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di Torino**

Master of Science in Territorial, Urban, Environmental, and Landscape Planning

**The Use of Public Spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia
Neighborhoods of Turin among International University
Students**

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the ways international university students perceive and use public spaces in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods of Turin. Turin, as a former industrial city, has started its transformation through 3 strategic plans from the 90s to 2015 towards a knowledge-based city as one of the main aspects of introducing a new identity of the city. In accordance with this, Politecnico di Torino (PoliTo) and the University of Turin (Unito) have been identified as two major actors in revitalizing urban development. These institutions have started to promote the new image of the city in relation to social interactions, student housing, economy, services, and international enrollments. In particular, PoliTo and Unito host 1% of the student population in the city of Turin, half of which are international students (around 10000 international students). During the past twenty years, this population has increased and moreover, the city of Turin plays a significant role in attracting students due to its rich history, cultural heritage, and amenities. International university students engage with the local community and participate in various cultural events in the city. These processes have contributed to reshaping the city and its public spaces and, especially in the most recent period, the neighborhoods of Aurora and Vanchiglia were particularly affected. The attention devoted to these areas by the study lies on the fact that the establishment of Campus Luigi Einaudi (CLE) in 2012, which courses welcome around 8000 students, on the border between Aurora and Vanchiglia, made the area particularly relevant for students in terms of housing and everyday life.

To better understand how international university students perceive and use public spaces, an overall observation of the two neighborhoods' public spaces was performed; then, 25 qualitative semi-structured interviews with international university students who are living or studying or both studying and living in these neighborhoods were performed. Following this analysis, the thesis highlights the movement patterns by students in public spaces and discuss their perceptions in terms of accessibility to public transportation and facilities as well as the perception of safety, greenery, beauty, multi-functionality. Finally, this study strived to identify important features of student-friendly public spaces in these two neighborhoods as one crucial aspect in the way of Turin's transformation into a student-friendly city.

Keywords: Public space, international university students, Turin transformation, student city

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Writing this master's thesis took more than one year of my life. It started with lots of confusion and dislikes, like a part of life that is always unwelcome particularly when it coincides with a time of chaos in your hometown. That is the moment you might give up and settle down wishing someone survives you. I found the survivor in the mirror. This was only me who could switch me into a better version. The most precious lesson I have learnt is: Believe in yourself!

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1. Introduction

This research addresses how public spaces are used among International University Students (IUS) in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods of Turin. This focus will be specified in students' free time to understand how their free time is spent in the neighborhoods, and their perceptions regarding the quality of public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia for students. Students' use of public spaces in free time helps to explore the relationships between kinds of uses with different criteria such as hours spent, gender, kind of place, and kind of activity. Multiple global phenomena are affirming a tendency to grow the relevance of universities as urban actors. This is the same approach that considers higher education institutions taken in post-industrial cities as drivers of urban development strategies (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023). The most city stakeholders and actors consider students as positive elements for the city's economic growth, urban transformations, and social influences. Students are as a new community, dynamic, and capable of producing substantial transformation which are tenants, consumers, also workers, and new citizens of tomorrow (Mangione, 2022). Also, the city is affected every year by the increase in the number of young people who choose to study, understanding their wishes, expectations, paths, and any difficulties encountered could allow for further tools to trace future lines of intervention on the attractiveness of the city, reception, inclusion, services, and housing supply (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023).

In this context, Turin, a former industrial city that was abandoned in the 1980s, started to provide its new identity. This brought a series of urban and strategic planning to undertake urban transformation (Mangione, 2022). Turin has undergone a significant shift from being a city of production to a city of consumption. This shift is captured in the metaphor of the "city of culture," which has replaced the traditional image of Turin as a "factory city" (Crivello & Peda, 2019). To define new plans that are never being implemented, new masterplans were approved, and a general urban transformation of Turin started. This transformation is mainly a transformation of the built environment (Governa & Salone, 2022). Enthusiastically, a study by the Chamber of Commerce pointed to Turin's new GPR as a key instrument to remedy "the disappointments of urban planning by projects in the 1980s, which had in fact brought the city's transformation processes to a standstill" (Santis & Rosso, 1997).

A governance coalition of public and private actors contributed, with different incidence and determination, to implement the agenda by supporting and financing projects and initiatives (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013). Through various kinds of crises appearing by de-industrialization, the city looks at universities as crucial assets to overcome problems and get a new brand (Cenere, Mangione,

Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023). So, the role of universities and students has become crucial in the urban development of Turin and local planners are aware of this. This indicates the importance of the studentification concept. Generally, studentification refers to the process of transformation of areas socially, culturally, economically, and physically because of the high number of university students (Mangione, 2022). Following this, the importance of two large universities of Turin (Politecnico di Torino and the University of Turin) is enlightened where 40000 students from abroad or other Italian regions enrolled and came to Turin (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023).

According to (Mangione, 2022), Turin is currently undergoing an urban transformation process to become a university city as one the aspects in its transformation process, and this process is affecting various aspects of the city, particularly its public spaces. The relationship between students and public spaces has become a key area of focus in this transformation, as international university students (IUS) bring unique economic, cultural, and social perspectives to the city, and their characteristics for living and using public spaces often remain even after they leave. How “the public space” is defined and imaged (as a space, as a social entity, and as an ideal) is a matter of some importance. Public spaces of spectacle, theater, and consumption create images that define the public. Public space is a place within which a movement can stake out the space that allows it to be seen. In public space, different groups (also students who are living in a city) can represent themselves to a larger population (Mitchell D. , 1995). “Public space also is continually contested over and for in the spaces of the city. As a legal entity, a political theory, and a material space, public space is constructed through a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, order and disorder, rationality and irrationality, violence, and peaceful dissent” (Mitchell D. , 1996, p. 127). As a result, it can be said that public spaces have become crucial in creating a new image of Turin in the studentification aspects.

Given the significance of students in the urban transformation of Turin, it is important to consider the mutual conditions of IUS and local development. These students are not just temporary population; they live, study, work, and recreate in the city, and as (Mangione, 2022) notes, they typically have fixed characteristics such as youth, education, mobility, and no affiliation. Therefore, understanding their culture of using urban areas and how international university students interact with city contexts is essential, especially as the number of IUS continues to grow and they become an increasingly important demographic in the city.

Considering studentification process of Turin through transformation plans, presence of International University students in Turin, and public spaces as one of most sections of a physical dimension of the

studentification process, as mentioned before, this research focuses to explore activities decided by International University students in one of the physical characteristics of studentification as public spaces of Turin. This is to envision a better understanding of the mutual role of international university students and public spaces in addition to improving relevant issues. The ultimate effort is made not to judge the International University students' impact on the city or vice versa. Rather, through structured interviews, a better understanding of aligning the demands of international university students as important inhabitants of Turin and improving public spaces, and a brighter future for Turin as a university city (knowledge city) can be imagined. Becoming a university city first requires a livable city for students.

Generally, this research aims to explore the ways of using public spaces by International University students in specific neighborhoods of Turin in their free time. This goal follows seeking a better understanding of activities decided by International University students in public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia in their free time, challenges or limitations or effective criteria for International University students' using public space in free time, and factors to improve the quality of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia. So, therefore, the main questions that this research seeks to answer are:

1. How do international university students use the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods in their free time?
2. What challenges, limitations, or features do international university students face while using public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods in their free time?
3. What elements affect international university students' use of public spaces in Turin?
4. How do they move through the public spaces and where are the most popular public spaces among international university students?
5. What suggestions can be addressed towards making public spaces vibrant and student-friendly in Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods?

To address these questions in the best way, this research adopts a qualitative research approach by providing structured interviews based on open questions and mental maps and investigating external variables to gain in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of international university students regarding the use of public spaces in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods in their free time.

Following this, the thesis is divided into five parts. Firstly, the state of art will be provided to go in depth with the concepts about students, public spaces, and relationships between them through the studentification process. Then, the analysis of different neighborhoods of Turin will be done to investigate the quality of public spaces and decide to focus on specific neighborhoods. Following that, the methodology part will explain the mixed-methods approach of the research and the analysis of qualitative data will be assessed in detail. Finally, the results and findings will be discussed to achieve better conclusions and comprehensive suggestions for solving problems related to the research concerns.

2. State of Art Review

According to the core of research this chapter provides a better understanding about the nature of literature related to the scope of research. In this regard, as the study considers the role of university and international students and their use of public spaces, in-depth literature is discussed due to university cities, role of universities or students, and public spaces in a basis of city transformation specially from industrial (Fordism) to post-industrial ages. Following these, the period of industrial ages to post-industrial ages is discussed, then the term studentification is explored as a new role in urban growth. Lastly, the public space literature is assessed to find the relationships between these main 3 scopes of the research.

2.1. Urban growth through industrial to post-industrial era

The concept of Fordism, popularized in the USA by Henry Ford himself, was already well-known in North America and Europe in the 1920s, becoming part of social scientific and popular consciousness. However, the hegemonic nature of Fordist concepts proved problematic, even in economies that were not clearly organized and dynamic under Fordism. The history of many national economies, before and after World War II, can be characterized by successive attempts to impose Fordist principles on non-Fordist economies. Despite this, the limited spread of Fordism reflects social limitations that make it impractical or unacceptable, even in cases where it is applicable (Jessop, 2005). Fordism is a broader construct that encompasses distinct economic, political, and cultural dimensions. The Fordist system of production was founded on the application of "Taylorism," which sought to increase productivity through the elimination of unnecessary operations and the acceleration of remaining ones. The debate on the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism was developed against the backdrop of a changing world economy and society. The concepts of Fordism and post-Fordism were theorized based on the integration of regional and national socio-economic systems into global circuits. (Bonanno & Constance, 2001)

According to Jessop in 2003, To understand industrialization and post-industrialization, four alternative referents are identified. Firstly, the labor process is seen as a specific arrangement involving the technical and social division of labor. Secondly, an accumulation regime denotes a macroeconomic system that supports the growth of capitalist production and consumption. Thirdly, a social mode of economic regulation encompasses a collection of norms, institutions, organizational structures, social

networks, and behavioral patterns that guide a given accumulation regime. Lastly, a mode of socialization represents a pattern of institutional integration and social cohesion that complements the dominant accumulation regime and its social mode of economic regulation, ensuring its predominance in the broader society. Industrialization is characterized by its dominant labor process, the mass production of complex consumer durables, and its nature as a feasible macro-economic system, a virtuous, balanced circle of mass production and consumption in a largely auto-centric national economy. Additionally, it has a profile as a social mode of economic regulation, particularly the role of institutionalized collective bargaining and a Keynesian welfare state, and implications for social organization and cohesion, creating an urban industrial, 'middle mass,' wage-earning society. Ultimately, the co-presence and co-evolution of all four possible Fordist phenomena contribute to its definition. (Jessop, 2003)

The era following World War II, often referred to as Fordism, witnessed a notable surge in economic activity characterized by widespread mass production, the emergence of a burgeoning middle class, and a relatively stable political and economic landscape. The shift from Fordism to post-Fordism signaled a pivotal change in both economic and urban governance models, carrying significant repercussions for the evolution and progress of cities. Expounding on the restructuring of capitalism and its effects on urban areas, David Harvey, in his 1989 publication "The Condition of Postmodernity," extensively examines this transformative period. Harvey particularly links this transformation to the ascent of what he terms "entrepreneurial city governance" (Harvey, 2012). As Logan and Molotch in 1987 described, urban governance structures are deeply embedded in the political and economic dynamics of a city and emerged one key concept as "urban regime" which encapsulates the idea that urban governance structures are deeply embedded in the political and economic dynamics of a city. Urban regimes often influence development policies, which can align with the interests of powerful groups within the city, effectively transforming the city. But it must be considered that the crisis of Fordism in the 1970s and 1980s triggered a significant reconfiguration of urban economies. The transition to post-Fordism introduced flexible production systems, deregulated markets, and a greater emphasis on innovation and technology as the driving forces of economic growth (Farahani, 2017).

An intriguing aspect of urban growth in the post-Fordist era is "studentification." This term refers to the process of students and universities playing a pivotal role in transforming cities. As students become a prominent demographic, they drive demand for housing, services, and cultural amenities, thereby altering the urban landscape (Smith M. P., 2001). At the same time, the rise of post-industrialization has

also led to the phenomenon of studentification, in which university cities become dominated by student populations, with the attendant social, economic, and environmental impacts. This has led to concerns about the impact of student populations on local communities, including issues such as housing affordability, gentrification, and the displacement of long-term residents. The relationship between students, universities, and the transformation of cities significantly impacts public spaces. Public spaces are crucial to urban life, serving as arenas for social interaction, civic engagement, activism, and cultural expression. However, in the context of post-Fordism, these spaces are subject to various dynamics, such as gentrification and privatization, which can reshape their accessibility and function within the city (Mitchell K. , 2000).

In the broader context of post-industrialization, the transformative dynamics of university cities, the phenomenon of studentification, and the evolution of public spaces carry significant implications for the societal role of universities, their interaction with local communities, and the planning and utilization of public areas. An understanding of these dynamics is crucial for the formulation of effective policies and strategies aimed at fostering sustainable and inclusive urban development. The emergence of urban regimes and the city as a growth machine, coupled with the phenomenon of studentification and its repercussions on public spaces, contribute to the evolving narrative of urban development in the post-Fordist era. Various scholarly works delve into these themes, offering a comprehensive and nuanced perspective on the intricate dynamics of contemporary urban environments. Consequently, the forthcoming chapter will specifically address the role of universities and students in shaping city transformation, examining the process and impacts of studentification, as well as exploring the concepts, qualities, and challenges of public spaces in the transition from industrial to post-industrial ages.

2.2. Knowledge-based Cities: Process, effects, and role of students/universities in urban growth

Students are widely recognized as an influential social group in enacting urban change (Kinton, Smith, & Harrison, 2016), while differentiated student cultures exist even within traditional and seemingly homogenous student intakes (Bates & Holt, 2023). The increase in the number of university students in towns and cities occurred after World War II due to the growth in the number of institutions of higher

education and the democratization of university studies (Murzyn-Kupisz & Szmytkowska, 2015) and university-driven urban development strategies (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023).

Aligned with the emergence of the post-industrial and knowledge-based economy, there has been a significant expansion in higher education. This can be observed through the increasing number of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and student enrollments. Public policies have encouraged the education of young professionals to enhance the advantages of states, regions, and cities that are now competing in the "development game" of the "new economy." Because of the widespread availability of higher education, cities around the world have experienced an inflow of young people seeking educational opportunities. Additionally, student populations have expanded not only in traditional university towns but also in cities with different historical backgrounds, such as former industrial centers (Zasina, 2020). Actually, universities are specific, intriguing learning and social spaces. Prestigious higher education institutions are overwhelmingly youthful spaces, notwithstanding some increasing diversity of student populations (Holton, 2019). Prestigious universities tend to reproduce certain sectors of society socially and culturally with relatively high levels of cultural and economic capital (Bates & Holt, 2023).

Throughout history, colleges and universities have played a pivotal role in shaping urban landscapes and defining the character of the cities they inhabit. Their influence extends to various aspects, including physical expansion, communal ambiance, reputation, and broader economic activities (Murzyn-Kupisz & Szmytkowska, 2015). This impact is not limited to on-campus facilities; it also involves the development of landmark structures within the urban fabric (Chatterton, 2010). The growing student population in cities has given rise to distinct neighborhoods marked by unique social, cultural, economic, and physical features. This transformation is propelled by the proliferation of student-oriented amenities like housing, shopping, and entertainment options (Fabula, Boros, Kovacs, Horvath, & Pal, 2017). Historically, university towns have depended on students as customers, resulting in increased demand for local goods and services. In the contemporary landscape, characterized by the global expansion of higher education, students have evolved into a significant and visible consumer group in cities worldwide. Recognizing university students as a crucial consumer group in modern urban settings is essential, not only due to their numerical strength but also considering the patterns of their activities.

Regarding the core of this study which is concentrated on use of public spaces among international university students, we tried to elaborate literature due to these senses. The first attempts are investigation on role of universities in urban growth. The role of universities in urban growth is a multifaceted and dynamic one, with their contributions extending beyond traditional educational

boundaries. Universities are increasingly recognized as key actors in the knowledge-based urban development process, occupying a crucial role as both knowledge creators and transmitters. This perspective aligns with the open innovation paradigm, which characterizes urban development as a systemic innovation process, and it highlights the centrality of universities in fostering innovation and knowledge dissemination within the urban context (Chesbrough, 2017).

One of the fundamental principles of knowledge-based urban development is the reliance on inter-organizational networks as catalysts for innovation and knowledge exchange. Universities play a central role in these networks, often referred to as the central nodes or 'anchors.' They act as hubs for the convergence of ideas and expertise, facilitating the development of urban areas as knowledge-driven entities (Goddard, Coombes, Kempton, & Vallance, 2014). Universities, with their specialized infrastructure and human resources, offer unique assets that are challenging for other institutions to replicate. They contribute significantly to urban development strategies by mobilizing their facilities, researchers, and graduates to transform urban environments (Fernández-Esquinas & Pinto, 2014).

The overall picture of universities' roles in urban growth is complex and multifaceted. Different studies emphasize various dimensions, including physical infrastructure, human resources, economic development, and civic engagement. These dimensions have explicit and implicit effects on urban growth, ranging from urban planning and knowledge transfer to demographic change and economic revitalization (Fernández-Esquinas & Pinto, 2014). In the realm of innovation and higher education, there are two primary visions of universities. The first vision focuses on the economic role of universities, positioning them as drivers of growth through business innovation. Universities generate educational capacities, skills, and research results that are instrumental in fostering innovation, especially in specific industrial sectors (Mansfield, 1991). Universities have evolved from being mere "factories of knowledge" to becoming critical partners for larger companies seeking strategic technology expertise (Gunasekara, 2006). They have even adopted the "entrepreneurial" model, further enhancing their contributions to regional development (Fernández-Esquinas & Pinto, 2014). The second vision highlights the social role of universities, emphasizing their involvement in improving social living conditions and empowering communities for collective action (Diamond, 1999). Civic universities actively blur the lines between public and private spheres and work to bridge various types of agents. They seek not only transactional interventions but also transformational mechanisms, making their impact harder to quantify but immensely valuable (Fernández-Esquinas & Pinto, 2014).

While universities are increasingly viewed as essential drivers of growth and competitiveness, their roles in urban development are not inherently progressive. They can serve as self-serving members of growth regimes as much as altruistic agents pursuing urban improvements (Bose, 2015). Universities' evolving roles in regional and global contexts reflect their commitment to place, open networks with other institutions, and new modes of internationalization. These dynamics have a profound impact on urban growth, creating opportunities and challenges for both universities and the cities in which they operate (Addie, 2017). Universities are pivotal players in the complex process of urban growth. They serve as knowledge hubs, innovation catalysts, and engines of economic and social development within urban environments. However, their effectiveness and value to the system and locale depend on the types of knowledge-creating activities they engage in. Therefore, understanding the multifaceted role of universities in urban growth is crucial for shaping more sustainable and thriving cities in the future (Ross, 2012).

Cities are evolving into hubs of leisure consumption to cater to the demands and desires of consumer-driven societies. Certain cities have adopted measures to foster the growth of the leisure economy and the night-time economy, which are viewed as strategies for economic revitalization. Sharon Zukin, in her works in 1995 and 2010 provides valuable insights into the role of amenities in urban growth. She emphasizes the importance of amenities, such as parks, cultural institutions, restaurants, and recreational facilities, in shaping the character of a city and making it more appealing to residents, visitors, and businesses. She argues that these amenities not only enhance the quality of life but also act as magnets, attracting both residents and investors (Zukin, 2010). Similarly, the work of Clark and Lloyd in 2002 highlights the relevance of amenities in urban development. Their research underscores how access to various amenities, ranging from educational institutions to healthcare facilities and public transportation, plays a pivotal role in influencing urban growth patterns. Clark and Lloyd emphasize that these amenities can shape the geography of cities, encouraging the establishment of businesses, residential communities, and cultural hubs. Moreover, they underscore the importance of urban planning and policy decisions in ensuring that cities offer a diverse array of amenities that cater to the needs and desires of their residents (Clark & Lloyd, 2002).

Since the mid-1990s distinct enclaves of university towns and cities emerged with an increasing number of students (Smith & Holt, 2007). Young adults, including university students, are a significant segment of the emerging generation of urban consumers focused on consumption. The emergence of the 'student city' is also manifested geographically in urban zones dedicated to accommodating leisure

destinations tailored to students. These areas, known as 'playscapes,' typically cluster 'youthful activities in bars, pubs, nightclubs, and music venues within the nighttime entertainment industry (Zasina, 2020). Playscapes are about creating holistic environments that encourage exploration, interaction, and learning. Playscapes are an essential element of urban planning and design, as they not only offer opportunities for leisure but also contribute to social and physical development. It is important to design urban environments that cater to the diverse needs and interests of students, recognizing that playscapes should be safe, accessible, and inclusive. This shift in thinking challenges traditional views of playgrounds as separate, fenced-off areas and calls for a more integrated approach to play within the city (Chatterton & Hollands, 2002). The significance of playscapes is in fostering people's well-being, cognitive development, and social interaction. The role of playscapes is to provide people with opportunities for creativity, physical activity, and imaginative play. Playscapes should not only be seen as places of recreation but also as educational and developmental spaces (Crivello G. , 2011).

“It can be argued that the commodification of student spaces and lifestyles is under- pinned by specific unfolding structural conditions. Some authors focused on the analysis of the structural conditions according to them the important factors here include: the state-sponsored expansion of higher education to foster global economic competitive- ness and innovation via knowledge-based economies and societies; decreasing welfare provision for higher education students; raised normative aspirations and attainment levels of society leading to increased demand for higher education; deregulation of the private rented housing sectors and an onus on the private sector to meet current and future housing demands; increased supply, and accessibility to, economic capital and mortgage finance, in conjunction with relatively low interest rates and buy-to-let mortgages; and the general rise of `investment cultures' within affluent sectors of society” (Cooke, 2013, p. 148). The presence of universities and other higher education and research institutions has become crucial to the competitiveness of cities and regions (Russo, Van Den Berg, & Lavanga, 2003). However, this can also be a source of conflict (Fabula, Boros, Kovacs, Horvath, & Pal, 2017).

Moreover, various literary works delve into the involvement of universities and students in urban developments, examining their impact on cities. It becomes crucial to delve deeper into studies that focus on students' interactions with urban spaces. This exploration aims to understand the intricate relationship between students, universities, and urban environments. The dynamics of students' interactions with urban spaces form a nuanced and intricate subject. Scholars and researchers across diverse fields have investigated these interactions, providing insights into how urban settings shape

students' daily routines and academic experiences. These interactions encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from daily commutes to campus life, and hold significant implications for both the well-being and academic success of students. Numerous factors influence students' choices in utilizing space for social interactions, including proximity to their intended destination (approximately 25m), availability of shade for protection against sunlight and rain, shelter from strong winds, open spaces with one or two walls, empty areas, comfortable seating, unobstructed views towards parking lots and the presence of lecturers, and ease of access to information (Wijayanti, 2000).

City areas serve as hubs of social interaction and face-to-face engagement, and simultaneously, their standards are widely considered indicative of urban life quality (Cattell, Dines, Gesler, & Curtis, 2008). The exploration of students' engagements with urban spaces proves to be a multifaceted and intricate subject. Scholars and researchers across diverse disciplines have delved into these interactions, providing insights into the impact of urban environments on students' daily routines and academic experiences. This encompasses a diverse range of experiences, spanning from daily commutes to campus life, each holding substantial implications for the well-being and academic success of students.

One notable author who has explored this topic is Jeffrey Kidder, who delves into the lives of bike messengers in San Francisco. While not explicitly about students, Kidder's work highlights how individuals, like students, engage with urban environments through alternative modes of transportation. He discusses the sense of freedom and connection to the city that these individuals experience on their daily routes, shedding light on how urban spaces can shape the daily lives of young people navigating cityscapes (Kidder, 2012). Furthermore, the work by Susan Robertson and Roger Dale offers a critical perspective on the globalization of education and its impact on students' experiences in urban settings. This article examines how the growing internationalization of higher education is transforming the ways students engage with urban spaces. It raises questions about the commercialization of universities and the effects of these changes on students' sense of belonging in the city. In a different vein, the work of Sharon Zukin, particularly her book "Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places," addresses the evolving nature of urban spaces, including those where students live and study. Zukin argues that the gentrification and commodification of urban areas can lead to the loss of authenticity and uniqueness that might have originally attracted students to the city. Her work highlights the tensions between revitalizing urban areas and maintaining the cultural character that makes them appealing to students (Zukin, 2009).

Following the discussion on the context of university cities, role of students in urban growth, and their interactions with urban spaces, the terms studentification comes up to get more in-depth understanding the mutual effects of universities and students with urban environments. The upcoming part, we will discuss the literature about studentification process with its belongings.

2.2.1. Studentification: Characteristics, Impacts, Advantages or Disadvantages

Starting from the early 2000s, the emergence of the idea of 'studentification' has highlighted the significance of students as particular residents of the urban area (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023), but even since then, studentified landscapes have transformed markedly (Sage, Smith, & Hubbard, 2013). The notion of studentification originated in the field of geographic and urban studies in the UK (Mangione, 2022) and “became more fully embedded within popular and academic consciousness to make sense of wider processes of urban change across the developed world” (Kinton, Smith, & Harrison, 2016, p. 2). So, this concept has gained widespread acceptance among scholars worldwide, who have employed it to describe various case studies in different nations and cities. The extensive application of this term across different regions may create the impression that a uniform process of urban transformation is taking place globally. Nonetheless, each case (region, city, or neighborhood) has its distinctive features. Thus far, the international academic discourse has mainly employed the studentification framework to investigate the influence of student populations on urban areas (Mangione, 2022).

Initially, research on studentification predominantly concentrated on the economic dimension, but currently, it encompasses all facets of studentification, including analyzing its social and cultural impacts, as well as student experiences (Uziel, 2021). In tandem, these changes give rise to the formation of a new sense of place, and a distinctive type of ambience in the studentified neighborhood (Smith, Sage, & Balsdon, 2014) when high numbers of university students move into established residential neighborhoods (Kinton, Smith, & Harrison, 2016). The genesis of studentification in England was rooted in the conceptualization of the concentration of university students in specific neighborhoods (Yıldırım, H. Bostancı, Yıldırım, & Erdogan, 2021) and “this concentration leads to the reorientation of retail (i.e., off-licenses, fast-food takeaways, travel and letting agents, student focused supermarkets), leisure (i.e., student pubs, cafés, and clubs) and recreational services – to exploit and cater for the student lifestyles and consumption practices that dominate” (Chatterton & Hollands, 2003, p. 66).

Studentification, as described by geographers, policy makers, and the media (Smith, Sage, & Balsdon, 2014), “involves the replacement of 'settled' resident groups with 'temporary' student groups, resulting in a reconfiguration of local population structures from increases in the production of unrelated individuals living together in shared housing, and a distinctive student-cultural lifestyle” (Kinton, Smith, & Harrison, 2016, p. 2). This concept captures urban changes tied to the rise of large concentrations of students within university towns and cities, a phenomenon “to illustrate the state-led expansion of higher education and the impetus for increasing young people's participation in higher education, leading to growing student populations and student housing in local neighborhoods” (Smith D. P., 2019, p. 1).

Across the globe, studentification is recognized “as an influential process of contemporary urban change linked to the neoliberal marketization of higher education. International scholarship illustrates how urban landscapes have been reconfigured through the commodification of student housing and lifestyles, including the imposition of purpose-built student-only spaces and housing” (Kinton, Smith, & Harrison, 2016, p. 13). “Some contemporary studies argue that studentification is intertwined with broader processes of urban gentrification, with students acting as apprentice gentrifiers and discernible consumers” (Smith D. P., 2019, p. 1). “When studentification emerged as a contentious social issue in the early 2000s, it was typically associated with the in-movement of young, middle-class populations to established residential neighborhoods in university towns, resulting in the concentrated (over)production of student Houses in Multiple Occupations (HMOs)” (Sage, Smith, & Hubbard, 2012, p. 2).

Moreover, the term "studentification" pertains to the urban transformation process resulting from the presence of student populations in urban centers, characterized by an increase in the proportion of students in the overall population of a particular area, and changes in the types of services available, particularly in the character and variety of retail and food establishments (Murzyn-Kupisz & Szmytkowska, 2015). This process includes the clustering of students in specific areas within university towns and cities due to the presence of HMOs or purpose-built student accommodations (Lager & Van Hoven, 2019). In general, studentification is a complex process involving various aspects such as social transformation, cultural change, economic shifts, and physical alterations (Mangione, 2022).

2.2.1.1. Effects of Studentification

Studentification, a term referring to the concentration of students in residential neighborhoods, has garnered significant attention in academic and public discourses. Within media discourses, studentification is often blamed for the closure of schools and community services, resulting in the formation of 'student ghettos' (Kinton, Smith, & Harrison, 2016). This shift in population structures triggers lifestyle-related conflicts and the interpretation of unbalanced communities. Economic transformations are reflected in “rising property and rental costs, opportunities for the construction industry to maximize profits, and changing tenurial profiles. Cultural changes manifest through the dominance of student-oriented retail and leisure services and shared cultural consumption practices. Physical markers of studentification include an initial housing stock upgrade, followed by a longer-term downgrade and environmental concerns tied to higher density populations (e.g., refuse, car parking, noise)” (Smith D. P., 2019, p. 1).

However, the impact of studentification is a contentious and emotive issue in town and gown relations, fueling conflict and resentment between different social groups within university towns and cities (Smith D. P., 2019). Studentification bears similarities to other societal processes reconfiguring the socio-spatial patterns of knowledge-based, post-industrial societies and economies. It reduces opportunities for positive interactions and fuels the segregation of groups based on lifestyle and economic capital differences, resulting in conflicts over ownership of space, services, and territory. Thus, studentification is a leading-edge process of urban change that epitomizes this trend (Smith D. , 2008).

In contrast to most of the literature focusing on the negative effects of studentification, some studies present a positive perspective, especially in the global south. For instance, in South Africa, students are recognized as part of the broader socio-political process of urbanization, with their involvement in political activism on civic issues significantly impacting local governance. Additionally, private businesses associated with studentification can have positive effects on certain cities and create opportunities for urban renewal. Thus, studentification can be viewed as a dynamic force for social organization and community engagement in university cities, offering potential for new conceptual frameworks and the enhancement of existing models for public life's governance and conduct.

The influence of students on urban environments is shaped by various urban actors, including local authorities, universities, residents, developers, and landlords. Students' decision to study in a particular location is influenced by their perception of finding favorable living conditions, which are shaped by the actions of these actors and their policies. Yet, the contribution of students is often downplayed in the

discourse surrounding studentification, with residents portrayed as politically engaged groups resisting the social consequences of students entering their communities. However, in non-western contexts, off-campus students can enrich and diversify the quality of local democracy, presenting opportunities for new research and policy frameworks (Mangione, 2022).

The impact of studentification on urban areas encompasses economic, social, cultural, and physical dimensions (Fabula, Boros, Kovacs, Horvath, & Pal, 2017). Economically, it can lead to the revalorization of housing stock and changes in occupancy patterns, which may also contribute to gentrification in some cases. Socially, it alters age structures, household compositions, and social stratification, while culturally, it influences consumption practices and retail and service offerings. Physically, it initially upgrades the urban environment but is often followed by a decline due to lack of further investment.

However, studentification is not without its challenges. It can result in neglect of the surrounding area and issues such as littering and traffic problems. Nevertheless, the presence of students can infuse vibrancy and energy into neighborhoods. Studentification, often seen as a beneficial form of gentrification, underscores the need for effective institutional control to avoid imbalanced populations. The rising student population in higher education institutions positions students as a significant catalyst for urban transformation (Zrobek-Rozanska, 2022). Despite initial improvements, studentification can exacerbate marginalization and perpetuate negative neighborhood perceptions, occurring not only in impoverished but also in affluent, middle-class communities (Fabula, Boros, Kovacs, Horvath, & Pal, 2017).

So, it can be said that the process of studentification affects a variety of various categories as social, economic, cultural, and physical. In the below table, these impacts are visible in these varieties:

Table 1. The effects of studentification

<i>The process impacts on the</i>			
<i>Social</i>	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Physical</i>
Demographic structure and density	Supply and demand for housing	Supply and demand for leisure, recreational, and retail facilities	Levels of private vehicle use, cycling/walking, and traffic congestion
Population stability/non-stability	Supply and demand for housing market, housing stock, services, and maintenance	Intensity of sound disturbance caused by households, pedestrians, taxis/private vehicles.	Visual pollution (toilet signs) and vandalism.
Turnover of residents	Spending levels within local economy and capital investment	Mismatch of lifestyles	Effectiveness of waste collection and environmental protection
Community interaction and local voluntary	Supply and demand for local retail, leisure, children services, and recreational services	Supply and demands for emergency services	Maintenance of gardens and driveways
Neighborhoodness	Levels of tax revenue		
Supply and demand for schools, GPs, dentists, public transport, parking, and other health services	Local employment		
Effectiveness of self-policing and decreasing criminal activities			
Levels of political affiliations			
Health and well-being			

Source: (Smith & Holt, 2007, p. 149)

Ever since the initial emergence of studentification, various criticisms have been raised regarding its negative repercussions, prompting the implementation of certain regulatory measures to mitigate its impact. The effective implementation of policies has resulted in a reduction in the density of student populations in designated areas, leading to a general decrease in the social (such as population decline), cultural (such as the closure of businesses and services), economic (such as a drop in property values), and physical (such as abandonment of housing) aspects. Furthermore, these processes of reverse

studentification or de-studentification reveal a change in supply-demand dynamics and highlight the commercialization of student housing as a business model.

The affordable cost of living is widely acknowledged as a significant factor for students when selecting a city or neighborhood to reside in. On one hand, the student population is perceived as part of the creative class, with high expectations for the economic and social revitalization of urban areas (Mangione, 2022). For instance, Students have a crucial impact on the housing market. They have spending behaviors that may differ greatly from those of the host community; as tenants, they enjoy lower protections and a faster life cycle than the locals (Russo, Berg, & Lavanga, 2003). They are considered future knowledge workers. On the other hand, the student population is thought to have adverse effects on the socio-economic aspects of urban landscapes. The higher education student population is seen as gentrifiers with disruptive and transient lifestyles and behaviors, which can disrupt the traditional local day and nightlife of neighborhoods. Additionally, their unchecked hegemony leads to conflicts with local populations and the social exclusion of vulnerable social groups (Vandromme, Carette, & Vermeir, 2022).

University experience encompasses a feeling of community and connectedness among students, faculty members, the campus environment, and institutional prestige. Additionally, universities offer various resources and social opportunities, including essential academic, research, and support services (Yıldırım, H. Bostancı, Yıldırım, & Erdogan, 2021).

2.3. Public Space

In this part, we will delve into a comprehensive exploration of the literature regarding public spaces, with a particular focus on their evolving nature, the concept of publicity, the criteria associated with the quality of public spaces, their transformation from the industrial to post-industrial ages, and the contemporary challenges in the form of the crisis of public spaces. Our journey into understanding public spaces will begin by examining their nature and characteristics. We will discuss the essential elements that define public spaces and their role in urban environments, emphasizing the critical significance of these spaces as venues for social interaction, civic engagement, and cultural expression. Next, we will delve into the concept of publicity as it relates to public spaces. This discussion will revolve around the idea of what it means for a space to be truly public and open to diverse users, how these spaces foster a sense of belonging and shared identity, and the ways in which they contribute to the

vitality and vibrancy of cities. A key aspect we will explore is the criteria associated with the quality of public spaces. We will investigate the factors that make public spaces inviting, functional, and inclusive. This includes considerations such as accessibility, safety, aesthetics, and the provision of amenities that enhance the overall experience of these spaces. Our journey through the evolution of public spaces will take us from the industrial age to the post-industrial era. We will examine how societal changes, technological advancements, and economic transitions have influenced the design, purpose, and utilization of public spaces over time. This historical perspective will provide valuable insights into the dynamic nature of these spaces. Finally, we will address the contemporary crisis of public spaces. We will explore the challenges that public spaces face in the modern age, including issues related to privatization, gentrification, commercialization, and their vulnerability to social, economic, and political changes. Our examination will shed light on the urgent need to address these challenges and ensure the preservation and revitalization of public spaces in our cities.

The sustainable development objective outlined in Goal 11.7 aims to realize "universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green, and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons, and persons with disabilities" by 2030 (Roy & Bailey, 2021, p. 1). This goal seeks to foster the creation of inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements, acknowledging that cities embody the future of global living, given that over half of the world's population resided in urban areas by 2022. The suggested indicators for Goal 11.7 encompass the ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate and the proportion of city space dedicated to public and green areas¹. The concept of a land-use efficiency indicator is introduced to measure the relationship between land consumption and population growth, aiding decision-makers in managing urban growth effectively. This indicator aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and considers economic, environmental, and social dimensions, providing insights into human settlement patterns. It emphasizes the importance of thoughtful development in rapidly growing cities in the developing world to avoid future infrastructural constraints. The second indicator underscores the crucial role of ample public space in ensuring efficient and equitable urban functioning. Public spaces contribute to infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, recreational activities, and the provision of ecosystem services. Well-designed public spaces enhance the quality of life, empower citizens by providing access to institutional and political domains, and contribute to reduced crime rates and economic activities¹. Despite this, many local governments are failing in their role of safeguarding public spaces, leading to

¹ Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), Indicators and a Monitoring Framework, <https://indicators.report/targets/11-7/>

uncontrolled urbanization and insufficient public space in settlement patterns. The scarcity of public space impedes safe movement, infrastructure development, and green spaces critical for social cohesion and ecological balance². Addressing the issue of public spaces and related problems becomes increasingly important.

Diverse communities may interpret the idea of public space in distinct ways that reflect their unique cultural perspectives, highlighting the significance of public space as a shared resource (Ramlee, Omar, Yunus, & Samadi, 2015). Public open spaces serve as a public expression of culture and are hubs for building community relationships (Francis, 1988), and can be considered as a product of social interactions (Mitchell D. , 1996). Before going into the details of the nature of public space, investigation in terms of public can be inspiring. Through an analysis of the literature done by Weintraub (1995) in political theory, public is conceptualized in 4 main categories:

1. “A **liberal-economistic** version of public rooted in mainstream economics and liberal political theory in which the public is defined as the state and its administrative functions. Basic rights and freedoms for individuals are in the public in this conceptualization. A public space that would foster a liberal-economistic version of public might be one that facilitates state functioning and makes it easier for the state to safeguard and regulate individual rights and to promote economic development and growth. Put another way, such a model of public might require (or produce) a space that allows for free political expression but requires such expression to be in a form that is decorous and that can be regulated to fit within the logics and rationalities of the governmental system” (Weintraub, 1995, p. 795).
2. “A **republican-virtue** model in which the public sphere is conceptualized as pertaining to community, the polity, and citizens, and the private sphere is related to the household (and private property)” (Weintraub, 1995, p. 795). The public sphere centers on the concept of a space within society where individuals come together to engage in rational-critical discourse and deliberation on matters of common concern. A healthy public sphere requires conditions such as accessibility, freedom of expression, equal participation, and a commitment to rational discourse. Over time, the public sphere has transformed, with the emergence of commercialization and consumer culture altering its character (Habermas, 1989). “A public space fostering republican virtue, on the other hand, might facilitate public interaction, but not necessarily interaction with the formal apparatus of government. Rather, these spaces might be

² Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), Indicators and a Monitoring Framework, <https://indicators.report/targets/11-7/>

where communities or civil associations set rules of inclusion according to the moral values and social expectations of the community to enhance (in part, by making more comfortable) interactions between community members” (Weintraub, 1995, p. 796).

3. “A **sociability** model rooted in practices of, wherein the public refers to symbolic display and self-representation. public space of sociability might be more chaotic or unpredictable, as it would not necessarily be based on governmentally or socially defined rules of conduct and conformance; spaces of sociability might be produced precisely through the act of being sociable. And yet, many argue that to promote sociability – to make people welcome – relatively highly regulated spaces must be produced (hence the perceived success of malls and festival marketplaces as social spaces. A public space of sociability is meant to be a space of display and publicity – in this sense a literal coming-into-the-public of private individuals – rather than a space of overtly political struggle or a space defined by the state” (Weintraub, 1995, pp. 795-796).
4. “A **Marxist-feminist** model in which public refers to the state and economy. These public spaces facilitate economic activities, that reinforce hegemonic norms of gender or class, and in which the power of the state and powerful private interests is clearly present”. (Weintraub, 1995, pp. 795-796)

Twenty-five years ago, the recognition of public space's significance in urban political economy, city life, and the broader structure of capitalist cities was just emerging. Prior to the late 1980s, public space was primarily seen as a design matter (Whyte W. H., 1980) or, perhaps, a policing issue (Kelling & Wilson, 1982). A 2017 study by Don Mitchell examined the intricate and contradictory transformations unfolding in public spaces. The encroachment of private interests, driven by capital, homeowners, and business associations, was reshaping the city into a battleground for capital accumulation. This transformation occurred alongside a rapidly changing ethnic profile, with public spaces becoming arenas for contesting these contradictions and shifts, particularly in downtown areas dominated by forces seeking a narrowly defined 'order.' Mitchell adopts a political-historical perspective, tracing the regulation of protests in public spaces, gaining renewed significance during events like the 1984 Democratic National Convention in San Francisco. Urban authorities restricted protests to designated 'protest zones,' distant from the main event, depriving activists of direct confrontation opportunities. Law enforcement, instead of relying solely on physical force, adopted a dual strategy involving zoning public spaces for peaceful protests and negotiating with organizers, including arrest procedures. These strategies over time reshaped the relationship between public space and politics, highlighting public spaces as realms of

control, limitations, and order. The quest for orderly public spaces became integral to urban development, driven by the demands of capital and the influx of new urban residents. Privately-owned public spaces (POPS), like festival marketplaces and New York's 'bonus plazas,' gained popularity from the 1960s onward, created by developers to secure rights for higher and denser construction. Embraced by suburbanites, tourists, and new urban residents, these spaces further reinforced the trend toward controlled and orderly public spaces (Mitchell D. , 2017).

In continuing with the political point of view to the public spaces by Donn Mitchell, he argued that “the rules of order are designed to protect ‘the marketplace of ideas’ from *conduct* that is threatening to the exchange of ideas” (Mitchell D. , 1996, p. 153). So, he pointed out 3 types of public forums in another paper, each of which must be regulated differently. “The first type—those streets, parks, and other places that have been open to the public “from time immemorial” (*traditional* public spaces)—must have the least restrictive laws governing the exercise of speech. Any laws governing the “time, place, and manner” of speech and assembly must be rigorously “content neutral.” The second level of space is “*dedicated*” public space such as plazas in front of federal buildings or portions of college campuses— which a government has *dedicated* to the purpose of speech and assembly. Like traditional public spaces, these dedicated spaces can be regulated in terms of time, place, and manner, but not in terms of speech content. But unlike traditional public forums, the state has specifically enabled these spaces and thus has a greater right to remove them from public use. The final form of public space includes all the rest. In these last spaces, even if they are state-owned property (for example, open-space trails, undedicated plazas, etc.), speech activities can be freely regulated”. (Haggerty, 1992, p. 1128)

But public space is not just a contested concept in political theory and general discourse. Getting into the definitions of public spaces, in 2007, Lynn A. Staeheli and Don Mitchell did an in-depth analysis through 280 articles to explore all sides of public space characteristics and definitions. The most common definitions of public space stressed the physical aspects, meeting place, walking place, political point, community norms and building community, sites for conflicts are expressed. (Staeheli & Mitchel, 2007). Public space represents the material location where the social interactions and political activities of all members of “the public” occur (Mitchell D. , 1995). The second cluster (74 articles) described public space as a meeting place, in terms of negotiation and conflict, surveillance, displays of ideas, public ownership and accompanying legal doctrines, and high degrees of accessibility. The importance of public space in this second cluster was as a location for democracy, politics, and social movements (Staeheli & Mitchel, 2007). On the other hand, Lynn A. Staeheli, and Don Mitchell had 25 interviews with

researchers to understand a better exploration of public space. The most common definitions of public space from the interviews were as a meeting place and place for individuals (Staheli & Mitchel, 2007). Mitchell believed that the ability for citizens to move between private property and public space determined the nature of public interaction in the developing democracy. Democracies like the United States, “owners of private property freely join together to create a public, which forms the critical functional element of the political realm” (Mitchell D. , 1995).

So, human connections and public activities become important. Public areas are accessible to the public at large since they are not under the control of private individuals or entities (Roy & Bailey, 2021). Following this, these areas reflect the social public and private beliefs (Francis, 1988), social interaction, and the daily experience of urban life. Therefore, these open, publicly accessible places indicate the vitality and inclusiveness of a city to socialize, celebrate, recreate, and work (Roy & Bailey, 2021).

On the other hand, public spaces have a diverse range of functions that can be categorized into physical, ecological, psychological, social, political, economic, symbolic, and aesthetic roles (Ramlee, Omar, Yunus, & Samadi, 2015). Public Spaces include a wide array of spaces, from old historic centers to suburban developments (Tonnelat, 2010). They are one part of the development of a city. It is considered a public space that can be seen as streets, plazas, parks, squares, public gardens, sports, recreation grounds, pleasure grounds, and marketplaces, in which the most emphasis is on its physical role (Ramlee, Omar, Yunus, & Samadi, 2015).

Some authors have focused on the identification of good public spaces as democratic, truly public spaces are those that have shared meaning, invite access for all, encourage youth and participation, and are well cared for by their users. Truly public spaces feel the needs of many kinds of people, provide opportunities for discovery and challenge, and actively encourage user manipulation, appropriation, and transformation. Democratic spaces are not simply liked; they are loved (Francis, 1988). In essence, Mark Francis's perspective on public spaces highlights the fundamental idea that public spaces are not just locations; they are the heart and soul of a community. They are where people come together, where traditions and shared experiences are celebrated, and where the future generation is nurtured. Democratic, beloved public spaces are a testament to the power of place-making, community engagement, and the enduring human need for connection and belonging. These spaces are designed and managed in a way that promotes equality and inclusivity, encouraging youth and participation, maintenance, and care by users, offering a range of opportunities for people, and their adaptability.

Public space occupies an important ideological position in democratic societies. The notion of urban public space can be traced back at least to the Greek agora and its function as: “the place of citizenship, an open space where public affairs and legal disputes were conducted. It was also a marketplace, a place of pleasurable jostling, where citizens’ bodies, words, actions, and produce were all literally on mutual display, and where judgements, decisions, and bargains were made” (Hartley, 1992, pp. 29-30). Politics, commerce, and spectacles were juxtaposed and intermingled in the public space of the agora. It provided a meeting place for strangers, whether citizens, buyers, or sellers, and the ideal of public space in the agora encouraged nearly unmediated interaction- the first vision of public space noted above. In such “open and accessible public spaces and forums, one should expect to encounter and hear from those who are different, whose social perspectives, experience and affiliations are different” (Mitchell D. , 1995). In a democratic society, public spaces serve as a venue for people to appreciate nature, as well as a meeting point for social interactions that showcase the unique features of urban environments and the vibrancy of everyday life. The objective is to enhance the urban environment's quality, encourage social interaction, evoke memories of the city's history and culture, and cultivate a shared sense of identity and belonging. This plays a crucial role in fostering community cohesion and a positive urban experience for all. All of these are possible if urban spaces are flexible and satisfy people with different interests. People may want to spend time and enjoy themselves in public spaces without considering their differences. Within the urban context, public space plays a crucial role in enhancing and harmonizing the city's environment, culture, and economy, promoting sustainable development and equitable growth. Thus, in the context of densely populated urban areas, public spaces serve as a transitional zone and a gateway to the city's heart, providing a much-needed buffer between private and public realms. Furthermore, public space also plays a critical role in facilitating air and light penetration into the city, thereby promoting a healthy urban environment (Ramlee, Omar, Yunus, & Samadi, 2015).

In the public spaces scale, segments of public space have garnered widespread attention, primarily due to their ability to enhance the quality of life by creating comfortable and vibrant environments, bolstering the city's image through urban liveliness, and driving economic growth by attracting investment drawn to positive perceptions. Consequently, the evolution of public space and the emergence of novel public areas can enhance the urban landscape, providing attractive, comfortable, and functional environments for people to live, work, and unwind (Ramlee, Omar, Yunus, & Samadi, 2015).

So, in a general view, some kinds of criteria must be applied in the strategic plan of cities specifically related to having or improving the quality of public spaces. Criteria such as use and user diversity, comfortability, accessibility or publicness, environmental learning/meaning, discovery/delight/challenge, participation/control/modification, conflict, management, and ecological quality (Francis, 1988).

The intensity and diversity of human activities in public open spaces are indicators of their success and high quality. The indicators and trends of the proposed tool for determining the intensity and diversity of use of public spaces can be as the intensity of temporal use, spatial use, social use, age diversity, gender diversity, stay, and activities (Alwah, et al., 2023). Guidelines for public spaces must ensure sufficient room for seating, organized activities, and food options. Another crucial aspect is ensuring that the space caters to a diverse user base. Unfortunately, several public spaces not only fail to appeal to older individuals, teenagers, and children but are also regarded as unsafe for women (Francis, 1988).

The feeling of **comfort** in a public space depends on numerous factors, including perceived levels of safety, familiarity of the setting and people, weather, physical conditions, convenience and so on (Mehta, 2014). Actually, in addition to the safety, the satisfaction of basic physiological needs, including environmental comfort protection from the natural elements and the provision of shelter, precedes the accomplishment of higher order needs such as belonging, esteem, cognitive and aesthetic needs (Mehta, 2014).

Public spaces should be open and **accessible** to all, irrespective of their backgrounds or interests. There is need for a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to evaluating and categorizing public spaces, emphasizing the importance of equitable access and usability for diverse communities. One way of categorizing public landscapes is to distinguish between "accessible" and "open" or "closed". Projects can be evaluated by degrees of accessibility for different users rather than by purely aesthetic or use-oriented criteria (Francis, 1988).

Place meaning is a complex phenomenon influenced by both individual and collective experiences and by the narratives of places that help construct place identity. Experiences such as prior familiarity, and historic or political or social events which effects on the environmental learning of users (Mehta, 2014). In fact, it can be said that learning and the meaning of the environment, in addition to being influenced by visual beauty, are also influenced by the activities of performers such as street vendors (Francis, 1988).

Discovery, delight, and challenge represent the desire for stimulation “and delight that one experiences through new encounters. Even familiar places can lead to novel discoveries, either by people adding new values and ideas to it (like books or thoughts) or by having the place itself offer stimuli that enable the users’ interest to endure” (Memarovic, et al., 2012, p. 55). Buskers, imagination, and found objects can enhance the significance of public areas (Francis, 1988).

Public displays can be used to support **public participation** in urban settings. While public participation can bring great value to all stakeholders, more efforts are needed to facilitate public participation and realize its full potential (Du, Degbello, & Kray, 2017). People utilizing public areas must retain immediate authority over the spaces, transforming them from being possessed by others to being possessed by us. To ensure users' engagement in everyday administrative choices, regulations ought to establish methods for discussion, involving users as well as space proprietors and administrators on an ongoing basis (Francis, 1989).

Conflict and resolution in public spaces are integral aspects of urban life and community interaction. Public spaces, whether parks, plazas, or sidewalks, serve as meeting points for diverse individuals with varying needs, interests, and expectations (Whyte H. W., 1980). These spaces often witness conflicts stemming from issues like territorial disputes, noise disturbances, and differing usage preferences. The strategies aim to create a harmonious environment where dialogue, compromise, and mutual respect are prioritized (Low & Smith, 2013)..

In the **management** discussion, the widespread use of privately owned commercial spaces, like the atrium, can be attributed partly to their exceptional upkeep. However, given the constantly evolving public environment, even thriving areas must be regularly assessed, adjusted, and revamped to accommodate shifts in urban society and customs (Francis, 1988). And finally, in **the ecological quality** term, expansive areas present a chance to optimize the number of natural elements integrated into urban areas, thereby enhancing the perception of city living (Francis, 1988).

2.3.1. Changes and crises of public spaces from industrial to post-industrial

Post-industrial urbanism is characterized by the creation of "flexible accumulation" and "flexible specialization," which have significant implications for the design and use of public spaces (Khaliun, 2015). In the industrial era, public space was typically designed for mass consumption and production, often serving as a backdrop for large-scale industrial production. However, in the post-industrial era,

public space has taken on a more diverse range of functions, often emphasizing the importance of creativity, social interaction, and cultural expression. (Zukin, 1993)

A crucial element of the post-industrial approach to public space involves prioritizing the creation of "quality" spaces tailored to the needs and preferences of local communities. This shift has prompted increased attention to community engagement in the design and management of public spaces, along with a heightened focus on integrating these spaces with the surrounding neighborhoods and urban environments. Another noteworthy facet of the post-industrial perspective on public space is the emphasis placed on fostering creative and cultural activities within these spaces. Many post-industrial cities have invested in establishing cultural districts and creative clusters, aiming to stimulate the growth of innovative and creative industries. These zones often incorporate public spaces specifically designed to encourage interaction and collaboration among artists, entrepreneurs, and other creative professionals. The post-industrial era is characterized by the emergence of "aestheticized" urban spaces, crafted to attract a new class of consumers and tourists, with significant implications for the design and utilization of public spaces (Zukin, 1993). In broad terms, the shift from Fordism to the post-industrial era has given rise to the development of more varied and adaptable public spaces, crafted to align with the evolving needs and preferences of local communities. Conversely, the restructuring of urban space during the post-Fordist period has given rise to novel manifestations of social exclusion and inequality, which may manifest in the design and utilization of public spaces (Brenner, 2000).

The discussion on the crises of public spaces and their transformation is closely intertwined with the changing trends of public spaces from the industrial age to the post-industrial age. The evolution of public spaces has been influenced by shifts in urbanization, technology, and societal values, and this transformation is reflected in the evolving understanding of public spaces. The concept of public space is currently at the forefront of various intellectual disciplines and public discourse. It is a topic that transcends geography, urban studies, cultural studies, and many other fields. The discussions revolve around a wide range of issues, from the nature of citizenship to the challenges posed by rising homelessness in urban public spaces, as well as the rights of protesters, acts of violence against women and people of color, and the design and construction of urban and suburban areas (Mitchell D. , 1996).

Feminists and other scholars have argued that idealized public spaces, such as the agora, have never truly been open to all without the risk of exclusionary violence. Exclusions and inclusions based on gender, race, and class have been widely discussed, but the question of safety in public spaces raises even deeper concerns (Mitchell D. , 1996). Lynn A. Staeheli and Don Mitchell's analysis of literature on

public spaces highlights the notion that public spaces are meeting places characterized by danger, encounters with strangers, and a lack of individual control (Staeheli & Mitchel, 2007). Public space's significance is tied to the vision of a good public life in a city. There are diverse interests in public space, ranging from leftists advocating for inclusive, even anarchic public spaces to rightists calling for greater public order. Mall builders seek to recreate ideal past public economies, and social critics imagine what could have been if not for the relentless construction of malls (Mitchell D. , 1996).

The concept of public space is inherently nostalgic, imagining what never was or what could be. Many envision a world where both public and private spaces exist harmoniously, allowing for unstructured yet non-threatening encounters and the freedom to express one's voice before retreating to a more private realm. A closer examination of the everyday interactions, group dynamics, power structures, and the types of spaces involved in people's lives can shed light on how public spaces are formed and utilized. The scripting of public space as "dangerous," especially for children, has created a perception that it is irresponsible to allow children on the streets or in public parks without supervision. Public space remains a place of both freedom and restriction, with unwritten rules that may not always align with the people or spaces involved (Mitchell D. , 1996).

The increased presence of women, minorities, and the LGBTQ+ community in public spaces has challenged the traditional notion of who public spaces are for and what violence in public space aims to contain. This presence has forced society to confront its exclusions (Mitchell D. , 2017). Historically, public spaces have been exclusionary, limited to specific groups. In ancient Greece and the early American republic, only certain groups were considered part of the public (Hartley, 1992). However, modern urban development patterns and the proliferation of quasi-public areas managed by private-public or private partnerships have redefined the legal concept of public space. Today, public space is more about accessibility by the public rather than being part of the state's public domain (Tonnelat, 2010). The current challenges facing urban spaces are undeniable. The urban landscape, public squares, and corner shops have long served as hubs for social interaction, community gatherings, and information exchange. These physical spaces continue to shape genuine urban culture in the face of attempts to privatize or erase them (Vidler, 2001).

Public space is integral to the identity of a city and is a defining feature of urban living. It embodies the complex relationship between physical proximity and emotional detachment in urban environments. Despite earlier predictions of the decline of public spaces, they remain crucial in shaping urban dynamics. Thoughtful urban planning that fosters life between buildings is more visually compelling and

meaningful than architectural extravagance (Gehl, 2011). Public spaces, therefore, retain their significance as the lifeblood of urban communities.

Generally, various authors and literatures give us some more important crisis of public spaces. In the below, the crisis of public spaces is provided through investigation on different studies:

- **Privatization and commercialization** (more spaces for consumption and entertainment): Privatization refers to the process of transferring ownership and control of public assets or services to the private sector, while commercialization involves introducing commercial activities and market-oriented principles into traditionally non-profit or public-oriented spaces (Evers, 2010). This transition often transforms these spaces into areas primarily focused on consumption and entertainment. The shift to private ownership can limit public access and may prioritize commercial interests over communal use (Gehl, 2011). One example of privatization can be seen in the management of public parks and recreation areas. Governments often turn to private companies to manage and maintain these spaces, arguing that the private sector can bring cost-efficiency and improved services (Söderström & Scholten, 2014).

Commercialization, on the other hand, is prevalent in urban environments, where public spaces are increasingly used for commercial activities such as street vending, advertising, and sponsored events. While commercialization can generate revenue for cash-strapped municipalities, it can also undermine the social and cultural significance of public spaces, turning them into arenas primarily driven by profit motives (Setha, 2005). One notable example is the transformation of public squares and plazas into branded spaces, where corporate sponsorship and advertising dominate the visual landscape (Zukin, 1998).

Some argue that a balance can be struck by maintaining public control over certain essential services and spaces while allowing limited private sector involvement where it can enhance efficiency. Others stress the need for strong regulations and oversight to ensure that privatization and commercialization do not undermine the public's right to access and enjoy these spaces (Davis, 2007).

- **Functional and social specialization** (more monofunctional places; more spaces for specific social targets only): Public spaces are becoming more specialized and monofunctional, catering to specific social targets or purposes. This specialization may limit the diversity of activities and interactions within these spaces, potentially excluding certain groups and

reducing the space's overall inclusivity and adaptability (Gehl, 2011). Functional specialization in public spaces often involves zoning and design strategies to allocate space for specific activities. For example, a city park might be functionally specialized to include areas for sports, picnicking, and children's playgrounds. The aim is to create spaces that cater to a range of needs and interests, enhancing the overall usability and appeal of the area (Gehl, 2011).

Social specialization, on the other hand, relates to how public spaces can attract and cater to specific social groups. This can be intentional, such as designing a park with features that appeal to families, or unintentional, where the design and management inadvertently attract certain demographics while discouraging others. A classic example of social specialization is the design of shopping malls. Malls are often consciously designed to attract a specific target demographic, and this design specialization can affect the types of social interactions and activities that occur within these spaces (Oldenburg, 1999).

Striking the right balance between functional specialization to accommodate various activities and social specialization to cater to diverse populations is a complex challenge that requires a nuanced understanding of the community's needs and aspirations (Carmona, 2010).

- **Social fragmentation** (growing differentiation of public space depending on users' income levels, lifestyles...): Public spaces are experiencing a growing divide rooted in users' income levels, lifestyles, or other social variables. This division has the potential to create segregated spaces, where distinct socio-economic or demographic groups tend to occupy separate regions. Consequently, the characteristic diversity and richness of the public sphere may diminish (Gehl, 2011). Social fragmentation can manifest through spatial segregation, where various groups inhabit separate zones within a public space (Carr & Knies, 2017). Furthermore, the privatization and commercialization of public spaces can contribute to social fragmentation, establishing exclusive enclaves within shared urban areas (Sennett, 2017). The repercussions of social fragmentation are extensive, encompassing diminished social cohesion, leading to feelings of isolation and a lack of community belonging (Putnam, 2000). Tackling social fragmentation necessitates deliberate urban planning and design that promotes inclusivity and accessibility. This might involve community-driven initiatives, such as creating spaces catering to a range of interests and

needs and ensuring that public spaces are configured to encourage cross-cultural and cross-generational interactions (Gehl, 2011).

- **Control, and surveillance** (tendency to equip public spaces with fences, cameras, etc., limiting its use): There is a rising tendency to exert control and surveillance over public spaces (Gehl, 2011). Control in public spaces is typically exercised through various mechanisms, such as law enforcement presence, security personnel, and rules and regulations that govern behavior. Public spaces, including parks, streets, and transportation hubs, are subject to control measures to ensure that they remain safe and orderly (Smith & Brian , 2009). Surveillance in public spaces involves the use of technology to monitor and record activities in these areas. This can include the deployment of security cameras in public places to capture and analyze video footage (Norris & Armstrong, 1999). While control and surveillance measures can contribute to public safety, they also raise significant concerns regarding privacy and civil liberties. The indiscriminate use of surveillance technologies can infringe on individuals' right to privacy and potentially lead to abuses of power (Lyon, 2001).

Balancing the need for security and safety with the protection of individual rights and liberties is a central challenge for urban planners and policymakers. Striking this balance requires the development of clear guidelines, transparency in surveillance practices, and oversight to ensure that control and surveillance in public spaces do not compromise the fundamental rights of citizens (Goold, 2018). Implementing measures such as fencing and installing cameras can limit the use of these spaces and may create an environment of monitoring. While aimed at enhancing security and order, excessive control and surveillance can potentially deter people from freely utilizing and engaging with public areas (Gehl, 2011).

2.4. Public Space, Studentification, and University City

In the evolving landscape of post-industrial economies where knowledge reigns as a critical economic, social, and cultural driver, the dynamic interplay between universities and cities has gained renewed significance (Mangione, 2022). In regions deeply marked by their industrial past, universities have emerged as valuable resources, leveraging knowledge and innovation to shape urban development and societal progress. As universities expand within urban areas, they have transitioned into active urban

actors, attracting attention from cities, and influencing urban dynamics (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023).

The global massification of higher education, coupled with increased human and student mobility, has intensified competition among cities and universities to attract students and economic resources, amplifying the role of universities as urban actors. Consequently, universities wield significant political influence in defining new geographies at various scales, establishing themselves as strategic geopolitical spaces (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023).

Universities have become agents of socio-spatial transformations, driving both positive spillovers and negative impacts on the cities they inhabit. The benefits of university development activities manifest in three main dimensions: spatial enhancements by creating knowledge-intensive hubs or improving facilities, governance support through collaborative planning, and place branding to construct a favorable city image, appealing to investors and knowledge workers. At the local level, the interaction between universities and cities generates crucial transformative processes. The student population within a city offers valuable insights into the city itself and the broader geographies it is part of. Their diverse geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as migration patterns, shed light on economic policies, societal unrest, and territorial divisions across multiple countries.

The increasing enrollment of young individuals into universities has profound implications for urban development, affecting both universities and the cities they are situated in. Students not only contribute to urban growth but also become tenants, consumers, potential employees, and future citizens, serving as reliable sources of income for the city. However, it is crucial to recognize that just as cities vie for students, students, too, are selective in choosing cities based on their quality of life and prospects. The expanding student population, often residing in university towns or cities with higher education institutions, possesses distinct characteristics that sometimes clash with those of long-term residents. Students lead lifestyles involving specific activities catering to their needs, including nocturnal pursuits. Additionally, student housing remains a critical aspect of the university-city relationship, as students tend to cluster around areas of interest for both socializing and living.

Furthermore, the concept of "studentified spaces" has emerged, characterized as settings where 'apprentice gentrifiers' refine their cultural capital, aligning with the broader theme of gentrification (Smith & Holt, 2007). Despite the prevailing image of university life as a youthful transhumance, it's

essential to acknowledge the diversity within the student population, including those from lower-income families who do not conform to the typical mold (Chatterton, 2010).

In this evolving landscape, universities and their students remain pivotal in shaping urban landscapes, embedding student life into the marketable urban lifestyle brand (Chatterton, 2010). The growth of the student city has seen a historical peak, plateauing due to fiscal constraints from government spending cuts, and the current economic downturn may signify a momentary pause in established trends. Studentification may even revert in some places as higher education increasingly localizes. However, the evolving nature of student life will continue to steer in new directions, influenced by changing times and the uneven nature of the university system (Chatterton, 2010).

Studentification, characterized by the influx of students into urban areas, profoundly influences the utilization and perception of public spaces within these locales. The urban student demographic, typically aged 19 to 30, engages with various public and private spaces, following concentration patterns that affect urban landscapes (Mangione, 2022). This interaction presents distinct phases of transformation in space, reflecting the impact of students on the urban fabric. Moreover, studentification triggers conflict over urban space usage, leading to the creation of consumption geographies and playscapes tailored for students (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023).

As crucial consumers of cultural and recreational facilities, students contribute to the vitality and diversity of cities, shaping their economic patterns and overall quality of life (Russo, Van Den Berg, & Lavanga, 2003). Public spaces, fundamental components of urban environments, serve as arenas for social negotiation and contestation, embodying both democratic and social functions (Staeheli & Mitchel, 2007). However, these spaces are subject to ongoing contestation, influenced by historical, political, and social dynamics, especially in the context of studentification (Mitchell D. , 1996).

Incorporating purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) is viewed as a potential measure to manage student populations and balance communities in the wake of studentification (Sage, Smith, & Hubbard, 2013). However, the dynamics of studentification are intricate, and the rise of PBSA can also lead to de-studentification in certain neighborhoods (Kinton, Smith, & Harrison, 2016). Studentification involves a transformation in local population structures, marked by an increase in Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and the co-residence of young, single, unrelated individuals in shared housing (Sage, Smith, & Hubbard, 2012).

In the modern urban context, public spaces are more than just physical entities; they represent a hybrid of politics and commerce, striving to create an interactive, democratic public. However, the imposition of limits and controls on spatial interaction by planners often prioritizes security and entertainment over free political discourse, leading to the creation of "dead public spaces" and festive areas focused on order and control (Mitchell D. , 1995). These dynamics underline the intricate relationship between studentification, urban public spaces, and the broader urban landscape, calling for comprehensive urban planning strategies that consider the evolving needs and dynamics of student populations.

2.5. A short glance to the ways of analysis by other literatures

As a conclusion for state of art and before going into the methodological and analytical parts of the research, the strive here is to assess some previous analysis in which related to this study. A study by Jakub Zasina in 2020 is demonstrated to compare university students' recreational activities in metropolitan areas of Turin and Lodz based on their temporal, economic, and spatial dimensions. The study's examination was centered on empirical data from two European cities that sit at the junction of two crucial processes in post-industrial urban restructuring: the emergence of consumerism and the expansion of higher education enrollments. The results indicate that students' recreational activities extend beyond visiting music and disco clubs, and instead gravitate towards gathering at home, frequenting pubs, and cafes, and engaging in non-daily shopping. Additionally, the locations where most students engage in leisure activities do not overlap spatially with their educational and living spaces. Finally, despite contextual variations between the two cities, the data collected on student leisure consumption in Lodz and Turin evince many similarities (Zasina, 2020).

Another study in 2020 tried to investigate transformation of urban space based on student migrants. Employing a qualitative grounded theory methodology, they ascertained that the limited land undergoes a malleable transformation because of the residents' involvement in social interactions with the community group. This adaptation is driven by spatial prerequisites and the hierarchy of temporal priorities. The indigenous residents' cultural norms and those of the student population merge into a unified way of life, embodying distinctive values. These values serve as the communal bedrock, representing intrinsic assets and potential for the community. The nature of this spatial metamorphosis transcends physical constraints like wall boundaries, encompassing a broader perspective where space is shaped by human needs and social interactions among community members, notably between residents and migrant students (Permana, Akbardin, & Nurrahman, 2020).

Furthermore, Francis Collins in 2014 “explores the connections between universities and cities in a moment of heightened emphasis on international student mobilities and globalizing processes” (Collins, 2014, p. 242). Due to this, the study discusses the generation of desires to be mobile, student experiences of situated learning in place, and the articulation of student mobilities. Through this research, “approximately 20 interviews with international students, a survey of 500 students and interviews with 10 officials were conducted. By analyzing decisions to study abroad, learning and life experiences and future aspirations” (Collins, 2014, p. 242), Collins introduces the concept of "assemblage thinking" to reframe international education, emphasizing that urban spaces like Seoul are not simply the sum of their component parts but are produced through interactions between these components. Seoul's emergence as an educational city is attributed to the dynamic interaction between universities, media industries, state policies, and multinational corporations, facilitated by student mobilities. Situated learning in Seoul is portrayed as the result of complex interactions between students, people, objects, and environments that shape the city. As a result, international student mobilities have implications not only for access but also for the positions of students, universities, and cities in the global landscape shaped by their interactions (Collins, 2014).

So, as can be seen, the literature review which has been discussed during this chapter, is investigated in a variety of research and different aspects. We tried to identify a framework of the focus of the thesis, then in the next chapter, we will go more into the details of the case studies and methods.

3. A specific look at Turin and its transformation process

This chapter will assess the process of Turin transformation from industrial ages to the post-industrial era. This is crucial to understand different aspects of changing approaches regarding Turin as a city where don't want to be an industrial city anymore. So, this investigation will be divided into the reasons for the transition from the industrial age and strategic plans of Turin. Through these, it will be clearer to have a communication of concepts between studentification and Turin post-industrial city.

3.1. An introduction of Italian Cities: Governance, Innovation, and Transition

Italian cities were the places where new institutions and forms of government have been shaped over the centuries, and where main innovations in the social and cultural domains continue to take place. Despite that leading role, it is only since the end of last century that urban areas started to be highly regarded within the national political agenda. Drivers of this process have been legal reforms to further empower local government, state initiatives to stimulate urban regeneration and, not least, the European Union, that especially in the Southern regions still plays a key role in supporting local projects and planning innovation (Governa & Salone, 2022). This could be known as a basis for urban reformations of Italian cities due to new images of the cities.

In the nineties, urban reforms in Italy have brought to municipalities a greater autonomy in a wide spectrum of relevant policies for local development, including new approaches to urban planning. New principles were embedded in the planning practices – for instance, civic participation – while the spreading of public-private partnerships have accelerated urban renewal in several Italian cities. More recently (2014), metropolitan government have been established in 14 city-regions, likely the territorial scale where the most urgent urban issues of contemporary Italy should be addressed, from social housing to climate change adaptation (Vinci, 2019). While institutional innovation is a good key to explain the progress in local governance and planning capacities within most Italian cities, their material transformation must also be related to the external investments that national and European policies have moved to urban areas in these years (Governa & Salone, 2022).

“Such considerations are important for post-industrial cities: one of their challenges is for example to make places attractive to specific target audiences, such as artistic communities, with their preference for vibrant artistic networks, a climate of support for arts, and a good and affordable quality of life. This

implies the celebration of ‘new’ post-Fordist urban identities, economies, lifestyles, forms of work and consumption” (Vanolo, 2008, p. 370).

3.2. Turin; From industrial to post-industrial through strategic plans

“Turin is a Northwestern Italian city, with a population in 2022 of about 847,287 inhabitants in the municipality, and 1.8 million people in the metropolitan area. It is the capital of the Piedmont region (4.5 million inhabitants), and the fourth Italian city in terms of population” (Vanolo, 2015, p. 2). From a geographical point of view, the city is situated in a strategic position, as recently confirmed by its involvement in some major infrastructure projects promoted by the European Commission, being at the crossroad of two priority European transport axes: the East-West extension (via a railway high-speed axis) of the pan-European Corridor 5 from Kiev to Lisbon, and the North-South railway axis from Genoa to Rotterdam/Antwerp. Concerning economic specialization, there is little doubt Turin is a major manufacturing city, classified by Oecd5 as an *old industrial town*. From 1899 Turin hosts in fact the long-run presence of the headquarters of the Fiat automobile manufacturer company that has historically been a major engine of the Italian industrial development. In Europe, equivalent paths have been followed by cities such as St. Etienne in Switzerland or Glasgow in UK. Turin has been traditionally known as a one-company town, the Italian capital of the automobile (Rota & Vanolo, 2007) due to the existence of the FIAT company which was founded in 1889 by Giovanni Agnelli (Mangione, 2022).

“Differently from other cities who experienced industrialization by the end of XIX century, industrial growth in Turin was quite slow until the First World War, and then extremely fast with the growth of FIAT car manufacturing and the consequent growth of a system of small and medium enterprises working as suppliers for FIAT. The city was highly specialized in the service sector, and then with industrialization it turned into a productive center, compared by Mumford (1938) with cities such as Pittsburgh, Lyon, and Essen. While at the end of the XIX century several car manufacturers and industrial enterprises were located within the city, in the XX century the history of Turin was mostly connected to FIAT” (Vanolo, 2015, p. 2). Since World War I, the growth of industry and related industries has started (Crivello & Peda, 2019), and as a result, the most economic and demographic growth occurred between 1950 and 1970. This made Turin one of the important migration flow destinations in the North. Based on the National census, in 1971, Turin's population peaked at 1.168.000. Along with demographic growth, the economic flourishing was due to industrial regions’ construction, working neighborhoods, road networks, the rise of the working class, etc. (Mangione, 2022).

“In the 1970s, the local economic upheaval linked to the onset of the Fordist crisis prompted both an internal restructuring of FIAT and a reconfiguration of industrial relations, involving the relocation of plants nationally (particularly in Southern Italy) and internationally (Latin America and Eastern Europe). These changes had tangible effects on Turin: population growth halted, and employment in the service sector began to ascend. While the city retained its industrial character, industrial relations and production chains extended beyond the metropolitan area, positioning Turin as part of a broader productive system” (Vanolo, 2015, p. 3). Since the 1980s, the crisis affecting industrial cities led to the relocation of numerous factories to Southern Italy, Eastern Europe, and Latin America (Crivello & Peda, 2019). This marked the onset of an economic downturn resulting in increased unemployment, a decline in population, the closure of industrial and production sites, vacant apartments, and unused land. In Turin, between 1993 and 2011, a prolonged period of governance aimed to prevent the city's social and economic decline by endorsing an ambitious agenda. A coalition of center-left parties took the lead, initiating the 'beyond Ford' project to steer Turin toward new production objectives and enhance social and territorial equilibrium for competition with other European cities. The governance model employed in Turin is likened to the concept of an 'urban regime,' reminiscent of certain American city government models. The application of the urban regime theory to analyze the two-decade government cycle in Turin is segmented into three phases: the development and establishment of the urban regime, the consolidation and stabilization of the regime, and the declining phase, identifying factors influencing its resilience and success (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013). In the 1990s, various actors, including local politicians, institutions, and foundations, collaborated to redefine the city's identity through a series of urban and strategic planning initiatives. These efforts aimed to enhance the economy, lifestyle, social and cultural aspects, and demographic patterns (Bolzoni, 2013). During recurring crises from the late 1990s to 2004 and ultimately in 2008, the urban decision-making system sought strategies to counter challenges in the automotive sector and reverse the decline of the "city-factory" (Governa & Salone, 2022).

In the span of strategic planning from 2000 to 2016, efforts were undertaken to lay the foundation for a policy aimed at steering Turin toward a post-industrial era, with a particular emphasis on technology and culture as pivotal aspects of the city's development (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013). Various stakeholders, including universities, the local chamber of commerce, and major banking foundations, were engaged in this process. Described as "elite-driven," this strategic planning involved influential individuals or groups playing a significant role in shaping the city's trajectory. The primary objective was to reposition Turin as a hub for education and innovation, with a special emphasis on the university's role in propelling urban development (Mangione, 2022). The initial effort to transcend the Fordist economic organization and its

social repercussions occurred through the First Strategic Plan in 1997. A decade later, the Second Strategic Plan in 2006 endeavored to implement the knowledge economy paradigm as a key strategy for planning Turin in the 21st century. Subsequently, the Third Strategic Plan in 2016 focused on a 'new manufacturing economy' aligned with a neo-industrial paradigm, seeking to translate the traditional industrial legacy into innovative forms (DASTU & IRS, 2014). This plan advocated for the promotion of new consumption patterns, particularly in the realms of food and technological urban smartness (Governa & Salone, 2022). These strategic documents encapsulated a core set of guiding ideas capable of uniting a diverse range of interests and inspiring a broad array of policies.

Generally, municipal, and regional governments, business communities and private-public actors have gathered around the adoption of a pro-growth approach. This model has been then modulated along three different lines: the development of infrastructures and built environment, the development of research and knowledge centers, and, finally, the development of leisure, entertainment, and tourist consumption. The three lines of redevelopment have known different fortune and relevance in the last twenty years, but the most prominent one has appeared to be the one related to leisure, consumption, and creativity. Municipal governance and local economic forces have worked together to brand a new image of culture, creativity, and tourist charm and to set up a supply of spaces and services for leisure and entertainment (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2012).

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of 'studentification' has gained prominence, highlighting the unique role of students as inhabitants of the city and emphasizing how the increasing concentration of students in metropolitan areas can give rise to complex and potentially divisive dynamics between students and local populations (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023). In response, initiatives have been launched to attract businesses, promote entrepreneurship in knowledge-intensive service sectors (such as Research and Development), organize cultural events, and rejuvenate the city's architectural and cultural heritage. The primary focus of the initial sub-agenda can be encapsulated in the term "polycentric city," an urban planning agenda concentrating on housing and infrastructures, including some projects that were unrealized by previous administrations (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013) In the first strategic plan (2000), universities were primarily viewed as generators of knowledge, proficient in research and the production of skilled individuals beneficial to the local industrial system (Cenere, Mangione, & Servillo, 2022). The university's role is fundamentally oriented toward revitalizing urban areas and fostering collaborations between the public and private sectors in urban development. The functions of universities are strategically aligned with urban redevelopment,

emphasizing two key roles: education and research to promote the city's new image. Concurrently, the presence of universities in social and urban spaces is leveraged as a means to positively impact neighborhoods. In practice, universities actively supported the first strategic plan, contributing to economic development, student housing, services, and social interactions (Mangione, 2022).

In 1999, during Mayor Castellani's second term, Turin was selected as the host city for the 2006 Winter Olympics. This event served as a pivotal point for the administration, influencing many of the decisions and strategies implemented. Mayor Chiamparino, who served two consecutive terms (2001-2006 and 2006-2011), played a key role in both conceptualizing and executing strategies and actions aimed at transforming Turin into an 'Olympic city' (Dansero & Puttilli, 2010). The execution of both the masterplan and the Olympic Program brought about significant physical, social, and functional urban changes, accelerating long-debated spatial transformations, including the construction of the underground railway, the expansion of Caselle airport, the repurposing of derelict lands like the former General Markets and Italgas area, and the modernization of various sports facilities (Governa & Salone, 2022). Projects associated with the 2006 Olympic Winter Games updated and enhanced (though sometimes distorted) the guidelines established by the Plan. Nearly two decades later, the visible outcome of this plan is an urban development that has profoundly altered the city's landscape. The transformation is attributed to the Railway Loop's extensive work (with over 7 km of tracks laid), the construction of new buildings in abandoned industrial zones and along major roads, urban regeneration initiatives in disadvantaged neighborhoods, the expansion of two academic institutions (Polytechnic and University), the restoration of central area buildings and monuments, the establishment of a new railway station, and the refurbishment of the old one (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013).

Map 1. A map of the polycentric sub-agenda

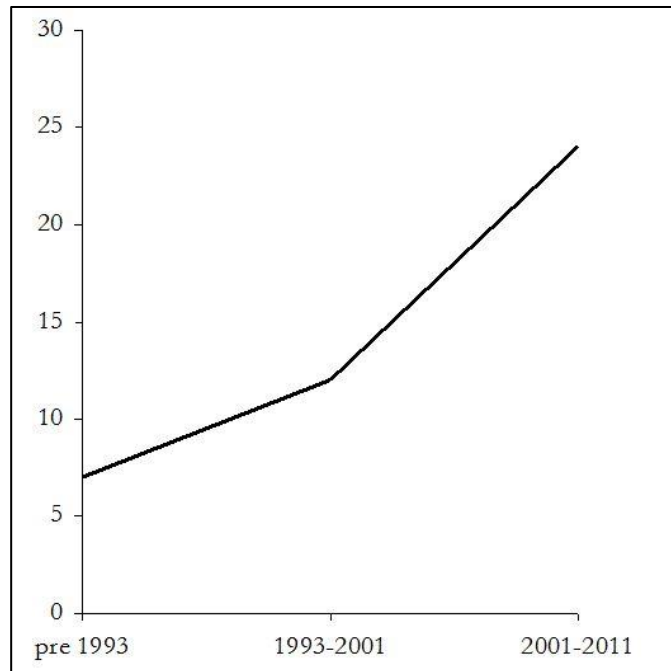


Source: (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013)

The second strategic plan (2006) maintained its focus on the knowledge-based economy, highlighting the imperative to bolster the city's human resources. It recognized the significance of educational excellence as a key element in attracting skilled professionals from other regions, emphasizing the need for Turin to develop housing infrastructure and an effective reception mechanism (Cenere, Mangione, &

Servillo, 2022). Turin's political leaders launched an extensive branding campaign to transform the city's image from its industrial past to that of a vibrant and multicultural creative hub (Crivello & Peda, 2019). The second sub-agenda introduced the concept of a polytechnic city, aiming to convert Turin into a high-tech cluster—a knowledge machine where innovative technical and organizational skills could intersect with the city's industrial tradition and the knowledge generated by its academic institutions and research centers. To realize this vision, “the University and Polytechnic embarked on ambitious expansion plans, including new structures and research centers, and established two business incubators and three poles to accommodate innovative companies (Environment Park for green-economy companies, Multimedia Park for the film industry, and Turin New Economy, situated in the old Fiat main factory)” (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013, p. 29). The overall number of research and technological centers increased from 7 in the early Nineties to 24 in 2010 (figure below) (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013):

Chart 1. Research centers and technological poles in Turin



Source: (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013)

The objective is to champion projects and endeavors geared toward positioning culture as 'the new job in the city,' envisioning culture as a catalyst for economic growth in a post-industrial society. Drawing

inspiration from the entertainment machine model observed in other urban contexts (Lloyd & Clark, 2001), the aim is to transform the city into a 'creative district' teeming with cultural activities and services. Simultaneously, it should function as a 'market of entertainments' catering to intellectual classes, young people, and the inhabitants of the gentrified center. Leisure and tourism, exhibitions, scientific conferences, religious celebrations, and festivals are seen as strategic solutions to counter industrial decline. The orchestration of major events emerged as the most conspicuous facet of the new urban cultural policy, with the 2006 Winter Olympics serving as the pinnacle. Numerous other events were organized, attracting people, and mobilizing substantial economic and organizational resources. Concurrently, there was a reorganization of the museum system, along with revitalized support for the film and theatre sectors (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013).

“The attempt to identify a new path to relaunch Turin’s post-industrial economy has seen both the University of Turin and the Polytechnic of Turin progressively play a major role in local urban growth strategies. In line with this shift, in 2012 the Municipality launched the Turin University City plan with the scope of leveraging universities’ capacity to introduce physical, social, and economic changes as partners of urban regeneration initiatives” (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023, p. 5). The Third Strategic Plan, published in 2015, encompasses several aspects of the strategy outlined in 2012, underscoring the significance of universities as crucial actors in the economic and social growth of the region. However, the amplification of the role of academic institutions is linked to the growth of the foreign and international student community, which is a result of the collaborative efforts of the universities and the city, and a factor that further shapes these strategies, with public policies and private interventions in the realm of hospitality and appeal becoming central to the agenda (Cenere, Mangione, & Servillo, 2022).

The city’s image has thus been radically re-branded, focusing on some aspects (culture, creativity, food, leisure) mainly oriented towards an integrated offer for national and international tourism (Vanolo, 2015). By hinging on the richness of regional food and wine traditions and the innovation brought by digital platforms in the temporary accommodation market (Semi & Tonetta, 2021), Turin has then become a tourist destination. Since technological innovation activities and start-ups do not take off, tourism represents one of the few truly significant items in the urban post-industrial tertiary sector. Moreover, the consolidation of platform economies in the short terms rentals market collides with the other major axis of local urban policies, i.e., Turin’s as a ‘university city’. The effort of both the University and Polytechnic of Turin to attract students from other regions and abroad, opened the issue of so-

called “studentification” in a real estate market that, while traditionally lower than in other Italian cities, is already cracked by the higher rate of evictions in Italy (Bolzoni & Semi, 2023). “The image of a city, in the sense of the general meaning and idea of a place, is formed not only by visual images, but also by many other elements. This symbolic construction of the image of the city is usually analyzed from two different perspectives: the internal image, that perceived and reproduced by the local actors of the city (those identifying their geographical identities with that place, and the external image, the perception and representation of the city by (and for) people and organizations extraneous to local life and symbols” (Vanolo, 2008, p. 1).

Various stakeholders collaborated during the transformation plans of Turin across different domains. The entities supporting the polycentric sub-agenda primarily identified the Association of Builders as the central hub. Around it, an extensive network of secondary stakeholders, committed to the 'land community,' played a crucial role in sustaining the agenda. This network included the Faculty of Architecture, major architectural and engineering firms, local banks, associations of small businesses and large-scale distribution, downtown property holders, and some football clubs. Fiat assumed the role of a major landowner, negotiating favorable agreements with public institutions. “Public entities, namely the Municipality and, in certain instances, the Region, served as intermediaries and coordinators among real estate interests and between them and higher levels of government” (Governa & Salone, 2022, p. 32). In the knowledge coalition, public institutions, especially the City and Region through key departments or public agencies, displayed foresight by promoting and supporting long-term projects. The two Turin bank foundations facilitated the implementation of the sub-agenda through dedicated funding, while the University and Polytechnic contributed significantly with their innovative potential in applied research and the establishment of business incubators. The two Turin universities, particularly the Polytechnic with its strong presence in the industrial field, played a dynamic role, increasingly asserting themselves as agents of innovation and technology transfer (Governa & Salone, 2022). The business community, notably larger companies, remained in the background. High-tech and ICT companies occasionally participated in specific projects, while Fiat showed little interest in investing resources and expertise in this domain (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013).

3.3. Concluding the discussion on Turin transformation

The evolution of Turin over the last forty years seems relatively simple to summarize: from the 'one company town', dominated by the automotive sector, to the "always on the move" city; from the city in crisis of the 1980s to the 'creative', vibrant, funny city (Vanolo, 2015); from the 'grey' city of the past industrial monoculture to the 'increasingly beautiful' city where 'passion lives (Governa & Salone, 2022). The crisis of the one-company town model occurred in a specific political juncture characterized by wide crisis and lack of legitimacy that caused a transformation in the balance of the local politic assets. The vision of Turin as a city that has been able to embrace the challenge of the transition to a post-industrial society and to get the most out of a situation of crisis is a rhetoric that is widely spread in the local society. The transformation of urban settings into places of leisure and entertainment embodies a powerful discourse of change and development that frames the interpretation of reality and the subsequent actions of the social actors. It has got both a symbolic and a material impact that affect not only the residents, but also the people who work and use that specific space (Bolzoni, 2013). Torino has not yet lived through a full post-Fordist transition, and industrial activities still represent the core of the urban economy (Crivello S. , 2011).

In the aftermath of the 2006 Olympics, the construction sector started to slow down, and the 2008 crisis further complicated the situation. post-Olympic Turin seems to be an example of those "places that don't matter" described at a European level by (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018), who points out how much and how the resentment and difficulties of places and people who feel - and in part really are - excluded from the processes of globalization are expressed above all from a political point of view with support for sovereigntist and populist parties and movements. The 2006 Olympic Games probably constituted the apex and at the same time the breaking point of Turin's transition (Governa & Salone, 2022).

The Turin urban regime can be characterized as lacking strength, despite its positive reputation, advantageous circumstances (such as the political and institutional crisis of 1992, the brief recovery of Fiat in 2004 and 2005, and the Winter Olympics), and substantial resources at its disposal. Its weakness stems from an excessively ambitious agenda without a central focus to concentrate efforts and resources. Additionally, the regime is weak due to the limited and conditional support from private partners and the unbalanced involvement of public authorities, which are financially highly exposed but lack leadership in the decision-making process. Ultimately, the regime's weakness is compounded by the composition of a ruling elite predominantly composed of neo-notables from cliques, detached from the citizens (Belligni & Ravazzi, 2013).

In general, one of the primary tactics was to create a new perception of Turin as a knowledge city. This led to a surge in the student population over the last two decades, with more than 114,000 students residing in the city. The city's two major universities are thriving, with rising enrollments and continued funding from both the state and corporations. As a result, the universities have become the city's new productive base, promising a future of knowledge, research, and innovation. The university dimension has become increasingly important in recent years for the city's urban transformations, and local planning is now giving more importance to the presence of universities and students. Turin's urban development strategy over the past two decades has focused on attracting highly skilled elites, with the city's universities actively involved in designing local governance coalitions and assuming a more engaged and aware role in terms of their urban outreach (Mangione, 2022).

It is noteworthy that while Turin's cultural and nightlife scene was previously a minor aspect of the city's story, at least until the early 1990s, over the past two decades, the city has undergone a significant shift towards consumption rather than production. This is exemplified by the metaphor of the "city of culture" surpassing that of the "factory city" (Crivello & Peda, 2019).

4. Methodology

In this chapter, we delve into the fundamental components that shape the research design and guide the entire research process. It provides a roadmap, offering clarity on the research process's execution, ensuring rigor and coherence throughout. So, this research tries to unravel the intricacies of international university students' engagements with public spaces within two distinct neighborhoods of Turin: Aurora and Vanchiglia. The research design entails a mixed-methods approach, combining Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis and qualitative interviews, with the aid of Atlas.ti software. In different stages of the research and the analysis, the GIS analysis enabled an evaluation of various neighborhoods in Turin based on multiple factors such as accessibility, amenities, and spatial distribution of public spaces. GIS analysis will be provided in the assessment of quality of public spaces in different neighborhoods of Turin, and students' movements through chosen neighborhoods.

Following the interventions in Vanchiglia due to presences of high volume of students and its effects on Aurora in terms of proximity to Vanchiglia, these two neighborhoods emerged as the focal areas for this investigation (which related analysis will be investigated in the next chapter). To capture the essence of the student's experiences in these chosen neighborhoods, 25 qualitative interviews were conducted with international university students residing or studying, or both, within Aurora and Vanchiglia. In general, the interviews prepared in various sections as perception and experiences about living in Turin, use of public spaces of Turin regularly, perception and use of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia, and differences and challenges in using public spaces. Then they were asked to draw mental maps through their favorite public spaces and kinds of activities on Google Earth. The goal was to have some opinions approval based on geographical dimensions by interviewees. Thematic analysis performed through Atlas.ti served as the core method to unearth recurring themes, patterns, and narratives within the qualitative data, revealing the intricacies of their engagements with public spaces. Additionally, GIS visualization techniques complemented the qualitative analysis by translating the participants' descriptions and navigational narratives into vivid mental maps. These visualizations provide an enriched spatial context, uncovering the participants' movements and perceptions as they interact with the public spaces in their chosen neighborhoods. In recognizing the significance of ethical research practices, this study adhered to a robust ethical framework. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their anonymity and understanding of the research's purpose and implications. By amalgamating rigorous data collection, comprehensive thematic analysis, and innovative GIS

visualization, this research seeks to offer a holistic and insightful understanding of the experiences of international university students in Turin, focusing on Aurora and Vanchiglia's public spaces.

The research will seek to understand and interpret participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings they attach to their actions and behaviors. On the other hand, it is mentioned that research questions focus on exploring:

- How do international university students use the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods in their free time?
- What challenges, limitations, or features do international university students face while using public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods in their free time?
- What elements affect international university students' use of public spaces in Turin?
- How do they move through the public spaces and where are the most popular public spaces among international university students?
- What suggestions can be addressed towards making public spaces vibrant and student-friendly in Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods?

These questions aim to gain a deep understanding of the student's experiences and perspectives. By studying the experiences of international university students in specific neighborhoods in Turin, the study is contextualizing their interactions with public spaces within a particular geographical and cultural setting. Generally, to address these questions in the best way, this research adopts a qualitative research approach to gain in-depth insights into the experiences and perceptions of international university students regarding the use of public spaces in the chosen neighborhoods in their free time. Through qualitative interviews, the research aims to capture the subjective meanings and interpretations that international university students ascribe to their use of public spaces. Overall, the research questions, data collection method, and data analysis approach suggest that the research aligns with an interpretive approach, which emphasizes understanding and interpreting the lived experiences and perspectives of participants in their natural settings.

Qualitative interviews allow for in-depth exploration and understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives. By engaging in direct conversations with the students, it can be delved into the nuances of their interactions with public spaces, gaining rich and detailed insights that might not be possible with other data collection methods. On the other hand, public space usage is influenced by a variety of factors, including cultural, social, and environmental, etc. elements. Interviews offer the opportunity to

understand the complex interplay of these factors and how they shape the students' behaviors and choices within the specific context. Also, interviews provide the flexibility to adapt the questioning and follow-up based on participants' responses. With interviews, it can directly capture the perspectives of international university students. This first-hand information is crucial for understanding their subjective experiences, motivations, and challenges while using public spaces. Public space usage can sometimes involve sensitive or personal topics. Through interviews, participants may feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences in a private and confidential setting, thus facilitating open and honest responses. Through interviews, findings are contextualized within the specific context of the neighborhoods in Turin. This helps in understanding how the unique features and characteristics of areas influence the students' use of public spaces. So, qualitative interviews are the best strategy for research as they offer a direct and personalized approach to understanding international university students' experiences and behaviors in using public spaces. The data obtained through interviews will help to uncover the intricacies of their interactions with the neighborhoods and provide valuable insights for addressing research questions.

In this case, in-depth interviews were undertaken with international university students residing in selected neighborhoods of Turin. The process involved direct engagement with participants, posing specific questions, and collecting their responses and perspectives. As primary data pertains to firsthand information gathered by the researcher directly from the source, it categorically falls into the primary data classification, serving as an indispensable and original contribution to the research study. A qualitative interview, as employed in this research, is an approach suited for obtaining detailed and personally significant information from participants. Typically conducted in a conversational or discussion format, qualitative interviews involve follow-up questions, providing a framework where practices and standards are not only recorded but also explored, challenged, and reinforced. While lacking a standardized structure, most qualitative research interviews are either semi-structured, lightly structured, or in-depth (Mason, 2002). In the realm of qualitative research, interview durations vary, with 1 hour to an hour and half being a common range.

The sampling technique follows some criteria. As the community focus is on international university students, all participants must be international students from universities. Basically, there are 2 preconditions for selecting interviewees. As (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023) mentioned in 2012, the municipality of Turin launched the Turin University plan with the scope of universities' capacity to introduce physical social and economic changes as actors of urban regeneration

initiative. The attempts have seen both UniTo and Polito play a major role in local urban growth strategies. So, during the last 10 years, the total number of students enrolled at both major universities increase with people coming to Turin from either other Italian regions or from abroad. Among entire university students, offsite students are the group most involved in the research by Mangione in 2022. While on-site students are those residing permanently in the city or residing in the surrounding and daily commuting, offsite students move to Turin to live far or outside the parental home. So, international students who enrolled in UniTo and Polito are the target of the analysis. The composition of the student population of a university or city can tell us not only about the city and university but about geographies at various scales including them. Another precondition is about nationality of interviewees. According to Mangione (2022), international students (IUS) are not just temporary residents; they live, study, work, and recreate in the city. IUS has characteristics that remain in the cities and urban areas for years even after their leaving. Parts of IUS live in peripheral areas because of economic conditions (Cenere, Mangione, & Servillo, 2022) explained 14% of students living in these areas are foreign students. On the other hand, by the vision of Turin university city, these students may come closer to the urban areas in addition to increasing the number of students annually, considering foreign students of Turin becomes an important variable for research. So, it is important that interviewees do not have a permanent residence permit in Turin, or they are not Italian.

So, for introducing samples for interviews, 25 students are selected so that 10 are living in the chosen neighborhood but their campus is in another area, 10 are studying in the existed campus of the chosen neighborhood, and 5 are both living and studying there. Generally, 25 students were selected in a variety of gender diversity, degree, diversity of nationality, and most importantly, living or studying or both in the selected area. These prepared categories are due to the significance of covering most areas of the neighborhood to make a more comprehensive analysis of the research. The way of finding interviewees and contacting them was based on familiarity with the Turin student community (Snowball sampling technique). Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique wherein initial participants are identified and then used to refer to additional participants, creating a "snowball" effect. This method is particularly useful when studying elusive or hard-to-reach populations. Snowball sampling is often employed in social sciences and qualitative research, allowing researchers to access individuals who may not be easily identified through traditional sampling methods (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). This kind of distribution makes a better understanding of their experiences, perceptions, and suggestions because it gives mixed information from different varieties of students with various life conditions. In the below table, more information such as gender, age, address, campus of study, degree,

nationality, and years of living in Italy are visible. The street numbers are skipped to ensure anonymity of interviewees:

Table 2. Sampling Distribution

CAT	FID	M/ F	Residence	Campus	Degree	Age	Nat.	Years of Stay in Italy
Studying	S1	F	Via Rossana	CLE	Master	28	Iran	4
	S2	F	Via della Rocca	CLE	Master	32	Iran	3
	S3	M	Corso Mediterraneo	CLE	Master	29	Turkey	3
	S4	F	Via Claudio Luigi Berthollet	CLE	Master	23	Spain	4
	S5	M	Via Monferrato	CLE	Ph.D	31	Iran	4
	S6	M	Via Rossana	CLE	Master	29	Iran	3
	S7	M	C.so Inghilterra	CLE	Master	27	Colombia	4
	S8	M	Corso Siracusa	CLE	Bachelor	21	Turkey	2
	S9	F	C.so Inghilterra	CLE	Bachelor	21	India	2
	S10	F	Via Germanasca	CLE	Bachelor	20	Spain	1
Living	L1	M	Corso S. Maurizio	Polito - Corso degli Abruzzi	Master	30	China	5
	L2	M	Via Carlo Noè	Polito - Corso degli Abruzzi	Master	25	Mexico	1
	L3	M	Corso Giulio Cesare	Polito - Corso degli Abruzzi	Master	27	Iran	1
	L4	M	Corso Principe Oddone	Polito - Castello del Valentino	Master	27	Armenia	3
	L5	F	Via Riccardo Sineo	Polito - Castello del Valentino	Bachelor	19	China	1
	L6	M	Via Rovigo	Polito - Corso degli Abruzzi	Bachelor	21	India	2
	L7	F	Via Giovanni Francesco Napione	Polito - Lingotto	Master	26	Egypt	3
	L8	F	Via Giovanni Francesco Napione	Polito - Lingotto	Master	27	Egypt	4
	L9	F	Via Vanchiglia	Polito - Castello del Valentino	Bachelor	22	Germany	2
	L10	F	Via Carlo Noè	Polito - Corso degli Abruzzi	Bachelor	20	Mexico	1
Studying & Living	SL1	M	Corso Novara	CLE	Ph.D	28	Iran	5
	SL2	F	Corso Novara	CLE	Master	27	Iran	3
	SL3	F	Corso Giulio Cesare	CLE	Bachelor	20	Pakistan	2
	SL4	M	Via Guastalla	CLE	Master	27	India	4
	SL5	F	Via Alessandria	CLE	Bachelor	21	Portugal	2

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Map 2. Sampling Distribution



Made by Author

In consideration of the attributes of the interviewees, the manner of their distribution, and the type of interviews conducted, the sampling employed adheres to the purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling approach. Purposive sampling involves deliberately selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, rather than relying on random chance. In this approach, researchers can maximize the relevance and depth of their findings, enhancing the overall quality of qualitative research. Also, due to the flexibility of purposive sampling, allowing researchers to tailor their participant selection to the unique needs of their study, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the research topic (Morse, 1991). Non-probability sampling methods find common use

in qualitative research and exploratory studies, where the objective is to gain insights and understanding rather than to generalize to a larger population. The research, in this instance, utilizes specific non-probability sampling methods, intentionally selecting participants based on predetermined criteria or characteristics relevant to the research questions (Schreuder, Johann, & Weyer, 2001).

In contrast, an exploration of various research studies, as highlighted in the literature review, underscores the significance of utilizing qualitative interviews as a crucial analytical tool in this research. For instance, Lynn A. Staeheli and Don Mitchell (2007) sought to bring clarity to discussions surrounding public space by analyzing existing literature, conducting 25 interviews with scholars actively engaged in public space research, and interviewing participants involved in public space controversies in the USA. Their approach revealed diverse definitions of 'the public,' rooted in deeply held political orientations and normative visions of democracy. They also identified considerable overlap in participants' framings of their understandings of publicity, suggesting a basis for more in-depth debate and potential transformations in policy and practice. Furthermore, a study by Emma Bates and Louise Holt (2023) delved into the expectations of gender inequalities in the workplace among young women university students. The researchers conducted 21 semi-structured interviews with young women at three mid-high-ranking universities. Their original findings indicated that these young women were factoring in expectations of the gendered workplace in their career choices and life-planning. Drawing insights from these previous studies and other relevant literature on qualitative interviews, this research method enables a focused examination of individuals likely to offer valuable insights aligned with the study's objectives, constituting a form of purposive sampling within the non-probability technique.

The data analysis methodology employed in this research utilizes a blend of thematic analysis and GIS visualization. Thematic analysis, recognized as a widely employed qualitative data analysis technique, encompasses the identification, examination, and reporting of patterns or themes within the qualitative data derived from the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Specifically, thematic analysis is deemed most suitable for studies seeking to uncover insights through interpretation, providing a systematic approach to data analysis. In this research, following the interviews with international university students residing or studying in the chosen neighborhood, transcripts will be generated and subjected to analysis. The coding process, facilitated by Atlas.ti, will systematically arrange and categorize interview responses, unveiling recurring themes and patterns related to the students' utilization of public spaces, encountered challenges, preferences, and suggestions for improvement. Coding in qualitative research involves processes that assemble, categorize, and thematically organize collected data, furnishing an

organized foundation for meaning construction. Coding methods encompass processes that uncover themes within the data, indicating thematic directionality for categorizing data, ultimately facilitating the negotiation, codification, and presentation of meaning (Williams & Moser, 2019). A code in qualitative inquiry often represents a word or short phrase symbolically assigning a summative, salient, essence-capturing attribute for a segment of language-based or visual data. Initially, coding entails a progressive three-part schema—First, Second, and Third level coding—guided by the formula "from codes and categories to theory" (Saldaña, 2021). Thematic Analysis further allows for the coding and categorization of data into themes, contributing to the creation of a logical chain of evidence and meaningful interpretations from qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Through these processes, thematic analysis aims to uncover in-depth insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

In this sense, the process of coding in the research is prepared through reading the interviews' transcriptions to find different themes or approaches to them. The interview questions were divided into different sections. Each section had its specific detailed question to get more real and clear information about interviewees. At the end, various classifications of codes were extracted. Actually, these classifications were not based on sections, but based on the topics, themes, or approaches flowed through the interviews. On the other hand, the research is striving to find responses about using public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia among international university students in their free time, challenges they face, effective elements in their decisions, their moving patterns through the city, and how is a student-friendly or vibrant public space for them. Considering the characteristics and impacts of the studentification process on the urban areas, it is necessary to explore the regular daily life of international students in Turin. As mentioned before by Smith, Sage, and Balsdon in 2014, "multiple social, population, economic, cultural, and physical changes give rise to the formation of a new sense of place, and a distinctive type of ambience in the studentified neighborhood" (Smith, Sage, & Balsdon, 2014, p. 118). So, by considering the regular daily life of students, these changes could be understood clearly. On the other hand, Zasina in 2022 mentioned that student populations have expanded in cities with different historical backgrounds, such as former industrial centers and these academic institutions have traditionally held a vital position in shaping the development of urban areas and defining the unique characteristics and culture of the cities, they reside in. This influence extends to their physical growth, community ambience, standing, and the economic dynamics at both local and regional levels (Murzyn-Kupisz & Szmytkowska, 2015). This can be an effective element on experiences of students in

cities, also assessing cities as university city or not. Finally, due to crisis of public spaces mentioned by Gehl in 2011, and elements for improving the quality of public spaces mentioned by Francis in the literature, discussion on limitations, differences, and perceptions of public spaces of Turin, Aurora, and Vanchiglia is crucial. So, by re-reading transcriptions several times, 68 codes were extracted that could be grouped in specific group codes to have better classifications due to interviewees' responses, research questions, and related literature that has discussed before. In the below table, the codes and categories of codes are visible. It must be noted that we have used abbreviations for each group code as GCn.:

Table 3. Codes and Group Codes of Interviews

Group Code	GC1.Perceptions and Experiences About the City of Turin					
Code	Affordable	Dissatisfaction with life in Turin	Diverse entertainment opportunities	Enjoyment of the city	Good transportation	High humidity
	Historical and modern identity	Housing challenge	Integration of green and urban spaces	Lack of green spaces	Language and social barriers	Non-clean city
	Student-friendly environment	Time-consuming administrative bureaucracy	The unsuitable city for students	Vibrant atmosphere	Wasting time on public transportation	-
Group Code	GC2.Regular Student Daily Life					
Code	Commute to the university by public transportation	Commute to the university by walking	Gym	Lunch with a friend on campus	Outdoor lunch break	Sightseeing in the center
	Socializing	Study room choice	Studying at home	Nearby and comfortable choices	-	-
Group Code	GC3.Perceptions of Public Spaces in the neighborhood					
Code	Bad transportation quality	Being away from the city center	Cheapness as a negative aspect	Dirty public spaces	Lack of good shopping mall	Lack of green area
	Lack of niceness	Lack of recreational spaces	Limited interaction with local people	Limited international presence	Low security	The negative perception of strangers
	Poor lighting	Poorly maintained public spaces	Unattractive spaces	Good access to public spaces	Lively environment	Numerous bars and restaurants
	Traffic-free and quiet streets	Wide and renovated streets	Well-supplied services	-	-	-
Group Code	GC4.Challenges and Limitations in Using Public Spaces					
Code	Theft and safety	Constructions	Distance concerns	Events	Fear of certain people in areas	GTT driver's strike
	Inadequate study room conditions	Lack of light, seat, water, toilet, store	Lack of natural elements	Limited availability of desired facilities	Overcrowding of public spaces	Transportation limitations
Group Code	GC5.Differences in Using Public Spaces					
Code	Relaxation and leisure vs. training and sport	Socializing vs. personal reflection	Spending time in open spaces vs. closed spaces	Spending time in public spaces vs. passing	Walking a lot vs. not walking a lot	Visiting museums
Group Code	GC6.Turin as a Student City or Not					
Code	Turin as a Student City			Turin as a Non-Student City		

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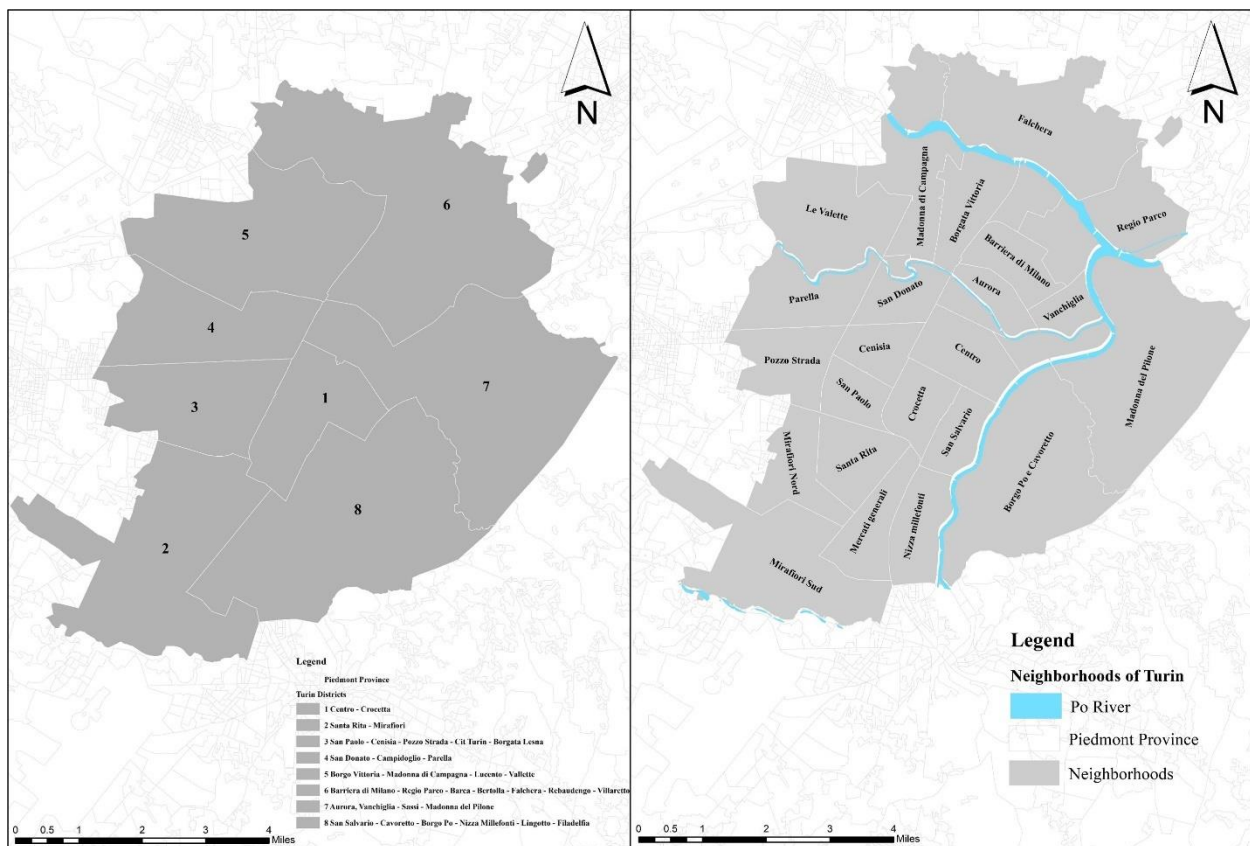
In addition to thematic analysis, it is considered to use GIS visualization to reproduce mental maps based on the participants' navigation and descriptions during the interviews. A mental map is a special type of image which is not a "picture". It may be the image of a real map, images of a city, for example, shops, monuments, and streets. Mental maps make it possible to repeat spatial behavior in the mind so that when we are on the road, we can act with assurance that we would have. If we want to remember events, people, and things, it helps to know their locations (Tuan, 1975). So, in this research, the process of mental mapping is placed in the middle of each interview. So that, each interviewee will be asked to imagine himself or herself in a day and time interval, then starting to move through interested routes and places. Through it, they must talk about their reasons of choices, interests, feelings, etc. These mental maps will be asked once in the specified neighborhood, once in the whole area of Turin. Also, the drawing process is pointed through google earth in the PC and saved by participants. By visualizing the mental maps, it can be geospatially understood how the students perceive and interact with the public spaces in the chosen neighborhood. The GIS visualization will complement the thematic analysis by providing a spatial context to the interview data. It offers to map out the spatial patterns and connections mentioned by the participants and gain spatial insights into their movements and preferences within public spaces.

Combining thematic analysis with GIS visualization is a powerful approach as it leverages the strengths of both qualitative and spatial data analysis methods. Thematic analysis helps to understand the students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges in using public spaces, while the GIS visualization provides a geospatial perspective to further interpret and contextualize their responses. Also, GIS visualization makes more trust for the researcher to examine the interview responses to interpret and analyze data and findings. In fact, it can be said that GIS visualization and mental mapping act as a filter that verify the answers that may divert the research from its original path through the interviewee's mind. This mixed-methods data analysis technique will offer a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of how international university students engage with public spaces in the chosen neighborhood of Turin.

5. Turin; An Analysis of public spaces and international university students

This chapter firstly provides an overview of international university students (IUS) distribution in the city and Turin public spaces, then it offers an analysis of empirical material collected, focusing on the IUS perception, description and uses of Turin's public spaces, Aurora and Vanchiglia areas in particular. As mentioned in the literature of public space, urban public spaces are pivotal for urban areas and their transformations. These spaces serve a multifaceted purpose, encompassing physical, ecological, psychological, social, political, economic, symbolic, and aesthetic functions. In the following context, these multiple purposes are discussed in the basis of public spaces of Turin. So, the neighborhoods of Turin are divided into 8 different districts as below map indicates:

Map 3. Turin districts and neighborhoods



Source: Made by Author

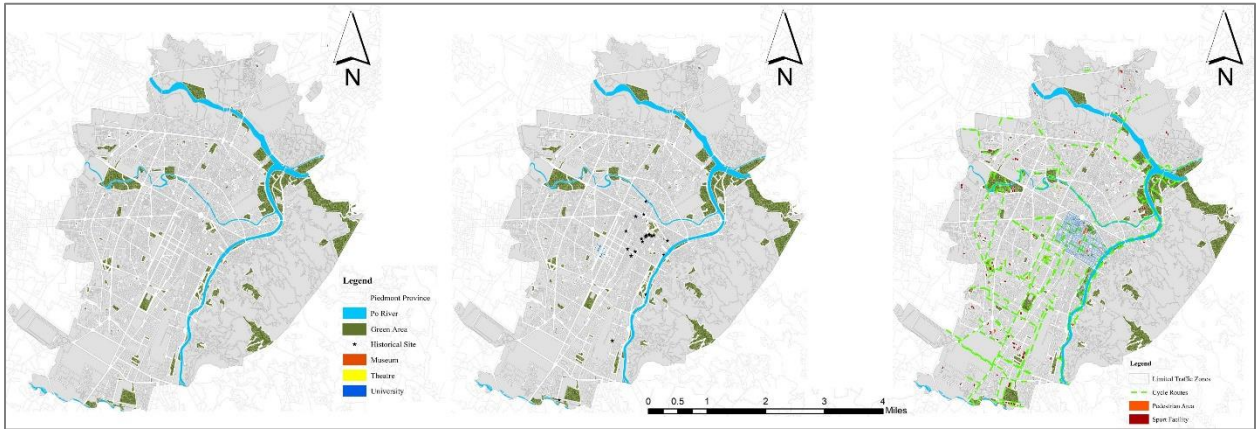
As an introduction, a brief look at the public spaces of the city of Turin has been given. Turin is endowed with an abundance of green spaces that enhance its allure and overall quality of life. These verdant expanses serve as a refreshing escape from the urban hustle and bustle, providing avenues for leisure, recreation, and communion with the natural environment. One of the most prominent green areas in Turin is the Parco del Valentino, a sprawling public park along the Po River. This park includes picturesque landscapes, meandering paths, and a tranquil atmosphere. It features beautifully landscaped gardens, tree-lined avenues, and the iconic Valentino Castle, which adds a touch of history and architecture to the natural setting. Another notable green space is the Parco della Pellerina and Parco Coletta, vast parks ideal for outdoor activities and family outings. They offer playgrounds, sports facilities, picnic areas, and ample space for jogging, cycling, or simply enjoying a leisurely walk. In addition to these major parks, Turin is dotted with smaller green oases, such as the Giardino Roccioso (Rocky Garden), the Giardino Sambuy, etc. These charming gardens provide a peaceful retreat for those seeking a quieter, more intimate natural setting. Turin also boasts numerous tree-lined boulevards and squares, enhancing the city's greenery and providing shaded areas for relaxation. Strolling along the wide avenues, such as Corso Vittorio Emanuele II or Corso Galileo Ferraris, allows one to appreciate the city's commitment to integrating nature into its urban landscape. The incorporation of green spaces into the analysis is based on recognizing their substantial positive impacts on the quality of life, environmental sustainability, and public health. These spaces act as natural buffers against pollution, enhance air quality, and play a role in reducing the urban heat island effect. Furthermore, green areas offer opportunities for physical activity, relaxation, and stress reduction. The proximity to green spaces has been associated with improved mental health and an overall higher quality of life. These areas also serve as settings for recreational activities, cultural events, and community gatherings, fostering social cohesion and a sense of belonging among residents from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, these spaces attract visitors, support local businesses (such as cafes near parks), and contribute to increased property values in the surrounding areas. This economic boost can further enhance the overall vitality of neighborhoods (Smith J. , 2010).

Turin, with its deep-rooted historical and cultural legacy, stands as a city that treasures its past and cultural identity, offering a plethora of significant historical and cultural landmarks that mirror its importance in Italy. Ranging from regal residences to notable museums like the Royal Palace of Turin (Palazzo Reale), Mole Antonelliana, Egyptian Museum (Museo Egizio), Palazzo Madama, Basilica di Superga, Piazza Castello, and the National Automobile Museum (Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile), these sites, among various other cultural destinations, can be profoundly meaningful for international

students in Turin. These historical and cultural sites in Turin offer a glimpse into the city's past, its contributions to art and culture, and its significance in shaping Italian history. People can immerse themselves in the splendor of Turin's heritage and appreciate the city's enduring cultural legacy.

Conversely, Turin has been actively enhancing its pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to cultivate a more sustainable and enjoyable urban setting, particularly to facilitate improved transportation options for students. These initiatives encompass bike-sharing and rental programs, dedicated cycling lanes and paths, pedestrian-friendly zones, and the Ciclovía del Po (Po River cycle path), among others. By prioritizing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, in collaborating with educational initiatives, community engagement, and smart technology integration, Turin can create a sustainable and inclusive urban environment that prioritizes the well-being of its residents. Pedestrian zones are essential for fostering a sense of community and promoting non-motorized transportation. Also, it has benefits for such neighborhoods in terms of social interaction and economic activity. Pedestrian Areas, can be known also as community gathering spaces, have a significant impact on reducing traffic congestion, public health improvement, reducing the risk of accidents, reducing the carbon footprint of cities, and supporting local businesses (Garcia, 2018).

Map 4. A general view on Turin’s public spaces



Source: Made by Author

So, by considering Turin atmosphere, we started to identify the presence of IUS in Turin to get in-depth into the Aurora and Vanchiglia’s features in terms of understanding the perception of IUS in using public

spaces. This primary analysis is devoted to frame a better understanding of these 2 neighborhoods and a basis for IUS use of public spaces.

5.1. Presence of international university students in Turin

The urbanized region of the municipality of Turin is contiguous with fifteen adjacent municipalities, commonly referred to as the first ring, which has merged into a unified built-up area (Mangione, 2022). The current metro area population of Turin in 2023 is 1,802,000, a 0.22% increase from 2022³. Between the '90s and 2012 the most relevant inflow of new foreign inhabitants has been registered. In 2020 Turin had the 15% of its registered population with foreign citizenship. The emigration flow from Turin to abroad exactly doubled (+100%) between 2010 and 2019 and the most recent data shows that more than 70% were Italians. The average age in Turin is 47 years and 26% of the entire population is more than 65 years old. In general, Turin has the lowest attractiveness of young people among the north-center Italian cities. To complete Turin's transformation into a knowledge hub, according to Municipality's projects, an increase in the number and quality of housing and services for university students became crucial (Mangione, 2022). In a context in which the city is affected every year by the increase in the number of young people who choose to study in Turin, understanding their wishes, expectations, paths, and any difficulties encountered could allow for further tools to trace future lines of intervention on the attractiveness of the city, reception, inclusion, services, and housing supply. In the last twenty years, Turin has been affected by a substantial increase in both major universities' populations (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023). Of these, the University of Turin (UniTo) hosts 59.522 students (63% undergraduate and 37% postgraduate students) of which 3.605 of them are international students (68% undergraduate and 32% postgraduate students)⁴. Another major university, Politecnico di Torino (Polito) hosts 31.737 students (58% undergraduate and 42% postgraduate students) of which 5.802 of them are international students (58% undergraduate and 42% postgraduate students)². These statistics indicate 1% of the Turin population are UniTo and Polito students among which 0.5% are international students who are living in the city.

Over the past twenty years, the number of young people who choose Turin as the city in which to undertake or continue their university studies has significantly increased. To date, around 38% of the Turin student population can be defined as non-residents, coming from another Italian region (33%) or

³ The Premier Research Platform for Long Term Investors, 2023, <https://www.macrotrends.net/cities/21597/turin/population>

⁴ QS World University Rankings, 2023, <https://www.topuniversities.com/universities/university-turin#p2-university-information>

from abroad (5%). The increase in nonresident students is particularly significant at the Polytechnic, which has recently seen an inversion of the ratio between Piedmontese and non-Piedmontese students, with the latter now reaching 54% of the total (Cenere, Mangione, & Servillo, 2022). In terms of presence of students in the neighborhoods, Turin can be known as a lively, exciting city as well as the promotion of the features of creativity, urban culture, and street life (Vanolo, 2008). The promotion and the celebration of a vibrant nightlife, of a dynamic cultural and artistic scene, of an alternative and authentic atmosphere go together in this direction (Bolzoni, 2013).

So, as mentioned before, UniTo and Polito are the major universities in Turin which hosts 1% of the Turin Population. One of the crucial things to be discussed is the relationship between campuses and students' residences which make an effect on the physical patterns of university students in the city, specifically the public spaces of Turin. The Italian higher education system has traditionally exhibited robust governmental backing for underprivileged students, particularly regarding housing and services, resulting in the elevation of some universities and regions to highly coveted status due to their comprehensive welfare provisions. Despite the fluctuating nature of regional funding policies, this trend persists in Turin and the Piedmont area. A prevalent method for assessing the effects of studentification on a community is to use the concentration of students in each neighborhood as a gauge, as it allows for the identification of the areas that are most impacted by the influx of students (Mangione, 2022). It must be mentioned that the definition of neighborhood in this research is referred to as *quartiere* meaning a localized area where people live, and it often has its own unique character, community atmosphere, and sometimes cultural or historical significance. First, the following table illustrates the branches of Unito and Polito in Turin:

Table 4. UniTo and PoliTo campuses in neighborhoods⁵

University	Department/Campus	Quartiere
UniTo	Dipartimento di Culture, Politica e Società - Campus Luigi Einaudi (CLE)	Vanchiglia
	Dipartimento di Economia e Statistica Cognetti de Martiis - Campus Luigi Einaudi (CLE)	
	Dipartimento di Giurisprudenza - Campus Luigi Einaudi (CLE)	
	Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici	
	Dipartimento di Lingue e letterature straniere e culture moderne	Centro
	Palazzo Venturi	
	Dipartimento di Studi Storici	
	Dipartimento di Storia Dipartimento di Filosofia e Scienze della Formazione	
	Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici	
	Dipartimento di Matematica	
	Dipartimento Scienze della Vita e Biologia dei Sistemi	
	Dipartimento di Psicologia	San Salvario
	Dipartimento Scienze della Vita e Biologia dei Sistemi	
	Dipartimento di Scienze della Terra	
	Dipartimento di Chimica	
	Dipartimento di Scienza e Tecnologia del Farmaco	
	Centro di Biotecnologie Molecolari	
	Dipartimento di Fisica	Lingotto
	Dipartimento Scienze Mediche	
	Dipartimento Neuroscienze Rita Levi-Montalcini	Santa Rita
	Dipartimento di Scienze della Sanità Pubblica e Pediatria	
	Facoltà di Economia	San Donato
	Università di Management ed Economia	
Dipartimento di Informatica	Mirafiori Sud	
Dipartimento Scienze della Vita e Biologia dei Sistemi	Orbassano	
Dipartimento di Oncologia		
Dipartimento di Scienze Cliniche e Biologiche	Grugliasco	
Ospedale Veterinario Universitario		
Dipartimento di Scienze Veterinarie	PoliTo	
Dipartimenti DIST e DAD – Castello del Valentino		San Salvario
Politecnico di Torino Lingotto		Lingotto
Poli MIRAFIORI		Mirafiori
Politecnico di Torino – Sede Centrale		Crocetta
Politecnico di Torino – Sede Centrale		Cenisia
Politecnico di Torino - Morgari		San Salvario
Politecnico di Torino - Sede di Alessandria		Alessandria
Biblioteca Luigi Squillario - Città Studi Biella		Biella
Politecnico di Torino		Mondovì
Politecnico di Torino, sede distaccata di Verrès		Verrès

⁵ Politecnico di Torino and University of Turin, 2023, <https://www.polito.it/en/polito/about-us/campuses-and-maps>, <https://en.unito.it/about-unito/structures/departments>

Considering the mentioned table, the distribution of these campuses in indicated as below:

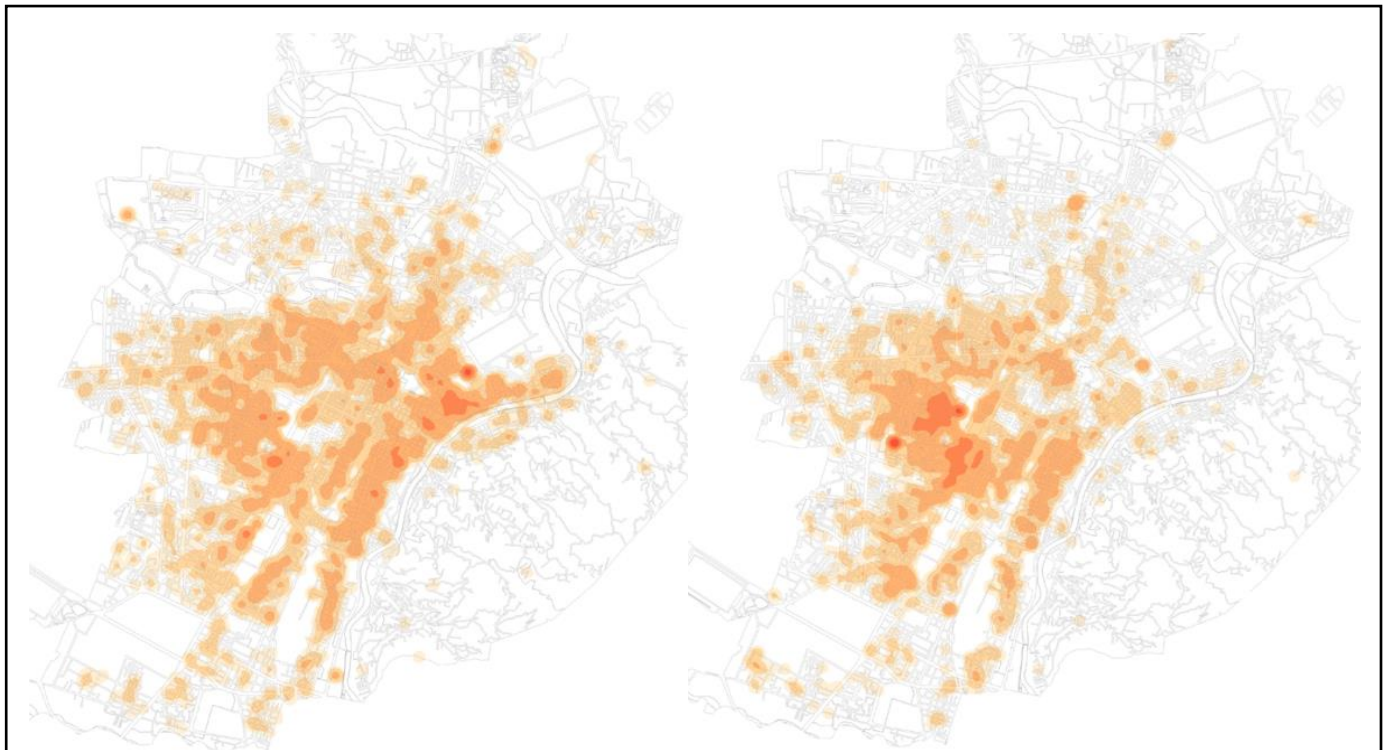
Map 5. Unito and Polito campuses and departments in Turin



Source: Made by Author

A study by Mangione in 2022 elaborated an analysis of the distribution of the non-local university population in Turin that was carried out based on data obtained through anonymized information about enrollees at the city's two main universities at an overall glance. The distribution of non-local university students covered almost the whole neighborhoods of Turin with slight differences in some areas as indicated below:

Map 6. Distribution of non-local students of the main domicile in Turin (Unito on the left, Polito on the right)



Source: (Cenere, Mangione, & Servillo, 2022)

As can be seen, almost all the main areas of the metropolitan area of Turin are populated by university students except for a few areas. It also highlights different patterns of these students in the city. Non-local university students tend to choose housing options near their respective university campuses. This is a common trend in many cities and is practical for students as it reduces commuting time and enhances their access to academic facilities. Also, it identifies the Politecnico's headquarters and the Valentino campus as strong attraction points for offsite students. This is not surprising as these areas are likely to offer amenities and a social atmosphere that appeals to students. It's also interesting to note the concentration of students along the Po axis, suggesting the impact of scenic and recreational

aspects. The differences in distribution between the University of Turin and the Politecnico are also noteworthy. This discrepancy is attributed to the historical nature of the university's location. The more scattered nature of the University of Turin's campuses contributes to a more evenly distributed student population (Mangione, 2022). On the other hand, easy access to public transportation is a significant factor for students when choosing where to live, as it can greatly affect their daily commute and overall quality of life. And lastly, the representation highlights areas in the extreme northern suburbs and the hills as being less attractive to students. This is likely due to the distance from the universities and possibly a lack of amenities or a vibrant student community in these areas.

Based on mentioned information, it is noticeable that the whole area of Turin (in the case of campuses, students' residences, etc.) is covered by students. Also, the international university students enrolled in UniTo and Polito, as 0.5% of the Turin population, are required to be investigated. They bring new effects to the city however they want to leave. But their positive and negative impacts stay in the city for years. Especially, when Turin is going to be a knowledge-based city, this issue becomes more essential. This approach and presence of international university students in the city are highly connected in terms of student housing, nightlife, economic situation, social interactions, transportation systems, and in general, development of the city. Therefore, the issue that becomes very important is the university presence on a large scale and the presence of numerous students and the daily side effects of these trips on the scale of the neighborhood and even the city. Campus Luigi Einaudi (CLE), Turin's largest campus in the Vanchiglia neighborhood, has led to massive changes not only in its surrounding area, but also with tremendous effects on the surrounding neighborhoods.

5.2. Aurora and Vanchiglia; Areas for investigation on students' patterns through public spaces

Building on the understanding of the significant influence of international university students on Turin's various facets, a closer examination of specific neighborhoods, such as Aurora and Vanchiglia, provides valuable insights into the localized impact of this demographic. These neighborhoods, situated in the heart of Turin, have become focal points for the convergence of diverse student communities. Aurora, characterized by its cultural diversity, and proximity to the center, serves as a microcosm of the broader student influence in the city. Likewise, Vanchiglia, with its blend of historic charm and modern amenities such as Campus Luigi Einaudi (CLE), has witnessed the dynamic interplay between international students

and the local community. In Aurora and Vanchiglia, the presence of international university students is palpable in the fabric of daily life. Student housing, nightlife, economic landscape from local businesses to cost-effective life conditions, and social interactions can lead to a symbiotic relationship between international students and the host community. This relationship shapes the transportation systems, with an emphasis on accessibility to educational institutions and recreational spaces. As Turin strives to become a knowledge-based city, the developmental trajectory of Aurora and Vanchiglia serves as a microcosm of the broader challenges and opportunities associated with accommodating and engaging an international student population. This exploration will delve into the nuanced dynamics of these neighborhoods, shedding light on the intricate interconnections between international students and the ongoing transformation of Turin into a hub of knowledge and cultural exchange.

5.2.1. Aurora

To date, Aurora is literally split into two very distinct areas: the eastern one, which develops from Borgo Rossini and Corso Palermo up to the intersection with Via Bologna, is rapidly expanding due to various factors including the greater proximity to the historic center of Turin, the presence of the new university centre, the restored Italgas headquarters, but also and above all the presence of the "Nuvola Lavazza" with its 600 new workers and of the IAAD. All this has led to an exponential appreciation in the value of the surrounding properties, but above all it has generated effervescence and vitality in a former industrial area where in the past there was a power plant decommissioned by Enel, the CEAT tire factory and popular buildings in a predominantly working-class context. The western area of the neighborhood, the one which rises around Corso Giulio Cesare, and which extends towards the Barriera di Milano and San Donato districts, is instead historically well-populated working-class neighborhoods (Bolzoni & Semi, 2023), which has been intensifying starting from 2000 and which involves serious problems of integration, degradation, delinquency, ghettoization, urban decay, and segregation (Bolzoni & Cotella, 2022).

Progressively towards the northern area of Turin, the developments increasingly affecting, lastly, the Aurora area. In a context of demographic contraction and aging of the resident population, university students, the young urban middle class and tourists emerge as a strategic resource, the main target of interventions and development. Studentification, commercial gentrification and, more generally, events, consumption and entertainment become key elements of an urban development agenda characterized by public debt and austerity measures in which market dynamics and private actors often emerge as

protagonists, gradually affecting different semi-central neighborhoods of the city (Tulumello, Cotella, & Othengrafen, 2020). In the last decade, however, several public and private interventions have been starting to change this area, one block at a time. Some university campuses such as Scuola Holden and Institute of Applied Art and Design – Iaad were launched in 2013. Other interventions by Lavazza coffee firm and market building in the Piazza della Repubblica were established in 2018 (Bourlessas, Cenere, & Vanolo, 2022). Furthermore, a fancy hostel, café, restaurant, and event space within the Combo national brand was launched at the beginning of 2020 (Bolzoni & Semi, 2023).

The transformations of the Aurora, Borgo Dora, and Barriera areas of Milan and, in general, of much of the northern area of the city, would fit into this framework of urban change. Historically popular neighborhoods, places of settlement of successive waves of migration and often associated with phenomena of urban degradation and segregation (Sacchi & Viazzo, 2003), present a real estate asset whose value per square meter in 2018 it was 71-88% lower (depending on the area) compared to the nearby city center, also due to the weight of the crisis (Bolzoni & Cotella, 2022), while the Aurora and Barriera di Milano area between 2007 and 2017 recorded a decrease in values between 9% and 29% (Bolzoni & Semi, 2023).

5.2.2. Vanchiglia

The other neighborhood, Vanchiglia, has a surface area of 3,38 km². Based on demographic data from 2006, it has approximately 14,200 inhabitants and, together with Vanchiglietta, which has 18,100, this brings a total of 32,300 inhabitants, of which approximately 2,900 are foreigners. The 1981 data reported as many as 42,300 inhabitants resident or domiciled in the two neighborhoods, but this demographic decline should not be misleading, since the transformation of the neighborhood from a popular one to a prestigious one has certainly increased the rooms not intended for housing, and is above all the proximity of the university has enormously increased the number of houses rented to off-site students, who are not included in the personal data relating to the count. To university students, young creatives, the new urban middle class in general: San Salvario first, Vanchiglia and Borgo Rossini then transform into districts largely focused on consumption and entertainment, including at night (Bolzoni, 2016).

“The ‘Esedra di Borgo Rossini’, a cozy, small square on the river, near the Maria Adelaide, has become one of the youngsters’ nightlife epicenters, gaining the nickname ‘Le Panche’ (i.e., the benches). The nickname has been given by the younger crowd because of the increasing relevance acquired by the

homonymous bar on the square. The bar, which opened in 2014 (2 years after the opening of the CLE), is blamed for bringing new practices of consumption that triggered an uncontrolled nightlife economy. But it was only a couple of years ago that the situation became untenable, due to the progressive attractiveness of the bar's low-price policy for drinks, very soon emulated by nearby shops, which changed their opening hours, targeting their offer to young consumers. The arrival of these new businesses is generally considered in line with a retail scape that was already characterized by the presence of activities addressing a clientele in search for high quality, 'authenticity' and good care (Owner of a tearoom, female). However, the nightlife popularity of the square and the adjacent streets full of small night shops became an issue" (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023, p. 9).

The neighborhood of Vanchiglia located close to Campus Luigi Einaudi (CLE), has been undergoing an intensive process of university-related transformation. CLE is 45,000 m² and opened in 2012. The area surrounding CLE has become characterized by a higher presence of students – "around 8000 of which are enrolled in courses that take place at CLE, with an effect on the housing market, retail scape, and public transport system. 11.763 are non-local students (before CLE was built) and in 2017-18, the Vanchiglia neighborhood increase its students by 67%, and Aurora increase it by 77% while showing a decrease in the resident population" (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023, p. 5). Three sites of Vanchiglia were investigated as the most populated by university students: the former Maria Adelaide hospital (have been made to convert the building into a student residence), Le Panche Square (for its increasing relevance in the geography of students' nightlife), and Mosca Bridge area (which international PBSA company as a social hub is going to be open) (Cenere, Mangione, Santangelo, & Servillo, 2023).

Following the establishment of new university campuses in Vanchiglia and its belongings such as nightlife, youthful spaces, etc., then studentification, commercial gentrification, events, consumption, and entertainment in Aurora have emerged as new hip destinations, with a complete transformation of the commercial landscape, increasingly devoted to the food and entertainment economy and especially targeted towards university students. The growing population of short-term residents appears to share a cosmopolitan attitude towards cultural policies and an interest in vibrant neighborhoods, and hold generational, age and cultural values that are much more homogeneous than those of the vast residential population.

Now, towards a spatial analysis of Aurora and Vanchiglia spaces, the most public space in Aurora is around 10% of Aurora's 2.6 km² area which belongs to historical sites while this amount is 41.53% of Vanchiglia's 3.38 km² area due to presence of CLE in Vanchiglia. Actually, Turin boasts a rich cultural

heritage, with numerous museums and historical sites. The inclusion of museums and historical sites aligns with the city's identity and heritage conservation objectives and Aurora is one the main areas due to its rich presence of historical points. On the other hand, Turin is known for its academic institutions and libraries. These spaces are significant for students and the general population, contributing to the cultural and intellectual vibrancy of the city, especially in Vanchiglia. They play a critical role in fostering education and research, cultural vibrancy of an urban area, workforce development and job-seeking activities, entrepreneurship, and technology transfer, spurring economic development, and social inclusion (Brown, 2015). In terms of vibrancy, the Po River, the most famous river in the region, constitutes 27.5% of Vanchiglia's area which provides many activities such as pedestrian areas, greenery, and some kinds of markets around of itself. It can be said that riverside areas often have unique recreational and cultural attributes, and their inclusion reflects the importance of waterfront development in a student-friendly environment. In Vanchiglia, the presence of riverside areas signifies a commitment to urban renewal and revitalization. Riverside Areas often serve as walking, cycling, and public transportation along the waterfront, attractive venues for leisure and cultural engagement, and green corridors (Lee, 2012), what is seen in Aurora is 4.43%. In terms of other public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia, some spaces in these areas are 0%. This does not mean the absence of these spaces, but it means the lack of these spaces in the neighborhood compared to other activities. For instance, lack of sport facilities, theatre, thematic/periodic markets, and cinema exists in these 2 neighborhoods. These spaces are important for physical well-being, community building, local events, cultural life of the neighborhoods, attracting residents and visitors, and community engagement (Johnson, 2014). In terms of markets, it can be mentioned that there is the largest open-air market in Europe in Aurora (Porta Palazzo) with 1.21% of Aurora's area. The presence of Porta Palazzo market contributes to the economic activity and social life of neighborhoods. Markets offer a platform for small businesses and entrepreneurs to showcase and sell their products, also enriching the cultural tapestry of the neighborhoods by an array of ethnic foods, crafts, and products. Markets can serve as focal points for residents, visitors, and tourists to socialize, connect, and partake in events and festivals. Finally, many markets offer affordable options for residents, including fresh produce and goods at competitive prices. This affordability factor is particularly relevant for urban neighborhoods with diverse socio-economic demographics (Smith R. , 2017). So, in the below table, the areas of each kind of spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia is stated separately:

Table 5. Distribution of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia

<i>Neighborhood</i>		<i>Aurora</i>	<i>Vanchiglia</i>
Total Area of the Neighborhood		2.67 km ²	3.38 km ²
Kinds of Spaces/Neighborhood (%)	Green Areas	1.02 %	1.8%
	Libraries	0.02%	0
	Universities	0	41.35%
	Pedestrian Areas	0.15%	0.47%
	Museums	0.02%	0
	Market	1.21%	0.17%
	Riverside	4.43%	27.52%
	Historical Sites	9.73%	3.84%
	Sport Facilities	0.002%	0
	Theatre	0	0
	Thematic and Periodic Markets	0	0
	Cinema	0	0

Source: Calculated by ArcGIS

So, two important neighborhoods are Aurora and Vanchiglia. The importance of Vanchiglia is due to the presence of one of the main campuses of Unito while it has a high range of effects on its surrounding area and, the Aurora neighborhood. These 2 neighborhoods were involved in the process of Turin's transformation through 3 strategic planning during time. While the process of changing for each of them experiences a different way. One of them saw a huge range of students' presence and the other one hosted a high number of migrants. On the other hand, the establishment of various kinds of spaces, activities, amenities in these 2 areas provide a basis for more developments. As research follows, we are striving to understand how international university students use public spaces. So, based on Aurora and Vanchiglia's functions, we are supposed to make the analysis by focusing on these 2 neighborhoods.

5.3. International university students' use of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia

In this last part, we move to the analysis of perception and uses of public space of Aurora and Vanchiglia by IUS. The first step is analyzing the interviews through coding and then, exploring the existing networks between codes and the nature of interviews. The second step is devoted to the preparation of a unique mental map which will be achieved through interviewees' navigations and considering the relationships between codes. In the end, the current situation is reviewed. So, in this part, we have discussed the themes and codes explored through the interviews separately. Each group code (GCn.) is

discussed through initial themes according to the literature, movements patterns of students is visualized based on their answers, and their challenges or differences are provided. Also, it is considerable that we have used the most important quotations by interviewees in the different parts. The characteristics of the interviewees are indicated by using the code Ln. (Living in Aurora and Vanchiglia) or Sn. (Studying in Aurora and Vanchiglia) or LSn. (Living & Studying in Aurora and Vanchiglia) which comes from table number 5 (sample distribution).

5.3.1. GC1.Perception and experiences about the city of Turin

The initial segment of the interviews aimed to gain insights into the general experiences and perceptions of international university students residing in Turin. Overall, a nuanced perspective regarding life in Turin emerged, encapsulated by two distinct positions. The first viewpoint expresses a positive appreciation for life in the city, while the second conveys dissatisfaction with the student experience. A recurring theme among interviewees was the acknowledgment of Turin as a city conducive to student life. Participants lauded the city's welcoming atmosphere, attributing it to the presence of esteemed universities and a diverse student population fostering an inclusive environment. Another significant factor contributing to Turin's reputation as **a student-friendly city**, as emphasized by interviewees, was the accessibility of scholarships and financial support for international students. Turin hosts numerous universities and educational institutions actively promoting internationalization and embracing students from around the world. In alignment with this commitment to inclusivity, these institutions frequently provide various scholarship programs and financial aid options to support students throughout their academic journeys. This financial assistance not only alleviates economic pressures on students but also creates opportunities for those who might encounter obstacles in pursuing higher education abroad. Scholarships encompass various forms, including merit-based awards, need-based grants, and those specifically tailored for international students. The existence of such scholarship programs underscores Turin's dedication to promoting diversity and fostering an inclusive educational environment. The provision of scholarships highlights the universities' commitment to attracting talented individuals globally and establishing a supportive ecosystem for academic and personal growth. Moreover, receiving a scholarship can profoundly impact a student's overall experience and well-being by alleviating financial stress and enabling holistic development during their time in Turin. Ultimately, the availability of scholarships in Turin, coupled with the city's substantial student population and a lower cost of living compared to other cities, significantly contributes to its acclaim as a student-friendly

environment. These factors gain particular importance based on the observations, experiences, or information shared by interviewees regarding living costs in other cities.

SL2: "Turin is a good city as a student city because, first, it gives scholarships. Secondly, it is a small city and with the money we get, we can have a good student life. Thirdly, Turin has good universities, and they have various fields."

The low living costs of Turin makes **affordability** another positive aspect of living in Turin, which appealed to international students. The city's relatively lower cost of living compared to other cities provided a sense of financial relief for students, allowing them to better manage their expenses and potentially indulge in various activities without breaking the bank. The relatively lower cost of living in Turin, including accommodation, food, transportation, and entertainment, allows international students to make the most of their budgets and enjoy various aspects of the city without straining their finances. It has a direct impact on the enjoyment of the city for international university students and allows students to explore and engage with the city's cultural, social, and recreational aspects. By alleviating financial stress and offering opportunities for exploration and cultural engagement, affordability contributes significantly to enhancing the overall experience and enjoyment of living in Turin for international students.

Turin's adept incorporation of green spaces into its urban landscape emerged as another noteworthy aspect commended by students. The prevalence of parks, gardens, and verdant areas across the city offered students a welcome escape from the urban hustle, providing venues for relaxation, recreation, and study. This facet not only amplifies the city's visual allure but also presents diverse attractions that international university students can partake in during their leisure hours. The interviewees expressed admiration for Turin's effective integration of green spaces into its urban tapestry. Strategically positioned parks, gardens, and tree-lined thoroughfares are interspersed throughout the city, creating natural havens that offer valuable respites from the dynamic urban surroundings. The existence of these green spaces contributes to a sense of equilibrium, serenity, and environmental awareness, rendering Turin an appealing destination for those desiring a harmonious cohabitation of urban life and nature.

L5: "The city has a unique blend of historical architecture, modern developments, and green spaces. I have enjoyed exploring the city's museums, and parks, and trying out the local cuisine."

On the other hand, the city's **unique blend of historical charm and modern amenities** was cited positively by the international students. Turin's rich history, reflected in its architecture and landmarks,

added a cultural dimension to their experiences, while the city's contemporary offerings provided opportunities for engaging with current trends and innovations. This integration expressed a **sense of enjoyment and excitement about living in Turin**. The city's vibrant atmosphere, enriched by cultural events, festivals, and social gatherings, played a significant role in enhancing their overall experience. This aspect likely contributed to a positive perception of Turin's social life and potential for personal growth. So, Turin's rich cultural heritage and availability of various amenities greatly contribute to the city's vibrant atmosphere and the enjoyment of international students. International students can immerse themselves in the city's history, art, and traditions, allowing for a deeper connection with the local culture and identity.

S4: "...Turin is a vibrant city with a rich cultural heritage and a growing reputation.... It's a vibrant and multicultural city known for its lively atmosphere, diverse dining options, and thriving nightlife. The neighborhood provides a sense of community and offers a wide range of amenities, including supermarkets, cafes, and parks, which make it convenient for daily living..."

Among other issues that have been mentioned less, of course, the **availability of various cultural activities, sports events, music festivals, and nightlife** options catered to the diverse interests and preferences of international students, making it easier for them to find activities aligning with their passions. Cities have often been characterized as places of pleasure-seeking (Zukin, 1993), and urban planners are increasingly recognizing the importance of the promotion of nightlife, intended as the descent of young adults into city center bars, pubs, and clubs, especially during the weekend (Hollands, 1995). It is considerable that nightlife clubs and entertainment structures and turning marginal or unsafe places into lively places have had an important role in the politics of renewal of Turin (Crivello S. , 2011) which make these kinds of senses by interviewees.

S6: "It has almost different types of entertainment. Sports, urban entertainment, various festivals, and beautiful natural areas."

And finally, **Turin's transportation system** was noticed by very few people as a desirable aspect of living in the city. An accessible and reliable public transport network allows students to easily move around the city and facilitates their exploration of different areas, including the neighborhoods of Aurora and Vanchiglia.

On the other hand, there are negative points of view about living in Turin among international university students. **Language barriers** are a significant challenge for international students in Turin, especially if

they are not fluent in Italian and local people do not know English. The small number of English speakers in the city of Turin bothers the students and this makes them isolated from the society. Difficulty in communicating with locals and accessing essential services might lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion. Social barriers may also arise due to cultural differences, making it harder for some students to integrate fully into the local community.

S6: "It seems that foreign people and students are not accepted by society until they can speak Italian, and even in many cases they are looked upon as strangers. This view can be seen even in the university environment."

Lack of knowledge of English and Italian language is more seen when **bureaucratic processes** and paperwork, such as visa renewals, residence permits, and university registrations must be done. These two problems can be time-consuming and frustrating for international students. Lengthy administrative procedures might lead to stress and a loss of valuable time that could otherwise be spent on academic pursuits or engaging in social activities.

One of the most crucial aspects which is mentioned in interviews was about **the non-cleanliness of the city and lack of green spaces in some areas**. A perceived lack of cleanliness in certain areas might create discomfort and negatively impact the overall perception of the city's livability. But it must be mentioned that this problem is seen in some areas of Turin (it will be discussed in the next few sections) not all, as integration of green spaces with urban environments is mentioned before as a positive aspect of Turin. The absence of natural elements, such as greenery and water features, can diminish the appeal of public spaces for students seeking opportunities to connect with nature and experience relaxation outdoors. One of the most features of Turin that students are interested in is the presence of rivers and mountains close to the city. So, this can impact their presence in public spaces, especially in Aurora and Vanchiglia. The last negative point which is investigated is related to the **time-consuming on public transportation**. Issues with public transportation, such as delays, overcrowding, or inefficient routes, may cause frustration and lead to a waste of time for international students who rely on public transit to move around the city. However, it seems that the most important challenge is the GTT drivers' strike, especially during weekends when more students want to spend their free time. These strikes disrupt the regular transportation services, impacting students' mobility and accessibility to public spaces, particularly during their free time. Apart from GTT strikes, transportation limitations can include irregular schedules, long waiting times, or limited coverage of certain areas, affecting students' ability to access and move through public spaces efficiently.

S4: "Accessibility can be a challenge in certain public spaces, particularly for individuals with mobility limitations. Uneven pathways, lack of ramps or elevators, and other physical barriers can restrict access for people with disabilities, making it difficult for them to fully enjoy and utilize the space."

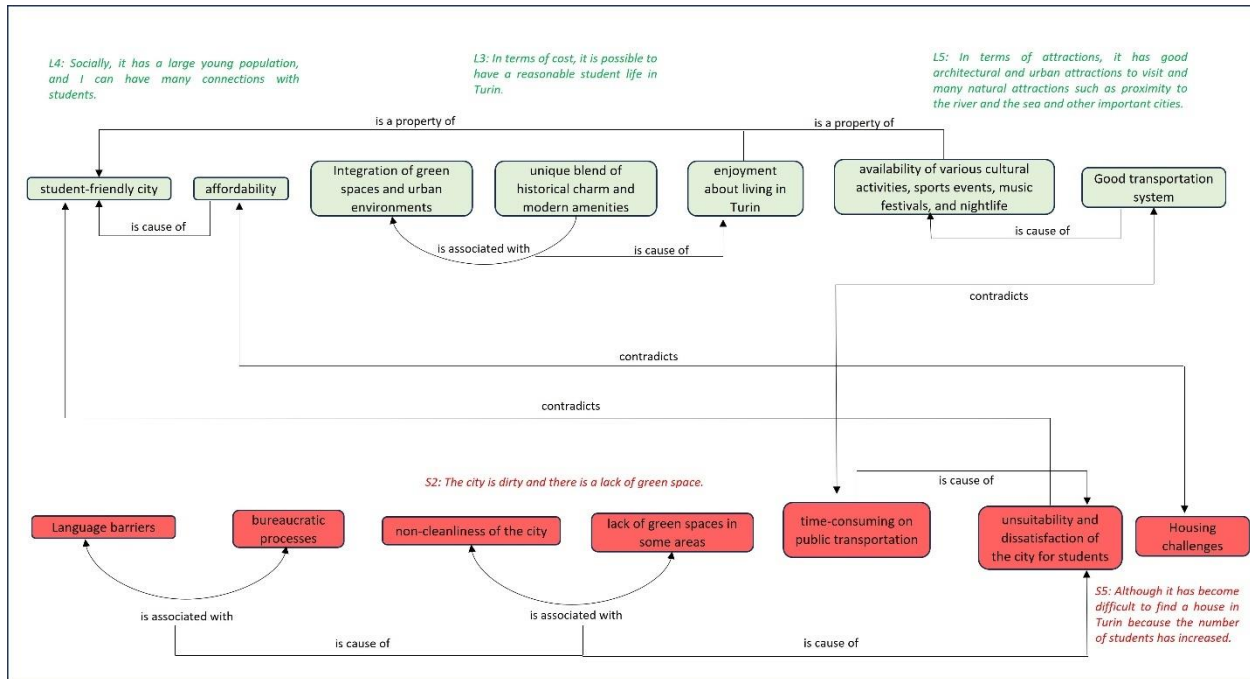
L1: "I can't use it because of the distance. Third, there are few metro lines. With one metro line, I cannot use all the spaces I like."

It can be mentioned that language barriers, long bureaucratic processes, non-cleanliness, lack of green spaces, and time-consuming on public transportation can be problematic if they will not be solved. Actually, the increase of these kinds of problems will show a sense of **unsuitability and dissatisfaction of the city for students**. These problems along with other problems of students in Turin, for example limited social opportunities, inadequate support services for international students, housing challenges, etc. might contribute to this perception.

L2: "It is difficult for international students to use recreational and sports facilities. Because there is no special offer for students. Next, as a student, the time I spend on extracurricular activities is extremely high. I want to study more, but now I am more involved in administrative work, finding a house, and other problems. With these issues, I am practically one year behind in my life."

So, as mentioned before, international university students who participated in the interviews had a dual sense of living and their experiences in Turin. It is not possible to give a definitive opinion on which feeling and experience about living in Turin as an international student is correct, but one can pay special attention to the relationships between their positive and negative reasons. This relationship is shown in the following diagram:

Chart 2. Perception and experiences about the city of Turin



Source: Author's elaboration: Code Gc1, Investigated through Atlas.ti

Various factors make students dissatisfied or enjoy living in Turin. The most noticeable reasons for their dissatisfaction are language and social barriers and time-consuming administrative bureaucracy. These two factors are associated together and cause in dissatisfaction the city. On the other hand, other factors affect the presence of students in public spaces in Turin. The lack of green spaces in some areas in association with non-clean areas makes the unsuitable feeling about the city. Also, public transportation limitations have several impacts on using public spaces among students.

In parallel, the large number of students living in Turin and the scholarship provided by universities along with the low cost of living and presence of interested students' entertainment make their life an affordable and student-friendly environment. In terms of urban texture, a combination of urban and green spaces in association with cultural and modern identity affect the enjoyment of the city.

5.3.2. GC2. Regular Daily Life

As discussed before, investigation on how international university students of Turin decide to use spaces can be a crucial point to explore "sense of place, and a distinctive type of ambience in the studentified

neighborhoods” (Smith, Sage, & Balsdon, 2014, p. 118). So, the other group code which is extracted through the participants’ responses is regular student daily life. The "Regular Daily Life" section of the interviews provided valuable insights into how international university students use public spaces in Aurora, Vanchiglia, and Turin during their regular week of lesson period or exam/closure period. This section shed light on various activities, routines, and preferences that shape their engagement with the urban environment.

One recurring theme among the interviewees was the strategic selection of public spaces based on convenience and comfort. Many students mentioned opting for study rooms on campus or studying at home during regular weeks. This choice allows them to have a focused and quiet environment for academic pursuits. Additionally, the proximity and accessibility of these study spaces contribute to their convenience.

SL3: “I prefer urban spaces that are close to the university campus in Vanchiglia (CLE) and the Aurora neighborhood where I live. Choosing spaces within a convenient distance saves time and effort in commuting, allowing me to make the most of my free time.”

Regarding the use of study rooms by interviewees, the availability of suitable study hall conditions is crucial for students. Inadequate study hall facilities can hinder academic productivity and impact their overall experience in public spaces designated for study. This problem is mostly about facilities provided in the study rooms and limitations in using some study rooms for some kinds of students.

S2: “Some study halls do not have good conditions. Even if they have an empty place, it is not a good place to study. There are no electrical outlets in some places.”

During lunchtime, most international students prefer having lunch with friends on campus. While some of them choose outdoor lunch breaks due to having time, quality of food, or sightseeing. These choices facilitate social interactions and enable students to relax and unwind while enjoying the company of their peers.

S1: “During lunchtime, I buy something from a nearby store and go to the river in front of the university to eat my lunch and have a small walk.”

Apart from academic commitments, international students engage in recreational activities and Socializing. Sightseeing in the city center is popular among them, providing an opportunity to explore iconic landmarks and socializing and spending time with friends play a significant role in their daily lives.

Social interactions take place in various settings, ranging from university campuses to nearby cafes and parks.

S3: "After the class at 6:00 pm, I take a bus from the university to Piazza Castello and walk a little in the historical part of the city, for example from Piazza Castello to Porta Nuova. I like this route because I see more people and feel more alive. There are people from all walks of life and the historical sense of the region gives me a good feeling. I also use the shops there." ... L1: "In the evening after class, if I'm not tired, I go with my friend for a little excursion to a bar or an open space in the city" ... S4: "In the evening, I might take a walk around the neighborhood to relax and explore the local shops and restaurants. Occasionally, I may meet up with friends for dinner at a popular San Salvario eatery, like Osteria Il Principe dei Vitelloni."

The use of public transportation is a common mode of commute for students to reach the university. While public transportation provides convenience and connectivity, some students also choose to walk to the university when it is feasible. They prefer walking due to the proximity to campus or problems related to transportation limitations.

S2: "I prefer not to use public transportation because of the large crowd and walking makes me feel more comfortable."

For a few of them, engaging in physical activities is essential for their well-being. They utilize gyms as public spaces to exercise, promoting a healthy lifestyle and stress relief. During exam periods or when the university is closed, the use of public spaces might differ. Some students prefer studying at home for longer hours because they are not satisfied with the study room conditions during exam periods. This is due to the lack of facilities and overcrowding of study rooms.

S6: "During the exams, this process changes completely and I spend most of my time at home and do not use the study hall."

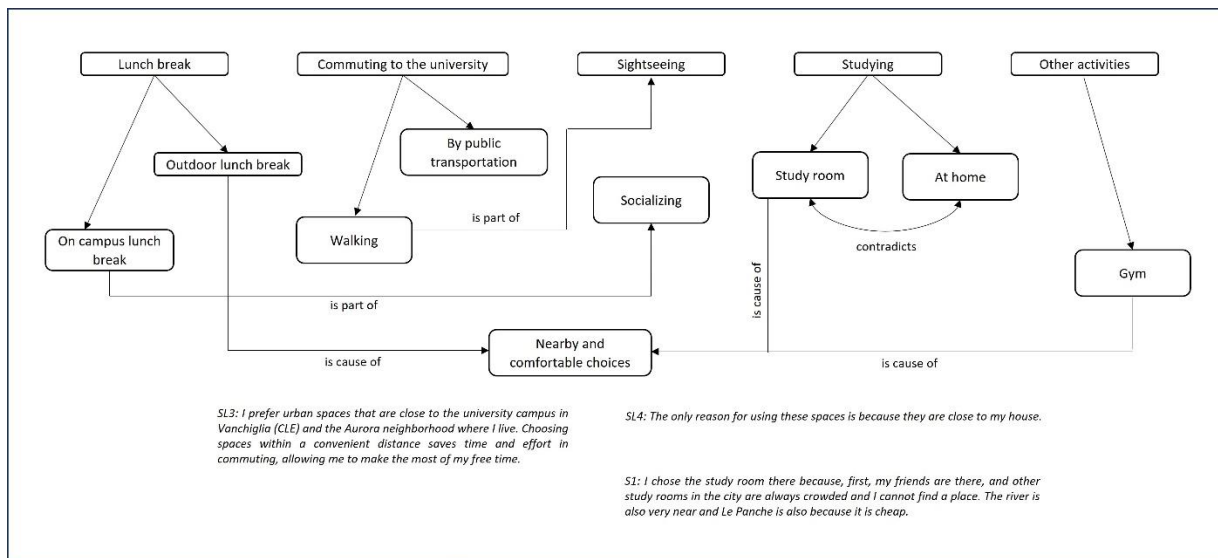
In general, the international university students' choices of public spaces in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods reflect a balance between academic pursuits, social interactions, and leisure activities. They opt for locations that provide convenience, comfort, and opportunities for engagement in various aspects of city life. Their daily life in Turin is demonstrated in these main activities:

- Study Room Choice or Studying at Home
- Lunch with Friends on Campus or Outdoor Lunch Break

- Commute to University by Public Transportation or Commute to University by Walk
- Sightseeing in the City Center
- Socializing
- Nearby & Comfortable Choices
- Gym

The relationship between these activities is visible in the below chart:

Chart 3. Regular Daily Life



Source: Author's elaboration: Code Gc2, Investigated through Atlas.ti

Regarding suggestions for making public spaces vibrant and student-friendly in the neighborhoods, the analysis indicates the importance of creating welcoming study spaces on campus and providing accessible recreational facilities. Enhancing the walkability and accessibility of the neighborhoods could encourage students to explore and utilize public spaces more frequently. Additionally, initiatives that foster social connections and cultural exchange, such as organizing events and gatherings in public spaces, could contribute to a more vibrant and inclusive environment for international university students in Turin.

5.3.3. GC3. Perception of Public Spaces in Aurora & Vanchiglia

The "Perception of Public Spaces in Aurora & Vanchiglia" section provides valuable insights into how international university students perceive and experience the public spaces in these neighborhoods of Turin. The points extracted from the interviews reveal a variety of aspects that shape their overall perception and impact on their neighborhood and city experience. In general, it can be said that there is not much positive view of the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia among international students. At this section these approaches will be explained based on different kind of students who are living or studying or both.

Among very few positive opinions about public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia, one of the positive aspects includes a **lively environment** with numerous bars and restaurants, and **well-supplied services**. These features contribute to the neighborhoods' vibrancy, providing international students with opportunities for socializing, convenience, and leisure activities. It must be considered that the lively environment of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia is granted by the presence of various services close to the campus Luigi Einaudi (CLE). This campus, which is in Vanchiglia, hosts many students daily, and this makes the areas around more compatible for providing services, especially for students. This is an important criterion for participants to have accessible facilities near their study area.

S1: "My campus is there, and I spend most of my time there, I know that until now everything I wanted was found there. Restaurants, shops, bars, etc. are always there." ... S4: "In Vanchiglia, the proximity of the CLE campus likely contributes to a lively atmosphere and an increased presence of students in public spaces." ... SL3: "This accessibility contributes to a vibrant and active community."

On the other hand, the most mentioned activity by students is eating or drinking. So, this is another reason for them to feel vibrant about public spaces in these areas. This becomes more crucial when many students are moving daily, and the numerous bars and restaurants provide cheap services for them.

L5: "But the number of bars, restaurants and diversity in bars and restaurants are great ... Yes, the social interactions are a lot due to the presence of the high number of bars and restaurants which offer open-air services. This provides social interactions between people."

Another positive aspect of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia for a few participants is **good access to public spaces**. In their opinion, this is provided through 2 main factors. They are satisfied with wide and

renovated streets, and **traffic-free and quiet streets**. These make good access to the public spaces but more for residents or people near the public spaces in these neighborhoods.

S1: "The streets are wide and renovated ... Its streets are easy to use. That is, for example, the street in front of my house is very narrow and the street is easily blocked, but in Aurora & Vanchiglia there is usually no traffic and no car noise." ... SL3: "The public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia are easily accessible to residents and students."

However, the section also highlights certain challenges and negative aspects. There are different reasons for participants to mention the **low security** of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia. These reasons had direct effects on their decisions to use these public spaces during their free time. Not using gyms in Aurora, not visiting parks located in Aurora, not walking along the green areas and parks in Aurora and Vanchiglia, not spending time in the riverside of Vanchiglia, etc. because of the presence of drug dealers, refugees, empty streets at night, low level of people, and negative perception of strangers. It considers that the sense of unsafety belongs to students who are living there, because they are facing this problem almost every day. The perception of safety and security is crucial for students while using public spaces. The presence of certain individuals or groups that evoke fear and discomfort can deter students from visiting specific areas, limiting their choices and freedom of movement.

L2: "I have not tried to use Aurora & Vanchiglia public spaces for a long time. Because they have no security. There are many drug dealers, and many refugees living there."

L5: "On the other hand, I would choose for example Santa Giulia because it's close to my home and I can get home easily at midnight but if I was in another area that is far from home, it would be different. Or I'm not going there or that night is a very stressful night for me! (because of dealers, drug sellers, ...)"

L6: "There is a great sense of insecurity in public spaces of Aurora & Vanchiglia. Especially at night when most people go to the city center and these neighborhoods are almost empty of people." ... "It makes me unable to stay out after 11 pm and return home as soon as possible. When I walk in its streets, I must be very careful with my belongings. Even because of the low social level of the people, I must take care of my dress."

The next disappointing point is the **lack of cleanliness** of public spaces in these 2 areas as was pointed out in the previous parts. It can be said that the amount of dirtiness in these areas is more than in other

neighborhoods in Turin. This problem has effective impacts on students' decisions in spending their free time.

S1: "Most of the dirt I saw in Turin belongs to these neighborhoods. Therefore, I remember the dirtiness of these neighborhoods." ...

L3: "The public spaces of Aurora & Vanchiglia are very dirty. This is the most important point that comes to my mind, and this dirt has made me reconsider my choice of routes or the choice of places where I like to spend time."

One of the other aspects which are important for students is the **lack of recreational spaces**. As the student community is young and needs different kinds of activities. Especially, when there are students from other European and non-European countries, the diversity of interest is wider. The lack of recreational spaces and shopping malls such as bowling or billiard or computer gaming or also gym forces some students to spend their free time in other areas. Following this, this can be affected by the other aspects of using public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia. This decreases the young population in the area, makes the area very quiet, and finally other problems will arise. Apart from the issue of lack of recreational spaces, there is the problem of **poorly maintained public spaces** here. This problem is related to providing facilities in public spaces of these 2 neighborhoods. It can be mentioned that utilizing a suitable range of facilities in a public space can provide good opportunities for different kinds of activities for students in their free time. The lack of some facilities in public spaces such as lights, seats, water, toilet, and nearby stores very challenging in using public spaces for students. This problem was also noticed when they were using the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia. These limitations may discourage them from spending time in certain areas, or even causes overcrowding in popular public spaces that diminish the experience for students, leading to limited seating options, noise, and difficulty in finding quiet areas for study or relaxation. Nightlife, safety, relaxation, vibrancy, etc. could be achieved through the organization of good facilities in public spaces such as good lighting, the existence of seating areas, greenery, and conservation of the space. For example, students compare the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia mostly with public spaces in Centro. There is beauty and a combination of greenery with the urban context in the Centro which attracts more. So, students do not agree with the attractions of the public spaces in these 2 neighborhoods.

S4: "Poorly maintained or uninviting public spaces may discourage residents and international students from utilizing them, limiting opportunities for social engagement and community building. Lack of

amenities, limited seating areas, poor lighting, or insufficient green spaces can diminish the appeal of these areas and negatively affect the overall perception of the neighborhood and the city.”

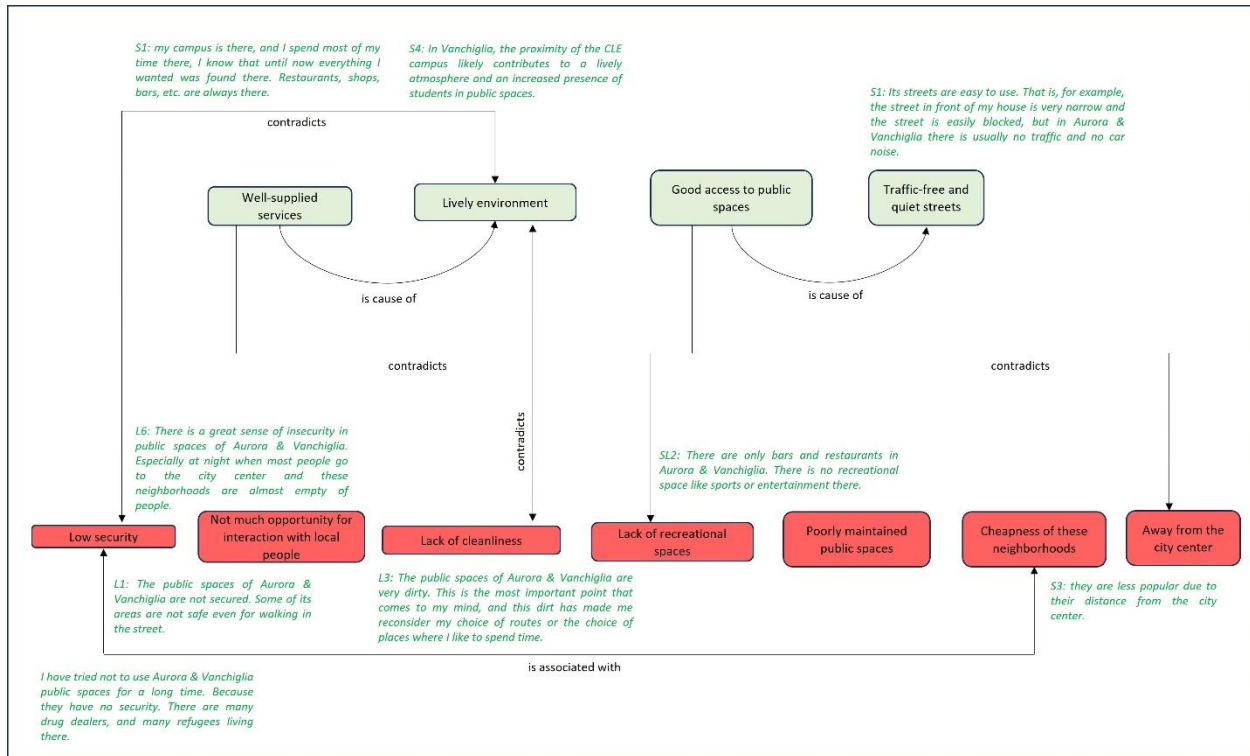
Another point which two different views can be assessed is the **cheapness of these neighborhoods** especially Aurora in terms of house renting, goods, and groceries. This cheapness encourages students to use public spaces in these areas to provide for their basic needs. This is a good point but, this cheapness also attracts other kinds of people (drug dealers, criminals, and addicts) to these areas who want to live there permanently. Students believe that the existence of these kinds of people affect their life and will make more problems for their years of study. One of these most usual problems is students living in these areas because of the low cost of rent. This makes a conflict between students and other kinds of people (drug dealers, criminals, and addicts) who are living in these areas. Finally, specifically, Aurora, becomes an immigrant neighborhood. On the other hand, Italians do not use public spaces in Aurora, or at least, students do not see a lot of Italians there. So, for those who spend most of their time in Aurora, there is **not much opportunity for interaction with local people** to get in touch with culture. On the opposite, Vanchiglia hosts more Italians as participants mentioned in their interviews. Italians prefer Vanchiglia more than Aurora and this is the problem of less contact with the international community for those who are living or spending their free time in Vanchiglia.

SL4: “...Most of the people who visit these neighborhoods and spaces are immigrants, and Italians use these spaces less, and there is no opportunity to communicate with the local people.”

As explored through the interviews, these problems are mostly about the Aurora neighborhood. Aurora is farther **away from the city center** in comparison with Vanchiglia. They want to be close to the center to spend their free time because all available activities are focused on the center. “It is not surprising that the heart of nightlife is in the center of the city, a place, by definition, associated with ideas of urbanity and of creativity. The central area, now crowded with cafés, wine bars and trendy clubs, places where having fun, listening to music, having dinner, consuming the apéritif does not match the same situation in the suburbs, where standardized and serial clubs, offering a less qualified service have proliferated; they are characterized by lower scope and range of attraction” (Crivello S. , 2011, p. 18). So, for whom they are living in Aurora, it is difficult to spend their free time as they like. This problem could be solved by a good and useful transportation system, but it must be mentioned that they are not satisfied also with the transportation system. This dissatisfaction is due to strikes, overcrowding of buses, or irregular bus schedules.

For concluding the perception of the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia, there were different positive and negative points about these neighborhoods. Some of them are related together, and others are not related. In the below chart, this relationship can be seen:

Chart 4. Perception of Public Spaces in Aurora & Vanchiglia



Source: Author's elaboration: Code Gc3, Investigated through Atlas.ti

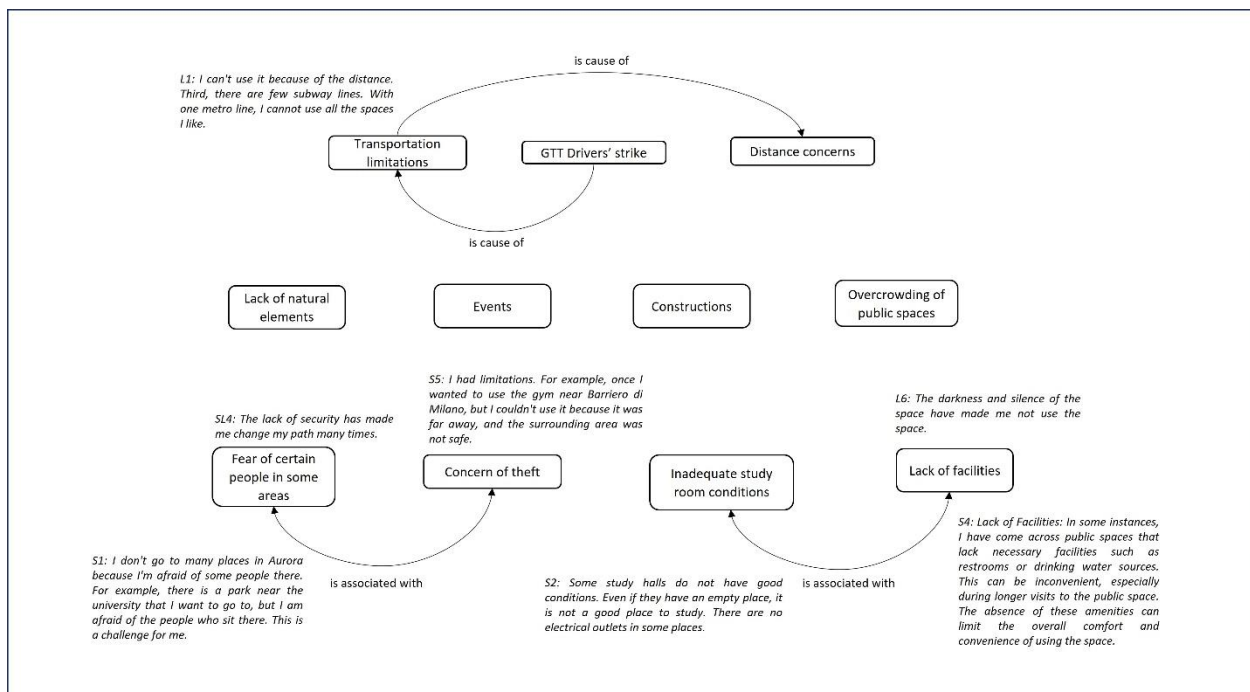
These two neighborhoods are facing some problems. Low security, which comes from unsuitable facilities in public spaces, is the most crucial concern in the areas. Also, the lack of cleanliness affects the attraction of the spaces and the beauty of the areas. In addition, some criteria cause other problems or associate together that can make bigger problems in the future.

5.3.4. GC4. Challenges and Limitations in Using Public Spaces

By investigation on three group codes (Perception and experiences about the city of Turin, Regular Daily Life, and Perception of Public Spaces in Aurora & Vanchiglia), the fourth group codes come as

Challenges and Limitations in Using Public Spaces. Actually, the limitations of using public spaces by international university students are coming from their perception of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia which were mentioned in previous parts. Generally, the challenges and limitations can be categorized as public transportation limitations, inadequate facilities of public spaces, lack of safety, constructions or events, lack of Natural Elements, and overcrowding of Public Spaces. These limitations shed light on the difficulties and barriers that international university students encounter while utilizing public spaces in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods of Turin. These challenges and limitations are significant factors that influence the utilization of public spaces by international university students in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods and Turin. Also, there is a relationship between these challenges which can be seen below:

Chart 5. Challenges and Limitations in Using Public Spaces



Source: Author's elaboration: Code Gc4, Investigated through Atlas.ti

5.3.5. Students' movement patterns through the public spaces

By understanding the experiential views of public space users about Turin, their regular daily life, and their perceptions about public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia, it can be useful to focus on their decisions when they are

moving through the public spaces. At this step, the research wants to make a rethinking about the previous 4 group codes. Interviewees were asked to draw their movements through the public spaces in a time as they want once for the area of Aurora and Vanchiglia and once for the whole Turin. The information regarding how much and how international university students spend in their free time provides valuable insights into their leisure habits and patterns in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods of Turin. Analyzing these responses carefully allows us to better understand how students utilize their free time and how it may influence their use of public spaces.

Before going into the movement patterns, it is considerable that during this part of interviews, students were asked to consider a time interval for their using public spaces. Upon examining the answers, we can observe a range of free time hours among the interviewees. The hours range from as little as 1 to 2 hours to as much as 7 to 8 hours. Most students seem to allocate 2 to 4 hours of their day to free time activities, with some devoting slightly more hours to leisure. The variation in free time hours may be influenced by factors such as academic workload, extracurricular commitments, personal preferences, and cultural backgrounds. Students with heavier academic loads or those engaged in part-time work or other activities may have less free time available. Conversely, students with more flexible schedules or who prioritize leisure activities might have longer periods of free time. The number of free time hours may also influence how students utilize public spaces. Those with fewer free hours may prefer nearby or easily accessible spaces for short leisure activities. On the other hand, students with more free time might explore different areas and spend longer durations in public spaces. Furthermore, the reported free time hours can also provide insights into the potential utilization of public spaces during different times of the day. For instance, students with shorter free time windows might frequent public spaces during lunch breaks or after classes, seeking efficient use of their limited leisure time.

Analyzing the time hours in conjunction with the activities mentioned in the previous sections can help identify trends and patterns. For instance, based on interviews students who spend more time in public spaces, engage in various social and recreational activities, utilizing these spaces as places for interaction and relaxation. Conversely, those with limited free time might prioritize specific spaces that cater to their immediate needs, such as study rooms or nearby cafes. Overall, the analysis of the reported free time hours provides valuable context for understanding the preferences and behavior of international university students in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods. It can aid in developing tailored suggestions and recommendations to optimize public spaces and make them more appealing, convenient, and accommodating for students with diverse leisure habits. The variation in the number of

free time hours reported by international university students reflects the diversity in their schedules, preferences, and commitments. Through this introduction, the research follows the exploration of international university students' navigations among public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia in their interested free time.

The process of international university students' navigation through public spaces in their free time follows different algorithms in their stops, movements, and interests in using public spaces. These choices are rooted in the characteristics of public spaces as well as the characteristics of students' lives, which shows the difference in the use of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia compared to public spaces in other areas of Turin. The main goal of this section is to understand the favorite or most attended public spaces, kinds of activities, interesting stops and routes, and reasons for enjoying these spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia in comparison with these preferences in other areas of Turin. As a recap, it must be mentioned that diverse choices among students in using public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia are rooted in their perceptions and experiences of living in these areas. As explained before, students were asked to draw their movements through public spaces of Turin, particularly Aurora and Vanchiglia by Google Earth. Then these drawings and answers were conducted by ArcGIS and Atlas.ti.

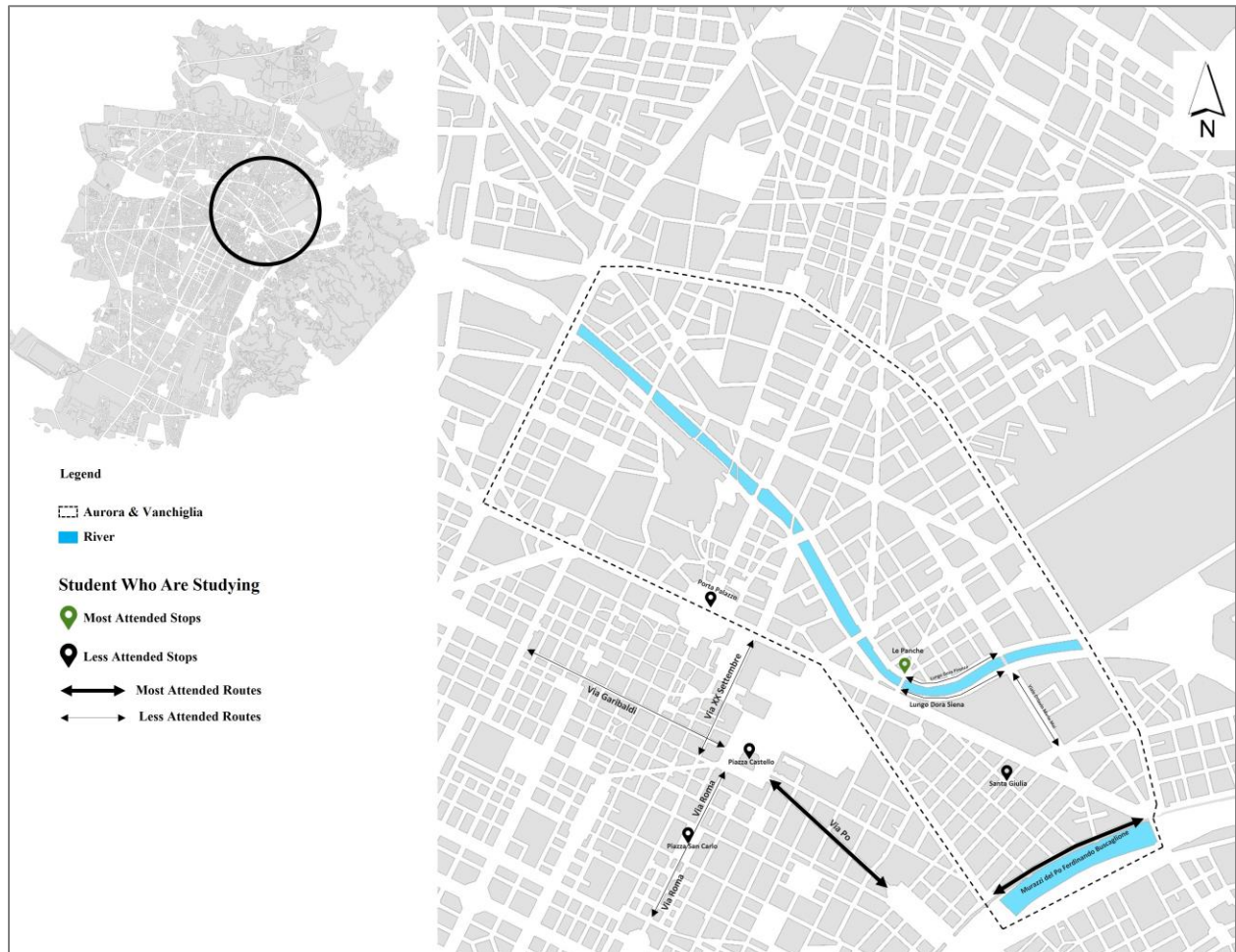
Figure 1. Drawings of Mental maps by interviewees



Source: Drawing by interviewees through Google Earth

Those who only study in Aurora and Vanchiglia, mostly use routes and places outside these two neighborhoods. Their use of Aurora and Vanchiglia public spaces is reserved for the spaces around CLE. These spaces are dedicated to mensa, Le Panche, and Piazza Santa Giulia, for drinking, eating, and socializing. In between, Lungo Dora Siena, Lungo Dora Firenze, and Viale Ottavio Mario Mai are the most popular choices in terms of beauty, light, and security. But outside of Aurora and Vanchiglia, the range of these choices is wider. In fact, it can be said that most activities are carried out by this group of students in Centro, most of which are dedicated to walking and spending time in the main squares.

Map 7. Commuting Network of Students Who Are Studying in Aurora & Vanchiglia



Source: Made by Author

On the other hand, those who only live or both live and study in Aurora and Vanchiglia had almost similar choices to each other. Students who live in these neighborhoods make the most use of Le Panche and Piazza Santa Giulia to spend their time. These 2 choices are due to the young and student atmosphere, for both men and women, and nightlife. Also, the path from Lungo Dora Firenze to Viale Ottavio Mario Mai, then Piazza Santa Giulia, and then Murazzi del Po are their most chosen routes for walking and safe commuting.

Map 8. Commuting Network of Students Who Are Living in Aurora & Vanchiglia



Source: Made by Author

Similarly, Viale Ottavio Mario Mai and Lungo Dora Firenze and Piazza Santa Giulia are favorite routes and places for those students who both study and live in Aurora and Vanchiglia. They prioritized safe spaces, with a high vitality atmosphere and close to each other.

Map 9. Commuting Network of Students Who Are Living and Studying in Aurora & Vanchiglia



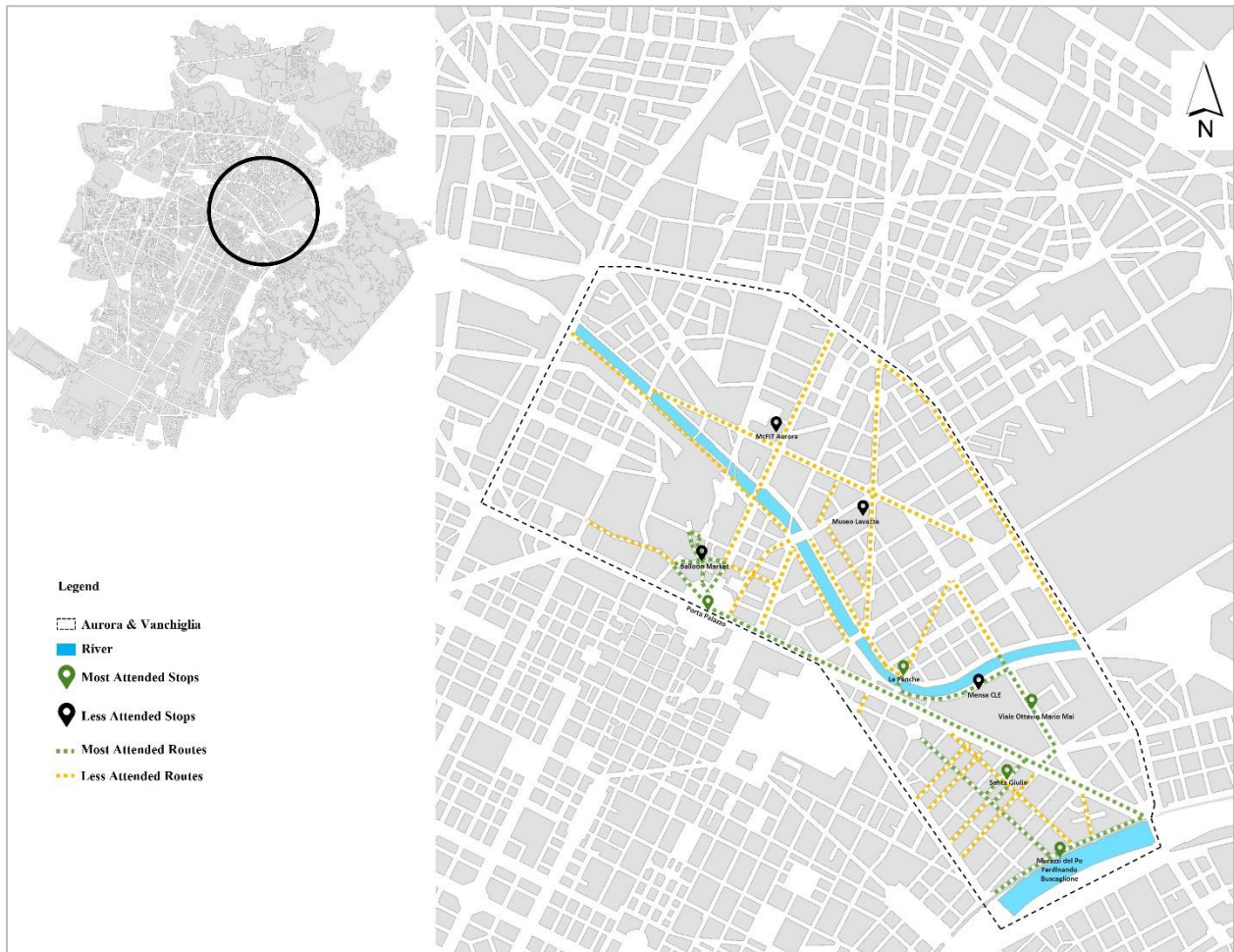
Source: Made by Author

The interviewees' analysis reveals a diverse range of activities and routes they take during their free time in the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia. Students engage in a wide range of activities, including socializing, dining, shopping, exploring, sightseeing, and enjoying recreational spaces. Also, their chosen routes often reflect personal preferences, safety considerations, and access to various amenities. While some prefer walking or cycling, others utilize public transportation to reach their desired destinations. Notably, students frequently choose to walk, especially when moving within Aurora and Vanchiglia. Walking is preferred for its proximity to certain locations, scenic routes, and the availability of pedestrian-friendly paths. The availability of public transportation plays a crucial role in students' decision-making when planning their outings. Many choose specific public spaces that are

easily accessible by bus, ensuring smooth travel between destinations. Bus transportation is commonly used to reach more distant areas or return home after activities.

The students' recreational activities primarily revolve around walking, spending time with friends, drinking, and dining out. Cafes and bars are common destinations for socializing, while parks and riversides are preferred for relaxation and enjoyment of natural spaces. Generally, public spaces like Le Panche in Aurora and Piazza Santa Giulia in Vanchiglia offer a variety of amenities and entertainment options. These multifunctional spaces attract students seeking diverse experiences and opportunities for socialization. Specifically, in these two areas, Le Panche stands out as a favorite meeting spot in Aurora due to its vibrant atmosphere and affordability. Additionally, the riverfront areas, such as Viale Ottavio Mario Mai and Lungo Dora Siena, are preferred for their peaceful ambiance and scenic views. On the other hand, public spaces that are conveniently located near essential amenities such as cafes, restaurants, and shops are valuable spaces for students. This proximity enhances the overall appeal of these spaces and encourages frequent visits. Safety is another factor influencing route choices, as some students avoid certain areas known for potential insecurity, especially during the night. They opt for more crowded and well-lit paths, like Corso Regina Margherita, to ensure a sense of security in Aurora. It can be mentioned that the problem of safety is observed in Le Panche and Santa Giulia as the most attended places for students in Aurora and Vanchiglia, but using safe routes to reach these spaces makes sense for them. Shopping is also mentioned as an activity, particularly in areas like Porta Palazzo in Aurora, where the students can access a diverse range of products and food stalls.

Map 10. Commuting Network of Students During Their Free Time in Aurora & Vanchiglia



Source: Made by Author

Conversely, students expressed dissatisfaction with the availability of parks and green spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia. Instead, they opt for green areas beyond these neighborhoods, such as Parco Valentino and Parco Coletta, where they can enjoy relaxation, picnics, and leisure activities. Parco Valentino, characterized by expansive green expanses, a serene atmosphere, and iconic features like the Valentino Castle, stands out as a highly esteemed locale. While these shortcomings extend beyond green spaces to encompass various activities and places, it appears that the presence of suitable green areas plays a pivotal role in students choosing to spend their leisure time outside of Aurora and Vanchiglia.

The analysis of how international university students navigate the public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods provides valuable insights into their preferences, behavior, and interactions with the

urban environment. The data highlights the significance of safety, accessibility, proximity to amenities, and the multifunctional nature of public spaces in influencing students' choices. This movement patterns give sights that how different kinds of interviewees (who are studying, who are living, and who are both studying and living in Aurora and Vanchiglia) choose their decisions.

In Conclusion, several common trends emerged from the interviews. Students often prefer open and green spaces like Parco Valentino for their leisure time. Proximity to friends, affordability, and the availability of diverse entertainment options play a significant role in choosing public spaces. Walking is favored for shorter distances, while bus transportation is utilized for longer routes. Furthermore, there is a clear appreciation for historical and central areas like Piazza Castello and Piazza San Carlo due to their unique charm and the abundance of activities around them. Students value locations that offer a mix of social interactions, green spaces, and diverse amenities.

Map 11. Commuting Network of Students During Their Free Time in Turin



Source: Made by Author

5.3.6. GC5. Activities in Public Spaces, perception of difference

In exploring the experiences of international university students (IUS) in public spaces within the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods of Turin, it becomes evident that their narratives not only shed light on the distinct ways in which they utilize these spaces but also serve as a platform for articulating perceived

differences and the construction of self-identity in relation to others. During interviews and the creation of mind maps, interviewees revealed a spectrum of challenges, problems, and decisions, providing insights into their feelings and responses to their surroundings. The analysis, however, goes beyond a mere observation of diverse preferences and usage patterns. It underscores the significance of these differences as perceived by the students, positioning their experiences as distinct from those of the local population or, at the very least, not aligning with the local preferences. The preferences and usage patterns articulated by the IUS are influenced by a myriad of factors, including individual preferences, cultural backgrounds, interests, and daily routines. This diversity necessitates public spaces that cater to a broad range of activities and preferences, ensuring inclusivity and attractiveness to the heterogeneous student population.

One notable difference highlighted by the interviewees is the preference for open spaces such as parks, piazza, and riversides, in contrast to the local population's inclination towards closed spaces like bars and restaurants. This divergence, as suggested by the students, may be attributed, in part, to economic disparities. Students spend their leisure time in open spaces, while Italians engage in exercises in public spaces, fostering different socialization practices.

S6: "I walk and sit in the spaces a lot more and even eat my drinks or food in these spaces. But the rest of the people do this much less and prefer to use restaurants and bars more."

Another noteworthy distinction arises from the students' tendency to walk extensively and spend more time in public spaces, contrasting with the behavior of other groups. Economic factors again come into play, as expressed by:

L3: "The main difference is that I walk a lot, but other people don't. Also, financially, my choices are more limited than others."

S1: "I sit a lot in spaces and spend my entire time in that space, but there are many people who just pass by and don't stop."

Beyond individual behaviors, these distinctions are more than spatial preferences; they serve as markers of identity. The perceived differences in the use of public spaces contribute to the building of self-identity for international university students. Their descriptions emphasize not only what they do differently but also how these practices set them apart from others. In essence, the perception of difference in the use of public space among international university students is a nuanced lens through which they articulate their self-identity. The act of navigating public spaces becomes a means of

expressing social distance or proximity to other groups. Recognizing the value of museums and cultural spaces in this context, and expanding such offerings, emerges as a key recommendation to enrich the city's public spaces and foster intellectual and cultural growth among students. In conclusion, understanding the relationships between the subcodes reveals the multifaceted nature of international university students' experiences and preferences in using public spaces in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods of Turin.

6. Conclusion

The research presented in this thesis is intended to address the international university students' use of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia. To do so, it adopted a mixed-method approach by using analysis of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia and exploring themes through qualitative interviews. The interviews' analysis completes the process of analysis of public spaces in these neighborhoods to assess the students' use of public spaces. In this final chapter of the research, we tried to have a general overview of our analysis and achievements. The first section is a discussion about the perception of Turin as a university city. This section looks at the students' feelings and perceptions about the whole of Turin. Then, the second section take into account the students' perspective on the factors which could provide a better and enjoyable public space, also discussing the context in which, according to their view, these factors are present in the city. Finally, an overall discussion of the international university students' use of public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia as emerged in the interviews will be offered. It explains that there is no definitive opinion on whether Turin is a student city or not due to some reasons and feelings by IUS but there are some important criteria particularly in public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia which make better use for IUS, then increasing a youth/student-friendly spaces. These features are mostly taken from students' opinions about their favorite public spaces in Turin.

6.1. Turin; a university city or not

The analysis of interviews aimed at exploring Turin's status as a student city revealed a spectrum of opinions and experiences. While some students perceive Turin as a student city, others hold a different perspective. The term "student city" denotes an urban area characterized by a substantial presence of educational institutions and a sizable student population, emphasizing the interconnectedness of academia and urban life (Bender, 1988). These cities are known for creating inclusive and dynamic environments that welcome both local and international students, fostering cultural diversity and a youthful atmosphere that contributes significantly to the local creative and knowledge-based economy (Florida, Gates, Knudsen, & Stolarick, 2006). Those who view Turin as a student city point to various factors supporting this perception. A key factor is the city's significant student population, with numerous universities attracting students from diverse backgrounds. This diversity facilitates international interactions and cultural exchange, contributing to Turin's image as a student-friendly city. Additionally, the availability of scholarships and university facilities further enhances this perception.

Scholarships play a crucial role in alleviating financial challenges for international students, making Turin an appealing destination for higher education. Consequently, Aurora and Vanchiglia, two neighborhoods in Turin, host a considerable number of international university students who reside, study, or both in these areas. Since 2013, interventions in Aurora have transformed it into a suitable area for migrants and student housing (Bourlessas, Cenere, & Vanolo, 2022). However, interviews also shed light on concerns about limitations in public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia, impacting the experiences of international university students in these neighborhoods. The focus of the interviews was on understanding how students utilize public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia during their leisure time, the challenges, and constraints they face, criteria for an ideal public space, and the incorporation of these perspectives in shaping Turin as a student city.

Furthermore, in international university students' opinions, the availability of job opportunities for graduates adds to Turin's appeal as a student city. Many interviewees view the city as a potential place to build their careers and pursue employment opportunities in various fields. Additionally, the existence of factories that offer job prospects for students is seen as a positive aspect, indicating the potential for post-graduation employment opportunities within the city. Conversely, those who do not consider Turin a Student City express concerns and reservations about certain aspects of the city. The unsuitability of public spaces for students is a significant point of contention. Some students feel that the public spaces in Turin lack the necessary facilities and amenities to meet their basic needs, making these areas less welcoming and accommodating for leisure and social activities. These limitations that were discussed in the previous chapter (inadequate study rooms, lack of desired facilities in public spaces, limitations in using some spaces, etc.) cause less presence of students in urban areas. Some of these challenges and limitations in using public spaces have a dual relationship with nightlife. Nightlife is cited as a key factor in the interviews. The absence of vibrant nightlife and sufficient entertainment options in Turin as a whole is seen as a drawback for many students who value these aspects in a student city. The lack of a vibrant nightlife scene may contribute to a perception of limited social opportunities and a potentially less vibrant atmosphere. A significant part of Turin's public spaces, specifically in Aurora and Vanchiglia, do not have sufficient lighting and security. This problem meets the need for public spaces to become more attractive and provide nightlife in Turin. For example, the presence of clubs in Aurora and Vanchiglia will help with this problem. As could be observed in the previous literature such as works done by Crivello in 2011, the center area of Torino has been renovated by the opening of mainstream nightclubs. "The central area, now crowded with cafés, wine bars and trendy clubs, places were having fun, listening to music, having dinner, consuming the apéritif" (Crivello S. , 2011, p. 19). Generally, it can

be said that the concentration of people and tourists is more in the Centro area. This is due to the cultural and historical heritage which provides the tourist areas of Turin and the presence of the most interesting public spaces such as bars, restaurants, clubs, and piazzas. As it can be understood that especially in Aurora, there are more feelings about an industrial city rather than a student-oriented one. They believe that in some areas of Turin (ex. Aurora) there are still not basic needs of international students in different categories. On the other hand, lack of diversity in providing recreational activities, events, less student vibe, and positive energy, etc. arouses this feeling more.

Overall, the contrasting opinions about Turin as a Student City reflect the diverse experiences and expectations of international university students in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods. The city possesses various elements that contribute to its attractiveness as a student city, such as a diverse student population, job opportunities, and educational facilities. However, some areas need improvement, particularly the suitability of public spaces and the presence of vibrant social and entertainment options. To address these perceptions and make Turin a more vibrant and student-friendly city, stakeholders can focus on enhancing the amenities and facilities in public spaces, ensuring they meet the needs and preferences of the student community. Regarding the strategic plannings of Turin, discussed in Turin transformation chapter, knowledge-based city with its main actors (Polito and Unito) can still keep Turin in its progress in terms of a better perception of public spaces of Turin among IUS. Collaborative efforts between the city, universities, and local businesses can be made to create a more vibrant nightlife scene and offer a variety of entertainment options. Additionally, promoting cultural events and activities that cater to the student population can contribute to a more positive and energetic atmosphere in the city.

The "Student City or Not" section showcases the multifaceted nature of Turin's identity as a student city, as perceived by international university students. By addressing the concerns and building upon the city's strengths, Turin or specifically Aurora and Vanchiglia have the potential to become a more inclusive, vibrant, and attractive destination for the international student community in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods. By examining the opinions of the interviewees about Turin as a student or non-student city, the movement and behavior patterns of students in the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia, the challenges and limitations in the use of public spaces, and their suggestions for a good and enjoyable public space. The section provides further insights into public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia.

6.2. Towards student-friendly public spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia

This research tries to identify some of these kinds of decisions to make the neighborhoods of Aurora and Vanchiglia and their public spaces student friendly. Student-friendly neighborhoods can be known as one of the lights of the taurine Turin transformation process which is discussed in the previous chapters. This research tries to identify some of these kinds of decisions to make the neighborhoods of Aurora and Vanchiglia and their public spaces student friendly. In this sense, the research wants to provide an in-depth suggestion achieved through the analysis of interviews, so that both the previous section can be recalled and a basis to better understand why some public spaces were most interested among the interviewees in Aurora and Vanchiglia. It should be noted that public spaces of interest to students will be indicated by the abbreviation FPS (Favorite Public Spaces).

Good access and transportation play critical roles in creating a good, enjoyable, and student-friendly public space such as *Piazza Castello*^{FPS}, *Piazza Vittorio Veneto*^{FPS}, and *Piazza Santa Giulia*^{FPS}. Easy access to public spaces ensures that students can reach these areas conveniently. This is especially important for students who rely on public transportation to commute to and from university. Also, efficient transportation systems and good access options enhance connectivity between educational institutions and public spaces. Students can easily access parks, libraries, museums, recreational facilities, and cultural venues for various educational and recreational purposes. A well-planned transportation system ensures that public spaces are accessible to all, regardless of their abilities. This inclusivity is important for creating a diverse and welcoming environment for students and the community at large. Easy access and efficient transportation encourage students to engage with the broader community by participating in events, volunteering, or contributing to community initiatives. This fosters a sense of belonging and community engagement. It must be mentioned that **easy access to the city center** is also an important factor. Because interviewees prefer to stay close to the center in case of presence of some problems related to the accessibility to public transportation. Because it is safer and more comfortable. For example, spending time in *San Salvario*^{FPS} make this accessibility for them.

S1: "For example, if the bus comes late at Piazza Castello, we decide to walk to Piazza Vittorio Veneto".

Another effective criterion is green spaces. **Greenery** plays a crucial role in creating a good and enjoyable public space. Greenery, such as trees, plants, and flowers, enhances the visual appeal of the public space, making it more attractive and inviting. As mentioned in the literature by (Francis, 1988), ecological quality enhances the perception of city living. The presence of natural elements can uplift the overall ambiance and contribute to a pleasant atmosphere. For students, having access to greenery in a

public space provides a much-needed retreat from the demands of academic life, allowing for moments of tranquility and rejuvenation. Green spaces provide a venue for various physical activities, such as jogging, sports, yoga, or picnics. Students can use these spaces to engage in physical exercise, having a healthy and active lifestyle. Also, green spaces often serve as gathering spots for community events, social interactions, and cultural activities. Students can participate in or organize events in these areas, promoting a sense of community and facilitating social integration. In summary, incorporating greenery into public spaces near educational institutions enhances the overall quality of the space, benefiting students' mental and physical well-being, academic pursuits, social interactions, and environmental awareness.

Ensuring **safety** through robust security measures is essential; however, it is imperative to strike a balance that fosters an inviting and student-friendly public space. While heightened security measures play a crucial role in deterring criminal activities and safeguarding the well-being of students and residents in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods, their implementation should also prioritize the creation of an enjoyable public environment. Visible security measures contribute to instilling community confidence in the safety of public spaces, a critical element for establishing a positive atmosphere, particularly for students. A secure neighborhood not only ensures safety but also enhances overall quality of life by allowing residents and students to freely engage in public areas without apprehension, thus promoting a sense of well-being and enjoyment. These security measures further facilitate the organized and safe execution of public events, gatherings, and activities in these neighborhoods. It is crucial, however, to maintain a delicate balance between security and accessibility to prevent security measures from impeding the inclusivity and accessibility of public spaces.

In addition to ensuring proper accessibility, green spaces, and security, **cleanliness** holds paramount importance for students. A tidy environment significantly enhances the overall visual appeal of the neighborhood. Well-groomed public spaces, streets, and parks contribute to a more attractive and aesthetically pleasing area, thereby creating a positive experience for both students and the community. A clean neighborhood serves as an encouraging factor for people, especially students, to partake in outdoor activities such as walking, jogging, picnics, or outdoor studying. The perception of a clean and safe environment plays a pivotal role in fostering increased outdoor engagement and physical activities. To summarize, maintaining cleanliness in the Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods of Turin is indispensable for cultivating a pleasant, enjoyable, and student-friendly public space. The *Parco Dora Shopping Centre*^{FPS} is cited in interviews as an example, highlighting its greenery and cleanliness.

S2: "I like Parco Dora shopping mall, because that area is greener and cleaner".

It enhances aesthetics, promotes a healthy environment, and encourages outdoor activities. Following this, **elegant design and beauty** will be visible. This aesthetic contributes to a sense of enjoyment and relaxation, encouraging people to spend time in the area, and make a sense of environmental learning and meaning to educate the public about historical events and serve as reminders of our shared heritage (Francis, 1988). Some areas such as *Via Po^{FPS}*, *Via Roma^{FPS}*, and *Via Garibaldi^{FPS}* are so favorable for their beauty and good atmosphere.

S1: "because of its beautiful shops, restaurants, and bars. The street itself is beautiful".

Along with the accessibility to public transportation, **accessibility to the stores** is important for interviewees in using public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia. Having shops, bars, and restaurants nearby provides convenience for students to access daily necessities, grab a quick meal, or socialize with friends. Bars, cafes, and restaurants, for example near *Mole Antoniella^{FPS}* serve as meeting spots for students to socialize or unwind after classes. These venues provide a relaxed atmosphere, promoting a sense of community and camaraderie among students. Shops, bars, and restaurants add to the liveliness and vibrancy of the neighborhood. They create a dynamic atmosphere and add to the overall appeal of the public space, making it more enjoyable for students and residents. Well-lit and active commercial areas, including shops and eateries, provide a sense of safety and accessibility for students during evenings and nights. This is especially important for those who may need to study or commute during late hours.

The presence of facilities and amenities provides an enjoyable atmosphere for students. For interviewees in Aurora and Vanchiglia, these facilities are included as sitting area, lighting, WC, music, and walking area. Adequate and comfortable seating areas allow students to take a break, relax, study, or socialize. Well-planned lighting ensures a safe and secure environment, especially during evenings and nights, promoting a sense of safety for students and residents. Adequate lighting allows the public space to be utilized even after sunset, extending the hours of usability, and enabling students to use the space for various activities. Well-designed walking areas encourage physical activity and exercise, promoting a healthy lifestyle for students and residents. This walking area is very interesting for interviewees who want to have time in *Po riverside^{FPS}* or *Fiume Dora Riparia^{FPS}*. Also, accessible, clean, and well-maintained restrooms are essential for the comfort and convenience of students and visitors, promoting a positive experience within the public space. Finally, music or live performances can

enhance the ambiance and create a pleasant atmosphere, contributing to an enjoyable experience for those using the public space. For interviewees *Parco Coletta*^{FPS} and *Parco della Pellerina*^{FPS} are places which have good toilets, walking areas, seats, places for training or running or picnic.

S1: "For example, although Piazza Castello is my favorite space, there is no place to sit. Or along the Po does not have a bench to sit on".

Another crucial aspect highlighted by interviewees is the **interaction between local and international individuals**. Fostering connections between locals and international students contributes to cultural diversity within public spaces. This diversity serves to enhance the environment, foster mutual understanding, and provide a global perspective, ultimately enriching the overall experience for all. Interaction also creates opportunities for language learning and the improvement of communication skills. Through interaction, international students can learn the local language, and conversely, locals can gain exposure to different languages, fostering a more inclusive and enriching experience. Organizing events and activities that celebrate diverse cultures, traditions, and customs plays a pivotal role in encouraging interaction and understanding among various communities. Such events may encompass cultural festivals, international food fairs, music performances, and art exhibitions. Designing public spaces with features that facilitate interaction, such as seating arrangements conducive to conversations, communal areas for events, or recreational spots that bring people together, can contribute significantly to this endeavor.

On the other hand, **being crowded in the public space** makes the interviewees enjoy the space, and it also increases the sense of security for them, especially in the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia. But the remarkable thing for them is that being crowded means the presence of many pedestrians. In fact, they prefer the noise and bustle of the space to be specific to the sound of music, people walking and talking, etc., so that they can enjoy their time in a public space **without cars** such as *Piazza San Carlo*^{FPS} and *Piazza Carlo Alberto*^{FPS}.

L6: "There should be shops, bars, and restaurants around the space so that the area is not suddenly quiet and scary. I think the effect of music in space is very high".

By creating a space full of noise and a favorable crowd, a platform is provided for providing activities in the space so that various groups of society with different ages can use that space. For example, a space like *Associazione Culturale Comala*^{FPS} is known among the interviewees as a space where different activities can be carried out in a **multifunctional public space**. This kind of space supports the user

diversity and publicness of the space. The space must cater to a diverse user base and is not only available for unrestricted public use but also accessible to diverse communities and a range of activities (Francis, 1988). This point is the opposite of social specialization and fragmentation which is explained in previous chapters as one of the most important crises of public spaces.

Finally, in the case of public spaces which provide products for people such as bars, restaurants, etc. it is important to have low prices for students. Because they have financial limitations and cannot spend more in some moments. So, the **cost of using public space** is crucial for interviewees. Restaurants and bars that are more interesting for interviewees for their lower costs and atmosphere are *Le Panche*^{FPS}, *Macgillycuddy's*^{FPS}, and *Jumping Jester Pub*^{FPS}.

SL3: "is known for its cozy and intimate atmosphere, making it a popular spot for locals and students to gather, chat, and enjoy the surroundings".

Finally, the most mentioned public space during interviews was *Parco del Valentino*^{FPS}. Rarely, interviewees mentioned negative points about this park. There are almost all facilities, amenities, and atmosphere that they are looking at. The presence of river, bars, and restaurants inside the park, walking area, seats, green spaces, good lighting, cleanliness, good safety, normal distance to the center and close to the public transportation, and presence of different kinds of activities and events there make the students interested in these kinds of spaces and they are more looking at the same spaces in Aurora and Vanchiglia.

The students' presence enriches the local communities by fostering a global perspective and intercultural exchanges. As our research has shown, these students are actively engaged in various public spaces, such as parks, cafes, and community events, which contributes to the overall vibrancy of the neighborhoods. Secondly, the use of public spaces by international students has highlighted the need for community inclusivity and the importance of creating welcoming environments. By examining the experiences and challenges faced by these students, we have identified suggestions where can be made to ensure that public spaces are more accessible and accommodating for everyone, regardless of their background or nationality. This is specified more about Aurora's public spaces. Because in this area, there is less interest in spending time in public spaces due to problems discussed before such as low security, dirtiness, lack of green areas, recreational spaces, and nightlife. Safety and non-cleanliness were two significant considerations, with students avoiding certain areas known, especially at night and especially in Aurora. On the other hand, Vanchiglia can be considered as a model in case of high

presence of student population, international atmosphere, nightlife, quality of public spaces, and other factors for Aurora, as students compared many times Aurora's features with Vanchiglia in the interviews. These criteria made vibrant atmosphere contribute to a student-friendly environment in Vanchiglia. In Vanchiglia, students demonstrated a balance between academic pursuits, social interactions, and leisure activities in their daily lives and their choices of public spaces reflected convenience, comfort, and opportunities for engagement in various aspects of life in Vanchiglia where they are studying or living. The availability of public transportation and proximity to amenities are crucial factors influencing students' choices of public spaces in Vanchiglia. Students' recreational activities center around socializing, dining, and spending time with friends. They prefer public spaces with a variety of amenities and entertainment options, like cafes and parks, of course, they are not completely satisfied. Because, for example, they appreciate green spaces outside of Aurora and Vanchiglia for relaxation and leisure activities. So, Vanchiglia can be a model which followed the Turin transformation programs and by establishment one the biggest campuses started its transition focusing on students' community. Following this, increasing the demands for student housing, and economic growth are happened due to cafe, restaurant, bars, etc. openings, and such factors have improved like nightlife, dynamic atmosphere, or most feeling which students expect. So, it can be said that Aurora has its own model to be developed and can escape from being just a neighborhood for students to rent house.

On the other hand, by investigation on the interview processes, there are most important criteria for IUS which they use, perceive, and enjoy more in some kinds of public spaces. At first level, they appreciate the safety, accessibility, and beauty of public spaces. In terms of safety, it's almost certain that there is not enough security in Aurora to even use a gym, either for men or women. In fact, most of Aurora's public spaces are reserved for shopping at Porta Palazzo and drinking at Le Panche (which is close to CLE and has a very impressive young atmosphere). While there is more safety in Vanchiglia especially at night due to proximity to crowd areas. Accessibility is another feature which is a priority for using public spaces for IUS. They prefer using spaces close to good public transportation or using spaces close together as we saw this proximity of spaces around CLE (mesna, Viale ottavio Mario Mai, Lungo Dora Siena, Lungo Dora Firenze, Piazza Santa Giulia, Le Panche). Lastly, beauty of space which includes cleanliness, greenery, lightening, and presence of river is another factor for using spaces. A factor that again there is not so much in Aurora spaces and can be found more in Vanchiglia. These are the most important factors taken out through this research. Of course, there are other effective elements, but the most considerable criteria for IUS were regarding these three elements. The point that was noteworthy

was that our impression before conducting this research was that international students in Turin prefer to use the public spaces of Centro and use other areas if necessary or for other reasons. But this research showed us that Vanchiglia has a high potential in attracting students to use public spaces, as we saw in the interviews how much spaces in this neighborhood are used. But on the other hand, our perception about Aurora was almost correct, as we found that students use this neighborhood when necessary and to do some activities such as shopping or living, and they prefer to use the public spaces of this neighborhood less.

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8. Appendix

Appendix 1. Interview Outline

Campus: Residence Address: Age: Gender:

This research aims to investigate the use of public spaces among international university students focusing on Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods of Turin. Turin, as a former industrial city which started to identify its new image, is becoming close to being a university city. An aspect that interests me in particular is the use of public spaces (as all places of public use, accessible by all and comprising streets and public open spaces) by international university students. In this research, I would like to better understand how international students use public spaces of the city (for example when, for which kind of activities, etc.), what are the public spaces they use the most for different activities and what they think about them. As mentioned, I am particularly interested in the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia, where, due to the presence of the university campus (CLE), there is a large amount of international students and student houses. Through this research, I am following to find the ways international university students use public spaces, hoping to be able to present also some suggestions to improve them.

1. First of all, I would like to get to know you better. Would you please tell me about your experience as an international university student about living in Turin?

- Where do you come from?
 - How long have you been in Turin?
 - How long do you plan to study?
 - Are you living alone or with somebody?
 - What is your general feeling of Turin's daily life?
 - Where did you live before Turin? Where and what feelings did you have of living there?
 - How do you spend your free time?
 - Where do you go in your free time?
 - How many hours do you normally spend in your free time?
-

2. As mentioned, my interest is about public space and the use of public spaces by international students.

- How would you describe your use of public spaces?
- Could you think about a regular week during the lesson period and describe for me when/where/to do what/with whom.... ?
- Would that be different in exam period and/or in periods when the university is closed?
- For what reasons do you choose these specific urban spaces over others?

.....

3. **As I have explained, my study focus is on the Aurora & Vanchiglia areas. Now, I need you to think about these areas. Where are your favorite or most attended public spaces there?**

- Which kind of activities do you do?
- Why do you enjoy being there?
- Can you describe the atmosphere, amenities, or characteristics that make those spaces appealing to you?
- Usually, how long does it take to get there from your home or campus?
- Do you spend your time alone there or not?
- This is the map of Aurora and Vanchiglia. I kindly ask you to imagine yourself in your free time:
 - How do you navigate and move through the area of Aurora & Vanchiglia?
 - Where do you have stops?
 - For which reasons do you prefer to pass and stop in specific areas?

If their favorite public spaces is not located in Aurora & Vanchiglia:

4. **What features of this place do you enjoy the most - letting it become your favorite place?**

- How long does it take to get there from your home or campus?
- This is the map of Turin. I kindly ask you to imagine a time frame and day by your choice and draw where you are going?
 - How do you navigate and move through the city?
 - Where do you have stops?
 - For which reasons do you prefer to pass and stop in specific areas?

.....

5. **What do you think, overall, of Aurora and Vanchiglia public spaces?**

- Do you think that the features of Aurora and Vanchiglia public spaces affect in any way your experience of the neighborhood and of the city?
- In your opinion, what are the most important features for a public space to be an enjoyable place for you?

.....

6. **In general, what are the differences between your favorite public spaces and other spaces in Turin?**

- Are there any aspects that you find particularly appealing or lacking there?
 - Have you noticed special differences in use of public spaces between you and others?
-

7. Especially about your experiences, are there any challenges or limitations you have encountered while using public spaces?
- What are they?
 - How do you think they can be addressed?
-

8. Do you think the design and layout of public spaces in Turin cater to the needs and preferences of international university students?
- What roles do you think public spaces should play in promoting a vibrant and inclusive environment for international university students?
 - What improvement would you suggest?
-

9. I would like to ask a question about Turin city. Do you think Turin can be considered as a student city nowadays?

If yes:

- What features made you think like that?

If no:

- With which characteristics do you know Turin or you introduce Turin for others?
-

10. In the end, based on your opinion, what are the features you would like to find in a good public space?
-



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The Use of Public Spaces of Aurora & Vanchiglia Among International University Students

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You are being asked to take part in a research project developed as part of a master thesis in Territorial, Urban, Environmental, and Landscape Planning. This research aims to investigate the use of public spaces among international university students focusing on Aurora and Vanchiglia neighborhoods of Turin. Turin, as a former industrial city which started to identify its new image, is becoming close to being a university city. An aspect that interests me in particular is the use of public spaces (as all places of public use, accessible by all and comprising streets and public open spaces) by international university students. In this research, I would like to better understand how international students use public spaces of the city (for example when, for which kind of activities, etc.), what are the public spaces they use the most for different activities and what they think about them. As mentioned, I am particularly interested in the public spaces of Aurora and Vanchiglia, where, due to the presence of the university campus (CLE), there is a large amount of international students and student houses. Through this research, I am following to find the ways international university students use public spaces, hoping to be able to present also some suggestions to improve them.

You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose. Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether to participate in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Your responses to this interview will be anonymous, even if your name will be included in the list of the ones interviewed. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality and the information you will provide will be used for research purposes only. Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents.



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CONSENT

I, the undersigned, confirm that:

- I have read and understood the information about the project
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation
- I voluntarily agree to participate in the project
- I give my consent to the recording of the interview
- I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons
- The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained to me
- The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me

I have understood the information about the interview and the project. I agree and sign this informed consent form.

Signature _____ Date _____