Re-Start: Student Housing Polycrisis post-Coronavirus

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Abstract. The pandemic widened the questions on the typological, functional, and managerial inadequacy of the university housing, highlighting its limits and criticality. A polycrisis that suggests to critically rethink the spatial, organizational, functional, and managerial models, to reflect on the opportunity to open to the needs of new and varied users, not necessarily academically, but above all to broaden the reasoning to the policies tied to the EU internationalization programs. To this end, a new overall vision seems urgent, able to accompany the recovery in terms of innovation, and inaugurate, in competition with the use of the substantial funding of the PNRR, a new season of student accommodation interventions.

Keywords: Student Housing; Internationalization; National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR); Next Generation Italia; Law n. 338/2000; Morpho-techno typological Innovation.

Impacts and criticalities highlighted by pandemic

From the spring of 2020 with the outbreak of the Covid-19 the different academic systems had to reorganize their functions in a short time to ensure the safe continuation of activities. On the one hand the remote teaching, has replaced traditional methods of education, on the other hand, some academic activities, including social welfare and international mobility, have to come in crisis.

The university hospitality structures have experienced complex and different dynamics, due to their spatial distributive organization, the origin and typology of the users, the geographic and territorial positioning, and the management-organizational model, forcing operators to reconfigure functional and spatial layouts to meet the rules imposed by social distancing.

The traditional housing models had highlighted unexpected limitations and criticality. Emergency solutions such as reducing to a single occupant double or triple rooms, contingentent in the use of the shared spaces, from study rooms to common kitchens, rigid shifts schedules for small groups of users, had to be used. This induced many students to confine themselves to their room and recourse to services such as food delivery. The living units become hybrid and/or multifunctional spaces, where carried out a plurality of activities: attending lessons, studying in solitude; eating meals, doing motor activities, etc.

Exchange student programs have been compromised, many university students had to give up interactions and integration with the host country (Cairns et al., 2021). On a global scale, the emergency
resulted in a travel ban (83%), the suspension of study and training programs abroad (43%), and the interruption of the research activities with the international partners (52%), (Marinoni et al., 2020). The total closures of the Universities in English-speaking countries such as Canada, the USA, and Australia, were opposed by attempts at partial opennings, as in Italy, conditioned by the trend of the pandemic curve and the consequent levels of safety required. According to a study conducted by Erasmus Student Network, with the easing of pandemic restrictions, the percentages of international students who remained abroad have progressively decreased and 37.5% of them highlighted some critical issues in relation to their stay. The most common difficulty is linked to the unavailability of means of transport for re-entry. Moreover, the typological functional and managerial inadequacy of housing, and the problem in access to primary services, (food and health products) are additional critical points. Concerning the teaching, half of the students who have confirmed their stay abroad have resorted to online lessons, while 34% have seen their study program partially postponed. The exceptional situation has been confirmed by the fact that three-quarters of the students whose mobility has been cancelled, received support, in some cases, also of an economic nature in response to a request for flexibility in the schedule of courses and curricular programs activities (Gabriels and Benke-Åberg, 2020). In terms of management, a 2020 survey also confirmed that both private and university housing managers responded to the pandemic situation in several ways: 40.5% allowed students back home to cancel the contract, 16.7% provided discounts on rent, 23.8% granted a free rental period (The Class Foundation, 2020).

A picture in continuous evolution Two years after the pandemic, in a situation of precarious stability, academic activities have suffered a painful recovery. The change in habits and behaviours and the definition of new needs, especially spatial and functional, essential to ensure a safe living and study inside and outside the university are slowly defining new social, housing and economic scenarios. A study carried out by the Talents Venture Observatory (OTV), based on Mur 2021 data, highlighted two aspects for the a.y. 2020/2021 enrolments. Firstly, the feared decline in university matriculations did not occur on a national scale, on the contrary there was an increase in enrolments of more than 4%, non-resident students (+7%) and international students (+15%). Compared to the previous academic year, some regions has become more attractive for new matriculations and non-resident students increase. The foremost enrolments were recorded in Liguria (+25%), Umbria (+39%), and Sicily (+13%), with a decrease in Molise, Trentino, and Lombardy (respectively -5%, -3%, and -2%). The increase of new students from the outside region is almost doubled in Umbria and Liguria (+97% and 82%), while in Toscana (+27%), Emilia-Romagna (+22%) and Lombardy (+19%) is increased the number of the admitted ones from the outside territory (OTV, 2021).

If we consider the overall increase (estimated at about 14,000 students) in relation to the average growth of regis-
In the last year, Lombardy, after 5 years of growth, recorded a contraction of about 500 units (-4%), (Fig. 1), while Sicily, Umbria, Veneto and Liguria collected 60% of the increase of new students. Even if with more contained total numbers, the data of Liguria and Umbria are significant in relation to the national context (Tab. 1).

This foreshadows a competitive repositioning of certain regions, both in terms of number of registrations and of out-of-home students. Although limited to a single academic year, the data outline a potential change of preference by first-year students, which implies – at least at this stage – a redesign of university mobility, whereas Lombardy, Lazio, Emilia-Romagna welcomed about half of the off-site (OTV, 2019).

On the other hand, it is still too early to draw conclusions: the speed of change is a scenario that is still in transformation (Figs. 2, 3, 4): data from the National Registry of Students of the MUR, for example, indicates a significant decrease in registrations for the year just started (-3%), corresponding to about ten thousand fewer students (from 312,388 to 301,776 enrolled). A decline that unites all regions independently by gender differences. The largest decrease is recorded in the Islands (-6.96% for men and 7.45% for women), while the lowest is in the North (-1.43% and -2.17%), (Fregonara, 2022).

In this scenario of great uncertainty, university housing will face in the medium-long term the planning of the substantial investments of almost one billion euros provided by Mission 4 “Education and Research”, Reform 1.7, of the PNNR. In addition to reforming the current legislation, promoting an “innovative and original architecture” that leads to triple, by 2026, the current availability of beds: from 40 thousand to over 100 thousand. To achieve this objective, new rules are envisaged: the financial involvement of private investors, the formation of public-private partnerships, the adaptation of building standards, the introduction of facilities for restructuring and the renewal of the existing, the construction of green-field buildings, with high environmental standards and the “flexible” use of housing during periods of suspension of educational activities (PNRR, 2021). Forecasts that are not yet supported by guidelines and operational purposes.

### Toward a new season for university housing

The “new season” on the doorstep will require new approaches, with a view to greater cohesion between stakeholders, to foster development in terms of sharing and innovation. A priority is to establish a National Observatory on the subject, capable of action of monitoring, studying, researching, collecting documentation, promoting and consulting among policies for university residency. The issues to be addressed are not lacking updating the regulatory framework and quality standards, in-depth analysis of the typological profiles of current users of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>a.y. 2020/2021</th>
<th>a.y. 2019/2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lombardia</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazio</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campania</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia-Romagna</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneto</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puglia</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toscana</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sicilia</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marche</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardegna</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friuli-Veneto</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trentino-Tirol</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molise</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basilicata</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle d’Aosta</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>6.96%</td>
<td>7.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>6.96%</td>
<td>7.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>-2.17%</td>
<td>-1.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ziato (-3%), corrispondente a circa diecimila studenti in meno (da 312.388 a 301.776 iscritti). Una decrescita che acciona tutte le regioni indipendentemente dalle differenze di genere. La diminuzione maggiore si registra nelle Isole (-6,96% per gli uomini e -7,45% per le donne), mentre la minore è al Nord (-1,43% e -2,17%), (Fregonara, 2022). In questo scenario di forte incertezza, l’housing universitario sarà chiamato ad affrontare nel medio-lungo periodo la programmazione dei consistenti investimenti previsti dalla Misione 4 “Istruzione e Ricerca”, Riforma 1.7, del PNNR, quasi un miliardo di euro, oltre a riformare l’attuale normativa, promuovendo una “architettura innovativa e originale” che porti a triplicare, entro il 2026, la disponibilità attuale di posti letto: dai 40 mila attuali a oltre 100 mila. Per raggiungere tale obiettivo si prevedono nuove regole: il coinvolgimento finanziario di investitori privati, la formazione di partenariati pubblico-privati, l’adeguamento degli standard, l’introduzione di agevolazioni per le ristrutturazioni e il rinnovo dell’esistente, la costruzione di edifici green-field, con elevati standard ambientali e l’utilizzo “flessibile” degli alloggi nei periodi di sospensione delle attività didattiche (PNRR, 2021). Previsioni che, ad oggi, non risultano supportate da linee guida e indirizzi operativi.

Tab. 01 | Dettaglio regionale delle immatricolazioni in relazione al numero di atenei a.a. 2020/21. Elaborazione degli autori su dati MUR 2021
Regional detail of the new student number for university a.y.2020/21. Authors elaboration of MUR 2021 data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Enrolment difference a.y. 2020/21 and 2019/20</th>
<th>N° University per Region</th>
<th>N° Students per University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liguria</td>
<td>1436</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umbria</td>
<td>1766</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sicilia</td>
<td>2480</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veneto</td>
<td>1619</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puglia</td>
<td>1101</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piemonte</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toscana</td>
<td>1382</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lazio</td>
<td>2320</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sardegna</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campania</td>
<td>747</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friuli Venezia Giulia</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calabria</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilia Romagna</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marche</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valle D’Aosta</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basilicata</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abruzzo</td>
<td>-130</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lombardia</td>
<td>-491</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molise</td>
<td>-50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trentino Alto Adige</td>
<td>-129</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enrolments comparison between a.y.2021/2022 and a.y.2020/2021. Authors elaboration of MUR 2022 data

03 | Confronto immatricolazioni a.a. 2021/2022 e a.a.2020/2021 per area geografica. Fonte: Erasmus Students Network, 2020
Enrolments comparison between a.y.2021/2022 and a.y.2020/2021 per geographical area. Source: Erasmus Students Network, 2020
Verso una nuova stagione per l’housing universitario

La “nuova stagione” richiederà nuovi approcci, nell’ottica di una maggiore coesione tra i soggetti coinvolti, per favorire uno sviluppo in termini di condivisione e innovazione. Una priorità appare quella di istituire un Osservatorio Nazionale sul tema, capace di svolgere funzioni di monitoraggio, studio, ricerca, documentazione, promozione e consulenza, sulle azioni e sulle politiche per la residenzialità universitaria. Le questioni da affrontare non mancano: aggiornamento dell’impianto normativo e degli standard qualitativi, analisi dei profili degli attuali utenti dello Student housing, ricerca di modelli morfotecnologici innovativi anche in chiave green-field, low-cost and high-quality, studio di nuove formule d’appalto per integrare nell’offerta il tema della gestione, verifica delle potenzialità degli strumenti di supporto ai processi di in-

Student housing, research of morphotechnological models innovative also in key green-field, low-cost and high-quality, the study of new contract formulas to integrate with the offer the theme of management, verification of the potential of the tools to support processes of process engineering (BIM), proper energy management. Other issues, no less important, concern the resolution of the debate on the contrast between dual education, distance, and presence, in the knowledge that the large investments in remote teaching will not be lost. Indeed, these efforts will be joined by those of the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027, which joins at European level the actions of the Internationalization at Home (De Wit and Altbach, 2021). A project that could open to the possibility of an institutionally recognized experience abroad, accessible even to those who cannot afford it, in the form of Blended Mobility (with off-site periods, distance periods and on-line mobility, as already provided by the Erasmus+ programme).

Another straight question concerns the effective financial sustainability over time of the new structures. Perhaps the most critical element is the need to go beyond the logic of public university hospitality as a simple assistance support those who do not have economic resources, with the goal to elevate the role of infrastructure to the level of tools for the promotion training, inclusion, integration, cohesion, growth, and enhancement of social and human capital (Bellini et al., 2019). It is a complex and articulated process, which requires a vision of the future, especially in the Next-Generation perspective.

Challenges and potential new trends

On a ten-year time frame of progressive growth of international student mobility and of continuous fostering the exchange processes, the endorsement of new investments needs the full understanding of the potentials of Student accommodation to sustain the so-called knowledge economy. Pandemic clearly showed critical points, some of them already identified before the Covid-19 related crisis, which requires to search accommodation solutions based on the Z-Generation real needs, the “digital native”. Being the project objective goal the search of the right balance between private sphere, semi-private and shared spaces, the challenge become to promote unedited relations between residence intimacy and shared spaces, this favouring creation of more flexible and versatile premises targeting to promote chances of formal and informal socialization (Bellini and Mocchi, 2021).

Shared spaces, study rooms, and relax and sport areas have been acquiring more and more a determining role on the guests’ wellness. Indeed, health and wellness areas, enriched with natural elements integrated in settings which require a suitable physical and mental health, to decrease the guests’ anxiety and stress. Environments combined with spaces that stimulate the practice of visual arts and creativity and promote contact with the outdoors and nature (Jozsa, 2021) are increasingly important. Locations such as makers spaces equipped with all kinds of technological and other instrumentation, such as 3d printers, embroidery machines, and electronic prototyping equipment for entrepreneurial think-tank spaces provide places to meet, exchange and develop ideas.
Sfide e potenziali nuove tendenze

In un quadro pluridecennale di progressiva crescita della mobilità studentesca internazionale e di incentivazione dei processi di interscambio, la promozione di nuovi investimenti richiede la comprensione della capacità dello Student accommodation nel sostenere quella che oggi si indica come “economia della conoscenza”. La pandemia ha messo in evidenza criticità, già in parte accorate prima dell’avvento del Coronavirus, che impongono di ricercare soluzioni abitative basate sugli effettivi bisogni e necessità della Z.-Generation, i “nativi digitali”. Se l’obiettivo di progetto permane la ricerca del giusto equilibrio fra sfera privata, semi privata e spazi condivisi, la sfida diventa promuovere relazioni inedite fra l’intimità dell’alloggio e gli ambienti comuni, favorendo la creazione di ambiti più flessibili e versatili, così da potenziare i momenti di socializzazione formale e/o informale (Bellini e Mocchi, 2021).

Spazi condivisi, sale studio, spazi per il relax, ambienti per lo sport stanno sempre più assumendo un ruolo determinante per il benessere degli ospiti. Spazi health and wellness, arricchiti da elementi naturali, si integrano ad ambienti dove prevedere un’adeguata physical e mental health, contribuendo a ridurre ansia e stress degli ospiti. Ambienti abbinati a situazioni che stimolano la pratica delle arti visive e la creatività, e promuovono il contatto con l’aria aperta e la natura (Jozsa, 2021) rivestono sempre maggiore importanza. Luoghi come maker spaces dotati di ogni tipologia di strumentazione tecnologica e non, da stampanti 3d a macchine da ricamo, da apparecchiature per la prototipazione elettronica ad enterpreneurial think-tank spaces in cui incontrarsi scegliere e sviluppare idee.

A causa del il Coronavirus, l’e-commerce e i correlati servizi di delivery hanno registrato un incremento esponenziale, mettendo spesso in crisi la disponibilità di appositi punti di consegna e deposito. La previsione di spazi filtro per la delivery, dotati di dispositivi elettronici, si sta rilevando indispensabile.

Because of the Coronavirus, e-commerce and related delivery services have experienced an exponential increase, often putting the availability of special delivery and storage points in crisis. The prediction of filter spaces for delivery, equipped with electronic devices, is proving indispensable. Today, university hospitality is also being asked to open up to new target groups, to contemporary city users, alongside traditional users. These new targets offer a reason for reflection, which would help to rethink these structures’ economic and management sustainability, even with redefining their role as facilities within the city.

In terms of the organization of spaces, it is increasingly advantageous to use open building solutions (Habraken, 2008), inspired by the paradigm of “flexible housing as housing that can adapt to the changing needs of users” (Schneider and Till J., 2005), in response to the complexity and instability of the varied targets of university users. The awareness that housing should also play a central role in maintaining social distancing in the future suggests that unit should be proposed to enable the functions traditionally provided in other places to be carried out in case of need: remote teaching, exams, individual study, sports, etc. Single rooms and accommodation for two people, with a private room and shared living space, have proved to be the most appropriate anti-pandemic models; indeed, they continue to be the most popular solutions in Europe, Australia, the USA, and the United Kingdom (GTR, 2021). For some time now, the English-speaking countries, which host half of the global international university students (Unesco, 2019), have been able to grasp a need: giving hospitability not only to single students, but also to those accompanied by their partner or family with minors. In Canada, the USA and Australia, it is already possible to find university residences on campus, combined with solutions for entire families. Student Family Housing, or facilities of “widespread hospitality” off-campus with single or multi-family solutions. More specific solutions supplement this offer targeting population groups that do not reside in the university residence but seek temporary formulas for short periods. It is an example of the Commuter hostel of Ryerson University in Toronto, which has specific accommodation for Commuter students: non resident students who need accommodation for very short periods.

In the field of internet technology, the massive use of the web, social networks, and the digitalization of real estate management processes (Big Data and IoT) are making more efficient the information exchange, making contacts (Bellini et al., 2021). Based on these factors, several universities set up virtual tours for their structures to show their location, equipment, and services, and present individual housing solutions. Furthermore, the provision of tailored apps to manage the reservation details before arrival, during the stay, and until the check-out allow today to dialogue with the residents’ digital infrastructure, to check the availability of amenities and utilities, to manage indoor comfort (humidity, temperature, brightness, etc.) and to program the operation of the appliances.

Rethink university hospitality: the role of technology in architecture

The above-described framework high-
Oggi, all’ospitalità universitaria si chiede anche di aprirsi a nuovi target di riferimento, ai nuovi city users, da affiancare alle tradizionali utenze. Un motivo di riflessione, che aiuterebbe a ripensare la sostenibilità economica e gestionale di queste strutture, anche con ridefinizione del loro ruolo di facilities all’interno della città.

Sul piano organizzativo è sempre più conveniente ricorrere a soluzioni open building (Habraken, 2008), ispirate al paradigma del “flexible housing as housing that can adapt to the changing needs of users” (Schneider and Till J., 2005), in risposta alla complessità e all’instabilità dei variegati target dell’utenza universitaria. La consapevolezza che l’alloggio debba assumere, anche per il futuro, un ruolo centrale per il mantenimento del distanziamiento, suggerisce di proporre unità che permettano lo svolgimento, in caso di bisogno, delle funzioni tradizionalmente previste in altri luoghi: lezioni a distanza, esami, studio personale, attività fisica, ecc. Le camere singole e gli alloggi per due persone, con camera personale e spazio living comune, si sono rivelati i modelli anti-pandemia più adeguati, tanto da continuare a essere le soluzioni più richieste in Europa, Australia, Usa e Regno Unito (GTR, 2021).

In questo contesto, i Paesi anglofoni, che ospitano la metà degli studenti universitari internazionali globali (Unesco, 2019), hanno saputo cogliere la necessità di dare ospitalità non solo agli studenti single, ma anche a quelli accompagnati dal partner o minori. In Canada, Usa e Australia è già oggi possibile trovare residenze universitarie on campus, abitate a soluzioni per interi nuclei famigliari, Student Family Housing, oppure strutture di “ospitalità diffusa” off campus con soluzioni mono o multifamiliari.

Il quadro sopra descritto mette in luce le sfide e la grande opportunità che si stanno concretizzando attorno al tema e che devono essere sfruttate per riallineare l’Italia agli Stati più avanzati. Ciò richiede un approccio sistematico, capace di gestire con appropriatezza e competenza una complessità a più livelli, che presuppone di agire al di fuori di una logica emergenziale,

...
per concentrarsi sugli aspetti strutturali, circoscritti, e come tali “risolvibili”.

Serve aprire un confronto diretto con gli stakeholder: dall’utenza universitaria ai gestori di fondi d’investimento, dai progettisti alle università, dagli Enti per il diritto allo studio al mondo delle costruzioni, in modo da disegnare scenari orientativi e sostenibili.

Un’occasione che dovrebbe essere attentamente considerata dall’Area della Tecnologia dell’Architettura in relazione alla sua naturale vocazione a indagare la progettazione delle forme speciali dell’abitare. Tale Area risulta inoltre particolarmente predisposta per via della sua attitudine a promuovere soluzioni innovative e sperimentali, di processo e di prodotto, a partire dai paradigmi prestazionali spaziali, funzionali e tecnologici, anche in relazione a temi complessi e articolati, come quelli attenenti la pianificazione, progettazione, realizzazione e gestione delle infrastrutture per lo student housing.

Le discipline della Tecnologia dell’architettura permangono centrali per far coniugare e convergere istanze sociali, ambientali ed economiche e tecnologiche. Ciò in un momento storico in cui il futuro lascia intravedere probabilib ciclicità dei momenti di crisi, e dove la capacità di trovare risposte immediate ed efficaci, in base a competenze specifiche e specialistiche, diventa priorità.

La prima indicazione che emerge è relativa alla necessità di elaborare una “capacità di visione a lungo termine”, sia a livello locale che globale, nella consapevolezza che il confronto non possa avvenire che a un livello di alta complessità.

A monte di tutto, esiste la necessità di elaborare una visione sovranazionale dell’istruzione di terzo livello, ragionando per la prima volta sull’assenza di un sistema di ospitalità europeo, in grado di rispondere a bisogni in forte espansione che trovano riposte insufficienti in termini di politiche, qualità delle strutture, disponibilità di servizi, messa in rete dell’offerta (Kuzmane et al., 2017).

Strategico appare il traguardo di un piano unitario, che sappia definire quantità e qualità dell’ospitalità universitaria su scala continentale, per integrare i differenti approcci presenti. Un’azione similare, di recente attivata dall’UE, è quella del progetto HOME – Home Of Mobile Europeans, con l’obiettivo di definire criteri qualitativi per uniformare e standardizzare l’offerta privata per gli studenti internazionali. Un progetto pilota finanziato dal Bando KA2 Erasmus+ 2019, che vede l’interazione di partner internazionali con capofoila la piattaforma olandese HousingAnywhere e partner scientifico il Politecnico di Milano che potrebbe essere esteso all’offerta di residenzialità universitaria, in termini multiscalari, per leggere e interpretare il fenomeno a differenti livelli di complessità: global, local, urban, neighborhood, building and dwelling.

Durante la pandemia, la mancanza di un network europeo ha certamente rappresentato un fattore penalizzante, l’assenza di una regia centrale, in grado di elaborare risposte convincenti e uniformi, è stata evidente. Le grandi sfide si vincono con approcci e strategie condivise: l’isolamento degli atenei ha prodotto soluzioni parziali, che avrebbero potuto trasformarsi, se coordinate, in occasioni di crescita del know-how collettivo, mitigando il senso di solitudine degli studenti, migliorando l’accesso ai canali di mobilità, garantendo un’effettiva condivisione delle informazioni, ma soprattutto promuovendo il senso di appartenenza a un sistema formativo sovranazionale.

A global approach is therefore indispensable to understand this phenomenon’s complex nature and is supported by the need to seek innovative and forefront solutions (Figs. 5, 6, 7). These aspects should be more courageously embraced by the regulatory board. Indeed, this would support and guarantee actions of equity, inclusion, and sharing towards an increasingly changing and diverse student population, often composed of disadvantaged people who deserve equal opportunities.

Working at the European level on a shared agreement on the hospitality rights of national and international students to plan adequate logistical, medical, economic, legal, and psychological support requires transnational and cross-sectoral collaboration between universities and host authorities, student organizations, etc. Overall, this is an obligatory way to promote operational protocols and arrangements and mitigate and/or overcome the impacts of possible new crises.
Si rende dunque indispensabile un approccio globale di comprensione della complessa natura del fenomeno, sostenuta dalla necessità di ricercare soluzioni innovative e sperimentali (Figg. 5, 6, 7). Tali aspetti dovrebbero essere recepiti con maggior coraggio dagli apparati normativi, a sostegno e garanzia di azioni di equità, inclusione e condivisione, nei confronti di una sempre più mutevole e variegata popolazione studentesca, spesso composta di soggetti svantaggiati a cui vanno garantite condizioni di pari opportunità.

Lavorare a scala europea su una carta condivisa dei diritti dell’ospitalità dello studente, locale e internazionale, programmando adeguati supporti logistici, medici, economici, giuridici, ma anche psicologici, richiede collaborazioni transnazionali e intersettoriali fra università, autorità ospitanti, organizzazioni studentesche, ecc.; via obbligata per promuovere protocolli e intese operative e attenuare e/o superare gli impatti di possibili nuove crisi.
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