



Dipartimento
Architettura
Ferrara

BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HOUSING, PLANNING, AND RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE TERRITORY

TOWARDS EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PERSPECTIVES

OCTOBER 16th-17th, 2025

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2nd International Conference on Housing, Planning, and Resilient Development of the Territory

Towards Euro-Mediterranean Perspectives

Conference Theme and Rationale

This conference returned for the second time within the Albanian and Mediterranean academic context, aiming to build a tradition of collaboration centered on scientific research and academia. Following the success of the first edition held on October 13th-14th, 2023, where proceedings were published in the Book of Proceedings, Albanica journal, and various international academic platforms, POLIS University and the Academy of Sciences of Albania relaunched this important event. The 2025 edition focused on housing, urban planning, and resilient territorial development, offering a platform for researchers, policymakers, and experts from the region and beyond.

Albania and the Western Balkans have faced major transformations in urbanization, spatial planning, and environmental management. Demographic changes, economic pressures, and environmental challenges created a need for new strategies in architecture, planning, and governance. This conference brought together diverse voices to explore these themes and promote resilient and sustainable development.

Key topics included architecture and the city, with emphasis on urban form, housing typologies, and the role of cultural heritage in modern urban design; urban mobility, addressing traffic challenges, public transport, and the use of technologies like GIS and AI in planning; and new housing models, focusing on affordability, energy efficiency, and innovative materials.

Discussions also covered demography and economy, exploring territorial governance, smart cities, social enterprises, and digital technologies such as AI, VR, and the Metaverse in urban management. Finally, the urban and natural environment was addressed through topics like pollution, adaptive planning, and nature-based solutions for climate resilience.

Through this conference, POLIS University and the Academy of Sciences of Albania aimed to foster a broad interdisciplinary debate on these pressing issues, combining academic and practical perspectives to offer concrete recommendations for future urban and territorial development policies and projects.

Organizers' Announcement

The International Scientific Conference on Housing, Urban Planning, and Resilient Territorial Development: Toward Euro-Mediterranean Approaches was held on October 16th-17th, 2025, in Tirana, Albania. Organized by POLIS University in collaboration with the Academy of Sciences of Albania and supported by national and international partners, including the University of Ferrara and Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development, the event brought together researchers, academics, policymakers, and professionals to address key challenges in urban development, with a focus on resilience and sustainability in the Euro-Mediterranean region. The first day of the conference took place at the Academy of Sciences, while the second day was hosted at POLIS University.

The conference explored five main themes:

- I. Architecture and the City, which investigated the typological and morphological dimensions of urban form, the evolution of collective and individual housing types, the relationship between architectural design and urban identity, and the role of historical and cultural heritage in shaping contemporary cities;
- II. Urban Mobility and Resilient Cities, which addressed traffic congestion, infrastructure challenges, and public transportation, while also promoting the redesign of public spaces – such as streets, squares, and pedestrian zones – to improve accessibility and mobility; it also explored the integration of digital technologies like GIS, AI, and simulation tools to enhance planning, automation, and infrastructure management;
- III. New Housing Models, which examined innovative approaches to affordable and social housing in response to demographic shifts and technological change, along with energy efficiency strategies, passive energy systems, and the application of new sustainable materials and construction technologies;
- IV. Demography and Economy, which focused on macro-regional and national dynamics impacting territorial development, including urban governance, disaster risk reduction, and the rise of smart and inclusive cities; it also explored how emerging technologies – such as AI, VR, and the Metaverse – along with social enterprises and circular economy practices, could foster more equitable and adaptive urban systems; and
- V. Urban and Natural Environment, which analyzed environmental degradation in urban settings, including air, water, and soil pollution, and promoted nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based planning, and adaptive strategies to enhance environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

The conference was conducted in English and Albanian (with self-translated texts where applicable) and was free of charge, with all registration fees fully covered by POLIS University in support of open academic exchange. Key deadlines included abstract submission by June 15th, acceptance notification by June 30th, first draft of papers by September 15th, and final submissions by October 31st.

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Table of Content

I. Architecture and the City: Architectural, Typological and Morphological Aspects of Settlement Form

Morphogenetic Axes as Generators and Anchors of Urban Form Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sotir DHAMO	5
The Structure of Tirana from 1614 to 1943. Continuities, Discontinuities and Relation with Western Cities Dr. Genti AVDIJA	16
Between Ideology and Identity. A Comparative Study of Socialist Hotel Architecture in Albania and the Balkans Dr. Malvina ISTREFAJ (KOLIÇI)	28
Vertical Growth and Urban Morphology. High-Rise Towers Reshaping Tirana's City Form MSc. Eneida MUHAMUÇI	40
Game of Towers. Vertical Growth - Horizontal Tensions MSc. Erjon ÇOBANI	50
Public Space and Urban Identity. Tracing the Shifts of Epidamn Boulevard, Durrës MSc. Arjola SAVA	60
Durrës After Transition: Urban Identity at the Edge of Time, Tourism, and Transformation MSc. Vjola ZIU	71

II. Traffic Crises in Cities and New Models of Sustainable and Resilient Cities

Tactical Urbanism as a Catalyst. Shaping people-centred mobility in Malta through experimentation Dr. Antoine ZAMMIT	80
How does the form of road infrastructure impact the propagation of traffic-induced noise in urban areas of Tirana? MSc. Kelvi PETI, Dr. Fiona IMAMI	95
Peripheral Journeys: Youth Mobility, Urban Margins and Social Inequality in Naples. The Everyday Experiences of Student Commuting and Spatial Injustice in a Euro-Mediterranean City Stud. Domenico Salvatore GALLUCCIO, Stud. Luca AMATO, LLM Candidate Francesco DE NIGRIS, Stud. Emanuele Mauro ABRIOLA	107

III. New Housing Models and Innovative Architectural-Urban Forms to Adapt to Demographic, Technological and Development Trends/Challenges

Cooperative Dwelling and Participative Governance. The Wogeno Case in Zürich Dr. Luca LEZZERINI	120
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Reimagining Urban Living: Beyond Building Housing – Building a Community. Affordable, Sustainable, and Innovative Housing Solutions for better Quality Living Erez ELLA	129
Cultural Dimensions and Entrepreneurial Innovation in Co-working Spaces. Socio-Spatial Insights from Tirana MSc. Belma AJAZI, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Xhimi HYSA, Dr. Gennaro MAIONE	153
From Informal Sprawl to Gated Communities. Evaluating Spatial and Functional Integration in Southeastern Tirana MSc. Alba GORA	164

IV. Demography and Economy: Demographic challenges and models in Albania and Beyond

Urban Planning in the Polycrises Era as “The Substance of Things Hoped For”. Research, Teaching, and Spatial Design at POLIS University, Albania Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lazar KUMARAKU	185
Land Distribution and Control in Urban Areas Dr. Diana BARDHI, Dr. Emre CECEN	195
Mapping the Invisible Boundaries. A Data-Driven Approach to City Delineation MSc. Andia VLLAMASI, Prof. Dr. Tamara LUARASI, Dr. Luca LEZZERINI	207

V. Urban and Natural Environment: Environmental Problems, Climate Issues and Other Environmental Challenges

Economic, Social, Environmental, and Landscape Values of Urban Agriculture and its Contribution to the Sustainability of Cities Emeritus. Prof. Dr. LUSHAJ	223
Environmental Challenges from Constitutional Perspective, Albanian Case Dr. Elsa TOSKA, Dr. Blerta MJEDA	236
Assessing the Impact of Urban Form on Air Quality. The Case Study of the Ish-Fusha e Avacionit Neighborhood Dr. Gentjan HYKAJ, MSc. Greta SHEHU	245
The Price of Progress: Unveiling the Environmental Cost of Urbanization in Tirana through Life Cycle Assessment Dr. Kledja CANAJ	259
Albania Forest Futures: Rethinking Forests as Ecological Infrastructure for Sustainable Industrial Development Dr. Dan HANDEL, Erez ELLA	270
Assessing Water Quality and Pollution Sources in the ‘Kune-Vain-Tale’ Lagoon MSc. Sidorela CERENI	281

Integrating Land-River Interactions in the Marzenego River Contract. A relational approach to water governance	290
MSc. Sofia BESCHI, Dr. Filippo MAGNI	
Art in Public Spaces. Creative Cultural Productions	303
MSc. Iris CANAJ	
Children and Public Space. The Role of Urban Structure in Safety, Mobility, and Play in Residential Areas of Tirana	314
MSc. Sindi DOCE, Dr. Doriana MUSAJ	
Decentralization of Tourism – An Inter-Regional Approach	329
MSc. Hamez TREZHNJEVA, Dr. Doriana MUSAJ	



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**2nd International Conference on Housing,
Planning, and Resilient Urban and Territorial Development:
Towards Euro-Mediterranean
Approaches**
October 16th-17th, 2025, Tirana, Albania

II. Traffic Crises in Cities and New Models of Sustainable and Resilient Cities

Infrastructure and public transport in relation to urban crises: The impact of urban form on circulation and mobility.

Public space design (squares, streets, sidewalks) and the reduction of architectural barriers for free movement.

New technologies in planning (GIS, AI, etc.) / Modeling, simulation, and digitalization / Co-progress in regenerative urban development / Automation of planning, architectural, and engineering processes.

Peripheral Journeys: Youth Mobility, Urban Margins and Social Inequality in Naples

The Everyday Experiences of Student Commuting and Spatial Injustice in a Euro-Mediterranean City

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Abstract

In Naples, Italy, the urban traffic crisis is not merely a technical or infrastructural issue it is a multidimensional social phenomenon that reflects and reinforces existing inequalities in education, access, and opportunity. Among the most affected populations are students living in peripheral urban areas, who face long, fragmented, and often unpredictable commutes to reach educational institutions across the city. This sociological study adopts a qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews and field observations to investigate the everyday mobility experiences of high school and university students in Naples. The aim is to explore how transport inefficiencies shape young people's educational trajectories, emotional well-being, and spatial perceptions of the city. As Salmieri (2019) points out, youth mobility in Naples is both constrained by systemic barriers and animated by informal strategies of adaptation and social navigation. Recent research on student choices in the Campania region of southern Italy confirms that mobility patterns are significantly shaped by socio-economic background and urban geography (Santelli et al., 2022; Rondinelli et al., 2024). The findings of this study complement this literature by highlighting students' lived experiences, their everyday forms of resilience, and the structural limitations of current urban transport policies. Drawing on the concepts of spatial justice (Soja, 2010) and the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968), the paper argues that access to education in Naples is mediated by mobility systems that often

exclude rather than include. For many students, public transport becomes a space where inequalities are not only experienced but reproduced, challenging their full participation in urban life. This contribution advocates for mobility planning that transcends technocratic approaches by embedding citizens' lived experiences into inclusive, participatory, and socially resilient urban strategies. While rooted in the specific case of Naples, the study reflects broader tensions within Euro-Mediterranean urban contexts, where spatial fragmentation and uneven infrastructure continue to shape the daily geographies of opportunity and exclusion.

Keywords

Right to the city, peripheries, youth mobility, spatial justice, urban inequality

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and rationale

In the metropolitan areas of southern Europe, a macro-region rich in paradoxes, neoliberal policies have eroded public services and increased inequalities. For over fifteen years, crises of different natures and durations have been intertwining, with solutions remaining uncertain due to the varied responses of governments and urban societies (Molinari & Froment, 2022). One of these crises concerns educational inequalities, more pronounced in Mediterranean and Eastern Europe than in the North (Palmisano et al., 2022). Within this context, Naples represents a major strategic city for the Mediterranean basin, with a complex urban character shaped by centuries of successive dominations. "Naples is the result of a contradictory multiplicity [...] the sum of several cities, one inside the other" (Punziano & Terracciano, 2017, p. 301) a layered architectural and social palimpsest where each historical period left indelible marks on the urban fabric. This complexity makes Naples "a privileged laboratory in the study of urban development" (ibidem, p. 302) where structural inequalities become concentrated and visible. According to Cerreta and colleagues (2020), "urban segregation dynamic is, in many cases, to be related to the negative impacts of social housing and planning policies [...] within the Municipality of Naples (Italy), where entire communities, living in social housing districts, face critical conditions of social isolation and exclusion from the processes of urban development." From a politico-administrative perspective, Naples exemplifies extreme territorial fragmentation: 81 municipalities compose the "de facto city" and 116 form the metropolitan area as defined by the OECD (Calafati, 2016). Nearly a decade later, despite the institutional establishment of the Metropolitan City (*Law No. 56/2014*) in 2014, this fragmentation persists. The "*metropolitan thought*" Calafati called for remains an incomplete project. As recent studies (D'Alessandro & Sommella, 2022) demonstrate, institutional transformations have introduced planning instruments but have not necessarily reconstructed the metropolitan logic urgently needed. Today, in 2025, persistent tensions exist between the "formal metropolis" (*de iure*) with its integrated plans and institutional competencies and the "real metropolis" (*de facto*) defined by actual mobility flows, daily commutes, and social networks traversing municipal boundaries. This gap between what has been actually implemented provides the critical context for our research: student mobility exposes how governance fragmentation translates into daily spatial injustice. Recent spatial analysis by Benassi and De Falco (2025) provides empirical precision to this urban portrait through GIS mapping and spatial statistics. Using a hexagonal grid with cells of 0.25 km² and principal component analysis, they constructed a socio-economic status index (Fig.1) integrating variables

on poverty rates, income levels, property values, and foreign resident distribution. Their urban accessibility index (Fig.2) measured minimum travel cost to essential services museums, theatres, healthcare facilities, schools, parks using both walking and public transit modes. Most significantly, they employed bivariate local Moran's (Fig.3) I analysis to examine the spatial relationship between these two dimensions. This technique identifies local clusters where high or low values of one variable spatially correspond with high or low values of another, revealing four patterns: High-High clusters (advantaged areas with good accessibility), Low-Low clusters (compounded disadvantage), and spatial outliers where accessibility and socio-economic status diverge. Their findings reveal "a clear division between central and peripheral areas" (ibidem, p. 9). Critically, Benassi and De Falco argue that "these accessibility issues are not simply outcomes of segregation they perpetuate and deepen systemic inequalities" (p. 2). European comparative literature highlights how student mobility represents a key lens for examining the everyday reproduction of urban inequalities (Lage et al., 2022).

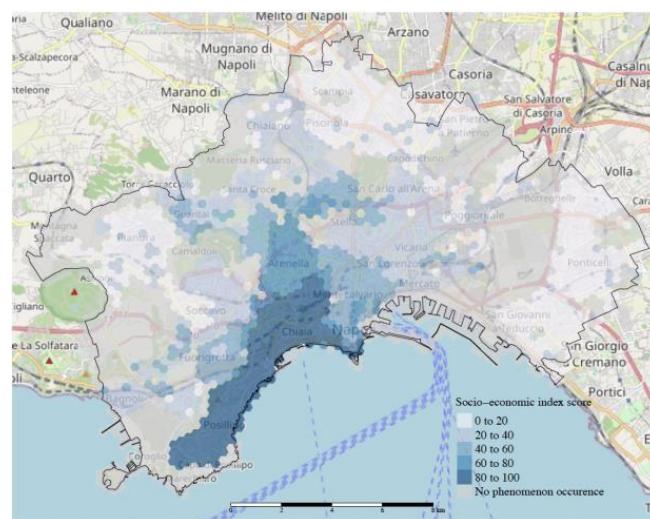


Figure 1. Socio-economic status index score map of Naples.

Source: Benassi and De Falco (2025).

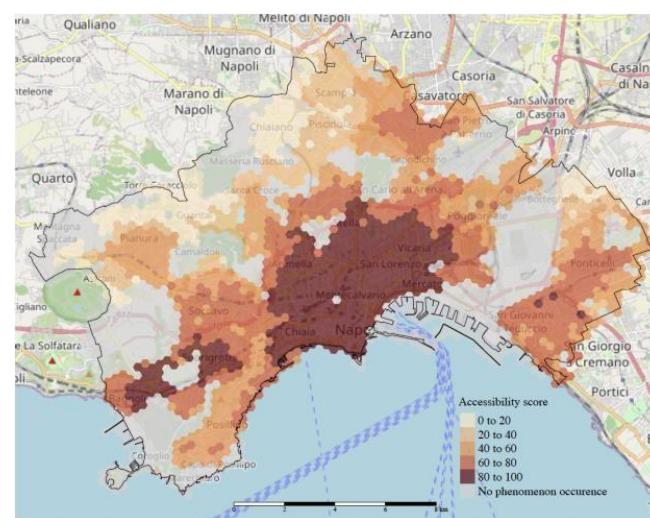


Figure 2. Urban accessibility index score map of Naples.

Source: Benassi and De Falco (2025).

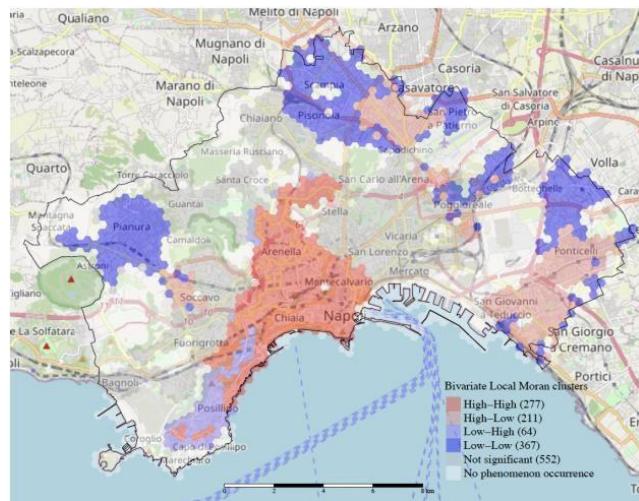


Figure 3. Bivariate local Moran's I results, showing the relationship between urban accessibility and socio-economic status in Naples.

Source: Benassi and De Falco (2025).

1.2. Research question and objectives of the study

Against this backdrop of spatial dualization, this study asks: How does the public transport system shape the educational trajectories, emotional well-being, and spatial perceptions of students living in Naples' peripheral areas? The objectives of this research are to (a) document the lived experiences of student mobility in Naples' peripheries, (b) reveal how spatial injustice operates through everyday commuting, and (c) advocate for mobility planning that embeds citizens' experiences into inclusive urban strategies.

2. Literature review

The theoretical framework systematized here, positions our work at the crossroads of multiple disciplinary traditions within sociology and beyond:

2.1. Urban sociology

We draw on critical urban sociology to understand questions of the right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968) and spatial justice (Soja, 2010). As Harvey (2013) further argues, the right to the city is much more than an individual or group right of access to the resources that the city embodies: it is configured as a collective right to reinvent the city in a way that is more in conformity with our needs, a form of decisional power over the processes of urbanization. In the context of student mobility, this means: not only being able to reach schools but participating fully in educational life; not only moving through space but contributing to defining urban planning priorities; not only adapting to existing systems but imagining and building alternatives. We mobilize contributions from Lefebvre (1968); Harvey (2000, 2013); Wacquant (2008); Soja (2010); Barbieri et al. (2019); Corbisiero (2022); Wacquant & Vandebroeck (2023).

2.2. Sociology of education

We turn with the sociology of education, particularly Foucauldian and Latourian perspectives, to examine how educational inequalities are materially produced through infrastructure and policy. As Landri (2014) demonstrates, educational policies materialize in the socio-material assemblages that enact them; in the Neapolitan context, this implies recognizing that buses, timetables, and infrastructures are not neutral backdrops but active components in the production of educational inequalities and access." Prominent commentators in the ANT tradition have emphasised the importance of following details in the everyday, to look down at the particular, not up at abstract categories that homogenise and control" (Fenwick & Landri, 2012, pp. 4-5). We draw on Fenwick & Landri (2012); Landri (2014); Grimaldi (2011); Grimaldi et al. (2015).

2.3. Sociology of emotions and everyday life

We draw on the sociology of emotions and studies of everyday life and embodiment (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, cited in Adey, 2010) to examine how spatial exclusion is lived and felt through experiences of boredom, fatigue, and disenchantment among students who spend long hours commuting. Emotions function as indicators of social identity confirmation: they emerge from our participation in social life and are embodied, insofar as they are connected to physiological processes and reactions that occur within our bodies (Cerulo, 2015, 2019).

2.4. Transdisciplinary mobility studies

Our work engages extensively with transdisciplinary contributions on mobility particularly research on commuting practices, sustainable governance and participatory processes. We mobilize Kaufmann (2002); Sheller & Urry (2006); Adey (2010); Cresswell (2010); Büscher et al. (2011); Verlinghieri & Schwanen (2020); Santelli et al. (2022); Schwanen (2022); Tarabini et al. (2022); Zawieska & Archanowicz-Kudelska (2023); Orjuela et al. (2024); Rondinelli et al. (2024).

2.5. Problematizing urban resilience

The concept of resilience, originally emerging from ecology (Holling, 1973), has become a dominant paradigm and cognitive horizon shaping contemporary development and urban policies. As it migrated into the social science it accumulated significant epistemological and political implications. This diffusion produced conceptual ambiguity, as resilience now refers both to the capacity to return to equilibrium and to transform amid change (Meerow et al., 2016). Yet, as Meerow and Newell (2019) remind us, "the underlying politics of resilience have been ignored," urging us to ask "resilience of what, to what, and for whom?" (p. 309). Such narratives often obscure inequalities and depoliticize social processes (*ibidem*). Consequently, we argue that resilience must be reframed as a process rather than a fixed condition a dynamic challenge for urban planning (Brunetta et al. 2019).

2.6. Gaps in the literature

The literature review reveals several significant gaps: (a) Focus on inter-regional mobility of students: most Italian studies concentrate on South–North flows, overlooking everyday intra-urban mobility; (b) Lack of in-depth qualitative studies: quantitative analyses prevail, failing to capture the experiential dimensions of mobility; (c) Separation between urban and educational studies: there is a lack of a framework that systematically integrates spatial and educational analysis; (d) Under-theorization of the bodily dimension: the mobile body is often absent from analyses.

3. Methodology

Started in February 2025, this study adopts a qualitative research design to investigate the lived experiences of student mobility in Naples' peripheral areas.

3.1. Participant selection and sampling

We employed purposive sampling ($N = 15$) guided by spatial data identifying compounded disadvantage areas (Benassi & De Falco, 2025), recruiting university and high school students aged 18-25 from peripheral neighborhoods. This age group was selected because they occupy a critical transitional life stage, depend predominantly on public transport, and represent transformative potential for urban futures. Participants were first approached *in situ* on public transport routes serving peripheral areas, during daily commutes. Subsequently, we engaged peripheral community associations to reinforce local trust and employed snowball sampling to expand participation within the identified communities. The results are not intended to be statistically generalizable but to provide in-depth, context-specific understanding.



Figure 4. Demonstration and public assembly, 21 June 2025 at the Scampia metro station, Naples. Over 50 organizations joined citizens and activists to protest the three- month closure (23 June-15 September 2025) of the Scampia, Chiaiano and Frullone Line 1 stations, demanding a permanent dialogue to safeguard the right to mobility.

Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/DLKpj14oK2K/?img_index=2&igsh=Yngxejc4b.

3.2. Data collection methods

We conducted semi-structured interviews explored multiple dimensions: sociodemographic profiles, daily mobility practices, transport barriers, adaptation strategies, educational impacts, emotional experiences, spatial perceptions, and perceived inequalities. Interviews integrated two techniques: the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954; cited in Cardano, 2011), asking students to narrate significant moments when mobility systems broke down, and photo elicitation (Harper, 2002), whereby photographs stimulate memory and evoke information beyond verbal accounts. Five participants also maintained mobility diaries (Büscher et al., 2011) documenting their daily journeys over two weeks. Crucially, we adopted Kusenbach's (2003) go-along methodology, accompanying students on their actual daily commutes "a hybrid between participant observation and interviewing that explores the role of place in everyday lived experience." We did not just interview students about mobility; we experienced it with them. We also conducted multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1998, cited in Adey, 2010): stationary observation at metro stations and bus terminals, and mobile observation aboard vehicles. Observations were conducted during peak commuting hours morning rush (7:00–9:00 AM), post-school dismissal (1:00-3:00 PM), and evening rush (5:00-7:00 PM) to capture student and worker congestion patterns, as well as during first runs (starting from approximately 6:00 AM) and last runs (approximately 9:20-10:00 PM) to document service extremes and temporal accessibility constraints. Field notes documented crowding patterns, temporal rhythms, infrastructure conditions, and passenger interactions.

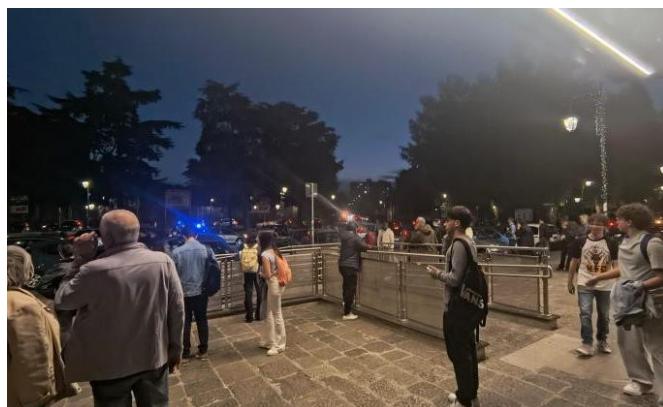


Figure 5. An example of a stationary observation.



Figure 6. An example of a mobile observation.

3.3. Data analysis, validation and ethical considerations

Interview transcripts, mobility diaries, and field notes were imported into the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. We conducted a thematic analysis informed by an abductive approach (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012), iteratively moving between data and theory, to foreground embodied, emotional, and temporal dimensions. Validation was ensured through triangulation across data sources and continuous follow-up with participants, including the return of preliminary findings to co-produce knowledge rather than extract data. We obtained informed consent and ensured anonymity for all participants. Following Grimaldi et al. (2015), we understood researcher positionality in intersectional terms relational, unstable, and contextually situated within interactions between researchers, participants, and the socio-political context. This reflexivity was particularly critical given power asymmetries inherent in researching marginalized youth.

4. Results and discussion

Our empirical evidence shows that the transport system systematically compromises educational trajectories, through delayed degree completion, diminished performance, and impossibility of reconciling attendance with employment. Students face exclusion from full academic and civic life, precluded from relational networks crucial for professional insertion. The system imposes impossible emotional management demands while foreclosing relationship construction. "The urban space, in the physical and social sense, is the 'boundary' in which the living conditions, accessibility and usability of services can affect the well-being of citizens" (Cataldo et al. 2019, pp.112-113). The embodied dimensions of transport failure reveals itself most powerfully through direct testimony. One female participant narrates a morning commute that epitomizes the daily violence students endure:

"This morning though, something happened – it was total chaos. Because at 7:40 a train went by with just a single car, 7:40 just one car, I don't know. And in fact people complained a lot, they started saying 'this seems ridiculous, getting off with these trains all pressed up against each other,' you couldn't understand anything, people couldn't get on. [...] I was standing there alone. I experienced the full discomfort, I was like: 'when are we getting out of here, please, let's get out of here,' and then you've got someone next to you who hadn't washed. So like, you get it?"

Overcrowding produces paradoxical isolation: bodies pressed together yet profoundly alone. It materializes as corporeal suffering and cyclical entrapment the endless repetition of wanting to get out. The temporal dimension proves equally significant. Another participant articulated the chronic rather than episodic nature of this suffering, identifying transport as "*one of the greatest sources of stress in my life*" sustained over five years stress compounding daily until defining existence rather than interrupting it. This accumulation of bodily assaults and psychic exhaustion produces a profound affective transformation. When daily violence becomes unbearable yet inescapable, when bodies are repeatedly violated yet must continue functioning, when stress defines rather than interrupts existence protective psychosociological mechanisms emerge. "The students who claim to manifest boredom on a daily basis appear as contemporary blasé individuals: subjects with no stimuli towards the actions of the present and without any trust in the future" (Cerulo, 2015). Students develop coping strategies operating at both individual and collective levels. At the individual level: attending only mandatory academic obligations while foreclosing informal learning spaces; self-exclusion from opportunities before attempting them (declining evening activities, part-time work, cultural events); reconfiguring domestic space as sole possible study environment; oscillating between irony, resignation, and protective boredom; relying on unauthorized transport services that emerge to fill voids left by official systems. At the collective level: female students travel together confronting gender violence and harassment; students coordinate informal carpool; share real-time information about delays and cancellations on social network; temporarily stay at peers' homes to avoid impossible return journeys. These represent resilient adaptive attempts to navigate failing systems. Yet these warrant critical interrogation rather than celebration. These strategies exemplify self- disciplining within neoliberal governmentality (Grimaldi, 2011) students internalize *geographical destiny*, responsibilizing themselves for infrastructural abandonment. "Living in an urban periphery not only affects young people's educational choices and transitions by means of the material constrictions associated to their mobility patterns. It also generates a 'practical sense' of what is perceived as appropriate and adequate for 'people like us'" (Tarabini et al., 2022, p.27). It is about giving shape to the aspirations of those who often feel like citizens without the city (Corbisiero, 2022). Resilience thus operates as an analytical

short-circuit: it enables survival while simultaneously concealing the structural violence that makes such survival strategies necessary, allowing depictions of peripheral youth as disengaged to obscure the systemic roots of their condition. "Now the neighbourhood no longer offers a shield against the insecurities and pressures of the outside world; it is no longer this familiar landscape, unified by a shared culture, which reassured and reaffirmed the residents in their collective meanings and forms of mutuality. It has mutated into an empty space of competition and conflict, a danger-filled battleground for the daily contest for subsistence, scarce collective resources (such as the use of public spaces and amenities) and, above all, for finding the means to escape" (Wacquant, 2008, p.271). Those who cannot escape close themselves at home; the disappeared body becomes final testimony to infrastructural violence. Our research focused on the corporeal dimension precisely to comprehend how this systematic spatial violence culminates in bodily disappearance the ultimate manifestation of segregation processes. The extrema ratio emerges in what we term the *ghost student* individuals formally enrolled yet systematically withdrawn from educational and social life. One participant's partner exemplifies this collapse: "*she deprived herself of the possibility of experiencing university; only went to exams because she always studied at home*". This represents not merely logistical difficulty but bodily and psychic collapse linked to individualization processes produced by contemporary global capitalism.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that student mobility in Naples reproduces spatial injustice through a cascading logic of fragmentation. Administrative fragmentation translates into fragmented multimodal journeys, which in turn fragment students' daily lives. Cumulative uncertainties – *will the bus come? will I make the connection? will I arrive on time?* – generate not only logistical difficulties but also forms of existential insecurity. When horizons fragment, we lose not only the ability to plan our days but, more profoundly, the capacity to plan our lives. These young people are deprived of the possibility to project futures, to imagine alternatives, to construct life trajectories. This is the ultimate violence of inadequate mobility: it forecloses not just opportunities, but the very ability to conceive of opportunity itself. Peripheral resilience thus appears not as a solution, but as a symptom of systemic failure. Our analysis engages with what Cafiero (2009) calls the *ordinary emergency*, the perpetual crisis that has characterized the processes of urbanization in Southern Italy since unification. Rather than normalizing constant adaptation, we must transform the systems that continuously reproduce these emergencies. This research is ongoing. The next phase will involve focus groups with community associations, mobility experts, activists, and political representatives, alongside the launch of a participatory emotional mapping campaign. Crucially, we propose the creation of Urban Living Labs for mobility justice in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods where students can co-produce urban policy rather than merely being its subjects (Cuntò et al., 2025). These Labs aim to create conditions of possibility for collective subjectivation processes, bringing situated knowledge into planning practices. Students are not recipients of interventions but holders of expertise essential for effective urban transformation. By embedding citizens' lived experiences into inclusive urban strategies, this approach reclaims the right to change the city by changing ourselves (Harvey, 2013).

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