

Parallel Sessions - Topic 4: The City of Students

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In 2011 a research group of the University of Urbino, coordinated by Ilvo Diamanti and Guido Maggioni, has realized an articulated research project on the relationship among the students, the university and the city with a plurality of sociological methods and techniques, quantitative and qualitative: 1) Questionnaires to attending students, 2) Phone survey to resident citizens; 3) Focus groups with students; 4) Collection and analysis of second hand data about students (enrolments, applications and carrier paths – yearly monitoring of opinions; 5) Questionnaires to online students; 6) Focus groups and participant observation in university colleges.

The relationships between the universities and their hosting cities have always had complex shades everywhere, and maybe today more than in the past. As the research findings have shown, Urbino did not escape this logic: the students, both for their number and their perspectives, live the city through a different, provisional, temporary relation: they are passing by, contrary to the citizens living there. It is out of discussion that the coexistence of these two realities in some cases produces tensions and inconveniences. In this general picture, Urbino shows its own peculiarities, partly, even if not entirely, due to the very high number of students compared to the population: there are 15000 resident citizens, and about the same number of students enrolled at the university.

After the realization of the research project, a national conference (2012) and the publication of a book (2013), the research `studiare@urbino` has been replicated in 2015 by the same work group of the Department of Economy Society and Politics (DESP) of the University of Urbino, in view of a permanent monitoring of the relationship among the students, the university and the city.

The new research has explored the topic with regard to all students of the University of Urbino, following the previous inquiry paths. The chance provided by the outcomes of two research projects realized to a large extent with the same methods and techniques has allowed to recognize changes and ongoing tendencies in the relationships students, university, city, which will be illustrated in the presentation.

We will also account for two important integrations in the second research about particular student “sub-populations”, living in specific ways their relation to the city: those who attend the university courses “at a distance” (online) and those who live in the university colleges, which are a peculiarity of Urbino, both for their big dimensions and for their architectural and urban value, within the ambitious project realized 40 years ago by the architect Giancarlo De Carlo, with the support of the historic University President, Carlo Bo.