City Leaders, Relationships and Urban Resilience. A Mixed Methods Exploratory Study of the City Leadership Network of Padua (Italy) and Peterborough (UK).

Thesis

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City Leaders, Relationships and Urban Resilience.

A Mixed Methods exploratory study of the City Leadership Network of Padua (Italy) and Peterborough (UK).

Michela Pagani

This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

September 2020
Abstract

The key role of city leadership at both the local and global scale is undisputed. However, city leadership has yet to be fully understood, even though studies on it have bloomed in recent years. This thesis argues that the adoption of a place-based leadership approach and a focus on the networked nature of city leadership can advance our understanding of this topic and, particularly, of the elements and dynamics that may influence the effectiveness or failure of city leadership.

Starting from the idea that city leadership (from a place-based leadership approach) can be considered as a metaphorical and semi-conscious network, called the City Leadership Network (CLN), this thesis focuses on three elements: the city leaders (the actors of the CLN), the relationships among city leaders, and the perceived urban resilience (the potential outcome of the CLN). The main aim is to explore whether the first two elements might influence the third element.

An exploratory multi-site case study based on Mixed Methods was conducted. The CLN of two cities, one in Italy (Padua) and one in the UK (Peterborough) were explored through the eyes of 66 city leaders, 37 in Padua and 29 in Peterborough. Data were collected using different techniques (online desk research, online questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus groups), whereas the analysis was mainly based on a qualitative approach to Social Network Analysis (SNA).

Surprising and thought-provoking findings emerged from the research, even though its nature and limitations did not allow to provide generalisable or strongly significant results and called for future research. In particular, despite the recognised central role of political leaders, managerial leaders and business leaders emerged as the critical actors.
within the CLN, whose role and relationships with other city leaders can tip the balance in favour of a more or less effective CLN and resilient city.
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**List of Abbreviations**

BL  Business Leader(hip)
CAS  Complex Adaptive System
CL  Civic/Community Leader(hip)
CLA  City Leadership Arena(s)
CLN  City Leadership Network
CLT  Complexity Leadership Theory
ML  Managerial Leader(hip)
PA  Public Administration
PBL  Place-based Leadership
PC  Public Corporation
PCC  Peterborough City Council
PL  Political Leader(hip)
PSP  Public Service Provider
RQs:  Research Questions:
  mRQ  main RQ
  sRQs  sub-Research Questions
SNA  Social Network Analysis
1 Introduction

1.1 Context of the research

Studies on city leadership have bloomed in recent years (Acuto, 2013; Budd et al., 2017; Hambleton, 2014; Langan & McFarland, 2017; Rapoport et al., 2019; Sotarauta, 2016a; Sweeting, 2002). The rapid increase in urban population (e.g. UN, 2018) and the increasing recognition of the impact of cities at both the local and global scale (Acuto, 2013, 2016) made cities become ‘the defining organisational units of our time’ (Rapoport et al., 2019, p. ix). Also, cities are now widely acknowledged as the sites where wicked problems can arise and develop, but also where they can ideally be solved. Wicked problems are resistant to resolution, rather than evil, and because of their complex, interdependent, cross-sectoral and cross-places nature, the effort to solve one aspect of them may reveal or create other problems (e.g. Budd et al., 2017; Head & Alford, 2015; Heifetz et al., 2009). Some classic examples of this kind of problems are climate change, poverty, social instability (e.g. World Economic Forum, 2019). At the same time, (good) leadership—especially in its collective form—is strongly demanded, being recognised as the crucial factor needed to successfully face and overcome today’s societal challenges (e.g. J. Bryson & Crosby, 2017; Grint, 2010; Hartley, 2018). It should not, therefore, astonish this renewed and extensive interest of scholars in the investigation of city leadership. Nevertheless, this concept can still be very straightforward and very confusing at the same time. Broadly speaking, it can be easily defined as ‘the leadership in the city’ but what it means, precisely, can vary a lot according to the research field, the
phenomenon investigated and how the terms city and leadership are conceptualised. In fact, despite its popularity:

there is no agreed definition of what city leadership is and little systematic knowledge about the forms it takes, how it operates, how it is evolving and its relationship to governance at both a local and international level. (Rapoport et al., 2019, p. 3)

It is clear that many questions remain open in the understanding of city leadership and that more research is essential to fully capture this topic. Fortunately, it has not finished attracting considerable attention, and it is likely to become an increasingly important area of inter-disciplinary studies.

1.2 Research Aims and questions

This thesis has two aims: first, to adopt a place-based leadership (from now on, PBL) approach to investigate city leadership; second, to focus on its networked nature.

As I better discuss in Chapter 2, PBL is a new stream of research whose adoption can shed new light on the understanding of city leadership, especially by emphasising some important elements of the leadership of and in places (such as cities). Also, PBL stresses the key role of social interactions among leaders, particularly in relation to its effectiveness, even though this has not been the focus of any empirical PBL research yet. Still, some PBL scholars call for the application of network literature and methodology to
the development of this area of study (e.g. Ayres, 2014; Normann et al., 2016; Sotarauta, 2016a). Accordingly, as I better discuss in Chapter 3, city leadership is here considered as a metaphorical and semi-conscious network, called the CLN (City Leadership Network), which drove the formulation of the following main research question:

*mRQ: How might the CLN (actors and relationships) influence urban resilience?*

However, to effectively address the mRQ, three elements need to be taken into consideration with their related three sub-research questions (sROs):

1. The actors of the network, which drove the formulation of sRQ1: *Who are the city leaders from a PBL perspective?*
2. The relationships among the actors of the network, which drove the formulation of sRQ2: *Which relationships exist among city leaders?*
3. The aim of the network, namely urban resilience, which drove the formulation of sRQ3: *How resilient is the city perceived?*

### 1.3 Nature of the study

To address the above RQs, an exploratory multi-site case study was designed. This means that, since little is known about it, this thesis aims to explore city leadership by discovering patterns characterising it (Chenail, 2011; Stebbins, 2001). Also, the same investigation was conducted in two different cities, namely Padua (Italy) and
Peterborough (UK), in order to compare and contrast findings and potentially identify similar patterns of city leadership. Furthermore, given the complexity of city leadership and the need for a pragmatic and flexible methodology, a Mixed Methods (MM) approach (e.g. Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) was adopted to collect and analyse data, with a predominant role given to a qualitative Social Network Analysis (SNA - e.g. Hollstein, 2014). These two approaches were indeed considered the most appropriate ones to achieve the research aim and address the RQs.

1.4 Contribution to knowledge

Through the exploration of city leadership by addressing the above RQs, this thesis advances the understanding of this topic in four main ways. First, the idea of a metaphorical and semi-conscious CLN provides an original approach to the conceptualisation of city leadership, in particular by focusing on its networked nature and emphasising both the informal and formal character of city leadership as well as the critical role of both actors (i.e. city leaders) and relationships. Also, it validates one of the PBL frameworks on the classification of city leaders (see Chapter 3), which is used in the thesis for the identification of these key players.

Second, the use of Mixed Methods and Social Network Analysis represents an original methodological choice in the study of both city leadership and PBL. Also, the adoption of a holistic and network approach based on the involvement of all categories of city leaders (as drawn upon the literature) provides a multi-perspective study of city leadership which is rare and represents an added value.
Third, despite the exploratory nature of this thesis, the comparison and contrast of the two investigated CLN highlights both similarities and differences across cases and, thereby, provides important empirically-based insights on city leadership, which take into consideration also the key role of place and context.

Finally, in more practical terms, this project can help city leaders to become more aware of the collective, networked and relational character of (city and place) leadership and of the impact that their relationships might have on the place and communities’ well-being.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis consists of nine chapters organised untraditionally. In fact, given the three sRQs and main themes characterising this project, each based on specific additional literature and methodological procedures, this thesis combines the conventional structure with the three papers one. More specifically, Chapter 2 reviews the main literature on PBL since city leadership is here investigated as the PBL of and within cities. The literature on this new stream of study represents indeed the theoretical starting point of this thesis.

Chapter 3 outlines the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis and links the literature to the research aim and RQs of this thesis. In particular, it introduces the three main themes (or elements) characterising this thesis: city leaders, relationships among leaders and urban resilience. Also, it deals with the ecological validity of the conceptual
framework, which represents its applicability to people’s everyday and natural social settings (Bryman, 2012, p. 48).

Chapter 4 focuses on the overarching methodology of this thesis, namely the methodology characterising the entire project. It begins with the philosophical assumptions underpinning this thesis, that are pragmatism as worldview, complexity leadership as theoretical lens, and Mixed Methods (MM) Social Network Analysis (SNA) as methodological approach. Then, it describes the exploratory multi-site case study research design, from sites and participants selection to the organisation of focus groups to validate early findings. Finally, it discusses ethical concerns and the quality of the project.

Chapter 5 illustrates the two investigated cities, Padua and Peterborough. After a broad overview, both cities are described in terms of their political, public sector, economic and civil society backgrounds, and urban resilience policies.

Chapter 6 is the first themed chapter, dedicated to the identification of city leaders. It addresses sRQ1: *who are the city leaders from a PBL perspective?* The chapter is structured as a paper: it first reviews the literature on the identification of city leaders; then it describes in more details the procedures of data collection, analysis and visualisation; finally, it presents and discusses the emerged findings.
Chapter 7 follows the same structure of Chapter 6 but focusing on the relationships among city leaders and hence sRQ2: *which relationships exist among city leaders?*

Chapter 8 follows the same structure of Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 yet concentrating on the perceived urban resilience. It addresses sRQ3: *How resilient is the city perceived?*

Chapter 9 recombines the three elements analysed separately in the three previous chapters and attempt to address the mRQ: *how might the CLN (actors and relationships) influence the urban resilience?* Also, the chapter highlights the limitations of the thesis and revisits the conceptual framework in light of the observed findings.

Finally, Chapter 10 concludes the thesis by revisiting the RQs, focusing on the contributions to knowledge and suggesting potential directions for future research.
2 Literature review on Place-based Leadership (PBL)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the main theoretical underpinning for this thesis by critically reviewing the relevant literature on PBL. In fact, there is no agreed definition of city leadership: the two most recent ones are still in their early days and, despite being promising, it is premature to evaluate whether scholars will embrace them or if they will be further developed. These are the definitions provided by Sancino (2017) and Rapoport et al. (2019). The former focused on city leadership as a capacity, whereas the latter on city leadership as a catalyst for action. The full definitions are provided here:

[City Leadership is ] the capacity of people and/or organisations that are in the position—both formally and informally—to activate and lead processes where city and citizens’ inputs, energies, and resources are mobilised for the accomplishment of relevant societal challenges. (Sancino, 2017)

[City Leadership is] a catalyst for action [...] that brings together multiple elements of urban governance to identify and act on governance priorities. These elements fall into three categories: actors, structures and institutions, and tools. (Rapoport et al., 2019, p. 29)
In this thesis, a broader approach is followed, and city leadership is intended as the \textit{PBL of and within cities}. This is the reason why an opening focus on this new stream of research is imperative.

As mentioned in the previous section, further and more specific literature is then reviewed in each themed chapter (i.e. Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8) to improve the flow of the text and facilitate the readability of this thesis.

2.2 City Leadership as a form of PBL

The interest in leadership at the local scale is not new (Beer & Clower, 2014), but the 2010 \textit{Policy Studies}’ issue on ‘Leadership and Place’\textsuperscript{1} marked the turning point in its investigation and, more precisely, in the emergence of the study of PBL (or place leadership). The editors of the issue called indeed for a new and fresh approach to developing the research on ‘the leadership of place’ (Collinge et al., 2010), in contrast with the more traditional focus on ‘the leadership in places’ (Beer et al., 2019; Sotarauta et al., 2017). Since then, PBL has caught a lot of attention and has become a growing and promising stream of research, as also shown by the development of a PBL Network (\url{www.pblnetwork.altervista.org}). Still, ‘many important issues remain to be explored’ (Sotarauta et al., 2017, p. 191) both conceptually and methodologically, since PBL ‘is not

\textsuperscript{1} In 2011, this issue became a book published by Routledge. Therefore, citations among place leadership scholars might differentiate in base of the reference to the journal issue (2010) or the book (2011). Here I preferred to cite the journal issue because, chronologically, it represents the turning point in the study of place-based leadership.
a singular phenomenon or set of experiences’ (Beer & Clower, 2014, p. 13). For example, there is the need of expanding the methods used to explore and examine it: most of the works on place leadership are indeed based on single or multiple qualitative case studies and only recently the first international comparative survey of place leadership was undertaken (Beer et al., 2019; Sotarauta & Beer, 2017).

But what is exactly PBL? An exhaustive and shared definition has not been formulated yet, especially because the topic is still under study and it’s constantly evolving. In one of the first works on the subject, Hambleton (2009) described PBL as an approach that:

starts from an examination of the forces creating the particularities of a specific place – its economic base, its social make-up, its constellation of political interests and so on. In this formulation local political leaders (and hence civic elites) are not seen as victims of global economic forces. Rather, they are seen as civic leaders who can have a considerable impact on the fortunes of their city by taking advantage of the strengths of the local population and the distinctive history and characteristics of their city. (Hambleton, 2009, p. 524)

Building on this definition, Hambleton started later to delineate PBL in contrast with place-less leadership, namely a leadership that is not concerned with the impact and related consequences of its decisions on particular places and communities (Hambleton, 2015b).

A further attempt to describe PBL, or at least its primary aims, was made by Sotarauta et al. (2017), who argued that:
At the most basic level, to study leadership in urban and regional development is to be interested in revealing the things that people actually do to influence other people in these very particular types of settings both formally and informally – openly as well opaquely – and how they go about doing what they do. It is also about revealing the types of social processes involved in ‘making things happen’ and in ‘getting things done’ (or not getting things done). Ultimately, the motivation is to understand better how and to what extent the places where we live, work and play are shaped by human relationships and interactions and, specifically, in what ways the meanings ascribed to concepts such as leader, leading and/or leadership can be used to explain how these places evolve. (Sotarauta et al., 2017, p. 188)

In line with this description, Sotarauta and Beer (2017, p. 213) highlighted three key elements of PBL:

1. Its being based on fragmented and shared processes, rather than top-down ones;
2. Its being exercised by both formal and informal leaders;
3. Its being characterised by multi-level, dynamic and interactive (or collaborative) governance processes.

Similarly, Nicholds et al. (2017) distinguished five general leitmotifs of PBL: collaborative atmosphere, blending learning, allowing space for complex problem-solving, distributed leadership, and power-sharing.

Although all the cited works provide a good starting point in the understanding of PBL, the authors neglected to mention (intentionally or not) other important aspects
that denote this topic. Accordingly, drawing upon the literature, I have delineated the following potential definition of PBL:

* A form of politically driven public leadership characterised by the mutual influence of place and leadership, and implemented, according to the governance settings, by a plurality of formal and informal leaders whose social relations influence the effectiveness of PBL itself and, consequently, of the place well-being.

Before unpacking and briefly explaining this dense definition, it is necessary to specify one key aspect of this thesis: since PBL can be implemented and studied at different territorial scales (e.g. regional or local) and, in this thesis, city leadership is considered as the PBL of and within cities, the main and general features that characterise PBL denote also city leadership. Thus, from now on, the term city leadership will be used only when the focus needs to be put specifically on the city-level or on the research design and findings. Otherwise, the term PBL will be preferred since it is broader and includes the study of leadership of and within cities, regions and other types of places.

2.2.1 *A form of politically driven public leadership*

PBL, and hence all its variants, can and should be nested in the broader discipline of public leadership (Jackson, 2019; Liddle, 2010) because of some important common elements. Drawing upon the conceptualisation of public leadership provided by 't Hart and Tummers (2019), also PBL both mobilises and strongly influences the communities
within a place and the way in which these communities deal with issues. Moreover, PBL has a powerful impact on the ability of its communities to create or destruct public value (Jackson, 2019), whose promotion, influence and improvement is the principal aim of public leadership (Brookes & Grint, 2010). Another common element is that both PBL and public leadership are exercised by a plurality of actors (see Section 2.2.4) and, thereby, need a pluralistic and collective approach to leadership (e.g. Denis et al., 2012; Ospina et al., 2020a; Yammarino et al., 2012). Lastly, in both cases, there is a solid connection with political studies: both are indeed investigated considering also politics and policy-making (e.g. Hartley, 2018; Sancino et al., n.d.). Also, public leadership encompasses political leadership (‘t Hart & Rhodes, 2014; R. S. Morse et al., 2007) and PBL is politically driven (Hambleton, 2015a; Jackson, 2019). This means that political leaders can create the right environment for the formulation and implementation of an effective PBL, which could also be legitimated by citizens through democratic processes—at least in Western Countries (Pagani, 2019).

2.2.2 The mutual influence of place and leadership

As its name clearly illustrates, the key characteristic of PBL is the emphasis on the mutual influence of place and leadership. Indeed, PBL shapes the place on which it operates but, at the same time, the place shapes how PBL is implemented (Collinge & Gibney, 2010). In fact, at the basis of the study of PBL, there is the common idea that, since leadership affects the community, it needs to be designed and implemented in accordance with the geographical, historical and cultural peculiarities of the place that it influences, hence the term place-based.
Still, two further clarifications are here due: what is *place* and what is *leadership*?

Both are familiar concepts, daily used by everyone everywhere, still they both remain somehow vague terms, hard to be clearly conceptualised. As Jackson (2019, p. 212) pointed out citing Cresswell, they ‘act as double-edged swords’ because their popularity is both an opportunity and a problem: since we believe to know and understand them and their meaning, we hardly go beyond that ‘common-sense level’ to further and deeper understand them (Cresswell, 2004, p. 3, cited by Jackson, 2019).

Let’s start with the concept of *leadership*. It is now widely accepted that ‘a consensus [on leadership] might be unachievable’ (Grint et al., 2016, p. 4). In fact, ‘there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are writers on the subject’ (Goodwin, 2006 cited by Liddle, 2010), depending on the theoretical perspective (see, for example, Bass & Bass, 2009), methodological approach (see, for example, Bryman, 2011; Case et al., 2011) and focus that scholars follow in the study of this debated topic. It is not a purpose of this chapter (nor thesis) to review the vast literature on leadership, which already includes remarkable works (e.g. Bolden et al., 2011; Bryman et al., 2011; Grint, 2000; Jackson & Parry, 2018; Storey et al., 2016). Still, it is important to point out how I conceptualise leadership in this thesis.

To date, it is commonly accepted Grint’s well-known argument that leadership can be distinguished in five forms (Grint, 2005; Grint et al., 2016), namely leadership as/through:

1. a Person (the who);
2. a Result (the what);
3. a Position (the where);
4. a Purpose (the why);

5. a Process (the how).

To these five forms, Jackson and Parry (2018) added a sixth one: leadership through/as a Place, emphasising the important role of place and context in the conceptualisation and investigation of leadership and, hence, re-calling the key arguments of PBL scholars.

Agreeing with Grint’s and Jackson and Parry’s frameworks and, especially, with their recognition that empirical examples of leadership may embody elements of all these forms (Grint, 2005; Grint et al., 2016; Jackson & Parry, 2018), in this thesis, leadership is considered in its widest sense as something influential and relational that can take one, a combination or all the six forms cited above. Leadership is influential because it is what ‘makes things happen’ (Huxham & Vangen, 2005, p. 67), by shaping emotions and behaviour (Hambleton & Howard, 2013) and by producing outcomes (e.g. Drath et al., 2008). Leadership is relational because it cannot happen nor make things happen without the complex interplay of different forces and actors, whether in a leadership-followership relation, collaboratively or collectively, or in a network (Craps et al., 2019; e.g. Drath et al., 2008; Kellerman, 2012; Ospina et al., 2020a; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007).

For what concerns the second key concept examined, also place can be conceptualised in several ways. Sutherland et al. (2020) pointed this out well: in their Call for Papers for a Special Issue on PBL, they distinguished at least eight conceptualisations of place: geography; value and beliefs; organisational culture and space; structure, power and politics; history; discourse and languages; materiality; community and locality.
In this thesis, place is considered as a meaningful site (Cresswell, 2015, p. 12) characterised by three key elements (Cresswell, 2015, pp. 12–14, paraphrasing Agnew, 1987):

- **location**, the fixed and objective geographical coordinates of a place;
- **locale**, the social relations that construct a place;
- **sense of place**, the ‘subjective and emotional attachment people have to a place’.

Place is dynamic (The University of Chicago Press Books, n.d., introducing Agnew’s book “Politics in Modern Italy“) and it is rooted in geography and in history (Jackson, 2019); it ‘is everywhere’ (Cresswell, 2015, p. 7), yet never the same. Therefore, place is a unique type of context for leadership (Collinge & Gibney, 2010) and PBL is contextually embedded in its place (Sotarauta, 2018). Place should hence be taken into consideration also by studies focusing on contextual leadership and on the role of context over leadership (e.g. Osborn & Marion, 2009; Shamir, 2012).

In particular, the influence of the government/governance contexts (or systems) seems to play a central role in PBL studies, even though its impact needs to be further explored (Bentley, Pugalis, & Shutt, 2017). In fact, different observations have been made on the matter. For example, Hambleton (2014, 2015c) identified four different contextual forces (or limits) which influence how place leaders operate (see Table 2.1 in the next page) and, because of their ambiguous role, the governmental forces are seen as the most critical ones. Sotarauta and Beer (2017, p. 220), while discussing their comparative research on PBL, stated that ‘at a fundamental level the findings reveal the influence of the ‘deep’ and often overlooked influence of national governance
arrangements on place leadership’. On the other hand, Budd et al. (2017, p. 332) argued that ‘the administrative and cultural context can both influence and at the same time be irrelevant’ for PBL.

Table 2.1 Hambleton’s four contextual forces (or limits) on PBL.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual forces or limits</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental forces/limits</td>
<td>Environment characteristics, natural ecosystem in which the place is embedded. These forces/limits are the only ones that are <em>non-negotiable</em> since leaders cannot (or hardly can) change them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural forces/limits</td>
<td>Mix of people (as actors) and cultural values of people of the place. In other words, the ‘the rich variety of voices fund in any locality’ (p. 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic forces/limits</td>
<td>The need for localities to compete and grow in the wider marketplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governmental forces/limits</td>
<td>The legal and policy arrangements imposed by higher levels of government. These forces are the most critical ones because of their ambiguous role.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on Hambleton (2015c).

2.2.3  **PBL and governance**

As it briefly emerged at the end of the previous section, PBL cannot be fully implemented or understood if the governance systems in which it is embedded is

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2 Governance is ‘the action or manner of governing a state, organisation, etc’ (Oxford Dictionaries). Despite of being extremely basic and questionable, this definition provides a good starting point in understanding the meaning of this vast concept, that is usually combined with a particular qualifying adjective to narrow down its connotations (Ansell & Torfing, 2016; Rhodes, 1996). Some popular examples include *global governance* (e.g. Acuto, 2013), *public governance* (e.g. Brookes, 2010), *multi-level governance* (Hooghe & Marks, 2003) and *corporate governance*. 
disregarded (Budd & Sancino, 2016b; Sotarauta & Beer, 2017). In fact, PBL can be exercised at different territorial scales (e.g. national, regional, local) but, in line with multi-level governance theories (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2001; Ongaro, 2020), it cannot be effective if the other levels of governance (above or below) are overlooked. As Sotarauta (2016b, p. 47) put it, since ‘governance structure both constrain and enable leadership processes, place leadership cannot be examined as a separate entity’. In fact, PBL is seen as the bridge between government and governance processes (Budd & Sancino, 2016a) as well as the link between (public) leadership and (collaborative and collective) governance (Jackson, 2019), able to lay where leadership and governance processes merge. PBL can indeed provide an answer to Sotarauta’s challenging question ‘where governance ends and leadership begins?’ (Budd et al., 2017; Sotarauta, 2014).

### 2.2.4 A plurality of formal and informal place-based leaders

It is widely acknowledged that PBL is exercised by both formal and informal leaders who may belong to any sphere (or sector) of the governance system (Beer et al., 2019; Hambleton, 2014; Sotarauta, 2016b; Sotarauta & Beer, 2017). Also, it is recognised that collective action and collaboration among place-based leaders are essential for the implementation of an effective PBL (Hambleton, 2015c; Jackson, 2019; Schlappa, 2017), in line with the rise and spread of studies and theories on cross-sector collaboration (e.g. Crosby & Bryson, 2005), collective leadership (e.g. Ospina, 2017; Ospina et al., 2020a), system leadership (e.g. Bolden et al., 2019, 2020) and multi-actor governance (e.g. J. Bryson et al., 2017; Craps et al., 2019). However, as it should be clear by now, it is not possible to list a priori concrete example of place-based leaders since every place has its
own; it is only possible to speculate on who (or what) could exercise such role. Yet, some groups or categories of potential place-based leaders are widely recognised and can support the identification of actual place-based leaders in specific settings. In particular, three frameworks can be taken into high consideration.

The first framework refers to public leadership but, considering the belonging of PBL to this broader field of study, it can be successfully applied also in this context. It was developed by ‘t Hart and colleagues (‘t Hart, 2014; ‘t Hart & Tummers, 2019; ‘t Hart & Uhr, 2008) and it identifies three spheres of public leadership and governance:

- **Political leadership**, which consists of all political players of a place, namely leaders of parties and elected politicians in government;
- **Administrative leadership**, which consists of public administrators, senior officers who manage public organisations and influence policy-making processes;
- **Civic leadership**, which consists of all actors outside the governmental system, especially from civil society.

In contrast, the other two frameworks originate from PBL studies. The first (second, if the previous one is counted) is the New Civic Leadership Framework, developed by Hambleton (e.g. 2009, 2014, 2015c), the first scholar to re-call the attention on PBL. He identified different realms of PBL, which were initially three (Hambleton, 2009) to then became five (Hambleton, 2014, p. 125, 2015c, p. 15):

- **Political leadership**, which refers to ‘the work of those people elected to leadership positions by their citizenry’;
Managerial/Professional leadership, which refers to ‘the work of public servants appointed by local authorities, central government and third sector organisations to plan and manage public services, and promote community well-being’;

Community leadership, which refers to ‘the many civic-minded people who give their time and energy to local leadership activities in a wide variety of ways’;

Business leadership, which refers to ‘the contribution made by local business leaders and social entrepreneurs, who have a clear stake in the long-term prosperity of the locality’;

Trade union leadership, which refers to ‘the efforts of trade union leaders striving to improve the pay and working conditions of employees’.

Similarly, as drawn mainly upon Hambleton’s works, Budd and Sancino (Budd et al., 2017; Budd & Sancino, 2016a) developed the second PBL framework (third, if the first one is counted) with the main aim of analysing and comparing city leadership patterns. This is the City Leadership Framework, that consists of four arenas of city leadership to represent the different functions of the city (Budd et al., 2017, p. 319):

- The Political leadership arena exercises ‘the function of political representation and democratic intermediation in the wake of public policy formulation. It deals with the democratic processes that are activated to take and/or to influence the main decisions concerning the life of the citizens living in a given place’;

- The Managerial leadership arena exercises ‘the function of public service delivery (public policy implementation). It deals with the public services that are designed and delivered in a given place’;
• The Business leadership arena exercise the function of dealing 'with the processes of co-creation of private value provided by the private sector and by its interaction with the public and voluntary sectors';

• The Civic leadership arena exercises 'the function of active citizenship aimed at co-creating public and social value. It deals with all the processes provided by the community and its actors operating outside the traditional realm of the public and private sector'.

Table 2.2 below summarises and compares the three frameworks just described.

Table 2.2 The three frameworks for the identification of place-based leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public leadership</th>
<th>New Civic Leadership</th>
<th>City Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>('t Hart, 2014; 't Hart &amp; Tummers, 2019; 't Hart &amp; Uhr, 2008)</td>
<td>(Hambleton, 2009, 2014, 2015c)</td>
<td>(Budd et al., 2017; Budd &amp; Sancino, 2016a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 spheres:</td>
<td>5 realms:</td>
<td>4 arenas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Political leadership</td>
<td>• Political leadership</td>
<td>• Political leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Administrative leadership</td>
<td>• Managerial/Professional leadership</td>
<td>• Managerial leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Civic leadership</td>
<td>• Community leadership</td>
<td>• Business leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Business leadership</td>
<td>• Trade Union leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be noticed, all frameworks give an important role to political leadership and managerial/professional leadership. Their main difference lies in the recognition of the leadership from society, namely the leadership that emerges outside (local) government. In fact, the first framework puts this arena of leadership under the broad term of civic leadership, whereas the other two frameworks differentiate it in two or three different
arenas, using also a different terminology to identify the same sub-group of place-based leaders (i.e. *community leadership* and *civic leadership*). As discussed in a co-authored paper (Pagani et al., 2020), both concepts can be as much appropriate as misleading, given their context-dependent meaning, and it is important that scholars clearly explain how they conceptualise them when choosing a concept over the other.

### 2.2.5 Social relations and effectiveness

Independently of the framework or classification embraced to identify place-based leaders, all authors in this stream of study agree on and underline the importance of the dynamic interrelations and interactions among place-based leaders. Indeed, Sotarauta et al. (2017, p. 191) claimed that ‘place leadership is fundamentally about social interaction’ and that the relations created among the leaders have a powerful impact on the effectiveness of PBL. Indeed, Beer and Clower (2014, p. 16) state that ‘to be effective, local leadership needs to be based on collaborations, power-sharing, a forward-looking approach and flexibility’. Nichols et al. (2017) based their frameworks on the importance of the relationships among place-based leaders and their five leitmotifs of PBL (see the beginning of Section 2.2) highlight the positive influence of these relationships and collaborations. Similarly, Hambleton highlighted that effective PBL is based on the recognition that leadership is dispersed and that the dialogue and the co-creation of new solutions with actors from different backgrounds foster innovation and community empowerment (Hambleton & Howard, 2013). However, Hambleton (2015a) also suggested that PBL is effective when:
1. it leads the place, not the local authority and, consequently, it is recognised and built on the assets in the locality;
2. it is multi-level;
3. it creates an *emotional* connection with citizens;
4. it articulates a clear positive vision for the locality.

Nevertheless, these features can be brought back to the definition of PBL itself and to the presence or not of this type of leadership instead of other forms of leadership.

Also, and among all, to state that something is effective means that a specific goal or aim to be achieved has been defined, but studies on the topic examine PBL in relation to different outcomes, such as the socio-economic development of regions (e.g. Sotarauta & Beer, 2017), public service innovation (Hambleton & Howard, 2013), the promotion of social justice and community empowerment (Hambleton, 2015a), the creation of smart cities (Nicholds et al., 2017) and the socio-economic resilience of cities (Bristow & Healy, 2014; Budd & Sancino, 2016b). So, what is good and bad (place-based) leadership and how do we distinguish between effective and ineffective one (Beer & Clower, 2014, p. 6)? More work needs to be done to answer these questions and to clarify how to define, evaluate and measure the effectiveness of PBL. Following the suggestion of some authors (e.g. Ayres, 2014; Normann et al., 2016; Sotarauta, 2016a), the literature on policy networks (Ingold & Leifeld, 2016; E.-H. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000; Rhodes & Marsh, 1992), governance network (E.-H. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016; E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012; Sørensen & Torfing, 2005, 2018; Torfing, 2005) and network effectiveness (Provan & Kenis, 2007; Provan & Milward, 1995, 2001; Turrini et al., 2009) can provide a powerful
contribution to the understanding of PBL and its effectiveness, given the emphasis that they all put on relationships and interconnectivity, yet with different focuses.

Policy network studies analyse and evaluate policy processes by focusing on the relationships among a stable group of interdependent actors who influence such policy processes and decision-making (Ingold & Leifeld, 2016; E.-H. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000; Knoke, 2016; Rhodes & Marsh, 1992). Policy networks are relatively stable forms of networks because policies span multiple years (e.g. Ingold & Leifeld, 2016) and the same group of interested and influencing actors is usually involved throughout the whole policy cycle (e.g. from the definition to the evaluation of the policy). Yet, policy networks are not simple forms of networks: the actors involved change according to the considered policy and, due to the conflicting interests as well as the interdependency of these actors, policy networks are complex, dynamic, unpredictable and they need to be based on co-operation (E.-H. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000).

Governance networks are a broader form of policy networks, especially because the former originates from the literature on the latter (E. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2012). Still, even though some authors define the two similarly (E.-H. Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016), the focus, range of action and outcome of the two are different: whereas policy networks focus on policy’s processes, decision-making and evaluation, governance networks are an effective way of governing, based on the mutual acknowledgement that no single actor can manage and solve wicked problems alone (Sørensen & Torfing, 2018). Also, governance networks contribute to democratic governance by fostering public and political participation and debate (Sørensen & Torfing, 2005, 2018).
In contrast, scholars interested in the understanding of network effectiveness attempt to identify the determinants (or variables or factors) that influence the effectiveness or failure of networks. Milestone works in this area are the ones by Provan and Milward (1995, 2001), for two main reasons. First, they distinguished three levels of analysis for the evaluation of the network effectiveness (i.e. organisational/participant level, network level and community level) and the criteria to evaluate each level. Yet, they concluded that since the ‘effectiveness at one level may or may not match effectiveness at another level’ (Provan & Milward, 2001, p. 414), the final evaluation of network effectiveness is the one at the community-level. Indeed, they argued that ‘the overall effectiveness will ultimately be judged by community level stakeholders’ (p. 423) and that the organisational and network levels are mainly important for the creation and maintenance of the network. Second, they identified two determinants that affect the ability of a network to achieve its goals, that are network structure and network context. Network structure and network effectiveness are in turn influenced by a third determinant introduced by Turrini et al. (2009) but acknowledged by several authors (e.g. Berthod et al., 2016; E.-H. Klijn et al., 2010; Provan & Kenis, 2007), namely the network functioning characteristics or, in other words, the network management and governance (i.e. how the network is managed and governed).
2.3 Chapter summary

Given the conceptualisation of city leadership as the PBL of and within cities, this chapter reviewed the main literature on PBL. This new stream of study represents indeed the main theoretical underpinning of this thesis and its central elements were discussed by unpacking a potential definition of PBL that I have delineated. This is:

A form of politically driven public leadership characterised by the mutual influence of place and leadership, and implemented, according to the governance settings, by a plurality of formal and informal leaders whose social relations influence the effectiveness of PBL itself and, consequently, of the place well-being.

Also, the promising contribution of network studies in the understanding of PBL was discussed, especially by considering the ideas of policy networks, governance network, and network effectiveness.
3 The conceptual framework

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the main literature on PBL and created the basis for the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis. In particular, we have seen that scholars in this area of study agree on the importance of social relationships and collective action for implementing PBL (Beer & Clower, 2014; Hambleton & Howard, 2013; Nicholds et al., 2017; Sotarauta et al., 2017). Furthermore, the literature on policy networks, governance network, and network effectiveness can provide a powerful contribution to it (Ayres, 2014; Normann et al., 2016; Sotarauta, 2016a). However, we have also seen that scholars still need to deeply understand PBL (Beer et al., 2019) and that several elements are still contested, such as the identification of place-based leaders, the aim(s) of PBL and how it can be considered effective or ineffective. These contested aspects of PBL drove the articulation of the research aim and questions (see Chapter 1) and the delineation of the conceptual framework which is the focus of this chapter. More specifically, first, I describe the three principal elements that characterise the conceptual framework and how these elements are connected and aim to address the RQs. Second, I illustrate the ecological validity of the conceptual framework, namely its applicability to people’s everyday and natural social settings (Bryman, 2012, p. 48). Even though this issue is usually addressed in the methodology section of the thesis (see Section 4.5), I prefer to anticipate the discussion in this chapter for readability reasons. In fact, considering the untraditional structure of this thesis, based on themed chapters, I
believe that it is more effective to present all ideas and findings about the conceptual framework in one place rather than fragmenting them in different chapters.

3.2 The delineation of the conceptual framework

Considering the powerful connection with the network literature (see the previous chapter) and the essential role of actors (i.e. individual agency) and of social relations, PBL can be considered as a metaphorical and semi-conscious network. *Metaphorical* because it is not a formal, established network, such as a policy network; *semi-conscious* because the actors (or leaders) which are part of it might be unaware, or only partially aware, of the existence and importance of this PBL network. This idea represents the starting point of this thesis, from which the research aim has emerged, that is:

*Research Aim: To investigate the networked nature of PBL within cities.*

However, to study a network, it is important to consider three key elements that characterise it:

1. the actors among which the investigated relationships exist;
2. the types of relationship to focus on;
3. the aim (and hence outcome) of the network.

Figure 3.1 in the next page illustrates these three elements as conceived in the conceptual framework at the basis of this thesis, with the aim of addressing the mRQ:
mRQ: How might the CLN (both actors and relationships) influence urban resilience?

Figure 3.1 The conceptual framework underpinning this thesis.

The first two elements (on the left of Figure 3.1) represent the City Leadership Network (from now on, CLN): the main actors belonging to the network and the considered potential relationships among these actors. The third element (on the right of Figure 3.1) is the selected network outcome, namely urban resilience. The arrow between the CLN and the network outcome represents the influence that the former could have on the latter, in line with network’s studies arguing that the relationships within a

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3 The term city has been used instead of the term place because of the research’s focus on cities.
network (i.e. network structure) affect the network effectiveness (e.g. Provan & Milward, 2001; Shrestha, 2018; Turrini et al., 2009).

It is important to note here that, even though the conceptual framework is based on what can be considered a dependency relationship (i.e. the network outcome depends on the CLN, since the latter might influence the former), this thesis is not based on a hypothesis testing or causal relationship, but on a qualitative exploration of such potential influence. In fact, the criterion of internal validity (and hence causality) is hardly considered in qualitative and exploratory research (e.g. Bell et al., 2018; Yin, 2009), since several causes or factors might explain or influence a specific effect or event. Especially with the establishment of complexity theory and the recognition of wicked problems (see Section 4.2.2), reducing the investigation to a causal relationship between x and y, without acknowledging the role of other factors, would undermine the research from the very beginning. Aware of this, this thesis aims to explore the potential influence of the CLN and eventually inspire future research (see Chapter 10).

The three elements of the conceptual framework are now described to explain how their features were selected. In line with the structure of this thesis and given the complex and inter-disciplinary nature of each element, the literature on them is reprised and expanded in each themed chapter, where also the exploration and analysis of each element are addressed (i.e. Chapter 6 for the first element, Chapter 7 for the second one, and Chapter 8 for the third one). In Chapter 9, the three elements are re-combined and the conceptual framework is re-visited in light of the research findings.
3.2.1  **First element: The actors of the CLN**

Figure 3.2 below represents the first element of the conceptual framework, namely the four main categories (i.e. arenas) of actors that denote the CLN and, hence, exercise city leadership.

*Figure 3.2 The first element of the conceptual framework: the actors of the CLN.*

As discussed in a co-authored paper (Pagani et al., 2020), these four city leadership arenas (from now on CLA) were drawn upon the two PBL frameworks identified in the literature on the topic (as also discussed in section 2.2.4): the Civic Leadership Framework, developed by Hambleton (e.g. Hambleton, 2009, 2014, 2015b; Hambleton & Howard, 2013) and the City Leadership Framework, developed by Budd and Sancino (Budd et al., 2017; Budd & Sancino, 2016a). The two frameworks are very similar, except for one major difference: the label and conceptualisation used to classify the fourth CLA.
In fact, Hambleton uses the term *community leadership* whereas Budd and Sancino use *civic leadership*, even though they refer to the same group(s) of actors: the civic-minded actors who operate outside the public and private spheres to co-create public and social value, a better society, and community well-being (Budd et al., 2017; Hambleton, 2014; Hambleton & Howard, 2013). Given the difficulty to choose one term over the other, since both have advantages and pitfalls and might lead to misinterpretations (as further discussed in the paper), I temporarily opted for a slashed version of the label, namely *civic/community leadership* (Pagani et al., 2020).

More specifically, the four CLA are:

- the *Political Leadership (PL) arena*, which exercises the function of political representation and democratic intermediation;
- the *Managerial Leadership (ML) arena*, which exercises the function of public service design, management and delivery;
- the *Business Leadership (BL) arena*, which exercises the function of private service design, management and delivery aimed at creating private value;
- the *Civic/Community Leadership (CL) arena*, which exercises the function of active citizenship aimed at co-creating public and social value, in line with Edwards’ (2005) conceptualisation of civil society (see also Pagani et al., 2020).

However, even though the recognition of these four CLA is an important starting point for the exploration of the relationships existing among city leaders, different actors
might have different perceptions on who exercises a leadership role in each CLA.

Therefore, a question arises spontaneously, which represents the first sRQ of this thesis:

sRQ1: Who are the city leaders from a PBL perspective?

I address this first sRQ in Chapter 6.

3.2.2 Second element: The relationships within the CLN

Figure 3.3 in the next page represents the second element of the conceptual framework, namely the relationships taken into consideration in this thesis. Several relationships are investigated rather than a single one because of multiplexity, namely the acknowledgement that multiple relationships co-occur among the same actors (Shipilov et al., 2014; White et al., 2016). Still, given the great variety of relationships that might exist among network’s actors (in this case, city leaders) and that might be studied (e.g. Borgatti et al., 2013), the focus of the thesis was put on two types:

1. Formal/informal relationships, that is the level of formality of such relationships, following Isett et al. (2011)’s call for further developing research on informal networks and relationships;
2. Relationships which might be useful to achieve the chosen network outcome, in this case, urban resilience (see next section).
However, at the time of the design of this research project, no specific and significant work was found that compared and analysed different types of relationships among actors for the pursuit of urban resilience. Therefore, the selection of relationships resulted from the recognised qualities of urban resilient systems. Indeed, 100 Resilient Cities (n.d.-a) and OECD (2016) identified seven qualities that an urban system (i.e. a city) should have to be resilient. Given the similarities between systems (especially complex systems, such as cities—see Chapter 4) and networks, both characterised by interconnectivity and interdependencies, such qualities could easily be considered under the lens of relationships. Table 3.1 on page 36 compares the seven qualities for urban resilient systems and the relationships that might represent them when occurring among actors within the system/network. Whereas the link between the qualities and the
selected relationship should be easily intuited from the labels or definitions of the qualities, the selection of two relationships (i.e. trust and good communication) requires a brief explanation, which is given in Chapter 7 with the reprise of the literature review on the topic and the focus on the second sRQ:

\[sRQ2: \textit{Which relationships exist among city leaders?}\]

Before moving to the third element of the conceptual framework, it is important to clarify that the set of relationships selected for this project are not intended as items of an index\(^4\) and it is not the aim of this thesis to develop one. In fact, the values of the relationships will not be aggregated into a composite score, but only analysed and explored in line with the perceived level of urban resilience (see Chapter 8 and Chapter 9). Also, scale/index development requires a substantial sample size and is usually based on factor analysis, and both these elements go beyond the aim and design of this thesis (Booysen, 2002; DeVellis, 2016).

\(^4\) DeVellis (2016, p. 32) distinguishes three types of multi-item measures which might be aggregated into a composite score: scale, index and emergent variable. A scale refers to a set of items that share a common cause (i.e. latent variable) and, hence, are “effect indicators”. An index refers to a set of items that share a common consequence (or effect or outcome) and, hence, are “cause indicators”; these items determine the level of a construct. An emergent variable refers to a set of items or entities that ‘share certain characteristics and can be grouped under a common higher category’, but that do not necessarily imply either a common cause or consequence.
### Table 3.1 The seven qualities and related relationships for urban resilient systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualities</th>
<th>Definitions (100 Resilient Cities, n.d.-b)</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective/Adaptable</td>
<td>Use past experience to inform future decisions and modify standards and behaviours accordingly.</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robust</td>
<td>Be well-conceived, constructed and managed and make provision to ensure failure is predictable, safe, and not disproportionate to the cause.</td>
<td>Good communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resourceful</td>
<td>Recognise alternative ways to use resources at times of crisis in order to meet people and institutions’ needs or achieve their goals.</td>
<td>Share of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share of resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Emphasise the need for broad consultation and 'many seats at the table' to create a sense of shared ownership or a joint vision to build city resilience.</td>
<td>Shared decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated</td>
<td>Bring together systems and institutions and catalyse additional benefits as resources are shared and actors are enabled to work together to achieve greater ends.</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundant</td>
<td>Spare capacity purposively created to accommodate disruption due to extreme pressures, surges in demand or an external event. It includes diversity where there are multiple ways to achieve a given need.</td>
<td>Help/Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>Adopt alternative strategies in response to changing circumstances or sudden crises. Systems can be made more flexible through introducing new technologies or knowledge, including recognising traditional practices.</td>
<td>Adjustment of behaviour (flexibility)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on 100RC (n.d.-b).
3.2.3 **Third element: The outcome of the CLN**

As I discussed in the previous chapter, scholars have recognised the positive impact that a *good/effective* PBL can have on several phenomena and aims of our society, such as socio-economic development of regions (e.g. Sotarauta & Beer, 2017), public service innovation (Hambleton & Howard, 2013), social justice and community empowerment (Hambleton, 2015a), smart cities (Nicholds et al., 2017), and socio-economic resilience of cities (Bristow & Healy, 2014; Budd & Sancino, 2016b). In this thesis, I selected as the outcome of the CLN, and more broadly of PBL, urban resilience, which represents the third element of the conceptual framework underpinning this work (see Figure 3.4 below).

*Figure 3.4 The third element of the conceptual framework: the outcome of the CLN.*

Urban resilience can be broadly defined as the resilience of urban settings (i.e. cities - 100 Resilient Cities, n.d.-b; Meerow et al., 2016) and it comprises:

- infrastructure resilience: the resilient capabilities of the urban infrastructure and networks which are built to sustain the well-functioning of the city, such as transport, energy, waste, public and private buildings and so on; and
• community resilience: the resilient capabilities of the communities living in the city.

The decision to focus on urban resilience as the outcome of the CLN resulted from three principal reasons:

1. Despite its contested use, resilience is a hot topic today and an increasing volume of studies and projects on it is continuously developing by both academics and practitioners. In particular, urban resilience is attracting growing attention especially since one of the most important and followed world agendas included it as a priority: the Sustainable Development Goal n. 11 is indeed ‘Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’ (UN, n.d., 2015).

2. There is increasing recognition of the place-based nature of urban resilience (Bristow & Healy, 2014b; Kythreotis & Bristow, 2017; Lyon, 2014).

3. There is a growing emphasis on the role of (collective) leadership and governance in enabling organisations, communities and places’ adaptive and coping capabilities (e.g. Hooijberg et al., 1997; Lebel et al., 2006; Meerow et al., 2016; Parry, 1999; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018), and hence (urban) resilience.

Urban resilience is further discussed in Chapter 8, together with the literature review and methodology carried out to address the third sRQ:

sRQ3: How resilient is the city perceived?
3.3 The Ecological Validity of the CLN

Given the untested character of the CLN underpinning this thesis and emerged from the literature, I decided to evaluate its ecological validity by asking interviewees their opinions on it. As written in the introduction of this chapter, the criterion of ecological validity is concerned with ‘the question of whether social scientific findings are applicable to people’s everyday, natural social settings’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 711). As Bryman further explained:

‘social research sometimes produced findings that may be technically valid but have little to do with what happens in people’s everyday lives. If research findings are ecologically invalid, they are in a sense artefacts of the social scientist’s arsenal of data collection and analytic tools’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 48)

Furthermore, even though this criterion is usually associated with quantitative research and laboratory experiments, Bryman highlighted that it is also relevant in qualitative research. In fact, the assumption that this latter form of investigation has a stronger ecological validity should not lead to taking it for granted.

More specifically, for what concerns the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis, its ecological validity was evaluated by asking interviewees to comment on the CLN and on the potential influence that it might have on the development of urban resilience (for more details on the interviews’ structure, see Chapter 4 and Appendix 1). This process enabled me to understand whether interviewees agreed with the conceptual framework and, in particular, with the four suggested CLA, and therefore
indirectly approve the research design, completely based on it. Also, it enabled me to improve the conceptual framework by combining theory (the literature) with interviewees’ opinions.

As mentioned before, only interviewees were asked to reflect on the conceptual framework because the online questionnaire needed to collect the key data and material in a reasonable time frame and by adding also these open-ended questions, it would have last longer, further reducing the response rate (see Chapter 4).

The two following sections summarise the interviewees’ opinions, first about the CLN and second about its potential influence on urban resilience.

### 3.3.1 Interviewees’ opinions on the CLN

After having explained the CLN using supporting handouts (see Appendix 2), I asked interviewees to comment on it, possibly specifying:

1. If they agreed with its simplified representation, and if not, why;
2. If they would have added or changed something, and if yes, what they would have modified.

Table 3.2 in the next pages summarises the interviewees’ comments grouped based on the type of reply given (ToR, first column), namely if interviewees: a) simply agreed with the CLN representation; b) agreed and added further considerations; c) agreed but suggested amendments. None of the interviewees openly disagreed with the suggested CLN representation. Also, comments were sorted according to their level of sharing among interviewees, from the ones made by several interviewees to the ones made by
only one of them. Columns three and four list the interviewees who made each comment.

**Table 3.2 Interviewees’ comments on CLN element of the conceptual framework.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ToR</th>
<th>Comments/Adds</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree + comment</strong></td>
<td>It’s simplified but represents well reality / Good representation.</td>
<td>Pa35-ML</td>
<td>Pe23-CL; Pe24-PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pa23-PL; Pa27-ML; Pa29-BL; Pa30-CL; Pa37-ML</td>
<td>Pe3-CL; Pe9-CL; Pe12-ML; Pe17-ML; Pe26-ML; Pe27-BL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It describes what city leadership should be, but not how it is in all places. Actors do not interact as well as they can/ used to do, in Peterborough.</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe11-PL; Pe22-BL; Pe28-PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pa33-ML</td>
<td>Pe12-ML</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CL is much more complex / CL arena holds a lot of stuff in there.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pa27-ML</td>
<td>Pe21-BL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is not anymore a pure “public sector leadership” and actors in ML are numerically less than they used to be / Bigger role of CL and BL in public service design and delivery.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pa24-PL</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The intensity and strength of the vectors could change according to the quality of the actors and the situations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pa30-CL</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actors influence one another, there are some sorts of relationships, but not formalised.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pa33-ML</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None of these actors alone can influence the city’s community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pa37-ML</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are also transverse layers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe3-CL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ML often fits with PL.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe13-CL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interesting but quite difficult to put organisations within the model.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe15-BL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PL and CL are quite similar, and PL has a more central role.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
## (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ToR</th>
<th>Comments/Adds</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree + comment</strong></td>
<td>There isn’t CL in the real context.</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe18-CL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agree but...</strong></td>
<td>Missing element: faith leadership in a fifth arena in Padua, but within CL in other cities / More emphasis on faith leadership.</td>
<td>Pa31-PL; Pa34-CL; Pa36-CL</td>
<td>Pe14-ML</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing element: the media/ the press/social media.</td>
<td>Pa24-PL; Pa25-ML; Pa26-CL; Pa27-ML; Pa34-CL</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change/stretch definitions of arenas slightly.</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe13-CL; Pe20-BL; Pe21-BL;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arenas are not equally balanced, and PL arena should be larger than the others.</td>
<td>Pa29-BL</td>
<td>Pe27-BL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on the role of the university.</td>
<td>Pa26-CL</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emphasis on social groups/movements.</td>
<td>Pa4-PL</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing element: the environmental phenomena that influence the city leadership.</td>
<td>Pa24-PL</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing element: a real shared arena where actors meet and discuss their activities within the city.</td>
<td>Pa32-CL</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Put citizens in the middle.</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe27-BL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Term ML as “managerial delivery leadership”.</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe15-BL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing element: Intangible things outside the structure that influence as well (media, communication,...).</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Peg-CL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing element: box near BL for non-profit organisations/voluntary sector organisations.</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe14-ML</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing element: National public services are important but do not fit in the model.</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe25-PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing element: External factors impact it (national government, national businesses, economy...).</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>Pe27-BL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 3.2 shows, several interviewees (11 out of 34) explicitly remarked its being a good and realistic representation, despite its simplicity. However, more than half of them (19 out of 34), especially in Padua (10 out of 15) suggested making some amendments to the representation. In particular, three elements required further attention according to more than one interviewee: faith leadership, the media, and the definitions of the CLA.

Faith leadership

Particularly in Padua, some interviewees suggested emphasising the important role of faith leadership for and within cities. However, interviewees had different views on how to highlight this role. Some (Pa31-PL; Pa34-CL; Pe14-ML) argued that an additional CLA should have been added, namely the faith leadership arena; others (Pa36-CL; Pa35-ML; Pa37-ML) noticed that «it depends on the city»: in some cities faith leadership should have its own CLA whereas in other cities it can be included in the civic/community one, still highlighting its role. However, several participants (Pa29-BL; Pa33-ML; Pe3-CL; Pe12-ML; Pe19-CL; Pe20-BL; Pe21-BL; Pe26-ML) considered faith leadership as being entirely in the civic/community arena.

Given the predominant attitude to include faith leadership within the CL arena, an attitude shared also by the faith leaders/actors involved in the study, I decided to maintain the research design as framed at the start, with four CLA. This decision also avoided the risk of undermining the research project by adding a fifth CLA in the middle

---

5 Pa35-ML and Pa37-ML are not listed in Table 3.2 because they did not suggest emphasising the role of faith leadership when commenting the CLN element of the conceptual framework, but when I asked for their opinion on the subject.
of the data collection process and, accordingly, creating some inconsistent data or the necessity to start data collection over.

The media

As regards the role of the media, some interviewees in Padua (Pa24-PL; Pa25-ML; Pa26-CL; Pa27-ML; Pa34-CL) expressed concerns about the forceful influence that the media (press, tv, social media) have on city leadership and public opinion, and they identified it as a missing element in the CLN representation. However, they were the first ones questioning how and where this missing element should be put in the CLN framework: as a cross-sectional element, an additional CLA, a highlighted actor within one of the four CLA or an external influential element.

During the two focus groups (see Section 4.3), participants were invited to discuss the role and influence of the media and in both cities, they concluded that:

1. The media surely influence the city and the public opinion, but this does not mean that they also exercise a leadership role;

2. This influence (and potential leadership) is generally disrupted, as the media tend to just chase headlines (PeFG1-PL) or aim to create conflicts (PaFG1-PL; PaFG5-CL). As PeFG5-CL put it: «It's interesting their relationship in terms of false leadership and influence that they may have».

Definitions

Finally, in Peterborough, some interviewees (Pe13-CL; Pe20-BL; Pe21-BL) advised to further “stretch” the definitions of the CLA to better describe the functions they exercise
and the actors that may belong in each of them. However, no interviewee in Padua suggested these amendments.

3.3.2 

**Interviewees’ opinions on the potential influence of the CLN on urban resilience**

After having explained the meaning of urban resilience using the supporting handouts (see Appendix 2), I asked interviewees their opinion on the potential influence that the CLN—and especially the relationships among city leaders—might have on the development of urban resilience. Table 3.3 in the next page summarises interviewees’ opinions, classifying them in five groups:

1. those who simply agreed with the conceptual framework, without further commenting on it;
2. those who emphasised the important role of relationships among city leaders;
3. those who emphasised the central role of political leaders in enabling relationships among city leaders and fostering urban resilience;
4. those who suggested other influencing elements (i.e. other);
5. those who commented on the urban resilience of their city but without mentioning the potential role of city leaders (i.e. NA).
Table 3.3 Interviewees’ opinions on the elements influencing urban resilience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simply agreed</td>
<td>Pa33-ML; Pa35-ML; Pa36-CL</td>
<td>Pe23-CL; Pe24-PL; Pe26-ML; Pe27-BL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on relationships among leaders</td>
<td>Pa27-ML; Pa29-BL; Pa30-CL; Pa34-CL; Pa37-ML</td>
<td>Pe9-CL; Pe14-ML; Pe21-BL; Pe22-BL; Pe25-PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on the central role of PL</td>
<td>Pa25-ML; Pa29-BL</td>
<td>Pe3-CL; Pe11-PL; Pe15-BL; Pe19-CL; Pe22-BL; Pe25-PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Pa32-CL (shared arena)</td>
<td>Pe13-CL (ability to respond quickly of political and public infrastructure); Pe25-PL (land and planning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Pa4-PL; Pa23-PL; Pa24-PL; Pa26-CL; Pa31-PL</td>
<td>Pe12-ML; Pe18-CL; Pe20-BL; Pe28-PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In particular, the five following comments (two from Padua’s interviewees and three from Peterborough’s ones) are highly significant and encapsulate the link between the CLN and urban resilience:

«In my opinion, resilience happens if the different categories are able to come to terms with others. I mean, it’s not that if they are all good per se then, automatically, the city becomes resilient. It becomes resilient… resilience is also the capability of conversing with the other, of adapting to the other and hence find a mediation of interests». (Pa27-ML)

«Theoretically, yes; practically, no. Because the objectives that these four let’s say stakeholders pursuit could not be the same. [...] We would truly need leaders able to converse more with each other. This is for sure. But today, both at the political level...»
and among other stakeholders there isn’t a dialogue. [...] If political leaders, before making decisions, involved the other three actors, then perhaps the decision would have been different and shared». (Pa29-BL)

«I think if you don’t have the right leadership in place, who is prepared to collaborate and cooperate across different areas, you sink. That’s got to be right. And, also, resilience comes from the general population agreeing to act under this sort of collaboration, if they don’t, then you fail, so you have to fit in it as well. Sometimes you can have a view about what you want to achieve, [xxx], you think you’ve got the answers and you go to the publicness and say I’m doing that. So you have to accept, if you are going to be resilience... you can be resilient by saying I’m going to stick to my guns and come against public opinion and drive this forward, but that’s not resilience, because people won’t come with you. The principle I think of resilience is that you have organisations and leadership which reflect and act upon what the public needs, not necessarily what they say they need, but what they actually need. And often you find that by your relationships. If people won’t see that you are doing the best that you can, then they won’t come along with you». (Pe25-PL)

«To create a resilient city, region, environment, there’re a lot of factors. It’s both civic and infrastructure. And I believe it is created by the political leadership and political environment and then delivered by the managerial leadership. So, the infrastructure integration of community is very important. How is that done? Well, you’ve got to have the space for people to live and work, houses, that’s important. You then have to have the infrastructure, the road, electricity, and water. You then have to have education, schools of every level up to university, and including occasional education. And you then need to have a leisure environment, as well. All
of these things, I think, go to create a sustainable environment. And then, you have
to plan short, medium and long-term». (Pe15-BL)

«I think that it's about the desire of the political leadership to actually have that
resilience. Don't get me wrong. Everybody underneath it has to play that part, but it
does need somebody sooner or later to have that holistic view to go after. This is
how we're going to do it. We can only be part of it. We may be able to support the
leadership on that, in respect of that kind of drive and goal, but it does need us to
come together and take on responsibility for embracing it, first of all. No, before you
embrace it, deciding what is the challenge, what is the mission and even the vision. I
mean embrace and help supporting to deliver communication. But there's one thing
that you should never forget, and you've got it on here, are these people. Because
business objectives are one thing, community objective are another and you have to
be able to get the two to entwine together to make sure that you not just got a
vision that is not gonna take everybody along with you». (Pe22-BL)

What clearly emerges from these comments is the double need of relationships
among city leaders (in forms of dialogue, shared decision-making, collaboration,...) and
of better political leadership. In particular, political leadership should be able to promote
such relationships and urban resilience and hence be the enabler of both. However,
whereas the first element is included in the conceptual framework, the central role of
political leadership requires more attention.
In conclusion, the ecological validity of the conceptual framework was confirmed. In fact, even though some interviewees suggested making few amendments to the CLN, and the central role of political leaders should be stressed, these are considered as minor modifications which do not undermine the core features of the conceptual framework nor its simplified representativeness of the phenomenon investigated.

3.4 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis and delineated its three main elements, each of which is the focus of a themed chapter of this thesis aimed at addressing a specific sRQ. The city leaders within a City Leadership Network (CLN) are the first element of the conceptual framework and their identification is the core of Chapter 6. The relationships among categories of city leaders represent the second element and they are explored in Chapter 7. The third element is urban resilience, the selected outcome of the CLN, and its perception is investigated in Chapter 8.

In this chapter I also evaluated the ecological validity of the conceptual framework: by asking interviewees their opinions on it, I was indeed able to understand its representativeness and applicability in everyday contexts.
4 Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 and 3 provided, respectively, the theoretical background and the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis. In this chapter, I describe the overarching methodology adopted to conduct the research project and address the RQs. More specifically, I delineate here the methodological elements characterising the entire project, whereas I go into details on the processes of data collection and analysis in each themed chapter (i.e. Chapter 6, Chapter 7, and Chapter 8).

The chapter is structured as follows. First, the research philosophy is outlined, followed by the description of the research design; then, the ethical concerns and the quality of the research are discussed.

4.2 Research philosophy

It is well established (e.g. Bell et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015) the significance of acknowledging the philosophical assumptions at the basis of every research: they constantly shape and inform the research process and conduct, and strongly contribute to ‘the strength, vitality and coherence of the research project’ (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015, p. xv). In this thesis, the philosophical assumptions are articulated following the four levels for developing a
research study suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2017; adapted from Crotty, 1998), as illustrated in Figure 4.1 below and discussed in more details in the next sections.

Figure 4.1 The philosophical assumptions of this thesis.


4.2.1 Pragmatism as worldview

The first and broadest level denoting the philosophical assumptions of this thesis is the worldview held. This term is used instead of paradigm to refer to the philosophical position taken, following Creswell’s preference (2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). In fact, even though the two terms can be used interchangeably (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Morgan, 2007), and the former can be considered too broad and general (Morgan, 2007), paradigm is used here in Kuhn’s original and specific meaning, as ‘shared beliefs among members of a specialty area’ (Morgan, 2007, p. 53).
It is not the purpose of this section to delve into the differences among worldviews (or paradigms) since a large volume of published work has already addressed the issue (e.g. Bell et al., 2018; Crotty, 1998; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Lincoln et al., 2017)—to be noted, in particular, Ongaro’s (2017, 2019a, 2019b) recent works on the application of philosophical knowledge into public administration (from now on, PA). What follows is a brief outline of the main elements of the worldview underpinning this thesis, that is pragmatism, the dominant and optimal philosophical position for mixed methods research (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Thorpe & Holt, 2011). As Feilzer (2010) pointed out:

Pragmatism brushes aside the quantitative/qualitative divide and ends the paradigm war by suggesting that the most important question is whether the research has helped “to find out what [the researcher] want[s] to know” (Hanson, 2008, p. 109).

Are quantitative and qualitative methods really that different or is their dichotomy politically motivated and sociologically constructed (Hanson, 2008)? Pragmatists do not “care” which methods they use as long as the methods chosen have the potential of answering what it is one wants to know. (Feilzer, 2010, p. 14)

The research aims and questions at the basis of this thesis called indeed for a flexible and pluralistic approach to research which went beyond the qualitative/quantitative dichotomy to focus on the most appropriate methods to conduct the investigation and on its practical and real-world consequences. Still, pragmatism is not a mere ‘what works’ orientation to research (Christ, 2013; Morgan, 2014) and should not result in a sloppy investigation (Feilzer, 2010): the choices made and the methodology employed to pursue
the research goals remain crucial and need to be acknowledged. In other words, pragmatists should examine not only what they do in and for their research but also why they do it in a certain way (Feilzer, 2010; Morgan, 2014). Accordingly, special attention was put in describing and justifying the different methodological steps made to conduct the investigation (see the rest of this chapter and sections 6.3, 7.3, 8.3). Also, following Tashakkori and Teddlie’s (2003a, as cited by Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017) invitation to abandon the use of metaphysical concepts (e.g. truth, reality), I will not discuss those philosophical questions, but simply summarise them in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Philosophical questions in pragmatism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophical questions</th>
<th>Pragmatism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontology</td>
<td>Singular and multiple realities, according to the phenomenon studied and 'what works'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemology</td>
<td>Practicality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Mixed Methods (a combination of quantitative and qualitative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of reasoning</td>
<td>Abduction (induction and deduction)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Complexity leadership as theoretical lens

The second level of the philosophical assumptions at the basis of this thesis is informed by the worldview held (see the previous section) and is represented by the theoretical perspective which guides the conduct and interpretation of the research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Crotty, 1998). In this thesis, the theoretical lens applied is Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT).

The growing recognition of the complexity of the world (e.g. VUCA world, Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous - see Benett & Lemoine, 2014; Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015; Van der Wal, 2017) called indeed for alternative views for the understanding of leadership. CLT moves forward the traditional and hierarchical models of leadership (e.g. Bass & Bass, 2009) to apply complexity theory and concepts to its investigation (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011). In fact, as Uhl-Bien and Marion (2009, p. 631) put it, ‘at its most basic level, Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) is about leadership in and of complex adaptive systems, or CAS’. But let’s proceed with order, starting from a brief delineation of the three important concepts at the basis of CLT: complexity, complexity theory and complex adaptive systems.

Uhl-Bien and Arena (2017) clearly explained what complexity is:

Despite the name, the concept of complexity itself is really quite simple: Complexity is about rich interconnectivity. Adding the word “rich” to interconnectivity means that when things interact, they change one another in unexpected and irreversible ways. Complexity scholars like to describe this as the distinction between “complexity” and “complicated.” Complicated systems may have many parts but when the parts interact they do not change each other. For example, a jumbo jet is
complicated but mayonnaise is complex. When you add parts to a jumbo jet they make a bigger entity but the original components do not change—a wheel is still a wheel, a window is a window, and steel always remains steel. When you mix the ingredients in mayonnaise (eggs, oil, lemon), however, the ingredients are fundamentally changed, and you can never get the original elements back. In complexity terms, the system is not decomposable back to its original parts.

Once we understand this, we can see complexity all around us. It occurs when networked interactions allow events to link up and create unexpected outcomes, or emergence. (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017, pp. 9–10)

This definition of complexity easily recalls the ideas of a VUCA world (e.g. Benett & Lemoine, 2014; Rodriguez & Rodriguez, 2015)—and of wicked problems (e.g. Grint, 2010; Head & Alford, 2015; Heifetz et al., 2009), two widely used concepts in today’s leadership studies.

Turning now to the concept of complexity theory, this refers to several theories which focus on the simplification of seemingly complex systems (Anderson, 1999; Manson, 2001). Complexity theory can indeed be considered as a subset of system theory, or the two can be viewed as separate yet overlapping approaches (Patton, 2015, pp. 240–242).

Widely varying definitions of complexity theory have emerged, because of the diverse disciplines where it is applied (e.g. Anderson, 1999; Manson, 2001), but one common element can be identified: the focus on complex adaptive systems, or CASs (e.g. Ellis & Herbert, 2011; J. H. Holland, 1992; John H. Holland, 2006). These are:
comprised of groups of heterogeneous individuals or ‘agents’ (such as cells, consumers, nations, atoms) between which are inherently dynamic relationships. The agents in complex adaptive systems are constantly reacting to what the other agents are doing and to the environment and are thus continually evolving through feedback and learning. As a result of their interconnected structure, these systems exhibit unexpected emergent properties—these are structures or patterns that cannot be reduced to the properties of the agents themselves. One such emergent property is self-organisation, i.e. organisation that has no leader but is generated spontaneously from the ‘bottom-up’ by the individual decisions and interactions of the agents themselves. Control thus tends to be dispersed and decentralised. Furthermore, these complex self-organising systems are constantly adapting such that their adaptive capacity is not simply change in response to episodic events or conditions. It is the ability of systems—households, people, communities, ecosystems, nations—to generate new ways of operating, new systemic relationships. (Bristow & Healy, 2014a, p. 95)

The concept of CAS has indeed been used to investigate different types of complex systems, such as organisations (e.g. Anderson, 1999; Schneider & Somers, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018), governance models (e.g. Bristow & Healy, 2014a; Duit et al., 2010; Duit & Galaz, 2008; Hartzog, 2004; Hill, 2011), and cities (e.g. Budd et al., 2017). Complex Leadership Theory (CLT) focuses on the leadership in and of these types of complex systems (Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009, 2011) and on how leadership might influence and shape them (Schneider & Somers, 2006). More specifically, CLT:
is a contextual theory of leadership which sees leadership as embedded in context (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2009, 2011);

recognises the strong relationship between individual activity and the whole, and between local and global systems (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011, p. 473);

sees leadership not only as formal position, authority and control but also as emergent and interactive dynamic generated by a complex and rich interplay and by interconnected actions of a multitude of agents—hence, also informal agents and relationships—(Uhl-Bien et al., 2007; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011). In this respect, CLT supports a collective, distributed and shared view of leadership (Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011);

emphasises the role of leadership in enabling the adaptive capabilities of complex systems by creating an adaptive space (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017, 2018). As Uhl-Bien and Arena (2017) explain it:

Adaptive space enables the rich interconnectivity (i.e., complexity) of a networked system and its agents to “meet complexity with complexity.” It allows a complex system to become a complex adaptive system. As shown in the Complexity Leadership model, the role of leaders in these systems is to enable adaptive space in ways that nurture and protect the adaptive function of the organization. They do this using three main leadership functions. Entrepreneurial leadership works to generate innovation, learning and growth in an organizational system. Operational leadership works to transform innovation into new adaptive order to enhance performance and results. And
enabling leadership works to open up adaptive space to ensure the ongoing
viability and fitness of the organization. (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2017, p. 19)

CLT still need to be fully developed (e.g. Murphy et al., 2017; Tourish, 2019), but
given the RQs and the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis (see Chapter 3), it
provides a valuable theoretical lens for the investigation of cities as CAS and, more
specifically, of the capability of city leadership to enable resilience.

4.2.3 *Mixed Methods Social Network Analysis as*

*methodological approach*

The third level of the philosophical assumptions underpinning this thesis refers to the
methodological approach (or strategy) of the research design, in this case, a Mixed
Methods Social Network Analysis approach. In other words, a Social Network Analysis
(SNA) based on Mixed Methods (MM) was adopted. Given the research aim and RQs of
this thesis, on the one hand, and the worldview and theoretical lens adopted, on the
other hand, this was indeed the natural methodological choice. In fact, broadly speaking,
SNA is both an approach and a set of techniques devoted to the analysis of ‘relational
data’ (Gemma Edwards, 2010; Scott, 2017). That is, it aims to study the relationships
among the entities of a network (e.g. Borgatti et al., 2013) in order to describe and
explore the patterns of these relationships, and examine ‘their structural properties and
their implication for social action’ (Scott, 2017, p. 2). Potentially, any kind of relationship
(also called tie or edge) can be investigated with SNA, from relational states—such as
kinship, friendship, work relationship—to relational events—such as interactions and
flows of information, of money, and so on (Borgatti et al., 2013; Scott, 2017). Also, the entities of the network (usually called actors or nodes) among which the relationships are investigated can be individuals, groups, organisations, countries, books, words... in other words, any possible object of enquiry whose relationships can be studied (Borgatti et al., 2013; Scott, 2017). This variety of ways in which networks can be perceived and conceptualised and the growing recognition of the strongly interconnected character of the world (see Chapter 1 and previous section), generated a massive array of SNA studies, among all sort of disciplines (e.g. Scott & Carrington, 2014), including the fields of leadership (e.g. Hoppe & Reinelt, 2010), PA (e.g. Isett et al., 2011; Kapucu et al., 2017) and public policy (e.g. Knoke, 2016), and urban studies (Z. Neal, 2018; e.g. Z. P. Neal, 2018).

In terms of the research approach adopted, SNA is traditionally seen as a quantitative-driven approach, but qualitative SNA is equally well established (e.g. Hollstein, 2014), and a MM approach is increasingly embraced (e.g. Domínguez & Hollstein, 2014; Gemma Edwards, 2010; Kolleck, 2013). As Edwards (2010) points out:

SNA offers a particular opportunity for mixing methods because networks are both structure and process at the same time, and therefore evade simple categorisation as either quantitative or qualitative phenomena (Gemma Edwards, 2010, p. 2).

A MM approach, in fact, is based on the combination (or integration) of both quantitative and qualitative approaches and methods in a single project (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Yet, the manifold ways in which such combination can be realised, and the growing interest in this approach, resulted in a variety of MM
research design and a huge proliferation of its studies among several disciplines (Creswell, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2015), and not only SNA studies. For instance, for what concerns the themes of this thesis, scholars in the fields of leadership (e.g. Stentz et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2011) and the PA and public policy (e.g. Hendren et al., 2018) continue to exhort MM research as a valuable tool for advancing theory and the understanding of complex phenomena. In fact, in very basic terms, a MM approach (should) enables to maximise the strength and minimise the weakness of the traditional qualitative and quantitative approaches (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Stentz et al., 2012). On the other hand, however, a MM approach requires more time and energy and wider research skills (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004), especially because of its complex design (J. Morse, 2010).

Whether or not combined with SNA, key to conducting an effective MM research is a clear idea of its purpose(s) and an appropriate overall design (e.g. Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Hendren et al., 2018). First, it is important to recognise the research problems that require the use of a MM approach. In general terms, these problems are those in which neither quantitative nor qualitative approaches and methods are sufficient and appropriate to effectively investigate the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Mittelmeier, 2017). More specifically, Creswell and Plano Clark (2017, pp. 34–41) identified seven main research problems, related to the needs to:

1. obtain more complete and corroborated results;
2. explain initial results;
3. first explore before administering instruments;
4. enhance an experimental study with a qualitative method;
5. describe and compare different types of cases;
6. involve participants in the study;
7. develop, implement, and evaluate a program.

In this thesis, needs 1, 2 and 6 drove the choice to follow a MM (SNA) approach.

In line with the research problems that need to be addressed, it is also important to clearly state the purpose(s) of a MM design. Greene et al. (1989, p. 259) provided one of the most widely accepted classifications to do it, which comprises five purposes:

1. triangulation, which ‘seeks convergence, corroboration, correspondence of results from different methods’;
2. complementarity, which “seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of the results from one method with the results from the other method”;
3. development, which ‘seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions’;
4. initiation, which ‘seeks the discovery of paradox and contradiction, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method’;
5. expansion, which ‘seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components’.
These five purposes are not exclusive, and a single research can aim to several or all these purposes. In fact, as pointed out by Hendren et al. (2018, p. 905), ‘satisfying these mixed methods purposes provide benefits for the overall study, such as improving the interpretability of results, reducing bias, providing context, and validating measures and constructs’. In this thesis, the research was designed to satisfy purposes 1, 2, 3 and 5.

Once the reasons (problems and purposes) for MM research are identified and are clear, it is essential to appropriately design the MM research. It exists several ways in which MM researches can be designed and conducted, and manifold classifications of these designs have been developed (e.g. Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Yet, the classification provided by Cresswell and Plano Clark (2017) is widely recognised as the most useful starting point. They identified three main core designs: the convergent design, the explanatory sequential design, and the exploratory sequential design. As the authors explained, the names of the designs were meant to emphasise the different intents (or outcomes) and timing of each design, as summarised in Table 4.2 in the next page. However, they also recognised the need to clearly convey and facilitate the discussion on MM designs by using a notation system firstly introduced by Morse in 1991 (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; see also J. Morse, 2010) and now well established. More specifically:

- capital letters show the theoretical drive (and core component) of the research design, namely QUAN for quantitative driven research and QUAL for qualitative driven one;
- lowercase letters (i.e. quan; qual) show the supplemental strategy;
• two symbols show the pacing, namely an arrow for sequential designs and a plus for convergent (or parallel) ones.

Table 4.2 The three core MM designs identified by Cresswell and Plano Clark (2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core MM designs</th>
<th>Intention</th>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Notation system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convergent design</td>
<td>Converge results: bring together the strength and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methods.</td>
<td>Simultaneous</td>
<td>QUAN + QUAL QUAN + qual QUAL + quan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanatory sequential design</td>
<td>Explain quantitative results: use a qualitative strand to explain initial quantitative results.</td>
<td>Sequential</td>
<td>QUAN → qual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory sequential design</td>
<td>Explore and generalise findings: develop and apply a quantitative measure or method that is grounded in the qualitative data.</td>
<td>Sequential</td>
<td>QUAL → quan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on Cresswell and Plano Clark (2017).

In MM terms, the research design of this thesis can be broadly described as a qualitative driven (SNA) convergent design with a sequential qualitative component, or, using the notation system, as follows: QUAL(SNA) + quan → qual. Yet, in line with the MM approach, the research design is actually more complex, and it is described in more details in the next section, together with the fourth level of the philosophical underpinnings of this thesis (i.e. the methods and techniques employed for data collection and analysis).
4.3 Research design

This thesis is based on an exploratory multi-site case study. An exploratory study primarily aims to discover patterns of the investigated phenomena of which little is known (Chenail, 2011; Stebbins, 2001), as opposed to an explanatory study which aims to explain the investigated phenomena usually through hypothesis or theories testing and causal relationships (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2008). A multi-site case study is one of the many types of case study designs that can be conducted (see, for example, Bell et al., 2018; Bryman, 2012; Chmiliar, 2012; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015; Yin, 2009, 2013). Its central feature is to carry out the same investigation in two different sites (i.e. settings) in order to highlight both within-site (or case) and cross-site (or case) findings. As explained by Bishop (2012, p. 588):

By illuminating the experiences, implications, or effects of a phenomenon in more than one setting, wider understandings about a phenomenon can emerge. Typically, the research design in a multi-site case study is the same across all sites. This means the same unit(s) of analysis or phenomenon is studied in light of the same key research questions. In addition, the same or similar data collection, analysis, and reporting approaches are employed across the sites. Hence, as well as eliciting site-specific findings, a multi-site case study has the potential to enable valid cross-site synthseses and replication claims.

In particular, this thesis was based on a two-site investigation for two main reasons. First, the need for designing a feasible project able to respect time and financial limits, in line with the pragmatic approach described in the previous section. Second, a small-N
research design enables a deeper insight of the explored phenomena, both within and across sites, even though it does not produce generalisable findings. Still, given the nature of the study and, in particular, the place-based perspective underpinning this thesis (see Chapter 2)—and hence the central role of place and context throughout the whole research project (from research design to findings’ discussion)—the replicability and generalisability of the project had already some inner limitations which still do not undermine the meaningfulness of the findings.

For the investigation of each selected site, in line with the methodological approach illustrated in the previous section, a MM SNA research design was conducted. In the previous section, I described it as a qualitative driven (SNA) convergent design with a sequential qualitative component. Let’s see in more details what this means, firstly by proving a diagram of the design to facilitate its understanding (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Hesse-Biber & Johnson, 2015; J. Morse, 2010)—see Figure 4.2 in the next page—and then by explaining each of its element in the following paragraphs.
Figure 4.2 The MM research design at the basis of each investigated site.
4.3.1 Step 1: Sites & Participants selection

4.3.1.1 Online Desk Research

Online desk research refers to the collection of secondary data and information from different online sources (e.g. websites, blog, social media...). It is an Internet-Mediated Research (IMR), which means that it belongs to the variety of procedures and methods which made use of the internet to collect data (Hewson et al., 2016). Even though it characterised the conduct of the entire research project, it had a predominant role at its beginning. In fact, taking all possible precautions to assess the reliability of the sources and the quality of data (Fielding et al., 2017; Hewson et al., 2016), the online desk research was extensively used prior to fieldwork to select the two sites (cases) to be investigated and to identify and gather details about potential participants (see next paragraphs).

4.3.1.2 Sites selection

Given the focus of the thesis on city leadership, the investigated and compared sites were two cities. A city is here considered as a human settlement characterised by a certain size in population and/or density, and by particular governmental, socio-economic and cultural attributes. These characteristics give to each city a specific denotation which may challenge the ability to compare them. In other words, each city is potentially both a unique and typical case (Bryman, 2012; Yin, 2009). This means that each city is potentially both an extreme case (namely a very different case from others) and an average case (namely a case that is very similar to others), depending on the focus of the analysis and the researcher’s perspective. Accordingly, following the QCA
(i.e. Qualitative Comparative Analysis) guidelines for case selection (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009), an ‘area of homogeneity’ was delineated, namely a population of cities that shares sufficient similar background characteristics and from which specific cities could be then purposively identified. In particular, the following criteria were considered to select the two investigated cities, as briefly explained also in a co-authored paper (Pagani et al., 2020): national context, city dimension, distance, accessibility, resilience networks, political continuity. The first two criteria are based on a critical reading of the literature whereas the other three follows the pragmatic approach at the basis of this thesis (see section 4.2.1).

**National context.** Even though cities are becoming more powerful at the global scale (e.g. Acuto, 2016), they are embedded in the national context in which they are located, in line with the multi-level governance theories (see Chapter 2). In fact, the national context remains a key parameter in comparative analysis, albeit it ‘can both influence and at the same time be irrelevant in shaping city leadership patterns’ (Budd et al., 2017, p. 332). To further develop this idea of both significance and insignificance of the national context over city leadership, the countries of the investigated cities were selected by building on the results of previous works on city leadership (Budd et al., 2017; Budd & Sancino, 2016a): Italy and the UK. They also represents the two national contexts of which I have more expertise: homeland (Italy) and PhD programme (the).

**City dimension.** There is the tendency to focus city-based studies on large cities (e.g. Milan, London,...), despite the growing recognition of the crucial yet vulnerable role
played by medium-sized ones. They are likely to be intermediary cities (i-cities), namely ‘cities that generally play a primary role in connecting important rural and urban areas to basic facilities and services’ (UCGL, 2016, p. 134), and hence strongly contributing to the regional and national well-being (Serrano-López et al., 2019). On the other hand, their vulnerabilities ‘are being underestimated compared to those of megacities for four reasons: limited data, political power, personnel and resources’ (Birkmann et al., 2016, p. 606). Accepting the call to focus more on this type of cities (Birkmann et al., 2016; Eurotowns, 2019), this thesis is based on the investigation of two medium-sized cities, albeit the lack of a shared definition challenged their selection. Drawing upon the four leading classifications of medium-sized cities (Dijkstra & Poelman, 2012; Eurotowns, 2019; OECD, 2020; UCGL, 2016), I decided to focus on cities with a population of around 200,000 inhabitants. This value is the lowest one in the overlapping area of the four classifications (see Figure 4.3 below) and might represent well the great variety of cities put under the label of medium-sized.

Figure 4.3 Four main classifications of medium-sized cities by population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eurotowns (2019)</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New OECD-EC definition (Dijkstra &amp; Poelman, 2012)</td>
<td>350,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-sized i-cities (UCGL, 2016)</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD (2020)</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Distance.** For feasibility and familiarity reasons, cities closed to the place where I was based were preferred. This means that the site selection focused on cities in North Italy (starting point: Milan) and in England (starting point: Milton Keynes).

**Accessibility.** I considered cities where I had no special accessibility to and no prior knowledge of (both theoretical and field), in order to minimise biases.

**Resilience networks.** Resilience is becoming a very popular theme (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 8) and a multitude of resilience networks and programmes are flourishing around the world. Two notable examples are the 100 Resilient Cities network, developed by the Rockefeller Foundation ([www.100resilientcities.org/](http://www.100resilientcities.org/)), and the Urbact’s Resilience Europe network ([https://urbact.eu/resilient-europe](https://urbact.eu/resilient-europe)), funded by the European Regional Development Fund. Given the financial and/or knowledge-based support that these networks give to their members, cities belonging to them (or to similar networks) were excluded.

**Political continuity.** For data quality reasons, I selected cities where no local political elections were planned in 2018 due to councillors’ end of terms.

As a result of this procedure, Padua (Italy) and Peterborough (UK) were selected as research sites. A more detailed description of the two cities is provided in Chapter 5.
4.3.1.3 Participants selection and approach

The aim of this thesis is to explore the CLN through the eyes of city leaders, namely the potential actors of the CLN. In fact, given the metaphorical and semi-conscious character of the CLN, it was not possible to know a priori the specific actors who belong to the network. Accordingly, all city leaders represented the potential participants in my research project, or, in other words, the target population from which the research sample needed to be drawn from. In this thesis, city leaders are all key city actors (individuals, organisations, informal groups) who exercise a form of city leadership and, hence, who hold a formal top-management position (if individuals) and/or are recognised as city leaders by others (informal leadership). As a result of this, a combination of two purposeful (or purposive or nonprobability) sampling strategies were carried out (Patton, 2015). As Patton (2015, p. 462) explained it, a combination of sampling strategies ‘can deepen and narrow the focus of inquiry, like a funnel that channels the flow of a liquid more precisely, to increase relevance and credibility’. More specifically, a maximum variation sampling strategy and a snowball sampling strategy were followed, as described in the next sections.

Maximum variation sampling strategy through online desk research

First, a maximum variation sampling was conducted. According to Patton (2015, p.428), this is a form of group characteristics sampling strategy whose aim is to capture and illuminate, across a great deal of variation or heterogeneity, the ‘core experiences and central, shared dimension of a setting or phenomenon’. Given, in fact, the collective nature of city leadership, investigating it through the eyes of a multitude of city leaders fosters the emergence of interesting patterns.
In more practical terms, extensive online desk research was conducted to identify city leaders (i.e. potential participants) and collect their contact information. In line with the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis (see Chapter 3), potential participants belonging to all four CLA were identified (i.e. political leaders, managerial leaders, business leaders and civic/community leaders). Also, given the internet-based nature of this procedure, the research mainly focused on formal city leaders, namely who formally hold a top-management position or who are commonly recognised as leaders (e.g. the leader of the council or the mayor, the deputy-mayor, top-managers of the town hall and of public organisations, CEO of businesses and voluntary-sector organisations). A similar sampling procedure was followed by Hunter (1953) for his seminal work on community power structure: he conducted desk research (mainly on journals) and observations to identify the most influential community leaders. Even though he recognised the importance of informal leaders, he focused on formal ones, arguing that:

persons occupying "offices" and public positions of trust would be involved in some manner in the power relations of the community. It was felt that some leaders might not work through formally organized groups, but getting leaders from organizations would be a good start towards turning up leaders who might operate behind the scenes (Hunter, 1953, “Appendix Methods of Study”, para. 7)

In leadership terminology, this sampling procedure is based on a positional approach to leadership (Bonjean & Olson, 1964), namely the identification of leaders according to their formal position or office (for other approaches to leadership identification see also Epitropaki et al., 2017; Pagani et al., 2020).
For what concerns the size of the potential sample of city leaders to be involved in the study, it was defined according to the size of the local political authority of the two cities. In fact, considering that leadership is changeable and subjective, meaning that it changes over time and space and different people might have a different perception on who or what is a leader and exercises leadership, the size of the investigated population (i.e. all city leaders within a city)—alike the size of the CLN (i.e. the number of actors of the CLN)—was unknown. Therefore, the size of the sample could not be statistically or theoretically defined. Yet, the size of the local political government (i.e. the number of councillors and cabinet members) was manifest and legally delimited, and was hence used to set the size of the potential sample by identifying a similar number of subjects in all four CLA. More specifically, since the local political government in Padua consists of 42 members (Mayor, Deputy Mayor, 8 cabinet members and 32 councillors) and in Peterborough it consists of 60 councillors (included Leader of the council and cabinet members), around 50 potential participants in the other three CLA (i.e. managerial, business and civic/community) were identified.

Let’s see in more details the criteria considered to select the potential participants.

**Political leaders**

In both cities, the list of potential participants who exercise PL consisted of the members of the local political government, as described above, plus the leaders of political parties, in Padua, and Parish Councils in Peterborough. Given their public and representative role, political leaders’ contact details were the easiest ones to collect because of the obligation to share them online, in the city council website.
Managerial leaders

The list of potential participants belonging to the ML arena included the key actors that deliver public services within the two cities (i.e. both PA and providers of public services). In particular, three challenges were met in the selection of these participants:

1. The public sector, and hence the organisations that are part of it, is conceptualised in a slightly different way between the two countries and thereby, it was imperative to carefully select potential participants;

2. Especially in Peterborough, names and contact details of these subjects were hard to be found on the internet;

3. Partly because of the previous challenge, some city leaders (as individuals) could not be identified or directly contacted. Therefore, sometimes, the identified potential participants were whole organisations and the contact details were their general welcome emails.

Business leaders & Civic/community leaders

The selection of potential participants who exercise a BL or CL role was the most challenging and difficult part of the selection process. In fact, all people who are in a top-management position or exercise an informal leadership in both types of organisations (private businesses or civil society ones) influence the city in which they are based, in a place-based or place-less way (see Chapter 2). This produces a sizeable population of these types of leaders—which cannot precisely be delimited—and, at the same time, a shortage of justifiable criteria to properly sample them. Accordingly, the following procedures were used to identify potential participants:
1. Local journal articles, local events sponsorships and city council’s websites were searched to select key (or locally involved) businesses and civil society organisations;

2. When available, the lists of local businesses and civil society organisations were randomly sampled, still making sure that a maximum heterogeneity of organisations was selected and, especially, that contact details were publicly shared (e.g. businesses of different dimensions—small, medium, big; third sector organisations with different focuses—environment, social care...).

Similarly to the managerial leaders’ selection, formal leaders of these organisations were sometimes hard to be identified and, accordingly, directly contacted. Therefore, the identified potential participants were sometimes whole organisations and the contact details were their general welcome emails.

Table 4.3 in the next page summarises the criteria followed for participants’ selection and shows the final number of potential participants (pp) identified and approached.
Table 4.3 Criteria for participant selection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>selection criteria and primary sources (PS)</td>
<td>selection criteria and primary sources (PS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pp</td>
<td>pp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected politicians + leaders of local political parties</td>
<td>Elected politicians (incl. Parish councils)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS: City Council website and local political parties’ websites</td>
<td>PS: City Council website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>Top Management of:</td>
<td>Top Management of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>City Council, Public Corporations (incl. Hospital and Chamber of Commerce), Public Service Providers, Schools, University.</td>
<td>City Council, Police, Housing Associations, NHS, Public Service Providers, Public Corporations, Schools, Colleges, University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS: City Council website</td>
<td>PS: City Council website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>Variety of L, M &amp; S businesses operating in different sectors</td>
<td>Variety of L, M &amp; S businesses operating in different sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS: local newspapers</td>
<td>PS: City Council website, Peterborough celebrates website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Variety of L, M &amp; S civil society organisations operating in different sectors</td>
<td>Variety of L, M &amp; S civil society organisations operating in different sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS: City Council website</td>
<td>PS: City Council website, Peterborough celebrates website</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Snowball sampling strategy through participants’ replies

The second sampling strategy followed was a snowball one. Bryman (2012, p. 424) described it as ‘a sampling technique in which the researcher samples initially a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research’. In other words, participants’ replies about city leaders were used to identify and contact further potential participants. Also, their replies were used to verify and
improve the quality of the list of potential participants created as a result of the first sampling strategy. More specifically, this happened in two ways:

- first, it allowed expanding the list according to participants’ perceptions.

  Therefore, the final sample was based on both mine and city leaders’ opinions, reducing biases from both sources;

- second, it allowed verifying that the more relevant and widely recognised city leaders (from participants’ perspectives) were included in the list and, hence, had been already contacted.

This sampling strategy is widely used in SNA studies to explore informal or undefined networks, namely networks of which the size, the boundaries and the identity of the actors are unknown or only speculated (e.g. Borgatti et al., 2013; Heath et al., 2009). Generally, by using a tool called *name generator* (e.g. Gemma Edwards, 2010; Heath et al., 2009; Marsden, 2014), participants (i.e. actors of a network) are asked to name other actors of the network (i.e. people with whom they have the relationship under investigation, also called *alters* in SNA) and then the same procedure is followed with alters until no new actor of the network is named or, more probably, the researcher imposes the network boundaries (e.g. Heath et al., 2009). In fact, it is now accepted that network boundaries can only be approximated and that it could be impossible to capture a network in its entirety (Borgatti et al., 2013; Heath et al., 2009).

According to leadership terminology, this sampling procedure is based on a *reputational approach to leadership* (Bonjean & Olson, 1964; Epitropaki et al., 2017), namely the identification of leaders according to ‘others’ evaluation (Pagani et al., 2020), in this case, the one of participating city leaders who were considered as followers of
other leaders (e.g. Kellerman, 2012; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). In fact, as Bolden (2016) emphasised, the best leaders and followers are the ones that can switch roles.

Table 4.4 below shows the number of potential participants added to the lists created during the first sampling strategy—and hence contacted and invited to take part in the project—as a result of this second sampling strategy. It is, however, important to underline that most city leaders identified by participants had already been listed and contacted, and therefore this step mainly enabled to focus on and re-contact the ones most mentioned.

Table 4.4 Number of new potential participants selected during the snowball sampling strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>+2</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>+1</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>+11</td>
<td>+10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accessibility**

Potential participants were approached mainly through email for feasibility reasons. Indeed, emails can be sent to many people in a relatively short time and from distance; they can introduce all relevant information about the research project, included the link to complete the online questionnaire; and they can be read when potential participants find it convenient. On the other hand, though, emails can be easily ignored or lost (in the
junk folder or in a very active account) and receivers might forget to reply (e.g. Fielding et al., 2017). Accordingly, two reminders have been sent to those potential participants who did not send any feedback after the first email. For feedback, I mean either a positive or a negative reply about the willingness to take part in the project. In fact, potential participants had the possibility to immediately deny consent for the participation in the project and, by doing so, they would have not been further contacted.

Table 4.5 below shows details about the response rate. The highlighted column (labelled P, i.e. Participated) represents the number of actual participants in the research project. Interesting data are the ones in the column SNF (i.e. Started but Not Finished), which represents participants who started the online questionnaire but never finished it or agreed to participate in an interview but never scheduled a meeting.

**Table 4.5 Number of potential participants approached and related response rate.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>SNF</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>SNF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37 (16%)</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: A (Approached); DC (Denied Consent); NR (Not Replied); SNF (Started but Not Finished); P (Participated).
It is important to note that not all participants involved held a formal leadership position. In fact, sometimes, organisations or very important and busy city actors were identified as city leaders. In both cases, their gatekeepers played a critical role in the ability to involve these actors, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. Yet, when gatekeepers gave the possibility to involve not the top managers/leaders themselves but their representative or spokesmen, this opportunity was warmly welcomed, for two reasons: first, for feasibility reasons and hence to increase the number of participants in the project; second, because these persons play a (informal) leadership role and, by representing and speak for an organisation or person, even if temporarily, they do play a city leadership role on the behalf of the organisation or person; in other words, they influence the city and its community.

**Quality of the sample**

In SNA studies, data saturation is ideally reached when all actors within a network have been involved in the study and hence the network boundaries have been defined. However, it is now widely accepted that network boundaries can only be approximated and that it could be impossible to capture a network in its entirety (Borgatti et al., 2013; Heath et al., 2009). It is therefore the researcher who imposes the network boundaries and decides when to stop collecting data (e.g. Heath et al., 2009), especially considering the length and unfeasibility of the investigation of certain informal networks, and the time and resources limitation which usually define a project, as it happened with this thesis. In fact, given the characteristics of leadership and leaders’ identification, aiming to define the CLN boundaries would have been simply impossible: different people might
have different perceptions of who are the leaders of their city and city leaders change over time, and hence new leaders could emerge in any moment. Yet, the quality of the sample on which this thesis is based can be considered highly satisfying for at least two reasons. First, all actors identified as city leaders by participants (see Chapter 6) were involved or invited to take part in the study. Therefore, their non-participation was due to their lack of interest or time in participating and not for a paucity of attempts in involving them. Second, at the end of the focus groups (see Section 4.3.4), some participants positively commented on the group of people involved in such initiatives, emphasising the quality and importance of the people attending them.

Table 4.6 in the next page shows two demographics of participants: age and gender. These are shown in aggregated form—and not classified by CLA—to guarantee participants’ anonymity (see Section 4.4 for further details).

Table 4.6 Participants demographics (gender and age).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total participants</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;30</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;61</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A short commentary on participants’ categorisation

As illustrated in Chapter 3, the four CLA overlap and therefore city leaders might exercise multiple functions within a city or being in a border-line position between different CLA. Moreover, people might have different perceptions of the function played by some city leaders. As a result of this, a discrepancy of views about the function exercised by certain city leaders was sometimes recognised. For example, a participant perceived itself as a civic/community leader, whereas the researcher considered it as a political leader, and other participants respectively as a political leader and a managerial leader. It is not the aim of this thesis to elaborate on this aspect of (city) leadership and its potential consequences (such as the conflict between role exercised and expected role to be exercised). Still, it is necessary to point this discrepancy out because, for research reasons, it was necessary to categorise each participant and potential city leader in only one CLA. This was also due to the belief that, despite the multiplicity of roles and functions that a city leader can exercise, one of these roles and functions is predominant in respect to the others. Accordingly, the CLA of each participant was defined by comparing three views: mine (the researcher’s), the participant’s own and the predominant one among other participants. The final and selected categorisation is the one that most sources shared.
4.3.2 Step 2: Data collection

As explained in the chapter’s introduction, given the structure of this thesis, the data collection and analysis procedures are discussed in detail in each themed chapter. This section aims to provide an overall description of the two main techniques used to collect data, namely the online questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. As illustrated in a previous section, and in line with the MM approach of this thesis, these techniques have been combined for two reasons:

1. meet the needs to obtain more complete and corroborated results and involve more participants in the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017);
2. aim to the purposes of triangulating results, better elaborating and illustrating them (i.e. complementarity), develop the following steps of the project and expand the understanding of the investigated phenomenon (Greene et al., 1989).

Both the online questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews followed the same structure, with only two exceptions: during interviews, some additional open-ended questions were asked, and the conversation was more open, enabling interviewees to provide additional qualitative material to both triangulate and expand the data collected through the items of the questionnaire (see Appendix 1).

In particular, three main types of data and information were collected during this step, held between March and September 2018:

1. A list of perceived city leaders for each CLA, to address sRQ1 (see Chapter 6);
2. The frequency of certain relationships potentially occurring between the participant and all other types of city leaders, to address sRQ2 (see Chapter 7);
3. The perceived level of urban resilience, to address sRQ3 (see Chapter 8).

The online questionnaire was designed using Qualtrics and sent first to potential participants. In fact, given the type of participants to be involved, namely city actors/leaders who usually claim to be very busy and with full diaries, the benefits of the online questionnaire were multiple: relatively short, fillable online in any place and time and, especially, in different moments. In fact, participants could start answering the questionnaire, stop and finish it later. Yet, as expected, the response rate to the online questionnaire was low (see Table 4.7 in the next page) and therefore interviews were planned in order to collect more data and additional qualitative material. In particular, beyond the possibility to answer more openly and drive the conversation in more directions, interviewees were also asked to comment on two additional aspects of the project:

1. The conceptual framework, as discussed in the previous chapter (Section 3.3).
2. The list of relationship taken into consideration and, in particular, whether they considered some relationships more important than others, and whether they would have taken into consideration an additional relationship which was not included in the list (see Chapter 7).

To facilitate interviewees in commenting the above points and answering questions, some supportive material was prepared and shared with them during the interviews (see Appendix 2). Also, to meet participants’ busy diaries, interviews were held in participants’ offices or convenient locations, and on two occasions on the phone.
Table 4.7 below lists the number of participants who were involved in each data collection technique.

| Table 4.7 Number of participants involved in each data collection technique. |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Potential participants approached   | Padua: 232 | Peterborough: 271 |
| Participants                        | Padua: 37  | Peterborough: 29 |
| Online questionnaire                | Padua: 22  | Peterborough: 10 |
| Interviews                          | Padua: 14  | Peterborough: 17 |
| Face-to-face                        | Padua: 14  | Peterborough: 15 |
| By phone                            | Padua: //  | Peterborough: 2 |
| Both online questionnaire and interview | Padua: 1  | Peterborough: 2 |

4.3.3 Step 3: Data analysis, Data visualisation and First Interpretation

Similarly to the previous one, this section aims to provide an overall and preliminary description of the analysis procedures, which are discussed in detail in each themed chapter. In fact, in line with the methodological strategy followed, also the data analysis processes were based on MM: the different types of data collected (from online questionnaire and interviews) and the RQs underpinning this thesis called for different analysis techniques and software. These were used mainly at the same time, and the resulting findings were then combined to develop a deeper and more complete understanding of the investigated phenomena. Yet, independently of the technique and software used, a qualitative approach to data analysis was adopted, meaning that the
principal aim of the analysis was to explore and interpret data and information and not explain or testing them (see Introduction and Chapter 3).

Resuming Figure 4.2 on page 66 (of which Figure 4.4 below represents a section), two elements require clarification: data transformation and the points of interface (represented by full and empty stars).

**Figure 4.4 Data analysis section of the MM Research Design diagram.**

Data transformation refers to the process through which research materials collected with different techniques are transformed to suit the core dataset or specific form at the basis of data analysis (J. Morse, 2010). In this thesis, part of the material collected during the semi-structured interviews was indeed transformed to conform to the online questionnaire’s replies and data tables (this latter were automatically generated by Qualtrics). This was possible because several questions asked to interviewees corresponded to the items of the online questionnaire (see previous section).

The points of interface represent the moments (or positions) in which the different components of the research converge (J. Morse, 2010). More specifically, the analytic
point of interface (represented by a full star) refers to the moment in which the data and information collected with one technique are imported into the core component for analysis. In this thesis, this happened after the data transformation of the interviews. On the other hand, the results point of interface (represented by an empty star) refers to the moment in which the results emerged from the different data analysis procedures converge in the narrative to triangulate results, better elaborate and illustrate them, and expand the understanding of the investigated phenomena. In this thesis, the results points of interface were reached twice: first, when the online questionnaire and interviews’ results have been combined for the early interpretation of findings (as shown in Figure 4.4 above); second, when such results were re-read and re-interpreted in the light of the focus groups’ results (see next section).

Data analysis was supported by the use of three software: Microsoft Excel, NVivo11 and Gephi.

MS Excel was used as a basis for and collection point of the core analysis. In other words, the original raw data collected through the online questionnaire were stored in two MS Excel datasets (one for Padua and one for Peterborough), then integrated with the data and information collected through the interviews once transformed and coded (as explained in a next paragraph) and finally organised to meet the needs of the analysis, carried out using Gephi or MS Excel itself. In this latter case, MS Excel was used instead of more complex and quantitative software (e.g. SPSS) for three reasons: first, the amount of data collected were too small to require more complex software; second, the statistics or calculations needed were basics and could have been effectively carried
out by MS Excel; third, the software is easily understandable and accessible, user-friendly and well-known by most people.

The second essential software used was NVivo11, which is the most complete, effective and supporting software for the analysis of qualitative material (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). All interviews and focus groups, both the English and Italian ones⁶, were recorded and personally transcribed using NVivo. Then they were anonymised to safeguard participants’ identity (see Section 4.4) and finally coded and integrated with the rest of the dataset, in line with the aims of the analysis and as described in each themed chapter. In particular, a directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was mainly conducted to code and interpret the qualitative material. This approach to content analysis is more structured than the conventional one. In fact, if the conventional content analysis is based on coding categories that directly derived from the text data, the directed approach is based on an initial list of coding categories resulted from theory or previous research (in this case, the conceptual framework) and which is used as a guideline for the entire coding process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Of course, the use of a direct content analysis did not prevent me to create new codes when they emerged from the analysis. Also, compelling quotes were used to illustrate and support the narrative of findings and give voice to interviewees.

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⁶ My native language is Italian, therefore I was able to transcribe and analyse the material collected both in Italian and in English.
Interviews and focus groups’ transcription and anonymisation represented the most consuming parts of the analysis process, but their benefits completely balanced their challenges. In fact, by personally transcribing them, I gained a deeper knowledge and familiarity with the qualitative material.

A final note needs to be provided here: Italian transcriptions were not fully translated because the analysis of the original version of the interviews and focus groups enabled a better understanding and interpretation of their content, particularly because it limited the loss of meaning or language nuances usually caused by translations. However, considering that the whole thesis is in English, the quotes from Italian participants were personally translated, to allow everyone to understand them and follow the flow of the thesis.

The third essential software used was Gephi (Bastian et al., 2009), one of the SNA software for network analysis and visualisation (e.g. Grandjean, 2015; Khokhar, 2015). Considering the focus of this thesis on the CLN, namely a network, the importance of a SNA software was indeed undisputed. The use of Gephi instead of others well-known software (e.g. Huisman & van Duijin, 2014), especially the praised Ucinet (Borgatti et al., 2002), was first due to the open-sourced nature of the former in contrast to the licence-based character of the latter. Also, a sample data analysis and visualisation were conducted on both software and Gephi was more user-friendly and efficient than Ucinet, at least for the data analysis and graphical representation that I wanted to conduct.
4.3.3.1 Data visualisation

In the study and analysis of social networks (such as the CLN), data visualisation becomes imperative as it enables a more efficient and timely understanding of the investigated phenomenon (Borgatti et al., 2013; Withall et al., 2007). Yet, the creation of a meaningful and comprehensible graphical representation of network data needs caution because several elements require important considerations in order to efficiently visualise network data.

It is not the purpose of this section to review the number of different ways in which network visualisation can be conducted (see, for example, Borgatti et al., 2013; Grandjean, 2015; Khokhar, 2015; Withall et al., 2007), but to briefly introduce network visualisation and two graphical choices made to represent the CLN in Chapters 6 and Chapter 7. In fact, given the different focus of the two chapters, more details about the data visualisation procedures are provided in each specific chapter.

As previously explained, SNA focuses on two elements of a network: its entities (usually called actors or nodes) and the relationships (also called ties or edges) among entities. In network visualisation, the formers are depicted as shapes, whereas the latter as lines when relationships are undirected or as arrows when relationships are directed. Figure 4.5 below provides two simple examples of this.

*Figure 4.5 Two simple examples of network visualisation.*
As regards the two graphical choices made for the representation of the CLN, they concern the colour used and the general disposition of nodes. In fact, to facilitate the analysis and readability of the network visualisation, and be consistent with the underpinnings of this thesis, nodes were coloured and positioned according to the conceptual framework driving this thesis (see Chapter 3). In other words, a specific colour and section of the graphical area of the network visualisation were assigned to each CLA, as shown in Figure 4.6 below. More specifically:

- the PL arena and its members were coloured in red and positioned in the top-left quadrant of the graphical area;
- the ML arena and its members were coloured in light blue and positioned in the top-right quadrant of the graphical area;
- the BL arena and its members were coloured in yellow and positioned in the bottom-left quadrant of the graphical area;
- the CL arena and its members were coloured in green and positioned in the bottom-right quadrant of the graphical area.

Figure 4.6 The colours and positions assigned to each CLA in the network visualisation.
4.3.4 **Step 4: The Focus Group as the Supplemental sequential component**

Given the exploratory nature of the project and the complexity of the studied phenomenon, all participants who expressed their interest (and hence consent), were also invited to participate in a focus group to discuss and validate initial findings. A focus group is ‘a research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic determined by the researcher’ (Morgan, 1996, p. 130) or, as in this case, a series of topics, namely the three themes of this thesis.

In line with the methodology adopted (see Section 4.2.3) and the research design (see Figure 4.2 on page 66), this step represented the qualitative supplemental sequential component of the research project, and it was conducted for three main reasons:

1. meet the need to explain initial results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017)
2. aim to the purpose of clarifying the results (i.e. complementarity, see Greene et al., 1989)
3. improve the quality of the project and its findings through participant validation (or respondent validation). This is:

   ‘a process whereby the researcher provides the people on whom he or she conducted research with an account of his or her findings. [...] The goal is to seek confirmation that the researcher’s findings and impression are congruent with the views of those on whom the research was conducted and seek out areas in which there is a lack of correspondence and the reasons for it.’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 391)
Following the good practices suggested in the literature (e.g. Barbour, 2007; Bell et al., 2018), two focus groups were organised, one in each investigated city, to discuss the preliminary findings of the project emerged from the early analysis of data. The qualitative material collected during the discussions, recorded and personally transcribed, was then used to improve the analysis, data visualisation and/or the narrative of results.

Appendix 3 shows the handouts given to Peterborough’s participants to support the discussion. The ones given to Padua’s participants (not attached) followed the same structure and logic, with the only differences of being in Italian and focused on Padua’s findings.

Table 4.8 below lists the number of participants, for each CLA, involved in the focus groups.

Table 4.8 Number of participants in the focus groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Ethics

The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee reviewed and approved this research project prior to fieldwork (reference number: HREC/2609/Pagani).

Few low-level risks were identified for participants and only one requires attention: the guarantee of participants’ anonymity. Considering the nature and public role of participants, it was a central element of the research design and it was highly appreciated by participants. Accordingly, all material collected was anonymised and a reference number was assigned to each participant involved in the study. In particular, to support the research analysis and readability, such reference number includes the following details:

1. abbreviation of the investigated city, namely Pa for Padua and Pe for Peterborough;
2. a number, assigned sequentially for each city;
3. initials of the type of city leader (i.e. PL, ML, BL, CL).

As a result of this procedure, for Padua, participants’ reference numbers go from Pa1 to Pa37, whereas for Peterborough, participants’ reference numbers go from Pe1 to Pe29.

The same logic was followed to assign the reference number to focus groups’ participants, with the only difference that between the abbreviation of the city and the sequential number, the initials FG (i.e. Focus Group) were added (e.g. PaFG1, and so on). The use of a different reference number for focus groups’ participants was due to further guarantee anonymity even among participants. In fact, even though a reference number
had already been given to each participant in the focus group, given their involvement in previous data collection initiatives, a second reference number hindered participants and readers to link comments made during the focus groups to the online questionnaires and/or interviews’ replies, strengthening anonymity.

4.5 Quality

There are no perfect researches, all have both strengths and weaknesses, but over the years several criteria have been suggested to evaluate and assess the research quality. Unfortunately, the number and diverse meanings of such criteria do not make this task easy, especially in MM research. In fact, even though the criteria to evaluate quantitative research are widely known and accepted (i.e. validity and reliability), different terms and conceptualisations have been suggested to evaluate qualitative (e.g. Bell et al., 2018; Dellinger & Leech, 2007; Miller, 2012b, 2012a) and MM research (e.g. Dellinger & Leech, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008), with no agreement reached on the matter and thereby leaving the choice to researchers on a case-by-case basis. In particular, given the pragmatic standpoint and the MM approach adopted, the quality of this thesis was evaluated following a simplified and adapted version of the Unified Validation Framework developed by Dellinger and Leech (2007). The selection of this framework was due to the rationale at its basis, which can be summarised in two key points:

1. The usefulness of unifying (and hence combining) thinking about the traditional criteria developed in quantitative and qualitative research with the newest ones
of MM research, rather than developing new terminology. This is in line with the general idea of MM research that quantitative and qualitative perspectives are complementary and not contrasting (see Section 4.2.3).

2. The aim of providing a flexible guide for all stages of the research process, rather than a checklist of criteria.

The development of a simplified version of this framework was however necessary for feasibility and optimisation reasons, as it enabled a more focused and effective evaluation. Also, the framework was slightly adapted to use the more common terminology in business research (Bell et al., 2018). In fact, the original framework is very rich since it includes both key criteria and sub-criteria of quantitative, qualitative and MM terminology, many of which are redundant. Even by following the simplified version of the framework and reflecting on its fewer elements, a researcher should be able to demonstrate a deep understanding and awareness of the complexity of the evaluation of research quality as well as of the appropriateness of the methodological choices made (Dellinger & Leech, 2007). The simplified version of the framework is shown in Table 4.9 in the next page and each element is briefly discussed in the following pages.
Table 4.9 Simplified and adapted version of the Unified Validation Framework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foundational Element</th>
<th>QUAN elements</th>
<th>MM elements</th>
<th>QUAL elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>Design quality</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecological validity</td>
<td>Interpretative Rigor</td>
<td>Transferability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dependability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Confirmability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequential element</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own elaboration based on Dellinger and Leech (2007) and Bell et al. (Bell et al., 2018).

The foundational element refers to ‘the researchers’ prior understanding of a construct and/or phenomenon under study’ (Dellinger & Leech, 2007, p. 323) and it is related to the review of the relevant literature underpinning research. This is not traditionally and explicitly considered a key criterion for the evaluation of a project, but it is widely acknowledged that the literature review needs to be appropriate to effectively situate the project in both the academics and practitioners’ contexts and inform both the theoretical and methodological choices at its basis (e.g. Bell et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014).

Aware that there could always be an additional paper or book to be considered since the creation and publication of knowledge is an endless process, by presenting the literature review of this thesis in separated chapters I attempted to emphasise the relevant literature on the themes discussed in this thesis (i.e. City Leaders, Relationships and Urban Resilience) and on the bridges between them, and how it has supported the conduct of the entire research project.
Apart from ecological validity (see Chapter 3), the traditionally quantitative criteria to evaluate research quality (i.e. validity, reliability and replication) can be hardly applied to this thesis given its qualitative and exploratory driven nature (e.g. Bell et al., 2018). Only if considered in its broad meaning, namely ‘the degree to which a study actually measures what it purports to measure’ (Miller, 2012b, p. 909), the validity of this thesis can be considered satisfactory. In fact, the most appropriate approaches and methods have been employed to study the investigated phenomena in line with the research aims, RQs and researcher’s standpoint. SNA was indeed been adopted to investigate the CLN, and this approach was developed specifically to examine networks. I delineated this in the previous sections of this chapter and I further discuss the methodological choices and procedures in each themed chapter.

The MM criteria to evaluate research (i.e. design quality and interpretative rigour) have been drawn upon the work of Tashakkori and Teddlie (2008). Design quality refers to the appropriateness of the research design and its adherence to best practices (Dellinger & Leech, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008), whereas interpretative rigour refers to the degree to which the interpretation of results are credible and trustable (Dellinger & Leech, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008). These elements can remind the broad meaning of validity (as seen above) and the qualitative criterion of credibility (see below), but their focus is on the integration of quantitative and qualitative procedures and results. As explained in Section 4.2.3, MM research is complex and pitfalls and challenges are unavoidable. Still, the detailed delineation of the methodology of this thesis (in this chapter and in Chapter 6, Chapter 7, Chapter 8) should point out the attention paid on both these elements.
The traditionally qualitative criteria (i.e. trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, transparency) are the ones commonly considered as parallel of the quantitative criteria (Bell et al., 2018). Trustworthiness, which refers to the rigorousness of the findings (Lincoln, 2004) and parallel the quantitative criterion of validity, is characterised by four elements. First, credibility, which parallels internal validity, refers to the plausibility and acceptability of the findings (Bell et al., 2018; Lincoln, 2004) and it is usually established through three techniques: the conduct of the research following good practices (largely adopted in this thesis as shown throughout the entire text), respondent validation (reached by involving participants in a focus group, as described in Section 4.3.4), triangulation (one of the purposes of MM research and of the data collection of this thesis). Second, transferability, which reflects external validity, refers to the degree to which findings can be transferred to and used in other settings (Bell et al., 2018; Lincoln, 2004). Given the place-based approach of this thesis, transferability is limited. However, the comparison and contrast of the two investigated cities located in different national contexts enabled to highlight similarities and differences between the two cases which can result as a useful starting point for future research. Third, dependability, which parallels reliability, refers to the traceability of the research process as assessed through an audit (Bell et al., 2018; Lincoln, 2004). This evaluation criterion has not become popular (Bell et al., 2018) and therefore it is only partially taken into consideration. That is, the key steps and procedures were tracked and explained in this thesis, but without entering too much into every alteration of the research project made necessary by external and unpredictable forces. This was also due to the principle of pragmatism and MM approach to keep the research design flexible. Lastly, confirmability refers to the degree to which the researcher can be objective. This
criterion, together with all other ones, is strongly linked to the principle of transparency, namely ‘the researcher’s clarity of explanation regarding all stages of the study’ (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2008, p. 108), which guided me in the writing up of this thesis.

The last element of the framework is the consequential element. It refers to the adequacy and social acceptability by stakeholders of the consequences that occur as a result of using the research findings. Unfortunately, it was not possible to further involve participants or other stakeholders in judging this aspect of the research, mainly for feasibility reasons, but this represents an appealing topic for future research.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the overarching methodology adopted to conduct the research project and address the RQs. I described the research philosophy underpinning this thesis, namely pragmatism as worldview, complexity leadership as theoretical lens, and MM SNA as methodological approach. Then, I delineated the research design and its key elements, from sites and participants’ selection to data analysis and visualisation. Finally, ethical and quality concerns were taken into consideration.
5 Research Settings

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I summarised the methodology underpinning this thesis, and I described the rationale behind the selection of the investigated cities, Padua and Peterborough. This chapter aims to briefly illustrate their main characteristics to better understand and compare the local background and context of the investigation. Despite the acknowledgement of the influence of the national context, I only allude to it not to overlook its role but to concentrate on the local area. Both Italy and the UK are indeed characterised by important differences among regions (e.g. McCann, 2016; R. D. Putnam et al., 1993) and thereby starting a discussion on the national contexts would have unnecessarily diverted attention and go beyond the focus of this thesis.

More specifically, this chapter, and hence the delineation of the two cities, is centred on five aspects related to the main elements of the CLN: the political, public sector (i.e. managerial), economic and civil society backgrounds, and urban resilience policies, if present. In fact, as I explained in Chapter 3, one factor driving the selection of the two investigated cities were their absence in notorious urban resilience networks, but this does not exclude the implementation of local policies on urban resilience. It is, however, important to note that, for feasibility reasons, only the local government’s policies or projects explicitly referring to resilience were taken into consideration.
5.2 Padova (Italy)

5.2.1 Overview

Padua is a city in the Region of Veneto, in the North-East of Italy, around 30 km west of Venice and 200 km east of Milan. It stretches over an area of 92.85 km² (Comune di Padova, 2019a) and, at the end of 2019, it counted a population of 211,316 inhabitants (Comune di Padova, 2020). Its population density was thereby of 2,275 inhabitants per km².

Padua is described as an artistic and religious city (Turismo Provincia di Padova, n.d.). It is indeed famous for the many and precious examples of Medieval and Renaissance art, including XIV century fresco cycles, which made the city become the Italian nomination to the World Heritage List for the 2020 Committee, under the candidature name of ‘Padova Urbs picta’—which means painted city (www.padovaurbspicta.org). Yet, Padua is also characterised by an important religious heritage, especially related to Saint Anthony of Padua, which gives it the appellation of ‘The City of the Saint’ and makes it a prominent destination of pilgrimages.

5.2.2 Political background

Italian municipalities (i.e. comuni, the lowest level of Italian government including both cities and towns) are politically led by a mayor, a cabinet and a council whose term of office usually lasts five years (or more, if re-elected). The number of cabinet members and councillors depends on the municipality size. Also, whereas the mayor and the council are directly elected by citizens, the cabinet is nominated by the mayor. Italy is
indeed considered one of the European countries with the strongest type of mayors
(Heinelt et al., 2018; Sancino & Castellani, 2016).

As regards Padua, the incumbent mayor is Sergio Giordani, a left-leaning
independent supported by both the Democratic Party (i.e. PD) and civic lists (i.e. Liste
civiche), namely those lists which do not represent or respond to any specific political
party. He was elected in June 2017 (Comune di Padova, 2019c) after the premature fall of
the former local government because of the resignation of the majority of the councillors
(PadovaOggi, 2016, 2017). Yet, the former mayor, Massimo Bitonci, a member of Lega
Nord (right-wing) still ran for the 2017 elections, won the first round and was defeated in
the run-off, showing his continuous strong popularity among citizens. He is currently a
councillor, more precisely the leader of the opposition.

The cabinet comprises ten members, including the mayor and the deputy mayor,
each with specific delegated functions; the council comprises 32 members who are
selected following a proportional logic (Comune di Padova, 2017).

5.2.3 Public sector background

The Italian public sector system is characterised by a Napoleonic/Southern Europe
administrative tradition (Budd et al., 2017; Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2019; Painter &
Peters, 2010), as it is well described by Kuhlmann and Wollman:

Italy can be assigned to the classic Continental European administrative model
characterized by the Napoleonic state tradition, which includes a strong orientation
towards codified law, Roman law tradition and a centralized administrative
organization with a weak local self-government level. Yet, it might be more
appropriate to classify Italy – along with Spain, Greece and Portugal – as belonging to a joint Southern European (or Mediterranean) subgroup of Napoleonic Continental European administrative systems (Demmke et al., 2007; Sotiropoulos, 2009; Kickert, 2011, p. 107 et seq.). The reason for the ‘Mediterranean’ classification can be found in the particularities of the public service and of administrative culture that the countries of this subgroup share, particularly with regard to pronounced (party) politicization of the public service, clientelism in the appointment of administrative positions, and patronage in public service. (Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2019, p. 81).

Broadly speaking, the Italian public sector consists of all PA and public corporations (PC), but public service providers (PSP) are key players as well. As regards PA, at the local level, the most relevant ones are regions, provinces and metropolitan cities, municipalities, local health units, chamber of commerce (CCIAA) and universities (for the complete lists of Italian PA, see Istat, 2019). Except for municipalities, which govern and influence the specific administrative territory they represent, the others mentioned PA influence a wider local area, such as groups of municipalities or the province. Since Padua is one of the provincial capitals of the region, there are local offices of all these PA within the city. The Municipality of Padua (www.padovanet.it) is, however, the core local government: its managerial/administrative head is the city manager (or general manager), who coordinates the activities of the 20 municipal departments. This role is currently exercised by Giovanni Zampieri (Comune di Padova, 2017).

For what concerns the local health units, every Italian Region call them differently: in Veneto, and hence Padua, they are called ULSS (Unità Locale Socio Sanitaria, translated
Local Social Health Unit) and AO (Azienda Ospedaliera, translated Hospital Agency). An important achievement in this respect was reached recently when the Region of Veneto, the Municipality of Padua and the University of Padua finally signed the agreement on the construction of the new hospital, the second in Padua, after a (political) debate of almost ten years (Il Mattino di Padova, 2020a; Regione del Veneto, 2018).

The chambers of commerce (CCIAA) are the public bodies that represent the needs of local businesses and have the most comprehensive knowledge of the local (provincial) economy. In July 2018, and hence during fieldwork, a new president of the CCIAA of Padua (www.pd.camcom.it) was elected: Antonio Santocono replaced Fernando Zilio (Il Mattino di Padova, 2018). This change in headship partially affected a part of this thesis, as better discussed in Chapter 6.

A final note needs to go to the University Of Padua, which is one of the oldest in Europe, being established in 1222 (www.unipd.it). During the academic year 2017/2018, it counted 57'914 enrolled students (Comune di Padova, 2019a).

As regards PC and PSP, they usually represent and meet the specific needs of the local community, which explains the direct or indirect participation of local PA in their management. Table 5.1 in the next page lists the key organisations in these two categories whereas a more exhaustive list is provided by the Municipality of Padua (Comune di Padova, n.d.-a)
Table 5.1 List of key PCs and PSPs in Padua.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Cat.</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AcegasApsAmga</td>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>Utilities (electricity, natural gas, water, waste, environment)</td>
<td><a href="http://www.acegasapsamga.it/">www.acegasapsamga.it/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS Holding</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Parking, car sharing, advertising, crematorium</td>
<td><a href="http://www.apsholding.it/">www.apsholding.it/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busitalia Veneto</td>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td><a href="http://www.fsbusitaliaveneto.it/">www.fsbusitaliaveneto.it/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMO (Consorzio Destination Management Organisation)</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td><a href="http://www.padovaconvention.it/">www.padovaconvention.it/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fondazione Irpea</td>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>Education and Social care</td>
<td><a href="http://www.irpea.it">www.irpea.it</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interporto</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Management, integration and coordination of freight transport</td>
<td><a href="http://www.interportopd.it/">www.interportopd.it/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZIP (Consorzio per la Zona Industriale e porto fluviale di Padova)(^7)</td>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Foster local economic development and growth.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.zip.padova.it/">www.zip.padova.it/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.4 Economic background

Veneto is one of the most developed Italian regions, generating, in 2018, 9% of the Italian GDP (Eurostat, n.d.), after Lombardy (22%) and Lazio (11%) and on a par with Emilia-Romagna (9%). The province of Padua alone generated 2% of the Italian GDP and 20% of Veneto’s one (Eurostat, n.d.). In fact, the area of Padua and Treviso (a nearby city and province) and the cities of Milan (Lombardy) and Bologna (Emilia-Romagna) form

\(^7\) In January 2020, ZIP has been placed in run-off management because ‘it has ended its function’ (Provincia di Padova, 2020). I still include the organisation in the above list because at the time of data collection and analysis, it played a key role.
now the new and most important Italian industrial triangle, thanks to the outstanding manufacturing and service sectors (Ganz, 2018; Mangiaterra, 2019). The important economic role of Padua and Treviso and their vision to play a key role in the national economy is also demonstrated by the recent merge of the two local trade associations of Confindustria Padova (manufacturing and service companies) and Unindustria Treviso (industrial companies) to create Assindustria Venetocentro (www.assindustriavenetocentro.it), the second-largest local association within the Confindustria network\(^8\).

According to the latest data provided by the CCIAA of Padua (2018), the Province of Padua is the second province of Veneto for number of active companies (88,267) and the ninth in Italy. 62% of these companies work in the service sector and 93.7% are micro-enterprises with less than 10 employees. Focusing on Padua, the city counted 20'730 active companies in 2018 (Comune di Padova, 2019a), most of them operating in the wholesale and retail trade (6,197), real estate (2,338), construction (1,985), accommodation and food sector (1,445). Among the largest companies by revenue, there are Ali (supermarket, www.alisupermercati.it), Gottardo SpA (retailer, www.gottardospa.it), Safilo Group (eyewear creator, www.safilogroup.com), Acciaierie Venete SpA (steel producer, www.acciaierievenete.com).

In 2019, the unemployment rate at the provincial level was 5.7%, in line with the regional (5.6%) but below the national (10%) average (Istat, n.d.).

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\(^8\) Confindustria is the main Italian trade association representing manufacturing and service companies (https://www.confindustria.it).
5.2.5  **Civil society background**

At the end of 2018, Padua was awarded the title of European Volunteering Capital 2020 (CEV - European Volunteer Centre, 2018). As the jury explained it:

Padova shows specific and multiple examples of how the municipality supports and encourages volunteers from diverse groups and backgrounds, as well as a wide variety of volunteering organizations. It has a positive focus on how to contribute to the social inclusion and well-being of vulnerable groups through volunteering. (…)

Padova shows that supporting volunteering is not only done through financial support; providing the physical infrastructure is also important to create a good environment in the municipality. (…) Having a councillor responsible for volunteering, gives the volunteers an important voice and keeps volunteering on the agenda (…). In terms of measuring the value of volunteering, Padova displays several interesting initiatives that research the importance of volunteering. (CEV - European Volunteer Centre, 2018)

As the President of the Veneto Region emphasised during the opening ceremony of this important achievement (Il Mattino di Padova, 2020b), volunteering and solidarity are in the DNA of Veneti (the people from Veneto Region) and data only partially capture this way of acting, resuming Edwards’ definition of civil society (2005). Padua is not an exception in this.

In more concrete terms, at the end of 2018 (CSV, 2019), Padua counted 2’135 associations and social cooperatives, one every 100 inhabitants. Figure 5.1 below shows
their scope of intervention, mainly focused on culture and environment, social and sports activities.

**Figure 5.1 Scope of interventions of Padua’s associations and social cooperatives.**

![Figure showing the scope of interventions](source: own elaboration based on CSV (2019, pp. 72–73).

Two organisations of civil society, in particular, require special attention (Pagani et al., 2020): the CSV of Padua and Fondazione Cariparo. The CSV, namely Centro Servizio Volontariato (translated Service Centre for Volunteering, [https://csvpadova.org/](https://csvpadova.org/)), is an umbrella organisation that operates at the provincial level and whose aim is to support volunteering activities within civil society. Fondazione Cariparo ([www.fondazionecariparo.it](http://www.fondazionecariparo.it)) is a former bank foundation and no-profit organisation that operates at the provincial level of Padua and Rovigo (a nearby province). Every year, it funds extensive projects to support and promote the social, cultural and economic
development of the two provinces. Both organisations are therefore important points of reference for civil society, PA and stakeholders.

5.2.6 Urban resilience

To date, the Municipality of Padua has used the concept of resilience within its larger and long-standing plan for adaptation to climate change. Padua has indeed shown an interest in the sustainable development of the city since the end of 2002 when it started planning its local Agenda 21 (Comune di Padova, 2015b). From that moment on, a series of projects and policies have been put in place for the safeguard of the environment, the promotion of environmental education, and, in recent years, climate change adaptation (Comune di Padova, 2015b). The creation of a municipal centre and office dedicated to these themes (Comune di Padova, n.d.-b) particularly supported and fostered this commitment. However, even though the concepts of sustainable development and climate change adaptation tend to be strongly related to the one of resilience and used interchangeably, they have different meanings. Broadly speaking, the idea of urban resilience encompasses the other two concepts. Also, Padua’s focus is primarily on the infrastructures of the city and on those measures able to maintain or improve their effectiveness while reducing both their environmental impact and the impact of climate change on them.

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9 Agenda 21 is an action plan for sustainable development set by the UN in 1992 as a result of the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (UNCED, 1992). In Italy, it began to significantly spread only in 1999 with the creation of a National Coordination of Local Agenda 21 (Comune di Padova, 2015a).
More specifically, the Municipality of Padua explicitly referred to urban resilience on two occasions:

1. In 2016, with the publication of ‘Resilient Padua. Guidelines for the creation of a plan for climate change adaptation’, developed by IUAV University of Venice together with the Municipality of Padua (Comune di Padova & Università IUAV di Venezia, 2016).

2. In 2019, with the organisation of a conference called ‘Plan and manage green areas as a means for urban resilience’ (Comune di Padova, 2019b), as a result of Padua’s participation in the European Project of Urban Green Belts.

5.3 Peterborough (UK)

5.3.1 Overview

Peterborough is a cathedral city in the East of England (UK) and more precisely in Cambridgeshire. It is around 48 km north of Cambridge and 120 km north of London. It stretches over an area of 343 km² (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-c) and, in 2019, its population estimate was 202,259 inhabitants (Cambridgeshire Insight, n.d.-b). Its estimated population density is thereby of 589 inhabitants per km².

Peterborough has been a unitary authority since 1998. This means that ‘the council has both the powers of a non-metropolitan county and district council combined’ (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-a). In 2017, as a result of a devolution deal, the city
council merged with Cambridgeshire County Council to become a Combined Authority with an elected mayor (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-f)\textsuperscript{10}.

Peterborough is described as a heritage and fast-growing city with a very diverse community. Peterborough has indeed important historic sites and items, first of all, the 900 years old cathedral and the 150 million years old marine reptile fossils hosted in Peterborough Museum (Peterborough Visitor Information Centre, n.d.). It is also one of the fastest growing city in the UK by population and economy, thanks to its favourable geographical position, the road and rail systems that make it very well-connected, and the cheap housing (Elledge, 2018; Opportunity Peterborough, 2019). As regards the multicultural character of the population, 20.6% of Peterborough population was represented by Non-UK nationals in 2018 (Cambridgeshire Insight, n.d.-b), far above the regional average (Non-UK nationals represented 9% of East of England and 9.9% of England population). 17.1% of them were EU citizens (Cambridgeshire Insight, n.d.-b). This might partially explain the 60.1% of Peterborough’s people voting to leave the EU (BBC, 2016; Goodwin & Heath, 2016).

5.3.2 Political background

In the UK, both the structure and governance model of local authorities varies from area to area (Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, n.d.). Peterborough is one of the 55 unitary authorities in the UK (out of 343 local authorities—see Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, n.d.) and its council operates with a Council

\textsuperscript{10} For more details on Combined Authorities in England, see Shutt & Liddle (2019).
leader and Cabinet governance model. This means that the Council appoints the Leader of the Council who, in turn, appoints other councillors to serve on the Cabinet, which has the executive role of running the Council services (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-a).

More specifically, Peterborough’s council comprises 60 councillors elected for a four-year term, one-third of whom are elected every year. The incumbent leader of the council is Councillor John Holdich OBE, Conservative, who runs the council with nine members of the Cabinet, each with a delegated function (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-b). The end of their term of office was supposed to be in May 2020, since they were elected in 2016, but due to the coronavirus outbreak, the local elections have been postponed until 2021 (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-g). Every year, the council also elects a Mayor, who has predominantly a representative function. Since 2000, the Conservative party has either controlled the council or represented the largest single political party within the council.

At a lower governance level, Peterborough consists of 26 Parish councils (with elected or co-opted councillors) that are responsible for smaller community services and needs. They represent ‘the first point of contact for anyone wishing to raise a community issue’ or share ideas useful to the community (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-h).

Another key local political actor is the MP (Member of Parliament) who is directly elected by citizens every five years or when a vacancy arises. From 2017 to 2019, the MP was Fiona Onasanya, Labour, but she was removed from office and expelled from the Labour party when she was found guilty of perverting the course of justice (e.g. Syal, 2019). In the following by-election held in June 2019, Lisa Forbes, Labour, was elected MP, but she was later defeated by Paul Bristow, Conservative and incumbent MP, in the general elections held in December 2019 (e.g. The Newsroom, 2019).
A final note needs to go to James Palmer, Conservative, who has been the first directly elected mayor of the Combined Authority of Peterborough and Cambridgeshire since 2017 (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, n.d.-b).

### 5.3.3 Public sector background

The UK public sector system originates from an Anglo-Saxon administrative tradition (Budd et al., 2017; Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2019; Painter & Peters, 2010), which Kuhlmann and Wollman describe as follows:

Based on liberal and utilitarian philosophies of the state, this tradition is characterized by an instrumental concept of statehood. At its centre is the acting ‘government’, rather than the ‘state’ being extolled as a ‘value in itself’. Thus, one often speaks of a ‘stateless society’ (Dyson, 1980). Embedded in a civic culture and individualist tradition, the cognitive and normative differences between the state and the social-economic sphere have not become very pronounced in the British administrative system. […] Furthermore, the dominance of Common Law has traditionally been a characteristic of the legal and administrative concept in these countries, since the ‘law of the land’ is still based on judge-made law rather than on statute law (La Porta et al., 1999, p. 10). […] the Anglo-Saxon administrative model is characterized by the modern development of parliament and democracy that preceded the formation of a professional civil service; thus, the functions of the bureaucratic system were determined from the outset by the political regime (König, 2006, p. 24). This is also reflected in the parliament exercising control over the administration and holding it ‘politically accountable’, with administrative courts
typically remaining absent. Hence, in the Anglo-Saxon context, bureaucracy has historically developed under the spell of the political domain and has remained so to this day. (Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2019, pp. 18–19)

Broadly speaking, alike Italy, the British public sector comprises all PA and PC, but PSP are key players as well. At the local level, the most relevant PA are the local authority, the police force, the health service and education systems, which mainly operate at the county/Combined Authority level. As previously mentioned, Peterborough is a unitary authority member of a Combined Authority. This means that Peterborough City Council (PCC) has more powers and functions than traditional non-metropolitan counties and districts, but also that some of these powers and functions are now shared and delivered jointly with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). This is evident from the council structure which now emphasises which roles are exercised at the Combined Authority level (considering both PCC and CCC) or just in one of the two local authorities (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-e). The incumbent Chief Executive (CEO, the central managerial role) of both PCC and CCC is Gillian Beasley (Cambridgeshire County Council, n.d.).

For what concerns the local police force, it is represented by the Cambridgeshire Constabulary (www.cambs.police.uk/), overseen by an appointed Police and Crime Commissioner (www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/). As regards the health service, the two key points of reference are the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which is one of the largest CCG in England (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG, n.d.), and Peterborough City Hospital, run by the recently formed North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust (n.d.). Finally, a special
note needs to go to the higher education system: at the beginning of 2020, the Combined Authority’s plans to build the University of Peterborough were finally shared with the public (BBC, 2020; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, 2020). Peterborough has indeed two colleges of further and higher education (FE and HE), namely Peterborough Regional College (www.peterborough.ac.uk) and City College Peterborough (an adult and community learning facility, www.citycollegepeterborough.ac.uk), but it still lacks a proper university, which should enrol its first students by September 2022 (BBC, 2020; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, 2020). University Centre Peterborough (UCP, www.ucp.ac.uk) is indeed a small HE institution formed at the end of 2007 as a joint venture between Peterborough Regional College and Anglia Ruskin University.

As regards PC and PSP, two organisations require attention: Opportunity Peterborough and Vivacity. The former is a private not-for-profit business that is wholly owned by PCC and whose role has been to lead and support the economic development of Peterborough since 2010 (www.opportunitypeterborough.co.uk). In fact, despite the existence of a local LEP and their partial overlap of functions, given the inner tensions and inefficiency characterising the LEP (Marlow, 2019), Opportunity Peterborough quickly became an important point of reference and link between the local government and businesses. The Combined Authority dismissed the local LEP in 2017 and constituted a Business Board in 2018 (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, n.d.-a; Marlow, 2019), with whom Opportunity Peterborough declares to have excellent relationships (Opportunity Peterborough, n.d.-b).
Vivacity (www.vivacity-peterborough.com) is an independent charity which manages and delivers many public services on behalf of PCC, such as libraries, museums, leisure centres.

5.3.4 Economic background

In the last decade, the East of England (alike UK) has experienced an important economic growth (CPIEC, 2018). In 2018, the region generated 9% of the national GDP, with London (22%), South East (15%) and North West (10%) performing better (Eurostat, n.d.). Even though Peterborough contributed with less than 1% to the national GDP and the 4% to the regional one (Eurostat, n.d.), its economy is described as robust, innovative and flourishing (Opportunity Peterborough, n.d.-c). As mentioned before, three main factors explain the city’s economic growth:

- its geographical location: Peterborough is indeed located in a favourable position for businesses since it is on a crossroads between London and the North, the Midlands and East Anglia (Elledge, 2018);
- its good physical and digital connections (Opportunity Peterborough, n.d.-a): the road and railway networks meet in Peterborough and extend in all directions (Elledge, 2018; Opportunity Peterborough, n.d.-a). For instance, London can be reached in 45 minutes by train. Also, Peterborough was one of the first Gigabit cities in the UK: it launched the full-fibre network for businesses in 2013, and since 2019 it has been expanding the network citywide to reach every home and business within the city (CityFibre, n.d.);
• its competitive costs: Peterborough has competitive housing, property and land costs which, together with the described above factors, make it very appealing to new businesses and people (Opportunity Peterborough, n.d.-a, 2019).

Peterborough counted 6,840 active businesses in 2018 (Opportunity Peterborough, 2019), 88% of which were micro-businesses with less than 10 employees. Whereas this percentage is in line with the regional and national average, Peterborough has nearly double the proportion of medium-sized and large businesses (Opportunity Peterborough, 2019). The most important business sectors in the city are (Opportunity Peterborough, 2019):

• Business Service Activities, which is the largest by employment;
• Distribution, Transport, Accommodation and Food, which contributes the most to local economic output;
• Manufacturing, which is the most productive one.

Among the most influential companies located in Peterborough, there are BGL Group (financial products, www.bglgroup.co.uk), Coloplast (med-tech company, www.coloplast.co.uk), Perkins Engines (diesel engine manufacturer, www.perkins.com).

In 2019, the unemployment rate in Peterborough was 6.2%, above the regional (3.3%) and national (3.8%) average (Cambridgeshire Insight, n.d.-a; ONS, n.d.).
5.3.5  **Civil society background**

An easy-accessible and clear picture of Peterborough’s civil society is hard to be found or delineated. Peterborough City Council provides an online directory (the Peterborough Information Network, [www.peterborough.gov.uk/PIN](http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/PIN)) with the list of the available community services (with contact information) but it is not very user-friendly and only partially allows to filter the search. Also Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service (PCVS, [www.pcvs.co.uk](http://www.pcvs.co.uk)), a key actor in and of the sector as it is the ‘umbrella and network organisation to the voluntary sector’, does not publicly share any report which delineates the sector or provides any up-to-date data.

According to OECD (2018), East of England performs very well in community support, an indicator which measures the *perceived social support network* of respondents. The region reached 9.1 points out of 10 in this indicator, with 94.6% of respondents claiming to have a social support network. However, this result is in line with the performance of all UK regions, with the lower level being 8.1 in North East England (92.1% of respondents) and the highest being 9.7 in Scotland (96% of respondents). Also, since the indicator represents the regional level, it is hard to scale it at the local level. Yet, with a Cabinet member for Communities, 32 community centres (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-d) and a variety of ethnic-related community associations (such as the Italian, Kurdish, Pakistani Community Associations), Peterborough’s civil society seems to be denoted and focused on the support and voice of its diverse communities.

For what concerns the third/voluntary sector, NCVO (2019) identified 347 general charities in Peterborough in 2016/2017, 1.8 charity every 1000 citizens. Table 5.2 in the next page lists some key organisations of this sector.
Table 5.2 Sample of key charities/civil society’s organisations of Peterborough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DIAL (Disability Peterborough)</td>
<td>Support for physically disabled people and their families</td>
<td><a href="http://www.disabilitypeterborough.org/">www.disabilitypeterborough.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens Advice Bureau</td>
<td>Advice and information services</td>
<td><a href="http://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/">www.citapeterborough.org.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Art organisation</td>
<td><a href="http://www.metalculture.com/about-us/peterborough/">www.metalculture.com/about-us/peterborough/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARCA (Peterborough Asylum &amp; Refugee Community Association)</td>
<td>Advice and support for asylum seekers, refugees and people in need</td>
<td><a href="http://www.parcaltd.org/">www.parcaltd.org/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAB (Peterborough Association for the Blind)</td>
<td>Support for blind people and their families</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mypab.org.uk/">www.mypab.org.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PECT (Peterborough Environment City Trust)</td>
<td>Environmental charity</td>
<td><a href="http://www.PECT.org.uk/">www.PECT.org.uk/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3.6 Urban resilience

To date, Peterborough City Council used the concept of resilience in two ways: first, in relation to its responsibilities under the Civil Contingency Act 2004 to plan for emergencies and build local resilience (Peterborough City Council, n.d.-i). These responsibilities and aims are reached especially through four major actions:

- the creation of a local resilience forum together with Cambridgeshire;
- the development and update of a Community Risk Register that identifies and assesses the risk of emergencies within the area (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum, 2016);
- the development and update of continuity plans to guarantee that the city council can continue functioning in the event of an emergency;
• the support to communities and businesses in writing a Community Emergency Plan (Peterborough City Council, 2014).

Second, Peterborough City Council is collaborating with Cambridgeshire in the development of a “Think Communities” project whose aim is ‘to create a shared vision, approach and priorities for building Community Resilience across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough’ (Cambridgeshire County Council, 2018). The project is based on a people-based, place-based and system approach and, in its first year (i.e. 2019/2020), it has focused on eight themes: communication, community engagement, data and intelligence, estates and buildings, funding and resources, technology and digital, workforce reform, strategic coherence and system facilitation (Chapman, 2019). The project was developed only recently and still needs to be fully embedded, but some positive benefits are already starting to show (Baker, 2020; Chapman, 2019).
5.4 Chapter summary

This chapter illustrated the main characteristics of the two investigated cities by focusing on five contextual aspects: the political, the public sector, the economic, and the civil society backgrounds, and urban resilience policies. Table 5.3 below summarises the key data and information provided with the aim of better understanding and comparing the two contexts.

Table 5.3 Main characteristics of the two investigated cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Veneto (North-East of Italy)</td>
<td>East of England, Cambridgeshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above-city government level</td>
<td>Province</td>
<td>Combined Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important nearby cities</td>
<td>Venice (30 km away)</td>
<td>Cambridge (48 km away)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milan (200 km away)</td>
<td>London (120 km away)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>92.85 km²</td>
<td>343 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>211,316 inhabitants (end of 2019)</td>
<td>202,259 (estimated, 2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>2,275 inhabitants/km²</td>
<td>589 inhabitants/km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Described as</td>
<td>Artistic and religious city</td>
<td>Heritage and fast-growing city with a very diverse community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political governance model</td>
<td>Strong mayor, Cabinet and Council</td>
<td>Council leader and Cabinet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last election</td>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incumbent Political Leader</td>
<td>Sergio Giordani, mayor (left-leaning independent)</td>
<td>Cllr John Holdich OBE (Conservative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet members</td>
<td>10 (incl. mayor &amp; deputy mayor)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
### Research Settings

#### Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Councillors</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative Tradition</strong></td>
<td>Napoleonic/Southern Europe</td>
<td>Anglo-Saxon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local government</strong></td>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>City Council, Unitary Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Managerial/administrative head of local government</strong></td>
<td>General Manager (incumbent: Giovanni Zampieri)</td>
<td>CEO (incumbent: Gillian Beasley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other important PAs</strong></td>
<td>CCIAA, Local health units, University</td>
<td>Local police force, local health service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Important PCs/PSPs</strong></td>
<td>AcegasApsAmga, APS Holding, Busitalia, DMO, Fondazione Irpea, Interporto, ZIP</td>
<td>Opportunity Peterborough, Vivacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GDP (2018)</strong></td>
<td>Veneto Region: 9% of Italian GDP Padua Province: 2% of Italian GDP and 20% of Veneto’s one</td>
<td>East of England: 9% of UK GDP Peterborough: &lt;1% of UK GDP and 4% of regional one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active companies (2018)</strong></td>
<td>20’730</td>
<td>6’840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of companies</strong></td>
<td>Majority of micro-enterprises</td>
<td>Majority of micro-enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main sectors</strong></td>
<td>wholesale and retail trade; real estate; construction; accommodation and food sector</td>
<td>Business service activities; distribution, transport, accommodation and food; manufacturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most influential companies</strong></td>
<td>Ali, Gottardo, Safilo, Acciaierie Venete</td>
<td>BGL Group, Coloplast, Perkins Engines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment rate (2019)</strong></td>
<td>5.7% provincial average 5.6% regional average 10% national average</td>
<td>6.2% in Peterborough 3.3% regional average 3.8% national average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civil society</strong></td>
<td>European Volunteering Capital 2020</td>
<td>Community-focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisations</strong></td>
<td>2’135 association and social cooperatives (10 every 1000 inhabitants)</td>
<td>347 general charities (1.8 every 1000 inhabitants)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics | Padua | Peterborough
---|---|---
**Main scope of intervention** | Culture and environment, social and sport activities | Hard to delineate

**Key organisations**
- CSV Padua
- Fondazione Cariparo | | PCVS

**Urban resilience policies**
1. Resilient Padua. Guidelines for the creation of a plan for climate change adaptation (publication)
2. Plan and manage green areas as a means for urban resilience (conference title) | 1. Responsibilities under the Civil Contingency Act 2004
2. ‘Think Communities’ project in collaboration with Cambridgeshire

**Focus of urban resilience** | Adaptation to climate change Infrastructure resilience | Community resilience

6 City Leaders\textsuperscript{11}

6.1 Introduction

Thus far, I outlined the overarching aspects of this thesis: I reviewed the main literature on PBL (Chapter 2), I delineated the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis (Chapter 3), I provided an overview of the methodology employed (Chapter 4), and I illustrated the two research settings (Chapter 5). What follows are the three themed chapters dedicated to the three elements of the conceptual framework. In particular, this chapter deals with the exploration of the first element, namely the actors of the CLN, or city leaders (see Chapter 3 and Figure 3.2 reproduced in the next page from page 31). The aim is to identify them by addressing sRQ1 (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3): who are the city leaders from a PBL perspective?

\textsuperscript{11}The contents of this chapter have been partially published in a paper entitled “Essential, complex and multi-form: the local leadership of civil society from an Anglo-Italian perspective”, co-authored with Alessandro Sancino and Leslie Budd (Pagani et al., 2020). In particular, the paper focuses on the identification of civic/community leaders (see Section 6.4.5).
Reproduction of Figure 3.2 The first element of the conceptual framework: the actors of the CLN. First placed on page 31.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, the literature review is reprised to focus more on the plurality of city leaders and their identification. Second, the methodology is reprised to better explain the data collection, analysis and visualisation procedures followed in order to identify city leaders. Finally, the findings are presented and discussed.
6.2 Literature review (reprise)

In Chapter 2, I pointed out the pluralised and cross-sector nature of PBL, namely its being exercised by a plurality of formal and informal actors which may belong to the public and private sectors as well as civil society (Beer et al., 2019; Hambleton, 2014; Sotarauta, 2016b; Sotarauta & Beer, 2017). This is well illustrated by the three main frameworks (’t Hart & Tummers, 2019; Budd et al., 2017; Hambleton, 2014) which support the identification of place-based leaders (see Table 2.2 on page 21) and which drove the development of the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis (see Chapter 3): all three frameworks are indeed based on the recognition of different types of actors who co-lead a place. Still, this multi-actor approach to leadership is not limited to PBL studies. On the contrary, it represents a shift of focus within the leadership discipline from the individual traits of leaders towards the relational and collective dimensions of leadership (Bolden, 2011; M. Clark et al., 2014; Crosby & Bryson, 2018; DeRue, 2011; Fletcher, 2004; Sergi et al., 2016). Collective leadership studies have indeed bloomed in recent years (Contractor et al., 2012; Ospina, 2017; Ospina et al., 2020a; Yammarino et al., 2012) and this includes also works which are based on the same perspective of leadership but differentiate for some elements—and hence label: for instance, studies on distributed leadership (e.g. Bolden, 2011; Gareth Edwards, 2011), shared leadership (e.g. Pearce et al., 2008), collaborative leadership (e.g. Crosby & Bryson, 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2005), plural or pluralised leadership (e.g. Denis et al., 2012; Sergi et al., 2012; White et al., 2016).

When focusing on city leadership, however, it emerges that the idea of a plurality of actors who influence (and hence lead) the city and its community has a long history. Yet,
the two seminal studies on it are rarely considered a part of the (city/place) leadership literature. In contrast, they are usually recognised as ground-breaking works in the study of local power structures and political dynamics (Gronn, 2003) as well as urban regime theory (Ledyaev et al., 2014). Still, given their focus on the identification and analysis of influential actors of the city (i.e. leaders of the city), it would be inaccurate to neglect them here. These are Hunter’s book *Community Power Structure* (1953) and Dahl’s book *Who Governs?* (2005, first published in 1961).

Hunter (1953) was one of the first to question ‘who runs the community?’ by examining the leadership of a U.S. city through the power structures of its community. Albeit his basic ideas were not new (Rosen, 1954; L. Smith, 1954) and his work is mainly remembered for the debate it opened on power dynamics and elite theory (see, for example, Dahl, 1958; Stone, 1988), his book should receive a larger credit by (city) leadership scholars for the important elements addressed and the methodology adopted to identify city leaders (see Chapter 4). Rosen (1954) excellently summarised its central argument:

If the problems which confront individuals and groups in a community are to be dealt with democratically and effectively, can this be done when the citizens are not even aware of who the real leaders of the community are and how they are selected?

(Rosen, 1954, p. 950)

More specifically yet briefly, Hunter found out that forty people out of the half-billion citizens of the investigated city were top city leaders who ‘have a virtual monopoly of big decision-making for the entire community’ (L. Smith, 1954). Also, most of these leaders
were businessmen. Third, the decision-making processes among these leaders were generally hidden and unknown to the public.

A similar research purpose was at the basis of Dahl’s work *Who governs?* (2005, first published in 1961). Indeed, like Hunter, Dahl investigated the power structure of a U.S. city and promoted a pluralistic interpretation of it. Furthermore, he also recognised the central role played by entrepreneurs and businessmen in political decision-making. However, he refused the power elite model suggested by Hunter (T. N. Clark, 1967; Dahl, 1958; Spinrad, 1965) in favour of what he called *a political system of dispersed inequalities* (Dahl, 2005).

Without delving deeply into these two studies, as it is not the aim of this review and given their main focus on power dynamics rather than on leadership ones, three elements about the historical conceptualisation of city leadership stand out from both books:

1. City leadership took place during decision-making processes;
2. City leadership was a political leadership;
3. City leadership (as a political leadership) was exercised by elected politicians as well as other types of actors, in particular entrepreneurs and businessmen.

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12 I acknowledge that differentiating between leadership and power is a sensitive and disputable choice, since the two concepts are strongly interdependent and it is not possible to fully understand one without considering the other (Firth & Carroll, 2016; Gronn, 2003). Also, both are related to the concept of influence and therefore the risk of redundancy and misunderstandings between the two is highly possible (Gronn, 2003). Yet, focusing on power instead of leadership, and vice versa, and the way in which each concept is conceptualised, produce different theoretical and methodological analysis and therefore I prefer to differentiate the two.
This latter point was also supported by Yager (1963) in his reflections about the political leadership of a community and, in particular, about its place-based nature and the different sources from which it might emerge. In fact, even though he recognised that key political leaders are the elected public officials and related political parties, he also argued that only ‘theoretically political leadership in a democracy originates or springs from the people – the governed [... because] in actual practice it is not the way things work’ (Yager, 1963, p. 256). Indeed, the author distinguished four other potential sources of political leadership:

1. Economic groups, which provided the greatest political leadership;
2. The press;
3. Minorities, because of ‘the control they can exercise in close elections’;
4. Mugwumps, namely ‘independent, political, citizen-action groups’.

It should not, therefore, astonish that city leadership is still widely associated to the local political leadership (e.g. Langan & McFarland, 2017; Latham et al., 2009), even though different interpretations are given to this latter concept. In fact, on the one hand, local political leadership can be broadly intended as the leadership implemented during local decision-making processes by any actor (democratically elected or not) who has the capability or the resources to strongly influence such processes. The three main references examined earlier (Hunter, Dahl, Yager) followed this perspective. On the other hand, local political leadership can be understood in a narrower sense as the leadership exercised by the (democratically) elected or appointed officials within the local government, such as the mayor and the councillors (e.g. Heinelt et al., 2018). As
illustrated in Chapter 3, this thesis follows this second and narrower perspective of local political leadership, whereas it considers the first broader one as an overlapping definition of public leadership (Rhodes & ‘t Hart, 2014). In fact, public leadership is exercised by people—from both within and outside government—who have ‘considerable influence over the way in which communities deal with issues’ (‘t Hart & Tummers, 2019, p. 3). Rapoport et al. (2019), on the other hand, followed a hybrid approach: they considered city leadership as collectively exercised by a plurality of actors which belong to many parts of society, but their primary focus was on the elected mayors or political leaders.

Independently of the interpretation followed, it is clear that city leadership has been understood as a pluralistic and cross-sector form of leadership since the very beginning of its investigation. Also, both political leaders and business leaders have been widely recognised as key city actors. However, even though some similarities can be recognised between these earlier and recent works, leadership is dynamic: it changes over time and across places. Also, different perspectives and perceptions on who (or what) is a (city) leader exist. In fact, the identification of leaders may result from four main complementary approaches:

- a positional approach, which identifies leaders according to their formal position or office (Bonjean & Olson, 1964);
- an intrapersonal approach, which identifies leaders according to the self-evaluation of leaders themselves (Epitropaki et al., 2017);
• a reputational approach, which identifies leaders according to others’ evaluation, such as the followers, the team and/or the group (Bonjean & Olson, 1964; Epitropaki et al., 2017);

• a decisional approach, which identifies leaders according to leaders’ actions during decision-making and policy formulation processes (Bonjean & Olson, 1964).

For example, Hunter (1953) applied a positional approach, Dahl (2005) applied a decisional one (Dahl, 2005), Rapoport et al. (2019) a reputational approach from an experts’ standpoint.

The identification of city leaders should not, therefore, be taken for granted: what might seem like a basic question (i.e. who are city leaders?) can easily produce a complicated and surprising answer.

6.3 Methodology

As explained earlier (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 4), this thesis is based on a MM research design and it is structured in themed chapters, each addressing one sRQ. Therefore, this section does not return or resume the overall methodological choices that have already been discussed elsewhere, if not relevant for the flow of the text. What follows is a detailed description of the data collection, analysis and visualisation procedures adopted to address sRQ1 and hence identify the city leaders of the two investigated cities.
As explained in Chapter 4, the identification of city leaders was based on the combination of the positional and the reputational approaches to leadership (Bonjean & Olson, 1964; Epitropaki et al., 2017). This means that city leaders were identified first according to the formal position they hold and then according to other participants’ evaluation. In particular, the adoption of this latter approach means that participants (city leaders) were considered as followers of other leaders (e.g. Kellerman, 2012; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014) and this follower-leader relationship was at the basis of data collection, analysis and visualisation. This methodological approach and sampling procedures put emphasis on leaders (person/position) rather than on leadership, despite it is now widely urged to focus more on the latter than the former (e.g. Grint, 2005). Yet, individuals still play a key role in embodying and/or enabling (or destroying) leadership (e.g. Jackson & Parry, 2018; Ospina et al., 2020b) and therefore the identification and roles of (city) leaders should not be taken for granted. Also, even though informal leaders are recognised as important players of and in this phenomenon, formal leaders are more easily identified, usually widely recognised as such because of their formal position, and, in particular, they can be the ones able to recognise informal leaders (hence the use of the reputational approach to leaders’ identification—see Chapter 4). As Hunter (1957) put it:

persons occupying “offices” and public positions of trust would be involved in some manner in the power relations of the community. It was felt that some leaders might not work through formally organized groups, but getting leaders from organizations would be a good start towards turning up leaders who might operate behind the scenes (Hunter, 1953, “Appendix Methods of Study”, para. 7)
6.3.1 Data collection

To identify city leaders, the following questions were asked to all participants, through the online questionnaire or the interviews:

1. In your opinion, who are the most important political leaders in your city today?
2. In your opinion, who are the most important managerial leaders in your city today?
3. In your opinion, who are the most important business leaders in your city today?
4. In your opinion, who are the most important civic/community leaders in your city today?

In particular, participants were asked to name (when possible) from three to ten leaders for each CLA. To help them, they were provided with the definition of each CLA (see Appendix 1) and they had the possibility to answer in any way they wanted (i.e. giving names, formal positions, organisations, groups,...). This generated a whole variety of answers, according to participants’ perceptions and conceptualisation of leadership and leaders.

6.3.2 Data analysis

A qualitative approach to SNA (Hollstein, 2014) and network visualisation (e.g. Withall et al., 2007) was employed to explore data and map the CLN. This means that SNA was applied to identify leaders (actors or nodes, according to SNA’s terminology) and not to investigate the more common network characteristics (e.g. density, centrality, and so on – Borgatti et al., 2013; Hanneman & Riddle, 2014) since it would have gone beyond the purpose of this thesis and it would have required more data manipulation.
(e.g. anonymisation of all nodes, including identified leaders, to protect participants’ identity), which would have affected the potential contribution of this study.

I began the analysis process by extracting the data and information relevant to address sRQ1 from the general data corpus, namely all data collected throughout the whole research project (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The resulted new datasets (one for Padua and one for Peterborough - from now on referred to as datasets) were organised vertically to create a list of all identified city leaders. In particular, the following details were included:

- Participant: the reference number of the participant who named the city leaders;
- Role by participants: the perceived function (i.e. CLA) exercised by the identified city leader according to participants;
- Appellation by participants: how participants named the identified city leaders (with no modification);
- Details for preliminary analysis: the appellations given by participants to city leaders were manually tidied up and unpacked to support the analysis. More specifically, appellations were tidied up to make them consistent throughout the whole datasets, still respecting as much as possible participants’ initial replies. Therefore, for example, misspellings were corrected and the same word order was followed (e.g. forename + surname). Also, appellations were unpacked to highlight the following pieces of information about the identified city leaders:
  - Name (when possible, forename and surname);
  - Position held;
o Organisation or Group in which the identified city leaders belong to;

o Other details or comments about identified city leaders that have been given by participants.

In fact, participants were asked to give as many details as possible about the identified city leaders to help the identification process and the follow-up participant selection (see Section 4.3.1).

Once data were manually cleaned and preliminarily organised, the datasets were prepared for the analysis and the graphical representation through Gephi. This was one of the most challenging stages of data analysis due to the great variety of replies given, also in reference to a single city leader. In particular, five procedures needed to be conducted:

• the integration of the datasets with missing details;

• the aggregation of city leaders based on the available details;

• the definition of the belonging CLA for each identified city leader;

• the categorisation of identified city leaders at a meso level of analysis (between the higher level of CLA and the individual level of analysis);

• the assignment of an ID to each identified city leader.

Each procedure is now briefly described.
The integration of the datasets with missing details

As a result of the appellations’ unpacking, it became evident that some participants provided insufficient details to identify the named city leaders. Consequently, online desk research was conducted to integrate the datasets with missing details or modify the out-of-date ones. These modifications are visible in the datasets since they have been written in a different colour (blue).

This step produced a completer and more accurate list of identified city leaders which enabled to compare and then aggregate different replies, as I describe shortly. Also, it enabled to contact potential further participants, as described in Section 4.3.1.

The aggregation of city leaders based on the available details

With the aim of limiting the dispersion of replies and hence conducting a more focused and effective analysis, the great variety of appellations (i.e. participants’ replies) collected and cleaned were aggregated. In particular, two aggregation strategies were followed so that the appellations represented the actual identified city leaders or the more suitable ones for the analysis. Both strategies are in line with multi-level network analysis (e.g. Grandjean, 2014; Lazega & Snijders, 2015), a technique applied to reduce the number of network’s nodes to produce more effective analysis and visualisation. An example can illustrate well the first strategy. The following entries can be found in Peterborough’s dataset, representing different participants’ replies:

a. Gillian Beasley
b. CEO of Peterborough City Council (PCC)
c. Gillian Beasley, CEO of PCC
As it can be imagined, even though participants named this city leader differently, at the time they replied, they were all referring to the same individual holding that particular position, namely Mrs Gillian Beasley, the CEO of Peterborough City Council (PCC). Therefore, the three replies were aggregated under a unique appellation defined following a plurality method. In other words, the unique (final) appellation was the one used by most participants.

For what concerns the second strategy, the main aim was to aggregate, when possible and valid, city leaders named only by a few participants. A typical example is when a participant named as city leader a business organisation and another participant named the chairman of such organisation. To reduce the number of identified leaders, the two replies were aggregated at the organisational level.

These two strategies were applied throughout the whole datasets and the final appellations to be used for the network analysis and visualisation were listed under an added column labelled Name def.

A brief note is imperative here. The final appellation of two identified city leaders of Padua was not defined following the strategies described so far. These two leaders are the President of the Chamber of Commerce (CCIAA) and the Chairman of Fondazione Cariparo (see Chapter 5). In fact, in both cases, most of the participants provided the names (i.e. forename and/or surname) of these leaders, therefore indicating specific individuals holding specific formal positions. However, both individuals left their chairman role during the stage of data collection. Since it was not possible to assume the reason why participants named these leaders the way they did, as it went beyond the purpose of this thesis (e.g. named them because they were truly and knowingly referring
to these leaders even though they had left their position; named them because they did not know that they had left their formal position; not named them because they wanted to recognise as city leader the position and not the individual; and so on), in the analysis, these two city leaders were labelled only with their formal position (i.e. Chairman of an organisation). This choice was made to emphasise the important city leadership role recognised to whom holds those formal roles, independently of the specific individual who holds them, despite the awareness that also the characteristics of the individual (i.e. leadership traits) are key leadership elements.

**The definition of the belonging CLA for each identified city leader**

As already noted (Chapter 4), different people might have different perceptions of the function played by some city leaders. As a result of this, a discrepancy of views about the function exercised by certain city leaders was sometimes recognised. Also, some participants named the same leader in different CLA, highlighting a dubious or borderline perceived role played by such leaders. Starting from the assumption that a city leader exercises a predominant function within the city, even though it may play several roles and hold several formal leadership positions, each identified city leader was categorised in one CLA. In particular, the same logic followed to categorise participants was used (see Section 4.3.1.3), namely the comparison of three views: mine (the researcher’s), participant’s own (if applicable) and the predominant one among other participants. The final and selected categorisation was the one that was shared by most sources, and it was then listed in the added column CLA def of the datasets.
The categorisation of identified city leaders at a meso level of analysis

In line with complex systems theories (see Chapter 4) and multi-level theories (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2001), the understanding of a phenomenon can be conducted at different levels of analysis (e.g. the individual, the neighbour, the city, the country, and so on). Therefore, to facilitate the analysis and the network visualisation, an additional layer (i.e. meso level of analysis) was added to the datasets in order to group similar identified city leaders on the basis of the type of organisation or institution they represented—column name: Meso level. Table 6.1 in the next page summarises, for each city, the defined categories at the meso level of analysis.
Table 6.1 City leaders’ categories at the meso-level of analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Authority (CA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comune/Local Government</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith/Religion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National or above Government</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Corporations (PC)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Province/Region</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service Providers (PSP)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Sector</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Associations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The assignment of an ID to each identified city leaders

The last step in the preparation of the datasets was necessary to conduct the network visualisation. In fact, Gephi requires every node (i.e. actor represented in the network) to have an ID, which is the basic piece of information from which the software creates the graphical representation of data. The ID was assigned following the same logic used to define participants’ reference numbers and thereby it included: first the abbreviation of the represented city, then the letter N (i.e. Nodes) to differentiate the ID from participants’ reference numbers, and finally a number assigned sequentially (e.g. PaN1 and so on for Padua; PeN1 and so on for Peterborough).

As a result of these five procedures, the datasets were organised in 11 columns, as shown in Figure 6.1 below. Also, each dataset counted respectively 518 (Padua) and 426 (Peterborough) entries.

Figure 6.1 Capture of Padua’s dataset, showing columns’ labels and a sample of data.

Note: Data are sorted alphabetically per “Name def” column.

At this point, the datasets were ready to provide the relevant details for the graphical representation of the network. Since Gephi works with .csv files (i.e. comma separated) and requires two separated files to create the network, one for nodes (i.e. actors) and
one for edges (i.e. relationships among actors, in this case follower-leader relationships), new files were created containing only the necessary data to be run in Gephi.

6.3.3 Data visualisation

The full step-by-step procedure followed to construct the network representations displayed in this chapter can be seen in Appendix 4. What follows is the description of the more important graphical choices made to create such representations, in order to facilitate their comprehensibility.

Given the focus of this chapter on city leaders’ identification, the main purpose of the network visualisation was to represent the identified leaders of each CLA and their perceived “degree of leadership”. The use of the quotation marks is due to the fact that the idea of a “degree of leadership” could be highly contested, but here it is used in its broadest and simplest sense to mean the different number of mentions that each identified city leader received. In fact, a high number of mentions means that the city actor was recognised as a city leader by several participants (i.e. followers) and, accordingly, it was likely to have more influence over the city community than an actor who received only one mention. In graphical terms, this signifies that each node represents an identified city leader and the size of the nodes results from this “degree of leadership”. In other words, the larger nodes denote the actors who have been named more times and hence have been recognised as city leaders by most participants.

I have already explained in Chapter 4 that nodes are positioned and coloured based on the conceptual framework scheme (see Chapter 3) in order to distinguish the city leaders belonging to each CLA. Other than this criterion, nodes are also positioned
according to the meso level of analysis (as explained in the previous section), and hence, similar nodes are grouped together. This means that, for example, all councillors are positioned close to one another, all third-sector organisations close to one another, and so on. These groupings can be recognised by the pink dotted circles around them. On the contrary, black dotted circles enclose the nodes which represent the same organisation (e.g. the organisation and its CEO). It is important to point out that I decided both the groupings and the location with the main purpose of creating easy-readable and comparable visualisations.

Once the network visualisation was completed, to focus on the key city leaders of the two investigated cities, I took into consideration only the ones who were named by at least three participants, hiding all other elements of the network. The choice of the three-mention (or follower) threshold resulted from a personal preference. In fact, at least to my knowledge, there is not a common rule or previous studies that define the number of followers that a (city) leader should have to be considered such. In very general terms, it can be said that it is necessary to have at least one follower to be considered someone’s leader, but in terms of influence and capability to mobilise the community, the one-follower criterion can be highly questionable. Also, it would provide a very dispersed picture of city leadership. In contrast, the three-mentions threshold enables a better analysis: it provided a variegated account of city leaders still allowing to focus on the more significant ones.

Finally, the qualitative material collected at the end of the questionnaire and during the interviews was examined to go deeper into the analysis.
6.3.4 Focus Groups

As introduced in Chapter 4, the focus groups were organised to validate preliminary findings and expand the data collected throughout the whole research project. Here, I focus only on the additional material collected and analysed to address sRQ1, in line with the aim of this chapter.

During the focus groups, participants received the preliminary representations of the identified city leaders of the two investigated cities. After a very brief explanation, as my purpose was to foster an authentic discussion that was not framed by me, participants were asked to take some minutes to look at the data visualisation and:

- make any questions about the representations, to understand if they were easily understandable;
- discuss the representations, especially the role of actors whose nodes were coloured in pink. In fact, the pink nodes represented the actors whose role within the city was perceived in contrasting ways among participants. Since the purpose of the analysis was to categorise them according to participants’ perception, and not mine, the focus group provided the perfect occasion to discuss this. The then pink nodes are listed in Table 6.2 in the next page.
- Express their opinion on the representativeness of the graphical representation of the city they were part of.
Table 6.2 Pink nodes in the preliminary network visualisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperatives</td>
<td>Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fondazione Cariparo</td>
<td>Circo (PSP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Combined Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefecture</td>
<td>Local Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Unions</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The qualitative material emerged from these initiatives was directly integrated with the data and material collected during the online questionnaires and interviews, and it was used to improve the graphical representations and the formulation of findings.

6.4 Findings

To facilitate the comparison between the two investigated cities, findings are presented according to the four CLA and not the geographical contexts. This means that, after a brief overview of the city leaders of the two cities, each CLA is described in more details, considering first the Italian city, then the English one and finally, comparing and contrasting the two.
6.4.1 Overview

Padua

The analysis of the identified city leaders of Padua was conducted using a dataset of 518 entries (i.e. the participants’ leader-follower relationships, or ties) which brought to the identification of 204 potential city leaders (i.e. nodes). However, given the decision to focus only on leaders named by at least three participants, the deeper analysis was centred on 52 city leaders, which are represented in Figure 6.2 below.

Figure 6.2 The key city leaders of Padua.
Peterborough

The analysis of the identified city leaders of Peterborough was conducted using a dataset of 426 entries (i.e. participants’ leader-follower relationships, or ties) which resulted in the identification of 200 potential city leaders (i.e. nodes). However, the deeper analysis focused on 44 city leaders as represented in Figure 6.3 below.

*Figure 6.3 The key city leaders of Peterborough.*
Comparison

The differences between the two cities in the identification of city leaders are highlighted in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3 Differences in the identification of city leaders between Padua and Peterborough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. of entries</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(participants’ leader-follower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships / ties)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. of nodes in potential CLN</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(all participants’ replies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. of nodes in CLN</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(with more than 3 mentions)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top three city leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Giordani Sergio, Mayor (PL;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 mentions);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Lorenzoni Arturo, Deputy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor (PL; 26 mentions);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Chairman of Chamber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Commerce (ML, 18 mentions).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Beasley Gillian, PCC CEO</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ML, 24 mentions);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Leader of the council (PL,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 mentions);</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. BGL (BL, 10 mentions).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, it can be noticed that the different numbers of involved participants (37 in Padua and 29 in Peterborough) influenced only partially the quantity of data on which the analysis was based. In fact, even though the number of entries substantially differs between the two cities (due to the different number of participants involved), the number of identified city leaders was very similar. This enabled a good comparison between the two cities, despite the expected contextual differences. Also, as explained in Chapter 4, this achievement supported the decision to conclude the stage of data collection as all potential participants (i.e. identified city leaders) were contacted. Lastly,
even though this project did not involve all potential city leaders (see Chapter 4), these data show that there is a strong possibility to reach the saturation point of data collection and, accordingly, temporarily delineate the borders of the whole CLN. Finally, Table 6.3 above lists the top three city leaders identified by participants. These are the leaders who, independently of the CLA they belong to, received more mentions and, accordingly, are represented with bigger nodes in the graphical representation. In particular, two elements can be emphasised. First, the different number of mentions among the three leaders. Whereas in Padua this difference is balanced (i.e. the number of mentions between the first city leader and the second one varies of only 6 mentions, and between the second and the third of 8 mentions), in Peterborough the number of mentions received by the top two city leaders in respect of the third one differs remarkably. In fact, the top two city leaders in the investigated English city received respectively 24 and 22 mentions, the third city leader received only 10. Second, the types of city leaders at the podium. Whereas in Padua it is evident the central role recognised to political leaders (two out of the three top city leaders are PL), in Peterborough the situation is more balanced across the two main forces of local government's leadership: the top two city leaders of Peterborough are indeed a managerial leader (ML) and a political one (PL).
6.4.2 Political Leadership arena

Resuming the definition used in the conceptual framework (see Chapter 3) and during data collection (see Chapter 4), political leader(ship) exercises the function of political representation and democratic intermediation.

Padua

Figure 6.4 below and Table 6.4 in the next page illustrate the 13 PL identified in Padua.

Figure 6.4 Political leaders of Padua.
Table 6.4 Number of mentions received by each political leader of Padua.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City leader</th>
<th>N. of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sergio Giordani, Mayor</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arturo Lorenzoni, Deputy Mayor</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massimo Bitonci, Councillor &amp; Former Mayor</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalizione Civica (Political Association)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President of the Province</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavio Zanonato, Eurodeputy</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massimo Bettin, Mayor’s spokesman</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Micalizzi, Cabinet member</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PD (Democratic Party, left-wing)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefect</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President of the Region</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at Figure 6.4 and Table 6.4, it is evident that a central and highly influential role in the exercise of PL is played by two actors: the Mayor Sergio Giordani and the Deputy Mayor Arturo Lorenzoni. Indeed, the majority of participants identified them as key PL of Padua (respectively 32 and 26 participants out of 37). As one interviewee put it, «They are two souls of a political coalition and both exercise an important leadership» (Pa33-ML). A third important actor is Councillor Massimo Bitonci, the main representative on the current opposition, and former mayor of the city.
A surprising finding is the identification of Massimo Bettin, the spokesman of the Mayor. Indeed, even though he is not an elected politician and he does not represent a community, but the Mayor, he is considered a PL.

By grouping these identified PL according to their role or affiliation, five types of PL can be recognised, other than the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for their dominant role:

1. The Cabinet;
2. The Council, represented by the Councillor and Leader of the Opposition Massimo Bitonci;
3. The representatives of higher level of governments, in this case, the European Parliament, the Region and the Province;
4. The current political party and the political association that run the Council, in this case, PD and Coalizione Civica;
5. Other actors who are not elected politicians, and hence are not political actors *per se*, but who are recognised as having a PL role (i.e. Bettin, Municipality, Prefect).

*Peterborough*

In Peterborough, 13 PL were identified by participants, as shown in Figure 6.5 and Table 6.5 in the next page.
Figure 6.5 Political leaders of Peterborough.

Table 6.5 Number of mentions received by each political leader of Peterborough

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City leader</th>
<th>N. of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leader of the Council</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elected Mayor of Combined Authority</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Members</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wayne Fitzgerald, Councillor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Fox, Former Mayor &amp; Councillor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marco Cereste, Councillor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservative party</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Councillors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene Walsh, Councillor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at Figure 6.5 and Table 6.5, what stands out is the clear dominance of the Leader of the Council within the PL arena, cited by 22 out of 29 participants. The role is today exercised by Councillor John Holdich. As one interviewee put it:

«Peterborough is a unitary authority […]. So, the leader under the Peterborough constitution is an executive leader. Though, that leader of the council, whoever that person may be, is the most powerful single individual in our city. Much more powerful than the MPs and anyone else in our city. We talk about outside the city, that’s different, but if we are talking about the unitary authority of Peterborough, the person that has the power and all the delegations is the leader of the council» (Pe11-PL).

The second influential PL, mentioned by 8 participants and hence far less than the first one, is the Elected Mayor of the Combined Authority, a role that has been exercised by James Palmer since May 2017 (see Chapter 5). As one interviewee commented:

«The most important political leader in Peterborough is not in Peterborough. It’s the Mayor, it’s the Combined Authority Mayor. […]. The political leadership has shifted to wherever his offices are at the moment. […] And you can walk down the street and not one person you ask would know that position even exists. Let alone who the occupier of the position is» (Pe20-BL).

Another interviewee noted: «He is very influential as he can get things done, […] he has a lot of money to allocate to projects» (Pe19-CL). However, his influence is not
always seen positively, given the fact that the Elected Mayor of the Combined Authority represents the Region and therefore a higher level of government and a larger territory, which also includes Cambridge. For example, one interviewee reported: «The Metro Mayor has pulled the centre of gravity to Cambridge and we are just the periphery» (Pe20-BL). Another interviewee remarked that politicians of the region, who influence Peterborough because it is located in the Region, «play a part in that, but is not foremost in their thought» (Pe27-BL).

A third recognised influential PL is represented by Cabinet members, as a group, even though also specific individual members of the Cabinet have been mentioned by several participants. In particular, one interviewee emphasised the collective leadership exercised by the cabinet, saying: «I think that probably is the cabinet rather than the leader himself. They probably act quite collectively and collaboratively» (Pe21-BL).

When grouping the similar identified actors and organisations, four types of PL can be recognised, other than the Leader of the Council, for his dominant role:

1. The Cabinet;
2. The Council;
3. The representatives of higher levels of government, in this case, MPs and the Elected Mayor of the Combined Authority;
4. The current political party that runs the Council, in this case, the Conservative Party.
Comparison

As it was expected, the identified PL (13 in both cities) represented and depended on the context in which they enact their role, and hence are obviously different. However, interesting similarities between the two cities can be observed. Indeed, in both cities, participants identified as leaders the same types of political actors, as Table 6.6 below shows.

Table 6.6 Comparison of types of political leaders identified in the two cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of PL</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant role</td>
<td>Mayor + Deputy Mayor</td>
<td>Leader of the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representatives of higher levels of government</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party with political majority</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other political leaders</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dominant political role is recognised in both contexts as being in the hands of the political figureheads of the cities: the Mayor in Padua and the Leader of the Council in Peterborough. The main difference between the two is that the former is directly elected by citizens, whereas the second is elected by Councillors (see Chapter 5). What is surprising is the dominant political role recognised to the Deputy Mayor of Padua, who has been mentioned almost as many times as the Mayor. Resuming a comment made by one interviewee (Pa33-ML), they represent two souls of the same political coalition, and
hence both have a strong influence. However, these results invite to wonder who is actually running the political show in Padua.

An interesting difference between the two cities concerns the Council. In Padua, it is represented by only one actor, whereas in Peterborough the picture is more variegated: three out of four identified political leaders within the Council represent groups of people, and not a specific individual (i.e. Council, Councillors, Opposition), and the fourth is the former Mayor. Therefore, it seems that the PL in Peterborough is perceived as more shared or dispersed and not linked to specific individuals, whereas in Padua it seems more centralised under a single person.

Finally, it is also important to remark that, whereas in Italy there is only one established political governance model that can be operated, UK’s local governments can decide which local government structure and political governance model adopt (see Chapter 5). Therefore, whereas there are some similarities between the two investigated cities due to the similar governance model (both based on a Cabinet executive model), more differences could be observed between Peterborough and other English cities that, for example, operate on a committee governance model.
6.4.3 Managerial Leadership arena

Resuming the definition used in the conceptual framework and for data collection, managerial leader(ship) exercises the function of public service design, management and delivery.

Padua

Figure 6.6 below and Table 6.7 in the next page illustrate the 14 ML identified in Padua.

Figure 6.6 Managerial leaders of Padua.
Table 6.7 Number of mentions received by each managerial leader of Padua.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City leader</th>
<th>N. of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President of the Chamber of Commerce (CCIAA) of Padua</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renato Rizzuto, Rector of University</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Commerce (CCIAA)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acegas Aps</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luciano Flor, CEO Azienda Ospedaliera</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiera di Padova</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Ragona, President Busitalia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZIP</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top Management Aps Holding</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Tosetto, CEO Interporto &amp; Mayor Staff</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giovanni Zampieri, City manager (Municipality)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at Figure 6.6 and Table 6.7, the first interesting aspect to be highlighted is the almost total absence of the Municipality and its directors or officials among the identified leaders, with the only exception of Giovanni Zampieri, incumbent city manager of the Municipality, who however has been named by only three participants (out of 37). A much more recognised role within the ML arena is played by two organisations and their figureheads: the CCIAA and its president, which have been named respectively by 10 and 18 participants, and the University and its rector, Rosario Rizzuto, which have been named respectively by 12 and 13 participants.
As previously explained (see Section 6.3.2), special attention needs to be given to the president of the CCIAA because the person exercising that role changed during the stage of data collection and this influenced the data collected. In fact, during the first months of data collection, the president of the CCIAA was Fernando Zilio and his leadership was perceived as highly influential for and within the city. However, in July 2018, Antonio Santocono became the new president and some participants commented on this new headship, arguing that it was too early to know which influence and leadership he would have on the city. As one interviewee put it:

«Till 3 months ago, I would have said the President of the Chamber of Commerce, but now, I would say the Prefect. [...] Because the President of the Chamber of Commerce has recently changed. For sure, the former one, Zilio, had a bigger influence than the current one, who has just been appointed and he is still orientating himself. Thus, we still don't know which impact his figure will have on the city. In the end, roles are made by people, therefore the same role with two different persons can have totally different peculiarities» (Pa29-BL).

When grouping similar actors and organisations, five types of ML can be recognised:

1. The Chamber of Commerce (and its figurehead);
2. The University (and its figurehead);
3. The Hospital (and its figurehead);
4. Public corporations (PC), in this case, Fiera, ZIP and Interporto;
5. Public Services Providers (PSP), in this case Acegas, Busitalia and Aps Holding;
In particular, for what concerns the public service providers, an interviewee (Pa26-CL) was reluctant to consider them as leaders because their role is less visible, more operational (managerial in its narrow sense) and strongly dependent on and influenced by the political activity.

**Peterborough**

Figure 6.7 below and Table 6.8 in the next page illustrate the 8 ML identified in Peterborough.

*Figure 6.7 Managerial leaders of Peterborough.*
Table 6.8 Number of mentions received by each managerial leader of Peterborough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City leader</th>
<th>N. of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gillian Beasley, CEO of PCC</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivacity</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers PCC</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Director PCC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz Robin, Director PCC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrian Chapman, Director PCC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors PCC</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly to what happened for political leaders, what stands out is the dominance of one actor within the ML arena, that is the CEO of Peterborough City Council (PCC), Gillian Beasley. She was recognised as a leader by almost all participants (24 out of 29).

As an interviewee commented:

«The person who manages the city, the most powerful one, without doubts, is the Chief Executive. And her name is Gillian Beasley. She is very good […], she doesn’t just manage the council, she manages the community. […] She is a political actor as well, although not elected» (Pe11-PL).

Another interviewee said:

«You may have come across Gillian Beasley, that is the Chief Executive of the City Council, she has been here a long time and I think Gillian is very impressive and I
think a lot of the things that we should take pride of is a testimony of the visionary leadership that comes from the managerial class in the city» (Pe20-BL).

Similarly, another interviewee described her as probably one of the best City Council CEO in the country (Pe24-PL).

Also, a theme that emerged again in the ML discussion is the consequences of the creation of the Combined Authority which led to the sharing of officials’ positions and time between the two cities of Peterborough and Cambridge (Pe26-ML; Pe28-PL). In other words, several directors and officials of the two city councils work now for and in both cities, spending some days in Peterborough and some days in Cambridge, making some participants question whether they can still effectively lead Peterborough while focusing also on Cambridge.

When grouping the similar identified actors and organisations, three types of ML can be recognised, other than the CEO of PCC for her dominant role:

1. City Council, represented by directors and officials;

2. Vivacity, the charity that delivers services related to art, culture, sport and leisure (i.e. a public service provider);

3. The police.
Comparison

In contrast to the findings related to the PL arena (Section 6.4.2), the identified ML of the two investigated cities are very disparate. First, the analysis focused on 14 managerial leaders of Padua and 8 of Peterborough; second, as shown in Table 6.9 below, different types of ML were identified.

Table 6.9 Comparison of types of managerial leaders identified in the two cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of ML</th>
<th>Padua (Italy)</th>
<th>Peterborough (UK)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant role</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce + University</td>
<td>PCC CEO, Gillian Beasley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public corporations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Services Providers (PSP)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ (Vivacity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality / City Council</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though two types of managerial leaders have been identified in both cities (i.e. PSP and Municipality/City Council), the two have a very different influence upon each city. PSP in the Italian case are represented by three organisations having different functions (i.e. transport and multi-utility), whereas in the English case only one organisation was recognised as a city leader, namely Vivacity. Conversely, for what concerns the Municipality/City Council, whereas in Padua it is perceived as having a very
limited leadership role, in Peterborough its influence and importance are undoubted and strongly visible (see Figure 6.7 on page 162).

All other types of managerial leaders identified by participants are considered as such in one city but not in the other. In particular two of them require to be briefly commented: the Chamber of Commerce and the University. In the UK, the former is considered as a business organisation and not a PA and, in fact, participants identified it as a business leader (see the next section). For what concerns the University, Peterborough does not have one (yet – see Chapter 5) and this is considered as a big limitation of the city, especially in comparison to the nearby Cambridge.

6.4.4 Business Leadership arena

Resuming the definition used in the conceptual framework and for data collection, *business leader(ship) exercises the function of private service design, management and delivery aimed to create private value.*

**Padua**

Figure 6.8 and Table 6.10 in the next page illustrate the 12 BL identified in Padua.
Figure 6.8 Business leaders of Padua.

Table 6.10 Number of mentions received by each business leader of Padua.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City leader</th>
<th>N. of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Massimo Finco, President Confindustria</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confindustria</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safilo</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Associations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrizio Bertin, President Ascom</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francesco Cannella, President and owner Ali</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massimo Carraro, Morellato</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANCE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Bonetto, President Calcio Padova</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coonfcooperative</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Solo Sport</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at Figure 6.8 and Table 6.10, it is evident that the BL arena is characterised by a more dispersed and variegated picture than the PL and ML arenas, where no specific actor or organisation stands out as dominant leader. Indeed, the actor who has been mentioned the most is Massimo Finco, the President of Confindustria (trade association), who, however, has been named only nine times (much less than the 32 mentions received by Mayor Sergio Giordani, and half the mentions received by the President of CCIAA).

Even though their perceived level of influence within and for the city could be questionable, especially compared to the level of influence of some PL and ML, two types of BL can be recognised in Padua:

1. trade associations;
2. businesses.

In particular, trade associations play a prominent role. In fact, 23 participants (out of 37) named at least one trade association (or their figurehead) when discussing business leaders. This seems to be due to two main interdependent reasons: first, in Padua, there is a considerable number of successful businesses, from small to very large ones, and therefore participants sometimes found it difficult to name or focus on a few of them and preferred to name trade associations, whose role is (or should be) to represent businesses. Second, given their representative role, trade associations are much more involved in the city’s matters (e.g. transport, limited traffic zones, and so on). As one interviewee put it:
«Here in the city there is an important entrepreneurial fabric, very important, and hence it is difficult to list business leaders. I think that good representation is given by the trade associations of industries [i.e. Confindustria] and by other trade associations» (Pa37-ML).

Another interviewee said:

«Trade associations have an influence. Then, we know there are businesses whose owner have... but leadership is mainly disputed within and among trade associations. And perhaps it is a biased observation, that relevant city leaders are trade associations and trade unions. And, of course, there are businesses that have a history, a tradition, but it is also true that the biggest businesses within the city are the University and the Hospital, [which are public institutions and not private ones].» (Pa26-CL).

**Peterborough**

Figure 6.9 and Table 6.11 in the next page illustrate the 9 BL identified in Peterborough.
Similarly to Padua, the BL’s picture within Peterborough is dispersed and lacks a dominant business actor. The organisation which collected the larger number of
mentions is Opportunity Peterborough, mentioned by 12 participants (8 cited the organisation itself and 4 cited its figurehead, Steve Bowyer CEO). Still, this number of mentions is considerably lower than the number of mentions received by some PL and ML (e.g. 24 mentions received by the Gillian Beasley, and 22 mentions received by the Leader of the Council).

In particular, looking at Figure 6.9 and Table 6.11, three BL can be identified:

1. Opportunity Peterborough and its figurehead;
2. The Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce;

Opportunity Peterborough and the Chamber of Commerce are two organisations which represent the voices of the businesses located in Peterborough. However, whereas the important role played by Opportunity Peterborough for businesses within and outside the city is recognised by almost half of participants (12 out of 29), the influence of the Chamber of Commerce is somewhat disputed, as shown by the low number of mentions and the following comment gave by one participant: « The local Chamber of Commerce and some other similar, perhaps more traditional organisations, have less of an influence» (Pe10-PL). In contrast, as one interviewee commented:

«Opportunity Peterborough, I think, is a good collaborative organisation that pulls together the functions within this group, but they also play a big part in pulling wider businesses into the city» (Pe27-BL).
Also, Opportunity Peterborough replaced the local LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership), as noticed by two participants during the focus group. The comment «Nobody seems to have mentioned the Local Enterprise Partnership» (PeFG6-BL) was indeed echoed by the following one:

«The reality of here is that Opportunity Peterborough has so far been extremely successful […] , it was far more successful than the LEP. And so, why would the local authority continue to fund a LEP or particularly support a LEP when you’ve got an organisation which was delivering what it was needed to be delivered. Now, we can argue about where we are now, that’s a different argument, but until 2 years ago, Opportunity Peterborough was the vehicle that delivered that for our city. And the LEP wasn’t» (PeFG4-PL).

For what concerns businesses, participants sometimes struggled to name specific business organisations who play a leadership role within the city. Some of them (Pe11-PL; Pe22-BL; Pe25-PL; Pe27-BL) argued that there are numerous different BL, others (Pe10-PL; Pe15-BL; Pe17-ML) specified that all businesses within the city are important and influential because they generate employment, opportunities and growth. One interviewee, in contrast, distinguished between the role of big employers and SMEs, commenting:

«There’re obviously business leaders in the city, there’re some very big companies in the city. But they don’t play a leading role in place-based city development. I can tell you, for instance, the name of the Chief Exec of several of those companies but only
because I know them because they live in my village or they are in my social circle, but not because they play any part in the future of the city. So, I think, there is an absence of business leadership in the city. [...] They do play a strong role in terms of CSR, but in terms of this, city leadership network, I think you’re relying more on the small to medium businesses» (Pe21-BL).

Another interviewee also said: «Some people don’t even understand their own importance in the city, apart from employment. [...] I think sometimes they don’t understand their role» (Pe27-BL).

Also, during the focus group, there was a short discussion on the identified business leaders within the city. One participant pointed out:

«Look at the names that have been mentioned under the private sector. Most of those are absent in the leadership discussion in the city. So, the fact that they are mentioned is significant. When is the last time everybody met, apart from Queensgate, Thomas Cook, Perkins, Perkins, ... they’re cited as important leaders in the city, but I don’t see them.» (PeFG7-BL).

In fact, as one participant noticed, businesses seem to be located in Peterborough because of strategic reasons, and they are not interested in being involved in city’s (leadership) matters:

«Businesses rock up here because it is a good place to be based, because they can get cheap office accommodation and cheap housing for the work force, cheaper
than in some other places around, but they don’t sort of invest in the broader sense in the city and in the community» (PeFG6-BL).

Comparison

Table 6.12 below summarises the types of BL identified in the two cities, 12 in Padua and 9 in Peterborough.

Table 6.12 Comparison of types of business leaders identified in the two cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of ML</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant role</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Associations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity Peterborough</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In both cities, the BL arena is dispersed and lacks a dominant leader. The more influential actors received respectively 9 (in Padua) and 10 (in Peterborough) mentions, hence much fewer mentions than some PL and ML. In fact, even though in both cities businesses have been recognised as influential, participants struggled, for several reasons, to identify specific ones who play a city leadership role. Participants were more inclined to recognise as BL the umbrella organisations that represent and are the voices of businesses of the local area, whose identification seems to strongly depend on the local context. In Padua, trade associations play this representative role and are perceived
as hugely influential, in line with the national context where these organisations are largely involved in many policy decision-making. In contrast, in the English city, Opportunity Peterborough exercises this key role instead of the more traditional LEP, due to the greater effectiveness of the former in respect of the latter. However, in other English cities, LEPs could play this central BL role.

Other than this difference due to contextual factors, another important element and potential issue needs to be highlighted: the number of umbrella organisations considered. In Peterborough, the umbrella organisations identified as business leaders are only two and have specific features and functions. In Padua, the trade associations identified as leaders are four, plus the general mention of trade associations, as a whole. Each of these trade associations has specific features and represents a specific group of businesses, with a specific agenda. Therefore, it seems that BL is much more dispersed and complex in the Italian case than in the English one. Also, this might mean that the leadership dynamics and relationships which exist within the group of trade associations might be very different and have a very different impact on the city in respect of the ones between Opportunity Peterborough and the Chamber of Commerce. It is not the aim of this thesis to go deeper into the analysis of specific types of BL, but this could be an interesting emergent theme for future research.
6.4.5  **Civic/Community Leadership arena**

Resuming the definition used in the conceptual framework and for data collection, *civic/community leader(ship)* exercises the function of active citizenship aimed at co-creating public and social value (e.g. associations, volunteering activities, charities,…).

**Padua**

Figure 6.10 below and Table 6.13 in the next page illustrate the 12 CL identified in Padua.

*Figure 6.10 Civic/Community Leaders of Padua.*
Table 6.13 Number of mentions received by each civic/community leader of Padua.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City leader</th>
<th>N. of mentions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fondazione Cariparo</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairman Fondazione Cariparo</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claudio Cipolla, Bishop</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSV (Service Centre for Volunteering)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legambiente (environmental association)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emanuele Alecci, President CSV</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caritas (religious charitable organisation)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diocese</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Città della Speranza (health foundation)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUAMM Medici con l'Africa (health NGO operating in Africa)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cucine Economiche Popolari (services for vulnerable people)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6.10 and Table 6.13 easily remind of the dispersed and variegated picture of the BL arenas described in the previous section, where no specific leader stands out. In fact, the actor who has been mentioned the most, i.e. Fondazione Cariparo, has been named only eleven times (much fewer mentions than the ones received by other actors, such as the Mayor or the Chairman of CCIAA). Even in this case, participants struggled to identify specific CL, emphasising the great variety of key organisations and associations positively influencing the city (e.g. Pa26-CL, Pa27-ML, Pa33-ML) and stating, for example, that «None is more important than the others» (Pa31-PL) and that «There are no key leaders, but a lot of leaders.» (Pa27-ML).
Also, some participants explicitly remarked the crucial role played by these leaders for the day-to-day function of the city (e.g. Pa23-PL, Pa25-ML, Pa27-ML, Pa31-PL). As Pa23-PL put it:

«We have so many charities, non-profit organisations, volunteers’ organisations that if they get tired to deliver services, Padua closes. Strictly speaking. (...) It is impossible to govern without them. (...) They replace the public sector in many ways. »

Still, when grouping together similar actors and organisations, two types of identified CL can be easily distinguished:

1. Third sector organisations;
2. Faith leaders and organisations, in this case all related to the Catholic Church.

In particular, among the first type of CL, two organisations and their figureheads are recognised as key city leaders: Fondazione Cariparo and CSV. For instance, as one interviewee put it: «If Fondazione Cariparo did not exist in Padua, it would be a tragedy.» (Pa36-CL).

The second type of CL encompasses the key representatives of the Catholic Church, first of all, the Bishop and its Diocese. What is striking is that only one-third of participants recognised them as key civic/community leaders, despite the religious character of the city which gave it the appellation of City of the Saint (see Chapter 5).
Peterborough

14 CL were identified in Peterborough, as illustrated in Figure 6.11 below and Table 6.14 in the next page.

Figure 6.11 Civic/community leaders of Peterborough.
Looking at Figure 6.11 and Table 6.14, it can be noticed that also the CL arena of Peterborough is variegated and diversified, and no specific leader stands out. In fact, the most mentioned leaders within this CLA have been recognised as such by only 7 participants out of 29.

Similarly to Padua’s findings, several interviewees recognised the crucial role played by these leaders for the functioning of the city and, especially, the delivery of some key services, but they struggled to name and identify specific leaders. As some interviewees put it:
«You need the voluntary sector to deliver so many things because actually you as a city can't afford to deliver these things, so you need to stimulate and finance the voluntary sector to be out and deliver many services that you can't.» (Pe11-PL)

«It’s a very diverse, very confusing picture. And it's completely normal. But of course, if you ask me if I can name a few, it’s quite difficult. My answer would be “it depends”.» (Pe25-PL)

«Community leaders.... I think you see that at very local level, so neighbourhood level, you can see that kind of leadership manifests. But I am struggling to think of any people who fit that section, [except for] the church.» (Pe20-BL)

In particular, this difficulty in the identification of specific CL emerged also from the types of replies given: most of them are indeed groups of actors or organisations, named in general terms (e.g. faith leaders, VSOs, community groups, ...) and not specific names or titles.

Still, when grouping together similar actors and organisations, four types of identified CL can be distinguished:

1. Third sector organisations;
2. Community groups;
3. Faith leaders and organisations;
4. Parish councils.
Comparison

Table 6.15 below put in comparison the types of identified CL of the two investigated cities, 12 in Padua and 14 in Peterborough.

Table 6.15 Comparison of types of civic/community leaders identified in the two cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of ML</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant role</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>//</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Sector</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish councils</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith leaders and organisations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly to the BL arena (see Section 6.4.4), in both cities the CL arena is dispersed and lacks a dominant leader. In fact, the more named actors received respectively 11 (in Padua) and 7 (in Peterborough) mentions, much fewer mentions than the ones received by some PL and ML. Also, despite the widely recognised important role played within and for the city, especially for the delivery of social services, in both cities participants struggled to name specific CL, emphasising the complexity and variegated nature of this CLA. This diversity particularly emerged from the different types of leaders identified, which represent three very distinct spheres (or souls) of society (Pagani et al., 2020):

- The third/voluntary sector (TS/VS) sphere, which includes all TSOs, VSOs and charities;
- The faith sphere, which includes all faith leaders and organisations;
- The community sphere, which includes community groups and associations.
However, whereas the first two spheres and leaders can be observed in both cities, the latter is recognised only in Peterborough, likely because of the very ethnically diverse character of the city (see Chapter 5).

For what concerns the first two spheres, two interesting elements emerge from the comparison of the two cities—as also discussed in the co-authored paper (Pagani et al., 2020). First, in both cities, a central actor within the TS/VS sphere is the umbrella organisation for VSOs, namely CSV in Padua and PCVS in Peterborough. Second, the identified faith leaders clearly represent the different cultural and historical context of the two cities: whereas in Padua the Catholic Church is predominant, in Peterborough faith leadership is seen in more open terms, without promoting a specific religious or spiritual belief but acknowledging the important role of different faiths within the city (in fact, participants mainly named faith leaders in general).

6.5 Discussion

The findings described in the previous section provide important insights in response to sRQ1 and the identification of city leaders from a PBL perspective.

First, as also discussed in a recently published work (Pagani et al., 2020) our findings are consistent with the literature and confirm the strong association between leadership and place (Beer et al., 2019; Budd et al., 2017; Hambleton & Howard, 2013; Sotarauta et al., 2017) and, more broadly, between leadership and context (Ferlie & Ongaro, 2015; Osborn et al., 2002; Osborne et al., 2016; Shamir, 2012). In fact, in both cities, the
identification of city leaders is context-dependent: it is influenced by the context and represents the context. This is detectable in all four CLA.

In particular, two main differences, related to the contextual elements of the cities, emerge from the findings. The first difference relates to where ML is perceived to be exercised: whereas in Padua it is identified outside of the Municipality, more specifically in the Chamber of Commerce and in the University, in Peterborough, it predominantly lies within the City Hall and, more specifically, in the hands of the CEO of the City Council. It is therefore possible that the open debate on whether public managers and bureaucrats are (or can be) also (city) leaders (i.e. the leadership-management debate) is justified because these findings both support and contrast the two sides of such debate (e.g. Grint, 2002, 2010; Jackson & Parry, 2018; Zaleznik, 2004). In particular, the different perceived leadership role of the Municipality/City Hall is likely to be critical given its central role in local governance and public service design and delivery.

The second difference is concerned with community leadership, in its narrow sense. In fact, only Peterborough’s participants recognised community leaders and groups as city leaders, whereas Padua’s participants did not mention them. This is likely to be due to the very ethnically character of the investigated English city, which has welcomed people from other countries for decades. Still, this difference between the two city questions the correctness and cross-site use of ‘community leadership’ to describe one of the CLA (see Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Pagani et al., 2020).

However, what is surprising is that, despite the differences between the two cities due to contextual factors, some interesting similar patterns also emerged from the findings.
First, the different way in which city leadership from local government (i.e. PL and ML) and the one from society (i.e. BL and CL) are perceived in both cities. The city leaders from the former sphere were clearly identified by participants and some dominant leaders were easily distinguished (e.g. the Mayor and the Chamber of commerce in Padua, the Leader of the Council and the PCC CEO in Peterborough). In contrast, participants struggled to identify city leaders from society, providing a more fragmented and dispersed picture of the BL and CL arenas.

Moreover, as mentioned in the previous sections, similar types of identified city leaders can be recognised in three CLA. In fact, in both cities:

- the PL arena is dominated by the political figurehead of the local government, supported by the leadership role of the cabinet and, to some extent, of the council. Also, actors that have a political role in higher levels of government have been recognised as city leaders;
- the BL arena is characterised by two types of city leaders, namely businesses and representative organisations;
- the CL arena encompasses different spheres of society, especially civil society and faith leaders and organisations.

Finally, as regards the open question on the most appropriate label for the CL arena (see Chapter 3), the concept of civic leadership (instead of community leadership) is recommended because, in light of the findings, city leaders in this arena can be considered as ‘representatives of civil society and as civic leaders embedded in a given place’ (Pagani et al., 2020, p. 13). In fact, as explained in the paper:
Civil society is indeed the broadest term in use and encompasses all three spheres that emerged from the analysis, namely the TS/VS, the community and the faith spheres (Howieson and Hodges, 2014; NCVO, 2018). Also, it describes a way of acting, recalling the US’s conceptualisation of civic leadership as a leadership exercised by citizens and followers (or traditional non-leaders) through civic engagement, responsibility and virtue to make their voice heard in a given place (Diamond, 1994; Reed, 1996; Edwards, 2005; Jenei and Kuti, 2008). The use of the term ‘civic leadership’, rather than other terms, might also further open up discussions about the dynamics of local governance, enabling the involvement (or demand for involvement) of a larger audience of key players within civil society. (Pagani et al., 2020, p. 13).
6.6 Chapter summary

This chapter aimed at providing an answer to sRQ1, which is a key yet often underestimated question: who are the city leaders (from a PBL perspective)?

The chapter started by further reviewing the literature on this topic, showing that the idea of a plurality of formal and informal actors who influence, and hence lead, the city has a long history. Also, it was pointed out that different approaches to leaders’ identification exist, further challenging the achievement of an agreement on the topic. Then, the methodology was described in more details, focusing on the steps followed to analyse and visualise data. A qualitative approach to SNA was indeed adopted to identify and map the city leaders of the investigated cities. Finally, findings were presented and discussed. In particular, it was observed that despite some differences in the identification of city leaders, mainly due to contextual factors, interesting similar patterns emerged from the comparison of the two cities. As regards the differences, a compelling result is the divergent perception of where ML is exercised, namely outside the Municipality in Padua but within the City Hall in Peterborough. As regards the similarities, further attention should be given to the leadership from society, that is the BL and CL arenas: both were perceived as influencing the city, but in a fragmented and dispersed way that resulted in the recognition of representative (or umbrella) organisations as key actors.
7 Relationships among city leaders

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I dealt with the identification of the city leaders of the two investigated cities, with the aim of exploring the first element of the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis and, accordingly, responding to sRQ1. Now, I turn to the second element of the conceptual framework, namely the set of relationships that might exist among city leaders and that might foster the creation of an urban resilient system (see Chapter 3 and Figure 3.3 reproduced below from page 34). More specifically, I attempt to address sRQ2 (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3): which relationships exist among city leaders?

Reproduction of Figure 3.3 The second element of the conceptual framework: the investigated relationships within the CLN. First placed on page 34.
As explained in Chapter 3, several relationships are investigated rather than a single one because of multiplexity, namely the acknowledgement that multiple relationships co-occur among the same actors (Shipilov et al., 2014; White et al., 2016). Still, given the great variety of relationships that might exist among city leaders and that might be studied (e.g. Borgatti et al., 2013), the focus of the thesis was put on two types:

1. Formal/informal relationships, that is the level of formality of such relationships, following Isett et al. (2011)'s call for further developing research on informal networks and relationships given their key role in the success of networks (especially as enablers of information sharing, problem solving and capacity building – see Isett et al., 2011);

2. Relationships which might be useful to achieve urban resilience.

This chapter follows the same structure of the previous one. First, the literature is briefly reprised to emphasise on the important role of relationships, especially trust and communication. Second, the methodology is reprised to better explain the data collection, analysis and visualisation procedures conducted to investigate the relationships occurring among city leaders. Finally, the findings are presented and discussed, whereas conclusions are drawn at the end of this thesis (Chapter 10), after having combined the results of the three themed chapters in Chapter 9.
7.2 Literature review (reprise)

The essential role of relationships in leadership and network studies is undisputed: leadership and networks are relational in nature. In fact, neither the two would exist without the relationships that characterise them: the relationships (or ties or edges) among network actors, for the latter, the leadership-followership relationship for the former (e.g. Kellerman, 2012; Riggio et al., 2008). Furthermore, in recent years, the relational character of leadership has been further stressed due to two contemporary and related phenomena. On the one hand, as also discussed in Chapter 6, there has been a growing interest in collective and post-heroic models of leadership which focus on the interactive and shared processes of leadership (e.g. Fletcher, 2004; Ospina et al., 2020a; Pearce et al., 2008). On the other hand, public leaders have been increasingly asked to co-create and co-produce policies, public services, public value with other actors within the governance context (Nabatchi et al., 2017; Osborne et al., 2016; Van der Wal, 2017; Voorberg et al., 2015). Accordingly, public leadership and PA studies on relationships have rapidly boosted, also supported by the growing application of network approaches and methodologies in the discipline (e.g. Cristofoli et al., 2020; Currie et al., 2011; Isett et al., 2011; Kapucu et al., 2017). Yet, these studies tend to focus on established formal networks or on relationships between two categories of leaders or actors, for example between mayors and councillors (e.g. Denters, 2006), between political leaders and citizens (e.g. Haus & Sweeting, 2006), between political leaders and public managers (e.g. Alba & Navarro, 2006; Navarro et al., 2018).

Without delving into the immense literature on relationships, which could result in a potentially endless and pointless work, especially due to the subjective and mutable
character of relationships (which highly depend on the actors between whom the relationships exist), the purpose of the following paragraphs is to briefly explain why the relationships of trust and good communication have been selected to represent respectively the qualities of adaptability and robustness\textsuperscript{13} of urban resilient systems.

### 7.2.1 Trust for the adaptive (or reflective) quality

Far from arguing that the presence or lack of trust directly affect the adaptive capability of a network or system, since no studies were found demonstrating this correlation and it’s not the purpose of this project to do so, two reasons drove the selection of trust to represent the adaptive (or reflective) quality of an urban system. First, the definition provided in Chapter 3 (see Table 3.1 on page 36) for this quality can easily describe trust as well: the capability of using ‘past experience to inform future decisions and modify standards and behaviours accordingly’ (100 Resilient Cities, n.d.-b). Even trust is indeed based ‘on reputation and past interaction experience’ (Provan & Kenis, 2007, p. 240) and, in terms of business behaviour, ‘on a perception of the probability that other agents will behave in a way that is expected’ (Welter & Smallbone, 2006, p. 465 citing Gambetta, 1988). Second, both adaptive capabilities and trust are fundamental elements in their respective areas of studies and cannot be neglected. An

\textsuperscript{13} Robustness is not here intended in SNA’s terms, namely as one of the measures to analyse social networks. In fact, in SNA, robustness measures the difficulty in disconnecting the network by removing nodes or ties (Borgatti et al., 2013). As explained by Boldi, Rosa & Vigna (2011, p. 2), ‘if removing few nodes has no noticeable impact, then the network structure is clearly robust in a very strong sense. On the other hand, a node-removal strategy that quickly affects the distribution of distances probably reflects an importance order of the nodes’.
urban resilient system cannot be considered as such without its adaptive capabilities (see Chapter 8); similarly, trust is a key concept in organisational, business and management studies (and many other disciplines) and it is considered the *glue of society* (Botsman, 2017; Castelfranchi & Falcone, 2010) and ‘at the heart of all great leadership’ (Martin, 1998, p. 42): it strongly influences intra- and inter-organisational relationships and organisational performance (Gordon & Gilley, 2012; Kramer & Cook, 2004; Lewicki et al., 1998) as well as citizens’ relationships with public and political leaders and institutions as well as peers (e.g. Botsman, 2017; Kettl, 2019). Also, trust seems to be a key factor for network effectiveness (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2007), successful network governance (Provan & Kenis, 2007), response to crisis (Longstaff & Yang, 2008; I. E. Sutherland, 2017) and social capital (e.g. R. D. Putnam et al., 1993). Yet, trust is not completely positive: even though a certain level of trust positively influence the ability to achieve organisational or network outcomes and deal with wicked problems, a high level of trust seems to actually reduce levels of cooperation and preparedness for crisis (Edelenbos & Klijn, 2006; Longstaff & Yang, 2008), potentially due to excessive confidence among other actors and, hence, less monitoring of others’ actions and motives (I. E. Sutherland, 2017).

### 7.2.2 Good communication for the robust quality

In Chapter 3 (see Table 3.1 on page 36) the robust quality of an urban resilient system was described as the capability of being ‘well-conceived, constructed and managed and make provision to ensure failure is predictable, safe, and not disproportionate to the cause’ (100 Resilient Cities, n.d.-b). Good communication among city leaders (or key actors) can be considered the key element to achieve this in a complex system.
Even though it is a very generic and ubiquitous term which has been used in a variety of ways in organisational studies to mean, for example, *information*, *channel* and *media* (L. L. Putnam et al., 1999), its important role for effective leadership and collaborations seems undisputed (Friedrich et al., 2016; Jackson & Parry, 2018; Morrison, 2002). For instance, Friedrich et al. (2016) described it as *essential to* and *a prerequisite* for collective leadership. Similarly, Jackson & Parry (2018, p. 57) pointed out that ‘it’s hard to imagine any other way that leadership might be created other than through verbal and non-verbal communication’. Also, communication is considered a decisive factor to successfully respond to crisis and disasters (Longstaff & Yang, 2008; Magsino, 2009; Seeger et al., 1998; Sellnow & Seeger, 2013). Yet, like trust, communication is not always positive: the quality of the communication is crucial, not only in terms of the content of the communication but also in the way in which communication happens (Bristow & Healy, 2014b). Good communication, intended here as the sharing of meaningful information in a trustworthy way and through the appropriate channels, is indeed one of the elements that might produce *collaborative advantage* rather than *inertia*, and hence lead to the achievement of common goals rather than to frustration and impasse (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Accordingly, good communication can successfully represent the robust quality of urban resilient systems since it strongly contributes to the creation of the right network environment (formal and/or informal) able to reduce the risks to fail and succumb to disasters and wicked problems.
7.3 Methodology

As anticipated in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, a specific set of relationships was under investigation. This means that data and information collected concerned a precise list of relationships potentially occurring among city leaders. This list was personally selected prior to fieldwork and did not result from participants’ preferences or the analysis of qualitative material collected. Also, data about relationships were collected using two Likert-type scales, as I describe in the next section. The choice of focusing on a close list of relationships in a structured way instead of openly ask participants about their relationships with other city leaders was due to one main reason: the aim of collecting data about all the types of investigated relationships in an easy and structured way and short time frame. In fact, even though open questions could have provided deeper insights on relationships among city leaders, they would have required:

a) more time to be answered to than close and scale-based questions, and

b) an indefinite number of participants to reach saturation of data, due to the great variety of replies that participants could provide according to their feelings, perceptions, opinions...

As previously discussed, given the types of participants involved in the project, both these elements (length of online questionnaire/interviews and number of participants) were critical in the research design and could not be taken lightly. Therefore, the data collection and analysis processes were conceived on the basis of such concerns and in order to facilitate the data comparison between the two investigated cities.
In particular, an important choice needs to be emphasised here: the focus of the analysis. In contrast to traditional SNA studies, participants were not asked to rate and discuss one-to-one relationships between them and specific city leaders (e.g. all city leaders identified in the previous stage of data collection—see Chapter 6), but the relationships they generally have with categories of city leaders, intended here as all potential leaders within each CLA (i.e. PL, ML, BL and CL). Alike every methodological strategy, this one has both strengths and weaknesses, as shown in Table 7.1 below. However, it was the most appropriate for the aim of this thesis.

Table 7.1 Advantages and disadvantages of the investigation of relationships among categories of city leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Faster process</td>
<td>• Less specific, given the focus on the tendency of relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Less demanding to participants (in terms of time and number of items asked)</td>
<td>• Not the same relationships among different actors within the same CLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Better comparison</td>
<td>• Struggle to reply by some participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overcome potential differences in one-to-one relationships due to changes in leadership positions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As previously explained (Chapter 3), this thesis is based on the idea that relationships among city leaders might exist independently of the total consciousness or willingness of city leaders. Also, relationships among city leaders might be of two main types: personal (or intimate) and institutional. Whereas the former put the focus on the relationships between city leaders at the individual or personal level, the latter put it on city leaders at the positional or institutional level. In other words, the former relationships exist
between persons, independently of the (leadership) role or position held, whereas the latter exist between the two (leadership) roles or positions, partially independently of the persons. This means that, for example, two city leaders might relate because they are friends (personal level) and/or because they are co-producing a service (institutional level) and, hence, they are expected to relate. The two types of relationships might overlap as well as be completely different. Still, in both cases, one-to-one relationships might be very exclusive and powerfully dependent on the specific actors between which such relations are in place, making the comparison of data about such relationships questionable.

Considering also that leaders change over time and that different actors might have different perceptions on who a city leader is (as discussed in the previous chapter), the focus on relationships between categories of city leaders should have fostered participants to reply thinking about their tendency of behaviour towards a category of city leaders, independently of the persons currently holding such leadership positions or perceived as exercising city leadership roles. Therefore, the personal element of the relationships should have been removed, at least partially, from the account with the generation of, on the one hand, less specific data but, on the other one, more comparable and useful ones, in line with the aim of this thesis.

### 7.3.1 Data collection

To investigate the relationships among categories of city leaders, the following procedure was conducted for both online questionnaires and interviews and for each category of city leaders.
First, it was necessary to understand whether participants had direct relationships with the considered category of city leaders and, if yes, the level of formality-informality of such relationships. Figure 7.1 below shows how the question was addressed to participants.

**Figure 7.1 First question about relationships among categories of city leaders.**

Now, think about the relationships that You have with these political leaders.

**How would you define these relationships?**

- A formal relationship is a relationship that is explicitly constituted and established to achieve a common goal and that is defined by, for example, a contract or a joint agreement. Formal relationships have a designed and agreed structure.
- An informal relationship is a relationship that has loose or no structure such as, for example, friendship.

- Totally formal
- More formal than informal
- More informal than formal
- Totally informal
- I have no direct relationships with political leaders
- Other (please, specify)

Note: this is an extract from the online questionnaire (created with Qualtrics), which can be fully read in Appendix 1.

Depending on the reply given to the above questions, participants were asked different following questions. When participants replied that no direct relationships exist with the considered category of city leaders (i.e. choice n. 6), they were asked to explain the reason of such inexistence of relationships, using an open-ended question.

When participants replied one of the other choices and hence rate the level of formality-informality of the relationships, they were asked to rate also the relationships for urban
resilience using a 7-point Likert-type frequency scale (Vagias, 2006). The explanation of the frequency scale was provided to participants in both the online questionnaire and interviews (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

Figure 7.2 in the next page shows the items asked participants and the 7-point frequency scale employed. To be noted that interviewees had the possibility to comment on their replies and that this opportunity was not given to participants in the online questionnaire because of the main objective of its design, namely being short and handy.
**Figure 7.2** Items and 7-point Likert-type scale used to investigate the frequency of occurrence of relationships for urban resilience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking about the present time, how often do the following statements represent the relationships You have with political leaders?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you are answering on behalf of your organization, consider that “I” refers to “My organization”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scale ranges from “Never” to “Every time”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are what I consider good communication between us.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t trust them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share information with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share resources with them (financial, human, capital).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t take decisions with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I collaborate with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I participate in their activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I help them to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I adjust my behaviour in base of their needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: this is an extract from the online questionnaire (created with Qualtrics), which can be fully read in Appendix 1.*
7.3.2 Data analysis

Similarly to the procedure followed in the previous chapter, a qualitative approach to SNA (Hollstein, 2014) was employed to explore and visualise data.

I began the analysis process by preparing the datasets (one for Padua and one for Peterborough) for the analysis. More specifically, I created new MS Excel files where I incorporated, in a meaningful order, all data relevant to address sRQ2. In particular, the new datasets included the following details:

- **Ref (column A)**: the reference number of the participants rating the relationships;
- **Source (column B)**: the CLA of the participants, used to aggregate participants and related replies in order to conduct the analysis at the category level;
- **Target (column C)**: the CLA of the city leaders to which the analysed relationships refers to;
- **FvI (column D)**: data about the level of formality-informality of the relationships;
- **Other (column E)**: participants’ description of the relationships when selecting the choice “Other” in the first question about relationships;
- **Relationships for urban resilience (column from F to P)**: data about all the relationships investigated using the frequency scale. Three elements need to be noted:
  1. Columns H (trust) and L (shared decision making) list the reversed data of the related columns G and K. In fact, the questionnaire’s items about trust and shared decision making were collected in their negative forms to reduce the acquiescence response bias. They were reversed in their positive forms to facilitate the discussion and dissemination of findings.
2. When participants replied that no direct relationship existed with a category of city leaders, a zero was put to represent the lack of such relationships and fill in the blank space automatically created by Qualtrics.

3. Despite my insistence, some interviewees did not reply using the frequency scale provided. They preferred to give examples, to simply ‘say yes/no’ without discussing their reply, and so on. Such replies were coded and transformed into one of the 7-points of the frequency scale using the strategies listed in Table 7.2 below.

- Why not (column Q): participants’ comments on the reason(s) why the relationships with a category of city leaders were not occurring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Used when</th>
<th>Considered as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S0</td>
<td>The reply needed to be reversed to make it consistent with the whole dataset.</td>
<td>Opposite value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Interviewees answered with a general ‘yes’ or ‘yeah’.</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Interviewees answered in a way that was not possible to give a positive or negative connotation to their reply.</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>Interviewees answered with ‘no’ or ‘not applicable’ or, for example, ‘I don’t have resources’.</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>For different reasons, it was not possible to ask about a relationship.</td>
<td>Based on the overall conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>Participants managed to not reply in the online questionnaire (see S3).</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At this point, using MS Excel’s feature of pivot tables, data were aggregated to highlight and focus on the relationships among categories of city leaders.

More specifically, the level of formality-informality was analysed using the score interpretation shown in Table 7.3 below. The related pivot table was created to show the number of participants who selected every potential choice in order to identify similar patterns of replies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Totally formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>More formal than informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>More informal than formal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Totally informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No direct relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Both formal and informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. It depends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast, to analyse and discuss the frequency of occurrence of the relationships for urban resilience, the arithmetic mean (or average) was calculated using MS Excel’s pivot tables. Two reasons explain the use of this value:

1. Gephi, the SNA software, suggests two merging strategies for parallel relationships (i.e. the different relationships that go from the same source to the same target): sum or average.
2. The average (or mean) score is a basic calculation that, despite its weaknesses, is easily understandable, useful and effective.

Figure 7.3 below provides an example of MS Excel’s pivot table created for the analysis, whereas Table 7.4 in the next page summarises the score interpretation of the average frequency of the relationships for urban resilience.

Finally, data were examined considering also the qualitative material collected during interviews and focus groups.

*Figure 7.3 Example of MS Excel’s pivot table used for the analysis of the Trust relationship in Padua.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average of TRUST</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>BL</td>
<td>CL</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Row Labels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ML</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>BL</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>CL</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7.4 Score interpretation of the frequency of relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No direct relationships</td>
<td>NDR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 – 1.3</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 – 1.6</td>
<td>Between Never and Rarely</td>
<td>N/R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 – 2.3</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 – 2.6</td>
<td>Between Rarely and Occasionally</td>
<td>R/O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 – 3.3</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 – 3.6</td>
<td>Between Occasionally and Sometimes</td>
<td>O/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 – 4.3</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 – 4.6</td>
<td>Between Sometimes and Frequently</td>
<td>S/F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 – 5.3</td>
<td>Frequently</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 – 5.6</td>
<td>Between Frequently and Usually</td>
<td>F/U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7 – 6.3</td>
<td>Usually</td>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 – 6.6</td>
<td>Between Usually and Every time</td>
<td>U/ET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7 – 7</td>
<td>Every time</td>
<td>ET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3.3 Data visualisation

In line with the aim and the methodology of this chapter, the primary purpose of the network visualisation was to represent the relationships that exist among the four categories of city leaders. However, considering the various relationships under examination, to facilitate its readability and analysis, a network representation for each analysed relationship was created, instead of a single representation illustrating all relationships together.

The full step-by-step procedure followed to construct the network representations can be seen in Appendix 5. In particular, each network representation consists of:
• The four nodes representing the four categories of city leaders (i.e. the four CLA).

Each node was located and coloured following the same logic used in the previous chapter. Also, it was labelled with the initials of the CLA (e.g. PL) and, in brackets, the number of respondents representing each CLA.

• The relationships among all categories of city leaders, including the ones within the same category (e.g. from PL to PL). Three graphical elements denote these represented relationships:

1. Colour: each relationship was coloured on the basis of the source of such relationship, that is the category of leaders that rated such relationship. Therefore, for example, all relationships rated by PL were coloured in red.

2. Weight: each relationship was weighted on the basis of the average frequency of occurrence of such relationship. More specifically, the thinner the relationships, the less frequently they occurred, and vice versa.

3. Label: each relationship was labelled to facilitate their examination, providing both the abbreviation of the score interpretation (see Table 7.4 on page 204) and the numerical value of the average frequency of occurrence.

Also, tables summarising the average values of each relationship were created and, to further facilitate the analysis and comparison of data, cells were coloured and values’ font was modified as illustrated in Table 7.5 in the next page.
Table 7.5 Meaning of cells colour and values’ font in relationships’ tables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour/Font</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light green cell</td>
<td>Value is higher than “sometimes” (&gt; 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light red cell</td>
<td>Value is lower than “sometimes” (&lt; 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark green cell</td>
<td>Frequent relationships in both cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark red cell</td>
<td>Infrequent relationships in both cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow cell</td>
<td>Opposite values in the two cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value in bold</td>
<td>Mutual relationships (frequent or infrequent in both directions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value underlined</td>
<td>Opposite relationships (frequent-infrequent)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3.4 Focus groups

During the focus groups, two main activities were organised to discuss preliminary findings and expand the data collected on relationships among city leaders. First, participants were divided into two groups and, with other members, they were invited to:

1. Order the nine relationships under investigation from the most important one to the less important one.
2. Decide (as a group) whether there was a missing relationship in the list, namely a relationship that they considered crucial but that was not taken into consideration during the project.

Each group was then invited to summarise to the other group its thoughts and choices on relationships.

Second, the graphical representations of the relationships among city leaders were shared with participants to discuss them openly.
The qualitative material emerged from these initiatives was directly integrated with the data and material collected during the online questionnaires and interviews, and it was used to improve the graphical representations and the formulation of findings.

7.4 Findings

Three sets of findings are reported here. The first section (7.4.1) focuses on the perceived level of formality/informality of the relationships among leaders, and hence whether city leaders develop more formal or informal relationships with each other. The second section (7.4.2) focuses on the relationships that have been identified as important to build a resilient city and community. The third section (7.4.3) presents some additional findings about the relationships among different categories of city leaders. Whereas the findings of the first two sections result from the combination of all material collected during the research project (see Chapter 4 and Section 7.3), the ones presented in the third section result from the qualitative material collected during interviews and focus groups, and they provide a useful lens to further develop the discussion around the relationships among categories of city leaders.

7.4.1 Level of formality-informality

In both investigated cities, no significant differences were found between the level of formality and informality of the relationships among city leaders. With this, I mean that a range of responses was elicited, embracing the whole scale employed, and no specific or relevant pattern could be observed. In some cases, around one-third of participants in
both cities, replied in the same way, however, participants belonged to different CLA and therefore, once replies were disaggregated representing relationships between specific types of leaders (e.g. between PL and ML), no remarkable differences were observed. Let’s make an example. In Padua, 11 participants (out of 37) described the relationships they have with PL as ‘more informal than formal’. However, these 11 participants belonged to different CLA. Therefore, these findings actually represent the relationships that:

- Seven PL involved in the study (out of 15 involved in total) have with other PL;
- One BL (out of 2 involved in total) has with PL;
- Three CL (out of 12 involved in total) have with PL.

Even if at first sights a general yet weak tendency of creating more informal relationships with political leaders can be observed, given the focus of this thesis on the relationships created among specific categories of city leaders, these findings do not show noticeable similarities or differences among participants’ replies that encourage any valuable interpretation.

This difficulty in inferring if relationships among certain categories of city leaders are more formal or informal was also confirmed by the qualitative material collected. Some participants (Pa7-PL, Pa12-PL, Pa18-PL, Pa26-CL, Peg-CL, Pe26-ML) emphasised the large variety of relationships they might have with different city leaders, relationships that also change considerably depending on the leader they are relating with. For example, Pe26-ML said, referring to relationships with ML:
«It varies. So, when the relationship is within the council, they are both informal and formal relationships. With the police and health systems, it's probably more formal as there is not a huge number of opportunities to build the informal relationships, because we are all so busy». (Pe26-ML)

Also, some interviewees, especially in Peterborough (Pa4-PL, Pe15-BL, Pe17-ML, Pe19-CL) remarked the need to overcome this dichotomy of formal and informal, as both types of relationships are crucial to make relationships work. For example, as Pe17-ML put it when referring to the relationships with PL,

«There is a formal relationship, but there is also the informal relationship that we have because without an informal relationship we wouldn't get anything done, to be quite honest. It would be much harder. So, day-to-day contact, through our informal relationships with them, is very important. As important to them, I would add. But, of course, we also do have the more formal structure in place, which any legally binding relationship requires». (Pe17-ML).

Other interviewees, in contrast, suggested to build and develop different relationships: one focused on the result of the relationships, not their formality (Pa24-PL); another on «the outcome and the correct path [of the relationships]», without wasting time (Pa25-ML); another on «mutually respectful» relationships (Pe12-ML); others on «substantial relationships» (Pa32-CL and Pa37-ML).
7.4.2 The relationships for urban resilience

As previously explained (in Chapter 3), data about nine different relationships were collected. However, given the aim of this thesis to focus on participants’ perspectives, the analysis took into consideration only the ones that interviewees and focus group participants regarded as more relevant to foster urban resilience. Table 7.6 below summarises the process for the identification of these relationships: for both cities, the ones that have been identified by interviewees and participants in the focus group as more relevant were listed (respectively in row 2 and 3), and then the chosen relationships were combined, first within cities (row 4) and then across them (row 5).

Table 7.6 Process summary for the identification of relationships to be analysed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Trust</td>
<td>1. Good communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collaboration</td>
<td>2. Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Good communication / Sharing of information</td>
<td>3. Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sharing of information / Good Communication</td>
<td>1. Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collaboration</td>
<td>2. Good communication / Sharing of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Participation</td>
<td>3. Shared Decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Trust</td>
<td>4. Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination (I+FG)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sharing of information/Good communication</td>
<td>1. Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Trust</td>
<td>2. Sharing of information/Good communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Collaboration</td>
<td>3. Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Participation</td>
<td>4. Shared decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sharing of information/Good communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Shared decision making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 7.6 above shows, in both cities *sharing of information/good communication* and *trust* were considered as key relationships. For example, Pe21-BL described them as the basis of and starting point for the development of all other relationships:

«I think that the most important of those is around trust and communication. I think the rest then flows from that. If you have trust and communication, then you can deliver a lot more of these things. If you don't have those things, if you don't have trust then you're not gonna share information and if you don't share information you won't share decisions and you won't collaborate. That's massively important. And trust comes through good communication, I think. I think those are the two most important things» (Pe21-BL).

Similarly, Pa36-CL emphasised the central role of communication among city leaders: «Of course we have to start from communication, from sharing of information, because if there is not that, then we are unable to have collaboration, participation and trust».

However, whereas in Padua, participants suggested concentrating also on collaboration and participation, in Peterborough the two other selected relationships were flexibility and shared decision-making. Considering the explorative and comparative nature of this study, and to focus not only on the similarities among the two cities but also on their differences, the analysis was conducted on all these six relationships: *good communication/sharing of information, trust, participation, collaboration, flexibility and shared decision-making*. 
Before proceeding to their examination, three elements require attention. First, the relationships *sharing of information* and *good communication* were analysed jointly under the new label of “*effective communication*”. This was due to participants’ perception, during the interviews and the focus groups, that these two relationships represented two faces of the same coin and one cannot (or should not) be considered without the other (e.g. Pa29-BL; Pa36-CL; Pe15-BL).

Second, even though they are not analysed here, it is necessary to point out that also the two neglected relationships (i.e. *sharing of resources* and *help/support*) are valuable for the creation of resilient cities. One possibility is that they were not considered as priority relationships because of two attitudes, remarked by a couple of participants. First, due to the financial issues which characterise both contexts, resources are always looked for and attempted to be gained, but once a specific actor or organisation get them, they keep them tight and tend to not share them (e.g. Pa36-CL). Second, even if participants seemed to be willing to help and support others, some of them considered other city leaders as totally capable of solving their own problems, without the need to ask for external help (e.g. Pa25-ML; Pe28-PL). It is not the aim of this thesis to further develop these two emerged themes, but they may be interesting issues for future research.

Finally, for what concerns Padua, all relationships from BL to other leaders were shown but were not considered for the analysis and discussion given the extremely poor involvement of these types of leaders, which led to insignificant and unrepresentative data (only two BL were involved, as discussed in Chapter 4). These relationships were marked with an asterisk (*) in the tables that summarise data.
7.4.2.1 **Effective communication**

*How often there are what you consider good communication with other city leaders?*

*How often do you share information with other city leaders?*

Table 7.7 below and Figure 7.4 in the next page illustrate and compare the perceived level of this relationship among city leaders, rated using the frequency scale introduced in Section 7.3.

**Table 7.7 Average values of the frequency of effective communication among city leaders.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Communication</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL-PL</td>
<td>F (5.0)</td>
<td>F (5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-ML</td>
<td>O (3.1)</td>
<td>F (5.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-BL</td>
<td>R/O (2.5)</td>
<td>R (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-CL</td>
<td>F (5.1)</td>
<td>S (4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-PL</td>
<td>F (5.3)</td>
<td>U (6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>O (3.1)</td>
<td>U (5.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-BL</td>
<td>R (2.1)</td>
<td>O (2.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>R/O (2.6)</td>
<td>F (5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-PL</td>
<td>*S (4.0)</td>
<td>S (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-ML</td>
<td>*F (4.8)</td>
<td>O/S (3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-BL</td>
<td>*F/U (5.5)</td>
<td>S (4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-CL</td>
<td>*NDR</td>
<td>S (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-PL</td>
<td>S (4.3)</td>
<td>S (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-ML</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
<td>F (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-BL</td>
<td>R/O (2.4)</td>
<td>O (2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-CL</td>
<td>S (4.2)</td>
<td>S/F (4.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.4 Network visualisation of the frequency of effective communication among city leaders.
Looking at Table 7.7 and Figure 7.4 above, some interesting results can be observed.

First, communication was perceived as effective more in Peterborough than in Padua. In fact, in Peterborough, several city leaders perceived the relationship with other city leaders as frequent. In particular, it is mutually perceived as such (i.e. perceived high/frequent in both directions, by both categories of city leaders) between PL and ML, and between ML and CL (see values in bold in the table). Second, in both cities, the relationship of *effective communication* with BL was perceived as infrequent by the other three categories of city leaders. Also, even though BL rated neutrally the relationship they have with other city leaders (i.e. sometimes), their comments revealed a disappointment on this theme. For example, in Padua, one interviewee said:

«At this moment, the right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing. Perhaps this is a stupid thing, but there is a lack of the mean or of the willingness, I don’t know, but we really can’t... Sometimes we get to know things [like this]. Information that we should have known in an organized way, promptly, and so on... we get to know...» (Pa29-BL).

Similarly, two interviewees in Peterborough commented:

«I think nowadays for effective leadership you've got to have good communication slash sharing of information. They’re kind of the same thing in a way. You've got to have that and you've got to understand what is going on. And I find, even though I am a communication businessman, I often know less of what's happening in the city than I do of many other cities. I think that there is an inefficiency there, in the sharing of information» (Pe20-BL).
«I would say in this city at the moment we don't have the communication between these groups, it's not as good as it should be, which means that trust gets eroded and therefore these things don't happen as much as they should. That's not to say that they don't happen, it's to say that they could happen more frequently and probably to a greater depth if there was better communication that leads to more trust and more trust that leads to better communication and then you create a virtuous circle. So, that would be my take on that» (Pe21-BL).

Third, in Padua, it is surprising the different perception of effective communication of PL and ML when rating the relationship they have with each other. In fact, whereas the former perceived as rather ineffective the communication they have with the latter, the latter has an opposite view about it (see underlined values in the table). This discrepancy in communication was also remarked by an interviewee in Peterborough when discussing the relationships between PL and CL, who commented:

«I don't think that the voluntary sector is appreciated for what it does. And I just don't think that there is a good understanding cause when you say communication is about really understanding, is there? And I don't think there is a good understanding between the voluntary sector and the political leaders» (Pe11-PL).
7.4.2.2 Trust

How often do you trust other city leaders?

Table 7.8 below and Figure 7.5 in the next page illustrate and compare the perceived level of trust among city leaders, rated using the frequency scale introduced in Section 7.3.

Table 7.8 Average values of the perceived level of trust among city leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL-PL</td>
<td>F (4.8)</td>
<td>F (5.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-ML</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
<td>F (5.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-BL</td>
<td>S (3.7)</td>
<td>O (2.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-CL</td>
<td>U (6.1)</td>
<td>S/F (4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-PL</td>
<td>F (4.9)</td>
<td>F/U (5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>S (4.0)</td>
<td>U (6.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-BL</td>
<td>O (2.8)</td>
<td>O (2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>O (3.3)</td>
<td>U (6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-PL</td>
<td>*O/S (3.5)</td>
<td>S (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-ML</td>
<td>*F (5.0)</td>
<td>S (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-BL</td>
<td>*S (4.0)</td>
<td>S/F (4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-CL</td>
<td>*NDR</td>
<td>S (4.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-PL</td>
<td>F/U (5.6)</td>
<td>F (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-ML</td>
<td>S/F (4.6)</td>
<td>S/F (4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-BL</td>
<td>O (3.3)</td>
<td>S (3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-CL</td>
<td>F (5.3)</td>
<td>S/F (4.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.5 Network visualisation of the perceived level of trust among city leaders.
Looking at Table 7.8 and Figure 7.5 above, the overall perceived level of trust among city leaders seems quite positive. In fact, among several categories of city leaders, it was highly rated by participants, as spotlighted by the green cells. In particular, the trust relationship between PL and CL in Padua and between PL and ML in Peterborough is highly positive, as it was mutually perceived as frequent. However, trust was also considered as an infrequent relationship on some occasions, especially with BL (see red cells). To be noticed, for example, that in both cities, ML rated in this way the trust they have in BL, and in Peterborough also PL tended to distrust BL. Also, even though this attitude did not seem to be reciprocated, an interviewed BL of Peterborough expressed concerns about it:

«I think that the business leadership and the political leadership don't really trust each other, they work together but often there is a view that the political leadership are ultimately trying to follow a political agenda and where it works well it works very well but often there is mistrust and disagreement. (...) I think they are working on that. I think they are not there yet. I think the business sector generally has a sort of level of mistrust of the public sector because the perception is the public sector doesn't move as quickly and isn't as efficient as the business sector. So, if I am in the public sector, I get my wages, a very strong union, my pension is guaranteed and there are not many performance-related issues. If I am in the business sector and my performance isn't good, then I'll lose my job. And that imperatively make the business sector to react more quickly, react more efficiently, be more successful, whereas there is a view that the public sector doesn't have that same efficiency, the same ability to react. So, as well as the word trust, I suspect that part of it is around
frustration. The needs of the business community are not considered and reacted to quickly by either the political leadership or the public leadership. (Pe27-BL).

As the above example illustrates, trust is a delicate and complex theme and relationship. Therefore, it is reasonable to wonder whether the number of neutral values (i.e. sometimes, the midpoint in the frequency scaled used) is due to participants’ desire to avoid answering honestly to the question, or to the difficulty in rating and describing trust relationships because they do really depend on too many factors. Also, as one participant in the focus group in Peterborough said, founding agreement among other participants, «You have both trust and distrust in equal measure, it depends very much on the personal relationships. (PeFG1-PL).
7.4.2.3 **Collaboration**

*How often do you collaborate with other city leaders?*

Table 7.9 below and Figure 7.6 in the next page illustrate and compare the perceived level of collaboration among city leaders, rated using the frequency scale introduced in Section 7.3.

**Table 7.9 Average values of the frequency of collaboration among city leaders.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL-PL</td>
<td>F (5.3)</td>
<td>F (5.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-ML</td>
<td>O (3.0)</td>
<td>F (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-BL</td>
<td>R (1.9)</td>
<td>R (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-CL</td>
<td>F (4.9)</td>
<td>S/F (4.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-PL</td>
<td>S/F (4.5)</td>
<td>U (6.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>R/O (2.6)</td>
<td>U (5.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-BL</td>
<td>R (2.0)</td>
<td>R/O (2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>R/O (2.5)</td>
<td>F (5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-PL</td>
<td>*S/F (4.5)</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-ML</td>
<td>*S/F (4.5)</td>
<td>O (3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-BL</td>
<td>*F (5.0)</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-CL</td>
<td>*NDR</td>
<td>S (3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-PL</td>
<td>S (4.0)</td>
<td>O (3.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-ML</td>
<td>O (3.3)</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-BL</td>
<td>R (2.2)</td>
<td>R (2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-CL</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
<td>S/F (4.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.6 Network visualisation of the frequency of collaboration among city leaders.
Looking at Table 7.9 and Figure 7.6 above, it is evident that the perceived level of collaboration among city leaders is highly questionable and infrequent, particularly in Padua. This lack of collaboration in the Italian city was remarked by some interviewees (Pa24-PL; Pa30-CL; Pa32-CL), and two comments are particularly revealing:

«Collaboration is a bit difficult because there are a lot of organisations. This city is enormously rich of organisations and we are all very self-referential, therefore it is difficult to put together the many resources because this is not a poor city, but a city rich of initiatives, of participation, of groups... Bring together is difficult because we are a lot of organisations. So, collaboration is a weak spot» (Pa30-CL)

«But we cannot prevail in this case. We are available, and always be, but always after a request for collaboration. We cannot invade territories and boundaries because it is not a function, a role of our institution, we can say. Hence, perhaps, the political leadership should make these reasonings and try to involve more, to create that shared-arena that we believe is crucial to have this collaboration and, consequently, all other relationships» (Pa32-CL).

The above comments suggested two possible reasons for this lack of collaboration: first, the difficulty of collaboration due to the complexity of the city and its heterogeneity, and second, the tendency of waiting for the others to act and ask for collaboration.

Similarly to previous results on effective communication and trust, it can be noticed that in Peterborough the perceived level of collaboration between PL and ML was mutually perceived as frequent (see values in bold in the table). In the same way, it can
be noticed that the perceived level of collaboration with BL was perceived as infrequent by the other three types of city leaders. Interestingly, this time also BL perceived as infrequent the level of collaboration with ML (i.e. mutual infrequent relationship – see values in bold in the table). Furthermore, in Padua, also the level of collaboration between ML and CL was mutually perceived as uncommon (see values in bold in the table).
7.4.2.4 Participation

How often do you participate in other city leaders’ activities?

Table 7.10 and Figure 7.7 in the next page illustrate and compare the perceived level of participation among city leaders, rated using the frequency scale introduced in Section 7.3.

Table 7.10 Average values of frequency of participation among city leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL-PL</td>
<td>F (4.8)</td>
<td>S/F (4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-ML</td>
<td>O (3.0)</td>
<td>S/F (4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-BL</td>
<td>R/O (2.5)</td>
<td>R (1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-CL</td>
<td>F (4.8)</td>
<td>S/F (4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-PL</td>
<td>O/S (3.5)</td>
<td>S/F (4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>R/O (2.4)</td>
<td>F (5.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-BL</td>
<td>R (1.8)</td>
<td>R (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>R/O (2.4)</td>
<td>S (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-PL</td>
<td>*F (5.0)</td>
<td>O/S (3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-ML</td>
<td>*S (4.0)</td>
<td>O (2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-BL</td>
<td>*F (5.0)</td>
<td>O (3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-CL</td>
<td>*NDR</td>
<td>O/S (3.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-PL</td>
<td>S (4.1)</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-ML</td>
<td>O (3.1)</td>
<td>S (4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-BL</td>
<td>R (1.8)</td>
<td>R (2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-CL</td>
<td>O/S (3.5)</td>
<td>S (4.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.7 Network visualisation of frequency of participation among city leaders.
Looking at Table 7.10 and Figure 7.7 above, it is evident the low perceived level of participation among city leaders, especially compared to the perceived level of other relationships analysed so far (i.e. effective communication, trust, collaboration).

Also in this case, the relationships with BL were perceived as infrequent by the other three categories of city leaders and even this time the BL of Peterborough perceived in the same way the level of participation with other city leaders (see values in bold), creating mutual infrequent relationships. Similarly, in Padua, the level of participation was mutually perceived as occasional between ML and CL.

A common explanation provided by the participants of both cities for this lack of participation was the enormous amount of activities organised within the cities and the related lack of time of city leaders, unable to attend them because of full diaries (e.g. Pa24-PL; Pe26-ML).
7.4.2.5 Flexibility

How often do you adjust your behaviour in base of other city leaders’ needs?

Table 7.11 below and Figure 7.8 in the next page illustrate and compare the perceived level of flexibility among city leaders, rated using the frequency scale introduced in Section 7.3.

Table 7.11 Average values of frequency of flexibility among city leaders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL-PL</td>
<td>O/S (3.5)</td>
<td>O (3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-ML</td>
<td>R (2.3)</td>
<td>S (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-BL</td>
<td>N (1.0)</td>
<td>R (1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-CL</td>
<td>O (2.7)</td>
<td>S (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-PL</td>
<td>O/S (3.4)</td>
<td>F/U (5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>O (2.8)</td>
<td>F (4.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-BL</td>
<td>R (1.9)</td>
<td>R (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>R (1.9)</td>
<td>F (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-PL</td>
<td>*R/O (2.5)</td>
<td>O (3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-ML</td>
<td>*O (3.0)</td>
<td>O (3.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-BL</td>
<td>*S/F (4.5)</td>
<td>O/S (3.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-CL</td>
<td>*NDR</td>
<td>S (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-PL</td>
<td>R (2.0)</td>
<td>O (3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-ML</td>
<td>R (1.8)</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-BL</td>
<td>N (1.2)</td>
<td>R (2.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-CL</td>
<td>R/O (2.5)</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.8 Network visualisation of frequency of flexibility among city leaders.
Looking at Table 7.11 and Figure 7.8 above, it is evident that also flexibility was perceived as an infrequent relationship among city leaders, particularly in Padua. Also, similarly to other relationships analysed so far, in both cities, flexibility was infrequent with BL and mutually perceived in this way between some categories of city leaders (see values in bold in the table). What is striking is the attitude of Peterborough’s ML: they are the only actors to argue to frequently act flexibly with PL, other ML and CL, but they have a totally opposite tendency towards BL. Another interesting finding is a dichotomy between a request for flexibility (e.g. from Pa27-ML; Pe3-CL) and a reluctancy to be flexible (e.g. Pa25-ML; Pa30-CL; Pa32-CL; Pa36-CL; Pe17_ML; Pe19-CL), where this reluctancy can be both considered as a negative and a positive attitude. In fact, it can be due to several reasons: to respect law and fairness (Pa25-ML), to carry on one’s own identity and values (Pa30-CL; Pa32-CL; Pa36-CL; Pe25-PL), to follow organisational drivers (Pe17-ML) or “rule books” (Pe3-CL). Two interviewees provided useful examples:

«It depends on the circumstances. For some things, it is important to carry on one’s own identity, for other things it is possible to be more flexible. It depends a lot on circumstances» (Pa30-CL)

[referring to BL] «I don't think that they can think flexibly. They've given a rule book and yes, that fits corporate, but it doesn't fit anything else. It seems to be that beyond what they've been told they can do, they can't be flexible. I think that's the thing. It's flexibility. So, rather than working in conjunction with you, they just go back to what they always do» (Pe3-CL).
7.4.2.6 **Shared Decision-making**

*How often do you take decisions with other city leaders?*

Table 7.12 below and Figure 7.9 in the next page illustrate and compare the perceived level of shared decision-making among city leaders, rated using the frequency scale introduced in Section 7.3.

**Table 7.12 Average values of the frequency of shared decision-making among city leaders.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Decision-making</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PL-PL</td>
<td>S (4.3)</td>
<td>S (3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-ML</td>
<td>O/S (4.5)</td>
<td>S (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-BL</td>
<td>O (3.3)</td>
<td>R (2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-CL</td>
<td>S/F (4.5)</td>
<td>O (3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-PL</td>
<td>S (3.9)</td>
<td>F/U (5.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>R/O (2.4)</td>
<td>S/F (4.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-BL</td>
<td>N/R (2.5)</td>
<td>O (2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>R (1.9)</td>
<td>F (5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-PL</td>
<td>*F/U (5.5)</td>
<td>O (2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-ML</td>
<td>*S (4.0)</td>
<td>R/O (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-BL</td>
<td>*S/F (4.5)</td>
<td>S (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL-CL</td>
<td>*NDR</td>
<td>O (3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-PL</td>
<td>S (3.8)</td>
<td>S (4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-ML</td>
<td>S (4.0)</td>
<td>S/F (4.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-BL</td>
<td>R (2.3)</td>
<td>O (2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-CL</td>
<td>S (4.1)</td>
<td>S (4.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 7.9 Network visualisation of frequency of shared decision-making among city leaders.
Looking at Table 7.12 and Figure 7.9 above, it can be noticed that the perceived level of shared decision-making is neither particularly positive nor negative. Again, in both cities, shared decision-making between BL and other city leaders was perceived as infrequent, especially in Peterborough. Also, Peterborough’s ML had again a contrasting attitude when considering shared decision-making: they were the only actors to argue to frequently share decision-making with PL, other ML and CL, but they showed a totally opposite tendency towards BL.

Particularly thought-provoking is a comment made by one interviewee in Peterborough when I asked if they would take and share decisions with people they do not trust:

«If it is shared decision making, I don't think it matters. Because, for example, there are a couple of people that I am really struggling with over the years and who have let me down in terms of trust, but if I sat on a board with them and we were making a decision about funding, and at that board meeting it was agreed and I was part of that conversation, I was able to say my piece, and then we came to a decision, even if it was a decision I agreed with or didn't agree with, the fact that I was able to play a part in that decision is enough for me. The fact that I don't trust the people at the table is not so important. That is on the basis that you are assuming that the decision would be followed through, of course. You've got to be able to trust the decision to be followed through. But if it's shared decision making, it's enough. Because not everybody is nice and kind and honest and has integrity and because of all reasons why people are scared of losing their jobs, they're looking out for themselves. That's the society» (Pe18-CL).
**Other relationships: Vision and shared goals**

Interviewees and focus groups’ participants were also asked to suggest other relationships, which were not considered in the research project but may foster the effectiveness of the CLN and the creation of urban resilience. The two relationships, or elements, which emerged from this discussion were *vision* and *shared goals*. The two are similar and strongly interrelated concepts, as they refer to the idea that city leaders’ activities, decisions and relationships should be driven by a common vision, by some shared goals that overcome differences among city leaders’ roles, functions and agendas to focus on the overall well-being and future of the city and its community. Several participants were favourable and aimed for the creation of a city’s vision (Pa32-CL; Pa34-CL; Pa36-CL; Pa37-ML; Pe13-CL; Pe15-BL; Pe21-BL; Pe26-ML). As Pe15-BL very effectively put it: «If you don't know where you are going, how do you get there?». A longer and remarkable comment was provided by Pe21-BL:

«What is missing from that and I think it's huge is —the question is how you want to articulate this—but you could say shared sense of place, shared vision, shared ambition. If you don't have a shared ambition then this is all a little bit nice to have but so what? There has to be this sense of direction, the sense of place, where is this city going, what does it want to be, what does it want to achieve. And then from that I think you could build a common endeavour that everybody is involved in, which in itself creates trust and if you communicate that well between the parties then the rest flows as an outcome of it. So, I would see that as a key starting point. What are we trying to achieve? And that's place-based agenda. But without it, if you don't have that place-based agenda if any of these people are not really sure on where this
place is going or what we are trying to achieve, then they’re going to go off on their own little journey. I think the danger is that those visions become a bit meaningless, you know, "we’re gonna make this the best place to live", that’s what everybody says. I think it has to be a little bit more than that. It has to be a real sort of tangible outcome that you want to achieve in that vision. And, because you’re trying to unite a disapproved group, you’ll probably end up with perhaps a little too busy agenda, so that everybody can see what's in it for them, but I think if you don't have that then it's hard to see what is bringing these people together» (Pe21-BL).

In contrast, one interviewee in Padua was reluctant with the idea of a vision, especially because of the difficulty of deciding who should create that vision:

«In theory, it’s a good thing, in practice, it is hard to achieve. Who should create it? Because that's the problem, in the end. If the politicians create it, maybe the businessmen would not agree with it, and vice versa. I don’t know. Theoretically, it should be crucial, but in reality it is complicated. (...). Or, in an absurd way, it should be decided by higher levels of government, as Soviets used to do with five-year plans, and hence say "now we’re going in this direction, stop. You people who are at the local level work so that we reach that goal. You can decide how to get there, but I decide where we need to arrive".» (Pa29-BL).

In fact, a further theme that emerged from this discussion was who was supposed to create and share the vision. Some interviewees (Pa37-ML; Pe15-BL; Pe21-BL) suggested that PL should have this role, in line with the suggestions made when commenting the
conceptual framework (see Chapter 3), whereas Pa34-CL, for example, argued that also the vision should be created collectively because:

«They have different operational aims but the same objective for the city. Therefore the vision should be shared. If it’s different [among city leaders] it’s because they are looking short-term and hence are looking only at their own function or they are exercising their role not as a role of public leadership but as a personal/individual one» (Pa34-CL).

7.4.3 Relationships among categories of city leaders

This section aims to briefly share some additional findings concerning the general relationships between categories of city leaders, especially the ones considered as particularly critical in the previous section.

Political leaders and managerial leaders

In both cities, some interviewees emphasised the close, interdependent and somehow symbiotic relationships between PL and ML. For example, in Padua, Pa23-PL said: «They need us, we need them. It’s a perfect give-and-take». Another interviewee (Pa26-CL), in contrast, remarked the influence that political leaders often have on the strategy, management and delivery of public services. Similarly, in Peterborough, two interviewees (Pe3-CL and Pe12-ML) commented on the strong relationship between PL and the directors and officers within the council. In particular, Pe3-CL emphasised the
possible conflicts that this may create: «The managers there have different perspectives and that causes some conflicts. Who is running the show...».

**Business leaders and other city leaders**

Despite the recognition of their important role within the city, the lack of relationships with BL was acknowledged by all categories of city leaders (e.g. Pe11-PL; Pe12-ML; Pe17-ML; Pa37-ML; Pe13-CL; Pe18-CL; Pa36-CL). In particular, the relationship between PL and BL was perceived as critical by both types of actors. For example, in Peterborough, both an interviewed PL and a BL pointed out the infrequent relationship between the two:

«It's important to know the business community. If you are the leader of the city, you are going to succeed or fail on whether or not you deliver the city that is needed by the business community, for the business community, to grow and prosper. It is simple as that. Nothing happens quickly. It might take four, five, six, seven years for things to grow, and it might take four five six seven years to start doing the new ones. But if you are not careful, and you don't involve the business community, you will die. (...) The issue we have today is, I think, that it doesn't seem to be that partnership anymore with the business community» (Pe11-PL).

«I think the relationship with business communities is not nearly as integrated as it should be. (...) It's an entirely passive one-way relationship with businesses. So, we come together every few moments, for events, and we told what's going on, we are just told, really, so there are no real opportunities for participation and engagement. And to the extent that the business is listened to in the city, I think businesses are
thinking of investing here or listen to and so they arrive. And once they arrive it's
banked, and the energy goes to the next ones coming. I don't feel that there is any
real kind of long-terms stakeholding relationships built with businesses here unless
they already have a kind of legacy relationships. So, if you say, Caterpillar, which
owns the Perkins brand, and the Perkins brand is absolutely synonymous with
Peterborough, so no doubt I presume they get spoken to, I presume... Take another
city, take Derby [...], I don't feel that political leadership here does that, with
businesses of any size, that I've observed, anyway. And I am a joiner, I go to things, I
look at these events, and I don't really see that that kind of deep commitment from
the politicians to the business community» (Pe20-BL).

Similarly, in Padua, both a PL and a BL remarked the difficulties in working together
due to the often contrasting views, functions and aims they have. For example, PaFG1-
PL explained it as follows:

«I'm surprised that during private meetings that we have with trade associations,
during which we discuss themes that affect everyone, such as the ZTL [transl.
limited traffic zone], we say “yes, we have to find a solution, it is not possible... let's
plan this in this way, let's do this, yes it seems fair...” and then they leave the
meeting and the next day they are on the local newspaper saying “it's a shame, the
council wants to kill us all...” [with general laughs of other participants]. And so I ask
them "but, sorry, during the meeting we said this" and they "yes, but I have to give a
sign to my own people, don't I?". And I am confused. Which sign? If we have a shared
goal, support me, if you share it. If you don't share it, tell me and let's find a different
one. This way of working in a self-referential manner, based on “I answer to the
people belonging to my trade association” gives limit to the city, this inability to see common goals and work only of personal goals». (PaFG1-PL)

On the other hand, the interviewed BL emphasised the lack of dialogue among city leaders:

«Today, both at the political level and among other stakeholders, there isn’t a dialogue. (...) If political leaders, perhaps before taking decisions, had discussed the issue with other city leaders, maybe they would have taken a different decision, a more shared one. In this moment, these arrows [i.e. the ones representing relationships among city leaders in the conceptual framework] don’t work, don’t turn, or they do that but very slowly» (Pa29-BL).

7.5 Discussion

The findings described in the previous section provide important insights in response to sRQ2 and the relationships occurring among city leaders.

First, in line with the literature, trust and good communication emerged as the key yet complex relationships for the implementation of a successful CLN able to foster urban resilience. In fact, even though most of the interviewees identified them as critical and both were perceived as occurring more frequently than the other relationship examined, especially in Peterborough, some contrasting findings characterise them. Communication was not effective throughout the whole CLN and several interviewees, especially from the BL arena, urged for its improvement. Similarly, trust was confirmed
as being hard to measure and to separate from distrust. Also, the pursuit of a shared vision or shared goals was identified as an important yet unconsidered (at least in this thesis) relationship among the CLN, which will require future attention.

Second, the findings about collaboration, participation and shared decision-making are quite surprising. In fact, given the great deal of focus on these relationships and their importance (e.g. J. M. Bryson et al., 2015; Fung, 2006; Huxham & Vangen, 2005) more positive results and opinions were expected. Going beyond the specific case studies examined in the vast literature, it seems that, at the city level, these relationships are theoretically idealised by both academics and practitioners, but, in general terms, hardly put in place, for several reasons (e.g. lack of time, complex context, divergent aims). Therefore, an important question that should be asked is whether it exists a minimum level of occurrence of such relationships to create an effective CLN (i.e. is it rarely enough?).

Third, the several mutual relationships found within the network are significant, because they represent symmetric perceptions and actions among city leaders and, in methodological terms, confirmation of the occurrence (or not) of such relationships. In particular, mutual frequent relationships can be highly positive for the CLN because they strengthen the network and become very useful in case of a crisis. To be noted, for example, the strong mutual relationships of trust, effective communication and collaboration between PL and ML in Peterborough. In contrast, mutual infrequent relationships might jeopardise the capabilities of the CLN to be effective and successfully address crisis. In this case, the relationships from and to BL are critical. Yet, it is important to point out that also contrasting relationships can be extremely risky. The
discrepancy of views and implementation of relationships (e.g. one frequently relating and the other rarely doing the same), might indeed be very hazardous because it may lead to misunderstandings and failed expectations between the two categories of city leaders and, consequently, it may undermine all relationships between the two, especially the trust one.

Last but not least, it is particularly interesting the suggestion of overcoming the dichotomy of formal-informal relationships, as both are important to make relationships work, in favour of other types of relationships, such as respectful, effective or substantial ones.

### 7.6 Chapter summary

This chapter aimed at providing an answer to sRQ2, that is: *which relationships exist among city leaders?*

The chapter started by further reviewing the literature on this topic, with special attention to the relationships of trust and good communication, both acknowledged as essential for effective leadership. Then, the methodology was described in more details, focusing on the steps followed to analyse and visualise data. A qualitative approach to SNA was indeed adopted to represent and analyse data. Finally, findings were presented and discussed. In particular:

- In line with the literature, trust and good communication emerged as essential relationships and, generally, they were perceived as frequently occurring, even though with some limitations.
• Shared vision was suggested as the key missing relationship that needed further attention.

• Surprisingly, the other analysed relationships (collaboration, participation, flexibility and shared decision-making) were hardly put in place.

• Some participants invited to overcome the dichotomy of formal and informal relationships to focus on other types of relationships (e.g. substantial, effective ones).

• BL emerged as the less interrelated actors of the CLN: relationships from and towards them were indeed the more infrequent ones.
8 Urban resilience

8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I explored the first two elements of the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis, namely the main actors of the CLN (Chapter 6) and relationships among these actors (Chapter 7). Now, I turn to the third and last element, which represents the potential outcome of the CLN, namely the perceived urban resilience (see Chapter 3 and Figure 3.4 reproduced below from page 37). More specifically, the aim is to address sRQ3: how resilient is the city perceived?

Reproduction of Figure 3.4 The third element of the conceptual framework: the outcome of the CLN. First placed on page 37.

The chapter is structured following the same logic used for the other two themed chapters. First, the literature review is reprised to focus on the conceptualisation and measurement of urban resilience. Second, the methodology is reprised to better explain the data collection and analysis procedures. Finally, the findings are presented and discussed, whereas conclusions are drawn at the end of this thesis (Chapter 10).
8.2 Literature review (reprise)

Resilience is a hot topic today, as fashionable as disputed. In fact, despite its common usage, it is employed in different disciplines to mean different things (Brand & Jax, 2007; Brown, 2016; De Bruijne et al., 2010; Martin-Breen & Anderies, 2011), creating confusion, misunderstandings and misuses of this valuable concept.

First used by psychologists in the 1950s to describe individuals (and mostly children) who adapted and overcame significant adversities and risks (De Bruijne et al., 2010; Martin-Breen & Anderies, 2011), the term has been easily and rapidly introduced in ecological systems and engineering studies since Holling’s (1973) seminal work. He indeed articulated the concept of resilience to put it in contrast with the more traditional one of stability. In fact, the former started to be used to describe the ability of ecological systems to absorb changes and still persist—now referred to as ‘ecological resilience’—whereas the latter represents the rapidity in which a system returns to a state of equilibrium after a shock or stress – now referred to as ‘engineering resilience’ (De Bruijne et al., 2010; Desjardins et al., 2015; Holling, 1973; Walker et al., 2004). More recently, the term of resilience has been further broadened to characterise social systems as well (Brown, 2016; De Bruijne et al., 2010; Martin-Breen & Anderies, 2011), becoming a ‘public and political object’ (Rochira et al., 2019) and an appealing word in policy-making and politics’ discourses. What is striking is that the emergence of these varying definitions and conceptualisations of resilience did not produce a consensus over what this term means or represents, despite the qualifying adjective usually combined with it (e.g. ecological, social, economic, and so on). Conversely, each discipline continued developing its own conceptualisation and understanding of the term, with few
cross-referencing (Brown, 2016) despite some commonalities (Brown, 2016; De Bruijne et al., 2010; Martin-Breen & Anderies, 2011). Also, a contortion or forgetfulness of the original meaning of the term is evident: resilience comes from the Latin word *resilio*, which stands for ‘to jump back’ or ‘bounce back’ (De Bruijne et al., 2010; Meerow et al., 2016), but several scholars tend to pay more attention to the prevention or anticipation of disturbances or to the development of the system after the disturbances, rather than to this reactive connotation of resilience (De Bruijne et al., 2010).

As a result of the manifold definitions of and approaches to resilience, different reactions emerged through scholars and practitioners: some dislike and condemn the concept, arguing that its popularity has actually emptied and undermined the meaning and value of the word (e.g. Streeck, 2016); in contrast, others, still recognising the importance of a descriptive concept clearly defined and specified, embrace the multifaceted character of resilience and consider it an advantage, especially for its potential role of ‘boundary object’¹⁴ (Brand & Jax, 2007; Meerow et al., 2016). As Brand and Jax (2007, pp. 23/16-17) pointed out:

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¹⁴ Brad and Jax (2007, p. 23/9) defined a ‘boundary object’ as an inherently ambivalent term ‘that facilitates communication across disciplinary borders by creating shared vocabulary although the understanding of the parties would differ regarding the precise meaning of the term in question (Star and Griesemer 1989). Boundary objects are able to coordinate different groups without a consensus about their aims and interests. If they are both open to interpretation and valuable for various scientific disciplines or social groups, boundary objects can be highly useful as a communication tool in order to bridge scientific disciplines and the gap between science and policy (Eser 2002, Cash et al. 2003). [...] But there is a fundamental drawback to this. Boundary objects can in fact be a hindrance to scientific progress’.
The increased vagueness and malleability of resilience is highly valuable because it is for this reason that the concept is able to foster communication across disciplines and between science and practice (cf., Eser 2002). Therefore, it is not the suggestion to eradicate this vagueness and ambiguousness entirely but to grasp the ambivalent character of boundary objects and, hence, of a wide and vague use of resilience. (Brand & Jax, 2007, pp. 23/16-17).

Even though this conceptualisation as boundary object could provide an interesting perspective in the study of resilience and some shortcuts in political discourses, there is a more general agreement on the need of being specific on which type of resilience is under consideration and implementation, and three questions are considered crucial: resilience of what, to what and for whom? (Carpenter et al., 2001; Lebel et al., 2006). The first question (i.e. resilience of what?) refers to the object under study; the second question (i.e. resilience to what?) refers to the type of perturbations considered; the third questions (i.e. resilience for whom?) refers to the beneficiaries and hence the purpose of resilience. In this sense, resilience can also be considered as a capacity, a process, and an outcome of the object under study (Brown, 2016).

Given the focus of this chapter (and thesis), the emphasis is put here on urban resilience.

8.2.1 Urban resilience

In contrast to the development of the resilience concept that can be dated back to the 1950s for psychological studies and to the 1970s for ecological systems ones (see the previous section), the concept and study of urban resilience are far more recent. In fact, it
has increasingly attracted the interest of scholars and practitioners since 2003, with the flourishing awareness on climate change and the growing occurrence of natural disasters (Pu & Qiu, 2016). Such growing trend of interest has further increased since 2015 when the United Nations included urban resilience in one of the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved by 2030, namely SDG11 ‘Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable’ (UN, n.d.). Still, also urban resilience remains a contested and ambiguous concept, as demonstrated by Meerow et al. (2016) through their bibliometric analysis that identified 25 definitions of urban resilience, none of which considered clear and complete by the authors.

In this chapter, despite their (minor) differences, two definitions are taken into consideration (see Table 8.1 below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s) (Year)</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100RC (n.d.-b)</td>
<td>‘The capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meerow et al. (2016)</td>
<td>‘The ability of an urban system-and all its constituent socio-ecological and socio-technical networks across temporal and spatial scales-to maintain or rapidly return to desired functions in the face of a disturbance, to adapt to change, and to quickly transform systems that limit current or future adaptive capacity’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first definition, conceived by 100 Resilient Cities (n.d.-b) is considered because of its popularity, readability and accessibility in both the academic and practitioners’ worlds, given the remarkable activities carried out and funded by the network. The second definition, suggested by Meerow et al. (2016), is taken into consideration because
of the process followed for its articulation. In fact, the authors produced their definition in light of the findings of their work, with the aim of including the six conceptual tensions they found in the literature while still giving to the definition enough flexibility to be widely adopted. However, resuming the three basic questions that need to be asked about resilience (i.e. resilience of what, to what and for whom?), only the first definition provides an answer to all of them. The second definition is deliberately broader and flexible because the authors stressed the need to extend the number of questions to five: resilience for whom, what, when, where, and why? In fact, according to the authors:

Resilience is recognized as a desirable state, but who determines what is ‘desirable’ and for whom? Urban resilience is shaped by who defines the agenda, whose resilience is being prioritized, and who benefits or loses as a result. We have argued in favor of building general adaptive capacity over adapting to specific threats, but priority areas, sectors, and hazards will undoubtedly differ from city to city. Contextual factors also shape the temporal and spatial scales at which urban resilience is applied (Chelleri et al., 2015). Thinking through ‘resilience for when’ entails deciding whether the focus is on short-term disruptions (i.e., storms) or long-term stressors (i.e., climate change) and translating the phrases “rapidly return” or “quickly transform” in the definition to a particular setting. Similarly, ‘resilience for where’ refers to the challenge of delineating spatial boundaries for an urban system.

15 The six conceptual tensions that Meerow et al. (2016) identified in the literature are: 1) equilibrium vs. non-equilibrium resilience; 2) positive vs. neutral (or negative) conceptualizations of resilience; 3) mechanism of system change (i.e., persistence, transitional, or transformative); 4) adaptation vs. general adaptability; 5) timescale of action; 6) definition and characterisation of ‘urban’.
with a complex set of often global networks, and how shifts in one location or at one scale impact those at others. Finally, why is resilience being promoted and what are the underlying motivations for doing so? There are no right or easy answers to these questions, but grappling with them collectively through an inclusive and open discourse is fundamental if we hope to forge cities that are indeed resilient. (Meerow et al., 2016, pp. 46–47)

This long quote is here provided for two reasons: first, to understand the role of the five questions in the authors’ own words, without losing or undermining their clear discourse and explanation by paraphrasing it; second, to emphasise two elements of resilience that are key for this chapter and the overall thesis, namely its place-based nature and its being politically and collectively driven.

Finally, a further element that emerges from the definitions provided above needs to be considered, in line with the methodological approach adopted in this thesis (see Chapter 4): cities (or urban settings) are systems and, more precisely, complex adaptive systems (i.e. CAS) composed by sub-systems and embedded in larger, macro-level systems (Bristow & Healy, 2014a; Budd et al., 2017; Martin-Breen & Anderies, 2011; Meerow et al., 2016). Therefore, the concept of urban resilience describes the resilience of the urban (city) system as a whole, including the sub-systems that characterise it. However, several sub-systems might exist within a city (e.g. transport, energy, sport – see, for example, Budd et al. (2017) and Meerow et al. (2016)) and urban resilience studies or projects might focus on one or some of them. Drawing upon the literature on resilience, two meta-systems within cities are here considered: the infrastructure meta-system and the community meta-system.
The infrastructure meta-system comprises of all urban infrastructure and networks which are built to sustain the well-functioning of the city, such as transport, energy, waste, public and private buildings and spaces and so on. The study of the infrastructure resilience can hence be linked to engineering resilience and resilient urban planning (e.g. Alderson et al., 2015; Marcus & Colding, 2014; Ouyang et al., 2012; Pickett et al., 2004).

The community meta-system comprises of all communities (i.e. group of people) living and influencing the city. The study of community resilience and how a community react to crisis and shocks has indeed bloomed in recent years, developing a further sub-discipline of resilience studies which combines literature from social-ecological systems and psychological or emotional resilience (e.g. Berkes & Ross, 2013; De Bruijne et al., 2010; Magsino, 2009; Mayer, 2019; Oliveira & Morais, 2018).

8.3 Methodology

Considering the literature reviewed in the previous section, and the manifold ways in which resilience has been conceptualised, it cannot astonish that a variety of approaches and methods have been developed and employed to investigate and measure (urban) resilience. The main difference lies between quantitative and qualitative approaches and methods, but also within these two, a number of techniques and scales have been proposed and used (e.g. Allan & Bryant, 2014; Béné et al., 2016; Bodoque et al., 2016; Bristow & Healy, 2018; Windle et al., 2011).

In line with the MM nature of this thesis (see Chapter 4), urban resilience was examined combining quantitative and qualitative techniques for both data collection and
analysis, to attempt gaining a deeper insight into this complex topic. However, in Chapter 4, this part of the methodology was delineated as the quantitative parallel component of the research given the central role of the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS - B. W. Smith et al., 2008) in collecting and analysing data.

8.3.1 Data collection

In order to continue focusing on city leaders’ viewpoint, urban resilience was explored through the eyes of participants (i.e. city leaders). In other words, the data collection process was designed and conducted to collect participants’ perceptions and opinions about the level of the resilience capabilities of the city. Questionnaire’s items and interviews’ questions were based on the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) developed by Smith et al. (2008). In fact, even though the scale was originally conceived for use with ill adults, and hence as a measurement of individual resilience and not territorial (e.g. urban) one, five main reasons made it the best option for this thesis:

1. Considering the focus on participants’ perceptions about urban resilience and the techniques used to collect data (especially the online questionnaire), it was necessary to use a scale which was based on self-reports, and hence that participants could easily complete by themselves.

2. In their review of resilience measurement scales, Windle, Bennet and Noyes (2011) pointed out that, even though there is not a gold standard measurement of resilience, the BRS is one of the more reliable and valid ones. The two other scales identified by the authors (i.e. The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale and the Resilience Scale for Adults), despite their quality, had some relevant
disadvantages that made them inadequate for the aim of this thesis (see points below).

3. Given its original use in psychology and its focus on the essential characteristic of resilience, namely the ability to ‘bounce back’, the BRS allowed to focus on this central element of (urban) resilience.

4. The BRS consists of only six items, in contrast with other longer scales of twenty or more items (e.g. both the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale and the Resilience Scale for Adults).

5. The BRS is openly accessible, in contrast with other licensed scales that require payments to be used (e.g. the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale).

However, given the original use of the BRS to assess individual resilience, for the purposes of this thesis the items of the scale had to be slightly adapted to focus on urban resilience. Therefore, where the original BRS’s items use the first person (i.e. I or me), in this thesis the items focused on my city, first considering it as an ensemble of infrastructures (e.g. transport, buildings, …) and then considering it as a community. Table 8.2 in the next page compares the original items with the modified ones used in the thesis (the italics represents the words changed).
Table 8.2 Comparison of the BRS’s original items with the ones used in the thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original items of the BRS (B. W. Smith et al., 2008)</th>
<th>Adapted items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times.</td>
<td>My city tends to bounce back quickly after hard times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a hard time making it through stressful events.</td>
<td>My city has a hard time making it through stressful events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event.</td>
<td>It does not take my city long to recover from a stressful event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is hard for me to snap back when something bad happens.</td>
<td>It is hard for my city to snap back when something bad happens.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually come through difficult times with little trouble.</td>
<td>My city usually comes through difficult times with little trouble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tend to take a long time to get over setbacks in my life.</td>
<td>My city tends to take a long time to get over city’s setbacks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The adapted items of the BRS were asked to participants through both the online questionnaire and the interviews. In line with the original study, participants were requested to reply using the 5-point agreement scale, as illustrated in Table 8.3 below. Still, during interviews, participants had also the opportunity to comment and explain their replies.

Table 8.3 The 5-point agreement scale used to assess urban resilience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3.2 Data analysis

I began the analysis process by preparing the datasets (one for Padua and one for Peterborough) to address sRQ3: how resilient is the city perceived?

First, I followed the instructions of the BRS’ authors to calculate the mean score of each participant’s reply for both infrastructure resilience and community resilience:

- Items 1, 3, and 5 are positively worded, and items 2, 4, and 6 are negatively worded.
- The BRS is scored by reverse coding items 2, 4, and 6 and finding the mean of the six items. (B. W. Smith et al., 2008, p. 195)

The mean scores were listed in added columns of the datasets named ‘INF’ (i.e. infrastructure resilience) and ‘COMM’ (i.e. community resilience).

Second, some interviewees did not answer using the 5-point agreement scale provided, but openly discussed the resilience capabilities of the city and the community. Therefore, their replies needed to be coded in order to be consistent with the rest of the data. Table 8.4 in the next page illustrates the rating scale used for this process and contrasts it with the BRS rating scale (B. W. Smith et al., 2008) and the related BRS score interpretation (B. W. Smith et al., 2013). In particular, the BRS score interpretation was not followed for the coding process because the three possible scores identified by the authors (i.e. low resilience, normal resilience and high resilience) were insufficient to appropriately highlight the different replies and perceptions gave by interviewees.
Table 8.4 Rating scale used for the coding process in comparison with the BRS rating scale and the BRS score interpretation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRS Rating scale (B. W. Smith et al., 2008)</th>
<th>Rating scale used for interviews’ coding (Coding interpretation (own elaboration))</th>
<th>BRS score interpretation (B. W. Smith et al., 2013)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Third, interviewees' comments on the urban resilient capabilities were categorised in three groups, namely negative, in-between (i.e. neutral or neither negative nor positive) and positive, in order to identify similar patterns of replies among participants.

8.3.3  **Focus groups**

In line with the logic followed in the previous chapters, I focus here only on the material collected and analysed to address sRQ3, which represents the focus of this chapter. In particular, through the focus groups, I attempted to understand whether participants recognised and agreed with the comments collected on the topic and, hence, whether the defined picture of urban resilience was (fairly) accurate.
More specifically, during the focus groups, participants received the tables summarising the negative, in-between and positive comments made by interviewees on the urban resilient capabilities of the two cities. They were hence invited to openly reflect and discuss on such comments.

The qualitative material emerged from these initiatives was directly integrated with the data and material collected during the online questionnaires and interviews, and it was used to improve the formulation of findings.

8.4 Findings

As previously explained (Chapter 3 and section 8.2.1), the concept of urban resilience is here explored by combining two elements: the infrastructure resilience and the community resilience. In fact, the two elements are strongly interrelated, and the majority of participants’ comments contemplated both elements, making it difficult to consider them separately. Indeed, as two participants pointed out, «infrastructures are generated by people» (Pa36-CL), and if these infrastructures are not made for the community and involving the community, the resilient capabilities of the city will be undermined. Using Pe21-BL’s words:

«I think you can build road whether or not you’re a resilient city, but whether you build in the right place and whether you build in the right way, whether you engage your community... if you don’t do that, then you can’t devote your infrastructure for your community and that will undermine resilience. I would guess» (Pe21-BL).
Similarly, Pa37-ML emphasised the fact that a city must have «smart citizens» to be a «smart city».

Findings are presented as follows: the perceived urban resilience of Padua is described first, followed by Peterborough’s one and then the two cities are compared and contrasted.

### 8.4.1 Padua

The mean score for the perceived urban resilience capabilities of Padua was 3.3, corresponding to “normal resilience” according to the BRS score interpretation (B. W. Smith et al., 2013) and to “work-in-progress resilience-positive side” according to the rating scale used for interviews’ coding. The mean score was found calculating the average between the perceived infrastructure resilience (i.e. 3.2) and the perceived community resilience (i.e. 3.4). Table 8.5 below displays all values and their related interpretations.

*Table 8.5 Perceived urban resilience in Padua.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>BSR score interpretation</th>
<th>Interview’s coding interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure resilience</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Normal resilience</td>
<td>work-in-progress resilience-positive side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Resilience</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Normal resilience</td>
<td>work-in-progress resilience-positive side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Resilience (avg)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Normal resilience</td>
<td>work-in-progress resilience-positive side</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 8.5 above shows, the infrastructure resilience was perceived as slightly lower than the community resilience. This is rather interesting, given the primary focus of the municipality on the infrastructure resilience of the city (see Chapter 5). Also, all three results describe a city that is still working on its resilience capabilities, as illustrated by comments made during interviews and focus groups. Table 8.6 and Table 8.7 in the next pages summarise these comments according to their negative, neutral or positive character. The comments marked with an asterisk (*) referred to both infrastructure and community resilience, and hence were included in both tables; the ones in bold are the comments made by more than one participant.
Table 8.6 Interviewees’ comments on the infrastructure resilience of Padua.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>In-between</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Slow city (Pa24-PL; Pa29-BL; Pa30-CL; Pa35-ML) *</td>
<td>• Somewhat resilient, as it can do more (Pa25-ML; Pa34-CL; Pa36-CL; Pa37-ML)*</td>
<td>• It is resilient (Pa30-CL; Pa32-CL)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unable to respond to needs (Pa4-PL; Pa24-PL)</td>
<td>• Very good potentialities that it needs to develop (Pa25-ML; Pa36-CL; Pa37-ML)*</td>
<td>• Quick and good response from PA (Pa31-PL; Pa32-CL)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weak (Pa4-PL; Pa30-CL)</td>
<td>• At the institutional level, less able to respond well (Pa24-PL)*</td>
<td>• Different PA over time able to respond to crisis (Pa32-CL)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of common goal/dialogue among leaders (Pa27-ML; Pa29-BL)*</td>
<td>• Infrastructures are generated by people and hence depend on people (Pa36-CL)</td>
<td>• Good infrastructures (Pa37-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Badly grown and built (Pa26-CL)</td>
<td>• It needs improvements (Pa27-ML)</td>
<td>• Good political leaders in these latest years (Pa33-ML)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• City that struggles to change (Pa36-CL)*</td>
<td>• It has the capability to adapt and overcome crisis, more than being resilient (Pa32-CL)*</td>
<td>• Good resources to even build more infrastructures (Pa37-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem of timing (Pa35-ML)*</td>
<td>• It depends on the people who manage the city (Pa30-CL)</td>
<td>• Good synergy among different leaderships (Pa35-ML)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem of changes in PL (Pa35-ML)*</td>
<td>• Less resilient than the community (Pa33-ML)</td>
<td>• It has all antibodies and characteristics to be resilient (Pa30-CL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem of contentiousness (Pa36-CL)*</td>
<td>• Not so resilient when thinking about the hospital (Pa34-CL)</td>
<td>• It has the resources to overcome crisis (Pa33-ML)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different opinions that delay decisions and investments (Pa29-BL)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Positive atmosphere (Pa31-PL)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulty in working on long-term projects (Pa4-PL)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The city is growing well (Pa31-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulty in investing in infrastructures and taking opportunities (Pa4-PL)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inability to make decisions because the “city” changes opinions a lot (Pa24-PL) *</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inability of handling climate change (Pa27-ML)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not resilient (Pa29-BL)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Too many divisions (Pa29-BL)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weak sense of innovation (Pa32-CL)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples: Transports/tram (Pa4-PL; Pa24-PL; Pa29-BL), Hospital (Pa24-PL; Pa34-CL), Aqueduct/water safety (Pa4-PL)
Table 8.7 Interviewees’ comments on the community resilience of Padua.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>In-between</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Slow city (Pa24-PL; Pa29-BL; Pa30-CL; Pa35-ML) *</td>
<td>• Somewhat resilient, as it can do more (Pa25-ML; Pa36-CL; Pa37-ML) *</td>
<td>• Good at responding (Pa4-PL; Pa23-PL; Pa24-PL; Pa26-CL; Pa27-ML; Pa30-CL; Pa32-CL; Pa36-CL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-centred (Pa23-PL; Pa37-ML)</td>
<td>• Very good potentialities that it needs to develop (Pa25-ML; Pa36-CL; Pa37-ML) *</td>
<td>• It is resilient (Pa4-PL; Pa27-ML; Pa30-CL; Pa31-PL; Pa33-ML) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• City that struggles to change (Pa36-CL) *</td>
<td>• At the institutional level, less able to respond well (Pa24-PL) *</td>
<td>• Stand up and solve problems (Pa23-PL; Pa31-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Difficult time and context (Pa34-CL)</td>
<td>• Good response slowed down by social media and distrust (Pa25-ML)</td>
<td>• Vibrant and active community who contributes to solving crisis (Pa30-CL; Pa32-CL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inability to make decisions because the “city” changes opinions a lot (Pa24-PL) *</td>
<td>• Socio-cultural differences in community/social structures (Pa32-CL)</td>
<td>• Different PA over time able to respond to crisis (Pa32-CL) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of common goal/dialogue among leaders (Pa37-ML) *</td>
<td>• It has the capability to adapt and overcome crisis, more than being resilient (Pa32-CL) *</td>
<td>• Good PL in these latest years (Pa33-ML) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Needs to work on and develop more relationships (Pa37-ML)</td>
<td>• At the institutional level, less able to respond well (Pa24-PL) *</td>
<td>• Good synergy among different leaderships (Pa35-ML) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People always complain about something (Pa36-CL)</td>
<td>• Good response slowed down by social media and distrust (Pa25-ML)</td>
<td>• It has the resources to overcome crisis (Pa33-ML) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem of contentiousness (Pa36-CL) *</td>
<td>• Socio-cultural differences in community/social structures (Pa32-CL)</td>
<td>• It has all antibodies and characteristics to be resilient (Pa30-CL) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem of timing (Pa35-ML)*</td>
<td>• It has the capability to adapt and overcome crisis, more than being resilient (Pa32-CL) *</td>
<td>• It is able to work together at the civic level, less at the business level (Pa24-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Problem of changes of PL (Pa35-ML)*</td>
<td>• At the institutional level, less able to respond well (Pa24-PL) *</td>
<td>• It was able to deal with economic problems (Pa4-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Too many divisions (Pa29-BL) *</td>
<td>• Good response slowed down by social media and distrust (Pa25-ML)</td>
<td>• Higher tendency to innovation (Pa25-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Very volatile (Pa24-PL)</td>
<td>• Socio-cultural differences in community/social structures (Pa32-CL)</td>
<td>• Positive atmosphere (Pa31-PL) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weak sense of innovation (Pa32-CL) *</td>
<td>• It has the capability to adapt and overcome crisis, more than being resilient (Pa32-CL) *</td>
<td>• Quick response of PA (Pa31-PL) *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Positive atmosphere (Pa31-PL) *</td>
<td>• True strength of Padua as it is capable to address and deal with situations (Pa26)</td>
<td>• Smart community (Pa37-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Very quick in getting over problems (Pa23)</td>
<td>• Very quickly in getting over problems (Pa26)</td>
<td>• Strong community’s social network/relationships. (Pa4-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: //</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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What stands out in Table 8.6 and Table 8.7 is the almost opposite perception of the infrastructure and community resilience. In fact, when discussing the former, interviewees mainly emphasised its negative aspects or those elements which challenge it, in particular its slowness, and its inability to respond to needs and to fully exploit its potentialities. In contrast, when discussing the community resilience, interviewees mainly remarked its positive characteristics, especially its ability to being resilient, to respond well to crisis, to stand up and solve problems, and its vibrant and active character. Still, this positiveness was not considered as being enough to make Padua perceived as a resilient city. Some interviewees emphasised two critical characteristics of the city and its community that challenge the city’s urban resilience, namely its contentiousness and self-centrism. Pa36-CL and Pa37-ML explained this effectively:

«In this sense, Padua is very difficult. It has great resources, some exceptional energies and things, even historically, but it is unable to explode, in a positive way, and hence to adapt, to develop well, just because there is this contentiousness quite widespread, at both small and large scales» (Pa36-CL).

«Padua is potentially resilient because it has the infrastructures and it has the resources do build new ones able to perform even better, and there is a smart community because its ability to express itself in opinion movements is another enabling element. Because a smart city to be such must have smart citizens... and this city is potentially very smart, very developed, and hence it's a city that has an inner resilience, as a characteristic trait. It is not able yet to convey it because it is curbed by this self-centred approach, in my opinion» (Pa37-ML)
These two traits of Paduan character can be very well observed in the two common examples made by interviewees to describe the infrastructure resilience, and indirectly some community attitudes that challenge it: the tram and the hospital and the long debates around their design and build. As Pa29-BL put it, talking about the tram:

«There are the political leadership and part of the civic/community leadership that strongly desire this tram, then there is a part of the business leadership and another part of the civic/community leadership that really don’t want this tram. Therefore... theoretically this idea of collective leadership is important, but it is not always achievable. I mean, some environmentalist groups say “if the tram passes across the park, it ruins the green area, the park, ancient trees...”, whereas other groups, environmentalist as well, argue “yes, we have to do some works in the park, but we get a thousand cars off the road per day”. These are two different perspectives, but we are always talking about environmentalist and environmentalist. Then, businessmen say “but if the tram passes here, you remove all parking, you close the roads and we can’t have clients...” whereas other says “yes, yes, do it, so that our buildings increase in values”. These are different point of views» (Pa29-BL).

In line with this comment, Pa24-PL remarked:

«Beyond if one position is right or the other, you have a debate that is sclerotic and that doesn’t resolve the problem. And what is equally negative is the public opinion that results from this, which is not driven by merit, but on the side that the community takes from time to time» (Pa24-PL).
These findings, and especially the different amount of negative and positive comments about infrastructure resilience, turned on an interesting discussion among participants in the focus group. They questioned whether the collected comments effectively represented reality, especially in comparison with Peterborough’s findings (described in the next section). In fact, they were surprised to see the tendency of mainly commenting on the negative aspects of infrastructures instead of the positive ones, which in their opinion were widely present in the city. Different explanations were offered by participants to explain this attitude:

1. Excessive criticism (PaFG8-CL);
2. Tendency of taking (good) infrastructures for granted (PaFG1-PL);
3. Difficulties in understanding complexity (PaFG6-ML);
4. Tendency to look at one’s own backyard (PaFG8-CL).

However, even though the majority of participants recognised that more positive comments on the infrastructure resilience capabilities could have been made, it was not possible to understand whether these potentially added positive aspects were enough to balance the negative ones, still widely accepted by participants. For example, PaFG6-ML explicitly considered Padua’s infrastructure on the resilience side, whereas PaFG3-CL strongly emphasised a further element that threat its resilience capabilities: the general aversion to change (and related attacks to who wants and acts for changes). They made the following comments:

«If we look at the comment “it has all antibodies and characteristics to be resilient”, well, I am totally convinced of this, that Padua has these characteristics. (...) It’s true
that we’d like to already have the new line of the tram, we’d like to already have the solution for the hospital, but these are decision-making mechanisms that have particular needs. But I believe that the organisation of the city, and hence a certain type of governance, a certain type of organisations, can create the conditions to make this city truly resilient. And we did see that even during quite traumatic events. If the city hadn’t been resilient, we would have had more dysfunctions and problems that we had. Because this is a city that reacts and reacts promptly and restore promptly the living conditions. These capabilities probably don’t get enough credit and are not shown enough in the table and merit to be qualified differently. Perhaps I am equally guilty for not having emphasised enough them... [general laughs of other participants] but I totally think that the city is resilient because, having to deal with emergencies every time they happen, I had the cognisance of the ability of the city to react, even in a constructive way» (PaFG6-ML).

«I think that this negative perception of infrastructures is partly due to the fact that Padua is paying for a policy of many years of careless for the environment, and where the road system has been carried out, in my opinion, with a very short-term vision, without foresight, and therefore, now, who has to deal with this situation has to solve problems made in the past. (...) To any attempt to remedy the situation, everyone saying “oh, no, don’t dare!”... even at the beginning, when it came to pedestrianising the city centre, what a tragedy! By trade associations and by Via Roma. It was the end of the world. Now, it’s the living room of the city, it’s liveable. Hence, these changes in Padua are difficult, because when someone wants to do something, instead of being supported, is attacked. This is chronic and, in my opinion, it’s one of the problems of the city» (PaFG3-CL)
For what concerns the community resilience, it is revealing the comment made by PaFG4-ML during the focus group:

«For example, for the community resilience part, I recognise quite well both the negative and positive comments, meaning that, in my opinion, as we have just observed, even at the business level where there is a strong focus on one’s own core business and similar, but, on the other hand, it’s also true that this is an active city, when we think at the voluntary organisation, at the initiatives, there are a lot… Perhaps they are dispersed, perhaps they are not coordinated, but there are surely a lot… and therefore there is a kind of double soul. It’s a city that sometimes is hostile but also very hospitable, even towards immigrants, emarginated people. At least for my experience, as Paduan, I’ve always lived in Padua, I see both these characteristics, I couldn’t say that one prevails the other. Therefore, it is a city that really has potentialities, this is for sure, it has a lot and very good ones, then sometimes we are not able to exploit them appropriately» (PaFG4-ML).

8.4.2 Peterborough

The mean score for the perceived urban resilience capabilities of Peterborough was 3.5, corresponding to “normal resilience” according to the BRS score interpretation (B. W. Smith et al., 2013) and to “somewhat resilient” according to the rating scale used for interviews’ coding. Following the same process adopted for Padua’s analysis, the mean score was found calculating the average between the perceived infrastructure resilience
(i.e. 3.5) and the perceived community resilience (i.e. 3.5). Table 8.8 below displays all values and related interpretation.

**Table 8.8 Perceived urban resilience in Peterborough.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>BSR score interpretation</th>
<th>Interview’s coding interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure resilience</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Normal resilience</td>
<td>Somewhat resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Resilience</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Normal resilience</td>
<td>Somewhat resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Resilience (avg)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Normal resilience</td>
<td>Somewhat resilient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 8.8 above shows, the average levels of infrastructure resilience and community resilience are the same. These results describe a city that has developed some resilient capabilities, but where there is still room for improvement, as comments made during interviews and focus groups also show. Similarly to Padua’s analysis, Table 8.9 and Table 8.10 in the next pages summarise these comments according to their negative, neutral or positive character.
Table 8.9 Interviewees’ comments on the infrastructure resilience of Peterborough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>In-between</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A bit limited (Pe23-CL)</td>
<td>• Room for improvement (Pe21-ML; Pe22-ML; Pe23-CL; Pe24-PL)*</td>
<td>• Growing city (Pe11-PL; Pe15-ML; Pe17-ML; Pe19-CL; Pe26-ML; Pe27-ML; Pe28-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Big infrastructures bad at responding quickly (Pe13-CL)</td>
<td>• Somewhat resilient but it can be improved (Pe12-ML; Pe13-CL; Pe14-ML)*</td>
<td>• Good transports/roads system (Pe14; Pe15; Pe17; Pe26; Pe27; Pe28-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contrasting policies (Pe3-CL)*</td>
<td>• Built for cars - but in future when there could be fewer cars? (Pe9-CL)</td>
<td>• Good geographical location (Pe15-ML; Pe17-ML; Pe20-ML; Pe26-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial issues (Pe18-CL)*</td>
<td>• Financial issues as a catalyst for creativity (Pe3-CL)*</td>
<td>• Delivered/planned in a good way (Pe11-PL; Pe15-ML; Pe27-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inability to fully exploit the potentialities of the city (Pe20-ML)*</td>
<td>• Financial issues challenge resilient capabilities (Pe12-ML)*</td>
<td>• It is resilient (Pe11-PL; Pe26-ML; Pe27-ML)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not resilient (Pe20-ML)*</td>
<td>• Hard to wait for the big institutions to lead on it (Pe13-CL)*</td>
<td>• Some very good infrastructures (Pe14-ML; Pe17-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Struggles with its sense of identity (Pe9-CL)*</td>
<td>• Infrastructure resilience driven by city leaders (Pe17-ML)</td>
<td>• Built well (Pe9-CL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It has resilience but probably not the right one (Pe22-ML)*</td>
<td>• Building houses (Pe19-CL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• It has to be resilient with the number of people from all over the world moving in the city (Pe24-PL)*</td>
<td>• City’s economy relatively stable (Pe27-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More resilient than 10/15 years ago (Pe14-ML)*</td>
<td>• Cheap houses (Pe15-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Not as resilient as it could be (Pe21-ML)*</td>
<td>• Excellent city (Pe15-ML)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Resilience depends on lots of factors (Pe15-ML)*</td>
<td>• Forward-looking city (Pe15-ML)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The city leadership network is not advanced or developed as it should be (Pe21-ML)*</td>
<td>• Good level of employability (Pe26-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Good response (Pe25-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Good PL and direction (Pe27-ML)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Good communications (Pe27-ML)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Good expansion plan (Pe28-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• It has adapted (Pe26-ML)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• It is struggling, is under pressure, but it is coping (Pe11-PL)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• It survived the economic crisis (Pe27-ML)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
City Leaders, Relationships and Urban Resilience

(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>In-between</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• PL and ML enormously helpful and good in building resilience (Pe19-CL)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Political leadership’s vision (Pe27-BL)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Political culture of &quot;how can we make it happen&quot; rather than &quot;how can we stop that happening&quot; (Pe15-BL)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The infrastructure is adapting, changing and improving (Pe17-ML)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Very resilient (Pe19-CL)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Very mature planning and hence crisis management (Pe25-PL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vibrant investments (Pe27-BL)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples: Roads/transport (Pe11-PL; Pe14-ML; Pe15-BL; Pe17-ML; Pe26-ML; Pe27-BL; Pe28-PL), Schools (Pe11-PL), Hospital (Pe11-PL), Gigabyte web service (Pe11-PL)
Table 8.10 Interviewees’ comments on the community resilience of Peterborough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>In-between</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Contrasting policies (Pe3-CL)*<br>• Concerns about the level of immigration and consequent pressure on services (Pe27-BL)<br>• Financial issues (Pe18-CL)*<br>• Get tired of growth (Pe11-PL)<br>• Inability to fully exploit the potentialities of the city (Pe20-BL)*<br>• Lack of community voice and structure (Pe18-CL)<br>• Not resilient (Pe20-BL)*<br>• Passive mode (Pe13-CL)<br>• Poverty, crime, racism (Pe18-CL)<br>• People feel left behind (Pe18-CL)<br>• Problem of very diversity of the community and of trying to work together (Pe23-CL)<br>• Problems of integration with newly arrived communities (Pe25-PL)<br>• Struggles with its sense of identity (Pe9-CL)*<br>• Suffered from dormitory nature of the city (in respect to London) (Pe28-PL) | • Cohesion (Pe12-ML; Pe13-CL; Pe14-ML; Pe19-CL; Pe25-PL; Pe27-BL)<br>• Room for improvement (Pe21-BL; Pe22-BL; Pe23-CL; Pe24-PL)*<br>• Working on it/Work in progress (Pe13-CL; Pe17-ML)<br>• Somewhat resilient (Pe13-CL; Pe14-ML)*<br>• Also depends on infrastructures (Pe12-ML)<br>• Financial issues as a catalyst for creativity (Pe3-CL)*<br>• Financial issues challenge resilient capabilities (Pe12-ML)*<br>• Hard to wait for the big institutions to lead on it (Pe13-CL)*<br>• It has resilience but probably not the right one (Pe22-BL)*<br>• It has to be resilient with the number of people from all over the world moving into the city (Pe24-PL)*<br>• More resilient than 10/15 years ago (Pe14-ML)<br>• Not as resilient as it could be (Pe21-BL)*<br>• React to pressure brought by growth and immigration (Pe11-PL)<br>• Resilience depends on lot of factors (Pe15BL)*<br>• Quite difficult because people face different treads at different levels (Pe9-CL) | • It is resilient (Pe11-PL; Pe12-ML; Pe26-ML; Pe27-BL; Pe28-PL)*<br>• It has welcome new communities (Pe26-ML; Pe27-BL)
Very resilient (Pe3-CL; Pe19-CL)*<br>• Better than it used to be (Pe23-CL)<br>• Diverse ethnic community that gets on well (Pe15-BL)<br>• Excellent city (Pe15-BL)*<br>• Forward-looking (Pe15-BL)*<br>• Good communications (Pe27-BL)*<br>• Good PL and direction (Pe27-BL)*<br>• Good relationships and collaboration within communities (Pe14-ML)<br>• Huge volunteering (Pe3-CL)
It has adapted (Pe26-ML)*<br>• It is struggling, is under pressure, but it is coping (Pe11-PL)*<br>• It survived the economic crisis (Pe27-BL)*<br>• PL’s vision (Pe27-BL)*<br>• PL and ML enormously helpful and good in building resilience (Pe19-CL)*
• Political culture of "how can we make it happen" rather than "how can we stop that happening" (Pe15-BL)*<br>• Proactive activities (Pe27-BL) |

*(continued)*
Negative | In-between | Positive
---|---|---
- Slightly less resilient than infrastructures (Pe27-BL)
- Some areas are resilient, some are not (Pe25-PL)
- The city leadership network is not advanced or developed as it should be (Pe21-BL)*
- They do not have many options - to not be resilient (Pe3-CL)

What stands out in Table 8.9 and Table 8.10 is the wide range of positive comments about the infrastructure resilience of the city. In contrast, the community resilience is equally perceived as uncertain (i.e. neutral comments) and positive. Still, in both cases, interviewees and focus group participants remarked that there is still room for improvement.

From the infrastructure point of view, the city was described as a growing city, well located geographically and well delivered, and with a good transport and road system. In particular, this latter feature was often given as an example of the high level of the city infrastructures, such as the train connections with London and other big cities. However, during the focus group, some participants were critical of it and its functioning within the city, arguing, for example, that it’s very difficult to cross the city from the North (PeFG4-PL), that the bus network is quite inefficient and requires a new strategy (PeFG6-BL),...
that the transport system is not planned for being sustainable and environmentally-friendly (PeFG2-CL; PeFG6-BL).

From the community point of view, it is interesting that some interviewees (Pe12-ML; Pe13-CL; Pe14-ML; Pe19-CL; Pe25-PL; Pe27-BL) referred to the concept of cohesion when discussing community resilience. As Pe25-PL said:

«I think it has to be cohesive first than it can be resilient. And I don't think it is as cohesive as it could be. Although it's not in any way a racist or a challenging environment, it's just people haven't learned to collaborate together because they are so newly arrived» (Pe25-PL).

However, different perceptions about the level of cohesion of the city emerged. On the one hand, the city and community were perceived as very cohesive, and several participants referred to the EDL march to give an example of this good community capability and, accordingly, its high level of resilience. Pe12-ML described the event as follows:

«In Peterborough, one of the big things we are really proud of is when there's been... have you heard of the English Defence League, have you? English Defence League. It's a group of people very anti-people that are not British, and they go in demonstrating in cities [xxx]. Within Peterborough we had the EDL come about two or three times and we all stood, all of us, these people [pointing to the four categories of city leadership] have stood together to say “actually you are not welcome in the city”. And, basically, we've pushed them out and we never had a riot or anything. So, we've only known they were coming, we all work and came together
[xxx]. But we all worked together to say actually we stand together, with our community and that shows that we do work together in that respect. So, I do think we do. I am very proud of that» (Pe12-ML).

On the other hand, other participants highlighted the loss of this capability. Two comments, in particular, are quite revealing:

«But, you know, everybody gets tired with it [the growth]. And when the pressure is on services and the indigenous community believe that they are suffering because services can't cope with the extra pressure that's brought by immigration and growth, then you get reactions. And Peterborough is no different to anywhere else. People walk and blame as Peterborough was one of the highest voted for Brexit than anywhere in the country. Because 30% of the community of Peterborough is immigrant. 30%. And I think people are only just beginning to understand what this Brexit means. Now they're beginning to understand and it's gonna be very painful» (Pe11-PL).

«I think we're becoming less resilient and I don't think that is just about austerity. I think that's about inclusion, and I don't mean, you know, race, I mean generally across the piece. It's about voices not being heard» (PeFG3-CL).

These two opposite views about the community cohesion and the shared perception that it could be improved led to the introduction of a further theme that emerged during an interview, namely the idea of right resilience. Pe22-BL explained it as follows:
«It is, it has resilience, without a doubt. Is it truly resilient? Probably not. It has to be resilient in that principle, it's a bit where it is currently, but it is the right resilience, does it have the right focus on what and where it needs to be, is somebody driving that, is it understood by people? Potentially not enough, potentially not at all, and therefore to get to that holistic resilience, more needs to be done. But it couldn't function without an element of resilience. Cause it would be too desperate. And it's not desperate and if I painted the picture that it's desperate, it's not. it is just not fully connected. (Pe22-BL)

Finally, a surprising element on which the focus group's participants decided to draw their attention while discussing resilience was the city's difficulty in creating a sense of identity. The comment was originally made by Peg-CL during an interview:

«I think there is a real sense of community and a sense of identity in Manchester. I think people identify with that and are proud of that and there is that sense of belonging. I don't get that same sense in Peterborough, and I don't know if there was one disaster or one incident whether the people would come together in that same way, and that would instil a sense of community. I don't know anything in the past that has happened to the city that has made the after react in... which is a good thing. But one of the things that the city leadership forum goes back to often is that Peterborough struggles with its identity. So, internally, people within the city often moan about it saying that is not a nice place to live or it's got a lot of social problems or lots of different things which happen everywhere. And the external, the kind of branding or the marketing of Peterborough, isn't very strong. It's in the middle of the country, it's not Northern, it's not Southern, it's not near the coast... it's sort of
somewhere in the middle. And this kind of issue with its identity comes up a lot. So, I think, unlike somewhere like Manchester or Glasgow that have really strong identities, London, Milan... there're places where people can picture whereas I think people struggle to think what is Peterborough about, what it's got» (Pe9-CL).

While dealing with this element of sense of identity, it's remarkable how focus group participants went over again some key elements emerged from the urban resilience discussion, namely the good infrastructures of the city, the uncertain community cohesion and resilience, the interdependence of the two. The conversation is fully represented here to emphasise participants’ voices and reflections, and not my interpretation of them (see Section 8.4).

PeFG7-BL: «Personally, I thought it was a good reflection. And the one that stands out for me is 'sense of identity'. I am not sure we've quite coped there and I think we were further down the track of having this sense of identity and vision, 5/10 years ago. [PeFG8-CL: I agree with that]. Whereas now I am not sure what Peterborough is for. I think we should have one»

PeFG4-PL: «Somebody said to me very recently "what is one single thing that you would pick, you will say I would go to Peterborough for...". I couldn't answer him. And I think what PeFG7-BL has just said is a real issue. We are very good at lots and lots and lots of things, that's the reality. As far as resilient is concerned, we are miles ahead from other cities, that's the reality. (...) If you look at our infrastructure, which includes not just roads and rounds but everything, the only comment I would make is we're not probably building enough homes yet. That will happen, it's just a question
of time. But the rest of it, look at it: we've got gigabit city (...), Cambridge would buy your arm off to have the road infrastructure that we've got. Again, if one wants to be really critical, you'd say that crossing the city to the North isn't as good as it could be and that really need to be sorted, but how on earth you do that now? It should have been done 20 years ago. Now, it would be a real issue».

PeFG3-CL: «I would argue that I think we're so far removed from what is happening on the ground in the community that we are not really aware of how resilient people are on the ground. My experience on the ground is that the EDL march was stopped but actually it's happening but people don't have a voice so it's not coming through you, you're not hearing it because there haven't the opportunities and the spaces for people to express their fears in the city. [...]».

PeFG7-BL: «I think everything PeFG4-PL said is accurate [PeFG8_CL: I agree with that], but I do agree with PeFG3-CL, I think we come off boiled, we had a lot of that and this is where we could sit by austerity, or I keep going back to PeFG5-CL point, it really resonates me, what are we going to do about it then? It's not down to what the council is doing about it, it's not the point. It's...«

PeFG4-PL + PeFG7-BL: «... what we are doing about it».

PeFG5-CL: «I think there is also the need for, I mean, a more holistic approach, where we're looking at the broad pieces in terms of the quality of life [xxx]. So much emphasis is being put on big infrastructure, on PeFG4-PL point, these things are really good, but actually the impact on lived experiences for a lot of people have made no difference in what so ever. There's still I remember an issue of time [xxx].
How do you get those things? The repositioning of Peterborough in terms of whether it's cultural tourism or whether it is just looking up place mocking, but it's horrible at doing that. Our tourism strategies, they don't exist, and actually that gives us, bring back the talk about what is great about Peterborough externally. I think we felt terribly on that.

### 8.4.3 Comparison

Table 8.11 below summarises and compares the main elements that emerged in the previous sections.

**Table 8.11 Comparison of perceived urban resilience of Padua and Peterborough.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infrastructure resilience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>More negative</td>
<td>More positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main example</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Resilience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Contradictory</td>
<td>Contradictory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main example</td>
<td>//</td>
<td>EDL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban Resilience (avg)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean score</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSR score interpretation</td>
<td>Normal resilience</td>
<td>Normal resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews’ coding interpretation</td>
<td>work-in-progress resilience-positive side</td>
<td>Somewhat resilient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 8.11 shows, the difference between the urban resilience mean scores of the two cities is very small. Also, even though the BRS score interpretation (B. W. Smith et al., 2008) considers them at the same level of resilience, the scale used for interviews’ coding points out some divergences, in line with the comments made during interviews and focus groups. The main differences refer to the infrastructure resilience: whereas Padua’s participants were more critical and negative, Peterborough’s ones were more praised and positive. This was well represented in both the rating score and the comments received. Still, similarities between the two cities also emerged. In both cities, participants tended to give examples about the transport system when commenting the infrastructure resilience, and, especially, they tended to delineate a contradictory city community, one with a ‘double soul’, using PaFG₄-ML’s words.

### 8.5 Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to explore the perceived urban resilience in the two investigated cities and interesting findings emerged. However, it is important to first reflect on two methodological choices. First, the decision to focus on the two meta-systems of infrastructure and community resulted in an appropriate and valuable choice: it enabled to draw participants’ attention on these two different yet interrelated aspects of their city, but without narrowing too down the discussion referring to specific sub-systems that participants might be unfamiliar with. Also, it enabled interviewees and participants in focus groups to drive the discussion to the city aspects that they considered more critical or worthy of attention, in a place-based logic (Meerow et al.,
Second, the adoption of a MM approach proved to be crucial in investigating the perceived urban resilience. In fact, the BRS confirmed to be a valuable tool to start the conversation and analysis of the investigated phenomenon, but its results had poor meaning without the combination of the qualitative material. The rating scale developed and used in this chapter attempted to reduce the limitation in the score interpretation, but it is clear that further research on urban resilience measures is necessary.

Focusing now on findings, the most obvious one to emerge from the analysis is the different perception of infrastructure resilience between the two cities: whereas Peterborough’s interviewees mainly highlighted the positive aspects of the infrastructure systems, Padua’s ones tended to focus on their negative aspects. In fact, Peterborough was mainly described as a growing city, well delivered and planned and with good infrastructures, whereas Padua as a slow city, weak, unable to respond to needs and to have a shared, long-term (political) vision.

Looking at similarities between the two cities, a compelling finding is the contradictory nature of communities that was perceived in both cities. Communities of both cities were perceived as having two opposite souls, one resilient-enabling, the other resilience-limiting: communities were described as being active and vibrant and able to work together and collaborate in case of necessity or crisis (resilient-enabling), yet they were also described as self-centric and contentious, in Padua, and less inclusive and without a voice in Peterborough (resilient-limiting). However, this double nature of communities might not be negative since it could actually represent the nature of resilient systems, who activate certain adaptive and transformative capabilities only when necessary. Still, this double nature cannot be considered totally positive either,
given the general perception, in both cities, that communities could do more and be more resilient.

Also, it was surprising to observe the different perceived role of city leaders in influencing urban resilience. Participants seemed to recognise a stronger influence of city leaders over the infrastructure resilience than the community one. Interviewees and participants in the focus groups tended to clearly refer (even if briefly) to the role of these actors when commenting the infrastructure resilience, since these actors design, build and/or manage the main city infrastructures. In contrast, comments on community resilience primarily focused on the inner character of communities and inhabitants, and only some Peterborough’s participants (mainly PL and ML) emphasised the potential influence of city leadership when describing the projects implemented to foster community cohesion. A possible explanation for this might be that infrastructure resilience is linked to engineering resilience and resilient urban planning (e.g. Alderson et al., 2015; Marcus & Colding, 2014; Ouyang et al., 2012; Pickett et al., 2004) and thereby the impact that leadership and governance processes have on it is more direct and evident and draws stronger attention than the one on community resilience. This latter, in fact, is more emotional and psychological (e.g. Berkes & Ross, 2013; De Bruijne et al., 2010; Mayer, 2019; Oliveira & Morais, 2018), mainly depends on the individuals belonging to the community, and it could be only partially (or indirectly) influenced by city leaders. In fact, they could only try to provide the tools and structures to foster community resilience. Also, they could usually focus only on a part or aspect of the city community, in line with their priorities, policies, and available funds. This supports the importance given to the third resilience question: (community) resilience for whom? (Hambleton, 2015a; Lebel et al., 2006).
Finally, it is important to remark that participants in both cities recognised a *room for improvement* in the resilient capabilities of their city, both from an infrastructure and community points of view.

### 8.6 Chapter summary

This chapter aimed at providing an answer to sRQ3 and hence investigate the perceived urban resilience of the two investigated cities.

The chapter started with a review of the literature on the topic and a deeper description of the methodology used, mainly based on the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS - B. W. Smith et al., 2008). Then, findings were presented and discussed. In particular, both similarities and differences between the two cities emerged from the analysis. The main difference concerned the perception of infrastructure resilience, generally perceived more positively in Peterborough than in Padua. Conversely, community resilience was perceived positively in the two cities despite the recognition of two contrasting souls of communities, one resilience-enabling and one resilience-limiting. Also, participants tended to remark that ‘more can be done’ for the urban resilience of both cities.
Re-combining the three elements underpinning the thesis

9.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, I explored, separately, the three elements underpinning this thesis: the identification of city leaders (Chapter 6), the relationships that exist among the four categories of city leaders (Chapter 7), and the perceived urban resilience of the two investigated cities (Chapter 8). The aim of this chapter is to combine the key findings that emerged in these three themed chapters in order to address the mRQ: how might the CLN (actors and relationships) influence the perceived urban resilient capabilities? Also, the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis (see Chapter 3 and Figure 3.1 reproduced below from page 29) is revisited in light of the findings.

Reproduction of Figure 3.1 The conceptual framework underpinning this thesis. First placed on page 29.
9.2 Limitations

A number of limitations need to be noted regarding this study. First, this thesis is limited by the small sample of participants, especially of BL in Padua. In fact, only 37 city leaders were involved in Padua and 29 in Peterborough, out of respectively 52 and 44 identified city leaders (see Chapter 6). However, this was not due to a paucity of attempts in involving them: all identified city leaders were indeed approached and invited to participate in the study. In particular, the low involvement of business leaders in Padua (only 2 out of 37 participants) is likely to have affected the evaluation of the CLN of the city, of the perceived urban resilience and of the potential influence of the former on the latter. Indeed, BL’s voice is missing in Padua’s investigation. This also affected the comparison of the two cities, especially the analysis of relationships from and towards business leaders. Such weakness does not apply to the Peterborough’s case, where participants represented the four CLA in a more balanced way. This limitation was discussed during the two focus groups to see whether participants could provide a plausible explanation to it, given their better knowledge of the city’s context and its leaders. In Padua, the following comments were made:

PaFG3-CL: perhaps because there is a tendency to not participate in the civic life of the city, they’re too busy on their personal things or there is no willingness to expose themselves.

PaFG6-ML: I think some sectors of society tend to self-reference and hence they tend to avoid facing projects like this, which put in discussion a system of relationships which is taken for granted or overlooked.
PaFG7-ML: Well, the economic sector in Veneto is poorly participative in these initiatives. Entrepreneurs are focused on activities, outcomes, and these research projects are treated with scepticism because either they bring profit to the company or they are ignored.

PaFG1-PL: Maybe the business sector considers research as something of little relevance. I almost feel like there is contempt of research as considered....

PaFG1-PL + PaFG3-CL: ...a waste of time.

On the contrary, in Peterborough, participants in the focus groups commented as follows:

PeFG4-PL: Here businesses are probably more community-spirited.

PeFG3-CL: So, there's quite a lot of opportunities in the city for leaders to come together here. So, maybe, it's something that people here are more used to doing.

The second limitation of this study is also related to participants. More specifically, it is important to bear in mind the possible bias of the findings. As discussed in Chapter 3, no participants explicitly disagreed with the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis. It is, therefore, possible that people disagreeing with it simply did not participate in the study and thereby the thesis lack this contrasting voice.
Third, methodological limitations deserve attention. Even though the MM approach was adopted rigorously and all traditional methods’ weaknesses were treated carefully and reduced where possible, the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods always requires caution. The quantitative components were less developed than the qualitative ones, both because of the nature of this thesis (explorative) and the low number of participants. Yet, it cannot be denied the usefulness of this approach, which can truly enable a deeper investigation of the phenomenon under study. A clear example is the use of the BRS to assess the perception of urban resilience: without the qualitative material collected, its results could have been misinterpreted. Also, the adaptation of the BRS can be questionable since it was tested to be used on the people resilience and not the place one.

Finally, the exploratory nature of this thesis and the focus on only two cases embedded in two different contexts (Italy and the UK) might have generated hardly transferable findings, despite the intriguing similarities observed across cases.

9.3 The re-combination of the three elements

Previous studies (e.g. Beinecke, 2009; Bristow & Healy, 2014b; J. Bryson & Crosby, 2017; Schlappa, 2017; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018) already emphasised the impact of collective and collaborative leadership on the capabilities of places to be resilient and therefore grow and survive in face of crisis and address wicked problems. This influence was also recognised by participants in this project while discussing the conceptual framework underpinning this thesis (see Chapter 3) and the perceived urban resilience
Re-combining the three elements underpinning the thesis

(see Chapter 9). The open question remains whether some specific elements of the CLN might have a stronger impact on urban resilience than others.

Given the exploratory nature of this thesis and the small number of participants representing each CLA, especially the BL arena of Padua, the discussion held here cannot provide generalisable or strongly significant results, but it can emphasise some surprising and thought-provoking findings.

Despite it is minimal, a difference in the perception of urban resilience between the two cities was observed, especially of the infrastructure resilience. This enabled to follow a basic practice in the exploration (and also explanation) of phenomena through comparison, namely to focus on conditions that vary across cases (hence, variables) instead of constants (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Accordingly, the three elements (and their features) of the CLN of both investigated cities were synthesised within a table, then compared, and finally, only the elements which varied across the two cities were taken into further consideration, as shown in Table 9.1 in the next page.
Table 9.1 Elements of the CLN that varied across the two cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. CITY LEADERS (CLA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>Outside Municipality</td>
<td>Within City Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. RELATIONSHIPS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>O (3.3)</td>
<td>U (6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-ML</td>
<td>O (3.1)</td>
<td>F (5.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-PL</td>
<td>F (5.3)</td>
<td>U (6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>F (5.0)</td>
<td>U (6.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>U (5.8)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Collaboration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-ML</td>
<td>O (3.0)</td>
<td>F (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>R/O (2.6)</td>
<td>U (5.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>R/O (2.5)</td>
<td>F (5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>R/O (2.4)</td>
<td>F (5.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-PL</td>
<td>O/S (3.4)</td>
<td>F/U (5.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-ML</td>
<td>O (2.8)</td>
<td>F (4.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>R (1.9)</td>
<td>F (4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Shared DM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-CL</td>
<td>R (1.9)</td>
<td>F (5.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. URBAN RESILIENCE</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure resilience</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before discussing what emerged from Table 9.1, two aspects need to be explained. For what concerns city leaders, only the ML arena was included in the table because it is the only one that clearly differed across the two cities and not because of contextual factors. In fact, as I discussed in Chapter 6, the main differences between the two cities resulted from the different context in which they are embedded. Once the contextual factors were removed from the analysis, what emerged was that in both cities:

- The PL arena was dominated by the political figurehead elected in the city;
- The BL arena was dispersed and mainly recognised in the hands of representative organisations and/or key companies;
- The CL arena was dispersed and mainly recognised in VSO/TSO and faith groups (the presence of community leadership in Peterborough and not in Padua was context-dependent).

Second, Table 9.1 shows one similar relationship across the two cities: effective communication between ML and PL. However, a careful look enables to observe a relevant difference in such relationship: in Padua, that relation is asymmetric (i.e. considered frequent from ML to PL but infrequent from PL to ML) and hence risky; in contrast, in Peterborough, the same relationship is symmetric (i.e. mutually considered frequent by both ML and PL) and hence more positive. As discussed in Chapter 7 the symmetry or asymmetry of a relationship might have important effects on the stability and strength of the relationships between the involved actors.

Now, a closer inspection of the whole above table shows two striking elements. First, all features which varied across cases involved ML, and hence the actors who design and
deliver public services and the relationships that these actors have with other city
leaders. Second, all relationships that varied across cities are infrequent in Padua (i.e. red
cells) and frequent in Peterborough (i.e. green cells). It is obviously improper to assume a
direct causal relationship between the ML arena (both actors and relationships) and
urban resilience, yet, considering Padua’s lower value of perceived urban resilience, it is
undeniable that these findings are rather intriguing. Also, in contrast to Peterborough,
Padua’s ML has been identified outside the Municipality, more specifically in the hands of
the Chamber of Commerce and the University. Therefore, the inability of the
Municipality and its senior officers to be identified and act as city leaders (and not only as
bureaucrats) and effectively interrelate with other city leaders might undermine the
efficiency of the CLN and, accordingly, its capability to foster urban resilience. After all,
these actors, leaders or not, have to be involved in all governance processes and policy-
making because of their function of concretely managing, delivering, implementing and
co-creating public policies and services. This supports the well-known debate over
leadership and management (e.g. Grint, 2002, 2010; Jackson & Parry, 2018; Zaleznik,
2004) and the fact that the two roles require different skills, have different functions and
aim at different objectives. Yet, it has been also recognised that both roles are crucial to
overcome crisis and that they do not exclude each other and could be actually enacted by
the same individual according to the problem that needs to be faced (Grint, 2010).
Therefore, a question that might be asked is why public managers within Padua’s
Municipality are acting as managers while the problems the city is facing require them to
be also leaders.
Also, the findings shown in Table 9.1 above might suggest that the effectiveness of the CLN could not depend only on the type of relationships among city leaders, but also on the quality and constancy of such relationships among specific types of city leaders. Therefore, it could not be only a matter of whether to communicate, collaborate or share decision-making, for example, but of the ability to make them habitual and continuous relationships.

Looking instead at similarities across cities (not shown in Table 9.1 but observed throughout the thesis), it emerged that PL and BL could be the other two decisive drivers in the development of effective CLN and urban resilience. The essential role of PL is undisputed and should not require further discussion: it was emphasised both in the literature reviewed and by participants. PL should indeed be the ones who co-built a vision for the city and create the environment to pursue it, especially by fostering the collective processes among different city leaders—and thereby promoting the relationships within the network—and who conceive and plan for the resilience of their city. Yet, some limitations of PL also emerged from the analysis, especially in Padua’s case:

- the very short-term vision of PL, usually depending on the potential discontinuity of the governing local party;
- the tendency to destroy or change what the previous governing local party has achieved or planned, mainly due to the tendency of contentiousness among political parties;
- the main aim of being re-elected and hence continuously being on political campaign, instead of aiming for the well-being of the city.
For what concerns BL, despite the recognition of their important role within the city and the CLN, the lack of relationships from and to BL were acknowledged by all categories of city leaders, as discussed in Chapter 7 (Relationships). Also, by listing in the same table all infrequent relationships emerged from the findings (see Appendix 5), most times these relationships involve BL. Therefore, also the ability to create more constant, regular, and mutual relationships with BL might improve the efficiency of the CLN, because all four actors would be actually interconnected and interrelated, not only theoretically or metaphorically.

9.4 The revisited conceptual framework

The conceptual framework underpinning this thesis resulted as a valuable guideline and support for this project, from its design to its discussion. However, in light of the findings that emerged from this work, it required some minor amendments to better contribute to the understanding of city leadership in future research.

More specifically, the novel version differs from the initial one in three aspects: two relates to the CLN, namely its actor and relationships; one to the addition of three external forces which do not depend on the CLN but strongly influence it: national government, place/environment, and the media. For what concerns the first two forces, they had already been considered throughout the development of this project, given its place-based approach, but following the discussion with some interviewees, it became necessary to insert them within the conceptual framework. The third force, namely the
media, was added because Italian participants gave to the media a crucial role, arguing that they strongly affect the perception of leadership and the effectiveness of both the relationships among city leaders and of the CLN itself. They indeed suggested to consider it as a fifth CLA or at least as an element that influences the CLN. Also, during the focus group in Peterborough, participants discussed the role of the media/the press and agreed on their influence, mostly negative, on the city and city leadership (see Chapter 3).

As regards the actors of the CLN, they were modified in two ways. First, PL was labelled in capital letters to emphasise its bigger influence and potential role as enabler or facilitator (e.g. Bolden et al., 2020) of the collective city leadership, as pointed out by several participants (see the previous section). Second, the fourth CLA was labelled ‘civic leadership’ to better represent the potential leaders belonging to and representing it (see Chapter 6 and Pagani et al., 2020).

Finally, the list of relationships to be taken into consideration for the development of urban resilience was slightly amended: the two relationships of sharing of information and good communication were aggregated (i.e. effective communication), and the level of formality-informality was changed with shared vision (see Chapter 7).

Figure 9.1 in the next page shows the revisited conceptual framework.
9.5 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on the recombination the three elements investigated in this thesis with the aim of addressing the mRQ: *how might the CLN (actors and relationships) influence the urban resilience?*

Given the exploratory nature of this thesis and the small number of participants representing each CLA, especially the BL arena of Padua, no generalisable or strongly significant results were provided, but surprising and thought-provoking findings were observed. In particular, three CLA emerged as critical elements:

- The ML arena (and its relationships with other actors) was the one that differed across cities and which might have tipped the balance in favour of a slightly higher perception of urban resilience in Peterborough.
• The PL arena was confirmed to be the most influential one within the CLN and participants invited to emphasise its central role.

• The BL arena, despite being recognised as important, seemed to be detached from the other arenas, as shown by the predominance of infrequent relationships from and towards other actors.

These findings, together with the comments discussed in Chapter 3, drove the revision of the conceptual framework.
10 Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the networked nature of city leadership from a PBL perspective. More specifically, it attempted to investigate what was called the City Leadership Network (CLN) and understand whether two of its elements, namely actors and relationships, have some influence over urban resilience. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the nature and limitations of this project did not allow to provide generalisable or strongly significant results and hence more research continues to be needed to fully understand city leadership. Still, the surprising and thought-provoking findings that emerged from this research can contribute to both theory and practice, and inspire future research. This chapter discusses in more details these concluding yet relevant aspects of the thesis, starting from the revision of the RQs underpinning this thesis.

10.1 Revisiting the research questions

This research project began with the aim of applying a PBL approach to investigate city leadership, especially by focusing on its networked nature. Accordingly, the idea of a metaphorical and semi-conscious City Leadership Network (called the CLN) was developed and used to formulate and address the RQs, which focused on the three main elements of the CLN: the actors (i.e. city leaders), the relationships occurring among actors, and the perceived urban resilience (i.e. the outcome of the network). The RQs are:
**mRQ: How might the CLN (actors and relationships) influence urban resilience?**

**sRQ1: Who are the city leaders from a PBL perspective?**

**sRQ2: Which relationships exist among city leaders?**

**sRQ3: How resilient is the city perceived?**

Each RQ was addressed and discussed in a specific chapter of this thesis and it is now briefly revisited.

In relation to the first sRQ (i.e. **sRQ1: Who are the city leaders from a PBL perspective?**), which was addressed in Chapter 6, the research found that the four CLA (and hence main categories of city leaders) were largely recognised in both cities. This support the argument that city leadership is collectively exercised by a plurality of actors which belong to different arenas and play different functions (Beer et al., 2019; Budd & Sancino, 2016b; Hambleton, 2014; Pagani et al., 2020; Sotarauta & Beer, 2017): political leaders (PL), managerial leaders (ML), business leaders (BL) and civic leaders (CL). Also, even though some differences in the identification of city leaders were observed, mainly due to contextual factors, interesting similar patterns emerged from the comparison of the two cities. As regards the differences, a compelling result is the divergent perception of where ML is exercised, namely outside the Municipality in Padua but within the City Hall in Peterborough. As regards the similarities, in both cities the BL and CL arenas were perceived as influencing the city, but in a fragmented and dispersed way that resulted in the recognition of representative (or umbrella) organisations as key actors. Also, in both
cities, the PL arena was dominated by the political figurehead of the local government, supported by the leadership role of the cabinet and, to some extent, of the council.

Turning now to the second sRQ (i.e. sRQ2: Which relationships exist among city leaders?), which was addressed in Chapter 7, the research confirmed the multiplexity of relationships, namely the acknowledgement that multiple relationships co-occur among the same actors (Shipilov et al., 2014; White et al., 2016). Also, it was observed the complexity of relationships occurring among city leaders. The overcome of the dichotomy of formal-informal relationships was suggested to focus more on other types of relationships (e.g. substantial, effective ones). Then, trust and good communication emerged as essential relationships whereas the others taken into considerations (e.g. collaboration, participation, flexibility, and shared decision making) were hardly put in place. Finally, it was observed that a critical aspect is represented by the actors among which the relationships occur more than the type or frequency of the relationships themselves. For example, BL emerged as the less interrelated actors of the CLN: relationships from and towards them were indeed the more infrequent ones.

As regards the third sRQ (i.e. sRQ3: How resilient is the city perceived?), which was addressed in Chapter 8, the thesis considered and investigated the perceived level of resilience under two lenses: infrastructure resilience and community resilience. The research found both similarities and differences between the two cities. The main difference concerned the perception of infrastructure resilience, generally perceived more positively in Peterborough than in Padua. Conversely, community resilience was
perceived positively in the two cities despite the recognition of two contrasting souls of communities, one resilience-enabling and one resilience-limiting. Also, participants tended to remark that ‘more can be done’ for the urban resilience of both cities.

Finally, the main RQ (i.e. \textit{mRQ: How might the CLN (actors and relationships) influence urban resilience?}) was addressed in Chapter 9 in light of the findings emerged addressing the three sRQs (see above). Given the exploratory nature of this thesis and the small number of participants representing each CLA, especially the BL arena of Padua, it is not possible to argue that results are sufficiently generalisable or significant to provide a robust answer to this RQ, but some surprising and thought-provoking findings can be emphasised and inspire future research. In particular, despite the recognised central role of PL, ML and BL emerged as the critical actors within the CLN, whose role and relationships with other city leaders can tip the balance in favour of a more or less effective CLN and resilient city.

\section*{10.2 Revisiting the contributions to knowledge}

In spite of its limitation, this thesis contributes to our understanding of city leadership both in theory and in practice.

First, the networked perspective and the idea of a metaphorical and semi-conscious CLN sheds new light on the study of city leadership. In fact, even though several scholars call for the application of network literature and methodology in the investigation of PBL (e.g. Ayres, 2014; Normann et al., 2016; Sotarauta, 2016a), so far no significant PBL
studies were published in this direction. This thesis emphasised the critical role of both actors and relationships in and for city leadership but also urge to further research on this. As regards the actors, for methodological reasons, a strong emphasis was put on city leaders as persons and positions because of sampling procedures and the key role recognised to them. Yet, participants in the project identified as city leaders not only individuals or formal positions, but also groups, institutions, organisations… this both contributes to and further opens the discussion on where leadership lies. As regards relationships among city leaders, they go beyond the formal ones due to established and/or legal partnerships, (policy) networks and/or collaborations. This was observed twice in this thesis. First, the investigation of city leaders was based on leaders-followers relationships, which participants could not consider as such but which influence—directly or indirectly—leaders’ action and re-actions. Second, it was observed in the analysis of relationships: the majority of respondents reported to have relationships with other city leaders, even though for different reasons. BL is the only exception to this: it was recognised as a key arena of the CLN, but poorly interrelated with the other ones. Third, findings suggest that the effectiveness of the CLN could not depend only on the type of relationships among city leaders, but also on the quality and constancy of such relationships among specific types of city leaders. Therefore, it could not be only a matter of whether to communicate, collaborate or share decision-making, for example, but of the ability to make them habitual and continuous relationships.

This thesis also contributes to the current literature by validating one of the PBL frameworks for the classification of city leaders. As described in Chapter 3, the CLN framework was approved by participants who recognised the role (potential or real) of
the four CLA and their interconnectivity. Moreover, this thesis offers additional insights on the different influence of the four CLA on the city, especially by opening the discussion on the critical role of ML and BL. Finally, it consolidates the link between city leadership and urban resilience, in line with Uhl-Bien and Arena (2017) argument on complexity leadership for adaptability.

Another contribution of this study lies in the originality of its methodology. First, by adopting a holistic approach based on the involvement of (almost) all categories of city leaders and thereby providing a multi-perspective study of city leadership. In fact, in each city, PL, ML, BL and CL were involved in this project. Second, by conducting a MM SNA. This methodological approach offers a fresh perspective on city leadership in both the identification of city leaders and in the analysis of relationships among them. In fact, (almost) fully connected CLN were investigated. These are networks where all pairs of nodes are directly connected and which are unusual to design and study because very time consuming for both participants and the researcher. It is indeed rare to ask the same sample of participants to rate the same relationships occurring towards the same group(s) of other people. This procedure enabled me to compare at the same time the different relationships occurring among different categories of city leaders, also emphasising the perceived mutual or asymmetric relationships among them.

Finally, and in line with the pragmatic approach adopted, this thesis has also practical implications. In fact, several city leaders positively commented on the questions asked them during this project since they stimulated them to think differently about city leadership and to express and reflect on actors, relationships and dynamics that are often given for granted. This means that thanks to this thesis and, hopefully, to future research inspired by it, city leaders can become more aware of the important role of other city
leaders and of the relationships occurring among them. Especially, this thesis can help them improve and ‘invest’ appropriately in the CLN, which can accordingly become a more conscious network (instead of semi-conscious one). Finally, it can foster the discussion and develop of the resilient capabilities needed to address and solve the wicked problems that characterise our society.

10.3 Future research

The investigation of city leadership and PBL is likely to continue growing, and both the limitations and contributions of this thesis can provide direction for future research.

First of all, the three main elements at the basis of this thesis could have been the central themes of three separated theses. Each element can be investigated more deeply and critically, even though their combination is an added value. For instance, future studies might focus on the different city leadership roles of each CLA and of specific leaders within it (e.g. faith leaders). In particular, they might concentrate on the role and involvement of BL and trade associations, on the impact of ML over urban resilience, on the capability of PL to provide a city vision and foster collaboration. Also, the role of media on city leadership could be an interesting topic for future research.

Second, future studies might adopt a more explanatory and quantitative approach, or further develop the use of MM and SNA in the investigation of city leadership. Moreover, the examination of perceptual measures for urban resilience could be further examined in the light of contextual differences between cases.
Third, similar work in more cities and other contexts might help to better understand city leadership and the influence of contextual differences, and accordingly improve the CLN framework to represent wider realities. Also, it might be important to further elaborate on the role of place and context in city leadership studies and on the similarities and differences between these two notions (i.e. place and context). Finally, it would be interesting to repeat the project involving citizens instead of city leaders since different findings would likely emerge.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Online Questionnaire and Interviews

structure

1.a Online questionnaire

In the following pages, the items of the online questionnaire are displayed. Due to the length limitation of this document, only the English version is included, that is the one used to investigate Peterborough’s case. The Italian version is simply a translation of the English one.
Informed consent

Welcome to the research study on City Leadership in European Cities!

Before starting, please read carefully this page

The research study on City Leadership in European Cities aims to investigate the collective nature of city leadership and, especially, how the relationships created among different city leaders influence the development of resilient cities and communities.

You should have received, together with the link to this survey, a leaflet containing all relevant information about this research study and, especially, information about how the survey works and how collected data will be treated.

To review the document, please click here.

The survey should take around 20 minutes to complete.

It is composed of 4 parts:

- Preliminary information
- City Leadership and the relationships among categories of city leaders
- City and Community Resilience
- Follow-up contacts

During the survey, you will be presented with information relevant to the study and asked to answer some questions about it. Data will not be collected anonymously for validation purposes but, please, be assured that your identity will be kept confidential and your responses will be anonymised for data analysis and distribution.

If you would like to contact the Principal Investigator in the study to discuss this research, please e-mail Michela Paganini michela.paganini@open.ac.uk

By clicking the consent button below, you acknowledge that:

- your participation in the study is voluntary;
- you are 19 years of age;
- you have received all relevant information about the study;
- you understand how data will be collected, analysed and distributed;
- you agree on how data will be collected, analysed and distributed;
- you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time and for any reason.

Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device.

☐ I consent, begin the study
☐ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate
Part 1 of 4. Preliminary information

You have been invited to participate in this project for a leadership role that you play or your organization plays in the city of Peterborough. This role has been specified in the email you received from the researcher.

On behalf of who are you answering?
- [ ] Myself - I have been identified as a leadership role in Peterborough (please, for validation purposes, provide your full name - it will be kept confidential)
- [ ] My organization - I have been identified as a leader of Peterborough (please, for validation purposes, provide your full name and the name of your organization - they will be kept confidential)

Do you play a secondary role in the city of Peterborough, beyond the one identified by the researcher?

E.g., you are a councillor but also a CEO in a charity or in a private company.  The secondary role needs to be exercised in Peterborough.

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

Do you think that this secondary role is more important for the city and the community of Peterborough than the one identified by the researcher?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

What is this secondary but more important role that you are playing in Peterborough?

Please, indicate both the role title and the organization in which you exercise it.

In the following sections, please answer by considering this other role that you play in Peterborough, as you specified in the previous question.

In the following sections, please answer by considering the main role that you play in Peterborough, as identified by the researcher.

Which role do you play in the organization you are answering for?
In the following questions, if not specified otherwise, please consider that "You/Your" [Y in capital letter] refers to "Your organization". Hence, please, try to answer from the organization's perspective and not your personal one.

**Part 2 of 4. City Leadership and Relationships**

**Part 2 of 4. City Leadership and the relationships among categories of city leaders**

Drawing upon previous studies, four categories of city leadership can be distinguished in each city:

- Political leadership: it exercises the function of political representation and democratic intermedialation (e.g., councillors);
- Managerial leadership: it exercises the function of public service delivery (e.g., local government, schools, NHS,...);
- Business leadership: it exercises the function of private service delivery and of private value creation (e.g., private companies);
- Civic-Community leadership: it exercises the function of active citizenship aimed at co-creating public and social value (e.g., charities, voluntary sector,...).

Each category of city leadership can be exercised by formal or informal leaders, individuals, groups or organizations.

**In which category of city leadership do you think you/your organization belong to?**

- [ ] Political leadership
- [ ] Managerial leadership
- [ ] Business leadership
- [ ] Civic-Community leadership
- [ ] Other (please, specify)

**How often do you consider the peculiarities of Peterborough (its territorial characteristics, its history, its community,...) when you take decision that may influence the city?**

The scale ranges from "Never" to "Every time".

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Rarely (in less than 10% of the chances when I could have)
- [ ] Occasionally (in about 30% of the chances when I could have)
- [ ] Sometimes (in about 50% of the chances when I could have)
- [ ] Frequently (in about 70% of the chances when I could have)
- [ ] Usually (in about 90% of the chances I could have)
- [ ] Every time

**Political leadership**

The function of political representation and democratic intermedialation

Think about the political leadership exercised now in Peterborough. In your opinion, who are the most important political leaders of the city?

Please, write between 3 and 10 leaders.
City Leaders, Relationships and Urban Resilience

Be specific. Write the first leaders you think of and be specific by giving enough details so that leaders can be easily identified. You can insert the name of specific persons, of groups of people or of organizations, a role played in the city, a combination of the previous options. If you think that You play one of the most important political leadership roles, write Your name as well.

Some examples:
- Mr/Sr X. Councillor
- Council or Councillors
- Local Political Party

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Now, think about the relationships that You have with these political leaders.

How would you define these relationships?

- A formal relationship is a relationship that is explicitly constituted and established to achieve a common goal and that is defined by, for example, a contract or a joint agreement. Formal relationships have a designed and agreed structure.
- An informal relationship is a relationship that has loose or no structure such as, for example, friendship.

- Totally formal
- More formal than informal
- More informal than formal
- Totally informal
- I have no direct relationships with political leaders
- Other (please, specify)

Thinking about the present time, how often do the following statements represent the relationships You have with political leaders?

If you are answering on behalf of your organization, consider that “I” refers to “My organization”.

The scale ranges from "Never" to "Every time".

- Never
- Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances I have
- Occasionally, in about the 30% of the chances I have
- Sometimes, in about the 50% of the chances I have
- Frequent, in about the 70% of the chances I have
- Usually, in about the 60% of the chances I have
- Every time
### Appendices

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**Why don’t you have direct relationships with political leaders?**

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**Managerial leadership**

The function of public service delivery:

**Think about the managerial leadership exercised now in Peterborough. In your opinion, who are the most important managerial leaders of the city?**

Please, write between 3 and 10 leaders.

Be as specific as possible, or include the name and title of the leader, the organization, and the role they play in the city. After the first leader, provide additional leaders and their roles.

Some examples:
- Mr./Mrs. X, Organization Y
- Mr./Mrs. Y, CEO/President of Organization Z
- Mr./Mrs. Z, Executive Director of Organization W

Managerial leader 1

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Now, think about the relationships that you have with these managerial leaders.

How would you define these relationships?

- A formal relationship is a relationship that is explicitly constituted and established to achieve a common goal and that is defined by, for example, a contract or a joint agreement. Formal relationships have a designed and agreed structure.
- An informal relationship is a relationship that has loose or no structure such as, for example, friendship.

- [ ] Totally formal
- [ ] More formal than informal
- [ ] More informal than formal
- [ ] Totally informal
- [ ] I have no direct relationships with managerial leaders
- [ ] Other (please, specify)

Thinking about the present time, how often do the following statements represent the relationships you have with managerial leaders?

If you are answering on behalf of your organization, consider that "I" refers to "my organization".

This scale ranges from "Never" to "Every time".

- Never
- Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances I have
- Occasionally, in about the 30% of the chances I have
- Sometimes, in about the 50% of the chances I have
- Frequently, in about the 75% of the chances I have
- Usually, in about the 90% of the chances I have
- Every time

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Occasionally
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Frequently
- [ ] Usually
- [ ] Every time

There are what I consider good communication between us.

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Occasionally
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Frequently
- [ ] Usually
- [ ] Every time

I don't trust them.

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Occasionally
- [ ] Sometimes
- [ ] Frequently
- [ ] Usually
- [ ] Every time
### Why don’t you have direct relationships with managerial leaders?

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<td>I help them to solve problems.</td>
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<td>I adjust my behaviour in base of their needs.</td>
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### Business leadership

The function of private service delivery and of private value creation.

Think about the business leadership exercised now in Peterborough. In your opinion, who are the most important business leaders of the city?

Please, write between 3 and 10 leaders.

Be sincere, write the first leaders you think of and be specific by giving enough details so that leaders can be easily identified.

You can insert the name of specific persons, of groups of people or of organizations, a role played in the city, a combination of the previous options. If you think that You play one of the most important business leadership role, write Your name as well.

Some examples:
- Mr(a) X, Company Y
- Mr(a) X, CEO/Head of Unit Manager in Company Y
- Company Y

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<td>Business leader 9</td>
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Now, think about the relationships that you have with these business leaders.

How would you define these relationships?

- A formal relationship is a relationship that is explicitly constituted and established to achieve a common goal and that is defined by, for example, a contract or a joint agreement. Formal relationships have a designed and agreed structure.
- An informal relationship is a relationship that has loose or no structure such as, for example, friendship.

- [ ] Totally formal
- [ ] More formal than informal
- [ ] More informal than formal
- [ ] Totally informal
- [ ] I have no direct relationships with business leaders
- [ ] Other (please specify)

Thinking about the present time, how often do the following statements represent the relationships you have with business leaders?

If you are answering on behalf of your organization, consider that "I" refers to "my organization".

The scale ranges from "Never" to "Every time".

- [ ] Never
- [ ] Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances I have
- [ ] Occasionally, in about the 30% of the chances I have
- [ ] Sometimes, in about the 50% of the chances I have
- [ ] Frequently, in about the 75% of the chances I have
- [ ] Usually, in about the 90% of the chances I have
- [ ] Every time

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<th>There are what I consider good communication between us.</th>
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<td>I don’t take decision with them.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I collaborate with them.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I participate in their activities.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I help them to solve problems.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I adjust my behaviour in base of their needs.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why don’t you have direct relationships with business leaders?**

---

**Civic-Community leadership**

The function of active citizenship aimed at co-creating public and social value.

**Think about the civic-community leadership exercised now in Peterborough. In your opinion, who are the most important civic-community leaders of the city?**

Please, write between 3 and 10 leaders.

Be sincere, write the first leaders you think of and be specific by giving enough details so that leaders can be easily identified. You can insert the name of specific persons, of groups of people or of organizations, a role played in the city, a combination of the previous options. If you think that you play one of the most important civic-community leadership roles, write Your name as well.

Some examples:
- Mrs(X), President/CEO of Charity/Association Y
- Mr(X), citizen.
- Mrs(Y), volunteer
- Charity/Association Y

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civic-Community leader 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Community leader 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Community leader 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Community leader 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Community leader 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Community leader 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Community leader 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Community leader 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Community leader 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Community leader 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now, think about the relationships that You have with these civic-community leaders.

**How would you define these relationships?**

- A formal relationship is a relationship that is explicitly constituted and established to achieve a common goal and that is defined by, for example, a contract or a joint agreement. Formal relationships have a designed and agreed structure.
- An informal relationship is a relationship that has loose or no structure such as, for example, friendship.

- [ ] Totally formal
- [ ] More formal than informal
- [ ] More informal than formal
- [ ] Totally informal
- [ ] I have no direct relationships with civic-community leaders
- [ ] Other (please, specify)

**Thinking about the present time, how often do the following statements represent the relationships You have with civic-community leaders?**

If you are answering on behalf of your organization, consider that "I" refers to "my organization".

The scale ranges from "Never" to "Every time".

- Never
- Rarely, in less than 15% of the chances I have
- Occasionally, in about the 30% of the chances I have
- Sometimes, in about the 50% of the chances I have
- Frequently, in about the 75% of the chances I have
- Usually, in about the 90% of the chances I have
- Every time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Every time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are what I consider good communication between us.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't trust them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share information with them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share resources with them (financial, human, capital).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't take decision with them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I collaborate with them.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I participate in their activities.</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Every time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I help them to solve problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I adjust my behaviour in base of their needs.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why don’t you have direct relationships with civic-community leaders?

Now that you have broadly identified the city leaders of your city, in your opinion, how often do these city leaders consider the peculiarities of Peterborough (its territorial characteristics, its history, its community,...) when they take decisions that may influence the city?

The scale ranges from "Never" to "Every time".

- Never
- Rarely, in less than 10% of the chances they have
- Occasionally, in about the 30% of the chances they have
- Sometimes, in about the 50% of the chances they have
- Frequently, in about the 75% of the chances they have
- Usually, in about the 90% of the chances they have
- Every time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political leaders</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Every time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managerial leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-community leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 3 of 4. City and Community Resilience

Part 3 of 4. City and Community Resilience

A resilient city and community is able to survive, adapt and grow no matter what kind of crisis (acute or chronic) it must deal with (100 Resilient Cities, Rockefeller Foundation).

Considering the definition of resilience given above, how do you perceive your city?
First, by considering the infrastructure of Peterborough (e.g. buildings, roads...)

The scale ranges from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My city tends to bounce back quickly after hard times.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My city has a hard time making it through stressful events.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It does not take my city long to recover from a stressful event.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is hard for my city to snap back when something bad happens.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My city usually comes through difficult times with little trouble.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My city tends to take a long time to get over city’s set-backs.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Second, by considering the community (as group of people) of Peterborough.

The scale ranges from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The community of my city tends to bounce back quickly after hard times.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community of my city has a hard time making it through stressful events.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It does not take the community of my city long to recover from a stressful event.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is hard for the community of my city to snap back when something bad happens.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community of my city usually comes through difficult times with little trouble.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The community of my city tends to take a long time to get over city’s set-backs.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 4 of 4. Follow-up contacts

Would you be interested in and available for participating in a focus group with other city leaders?

☐ Yes, write me about the focus group
☐ No

Are you interested in receiving some updates and the results of the research?

☐ Yes, but only ongoing updates
☐ Yes, but only the final results
☐ Yes, both ongoing updates and the final results
☐ No

If you answered yes to any of the previous questions, please confirm you email address or provide a new one.

☐ I confirm that I want to receive follow-up contacts to the same email address that the researcher used to send me the survey
☐ I want to receive follow-up contacts to a different email address (please, provide the new one)

Do you have any comment on the survey or on the research project?

[Comment field]

Please, provide the following details for statistical reasons.

Your gender

Your age

Your occupation

Powered by Qualtrics
1.b Interviews’ structure

Notes: when the questions equal the questionnaire’s items, *italics* is used. Because of the nature of interviews (semi-structured), it was not possible to ask each question in every interview. The following structure plays mainly a guideline role.

I. Brief explanation of the consent form to be signed and preliminary questions by participants

II. [Showing Handout #1 “City Leadership Framework”] Brief explanation of the CLN and question(s) about their opinion on it

III. *Items included in Part 2 of 4 of the online questionnaire (i.e. City Leadership and Relationships)*

IV. [Showing Handout #3 “Resilience”] Brief explanation of the concept of urban resilience and question(s) about

   a. Their perception of the level of urban resilience of their city

   b. Their opinion on the influence of the CLN on the urban resilience of their city

V. *Items included in Part 3 of 4 of the online questionnaire (i.e. City and Community Resilience)*

VI. [Showing Handout #4 “Relations”] Questions about relationships:

   a. Which relationship do you think is the most important among the ones listed?

   b. Do you think there is a type of relationship that needs to be included?
VII. *Items included in Part 4 of 4 of the online questionnaire (i.e. Follow-up contacts and statistical details).*

VIII. Comments or final questions by interviewees
Appendix 2: Interviews’ supporting handouts

City Leadership Network

**Political Leadership**
The function of political representation and democratic intermediation

**Managerial Leadership**
The function of public service design, management and delivery

**Business Leadership**
The function of private service design, management and delivery > creation of private value

**Civic/Community Leadership**
The function of active citizenship aimed at co-creating public and social value

*Drawing upon two frameworks: The New Civic Leadership Framework (Hambleton, 2015) and the City Leadership Framework (Budd & Sansino, 2016-2017).*

Rating Scales

**Frequency Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Every time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In less than 30% of the chances I have</td>
<td>In about the 30% of the chances I have</td>
<td>In about 50% of the chances I have</td>
<td>In about 70% of the chances I have</td>
<td>In about the 90% of the chances I have</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of agreement**

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

362
Resilience

A resilient city and community is able to survive, adapt and grow no matter what kind of crisis (acute or chronic) it must deal with (100Resilient Cities, Rockefeller Foundation)

Infrastructure

Community

Relations

Good communications

Sharing of information

Trust

Flexibility

Sharing of resources
(financial, human, capital)

Shared decision-making

Collaboration

Support/help
(to solve problems)

Participation
Appendix 3: Focus groups’ supporting handouts

In the following pages, the focus groups’ handouts are displayed. Due to the length limitation of this document, only the English version is included, that is the one used to discuss Peterborough’s case. The Italian version is mainly a simple translation of the English version, with the focus on the Italian examples instead of the English ones. Also, please note that the separate handouts referred to in the focus groups’ handouts are the early graphical representations of the project results. Since only minor amendments were made, only the final version of them is reproduced in this thesis, as shown in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8.
PhD Research Project - FOCUS GROUP
Peterborough

City Leadership in European Cities:
Peterborough (UK) and Padua (Italy)

Michela Pagani
Department of Public Leadership and Social Enterprise
The Open University Business School (UK)

Agenda

10.00 – 10.10 > Welcome & Refreshments
10.10 – 10.20 > Introduction
10.20 – 10.30 > Participants
10.30 – 10.55 > Who are city leaders?
10.55 – 11.15 > Relationships among leaders
11.15 – 11.25 > Break
11.25 – 11.45 > Resilience
11.45 – 12.00 > Q&A & End of Focus Group

30th January 2018
City Leadership in European Cities – Focus Group Peterborough
**Introduction (1)**

- Comparative Research Project of **medium-sized cities**
  - Around 200,000 inhabitants
  - Closed to the cities I am based (MK -- UK, Milan -- Italy)
  - No facilitated accessibility
  - Political continuity(*) during the data collection stage (2018)

---

**Introduction (2)**

- Participants: city leaders or key/influential city actors
- Mixed methods research, mainly based on a Social Network Analysis
- Data collected from February to September 2018
Introduction

(3)

The City Leadership Network / Framework

Political Leadership
The function of political representation and democratic intermediation

Managerial Leadership
The function of public service design, management and delivery

Business Leadership
The function of private service design, management and delivery > private value creation

Civic/Community Leadership
The function of active citizenship aimed at co-creating public and social value

Any Question before we start?

30th January 2018
City Leadership in European Cities – Focus Group Peterborough
## Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
<th>Padova</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total (66)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Leaders</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial Leaders</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Leaders</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Leaders</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Any general comment?
- In particular, any comment on the different participation of political and business leaders in the two cities?

30th January 2008
City Leadership in European Cities – Focus Group Peterborough
Who are City Leaders?

(Separate handouts)

Who are City Leaders

- Couple of minutes to look at the network
  - Any question or doubt?
  - First impressions/comments
- Discussion in groups
  1. Pink nodes: which leadership do they exercise?
     - Combined Authority group > Combined Authority: PL or ML or Other?
     - Town Hall > Local Authority: PL or ML or Other?
     - PSP > Credo: ML or BL or Other?
     - Faith/Religion group > Cathedral: ML or BL or CL or Other?
     - Education > University: ML or BL or Other?
     - Media > Local Newspapers: BL or ML or CL or Other?
     - Trade Unions > BL or CL or Other?
  2. Is it representative of Peterborough?  

30th January 2018 
City Leadership in European Cities – Focus Group Peterborough
Relationships among Leaders

(Group activity + separate handouts)

30th January 2008  City Leadership in European Cities—Focus Group Peterborough

Relationships among leaders

- In groups,
  - Order the relationships from the most important one to the least important one
  - Important to create an effective/successful "city leadership network"
  - Any one other relationship or element that you (as group) think is crucial and it's not listed?
- Comparison with what the other group has done > 3 most important relationships according to anyone
- Handouts of the three most important ones
- Couple of minutes to look at them
- General comments and discussion. E.g.:
  - First impressions
  - Would you have expected something different?
  - The visualization could be improved – how?

30th January 2008  City Leadership in European Cities—Focus Group Peterborough

City Leaders, Relationships and Urban Resilience
City & Community Resilience

- Look at the comments and then, in groups, try to decide if you agree or disagree with them – which ones?
- Decide where you would put Peterborough in the resilience scale (alongside)
  - Infrastructure
  - Community
  - In general
- Look at Padova’s comments and reflect whether it would be more or less resilient than Peterborough (infrastructure, community and in general)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not resilient at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Not resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Slightly not resilient, but working to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Neither resilient nor not resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Slightly resilient and working to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strongly resilient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very strongly resilient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q&A & Final Comments

Thank you!
Appendices

Appendix 4: Step-by-step procedures for graphical representations

In the following pages, the step-by-step procedures to create the CLN graphical representations are described. The same procedure was followed for both investigated cities, whose respective files differentiated for the abbreviation at the beginning of their names: Pa for Padua, Pe for Peterborough.

4.a Identification of city leaders

First, the files “Nodes_Who” and “Edges_Who” were opened in Gephi. The former included all nodes of the CLN, namely the participants and their identified city leaders, and their attributes (i.e. characteristics). More specifically, the file included the following details:

- the label of the node, that is its name;
- the CLA of belonging to colour the node accordingly;
- the ID of each node, as requested by the software;
- the personally defined latitude and longitude to display the nodes.

The second file included all relationships between nodes, namely every time a participant named a specific city leader. More specifically, the following details were included:

- source node, that is each participant who named a city leader;
- target node, that is every city leader named;
- type of relationship, that in this case is directed, namely it is specified its direction (from source to target).

For more details on how to set up the files to be imported in Gephi, refer to the software website (www.gephi.org).

The resulting graphical representation was meaningless and unreadable since nodes were randomly displayed and nothing differentiated them. To improve the visualisation and made it being able to support the data analysis and discussion, the following characteristics were changed:

a. Nodes’ size defined by in-degree relationships, i.e. the more a node (city leader) was mentioned, the bigger it was represented;

b. Nodes’ colour defined by the CLA of belonging (as explained in Chapter 4);

c. Location, i.e. where nodes needed to be displayed within the graphical area (as explained in Chapter 4), without overlapping. This action was implemented using Geo Layout (with a scale of 10’000) and then Noverlap (with the following parameters: speed 1.0; ratio 1.0; margin 2.0).

Then, to focus only on key city leaders, nodes were filtered so that only the ones with at least three in-degree edges were visible (Filters > Topology > In degree range equal or higher than 3). Finally, nodes’ labels were added and the layout was adjusted to clearly read them.

Figure A.1 and Figure A.2 in the next pages represent the different steps just described.
Figure A.1 Procedure for the graphical representation of identified city leaders (step 1 to 3).
Figure A.2 Procedure for the graphical representation of identified city leaders (step 4 to 6).
4.b Relationships among city leaders

To describe this procedure, data about the trust relationship in Padua are used as an example. The same procedure was followed for all other relationships in both cities.

First, the files “Pa_Nodes_Rel” and “Pa_Trust” were opened in Gephi. The first file included the attributes of the four nodes of the CLN, namely the categories (or arenas) of city leaders (see Appendix 4.a for more details). The second file included the data about relationships, more precisely:

- source node;
- target node;
- type of relationship (directed)
- weight, representing the frequency of occurrence of the relationship;
- label of the relationships.

Then, similarly to the procedure followed for the representation of identified city leaders, the visualisation was improved by defining some parameters. First, as regards nodes, their size (based on in-degree relationship); colour (based on CLA), and location were defined and labels added. Second, the characteristics of the relationships (edges) were changed, in particular:

- their colour was set to equal the source of the relationships. Thereby, for instance, all relationships from PL were coloured in red.
- Their thickness was increased (from 1.0 to 2.0) to emphasise the differences among values.
- Their labels were added.

Figure A.3 below illustrates the different steps just described.
Figure A.3 Procedure for the graphical representation of the relationships among city leaders.
Appendix 5: List of infrequent relationships

Table A.1 Infrequent relationships within the CLN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Padua</th>
<th>Peterborough</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a. Trust</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-BL</td>
<td>S (3.7)</td>
<td>O (2.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-BL</td>
<td>O (2.8)</td>
<td>O (2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-BL</td>
<td>O (3.3)</td>
<td>S (3.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b. Effective Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL-BL</td>
<td>R/O (2.5)</td>
<td>R (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ML-BL</td>
<td>R (2.1)</td>
<td>O (2.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CL-BL</td>
<td>R/O (2.4)</td>
<td>O (2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c. Collaboration</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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### City Leaders, Relationships and Urban Resilience

(continued)

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**e. Flexibility**

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**f. Shared Decision-making**

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