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BUDDlab

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BUDDcamp 2011
The City of Euphemia
Brescia / Italy

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Planning for socially just
and sustainable development
in the global south

Design and layout: Ricardo Martén

Foreword

William Hunter

In 'Trading Cities 1' from his now seminal text *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino describes the city of Euphemia as a place "where the merchants of seven nations gather at every solstice and equinox." These merchants arrive at Euphemia for trade and simultaneously develop an evening cultural exchange, "sharing tales of wolves, sisters, treasures" unifying merchants from different nations along their travels for financial gain. Though cultural diverse, this sharing of second hand experience of the world serves to connect specific lifestyles, thereby giving Euphemia a distinct social identity.

Unfortunately, in most urban areas throughout the world, this symbolic and evocative aura of collectiveness falters by way (among other things) of stereotypical fear and fragmentation. Nestled near Brescia, Italy's main central square, the Quartiere Del Carmine, was a place not unlike Euphemia. Though finding itself in a state dereliction in the '70s and '80s, subsequent refurbishment and transformation in the '90s has given way to a completely gentrified character with pockets of mixed immigrant areas. A major consequence of this development is that it has stifled the use of open spaces and semi-public spaces where everyday meetings took place and strong social ties were formed and thrived. However, despite this challenge, small groups of women have initiated projects underlining good neighbourhood practices that revolve around a network of open houses where immigrant families develop 'care' practices at different levels. These 'exchange services' range from shopping assistance, collective studying and prayer to the promotion of responsible tourism and assimilation support. Though small in scope, the positive revelation of these networks has in some ways resulted in the obvious need to bypass the rigid schemes of closed (condominium) living which fosters exclusion and isolation in favour of shared spaces within houses and shops that could serve as possible civil society nodes or headquarters at the level of the streets.

Located in the old working class "barriera" style peri-urban fringes of the city center, amongst empty factories and corridor houses full of marginalized immigrants are the remnants of the Movimento Nonviolento Headquarter via Milano. Housed in a large abandoned factory, it is now occupied by the Peace Anti-Militarist Association called MIR (meaning peace). During the '80s and '90s this was a very active organisation working on de-militarisation and Gandhi-style processes and essentially a

point of reference for all of Italy (remember that BRESCIA was once home to a vast weapons/mines industry which allowed for a direct emergence and confrontation with peace and non-violent movements since the '70s). A sort of contra gentrification is happening here. However, the activities of the association are currently much reduced and the space is sort of un-used. Yet, still of vast importance and potential is the extensive library which contains a collection of nearly 50 years of publications on non-violence and pacifism- a "collection of memories".

Run in conjunction with the Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici (LDE), an organization focusing on social and educational projects for immigrants and refugees in Brescia and promoting democracy and peace overseas BUDD Camp 2011 involved a 3-day charrette concerning the spatial and temporal exchange and integration of immigrants and locals with a particular parallel focus on how MIR (in collaboration with LDE) can re-define its identity and expand its active capacity to serve as a driving force and platform to combat these challenges. With an introductory testimonial from Agostino Zanotti, head of the LDE, BUDDlab Vol.2 represents the reflections of the MSc Building and Urban Design students' operational experience as they sought to navigate between the multiple meanings of design action and synthesis. Engaging in methods including psycho-geographical mapping and one-on-one interviews, the student groups developed a range of interventions meant to serve as investigative catalysts for the promotion of community identity, organizational strategy and overall urban integration within Brescia.

William Hunter is a Teaching Fellow on the MSc BUDD course at the Development Planning Unit, London.

Introduction

Agostino Zanotti

Towards Euphemia: Thoughts on the City and its Citizens

We have crossed together, during these days of the students' visit, the doors of Eupemia City. It has been a good occasion to compare words, thoughts, experiences of everyone, linking them to places of a city: Brescia.

From our perspective, the aim has been to show to different people, that is, foreigners, places ordinary to us, spaces in the city that have represented and represent the story of a varied political acting.

In this attempt of opening, we addressed the foreigner so that he could give us useful cues, in order to read and understand in a new way our way of "living" the city. Master students, during the days of work, have been investigating the urban space in its different constitutive aspects and, first of all, have told the stories of some of the several persons that inhabit the roads and the districts of the city.

One more time, the external look has been the one able to catch the most controversial and worn aspects of a city crossed by a politic of no citizenship, wherein the person/citizen does not find in the present the reasons to create a community and social links.

We live in more and more crowded cities, while the physical distance between persons decreases, the affective one increases. A cooperating community is a community that lives closeness, builds up relations based on reciprocity and dissolves its own fears through the strengthening of social cohesion between all citizens.

During the 'internship' days (this is maybe not the most appropriate definition) events of serious international interest hanged as grey clouds on our daily work. The terrifying earthquake in Japan and the tragic news from Tunisia and Libya fed our fears of a new radioactive catastrophe and of a future migratory exodus towards our cities. The territories that we live in are crossed by economic, migratory and environmental flows able to influence their own productive, social and environmental state. The sense of bewilderment that invests people is joined by a wish of security that turns places we inhabit in stones without any past.


The four proposals that came out of the groups' work have offered interesting cues to all of us to rebuild the urban space, so that it becomes not just a place for socialization, but also a space of a policy of meeting, a space of telling and thinking. It is a policy wherein human qualities are able to sparkle and wherein human beings are able to discover springs of bare life.

**Translation by Valeria Marengoni (ADL) and Camillo Boano*

Agostino Zanotti is the head of the Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici in Brescia.

Camillo Boano is the Director of the MSc BUDD course at the Development Planning Unit, London.





To build means to collaborate with the land, to impress man's sign on a landscape that will be modified for ever; moreover, it means to contribute to that transformation that is life itself of the city. How much care, just to devise the proper placement of a bridge or a mountain, to give to a mountain road the cheapest bend, that is, at the same time, the purest...

I have rebuilt a lot: and to rebuild means to collaborate with time in its aspect of past, to catch its spirit and to modify it, to lean it out towards, almost, a long future; it means to discover under the stones the secret of the springs."

(M. Yourcenar, Memoires d'Hadrien)

Student Reflections

AFRAA ALI (United Kingdom)

The city of Euphemia project was a highly thought provoking experience as it exposed me to a different reality. Understanding ways in which the city was being opened up by hosting refugees and immigrants but also the challenge of transforming social perceptions of refugees from problems to resources. The question of space and territory was important as the logic behind hosting is that it should not be confined to a particular part of the city but instead hosting them in different locations using dispersion as a means to open the city and relinquish the problem of territory. Accepting that their presence transforms open space as refugees and immigrants do change the urban fabric of a city, however it is not possible to conceive the city as a fixed apparatus but that it is constantly changing and revived with different cultures and practices.

My initial impression of the area as we departed the coach was the prominence of multicultural shops, such as Punjab travels. Had it not been for the architecture it felt as if this could be a part of London in terms of the diversity of people passing by. However When we received our initial briefing regarding the plight of the refugees and immigrants in Italy with regard to jobs and housing as well as the awareness being raised regarding the production and transaction of weapons to conflict areas, which makes refugees seek refuge in countries such as this in the first place it highlighted the perverse mechanism of war. With this regard it confirmed to me the importance of citizens to be made more aware and be actively involved in international relation and how the macro relations and tensions influence the local scale.

Being welcomed by the Refugee women association put us at the receiving end of that hospitality and made it more tangible the importance of the practices of hosting. On the second day, we were given a more in depth historical timeline by Dr Nicola Montagna of the Italian social movements, conflict, sociology and the international and scaled migration.

Following our site analysis of Quarter del Carmine and the discussion with various residents raised many questions. It made me question the notion of citizenship, rights and resistance; in particular the spatial manifestations of these topics and conflicts. When working toward our interventions on the site, we attempted to explore the complex meanings of Euphemia and what that could mean on the site. We focused this on three aspects firstly memories and aspirations, learning from the past historical occurrences whilst looking at the present day individuals and their aspirations, secondly creating wires of activities for networks and rotating embassies for rotating communities to exchange and create new cultures and memories and finally reinforcing a shared identity and collective relationship to the space.

My thinking and analysis shifted throughout this charrette from statistics to observations of the urban fabric however the one of the important conclusions I drew from this is that solutions or interventions to the issues we identified need not always be physical, they could be more on a metaphysical level.

AMRITA KOONAR (United Kingdom)

We arrived at our lodging - the Movimento Nonviolento Headquarters (MNH) - and the immediate impression given by the façade of the building was the portrayal of 'peace and love' values synonymous with the 60's and 70's. The building was concealed behind a courtyard and a muddle of other buildings, which appeared to be connected and disconnected at the same time. As with any trip to a new area, I looked for hints and clues to the culture and identity of the place.

We were welcomed by the Embassy for The Embassy of Local Democracy (LDE) provided an introduction to their cause and aim of facilitating the integration of refugees and immigrants into the transforming city of Brescia. Listening to our hosts' stories it became clear that, having



devoted their adult lives to the pacifist movement and having witnessed its decline, they now lacked a way forward.

Our 'quick and dirty' design charrette began with a survey of the map of the local area. It was decided in order to get a feel for the place that we would map the immediate area on foot. As these areas housed a high level of the immigrant population, we were optimistic this would reveal whether there were any tensions or underlying issues between the host community and the immigrants which could be addressed by our proposed intervention. Interviews were held with several people from a cross section of society.

The interviews were successful in terms of the useful information gathered from the responses. However, in hindsight, perhaps more careful consideration should have been paid to the specific questions asked as well as the direction and structure of the interviews. Efforts were made to ask similar questions to each person, however the full reasoning behind each question and whether the questions were leading the interviewee in a specific direction were not fully considered. Speaking with people from outside of the immediate area would have also been useful, as a very different set of answers may have been revealed.

The group mapped the area together, and while this may seem to be an inefficient use of resources, in our case it worked well as we had diverse language abilities in our group, and therefore were able to communicate with both Italian and non-Italian speaking immigrants. Opportunities may have been missed if we had been at different sites. Where one team member was speaking in Italian, another was able to translate to the third who documented the interviews as we went along, allowing for a smooth conversation and efficient use of time, while other group members were photographing areas of interest. Day two revealed a more directed exploration of the industrial areas and finalising of the points of entry for interventions. Further interviews were conducted with members of the LDE for clarification on points.

Our final presentation identified a need to develop a deeper thinking about the terminology used and the connotations it may have for the host community. The intervention should look at what has been done before, and if something obvious has not been tried then further questions should be asked as to why this has not happened. The reason for that will in itself be a possible point of intervention.

The limited time allowance for this design charrette, highlighted the necessity for good organisation, directed and purposeful information gathering. Preparation before going out on site is crucial to ensure that time is not wasted and resources are efficiently applied.



AMY LEAMAN (Canada)

3 Things I Learned in Brescia

1. Use your eyes & ears.

In my thesis year of my undergrad, I undertook a project which was contentious in our faculty. We were meant to design a mixed-use 25,00 square foot building in Toronto and I was interested more at studying informal settlements in Guatemala. My advisors were accommodating, but the issue I had was that it was nearly impossible for me to make the leap from context to design without being in the field and working specifically with people in the field. I wrestled for the entire first term at the DPU with the same problem, working remotely on the case of Dharavi. In our term 1 feedback on Dharavi, Camillo answered this question of moving from context to design which was that you have to make assumptions and suppositions based on what you know. Then, when in the field, and when new information comes up, you have to be ready to adapt to it. This made sense to me as we started to work on Bangkok, but the problem in Brescia was that: when you are in the field, it's time to stop making assumptions and start adapting. I really enjoyed the presentations we had from our hosts in Italy about the history of social movements and the political history of Brescia, but I thought maybe we had learned to rely too heavily on this kind of information and we hadn't been properly ready to have to use our eyes and ears in the field. As a result, a lot of our suggestions and interventions had more to do with what we had learned than what we saw.

2. Don't take the same photo twice.

I think there's certainly something to be said for taking ownership of information when working in a group. I found that often in the field everyone was taking the same photos (of a window, a street, a poster). In retrospect, because we all had access to the same information, no one could take ownership of a single aspect of

the project, whereas the people who had gone on interviews were very outspoken about having their ideas count in our final interventions. Maybe if we had all been doing something entirely different (one person taking photos, one person writing notes, one person sketching, one person doing street interviews) when it came time to put things together everyone would feel much more as though they had something to contribute rather than the strongest voices in the group winning out.

3. Ask smart people dumb questions.

There were 3 moments in Brescia when I asked dumb questions to great results (well, 2 questions and a statement). The first two I asked Camillo, which were “what is the political situation in Italy” and “what happened after the fall of the Roman empire that all the ruins are, well, in ruins?”. Both times I expected to get an answer that would make me feel like I was hearing something I should know already. But, it could just be because Camillo is particularly gracious, but I felt that he had a lot more to say on both subjects than I would have assumed. The final statement I made to Anna which was during our tour of Brescia from that lovely, very well-educated architect whose name escapes me. When we got to the end of the tour I said “I’ve never seen a fascist building before!” and she recoiled in shock. “Anna,” I said, “I’ve only been in the Americas and England. When would I have seen a fascist building?” Although I felt stupid saying it at first, Anna and I learned a lot from each other in that one statement. There is the value in asking dumb questions and saying stupid things.

ANNA VON DER SCHULENBURG (Germany)

IN BRESCIA 193,752 Brescians + 31 BUDDs = 164,497 “Italians” + 29,286 “Foreigners”
(Figures adapted from talk by Nicola Montagna: Brescia 1974-2010)

The City of Euphemia / Quartiere del Carmine

Our visit needed a set of more critically investigative eyes than when I previously explored a new place. Strategic planning, time constraints, critical distance and focussed questioning were replacing more intuitive approaches. Built form became an investigative visualisation tool to reveal initially invisible relationships beyond, instead of being the main focus. The interest was looking for contradictions, clashes and tensions, rather than for coherence, harmony and beauty of the place. The benches aren’t only benches, so are shops, blue parking lines, temporary construction fences, gatherings or the famous Italian city-charm as only one layer of many to tell the story of the place and the influence of identities on its space. It started to make sense together with the talks and to give an indication of where to contribute as practitioner.

The built form of ‘Quartiere del Carmine’ seemed to talk in the voice of one part of Brescia’s population, maybe the more official one. Other voices we observed more easily in the openings, balconies, more hidden places and the calm in the back of the CCTV cameras. These were more diverse, personal and seemingly less coordinated (maybe because our workshop started for me with a full day of organized interviews giving the individual stories more presence than the city fabric) and observations started to form a pattern, a little more so than the personal voices behind the city administration, Inland Revenue and people who aren’t ready to embrace Carmine’s form of multi ethnicity.

It is the first time I have started a project in a guided parachute-style without a brief in the sense of a request or plan for a program to be fulfilled. The question for me as practitioner is how to formulate a response to contribute to transformative change including all Brescians aspirations and taking a stand at the same time while an all-encompassing investigation isn’t often possible due to time/situation/language barriers/cultural misunderstandings. With some distance to the weekend, I would be interested to focus on education if there was a next stage of the project. It could have been very valuable to talk to the schools of the area and their teachers.

With regards to timeline and methodology of the work I guess we had 26 varied structures of days and work, all connecting in the end. In my case the strongest focus of the weekend was in the interviews, leaving much less time to actually observe, draw and map the area. Because the interviews were prearranged for us and we didn’t necessarily know who we were meeting until a few minutes beforehand, we agreed on a minimal structure: 1 sketcher, 1 photographer, 1 writer, 1 speaker and adapted this to suit us best in the course of the day. The most important point for me was having at least one question that we asked all 5 interviewees: What do you think about the protest ‘de la gru’? This allowed us to connect the very personal stories and also qualify some of the remarks of each towards a bigger picture. One point was to listen and allow for surprises and another to learn how to structure and end a conversation politely in order not to lose track of what we were looking for.

AZZURRA MUZZONIGRO (Italy)

City of Euphemia is a project led by Ambasciata della Democrazia Locale (ADL) di Zavidovici with the aim of welcoming refugees in Brescia and provide them a house, a job but mainly to focus their interaction with the territory. The vision of ADL is to shift the role of the refugees: from problem to resource. The other very interesting approach they have is the understanding that the presence of refugees performs a transformation of urban spaces.



Starting from these assumptions –after a welcoming dinner prepared by the women refugees and a very interesting talk by Nicola Montagna on the history of Brescia’s movements from 1974 to 2010– the Budd group started to explore the urban spaces. We were divided into two groups: one dedicated to the area around via Milano –where the headquarters of the Movement of Non-Violence of Brescia, that was hosting us, is located– and the other focusing on the Carmine neighborhood, in the centre of the city. Both places share a strong immigrants’ and refugees’ presence: a good starting point to challenge the assumption of the potential of transformation that their presence exerts on the urban environment. How does the city interact with them? Are they recognised or marginalised, welcomed or rejected by the ‘natives’? What visible and invisible traces do they impress over the territory and how and to what extent they contribute to shape the local urban identity?

With this range of questions in mind we started the exploration. After a day of observation and interviews dedicated to a general understanding of the local dynamics we started an active engagement and interaction with people. We wanted to investigate the relationship between the inhabitants of Brescia and their territory – considering inhabitant anyone that lives on the territory regardless of their legal status- so we run across people with multiple foreign proveniences –Africans, Romanians, Tunisians, Pakistanis and so on- alongside with

native Italians. We asked them to take us to a place they felt a sense of belonging in Brescia and to be photographed in front of that place with the idea of then exposing all the pictures in a public space of the city. The idea for the project –that we later called I Love Brescia- came from our long talks with Mamadou- a Senegalese man living in Brescia since 1990 that used to have the legal Permit to Stay for 17 years which in 2007 was no longer renewed because of the change of national law on immigration and is now considered clandestine therefore socially ‘invisible’ and legally prosecutable. His message was that the most important value besides legal recognition is communication among people: it makes you forget your troubles. We wanted to build on that notion by trying to create a mechanism of interaction to bring people together capable to overcome isolation and create the ‘exchange among equals’ that is at the basis of reciprocal recognition.

Out our brief visit to Brescia I would consider this understanding the most valuable achievement we matured of such a complex issue as contemporary migration and the notions of identity and sense of belonging.

DESIRÉE DUROUSSEAU (USA)

BUDD Camp 2011 was an intensive three day design charrette where students were assigned between two

sites within Brescia, Italy: Quartiere Del Carmine or Movimento Nonviolento Headquarters via Milano; with the task to observe, document and report the urban and social phenomena within the assigned area.

A journey through the later twentieth century in Brescia, Italy depicts social discourse and evolution through politics, intimidation and protest. Struggle and the inherent obstacles in life are not particularly unique to Brescia and the Lombardy region of Italy as I have discovered. However, the experiences and the perseverance of MNH and LDE organizations have defined the country and its society in similar ways. Flash forward; the MNH depicts the hardships endured by immigrants to this country as well as those who are in a lower socio-economic class at various points in life. In my observations, historically social class as with citizenship is a “right” of birth or in the case of immigrants a “wrong”; in contrast since I come from the United States this “right” is easily more challengeable since “Americans” other than the indigenous inhabitants are all immigrants. So questions formed for me while in Brescia; “how can the history and efforts of social movements through Movimento Non-Violento Headquarters (MNH) and Local Democracy Embassy (LDE) be reincorporated to open the city to receive the diverse make-up of incoming people; making resources and opportunities available?”

The challenge of an intervention is that it be a lasting change to promote a more equitable social structure in Brescian society. An intervention in the area should enhance the freedom to cross social boundaries, promote the idea of achievement and success at multiple levels, and not be constrained but enriched by the heritage and roots from which it began. In the site area of “Movimento Non-Violento Headquarter via Milano”, remnants of industrial plants, warehouses and unused railroad tracks fill the urban landscape; most succumbing to the adversities of a changing work market and declining weapons industry. My group's intervention on a more metaphoric context sought to address the underlying social change and reconnect the cultural shift from an independent or segregated way of life, to a more collectively cohesive society.

From this our group decided on a phased intervention considering the capital needed, the desired impact on the community, as well as the possible donating and volunteering capacity the two organizations need for continued vitality. Knowing that one organization has the land and building space to use for certain programs, and the other organization has the ability to work with social vulnerability. By organizing and combining forces and incorporating achievable strategic intervention(s) such as civic art projects and mobile advocacy; people not born in Italy or the ones born there having rights that revert to that of an immigrant class, as well as people of lower social classes with no money, possessions, or power can

collectively become a force that as a whole are a community unto themselves where their needs and demands can be realized. This journey must begin with a desire to overcome and the willingness to cope with the singular experiences and challenges each group has been faced with whether it is the locals, immigrants, institutions or social organizations.

I end with a quote from the protest song “We Shall Overcome”, (Tindley, 1947), a key anthem of the U.S. civil rights movement:

*“We shall overcome
We'll walk hand in hand
We shall all be free
We are not afraid
We are not alone
We shall overcome someday...”*

DHRIN ANANTAMONGKOLCHAI (Thailand)

In the city of industrial, where castle, churches, and centuries-old houses are surrounded by mills and factories. The strong atmosphere of this old city still attractive to its residents, tourists and workers, especially immigrants. Even though industrial part of the city is declining, Brescia is still one of the richest cities in Italy with the highest GDP. And not only its industry that has been declining, Its Italian citizen is also on decrease, while legal and illegal foreign resident have been increasing since 1980s.

Immigrants have been coming to Brescia from many places: Pakistan, Romania, Egypt, China, Ukraine, Philippines, etc. These people came here with different reasons, but one thing that they have in common is the struggle to live as an equal citizen of Brescia. This struggle has become part of the long history of movements in this old city. From anti-war movement and worker movement to migration movement, they have been fighting against discrimination and preventing conflicts.

However, These migration movements were perceived differently from different groups. Similarly, there were different interpretations of the Piazza Della Loggia bombing in 1974 by institutions, unions and left wing, and far left depend on which story suit them the most. From the interview with many people (formal and informal), the Hunger strike on top of the crane in 2010 was interpreted by Italians who support the immigrants as a bad move. All the interviewed Italians agree that bring the subject into politic will only create more conflict. However, the immigrants believed that it was a right and successful strike. Due to this information we as an international student believe that any movement in the future have to include both sides in order to prevent more conflict.

Moreover, interviewing many people in their own envi-

ronment brought a lot of interesting and surprising stories. It became our key tools and was developed into the intervention itself.

I ♥ BRESCIA - Space of interaction

“Euphemia, the city where memory is traded at every solstice and at every equinox.” (Calvino, 1972) From one of the interview with the person who lived in the area called Quartiere Del Carmine, his daughter is the only Italian in the class of 21. The others came from 16 different nationalities. The notion about integration was question here that who and how the integration should be when the majority has become the minority, so we believed that the focus should be shift from integration to interaction by sharing their stories both Italians and immigrants.

Similar to the traders of the city of Euphemia, we introduced the way that people of Quartiere Del Carmine can share their tails of wolves, sister and treasures. Showing their face, telling their stories and letting them interact with each other in the public space will help reduce the sense of the word ‘stranger’ and penetrate the barrier between groups. Using art event to promote this will also bring join and create neutral ground for everyone. Old individual stories will be share and new community memory will be create with the hope that it will result conflicts and people can sit with ‘strangers’. However, this was done by knowing that we made many assumptions due to the time we have, but we believed that this can really be done.

FARIDA FARAG (Egypt)

Our first walk around Brescia was very interesting after the lecture we had presenting key information about the city and its demographics, as well as political shifts that have greatly affected the urban fabric. Brescia is a small city with a population of 200,000, 16% of which are foreigners. There was a huge increase in foreign migration from 1990 – 2008 that was due to the nature of the city as an industrial town with a low education status with 69% manual and unskilled workers, which attracted many foreigners. Getting lost in that part of the city by the headquarters and the industrial site that we were allocated for our exercise, we have observed the different typologies around as well as the industrial buildings that had a distinct narrative characteristic to them. Some of the high walls securing a certain site were still there and incorporated with new structures, or had graffiti drawings throughout.

It was evident that the city had a heavy industrial feel, where many sites and plots were abandoned, probably due to the high cost of demolition versus the value of land. Some of these sites were huge, completely abandoned, and a bit scary. The urban feel of that area reso-



nated the story of the struggle between civil society and the city in the 1970s, where Piazza Della Loggia became a space of resistance and protests against poor and unjust work and living conditions. Years after these occurrences the city was left with that memory embedded in the urban structure, however I kept wondering: Should they or do they want to destroy them as painful symbols of political turmoil, or figure out ways to reconfigure and transform them?

It was quite interesting to explore these issues of political transformation and its effects on the urban fabric 30 years after the fact, where citizens are in search of a new cultural shift integrating the population, including migrants, into the city by having it reflect their new collective identity. It was even more interesting because I couldn't help but compare our findings and analysis to the current Middle East situation, where protestors have expressed more than 30 years of oppression, as many municipal buildings were burnt down by people expressing their suffering. For many years people have felt disconnected from their city, which led to a decrease in the sense of citizenship: People have felt like foreigners in their own country. There are many similarities between those two cases as it made me realize how identity and citizenship are two important components and drivers of social change and urban transformation.

The question of ‘what is to become of the ancient symbols of struggle’ still remains. Can a distressing associated meaning to the urban structure be the vehicle of social change acting as an empowering link between civil society and city? After conducting our analysis and engaging with the community, we concluded that power for mobilization within the people is based on self-identity and awareness, which is a precondition for action. Therefore the basis of an effective intervention is the enhancement of that link connecting the people to the city, which has become the center of solidarity.

IVANA NADY (Slovenia)

BUDD CAMP 2011 took place in Brescia, Italy. It was a three day charrette where we were asked to observe urban and social phenomena within a selected area and propose a design intervention that would highlight, mobilise or act as a catalyst for transforming existing social activity. The exercise was implemented in collaboration with the local association Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici.

The charrette

On the day of our arrival we were greeted by our host and people involved in the association. The brief overview of the association's history and activity points were a good way to evoke an interest and curiosity about the exercise ahead. For me, the most important aspect was being introduced to the topic first hand, by the people who established and run association, as their enthusiasm was admirable.

On the following day we were given a presentation by Nicola Mongtana, who gave us a background over Brescia's development in last 40 years. It was interesting to see how the social and economic development related to the social movements and activities of LDE.

After the presentation all groups were given a specific area to observe and document. My group focused on Movimento Nonviolento Headquarter via Milano, a building which was a part of unused factory set in a neighbourhood where working class and marginalised prevail. The group had a brief discussion on where to go and explore the surroundings. Having had the experience of the exercise, I now think it would be better if we have



spent that time reflecting on what information we were given by Nicola and Adriano to help us form a time efficient strategy for gathering the information we needed to make an appropriate proposal. While we explored the area we interviewed people asking them about their views on refugees and immigration issues.

We tried to get an opinion from people of different ages and backgrounds. It was interesting to see there were not many negative views on the issue; perhaps we would get different answers if our approach was different. We could possibly have formed a simple questionnaire that would be flexible enough to allow some space for manoeuvre but would give us a framework to assess the answers against each other.

Although I feel we could have structured our interviews better, I think being on the street and interviewing people was a very important experience. It gave me the confidence and knowledge on how to approach and speak to different people. Even if I wasn't directly interviewing people due to language barrier, my task was to take notes and help form the questions which meant being part of the interview.

The outcome

For me, the most important part of the exercise was being put into unknown location and having a specific time-frame to make a proposal. It highlighted the importance of having a structured framework and working efficiently and sharing tasks among the team members. Coming up with the proposal in response to our brief was a lot of fun but I can see a missed opportunity as we disregarded a lot of what was presented to us in the first two days. In addition, our proposal could have been grounded in theories we have learned during our course.

JENNIFER CIRNE (Canada)

The trip to Brescia was very worthwhile on many fronts. It worked very well to allow the class to adjust and experience working in the field; learning to better analysis the spatial context, experimenting with interview techniques, and working as a large group with limited time; all of which will be invaluable skills for our time in Bangkok.

Politics

For me, the most important development gained from this trip was the realization of the strong influence that regional politics plays on daily life in civil society. In the past I have tried to stay clear of politics, but am more and more realising that for transformation to be sustainable, there needs also to be support within political discourse and reinforced through policy.

During our short stay, we recognised that the situation in Carmine has been strongly entrenched within the

area for many decades. Because of this we felt our entry point would need to be through 'soft interventions' which would help to build networks within and between the many local individuals and groups in Carmine. The purpose for our interventions (the Citizen & Space Network, regular Neighbourhood Party, and the 10-Year Reflection/Projection stickers) was to reinforce/build a bottom up strength which would:

- now – help to counter the municipalities crack down/restriction on use of public space,
- soon – help to improve local business, exchange of knowledge/skills and employment,
- and with time – enable the collective people of Carmine to exert more influence within politics, and therefore helping to securing sustainable improvements within the area.

Our three interventions intentionally covered a range of forms – strengthening social networks, physical occupation of space & a new platform for vocal expression.

An additional benefit of these interventions is that they have the potential to demonstrate to the local authority that regeneration within Carmine needs to be approached from multiple perspectives, not purely through improved housing (one of their most recent strategic approaches to regeneration within Carmine). From our observations and interviews, the recent improvement strategy has had a negative impact for some, as inflated housing rental prices have pushed some into further deprivation/difficult living situations within and outside of Carmine.

Interviews

A second personal development gained through the Brescia trip was the experience with 'interviews' and translating an individual's narrative into usable information. We had the benefit of interviewing a range of people, which gave a wide perspective of the situation in Carmine. What lacked (due to limited preparation time) was the opportunity to properly prepare in advance for the interviews.

As discussed in Brescia, I agree that there needs to be some degree of 'set questions' to ask all interviewees, but I fear with this systematic approach that we will miss the anomalies and/or the special knowledge that each interviewee can bring to the conversation. This I feel would be a missed opportunity, and may also have the fundamental flaw of generalising and further marginalising some individuals/groups. I believe that there needs to be a balance between structured questions and questions which builds on the conversation to maximise the quality of the data captured. Before going to Bangkok, I would like to develop a strategy for interviewing that will strike this balance.

JOSÉ DI GIROLAMO (Chile)

From Brescia to Euphemia: the language as an opportunity to produce spaces for integration

In the last decades, Brescia has experienced the vicious circle of the conflicts. On the one hand, the province has been famous as one of the main producers of light weapons, which has been exported to the regions in conflict like the Balkans and most recently Libya. On the other hand, the city has become the shelter for thousands of people displaced from the same conflicts that indirectly they facilitated. Mostly young population from countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Romania and Egypt arrive to Brescia looking for job opportunities as unskilled workers taking advantage of the industrial character of the city. In a new form of contradictory "voluntary-but-forced" colonialism, the pressure of the conflicts and the dynamic of the market make the immigrants move from their countries to find new livelihoods outside.

The city is divided. While the right-side local government has been opposed to the immigration phenomenon, civil organizations like the Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici have been working with the objective to rebuild Brescia as a centre of solidarity. They are fighting for "the right to the city" not only at the level of the most evident needs like work, housing and market, but also for its essence, building opposition to the war conflicts as the causes of the phenomenon and finding spaces for interaction.

Going around the city is possible to notice that slowly the city has been able to provide spaces for the immigrants to work, live and trade. Like Euphemia "where the merchants of seven nations gather at every solstice and equinox"¹, many streets and corners in Brescia have become points of exchange of foreign goods under the form of markets, restaurants and stores of clothes and textile. The refugees have demonstrated that more than a problem for the city, they have become resources for it, keeping the local economy alive. This can be considered as a first step for Brescia to reach the paradigm of Euphemia.

Nonetheless, "you do not come to Euphemia only to buy and sell, but also because at night, by the fires all around the market (...) at each word that one man says (...) the others tell, each one, his tale of (...) "¹, and this represents the highest challenge for Brescia. Despite the locals and the immigrant share the same city and the same built environment, there is an invisible barrier which blocks the possibility of effective integration and interaction: the language. It is a paradox that a non-spatial element is the one that still divides the city between Italians and foreigners. Consequently, the language represents a limitation but also an opportunity as the key tool towards a more integrated Brescia. Actually, for the youngest

The Digital Mural Initiative – Via Milano corridor



← Milano
\$\$\$\$\$\$

via milano
\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

Brescia →
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generations this barrier has been successfully dissolved by the schools in where local and immigrant students learn and coexist under the same codes.

Language can be considered as the new struggle for institutions that are fighting for "the right to the city" for the refugees in Brescia like the Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici. It is the key element to reach a city in where also "the memory is traded at every solstice and at every equinox"¹ like in Euphemia.

JOSUE ROBLES CARABALLO (Puerto Rico)

The Ripple Effect

We have studied, explored and analyzed a great number of scenarios to develop an awareness to utilize in potential engagements within development. This exercise for the first time allowed the students to generate a face to the given condition. The Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici (LDE) and Peace Anti Militarism Association (MIR) as institutions and their members were a resourceful and an evolving scope within the development of the exercise. The course of the research and proposal was constantly shaped by the daily feedback and interaction with the members of the MIR and LDE. Whether the interaction took place through conversations or observing the passion behind the members work translated into a contextually rich intervention.

The Value of a Casual Interview

From the initial scenario briefs to the development of the proposal we discovered the value of the face to face engagement with members of both institution, MIR and LDE. This also occurred during our interviews with the city residents. The face to face engagement provided not only answers to potential questions from the interviewer but a forum that allowed residents to expressed potential concerns or information not previously considered. The exchange of information of a face to face dialog translates in to a rich collection of anecdotes, information, perspectives and social stands on the individual recollection of the city as a phenomenon. Thus, informing the development of the proposal or intervention according to the interaction with the engaged individuals.

Quartiere Del Carmine

During the field visits and elaboration of a proposal, we had the opportunity to engage not only the built form and its users, thus, catching a limited glimpse of the socio-cultural behavior and perception of the city. As the team focused on the Quartiere Del Carmine, we were able to complement previously experienced mapping techniques with live information from interviews while at the field, to further enrich the research and survey component of the exercise. In contrast with other studio exercises, this illustrated the benefit of the collection and use of live data. As the perspective as practitioner can be shaped resulting in collaborative delivery of ideas.

The Apparent Deception

After discussing all briefs and all interviewing had been performed, the idea of the city of Brescia was perceived completely different through members of the different social strata. This posed a contrast to the perception of the urban fabric as outsiders, in fact the behavior of the socio-cultural fabric of the city seemed of one of many different but interwoven social conditions and not of an accentuated division as described by the different members of the institution and residents. This perceived cohesion in the social fabric is in such nature that as a development practitioner has to be identified, thus, accentuating the necessity to complement field observations and interviews.

Conclusion

Apart from the experience created by developing our team proposal for the community awareness of the Local Democracy Embassy of Zavidovici (LDE) and Peace Anti Militarism Association (MIR), the greatest value of this exercise was to acknowledge the amount of the all ways changing information that the field has to offer and the potential contribution that it can generate for future intervention.

KATJA STARC (Slovenia)

The immigrants in Italy, the Italy in me

After graduation in 2010 I couldn't find a job in Koper, Slovenia so I tried my luck across the border - as many others coming from this multi-ethnic, multi-lingual region of Slovenians, Italians and Croats did for generations before me. It was about this time of the year on my first day of work in Trieste, Italy and I didn't know how long the bus ride from Koper would take me so I nervously took the early bus. Arriving there way too early, of course, I went for a coffee. So there I was, a freshly graduated Slovenian student, hoping to move to London in September, having a *croissant*, watching cars and *motorini* driving by this café run by a Chinese family, thinking about my future and contemplating about my past, while smiling at the multiplicity of the present situation.

I cannot think about Italy in general without feeling somehow connected to it and I cannot write about Brescia without relating it to my internalized conception of Italy. Living in its close proximity, just across its eastern border, it has influenced me since I was a kid. Indirectly, through its popular culture and experienced first hand through the city of Trieste. Before the proliferation of shopping malls in Slovenia, we would regularly go *čez* (literally across, meaning across the border) to buy *scarpe* and *jeans*. On our way back we would get stopped at the border crossing and be asked the usual "*Qualcosa da dichiarare?*" (Goods to declare?). And as usual, with our car trunks full, we would nod our heads saying '*no, no*' and based

on an informal agreement, where lies were tolerated for mutual benefit, the customs officer would let us through.

Trieste was the place where I first experienced seeing something different. It is here that as a child I first saw a black person, one of the African immigrants called *vu-compra* (coming from *vuoi comprare?*, meaning *want to buy?*), selling their bracelets, fake Rolex watches and Gucci bags on the pavements. But it is also where I felt being different myself. I would speak the same language, watch the same TV shows, listen to the same music, drink the same coffee. But no matter how frequently I would use the same urban spaces as the Triestini, in that city I would always feel a stranger, an outsider, never a part of it. Not really bothered by this, however feeling that I was somehow related to this environment, I kept observing this impenetrable society, seeing it change quickly over time.

Like in Brescia, where the *tabaccaio* said the influx of immigrants in the past 15 years has been huge, Trieste has transformed drastically too. The shops around Ponte Rosso where we used to go to buy Levi's are now taken over by the Chinese. Old Italian shops could not compete with the cheap goods and this led to new resentments towards a community that is otherwise completely invisible in its parallel life. Recently, a Slovenian journalist Ervin Hladnik Milharčič who worked extensively in The Middle East, compared Trieste to Jerusalem because of its multiple identity and where one doesn't know when to speak Italian or when to speak Slovenian in order not to offend anybody. In this now peaceful city with a troubled past new micro-lesions and new invisibilities are arising, reflecting global trends that are changing our societies forever. There is a long way to go in creating new bonds and mending old ones.

After finishing that *caffè e cornetto* I still had time to kill so I took a stroll along the Riva towards the famous Piazza Unita, so special because of its architecture with an Austro-Hungarian influence on three sides of the square and the whole northern side opening up towards the Mediterranean Sea. As I was wandering around, it suddenly struck me. Something that didn't happen during high school history classes and not even when reading Boris Pahor, a Slovenian minority writer from Trieste and concentration camp survivor, who spent all his 97 years struggling with and fighting against nationalist and totalitarian ideologies. It was walking those streets that finally and undeniably made me realize that this ambiguous place, this contested city and this shared history of conflict and cooperation were all living inside me. There is something unclear about this part of me, something not completely familiar and still a bit alien, but so inextricably woven into my identity.

It took me 27 years to acknowledge and feel this simple fact. By then the city was completely awake and I was already late.



MAGDALENA ASSANOWICZ (Poland)

Factory's revolution- a reflection

'Do not agree with what we are doing just because we are told to do so. Be brave to be disobedient. Frankly, everything that seems normal to us at the moment, was once illegal.' John Jordan "Reclaim The Streets"

Once upon a time there was a place called Factory. It had a long history that was visible through the elements of its construction. People inhabiting Factory were skilled in trading. They knew how to exchange skills to have a fruitful outcome. They had hopes and expectations, plans of expansion. Factory was prosperous and quite just. The ruling Head knew the ways to make people comfortable and secure.

One day the Head thought: "We can improve the speed of exchanging skills- Factory could produce even more". Simple idea turned into a disaster. Factorians did not know how to fulfil the expectations and started faking their skills and cheating in the exchange processes. The foundations on which Factory was based, disappeared. Factorians from the state of expectations turned into state of disappointment. The situation led to a revolt. The Head was angry- he said that it is the Factorians fault that the place is not prosperous anymore. Some Factorians decided to leave and start their lives elsewhere. Factory was empty and only strangers, not knowing Factory's current conditions, decided to stay. After sometime they also understood that Factory is not in a good shape but they had no option of coming back to their homelands.

Factory is now partly inhabited, some of its sections still prosper, there is no cohesion of Heads and Factorians reasoning. Is there a way to bring Factory's golden days? Factorians still hope.

How to change reality through an Urban Intervention? We found ourselves in a particular context- Brescia (Italy), city in an industrial decline, facing a new wave of im-

migration. Working with Embassy for Local Democracy dealing with problems of refugees and migrants, promoting non-pacifist movement, made us realize that the 'struggle' they were having in the 1970s/1980s changed drastically throughout the last decade. Firstly we thought that what has to be done is a redefinition of their new mission, but we also had to intervene physically/visibly. This exercise made us realize that urban design of any form is a great way to visualize the issues that seem to be invisible, but also present in daily debates. Due to time constraints the interventions that were proposed played with the visual level of buildings and surroundings using mostly "art of engagement" (i.e. posters, stickers, painting and even graffiti). It was interesting to observe, that although we could do whatever we wanted, we were still afraid to break the rules and only 'played with them'- rules made by those who do not necessarily respect the ethos of 'social justice' and with whom we do not agree with. This fear was somehow astonishing- questions of what is right and wrong emerged immediately.

During our discussion images of Brescia as a ghost town (thousands of m2 of empty factories, empty streets, weirdly calm Brescianos) floated in our heads. We knew one thing: there is a need of a provocation, of a shock therapy that would open some of Brescianos eyes. Are we brave enough to say: A Revolution?

MAHYA FATEMI (Iran)

"[...] It is pointless to try to decide whether Zenobia is to be classified among happy cities or among the unhappy. It makes no sense to divide cities into these two species, but rather into a different two : those that through the years and the changes continue to give form to their desires and those in which desires either erase the city or are erased by it."

Italo Calvino, Le Cita Invisibili, 1972

"[...] your sister another sister, the battle other battles, on you return from Euphemia, the city where memory is traded at every solstice and at every equinox."

The city of Euphemia

I ♥ Brescia: (where is your favourite place?)

Going away to Brescia at an intense time of the year where each weekend seemed like a time to catch up on the readings and works during the second semester seemed like an inconvenient trip, but it turned out to be one my unforgettable personal experiences involving the issues that were unpacked, as well as the collective group aurora during the three intensive days.

The exercise was run in conjunction with Local Democracy Embassy of Zaviodovici working with issues of migrants and refugees in Brescia where it gives the impression of a divided city based on marginalization of people

in a developing country. After day of lecture, the site of Quartiere del Carmine was appointed to our group where the task was unpacking certain phenomena on the site resulting to a design intervention. The charrette started by 'mapping the visible' and physical attributes combined with informal and formal interviews in order to understand the site and arrived at a stage where it resulted into mapping the unrealised which influenced our final design intervention.

After some hours of discussing in our group of six, our intervention formed as an enabling transformative process both at spatial level as well as accommodating and challenging the dynamics of social change between people of Brescia. This design intervention aimed at voicing the marginalized individuals as well as the residents toward a programme that engages and promotes identity with the surroundings that demands viewers to conscious questing of current appropriation of the social problems experienced; on top of breaking the prejudices among the residents of Brescia toward a collective sense of belonging and memory and interaction.

The Brescia field trip was an academic experience that had a strong connection with the concepts that we learned and researched during the year and resulted in a more in-depth hand on experience as an individual on concepts of exclusion, identity, housing, informal circumstances, resistance, right to the city, citizenship and even literatures from Foucault, Lefebvre and ... which we have been bathed with during the past 6 months combined with the notion of Urban Design tool for transformation in BUDD. The exercise was about transforming the public space by provoking the sense of identity of Brescians as a catalyst for moments of solidarity and bonding in their everyday life paths.

Although it was a three day process of intense work and staying up the night for our presentation the next day, it was a rewarding experience based on sharing new knowledge, skills and organizing the group based on the skills and resources that each group member had for a better result in the limited time we encompassed. The experience strengthens our role and capacity as practitioners based on the constraints we had on the trip and also our mediating role between designing and informal tensions perceived during the investigations. Moreover as an individual I got more aware of the amount of submerged resources and information that needs to be collected as well as co-operation among the practitioners for changing a situation in a strategic way especially working in a poor and developing area later during our trip in May. The dynamic of the group which I was working with and their openness and flexibility toward each others opinion by putting away their presumption of expertise and being imaginative and free spirit within the limited time was a truly enjoyable and satisfying chance. (I ♥ my group).

MAIRA ANDRADE (Mozambique)

Choosing People over arms

The 3-day Brescia fieldtrip, in Italy, resulted from an invitation made by the Association Embassy of Local Democracy challenging the BUDD students to engage in a project that began in 2010, entitled "The City of Euphemia". This project was born from the increasing need to integrate refugees (mainly from Pakistan, Romania, Egypt, China and Ukraine) coming into the city, representing a considerable 15.1% (Montagna, 2011) of the total Brescian population of almost 194,800 (census 2008) (Montagna, 2011). Here, 'integration' is not simply about hosting people, but making sure the city stays open to refugees/immigrants, and that the spatial environment is transformed so to make them feel welcomed and safe.

Unfortunately, from testimonials and personal observations, some degree of gentrification is noticeable and mainly not favorable to those without an Italian background/heritage. Ironically it is believed that the local arms factory (specialized in Beretta firearms) supplying weapons to various countries is (in)directly to blame for the increase of refugees flowing into the region, which according to Montagna (2011) fits to the slogan "you wanted arms, you have people".

For centuries, human presence has transformed the urban space in this city; this is evident now, more than ever. Under this light, BUDD students interacted with Brescia's inhabitants seeking transformation of the urban space. Our exercise focused in transforming the area according to our experience, observation and imagination, since the local municipality allows for the operation of the arms factory and lacks responsive action to attend the needs of the (international) community. In other words our objective was to make "The City of Euphemia" more visible.



Coming myself from a civil engineering background where the premise is ‘to build’, the Brescia fieldtrip elucidated me, once again, in how ‘building’ does not necessarily mean engaging in a hard intervention approach, in terms of urban design decisions. In the past, it had been very challenging to adopt and embrace non-building interventions, in the theoretical studio environment; however, upon facing this real case-study and having experienced both hard and soft spatial environments of the city, this realization seems to have been easier to attain.

This live exercise was rich in the sense we were exposed to a complex situation comprised by clashes of values, interests and objectives, driven by different levels and forms of power, domination and oppression. Upon the challenge posed by this context (and as a strategy taking into account limitations in both time and information for a more detailed analysis and proposal), there was an almost immediate and general consensus, within and among working groups, that our approach had to be more social (soft) oriented. Deciding on the approach, on the other hand, brought to the surface a set of personal questions:

1. How to engage without losing oneself in the righteousness trap of social justice? After all, the case had everything to do with needs and power relations;
2. Who is our ‘client’ and to which degree are we, as ‘practitioners’, obligated to cater to its desires?
3. Even though we are ‘practitioners’ we are, above anything else, rational Human beings with a sense of judgment and so, how does one draw the line separating ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ and keep aside personal feelings that may put in jeopardy possible lucid results (in the best interest of the ‘client’)?

Although I am sure these are questions that still remain, as obtaining answers is a work-in-progress, the process and collective working experience undergone during the fieldtrip, was an eye-opener regarding fieldwork dynamics, challenges and dilemmas faced in practice, that are not truly perceptible under the rather controlled environment of the, yet, theoretical BUDD Studio.

MCKENZIE O'NEILL (USA)

“...In the long journey ahead of you... you start summoning up your memories one by one...on your return from Euphemia, the city where memory is traded at every solstice and at every equinox”.

– from *Calvino's Invisible Cities*

Many times we forget the physical representations we draw or construct are connected to people and livelihoods at their very core. As designers and people of the ‘built realm’ it is our weakness and constant challenge to connect the social and physical phenomena together.

The trip to Brescia, Italy was an opportunity to step outside of academia for a moment and insert ourselves in our role as design practitioners to propose “socially-rooted-spatial-strategies” to the Embassy for Local Democracy, a local organization working with the large immigrant and refugee populations in the city. Profoundly, while at first it was difficult to remember that the rapidness of the exercise required us to utilize our resources to the best of our ability, in this case we found we relied heavily within our teams on “each other” to produce and share knowledge in making our proposal. The group was divided into two sites, the Carmine neighborhood and the Movimento Nonviolento Headquarters on Via Milano, our site in this exercise. We were tasked with walking the neighborhood and ‘accessing’ the local extremities of our site’s complex, a challenge easier said than done, in order to make a proposal to the LDE.

In our investigation one of the most enjoyable experiences was recognizing how language as a skill set was one of our ‘kit’ items. As we walked the vicinity and met locals and passersby, one team member would ask the questions in Italian, another would stand to the side and translate, a Spanish speaker, to another team member who took notes, while the others would listen to the translation and focus on documenting the interviews and surroundings. Occasionally on meeting people who recently moved to the city and were still learning the language, other team members, speaking Punjabi and Spanish, would be placed in the role of interviewer and extract the information we sought making the exercise quite dynamic as we adjusted according to each condition. While our strengths were working to our advantage here, this was more of a display of the place and the city than solely of us, and we tried to acknowledge this as one of our most crucial findings in our proposal.

The Brescia trip provided a great opportunity to explore creative solutions for an organization that encounters contestation on every surface of its site. The struggle is not limited to the LDE but to the city itself as a place that seeks to renew itself and struggles with the damage inflicted by the previous events of the city, specifically in the industrial quarter. Our proposals sought realistic and provocative approaches in order to expose the physical limitations of our site but also emphasis the mission imbedded in the organization.

Taking this experience, Brescia reminded me that exploring the social dimension of urban life is important to understanding the complexities of a site. In this case, the physical site was more difficult to explore than the social, constantly finding barriers and walls preventing us from seeing all we wanted to, both physically and metaphorically. Looking for solutions, though, forces one to look beyond these contingencies as an opportunity to exploit the question of why these boundaries exist and how to open them to better connect fragmented urban conditions.



NOOR AL GHAFARI (Canada)

Communicating Acceptance

My personal journey in the MSc in Building and Urban Design in Development began on the 13th of September 2010, the day I was accepted into UCL. Already being honoured to attend this school and being part of Department Planning Unit is an experience on its own. Going to Brescia in the middle of all the hustle and bustle of the end of semester rush seemed like the worst idea. However, a few hours into the BUDD camp, I felt so fortunate and privileged to finally put into practice all the skills I had acquired during the past two hectic, but beautiful, semesters. Coming into this program, the majority of us expected to be going to Wales in the spring. The previous years attended a workshop in Wales, which gave them the opportunity to experiment with different building materials on the field. The workshop in Brescia was styled as a Design Charrette. Based on the experiences I've had in this workshop, I would say that its nature suits the basis of our course much more than the previous years.

The day we arrived in Brescia we were greeted by the Movimento Non Violento (the non violent movement).

Augustino and Adriano, the ones running the branch in Brescia, kicked off the night with a welcome speech, which described to us the motives of the movement and introduced us to "the City of Euphemia". The basis of the project was to welcome refugees from different countries to the city. The interesting part of this project was that these individuals were not to be put into refugee villages, but rather to be incorporated into the city and to be seen as resources rather than a problem. Their presence in Brescia transforms the urban space, which should be seen as an apparatus for change, rather than a burden to the city.

The struggle remains in the way the people of the city react to this project. Our aim was to come up with an intervention, which would stimulate the people of Quartiere del Carmene to think differently towards the high immigration population. Our group was split up in two, some to do interviews and some to observe and analyse the neighbourhood. I went to conduct interviews, and I'm glad I did, because I truly enjoy interacting with people and learning first hand from their experiences. The first set of interviews, we met people from a variety of background; Italian, Moroccan, Ethiopian. Each of these people gave us a different insight about how people perceived the immigrant population living in Quartiere Del

Carmene. Combining it with the observations, it was clear that there was a distinction between the Italians and Immigrant populations. People mostly stuck by their own ethnic backgrounds rather than integrated with one another. After a day of fixed interviews, we were trying to identify ways in which we could intervene in the space and introduce a project which would unite the people rather than create further discrimination.

Our project, I (heart) Brescia, aimed to do just that- Finding a common ground for all the people of Brescia to relate to. We decided to ask them what part of Carmine they loved the most and to take us there. As we walked with them we really got to know a bit more about them through a casual conversation. At first I thought that these interviews were better than the previous ones, until I realized that without the arranged interviews, we probably wouldn't have known what type of questions to ask to fill in the gaps. Once we reached their destination, we took their photograph in hopes to one day have a photo exhibition in the heart of Carmene. Also perhaps have these photographs on the shutters of the apartments to reflect that person's favourite place.

The second intervention was 'sitting with strangers', a bench in which people could go and write their stories. A lot of benches have been removed from public spaces, since the officials want to prevent clustering around public squares. This is why the bench would be a temporary exhibition, but would still act as a vessel to put the message across.

If I were to do anything different, I would have liked to take the interviews further, especially the ones conducted on the second day. Walking with someone to a place, which is personal to him or her, allows them to somehow open up to you. The dynamics and enthusiasm in our group also added to this wonderful experience. I truly enjoyed Brescia, and I hope this is only the beginning of a set of beautiful experiences that I will have in my career.

PARVATHI NAIR (India)

The intensive 3 days in Brescia was rather a refreshing experience in terms of a change from the rush of London and more importantly to gain a fresh perspective on the practical side of field we have been exposed to. Though the journey was rather quick, the amount of information assimilated in such a short while made us realize the value of being in the field and gaining first-hand experience. We uncovered the case through the lens of the Movimento Non-Violento Headquarters (MNH) and Local Democracy Embassy (LDE) who were our kind hosts during this process. While the history of these organizations and the glorious past of the city itself depicted the social revolution, struggles and protests of the people

of the Lombardy region, what caught my interest was the current social scenario. Brescia's present demography is constituted by immigrants from various Asian and African countries who are mainly refugees or who arrive in search of a livelihood. This trend is very unique when compared to the other Italian cities. For me, the challenge for any intervention in this locale was to integrate the immigrant community with the local Italians who are a minority in order to enable a harmonious living. From our observation most of the immigrant communities kept to their own clan whether it be for religious, communal or occupational activities. It was hence important to understand how socially inclusive these people were in the city and what their rights to the city were.

Some of the other considerations of my group were to emphasize the past and celebrate the rich heritage. Our area of study 'Via Milano' consisted of a mix of residential and industrial buildings. Most of the industrial buildings were just unused with trails of old rail tracks that catered to the weapon industry that existed here. The residential buildings were old, under maintained and uninviting. This was a contrast to the city centre where open plazas exhibited the splendor of the Italian city.

In my group, our main objective for proposing an intervention was to improve social integration and connectivity. This we realized had to be a step wise procedure. We also considered the flow and management of capital to carry out such a long term process. A phasing of the process was done and the first catalytic intervention was identified as our proposal. The proposed steps were also in consideration with the MNH and LDE and after the understanding of the available resources. Our proposal thus had to be a trigger for opening up the city to its rich heritage and enhancing a sense of connectivity and oneness between different communities.

Hence our intervention was one of a catalyst in nature; one which involved community participation under the guidance of organization and one that will be self generative in terms of income and activities. This process of arriving at an intervention was more complex to come up with than the intervention itself as it involved the considerations of various aspects of the society. Thus dealing with such a reality with direct interaction with the people involved was the enriching part of the trip for me.

SADIQA JABBAR (United Kingdom)

Italian, migrant, or immigrant "I ♥ Brescia"

The weekend in Brescia promised to be intensive and fast paced and was likely to be over before we knew it. BUDD members were divided into four groups and assigned two areas for observation; the city centre, Quartiere del Carmine, and Movimento Nonviolento

Headquarter Via Milano. Groups 1 and 3 went to the city centre while groups 2 and 4 remained in the latter area.

The issues raised concerned the immigrant community's inability to 'integrate' into Italian society through citizenship and acknowledgement of their diverse cultures. This is due to the Italian Government's immigration policies. I found this contentious especially in a country regarded as part of the 'developed' world whereby 'freedom' and 'democracy' are highly prized realities that distinguish them from countries in the 'developing' world. "A city is composed by different kinds of men [and women]; similar people cannot bring a city into existence" (Aristotle). Through the introductory session, lecture and historical tour of Brescia, I realised just how lucky I am to live and study in the UK. The issues raised in Brescia were quite overwhelmingly depressing and frustrating. It enabled me to value my British identity with fresh pride and respect.

As a trial-run of the Bangkok field trip many forms of data collection were used through both detailed and 'without looking' sketching techniques, photography and the note taking and diagramming of observations and key findings. We used various forms of interviewing techniques; formal pre-planned interviews took place in people's homes or neutral places, informal conversations with people on the streets, to the unplanned ones whereby citizens approached us directly. The unplanned conversations were sometimes the most interesting as people would often speak to us in Italian, not too much of a problem as somehow we managed to get the gist of what they were saying through the odd word or hand gesture!

On reflection I think my group (Azzura, Dhrin, Noor, Mahya, Serena and Su-Ann with our group leader Andrew) worked quite well together in our ability to work cohesively despite having different perspectives. Although we had different ideas it all came together in the end as we somehow envisioned similar social and physical interventions. It was important to test group dynamic and how in such a short space of time we could assign tasks and work efficiently to generate an urban analysis and an evaluation of our findings that would inspire our spatial interventions.

During our observations of Quartiere del Carmine, which we thought was highly multicultural with migrants from various part of the world namely Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, Romania and Albania, we decided that the problem within the society was not necessarily to do with the lack of integration as much as the lack of interaction. Vehicular and pedestrian movements seemed to be quite fluid and harmonious regardless of the size of streets. The public realm in the main thoroughfares was full of activity which changed during the course of the day and weekend, yet we noticed that people tended to cluster according to ethnicity.



Our proposed intervention was to create interactive public memory walls. We came to this idea from the generation of keywords such as interaction, communication, women, children, public space, home, hybrid, citizenship and memories. The notion of home would be transposed into the public realm through the name and photograph of people in their loved place in Brescia promoting the historic welcoming nature of Brescia. It essentially was about people and places representing a sense of home or belonging in Brescia, "I Brescia". The memory wall comprises photographs exhibited on window shutters with an interactive map of Brescia placed on the ground. The places would be located using photo-flags with routes simulated to direct people to the locations in the photos. Waiting for them at the end would be a temporary seat with a silhouette and basic information about the person as a marker to engage with the public. "...cities exist for processes of communication and exchange between people - that is the only reason for having them in the first place - and public space is a key medium through which these processes take place..." (Ian Bentley, 1999, p14).

From the food, streetscapes, people and even publication of our visit in a local paper, the Brescia workshop was an eye-opening and interesting experience that tested group dynamics within a short space of time, limited resources and bundles of creativity. Bring on Bangkok.

SEPIDEH HAJISOLTANI (Iran)

Based on the Brief of the BUDD camp I was supposed to be "stimulated by the richly evocative and symbolic imaginations of such multiple meanings (the city of Euphemia by Italo Calvino) adapted to the realm of spatial reality in which they work". Actually I was stimulated by thinking about this richness "sharing the story of wolves, sisters and treasures by merchants who share the second hand experiences of the world." I am thinking about them sitting next to each other talking and sharing this experience; "yes it sounds quite nice!" I tell myself while I

have just finished reading the brief once again while I am flying to Brescia. Before the passport check in the airport I feel the same feeling that any middle eastern would feel in that position and I wonder if those merchants had the same feeling when they were crossing the borders, gates or what so ever? Were all of them welcomed?

It is a few hours that I am in Brescia listening to Alireza's story and I have forgotten everything about the merchants, fires, sisters and wolves. His family immigrated from Afghanistan like so many other families to Iran before he was born. He was brought up in Iran. Now as an adult he has immigrated to Italy. Being an illegal refugee he needed a fake passport to go to Turkey, he managed to do so. He stayed in Turkey for a while then went to Greece and finally reached his destination in Rome. It took six month to travel all this way by road and he spent all his 13,000 Euro for his trip. He stayed in Rome for 4 months in a camp and there he got an Italian Visa for 5 years! He seems quite happy and content! Now he is in Brescia, He does not know how to speak Italian so he does not have any chance to find a job in a very near future.

On my way back to our place I think about his story; now I have doubts in the whole thing about sharing the tales. Those merchants were in the city of Euphemia to do trading not for sharing tales, They shared these tales when they were done with their business. They entered the city with their goods and left the city with their profit. Alireza came to stay, he had no goods and he cannot make a profit for a while.

In our presentation for the BUDD Camp we talk about integration between immigrants and Others. We talk about networks, cultural tolerance, etc. I am thinking if all these things are going to take place. These immigrants are interacting within their own communities. If we are talking about integration we need a reason for integration as well. In a city like London diversity is interwoven within all your daily activities. You have people of other nationalities

at your school, work or even in the tube. In Brescia there is no reason to interact with immigrants they sell their own flowers and people pass by.

May be they need a chance to gain more skills to do something else, something beyond selling flowers. May be they need to play a more serious role in this city to be taken seriously by others.

SERENA JARVIS (Hawaii)

The concept of home is a multidimensional subject representing spatial, virtual and imagined domains. The deconstruction and forced displacement from one's home can evoke some of the most powerful human emotions. Equally, real or imagined threats of foreign infiltration can activate hostile responses tied to notions of identity and relations of power. Within the context of anti-migration agendas and xenophobic communities of resistance, the city of Brescia emerges as a unique place of rich diversity and multicultural acceptance.

During our welcome dinner at the Embassy for Local Democracy we were made aware of their longstanding support of antiwar movements, workers rights and asylum seekers. We learned of their current initiative to host refugees and how they are welcoming them and assisting in their integration process in Brescia. The discussion over an exotic meal of Ethiopian food surrounded topics of how the refugees are changing the urban fabric of Brescia, but even more importantly how the urban fabric must shift and expand to acknowledge and accommodate new identities of the city. The aim of our time spent in Brescia was to investigate a way to recover a sense of openness in the physicality of the place and produce a design intervention that would represent a catalyst for change. Our urban analysis of the neighborhood of Carmine proved to be an inspired experience.

Our group split into clusters and investigated the community through various mediums — mapping, sketching, filming and formal and impromptu interviewing. After discussing and analyzing our initial material we decided to focus on the relationship between hybrid identity and the concept of home (home being defined as a multilayered concept relating to nostalgia of the past and transformation for the future). We aimed to find a way to represent and give voice to the multiple identities of Brescia. Equally, we hoped to express how Brescia represents home for Italians and emigrants alike. The trip concluded with a presentation of our urban intervention at the LDE. We proposed an interactive urban art installation that aimed to express the many faces/voices/identities of Brescia within the public space of the city.

Photos of various people taken in their most loved place in Brescia would be displayed as large images on the

The Mobile Advocacy Center

The aim is to achieve and **enhance the collective identity** towards a new fabric of culture that celebrates the character of both local Italians and immigrants in the region.



walls of the city. An installation of benches situated in each favorite location would have the story of the person who loved that space written on the bench. The installation would aim to be interactive, encouraging any person who sat on the bench to also write their own story and their feelings of Brescia for others to see. While we realized that encouraging people to be openly expressive could present some element of risk, we decided that providing a public platform of expression was important. And, we felt that it would reflect the overwhelmingly positive responses of the place that were gathered in our interviews.

The experience in Brescia helped me to begin developing the appropriate tools of 'looking' and 'listening' that will be essential for future experiences in the field. However, I remain uncertain that macro scale conclusions can be made from a single weekend excursion. Building trust as an outsider coming into a community is a delicate and complicated process, one that requires time and sensitivity. Additionally, developing a comprehensive understanding of the spatial forces, in addition to the less obvious or invisible forces calls for a significant study of the place. While we felt passionate about our urban intervention and were praised by the panel we presented to at LDE, how can I be certain that our recommendations (developed over the course of two days) were in fact aligned with the immediate and long term needs of the community. Additionally, I felt that for our first project it might have been more productive to work collaboratively as part of the efforts of local agencies.

Globalization is changing the nature of development interventions and definitions of 'community,' 'home,' 'empowerment' and 'participation.' As we re-define intervention in the academy and in practice, it is important to acknowledge that current conceptions of progress and community mobilization may have to be re-conceptualized or rejected altogether, in order to allow for hybrids to emerge and changes to take place. The protests and radical pacifist movements of the 1970's allowed for profound transformations to take place in social relations, making room for new cultures of tolerance to emerge. However, current conditions present a much different landscape — globalization, mass displacement and migration, and the presence of informality pose profound, multi-scalar challenges for communities and urban practitioners. While I still have more questions than answers, it is my belief that the more multidisciplinary the approach of the intervention, the greater the potential for success. While our initial intervention was only a starting point, a taste of

what is to come, I am not certain that it represented the type of multidisciplinary/cross cultural collaborations that are necessary in addressing these larger questions (what is our role as urban practitioners and how must this role be redefined to relate more specifically to contemporary urban conditions.) Equally, longstanding

concepts such as 'community' and 'participation' must be reframed and examined through the lens of cultural hybrids and the emergence of new geographies. If participatory strategies and catalytic interventions are to cultivate a new mode of progress that values diversity of thought and action it is essential that they engage and represent the highly specific identities of the place.

SILVIA ELISA CHI CERVERA (México)

Calvino's Euphemia: Trading Cities Camillo's Euphemia: BUDD, trading knowledge

For me, there were two approaches for the charrette: one before Brescia, and another after it. Before Brescia I thought of the exercise, as a workshop, in which, we were going to develop some sort of project that besides the result would help us to reinforce our bonding with the group, experiment with the dynamics of a trip with 26 people, and improve our performances in the teamwork towards the fieldtrip in Bangkok.

After Brescia, the things are different. The exercise have brought to my personal experience other reflections around the issues of segregation and multiculturalism that precisely we saw in Brescia (and that we were trying to tackle with the idea of trade as in Calvino's "Trading Cities"), contrasted with my personal experience as part of a group of BUDD students, which is also a multicultural group, with complementary and collaborative perspectives and approaches to work.

In order to explain this change in my approach, I need to describe my team, the members were: Magda Assanowicz (Poland), José DiGirolamo (Chile-Italy), Amrita Koonar (UK-India) Ivana Nady (Slovenia), Katja Starc (Slovenia), McKenzie O'Neill (USA), and myself, from México. We walked around the area (Movimiento Non Violento HQ); in order to identify the social and urban characteristics of the place. In this search, we interviewed people from the area, and, as we were told before by the organizers of the workshop, we could see the multiculturalism of the place: different nationalities, looking for their livelihood in Brescia, cohabiting with each other.

In our group, the Italian speaker was Katja (who speaks Italian since she has been exposed to Italian culture because she lived near the Slovenia-Italy border) and also she was the interviewer. In order to carry out the interviews in a more efficient way, simultaneously I was translating —or trying to do so— the Italian dialogue to English to Ivana, who was taking the notes. One of our interviews was with an Indian family, who happened to be living in Brescia from few months, so their command of Italian language was not very fluent. In this particular case, the interviewer role was transferred to Amrita, who is fluent in Punjabi language. At this point we were quite amused

“the City where memory is traded at every solstice and at every equinox”.

Tales Market

The use of a design initiative in collaboration with **local academic communities** to design and build market stalls that would showcase the distinctiveness of the **collective identity** of local community.



with the complexities and entertaining particularities of the translation exercise which was possible due to the combination of our multicultural backgrounds, working in our favour to improve and maximise the inputs for the exercise. This experience was important to develop this reflection, but the next encounter defines it.

The next encounter we had in Brescia, was with a group of teenagers that were going out of the school. One thing that caught my attention was that they were from different cultures, but they were acting all together as an homogenous group of students, playing, chatting to each other, etc, an phenomenon that we haven't seen before in the streets of the city (picture 1)

Katja asked the questions in Italian, and there was confusion at the beginning: Magda interviewed one student in Spanish, whose answers were in Italian, Katja interacted with another boy in Italian, I was speaking Spanish with an Uruguayan kid; again, the full exercise of translation was carried out in extreme. Later, in a quiet moment and ourselves acting more as a group rather than individuals, we asked the students where all they were from: Uruguay, Pakistan, India, were their answers and one of them returned us the question: where are you from?: Poland, USA, México, UK, Slovenia, Chile. It hit me. We were looking to a mirror.

When we begin the BUDD course, we all brought our knowledge from different backgrounds, different countries, different expertise and level of it. In the course we add to our knowledge, new and different inputs, with different interests: design, policies, planning, economics, participation, etc. We have been using our knowledge to produce whatever it was asked to us in the course in a cooperative way: “learning” from other people, “teaching” to other people, maximizing the personal skills of each one of us and discovering new potential ones, as well as define our positions, in some cases not only with BUDD course mates, but also with other DPU mates. We have been in a trading-off exercise since September, that has helped us to grow and to expand our knowledge with new or different perspectives so, BUDD is our city of Euphemia.

This multicultural working group dynamics is definitely impacting my present and future work as practitioner, I have been able to see clearly that even within a group of different backgrounds, things can be achieved, when there is a common goal.

The teenagers we met in Brescia were in the same collaborative dynamics than us, interacting in an academic environment, all of them were from different countries, but not only cohabiting as the rest of our interviewees,

but also interacting with each other, and fading the differences as a heterogeneous group.

The lack of a feeling of a group has to be discussed by the Brescia inhabitants. What are the common objectives now for the future they want for themselves? My hope is -and it is clear- that the master course should maintain the Euphemia spirit, and the trading off happening in the BUDD, as well as in our day to day practice.

SU-ANN TAN (Malaysia)

Learning and walking it through in Brescia

Pre-Brescia

It had been a hectic pre-Brescia week, or rather, last term. I honestly was not looking forward to going to this BUDD camp, even though it was somewhere in Italy. I wanted my weekend to rest and though I knew that this camp would be an enjoyable experience, it would also be tiring for those four days and for the weeks ahead. On top of that, I was quite disappointed that we were not going to Wales where we would learn how to build with different materials as before starting this course, I was very interested in learning that. However, this whole course so far had been quite unexpected, but in a good way. I am pleased with the issues we're addressing and the knowledge and experiences that I've had to face.

Brescia

Though starving and exhausted upon arrival, my whole attitude towards this trip started to change as we spent more time in Brescia. The first informal 'conference' we had at the Peace Youth Centre kicked started a remedial change to my attitude and my understanding of this camp. I was finally excited about what we were going to hopefully learn and take home from the urban design interventions we would propose. Looking back at my logbook, I wrote that 'our job was to support the work of change in the urban fabric so that the city becomes a host city for refugees'. I thought this was great as I had not learned much about this. The case given seemed very interesting and I was excited to begin.

During our field time in Quartiere del Carmine, it was difficult to not get distracted with wanting to go round the city doing nothing but just sightsee and eat good food. I felt I always had to catch myself from wandering around aimlessly instead of analysing the spaces to understand the dynamics of activities and people relations within our area. The first day on the field was difficult as I still had not gotten a grasp of what we were doing or what I wanted to achieve. Our group broke off and so Sadiqa walked around doing basic public realm analyses- sort of the same kind of analyses we did in the first design charrette exercise we had in term one. To cut the story short, though our analyses at the time seemed a little

unproductive, when we were all able to gather our bits of information during discussion times we were able to reach the breaking point of it all making sense and forming an urban design intervention we all felt passionate about. It was momentous!

Post-Brescia

On the bus back to Verona airport, my conversation with Desiree really helped me verbally process what I had learnt over the extensive four days that had rapidly flown by. I was further reminded that I had an interest in people from diverse backgrounds which came about when we interviewed migrants and locals during our intervention exercise. Not only that but I enjoyed the process of understanding how they impacted the city spatially and if we had a longer time there, I would have loved to see how our knowledge and experience about the city and its people might have changed.

There are more or less three things that I have taken away from this camp. Firstly, the food was amazing! On a more serious note, the second is that the camp has given me a better grasp of how little time we have in finding out results and creating an impact when we're on the field. It's taught me a lot about the need for a good group dynamic – where we can work together with the skills we have, to use resources effectively and so on. It's been an added experience to what I have been learning in our class group work sessions.

And lastly, the BUDD camp has actually helped me process my thoughts on my dissertation topic a bit better, I want to have my own view of what 'the right to the city' means and how power influences that. I want understand that at a point of view from migrants and marginalised ethnic groups. Though I lack experience in this area and though what I've learnt and am learning from this is still taking its roots, I hope to have a clearer direction for where I am heading next after this masters course.

TAREQ RAZOUK (Syria)

This report is about BUDD camp in Brescia in Italy. This camp lasted for three days to enrich student's experience in understanding and analyzing specific sites in the city. Maira, Anna, Jen, Afraa, Amy and I were responsible about developing an understanding about QUARTIER DEL CARMINE which directed our catalyst design approach to this site.

Close to the city center, Short Walking from the main Square through the market to the historic fabric of Carmine brought a lot of questions to our minds. In this street the most commercial and economic activities gathered to represent people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Moving from this street to the nar-

row alleys you can notice a dramatic transition between public and private realm. This transition is obvious in both physicality and usability. The stoned ground accompanied with arches on the entrance of the most alleys helped to create such feeling of transition. Furthermore, the walls of these alleys became a local newspaper of people who expressed their political or emotional attitudes. The windows which were used as a way of connection to the public realm in the Main Street kept closed in these narrow alleys. CCTV brings feeling of danger and instability. All of these issues were understood in many ways and all of these interpretations can be far from reality.

The methodology and tools that the practitioners use will direct and control their intervention and understanding of the site. While mapping the physicality, usability and people behavior within the site is subjective to the practitioner's interests and understanding, interviewing people is subjected to those people and their understanding to that site. Thus, the truth is located in between. The common points, which were highlighted in both my observation and the interviews which were conducted by my colleagues, focus on the contradiction between how the place is designed and how it is used. This can be because of many issues; some of them related to the un-recognitions of immigrants and the others related to the multicultural characteristic of residents. As a result of that, our intervention tried to tackle these issues by raising the idea of identity of the place.

The differences in Carmine area can be highlighted as a point of identity. Recognizing these differences can make the place definable and recognizable. Therefore, Building the identity of the Carmine neighborhood can guarantee a cohesive place and inclusive community to evolve a sense of belonging and helps for continues positive changes. We proposed three catalyst interventions; postcards on shops, reuse vacant shops and the multicultural social events. While some of them have more spatial dimension and others have a social entry point, all of them tried to play a role in building the identity of the place and community. In this way we tried to make our intervention a catalyst one since the changing in people mentality can never be reversible and transformation might be achieved.

TATIANA LETIER PINTO (Brazil)

EVANUERUNT DIES VERITAS ULTIMA VITAE ILLUXIT IN DOMINO

Arriving in Brescia Friday 11th of March. Why Brescia? What are we doing here? Only question pops up in this moment. We were hosted by Agostino and Adriano. Agostino represents 'L'Ambasciata della Democrazia Locale a Zavidovic' and Adriano represents the 'Movimento Non Violento'.

Mapping the People



What war and conflicts has to do with democracy and refugees?

L'Ambasciata della Democrazia Locale a Zavidovic works welcoming refugees and help them to have a house and find a job when they arrive in Brescia.

To have a house and work is the first step but is not enough for the development of human being. Life is much more. When refugees fly away from home they seek more than good job opportunities, they seek a better life's in all it extents.

Exactly how it is describes in "City of Euphemia". I was very glad that we had this piece of Italo Calvino's literature to reflect on. The text describes the city not only as a place to trade goods but also to trade histories, memories, and lives.

"But what drives men to travel up rivers and cross deserts to come here is not only the exchange of wares..."

"You do not come to Euphemia only to buy and sell, but also because at night, by the fires all around the mar-

ket,..., at each word that one man says...the others tell, each one, his tale..."

How integrate the immigrants in all senses? How can we design a city where we have "fires around the market" to sit and trade life's story?

The "extra-comunitari", how the immigrants are called in Italian received the prefix 'extra' referring to outside but 'extra' really means: 'one plus', or 'a bonus' or could also have the meaning of 'a high quality. Italy transforms the refugee that could be a resource in a problem. They are not seen as a plus in which Italians can learn from and share their costumes and traditions.

What is the role of design and urban space to contribute to integrate the immigrants?

The presence of immigrants is changing the urban fabric of the city and is interfering in the city plan.

What is peace? What is democracy?

Peace is the well being of a society, peace is a relationship without conflicts. The refugees commonly leave a conflict zone searching for peace. The place that received them should be peaceful.

War, conflicts and refugees make part of the same cycle, a cycle that need to be brake at some point. The society need a high level of transformation to perceived that we

are all the same, no matter where we were born and where we come from. "Siamo sulla stessa barca" As it was written in the monumental cemetery: "at the end of the days the last true from life will emerge in light". At the end of the days we are all the same. But do immigrant can be buried in the same cemetery as Italians?

The weekend was a very intense and interesting experience. We were not there just to work but to share our histories. As a preparation for the field trip we could notice what is real life and what is your sometimes naive minds. The most important was to think the design in all its expansion and not just a drawing delivery to a city council. And how apply the different forms of design or anti-design in different occasions.

I am not sure if all the design dimensions were achieved by the group. Perhaps floating from a parachuting in two days I would say is not so easy to understand the live context. I am sure we didn't surprise our host and most of what was presented they had thought already but anyway was a very good exercise, for us! The only thing that bothered me was Desirée's bed. Non-expected things happen and this is out of our control, but how to solve is or should be under our control. The fact that in the last night after we finished the work she didn't have where to sleep made me think why we were in Brescia, to discuss society, how to integrate society, how to make a better society? Boo...I wished this wouldn't happen.



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COLLABORAZIONI. A cura dell'«Ambasciata di Zavidovici»

Gli universitari di Londra per l'integrazione a Brescia

Una visita di tre giorni poi la creazione di progetti per renderla più accogliente

Manuel Venturi

Tre giorni per scoprire Brescia e renderla più accogliente e a misura di stranieri: è il progetto «La casa di Eufemia», che vede la collaborazione tra l'associazione per l'Ambasciata della democrazia locale a Zavidovici e lo University College of London. I 26 studenti arrivati a Brescia, che provengono da 22 diversi Paesi del mondo, partecipano ad un master in «Design e sviluppo urbano», finalizzato a migliorare le condizioni di vita nelle zone più povere del pianeta. Accompagnati da cinque tutor, nel weekend entreranno in contatto con due delle zone a più alta concentrazione di stranieri, via Milano e il quartiere del Carmine.

Ieri sera, partecipando ad una cena preparata dalle donne rifugiate nella nostra città, sono entrati in contatto con la multiculturalità bresciana, mentre oggi comincerà il vero lavoro: dopo un'introduzione storica sugli ultimi trent'anni di Brescia e sulle sue trasformazioni, i ragazzi si confronteranno con le realtà più problematiche della città, studiando le difficoltà che i rifugiati poli-



A Brescia i ragazzi dello University College of London

tici si trovano ad affrontare nel tessuto sociale bresciano.

DOMANI mattina gli studenti visiteranno il centro storico e il quartiere del Carmine, mentre nel pomeriggio si divideranno in quattro gruppi per raccogliere le idee e presentare prospetti che vadano a migliorare le condizioni di vita dei rifugiati. Il progetto «La casa di Eufemia» è partito nel 2010, e in un anno ha già aiutato 18 persone, provenienti dall'Africa, dal Pakistan e dall'Afghanistan; l'obiettivo di quest'anno è dare supporto ad altre otto persone in difficoltà: «La presenza dei rifugiati ha trasformato la città - sottolinea Agostino Zanotti, coordinatore del progetto per Adl Zavidovici -. Prima di tutto vogliamo far emergere la loro storia e la

loro umanità: il primo passo è trovare loro una casa e un lavoro, ma la cosa più importante è farli entrare in contatto con la comunità, che deve essere aperta ed accogliente».

Il progetto, fanno notare dall'associazione, non ha riscontrato l'interesse del Comune di Brescia, ma undici comuni dell'hinterland si sono fatti promotori, per sostenere il lavoro dei ragazzi e trovare soluzioni al problema dell'inserimento dei rifugiati. Il lavoro degli studenti, che in passato sono entrati in contatto con realtà più problematiche, come la Thailandia, l'India ed il Sud America, proseguirà nei prossimi mesi, con uno studio più approfondito della situazione bresciana e con la presentazione di progetti. ♦



**VIETATO
L'ACCESSO**