

How does a students' neighborhood look?

Visibility and heritage in Casal Bertone (Rome, Italy)

Visual Ethnography

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Abstract

This article adopts a mixed ethnographic and architectural urban regeneration perspective to explore how the heritage and visibility of different social groups in Casal Bertone, a neighborhood in Rome, influence power dynamics and the urban configuration. The study describes how the elderly group's visibility is achieved through an assemblage of symbols, practices, and material elements, such as civic activism, local memories, urban paths, heritage constructions, and architectural styles, creating a meaningful urban environment focused on the legendary railway worker figure. However, preserving this heritage risks rendering university students and their needs invisible. The research indicates that Casal Bertone has undervalued the presence of students by not incorporating distinct architectural features that recognize their importance, relegating them and their public structures to mere logistical consideration. The case of Casal Bertone underscores the necessity to architecturally and rhetorically acknowledge students, fostering their active participation in daily neighborhood life and heritage management. This engagement is crucial for enhancing their visibility, a cornerstone for the political agencies of any social group.

Keywords

Visibility; Public space; Urban Studies; University Students; Heritage.

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Introduction

Urban regeneration is an integrated vision and intervention aimed at resolving issues and sustainably improving the multifaceted conditions of an urban context. A key aspect of urban regeneration practices is their inclination toward social, cultural, economic, architectural, and environmental changes (Scarpelli and Romano 2011; Leary and McCarthy 2013; Roberts et al. 2017). In specific contexts such changes may face resistance, often justified by negative experiences with top-down projects neglected or driven by vested interests. Local communities may perceive these projects as threats to delicately balanced conditions. To mitigate these issues and avoid significant resource wastage, urban regeneration, renowned for its multidisciplinary approach, increasingly incorporates quantitative and qualitative socio-cultural analysis tools, ensuring thorough stakeholder engagement. While effective, this methodology can suffer from weaknesses linked to stakeholder selection.

What happens when certain stakeholders deliberately remain invisible and silent, while another group dominates public spaces and controls the narrative of a locality's self-representation? Why do some groups choose to remain invisible, and what are the detrimental effects of such behavior? How do urban spaces and their diverse narratives influence these processes?

Based on field research conducted in the mid-eastern Casal Bertone neighborhood of Rome, employing ethnography, anonymous surveys, mapping, and stylistic-architectural study, we present a case study that addresses these issues and seeks to answer related questions. Firstly, we will challenge the naturalized visual perceptions of the residents. Secondly, we will offer anthropological reflections on the socio-cultural, political, and environmental implications of pronounced visibility (pertaining to the elderly group) and profound invisibility (pertaining to university students).

Compared to research on other groups (Cancellieri and Ostanel 2015; Scandurra 2017; Ostanel 2020), there has been relatively little exploration of the relationship between invisibility and the engagement of middle social groups (Currid-Halkett 2017) — individuals who do not fit into the categories of the marginalized or the wealthy (which include university students in Italy). Focusing ethnographically on the everyday living practices of both Italian and international university students in Casal Bertone, our aim is to highlight their latent potential to shape the community and their challenges in voicing and advocating for changes that reflect their perspectives and needs. To achieve this descriptive objective, our initial approach involved investigating the perceptions and dynamics of visibility among different social groups in the neighborhood.

Drawing upon the ideas of Hannah Arendt (1958), Michel Foucault (1963, 1975), and Jürgen Habermas (1989), scholars across disciplines argue that visibility and co-visibility in public spaces hold significant political implications (Calhoun 1993; Brighenti 2010). This visibility, or inter-visibility, is integral to the concept of “publicness”, involving the freedom to express and make visible one's opinions through bodily presence in an inclusive public sphere. This discussion addresses the intersection of the politics of recognition and social justice with the embodied experience in public spaces, asserting a secure space for existence, self-determination, and political action (Fraser and Honneth 2004).

The visibility conceived by these interpretations goes beyond the “raw” sensorial sphere, intersecting with the complex domains of materiality, cultural values, aesthetics, economies, and politics. As shown by many scholars (Gibson 1979; Goodwin 1996; Ingold 2005; Pink 2021), there is no such thing as merely visible, but cultural ways of perceiving that (re)construct a given subject visible (or invisible) according to the features of the environment (Lynch 1960, Bateson 1988; Classen 1993; Ingold 2000; Kohn 2013). Following the works of Brighenti (2007, 2010c, 2022), the relationship between visibility, publicness, and a politics of recognition is far from being a simple positive association. As

shown by Foucault's *oeuvre*, visibility constantly oscillates between an empowering pole (visibility as recognition) and a disempowering pole (visibility as control). "Thresholds of visibility come into play here" and "there is a minimum and a maximum of what we may call 'fair visibility' – regardless of the fairness criteria we want to adopt" (Brighenti 2007: 329-330). All these observations characterize the management of visibility as a complex socio-material and localized undertaking, constantly giving rise to new spatial arrangements and contextual politics of visibility (Arab 2013).

In the context of Casal Bertone, situated in the 4th Municipality of Rome near the Tiburtina Railroad Station (2 km) and Sapienza University of Rome's main campus (4 km), the neighborhood provides an ideal setting to explore the politics of visibility due to its distinctive identity and characteristics. Unlike neighboring areas like San Lorenzo and Pigneto, known for their identities associated with "university student" and "movida-driven" (Semi 2015; Cozza 2022), Casal Bertone is internally and externally narrated as a "peaceful island" or a family-friendly reality with a "vintage Roman style" (D'Andreta 1995; Fabrizi 2019). The neighborhood withstands the "threats" posed by the youthful and nocturnal lifestyle associated with the aforementioned areas, along with the changes brought about by a globalized capital, by embracing the self-image of a "village within the city" (Thomassen and Clough Marinaro 2014), where individuals prioritize slowness (Figure 1), interpersonal connections, and a nurturing approach towards neighborhood spaces (Figure 2).



Figure 1 Sign "Do not run" placed on Giovanni Pittaluga Street, Casal Bertone, Rome. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2023.



Figure 2 Sign: “Respect this small flower bed; it is a drop of beauty that is good for all of us”, placed on a tree in Cesare Ricotti Street, the location of the daily street market of Casal Bertone, Rome. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2024.

Despite this narrative, our field research paints a different and more complex picture. Well-connected to Sapienza University City and hosting a public student residence with 475 beds, along with a relatively small neighborhood size and affordable rental costs, Casal Bertone is far from being uninhabited by young university students (both Italian and foreign). They are simply “out of sight”, or in other words, remain invisible compared to other groups in Casal Bertone, such as the elderly, who are the most visible and, thanks to a particular cultural and architectural heritage that we will describe, the most active in the neighborhood’s public spaces.

Even when characterized by good intentions, as we will show in the case of Casal Bertone, in a globalized world where interfacing with proximate and distant otherness is a daily affair, the existence of a social group that legitimizes the preservation of a neighborhood identity through a cultural and architectural heritage can negatively impact the experience of other inhabitants (Harrison et al. 2020). This is particularly true because this “traditionalist” concept of conservation perceives homogeneity of class, race, and age as a natural strength to be defended against the threats of otherness and change, whether the change affects the material sphere, the symbolic framework, or both. From this perspective, the de-essentializing work of the anthropologist goes hand in hand with the pro-change mission of the urban regeneration designer. The former describes and critiques the endless human reconstruction of identities, memories, and heritages, while the latter maps, interprets, and promotes inclusive and sustainable socio-spatial arrangements. Since both disciplines share the common ground of the urban environment, in addressing these issues, we will endeavor to overcome the dichotomy between symbols and materiality (Bateson 1988; Ingold 2000; Latour 2007, 2010; Kohn 2013), placing specific attention on the assemblage that reveals the “permanent tension between, on one hand, procedures of stabilization, order, consensus, hegemony, pre-assignment and, on the other, the irreducible plurality of each territory, necessarily mirrored in every territorial constitution and regime” (Brighenti 2010b: 53).

A mixed methodology for an (in) visible neighborhood

As illustrated by various ethnographies of the senses, in modern Western ontology and contemporary common usage, vision is often conceptualized as a detached, rational, and objective process, hierarchically positioned as the

most reliable among sensory forms of knowledge (Howes 1991; 2003; Classen 1993). From this “naturalistic” perspective, vision is considered detached because it is assumed not to interfere with the observed object, rational because it is governed by the free will of a subject depicted as self-aware, and efficient because it is perceived as providing objective and clear data. Moving beyond these stereotypical views on vision necessitates exploring an ecological phenomenology of the visible, where vision is culturally and materially influenced, and where “vision is not only vision of something but through something” (Brighenti 2010b: 13; Goodwin 1996; Ingold 2005; Pink 2021). The visibility of a social group must therefore be understood as the result of an assemblage of factors. In the case of Casal Bertone, it is important to observe how the urban layout, architectural style, and rhetoric strongly impact the perception of what is visible and what is invisible (Latour and Yaneva 2008; Stender et al. 2021).

Starting from an ethnographic focus on the everyday interstitial dimension, we initiated a research project aimed at denaturalizing the taken-for-granted and examining its effects on visual perception. (Bourdieu 1965, 1977), seeking to capture the viewpoints of those observing the communal spaces of a Roman neighborhood and its inhabitants (Scarpelli 2020). In exploring the intricate dynamics of urban spaces, it is essential to consider the works of Erving Goffman (1963, 1963b), particularly concerning stigma and behavior in public settings. Goffman, renowned for his studies on the theatrical performances of daily life structured akin to a paradigm of actors and spectators, illustrates how the “normal appearance” of a social setting paradoxically corresponds to its invisibility. While the normal remains unnoticed, the anomalous – bearing visible signs of its otherness – inevitably “catches the eye” and disrupts the invisibility and anonymity of urban subjectivity described by numerous scholars of city life (Jacobs 1961, Hannerz 1980). Inspired by these profound insights, our exploration goes beyond mere visibility for some groups and invisibility for others. Through the denaturalization of visibility mentioned earlier, we delve into the underlying reasons for these distinctions, critically reflecting on the diverse perspectives voiced by the neighborhood’s residents. Given that recognition of others in urban spaces often hinges on categories, stereotypes, and social typifications (Lofland 1998; Link and Jo 2001; Simonicca 2018), and recognizing that the environment shapes a place’s identity in non-neutral ways (Lynch 1960, Ingold 2000; Kohn 2013; Low 2017), we examine how the dynamics of visibility and invisibility reverberate within the architectural framework of Casal Bertone (Latour and Yaneva 2008; Stender et al. 2021).

As underscored by our emphasis on both cultural and architectural dimensions, this article emerges from a collaborative investigation spanning two years, initiated in January 2022 by Fulvio Cozza and Mahtab Seyedabadi. Integrating ethnography with practices in urban regeneration and architectural design, our primary focus has been on exploring the use of common spaces by young individuals and young adults, with a specific focus on the university population surrounding Sapienza University City (Europe’s largest university by enrollment, as stated on its website, with 122,000 students). The decision to conduct primary fieldwork in Casal Bertone and our methodological approach stemmed from a blend of serendipitous opportunities and epistemological reflections.

Like any urban fieldwork, these observations inevitably cannot encompass the entirety of lived experiences within a city (Simonicca 2018). Rather, they are specifically aimed at gathering the experiences of the student community in a setting distinct from the moral panic rhetoric surrounding various locations of Roman youth nightlife (Semi 2015; Cozza 2022). Indeed, by positioning ourselves just outside the areas considered part of the “*movida romana*”, such as San Lorenzo, Pigneto, and Piazza Bologna, we realized that working in Casal Bertone would allow us to explore the student experience and how students are perceived by other neighborhood residents without succumbing to mainstream sensationalism. Moreover, the presence of a large

public student residence in this neighborhood, notably housing students from non-European countries such as Azerbaijan, Iran, India, Turkey, and Kazakhstan, provided an opportunity to explore university students' practices from diverse socio-cultural perspectives and their unique views on Rome, Italy, and the broader Western context.

Since January 2022, Mahtab Seyedabadi has resided in Casal Bertone, sharing a rental house with other young roommates (both Italian and foreign). Her firsthand experience of the student reality in the area, including the public student residence and dining hall – particularly significant for the sizable Iranian community – has greatly facilitated her understanding. This experience has also allowed her to personally confront the challenges faced by foreign university students in Rome, originating from Iran, and to establish trusting and open relationships with various participants in our research. Pursuing an architectural perspective on urban regeneration for her master's thesis at Sapienza University of Rome, Seyedabadi has been compiling a visual archive of Casal Bertone since 2022, comprising images, photo journals, videos, maps, and design projects (Figure 3).



Figure 3 Urban regeneration proposal for Via Domenico De Dominicis in Casal Bertone. The project aims to make the area around the public student residence more functional, green, livable, and distinctive, currently used as a parking area. The installation of a tram line, in addition to aligning with the neighborhood's heritage, aims to alleviate the systematic congestion on the transportation routes between Tiburtina Railroad Station, Pigneto, and Largo Preneste. Photo and design by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2024.

Her study aims to revitalize neglected areas and buildings in Casal Bertone by designing public green spaces that foster community integration and connection among university students. Initially, this work highlighted the severe shortage of shared spaces in the neighborhood, concentrating all social activities in Santa Maria Consolatrice Square and the Casal Bertone shopping center. Secondly, during her observations, she noted residents' reluctance to envision or embrace urban changes. Alongside widespread skepticism toward initiatives expanding communal green spaces and community areas, Seyedabadi observed university students often portraying Casal Bertone as an oasis amid perceived threatening and unreliable areas like San Lorenzo and Pigneto.

Having lived in the neighboring area of Casal Bruciato for over twenty years, Fulvio Cozza's immersion into the fieldwork of Casal Bertone has also been facilitated by some pre-existing friendly connections at the outset of this research, as well as by the knowledge of privileged interlocutors from a previous ethnography of archaeological practices that allowed him to explore the issues faced by university students in Rome (Cozza 2022; 2023). Specifically, he explored how new generations connect with cultural heritage and construct belonging through the identification of Rome's monumental landmarks and past.

The methodology employed can be summarized as a framework combining the collection of place narratives with direct observations and the exploration of the dissonance between local emic and etic perspectives, as well as group visibilities. The primary objective was to deconstruct and critique the prevailing invisibility characterizing the narrative about university students among Casal Bertone's residents. In seeking to "visualize" student practices in common spaces and beyond, our research proceeded through several stages. Initially, we both, engaged in ethnographic fieldwork within the neighborhood's common spaces, documenting activities and events through ethnographic journals, photography, videography, and mapping, spanning both weekdays and weekends, day and night. Secondly, focusing on issues highlighted by neighborhood residents during fieldwork, we designed and administered an online anonymous questionnaire circulated among selected WhatsApp, Facebook, and Telegram groups by key informants¹.

Building upon this collection of "viewpoints" (Figure 4), strengthened by subsequent interviews, personal communications, focus groups, and participant observation, we conducted path and route surveys in Casal Bertone. This involved photographing identical itineraries at different times and days, compiling visual diaries (Faeta 2003; Conord and Cuny 2014; Pink 2021; Meloni 2023). We documented who utilized specific paths and for what purposes, identifying discrepancies between rhetoric and actual practices to unveil insights overlooked in our interlocutors' narratives. The first example, university students were present throughout the neighborhood but visibly congregated only in certain spots due to limited interaction with other groups. Second, the elderly's protective role toward children flourished in the neighborhood's sole motor-free areas. Lastly, despite residents' perception of Casal Bertone as predominantly white, visual evidence did not substantiate this claim. This approach allowed us to identify neighborhood landmarks and explore how their materiality, coupled with compelling narratives, shaped distinct cultural heritage. We also mapped out how this cultural heritage influenced the behaviors of diverse inhabitants.

¹ The questionnaire, comprising 38 questions on the neighborhood's identity, its relationship with surrounding areas, spatial characteristics, and perceptions of visibility among different social groups (teenagers, university students, families with children, the elderly, and foreigners), garnered responses from 42 anonymous volunteers: 12 university students (28.5%) and 10 individuals over fifty (24%). Naturally, given its distribution through key informants' social networks, the questionnaire offers a partial view of Casal Bertone. Nevertheless, the sociometric data obtained and the voluntary nature of responses reflect a sample of residents accustomed to expressing their views, demonstrating a vested interest in the neighborhood's future, identity, and current configuration. While the questionnaire may not encompass all perspectives on Casal Bertone, it served as a valuable tool enriching our ethnographic understanding of visibility and related perceptions.

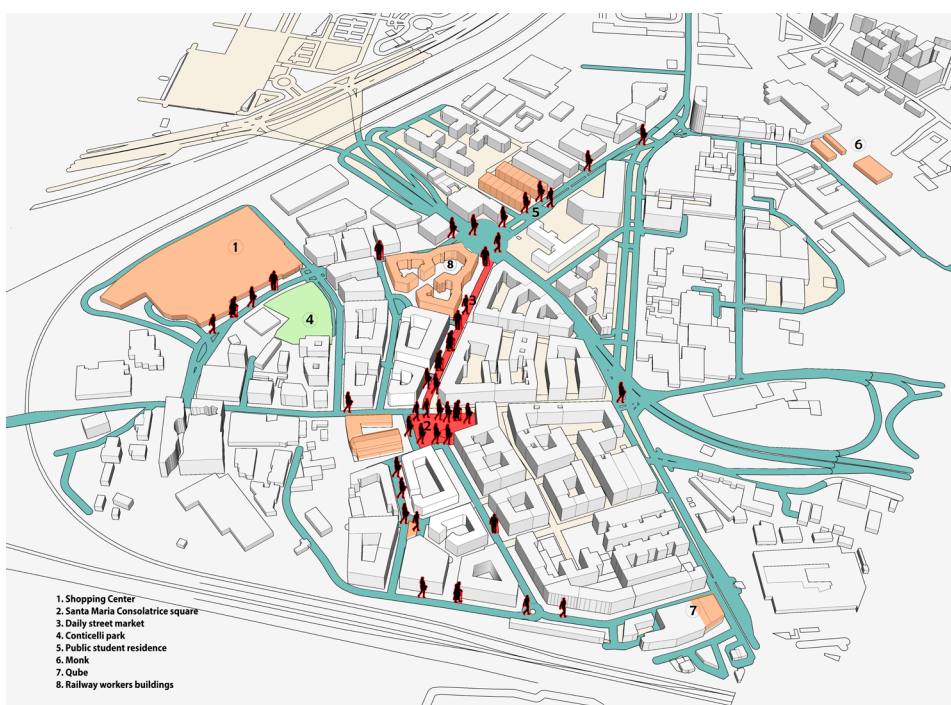


Figure 4 Average distribution in the space of the 42 participants of the anonymous questionnaire. Map by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2023.

On the one hand, this methodology gave us the possibility of “materializing” the presence of students in areas where they seemed to be invisible. On the other hand, the mapping tasks revealed that the places typically frequented by students were “hard to read” (Lynch 1960; de Koning 2009, 2015; Sletto 2009), and through the ethnographic lens, we sought to reflect on the fact that, in some cases, invisibility seemed to result from the students’ intentional actions, facilitated by the local social and spatial framework. The motivations implied by these practices will be described and analyzed in the next section, following a description of the Casal Bertone neighborhood identity and materiality: an assemblage hegemonized by the elders.

The neighborhood of the railway worker

To deeply contextualize Casal Bertone, encompassing its dynamics of visibility, identities, materialities, movements, and architectural “styles”, we initiate with a map detailing the neighborhood’s landmarks and pathways (Figure 5). Rather than presenting a “de-historicized history” of Casal Bertone extracted from established literature (D’Andreta 1995; Kim et al. 2012; Capoferri 2017; Fabrizi 2019), our approach is to highlight the inherently non-neutral interplay between spatial usage, identities, memories, and distinct the reproduction of a characteristic modern Roman heritage. Our goal is to illuminate the community’s subjective selection of significant local memories, interpreting their current significance, spatial arrangement, and impacts on visibility (Low 2017; Scarpelli 2020).

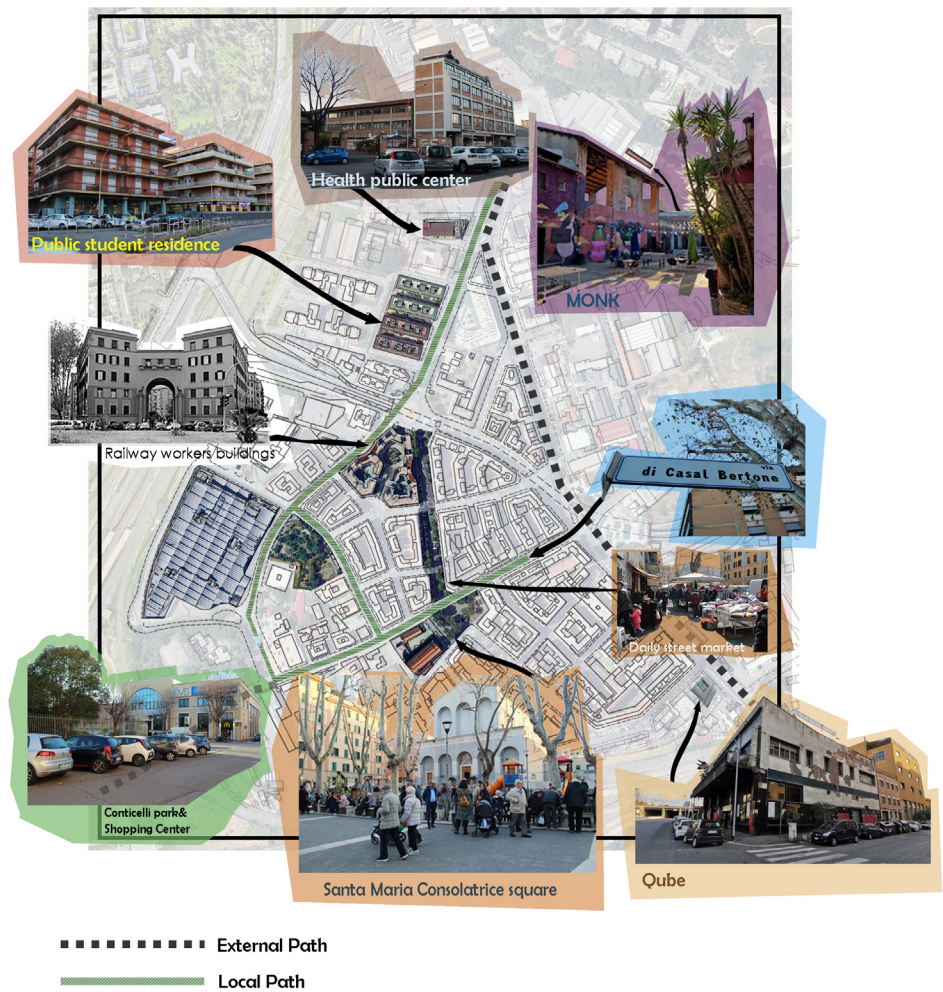


Figure 5 Landmarks and paths of Casal Bertone, Rome. Map by Mahtab Seydabadi, 2024.

In a somewhat unexpected twist, and as evidence that even seemingly self-contained places are intricately linked to their surroundings and outward pathways, our exploration of Casal Bertone naturally begins from a location perceived by its residents as beyond the neighborhood – specifically, the Tiburtina railway station. As a crucial railway hub since the era of the fascist dictatorship, the neighborhood of Casal Bertone has been profoundly influenced by its proximity to Tiburtina station. This influence unfolds on three fronts: first, it facilitates the movement of residents through local, national, and international transportation lines, making Casal Bertone a suitable base for living in Rome, especially for foreign students. Second, the extensive railway network encircles three-quarters of the neighborhood, creating a distinctive sense of “train-relatedness” together with an experience of isolation (not necessarily perceived as negative). Third, the architectural characteristics of the buildings erected to house railway and tramway workers, reflecting the style of the 1920s and 1950s, contribute to shaping an identity for the neighborhood that nostalgically echoes the “authenticity” of the once-popular Rome (“*la Roma de na vorta, la vera Roma*”, male, 65, Personal communication, 18/05/2023). Among these structures, the “Deers Building” (Palazzo dei Cervi), also known as “the Railway Workers Building” (Palazzo dei Ferrovieri), stands out as an exemplary manifestation of popular Roman-ness, a topic we will explore shortly. Its significance is further elevated by its cinematic prominence in Pier Paolo Pasolini’s film “*Mamma Roma*” (1962), where the legendary Roman actress Anna Magnani portrays a sex worker seeking a change of life (Figure 6). The place holds such an iconic charm that one day we even witnessed a scene where two employees moved a restaurant table right onto the roundabout facing the Railway Workers’ building. When we approached one of the men to inquire about this curious setup, he shared with us: “It is the most beautiful thing you can do here, eating in front of this beauty” (27/01/2024).



Figure 6 The Railway Workers’ Building in Casal Bertone in a frame from the movie *Mamma Roma* by Pier Paolo Pasolini (1962).

Serving as an arched gateway to Casal Bertone for those arriving from Tiburtina station, the Railway Workers’ building stands as the inaugural piece in a series of historical structures that collectively form what we term “the symbolic and material backbone of the neighborhood”. Significantly, the arch is a recurring architectural motif found in several local landmarks, including the public school, the church, and the shopping center. Notably absent from this stylistic trend is the public student residence, which appears so uncharacterized that several long-time inhabitants of Casal Bertone were unaware of its location or misinterpreted it as an office for immigrant people (Figure 7).



Figure 7 The arch is the stylistic element that unifies the most important places in Casal Bertone: the Shopping Center, the Railway Workers' Building, the Elementary School, and the Church of Santa Maria Consolatrice. Underneath are the public student residence buildings lacking this distinctive element. Photos and composition by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2023.

The “hegemonic path” of Casal Bertone culminates with a notable cinematic reference to Enrico Cosenz Square, featured in the masterpiece “*I soliti ignoti*” (Big Deal on Madonna Street) by Mario Monicelli (1958) (Figure 8). This path begins at Via Cesare Ricotti, home to the daily street market, and converges at Santa Maria Consolatrice Square – the neighborhood’s sole common space. Casal Bertone’s enduring presence in films from the golden age of post-war Italian cinema contributes to increasing the “old-style” importance of the buildings constructed along the hegemonic path. In our interviews and surveys, residents frequently mentioned these films. During a survey with a camera, a man in his sixties approached us mistaking us for tourists. After explaining our research, he proudly recounted his childhood memory of greeting Totò during the filming of “*I soliti ignoti*” in Enrico Cosenz Square (Figure 9) and highlighted the cinematic heritage that shapes the neighborhood backbone identity (“l’ossatura del quartiere”, personal communication, 17/03/2024).



Figure 8 A frame from the movie *I Soliti Ignoti* (Big Deal on Madonna Street), filmed on the rooftop of a building in Casal Bertone. Behind Totò, the railway yard along Prenestina Street. The scene’s audio captures the whistle of a locomotive. Mario Monicelli (1958).



Figure 9 Another frame from the movie *I Soliti Ignoti*. The shot shows the crowd gathered in Enrico Cosenz Square to see Totò. Mario Monicelli (1958).

Clearly, the hegemonic path does not encompass all of Casal Bertone's landmarks identified by our interlocutors, nor is it the sole pathway within the neighborhood. Nevertheless, both newcomers and long-term residents – students and non-students alike – recognize and frequent it as the most significant and typical route. In addition to the previously mentioned landmarks like the shopping center (which, in a way, pays homage to the hegemonic path with the architectural style of its facade), other notable locations such as the health public center (ASL), the public student residence (*Casa dello Studente*), the Cube Disco Club, and the Monk Disco Club exist beyond this path and exhibit different architectural styles. Even though Renato Conticelli Park is located in a transitional area and lacks distinctive architectural features, its management by a group of elderly volunteers who have witnessed the recent history of Casal Bertone imbues the park with the neighborhood's memory and heritage. This is evident even when the events “narrated” by the elders – such as the “railway worker epic” – took place at least a generation before theirs. It is significant that during a focus group conducted with a group of elderly residents of Casal Bertone – five males, all born at the end of World War II – many of them recount the construction of the buildings and the events of the Allied bombing, linguistically positioning themselves as the witnessing protagonists of those events: “we endured the bombing” (*abbiamo subito il bombardamento*), “here, we were all railway workers, tram drivers, and postal workers” (*qui eravamo tutti ferrovieri, tramvieri e postini*, Focus Group, 16/03/2024).

As illustrated by the latter example, the conceptualization of the hegemonic path is not merely a result of an appealing architectural style from the 20s and 60s. It is also not solely the result of everyday widespread use. Some sections of the hegemonic path, such as Enrico Cosenz Square, have low foot traffic and are primarily used for car parking. Conversely, highly frequented areas, like the vicinity of the public student residence, as we will explore in the next paragraph, do not receive particular attention nor are they characterized by specific material and symbolic connotations. Essentially, both areas function as parking lots for cars, but only the square of the hegemonic path is considered part of a shared identity.

For these reasons, we argue that what distinguishes the hegemonic path is a combination of material elements, narratives, and practices (Arab 2013) – a compelling narrative encapsulating a particular manifestation of Roman identity with its architectural style, legitimized by the aforementioned movies and rooted in what can be considered a cultural heritage in formation (Meskell 2015). Indeed, even apart from Italian institutional heritage recognition processes, which have primarily focused on rural traditions (Bravo and Tucci 2008; Dei 2018) or archaeological findings – and thus fail to adapt to the form of heritage expressed by the residents of Casal Bertone – if the concept of “heritage” includes everything – material or immaterial – that a community or group considers significant for its history and identity, and therefore worthy of being preserved and transmitted to future generations, without a doubt, the identity, memory, and buildings of Casal Bertone must be considered heritage. Why does this heritage of popular Roman-ness succeed? The reason is its unique poetics of class advancement, deeply rooted in the working-class history of the area, which resonates strongly with the elderly inhabitants of Casal Bertone. Their collective memory and identity are intertwined with this heritage, and their active involvement in the neighborhood’s public activities helps to sustain and reinforce it. The sense of belonging and pride associated with this shared heritage fosters community cohesion and ensures its persistence over time. This interpretation of the victorious “class of iron” (*classe di ferro*) becomes apparent in the recurrent nostalgic mentions of the “rocks battle” against the neighboring young boys of Casal Bruciato or the games played in the puddle (*marana*), as a testament to the ability to achieve the most from scarce resources: “We had nothing, not even pants and shoes... but we were happy!” (Male, 70 years old, Interview, 22/03/2023).



Figure 10 One of the historical buildings of Casal Bertone in Enrico Cosenz Square, Casal Bertone, Rome. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2024.

In fact, following World War II, Casal Bertone thrived as a community of workers, squatters, and war refugees. Over the past 30 years, it has transformed into an upscale middle-class neighborhood. Narratives detailing this evolution center around the figure of the railway worker, symbolizing a distinctive “middle-ness” (Capoferri 2017; Currid-Halkett 2017). Depicted as a train manager, conductor, or station manager in the accounts we have gathered – when not referencing a specific individual – the railway worker is not your typical fac-

tory laborer or conventional employee. Rather, he emerges as a knowledgeable technician who traversed Italy, exploring various destinations and cities through the national railway company, returning home akin to a “modern Ulysses” (Male, 36yo, Personal communication, 10/12/2023). It’s worth noting that while embodying the spirit of Ulysses, this heroic figure does not fit the high-modern mold of contemporary globetrotters who rely on airplanes and explore global paths rather than just Italian routes.

The “typical” resident of Casal Bertone is not a wealthy bourgeois of today or a modern-day impoverished worker; rather, they embody a middle-class identity as it was conceived thirty years ago. This heritage of popular Roman-ness places Casal Bertone in a slower temporal dimension where the rapid changes of a globalized, complex, and unstable metropolis (Scarpelli 2020), along with the rushed use of the neighborhood’s spaces, must slow down amidst the narrow streets lined with elegant apartment buildings that evoke a nostalgic memory of a recent Rome (a Rome of yesterday rather than the day before yesterday) (Figure 10).

During a conversation with a resident who voiced opposition to the installation of public trash bins in front of the iconic entrance of the Railway Workers’ Building, a man approximately 70 years old emphasized Casal Bertone’s significance as a bastion of Roman-ness (*romanità*). He underscored the importance of preserving this heritage for the broader history of the city, stating, “The problem is they want to place the bins right here, disrespecting the memory of Pasolini and Anna Magnani... and by extension, disrespecting Rome itself” (Interview, 22/03/2023) (Figure 11).



Figure 11 A banner reading “no to the trash bins” placed at the entrance of the Railway Workers’ Building, and posters depicting a scene from Pasolini’s movie with the inscription “no to the trash bins in front of Mamma Roma’s building”. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2023.

In summary, Casal Bertone confers a distinct readability to its entire neighborhood (Lynch 1960) by intertwining materiality with symbols, concrete with identity, and architectural styles of buildings with associated narratives, shaping a heritage that defines what aligns with the sense of place, what does not, or what is simply deemed unworthy of consideration (Goffman 1963; Link and Jo 2001; Fraser and Honneth 2004). This heritage of popular Roman-ness determines visibility and invisibility (Goffman 1963b).

One of the most visible aspects of Casal Bertone, as affirmed by data from our anonymous questionnaire, is the unequivocal recognition of the elderly as central figures in the neighborhood’s spaces. In Italy, where the proportion of elderly individuals is steadily increasing and statistics underscore their crucial role as social stabilizers (Livi Bacci 2008; Woodman and Bennett

2 Home to numerous sports and political activism initiatives since the 1990s, despite being an important place for the neighborhood's memory, the Palestra Popolare di Casal Bertone (Popular gym) was not spontaneously mentioned by most interviewees when asked about the landmarks of Casal Bertone. Except for two individuals interviewed as members of the neighborhood committee, the rest of the respondents did not bring up the Palestra Popolare. However, when subsequently questioned on the subject, many showed awareness of its existence and some even mentioned having participated in its activities. In summary, the Palestra Popolare has proven to be an invisible place within the framework of locations that distinguish Casal Bertone and its heritage.

2015; Colombo et al. 2018; Colombo and Rebughini 2019), this finding may not be surprising. However, due to the heritage of popular Roman-ness rooted in the railway workers' heritage, the presence of the elderly, often overlooked and taken for granted, becomes noticeable as a pivotal element of the community. The local significance attributed to what a man referred to as "*la generazione dei ferrovieri*" ("the railway workers' generation", approximately 40 years old, personal communication, 16/04/2023) is encapsulated in the narrative surrounding Conticelli Park – a contested space involving the municipal administration, construction company, and neighborhood committees, culminating in a legal battle eventually won by the citizens (Figure 12).



Figure 12 The interior of Conticelli Park in Casal Bertone, Rome. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2024

Located in front of the Shopping Center and just a few meters from the Palestra Popolare di Casal Bertone – one of the few places in the neighborhood where, despite their presence, the elderly play a secondary role to the young² – Conticelli Park is widely regarded by many of our interviewees as the epitome of neighborhood activism, as also evidenced by the words used by this father of two kids:

"[Conticelli Park] It is truly a remarkable story and a beautiful park [...] managed by a group of volunteers. If you visit, you'll find it exceptionally clean and well-maintained. This is quite unusual for Rome, where many public parks are often littered with cigarette butts. There is a group of people, especially an older woman named Gina, who oversees the park. Often, even the children refer to it as Gina's Park." (Male, approximately 45 years old, Interview, 18/11/2023).

Embodying the aforementioned heritage of the pugnacious railway workers, who find new life in the stewardship of Parco Conticelli, this elderly generation appears pivotal in shielding the neighborhood against external threats, particularly from the so-called *palazzinari* (real estate speculators).

"In the beginning, that park was an abandoned area filled with garbage. So, this group of people began cleaning it up and using it as a park, but the owner took them to court. [...] They took the risk of being condemned, facing a hefty penalty, and the legal battle lasted for years, but ultimately, they emerged victorious" (Male, about 45 years old, Interview, 18/11/2023).

According to the narratives we have gathered, *palazzinari* appear intent on encroaching upon the already limited green spaces in the neighborhood, a matter of significant concern for residents, particularly for children, thus making the elderly the defenders.

The protective role of the elderly is evident in the unique layout of Conticelli Park. Indeed, the park exceeds the typical dimensions of a public park, evolving into an area that, as described by one resident, accommodates private plants “too large to maintain on personal balconies” (Personal communication, 07/05/2023). More importantly, it serves as a playground for children equipped with various kindergarten features. In addition to slides, swings, and private plants that replace the absence of their owners (Gell 1998), the park boasts dozens of tricycles, toy cars, and other games donated by families whose children, having grown up, no longer return to play in a space that seems excessively geared towards younger children (Figure 13).



Figure 13 The interior of Conticelli Park, with the arcades of the Casal Bertone Shopping Center in the background. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2024

Precisely because the park has been the gathering place for the young generations of Casal Bertone for more than twenty-five years – containing the agency of all these generations – its existence contributes to perpetuating an idea of protection and security ensured by the older generations of the neighborhood, especially the “epical” generation of railway workers.

However, this defensive stance of the elderly residents, shaped by the securing of Parco Conticelli and a general distrust of local administrators, may lead to shortsighted conservatism (Harrison et al., 2020). This tendency is evident in their perception of the neighborhood as a “happy island” amidst the “threatening” areas of San Lorenzo and Pigneto, known for their youthful nightlife. This perspective often results in a strong resistance to regeneration proposals aimed at creating new common spaces, out of concern that these areas could attract young people. As articulated by a neighborhood resident in

his seventies: “there’s a risk the neighborhood will lose its essence and become like San Lorenzo, Pigneto, or even Piazza Bologna... with people hanging around on the streets” (Personal communication, 16/03/2024). Such apprehensions significantly influence the work of urban regenerator, particularly when elderly stakeholders in focus groups and discussions only endorse minor enhancements, such as improving the urban decor of Santa Maria Consolatrice Square or ensuring the safety of the children’s playground – small-scale improvements targeting an already well-maintained and frequented area. This skepticism towards urban interventions is exemplified by an eighty-year-old resident, revered as “the memory” of Casal Bertone. When questioned about regenerating a large green space less than 1 km from Santa Maria Consolatrice Square, along Via Ettore Fieramosca – the route leading towards the “hazardous” Pigneto neighborhood – he expressed strong skepticism about the success of the endeavor. He stated that the inhabitants of Casal Bertone embrace a “village mentality” and prefer to stay close to their familiar central square.

The student: a life out of sight

So far, we have seen that the visibility of the elderly group in Casal Bertone has increased thanks to the popular Roman-ness heritage. Consequently, this social group acquired a leadership role in the neighborhood’s affairs. This process significantly impacts the visibility of students, as both in-depth interviews and the anonymous questionnaire describe it as a phenomenon that is difficult to perceive. This invisibility is exacerbated by their exclusion from heritage sites and compounded by the lack of clear delineation of spaces designated for them (Lynch 1960) (Figure 7). Despite university students frequenting and identifying with the same spaces esteemed as important and secure by other social groups, their presence largely remains unnoticed in the eyes of others (Figure 14).



Figure 14 The first three landmarks around which the greatest visibility of the three social groups is perceived. Data processed from the anonymous questionnaire with a maximum of three responses. Map by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2024.

This perspective was eloquently shared by a 45-year-old man during our ethnographic survey of Santa Maria Consolatrice Square. When asked about the possible presence of students in his building or the neighborhood, he conveyed:

“Casal Bertone is not really known for being a student hub; there are quite a few students, but it is more San Lorenzo and Pigneto where you do not expect to find them [...] Perhaps [they are out] at night since I occasionally see them when I take the dog out... but it is not like there is a noticeable abundance of university students here, although their presence is not exactly prominent. Maybe they head to Qube, who knows...” (Interview, 18/11/2023).

Conversely, the parts of Casal Bertone seldom frequented by university students were identified by other residents as the only places where local students might be glimpsed. Ironically, these spots are often perceived as unsafe by many of our student participants, reflecting the concerns voiced by older adults and families about the perceived risks associated with nightlife (Figure 15; Figure 16).



Figure 15 The primary landmarks frequented by the 12 students who participated in our anonymous questionnaire. Data processed from the questionnaire with a maximum of three responses. Map by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2024.



Figure 16 The primary landmarks frequented by the 10 people older than fifty who participated in our anonymous questionnaire. Data processed from the questionnaire with a maximum of three responses. Map by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2024.

However, rather paradoxically, the trend of students' invisibility in Casal Bertone does not seem to change significantly when focusing the ethnographic lens on the viewpoints of university students. Many of them – especially the foreigners we interviewed – admire this place because they consider it more authentically Roman or Italian. Here, the popular Roman-ness heritage of the neighborhood continues to play a crucial role, especially among new residents. This trend is exemplified by the lack of awareness regarding Turkish-language graffiti that we observed right in front of the public student residence, presumably created by foreign students experiencing romantic distress. When we asked our Turkish-speaking contacts to translate the mural messages located right in front of the entrance to their residence, we noticed that they had not seen these elements, just like the Italian residents who, in contrast, are well acquainted with the AS Roma fans' murals in the same areas (Figure 17).



Figure 17 Graffiti in Turkish read: “You are the best person to go to the kebab shop, but do not go”, right in front of the public student residence on Domenico De Dominicis Street, Casal Bertone, Rome. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2023.

The issue of students’ invisibility is also well illustrated by the cases of Maria and Arghavan reported below. In both cases, the construction of their localized belonging requires them to give up their alternative way of being young-adult residents of Casal Bertone.

When we met Maria through some mutual friends, this 28-year-old archaeology student from Abruzzo explained to us that one of the reasons she likes Casal Bertone, aside from the fact that the neighborhood is very well-connected, is the massive presence of elderly “ladies sunbathing in the square” (Personal communication 30/03/2023) or going shopping with their characteristic shopping trolleys. Describing the “stately beauty” (*bellezza signorile*) of the residential courtyard where she had rented a room with other Italian students, Maria reports that this aspect, which constantly brought to her mind the situation in her hometown, along with the significant presence of young families with children, facilitated her integration into a large and modern city like Rome (Figure 18). Unlike the “*casino*” (chaos) of San Lorenzo and the related lifestyle threats of nightlife, the Casal Bertone neighborhood has provided Maria with the suitable context to “feel like family” (*sentirsi in famiglia*). Due to this pleasant sensation, Maria tells us that her parents have ultimately purchased an apartment in this neighborhood in anticipation of her younger brother’s enrollment at the university. She describes her parents’ reaction to the neighborhood as an immediate love affair, prompted by the peacefulness of the location, the beauty of the buildings, and the safety of the streets: “the people here are all well-mannered gentlemen.” (*qui sono tutti signori educati*).



Figure 18 Historical buildings on Antonio Baldissera Street, Casal Bertone, Rome. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2024.

Arghavan, a 35-year-old Iranian architecture student, also lives in a rented house with 2 other young adult roommates from Italy and Cameroon. She, also, tells us how important it is for her – not just because of an age she no longer considers youthful – to live in a “safe”, “real neighborhood” with elderly people and families, “true local inhabitants of Rome”, with a “style” and “beauty” very similar to that depicted in her beloved classics of Italian cinema (personal communication, 5/12/2023). As evidenced by the multitude of images portraying Casal Bertone on her social channels, Arghavan shares her enjoyment of leisurely strolling through the neighborhood’s streets, immersing herself in various shops and public events, and relishing the continuous array of sights and sensory experiences.

Just like Maria, who describes the neighborhood characteristics with the proud tone of a local resident, Arghavan willingly showcases her specific insider knowledge of the neighborhood. It is noteworthy that both mention the pleasure of strolling through Cesare Ricotti street market and other “old-ish” places in the neighborhood. Additionally, these young women assert that they do not consider Casal Bertone a neighborhood frequented by students, despite the fact that both are students who either live here or have lived with other students.

Alongside the various small episodes of daily life that have unfolded in the various corners of Casal Bertone since her arrival, Arghavan tells us about the misadventure that happened to her when she inadvertently got locked inside Conticelli Park:

It was around May or June, during the first few months of my time in Rome. One day, around midday, I decided to take a stroll near my home. I walked for a while and then headed to this park because it was filled with trees and provided a pleasant shade. The park was nearly empty, so I spent more than half an hour there. When I decided to leave, I noticed that both of the gates were closed, and I found myself trapped. I sought help from people outside the park, and we attempted to call the municipality’s emergency number. However, since it was a Sunday, no one answered. Eventually, a group of people (around 10 or 12) gathered, and we tried to locate the lady responsible for the park, who lived nearby and was known to the locals. In the end, they found her, and she arrived

with the key in her comfortable clothes (as she was in the middle of a nap). She apologized multiple times, mentioning that she always checks the park carefully but somehow missed seeing me. [...] it's normal here that they close the park at noon in a warm weather because no one use it (Interview, 12/03/2024).

Like the rhetoric of Maria, Arghavan's account effectively encapsulates the invisibility of university students in Casal Bertone, as well as their docile disposition towards the hegemony of the elderly in managing neighborhood spaces and heritage. This is something we have found with few differences in several answers to our questionnaire and while shadowing some Italian university students from Casal Bertone.

In fact, while the students from Iran, Azerbaijan, and Russia who participated in the questionnaire identified a close resemblance between the appearance of this neighborhood and the city center of Rome (thereby conferring an aura of authentic Italianness to this location), Italian students have repeatedly emphasized that Casal Bertone is a neighborhood for elderly people, equipped with many places specifically tailored for them, such as bars, shops, and parks.

However, the students we spoke with did not appear particularly irritated or upset by this state of affairs. In fact, contrary to what we expected to hear, not only did they demonstrate acceptance of their marginal placement in the neighborhood's common spaces. But they also expressed a preference for this hidden mode of existence over others, that might be more engaging.

The interpretation of the "distributed agency" (Gell 1998) in a wall writing provides a valuable perspective on the experiences of foreign students in Casal Bertone, particularly those who speak Turkish languages (Figure 19). By posing the question "does your mother know?" the mural's agency replicates, perhaps in a humorous manner, a judgmental gaze on moral behavior within a context perceived as less restrictive than one's homeland. In other words, the agency of the graffiti aims to reveal someone who is effectively concealed within common space.



Figure 19 Graffiti in Azerbaijani language read: "does your mother know?", on a wall of the Railroad Workers' Palace on Alberto Pollio Street, Casal Bertone, Rome. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2023.

It is a trend expressed by the voice of a 20-year-old male student from Kazakhstan we interviewed in the public student residence. He articulates a preference for neighborhoods like Casal Bertone or San Giovanni due to the

characteristic opportunity to “see elderly Italians on the street [...] I like it” (Interview, 18/11/2023).

A similar alignment with the elderly heritage is confirmed by the evening focus group held in Santa Maria Consolatrice Square with a group of university students (3 males and 4 females). In fact, when we asked these twenty-year-olds, born and raised in Casal Bertone, about the most important places in the neighborhood, all of them indicated the Deers Building – another name for the Railway Workers’ building – as the most historic place: “the important places in Casal Bertone are quite historical buildings (*i palazzi abbastanza storici*) like the Deers building and the Church”; “The Deers building is the most important one, it serves those who work in the railways but also soldiers... if I remember correctly” (Focus Group, 01/03/2024). Subsequently, when we asked what they think about the neighborhood’s elderly identity, one of the young men declared: “the young people of Casal Bertone move around... they go to Piazza Bologna or San Lorenzo. They leave Casal Bertone”. However, even with the desire to avoid scrutiny from their acquaintances, the act of moving away from their area does not seem to be experienced as a big sacrifice: “in the end, we have Piazza Bologna and San Lorenzo which offer many things... besides, Casal Bertone is well connected and is a safe neighborhood”. When asked about what Casal Bertone needs, one young man explains: “We would like a few more pubs, a few more places for the evening. Otherwise, Casal Bertone has everything”. A similar response came from a girl who, while explaining that she still prefers to hang out with friends in other neighborhoods, adds that: “in terms of community, Casal Bertone has everything, it just lacks something for the evenings... for young people” (Focus group, 01/03/2024).



Figure 20 Cesare Ricotti Street Market, Casal Bertone, Rome. Photo by Mahtab Seyedabadi, 2023.

Although the various voices we gathered from university students – regardless of whether they are Italian or foreign – reflect a common tendency towards accepting the prominence of adults with children and the elderly, in order to advance a general interpretation of these attitudes and related visibility policies, it seems important to underline some differences between the practices of students born and raised in Casal Bertone and those who have come here from other parts. To do this, we want to start by observing the different ways of being a neighborhood inhabitant (Figure 20).

In fact, if we observe and listen more closely to Maria and Arghavan's attitudes and rhetoric, we notice that their account of daily life in the neighborhood includes several detailed mentions of the location of the best pizzeria, the top ice cream shop, the unique atmosphere of a particular bar, their active participation in neighborhood celebrations, and more. Often, these places appear to hold significance for these two young women, who were born outside of Casal Bertone, as they have facilitated the development of strong localized relationships. Essentially, these locations are valued because they have enabled the acquisition of a Roman citizen identity, allowing them to be recognized in a public sphere of the Capital. An identity with its own glorious unique history intertwined with the legendary image of the railway workers' popular neighborhood. It is an achievement of which Arghavan seems particularly aware, as she explains, "they may seem like little things, but for me, after what I've been through to be here, having these people as my neighbors brings me joy" (personal communication, 05/12/2023).

Different – and in some ways opposite – is the case of students born and raised in Casal Bertone. In these cases, the tendency is to make the neighborhood one's safe refuge with a sense of familial intimacy, outside of which – towards less intimate neighborhoods like San Lorenzo or Piazza Bologna – one moves in search of alternative identities, free from the constraints and control imposed by long-standing acquaintances (Cozza 2022).

In the first scenario, "foreign" university students adopt the identity of the neighborhood's elderly residents to cultivate a satisfying sense of belonging, enabling them to distance themselves from both their native land and an identity they evidently perceive as abnormal (Goffman 1963). In the second scenario, it is precisely the assurance of being able to rely on a safe and long-established identity that favors the temporary foray into alternative places outside Casal Bertone, possibly in search of extraordinary situations. Both attitudes attempt to break away from a perceived "intimate controlling atmosphere", which solidifies the visual, political, and heritage hegemony of the elderly in this neighborhood. Seen from this perspective, the viewpoint of young university students is that of a stigmatized social group, namely a group that naturally perceives itself as abnormal and, by virtue of this perception, accepts to position itself in a zone of invisibility from which to emerge only in exceptional cases and – just like those stigmatized individuals described by Goffman – encountering the stereotypes that the "normal" people have produced about that specific group.

The stigmatized individual is asked to act so as to imply neither that his burden is heavy nor that bearing it has made him different from us; at the same time, he must keep himself at that remove from us which ensures our painlessly being able to confirm this belief about him. Put differently, he is advised to reciprocate naturally with an acceptance of himself and us, an acceptance of him that we have not quite extended him in the first place. A *phantom acceptance* is thus allowed to provide the base for a *phantom normalcy*. So deeply, then, must he be caught up in the attitude to the self that is defined as normal in our society, so thoroughly must he be a part of this definition, that he can perform this self in a faultless manner to an edgy audience that is half-watching him in terms of another show (Goffman 1963:122, italics by the author).

Naturally, the fact that university students in Casal Bertone – whether foreign or locally born and raised – prefer this experience of the neighborhood as "phantoms" reinforces the adherence to the heritage proposed by the elderly group and reflects the same resistance to change described in the previous paragraph. However, examining the profile of these students, the recurrence of such responses cannot be attributed to their laziness (as the vast majority are engaged in stressful, underpaid jobs) nor to their disinterest in social issues

(which they discuss passionately among themselves, at demonstrations, and on social media). Instead, it seems that what drives them to accept the heritage of Casal Bertone and their consequent invisibility is their perception of their student identity as unable to promote actions capable of changing the face of the neighborhood (Walther et al. 2019). Grown up in a context that views university education as strictly linked to the realm of individual skill formation, it is difficult for them to feel a sense of belonging to a social group capable of promoting and spreading ideas and values beneficial to society. From this perspective, the desire to leave the neighborhood unchanged or perhaps see more venues for young people, rather than advocating for better and more attractive public spaces for students, does not reflect a frivolous viewpoint. Instead, it highlights the awareness of those who prefer an identity with at least some capacity for choice and agencies (that of the young consumer) over an identity associated with low social legitimacy and power (that of the student).

According to this case study, it is not just about being more present in public space or simply obtaining a rhetoric in which students are represented as good and polite. What is more important for students – as well as for other social groups – is the possibility of being involved in a localized assemblage in which the material characterization of spaces goes hand in hand with connections to other social groups, their right to be passed to future generations, and their active participation in neighborhood activities.

In short, in order to make students' political actions more integrated with the local community and less tied to delocalized objectives, being visible in a given context is important. This condition involves having architectural recognition (materiality), rhetorical recognition (symbols), and practical integration into the daily life of a place and its various social groups.

Conclusion: steps to a university students' heritage

By adopting a mixed ethnographic and architectural urban regeneration perspective, this paper describes how the visibility of different social groups in the Casal Bertone neighborhood is a decisive factor for power dynamics and the preservation of the current urban configuration. The case study, on the one hand, demonstrates how the visibility of the elderly group has been achieved through an assemblage of symbols, practices, and materiality in which civic activism, local memories, urban paths, heritage constructions, and architectural styles have created the conditions for a meaningful urban environment centered around the legendary figure of the railway worker of the past. On the other hand, the case of Casal Bertone has shown the risks inherent in preserving this heritage. It contributes to making university students (and their needs) invisible. The research into the urban situation in Casal Bertone has revealed a portrait of a student neighborhood that has not valued this presence through a distinctive architectural mark but has instead treated the presence of students and public structures intended to host them as a purely logistical factor. The implicit vision expressed by these cultural, urbanistic, and stylistic choices – in line with a general European perspective – is that student life is a completely depoliticized phase concerned solely with the learning of professional skills. Students are not visible because they are not perceived as a group capable of impacting collective reality. Naturally, the architectural legitimization of students in Casal Bertone is not sufficient to guarantee their inclusion in the neighborhood community, but it can certainly be a first step. The cultural construction of the railway workers' heritage teaches us how architecture needs narrative support to become a decisive element of a community, and in this sense, there are ample opportunities. After all, if we think of the figure of the heroic railway worker as imagined in the heritage of Casal Bertone, nothing prevents us from reinterpreting this archetype through the lens of encounter, exchange, and peaceful coexistence with others: a contemporary experience that daily involves university students as well as all other city inhabitants.

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