

**POLITECNICO**  
**MILANO 1863**

**Scuola di Architettura Urbanistica Ingegneria delle Costruzioni**

Urban Planning and Policy Design - Pianificazione Urbana e Politiche Territoriali LM48

Never Seen the Sea: Student Life on the Ticino River Shores.  
The *diffused campus* and the city: living, learning, leaving the Italian city campus.  
Opportunities and constraints from the University of Pavia.

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Anno Accademico 2021/2022

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## Abstract

La ricerca è stata condotta per illustrare i comportamenti spaziali nel city campus. Nella letteratura, il termine indica le città di piccole e medie dimensioni con una forte componente universitaria. Tuttavia, la definizione è nebulosa e comprende diversi aspetti della vita universitaria e cittadina. L'obiettivo della ricerca è stato quello di studiare le relazioni sociospaziali nel campus cittadino attraverso una ricca letteratura sui temi della progettazione dei campus universitari, della studentificazione, delle residenze universitarie, dell'impegno territoriale dell'università, delle strategie di city branding, delle pratiche di vita notturna, del senso di identità e dell'appropriazione dello spazio. Emerge che la città universitaria è uno spazio di opportunità ma anche di vincoli. Infatti, la letteratura evidenzia rapporti controversi tra la comunità studentesca e la popolazione locale in una percezione disforica degli spazi pubblici cittadini. Il mondo accademico definisce il concetto di relazioni spaziali diverse in base a differenti presupposti di progettazione urbana e alle ubicazioni del campus. Dopo un'attenta ricerca, l'Università di Pavia è emersa come un peculiare banco di prova della letteratura qui presentata. Pavia è una città con una lunga storia accademica che nel tempo è stata oscurata da città più grandi e da istituzioni emergenti. La presenza estesa dei collegi rappresenta una tipologia peculiare di residenza universitaria. Negli ultimi tempi, inoltre, l'università ha tentato di confrontarsi con il proprio territorio, ma con risultati altalenanti. Sebbene sia una risorsa importante per l'arena economica della città, l'emergenza sanitaria da Covid-19 ha messo in luce un modello economico insostenibile per la città. La totale dipendenza dall'istituzione universitaria per generare profitti è risultato fragile e fallimentare durante la pandemia. La municipalità, spinta a gran voce dalla popolazione del centro città, ha messo in atto politiche di controllo del territorio sulle attività notturne rivolte agli studenti, in un processo di borghesizzazione degli spazi per il tempo libero. Attraverso gli occhi degli studenti intervistati, la tesi ha svelato una complessa struttura "a bolle". Pavia è vista come una città a totale disposizione degli studenti, ignorando qualsiasi altra tipologia di popolazione. L'unicità della vita universitaria ha portato nel tempo a un ambiente iperprotetto per gli studenti, dove i comportamenti goliardici si alternano all'ansia da performance universitaria. Qui, lo spazio pubblico è contestato da parte della popolazione locale in un confronto passivo che si muove attraverso i canali comunali e ignora l'autorità universitaria, che si rinchiude tra le sue stesse mura trascurando le rivendicazioni spaziali degli studenti

## Abstract

This research was conducted to critically illustrate spatial behaviors in the city campus. In the literature, the term stands for small and medium cities with a strong university component. However, the definition is nebulous and encompasses different aspects of university and city life. It was therefore the objective of the thesis to unpack sociospatial relations in the city campus through a rich literature on the topics of campus urban design, studentification, university residences, university territorial engagement, city branding strategies, nightlife practices, sense of place and space appropriation. It emerges that the university city is a space of opportunities as well as constraints. In fact, the literature highlights controversial rapport between the student community and the local population in a dysphoric perception of city public spaces. Moreover, the academia defines different spatial relations given the urban design concepts and locations of the campus, ranging from formal to informal relations. After an attentive search, the University of Pavia emerged as a peculiar testing ground of the literature herein presented. Pavia is a city with a long academic history that over time has been shadowed by greater cities and new institutions. The everlasting presence of colleges represent a peculiar typology of student living which is not found elsewhere in the same scale. Moreover, the university has attempted recently to engage with its territory but with fluctuating results. Although a relevant resource for the economic arena of the city, the coronavirus pandemic shed light on an unsustainable economic model for the city as total reliance on one actor to generate the majority of the capital became implausible. The municipality, stressed by the population of the city center, enacted spatial control policies over nightlife activities geared at students in a process of burgeoning leisure spaces. Through the eyes of the students interviewed, the thesis unveiled a complex bubble structure. Pavia is understood as a city of total disposal of students, ignoring any other population. The uniqueness of the college and university living has led over time an overprotected environment for students where goliardic behaviors alternate with university anxiety. Space is contested from the point of view of the local population in a passive confrontation that moves through municipal channels and ignores the university authority, which hides within its walls and ignores student spatial claims.

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“I came without reason,  
So bitter, so free.  
You were born by the river,  
But you’ve never seen the sea.

I stood at your tombstone,  
I felt alive.  
A vision between us  
A sun in the sky.

I weighed up your madness,  
In scales of degree.

You lived your whole life,  
But you never saw the sea.”

Gevin Clark (1969 - 2015)  
*Never Seen The Sea*

# 1) Introduction: town and gown. Understanding the university city phenomenon in Italy.

## 1.a) Contexts and Guidelines

Universities are a crucial part of the city community. These include different spaces, such as the campus at large, classrooms, open areas and the surrounding public spaces that bring vitality to cities thanks to the young and upcoming population that universities host. Sometimes, the university-city connection can go as far as transforming the city into a university city, meaning that the city at large is considered the whole campus. Here, however, labeling issues arise. For example, Fedeli (2010), in her account of Milan as a city of academia, states that, given the vast number of universities and their students (around 200.000 units), Milan is a university city. Still, Milan is much bigger than just its universities as the city is the major financial hub of Italy and its metropolitan area has expanded way beyond that of its municipal boundaries. It is thus for this reason that Bender (1988) describes the metropolitan university as the node of broader relationships between the university (or a cluster of institutions) and the surrounding context over different scales, from the city to the international one. Such framework could be easily applied to Milan, where a multitude of universities exchange relations, practices, and knowledges with different actors in a bigger than local territory. Milan is a university city in as much as it is a city of finance, of fashion or of industries and so on. Different ecologies exist. Nonetheless, other cities have gone on taking the label of university city as their primary ecology. Oxford and Cambridge are the first cities that come to mind. Again, Fedeli (2014) recalls Bender in that universities historically needed cities as the space where knowledge production could take place, and where connections with society happened. That however did not lead univocally to a positive marriage between universities and cities. Indeed, universities were the city within the city. Consequently, although it is difficult to draw a line of what a university city is, an attempt will be made in the following pages by taking in account the literature stemming from different fields such as small city studies, university and urban development, and cultural economy.

A univocal definition of university city is almost impossible. This is so because at different latitudes, universities take on different socio-economic and spatial roles. Still, it can be ascertained a difference between the metropolitan universities of above and universities located in medium to small sized cities. In bigger cities universities have opened to technology transfers and relations worldwide, surpassing the local scale for a larger one. On the other hand, universities are more pervasive in the small and medium cities in which they are hosted. Here, they leave visible material landmarks which make the university a pivotal part of city life (Lazzeroni and Piccaluga, 2015). Furthermore, they can be the engine of technological development of industries as well. This is the first of many features of the university city, which can be broadly ascribed to the architectural and social relevance of university spaces within the city itself. When technological and scientific transfer happen in university towns, they become pivotal in the reorganization of spaces and practices (Lazzeroni and Piccaluga, 2015). Higher education has become so embedded in certain city regions that they have been the main employer of high qualified workers in knowledge intensive industries. The increasing presence, defined as anchoring, exemplifies the penetration of academic knowledge in society as institutions answer through additive solutions to local needs (Arbo and Benneworth, 2007). It follows that, when anchoring is greater, universities exert a larger role of influence over the processes of urban development of urban areas (Liu, 2013). The most important contribution in this field is undoubtedly the Triple Helix Model by Etzkowitz (Etzkowitz and Zhou, 2007; Etzkowitz and Ranga, 2013).

Secondly, the university may cover a cultural role, critically engaging local masses as well as the student body (Chatterton, 2010). In addition, the everlasting presence of some institutions in medium and small cities is as such that the identity of the city itself may mirror the local institution and vice versa. Such identity has been found to be stronger in towns rather than in large cities, where universities are just

one of the different coexisting identities making up for the history of the city (Lazzeroni and Piccaluga, 2015). In demographic terms, moreover, students compose a larger part of the total population in towns compared to larger urbanities. As a result, student density is higher and thus perception of the city being a place of students increases in towns; hence obtaining the label of university city (Lazzeroni and Piccaluga, 2015; Bazzoli, 2019). Consequently, the university city debate highlights three lingering issues that, although present also at different scales and city sizes, are extremely evident in this context. In brief, housing, social cohesion and inclusion, segregation, civic participation, and finally, aggregation reveal the conflicts between the student population and residents over different ways of living the mid and small city (Bazzoli, 2019).

Alongside size, proximity to urban centralities is another deciding factor in the creation of the university city imaginary. Indeed, geographical proximity reinforces relationships between higher education institutions and other activities of the cities (Goddard et al, 2011). This happens both formally, through partnerships and agreements, and informally, where proximity increases flows of goods, people, and ideas from and to universities and their surroundings. Moreover, proximity is not only internal but also external to the region. Often times, small urbanities are internal of bigger urban regions from which they benefit from (Barrado-Timón, Palacios and Hidalgo-Giralt, 2020).

In Italy, town and gown relationship has ancient roots. Indeed, of all the 24 universities founded in Europe between the 11th and the 14th century, Italy is the most represented country with 12 (Ave, 2016). It is due to the political subdivision of Italy at that time. Further, of those 12 universities, 9 are in cities currently having less than 400.000 thousand inhabitants, of which 7 under 300.000 inhabitants. Ave (2016) points out that in those smaller areas, university success becomes the determining factor to the host city development in social, cultural, economic, and political terms. The theme has been recently acknowledged by European Union institutions and universities altogether throughout the creation of two well established networks: the Unitown—University Town Network, taking the form of a no-profit organization joining European university cities and high education institutions founded by the University of Delft and the University of Ferrara. The second one, Unitown emphasizes academia and host city partnerships. Such partnerships aim at revamping the city image of smaller urbanities via cultural attractiveness policies through university presence and the increasing number of students and young city (Ave, 2016). Thus, universities are perceived by local administrations as a true economic engine, stemming locally and attracting globally. Such urban marketing and city branding strategies will be later analyzed more deeply in this work.

The economy of experience is indeed crucial in the debate. Cultural production becomes an economic commodity, so the spaces where culture is created and reproduced hold greater value in the market. Here, smaller cities, when compared to strategies from bigger counterparts, show a greater interest in promoting an image based on heritage, culture, creativity and subsequently knowledge produced through high education institutions (Barrado-Timón, Palacios and Hidalgo-Giralt, 2020). However, it also emerges a pattern of “trendification” of local heritage. Small urbanities, in deploying new marketing strategies sponsoring their uniqueness, all employ the same culture/heritage paradigm (Barrado-Timón, Palacios and Hidalgo-Giralt, 2020). Instead, Lorentzen and van Heur (2013) ascribes to medium and small size cities capacities of higher degrees of technological and economic specialization, identities and traditions, urban hierarchy and dependencies that are not mirrored on a macro scale by their pertaining region. Thus, for some, specificity is the competitive advantage of smaller urbanities. Indeed, small city’s own self-promotion passes through the quality-of-life agenda (Bell and Jayne, 2009). The creative transformations of small cities, fueled by gentrification, tourism, and amenity, could potentially lead to the erosion of preexisting strata of society. This is perhaps in areas transitioning from a Fordist secondary sector to a post-Fordist, tertiary focused urban policy tactics (Waitt and Gibson, 2008).

To conclude, the university city can thus be attributed to a broader urban phenomenon happening when the “university system” encompasses the “urban system”. We may define it as osmosis process. As a result, the prior takes on a relational trajectory that expands well beyond the university spaces and ties itself to all contingent aspects of urban life (housing, lifestyle, consumption, economic, political, technological, participatory, and relational). All the above characterizations are amplified in medium-to-small sized cities, where the density of student to population ratio is higher. As such, De Lotto et al. (2014) defines those urbanities as “city campus”, where the city and the university campus juxtapose. Furthermore, we can ascribe three different typologies of university city. The city campus from De Lotto et al. (2014) and Martinelli (2012) where the university is a fundamental, and sometimes the biggest, social, and urban generator of new dynamics. Here, the city and the institutions are symbiotic but not necessarily partners. This is where the focus of this research lies. Second, the “city with university”, which is typical of Northern European high education institutions, concerns universities located in cities but without a particular relation to the latter. Indeed, exchanges are mostly technological and economic rather than social. The university is seen as a developer of functions while the city is its incubator of resources, underlying the Triple Helix Model. Finally, the university campus peculiar of U.S. institutions features a distinct geographical separation between the city and the campus. The university is a completely autonomous body with the rest of the city (De Lotto et al., 2014). Finally, we can acknowledge two more minor typologies of university city. The first is the “decentralized university”, which represents a detached body from the original institution which carries its own functions and relations away from the urban aggregate. Also, the “satellite university” signifies a portion of the original university peripheral to the rest of the city but still integrated within the city system (e.g., infrastructures, transportations, social relations) (De Lotto et al., 2014).



## 1.b) Reference cases: Pisa, Bologna, Padua and Urbino

The paper will now proceed in offering an analysis of some important cases of city campus in Italy. First, the focus will turn to Pisa, a city in the middle region of Tuscany where the university was founded in 1343, and the city retains the status of one of the most prestigious research sites of Europe. Secondly, Bologna is perhaps the most known yet emblematic case of città universitaria of Italy. Its university is of ancient roots. Overtime, Bologna and its Alma Mater Studiorum have gone onto signifying the prototypical city campus in the collective imagination of Italian young adults. Then Padua University is another ancient institution in the homonymous city where university development can be traced back to that of the city itself. Last, Urbino, the smallest cities of the cases herein presented, as a long tradition of urban planning thanks to Giancarlo De Carlo and the planning of the university college residences, which have their own impact to the city life. These four examples are crucial in understanding the overall urban dynamics of city campuses. It is so since all universities are set in medium to small cities, the university foundation dates to pre-modern times, all three institutions are recognized for their academic relevance, and finally both conflicts and opportunities have risen in the last decades due to university expansionism.

Pisa is one of the most iconic town and gown city of Italy, with a strong student presence. Indeed, the city hosts not only the University of Pisa but also the superior schools (Scuole Superiori) of Sant'Anna and La Normale, where only the most deserving students can get access to. On a demographical level, Pisa is the 58th biggest city of Italy with 44.714 students of out a grand total of 90.488 residents as of 2020. Although data are not accurate (some students also count as residents while others do not in the Italian legislation system) the city counts approximately a 1:2 ratio. Of those, 3% of the student population is foreigner (Lazzeroni and Piccaluga, 2015). Moreover, Pisa, compared to the other cases herein presented, is the one mainly considered as a "territorial knowledge niche" given the quality of the academia as well as the developed industrial sector which often ties itself to the university (Lazzeroni and Piccaluga, 2015). In addition, for the tertiary sector, especially the tourism industry, the local administration has strived for global recognition through brandization and punctual requalification strategies in favor of a glocal agenda (Lazzeroni and Piccaluga, 2015). Thus, in Pisa, the town and gown relationship has produced noteworthy landscape effects such as the new scientific citadel on previously dismissed ground. Being one of the oldest institutions of Italy, the University of Pisa has a strong architectural presence in the city center, where the academia and tourism industry gel together. University buildings are part of a bigger architectural heritage portfolio (Lazzeroni and Piccaluga, 2015). However, Lazzeroni and Piccaluga (2015) also stress how such expansionist efforts by both the city and the university are seldom jointed as often the two authorities travel on different grounds although for similar goals. The academia body lives in the same spaces of the rest of the urban community and tourists. Still, the town and the gown have yet to fully acknowledge each other as member of the urban arena.

Contrast to Pisa, in Bologna the university is fully acknowledged by authorities as a pertaining element of the urban hierarchy. Counting just less than 400.000 inhabitants and a student population of circa 87.000 member, the city has a 1:4 student population ratio (De Lotto et al., 2014). Even though the ratio is lower than other realities, Bologna has made a name for itself as one of the most important university cities in Europe. Such relationship, however, is often conflictual. In particular, in the historic center of the city, the estate portfolio of the university is vast, and this generates revenues not only for the institutions, but also to commercial activities and landlords as gentrification fast advanced in the city (Bazzoli, 2017; De Lotto et al., 2014). As early as the 1800s, the University of Bologna attempted some type of urban diffusion through the spreading of faculties across the city. This in turn has put the institution towards a regional scale thanks to the reordering of faculties in the city and the acquisition of new sites through the Piano Capellini of 1888 (De Lotto et al., 2014). Finally, in the 1960s, the multicampus vocation of the institution emerged so to both expand and ramify in the region as well decongesting the city center, where early conflicts between students and population started to arise (De Lotto et al., 2014).

Contrast to Pisa, in Bologna the university is fully acknowledged by authorities as a pertaining element of the urban hierarchy. Counting just less than 400.000 inhabitants and a student population of circa 87.000 member, the city has a 1:4 student population ratio (De Lotto et al., 2014). Even though the ratio is lower than other realities, Bologna has made a name for itself as one of the most important university cities in Europe. Such relationship, however, is often conflictual. In particular, in the historic center of the city, the estate portfolio of the university is vast, and this generates revenues not only for the institutions, but also to commercial activities and landlords as gentrification fast advanced in the city (Bazzoli, 2017; De Lotto et al., 2014). As early as the 1800s, the University of Bologna attempted some type of urban diffusion through the spreading of faculties across the city. This in turn has put the institution towards a regional scale thanks to the reordering of faculties in the city and the acquisition of new sites through the Piano Capellini of 1888 (De Lotto et al., 2014). Finally, in the 1960s, the multicampus vocation of the institution emerged so to both expand and ramify in the region as well decongesting the city center, where early conflicts between students and population started to arise (De Lotto et al., 2014). Interestingly, the university, which is seen as a catalyst of conflicts, is also the authority deputed to the requalification of peripheral areas. Indeed, the university, which holds an undeniable cultural capital in the city, partners with privates and the municipality for urban regeneration strategies. Here, it attempts to empty out the city center of students by relocating functions and people in the periphery. Those, in turn, will be the facilitator of a culture-led regeneration of peripheral spaces. It follows a new presence of the university in other cities of the Emilia Romagna Region in the cities of Cesena, Ravenna, Forlì and Rimini, a clear example of decentralized university (De Lotto et al., 2014). To sum up, the university of Bologna has had a crucial role in the expansion and redevelopment of the city since its early days. Still, such assisted city development from the institutions has met a certain resistance from the population, who sees students both as an economic force as well as a gentrification actor working against the local community.

It is also relevant to look at the case of Padua. The university was first established in 1222 and just like the prior examples the university developed alongside the city itself, yet compared to the other examples, here links between university and cities development are stronger and more formal. In order, as of 2021 the city counts around 209.420 inhabitants and a total of 63.031 students according to the Italian Ministry of University and Research. The history of Padua ties itself with that of Bologna. Indeed, a group of students at the University of Bologna moved in 1222 to Padua to form a new educational institution. We could thus say that Padua is the first ever satellite university (Stellin and Picchiolutto, 2007). From that point on, the academia was formally recognized by the local state of that time in as much as it was the latter to pay the salary to professors and provide beds for students (Stellin and Picchiolutto, 2007). Already in the 13th century the university was a vital part of city administration. Ties went unchanged during the Venetian ruling of Padua till the end of the Venetian Republic in 1797. At that time, Padua was the only academic hub of the Serenissima, so the city begun its ascension as an early attempt of regionalized institution (Stellin and Picchiolutto, 2007). This has been defined as the early developmental phase of the university, from its foundation to the 1900, characterized by the re-use of historical building in the city center for academic use. In the second phase, the university acted as a real estate developer through the construction of brand new “university neighborhoods” (De Lotto et al., 2014). The post-war period lends itself to great expansion. Restoration of ancient buildings continues in as much as the area being labeled as the quatrefoil, which comes to signify the four areas of distinct university urban redevelopment, that of humanities, medicine and scientific faculties and administrative offices (Stellin and Picchiolutto, 2007). To this day, the University of Padua counts plenty of estates in the city center as well as numerous areas in neighboring small towns where the new faculties of agrarian sciences and veterinary medicine are established, much like the prototypical U.S. campus design (Stellin and Picchiolutto, 2007). Nonetheless, the debate over a potential expansion is widely debated among the city public. Indeed, socially speaking, a partial student segregation has emerged. Bourgeoise students de facto represent much of the student population living in the city center due to better services and living conditions, informally impeding housing, and service access to other student categories (Stellin and Picchiolutto, 2007).

Finally, the last city to be presented in this introductory discourse is Urbino. The university is slightly younger than the previous counterparts, being founded in 1506. Similarly, the city of Urbino is much smaller, counting less inhabitants as well as the university hosting less students. Yet, Urbino represents an interesting case study given the presence of several student colleges designed by one of the most illustrious urban planners of Italy, Giancarlo De Carlo. Today, college housing contraposes the more renowned option of *fourisede* (students moving to a different city to pursue high education studies) renting apartments or rooms, often shared, in the private market. The choice of colleges rather than apartments varies from case to case. However, it is noteworthy to point out that colleges offer greater outputs. Indeed, De Carlo, who planned the College of Urbino as well as the General Regulatory Plan of Urbino, thought that colleges, and universities more in general, had to be a cohesive part of the urban landscape, both architectonically and socially (Bazzoli & Torrasi, 2017). Thus, when planning for the colleges of Urbino, De Carlo strived for integrity and participation of the residences in the city's urbanity. Colleges represent a peculiar case of living and use of space. They are fluid, continuously changing from private to public (Bazzoli & Torrasi, 2017). This alternation of spaces makes possible a continuous rearrangement of social practices from one hall to the next, creating a complex set of social relations (Bazzoli & Torrasi, 2017). The college amplifies the relation of city and university, too. Indeed, it offers new grounds for exchange of social and economic interactions between the two institutions as well as the actors pertaining to them. Colleges encapsulate living in the most communitarian way possible. They are understood as a place of growth and possibilities by students with different origins, creating groups with their own habits, spatial practices, and social capital. Moreover, the relation between college students and citizens is different in colleges compared to those living in private apartments (Bazzoli & Torrasi, 2017). In the case of Urbino, it was found out that, students felt resistance from citizens. Consequently, students got pushed inwardly within the walls of the college rather than expanding their relations to other city users outside the university boundaries (Bazzoli & Torrasi, 2017).

To conclude, the chapter aimed at providing a wide overview of the university and city debate. The subject matter focused mainly on small and medium cities since here is where socioeconomic ties are more evident and conflictual relations also prevail. The stark student to total population ratio shows how universities are a relevant actor, not only morphologically but also demographically. Opportunities as well as disparities were evident in all four Italian cases included in the discussion. Some of these themes, such as university development, academia entrepreneurship and knowledge transfers as well as university branding and studentification of spaces will be all discussed further in the following chapters to build an extensive literature that will be tested in the case study of this thesis.

The research question will be dealt through different perspectives. The thesis will first look at the core of universities. It aims to understand what agenda institutions are promoting nowadays, tracing the shift from an isolated institution in the urban arena to an active player in re-defining the space of urban activities. Since the spatial issue is of greatest importance here, different architectural ideal types of campuses will be analyzed broadly. Indeed, according to Magdaniel (2013), different typologies of built environment arise. Not only spatial location determines relations with the urban surroundings, but the architecture of universities spaces become a portfolio, and universities take the role of real estate agents. This ties with a new approach of university management defined as third mission. Universities have rebranded themselves as social actors. However, the "social activism" of university is met by another powerful tool, university entrepreneurship. It is a new attitude which entails academia institutions to become proactive economic actor in the urban arena (Lazzeroni, 2004). Finally, the thesis will draw on the studentification debate and see how the student population, alongside universities, redefine formal and informal social practices and use of spaces as well as altering urban hierarchies.

## 2) Methodology

The objective of this chapter is to describe the methodologies applied in the thesis. First, two techniques were predominantly used to carry the research in this work; direct observation and semi-structured interviews. Hence, the research was conducted predominantly through a qualitative lens. Although quantitative data was also taken into consideration from different external sources to better understand the phenomenon unfolding in Pavia, the early stages of the research for this thesis revealed how prioritizing a qualitative approach would have landed itself to a more precise and detailed understanding how the life of the student community unfolds in space. Consequently, the two main approaches, that of observing and interviewing became the leading activities to answer the research question of this thesis. Finally, the chapter will end on a short literature review of the academic material utilized to build a constructive argument on the university and city relationship from different angles.

Interview typology were predominantly two, semi structured one-to-one interview as well as focus groups. In order, one-to-one interviews were carried out with three professors at the University of Pavia; one from the Department of Political Science and one urban planning professor from the Department of Civil Engineer and Architecture. Moreover, other Italian academics were interviewed for the sake of this project, namely a full-time professor and a post-doc researcher from the University of Pisa and the University La Normale of Pisa as well as a post-doc researcher from the University of Urbino Carlo Bo, all pertinent to the theme of higher education institution studies. Also, two city councilors from the municipality of Pavia were contacted and interviewed. The University of Pavia administration was also contacted, resulting in a one-to-one interview with the current head of the Research and Third Mission Department of the university. Bar owners in the city center were also met and interviewed in person. Finally, the manager of the website for the colleges of Pavia was also interviewed. All interviewees gave their consent to the interview as well as the use of their first name, age, and role.

In addition, a part of student community was interviewed too. Here, focus groups of three to five people were carried out alongside one-to-one interviews. The choice of focus group interview was utilized only for students living in colleges, with few singular interviews. Instead, for students living in rented apartments as well as student commuters and student members of student unions one-to-one interviews were considered. The reason for such differentiation was practical as well as social. In practical terms, focus groups helped in reaching an adequate number of respondents so to have the more holistic understanding of student life in Pavia as possible. Moreover, as colleges are a social place as well as a living choice, it was important to have college member interviewed together so to have a broader narration for each college life.

In depth, one-to-one interviews took a semi-structured format. The length of all interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour. Interviewees were able to speak openly and without interruptions and leaving room for dispersion between topics. Interviews had two standardized questions to prevent biases and diversions in the answers. The three standard questions referred to role of the respondent as well as a question in which each interviewee was asked to define the features of the university city in Italy. Then questions varied according to the person interviewed but always framed within the matter of the research project. Questions regarded, university life and research contextualized to the University of Pavia. Next, question referred more generally to the life in the city and town and gown relations. Then the focus shifted to college and private housing, with questions related to socialization patterns, habits, and affordability. Finally, to students was also asked a reflection on their university life during the pandemic, especially regarding activities and spaces. Finally, the questions also related to nightlife and social alcoholism.

The methodological process is commonly defined as an interpretative method, destined to favor the understanding of phenomena in a comprehensive way. Interpretive methodology centers around analytically disclosing the “meaning-making practices of human subjects (the why, how, or by what means people do what they do)”. (Labaree, 2018). Furthermore, the interpretative method allows the researcher to make connections about the phenomena under investigation while also linking causes and outcomes from the analysis of the interviews. The main objective of interviews was to understand the different views on the topic of campus life, town and gown relations and university living and its practices inside and outside universities. Also, the answers reported by the interviewees were contrasted by the theories mentioned in the literature chapters. Last, interviews provided an opportunity to compare responses with the observations made in person during field visits. By comparing the two, it was possible to evince different practices and understandings.

While professors, city councilors and university staff were contacted via email, for students two sampling techniques were applied. A first skimming took place via social media channels, through which students were contacted and asked for interviews. Once the first interviews took place, a snowball sampling method was employed. Snowball sampling is defined as an initial group is asked to suggest other individuals for research purposes, in this case interviews. Thus, the pool of participants was generated by students themselves. A total of 20 one-to-one interviews took place in addition to 6 focus groups took place in the student residences of Pavia, namely the Collegio Griziotti (need-based and mixed gender), Collegio Nuovo (merit-based and female gender), Collegio Maino (need-based and mixed gender), Collegio Valla (need based and mixed gender), Collegio Cairoli (merit-based and male gender), and Collegio Ghisleri (merit-based and mixed gender). Moreover, student from the Collegio Golgi (need-based and mixed gender), Collegio Plinio Fraccaro (need-based and male gender), Collegio Cardano (need-based and mixed gender), Collegio Santa Caterina da Siena (merit-based and female gender), and Collegio Alessandro Volta (need-based and mixed gender). Focus groups took place in presence at colleges, while interviews were both online via Google Meet and in presence. Finally, for students who are member of student unions, contacts were taken via the official social media page of the student union and administrators shared the contact of the interviewees. Two interviews took place, with the student union UDU – Unione Degli Universitari and one with Azione Universitaria. Although contacted, the union Ateneo Studenti never replied to the invitation to participate in an interview.

Following interviews, on field observation took place for a year long, from June 2021 to June 2022. Observations took place both in daytime and nighttime. Field visits occurred inside universities, participation in two bachelor classes, colleges - both alone and with by student residents – bars, plazas and at special events. In order, spaces surveyed comprehended university open spaces and plazas in both the city center campus and the Cravino complex, attending classes in the city center campus, observation in all the colleges of the interviews in both communal areas and visit to private rooms. Also, time was spent at the main streets of Pavia, such as Piazza della Vittoria and Corso Strada Nuova, where students gather to drink and the shores of the Ticino River. In addition, participation at social events such as college talks, varsity sport events, and a party hosted by the student union UDU which took place in the main square inside the city center campus over the first week of June. Three key elements received major attention during in site observations: social interactions, daytime, and nighttime life in the city and inside colleges, and activities in different spaces. Observation was crucial to ascertain the habits and practices of each person, student but also groupings of students in their daily life. It was important to understand their living condition in the university city and confronting it Bourdieu (1984), Smith (2005) Watis (2013) and Chatterton (1999) insights.

The literature (Gold, 1958) distinguishes four different roles the observer can opt to to accomplish any observatory task. The division regards primarily the modes in which participation occurs. Different occasions as well as different research assignment may require one typology over the other. The Complete Participant approach by Gold (1958) defines full interaction between the observed and the observer. Namely, the appro-

the most distanced of those four. In between lies the Participant as Observer and the Observer as Participant. This means full first-person engagement. This gives the researcher complete access to the events, the attendants and the activities carried out via a direct inspection. Still, this poses an ethical and psychological limit. Broadly speaking, ought the researcher qualify himself as such while participating actively in the activities, this may cause changes in behaviors from other participants, thus changing completely their approach. Complete Participant requires full trust between the researcher and the actors observed (Gold, 1958). The Complete Participant approach was chosen in field visits in bars, where owners favored the interaction between the researcher and the attendees and during college varsity games when invited by college residents themselves. Such events were important to estimate social capital rates, practices, and spatial norms among students according to Wattis (2013).

Second, the Participant as Observer takes on a more formal role and does not fully blend in the environment as its Complete Participant counterpart does. Although a relationship with the participants is developed, the researcher does not actively participate in the events in question. It was for instance the case during visits in the colleges invited by college students themselves. We may define the field work as reporting a day in the life of a college students and its peers. Thus, a relationship with the actors is developed over time, but observation rather than participation remains the focal point of the field work (Gold, 1958).

The Complete Observer was also utilized. For instance, it was used during campus visits, class, and events attendances. Here, social interactions with locals are removed. The researcher is a complete stranger to others, blending in the crowd without being noticed. They do not know that they are being observed, and as such they are the observer own's informant (Gold, 1958). In the cases of participating in classes upon request from the class professor, the partaking of the teaching by an external figure was not disclosed so to not alter class structure. It was also the case for certain college visits which took place without the escorting of students.

In conclusion, limitations and ethics must be accounted during interviews and direct observation. First, observation must be as neutral as possible to avoid any personal bias regarding events, actors and phenomena observed. Similarly, the researcher can commit errors during interviews by posing the wrong questions. Those question could contain favoritisms for a certain party, or make the interviewee respond in the way the researcher wants to because of pressure and fear. Further, the answers could be rushed or incomplete. Hence, a particular emphasis was given to neutrality and peaceful context in order so to not make the interviewee uncomfortable while responding. The thoughts of the interviewees are the focus of the interview s, not the opinion of the researcher. Last, to all interviewees were explained the methodology of the interview as well as the reasons of such question and the general scope of the thesis. The researcher identified himself as a master's degree student from Polytechnic of Milan undergoing research for his final thesis. Moreover, all participants were asked to give full consent to the publication of the material, quotes and extracts from the interview.

To test the case study in Pavia, the thesis has also taken account a large literature body referring to the theme of higher education studies, urban design, and student sociology. In details, the thesis aims to unveil a broader set of practices happening in the context of the University of Pavia. Indeed, instead of focusing onto one aspect of university life, the work aspires to cover as much ground as possible so to provide to the reader a complete understanding of the spatial condition in the Italian city campus. As such, the literature analyzed will begin with a discussion over the different architectural types of universities. It is indeed crucial to understand how different design configurations may influence fruition, practices and habits in university buildings. Three scales are considered here. First, Magdnaniel (2013) understands universities as free-standing buildings aside from the urban environment. In this the scale is that of the university facilities and socio-spatial relations are seen predominantly from the inside. Secondly, the university is also understood at the neighborhood and city level. Two theories here apply, whether the university is a *city within the city* or it carries any relation to the urban surroundings.

Moreover, the university is herein reviewed as an economic and political actor. In this, it will be tested how do university act in the economic arena of the city. Indeed, it is here understood that universities compete over resources. They act as economic actors as they utilized different branding strategies for a competitive advantage. Such strategies will be evaluated below. Also, university life will have a chapter of itself where different urban phenomena will be illustrated under a high education institution lens. For example, space appropriation and different urban conditions such as studentification will be analyzed. Different examples will be brought up by several European nations such as England (Smith, 2005, Chatterton, 1998, 1999, 2000) and from the Erasmus question in Lisbon (Calvo et al., 2017). Student sociospatial practices will be confronted with both Bourdieu (1984) concept of habitus and that of creative class by Florida (2004). In fact, it will be hypothesized whether high education students are a soon-to-be-creative class.

Economic relations are here understood to stem from different scales and approaches. Indeed, students are not the only ones to generate capital. The research world has been keen to do so. From reviewing the consequences to the Bay-Doyle Act to the three archetypes of engaged university by Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth (2018). The university can generate spill overs and produce growth and investments for the region, but it can also be a sleeping giant ignoring the local economy or even surpassing it to move up to a larger economic scale.

Finally, the thesis will also utilize non-academic material to compose the bigger picture in Pavia. As such, different multimedia sources will be used such as social media posts from Instagram profiles as well as pictures taken during site visits. Furthermore, newspaper articles will be utilized to better delineate humors, beliefs, and conflicts in the public life of the city of Pavia.

### **3) The university and city bond.**

#### **3.a) Tracing the role of universities in the development of urbanities in Europe. The emergence of small towns for large institutions**

Historically, universities complied to a partially different role from that of today. Conservation and promulgation were the primary role while research was left to private entrepreneurs in Europe. Steadily, though, universities became the leading space for research in the 20th century. From that, universities emerged as the place of discoveries, but also of jointly research with private R&D corporate groups. The first move in that direction was made in the U.S via the Bayh-Dole Act in 1980, signaling the first step towards a more jointed role of universities and the private sector. Fast forward today, universities have taken on an even bigger role by implementing what is commonly referred to as “third mission”, meaning all those activities carried out by universities which transfer academia knowledge to different actors such as industries, public administrations, and citizens, which ultimately impact the socio-economy structures of society (Martinotti, 2010). This concurred to an expansion of funding, often private, for the so-called big science and a shift from basic to applied research, ultimately leading universities to not produce knowledge but answers to societal needs (Martinotti, 2010). As a result, European universities repositioned themselves in the urban panorama as accelerators and producers of urban growth also deriving from a stronger push from the European Union via policies such as the “Science2Society” program which stresses interaction between the academic world and societies (Martinotti, 2010). This chapter explains the changes that occurred in the academia world.

First, the shift in role of universities in society will be analyzed as well as how such change is being perceived by public administrations in Italy. Moreover, it will also provide a relative example from the city of Chicago and its high education institution’s role in re-organizing urban spaces. From there, a section will follow underpinning the different typologies of university campuses. It is of crucial relevance since it will be discussed how different types of urban designs impact socio-spatial relationships across different scales. Once assessed the physical facets of the matter, the thesis will delve into the relational. The new consumer role of the universities and the student-life attitude will be analyzed. Last, the paper will also look at the university in more communicative terms. In fact, the concept of third mission will be overviewed to understand how universities interact with society as well as their capacity to self-brand and incorporate mission statements able to reach out their target groups. Evidence from the Welsh high education system will be exemplified.



### **3.b) 20th century and the shift from ivory tower to mass institutions**

Universities nowadays might very well be considered as the new center poles for territorial development and economic cohesiveness thanks to their new role in society. From the established concept of universities as ivory towers, silent spaces of high culture detached from societies, a shift as occurred in the last decades. Now, universities permeated societies, partnering with private enterprises and public actors working across different scales and objectives. In short, universities have become new centralities in the urban arena of economic development and urban growth (Fedeli, 2010). In Milan especially, such socio-morphological changes have been carried by academic institutions such as the Polytechnic of Milan in the north-western area of Bovisa as well as Bicocca university in the homonym neighborhood. Consequently, an important node to be unpacked is how do universities tie themselves to a particular neighborhood or even the entire city in instances of medium-to-small size cities. Such relationship, though, goes beyond economic partnership, and it unveils new relational, housing and consumer practices (Fedeli, 2010). However, what Fedeli (2010) notices is that such relationship is more a matter of coexistence rather than signals of prolific cohabitation. On these terms, it is of crucial relevance a new trend of decentralizing rather than clustering knowledge in space. The opening up of new poles and new different spaces for different departments and sectorial knowledges spread across the city gives new meanings to localities from day to night. These examples show how crucial and impactful has become the role of universities in cities. Promoters, sometimes purposefully and other times indirectly, of new internal geographies in pre-existing, codified spaces (Fedeli, 2010).

Indeed, Balducci (2010) denotes how local public administrations in Italy have yet to fully address the issues but also the potentialities stemming from this academia expansion. The latter is seen as problematic and bearing unmanageable questions over public transportation, housing, and communitarian wellbeing. Cities struggle to catch universities' outflows, resulting in a dispersion of resources and opportunities. Considering this, when cohesiveness between university and city happens, four typologies of scholarship developments take place (Boyer, 1990). First, the most classical type of scholarship is that of "discovery". It refers to basic research in which knowledge is considered a universal patrimony. Secondly, the scholarship of "integration" goes beyond field limits to embrace different studies to provide a holistic understanding of phenomena in all their aspects. Third, the scholarship of "teaching" concerns the ways in which knowledge can be passed down. Finally, the last scholarship is that of "application". Here, knowledge produced within the academia is externalized to societal matters (Boyer, 1990). This latter scholarship is the one that most embraces the concept of third mission. The city would thus become the arena of universities, where practices can be tested and taken further (Balducci, 2010).

To understand the know-how and more in the general relationships diffused spatially from universities to the surrounding environment, great emphasis should be pointed to the physical features of university spaces, especially campuses. In fact, universities have become a huge real estate player. Thanks to more favorable neoliberal policies, institutions have been able to buy and plan plots of land and consequently relocate certain departments. As a result, universities are today one of the biggest land and building owner of our cities. Perry et al. (2009) argue that two distinct university architectural typology have arisen in the urban planning debate. First, university building as educational anchor, defining cluster of long-standing university building in a specific area of the city. Second and more recent, academic corridors reflect a mix of buildings from different private and public institutions. In analyzing the Chicago area, it was found out that the university was the primary developer of new areas. However, it was the political and entrepreneurial vision and leadership of the city's mayor to make the project possible, "while the university was purchasing the land, the city was substantially driving the process through regulations, eminent domain, and its own prior ownership of land parcels." (Perry et al., 2009, p.3) Moreover, the urban corridors drove up university expansion outward from the usual downtown urban development. Nevertheless, such practice did not go unnoticed. Many activist groups, it was reported,

claimed that the new corridors came at the expenses of vernacular buildings and fostering gentrification practices disagreeing with the claim of improving livability advertised by the city planning department and the University of Chicago (Perry et al., 2009). To conclude, in order effectively advance in new areas of the city, university entrepreneurship should meet four criteria: I) leadership, as in the case of Chicago the city council was fundamental to enact the new plan; II) resources, without them the feasibility of the plan is at stake; III) organization, a plan must be cohesive; and last IV) expertise, as the collective forces of various expert, from management to urban planning is needed for the reorganization of the land around a new university estate (Perry et al., 2009). University, government, and communities all played a role in the success of the expansion plan in Chicago. Institutional relationships are keys for universities to successfully install themselves in new areas of the cities and mitigate conflicts related to gentrification and land grabbing claims. Finally, relocation brings its own downside to the side-economies of universities. Relocation decreases commercial demands. In particular, business targeting students see a share of their target group disappear as certain department move elsewhere (Breda-Vazquez, Conceição and Alves, 2008). Higher education institutions are a deciding factor in the success or failure of certain business activities.

### **3.c) The university campus. Different urban designs for different city-university interactions**

As interdisciplinary as this thesis aims to be, it is necessary to look not only at the aspatial and relational facets of the university and city bond, but also test the spatial consequences that a certain type of urban planning tactic can have onto the relational. Indeed, a special focus has been devoted recently, especially in the U.S. (Perry et al., 2009) and Dutch (Magdaniel, 2016; Heijer, 2012; Hoger, 2007; Van den Berg and Russo, 2003) schools of urban planning to the urban design of campuses. This stream of research focuses on the consequences of the different typologies of campus architecture. Indeed, the main point stemming from such analysis is that varying typologies of campuses alternate different typologies of economic relations with the city, and between the academia community (students, professors, researchers, and boards) to the rest of the city population. This leads to a subsequent question. If the university is to be considered a real estate agent of the city, what kind of governance and policies host cities put in place to foster opportunities and cooperation? In the case of Italy, Balducci (2010) stated how local administrations have only recently been keen to partnering with universities. Moreover, these are more isolated cases on specific projects, and Milan with its many universities has been a driving force in this aspect (Fedeli, 2010). However, this does not refrain us from looking elsewhere, where such dynamics are commonplace.

Nowadays, the changing role of universities to suppliers of creatives, professionals, experts, and workers of the tertiary sector lend universities to new areas of cities, such as tech parks and business districts. Moreover, the new lifestyle and consumption habits of students and young members of the academia repositioned universities towards the commercial and leisure districts as well. As a result, university campus management started to acknowledge that to manage a campus was not about preserving the architectural integrity of university facilities, but it now meant expanding and planning for a new segment of needs that the change of lifestyles brought along. It follows that the new urban expansion of higher education institutions established a re-alignment of urban scale and magnitude of facilities. Consequently, the increasing campus size is understood as a real state object between two scales (Magdaniel, 2013). First, the campus is a real estate portfolio comprising different building typologies. Secondly, because of such vastness of architectural objects, the campus becomes a recognizable area of the city, too (Magdaniel, 2013). This carries planning and political consequences. The university campus is now classified as an administrative unit of the city. It undergoes a process of mapping and bordering. The area becomes incorporated into political and administrative subdivisions. People get appointed to the management of the area. Finally, the “university district” is formalized, and the management of spaces slips away from the hands of administration to get into those of municipalities. An evident exemplification of that is the City of Milan. The new PGT (Plan for the Government of the Territory) issued by the municipality divided the city into 88 NIL (Nuclei of Local Identity), formalizing and defining entire neighborhoods. Of those 88 areas, Città Studi, the university district comprising the Leonardo campus of the Polyethnic of Milan and some facilities of the University of Milan, now formally falls under the Municipio 3 (Comune di Milano, n.d.). From such formalization, policies of urban regeneration can be enacted. The university area is thus considered, similarly to a business district, as an area of intensive economic development. On the one side, urban regeneration programs stress better spaces and urban design of areas, improving living. On the other side, such improvement threatens the most marginal residents as studentification, and gentrification could fast approach.

Now, as we mentioned, the design of buildings plays a role into what kind of interactions can take place. Hoger (2007) identifies four typologies of university campuses. Of those, two are the most common to be in cities or their immediate surroundings. One is the inner-city campus and the other the green field campus. Moreover, according to (Heijer (2008) these two campus designs articulate into three distinct forms. The greenfield campus is separated from the city, as a stand-alone object. Conversely, the inner-city campus can either take shape as a gated (not necessarily physically) community area. In other words, it is a highly intellectual and highly specialized enclave within the city. Conversely, the inner-city campus may also be an integrated

unit of objects in the city (Heijer, 2008). Moreover, the latter enjoys a more informal relationship with the surroundings (Van den Berg et al., 2008). On the other hand, the gated campus and the greenfield campus establish generally more formal socio-spatial relationships with the rest of the city (Van den Berg et al., 2008).

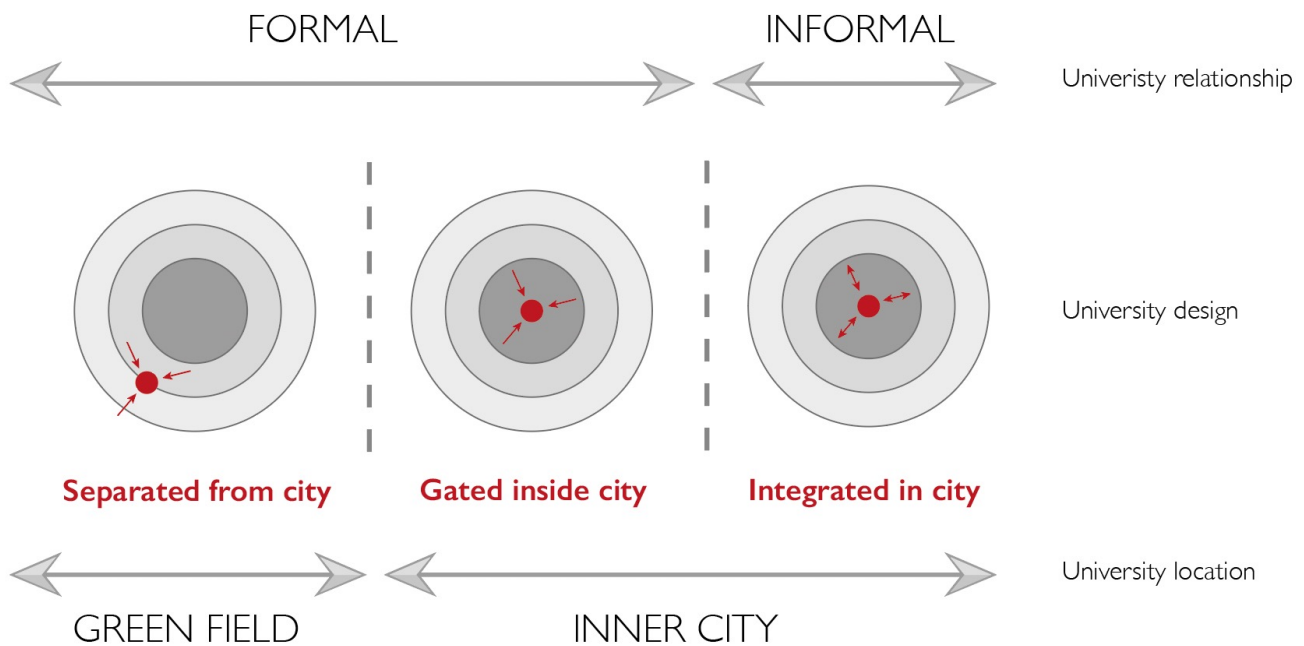


Table 1. Different typologies of campuses and their socio relation with the city (author own elaboration from Magdaniel, 2013).

Last, relations are analyzed also on different scale levels. It is indeed true that universities may bear different relations at different scales, changing degrees (from formal to informal and vice versa) but also in types. In fact, at the neighborhood level, three types of functions appear crucial. Here, the university is perceived as a city within the city encompassing a symbiosis with the surrounding, having an agency of its own also in the real estate local market (Magdaniel, 2013). From this, nodes of collaboration and networks spun from the neighborhood to reach the bigger district scale. Finally, universities can top to the entire administrative area of the city improving growth schemes and the employability capacity of the city (Magdaniel, 2013). This leads to the next section of this work, where such relationships will be considered through a consumer-based perspective.

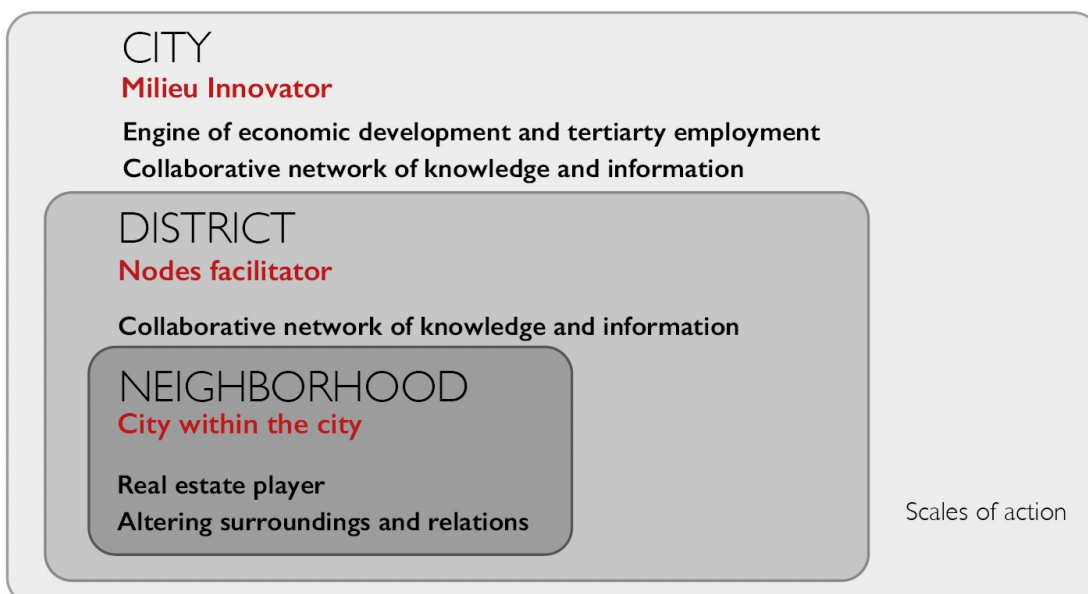


Table 2. Scale of actions of higher education institutions (author own elaboration from Magdaniel, 2013).

### **3.d) The university becomes part of city consumption (or the consumption of the city).**

Throughout the narration of this thesis, we saw how the university enlarged its scope and relevance over city matters. Indeed, as part of their new role, universities have positioned themselves both locally and internationally as promoters of city growth, physically encompassing the boundaries of college campuses to resonate city-wide through an intangible spill-over effect (Magdaniel, 2013). Further, by attracting investments through knowledge workers, universities have engineered a strategy of reshaping socio-cultural habits in cities through university hubs. The university interacts with the city and vice versa, exchanging capital, knowledge, people, and skills. Managing the academia nowadays has become a matter of stakeholders, investments, and growth rather than mere research (Magdaniel, 2013). Students, who have now become consumers are leading universities into a market competition in offering the best “student-life” and with that an all-new set of amenities based on consumer demand. By expanding, building, and buying infrastructures, universities imply socio-spatial changes at the neighborhood/district scale. Universities’ urge of enlarging their estates in a competition for who can offer the best campus-life in between leisure and academia does, as a domino effect, reshape the areas surrounding campuses, starting a process of physical and ideological rebranding of the university district. Nevertheless, Magdaniel (2013) notes how urban development through university growth may become detrimental as it is a very sectorial policy, with pre-determined users in mind and where private interests avail common good resulting in a struggle between the users and the non-users of university spaces.

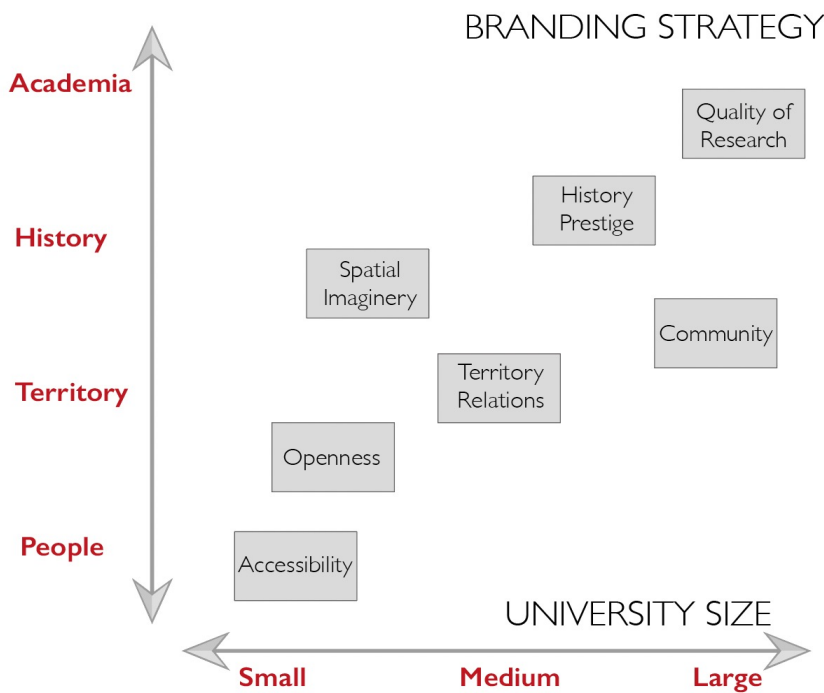
As a result, some cities in Italy have taken over the role of “città universitaria” or “university”. University is here referred as a label stemming from different factors. First, the university has a long standing and established tradition in the city. Physically, its buildings and campuses cover an abundant portion of the city, both in the historic center and sometimes also in peripheral areas. The student population is vast and acknowledged as a weighting part of the city demographics, economy, and social life although not always peacefully. Moreover, economically speaking, the university is one of the main employers while also students provide earnings for the economic activities of the city. This reveals true for many midsize Italian cities such as Bologna, Urbino, Pavia, Pisa, Perugia, and Padova (Savino, n.d.). Often times, such labeling becomes brand in an effort to rejuvenate and attract people and investments into the city. University life becomes the “vocation” of such cities, Savino (n.d., pp.16). However, the university unique positioning can overwhelmingly obscure other functions and sectors of the city, transforming the host city in a high specialized area. The city starts to live off the academia brand (Savino, n.d.). As a result, urban regeneration schemes and cultural policies pass through the local university, which becomes the main sponsor and brand ambassador of initiatives. Moreover, the higher the prestige of the academic body or of the institution itself, higher is their role and relevance in determining activities.

Thus, De Carlo (1965) stressed how the university ought not to be an alienated entity in the urban arena. Nevertheless, integration is critical. In the planning context, a poorly planned insertion of university related facilities into the city layers could create an urban crack, meaning an unbalancing of spaces, those of students and those of other city users when certain integrative strategies are not met by the willingness of the local population. Of course, this is not to say that all attempts have been poorly planned or doomed to failure from the start. Sometimes, simply the actors involved are not keen to cooperation, which lies outside of universities or city administration intents, as reported in a previous thesis of mine about the neighborhood of San Lorenzo, Rome (Guerzoni, 2019). However, more studies are needed which specifically address, in practical terms, how Italian universities have the potential to turn proximal spaces into spaces of university consumption and use. This is needed for various reasons. First, it is important to understand how universities can change the urban landscape for the good. Second, learn from this to prepare better policies that can integrate the campus life into the daily life of all city users, without creating spatial voids and create equal opportunities of use of all public urban spaces. Finally, acknowledge ones and for all the increasing weight of universities in the urban arena and consequently plan sustainable solutions for all members of the civil society.

### **3.e) Third mission, social statements, and branding: a second life for universities**

Over the last decades, universities have seen growing their importance in the political arena of cities and nations. If this is so, however, is not only due to exogenous factors, but rather endogenous. What will follow is a comprehensive review of the current literature on university's third mission; how they publicly brand and position themselves. We already stated that the role of universities has changed, but we have yet to analyze how such change materialized. Third mission is the consequent effect of it. Broadly speaking, third mission strategies reflect the commitment that high education institutions have to society at large (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020). Furthermore, third mission roles comprehend activities such as socioeconomic development of the local context, cultural promotion, welfare, and knowledge transfer from the academia to firms. However, no clear definition has yet to be defined and agreed on by the literature, which comes to demonstrate how this is still a blurry area of study also given the novelty of this approach undertaken by institutions. Though, what is clear are the actors involved. Formally, it is a matter of university boards, local administrations, firms and entrepreneurs, and sometimes social actors, who all engage actively in the third mission of universities (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020). The involvement of new actors and path of actions signal the final step towards the abandonment of the universities as ivory towers towards a more interactive role with society (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020). Moreover, if we were to trace back the reason for such change, one aspect stands above the others. The decreasing of resources allocated by national and regional governments to institutions led; on the one hand, to universities "coming out" publicly to society in search of grants and funds, and, on the other hand, to firms and stakeholders looking to get into the academia world to acquire human, labor and knowledge capital in exchange of financial capital (Compagnucci and Spigarelli, 2020). Nonetheless, this explanation remains rooted in the economics of universities, which leaves unaccounted other types of third mission activities that leans towards more social themes crucial to contemporary societies. As such, Schoen et al. (2006) furthered the debated by delineating eight possible areas of third mission activities. Four stems from an economic dimension, namely academic spinoffs, human resources, firm relationship, and intellectual property. In addition, contracts with public bodies, social life, cultural life, and science divulgence make up for the societal dimension of third mission activities (Schoen et al. 2006). Regardless of the activity undertaken, third mission policies act upon the improvement of society through a direct involvement of the academia world in the everyday society (Trencher et al., 2014).

To better understand the reasons and strategies that universities employ in adopting an outward behavior towards society, mission statements must be studied. Just like companies, universities have their public relation departments which generally take care of formulating the mission statement. A sound statement, generally, is helpful in attracting interests (from authorities, firms, and students) and thus obtain a competitive advantage over other institutions. The latter is fundamental. In the capitalist society of today, competition over resources is crucial in the high education world, too. Universities compete over who can get the best partnerships, participate in the most impactful projects, and increase their student pool (nationally and internationally). Moreover, mission statements work internally to the institution to distinguish what activities have an internal or external purpose and to provide guidance to the faculty (Morphew and Hartley, 2006). Therefore, formulating a sound mission statement drives institutions to look inwardly to their history, academic success, educational philosophy, uniqueness, and strengths as well as outwardly projecting a vision for their future which includes academic excellence, enduring presence, and connection with the territory (Camelia and Dorel, 2013). The recalling theme of history creates a spatial imaginary in the minds of students. Indeed, historic buildings provide a soft power tool for universities to transmit a symbolic and prestigious meaning of the institutions as well as the surrounding area to students, investors, and stakeholders (Breda-Vazquez, Conceição and Alves, 2008).



On this last point, James and Huisman (2009) analyzed different mission statements from several universities in Wales to unveil what kind of affinity they had with local policies and markets and understand if they concretely supported regional growth. Assumed that markets, funding, and governmental policy shape universities' mission statements, what emerges from the research is that higher education institutions preferred to indicate general intents instead of emphasizing precising actions in their statements (James and Huisman, 2006).

Table 3. Grouping branding strategies by institution size (author own elaboration from James and Huisman, 2006; Camelia and Dorel, 2013).

Finally, university branding is the last strategy here discussed that higher education institution employ in society. First, it must be understood that place branding is not something new. Cities have often relied on spatial branding to gain competitive advantages over other cities. A vast literature exists on city branding and city legacy, especially for tourism and planning for mega-events in both the Global North and Global South and their consequences (Chen and Spaans, 2009, Danna, 2017, Nobre, 2017, Short, 2008). The concept of city branding stems directly from branding and marketing strategies from companies. The premise is simple, citizens understand cities in the same way consumers understand brands and firms (Ashworth and Kavartzis, 2008). Consequently, cities shape their image to be more attractive to citizens and tourists in as much as brands search for a recognizable "brand identity." Therefore, cities establish their fluid brand images by following global trends and promote a place-related self-identity (Ashworth and Kavartzis, 2008). Anholt (2007) set a City Brand Index to evaluate the effectiveness of city branding policies. Six components dictate the score of cities. In order, "Presence" evaluate the international status of a city. Second, "Place" entails the aesthetic qualities of the city such as the architectural landscape and urban design. Then, "Potential" and "Pulse" represents the potential value embedded in a city and the vitality of it, respectively. Finally, "Prerequisite" looks at basic services, amenities, and cost of living to assert the livability of a place (Anholt, 2007). Thus, brand elements aim to project an image to the citizens and visitors (Ashworth and Kavartzis, 2008). It is ultimately an attempt to instill a certain codified lifestyle and habits in line with the city administration's own vision and policies.

Expanding on the concept of city branding, universities also applied certain branding strategies. This is so since, just like for cities, a powerful image attracts people, investors, and future students. Universities employ such strategies to stress their history of excellence, openness, and policies to reflect a sharable imaginary (Javani, 2016). Nowadays, students opt to choose one institution over another not only based on academia, but also on a set of soft intangibles not specifically related to their future studies but to the life they expect to live. Given that students are a price-sensitive and activity-sensitive demographic, to package a wholistic image which comprehends what is not necessarily academic is crucial (Gray et al., 2003). At the end, students will move away from home and total expenses as well as leisure are a make-or-break factor.

Finally, Rizzo and Scaccheri (2006) analyzed the planning process leading to strategical place branding policies in Italy. The planning activity is a process through which resources are balanced with objectives by exploiting opportunities (Rizzo and Scaccheri, 2006). Consequently, the planning process also require a new local governance to emerge in which all local actors can participate so to result in an overall competitive advantage over investment flows and generating capacities. Lastly, a mission must be stated. Consequently, we can identify four guidelines dictating the identification process though which Italian institutions generally operate; 1) Understanding the peculiarities of the territory 2) Understanding the main sector to be promoted 3) Understanding the profile of the potential user 4) Acknowledging the territorial components to be valuable to potential users (Rizzo and Scaccheri, 2006).

To sum up, it can be thus asserted that, in the current academia environment of the Global North, higher education institutions must secure resources to succeed, and when supply of resources is scarce, competition among institutions arise (van Vught, 2008). Here, third mission, mission statements, and university and city branding become crucial assets over the competitive appropriation of resources from the environment.



## **4) Univercity entrepreneurship**

### **4.a) The role of academia knowledge productivity in the capitalist world**

The chapter will cover the main literature regarding the entrepreneurial role the academia. An overview of the concept of knowledge production in society will be discussed. The topic will be furthered by an analysis of the U.S. Bayh Dole Act and the subsequent commercialization of university knowledge with a special emphasis on the current Italian legislation. Then the phenomena of university spillovers and spinoffs will follow, being these of extreme relevance in the university-society relationship debate. The chapter will close by estimating the new roles undertaken by high education institution today and what kind of sociospatial implication those can have for the territory.

In the past, ivory tower universities lived off codified spaces and dynamics, and the same could be said for industries. Hence, Lazzeroni (2016) distinguishes between “spaces of production” and “spaces of application” of knowledge. The first being universities, R&D hubs, think-tanks where high concentrations of academics produce knowledge capital. Spaces of application, instead, are where knowledge is applied to specific sectors of the economy. Here, proximity plays a role. Where universities are closer to industries, a greater exchange of knowledge occurs, consequently leading to technological progress (Lazzeroni, 2016). Moreover, spaces of production can be further subdivided into big metropolis, where connections with industries are broader and ramified, and territorial niches, which stands for smaller territorial entities with a strong history of knowledge and human capital production specifically linked to a certain industry or field (Lazzeroni, 2016). Simultaneously, in the age of globalization, spaces of production engage with external flows of knowledge production. This opens to greater opportunities in the production field but would also increase distances with local spaces of application. On the other hand, closure to external flows of idea might generate cultural auto-segregation patterns. Therefore, knowledge competitiveness of territories results in the management of exogenous flows and local identity (Lazzeroni, 2016).

The Bayh-Dole Act was first signed by the U.S. Congress in 1980, and it marked the first time the academia was acknowledged as producer of technologies relevant to society. Indeed, the act enabled universities to commercialize and profit off the discoveries and products created within university labs (Grimaldi et al., 2011). The positives quickly emerged, U.S. universities were now able to increase revenues generated from internal discoveries and consequently increase investments in the research departments. Still, some assumed that such widening of scope of universities would become detrimental to their own essence, now devoted to research for profits, driving interests away from the basic research to focus to more practical applications (Grimaldi et al., 2011). However, the negatives are harder to estimate overall as research demonstrated that a drastic decrease in open culture of sciences and research following the Bayh-Dole Act was not to be found (Grimaldi et al., 2011).

First, it must be addressed that such change in the U.S system brought an international wave of side-effects in Europe, too. New IP (intellectual property) laws were being discussed. In particular, it was found out that, when partnerships between university departments and private sector occurred, IP and patents were patented faster and predominantly by the latter rather than universities (Grimaldi et al., 2011). In this regard, Italy made a huge leap forward in the 1990s when new legislation opened new opportunities for public universities. Indeed, in 1989, Law 168 enabled universities greater administrative autonomy. Moreover, the National Law 537 of 1993 gave university major room for management of funds coming from the Ministry of Education (Fini et al, 2011). Consequently, each specific university started to compile their own statute comprehending different funding management boards and strategies. A big pendulum swing was the national spinoff law of 1999. It stated that university professors were now entitled to be formally involved in university spinoff companies and other private technologic research while retaining their university role and salary (Fini et al, 2011).

Last, the constitutional reform of 1999 gave Italian regions powers over matters previously reserved to the national government (Fini et al, 2011). Of these, the theme of innovation policy was transferred from the state to the regions. Henceforth, regions could enact their own technological and local growth policies, so new regulations and funding options emerged to foster local development, and Italian universities were extremely involved in the process (Fini et al, 2011).

#### 4.b) The spillover and spinoff effect

Two distinct phenomena will be discussed in this subchapter. These are the two ways in which universities affect territorial paths through knowledge production. First, knowledge spillover happens when knowledge is passed from universities to industries. Codified spillovers are generated through formal relational paths within the academia world, publications, and journals. Instead, tacit spillovers are generated by informal interactions, for instance via face-to-face interactions and learn by doing methodologies (Lazzeroni, 2016). The second distinction reveals the modes in which spillovers happen. Direct spillovers are planned a priori such as joint research and partnerships. On the other hand, indirect spillovers are spontaneous; researchers may publish results which get extracted and used by private companies for industrial purposes (Lazzeroni, 2016). Publication data are helpful in evaluating spillovers effects generated by universities. For instance, the median university production index, resulting from the total number of publications over the total number of researchers of a given institute, reveals the average number of publications from a single researcher. Additionally, the index on scientific presence of an institution, meaning the total number of citations over the total number researchers of a university, shows how often an academia is cited in journals. Finally, the most common evaluative index is the Citation Impact. It signals the worldwide impact of a university, extracted from the total number of citations over the total number of publications (Lazzeroni, 2016). We may further consider commissioned and joint research to assess knowledge spillovers. Broadly speaking, other forms of collaboration outside of research ought to be considered like collaborations with municipalities and other public entities (Lazzeroni, 2016). The biggest examples of spillovers result into concentrations into specific territories of companies and institutions related to a particular field (Potter, 1998). Clusters of actors are both vertical, when knowledge is shared between different channels, and horizontal, meaning alongside the same levels of institutions (Lazzeroni, 2016).

On the other hand, spinoffs do not relate to knowledge but to whom such knowledge can produce it. Namely, spinoffs refer to emerging companies where an academic, assistant professor or P.h.D. candidate is directly involved or even employed notwithstanding a formal commitment from the university of origin (Fini et al., 2011). University spinoff companies (UFOs) emerge when the university ecosystem is purposefully seeking outwards relationships, transitioning from an academia to a business ecosystem (Fuster et al., 2019). Thus, the “Knowledge Spillover Theory” examines the role of agents in fostering the growth and knowledge ecosystem. It assumes that academic knowledge can produce innovation and productivity (Fuster et al., 2019). Individuals carry out a specific knowledge that they can transfer from one ecosystem to the other, namely from the academia to industries (Fuster et al., 2019). Transfer occurs when entrepreneurship is present within high education institutions. Consequently, such vocation generates the entrepreneurial university ecosystem (Fuster et al., 2019). The strength of social networks makes the transfer happen. They are fundamental in the process of diffusion, absorption, and use of knowledge. Here, the foreign literature agrees with the findings from Lazzeroni (2016) in determining that are social relationships, rather than formal policies and contracts, the drivers for university expansionism.

#### 4.c) Getaway and relation makers: the new role of universities

So far, we looked at the transition academia institutions have undertaken over the past decades, becoming more and more an integral part of society. First and historically most ancient, university were “knowledge factory”, connotating a focus of base research and on generating new knowledge. Secondly, university as “human capital factory” connotates the efforts done by most university communities of producing high profile academics. Then the role of university as “technological transfer factory” (Lazzeroni, 2016). This is exemplified by the many interactions universities can have with industries and private investors. Here, research production is being commercialized to university partners. For example, patents can be shared, and research be done jointly with R&D sectors of companies. Finally, the last and most recent category, that of university as “territorial development factory” when universities partake into the promotion and management of projects of territorial innovation and development alongside public administrations (Lazzeroni, 2016). Two roles can be distinguished. Universities can be getaway from the local to the global scale of knowledge. Universities may also be addressed as relations maker connecting actors and forming participative networks (Lazzeroni, 2016).

Consequently, two streams of thought are applied. Universities become part of territorial development either through internal policies or due to exogenous factors stemming from the territory itself. Endogenous factors are usually referred to as “university-level support mechanisms” (ULSM), which entail a set of policies and practices internal to institutions which aim is to increase spillovers and spinoffs capabilities (Fini et al., 2011). For instance, Technology Transfer Offices (TTO) are specific offices which scope is to enable ideas and projects to develop into startups via successful business models. Once the startup is launched, distribution strategies are activated, services diffused, and partnership deals signed (Fini et al., 2011). Furthermore, TTOs provides venture capital, investors, and stakeholders to fund startups (Fini et al., 2011). In contrast, “local-context support mechanisms” (LCSM) understands the territory as crucial in the success or failure of university spinoffs. The business environment in which institutions operate may provide the resources needed for the emergence of business-related opportunities.

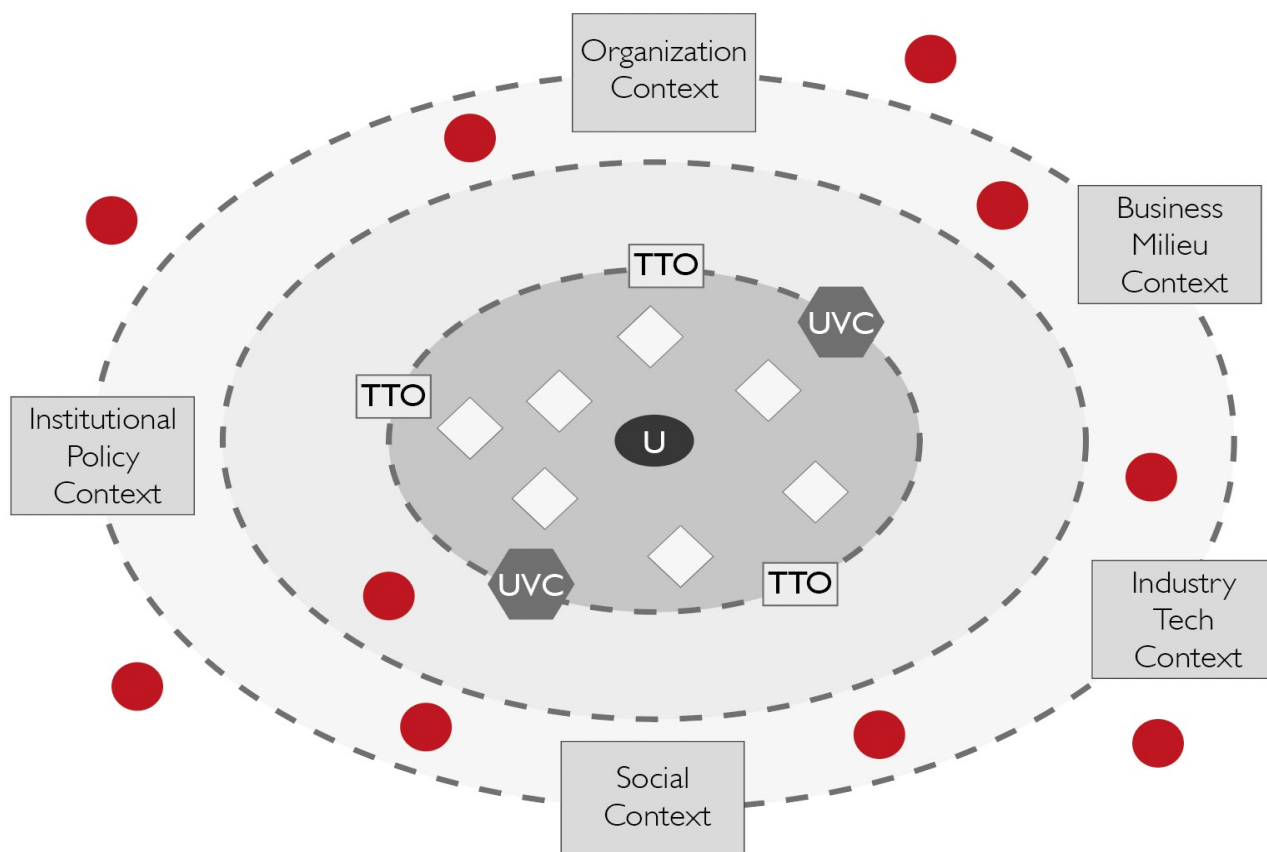


Table 4 The university entrepreneurial environment (author own elaboration from Fini et al., 2011, 2006; Fuster et al., 2019, Lazzeroni, 2014).

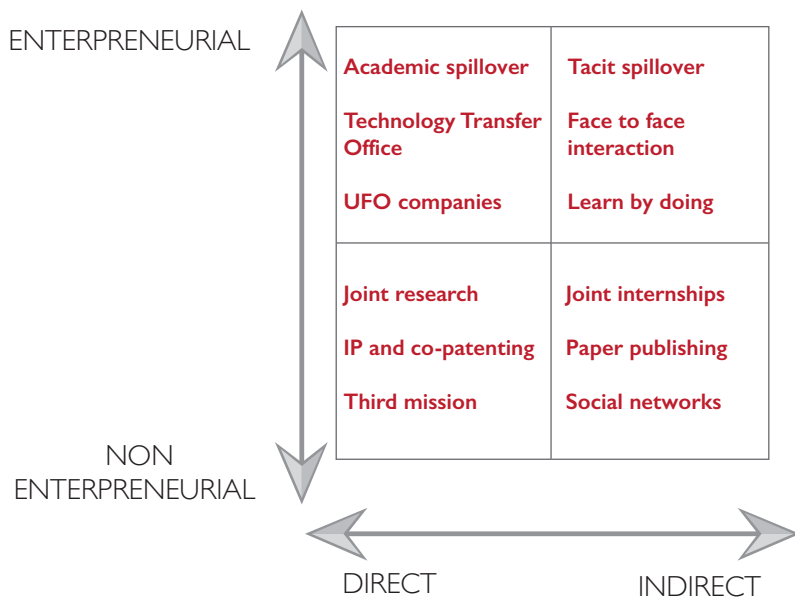


Table 5 Typologies of engagement activities (author own elaboration from Fini et al., 2011, 2006; Fuster et al., 2019, Lazzeroni, 2014).

The region and its actors are the milieu innovateur that a university needs. If competencies, infrastructures, and human capital are presents, then universities have higher rates of spinoff and spillover success (Fini et al., 2011). The features of an industrial region, such as size, type of industry and level of R&D, can also increase chances of spillovers. A well-structured economic region which shows some affinity with the type of academic research carried out by local institutions generates a natural exchange of ideas and patents, ultimately forming a knowledge network (Fini et al., 2011). Moreover, regional governments and local administrations can provide financial support, mitigate bureaucratic constraints, and help access international funding (Fini et al., 2011).

#### **4.d) The territory as the new resource for knowledge entrepreneurship**

So far, the chapter provided a broad narration on the bonds between universities and industries. It emerges that entrepreneurship is becoming highly relevant strategy undertaken by universities nowadays, adding business strategies into the academia. What remains to be determined is how impactful is the territory in favoring certain strategies. Indeed, it must be unveiled by what extent the territory plays a role in university business strategies, and conversely how such strategies affect the surroundings. Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth (2018) defined three different university ideal types, all of which with a peculiar characteristic regarding outward strategies. Model 1 defines a strictly commercial type of the entrepreneurial university while Model 2 describes the engaged university. The latter combine commercial to engagement activities as part of institutions third mission (Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth, 2018). Finally, the regionally engaged university entails regionally located collaboration activities, labeled as Model 3 (Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth, 2018). It is part of the overall history of universities to comply more or less to one of the three models. The findings showed that the entrepreneurial university (Model 1) was characterized by spinoff activities and patents. This is also the most common type of university given the emerging of patenting as a form of revenue for institutions (Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth, 2018). Moreover, the reasons for that are also external to universities themselves, as policy makers have emphasized patenting as a mean of economic growth (Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth, 2018). Secondly, the engaged university (Model 2) has more ramified and collaborative links with firms. In fact, they share knowledge through consultancy contracts and shared research as part of their outputs. Here, a higher degree of territorial impact is present (Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth, 2018). Finally, the regionally engaged university (Model 3), scores highest in terms of territorial impact. This is so since this ideal type thanks to “soft” activities closer to the more traditional academia while “hard” activities like licensing and spinoffs puts universities away from the proxy territory and closer to global actions (Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth, 2018).

Last, different typologies of engagements exist. However, university entrepreneurship does not only stem from the university willingness to expand but also by its surrounding ecosystem. Sometimes, the university can surpass the regional scale and find entrepreneur opportunities nationwide or even abroad through joint research agreements, for example. In this case, the academia becomes a player bigger than its physical scale. Rootedness disappear for a broader set of participatory activities involving different actors across multiple regions. By forgetting its local dimension, the university moves from a local dimension into one which is more abstract that do not conceive the university as a local economic player. As a result, the university engages much as an international company in which location does not determine local engagement as the institution lives in a realm where physical context is not as relevant as network ties. In this case, the territory is host to an actor that is completely removed from physical space and engages in a-spatial relations mainly.

#### **4.e) A warning: Bernardo Secchi and the urban voids**

Last, it is important to end the chapter on a critical note. Universities are moving away from their traditional role to a more wholistic character in society. They are service providers. They are in dialogue with firms, industries, and public administrations. They also offer more than just pure knowledge. All in all, this has been regarded greatly for local economic development. However, it is hard to evaluate whether growth overpasses the local to reach a broader scale of economic relevance. If this is so, universities place locally but engage globally, raising them to a new role: the “ivory tower of the underdeveloped region.” In turn, this would create socio-economic urban voids between spaces of growth, internal to the university spaces, and spaces of degrowth, external to the university space within the same locality.

Furthermore, university-related territorial attractiveness tactics may often employ dispersion to incorporate city spaces into university spaces. Instead of clustering, universities open new campuses away from their original one, disseminating knowledge, capital, and users across space. Planned dispersion implies a certain level of connectivity between distant places but with similar spatial imaginary. That is for example the case of two detached campuses from the same institution in exurb areas. Consequently, urban voids are created, an “interrupted drawing” (Secchi, 1989). These spaces are difficult to cross, meaning that they link two highly qualified spaces, but the linking path is left unplanned and unconsidered. Voids can be of any type; residential, industrial, infrastructures. They are not a tale of a tragic past, but rather of a growing future that never accounted for these spaces. Areas waiting for a new morphological dimension while for the time being they reflect only a state of spatial discontinuity (Secchi, 1989).

Consequently, the territory is manifold (Secchi, 1989). It is distance across points, it is the area of ruling the space of growth, it is the depository of the past. Still, it is most importantly a resource. Such resource, however, it is not given nor ready-made. Indeed, the territory is a limited exploitable resource for unlimited opportunities. There are different inhibitive systems in the same territory which spur ways of living, values, and meanings (Secchi, 1989). In this context, planning and managing territories should first establish relationships among these systems of living, comprehending different ecologies with each of their own substrata of relationships. Suddenly, high education institutions repositioned themselves in regions and cities, yet it is unclear what kind of role they have chosen to have socioeconomically, and what consequences such repositioning it will bring.

## 5) Student life

### 5.a) Attracting businesses... and students. How student life engagement has become a crucial part of the academia agenda

City and university are two entities that long coexisting. Since the Middle Age, throughout Europe, universities emerged as a constituent part of the creation of the higher class of the medieval society. It is has become such a strong relationship that in the Anglo-Saxon terminology the concept of town and gown has become of widespread relevance (Bazzoli, 2019). It is part of the intent of this work to unveil the sociospatial practices of a new emergent class in the contemporary urban arena, that of high education students. As a result, the chapter will first cover the debate from the side of universities, namely how institutions view students as a potential part of their urban growth agenda. We will then look at the student perspective, accounting from Bourdieu's habitus and Florida's creative class concept. Finally, it will be unveiled the phenomenon of studentification, emerged in small urbanities in Britain during the late 1990s. It is considered as a side-facet of the more widespread phenomenon of gentrification.

Students have now become a vital part of the urban population. Especially those who move to a new place to study; they provide economic wealth for the city as well as rejuvenating the population. Here, attracting students from outside falls under a broader category of university branding practices encapsulated into the idea of student life. Indeed, universities become more than just classrooms and exams, but places of personal growth and exploration of the self towards a path of adulthood and maturity. However, the continuous agenda that is being pushed from institutions is not met by local institutions, that most of the time acknowledge students as an invisible population (Russo et al., 2013). Indeed, students are seen only in matters related to housing, but not as an economic propeller for the city. On the other hand, universities enact strategies, such as the aforementioned third mission to attract, welcome, manage, and retain locally the student population (Russo et al., 2013). For Martinotti (1997) the student population is a crucial agent in generating new, ready-to-use human capital that can contribute to the livability and employability of cities. One thing that must be noted is how nation states have been left unaccounted so far. This is not an oversight but rather a product of the increasing role of cities in the global economy and in the production of capitals. In this context, the high education institution is seen as an economic agent able to flow money and people into the city. It follows that many urban regeneration practices for a knowledge-driven development target specific areas of cities in which the academia presence is strong (Russo et al., 2013). Nevertheless, here cities and universities compete for lands. University expansion sometimes equals a retreat of other functions and populations in the city, and sociospatial conflicts start to arise (Russo et al., 2013).

For instance, the sustainable campus project started in 2011 by the Polytechnic of Milan and the University of Milan is emblematic. Both universities have some facilities in the Milanese neighborhood of "Città Studi." For a long time, it was a university area peripheral to the rest of Milan. However, as the city expanded, Città Studi is now an important part of the city center surroundings. The project self-acknowledged universities as a space of innovation and the campus as a living lab. Furthermore, students are a special urban population apt to innovation and changes. Finally, high knowledge can produce sustainable practices (Guidetti and Morello, 2015). Thus, the urban campus is a technical design able to create a sense of continuity between the city and the university (Guidetti and Morello, 2015). This becomes relevant since the narrative of high education institution is that of a training ground for students to learn sustainable living practices. Such narrative stems from the two-way distinction of universities, accounted as popularization and commercialization of universities (Takeuchi, 2008). Popularization stands for the increasing diversification of curricula. In particular, it refers to the idea that undergraduate studies are becoming mandatory and graduate studies diversified and encouraged (Takeuchi, 2008). Still, in the report from Guidetti and Morello (2015) it emerges that students were the population that participated the less in the actions and events of the Città Studi project in Milan.



Perhaps, students are still considered emarginated from the urban community, they consume space differently, they behave differently and live differently, both in their social norms but also literally in the typology of houses in which they live in.

Indeed, the case of housing is emblematic. Universities have never been able to satisfy the enormous housing demand that the student population requires. Thus, historically students have relied on the private house market, where they can find shared accommodations among their peers. Still, not all students have the same spending power and thus mixed results emerge in terms of quality of housing, with more and more students relying on cheap, run-down habitations while others looking for better options in purpose-built student accommodations (Hubbard, 2009; Kinton et al., 2018; Holton, 2015). Indeed, students seeking accommodations are seen as a fast tenant, with shorter rent life cycle (Russo et al., 2013). Consequently, they enjoy lower protections, as many resort to informal practices, subletting and the black market to find an accommodation. This is also a consequence of the increasing rent prices around university areas, part of the studentification phenomenon and consequent *laissez faire* urban policies by municipalities and nation states (Russo et al., 2013).

## 5.b) Studentification. Turning cities into student experiences

Throughout my student career, I have often heard my peers as well as other people refer to certain places as the “quartiere universitario” or the university neighborhood. However, I always questioned what that meant. How come that people identify a neighborhood with students? After all, it is true that certain neighborhoods vary in terms of compositional mix, ethnicity, demographics, wealth status or activities. Still, the student neighborhood is never referred as a matter of wealth, demographics, or mere activities. Rather, it signifies a certain set of practices carried out by a particular social group at a given time of the year (sometimes even of the day) in a space that does not have clear administrative boundaries. It is spatially located close to universities, that is certain. However, the most important of things is its fluid and permeable capacity. Where practices are being carried out is not fixed. They adapt as they advance or retreat during the day, also depending on the practice itself. Also, such constant redefinition of boundaries comes from internal conflicts, among sub-categories of students, and with exchanges with the surrounding population. Moreover, spatial practices are also fluid. They incorporate or exclude systematically ideologies and behaviors from the contemporary mainstream society as well as the underground world. As such, it is also a political space. Smith et al. (2012) indeed wrote that the student neighborhood is the space of the *people not like us*.

If all the above is true then we are facing a very peculiar urban phenomenon, that of studentification. The phrase of Smith et al. (2012) encapsulates an understanding of student life which is detached from the rest of society, and consequently it lives off a life of its own with its own social and economic norms. In his seminal work, Smith (2005) understands studentification as a four-way phenomenon. First, it is economic as it relates with the revalorization of housing and the increase of accommodation prices of single-family dwellings, which get converted into houses for multiple inhabitants, each one sharing a private contract with the landlord (Smith, 2005). Second, studentification is a social matter as it favors the displacement of a preexisting population with that of students. Thus, it incorporates new behavioral and communitarian patterns. Alongside with new social interactions, studentifications therefore signal a cultural shift in the space of action. New practices and lifestyles emerge (Smith, 2005). Finally, studentification is a physical process which changes the outlook of an area. Properties are upgraded, and new shops open. Nonetheless, the opposite can also happen; the area gets downgraded by the arrival of new students and their practices (Smith, 2005). At a first glance, studentification resemble the more known widespread concept of gentrification. However, dissimilarities arise. In fact, traditional gentrification expects gentrifiers to seek mid-to-long term housing solutions to settle in indefinitely. Instead, studentification shows a different pattern. Given that the agent of studentification are students, their stay is as long as their study period (Smith, 2005). Moreover, further research also shows that some students purposefully leave the studentified area to better blend with the rest of the city, moving away from the student life framework (Holton, 2015).

### 5.c) The creative class, or the creative student class

What emerges from the studentification narrative so far is that students are being the actors of the phenomenon, while universities, cities, estate agents and leisure activities are propellant of studentification. Although quite correct, students may be both the propeller and the agent of studentification. This is for example true for gentrification, where some early gentrifiers, defined as the new creative class (Florida, 2004), hold the keys of gentrification. Broadly speaking, the economic shift of certain cities to a deep tertiary, or even quaternary, sector defined as a strong focus on ICT, consulting, and R&D jobs required a new class of young workers (Semi, 2015). Workers of the past were not able to fulfill the demand, thus companies turned to universities to look for new and highly qualified workforce. As the profile of workers changed; their behavior and social habits changed, too (Semi, 2015). On the other hand, the creative class does not only relate to highly qualified people of the high-tech and finance sector, but also people holding degrees in architecture, arts, and other “creative” field of studies (Florida, 2004). Moreover, Florida (2004) also categorizes the creatives class into two subcategories. First, the “super creative core” represents the top class within the class, these are all the people directly involved in the creative process. Second, the “creative professionals” engage in a broad range of activities in a creative context (Florida, 2004). These people, hold a varying range of economic capital, but all have a high rate of knowledge capital at their disposal. For Semi (2015), local administrations rely on place-making tactics, and thus city branding, to attract creative professionals via requalification and acculturation of urban areas hoping to foster growth patterns. Consequently, the focus of administration is targeted towards only certain areas of cities, leaving families and other classes of need unaccounted for the most part (Semi, 2015). Thus, cities strive to become and maintain their status of creative cities. City offers new amenities, products, and social activities to satisfy the needs of the creatives. (Semi, 2015). We see a similar pattern in universities, too.

Moreover, it is important to denote another similarity between creative gentrifiers and students. They both follow a similar night/day pattern. Indeed, the Fordist classes had a stricter night/day and workday/weekend division, and, consequently, a pre-set of activities depending on time of the day (Semi, 2015). Such rigid division of activities is not matched by the creative class, whose behavior is more fluid. Working time and aperitif time intertwines, and leisure activities are being carried out even during workday nights (Semi, 2015). This is also true for students, who see their life less fragmented between study week and the weekend. For example, Chatterton (1999), in his account of student nightlife in Bristol, denoted that student were keener to go out on Thursdays, which went to be labelled as the “student night” in many pubs and bars of the city, offering special discounts to the student population only. Here, both studentification and gentrification rely on commercialization of *ad hoc* activities for their targeted consumers.

Still, we must distinguish between the creative class and the soon-to-be creative class. Students are the latter. So, they experiment their own gentrification via the studentification of neighborhoods adjacent to their “workplace”, the university. Classrooms, as well as clubs, pubs and plazas become the *learning spaces* of gentrified practices and ideology (Semi, 2015). Furthermore, we might say that studentification is the embryo state of future gentrification. Here, is where gentrifiers learn the ways of gentrification (Semi, 2015). Moreover, in a study by Wesselmann (2018) on student population’s place satisfaction, it emerged that nightlife was right under job opportunities as what students sought in determining their location choices. Even more striking, housing supply scored higher than the quality of higher education institutions (Wesselmann, 2018). This reinforces the hypothesis that students, just like their young worker counterparts, stress the importance of amenity and housing, both factors entangled in the studentification paradigm. However, studentification brings a socioeconomic disequilibrium in the cities affected. In addition, students may replicate the same practices but in the form of gentrification in different cities and spaces once they turn in their working life.

#### **5.d) Bourdieu; the habitus and taste of classes**

If students are to be considered the soon-to-be creative class, how their cultural capital and activities will develop can be traced back to their education career and the relative habitus (Bourdieu, 1984). Indeed, the position a given student is holding at a given time in society is a contributing factor to its ascent in the creative class system. It follows that, the incapability of a student to advance in the university career will compromise the chances of getting into the upper classes (Bourdieu, 1984). The key point is whether such system of relegation and elimination will exist also within the student class, harming their access to certain practices and spaces. Moreover, according to Bourdieu (1984), the type of studies undertaken carries a value over what type of new class the student will be part of. Most importantly, access to classes is determined by space as well. Indeed, access to certain cultural practices changes according to the location of residence. Space effects the supply of culture. Thus, education and culture may do not match. Proximity to high education institutions does not guarantee high culture capital. As a result, density of culture is distributed unevenly across geographies (Bourdieu, 1984). Students may be inclined to move to better cultural geographies so to upclass themselves once they enter the job market. Conversely, when education and cultural goods are located in proximity with each other, cultural values intensify, and sense of belonging is augmented by the cultural relations of actors. All kinds of culture are more legitimized if located within reach of educational spaces (Bourdieu, 1984).

Further, Bourdieu (1984, pp. 170) identifies by habitus the creation of “meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions.” Consequently, each class follows a predetermined habitus whose members must follow. Moreover, each class has its own perception of the social world according to the internalization of the habitus. As a result, the student class condition is characterized by its own properties and by the relational properties according to its position in a given class system (Bourdieu, 1984). We may thus conclude that, when both studentification and conflicts arise in space, these are in part due from the different position of classes and their own habitus in a specific urban context. Finally, the habitus generates taste. The latter is capable of creating links between classes and objects - practices. The taste of certain practices, in turn, is a set of preferences which can be classified as lifestyle (Bourdieu, 1984). Broadly speaking, taste is what makes class practices into the distinctive class lifestyle. Lifestyle is the way a class acts in space and is consequently perceived.

## 5.e) Sense of place, space appropriation and segregation in the student city

Although the narrative has historically been that of students as an excluded community from city matters, they hold great powers in shaping and acknowledging places. Nevertheless, they can even segregate or get segregated by other city communities. All of these lie under the studentification debate. In order, the subsequent sections will unveil the sociospatial dynamics of the student community. First, the literature of space and universities will be discussed. It will follow how students interact with the city space, from the university itself to the university neighborhood and finally to the city at large. Students expand and conquest city landscapes, but they are also forced to retreat. Last, the subchapter will also explore segregation patterns within the student community. It emerges indeed that students sometimes self-segregate within the university spaces while other times they deny studentified areas of cities to explore other lifestyles. In this debate it is important to highlight the student independence debate related to students moving to pursue a degree away from home.

Students are a particular group in terms of location choices. Indeed, they tend to cluster into pockets within the university neighborhood (Wattis, 2013). Over time, pockets ramify through paths dictated by vicinity and accessibility to the university campus. As a radius with the university as its epicenter, studentification expands through the nodes that facilitates access to the university. Thus, areas served with metro lines linking those to the campus may become the new spaces of students. Furthermore, for many non-local students, university becomes a safe space, and thus a positive sense of place gets developed (Wattis, 2013). Particularly, Wattis (2013) in her account of studentification and sense of place in the U.K., noted that, while interviewing students, they understood sexual harassment and threats as coming mainly from the male non-student population rather than a mix of both. Wattis (2013) derived that sense of place and safety are intertwined. If the campus is considered as a safe space, then threats must all be exogenous to the university environment. Sense of place shapes perception of one's own social class and of that of the others. Sense of place relates to sense of belonging through labeling. A prime example is the "student street", the "student bar" and so on (Hubbard, 2009). Such spaces, whether they are a venue, or a street does not matter, through a process of labelling and acknowledging, become part of the habitus of students. Spaces are incorporated into lifestyle once they are acknowledged as the student community's own space. It follows that predefined pathways exist linking the spaces of the student habitus (Chatterton, 1999). Moreover, in terms of who creates such identification, the answer may vary, and not always it is merit of students. Indeed, local administration, commercial activities, universities, and housing agencies all play a role in labelling and defining spaces as student spaces for the sake of their own interests (Chatterton, 1999).

We may define such sense of place as the practice of space appropriation. Appropriation comes down to the exclusive use of a given bounded space by one community over others. There is no right to exclusive use. However, through the constant repetition of acting and "being there", it becomes customary to associate a certain space to a certain class or community. Consequently, segregation happens once others are *de facto* neglected the use and reproduction of social practices in such space. We may define this as the spatial act of studentification over a given area. Chatterton (1999, pp. 120) defines such practice as "informal colonization of venues." Such appropriated space, then, retains a certain culture, norms, and codes of conduct, that of the appropriator, which are reproduced in the specific context over time through repetition of practices (Chatterton, 1999). It is a student bubble which can avail the entrance of people, practices as well as economic activities (Avni and Alfasi, 2018). Moreover, student culture is facilitated by intermediaries. They are non-student actors who seek to diffuse student culture and cater student needs for their own interests (Chatterton, 1999). Appropriation, however, is not fixed. Indeed, spatial capital, meaning the space where social capital is exercised, enlarge and retracts in time. Students are the most typical of the seasonal community. They move in and out of neighborhoods seasonally. They follow a codified season which is that of the university semester. It is thus in this window of opportunity that studentification and space appropriation is more likely to happen (Chatterton, 1999).

Emblematic is the case of Erasmus students. Erasmus students are students of European higher education institutions who move abroad (within E.U. borders) to join another institution, usually for one semester. They are considered a migratory elite forming their own network that engages with the host city (Calvo et al., 2017). For example, in Lisbon, the Barrio Alto area witnessed an increase of students moving into the neighborhood in recent years. The arrival of students was considered as an act of regeneration of a neighborhood which witnessed violence, alcoholism, and drug trafficking during night hours. In turn, local bars were able to capitalize on the growing numbers of the Erasmus population willing to spend at night (Calvo et al., 2017). The Barrio Alto neighborhood thus saw the ascending of a new internal area, defined as the “Corner”, an intersection of two streets with a plaza in the middle, where Erasmus students usually gathered. Here, students organized spontaneous events, birthdays and farewell parties for students leaving for their home country (Calvo et al., 2017). A crack in the area emerged marking a distance in socialization and activity structures between the locals and the foreign students (Calvo et al., 2017). Segregation occurred. The Corner area became the “Erasmus Street” of Lisbon where nightlife was codified to the needs of the study abroad community. In the mind of students, the space became a place for social alcoholism, exploration of sexuality and new international friends (Calvo et al., 2017). All of these signified an increase sense of attachment of students for the Barrio Alto area. This stemmed from the appropriation of a street, namely the “Corner”, which geographically divided the nightlife practices of students from those of locals. The city saw in the study abroad community the agent through which urban regeneration could take place in Barrio Alto. The exchange, not necessarily intentional, of students with public administrations and local business lay the foundation for future gentrification practices (Calvo et al., 2017). The arrival of new students is an opportunity for different parties to formalize neighborhoods and find new spaces to colonialize.

Consequently, during the semester timeframe changes are about to happen. Still, changes are not only related to the space but to the agents of the space in question as well. Indeed, student activities attracts freshmen and soon-to-be university students towards the cultural class of students. They learn the conducts, tastes and overall habitus of being a student and of studentification (Holton, 2015). Still, the learning curve is hampered if students are immobile (Holdsworth, 2009). In fact, distance from campus defines how students may define themselves part of the student community. The closer to the campus the highest the sense of belonging to a group and place (Holton, 2015). Social immobility marginalizes students, so they do not “fit in.” As years progress and students increase their participation to campus activities, the more they would be part of the student community and deem the university area as their place of belonging. Furthermore, Holton suggests (2015) that the moving from university halls to privately rented houses increased levels of attachments to university in Portsmouth. However, what is also true is that the belonging curve drops as students approach their final here of study. Overall, it was reported that students, as they move towards graduation and seek early work experiences, some of which are provided through the university career service, abandon the student neighborhood to move to other spaces (Holton, 2015). We may consider this the beginning of the studentification to gentrification transition.

## 6) Linking the literature with the case study. From the diffused city to the diffused campus

Throughout the research carried out for this thesis, an interesting hiccup emerged. Indeed, in the literature review process that was undergone to make this work valid, very few cases comprehended all the different themes here presented. Indeed, it seems that the literature on town and gown studies often over specializes in different sectors that, although offering a very in-depth analysis, fail to produce a more comprehensive understanding over the subject matter. For instance, studies on university regional development rarely combine with that of studentification, failing to address more unorthodox economic developments combining university, host cities and leisure markets. Conversely, when studentification studies account for nightlife and students' use of space, they do not include city branding policies and third mission strategies into the discussion. Finally, not many cases reported the effects of colleges and other types of student residences on the private renting markets and gentrification. Does the presence of college residences lessen the burden of the local market over the availability and affordability of rooms for students, or does the location of these contributes on the success of neighborhood as student areas, which would make them favorable to studentification? Such hypotheses were rarely seen in the academia.

Thus, it emerges a need to merge different sources of knowledge in the study of academia behavior in society. If studentification happens, different factors must be summed up together to understand the root causes of the phenomenon. Universities, now managed in as much as a company brand than as an institution, starts factors outside academia capacity to attract students. They have begun to sponsor the neighborhood narrative or that of the campus city. External services and amenities of the city becomes a lever against competing institutions. On the one hand, this enhances the city and university visibility to future students, residents, and city users. On the flip side, it exacerbates studentification. Putting much stress on the affordability of rooms, driving up commodity prices and funneling the city into one vision only, that of the campus city. This may perhaps lead to exclusionary forms of other populations from city social life. Still, whether the university themselves push such studentification agenda is up to debate. When the campus city is recalled for its great nightlife scene, that indirectly boost up university visibility as being a place of fun and of academia as well.

Also, the concept of diffused city, which first appeared in Italy through the book "La Città Diffusa" by Francesco Indovina in 1999 can be also applied to punctual dispersion strategies adopted by higher education institutions. Many examples were here reported, from Milan (Fedeli, 2011) and Padova (Stellin and Picchiolotto, 2007) to Chicago (Perry et al., 2009). Still, the diffused campus is a blurred concept. It is a focus of this thesis to shed light on the concept, emphasizing how this has been applied in the case study of Pavia, given the multi campus structure of the University of Pavia campuses, which differ in urban design as well as geographical context. Different spaces create dialogues, link people and practices. Though, this is not necessary always the case. Urban voids can happen. They refrain a dialogue to exists. Diffusion becomes dispersion, and in this case, dialogue shifts to isolated systems of high-density practices. The most noticeable case, the Erasmus policy established by the E.U. to open universities to a greater exchange between institutions and their students across the European Union has led to many neighborhoods being turned into student amenities hotspots which eroded social layers and practices in favor of student amusement and evening economy, like the case of the Corner area in Lisbon (Calvo et al., 2017)

## 7) Pavia

### 7.a) Historical context. From the ascension of Pavia as the city of knowledge in the Duke of Milan to present day

The year 2021 marked the 660th anniversary of the foundation of the University of Pavia. Although the recurrence took place under a period of great uncertainty and limitations due to the COVID – 19 pandemic, the anniversary did not go unnoticed. Pavia's very own public university is among the oldest universities of the Middle Age. Under the willingness of co-ruler of the Duchy of Milan Galeazzo II Visconti, Pavia became the designated city for the establishment of the new university of the Duchy (quatarobpavia.com, 2021). Carlo IV, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, granted Pavia the designation of "Studium", which entitled the city to have its own university. This was a mandatory process for all European universities within the Holy Roman Empire. Consequently, in 1361 the university was officially born and was located where it is still today, in the central Corso Strada Nuova, considered the heart of the city (quatarobpavia.com, 2021). The 16th and 17th century were tumultuous times for the city. It went under different foreign rulings, and this affected the expansion of the university. It was only during the time of Maria Theresa of Austria that the university was rejuvenated, and it started to expand in the city center of Pavia, having the layout it has today.

Immediately after its foundation in the 15th century, Pavia's colleges started to host needy students aspiring to become members of the clergy (quatarobpavia.com, 2021). Thanks to these reforms, the university increased in academia importance. Everything culminated in 1906 when Camillo Golgi, at that time professor at the university, obtained the Nobel Prize for medicine. It was the first time an Italian academic ever obtained such prize (quatarobpavia.com, 2021). Another marking event was the expansion of the university area through the creation of the new scientific pole "Cravino" in the northwestern area of the city. In what was previously a greenfield area, the university committed to architect Giancarlo De Carlo to open a massive new scientific campus during the 1960s.

Today, Pavia is not only its city center. Both via the university and the industries, the city now comprises a wider territory of very small town thanks to the geographical expansion of the two sectors. Therefore, Pavia is also a city of small towns orbiting around Pavia. Indeed, even though the city is not the biggest and richest market of Italy, it still has a propensity of attracting people through the education and healthcare sector of the city. Indeed, almost 2/3 of all jobs in the city either relate to the university or to the S. Matteo Hospital pole. Hence, city users are not only university students, but also local workers and high school adolescents who daily commute to Pavia, but data on the matter are few and scattered. Furthermore, Pavia not only is an attractor but is also attracted by the Metropolitan City of Milan, one of the biggest urban areas of Italy just a 30-minute train ride away from Pavia. The history of Pavia and Milano's academic institutions intertwines. Being Pavia the only city of study in Lombardy up until the late 1880s, it made so that the city flourished vigorously. However, as the Polytechnic of Milan was establishment in the city in 1863, followed by the public University of Milan, and the private Bocconi University and Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in the early years of the 20th century, Pavia was overshadowed by the bigger and more advanced Milan. The latter took the center stage as the main city of universities in the Lombardy region (Fedeli, 2010). Slowly, Pavia retracted from a primary university in Italy into a mid-tier status. Now, as competition for students increased after the massification of studies, the label use of city campus became a tactic of wider use for the university to gain over their competitors, trying to distinguish itself from Milan and other big university cities through the student-friendly city label.



Even more recently, the University of Pavia was granted by the Ministry of University and Research a total of € 37.320.125 to be divided into the 5 departments deemed of excellence by the ministry for the years 2018-2022 (MIUR, 2017). The departments of Medicine, Mathematics, Molecular Medicine, Biology and Biotechnology, and Humanities were those selected by the MIUR. Moreover, the IUSS - School for Advanced Studies, a branch of the University of Pavia dedicated exclusively to honor courses and for only the best students G.P.A. wise was listed as an institute of excellence of its own (MIUR, 2017). Broadly speaking, the University of Pavia has been widely acknowledged among the best universities of Italy, especially in the scientific fields, where it has a long list of honorable researchers and professors. It is indeed one of the main elements of its third mission and branding strategies.

To conclude, Pavia is a peculiar case of what's been defined as a città universitaria in the Italian context. Although definitions may vary, what makes a city a "university city" is a university which is embodied within the city to such an extent that the university life, and thus students, play a predominant part in city socioeconomic development. Such status is also given by the peculiar housing situation of Pavia's students, that of the widespread college housing.



Image 1. Entrance of the Collegio Ghisleri among the most prestigious of the city campus and founded in 1567 (author own picture)

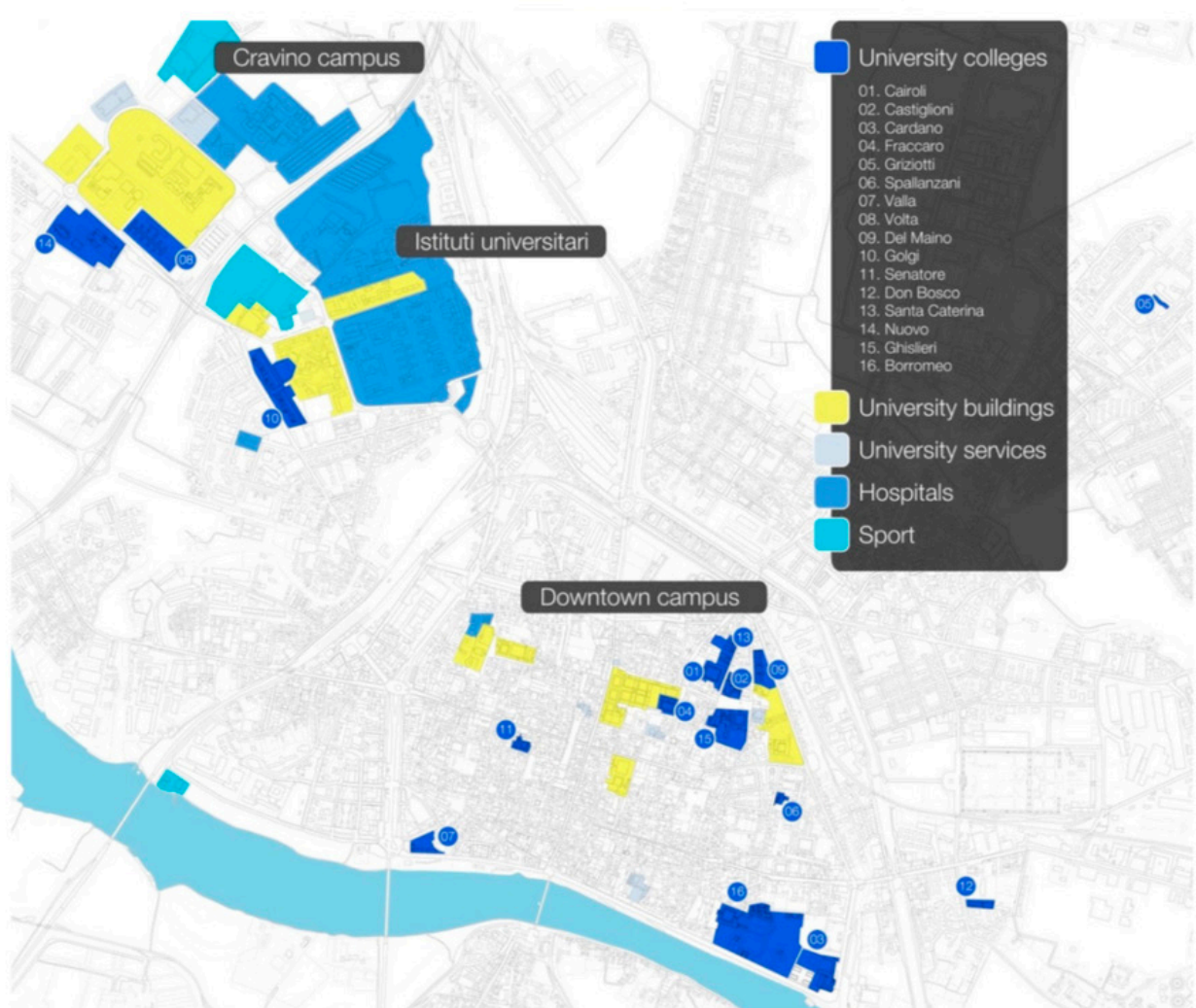
## 7.b) Living in the collegio: a peculiar case of student housing

The first college housing appeared in Paris in 1180 when an English pilgrim opened his dormitory room to religious students. Since then, colleges took a semi-religious connotation. They hosted clerics from lower social classes who were attending catholic schools and universities and not able to live on apartment of their own. They served primarily as an assistance service for upcoming clergymen (Musatti, 1994). During the Middle Age, colleges, and universities in general, understood merit as a way of social ladder. Indeed, college housing was destined to deserving students only, forming a new individual status based on deserving minds who partially overcame social difficulties based on family, aristocracy, or wealth (Musatti, 1994). Moreover, during the 15th century colleges started to increase in relevance, having their own professors and courses (Monti, 2018). This is important since, both students and professors, were living in the colleges. That created a different kind of relationship between parts than what we are used to see today (Monti, 2018). Colleges were therefore an autonomous branch of early universities in France, England, and Italy. Although this type of bodies was laic in nature, ties with religious figures were evident. They served as influencer of secular institutions by ecclesiastics (Musatti, 1994). Indeed, colleges were founded for the most part from the wealthiest figures of Europe (Monti, 2018). Also, it was at this time that the idea of *goliardia* developed. In Italian it stands for mockery and excessive behaviors by college residents. Moreover, given the large number of colleges, in Pavia student rivalries rose as well as traditions.

In the Italian debate, the collegio found new life in the 1960s. In fact, the massification of universities in Italy led to a direct expansion of new student housing facilities through state funding (Monti, 2018). However, questions emerged on how whether colleges were the best fit for the middle and lower classes students. Indeed, this came from the reason that historically colleges were to indicate the ivory tower in which the new churchmen, aristocracy, technocrats, and bureaucrats were formed. This could have never fitted with the massification of universities which occurred after the end of the World War II in Europe (Monti, 2018).

Socially speaking, even more so than living on a flat, spending university years inside on-campus, or in the case of Pavia in the collegio, exemplifies the concept of blended university social life. In fact, the collegio best represents the idea of collective life as well as individual life within the same space. Here, there is a quest for a fined balance between these two spaces that, sometimes intertwine, and other times they differ drastically. Moreover, it must be noted that the main difference between the “Pavia experience” and that of the most renowned U.S. campuses is the spark division between university social life and college social life. This is so since in Pavia, the university and the collegio represent two distinct bodies, both physically, in terms of where social interactions happen, but also jurisdictionally given that these bodies are not part of the same entity (college residences are not managed by the university).

In particular, in the city there is a grand total of 17 colleges. These are divided into three types. First, 5 colleges are merit-based. These are commonly referred to as the most prestigious. Students must have a 27/30 G.P.A. while they cannot take less than 24/30 on a given exam ([collegidipavia.it](http://collegidipavia.it), n.d.). Merit-based colleges also require their students to take on extra classes. They are considered the most expensive, too. These are privately managed each by its own foundation. Second, 10 need-based college housings accept students through their relative ISEE. It is the Italian Equivalent Financial Situation Index of students and their families, and it is used to assess how much should students pay for their tuition fee. Students with low ISEE grades often receive financial aid and are those accepted by need-based colleges. This type of college is run by the EDISU (Regional Body for the Right of Study). Last, in Pavia are present also 2 private religious colleges.



Map 1. Location of the university campuses, services, university hospital, and colleges in Pavia (from De Lotto, Pietra and Venco, 2020).

Sometimes, college students run an alternate life then their regular counterparts. Indeed, college acceptance in Pavia is mainly through merit-based scholarship or need-based scholarship. In the first case, the college accepts on the base of academic meritocracy. This means that only the best students from each course can get a room. Meritocracy is also a pillar of Florida's (2004) creative class. Indeed, the class of the creatives is based on meritocracy, meaning only the most deserving creatives can get in. However, it is also noted that meritocracy implies certain social downsides. Only the ambitious individuals are given credit of in the society of the creatives (Florida, 2004). Technical knowledge is mainly acquired via education, yet those not able to get into a certain level of education are automatically excluded from the new social class (Florida, 2004). Moreover, within students, those unable to pass exams can lose touch with the rest of the group; they fall behind and cannot advance into the upper classes, says Bourdieu (1984). In addition, it is here hypothesized that attending a merit-based collegio may thus lift one's own appurtenance into an upper student class. Conversely, being a regular student or part of a need-based college devalues students in the eyes of their peers.

The first thing that must be addressed when inquiring university living is its temporary status. However, such temporary status does not necessary underline a situation of emergency. Rather, temporality is due to a basic condition of universities themselves (Rizzo, 2004). The university is a transitory place for many young adults in between adolescence (high school) and adulthood (working life). In this context, accommodations also become temporary and transitory (Rizzo, 2004). The consumption of university life and the city by students is part of a life cycle from freshman to graduation. Further, temporariness does not hinder any kind of rooting. Indeed, although temporary, in the city,

the neighborhood, and the collegio students do feel a sense of belonging (Rizzo, 2004). This has found to be true for studentification spaces especially. In Pavia, where the campus residences are places of aggregation through events, intra-university varsity games and parties, attachment to one's own college is high, and over time rivalries between colleges have spurred, too. Students sympathizes from one college over the others and the oldest ones have comradery traditions from one academic class to the next. Former college students remain part of the institutions via alumni programs, and these are often invited to formal speeches at ceremonies and the openings of the new academic year.

The public/private dichotomy of housing within the collegio is broken into different shades. Public life, in fact, can be for example split up into "fully public" in the spaces which are open to everybody, members and guests, and "partially public" in those spaces that are public, but relegated only to members of the collegio, thus creating a society of student-only members (Rizzo, 2004). From example, gardens are open to guests while the cafeteria is public to only the student and governing body. Consequently, students cannot be classified as users nor consumers but as members of the residence. Therefore, space is contingent to who is in that particular area of the collegio at a given time. It follows that the college residence is a permeable bubble in which, depending on daytime and nighttime, it can be sealed or open to the outside world of Pavia through an everlasting exchange of relationships. Thus, they can be an exclusive space, accepting only a certain population of the city, that of students, and even here those not part of the collegio gets excluded physically from the spaces hence also relationally within the residence. The architectural type of colleges also effects the privacy levels of students. On the one hand, the hotel style college is composed of a series of rooms that face inwardly into the main floor corridor. This typology usually leads to higher rates of privacy among members (Monti, 2018). On the other hand, the lodge type describes a series of room around the same common area where kitchens, study areas and bathrooms are. This more recent type of dormitory seeks to create a floor community within the college itself (Monti, 2018). All in all, the collective living of university housing units seeks to balance a constant struggle of students between the need of privacy and the search for public social life. Last, it is important to notice that 9 out of all colleges in the city are gender based, either for male or female students, which may carry relational effects over gender relations within university peers.

According to the most recent Italian law 68/2012, the collegio is an accommodation facility equipped with polyfunctional spaces and qualified to host residential, cultural, and formative area (Monti, 2018). As a result, the Chart of Colleges, signed by the most prominent Italian colleges in 2004 defines colleges as having the following third mission. Orienting students as well as offering them tutoring and university credits. In addition, they do provide extracurricular activities and orientation after graduation. Finally, they also offer international mobility, quality of services and assistance to the persona (Monti, 2018). Still, college housing is a minority choice compared to other options. According to Eurostat, in Italy around 75% of students still live with their families during the university years (Monti, 2018). So, they either live in the same city of their university or commute systematically from home. Second 15% of students share a private rented apartment with their peers while only 1.7% choose to live in a student housing complex while 0.4% live in a college (Monti, 2018). Still, in Pavia the number of students choosing to live in colleges is much higher than the national average. According to MUR (2022), the University of Pavia is attended by 23.849 student for the academic year 2020/2021. Of those, around 8% of total students live in one of the colleges. This is due to the high number of colleges as well as their history which is still able to attract freshmen. Moreover, in a city of around 70.000 people, students represent more than ¼ of the total population. It is clear how the university and the city live hand in hand (De Lotto et al., 2022).

We saw how the collegio can be a place of relations of various type among various people. Such relationships generate an intangible social capital. This is an important part of their third mission. Building ties and relations was, and still is, an important part of the colleges. The relevance of the alumni associations, public forums and academia

exchange all aim towards forming better students in both their field of study and in the soft skills of everyday life (Monti, 2018). In fact, forming capable people rather than just scholars is the final objective of colleges. Creating bonds and ties, strong and weak networks is fundamental. Hence, human capital is here stressed. However, Monti (2018) in his assessment of Italian colleges denotes how another form of capita is present. The “personal capital” (Monti, 2018, pp.48) is therefore intended as the emerging relations that a student can achieve as a college member, and it is the sum of economic, human, cultural and social capital.

In her overview of college housing in Italy, Belforte noted how colleges were a space of positive “in between” times from family housing to life on one’s own (1991). Indeed, she noted that the college introduces students to a more independent way of living but with some assistance to limit setbacks. It is a condition of increased freedom without the risks associated with house management. Moreover, on the other side, families feel more comforted to leave their kids to colleges rather than let them test the housing market (Belforte, 1991). A sense of mutual assistance is born within floormates that students living on their own or that share a flat are less prone to have (Belforte, 1991). Here, interpersonal relations are stimulated by spatial proximity in the dorms. In the post-Fordist city, where individualism is prevalent, living in colleges counterbalance such individual tendency and fosters co-management of issues, better stress-management and provide a relief valve for students (Belforte, 1991). As a result, the biggest challenge of colleges is how to foster and develop the individuality of each own student while promoting a sense of communion and exchange between members (Belforte, 1991). In architectural terms, it is necessary that private and communal spaces are unified and that they do not neglect each other. Consequently, in between spaces or frontiers, where private and communal areas join each other becomes the space of reciprocal exchange (Belforte, 1991). Finally, a more outward dimension of colleges must be addressed. Indeed, the localization and dimension of the facilities play a role in determining the bonds with the collectivity, the access to external services of general use to avail a very detrimental dichotomy of home (college) and study (university) which would impoverish the sociocultural life of college members (Belforte, 1991). The dimension and position of the facility is of the utmost importance. It must balance the surrounding environment in order to favor the adequate availability of basic services as well as favoring the development of a positive relationship between student members and the vicinity (Belforte, 1991). To sum up, the spatial organization of colleges ought to favor the integration of students of all genders, of different cultural backgrounds, parts of the world and of different university departments. Then they should have spaces for the formation of groups. Finally, to avail any sort of segregation, colleges must have a direct opening to the city, meshing with the urban context so to guarantee cultural exchanges (Belforte, 1991).

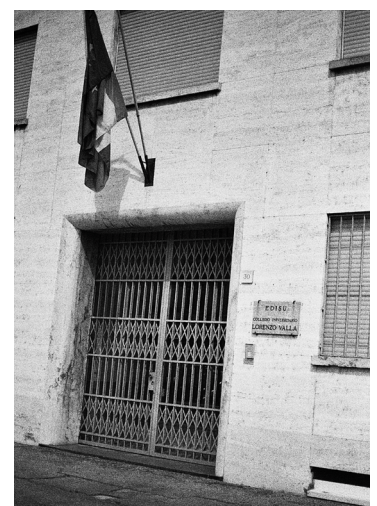


Image 2 & 3. Entrance of the Edisu Collegio Valla next to the Ticino River (author own picture)

### 7.c) Giancarlo De Carlo and the Plan for the University of Pavia

Pavia is a city of a long history. It was first built by the Romans around the typical *castrum* which is still visible today in the historic center, and it is represented by the two main arteries of Via Strada Nuova (south-north axis) and Corso Cavour (east-west axis) (De Lotto, 2008). From that, the city expanded during the Visconti's family ruling in the 14th century, when the university was established in the Strada Nuova area. The old bridge crossing the Ticino River was refurbished and the Certosa monastery was built outside of the city as well as the Castello Visconteo (De Lotto, 2008). During the Spanish ruling in the 16th century the first colleges existing today were erected, those of Borromeo and Ghisleri (De Lotto, 2008).

Fast forward to the 20th century, the first regulatory plan for the city was emanated in 1903. In brief, it promoted the expansion of the city outside of the city center and the first ever edification for housing purposes of what was before only farmland (De Lotto, 2008). Twenty years later a new regulatory plan was published. It aimed at targeting urban development which until that time was extremely random in spatial terms. The city grew to 40.000 inhabitants. Moreover, the industry eclipses the university in importance as Pavia becomes an industrial city. More than 16.000 people are employed in the secondary sector and the Necchi sewing machine company covers up to 55% of the total national market at the end of World War II (De Lotto, 2008). Thanks to the industrialization of the city, the population increases to 67.960 inhabitants in 1955. Nonetheless, rooms per inhabitants are below the 1:1 ratio at 0.96 (De Lotto, 2008). It is still positive considering the 0.88 ratio of 1950, showing great urbanization in that period (De Lotto, 2008).

The 1970s is a decade of great changes for Pavia. Secondary activities disappeared from the city center with a constant increase in the tertiary and services. Segregation among classes became evident in as much as the city is labeled as the city of the "two Pavie", meaning bourgeoisie in the city center and lower classes in the periphery. Such hypothesis of stark division of spaces and classes valorized by the lack of services and leisure spaces in the peripheral neighborhoods (De Lotto, 2008). It is because of such reason that the following plan drawn up by Giovanni Astengo and Giuseppe Campos Venuti opts for a new philosophy for the city which is alternative to the conventional urban plans of the 1970s Italian cities (De Lotto, 2008). Finally, prior to the enactment of the new regulatory plan, the historic center of Pavia was in way worse conditions than the one of today. It was estimated that around 3674 housing units were in degraded condition, making up to 3.4% of the total units of the city (Venuti and Oliva, 1978).

It was indeed the 1970s that represented ideally the beginning of the renewal of the city of Pavia. In this decade the Municipality adopts their new Piano Regolatore Generale (General Regulatory Plan) and the Piano dei Servizi (Plan of Services). Simultaneously, the University of Pavia assigned to architect Giancarlo De Carlo the development of the new scientific departments, commonly referred to as the Polo Cravino. Looking at the municipal papers of those years, it emerges a disequilibrium in the city. Socioeconomic disparities within neighborhoods, the critical conditions of architectural heritage, the lack of public housing and finally a nonexistent environmental protection program were all aspects of city management that the city administration had to face (Venuti and Oliva, 1978). In brief, the new plan proposed to invert such conditions through a methodology that was rebranded as the *cinque salvaguardie* (five safeguards) for the city (Venuti and Oliva, 1978). These were public service; social welfare; productivity; environmental and historical areas preservation (2/3 of citizens lived here) and strive for equal growth and increased services (Venuti and Oliva, 1978). Speaking of planning, the GRP provisioned the actuation of its envisioned pluriannual projects by public and private instruments and through direct and preventive interventions, which was very forward thinking for its time and considering the scale and size of the city in question (Venuti and Oliva, 1978). As a matter of fact, the new Cravino university pole designed by Giancarlo De Carlo,

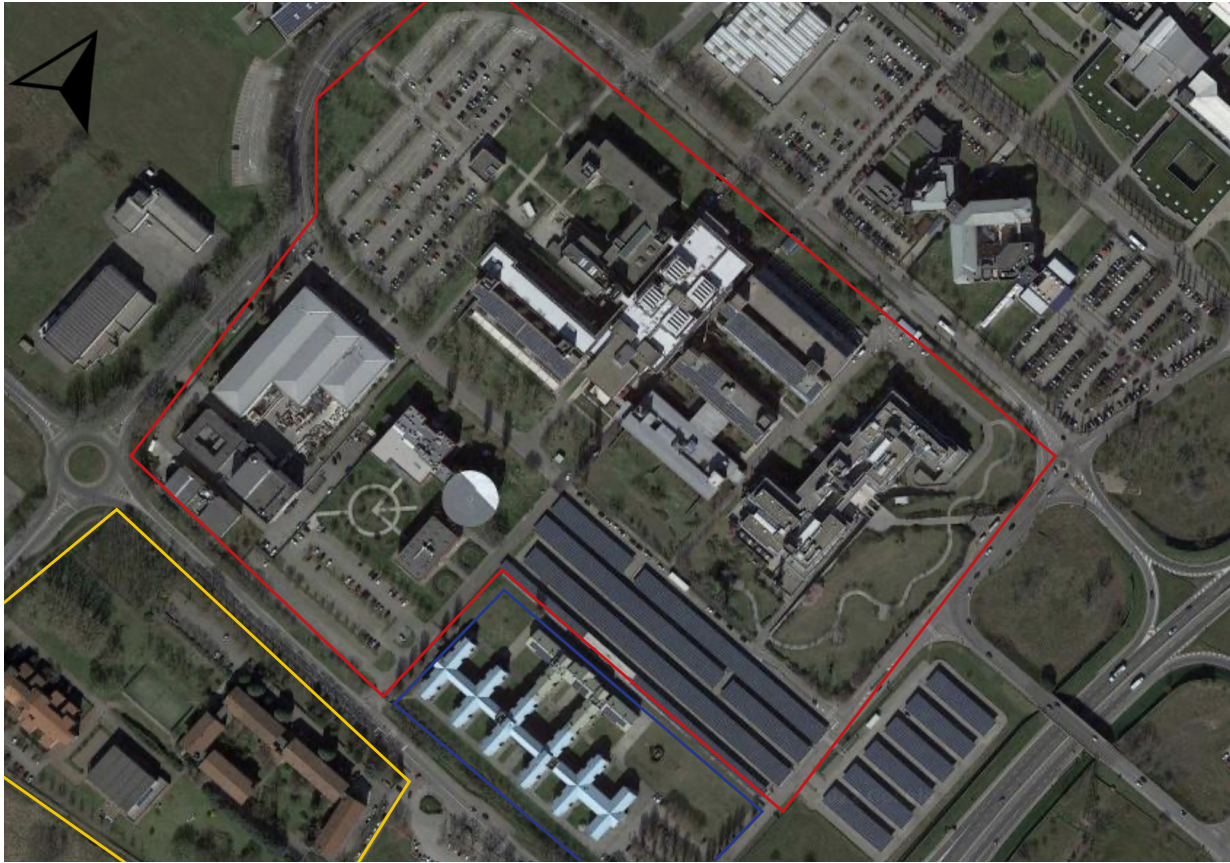
located in the peripheral north-west sector of the city signifies the efforts made by the municipality in such direction. The GRP's regulations were made ad hoc so to favor university development in the area (Venuti and Oliva, 1978). The university indeed signed a planning pact with the municipality for the construction of new facilities in the area. Overall, the plan added 560.000 mq of spaces for the new faculties of engineering and biology and genetics, library services, and a new National Research Council facility (Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, CNR) all of which were funded through the University of Pavia's own treasury (Venuti and Oliva, 1978).

In the wake of the Italian university expansion and the new social ferments of the sixties, the university of Pavia counted around 4.550 students. At that time, the municipality of Pavia, whose mayor was Giovanni Vaccari from the Italian Socialist Party jointly with the university rectorate decided to open the city to the university, viewing the latter as a new pro-active force in the re-development of the small city of Pavia (Berzoralì, 2017). Having in mind the renewal of the historic center of Pavia, which dated back to the early Middle Age and even Roman times in some of its oldest parts, a new series projects and financing started in which the university was directly entrusted the restoration and re-use of abandoned spaces in the inner city for a new university use (Berzoralì, 2017).

Following the new Italian university building law 641/1967 which sought to expand financing to university for the renewal of facilities, the University of Pavia appointed a new board for the requalification of the city facilities that would become part of the university building asset (Berzoralì, 2017). Their aim was to co-operate with the municipality to provide a new vision and guidelines for a new development of the university which sought to be parallel to that of the city's own urban plan, in a way to create a sound university-city bond able to stand in between the university élites and the new phenomenon of university massification. As a result, rector Antonio Fornari in 1970 saw in architect and urbanist Giancarlo De Carlo a potential figure for the ambitious project. The university went on in buying lands on greenfield areas to be repurposed for university use.

University building architecture played a pivotal role in the works of Giancarlo De Carlo. For him, the university campus could not be a foreign space within the city. Thus, university ought to be a cohesive part of city life (Delsante, 2007). De Carlo believed that, in the urban life of the city, the university campus should take a fluid form and permeate the urban texture of the city (Delsante, 2007). This was so in a time, the 1960s, in which higher education institution started to be massified, with public universities opening to all strata of societies.

Although some projects never took off and others were abandoned over land ownership disputes, it is still worth noticing how the University of Pavia planned for a full expansion in both the inner city and peripheral areas of the city in a way that was very peculiar at that time. Indeed, the city administration met with the university body in 1975 resulting in a planning act for the Sectorial General Plan (Piano Generale di Settore) in which both parts agreed to a cohesive urban development for the city (Berzoralì, 2017). Broadly speaking, the plan aimed at remodeling university spaces to make them citizen-friendly rather than only spaces for students so to enlarge the type of users these spaces would welcome. At the same time, the re-urbanization of Pavia was keen to the student population (Berzoralì, 2017). That also relieved the city center of some services since the university literally pushed the boundaries of the city by opening new facilities in what were abandoned lands in the outskirt. Still, a no precise definition of both were ever given in the sectorial general plan (Berzoralì, 2017). The "De Carlo Plan", as many called it, understood the university as a multipolar body within the city through a series of concentrations and dispersions of spaces named central, intermediate, and peripheral poles, which were interconnected through spatial and a-spatial fluxes of interaction and information. This was made so also given the intention of the rectorate of the university to open the academia to 18.000 new students (Berzoralì, 2017). However, this had a socio-political aftermath on the urban development with the appropriation of spaces and consequently meaning by the student demographic over other users and demographics. The two new models of the città universitaria and that of the disaggregated and multipolar university expressed a new type of cultural aggregation that became dispersed and not confined anymore to specific spaces (Berzoralì, 2017).



Map 2. Location of the greenfield Cravino Campus (red), the Collegio Volta (blue) and Collegio Nuovo (yellow) (Author own elaboration, Image taken from Google Maps)

In the years 1976 to 1983, the De Carlo Plan costed around 33.836.000.00 lire. The money was spent for the new Cravino university hub Faculty of Engineering (the Cravino Genetics Dept. was fully finance by the CNR – National Research Council), new labs and a new polyfunctional sport facility next to the faculty (Berzoralì, 2017). The restoration of buildings in the historic Palazzo Centrale, the main building of the University of Pavia, were funded by private banks and the Lombardy Region. Nonetheless, the plan never fully met the university expectations neither it made Pavia a functional univercity (Berzoralì, 2017). Neither De Carlo nor the university body expected such an uncontrolled growth. Indeed, the expected 18.000 students forecasted by the plan were, in practice, 20.000 in 1981, which became 27.000 ten years later (Berzoralì, 2017). As a result, the plan was never able to create such a dichotomy between city and university, and it later became evident that the uncontrolled expansion of the university had eaten up large portions of the city, segregating people and social activities from the city center (Berzoralì, 2017). At the turn of the 21st century, Pavia counted 14 colleges, or university residential units, 10 of which of public nature while 4 run by private organizations (Berzoralì, 2017). At the peak of university expansion in the 2000s, 16% of the total student body of the University of Pavia lived in one of the residential units, compared to an average of 2% for the rest of Italy, showing the great importance of these spaces in urban social life of Pavia as well as in the housing market (Berzoralì, 2017). In the early 2000s, Pavia hosted 25.000 students, 1.088 professors and researchers and 968 administrative workers and technicians employed by the university over a total of 71.214 people living in the city in 2001. (ISTAT, n.d.)

Among all De Carlo's plans, the scientific university hub commissioned by the University of Pavia is perhaps the one with the most puzzling story which implications are carried on to this day. The new plan was conceived within the new local city regulatory plan of Astengo and Campus Venuti. Therefore, the campus was the initiator of the new plan for Pavia since many of the new university facilities were part of a bigger urban renewal strategy actuated through punctual interventions in strategical locations (Delsante, 2007). Former rector of the university Plinio Fracarro strongly advocated in the 1950s for the foundations of new colleges as an identarian part of the city of Pavia. An early attempt of university branding



through iconic features of the institutions, such as the core location in the city and the college entities. Moreover, in De Carlo's view, the new university of Pavia would have been articulated into three different categories of spaces (Delsante, 2007). The first, the central pole, located in the historical city of Pavia, would have been destined to research and teaching. Simultaneously, intermediary spaces would be spaces in which the university would interact with the rest of the city social life through the college themselves. Finally, peripheral poles would reunite the university life with services for inhabitants.

This would have in turn led to a more complex understanding of universities, creating new synergies in the city which would facilitate an intricate node of socio-spatial relationships for new images of Pavia (Delsante, 2007). De Carlo planned a university but having in mind the whole city so to make the university live in osmosis with Pavia (Delsante, 2007). This is a dichotomy that endures to this day, which made this work spring in the first place. In order, the plan for the new scientific pole of the University of Pavia in 1971 purposefully chose to separate humanities and scientific faculties. In fact, the humanities retained their place in the historical city center in the ancient buildings in Via Strada Nuova whilst the new scientific campus was designed outside of the historic center and the train station. Stylistically and socially speaking, this choice was relevant. Indeed, putting the new scientific laboratories in the old city would have meant a socio-spatial discontinuity, the "historic" life of the old town abruptly by the modernity of the new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) faculties (Delsante, 2007). Also, laboratories in the city center would not meet current building regulation standards. Consequently, the new Polo Cravino took shape, and hosting all scientific faculties and departments from the university, creating a line of continuity with the proximal San Matteo Hospital. De Carlo planned the backbone of the new University of Pavia through a new look and functions. Therefore, De Carlo himself described the new plan as "unitary" because it aimed at creating a line of continuity between buildings, functions, and spaces, but also "sequential" since it can be divided into different areas, roles, and purposes (Delsante, 2007).

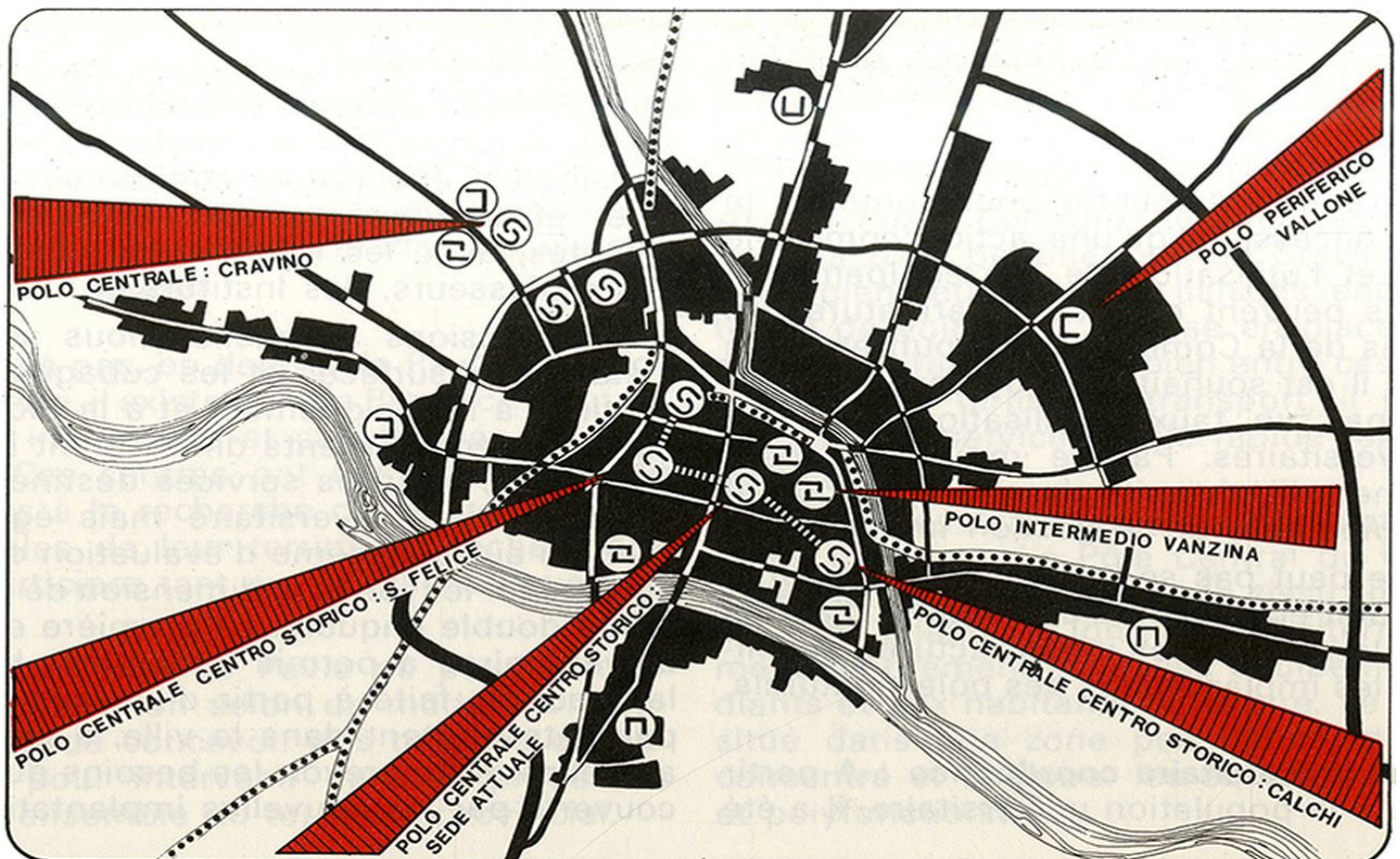


Figure 1. Drawing by Giancarlo De Carlo showing the synergies across campuses with the central, intermediate and peripheral poles. (From *Artribune*)

Looking beyond the Polo Cravino by De Carlo, it is safe to say that the University of Pavia made huge efforts to rejuvenate their real estate portfolio through the rehabilitation of dilapidated buildings in the historic center as well as expanding their scientific hubs in the peripheral areas of the city. In order, during the 660th anniversary ceremony, current rector of the university Francesco Svelto officialized the new project “Campus della Salute” in what was part of the S. Matteo Hospital. The area of about 8500sqm will host libraries, classrooms and offices and costing 18€ millions of which 5.8 million will be provided by the Region of Lombardy (Fiorani, 2021). Next, the expansion continues in the historic center, the former monastery San Tommaso hosts the new library while the monastery S. Felice is now home of the faculty of Economics (Fiorani, 2021).



Image 4. View of the Cravino Campus from the university park (author own picture)

Further, university is also expanding its museum pole. As of today, the university owns several museal areas ranging from archeology to natural sciences and botanic gardens, all of which financed by the university itself through fundraising activities, donations, and internal budgets (Fiorani, 2021). Finally, the university is willing to expand the college system as well. Although not directly owned by the university, the latter is trying to get all need-based colleges under its wings and have all students, even those not residing in a college, to be entrusted into one college, rector Svelto stated (Fiorani, 2021). Such expansion is also due to the increasing number of students choosing the University of Pavia as their institutions. Currently, the institution holds the record for the highest number of women enrolled in the STEM faculties in the Lombardy region, closing the gap between gender disparities in the university system (Fiorani, 2021).

## **8) Site Analysis: Understanding the campus city and its people**

### **8.a) Campus design and sociospatial relations among the student community in Pavia**

To begin with, it is important to analyze the urban morphology of Pavia's campuses. Indeed, the two main facilities differ in urban design as well as faculties being hosted. The central campus is in the middle of the city center of Pavia. It is a 15 minutes' walk away east to the the train station and south of the Castello Visconteo, the main green space of the citycenter. Heading east, surpassing the train station, the Cravino campus is found. Ideally, the San Matteo Hospital is the last checkpoint before entering the rural province, of which the campus Cravino is one of the few instances of built environment. Another minor campus exists in the city of Cremona, which is confined to the department of musicology only, but it will not be considered in this work. The chapter will provide an analysis of each of the two main campuses of the University of Pavia, understand their structure and location in the city. From this it will draw a sociospatial conclusion on how campus design effects the univercity.

In order, the campus in the city center is among the oldest buildings of the city. Its location in the core of the urban grid has made the unit a recognizable element of the landscape. It takes the shape of a huge square with each side having its own street. The front entrance faces Corso Strada Nuova, one of the two main arteries of the city center from north to south. Thus, the university blends with the rest of the historical urban environment. Moreover, Corso Strada Nuova is a partially pedestrian street since access to the city center is limited to public transports and taxis. Consequently, students, faculties and university workers blend in the crowd as soon as they step outside the building. This is a point of increased relevance. The fact that university faces outwardly to pedestrian street creates a sense of continuity with the rest of city center, offering functional diversity as well as diversity of city users alongside shops, restaurants, offices, and administrative buildings.

Inwardly, the campus is composed of a series building units around quadrangle courtyards with arcades. Courtyards offer different compositional mix of functions. Indeed, buildings in each courtyard relate to different faculties or administrative offices and the rectorate. In this way, functions are clustered, and halls mark the transition from the faculties to the administrative areas. Moreover, just next to the campus we find the college Plinio Fraccaro, which follows the same architectural design of the rest of the university buildings. During fieldwork visit, it emerged that during daytime hours a distinction of practices and demographic in each courtyard exist. Indeed, the rectorate building was not particularly attended by students who, when not in class, moved to the central cloister, where the university cafeteria is located as well as being the only one with picnic tables. Indeed, at lunch time, on site observation appeared that students would pour into the area. Early hours observation also showed that classrooms are preemptively closed before 8am ca. Talking to one professor, such measure is taken for maintenance reasons. Classrooms are very old, and access is not permitted outside of class hours. As a result, students poured outside in the early hours of the day. In winter times, this resulted critical given the open-air structure of the university. This is an everlasting conflict between student unions and the rectorate. Talking with members of the UDU Pavia (Unione degli Universitari) student union, they often demanded the opening of classes before class time, but the administration was never in favorable of such decision, not wanting students to eat inside classes for decorum reasons. Indeed, very few indoor spaces are available to eat in case of bad weather while classes are closed. On the other hand, observations during the spring terms revealed how students gathered in small groups of 4/5 people exchanging words and eating meals, which was rarely seen during winter observations.

Moreover, Middha (2019) in her account of microwave use on Australian universities, it was found out that these were aggregatory spaces among stranger students as well as a catalyst for better food waste management and sustainable food practices. Still, in Pavia, the absence of microwave stations in any of the areas of the central campus has produced more than few laments from student unions.

Indeed, in a one-to-one interview with Matteo from Azione Universitaria student union, he reflected on how the lack of microwave was a reason for why students would leave early to eat at home or outside university walls. In addition, he also lamented how the lack of canteens and living spaces within the university hampered socialization. He stated that he rarely had random encounters with other students which led to chats and formation of new relationships.

Towards the center of the main quadrilateral area of the campus the plaza is found. During spring days, it is where students mainly gather, but not only. Indeed, the area represent the main point of connection between the university and the city, both architectonically and socially. Indeed, the plaza functions as a fulcrum of the four axis of the university which, given the quadrilateral structure and having an entrance door for each side, the plaza both represents a hotspot and a shortcut function for pedestrians. First, the plaza is used by students to have meals as well as enjoying sunny days. Moreover, given the easy accessibility of the location, locals also go there the same vary reasons. It was indeed common to see older couples and people walking their dogs inside the campus plaza. It is also worth noticing the touristic relevance of the area. Indeed, in the middle of the plaza three medieval towers stand over the rest of the urban landscape. They are considered as part of the medieval heritage of the city of Pavia, and it is not uncommon to see tourists in the vicinity. It is worth mentioning that, for tourists, the university is an icon in the city in as much as other historical monuments are. The space is treated with a historical relevance rather than a present identity. Tourists look up to Latin signs and frescos forgetting the students that walk alongside them. The same space is treated and understood different by differing users. Finally, the plaza serves as a strategic shortcut for pedestrian who can cross the city center from side to side through and save time instead of walking around the building. Nonetheless, such practice is limited to daytime hours during class days. Indeed, during weekends and festivities, the campus is closed. Access is negated both to students, so neglecting a space for study and socialization, as well as for city users who see themselves forced to circumnavigate the facility to move from one side to the city center to the other given that gates remain closed at all hours of weekends.



Map 3. The city center campus showing entrances, contested areas (red) and fluid spaces (grey) (Author own elaboration, Image taken from Google Maps)



Image 5 (top). View of the Collegio Plinio Fraccaro from the university main courtyard (author own picture)



Image 6 (left). View of the university main courtyard from the southern open street (author own picture)



Image 7 (bottom). A family of tourists resting on the university main courtyard on a Sunday afternoon (author own picture)

To conclude, the city campus in Pavia follows distinctly the directions already addressed by Magdaniel (2013). It does in fact favor a merge, albeit moderate, between the student population, the city community and tourists. The relations are prevalently informal as the non-students enter and exit the buildings easily and without any special permission. The university is more than a place of study but rather part of the architectural and historical landscape of the city. It is worth a visit by tourists as well as being completely walkable. The four axis entrances favor exchange with the exterior and provides pedestrian shortcuts. However, in terms of students' own spatial engagement, lack of microwaves and canteens as well as strict opening hours do limit interactions and uses of the space. Hence, we may conclude that it is the university administration own decisions of closing gates on Sundays and of not providing the necessary equipment and lounges for students that hamper social exchange with the surrounding rather than the building own design. In fact, although Magnani (2013) described city and campus interactions on a mere spatial framework, it fails to address the importance of the authority managing spaces. It is indeed the university authority in Pavia to decide whether or not informal connections with the outside can happen and when through the opening or closing of accesses, taking the role of a perfect gatekeeper of socio-spatial relations.

Different is the greenfield Cravino campus. Here, the campus is surrounded by greenery. In fact, the campus is located north-west of the city center. The campus was planned by De Carlo and part of a bigger planning act that aimed at jointing the university with the city of Pavia. However, actuation did not go to as planned, and only a part of the plan of De Carlo came to light. As a result, the campus today is detached from the rest of the city, the closest area being the San Matteo hospital. Still, a void is present between the two facilities. No development has been made in the surrounding area of the campus, which consequently takes the form of a gated community. The only other buildings in the area are the three colleges of Collegio Nuovo, Collegio Alessandro Volta and the medicine residence of the Collegio Santa Caterina (the main building is in the city center). Access is one, a main entrance where the buses stop in front of. Interestingly enough, the bus lines that from the city arrive to the Cravino campus have there their final stops around the campus, demonstrating how the campus is the at the margin of Pavia. Indeed, most of the students reach the campus via bus, and rarely are student seen walking or cycling in and out of the campus. Arriving by bus, the visitor is soaked into the only entrance of the campus. At peak hours, a massive flow of people enters the tiny gates of Cravino and suddenly disperse.

Inside, stand-alone buildings tower over the greenery, each representing one of the different scientific faculties. Buildings diversify by color stripe, but the design remains mostly the same for all. The only side note is the library, relabeled by the student community as *melanzana* (eggplant in English) due to the violet color which recall that of the vegetable. One main road splits the library from the rest of the building cluster. The latter fell compressed under the same space, one building overshadowing the other. Finally, the greenery is vast, characterized by small trees, walk path, tables, and a pond. During field visits in the summer, it was common to see students having their lunch break outside. Contrary, in the winter the area is often deserted. In fact, during the fall semester, students move inside one of the faculty buildings where the small canteen is located. Contrary to the campus in the city center, here food is served. Also, next to the library is a vast parking lot. Car is among the preferred mean of transportation by commuters.

During interviews with two female students, Laura, 25 a master's degree student in molecular biology and genetics, and Caterina, 29, a PhD, student in urban planning and architecture, they both recalled how the location does not allow students to move freely from and to the campus. This differs from the usual narrative of Pavia as a campus city. Indeed, the greenfield campus in Pavia do not favor student mix. In the focus group carried out in the city center campus, interviewees claimed that they never moved to Cravino. It was not practical, they said, to go study there. They lamented the distance from the city center and the lack of attractive leisure spaces as the reasons why the never went to the campus. Same answers were found during a focus group for Cravino students, who saw the city campus as a distance space.



They did not feel it was a part of the university since they always stayed in Cravino throughout their studying career. Caterina mentioned how she went to the other campus only once during her career (she attended her bachelor, master, and PhD all at the University of Pavia). She stated that she would have loved a mixing of classes between the two campuses. Although unpractical, she would have preferred to stay more in the city center as she confessed that sometimes the Cravino felt a bit oppressive during winter days.

**“Once you enter, you stay here until you are done and go home.”**

*Caterina*

*PhD Student*

Image 8 Parking sign at the Cravino Campus main entrance (author own picture)

She also mentioned how inadequate was the public transport to reach the university campus. She often found the buses packed and felt squeezed up by other students. As a result, when asked about if she ever felt belonging to the University of Pavia, she responded that she would consider herself rather as a Cravino campus student instead as a University of Pavia student.

The other female interviewee, who took a different career path by earning her bachelor’s degree in Rome, University of Rome La Sapienza and then moving to Pavia for her master studies, never felt belonging to the university. Reasons were multiple. Much like Caterina, she also thought that the Cravino was far outside the city center to just move from the two areas conveniently. Also, the interviewee noted how balancing classrooms, laboratories and private life was difficult. Hence, over her staying in Pavia, which has been interrupted by the pandemic, Laura found difficulties in socializing due to demanding lab working hours mixed with elitism by some of her classroom peers which made it difficult to blend in given the stark difference of people’s mindset compared to her previous study experience in Rome. “There are two kinds of people in Cravino, those who live off their small friend groups and those who live as a *recluse*. I met people only from my department and bonded with only a few.” As a result, she graded her previous experience in Rome as better as she identified more with the University of Rome La Sapienza with that of Pavia. Logistics was also factored in her lack of belonging. Out of convenience, she rented a room closer to the Cravino than to the city center. Therefore, her college experience was less that of the stereotypical *città universitaria* and more that study and few relationships. She did not classify her neighborhood outside of the city center as a university area and did not feel to be part of a city campus at all. As a closing note, she would not come back to Pavia for her master studies if she had the options. She did not fit in the city and would have rather suggest Pavia as an undergraduate student location only.

Finally, both location and campus design, as well as the internal management and rules of buildings do indeed create different spatial dynamics between universities and the outer world. Consequently, university life is reported differently depending on the above variables. In the case of Pavia, students of the city campus were more in touch with the rest of the city. Spaces are fluid as citizens move within university walls freely, and do not feel foreigners to the space. Students are used to mix to other city users.

No conflicts were ever reported during interviews with students or professors. They enjoyed the central location as well as the architectural style of the units. Though, this changes when moving to the Cravino campus. Here, the campus is of a greenfield type, gated and informally closed to the public. Indeed, even though access is open to the public, the location does not invite city users inside. Moreover, location do not favor integration between students and other city users, but also among students from different campuses. The ones of Cravino seldomly reported to stay in the other campus and vice versa.

The university city becomes emblematic under a campus design lens. University expansion outside the historical city has led to the broadening of city limits, but this does not necessarily coincide with the expansion of city activities towards peripheral areas. Future university managers should consider, whenever expansionism policies are enacted, that facilities not to be only the physical end point of the process, but also that daily routes must merge different university realities together and with the rest of the urban landscape. This reveals to be especially true in the medium and small university cities where voids, although of smaller scale, may become critical factors in the sustainable and aligned growth of universities and their host cities.

On the one hand, the city campus structure allows the academia to merge with the surrounding both architectonically and socially. It results that the university becomes a public space with a greater urban aggregative potential. Relations are indeed more informal. On the contrary, the greenfield campus becomes a missed chance to add potential public greenery for the urban community. Distance is a barrier to accessibility. STEM students are unable to enjoy the university life of the city center, where the university is not an entity on itself but rather part of a broader cluster of aggregatory spaces in the city. The consequences are also identitarian. Cravino students do not feel part of the university community but rather part of the department they belong to. Although urban design is certainly dictated by necessities as it would not be feasible to have laboratories located in the city center that does not take away a better overall planning of the area. The chances are there to better create synergies between the campus and the surrounding, breaking the conceptualization of the greenfield campus as a campus alienated from the rest of the urban community (Heijer, 2008). Secchi's (1988) urban voids are a constant in the transit from the citycenter to the Cravino campus. From the train station a void, albeit small, opens between the station and the S. Matteo Hospital, and then continues from the latter to the campus. The void is a barrier to movement, an uncrossable crater that divides the two campuses, interrupting urban connections as well as social relations.



Image 9. Cravino students waiting to get into a bus at the bus station at 8.30 am, February 2022 (author own picture)



## 8.b) Entrepreneurism and Third Mission: How does the University of Pavia cope with the challenge?

Although at first glance entrepreneurship strategies and third mission policies may not have a direct spatial effect, in fact they do impact sociospatial relations. Tracing the external activities of the university is important to delineate its profile with the city and the economic sphere of the region. Through an analysis of the activities carried out as well as interviewing Sofia Baggini, Head of Third Mission and Research Services Office, it emerged that the University of Pavia has two main third mission pillars channeled through their Communication Office. First, the university stresses its technical and top research nature. Technological transfer happens mainly through shared intellectual property, university spin offs and third-party contracts. The office opened in 2013, when current rector, former head of the research office tried to rejuvenate the interaction between the university and the territory. Indeed, relations were stagnant in the 2000s while the 1990s was a period of great exchange due to the presence of ST Microelectronics, a multinational company which benefitted from the university through shared patents and exchange of human capital. However, as the city moved to the tertiary, entrepreneurship declined. So, in 2013 the new office was developed. Since then, the university has built a new science park for incubating new university startups, ideas, and technologies. ST Microelectronics remains still the main sponsor of the research activities through funding and scholarships of PhDs projects. Of course, this is parallel to public funding of regional, national, and European scale. Spin off process is also sponsored through the TTO office. As of now, 23 are the spinoff companies and startups from the university of Pavia. The vast majority come from the engineering departments and a few from that of biology. The university also holds shared patents with private, public institutions and other intra-university departments. From the individual side of things, professors often group together under various departments to work on projects. Researchers and professors are also able to work with companies on a one-to-one mode through private contract. However, a professor during an interview carried out in March 2022 with the writer revealed how his own spinoff activity found resistances from the university body.

However, when it comes to relations with the public administration Pavia, relations are different. After years of nonexistent relations between the two in the 2000s in combination of the most stagnant economic years of the university, the latter has now been able to valorize the economic side of research in the eyes of the municipality, Sofia Baggini revealed during the interview. In terms of student entrepreneurship and acceleration of internal startups and spinoffs in the city, the university has been able to involve the municipality in the “Univenture” activity where student startups compete for a 20.000 € co-financed by the city. Last, the university is moving towards promoting curricular internship as part of the curriculum for all students. Yet, this has met resistance by some student unions. Indeed, the city and its territory are indeed weak in terms of internship offerings, and students saw themselves move to other cities to fulfil their internship requirements. In fact, UDU – Coordinamento Diritto allo Studio Pavia, a student union, managed to approve a proposal for reimbursement for students who attend curricular internship 30km away from their university school. It shows the lack of a ramified network in the wider provincial territory of Pavia, making students to seek opportunities elsewhere. This is not a matter of internships, though. Indeed, it can be ascribed to a wider socioeconomic demographical issue of Pavia. Hence economic relations of the city with the university will be a point of major focus in the following student debate.

To sum up, the student city that welcomes almost 5000 new students enrolled each year is not able to retain them afterwards. The lack of innovation and job opportunities in the city aside from very highly specialized and technical activities have led to greater turnovers. The city, university and the regional market have not yet been able to create a solid support system to graduates and young skilled workers. Indeed, those who leave for better opportunities are more than the ones that stay, who are mostly PhDs rather than graduates now working in Pavia, emerged during interviews. This is one of the emerging downsides of the city campus agenda. For a city economy to rely solely on university entrepreneurship when the broader regional context does

not support such activities creates a vacuum in which students come, consume, and leave the city, bringing their cultural capital elsewhere at the end. The interview with Laura, 25, a microbiology and genetics graduate student exemplifies it as she noted how Pavia was a great place for undergraduates but for master students the city nor the market was able to provide enough opportunities for her to stay as she planned to move back to Rome, where she attended her undergraduate studies.

Third mission does not only try to engage with companies and the public administration, but with the population at large, too. The main activity is the Sharper Night, a wider program funded by the European Union and carried out by university researchers that sees different higher academic institutions in Italy engage locally to spread scientific knowledge through dedicated events. Although organizational setbacks due to the pandemic in the past years, the Sharper Night provided to be a useful tool to detach the university from the ivory tower label and engage locally in an informal way. One of the main events in Pavia is carried out in the Visconti Castle where researchers show their projects to the public. The choice of the location is important. The castle is one of the main recognizable elements of the city. It is a powerful tool for public and tourism policies. It is also one of the few spatial elements utilized by the university to promote third mission activities outside of the university campus. Indeed, activities are predominantly aspatial in nature. However, data collected are few and it was not possible to make a full esteem of the socio-urban impact of the event. Finally, the university has no plans to involve the colleges into the third mission activities of the institution. Indeed, although they are both part of the same ecosystem and cannot live one without the other, they are different bodies. As such, the governing body of the university has yet to include colleges in their activities. We will see how this unfolds further in Pavia in the following paragraphs.



Figure 2. Screenshot from a social media post of UDU student union signaling the approval of reimbursement for students attending a curricular internship at least 30km away from campus (from UDU Instagram page)

To sum up, Pavia does not seem to have a coherent entrepreneurial strategy which reflects and of the three entrepreneurial university models of Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth (2018). We could potentially define the University of Pavia as hybrid between Model 1 and Model3 given the high reliance of patenting and research activities as well as territorial engagement. However, the latter seems more a consequence of the long rootedness of the university in the city since the 13th century rather than a current active policy of territorial activity. The lack of internship opportunities found by some students resulting in student unions asking the university to provide reimbursement for internship commute signals how the university and the territory is fragmented. There is no continuous line between university and local entrepreneurship.

### 8.c) College, housing and studentification: living the *fuorisede* life during a pandemic.

As Rizzo (2004) noted, colleges are indeed a very peculiar form of living which mixes private and social life together. The structure, location and design of residences and buildings do in fact shape the relations among college members. Moreover, in Pavia, history also plays a role. Colleges differ in terms of typology (merit-based, need-based, and religious) but also in terms of year of edification. Indeed, we can trace two major epochs of foundation. The first trace of colleges can be ascribed in between the 17th and 19th century. Here colleges emerged as the primary residence for students in Pavia. Six colleges were founded around this time. Of these, some are the ones most renewed today such as the Collegio Borromeo and Collegio Ghisleri (both merit-based) and the Collegio Cairoli. They retain much history, and sense of belonging is heavily stressed. Then the Collegio Valla was built during fascism part of a much wider national policy of student housing. Finally, the rest were all funded during Italy's economic boom from the late 1950s to the 1970s, with a couple of instances of late 1990s foundation. The postwar addition is mainly to be ascribed to former rector of University of Pavia Plinio Fraccaro, who saw colleges a strategical tool for the resurgence of the institution and that of Pavia as a student city. Moreover, some colleges are also gender based. Indeed, six colleges are open to both genders, while five are destined to female students at the University of Pavia. The remaining five are instead for male students only.



Image 10. Internal courtyard of the Collegio Ghisleri (author own picture)

In depth, during the time spent in Pavia for the matter of this research, direct observation was carried out inside different colleges as well as interviews in both small focus groups of three and with one-to-one interviews. Moreover, during the stay in the Collegio Cairoli it was possible to meet Federico Magnani, coordinator of the project “Collegi di Pavia.it” which seeks to bring under the same umbrella all colleges and programming a series of activities that makes in touch people from different colleges and the rest of the city.

Activities vary from varsity tournaments, challenges, and panels as well as a yearly treasure hunt that involves a team from each college and it's carried out around the street of Pavia's historic center. Federico, before joining the project, was himself a college member in Pavia. He described that entering the college is a totalizing activity, and freshmen students take part in informing and community building activities. Since the early days indeed, each college trains its new member to be an active part of the community, building relations, trust, identity, and cooperation. Nevertheless, peer relations differ from college to college, not only in terms of programmed activities but also due to location and design. Indeed, Federico explained to me, the Collegio Golgi, next to the Cravino campus, given its form as a series of six building rows with small rooms that resemble more a condominium, sense of belonging and identity is minor. He noted that the structure is way more dispersive, communal areas are less and thus interaction rates are low. Instead, the Collegio Ghisleri, located in the city center near the Visconti Castle, in a 18th century square building with an internal courtyard and inward facing balconies, he noted, students are way more cohesive and integrated in a more pleasing environment.

Identity is therefore a focal point in college life. The student is a member first and foremost. Federico explained me that those who chose colleges as a residence tool only are seen negatively from the rest of the college community. Marta, 26, a *fuorisede* student informed me that her college friends who did not participated in their respectively colleges were seen in fact negatively by their college peers. They sometimes were subjects to skirmishing and bullying because they were not part of the community. On the other hand, when participation does happen social capital rates are generally higher among college members when compared to non-college students. Moreover, in colleges students are less keen to drop out of classes, according to Federico the reason is simple, colleges offer tutoring for their members. Extracurricular services represent one of the

third mission objectives of colleges. The college life is stressed through informing seminars on various topics as well as the alumni program in which former members are invited to speak about their experience in Pavia. Just like universities, in Pavia colleges have their rankings, too. Although unofficially, they rank each other in terms of prestige and richness of services. This is reflected in two ways in the daily relations among the different college administrations as well as in between students from different colleges. In the first case, for instance, when the Collegio Cairoli turned into a hybrid form as the first public Edisu college to also become merit-based, the four other merit-based colleges opposed to such decision marking their higher social status that Cairoli could not ever achieve. For them, public image and brand status were hit by the decision. On a student level, elitism is largely present in Pavia.

**“Borromeo and Ghisleri’s male members,  
people are different. Just have a look at the  
architecture.**

**It is not a student housing, it’s a royal palace!”**

*Federico Magnani  
Collegidipavia.it*

Their wealth and family status are higher, and the type of college life is different. They supposedly spend more time on books and are less keen to social alcoholism. In fact, when Cairoli turned into a semi merit-based college, he saw how new freshmen looked more like their Borromeo counterparts compared to those of previous years. Consequently, as the admission criteria changed, the type of new members enrolling changed too. This comes to signify how the status and social façade of the college is crucial in their positioning within the university life of Pavia. It follows that different colleges have different branding strategies to attract different typologies of students. From this, different identities arise also shaped by the college’s own imaginary.

Informal practices among different colleges emerged during interviews, too. From pride in winning different varsity tournaments to night raids where students spoil rival colleges facades, ranking is felt among students. One of the most curious cases is the Collegio Griziotti, one of the newest but also most distant from the city center. During the focus group carried out there, one of the interviewees stated that such rivalries happen the most within the colleges in the city center. They do indeed participate in such juvenile actions, yet rival other colleges seldom reply. Distance influence social rivalries too. Because Griziotti is the most distant from the city, and out of reach especially when bus rides are inactive, they are left out of such practices. Instead, in the city center, where college buildings are few meters away from each other, rivalries as well as sense of belonging is stronger. Belonging and sense of place relate to yet another dimension, that of safety. Indeed, both during interviews and site visit inside college halls, doors were left unlocked. Some were even left completely open, and those in the hallway could easily look inside private rooms. Indeed, when asked members replied that there was no need in locking the doors. In fact, entrance is regulated for all colleges. Strangers must leave their ID upon entry. Moreover, as colleges count on average around 120 beds on average, students often refer to know each other, at least those living in the same hallway. As such, level of trust is ultimately very high, and instances of intrusions or thefts were never reported during interviews. Identity passes through reciprocal trust among members. Consequently, membership rates and sense of identity are evaluated through ones one participation in the college internal activity as well as mutual help and reciprocal trust. Once freshmen get in, they rarely leave. Again, distance is a barrie to entry. Belonging changes depending on the pockets areas. Wattis (2013) revelas to be true. Students in the most historical and central colleges have higher pride rates than their peers living in farer colleges from the center. Hubbard (2009) defined certain areas as the student street. This is truer for historical colleges of the city center only. The rest remain relegated to objects in the landscape. They do not carry social values. As a result, different *habitus* are generated (Bourdieu, 1984) . In Griziotti pride is not in being first but last. The belonging of the outsiders.

However, Federico also acknowledge how meritocracy and social status sometimes can be detrimental to students' health. He explicitly referred to cases of mental breakdowns in the female college of Santa Caterina. It is a merit-based college. Of course, to stay in a college for two or more years creates relationships and bonds that are different to erode. Nonetheless, the threat of being kicked out due to poor grades impacted heavily on some students' friends of his. Meritocracy thus becomes controversial here and reflects Bourdieu (1984) and Florida's (2004) statements. To privilege academic merit also means to turn an eye on certain socioeconomic preconditions. Family counts too. In colleges such as the Ghisleri and Borromeo indeed, students of former members have an "easy access", Federico said, "there are sons of noteworthy people." Borromeo students go to exams wearing the college badges knowing that they may get special treatments during oral examinations, he continued. These are minor cases now but were evident in the past. Florida's class of creatives ascend social classes via formal education. Academic merit counts as a criterion that reflects one own's proven status. Florida warned that this could lead to discrepancies over right to the city and use of space. The city of creatives, in fact, welcomes those with merit while others are relegated to subpar status. This is verified in Pavia as well. Indeed, in late May 2022 colleges have opened the Festival of Merit where high caliber figures in different fields present discussion of a broad range of topics. Federico, as well as Caterina and Laura during interviews confirmed that college status based on meritocracy and grades creates division within the student community. Members of merit-based colleges and more in general better students do feel entitled to higher status within the student community of Pavia. Hence, it emerges that in the university city students are not equal. In Pavia, where academic excellence is among the pillars of third mission, entrepreneurship, and branding for competition, it culminates in a population of students overshadowing others over matter of G.P.A.

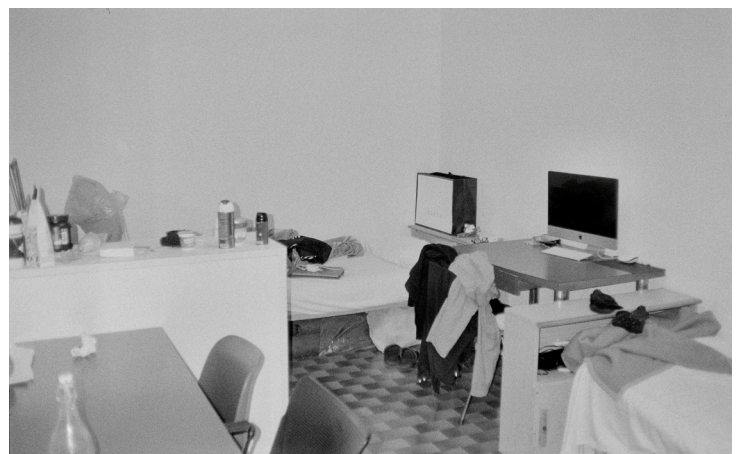


Image 11 (top). Entrance of Collegio Griziotti (author own picture)



Image 12 & 13 (right). College room of Loris at Collegio Griziotti equipped with a small kitchen (author own picture)

Image 14 (bottom). A poster from the Griziotti dorm hall (author own picture)



On the flip side, colleges are famous for their parties and moments of nightlife and social alcoholism as well. Every year, colleges carry on their own party during the months of May and June, and the events are open to both college members and the rest of the student community. Broadly speaking, they are very exclusive parties given the few tickets available for each party. All students try to participate, yet parties range from 50 to 1000 attendees. Curiously, students who are members of the college party in question do attend but as workers only. Moreover, the party formula is pretty much the same for all parties. Alcohol is offered via open bar and a theme is run. Also, Halloween parties in Cairoli are famous for free entrance for female members of colleges. Finally, socially speaking, the treasure hunt involves members from each college. On a one-day event, members wear the iconic colors of their college and search for hints and a final treasure around the city center. The city gets congested with students who have visit each college to find clues and win the final prize. It is relevant for two reasons. Socially, the winning college gets elevated as well as its members, scaling the social ladder of colleges. Second, spatially the city gets invaded by students. It is a demonstration of the university spirit of Pavia. Citizens welcome students in this occasion, but as we shall see later this is not always the case.

A two-sided phenomenon exists. On the one hand, colleges, especially those of merit, retain a certain status above the rest of the student community. This was evident during interviews and focus groups. Meritocracy reinforces such status but at the same time it provides to be an ally to mental disorders of students who get overstressed by the constant pressure of performing to confirm their status. In the campus city different student strata exists, and not all students are equals. Of course, this is a broader phenomenon that happens also in other academic realities. However, in Pavia, where colleges retain a certain status and the city is devoted to university life, the circumstance exacerbates to the extremes. Belonging thus, must be obtained through honors, and proved constantly in certain student spheres. In speaking with a group of female students from the merit based Collegio Nuovo, they all referred that maintaining an above standard G.P.A. was a source of stress. They said that if they were part of a different college, they would have had less pressure in performing during the exam periods.

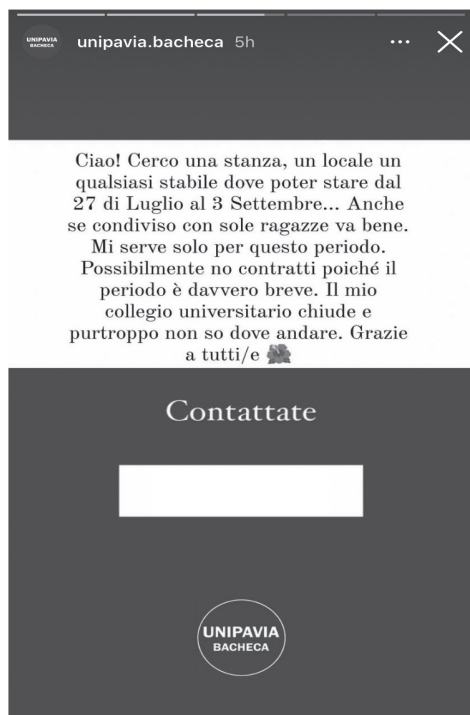
All in all, students highlighted positives in both living the college and in a rented flat. For Anna, who spent her bachelor in a rented home and then moved to the Collegio Nuovo, a merit based female college next to the Cravino campus, the house life strengthens one's own organizational skills and responsibilities while the college improves socialization. The interviewee felt that moving from the Apulia region in the south of Italy to Pavia right out of high school and becoming autonomous was for herself a big step towards adulthood. Not only housekeeping, but Anna mentioned bills and money management as the biggest outcome from living on her own. On the flip side, college life pushes even the shiest of individuals to get out of their comfort zone and socialize. Although the Collegio Nuovo provides students with single rooms which allow for privacy, the most tenured members involve newcomers into the daily activities of the collegio. The *matricola*, namely freshman, is a set of activities that new members have to perform. It is a way to instill identity in new members. Cheering for college varsity sports is also intense in the Collegio Nuovo as an internal structure is present with a head of the ultras team as well as member designated to start choirs, and freshmen have to be present at games, too. But not only colleges are preferred in terms of socialization but also in terms of proximity. Outside of the Collegio Griziotti which is located in the outmost part of Pavia, all the other colleges are set either next to the city center campus or the Cravino pole. This would facilitate commuting to and from the university. College design is also among the deciding factor over choosing to live in an apartment. The vastness of the green spaces provided by the Collegio Nuovo was an added value. In fact, the interview took place in the main courtyard where many students were studying. It must be noted that the interview was carried out in mid-June during a sunny day. The rigid temperatures during winter months would perhaps discourage students to study outside the preferred study areas. Finally, as mentioned the Collegio Nuovo is a gendered college. For Anna, it was important to be part of a college that empowers women in their studies and that accompanies them in their job search.

Figure 3 (right). Screenshot from a social media post of unipavia.bacheca, where students can post questions and request. Here showed a request for a room due to the closing of the college (from unipavia.bacheca Instagram page)

If colleges are such a lopsided space, it is important to investigate also why they are chosen over private rented room like in the majority of all students outside of Pavia. Indeed, a recent report from the University of Pavia on the local estate market showed that, not surprisingly, the city center is where most of the wealth is concentrated. The city is indeed characterized by a stark spatial distinction when it comes to wealth. Peripheral areas in the north-west are strikingly poorer, and social segregation based on economic status is evident (Colleoni and Daconto, 2018). The central urban nucleus sees family as the first demographical category, followed by students and young workers. Immigrants and the elderly mostly live towards the edge of the city. The castle is a buffer zone. People, landscape, and quality of live impoverishes as we advance towards the periphery. Population rates are slowly increasing compared to previous years, and students seems to be the university with its high number of *fuorisede* is a valuable demographic resource. The housing market reflects such boost in young people via an increase of both house median prices and rent prices (Breglia and Tiano, 2018). Within the borders of the municipality of Pavia, price rates have increased from 2014 to 2017 in the city center. Similarly, from 2015 to 2017 prices have started to boom also in the semi central zones of the city. Therefore, it may suggest that the increase of prices in the city center forced people to seek housing options in surrounding areas too. High demands have resulted in increased prices there, too (Breglia and Tiano, 2018).

The same can be said for the rent market, which is the one most affecting the student population's needs. In Pavia, around 70% of students come from outside the province, showing how this is among the favorite destination for off-site students (Breglia and Tiano, 2018). Median prices for a bed in a single room in Pavia range from 300 to 400 euros. Yet, prices can go up to 500 euros in the city center (Breglia and Tiano, 2018). Although prices are low when compared to Rome or Milan, or even by standards of the most famous of city campus of Italy, Bologna, Pavia still showed an increase in prices before the Covid -19 pandemic crisis of 2020. Caterina recalled how difficult it was to find a good accommodation at affordable prices in 2019. At the end, she opted for a 1960s apartment in the periphery close to the Cravino campus which furniture was outdated but she still had to pay around 350 euros for a single room.

In comparison, for students living in need-based colleges annual fees vary from 1000 to 3500 euros depending on family wealth (ISEE). Still, they also must provide food for themselves as there are no serviced canteens inside but just small kitchens to cook their own meals. Indeed, during a focus group in the Collegio Cairoli, the most tenured student observed how before the pandemic coffee and brioche were free at the vending machine at breakfast hours. Then during the lockdown only coffee was free. Today, everything is charged to students. Instead, at private, for merit colleges annual fees can go up to 10000 euros per year. Still, canteen and other services are granted to all member students for free in the latter. Moreover, it is important to stress that such colleges offer many scholarships to reduce fees. What's interesting, though, is that all colleges except the Collegio Golgi are closed during the summer months. It is indeed curious when inserted in the broader category of student living. Indeed, often students on a rent leave for home during their summer break, but they still must cover the rent for the time they are not in the house. In case they stay in the city, they have their own apartment. On the contrary, students living in the colleges in Pavia who decide to stay over the summer break do not have any solution since their colleges are going to be closed. The issue is quite widespread.



Through a quick search over different social media channels of university students, many colleges member seek a room for the month of August only. However, is difficult for them to find a regular accommodation since many landlords will not rent rooms for one month only. The sole option is staying at the the Collegio Golgi. Where college students must pay around 200 euro for a bedroom.

During interviews with college students and students living on a rented room, the research focused on their respective housing situation, too. Of course, each student carries its own living background and habits. For the younger ones, Pavia was their first ever experience of living outside the family nucleus. For others, they already had lived on their own in the past in other cities as students as they moved to Pavia in the later stages of their studies. Another important student type that should not be left unaccounted however, is the commuter. For them, living the university life in the campus city is different. They neither live the colleges life of Pavia nor live on their own. What they do is to continuously move back and forth from their city of residence.

Nonetheless, for those interviewed who stay in colleges, the experience is mostly positive. Such statement revealed to be true especially for freshmen students interviewed. In fact, they showed great enthusiasm in being part of college life. Yet, these are unprecedented students. The reason for that is simple. Freshmen and sophomore students today have all enrolled just prior or during the Coronavirus pandemic in Italy. It is indeed true that these students have lived under critical circumstances never seen before. Compared to their counterparts who stayed in their rented room, they suffered less from isolation and lack of socialization, it emerged. In fact, Lombardy, who after the first national lockdown from March to May 2020, also underwent regional lockdowns named as red zones. Masks were mandatory, restaurants and other amenities closed as outdoor living was strictly hampered by anti-covid regulations and curfews.

Though, for college students in Pavia life was different. Albeit social distancing regulations applied within the walls of colleges too, there was much more room for socialization through informal use of space when college keepers were not in sight. Indeed, informal gatherings were commonplace during lockdown periods when the college administrations prohibited socialization practices. Loris, 20, member of the Collegio Griziotti, the most distant from the city center and thus the most isolated from campus life, earned his high school diploma during the first national lockdown and then moved to Pavia. He stayed for a month on a temporary house and then entered the college. Overall, he graded positively his experience in the college also during the pandemic. In fact, he did not feel isolated given the students living there. They created their own group via the chatting app Whatsapp to communicate and organize during covid. They had their own informal parties although they were formally forbidden by the Griziotti administration. A similar pattern emerged in the Collegio Maino during the pandemic. Maino is a more central college in the city. Indeed, in a one-to-one interview with Daniele, 24, graduate student, he admitted that gatherings were still happening throughout lockdown. He indeed spent the time of the pandemic in his single room in the Collegio Maino. Instead of using social media, cooking became a moment of social gathering. He admittedly violated regulations and social distancing restrictions, yet he confessed that this was the only way to have a social life at that time. Thus, living in the collage compared to a flat was beneficial given that he could still take part in social evenings.

Regulations were indeed in place. The college rector punished students who got caught infringing social distancing rules. He himself got caught once. Daniele said that after the third strike for violating covid rules, students would get kicked out of the college, but this has yet to happen at the time of writing. To conclude, the lack of a kitchen inside rooms in the Collegio Manio pushed students towards the canteen to cook, and that became an excuse for informal social gatherings under covid regulations. In contrast, Loris from the Collegio Griziotti, who lives in a college in which rooms were equipped with small stoves, did not have such pretext to meet. So, they sneaked outside their rooms for social drinking and socialization at night without organizing activities via social media groups. What emerges is that furniture configuration in colleges played a role in socialization patterns. In colleges where common kitchen are available, that is an added form of socialization while those who have kitchen inside the rooms resorted to other activities to meet during the pandemic.





Image 15 & 16. Collegio Cairoli kitchen room. Consisting on a series of electric stoves, the open space allowed students to meet during the pandemic due to the need of cooking outside of rooms. This was the case of many colleges with shared kitchens (author own picture)



On the contrary, Marta, 26, who is attending her PhD in Pavia as well as having completed her graduate studies in the same university, spent all his university years in Pavia as a *fuorisede*. Her life during the pandemic was different. She lived with a friend of hers. They currently live together in a house equipped with two rooms, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a small living room close to the city center and the Ticino River. Her lockdown was different. She felt like the city just shut off as she realized how Pavia stopped to be a lively city when the university was closed due to covid regulations. As she was a biology student, she still got to move outside during lockdown as her lab was still operative. Yet, nothing in the city was there outside of research duties. For the first time, she would take a bus ride and be alone in it. Socialization did not happen in any way possible during the deepest moments of the pandemic. Moreover, now that there are no more regulations in place, she saw how life between college students and other students is indeed different. The prior, for her, seems to have gone back to “normality” while she is still struggling to get back into socializing activities. She stated during her one-to-one interview that college students seemed keener to socializing and more involved in the city social life. She cited as an example the college varsity tournaments. Her friends who were rooting for their own college were way more involved in the cheering up of their college team. Marta, instead, as a college foreign did not feel any attachments and saw the event as boring. This reinforces the prior statement that colleges are indeed places of intense socialization and of high social capital rates. This has endured also during the pandemic where via informal and often forbidden gathering college members maintained the internal relations alive. The two cases presented are emblematic. Marta could still move around the city since she was part of a scientific laboratory, so she had chances to be outside, yet she had few socialization moments.

**“The city was just off. All the places I knew dissappeared. Everything stopped during covid. Pavia was a stagnant marsh”**

*Marta*

*PhD Student*

On the contrary, college members who did not have any right to be outside during the lockdown, still used pretexts such as cooking to meet away from college guards to stay together and occasionally perform social drinking. The open city was at Marta’s disposal, but nothing was there to be accessed. Loris and Daniele, instead, could not move outside their college dorms, but found escamotages to meet with their peers within college walls.

Open spaces are also worth mentioning. The majority of colleges have a garden. Those of merit like the Collegio Ghisleri even have a football and tennis pitch. Of course, these became stress reliefer spaces where students could take a breath of fresh air without actually exiting the building, complying with the normative standards of that time which severely forbid recreational activities in public spaces. Need-based colleges such as the Collegio Valla, students told me, has its own tennis court yet it is closed due to lack of maintenance. College students were privileged when compared to their peers forced to remain inside their houses during the coronavirus lockdown. Furthermore, even among college students disparities are self-evident. Spatial fruition is not equal, and those of merit maintain a higher status thanks to better open air facilities.

**“During the pandemic it was weird... nobody was around. It felt strange to be alone on a bus ”**

*Marta*

*PhD Student*



Image 17. View of the soccer field of Collegio Ghisleri from a hall balcony (author own picture)

Finally, it also worth mentioning how college residences became virus incubators at some point. Indeed, it was described by an interviewee during focus groups that in 2021 17 people were found positive and the Collegio Maino established stricter rules, forbidding meetings and students found themselves forced to remain inside their rooms. To make the matter worse, just before the Easter break in 2021, a covid outbreak happened in the all-female Collegio Nuovo. 30 students were found positive at the same time, Consequently, the college dean deemed the residence as unsafe, and students were requested have a swab test for Covid - 19. If found negative, they were asked to leave until and find a different accommodation until the internal outbreak terminated and students resulted negative. Hence, colleges went from a positive social aggregator to a dangerous virus facilitator.



**“I got Covid - 19 when the outbreak happened. I had to stay here. My mom was worried.”**

*Marta  
Collegio Nuovo*

Image 18 (top) & 19 (left). College room of Anna at Collegio Nuovo. The unit was on a self proclaimed lockdown on April 2021 given the high number of contagions in the facility (author own picture)



**“When I’m here I say home to mean the college. But when I go back to Novara i call it residence. I never thought about this change of words.”**

**“You stay up late to study, you know you have to pass the exams to remain in the merit colleges.”**

*Marta  
Collegio Nuovo*



Image 20. View of the garden of Collegio Nuovo near the Cravino Campus (author own picture)

#### 8.d) Focus - A price to pay: six years in the Collegio Maino

**“Now that I’m packing up and leave my room after six years, it is difficult... you feel like it is going to take time to adapt.”**

*Loris*

*Collegio Maino*

During the time spent in Pavia it was possible to meet Loris, 25, one of the most tenured members of the Collegio Maino, who spent his whole university days there. His college experience was totalizing, partaking in almost all activities throughout the years he spent in the building, lockdown included. He confessed that, after six years, there is a price to pay for having spent all his university career inside the same building. Now that he is almost graduating, Loris realized that he lived a life which was very out of the ordinary when compared to his friends who moved to Milan to attend university. After having spent almost every day of his last years with his mates next door, he is distressed by the idea of leaving his room and move fully on his own. He fears of being suddenly without a breakfast or a dinner with his friends or being taken out of boresome nights because of something goliardic happening in the college. However, he also credited the college to have helped him keep up with exams. Although considered by many college students a totalizing activity, Loris did not feel that college life was overshadowing his academic career. In fact, the most important space of the college was for him the library. Instead of moving to the university library, Loris preferred to study in the internal study rooms. Not only that was more time efficient but having known faces in the library fortified him to study more and distract less. The college was ultimately a positive experience. Still, now that is over Loris had some afterthoughts.

In order, he divided his stay in the Collegio Maino into three main phases. The matricola period, the first two years, the kitchen area was where relationships were built. He would go there to cook and end up in chats with newcomers just like him. In fact, when he became among the oldest members in 2022, he found himself not spending time in the kitchen to cook and play, but rather to facilitate interactions among freshmen and the rest of the college community. Older members, he said, get appointed the role of facilitators, the last phase of his period in the college. An informal buddy program to show freshman people, spaces, and practices of the college residence. Moreover, during lockdowns, restrictions made impossible to have 30 to 40 students all at once when only six stoves were available. Thus, he resorted to other spaces such as the internal courtyard and the living room to act as a facilitator. Indeed, his presence as a bridge between freshman and the rest of the community never stopped.

In between the freshmen and the last years, Loris experienced everything that was possible in the Collegio Maino. From partying to long sessions in the library, he also participated in several varsity sports tournaments as well as the college treasure hunt race, both as a runner and as a mentor of the team. Nonetheless, as the pandemic came during the transition towards his last year, he made him realized how out of the ordinary his experience was, and in some way that did not fully prepare him for the next stage of his life. In fact, speaking of Covid – 19, during the 2020 emergency he rushed back home as many other fuori sede did. His stay with his family, after five years of absence was difficult. He had to comply to norms which were not those of the colleges. Living with his peers was different. Of course, relations with a parent can be different with that of a dormmate. Consequently, as soon as he had occasion, he returned to Pavia, preferring the college to his family house. The strong social component of colleges, already stressed by De Carlo during the planning of the colleges in Urbino in 1962, revealed crucial to many students in Pavia. Yes, they were also a virus incubator given their very own design, but at the same time they also kept students positives while others struggled with their mental health.

**“It is Thursday night, and you are forced home with your parents. What do you do? It was difficult, very difficult.**

**Doing the second lockdown in Pavia was a savior. It helped me keeping some relations alive.”**

*Loris*

*Collegio Maino*

During the period of pandemic, he also contracted coronavirus inside the Collegio. He had to isolate inside the room, not able to get out even to cook. His friends left food at its door for two weeks. In that period, he felt a disadvantage. He could not connect with his college friends. Managing a whole day in one room was difficult. The biggest obstacle, Loris admitted, was creating a spatial and mental division between day space and night space inside the same room. A continuous exposure to his room merged the two spaces, and sense of oppression and anxiety surfaced. Loris found a way out by strictly dividing its daily timetable. In that way, he was always busy, either training, studying or binge-watching shows. Technology also shortened relational distance. He would have lunch videocalling his friends who were downstairs in the kitchen eating.

To conclude, as Loris will have to leave his dorm room in a couple of months, doubts starts to emerge. He will stay in Pavia for one more here to complete his lawyer traineeship in a firm there. How will he see the city now that he is not member of a college? He acknowledged that Pavia is primarily a city for students. He felt member of the Collegio Maino first and foremost, and only then a citizen of Pavia and its university. At first, he thought to immediately leave the city but once he got in the law firm in the city center, he felt that staying was the better option. However, now doubts started to arise. Currently, Loris is in a limbo. He is eligible to stay in the college until July, but every day he wears his suit and go to work. Also, during the interview he confessed that the city starts to look different. Without the option of staying in the college but forced to still live in Pavia. How to live the city campus when you are not a student anymore?

## 8.e) Studentification: conflicts and opportunities in the political arena of the city campus

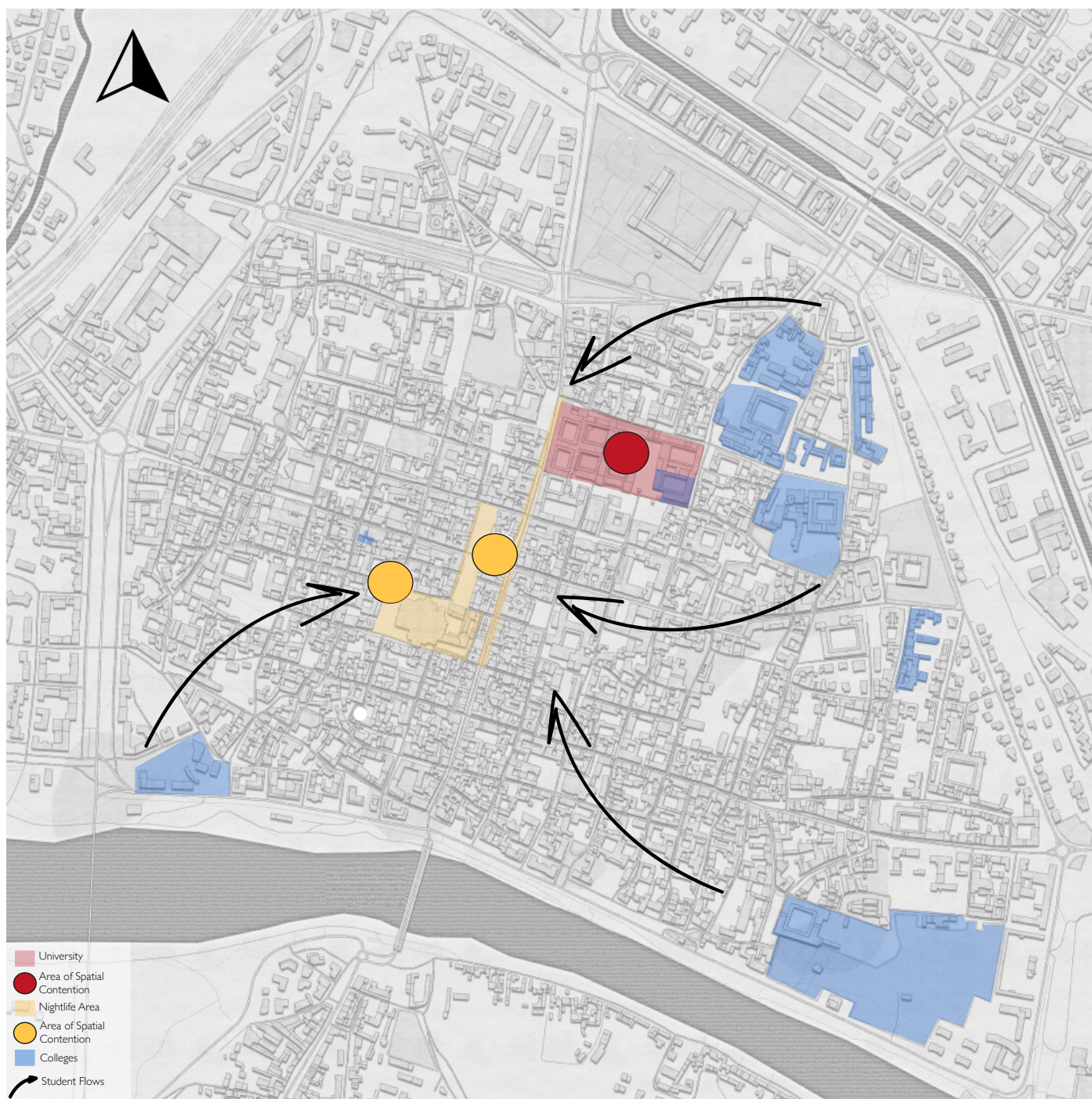
To answer the question posed at the end of the previous chapter, we must turn into another compelling issue of the university, studentification. In a city so rich in colleges and students it may lead to an overabundance of student-related amenities in Pavia, forgetting of any other demographic. Such a double edge sword will be dealt here in this subchapter. Through direct observations in the city and interviews with students, it will be revealed how businesses in the city have focused much on building a student clientele, but that proved to be detrimental to the social life of the rest of population, which became evident during the pandemic. Although very small, the city center encloses a variety of shops, restaurants, and cocktail bars. In his interview, Matteo from the student union Azione Universitaria stressed how different it was the university nightlife before the pandemic. Indeed, as far as gatherings goes, the central plazas of Pavia next to the Duomo and Piazza della Vittoria. Before the pandemic, he recalled, Wednesdays in Pavia's city center were full of people from the evening to late night hours. In fact, Wednesdays were the days in which university students would pack the city centers. Pubs and bars had special offerings for those who would exhibit their university card. This has led to not so few instances of noise complaints from city center residents. Indeed, the Provincia Pavese, the main local newspaper in the city often wrote on different occasions of the degenerated social drinking in the city center. Since 2015, many have been the instances in which the police intervened to quit the plaza packed of students. The residents of the historic center have consequently formed a neighborhood committee in the past years. The committee named "Piazza Pulita" (Clean Plaza) aimed at raising the debate to the local administration and push for a greater enforcement of regulations regarding crowd noise and late-night drinking in the areas of the city center. The local newspaper reported in June 2016 that the *movida* (nightlife) went out of control during the exam period as youngsters broke car windows and reverted trash cans in the city center. The article headlined how such acts of vandalism were a testament against the Piazza Pulita neighborhood committee (Zorzetto, 2016).

Conflicts between students and residents exacerbated in 2018 when the neighborhood group claimed a class action before the municipality to control noise during night hours. Indeed, the most lingering issue was not the fact that students remained up late drinking in the streets, but rather the noise produced. The group proposed an ordinance to stop noises, but it never came into realization. The committee claimed that more than 400 people usually gathered before the pandemic until 5 am in the morning (Zorzetto, 2016). Finally, in 2021, in the minds of the reopening of bars and clubs in Italy as covid regulations were weakening, the municipality emanated a new ordinance commanding the patrolling of central streets of Pavia during night hours. Mayor Maurizio Fabrizio Fracassi of the right-wing party "Lega per Salvini Premier" commonly referred to as "Lega" enforced a new ruling banning the selling of alcohol from midnight to 7 am and those bars would close at 1 am to limit disorders and noise at late night hours (Lanzetti, 2021). Such enforcement lasted until the 31st of March 2022, when, in accordance with the new Italian legislation, the covid emergency status ceased nationwide, with bars and clubs being back to pre-pandemic regimes. Moreover, stalls for outside tables for bars were again according to owners under payment to the municipality. Lastly, although police enforcement ceased, stewards for crowd control remained present until May 2022 (Barbieri, 2022).

Therefore, such long history of town and gown did not come without conflicts. From the housing market to commercial activities, the great numbers of students do play a role in the urban development of Pavia. According to a study from the Osservatorio sulla Società Pavese, approximately 40% citizens interviewed during a survey stated that Pavia is a city of major contrasts between different communities and social classes which makes impossible a unitarian socio-economic development of the city (Membretti and Spitti, 2006). Conversely, 30% of the people surveyed affirmed that, although contrasts are evident, negotiations can somewhat improve Pavia's citizenship. Finally, a minor 7% defined Pavia a city of little to no contrasts between social classes, who usually collaborate for a better good (Membretti and Spitti, 2006).

However, when speaking with bars and clubs in Pavia, they suffered deeply from the pandemic. When the last ordinance ceased in May, they saw a little improvement but not with the same 2019 rates of engagement.

Many students during interviews reported that before the pandemic hit in 2019, they would mostly gather at ZamZam, an Indian ristopub which would offer student discounts on alcohol as well as serving shots at 1€. The bar closed due to the financial pressure of the pandemic and students were left without a place to gather and drink inexpensively. The shop was in a side road to the Duomo.



Map 4. Areas of spatial conflicts. Arrows indicate student movements at night (Author own elaboration)

In this context, colleges also played a role. Starting from the late stages of the pandemic, Matteo noticed that now students prefer to remain within the colleges to party. They retreated and had their own party inside. Although social drinking practices remained the same, after the pandemic students now prefer different spaces of socialization. College members carry out their own nights inside the colleges, resulting in less people taking on the street bars for nightlife activities. Each college runs its own summer party as well as other minor activities in which music and dirking is allowed. In addition to colleges, the university has started granting internal courtyards to student unions to organize their own music activities. Noteworthy was the case of the CultFest party organized by the main union UDU, the most tenured student union in the city.

The event took place in the square internal to the main campus in the city center, where usually both students and passersby meet. The event took place for a whole week from the 31st of May to the 3rd of June. The event lasted till midnight approximately and saw the participation of both students and other demographics. As a result, now in Pavia, the city center's nightlife is becoming much more heterogeneous. It was indeed reported an increased number of high school adolescents rather than university students being out late at night since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. The city campus model is slowly vanishing in favor of a more variegated demographic as students have retreated in their spaces of pertinence, namely colleges and the university.



Image 21. Entrance to the CultFest event. On regular days the area is a parking lot for the faculty (Author own picture)

The reason for such changes is not physiological of the pandemic restrictions only, but rather the pandemic became the lever from local administrations to change the social composition of the city center leisure spaces. Interviews were also carried out with bar managers and pub owners. In a generally recessive period for leisure activities and bars like that of the pandemic, it is noteworthy the troubled opening of Klixia, a small cocktail bar which opened in December 2021 and quickly saw its role expanding as a new pole for social drinking in the city center. Located in a parallel street to the main square of Piazza della Vittoria and just few meters away from the university main building, the new opening created some rumors among city center inhabitants as well as competitors. Indeed, he reported me that the most difficult part was not finding new customers but rather finding a good rapport with local institutions and police. In fact, students are its main customer. However, as for him, they never created troubles outside of perhaps being too loud. Loudness is indeed the most emblematic of issues related to nightlife. Although is not a specificity of Pavia, here it seems that this is the main reasons why inhabitants even often lamented against new bar openings. In several field observation at night, due to the small size of Klixia's interior, costumers often moved outside, packing the narrow streets which lead to the plaza. In just few months, the bar had to cope with upper floor residents quite some time. With regularity, the owner told, police cars were entering the small street to disperse people. Most of the times, the police act upon call from residents. He was also made aware that the street residents tried to group for a petition to limit the working hours of Klixia's.



Consequently, Klixa's received a formal warning from the municipality who ordered noise level surveys on Friday nights. The owner carried out all the expenses for the survey. Klixa's then received the results directly from the municipality which granted the opening as measurements did not find any infringement of noise levels by law standards. Although considered a win from Klixa as it could continue to run its operations, expenses, and damages to the image of the bar were costly.

It follows that the post-pandemic Piazza della Vittoria is a space much different to the one of 2019. Some bars closed, and those which remained open were able to do so by changing their customer base to one that is quieter and prefers the 6pm aperitif to the midnight cocktail. People standing in front of monuments and church steps are replaced by dehors and table service. The pandemic has been the mean to change the people and customs in the plaza. The regulations imposed by the local administration have indeed modified the special practices. Studentification has been replaced by a burgeoning of the main social space of Pavia. University students retreated and the area has open up to a middle age population. The city campus plaza where bars where open till 6am, with constant shouting by university students and neighbor complaints is now the space of the wealthiest. This reflects the report from Breglia and Tiano (2018) depicting the city center as an increasingly niche area. Throughout direct observation during both the spring months of 2021 and 2022, the population who was mostly visiting the plaza and the contiguous avenues were families and 40 to 60 years old people. It remarks a critical point. In the university city of Pavia, university and municipality are not aligned. Policies diverge. On the one hand, the university third mission and branding strategies display Pavia as a city which naturally opens to students through academic excellence and colleges goliardic activities. On the other hand, the municipality employed a different strategy. Policing and strict anti-nightlife regulations during the pandemic have been successful in emptying out the city center from students and installing a new type of leisure dedicated to an older demographic. Studentification practices turned into burgeoning. Early separation starts to emerge. College students prefer to spend their free time inside the colleges; the rising costs of housing in the city center has moved students towards the Visconti Castle, the Ticino River basin, and the train station; finally, student from the Cravino campus prefer to remain within the campus and rather go home once their day is over instead of moving to the city center.



Image 22. The CultFest party with people attending a concert in the university parking lot (Author own picture)

Yet, the municipality has kept in place after the pandemic restrictions the night bus rides. Indeed, on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, Autoguidovie, the private urban and suburban transportation service operating the city provides night bus sequential rides at 11.00 pm, 00.30 am and 1.30 am for free. The bus takes on a circular ride that from the Visconti castle reaches the Cravino campus, touches south the Ticino River, and then move north again towards the peripheral areas before returning to the castle. Stops are located strategically within meters of distance of colleges. On top of that, Autoguidovie Pavia opened to private shuttle rides from 8.00 pm to 1.00 am. Through a dedicated app, students can book a ride and pay online the shuttle service.



Image 23. Piazza della Vittoria, February 2022, Munal restrictions applied (Author own photo)

What has happened in Pavia is a conflictual push and pull between different actors in deciding the leading identity of the city. It reflects Russo et al. (2013) conceptualization of spatial retreat. The other communities in the city moved away from public spaces as students and bars colonized the city center at night. Pavia follows the lines of Smith et al. (2012) in that the student city is a city of distance and almost non existing relations between one community and the other. Moreover, relational detachment is also expressed spatially. The bar area of Piazza della Vittoria reveals a spatial distance between city users. With student bars on one side and aperitif bars on the other. Still, everybody has something at stake: university, colleges, landlords, students, and cocktail bars on one side and municipality, restaurants, bistros, tourists, and a wealthy middle class on the other. Who has lost already are the people in between; the ones that are never seen around. Klix's owner frequently stated that a market for the 26 to 35 years old does not exist in Pavia.

The few people who chose to live in Pavia must adapt to either a university style type of leisure or that of the older middle class. The lack of amenities and services as well as a more diversified economic structure of the city has also been lamented from students interviewed. Indeed, most of them would like to move to either Milan or other European metropolises for their working career, leaving Pavia behind. This however is a recurring theme of previous generations too. Some of the students interviewed were suggested to spend their university time in Pavia and reside in a college by families, relatives, or family friends. Yet, these people do not live in Pavia. Although reasons are beyond the scope of this work, it is noteworthy mentioning that some students moved to Pavia after family suggestion. Some even had their parents meet each other in Pavia and then move elsewhere to set their family and bear children.



Image 24. Piazza della Vittoria, June 2022, Municipal restrictions ceased (Author own photo)



Image 25 (top). Inside Klixa Cocktail Bar in the SouthWest corner of Piazza della Vittoria. The small size of the bar forces customers outside, resulting in laments by residents of the upper floors (Author own picture)

**“Kind customers are asked to keep the voice volume at a moderate level!  
Two 6-month-old girls live upstairs, thank you for your understanding**

**only kisses and love”**  
*Klixa*



Image 26 (right). Entrance door of Klixa. A sign asks customers to keep their voices low (Author own picture)

Throughout the narration of this work, we delineated how Pavia, the city of students and college housing, is a way more complex ecosystem of spatial behaviors, conflicts among actors, juxtaposing of lifestyles. A plethora of actors have been interviewed, from the university administration to its students and the college residents and their bar vendors. Yet, space, whichever it may be is part of a bigger, formal administration controls the space. Nightlife is a prior example of that in the city of Pavia. Battling for social control, the city administration has found itself in between the two most powerful social groups of the city. On the one hand, students, a vast and informal community but with limited electoral powers is opposed to a much older, formal community of residents able to raise their opinions and breach into the town hall. As a result, it became evident during the writing of the thesis to meet with the public administration.

Indeed, it appeared that divergences among different residents are known among the public administration, however, a city councilor stressed how difficult is to deal with to populations that live and demand space to be one the opposite of the other. Further, divides are not new discontents surfaced as early as the 1990s. Still, it was during the pandemic was when the municipality received the most claims against nightlife. Although a relatively quiet period for social alcoholism, the city center residents decided to push harder against as soon as glimpses of reverting to “normality” turned up. Moreover, the idea of closing the bars at 1am on weekends and defined as “vexatious” for business owners expanded from the city center to the whole city, for a sound statement of what could and should be done at night. Yet, the biggest theme that emerged from the interview was not social alcoholism per se but rather how to apply a stricter control of the territory by the police so to apply a better management of the city by the city administration.

It followed during the interview that is competitiveness the elephant in the room, or perhaps in the city hall. In fact, the city has been struggling lately to attract but most importantly to generate new attractive spaces and opportunities alongside the ones already present of university life. Now that the pandemic is in the rearview mirror; it is time to generate new consensus, attracting capital through new policies and innovative solutions, but in this Pavia has been struggling. The quick ascension of Pavia as a place for students, research and great education has lapsed over the new forces triggered by bigger cities and new emerging profiles in the higher education business.

**“Pavia was one of the few cities with a strong university apparatus,  
now is just one of many”**

*Local Politician*

Even bigger actors play a role here. The national legislation over the residence and domicile, advantaging the first over the latter, weakens the student population since without a formal residence document they cannot cast their local votes in their place of study but only in the cities of their birthplaces. It follows that do not net in when politicians prepare their political campaigns in Pavia. As they cannot vote, they are not worth of any targeted policy to increase consensus. As a result, many efforts are devoted to the voting side of the city, that of families and seniors firmly residing in Pavia. Albeit not part of the voting population, students remain the main economic generator and social aggregator of the city. Reviewing Florida’s (2004) creative city, vitality is among the deciding factor in determining the competitiveness rates of a place. Same can be said for college residences. They distance themselves from the prototypical student housing in Italy, both in architectural and aggregative terms. The emphasis on internal communitarianism attracts students from other regions, finding in colleges a way to socialize and to immediately blend in with the rest of the student community. Yet again, as the university is a city within the city, in Pavia colleges are also a community within a community, that of students, within the bigger one the city itself, without ever merging into each other. In this, the interview with city counselors showed students and colleges are considered marginal in the policy debate as colleges bring only a limited cultural offering too related to the academia while students are economic actors only in term of a very specific leisure which do not fit with broader tourism and leisure policies. Students bring an instable contribution of which the city is unable to capitalize in.

Placemaking policies by administrators discussed by Semi (2015) as well as Florida's (2004) creative city here do not apply. On the one hand, the university rely heavily in the uniqueness of the city context, with colleges and academia history to attract new students. However, the city is not able to do the same and retain emerging creatives. The soon-to-be creative class of students – who acknowledged their transition from student to worker – are not met by the local administration able to keep talent and knowledge around as it seems that those who stay are the ones pursuing a career in the academia. Furthermore, the administration is aware of the strategical yet burdensome position of Pavia. The proximity to Milan means that many of those living in the city daily commute to the latter to work. Living in Pavia is a choice dictated by housing affordability for some while for others a smaller, more livable city is the choice. Indistinctly, these are people who generate wealth and labor elsewhere. The economy has not been able to duplicate more profitable economic models. In the past century, the economy of the city was multifaced. The university and public compartments were sided by a relevant secondary sector. As industries shut down or moved elsewhere, Pavia became a mono-economy depending exclusively on the San Matteo and the University of Pavia to generate profits and employment. The local economy, city councilors acknowledged, never made a shift to the tertiary, but relied exclusively on already existing economic actors, such as the university and small business owners, avoiding new activities and players to enter the arena, and now facing the negative consequences of it. Pavia is a stagnant economy compromised in the ever-changing private sectors of Milan. The city budget is unable to cover for any requalification project and private actors to fund renovations are hard to find. Hence, the difficulty of find new productive demographics re-emerges also in the narration of Pavia offered by local politicians, in line with the comments made by bar managers over the absence of a clientele of young adults in between university students and families in the city center.

As far as politics goes, within the walls of the University of Pavia things are not much different. Student unionism is represented by three student unions, UDU, Azione Universitaria and Ateneo Studenti. UDU is the most rooted in the student community as it won the last voting elections. Yet, numbers are not encouraging. Indeed, voter turnout as slightly above 15% according to UDU students. They lamented the immobility of the university administration in welcoming proposals from the unions. For example, the CultFest festival organized by UDU took place in the par to the place inside the citycampus where usually cars are parked. Students requested that the area could be turned permanently in a mixed-use plaza. UDU even sent their planning proposal, in which they would have transformed the area in an open-air study room during for the spring and summer exam sessions, but the university neglected the request justifying the need of a parking lot dedicate to members of the faculties as well as service staff. Use of space is widely contested by student unions but also by single students as emerged during interviews. This reveals to be truer for those attending classes in the city center campus. The campus most open to the city's urban fabric is the also the one with less spatial opportunities for students themselves, with class access negated as well as plazas turned into parking lots. The small courtyards remain the primary space of aggregation for unions to run their contestations as well as student aperitifs for the student population. The latter is the main tactic employed by unions to gather consensus. In fact, consensus building is primarily done via offering leisure and small scall parties with afford able alcohol inside universities. In this, educational spaces are turned formally into spaces of social alcoholism since the rectorate approves the events. Nonetheless, outside of such activities, a void is present as the university and unions have difficulties in finding a common ground to activate better spatial policies, for example the assignment of a new eating and microwave room in buildings, absent in all structures at the time of writing.

Same goes with the classroom debate. As anticipated, classrooms remaining closed outside of class schedule has led to disadvantages for the student community of the city campus. In the winter, waiting for the professor to come and open the class can be harmful given the cold weather of Pavia. Student unions lamented that, saying that heritage of the unit could not have been an excuse. They do not see classroom as an architectural object to be preserved. Instead, it is an antiquity that has not kept up with time, and they should be modernized. Indeed, this is in line with a broader set of complaints regarding the inadequacy of structures. Often, classes are not equipped with sockets for laptop and no heating during winter semesters. Again, a barrier exists between students and the rectorate. The barrier is physical – as the offices are located opposite to classrooms – and relationally as the university does not look cooperative in addressing students’ spatial needs. Though, this is not a secondary issue. No microwave, lack of open spaces and inaccessible classrooms make university life more difficult. The reason why college students prefer their residence to the university buildings, feeling closer to the prior, could very well be because the University of Pavia has yet to provide quality social spaces of which colleges are full of.

Moreover, the public administration has also showed no interests in opening a dialogue with student union so far. Same applies to colleges. Indeed, unionism and politics is completely absent inside colleges. It has emerged that colleges are not a political space at all. They are aggregative but this has never led to the formation of internal unions neither to a general organization of college students. Although students commented on certain negativities inside colleges, the positives overshadow the prior. The strong identarian community is seldomly critical of the place they live in. They find it as a unique opportunity to meet other students, and criticalities are ignored. The plethora of activities offered perhaps hinders political dialogues and confrontation, or it may be that students are simply disinterested in internal political affairs, as demonstrated by the low voter turnout at the 2022 student elections in the university.

Image 27 (right). Students in a courtyard waiting to get into class in the city center campus. March, 8AM  
(Author own picture)



Image 28 (bottom). A typical class in the city center campus  
(Author own picture)



## **Soddisfatto del viaggio?**

- **treni vetusti**
- **collegamenti insufficienti di bus e treni**
- **costi elevati**
- **ritardi e scarsa igiene**

## **Abbiamo ottenuto un tavolo con Trenord**

- **monitorare orari e coincidenze**
- **chiediamo sconti per coloro che studiano**
- **sicurezza in stazione e sui mezzi**
- **collegamenti serali e notturni**
- **noleggio di mezzi elettrici a Pavia**
- **realizzare nuove piste ciclabili**

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**VOTA UDU**

Figure 4. Vote flyer of the UDU student union. It laments the poor regional train system as well as better transportation between campuses. (Author own picture)

## 9) What is a city campus: definitions from Pavia's own student community

It is important now to finally shed light on the university city and its meaning. Throughout the thesis, we saw how universities have taken on different roles and duties. From ivory tower and social incubators to finally reaching a point in which the higher education institutions resemble business enterprises in their management operations and outreach. They have expanded their curricula as well as redefining the role of university in society is. They are further ramified in the territory and taken on a social character. Higher education institutions have nowadays incorporated a collective approach. In fact, thanks to the third mission universities are now working not to educate future bureaucrats but offering a contribution to the civil society. However, when a university becomes such a central piece of the city, embedding different aspects of societal life, finding a definitive definition to fits all cases becomes almost impossible. As a result, I have resorted to the students of Pavia, asking directly to the protagonists of the city campus what for them is a *città universitaria*. Although answers varied due to different experiences and conditions, what emerges is student-centric a view in which the city is seen predominantly as a service provider authority to the student population.

In details, most of the respondents stressed leisure and services as the main indicators of a city being student friendly. Some indeed commented that a univercity is a city in which students are the main actor of the local nightlife scene while other emphasized the presence of the student community as the primary community residing in the city, “everything must be dedicated to students’ wellbeing,” one person said. Further, the city scale and size must be so to facilitates student movements and student activities. The concept of scale was stressed unanimously. It seems that a city must compromise all its features into a very small space in order to be classified as univercity or city campus. In fact, from classes to supermarkets and bars, everything must be within walking or biking distance. The student city does not conceive the use of cars, and bus rides are short. Stretching the concept, the university city is a precursor of the 15 Minutes City, where everything is within reach. However, we may argue that this is a direct reflection of the student condition. The student city welcomes students from outside, often not equipped with a personal car. Consequently, students rely on walking and biking to move most of the time. This require movements to be short and activities to not be dispersed in space.

Image 29 (bottom). Entrance of the Collegio Nuovo near the Cravino Campus (Author own picture)





Students often compared Pavia with Milan; the prior emerged as a student city given its small size. Milan, instead, is considered too dispersive and including too many functions alongside academia to be considered a univercity. It follows that, although Milan outnumbers Pavia both in terms of number of universities and of the student population, its multifunctional nature does not consent the city to be addressed as student city. On more general terms, no matter the size of the university community, the functions define a city. As a result, a university city must be a monofunctional city, where the university predominates over all other compartments of socioeconomic life. Finally, the university city results as a city in which the university is the epicenter of all functions - socially, culturally, and economically.

Such description offers downsides as well. During interviews, students were rapid in defining Pavia's student city features, yet they were likewise quick in explaining how their life would never be associated with a city like Pavia. Indeed, all understood that as soon as graduation is completed the city turns into an inhospitable space. Attractivities are not for them anymore, and services do not cover their new needs though their age is not much different. They acknowledged that their time in Pavia had an expiring date and once their university career would be over it is time to move elsewhere. That does not necessarily mean moving to Milan. Some mentioned that remaining in a small or medium sized city was preferred. Still, that was not to be a city campus. Indeed, there is a stark division of functions and consequently of spaces between students and young workers of the same age. The first one is dedicated to a life of excesses and behaviors that get lost as soon as the first steps in the workplace are made. A distinctive switch that changes the approach to space. The positive monofunctionally feature of the student city becomes a downside. Just as the name suggests, the student city is a city hospitable to students only.

A dilemma emerges for policy makers. On the one hand, stressing the university nature of a city guarantees employment, influx of young people, nightlife, and cultural attractiveness. On the other hand, such policy approach divides the city, creates conflicts among classes, and most importantly, the univercity is not the ending point of one's own life. It is a rite of passage between high school and adulthood, from the birthplace and the working place. Job opportunities are a tipping point. In fact, students in Pavia lamented lack of job opportunities as one of the reasons to why they would ultimately decide to leave for another place. In line with the comments of bar managers and local politicians, attractiveness is a crucial factor. It seems like Pavia is as good at attracting students as bad as attracting investments. From this, lack of employment opportunities for recent graduates. The univercity is a place where everything revolves around university life. Nonetheless, as contemporary times have seen universities taking on a more social attitude attentive to both local and global needs, the univercity must change accordingly. Even though the presences of bars and student-centered services are required, attention to other sphere of university life are to be sought after. For example, a robust network of internship is needed. Thus, the territory should not be voided of opportunities, like Secchi (1988) suggested. The univercity must take on a more general role just like universities have done and start to provide a wider array of opportunities whilst remaining a place of academia knowledge at the pillar city brand. It follows that the univercity may resort to a more creative city outlook if it wants to aspire to a bigger role and not just that of knowledge capital provider for other cities

To conclude, the description provided by university students is a very self-centered one. They expect a university city to be geared to their needs and interests solely. They never mentioned other demographics nor activities not directed to students. Yet, they also acknowledge among the flaws of the univercity the same positives they mentioned. A too higher concentration of students does not equate to a positive living factor once they move to their working life. Ultimately, a question mark arises. The advent of campus cities could in turn transform urbanities into monofunctional hub apt to form the future workers of others. As students seemed inclined to understand their future life through primarily a working point of view, the univercity becomes inadequate to their new professional needs.



Image 30 (bottom). Entrance of the city center Campus on Corso Strada Nuova (Author own picture)



## 10) Conclusion. Learning from experience. Opportunities and constraints from the University of Pavia.

This research spurred directly from a previous work of mine on the evaluation of student activism and social capital rates in the university neighborhood “San Lorenzo” in Rome, where the University of La Sapienza is centered. Three years have passed from that research and yet the student question seems more puzzling than ever. During my first encounter with the student population in Pavia it seemed distant from those first met in Rome. Identity as well as behaviors were different, although demographics was pretty much the same. It reveals that city structure affects typology of behaviors. In Smith’s (2005) account, to live alongside people not like us meant for residents to find acoustic discomfort in living next to student rooms. In Rome, people gathered under one neighborhood committee to fight studentification and gentrification practices. Awareness over the gentrification phenomena was high. Still, in Pavia, the debate never centered around the phenomena itself. In the university, a place where residents are accustomed to a strong university presence that for some is also a source of income, the issue does not lie in neither the changing of business models, the arrival of new players or new urban regeneration tactics in the neighborhood but rather only on excessive behaviors undertaken by students. It must be also addressed that Pavia has lost much of its economic secondary sector at the turn of the century and has not been able to adjust to tertiary activities. The economy is stagnant as two thirds of residents are employed in the para-public sector, either through the university or the hospital. The overstressing of the public apparatus as the economic driver of the city resulted faulty as the pandemic approached in 2020.

Pavia is today a university city, that is for sure. Students are conscious of that. When they arrive, they know this would be a great place to study. However, as they graduate, students are also aware of the fact that the city cannot provide them with the working opportunities they need. For the majority, leaving the university is the only option they have left. But it does not seem to bother the most. Indeed, students aware of their living condition knew that a change of place was needed. Simply put, Pavia is their *alma mater*, but their career leads them elsewhere. The feeling is that the city-campus is an impermeable bubble. Living the shores of the river neglects students from seeing the sea of opportunities that other places could offer until they must cut lose with the university. To answer the research question posed at the beginning of this thesis, small and medium sized cities find in the academia a way to elevate themselves towards small creative cities. Through studentification, nightlife and university knowledge certain localities can generate economic gains and attract youngsters. However, the most difficult parts come when the academic career is now over. How to retain a young and ascending workforce to generate capital, profits and investment and push for a continuous growth? If not, the faith is stagnation. The city as a rite of passage towards grown up life.

Graduation was the final stage of Loris’ life as a university student in Pavia, which he described me as worth living yet very intrusive. At that point, the Ticino turns into a memory of the great times of university years. As great as it can be, now it can offer nothing else than a joyful past. The space of the city campus has been exploited to the maximum and now is time to leave. Another academic year begins. New students will touch the goliardic shores of Pavia for the first time, while for others it is time to start navigating the sea of the unknown. Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth (2018) described three types of engaged university. The “entrepreneurial university”, the “engaged university” and the “regionally engaged university” all compromise different aspect of town and gown relations. However, it should also be worth to point out the disengaged or rather un-engaged university meaning incapable or unwilling to build bridges between itself and the city. Moreover, an issue of point of view is present. Sánchez-Barrioluengoa and Benneworth (2018) as well as Fini et al. (2011) and Lazzeroni (2014) understood the university as a monolithic entity, where the only divisions are the different academia departments. But it emerges that engagement varies and other formal of connection exists, sometimes more informal and not necessarily generated by the university but that sees in higher end institutions their endpoint.

Studentification may very well be a phenomenon of this nature. Although related with the university, it does not spur from the institution nor sees that as the main contributor. However, the academia is the way to capitalize over a large demographic body which needs services, leisure spaces, amenities, and housing. Total reliance on the student community is harmful, though. In this, Pavia is not distant from bigger and more noteworthy cases like Lisbon, where the Erasmus Corner became a sociospatial landscape. However, the area is not for everybody as locals were pushed in the more degraded area of the neighborhood. The student community is a mass of people able to generate spatial habits. The “meaning-giving perceptions” of Bourdieu (1984, pp. 170) exemplify the branding of universities and Erasmus cities. The academia is a meaningful twofold perception of knowledge and upclassing as well as temporary distraction from society. Hence, the univercity is the tailor-made city to students who are ready to enjoy life while acknowledging their future role in society, albeit away from their university.

To retain students, engagement must be so high that the univercity must transition to a knowledge city at large. The knowledge transfer must be strong, continuous, and direct. It is a demanding task for both universities and cities together. First, cooperation is needed. One actor needs the other to succeed. If the university is embedded in the territory, then it must be in line with who governs and administers the territory. Pavia was unprecedented in delineating an administrative urban planning strategy that recognized the university as a living element during the times of Astengo and Venuti. But from that time nothing much else was done. Still, this should become the new normative approach for territorial plans in univercities. A total and transparent collaboration to take advantage of territorial opportunities. The absence of so is costly and can be seen all around. Skyrocketing renting prices, conflicts, and monothematic economic model are some of the issues arising by the disconnection of universities and host cities. As the prior take on a more social role then they must start to become the R&D units of the latter through coadiuvated policies. The university is a living presence not an enduring piece of the city landscape. The univercity must forget to be a city of university only. It seems paradoxical. Yet, to break the chains of stagnation and uncompetitiveness universities and municipalities must face the fact that one cannot prosper without the other prospering, too. Pavia is a stark example of unbalanced relationship.

To conclude, it is suggested to review the meaning and role of the univercity. From the student’s very own understanding of living to a broader consciousness in society, the city of students is too much confined into itself. Third missions too often focus on history, excellence, sustainability, or openness. Without a doubt, these are strong values to be pursued. However, acting like a river, the university should carry the waters of preparedness, consciousness, and responsibility to the sea of cities. In Pavia, the university authority never stepped into the nightlife debate. Similarly, it seldomly attempted to spread its knowledge and capabilities outside its walls. However, univercities should open their space of knowledge, both physically and epistemologically to the city. Creating bridges and connections should be the biggest challenge to the university nowadays. It should not form better academics nor better workers but rather better individuals who are able to put their interdisciplinary understanding of life at the service of the univercity. To leave, learn and live is a predominant trend that should be inverted. If univercities will continue to live off the student dichotomy they are set up to become the factory of the workers and innovations of elsewhere. It is not suggested here to keep students in their place of study. Exploration is a great source of knowledge as the university is, especially in a time where mass tourism and city consumption have taken cities by storm. However, to invert negative tendencies means to open to new opportunities and actors – and not only for scrupulous economic advantages – to prepare planning tools that can involve broader strata of the local society to avoid conflicts and offer a living continuum to the post university life that is able to take advantages of local opportunities for a better positioning in a society that is predominantly overshadowing smaller urbanities in favor of metropolises and their lifestyles.



# L'Università e i suoi servizi

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