SCUOLA DI DOTTORATO
UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

Department of

Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale

PhD program URBEUR-STUDI URBANI Cycle XXXV

Activation in housing policies. The role of temporary young residents in programs pursuing social mix in public housing neighbourhoods in Milan and Turin.

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ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

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Introduction

This research was born from the urgency of questioning the daily practices of my profession in a context of deep transformation of the traditional approach of the housing cooperative I work for. I embarked on my doctorate study four years ago within the executive program of the university. At the beginning, my purpose was to find answers and solutions to practical issues I felt as complicated and sometimes confusing. As I dived into theoretical and methodological topics, I gradually changed my initial approach and I redefine the objective of my research towards a more heuristic purpose. I was finally able to embed the practices in the macro trends of welfare transformations and to move between practices and policy strategies and tacit believes to acquire consciousness of the risks and implications of the use of some policy concepts and orientations in the practice. This positioning between research and practice (Arber, 2006) influenced not just the beginning of the story, rather it has informed the whole PhD course. My dual identity within the research posed key challenges in the definition of the theoretical framework, as well as in the selection of the case studies and in the data collection phase. The concern to be too much engaged with the research issue and the cases often brought me to lean towards putting more distance between me and my research object. I was able to find a (wobble) balance between the two extremes of familiarity and distance when I recognized my involvement as an opportunity, rather than just a limit, in getting access to data and information. From a methodological point of view, I approach the dual identity issue through reflexivity, constantly accounting for and discussing my specific position along the whole research. This approach is probably the main feature of the dissertation that develops in the following chapters. Certainly, it has been so for me, together with a major event that broke out at the beginning of the second year when data collection was supposed to start. The Covid-19 pandemic added methodological issues to the research, which sometimes mingled with the dual identity's implications. Both are so relevant for my study that I deeply discuss them in the methodological chapter.

The purpose of my research is to explore how the policy concept of activation (Newman and Tonkens, 2011) is being applied within housing policies and what kind of effects it provokes in the practice. The choice of the theme is clearly linked to professional interests. At the same time, during the literature review I identified a gap I hope to contribute to with my exploratory research. "The trend towards activation in contemporary social policies […] is by now well documented" (Bonvin, 2008, 367). However, activation has been mainly studied in relation to unemployment and social assistance, while its use within housing polices is more recent and needs to be further investigated. I aim to contribute to enlarge this knowledge via the qualitative analysis of two empirical case studies developed in two major cities in Italy. Cases were selected according to the most similar system design. In fact, they employ the same conditionality mechanisms in the allocation of affordable housing to young people, who are requested to actively engage in volunteer community work in exchange of accessing this type of housing provision. However, differences can be identified in the policy design and governance of the two cases as well as in the policy outcomes. My hypothesis is that the differences in the contextual features (normative, socio-economic, historical, local welfare arrangements) in which they are embedded affect practices of activation and policy outcomes. Results are discussed following this hypothesis, thus highlighting the peculiarities of each case, rather than the similarities, and linking them to the contextual

factors and conditions which I believe can contribute to explain the differences. I develop the analysis of the cases' peculiarities using specific dimensions I refer to as policy devices, i.e. space, time, and management strategies.

The analysis is embedded in the theoretical framework defined in the first part of the research and based on the hypothesis that the main trajectories of change seen for welfare in general can be found in housing policies' more recent transformations. Some concepts and ideas have become so pervasive that they are progressively entering and spreading in housing policies, that is not considered unanimously as a field of welfare. Since the 1980s, welfare systems in Europe have been subjected to relevant and intertwined transformations. Progressive cutback in public funding has brought to a decline in the public provision of social services. Costs' reduction has been promoted also introducing market-oriented principles and strategies in the public administrative body. Stakeholders from the private and the not-for-profit sectors have been involved in the provision of welfare services with the twofold aim to save financial resources dedicated to social protection and to increase efficacy in solving widening societal problems (Sabatinelli, 20210). The involvement of different stakeholders in welfare provision would allow to design and provide more tailored answers to the multifaceted needs of citizens. These organisations are thought to be more flexible than the public bureaucracy and more skilled to read social needs as they work closely to the scale where problems arise. Private organizations are not the only new actors involved in welfare governance and provision. A shift has occurred also between public powers, with local authorities gaining a pivotal role in the design, financing, and implementation of a wide range of welfare measures. This framework is further enriched by the new role assigned to citizens in building their social protection. The model of citizens as clients has been overcome by a more entrepreneurial view of people as co-producers of social services for themselves and the others. Dealing with social risks is increasingly a matter of citizens than of the state. The policy concept of activation coherently connects with and nourishes this framework. The active citizen is responsible for himself and his community. More and more, citizens are asked to be active while accessing some welfare measures (conditionality). These trajectories of change have also involved the provision of social housing across Europe (Czischke and Huisman, 2018).

My research aims at contributing to study how the figure of the active citizen develops in the new policy category of the active resident, who is proactive and committed to contribute to his and the communities' well-being. The active resident is then defined according to personal traits which policy makers more often tend to identify with specific categories of people. Typically, young people are among these because they are usually attributed stronger human and social capital. The active resident is a key figure in recent social mix developments where his presence is supposed to increase the chances to boost social interaction in vulnerable contexts. The interpretation I suggest is that the construction and spread of the active resident in housing policies are linked to the diffusion of collaborative housing and vice versa. New allocation and selection strategies based on the evaluation of personal characteristics are the policy device used to define and identify the active and collaborative resident. Activation is often a (implicit or explicit) prerequisite for collaboration in housing. However, collaboration in housing does not totally overlap with activation as collaborative housing encompasses various configurations, provisions, and values. In my theoretical framework of analysis,

activation and collaborative housing share some characteristics and ambiguities. They both stress self-responsibilisation and individualisation. Their execution in policies and interventions move between two opposite ends of a continuum. At one extreme there is a democratic view of power redistribution within society through transformative practices; at the other end there are cost-cutting goals and approaches that support consensus rather than conflict and power redistribution in policy making. The risk for such experiences and policies to be co-opted by (and thus to reinforce) neoliberal principles within public policies is high and often hidden to housing practitioners who miss (or do not have the time and methodological knowledge) to look critically at the macro framework. The risk is then focussing on the practices without framing them in the political and policy context and overlooking risks concerning social justice and access to social rights.

Concerning the structure of the work:

- in the first chapter I design the theoretical framework within which I build the discussion of the two case studies. The chapter develops from an overview of the main changes in welfare systems starting from the 1970s to a focus on housing policies as a field of welfare restructuring. In this first part of the chapter, I discuss a specific application of the policy concept of activation within new recent housing projects inspired by social mix based on unconventional definition and selection procedures of residents to encourage social interactions in vulnerable neighbourhoods. The active resident is defined as a policy category and selected according to personal traits and attitudes. The second part of the chapter gives an overview of the concept of collaborative housing in its heterogeneity, considering the several forms and arrangements it can acquire. In the same section I present an insight into the possible understandings and implications of the concept of collaboration in housing policies, focussing on collaboration in diversity which social mix policies aimed at increasing social cohesion have to do with. At the end of the chapter, I discuss the role of eligibility criteria and selection procedures as policy devices that contribute to build the policy figures of both the active and collaborative resident.
- In the second chapter, I introduce another analytical dimension which contributes to frame the two case studies of the research. Young people are often identified as active citizens par excellence for their supposed higher ability to adapt and for their stronger human and social capital. Moreover, they are experiencing pressing and increasing housing needs all over the world. The mix between these two ingredients makes the youth a category to which housing interventions based on the figure of the active resident often address. Therefore, the chapter is dedicated to present and discuss the demographic and economic situation of young adults in Europe and in Italy (where the two case studies are located) and its implications on their housing autonomy.
- In the third chapter, I discuss the main characteristics of the Italian housing systems, which contribute to frame young people's housing problems. The second part of the chapter is divided in two sections, one for each of the cities where the case studies are located. The discussion does not intend to be exhaustive of the local conditions of the two urban contexts, rather it presents those features I consider relevant for the following analysis of the cases.

- The fourth chapter is the methodological one. The first section is dedicated to clarifying the tensions of my positioning during the research with respect to my dual role and to the restrictions and adaptations brough by the Covid-19 pandemic. Both these aspects are discussed also in relation to the evolution over time of my object of study. A part of this section focuses on data sources and collection in time of restrictions. In the second section of the chapter, I describe the two case studies through both pieces of interviews and policy reports and documents.
- In the fifth chapter, I look at the practices. I decided to propose an interpretation for each case, based on the considerations on the contexts I developed in the second section of chapter 3 and on the description of the cases in chapter 4, so I discuss them separately. My choice derives both from the way I ask my research questions (more centred on the differences than on the similarities) and from the heuristic need to bring out variations between two policy/projects that seem to be designed exactly in the same way. Conversely, the last paragraph of the chapter crosses both the cases because it starts the analysis from the same interpretative tool (space), and it looks at how its different policy interpretation impacts in the practices.
- In the conclusions, I sum up the main findings of the analysis developed in the previous chapters. Lastly, starting from the limitations and gaps of my work, I suggest further steps in research, which should focus on the analysis of the process of activation concerning the welfare structure in the field of housing policies.

1. New welfare arrangements within housing policies: activation and responsabilisation through collaborative neighbouring

In the last twenty years or so, housing policies have been undergoing relevant changes coherently with the redesigning of the European systems of social protection started in the 1980s (Bifulco, 2017; Busso, 2017; Bricocoli and Coppola, 2013; Andreotti *et al.*, 2012). In the Fordist welfare state the public actor was directly responsible for policy design and delivery of standardized services. In new welfare state arrangements, the provision of welfare services and the implementation of public policies have been opened to private organizations. Moreover, the request for citizens' activation has become fundamental to access certain welfare opportunities (Dodaro and Costarelli, 2021; Costarelli *et al.*, 2020) and in some cases has brought to the co-production of services in full or part by citizens in collaboration with public and private service professionals (Czischke, 2018). These trajectories of change have also involved the provision of social housing across Europe (Czischke and Huisman, 2018). In this shift, citizens are increasingly assigned the responsibility to actively care for their own social protection (self-responsibilisation). The welfare request for individual responsibility is also intended as an active commitment for the well-being of local communities, especially marginalised neighbourhoods (Newman and Tonkens, 2011).

The aim of the discussion developed in the first chapter is to analyse the spread of housing policies built upon the principle of activation of residents in connection to the growing diffusion of policies, initiatives and discourses inspired by the concept of collaboration in housing domain. Collaborative housing is emerging in many European countries in a variety of shapes (Czischke, 2018) and energetically spreading in academic and policy discourses. Collaborative housing can be seen as an expression of wider shifts towards the participation and co-production of welfare services and infrastructures through the involvement of a greater number of different stakeholders than in the past.

The following three sections are organized as follows. In the first one, I present the main transformations in welfare systems in which the emergence of the figure of the active citizen (Newman and Tonkens, 2011) is embedded. After that, I describe transformations in housing policies in connection with the changes of welfare systems analysed in the first paragraph. The last part of the section focuses on the application of activation strategies in a new framework of social mix emerged since the 2000s across Europe. In the second section, I describe the emergence of collaborative housing forms in the frame of the changes occurred in public service provision towards a wider participation of stakeholders and an increasing responsibilisation of citizens to care for their social problems and risks. Within this framework, I discuss some possible meanings of collaboration, with a focus on a specific form of cooperative relations which unfold in contexts characterised by social and cultural diversity. In the third section, I highlight the role of allocation strategies in the promotion of both activation and collaboration in housing policies.

1.1 The redefinition of welfare systems

In this paragraph, I outline three interrelated processes of welfare transformations which are all supported by and revealed in both policies and discourses: marketization and cost-cutting; devolution and rescaling of public policy; changes in the role of welfare recipients. Between the mid-1970s and the early 1980s, massive changes

in economy and society have occurred under the influence of neoliberal politics. Many Western countries have been witnessing a decline in the public provision of social services and in the investment in public infrastructures following a massive cutback in public funding, further exacerbated after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis (Petmesidou and Guille´n, 2014). Moreover, increasing privatization and marketization have been promoted to reduce costs. On the one hand, through outsourcing these two processes brought market-oriented private providers in the traditional fields of public services, thus widening the number and typology of stakeholders involved in their provision (the third sector, voluntary organisations, and for-profit providers). On the other hand, since the late 1980s this shift towards marketization has also affected the administrative body of the state and local authorities through the spread of the New Public Management (NPM) model across European systems of administration, though at differentiated degree and pace in different countries and in different policy fields.. The main hypothesis of the NPM-reform wave is that more market orientation in the public sector will lead to greater cost efficiency and effectiveness for governments (Busso, 2017). The model is oriented towards outcomes and efficiency through better management of public budgets which can be achieved by applying competition, as it is known in the private sector, to public sector organisations, emphasizing economic and leadership principles. Public administrations have been encouraged to change in this direction by the criteria for the access to European funding programs (structural funds, European initiative programs). The Europeanization of public polices is a pressure that has pushed public administrations to adopt project-oriented approaches, result-oriented competences, and action criteria.

Alongside the growth and diversification of the stakeholders involved in the provision of public services following increasing privatisation, another trend has contributed to modify the structure of decision-making and provision of social services. Until the beginning of the 1980s, cities lost relevance and the state was the most important territorial and policy actor. After 1980, also following the development of the European Union, a process of territorial reorganisation took place, which meant an increasing role of local policy actors, especially cities, in policy making. Local authorities have become a "third level of government" (Bobbio, 2002) which the European Union addresses directly in case of policies specifically aimed at projects for the development of regions and cities. Therefore, the role of local authorities has been changing considerably: "they are no longer merely implementing decisions taken at other levels of government but are taking an active part in the redesign of public policies through conflicts and negotiations" (Kazepov, 2004, 27). This shift went together with the centrality gained by the local and urban scale in public policies. The local level became the privileged scale for the design and implementation of a wide set of measures and interventions. "The basic assumption underlying these trends is that local policies should facilitate more targeted and flexible solutions which are able to adapt to increasingly varying social needs in differentiated local contexts" (Kazepov, 2004, 26). Thus, on the one hand local policies target local contexts as the scale where problems reveal more strongly and intensely; on the other hand, they assume local resources (actors and organisations, territories etc) to be

the best levers to be activated to solve those problems[1] (Bifulco and Mozzana, 2022; Bifulco, 2017). However, in a multilevel, global-local world, several scales coexist and interact at the same time in policy framing and making. This complexity can cause fragmentation. At the same time, if policy and action remain just at the local level, they risk being weak and ineffective in the long run.

These top-down transformative pressures have contributed to the process of localisation of welfare systems, where the socio-economic features of the contexts define specific arrangements of welfare provision in different territories (Andreotti and Mingione, 2016). According to some authors (Costarelli and Dodaro, 2021; Andreotti *et al.*, 2012), this increasing focus on the local dimension with its different implications has contributed to the emergence and strengthening of activation strategies in public policies and vice versa (Sabatinelli, 2010).

Such reorganization of public powers has transformed the relationship between central and local authorities, but also between public and private actors (Bifulco, 2017), including citizens. A series of successive shifts in the roles of recipients of welfare measures and in their relationship with public bodies have occurred (Czischke, 2018). In the old, standardised welfare systems, the relationship between citizens and public welfare actors was a passive one where the formers were considered beneficiaries of services provided entirely by the state. Coherently with market-oriented rearrangements, recipients were assigned a more active role in the form of clients in the marketplace of welfare services (Newman and Tonkens, 2011). In the NPM model "the key concepts are accountability and the reduction of costs but also devolution and freedom of choice" (Bifulco, 2017). The role of freedom and choice is emphasised in the attempt to recognize to citizens a new space of participation in an institutional context such as welfare provision. Freedom is intended as the possibility to choose the best offer in the market of welfare services, where public actors play among different providers. The further evolution in the role of people accessing welfare measures is informed by entrepreneurial visions of citizens directly involved in the production and provision of the services they need, thus blurring the borders between receivers and providers (Dodaro and Costarelli, 2021). According to some authors (Bifulco 2017; Andreotti *et al.*, 2012), this change is inscribed in a major paradigm shift in welfare policies towards social investment (SI). I mention here two cornerstones of this approach which are useful to develop my reasoning on activation in the following sections. SI works in a perspective of prevention: the old welfare state allocated subsidies to compensate for social (mainly unemployment) problems, while social policies based on the SI approach tend to target people at risk of drifting to poverty to prevent this to happen. The old welfare state took care of people in need; in a SI perspective the aim is to free people from social protection needs (Sennett, 2004). How does contemporary welfare do that? Investing to strengthen people's human and social capital (Busso 2017), providing them the relevant skills to successfully navigate the labour market and prevent slides. In doing so, they also entrust to them the responsibility to use their capital in a proper way so that their condition will not worsen or even improve thanks to their capacity and willingness to use these resources (self-

[1] However, the assumption of the local as the most effective scale of intervention risks to delegitimize other scales of government and action and to dim the problematic effects of this approach (the so-called local trap, Governa and Saccomani, 2008).

responsibilisation). In contemporary societies, we assist to a risk shift (Aalbers, 2016) from public institutions towards people and households who must rely more on themselves and on the market for their security. The effect of this shift is the increasing overall vulnerability of individuals and households (Brokking *et al.*, 2017). Responsibilisation is the development of the freedom of choice in a neoliberal policy framework. Policies provide instruments (education, skills, counselling) to deal with problems individually or within family and community relations. Individualization, the tendency to give importance to the personal inclination to activation and self-organization of people, is an emerging trend in social policies (Bifulco, 2017). This tendency is reinforced by the discourse on the increasing diversification and individualization of needs and conditions which, if we go further in the reasoning, supports the idea of a supposed better capacity of individuals to find not-standardized solutions for their own problems. In this perspective, two main risks emerge: first, overlooking the macro societal and economic context in which we are embedded and the factors of production and reiteration of inequality; second, assuming a pretextual view of the promotion of agency co-opted by governmental strategies inspired by neoliberal ideology, without giving real recognition to the voice of those who are directly involved (Bifulco and Mozzana, 2022) in defining and addressing their problems.

1.1.1 Activation within welfare policies: a complex and ambiguous concept

The policy concept of activation is a complex and contradictory one. It moves from a context to another as other successful policy ideas (Bricocoli and Cucca, 2014; Newman and Tonkens, 2011); however, its unfolding is deeply embedded in the socio-political context where it is used. Some authors connect its spread mainly to welfare cost-cutting and changes in welfare systems, assuming a macro perspective within which I have developed my reasoning until now and viewing it mainly as a manifestation of the diffusion of marketization and neoliberal ideology in public policy. Some others focus on the link between the spread of the figure of the active citizen and claims for inclusiveness and societal and bureaucratic change made by citizens and social movements. The same concept of social innovation[2] intended as new initiatives and services implemented by citizens and local civil society actors to solve unmet social needs that are not addressed neither by public policies nor by the market (García and Vicari Haddok, 2016) recalls in some respects the figure of the active citizen. However, as for the concept of activation, the complexity and sometimes ambiguity that characterise social innovation risk supporting a reductionist and utilitarian view of this phenomena, which contributes to legitimize neoliberalism, encouraging individuals' activation to compensate the retreat of the state (Cirulli *et al.*, 2020).

Both the neoliberal and the empowering interpretations are part of the concept of activation and inform both the policies and practices in different territorial and policy contexts. For this reason, the interpretation given by Andreotti et *al.* (2012), who describe these two meanings of activation as the two ends of a continuum within which practices are enacted, seems to me the best suited to framing my analysis. At one extreme, the driving force is the retrenchment of the state both in terms of economic resources and collective responsibility

[2] In the last years, there has been a proliferation of discourse and work on social innovation, not just in the academic world. However, the use of the concept is sometimes ambiguous because of the great diversity of existing approaches. Here the reference to this concept is used just to discuss the possibility to read activation also assuming a bottom-up perspective. I will not neither go deeper in the analysis of nor use this concept any more in my research.

(its responsibility towards its citizens); at the other end what is at stake is the redistribution of voice among citizens and, consequently, of power: the power to be active agents in the definition and resolution of their problems together with public institutions and other subjects.

Through conditionality, activation plays a role in the access phase to welfare through the definition of specific requirements. It operates also during the social support period, and it is verified through step-by-step checks intended to test the effectiveness of the employed measures and sometimes to confirm the right to continue to access to such measures. These conditions are often an integral part of the contract that formally defines the relations between citizens and welfare providers (De Leonardis in Newman and Tonkens, 2011). However, conditionality is not a neutral policy instrument (Lascoumes and Le Galès, 2007). It can have disciplining implications: through its use specific personal characteristics, attitudes and behaviours are positively evaluated to access or continue to benefit from welfare. At the same time these personal attributes and actions are informed by activation: those citizens who demonstrate to be motivated ad responsible towards themselves, the others, and their communities are more easily selected to get access to welfare resources; once they are in, they are asked to actively engage in gaining autonomy and in contributing to the well-being of the larger community.

As already mentioned in the introduction, these trajectories of change have also involved social housing policies across Europe (Czischke and Huisman, 2018). There is an ongoing debate in the literature whether to consider housing as an area of welfare or not[3] and, if it is, on what are its position within and its relationship with the national systems of social protection (Poggio, 2005). My research moves from the idea that recent changes in housing policies can be read within and coherently with the rearrangements of social protection systems as described above. Therefore, the perspective I embrace here is that indeed housing policies play in the field of welfare as they contribute to people's well-being (Poggio, 2005). Of course, the relationship between housing and welfare is a dynamic one: its positions within the national and local systems of social protection has changed in the course of history and across territories. In the following paragraph, I describe those transformations in housing policies connected with the changes of welfare systems depicted in this first paragraph.

1.1.2 Housing restructuring within welfare reform

In the modern or Fordist regime, housing was considered an area of welfare policy and the social housing sector[4] was developed and financed mainly by the state in most Western European countries. Its aim was to provide decent housing for the masses, especially for the working and middle classes. In this period, "good, affordable housing became a goal of many states" (Aalbers, 2016, 68) and housing was part of, and crucial to, welfare policies. This arrangement was supported by the acknowledgement of the right to housing as a basic

[3] For example, contemporary political economy studies housing as a public policy on its own rather than as a public policy of the welfare state. According to its scholars, in this way they can study housing holding the different sides of the issue together (Aalbers, 2016).

[4] Social housing is a comprehensive expression that encompasses both publicly built housing (funded by the government and built by municipalities or by public housing agencies) and subsidized housing (built by private contractors or housing cooperatives that apply directly for funding from the local governments) (Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017). The direct intervention of the state has different forms according to the specific national context (Tosi, 2016).

human right as declared in various documents at the international and European level and at the national level within certain states[5] (Brokking *et al.*, 2017; Balmer and Bernet, 2015; Sendi, 2011). This idea was at the basis of the development of systems of social housing in the last century. However, housing has been one of the welfare state policy fields most affected by the ever-growing retrenchment of the state under the influence of neoliberal politics (Costarelli *et al.*, 2019). Since the 1980s, most European countries have been witnessing a shrinking of the size of the social housing stock (Pittini, 2012) following massive cutbacks of public funding. "New housing policies […] put decent, affordable housing for everyone much lower on the political agenda that was the case in the modern period" (Aalbers, 2016, 72). Consequently, the areas of housing stress and vulnerability have enlarged. The reduction of public investments in social housing, the increasing fiscally support to homeownership, and the shift from supply-side assistance to demand-side assistance (Czischke, 2009; Tosi, 2016) have fostered a process of marketization and commodification of housing that has increased the danger of the violation of this basic human right (Sendi, 2011). The financialization of housing[6] and the financialization of the social housing sector[7] have further undermined the right to housing, and "housing has turned in a conditional right constrained by financial commitments and risks" (Brokking *et al.*, 2017, 346). In her pan-European study, Czischke (2009) researched on the impacts that rapid and profound changes in society, in the economy and policy, including the reinforcement of market principles in housing policies, have had on the organizational strategies of social housing providers. According to her findings, the increasing trend towards the application of business principles within social housing management has taken place in two different ways: "performance management" (Czischke, 2009, 130), i.e., increasing efficiency and accountability without changing the social objectives of the organizations; and market-orientation within the business strategy. In the second case, business principles are introduced into the organization's mission. The two shapes may coexist.

An additional reduction in state funding to social housing sector occurred after the Global Financial Crisis of 2007-2008 (Costarelli *et al.*, 2019a). Austerity policies in a context of growing socio-economic inequalities, increasing migration, and ageing of population has posed new challenges to housing policies. The expansion

[5] E.g., the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966; the Habitat Agenda, 1996; the European Social Charter, 1961; the Vienna Declaration, 2004. Moreover, Housing rights are referred to in the Constitutions of at least 40% of the countries of the world (Sendi, 2011).

[6] The process of global expansion of credit has brought housing to be a key object of financialization (Aalbers, 2017a). In a political economy perspective, that means that house prices are primarily driven by the dynamics of finance rather than by the development of the demand and supply of housing units (Aalbers, 2016). Under these conditions, houses have been transformed from a good to be used into a financial asset for a limited part of the population (Filandri and Pauli, 2018).

7 The financialization of housing is mainly referred to homeownership. However, as housing entered a post Fordist neoliberal regime, financialization has concerned rental housing as well, and social rental housing. The emergence of rental housing as a frontier of financialization has been increasingly relevant since the 2008 GFC, when global financial investors could take advantage of a substantial price drop (Fields, 2017). Always in search for new investment opportunities, financial companies started to target also social rental housing. The financialization of social housing have occurred in two ways: 1) a new generation of financialized landlords has entered this specific portion of the housing market: private equity firms have become important investors in subsidized housing, for example in Germany and in the US; 2) social housing providers increasingly partake in practices that have been the domain of financial sector, such as investing in social bonds and derivative. This is for example the case of housing associations in the UK and in the Netherlands.

of unmet housing needs (Brokking *et al.*, 2017) has been further exacerbated by the increasing commodification of housing and by the process of financialization. On the one hand, there are larger numbers of families and individuals on the waiting lists for social or subsidized housing; on the other, the demand for affordable housing involves different social categories, e.g., middle-class income, young people, and, more recently, asylum seekers (Costarelli *et al.*, 2019; Czischke, 2009; Mugnano, 2017). The neoliberal restructuring of housing policies expanded the area of housing vulnerability, but it struck more strongly lower-income groups. Following the Global Financial Crisis, on the one hand governments have adopted stricter mortgage regulations with the attempt to protect households from arrears and foreclosures (Brokking *et al.*, 2017); on the other, unemployment and irregular and under-paid employment have increased. Thus, a growing number of households cannot become homeowners and at the same time, they cannot access social housing nor private rental market that is often under-maintained and overpriced (Aalbers, 2016). The exclusionary effect of neoliberal housing policies on households and individuals is amplified where the other welfare measures are weak (Brokking *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, as Tosi (2016) underlines, the ongoing residualisation[8] of social housing produces negative effects for the most marginalized, because, particularly in conditions of shortage of supply, social housing providers use mechanisms of prioritization and selection of tenants that risk keeping out the most vulnerable. Because of these transformations, "the right to housing is no longer guaranteed in contemporary welfare states" (Brokking *et al.*, 2017). At the same time, the market, and especially the financialized market, has failed to provide affordable housing for a larger number of households and it has reproduced social inequalities (Filandri and Pauli, 2018).

Alongside cost-cutting measures and the increasing marketization of the social housing sector, housing policies have been affected also by processes of rescaling and redistribution of political power. In some countries national reforms have changed the distribution of political responsibilities among states, regions, and local authorities in favour of those levels of government which are physically closest to citizens and territories. These changes have impacted on institutional governance structures where local authorities play a major role: their ability to bring together all actors involved in policy interventions become essential in ensuring sustainability in the long run and effectiveness in responding to citizens' needs. For example, in Italy[9] in October 2001 the reform of the Fifth Title of the Constitution was approved. It outlined a new kind of relationship between the State, the Regions and the EU and drew a new institutional order of regions and local authorities. It established a shift of competences from the State to the Regions in several social policy matters. Housing policies are included within those issues (also health is among them) on which Regions acquired competence of legislation (Costarelli and Maggio, 2021). This meant a radical change in the role of the actors involved in the financing, definition, and implementation of those policies. In particular, the social housing sector was traditionally handled by the central State; nowadays Regions have the tasks of programming, orienting, and coordinating actions, while it is expressly addressed to local governments the responsibility of

[8] The process of residualisation of social housing brought to allocate units primarily to the most vulnerable or to the poorest households, thus fuelling processes of concentration and stigmatisation (Czischke, 2009; Tosi, 2016).

[9] Italy is the country where the two case studies analysed in this research are located. However, the trends I describe here are trajectories that can be found also elsewhere in Europe.

designing interventions, integrating a plurality of means which are provided by regional, national, and European programs. Decentralisation reforms present some risky consequences, the intensity of which depends on the political, social, economic, and territorial features of the contexts where they are implemented. Fragmentation is among these. In the absence of an overall policy framework, the fragmentation of policies and instruments can lead to the development of different local systems of social protection which do not guarantee equal service standards and rights to citizens (Kazepov, 2010). The risk is the reinforcement of existing inequalities between different territories and the development of new lines of exclusion (Andreotti *et al.*, 2012).

Until now, I have developed my reasoning on housing policies changes and reorganization in relation to the first two processes of transformation of welfare systems pinpointed in the first paragraph: marketization and cost-cutting on the one hand; devolution and rescaling of public policy on the other. As we have already seen, the transformation of governance towards a model that includes civil society organizations in decision-making and service provision (Busso, 2017) have redesigned the role of citizens, too. In the following section, I focus on this third process of change (changes in the role of welfare recipients, cfr. 1), tracing the figure of the active resident, specifically in the recently reframing of social mix policies aimed at boosting social cohesion in vulnerable neighbourhoods.

1.1.3 The active resident in social mix reframing

The ongoing processes of shrinkage and residualisation of social housing has been fuelling the concentration of the poorest and most vulnerable in specific parts of cities, specifically those with higher shares of public and social housing. Thus, those estates that had been built for the working class have over time become estates for the poor and marginal.

The policy of the right to buy, started in the United Kingdom in the 1980s, represents a touchstone in the transformations of social housing stock and of the social and economic profiles of its residents across Europe. Those households with more economic resources were encouraged to leave social housing and to become homeowners, while the stock was progressively reduced and left in bad maintenance conditions. In the 1990s many Western European governments promoted great urban renewal programs to tackle the spatial concentration of low-income households, the lack of maintenance and the growing stigmatisation of social housing (Bricocoli and Cucca, 2014). This area-based programs targeted specific territorial contexts (territorialisation, cfr. 1) with the purpose of improving both their physical and social environment through a multidimensional set of actions (Mugnano, 2017). Social cohesion became a local goal of urban policies to be achieved in specific territorial contexts supporting the employment and flourishing of local economic and social resources and capitals. Target areas in cities were mainly represented by vulnerable (social housing) neighbourhoods, where problems of social exclusion and economic deterioration were more evident and immediately experienced (Vaiou and Kalandides, 2016). At the same time, neighbourhoods were viewed as sets of resources (material, institutional, relational, and immaterial) for social action to be supported to enhance

the social inclusion of their inhabitants[10]. For these two reasons, the neighbourhood raised as a relevant policy scale[11].

"Social mix has played a pivotal role within state-led integrated area-based urban renewal policies of deprived neighbourhoods (Costarelli *et al.*, 2019a, 131) with the purpose of tackling the negative effects[12] of spatial segregation of poor populations. Over time, policies of social mix have been promoted to address a variety of housing and social issues, defining mix according to different variables and mechanisms, and with different degree of integration with other public policies[13] (Bricocoli and Cucca, 2016). Several international research have demonstrated that mixed neighbourhoods appear to offer little benefit in reducing neighbourhood challenges because "mixing does not address the real problem" (Bolt and van Kempen, 2013). Other factors such as welfare state systems, labour market, social networks etc. play a significant role in exclusionary processes (Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017). Moreover, the creation of such diverse groups of residents is usually obtained through a mix of tenure typologies (mainly homeownership and rent), that means through income mix. Low-and medium-income residents are mixed with the idea that the latter works as role models for the former. The assumption is that middle-income households' way of life and values are more desirable and well-suited to improve urban life and neighbourhood and housing management. In this perspective, social mix has also a disciplining feature in that it encourages the spread of certain values and norms (Camina and Wood, 2008), according to the political and social contexts where it is applied.

On the other hand, social mix policies may have negative side effects, such as the weakening of social networks following relocation, more stigmatisation, and the reduction of housing opportunities for low-income households (Bolt and van Kempen, 2013; Bricocoli and Cucca, 2014). However, as Olagnero and Ponzo (2017, 181) point out, "despite these criticisms, policy makers' expectations about socially mixed neighbourhoods remain high". These beneficial expectations also concern the impacts of social mix on social cohesion[14]. An almost automatic expected effect of residential proximity of families and people with different economic, social, and cultural resources is the intensification of social relations between them, resulting in a positive impact on social cohesion. Thanks to the interaction with people with less problematic social and economic

[10] In this twofold perspective the neighbourhood is identified both as the cause of segregation and the resource to solve the problem.

[11] The territorialisation of social cohesion policies at the neighbourhood scale presents also some risks related to the already mentioned issues of fragmentation, exclusions, and increasing inequalities between territories.

[12] I refer to the so-called neighbourhood effects, i.e., "specific and cumulative locational disadvantages associated with communities where concentrations of deprivation are found" (Manzi, 2010, 6). The premise of this kind of interventions is that living in neighbourhoods with high levels of segregation limits the possibilities for residents to change their destiny, moving away from poverty and isolation caused by scarce relational resources and bad job opportunities. These considerations initially referred to the American context, but they have spread in Europe too, even in contexts characterised by lower degrees of spatial segregation.

[13] For an historical discussion of the uses and implications of social mix in housing policies, see Costarelli, 2017.

[14] Social cohesion is a complex concept. Different definitions, and consequently ways to measure it, have been proposed (Mugnano and Palvarini 2013). Kearns and Forrest (2000) highlight the reference in the concept to both norms and values on the one hand, and to social ties and networks on the other. The type of interactions at stake are characterised by the participation of people coming from a relatively wide range of backgrounds, where the "proximate reason for interaction is to engage together in a collective activity, which each one values and benefits from, which they cannot achieve alone, and which is not available through the bonded networks they have" (Szreter, 2002, 576). Therefore, the focus is not on identity (bonding social capital), but agency, the role of practice in fostering social relations and bridging social capital.

backgrounds and conditions, the most vulnerable have the chance to come out from too tight and homogeneous environments. However, many studies have already shown that socioeconomically mixed neighbourhoods do not automatically produce a positive effect on social cohesion (Bolt and van Kempen, 2013). The simple spatial juxtaposition of residents with different backgrounds and characteristics is not sufficient to bring people together that would not normally interact (Benton and Power, 2018). Research suggests that the success of mixed communities' initiatives is in large part dependent on the conditions of the wider context (Costerelli, 2019b) and on "intensive management strategies" (Manzi, 2010, 9). Continuing, deliberate and inclusive actions aimed at encouraging people who wish to interact and hang together are essential factors to try to provoke the so-called people-based effects of social mix (Mugnano and Palvarini, 2013; Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017).

Since the 2000s, a new frame of social mix (Costarelli, 2017) has emerged where housing allocation to active residents is supposed to boost social interaction in vulnerable contexts, thus partially overcoming some of the limits of previous forms of social mix. This shift is embedded in the more general trend of public policies we have already spoken about, namely the tendency to give importance to the personal inclination to activation and self-organization of people in accessing welfare measures (Bifulco, 2017). The policy figure of the active resident is constructed referring to a multifaceted set of personal characteristics:

- the active resident is resourceful: he has developed collaborative and relational skills which can be useful to do community work and promote mutual support activities in vulnerable neighbourhoods;
- the active resident has a pro-social attitude: the distinguishing features of his personality are sociability, openness and the ability to adapt to complex and diverse situations;
- the active resident is committed: he desires to get involved and to contribute to the well-being of his community[15] and neighbours.

These personal traits are usually mixed with objective criteria which define the need for affordable housing[16] (e.g., level of income, age, household's typology) to identify the terms for the access to social housing stock. The mechanism of conditionality intervenes in relation to both the evaluation of specific behavioural features and the request to fulfil specific duties (Costarelli *et al.*, 2020). Once the access requirements are assessed by housing providers, the prospective resident is asked to actively engage in contributing to the well-being of the community he is going to live in. These tasks are often an integral part of the contract that formally defines his relations with the housing provider. Activation plays at both the individual and collective level. As we will see

[15] Often the concepts of community and neighbourhood are used interchangeably and with a nostalgic view of the lost urban village whose social organization can contrast the problems of modern societies. However, this interpretation risks to be both misleading and worthless from an analytical point of view (Castrignanò, 2021). The issue is complex, as it is the relation between the two concepts and entities. For a thorough discussion on neighbourhoods and communities in a sociological perspective, see Castrignanò, 2021. Here it is worth considering, as it is useful for the upcoming analysis, the neighbourhood as a unit of analysis with its own social and spatial peculiarities. The former cannot be automatically described as solidarity ties deriving from spatial proximity and informal face to face contacts.

[16] A case in point of such a profile is represented by "young people with few economic resources but strong social and human capital" (Costarelli *et al.*, 2020, 2), who at the same time experienced more difficulties in accessing social housing and welfare more in general (Mugnano *et al.*, 2021). In the second chapter, I will analyse the specificities of young people's housing problems across countries to frame the case studies presented in this research.

more in depth in the analysis of the case studies, citizens are asked to be actively engaged in finding a solution to their housing need through the enhancement of their personal relational resources and skills. This means knowing how to recognise them[17], how to promote them with welfare providers and how to use them in contexts and situations that could be different from the ones where they have been learnt and practiced. In the practice of collaborative skills (Sennett, 2012) in vulnerable contexts, the human and social capital of the active resident is supposed to be reinforced and improved, thus working as a preventive factor in navigating the potential hardships of life. Simultaneously, the active resident is requested to be responsible towards the surrounding community (Fromm, 2012), taking care both of physical spaces and of the relationships between neighbours, thus contributing through his action to enhance their well-being (Newman and Tonkens, 2011). The active and collaborative resident is expected to promote mutual support and community building (Costarelli *et al.*, 2019b), to encourage vulnerable tenants to know each other and connect in solidarity relationships which can be useful in their daily life in neighbourhoods often characterised by a shortage of public services. In doing so, the active resident becomes himself a producer of local welfare services for his neighbours and the city (Dodaro and Costarelli, 2021).

Recently different housing projects and policies inspired by this new form of social mix have sprung up in Europe. However, the overall picture is manifold (also within the same national contexts) as concerns the scale of intervention and the type of housing provision; the constellation of the stakeholders involved; the level of integration with housing and other public policies. Besides, sometimes, even when policies and projects share the same objectives and features, the ways they come into practice can be different and at times contradictory in relation with policy design and aim definition. For this reason, an approach of analysis that considers the institutional level, the level of social practices and their relationships is considered more helpful to study such a complex and ambiguous concept as activation in public policies (Lescoumes and Le Galès, 2007; Bifulco, 2017).

These "new forms of social mix of the new millennium" (Costarelli, 2017, 99, my translation) are not free from risks and side-effects. Especially in those contexts where the social housing stock is scarce, they contribute to further reduce the affordable housing stock available for the poorest through the allocation of apartments to specific categories of beneficiaries (which usually does not refer to needs and vulnerability criteria) or considering certain types of personal skills and resources that are considered more successful for personal integration (Tosi, 2016) and social inclusion. Moreover, the use of specific eligibility criteria (i.e., motivation, attitudes, and personal skills) in the selection of prospective residents draws new dividing lines and it makes housing policies more selective in the distribution of welfare entitlements. Therefore, social mix risks to result in a further mechanism of exclusion of those with less resources, thus posing "a social justice issue" (Costarelli *et al.*, 2019b, 305) in the selection of applicants and in the possibility for people with similar socio-economic situation to access to the same housing opportunities. Personality traits are no more neutral in the access to welfare, but they acquire a political status which contributes to define the conditions under which

[17] […] the ability to define what resources are important for privileges, has meant that privileged groups have everywhere been successful at defending their positions" (Fligstein, 2008, 234).

citizenship can and must be practiced. On the other hand, the recovering of social ties in neighbourhoods often characterised by a collection of diverse, multilevel, and long-term problems cannot be entrusted entirely to the active residents involved in the projects, further unloading the costs of welfare and the responsibilities of societal problems to citizens (Belotti and Caselli, 2016).

1.2 Collaborative housing

Collaborative housing is an umbrella term (Czischke and Huisman, 2018) encompassing a wide range of housing solutions where "aside from autonomous housing units and the provision of shared common facilities […] a strong social dimension" is included (Fromm, 2012, 364). This social component is defined by two features: the participation of residents in housing provision and management, and the establishment of reciprocal relationships and collaboration between residents and with the surrounding neighbourhoods in different forms and degrees according to the specific project.

Projects and programs are heterogeneous and fragmented as it is still under construction the conceptual and methodological frameworks in this field (Griffith *et al.*, 2022). Collaborative housing can take different shapes (self-building, residents' cooperatives, community land trusts, etc.) where residents usually do not engage in all the project stages and with the same intensity across its development. The classic example of this type of initiatives is co-housing originated in Denmark in the 1960s (Autigna and Filandri, 2016), where residents have the will to share living spaces and moments of their daily life accordingly to the common values which brought them together. Usually in co-housing projects the degree of residents' involvement is high in all stages of the planning, development, and management processes. Collaborative housing initiatives vary across and within countries also regarding forms of financing and management (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022). The landscape is diversified also concerning the institutional articulations of state, private and inhabitants' relations which display in specific set-up of property rights and management models and obligations (Griffith *et al.*, 2022). The degree of residents' involvement and the organizational set-up reflect the values and goals "motivating the collective inhabiting and managing of the estate" (Griffith *et al.*, 2022, 1). Traditionally collaborative housing emerged from bottom-up experiences with a strong political or ecological commitment. One of the main ambitions of these experiences is to secure housing against neoliberal pressures, and later financialization, through different tools: e.g., new set-up of land and housing rights (Griffith *et al.*, 2022), and new schemes for civil society involvement in housing provision (Girbés-Peco *et al.*, 2020). More recently professional housing providers, e.g., social housing organizations, have been increasingly promoting such initiatives in a more top-down perspective (Czischke and Huisman, 2018). In these forms, not-for-profit organizations and housing professionals play a role in the development and management phases besides residents (Fromm, 2012). Some authors (Costarelli in Bifulco and Mozzana, 2022; Czischke, 2009; Boelhouwer, 1999) link this development to two contextual and connected factors: the development of social welfare mix arrangements and the transformations of social housing providers. As we have seen in the first part of this chapter, following privatisation and devolution other actors than the State have entered the organization and provision of public services, from not-for-profit organizations to citizens. This new configuration has consequences on governance arrangements of policies and projects, but also on the social

housing sector more in general. Social housing providers' staff professionalises and expands his functions, from housing allocation and management to residents' well-being and urban renewal. The context of reduction of public resources devoted to housing on the one hand, and of increased complexity and inequality of the social and economic frame within which social housing providers operate on the other, paradoxically led them to confront wider social problems with less (public) financial resources. In the 1980s and 1990s a business-like tendency prevailed in the organization of social housing providers in search for more efficiency through market-oriented performances. Two consequences of budget constraint are:

- social housing providers started to diversify their activities to cross-subsidise social support tasks (Czischke, 2009) and find additional resources to secure their financial sustainability;
- more recently social housing providers increasingly partake in practices that have been the domain of the financial sector, such as investing in social bonds and derivative to gain additional resources. This is for example the case of housing associations in the United Kingdom and in the Netherlands.

However, in most social housing providers business-like goals coexist with a social welfare mission. Social support activities have enlarged the scale of their action (allocating affordable housing to low-income households), moving towards finding answers to neighbourhoods and sometimes societal problems in their local dimension (e.g., increase individualism and isolation, segregation, and stigmatisation etc.). After the Global Financial Crisis, new drivers have been characterising large numbers of these initiatives, i.e., affordability on the one hand and social inclusion of the most vulnerable (e.g., refugees and asylum seekers) on the other. Contemporary social and economic developments underpin contemporary collaborative housing initiatives (Czischke, 2018). Socio-demographic changes comprise ageing, the redefinition of gender roles, increasing migration, etc. Socio-economic trends include increasing flexibilization of the labour market and the depletion of the population's income levels. In this framework, affordability[18] has become the main driver for collaborative housing pursued by professional housing organisations.

Within this transforming framework, the residents' role changes too. In the 1980s the client-consumer was pushed to become homeowner through public incentives[19]. As the residualisation of social housing stock brought housing providers to confront mainly with the most problematic situations in a context of budget constraints, the management style changed towards a greater involvement of residents in solving the day-to-day problems of the neighbourhoods they live in. This shift was supported by cultural discourses according to

[18] The issue of housing affordability has gained new relevance in academic debate, especially in connection with the trends of urban contexts' transformations, as it is demonstrated by the frequently cited expression "global urban housing affordability crisis, as described in Wetzstein's article (2017), meaning that low- and middle-income groups are increasingly unable to afford decent housing in cities and are facing the risk of expulsion" (Peverini, 2021, 849). However, following Sendi (2011), the concept of housing affordability needs to be critically examined in a more right-oriented perspective: "Affordability is a market concept related to capacity to pay. Something is affordable for the individual who can pay for it. If one can pay for a certain good, then that individual gains access to that good. On the contrary, those who cannot afford to pay for a certain good cannot gain access to it. If that good is housing, that means that those who cannot afford to pay, cannot gain access to housing. […] At the same time, however, there is a growing proportion of the population in European counties that cannot afford to pay for housing on the open market. Those who cannot afford to pay for housing, cannot access it either" (Sendi, 2011,10).

[19] For example, through the Right to Buy in United Kingdome and the privatization of public and social housing stock often in favour of occupants in Western Europe since the 1980s (Costarelli, 2023).

which "communities are most effective where they rely on the skills and expertise of those closest to the ground" (Manzi, 2010, 8). In this perspective, communities and active residents are considered the most qualified to care for themselves, their neighbours, and the space around them and they become the model for who is considered to be the good and responsible resident. In this framework, collaborative housing emerges as a possible arrangement to facilitate residents' involvement in order to improve the delivery of housing services and the management of buildings and entire neighbourhoods. This view accounts for a more pragmatic[20] interpretation of the spread of collaborative practices in social housing management in recent times, as collaboration and participation are seen as possible effective recipes to overcome the problems which have traditionally affected social housing stock, e.g., deterioration of neighbourhoods, antisocial behaviour etc. (Boelhouwer, 1999). However, collaborative housing can also have more inclusive and democratic goals also when promoted by civil society organizations. This is the case for example of the alternatives to the mainstream housing model created in Catalonia by grassroots urban movements, especially since the 1960s and in the wake of the 2007-8 crisis, to obtain affordable or social housing expanding participation and empowerment for affected groups (Girbés-Peco *et al.*, 2020), and recently involved in the overall housing strategy designed and implemented by Barcelona Municipality[21]. Civic collaboration in the form of public community partnerships has become a fundamental ingredient of the new approach of the Municipality on housing policy. In 2021 the City Council established a formal agreement[22] with cooperatives and foundations with the aim to build 1000 units in 10 years on municipal land based on long-term lease. These organizations are in part those emerged since 2011 when the housing crisis hit Catalonia and supported "from coordinated networks of supporting organisations and municipal policy-making" (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022, 150). Many of them, as the well-known La Borda housing cooperative[23], lay their foundations on participatory processes and are strongly oriented towards self-organisation and self-management. As the opportunities to replicate and scale-up this cooperative model increase with the strong engagement of the City in shaping housing policies, professional instigators and coaching organizations have started to provide assistance in the development and architectural design of the buildings and in the following steps (e.g., improving group skills and participatory strategies, helping residents organize to take decisions together on their housing resources).

The case of Barcelona is emblematic[24] of an approach to collaborative housing which aims at keeping together affordability and decommodification of housing goals on the one hand, and the promotion of inhabitants' self-organization on the other. Scholars who study housing as commons (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022; Balmer and Bernet, 2015) warn that the approach to collaborative housing which focuses on residents' participation

[20] However, as we have seen, also what seems to be just a matter of organization and cost-efficiency is supported by and reinforce common meanings and cultural conceptions (Fligstein, 2008).

[21] In the perspective of new institutionalisms (although in their different versions), the attempt of Barcelona City Council to design a new overall housing strategy can be seen as the redefinition of housing field, started by social movements, with the objective to produce a new local social order characterized by different relations between groups with different resources and power (Fligstein, 2008). I will not go further in the analysis of this specific case study. However, I will gather some elements of this perspective later in my research.

[22] ESAL – Framework Agreement with Non-for-profit providers.

[23] For the analysis of La Borda democratic organization, see Girbés-Peco *et al.*, 2020.

[24] Although it is not the only one (for other experiences see for example Griffith *et al.*, 2022; Balmer and Bernet, 2015).

(Czischke, 2018; Czischke and Huisman, 2018; Fromm 2012) risks to overlook "the market and property relations in which specific tenures and housing forms are embedded" (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022, 155). This underestimation can lead to include in the large spectrum of collaborative housing also commodified forms of housing, thus undermining its contribution in solving the contemporary "affordability crisis" (Wetzstein, 2017 quoted in Peverini, 2021, 849). Besides the participating feature of such housing process, the latter approach stresses also the collaborative nature of the relations set up in such housing forms, concerning different subjects and tasks: "among its residents in the way the estate is managed, financed, or used" (Griffith *et al.*, 2022, 4); amongst (future) residents, and between them and external actors and/or stakeholders (Czischke *et al.*, 2020). However, in the practice, relations develop through both collaboration and conflict, especially if we speak about a "fundamental political issue" (Balmer and Bernet, 2015, 178) as housing is (Balmer and Bernet, 2015, 178). If we do not look at the material and power relations that underpin collaborative housing projects, partnerships, and relationships, "collaboration remains a suggestive notion" (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022, 155). In this frame, for example, it is possible to analyse the extent to which each collaborative housing project/program confirms or produces lines of exclusion or, on the contrary, contributes to redistribute resources and respond to wider social claims. In fact, one shared concern about these types of housing provision is related to insularity (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022) or enclaving (Griffith *et al.*, 2022), when lines of separation appear between insiders and outsiders and the former gain privileges against the latter. Insularity can also refer to the niche risk of this type of collective projects, which require "a rather specific lifestyle and cultural capital" (Balmer and Bernet, 2015, 192).

Both these points of attention brought into the discussion on collaborative housing by commons-oriented approaches are key to study to what extent the projects pursue affordability and social inclusion objectives, aside from the declared policy aims. Griffith *et al.* (2022) add one more element to take into consideration for this kind of analysis, i.e., values. The motivations of the collective living (both the provider's and the residents', both explicit and implicit) display in the design, in the eligibility criteria and in the collective organization. In these different frameworks, it is necessary to look at the practices to understand how collaboration works. Collaboration practices enacted by residents and housing professionals are many and varied. Also, the values inspiring and shared by the dwellers can be very different and lead to different results in the daily life of the housing estates (Griffith *et al.*, 2022). This is the point where my research questions step in. Through the analysis of two case studies, I look at how collaboration unfold in the practices, and I outline what kinds of collaborative relationships develop within two social mix housing initiatives where reciprocal interactions are supported through the allocation to active residents. Before going deeper in the research objects and methodology (which I do in the third chapter), I hereafter present an insight into the possible understandings and implications of collaboration in public and housing policies.

1.2.1 Collaboration

Collaboration is about how things are done together and what shapes relationships take on. Referring specifically to housing, Czischke *et al.* (2020, 6) argue that "the term collaboration stands for coordinated action towards a common purpose". Coordinated means both well organized and arranged by the subjects

involved in completing a task (both residents, and external actors and/or stakeholders). In this definition, the authors go further: collaboration is not just a way to do practical work. Collaboration implies sharing a common goal before acting practically. The purpose of collaboration "can span both physical features (e.g., living together, sharing facilities and collective property) to political values and social practices" (Griffith *et al.*, 2022, 5). The goal can be defined either by subjects (individual or group/institution) external to the group of users (e.g., through policy design or housing management) or by the group itself. Or, most likely, it comes out from the interaction of the two. And so, it is not fixed forever, rather it is subject to redefinitions and rearrangements. This perspective implies "a degree of internal cohesion among the dwellers which […] is built around common values" (Griffith *et al.*, 2022, 5). Residents are seen as self-conscious and aware of the values they have and bring in the process. These common values can be shared by residents before they start a collaborative housing experience and, in this case, they are the reasons why they come together. Housing can be a means to and a field where they can put those values into practice. This is the case of co-housing and ecologically sustainable communities inspired by imaginaries of commoning and degrowth (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022). The ways in which collaboration unfold in the daily life of the housing estates vary according to the different values promoted, but also within the same set of beliefs.

This perspective seems to me to be too deterministic, thus undermining the heuristic value of studying collaborative practices. In a public action perspective, what it is worth looking at is how action and interaction actually work and the possible misalignments between practice and policy design. In these spaces of interpretation, meanings, norms, and resource distribution can be confirmed, reinforced, or questioned. As Fromm (2012) remarks "collaboration is first a process, not a product" (388) nor, I would add, a set of practical tools[25]. The understanding of collaboration as a process is at the basis of the idea of housing management as a continuous and proactive work on socially mixed communities (neighbourhoods/housing estates) and key for their being socially sustainable (Manzi, 2010). Especially as regards vulnerable groups, ongoing support is seen to be often required to enable and sustain collaborate living over time (Fromm, 2012). In this perspective, the processual feature of collaboration in housing seems to lay exclusively on a time dimension: if residents' involvement starts in the housing development phase, it will be more likely that they will be engaged in the life and management of their houses and more concerned with the surrounding neighbourhood. As Fromm (2012) warns: "Not involving the residents in the development process […] can result in less use of the common space" (389).

To avoid a too much focused perspective on the single project or on practical activities or purposes to be achieved, it is useful to look at collaborative housing initiatives within the wider policy contexts where they are embedded and developed. This point of view could help to place promoted collaboration in the wider process of policy making at the territorial scale taken into consideration for the analysis. As regards housing

[25] Collaboration risks to be reduced to the use of certain technical tools and procedures and to focus on physical features, especially in housing domain. However, policy instruments are not neutral. Every instrument is embedded in cognitive frames and has its normative constraints. Overlooking these aspects and the role of interests and values at stake in collaborative processes contributes to de-politicization of policies and practices (Busso, 2017), as it has happened in some cases for the implementation of participation in public policies (Caselli and Polizzi in Bifulco and Mozzana, 2022),

policies, this task is even more important because the promotion of collaboration seems to be more oriented and related to the definition of specific projects rather than to policy making (with differences between national and local contexts). As we have already seen, generally speaking the re(emergence) of collaborative housing is embedded in the changing scenario of welfare systems. The active resident is the preeminent figure in collaborative housing projects. It is not always the case that (future) residents of collaborative housing are already resourceful (cfr. 1.2.1) when they decide or are selected to join such initiatives. However, they must be committed and ready to be involved in collaborative living.

Sennett (2012) defines cooperation[26] "as an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounters" (5) because through mutual support they can accomplish what they cannot do alone. He underlines the collective dimension of doing things to reach goals which need to share resources (material, cognitive, relational). According to the author, "cooperation is embedded in our genes" (ix), so everyone is potentially able to share with others in conducing everyday life. This ability needs to be practiced not to remain stuck in individuals. Moreover, it is not a fixed feature of human relationships. Cooperation is practiced in the interactions with others. Most contemporary sociology describes our societies as characterised by increasing individualism, isolation, and lack of social cohesion (Ambrosini, 2005). A consequence to this analysis could be that contemporary societies need occasions and spaces where social interactions are promoted, and there cooperation can be trained. Collaborative housing seems to respond to this need to create grounds where cooperative skills can be employed. Involving residents in meeting on how to collaborate is identified by some authors and housing practitioners as key to positively impact on residents' participation and the use of common space (Fromm, 2012). However, to what extent these kinds of projects contribute to reactivate and improve this genetic inheritance through practices of sharing and participation in housing with the more general purpose to counteract to wider societal problems[27] is a matter of study and depend on the specific features and conditions of the initiatives, of the contexts and of the interactions triggered by housing proximity as well as the connections between different policy layers and territorial scales. My aim is to contribute to these issues through the in-depth analysis of two cases where collaborative relationships between residents are differently designed and practiced. In both the cases social mix is used to foster social cohesion in multi-problematic public housing neighbourhoods. The mix is created at block level: resourceful young tenants live close to sitting public housing tenants and they are required to engage in social oriented activities in favour of their neighbours. The diversity between these two socially constructed categories is mainly connected to age, personal and social skills and capitals, and lifestyles and it is supposed to be a driver of social interaction and possibly mutual help and solidarity. For this reason, in the following section, I discuss a specific type of collaboration that is practiced in socially diverse contexts.

[26] Sennett's reasoning on cooperation contains analytical elements which are interesting to study urban contexts characterised by (or designed through) diversity. In particular, he outlines a specific form of cooperation he calls hard cooperation, which is practiced in socially diverse contexts (of which social mix housing initiatives are part).

[27] As Sennett himself warns (2004, 2012), cooperation cannot solve wider social problems, e.g., individualism which is fostered by institutional forces.

1.2.2 Collaboration in diversity

Societies, and especially cities, are characterised by increasing diversity (Sennett, 2020; Brokking *et al.*, 2017; Czischke, 2009). Migration is not the only factor. Diversity goes beyond migration: families have become more differentiated, and we assist to a pluralization of attitudes and lifestyles (Costarelli, 2017). Living together in contemporary urban contexts is a complex task. At the same time, "social differentiation without exclusion" (Balmer and Bernet, 2015, 183) is the distinctive quality of the urban. This complexity can produce, and do produce, forms of tribalism that oppose us and the others. In these cases, cooperation is practiced within homogeneous groups, while the interaction between heterogeneous groups or individuals can take on destructive forms (Sennett, 2012). To counteract these tendencies and risks at the micro level of housing estates and neighbourhoods, housing projects are often socially engineered and controlled through allocation and management procedures. As we have already discussed, through the promotion of appropriate and adequate role models, policy makers and practitioners try to keep diversity and conflicts under control. If both collaboration and activation are employed and encouraged just as means for more efficient and effective management of policies and procedures (and housing estates), then what is supported are simplified social interactions which are disconnected from the complexity of the social world and not useful to practice those skills essential to navigate this complexity. In such conditions, the potentialities of citizens' engagement in promoting "inclusive relationships among individuals, especially those that are neglected" (Marques *et al.*, 2018) with the aim of social change weaken. Therefore, the question is how to promote cooperation in a more open version, giving space to complexity (and conflict). According to Sennett's proposal (2012), hard cooperation, the type of cooperation that is practiced in socially diverse contexts through empathy, requires those "skills to deal with intractable differences" (Sennett, 2012, 9). Empathy here is intended not as the ability to identify with others, rather as the ability to get curious of the others' points of view. In giving space to others to express, everyone acquires more self-consciousness. So, what is needed is creating spaces and setting conditions within which collaborative skills can be practiced. According to Sennett (2012), an example of such a context is the modern factory which worked as a stable institution within which rules and regulations were set and cooperative relationships could unfold. The flexibilization of the labour market has induced shorter permanencies in the same job positions, so the attachment to the working place and to its organization has decreased and workers are generally less engaged with their colleagues. In his study on cooperation and its daily practices, Sennett focuses on the relationships between individuals and on the development of their individual collaborative skills, overlooking the collective dimension of cooperative action with a political perspective. The issues of the unequal social and territorial distribution of collective action capabilities and the possible role of public policies in the redistribution of such resources is for example brought to attention in some studies of Barcelona and the Catalan context (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022; Blanco and Nel, 2017) concerning housing and neighbourhoods. In these cases, social practices of cooperation and capacities for collective action (Bifulco, 2017) are studied in relation to the attempts to counteract societal and urban growing inequalities. What I am interested in is instead how these kinds of skills and resources act in new welfare arrangements based on activation and self-responsabilisation: which are the exclusionary risks they trigger, how they

challenge citizenship through the conditional access to welfare services and what kind of relations they contribute to in contexts of everyday life.

1.3 The role of allocation strategies in the making of the active and collaborative resident

In this section I develop the link between collaborative housing and activation through the means of housing allocation systems and selection criteria. This choice is based on the fundamental role that allocation processes play in the redistributive strategies of welfare (Ferreri and Vidal, 2022) and on the development of proactive housing management strategies (Manzi, 2010), an example of which are the new forms of social mix I discussed in 1.2.1, which are the objects of my study. Boelhouwer (1999) includes housing allocation within the social aspects of housing management, which are defined as "the decisions and activities, which are related to providing housing services and are aimed at stabilising and/or improving the social living environment" (Adrianow, 1993, quoted in Boelhouwer, 1999, 230). The relations among residents and between them and external actors and/or stakeholders (including housing providers and managers) are considered ingredients of the social living environment. In this perspective, allocation choices contribute to stabilising and/or improving the living context as they influence who the residents will be. This definition evokes "notions of control and surveillance" (Balmer and Bernet, 2015, 187-188) and can have disciplining implications, which have been characterising some forms of welfare over time.

Besides the traditional entitlements based on income and need (Pittini, 2012), other criteria can be introduced to identify specific target groups (e.g., youths, elderly, etc.) or to give priority to certain people or conditions once the application has been made, so in the selection phase. The reasons supporting the use of additional allocation criteria can be linked to social mix goals and/or to the choice to address specific local housing needs and gaps in local housing markets (Pittini, 2012). In more market-oriented models of social housing, allocation criteria can be used also as tools to filtering up tenants to contribute to the financial sustainability of housing projects managed by private organizations (Belotti, 2016). The resulting residents' profile comes out from the interaction between allocation and selection processes and the typology of the housing stock available (e.g., stock, and flat size, equipment of the provision, location). Allocation strategy is one of the criteria usually used to classify social housing provision. According to the overall strategy of housing policy and with the definition of the target group(s), two approaches are usually identified: the universalistic model and the target approach (Czischke, 2009). In the first case, the goal of social housing policy is to guarantee the access to affordable housing to the whole population. The public sector has the main responsibility to provide affordable housing through both direct provision and regulating the market. In the second case, instead, social housing is dedicated to those households whose housing needs cannot be answered by the market. Within this second category, two sub-models are usually identified: the generalist and the residual ones. In the latter, social housing is intended for the most disadvantaged (Poggio, 2005). In these cases, income ceilings are set at significantly low levels (e.g., in Italy), while in the universalistic model access to social housing is ideally open to everyone (e.g., in Denmark) (Pittini, 2012). In this case, it is usually the characteristics of the housing stock (mainly the size of the dwellings and cost of housing) that influence and define who asks for and lives in social housing.

As Pittini already underlined in 2012, "there is a general trend [in Europe] towards restricting the provision of social housing by defining stricter categories of beneficiaries" (33). Within this tendency in a context of scarcity of public resources for welfare and housing especially, the quest for activation works as a further mechanism of selection of receivers to gain access to social and affordable housing in many contexts and projects. As we have already discussed (cfr. 1.2.1), the figure of the active resident is socially constructed, and their characteristics concern personal attitudes and behaviours. Thus, traditional allocation criteria need to be adapted[28] to assess and evaluate subjective traits (skills, commitment, and attitude) in the process of selection. The definition of the ways to assess such personal requirements draws on the goals attributed to the active residents' housing allocation. As in this policy framework housing is allocated to resourceful, responsible, and committed (future) residents to boost social interaction and promote collaborative relationships, social housing landlords and managers use previous experiences of activation in other contexts (e.g., affiliation to voluntary organizations, informal engagement with previous neighbours) as indicators of the personal features they are looking for and they value. The assessment is often performed through questionnaires or interviews with the housing managers. Two concerns emerge from this procedure. First, the design of the assessment process risks validating the predefined image of the active resident that policy makers and housing managers have in mind, leaving little space for the redefinition of this social category in progress. The contextual conditions within which collaboration and activation are practiced in these kinds of projects can be very different from the applicants' previous experiences. The risk is to consider their personal characteristics as fixed personal traits which can be practiced and bring to the same results regardless of the fields, the scopes, and the meanings within which they unfold. According to Sennett (2012), people need to be left free to interact to let cooperative skills to emerge and flourish. However, the settings within which relations develop is not neutral. They both influence and are changed by the ways in which people interact. This observation does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that settings have to be socially engineered and taken under control to increase the chances to develop cooperation between neighbours. In the same way, cooperation is not always the same. So, what needs to be analysed is how cooperation unfold in the practices within specific policy frameworks.

Second, those assessment tools involve some degrees of discretion (Saruis, 2018) practiced by the workers who are in charge of the selection of active residents. According to the street-level perspective, the daily practices of front-line workers contribute to distribute welfare benefits and sanctions (Lipsky, 1980). In this specific case, mechanisms of conditionality and activation play together with discretion in allocation processes, risking producing new exclusionary lines in the access to affordable housing (Belotti and Caselli, 2016; Costarelli *et al.*, 2020).

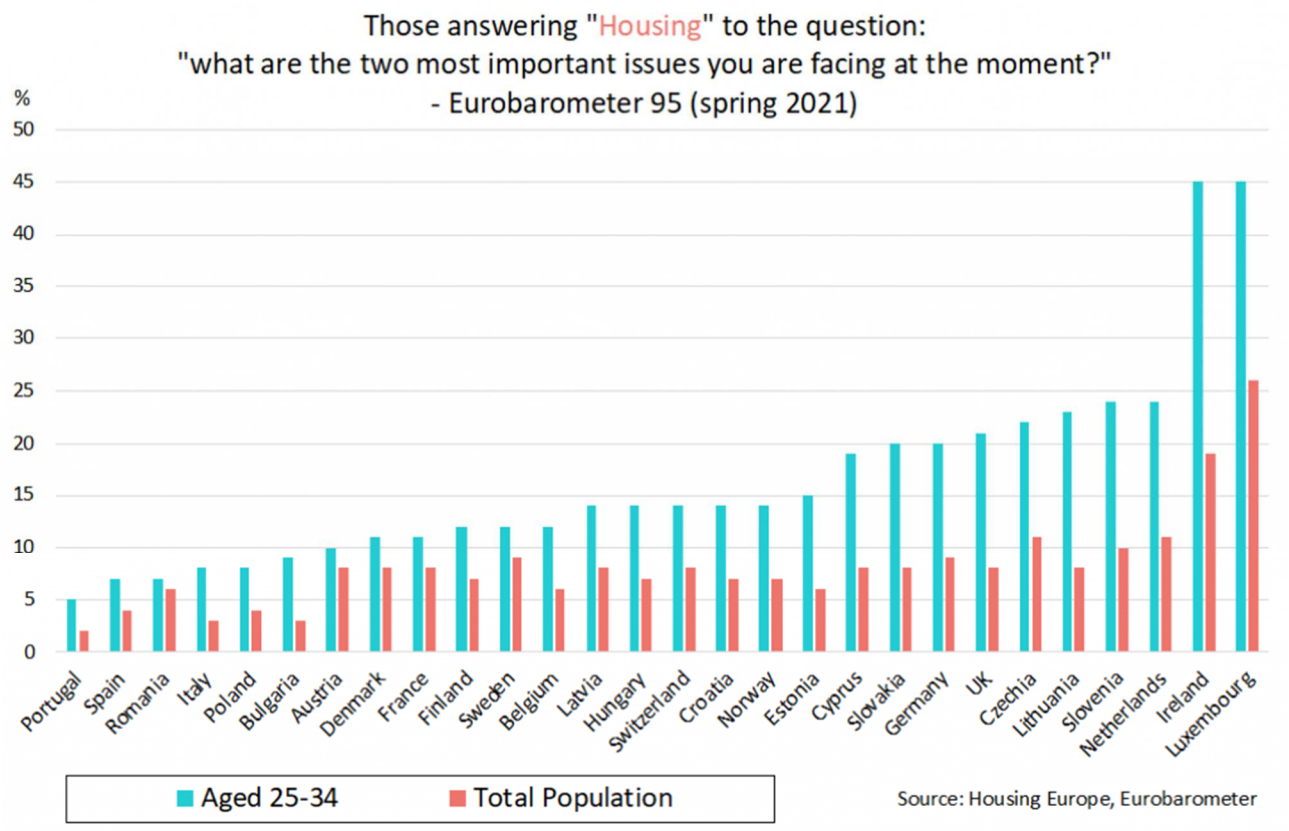
In the following chapter, I introduce a specific category which is often involved in activating housing policies, i.e., the youths. On the one hand, the exacerbation of young people's housing problems in many countries has brought their housing experiences to become a contemporary global concern (Mackie, 2016). On the other, young people tend to have "few economic resources but strong social and human capital" (Costarelli *et al.*,

[28] More often traditional allocation criteria are accompanied by further requirements which aim to assess personal features. They are usually used in the second phase of the selection process.

2020, 2), so they are more often the target of these policies based on activation principles. First, I discuss the conditions of contemporary housing problems experienced by the youths in many European countries. After that, I present some specificities of the Italian context, where my case studies are embedded.

2. Housing and young people

The housing experiences of young people has globally emerged as a concern, following the exacerbation of young people's housing problems in many countries (Mackie, 2016). According to the Eurobarometer[29] 95 survey (2021), today young Europeans are widely worried about housing. This data is part of a wider concern to find adequate housing at a reasonable price expressed by 56.2% of people questioned in 2019 as part of a survey on quality of life in European cities (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021).



Graph 1. Excerpt from the Eurobarometer 95 survey. Source: Housing Europe.

Indeed, housing is one of the welfare state policy fields most affected by the ever-growing retrenchment of the state under the influence of neoliberal politics (Costarelli *et al.*, 2019b). Since the early 1980s, many Western countries have been witnessing a decline in the public provision of social services and in the investment in public infrastructures following the massive cutbacks in public funding. Moreover, the increasing commodification and financialization of housing in a context of growing socio-economic inequalities, increasing migration, and ageing of population have been posing new challenges to housing policies. These phenomena have brought to the expansion of unmet social and housing needs (Brokking *et al.*, 2017). On the one hand, there are larger numbers of families and individuals on the waiting lists for social and public housing (Brokking *et al.*, 2017) vis-à-vis a shrinking of the size of the social housing sector in most European countries

[29] Eurobarometer surveys are opinion surveys which address a wide range of topics, for example: EU enlargement, the social situation, health, culture, information technology, the environment, the euro, or defence issues.

(Pittini, 2012). The situation is not the same in all countries[30], but in the face of an increase in precariousness and poverty, the overall stock of social housing has decreased in most OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries since 2010, further reducing the supply of affordable housing for low-income households (Lomonaco and Chiaro, 2022). On the other hand, the demand for affordable housing involves new social categories, e.g., lower middle-class income, young people, and more recently asylum seekers (Costarelli *et al.*, 2019b; Czischke, 2009; Mugnano, 2017). The Covid-19 pandemic at the beginning of 2020 further affected vulnerable people and broadened the problem of housing affordability. According to the Housing Europe Observatory (2022), house prices and rents have "further accelerated and current prices are higher than at the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008" (7). This growth clearly impacts on housing affordability and accessibility (Sendi, 2011), as well as the increase in living costs due to the rise of the inflation rate in the EU since the beginning of 2021[31].

In this framework, young generations have gained global political and academic attention. The growing risks of unemployment and the flexibilisation of the labour market have significantly affected younger generations (Housing Europe, 2021). Job flexibility often leads to more unstable and low-paid employments, thus affecting the access to homeownership. However, it also brings about more temporary housing needs for young people, who are more likely to need to live in another city for the duration of a master program, an internship, a short-term job contract. Besides, systems of social protection are not very attentive to the changing life conditions and housing needs of the younger generations, especially in Southern European countries (Mugnano *et al.*, 2021). Thus, young people, mainly those with scarce and volatile economic resources and weak parental support, are being confined to private tenure, which is often more expensive, selective, and low-quality, experiencing precarious and often undesired housing conditions (Mugnano *et al.*, 2021; Housing Europe Observatory, 2018; Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2016). In these circumstances, the economic support of parents is of paramount importance to access housing, thus exacerbating inequalities amongst young people on the one hand and influencing their transition into independent living on the other (Mackie, 2016; Sicet, 2011). However, the situation is not homogeneous between countries. "Young people are facing very different situations, realities and experiences" (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021, 31), also within the same country. Different contextual factors impact for example on the age in which they leave the family home, like the range of measures of social support[32] available which mitigates the influence of the original collocation in the class structure on reaching housing autonomy.

Against this backdrop, various social housing providers across Europe are experimenting with the redefinition of allocation criteria and tenancy conditions to increase the opportunities for young people to access affordable housing (https://www.housingeurope.eu/blog-1739/tackling-youth-housing-exclusion-houses-in-return-for-

[30] For example, "Austria, France and Denmark […] have sustained their level of social housing production" (Pittini, 2012, 24). Recently EU resources from Resilience and Recovery Funds have been thought and used by some housing providers to increase and improve the stock, even if the growth in construction costs and in project financing have been causing delays and interruptions (Housing Europe, 2023).

[31] The war between Russia and Ukraine has impacted on housing costs too, on those related to energy provision.

[32] Where there are many and they are structured and integrated, e.g. in Denmark, the proportion of young people living in their family home is lower than in other countries, typically those in Southern Europe.

community-involvement, January 12th 2024). These strategies are embedded in processes of policy targeting and individualization (Bifulco, 2017) which sustain the social construction of specific socio-economic groups as policy targets who need tailored answers to their problems. However, in most cases, the widening of social vulnerability and the emergence of new needs do not correspond to the increasing of resources for social protection (in this case, houses), rather to the distribution of the same resources in different ways. This is the case, for example, of those projects where social mix is promoted through the allocation of flats to young and resourceful tenants in public housing neighbourhoods (cfr. 4.2).

In the current chapter I present the evolution of youths' life conditions in Europe, focussing on their increasing job difficulties. Growing unemployment and job insecurity negatively impact on young people's housing autonomy. My argument is that the general trend of a delayed exit from the family home recorded in all European countries affects both the definition of autonomy and of youth.

2.1 Young people in Europe

According to statistical data and analysis at the European level (Eurostat, 2022, 2015; Unt *et al.*, 2021), two main phenomena regarding young people have emerged in recent years: the continuous decreasing of the share of youth in the overall population and the growth of the unemployment rate among them. The EU is characterised by an ageing process that has been observed in many industrialised societies where people over 65 have been increasing in numbers, mainly due to growing life expectancy[33]. According to Eurostat (2022), the share of young people[34] in the population was 18.4% in 2010 and changed to 16.5% in 2020. Projections speak of a further reduction, bringing the value to 14.9% by 2052. However, the situation varies between Member States. According to 2014 data, Italy, together with Germany, recorded the lowest share of children and young people compared to the 33.3% registered in the overall European population.

As regards the second factor, the unemployment rate of young people in the EU has increased in the past few years, especially since the 2008 financial and economic crisis (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021; Unt *et al.*, 2021). In 2013, 23 % of the EU's labour force in the 15–24 age group and 15 % of its labour force in the 25–29 age group were unemployed. The Covid-19 pandemic had further impacted on labour markets across the world. For the EU, the youth employment rate fell 2.3 percentage points between 2019 and 2020 but recovered some of these losses in 2021. In the same year the unemployment rate of those aged 15–29 years was 13.0%[35]. Long-term unemployment in particular is of great concern for policymakers. In the EU-28 the percentage of young people who were long-term unemployed has steadily grown after the financial and economic crisis. A further concern regarding youth's social inclusion is the proportion of those neither in employment nor in education and training (the so-called NEET): in 2021, 13.1% of young people aged 15-29 years in the EU were in this condition. This phenomenon can also be explained by the increasing difficulty to

[33] The increase in number is due to growing life expectancy, while the growth in share is due to the combined effect of higher life expectancy and drop in births.

[34] In this specific Eurostat report, youth are referred to as people aged 15-29. As we will see in the discussion, this category of population is not always defined in the same way, both in statistical analysis and policy design.

[35] It must be considered that among this group some people are likely to be still in education. For example, in 2013 in the 15–19 age group the majority of young people were in education.

get a job by many young people leaving education. On the other hand, "the general process of expansion in education in recent decades has had the effect of postponing entry into the labour market and subsequent stabilisation" (Unt *et al.* 2021, 167). This, together with employment flexibilization, also brings about more temporary housing needs for young people.

In this frame, the issue of youth unemployment is a problem for the entire EU, especially for those countries that were hardest hit by the 2008 GFC (Eurostat, 2015). Besides unemployment, since the widespread deregulation of the labour market, the younger age group has been experiencing increasing job insecurity. Job uncertainty can be viewed also through the diffusion of temporary work and involuntary part-time. Both the contracts are types of agreement young people usually come across when entering the labour market. Temporary work contracts were more widespread in the younger age group: in 2013, 43 % of the people aged 15–24 and 22 % of the people aged 25–29 was employed under temporary work contracts in the EU — a pattern which can be observed in all EU Member States. Part-time work is also more widespread in the younger age group. Part-time employment is not always a matter of personal choice — some people may be working part-time because they cannot find a full-time job. From 2007 to 2013, the share of involuntary part-time employees has generally increased in all EU Member States (Eurostat, 2015). Job uncertainty is experienced by younger generations not just when entering the labour market: a great risk for them is to remain entrapped in these types of precarious conditions during their working life (Poggio, 2013).

Young people are also the age group which is more at risk of poverty or social exclusion[36]: in 2021 one quarter (25.3 %) of them was in this condition, while for people of all ages the share was lower, at just over one fifth (21.7 %). This index embraces a wider range of conditions than those related to employment and the labour market. In that, it strengthens the frame of vulnerability factors which characterise the condition of young adults in Europe today.

Clearly, as Eurostat statistics and reports show, there are other indicators and numbers that describe being young in Europe today. However, I decided to focus largely on the youth's position in the labour market because labour market insecurity (i.e., unemployment and non-standard forms of employment) affects housing autonomy[37] (Unt *et al.*, 2021; Musumeci and Bertolini, 2020; Poggio, 2013), where gaining "housing autonomy refers to leaving one's home of origin" (Unt *et al.*, 166). Particularly for people aged 25–29, access to the labour market is essential for entering independent life (Eurostat, 2015). Both unemployment and housing exclusion negatively impact on young people's transition to independence (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021).

[36] "At risk of poverty or social exclusion, abbreviated as AROPE, corresponds to the sum of persons who are either at risk of poverty, or severely materially and socially deprived or living in a household with a very low work intensity. […] The AROPE rate is the share of the total population which is at risk of poverty or social exclusion" (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:At_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion_(AROPE), January 12th 2024).

[37] According to another research perspective, the analysis of the delay in the transition to adulthood mainly focuses on changes in social norms and in individuals' capabilities (Poggio, 2013). Generally speaking, younger generations have been experiencing more freedom, even while living with their parents.

The conditions I have discussed here contribute to the redefinition of young people's autonomy and their transition path to adulthood and, consequently, of youth itself. These processes are influenced by policies and contribute to inform them.

2.1.1 Youth and autonomy: no clear-cut definitions

The general trend of a delayed exit from the family home[38] recorded in all European countries (Housing Europe Observatory, 2018) affects both the definition of autonomy and of youth. "According to traditional theories of transition to adulthood, leaving the parental home is always considered a step towards becoming an adult" (Unt *et al.*, 2021, 193). If this step is delayed, what can happen is a postponement of adulthood and/or a redefinition of the steps which mark this process. In their study on the transition to adult life in Germany, Poland, and Italy, Musumeci and Bertolini (2020) refer to autonomy as implying the skill to take decisions on your own's life and to deal with consequences. Reaching this level of autonomy is associated with adulthood. In the past, economic and housing autonomy were considered both preconditions to autonomous decision making and life domains where the capability to take on your own responsibilities unfolds. Moreover, these two steps often corresponded. However, this is not the case anymore or, at least, this is not the only one possible path of transition. Paths have become more fragmented, varied, and flexible, and transition more diluted and less standardised[39] (Musumeci and Bertolini, 2020; Piacenza, 2018).

Apart from these general trends, the definition of autonomy and adulthood is sensible to cultural and social norms and changes, and it is embedded in institutional and policy contexts. In the above-mentioned research, an interesting result is that in Italy the youth try to cope with the constraints to economic and housing autonomy they experience by redefining their spaces and opportunities for autonomous decision making and planning. Even if they still cohabit in their family's house, they manage to find spaces of decision for themselves and their life. However, the situation of uncertainty they live influences the time span of their plan, in favour of short-term prospect on their life.

From the point of view of policies, in recent years different actors have been calling for a change in the ways young people's housing needs are typically addressed. As already pointed out, the youth are mainly in the private rental sector and they usually are not a priority target in social housing, which mainly targets the most vulnerable families (Housing Europe Observatory, 2018). Against this backdrop, many organizations are experimenting with innovative solutions to provide more affordable housing for young people. These attempts concern different aspects of policy definition and implementation (governance, financing, target definition, features of the provision, etc.). Two main aspects are allocation criteria and tenancy conditions (cfr. 1.3). Their redefinition can be seen as one of the strategies used to increase the opportunities for young people to access social and affordable housing (https://www.housingeurope.eu/blog-1739/tackling-youth-housing-exclusion-houses-in-return-for-community-involvement, January 12th 2024). This is for example the case of some new

[38] See 2.1.2.

[39] Another phenomenon increasingly recorded among youth is what is called the "boomerang effect" (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021, 36). Even if they have managed to move from their parents' home once, they can be forced to go back in case they face challenges and problems which undermine their capacity to afford autonomous living (Housing Europe Observatory, 2018).

projects inspired by the figure of the active resident discussed in 1.1.3. "Young people with few economic resources but strong social and human capital" (Costarelli *et al.*, 2020; 2) are often the target of these kinds of projects which use specific criteria and policy tools to address the lack of affordable housing for young people. In some cases, they provide short-term and affordable housing solution to young people who, in turn, engage in community work in vulnerable neighbourhoods. Thus, young active residents can access affordable housing if they fulfil specific requirements and formally commit to contribute to the communities' well-being. Both the definition of the target age group and of the length of the tenure vary according to the project or policy considered. Beneficiaries can be identified in diverse ways concerning age[40] and economic conditions. This variability reflects both the project features and conditions and more generally the fact that the "youth is not a homogeneous category with specific and 'static' characteristics" (Housing Europe Observatory, 2018, 3). Institutions working at European level[41] usually refer to the youth as people aged maximum 29. However, especially in those countries like Italy where young people leave their parental home later on average, policies need to adjust the official definitions to the contextual conditions to be more effective. More managerial considerations can also play a role. The challenging conditions proposed by these kinds of projects (living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods to bring in positive impacts, mixing with diverse people and families, sharing housing or other spaces, etc.) sometimes led practitioners to opt in favour of more skilled and motivated young people, often searched for in the upper age range. The same happens with the definition of the economic requirements necessary to access such provisions. On the one hand, their heterogeneity recalls the "diversity of situations in terms of professional life and training: there are students (with or without a scholarship), those in professional training (stage, apprenticeship, etc), those in paid jobs with different level of employment precariousness (interim, part time, short term or long terms contracts), young people who are unemployed and may or may not be looking for a job" (Housing Europe Observatory, 2018, 3). On the other hand, they can be influenced by the conditions established by funding institutions and/or by budgetary reasons, especially in more market-oriented housing systems.

Speaking about the same housing initiatives based on activation, which are the object of my research, autonomy is mainly referred to as housing autonomy. The main problem they address is to support the exit of the youth from the parental home through the provision of below the market rents. However, the types and the length of the solutions provided are varied: from single and double rooms in shared apartments to single mini flats scattered in different buildings. All flats and rooms are furnished and equipped with the necessary materials as the tenancy is always temporary (spanning from 6 months to 4 years). However, the selection of a type of provision instead of another can be affected both by personal conditions and policy tools rather than being simply a choice based on one's needs and preferences. For example, the lower cost of a shared solution can push people with less disposable income or economic resources to apply for a cohabitation, even if it is not the most suitable solution for them (this is for example the case of young care leavers who would probably

[40] For example, the maximum age can vary from 30 to 35 according to different contextual and policy variables.
[41] For example, FEANTSA and Housing Europe reports.

prefer to have their own private space after long lasting collective living). Or the condition of housing emergency of the most vulnerable can push them to accept a highly temporary solution, even if they have few opportunities to move after the due date, just because they have no other chance. Or again the allocation criteria and mechanisms can bring to the selection of the most equipped with both economic and relational resources (Ascoli and Bronzini, 2018). These possible pitfalls influence the kinds of autonomy promoted by such policies and sometimes risk confirming rather than improving the initial problematic situation they aim to address. The duration of the tenancy is often linked to the length of the job contract (temporary) or of the training/study experience. In Italy this condition derives from the limits set by the national rent law (L. 431/1998[42]) which regulates also temporary rent contracts. From one point of view, the possibility to have a temporary rent contract (instead of the long-term traditional one) under some specific circumstances have been and still is presented as (and sometimes indeed is) an opportunity to respond to mobility and more flexible needs, often attributed to the youth in general. However, as the report by FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre (2021) clearly states, flexible rental contracts can have adverse effects on young people's housing autonomy in different ways. Especially in urban contexts, where rents are high and the stock is under stress, flexibility risks to turn into further precariousness, negatively affecting the youth's overall autonomy, also from a psychological point of view. Autonomy takes on the form of short-term independence, because of the limitations and conditions defined by policies and interventions.

Despite the main reference to housing independence, housing policies based on young people's activation often refer also to other aspects of youth's autonomy. For example, they often promote the housing solutions they offer to the youth also as an opportunity to test and improve their relational skills. Autonomy becomes therefore a competence young people can enhance through voluntary work in the neighbourhood according to a pedagogical approach (Ascoli and Bronzini, 2018) that is coherent with the Social Investment paradigm in social policies (cfr. 1.1).

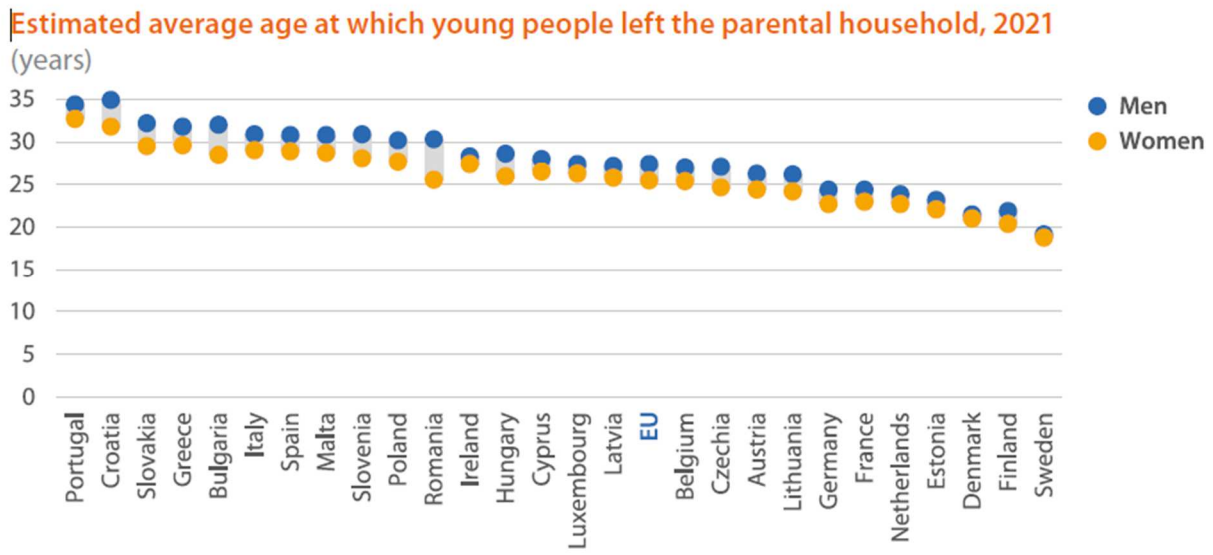
In the following section I elaborate on the concept of housing autonomy and discuss the factors which facilitate or hinder it.

2.1.2 Young people and housing autonomy

Between 2000 and 2004, there was a rapid increase in the average age at which young people tended to leave the parental home: it increased by six years for young men (from 21 to 27 years old) and by five years for young women (from 20 to the average age for leaving the parental 25 years old). In the last of 10 years, the average age of young people leaving their parental home increased in 14 EU countries

[42] The rent law reform in 1998 liberalized the private rental sector in Italy (Poggio and Boreiko, 2018). According to the new law (431/1998), landlords can choose between two options. The first lets landlords set the rent according to free market values and establishes the length of the rent contract in 8 years (4+4), while the second option (*canone concordato*) caps rent prices in turn for a shorter contract length (3+2 years) and tax incentives for landlords. Maximum rent limits are calculated according to parameters agreed upon by the state, owners' organizations and tenants unions. The national format is then adapted at local level in those territorial contexts identified as under higher housing stress (*comuni ad alta tensione abitativa*) (Costarelli *et al.*, 2022). However, the second option is not always discretionary. The conditions of *canone concordato* are compulsory in the case of temporary rent contracts, which can be stipulated for shorter time than the standard, only to respond to specific needs of landlords and tenants (e.g., work mobility or study reasons) (Bargelli and Bianchi, 2018).

(https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/w/ddn-20230904-1, visited March 20th, 2024). In 2021, the estimated average age at which young people stopped living with one or more of their parents was 26.5 years (Eurostat, 2022).



Graph 2. Estimated average age of young people leaving the parental household. Source: Eurostat 2022.

Accessing independence requires leaving the family home (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021). Thus, there has been a general postponement of material and tenure independence by young people. On average, almost half of young people aged between 18 and 34 in the EU lives at home with their parents but the share decreases significantly with age in most countries. The situation is not homogeneous in all Member States. While very few young people live in the parental home in Nordic countries, this is very common in most Southern and Central-Eastern European countries, where family and social networks provide material and emotional support in coping with job insecurity and risks of social exclusion (Unt *et al.*, 2021). In Norway and Denmark, the share of young people living at home with parents has increased considerably in relative terms since 2008 but starting from very low levels. The increase is significant in Italy, Spain, and Greece - countries which also experienced the highest increase in youth unemployment over the same time (Eurostat, 2022, 2015). This overall postponement is linked to increasing levels of job insecurity which characterises all European countries (Musumeci and Bertolini, 2020). However, its impacts are different according to the presence (or absence) and types of policies of social protection in the specific country.

In the comparative research by Unt et al. (2021), the authors analyse the consequences of job insecurity on young people's risk of social exclusion in relation to the European context. One of the dimensions of risk of social exclusion considered is autonomy, interpreted as the process of transition towards adult life. Housing autonomy is one of the life markers traditionally identified in the transition to adulthood and a pre-condition to reach others of them (e.g., family formation) (Unt *et al.* 2021; Musumeci and Bertolini, 2020). If job insecurity is concerned, what emerges is that it plays a role in postponing the transition towards housing

autonomy. However, research does not show univocal results. At the microlevel, there is a negative association between unemployment and housing autonomy: unemployed individuals have lower chances of living independently from the family of origin compared to their employed peers (Unt *et al.*, 2021). Considering temporary employment, instead, previous research has demonstrated that the association between it and housing autonomy is weak and not significant for most EU28 countries (Unt *et al.*, 2021). The analysis of their relation needs to consider the embeddedness of labour market regulation policies into the whole labour market and economic structures.

The decision to move from parental home is linked to economic autonomy, but the latter does not represent the only determinant towards this step. Rather, "leaving the parental home is a complex decision involving several dimensions on the micro- , meso- , and macrolevels" (Unt *et al.*, 2021, 183). A mix of personal preferences, cultural and social norms, economic circumstances, and institutional factors contribute to personal choices (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021; Musumeci and Bertolini, 2020). As regards cultural aspects, for example, a comparative study on the transition to adult life in Germany, Poland, and Italy (Musumeci and Bertolini, 2020) demonstrates that the late move of Italian youths is also linked to a rather conventional, still widespread idea of the correspondence between leaving the parental home and the formation of a new family. More in general, leaving the parental home is not considered universally important in the transition to adulthood. The value young people, and to some extent society, confer to this step is subject to reinterpretations over time and according to the contextual conditions they experience.

At the macro level, institutions and policies can have a moderating impact on the negative effects of unemployment and job insecurity on autonomy. Goglio and Bertolini (in Unt *et al.*, 2021) start their analysis with the hypothesis that "in countries that provide more generous support for youth, the impact of labour market weakness on housing autonomy is reduced" (168). Policies can support the cost of living both directly (with cash subsidies) and indirectly (with social housing policies). However, the research hypothesis is not always confirmed. In fact, not all types of measures and policies have the same favourable impact. Using indicators of public expenditure in housing policies, what emerges is a not clear correlation between the level of expenditure, unemployment, and housing autonomy. Other factors count, such as how policies are designed (e.g., the definition of the eligibility criteria).

Such results lead to two interlinked observations: on the one hand, it is not single institutions nor single policies that can mitigate the negative effects of unemployment and job insecurity on housing autonomy (and on the other aspects of young people's well-being); on the other hand, qualitative in depth analysis are required "if one wants to fully grasp whether measures put into place to buffer microlevel events achieve their potential" (Unt *et al.*, 2021, 185).

Concerning welfare policies for youth, despite differences between Member States, a common trend has emerged since the 2008 financial crisis: "several governments implemented budget cuts to welfare benefits for young people, transferring the responsibility and the role of social safety net to parents and family" (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021, 32), coherently with the general shifting of collective responsibility to citizens I have already spoken about in Chapter 1.

In this context, other intervening dimensions gain importance, those which the researchers call the mesolevel factors. Typically, family, and social networks are among them. They can moderate the impacts of personal and contextual conditions and work as coping strategies in achieving autonomy. This is especially true where young people tend to leave later. In these countries, mainly in Southern Europe where family is a fundamental actor in welfare provision, the support of parents is of paramount importance to access housing (Poggio, 2005). This supporting role is twofold: on the one hand, a longer permanence in the family home enables young people to save time, money, and effort in their path towards independence (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021; Poggio 2013). On the other, support can take the form of intergenerational transfer of wealth, which can compensate the lack of job and income. In these contexts, an individual's original collocation in the class structure strongly influences his/her opportunity to gain housing independence, thus perpetuating and to some extent exacerbating inequalities and privilege among young people (Mugnano in Bifulco and Mozzana, 2022; FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021; Mugnano *et al.*, 2021). In fact, living autonomously implies having enough economic resources. They mainly come from income, so one's position in the labour market plays a major role in the process of housing independence. In case of lack of income, two mitigating factors can intervene: monetary transfers to support the costs of housing or policies that reduce the cost of housing on the one hand; intergenerational support for housing on the other.

The material support coming from the family of origin can also play a role in the definition of times and modes of youth's transition into independent living (Mackie, 2016). The growing role of family resources as a substitute for welfare for younger generations raises important issues not just of widening social inequalities among the children of different families but also of intergenerational equity (Unt *et al.*, 2021). "Young people stay longer in the parental home and delay new family formation, compared to what used to happen in previous generations[43]" (Poggio, 2013, 42). Intergenerational inequalities display also in the different (harder) conditions young people experience in the labour market in comparison with older generations, as well as in different (less) opportunities to access social protection measures (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021; Poggio, 2013).

As we have seen until now, socio economic changes in the form of transformations of European labour markets have affected the youth's housing autonomy. In his discussion, Poggio (2013) underlines another domain of structural economic constraints which play a role in the delayed transition to adulthood, i.e., the characteristics of housing systems. Housing is one of the welfare state policy fields most affected by the ever-growing retrenchment of the state under the influence of neoliberal politics (Costarelli *et al.*, 2019b). Moreover, due to the financialization of housing, prices have been increasing, especially in large urban areas (Brokking *et al.*, 2017) with uneven impacts on households' lives. In such a global context, house prices are primarily driven by the dynamics of finance rather than by the development of the demand and supply of housing units (Aalbers, 2016). The role of the mortgage markets is to fuel global investment rather than facilitating homeownership.

[43] Even if the author's observation refers directly to the Italian situation, it can be extended to almost all European countries (with specificities depending on the national historical and cultural context) as the delayed transition to adulthood is recorded in most of them.

The broader possibility of obtaining credit has potentially allowed more people to get a mortgage or a loan, but at the same time, the growth of house prices forces people to get more debt to buy a house. Through mortgage markets local homeowners are connected to global capital, bringing the high volatility that characterizes financial markets in the every-day life of their families. This connection increases individuals' insecurity and instability. People are more exposed to financial risk also as regards their basic needs that were traditionally answered by public institutions. Whereas households' debt increases (in particular mortgage debt for the middle and part of the lower classes), individuals' real income does not (Aalbers, 2016). Moreover, the flexibilisation of the labour market has led to more unstable and low-paid employments, thus widening the area of the working poor (Brokking *et al.*, 2017), who have not enough economic resources to support housing costs, nor they can give the required guarantees to obtain access to credit. Those who manage to get a mortgage increasingly work solely to pay off their mortgage debt. After the 2008 financial crisis, the financial institutions introduced constraints to credit access, which affects access to homeownership, especially for some categories like young people (Brokking *et al.*, 2017; Vinci, 2017; Poggio, 2013). Thus, young people, mainly those with scarce and volatile economic resources and weak parental support, are being confined to private tenure, which is often more expensive, selective, and low-quality, experiencing precarious and often undesired housing conditions (Mugnano *et al.*, 2021; Housing Europe Observatory, 2018; Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2016; Mackie, 2016). Indeed, one side of youths' housing vulnerability is bad conditions. As the report by FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre (2021) highlights "[…] when they are able to access housing, they are compelled to live through lockdowns in poor conditions, experiencing overcrowding and/or energy poverty" (33). As regards housing deprivation (unfit living conditions, e.g., leaking roof, no bath or shower or indoor toilet, or poorly lit), 5.7% of young people aged 15-29 were living in severe housing deprivation in 2019 in the EU28, compared to 3.8% of the total population. Similarly, 23.5% of 15–29-year-olds were living in overcrowded conditions in 2019 compared to 15.6% of the total population. In this frame, cohabitation is unlikely a matter of free choice, rather it represents a copying strategy against rising costs, housing access burdens and insufficient proper housing provision. House sharing is "a very common arrangement among young people renting on the private market; it enables them to share rental costs given the serious lack of small, affordable housing units" (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021, 43). Especially in large metropolitan areas, small flats are insufficient to cover the housing demand of increasing social categories (single member households[44], students, youth workers), producing competition for the same type of provision. Besides, the shift of growing parts of the residential stock to tourism and short-term lettings further exacerbate this shortage. Young people are often those who suffer more in this competition due to the factors I have discussed in the section. As job precariousness risks to become a lifelong condition, the same risk concerns home sharing: "while this is considered a normal stage in life, enabling young people to share housing costs, to learn from the experiences of shared living spaces and to avoid becoming socially isolated, it can also be a trap if it is not a choice made of their own free will" (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021, 43). The same ambivalence characterises

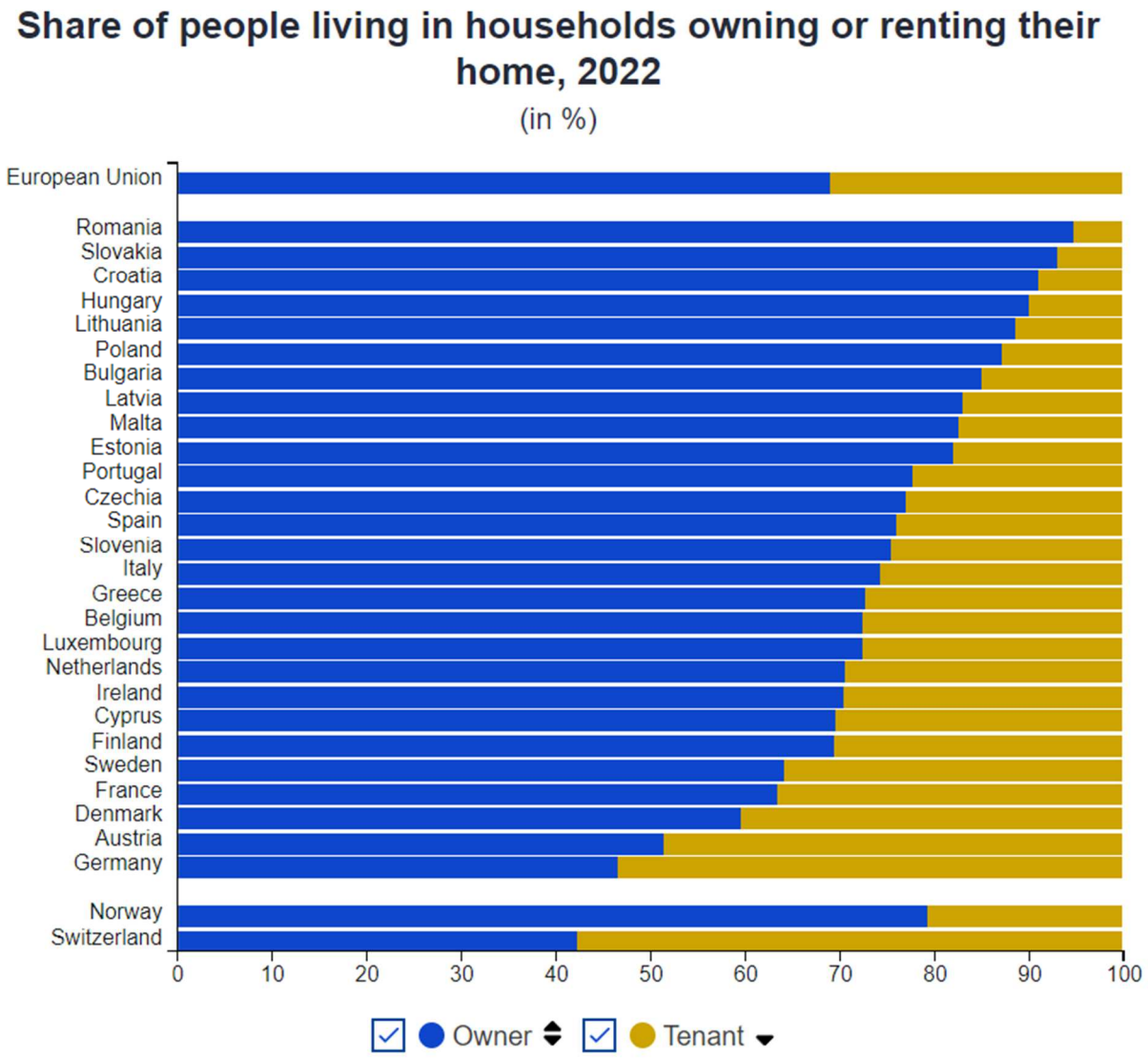
[44] For example, in Italy in the last decades the number of families has increased, and the average number of components has decreased following the major trends of change in family structure (Filandri and Autigna, 2015).

the issue of time-limited rental contracts. In public discourse often young people are portrayed as flexible professionals whose career mobility's needs and aspirations are hampered by the excessive regulation of the housing market and provision. However, the spread of temporary rental contracts especially among the youth risks to increase their precariousness because, especially in already vulnerable situations, it can end up in a specious contraction of tenancy rights and protection (Druta and Fatemidokhtcharook, 2023).

Before presenting my case studies in chapter 4, in the following chapter I first discuss the main institutional, cultural, and historical features of the Italian housing system to frame the specificities of youths' housing problems in the country. Italy is an extreme example in Europe as regards the housing condition of the youth. Indeed, traditionally young Italians are among the last to leave their parental home in Europe. However, even if this situation is common to the entire country, local features play a major role in defining both the demand and the policy answers in a context of rescaled housing competences of legislation. In the last two sections I analyse the urban context of two major Northern Italian cities, Milan, and Turin, where the research case studies are embedded. In Italy the state has the task to outline common directions to housing policies, while local levels of government, especially regions, can adapt central policies to local contexts. This is the reason why the analysis of housing policies can not overlook regional features (Filandri and Autigna, 2015), to which I refer in the discussion of the two cases' policy frames. The analysis does not mean to be exhaustive, rather to underline the relevant aspects in relation to the discussion of the cases, which is the object of the last chapter.

3. The Italian housing system

According to Eurostat data, in the EU in 2022, 69% of the population lived in a household owning their home, while the remaining 31% lived in rented housing (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/interactive-publications/housing-2023#housing-cost, visited March 20th, 2024). Italy is not among the countries with the highest shares of ownership, but it records a rate of 74,3%, above the average European value.



Graph 3. Share of people living in households owning or renting their home, 2022. Source: Eurostat.

Since 2008 the home ownership rate among the total population has remained stable at between 72 and 74. This scenario has brought to speak extensively of Italy as a "land of homeowners" (Poggio, 2018, 9, my translation). Homeownership has been benefiting by public and private support (e.g., through tax relief, the sale of public housing stock over years and favourable mortgage conditions) and from a widely spread discourse promoting this kind of tenure as the "standard way to get a house, even if at the beginning of one's own adulthood" (Poggio, 2018, 12, my translation). However, the access to homeownership has been affected by diverse problems, especially since the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. As we have already said, the restrictions

to credit introduced after the financial crisis have impacted heavily on some social categories (Poggio, and Boreiko, 2017), like the younger generations and immigrant families. Insecure work makes the access to credit more difficult for those most affected by it. The growth of house prices has further impacted on the possibility to access homeownership, especially in large attractive urban areas. In the EU there was an increase of 37% between 2010 and 2021 (Eurostat, 2022). Even if decreases were registered in Italy in the same years (-13%), the housing cost overburden rate[45] in Italian cities is slightly under the European rate (9,2% in Italy against 10,4% in the EU) (Eurostat, 2022). This index accounts for a wide economic stress also for households already in homeownership for whom this tenure becomes a factor of vulnerability (Ascoli and Bronzini, 2018; Poggio, 2018). In this environment, the wealth of one's family of origin and family networks play a major role in letting the younger generations become homeowners (Poggio, 2018, 2005; Bricocoli and Coppola, 2013). As prices, mortgage interests and the requested guarantees increase, the role of families becomes even more relevant and considerable.

As regards the rental sector, in Italy it has been traditionally the minor part of the available stock, as well as in almost all the other Member States, apart from Germany, Austria, and Denmark (Eurostat, 2022). However, a widespread growth of tenants and a decrease of homeowners have been registered starting from 2007 almost everywhere in Europe (Cognetti and Delera, 2017). In Italy, in 2021, 26,3% of the population lived in rented housing. A problematic characteristic of the rental sector in the country is that in this kind of tenure low-income households tend to concentrate (Costarelli *et al.*, 2022; Bargelli and Bianchi, 2018; Poggio, 2018). Households who have fewer financial resources turn to the rental market because they barely have other choices both in buying a flat and in accessing public housing. This constraint pushes low-income families to accept worse housing solutions available in the rental stock (concerning both the physical conditions of the apartments and the rental agreements) (Bargelli and Bianchi, 2018). Following the 2008 financial crisis, unemployment rate has increased and earnings for those at work have decreased, further worsening accessibility and affordability issues for the most vulnerable. The most recent data on poverty in Italy (Istat, 2021) highlight that this condition increasingly affect young people: the share of youth between 18 and 29 at risk of poverty and social exclusion is 29,9%, while in the other EU countries the average value stops at 25%. These data go hand in hand with those on unemployment: in 2021 in the same age range the unemployment rate was more than 25%. Especially in the first phase of their housing carriers, young people tend to live more in the rental sector not just because they are more mobile, but also because they have fewer financial resources to invest in homeownership (Mugnano *et al.*, 2021) and in housing in general. Affordability problems in this sector have been further exacerbated by the steady growth of rents. In Italy rent increase goes back to the liberalization of the rental sector during the 1990s[46] (Poggio, 2018, 2005). Moreover, the contemporary

[45] The housing cost overburden rate is the percentage of the population living in households where the total housing costs ('net' of housing allowances) represent more than 40 % of disposable income ('net' of housing allowances) (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Housing_cost_overburden_rate&lang=en, January 12th 2024).

[46] In that period the law which defined *equo canone* (L. 392/1978), a form of rent regulation, was abolished and rents began to be set according to free market principles (Costarelli and Maggio, 2021). For a brief overview of the *equo canone* law, see Bargelli and Bianchi, 2018.

situation of increasing demand for rent and low stock available contributes to push prices up[47] (Bargelli and Bianchi, 2018). Differently than homeowners, families in the rental sector traditionally have not been significantly supported by public resources[48]. Housing allowances are heavily susceptible to budget allocation and their effectiveness depends on allocation promptness.

In Italy the private rental sector accounts for 14.8% of total housing stock (Costarelli *et al.*, 2022). The public housing sector is historically residual with almost 4% of the total housing stock (Housing Europe, 2021), as in the others Southern European countries (Costarelli and Maggio, 2021; Whitehead, 2017). In the next section, I discuss the main traits of this stock between old problems and new challenges (Poggio and Boreiko, 2017).

3.1 Housing policies and the public housing sector

In this section I first focus on provision-oriented policies, in particular on social housing as understood in 1.2 (footnote n. 4) and second, I discuss the main dimensions of change in social housing policies in recent Italy. Poggio and Boreiko (2018, 2017) use the following distinction to classify different types of provision which can be currently included in the Italian social housing sector: the traditional public housing stock (ERP)[49], the provision made available through the SIF[50] and the stock provided by not-for-profit organizations. The public housing stock consists of publicly built housing, funded by the government, and built by municipalities or by public housing agencies (Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017). After the second World War, a large scale national social housing plan was developed (the Ina-Casa plan), followed by the establishment of a fund (Gescal) in the 1960s fed by a compulsory contribution by workers and their employers. The aim of the programs was twofold: addressing the housing shortage, especially in urban areas where people from other parts of Italy arrived to work in the industrial sector, while fostering the construction sector. As regards the target, the plans vision was closer to the universalistic approach to housing policy than it is today: they aimed at addressing the housing demand of large portions of the population (Costarelli and Maggio, 2021; Poggio, 2005). Since the 1990s the public stock has been reducing because of the progressive sale of dwellings primarily to sitting tenants (Mugnano in Bifulco and Mozzana, 2022; Maranghi *et al.*, 2019; Bricocoli and Coppola, 2013) and to the substantial reduction of (stable) public fundings to build new public housing (Bricocoli *et al.*, 2018; Poggio and Boreiko, 2017). Moreover, as in other European countries, the public stock has been affected by a process of residualisation that brought to allocate units primarily to the most vulnerable or to the poorest households, thus fuelling processes of concentration and stigmatisation (Czischke, 2009; Tosi, 2016). This phenomenon is

[47] The exacerbation of urban affordability problems has among its causes real estate speculation which pushes housing prices and costs up in a context where income has been going down since 2010. Houses have been transformed from goods to be used into financial assets for a limited part of the population (Filandri and Pauli, 2018) (cfr. 1. 2). Housing costs are not linked just to housing characteristics, rather they are deeply influenced by the value of land within urban space (Dagnes and Salento, 2022).

[48] Social protection policies for tenants can take on the form of subsidizing the construction of social housing (indirect support) or of financially supporting households in paying for housing costs through housing allowances (direct support) (Filandri and Moiso, 2018).

[49] The so-called *Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica* (ERP) in Italian.

[50] *Sistema Integrato dei Fondi* (Integrated System of Funds). This segment of stock is referred to as housing *sociale* in Italian, which is often inappropriately equated with social housing in its European understanding. Despite the large variety of social housing across the continent, "the most common definition is focused on the social rental segment, i.e. on – directly or indirectly – subsidised dwellings let out at below pure-market rents and allocated administratively" (Poggio and Boreiko, 2017, 2).

particularly impactful in a context of scarcity of social housing, as Italy is. In this environment, allocation criteria based on needs assessment (income, health problems, eviction, etc.) brought to the concentration of economic and social problems in public housing neighbourhoods (Vinci, 2017). On the other hand, public housing allocation to low-income and vulnerable households is more coherent with the residual housing model, to which the Italian one has increasingly moved to. According to this categorization, public intervention in housing domain targets only those households whose housing needs are not addressed by the market (both through rent and homeownership) because of both lack of financial resources and the presence of "special needs" (Poggio, 2005, 284). Paradoxically, the higher effectiveness of such policies concerning the capacity to reach the target population increases residualisation and collides with growing lack in the financing and management of the public housing stock. In Italy public housing is mainly owned and managed by municipalities and by regional housing companies. Rents are set according to the characteristics of the provision. The base value is then parametrized according to the economic condition[51] of the households to whom the flat is allocated. As tenants are mostly very low-income families, rents are set at very low level, while service expenses (for heating, elevator, cleaning, etc.) depend just on flat size. While pursuing social justice objectives, this system of rent setting produces problems of financial sustainability for public owners in the absence of a system of public support to low-income or unemployed people and households (Poggio and Boreiko, 2018). Especially after the 2008 crisis, rent arrears have increased and become a major problem in public housing management because of lower incomes and increased job insecurity (Costarelli and Maggio, 2021; Bricocoli *et al.*, 2018; Poggio and Boreiko, 2017). Moreover, after-crisis austerity policies have further cut public expenditure in welfare in general, producing a vicious cycle of increasing needs and decreasing resources. The wobbly budgets of public housing agencies and owners affect the possibility to restore empty flats, leaving them unused for long time and increasing the risk of squatting (Maranghi *et al.*, 2019; Poggio and Boreiko, 2017). The already scarce stock available risks to be partially unused or misused for different reasons. For example, the periodical assessment of the conditions to stay in public housing barely brought to the exit of those who do not have these requirements anymore. Often the permanence in the stock of tenants who are in better economic conditions is considered by public housing owners as an opportunity to diversify their revenues and to decrease the risks of rent arrears (Olagnero, 2018). Budget concerns derive also from the formal nature of public housing regional agencies, which were converted from public bodies to public companies with budgetary constraints[52].

The limited turnover of tenants and reallocation of empty flats in public housing come up against the wide housing demand waiting in the allocation lists (Mugnano in Bifulco and Mozzana, 2022; Maranghi *et al.*, 2019; Bricocoli *et al.*, 2018) and the expansion of housing affordability problems within the larger population (Ascoli and Bronzini, 2018; Poggio and Boreiko, 2017). The focus on the widening of the housing demand

[51] ISEE (Indicator of Equivalent Economic Situation) is an indicator of the economic condition of households that mixes income and assets used to verify the economic requirements to access to public services and subsidies.

[52] From Iacp (*Istituto Autonomo Case Popolari*) to regional agencies and companies (e.g., Aler, Atc etc.), according to regional legislation.

characterises the new 2008 national housing plan[53]. The so-called housing *sociale*[54], the main line of action promoted by the plan, is intended for those who neither can afford the costs of the private market nor are able to access public housing (Costarelli, 2020; Poggio and Boreiko, 2017). Housing provision is based on public-private real estate funds, originated from a pilot experience in the city of Milan (Dagnes and Salento, 2022; Costarelli, 2020). The mechanism aimed at employing public resources to attract private funds in the realm of social housing and using private resources to multiply the stock to be built[55]. The national fund, *Fondo Investimenti per l'Abitare* (FIA), invests in local real estate funds through the public institution *Cassa Depositi e Prestiti* and, as regards private capital, banking foundations resulted to be "the almost exclusive private participants of regional funds in the Integrated System of Funds" (Poggio and Boreiko, 2017, 119). The initial intention contained in the plan was to have a maximum of 40% national fund's participation in local regional funds. However, as the interest of private partners and capitals in investing in regional funds have been limited despite the expected returns was set to 3% above inflation, the threshold was raised up to 80%, significantly decreasing the expected (and publicly sponsored) involvement of private investors in the system (Poggio and Boreiko, 2018). The provision made available through the funds system is a mix of both uses and tenures: not just flats, but also business and services on the one hand; flats for long term rent or under rental purchase agreements and flats for sale under municipality agreements on the other hand (Costarelli, 2020; Poggio and Boreiko, 2018). The diversification of both uses and tenures is meant to contribute to the financial and social sustainability of the initiatives. Rents are higher than in public housing, but they are meant to be lower than in the private market. Thus, eligibility criteria are different from public housing as the targets are not the poorest and most vulnerable households and the initiatives should guarantee returns to investors (Dagnes and Salento, 2022). The provision variety (mainly in terms of tenancy categories) is formally recognised in the new definition of *alloggio sociale* contained in the 2008 ministerial decree[56]: "every dwelling built or restored by public or private subjects, as well as by housing managing organisations, to be rented out – not just on a permanent basis any more – to address the housing need of vulnerable people and households who cannot afford rents in the private market" (Costarelli and Maggio, 2021, 302, my translation). The actual impact of these initiatives needs to be further analysed because the available data are partial and sometimes barely accessible (Dagnes and Salento, 2022; Poggio and Boreiko, 2017). The new terminologies and tools introduced by the laws derive from and involve some shifts in Italian housing policies and practices (Vinci, 2017) which I discuss in the second part of this section.

The last category identified by Poggio and Boreiko (2018, 2017) refers to the affordable housing provision made available by the not-for-profit sector. In fact, among the more variegated set of organizations involved in the production and management of social housing, cooperatives, NGOs, traditional charities etc. have come

[53] L. 112/2008, art. 11; D.P.C.M. 16 luglio 2009.

[54] I decided to keep the Italian terminology when referring to the SIF initiatives and the more recent developments in housing policies in Italy instead of using the English translation social housing as the two expressions are not interchangeable as I have already discussed.

[55] For an in-depth dissertation about the mechanisms and the policy implications of the SIF (Integrated System of Funds) see Fontana and Lareno Faccini (2015).

[56] *Decreto del Ministero delle Infrastrutture* April 22nd, 2008.

to play a major role in the housing domain since the 1990s. Some of these organizations are also investors in the local real estate funds within the SIF system (for example in Tuscany). In other cases, they do not provide housing directly, rather they manage the housing estates working for the companies that realized the initiatives, bringing in the real estate sector their often-innovative experience of integration with the social dimension of housing policies (Poggio and Boreiko, 2018). However, the overall picture is affected by the traditional weaknesses of the Italian not-for-profit sector, which is highly fragmented and barely coordinated in its relationship with public actors.

From this overview some macro changes emerge which have characterised Italian housing policies and are coherent with the transformations occurred in the provision of welfare services: devolution and rescaling; marketization and cost-cutting; changes in the role of welfare recipients (cfr. 1.1 and 1.2). In Italy the local levels of government gained more importance following the reform of the Fifth Title of the Constitution in 2001 (Costarelli and Maggio, 2021). Concerning housing policies, since then there has been a shift of competences from the central state to regions. Regional governments have the tasks of orienting, programming, and "establishing regulations for management and funding" (Petsimeris, 2018, 270), while it is expressly addressed to local governments the responsibility of designing interventions (Cela, 2011). The local scale has gained relevance both as the object of policies and programs and as the context where specific arrangements of actors and resources come together to address old and new problems. This arrangement has certainly further contributed to the fragmentation of housing policies in a country like Italy already characterised by deep territorial inequalities and by low levels of coordination between different levels of government and governance (Poggio and Boreiko, 2017; Vinci, 2017). This shift in public powers has not been accompanied by a sufficient redistribution of financial resources from the central state to local levels and, even when resources have been provided by the state in a general environment of budget cuttings, they have been not enough to cover the needs[57]. The devolution of the housing question to local authorities went together with a decrease in the resources for social housing and a simultaneous increase in the size in the more vulnerable population (Petsimeris, 2018). In such a context, the competence of local institutions to collect and organize different resources and skills have become fundamental to provide for the retrenchment of public actors. The involvement of organizations coming from the private sector has also been supported by widespread discourses on their supposed higher efficiency in answering to social problems (Bifulco, 2017; Kazepov, 2004). It is also true that in some cases and under specific conditions, "these organizations have been able to suit specific local circumstances in a flexible way, to focus on particular issues, and to leverage the available resources" (Poggio and Boreiko, 2017, 120). The development of the SIF itself has been supported by these new arrangements between public and private actors and by the involvement of the private sector, especially not-for-profit organizations, in housing policies. Moreover, the idea of housing *sociale* promoted by the SIF initiatives is supported by a reconceptualization of housing[58] and housing policies in that their aim is not just to build or

[57] This is for example the case of the housing allowances (e.g., *Fondo Sostegno Affitti*) meant to support households in paying rents in the private market (Filandri and Moiso, 2018).

[58] The shift of attention from house to home (*dall'edilizia all'abitare*) underlines the focus on the relational dimension of housing (Olagnero, 2018) both in public discourse and in policy practices.

provide new affordable housing, rather to address a more complex housing issue which mingles with social inclusion objectives and relational needs (Ascoli and Bronzini, 2018; Olagnero 2018)[59]. "The underlying principle for social housing in Italy is to promote social cohesion by means of reducing housing stress" (Petsimeris, 2018, 266-267). The extension of the conceptualization of housing and of the objectives of housing policies also affects management approaches. The growing role played by different typologies of organizations, especially the not-for-profit-sector, in the implementation of housing policies has supported this shift in management style. In Italy the new model promoted through housing *sociale* is referred to as "integrated social management"[60] (Costarelli, 2021, 6, my translation) where the emphasis is on the interconnection between the different aspects of housing management (technical, social, and financial aspects). In this perspective, the social component of housing management refers mainly to the engagement of residents in different aspects and degrees. Integrated social management aims at fostering residents' participation to improve community's well-being[61]. One of the ways practitioners use to facilitate participation is the definition of non-standard allocation criteria of residents (cfr. 1.2.1) to select people and households who are supposed to play an active role in the estates. Integrate social management is an ongoing service provided to support residents in avoiding conflicts, fostering mutual help and solidarity relations, thus contributing to the overall sustainability of housing projects.

The framework described in this section and in the previous ones is the general context within which my two case studies are embedded. Clearly the picture is not thorough, rather it aims at providing the main institutional, cultural, and historical traits within which local policy decisions are rooted (Bronzini, 2014). Given that, in the second part of this chapter I move to the local scale of my cases. I then discuss the main features of both the regional and urban housing policy frameworks, before going deeper in the description of the cases in the next chapter.

3.2 Milano never stops[62]: economy and housing in the city

The metaphor of Milan as the engine of the country is often used in media and public discourses to describe the dynamic and entrepreneurial nature of the city economy. As other major European cities, in Milan the local industrial economy has been restructured in favour of the service economy (Petsimeris, 2018) and the city entered the global circuit using branding to get a competitive economic advantage. In the Italian context, Milan is the economic and financial capital (Costa *et al.*, 2015) where most job opportunities concentrate. Moreover, training opportunities offered by the Milanese metropolitan area are an important attraction for young people (Mugnano *et al.*, 2021). This vitality has been attracting people from the rest of Italy and from abroad, especially youth and highly skilled workers, who struggle to find affordable housing solutions. Between 2009

[59] For an extensive analysis of the new approaches to housing policies in Italy, see Bronzini (2014).
[60] *Gestione sociale integrata*.
[61] In the terminology of housing *sociale*, the social component of housing management is often referred to as community management (Costarelli, 2021).
[62] The title of the section recalls the name of the promotional video made by the current major of the city at the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic which depicts Milan as a city that never stops, where people work hard and tirelessly to reach great results. A rich and dynamic city which not even the fear for the Virus can stop. As the pandemic grew in numbers and Lombardy was hardly hit by the virus, the major was widely criticised for the message in the video, and he then declared the video was a mistake.

and 2014 the city registered a significant increase in the number of residents, mainly among youth (Mugnano *et al.*, 2021). 50,000 students come from outside the region, however the 5 biggest universities in Milan only accommodate one out of every 17 of these students. The touristic appeal of the city has been growing since the EXPO in 2015 and it has contributed to intensify the shortage of affordable housing for residents and people moving to live and work in the city (Mugnano *et al.*, 2021). Despite rents growing again after a break during the Covid-19 pandemic, the demand for rental housing has been increasing since the 2008 crisis[63]. The overall reduction of wages and the constraints to credit (Mugnano and Palvarini, 2011) matched with a disproportionate increase in housing prices are among the factors for this growing demand[64]. Both the most vulnerable parts of the population (e.g., immigrants and single-parent families) and young newcomers address their housing demand mainly towards the rental stock because they do not have enough financial resources nor guarantees to get a mortgage or because they are asked more geographical mobility following the spread of uncertainties in the labour market (Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2016). These phenomena result in increasing and wider housing affordability problems in a context where the costs of living are expensive comparable to those in other European metropolises although wages are still very low by European standards and the system of social protection is overall weak, especially in relation to younger generations. Indeed, "many features of the housing situation in Milan closely resemble the state of affairs at the national level" (Bricocoli and Coppola, 2013, 2, my translation). Between 1951 and 2011 homeownership tripled its share (Petsimeris, 2018). According to the 2011 census, 71% of residents lived in homeownership, 22% lived in rented dwellings and the rest were in other types of tenure. Even if data are not recent, they confirm the overall national framework, other than a higher share of renters than in the rest of Italy (Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2016; Bricocoli and Coppola, 2013). The housing stock in the city counts around 800.000 dwellings (Nomisma, 2021), of which public housing is around 10%, a share higher than the national average (Dodaro and Costarelli, 2021). Despite a relatively large share of public housing in Milan, which testifies for the long tradition of social housing in the city (Petsimeris, 2018), the stock is essentially insufficient to address old and new demands. Moreover, it has progressively decreased over years following privatisation (Petsimeris, 2018; Mugnano and Palvarini, 2011). In 2013 the waiting list for public housing amounted to approximately 22,000 families that would be fully entitled to a social dwelling (Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2019). The Municipality and Aler (the regional public housing agency) own almost 91.000 dwellings[65] in the city (Nomisma, 2021), while the last waiting list counts around 18,000 requests for 330 available dwellings (Avviso pubblico 7701, Comune di Milano, 2023). New allocations derive exclusively from internal turnover (e.g., after sitting tenants' death). Flats usually need

[63] Between 2015 and 2021 the number of rental contracts in the private market grew from 40.000 to 55.000 and in the same period rents per square meter increased significantly (+25/30% for new rental contracts) (https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/a-milano-uno-stipendio-1500-euro-mese-si-comprano-23-mq-AFepc2XB, visited January 15th, 2024, my translation). In 2022 the Polytechnic University in Milan and two major housing cooperatives, Consorzio Cooperative Lavoratori and Delta Ecopolis, promoted the Affordable Housing Observatory to collect and study data on housing prices and the levels of income in the city. The aim is to monitor the dynamics of affordability and to advocate for political and public awareness and action on the issue. The Observatory produces reports every year.

[64] "The increasing disconnection between housing costs and household incomes" (Tulumello and Caruso, 2021, 871) has been a worldwide phenomenon since the Global Financial Crisis.

[65] 62.856 dwellings are owned by Aler and 27.936 by the Municipality.

several renovations and the lack of money in public budgets causes lots of them to remain empty for long time (and at risk of squatting). If in the 2010s the annual availability of public flats amounted at around 1000, in more recent years this number has further decreased. In the first 10 months of 2020, 863 leasing contracts were signed (Comune di Milano, 2020). However, among these, 167 dwellings were used for the two public owners' mobility needs and 22 were allocated for short-term period[66]. Besides public actors, other large-scale landlords play an important role in the rental market of the city[67]. These property owners are diverse, from socio-assistance old institutions, to banks, foundations, private families and entrepreneurial groups, cooperatives, real estate funds and so on (Costa, 2017). In this environment, the housing *sociale* model based on public-private funds was first experimented and then scaled up at national level. However, following a continuous decline in public housing construction, policy responses to the affordability issue based just on this tool risk to be inadequate both in quantitative terms and in relation to the capacity (and purpose) to respond to the most pressing demands. Some of these organizations have been experimenting with projects specifically targeted to youth who benefit from housing solutions at moderate rents in exchange for their community work. These projects are based on the idea that bringing young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, mainly inhabited by elderly, immigrant families and people affected by various problems, will impact positively on their lives and the physical environment (Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2016). The underlying assumptions guiding these pilot projects lay on the principles and ideas which have inspired the regional housing policy in the last decades. As already said, "responsibilities for housing are regional, […]. Below the region, a high (and increasing) degree of discretionary power is afforded to the municipalities" (Petsimeris, 2018, 267). For this reason, I first discuss the main contents of regional housing legislation within which these experiments are embedded and second, I scale down to how they have been acknowledged and adapted at municipal level.

3.2.1 Policy shifts in housing legislation in Lombardy

I discuss the regional housing policy framework focussing on three kye concepts, looking at their use and development within the regional housing legislation: social mix; housing as service; short-term allocation.

In the 2004 legislation on public housing[68], the Lombardy region already referred to the concepts of mix and diversification within the public housing stock. It established that Municipalities (which were in charge of collecting and allocating public housing applications) could decide to allocate a maximum of 30% of the whole annual available stock at city level to specific categories among the households already present in the waiting list. These categories were defined by the region according to different types of characteristics: age (e.g., the elderly), type of family (e.g., recently formed families, singles with or without children) or personal conditions (e.g., disabled). Municipalities had to be authorized by the region to use this option. No recommendation was

[66] In 2016 the Lombardy regional law n. 16 "Disciplina dei Servizi abitativi" introduced a new category of public housing provision labelled as SAT - *Servizi abitativi transitori* (temporary housing services) devoted to "limiting the housing disadvantage of particular social categories such as households under eviction or affected by any other housing emergency situation" (l.r. 16/2016, art.23, comma 13).

[67] In Milan 80% of the dwellings are owned by individuals (Nomisma, 2021). The rest belongs to a variety of organizations: besides Aler and the Municipality, there are business companies, housing cooperatives and other public bodies (e.g., pension public institutions).

[68] Art. 11, comma 8 – *Regolamento Regionale* 10 febbraio 2004, n. 1.

given by the region concerning for example the territorial distribution of this stock. It must be considered that usually the stock available for new allocations is scattered in different neighbourhoods and buildings. Thus, this option seems to be more an operational tool to manage the allocation through the public waiting list, rather than a possibility for social mix in specific estates. Indeed, in the same law[69] the region refers explicitly to the concept of mix (mix *abitativo*) in relation to redevelopment interventions and new constructions of public housing. In these cases, Municipalities can select households through specific public procedures other than the standard tenders. The declared aim of the rule is to "foster social integration" (Regione Lombardia, 2004) through the diversification of the social categories entitled for the allocation of flats, otherwise concentrated among the most vulnerable (the ones who get the highest scores). Coherently with the residual model of social housing, access criteria are based on income and need (e.g., housing conditions at the time of the application: homelessness, unhealthy accommodation, over-occupation, forced cohabitation, etc.) (Pittini, 2012). In this case, social mix is not pursued through the introduction of new and diverse allocation entitlements or criteria, rather through the possibility of selecting specific target groups within households with the same formal requirements. In 2009[70] the region broadened the tools to promote social integration, considering not just the opportunity to allocate shares of the available stock to specific target groups, but also introducing the possibility to identify parts of the stock to be allocated at different rents or according to different tenure agreements (e.g., the so-called moderate rent, short-term rent contracts). This change in the tools for diversification is inscribed in a more general shift towards a layering of the public housing stock according to economic and financial eligibility criteria. In fact, the regional law 27/2009 introduced another layer within the public housing stock, namely moderate rental. Besides the traditional stock for which tenants pay according to their economic condition, moderate rent tenants pay a fixed sum (per square meter) calculated to cover construction and management costs, so it presents higher rent values. Social and moderate rent tenants are selected through the same public tender, but the Indicator of Equivalent Economic Situation's ceiling for the second group is higher than that of the first one. This is the only difference in the selection of the two groups. Sometimes the stock allocated to the two groups has the same characteristics, for which they pay different rents, but the same expenses for services. Moderate rent stock can also be built by other organisations than the Municipality and the Aler, especially not-for-profit actors. The region supported this new socially rented housing model through public funding, especially within area-based programs with the purpose of diversifying "the supply of social housing in order to solve the traditional limits of public housing in terms of tenure homogeneity" (Belotti, 2016, 2). So, the diversification of rent calculation is a way to attract lower middle-class households within public and social housing stock[71]. On the other hand, the new parameters for rent calculation are aimed at attracting private actors, increasing the financial sustainability of the projects, coherently with the diffusion of market-oriented models of social housing at national level (Belotti, 2016). Within this framework, social mix is therefore intended as tenure mix (cfr. 1.2.1). The most recent regional

[69] Art. 6bis, comma 1 – *Regolamento Regionale* 10 febbraio 2004, n. 1.
[70] Art. 29, comma 1, *Legge Regionale* 4 dicembre 2009, n. 27.
[71] For a discussion on the effectiveness of moderate rental as a tool of tenure diversification within mass housing neighbourhoods, see Belotti's analysis (2016) in the context of Bergamo, a Lombardy's middle-sized city.

law on housing (n. 16/2016) adopts and organizes at the regional level the changes occurred in Italian housing policies since the introduction of the 2008 national housing plan. As already underlined, some contents of the plan come from the upscaling of experiences made in Lombardy and in Milan in particular. So, the contents of the 2016 regional law are the results of a gradual process of change the main features of which I have discussed above. The law acknowledges the notion of *alloggio sociale* (cfr. 3.1) and it defines two different layers of social housing stock, just in part corresponding to the previous layers of social and moderate rental. The first layer is named public housing services (SAP - *Servizi Abitativi Pubblici*) and it includes the stock aimed at addressing the housing needs of the most vulnerable households. The second layer is referred to as social housing services (SAS - *Servizi Abitativi Sociali*) and it consists of the stock aimed at addressing the housing needs of those households whose economic condition does not let them afford housing in the private market nor let them access public housing services[72]. Unlike the previous dual model, the current one allows private actors to be involved in both the types of provision, marking a further step towards the reinforcement of the role of private organizations in social housing models. The current law set off, also through the change in the naming[73], two main shifts. The previous model focused on the material aspect of housing provision (*Edilizia*) and on its main residential function to provide a place to live in (*Residenziale*). In the current model, instead, the stress is on the role of affordable housing in the personal path towards social integration. Public housing became housing services[74] (*Servizi Abitativi*[75]) which stress the widening in the scopes of housing policies (Bronzini, 2014) and in the parterre of organizations involved (Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2019). Moreover, the expression *Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica* revealed the central role played by the public actor as both provider and manager of the stock. In the new framework, similarly to other services[76], housing can be provided by public, private and not-for-profit organizations in a contest of welfare mix (Bifulco, 2017). Consequently, the role of public actors changes too. In the 2016 law, the region established that private organizations must fulfil specific requirements to be appointed as *Servizi Abitativi Pubblici* and S*ervizi Abitativi Sociali* providers and managers. The region formally regulates and verifies this system[77], while municipalities have the tasks of coherently programming interventions to address local housing needs. This

[72] The so-called grey area (*fascia grigia*) of housing demand (Bricocoli, 2013) to whom the new housing *sociale* model explicitly refers to. According to Tosi (2018), this shift of public resources from the lower segments of the demand of social protection towards the middle-income class is a sign of the increasing selectivity of neoliberal social policies. Selectivity works also within the most vulnerable, filtering up those who have more skills and resources and so more chances to exit social protection.

[73] Public housing was historically referred to as *Edilizia Residenziale Pubblica* (ERP). The 2016 regional law in Lombardy changed it in *Servizi Abitativi Pubblici* (SAP).

[74] The identification of housing as service is established by a previous regional law which was inspired by a pilot housing program implemented in Milan in 2004 (Bricocoli and Sbatinelli, 2019).

[75] Another difference from the previous model, which is not just formal but entails transformations in the essence and meaning of housing, is the use of the plural form (*servizi* instead of *edilizia*). Public housing is no more a standardised provision for everyone, rather it is intended as a mix of different types of provision according to specific needs. As conditions of need diversify and widen, provision has to adapt to changing contexts and the involvement of different actors is depicted also as a way to address this call for diversification.

[76] Housing as service is clearly very different from housing as a right as it was conceived in many European countries after the II World War, when the state played a central role in its provision through welfare (cfr. 1.1.2).

[77] It is not yet possible to discuss and evaluate the functioning and impact of the new system because the region approved the guidelines to be formally recognised as social housing providers at the end of 2022 (*Deliberazione della Giunta Regionale* n. XI/7607/2022).

activity requires attracting and adapting to private actors which have enough financial resources to invest in affordable housing on the one hand (Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2019) and the experience and skills to manage housing services (cooperatives, foundations, etc) on the other. The inspiring principles of private actors (business-like) are explicitly adopted by the 2016 law as the guiding criteria in the management of the regional housing system: "the regional system of housing services […] is guided by principles of sustainability, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness and reduction of operating costs" (art. 1, comma 2, l.r. 16/2016, my translation) within the overall aim to fulfil the housing needs of vulnerable households[78].

As housing becomes a service, it brings along all the discussions on more efficient and effective uses of welfare resources (cfr. 1.1.1). One of the most pervading discourses about the limits of the traditional systems of social protection refers to welfare dependency. Long term social protection is seen by critics as potentially feeding a passive attitude in welfare beneficiaries. At the same time, economic, and social vulnerability is depicted as a temporary condition which can be overcome through the right actions, the active involvement and responsibilisation of welfare beneficiaries. In the SI approach, the aim is to free people from social protection needs (Sennett, 2004) (cfr. 1.1.1). Time is an important variable within this framework. Social protection must move from long-term support to short-term help to avoid dependency and to reach better results in terms of social inclusion. Housing as service implies housing support for short to medium term period of life. Public housing has traditionally been all lifelong (Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2019). Housing mobility within that stock has always been very low. The rhetoric against welfare dependence in relation to public housing has brought public actors to address the problem (which is more often the result of management weaknesses) in terms of reducing the length of time during which the support is provided. The final objective is fostering the mobility of households outside the system of social protection towards other housing solutions. In this way, another result can be achieved: the available stock can be used in a more flexible way to support more people according to a revolving mechanism. However, this argument seems to be used more to hide the problems caused by a residual affordable housing stock than to foster a more effective use of it in terms of social protection. The role played by macro societal and economic factors risks being overlooked[79]. On the one hand, increasing insecurity in the labour market, decreasing wages and housing costs skyrocketing hamper the path of most people towards housing autonomy. On the other, the absence of a strong welfare system and a large social housing stock in Italy risk to undermine the effectiveness of these solutions and to increase their side effects (Tosi, 2018). Moreover, during the period in which the housing service is provided beneficiaries need to prove to be actively engaged in solving their problems. The positive assessment of self-activation and responsibilisation by housing managers and social workers contributes to the possibility to extend social protection in case independence is not reached until the due date. The Lombardy region introduced a subset of *Servizi Abitativi Pubblici* provision called temporary housing services (*Servizi Abitativi Transitori* – SAT) mainly thought to address emergency

[78] Art. 1, comma 1, l.r. 16/2016.

[79] This approach feeds an "optimistic ideology of integration" (Tosi, 2018, 53, my translation) which assumes that every path towards social integration will end and will end positively. To make this happen social housing providers often use mechanisms of prioritization and selection of tenants that risk keeping out the most vulnerable. The selection can take into account certain types of personal skills and resources that are considered more successful for personal integration and social inclusion (Tosi, 2016).

housing situations. Households evicted from the market because of rent arrears or because the rental contract expired can access this segment of public provision. *Servizi Abitativi Transitori* are allocated through a public procedure. Households who live in a temporary housing service can ask for a permanent one and the temporary condition gives them further score in the *Servizi Abitativi Pubblici* application. Two pitfalls emerge: as the other criteria to access the *Servizi Abitativi Transitori* provision are the same of *Servizi Abitativi Pubblici*, it is highly probable that households entering the SAT are able to move out just in case they are allocated a SAP dwelling. Moreover, often *Servizi Abitativi Transitori* provision is taken out from *Servizi Abitativi Pubblici* stock, further reducing the available provision for the most vulnerable. Temporary housing services were introduced by the region to address the issue of the overrepresentation of evicted households in the allocations of public housing, especially in urban areas. In Milan the share of public dwelling allocated to households in emergency conditions after an eviction often exceeded 50% in a year[80]. Again, problems deriving from the scarcity of affordable housing stock and from management shortcomings have been addressed by designing policy solutions which further hinder people living a precarious and stressful housing condition like eviction is. Mainly, these households are low income, and they cannot afford private market any more[81]. Thus, their main need is to access to affordable housing. In most cases, the introduction of *Servizi Abitativi Transitori* intermediate step results in "multiplying the wait areas" (Tosi, 2018, 48, my translation) for families who already find themselves in unstable housing conditions.

3.2.2 The ambivalences of housing *sociale* in Milan

In 2004 the Municipality of Milan promoted and funded a program, called *Milano Abitare 1*, to build new public housing on empty areas allocated to services (e.g., green areas, parking slots, etc.) by the city planning. It was the first after a long time, and at the same time the last, construction program made by the public actor to increase the public housing stock in the city (Bricocoli and Sabatinelli, 2019). The program led the way to the classification of public housing as service both at the regional and national levels, also from the point of view of urban planning. This change of status implied the possibility to allocate plots of land allotted to services to build affordable housing. As the notion of *alloggio sociale* was defined in 2008 and the model of housing *sociale* was officially recognised in the national housing plan, the possibility of building on areas allotted to services was enlarged concerning both the types of provision and the organizations involved. In 2008[82] the Municipality made a public tender to allocate 8 public areas to build housing *sociale*, namely dwellings to be rented out or sold at below-the-market prices. These projects are characterised by a mix of several functions (residential, economic activities, social business activities and services) and a mix of different tenures. Both the tools contribute to the financial sustainability of the projects which must be secured to private organizations

[80] This data reflects the steep increase in evictions in the 2000s as compared to previous years (Bricocoli and Coppola, 2013).

[81] To be eligible for SAT, in case of rent arrears, families must demonstrate to be in a situation called *morosità incolpevole* (to be in arrears not for their fault), that implies they need to certify the reasons why they have not been able to pay rent regularly anymore. The accepted causes are all related to the reduction of family's income (e.g., job loss, being on employment subsidy, shrinking of family's composition after a divorce etc.).

[82] *Deliberazione Consiliare* n.23 - 26 maggio 2008. After the tender, 6 out of the initial 8 areas were allocated to private organizations.

to foster their involvement in the program. Moreover, it is often made explicit reference to social mix in the allocation of dwellings, where social mix is intended in the same way the Lombardy region has done in its housing legislation over years (cfr. 3.1.2). So, a combination of household typologies (e.g., singles with or without children, recently formed families) and objective characteristics (e.g., people under 35, elderly) contribute to define diverse categories of residents. In most cases, allocation is dependent on people's commitment to activation, responsibilisation and participation (Acoli and Bronzini, 2018) which is positively evaluated in the selection phase. The model of "integrated social management" (Costarelli, 2021, 6, my translation) is thought to support, foster, and periodically verify residents' commitment towards the community they are contributing to build together with their neighbours. Redo, the major housing *sociale* player in Milan, describes its mission as follows:

> Quality and affordable housing, redevelopment of city spaces at risk of abandonment, services, and initiatives to increase inclusion, collaboration, well-being: these are the keys to Redo's intervention. We build houses together with the community: we regenerate the social fabric by creating a dimension of living that is accessible to all, sustainable and capable of promoting relationships between people. We promote an idea of "collaborative living" in which private, semi-public and public spaces are integrated into a continuum open to the territory, are multifunctional and flexible, therefore adaptable according to different needs over time, and are aimed at encouraging relationships between the inhabitants, allowing you to create a sense of belonging to the place you live in. (https://redosgr.it/progetti/, 7 February 2023, my translation)

Nothing in this description points to a temporary perspective of living in such places. Rather, community and local rooting is promoted and a great (time and personal) investment in social relations is requested. Flexibility refers exclusively to the capacity of spaces to adapt to different needs over time, thus recalling a long-term time frame of living in such contexts. Bricocoli (2017) highlights the ambivalence emerging from the use of housing as service:

> In many ways, just while it is argued that the idea of accommodation is a service, a supporting factor of an existence that can unfold in various and different shores, access to housing projects is subject to adherence to a model of organization and management, as well as in a broader sense to the commitment to invest in creating and reproducing a localized community. (51, my translation)

From the point of view of social landlords and managers, the technical, property and social management of temporary housing is time and money spending[83]. As the turnover is faster, flats must be restored more

[83] Conversely, the reasons pushing private owners in the market to prefer short-term and touristic rentals seem to be the possibility to overcome some implications of rental legislation (e.g., the risk of rent arrears, the long eviction procedures), in addition to maximizing earnings.

frequently. Temporary flats are usually furnished before allocation, so maintenance concerns not just the flat but also its contents. Tenants' attachment towards the apartment, the building and the neighbourhood can be potentially less strong than in long-term rental, thus risking increasing the indirect management costs. Moreover, in the housing *sociale* model the expected return on private's investments are estimated on a long-term basis, therefore revenues stability[84] is key in this perspective. At the same time, temporary housing is a difficult and uncomfortable condition for families and people with low financial resources, in conditions of emergency and at risk of housing exclusion. Despite that, temporary housing, personal commitment, and active participation are key elements in the management of emergency housing needs of most municipalities and not-for-profit organizations in Italy (Ascoli and Bronzini, 2018). The combination of these aspects characterises also various projects[85] aimed at "housing inclusion of young people that have been recently implemented by state and non-state actors in the local welfare system of Milan" (Costarelli and Dodaro, 2021). Many of them are located in recent housing *sociale* developments (e.g., il Foyer di Cenni) (Costa, 2015) or in privately owned buildings (e.g., Grigioni2035 and Frattini Home) or in public dwellings within public housing neighbourhoods or mixed ownership buildings (e.g., Ospitalità solidale and Appennini Home). They are mainly managed by not-for-profit organizations and housing cooperatives, and they rely on activation principles and community welfare ideals[86]. In that they are coherent with "the mainstream rationale of local welfare system in Milan" (Costarelli and Dodaro, 2021, 124). In 2018 some of the managing organization of these projects fostered the creation of a network called Milano 2035 - Youth Housing Coalition, supported by the Cariplo Foundation's Welfare in Action program and sponsored by the Lombardy Region and the Municipality of Milan. The project was initiated to increase the Milanese metropolitan area's capacity for housing solutions tailored to the needs of young people, increasing the number of 18–35-year-olds who can move to Milan or who, already resident there, can live independently of their families of origin (European Responsible Housing Awards Handbook, 2022). The network comprises 22 housing projects, divided into individual residences/buildings or spread over wider areas, for a total of some 300 beds (https://milano2035.it/le-residenze, visited July 12th, 2022). The formulas put forward vary: youth cohousing, residences that house young people and those with frailties, private accommodation in intergenerational shared housing, apartments in public housing. The reason for creating a coalition was to reinforce the single projects, which were often isolated, to share experiences, to transfer methodologies of work and to become a critical mass to put forward the youth housing issue on the political agenda. The Coalition explicitly sets its promotional action in the frame of collaborative housing.

> The Milano2035 residences offer young people, students, and workers (20-35 years old), housing opportunities at affordable prices by proposing a new way of living, based on sharing and solidarity

[84] The definition of specific allocation criteria and selection processes is also meant to contribute to revenues stability decreasing the risk of arrears.
[85] For an overview of these projects, see https://milano2035.it/le-residenze, 7 February 2023.
[86] The idea of a welfare system in which citizens and territorial communities play a major role in delivering social services and in creating social safety nets based on trust at local level has been fervently promoted by the major bank Foundation in Lombardy, Fondazione Cariplo, through substantial fundings, policy documents and dissemination meetings (see, for example, the program *Welfare di Comunità e Innovazione Sociale* and the call for fundings *Welfare in azione*).

> between neighbours. Collaborative Living allows young people to play an active role in the condominium and in the neighbourhood in which they live, putting their skills and interests at the service of the community, organizing social lunches, recreational activities, homework assistance, tending to the shared garden and common. (https://milano2035.it/il-catalogo-delle-residenze-di-milano2035, visited February 13th, 2023).

This description recalls both the drivers which have been characterising large numbers of collaborative housing initiatives after the Global Financial Crisis i.e., affordability and social inclusion (cfr. 1.2). Affordability has been a major issue within the network. As the provision made available through the project is heterogeneous concerning typologies, costs and conditions, a specific effort has been made by the organizations to define the maximum costs that make housing affordable.

> Collaborative Living allows young people to feel part of a community, even if they have recently arrived in the city, even when relatives and friends are far away. Collaborative living consists of engaging a few hours of the week in activities that enhance the skills and interests of young people and that are useful for the life of the neighbourhood: social lunches, courses, homework assistance for children, gardening. (https://milano2035.it/il-progetto, visited February 13th, 2023)

In both the presentations, social inclusion is referred mainly to young residents' condition. Collaborative living is promoted as an opportunity for young people to find a welcoming and cosy living environment (a community), where neighbours can become like friends, and to improve their social skills in the relation with their neighbours. Being an active citizen and neighbour is as well presented as a chance for personal improvement through the engagement in the relationship with others. Activation is thus more a scope which has to do with values (what means to be a good neighbour and citizen) than a project request. On the other hand, of the social components which usually defined collaborative housing (Czischke and Huisman, 2018; Fromm, 2012) only one is recalled, i.e., the establishment of reciprocal relationships between residents and with the surrounding neighbourhoods, while the participation of residents in housing provision and management is not mentioned. Of course, the contents and the way the projects are presented convey the feature of the web site, which is also used to promote the type of provision offered within the Coalition framework. Recognized the effort to overcome fragmentation made by the Coalition project, as the ways in which collaborative living is intended and practiced vary across the projects of the network, as wide is the range of housing solutions provided, it is useful to look deeply at one of the initiatives to discuss how and what types of collaboration are played in the daily unfolding of the project. My first case study is a social housing project, called *Ospitalità Solidale*, in which public dwellings are temporary allocated at affordable rent to young people who commit to engage in community-oriented activities on a regular basis. The case study is described in the next chapter.

3.3 Socio-economic changes in Turin: a city still in transition[87]

In the last years Turin has been characterised by a steady reduction in the number of residents (Città di Torino, 2021). Moreover, it has been playing a minor attractive role for graduates compared to other metropolitan areas in Italy, like Bologna and Milan, as data between 2012 and 2018 testify (Omnia Torino, 2021). This trend is inscribed in a more general decrease in the number of young people aged 15-29 that dropped off dramatically in the city between 1993 and 2019 (Omnia Torino, 2021; Sicet, 2011). More precisely, the city attracts university students, especially thanks to established and long-standing national and international role of the Polytechnic (Power, 2016), while it is less able to keep young highly skilled professionals in the city. In a study conducted in 2021 in the city by four not-for-profit organizations on a sample of 511 youths between 15 and 29 years old what emerges is "an alarming impoverishment of the production industry which has caused the disappearance of renowned business companies over years" (117). Turin was the former Italian industrial capital (Tulumello and Caruso, 2021) as its economy was dominated by the well-known car industry, Fiat, which had been attracting workers to the city since its birth at the end of the nineteenth century. After the Second World War, immigrants were mainly from Southern Italy. As Power (2016) highlights piecing together the main features of the city history, Fiat also acted as a welfare provider for his workers, especially in relation to housing. As huge working population arrived in Turin over time to work in the big factories (e.g., Fiat and Olivetti) and in "small off-shoot production and service companies that plugged gaps in supply chains and specialist skills for major companies" (Power, 2016, 13), the need to adequately house large number of people and families became pressing. Fiat contributed to build worker neighbourhoods, such as Mirafiori, outside the main city. Since the oil crisis in 1973, Fiat began to decline, and different waves of restructuring were undertaken. By the 1990s the number of workers in the industrial sector strongly declined. Unemployment grew and the population decreased. Meanwhile, immigration from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America accelerated between the 1980s and the 1990s (Power, 2016; Governa and Saccomani, 2008). In 2021 they represented 15% of whole residents (Città di Torino, 2021). Their growing presence in the city can also be seen in the applications for public housing: while in 1995 they represented 17% of the total, in 2012 they grew up to 47% and to 49% in 2018 (Città di Torino, 2021; Governa and Saccomani, 2008).

The crisis of industrial economy was a common feature between Turin and several other European cities. In those years, Turin became part of European Union funded urban networks and exchanges which aimed at addressing these profound transformations. The economic development of the city in the following years was linked to the emergence of an IT innovative sector linked to the Polytechnic and to the investment in tourism based on the city's historic heritage. From the physical point of view, plans to renew decaying working neighbourhoods and brownfields were set in the Strategic Plan. A turning point in the history of the city is the Winter Olympic Games in 2006. Thanks to their success, Turin gained much more visibility on the international scene and tourism became one of city's major successes. In addition, the expansion of service

[87] Interviewed during a podcast organized for the 2023 AnthroDay MI-TO – *Milano e Torino insieme per l'antropologia* (http://www.shareradio.it/anthroday-mi-to-milano-torino-insieme-lantropologia/, February 13th 2023), anthropology professor Carlo Capello refers to Turin as an "unresolved city: we know what it is not any more, while we cannot say what it has become" (my translation).

industries contributed to transform the economic basis of the city. However, the subsequent 2008 global crisis was particularly harsh in the city, as in whole Southern European countries (Petmesidou and Guillén, 2014). "Young workers in particular lost out and […] Levels of youth unemployment went through the roof, from a high of 25 per cent in 2010 to an astronomical 43 per cent in 2013" (Power, 2016, 30, 31). Cutting of public services were particularly impactful because wider austerity policies summed up with heavy debt exposure as the city received large investment loans from the European Investment Bank for its major infrastructure spending and the Winter Olympics. The economic recovery of the city is still ongoing, and it is based on four main elements: the expanding role of the Polytechnic, the growth of new industrial sectors (e.g., ICT and design), renewable and green innovation, and tourism (Power, 2016).

As regards housing, "up until 2008 the housing market was not characterised by overall growing prices" (Tulumello and Caruso, 2021), which remained, and generally still are[88], lower than in other Italian cities (Governa and Saccomani, 2008). In the first part of the 2000s, housing provision increased in the city following wide regeneration plans. The crisis pushed prices down (and reduced new constructions), but at the same time increased and enlarged housing hardship[89]. In 2020, 67% of resident households lived in homeownership. As in other big cities, the share of households in the rental sector is higher than the Italian average (Tulumello and Caruso, 2021). However, private rents were too high for households with low wages, short hours, or no work at all (Power, 2016). Applications for public housing were 6.791 in 2019 (the last call the city made). Since 1996 the city has been allocating around 530 public dwellings per year (in 2021 they were 595) (Città di Torino, 2021). Public housing counts 17.439 flats which represents 3,5% of the total housing stock in the city. Despite the public stock is among the largest in Italy, it is largely underestimated if compared to the demand (Governa and Saccomani, 2008). So, "despite housing prices being relatively low in terms of the national comparison, Turin is characterised by serious housing needs" (Tulumello and Caruso, 2021, 880). Since the 1990s, Turin emerged as a lighthouse in urban regeneration and housing policy within the national context. In the next section, I discuss the main distinctive features of the regional and municipal policy frames which have contributed to its reputation and to the current situation.

3.3.1 The "happy anomaly"[90]

In the previous section, I outlined the main elements of the housing demand in relation to the historical turnarounds the city went through. In the current paragraph I focus on public policies developed at local level in the framework of national traditional weaknesses related to housing issue.

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[88] Given that, in 2021 rents grew by 2% on average compared to the previous year (Città di Torino, 2021). In August 2022 the most important daily newspaper of the city, La Stampa, created by Fiat's founder, reported a growth in buying and selling in real estate and housing prices. This data is represented as good news for the city: "prices go up for everything, even for real estate. But in this case it is not bad news because it shows that the city is gaining value, starting from a market in crisis and from particularly low costs when compared with the other provincial capitals" (https://www.lastampa.it/torino/2022/08/17/news/casa_a_torino_aumentano_prezzi_e_compravendite_e_un_nuovo_ciclo_per_limmobiliare-6702630/, February 15th 2023).

[89] As testified by evictions, whose number reached the peak in 2014 when more than 4000 households lost their homes (Città di Torino, 2021).

[90] The title of the section is inspired by the Bricocoli's presentation "The context: Urban regeneration policies in Italy. Why Torino is unusual?" for the City Reformers Workshop, Torino19-20th May 2008. The unusual feature of Turin questioned by the author refers to the urban policy the city developed since the 1980s compared to the national context.

According to Power (2016), the 1990s were characterised by the emergence of more collaborative and participative ways of working both between institutions and between institutions and citizens fostered by at-that-time major of the city. The framework was the definition of the new Master and Strategic Plan of the city for long-term development of post-industrial Turin. One of the axes of these transformations was the renewal of central and more peripheral neighbourhoods where the poorest parts of the population concentrate, and which were in bad maintenance conditions. Their regeneration was supported by European and national funds through complex programs (e.g., Neighbourhood Contracts, URBAN, etc.) which pushed local governments to address urban issues through a more integrated policy approach than in the past. Integration refers to different aspects of policy making and implementation: integration among different policy measures (physical, economic, social), among institutions and policy actors, including residents (vertical and horizontal), and among different sources of funding (Bricocoli, 2008; Governa and Saccomani, 2008[91]). These features can be found also in the initiatives promoted by other Italian cities. However, the aspect identified as distinctive of Turin is the role of the city government: "despite the intervention of bank foundations (mainly as supportive funders) and the non-profit sector (active agents on the ground), this strategy is framed by municipal and regional programmatic documents (see Regione Piemonte 2007; Città di Torino 2008) and centred on the coordination of the municipality" (Tulumello and Caruso, 2021, 882). The establishment in 1998 of the *Progetto Speciale Periferie* (Special Peripheral Neighbourhoods Project), then *Settore Periferie*, a stable sector within the public administration, derives from the willingness of the city administrators and politicians to look at urban regeneration taking place in Turin in a comprehensive perspective with a leading role played by the public actor both from a strategic and operational point of view (Power, 2016; Governa and Saccomani, 2008). The same principles and role of public actors characterised the development of experimental housing policies outside the framework of regeneration programs. Since the 2000s the Municipality has been developing a set of public policies which mix heterogeneous initiatives (Governa and Saccomani, 2008). The aim is to combine "the more traditional actions, mainly focused on public housing, with the creation of an alternative system oriented towards the market" (Città di Torino, 2021, 41). This objective derives from both the recognition of the ever-growing reduction of public resources for housing and the acknowledgment of the increasing diversification of housing needs (Città di Torino, 2021; Filandri and Autigna, 2015). The explicit stress towards the role of the market in solving the housing issue and the use of public resources to encourage it are seen by some authors as "a clear relationship with neoliberal policies (Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017, 184) of Municipality's interventions.

[91] For the analysis of the problems and shortcomings of urban regeneration programs and policies developed in Turin since the 1990s, see Governa and Saccomani (2008). One of the pitfalls is linked to the use made of social mix as tenure mix. The introduction of different tenures than public housing was promoted also within regeneration projects with a twofold objective: preventing neighbourhood stigmatisation and fostering social mixed relations. Briefly, the shift of public resources towards housing interventions targeted to middle-class (homeownership, cooperative housing) through the promotion of tenure mix is identified by Governa and Saccomani (2008) as a potential feature of neoliberal housing policies which exacerbate the exclusion of the poorest.

The different initiatives promoted by the Municipality, coherently with the policy frame designed at regional level[92], can be grouped in four typologies. First, tools to encourage the matching between housing demand and provision in the market. In 2000 the Municipality established the *Agenzia Sociale Comunale Lo.C.A.Re.* the main aim of which is to allocate incentives to those private owners who accept to rent out their apartments at a below the market rent (the so-called *canone concordato*, cfr. 2.1.2) to households in emergency with enough financial resources to pay the set rent. Second, subsidies[93] aimed at avoiding evictions in the private market. Third, the enlargement of public housing stock through the purchase of flats spotted in different parts and buildings in the city to avoid concentration rather than the construction of new ones. Lastly, the promotion of housing *sociale* projects. As "the same expression - which has entered common language in the last years - housing *sociale* in one territory rather than in another refers to interventions that can be very different from each other" (Filandri and Autigna, 2015, 340, my translation), it is necessary to clarify which kinds of projects are considered part of this type of provision in the city of Turin. According to the guidelines of the region (2007), the provision of housing *sociale* is split in two typologies: temporary and long-term rental stock. The first one includes two kinds of provision too: both single and shared apartments (social hotels, cohabitation and solidarity condominiums, collective residences) to provide a first support in moments of transition during the life course and to foster social inclusion (Sicet, 2011). Their main feature is to match a temporary and affordable housing solution with a support service tailored to the beneficiaries' different needs of assistance (work, health, etc.) (Autigna and Filandri, 2016). This kind of provision can be addressed also to highly vulnerable situations. The support service is supposed to lead beneficiaries to more stable social and housing situations within a set maximum period (usually 36 months). We have already discussed the pitfalls of an "optimistic approach" to social integration (Tosi, 2018) in 2.3.1. However, in the case of Piedmont and Turin, what is interesting to look at is the effort to complement housing initiatives with social policies both in governance (between and within institutions and between different actors) and policy implementation to reach that goal (Autigna and Filandri, 2016; Costa, 2015). This integrated approach is coherent with the methodology designed and applied since the development of the great regeneration programs of the 1990s and the 2000s. The general approach is developed differently in policy and practice through specific organizational layouts and tools, especially in these housing *sociale* projects which are characterised by the compresence of both public and private actors and organizations. The same complex and multifaceted approach which characterises the Municipality's policy on housing can be encountered also in the set of public policies designed to support youth' housing autonomy during the last two decades.

3.2.2 Housing policies for young people in Turin

Within the initiatives promoted by the region in the "*Programma casa: 10.000 alloggi entro il 2012*" (2006) one was specifically targeted to young people. In line with the tradition of housing policies in Italy (Costa

[92] See "Programma casa: 10.000 alloggi entro il 2012" (2006) and "Le linee guida per il social housing in Piemonte" (2007). Filandri and Autigna (2015) provide an overview of the main housing intervention of the Piedimont region during the period 2004-2013.

[93] The *Fondo salvasfratti* and the measure *Promozione dell'Abitare Sociale* share the same objective employing different mechanisms. The second tool was created in 2021 and strengthened during the Covid-19 pandemic when more households experienced increasing difficulties in paying rents regularly because of job loss or the reduction of working hours.

2015), this initiative aimed at supporting access to homeownership for young people through the allocation of a grant to restore their apartment (Sicet, 2011). However, despite this measure testifies the increasing presence of young people's housing needs in the public agenda, it supports people and households who already have a house and excludes those in the rental sector or in search for housing independence who cannot afford to become homeowners (Filandri and Autigna, 2015). Apart from this measure targeted to people under 35 years old, the regional program is overall oriented towards supporting affordable rental housing provision. During the last two decades, Turin's housing policies have been mainly focussed on the promotion of affordable rent (Costa, 2015). The massive reduction of public resources for housing is explicitly referred to in the official documents as the main reason for "leaving part of the answers that public housing is no longer able to give to the dynamics of the market" (Città di Torino, 2009, 6, my translation). This is one of the principles that have been guiding the city's housing policies, also those specifically targeted to youth.

As already pointed out, age is not an eligibility criterion for public housing. However, age can be used to select among applicants for public housing. As happens in Lombardy (cfr. 3.2.1), young singles or families with young members can be given a priority in the allocation process to reach specific objectives. While in Lombardy housing legislation[94] stresses social integration goals within regeneration projects[95], in Piedmont the key policy concept is social mix with a specific focus on de-stigmatising deprived public housing neighbourhoods. In 2007 the Municipality of Turin allocated 20% of the whole annual available stock to young households with the explicit intent to foster social mix. However, the quantitative impact of this measure is low in numbers as only 140 dwellings were allocated through the municipal call (Sicet, 2011).

Coherently with the overall housing strategy developed during the years (cfr. 3.23.1), the Municipality designed a set of measures involving not just the public housing stock, but also market resources to deal with young people's housing needs. Within the activity of *Lo.C.A.Re*, a set of incentives for owners and subsidies for young tenants have been implemented to increase the stock in the market offered to this target. The project *Stesso Piano* addresses the private market stock as well. It promotes cohabitation among youths in private rental apartments providing a support service for both private owners and young tenants. Besides a consultancy service on legal contractual aspects, the project allocates subsidies to both owners and tenants to reduce tenancy risks and to support young tenants with entry costs. The project was designed by a youth association, supported by public and private[96] funds and now it is managed by a professional organization selected by the Municipality. *Stesso Piano* is now referred to as one of the projects of collaborative housing promoted by the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation (https://www.compagniadisanpaolo.it/it/progetti/stessopiano/, February 20th, 2023) within its housing mission. The reference to cohabitation as a type of provision which can contribute to affordability remains the main feature of the project (Costa, 2015). Cohabitation and social mix are the key drivers of another program targeting young people called *Coabitazioni giovanili solidali*[97], which is one of the

[94] Art.11, commi 7 e 8, *Regolamento Regionale* 1/2004.

[95] which have later included housing *sociale* projects, where young people mostly deserve attention (Costa, 2015).

[96] The Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, the most important bank foundation in the region, has been supporting the project since the beginning, first within its Housing program and now within its mission *Abitare tra casa e territorio* (Living between home and territory).

[97] A possible translation of this expression is Youth house sharing for mutual support.

case studies of my research. In exchange of the possibility to access public housing on special terms (e.g., they benefit from a reduced rent), young residents "are expected to help the community on a voluntary basis, looking after shared areas and supporting public housing residents in accessing needed services" (Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017, 196). The overall aim of the program is stimulating greater social cohesion and integration thanks to the presence of a more variegated social and cultural mix of residents in deprived public housing neighbourhoods[98]. More than being referred to as a measure to address the housing problems of young people, the program has been promoted within the municipal housing legislation[99] aimed at achieving social mix in public housing neighbourhoods characterised by high levels of deprivation. Two strong ideas emerge from the planning documents. First, allocation by exceptions is used to "correct imbalances in the composition of the social fabric" (*Progetto per l'attuazione del mix sociale negli ambiti ERP con maggior difficoltà e disagio*, 2004, 1, my translation), by introducing for example richer households than those who can access public housing. The assumption is that of role modelling which has traditionally supported social mix policies over the past years (Costarelli, 2017). The enrichment of the socio-cultural mix is intended to disseminate shared social norms and values. In particular, the type of social mix achieved through the *Coabitazioni giovanili solidali* is oriented towards very specific social values: "the growth of civic responsiveness and the culture of coexistence" (*Progetto per l'attuazione del mix sociale negli ambiti ERP con maggior difficoltà e disagio*, 2004, 3, my translation). As I discuss later more in detail, this distinctive feature is linked to the genesis of the program. *Coabitazioni giovanili solidali* was born from an experimentation made by a voluntary juvenile association strongly devoted to the promotion of youths' active citizenship. Second, the kind of social mix promoted by the Municipality is achieved through a detailed profiling and selection of residents and it is aimed at fostering social cohesion and integration. As discussed in 1.2.1, these are all topics which have been put under observation and confutation by many scholars. However, much research suggests that the success of social mixing policy depends on the conditions of the wider context (Costerelli, 2019b) and that continuing, deliberate and inclusive actions aimed at encouraging people who wish to interact and hang together are essential factors to try to provoke the so-called people-based effects of social mix (Mugnano and Palvarini, 2013; Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017). In the analysis of the case study, I look deeper at the conditions and features of the active involvement of young residents within the framework of the program.

To conclude, this overview of housing policies and projects testifies the distinctive features (i.e., strong role played by the Municipality, integration between different actors and financial resources, intersections between different policy fields) of the approach of the city of Turin compared to other cities in Italy concerning housing for the youth. I summarise here what I consider the possible reasons for these peculiarities. As discussed in 3.2, the decline of the youth population in the city and the hard impacts of subsequent economic crisis on residents in general and young people in particular have probably brought the issue to the public agenda before and more urgently compared to the rest of Italian largest urban areas. Civil society organizations experimented

[98] *Programma per l'attuazione del mix sociale negli alloggi ERP – Individuazione alloggi ed approvazione criteri di selezione dei progetti di coabitazione solidale* (2009).

[99] *Progetto per l'attuazione del mix sociale negli ambiti ERP con maggior difficoltà e disagio* (2004) and *Piano Casa 2008-2009* (2008).

pilot bottom-up projects which have been then scaled up by the Municipality also thanks to the support of resourceful and committed philanthropic organizations. The Municipality has been playing a pivotal role in enabling and holding together diverse initiatives and in mobilising different resources. Finally, the tradition of integrated approach in urban policy promoted since the great regeneration programs of the 1990s contributed to build the policy category of young people as resources to deal with the problems characterising the social fabric of the city.

4. Between familiarity and distance: methodological challenges for the researcher

In this chapter I present and discuss the research design, including the methodology and a description of the case studies. Particular attention is given to what it meant to me to have a dual identity[100] as a practitioner and a researcher within my research study and my doctorate path. I explore and discuss the questions and issues which arose during the first phase of research design and definition and the following data collection stage. The tensions linked to my "dual nature" (Arber, 2006) brought me to reflect upon methodological issues, but also, more broadly, to consider the sense this experience has for me and my professional development. In this respect, I found inspiring a discussion about the de-politization of the third sector in Italy during the presentation of a research book by Citroni[101] at the University of Milano Bicocca at the end of 2022. As already mentioned in chapter 1, the de-politicization of social policies and practices (Busso, 2017) affects contemporary urban and housing policies too. As a practitioner in the Milanese housing Third Sector (more precisely in a housing cooperative), the review of the literature about current trends in welfare policies (marketization and emphasis on effectiveness, individualization of responsibilities, co-optation risks for civil society actors, etc.) brought me to deeply question my professional role within a system of social protection which seems to overlook justice and equality issues. Recognizing those macro trends within the daily practice of my work made the risk of co-optation by neoliberal discourses and strategies more evident and sometimes overwhelming. At a certain point, the issue of the dual identity turned around and my concern focused on what role the knowledge I was gaining through my study should have in my daily work. The answer to this point in question would have had an impact also on the goal and design of my research. Was the aim to provide policy advice to overcome the pitfalls of certain policies and strategies? And if so, to whom this advice should be directed (to my organization, to policy actors at local level., etc)? I needed to untangle my thoughts which were risking freezing me rather than helping to identify a direction for my research project. Unfortunately, the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which broke out during the first year of PhD, and the overlapping between research and work did not let me develop and join networks of other PhD students, which could have helped through informal discussions. On the other hand, I found it beneficial to share my doubts with my supervisor and to participate in international conferences where I could both listen to other research presentations and share my research steps to collect ideas and suggestions. The (re)-politicization of my work seemed to me an overly ambitious goal to attach to my PhD[102]. Considering re-politicization a process rather than the goal of my PhD and my research as a step within this process has been helping me to cope with both expectations and ambiguities. If politicization is interpreted as proposed by Citroni[103], i.e., "to take it away from the given for granted in order to question it" (my translation), then my research can contribute to get through the heuristic part, prelude of possible reviews of practices. Going further, neither to overlook the

[100] I am currently a PHD candidate and a practitioner in a housing cooperative in Milan, where I work as both project manager and community worker in different neighbourhood teams. I am attending a PHD executive as my cooperative and the University signed an agreement, so my research project is strongly linked to my professional experience.
[101] *L' associarsi quotidiano. Terzo settore in cambiamento e società civile* (2022).
[102] And probably a cause of clear failure.
[103] This is the approach proposed by Citroni during the above-mentioned book presentation.

embedded nature of my PhD nor to interpret politicization as an individual process of knowledge and political awareness, I plan to socialise my findings and thoughts with my colleagues at the end of the research. The aim is not to give them advice, rather to open spaces of discussion on concepts and practices taken for granted and share tools which allow reflexivity in daily practices.

From a methodological point of view, I decided to approach the dual identity issue through reflexivity, accounting for and discussing the specific positioning of the researcher during the investigation. The following two sections are organized as follows. In the first one I present and discuss the methodological choices I made during the research, including the selection of the case studies and data collection, and I share some reflections about my personal experience of doing research during the pandemic and about my dual identity. The second section is focussed on the description of the two case studies.

4.1 Methodology

Redefinitions and realignments have been key features of my doctorate study. The reasons are manifold, linked partly to personal conditions, partly to external factors. At the beginning, my idea was to find a balance between closeness and distance from my working experience[104] through the definition of the research questions and the selection of the case studies which can hold together these two dimensions. I started exploring the literature about social innovation, which I was not familiar with, focussing on housing, which instead is the issue I have been working on since the beginning of my professional career. Social innovation could have been a theoretical lens, distant enough from my knowledge and logic, through which observing and analysing cases close to my working experience. The same attitude between closeness and distance inspired the first selection of cases. My first intention was to compare social innovation in public housing neighbourhoods in Milan and Barcelona through the analysis of the initiatives developed by citizens and local civil society networks to cope with and answer to increasing unmet housing needs. Between the two, Milan was (for me) the well-known case, while Barcelona emerged as the benchmark in Europe for innovative housing policies after the GFC. For the case of Barcelona, as I did not know the city, I would have needed to conduct preliminary exploratory work to outline the contextual features – economic, political, social history and the local welfare system, which would have been useful also for the selection of case studies within the city. Concerning Milan, my plan was to select initiatives where I did not have any form of interest or role related to my professional position.

The encounter with theory and the review of literature was a hard one. As Bartunek and Rynes (2014) argue in their discussion on the tensions regarding academic-practitioner relationships, “practitioners rarely (if ever) begin with literature reviews as a way to frame their questions, while academics do so as a matter of course” (1184). This is an example of the differing logics of academics and practitioners influencing the way in which problems are defined. In my case a further element of complexity is the dual identity: academic and practitioner are the same person. However, I can say that my prevailing logic was at that time the practitioner’s one, so the definition of a coherent and sharp theoretical framework for my research was an extreme challenging task. As the shifting between study and work started to acquire a certain rhythm, the Covid-19 pandemic broke out and harsh restrictions to personal and collective life were imposed. The first lockdown in Italy started at the

[104] Which was a main issue of concern along the whole period.

beginning of the second half of my first year of PhD, when I was still in the research design process. The restrictions heavily impacted on people and families' everyday life: schools were closed, and many workers were forced to work from home. Time became an even scarcer resource and the balance between life-work-research a hard task to achieve. Regular adjustments have been necessary from the beginning, but at the time of restrictions I had to put into place diverse strategies to cope with the new situation (e.g., working when my child was sleeping) (Manzo and Minello, 2020). As a mother, it was hard for me to devote time to my own work while my little child was at home (Banerjee, 2021). The need for concentration and continuity clashed with pressing household and childcare responsibilities, thus making the situation very stressful. The uncertainties about near future brought me to redefine the research project according to the new conditions. The possibility to move abroad to do fieldwork seemed to me an extremely unlikely option. As time went by, I was also supposed to start data collection. Then I decided to better enhance my working experience within the research project. I move back to my first research interest, which was to look at projects and policies where social mix is used to promote social interactions in diversity. I reversed my perspective focussing on policy making and practice, instead of bottom-up processes which were far both from my personal and professional experience. The need to streamline time and knowledge brought me closer to my working experience, which I have tried to avoid since the beginning. The selection of the case studies is affected by this turn, too.

4.1.1 Research questions and case study selection

Research problem and questions became clearer and more defined during the data collection phase. The purpose of my research is to explore how activation strategies are being applied within housing policies and what kind of effects they provoke. As Bonvin (2008) reminds "the trend towards activation in contemporary social policies […] is by now well documented" (367). However, activation has been mainly studied in relation to unemployment and social assistance. In a broader perspective, new welfare policies aim at promoting "the activation of citizens in building their own social condition" (Andreotti *et al.*, 2012, 1929). Activating housing policies can be ascribed to this logic: "the beneficiaries of this kind of housing measure are invested with the responsibility to build part of the local social protection infrastructure" (Frangioni, 2022, 539, my translation). The spread of activation principles and strategies within housing policies is a more recent trend. One reason for this "translation"[105] (Bricocoli and Cucca, 2016, 88) could be the increasing permeation between social and housing policies at local level since the 1990s (Frangioni, 2022). In those years, area-based programs targeted specific territorial contexts with the purpose of improving both their physical and social environment through a multidimensional set of actions (Mugnano, 2017). This tendency has grown stronger with the development of the so-called "second generation housing policies" (Olagnero, 2018, 27, my translation) which broaden their goal towards social inclusion. As active welfare policies, the aim of which is the reintegration of beneficiaries into the labour market in a short-medium span of time, housing policies seek to get people back to ordinary housing solutions as soon as possible (preferably owned). Beneficiaries' skill and commitment towards

[105] In their article, Bricocoli and Cucca (2016) refer to the "translation of the concept [of social mix] in different contexts" (88). Here I borrow this expression to indicate the transfer of the concept of activation within different policy domains (social and housing policies).

activation is both the precondition to be included in such kind of social protection and the essential ingredient to become independent from it (Olagnero, 2018). In the selection of the case studies, I focussed on a specific configuration of housing policies which employs activation not just for receivers' own benefit, but also to promote social inclusion of vulnerable people in deprived contexts through the involvement of selected more skilled and resourceful residents (cfr. 1.1.3). This research choice is based on two factors: first, dual-level activation marks a further step in the shift of responsibilities from the state to individuals; second, it lets include in the analysis the spatial dimension which is an important lens in housing. This kind of conditional mechanism in housing increasingly involve young people (Dodaro and Costarelli, 2021; Costarelli *et al.*, 2020). As discussed in chapter 2, the youth have been experiencing increasing economic difficulties to access housing, especially in Southern European countries. They are usually included in the so-called *fascia grigia* (grey area) of demand (Costa, 2015), whose housing need is linked to a specific moment of transition in their life (Olagnero, 2018). However, data (FEANTSA and Fondation Abbé Pierre, 2021) show that the picture is more complex than that and that young people both experience specific conditions of difficulties on housing markets and social housing systems and share with other social categories similar problems in accessing and maintain a house. Targeting youth (while contributing to socially construct them) as a specific category of housing need is coherent with contemporary welfare strategy to increase categorization and to tailor policies on specific conditions and needs (individualization). Such partial representation of youth's housing problems helps nurture a policy approach based on prevention, temporary social protection and responsibilisation.

To study how activation is employed within housing policies targeted to youth I chose a qualitative, case study approach because my purpose is mainly descriptive and exploratory as the issue has not been deeply investigated in the literature yet (Yin, 2003) and such policy initiatives are still small in numbers. I contribute to this goal via two empirical case studies selected at urban level in the same national context. Recently, in several Italian cities, different housing projects and policies inspired by the philosophy of activation have sprung up. However, the overall picture is fragmented as there is not a coherent national urban and housing policy (Costarelli, 2018). Since the reform of the Fifth Title of the Constitution in 2001, regions have an exclusive competence of legislation on housing policies. Housing policies were traditionally handled by the central state (which continues to partially finance and legislate on the issue); nowadays regions have the tasks of programming and financing, orienting, and coordinating actions, while it is expressly addressed to local governments the responsibility of designing interventions that can address local housing issues. The local level has gained increasing relevance in the design, implementation, and financing of welfare responses in general and housing policies specifically (Andreotti *et al.*, 2012; Frangioni, 2022). Milan and Turin are the cities where the research case studies are embedded. The selected case studies are similar concerning the conditionality mechanism they use to address youth's housing problems through activation. Moreover, it is likely that the Milanese case study was directly inspired by the Turinese experience, as Turin has been considered for a long time as a lighthouse at the national level as regards urban and housing policies (cfr. 3.2.1). However, differences can be identified in the policy design of the two cases as well as in the contextual features (normative, socio-economic, historical, local welfare arrangements) in which they are embedded. My

hypothesis is that different institutional configurations in public and social housing policies at regional and municipal level, and the different origins, design, and governance of the two initiatives affect practices and policy outcomes. The goal of the analysis is to test whether and how the specificities of the two contexts contribute to provoke differences in the practices.

In the following table I sum up the main similarities and differences which are consistent with the research issue. Most of them were known before the research and they guided the selection of case studies. However, the research allows me to analyse the differences more in depth and to link them to different practices as I discuss in chapter 5. In chapter 2 (cfr. 2.3 and 2.4) I discussed more in depth some contextual features (normative, socio-economic, historical, local welfare arrangements) which I consider relevant aspects in relation to the discussion of the cases.

Similarities	**Differences**
Welfare regime at country-level characterised by high level of horizontal subsidiarity to families and the not-for-profit sector	Regional and local legislation on housing (e.g., different interpretation of housing *sociale*)
Local welfare systems inspired by community welfare ideals	The role of the Municipality in housing policies (enabler vs coordinator)
Housing systems characterized by high level of homeownership and limited stock of public housing	Organizational specificities within the public sector (sectoral-based logic vs integration/collaboration)
Young people experiencing a peculiar mix of late exit from the parental house and unfavourable conditions on the labour market	Two different housing markets within national, global, and financial dynamics (share of homeownership and rent, level of prices)
	Different economic fabric and historical developments

Table 1. Similarities and differences between Milan and Turin

Having said that, my research questions are the following:

- How does activation is intended and practiced in the two cases?
- What forms collaboration take in Ospitalità Solidale and in Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali? What are the factors that facilitate or discourage collaborative practices to develop in the two cases?
- Are there gaps between the goals of these initiatives, the actual practices, and their outcomes? What are the reasons and the consequences of these possible gaps?
- Which are the factors that can help understanding possible differences in the practice and impacts in Milan and Turin? Are these depending on the specific program or on the context?

4.1.2 Data collection

Data have been collected using semi-structured interviews and content analysis of official documents (policy documents, project proposals and reports)[106]. The first round of interviews to the cooperatives' practitioners and to young residents was between November 2020 and January 2021, and it was focussed on *Ospitalità Solidale*, the Milanese case study. In October 2021 I visited one of the locations of the project, Ca' Granda Nord neighbourhood, and joined a periodic collective meeting with practitioners and young residents. From May to December 2021 policy actors, practitioners, and young residents in Turin were interviewed. In July and September 2021, I made two field visits in the *Coabitazione* called *Filo continuo*[107] during which I first visited one of the apartments and second, I joined a street party organized by the young residents for their neighbours. The selection of this specific *Coabitazione* within the six operating at that time[108] is due to two factors. First, Acmos, together with *Il Punto* cooperative, was the only organization to manage two *Coabitazioni*. It is also the initiator of the project in 2008, so I decided to include it in the in-depth analysis. During the interview I asked Acmos' project manager to indicate one of the projects in which her organization was involved to examine in depth. She suggested *Filo continuo* because in her opinion it was the most articulated with a total of four apartments spread in two different buildings (a 21-story tower and a low building) characterised by different social context (families with children on one side and elderly people on the other). After the first round of interviews to practitioners, I selected two other *Coabitazioni* to further investigate together with *Filo continuo* to draw a more complex frame of the different organizations and practices developed within the same policy. I then selected *CasaSol* managed by *Synergica* and *Il Cortile* managed by *Il Punto*. The first one was interesting because the managing cooperative has a long-lasting mission and experience on the promotion of supported housing (and more recently on the innovation of social housing solutions), so it seemed the most similar to the Milanese case for its structured professional experience and approach in the field of housing for vulnerable people. The second one was *Il Cortile* managed by *Il Punto*, as suggested by the project manager during the interview. According to her, the context is livelier than in *Mirafiori* neighbourhood, where their other *Cabitazione* is located, and people are not new to interviews and observation because the case has already been studied. This should have facilitated the engagement of both young residents and sitting tenants. However, my attempts to include in the observation both *CasaSol* and *Il Cortile* did not reach the scope mainly because of young residents' and practitioners' overload.

All respondents were reached through a snowball approach. All the interviewed young residents were selected and first informed by the corresponding organizations' practitioners. Thus, they are probably among the most active and collaborative on the one hand, and compliant with the aims and strategies of the project on the other hand. Interviews were recorded, fully transcribed (and partially translated into English by the researcher) and

[106] The interviews' formats are contained in Appendix 1 at the end of this chapter.

[107] "Filo continuo takes its name from a type of semi-automatic welding that never stops. The metaphor is used to represent the intervention of Acmos within Spina 3, a formerly working-class area, which today is a neighbourhood undergoing reconversion and full of difficulties" (https://associazione.acmos.net/filo-continuo/, March 1st, 2023, my translation).

[108] In 2021 the *Coabitazioni* were a total of six: *CasaSol* managed by *Synergica* cooperative, *Il Cortile* and *L'Ingranaggio* managed by *Il Punto* cooperative, *Filo Continuo* and *Tessitori* managed by ACMOS association, and *Casa Barriera* managed by *LiberiTutti* cooperative.

coded. In Appendix 2 at the end of the chapter codes are linked to the profile and role of interviewees. I use a different classification for interviewees in Milan and in Turin (M for Milan in table 3 and T for Turin in table 4) to be able to immediately catch the reference to the specific case study while reading the excerpts in the text. I then integrated the transcriptions with personal notes from participant observation collected in the research logbook during site visits and informal meetings with project managers and community workers. Interviews to practitioners and young residents are different (see Appendix 1). The former is taught to gain information on the organizations' objectives and modus operandi within the overall framework of the projects. The latter seeks to explore both the imaginaries by which the young residents are inspired and their practices of interaction. For the analysis of *Ospitalità Solidale*

I could also benefit from 18 interviews made by the community workers of DAR=CASA and *Comunità Progetto* cooperatives to current young residents in both the locations of the project. The interviews were aimed at collecting youth's opinions and evaluations on the outcomes of the project regarding the relationships within the group of peers and with their neighbours, and the collective activities organized till then. They also asked for suggestions to improve the project. Even if the interview was not designed for the purpose of the research, but it was a tool for the professionals to help adjusting the project, I consider it an interesting source of data both to explore the practitioners' rationales at work and to deepen the residents' perspective. In order to distinguish them from the interviews purposely collected for the research, I use a different coding system as reported in table 5.

As data collection began during the end of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions forced me to switch from face-to face to virtual interviews using a digital platform. Even if during spring and summer 2020 the Covid-19 restrictions were softened, my interviewees preferred to meet virtually. I think this depends on the possibility it gives to manage their working time in a more efficient way, but also on a sort of habit we acquired during the hard times of the pandemic. Technology helped me too in managing and overcoming some personal difficulties arisen during the restriction periods. As a mother, it was hard for me to devote time to my own work while my little child was at home (Banerjee, 2021). Certainly, digital platforms proved to be a useful (and sometimes essential) alternative to in person fieldwork when it was not possible to go out and travel. However, as Pulker considers (2021) "they do not provide the same level of immersion in the physical notion of 'the field' and depth of observation that the physical field site allows. The level of spontaneity provided when immersed in the field disappears through these virtual media". For me, the virtual interviews I conducted in 2020 represented the only possibility to start my research, even if in a different way than I had planned at the beginning of my path. At the same time, I felt my emotional involvement when the young inhabitants share with me their will to plan new activities despite the uncertain future. In 2021 the fatigue caused by the stressful period manifested during the interviews and affected my ability to focus on the virtual meetings and their contents and dynamics. As I realized that, I followed Sennett's suggestion (2004) to use interviews not just to collect data for the research, but also as a chance to reflect on myself and on my position and attitude during the interviews and in my research in general. In doing so, I realized I tended to identify with my interviewees rather than feeling the differences between us. I think this attitude on the one hand gave me the comfort I

needed to start again meeting new people after a long period of relational pause; on the other, it is linked to my dual identity as practitioner and researcher. The challenge for me was to keep sympathy under control and to prefer "another form of engagement: empathy" (Sennett, 2012, 21), where attention and curiosity for others' stories and thoughts play a greater role in the relation than identification.

4.1.3 Between closeness and distance

In the logbook I used for my notes during the research, that on my positionality is a recurring thought. Scrolling through the notes I can find me discussing the issue at many times both theoretically and with reference to concrete episodes. It is from the report of a meaningful episode that I would like to start the discussion of this section. During the collective meeting with practitioners and young residents I joined in October 2021 in Milan, I sat in circle with the other participants and at the beginning I was presented in my double identity by the community worker[109] who led the discussion. I decided not to write notes during the meeting, so to focus my attention on the interactions between participants. During a break, a young resident sitting next to me asked me to help her about her situation. For a very specific reason she was told she had to leave the project as soon as she would have found another housing solution. She asked me to reconsider this position. I already knew her specific case as in the previous days my colleague discussed it collectively to catch ideas on how to behave with the young woman. So, when she asked me, I already knew both her case and the answer my colleague gave her. My reaction was to listen to her without mentioning I already knew what she was telling me and then suggesting speaking again with my colleague. However, I couldn't manage to be completely detached from my professional role and I explained her the reasons of my colleague's request to leave. I decided not to completely bypass her need to speak about her problem because even if I was there to observe for my research, I feel responsible for my professional role and I acknowledged the power attached to it. The young woman was losing her affordable housing in a moment of her life when she was probably more vulnerable, but this same condition of vulnerability was the reason why she could not be supported any more within the project framework. Looking at this tension brought me to identify in the practices the exclusionary risks of activation in welfare policies and the political nature of technical decision and tools in leading to social inclusion/exclusion. My decision not to present me just as a researcher, omitting my double role, came from the necessity to be transparent with the people I observed and interviewed. Not to tell them would have meant lying more than simply omitting a piece of information. On the other hand, to clarify my double position brought along the risk to get involved on other levels, as indeed sometimes happened. The tension between pure observation and participation was constantly playing throughout my research, also during interviews to professionals as I already discussed (cfr. 4.1.2). My attempt was to move between these two opposites trying not to come too close to participation during the different phases of the research. If distance is desirable in research for analytical reasons, it is a difficult task to achieve, especially in cases of dual identity. Adopting a reflexive approach meant of course to take notes to be aware of the roles, values, and rhetoric at stake during data collection and analysis, but also to consider my positioning one of the issues of my analysis. Even if I am not directly involved in the cases I selected, my professional style is embedded in the modes and values of my

[109] Indeed, she is also a colleague of mine as we both work for DAR=CASA housing cooperative.

organization and in the policy frame and public discourses about housing. Thus, my research analysis indirectly speaks about and to my work and pushes to be considered in its daily unfolding.

"Balancing involvement and detachment" (Arber, 2006), 153) informed the selection of the case studies, too. The choice of the main issue of my research (i.e., housing policies) is of course strictly linked to my professional experience and to the nature of my doctorate. However, the specific theme (activating housing policies for youth) is one I am not directly involved as a practitioner. This choice lays its reason in the attempt to balance familiarity and distance. The former helped me to get easier access to the field and to data; the latter let me decentralize from my own experience, at the same time telling me something about my work. I decided to control the possible influence on the research linked to my professional involvement selecting sites and initiatives where I do not have any form of interest or role related to my current professional position and informing the interviewees in advance.

4.2 Description of case studies

Both *Ospitalità Solidale* and *Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali* have a twofold objective. Addressing the lack of affordable housing for young people is one aim. At least since the 1990s, in Italy young people have been experiencing increasing economic difficulties to access housing (retrenchment of the welfare state, atypical employment, constraints to credit access, growing of housing prices and rents), so they spend more time in their parental home than in the past (Poggio, 2013). This situation hits harder in large urban areas, where the combination of "globalisation, which directed investment toward the economic competitiveness of cities and territories in preference to the welfare of their citizens" (Brokking *et al.*, 2017, 342) and financialization has brought to a rise in housing prices. The other objective is to foster social cohesion in deprived public housing neighbourhoods by enabling the development of supportive relationships between residents through the activation of young people. Residential proximity is considered an essential ingredient of this mix. Motivated young tenants live close to sitting public housing tenants and they are required to engage in social oriented activities in favour of their neighbours.

The weight of the two components is different in the two cases and within them. Policy aims are then differently interpreted and mixed in the practice.

4.2.1 *Ospitalità Solidale*: a pilot project to improve public housing estates in Milan

Figure 1. Building façades in *via del Turchino* (Ponti neighbourhood). Picture by Filippo Romano.

Ospitalità Solidale is a pilot project that offers low-cost housing in two public housing districts of Milan to young people aged between 18 and 30, who, in exchange, accept to devote part of their time to carrying out supportive neighbourhood activities in their own block and in the neighbourhood. The project is the result of a public-private partnership (Costarelli and Melic, 2021). In 2014, the Municipality of Milan launched a public tender for the use of property dwellings as part of the *Ospitalità Solidale* project, with which the city had participated in the invitation from the Prime Minister's Office - Youth Department to present projects in favour of youth policies. A partnership made up by third-sector organizations, two cooperatives and an association (DAR=CASA, Comunità Progetto and ARCI), won the public tender and now manages the project[110]. In the tender's document[111], the Municipality identified the following project objectives: the recovery of unused flats and spaces; the sustainable response to the housing needs of young people for whom it has become increasingly difficult to leave their family of origin due to precarious working conditions; the development of proximity services to support the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods where the dwellings are located; the improvement of social cohesion in these contexts, also thanks to the inclusion of different populations who are asked to take action with voluntary activities to create opportunities for interaction with the other inhabitants. As Dodaro and Costarelli summarise (2021, 125), "the aim of this project is twofold. On the one hand, it aims to facilitate access to affordable housing opportunities for young people. On the other hand, it seeks to boost social

[110] ARCI is not active in the project anymore, even if formally it is still part of the partnership.
[111] *Avviso pubblico per la concessione in uso gratuito di unità immobiliari di proprietà comunale (N. 24 ad uso abitativo e N. 3 ad uso diverso), site dei quartieri Ponti e Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo, per l'attuazione del progetto Ospitalità Solidale* (2014).

cohesion on building and neighbourhood level by increasing chances to create new social ties and solidarity relationships between tenants".

And as a young resident explained to me

> We give a minimum of 10 hours of voluntary work to develop projects that aim at making the neighbourhood more liveable, at connecting with the people who live in the neighbourhood. We try to create a dialogue in the neighbourhood to improve the quality of life in the neighbourhood. (M4, my translation)

The starting point is the recovery of an unused part of the public housing and non-residential stock through the deployment of extraordinary financial resources used to safeguard the "use value of housing" (Peverini, 2021). Social mix defined both in terms of age and resourcefulness (cfr. 1.1.3) is used in a pragmatic way to put a share of vacant dwellings back into allocation[112].

Ospitalità Solidale is located in two low-income public housing neighbourhoods (Ponti and Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo) in Milan's peripheral area.

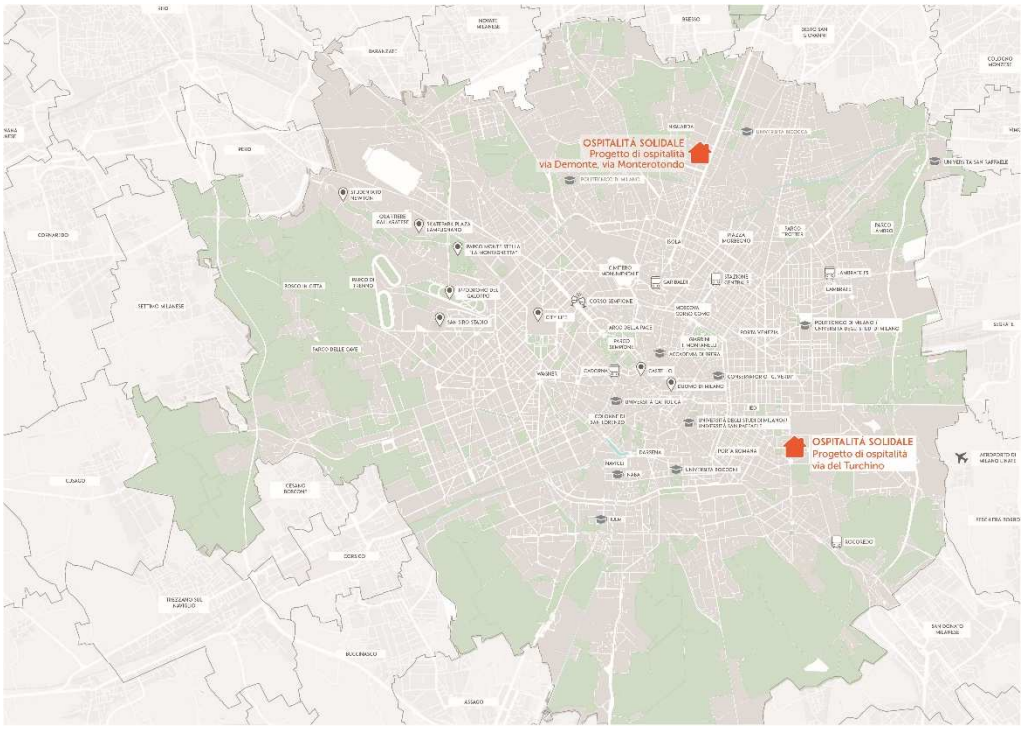

Figure 2. The two locations of the project within the city of Milan. Map by Rosa Lanzaro.

[112] The regional law 16/2016 introduced what it defines "strategies to improve the public housing stock alternative to alienation" (art. 31). Besides the long-lasting tradition of sale of public housing "for needs for rationalisation, cost-effectiveness and diversification of asset management" (art. 28), the region envisages other possibilities to use the stock to improve its condition. Among these: leasing at a subsidized rent, normally not less than 40 percent of the market rent; and leasing to intermediate subjects, such as not-for-profit associations and institutions, with statutory purposes of a social nature, which contribute to restoring the allocated flats.

Both the public housing neighbourhoods are characterised by poor building maintenance, many empty flats, a high proportion of lonely people, often elderly or disabled[113]. The problem of the concentration of small[114] vacant dwellings was (and probably still is) particularly relevant in both neighbourhoods (cfr. 3.1.1). According to the data provided in 2014 by the Municipality, in Ponti district, of the 332 dwellings, 70% were rented, 23% were empty and the remaining 7% were illegally occupied. In the Monte Rotondo district, of the 149 dwellings still owned by the Municipality (the district was affected by asset sale processes), 87% were rented, 5% were vacant and the remaining 8% were illegally occupied. As far as the Ca' Granda Nord district is concerned, the analysis concerns only via Demonte n. 8 (where part of the housing in the project is located): out of a total of 28 housing owned by the municipality, 54% was rented, 28% was vacant and the remaining 18% was illegally occupied. The project consists of twenty-four mini-flats (23 sq. each) scattered in different buildings and two common spaces, one in each neighbourhood, owned by the Municipality of Milan. In Milan, the Municipality does not directly run its public housing stock. Since 2014 council housing is managed by a public company, MM, which set up a special department to take over this task.

Initially the dwellings were empty. They were renovated and furnished thanks to the project's fundings. Flats are allocated to young people (18-30 years old) who study or have a temporary job with a short-term tenancy (from 6 months to 2 years) at 380 euro/month, including expenses. They benefit from a below the market rent, and, in turn, they must engage in community work for at least 10 hours per month. The allocation mechanism matches some classical allocation indicators (e.g., maximum monthly income) with subjective characteristics of applicants, such as personal attitudes, lifestyle, and individual preferences (Costarelli *et al.*, 2020), assessed through questionnaires and interviews by the organizations' practitioners. The decision to address young people is driven by two reasons: on the one hand, the type of apartments available, small flats which can more easily be thought of as temporary in a phase of life which is more subject to changes and deviations; on the other hand, from the recognition of a demand for housing at affordable prices and conditions expressed by young people who want to leave their parental family, but who collide with the limits of working flexibility and with the consequences of the precariousness of the labour market.

Name of the project	Target (years min - max)	Location	Flats (number)	Beds (number)	Type of contract	Lenght of contract (months min-max)	Deposit (€)	Costs (€/month)	Voluntary work (h/month)	Formal entry requirements
Ospitalità Solidale	18-30	Flats scattered in buildings located in two Public Housing neighbourhoods	24	24	Project subscription contract	6-48	300	380	10	No home ownership Monthly income < 1.500 € Proved temporary housing need

Table 2. Key features of *Ospitalità Solidale* project. Source: my elaboration on project documents.

[113] These data are contained in the technical document attached to the public call (*Allegato A – Documento tecnico dell'Avviso Pubblico del Comune di Milano*, 2014).

[114] Studio flats with an area of less than 28.80 m2. According to regional legislation, because of their small dimension, they cannot be allocated through the public housing waiting list.

The project partners select the young people to whom they allocate the apartments, carry out the property and facility management of the dwellings, support the young inhabitants in the planning and organization of solidarity neighbourhood activities matching on the one hand the features of and the needs arisen from the intervention contexts, and on the other hand the wishes and skills of the young people themselves. The two common spaces of the project represent a key resource for implementing social oriented activities with sitting public housing tenants. They have been hosting both informal and more structured activities (e.g., shared meals; film festival; after-school support for children; Italian classes for foreign women; second-hand market etc).

4.2.2 The social mix program *Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali* in Turin

Figure 3. The towers of Corso Mortara (Spina 3 neighbourhood). Picture by the author.

Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali is one of the policy lines which compose the multifaceted program[115] the Municipality has been promoting to foster social mix in deprived neighbourhoods or in new developments with a quota of public housing[116]. Since the 1990s, when the season of the urban regeneration projects funded by the EU began, the Municipality has been widely using tenure and socio-economic mix to reach both area-based and people-based purposes (Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017)[117]. The overall goal is "to promote greater social

[115] *Linee guida per la promozione del mix sociale negli insediamenti ERP* (2004); *Piano Casa della Città 2008-2009* (2008); *Programma per l'attuazione del mix sociale negli alloggi ERP – approvazione progetto* (2009).
[116] It was the case for example of the real estate complexes built at the time of the 2006 Winter Olympic Games for media and athletes and subsequently converted into public and subsidised housing.
[117] Research has progressively questioned the actual effectiveness of this kind of policies. For a discussion of some Turin cases, see Olagnero and Ballor (2010) and Olagnero and Ponzo (2017).

cohesion and integration [through the] enrichment of socio-cultural mix in those most marginal urban areas characterized by a high presence of public housing" (Città di Torino, 2004, 1 my translation). The pilot project from which the program *Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali* originated started in 2006 and it was promoted and managed by the youth association Acmos. The Municipality allocated flats to the association, which restored them with its own financial resources and set up a house-sharing community for young people. The neighbourhood was selected as it is characterized by bad maintenance conditions and high level of economic and social deprivation (measured by the share of households supported by social services). Young volunteers under 30 years old benefit from a reduced rent and in turn are expected to spend 10 hours a week in boosting interactions between sitting tenants, supporting them in accessing social and health services and promoting community development. Progressively from 2008, six more *Coabitazioni* have been started in partnership with the Central Piedmont Housing Territorial Agency (A.T.C.), which owns part of the public housing stock and manages also the share owned by the Municipality. In 2020 the first seven projects were reauthorized by the Municipality and the region[118] until 2026 and two more were approved for the first time.

Figure 4. The territorial distribution and numbers of the first seven *Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali*. Map by Matilde Albertini.

[118] *Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali* fall into the possibilities provided by the regional law on social housing approved in 2010 (L. R. 17 febbraio 2010, n. 3), in particular within the contents of art. 21: "reserve of public dwellings for social accompaniment, social support and conflict mediation" (my translation). Reserves need to be supported by project proposals submitted by Municipalities or A.T.C., approved and reauthorised by the region every five years.

Each *Coabitazione* is managed by a Third Sector organization (association or cooperative) selected through a public tender.

Name of the organization	Project flats (number)	Public housing flats in theneighbourhood (total number)	Volunteers (estimated number)	Starting year
ass. Acmos	4	142	4	2006
ass. Acmos	4	290	9	2008 e 2011
coop. Il Punto	3	207	7	2010
coop. Synergica	2	58	4	2010
coop. LiberiTutti	2	280	6	2014
coop. Il Punto	4	300	8	2014
Total	**19**	**1277**	**38**	

Table 3. Numbers and main data on *Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali* program. Source: my elaboration on Municipality's policy documents.

Flats are located directly to the managing organizations at a considerably reduced rent. They then sublet dwellings to young people from 18 to 35years old for a period of minimum one to maximum 3 years. The monthly sum they pay to the manager depends on the type of accommodation (single or double room; studio or larger apartment) and on the expenses for common services. In exchange of this possibility to access social housing on special terms, young volunteers "are expected to help the community on a voluntary basis, looking after shared areas and supporting public housing residents in accessing needed services" (Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017, 196). The activities young volunteers have been performing during the time range from informal ways to connect with people (e.g., chatting with neighbours in the courtyard, helping lone elderly with paperwork) to more structured activities designed according to the needs of the residents (e.g., after school support for children) and to the physical deficiencies of the buildings (e.g., garden cleaning, lobby painting). In 2019[119] the region stated that this kind of projects "must concern actions aimed at safeguarding and protecting the public housing stock and the surrounding areas through the implementation of small maintenance interventions in favour of the most degraded buildings" (5, my translation). For the organizations' practitioners and the young volunteers this change represented a turning point for their activity as they needed to find a new way to balance the material and the immaterial component of their action as the former has always been functional to bring residents together and improve their engagement in the care of common spaces and goods. As a practitioner of a cooperative explains

> And this maintenance thing, however, must make sense with respect to the project as far as we are concerned, so we have to play with this balance a bit. For us, animation in the care of common spaces makes sense because that is our role there, not doing maintenance. But over the years we have had access to a fund, and we have changed mailboxes thanks to that fund with a process done with the

[119] *Indirizzi e criteri per l'applicazione dell'art. 21 della Legge Regionale 17 febbraio 2010* (D.G.R. 4 ottobre 2019 n. 2-330).

> tenants. The letterboxes for the letters they abandoned were built together with the tenants, that is, we actually do that stuff there, in this way it falls within our comfort zone, we do it because it makes sense for the project. It makes no sense to paint the staircase. At least, it hasn't made sense to us yet, maybe tomorrow it makes sense for the project to do that piece there. But now we have this mandate so we will try to tell in the best possible way what has already been done, which is therefore: the space you live in is beautiful, you live there more willingly and since it is beautiful, let's keep it better. (T6, my translation)

The program consistency is guaranteed by the regular engagement of the city institutions, especially the Municipality, through a policy tool called *Tavolo di Coordinamento e Monitoraggio*. Every project has its *Tavolo* that meet on a regular basis, where the representatives of the city institutions, the organizations of the local networks and the young volunteers jointly supervise the project, discuss the problems and the new initiatives to undertake. The program is financially supported by Compagnia di San Paolo bank foundation, which facilitates the volunteers' coordination and sets up training courses tailored for their specific experience.

Appendix 1: Interviews' formats

Interview to practitioners

1. What role do you have in the organization and in the project?
2. How was the project born and what are the objectives that the association aims to achieve?
3. What problems does the organization intend to address through the action of young residents?
4. How do you work to reach them in the project districts?
5. What kind of professionals are involved in the project and what kind of work do they do, both for the young cohabitants and for the public housing tenants?
6. How and by whom are young residents selected? What characteristics should they have?
7. How do they relate to other active tenants/committees present in the neighbourhood?
8. Since the beginning of the project, have you noticed any changes in the neighbourhood and possibly which ones, in your opinion, are due to the presence of the project resources?
9. What kinds of interaction occur between the organization and the young residents on the one hand and the institutions involved in the project on the other?
10. In your opinion, have the activities experimented through the project somehow had an impact on the institutions' ordinary methods of action of the in their work in public housing neighbourhoods?
11. What do you think are the critical points of this policy model? [Question added in progress]
12. How has Covid-19 impacted the relationships and solidarity activities promoted by the project?

Interview to young residents

1. How did you know about cohabitation? What were you hoping to find and what did you find?
2. What does being a good neighbour mean to you (give real examples)?
3. How do you choose activities together? How do you manage to organize yourself with your ordinary activities?
4. Can you tell me about what activities you do, how you reach people, how you try to promote meetings with and between neighbours? Can you give me some examples?
5. Are there also people who approach you without you first go to them?
6. Have you observed that there have been any impacts of your presence in the neighbourhood?
7. If you want to add something important that you couldn't tell me before…

Interview to Ospitalità Solidale's young residents (made by the cooperatives' practitioners)

1. Your supportive neighbourhood relationships: which ones, how many, to do what.
2. Compared to the supportive neighbourhood activities carried out to date: what do you think has worked and what hasn't worked?
3. With respect to your commitment to the project, how do you evaluate the quantity and quality of your activation?

4. How do you consider your group's relations?
5. Suggest two aspects on which you think the project could improve.

Appendix 2: List of respondents

Code	Role of interviewees	Organization
M1	Project manager	DAR=CASA cooperative
M2	Community manager Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood	DAR=CASA cooperative
M3	Community manager Ponti neighbourhood	*Comunità Progetto* cooperative
M4	Young resident Ponti neighbourhood	
M5	Young resident Ponti neighbourhood	
M6	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood	
M7	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood	

Table 4. Interviews in Milan (November 20 – January 21).

Code	Role of interviewees	Organization
T1	Official in the Public Housing Department	City of Turin
T2	Head of Media Department	Central Piedmont Housing Territorial Agency (A.T.C.)
T3	Project manager and former resident *Coabitazione Filo Continuo*	ACMOS association
T4	Former young resident *Coabitazione Filo Continuo*	ACMOS association
T5	Young resident and coordinator *Coabitazione Filo Continuo*	ACMOS association
T6	Project manager *Coabitazione Casasol*	*Synergica* cooperative
T7	Project manager *Coabitazione Il Cortile*	*Il Punto* cooperative
T8	Advisor	Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo
T9	Young resident *Coabitazione Filo Continuo*	
T10	Former young resident *Coabitazione Filo Continuo*	
T11	Young resident *Coabitazione Il Cortile**	
T12	Young resident *Coabitazione Il Cortile**	

Table 5. Interviews in Turin (May - December 2021).

* These two interviews were collected through the project manager and fill in directly by the two residents who agreed to join the research even if they had not enough time to meet neither in person nor virtually. The interview was semi-structured as well, but the impossibility to meet in person stiffened the answers and the relation between the interviewer and interviewees.

Interview number	Role of interviewees
1	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood
2	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood
3	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood
4	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood
5	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood
6	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood
7	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood
8	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood

9	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood
10	Young resident Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhood
11	Young resident *Coabitazione Il Cortile**
12	Young resident *Coabitazione Il Cortile**
13	Young resident Ponti neighbourhood
14	Young resident Ponti neighbourhood
15	Young resident Ponti neighbourhood
16	Young resident Ponti neighbourhood
17	Young resident Ponti neighbourhood
18	Young resident Ponti neighbourhood

Table 6. Interviews to *Ospitalità Solidale* young residents made by the cooperatives' practitioners.

5. Practices of activation

This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the practices to derive possible answers to the research questions (cfr. 4.1.1). I frame the discussion following the research hypothesis according to which differences in contextual factors on one hand and in the origins, design, and governance of the two initiatives on the other affect practices and policy outcomes. Thus, I develop my discussion focussing on the peculiarities of each case rather than on the similarities.

The following three sections are organized as follows. In the first one, I discuss the joint presence in the Milan case of the two perspectives of activation (for the self and for the community) in the practices, discourses and approaches of both practitioners and young active residents. The multiple objectives requested by the project produce a complex articulation of proactive strategies and layers of action which need to be carefully and constantly managed to reach the goals. In the second section, I focus on the Turin case. The specific institutional arrangement of the program produces tensions in the positioning of the young inhabitants, who are committed to a recurring redefinition of their role within the *coabitazioni*. In the last section of the chapter, I consider space as a policy device used to facilitate youths' activation. The different spatial arrangements of the projects have an influence on how neighbouring interactions are encouraged, thus on how activation is practiced.

5.1 Multilevel youth activation in Milan

In *Ospitalità Solidale* youths' activation is identified as the main strategy (and one of the entry requirements) to reach the manyfold goals of the project, in particular the recovery of unused flats and spaces and the development of proximity services to support the inhabitants of the target neighbourhoods (cfr. 4.2.1). Activation is understood as the execution of supportive neighbourhood activities by young people who demonstrate to be available to carry out such activities in the target neighbourhoods (Comune di Milano, 2014). Thus, activation is viewed and practiced in a very pragmatic way as doing things together for the sake of neighbours and the surrounding environment. Youths' willingness to contribute to the well-being of their neighbours is a *conditio sine qua non* being accepted in the project (i.e., to get a flat at below-the-market rent). This entry requirement is the reason why the assessment and evaluation of personal characteristics is introduced in the selection of applicants (cfr. 1.2.1). And it also the main reason why they can access a welfare measure that otherwise they would not be eligible for (or for which they would have very few chances to access). Thus, activation is not neutral, rather it recalls very specific values and believes such as solidarity and mutuality. Both the Municipality and its project partners refer to the activities the young residents are asked to promote and join as *vicinato solidale*[120] (ARCI Milano *et al.*, 2016; Comune di Milano, 2014). Young residents must be committed to turn neighbouring from an anonymous and potentially conflicting condition into a proactive activity aimed at supporting their most vulnerable neighbours to improve social cohesion. Solidarity and mutuality are prompted in a top-down perspective firstly by the public actor which through this project aims at promoting specific behaviours and values in the same way the more traditional models of social mix have been doing (cfr. 1.2.1). The promoted model refers to active citizenship rather than to traditional middle

[120] Solidarity neighbouring.

class's behaviours and standards. The reference and use of volunteering in the conditionality mechanism is coherent with this frame.

In the discourses and working/volunteering practices of both professionals and young inhabitants, references to individual (self) activation emerge too. Through volunteering for and in their temporary community (Frangioni, 2022), the youth are supposed to enhance their skills and cultural expertise (Comune di Milano, 2014). In other words, they have the chance to improve their self-activation[121] which is considered to be useful in their path towards autonomous living. Here autonomy concerns both housing autonomy (the possibility to leave the parental home) and personal autonomy (Comune di Milano, 2014) where the adjective personal seems to refer to organizational and relational skills (cfr. 2.1.1). However, this supposed strengthening effect needs to be questioned because it risks allocating a major role to the improvement of personal skills, attitudes, and commitment in answering housing problems rather than focussing on the impacts of macro factors or at least considering the mix of both implications. A young interviewee describes how this relation develops in her case

> I would say that so far I have not particularly developed new skills regarding the type of activities in which I have been able to participate. I was certainly able to bring my skills in - relational skills, empathy, listening, which is still very nice and certainly strengthens every time you use them again, but I wouldn't say new skills, at least now in the type of projects we could do during this period. (M4, my translation)

It is possible that in practicing these skills she has also improved them and that this process can support her and the other young inhabitants in their future living, but these possible impacts need to be further studied and assessed.

Her description recalls the experimental laboratory for the practice of cooperation described by Sennett (2012). Social skills need to be learnt and trained in the practice. They are very important in societies characterised by increasing individualism to try to fill a social void. However, cooperation cannot solve the problems generated by the new welfare arrangements based on activation and self-responsabilisation (Sennett, 2004), and, I would say, by welfare state cutback and residualisation.

Values and the promotion of specific behavioural models underpin the promoted idea of youth autonomy too. Applicants are supposed not to be (enough) autonomous when they ask to be part of the project both from a housing and a personal point of view. And this condition is represented and dealt with as a lack of experience or knowledge rather than the result of structural conditions which hinder youth autonomy (cfr. 2.1.1)

> If the project is for 30 [years old] let's be clear, at 31 the situation doesn't change much, I don't think that in a year I will be able to afford accommodation on the market. I know I can only stay here for

[121] And the other way round: those youths who demonstrate a good degree of self-activation during the selection phase are chosen to be engaged in community volunteering.

> one year and all the relationships and things that can be built have a limit. I wish I could continue with the things I'm doing in here. The youth situation under 35 sucks. I know I'll have to move back to cohabitation. (Interview no. 17, my translation)

Through activation for the community a specific image of how to be a good citizen is promoted. A good young citizen benefits from welfare in a proactive way, coproducing his and others' welfare support. This attitude should prevent welfare dependency in favour of autonomy from needs, then from welfare (Newman and Tonkens, 2011; Sennett, 2004). Both practitioners and young tenants refer to welfarism in different parts of their interviews, marking the difference of their approach in community work based on activation

> What we do is not welfarism, things like that. There are organizations in the surrounding area that already deal with certain things, and we can put people in contact with them. So, if there were people who asked us about this thing about groceries, we'd put them in contact with the tenants' committee or things like that. Or there were a few people who asked me for psychological support during this period and so I gave them the number of the association that dealt with this thing. We act as an intermediary, if there are already existing realities it is easier, also because we are only passing through here, we don't stay for a long time. (M5, my translation)

> So, before in the neighbourhood we did various, that is, fixed activities that could be dinners in solidarity for the neighbourhood, with the neighbourhood, that is, our perspective has always been non-welfarist, but collaborative, so dinners with the neighbourhood in which everyone brings something where we all eat together and make the elderly person feel less alone. (M3, my translation)

In the first quote, the young resident defines her role with families and people she met. She interpreted it as a bridge towards those local organizations that already provide professional welfare services. Once directed, beneficiaries are supposed to play an active role in solving their problems contacting these organizations autonomously and asking for support. It is not clear from the interview whether this is the young resident's vision on the role she must play in the project or a shared interpretation between young residents and practitioners. More probably it emerges from both practitioners' organisational cultures shared with the youth and more implicit believes embedded in the practice of community work. The request for activation to the beneficiaries of the activities executed by the youth (i.e., the public housing tenants) emerges more explicitly in the second quote by a community manager of the project. Not just in accessing welfare services, but also in joining convivial moments, vulnerable tenants are expected and pushed to contributing in the making of the activity. Despite this emphasis on beneficiaries' self-activation, what clearly and largely emerges from the description of the activities set up by the young residents is their involvement in service provision for their public housing neighbours and the city. Service-like activities (e.g., after-school support for children, second-

hand market etc.) are tailored to the needs of public housing tenants and this was especially true during the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, young residents are at risk of being asked to fill a gap in welfare provision for the most vulnerable rather than promoting long-term solidarity for two main reasons: the conditional nature of activation and the time span of youths' permanence in the project. If overlooked, the power relation embedded in the conditionality mechanism risks producing conflicts which result in exit strategies by the young inhabitants rather than in spaces where it is possible to practice citizenship. Furthermore, it risks creating divisions among the group of youth, identifying those who do not properly volunteer as defective or dishonest. As it emerges from the following quotes, the picture is complex, sometimes conflicting, and different views can coexist in the same person

> We are volunteers, but we are a group that has to do something. So, it's not always easy. Over the years I have seen people who, … well, sometimes you do things that, perhaps it's the period, you don't feel like doing. But I believe that even when I have little desire, because there is a day when you have little desire, when I do the activity, I like it afterwards, that is, I like it because I meet people and understand that I am doing something nice and you say, ah, ok, how cool, how nice! Instead, there were girls who maybe, that is because maybe they didn't understand, that is, maybe they said ok, I need the house in Milan, like this, but in doing a business, which is 10 hours a month anyway, it's very little, in my opinion it's very little, so it's the minimum, they still felt caged, obligated. And in fact, they are the guys who then left the project. But in my opinion it is very nice because if you spend even a few months here, if you are a sensitive person, in general it leaves you something and you are led to volunteer even afterwards because obviously you no longer see it as an obligation. It becomes a habit, something that has now become part of your life. It's an interesting way, in my opinion, something that I don't know, but it makes you a better person because in the end we are young guys and honestly if we don't volunteer or do something for others, who should do it? It's fine to say that volunteering is for pensioners because then they say these things too, but volunteering doesn't have to be an obligation. Here it becomes a bit, but it's not like Camilla is there with the rifle telling you to do it! (M6, my translation)

> There is an attitude to judgment with respect to those who do not have such a structured vision, it is a monopoly of the modality (then everyone invests what they want) the investment must be proportional to what each person manages to put in; I don't like that those who have decided to invest in a certain way need to have a say in time and emotional investments, I don't want to feel guilty because I'm not part of the after-school program. There should be a little less ego in the project, it's a question of expectations. The only thing that makes me uncomfortable is their projecting onto other people, making you feel guilty and saying how things are done in general. (Interview no. 11, my translation)

Young residents are indeed both (obliged) volunteers in the project and tenants who must pay the rent to continue staying in the flat. Indeed, they are both producers and receivers of welfare services (Dodaro and Costarelli, 2021). This double identity makes things complex and sometimes ambiguous. For example, during the pandemic, some young residents of the project, especially those with irregular jobs, experienced the loss/reduction of their income and other conditions of uncertainty. Some young residents had to leave the project because they were not able to pay the rent anymore or they collected arrears. Somebody needed and benefited from the same local mutual assistance and solidarity initiatives that the young inhabitants actively contributed to in connection with the local network of organizations (e.g., free food delivery). In these cases, the young neighbours became themselves receivers of the local welfare services they contributed to provide within the housing project. Concerning other forms of welfare support more related to their tenant status (e.g., the economic contributions that some Italian Municipalities gave to households in need to contribute paying the rent)[122], the conditions under which the young residents accessed the project left them out of both the traditional and the temporary welfare measures provided for renters.

What emerges is the blurred and changing boundary between the different roles played by citizens involved in welfare state measures wherein they are asked to actively contribute to deliver social welfare (Dodaro and Costarelli, 2021), where need, commitment, and skilfulness mix.

Another variable that influences the young residents' activation approach is of course time. As discussed in 3.2.2, temporary stay produces tensions with the request to commit for the community's wellbeing and with the policy emphasis on relation and social interaction. This is especially true in communities characterised by the long-lasting concentration of different and complex problems. On the other hand, temporary stay can act as a safeguard for the young residents, who are not professional social workers and have to confront with difficult situations which can lead to burn out.

Time is an important ingredient of active welfare. Social protection based on activation is interpreted as supporting beneficiaries in their moving from a situation of need to one of autonomy, so it is temporary itself (Sennett, 2004). Recipients' commitment is verified in progress to confirm or not the welfare measure they are benefiting from. In the project this type of check is made by the practitioners who decide whether to extend the housing contract duration according to the commitment and effort demonstrated by young residents during their stay.

In the next paragraph, I discuss characteristics and implications of the interactions between the young residents and their neighbours resulting from such a policy framework.

5.1.1 Planning relationships

Youth activation towards their neighbours aims at improving their wellbeing through increasing social interaction and relationships. Informal relationships coming from physical proximity are considered the basis to define and nourish collective activities; at the same time, the collective activities planned by the project are seen as chances to improve and increase already established or new relationships.

[122] For example, the specific type of contract (so-called service contract) that the young residents signed to enter the project did and still do not let them get access to some welfare measures established for renters.

The distinction between informal and more structured relationships emerges very often both in youths' words and in the analysis made by practitioners. Informal relations among neighbours derive from very close proximity (people who live on the same floor or in the same staircase) and they develop from greeting and chatting in the courtyard to helping people with paperwork. This type of relations is often described as normal and natural by young residents, referring more to a normative view than to the reality of neighbouring

> I then met the other inhabitants of via Demonte. Both those who live on the same floor as me with whom there is a normal neighbourly relationship. I am not too close to them yet, but we always say hello. In short, this is very beautiful. And also, the people who live on the other floors, in particular the families who have young and teenage children with whom we always greet each other and exchange a joke. (Interview no. 1, my translation)

In the first account written by the project's team for the Municipality (ARCI Milano *et al.*, 2016) this spontaneous dimension of social interaction is reported as a problematic issue for the youth as they do not feel to fulfil their activation duties through informal (and, I would say, not easily demonstrable) relations. As activation for neighbours' wellbeing is mandatory within the project, young residents ask for and need to make their active involvement visible to themselves, to housing practitioners and to families living in the neighbourhoods. Simple neighbouring relations are not recognized as social activity by the youth as they are considered natural (ARCI Milano *et al.*, 2016).

The dimension of personal commitment is essential to be considered and feel to be active in the community. Thus, relations with neighbours acquire a meaning within the project conditions when they become the basis to know people's needs and to design more structured activities.

Activation needs to bring clear and visible results for two reasons. First, in this type of welfare, assessing activation is fundamental to continue benefiting from it; second, when activation is imbued with moral values of solidarity and mutuality, the beneficiaries themselves are reinforced (and their presence is collectively justified) if they see their efforts are effective for their community

> And this was nice because in any case you saw that family quite happy or the mother or father who came down to the door to collect the shopping were quite happy. (M7, my translation)

> I think I have left a small mark on life in recent months. Adel and Ossama came to do the shopping with me, Ossama dressed well (shirt) to come and do the shopping, for them it was wonderful to go out and arrive at Piazzale Susa, I made them read the labels of the products, they wanted to help me carry the bags, but they didn't accept ice cream as a reward. I "forced" them to eat ice lollies, they didn't feel like eating expensive ice creams. In some ways there is also an emotional return. (Interview no. 12, my translation)

For these reasons, the need for great planning and strong organization of activities emerges constantly in the young residents' interviews.
Clear definitions of role and structured organization do not just allow to be more effective, but they are also seen as a precondition for activation. In this perspective, organization and planning are recognised by young residents among the necessary practitioners' tasks within the project.

> If there are structured activities you can easily get actively involved in things. (Interview no. 16, my translation)

As practitioners' methodology to define the social-oriented activities to be developed within the project starts from the social and economic needs of public housing tenants, the lack of fundamental goods and services in those neighbourhoods pushes these activities to take on a service-like approach. This awareness has brought to a shift during the project as regards the types of collective activities developed throughout the years

> Over the years it has expanded a lot from... it has gone from when I joined the project to something much more... in these years of the project before the lockdown we aimed at relational activities, relationships with neighbours, combating loneliness for elderly people who lived alone and a whole series of social activities, help for families with minor children, as I said before, from homework help to play, recreational afternoons, neighbourhood parties, film clubs with children and then with adults, we activated the free market with the distribution of clothes for children and families and through collaboration with other organizations in the area we also tried to deal with the distribution of unsold food at the local market also thanks to the collaboration with Recup[123]. (M2, my translation)

Indeed, this characterization of the collective activities is coherent with the objectives made explicit by the Municipality in the tender document, in particular the request to develop proximity services to support the inhabitants of the two neighbourhoods (cfr. 4.2.1).
However, someone identifies a tension in supporting service-like activities within a welfare approach which promotes activation and autonomy also among public housing tenants, as I discussed in 5.1.

> One downside of the homework space is that it does not make the neighbourhood more autonomous. In the sense that neighbourhood volunteering should also aim to make the neighbourhood autonomous. So, in the long run they should rely on us less and less because they grow. And yet the homework space doesn't do this. It's true that it helps a lot, but it doesn't make you independent. We could then propose some activities that improve the neighbourhood, as they did at Turchino, who worked

[123] Recup is an association whose missions are fighting food waste and promoting active citizenship: volunteers recover unsold food, select it and share it with all the people who participate in the activity (https://associazionerecup.org/, visited September 20th, 2023).

> physically to improve the bus stop. Something that renovates that makes the neighbourhood autonomous. (Interview no. 8, my translation)

Such an organization needs a high degree of support and management by the professional community workers leading the project. Once a month each group of young people meets with its community manager, and they discuss what they are doing, problems and new opportunities. During these meetings, operational issues are reviewed within the groups. Sometimes, especially during the pandemic, regular meetings become occasions to share common problems and states of mind. This organization allows to regularly schedule activities and to sustain them over time and beyond the youth's turn over. The practitioners' role and constant presence in the neighbourhoods represent the infrastructure facilitating the continuity and maintenance of social interactions among the young inhabitants and between them and the public housing tenants. Moreover, this organization facilitates interactions between people with diverse socio-economic and lifestyle characteristics both within the groups of youth and in the neighbourhoods. These encounters would be less likely to happen if totally left to spontaneity, as I discussed in chapter 1. However, the infrastructure represented by the project management is uncertain, too, as the project itself is temporary[124] and until now it has not been scaled up by the Municipality. After all, the choice of the length of the project was made by the Municipality mainly according to the evaluation of the time occurring to recover the renovation investment costs rather than to analyse the social impact of the project activities.

5.2 Between volunteering and institutional engagement in Turin

It must be said that the discussion I develop hereafter is conditioned by the prevalence of interviews and analysis I made within the *coabitazioni* managed by Acmos. The association is strongly devoted to boost civic engagement among the youth through volunteering in society: "Citizenship education is the driving force of Acmos […] to help students grow as <<citizens>> and not guests of their own environments, as active protagonists and as subjects ready to engage in the democratic life of the country" (https://associazione.acmos.net/edu-cittadinanza/, visited September 27th, 2023). Even if *coabitazioni* are managed by different organizations, which can have partly diverse approaches and methodologies, the overall frame of the program is strongly inspired by the starting case. However, the strong policy framework developed by the Municipality in scaling up the first projects and the continuous efforts towards coordination and peer exchange supported by *Compagnia di San Paolo* (cfr. 4.2.2), make the following considerations meaningful for the analysis of the entire program.

In Turin the ways in which youths' activation is practiced and youths' roles in the *cobitazioni* are influenced by the origin of the program and the specific position taken on by the Municipality (cfr. 4.2.2).

Their two distinguishing features are the characterisation of the youth as volunteers rather than residents, and their strong link with the social and public services of the city. Concerning the former, it is confirmed by the greater number of hours dedicated to volunteering if compared to the Milanese case. In Turin the youth are

[124] The contract between the Municipality and its partners lasts 10 years and it cannot be renewed without a new public tender.

asked to devote at least 10 hours a week to volunteering for their neighbourhood. As the requested commitment is a heavy one, the monthly sum asked for the housing solution is usually low and it often corresponds to the reimbursement of housing expenses[125]. Moreover, and clearly, the relation with time is different. The availability of time becomes an important requirement to enter the project. Apparently it is more important than skills during the selection phase

> Beyond the will, we evaluate the perspective a bit, the security that we see in the possibility of dedicating time to ourselves and therefore between those who have more time to dedicate and those who have less, we obviously give priority to those who have more time to dedicate, in the sense that if someone has a full-time job and other commitments or other things, it is difficult, because they physically cannot spend time there, to dedicate themselves well to the cohabitation project. However, we make this quite explicit in the dialogue with those who apply. And then we positively evaluate the possibility of staying for more than a year, in the sense that we ask for one year's availability to start with, but obviously one year is just enough to get to know the context a little, understand how it works and therefore, if one has the prospect of staying longer, we prefer to give the possibility in this sense. The candidates must all be a maximum of 29 years old when they enter the cohabitation and the standard period is 3 years of permanence, let's say after three years there is usually a turnover, but it is not a mandatory rule in the sense that if one then becomes responsible he can stay more than 3 years in some cases, in some situations we evaluate other solutions. More or less, it works like this. The minimum is 1 year, then maybe there have been exceptions. If someone already tells us that they will go on Erasmus, we know that they will not be able to take part in this project. At most, this is what we said to ourselves, around three years, except in cases where someone takes on responsibilities within the project or other cases. But in this sense, for us it is a positive value that someone stays longer, in the sense that they can dedicate themselves in a better way, so to speak. (T3, my translation)

In this quote by a practitioner and former inhabitant, temporary stay seems to be an issue when active engagement towards the community is expected. Building relationships based on trust requires time and effort. Frequent turn-over is energy- and time-consuming and it impacts on existing social connections

> We require a minimum stay of 1 year and a maximum of 3. Why? The minimum stay is useful, therefore 1 year, it is useful for creating relationships with the group, therefore for consolidating and giving a bit of continuity and at the same time being able to create, in a normal period, not a particular one like this I would say, also create stable relationships and effectively become points of reference for inhabitants and tenants. (T7, my translation)

[125] This is also possible because the management expenses of the projects are financially supported by the bank foundation Compagnia di San Paolo (cfr. 4.2.2) while in Milan they are cross financed through rents.

The great commitment requested to young inhabitants have implications for the role of both the practitioners and the young inhabitants themselves. Even in the *coabitazioni* managed by more professional organizations (e.g., social cooperatives), the practitioners' role is light and focused mainly on coordinating the relationship with the Municipality. The young volunteers independently manage the interactions with the other residents of the *coabitazione* and with public housing tenants and they define and execute the socially oriented activities for the neighbourhood. They are assigned great responsibility and autonomy in fulfilling these tasks. Some of them acquire the role of representatives within their own *coabitazione* and, as such, they have specific duties (e.g., new inhabitants' integration in the group and context).

The daily management of the groups of peers, who mostly share the same apartments, is a relevant aspect of the activation duties requested to the young volunteers. They are engaged in the daily practice of cooperation that is implemented on two levels: within the groups of young residents, and between the youth and their public housing neighbours. This twofold effort makes the practice of cooperation harder, as Sennett (2012) understands it. Personal and social differences perform not just at the scale of social mix policy implementation (from the block to the neighbourhood), but also between the young residents, that can be part of heterogeneous groups of peers. These differences must be addressed too while planning and doing things together

> I realized that joining the project is one half working hard in your network with tenants and the other half committing to the group of people because there's five of us, and they are four, so we are nine in total and we spend a lot of time in managing the group, how you feel in the group, how you live together in your mini-group of flat-mates. During the period of Covid-19 hard restrictions and lockdowns, the challenge was ten times harder because we all lived together. Especially in 2021, we only had people who had not lived together before because the group had almost completely changed, so after a month of cohabitation we were 6 persons who found themselves stuck in the apartment for a month and that was the most problematic month because we had to pay attention not to step on each other's toes […]. If you manage to create that group dimension, then you have a very good basis to do the rest of the work; if that group dimension goes out, then we become loose cannons. (T5, my translation).

These specific features of the role of volunteers contribute to set the types of activities developed within the selected neighbourhoods

> There are two lines of action: one is the daily one that we do every day and is simply going to visit people, going to their place to have a coffee, going to see if they need help at that moment or with everyday matters such as going shopping, paperwork, that kind of things; otherwise, the other line of action is to organize events for the building. (T5, my translation)

The first typology recalls the informal neighbouring activities I discussed in 5.2. Also in this case, the figure of the (good) neighbour is socially constructed through the project objectives and actions.

> However, everything is within the scope of the work of the good neighbour, […], in trying to do all that work of the neighbours that perhaps that person, that problem, you should try to put yourself in his shoes and vice versa. (T6, my translation)

> I actually think that a neighbour should be nearby, for example ready for help, to bring a bag of shopping home to someone who can't move. But they must also be discreet, understand how far they can go in lending a hand and not invade the other person's space and time. A neighbour must also take care of what is not really theirs, for example taking care of the common spaces (green, courtyard, etc.) so as to feel they are theirs and also enjoy living in them with others. (T11, my translation)

That of the good neighbour is the role model that both the public actor and the Third sector organizations aim at promoting through the presence of young volunteers in public housing neighbourhoods. However, the reasons for this same goal appear to be different. In relation to the organizations managing the *coabitazioni*, the approach of both young inhabitants and community workers aspires to leave long-lasting effects of their temporary local action with tenants. They behave in two ways: on the one hand, they encourage the development of relationships between tenants that make up the basis to experiment cooperation. On the other, they adopt a capacity building approach to encourage incisive and valuable cooperation.

> At the beginning, you try to establish a contact with tenants, you realize that if you create this link, when you go away, when you are not here anymore, the situation does not return to what it was. Therefore, you work to create relations between them [sitting tenants]. You try to organize events where people can get to know each other, you try to introduce them to one another. It is this step further that makes your work more useful. (T5, my translation).

In the next section I discuss the implications of the Municipality's view on the role of young volunteers in their daily efforts within the program.

5.2.1 A compromise producing tensions

> The *Coabitazioni* project was born as a compromise between young people who don't know how to leave their family of origin's house and social services, ATC[126] and the city of Turin who need someone to look after these buildings for them. (T5, my translation)

[126][126] Central Piedmont Housing Territorial Agency (A.T.C.).

As reported in 4.2.2, the program *Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali* started from a pilot project pushed by Acmos association and it was then scaled up by the Municipality and embedded in both the city and regional housing legislation.

While in Milan the starting point of the project was the presence of empty flats in public estates and the Municipality's will to renovate them, in Turin the main objective of the City was to improve the living conditions in the most vulnerable public housing neighbourhoods.

The selection of the target neighbourhoods is done by the Municipality evaluating the concentration of different parameters of social, economic, and relational vulnerability (e.g., number of families and people supported by social and health services).

Through the presence of the *Coabitazioni*, the Municipality aims at controlling what it considers the negative impacts of that concentration such as the lack of attention for common services and spaces, the improper use of common spaces and flats, the insufficient maintenance of residential spaces, loneliness, and social fragmentation

> The need of the Municipality is to be able to manage difficult contexts. (T4, my translation)

This policy frame shapes the way in which institutions look at and define the role and position of young volunteers and the expectations both the youth and the practitioners must confront with in practicing social-oriented activities for vulnerable neighbours

> Where there are *coabitazioni*, they help us a lot because on the one hand they liaise with social services to report situations of degradation, fragility and so on; on the other hand, they help to enforce the rules. We talk about rules for managing accommodation and common areas […]. (T2, my translation)

> Young people relate to local and municipal services and these support young people in carrying out local activities. They are antennas in the areas for A.T.C. and for the Municipality. (T4, my translation)

The connecting tool between the *coabitazioni* and city institutions is called *Tavolo di Coordinamento e Monitoraggio* (cfr. 3.2.2). Each *coabitazione*'s representative meets monthly with A.T.C. and the Municipality. Different sectors of the Municipality are called to join the *Tavolo*, from social services to local police, from health services to maintenance divisions. During these regular meetings, young volunteers share the problems they have observed in the neighbourhoods and for which they ask for a joined effort with institutions to solve them.

The young volunteers' main tasks are updating public and social services about already-known cases and reporting to them about new ones who need public support. On the one hand, "the *coabitazioni* help us [i.e., institutions] to intercept even precarious and difficult situations" (T2, my translation) that otherwise would be difficult to come across. On the other hand, these tasks generate great ambiguities in relation to the young

volunteers' role with their neighbours. In fact, public housing tenants do not know that their cases are regularly discussed by their young neighbours with public and social services and reported in the accounts they are asked to give to the Municipality every six months. This opacity produces tensions within the same volunteers because they cannot be completely clear in their relationship with their neighbours.

These tensions add up to the peculiar complexity of the role of the *coabitanti* who need to hold together the group's objectives, "the objectives of the cooperative, of the Municipality, of the Region and also of ATC, so we also feel a little overwhelmed every now and then" (T7, my translation).

Even if the Official in the Public Housing Department of the City states that "these guys are not social workers" and that "the agreement with them is that they live in that context and that they are good, careful neighbours" (T1, my translation), the youth's identity and role within the program is indeed between volunteers and practitioners.

Additionally, the interpretation of volunteers as practitioners is not univocal. Since the beginning of the program, their role has been closer to social work. The different types of activities developed with neighbours and in the buildings have aimed at increasing and improving interactions not just between neighbours but also with institutions. This has also been the objective of the actions and activities aimed at taking care of and improving physical spaces and common services.

The tensions between the program partner's objectives and rationales and about the flexible role of the youth became more evident and conflicting with the new obligations stated by the Region[127] (cfr. 4.2.2). In particular, the Region established that those projects which allocate a few public housing flats to develop social oriented activities for vulnerable tenants[128] must promote "actions aimed at safeguarding the public housing stock and the surrounding areas through the implementation of small maintenance interventions in favour of the most degraded blocks of flats" (D.G.R. del 4 ottobre 2019 n. 2 – 330, point 1, my translation). The organizations managing the *coabitazioni* have challenged this interpretation of the role of the youth, who cannot and do not want to replace A.T.C. and the Municipality in their maintenance responsibilities.

To conclude, then, the role played daily by the youth in the field is the result of negotiations between different rationales, objectives, interpretations, and practices belonging to the different actors of the policy partnership as well as to the individuals' practicing objectives and activities. Negotiation of roles and identities takes place in the field, making young people's staying challenging and sometimes complicated for volunteers.

5.3 The spatial dimension of social interactions

I decided to insert a specific paragraph dedicated to the use and role of space in building social relations in the two cases. In this type of social mix policies space is one of the policy devices, like time and eligibility criteria, used to ease activation among beneficiaries.

[127] D.G.R. del 4 ottobre 2019 n. 2 – 330 "Indirizzi e criteri per l'applicazione dell'articolo 21 della Legge Regionale 17 febbraio 2010, n. 3".

[128] Not just the *coabitazioni*, but also other projects using the same physical resources and mechanisms like the so-called *portierato sociale* (a service dedicated to supporting vulnerable residents in using the services available in their local area).

The premise of both the research case studies is that physical proximity is an enabler of social interaction. As discussed in 1.2.1, social mix policies have been traditionally embracing this idea, which have been extensively criticised by researchers for its too deterministic approach as spatial closeness is seamlessly transferred to relational closeness (Olagnero and Ponzo, 2017). Boosting relational closeness (social interaction) at the micro level is seen to tackle the "appearance of widespread situations of social isolation and loneliness, and the weakening of traditional solidarity networks" (Bianchi and Costa, 2019, 2, my translation). Social mix policies based on or using the activation of specific social categories add a further social effect to physical proximity: the chance to practice the role of the active and responsible citizen and to spread his values and behaviours and characteristics among neighbours. That is, an element related to values qualifies the social relations that spatial proximity is supposed to boost within this type of policies. In the policy makers and practitioners' intentions, spatial closeness allows this transfer to happen mainly through daily and regular role modelling

> The focus of the project is […] on trying to include someone who would not have had access to the social housing through the public call to create a social mix and include people who with the contamination of volunteering, could change things or can give different examples of how situations are managed, how to take care of the space and so on, and could contaminate the context in which they would have been inserted. (T6, my translation)

The different policy objectives and approaches of the two cases display also physically in the types of housing solutions and non-residential spaces provided to the youth.

In Milan, the policy aim related to the promotion of young people's housing autonomy justifies the choice of studio flats to be devoted to the project. The interactions between peers unfold outside the apartments, mainly in the common spaces provided by the Municipality for the project. However, these spaces play a pivotal role mainly in the relationship between the young inhabitants and the public housing tenants. It would have been difficult to develop proximity services to support the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods (Comune di Milano, 2014) without the availability of visible spaces open to individuals and families. In both Ponti and Ca' Granda Nord/Monte Rotondo neighbourhoods, the common spaces are at the ground floor of public housing buildings, and they overlook the street.

Figure 5. The common space overlooking *via del Turchino* (Ponti neighbourhood). Picture by Filippo Romano.

These spaces, which are party self-managed by the youth, are considered the centre of their community actions and interactions: the activities taking place in the common areas make the project presence and impacts more visible and then, publicly recognized and legitimized. They can be used by local organizations or informal groups to execute their activities and they represent a resource also for the groups of peers as those spaces are used to introduce the new members of the project to the ongoing activities. During the lockdowns the common spaces could not be used for socializing and collective activities. They were used to store the goods to be delivered to families in need. They represented at the same time a resource and a problematic issue for the project, mainly because of the youth's frustration derived from the prohibition to use them in a moment when they needed their peer's support the most. To overcome this slowdown, other in-between spaces were used to meet and do things together, e.g., the courtyard.

Thanks, and through these spaces, activation has taken on the requested collective dimension

> Unlike how the initial project was born, therefore a lot on the neighbourly relationship, i.e., a single boy's relationship with a person in the condominium, in my opinion in these years we have already taken a step further, let's say we have expanded, so perhaps we are already coming from a slightly broader concept of relationship. […] The common space was fundamental for us because it allowed us on the one hand to be able to open a space for the city where people could meet, stay together, a place that was as welcoming, open, and free as possible. It has allowed us to increase relationships with the inhabitants and to establish relationships that have now lasted for some time and are very positive. On the other hand, the common spaces allowed people to have a place to stay and on the one

> hand it increased the activation not only of the youth of the project, but also of the individual citizens and inhabitants who were part of it because for example by participating in some activities some of the inhabitants themselves have made themselves available to open the space for some activities, they have made their time, energy and resources available to offer themselves and help others. A positive circle of activation was then created. (M2, my translation)

Common spaces are identified as one of the conditions for activation in the words of this practitioner, who goes further and recognises their role in enabling not just the youth's individual and collective activation, but also the engagement of other inhabitants (cfr. 5.1).

In Turin, the home sharing-solution is more in line with the genesis of the program. Acmos' volunteers were looking for chances to practice active citizenship and the organization had already experimented with communitarian housing solutions. Their aim was also to promote Acmos' values of social engagement through the practice of cohabitation between peers. These experiences of communitarian or shared living have for them strong pedagogical and socially transformative goals. This approach practically means using larger flats for the project. However, as the program scaled up, studio flats were also made available in some neighbourhoods, but the main reason seems to be linked to the characteristics of the available (empty) stock rather than to policy adjustments.

The mix between self-managed cohabitation and supportive neighbouring makes the experiment a complex one, especially for those young people who are not among Acmos' activists. Different physical and relational scales intertwine. However, they play mainly inside the residential perimeter (apartments, elevators, landings, halls, and courtyards). After the legislative changes introduced by the region[129], according to which every organization can have just one flat per building for its *coabitazione*, the floor landings and the other spaces inside the same building have become even more relevant. In some cases, volunteers can be more scattered between buildings, while in others this new rule has brought to a reduction in the number of volunteers operating in the same neighbourhood. In both cases the scattering of the youth's presence makes their action less visible, less "impactful and favourably contagious" (Compagnia di San Paolo, 2015, 7, my translation), according to the youth themselves. Where the numerical ratio between young cohabitants and residents is higher, community development actions is considered harder (Compagnia di San Paolo, 2015). Relationships, thus, are mostly informal, even if sometimes provoked, interactions, but they can also take the form of single events

> There are two lines of action: one is the daily one that we do every day and is simply going to visit people, going to get a coffee, going to see if they need help at that moment or with daily chores such as going to shopping, bureaucratic issues, things of that kind […]. The tactics are those that come to mind for people who have passed through here over the years, the most disparate, from pretending that

[129] *Indirizzi e criteri per l'applicazione dell'art. 21 della Legge Regionale 17 febbraio 2010* (D.G.R. 4 ottobre 2019 n. 2-330).

> you need salt to go and visit other people, to being annoying in the elevator instead of looking up embarrassed in the air, you simply stop and have a chat. Otherwise, slightly more repetitive actions, again to meet people, are organizing aperitifs at the entrance where you stop all the people who pass by and have a chat. (T5, my translation)

In the program *Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali*, too, the provision of a common space is considered decisive to develop activities with the other inhabitants. However, not all the *coabitazioni* have such spaces and if they have one, they are often apartments shared with other local associations or assigned to the managing organization of the *coabitazione* (Compagnia di San Paolo, 2015). Thus, they are inside the buildings, and they do not overlook the street. To become more visible and to engage inhabitants from different buildings, sometimes the young volunteers organize street events open to everyone.

To conclude, what I would like to underline here is the multilevel spatial arrangements of the two projects, which I think correspond to (however, not by default) to the multifaceted understandings and implications of neighbouring in the two cases.

Conclusions

This research focuses on activation in social mix policies targeted to young people in public housing neighbourhoods in Milan and Turin. It is embedded in the idea that the main trajectories of change characterising welfare since the late 1970s, including the increasing use of activation principles and strategies, can be observed in housing policies' more recent transformations. Coherently with the principle of activation, to access affordable housing young people need to be well equipped with specific personal characteristics (resourcefulness, proactive attitudes, commitment towards the community) which are assessed in the allocation and selection phases and monitored over time. Traditional eligibility criteria based on needs and objective conditions are then integrated with the evaluation of personal traits, lifestyles, and attitudes. Through the definition of specific selection criteria, the figure of the young active resident is socially constructed and becomes a policy target. Mechanisms of conditionality and activation requirements add to a certain degree of discretion in allocation processes risk producing new exclusionary lines in the access to affordable housing. Moreover, the need to evaluate activation duties *in itinere* to continue benefiting from a specific welfare measure put beneficiaries under legitimacy pressures which bring them to assign major importance to the acknowledgment their social activities have in and by the community. This feature risks blurring the right dimension connected to welfare in favour of an approach based on individual's performance.

Activation plays a major role in recent social mix reframing, where housing allocation to active residents is supposed to boost social interaction in vulnerable contexts, thus partially overcoming some of the limits of previous forms of social mix. A closer look at how activation unfolds in the two programs studied in this research shows the role of contextual conditions and policy design in defining both practices and policy outcomes. In fact, even if the overall policy mechanism is the same, differences derive from the policy framework and design, which affect the ways the same policy concept is practised. In table 7, I sum up the main features of the two cases to be read in connection with the contextual characteristics shown in table 1 (cfr. 4.1.1).

	Ospitalità Solidale	***Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali***
Social mix	Opportunity to allocate flats outside the public waiting list	Policy tool of the Municipality to tackle segregation in vulnerable neighbourhoods
Type of intervention	Pilot project	Program
Scale of young residents' activation	Individual and neighbourhood	Individual, group of peers and neighbourhood
Role of young residents	Active tenants	Volunteers
Type of activities	Service-like	Informal neighbouring
Main spaces of activation	Common spaces at street level	Apartments, residential common spaces
Role of time	Focus on maximum stay (*in itinere* - evaluation of activation)	Focus on minimum stay (it enables engagement)
Role of housing practitioners	Ongoing management	Promoting the youth's self-management

Table 7. Main features of the two case studies

In Milan the framework of housing policies is overall fragmented. Often, extraordinary solutions are put in place mainly for pragmatic reasons, i.e. to put a share of empty public owned dwellings into allocation. In fact, one of the most pressing problems concerning public housing stock is the share of vacant flats that cannot be allocated to people in the waiting list because they are not renovated. This situation clashes with the tense housing situation in the city, where costs are disproportionately high, and people struggle to find affordable housing solutions. The Municipality behaves as enabler in favour of other organizations, but it lacks to link and coordinate the projects it promotes. In this framework, pilot projects as *Ospitalità Solidale* often risk remaining single cases and not being scaled up. An important space of manoeuvre is then left to private organizations managing these projects, resulting in diverse approaches and conditions in their execution. In the case of activation, the way it is practiced in Milan is dependent on both the manyfold project goals established by the Municipality and the rationales of the managing organizations. Thus, the young residents' involvement with their neighbours mainly takes the shape of executing service-like activities which generally lack in those neighbourhoods, even if they are largely needed by residents. The presence of visible common spaces dedicated to the project helps reaching out public housing tenants. The same young residents are service receivers in their being tenants of the cooperatives managing the project. The tenancy conditions, in particular that concerning short-term staying, produces tensions with the request to commit for the community's wellbeing and with the policy emphasis on relation and social interaction. On the other hand, temporary stay safeguards the young residents, who are not professional social workers and have to confront with difficult situations which can lead them to burn out. This complex layering needs a great degree of management by the project practitioners in planning social activities, managing the frequent turn-over and monitoring the activation duties asked to the youth. However, this social infrastructure is temporary itself because the project

lasts 10 years and its follow-up is subjected to political will and administrative procedures. This feature will affect both the impacts of the activities undertaken and the practices of collaboration and solidarity that have possibly developed among residents.

In Turin, the effort of the Municipality to design an overall coherence between the different strands of action on housing is clear in the policy documents and in the development of the city's urban and housing policies since the 1990s. Regarding *Coabitazioni Giovanili Solidali* this coherence is twofold. On the one hand, the program is inscribed within the social mix plan of the city, and it is presented as one of the opportunities provided to young people searching for affordable housing solutions in the city. On the other hand, even if the *coabitazioni* which made up the program are managed by different organizations and are located in different neighbourhoods, the Municipality made a great effort towards integration of rationales and roles when it decided to scale up the first pilot projects by Acmos. The financial resources provided by *Compagnia di San Paolo* bank foundation are directed to support this effort. The current role of the young residents is the synthesis between the initial volunteering experience promoted by Acmos and the institutional rationale of the Municipality, according to which one of the young residents' main tasks is to connect with public and social services of the city. This twofold characterisation sometimes creates tensions for the ambiguity and complexity it entails. At the same time, the volunteering component pushes towards self-management and a residual role of practitioners in the management of the *coabitazioni*. Concerning the volunteering activities, young residents' engagement takes place mainly at the micro scale within the same apartment in the group of peers and inside the residential perimeter (apartments, elevators, landings, halls, and courtyards) with other tenants. This idea of neighbouring relations is coherent with the understanding and objective of social mix in Turin, a policy aimed at operating surgically at building or stair scale to differentiate and destigmatised vulnerable residential communities.

Finally, analysing the relationship between activation and social mix, the cases show the reinforcing effect played by activation in relation to the role of social mix policies in promoting and spreading values, norms, and behaviours. Social mix has been recognised a disciplining feature in that it encourages the spread of certain values and norms, according to the political and social contexts where it is applied. Traditionally, the promoted role model has been that of the middle class, whose behaviours and standards have been considered desirable to be spread among lower classes. Through activation for the benefit of the community the model promoted by public, and Third sector actors refers to the concept of active citizenship. The active citizen is engaged in building his social protection. Responsibilisation is also expected towards contributing to the well-being of local communities, especially marginalised neighbourhoods. Through activation for the community a specific image of how to be a good citizen is promoted. A good citizen benefits from welfare in a proactive way, coproducing his and others' welfare support. This attitude should prevent welfare dependency in favour of autonomy from needs, therefore from welfare. In this framework, the use of conditionality mechanisms (i.e., using activation requirements to select welfare beneficiaries) can lead to potential risks of exclusion based on personal traits and skills, attitudes, and lifestyles. If these components are considered key to access welfare protection, then what policy makers need to pay attention to are public policies promoting equality and "public

intervention oriented towards the enhancement of collective action capabilities" (Blanco and Nel, 2017, 7). And this is particularly true for the most vulnerable whose social needs are more pressing but tend to lack very important resources for collective action such as time, social trust, money, and education (Blanco and Nel, 2017). Such policies would act to counterbalance the above-mentioned exclusionary risks to access active welfare measures. The actions promoting public housing tenants' capacity building cannot be entrusted only to the youths involved in the analysed projects, further unloading the costs of welfare to those active citizens (Belotti and Caselli, 2016).

Limitations and further steps

In my research, I focused on the activation of welfare beneficiaries within the framework of housing policies, i.e., residents. I looked at the practices and analysed their specificities and differences in relation to the institutional features of the local contexts where the two case studies are implemented. To go further in the analysis, I suggest starting from the questions Sabatinelli (2010) rises in relation to the comparison of activation process concerning labour market and social policies in different countries: "First, one should ask who or what is activated. In other words, the analysis should examine whether activation means only or principally activation of the person […], or also activation of the programmes and, ultimately, of the system, i.e. getting organised in order to provide applicants with activating tools and paths" (86). I think the latter issue needs to be analysed more in depth thus enriching the study of the two cases and contributing to strengthen the knowledge on activation in housing policies. Some hints to the presence and effects of activation tools in the housing policy structures of the two cities and on their effects on the practices are contained in the research (for example, the governance tools set up by the Municipality of Turin). However, a more focused analysis can help to highlight two aspects: on the one hand, the possible influences of the practices in triggering activation process of the structures; on the other hand, the further risks that the absence of these processes and tools in the policy structures can provoke on individuals, making the weight of their responsibility even more disproportionate. Such an analysis could also be useful to identify the conditions under which activation in housing (and welfare) policies can become an opportunity of voice and collective thinking rather than an additional policy area of increasing shifting responsibility.

Another part that needs to be improved concerns data collection. The constraints caused by and linked to the pandemic influenced the number of interviews collected and the chances to practice participant observations, as in person events and meetings were limited by the Covid-19 restrictions. Especially concerning the case in Milan, what lacks most is the voice of the Municipality's Officials. All the practitioners interviewed work for the Third Sector organizations managing the project, also because it was easier for me to get in contact with them as they mainly are colleagues of mine. Therefore, the reconstruction of the public actors' rationales and positions (both the Municipality and the Region) derives from the analysis of policy documents. Two pitfalls emerge: first, the analysis of policies and projects based just on official documents risks overlooking the contribution and influence of public Officials' values, beliefs and ideas in the design and implementation of logics and interventions. Second, my personal (and my organization's) experience of working with the public

sector at different scales risks influencing the interpretation, if not mitigated by the voices of other actors involved.

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