Interpretation and management of the fascist architectural heritage in post-fascist Italy.

Transformation and continuity.

The case of EUR.

MA Heritage studies

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Declaration of originality

I hereby declare that this thesis is an original piece of work, written by me alone. Any information and ideas from other sources are acknowledged fully in the text and notes.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The fascist regime in Italy has left many types of buildings, monuments, and works of art all around the country. In the aftermath of the fascist regime in Italy, numerous buildings constructed during that time were either altered or demolished, as they represented symbols of a period marked by repression, totalitarianism, and avid nationalism. This dismantlement process explicitly manifested the nation's effort to reconcile with its dark past and to distance itself from totalitarian ideologies. Additionally, many of these buildings had specific purposes that directly contributed to the propaganda machine of Benito Mussolini's regime.

A noteworthy example of fascist architecture dismantled after the regime is the facade of the Central Station in Milan. Designed by architect Ulisse Stacchini during the 1930s, the station initially featured a monumental entrance adorned with statues and inscriptions glorifying Mussolini and the regime. Following the political shift towards democracy, the station underwent significant alterations, and these politically charged elements were removed. The original function of the Central Station was to serve as the main railway hub of Milan. However, it also embodied the power and grandiosity of the fascist regime through its imposing architectural design.

Another notable edifice eliminated in post-fascist Italy was the Palazzo del Littorio, designed by Italian architect Giuseppe Terragni. Intended as the headquarters of the National Fascist Party in Como, Palazzo del Littorio bore clear connotations to fascist ideology due to its role in the political infrastructure. After the fall of the regime, the building was demolished in 1957, signifying a deliberate rejection of the fascist heritage.

Although this elimination process was taking place together with changes of names of public spaces with references to the fascist period, quite soon, that process became more complex. This complexity can be explained by various factors that include ideology, politics, and economy. The discussion that arose around those buildings included not only the policymakers and urban planners but also architects, many of whom had practiced during Mussolini's regime, architectural theoretics, and the general public. We can now witness that many public spaces in Italy and architecture still bear either stylistic or visual memory of the fascist past either through remaining symbols or subjects depicted in visual art decorating them or in implicit forms of style and planning of those spaces.

1.1 Research question

In this thesis, I am not looking for answers or solutions to the largely discussed and debated question of how to deal with the fascist architectural heritage in Italy. My aim is to investigate the fascist ideological narrative represented by architecture of the time in the post-war period, and most importantly, how it was interpreted and in what ways it was managed by the post-fascist Italian society. This interpretation was very complex due to many factors like socio-political environment, economy, and ideology. To answer this question, it is crucial to analyze whether there are indications of either continuity or transformation in the existence of fascist architecture in the post-war period in Italy.

These questions will be investigated with regard to one of the significant areas in Rome — the EUR district, which is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable urban manifests of Mussolini's regime within the Italian capital city.

1.2. Concept and method: Critical heritage studies.

The methods applied to perform the research are those of critical heritage studies (CHS). This is a relatively modern field in heritage studies that can be defined as a multidisciplinary and self-reflecting approach to evaluating cultural legacy[1]. Critical heritage studies aim to understand and engage with various aspects of cultural heritage, including its formation, significance, and management. One of its key aspects is the examination of national identity and the role of cultural heritage within it.

CHS allow us to discuss and analyze cultural heritage in a way that results in a more critical consideration and understanding of the meaning and importance of its specific role in history and societies, as well as to define effective mechanisms for its management. As Tim Winter explains, conveying critical issues that face the world today should be first and foremost with critical heritage studies, including larger issues that pertain to and expand past from heritage studies itself. [2]

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[1] See notably Laurajane, Smith. *Uses of heritage.* Routledge, 2006; Rodney, Harrison. *Heritage: Critical Approaches.* Milton Park, Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 2013; Tim, Winter. "Clarifying the critical in critical heritage studies," *International Journal of Heritage Studies,* (June 19, 2013): 532–545.

[2] Tim, Winter, "Clarifying the critical in critical heritage studies," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (June 19, 2013): 533.

Critical heritage studies explore the ways in which cultural heritage is constructed, mobilized, and managed to define and strengthen national identity. For example, it may examine how government initiatives and policies focus on preserving and promoting specific aspects of cultural heritage to promote a sense of nationhood. This can include evaluating how museums, monuments, or other tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources are utilized in fostering national pride and a sense of belonging. Such factors as sociology, economy, and political studies are currently being introduced in the field of heritage studies by critical heritage researchers. states that a distinct role of interdisciplinary heritage studies is for this newly emerging field to analytically describe not only new developments but also engage more actively with the production of policy and critical discussion of its function in society. Rodney Harrison states that a distinct role of interdisciplinary heritage studies is for this newly emerging field to analytically describe not only new developments but also engage more actively with the production of policy and critical discussion of its function in society. [3]

Furthermore, CHS also engage with issues of power, representation, and politics surrounding cultural heritage. This can involve questioning whose histories and narratives are emphasized in defining national identity and how diverse and marginalized groups are included or excluded from the larger cultural narrative.

Investigating heritage within critical heritage studies largely tends to include a wide variety of stakeholders and participants involved in its management and interaction with it. The general strive of critical heritage experts is to overcome the traditional theoretical and scholarly 'top-down.'[4] approach to working with cultural heritage and moving towards more inclusive and multidisciplinary analysis.

The Manifesto of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies from 2012 proclaims that "heritage is, as much as anything, a political act and we need to ask serious questions about the power relations that 'heritage' has all too often been invoked to sustain."[5]

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[3] Rodney, Harrison. Heritage: Critical Approaches. Milton Park, Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2013, 229.

[4] This approach is generally considered part of what is called Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD), which was named as such by Laurajane Smith in her book "Uses of Heritage" (Laurajane, Smith. *Uses of heritage.* Routledge, 2006. According to Smith, the AHD presents as a top-down practice in decision-making and interpretation of heritage, excluding several groups of its potential stewards.

[5] Association of Critical Heritage Studies, Manifesto 2012, accessed on June 6, 2023, https://www.criticalheritagestudies.org/history

In summary, critical heritage studies provide valuable insights into how cultural heritage shapes and maintains national identity and how its intrinsic value contributes to a sense of shared belonging among a nation's people. This field also explores the complexities and power dynamics involved in constructing, preserving, and interpreting cultural heritage.

1.3. Critical Heritage Studies and Construction of national identity through cultural heritage

As the framework chosen for this analysis lies within critical heritage studies, my goal is to provide an overview of the discussion in the specific ideological context of post-fascist Italy. Before initiating my investigation of the fascist architectural heritage and its perception, I would like to highlight the role of Critical Heritage studies in defining such a complex aspect as national identity. This aspect is an essential part of the fascist ideology; therefore, it needs to be considered a vital element in analyzing the architecture that remained after it. The complexity of the question of what type of heritage fascist architecture is lies in the overall concept of what we consider heritage.

Heritage is most often defined and evaluated based on its intrinsic value. The intrinsic value of cultural heritage refers to the inherent, priceless, and irreplaceable worth of cultural objects, sites, traditions, and expressions that come from their cultural, historical, symbolic, or aesthetic significance. This value is not based on any economic or tangible benefits but rather on the deep connection, identity, continuity, and shared memories that cultural heritage embodies for a community, society, or civilization. It represents the importance of preserving and transmitting cultural heritage to future generations and fostering a sense of belonging, social cohesion, and cultural diversity.

However, in Pluralising Pasts, Ashworth et al. state: "(...) heritage, therefore, both past and future are imaginary realms that cannot be experienced in the present. As the tangible-intangible dichotomy infers, the worth attributed to these artifacts rests less in their intrinsic merit than in a complex array of contemporary values, demands, and even moralities."[6].

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[6] Gregory John, Ashworth, Brian J., Graham, J. E Tunbridge. Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies. London: Pluto Press, 2007, 36.

The intrinsic value of cultural heritage refers to the inherent worth and significance of tangible and intangible elements of culture, which contribute to its unique identity, social cohesion, and sense of belonging. This concept recognizes that cultural heritage possesses an essential value that makes it important to preserve, transmit, and celebrate for the sake of present and future generations.

Critical Heritage Studies is an interdisciplinary field that aims to understand and engage with various aspects of cultural heritage, including its formation, significance, and management. One of its key aspects is the examination of national identity and the role of cultural heritage within it. National identity refers to a shared sense of belonging and commonality among people within a nation, shaped by their shared history, customs, values, and beliefs.

CHS explore the ways in which cultural heritage is constructed, mobilized, and managed to define and strengthen national identity. For example, it may examine how government initiatives and policies focus on preserving and promoting specific aspects of cultural heritage to promote a sense of nationhood. This can include evaluating how museums, monuments, or other tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources are utilized in fostering national pride and a sense of belonging.

Furthermore, CHS also engage with issues of power, representation, and politics surrounding cultural heritage. This can involve questioning whose histories and narratives are being emphasized in defining national identity and how diverse and marginalized groups are included or excluded from the larger cultural narrative.

In summary, critical heritage studies provide valuable insights into how cultural heritage shapes and maintains national identity and how its intrinsic value contributes to a sense of shared belonging among a nation's people. This field also explores the complexities and power dynamics involved in constructing, preserving, and interpreting cultural heritage.

In my thesis, the research question is addressed through the lens of Critical Heritage studies. This approach allows us to investigate perception and interaction with the complex architectural heritage of the fascist regime in Rome by putting it in a broader context that includes politics, sociology, and economy. Aiming for objective analysis and opinion, it is crucial not to ignore those factors and to 'listen' to multiple voices that sometimes may be

controversial. Since absolute truth does not exist, our goal should be to find compromise and respect for the multiplicity of opinions.

1.4. Sources

The subject of the analysis in my thesis is the post-war management and discussion of the fascist architectural heritage in Rome from 1945 that actively involved the fascist urban infrastructure.

Primary sources for the research include the legislative acts of the national and local governments aimed at the treatment of fascist ideology in visual forms. Publications in the press during the post-war period allow investigation of the socio-political discussion around the undertaken measures as well as a whole public mindset towards fascist architectural heritage in Rome.

Additionally, literature and various types of publications in the studied period, as well as more recent ones, that are dedicated to reflecting and analyzing the fascist architectural heritage add up to the analysis of the structure and content of discussion on the fascist architectural heritage.

Other sources include academic publications on critical heritage studies that are used as secondary sources to provide the theoretical background of the chosen method.

1.5. Structure of the thesis

In the first chapter, I have stated my research question and a brief overview of the subject of my investigation, as well as the choice of the methodological framework.

The thesis starts, in chapter two, with a historical contextualization of the period of study, from fascism to the immediate post-fascist phase.

It will then continue in chapter three, where I introduce the EUR district. There I provide the ideological background of its appearance and the history of its development under the fascist regime before the beginning and during the Second World War.

In chapter four, I describe the processes of management of EUR after the end of the fascist regime in a new socio-political climate. I start with a brief description of the political

situation during that period in Italy because it highly impacted the decision-making processes in the urban design of the city.

Chapter five is dedicated to the investigation of aspects of continuity and transformation in the perception and treatment of the fascist architectural heritage after the fall of the regime, focusing on the example of EUR. Additionally, in this chapter, I provide an overview and analysis of the discussion on fascist architectural heritage in public and academic fields.

The thesis ends with a conclusion in chapter six, in which the main findings of this research will be recapitulated.

Chapter 2. Historical context

Before investigating the aspects of fascist architectural heritage, it is necessary to understand what fascism is as an ideology and how what role did it play in the process of nation-building in Italy between World War I and World War II. Secondly, it is crucial to define what is called fascist architecture since it is not an architectural style in itself but rather a semiotic and phenomenological construct within a specific architectural style. Therefore, in this section, I am providing a brief historical introduction to the ideology of fascism and the history of its formation, the personal role of Mussolini, and continuing with the definition of fascist architecture and its statements.

2.1. Fascism and Nationalism

Benito Mussolini served in the Italian army during World War I. Without going too deep into the reasons and details of the aspects of the First World War, I would like to point out that the reason for Italy to join the conflict was nationalist and territorial in the first place. After the Risorgimento[7] several Northern Italian territories had not been captured by the united Italian state. These were Trieste, Istria, Zara, and Dalmatia, which had been in Austrian possession at the time. By the end of the war Italy managed to retain only a small part of the desired territories, therefore leaving the country devastated for practically no reason. Following World

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[7] "Risorgimento, (Italian: "Rising Again"), 19th-century movement for Italian unification that culminated in the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861. The Risorgimento was an ideological and literary movement that helped to arouse the national consciousness of the Italian people, and it led to a series of political events that freed the Italian states from foreign domination and united them politically." — Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Risorgimento." Encyclopedia Britannica, December 8, 2022. https://www.britannica.com/event/Risorgimento. Accessed June 24, 2023

War I, many Italians felt that their nation was not given fair treatment, leading to a sense of resentment and insecurity, not to mention a critical state of the economy of the country.

After returning from the battlefields, Mussolini decided to look for ways of unifying the nation and bringing back its powers. After what is called 'The March on Rome' in 1922, the demonstration which led Benito Mussolini and his National Fascist Party to power in Italy, the story of the Apennine peninsula took on a totalitarian path.

The ideology proclaimed by a new regime manifested a goal to return to the glory of the Roman Empire and restoration of Italian domination on its former territories in the Mediterranean region. The new politics was aimed at establishing what could be called a 'Third Rome.' Why was this ideology so easily introduced into Italian society?

Italy had only been unified as a single nation in 1861, and prior to that, it was a collection of separate city-states, kingdoms, and territories with different cultures, languages, and histories. Although the Risorgimento movement was based on the national idea of the unified state, it can be said that the fundamental concept of the nation had not yet been formed before the outbreak of the First World War. Fascism, under the leadership of Benito Mussolini, sought to build a strong, centralized Italian nation by promoting nationalism, Italian culture, and a shared sense of pride and purpose among its citizens.[8]

Fascism emphasized the need for strong, authoritarian leaders who could make bold decisions for the greater good of the nation. Benito Mussolini, as the leader of the Fascist Party, portrayed himself as a charismatic and decisive figure who could solve Italy's problems and provide a clear direction for the nation's future.

After the "March on Rome," Mussolini established an authoritarian state under his exclusive dictatorship as il Duce ("the leader"), excluding the parliament from the governing process of the Italian state.[9] By doing so, he practically initiated a personalized 'cult' of being an Emperor of a soon-to-return great Roman Empire. This 'cult' was expressed in an elaborate

[8] Federico, Caprotti, "Italian Fascism between Ideology and Spectacle." *Fast Capitalism* 1, no. 2 (2019), 131 https://doi.org/10.32855/fcapital.200502.014.

[9] Holocaust encyclopedia. Fascism. Accessed June 20, 2023, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/fascism-1#:~:text=Fascism%20is%20an%20ultranationalist%2C%20authoritarian,and%20equality%2C%20and%20democratic%20government.

semiotic game of visual symbols of the Ancient Roman Empire and spatial transformations in Italian cities, especially in Rome as its capital.[10].

To conclude this brief historical introduction, it is fair to say that fascist ideology in Italy emerged on very unstable grounds of undefined national identity and state. Mussolini's intentions offered a clear and simple path towards obtaining that identity, reconstructing the country's economy, and even resurrection of long-forgotten domination on large territories. Therefore, at the time, his ideology was appealing to a big part of the Italian nation.

2.2 Fascist Ideology in Architecture and urban planning

When we think of architecture, most likely, what comes to our mind is the construction of walls, interior spaces, and exterior look. It is rarely thought of as a part of our identity, although it has a vital role in it. The thought that the cultural value of a building in society can be equated to many intangible aspects is explained by Freek Schmidt. These include stories about the building and place, the design intent, as well as later changes. [11] Architecture is not only produced by people, but in some way, it forms them. Therefore, architecture has been changing during the whole course of history; the styles and types of buildings were changing, mirroring the social, political, and economic development of nations.

To propagate ideology, it is necessary to create a specific atmosphere that manifests the glory of the dominating regime and visualizes its power. In addition, it builds a feeling of pride and success in the nation. Caroline Humphrey shows this with the idea that ideology itself is not only in texts and speeches but is also a political practice that manifest in constructive material objects. [12] One of the essential elements in this strategy is architecture and urbanism.

Since architecture is an essential part of people's lives, as it provides their living surroundings, it is inevitable to become one of the instruments of manifesting national values. A prominent Italian architectural critic and historian, Bruno Zevi, states that:

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[10] An extensive description of these symbols can be found in Harper, Douglas, and Francesco Mattioli. "Chapter II. Fascist semiotics: symbols and messages" in *I simboli del fascismo nella Roma del XXI secolo. Cronache di un oblio*. Roma: Gruppo Editoriale Bonanno, 2014. pp.31–66.

[11] Freek, Schmidt. "Waarachtige architectuur. Over authenticiteit en herbestemming' / 'Genuine Architecture. On Authenticity and Adaptive Reuse", Bulletin KNOB, accessed June 26, 2023, https://doi.org/10.48003/knob.119.2020.4.699.

[12] Caroline Humphrey, "Ideology in Infrastructure: Architecture and Soviet Imagination," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, Mar. 2005, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Mar. 2005), 39

"To say that architecture is a limpid and categorical mirror of a civilization, its values and its risks, is to repeat a cliché; but it certainly offers a sure means of tallying social analyses, cultural settings, and civic aspirations."[13]

The history of building in Rome has always been complicated during the whole of its history from the moment of the development. Rome can be considered a showcase of the power of the country since its Ancient Imperial times; it reflected the political ambitions of its leaders as well as cultural development. Rome has always witnessed the physical presence of ideological doctrine on its urban imprint.

We can look at the urban transformation in the XVI century when the papacy's urban planning policy was aimed at transforming the urban space of Rome into a single structured and organized religious center. Its major priority was to connect the key Roman basilicas by clear central paths to ensure the smooth and optimized movement of pilgrims between them. That's why in 1585, Pope Sixtus V initiated a grandiose plan for the transformation of Rome. His goal was to reshape Rome according to a well-planned and organized system of interconnecting streets connecting the old and solemn Roman basilicas. The realization of this plan transformed Rome into a true center of the Catholic world and a central place of pilgrimage.[14]. And as it was discussed earlier, Mussolini was not much different from his predecessors in putting his personal reflection on the capital city of the Italian state.

The way architecture affects the collective imagination is something Valentina Follo states Mussolini was very aware of, especially its ability to persist over time and continued permeance in future historical contexts.[15] His urban and architectural interventions in Italian cities, and especially in Rome, had a goal of developing the historical memory of his regime, which in its turn was supposed to build up a national identity for future generations.[16]

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[13] Bruno Zevi, "Per chi non si vota", L'Espresso n.21, May 25, 1958, 14 (Translated from Italian by Maria Nebolsina)

[14] Maria, Nebolsina, "Francesco Borromini's art in the context of the religious congregations' activities of his time", final qualifying paper, Lomonosov Moscow State University, 2012: 39 (in Russian).

[15] Valentina, Follo , "The Power of Images in the Age of Mussolini" (2013). Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations. Paper 858: 26 (Translated via DeepL. Free version).

[16] Giulia, Albanese and Lucia, Ceci. "Introduzione: il fascismo ei suoi luoghi," in *I luoghi del fascismo: Memoria, politica, rimozione*, Roma: Viella, 2022: 12.

Totalitarianism inevitably leaned towards large spatial and urban forms. Foro Mussolini in Rome (currently named Foro Italico) and the EUR quarter are typical examples of this tendency. Enormous spatial areas arranged for processions and mass events developed through a rectangular system of coordinates are characteristic features of such projects. The architecture of EUR had to not only embody the new epoch but also to become a symbol of Rome; a city of dialogue between cultures, a territory where antiquity, modern times, the Middle Ages, and constructivism united with rationalism[17] met all together to manifest the historical legacy and continuity of the Roman Empire inherited by fascism[18].

The first significant step in Mussolini's urban planning strategy was to give the Ancient Roman symbols a protagonist role in the landscape of the Eternal City. That was accomplished by building a new street, Via dei Fori Imperiali, through the Ancient Roman Imperial forums, which at first connected the Piazza Venezia — a monument to unified Italy — to the Colosseum — an Ancient Roman gem — and later became a starting point of the significant project of manifestation of the power of the new ideology — the EUR quarter.

Chapter 3. Introducing EUR and its history before the fall of the fascist regime

In this chapter, I am introducing the main subject on which I am basing my research — Esposizione Universale Roma, most commonly known as EUR. Here I explain the ideological concept of this urban project of Mussolini's regime and how it developed before World War

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[17] The Novecento style is straightforward and linear without the large protrusions and conspicuous Fascist symbols: the beam and the eagle; this architecture is related mainly to the stream of rationalism. Rationalism aimed to solve the problems of mass construction by combining individual ingenuity with mass production to respond to the vital needs of civil society. After the total upheaval in Europe following the First World War, Art Nouveau came to reproduce inexplicable forms devoid of functionality unrelated to content, thus losing those original characteristics of novelty. Rationalism emerged in Germany from innovative experiences and was characterized by a close relationship between form and function, the use of prefabricated elements of standard size, the desire to minimize to the essentials, excluding any surface elements such as decoration, functionalism and extensive use of lines, precise angles and volumes. Most of all, he appreciated the need for universally functional architecture and the opposition of the past. In 1933, the Charter of Athens was drawn up in Paris at the instigation of Le Corbusier: a document that laid the foundation for modern architecture. With the rise of totalitarian regimes such as those in Italy, Germany, and the USSR, and thus the adoption of a glorified propagandist policy, the rationalist movement began to be undermined, which was followed by the emigration of various artists who were looking for a place where they could realize and promote their ideas. Rationalism was also criticized for its lack of imaginative charm, its use of standards in urbanism and construction, and its serial production, which was limited to the reproduction of certain canons.

[18] "The EUR was meant to represent Italian political security and the declaration of the Italian Empire following Italy's momentous defeat of Ethiopia." — Jelena Loncar, "F is for … fluctuating symbolism. The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning" in *Kay Bea Jones and Stephanie Pilat, eds., The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture: Reception and Legacy Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2020.*

II's outbreak. I point out one of its most prominent buildings that is still standing and can be considered the focal point of the whole area, and that raises most of the discussion on the complexity of the fascist architectural heritage in modern Italy — Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. I finish this chapter with a brief description of how EUR existed during World War II and by the end of the war.

3.1 The idea behind the original project of EUR

Esposizione Universale Roma was an ambitious and grandiose project that was supposed to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Fascist Party coming to power in 1942. It was initiated in 1935 after the governor of Rome, Giuseppe Bottai, suggested it to Mussolini under the name E42. The theme chosen for the exposition was "Olympiad of Civilizations". It was to show that this Olympiad, under the auspices of superior Italian culture, was to be a peaceful clash between nations. All in the name of science and culture. [19] E42 was an urban planning project built to last; from its infancy was meant not only as a universal exposition but also as the "nucleus of a new Rome." [20]

The EUR quarter was supposed to be a worldwide celebration of the glory of the fascist regime; it had been planned to show the rightness of its ideology to the world as the demonstration of the reborn Ancient Roman Empire and a triumph of the ideological values of the new politics. Furthermore, the idea was to exhibit how Italy has always been at the forearm of human knowledge and civilization throughout the twenty-seven centuries of its history.[21]

It was supposed to become the most consistent urban planning embodiment of the new Italian culture and civilization: "it was meant to be the 'ideal' Italian city, a functional city whose symbolic task was to embody in the concreteness of its stones fascism's political, cultural, and economic project."[22] This project envisioned constructing multi-story residential

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[19] Basje, Bender, EUR 1935-1960. Il recupero di un progetto fascista nel dopoguerra, Tesi per il Master Letteratura e Cultura Occidentale Università di Utrecht, 2009. Accessed on April 8, 2023 https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/3521.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Anna, Notaro, "Exhibiting the New Mussolinian City: Memories of Empire in the World Exhibition of Rome (EUR)," *GeoJournal* 51, no. 1 (2000): 19.
[22] Ibid. 18

buildings and creating infrastructure in a single architectural style: monumental and scenic, as well as grandiose space for green quarters and other natural elements.

The 'Third Rome,' which EUR was supposed to represent, was chosen to be posed beyond the borders of the Eternal City, along the axis that led from Piazza Venezia to the seashore. This idea is essential in the ideology of fascist urbanism, as the axis provided a symbolical connection between the ancient history of the Roman Empire — its Forums — with the proclaimed heir of it — the fascist urban manifest —EUR. Additionally, it was a counterpoint of Foro Mussolini located on the northern end of this axis. This project envisioned constructing multi-story residential buildings and creating infrastructure in a single architectural style: monumental and scenic, as well as a grandiose space for green quarters and other natural elements.

3.2. History of construction of EUR before the World War II

The construction of EUR complex began in 1937 and was interrupted due to Italy's entry into the World War. The highly symbolic act of the beginning of the construction was performed by Mussolini himself: he planted the Italian stone pine on the place where the new quarter would start establishing soon. A numerous group of architects, including Giuseppe Pagano, who at some point left the project, Del Debbio, Luigi Piccinato, Paniconi, and Giulio Pediconi, were commissioned to design the quarter under the direction of Marcello Piacentini.[23] Piacentini, by that time, had already gained trust and acknowledgment as the primary architectural mouthpiece of the regime and who gave a monumental and rhetorical character to EUR.

The aim of the E42 project was to transform the exhibition space into a monumental center of Fascist Rome with the transformation of temporary exhibitions related to history and Roman civilization into permanent museums.[24] The area of approximately 400 ha that was located to the southeast of the center of Rome in the direction of the sea was chosen as a site. The urban structure developed along Via Imperiale (now Via Cristoforo Colombo) and Via Europa, with Piazza Imperiale as its center, formed by four exhibition buildings: pavilions for ethnography, science, ancient art, and contemporary art. The project, additionally, called for

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[23] Paolo, Nicoloso, "Architetture per durare." In *Luoghi del fascismo: memoria, politica, rimozione*. Roma: Viella, 2022: 70
[24] Appendix, Fig. 1

the construction of a grand glass and aluminum arch 100 meters high, which was never realized, even though it became a symbol of the project during that time.[25]

Competitions were held for the construction of permanent buildings, in which rationalist architects put forward designs particularly adventurous and anticipatory of the future, posing as those chosen by fascism for their program of total architectural renewal.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, several significant buildings were completed in the Esposizione Universale Roma quarter. The completed structures in the EUR district exemplify the ambitions of the Italian Fascist regime and the architectural movement that it fostered. Among these structures is the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana.

Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana – a symbol of EUR

Since the 100 m arch was never completed, the role of the iconic symbol of the EUR quarter was overtaken by the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, known as the 'Square Colosseum.'[26] One of the masterpieces of Italian rationalist architecture was inaugurated in 1940. This work of architects Giovanni Guerrini, Ernesto La Padula, and Mario Romano could probably be the best illustration of the architectural language of fascism. It is cladded in travertine, has a square plan, and has six stories of arched windows all around it, which are an undoubtful reference to the ancient Colosseum. It as well bears an inscription of Mussolini's quote from one of his speeches: "*Un popolo di poeti, di artisti, di eroi, di santi, di pensatori, di scienziati, di navigatori, di trasmigratori*"[27] (a nation of poets, of artists, of heroes, of saints, of thinkers, of scientists, of navigators, of migrators.[28]). That speech was given in 1935 as an announcement of the beginning of war in Ethiopia[29], which had probably, been the major colonial and brutal military activity of the fascist Italian state during its time. The composition, as well as the choice of quotation, is a proclamation of a great empire and unique nation, both perfectly fitting into the concept of continuation and resurrection of the prosperous Roman Empire.

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[25] Flavia Marcello, The idea of Rome in Fascist art and architecture: the decorative program of the Palazzo dei Congressi in EUR, Rome, Australian Institute of Art History, The University of Melbourne, 2010: 2–4.

[26] Appendix, Fig. 2

[27] Appendix, figure 3

[28] Translation from Italian by Maria Nebolsina.

[29] Ruth, Ben-Ghiat, "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?", *The New Yorker,* October 5, 2017, accessed June 19, 2023, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/why-are-so-many-fascist-monuments-still-standing-in-italy.

The purpose of the Square Colosseum was to accommodate the main exhibition of the 'Olympiad of Civilizations' which aim was to show the whole history of the Roman civilization including its then considered glorious regeneration.

The original Colosseum, during its use, was the site of gladiator fights and other military 'entertaining' activities that aimed to demonstrate the power and significance of the Roman Empire since gladiators were fighting against captives from other countries defeated by the Empire. This symbological connection to the Square Colosseum of Mussolini can also be identified since the significant military achievement of the Fascist regime had been a successful invasion of Ethiopia during the Second Italo-Ethiopian War by the end of 1937. Therefore, it was as well a demonstration of the military power of the new Italian Empire that Duce was creating.

Additionally, the symbolic reference to the Duce is suggested to be contained in the core structure of the building: the quantity of the arches is composed of 6 vertical rows by 9 in a horizontal row, which makes it the exact number as in the full name of Benito Mussolini.[30]. The personalized cult of the leader of fascism is practically encoded into the monumental structure of the landscape.

3.3 EUR during World War II and occupation by Allies

During the course of the Second World War, the EUR quarter took on different roles as the turbulent events unfolded. In particular, the area served as a poignant symbol of Fascist authority and ambition. While the unfinished buildings served as a testament to the regime's grandiose visions, they also exposed its vulnerability, especially as Italy experienced significant setbacks in the war.

Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana during the war was used as headquarters for the Italian Fascist Party. Mussolini utilized it to host meetings with other fascist leaders, including Adolf Hitler. Then EUR became a hub of the Italian resistance against the fascist regime. The narrow streets and hidden corners of the neighborhood provided an ideal battleground for guerrilla warfare, and EUR was strategically located near several railroads and strategic lines that were

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[30] Jelena, Loncar, "F is for… fluctuating symbolism: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana and its shifting meaning Jelena Loncar," in *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, Routledge, 2020: 96.

critical for the occupation of the city. The Partisans used EUR as a safe haven and a central meeting point to coordinate their anti-fascist activities. They also used EUR's elegant buildings, specifically the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, as a site for clandestine printing operations. Underground newspapers such as "l'Unità" and "Il Popolo" were printed and distributed from this location as part of the Italian resistance's propaganda campaign.

EUR played a significant role in the liberation of Rome on June 4, 1944, following the Allied invasion of Italy. Partisans from EUR and other areas of the city participated in the uprising, forcing the German occupiers to withdraw and freeing thousands of Italian prisoners from the Gestapo. Furthermore, EUR area played a crucial role in the urban transformation of Rome caused by the war. With the core of the city being heavily affected by air raids, many Romans sought refuge in suburban areas like EUR. The partially constructed district offered temporary accommodation, although living conditions were far from ideal. As the war progressed, EUR area and its incomplete buildings garnered additional significance as havens for partisans, black market activities, and dislocated families seeking shelter amidst the chaos.[31].

Chapter 4. EUR after the fall of fascism in a new socio-political context

This chapter is dedicated to the development of EUR after the end of World War II and the end of fascist rule in Italy. To understand the 'life' of EUR in the urban environment of the capital city of Italy, we need to investigate not only the ideology behind the project and the basic historical context but the whole socio-political environment of Italy at that time. Therefore, I will provide a brief analysis of the fascist ideology in Italy after WWII, following it by the introduction of urban politics in Rome in that period, since it was connected to the political environment, as well as to the role of EUR.

4.1. Socio-political context after the end of Fascism in Italy

In this part, I am introducing the questions of continuity and discontinuity in a socio-political environment in post-fascist Italy, based on the article written by Chiara Fonio and

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[31] Paola, Somma,. "The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana: From fascism to fashion," in *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture. Routledge*, 2020: 80.

Stefano Agnoletto, "*Surveillance, repression and the welfare state: Aspects of continuity and discontinuity in post-fascist Italy*." These aspects provide an essential framework for the development and redevelopment of the city of Rome after the Second World War.

We might have expected the total purge of the fascist ideology and political figures of the fascist party in Italy after the end of the regime, just like it happened to the Nazi party in Germany. However, that did not happen. After the fall of the fascist regime in Italy, many fascist politicians continued to remain active in the political life of post-fascist Italy. Some of these politicians were able to reinvent themselves and pursue successful political careers without facing any repercussions for their actions during the fascist period.

Chiara Fonio, in her article dedicated to the aspects of continuity and discontinuity of the repression mechanisms of the state in post-fascist Italy, explains how that happened by analyzing the changes in the structures of government institutions like the Ministry of the Interior, police activities as well as the welfare politics. According to her investigation, continuity is very much present in both sectors. Most importantly, due to the fact that many political actors just changed their posts in the system and that "despite a 'formal' discontinuity embodied by the Italian Constitution, the lack of a more substantial shift from the regime seems apparent in the absence of both police reform and a democratic approach to policing and social control."[32]

The way that fascist politicians remained active was through the formation of new political parties. For example, the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) was founded in 1946 and was explicitly modeled after the fascist party. Some of the former members of the National Fascist Party also joined the Christian Democratic Party. Several former fascist politicians in Italy managed to remain in the political system after the fall of the fascist regime by adapting to the new political landscape. Key figures such as Giorgio Almirante, Arturo Michelini, and Pino Rauti joined the Italian Social Movement (MSI), which served as the primary political platform for post-fascist ideas during the post-WWII period. Their strategies varied from emphasizing anti-communism and contributing to center-right coalitions to presenting an

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[32] Chiara, Fonio, and Stefano Agnoletto, "Surveillance, repression and the welfare state: Aspects of continuity and discontinuity in post-fascist Italy," Surveillance & Society, 11.1/2, 2013: 77.

alternative vision of nationalism and social conservatism. Thus, they managed to reshape their political ideas to maintain relevance and influence in the changing landscape of Italian politics.

A notable segment of former Fascist politicians managed to remain active in the political arena by joining the Christian Democratic Party (DC). This party emerged as a pivotal political force in post-WWII Italy, initially taking a centrist position but gradually showing affinities to the conservative right. Amintore Fanfani (1908-1999) was one of them. Initially affiliated with the National Fascist Party, he later became the Minister of Labor and Social Security in the Italian Social Republic. As a member of the DC, Fanfani gained significant prominence, serving as prime minister five times, as well as holding other important positions such as Minister of the Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

On the other hand, there was, of course, a major aspect of discontinuity of fascism in Italy after the war as well. One of the most significant changes after the fall of fascism was Italy's transition to a democratic political system. After the end of World War II, Italians voted for a new constitution in a popular referendum in 1946, which established the Italian Republic and a system of representative democracy, marking a significant break from the Fascist dictatorship under Mussolini. However, Fronio states that there was more continuity than discontinuity set forth by the transition from Fascist to post-Fascist governments.[33]

In conclusion to this brief introduction to the afterlife of the fascist ideology in the political system of Italy, we see that despite the brutal execution of Mussolini by the Italian resistance in April 1945, the whole ideology remained actively present in the post-fascist socio-political scene of Italy.

4.2. Politics and urban planning in Rome after the WWII

Why is that state of political affairs important for the investigation of the fascist architectural heritage in Rome and EUR in particular? As it was previously stated, architecture is not purely utilitarian; it possesses a significant ideological meaning and transmits narratives created by the commissioners of the constructions. Therefore, I would like to provide here an important point of discussion in the government of Rome around the same time when EUR

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[33] Chiara Fonio, and Stefano Agnoletto. "Surveillance, repression and the welfare state: Aspects of continuity and discontinuity in post-fascist Italy." Surveillance & Society 11.1/2 (2013): 77.

was regaining its role in the urban layout of the city, and that directly affected its development at the end of the 1950s.

The city government was constituted not only of the anti-fascist politicians but of the former and new followers of fascism. And one particular aspect of the after-war discussion was the urban Master plan of Rome (*Piano Regolatore*). It is the urban planning strategy aimed at guiding the growth and development of the city over the years. It introduces zoning regulations, land-use designations, infrastructure improvements, and preservation measures for culturally significant sites, among other aspects. The curiosity with the Piano Regolatore in Rome is that its first three versions were accepted as early as 1870, 1873, and 1883. Those Master plans were, in fact, not as plans in themselves, as just a justification of the transformations that had already occurred: "the plans served simply as tardy tools for reinforcing the Status quo – a footprint of what was already done — rather than as programs for channeling growth…"[34]

Then during the whole period of the fascist state and even two decades after its fall all the urban transformations within the city were taking place without any planned regulations. It is notable for Mussolini's time, as he was practically an 'emperor', he wouldn't need any permission or discussion around his urban projects and visions of the development of the capital of *his* state. However, when the regime seized to exist and the government changed, fascism was overthrown, and it took a lot of time for the city government to conclude the development project. The reason for that was the remaining presence of fascist politicians in the government in their posts in the ruling parties.

I have been able to trace the discussion around this Piano Regolatore in the post-war period, from 1955 until 1960, through the articles written by Bruno Zevi, a prominent architecture historian and critic, who had his own column in the weekly edition of L'Espresso newspaper. One of the most notable of them was published on July 6, 1958, which describes one of the meetings and voting for a long-discussed and developed Master plan. It contains an

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[34] Maristella Casciato,. "Sport and Leisure in Rome from the Fascist years to the Olympic Games." ICOMOS–Hefte Des Deutschen Nationalkomitees 38, 2002: 29.

explicit description of the contestation between MSI and Christian Democrats parties that, during the whole time of the development of the plan, had been rejecting each other's ideas[35].

At that meeting, as Bruno Zevi states, "despite appearances, the order of the day imposed by the majority proved that the monarchists and the MSI were right, who were the real winners of this battle… Now the Christian Democrats passed on to the Fascist thesis, making a choice that had no technical justification and therefore reflected an evident political orientation."[36] This allows us to conclude that the remaining fascist ideologists played crucial roles in the decision-making processes in the development of the city of Rome.

During these discussions, EUR has always been mentioned as a focal point of the urban layout; it was a destination point in developing the transport connections of the city and as the area to be revitalized further. The tendency towards decentralization of Rome from its historical center had always been considered in the direction towards the sea, which means towards EUR and further.[37]

4.3. History of EUR in the first decades after World War II — Shift in the perception.

In the 1950s, the works on the quarter resumed under the guidance of almost the same group of architects led by its original leader Marcello Piacentini. The main decision-making role in the resumption of construction of EUR was played by Virgilio Testa, who was the one to propose the expansion of Rome towards the sea, on the axis of Rome–Ostia in 1926, the same year when he was given an ex officio membership in the Fascist Party. Testa had been actively involved in the urban planning of Rome during Mussolini's reign in various official roles, as well as related to the foundation of the graduate school in urban planning at the Faculty of Architecture in Rome, where he taught as a free lecturer in urban planning for five years.[38]

During Testa's leadership in the EUR project, the idea of EUR was that it "had a specific image: the old exhibition of fascism, the abandoned and fenced-off ruins. It is an image to be

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[35] Another mentioning of the conflict can be found in the article "Più brute le città." L'Espresso, January 5, 1958, n.p.7: "The Master Plan of Rome is not going to be approved: the representatives of Christian Democrats in fact don't want it." (Translated from Italian by Maria Nebolsina)

[36] L'Espresso, July 6, 1958: 16. (Translated from Italian by Maria Nebolsina)

[37] L'Espresso, July, 6 1958: 16; L'Espresso, "Urbanisitca. Il piano e la retorica", May, 3 1959: 16.

[38] Testa Treccani and Virgilio di Oscar Gaspari — Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani — Volume 95 (2019), accessed June 20, 2023 https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/virgilio-testa_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/.

erased, from which nothing good can be derived."[39], and the focus was made on the residential role of the quarter, which was essential for the after-war society that was partially left without roofs over their heads. It was also supposed to accommodate businesses and commercial activities.

Most likely, the main reason for relaunching the construction of EUR was purely practical and economical. Italy was devasted after World War II; the main infrastructure was affected by the bombings and war actions. Joshua Arturs explains that recovery efforts understandably focused more on using what available resources were at hand rather than on the annihilating traces of the previous regimen. This is largely due to the damages the war had inflicted economically and on infrastructure.[40] That idea can also be found in works by different scholars who dedicate their research to the architectural heritage of fascism.[41]

Additionally, EUR was chosen as one of the two main locations for the Olympic games that took place in Rome in 1960 alongside Foro Italico (ex. Foro Mussolini). This may be considered as one of the main turning points in the destiny of the EUR quarter. By the time of the Olympics, works in EUR were almost finished. Games took place in Velodromo, constructed there in 1957–1960, and Palazzo dello Sport, which was designed by Marcello Piacentini in 1957. I suggest that the Olympic games that were held in Rome in 1960 provided Italy with a chance to demonstrate the liberation of the country from the fascist doctrine to the world community, at least in its explicit visual forms. And the attempts had been made in Foro Italico as a main site of the games… In EUR, the statue of an athlete that was showing the fascist salutation sign, which also had the name of Il genio del fascismo (The genius of fascism[42]) located in front of Palazzo degli Uffici was partially transformed with stripes added to it on its hands and wrists, as well as renamed as Il genio dello sport (The genius of the sport[43]).[44] However, as has already been discussed earlier, the political situation had not allowed clearing that doctrine completely. I will later analyze the aspects of post-fascist

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[39] Luigi Di Majo and Italo Insolera. L'Eur e Roma Dagli Anni Trenta al Duemila. Grandi Opere. Roma: Laterza, 1986, p.86
[40] Joshua Arthurs,"Fascism as 'heritage' in contemporary Italy." *Italy Today*. Routledge, 2010: 134–148.
[41] Paolo Nicoloso, "Architetture per durare," in *Luoghi del fascismo: memoria, politica, rimozione,* Roma: Viella, 2022. p.71; Flaminia, Bartolini, "Le eredità difficili: il Foro Mussolini e la memoria del fascismo a Roma," in *Luoghi del fascismo: memoria, politica, rimozione.* Roma: Viella, 2022: 136.
[42] Translated from Italian by Maria Nebolsina.
[43] Translated from Italian by Maria Nebolsina.
[44] Renato Moro, A cento anni dalla marcia su Roma: il peso del passato, in *il Mulino, Rivista trimestrale di cultura e di politica*, 3/2022: 187, doi: 10.1402/104785.

narratives in the management of urban structures, that idea may be reinforced with argumentation.

4.4. EUR as it is presented today.

The case of the Square Colosseum may be considered one of the most representative illustrations of a new approach to the perception and understanding of the fascist project of the EUR quarter. In 2004 a significant step in the evaluation of the EUR quarter took place — the Italian government proclaimed Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana as a cultural heritage site according to the national legislature towards historical monuments (*La nozione di "bene culturale" è desumibile dall'art. 2, co. 2, e dagli artt. 10 e 11 del Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio (d.lgs. 42/2004)*).

Since 2015 it has been housing the head office of the Italian fashion brand Fendi. During the opening ceremony, its guests were greeted by a specific installation: "the letters lying on the staircase anticipate upon arrival one of the works celebrating the reopening of one of the buildings symbolic of the history of the Capital and of the country: these are the same letters that, projected on the facade in artist Mario Nanni's Poetry of Light, have returned to their place in the luminous form to recompose the inscription."[45] In the inauguration speech of the president of the organization, such words have been said: "We are proud to be able to return today to our city, Rome, and to the whole world the Palace of Italian Civilization, a symbol of our Roman roots and of the continuous dialogue between tradition and modernity, values that have always been dear to Fendi."[46] "For me it is a non-issue. For the Romans it is a non-issue. For Italians it is a non-issue," said Fendi's chief executive, Pietro Beccari.

> "This building is beyond a discussion of politics. It is aesthetics. It is a masterpiece of architecture."[47]

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[45] Clara Tosi Pamphili, "Fendi, il Colosseo Quadrato e le polemiche", Arttribune, October 31, 2015, accessed June 20, 2023, https://www.artribune.com/progettazione/architettura/2015/10/fendi-polemica-palazzo-della-civilta-italiana-roma/.

[46] Clara Tosi Pamphili, "Fendi, il Colosseo Quadrato e le polemiche", Arttribune, October 31, 2015, accessed June 20, 2023, https://www.artribune.com/progettazione/architettura/2015/10/fendi-polemica-palazzo-della-civilta-italiana-roma/.

[47] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/22/fendi-launches-hq-in-mussolini-propaganda-building Accessed June 19, 2023.

What may seem outrageous, given the context of the history of the building and that inscription on it, is, in fact, what constitutes modern Italian mentality. The nation undoubtedly has its right to be called remarkable due to its long-lasting history and significant culture that is invested in the whole world. On the other hand, there are very specific political and economic issues within the country that have been continuously going on for the past decades, shifting political discourses along the whole left–right spectrum. Currently, the government is run by a far-right political force that is practically a direct ancestor of the original fascist movement. This seems to allow the preserved and 'amnestied' fascist architectural heritage that, as I stated earlier, seems to have been blurred in the background to slowly regain its ideological meaning with which it was created.

In conclusion to this chapter, I would like to point out the fact that the socio-political environment plays a significant role in the process of managing architectural heritage and city development. This was illustrated by a specific example in the discussion of the Master Plan of Rome in the 1950s but is undoubtedly still present nowadays. The EUR quarter was featured in that Master Plan as one of the focal points of the development of the city. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that for those politicians who were still representing the fascists' thoughts, it was an opportunity to achieve the original ideological goal of the project.

Chapter 5. Continuity and transformation in the treatment of EUR after the fascist regime. Discussion on the aspects of its heritage

EUR was supposed to demonstrate the opportunities of the fascist state and its ideology on the international level; it was the product to be 'exported' on the world's arena — "…Mussolini regarded it as the flagship of Fascist culture and a sign of the new openings the regime intended to manifest toward foreign countries, imposing itself for the international attention."[48]

Yes, it was intended by Mussolini to last through generations, just as Foro Italico, but since the ideological context of the new generations has changed, hasn't the concept of EUR

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[48] Harper Douglas and Francesco Mattioli. I simboli del fascismo nella Roma del XXI secolo. Cronache di un oblio. Roma: Gruppo Editoriale Bonanno, 2014: 82. (translated from Italian by Maria Nebolsina)

changed as well together with these generations? Today we see EUR being a prosperous, quite prestigious quarter of Rome. It is home to multiple headquarters of not only Italian but international companies, and it continues to expand and build up with residential and commercial buildings. On the one hand, in the end, EUR has indeed accomplished one of the original intentions of Mussolini, but on the other, it is no longer a fascist manifest but rather the opposite — a manifest of capitalism, modern technologies, and ways of living. All the fascist symbols have practically faded into the background and have become so blurred that their meaning is practically not even noticed.

In this chapter, I am discussing two aspects that can be found in the treatment and perception of the EUR quarter after the end of World War II and the fall of Mussolini's regime in Italy. These aspects are the discontinuity and transformation that imply changes in the function and meaning, and the continuity — meaning either the preservation of its functions or ideological meaning or even both. The question is whether there were any, how they happened, and influenced the current role of the quarter in modern Rome. These aspects are highly complex and interrelated, which possibly affected the interpretation and use of EUR.

5.1. Discontinuity and transformation

As it was previously stated, during World War II and after the end of it, EUR was abandoned and partially destroyed by military activities that had been taking place in the capital of Italy. It impacted its functionality and ideological meaning. Not only had the original plans for the quarter failed by the warfare, but the buildings which were supposed to host a demonstrations of the achievements and prosperous plans of the fascist state were transformed into the focal points of the fight against this state. This happened when the Allied forces, as well as the Italian resistance movement, took over the area and used it as their base for the coordination of military actions.

We can see a lot of transformation in the ideology of EUR almost instantly after the end of fascism. Despite being unfinished and made up mostly of monumental public buildings, the area was highly appealing for after-war development. Firstly, unlike a whole city planning strategy, which was missing at that time, EUR possessed a ready-made plan to become both a

residential and a business district.[49] The main streets were laid out, and their zoning was determined. The need for the city to expand was essential, and EUR provided quite an easy solution from a practical point of view.

The choice to hold the Olympic games there reinforced its potential and, as it always works everywhere, boosted its growth and attractiveness. Repurposing the area for modern needs overshadowed the original ideological manifest of its appearance in the urban system. As EUR was passed from the state's hands to private ownership, it probably played another significant part in ideological transformation since the project was no longer governed and constructed by the state but rather by independent private entities. Therefore, it began to reflect the vision of its new stakeholders.

As early as in the first decade after the end of the fascist regime EUR became featured in various movies produced by notable Italian directors such as Roberto Rosselini (*Roma Città Aperta*, 1945), Federico Fellini, and Michelangelo Antonioni (*Le tentazioni del Dottor Antonio* e *L'eclisse*, 1962) Bernardo Bertolucci (*Il conformista*, 1970), and many others. Fellini used EUR practically as his main movie set and saw it as a real competitor of Cinecittà.[50]. The quarter seems appealing to filmmakers due to its pure and neutral forms and colors. Modern movies that needed a progressive and innovative setting could be filmed alongside historical ones that were dedicated to ancient Roman scenes with gladiator fights. According to Andrea Minuz, a professor at the Department of History of Anthropology, religions, and Performances at Sapienza University in Rome, the stylistic dichotomy of the stylistic contestation in the architecture of EUR among its architects is being re-worked in the works of Antonioni and Fellini. Overall, in the opinion of Minuz, the historical distance from the time of the creation of EUR and its original ideological narrative offered an opportunity to look at its architecture as an illustration of modernist ideas through the works of moviemakers. [51]

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[49] Basje Bender, EUR 1935-1960. Il recupero di un progetto fascista nel dopoguerra, Tesi per il Master Letteratura e Cultura Occidentale Università di Utrecht, 2009: 66. Accessed on June 24, 2023 https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/3521.
[50] A large film studio quarter in Rome that, in its turn, was created during Mussolini's regime.
[51] Andrea Minuz, "Spettri della modernità. Le architetture dell'Eur nel cinema italiano," in *Esposizione Universale Roma. Una città nuova dal fascismo agli anni'60*, De Luca Editori D'Arte, 2015: 127-134.

This type of what I may call a 'public campaign' for EUR has probably had its effect on the public perception of the area since it was becoming a background for artistic expressions, an area that had been put forward for its aesthetics rather than ideology.

5.2. Continuity

In this section, I am analyzing the factor of continuity in the management of EUR and its perception by society and decision-makers. It is fair to say that unlike in Germany, where a profound process of denazification took place after the defeat of Nazi ideology, in Italy, it was not the same.[52], even though Mussolini was detested by many people during his reign and executed by shooting in 1945. This has been discussed in the previous chapter as a socio-political climate of post-war Italy. As it has well been mentioned, it had a significant impact on city planning. Therefore, it is worth looking into how that continuity can be seen in the treatment of EUR.

First, we can find continuity in the figure of the leader of the EUR project after the war — Virgilio Testa — who had been the main ambassador of the idea of expansion of Roma towards the sea during Mussolini's regime, being as well a member of the fascist party and government. This continuation is not entirely ideological from the point of view of propagandist manifestation; however, it is the continuity of the fascist urban planning strategy in the expansion of the city. Although it may be said that this is just an urban design, it was as well an urban design based on that ideologically charged architecture that had been used as the basis of future development. This can be seen in the finalization of construction of the sites at EUR that had been interrupted by World War II.

Secondly, another figure can be added to the aspect of continuity — Marcello Piacentini. He was practically the author who invented the architectural language of fascist architecture; he was the chief architect for the E42 project since the very beginning of its execution. Choosing Piacentini to continue the development of EUR after the fall of the fascist regime is quite controversial. On the one hand, it had been his original design from the beginning; it may be seen as a simple decision to facilitate the management process of the construction. On the other

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[52] Joshua Arthurs, "9 Fascism as 'heritage' in Contemporary Italy in *Andrea Mammone, Giuseppe A. Veltri, Italy Today: The Sick Man of Europe* London, Routledge: 115.

hand, Piacentini was an ideological mouthpiece of fascism in urban and architectural design. Therefore, choosing such a significant figure in the circumstances in which the country was attempting to recover from the 'dark' dictatorship seems questionable.

Additionally, the role of the Allies in the management of the fascist architecture during the first five to ten years after the victory over Nazism and Fascism cannot be underestimated. It is mentioned by researchers that the Allies somewhat ignored the ideological manifestations of Mussolini's ideology in visual forms. For instance, Nick Carter and Simon Martin, in their article investigating the aspects of post-war management of the fascist monumental art in Italy on the basis of the mosaic at the Foro Italico, emphasize the role of Allied forces, mostly US Army, who occupied the Foro, as well as several other locations in Rome, in the first steps of the 'defascistization' of the country. Foro Italico was used as a military base for the US army, and all of its content, including the propagandist mosaics and art, were left untouched, and the facilities of the Foro were used for their original purpose. Most likely, the same ignorance took place in EUR. [53]

The Allies did not fully take over the process, rather entrusted to the newly elected democratic Italian government to develop the measures in dealing with it.

"The Ministry of Public Instruction ... has been given not only a new name but a new and delicate assignment: it will distinguish between the good and bad in the public monuments of fascism. The unaesthetic will be destroyed, the better specimens removed to museums, where presumably they will do no harm."[54] However, this distinguishment had barely taken place. Most often, the works by fascist artists depicting the scenes that glorified and propagated fascist ideas were simply covered, sometimes just partially, but rarely taken down.[55] Paolo Nicoloso suggests that it was the new democratic government that could not afford the demolition of the fascist architecture.[56]

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[53] Nick Carter and Simon Martin, "The management and memory of fascist monumental art in postwar and contemporary Italy: the case of Luigi Montanarini's Apotheosis of Fascism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 22.3 (2017): 338–364.

[54] Allied Control Commission Weekly Bulletin, no. 8, 21–27 May 1944, 1 (quoted in Nick Carter and Simon Martin. "The management and memory of fascist monumental art in postwar and contemporary Italy: the case of Luigi Montanarini's Apotheosis of Fascism." *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 22.3 (2017): 346.

[55] Carmen Belmonte. "L'arte dei luoghi del fascismo: rimozioni, mostre e restauri," in *Luoghi del fascismo: memoria, politica, rimozione*, Roma: Viella, 2022: 80.

[56] Giulia Albanese and Lucia Ceci. "Introduzione: il fascismo ei suoi luoghi," in *Luoghi del fascismo: memoria, politica, rimozione*, Roma: Viella, 2022: 12.

Conclusion

As we can see, both transformation and continuity were present in the post-war interpretations of the fascist architectural heritage and EUR in particular. However, I would like to point out that those were not two strictly demarcated processes but rather tightly intertwined. The reason for that was the complexity of the socio-political situation in Italy after the war when the fascist ideas had not gone through a proper condemnation and purging of fascist political leaders. On top of that, the struggling after-war economy in the significantly devasted country of the defeated state had left the government with a practical need to preserve the efficient architectural and urban structures of fascism for future development. Therefore, I prefer to agree with the statement of Paolo Nicoloso, who says that Mussolini's goal of leaving his personal mark on the history of the state to be passed through the following generations was partially achieved. [57]

5.3. Discussion on fascist architectural heritage

It is as well important to consider not only the political and urban activities towards a re-evaluation of the fascist architectural heritage but professional and academic perspectives on the issue. Here we can once more refer to the interview of Paolo Portoghesi, who not only expresses his personal opinion but also recalls the discussions he witnessed himself at the time. He points out that essentially right after the war, there was a rise of the "theoretical anti-fascist atmosphere."[58] and ideas of the complete erasure of the fascist architectural heritage were explicitly expressed by architects, as well as architectural theorists. However, providing an example of Mario Rudolfi, who was among this group of architects, Portoghesi states that already within the decade after the fall of the fascist regime, the ideological approach to the perception of fascist architecture started to shift towards what can be called a compromise. Therefore, introducing the concept of what I may call an 'amnesty of thought,' which accepts some reasoning behind the works of architects under Mussolini's rule. Portoghesi attributes himself to that compromising group of critics and historians of architecture; he describes it as an attempt to "… recognize that in the midst of Evil, there was some Good."[59] It is indeed a

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[57] Paolo Nicoloso, "Architetture per durare," in *Luoghi del fascismo: memoria, politica, rimozione*, Roma: Viella, 2022: 71.
[58] Luca Arcangeli, "Regarding the legacy of fascism: Interview with Paolo Portoghesi 1," in *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, Routledge, 2020: 67.
[59] Ibid. 68.

challenging task to write and talk about architectural history when one of its major stages is strongly interconnected with a very dark and painful period of history.

Bruno Zevi finishes his article that describes the situation around the ex. Casa dei Fasci in Como with a bold statement that best illustrates the opinion of the intellectual and architectural critic who looks at fascist architecture from the historical point of view:

> "This is the country of paradoxes. It is therefore most natural that anti-fascists, that is, men of culture, should rise unanimously to defend the Casa del Fascio in Como, the masterpiece of the greatest Italian architect between the wars, the work that best redeems the most vulgar period of our architecture."[60]

However, the same Bruno Zevi, just a month before the abovementioned statement, had made another, almost opposing one to his own ideas, that was featured in an article dedicated to the critique of the transformation of the city of Ferrara by Marcello Piacentini:

> "It is the dirty, fetid legacy of Fascism that still reigns, gouges out its projects, secures the support of economic forces, sits in the controlling bodies of the state, makes bad and bad time in the field of construction. All around, no one is responsible, everyone looks on in astonishment, they don't know what to do: a madman, wicked and degenerate, has raped Ferrara noblest."[61]

Earlier, in 1950, Bruno Zevi wrote his book on the history of architecture of the XX century, Storia dell'architettura Moderna[62]. There he mentions such major figures of the development of fascist architectural style as Pagano and Terragni, describing them as the forefront of Italian Modernist architecture.

It is worth mentioning here that Bruno Zevi was a true architectural critic; he had a straightforward opinion on EUR. He writes: "… After the war (...) Eur became the visual document of a tragedy veiled by a pathetic touch (...). Today the district is in full swing (...). But to the extent that, with skillful artifice, life is grafted between the grim mausoleums, the

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[60] Bruno Zevi, "La Casa del Popolo di Como: Capolavoro Moderno Pronto per il Piccone", *L'Espresso*, n.34, August 16, 1956.
[61] Bruno Zevi, "Piacentini corrompe il centro di Ferrara", *L'Espresso*, n.29, July 15, 1956.
[62] Bruno Zevi, Storia dell'architettura moderna, 3 ed. Torino: Einaudi, 1955.

scenario appears increasingly absurd,"[63] and "… a crazy abstraction like the E.U.R. in Rome…"[64] His critical, almost sarcastic references to EUR can be found in various articles in his column in L'Espresso that are dedicated to completely different subjects, like, for instance, his review on the newly constructed capital city of Brazil, where he says that "Brazil could practically turn out to be a great World's Fair, where visual impact is more important than filler, kind of a rationalist EUR without all the marble junk made to please the public, but still just as gloomy."[65]

Overall, the discussion about the treatment of fascist architecture in Italy in the first two decades was not that intense, especially among academics. It can be described as ignorance towards its ideological aspects in favor of utilitarian use. Understandably, focus on the interpretation of the architecture of the Ventennio was not given precedence in the immediate postwar period largely due to the country's economic emergency.[66] However, not only that, but the aspects of aesthetics and the role of fascist architecture in the whole history of architecture as a representation of rationalist style in Italy were a point of the discourse of the evaluation of this heritage.

In more recent times, a high impact on the discussion was initiated by a short article published in The New Yorker by Ruth Ben-Ghiat under the name "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?" in 2017. In her article, she criticized the policy towards the Fascist architectural heritage in quite a strong way. Referring to the Square Colosseum, she states that it is "…a relic of abhorrent Fascist aggression." [67] The article practically sparked a whole new wave of discussions that are still ongoing among academics.

An almost immediate response was from the Wu Ming 1 (one of the participants of a group called Wu Ming that unites several Italian authors and publicists, whose original name is Roberto Bui) followed by an elaborate analysis of the current narratives of the early XX-

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[63] Bruno Zevi, 'Forbito nel tragicomico' [12-07- 1959] Cronache di architettura 270, parte 6: 1959/1960 (1970): 346-349, 347. — cited in Basje Bender, EUR 1935-1960. Il recupero di un progetto fascista nel dopoguerra, Tesi per il Master Letteratura e Cultura Occidentale Università di Utrecht, 2009: 61. Accessed April 24, 2023 https://studenttheses.uu.nl/handle/20.500.12932/3521. (Translated from Italian by Maria Nebolsina)
[64] Bruno Zevi, "Per chi non si vota", L'Espresso, n.21, May 25, 1958: 14. (Translated from Italian by Maria Nebolsina)
[65] Bruno Zevi, "Brasilia come l'EUR è nata troppo in fretta", L'Espresso, January 25, 1959; 16. (Translated from Italian by Maria Nebolsina)
[66] Basje Bender, EUR 1935-1960. Il recupero di un progetto fascista nel dopoguerra, Tesi per il Master Letteratura e Cultura Occidentale Università di Utrecht, 2009: 57.
[67] Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "Why Are So Many Fascist Monuments Still Standing in Italy?", The New Yorker, October 5, 2017, accessed June 19, 2023, https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/why-are-so-many-fascist-monuments-still-standing-in-italy.

century architecture in Italy. Wu Ming 1 provides a statement by Gianni Biondillo, an Italian writer and architect that reads as follows: "*There is no tout court fascist architecture. There is an architecture produced under Fascism, often by architects at absolute odds with the dictates of classicism pushed by the regime.*" [68]

In the interview, responding to the question about his thoughts on the article, Paolo Portoghesi tries to answer Ben-Ghiat's question with his thoughts on the history of Italian culture. According to his ideas erasure of symbols of power is something common to the history of Rome during its existence, especially for the fascist regime. Therefore, he sees respect and preservation of symbols, since he considers them innocent in their core, as a good practice of anti-fascism. Overall, his answer appears highly compromising, he again repeats himself as being someone who sees Good in Evil, and says that "now even the worst man is still a man: therefore, he may also have some good ideas."[69]

5.4. Analysis of the discussion around fascist architectural heritage

This section is dedicated to the analysis of the discussion on the aspects of fascist architectural heritage in the course of time after the fall of Mussolini's regime in Italy.

Understanding fascist architectural heritage through the lens of the concept of heritage as collective history is difficult due to the fact that it is very controversial to state that fascist ideology represents the history of the Italian nation per se. Fascism was highly personalized and individual, almost like a cult. Its whole ideology was built around the figure of Duce. All the monuments created during his reign were dedicated to him either explicitly or implicitly. Is it fair to state that the whole nation is related to that ideology and past? Obviously not. Of course, we can see and easily find some nostalgia for those times among people if we start looking for it purposefully, but it is not expressed publicly and anywhere explicitly. The only connotations we can find are more semiotic in the political field of the current Italian

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[68] Wu Ming 1, La leggenda dell'«architettura fascista»: un dibattito distorto su memoria e spazio urbano [The legend of the "fascist architecture": a distorted debate on memory and urban space], December 29, 2017, accessed June 19, 2023, https://www.wumingfoundation.com/giap/2017/12/la-leggenda-dellarchitettura-fascista-un-dibattito-distorto-su-memoria-e-spazio-urbano/.

[69] Luca Arcangeli, "Regarding the legacy of fascism: Interview with Paolo Portoghesi, " in *The Routledge Companion to Italian Fascist Architecture*, Routledge, 2020: 69.

government, which is represented by the right political wing, but it is not a pure revival of fascism.

The discussion on fascist architectural heritage in the first two decades of the fascist regime was taking place in a very complex socio-political and economic state of affairs in Italy, as I have described it previously. Taking into consideration the definition of heritage within Critical Heritage Studies as something that is constructed by the community, it is inevitable that a vivid visual representation of the controversial past of the nation's history, which is especially 'fresh' in memory as it had been with fascism in Italy right after the war, should have become a focal point of the discussion. However, as it can be seen from what I have been able to gather for my research to illustrate it, it appears to not have happened then. The reasons for that are multiple and complex. As was mentioned earlier, the economic factor was significant; the demolition of the whole infrastructure that had been built by the fascist state would have left the country without basic functional spaces. Another factor was essentially political and ideological since former fascist politicians and decision-makers happened to remain in the political life of Italy after the fall of the regime. Additionally, as we have seen in the discussion in the academic field of architectural studies, the somewhat preservationist approach was actively present — the choice to keep the powerful ideological architecture as a 'purified' piece of art and history of architecture was necessary for theorists.

When thinking of the economic reasons, the aspects of *adaptive reuse* may be considered. It is not always that we build a new building for every other need. Otherwise, we would have already run out of space in our cities. It is acceptable to change the function of the building in case it no longer serves its primary function or is no longer acceptable for its function in the modern world. However, it is a very delicate process, which should be considered and executed carefully for various reasons. The main reason, of course, is the evaluation of the historical importance of the building, ensemble, or cityscape. It is crucial to recognize the significance of an architectural structure as an illustrative object of the stylistic or historical development of the national or world culture. However, considering the idea on which I am building up my analysis, that architecture is not always a purely functional structure but a reflex of a specific cultural or socio-political narrative, this evaluation process becomes very sensitive and complex. Here it becomes important to take into consideration many factors that

include public opinion, memories, and perception, as well as the strength and vividness of the ideological manifest of the architectural structure.

The transformation of EUR and its Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana from the point of view of adaptive reuse may seem like a positive example and quite a successful case. And it has been such, but only until the shift in the political climate of recent years in Italy. Under the current Italian government that represents far-right political ideas such transformations and pompous opening ceremonies as Fendi conducted for its new headquarters, we inevitably may start questioning whether it can be considered a turn back to the exploitation of ideological architecture of fascism in its original narrative in the modern world.

It is worth looking at another building in Bolzano, which is Monumento alla Vittoria (Victory Monument). It was designed by Marcello Piacentini and erected in 1928 as a celebration of the victory of Italy over Austria in the First World War in the city of the annexed region of South Tyrol. In 2017 the fascist inscription on it was overlayed by a light installation by Hans Piffrader that quotes Hanna Arendt: "*Nessuno ha il diritto di obbedire*" (No one has the right to obey).

In the book written by Douglas Harper and Francesco Mattioli[70] , sociologist Mattioli dedicates his research to the very important sociological question in the perception of fascism by Italians in the XXI century — "to what extent did the architectural symbols of fascism become an integral part of the urban identity of Rome?"[71] He conducted a profound sociological investigation that was based on interviews with citizens of Rome of various generations. Among those people there is a whole range of generations from the one who actually witnessed the time of Mussolini's reign and his urban transformations of the capital, to the younger ones who have only learned about fascism in schools or from their families. This sociological study is a crucial point for the investigation of the perception of the fascist architectural heritage in modern Italy. Some of the young people interviewed by Mattioli have never noticed the fascist mosaics of Foro Italico, but the majority can name EUR as a product of the architectural fascist regime. Several older people who have seen the architectural

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[70] Douglas Harper and Francesco Mattioli, I simboli del fascismo nella Roma del XXI secolo. Cronache di un oblio. Roma: Gruppo Editoriale Bonanno, 2014.
[71] Ibid. 87. (Translated from Italian via DeepL, free version)

development of the city by Mussolini's architects state that it was better than what they see now, some of them are outraged. It proves the existence of such factors as nostalgia and rage in the mindset of people who currently live in the city.[72]

Chapter 6. Conclusion

It is undeniable that fascism laid a significant imprint on the cityscape of Rome as we see it now. Modern tourists have access to the ancient Roman sites because of Mussolini's strive to resurrect the Roman Empire, to showcase its grandeur. We do not question Ancient Ruins as the national heritage of Italy; we even cherish it as a universal heritage. However, when it comes to the monuments produced by the fascist state, we start to question their value. That is justified by the fact that the fascist regime and ideology were responsible for a significant number of innocent deaths and broken lives of not only the Italian nation but those that suffered from its military aggression at the time. While as outside experts who are trying to be unbiased looking into the historical and modern comprehension of this controversial heritage, we are still taking the judgmental position as we emphasize the aspect of the socio-political origin of the commissioner.

However, if we put ourselves in the position of a regular citizen of Rome, who has lived there for all of his life, he may not see those semiotic references and signs that connect his surroundings with the difficult past. For that citizen, it can be just a natural background of his life, structures that have been surrounding him since his birth. This citizen may not know the history behind this specific building that he lives or works in unless it is explicitly demonstrated to him.

While Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana at EUR is actively excluded from the presence of Mussolini's narrative in architectural heritage within the cityscape of Rome under the acceptable argumentation of defining it as a purely aesthetical masterpiece, it may be said that we are now witnessing the signs of the resurrection of fascist ideology in urban structure through the activation of the nationalist narrative.

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[72] Douglas Harper and Francesco Mattioli, I simboli del fascismo nella Roma del XXI secolo. Cronache di un oblio. Roma: Gruppo Editoriale Bonanno, 2014: 120–153.

In Italy specifically, the blending of fascist architecture and urban planning with pre-existing architectural styles made it hard to separate the fascist elements entirely. Many buildings and structures had historical and cultural significance and maintaining them was often considered more important than eradicating the remnants of fascism.

In my thesis I have provided an analysis of the two factors that are present in the history of management and perception of fascist architectural heritage in Rome based on the case of the EUR quarter. These factors are transformation and continuity that are actively present in the process of development of that area of the city since the early years after the fall of the fascist regime in Italy. These factors exist due to very specific socio-political context of the time that I have also provided in my analysis. It can be said that the case of EUR is a good example to show how political climate can affect the management of heritage in general, but also such sensitive and complex ideological heritage as fascist architecture.

In the conclusion to my analysis, I suggest that cultural heritage is indeed, not just an object but rather a concept; a construct of meanings produced by societies — the idea that is one of the main concepts within Critical Heritage Studies. Preserving something as complex as fascist architecture as a piece of tangible heritage is not wrong. However, not providing a proper context around it that could educate people of its complexity can be easily exploited in political power games that are seeking to fully or just partially revive its original meaning to reach their own goals.

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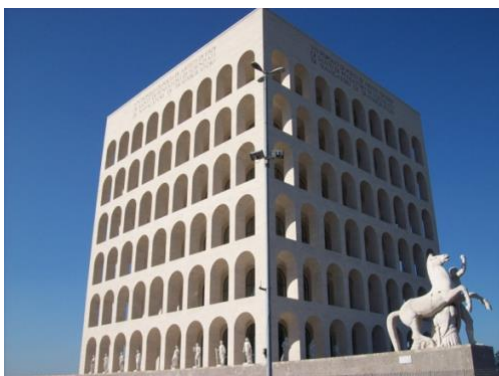
Appendix. Images.

Figure 1. The original plan of EUR

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:EUR_42_-_Planimetria_generale.jpg ArchiDiAP, CC BY-SA 3.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>, via Wikimedia Commons. Accessed June 30, 2023.

Figure 2. Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana

Source: Wikipedia. 2023. "Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana." Wikimedia Foundation. Last modified March 23, 2023. Accessed June 30 2023. https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palazzo_della_Civilt%C3%A0_Italiana

Figure 3. Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana. Inscription.

Source: https://www.culturalheritageonline.com/cho/location.php?n=163 Accessed June 30, 2023.