

BRAVETTA PISANA

STRENGTHENING INFORMAL PRACTICES



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Bravetta Pisana: Strengthening Informal Practices

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Introduction

Bravetta Pisana is a neighborhood or quartiere located on the western periphery of Rome. The exact contours of the quartiere vary as expressed by different local residents. Our designation, “Bravetta Pisana,” calls attention to sharp physical edges defined by two primary roads, Via della Pisana and Via di Bravetta. While these primary streets act as boundaries for our study area, many residents define the quartiere as a larger space which includes areas to the west of Via della Pisana and to the east of Via di Bravetta. One resident in particular even described the historic center of Rome as an area that is very critical to local residents, displaying the easy accessibility to the city core. The idea of the quartiere appears to have persisting value in defining the experiences of Rome residents, yet it must be understood in flexible terms reflecting the different needs and perceptions of the local residents. In a physical sense, Via dei Gonzaga defines the core of the neighborhood, and we believe this central corridor should be strengthened to encourage the expression of local identity by providing a visible core in Bravetta Pisana. Perhaps it is significant that one citizen was unable to read a simple map of the neighborhood unless he held it upside-down, with north at the bottom. In this position the map gives the appearance of a chalice on stem embracing a fluid local community.

We selected 18 census tracts that lay within the boundaries of Via della Pisana, Via della Consolata, and Via di Bravetta as our primary area of study. There are 7,599 people living within this area, which has residential, mixed-use, and commercial and institutional buildings, such as



Figure 1: Context Map (Image source: Google Maps)

churches and schools. There is an apparent divide between the north and south ends of our study area identifiable by the differing building typology, security level, building condition, and resident employment. There is also an urban garden in Bravetta Pisana -- Consolata Urban Garden Park -- which is the focus of our study. These gardens lie at the southeast corner of the quartiere in the lowest sector of our study area. In addition to enhancing the identity of Via dei Gonzaga, in this investigation we hoped to further explore the strengths and weaknesses of Associazione Fosso Bravetta.

Method

Qualitative and Quantitative analysis

The first study we conducted was of the buildings within our census tracts. The Bravetta Pisana neighborhood is densely developed residential area (12,221.7 people/km²), several of which are hard to access due to many gated streets. The survey thus focused on primary streets. To understand differences in residential quality, we analyzed the level of security and maintenance of buildings. We surveyed buildings on a scale of 1-5 that considered factors such as cameras, gates, and grated windows when determining how secure buildings were. To establish the condition of the buildings, we created a similar rubric, but one that paid attention to physical and structural conditions. We were able to conclude through the building survey that housing stock in Bravetta Pisana varies between, the north and the southwest area. The areas differ in their density, size, condition, and level of security; giving us better insight into the kind of families that live in both areas.

Utilizing the National Institute of Statistics' (ISTAT) 2011 national Census of Italy. From this dataset, we examined age, education, employment, immigration, and family size. We specifically focused on comparing data from our neighborhood to data from the larger City of Rome. We also compared data from the northern end of our neighborhood to that of the southern end of our neighborhood, as there is a building type, maintenance, and security divide between the two regions. Furthermore, the map from the public transportation section is sourced from the Azienda per i Trasporti Autoferrotranviari del Comune di Roma (ATAC) website, and all other maps are sourced from our own research.

Surveys

After surveying residential zones, we noted how many buildings were mixed commercial zones in order to determine the various land uses in our neighborhood. This was done through a combination of surveying shops, looking at google map images, and using online land use and zoning data. In these studies, we investigated land use and public space -- buildings are primarily mixed-use in the north and either residential or commercial towards the south, while public space is sparse throughout the neighborhood. We then identified green spaces within Bravetta Pisana, using a combination of observation and online maps to distinguish public from private green space.

We conducted a survey of street types and pavement conditions in Bravetta Pisana. This included onsite surveys of several streets, categorizing them as primary, secondary, or tertiary streets based on their width, traffic, parking, street paint, and presence of streetlights and crosswalks. We assessed the

level of maintenance and presence of amenities, such as the amount of foliage, signage, street lighting, crosswalks, and sidewalks. Our most important finding was the lack of accessibility within our neighborhood: many neighborhood streets are privatized and gated, blocking access to central nodes such as the garden and park.

Interviews

We spoke with several residents and key actors in Bravetta Pisana in order to determine how they viewed their neighborhood and if they saw any issues with the quartiere. We spoke to four gardeners at the Associazione Fosso Bravetta, retail owners, two baristas, the president of the local market association, Paola (a longtime resident of Bravetta Pisana), and anyone else on the street that was willing to speak with us. These interviews enhanced our understanding of the area, broadened our perspective, and clarified many questions we had about street accessibility, garden involvement, and socializing in Bravetta Pisana. In addition to learning that many residents considered the neighborhood to be much larger than our initial census tracts, we were also able to narrow the focus of our recommendation towards their explicit needs.

Residents' Lynch Maps

A Lynch map, is a resident's mental map of their neighborhood or other space they are familiar with that provides insight on how locals view an area, and the connections and landmarks they recognize and use. The creator Kevin Lynch developed the methodology to document the flow of human activity, to see where and when people shopped, socialized, and navigate through the city, and how they viewed the city. A city is usually defined by its features, such as a "node," a point a space is focused upon that is heavily frequented, such as a popular market. Another is the "landmark," such as a memorial, that provides a distinct visual indicator of one's location. There are also "districts," or areas that are distinguishable by buildings of similar styles and functions, which can be defined by "edges," visible boundaries usually formed by large or distinct streets, rivers, parks, or other natural features. Finally, a city is defined by its "paths," primary routes of travel throughout cities and neighborhoods. Path identification is important in Bravetta Pisana, due to the barriers to travel that exist within the area.

Mario's Map

This Lynch map drawn by one of the Orti Fosso Bravetta farmers, Mario, (next page) shows that he lives at the corner of Via dei Gonzaga and Via dei Veralli in the northern part of the neighborhood. It indicates that Mario's concept of the Bravetta Pisana neighborhood largely matches our study area, bounded by Via di Bravetta to the northeast and Via della Pisana to the west, with Consolata Urban Garden Park at the other end.

Salvatore's Map

Salvatore's map presents an interesting case, as he was once a resident of the neighborhood but has since moved farther into Rome's periphery, although he still returns to the neighborhood to care for his plot at Consolata Garden Urban Park. All of his landmarks, likely since he must travel there by automobile, are either sight or automobile-related. In his conception of the neighborhood, the southern end is at the Grande Raccordo Anulare (Large Ring Road) or GRA, a highway that encircles Rome, since he must cross it when traveling between his current home and Consolata Garden. He also notes a Total gas station slightly to the south of Consolata Garden, which signals to him he has arrived at the garden. There are two other landmarks he makes note of that are visible from Via della Consolata on approach to the garden, the Seminario (Seminary) on top of the hill to the right, and "Palazzi brutti da demolire" (ugly buildings to be demolished) to the left. Perhaps most importantly, however, this map shows that the social and state institutions that bind the neighborhood and are critical for residents are not particularly visible from the window of an automobile.

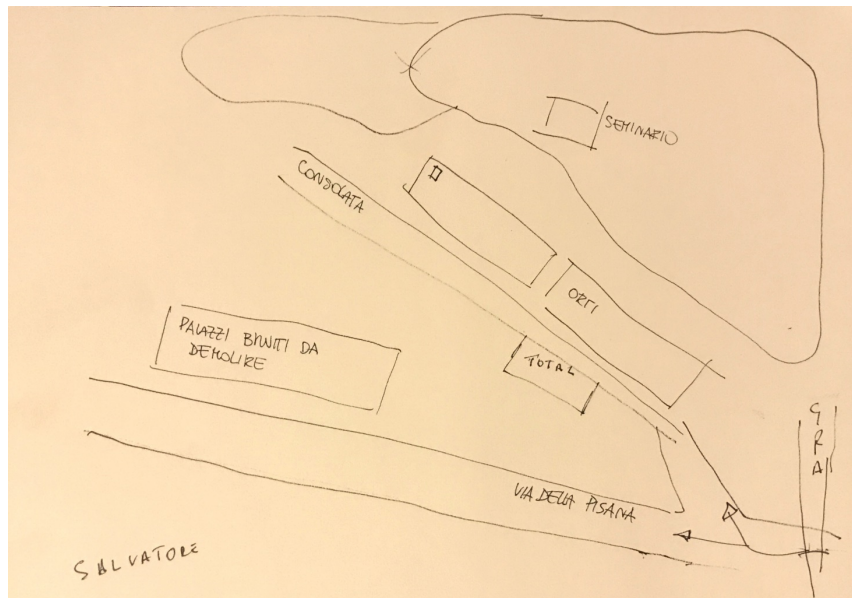


Figure 4: Lynch Map of Bravetta Pisana by Salvatore

Limitations

Our study was based on a combination of both qualitative and quantitative analysis, however there were some limitations to our investigation. Due to our lack of fluency in Italian, there was a language barrier between us and the residents of Bravetta Pisana. While we had a very capable translator, it restricted the times at which we were able to visit the neighborhood to only class hours -- every Monday and Thursday. Moreover, we initially explored the area as tourists, unfamiliar with the space. We chose the census tracts to work with after only one visit, and we subsequently did not include some key areas -- Via dei Capasso, the main bus terminal, the senior center -- in our primary study. It also took us a while to realize the strong presence of informal systems in Bravetta Pisana. While we had initially branded entire residential blocks as inaccessible, we soon came to realize that anyone who needed access to a gated street already had a key from a friend.

Background

History

The area of Bravetta Pisana is home to ruins dating back to Emperor Nero. During this time, Via della Consolata was an open drainageway -- it was a food source in ancient times, sustaining fish and eels. Decades later, the Bravetta Pisana area was owned by the Frassoldati family, a family that dates back to the Roman Empire era, who were involved in land drainage and reclamation works dating to the 1920s. Following the Frassoldati's ownership of the land, the valley was acquired by Instituto Misioni Consolata, a Catholic religious order and seminary. It was expropriated by the city for the purpose of building Via Bravetta in 1970. When this occurred, the convent built the wall which today marks the eastern edge of Consolata Urban Garden Park. The area now occupied by the Garden Park was left unmaintained by the city, and squatters moved onto it. Via della Consolata, the street adjacent to the community gardens, was constructed in 1999. Before that, it was an unpaved path.¹

The name Bravetta Pisana arises from one of its few landmarks: Forte Bravetta, which marks the southernmost edge of the study area. Forte Bravetta is an installation built to defend Rome after Risorgimento. Constructed between December 1877 and January 1891, it was designed as an artillery post in defense of the capital and was used for artillery storage at the start of the twentieth century. The fort was later utilized used as an execution venue for death sentences by firing squad under fascism.² It is still visible today within a memorial park called Parco dei Martiri di Forte Bravetta. Another other landmark in the neighborhood is a World War I Memorial situated in the northernmost end of our study area. The marble memorial stands at the intersection of three main streets -- Via della Pisana, Via dei Gonzaga, and Via di Bravetta -- and is surrounded by a stone plaza and benches.



Figure 5: Forte Bravetta (Mausoleo Fosse Ardeatine)

¹ Associazione Fosso Bravetta members, interview.

² "Forte Bravetta," Mausoleo Fosse Ardeatine.

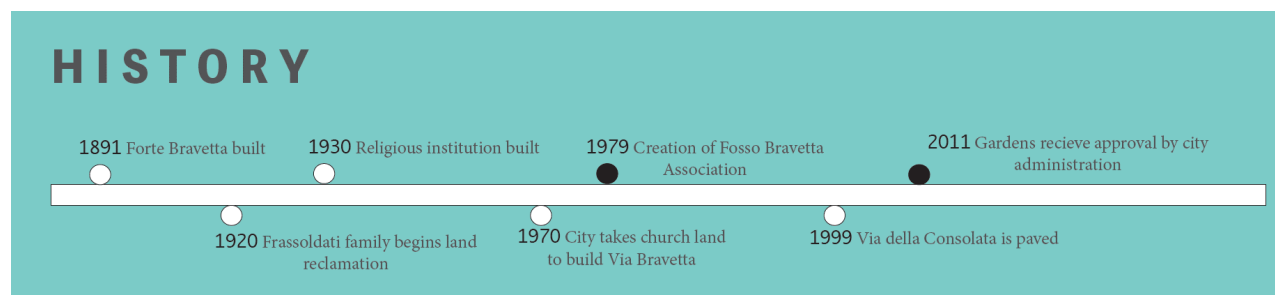


Figure 6: Timeline of Bravetta Pisana

Almost all buildings in the Bravetta-Pisana neighborhood were built after World War II. The quartiere was known as “Borgata Villini” in the 1950s and 1960s, and solely consisted of the northern end of the study area. It was a rural town that housed middle-class residents, called Borgata Villini because the buildings were a mixture of ‘villini’- single household residences - and self-built, informal residences, often multiple family structures. The informal residences were mostly built in the 1950s/1960s, while the villini were most likely built in the 1920s, following the land reclamation. A locally known villino sits directly next to the marketplace and is known as the “Little Castle.” Villini like this one are now scattered throughout the northern end of Bravetta Pisana.³ Today the southern section of Bravetta-Pisana is called the Borgatta and the northern end is called the Villini neighborhood,

The development of Bravetta Pisana expanded towards the southern end of the neighborhood beginning in the 1970s and was mostly of informal construction. There are more informally constructed buildings in the southern end of the neighborhood than in the north. There appears to have been a lull in construction from 1980 to 2000, but most recent development (since 2000) has been in the southern area as well, while the northern area has seen little new construction since 1980. Some 95% of the northern area’s current residential buildings predate 1980, compared to only 62% in the southern area.⁴

Demographically the northern and southern ends of Bravetta Pisana are mostly the same in terms of age of residents and number of immigrants, but the south has more working class residents (commonly within the construction trade), while the north has more public sector or service sector workers⁵. The quartiere is part of the XII Municipio that is currently run by “Movimento 5 Stelle” (Five Star Movement). According to residents nowadays this is a political orientation of the neighborhood, but the area formerly voted “Partito Comunista Italiano” (PCI) before that party disintegrated. Partito Democratico (Democratic Party) has a regional office in the neighborhood and had previously been the dominant party of the area.⁶

³ Ibid.

⁴ Census Data, 2017.

⁵ Interview with Associazione Fosso Bravetta Members.

⁶ Ibid.



Figure 7: Villino in the northern end



Figure 8: "Little Castle"

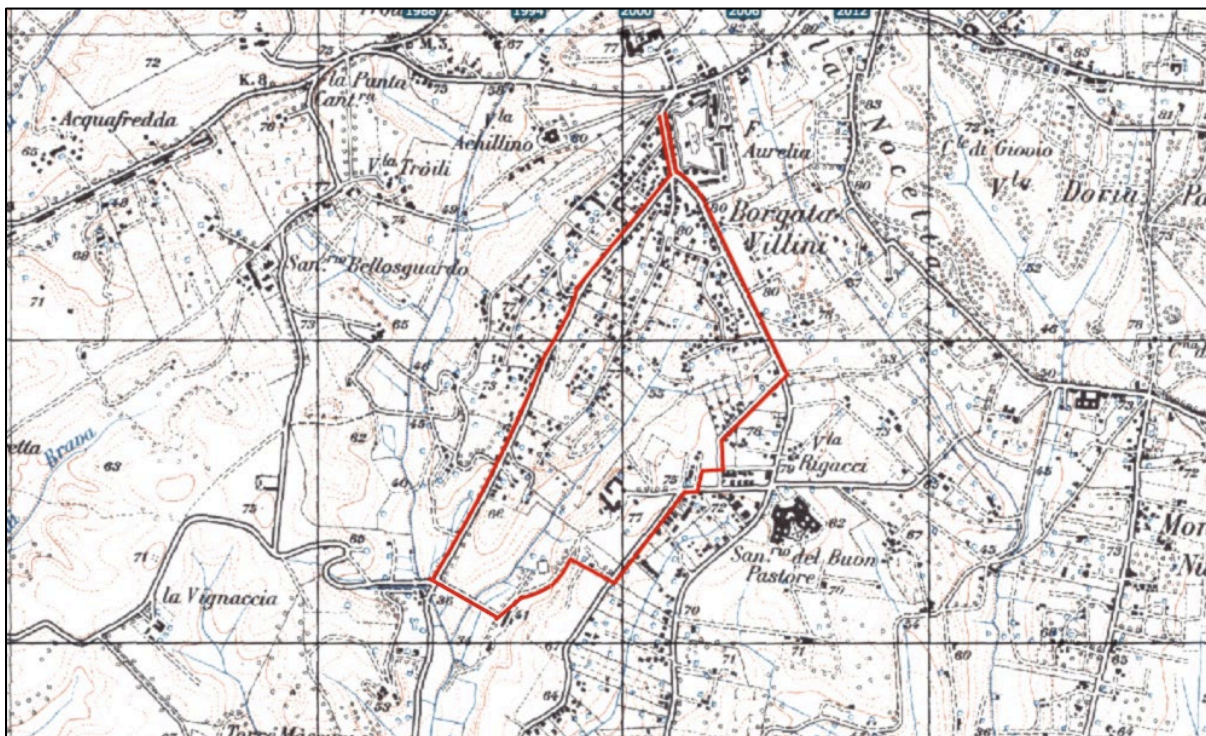


Figure 9: 1945 Map of Bravetta Pisana [with project study area outlined] (Istituto Geografico Militare, 1945)

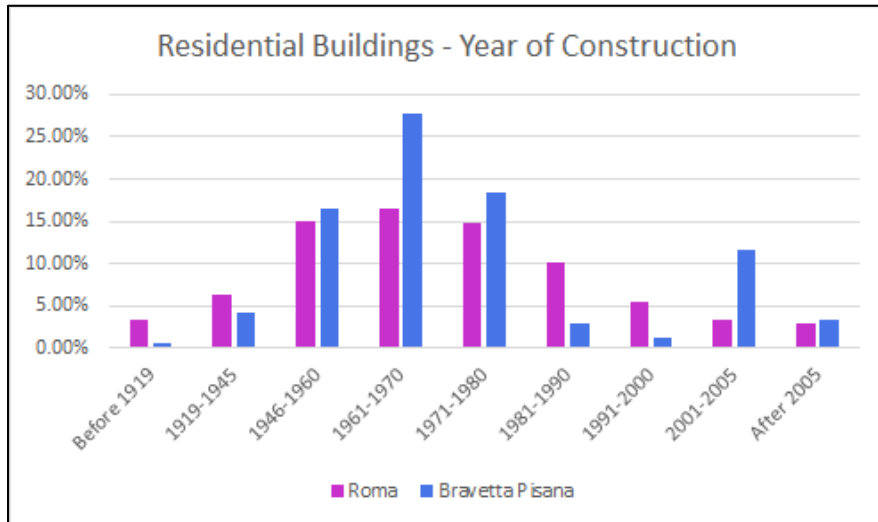


Figure 10: Residential Building History (Census Data 2017)

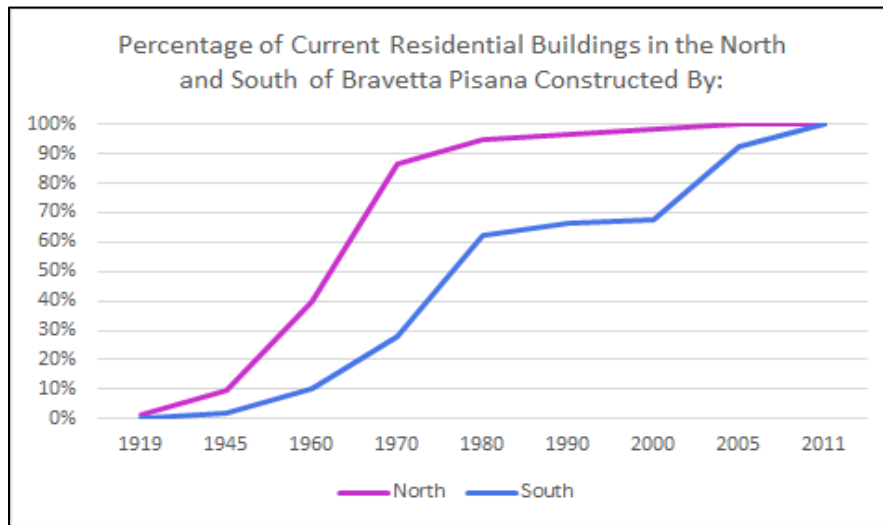


Figure 11: Residential Building History -- North versus South (Census Data 2017)

Spatial Analysis

Situated in the South West corner of Rome between two large parks, Villa Doria Pamphili and Villa Troili, Bravetta Pisana lies in Municipio XII. Bravetta Pisana is .62 km² and has 7,599 residents; the area has 12,221.7 people/km². The neighborhood study area is marked at its northern end by the small piazza at the intersection of Via dei Bravetta and Via della Pisana. The historic Forte Bravetta marks the southernmost edge of the study area

Utilizing ISTAT census tracts as a reference to identify our study area, we decided to border the neighborhood into 18 census tracts, whose limits are: Via della Pisana on its west; Via dei Bravetta on its east; Via della Consolata to the south.

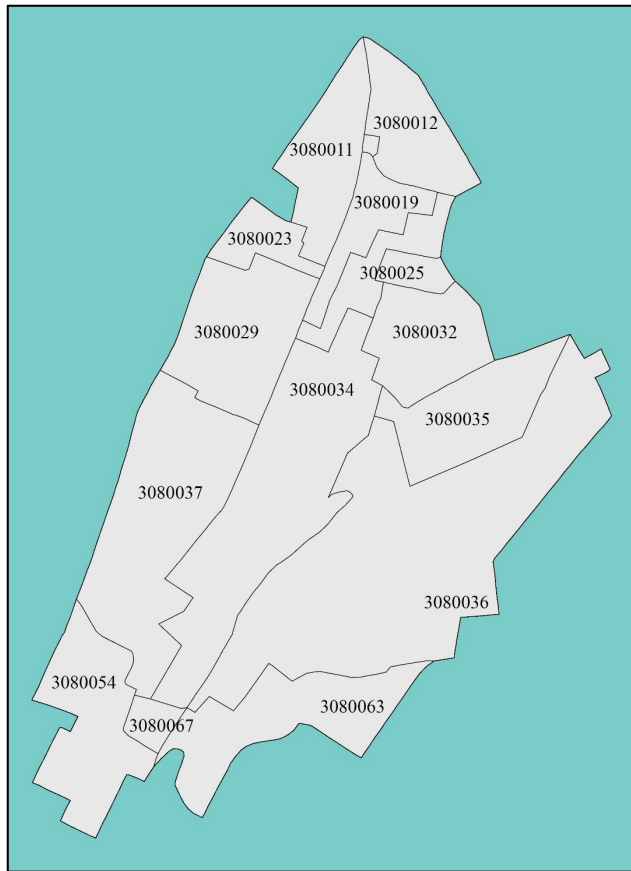


Figure 12: Census Tracts (Census 2017)

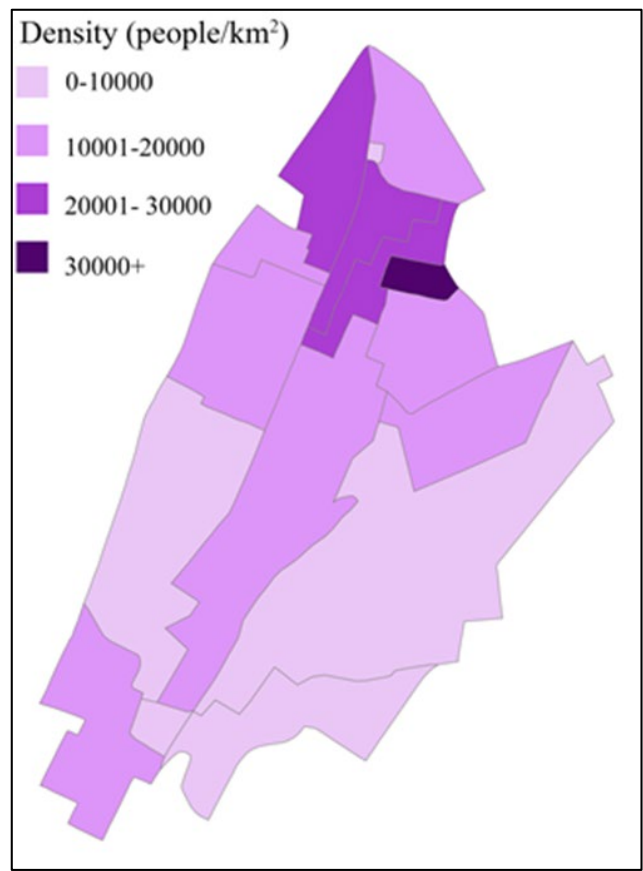


Figure 13: Density Map (Census 2017)

Public Transportation

Bravetta Pisana is well connected to the rest of Rome. All transit routes that run through it provide service outside of the neighborhood to other parts of the city. The No.8 Tram, which runs through Trastevere to Piazza Venezia, where one can further connect to a number of bus routes, terminates about a 15-minute walk east of the neighborhood at Casaletto station. The 088 bus connects the No.8 Tram, at Casaletto to the neighborhood down Via della Consolata, and continues westward to the Massimina neighborhood.

Two routes provide service eastward along Via Silvestri. One is the 792, which begins at the southern end of the neighborhood and runs north up Via della Pisana before turning south on Via di Bravetta and continuing east to San Giovanni metro station, where it connects to Metro Lines A and C. The other is the H, which starts in the neighborhood just off Via di Bravetta at Dei Capasso terminal and runs northeast through Trastevere and central Rome to Termini Station.

Three routes connect the neighborhood through its northern end. The 98 bus goes up Via di Bravetta and connects to Via Gregorio VII, and then runs past Vatican City to the Paola bus terminal, across the Tiber from the Vatican. To the south it continues down Via di Bravetta to the Casetta Mattei neighborhood. The 881 bus originates just south of the neighborhood and runs north up Via della



Figure 14: Public Transportation (Azienda per i Trasporti Autoferrotranviari del Comune di Roma (ATAC), 2018)

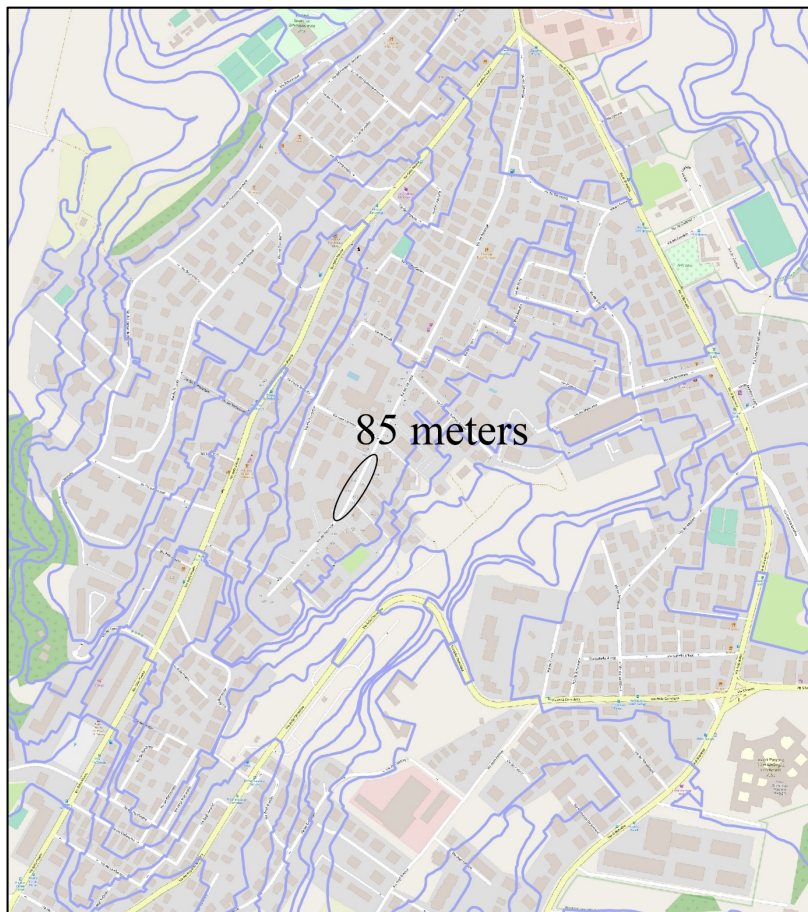
Pisana, and at Via di Bravetta follows the same route as the 98 to Paola. The 892 bus begins at the Aurelia Trenitalia station just to the west in La Pisana, comes up Via della Pisana, and then continues north to the Valle Aurelia metro and Trenitalia station.

The final route is the 808 bus, which begins in Ponte Galeria near Fiumicino Airport, and meanders to the northwest towards Bravetta Pisana, comes up Via della Pisana, and then turns down Via di Bravetta and terminates at the Dei Capasso terminal, where one can connect to the H bus.

Overall, this neighborhood has excellent connectivity to the rest of the city via public transportation, but completely fails at connecting the northern area, where the bulk of the elderly garden workers live, to Orti Fosso Bravetta. Some sort of improved public transportation link to the garden should be instituted.

Physical Characteristics

The changes in elevation within Bravetta Pisana are relatively, ranging between 50 and 85 meters above sea level. With the exception of the community gardens at the valley, most of the land is at an altitude higher than 60 meters above sea level. The area occupied by the community gardens was once predominantly undevelopable due to poor drainage conditions, until land reclamation efforts in the 1920s. Nonetheless, the low elevation and increased level of soil fertility in this valley area surrounding Via della Consolata made it an ideal location for the public garden. In comparison, the rest of the neighborhood is densely populated with little green space. The southern end of Bravetta Pisana in particular is built upon steep hills that are unsuitable for agriculture.



*Figure 15: Contour Map
(Regione Lazio Carta
Tecnica Regionale, 2002,
Opthometry)*

Land Use

Although Bravetta Pisana contains an assortment of commercial and retail spaces including restaurants, bars, coffee shops, auto repair shops, and supermarkets, it is primarily a residential neighborhood. The commercial activities are scattered throughout the neighborhood and often occupy the bottom floor of residential buildings. There is a small concentration of commercial activities in Piazza Visconti, as well as along Via della Pisana. Green space is abundant in the east/southeast portion of Bravetta Pisana, as well as in the surrounding area. The valley that houses Consolata Urban Garden Park is almost entirely undeveloped, with the neighborhood's development overlooking it from hilltops above. Access to the garden park from the overlooking residences however is unclear, as many of the driveways and tertiary streets leading to the white road and Via della Consolata are gated. While the garden is built for communal use, traffic and limited crossing points along Via della Consolata, and other physical barriers, challenge access to the garden.

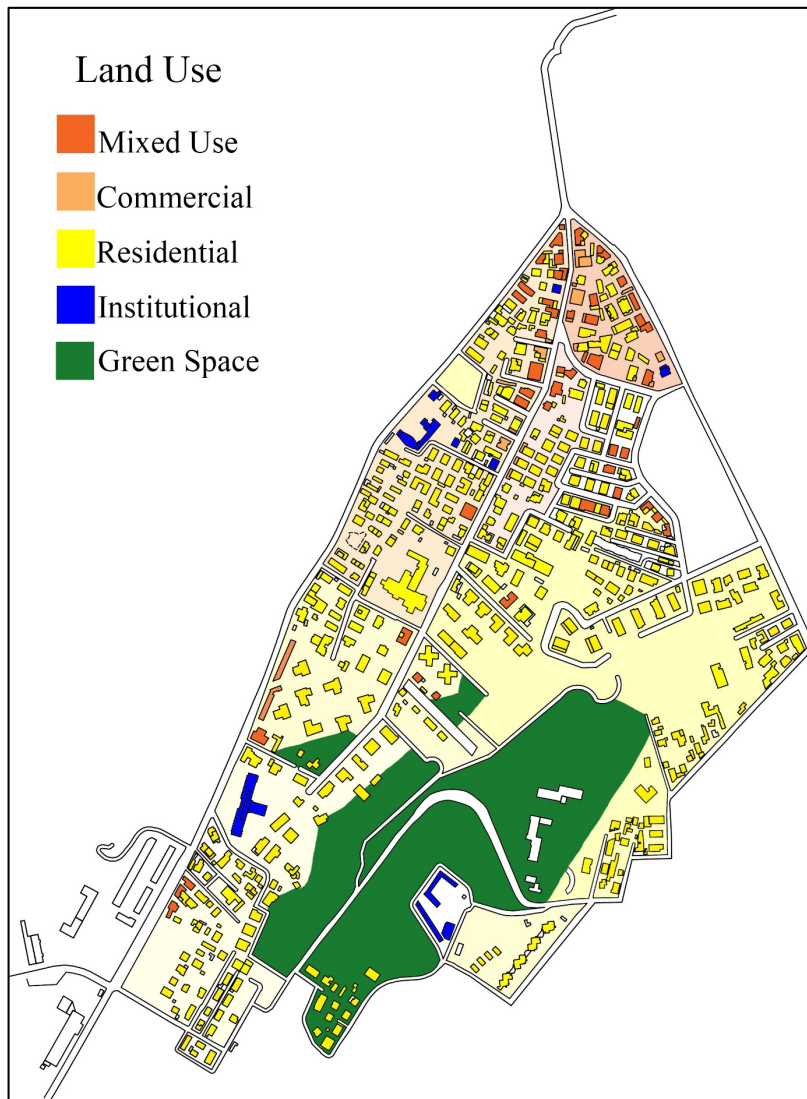


Figure 16: Land Use Map

Public & Institutional Infrastructure

There is a large hospital, IRCCS San Raffaele Pisana, on Via della Pisana, however it is a rehabilitation and extended care facility and does not offer acute care or emergency services. Other institutional uses in the study area include several churches and religious centers, one school on Via dei Carraresi, the Partito Democratico (PD) office, and the Vietnamese embassy. There is also a Comando dei Carabinieri on Via dei Feltreschi. Although these structures provide limited services within the neighborhood, Bravetta Pisana still lacks essential public institutional infrastructure. There are no public parks or green spaces within Bravetta Pisana. Along Via dei Gonzaga, the only area to socialize is either at the half-open market or outside a cafe. This also speaks to the fact that the quartiere is much larger than our study area. For example, within our initial boundaries, there is no fire department. However, just to the southwest of Via della Pisana, there is a fire station that would presumably go to Bravetta Pisana in case of an emergency. There is also a senior center and library directly outside our initial study area, that constitute common spaces used by local citizens.

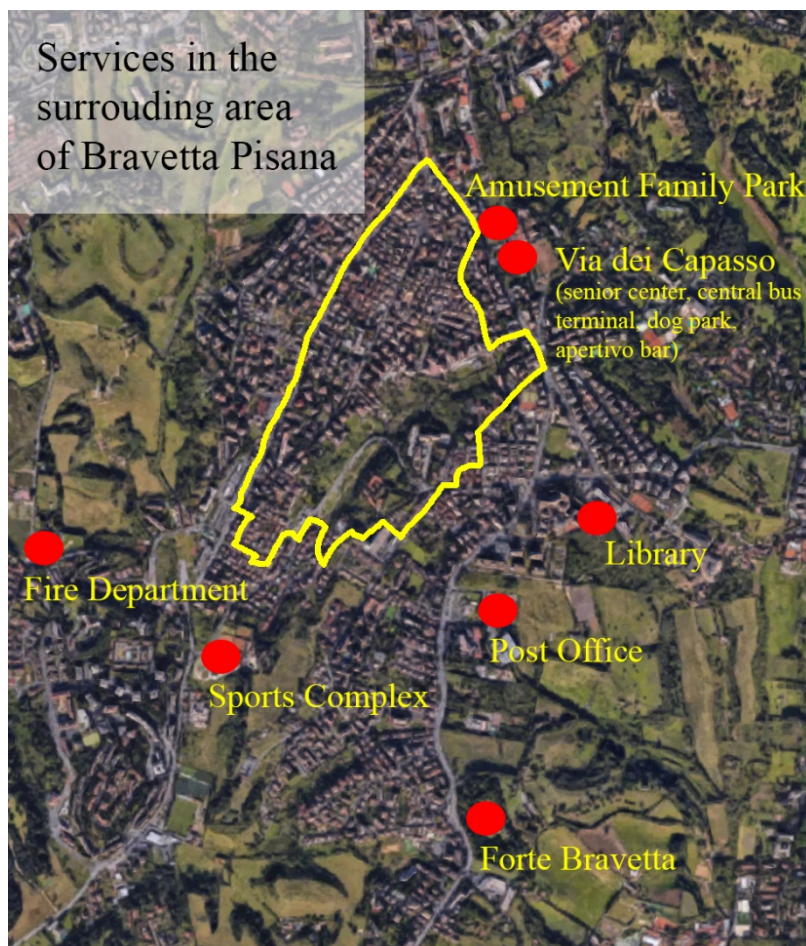


Figure 17: Secondary Spaces Map

Green Spaces

Our analysis focuses on the community gardens of Bravetta Pisana, known formally as Consolata Urban Garden Park, colloquially as Fossa Bravetta gardens, and managed by the Associazione Fosso Bravetta. Before 1970, the community garden area was covered with piles of trash, a spring and open drainage way. In 1970 residents began to take advantage of the land and set up gardens. They consistently sought to get formal approval to operate their gardens to no avail. In 1979, some informal gardens were fined some 400,000 Lira/1,257 Euro for illegally occupying public property. The gardeners, challenged the municipal government, the fine was removed, and the gardeners were advised to form an association to formalize their activities. The Associazione Fosso Bravetta was formed, and the Consolata Urban Garden Park was established. The Association continued to occupy the land informally until 2011, when they finally received formal sanction from the City under Mayor Gianni Alemanno's administration.⁷

Upon receiving formal sanction, Associazione Fosso Bravetta began parceling out the land, each plot being approximately 80 m². Currently, there are 65 gardeners, about half each from the north and south of the neighborhood -- 60 are men and 5 are women. All of the gardeners are native Italians and some of the garden plots are still worked by residents who founded the informal garden in 1979. Residents desiring a garden plot must apply with the Association. Currently there is a waiting list of 180 people and there is little movement. There is a clear lack of turnover within the garden, preventing the training of a new generation of gardeners to replace aging members.

The garden pays 500 Euro per year in insurance fees, but the gardeners pay minor maintenance costs. The cost to have a plot on the east side of Via della Consolata is 25 Euro per year, whereas the cost to have a plot on the west side of Via della Consolata -- and be close to the park and children's toys -- is 60 Euro per year. This money all goes towards maintenance, such as mowing the grass which costs 15 Euros worth of gas each time. The price discrepancy is also a result of a 420,000 Euro investment in urban agriculture by Mayor Gianni Alemanno during his term. The east side of Via della Consolata received extremely favorable terms from the city, and gardeners there do not pay for rent, electricity, or water service. The west side, received such assistance, so plots cost more in order to offset those costs.

Gardeners are not allowed to sell their products, but they are allowed to exchange or give them away. Sometimes, the association will hold special events for religious holidays or birthdays -- they will give out free food that they have made from their crops, and hope that people donate to the association in exchange for them hosting. Associazione Fosso Bravetta is meant to be a community hub for residents of Bravetta Pisana. Many residents share garden plots and they all discuss their produce with one another. Tomatoes are the top crop produced overall; fava beans are not allowed to be grown due to a gardener's allergy. Many gardeners stagger their crops so that their harvest lasts all year -- they are very involved.

Aside from the community gardens, which are publicly owned, the remainder of green space in the Bravetta Pisana area is private. This green space takes shape in the form of backyards and personal gardens. If people have independent houses, they commonly have their own private garden. Other residents will have sheds, small vegetable gardens, or flower plots. A large number of residents have pets, who exercise in private green space, the dog park on Via dei Capasso, or are taken to the

⁷ Associazione Fosso Bravetta, interview.

community gardens where pets are welcome, as long as they are kept on a leash. Near the community gardens on the west side of Via della Consolata there is also a canine rescue facility that cares for ownerless dogs and finds them proper homes.

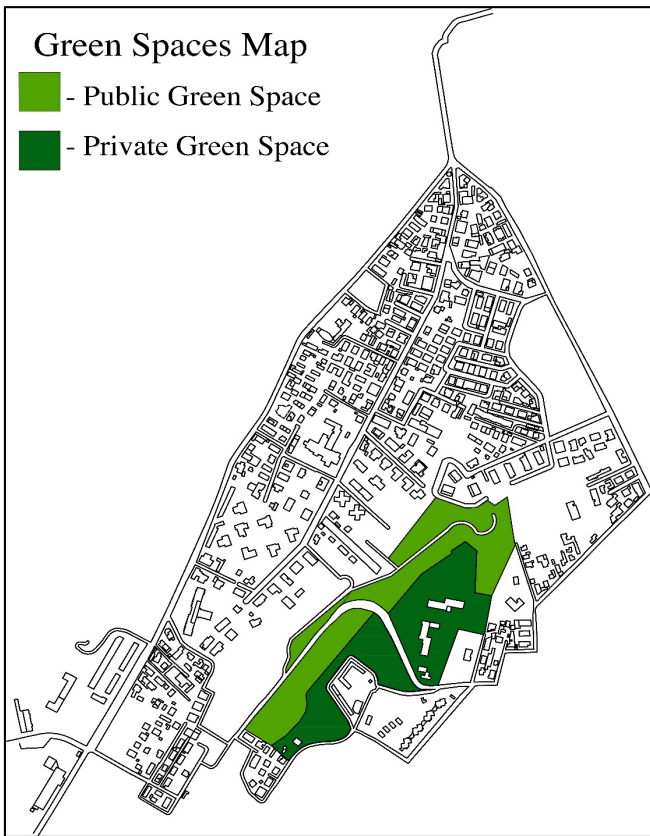


Figure 18: Green Spaces Map



Figure 19: Consolata Garden Urban Park



Figure 20: Garden on the east side of Via della Consolata



Figure 21: Garden on the east side of Via della Consolata



Figure 22: Garden on the west side of Via della Consolata

Street Survey

Street Typologies

In order to classify infrastructure, we divided the streets in three typologies: primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary streets are major thoroughfares that carry large amounts of both inter- and intra-neighborhood traffic, often at a high speed; secondary streets are minor thoroughfares that serve as a local focal point and carry traffic originating from or destined for points in the neighborhood; and tertiary streets are small streets that residents use to directly access or leave their homes. Generally, primary streets are 8 meters wide, secondary streets are 7 meters wide and tertiary streets are around 5.5 meters wide.

The majority of the streets in Bravetta Pisana are tertiary streets. There are only three primary streets -- Via della Pisana, Via della Consolata, and Via dei Bravetta -- along with two secondary streets, Via dei Gonzaga and Via dei Feltreschi. Primary streets can be distinguished by their two-way lanes and prominent street lights. Via della Pisana and Via dei Bravetta have sidewalks on both sides of the street the entire road, and Via della Consolata only has sidewalks on both sides of the street for specific sections. Nonetheless, all three of these streets allow for multiple lanes of traffic and centerline striping. Moreover, these streets all seem to be just be informally created, without any kind of planning, and not for the purpose of connection. In fact, Via della Consolata was not built until 2000. Before then, it was only an unpaved road. This displays how slowly this neighborhood has progressed in terms of their street accessibility and typology.

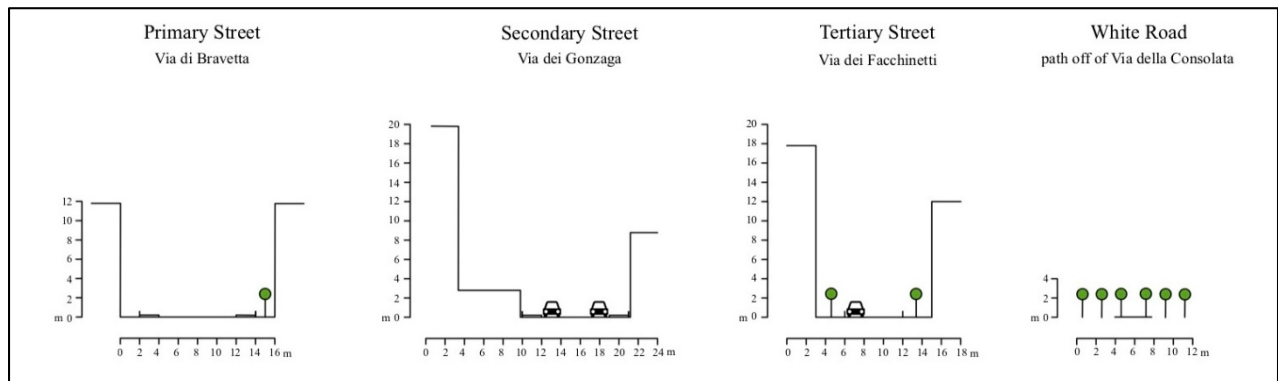


Figure 23: Street Typologies

The secondary street, Via dei Gonzaga, has room for two cars to pass one another, but there are no streetlights or center stripe. The other secondary street, Via dei Feltreschi, is busy with traffic but only during rush hour. It appears to be a main connection to Via di Bravetta, even though it is a single lane one-way street. Tertiary streets comprise the remainder of the street network. These streets can be characterized as alleys, as wide enough for only a single car and lack sidewalks, streetlights, streetlamps, or specified parking areas. Many of the streets dead-end and do not connect to other streets, making residences very inaccessible from different parts of the neighborhood. Furthermore, accessing houses in the south is even more difficult as many are built on the sides the top of a hill.

In addition to the primary, secondary, and tertiary streets in Bravetta Pisana, there is also a “white road” that offshoots from Via della Consolata. The white road is an unpaved track about 4 meters wide. It is widely used by residents, especially by members of the Associazione Fosso Bravetta to access garden plots along it. Apartments on the east side of Via dei Gonzaga have direct access to the white road, as their gated driveways stretch from the street to the white road. The white road is a key part of our neighborhood study, as it could function as a crucial connection between Via dei Gonzaga and Via della Consolata for the public.

All of these issues speak to the haphazard development of the neighborhood through informal plots, where developers only connected their new construction to Via dei Gonzaga and not to the surrounding primary streets. Most of these access roads are owned by the condominiums along them, and provide access to Via dei Gonzaga. Via dei Gonzaga itself is a cul-de-sac roughly 800 meters long that provides access only to the homes and shops along it, and automobile traffic is consequently light. The street can only be accessed from one point in the north, or by an alley, Via Carimini, which offers limited access to Via della Pisana.

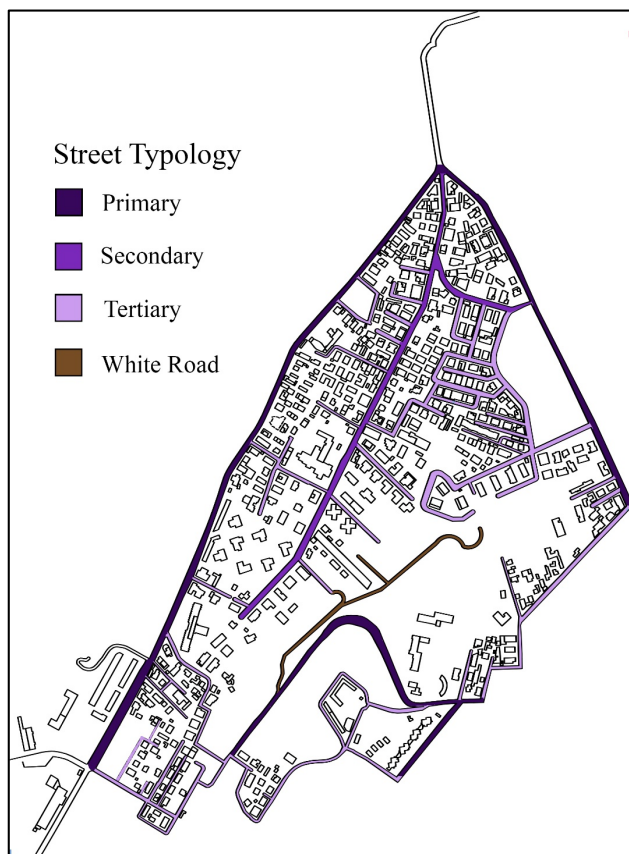


Figure 24: Street Typology Map

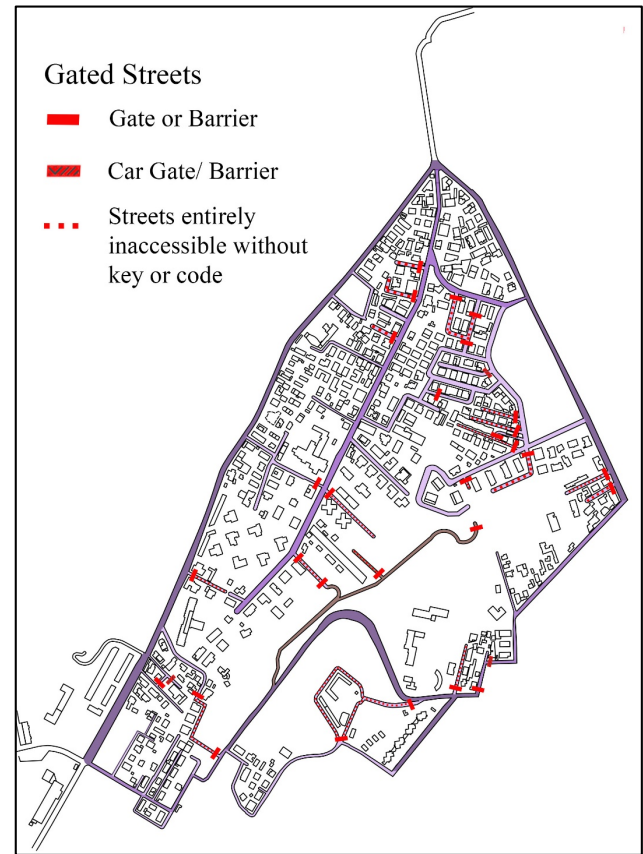


Figure 25: Gated Street Map

Gated Streets

Several streets defined as tertiary streets are gated off entirely and not accessible to the public. Some of these streets solely block car access, as they have open side-gates for public pedestrian access. However, the majority of the gated areas appear to only allow pedestrian access for residents living on those streets. Such streets are only accessible through a code or key to the gate. As seen in the map, numerous streets in both the northern and southern ends of the neighborhood are gated off -- this makes navigating the neighborhood significantly more difficult as there are fewer streets for the public to travel on.

Street Maintenance

The streets and sidewalks in Bravetta Pisana are overall very poorly maintained. The primary streets are better maintained than the secondary streets, which are in turn, better maintained than the tertiary streets. This would make sense considering that the primary streets are most frequented by people, cars, and buses. In fact, the bus system utilizes these streets very regularly, as it connects Bravetta Pisana to the city center of Rome with numerous routes. As the only street with designated street parking is Via della Pisana, parking facilities are lacking. None of the other streets have specified areas for cars to park and, consequently, cars are parked either very close to the sidewalk or occupy part of the road. This is especially prevalent on tertiary streets, which are all only wide enough for one car to due to parked cars blocking the possibility of a two-way street. On Via della Consolata -- where the urban garden is located -- there is no place to park on the side of the busy street, nor is there space for a parking lot.

Overgrown shrubbery intrudes on many sidewalks in Bravetta Pisana, narrowing the space to walk safely. On Via della Consolata, which is a primary pathway, the sidewalks have been damaged by rooting trees underneath. Furthermore, directly in front of the urban garden, the faded crosswalk compromises safe pedestrian access to the garden. On Via della Pisana, the sidewalks are better developed and maintained, due to the commercial nature of the thoroughfare. However, the transitions between sidewalk and the storefronts are not always on even ground, creating potential hazards. The tertiary streets, along with Via dei Gonzaga, do not all have sidewalks, and sometimes they are so small that they could be considered a curb more than a walkway. This forces residents to walk along parked cars or in the middle of the street. In the Southern end of the neighborhood there are no conventional sidewalks, but in some areas there are bollards along streets that appear to create space for residents to walk. In some locations there are also railings for residents to use while walking down the steep inclines.

Overall, the state of roads and sidewalks indicates lack of maintenance by both the public and the private sector. Informal streets owned by condominium associations are in just as poor condition as many city-owned streets. The most likely reason is both a lack of public funding) and the fact that, since so many of these streets are dead-ends and see only a small amount of traffic that's created almost entirely by residents, they are simply a low-priority, and higher-traffic streets receive repairs before these small, lightly-used streets. There is also a demonstrated a lack of attention to pedestrian concerns, as pedestrians must traverse many cracked, pot-holed streets to reach their destinations without protection from passing automobiles.

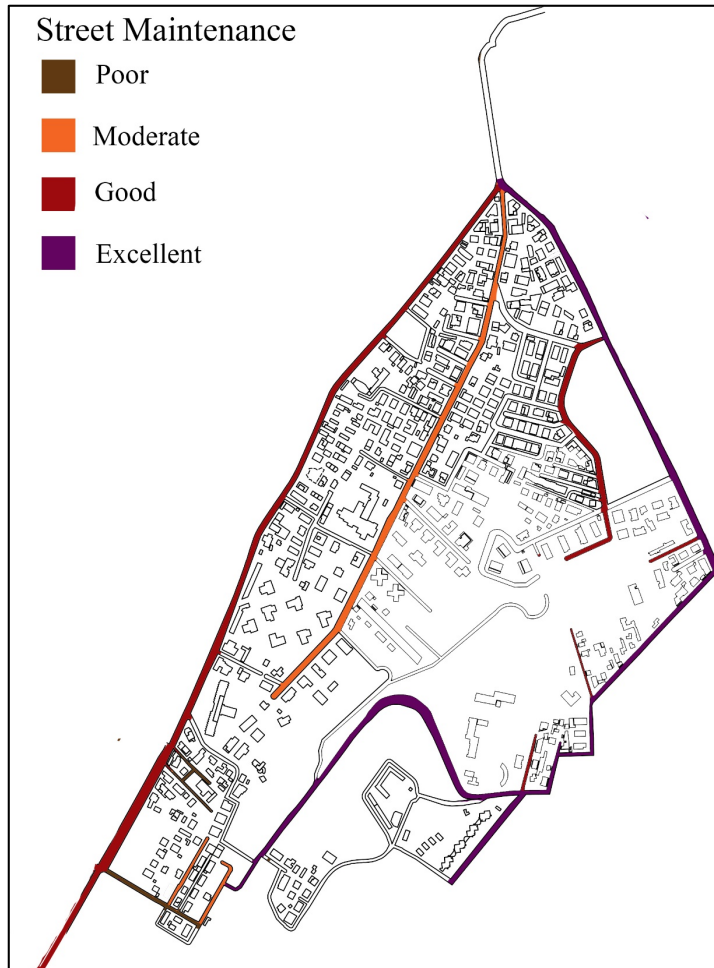


Figure 26: Street Maintenance Map



Figure 27, 28: (left) Via della Consolata -- sidewalks blocked with shrubbery; (right) Via di Bravetta -- blocked by construction that has been going on for our entire street study



Figure 29, 30: (left) Via dei Facchinetti -- hand railings but no sidewalks in the southern end of the neighborhood; (right) Via della Pisana – Potentially hazardous transition between sidewalk and a storefront



Figure 31: Via della Consolata -- lack of visible crosswalk to access the urban garden

Buildings

Typologies

Buildings in Bravetta Pisana range from row rise single family homes, to high rise gated communities. Structures in the north are larger and reaching up to six stories high, in comparison to buildings in the southwest that are predominantly one to two stories tall. The southeast corner, comprised primarily of church-owned land and open green space, has fewer buildings. On the other hand, in the southwest corner, the buildings are tightly packed and self-built. They tend to be small, housing not more than one or two families each. Conversely, buildings combining both private and public space are located on the main streets and designed largely as mid-high rise apartments. Stylistically many buildings in the north exemplify postwar styles of the 1960s. These buildings look more homogenous in style. In the self-built area, there was less variation in height but more variation in terms of color, material, and architectural style.

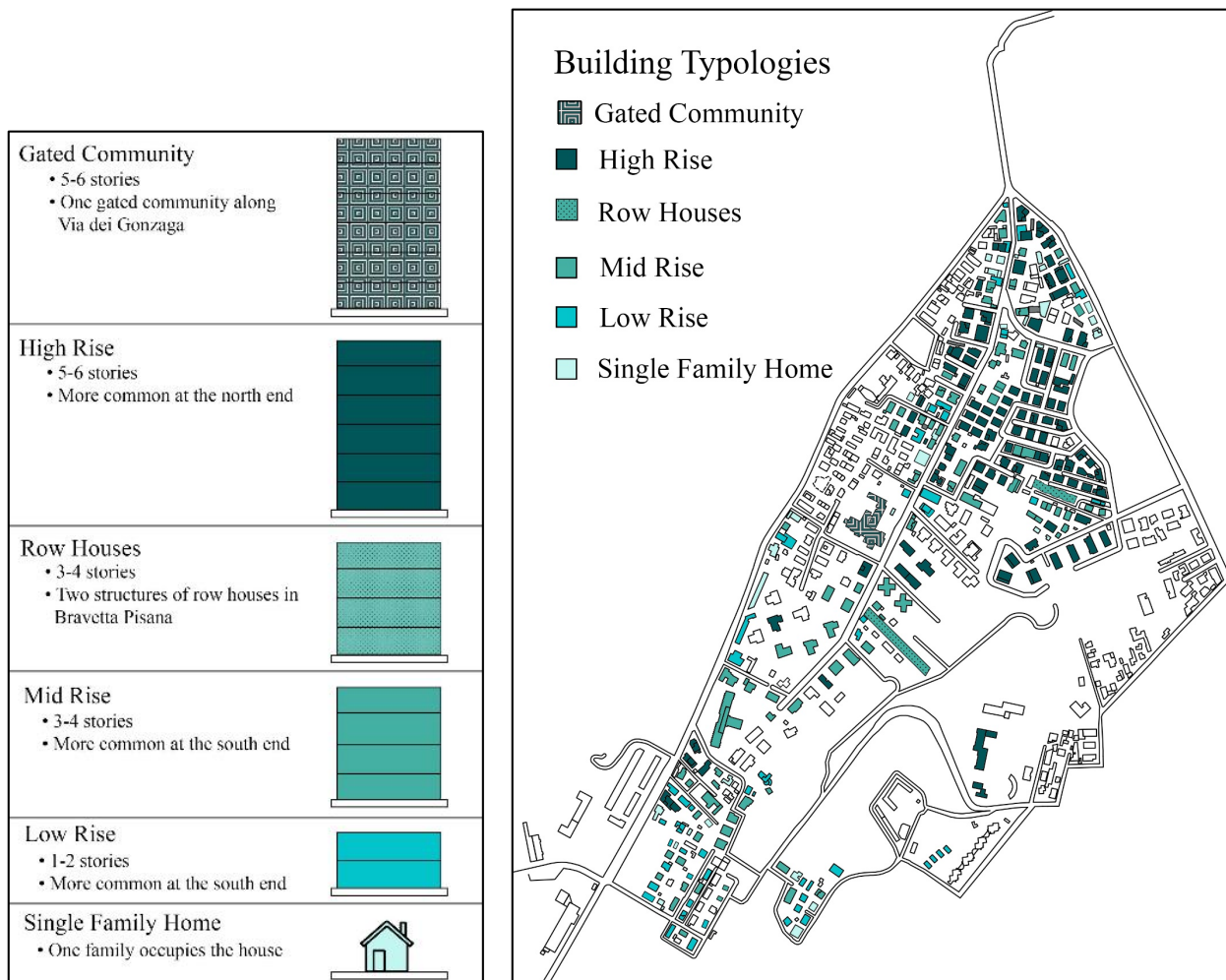


Figure 32: Building Typologies and Map



Figure 33, 34: (left) High Rise Gated Community; (right) Typical Bravetta Pisana High Rise



Figure 35, 36: (left) Mid-Rise Row Houses; (right) Typical Mid-Rise



Figure 37, 38: (left) Typical Low Rise Residence; (right) Single Family Home

Building Maintenance

On average, the buildings in Bravetta Pisana are well maintained. Using a scale of 1-5, this map shows the maintenance level of most houses along key roads. We examined aesthetic maintenance, such as peeling paint and rusted railings, as well as structural maintenance, such as crumbling support, in order to classify buildings. This classification system is organized as follows:

- Level 1: Abandoned
- Level 2: Poor (major structural damage)
- Level 3: Average (minimal aesthetic and structural damage)
- Level 4: Good (little aesthetic damage)
- Level 5: Excellent

The maintenance level is reflective of the area's income. Since the area is mostly middle class, it follows that buildings are maintained at an average to above-average level. The southern part of the neighborhood had better-maintained buildings, averaging at level 4, while the buildings in the north are slightly less well-maintained and exhibit more variation in their maintenance levels., Furthermore, there are more abandoned houses and residences in the north than in the south. Many of these are original villini residences built around the 1920s and 1930s, that have been left in a state of dilapidation. Nonetheless, the presence of abandoned buildings or ones in a poor state of repair suggests that some owners still hope to have the opportunity to construct higher density real estate for commercial gain. In comparison, many buildings in the south were self-built in the 1970s/1980s and are still occupied by the original owners. They may be more concerned to maintain the existing units rather than engage in speculative development. This may also be because the plot size in the south is smaller than in the north, and thus less suitable for redevelopment.

It is interesting to note that the buildings in the south, which are mostly the informal buildings, are slightly better maintained on average than the formal settlements. This may be because the original residents had the option to create building forms which would correlate with their personal ability to maintain them. Many of the southern houses are smaller homes, designed and cared for by fewer occupants. Furthermore, we know that residents in the southern end are working class individuals, while residents in the northern end are more part of the bourgeoisie. The maintenance levels of their respective houses suggest that informality works very well in this neighborhood.

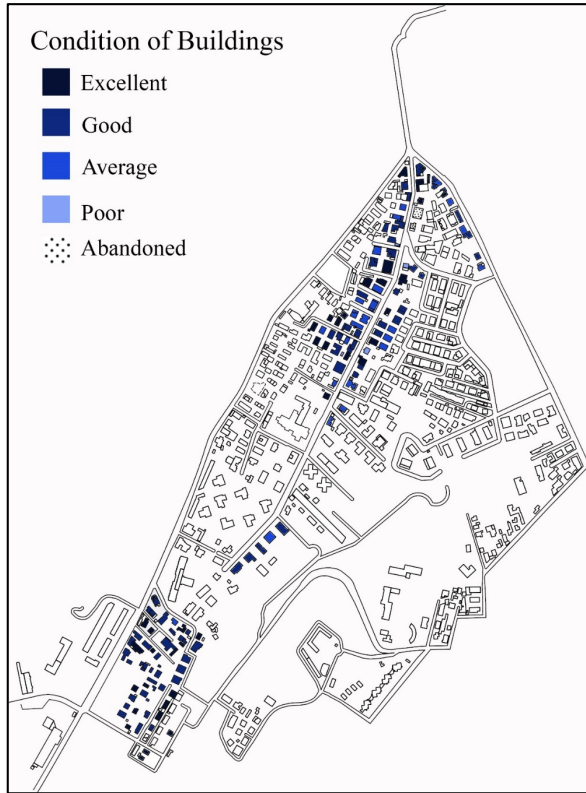


Figure 39: Building Condition Map



Figure 40, 41: (left) Abandoned Building; (right) Building with severe structural and aesthetic damage, Via della Pisana;



Figure 42, 43: (left) Building with mild structural and severe aesthetic damage; (right) Building with aesthetic damage but no structural damage



Figures 44 and 45: Buildings with very good maintenance (level 4 and 5)

Building Security

In our neighborhood study, we classified building security as follows: Level 1: Abandoned; Level 2: Gate; Level 3: Buzzer; Level 4: Gate and buzzer; Level 5: Gated community; Extra Features: Grates on windows; Security camera; Grates and security camera.

Walking around Bravetta Pisana, it appears that the neighborhood is protected more by eyes-on-the-street citizen engagement and less by police involvement. There is noticeably less street level police presence than in the center of Rome. While conducting street surveys, we were often approached by residents who questioned what we were doing. Many residents have pets who act as watch animals.

This map shows the security level of buildings in Bravetta Pisana based on security features such as cameras and window grates. Typical buildings exhibited a security level of 3, meaning they had both buzzers and gates.

Just as building maintenance was higher on average in southern Bravetta Pisana, so is the level of security. While the average in the south is still 3, there are significantly less buildings at level 2. This means that the informal buildings have higher levels of security, and owners favored stronger measures. Buildings in the north have less security on average, likely because they share spaces with commercial zones, and tend to hence be more visible to the public.

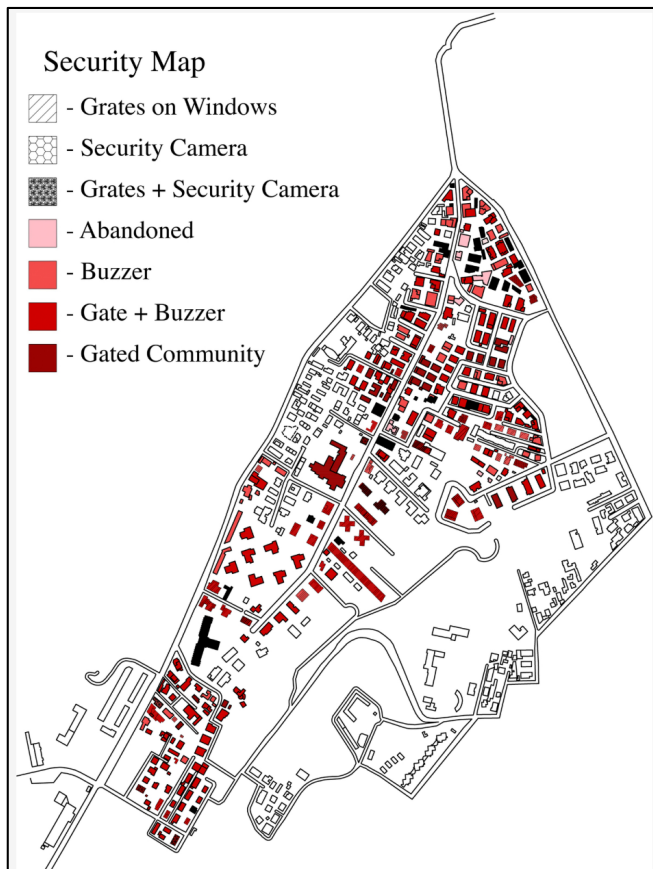


Figure 46: Security map

We interviewed a senior Bravetta Pisana resident, Paola, who told us that she feels very safe in the area, and up until 2017 there were no grilles on many residents' windows, including her own. In 2017 the neighborhood had an attempted burglary, which her dog thwarted by barking and scaring off the perpetrators. Residents have an association called "Sei or Sono di Bravetta" (I am from Bravetta), which shares general information and security updates. This association is most active on Facebook, post updates and warnings in regards to security matters in the area on their page.

Analyzing the security and maintenance data for buildings in Bravetta Pisana reveals that informal construction is positive. Informal buildings, on average, are better maintained and more secure than formal ones, likely because they could be built to the specifications of the owner.



Figure 47, 48: (left) Gate and Buzzer; (right) Buzzer Inside Gated Area



Figure 49: Camera, Gate, and Buzzer

Demographics

Age

Overall, the demographics of Bravetta Pisana are similar to the demographics of Rome at large. The age structure of both the city and Bravetta Pisana are skewed elderly, with a very high proportion of residents over age 74. The bimodal nature of the age distribution, with a high percentage of residents being very elderly or middle-aged, indicates that a younger generation of more established adults is replacing the elderly population. However, the dearth of minor-aged residents indicates a low birth rate. There is generally a higher proportion of females in the population in the older age groups, and a higher proportion of males in the younger groups, indicating that females in this region have a higher life expectancy than males.

There is not large differences between the age distributions in the north and south of the neighborhood. Age is slightly more evenly distributed in the south, with a larger proportion of 60-74 year-olds and a lower proportion of middle-aged residents than in the north. This may indicate that new families and couples are moving into the northern area and replacing elderly residents, while the south has a large proportion of residents who built their homes there in the 1970s and 1980s and have continued to live there.

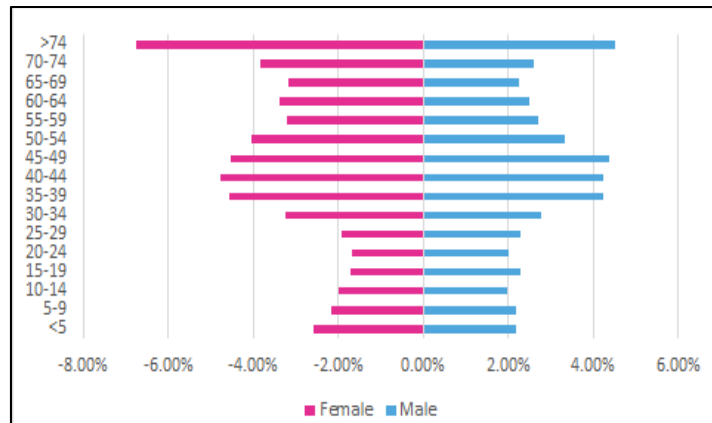


Figure 50: Population Pyramid of Bravetta Pisana (Census 2017)

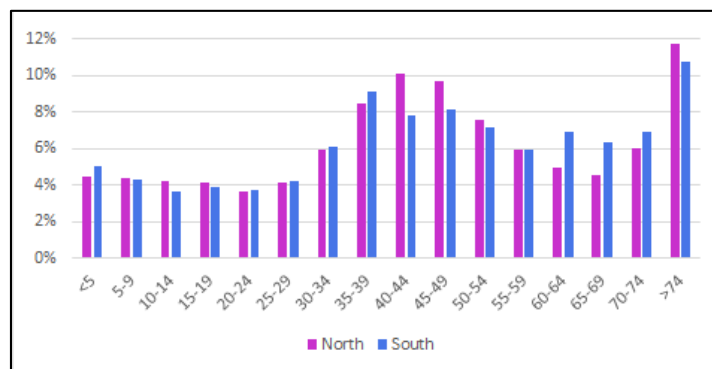


Figure 51: Comparison of Age Distributions in the North and South of Bravetta Pisana (Census 2017)

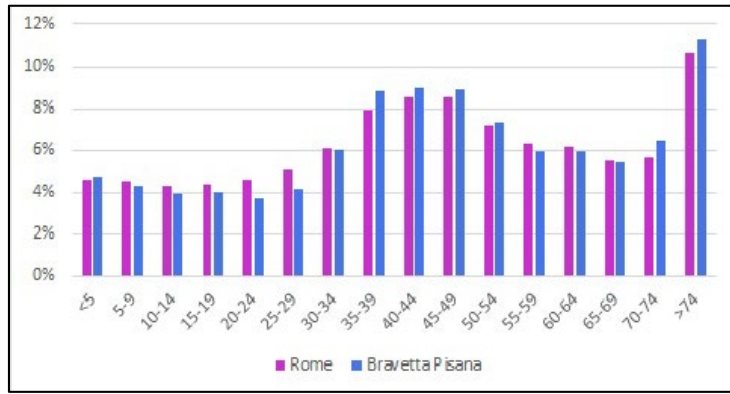
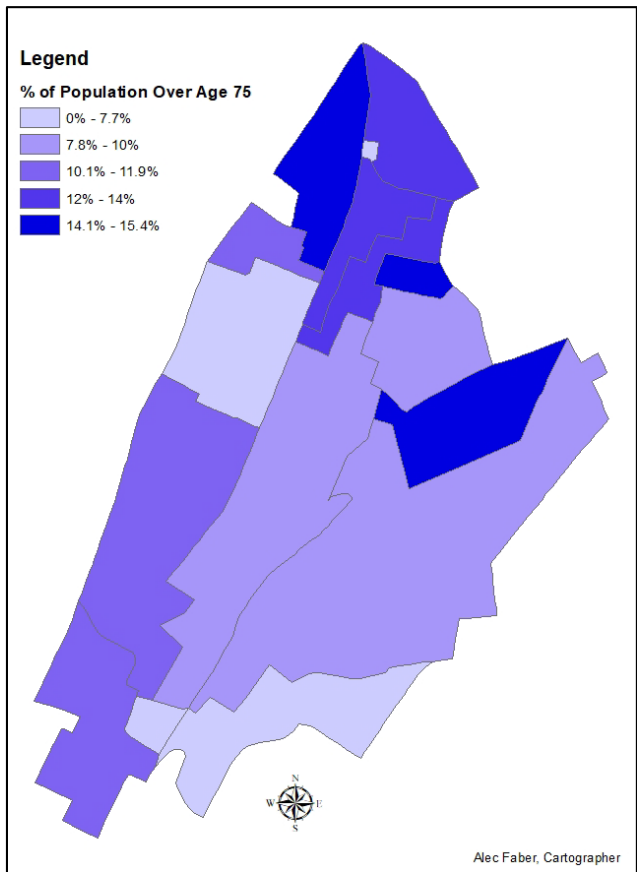
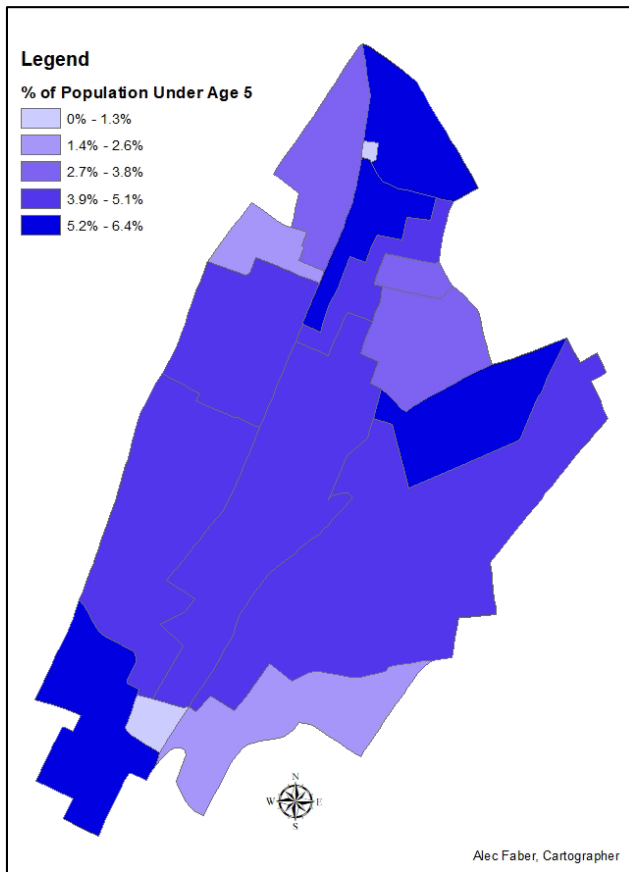


Figure 52: Comparison of Age Distributions in Rome and Bravetta Pisana (Census 2017)



Figures 53 and 54: Comparison of Residents Under Age 5 and Over Age 75 (Census 2017)

Education

The educational demographics of Bravetta Pisana closely mirror the demographics of Rome as a whole for high school graduates and residents with some high school education. However, Bravetta Pisana falls short of the city in terms of residents with university degrees, and has a higher proportion of residents who have only completed primary school. This may also indicate the economic condition of the neighborhood, as the presence of fewer residents with university degrees may mean there are likely fewer higher income persons in this neighborhood than elsewhere in the city.

The southern area has a higher percentage of residents with a university degree or higher, but it is concentrated mostly in the geographic center of the study area. The extreme southern end, in the self-built area, has a comparatively low proportion of university educated residents. The northeastern-most part of the study area also has a low proportion of well-educated residents.

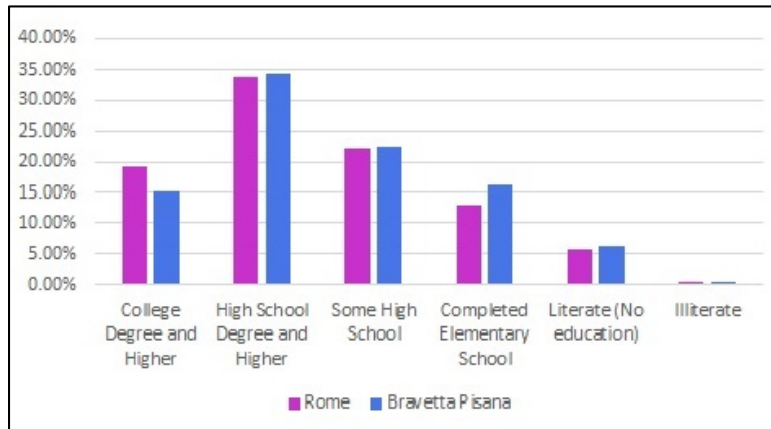


Figure 55: Comparison of Education Levels in Rome and Bravetta Pisana (Census 2017)

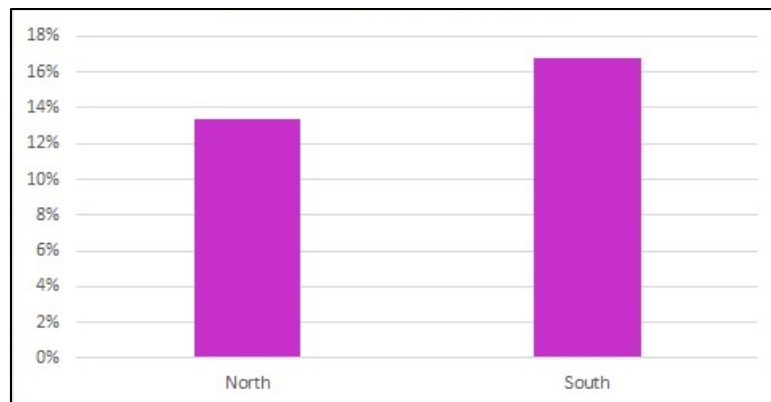


Figure 56: Comparison of University Education Levels in the North and South of Bravetta Pisana (Census 2017)

Employment

Employment statistics also closely mirror the City of Rome. Since only about 45% of residents in both Bravetta Pisana and Rome as a whole are in the workforce, it is clear that many residents in both places are retired, have stopped looking for work, or have not yet entered the workforce on account of being too young or still in education. It could also potentially indicate a large number of young residents who have not yet entered into the workforce, but as the age demographics show, while that certainly has an impact, it is not the largest factor.

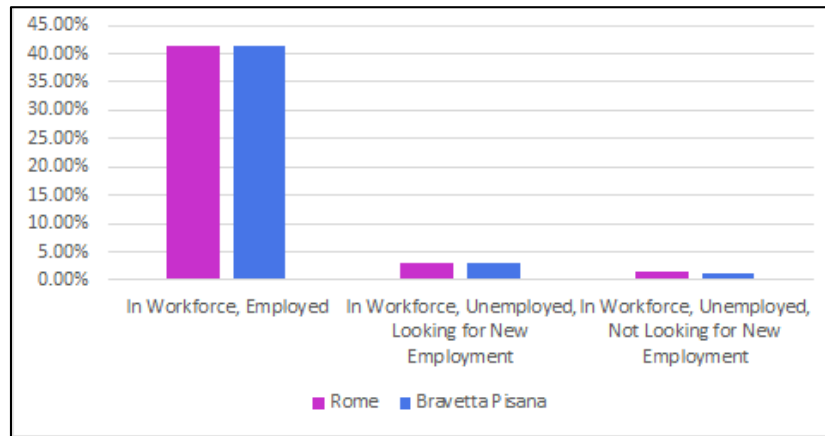


Figure 60: Comparison of Employment Levels in Rome and Bravetta Pisana (Census 2017)



Figure 61: Employment in Bravetta Pisana (Census 2017)

Immigration

Rome and Bravetta Pisana have a similar proportion of immigrants, at about 8.5% of the population. Immigrants in Bravetta Pisana are slightly more middle-aged than immigrants in Rome as a whole, showing that the neighborhood has a higher proportion of working-age immigrants than the rest of the city. Immigrants in Bravetta Pisana include more Asians than in the City of Rome.

While Rome as a whole has a small amount of undocumented immigrants identified in the Census, none of the immigrants in Bravetta Pisana measured in the Census were identified as undocumented residents of Italy.

The immigrant population is fairly well distributed throughout the neighborhood, with slightly higher concentrations at the northern, eastern, and southern tips. The North and South areas have a similar proportion of immigrants, but the North has a higher proportion of immigrants from Asia, while the South has a higher proportion of immigrants from Europe and Africa. Both areas have similar proportions of immigrants from the Americas.

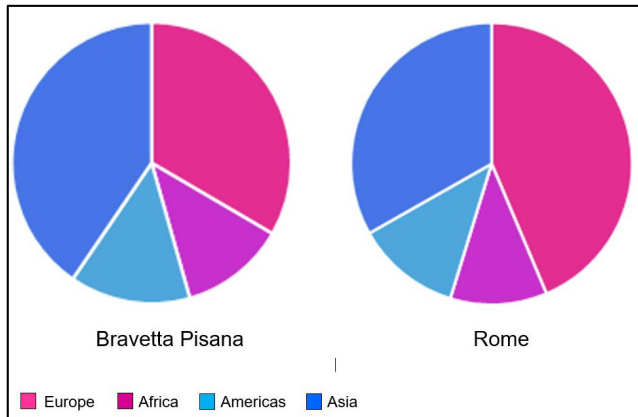


Figure 62: Immigrants by Continent of Origin in Bravetta Pisana and Rome (Census 2017)

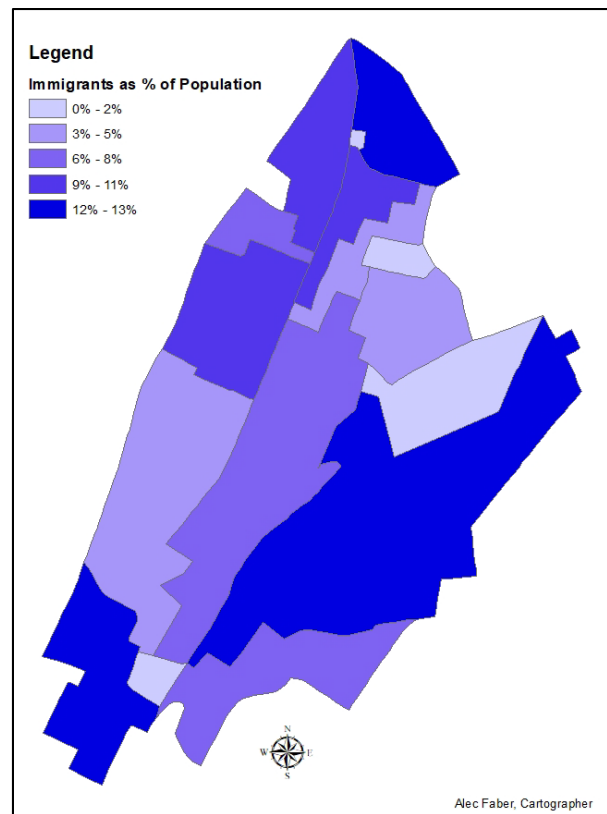


Figure 63: Immigrant Population in Bravetta Pisana (Census 2017)

Family Size

Family sizes are very similar between Bravetta Pisana and Rome as well. A large proportion of these families are very small, having just 1 or 2 members. This is connected to the low birth rate, which could be caused for numerous reasons: people are not getting married (as shown by the nearly 40% of families with just 1 member), people are getting married and not having children, or people are getting married and only having 1 child, which is still below replacement level. The northern area has a higher percentage of single-member families, about 39%, compared to about 34% for the south.

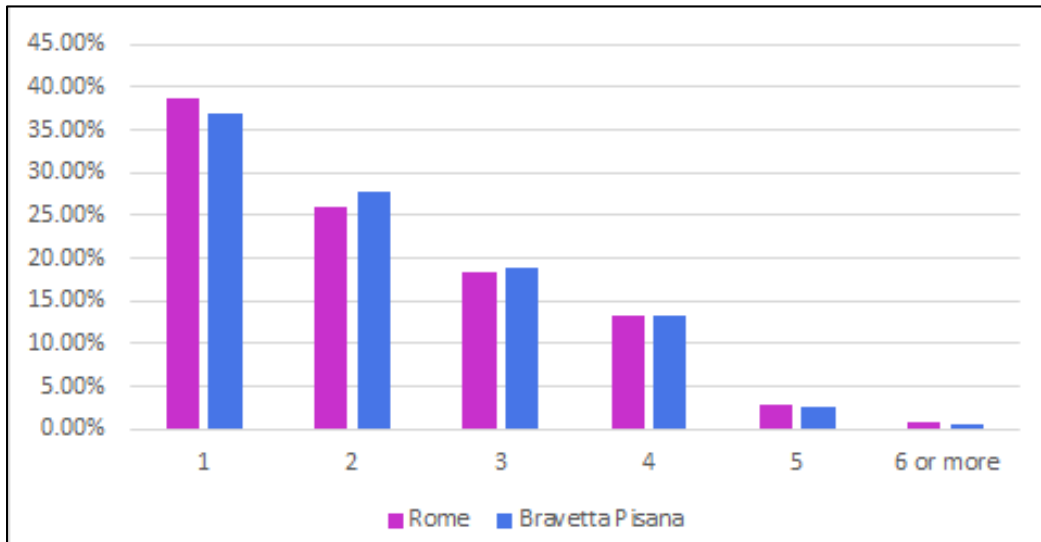
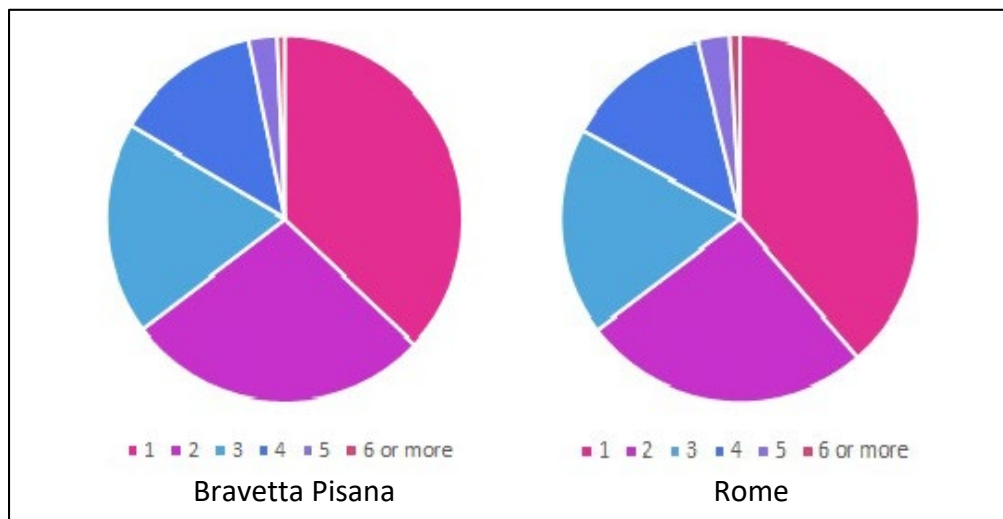


Figure 70, 71: Comparison of Family Sizes Between Rome and Bravetta Pisana (Census 2017)



Descriptive Analysis

Bravetta Pisana's urban gardening and informal housing development embodies the character of "informal planning," or "practices that are intentionally put forward by local dwellers with the intention of urban space planning and organizing public life in the absence of legal definition, guidance and funds provided by public authorities or the private sector⁸." Like Rome, Bravetta Pisana is "a 'self-made city' whose urban development is driven less by centralized urban planning and more by spontaneous primitive initiative and improvisation⁹."

Informal development in Bravetta Pisana, like in most of Rome, operates under a "informal until formal" model. This means that residents will construct informal settlements and then plead to the municipal government for "urban recognition" of their illegal zones.

Bravetta Pisana is a key example of informal planning. A large percentage of its buildings are informally built, more so in the southern Borgata than in northern Vellini. Informal planning is not just present in Bravetta Pisana, however. "Nearly 30 percent of the city of Rome has been built illegally and... there are widespread areas, some more marginal than others, under self-management and self-organization¹⁰."

The informal buildings in Bravetta Pisana are actually better maintained and more secure than the formally built ones. This refutes the perception of informal planning as being "irresponsible". Cellamare writes, "rather than eradicating the problem and finding alternatives, the public administration has adopted forms of negotiation and consultation (if not downright delegation of authority) with builders and proprietors of the areas and construction firms that allow and indeed encourage irresponsible land use¹¹." Bravetta Pisana shows that, if left to their own devices, civilians are capable of constructing high-functioning, attractive and secure settlements.

Our investigations indicate that the informal planning practices also led to the establishment of Bravetta Pisana's community gardens. Community gardens have been widely heralded as "catalyst[s] for neighborhood and community development, stimulating social interaction, encouraging self-reliance, beautifying neighborhoods, producing nutritious food, reducing family food budgets, conserving resources and creating opportunities for recreation, exercise, therapy and education" (Community Life Garden). Without informal planning, the Consolata Urban Garden Park would not have formed.

"Urban gardening has... often emerg[ed] from the negotiation between public administrations, building companies¹²" and the public. In the case of Bravetta Pisana, the Fosso Bravetta Organization was formed as a response to a fines against the informal gardens in 1979. The Consolata Urban Garden Park was finally formalized in 2011 by mayor Gianni Alemanno's administration. "In 2011,

⁸ Certomà, *'A New Season for Planning,'* 109.

⁹ Cellarme, *The Self-Made City*, 205.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Certomà, *'A New Season for Planning,'* 109.

more than 2500 non-authorized private gardens have been mapped in both the peripheral and central areas of [Rome]¹³.”

Informal planning can “address some of the problems associated with the neoliberal transformation of the city space, most notably the decrease in public space and its deterioration¹⁴.” Across the globe, 20th century planning practices have often left little provision for usable public green space. In the case of Bravetta Pisana, when the city expropriated the land from the Church in 1970, the green space was in poor condition. It was used as a dump until residents began to clean it up and establish informal gardens. When the Fosso Bravetta Association was established in 1979, they conducted a full cleanup of the site and created usable public green space.

In Bravetta Pisana, not only did informal planning create a community garden, but also a vibrant social space where children can play, dogs can run around, and residents can have events like picnics or barbecues. “This evidence confirms that urban gardens in Rome have many socio-environmental functions rather than simply ‘pimping up’ the neighborhood, as they bring back public space and community life in degraded and marginal areas¹⁵.”

Urban gardening projects and informal housing development, like in Bravetta Pisana “exemplify the potentiality of informal planning to positively challenge and engage institutional planning authorities in detecting and understanding relevant spatial and social needs, and in experimenting with innovative spatial solutions by taking the move from ordinary people-led planning processes¹⁶.” It engages the public rather than being a top-down process from professional bodies, and can subsequently create stable, attractive and engaging settlements.

¹³ Ibid., 112.

¹⁴ Ibid., 109.

¹⁵ Ibid., 115.

¹⁶ Ibid., 121.

Part 2: Recommendations for Bravetta Pisana: **Strengthening Informal Practices**

Recommendation #1: Increase access to Associazione Fosso Bravetta

Observations

Residents in both the northern and southern ends of Bravetta Pisana are isolated from Consolata Urban Garden Park due to a surplus of gated streets, which increases travel time to the garden both by foot and car. While the southern end is slightly more accessible, accessing the garden from the North proves to be very difficult for residents. There are few routes from the northern end of the neighborhood to the garden and they are indirect and lengthy. One option (Route 1) is to go south along Via della Pisana past the garden to the southern end of the neighborhood, traverse streets with steep grades, and arrive at the Consolata Urban Garden Park from the southern end. Another option (Route 2) is to go northeast along Via di Bravetta and cut right at Via della Consolata to reach the garden from the far northeast side. There is no direct route on a map to access the garden from Via dei Gonzaga or any of the tertiary streets within Bravetta Pisana. There are very few streets that connect to Via della Consolata or the white road in the first place, and those that do are gated.



Member of Associazione Fosso Bravetta

The solution to this problem was proposed over ten years ago -- the government stated that they would extend Via Giovanni Battista Gisleni to Via Della Consolata. This would provide a direct passageway from the physical center of the neighborhood -- Via dei Gonzaga -- to the urban garden. However, the government never followed through on this plan, and urban gardens (both formal and informal) have been built in the pathway of where this road would go.

In response to the lack of accessibility, gardeners have taken matters into their own hands. Off of the white road, after two closed gates on the left side, there is a smaller gate surrounded by brush. This gate is owned by the owner of a very small, one story building on the northwest side of the gate. The gardeners, along with other residents, have carved a path around this gate so that there is a walkable and scooter accessible route. While no cars can cross this gate, people can go around the gate either on foot or on their scooter. Once a

resident passes the gate, the path transitions from dirt to pavement and turns into a driveway behind a condo complex. The gate in front of the complex on Via dei Gonzaga has been left open and appears to have been left open for numerous years (there are plants growing around the gate itself). This front gate is controlled by a condo owner on Via dei Gonzaga -- nonetheless, it seems to have been left open and residents have adopted this route as their most effective path to the garden from the neighborhood center.

Interviews

Mario, an active member of Associazione Fosso Bravetta, stated that he consistently uses this pathway to reach the garden on his scooter. He lives about 100 meters from Gran Caffé Santos right off of Via dei Gonzaga. He said that accessibility is not an issue if you know where to go and know the right people. For example, he has the key to both the gate on Via dei Gonzaga and the smaller gate on the footpath in case he ever wanted to drive a car to the garden. Many of the other gardeners also have this kind of easy access to the garden. We spoke to a resident in one of the condos on the west side of Via dei Gonzaga as well. She stated that her condominium has a driveway that leads from Via dei Gonzaga to the white road, like the one mentioned above. However, there is a gate on Via dei Gonzaga and another one on the white road. The public is unable to use this passageway, but she says that she goes through the gate to the white road in order to visit the garden quite frequently.

From our interviews, we learned that the issue of accessibility does not seem to be a problem for the people who are already well connected within the neighborhood. There is a strong network of residents who distribute keys to one another and communicate the best pathways. While walking along this offshoot of the white road is technically trespassing, it seems to work. This ideology stresses the importance of informal practices in Bravetta Pisana. Nonetheless, as per our conversation with Mario, many of the gardeners at Consolata Urban Garden Park are elderly and live very close to him in the north. Our analysis of census data conveys that the bulk of the neighborhood's elderly population lives in the northern part of the neighborhood, though they are half of the active gardeners. This contributes significantly to the problem of access to the garden, especially if some of the elderly residents do not have scooters.

Recommendations

In order to increase accessibility to the garden to *all* residents, as well as expand the overall connectivity of the neighborhood, we recommend that the gate directly off the white road be removed. This will allow cars to pass from Via dei Gonzaga to the urban garden, in addition to scooters and people. Bravetta Pisana thrives off of informality -- the government was not acting quickly enough to connect two critical roads, so the people simply cut around an unnecessary gate and made a path. The condo owner's casualness about leaving the gate on Via dei Gonzaga open also speaks to the success of the informality in the neighborhood.

In order to fulfill this recommendation, we suggest that the city negotiate with the owner of the one story building northwest of the gate in question who also controls the gate. The owner

supposedly desires to build a high rise apartment building on the property.. We recommend that the city negotiate a agreement to exchange a density bonus for a public right-of-way across the property. If this gate is removed and the condo owner continues to leave the gate at Via dei Gonzaga open, then there is a clear connection from the center of the neighborhood to the garden. This approach could be a way forward in promoting greater physical integration in the Bravetta Pisana neighborhood -- this selected landowner could be given the right to expand building volume in exchange for public access through their private property.

There must be open parking available at the garden: a parking area already exists within the garden, yet the driveway gate to the garden is rarely open. This gate should be open as long as the garden is open, in order to encourage more people to utilize the garden's services. Moreover, the crosswalk in front of the garden on Via della Consolata must be repainted. This is most likely

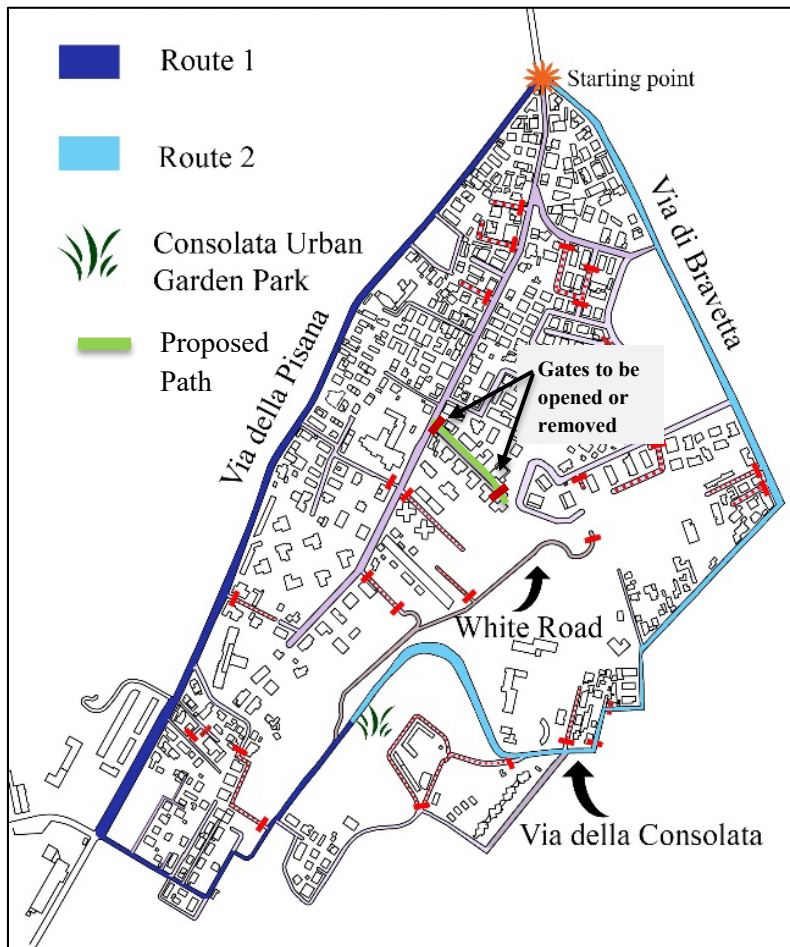


Figure 1: Current Routes to Consolata Urban Garden Park & Proposed Improved Access

city work, but informal measures can be taken to ensure that crossing the street is safer, such as inserting signs to slow down traffic near the garden.



Figure 2, 3: (left) Driveway from Via dei Gonzaga; (right) Overgrown plants on Via dei Gonzaga gate

We believe that residents should continue to embrace the informality of the neighborhood, especially as it has created success in the past. Formality is more the exception, rather than the rule -- strong urban planning should leave room for spontaneous citizen innovation. The term 'informal' itself is problematic in the sense that "it is tied to, and legitimates, the formal."¹ It is critical to stress that informality does not mean that the neighborhood is 'bad' or 'poor.' In fact, the informal economy "makes up a substantial proportion of the global economy," and in some countries, informal activities could account for 80 percent of their economy.² Moreover, it is difficult to imagine a completely formal activity, "one that has no informality: even in totalitarian states some activity escapes control."³ The self- built homes in the southern end of Bravetta Pisana uphold the best security and maintenance. The urban garden itself in Bravetta Pisana was informally built. Informality works here, as it does in many other places, and it is critical to embrace and strengthen this characteristic of Bravetta Pisana.

¹ Pratt, "Formality as Exception," 3.

² Ibid., 4.

³ Ibid.



Figure 4, 5: (left) Overgrown plants on Via dei Gonzaga gate; (right) Gate looking from direction of White Road, with transition from paved to unpaved condition.



Figure 6, 7: (left) Gate on unpaved path, recommend to remove; (right) Evidence of poor maintenance and neglect of gate.



Figure 9: Building northwest of gate, negotiate with owner

Recommendation #2: Revitalize Via dei Gonzaga

Observations



Figure 10. Coffee Bar, Via Gonzaga

While Via dei Gonzaga is the physical center of Bravetta Pisana, it is not an active area for residents. There are few shops along the street, besides from a pizzeria, some small stores in the north, and Caffé Gran Santos in the middle. The entire dead-end street is residential. There is a small market at the intersection of Via dei Gonzaga and Via dei Feltreschi. However, this market has very few vendors and many of the small shacks are closed permanently. Few residents do their shopping at this market due to the lack of products and the expensive prices for produce. There are cars parked along the side of Via dei Gonzaga,

but the street is lightly trafficked as there is minimal access to anywhere else in the neighborhood from this secondary street due to the many gated areas. Furthermore, there is a gas station on Via dei Gonzaga that is run down, dangerous, and has little business. Because the neighborhood is so inaccessible by car, having a gas station in the middle of numerous gated tertiary streets does not make much logical sense. Paola described Bravetta Pisana as a “strange neighborhood,” stating that “there is no life here.” Paola continued stating that this neighborhood is a “dormitory community,” only housing people and that is it.

Paola, along with many other Bravetta Pisana residents, travel to Via dei Capasso in order to socialize, exercise, and relax. Via dei Capasso has a senior center, a dog park, and a great pizza and aperitivo bar -- this area was mentioned by everyone that we talked to in the north as a critical part of their lives. Paola in particular is an active member of the senior center -- she does gymnastics there and is part of a time bank program where she teaches other elderly people how to knit. Residents of Bravetta Pisana walk to Via dei Capasso for any and all social activities because there is nothing closer to their homes. While for Paola this walk is only five minutes as she is very far north, for residents in the southern end of the neighborhood, going to this area is a bit of a trek.

Interviews

After speaking with more residents, we learned that the market is supposed to be moved to Via dei Capasso, where there would be sixteen stalls for vendors.⁴ However, this project has been “in the works” for the past 40 years. Mario stated that a contractor started to move the market and then ran out of money. Supposedly he ran off with the remaining money, and left the market in shambles. The market president would love to move to Via dei Capasso as he believes he will get more business there. Another gardener further discussed how he would like to have “stronger ties with the center of the city (Bravetta Pisana).” While he has the garden as a community hub, he would also like to have a space closer to his own home.

Furthermore, another resident spoke about how difficult it is to find a place nearby for her kids to play. She said that the closest playground is along Via di Bravetta at the Family Park. However, she lives on the southern end of Via dei Gonzaga and it is difficult to access all the time. She wants to have a space that allowed her kids to casually play, a place that did not require too much thought or planning.

⁴ Market President, interview.



Figure 11, 12: (left) Market president and his produce; (right) A closed shop in the market

Recommendations

We recommend that the market move to Via dei Capasso and that the gas station is taken down. In their place, we suggest an urban, multifunctional space. Both sides of the road will be covered with tile or brick, and there will be planters surrounding the area. It will be an area in which many residents can walk their dogs, read the newspaper, and have a coffee. There would be a small bar that would serve coffee in the morning and drinks at night. On the side where the gas station is, there will be a playground, benches, and tables. On the other side -- where the market currently is -- there will be local clothing and food vendors. Presently, across from the existing market there are two rotating tents of clothing and basic-needs vendors. They would move into the market space area, leaving more room for parking along Via dei Gonzaga (which is very hard to come by). The idea is that residents can shop around, grab a bite to eat, socialize with friends, and then cross the street towards the current gas station and have a seat to relax. The planters could be sponsored by different local businesses as free advertising, as well as by Associazione Fosso Bravetta. The tile or brick ground allows for little maintenance by the city, which works well in this neighborhood that seems to commonly be neglected by city management.

This community center would connect the already existing community hubs in the east and west, and provide public space in a neighborhood that is extremely gated and private. While Paola lived behind two gates, she loved to walk around the neighborhood and chat with others. Even though there are gates, the residents -- many of whom are older and retired -- want to have some sort of social life. This can be enhanced with a central community space on Via dei Gonzaga. Furthermore, this idea related to the idea of ‘Appropriation,’ discussed by Franck and Stevens in their book, *Loose Space: Possibility and Diversity in Urban Life*. They examine how “ordinary people produce space through the pursuit of their own unique desires and needs.”⁵ This space

⁵ Koch, "Review of *Loose Space*," in *f*, 2.

will be created from the ideas *of* the residents and *for* the residents in order to meet their specific wants and needs.

Building on the theme of strengthening informality, this multifunctional space can also be a place to promote Associazione Fosso Bravetta and other organizations. In order to increase messaging and branding of Associazione Fosso Bravetta, the garden management can hold free events in this space now that they are able to easily access it through the new gate opening. The garden currently holds parties and celebrations on their premises -- these can be expanded to the space on Via dei Gonzaga. They can also use the space for promotional events, as many people are unaware that the garden even exists, such as Paola. We suggest holding another “Bruschetta Event” on Via dei Gonzaga, in which free bruschetta is given to residents so they can learn about the garden. Moreover, other groups in the neighborhood can also hold events here or set up weekly tents to sell products. For example, Pesca di Beneficenza -- the church thrift store -- could sell their clothes under a tent with the other vendors once a week. There could be a distribution tent run by the church to give food and clothes to the poorer populations of the neighborhood. These various events could be communicated between residents of Bravetta Pisana through a facebook group or through church communities. Paola stated that the residents talk with one another about the security of the neighborhood through a facebook group; it would be fairly easy to create another group with all of the same members in order to advertise and inform one another about specific gatherings in this area. Overall, this low-impact multifunctional space will be a place to relax, sell, shop, snack, drink, and gather. It is a flea market, farmers market, event space, and park all in one in the center of Bravetta Pisana.



Figure 13: New location for the market at Via dei Capasso



Figure 14, 15: (left) Clothing vendors on Via dei Gonzaga, to move to Via dei Capasso site; (right) Gas station on Via dei Gonzaga, recommend removing

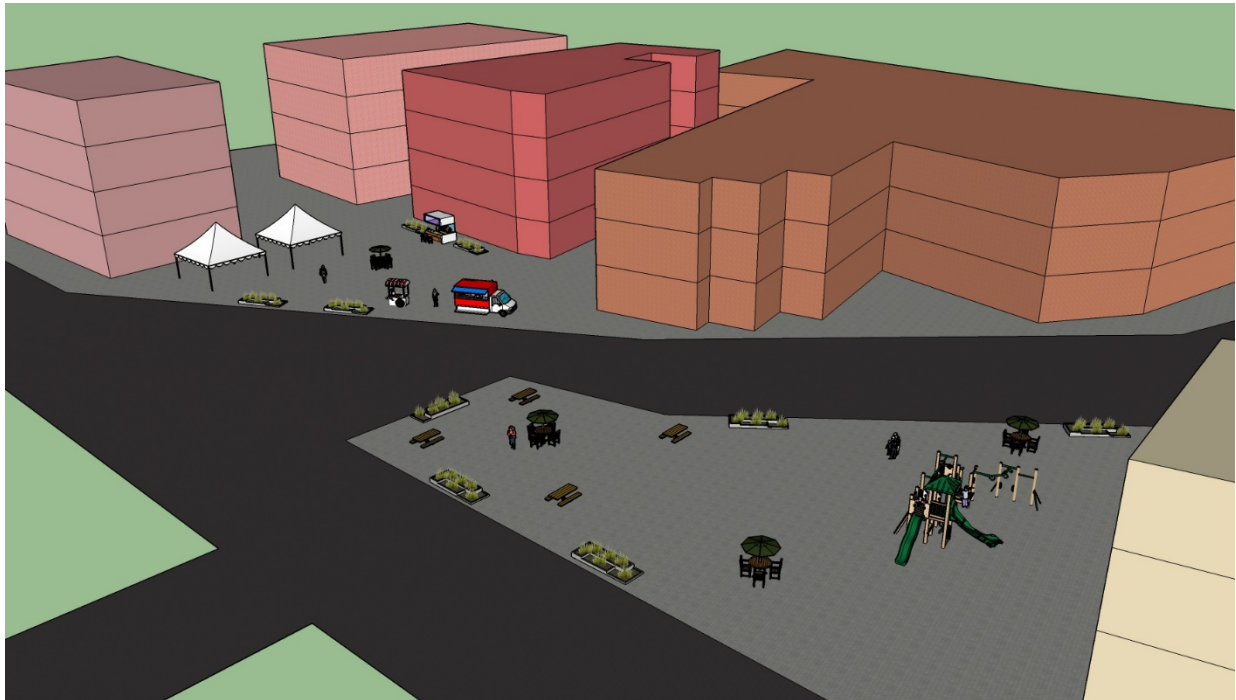


Figure 16: Rendering of Proposed New Piazza, Via dei Gonzaga



Figure 17: Rendering of North End, Proposed Piazza



Figure 18: Rendering of South End, Proposed Piazza

Prescriptive Analysis

The case of Bravetta Pisana presents one of many examples of urban informality present throughout Rome, Italy, Europe, and the world. Informal uses complement official action from government authorities; neighborhoods come together and provide services and improvements to suit their need. In Bravetta Pisana, in the face of broken promises from the City of Rome regarding new connections that would improve access to their urban garden, residents forged their own connections, hacking paths around gates and establishing a network of keys to allow people to pass through the gates that blocked their way.

Occurrences like this are not unique. Take India, for example, where a massive number of poor are overlooked by all levels of government. The city of Delhi in particular has seen a great amount of informal development over the past several decades. Since the 1940s, when Delhi became the capital of independent India, the city's growth has exploded at an astounding rate, and government policy has been unable to keep up with the deluge of rural residents migrating to the urban metropolis, resulting in a significant housing shortage.⁶ By 1974, about 25% of all residents of Delhi lived in informal settlements.⁷ These settlements were mostly built on land that was not considered useful due to "poor drainage, difficult access, awkward plot shape or unattractive surroundings."⁸ This closely mirrors the development of modern Rome generally, as well as Bravetta Pisana more specifically. Rome's growth accelerated massively after becoming the capital of united Italy in 1871, and accelerated even further once the Economic Miracle took hold after the end of World War II. Similar to Delhi, the government's response to surging housing demand lagged significantly, leading to the development of large slums, often in undesirable areas. The northern area of Bravetta Pisana was not built as self-constructed shacks and slums, but it was nonetheless informal. Its land was originally undesirable, but reclamation work in the 1920s rendered the land buildable, and in the 1950s land was informally subdivided and buildings were constructed independently to house newly-arrived Romans. The southern area of Bravetta Pisana more closely paralleled Delhi, with its residences being built by the residents themselves on terrain that was undesirable due to its steep slope.

Street layouts in the Delhi slums and Bravetta Pisana mirrored each other as well. Delhi slums usually featured a primary road that served as a hub of the neighborhood, secondary streets that provided access to groups of dwellings, and finally tertiary lanes linking individual groups of dwellings to secondary and primary roads and to other groups of dwellings.⁹ Bravetta Pisana is structured in much the same way, with main thoroughfares Via della Pisana and Via di Bravetta, secondary street Via dei Gonzaga, and then tertiary streets that serve individual buildings or complexes. Where Bravetta Pisana differs significantly, however, is in connectivity and space efficiency. Delhi's slums, due to space limitations, feature an "intense use of space" that creates a very clustered, inter-connected settlement, while Bravetta Pisana's street network is disjointed and dysfunctional and isolates buildings or clusters of buildings within the broader neighborhood.¹⁰ Delhi's slums, while certainly extremely deprived, are able to maintain a sense

⁶ Payne, *Functions of Informality: Squatter Settlements in Delhi*, 63.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

of community and a universally beneficial use of space.¹¹ Should Bravetta Pisana become better connected internally, particularly to the Consolata Garden Urban Park as we are proposing, it will help to bring residents in the area together and reduce the “dormitory”-like feel of the neighborhood described by one resident we interviewed.¹²

We also proposed to construct a new social hub that would replace the market and gas station at Piazza dei Visconti. Via dei Gonzaga, the street that bisects Piazza dei Visconti and is the central spine of the neighborhood, should be a vibrant commercial corridor. In Delhi, researchers found that the central node of an informal settlement was the most vibrant and bustling part of the neighborhood, but Via dei Gonzaga instead is desolate, mostly residential, and only frequented by those who live along it and the tertiary streets that branch off it.¹³ According to Henri Lefebvre, as paraphrased by Nipesh Palat Narayanan, “the production of space occurs through the dialectical relationship between lived, perceived, and conceived space.”¹⁴ Residents do not participate in activities or leisure on Via dei Gonzaga or in Piazza dei Visconti, so they do not perceive it as space. Our proposal would create that space, allow people to exist and participate in communal gatherings within it, and turn a gas station and ill-used market into a real “lived space” that would enter the “mental constructions” of area residents.¹⁵ Further, by providing an outlet at the southern end of Via dei Gonzaga that leads towards Consolata Garden Urban Park, more traffic will be drawn through this corridor, and more people will frequent the new community hub at Piazza dei Visconti and the other businesses along Via dei Gonzaga.

¹¹ Ibid., 64.

¹² Paola, interview.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Narayanan, “Informal Production of the City: Momos, Migrants, and an Urban Village in Delhi.”

¹⁵ Ibid.

Appendix:

Initial Reflections by Alec Faber

Stepping out of the Number 8 Tram at the end of the line, Casaletto station, I was awed at the vista before me on top of the ridge. The street dropped out below the platform, carrying cars down into the valley. In that direction, I could see a sea of trees pocked with residential tower blocks that are typical of suburban Rome, and beyond that, on the next ridge, I could see our destination: The Fosso Bravetta neighborhood. Meandering down little alleyways and dirt paths, we made our way down to Via della Consolata, the main road leading towards the neighborhood. Throughout this area, as well as the Torre Fiscale neighborhood I explored last week and virtually every other suburban area in the city, I noticed a startling uniformity in the built environment. There are of course small differences in the buildings, but almost all of them were built after World War II in the same general block-style at the same approximate height. This, of course, is a symptom of the city's rapid growth following the fall of fascism and the end of the Second World War. With new residents pouring in from the countryside, particularly the impoverished South of Italy, city and national authorities had no choice but to build new housing as quickly and cheaply as they could, resulting in the cookie-cutter blocks that have enveloped Rome's periphery.

But, although this neighborhood could be any neighborhood in suburban Rome, the residents make it their own, particularly in the work of the Associazione di Fosso Bravetta. We observed that group's work in one of the public parks at the heart of the neighborhood, in a bend in the Via della Consolata. We spoke to a farmer named Mario Burante, who lives close by and who has worked a plot in the park for many years, and he gave us a wealth of valuable information on urban agriculture in the neighborhood. I was amazed at the work being done in the plots, even during the winter, and at the variety of crops that were grown there. I was also slightly surprised to find it was mostly retired people working there. I would have figured that younger, more fit people would be doing the bulk of the labor, but instead it was elderly people looking to help provide for themselves and have something to do.

After our tour of the agriculture area, we continued deeper into the neighborhood, which was composed of yet more tower blocks. We went into some back streets of Via della Pisana, and I was surprised to find an almost American-style street layout. The streets were much narrower than suburban American streets, and there were much bigger buildings, but the network of winding alleys and dead-ends that prevented through-passage in the area was very reminiscent of American suburban subdivisions. This certainly preserves the very residential nature of that particular area, and keeps it isolated from the hustle and bustle of the main street outside.

Overall, I found this to be a very interesting adventure. We very much look forward to continuing to study and observe this neighborhood over the course of the semester.

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