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Dipartimento Interateneo di Scienze, Progetto e Politiche del Territorio
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Doctoral Dissertation

Housing the student population in the post-industrial university city

By

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Declaration

I hereby declare that, the contents and organization of this dissertation constitute my own original work and does not compromise in any way the rights of third parties, including those relating to the security of personal data.

* This dissertation is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ph.D. degree in the Graduate School of Politecnico di Torino (ScuDo)

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Abstract

Universities have been traditionally considered as elite institutions, ivory towers which raised the urban ruling class. Nonetheless the situation changed rapidly in the last fifty years. The higher education is still encompassing a process of massification, with increasing number of global populations accessing the tertiary education and universities increasingly oriented to grow. Universities with their expansion in the urban environment became progressively urban actors, changing in some cases their role and activism in the local dimension. On the other side, cities start to notice university presence and particularly their student's urban activity. These dynamics involved also Italian universities and cities hosting universities. Here, in some cities more than others the university presence became crucial. Turin is one of the cases. Searching for a new identity in a phase of post-Fordist reconversion, in the late 90s the city started a process of reorientation of its economy. One of the main strategies went toward the development of a new image of knowledge city. In the meantime, several contextual as well as internal factor supported the mobility of a – apparently unstoppable – flux of student population in the city. As a result, Turin gained in the last twenty years one of the most numerous student population hosted by the main Italian cities. More than 114.000 students live daily the city of Turin, with more than one third residing for medium to long term in the city. The student demand for housing thus exploded in a few years, finding the local housing market unprepared. The affordable supply became rapidly insufficient while the private rental market have been overwhelmed by student request. This laid the foundation for a new market, those of purpose build student accommodations (PBSA). This student housing solution, though not really new for the Turin context, evolved to meet the demand. A private PBSA model which has been frequently reproduced mostly in the UK, America and Canada has recently approached the Italian market, finding a fertile environment in Turin and elsewhere. Following a in depth description of context specific characters of the case study of Turin, the research go on with the analysis of the process of expansion of the student housing supply, on the actors which make it possible and their reasons. But, most importantly looking at the urban socio spatial transformation that this process produced. The aim is in fact to understand how such transformations are produced and why. The focus is on students and their housing in the city as agent of socio-spatial urban transformations, with a particular attention to universities' influence on those

transformations, looking towards the most critical and those which potentially accentuate territorial fragilities.

The research work is articulated around three research questions.

1.Which local actors are involved and how in the urban development of Turin,
as a city that aspires to become a 'university city'?

The first question raises from the need first to map actors and stakeholders, in order to assess how they are positioned in relation to the so-called University City strategy and the consequent increase of student population in Turin. Actors at play are those involved in either drawing, carrying out or in taking advantage of the Turin University City strategy, particularly on student housing development. At the same time with an inclusive approach oriented as well to the recognition of those who are not involved or even excluded from the processes at stake. The structure of the network of actors and their role are observed focusing on their interaction with the urban development; this also mean to evaluate actors' contribution to the city transformations in the socio spatial domain.

2. What impacts does the student residential sector have on urban socio spatial dimension?

The urban development of the 'university city' and actors' contribution are assessed though the analysis of the subsector of the student housing. The second research question points towards a better understanding of the role of student housing in the definition of socio-spatial urban transformations. The objective here is to draw the Turin student housing system in its complex geographies and multiple forms (also referring to the different housing typologies it entails).

Quantify demand and supply is an intermediate objective in order to evaluate the extent of this relatively new urban phenomenon and estimate the scope of its impacts in the city. Furthermore, map the changing distribution of student residents allows to postulate on the fluidity and rapidity of the student housing market, as well as on the presence of student enclaves; evaluate the contribution of students as an agent of redevelopment of urban " voids ".

3. Which conditions (political, economic, physical, social...) support or accelerate the creation of exclusive urban transformations of the university city, particularly in the housing dimension, and how?

The third research question shifts the focus to local policies and their exclusive (or inclusive) outcomes. The aim is to make to emerge the contextual factors (political, economic, social etc.) influencing actors' agency and, consequently, shaping the student housing solutions. Effectively, this means first to reconstruct the process through which the policy responses (and non-responses) to the increasing university student housing demand have been shaped in Turin, assessing their socio spatial impacts afterwards. Put it differently, what step in the process, or reason of the actors, or contextual factor brings to student housing solutions potentially exclusive for the urban populations?

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Part 1 – Introduction

This doctoral research addresses the role of tertiary education and the increasing focus on its growing student population in the dynamics of urban transformation, in this case explored from a preferred perspective: student housing as a potential urban policy issue. In this context students' presence is crucial because of the new issues it raises for urban governance in managing students' impact. Indeed, there is a problematic dimension to these impacts at stake, namely the local conflicts and forms of social exclusion they can generate.

On the one hand, the action of the student population on cities is seen in relation to the global dynamics of massification of tertiary education and increasing mobility of people. On the other hand, it does not prevent us from pursuing the objective of highlighting the way in which these dynamics are translated at the urban scale, in a specific context and through specific practices. In particular, in the local dimension, the effects of the presence of students are observed (1) on socio-spatial transformations and the possible conflicts associated with them, and (2) on local policies and actors who are involved in various ways in shaping urban development. The development of the themes described above takes place in this research through the in-depth study of a Southern European case study: that of the city of Turin, the former FIAT one-company-town in Italy. As will be recounted later, the choice of the city is not random but the result of the observation of the occurrence, precisely in Turin, of phenomena of urban transformation. These changes occur at times silently and inconspicuously, but at the same time reproduce dynamics and power games already observed elsewhere and critical to the life of the city. The final intention is therefore to gain a deep understanding of what is happening here and now, in order to highlight the nuances that are less evident, but which demonstrate a structural change whose implications are largely yet to be understood.

0.1 Issues at stake

Multiple global phenomena are affirming a tendency to grow of the relevance of university as urban actor. The most relevant are related to the global massification of the higher education the increasing human (and students) mobility and growing competition among cities as well as universities to attract those human though economic resources.

The massification of tertiary education is a now recognized phenomenon, but at the same time still relevant because it is expanding. In the context of continental Europe, universities are strongly linked to the city in which they are located. Therefore, the fact that in general an increasing share of young people decide to enroll in university has inevitable repercussions for urban development, both of universities and of the cities themselves.

The student population is also among those involved in the broader phenomenon of increasing mobility of people. Young people who leave their region or country of origin to study are increasing (Russo & Tatjer 2007) and they are supported in this type of move by governmental or supra-national policies (i.e. among others in the European context we can refer to the noteworthy impact of the Erasmus programme). Indeed, the growth in the overall university population does not necessarily correspond to an even growth in the number of students enrolled in the cities, or near the cities, in which they were born.

The choice of university and city in which to study is of course not random but influenced by several factors. The cost of university fees, the cost of living or the level of bureaucratization in a given country may be reasons of attraction for some students or repulsion for others. Indeed, the countries with 'the best universities' are not always the most accessible. The issue of the perceived quality of university institutions is another key factor in the processes of student mobility. Studying at a good university is an understandably widespread ambition.

On the other hand, we see mechanisms typical of market-driven spirals. On the one hand, universities manage to guarantee a high level of services, teaching and research if they have sufficient resources. On the other hand, universities manage to get more resources if they manage to attract more students. Consequently, it becomes imperative to compete on the international scene. Being a university with internationally recognized prestige becomes an indispensable condition, because it allows for increased enrolments and resources. This is also one of the reasons for the success of the international rankings of the most prestigious universities, which Italian universities - but not only them - struggle to climb every year. At the same time, the presence of a university with a high reputation is seen as a strategic factor by local administrations. Indeed, the influx of a young and highly educated population has an undisputed direct positive impact in economic terms on the city. This observation is often made in support of urban development policies based on university and knowledge as strategic factors. Many cities are fascinated by the idea of becoming knowledge hubs and are strongly committed to political and financial support to implement this goal. Such strategies include attracting a highly qualified population, including the university population.

The students are tenants, consumers and perhaps also workers and new citizens of tomorrow: a sure source of income and urban growth. However, it must be kept in mind that just as cities are interested in students, students are interested in cities. The quality of life in a city, but also the opportunities it offers for the future, are important factors in choosing a city in which to study. There are some attractive factors that may seem more obvious, such as the presence of a cultural, sports and leisure offer. And then there are others that are less frequently mentioned such as the level of transport connections between services or the cost of living (housing above all). Here the intention is to highlight the effort made by both universities and cities to implement policies that are attractive to students, which may be understandable. On the other hand, one must also consider the impacts that a growing student population has on the city, both in its most obvious aspects (the increased presence and their behaviors) and in its induced aspects, that is, on changes in urban structures and its uses. A line of research has partially developed on this issue, which has taken the term "studentification”.

A growing literature on 'studentification' processes drew attention to students' disruptive impacts on different urban contexts, from the physical social and economic point of view (Smith, 2005). The growing student population, which chooses to live in university towns or in cities where higher education institutions are located, has in fact characteristics that can sometimes conflict with those of long-term residents. Students have their own rhythms of life, with more assiduous participation in certain types of activities that meet their special needs, including night-time activities. Moreover, the university population, like other urban populations, tends to spatially concentrate around areas of interest (both to meet and to live). The reach of critical concentration of students in urban hotspots has been recognized as source of negative impacts. Accordingly, this research work focuses on the analysis of these impacts and how they are defined through the implementation of certain policies. From this, the research aims to bring attention precisely to the responsibility that certain urban actors, such as universities or municipal administrations but not only, have in determining certain forms of urban transformation. Two central aspects of this reasoning concern (1) the fact that such impacts are not always consciously generated and (2) the fact that the urban transformations produced can also be exclusive to the resident as well as student population.

A central dimension of the relationship between the university, students and the city is the issue of student housing. Among the different forms of transformations that universities and their students generate in the city, the question of the impact on housing emerges. This results first of all in an explosion of supply dedicated to students, who turn out to be an extremely profitable target. Second, student housing takes on the forms of a sector with characteristics of its own, activating market and urban economic policy dynamics that have yet to be explored.

This research investigates the peculiarities of student housing supply development in an urban Italian context which has recently undertaken a path of university and student related exclusive urban transformations. The particular focus is on PBSA, a sub-sector that has particularly grown in recent years, increasing its relevance in the housing market; as well as a form that has already been observed for its rapid development, exclusivity and power to reproduce inequalities both among students and local populations (Reynolds, 2020).

0.2 The case study

Turin is a medium size city undertaking a long process of economic reconversion strongly influenced by knowledge production and knowledge institutions.

The city's recent history underlies these conversion choices. Particularly in the background is the attempt, in some ways still ongoing, to abandon an unwieldy industrial past. Turin is the Italian city where Fordism found among its highest expressions, in the years when it became FIAT's one company town. But it is also a city that was, from the 1980s onward, abandoned by large-scale industrial production and where the post-Fordist reconversion translated in a long and ongoing journey in search of a new identity.

In more recent years Turin worked on its image as a place of major events and culture, reaching a peak of international exposure in 2006, hosting the Winter Olympics, from which the city inherited disastrous effects on the municipal budget, later aggravated by the 2008 economic crisis. Turin today is a northern Italian city with a general socio-economic situation that is far closer to the one of southern Italian cities. Against this backdrop of severe weakening and impoverishment, the city's two large universities seem like happy oases, where enrollments are increasing and funding - state and corporate - continues to flow in. Thus, the universities become the city's new productive base, promising a future of knowledge, research and innovation. This process, which is still ongoing, is the context within which it is interesting to observe the developments of the strategy of conversion to a knowledge economy.

Turin, in the north-west of Italy, emerges as a case of interest because of the increasing centrality of its HEIs and the student population in the overall process of urban development. During the last twenty years students, and particularly off-site ones, increased also in countertrend compared with national variations, the case study emerges significantly for the growing path of its student population and for the answer the city decided to give to their housing demand. Students' grow can be ascribed to targeted attraction policies as well as intra-national migration and international mobility flows of youth.

Among the entire university student population, off-site students are the group most involved in this research. While on-site students are those residing permanently into the city, or residing in the surrounding and daily commuting, off-site move to Turin to live far or outside the parental home. Off-site national and international students are thus the target of the student housing market, as a consequence this is also the segment of the student population that is more involved in this research. Nonetheless, it is important to take into account how student led urban transformations also involve domains beyond the housing.

Off-site students ask for living in Turin from short to medium term, and their rapid grow risk to turn critical their demand. As the following sections will underline, the private student housing sector has quite rapidly reacted, in the face of a sluggish public response of planned and affordable solutions. The results in terms of socio-spatial transformations produced by both public and private projects as well as the emerging processes of privatization of student housing subsector, are at the core of this research's analysis.

Reflecting on student housing issues in Italy has a further relevance. In a national context in which the policy approach appears less and less appropriate for tackling the housing needs of the young (Bricocoli & Sabatinelli 2019), this research raise questions on that from a critical perspective. Through the re-enactment of the policy approach to student housing supply in Turin, I questioned who gains and who loses in the game of strength between the real estate interests and the constitutionally recognized right to study and to home.

The achievement of the research's objectives is embedded in the understanding of how the urban transformations occurs in a specific place and time, which are those of Turin, Italy, in the last twenty years. The choice of an Italian case study lie with the intention to overcome the geographical lack in the international literature, where the southern European rarely appears. Italy has several examples of university cities and cities where universities are assuming relevant role as urban actor and student's attractor. Some of the university and student related socio-economic transformations observed in Turin seems to emerge in other Italian cities too. Nevertheless, despite the international literature on student impacts on cities, it is hard to find there works tackling these issues in the Italian context, and even less when it comes to student housing. Such criticality could be extended to countries from the south and east of Europe, with few noticeable exceptions (Garmendia et al. 2012, Malet Calvo 2018, Zasina 2019).

0.3 Research objectives and approaches

The broad scope of this research is to understand urban transformation in relation to increasing role of university in the city. The focus is on universities as agent of socio-spatial urban transformations, with a particular attention to those produced by their populations and looking towards the most critical and those which potentially accentuate territorial fragilities. The aim is to understand how such transformations are produced and why, though a close observation of phenomenon in the context of Italy and Turin in particular.

The research moves from the recognition of a set of problems which regards both the dimensions of urban change and the way those changes are perceived and understood, in policy making practices and in the academic debate. The two most problematic processes of urban change at the basis of this work are the pressure that growing mobile young populations apply on cities, and the exclusive urban geographies produced by university development in cities. The two are somehow related, but also need of distinct reflections as they have diverse origins. Growing university student populations in cities depends also from university and cities attraction policies, besides wider global dynamics of human mobility. The attempt to attract such populations laid in the will of reconversion of urban economies through knowledge. In other words, laid in the expectations of the good impacts universities and their populations can have on cities: as gain of new young, mobile and wealthy population or in the form of urban renovation projects. This prevalent narrative is critical, since it underestimates reactions and impacts on the whole city and its populations, including the most exclusive.

In the urban research tackling student housing developments there is still space in the debate for further analysis on the role of different actors in shaping an inclusive/exclusive university city, and particularly to speculate on the role of local policies and local actors in shaping inclusive or exclusive student housing solutions. Particularly lacking are studies seeking the ex-ante phase of student housing developments, in which the conditions for the new project are settled.

A second gap in the international debate is the essential lack of some geographical areas, which could be synthesized as the global south, with the addition of southern Europe. The absence from the international debate does not mean that urban

transformation processes related to universities and students do not also occur elsewhere and with similar levels of impact on cities[1].
Therefore, the research aim is articulated in three research questions.

> RQ 1: Which local actors are involved and how in the urban development of Turin, as a city that aspires to become a 'university city'?

The first question raises from the need first to map actors and stakeholders, in order to assess how they are positioned in relation to the so-called University City strategy and the consequent increase of student population in Turin. Actors at play are those involved in either drawing, carrying out or in taking advantage of the "Turin University City" strategy, particularly on student housing development. At the same time with an inclusive approach oriented as well to the recognition of those who are not involved or even excluded from the processes at stake. The structure of the network of actors and their role are observed focusing on their interaction with the urban development; this also mean to measure actors' contribution to the city transformations in the socio spatial domain.

> RQ2: What impacts does the student residential sector have on urban socio spatial dimension?

The urban development of the 'university city' and actors' contribution are assessed though the analysis of the subsector of the student housing. The second research question points towards a better understanding of the role of "student housing" in the definition of socio-spatial urban transformations. The objective here is to draw the Turin student housing system in its complex geographies and multiple forms (also referring to the different housing typologies it entails). Quantify demand and supply is an intermediate objective in order to evaluate the extent of this relatively new urban phenomenon and estimate the scope of its impacts in the city. Furthermore, map the changing distribution of student residents allows to postulate on the fluidity and rapidity of the student housing market, as well as on the presence of student enclaves; evaluate the contribution of students as an agent of redevelopment of urban " voids ".

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[1] As was noted in a recent dialogue between Camilla Perrone and Saskia Sassen at the presentation of Urban@it's seventh report on cities, processes such as commodification and financialization of urban assets are relatively easily observed in global cities, where they emerge most strongly. And yet this does not mean that "smaller," medium-sized cities are excluded from being involved in the same processes, which, on the contrary, in some cases can manifest themselves in more subtle ways, less easy to be identified in their generation as well as in the effects they produce.

RQ3: Which conditions* (political, economic, physical, social...) support/accelerate the creation of exclusive urban transformations of the university city, particularly in the housing dimension, and how?

The third research question shifts the focus to local policies and their exclusive (or inclusive) outcomes. The aim is to make to emerge the contextual factors (political, economic, social etc.) influencing actors' agency and, consequently, shaping the student housing solutions. Effectively, this means first to reconstruct the process through which the policy responses (and non-responses) to the increasing university student housing demand have been shaped in Turin, assessing their socio spatial impacts afterwards. Put it differently, what step in the process, or reason of the actors, or contextual factor brings to student housing solutions potentially exclusive for the urban populations?

Finally, the research has two further objectives which aim to represent new images of both universities and their student populations. The first is to develop a context specific and critical analysis of the higher education students as an urban population. Students are analyzed per-se, as informal citizens and one of the many short-term mobile urban populations. But they are also observed as they contribute to the life of the city (and of some specific neighborhood), in order to understand their role (the one they play as well as the one which is attributed to them) in determining urban transformations and the unfolding process of studentification. The second is to contribute to the debate about the complex city-university relation, looking at universities' role and impacts in a broader and comprehensive way: this include a new perspective on student impacts as a form of university impact on the city.

The overall research framework is summarized through the following scheme.

SCOPE AND AIM

The focus is on students and their housing in the city as agent of socio-spatial urban transformations, with a particular attention to universities' influence on those transformations, looking towards the most critical and those which potentially accentuate territorial fragilities.

The aim is to understand how such transformations are produced and why, through a close observation of phenomenon in the context of Italy and Turin in particular.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Ongoing processes of urban change:

The pressure that growing mobile young populations apply on cities, and the exclusive urban geographies produced by university development in cities.

But also, locally:

- tendency to easily harness the narrative of the city as a "knowledge factory";
- little awareness of urban dynamics and the potential externalities that this phenomenon induces;
- coalitions of actors and interests that see the process as an opportunity for speculative actions, especially in relation to the issue of accommodation.

Academic debate:

In the urban research tackling student housing developments there is still space in the debate for further analysis on the role of local policies and local actors in shaping inclusive or exclusive student housing solutions.

The essential lack of some geographical areas, which could be synthesized as the global south, with the addition of southern Europe.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
RQ1: Which local actors are involved and how in the urban development of Turin, as a city that aspires to become a 'university city'?	RO1.1: Map actors and stakeholders RO1.2: Assess how they are positioned in relation to the University City strategy and the consequent increase of student population in Turin RO1.3: measure actors' contribution to the city transformations in the socio spatial domain
RQ2: What impacts does the student residential sector have on urban socio spatial dimension?	RO2.1: draw the Turin student housing system in its complex geographies and multiple forms RO2.2: Quantify demand and supply RO2.3: evaluate the extent of this relatively new urban phenomenon and estimate the scope of its impacts in the city
RQ3: Which policies and contextual conditions (political, economic, physical, social...) support/accelerate the creation of exclusive urban transformations of the university city, particularly in the housing dimension, and how?	RO3.1: reconstruct the process through which the policy responses (and non-responses) to the increasing university student housing demand have been shaped in Turin RO3.2: assess their socio-spatial impacts of student housing policies

	RO4.1: To develop a context-specific and critical analysis of the higher education students as an urban population RO4.2: to contribute to the debate about the complex city-university relation through a new perspective on student impacts as a form of university impact on the city

0.4 Research contribution

The current research can be seen as a contribution to the understanding of the dynamics in the triangular relation among university-students and cities as well as to the advancement of the literature in multiple directions; but also, in the end, aim to contribute to enrich the local public debate of the case study city. The phenomena observed in the case study give the opportunity to unfold different crucial issues in the geographical debate, particularly on the university-city relation and on the contribution of student population in urban life. Nonetheless, this is a transdisciplinary work whose author has an urban planning background, a geographical PhD curriculum and, at the same time, aims to contribute in the field of the policy analysis thorough mixed approaches used in the urban studies and social sciences. Furthermore, this research aims to contribute to the local debate of the case study, providing data and a new perspective on ongoing processes of urban transformations, in order to inform the process of policy decision.

The choice of tacking the university-students-city relationship through the analysis of the policy process on the student housing is also a novel attempt in this field of study. As Savino observed there are not many reconstructions of decision-making processes that have had the university as the main protagonist of policy-making or as one of the main actors, but in the various "narratives," however, the university does not seem to have stood out in any way in the landscape of political action (Savino, 1998). Here instead a different perspective will emerge.

The research is deeply rooted in its context, meaning that it tries to deeply understand why specific actors in a defined place decided to act in a particular way. In other words, what ideas, needs, priorities but also spaces and places influenced actors orienting their decisions. All these elements together are unique and impossible to be reproduced at the same in a different city. Nonetheless I see a certain usefulness to provide such photography of Turin now, a place and time of relevant transformations in which universities and their populations are crucial actors. But also, a place and time of lacking comprehensive and critical analysis of these changes, from which several actors in the city could benefit.

Despite the PhD research was first designed as a solely author's project, during the three-year long development it has crossed other research projects which had enriched its contents significantly.

Between 2017 and 2018 I gave my contribution in the field work of the research project 'Spatio-consumer behaviours of students and the development of postindustrial cities' led by the Department of Regional Economics and Environment, University of Lodz which project's principal investigator was Jakub Zasina. This led to a publication (Zasina et al., 2021) which gave me the opportunity to deepen the knowledge of student geographies and "studentcapes" in Turin. I owe to this collaboration some crucial initial reflections.

From January 2019 I have joined the Horizon 2020 SMARTDEST project. The project aims to develop innovative solutions in the face of the conflicts and externalities that are produced by tourism-related mobilities in cities, by informing the design of alternative policy options for more socially inclusive places in the age of mobilities (smartdest.eu). Furthermore, each partner in the project will develop a specific issue that in Turin will be related to student mobilities and their impacts on the city. Due to my previous experience in the research field of student-university relations and my knowledge of the Turin case study, I have been involved as a team member and I have the opportunity to be part of research activities.

As a consequence, some analyses developed for the PhD research are also a contribution for SMARTDEST official reports (noted, when relevant, throughout the thesis).

0.5 Overview of the analysis conducted, approach and methods

This research is based on the single case study identified by the city of Turin, in the north west part of Italy. The research work provides a first thus unique interpretation of the transformation processes occurred along the period of the last twenty years (2000-2021) in the city, as a consequence of the increasing leading role of universities as local development actors and the growth of the student population. The urban transformations observed are of physical, social, political and economic nature; particular attention is given to actors' agency and orientation in the field of student housing and the related policies and urban transformations. The choice of a single case study is due to several reasons. In accordance with Flyvbjerg (2011), the value of this methodology lies in the fact that it allows one to go deep into the study of issues, through close observation but also by looking at the progression of phenomena over a reasonable period of time. In addition, the context in which the case develops takes on particular relevance. Some of the phenomena observed in the case study spread globally with similar characteristics. In fact, the transformations observed in the case study can also be framed within those wider global geographies, such as student mobilities, studentification and commodification of student housing, university engagement. Nevertheless, the observation of such phenomena in different local contexts does not imply the same outcomes reproduced in every urban dimension. Wanting to understand how certain dynamics are translated in a given context, and which context factors are decisive in varying the outcomes of the processes, is a further reason for choosing the case study as methodology.

It is not my intention with this research to provide general notions or produce generalizable knowledge but to propose a path towards the knowledge of an urban development process which could, at some point, be an example to be transferred (Flyvbjerg 2011). Naturally, the study is set within the framework of a literature that constitutes a useful basic reference for looking at the case study through the lens of certain key concepts, such as that of studentification[2] . In this research, the in-depth case study allows these concepts to be tested in a new context, different from those in which those ideas were structured. Thus, it also allow to refute them, or to discover that in Turin some dynamics develop in slightly or completely

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[2] Moreover, in most cases, studies addressing the university-student-city relationship have been developed from individual case studies.

different ways, then to discover that some concepts or readings of them can be redefined and - ultimately - to propose alternative ones.

The analysis develops at the urban scale, including the territorial extension of the Turin and its metropolitan area. Indeed, conterminous municipalities frequently are continuous with Turin's urbanization. Furthermore, those municipalities are part of the local university system, since HEIs have branches and student halls there, or they are planning to establish new one in the near future. During the analysis at the urban scale, some issues raised as more relevant to specific neighborhoods or group of people. Those emerging social and spatial sub-units where though observed at a closer distance and minor scale.

The field work was developed between 2018 and 2021. However, my previous experience in this field cannot be overlooked. In fact, I have been dealing with Turin and the strategies the city has put in place to become a university, since the academic year 2016/2017, in which I started researching for my master's thesis. Equally relevant to properly situate this work are the political experiences I had as a student first and as an activist later. Having been an active part of university collectives and city associations influenced my view of the university system on the one hand, and the city government system on the other. Sometimes it is not possible to distinguish what I observed as an activist from what I think of it as a researcher. As an example, working on housing issues as an activist made me see and understand how student population can be in conflict with others in search of the same kind of home. This PhD thesis does not have the aim nor the time to deepen these aspects, nonetheless they have been noticed and hopefully will be developed as research and/or activism issues in the future.

For these reasons, although this research has an officially defined beginning and end, the reality is that the boundaries of the fieldwork are lost in the curves of this long journey. It is evident how these experiences and knowledge of the city over a long period of time (I have been in Turin since 2010, when I came to study here as an off-site student) may have influenced the research. On the other hand, I believe that this is also an element in favor of achieving a level of knowledge of the field that has allowed me to access information, places and people more easily, thus enriching the narrative of the processes studied to make them clearer and more readable.

The fieldwork consisted of a long process of participant observation of different contexts of policy development and discussion. The objective was to closely observe the constitutive processes of some specific policies related to the dimension of student living. As stated by Dente (2014) "the macro explanations of decisional blockages resemble the well-known myth according to which a bumblebee should never rise from the floor. To recall Dunn, we need a micro-positive approach to discover the specific circumstances under which important decisions are taken, also in order to check their transferability to other contexts".

The participation, as observer, in public formal and informal assemblies and debates was crucial; following Municipal Council sessions where the city, universities' and student housing related urban transformations were on the agenda. Furthermore, the author has been a member of the research group involved in the preliminary studies for the revision of the local comprehensive plan (2019-20), a work which was very much related to HEIs development strategies.

The urban strategies for the university and student housing development was reconstructed through a desk analysis, which translated in a systematic collection of policy documents produced by different actors over time, to cover twenty years of urban redevelopment strategy, including documents related to planning or regulating student housing in the city from 2000 to 2021. In parallel has been developed a collection and analysis of 260 articles on HEIs development, student related issues and student housing, published on the local pages of three national newspapers (La Stampa, La Repubblica, Il Corriere della Sera) between 2018 and 2021.

The information gathered, as well as the documents collected, have helped in building a geolocated database of the existing, currently built and future student housing projects. For each facility, has been recorded the information about the year of construction, the funding and managing institution, the number of students that can be hosted and expected or current prices of the accommodation. The main actors involved in the policy development and implementation have been identified through a city student housing actor network, in order to investigate their contribution to the policy and to have a clearer image of the overall policy discourse on student housing as well as the effects of these policies on urban transformations in Turin (Mangione, 2019).

As a first step, an in-depth analysis of the literature has been made in order to understand how the most relevant research works in the field of student housing and student impacts on cities. According to what emerge from the comparison between methods, methodologies and scale of the analysis, the qualitative approach is the most common used to tackle issues related with the student population, their behaviors and relation with the urban space and the rest of the urban population. Due to the complexity of this kind of phenomena, the choice to go deep in understanding a single case is not uncommon as well, just a few works try a comparison between two or more case studies. However, the scale of the analysis is urban in the vast majority of the literature. This overview was useful to understand the methods that better fix with the topic of the research and with the approach to that, and to choose the qualitative approach to a single case study on the urban level, to better obtain the expected results. In other words, the aim to unfold the social and political mechanisms that moves the student housing systems of a medium city with two big universities, ask for a close, continuous and in deep observation of the actors into the environment they act and relate to each other. The methodological challenge is thus about the way to approach the study of the policies related with the student housing issues. On the one hand, there are no studies about the analysis of policy making processes that are related with student housing issue. On the other hand, it is hard to find works that can guide in the attempt. This lack put me in the position to test a policy analysis in the field of student housing.

According to Rossi and Vanolo (2010), the concept of urban politics (i.e. the politics of space and place in the urban context) must be considered in a broad sense that includes:

- "official policies undertaken at different geographical scales (urban policies proper);
- mobilisation processes of civil society and unrepresented actors (in the form of associations and social movements);
- the relationships of dominance and hegemony built on a material, symbolic and imaginary level;
- socio-territorial practices that take place in everyday life and outside the official public sphere.

On a more substantial level, wanting to identify an essential core of contemporary urban policy, one can refer to the following key phenomena:

- urban competitiveness strategies;
- the evolution of the real estate sector and the housing problem;
- the role of culture in the regeneration processes of cities and particular neighbourhoods within them;
- multiculturalism and the integration of ethnic and religious minorities;
- the recognition of social and cultural diversity and citizenship rights for the weakest (women, sexual minorities, the homeless);
- the demand for security and surveillance measures in public and residential spaces;
- the claims of ecologically sustainable urban development." (p. 16)

The policy analysis was then developed following Rossi and Vanolo conceptualization, looking to the presence of the key phenomena.

“Identifying and promoting an attractive image of the city is a process of constructing a 'selective narrative' that can be accepted and liked by potential investors/visitors/casual visitors to the city. The image chosen to be effective must, however, have some form of grounding in the city's local identity, urban context, and everyday life” (Ibid, p. 33).

The reason why it is relevant to look at student housing as a policy issue laid in the opportunity that such perspective gives to better understand and cope with related processes as studentification and their critical impacts. Particularly, the understanding on where (at what level) and how (intentionally or not) such exclusionary processes originate, who (actors) is responsible for them, in order to be also able to prevent or properly face the transformations related. In this sense it is relevant to understand from which perspective the different actors involved in the student housing supply system look at students, in other words what students (housing) represent for them.

Picking up on what Dunn wrote in one of the most popular American public policy textbooks, Bobbio et al. (2017) describe the discipline of public policy analysis from a prescriptive perspective (i.e., with a practical approach geared towards helping policymakers solve problems) as follows:

"Public policy analysis is a discipline that consists of problem solving; it is a multidisciplinary process of inquiry designed to create, critically evaluate, and communicate information that can be useful in understanding and improving policy; it is a process of inquiry set up to discover solutions to practical problems."

The descriptive-interpretive research perspective is more widespread in academia and is oriented towards understanding and explaining phenomena as such: how and why policies arise and evolve, who produces them and through what processes. This type of research can also have prescriptive spin-offs, highlighting possible improvements in public policy. (Bobbio et al., 2017, p16).

Part 2 – Universities, students and the city

Chapter 1 - Universities in cities

In this chapter, the global logics and dynamics leading to the growth of the student population - particularly off-site and international - in universities and cities are traced. In particular, it is observed how universities tend to be more and more global players seeking a place in international geographies and networks (such as those of the excellence rankings), and how this trend also has among its effects the attraction and growth of the student population. On the other hand, this logic of attracting 'excellent' human capital is widely supported in the discourses on the knowledge economy, which are taken up by both the universities - which place themselves there, reaffirming their role as key players in multiple dimension of development - and the cities undergoing economic reconversion. The last part of the chapter tackle the complex relationship between universities and the city, particularly focusing on the first as urban agent of urban spatial and social transformations.

1.1 The higher education as a global and mass phenomenon

There are many ways in which the relationship between the university and the city has been and still is defined and narrated. But before looking so closely at the relationship between these two institutions, it is necessary to look at the way in which the university relates to the global. Here in particular, this is done by looking at the university in its role as an educationally-oriented institution and in its function as a place populated mostly by students[3] . In this context, it is useful to look on the one hand at the university as an actor, acting on a supranational scale. Indeed, universities increasingly tend to expand their locations beyond the national borders

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[3] Moreover, since the research is geared towards closely observing a specific context, it is necessary to bear in mind that the analyses carried out both in this theoretical section and in the subsequent case study chapters refer to a type of university that is not only very educationally oriented, but also public, thus funded mainly by the central government and with no declared aim of carrying out profit-making activities.

in which they were originally born, giving rise to transnational spaces of education (also called offshore campuses) (Kleibert, 2022). The discourse on the internationalization of universities is strongly related to that of the mobilities and immobility that are activated as a consequence. In this sense, the role that is assumed by university institutions as actors and at the same time as physical places (infrastructures) that facilitate and channel forms of student mobility is relevant (Kleibert, 2021), but this aspect will be developed further on. What is important to emphasize here is the increasingly international scale on which this influence is exercised. This is particularly so because of its effects in terms of attraction and growth of the student population.

The massive expansion of higher education around the world was evident in the late 20th and early 21st century (Guri-Rosenblit et al 2007). As noted by Guri-Rosenblit and colleagues, this does not mean that all countries and continents have moved in the same way, with the same conviction and speed towards opening up university systems to the masses. Compared to the American system, for example, which allows broad accessibility to higher studies as well as a certain mobility between types and levels of education, the European system still retains a certain rigidity. Moreover, it should be considered that in Europe the number of young people entering university still varies greatly from one country to another. In some cases, such as Italy, access to and completion of university education are still the prerogative of a non-majority percentage of the population. These considerations are necessary but do not exclude an ongoing phenomenon, which is that of a general increase in the number of students enrolled in universities, especially from abroad. This is the result of the implementation of specific policies of attraction but also of competition between universities. Indeed, one of the effects of the globalization of universities is greater competition between institutions to attract talented students and researchers from the international market and retain them. Looking at the Italian context in particular, competition is also exacerbated by the need to attract students in a context of demographic crisis in which some territories are experiencing a significant loss of young people and enrolments. But competition it is also related to a systematic contraction of public funding for universities. In an OECD report[4] that aims to give policy indications, analyzing the initiatives and practices in place at the level of higher education in Italy, the reasons why it would be necessary to implement internationalization emerge. A number of trends common to Italian universities are identified: the most stressed reason is the so-called 'academic' one, which translates into the need to increase the numbers of the international student

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[4] Produced with the support of the Association of Italian Universities, and the Ministry of Universities and Research (OECD/EU, 2019).

population, improve the quality and prestige of the universities and their position in the rankings. In addition to this, there are the economic reasons motivating the implementation of internationalisation strategies, mainly identified in the contribution that students can make, with both national and local spin-offs. Indeed, it is underlined how, in a context in which state funding is declining, international students and in particular non-EU students have become a funding opportunity (OECD/EU, 2019).

Despite the fact that university rankings always provide very partial and specific perspectives on the material and reputational status of higher education (Jöns & Hoyler, 2013) universities around the world seem to give such rankings a certain relevance and strive to be part of them and climb them upwards every year. This is also because, after all, rankings have impacts on the decision-making processes of individuals and institutions. On the one hand, they become tools for assessing the quality of university education by the institutional actors with which universities interface. Indeed, as noted by (Jöns & Hoyler, 2013), assessment cultures in higher education have often been informed by the same criteria that constitute global university rankings. On the other hand, international rankings have an influence on students when it comes to choosing where to direct conspicuous investments in their education. It is no coincidence that a certain correspondence emerges between the countries that attract the most students internationally and those with the best-ranked universities in the rankings[5] (Jöns & Hoyler, 2013).

We have seen how universities and university cities are attractors and competitors of students (populations). Cattaneo and colleagues show empirical evidence that universities have competed to attract a larger number of students over the past decade, highlighting the economic reasons behind the processes of competition between universities aimed at attracting student populations (Cattaneo et al. 2017). In this game of competitive strategies and attraction, it emerges that important economic dynamics do not only originate from the growth and direct contribution of certain populations in urban economies, but also from other types of economies that are consequently stimulated. The real estate market is one of these; in fact, real estate investment companies use international university rankings to identify cities where it is strategic to invest in certain sectors such as student housing (JLL 2021).

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[5] A further critical aspect of the geographies of higher education that emerge from the analysis of international rankings concerns the territorial disparities that emerge. In particular, the authors highlight a prevalence at the top of the rankings of the global North at the expense of the absence of the South. Even at the level of the European continent, the hegemony of Anglo-American contexts has the effect of marginalising those countries where the use of English does not prevail, including southern Europe and Italy. It should be noted that, as early as 2013, this hegemony was challenged by contexts such as East Asia, now established in the geographies of global universities of excellence.

1.2 Universities as key players in the knowledge economy

From what has been said so far, it emerges how the evolution into an international dimension of higher education geographies strongly stimulates economies also on a local scale. Indeed, the attraction of university students and researchers is crucial for contexts bent on the realisation of knowledge economies. Here I would like to focus on the way in which this idea of knowledge economy influences relations between the city and the university. According to some authors, the presence of highly qualified human resources underpins the construction of such economies. First of all, the presence of the university is a key structural component of the knowledge economy (Lazzeroni, 2013). Fuller, too, emphasises that universities are key institutions for the creation and distribution of knowledge, primarily as a public good. In this sense, they play an important role precisely because they can stand outside the commodifying influence of market forces (Fuller, 2005). However, universities do not always distance themselves from the dynamics of knowledge commodification; on the contrary, they increasingly seem to be oriented towards adopting them.

There is a vast consensus today that universities play a significant role in knowledge-intensive capitalism (Moisio, 2018). In fact, we are witnessing a broadening of the scope of action of universities, in which a third mission is added to the traditional functions related to education and research, which, however, is decidedly less defined than the first two. The debate on what can be included in third mission activities is in fact open and ambiguous (Cognetti, 2013), diverging towards multiple interpretations. Very broadly speaking, one can speak of a type of mission oriented towards taking the knowledge and skills produced within the university outside it, contributing to the development of the territory. Moreover, the third mission is generally understood as the process of broadening the university's relations with society, with non-academic, local and non-local actors (Cognetti, 2013; Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). The third mission can also be interpreted as a set of actions to be carried out in the most diverse fields: economic, social, environmental, technological to name but a few examples, and without one excluding the other. A further dimension of the third mission is that involving the concept of sustainability. In particular, in the Italian context, we have been witnessing in recent years an increased attention of universities to the sustainability of their actions on the territory. Indeed Lombardi underlines the relevance of the role of universities as agents for a sustainable development, from the local to the regional scale (2021). In this context, the national network of sustainable universities (RUS) enable to foster a coordinated action of HEIs engagement in the multifaceted dimensions of sustainability (Lombardi, 2021). But among the multiple dimensions of sustainability, the social dimension seems more neglected than the others. As also observed by other authors, this emerges as a weak point both in the policies of universities and in those of cities that look to them. If universities' efforts to achieve higher levels of sustainability are multiplied, it goes without saying that this may be symptomatic of a current state in which the university is not (completely) sustainable and produces negative externalities on the surrounding environment that must first be understood. On the other hand, in wholeheartedly espousing knowledge-based economic and development models, one cannot ignore the fact that the rise of the knowledge economy has been accompanied in larger cities by a growth of social exclusion phenomena (Benneworth et al. 2010).

A further radical change that is taking place, as described by Moisio, is in the role of universities in their relations with the state and with major national and international institutional actors, including global business corporations. "Indeed, within the increasingly axiomatic discourses of the global knowledge-based economy, universities are no longer given a merely supporting role as 'national' organisations of such economy. Rather, universities are increasingly conceived of as pivotal actors of the global knowledge-based economy. They inculcate global geopolitical subjects with 'skills and vision' and perform as partners to business firms. Moreover, they may even become lucrative 'national' businesses themselves” (Moisio, 2018). While the evolution of the university's role as an economic actor will be explored later, it is first useful to dwell on the context in which this role is assumed. Indeed, the university is only one of the actors involved in the development of knowledge economies, albeit one of the most important. The characteristics of the urban context in which the university is located are crucial to understanding the development of university-based knowledge economy models. According to Lazzeroni (2013) it is possible to identify two types of elements which define a knowledge and innovative city: structural components, which are essential to apply such definition, and contextual components. The structural components are (1) the presence of centres for knowledge production and transfer (HEIs, research centres), (2) the high skilled and talented human resources, (3) firms and institutions specialised in the high-tech sectors. The contextual components can be tangible with a practical or symbolic function (as the material infrastructure for research and innovation activities, but also the quality of life), or intangible and cultural (as the local network, the international openness or a cosmopolitan culture).

According to now accepted interpretations, investment in economic scenarios that put knowledge production at the centre can be considered not only as a development strategy in healthy contexts, but also as a form of reaction to the crisis of urban economic and production systems. Several European cities studied as reference centres in which economies based on culture, services and knowledge-intensive advanced manufacturing were developed are former industrial centres emerging from a phase of structural economic restructuring over the last thirty years (to name but a few Berlin, Rotterdam and Jyvaskyla in Goddard et al., 2011). University and city "live in a renewed tension within a post-Fordist and post-industrial economy in which knowledge has become the material and condition for economic, as well as social and cultural, development, etc., putting the relationship between city and university back into play" (Cognetti & Fedeli, 2011 p. 2). In places where the industrial past has left profound marks on the economic and social fabric, the university - if present - with its knowledge and innovation constitutes a valuable resource. Moreover, there is a further aspect that must be taken into account because it is central to this research. In these contexts, the material heritage of the industrial past is of great importance. On the one hand, the large spaces left behind by manufacturing activities become grounds for economic reconversion; on the other, they are complex wounds to heal. It is evident how the transition from a Fordist and industrial economy to a knowledge-based economy entails, on a material and social level, a major challenge that is not without risks for urban balances. It was mentioned earlier and will be seen later how universities are increasingly becoming poles of attraction for populations, mostly young, mobile and international. One cannot therefore overlook such population flows and the interaction they have with the urban contexts in which they find themselves living for short to medium periods. This is because, as Moisio observed in his research on the geographies of knowledge-based economies, "similarly to neoliberalist, in knowledge-based economization individuals and populations are taken up as economic resources with potentials that can be cultivated, mobilized and harnessed for profit making" (Moisio, 2018, p.160). The tension between knowledge-based economies and social development has been observed in different contexts, also resulting in legitimizing operations of local de-development practices with regressive socio-economic impacts for certain components of the population (Goddard et al 2011). On the one hand, this raises the question of which urban populations are included or excluded, welcomed or not in the knowledge economy. On the other hand, it also emerges how the university can make different forms of contribution to the context in which it is located. As Lazzeroni and Piccaluga (2015) observed the contribution of universities in urban development process in small and medium-sized European cities (named Leuven, Oxford and Pisa), they conclude how the understanding of university-city relationship goes beyond the economic dimension, due to the multifaceted nature of university impact on cities.

1.3 The relationship between universities and their territories

We have seen how the university is taking on a multiplicity of roles: as a global driver of knowledge production and population attraction, as an economic partner, as an intermediary in relations with other institutional players. University is becoming an engine for the development and growth of the territory, but more than just a resource. It is, in fact, also a decisive political actor in the definition of new geographies at different scales, it becomes a strategic geopolitical space (Moisio, 2018). I would therefore like to go into the relationship between the university and its territory, and in particular with the urban dimension in which it is located, in order to observe how the city and the university position themselves as real actors in relation to each other (Cognetti & Fedeli, 2011). The triple helix model is often used to describe the university's relationship with the city's actors and the university's contribution to local development. The triple helix describes the tripartite structure of a territorial system that bases its development on the co-presence of higher education institutions, local government and the business community. To these is added a fourth actor, civil society, in the so-called quadruple helix model (Goddard et al. 2016). The success of such models is based on the equal participation of all actors in the realisation of local development strategies. Indeed, although the increasing centrality of university institutions in redefining urban economic systems has been described, the physical presence of universities in a given region is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for social, economic and cultural development to occur (Campagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). Equitable sharing of the three parties is critical to the success of the triple as well as quadruple helix model. Russo et al. (2007) review a set of cases in which the application of the model has failed. They underline how a virtuous cycle of development should be characterised, stating how "any lasting contribution of higher education to local development might therefore require some form of intervention from the public sector to bring these relationships into balance wherever they are not (which is likely to be the case in a dynamic urban environment)" (Russo et al., 2007 p.205). A further critical element of the triple helix model was observed by Goddard in his analysis of European case studies, in which it emerges how the potential role of HEIs in social development partnerships seems to be less recognised in public policy or governance. An equivalence of the universities, government and business 'triple helix' economic development model does not seem to have developed in the social domain through university relationships with, for example, local government, the third sector, and community groups (Goddard et al 2011). Arocena and colleagues deepen the universities commitment in the social domain, underlining HEIs contribution to knowledge democratization through the concept of “developmental university”. Universities assume a developmental role when they are committed to human sustainable development and cooperate with external actors in teaching and research. Furthermore, going beyond the two missions toward a third role which foster the socially valuable use of knowledge (Arocena et al. 2017).

In the wake of the vision that emphasizes the mutual relationship between the university and urban community, a wide-ranging debate has developed that defines universities in various ways, using different definitions all referring in some way to the third mission, i.e. the 'urban' role assumed by the university. Universities have been defined as: anchor institutions, civic institutions, engaged, entrepreneurial, developmental. Although there is literature devoted separately to each of these concepts, reading them separately as if each one described only one university prevents one from grasping the transformation of the university institution in its complexity.

Universities are not always urban institutions, both because in some contexts it is not the norm for a university to be born in an urban setting, and because it is not taken for granted that a collaborative relationship between city and university will be structured. However, the universities' focus on their surroundings means that the idea that they can only become civic institutions is gaining ground. The civic university is a concept that has been extensively explored by Goddard and colleagues (2016), which does not exclude the possibility that the university institution can be a global actor and at the same time strongly connected to the territory and the city. The innovative element of the contemporary civic university model, according to Goddard and colleagues, is the presence of engagement at the heart of the university's functions, along with teaching and research. The third mission is placed at the same level as the first two and the boundary between academia and society becomes flexible. The Civic University is turning more and more often - and willingly - to the context in which it is located, not only as an object of study, but as an organism of which it is an integral part, from which to take and to which to feed. At the same time, the fascination of the creative or knowledge city spares none of the great European cities, fueling a particular interest of administrations and policy makers towards university institutions. Cities that provides an environment open to creative knowledge workers are expected to be the winners in the future economic development game (Thiel, 2017, p.23). Despite these common expectations, Thiel states how the creative urban economy is a vulnerable one, following unpredictable path and with not predictable impact on urban environments. He defines (neither the first nor the last) the urban creative one as a new leading economic system, but he uses complexity and heterogeneity as key concepts to describe it and to affirm that the system's success has not been taken for granted.

As described by Compagnucci and Spigarelli (2020) the increasing focus on the university's third mission activities is also symptomatic of a gradual shift in university activities towards an approach oriented towards the commercialisation of knowledge. This process of emerging prominence of universities in the economic development of the territory and with an increased focus on the market is defined as the entrepreneurship of the university (Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). Several authors also attribute the causes of university entrepreneurship to the different national funding systems for research and higher education (Trigilia and Burroni 2010; Compagnucci & Spigarelli, 2020). Indeed, it is a process that develops earlier and more easily in certain contexts, such as the US or where state funding is limited. The university's entrepreneurial approach can thus be read as a reaction to a need for economic resources, but it is also associated with a growing interest on the part of the productive sectors to relate with the academic world. In the Italian context, the universities' turn to a more entrepreneurial approach can be attributed to different contextual as well as internal factors. According to Trigilia and Burroni (2010) from 90s on, for Italian universities started a long-term crisis, due to a series of national reforms of HE system and increasing financial difficulties; this has led to a shift towards university attitude as entrepreneurial subjects.

1.3.1 University impact in the urban

While there is an expansion of the university's role and functions outwards, this process has some significant consequences. Firstly, it inevitably involves the universities flanking or replacing the actors previously in charge of the roles and functions they assume. Moreover, its spatial dimension has to be considered: due to the even global pushes observed so far, the university extends into the urban space to occupy places, often changing their forms and uses (Benneworth et al. 2010). In the face of the lack of (political) initiatives and (economic) support from traditionally mandated public actors, in some contexts including the Italian one, a new leading role is being played by higher education institutions, which are developing with a certain degree of autonomy entrepreneurial-type relations with the world of production, services and business. In order to satisfy various types of unmet needs, from providing infrastructural support to external partners to expanding the space of their university community, HEIs become engines of urban development. Universities are changing their space-using behaviour as their spatial needs change (Benneworth et al. 2010). Developing strategic and expansion plans for their sites, they are increasingly hybrid real estate actors, somewhere between performing the functions of urban planning and structuring strong relationships with financiers and market players. This acting as an urban developer has a strong potential, since the way the university decides to be in the urban space (i.e. in which place, in what form, etc.) influences the quality of the urban environment in which this happens.

The physical and spatial forms of the university are diverse and dependent on many factors, both internal and external to them. In this research it cannot be underestimated that much of the reference research on the university-student-city relationship is done in contexts in which universities are also very different institutions from those observed in the case study (in terms of their physical form, sources of funding, and the legislative and institutional context that informs them). In the Italian context, universities are mainly publicly funded institutions, and, as in many countries in continental Europe, traditional universities have settled in densely built city centres. This has led to the introduction of the term "campus diffuso" (sprawled campus) (Del Nord et al., 2016), opposed to the campus in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, which had few examples across the country. The 'sprawled campus' implies a sprawled geography made of facilities, students' services and student housing across the city. Partly because of this highly integrated presence with the urban, service activities for the university and students also developed in an integrated way with the city. The forms of student housing have also adapted, and even today students live mainly in private flats shared with their peers. This last aspect is certainly also to be traced back to student housing policies that for a long time resulted in scarce public funding for this type of services. In recent years, some changes in the spread of new forms of student housing seem to be discernible, as will be further explored below. Universities, on the other hand, continue to expand in urban areas, exploiting the voids left by first the post-industrial conversion and then the economic crises.

Universities become agents of urban socio-spatial transformations and this can generate both positive spillovers and negative impacts. According to Benneworth and colleagues (2010), the benefits that university development activities can bring to the city are of three types, respectively spatial, in creating new knowledge-intensive places or improving the supply of facilities in certain locations; supporting governance, in co-planning new interventions; and place branding, supporting the construction of a new image of the city, attractive to investors and knowledge workers.

Of course, the type and extent of urban impacts of universities depends heavily on the physical size and population of the two, as well as the characteristics of the city, its economic and social conditions, and its location in local and international networks. Large universities in small cities may have greater impacts than large universities in global cities. The interaction between cities and universities in the local dimension generates even critical transformation processes. As observed by Benneworth and colleagues studying the development plans of some world class universities, MIT has had a very dramatic effect on the availability of affordable housing in Cambridge while Newcastle University's student accommodation policies have been extremely disruptive to the city's housing markets (Benneworth et al. 2010). Among the frequently observed impacts is in fact that on the housing market. Rivar and colleagues (2019) studying US homes observed how the distance of a property to a university affects its price or rent, increasing the sale price and rent of nearby homes. Areas (they use zipcodes as spatial units) including a university register average home price and rent higher than those without. In addition to rising costs, competition for access to housing increases, generating dynamics of expulsion or repulsion of old and new residents. As noted by Benneworth and colleagues (2010), the spatial engagement of universities may also lead to the emergence of spatial conflicts. The responsibility for addressing and managing such conflicts should be distributed equally between local authorities and universities.

Beyond the third mission policies and strategies implemented with the city and other urban actors, the issue of the university's impact on the local dimension emerges in various contexts and studies (Cortes, 2004; Bromley 2007; Benneworth et al. 2010). The concept of 'impact' is used here to look at universities 'from the outside', to reflect on how their presence in the city produces other, unforeseen or unconsidered, but not irrelevant side effects.

Within their systematic literature review on the impact of HEIs on sustainable development, Findler and colleagues (2019) assessed the various meanings of 'impact' for the HEI context. They give an holistic interpretation of HEI impact as the effects they have "outside their organisational and academic boundaries - namely, on its stakeholders, the natural environment, the economy and society. "(ibid., p.25). The impacts attributable to HEIs' activities can be direct (short term effects) or indirect (long-term effects). Quoting Yarime and Tanaka (2012) they underline how "the measurement of impacts [is] challenging, and, consequentially, impacts are usually not systematically considered part of sustainability assessments in higher education. " The argument I would like to make concerns precisely the usefulness, in the study context, of recognising a specific type of impact of the university on the city. It is actually a multiplicity of individual impacts that can be summarised in the impacts caused by the university student population. As we have seen, it is the strategic objective but also the responsibility of university institutions to attract a substantial youth population. But at the same time, as will be seen, its presence in cities is at the origin of important socio-spatial transformations. As part of a deeper understanding of the impacts of students on/in cities, it is necessary to understand both the socio-cultural geographies they are part of and the institutional and political dynamics that generate them. If Russo and Capel Tatjer (2007) define 'studentscape' the spatial configuration that comes out of an interaction between students and their living and working environment, it appears crucial to introduce a socio-political institutional dimension of such environment.

Tertiary education students' mobilities are indeed very much related to specific policies. Authors generally recognise mobility as one of the origins of student impact on cities, but such effects are rarely attributed to student mobility policies and policy makers. From EU policy to universities competitive strategies for student attraction, a small debate points at key stakeholders' responsibility in student impact in cities. As an example, when it comes to recognising universities as actors in reproducing social exclusive geographies, rarely higher education institutions seem to be aware of this (Russo et al., 2007). While it is evident their role in being active agents in the urban strategic economies, they do not really demonstrate awareness or strategic vision in the impacts they have in the related urban area (Wiewel et al. 2000; Goddard et al. 2009). Universities has been widely recognised as agents of urban change in a variety of spatial, economic and social dimensions. The academic production on these topics has flourished though limited to some area in the global north; nonetheless the relationship between higher education institutions and the city continues to show critical aspects that deserve to be understood and studied carefully, also in less rated countries and cities.

Regarding the role of the university in the city, the academic debate is wide and varied. In the United Kingdom, the narrative on the civic university has emerged strongly in recent years, particularly through Goddard, Vallance and Kempton works. The authors highlight the role of universities as leading institutions in urban and regional socio-economic development. Among the most interesting observations is how the dimension of the social impact of the university in the city is particularly neglected in the reflection on the role of university institutions, even within them.

Yarime and Tanaka (2012) identify the need for "more research with a holistic perspective that considers the impacts of all core elements [of HEIs]" which "would allow for a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of HEIs on sustainable development. Such a whole institution approach would also help identify impact areas and stakeholder groups that are currently underrepresented in the literature. For instance, cultural impacts and impacts on policy, social cohesion, individual behavior and life paths of alumni are currently underexplored and merit further attention. "(ibid., p.32).

Brennan and colleagues' (2018) reflect on universities related urban changes, posing few crucial questions (1) on the role HEIs themselves can have as drivers or responders to such changes, and (2) about the planning/intentional (or unplanning and unintentional) which laid behind university related transformations and impacts. Assigning causality in to processes of change remains for the authors a major challenge which this work is intended to tackle.

Chapter 2 - The student population[6]

At the crossroads of a number of disciplines an increasing corpus of literature tackles the unfolding relationship between university students and cities. In this multi and transdisciplinary field of study two types of contribution compose the framework. A first one reflects on students' critical impacts throughout the settlement process in cities, in the last fifteen years the debate can be resumed in scholarships defining such impacts as a result of 'studentification' processes. The second and more positive perspective, looks at student presence in cities as related to specific attraction strategies, underpinned by actors and policymakers increasingly focused on knowledge economy urban development paradigms. Students can thus be a precious economic resource for the city, with their contribute in the real estate market or in the night (and day) retail economy. As well as they can become the high skilled workforce of tomorrow. These two ideas of students as disruptive gentrifying force on the one hand, and as a target of exploitation on the other hand, return both a two-dimensional image of a far more complex phenomena. In the following chapter both dimensions will be tackled. Moreover, as a transient population student will be observed through the lenses of mobility studies but also, on the other hand, as potential citizens of cities they chose to study.

2.1 Student mobilities

2.1.1 Reading student presence in cities trough the lenses of mobility studies

As Fuller (2005) observed, the dawn of the knowledge society has been marked by the massification of academia and the rise in the number of students in search of credentials. One of the most evident consequences to this process is the global increase of student mobility.

When we reflect on mobilities, it is primary and critical to clarify what type of mobility is at stake. The mobility research I refer to is the one about people movements and tackling what makes movements important for the social urban dimension, rather than being just measured (Cresswell, 2010). Particularly, I'm interested in the understanding of local social impacts of mobilities. Students became an urban issue because of their mobility, which also contribute to constitute them as a population (since, as Pasqui observed, movement is the constitutive trait of urban populations (Pasqui 2008)). In example, there is a connection between

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[6] Some parts of the chapter are extracted from the author's contribution in Zasina, Mangione & Santangelo, 2021 and in the SMARTDEST D2.1 report.

mobility and housing issues: the mobile character of students influence their forms of housing/way of inhabiting.

Understanding mobilities also means understanding it in relation with politics and power relations (Kleibert, 2021). One person's speed can be completely related with another person's slowness, or one can be able to move because the other one is immobilised. Movements are political, if we just think about who move, to go where, how fast or often do they move. But also, how the experience of mobility differentiate and who is in control of the meaning of the mobility gaps, all end up in power and the possibility to resist.

In the wide context of mobility studies, a branch of research focuses on student mobilities which identifies university students as one of the high skilled population characterised by growing mobility behaviors (Sa et al. 2004; Findlay et al. 2012; Dotti 2013; Raghuram 2013; Van Mol & Timmerman 2014; Burmann & Delius 2017; Impicciatore & Tosi 2019). The affirmation of higher education as a mass phenomenon (Are 2002) and the wide spreading youth mobility are within the main causes of the increasing numbers of student mobility worldwide. Meanwhile, university student mobility is also supported by institutions and became a major policy priority in the EU's agenda.

Since the end of the 1990s, with the start of the Bologna process, European states have been committed to promoting policies to reform university systems that would facilitate student mobility both in and out of the country. In 2018 the higher education students involved in the Erasmus+ programme were 340,100 (while in 2014 they were 272,497). Moreover, in 2017 1.7 million students from abroad were undertaking tertiary level studies across the EU-28. More than one third move within Europe (37.8%), one third move from Asia (30.1%) and 13% from Africa. Student mobility is a growing phenomenon at different scales, including sub-national and international mobilities, short-term and longer-term moves as well as it includes a diversity of motivations and aspirations for moving (Smith et al. 2014). Increasing inward and outward university student's migration flows in cities have been seen as causes of socio demographic, cultural, economic and physical radical changes. On the one hand, studies on university student mobilities revealed a certain selectivity in their socioeconomic dimension. As Lipura and Collins suggest, student mobility needs to be tackled with an integrative approach considering the growing complexity and diversity of international student's experience. Much critical attention needs to be given to how privileged and precarity unfold the experience of mobile students (Lipura, Collins 2020). Particularly, international mobility can also be viewed as a means of social mobility and class differentiation (Findlay et al. 2012; King, Raghuram 2013). Family support, economic background and local labor market conditions (both in origin and destination), are observed as fundamental factors in youth migration choices. The relevance of such factors emerges especially in context of lacking student welfare measures, causing forms of prejudice between who can and cannot move (Sa et al. 2004; Insch, Sun 2013; Dotti et al. 2013; Van Mol, Timmerman 2014; Impicciatore, Tosi 2019; Magni et al. 2019).

For some authors, student mobility can also be framed as a form of migration. "Student migration is a bit of a blind spot on the research map of migration scholars, partly, one suspects, because students are not seen as 'migrants' (conventionally perceived as 'poor people', 'workers', 'refugees' etc.), nor as 'problematic' individuals who challenge established (and manufactured) canons of national identity by preserving their cultures, languages and religions.

Moreover, students often distance themselves from the image of the 'poor, Third World' migrant; they self-identify simply as 'international' or 'visiting' students and are referred to as such by their host institutions. Nevertheless, by any conventional, statistical definition of international migration*movement from one country to another for a significant period of time, such as a year or more*students are migrants, although a distinction can be drawn between those who move for an entire programme of study such as a bachelor's or doctoral degree, and those who move for a semester or year abroad as part of a qualification taken in their 'home' university and country" (King, 2010, p.1355).

The increase of student mobility does not go unnoticed to the (relatively) new urban agendas oriented to capture such mobility flows. In fact, strictly related to the knowledge economy paradigm is the debate on high skilled workforce and the attraction and retention strategies that cities adopt (Moos et al., 2019; Russo and Sans, 2009; Tan et al., 2007). University students are "desirable migrants" (Raghuram, 2013) not just for the HEIs, they are also described as part of cities' new creative class (Wesselmann, 2019) and as future knowledge workers (Sokołowicz, 2019). Nonetheless, the charming idea that students will move because of the effectiveness of targeted attraction strategies oversimplifies the mobility discourse (Lipura and Collins, 2020), because in this prevailing narrative the complexity of the student experience is partially missing.

2.1.2 Student mobility between opportunity and possibility

On the one hand, university became a mass phenomenon with a growing access to higher education as consequence. On the other, with the weakening of public welfare systems and progressive lack of financial support, university became also a privilege and a private asset for those who can afford. This is particularly true in

Italy (Attanasio, Priulla 2020). In a study of the population of the University of Turin (Scagni 2020), it emerges that Italian students from the south make greater use of tax reductions based on income, furthermore, the incomes of these students appear on average lower than those of their northern colleagues.

On a European level, a third of students which have not moved for temporary study abroad express the will to do it in the future; among European countries the willingness to become mobile is higher for Italian students, of whom 58% express the same will (Eurostudent VII). A positive correlation emerge with students' educational background and their aptitude to move. But the primary determinant of college student mobility choices (Porcu et al. 2020), as well as the factor which inhibit most student mobility across Europe, is the expected financial burden which the mobility entails. The cost of migration, which translated mostly in transportation (for commuters) and housing costs (for migrants students) (Cattaneo et al 2017) can limit student mobility, especially those from economically disadvantaged or peripheral regions.

Analysing the considerable growth during the most recent years of student mobility in Italy, Cattaneo and colleagues observed how "this rise might have occurred for two reasons. First, the financial crisis could have played a role. In recent years of economic recession in Italy as in most of Europe, students make their post-secondary education choices more selectively, and they are more prone to move with respect to the past. The second argument refers to the different mobility conditions. Since student mobility is partially a migration phenomenon, it is likely to increase if the present value of the benefits is greater than the monetary costs of moving. In this case, the benefits are associated with the possibility for students to increase their future returns in terms of better social status, higher wages and employment probability as well as the quality of life of the destination. […] An increase in student mobility might be related to a rise in benefits or a decrease in costs" (Cattaneo et al 2017). In this regards, right-to-study policies that reduce the cost of tertiary education and thus facilitate access to the university system for the less advantaged can enable universities to attract more students.

Regarding the benefits of moving, Mathies and Karhunen (2020) analysed the factors which most influence international students to stay in the country of study after graduation. They found that family ties (thus the opportunity to enhance family life) and the possibility to access the labour market are those which significantly increase the probability of international students staying in the host country after graduation.

2.2 The various representations of students as urban agents

Higher education students are frequently represented as part of sub-categories: national and international, local and non-local (also on-site, off-site and commuting students), on-campus and off-campus. Whilst this general trend in describing students in a dualistic perspective (e.g. local and non-local). As Holloway et al. (2010, p. 592) suggest “it is important to note that students are diverse in their dispositions and outlook, and that not all students conform to (British) media stereotypes of being consumer oriented and alcohol-fuelled'(...). Therefore, much more work is needed here on the diversity of experience within and between student groups, particularly in breaking down these monolithic dualisms in favor of more fluid, heterogeneous classifications"(Holton & Riley 2013 p.68). This view of monolithic dualism seems to emerge in both local and international academic policy debates. Looking at the perspective emerging from the actors of policy practices related to student populations, "recent studies in six European countries found that interviewed policy actors failed to emphasize any aspects of diversity beyond students' age (Brooks, 2019), whereas higher education staff, and particularly students themselves, showed greater awareness for the various diversity dimensions as well as their interplay (Brooks et al., 2020)” (Finocchietti, 2015).
Often when referring to the student population, the literature refers with particular interest to the subcategory of international students. "Debates which foreground the practices of international students have also had surprisingly little to say about the practices of more marginalised international students (Waters, 2012; Yang, 2018). This is also arguably related to the use of an implicit schema which casts dominant social groups as significantly more dynamic and agentive than those who are dominated. Yet, it is widely recognised that international student mobility is no longer the preserve of the upper echelons of society, but is increasingly sought by students from broader social classes and geographical areas (Tran & Nyland, 2013; Xu, 2017). Scholarly debates have not adequately attended to the changing nature of the international student body and the practices of international students who may not be classified as elite"(Deuchar, 2022). Malet Calvo proposes to see higher education international students as economic actors, "a transnational, distinctive social class of consumers and producers of urban culture (Florida, 2003) in the context of the neoliberal 'entrepreneurial turn' (Harvey, 1989). Among HES, international students seem to be particularly relevant in urban change because they participate in knowledge economy (as students), in travel economy (as strangers),

and in leisure economy (as youth) from a socio-economic position that is above the average in their home countries"[7](2017, p.3).

As seen in the previous chapter, there is growing competition between both cities and universities to attract student populations, which is increasingly seen in light of its potential action in the dimension of neo-liberal economic development. Students are numbers to be increased, preferably international, deserving and affluent, so as to enable a faster climb up the international rankings of the best universities or the most desirable university cities. "Seen through a different lens, the relationship between the student and university in a sustainability context has been diminished through such league tables, to one where the main preoccupation is for a few managerial, university technocrats to satisfy the student as a customer, in contrast to embracing the complexity and pluralistic citizenship voice of students amongst the many other silent stakeholders. "(Jones, 2012).

In the literature tackling the relation between university students and cities that has been analysed, the student population is represented through peculiar characteristics that inform the space in which they temporarily move to study and live. What is generally missed is the consideration of the internal diversification and variety characterizing the student population. Despite not every student moves to study abroad, tertiary education students are widely recognised as a population with common peculiar characteristics, which broadly remain stable as each cohort replaces its predecessor (Munro et al. 2009): they are young, middle class, well educated, transient, with no dependents, mobile.

Such characteristics are crucial in building up the dominant and dichotomic narrative describing university student population and agency. On one side, the student population is viewed in the shadows of policies of high skilled human capital attraction. Students are associated with that creative class (Russo, Sans 2009; Wesselmann 2019) in which high expectations of economic and social redevelopment of urban contexts are often placed, they are the knowledge workers of tomorrow. High skilled migration attraction is included in urban development strategies underpinned by policymakers in cities worldwide (Tan et al. 2007; Insch & Sun 2013; Föbker 2014), in the context of radical changes in urban development paradigms, increasingly focused on services and knowledge economies (Tan et al. 2007; Moos et al. 2019). International students and high-skilled migrants more generally are warmly welcomed in knowledge cities and cities aspiring to become knowledge cities. Nonetheless, asserting that students move because the effectiveness of HEIs and cities' strategies is a reduction of mobility goals to pure

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[7] Furthermore, among the contribute students gave in the local and global economy, we should add the gig economy to which they contribute as workforce.

economics (Lipura, Collins 2020). If we can understand what makes particular destinations attractive, less investigated are the mechanisms that lead to, constrain or shape student mobilities to those destinations (Lipura, Collins 2020). Furthermore, for some authors harnessing knowledge for profit and competitive advantage in emerging global hierarchies may also be exacerbating regional and local social inequalities and increasing social exclusion (Benneworth 2010; May, Perry 2011).

Attracting and retaining a high-skilled young population became also a way to successfully face and overcome urban crisis (Tan et al. 2007). However, it is an approach that also has critical aspects for the cities themselves. In fact, such an enthusiastic view turns a partial perspective, ignoring the social dimension of the rise of the knowledge economy. In British cities and university towns, where student presence has significantly grown, "various local governments rearranged their political priorities to serve students exclusively, which resulted in constant community conflicts between students and local residents" (Mzileni 2021, p.6).

2.3 Studentification

2.3.1 Students as gentrifiers

Works of Chatterton (1999) and Smith (2005) opened the floor to a growing number of investigations about student agency in the urban space. For this group of authors, a certain transformative power is attributed to students, due to their specific features. Such a process of urban changes due to student impact on cities was defined as "studentification" (Smith 2005), a key concept in the growing literature of the last fifteen years.

Studentification is characterised by a multifaceted nature of engender transformation of social (replacement and displacement of local residence, concentration and ghettoisation of students), cultural (new cultures and lifestyles), economic (increase/decrease of property prices, increase in renting and decrease in homeownership) and physical dimension (upgrading and downgrading of neighborhoods) (Smith 2005). In fact, studentification describes a process whereby high numbers of university students move into established residential neighborhoods. It involves the replacement of 'settled' resident groups with 'temporary' student groups, a reconfiguration of local population structures from increases in the production of unrelated living together in shared housing, and, with young, cohabiting students changing local class and household structures (Kinton et al. 2016). New spaces for leisure time also emerge as a consequence of student presence; the adaptation of nightlife entertainment economy, and more generally of shops and facilities (the so-called anti-family business (Mzileni 2021)), to student consumption behaviors (Chatterton 1999; Hollands & Chatterton 2003; Allinson 2006; Malet Calvo 2017 and 2018). The student population was observed to follow a pattern of concentration specifically close to city centers (Russo & Capel Tatjer 2007), these are places where - more commonly - studentification processes unfold; within inner cities, as well as in neighbourhoods well connected with university and city centres (Smith 2005).

2.3.2 Reduce studentification impacts and de-studentification

Since early manifestation of studentification processes were observed, several critiques were moved to its dramatic consequences and some control measures were undertaken, in order to reduce studentification impacts. As the entire debate around studentification processes and its consequences, British authors are the main and most fruitful contributors to the debate. Hubbard analysed licensing and planning policies applied by local authorities and universities, with the aim to reduce the conversion of existing properties to student House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and encouraging Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) on and off campus (Hubbard 2009). According to Vandromme and colleagues "in some municipalities in the Netherlands, the municipal councils has used zoning plans to maximize the number of premises that can be used for student housing" (Vandromme et al. 2022 p.5).

Successful policy implementation has obtained the decrease in concentration of student population in studentified neighborhoods, together with an overall decline in the 'social (for example, population loss), cultural (for example, closure of retail and other services), economic (for example, decrease of property prices) and physical (for example, abandonment of housing)' dimensions (Kinton et al. 2016). At the same time, such processes of backward studentification or de-studentification (ibid.) shed new lights on a shift in supply demand dynamics and unfold the business model of commodification of student housing.

2.3.3 Alternative interpretations of studentification processes

Though insightful, the literature that have been analysed so far, as well as the first and most fruitful studies on studentification has grown being significantly related to a specific context, which was those of English university towns and cities. Higher education student population has been seen as a group of gentrifiers (Hollands, Chatterton 2003) with disruptive and transient lifestyles and behaviours spreading throughout public spaces and traditional local day and night-life of neighbourhoods. Furthermore, their rapid and unchallenged hegemony (Allinson 2006) raises conflicts with local populations and leads to social exclusion of more fragile social groups. This twofold prevailing perspective, originating from the same mainstream definition of student population, missed the socio-cultural diversity that students as a population brings and put in two-dimension the multifaceted impacts that students can have on cities. Meanwhile, different contributions and perspective on studentification has been recently developed from other authors and national context.

As Mzileni (2021) noted, studentification first emerged in the European context of increasing neo liberalisation, where a larger university educated workforce was required to manage the emerging knowledge economy. Despite studentification was first identified as an urban West phenomenon (Hubbard, 2006), during the last decades a growing corpus of literature have shed light on the reproduction of similar processes in many different places (China, South America, Africa). Differently from majority of studentification literature, which address to students' negative impacts on the local dimension, other authors from the global south proposed an alternative, sometimes positive, interpretation of studentification processes (see Prada 2019 in Chile and Mzileni 2021 in South Africa). In South Africa students were also observed as an emerging sub-group in the broader socio-political process of urbanisation (Mzileni 2021). This particular form of studentification observed differs for its significant impacts on local governments, which students influence through their political activism on civic issues. Has also been observed how the import of private businesses related to studentification process can positively affect some cities and become an opportunity for urban renovation (Mzileni 2021).

"Studentification as a dynamic force of social organisation and community engagement in university cities presents opportunities for conceptual reconfiguration and for the renovation of existing models for the conduct and governance of public life." (Mzileni 2021, p.14).

2.3.4 Studentification beyond students

In the review of the literature on studentification processes, some gaps emerge, which are only partly filled and which open up new scenarios for possible future research developments in this field.

In the UK, students' relation with cities has been observed and studied since the late 1990s, by Chatterton (1999), Hollands (2003) and Smith (2005). They focused on students' negative impacts on cities and neighborhoods. What emerges from their interpretations is the centrality of the housing dimension and the role attributed to students in the creation of exclusionary processes. This is the first gap in the studentification studies: to overestimate the student population homogeneity and power of cities transformation. "It is important, we would argue, to emphasise the students as much as the geographies. Whilst existing datasets make mapping movements and trends an obvious focus, more work with students is needed. In relation to studentification, the lens may be turned to focus not just on the impacts of students on university locations, but how these locations differentially impact on students. The cumulative effects of the 'student population' has been considered in various contexts, but it is clear that not all students are likely to experience, consume and appropriate these places in the same way. Rather than just a consideration of the extraordinary here, we need to consider also the ordinary, moving beyond the institutional space(s) of the university into leisure spaces and student homes" (Holton & Riley 2013). Furthermore, in the entire debate on spreading studentification processes, a fundamental aspect seems to remain in the background. Some authors, less successfully than 'studentification' theorists, pointed out a different perspective in which many actors are responsible for student's attraction and impacts, beyond just the students (Collins 2010, Tatjer and Russo 2007). As Collins (2010) highlights, "student impact" is not simply the result of their presence and practices on urban environments but it is also determined by other urban actors' agencies such as local authorities, universities, local residents, developers, landlords. In fact, student's choice to study in a particular place is related with their perception to find there the best life condition, but the existence of such conditions are related to some actor's agency (and sometimes their policies). The student's settlement process involves not just students themselves, but wider networks of not student population, institutional actors and local government: they contribute to influencing student location choices through their different types of (inter)action with them. Furthermore, Brennan and colleagues' (2018) contribute highlight university role in fostering cultural change including the university student population as key in this process.

The second gap is, then, a quite scarce evaluation in the literature of the responsibility that actors and policies have in determining studentification effects.

From student mobility studies emerges how student mobilities unfold into inward and outward selectivity degrees. Students who can afford to move were observed to be, in some context, as economically privileged if compared with peers who cannot afford. But this is not necessarily a condition that migrates with students too. Low cost of living is widely recognised as a relevant reason for students in choosing the city and/or the neighbourhood to live in (Moos et al. 2019). In this perspective, the opportunity for a shift in students' definition, from 'studentifiers' to marginal gentrifiers (Rose 1984; Semi & Tonetta, 2019) could be deepened, having also in mind the underestimated contribution they can have in building sustainable communities. According to Winchester and White (1988), analysing the location of marginalised groups in the inner city, students were among those marginalised populations. This field of research still lacks in understanding if precarity (and privilege) of mobile students relate with the way they behave in the host city, and how this relate with their geographical patterns.

2.4 Students as an urban population and citizens

In the field of human sciences, Foucault first defined population as an actor (as a political character). This modern (from the eighteenth century) meaning of the term population “is closely related to its emancipation from a mechanism of entrenchment linked to traditional territorial sovereignty” (Pasqui 2008, p104). In other words, according to Foucault’s definition, population:
- does not coincide with the sum of the residents of a given territory;
- varies in relation to its practices (habits, values, resources);
- can be the subject of policies only by working on the variables of habits values and resources;
- shares the motive (or engine of action) of desire that can produce the general interest of the population;
- acts in seemingly fortuitous forms but in which a governable regularity can be detected. The Italian debate on “populations” which supported this work reflections, moved from this first definition forward. A first crucial author was Martinotti which defined populations as aggregate of individuals defined by common traits but not necessarily related to common rationality (Martinotti, 1996). Nonetheless, "Martinotti emphasises that the shift from the logic of classes to the logic of populations does not at all imply a reduction in conflict" (Pasqui 2008, p132 footnote 14), on the contrary coping with population movements seems to be far more complicated that with class conflicts (Martinotti, 1996). A further contribution of his work is the introduction of the concept of city users, which are in fact individuals “using” the city for short term periods of time, whose common traits and city uses allows to define as populations. More recently, Pasqui keeps forward these reasoning. On the one hand, both in Pasqui as well as in Martinotti “the constitution of populations has a decisive relationship to time” (Pasqui 2008, p130). Furthermore, populations use, shape, and are shaped by cities and are the object of policies. On the other hand, Pasqui proposes going beyond Martinotti definitions because of two aspects that limit his reasoning:

1. it is the practices of the populations that define the territory and not vice versa;
2. we must take into account the 'multiple belonging': an individual can belong to several populations, can partially and temporarily transit them at different times and places. He proposes "populations not as categories but as bundles of practices" (Pasqui 2008, p134).

Another aspect related to urban populations which Sini and Pasqui discuss is the decoupling between the principle of citizenship and living practices[8] (Sini & Pasqui, 2020, p.50-53) which populations reveal. This dual, sometimes conflictual, relation can be synthesized by observing that sometimes – most frequently in Italy - people live in cities in which they cannot vote, and this is also the case of student population in this research. It fails when the processes of use of space override any kind of boundary because populations move in migratory processes, demographic changes and economic and social models. Then, administrative boundary no longer holds (Sini & Pasqui, 2020, p.52) and the concept of citizenship needs to be re-shaped and probably extended.

Looking at the city as a place inhabited by 'populations' allows to observe the urban social, economic and spatial transformations through the lenses of the human practices. The complexification proposed by Pasqui makes it possible to see on the one hand that each individual can belong to more than one population at the same time. On the other that a plurality of populations coexist at the same time and in the same urban space. What Pasqui calls "radical pluralism" refers to a pluralisation not only of interests, which conflict with each other, but also of "different forms of life, groups and individuals that do not inhabit the world according to the same coordinates, that are located in space within different and often incommensurable backgrounds of meaning". (Sini & Pasqui, 2020, p.29).

2.4.1 Why and how to use the category of urban population referred to students

This research looks at higher education student population in a twofold perspective. On the one hand, it is a population intended to grow (especially in some countries of the world) which stimulate the higher education institutions to expand, and cities to be equipped for students' accommodation. On the other hand, students are an urban population who challenge cities' ability to host and include them, but also to keep in balance others urban populations' needs.

The choice of using the sociological category of population for university students lie in to the need of an effective identification and representation of their collectiveness, but also its needs and rights, leading therefore to their claim on a political and policy level. A perspective that raises the need to question the ability of territorial government to accommodate the demand for the city of different urban populations. How can we rethink citizenship rights and welfare policies for all those who live in the city? Policies 'for' or 'of' urban populations? How to deal with the

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[8] In other words, between sovereignty and territoriality / between political sovereignty and residency / between citizenship and territorial sovereignty.

conflicts that arise from the coexistence of populations and the contrast between desirable and undesirable populations?

Due to the **common traits** that students share - they are mostly young, becoming highly skilled and mobile - and the specific needs and behaviours they have, students can be considered as one of the **mobile** populations that also affect the social and ecological structure of cities (Martinotti, 1996). What distinguishes Martinotti's four urban populations (inhabitants, commuters, city users, and businessmen) from students is that the latter seem to **sum up some features** from the already established ones (van den Berg and Russo, 2004). Different types of students' mobility, their consumption patterns and socio-economic characteristics **set many ways to** inhabit, commute or consume the city. Non-local students can be commuters as well as they can be long-stayers in the city. The student population that chooses to live in the city follows concentration patterns through which they interact with other populations' public and private spaces. Some of these areas are to a certain extent lived by city users and businessmen too, while others became recognisable as almost exclusively student ones.

The value attributed to the student population and consequently the attempt to work on its attraction are linked not only to the attempt to redesign an image as a city of knowledge, but also to a certain belief that students have the potential to repopulate cities. As a new community, dynamic and capable of producing substantial transformations.

A minor part of literature on students and the city, puts the mobile student population in a new light, unfolding the complexity than characterising their agency. In this perspective student populations are proposed to be looked at in the light of their contribution to build sustainable communities, beyond the regulating and planning approach of student spreading in neighbourhoods and focusing on the other hand at the embedding and restructuring power of student communities as an opportunity to enhance sustainable local development (Russo, Sans 2009). The recognition of this role to the student population suggest again to the idea that off-site students are eligible to be considered as citizens, whilst their peculiar characters and behaviors (i.e. their short term stay in cities) and notwithstanding the substantial absence of such proposition in the political and academic debate.

According to Martinelli and Simone (2011) university attractiveness and competitiveness is strongly related with the capacity to give an adequate response to the request of 'student citizenship'. Such request of student citizenship it is not just raised by the student presence in the city itself. It is raised through student practices, not just living and consuming in the city, but actively contributing to the material, cultural and political urban "production".

As pointed out by Mzileni (2021), most political and local activism on student impacts reported by literature - especially on housing and student accommodation - emerge from local residence asking local government to act somehow against students and studentification. "The role that students play as far as studentification patterns are concerned is minimised and depoliticised, while local residents are viewed as politically active groups who are opposed to the social implications of studentification brought by students to their 'native' communities" (ibid. p.7).

"The socio-political value that off-campus students provide to the local community in enhancing and diversifying the quality of local democracy as knowledgeable young people is another intriguing development of studentification emanating from a non-western context that is under-researched"(ibid. p.9).

As pointed out by the latest Eurostudent report, students are also part of cities' workforce. The 80% of university students in Europe do one or more paid jobs while studying. Most frequently they work to cover their living cost (68% as European average, 65% in the Italian context) while the 50% (34% in the Italian context) work because they would not be able to afford to study without their paid job (Finocchietti, 2015).

As Collins (2013) suggests, considering student characteristics as transformative agents per se, return an incomplete interpretation of a phenomena in which a number of different actors are involved; indeed, it is in the relation occurring between them and the students, that urban changes are produced. And it is the nature of such relation that determines the urban transformation outcomes, its positive or negative impacts, its inclusivity or exclusivity. To tackling student impacts on cities, it is necessary to understand the geographies they are part of and the collective action that leads to their creation. In other words, look at what Russo and Tatjer defined a 'studentscape' (as previously mentioned, the spatial configuration of the interaction between students and their living and working environment) (Russo, Tatjer 2007). If it is no doubt about the fact that student geographies can simultaneously overlap with, or evolve into, different urban landscapes of youthified or gentrified areas, studentcapes are not necessarily geographies of exclusion (Russo, Sans 2009). Furthermore, not all students or young adults are gentrifiers, as well as nor are all gentrifiers young (Moos et al. 2019).

The composition of the student population of a university and, on a larger scale, of a city, can tell us a lot not only about the city and the university itself, but about the geographies that at various scales include and involve them. The geographic and socio-economic origin of students, the intensity and trend of student flows from other places, can tell us about the economic and development policies of one and many countries, can tell us about social unease and territorial divides. Just as they can be useful in understanding the forms that students' demand for the city takes, the different needs, the possible evolutions in the uses of spaces and services.

Chapter 3 - Student housing

In this work and chapter, the student housing is analyzed as a phenomenon and a process of urban transformation, more than a housing typology. The literature on studentification previously described, identify in the housing one of the most affected sectors by student presence in cities. Here the various forms of housing are described according to the juridical nature (public or private) and type of management and investors. Nonetheless, also the impacts student housing produced are analyzed. On the other hand, it is crucial to know more about the student housing condition, how they live in terms of quality and affordability of the housing. After an overview on the European context, some general trend are underlined, such as the raising interest of real estate investors increase particular forms of supply. The potential impacts of new (and traditional) forms of student housing on the overall housing market is explored. But also, it is mentioned how the non-student young population interact with this new trend. In conclusion, an open-ended question raise the issue of the role of various actors at the urban level in fostering new student housing solutions.

Student housing is an issue in many disciplines (social research, youth studies, higher education research, geographical research, architectural research, planning studies, housing research, economic and financial studies). This research looks at student housing from the urban studies perspective but focusing on it as a policy sector. At the same time, it is crucial to get to the heart of what student housing represents for the student population. It is not only a space for housing, often temporary, but also a fundamental service and a right, as on the other hand housing is for all citizens, students or not. Looking at student housing in this way means on the one hand looking at students as inhabitants of the city and on the other hand looking at their conditions in the sphere of living. But also, to understand what tools and means regulate this sub-sector and facilitate its accessibility or not.
Unfortunately, the majority of the international literature which contribute to frame the student housing issue in the urban dimension has developed outside continental Europe. This gap make the knowledge which have been built so far, a tool to be carefully used in the analysis of some context as the southern Europe. We probably could find phenomenon reproducing in the UK, Canada, France or Italy in the same way, and at the same time profound differences can occur from one context to the other.

Student presence in cities has been frequently observed through the lens of their way of dwell in the city. Nowadays, research work on student impacts on cities concentrate on the effects they produce once they are settled in the city where they study, live and consume. These effects are commonly summarised by the concept of studentification, introduced by Smith (2005). As it has been shown, the last twenty years of studentification studies gave a fundamental contribution in understanding how student behaviours interact with urban socio-economic environments, but also in identifying main conflicts and problems in terms of social exclusion. In this context of research, the student housing development has a central role as it was internationally recognised as a driver of urban changes (Kinton et al. 2018). Among the different dimensions of studentification and student impacts on cities, the housing is probably the one which is produced and still produces the most evident urban transformations. In fact, growing student population and student mobility increase the student housing demand, thus increasing the pressure on local housing systems and consequently on the social dimension. Especially in the studentification literature, different forms of student housing has been associated to different kind of impacts on neighborhoods, and on their social, physical and economic dimension. Student housing is a sub-sector of housing that certainly involves a minority portion of the urban population, yet in recent years it has been attracting the attention of various actors on both a local and global scale. But, to better understand the student housing phenomenon, look only to students' behaviors is just scratching the surface of the issue. We should instead trace back to the actors who have power over the development of new student housing. What it is lost in the entire debate about students and the impact of their forms of housing, is in fact the understanding of how such critical concentrations of students are generated, who is responsible for that (to which extent it's a students' responsibility) or, in other words, who make the studentification possible in its beginning.

As Yilmaz, Talavera, and Jia (2022) observed in the UK, in university cities the private rental market is crucially influenced by the proximity to university branches, in terms of volatility of rental prices, seasonality of the market and competition among student and non-student rental market (Rugg et al. 2004). Being close to HEIs implies higher rental prices (Rivas et al. 2019) and, more generally, student housing demand increases average rent in the local market (Ogur, 1973 in Yilmaz et al.2022). Rental prices are more volatile in areas close to universities and, in those areas, the probability to rent increases around the start of the academic term. The student accommodation demand is at the origin of a demand shock[9] which

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[9] "A demand shock is a sudden unexpected event that dramatically increases or decreases demand for a product or service, usually temporarily. A positive demand shock is a sudden increase in demand, while a negative demand shock is a decrease in demand' (source: www.investopedia.com).

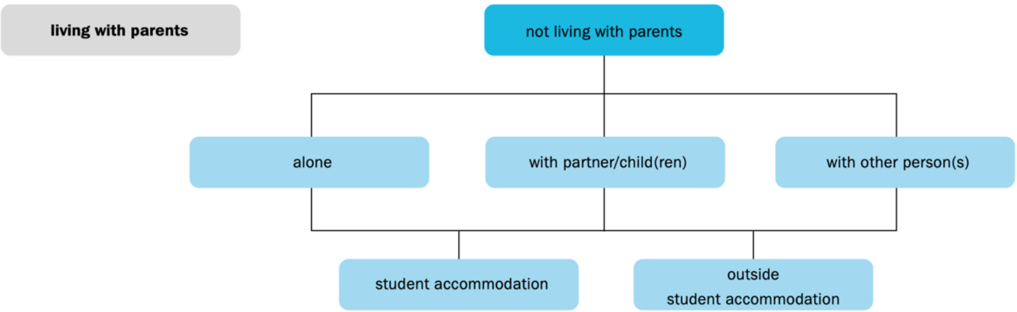
cyclically run over the rental market influenced by HEIs presence. Yilmaz, Talavera and Jia state that "policymakers should be aware of the pressure of student housing demand on the local markets, which can cause adverse effects, such as the exclusion of local households due to crowding out" (Yilmaz et al., 2022).

These particular pressures usually manifests in city districts closer to universities or well connected with them, where students choose – or are pushed – to live. Who how and why it is decided that a neighbourhood ends up being mostly lived by students, can be about unpredictable (and random) students' choices, or because of some actor's unintentional agency (HEI) or attraction (availability of homes in a "student friendly" neighbourhood), but also because of intentional choices of actors (i.e. landlords in renting student apartments in strategic places). Also, can be crucial a student hall new location in a specific place of the city. This depend on urban land availability, urban planning decisions, investors' or other actor's location choices (be close to HEIs facilities, be well served by transport connections...).

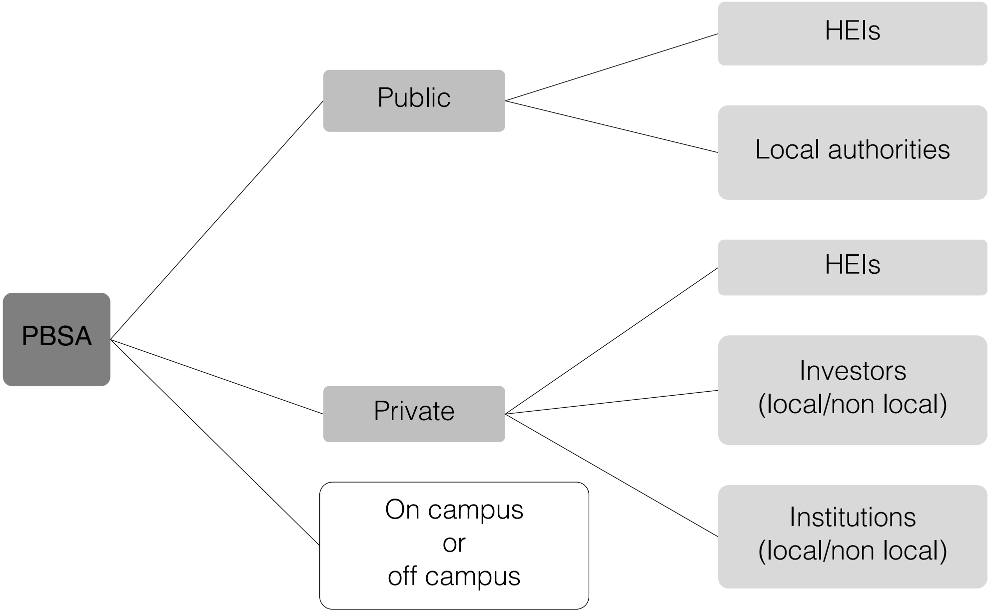
More generally and from what has been observed so far, despite some institutional initiative to control and plan proliferation and concentration of student housing, urban changes due to increasing mobile and international student population seems to be followed by non-regulation and laissez faire (Smith 2005). Nonetheless, the global growth of HEIs and increase in student population, with the associated impacts, ask for a better understanding of such non-regulatory approach.

3.1 Student housing typologies: context specific and global trend

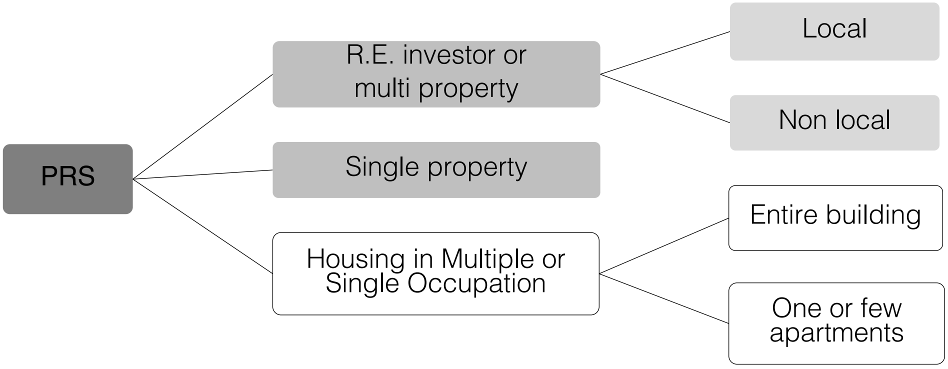
1 Form of student housing for students living with or without parents. Eurostudent VII.



2Purpose Build Student Accommodation: type of actors and housing forms



3Private Rented Sector: type of actors and housing forms. Author elaboration.



The different types of student housing are distinguished not only by the physical form they take, but also vary according to the type of demand expressed by students and the nature of the actors asked or interested in providing a response. Further variations in forms of accommodation seem to emerge according to the geographical, cultural and political context of the city in which they develop. However, based on the international literature on the subject, the different existing forms can be grouped and summarised as depicted in Figures 1 2 and 3.

The "spread" form of housing also known as the private rented sector (PRS in figure 3) and recalled in research works on vertical studentification (Garmendia et al.2012), is about students renting a room in single or shared apartment in the private rental market; this produces a geography of single units which can be clustered or widespread around the city. This form seems to be the most common in the medium and big cities hosting universities in the continental Europe, as well as in Italy. A critical aspect of this form is the high differentiation and fragmentation of the actors who owns and/or manage the apartments where students live. As a consequence, it is difficult to quantify and map this form of housing.

In the UK, a similar form of student housing is called the HMO or Housing in Multiple Occupation. According to Hubbard (2006) 'under the terms of the 2004 Housing Act any household consisting of more than two unrelated people is known as a house in multiple occupation (HMO); the majority of student houses can thus be described as HMOs' (p.325). This could be defined as an a hybrid forms, between the 'spread' and the PBSA. These are buildings which are not purposely assembled for hosting students. A former family apartment building is renovated and converted (sometimes after being acquired by a specialised real estate company) into a complex of shared students' apartments. This student housing typology is also hard to be identified from the outside, to be quantified as well as mapped. In contexts, as the UK Canada and America, halls of residence and PBSA are more frequently used and also managed by HEIs, but still the majority of students rent in the private sector (Rugg et al, 2002).

In Italian university towns, there were traditionally three forms of student housing: widespread housing in the classic housing stock, i.e., peer-to-peer shared apartments; small university residences managed by religious bodies or local private institutions; public university residences financed by the state and managed by regional authorities. Renting in the private sector is prevalent while the institutionally managed student-halls host a minority of students with low incomes. Only more recently, traditional forms of student housing have been joined by a private supply that seems to be growing exponentially, even during the Covid-19 pandemic (Basilici, 2020; Coccorese, 2020). Furthermore and despite the Covid-19 crisis, according to Yilmaz, Talavera and Jia (2022), “reliance on the private rented sector shows that there is still room for private investment in student accommodation, which already has an estimated market value of around 50 billion”. What have changed are student preferences in home searching: according to the global report 2021 of Student.com, young people and students now prefer single rooms, even in places where more frequently the shared room was chosen (as Europe), and also look for flexible contracts.

3.1.1 The housing condition of students in Europe

In most EU countries, in recent years, the sharp increase in the number of HE students has been associated to the increase of students in the student housing sub sector (Vandromme et al. 2022).

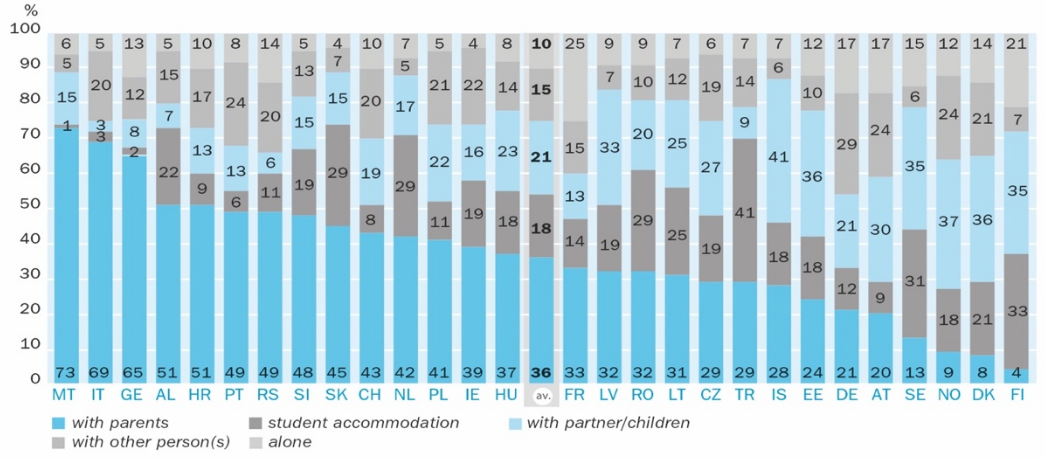
In Europe 34% of students live with parents - while in Italy it is the 68% - and another 25% with partners and / or children (2% in Italy). The 17% live in a student accommodation, while in the Italian context it is just the 5%.

Students living in accommodations (PBSA) are usually the youngest; this type is also more commonly used by international students and by students with a good family background (Finocchietti 2015).

Figure B9.2

Students' housing situation

Share of students (in %)



Data source: *EUROSTUDENT VI, E.1.*
EUROSTUDENT question(s): *3.0 Who do you live with during the current lecture period (Monday to Friday)?, 3.1 Do you live in a student accommodation?*
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT conventions: *FR, IT.*
Deviations from EUROSTUDENT standard target group: *AL, DE, IE, IT, LV, RS.*

Source: EUROSTUDENT VI

For what concern housing costs, it is the higher among the living cost of students in EU which are not living with parents. Eurostudent calculates that the 35% of their living expenses are for the accommodation. In Italy the housing cover the 39% of student living costs (at the tenth place of twenty-five countries, at the first place is Denmark with 47%, at the last Georgia with 18%). Along the last twenty years, the accommodation cost of students not living with parents have increased in the EU, and Italy is not an exception. The Eurostudent report layout two possible explanations: the different rhythms to which housing supply increases, in comparison to faster student housing demand and a level of income and public support which do not grow consistently to prices. International students typically have higher spending power than domestic students, with parental or family support on average 40-50% higher (Eurostudent VI). According to Uniplaces, students from non-European countries are the ones who spend the most on housing in Italy. The ranking sees the Americans, Mexicans, Brazilians, Chinese and Turks at the top.

In recent years the European higher education system faced a general decrease in public financial support to students, which laid on families the burden of university student living expenses (Finocchietti 2015); parental support of HE expenses recently grown in more European regions than those more traditionally involved in the phenomenon. Together with the overall increase in housing costs and its weight on student's economic means, these trends can negatively affect low income students and families, reproducing inequalities (Finocchietti 2015). In fact, in the broader housing domain, there is a severe housing shortage in several countries in Europe. And a sharply rising housing prices and rents in urban areas where HEIs are located. Consequently, students and housing seekers are pushed to compete for affordable housing solutions (Vandromme et al. 2022). Moreover, in Italy a further critical aspect is the South-North divide in the current provision of student housing. According to the European Student Union, most of the student housing facilities, especially those of high quality, are located in Northern Italy while students in the South suffer from a lack of high-quality accommodation.

The insufficient supply of housing produce rise of prices but also an attractive environment for private investments (Vandromme et al. 2022). There is thus a need to reflect on the public or private nature of student living, how this has to do with the inclusivity and exclusivity not only of forms of living, but also of the resulting geographies of the university and the university city. In a 2015 article in Sole 24 Ore[10] , which dealt with the subject of the investment boom in student housing in Britain, the director of the Savills Student Investment and Real Estate Development Division, James Hammer, says that "Thanks to its reputation, London will continue to attract students from all over the globe, but to avoid it becoming a 'reserve for the rich' we need to build more student housing at affordable prices".

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[10] https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/casa/2015-10-01/in-the-students-and-boom-gran-brittany-132837.shtml?uuid=ACuDwE8&fromSearch

3.2 The student housing market

As has been shown, the student housing forms that we can find in a city depends on several factors. However, recent times witnessed a trend in homogenisation. These homogenisations could be investigated in their possible connections with global processes of transformation occurring in the wider housing sector. I refer here to processes of commodification and financialization, which particularly interest the short-term forms of housing. These processes, in the sub-sector of student housing, are stimulated by the growing demand for housing solutions by the off-site population and favoured by local and national administrations. The latter are in fact less and less oriented to publicly finance and regulate the sector, and more and more oriented to favour neoliberal economic systems. According to Brill and colleagues, "policy responses to the failures of housing markets in countries such as the United Kingdom have prioritised the growth of new stock and the stimulation of private supply, often through a short-term focus on deregulation and the removal of planning burdens (Gallent et al., 2017). This has been coupled with, and is partly reliant on, the shift towards a market-led planning system that institutionalises the private sector's role in the delivery of the whole housing system (including affordable homes)". (Brill et al 2022 p.3).

In these contexts, the interest of the real estate investment and finance sector in the new profit opportunity represented by student housing finds fertile ground.

The student housing sub-sector is gaining a growing attention in the real estate investments sector worldwide and is now widely recognised as a promising new asset class. "The residential asset class was beginning to be seen as an increasingly viable and resilient opportunity for investors post-GFC, with institutional capital beginning to invest in this "alternative" sector in the United Kingdom, initially through PBSA. A decade ago, PBSA and the private rental sector were seen as riskier propositions for investors, but these are now more firmly established and mainstream assets, offering attractive rewards, as the earlier reflection on yields and returns illustrated" (Livingstone 2022).

In the contemporary context of increasing irrelevance of state borders and de-territorialisation of world markets, connected on a global scale through networks of cities (Moisio, 2018) it is easier to understand the phenomena of spreading of student housing market models around Europe and the Western counties. In other words, the diffusion of similar forms of housing investments (and speculation) that reproduce the same economic and political mechanism as well as impacts, on different and long distanced territories.

What Livingstone observe in the UK market is in some ways comparable to what is happening in recent years in Italy too. From 2020 JLL dedicated for the first time a specific snapshot report to Italian student housing, testifying a growing interest in this new area, where the PBSA is becoming an entry market subsector for institutional (national as well as international) investments in the residential sector.

3.3 Student vs non-student: housing path and conflicting demand

As previously underlined, university presence and – consequently – student concentrations in cities, can determine pathways of exclusion from the housing urban market. Such exclusionary processes affects groups and people of the urban population in all ages, from youngest to eldest individuals, sharing students' spaces and places of living. Therefore, the conversion of traditional housing in student-oriented supply is potentially fostering inter and intragenerational conflicts for home. In fact, some authors in the housing studies on young generations look at students as one of the less fragile sub-groups of tenants. Not only students have their own and recognizable way of life, which is internalised and embodied (Chatterton 1999), they also have a dedicated niche in the housing market. According to Rugg and colleagues, "generally speaking, a niche market is one in which supply has become adapted to meet the needs of a specific, specialised group, and displays a reluctance to meet demand from another source […] This position contrasts sharply with the experience of young people seeking to rent outside the aegis of a course of higher education study"(Rugg et al. 2004).
Indeed, students and non-student young population (workers, non-workers, neets, immigrants and refugees...) both have specific housing needs which could differ as well as be in conflict. A further difference regard the role of HEIs in students housing search, supporting students' moves into private renting. In the rented subsector there are no other group receiving the level of assistance afforded to students in this respect (Rugg et al. 2002). On the long period, Rugg and colleagues observed how the students' housing experience – named their housing career[11] - is characterised in comparison with that of other populations by a pathway which offers substantial advantages compared with others. Particularly, the student housing pathway develops progressively allowing young people to accrue their

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[11] The experience of living that a person has in the course of a lifetime, possibly moving from one solution to another. This, of course, varies according to the age of the individual, but also according to the social and economic status of the individual (Rugg et al. 2004).

housing knowledge in a gradual fashion[12] (Rugg et al. 2004). In addition, students have the opportunity to plan their housing pathway, often with the support of their family or dedicated services. But sometimes also to be accompanied along the same path and to learn from it in view of their future as inhabitants or tenants after university. Indeed, the student housing experience generally continued after graduation, although over time the quality of properties that were rented showed a marked improvement, and household sizes tended to get smaller (Rugg et al. 2004). The study by Rugg and colleagues thus highlights how, in general, university students are a category that enjoys certain advantages in access to housing and in their ability to understand the dynamics of the housing market. This does not detract from the specificities within the student population. qui The student housing experience highlights the need for policy-makers to appreciate that young people, including non-students which have similar housing needs (such as size, location or price of flats) but do not enjoy student status, need to 'learn housing', and that lessons are best taught in a supportive context (Rugg et al. 2004).

Also, on the other side of the coin, there are representations of young generations in the age of housing independence as facing new issues of housing and working precarity (JLL, 2021), which include students among the more fragile groups. According to McKee (2012), HEIs students belong to what has been defined "generation rent", which describe how the majority of under-thirties living outside the parental home find themselves in the private rented sector, which is generally more expensive and lacking in tenure security, compared to other tenures or ownership. It is a condition deriving from the inability of young people to realise the ‘normalised’ goal of homeownership (McKee 2012), which depend on several socioeconomical condition which characterize the young generations.

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[12] "Student demand for accommodation has framed supply in a very specific fashion. For the majority of students beginning their career at the ages of 18 or 19, the student housing experience comprises two elements: an initial stay in accommodation that is directly managed by the HEI, which may or may not be repeated during the course of study; and two or more years in shared housing with other students in the private rental sector” (Rugg et al. 2004).

Part 3 - The case study

Chapter 4 - Turin

The research aims to shed light on the recent urban development strategies of Turin, particularly on the attempt to undertake a post-Fordist reconversion. The process was first led by a local coalition in which the municipality, the universities and institutional investors played a central role. Through the action of the local pro-growth coalition and a network of local and non-local stakeholders, the urban economy has been reoriented with an approach that has now lasted for almost thirty years and produced several impacts. Thus, the case study is not just about testing how strong is today a twenty years old university-based urban development strategy, but also on understanding how the commitment of the city to a university-based knowledge economy translated in terms of urban socio-spatial transformations (doing it in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as of the changes of the local political arena). The student housing is chosen as a lens to observe how the local governance coalition acted (and still acts) through a process of redefinition of the city image and the urban development towards a knowledge-based model.

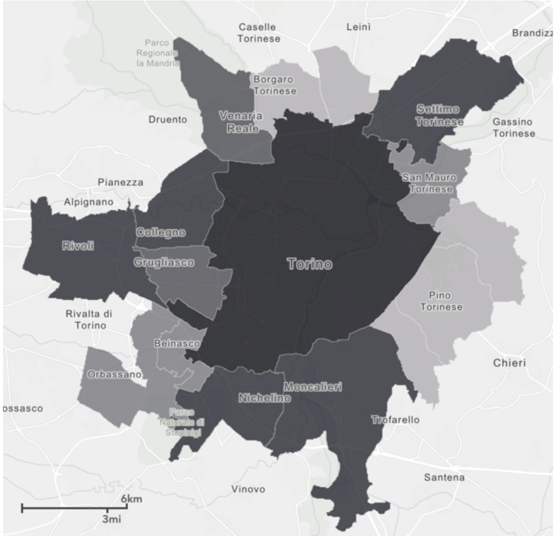
Turin is the capital of Piedmont, a region of 4.356 million inhabitants situated in the North-West of Italy. The city of Turin has been for long identified as the FIAT one company town (Vanolo, 2015). The car industry hauled the industrial fordist city development since early '90s, but most relevant economic and demographic growth began with the FIAT expansion between 1950 and 1970. According to the national census, in 1971 Turin reached its population peak with 1,168,000 inhabitants. In fact, the industrial booming economy of the post-war era have been supported by huge immigration flows, particularly from the Italian southern regions. The FIAT group established an overwhelming hegemony on the city. The Turin flourishing economy, with all the manufacturing satellite activities; the urban development with the construction of new industrial districts, working-class neighbourhoods and road networks; the social turn, with the inflow of huge numbers of new residents and the emergence of a working-class. All revolved around cars and their production, as well as all under the political control established by FIAT and the Agnelli's family over the local ruling class.

It is thus from 1980s the progressive move of the company crucially contributed to the city decline. Starting with the loss of its economic pillar the city entered a long phase of recession and crisis which fell in multiple dimensions. The most relevant social implications relate to work and increased unemployment, and the population decline. The latter, together with the closure of industrial and production sites, fostered a progressive process of spatial transformation, in terms of creation of urban voids, brownfields, vacant flats and under using of services (e.g. in the recent years, the municipality is reflecting upon the possible future use of pre-school and school underused buildings). The last steps that sanctioned the disappearance of Fiat as the industrial complex of reference for Turin were the absorption of Fiat into the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles group in 2014 and the entry into the larger company Stellantis, which controls 14 automobile brands, in 2021. This was accompanied by the gradual relocation of the company's headquarters abroad, to the United States, England and the Netherlands. Today, the production lines remaining in Turin are severely reduced, there is little certainty about their future, and many sites are now abandoned. About 6,000 workers remained in the Mirafiori production hub in 2019, a figure that has halved in the past decade (Cabodi et al., 2020).

Nowadays, compared to the beginning of the century the industrial sector in Turin is downsized, with almost a third fewer people employed (a value in line with the national average), just as the transport and construction sectors are also in sharp decline - more than average. Conversely, the hotel and restaurant sector grew (albeit less than the other metropolitan Italian city average).

Overall, Turin remains today one of the two (together with Bologna) Italian metropolitan cities most characterised by industry (which employs more than a quarter of the total workforce). As for the other sectors, emerges the prominence of ICT and technical-scientific professions, and of the financial sector (Cabodi et al., 2020). Although the car manufacturing sector remains the most relevant for the local production system, to date it seems difficult to imagine a strategic role for it in Turin's future development.

As previously mentioned, from the point of view of the territory of reference, the analysis looks mainly at Turin but takes into account the municipalities in its metropolitan area that may be involved in the phenomena observed. In fact, the built-up area of the municipality of Turin is in continuity with fifteen neighbouring municipalities - also known as the first belt - that have become to all intents and purposes part of the same urbanised area (Figure 4), sharing transport networks and services such as the university facilities.

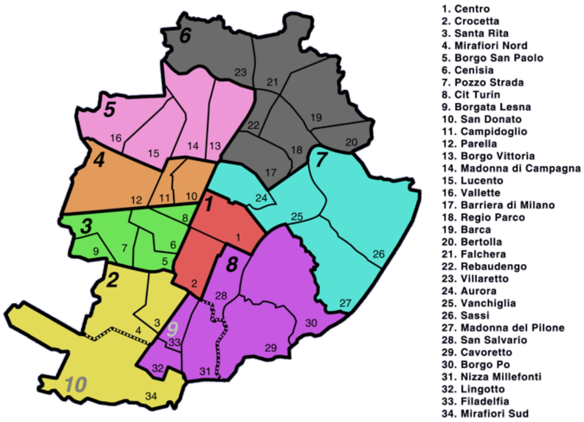


4 Turin and the first belt. Source: geografiemotropolitane.it

The current population of the municipality is about 861,636 inhabitants (on December 2021), and reach 1,292,678 including the first belt; in both areas the population trend follows a decreasing path. Between the '90s and the 2012 the most relevant inflow of new foreign inhabitants has been registered (Cabodi et al., 2020). In 2020 Turin had the 15% of its registered population with a foreign citizenship; the fourth most represented nationalities are Romania, Morocco, Peru and China. But this is not enough to change the ongoing ageing process, also considering the decrease of foreign population which has been observed recently. In the socio-economic balance of urban contexts such as Turin's, one must also consider the growing rates of youth unemployment, the high percentage of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training), emigration and the search for post-graduate work elsewhere. Young population in Turin particularly suffers from the problem of unemployment, which stands at 30 per cent among young people between the ages of 15 and 24. The emigration flow from Turin to abroad exactly doubled (+100%) between 2010 and 2019 and the most recent data shows how more than the 70% were Italians (Davico et al., 2020). The average age in Turin is 47 years and the 26% of the entire population is more than 65 years old. In general, Turin has the lowest attractiveness of young people among the north-centre Italian cities. If we look at the ability that different cities have to attract young graduates, Turin is not among the best (which are Bologna and Milan instead) and - indeed - in the last decade seems to be getting worse (Davico et al., 2020). In this research, the figure on the graduate rate is also relevant. Italy is among the last countries in Europe for university graduates, who are around 20 per cent of the working-age population (Istat, 2020). In Turin and the first belt, the ratio drops dramatically to 12.8 per cent[13] . This figure shows how the university "world" is something fundamentally distant to a large part of the population; therefore, when speaking of a university city, one cannot fail to take into account how the university is still a decidedly elitist world, even among the young population.

4.1 The spatial dimension

Internally, the city is divided administratively into eight wards, i.e. aggregations of districts. The district is not a unit of territory that retains power from an administrative point of view. However, they are part of recent history and are still an important spatial and cultural reference for living and getting to know the city, unlike the wards. For these reasons, in discussing the processes underway in Turin, I have chosen the district (also named neighborhood) as the spatial unit around which to reflect on urban transformations.



5 Turin: wards and districts. Wikimedia Commons (Online source: https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circoscrizioni_di_Torino)

4.1.1 The urban spatial planning

In the last decades of the 20th century the deindustrialization process begun in Turin, and although several industrial sites were progressively reconverted, there

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[13] Unfortunately, the only available data dates back to the 2011 census.

are still many brownfields waiting for reuse (Pichierri & Pacetti, 2016). The most recent and comprehensive city's restructuring process started with the 1995 urban plan to provide a new interpretation of the urban structure. The city's spatial development would be based on three axes (Ponzini & Santangelo, 2018). The main axis, known as the 'Central Backbone', was the result of relocating the railway tracks. It occupied a large proportion of the city's brownfield sites, and it also became one of the main attractors for HEI interests and investments' (Zasina et al. 2021).

The 1995 city plan is still in force. No administration to date has been able to draw up a new plan for the city. This does not mean that the city has remained the same over the last 30 years. Turin has continued to transform itself in terms of urban planning, but each significant update is made by making partial variations to the plan (so-called variants). To date, more than 300 variants have been approved, often prepared at the suggestion of private operators.

Between 2016 and 2021, the municipal administration attempted a broader revision of the plan, which will be discussed below. One of the central themes of the plan and, more generally, of urban planning in Turin over the last 30 years is that of the building stock, both public and private, characterised by large voids and disused spaces, to which it is difficult to find new functions. From disused industrial areas to thousands of empty flats. The disused industrial areas in the city in 1995 covered an area of 2.5 million square metres. According to Saccomani (2001), the plan acts heavily on the industrial areas in the city by transforming their uses into residential and tertiary. Through these operations, the plan shows little sensitivity to environmental conditions, especially those of the oldest neighborhoods close to the spines (Centro, Crocetta, San Paolo, Cenisia-Cit Turin, San Donato, Aurora-Rossini, Barriera di Milano) (Caruso, Pede 2016). Moreover, the result has been that in the districts of ancient industrial settlement, located at the crown of the historical centre, the countless material testimonies of industry have been largely destroyed or heavily transformed (Montanari, 2016).

More generally, since the 1990s, Turin has undertaken an intense activity of urban transformations, through a series of urban and strategic planning initiatives; these have brought flows of investments that have also produced price increases in the overall housing market (Bravi 2006), thus supporting the concern for ongoing gentrification processes in different parts of the city and for a variety of concurring reasons, including students' demand for housing (Semi & Tonnetta, 2020; Bourlessas et al., 2021). Indeed, the university dimension has become important in recent years for the urban transformations taking place in the city. Local planning is also becoming aware of this, giving increasing importance to the presence of universities and students.

4.1.2 The urban plan revision and the raising interest for the student population

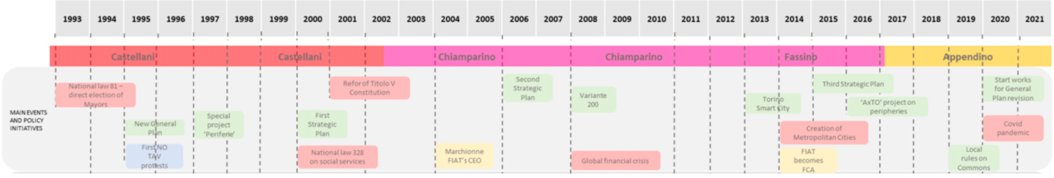
In 2016, coinciding with a historic change in the municipal council (see next section), a process of general revision of the municipal master plan began. This was not the drafting of a brand-new plan; however, a certain ambition must be acknowledged in the attempt to carry out a comprehensive revision through an articulated process, in which civil society was repeatedly involved. This attempt was not carried through to the end of the approval process. Indeed, the new and current municipal council has been elected before. It is not yet clear whether and how this work will also be adopted by the new municipal council.

Among the new elements, I have chosen to focus on the aspect that has the most to do with the themes of this research, namely the planning of the city of university students. In particular, the 'demographic question' emerges as an issue to be addressed because of its consequences in terms of spatial planning; particularly for a shrinking city like Turin. To this the plan associates the issue of non-resident populations but who habitually frequent and use the city. The interesting element is that the latter are proposed as one of the possible solutions to the problem.

One of the preparatory documents for the plan states: “do not lose sight of the growing importance for the contemporary city of the non-resident population, varied in its mix of workers, city users, tourists, students: it is another lever that disrupts the way the traditional city functions. Moreover, this is a theme that continues to be practically ignored by official statistics, urban policies and urban planning itself, all of which are still substantially based on the city of resident inhabitants and much less on the more significant figure of households [...] in fact without considering an increasingly important population that lives in, traverses, inhabits, and uses the city without its impact being recognised. These are different populations that are important players in the transformation of metropolises in the first place, but also of cities like Turin, which determine demands for temporary housing types, hotel offices and innovative accommodation, public meeting spaces and services, greenery and the environment, places for recreation, catering and commercial offers, and which transform the city under their impetus" (Barbieri, 2020, Technical proposal of the preliminary project, Study documents - Notebook 1/1, May 2020, P.248).

4.2 The political context

"The last twenty years of Turin's political history (and the ones of the other main Italian cities) have been marked by a major transformation that took place during the 1990s. In 1993, law 81 established the direct election of mayors, thus giving unprecedented powers to them. Since then, mayors were not dependent on their own parties, but were able to use their leadership to gain popular consensus to build ad-hoc coalitions" (Amato et al., 2011). In Turin, the first mayor to be elected through the new law was Valentino Castellani, former vice-chancellor of Politecnico di Torino, elected as an independent candidate backed by a centre-left coalition and mayor for two consecutive mandates until 2001. Castellani was able to establish a new urban regime (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013), in which politicians, entrepreneurs, and members of the civil society worked in a cooperative way to lead the urban economy out of the crisis of the Fordist model of growth and to tackle the relevant loss of population. Many turning points for Turin's history took place during his mandate, such as the 1999 bid for the Winter Olympic Games - hosted in 2006 and in which Castellani played a crucial role as president of the TOROC, the Games' organising committee -, the adoption of a new masterplan in 1995, the launch of the suburban redevelopment programme 'Special Project Peripheries', and the First Strategic Plan (Cenere et al., 2020).



6 Timeline of political event, main policies and initiatives in Turin, 1990-2020 (preCovid). Source: Cenere et al., 2020.

As mentioned, from the end of the 20th century to 2015 the Municipality promoted a strategic planning phase that has greatly contributed to inform the policy agenda also for HEIs development perspectives (Ponzini, Santangelo, 2018). This phase was articulated through three strategic plans, each developed under a different major (Figure 6): the first one in 2000 under Castellani council (Torino Internazionale, 2000); the second under Chiamparino council, published the same year of the winter Olympics in Turin (Torino Internazionale, 2006); the third under the Fassino council (Torino Strategica, 2015). The latter was just before the election of Appendino, of the Five Star Movement, which marked a major political turning point for the city. The new council wanted to place itself in discontinuity with the previous political system. This also entailed not giving continuity to the strategic planning process. Nevertheless, the university city-oriented strategy in the facts has been continued, with different tools, without major changes in course.

4.2.1 A twenty-year strategy for the university city and housing

The knowledge city is one of the many images which the local governance coalition choose for Turin. But the significant and innovative element of this research is not so much the recognition of Turin as a city devoted to a knowledge economy, but rather the attempt of local politics to acquire this model in its own way and transform it into local policies with a local impact.
The strategic planning season (2000-2016) laid the foundation for setting a policy for the university city. Actors included in the strategic planning process were - among others - both universities, the local chamber of commerce and the two leading banking foundations[14], in a governance process which has been labelled as "elite-driven" (Belligni, Ravazzi, 2013) and that gave the city a robust orientation towards the implementation of development projects of the University and Polytechnic as technological and research centres for training and production activities. HEIs were defined by strategic plans as 'knowledge firms' and their key role - alongside the public system - was related to the territorial development according to the model of the triple helix (Goddard et al., 2016). Since the first strategic plan, the university function is crucially planned around urban redevelopment of urban voids and through public-private partnerships. Turin HEIs were strategically considered as international competitors and engines of attraction for 'human capital' belonging to the 'creative class' (Mangione, 2019). Universities were expected to assume a new role to go beyond the two traditional missions of teaching and research and to promote a new image of the city. Furthermore, universities, with their visible presence in the urban space, were also recognised as engines of social cohesion with the ability to change the life of entire neighbourhoods they settle into (Torino Strategica, 2015; Wiewel et al., 2000).

The strategic plans supported the entry into the sphere of university-city policies of a new set of actors which are the ones of a private nature linked to the real estate economy, particularly in the sector of student housing and services. The temporary populations such as students and professionals express a demand for flexible and temporary housing that the strategic plans invited to intercept with "experimental

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[14] The Compagnia di San Paolo and CRT bank foundations have assumed in recent years a crucial role for the Turin development. They support and finance several projects and institutions in the city in a wide spectrum of fields (urban transformations and renovations, social inclusion, art, culture and events). This is also true for the HEIs which benefit of substantial economic support from both the foundation, financing research activities as well as HEIs new facilities.

interventions" that involve private subjects and the third sector (Torino Strategica, 2015).

The overall policy discourse emerging from the strategic planning phase is rooted in the objective to become a 'university city', assuming the centrality of the university as driver of urban development. University branches, student housing and student facilities were frequently mentioned in the strategic plans, as well as in the 'Torino Città Universitaria' City Council's project (which will be presented in the next chapter), as a guarantee of social and functional mix of the urban fabric, as sources of district vitality and drivers of improvement of the overall housing quality of the city. To complete Turin's transformation into a knowledge hub, according to Municipality's projects, an increase in the number and quality of housing and services for university students became crucial. In this framework, PBSAs are identified as contributor of the local economic growth, since their presence could and should reactivate the local retail sector and the overall vitality of the neighborhood.

4.3 The university system

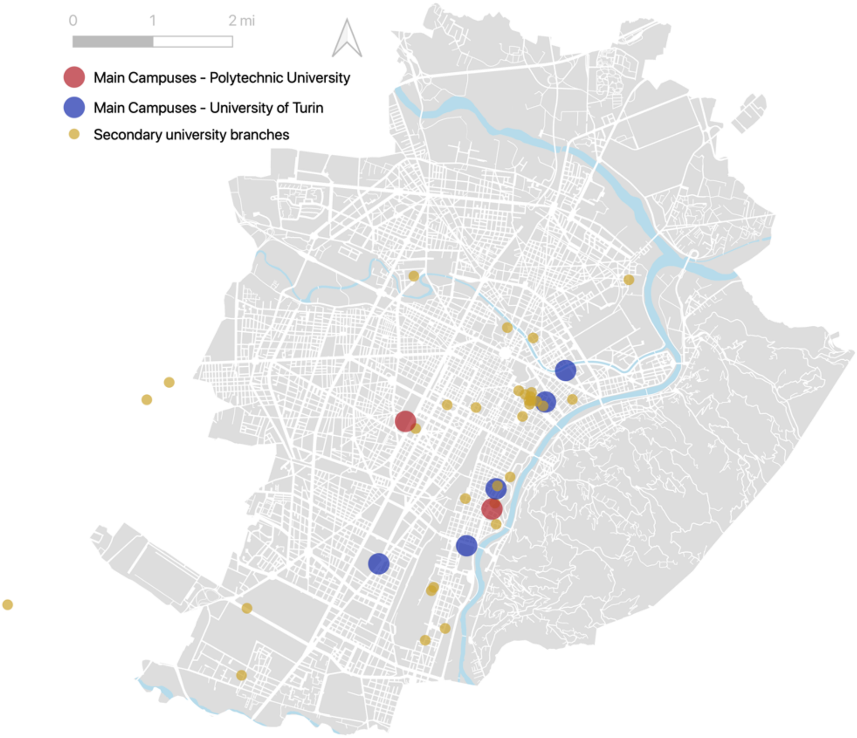
Turin's university tradition dates back to the early 15th century, when UniTo (Università degli Studi di Torino) settled in the historical core of the city (Centro). PoliTo (Politecnico di Torino), in contrast, was established in 1859 as the Royal School for Applied Engineering, in the San Salvario neighbourhood, just to the south of the city centre. The HEIs evolved together with the city, following a scattered pattern that mostly depended on the availability of empty buildings and areas within the dense urban fabric' (Zasina et al. 2021). It is only in more recent years that universities have started to plan the development of their sites through proper master plans, partly shared with the city administration.

The districts in which the main sites of the two universities are located, in addition to the historical centre, are:

- the neighbourhood of San Salvario, which stretches along the river immediately south of the Centre, where the headquarters of the architecture departments are located (Valentino building) as well as several buildings housing mathematical and medical science departments;
- the Vanchiglia district, immediately north of the Centre, where the Einaudi Campus and some satellite sites are located. The departments of law and humanities are concentrated here;

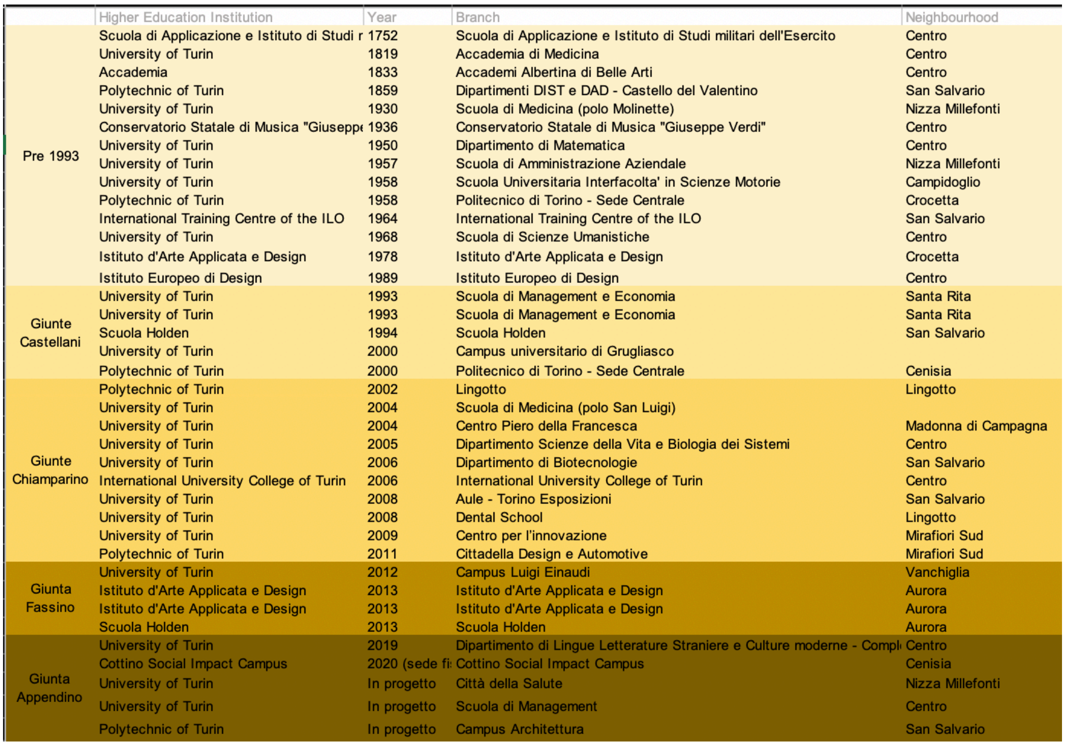
- the Crocetta and Cenisia districts, southwest of the centre. Straddling the two neighbourhoods is what can today be defined as the largest university settlement in terms of territorial extension in Turin, that of the Politecnico with its engineering departments.

In addition to these large poles (in Figure 8, the red and blue dots) there is a galaxy of smaller, secondary venues (yellow dots). Some are close to the main locations, others are located far away, in other districts or in municipalities in the first belt to the west of the city. This adds another eight districts (for a total of 13) to the list of those affected by the university presence, plus the municipalities of Grugliasco and Orbassano.



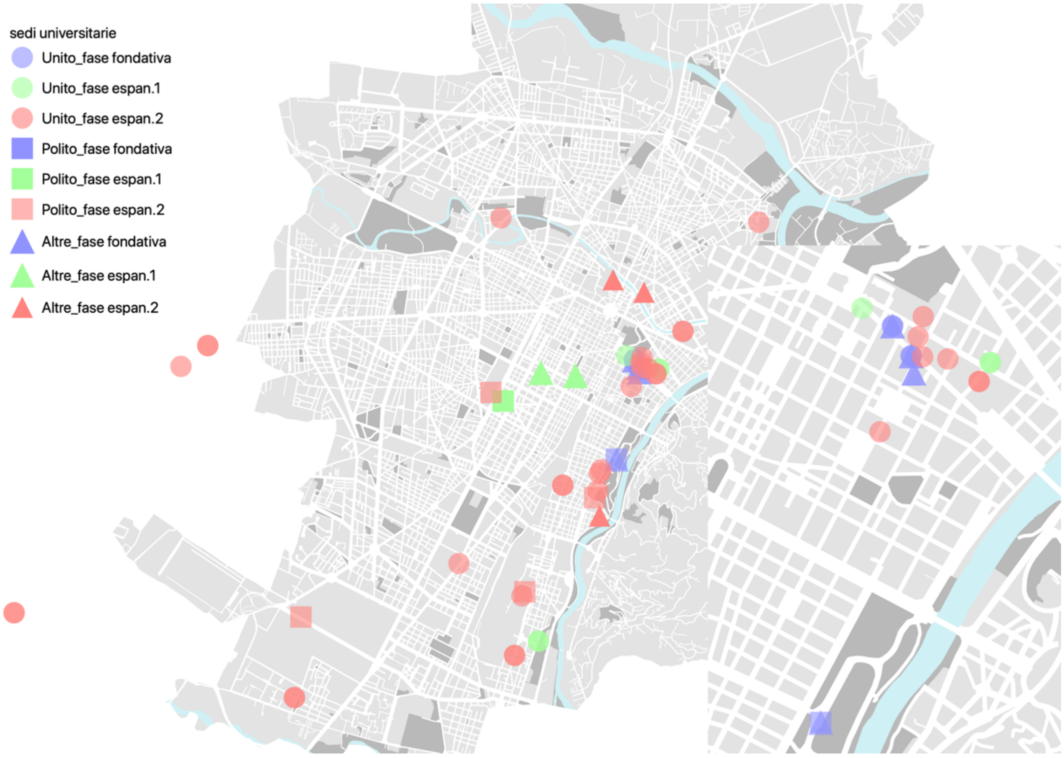
7 Map of current HEIs branches in Turin. Author's elaboration, 2020.

This conformation of the university system is partly due to historical reasons. That is, the tradition of Italian universities to locate themselves in what are now historic centres, within buildings that used to house far smaller numbers of university students. However, with the expansion of the university - first progressive and then massive - new spaces were sought, not always close to the historical sites. The phase of 'widespread' expansion has been curbed in recent years for two reasons. On the one hand, it becomes complex for universities – particularly after 2008, under a continuous spending review - to manage a large number of locations. On the other hand, also driven by a significant growth in students, the practice of location planning takes hold. As illustrated by Figures 8 and 9, after the founding phase there followed a first expansive phase, between the 1950s and 1960s, in which the first large sites of the Politecnico (the basis for the future 'Cittadella') and the University (Palazzo Nuovo) were opened. This was followed by a second expansive phase in the late 90s and the first decade of 2000, which saw a massive growth in locations. This took place under the major Castellani and subsequent councils (politically rather in continuity), in the years following the approval of the master plan and in the same period in which the three strategic plans were developed.



	Higher Education Institution	Year	Branch	Neighbourhood
Pre 1993	Scuola di Applicazione e Istituto di Studi r	1752	Scuola di Applicazione e Istituto di Studi militari dell'Esercito	Centro
	University of Turin	1819	Accademia di Medicina	Centro
	Accademia	1833	Accademi Albertina di Belle Arti	Centro
	Polytechnic of Turin	1859	Dipartimenti DIST e DAD - Castello del Valentino	San Salvario
	University of Turin	1930	Scuola di Medicina (polo Molinette)	Nizza Millefonti
	Conservatorio Statale di Musica "Giuseppe	1936	Conservatorio Statale di Musica "Giuseppe Verdi"	Centro
	University of Turin	1950	Dipartimento di Matematica	Centro
	University of Turin	1957	Scuola di Amministrazione Aziendale	Nizza Millefonti
	University of Turin	1958	Scuola Universitaria Interfacolta' in Scienze Motorie	Campidoglio
	Polytechnic of Turin	1958	Politecnico di Torino - Sede Centrale	Crocetta
	International Training Centre of the ILO	1964	International Training Centre of the ILO	San Salvario
	University of Turin	1968	Scuola di Scienze Umanistiche	Centro
	Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design	1978	Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design	Crocetta
	Istituto Europeo di Design	1989	Istituto Europeo di Design	Centro
Giunte Castellani	University of Turin	1993	Scuola di Management e Economia	Santa Rita
	University of Turin	1993	Scuola di Management e Economia	Santa Rita
	Scuola Holden	1994	Scuola Holden	San Salvario
	University of Turin	2000	Campus universitario di Grugliasco	
	Polytechnic of Turin	2000	Politecnico di Torino - Sede Centrale	Cenisia
Giunte Chiamparino	Polytechnic of Turin	2002	Lingotto	Lingotto
	University of Turin	2004	Scuola di Medicina (polo San Luigi)	
	University of Turin	2004	Centro Piero della Francesca	Madonna di Campagna
	University of Turin	2005	Dipartimento Scienze della Vita e Biologia dei Sistemi	Centro
	University of Turin	2006	Dipartimento di Biotecnologie	San Salvario
	International University College of Turin	2006	International University College of Turin	Centro
	University of Turin	2008	Aule - Torino Esposizioni	San Salvario
	University of Turin	2008	Dental School	Lingotto
	University of Turin	2009	Centro per l’innovazione	Mirafiori Sud
	Polytechnic of Turin	2011	Cittadella Design e Automotive	Mirafiori Sud
Giunta Fassino	University of Turin	2012	Campus Luigi Einaudi	Vanchiglia
	Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design	2013	Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design	Aurora
	Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design	2013	Istituto d'Arte Applicata e Design	Aurora
	Scuola Holden	2013	Scuola Holden	Aurora
Giunta Appendino	University of Turin	2019	Dipartimento di Lingue Letterature Straniere e Culture moderne - Compl	Centro
	Cottino Social Impact Campus	2020 (sede fi	Cottino Social Impact Campus	Cenisia
	University of Turin	In progetto	Città della Salute	Nizza Millefonti
	University of Turin	In progetto	Scuola di Management	Centro
	Polytechnic of Turin	In progetto	Campus Architettura	San Salvario

8 History of HEIs developments: Polytechnic and University new branches per years of opening, city district and political administrations. Author's elaboration, 2020.



9 History of university branches: map of branch expansions in different phases, with zoom on city center (square on the right). Author's elaboration, 2020.

With the projects that have been announced in recent years, we are entering a further phase, characterised by the emergence of new urban university poles. Nonetheless, the HEIs location strategy in recent decades changes, and moves towards concentration in large poles. Projects still in progress include, for example, the construction of a campus to concentrate the hard science departments in the city of Grugliasco and an architecture campus near the Valentino pole. The expansion of universities in the city of Turin has occurred with greater intensity in certain historical periods.

The analysis of the spatial distribution of university sites is also functional in understanding student geographies. As will be seen, in the case of Turin there are significant concentrations of students living around the main poles, with a system of student residences and flats that spreads over much of the city's territory.

4.4 The student population

4.4.1 Student spatial distribution in Turin

There are different perspectives in which to look at the spatial distribution of university students in the city of Turin. One can look at the activities they carry out in different places or rather at the interactions between places and students, thus at the impacts their activities produce. Different student geographies can be identified in the same city. In a recent study, Zasina (2020) compares the student geographies of Turin and Lodz (Poland), using the notion of 'studentcapes' conceptualised by Russo and Capel Tatjer (2007). According to them studentscapes are the new environment or landscape based on students' activities. More precisely, "studentcapes could be defined as the spatial configuration of the interaction between students and their living and working environments. Thus, studentscapes not only encompass the spaces that they use for education (faculties, etc.) (formal elements of the studentscape) but also the different spaces in the city that are used and define them in their social condition of students (informal elements of the studentscape)" (Ibid., p.1163).

This studentscape framework was useful for further study of the case of Turin, in which together with Zasina and Santangelo (Zasina et al. 2021), we looked at student geographies in a three-component way, examining students' educational, residential, and leisure activities distribution in the urban space[15]. The work is summarized in the following map (Figure 10) which represents the highest concentrations of out-of-town students according to the three functions. This was obtained through a campaign of in-person interviews with students, conducted between 2017 and 2018. Students were asked to indicate, for each of the three activities, the places they frequented most.

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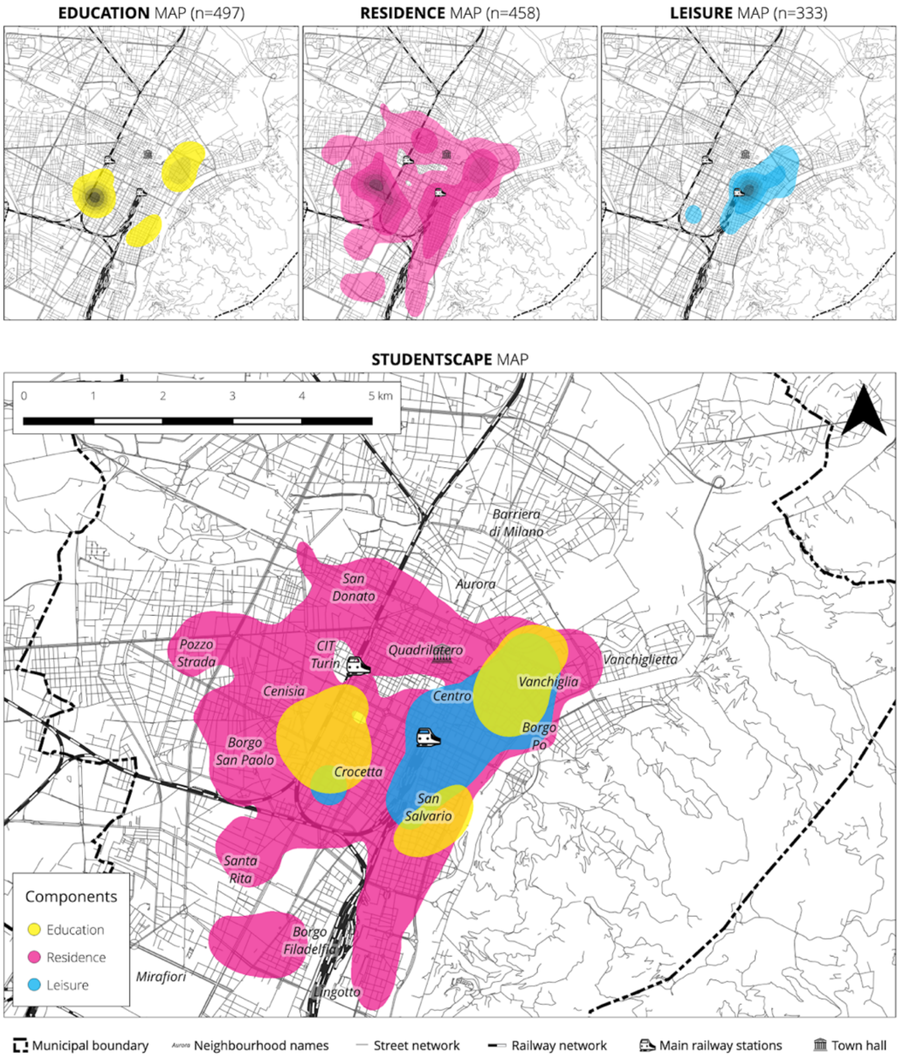
[15] What follows is mainly taken from the author's contribution in Zasina et al. 2021



10 The studentscape of Turin. Source: Zasina et al. 2021.

The current distribution of students related to the educational activities in Turin follows a spatial concentration in three main areas (Figure 10, Education Map). The largest concentration is around the PoliTo campus, located along the Central Backbone and close to the new railway station of Porta Susa. PoliTo moved his headquarter there from its historical site in the post-war period, while in the early 2000s the campus doubled in a wide area of former railway yard and following a process of urban restructuring. In close proximity to the new buildings for teaching and research purposes there are a variety of firms, start-up incubators, cultural centres and student related facilities. The second area in terms of the density of students' educational activities is between the Centro and Vanchiglia neighbourhoods (the latter, a former working-class neighbourhood, is the newest trendy area for Turin's nightlife). This area concentrates mostly students of UniTo (Università degli Studi di Torino) faculties as well as students of the Accademia Albertina di Belle Arti di Torino. It is along the historic axis of Via Po and in its proximity that the oldest university buildings in the city are located. UniTo facilities recently expanded further east, through Vanchiglia: the Campus Luigi Einaudi, built in 2012 on a former industrial site, contributed to definitively establish the image of Vanchiglia as a student area. Within the educational layer of studentscapes in Turin a third area of concentration emerges. It is San Salvario, to the south of the city centre. Close to the former main railway station (Porta Nuova), it is known as a multicultural neighbourhood as well as a place of high concentration of nightlife activities.

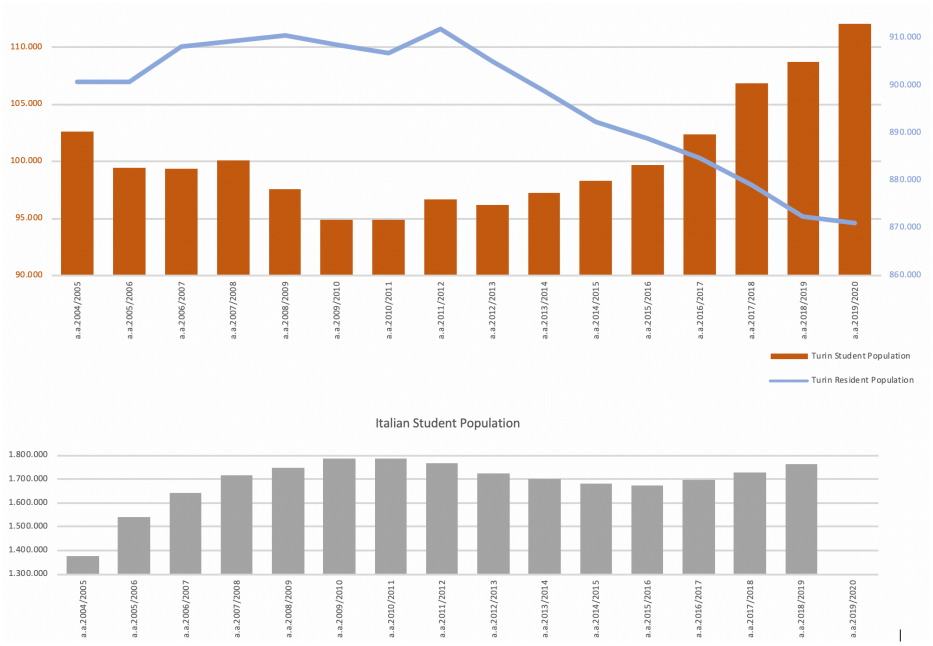
The residential layer of Turin studentscape is, on the contrary, mostly dispersed (Figure 10, Residence Map), due to the fact that only a limited number of students can be hosted in public residences, operated by a regional authority (EDISU), or other students' halls. Consequently, as will be further explained in next section, the majority of students then tend to share a rented private accommodation, also because of a widespread availability of such types of apartments in the city. Again, the area around the PoliTo main campus is the denser in the map. In fact, areas where HEIs are located seem to be attractive also for student residence purposes: this is particularly true for Vanchiglia and San Salvario neighborhoods. However, the residential layer is far more extended, beyond the strict HEIs influence zones. The residential pattern seems to follow the Central Backbone, with relevant concentration of students renting accommodation in residential neighborhoods that are well connected via public transport with other parts of the city, especially in areas located along the metro and the railway lines. More generally, students in Turin appear to mostly live in central and semi-central residential neighborhoods. On the other hand, as will be further explained, an increase of private investments in PBSA is expected and could potentially reshape the residential studentscape in the near future (Mangione, 2019).

The leisure layer of Turin studentscape (Figure 10, Leisure Map) has a lot in common with the residential one, and can be partly associated with education facilities location. It overlaps with the distribution of the city playscapes with the highest density of nightclubs (Crivello, 2011). Two main areas of concentration of pubs and cafes emerged as popular among students: the first one is close to the Porta Nuova railway station, between the Centro and San Salvario neighbourhoods; the second area is in the student district of Vanchiglia, where - as described earlier -

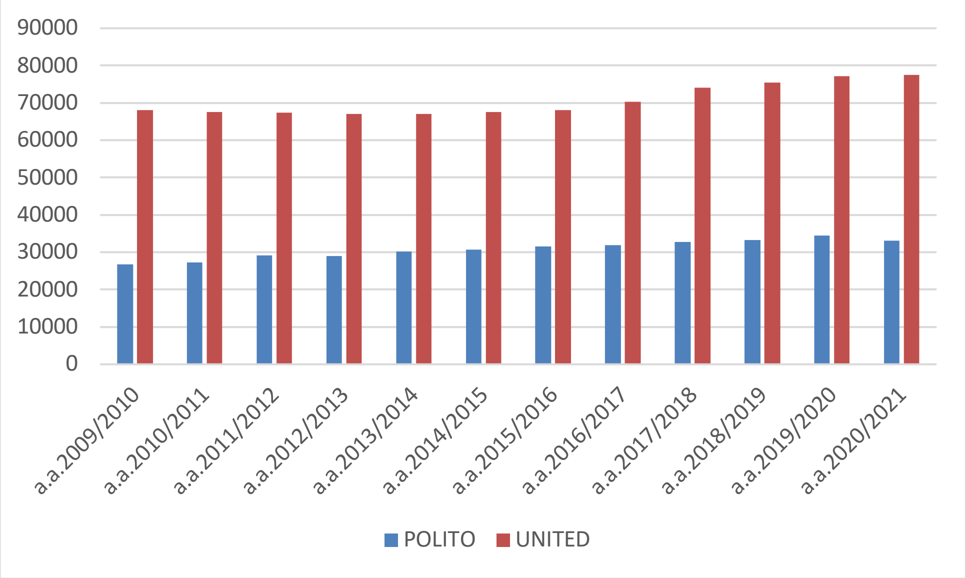
students recently tend to live and attend classes. We can generally observe a certain correspondence between the leisure layer of the studentscape and the well-known landscape of leisure activities in Turin, the same that is also popular among locals and tourists.

Students' geographical patterns in Turin seems to be related with higher education facilities locations than any other spatial feature. The students' concentration patterns observed in Turin are related, in fact, to the different location strategies of the two main HEIs. In Turin the education, residence and leisure layers frequently overlap, making some areas potential student neighborhoods, possibly subject to an increase of conflictual relations with residents. Students in Turin usually live in neighborhoods with a densely built urban fabric that are often characterised by relatively high rental prices, as it is for example in the Centro and Crocetta neighborhoods (the latter is where the main PoliTO campus is located). On the other hand, there are smaller number of students that live in peripheral or cheaper areas. This pattern, similar to the spatial distribution of Turin's playscapes observed by Crivello (2011), could suggest a potential perpetuation of a centre-periphery gap also in the student geographies context. Turin's studentscape is thus particularly visible, although quite blended, in districts within - or close to - the historical centre but, at the same time, students' presence can be seen within the wider urban area.

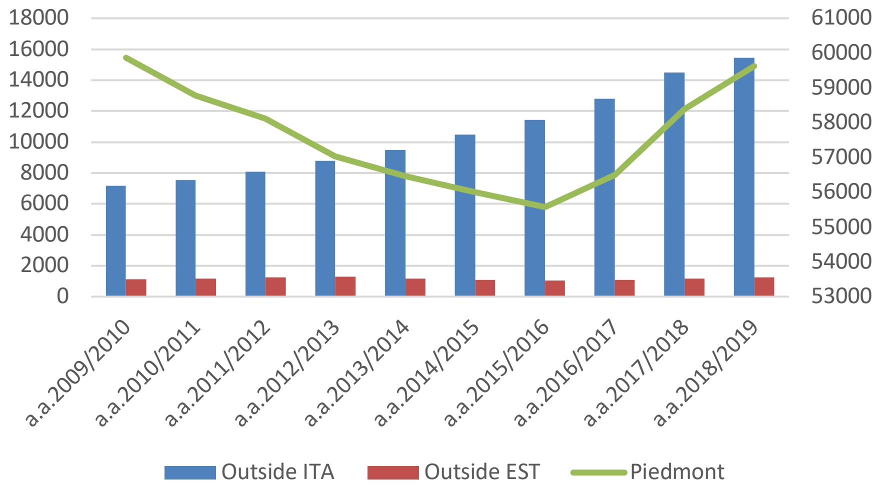
4.4.2 Growing enrolments and students' origin



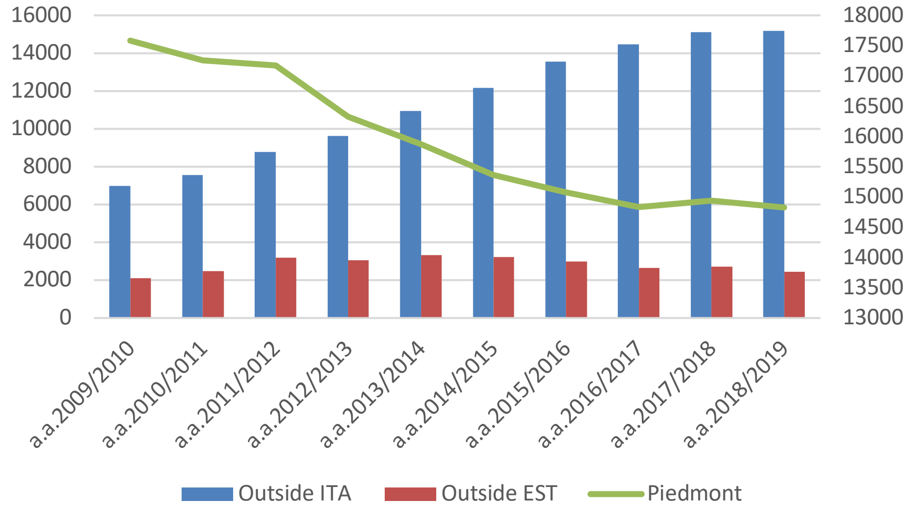
11 Trends of Turin student and non-student population (above) compared with national student population (below). Author's elaboration.



12 Historical of students enrolled in the two main Turin universities. Absolute values. Author's elaboration on Regional Observatory data.



14 Historical of students enrolled at University of Turin and their region of origin. Absolute values. Author's elaboration on Regiona Observatory data



13 Historical of students enrolled at Polytecnic of Turin by their region of origin. Absolute values. Author's elaboration on Regiona Observatory data

During the period of last ten years the enrolment trend was positive in both Turin's universities[16] (Figure 12), which count for the last academic year 2020/2021, a total of 110,665 students. The University of Turin have had the highest number of students enrolled, equal to 77,531 students while the enrolment at Polytechnic of Turin were of 33,134 students.

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[16] Turin's university or equivalent institutions include the Albertina Academy, the European Institute of Design (IED), the Institute of Applied Art and Design (IAAD) and the 'Giuseppe Verdi' Conservatory of Music in Turin.

Moreover, in Turin are seated four smaller higher education institutions with a number of students distributed as follows:

- Albertina Academy 1276 enrolled[17]
- European Institute of Design (IED) 671 students[18]
- Institute of Applied Art and Design (IAAD) 1134 students[19]
- Turin Conservatory of Music 'Giuseppe Verdi' 550 members[20]

This means that in Turin there are 114,294 students enrolled in the local HEIs.

If we look at the region of origin of the students enrolled (historical series Figure 11 and 12) the students who resides in Piedmont region are following a decline at the Turin Polytechnic, with a loss of 20 percentage points in the decade, while at the University the negative trend reverses in the academic year 2015/2016. To date, 78% of those enrolled at the University and 45.6% of those enrolled at the Polytechnic reside in Piedmont. On the other hand, it is relevant to notice how non-resident students are the ones who determine the total increase in enrolments. In fact, inflow enrolments from other Italian regions are significantly increasing in both universities. They are 20.3% at the University and 46.7% at the Polytechnic.

There are two critical aspects when we look at data on student population in Turin: one is about the precise number of off-campus students and the second is about foreign students. The issue is critical because it is not just a matter of being able to count students accurately. Both off-site students and foreign students are categories that are frequently called upon to motivate policy and urban development initiatives. These are data that define the prestige and attractiveness that are increasingly recognized - by the media and politics - to Turin universities. But they are also the data on the basis of which assessments of service and housing needs are made. In light of their use, it is necessary to go deeper into how the numbers of off-campus students, both Italian and foreign, are quantified.

Regarding the non-local students in general, the data[21] exists on how many of those enrolled in Turin live in a region other than Piedmont (35,569) or in a province

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[17] Source MIUR: http://ustat.miur.it/dati/didattica/italia/afam-accademie-belle-arti/torino-albertina last consultation June 17, 2022

[18] Source MIUR: http://ustat.miur.it/dati/didattica/italia/afam-istituzioni-autorizzate-afam/istituto-europeo-del-design-ied-torino last consultation June 17, 2022

[19] Source MIUR: http://ustat.miur.it/dati/didattica/italia/afam-istituzioni-autorizzate-afam/istituto-d-arte-applicata-e-design-iaad last consultation June 17, 2022

[20] Source MIUR: http://ustat.miur.it/dati/didattica/italia/afam-conservatori/torino-giuseppe-verdi last consultation June 17, 2022

[21] The source of data on number of students residing per Region and Province is the following: Ministry of University and Research, Higher Education Data Portal: http://dati.ustat.miur.it/dataset/iscritti/resource/b270ef1a-c219-48b1-8399-b1458e225d39, last consultation 17, June 2022

other than Turin (55,956), but it is not possible at present to know how many of these students decide to live temporarily in Turin instead of commuting, nor if there are students from other regions or provinces that move daily to study in Turin. For these reasons, we could claim that almost one third, a percentage between the 32% (off-region residents) or the 51% (off-province residents), of the student population is off-site but it is also probably necessary to read this data carefully, keeping in mind such critical aspects[22]. Nevertheless, the amount of one-third of off-site students on the total student population is in line with national average: according to the eight Eurostudent survey, in 2018 the 33% of Italian students were off-site, 50% commuted with the city of study and the 17% lived in their home towns.

Among non-local students, 6% of the University of Turin (Unito) and 13% of Polytechnic of Turin have a non-Italian citizenship. It is quite common for universities to provide such data as the ones describing their foreign student population. Nonetheless this is a delicate procedure. For example, if we compare the most represented foreign citizenship among students, emerges how these are significantly overlapping with the most represented foreign citizenships among Turin overall resident population (Figure 15). This data suggest the possibility that some of those “foreign” students could be in fact part of the Turin population which still wait for an Italian citizenship, but that at the same time cannot be identified as “non-local”. This is not to say that non-Italian students in Turin HEIs have irrelevant representation. Attractive policies and international exchanges with foreign countries and HEIs are effective in increasing such population. On the other hand, would be probably necessary to deepen the understanding of composition of student off-site population, in order to have policy decision – both internal and external to universities – well grounded.

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[22] It is important to consider this unavoidable error in the counting of off-site students, since - as we have seen and will see - the number of students temporarily residing in Turin is important for the definition of policies targeting this population. In various contexts, from municipal administration urban plans to real estate investment sector studies, numbers on off-site students are used that are sometimes difficult to trace back to a source. Since these very approximate quantifications support important policies and interventions, it might be useful to imagine more precise calculation systems; e.g. by universities.

	Rate on total **Turin residents** with non-Italian citizenship	Rate on total **Unito students** with non-Italian citizenship	Rate on total **Polito students** with non-Italian citizenship
Romania	38,5	28,5	6,2
Morocco	12,5	6,2	2,3
Peru	5,5	5,0	1,7
China	5,6	7,1	21,3
Albania	4,0	11,9	8,0
Total	66,0	58,5	39,6

15 Comparison between Turin's four more frequent nationality among city residents and their presence among university students, percentages. Author's elaboration on Osservatorio regionale and Rapporto Rota data.

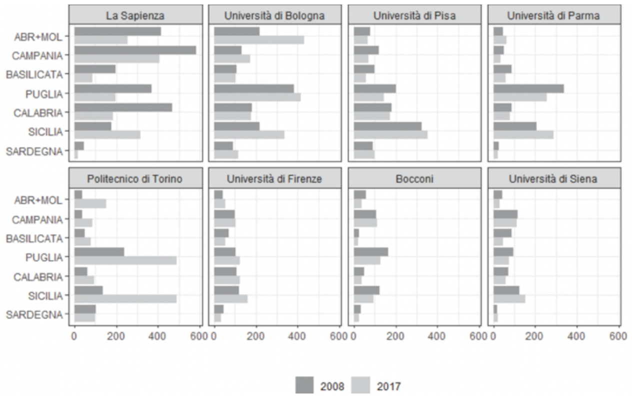
4.4.3 Turin gain students from south-north mobility

A recent publication (Attanasio, Priulla 2020) analysing south-north migration of first-year bachelor students in Italy underlines how between 2008 and 2017 a relevant increase in student mobility has been registered: from Sicilia and Puglia the amount of out-going has doubled. Rizzi and colleagues, in another study on Italian student mobility, shows that "most students choose a local university, which can also be located in a neighbouring region. Instead, Milan and Turin, the two big Italian northern cities, do not follow this rule. They attract students from all the northern regions. "(Rizzi et al. 2021, p.20).

In recent decades, in fact, university student geographies in Italy have been strongly characterised by student mobility flows. In particular, it emerges that these flows have a prevailing direction, from south to north, albeit with some exceptions. This type of mobility can only partly be traced back to the attractiveness of universities. Other relevant factors are to be sought in the context of national policies. On the one hand, those of economic development which, more in words than in deeds, are concerned with reducing the gaps between north and south. On the other hand, university funding policies that in recent decades have been oriented towards a reward system that encourages competition and rewards already strong universities. Consequently, on the one hand, the migration of young people, students and non-students alike, to regions that offer greater economic and social opportunities continues. As observed by Rizzi and colleagues in fact, it seems that the choices of northern first-year students are influenced more by the 'investment-perspective' than by the 'consumption- perspective' (Van Bouwel L., Veugelers, 2013), as Milan and Turin offer better economic conditions and better job opportunities (Rizzi et al. 2021). On the other hand, a number of large universities, many of them in northern Italy, are becoming major attractors.

As will be seen shortly, the two major universities in Turin have different catchment areas for students. While the university has the majority of its enrolled students coming from the Piedmont region itself or neighboring regions, Polytechnic of Turin is one of the eight most attractive universities for student mobility from the south (Figure 9). It also keeps its attractiveness in the recent years, increasing it from Sicily and Puglia.

16 Enrollment inflow from southern regions in the top eight universities, absolute values (Attanasio & Priulla, 2020 p.39)



Beyond the willingness of universities to foster the student number increase (Politecnico aims to reach 40,000 students in the next few years) what is changing is the composition of such population. Emigration-immigration processes are progressively changing the ratio of off sites - in sites students: as a consequence, new student housing demands are raised.

4.5 Student housing: Turin position in the Italian context

4.5.1 The institutional framework of student housing

In Italy the state's and region's legislative powers share student housing competences. Regions have charge of the social right to education (DSU or diritto allo studio) which traditionally exert through ad hoc agencies for the right to study (in Piedmont this is the EDISU) while the state maintains the exclusive responsibility to guarantee a minimum and equal level of social benefit, including student housing (Dinisi, 2022). The Italian university system has historically been characterised by strong public support for students without means, in terms of services and housing, which has enabled it to achieve the current status of some universities and regions, which are also very attractive because of the welfare systems they offer. This is the case of Turin and the Piedmont region, notwithstanding a fluctuating trend in regional funding policies.

The student housing supply in Italy is regulated by Law n. 338 of November 2000. It introduces a co-financing program for new projects, but also renovation and extension of the existing. The financing is activated through specific financing notices, the last of which has been published in 2021. "The call for proposal is open to the regions, regional entities of DSU, public housing companies, universities, AFAM institutions, university colleges, student cooperatives, non-profit organizations and foundations dealing with social and university housing" (Dinisi 2022 p.209). For the Turin territory, an ad hoc coalition has been created in order to apply to the last call of 2021. This was formed by the Regional government, the EDISU, the local universities and municipal administrations. With a 88 million euros investment, Piedmont could have 1,075 new beds in university residences by 2025. This is thanks to the restoration or redevelopment of four existing but unused buildings and areas between Turin and the first belt[23].

Universities can also play a role in the student housing supply. Some universities in EU can and decided to invest themselves on the supply in order to be attractive for international students. In other cases, such as in the Lombardy Region, the power of housing provision of the regional authorities for the DSU has been shifted towards universities, which directly operate as affordable housing operators. However, this is not the case of Turin.

In Italy "students' housing needs are only marginal satisfied by public student accommodations" (Dinisi 2022 p.207). In the a.y. 2016/2017 the 66% of students eligible for scholarship were not assigned a bed and public institutions can cover just the 8% of demand. This context supported the access of new and different actors in the student housing supply, particularly if the traditional institutions cannot supply the student housing request. In recent years the number of residences managed and owned by companies and moral entities has increased. This type of housing which is already common in countries as the UK, "began to be considered by private investors as an expanding market in Italy" (Ibid., p.208). The investment sector in the residential market is confirmed to be in high ferment, even in cities like Turin where the general economic environment and the real estate market appear weak (Camplus, Scenari Immobiliari 2019). The vitality of this market is confirmed by the presence of major international investments. In Turin, for example, more than 7 million euros were invested in the purchase of the area alone where the student residence of the Dutch company The Student Hotel will be built (over in the Aurora district) and about 63 million euros for the university residence project in Via Frejus, in the San Paolo district, following an investment by the company MeG Investments (see Figures 28 and 29).

Italy is among those European countries which have a specific national legal regime for rental agreements with students (Vandromme et al. 2022). The role of locally regulating those contracts is played by municipalities, which promote local

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[23] Source: https://www.regione.piemonte.it/web/pinforma/notizie/sei-progetti-residenze-universitarie (Last access June 2022).

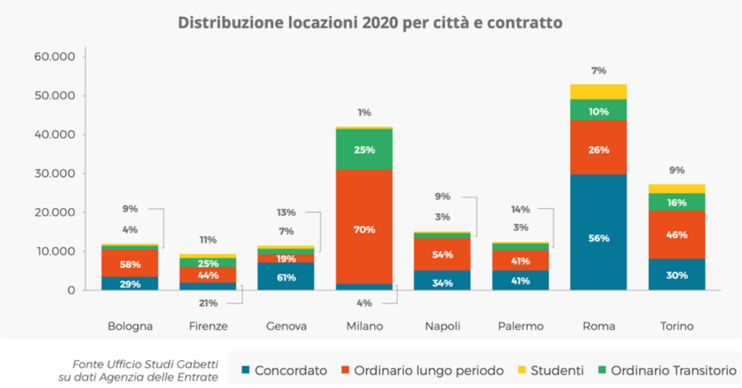
agreements between tenant and landlord associations, with the objective to specify the rent ceiling and draft contracts models (Dinisi 2022). For what concerns the rental price, this can be defined according to the type of contract applied (the private student rental market and possible contracts to be used to are regulated by law n.431 of December 1998). The most common contract used for student housing in Turin is the assisted tenancy (contratto concordato) which entails that "the rent is established by local agreements stipulated by the most representative landlords' and tenants' associations. These agreements define the rent amount according to different parameters such as location and the characteristics of the dwelling (age, conditions, services, etc.)" (Vandromme et al. 2022, p.221). The authors underline how in tenancies for university students the fixed rent regimes always applies and any clause providing a rent over the legal limit is null and void. Considering these indications and the fact that most student housing in Turin (and Italy) are proposed for students' tenancies only, it probably should be clarified why in many cases rents asked are clearly higher than what has been defined by local agreements (see also results in Cenere et al., 2022), also considering the possible additional cost and expenses. Further investigation on this issue should be made. Also, in the light of the observation that "rent control by territorial agreements and concurring fiscal and welfare policies positively impacted student housing affordability" (Dinisi 2022 p.229).

4.5.2 The student rental and PBSA market

The majority (around 86%) of the off-site students in Turin rent a flat, alone or - more commonly - shared with peers. The widespread student housing is a common trait in the Italian context and according to the annual report of the Agenzia delle Entrate (Festa, 2020) the number of student-dedicated leases registers a constant increase (Cenere et al., 2020). In fact, student's demand also increases, in the front of a general trend in more expensive student housing options, especially in most popular university cities such as Bologna, Florence, Milan and, more recently, Turin. In the Italian rental market of 2020, the 4% of the total registered leases are for students. If we look at the distribution of student leases among the main Italian cities, Turin registered 2,271 contracts, just after Rome with 3,727 (Figure 22).

According to Tecnocasa (2019), students searching for a house in Turin mostly look at two-room apartments (35.2%) and three-room apartments (29.7%), mostly stipulating transitional type contracts for students (67.5%). Turin beats the Italian record in the percentage of those looking for a house for study reasons (31%), followed by Milan (28.4%) against an Italian average of 9.4% (increasing). In 2019, Turin was first for the increase in real estate values of apartments rented to students with + 8%, compared to a national average of + 3% (Tecnocasa, 2019). Today the

Turin rental sector confirms its trend in increasing the rent costs, together with the majority of Italian medium and large cities (Tecnocasa, 2022).



Fonte Ufficio Studi Gabetti
su dati Agenzia delle Entrate

17 Distribution of 2020 leases by city and contract (blue: agreed contract; orange: ordinary long-term; yellow: students; green: ordinary transient). Source: Ufficio Studi Gabetti.

"In university cities where the potential demand for student housing is particularly pronounced, out-of-town students generally face above-average rents on the open market. This is certainly the case in cities such as Milan and Rome where the rent for 30 square metres in a central area significantly exceeds, on average, 500 euros per month. There are, however, exceptions such as Turin, where rents are about half of those observed in Milan, reaching the levels of Padua and Pisa, despite an out-of-town student population the size of cities such as Rome or Bologna". (Montanino et al. 2022). Indeed, what makes Turin rental market particularly attractive is probably that Turin has one of the lowest prices per square meters of student leases, if compared with other Italian cities (i.e. the highest price per square meter are on Rome, 132 euros, while Turin is about 77 euros, after Naples and just before Palermo with 53 euros) (Ufficio Studi Gabetti, 2020).

For what concern the student halls sector, around 14% of off-site students in Turin live in a PBSA either public or private (data from own elaboration on PBSA developments, updated to 2022), a value that is not so far from the European average of 18% according to Eurostudent (Hauschildt et al., 2018) and above the national average that is just about 3% of students. Nonetheless, all real estate analysis on PBSA market in Italy and Turin report a far higher under supply in order to justify the need of investments (see in example The class foundation PBSA market update on southern Europe[24]). According to the Gabetti Report (2020) in

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[24] The class foundation "PBSA MARKET UPDATE: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR SOUTHERN EUROPEAN STUDENT ACCOMMODATION?" June 2016. https://www.theclassfoundation.com/articles/pbsa-market-update-what-does-the-future-hold-for-southern-european-student-accommodation

Turin "the large increase in the number of university students, the ageing of the population and the data on transactions carried out, suggest Turin as a suitable city for the development of private rented sector, senior living, micro-living and student housing solutions. The more dynamic solutions, such as micro living are dictated by the housing needs of what will be the future ex-university students, who have already moved to the city for study purposes. "(Ibid., p. 18).

The push for new student housing solutions also comes from the level of national policies. The most recent initiative is that of the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan), i.e. the Italian plan implementing the Next Generation EU, which allocates about 1 billion euro for student housing, assigned to the Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR) with the aim of increasing the number of beds, providing for a reform aimed at encouraging the involvement of private capital. According to analysts at Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP), “the measures envisaged by the PNRR respond to two circumstances: the increase in the number of out-of-town students recorded in recent years and the structural shortage of university residence accommodation, which currently meets less than 8% of out-of-town students in Italy. In order to bring the supply of student housing up to the best European standards it would be necessary to increase the current supply by about 100 thousand beds” (CDP, 2022). According to this study, analyzed on the basis of three key factors - potential demand for beds, the private rental market and the dynamics of the out-of-town student population - the need for student accommodation is particularly urgent in the university cities of Central-Northern Italy and, in particular, in the large metropolitan areas: the gap estimated in Milan is about 16 thousand beds, just under 7 thousand in Turin, Bologna and Rome respectively.

4.5.3 How the local market react to students

Student's presence starts to be noticeable in neighborhoods closer to university facilities and to be associated with phenomena such as the increase in night-time activities and noise and the increase in rent prices. The impact of student housing on the dynamics of the housing market is perhaps one of the most relevant in Turin. Although still not very visibly, some changes are taking place and deserve some attention. A recent Tecnocasa report on real estate sales in Turin, referring to the second semester of 2018, indicates the neighborhoods with the greatest demand from investors looking for apartments to rent to students, but also from parents of non-resident students. The neighborhoods with a higer rate of this kind of requests partly correspond with these were students actually resides, such as San Salvario, Vanchiglietta and San Paolo (indicated as a neighborhood in which the very high demand for rental apartments can no longer meet the demand). On the other hand, other districts seems to receive a more recent attention from investors; these are the Center and the two peripheral Borgo Vittoria and Barriera di Milano.

According to the data of the database of the Rota report on Turin, university districts are characterised by peculiar trends in housing prices. In the last 10 years (2006-2017 period) the values of homes for sale in areas characterised by a strong presence of university students have risen (this is particularly true for neighborhoods as San Salvario, San Paolo, Vanchiglia, Vanchiglietta).

According to Laudisa and Musto, “the increase in the number of off-site students, which testifies to the highly attractive nature of the Piedmont university system, has led to a growing demand for beds and to the realization by some private and public players (including, in particular, the universities) of the need to invest in university housing” (Laudisa & Musto, 2021). In the student housing sector, a significant reaction to student housing demand also came from the private sector. Houses started to be converted into student apartments and rented by their owners or - following an expanding trend - by specialized real estate agencies. Moreover, a flourishing production of Purpose-Built Student Accommodations (PBSA) have been established, with the construction of several projects across the city in the last ten years (see Chapter 6). In fact, the increase in new enrolments supported PBSA typology. According to a study by Camplus and Real Estate Scenarios, in order to calculate the demand for student housing in PBSA, one needs to consider in particular that portion of younger or international off-site students who choose this type of housing at an early stage of their approach to city life (Camplus, Scenari Immobiliari 2019).

4.5.4 An innovative approach to affordable student housing demand in Turin

Two recent studies analysed the need for university housing for low-income students in Turin. The first is from 2016, entitled 'Public university residences for the right to study in Turin: proposal for an alternative "masterplan"'. It was written by two student representatives, Sera and Magariello (2016) and was approved with unanimous and open votes by the Regional Assembly of Students for the Right to University Studies of Piedmont. The 'Alternative Master Plan' carried out an accurate calculation of the need for EDISU beds. For the calculation, the number of eligible students per teaching site was taken into account, the latter divided by areas. Eight territorial ambits comprising university sites were defined and the number of eligible students per site was calculated. The ambits are associated with the EDISU residences in the area. "By summing up the number of students entitled to a bed in EDISU residences of the courses associated with the various study locations in each ambit, it was possible to calculate the need for beds. From the analysis of these data it emerges that the area with the highest number of students entitled to accommodation is the Cittadella Politecnica (1,448 students, 45% of the total) followed by the Centre (741 students, 23% of the total); the other areas have lower numbers: 417 students in the San Salvario / Lingotto area, 169 in the Economics Pole, 155 in Mirafiori / Orbassano, 49 in the Grugliasco Pole, 39 at the Piero della Francesca Centre and 223 at the Luigi Einaudi Campus. In 6 of the ambits, there is a shortage of beds for eligible applicants. The most serious scenarios are: the Cittadella Politecnica area where only 35% of requirements are covered, the San Salvario/Lingotto area where 31% of requirements are covered, and the Mirafiori/Orbassano area where 41% of requirements are covered. In the Grugliasco pole and the Einaudi Campus area, on the other hand, there is an excess of beds. A further and more recent analysis of demand has been developed by Laudisa and Musto (2021), analysing students who hold a scholarship but do not actually have access to the student housing service, because of the lack of public beds. In this case, the city has been divided into seven university poles. The result is that Turin lacks 4,200 beds in order to fully cover the demand of non-resident scholarship holders, of which: 2,300 would have to be created at the Cittadella Politecnica and 1,000 at the Palazzo Nuovo-CLE training centre; about 300 beds would be needed at the Ospedali-Lingotto centre, currently the area where there is the widest gap between supply and demand for housing - 10 out of 100 out-of-state scholarship holders benefit from a bed - and where demand could increase following the opening of the new University of Turin campus in Via Marenco; 220 beds would be needed in the Valentino-Scientific centre; the demand for housing, however, could decrease with the completion of the City of Health while it could increase if the redevelopment project of Torino Esposizioni is realised, as indicated in the Master Plan of the Polytechnic of Turin; almost 200 beds should be available in the Economics area; the former MOI buildings, which will be redeveloped, could cover the gap provided that the rates are effectively lowered, i.e. aligned to the value of the housing service set by EDISU Piemonte .

4.5.5 Insights on the student housing experience and living condition[25]

When searching for accommodation in Turin, modes and channels that could be described as informal, i.e., not designed specifically for that purpose (e.g., Facebook) or based on networks of acquaintances and word of mouth, prevail. The level of satisfaction with respect to relations with apartment owners or managers, as well as with possible roommates, appears on average good if not high. In

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[25] This section is an extract from the research report Cenere, S., Mangione, E., Servillo, L. (2022) Torino da fuori. Studiare, abitare e vivere la città da fuorisede. Quaderni Future Urban Legacy Lab. Politecnico di Torino. The report and data cited in the paragraph are based on an anonymous questionnaire, disseminated through the collaboration of the Universities, was filled out by a total of 1,538 people, mainly enrolled in the University or Polytechnic.

contrast, dissatisfaction grows with the cost of rent and the physical condition of the apartment. 29% of respondents are little or not at all satisfied with what they pay, and the percentage rises to 45 % among those with non-Italian citizenship. The physical condition of the housing does not satisfy 23% of the identified sample, but there still remains a majority (61%) of people who are satisfied. Although the absolute majority of the sample of international male and female students have not experienced discrimination by landlords while searching for housing, the percentage of those who say they have experienced incidents of such discrimination is very high (43%), a sign of a rental market that still does not seem ready to adequately accommodate those from other countries.

Three crucial aspects are worth noting regarding the life experience of off-site students. First, the survey shows a general appreciation by off-site students for Turin, particularly with regard to cultural offerings, events, concerts and nightlife. This is not surprising, as the leisure and entertainment sector has grown in recent decades as a result of land promotion policies geared toward attracting tourism and boosting the culture economy. Second, students not only help support the entertainment economy as consumers, but also as a share of the industry's workforce. In fact, from the sample analyzed, the majority of student workers are employed in bars and restaurants, in the tourism or events sector. Of this, the precarious and often unprotected nature of working conditions is emphasized. A wide variety of working conditions characterizes the student world: temporary and/or casual work, work in support of university administrative or teaching activities, to the willingness to seek employment opportunities for even a longer period and after the conclusion of one's study period. Third and last point, the participation in city life of off-campus students, on the other hand, appears to be little oriented to the political dimension: students remain temporary guests of a city in which - as non-residents - they do not appear in any electoral or registry register. Moreover, when asked specifically, both the lack of opportunities and the absence of a particular interest in participating in Turin's democratic life emerge. These three points pose interesting insights into public policy. The city's attractive policies (from loisir to cultural entertainment) intersect little with those dedicated to everyday living conditions, which are of more interest to people with medium mobility, such as off-site students. These include access to general services, green areas and sports facilities, to the possibility of feeling part of a community and its political demands. The result is a temporary urban student population that consumes, partly works, but whose active participation in local life remains limited.

4.6 Pandemic: implications and new scenarios

The most relevant implication of the Covid-19 pandemic on the research issues, has been for a period of time the global reduction of young mobility for study reasons. This had short term implications in student presence in cities and in student housing occupation.

In the long term, we should also consider the social and economic crisis that in some countries, including Italy is originating from the pandemic one. The impoverishment of families could have an impact on the future opportunity to study or study abroad. Such regressive dynamics were already observed as a consequence of the 2008 economic crisis (Finocchietti, 2015). The remote teaching also marked the Covid-19 phase of higher education, giving the opportunity to imagine the university of the future as a digital one. On the other hand, a relevant amount of literature looks at young reasons to move for study, showing how the experience of living far from home prevails on the university name.

On the local level of the case study, some elements need to be taken into account. The enrolment at Turin universities has not decreased in the last two years. In this regard it is relevant to consider the local user base character of Turin universities. Unito has a short-range attraction of students mainly from Piedmont region, while Polito has a longer range with more than 50% of students coming from other Italian regions. In both cases the enrolment increase is critically related with an intranational mobility. This could have helped (or it could help in the future) the Turin universities with a minor loss in off-site students, if compared with universities with larger number of international students. For some universities, being attractive for international students translated in to a problem when the pandemic blocked before and made more difficult then, the international mobility fluxes. According to recent studies, in the two countries with the highest number of international students in higher education the academic year 2020/2021 would have begun with a decrease in new enrolment around 24% in the UK and 15% in the US (Laudisa, Musto 2020).

The pandemic also helped in establishing as an unquestionable fact, in the local debate as well as in the political approach to urban governance, the role of students as a fundamental resource for the local economy (of rent and retail sector in some areas of the city, close to universities). The continuity in the inflow of student population in the city is generally taken for granted. The Turin local plan has started its approving process during the pandemic crisis, keeping the special consideration for the mobile student population the same as the original pre-pandemic version. In the housing sector we can find three entry points to future evolution. First, renting a room seems to maintain the same price of pre-pandemic situation. Second, beds available in student halls are decreased due to the safety restrictions (no more than one student per room, if they are not relatives); it is not jet clear if such an internal policy of main PBSA will remain in the future academic years. Third, the PBSA investors go through with their projects and the belief that it is a good moment to invest in student housing in Turin.

Part 4 – Housing the students: processes, policies and emerging geographies

If we look at the timing of a transformation process of a space, we could identify three main phases: the “ex-ante”, the “in itinere” and the “ex-post”, which respectively identify what happen in the process before the transformation, during and after it. In this research, the transformation correspond to the changing student housing geographies in Turin, and particularly produced by the set of ongoing developments of purpose build student accommodation. Thus, the analysis focused not just on a single project, but on the process through which several projects are going to be realized, in different part of the city. In this complex transformation process of multiple spaces, the ex-ante phase correspond to the decision making leading to the project’s approval, it includes the contextual factors which interact with the decision making. On a timescale, in this case we should go back to the first moves which settle the ground for a relevant increase in students and student housing solutions. The in itinere phase has been identified by the one of factual growth in the student housing market and realization of PBSA projects. This is the moment in which the PBSA is built and in which students begin to be noticeable in places, as well as the one of first reactions of the local territory (conflictual reaction and opposition to PBSA development, first changes in the local retail and manifestation of night time activities). The ex-post phase is about impacts produced by the student presence and student housing in the urban context they settle. It is more related with medium to long term impacts and in some ways overlaps with the previous, which is more about the short-term ones. The ex-post is the phase which sees the city close to the PBSA changing consistently (in the retail, the overall housing market, the reputation of the district which is then identified as “students”). Almost in every case study in which the transformation process of a space occurs due to student housing developments can be somehow recognized such phases distinction. The literature tackling the students and student housing presence in cities use to focus on what happen sometimes during and more frequently after the project realization. Nonetheless, understand why and how those projects has been realized in that specific time and place can be relevant for more than one reason. Focusing primarily on the first of the three phases is particularly relevant since such a study of the context is usually overlooked by literature on student housing. This constitute a shortcoming who also may lead to lacking interpretations in the "ex-post" analysis of student housing impacts. This research has the objective to tell the entire story of the process, in a moment in which the process is both at its core (in itinere) but also begin to show its consequences in the urban dimension. At the same time, a particular attention is posed on the analysis in the "ex-ante" phase, in order to understand under which conditions those transformations occur. In other words, unfold the decision process of local actors and policy makers and trace university and student related urban transformations as they unfolds (Sage, Smith, Hubbard 2012).

The policy analysis which leads the following chapters had the aim to understand issue evolution and agenda setting, also in terms of (in)ability of traditional and current local governance to cope with emerging forms of student's transient mobility and the resulting housing behaviours. The objectives which guide the analysis are thus to identify actors and stakeholder in order to

- analyse the 'decisional process' which leads to the current composition of the student housing supply;
- to understand to which and whom housing demands the actor's agency respond;
- through which causal chain the outcomes did (or did not) occur or in other words what specific feature of the process appears crucial in determining outcomes;
- to understand and verify if a student housing policy exists.

Chapter 5 - Policy initiatives for the 'university city’

The chapter illustrate the policy analysis. In a first part, the methodological issues are described, together with the main approach to the analysis. Consequently, follows an accurate description of method and documents collected ad used, but also of actors interviewed with some outcomes. The main contents relate to the analysis of actors positioning and priorities in the various policy initiatives undertaken. A particular focus is on the role of the university on the one hand and of the city on the other. The local administrations have in fact undertaken a series of acts that, with a certain continuity regardless the different political color, defined a new direction in the policy for Turin as a university city.

5.1 Approaching the analysis of a quasi- policy

Through an accurate observation of the last twenty years actor's behaviours and discourses the set of their actions emerges as to be strong connected, although has not been oriented by a single recognizable and organic policy. We are in the face of a collection of individual and not always shared actions, which in the end act in the urban environment as a policy, but that in the meantime has not been designed and put forward as such. This is one of the main challenges raised by the case study: to develop a policy analysis of a quasi- policy.

The analysis of a policy process with such characteristics raised some methodological issue. First, the reconstruction of the same process. The policy initiatives which informed the transformations of the student university city and the development of the student housing sub sector were (are) not codified. They were rather scattered among different city departments, councilor competences and even different actors and institutions. As an example, each of the four majors elected along the period of study chooses to delegate the “University city” project and or the student housing development to a different office. Sometimes official documents clarify such process of delegation, while in other occasions this is quite difficult to reconstruct.

A broader methodological issue is that student housing (and studentification) seems to be not conceived (or studied) as a policy issue by scholars. It is uncommon to find geographical or urban studies which tackle the political overall approach to the student housing in a city. More commonly, scholars tackle the presence of the student housing in cities through specific aspects on specific projects, or the recognition in local transformations of globalizing phenomena (i.e. studentification, financialization). On the other hand, also in the wider sector of policy analysis, specific methodology to study the "urban" level has not emerged as a research practice (Kaufmann & Sidney 2019). Nonetheless, the policies that cities create, and implement are essential objects of study for understanding such contemporary societal transformation. This research thus is a test which put into connection a policy analysis with the analysis of processes of urban change which are traditionally more commonly used in the urban studies.

The policy analysis has been supported by the analysis of the main stakeholder with the aim to reconstruct the network of actors contributing in the student housing provision as well as to recognise the power relation between the actors and the contribute they provide in answering the housing demand. Regarding the actors at play, three groups of actors has been identified: public local authorities; HEIs; actors of the private sector. The first group includes Turin's Municipality and the Piedmont Regional Government, through the Regional agency for the right to study (EDISU), an agency that plays an important role as main funder of public student housing and facilities (canteens, study halls) as well as scholarships provision. As regards HEIs, the main institutions in Turin are two public universities: the University and the Polytechnic. They are among the most important Italian universities and attract students from the whole country and from abroad. In the last group of actors we can recognise two different categories: on one hand two important bank foundations, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo and Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Torino, which are committed to promote and fund local development policies, also in the broad field of education and research activities; another category is the one of companies that invest in the student housing real estate market, as in the case of the Italian private foundation Camplus and of the international companies The Student Hotel or M&G.

At the core of the policy analysis there has been a significant collection of documents of different nature. Over sixty documents, official reports, plans and resolutions were analyzed in their contents related with policy initiatives for the student population and their housing provision. The most relevant category of documents concerns the set of 55 resolutions and resolutions approved by the municipal council. The observation period begins with the publication of the first documents dealing with one of the topics of interest, in May 2007 while the last one collected is from July 2020. They were searched in the municipal documentation by using keywords in the online database for searching acts (https://servizi.comune.torino.it/consiglio/prg/web/ricerca_atti.php). The four main keywords used were university, university city, students, student housing.

After an in dept analysis of each document contents, the 24 more significant municipal act has been identified and collected in the table in Annex 3, each document has been recorded chronologically together with date, reference number, subject and deputy councilor. These are resolutions about the student housing, but also more broadly oriented to promote actions toward the project Torino Città Universitaria which will be described in next chapters. In some cases, they testify the subscription of particular agreements among actors. More generally, each document is a useful tool in order to understand which actor of the municipal council is responsible for the resolution, thus for that particular policy and approach.

The other documents which were key in the policy analysis were

- the three Stategic Plans of the city respectively published in 2000, 2006 and 2015 (Torino Strategica, 2000; 2006; 2015);
- the document titled "Public university residences for the right to study in Turin: Proposal for an alternative "master plan"" of April 2016 (Magariello, Sera 2016);
- the Polytechnic and University most recent strategic plans;
- the Polytechnic Masterplan (https://www.masterplan.polito.it/);
- Technical proposal of the preliminary project of the Urban Plan Revision published in May 2020.

A series of interview completed the data collection for the policy analysis.

In general, the interviews were treated as tools to support policy analyses (Dente, 2011). Some of them had an exploratory function, others were used to verify and validate the outlined scenarios. The macro-group of interviews also included informal interviews with some actors, mostly in the preparatory phase. A significant part of the interview phase was carried out alongside the other members of the SMARTDEST project research group, in particular Samantha Cenere and Loris Servillo. Among the various commonalities between the project and this research are some of the actors at play in the dynamics observed and their approaches.

In the case of the interviews done specifically for this research, interviews involved the actors responsible in some way in shaping what I call 'the student housing policy' (despite some issues on such a definition, which will be better explained later on). Attention has also been taken in investigating the relation between the student housing and other policies, which are closely connected with the student housing policy. With regard to the interviews shared between the two research projects, in part similar issues to those just described were investigated, and in part an attempt was made to understand the actors' approach to the Torino Città Universitaria strategy.

The interviews conducted were as follows[26] :

- EDISU (regional authority for the right to education), Alessandro Sciretti, President
- EDISU, Silvia Bodoardo, Vice President
- EDISU, Antonio Amico, Student Representative on the BoD
- CUS (university sports centre), Riccardo D'Elicio, President
- City of Turin, Marco Giusta, former Councillor for Youth Policy with responsibility for the university city
- City of Turin, Maria Rosa Gilardi, Former Head of Urban Planning Area and Head of Special Project Master Plan
- City of Turin, Economic Development Offices
- City of Turin, Department of Housing and Welfare Policies
- City of Turin, Department of City Planning
- Piedmont Regional Council, Marco Grimaldi, Leader of the Liberi Uguali e Verdi group
- Politecnico di Torino, Elisa Armando, Internationalisation Office
- UPPI (Union of Small Property Owners), Piera Bessi, President
- Torino Urban Lab, Chiara Lucchini, Regional Development Manager
- Stesso Piano project, Luna Sette, Coordinator
- Cerco Alloggio, Luca Spadon, Project Manager
- IRES Piedmont, Federica Laudisa, Researcher
- Corriere della Sera Turin, Paolo Coccorese, Journalist
- La Repubblica Turin, Jacopo Ricca, Journalist
- Arteria, Ivano Casalengo, Founding Member of the Association
- Real Estate Agency, Sandra Febbo, Agency Owner
- Architecture studio specialising in university residences in Turin

In addition, attempts were made several times but without success to interview some private operators in the student housing sector. These are representatives of the main residence managers in Turin. Despite several requests, no response was received.

As part of the author's previous research on the same topic, additional interviews were conducted with key players. Although these were not interviews conducted specifically for this research, the results that emerged influenced the analyses.

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[26] Where it was not an actual interview but instead an informal interview, the names of the persons involved were not given due to privacy issues, only the roles or the area in which they work. Otherwise, the interviewees signed appropriate privacy documentation, as indicated in the research ethics requirements of the European Smartdest project.

Among the actors who had previously been involved, the following have a particular relevance:

- Former Rector of the Polytechnic
- Former University Rector
- Former town planning councillor
- Vice-Chancellor of the Polytechnic
- University Vice-Chancellor for Sustainability

The interviews supported the analysis of the decisional network (Dente, 2011). They help to identify also the power relation between the actors and the level of influence that each of them has on the others.

Last, but not least, along the entire period of observation of the field (2018-2021), the local newspaper has been monitored (in some cases archive searches allowed to find relevant articles even before 2018). The local pages of the national newspapers La Stampa, La Repubblica and Il Corriere della Sera has been chosen. This constant observation on the local debate through the media has been very useful for several reasons. It allowed not just to keep updated on local events or projects related to university and students, but also to know how the local actors – frequently interviewed by the media – took position on them. Moreover, from the overall observation of theme and issues raised by the local media it was possible to add a further element to the understanding of the local debate.

5.2 - The actors and their positioning throughout the Turin university city

5.2.1 - Changing local policy priorities towards knowledge-based development

In Turin, the last twenty-year urban development strategy invested in the objective to enhance the capacities of the city to attract desired members of the high skilled elite. As a particular consequence, policy areas previously belittled as 'soft', such as tourism, education or cultural policy, have been moving into the core of local economic development.

The current agenda for Torino university city sinks its roots into the post-Fordist development plans recounted by Belligni and Ravazzi (2011) as Torino Politecnica. In the years following the authors' analysis, the Torino university city project takes shape and - based on the interviews done for my master thesis between 2016 and 2018, a convergence of visions of the coalition of 'university' actors emerges along with a choral call for the definition of a control room that would structure the work for the material realization of the project. Along the four years later, the situation seems to be changing. In a first moment, some actors as the universities and the EDISU given up this expectation and have become self-organized. Universities became increasingly and widely recognized as key players (both in the media and political debate) and, on the strength of this, are gaining autonomy and centrality. This also happened in the face of a local administration which loosed progressively its political appeal and consensus (here I refer both to the centre-left Fassino administration, which loosed against Appendino in 2016, and to the latter whose party – the five star movement - has not being confirmed in 2021 elections). After the creation of its own space of autonomy, this is paying off universities in terms of credibility and bargaining power vis-à-vis the administration. More recently, with the election of a new center-left coalition in 2021, the city administration seems to be more open and interested in assuming a more active role in relation to the universities. In this regard it is relevant to underline how the new major, Lo Russo, is a full professor at the Polytechnic university, as well as the former deputy councilor to the urban development (Fassino administration 2011-2016). He has been one of the most committed to the Turin University City project and in fact he has now kept for himself the mandate to work on the topic. Nonetheless, this choice make difficult to have a clear idea of the city intentions about the future of the project, since no plans or clear strategies has been published so far.

5.2.2 The changing role of university in Turin

As previously mentioned, Turin universities are one of the actors more actively involved in designing the urban development strategies in the local governance coalition (i.e. Urban Strategic Plans between 2000 and 2016). The approach to the urban development which strongly relies on Turin as a university city, asks universities to assume a different role whereas they traditionally had a kind of passive position in terms of their capacity to attract real estate investments. But, while in other contexts a certain disengagement of universities has been observed - especially in the student housing market (Kinton et al. 2018) - in the Turin case universities are increasingly turning into urban developers: either directly, to develop their own facilities, or with a mediating role, for instance in student housing provision and management, through their masterplans and policies that reinforce the goal of enrolments increases in the next years (Politecnico di Torino, 2019; Università di Torino, 2020).

A particular emphasis is placed, in the universities' documents, on attracting investments to the areas neighbouring the universities' campuses (https://www.masterplan.polito.it; https://politichediateneo.unito.it/masterplan/). This is associated with the awareness of the strong impact they will have on the urban fabric and its population. The universities urban development plans start to become 'independent' since the city stops to plan a strategy for the whole urban development, or at least to make it explicit in the late 10's. Such plans are not (anymore) just a content of parts of broader urban plans but are developed quite independently by the universities' staff (i.e. the Polito Masterplan Team).

The university role in determining student housing forms and impacts is twofold. On the one hand university can be seen as a political player exercising power on neighbourhood in which it is located; on the other, university is a policy maker collaborating in defining strategies of urban development.

Turin universities are locally engaged and somehow aware of their urban outreach. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy the gap of the current approach according to which universities does not seem fully aware of the socio-economic impact they have on the city and of the opportunity to face it. In the last decades universities pay more attention to their 'urban outreach' through actions and good practices oriented to reduce their environmental impact on the territory they are embedded. They also work through the participation in international networks of 'sustainable universities' and related issues. Nevertheless, their sensitiveness is still weak to the social impacts they have and produce in the closest neighbourhoods in which they are located.

In addition, universities express their interest in urban development in particular types of areas. They are active players in changing the city and do so in collaboration with other institutions. However, universities are careful in their location choices, driven by their interest in making synergy with the economic sectors most akin to them. In this sense, where the territory does not offer opportunities, it is difficult that the university decide to move. The latter is a non-secondary factor when reasoning about the university's role in the city, in particular the regeneration potential of complex and problematic areas of the urban.

The dynamic of interests emerging from the case study concerns the silent delegation to the universities of roles not traditionally recognized to them or that were previously shared with other actors, in particular public institutions. The reference here is to what is happening in a specific field, that of the physical transformations of the city involving the university - or even the university's expansion spaces - looking also within it at the function of living. In a context in which the university does not have among its duties nor among its traditional functions that of providing housing for its community in the city, because other actors are in charge (the city for identifying expansion areas, the region for allocating resources), the loss of contractual power, planning capacity and investment of these actors leaves a void that it is in the university's interests to fill. And it is precisely the university that is trying to do so by expanding the network of its relations with all players, including new figures from the local, national and international business and financial world.

Finally, what interestingly emerges from the case study is a new political role of universities, testified on the one hand by the recognition of the university rectors as valuable candidate for the municipal elections, in different election campaigns along the Turin political history; and on the other by the ever-present 'Turin university city' issue in any electoral programme, regardless of the political orientation of candidates.

Image capture: Sep 2008 © 2022 Google
Image capture: Jun 2022 © 2022 Google
Image capture: Nov 2011 © 2022 Google
Image capture: Aug 2020 © 2022 Google

18 Examples of two of the several redevelopment projects for university facilities (before - on the left and after the realization - on the right). The Campus Luigi Einaudi and the adjacent student hall and the Polito Energy center with the adjacent Codegone student hall.

5.2.3 The role of the City

In order to understand the City of Turin's approach to the issue of university presence and university population, it is useful to chronologically review the policy initiatives. In particular, the focus has been on those initiatives that, piece by piece, build the (quasi)policy on student housing in the city of Turin. In this case, speak of a quasi-policy is due to the fact that an important part of the initiatives described remain good intentions that have not yet been followed up.

Reconstructing the path of local policies on student housing is functional to the subsequent reconstruction of the geographies of university residences in Turin, to understand how they have evolved and positioned over time, what the current situation is and what the future prospects are. The account of the city's main initiatives, geographies and emerging approaches is thus useful in representing the complexity of the system through the analysis of individual policy initiatives. Those listed below are the provisions approved by the City Council of the city which particularly refers to the student housing domain. They are generally a collection of good intentions. Only a few of them have been followed up in terms of actual implementation (as indicated in the list, where nothing is indicated no information are available on the initiative realization). However, they have been reported in their entirety as they help to understand the path and reasoning of local politics on student housing issues.

Outline of the city's main policy initiatives on student housing over the past decade.

2011 Fassino mandate programme

Proposals
1. home desk service for students (not realized)
2. housing plan for teachers and students, to be implemented also through the use of vacant housing stock and a housing plan for families (not realized)

2012 'Torino Città Universitaria' - launch

Interdepartmental working group and permanent policy coordination round table on the most relevant and sensitive issue for students (housing as a priority)

Proposals
1. concession of disused buildings and areas to private individuals for redevelopment into residences (with a quota reserved for students without means) (realized)
2. hostel for temporary university residents (realized)
3. bed breakfast with families with rooms available (not realized)
4. census of Turin vacant dwellings (not realized)
5. systematisation of existing interventions and projects on student housing (not realized)

2012 'Torino Città Universitaria' - guidelines for the enhancement of the vocation

Underline the difficulty of providing an adequate response to the demand for student housing, also in view of the progressive reduction of public resources allocated to EDISU. The initiatives has been associated to the document of the Urban Center in 2012 (Figure 20) reporting a spatial representation of strategic areas to be transformed for university purposes.

Proposals
1. develop through public-private 'partnerships' and with the active participation of Turin universities new places of residence and services for university students (realized)
2. incentivise the housing response for students also implemented by private operators (realized)

2013 'Torino Città Universitaria' - Agreement with Compagnia di San Paolo on Diffused Housing

Proposal
1. promotion of the project Stesso Piano (realized)

2014 'Torino Città Universitaria' - University Residence Development Plan. 5,000 new beds

Proposals	1. to reach 10,000 beds in the three-year period (not realized) 2. publicly owned areas to be promoted for the realisation of interventions aimed at strengthening the network of such services, in terms of new residences but also of support structures for the student presence in the city (realized) 3. checking whether private individuals are interested in making available areas/properties for the same purpose (realized)

2015 'Torino Città Universitaria' - *guidelines for student housing*

Following the previous measures, several proposals were received from local and international student housing operators. As a result, three types of student housing are introduced in the guidelines:

1. Proper university residences (possible integration with accommodation for different targets, such as hostels and holiday homes)
2. Student Houses, i.e. 'nuclei integrati' residences (rented single-room or roomed nuclei, with services included in each nucleus, for independent living in a protected environment)
3. Student Housing (residential properties in which single or double rooms are rented out for up to six guests and in which services are included in the accommodation and managed independently by the students; according to the proposal this should reduce construction and management costs).

2016 'Torino Open for Business' platform

Proposal	1. Platform activation (realized)

2016 Appendino government programme

Proposals	1. Enhancing public and private university residences (paying particular attention to combating undeclared residences) in co-planning with student representatives and EDISU by adopting models increasingly close to the Campus concept (not realized) 2. strengthening the university residence network and reviewing transport network (partially realized the first part) 3. agreements with Demanio and CDP to use derelict buildings

2019 Agreement between City, EDISU, University for Residential Service

Proposal	1. Activation of a platform to regulate and facilitate the meeting supply-demand (not realized)

2020 'Diffuse Campus' Project – Agreement between EDISU, universities and city

Proposal	1. Find further spaces to be dedicated to study rooms and student services (realized)

As shown in the scheme above, since 2011 different policy initiatives attempted to give an adequate response to the students' demand for housing, also in view of the progressive reduction of public resources allocated to EDISU. Some among the most interesting still remain proposals, such as a vacant flat monitoring to expand rental possibilities or the activation of a home search desk for students. The Municipality has been instead successful in promoting its stock of abandoned buildings and former industrial and dismissed areas for a potential HEIs related reuse. This policy, the Open for Business Torino project, was fostered mainly by the economic development city office, collaborating with the urban planning one. The objective was to sell areas and public properties to private investors in order to develop university housing and services and to increase the student housing supply by 10,000 bed places in three years (Turin City Council, 2014). To this extent, the aforementioned Open for Business platform was launched in 2016, with an interactive map that illustrates the areas chosen by the City of Turin to be developed for three types of strategic interventions: 'university', 'tourism' and 'industry, innovation and research'. At the time of this research, there were seventeen university facilities and student housing purposes (and twelve of these areas are at the same time proposed for potential uses for tourist accommodation purposes) (Mangione, 2019).

Despite the different offices involved (but uncoordinatedly) and the changes in political orientation in the city government, there is a continuity linking every single initiative, which reveals a coherence in the path taken. As far as Open for business is concerned, the municipality's online platform is constantly being updated. Figure 22 lists the disused areas, urban voids or brownfields that were indicated by the three city documents which, along the years, gave continuity to the policy: Urban Lab 2012, Urban Transformation Opportunities in 2014, Open for business in 2016. It can be seen that some areas are repeated, because they probably did not find investors interested in their transformation yet. Others, on the other hand, have been acquired over the years and are in the process of transformation, as indicated in the table in brackets[27].

Some key aspects emerge from this policy framework. As said, generally emerge a continuity between the initiatives proposed by the different municipal administrations. The different political colors do not seem to change the nature of the policies undertaken. Furthermore, the overall approach to the construction of university residences is characterised by a strong thrust on the strategy of urban promotion and transformation on brownfield sites for university functions. Political initiatives for student housing interact with economic and urban development policies. As a matter of fact, it can be observed that the strategic planning of university residences has been increasingly devolved to economic interests over the years. The approach involves mapping Turin's numerous urban voids and making them available to investors interested in this type of intervention.

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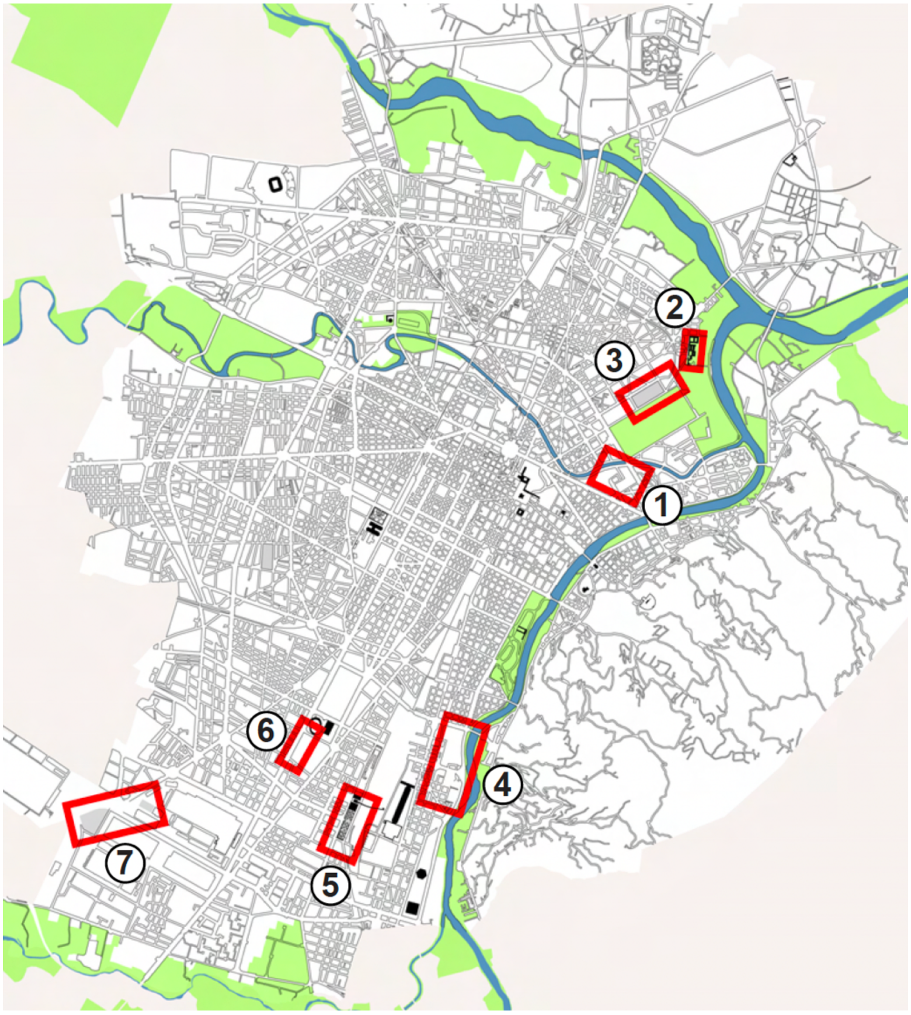
[27] To view the most up-to-date version, you can look at the platform (http://www.comune.torino.it/openforbusiness/en/).



19 Map of strategic areas for university residences.

Metropolitan Urban Centre, 2012.

20 Map of Open for Business areas for the university function. Author's reworking of platform data)[28] . Status as of 2019.

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[28] Legend:
1. Spina 3, Distretto Vitali; 2. Ex Superga; 3. Ex Officine Grandi Motori; 4. Ex Toroc; 5. Ex Manifattura Tabacchi; 6. Ex Nebiolo; 7. Former Moscow Bridge; 8. Former Flower Market; 9. Italgas Gasometri; 12. Frejus; 13. Ex Westinghouse, New Gongress Centre; 14. FS Sistemi Urbani, Porta Susa Spina 2; 15. Porta Europa Tower; 16. Foresteria Lingotto; 17.

2012 Urban Center	**2014 Urban transformation opportunities**	**2016 Torino Open for Business (areas made available in 2019)**
Ex Manifattura Tabacchi	Ex Manifattura Tabacchi	Ex Manifattura Tabacchi
Ex Combi (student and citizen services project under implementation)	Ex Combi	Ex Italgas area
Mirafiori TNE	Mirafiori TNE	Ponte Mosca (university residence project under construction)
Ex Italgas area	Ex Italgas area	Ex Nebiolo
Scalo Vanchiglia (residential project and services under construction)	Ponte Mosca (university residence project under construction)	Foresteria Lingotto
City of Health	Nebiolo Area	Vitali District
Ex Moi (university residence project under construction)	Via Lombroso	Ex Superga
	Fiocchetto	Former Officine Grandi Motori
	Area Ghia	Ex Toroc
	Corso Farini	Ex Mercato dei Fiori (private gym project under construction)
		Regaldi
		Ex Procura
		Frejus (university residence project under construction)
		Ex Westinghouse
		FS Urban Systems, Porta Susa Plug 2
		Porta Europa Tower
		FS Urban Systems Health Park
		Ex Borello and Maffiotto

21 Comparison of the areas made available by the City for real estate investment with a university residence and/or student services function between 2012 and 2022. Author's elaboration on data from the City of Turin, various sources. 2022.

Finally, it emerges how student housing became an issue whose management requires different competences. Indeed, municipal policy initiatives refer to different departments such as Urban Planning, Youth Policy, Economic Development, Right to Study, to name the most relevant. However, when looking externally, it is difficult to see whether there is any kind of coordination between these different sectors. Beyond the interpretations that can be given to the sequence of public acts, it is difficult to understand whether what is being reconstructed is a genuine process, that is, one that follows a deliberate logical and strategic thread.

As has been shown, urban voids, former industrial areas and brownfields reconversion is at the core of the urban development strategy of the city and it is strongly linked with the economic development strategies. This approach to 'voids' reconversion is also shared by the university urban development plans (which look for available areas in close proximity to their existing branches, usually former industrial areas in the urban fabric or urban voids). Many formerly abandoned post-industrial 'urban voids' now successfully host students' educational activities, and they are the leading examples of how urban geographies might be restructured through students' presence (Zasina et al. 2021).

However, mapping spatial developments in university Turin is complex even for sensitive and informed observers because of the way all actors manage and communicate these developments.

There are, on the one hand, projects with clear if changing mappings (open for business), on the other hand external events (sometimes unpredictable as PNRR, sometimes simply difficult to intercept as 'silent' agreements between the parties) that add to and change these geographies. It is 'normal' for these dynamics to be part of the everyday interplay between parties and political dialectics, but it is certainly a modus operandi that makes the direction the city wants to take in terms of urban transformation unclear. It is not clear whether there are strategic areas for new projects, why they are strategic and how they are supposed to be transformed, it is not clear whether there is a plan or whether progress is being made on the basis of opportunities that happen here or there in the city.

Chapter 6 - Student housing: a key sub-sector in the urban re-development strategies

The chapter explores the challenge to develop a multidimensional mapping of an entire urban system of student housing, the one of Turin. The main methodological challenges are described, together with the particular approach that has been applied. The results are described through a detailed reconstruction of the supply of student housing in the private rental sector as well as of PBSA. The latter is at the core of the analysis. In fact, PBSA developments are described through the complexity of actors involved in their project, investment and management. These urban transformations are described also through the evolution in time of their location, dimension, cost. In so doing, emerge the evolution of the supply from the origin now on, but also the possible scenario for the future. The chapter conclude remarking the affordability issue posed by the new student housing supply and outlying the reaction of local students and their activism for the right to study.

Tracking student presence and mobilities at the city and regional level emerge as a challenging operation because of the scarce availability and irregularity of data. As far as was possible to observe in the course of this research, the exercise of reconstructing the student housing system of a medium-large city with discrete numbers of out-of-town students is not frequently carried out in the literature. In this research, therefore, it is a question of experimenting with a census of all the facilities that host students in Turin. An attempt that entails critical issues but also elements of potential, such as proposing an unprecedented analysis. The collection and creation of this data may be of interest not only for researchers, it could also support decision-making processes in this area. However, this entails risks, since it is not excluded that the same data can be used by actors more oriented towards property speculation operations, which are far from the principles and intentions of the current research. Another critical issue concerns the impossibility of fully and reliably verifying that the information gathered to construct the data is complete. Not only because the sources are many and varied, but also because not all of them are entirely reliable (for example, some student housing managers did not respond to requests for data, which were therefore deduced from secondary sources). Added to this is the fact that the sector under investigation is undergoing continuous and rapid change, and that news about the possibility of opening new student halls of residence occurs frequently but is not always accompanied by the possibility of being verified. Consequently, every effort has been made to produce a mapping that reports as much verified information as possible, but a margin of error remains.

6.1 Mapping the student housing constellation: the supply

To describe the many forms of student housing supply in Turin, generally, it can be divided into two macro categories: purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) and the student housing in the rental sector, which include the peer shared apartments (also known as housing in multiple occupancy HMO in the UK literature). This research chooses to focus on the analysis of the PBSA developments and related policies. Nonetheless, it is useful to give an overview on both side of the student housing supply, in order to give a complete framework of the overall student housing sector. But also, in the light of the possible interaction that could emerge between the two typologies and their coexistence in the same urban environment.

Recording and monitoring student housing distribution is a basic operation in order to trace studentification and similar processes as they unfolds (rather than studying it when and where it already exists). If systematized, it would allow to overcome a superficial knowledge of the scale of student housing spreading phenomena and to put it in connection with other urban phenomenon (i.e. creating GIS database of student housing records could make possible a productive cross-check with other type of housing data). Nonetheless it is not quick nor simple, but a complex procedure indeed.

Usually research using data spatialization at the urban scale of analysis employed surveys results and data provided by Universities. Universities' databases are an underestimated source indeed, as Sage, Smith and Hubbard (2012) demonstrate in their longitudinal analysis. In fact, data which are usually retained by HEIs allow to spatialize the changing distribution of student residents. On the other hand, there are also data which are not easily accessible, in example those related to private PBSA developments, which are retained by private companies not always willing to share them.

Along this research path, both operations have been attempted with quite satisfying results. On one side, together with the research group of the SMARTDEST project, we managed to obtain from both Turin universities the data on the off-site enrolled students. On the other, I developed an in-depth census of PBSA in Turin which allowed to have a clear image of the evolution of the supply, future developments included.

6.1.1 The supply in the private rental sector[29]

The analysis of the distribution of the non-local university population in Turin was carried out based on data obtained from two databases, containing anonymized information about enrollees at the city's two main universities at an overall glance. The off-site university population presents a substantially homogeneous distribution over the city's territory, in which only a few areas of particular concentration stand out. As has emerged from other surveys conducted on different samples but having the same objective (see, for example, Zasina et al., 2021), off-site students concentrate their housing choices mainly in the immediate vicinity of the university sites they attend (see figure 23). Neighborhoods in the immediate vicinity of the Politecnico's headquarters, located in Corso Duca degli Abruzzi, emerge as strong poles of attraction for out-of-town students enrolled at the university; the Valentino campus also demonstrates a similar power of attraction, resulting in a relevant concentration of students along the Po axis. Due to the historically more dislocated nature of the University of Turin's locations, the distribution of out-of-state and international students enrolled at this university appears more homogeneous. Significant concentrations are, however, evident in the central area of the city, where several of the University's historical sites are located, and in the area between downtown and the Dora, where since 2012 the Luigi Einaudi Campus, home to the departments of social sciences, politics and law, has been located. Important factors of attraction also seem to be the city's main infrastructural axes, which are crossed by public transport lines that provide quick access to the locations of interest. Only a few areas remain excluded from the maps of student living, identifiable mainly with the extreme northern suburbs and the hills. Further investigation of these areas would allow us to investigate the causes

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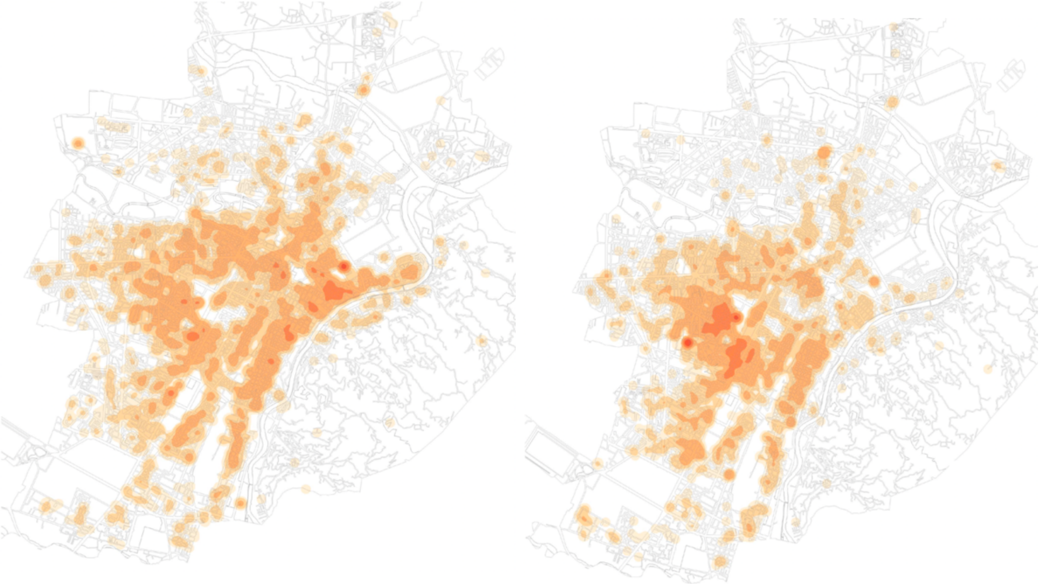
[29] The first paragraph of this section is an extract from the research report Cenere, S., Mangione, E., Servillo, L. (2022) Torino da fuori. Studiare, abitare e vivere la città da fuorisede. Quaderni Future Urban Legacy Lab. Politecnico di Torino.

behind this lower concentration (e.g., difficulties related to the public transportation network, subjective perceptions of students with respect to those areas, etc.).



22 Distribution of non-local students of the main HEIs domicile in Turin (Unito on the left, Polito on the right). AY 2020/2021. Source: Cenere et al., 2022.

To capture student population impacts at a local level, student concentration in neighbourhood is a common indicator (Allinson, 2006; Garmendia et al., 2012; Moos et al. 2019; Munro et al. 2009) to identify areas most affected by studentification processes. However, a certain lack in complex representation of student population emerges. This could be overcome through cross section analysis of the student population, observing in example term time address together with socio-economic student backgrounds, giving the opportunity to investigate and compare behaviours of different types of students (international, interregional, commuters, local students). Figure 24 depicts a try of this kind, mapping the domiciles of non-resident students enrolled at the Politecnico di Torino[30] with the additional information concerns the distribution of domiciles according to income brackets. As seen from the study of the literature and the Turin case, household income is an important variable in determining the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in the tertiary education system. As well as in the distribution of the population on the city's territory. In the areas most densely populated by non-resident students, there are no significant differences between students with high incomes and students with low incomes. However, in the peripheral areas,

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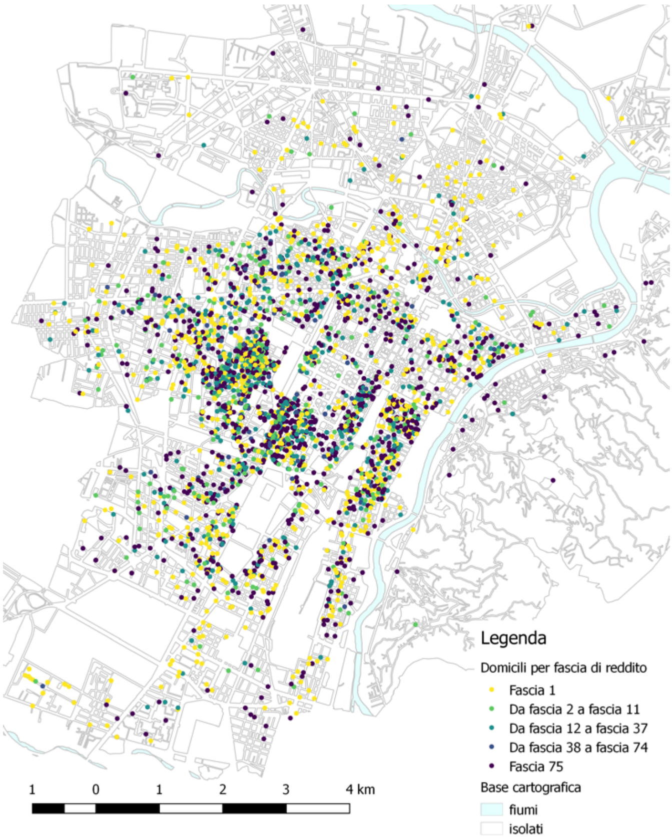
[30] They represents a georeferentiation of the contact details, including their domicile address, provided by 48% of the students of the Politecnico, where more than one third are off-site. The map was created for the master's thesis work in Planning 'Turin university city. Urban strategies and student population', Erica Mangione, Polytechnic of Turin, March 2018.

especially towards the north, they appear to be present mainly with very low incomes (Mangione, 2018).

Through this student housing mapping experimentations, data emerge as a fundamental aspect to proceed in planning and student housing regulation.

In the case of Loughborough, as described by Hubbard (2006), thresholds of percentage of students were defined in order to avoid an excessive concentration of students. This approach fits small towns, while for bigger cities like Turin other solutions should be identified. Methodologically, Hubbard observes how the adoption of a threshold approach requires the construction and constant updating of new datasets about student occupation. The student housing mapping we tried (first in my master thesis and then in the SMARTDEST analysis) laid the foundation of such crucial information work. The next steps could try a simulation (since our elaboration was on a sample) of the percentage of students in the overall city and single neighbourhood population.

23 Domiciles of off-campus students enrolled at Polytecnic of Turin a.y.. 2016/2017 (Mangione, 2018)



6.1.2 The supply of PBSA

The housing sector is one of the most affected as well as investigated in the context of the student impacts on cities. Processes as the emergent financialization of student housing were previously investigated through the construction of novel database of purpose build student accommodation (Revington, August, 2019) in order to show firms impacts on patterns of inequality in urban space. Following the same approach, at the case study level has been decided to analyze the multifaceted composition of student housing providers as well as to realize a PBSA census. This was also useful to better visualise by mapping the changes in student housing facilities around the city. This information level has been overlapped with the one of the main policy initiatives. Thus, a first longitudinal analysis entails crossing the timescale of the policy evolutions, as shown in the policy timeline in figure 24, with PBSA and university facilities (Annex 1).

The PBSA census is at the core of the student housing analysis of the supply. It has been first developed in 2020 and then updated in spring 2022 with the latest information on new developments. The PBSA census collected and organized information for each project – or group of similar projects - about:

- managing institution: name, juridical nature (private or public);
- investor: name, nationality (local, non-local);
- year of the first opening;
- number of active locations (already opened);
- number of active bed places (already available);
- number of location in project (approved and/or in costruction);
- number of bed places in project;
- average price charged to the student (single room).

Considering the absence of a general database[31] and in order to have the data as precise as possible, each institution manager has been directly contacted and interviewed. In case of incomplete or absent answer, secondary sources has been used to integrate.

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[31] Nonetheless, to identify a first list of student housing providers, two sources were of great support. The list of available accommodations on the Study in Torino website http://www.studyintorino.it/information/accomodation/ and the one of the Osservatorio Regionale http://www.ossreg.piemonte.it/info_02_09.asp .

24 Development of the university residence system in Turin from the origin to 2015, local investors

Source: Author's elaboration on various sources, 2022.

Gestore / Nazionalità investitore	**Altri Enti Privati religiosi / Ita, Local**	**EDISU Pubblico (Regione) / Ita, Local+State**	**Einaudi Privato - Fondazione / Ita, Local+State**	**Sharing Privato / Ita, Local**	TOT
Prima apertura	1843	1992	1935	2015	-
N. sedi attive	26	15	4	1	46
N. posti letto attivi	1.255	2.173	663	536	4627
*N. sedi in progetto**	0	1	2	0	3
*N. posti letto in progetto**	0	80	190	0	270
Prezzo medio stanza singola a carico dello studente	398 €	227 €	636,36 €	460 €	-
	-	(2.500 per 11 mesi)	(7.000 per 11 mesi, riduzioni per reddito fino a 184€/mese min)		-

*esclusi progetti 338, PNRR, Universiadi 2025

25 Development of the university residence system in Turin from 2016 now on, non-local investors. Source: Author's elaboration on various sources, 2022.

Gestore / Nazionalità investitore	**Camplus** Privato - Fondazione / Ita**	**CampusX Privato / Ita**	**The Student Hotel Privato / Ita**	**Stonehill Frejus Srl Privato / Lu**	**Altri privati / Non Ita**	TOT
Prima apertura	2016	2021	2023	In costruzione	Da definire	-
N. sedi attive	11	2	0	0	0	13
N. posti letto attivi	1270 ~	480	0	0	0	1750
*N. sedi in progetto**	1	0	1	1	2	5
*N. posti letto in progetto**	400	0	525	582	682	2189
Prezzo medio stanza singola a carico dello studente	600 €	620 €	599 €	-	-	-
	(stima)	(stima)	(stima)	-	-	-

*esclusi progetti 338, PNRR, Universiadi 2025
** In addition to the PBSA, Camplus manages numerous structures consisting of apartments of various sizes for a total of another 573 beds.

In the figure 25 the first half of the census is presented. It correspond to the set of small scale PBSA which has been realized within 2015, financed by local investors and managed by local institutions. On the Turin territory, the PBSA supply emerged as historically characterized by numerous religious institutions, often of small dimensions and with their own management of the service and fees (often, for example, entirely male or female sections are still kept separate from each other). Another historical Turin institution, but of a different nature, is the Collegio Renato Einaudi, a private foundation today part of the national network of 'Colleges of merit'. This also results in a particular application and fee policy, where the students who want to access must have the higher grades, but they can pay fees proportionally to their income. Furthermore, one third of Einaudi students also benefit from an EDISU scholarship.

Regarding the EDISU regional agency, it has been active since the early 1990s, and it is still the only public operator, financed by the Region. Its presence is wide spread in the Turin metropolitan area with a dense network of residences, with a total of over 2,000 beds available to students with "University ISEE"[32] not exceeding € 23,626.

If we look at future developments of this group of actors, the Einaudi foundation have in place two projects for a total of 190 places to be realized in the near future. While expansion plans of EDISU are not clear so far and consistently depend from the allocation of national funds in the context of PNRR and 338 law fifth call, whose results are still to be published.

In the figure 26 the second half of the census is presented. It correspond to the set of larger scale PBSA which has been realized after 2016 or in project for the future, financed by national and international investors and managed by national (non-local) or international institutions. In the last five years a considerable number of private PBSA operators have entered the student housing market which, in a few years will increase the Turin offer significantly. The new PBSA private supply is characterised by the larger physical dimensions of the facility, with the higher capacity in number of beds and rooms. But also, by the rising costs of the rooms, often justified by a wider range of additional services. In fact, these are structures with a primary function aimed at hosting university students during the months of university activity, but at the same time increasingly aimed at tourist accommodation functions, with co-working spaces, gyms, coffee bars and restaurants. However, managed university residences and mid-range student halls

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[32] This is a student's economic status indicator, based on family income and real estate ownership.

of residence are on average more expensive than renting an apartment on the rental market. Looking at a national average value, prices are around 600 euros for the former and 400 for the latter (Camplus, Scenari Immobiliari 2019).

For what concerns the new PBSA projects, it is important to recall the approval in 2014, by the municipal council, of the document which identified the areas of public property to be promoted to potential investors to create new student housing. The document's hypothesis was to create 5,000 beds in the short term and to reach up to 10,000 in the three-year period. To date, none of those areas has seen the implementation of what was planned in the expected period of time. However, in the recent years several PBSA projects get underway. Two of them are 'via Lombroso 16' in the San Salvario district and the 'Ponte Mosca' area, in the Aurora district. The first one moves from the provision of a municipal building to EDISU and should include the construction of a public student hall, with about 80 places for low income students. The second project, which will focus on one of the areas indicated by the Municipality, instead concerns a mixed typology between student residence and tourist accommodation. It is led by a Dutch investment fund according to a format - The Student Hotel - already widespread in several university cities of Europe; in Turin, the opening of a structure capable of welcoming up to 525 guests is expected by 2023. If on the one hand the project of the previous council does not therefore seem to have achieved the desired results within the expected timeframe, however, in the last five years the construction of new residences went on, making the “student” function a tool for the re-functionalization of urban voids (Zasina et al. 2021).

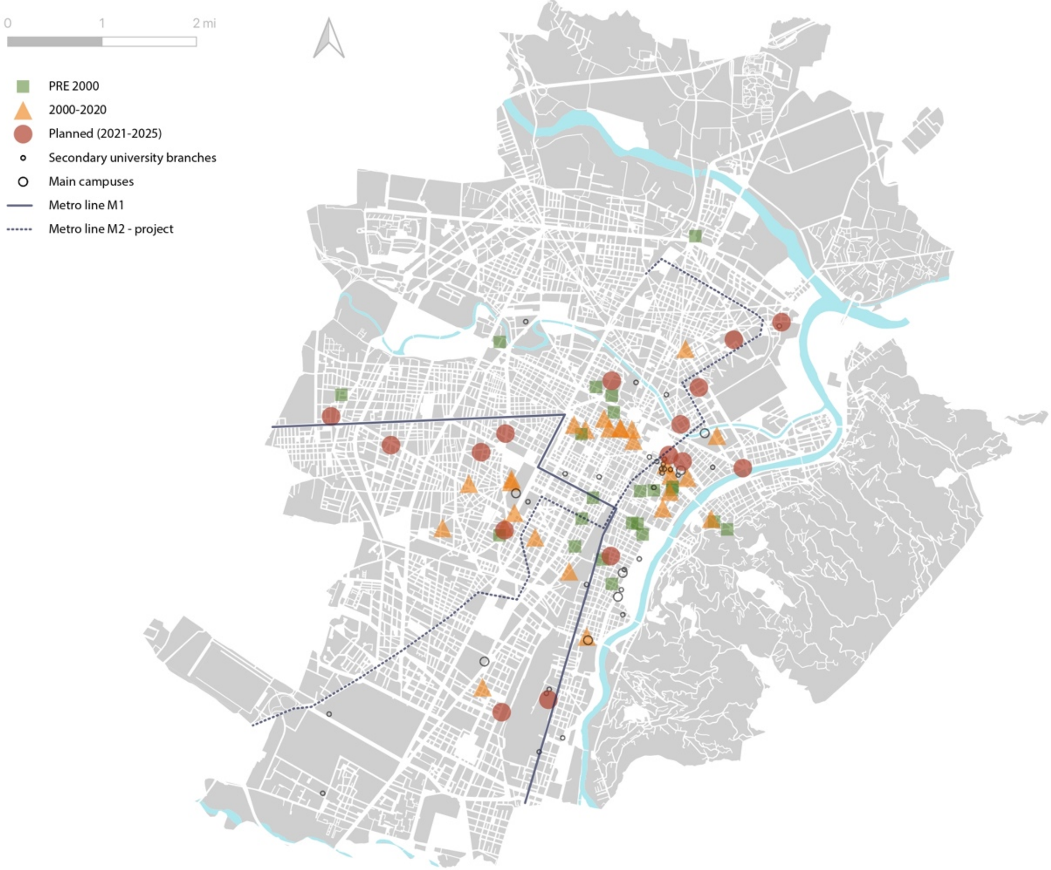
However, if we look at the ongoing projects, whose realisation is expected in the next few years, the scenario seems to register some changes in the distribution of the offer, assuming that no further projects are added (a quite difficult assumption to made now). In fact, the public sector seems to be losing ground, not having any significant interventions planned for the future; this is to the advantage of the new openings of private PBSA. In particular the next three years should see new opening operated by Camplus, which plans to add 400 beds to its offer, and by a set of operators which are new on the Turin scene: the cited The Student Hotel (Dutch investment funds), Stonehill (financed by MeG, a company based in Luxembourg), and other two private investors. Observing the size of the residences, in terms of number of beds, it can be seen that the new private operators tend to increase the capacity of the structures.

To sum up, can be said that at the time of writing (June 2022) on the Turin and first belt area there is a total of 59 active PBSA (both public and private) and 8 new locations in project or under construction. The bed places now active are around

6.377 with a probable increase of 2.459 within next five years. These numbers exclude the projects which are still under evaluation by the national (338 law) and regional (Universiade 2025 and PNRR) governments which, according to Laudisa and Musto (2021) could add 1.700 bed places to the supply (it is not clear yet if those projects will be public, private or in partnerships).

26 Map of university residences by stage of realisation

Author's elaboration, December 2020.



To sum-up, figure 27 shows the spatial oucomes of twenty years of policies addressing a university-related development in Turin: in green squares are represented the PBSAs realised between mid -19th century and the year 2000, for a total of 38 PBSAs which correspond to the 56% of the actual stock. As Turin hosts two of the biggest Italian universities, the student housing supply has been traditionally developed since the 19th century. At the beginning of the 2000s, the student housing supply was divided into three main typologies: 46% of the offer was provided by a wide network of publicly funded student housing, 40% was provided by privately owned (mainly religious) institutions, and the remaining 14% was provided by local investors. Orange triangles display the twenty PBSAs that have been realised between 2000 and 2020, while in red are the ten PBSAs in the process of being completed, under construction, or that just received the Municipality's formal approval.

6.2 Affordable student housing: demand and sporadic reply

The right of every citizen to access the highest levels of education regardless of their economic circumstances is constitutionally enshrined in our country. This includes access to public universities. In a broad interpretation - widely shared by the institutions that have delegated authority in the area of guaranteeing the right to study - access includes not only the payment of university fees, but also the possibility of bearing the costs of living in the city in which one is studying, particularly for those who come from other municipalities, regions or countries. In the light of this, this research work moves from the assumption that, in Italy and in Turin in particular, the right to live in the city where university studies take place is not equally guaranteed to students, regardless of their economic conditions.

First of all, the public institutional actor, holder by definition of the responsibility of guaranteeing the right to education to all citizens, in the form of the municipality, the region and the state. Its role is to regulate the way in which services are provided, and in some cases, it is at the same time the provider of these services. In the context of institutional actors, the university can also be included as a bearer of direct and indirect responsibilities. Indeed, university institutions are constantly engaged in attracting students, thus becoming primarily responsible for the presence of out-of-town students and thus for the demand for accommodation (and the increase of the latter). Moreover, universities are by nature the locus of valuable intellectual and research resources on the issues of the right to study and housing, and therefore potentially useful and - albeit indirectly - responsible for solving problems related to them.

The massification of higher education translated in Turin with a fast grow of student enrolled and the improving of student-oriented services and welfare funds and solutions. Nonetheless these measures where not sufficient and pushed relevant numbers of students off from welfare and affordable housing system, to off-campus market-led housing solutions. According to Zasina, which collected the information about the reasons why the off-site student chooses their accommodation in Turin, affordability of houses price is the first of the most relevant factors, together with the proximity to university facilities and the accessibility to home by public transports (Zasina, 2019). Following the two recent studies calculationg the need for university housing for low-income students in Turin (Magariello & Sera, 2016;

Laudisa & Musto2021)[33] some inferences can be drawn about the areas of the city where demand for low-priced housing is greatest. Results show that the majority of scholarship students who do not have access to a public residence attend the sites of the Politecnico (main campus), Valentino branch and more generally the Unito and Polito branches in the San Salvario district, but also the southern districts of Lingotto and Mirafiori. Some lack has been registered also in the historic centre and the Einaudi Campus. Nonetheless, both analysis – despite their publication in different moments – conclude for a general shortage of beds in Turin for eligible applicants.

In the face of such a shortage, during the last few years important opportunities have opened up on the university housing front; thanks to the fourth announcement of law 338/2000, the funds of the Next Generation EU and the Universiadi 2025, 1,700 new beds should be built in Turin by 2025 which will allow to increase the coverage of housing needs. The downside is that the increase distributed in an unbalanced way between the various university poles, being concentrated mainly in the Palazzo Nuovo-CLE area; here the 978 beds "in the pipeline" would almost completely satisfy demand. On the other hand, there are no plans for new residences in the Cittadella Politecnica, where the need for accommodation is greatest, or in the Valentino-Scientific pole." (Laudisa & Musto, 2021, p38). Furthermore, other critical elements emerge from the observation of the recent developments of these out of the ordinary initiatives.

First of all, it is not clear (since no document report it) what kind of demand for student housing these new investments will answer to, nor how their realisation is and will be planned in the city.

Secondly, the national legislation (338/00) do not take into account diffuse housing in the calculation of housing supply, taking for granted that all off-site students should accommodate in a PBSA, which is not necessarily the most affordable and appreciated typology.

Thirdly, both the post-covid international funds and the Universiade are spot events which will give a contribution without solving the problem. Indeed several researchers and student collectives have been calling for years for an increase in the supply of beds for scholarship holders and students with lower incomes. The last significant increase in beds managed by EDISU dates back to the years after the 2006 Winter Olympics. At that time, in fact, many residences for athletes, media or tourists were converted into university residences. In the last two years, there has been renewed talk of public university residences due to the similar occasion of the

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[33] They propose an innovative approach to public housing planning mediating between locational and economic needs.

2025 Winter Universiade. This orientation affirms an approach according to which supply is not planned, and that action is taken in the presence of extraordinary events (see above), an attitude that is very much attributable to local institutions. On a national level, 338 law and PNRR are interesting support tools, but again - especially PNRR - are una tantum initiatives which leaves planning and operational aspects to third parties.

6.2.1 Students' political engagement

During the last decade, students led in Turin different political campaigns to obtain better learning and living conditions, on several civic issues such as mobility and transports, housing and services. The politicization of group of students, whose work on crucial aspects such as the right-to-study (DSU) funding has been constant along the years. It has produced tangible impacts such as the stabilisation of DSU regional funding, despite continuous attempt to cut it, and the definition of Turin as an attractive and welcoming university city for low income students. The politicisation of students has also influenced some policies internal to universities, such as the taxation policy or the increase in number and quality of spaces (i.e. asking for study and lunch rooms, both inside and outside university branches). Furthermore, there are groups of activists which are participated also (but not only) by students living in different working-class neighbourhoods (mostly San Paolo, Aurora, Vanchiglia). Here they contribute in raising broader questions for better living conditions for the local (non-student) community, fighting against speculative urban transformations and for the local welfare services safeguard.

In 2016, student activism tried to contribute to the improvement of housing policies. After a long phase of study and research, an in-depth study of the need for beds for students meeting the income requirements of EDISU was presented. The study was approved by the regional assembly for the right to study in Piedmont. It showed how this type of demand (3241 places needed to fullfil the total requirement), which is more urgent because it is that of the neediest, was not and still is not being met (see previous reference to Magariello and Sera, 2016). It is a document that is unparalleled in terms of the level of accuracy and topics covered, at least until Laudisa and Musto's 2021 publication. In fact, all variables in the field of public and accessible housing are considered, crossing these with the spatial and urban dimension. One part is devoted to considerations of possible areas available for residences, but which have a connection to the existing geographies of universities or to transport systems. The document concludes by noting how the city could help EDISU's lack of funds by giving away areas or buildings free of charge (which is also a useful condition for the 338/2000 call for proposals). In fact, this institutional document is carried in parallel with an attempt to convince the city to make available a building it owns, in a strategic area for the university and students. However, on the one hand, the document finds no consideration on the part of the public and right-to-study institutions. The choices made in subsequent years show that they follow different priorities. On the other, the results obtained in the mediation with the new municipal administration (in 2016 the Giunta Appendino was elected securing the students the concession of the building in question) were lost in bureaucratic delays that led to no results. These experiences demonstrate a considerable capacity of students to know and analyze the issues that concern them, through their representatives in the governing bodies of the university and EDISU. But also, and above all, a proactive approach to the merits of the policies to be implemented and their feasibility. On the other hand, local and regional politics seem almost deaf, certainly not receptive.

Part 5 - Discussion of results

Chapter 7 - Student and university led socio-spatial urban transformations

The current and the following chapter move from the main results of the research in order to discuss the main issues raised. The chapter 7 look at main urban transformations produced by students, the universities and the student housing with a particular attention to the geographies of exclusion which they potentially reproduce. A first analysis is on the student and their presence in the city. It is discussed whether the concept of studentification could fit the case study observed. A second paragraph deepen the role and activism of universities in the urban transformations, while the third part deepen the issue of the exclusive geographies produced by student housing solution.

7.1 Studentification in Turin?

The concept of studentification originally stands out in UK geographical and urban studies. But the phenomena, described by the 'new' term, found widespread consensus through scholars internationally and was used to describe many different case studies in different countries and cities (from Brighton and Leeds in the UK to Lisbon in Portugal or Valencia in Spain). The large use of the term in many counties can lead to the idea that same condition and urban transformation involve different cities in the same way, following a global and globalised path; nevertheless, every case (state, city or neighbourhood) has its own characteristics and probably the studentification affecting Brighton is a different one compared to Lisbon's. Studentification seems the only conceptual framework to be used to deeply analyse student population's impact on cities, at least in the international academic debate so far. Nonetheless, this research propose to take into account that not all students are gentrifiers, nor is it always possible to define student's impact on cities as studentification.

What is emerging in Turin are some quite different student geographical patterns, if compared with international literature on student impacts in cities. Such differences make doubting about the opportunity to commit to the extensive use of the 'studentification' concept, as well as raise questions on the same suitability in other similar Italian cases.

A first aspect regard the student predominance in specific districts, which has been noted as a triggering factor of studentification. In the case study something different happens: student presence is widespread in several city neighborhoods, whilst a higher but not surprising concentration of student accommodations in privately rented apartments emerges in closer distance with HEIs branches. A second element, distinguishing Turin studentcapes, is the mixing of student and non-student leisure and nighttime activities: students are part of the mainstream places in which they became quite indistinguishable from other young and non-student populations, differently from what has been observed elsewhere, in example by Chatterton (1999).

Differently from many cases in which studentification has been internationally observed (as an example, the various works on studentification in small university towns in the UK), in the city of Turin university and student presence emerges in an urban context of a big - though shrinking - city, whose economy and urban development does not depend entirely on HEIs. Moreover, the nighttime economy which elsewhere (Hubbard 2006; Chatterton1999) originated from and was dominated by students, in Turin has been the result of a process fueled by leisure-oriented policies aimed at attracting tourists and young population.

In Turin is thus possible to observe something both very similar and different from the textbook process of studentification. Studentification here is in its emersion phase but immersed in a mixite of other processes: economic reconversion attempts, other mobile populations attraction, increasing social conflicts and forms of exclusions.

7.2 The emerging new role (and responsibility) of HEIs in Turin

In the broader redefinition of framework and perspectives described as entrepreneurialization of HEIs and of the whole society, we can identify four interconnected ways in which universities have played a different role in Turin's case, often mirroring what is happening elsewhere. First, changes to the steering role and financial capacity of traditional public actors, i.e. the State, the Municipality and, in the Italian context, the Region, have led Turin's universities to progressively become key player in the city urban (re)development strategy. Secondly, this role has been played in different phases of the problematic transition towards a post-industrial scenario: universities have been partner in drafting and signing three strategic plans, they have worked closely with the Municipality to translate those plans into formal resolutions, they have substantially substituted local authorities as promoter of urban regeneration strategies in different parts of the city, thanks to their capacity to boost the process with direct investments in education and training related facilities. This direct involvement brings us to the third way in which universities' role has changed: they became urban developers, whether to expand a campus area, as in the case of the Polytechnic's "Citadel", or to invest in new facilities, as in the case of the "Campus Luigi Einaudi" that the University of Turin decided to build in a former industrial site. Finally, universities have increased both their capacity to enter public-private partnerships as well as to stimulate companies to invest in Turin, in student housing in specific, because of their success in attracting students and helping to brand the 'university city'[34] .

7.3 Student housing development in Turin: building exclusive geographies?

As observed at the international level (Pillai et al., 2021), the mismatch between an increasing number of university students' enrolments and the diminishing support of public funding for student housing has created a supply gap that has been increasingly resolved by private actors. The recent wave of private student housing (since 2000) shows that there are some trends which connect what is happening in Turin to other contexts in Europe and elsewhere.

The resort to private capital is explicitly considered as unavoidable in order to integrate the constantly diminishing public funds and, in fact, the ongoing revision of the local comprehensive plan considers student housing realized by private investors as public services, regardless of the typology and prices of the supply they will provide (Gilardi, 2020). On the one hand it is shared the idea that “the spatial planning policy pursued by the (local) government can influence the affordability of (new) student accommodation” (Vandromme et al. 2022 p.5). On the other, the case study of Turin also reveals different possibilities. From the analysis of the strategic and urban planning, as well as from municipal act and documentation, emerge a certain belief that new university buildings as well as new student housing interventions can become tout court elements of socio-spatial regeneration of neighborhoods. As if a new building can be enough per se to activate an urban regeneration process with positive overall impacts.

Despite some institutional initiative to control and plan proliferation and concentration of student housing, urban changes due to increasing mobile and international student population seems to be followed by non-regulation and laissez

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[34] This paragraph is mainly from a recent author's coauthored article: Mangione and Santangelo, forthcoming.

faire (Smith 2005). This market led urban regeneration approaches find widespread agreement between city administrators and institutions and, as Collins states, it should be seen as a key driver of urban changes, more than students themselves (Collins 2010).

The increasing role of private actors in developing and managing PBSAs, as well as the latter greater dimensions, are clear manifestation of a process of commodification of the student housing sector. We assist to a shift away from the production of affordable and subsidize student housing, with the privatization of this particular form of social housing through the intentional attraction, by both the Municipality and the universities, of national and international real estate investors. A clear path towards student housing financialization which has already been observed elsewhere by Revington and August (2020) and Aalbers (2017). Another aspect regards the kind of new supply which has been developed in Turin as well as in other different contexts. It is characterised by a shift through an increase in high-cost and high-quality supply and demand of student housing, due to the ongoing commodification of "studenthood" (Kinton et al. 2018). This shift poses new issues for the urban development. According to Kinton et al. (2018) the physical transformations induced by the PBSAs include the development of large blocks which results in the reinforcement of student housing transformative effect on established residential neighborhoods as well as on regeneration of vacant brownfields and other sites. Or, in other words, student housing development and provision are reinforcing or inducing gentrification processes in the city (Smith, 2005; Hubbard, 2009; Garmendia et al., 2012).

The 1995 local comprehensive plan had laid the foundations in this sense: the economic reconversion of former industrial areas towards residential or tertiary uses are in fact among its main pillars (Caruso & Pede 2016). The strategy for Turin as a university city thus emerges as perhaps the most visible example of the entrepreneurial orientation of Turin's urban agenda but, despite greater attention has been paid to the changes in the local governance system and how this impact the city development strategies (Belligni, Ravazzi, 2013; Caruso et al., 2019), the relationship between student housing related developments and the reinforcement of exclusive geographies remains largely unexplored. Furthermore, the issue of affordability should be considered. The Italian legislation only allows a restricted number of students to be eligible for student housing and in many regions not all the eligible students can make use of the service (ESU, 2019). In fact, in many regions including Piedmont, there are not enough subsidised beds to cover all the students who would be eligible. Italian student unions have long stressed the necessity to ensure that everyone eligible for student housing will be able to profit from quality accommodation for fair prices (ESU, 2019). This would mean investing in public or at most public-private student housing (possibly not making profit by students), but this does not seem to be the direction taken even at national level.

Furthermore, the geographies of young people, in cities with a strong university characterization, are subject to polarization, depending on family income level and spending capacity, geographical origin or level of education; they can therefore sometimes result in geographies of marginalization or - on the contrary - of concentration in the central area of the city and around the university sites. The latter may be the case, now frequent, in which such geographies overlap with those of the older population, leading to the explosion of unresolved conflicts and highlighting a strong weakness of local and urban institutions in the management of such population conflicts.

Chapter 8 - Reshape the image of student population

In the case study followed along the last 20 years, a specific image of students established among political and economic actors in Turin: the idea of student as economic resource and crucial target for real estate investors. This idea also reflects in more recent urban planning initiatives. A critical (re)elaboration of the image of youth and students as agents of negative urban transformations is proposed in the chapter, giving more space to the social issue students pose. Furthermore, the non-student part of the population is considered, particularly those with housing needs similar to students, but which differ from them in terms of the appeal they have for the administration and the urban development strategies.

One of the challenges in studying student population in cities is to avoid bringing into conflict populations with even very divergent ways of life, and instead to identify the points of conjunction that can support a coexistence that is not only peaceful but also fruitful in terms of opportunities for mutual exchange. Keeping in mind, last but not least, the issue of the citizenship of this mobile population. In fact, we are talking about young people between the ages of 19 and 30 who live in the city over medium-long periods, between a minimum of two and a maximum of five years (in theory, while in practice, the average time taken by Turin students to graduate is longer). A city within a city of over thirty thousand inhabitants, often invisible to the urban welfare system because their residence is legally registered elsewhere. A city within a city without the right to vote, and perhaps for this reason marginal with respect to the priorities of politics and little present - in fact beyond good intentions - in policies.

8.1 Student population between diversification and individualisation

In the literature tackling the relation between university students and cities that has been analysed, the student population is represented through peculiar characteristics that inform the space in which they temporarily move to study and live. Despite not every student moves to study abroad, tertiary education students are widely recognised as a population with common peculiar characteristics, which broadly remain stable as each cohort replaces its predecessor (Munro et al. 2009): they are young, middle class, well educated, transient, with no dependents, mobile. Such characteristics are crucial in building up the dominant and dichotomic narrative describing university student population and agency. On one side, the student population is viewed in the shadows of policies of high skilled human capital attraction. Students are associated with that creative class (Russo & Sans 2009; Wesselmann 2019) in which high expectations of economic and social redevelopment of urban contexts are often placed, they are the knowledge workers of tomorrow. On the opposite side, the student population is claimed to have deeply negative impacts on socio economic urban landscapes. Students are undoubtedly more widely recognised as producers and consumers of exclusive geographies in the residential and entertainment sphere (Chatterton 1999). Higher education student population is thus seen as a group of gentrifiers (Hollands & Chatterton 2003) with disruptive and transient lifestyles and behaviours spreading throughout public spaces and traditional local day and night-life of neighbourhoods. Furthermore, their rapid and unchallenged hegemony (Allinson 2006) raises conflicts with local populations and leads to social exclusion of more fragile social groups. What is generally missed is the consideration of the internal diversification and variety characterising the student population. To each of the "sub-populations" which compose the students’ corresponds a highly differentiated, distinct forms of interaction with the city ranging from absolute indifference to perfect integration to the point that it is impossible to make precise classifications of "ecologies locales" and possible behaviors (Savino, 1998).

Student geographies can simultaneously overlap with, or evolve into, different urban landscapes of youthified or gentrified areas, as much as studentcapes are not necessarily geographies of exclusion (Russo & Sans 2009). As Collins (2010) suggests, considering student characteristics as transformative agents per se returns an incomplete interpretation of a phenomenon in which a number of different actors are involved.

Assessing student impact on cities is possible as far as the multifaceted nature of the population is taken into account. Conversely, in the case study most of the stakeholders see students in the light of the positive and mostly economic impact they have in the city; thus, they are far from considering students as adverse gentrifiers. Policy makers hardly look at student as agents of urban transformations and social impacts, including the most exclusive forms.

8.2 The non-student part of the housing and emerging pathways of exclusion

Has been observed how the lack of affordable student housing and the lack of affordable residential housing (non-student) occur in the same cities. But also, that the shortage of student housing correspond to student seek in the affordable residential (non-student) market (Vandromme et al. 2022). In Turin several circumstances seems to coincide in the direction of enabling dynamics of conflictual relations among different categories of housing seekers, sometimes visible and sometimes less visible.

In Turin there is a lack of coordinated strategy nor a consistent plan for the university city and the urban development of its facilities, notwithstanding some progress in the provision of housing solutions or services (such as study rooms) were made in the last twenty years. Can we affirm the same for other groups in the city? Has the housing sector been improved by some policies or acts for those who are not (or not yet) students but have similar housing needs (time flexibility, affordability, closeness to transports or other kind of public services...)? In the urban plan revision, a particular approach to transient populations emerge. In practice, the plan review proposal tries to quantify on the one hand the number of mobile workers, students and tourists who live in the city each year, and on the other hand it tries to quantify the empty apartments. In the end, the number of vacant apartments is intended to be used to embed the new populations cited. Despite the good intentions, however, critical issues emerge. First, the mechanisms through which the shift, from private vacant apartments to student rented ones, should occur is not clarified by the plan. Regarding the social dimension, the plan makes a summary assessment of the fluctuating populations. It seems it is not considering those part of the fluctuating population which do not make an economic contribution to the city (at least in a certain conception of urban economy) such as migrants in transit or not yet stable, nomads. A hierarchy between desirable and undesired (or ignored) population emerges in the background of the official preparatory planning documents.

In this work the housing dimension has been initially chosen as a key to access and understand the role of students in Turin urban transformations. Notwithstanding during and thanks to the field work several housing issues has emerged, they were not always related with students' but still noteworthy in understanding students' impacts.

What could be observed, but only partially, is the emergence of a (creeping, not visible but present) conflict in access to housing between students and non-students or workers or other 'users' of the rental market: somehow all members of the generation rent (McKee, 2012). The local association Almaterra, in a recent field survey, tells us of the racism that characterises the rental market in Turin. But this phenomenon is also compounded by a question of the selectivity of those who seek rental housing, based on the economic categories to which they belong. While this is understandable, from the point of view of landlords, it is clear that the phenomenon is exclusionary and a source of inequality. The question remains open as to how to remedy the conflict created when the student becomes a preferred target over others (young people, workers and non-workers, foreigners and Italians, families and individuals). In a country and a city with a shrinking population, housing issues - even when referring to sub-sectors such as this one - should be approached from a systemic perspective. The progressive emptying of housing on the private housing market, for example, should be seen as a resource to respond to new and different housing needs. However, the great stumbling block remains a legislative system that is difficult to update, especially from a political but also from a bureaucratic point of view.

According to Ozogul, the key issue of "governing diverse urban populations is exemplary of these challenges. Research shows that diverse populations tend to be targeted in a compartmentalised manner, how social and spatial policy objectives are often incongruent and fragmented efforts are disconnected from overarching visions. This fragmentation is particularly visible in spatial planning, despite the field's reputation to enhance policy integration. Spatial planning's engagement with diversity is scarce, leaves diversity-related questions mainly within social policy or is reduced to the function of providing housing to specific target groups. The resulting lack of comprehensive approaches can have detrimental consequences, particularly for the most vulnerable in urban society" (Ozogul 2019, p.39).

Often the rental market by its very nature and by tradition in the Italian context is much more frequented by mobile (and or precarious) populations, many of whom for various reasons do not become “full citizens”. In fact, the theme of the possibility of participating in the democratic life of the city becomes central, and almost a paradox, for people who do in fact live in the city. To the theme of the paradox of the vote Pasqui weaves 'a more general reflection on the possibility of imagining a new welfare system which, without renouncing the universalist objectives of extending and strengthening citizenship rights, is able to (...) correspond to the questions posed, among others, by "anomalous" subjects such as urban populations' (Pasqui 2008, p. 155). In recent years, in some territorial contexts and by some municipal administrations, the question of 'responding' to the different urban populations is beginning to be assimilated, while it seems that a question of hierarchy - defined by the administrations themselves in their actions - between the populations to be responded to, is emerging with greater urgency. In the public debate of cities such as Turin a sort of discriminating distinction between desirable populations (e.g. students or highly skilled workers) and undesirable populations (e.g. migrants or the poor) seems to emerge in unstated but evident forms.

Chapter 9 - A quasi-policy for student housing

This last chapter point out a concluding reflection on the overall policy analysis. In the light of the work that has been done so far, still a question remains: is it possible to affirm that Turin actually have a policy for the student housing? Supported by the insightful idea of scholars in the policy analysis domain, I tried to tackle this question which is both at the origin and conclusion of this work.

Starting to the definition of a public policy which, according to Dente, is a 'set of decisions and activities that are linked to the solution of a collective problem' (Dente 2011, p28) I tried to understand if such a definition can be applicable. The student housing issue has a collective character as previously explained. If so, then looking at it as a public policy issue requires the identification of the set of decisions and activities that can effectively identify the student housing as such.

In some context a policy for the student housing assumes a quite specific and practical meaning. In fact, since early 2000s the local plans of some UK cities (i.e. Loughborough or Leeds) have proper sections and supplementary planning documents regulating the student housing sector, both of HMO and PBSA.

It is not one of the objectives of this thesis to give policy indications or best practices. Also, because before being able to do this, it remains to be clarified whether there is an intention to make the several actions converge into a coherent policy. As far as this research has investigated, in fact, what has been done so far was a sequence of strategic indications, pieces of plans and programmes (of different bodies at different scales), individual initiatives, inter-departmental projects. Is all this enough to be considered a policy? Does a public policy for student housing exist in Turin? Let us assume that - as noted by Dye (1976, cited in Bobbio et al. 2017) - government non-action (in the broad sense) is also to be considered a policy since it reproduces its effects. It is quite evident that no designed and organic public action has ever been taken in Turin on the issue of student housing. And this is particularly true for affordable housing. However, there have been, and still are, some initiatives on the subject. To better understand the logic of these initiatives it is useful to go back to consider student housing as a "sector" composed of two areas: PBSA and housing in the rental sector (the most common form of student housing in Turin and Italy). The first area has the largest number of urban governance initiatives in recent years. However, it remains difficult to define this set of initiatives, however characterised by continuity over time, as public policy for student housing. This is because, on closer inspection, the initiatives mentioned have been undertaken in no particular order and often as part of the implementation of a policy related to a different sector, such as economic development. In addition to this, there is the evidence that the initiatives undertaken mostly go in the direction of the form of housing that is least common among students living away from home, while 88% of them have recourse to the form of widespread housing, for which little or no action is taken.

According to Bobbio and colleagues (2017), rather than saying that Turin does not have a policy for student housing, it would be more correct to say "that this policy proceeds case by case without a defined criterion" (Bobbio et al. 2017, p3). But to answer the initial question, it is still necessary to preface it with two others.

Can a public policy be defined as such when it is not designed to respond to a collective problem? Can a public policy be defined as such if and when it is designed and implemented in a decision-making context oriented towards the realisation of a second and different policy?

To the first of these two questions the answer looks at Dente's definition of public policy, taken up by Bobbio et al. (2017), according to which 'a public policy is the set of actions in some way related to the solution of a collective problem that is generally considered to be of public interest' (p.5). At first glance, one might therefore conclude with a negative answer: if it is not designed with the resolution of a collective problem in mind, government action does not qualify as public policy. However, Dente's definition implies the need to reflect on the concepts of problem and collective interest. If, as in the case at hand, the collective interest is defined as the need to expand the supply of student housing in university residences, then the actions aimed at achieving it, can be considered public policy. And this happens and is valid even where that collective interest is defined (i) by a public-private coalition and (ii) seems apparently not to correspond with the needs of the community, that is the subject of the policy. What happens, when there are collective subjects who do not agree with this idea of collective interest, is another story.

Here the attempt was to disclose a (quasi) policy of the student housing sector, through the analytical and longitudinal reconstructions of formal and informal acts and practices. This meant not only to put in a new light or framework the actors' behaviours, but also to recognise a collective purpose and to connect policy practices and their practitioners to the impacts they produced.

A further issue regards the way in which policy initiative are tackling the student housing dimension. To clarify the intentions of policy makers we should understand whether policies are defining and thus anticipating the creation of new residences. Unfortunately, it seems instead that policies are the result of an attempt to accompany and support (rather than regulate) actions already underway. According to Bobbio et al. (2017, p14) it is often the availability of a solution that brings the problem to the surface. In Turin just as often, the process is set in motion because there are actors pushing for a certain solution (meaning the private investors) without it being clear what problem it relates to.

The analysis, finally, has tried to cover the blind spot on "the role of planning in shaping student housing markets more generally, or over a longer time frame, beyond specific points of conflict" (Revington et al. 2020, p. 191), as well as set the ground for further research on the role of financialization in the entrepreneurial scenario described (Nölke et al.,2013; Aalbers, 2017). Turin's case, ultimately, shows how ingrained are the changes towards a growing role of private investments in urban (re)development processes - which may not come as a surprise - but, also, how important it is to include in the story concrete actors' decisions and actions (or non-decisions and inaction), especially when dealing with the broader phenomenon of studentification, whose importance for the city development has only started to be fully understood .

Chapter 10 - Conclusions

10.1 Universities and their partial engagement

The knowledge economy paradigm emerges in the case study as a form of urban development strategy, somehow applied in a city where higher education institutions are acquiring a leading role in urban development and policy making.

The research aimed at contributing to the understanding of some urban processes of change, somehow proposing a reshape of university and student image. In the context of study some weaknesses emerge in the conception of processes and transformations at stake. Though university impact on city is not underestimated by actors, it understands is limited again to the HEIs positive economic impacts or to the environmental dimension of their sustainability. From a first observation of the case study emerges the need and opportunity to broaden the comprehension, complexify and problematize the impacts HEIs have on the socio-spatial dimension of the city. This work tried to answer to this need proposing a new interpretation of universities' impact on cities including students' impact as a further category. Furthermore, in this research a particular attention is on the housing sector, which is on the one hand one of those most critically affected by off-site students; indeed, HEIs should probably keep more attention to the way they interfere with the local housing market.

University agency in the local context entails increasing responsibilities they have in influencing, both positively and negatively but consistently, part of the social and economic dimension of the city. Universities has all the instruments to be more aware of this and working - transversally to all universities in the city and with a transdisciplinary approach - towards the understanding of the socio-economic impact they have on the city and supporting the management of impacts they produce locally.

Within the debate that sees the higher education institution not as an ivory tower anymore, but increasingly open to the city they are settled into, universities (try to) become civic universities, and to assume a new leading role in the city (even political) life. This shift is not without contradiction and needs to be better analysed. The attempt in this research was to look towards an engaged university in an urban society, which "must negotiate the central contradiction between the university being a 'monumental institution' that oppresses and colonises the space organised around it (Lefebvre 2003, p. 21) and an emancipatory setting and stake of social struggle whose ability to accommodate difference enables socially just, democratic knowledge production and dissemination" (Addie 2017, p. 1096). Benneworth and

colleagues studied the crucial issue of universities engagement in urban development projects of the city in which they settle, looking at their contribution beyond the reductionist “third mission” view of impact (Ibid., 2010).
They underline the role in terms of spatial configuration of the HEIs in the wider urban context and form: “The spatial form of the “campus” affects the role that the university plays in both the wider urban environment and wider urban hierarchies. Depending on a university’s location, in the centre of a large city, in a small town, an out of town campus or a completely disembodied virtual institution, the nature of such linkage—and hence its overall impact—varies.” (Benneworth et al. 2010, p.1616). In their observations they report the impacts on the local context, where serious risks of reproducing social exclusions and inequalities are notified. Nonetheless, in their cases, successful urban transformations of university facilities depends on the mutual relations and collaborations between university and the city. Fruitful partnerships on urban development involving both HEIs and local administrations require trust “building up not in agreeing high-level common visions, but in addressing more quotidian yet insuperable problems” (Benneworth et al. 2010, p.1626).
Turin universities certainly demonstrate engagement, but not on all issues of primary importance to the area in which they are located. The hypothesis that is proposed is that the university is not only an instrument for solving problems, but also for generating them. How do we stand critically against this, especially from the perspective of scholars of urban issues (i.e., from a point of view both inside the problem and potentially on the side of the solution)?
Finally, the empirical approach of this research has been developed in the light of the importance to keep closer knowledge production and the use people can do with it, for the societal improvement. "If universities are at the heart of the knowledge economy and the knowledge economy is urban, then urban researchers must pay heed to how they are increasingly implicated as political actors in, rather than critics of, territorial projects. Without this, the ability to critique what are often loosely articulated and inadequately theorized new urban visions in the knowledge society is limited, not only by the potential benefits of silence, but by a complicity in the project of creation and the complex sets of relationships between those who practice and those who fund research” (May and Perry, 2011, p.363).

10.2 Students role between perception and activism

A second concern regard the student population and the way they are perceived by local actors, particularly policy makers. Off-site students are considered as a foreign body in cities where they decide to study, and mostly viewed though the economic value they bring into the city. This is problematic because of the way this 'idea' informs student-oriented policies. The growth of student population has been interpreted as an unstoppable trend which gives to local and non-local actors the opportunity to invest in Turin development. As a result, student housing supply is increasingly provided by actors, which target just an exclusive part of the student population housing request. Student presence in cities should be better understood in its complex causes, also out of the Turin coalition control.

A further aspect which emerge as characterizing a part of the Turin student population, is their political and collective action toward they right to housing and study. This aspect has not been properly developed in this research, although it belongs to the author's living experience. Attention should be given by future research on this particular role of student and the consequence of their activism in urban change processes. It is even more relevant in the light of a certain reduction in the space and time of collective experiences which Pasqui underline as an issue for contemporary cities. This does not mean that individuals do not carry out practices 'together,' but rather that in this they are not connected by forms of belonging and identity constitution. "Increasingly we can con-share (spaces and activities) without sharing (meaning and identity)" (Pasqui, 2008, p39). Nevertheless, cities remain the places where it is easiest for individuals to group together obeying principles of shared identity. In this regard, I wonder if the student population is united by principles of shared identity, or rather if students as such identify themselves as belonging to that population (and if this might change the gradation of the lenses with which they are viewed as a population). My impression is that, for the most part, this cannot be argued. But that - nevertheless - there are groups (of interest) united precisely by the fact of being students, for whom the value of belonging is based on the presentation of demands for change in certain general conditions. The identity action of a restricted group would thus contribute to changing the living conditions of the entire 'population'. However, if one looks carefully at the ways in which the group is organised and the contents and objectives of the instances, one might instead recognise a prevalence (or tendency?) to work from a perspective of individualism. As Pasqui observed, "Melucci pointed out how the constitution of the new generation social movements, strongly marked in a post-ideological sense, is closely linked to processes of individualisation" (Pasqui 2008, p40, footnote no. 42).

10.3 A city committed to universities

The Turin policy coalition translated the idea of becoming a knowledge city through the attempt to become what is called a 'University City'. This is despite the fact that the city is not actually dependent on its universities or based solely on the economies they move. The city government and its political representatives have certainly been the most consistently devoted actors to the idea that the city's socioeconomic revival could be linked to a new knowledge economy. This is not to say that there are no other spatial development strategies in place. But that of the knowledge economy based on a new role for universities is of extreme interest because of the constancy with which it has been promoted. As well as for the interactions it involves with other dimensions of the urban, an interaction that is not always peaceful and inclusive. However, the city itself is ceding important spaces and powers to actors. On the one hand to the higher education institutions. On the other, targeted policies has been developed in order to attract investors to give an answer to the student housing demand, which traditional public bodies are no longer able to give.

10.4 Housing the students in Turin, at the crossroad of global phenomena manifestation and urban changing geography

This research tell a story about the multifaceted nature of university impacts on cities, through the close observation of the particular world of university students and the role of their housing. In so doing, tries to hold together different theoretical frameworks because, in conclusion, it attempts to connect social and political processes that take place, at the same time, in the space of a city. Some processes are the result of global flows (human and economic capital mobility), others are replicated in Turin following similar trends and observable in other contexts at the international scale (commodification and financialization of living, studentification). Each manifest itself in the local dimension determining a unique case with localized effects on society, the economy and the organization of space. As Reynold observed, “PBSA has been defined as a “mature and globally recognized” asset (Savills, 2015) and is increasingly infiltrating the housing sectors of global university locations” (Reynolds, 2020 p.13). Turin is not a global university location, but still emerge as a location under the spotlight of international investors. This is because the coexistence of many factors: the availability of large spaces at low prices, because of the political openness that is committed to creating a favorable terrain, because the student population seems to be growing uninterruptedly and universities are heavily engaged in competing to climb the rankings and gain international prestige. However, this growth process, which appears linear and healthy for a city in an enduring economic crisis, is made up of chiaroscuros. Indeed, this research aimed to go beyond the mainstream narrative that is being made, getting into the folds of the shadowy parts of this image.

While in other contexts, namely the UK, privately managed newly-built student housing were common in most university cities since the early 2000s (Smith, 2005), it is a quite recent phenomenon in Italy, although rapidly spreading. Despite the predominance of rented apartments as the traditional forms of student housing, in fact, which is closer to a continental Europe path (Garmendia et al. 2012), a shift towards a PBSA, Anglo-Saxon, model is occurring.

This shift does come with some concerns on the impacts it can have jointly on promoting and reinforcing gentrification processes and on the deepening divide between students who can afford a decent accommodation and those who cannot. It is already clear that only part of the student population can benefit from the new batch of existing and planned student housing. The entrepreneurial approach to student housing - widely shared by all actors at play in Turin - tend to overlook the affordability and accessibility issues in the supply, with just one-third of the eligible students to get a bed in 2019-2020 (Laudisa et al., 2021). The strategy for the university city, thus, has turned out to be a policy that favours private investment in student housing provision for specific groups of students (i.e. off-site and international high-income students), with the increase in students' enrolments only partially matched by an increase in the availability of public student housing or the possibility for more traditional solutions in the rental sector to cover for those who are left out (Zasina et al., 2021). Thus, the PBSA developments became the crucial part of an urban re-development strategy.

On the other hand, resorting to the privately built and managed student housing facilities could be considered as a welcomed addition to the already existing offer of accommodation for students. These facilities can play an important role in urban regeneration, helping to (i) reuse formerly abandoned or dismissed areas (Smith & Hubbard, 2014; Cascone & Sciuto, 2018) and (ii) revitalise a neighbourhood, for instance by attracting new leisure-oriented commercial activities (Macintyre, 2003; Allinson, 2006). We have to consider, however, that on one hand there is a risk of de-studentification (Kinton et al., 2016), on the other hand a risk of successful gentrification (Smith, 2008). As regards the first, the oversupply produced by the development of more commodified forms of student housing, such as PBSA or more exclusive HMOs, is connected to de-studentification processes in more traditional or less appealing student areas (Kinton et al., 2018), thus reconfiguring the exclusive geographies in certain parts of the city. As regards gentrification, it is hard not to see that a shift towards new inhabitants, "marginal gentrifiers", new commercial services and leisure venues, a rebranding of the area, can benefit a regeneration of the neighbourhood whose effect will most likely be enjoyed by a different population (Cocola-Gant & Lopez-Gay, 2020; Sigler & Wachsmuth, 2020).

As Reynolds states, there is need to focus on student accommodation and the role it plays in student geographies. At the same time, it is crucial to understand what interactions occur between forms of student accommodation and other urban geographies, particularly if we consider those urban contexts in which massive student presence is a relative new phenomenon. Has been already observed elsewhere how PBSA has important consequences for the wider city (Reynolds, 2020). Nonetheless student's housing challenges are also context specific, this mean that must be understand in relation to the urban context, thus considered in tandem with structural changes to the wider housing market, in competition with different possible land uses or in conflict with local needs and behaviors in the use of urban space.

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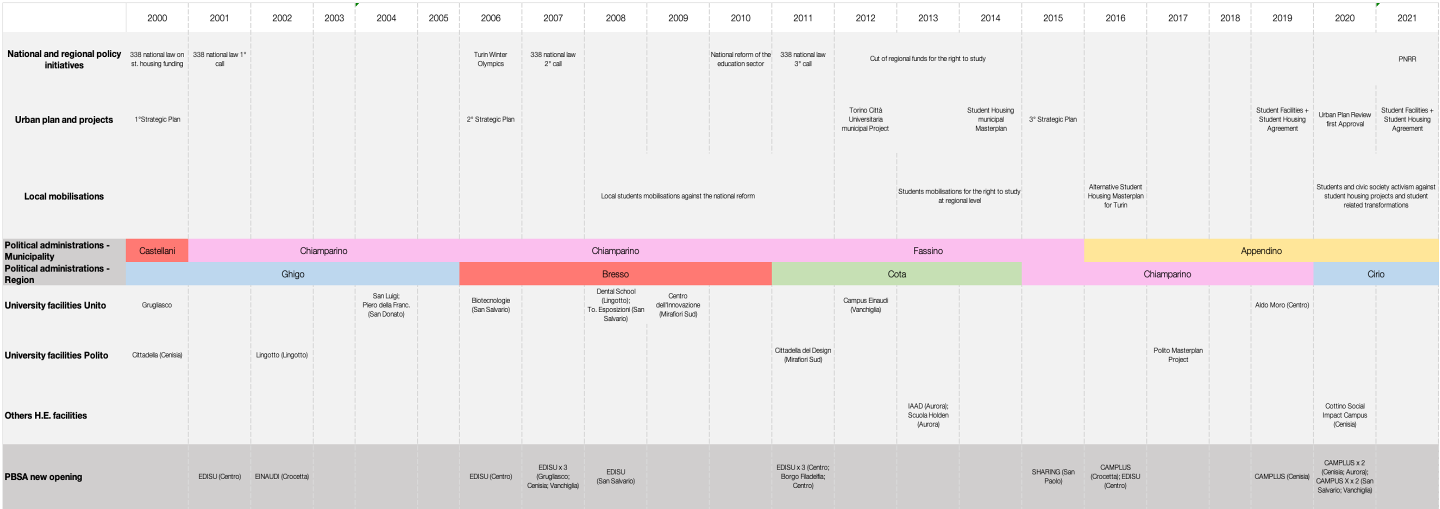
Annex

Annex 1 – Timeline of policy events and main urban transformations



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
National and regional policy initiatives	338 national law on st. housing funding	338 national law 1° call					Turin Winter Olympics	338 national law 2° call			National reform of the education sector	338 national law 3° call	Cut of regional funds for the right to study									PNRR
Urban plan and projects	1°Strategic Plan						2° Strategic Plan						Torino Città Universitaria municipal Project		Student Housing municipal Masterplan	3° Strategic Plan				Student Facilities + Student Housing Agreement	Urban Plan Review first Approval	Student Facilities + Student Housing Agreement
Local mobilisations									Local students mobilisations against the national reform					Students mobilisations for the right to study at regional level			Alternative Student Housing Masterplan for Turin				Students and civic society activism against student housing projects and student related transformations	
Political administrations - Municipality	Castellani	Chiamparino					Chiamparino					Fassino					Appendino					
Political administrations - Region	Ghigo						Bresso					Cota				Chiamparino					Cirio	
University facilities Unito	Grugliasco				San Luigi; Piero della Franc. (San Donato)		Biotecnologie (San Salvario)		Dental School (Lingotto); To. Esposizioni (San Salvario)	Centro dell'Innovazione (Mirafiori Sud)			Campus Einaudi (Vanchiglia)							Aldo Moro (Centro)		
University facilities Polito	Cittadella (Cenisia)		Lingotto (Lingotto)									Cittadella del Design (Mirafiori Sud)						Polito Masterplan Project				
Others H.E. facilities														IAAD (Aurora); Scuola Holden (Aurora)							Cottino Social Impact Campus (Cenisia)	
PBSA new opening		EDISU (Centro)	EINAUDI (Crocetta)				EDISU (Centro)	EDISU x 3 (Grugliasco; Cenisia; Vanchiglia)	EDISU (San Salvario)			EDISU x 3 (Centro; Borgo Filadelfia; Centro)				SHARING (San Paolo)	CAMPLUS (Crocetta); EDISU (Centro)			CAMPLUS (Cenisia)	CAMPLUS x 2 (Cenisia; Aurora); CAMPUS X x 2 (San Salvario; Vanchiglia)	

27 Timeline of policy events and main urban transformations

Annex 2 – Main resolution and acts of the Turin Municipality

Data	Meccanografico	Tipo atto	Oggetto	Proponente
INIZIO GIUNTA FASSINO				
13 luglio 2011			LINEE PROGRAMMATICHE 2011-2016 PER IL GOVERNO DELLA CITTA' DI TORINO	Sindaco Fassino
19 luglio 2011	4099	Deliberazione	CITTADELLA UNIVERSITARIA - COSTITUZIONE DI DIRITTO DI SUPERFICIE E DI DIRITTO D'USO A FAVORE DEL POLITECNICO DI TORINO SU AREE DI PROPRIETA' DELLA CITTA'.	Dealessandri, Passoni
23 novembre 2011	6562	Ordine del giorno	"SOSTEGNO AGLI STUDENTI BORSISTI EDISU, PER LA DIFESA DEL DIRITTO ALLO STUDIO UNIVERSITARIO" PRESENTATA DAI CONSIGLIERI GRIMALDI E CURTO IN DATA 18 NOVEMBRE 2011.	Consiglieri Curto, Grimaldi
8 maggio 2012	02229/007	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	TORINO CITTA UNIVERSITARIA. APPROVAZIONE PROGETTO E GRUPPO DI LAVORO INTERASSESSORILE	Assessore Pellerino di concerto con Assessore Curti
27 novembre 2012	06522/007	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	TORINO CITTA` UNIVERSITARIA. AVVIO PROGETTI E COLLABORAZIONI CON GLI ATENEI TORINESI. APPROVAZIONE ACCORDI QUADRO E SCHEMI CONVENZIONI ATTUATIVE. INDIVIDUAZIONE	Assessore Pellerino

			SPESA EURO 146.668,88, FONDI DERIVANTI DA ENTRATA CONSERVATI NEI RESIDUI	
22 dicembre 2012	07704/009	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	"TORINO CITTA UNIVERSITARIA" - LINEE GUIDA PER LA VALORIZZAZIONE DELLA VOCAZIONE ED INDIVIDUAZIONE DEI AZIONI STRATEGICHE - APPROVAZIONE	Assessore Curti di concerto con Assessore Pellerino
19 marzo 2013	01234/009	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	OGGETTO: CONVENZIONE URBANISTICO-EDILIZIA CON LA SOCIETÀ FABRICA IMMOBILIARE SGR S.P.A. PER LA REALIZZAZIONE DI UNA RESIDENZA UNIVERSITARIA IN VIA CARAGLIO ANGOLO VIA RENIER. APPROVAZIONE.	Assessore Curti
6 agosto 2013	03562/007	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	TORINO CITTÀ UNIVERSITARIA. LETTERA D'INTENTI PER ACCORDO TRA CITTA DI TORINO E COMPAGNIA DI SAN PAOLO SULLA RESIDENZIALITA DIFFUSA	Assessore Pellerino
18 novembre 2013	03200/002	Ordine del giorno	RIPRISTINO DEL SISTEMA DI DIRITTO ALLO STUDIO UNIVERSITARIO	Consiglieri Grimaldi, Curto, Levi
17 dicembre 2013	07446/007	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	ADESIONE DELLA CITTÀ ALL'ASSOCIAZIONE UNITOWN - UNIVERSITY TOWN NETWORK	Assessore Pellerino
10 febbraio 2013	04625/009	Deliberazione del Consiglio Comunale	PROGRAMMA DELLE TRASFORMAZIONI URBANE 2013-2014. LINEE DI INDIRIZZO	Firmata da Fassino e Lo Russo, Gilardi

27 maggio 2014	02403/007	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	TORINO CITTÀ UNIVERSITARIA. PROTOCOLLO D`INTESA TRA CITTÀ DI TORINO E UNIONE PICCOLI PROPRIETARI IMMOBILIARI SULLA RESIDENZIALITÀ DIFFUSA, APPROVAZIONE TESTO.	Assessore Pellerino
4 novembre 2014	04633/009	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	TORINO CITTÀ UNIVERSITARIA. PIANO DI SVILUPPO DELLE RESIDENZE UNIVERSITARIE. 5.000 NUOVI POSTI LETTO. APPROVAZIONE.	Sindaco Fassino, Assessori Lo Russo, Pellerino e Passoni
30 novembre 2015	05289/131	Deliberazione del Consiglio Comunale	TORINO CITTÀ UNIVERSITARIA. DEFINIZIONE LINEE GUIDA PER LA DESTINAZIONE A RESIDENZA UNIVERSITARIA DELL'IMMOBILE EX NEBIOLO E A CASA PER STUDENTI DELLO STABILE DI VIA LOMBROSO 16.	Assessore Passoni di concerto con Pellerino e Lo Russo
24 novembre 2015	06029/009	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	TORINO CITTÀ UNIVERSITARIA. LINEE GUIDA PER LA REALIZZAZIONE DI RESIDENZIALITA STUDENTESCA. APPROVAZIONE.	Assessore Lo Russo di concerto con Assessore Pellerino
INIZIO GIUNTA APPENDINO				
2016	03358/002		PROGRAMMA DI GOVERNO PER LA CITTA DI TORINO 2016-2021	
13 aprile 2017	01354/009	Deliberazione del Consiglio Comunale	ATTO DI INDIRIZZO. REVISIONE GENERALE P.R.G. VIGENTE.	Sindaca Appendino, Vicesindaco Montanari

16 luglio 2019	02827/070	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	PROTOCOLLO D`INTESA TRA LA CITTA' DI TORINO, L'UNIVERSITÀ DI TORINO E IL POLITECNICO DI TORINO PER L'INDIVIDUAZIONE DI SPAZI DIFFUSI DI SERVIZIO PER GLI STUDENTI. APPROVAZIONE	Assessore Giusta
16 luglio 2019	02632/050	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	OGGETTO: TORINO CITTA' UNIVERSITARIA. APPROVAZIONE SCHEMA DI ACCORDO QUADRO TRA COMUNE DI TORINO, EDISU PIEMONTE, UNIVERSITA' DEGLI STUDI DI TORINO E POLITECNICO DI TORINO PER L'INDIVIDUAZIONE DI UN SERVIZIO DEDICATO ALLA RESIDENZIALITA' UNIVERSITARIA.	Assessore Giusta
19 settembre 2019	03871/002	Interpellanza	"RAGGIRI E CARO AFFITTI AI DANNI DEGLI STUDENTI FUORI SEDE" PRESENTATA IN DATA 19 SETTEMBRE 2019 - PRIMA FIRMATARIA ARTESIO.	Consigliera Artesio
5 marzo 2020		Presentazione in II Commissione Consiliare	OFFICINE GRANDI MOTORI PASSATO PRESENTE E FUTURO	Assessore Iaria
14 luglio 2020	01539/050	Deliberazione della Giunta Comunale	TORINO CITTÀ' UNIVERSITARIA. APPROVAZIONE SCHEMA DI CONVENZIONE CON EDISU PIEMONTE PER LA SPERIMENTAZIONE DI PROGETTO DI CAMPUS DIFFUSO	Assessore Giusta

			E SERVIZI PER STUDENTI E STUDENTESSE UNIVERSITARI/E	