Rome is a capital city of 2.5 million people, known worldwide for its historical heritage and the presence of the Pope. After tumultuous growth in the post World War II era (+60% population increase in 1951-1971), its demography remained almost constant until the '90s when city users started to substitute residents and the proportion of foreigners increased (to 10% in 2009).

Meanwhile, the city's economy saw through two major transitions. In the '70s, a modern service sector emerged alongside the traditional structure based on public administration and construction. In the following two decades, Rome progressively split into two separate urban worlds with different locations in the city. The year 1993, in which mayor Rutelli was elected, marks the transition from a two speed city towards a city for the few. The old protagonists of the city's economy joined the younger service sector in a deadly partnership for the future of at least half of the Roman people. Indeed, under Rutelli's mandate the so-called “Roman model” was inaugurated, and it still dominates the city's decision making notwithstanding the shift to a right wing majority in 2008. Incidentally, Rutelli still sits on the city council and it was him who proposed Rome's candidature for the 2020 Games.

The Roman model has allowed the city's economy to expand substantially in recent years. In 2001-2005, Rome's GDP was growing much faster as compared with the rest of Italy (+6.8% versus a national +1.4%). However, the Roman model is characterized by both social exclusion and spatial polarization which are typical of two-speed development. The main difference between the social and previous periods lies in the scale of the phenomena in the city and province. Social exclusion is more visible in the city, whereas spatial polarization has involved the province. In conclusion, the new renaissance in Rome, made immediately visible by a series of majestic projects, was not for all Romans. Undoubtedly, the effort made by the city to facilitate people's participation in local decision making, like Rome's model, proved unable to empower its inhabitants if they did not own a bit of real estate, which would allow them to cope with the high housing prices and the consequently “Roman” soft costs.

Urban Region: 3'285Km² * Inhabitants 2'500'000
Italy: 301'338Km² * Inhabitants 60'325'805