

# Matera University City? Possible Dialogues

PEER REVIEWED

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## 1. University and City.

The historic relationship between universities and cities<sup>2</sup> is now returning to the centre of attention in socio-cultural and political reflections as a result of the crises and resources available in the new European programming and in the national funds of the Recovery and Resilience Plan. Rethinking possible integration policies between the two systems from a contemporary perspective is very important, especially in contexts where this relationship has remained potential or insufficiently valued as resources for places and citizens.

The city is to be understood as a place for knowledge, culture and creativity production and dissemination, while the university represents the place that fosters the transit of knowledge, and individuals, which forms new personalities.<sup>3</sup> This complex relationship, which has been at the centre of architectural and urban planning debate since the 1970s, is reflected in the three categories of a university city, a city with universities, and a university campus,<sup>4</sup> described below, and from which the reflections of the present contribution start. In the university city, it is the university that assumes a central role in the urban, social and economic development of the city, determining the main qualitative and quantitative transformations; in the case of the city with universities, also called "university poles", to the university is given a space defined in physical and immaterial terms, which is more residual than in the first

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<sup>2</sup> Paolo Prodi, «Università e città nella storia europea», *il Mulino* 37, fasc. 3 (1988): 375–84; Patrizia Messina e Michelangelo Savino, «Università e Città. Introduzione al tema monografico», *Regional Studies and Local Development* 3, fasc. 3 (2022): 15–42.

<sup>3</sup> Arnaldo Bagnasco, «Città in cerca di università. Le università regionali e il paradigma dello sviluppo locale», *Stato e mercato* 24, fasc. 3 (2004): 455–74.

<sup>4</sup> Nicola Martinelli, *Spazi della conoscenza: università, città e territori* (Bari: Adda Editore, 2012).

case, and for that reason, it determines urban transformations and lines of development less strongly; finally, the third case of the university campus represents the physical and geographical separation between the city and the university, which inevitably affects the distance from the city's services and the possibilities the latter can offer the university and its community and vice versa.

These definitions take relevance when contextualized against the backdrop of the ongoing poly-crisis,<sup>5</sup> so profound as to call into question the social and economic assets, and ways of living and working in the contemporary city, and because of the renewed role of the knowledge economy as a facilitator in processes of advancement and development.<sup>6</sup> The contribution, therefore, aims to investigate as case study the city of Matera that hosts the university (among the many functions) and its community, trying to define the relationship between city and university system, still today fluctuating and not primary in territorial government policies. However, Matera has gone through three different conditions: the nomination as European Capital of Culture (2019), the Capital Year (2019) and the Covid-19 crisis (2020 to present). In each of these moments, the University has been a central element in urban dynamics, in some cases driving, in other cases it has more than anything else suffered some transformations. Different forms of temporary inhabitants populate Matera: students, tourists, and city users,<sup>7</sup> each exhibiting different housing needs. The category of students is very close to the knowledge worker vision;<sup>8</sup> travelling for training purposes, they move from the individual dimensions of their housing to the collective dimensions of places of study. Training facilities have always produced a strong impact on cities, which concerns not only the modification of the urban setting<sup>9</sup> but also the economic and social system of the host city.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, the presence of big events in the city brings measurable impacts on the attractiveness and competitiveness of universities.<sup>11</sup> For example, the inauguration of the new location of the University Campus in Via Lanera coincided with the proclamation of Matera as the European Capital of Culture 2019 and represented an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between the academic institution and the city, integrating educational

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<sup>5</sup> Mauro Ceruti e Francesco Bellusci, *Abitare la complessità: La sfida di un destino comune* (Milano-Udine: Mimesis Piccola Biblioteca, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Jean Trullén e Rafael Boix, «Economia della conoscenza e reti di città: Città creative nell'era della conoscenza», *Sviluppo locale* 8, fasc. 18 (2001): 41–60.

<sup>7</sup> Guido Martinotti, *Metropoli: la nuova morfologia sociale della città* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Peter Drucker, *Landmarks of Tomorrow: a Report on the New Post Modern World* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1959).

<sup>9</sup> Vittoria Santarsiero e Mariavaleria Mininni, «Politiche di innovazione e modelli sostenibili food oriented. Il ruolo delle università come spazi di sperimentazione e educazione», in *Atti della XXII Conferenza Nazionale SIU. L'Urbanistica italiana di fronte all'Agenda 2030. Portare territori e comunità sulla strada della sostenibilità e della resilienza* (Roma-Milano: Planum Publisher, s.d.).

<sup>10</sup> Wim Wiewel e David C Perry, *Global Universities and Urban Development: Case Studies and Analysis: Case Studies and Analysis* (Routledge, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Russ Thorne, «Economic Impact of sporting events», *The Independent, Independent Digital News and Media* 20 (2015).

activities with political and cultural ones<sup>12</sup> in the awareness of the importance of integration between urban and cultural policies. It is possible, moreover, to identify a "process of consolidation of the academic school in Matera in light of a better strategy of urban regionalization of the Lucanian university"<sup>13</sup> with a view to a development model based on the knowledge economy. Weaker, however, has been the city's response to student housing policies and the construction of services for students and temporary residents, as discussed below.

In this premises light, the contribution investigates the existing relationship between the university system and Matera, the nature of this relation, and how the latter has changed as a result of the aforementioned events, attempting to assess the fallout at the urban level useful to define possible scenarios built on the mutual exchange between city and university. Particular attention is paid to the role in these processes assumed by the temporary inhabitants of Matera, defined in the candidacy dossier as cultural inhabitants, and to the "new" ways of living that have challenged traditional models.

The contribution is organized as follows. After this introduction and a brief overview of temporary forms of city users, the materials and method of the research are described. Next, the case study of Matera in its relationship with the university is illustrated, highlighting the influence and impacts that the events had on the city, the university and the temporary inhabitants. Finally, after a discussion that returns an overview of the issues that emerged concerning the research themes, the study's limitations, conclusions and avenues for future research are drawn.

## 2. Temporary Forms of City Users.

The contemporary condition, is strongly influenced by the digitization of society, decreasing distances, hybrid forms of work and education, the result is the rise of a new population in constant movement. *"We are in an era where the transformations of productive arrangements and lifestyles, of global economic organization and communication systems, of languages and international relations are such as to postulate the advent of a 'new' professional and human figure, of a 'lineage' different from previous ones, capable of permeating the entire society with itself and at the same time of being its symbol, its logo"*.<sup>14</sup> Transitional, temporary inhabitants are those who enrich cities with cultural and social contaminations, who are adapted to living in places unusual in relation to traditional one. The motivations that push individuals to move are several, but we have a specific focus on

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<sup>12</sup> Mariavaleria Mininni, *MateraLucania2017: laboratorio città paesaggio* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2017).

<sup>13</sup> Mariavaleria Mininni e Cristina Dicillo, «Politiche urbane e politiche culturali per Matera verso il 2019», *Territorio*, fasc. 73 (2015): 86.

<sup>14</sup> Sergio Bologna, «I "lavoratori della conoscenza" e la fabbrica che dovrebbe produrli», *L'ospite ingrato* 1 (2005): 18.

a population that moves for cultural and intellectual reasons. For this aim, we define, in a more specific way, what is meant by a temporary inhabitant, by understanding analytically what types this term refers to and what their needs are. The temporary inhabitant is a new player, a result of the phenomena of social and economic innovation, which has radically changed the concept of using time and space, with inevitable impacts on the urban context and its dynamics of transformation. Martinotti<sup>15</sup> defines them as city users, which are individuals who take advantage of a city's services but do not actually reside there. Reference is made, for example, to knowledge workers<sup>16</sup> and so, to artists, intellectuals, freelancers, researchers, businessman, the man with the personal computer, brain worker, anyone who produces knowledge by knowledge. This category also includes tourists, or better yet, travelers, the curious, cultural inhabitants.<sup>17</sup> Di Campli,<sup>18</sup> for instance, describes the resident tourist as a complex form of tourist, which is one who is not simply hunting for signs,<sup>19</sup> but learning about local culture, traditions and territories. The category of students is very similar to the view of temporary residents, as they are individuals who move for educational purposes. Out-of-home students personify a particular form of temporary inhabitant: they leave their hometowns to pursue higher education, university, master's, and further education. The time period is variable and can coincide with the entire course of study, or with short periods, such as semesters in European exchange programs like Erasmus+, for graduate courses, or for university conventions.

Among the previously mentioned categories, students certainly have a strong impact on the urban and economic and social system; think for example of the settlement of large facilities dedicated to education, housing for those out-of-home students, and services. Deciding to study in one city over another certainly depends on how attractive an urban setting is able to make itself by providing new inhabitants with adequate facilities, breaking down social barriers, ensuring social and cultural heterogeneity, and offering facilities dedicated to educational. Moreover, the academic community is far broader, including faculty, researchers, and doctoral students, each of which can also carry out their study, teaching and research activities at other locations. This condition includes the whole scientific community in the type of temporary inhabitants [Figure 1].

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<sup>15</sup> Martinotti, *Metropoli: la nuova morfologia sociale della città*.

<sup>16</sup> Drucker, *Landmarks of Tomorrow: a Report on the New Post Modern World*.

<sup>17</sup> Dossier Matera Capital of Culture 2019

<sup>18</sup> Antonio Di Campli, *Abitare la differenza: il turista e il migrante* (Roma: Donzelli editore, 2019).

<sup>19</sup> Marco d'Eramo, *Il selfie del mondo: indagine sull'età del turismo* (Milano: Feltrinelli Editore, 2019).



Figure 1| PhD Student working in the van.  
Credits: Francesca Alemanno.

### 3. Materials and Method.

The research applies the case study method to explore the relationship between Matera and its University and try to return a definition of this relation. The objective was to connote the City-University relationship in its socio-territorial and cultural elements, events occurred, and to detect the impacts on the urban and university system.

Qualitative research is based on two parallel phases: the analysis phase, better defined as desk research, which consists of researching, evaluating and reprocessing data already collected by others, and the second one, the fieldwork phase, which focuses on the researchers' participation in the activities analyzed.

The analysis phase was dedicated to an in-depth study of the relationship between the University of Basilicata (Matera campus) and the city of Matera, trying to reconstruct the resources present in the area, the events impacts and the possibilities for dialogue between the two institutions. The analysis of data and documents facilitated the description of the state of the art and the study of change processes. Specifically, Mininni<sup>20</sup> research,<sup>21</sup> were fundamental materials for understanding material and immaterial Matera resources, dynamics occurred, events and the legacy left by the Capital of Culture event.

In parallel, a fieldwork phase involved the observation of the city and university phenomena occurred 2019 to the present, with particular attention to the Capital of Culture event and to the analysis of the post-legacy phase, subsequently conditioned by the pandemic. These

<sup>20</sup> Leader of the Team Evaluator of the scope: Matera 2019: the transformative bearing on urban spaces, with subsequent publication of the volume *Osservare Matera*, Quodlibet, Macerata, 2022.

<sup>21</sup> Mininni, *MateraLucania2017: laboratorio città paesaggio*; Mariavaleria Mininni, *Osservare Matera: cultura, cittadinanza e spazio* (Macerata: Quodlibet, 2022).

assessments started from the phenomena observation, particularly at the initial moment of the Matera 2019 process, during the preparation of the events. This observation was carried out in the researchers' role, interested in the urban dynamics of the city of Matera, and by users and temporary inhabitants of the city, who experienced the Capital of Culture event, the subsequent pandemic lockdown and their effects on the city and its university (community included).

#### 4. University and Cultural System Versus Matera.

The site of the University of Basilicata in Matera represents a branch of the main one, which is located in the city of Potenza. The Matera campus includes the Department of Cultures and the Mediterranean (DiCEM), and the Department of Human Sciences (DiSU), as well as the offices of the Student Secretariat and those associated with the internship management facilities and the University Library. The courses of study pertaining to the DiCEM department are: Architecture, five years course, master's degree; Cultural Heritage Worker, and Landscape, Environment and Urban Greening (PAVU), bachelor's degree programs; Archaeology and History of Art (ASA), international course in collaboration with the *école pratique des hautes études in Paris*, master's degree; Anthropological and Geographical Sciences for Cultural Heritage and the Enhancement of Territories (SAGE), managed in a consortium manner with the Universities of Naples Federico II, University of Salento and University of Foggia, master's degree. In the same department there are, in addition, two postgraduate tracks, the PhD in Cities and Landscapes: Architecture, Archaeology, Cultural Heritage, History and Resources, and the School of Specialization in Archaeological Heritage. For the DiSU department, the course of Primary Education Science, a five year course, master's degree program, is provided at the campus on Via Lanera. The University has a strongly humanistic character focusing on cultural heritage, tourism and education, with technical aspects concerning the course of study in Architecture. The curriculum is a perfect match for the urban setting, one of the oldest in human history and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1993.<sup>22</sup> A city with an artistic heritage, which has made its history the primary instrument of social and economic claim in the national and international arena. Although the focus remains on the university presidium, it is important to emphasize the presence of other cultural resources that the city of Matera also possesses, which, if systematized from the perspective of services/resources for the construction of a university city, would be a significant strength. In particular, we mention the *Casa delle Tecnologie Emergenti (Cte)*, in Via San Rocco, which has the municipality of Matera as the lead partner along with scientific collaboration from both the University of Basilicata, the Polytechnic

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<sup>22</sup> Pietro Laureano, *Giardini di pietra: i Sassi di Matera e la civiltà mediterranea* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri editore, 1992).

University of Bari and the CNR. Cte aims to carry out experimentation, applied research and technology transfer projects based on the use of emerging technologies, such as Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), linked to the development of next-generation networks.<sup>23</sup> HUBOUT, a coworking space and laboratory for social innovation of the Municipality of Matera, in collaboration with the Basilicata Creative Cluster, has been open in the Spine Bianche neighborhood since 2022. A separate site of the School of Higher Education of the Central Institute for Restoration (ICR) , an organ of the Ministry of Culture, has been located in Vittorio Veneto Square since 2015. The School of Advanced Training (SAF - ICR) is a course aimed at those who want to work in the profession of restorer, acquiring a preparation based on technical-educational activities conducted directly on artifacts identified as cultural property and subject to the provisions of protection. At the end of the five-year course, the student received a Diploma equivalent to the Master's Degree in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage qualifying for the profession of cultural heritage restorer. Lastly, in Piazza del Sedile is the headquarters of the “Duni” Conservatory, one of the most important in southern Italy. The city thus appears to have an important cultural network of higher education, which, at several levels communicate with the administration.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ctematera.it/>

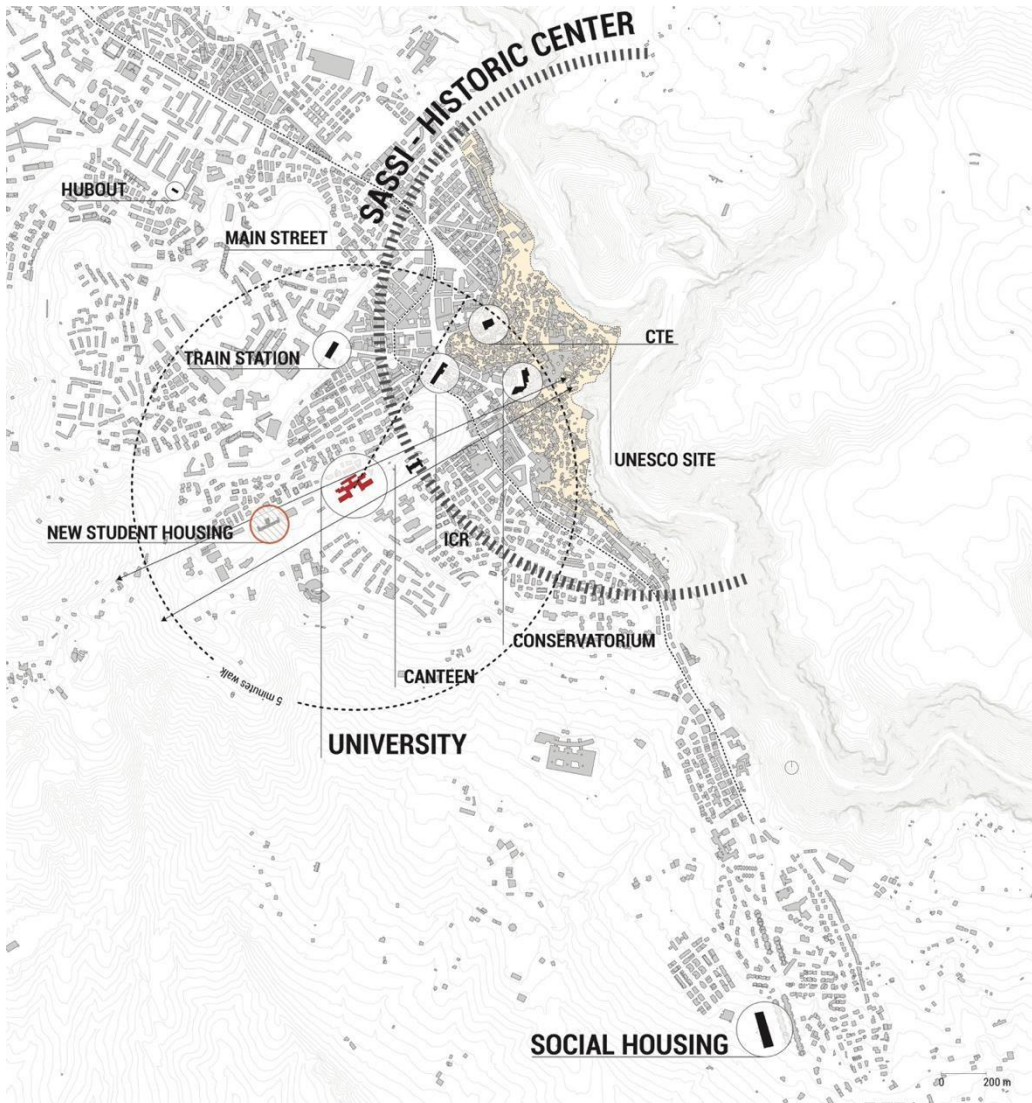


Figure 2| Resources and supply in the city of Matera.  
Credits: Giovanna Mangialardi, Ida G. Presta.

The map [Figure 2] shows the university campus, and the relationship established with the urban context. In particular, it can be seen how within a 5 min walk are concentrated the main services and other cultural and training institutions in the city. It is interesting indeed, the cultural corridor that starts down from Sassi and arrives up to Castle Hill also location of the campus and future student residence. In terms of university housing offerings, it is important to note that there is no student housing in the city but rather two ongoing experiences. First one is the student residence that will be completed, as reported in the statement by Councillor for Infrastructure Donatella Merra,<sup>24</sup> owing to a recent allocation of 7,5 million euros in funds, which will be in addition to those already allocated. The Councillor also emphasized the importance and urgency of this project, specifically for off-site students who have been suffering from market changes and increases for too long; it will also represent a valuable and promotional service for the University. In March 2023,

<sup>24</sup><https://www.regione.basilicata.it/giunta/site/giunta/detail.jsp?otype=1012&id=3077831&value=regione>



the tender for the completion of the student residence hall was published.<sup>25</sup> The amount allocated is 13,7 million euros, this represents an initial response to the appeal of the entire Lucanian student community.

The second project concerns the recent completion of the Social Housing-City of Sassi complex, which saw the Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, as the main investor.<sup>26</sup> The project includes 115 apartments on an area of about 13,000 square meters, social gathering spaces and open spaces. The initiative is among the most relevant social housing real estate interventions for the South, aiming to provide housing solutions with subsidized rents in the city.<sup>27</sup> The Social Housing Complex-City of Sassi, targets segments of the population that have difficulty accessing the free housing market, and thus large families, single-income, single-parent households, the elderly, young couples, as well as young off-site students. Despite representing a real estate operation promoted by mostly private actors (Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, Fondo Esperia and Social Housing Foundation, etc.), it is an attempt to respond to the rising cost of living in the city by providing an alternative solution to the growing housing needs of the city of Matera.



Figure 3| Social Housing Matera “Città dei Sassi”.<sup>28</sup>

## 5. Events and Impacts.

The nomination as European Capital of Culture 2019 has confirmed art and culture as major attractors. Matera, as the first city in the South to receive the title, has built the candidature by interweaving scientific and technological expertise, manual skills and traditions to design an idea of the future (the reference slogan is Open Future)<sup>29</sup> for the Lucania community and for local, national and international tourists and city users based on the immense architectural and cultural heritage that

<sup>25</sup> "Recupero e ristrutturazione edilizia del 2° padiglione dell'ex Ospedale Civile di Matera da adibire a residenza per studenti universitari", Comunicato della Regione Basilicata.

<sup>26</sup> <https://materasocialhousing.it/tipologie-appartamenti/>

<sup>27</sup> Press release - no.104 of 05/10/2022/ Social Housing Matera | Cassa Depositi e Prestiti

<sup>28</sup> Left photo Credits: <https://materasocialhousing.it/tipologie-appartamenti/>

Right photo Credist: <https://sg-gallerylive.it/index.php/cantieri/social-housing-citta-dei-sassi/#bwg429/6060>

<sup>29</sup> dossier [https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/images/2019/allegati/dossier\\_mt2019-openfuture\\_ita.pdf](https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/images/2019/allegati/dossier_mt2019-openfuture_ita.pdf)

animates the city of Matera and its history. A long and inclusive process in which cultural and social associations, the region's municipalities, private operators, residents and many other institutions, including the University of Basilicata, participated. The Department of European and Mediterranean Cultures (DICEM) and the School of Specialization in Archaeology worked alongside the Committee to support the candidacy but above all to introject its spirit and train all enrolled students in the culture of openness. In fact, in July 2014 in the decommissioned building of the *Ferrovie Appulo Lucane* railways, in agreement with APT Basilicata, Matera 2019 and the University, the Matera 2019 Urban Center was opened, a place that could be supportive in the narrative about the change of the city, as well as a space for study and work. Since 2019, with the opening of the Campus the Center has moved inside the campus itself, it remains a coworking space open to students and interested companies, who with a membership fee can gain access.

Evaluation and reports that are useful in order to understand the transformations of the process from the moment of nomination have reported what has happened of Matera European Capital of Culture in a transparent and open way.<sup>30</sup> Specifically, the reports and evaluations submitted and collected were:

- Project leader and Matera 2019 – Experience, business model impact and social innovation. Analysis of some case studies by Prof. Carlucci (University of Basilicata);<sup>31</sup>
- Open Design School: Living Lab as a catalyst for business development. The experience of some providers by Prof. Carlucci (University of Basilicata);<sup>32</sup>
- Audience survey: a study of the experience and perceived benefits during Matera 2019 by Prof. Petraglia (Università degli Studi della Basilicata);<sup>33</sup>
- The space of events and events in space by Prof. Mininni (University of Basilicata).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Dossier Matera Capital of Culture 2019

<sup>31</sup> Evaluator: University of Basilicata (team led by Prof. Daniela Carlucci)- Evaluative scope: In Matera we produce culture. Effects and impacts on strengthening cultural and creative supply chains-

<https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/it/report-2019/studi-valutativi-su-matera-2019/l-esperienza-dei-project-leader.html>

<sup>32</sup> Evaluator: University of Basilicata (team led by Prof. Daniela Carlucci)

Evaluative Scope: Culture is produced in Matera. Effects and impacts on strengthening cultural and creative supply chains. - <https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/it/report-2019/studi-valutativi-su-matera-2019/il-living-lab-open-design-school.html>

<sup>33</sup> Evaluator: University of Basilicata (team led by Prof. Carmelo Petraglia and composed of Dr. Lucio Giuseppe Gaeta, Dr. Benedetta Parenti, Dr. Salvatore Ercolano) - Evaluative scope: Matera 2019 and access to culture - <https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/it/report-2019/studi-valutativi-su-matera-2019/l-indagine-sul-pubblico.html>

<sup>34</sup> Evaluator: University of Basilicata (Team led by Prof. Maria Valeria Mininni and composed of Arch. Marialucia Camardelli, arch. Giovanna Costanza and arch. Miriam Pepe) - Evaluative scope: Matera 2019: the transformative impact on urban spaces - <https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/it/report-2019/studi-valutativi-su-matera-2019/gli-spazi-degli-eventi.html>

Under the I-DEA project<sup>35</sup> 249 public archives and private collections were surveyed by the University of Basilicata, which are now accessible on the Foundation's open data portal.<sup>36</sup>

There were about 7,200 students involved in the Matera 2019 process, from all grade levels, more than 95 percent of whom participated in the realization and construction of the events. The University, with the figure of Rector Ignazio Mancini, is still present in the board of directors of the Matera 2019 Foundation, together with the Mayor of Matera and the President of the Region, underlining the importance of the institution and the work it does in the area. The pandemic condition confronted by the city and consequently by the university and its community represented a moment of profound crisis: from the creative euphoria of 2019 came the lockdown of 2020, bringing an abrupt interruption to tourist flows, to the dialogues struck between the University and the City, and to access to public spaces, and consequently to the university (access to study rooms, lecture halls, the library, etc., was banned, for example).

In particular, the synergy relationship set up during the course of the event was frozen, and now slowly resumed,<sup>37</sup> although the city's attractiveness is still a strong driver of economic development and tourist flows to the city are increasing. From APT statistical data,<sup>38</sup> in 2014, the year of the nomination, the registered presences in the city reach 244,847; in 2019, the year of the European Capital of Culture, there is an increase of about 200% recording 730,434 presences in the city, to drop by about 65% in 2020, the year of the pandemic with 253,250 presences; in 2021 the trend rises again by 36%, with 345,187 presences. The data indicates that interest in the city is still strong, the administration and the foundation, in fact, continue to work on a busy cultural and tourism program, sometimes in collaboration with the university, continuing the exchange triggered with the Matera 2019 event.

Although the academic community afferent to the DiCEM/DiSU department counts on a number of about 1580 individuals (including enrolled students,<sup>39</sup> structured and contracted faculty, and administrative staff)<sup>40</sup> which corresponds to about 2.6 percent of the city's total

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<sup>35</sup> I-DEA is a pillar project of Matera 2019's exploration of Basilicata's archives and collections from an artistic point of view; it is an experiment in how archives and collections can be interpreted as living entities according to which to understand the articulated complexity of a territory's history and culture. The project is by the Matera 2019 Foundation, with support from the Ministry of Culture, the Cohesion Fund and the Basilicata region.

<sup>36</sup> Open archival access portal: [https://umap.geonue.com/en/map/archivi-e-collezioni-unibas-per-i-dea\\_978#9/40.6338/16.4603](https://umap.geonue.com/en/map/archivi-e-collezioni-unibas-per-i-dea_978#9/40.6338/16.4603)

<sup>37</sup> Mininni, *Osservare Matera: cultura, cittadinanza e spazio*.

<sup>38</sup> Statistical data extracted from the Basilicata Territorial Promotion Agency - Archives 2014-2021 - <https://www.aptbasilicata.it/dati-statistici/>

<sup>39</sup> Data extrapolated from the MUR database - <http://dati.ustat.miur.it/organization/ace58834-5a0b-40f6-9b0e-ed6c34ea8de0?tags=Universit%C3%A0&tags=Studenti>

<sup>40</sup> Data collected from the university website -

<https://www.google.com/search?q=unibas&oq=unibas&aqs=chrome.0.0i271j46i131i433i512j69i59j69i60j69i65j69i60l3.1386j0j4&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

population (60,351)<sup>41</sup> the city is not perceived as a university town. Citizens, for example, are not familiar with the new university campus in Matera, but only recognize the one in Potenza.<sup>42</sup> The number of matriculations has also been declining in recent years due to the pandemic [Figure 4]; however, from the interviews posed to the University on enrollment data, about 15 percent of matriculations are expected to recover by the academic year 2022/2023.

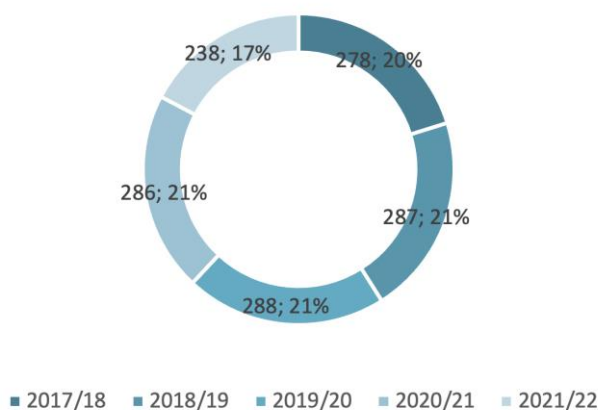


Figure 4| Matriculated Trends in Matera site.  
Credits: Authors' revision of Mur data.

The city's strong tourist orientation can be read from the housing supply. Matera has seen significant increases in private rentals and needs even more subsidized housing for the most vulnerable social groups.

## 6. Possible Dialogue? Concluding Remarks.

The contribution investigates the existing relationship between the university system and Matera, the nature of this relationship, and how the latter has changed as a result of the aforementioned events, attempting to assess the fallout at the urban level.

Matera has undergone profound changes as a result of the various events that have affected the city, yet the relationship with the university has remained latent and undervalued. In 2020, a discussion seemed to have begun between the administration and the university institutions,<sup>43</sup> with the main objective of making Matera a university city by investing in the university's attractiveness and networking with other actors and with the numerous cultural principals. Particular attention was paid to the need to address the declining population, especially in the 20-29 age group.<sup>44</sup> An

<sup>41</sup> Istat DATA 2017

<sup>42</sup> Mininni, *Osservare Matera: cultura, cittadinanza e spazio*.

<sup>43</sup> The working panel included the Rector Mancini and Mayor Bennardi. <https://www.sassilive.it/cultura-e-spettacoli/terza-pagina/matera-pronta-per-la-citta-universitaria-sindaco-bennardi-incontra-rettore-unibas-mancini-report-e-foto/>

<sup>44</sup> Istat 2020 data.

[https://www.istat.it/it/files//2022/03/Censimento-della-popolazione-in-Basilicata\\_focus.pdf](https://www.istat.it/it/files//2022/03/Censimento-della-popolazione-in-Basilicata_focus.pdf)

opportunity that has not yet been fully seized both in urban strategies and in educational and housing offerings appropriate to the target students. The University, during the Matera 2019 event, has assumed the role of intermediary in the relationship between cultural policies and urban policies, between culture and the city. It became an anchor institution, fulfilling the task of monitoring and evaluating some of the experiences that took place during and/or after the event, thanks to the activity provided by the Matera 2019 Foundation. However, the presence of the University of Basilicata, despite representing an important cultural venue<sup>45</sup> and a value for the territory, cannot yet be considered as a hinge between the events and the urban space.

The impact of the event was strongly perceived in the city, giving it the designation of a tourist/art city. However, Matera has not managed to win the definition of “university city”;<sup>46</sup> Matera seems to be more of a “city with a university”, where the university has a residual role compared to the clearer tourist vocation and will. Moreover, the role of the student community has been marginal in public discussions, and the exodus of young Matera residents is still ongoing. The pandemic, on the other hand, as shown in the data above, has greatly affected enrolment, which has gone from 289 matriculated for the a.y. 2019/2020, to 238 for the a.y. 2021/2022. However, as specified above, trends suggest a 15% recovery in future years.

Despite the many issues solicited, however, the importance of the public service that the University of Basilicata offers to the community emerges, through its role as a mediator between the training of scientific excellence and social and contemporary problems.

Ultimately, the analysis shows how the University of Basilicata beyond the more traditional tasks of research and education, represents, albeit within the limits of action, for the city of Matera, an attractor of talent and businesses, triggering relationships that over time nurture and enrich the relationship between University and City, and the big event of Matera European Capital of Culture has demonstrated this. However, this does not imply a direct increase in the attractiveness of the university campus for students, as there has been a weak increase and difficulty in managing facilities related to the right to study. There is still much to be done in terms of upgrading infrastructure and services to support students. It is necessary, therefore, to support a still embryonic process by providing joint City/University policies to preserve the international breath gained in 2019 and to attract and enhance young temporary residents.<sup>47</sup> The university should aim to become a leader of cultural and social processes that are an engine of emancipation and vindication for both the region and the city of Matera, at the national and international levels.<sup>48</sup> The

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<sup>45</sup> Mininni e Dicillo, «Politiche urbane e politiche culturali per Matera verso il 2019».

<sup>46</sup> Martinelli, *Spazi della conoscenza: università, città e territori*.

<sup>47</sup> Mininni, *Osservare Matera: cultura, cittadinanza e spazio*.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*.

potential conditions of Matera and its University make evident the multiple possibilities and relationships of/with the Lucanian territory, which if enhanced can initiate a long-lasting and fruitful dialogue over time, benefiting both institutions and especially the students, citizens and resources for the territory.

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