



UCL

**MSc Building and Urban Design
in Development**

Seeing the city anew: Designing for refugee integration

Volume 8 June 2016



BUDD
lab



Acknowledgement

The students and tutors of the MSc Building and Urban Design in Development (BUDD) would like to thank the members of LDA Local Democracy Agency Zavidovici for their generous hosting of BUDDcamp in Brescia. In particular, we would like to thank Agostino Zanotti, head of LDA Zavidovici, for his continuous collaboration with BUDD and his meticulous assistance in planning this workshop with Maddalena Alberti. We also wish to thank all the people who showed us around, talked to us and made our weekend in Brescia successful. In particular, we would like to thank the municipalities of Passirano, Paderno, Torbole, Castelmella and Collebeato.

Credits

BUDDlab is published by the Development Planning Unit (DPU) at University College London (UCL). The DPU is an international centre specialising in academic teaching, practical training, research and consultancy in sustainable urban and regional development policy, planning and management. The MSc Building and Urban Design in Development (BUDD) is a cutting edge international masters programme offering a unique synthesis of critical methodology and design-based research, linking the practice of 'design' within development planning.

Editorial Coordination: Giovanna Astolfo and Kay Pallaris.

Copyright of photographic images and works are attributed to students and tutors who attended the workshop in Brescia.

Development Planning Unit, University College London
Email: dpu@ucl.ac.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/dpuucl

Twitter: www.twitter.com/dpu_ucl

www.twitter.com/DPU_BUDD

©2016 The Bartlett Development Planning Unit

MSc BUDD students

Frances Brown
Marisela Castaneda
Lei (Simba) Cui
Daniel Daley
Hani Fakhani
Edgar Gonzalez Guillen
Edwar Hanna
Luis Felipe Hernandez Ventura
Muhammad (Nelza) Iqbal
Bouchra Jamal
Ritu Kataria
Hetsvi Kotak
Ariana Markowitz
Maria Jose Martinez Gertner
Miguel Martin Mejia Tamariz
Hye Jung Park
Guillermo Robles
Wen (Simon) Shi
Yuxuan (Cheryl) Tu
Valeria Vergara Granda
Di (Wendy) Wang
Lucy Warin
Yujin (Tracey) Yan
Xiayi (Sunny) Zhou

Associazione per l'Ambasciata della Democrazia Locale (ADL) a Zavidovici

Maddalena Alberti
Agostino Zanotti

MSc BUDD staff

Giovanna Astolfo
Camillo Boano
Ricardo Marten Caceres (PhD researcher)
Catalina Ortiz Arciniegas
Kay Pallaris

MSc Building and Urban Design in Development

Seeing the city anew: Designing for refugee integration

Volume 8 June 2016



Development Planning Unit | The Bartlett | University College London
34 Tavistock Square - London - WC1H 9EZ
Tel: +44 (0)20 7679 1111 - Fax: +44 (0)20 7679 1112 - www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu

BUDD lab

Content

- 4 Introduction
Catalina Ortiz Arciniegas and Kay Pallas
- 7 When borders collapse:
on crises, biopolitics
and representation
Giovanna Astolfo and Ricardo Marten-Caceres
- 11 In transit - *In transito*
Agostino Zanotti
- 13 Paradoxical integration:
the in-between space of [non] belonging
Catalina Ortiz Arciniegas
- 16 Students' reflections
- 33 Defining design research:
an unfinished story
Camillo Boano

Introduction

Catalina Ortiz Arciniegas and Kay Pallas

With an increase in forced migration, cities have a pressing responsibility to deal with refugees and asylum seekers. Their presence in contemporary European cities challenges the ability to create inclusive communities. In this context, students from the MSc in Building and Urban Design in Development (BUDD) run a three-day design charrette (BUDDcamp) in conjunction with the Local Democracy Agency (LDA) Zavidovici in Brescia, Italy.

LDA focuses on social and educational projects with immigrants and refugees in Brescia and promotes democracy and peace overseas, especially in the Balkans. The organisation currently coordinates the SPRAR project (*Sistema di Protezione Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati*) that seeks to improve the integration of forced migrants in the city of Brescia and its surrounding municipalities. Opposed to the humanitarian approach, where the refugee is seen as a 'beneficiary' and a person that needs help, the SPRAR project instead aims to stimulate self-awareness, autonomy and inclusion of refugees through individualised and targeted programmes.

The BUDDcamp is part of a broader pedagogic endeavor to recalibrate the role of urban design expanding its agency to the politics of space production. With this

in mind, the workshop incorporates a design research methodology where students were asked to explore how urban design can address the spatial integration of refugees in the city to achieve peaceful coexistence. The key objectives of BUDDcamp were to a) investigate the 'imaginaries, memories and lives' of asylum seekers and refugees that are part of the SPRAR project and try to uncover narratives of everyday life; and, b) propose catalytic and strategic interventions that highlight, mobilise, and/or transform existing social tensions at five key locations (within the municipalities of Paderno, Collebeato, Castel Mella, Passirano, and Torbole). The key outputs included the production of spatial maps of the city to highlight issues, to devise strategies for integration and to reflect on this experience.

This BUDDlab volume serves as an ongoing compilation of ethnographic and action research towards a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of urban design. Each reflection is the student's personal journey towards understanding their role as an urban practitioner, as they get closer to embarking on this trajectory after graduation. We hope that these help both those working at LDA to appreciate the impact of their work, but also as a moment in time biographical exploration that students could return to, years from now, to review how they put their learning in to action.

L'attuale 'crisi migratoria' - che corrisponde alla più grande ondata di rifugiati che abbia mai raggiunto l'Europa dai tempi della II guerra mondiale - sta mandando in tilt il sistema dei controlli degli stati membri EU. Mentre istituzioni locali, attivisti e associazioni per la difesa dei diritti umani cercano di gestire la situazione, l'Europa continua a postporre decisioni e azioni e a delegare le responsabilità del soccorso e protezione a stati non membri, secondo una nuova politica di 'deterrenza cooperativa', per cui i confini dell'Europa vengono proiettati al di fuori dell'area Schenghen - come nel caso del controverso accordo con la Turchia firmato lo scorso marzo 2016. Un simile protocollo esiste a Calais - confine extraterritoriale tra Regno Unito e Francia - dove il trattato di Toquet sancisce una particolare forma di 'solidarietà negativa' tra stati europei. Senza mezzi termini, si tratta di un progetto di espulsione e di esclusione.

Al di là dell'evidente vuoto morale, perchè l'Europa sta facendo questo? La risposta non si trova tanto nella cosiddetta crisi dei rifugiati, quanto piuttosto nella crisi della nozione di Europa stessa.

Il *nomos* di Europa giace nella legittimità sovrana dei confini nazionali, legittimità suggellata dal patto di Schenghen e garantita da un rigido sistema di controllo, che possiamo chiamare biopolitico. Un sistema bioopolitico non è nient'altro che un sistema di controllo dei corpi (*bios*) e della loro distribuzione in un determinato territorio. Il costante flusso di rifugiati sta portando questo sistema al limite di sopportazione. Quando i limiti verranno effettivamente raggiunti, la 'crisi dei rifugiati' segnerà la fine dell'ordine westfaliano, ovvero del progetto di Europa.

When borders collapse: on crises, biopolitics and representation

Giovanna Astolfo and Ricardo Marten-Caceres

The current 'refugee crisis' is the "largest wave of refugees and the biggest sum of misfortune on the continent since World War II (...) flooding the systems of control and admission of European member states" (Balibar, 2015).¹ But what are Governments doing? Europe, as a supranational entity, has for long postponed decisions and action, while grassroots institutions, local NGOs, activists, human rights associations and few state authorities have tried addressing the issue, arguably in an uncoordinated and non multi-scalar manner. The 'new' policy of *non entree*, or 'cooperative deterrence' (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Hathaway, 2015)² projects Europe's borders out of Schengen territory, pushing the responsibility of emergency relief and protection to peri-European states. A controversial agreement with Turkey was signed in March 2016, while similar protocols exist with regards to the UK's extraterritorial border in Calais, in what Toscano calls 'intra-European negative solidarity'. With little reductionism, we could call this another project of expulsion and exclusion.

Beyond the evident moral vacuum, it begs the question why Europe is acting this way? The argument, it seems, is not only the crisis of refugees, but a crisis on the notion of Europe itself. The *nomos* of Europe lies in the mutualisation and legitimisation of its borders and territories, which is enacted through the 'open border' scheme of the Schengen Area. The large waves of migrants currently fleeing into Europe are pushing this system of control towards collapse. They are unknowingly but steadily dismantling the biopolitical system that constitutes one of the pillars of Europe, and consequently threatening the European construction, or

rather pushing its de-construction. The ways in which this is happening are multiple, from the political/territorial impacts of mass migration, to the representation of these processes through discourses, narratives and media analysis.

Evidently, borders have become hotspots of contest, playing a fundamental and controversial role in understanding the 'threat' to Europe's biopolitical system. But their definition is itself in flux, no longer restricted to official legal definitions; borders are no longer isolated state-nation divisions, but rather global ones. Borders perform simultaneously local and global functions, as evidenced by the dozens of camps set up around the continent. Borders have also become increasingly mobile, dispersed and diffused, offset into wider zones such as the extraterritorial borders within Libya, Turkey and Calais, and current border policies enacted far away from the border line. Furthermore, migrants themselves can be seen as mobile borders, being activated by their bodies across their transit routes.

In the Foucauldian biopolitical system bodies are controlled within a power-spatial framework, yet refugees have subverted the system through equal but opposing means: moving and disappearing³ bodies that constantly violate and delegitimise the sovereignty and existence of borders. Their mobility is subversion and their movement questions the very idea of Europe. If borders are also a socio-political relation (De Genova, 2016),⁴ we can argue that borders become an organic reaction process to migration, where the steep rise in migration generates an overproduction of borders. And when the system's limits

are exceeded, the crises of the state of control will turn the system towards collapse, eradicating the Westphalian order of things.

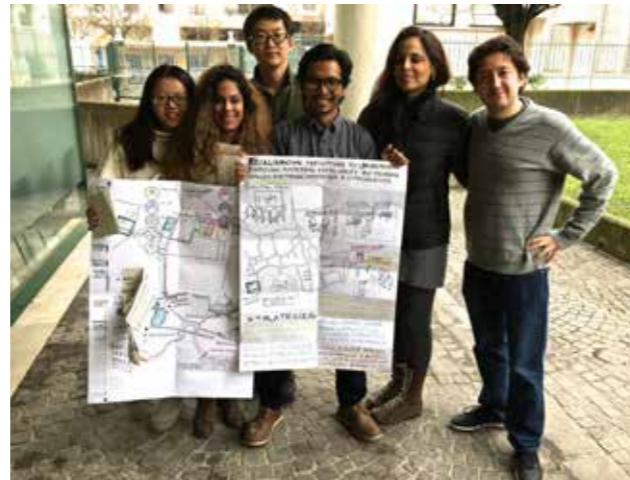
With these geopolitical tensions reaching a climax, so has our appetite for visual storylines. It is unclear where the moral compass lies on the social discourse emerging from the ever constant sharing of images and videos depicting the struggles of migrants traversing Europe. It has become a live event, a never-ending news item with image biases, which, devoid of context, can easily be misconstrued into particular narratives that fulfil established prejudices: a child lying dead on a beach, a group of men forcing down a fence, families running away from border police.

However, the vast majority of these stories oversimplify the subjects, annulling their personal story and transforming them into fixed proxies of representation, watered-down archetypes of thousands suffering similar situations, where migrants are homogenised into one big category and therefore neutralising their individual needs and aspirations. Evidently, representation transcends what is mediated, which is nothing but the end consequence of the European biopolitical machinery simultaneously peaking and collapsing.

The political apparatus has been driven to its ideological limits, trying to cope with a chaotic logistical process that aims to identify and control every individual, trace their path, know their origin and ethnicity, but also strip them of their rights by virtue of their transient condition. It's a transactional enforcement whereby the right of temporary admission supersedes, and in many cases excises other basic rights. The refugee is essential as an individual to complete the supranational biopolitical profiling currently in place, as well as an essential 'data unit' that is ancillary to the security system. However, once included in the statistical cloud of data trends, the refugee becomes part of a larger mass that holds a completely different semantic value to the European agenda.

The idea of the 'refugee crisis' suggests a challenge to stability and the existing status quo. The collective 'other' is a reductive yet effective visualisation of the fears and anxieties that currently hold Europe at its limits, the historical problem with the 'stranger' and the old struggle towards cosmopolitan development. At this

point, the continent's incapacity to adjust and operate a comprehensive strategy that administers migratory transit in its sovereign construct, has shown that not only have the political structures failed, but that language and discourses have come up short. By narrowing events into fixed narrative templates with a reduced set of words, there is less room for nuance and calibration around the multiple human aspects that frame the current assimilation of who we are and what differentiates us.



1 Balibar, E., (2015) Borderland Europe and the Challenge of Migration. Accessed at: www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/etienne-balibar/borderland-europe-and-challenge-of-migration

2 Gammeltoft-Hansen, T., Hathaway, J., (2015) Non-refoulement in a World of Cooperative Deterrence, Columbia Journal of Transnational Law, 53(1)

3 As in the case of the 100,000 migrants that disappeared in Germany in 2015/16, or the 200 unaccompanied children that disappeared during the evictions in Calais in February/March 2016.

4 De Genova, N., (2016) The "crisis" of the European border regime: Towards a Marxist theory of borders. Accessed at: <http://tsj.org.uk/the-crisis-of-the-european-border-regime-towards-a-marxist-theory-of-borders/>



L'edizione 2016 del BUDD CAMP è stata caratterizzata dall'analisi di come i richiedenti protezione internazionale e riconosciuti inseriti nel progetto di accoglienza SPRAR Cellatica "A braccia aperte" interagiscono con i nuovi contesti urbani che abitano. Gli studenti del master, divisi in quattro gruppi di lavoro, hanno potuto incontrare i beneficiari del progetto SPRAR, conoscere gli operatori sociali, dialogare con i cittadini che abitano i territori dove sono inserite le strutture di accoglienza e confrontarsi con le autorità locali che amministrano i territori.

Lo SPRAR, Sistema di protezione Richiedenti Asilo e Rifugiati, si caratterizza dalla presenza attiva degli enti locali che assegnano ad una organizzazione del terzo settore la realizzazione dei servizi previsti nel sistema asilo italiano.

L'obiettivo dell'accoglienza SPRAR è quello di consentire ai richiedenti asilo di avviare un percorso personale di inserimento socio-economico in vista della (ri)conquista della propria autonomia. Per "realizzare" l'obiettivo di una accoglienza integrata viene fornito al beneficiario un alloggio condiviso con altre persone, un contributo economico per vitto e abbigliamento, servizi alla persona come: corsi di lingua italiana, assistenza socio-sanitaria, orientamento al territorio e ai servizi, supporto legale. Il percorso individualizzato condiviso con il rifugiato comprende l'inserimento socio-economico.

Le problematiche più rilevanti che l'Associazione riscontra nel tentativo di dare forma all'autonomia del beneficiario si rappresentano attraverso alcune parole chiave: sospensione, standardizzazione, accoglienza, autonomia, consapevolezza. Sospensione in quanto il sistema dell'asilo è caratterizzato da lunghi tempi di attesa e da un percorso molto articolato che costringe i richiedenti asilo a periodi anche di due anni prima di vedersi riconosciuto o meno il diritto a stare definitivamente sul territorio italiano e/o a circolare in altri paesi europei. In questa attesa la persona difficilmente trova gli stimoli utili a de-finire il proprio percorso

migratorio. Standardizzazione per dare uguali servizi e possibilità a tutti, ma è una parola che tende a vedere l'insieme dei beneficiari come omogeneo con bisogni uniformi che confligge con la prospettiva di realizzazione di progetti individualizzati. Accoglienza risulta essere una parola che si scontra con l'aumento di un pensiero cinico e razzista alimentato dalla paura dello "straniero" in quanto minaccia, portatore di malattie e insicurezza. Accoglienza e ospitalità sono pratiche quasi dimenticate dal nostro tempo che ci costringono a riconoscere il diritto dello straniero a non essere trattato come nemico.

Autonomia che i beneficiari chiedono non si concretizza solamente nella richiesta di una casa e di un lavoro, ma spesso passa attraverso la possibilità di rappresentarsi compiutamente per quello che sono e non per quello che vorremmo fossero. Imbrigliati in un sistema di tutela che spesso assume le linee di un sistema di controllo, i beneficiari esprimono linguaggi altri, parlano con la voce del "progetto" e faticano a trovare nuovi modi per definire le traiettorie del loro futuro. Consapevolezza è la parola che più deve permeare lo stare del beneficiario nel progetto e l'agire dell'operatore in relazione costante con i contesti nei quali si agisce. Prima di tutto la consapevolezza che realizzare progetti di "accoglienza" significa saper stare nel conflitto e indirizzarlo verso un discorso che si rappresenta non solo con la parola, ma anche con l'ascolto.

Le persone richiedenti asilo sono soprattutto persone in transito sia in quanto viaggiatori in senso spaziale che come persone in cerca di identità in divenire. In transito lo sono anche i contesti urbani nei quali sviluppiamo i progetti SPRAR che, se bene realizzati, necessitano di un cambiamento politico, sociale, culturale delle persone che abitano i luoghi dell'accoglienza.

Il nostro ringraziamento va ancora una volta ai docenti e studenti del master che hanno interpretato al meglio la difficile impresa di interagire con questi temi lasciandoci spunti interessanti sui quali riflettere e con i quali migliorare il nostro lavoro quotidiano.

In transit

Agostino Zanotti

The BUDDcamp 2016 workshop focused on exploring how international protection seekers and refugees who are included in the SPRAR programme, run by LDA, adapt to and interact with their wider urban surroundings. The main feature of the SPRAR programme is the intense and proactive involvement of local authorities who coordinate and activate the implementation of different services in a local network of care.

The main objective of the programme is to initiate a socio-economic integration process tailored to individuals, with the aim of achieving their progressive autonomy. In order to foster this integrated hospitality, each 'beneficiary' is hosted in a shared apartment with other beneficiaries and is allocated a stipend to cover meals, subsistence and clothes. All beneficiaries also attend Italian language courses and receive medical assistance and legal support. This integration process is not without its challenges, which can be conceptualised as follows: suspension, standardisation, hospitality, autonomy and self-awareness.

Suspension is related to the very long and convoluted legal process where asylum seekers have to wait up to two years before a permit is issued. During this waiting period, the beneficiary hardly finds enough stimuli to define or re-define his/ her own path of development and existence, remaining suspended in limbo. Standardisation ensures that all seekers are provided with the same opportunities, but it also implies the homogenisation of their needs, aspirations and expectations. A standardised approach is required for the sake of equity, but it also conflicts with the idea of pursuing individual projects and individual assistance. Hospitality is a word that is confronted with

the increasing racism that is fuelled by the fear of the other which is seen as a threat to citizens' security and safety. Hospitality seems a practice almost forgotten in present day society but it is useful to remind ourselves that foreigners are not our enemies. Autonomy is seen as risky and cannot be achieved through simply providing seekers with a home and a job. Refugees need to be able to manifest their own identity, their own individuality and cultures but are often trapped within a system of protection that becomes one of control. For instance, they speak the language of the project, performing only the identity we have chosen for them. They therefore, struggle to find new ways to self-define themselves and determine their own future trajectories. Self-awareness is the key word that must permeate the hospitality and integration process from both the part of the refugees as well as those working with them. This implies the acceptance of the inherent conflict resulting from individual ethical position.

Asylum seekers are people constantly on the move, not only spatially, as they also experience an identity that is transient. They are in transit within the urban context where the SPRAR programme is rooted. For this reason, the implementation of the project requires political, social and cultural change in the way we see, manage, conceive and practice urban spaces.

Through the eyes and the work of the BUDDcamp 2016 participants, all of the above were challenges that we were able to observe and reflect upon in this edition. We would like to acknowledge all BUDD students and staff of 2016 who provided us with crucial inputs to reflect on and allow us (LDA) to improve day-to-day work.

L'aumento dei flussi migratori porta con sé nuove sfide urbane. Le città stanno diventando teatri di nuove strategie militari con un vasto impatto socio-spaziale. E' in questo contesto che deve essere esaminata la pratica dell' integrazione sociale. In particolare è necessario discutere come sviluppare un nuovo senso di appartenenza degli 'stranieri' che vivono in ambiti urbani.

Il rapporto tra città 'ospitanti' e 'ospiti' è di natura reciproca e tende a trasformare sia la città che i suoi soggetti. Nuovi approcci e politiche della 'differenza' devono emergere e il progetto urbano deve immaginare pratiche spaziali per la pacifica coesistenza. Il presente contributo si interroga sull'adeguatezza dell'idea di integrazione tra rifugiati e città.

Da una prospettiva heideggeriana, il concetto di integrazione implica il trattamento dell'altro come un ospite. In qualità di ospite, il migrante è escluso dalle regole del gioco dettate dall'ospitante, e dal diritto alla costruzione della città.

Si tratta di un'integrazione paradossale, le cui caratteristiche includono il paradosso tra movimento migratorio e stasi legale e processuale; la strenua ricerca di status legale e costante incombere di condizioni di illegalità; l'esclusione dal quotidiano e l'inclusione in programmi speciali; la dipendenza economica e il desiderio di autonomia. Tutti questi paradossi circoscrivono uno spazio in mezzo, in cui i rifugiati e richiedenti asilo vivono.

Paradoxical integration: the in-between space of [non] belonging

Catalina Ortiz Arciniegas

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it." Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird.

The rising influx of people escaping war zones is creating unprecedented challenges to city planners. In this context, the discursive practice of 'integration of refugees and asylum seekers' in Europe needs to be examined and public debate renewed to address how to develop a new sense of belonging for the 'strangers' living in foreign cities. Is the idea of 'social integration' adequate in city planning practices and does it lead to connecting refugees and asylum seekers to cities? I argue that urban design should engage in a radical open envisioning of alternative spatial practices for promoting reciprocal spaces for peaceful coexistence; a new stage of the politics of difference and recognition needs to emerge.

From a Heideggerian perspective, one can ask if a 'guest' is entitled to dwell and participate in the building of the 'host' city. The discursive practice of 'integration' deepens the idea of strangeness by implying the treatment of the 'other' as an outsider. In other words, the newcomer embodies the exteriority of the urban system since the rules of engagement are always defined by the 'host' and never by the 'guest'. There are multi-faceted paradoxes that integration schemes for asylum seekers and refugees encapsulate including: a) the mobility of a long journey seeking safety and the immobility of the waiting time to decide where to head; b) the idea of permanence in the host city and the threat of constant transiency; c) the fight to obtain a legal status

and the constant uncertainty of facing rejection and the subsequent illegality of their stay; d) the exclusion from everyday urban life and the inclusion of supranational aid; and e) a period of economic dependency on external support and a pressure to obtain livelihood autonomy. These paradoxes constitute an in-between space. In turn, the 'hosting' site becomes a transient spatiality that is simultaneously inhabited as 'here-there-nowhere'. In light of these paradoxes, the terms of integration become intertwined fields of tension; a space for 'suspended lives'.

Managing refugee co-existence with 'others' is at the core of urban design and planning. In 'When Strangers Become Neighbours', Sandercock reminds us how "our ambivalence towards strangers expresses fear and desire fused into one, and is thus doubly unsettling" (2000:23).¹ It is this ambivalence that drives the complexities of devising strategies to reclaim the political relevance of planning and design professions in the face of massive immigration. In Sandercock's seminal work 'Towards Cosmopolis' (1998),² she explains how the convergence of transnational migrations, post-colonialism and the rise of civil society have determined the need to place the politics of difference on the agenda and to be addressed by the courts, the market, social movements, and by political dialogue. Revisiting these ideas enable us to reconstruct a new sense of multilayered urban belonging and a collective definition of radical simultaneity to address the in-between space. This simultaneity could be expressed in strategies that at the same time anchor and disengage new comers to urban life. Perhaps, it would require the remaking of urban subjectivities by dislocating

the current conceived spaces of 'hospitality': the urban commons. Thinking about reciprocal space - instead of the binary 'host-guest' spaces - enables us to re-scale the notion of urban commons as sites to preserve human dignity and solidarity at planetary scale and in this way re-think the notion of urban commons through the lenses of reciprocal space. A radical open urban commons would be a way of gauging an expanded cosmopolitanism.

The discourse and spatial practices of 'Integration' becomes a threshold of disruptive uncertainty. The very notion of future gets distorted inasmuch as the horizons of hope are jeopardised for being in a passage of no return. What can urban design offer? Can urban design reshape the spatial distribution of hope? How does one define a reciprocal relationship between new comers and long-term residents? The work summarised in this volume shows alternatives for generating convective networks that foster familiarity, visibility and empathy. In particular, the interventions concentrated on proposing differential mechanisms to promote linkages among refugees, with economic migrants and local residents.

The strategies of radical simultaneity advocated for a) changing the negative perception of refugees and asylum seekers using media, art-based activities in school, and other intergenerational initiatives; b) the promotion of events that rely on non-verbal communication in the urban commons at municipality and city level; and c) valuing the refugee skills as assets to enhance their livelihood opportunities and appropriation of the spaces of dwelling. Hence, the role of urban design expands its agency to the politics of space production by embracing the relationship between new comers and cities as no longer an externality of the migration system but a constitutive force that shapes a new phase of urban coexistence.

1 Sandercock, L., (2000) When Strangers Become Neighbours: Managing Cities of Difference, *Planning Theory & Practice*, Volume 1, Issue 1, pp 13-30

2 Sandercock, L., (1998) *Towards cosmopolis: planning for multicultural cities*, London





Different faces; shared spaces; same traces.

Torbole-Castelmella

“I think there’s just one kind of folks. Folks.” Harper Lee.

Dan Daley. Like Perseus, we flew with lightness
Hand-bags in tow, traveling light
Overcoming the fright of missing that flight
To board a singing coach via fair Verona,
Past brimming smoke of industrial choke, this was no
Barcelona,
There sat Brescia where Frances became Francesca
And the hotel Leonardo served no avocado, Ago and
Magda brought us onstage
Turning the page in our development age,
Full from ceaseless pizza
We entered speechless into municipal halls
And within walls of asylum seekers,
Where we were reapers of stories
In their shoes for a day
Learning of their way
Trying to portray hope from beyond their doorway,
We laughed and played
Were surveyed for being waylaid in the night,
The next day we displayed our campaigns
And were told we made great gains,
Pained to leave, we made off with lightness
Revelling in the “delightness” of absolute tiredness.

I feel that sometimes verse can say it better than
prose, with less specificity, but with more emotion.
My experience in Brescia brought many emotions. At
times I felt weighed down by the process and just when

“humanity seem[ed] condemned to heaviness, I [felt] I
should fly like Perseus into a different space”, I found
perspective and renewal to drive ahead.

As we learned from Italo Calvino’s lecture, language
cannot always serve justice to an experience, but many
great writers have attempted this feat with fantastic
creativity. Exactitude, as he describes, can bring a
precision to language, “both in choice of words and in
expression of the subtleties of thought and imagination.”
My challenge was to ask the right questions, to work with
specificity and clarity.

We met with two groups of young men, each with
vastly different experiences and also many shared
experiences. The quickness by which they told their
stories varied greatly and for some we didn’t have the
time to hear them in full. “Narrative cannot be measured
against real time” and their entire lives couldn’t easily be
encapsulated in a single story. We know the dangers of
the single story. We quickly discovered there was often
a single story about our new-comers that was being
perpetuated by the media and among local residents.
I wanted to spend hours more with these men, but our
work required strong delineation of time.

Frances Brown. Our first full day in the field brought us to
hear the personal stories of two groups of refugees that
were under the program of LDA. We found ourselves at
a personal and emotional cross-road, where our stance
as a practitioner had shifted to simply being ‘us’ wishing
to spend more time and share more with them. In effect,
I had made a mistake and forgotten my practitioner
role. We managed to respectfully change our course of
practice and recalibrate it towards what we had come

to do – find out if and how urban design can respond
to a social and political crisis such as the Mediterranean
refugee crisis. How can urban design help in creating a
different narrative towards migration and refugees?
We came up with strategies, some small and feasible,
some with a focus on larger scales. All however were
set in the personal contexts of each conversation we
had throughout our time spent with our focus groups.
Throughout, the boundaries of what ‘Urban Design’
represents and consists of, was stretched.
Our short stay, taught me that Urban Designers have
responsibilities in taking a stance in what we believe
whilst also allowing (to a certain extent) your practice to
be changed by other opinions and needs. There is a lot
of reflecting and analysing before one is capable or even,
in my opinion, allowed to act within a space. Can we
really put ourselves in someone else’s shoes in order to
help?

Hani Fakhani. The co-production of knowledge concept
sounds to be a way out for me if not thought of naïvely.
I learned that there is a need some how to combine
between the luxury of being an outsider who can see a
specific story or problem from enough distance in order
to be able to analyse it and understand it. And being
an insider with the real knowledge of the problem that
comes from experiencing it. It is a balance between
having a real knowledge about a social experience to be
analysed and the ability to analyse it without being locked
into this experience. The participation for me now is more
important if not thought of as a way to merely bringing
the actors together to contribute with what they have,
but rather about what each of the sides can contribute
to making the others reach the balance of being an
outsider and insider in the same time. Saying that, the
big question of how to achieve that balance practically
remains a challenge for me.

Hye Jung Park. Do I deserve to talk about the solutions
for the people who suffered many obstacles and try to
begin the new paragraph of their life? But very soon
after I begin my own conversation individually, I realised
my thought was wrong. It is true that they made such a
dramatic decision; they were the people who came to
live ordinary lives, who used to live ordinary lives. Sharing
food, playing sports and praying to god. They were just
young people who had a short and intense experience in
their life. There was no lens needed to see them in such

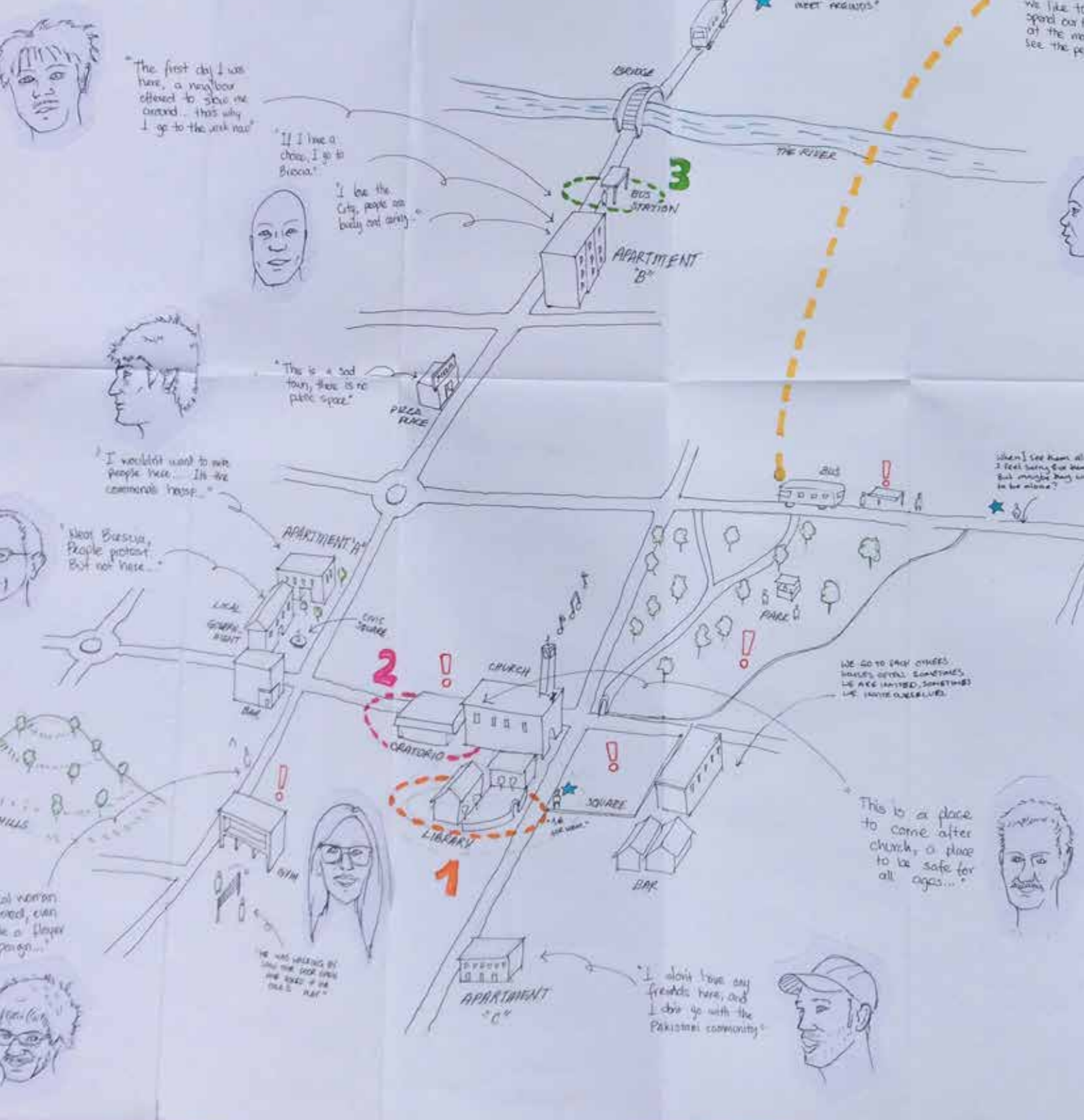
different ways. They wanted what I want in my life, I could
sympathise with the idea of the life they want.
When I think about refugees’ life waiting for their asylum
in the new land, I could think about the twofold distance
in their life in Brescia. They were there in Brescia, from
their hometown. They are reminding themselves the
distance they had to pass to get themselves in Europe,
trying to be involved in Brescia. The distance between
the ‘dream land’ and oneself is now zero. But they still
experience distance of culture, emotion and way of
thinking. Refugees often run towards death to close this
distance. What can cities do to close every distance
between people?

Marisela Castaneda. Some people say the grass is
always greener on the other side, for some this is true
and for others it’s a lie. Some people risk it all, gambling
for a better life on greener shores but it is not only about
those who leave; it is also about those who stay behind.
Whether you are here or there, the grass will always
be greener wherever you water it with care. My father,
Antonio, made the journey from Mexico to the United
States, making sacrifices and facing challenges to give
my family a better life in the United States.
Growing up a first generation Mexican American in the
United States, I am constantly navigating between the
worlds of Mexico and the United States, negotiating
between my ethnic and national identities and code
switching between English and Spanish. I am confronted
with the “perpetual foreigner status” when people ask
me, “where are you from?” and I answer “I am from
Detroit”. This is not seen as a satisfactory response and
they proceed to ask me “where are you really from?,”
attempting to find out “why am I here?”. The sentiments
expressed by Edward James Olmos, acting as Abraham
Quintanilla in the film, Selena, sums up my sentiments
and the sentiments of millions of Mexican Americans
when he says: “We have to be more Mexican than
the Mexicans and more American than the Americans,
both at the same time! It’s exhausting!” It’s exhausting
having to constantly to be ‘on’ instead of just ‘being’.
It’s exhausting to have to look over your shoulder for
the border patrol or police that regularly surveil your
community. It’s exhausting to self-monitor yourself on a
daily basis.

Ritu Kataria. Being a part of the refugees’ lives seemed
daunting at first as we weren’t sure how to approach

SEEING A CITY THROUGH NEW EYES

A DESIGN-RESEARCH PROJECT EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCE OF ASYLUM SEEKERS IN COLLEBEATO, BRESCIA



RECIPE FOR RECIPROCAL

GESTURES and the importance of **BEING ABLE TO ACT FIRST.**

- Creating spaces, at home and in the community for refugees and migrants to be able to offer a gesture.

REBALANCING power relationships:

- Limiting activities that label refugees and migrants as different or 'other' to Collebeato residents.
- Maximising opportunities for them to use their skills and feel useful.

HUMANISING and **EQUALISING** spaces of contact:

- Limiting paternalistic interactions and creating opportunities for meeting those with shared experiences.

Increasing **QUALITY** of interactions:

- Using space and time to enable quality interactions, beyond the superficial interactions we've observed.

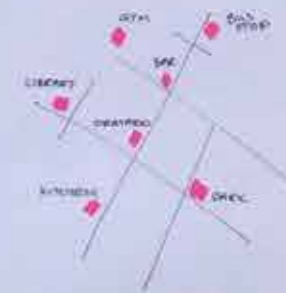
The act of reciprocating is a fundamental social cohesion of human interaction. Graciously receiving and returning another human's kindness opens the door for connected communities.

When one person makes a gesture towards a fellow human, a gift, an inclusion or a favour we are hard-wired to return it, to doing so we create a thread of shared experience and understanding and a building block for a connected community.

From our understanding of the Collebeato experience, we've chosen the concept of **RECIPROCAL SPACE** as our entry point for understanding and improving the interactions between refugees and migrants with their host community.

Reciprocal space is **SPACE THAT ENCOURAGES AN INTERCHANGE BETWEEN DIFFERENT CULTURES OR WAYS OF THINKING THAT IS MUTUALLY PRODUCTIVE AND BENEFICIAL.** It cross-fertilises cultures.

We've identified **FOUR** key aspects of Reciprocal Space and principles for achieving them.



ES
ALS
different
diffi-
elder
get the
al
ions
portunity
now
S.
people are
"stayed
erian

LOCALS → REFUGEES.

Racism.

Toxicity of 'tolerance'.

Changing attitude towards refugees.

Preconceptions of coloured people and different religious people.

"If you go in their houses, they would cut your throat." — Italian resident

"Working with immigrants for 20 years in Brescia made me racist" — Italian resident

REFUGEES + IMMIGRANTS

Immigrants adapting in time.

Immigrant community: transcending conflicts.

International language of no language.

"I've lived here for 5 years, but I wouldn't call it home. People would still judge you." — Congolese student

"I like Brescia, you can meet people from everywhere in the world." — Pakistani

SPACE & ACTIVITIES

Lack of places for encounter and events.

People would rather go to town centre than staying in Collebeato.

"We go to the church every Sunday, that's where we meet other Nigerian friends. We'd rather stay in the town centre." — Nigerian

ORGANISATION PROBLEMS

Social work as a visible mark of second class citizenship.

Inequivalent levels of education and skills.

They're not a group yet they are treated like one.

Paternalistic housing rules.

"I've never invited my Italian friends here because this is not my flat." — Afghani

such a sensitive topic and indulge in a conversation with the people concerned. With a lot of improvisations, brainstorming, asking the ‘right questions’ and learning on the go, we managed to make the most out of the conversation to gain a deeper insight into the current situation. The fieldtrip was the first time that we were immersed into the real scenario where we dealt with the socio-economic, cultural and political issues concerned with a place. It was a fast track process of understanding, listening, learning and reflecting at the same time and first step out of our comfort zone of institutional learning. The most important moment in the trip was the realisation and decision to ‘STEP BACK’ from all the emotions (though understanding and respecting them) to analyse / reflect as a ‘development practitioner’. We needed to be rational in our thought process, break away from the emotions, zoom out and position ourselves as an external agency where we could analyse the situation without any bias or preconceived notions.

Cui Lei. Within this world, no refugee will leave his or her motherland reluctantly. However, the truth is that the world is unfair. There are many youngsters who live in extravagant life but still do not satisfy and even complain about their food and houses. There are also many young persons, however, born in poverty and could not have enough food to eat or basic space to live. Although we cannot easily bridge the gap between the poor and the rich, what we can do is to offer ourselves to the people who need our help. In order to do so, the first thing is to get along with them and know more about them, about their life, about their stories, about their views and about their values. These things cannot be finished within a short time. But we tried our best to know them more comprehensively. Maybe for the refugees our short visit and research is just as a piece of beautiful cloud in their sky that will disappear someday. But for us, it is the responsibility to analyse well and to come up with the strategies for a better living space. So the meaning of this trip is not just about completing the aim of study and workshop, but also about completing the life of the every urban participator.

Xiayi Zhou. “Past was past, Now has become past, but Future will definitely be better!” That’s what I want to say for those new comers.

PAST — FAMILY & WAR: One thing I noticed is that a

boy from Pakistan shows us a photo of his brother and another guy from Africa shows a family video. Although their countries are destroyed by the war, they still keep ‘home’ in mind. The past for them is the happy time with families, as well as the wound from wars.

NOW — WAITING: Most of them follow the arrangement from local government and municipality, what they usually do is just wait. Waiting for the result from the court, again and again.

FUTURE — CONFUSED: Few people know what will happen and what can they do. They are confused.

PAST — BIAS: The field trip is one of the most important reasons that I choose BUDD, but I never imagine that it relates to refugee issues. Actually, before this time, I have no chance to think about this problem which has become more and more severe in Europe. In my opinion, the living conditions of those ‘new comers’ may be very poor, like shelters and informal housings and they might be prone to violence. There are some bias.

NOW — RETHINK: But this camp in Passirano changed my idea. First, living conditions for new comers was much better than what I thought before. A standard two bedroom flat with multiple facilities is good. Second, we talked with two groups of people, one from Pakistan and another one from Africa. They are all nice guys with lovely a smile and easy going, except for some language barriers. Third, the activities for their everyday life is simple. They are considered as a ‘special group’ rather than as residents. Eventhough the municipality and community have made a lot of effort to make them feel engaged in the city, it seems it is still hard to achieve.

FUTURE — CHANGE: What should we do to change this situation? Giving them a house to live? Municipality has done this. Teaching the local language? They have taken part in the language course. No, they are just some basic ways. From my point of view, first of all, we should encourage the communication of local residence and those new comers, making them feel they are not a special group, instead activating their conditions of ‘waiting’, enriching it with activities. Then, encourage and help new comers make a plan for future, and build on the skills and talents for them. Making them feel confident and establishing agency.

Our proposal. Passirano

“Before I can live with other folks I’ve got to live with myself.” Harper Lee.

Bouchra Jamal. Trying to escape the universal unknown, death, they are becoming unknowns themselves in foreign territories. Wanting to be part of new border, escaping their own, they have come under the mercy of a narration. The narration of a story, not necessarily about the truth but that narration will be their passport to safe borders. Who are they? What are their stories? I believe they can be any one of us at any time of our lives, our parallel lives maybe. Who are we? What can we do? How can we provide them with what they need? Do we know what they need after spending one day with them? Can we do something? They head to the city center every time they have time. Do they prefer the city centre because they find what they are looking for? Anonymity or just a market where they find food ingredients from their home countries. In the city centre they are not the unknown resident that their own neighbourhood avoids. Each one of them is just another resident. When we looked at the situation from a visibility lens, we understood later on that they are visible when they are seen as a problem and invisible when they need a job.

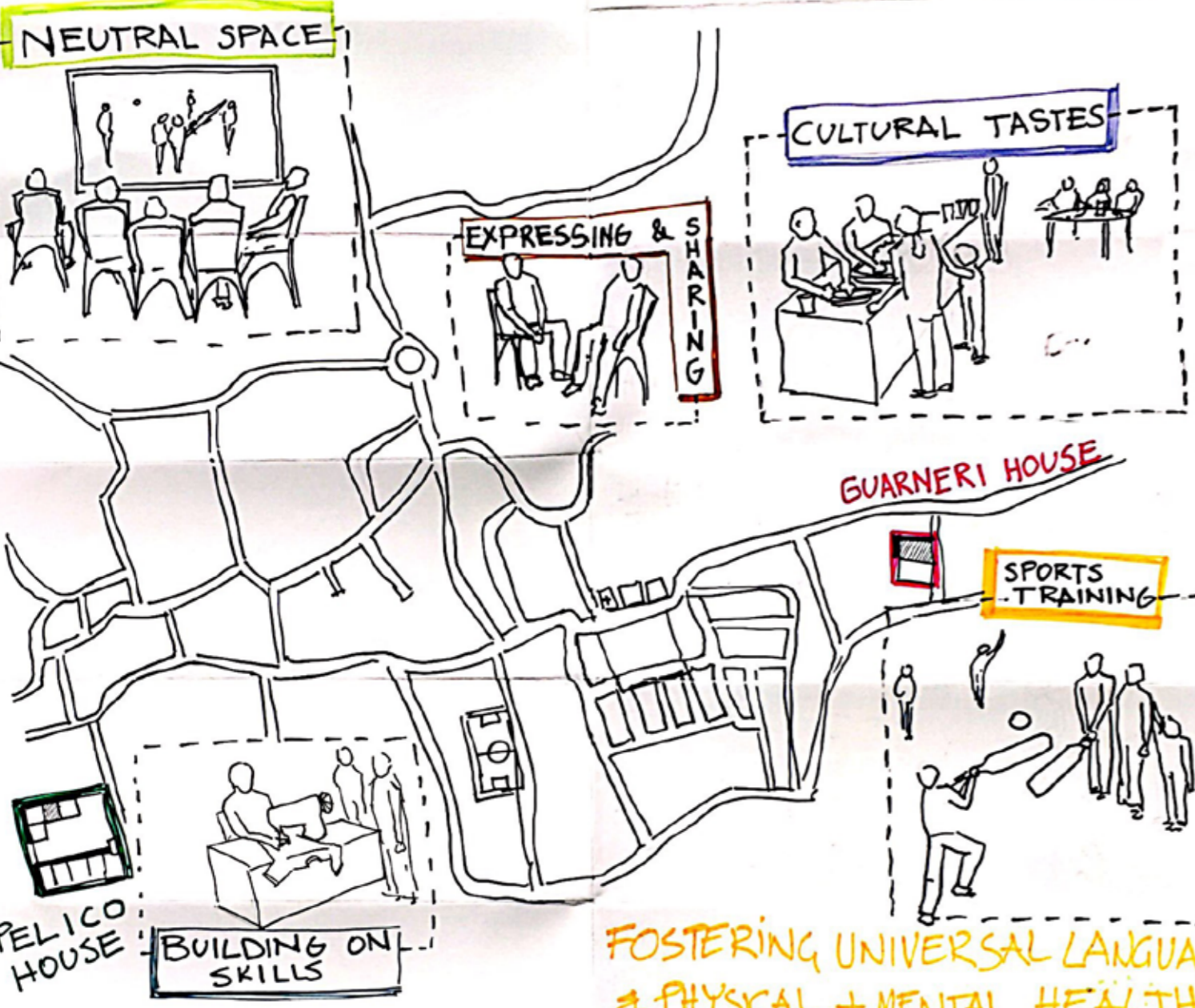
Guillermo Robles. In the confidence of the afternoon, the cold, the situation, Enza understood my joke, and there was a universal laughter... A few moments in life one has the opportunity to be nurtured with stories from people from other latitudes and with completely different urgencies and worries. [...] Passirano, a small town in the North of central Brescia, offers to the new comers a healthy and quiet place to develop their lives during their status process. It is considered a settlement where the majority of its dwellers are Christians, and maybe this is an important factor that affects the way the residents treat the asylum seekers. Unfortunately, this cannot be interpreted as hospitality, but tolerance in a situation that put diverse people in a same place. Obviously, seeking inclusion was the most important goal of our project. Even though sometimes the variety of personalities and stories behind every man influenced the way they were open to share their experiences with us, it was an enriching moment for them and the students. In the meeting the humour and spontaneity played a key role to become more and more familiar

with each other. Most of their stories involved unbelievable sad and violent events, and I could feel that those sensitive conversations were correctly treated with understanding and respect from the students. I hope they could perceive our openness and interest with no judgements, and that was a key element to go deeply into their realities.

Hetsvi Kotak. There were moments where I thought the particular form of urban design plans we had come up with as a group in order to tackle spatial and integrational challenges would work, however some situations were just harder to deal with as there was an emotional dimension we also had to consider. The segregation between the community and asylum seekers could be seen and our aim was to help create awareness through various ways and bring in a sense of autonomy to them. We tried to see how they lived their lives and asked them to narrate their everyday stories whilst we thought of interventions that could change the tensions they were having. I personally felt I had a foundation of understanding when it came to this especially after reading Calvino’s memos. The particular municipality I was working with was Passirano, where the talk with the Mayor also proved to be very interesting in regards to the wider community and refugees coexisting in the same space. I found out I could speak parts of the language with the people we had gone to visit, which only made them (the new comers) more comfortable in telling their story as they were hesitant to at the beginning, even though we did have Italian speakers in our group. Some stories were fascinating as there were no complaints however the more important ones had issues of mobility, legality and dependency to name a few. [...] Providing neutral spaces for communication, building on skills and talents to train and involve residents, fostering of universal language through practice of sports and sharing of gastronomical culture, this we believe would create spaces for integration. However more important than this is whether the local community is truly ready to engage with refugees in the right way; the answer to this, only time can tell.

Muhammad Iqbal. Urbanism can be shown to be a temporary-centric and based on historically urban phenomena and urban forms of integration in a specific time. Thus, an integrated plan for a temporal urban

RECALIBRATING PERCEPTIONS TO UN-UNKNOWN THROUGH FOSTERING FAMILIARITY BY PROVIDING SPACES FOR PHYSICAL INTERACTION & COMMUNICATION



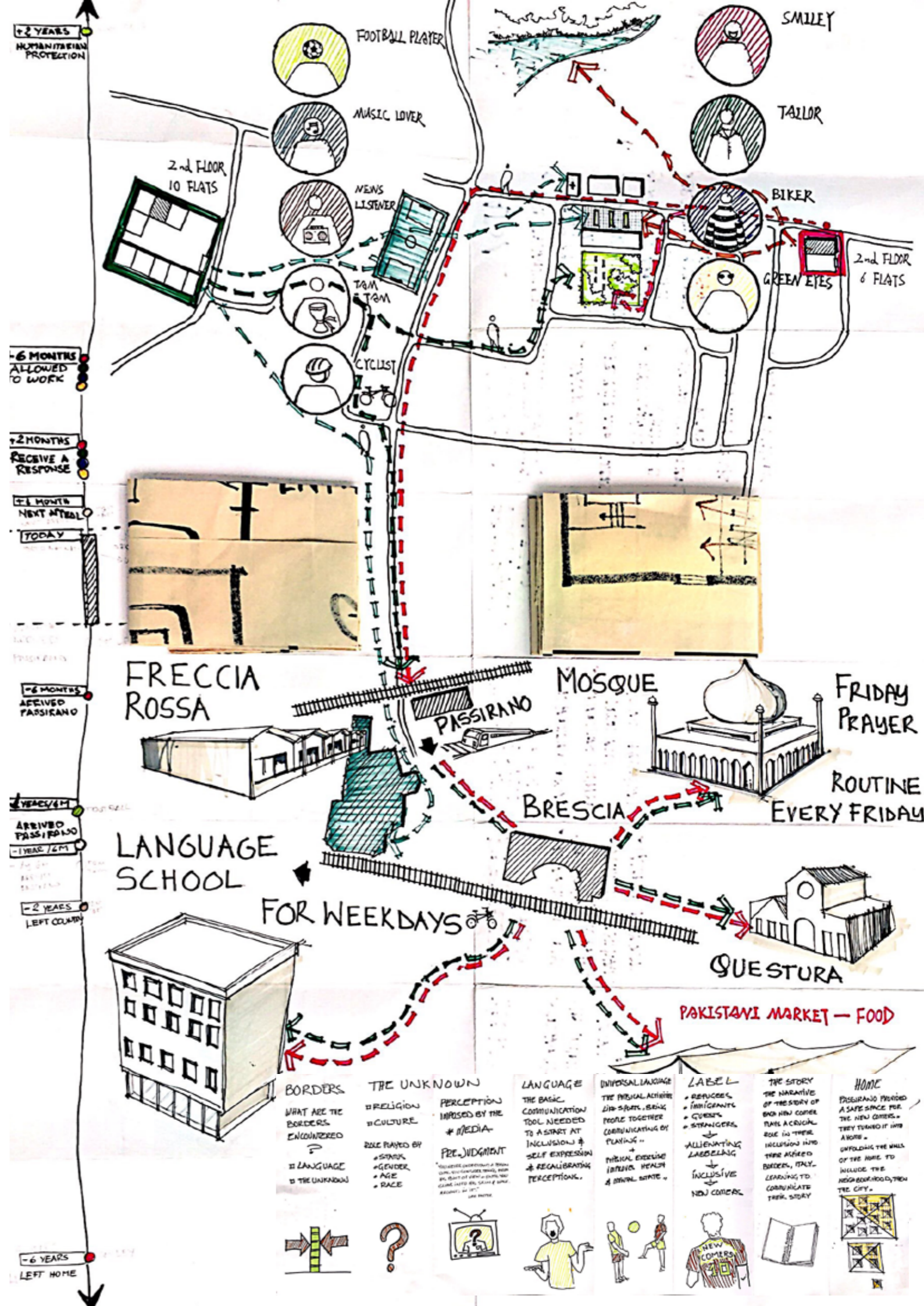
FOSTERING UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE & PHYSICAL + MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF SPORTS

THE NEW COMERS SHARE THEIR GASTRONOMICAL CULTURE BY INTRODUCING NEW TASTE BUDS TO THE RESIDENTS

MAKING AVAILABLE SPACES FOR EXPRESSING & SHARING LIFE ALTERING EXPERIENCES MEMORIES & FEELINGS

STRATEGIES
PROVIDING NEUTRAL SPACES FOR EVENTS TO ENCOURAGE COMMUNICATIONS

BUILDING ON THE SKILLS & TALENTS OF THE NEW COMERS TO TRAIN & INVOLVE RESIDENTS



BORDERS
WHAT ARE THE BORDERS ENCOUNTERED?
LANGUAGE TO THE UNKNOWN

THE UNKNOWN
RELIGION
CULTURE
ROLE PLAYED BY STORIES, GENDER, AGE, RACE

PERCEPTION
IMPOSED BY THE MEDIA
PRE-JUDGMENT

LANGUAGE
THE BASIC COMMUNICATION TOOL NEEDED TO A START AT INCLUSION & SELF EXPRESSION & RECALIBRATING PERCEPTION.

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE
THE PHYSICAL ACTS OF SHARING PEOPLE TOGETHER COMMUNICATING BY PLAYING...
PHYSICAL EXERCISE IMPROVES HEALTH & MENTAL STATE

LABEL
REFUGEES
IMMIGRANTS
STRANGERS
ALIENATING LABELLING
INCLUSIVE
NEW COMERS

THE STORY
THE NARRATIVE OF THE STORY OF HOW NEW COMERS TAKE A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THEIR INCLUSION INTO THE AGREED BORDERS, ITALY, LEADING TO COMMUNICATE THEIR STORY

HOME
PASSIRANO PROVIDED A SAFE SPACE FOR THE NEW COMERS... THEY TRAINED IT INTO A HOME... OFFERING THE WILL OF THE HOME TO INCLUDE THE NEIGHBOURHOOD, THEN THE CITY.

condition should be a system of interlinked actions which seeks to bring better intervention within the city in a whole. Our design intervention is trying to recalibrate the perception to “un-unknown” through familiarity approaches. It will be navigated by a series of interlinked interactions within space and highlight neutral and universal tactics as the main concept. Our group reflection regarding the issue of migrants once again proved that urban design as a physical thing is not the only solution. Urban design can be an essential trajectory of understanding the place, human and social components. Perceiving phenomenology of the site and finding a critical and alternative solution from current capitals is a vital step toward design interventions. Also, we have to learn how to recognise and expand on the phenomenological aspects of a place and actors throughout the time (the past, present, and future) analysis to develop appropriate strategies in urban challenges. In terms of the migrant issue, urban design should be able to make a further contribution to be an agent of social change. In this regard, urban design should also synchronise planning consideration with future scenarios. In so doing, we must keep in mind that a cross-disciplinary approach to overcome the problems will be better.

Wen Shi. We decided to call these people ‘new comers’ instead of refugees, which very much related to a question: “why should these people be considered special or different? [...] Generally speaking, the safety issue is the problem that most concerns citizens because of the “unknown”. People are afraid of refugees because they have no idea about their identity. All the information they have is based on these people’s appearance and the international reflection about the region these people belonged. [...] We thought a good way to integrate these two groups of people is respecting the status of refugees. Yes, they are special, that’s a truth. We don’t have to shy away from that problem. But we could help residents to regard them as independent individuals. Through certain social occasions, new comers could show their skill, their talent. Their neighbours could re-recognise them as “an African guy good at football”, “a good cook from Pakistan”... We could build their ‘speciality’ to be more specific to their personality instead of focusing on their nationality, to make them become interesting passengers of local neighbourhood life.

Seeing the city through new eyes. Collebeato
“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view [...] until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” Harper Lee.

Cheryl Tu. Every narrative tells a different infortune, while life has to continue. Can it be called ‘life’ though? Perhaps a more accurate description is ‘being alive’. The sentence that touched me the most was from a Nigerian, when being asked about the expectation of new life in Italy—“I’m grateful for everything here, at least I’m safe now, where there’s life, there’s hope.” It was also the time I came to realise that we, as urban practitioners, should have the potential to do something to help them live with dignity. Humanism is no longer just a word for the so-called ‘political correctness’ in EU, but a true spirit that I would embrace. In addition, it is also realised that social integration is never an easy goal, the government, the NGOs, the refugees, and the residents are all facing challenges. From the narrative of the municipality, the refugees and the residents, there are not only obvious obstacles to be overcome but also underlying problems to be discovered and solved. Conflicts can be easily triggered in this seemingly harmonious society, religious differences, racialism, and people’s fear to the social instability can all be the trigger. On the other hand, the nature of the policies for the refugees determines that the refugees acceptance scheme, is doomed to be a short-term solution, while the local initiatives tried hard to achieve social integration, which made this issue contradictory.

Edgar Gonzalez Guillen. The experiences was very powerful on many levels. For most of us, me included, it was the first time we were doing field work of this kind, getting in contact with refugees, hearing their stories and trying to connect and support them in any way possible, while understanding the multiple constraints of time, money and political manoeuvring that all these process are subject to. It was the first time I had to face the issues of racism and xenophobia up close. This kind of discussion have always felt alien to me, kind of not really happening. That in itself was one of the key reflections I was able to do during the fieldtrip. How to understand and in a way, workaround these ideas. But also to understand that these same preconceptions and personal bias (of nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, etc.) affect us, and the way in which we

communicate and are perceived, therefore the way in which we do research and the result we obtain from it. Saying it now, it appears almost logical or obvious, but having experienced it now, will change the way in which I’ll handle myself in these matters from now on.

Edwar Hanna. After spending more than ten hours in a dark crowded basement in Damascus’ suburbs under continuous massive booming, without food, electricity or even water, with only the sounds of crying kids as a terrifying background, the hope to escape that I had along with more than 50 other people kept in that place, was a luxurious dream, closer in fact to an unachievable ambitious wish. Hence, thinking about continuing my studies in London was beyond the possibility of imagination. However, at the end of the day I am here. And the life could restart every single moment. With this message in mind, as a person coming from a country that has been exporting 4 million refugees in the last five years in one of the worst disaster of the century after the WW2, I eagerly went to Italy, trying to figure out a way to inspire and continue a good life by mobilising the glimmer of hope I’d experienced myself. [...] Uncovering the everyday life for the migrants was a meaningful investigative apparatus that attempted to shed light on how the in-between lived space which is produced by these activities in different scales (Home/Neighborhood/City) could be taken as an advantage to improve the social coexistence and reconciliation with the new home country. [...] As an urban practitioner I have learnt to critically deal with the cliché words in particular topics, for instance the term ‘integration’ and its possibility in the refugee and asylum seeker issues. [...] Personally, many times I have been speechless during the interviews just remembering 4 million refugees who are suffering these conditions or probably worse. This taught me when and how to distance myself as a practitioner to ensure better engagement. Through the eleven stories we have heard in those three days, it was evident that hope has always existed, steering them towards Italy. However, Italy as a place was not the final destination, it was the beginning of a life that would always be guided by the glimmer of hope they have been inspired by.

Lucy Warin. Sandwiched between Lee’s words on racial tensions and ‘otherness’ and Calvino’s city as a text for reading the complicated interactions between the group and the individual, we landed in Brescia – as 24

‘individuals’ in need of pizza. Tasked with finding out “What’s really going on here?” we set about trying to translate the abstract of Bloomsbury to the reality of Brescia. I follow the grand narrative of the refugee and migrant crisis closely. My friends talk about it in the pub, it encroaches on my essays. I sit between Edwar and Hani the day after my country decides to bomb theirs. But Brescia gave me fresh schooling on scale and how policy and ideology meet the ground and real lives. For me, and my progression as a reflexive practitioner, the experience was about recognising the reality of situation – the dialectic between integration and coexistence - and the humanity of the ‘actors’. For personal and political reasons, I’ve long hated the concept of ‘tolerance.’ I find it gross, inhuman and a political argument or doing ‘less bad’ rather than good. In Brescia we explored the concept of ‘Reciprocal Space’ as a concrete alternative to tolerance and a chance for me to rethink my politics through a spatial manifestation.

Miguel Martin Mejia. It was a long time since doing fieldwork again. I remember the first time I approach people working in a *barriada* in Lima, were I arrived as a newcomer trying to explore the area with curiosity. I was doing my dissertation at the time and my fieldwork that was meant to be for just two weeks, lasted one year. Since then I have followed this mantra: any understanding of the people might depart from the real interest towards them and an interiorisation of their problems as a reflection where empathy is the main feeling. This time in Brescia, I was not the student of years ago. I felt the refugees as I feel myself. Being a stranger in a land not mine, without any control over my destiny, I feel as one more refugee. This experience was for me a re-commitment with myself: to do the kind of work I want to do, and for the people I want to work for.

Maria Jose Martinez Gertner. I do not believe in the gap between academic learning and the so called ‘real world’. I think they are both real and linked: more a continuum than a dichotomy. As far as I know, both UCL and the DPU are a good example of that. There is always a connection between the learning process and what is happening outside the classroom doors: the generation of knowledge is at its service and vice-versa, not only as mere case studies analysed from a distance. Personally, that is one of the reasons why I chose BUDD: the idea of having a strongly theoretical ‘deconstruction and

**DIFFERENT
FACES
SHARED
SPACES
SAME
TRACES**

BRESCIA

"Refugee" is big question
 [Some of them here for Job, not integration]
 [Lack of jobs is main problem]
 [Many are 'AFRAID' of 'REFUGEE']



- CULTURE
- RELATIONSHIPS
- TEMPORALITY
- MOBILITY
- ECONOMY

"Friendship, Respect, Rules and people." by Saoud

"No different from us, no learning in having relationship with them." by Cosimo (age of 20s)

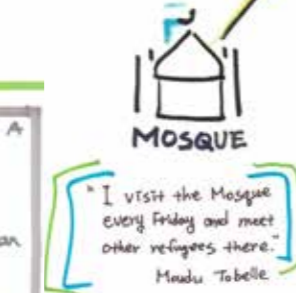
"Refugee think of Italy as temporary residence 'first stop'."

"Albanian refugees were fine after 'integrating' (asking time)"

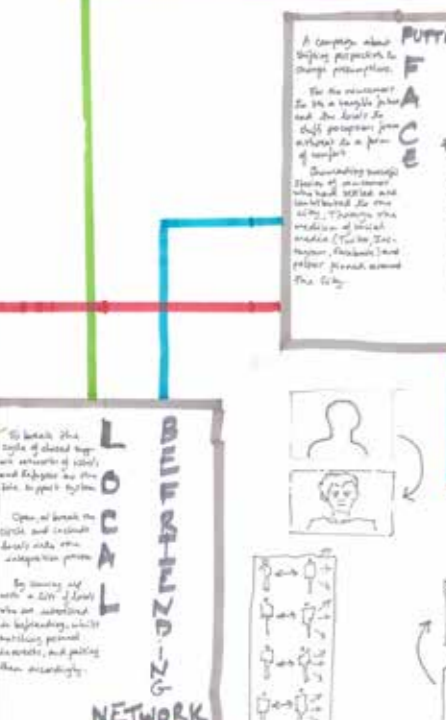
"Refugee sometimes don't appreciate what is going to them."

"education / language is way out"

"big problem of jobs" by Angelo (age of 60s)



- CULTURE**
[...]
- RELATIONSHIPS**
[...]
- TEMPORALITY**
[...]
- MOBILITY**
[...]
- ECONOMY**
[...]
- POLICY**
[...]



CASTEL MELLA



"Italy is good (perfect). But if we could not find job than we go possibly to Germany."

"follow laws, Rules, and be fine."

"It was LONG WAY for us to reach here"

"I just stay home on the weekends."



"It's hard to gather CITIZEN'S opinion, because they got scared by their (refugees) identity."

"WE DON'T WANT A DORMITORY CITY."

"Constantly has been a political decision. Legal status is impeding territorial development"

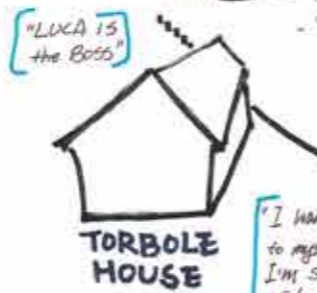
"Major group of people conservative which is weakening the process."

"People are really suspended in time + space"

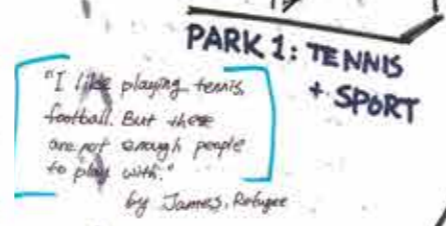
"We did organise a meeting with the villages. BUT there were not that many people who care. AND they were against it to have a political decision to implement the program."



TORBOLE

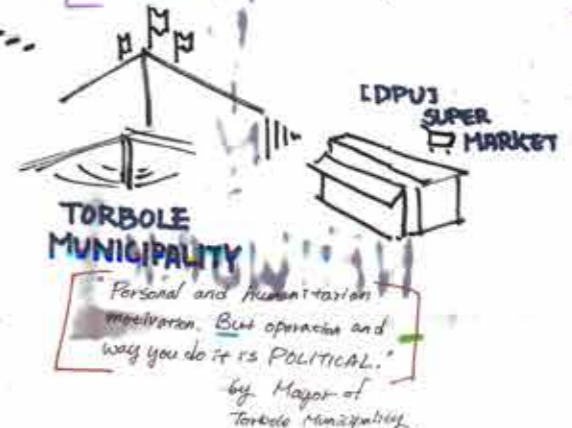


"I used to ride bike to school. It takes me 20 minutes. But now I have to take bus, because of the cold weather."



"65 out of 200 municipalities hosting refugees, 1,3 / 1,000 : refugees/citizens."

"Environment / city needs to be protected. Not just put in crises and by others. But also by globalisation."



recalibration' of urban design, and at the same time being able to actually apply it in existing and ongoing conflicts is a valuable experience. The BUDDcamp offered a comprehensive sample of what we have already learnt. We didn't map the actors but interacted with most of them, we tried to understand power relations and conflicting interests, we proposed solutions that were far from utopic approaches, but rooted in reality and tried to understand the political, social and spatial dimensions of them. However, what I did not expect to happen was the effect at a personal level this experience had in all of us.

We are all branches of the same tree. Paderno
"We're paying the highest tribute you can pay a man. We trust him to do right. It's that simple." Harper Lee.

Ariana Markowitz. Our days in Brescia were a watershed moment for me, the first time I felt that I was seeing through designer glasses, as it were, rather than through the perspective of a development and security practitioner aspiring to be a designer. I am starting to understand scale, strategies, guidelines, principles, actors, and maps not as concepts but as tools, and to use them reflexively albeit uncertainly. [...]

I thought often in Brescia about how to cultivate empathy rather than sympathy without diminishing the importance of difference. The UK is the sixth country where I have been a migrant. I understand well the trials and tribulations of integrating into a new culture and having to define my views on topics about which I lack context, struggling to find my voice in a foreign language, and navigating the maze of immigration-related bureaucracy. But I have always done these things from a position of great privilege. In seeking commonalities upon which to base my interactions with the newcomers, I sometimes felt that I negated our differences. Finding the line between designing for empathy and accounting for difference while working towards some degree of assimilation remains a long-term balancing act.

Di Wang. During the whole process of BUDDcamp, one key question – how to identify ourselves - kept echoing in my mind. Are we practitioners, urban designers, students or just normal people? I found it really hard to engage with their lives as soon as possible in such a short time alongside with keeping a distance from outside so as to be rational. It seemed that there were two different



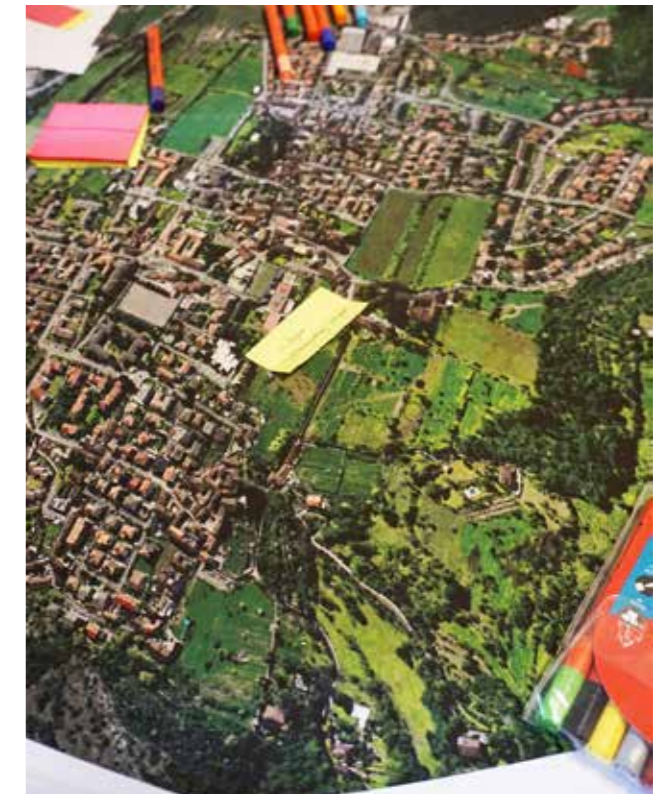
people deep in my heart, one is the emotional one, the other is the rational one. Without doubt we need to dissociate ourselves a little bit from their perspectives in order to dissolve the problem as a whole. But we could not further analyse their situations without being deeply involved in their conversations. So what we could do is to balance these two different roles and try not to be biased. When thinking about our strategies to intervene, our roles seemed to be less unimportant. We simply reflected our understanding of the current situation and proposed possible solution to help solve the problem from our perspectives. At this time, we are academics but not only academics. Who are we? I identify ourselves as observers and advisors. At least, we are one active member of the city who intend to create a better society.

Luis Felipe Hernandez Ventura. The different points of view applied to a single target is one of the factors that enrich the discussions and increase the range of perspectives to solve a problem. Personally, it is what helps me understand things better. It's a matter of learning to see things differently. Use a new lens for perceiving the world. Forget what we know, prejudices, weaknesses and see a bit beyond what we could see on any other day. Remove the filters we have and develop a new ability to recognise new realities. [...] And it's not so easy to relate to someone who is living in a different situation or have a different background or who have lived the same way for a long time and suddenly the situation is disturbed by an external factor. I think the best way to approach a new problem is to get clear objectives and an open mind. You can never be completely prepared for surprises, but understand that uncertainty is part of the process and within that uncertainty is where learning is. There is no single right answer, nor absolute truth or even a complete success, but the city is creating an ongoing process filled with uncertainties and mechanisms that should be improved, adapted and constantly updated.

Valeria Vergara Granda. An urban design practitioner has to be able to understand, analyse, synthesise and propose different urban realities. This time, these were applied for one reality: male refugees in Brescia and its surrounding villages. It was not an easy assignment to construct a relationship with complete strangers, understand their situation in just two days and finalise a proposal of strategies in order to improve their livelihood; but it was a great opportunity to learn and face

challenges. In 4 days, Brescia and Paderno became for me, the setup of not only an intellectual and academic experience, but a very deep personal one.

Yujin Yan. Our group worked on Paderno with four Nigerian refugees. When I was with them, I found they were more talkative and passionate than we were told. I remembered when we talked about sisters and brothers, they were really happy, while missing them a lot. They showed their pity that China had a one child policy for my generation. They said it was awesome to have company while growing up because you had people to share happiness and sorrows and to support you. And they said if they got the documents, they want to pick up their families and give them a better life. I could see their difficulties in seeking for the so-called better life living a new environment with a language barrier and without many friends and acceptance from others. They left their hometown and moved to Brescia through long journeys; they simply thought it was because of their race that people do not accept them. However, it is not the problems of different colours, it also relates to different religions, current economic circumstances and so on. And I think sometimes racial or religious prejudices exist due to misunderstanding or negative impact from events that have happened.



ENTRY POINTS OF ANALYSIS

EMPATHY

ARE YOU PROUD OF YOURSELF TO WHAT YOU HAVE INSTALLED A TOTAL STRANGE ABOUT CIRCUMSTANCES YOU KNOW MORALLY ABOUT? - LEE

SUBTLETY

"ALTHOUGH HE WAS FEELING THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE SCARED, YOUNG IN YOU FINALLY LIKE THEM" - LEE

COZINESS

"FALLERGO IS NEVER IN WORDS, IT IS IN THINGS" - COALIND

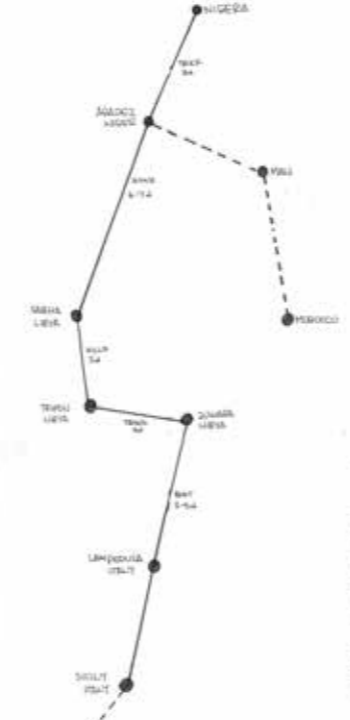
STRATEGIES

TRENDS INVEST
EXPAND BUILD

OPPORTUNITIES FOR NON-VERBAL INTERACTIONS
SKILLS FOR LIFE RATHER THAN EVERYDAY LIVING
EXPECTATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE



DWELLING SCALE



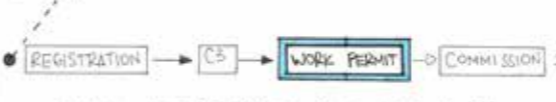
S.O.G. BASE, APRIL 21-24, 2010... TWO OF THE PING WENT MADE THE STEP TOGETHER AND THEN LEFT THE OTHER TWO LEFT STAYING IN THE... AND SLEEPING IN THE ROOMS OF APPROXIMATELY 20 SQM... WHICH ARE CONSIDERED A 2-BEDROOM FLAT IN ITALY... THE POLICE WERE FOLLOWING AND MOVING TOGETHER.

WE CAN'T USE THIS ROOM BECAUSE THE NEIGHBOUR COMPLAINT ABOUT THE NOISE



INITIAL IDEAS
- THIS IS THEIR FIRST TIME OUTSIDE OF AFRICA
- MAXIMIZE YOUR ENGAGEMENT WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT BLACK OR FROM AFRICA
- GROW IN ITALY
- GROW IN SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL CAPITAL TO MAKE THEIR TRANSITION

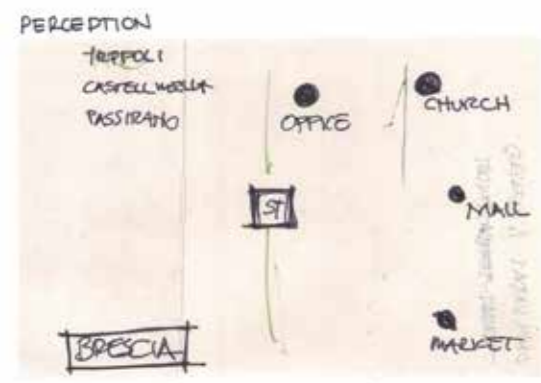
LEGAL PROCESS



"WE WANT THE DOCUMENTS"

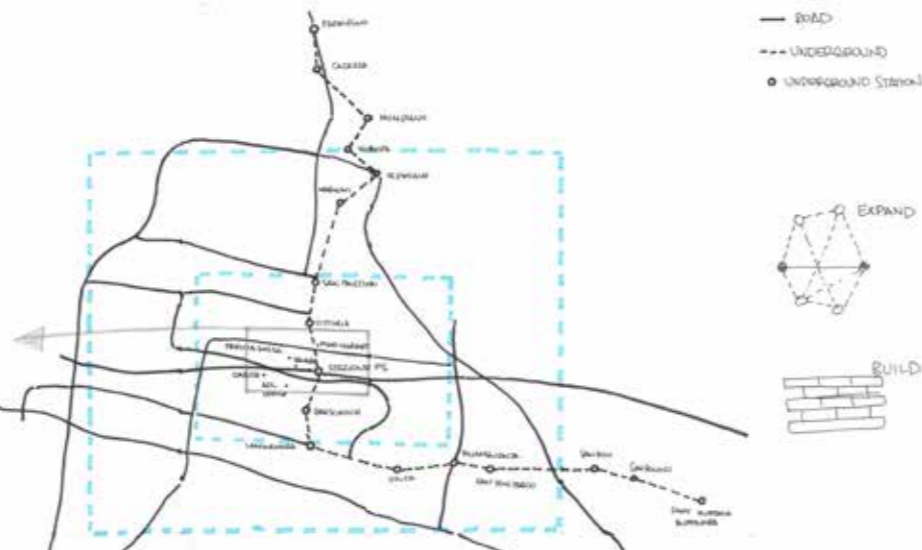
"REAL COURAGE IS WHEN YOU KNOW YOU'RE LIKED BEFORE YOU BEGIN, BUT YOU BEGIN ANYWAY AND SEE IT THROUGH NO MATTER WHAT" - LEE

CITY SCALE



PERCEPTION
THE CITY OF BRESCIA CAN BUILD UPON THE STRATEGIES USED AT THE TOWN SCALE ITS GREATER OPENNESS TO DIVERSITY RELATIVE TO PADERNO MEANS THAT THE MEN DO NOT FACE THE SAME PHYSICAL BARRIERS TO INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION.

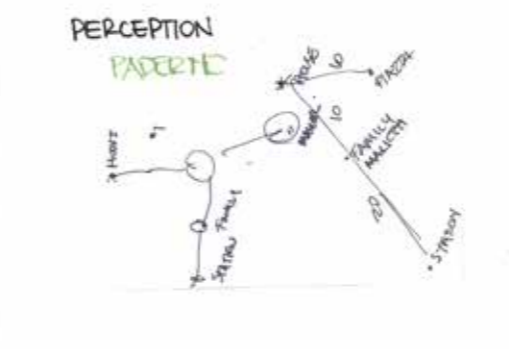
NONETHELESS, THE MEN MAKE USE OF A VERY LIMITED PORTION OF THE CITY CIRCUMS BETWEEN THE TRAIN STATION AND OFFICE. THEIR CHURCH FRECQA RD SSA AMALU AND TWO SMALL BROKERLY STORES OWNED BY LONG-TERM CHINESE MIGRANTS THAT CATER TO WEST AFRICAN CUSTOMERS. WE SEEK FIRST TO BROADEN THE MEN'S ROUTES AFFORDING THEM GREATER OPPORTUNITIES TO INTERACT WITH A HIGHER NUMBER AND MORE TYPES OF PEOPLE AND TO SEE AND BE SEEN; AND SECOND TO CONNECT THEM WITH MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD THEIR SKILLS AND SECURE EMPLOYMENT.



UNDERSTAND AND MAKE USE OF THE MEN'S SKILLS AND PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE
-CONNECTING THE MEN TO TARGETED INTERNSHIPS IN TRADES OR INDUSTRIES THAT THEY ALREADY KNOW
-THE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE REDUCES THE NEED FOR COMPLICATED VERBAL EXPLANATIONS
-MAY ENABLE THEM TO DEVELOP SPECIALIZED VOCABULARY SETS MORE EASILY
"THE PROPER USE OF LANGUAGE IS ONE THAT ENABLES US TO APPROACH THINGS (PRESENT OR ABSENT) WITH DILIGENCE ATTENTION AND CAUTION WITH RESPECT FOR WHAT THINGS (PRESENT OR ABSENT) COMMUNICATE WITHOUT WORDS"

ACTIVATING THE POTENTIAL OF CHURCH COMMUNITIES
-LINKING REFUGEES, MIGRANTS AND AFRICAN RELIGIOUS LEADERS ACROSS CHURCH COMMUNITIES
-STRENGTH IN NUMBERS MAY INCREASE THEIR VISIBILITY AND PROVIDE THEM WITH A MORE SOLID PLATFORM FROM WHICH TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS AND ADVOCATE FOR THEIR NEEDS
-REPLICATING THE SAFE SPACE OF CHURCH TO OTHER LOCATIONS OF THE CITY

TOWN SCALE



PERCEPTION
TWO OF THE MAIN BARRIERS THE MEN FACE ARE THEIR RESISTANCE TO LEARNING ITALIAN AND SOME OF THE RESIDENTS APPREHENSION ABOUT HOSTILITY TO THE PRESENCE OF MIGRANTS IN THEIR TOWN. THE LATTER GOES IN SPITE OF EFFORTS BY THE MAYOR AND HER TEAM TO PREPARE THE COMMUNITY FOR NEW ARRIVALS AND TO HOLD EVENTS TO ENCOURAGE INTEGRATION.

MEN - REFUGEES
-NO INCENTIVE TO LEARN ITALIAN WITHOUT KNOWING WHETHER OR NOT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO STAY IN ITALY, BUT THEY CANNOT BUILD PERSONAL NETWORKS THAT WOULD FACILITATE THEIR INTEGRATION OR FIND A JOB WITH OUT SPEAKING ITALIAN. EVEN IF THEY DO SECURE PERMISSION TO STAY, NOT HAVING INCOME WOULD MAKE IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO MAINTAIN THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING.

ITALIAN RESIDENTS
-ECONOMIC RESERVATION DISCOMFORT WITH THEIR DIVERSITY
THOUGH PADERNO HAS A YOUTH CLUB WITH PLACES FOR SPORTS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES SOME OF THE LONG-TERM RESIDENTS USERS HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DO NOT WISH FOR THE MEN TO PARTICIPATE
THE PRIEST WHO IS THE CARETAKER OF THESE SPACES, HAS NOT INTERVENED ON THE MEN'S BEHALF. THIS LACK OF AGENCY MEANS THAT THE MEN AND THE TOWN ADMINISTRATION MUST SEEK ALTERNATE AGENCIES TO ENABLE THE MEN TO INTERACT WITH TOWN PEOPLE AND ULTIMATELY SECURE EQUAL ACCESS TO PUBLIC SPACES MANY PEOPLE INCLUDING THE MAYOR ASSUME THAT ACCEPTANCE WILL COME FROM THE GROUND UP - FROM CHILDREN WHO HAVE NOT HAD TIME TO DEVELOP NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR MEN NEIGHBOURS - DUE TO THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH SIGNIFICANT SPATIAL CONSTRAINTS, HOWEVER WE BELIEVE AMEND INSTEAD WORKING FROM THE TOP-DOWN (ELDERLY) IN HOPES THAT POSITIVE PERCEPTION WILL FILTER DOWN THROUGH YOUNGER GENERATIONS

"IF YOU DON'T SPEAK THE LANGUAGE YOU ARE IN A PRISON"

La ricerca progettuale è complessa e spesso arbitraria. Per noi in tale indeterminatezza si nasconde il potenziale. La ricerca progettuale non è né statica né strutturata, al contrario può essere definita come un insieme di approcci concettuali in costante evoluzione. Nient'altro che il perpetuo ripensamento di idee e nozioni. Partendo dall'esperienza accumulata finora, cogliamo l'occasione di riflettere ulteriormente sul nostro approccio teorico e pratico al progetto e come esso possa contribuire a far emergere le forze nascoste che danno forma alle trasformazioni urbane e come viceversa l'urbano e il quotidiano forgiando le relazioni sociali.

La discussione epistemologica sulle radici della progettazione urbana vede due posizioni radicalmente opposte. La prima riguarda il dialogo permanente (e la rottura accademica) tra progetto e disciplina, la loro interdipendenza, e le loro differenze. La seconda riguarda la sfida del tutto politica del fare ricerca progettuale andando al di là dell'artefatto e dell'oggetto (quindi interessandosi di processi e relazioni).

La prima discussione è forse più tecnica e affonda le sue radici in questioni etimologiche...

Come suggerisce Findeli, definire cosa intendiamo per ricerca progettuale è fondamentale per formulare migliori domande progettuali. Ma soprattutto per rendere il progetto e la ricerca due attività parallele.

In prima fila a parlare di ricerca progettuale c'è il filosofo Bruno Latour, in particolare con la teoria della 'rete di attori' e di come essa viene applicata al manufatto e all'agglomerato urbano. Secondo il filosofo la teoria dell'architettura ha fino ad ora inteso l'edificio in maniera limitata come spazio euclideo dimenticando la dimensione umana. La sfida è, al contrario, quella di apprezzare l'evolversi dell'architettura, laddove il ruolo del progetto non finisce con il completamento dell'edificio ma piuttosto continua attraverso la documentazione delle 'tribolazioni' cui l'edificio è soggetto.

Defining design research: an unfinished story

Camillo Boano

Articulating design research is complex and often arbitrary. For us, such indetermination is where its potential lies. Design research is neither static nor structured but can instead be defined as a shifting body of conceptual approaches in need of constant evolution; nothing but the constant re-evaluation of ideas and knowledge as entry points and their ulterior adjustment as output. Based on our collective experiences of action-oriented work and previous reflections¹, we continue here to explore how a theoretical, yet pragmatic design-research approach, can help uncover the hidden forces that shape the material urban worlds and, vice versa, assist in investigating how the material and everyday conditions shape relationships, imaginations and people. Epistemological discussions on the root of the design discipline seem to explore two very distinct trajectories: firstly, the permanent dialogue (and academic rupture) between design and science, observing the interdependence of both disciplines as well as their differences; secondly, the political challenge of exploring design research beyond the concreteness and feasibility of artefacts, exploring instead the agency of design as a wider and socially active enterprise. The first discussion is perhaps more technical and grounded in semantic nuances. However, it is a topical subject matter and a highly relevant one; the different practices that are claimed by design (whether objects, buildings, spaces or cities) are increasingly drawn to technological dependencies, following a trajectory with a strongly positivist focus. These arguments on the very nature of design spell out a complex process that operates at several levels. Whereas the discussion above deals with semiotics and the place of origin, the definitions of design and its trajectories

can also start from its culmination - from the 'objects' themselves.

As Findeli succinctly elaborates, defining design research is an essential starting point to define better design questions, but more importantly, to ensure parallel design and research activities that interconnect along a path of exploration.²

At the forefront of design research and theory is the work of Bruno Latour, particularly the perspectives of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) as applied to both the architectural object and the urban conglomerate. As the author explains, traditional architectural theory has gone so far as understanding the building as a contested space, albeit in a static manner, relying on the constraints of Euclidean representation and forgetting the real-life dimensions. The challenge, he argues, is to appreciate its permanent transformation across time, where design acquires an active role that doesn't finish at the building's completion, but is sustained by its evolution: "Only by enlisting the movements of a building and accounting carefully for its "tribulations" would one be able to state its existence: it would be equal to the building's extensive list of controversies and performances over time, i.e. it would be equal to what it does, to the way it resists attempts at transformation, allows certain user actions and impedes others, irritates observers, challenges city authorities, and mobilises different communities of actors".³ The challenge of design theory is to recognise these 'tribulations' within the wider context of the urban environment, that of buildings and the space in between. Sarah Wigglesworth, offers an interesting perspective on the essence of critical thinking in design. Although her work is strictly architectural, Wigglesworth calls for a review of design,

setting out five assertions, positioned on informed critique, that certainly inform academic engagements. Amongst the variables used to develop informed critique are context, the fields of practice, recognition, as well as politics and causality. The latter particularly focuses on the need to think carefully about the validity of the criticism: “Critical thinking is essential to developing a critical architecture, but thinking critically does not guarantee a critical outcome”.⁴

Acknowledging the irregularities and unfiltered schematic of design should also be part of the paradigm: “In a wider context, the design practice can be seen as an expanding field rather than being developed in isolation. The production of space is subversive to the process, which enables appropriation, wellbeing, solidarity, inhabitation and dwelling. These are not forms”.⁵ With these reflections, we could certainly provisionally come to terms with the fact that design is essentially about the production of space, not as a fixed and abstract reality, but as something actively and contingently produced. As such, design needs to be understood as an impure and discrepant practice, as a way to address urban challenges from the perspective of excluded groups in contested urban spaces. Each project shows that the potential of design can no longer remain within the realms of intent, form or representation but needs to tie these to its consequences and effects.

Fields of Design Research in Urban Design. The ancient Greek word Agon means struggle or contest, and was used interchangeably in several contexts of Greek life. At the core of Greek cultural conceptions, struggle and conflict were the crux of happenstance and storylines; without struggle there was no drama, and no possible representation of reality. The importance of contest as part of Western cultural values cannot be understated, interpreted either as competition or as direct confrontation. In urban contexts, contest is permanent and multi-dimensional. It is part of the cultural landscape and underscores the societal structures that define urban life. For us, the notion of a Contested Urbanism represents the latency of conflict as well as resolution, where characters (actors, practitioners) face the tensions implicit in a context, while trying to operate and articulate their respective reactions. In that vein, we find necessary to explore the structure behind Agon, the tools that can help guide us into using a loose template of design practice in scenarios of conflict. In order to propose and

articulate a reflection of design research we set out to develop a set of stages that, albeit non linear, operate as some sort of procedural sequence where the myriad sensibilities presented in the built environment can be theorised and practiced. The following concepts and ideas form a set of interrelated fields of analysis that can operate at several scales and adapted depending on the tensions of each urban context.

Field 1: Design Research Engagement. The first field deals with the wider schemes of research in design. Any research process follows a route, and its final form can take several turns that make it unique. However, the toolkit tries to streamline the main stages that shape design research, a template for the initial engagement between the researcher and the case in point, be it a site or a theoretical debate. At the same time, we try to foresee the research’s culmination, which in this case shouldn’t be seen as a static conclusion but a tentative reflective point. Thus, when we speak of engagement, we are describing the external dimensions that qualify the stages of research according to the values and principles we aim to develop as sustained strategies, where a common thread of causal approach can elaborate a collective rationale that, simultaneously, respects individual approaches.

Field 2: Design Research Challenges. As explained above, the first field of the toolkit deals with the organisational shell that shapes design research. However, we also understand that these processes are rarely clear-cut and flawless requiring a deeper understanding of the philosophical approaches being considered, the analytical dimensions being applied and the pedagogical aims being dictated. Design research, in any context deals with tensions; every articulation, every decision that determines a degree of purpose is the product of guiding notions and thematic organisations. This second field mirrors the stages of engagement explained above, adding an additional layer of challenges. These are variables that validate the critical process, stressing the need for a self-questioning research pedagogy that is flexible as well as proactive. If the previous stage deals with the structural approach to design research, this one looks to expand its critical capacity.

Field 3: Critical issues. A key point of debate is the capacity of design research and its resulting practice to locate itself among the narratives that surround it; this third field tries to tackle that. It is here that we openly call for urban design to be thought of as a research subject

with a distinctive quality, one where the complexity and openness of design is dispersed out into multi-disciplinary dimensions, where the human element is central to its very conception. In the urban realm, a project can be politically charged, dealing with important sensibilities and biases. A research might make critical assumptions that, while valid, might overstep its boundaries and misrepresent the case in question. These are delicate lines that need to be addressed permanently as part of the design process in order to maintain a discursive balance. At the same time, it doesn’t mean that design should be aseptic and sterilised; as has been stressed so far, political engagement and ideological calibration are of essence when dealing with processes immersed in conflict and social struggles. The urban environment is the design practice at its culmination, whether as an active participant or by omission; research in urban design is the arena of ideas and proposals that challenge the status quo and question the order of things.

Field 4: A Pedagogical Recalibration in Practice.

In relation to the challenges discussed above, our vision looks for a renewed sense of practice. The main pedagogical objectives are to expose researchers with the experience or interest in the development of urban areas, with a political economy perspective of space and furthermore, to enhance the comprehension of the unique needs, abilities, aspirations and forms of resistance that characterise urban dwellers in various geographies, particularly those of the Global South. It seems imperative to critically challenge the different morphologies and tensions that shape current complex neoliberal urbanisation at different scales. There is an academic need to coordinate design research processes that leverage knowledge in order to meet local needs. It is necessary to engage with the practice of architecture and urban design that work to configure the urban domain, remembering that this emanates from specific modes of production and their inherent structures of social relations, cultures, ideologies, histories and struggles. Beyond the theoretical and structural grounding explained in the previous sections, this recalibration looks towards a tool-based methodology that serves as a guide for moving through the design processes – from the early desktop research stages through to action-orientated fieldwork. BUDDCamp is thus an extension of the studio pedagogy; it is a glimpse into the challenging notion of praxis and the benefits and limitations of project simulation and fieldwork that serve as a platform to act

on and experiment with new methodologies. As a result of our working approach, this creates the necessary fostering of more fruitful relationships between education, practice and the users.

Design research is a radical alteration of the project of design. The term project, for us includes the theoretical and the practical, the critique and the transformation. Radical is intended to capture the Latin origin of the word radix, which means ‘root’. To be radical means to be about the root or origin of something. We could say that a radical critique targets the root of a problem, rather than just a symptom. A project of change that involves overcoming not only the lived experiences of alienation, objectification and self-hatred, but also the more fundamental systems of oppression responsible for those experiences as well. What is argued then is a destituent mode of thinking and practicing of architecture, planning and urban design. The ethical shift suggested here, around an inoperative architecture, is closely related to Eyal Weizman’s “political plastic” that mobilises a differential architectural intelligence in investigating the “abyss of the worst architectural possibilities” (ibid), than the one framed by Justin McGuirk on the “activist architect [...] who creates the conditions in which it is possible to make a meaningful difference” or the “insurgent architects” defined by Erik Swyngedouw as sole agents entitled to claim an emancipatory role and effective agency in co-animating political events. Hopefully the approach we propose can offer a reinvigorated political possibility for architecture, design and urbanism and, furthermore offer an intense meditation that considers the political in terms of ‘means’ rather than ‘ends’.

1 Astolfo, G., Talocci, G., Boano, C., (2015) A six-fold mandate for an engaged urban design research education, Urban Pamphleteer Vol. 5., p.43-45; Boano, C., Talocci, G., (2015) A militant to-do list (in the form of a map) for future DPU summerLabs, in Boano, C., Talocci, G., eds., DPUsummerLab 2014 series pamphlet. The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, London, p. 54-55.

2 Fendell, A., (2010) Searching For Design Research Questions: Some Conceptual Clarifications. Questions, Hypotheses and Conjectures, pp.286-303.

3 Latour, B. & Yaneva, A., (2008) Give me a gun and I will make all buildings move: an ant’s view of architecture. In R. Geiser, ed. Explorations in Architecture: Teaching, Design, Research. Basel: Birkhäuser.

4 Wigglesworth, S., (2005) Critical practice. The Journal of Architecture, 10(3), pp.335-346.

5 Boano, C., 2014. Architecture of engagement, informal urbanism and design ethics. Atlantis Magazine, 24(4), pp.24-28.

BUDDlab Vol. 8

The Development Planning Unit, University College London, is an international centre specialising in academic teaching, research, training and consultancy in the field of urban and regional development, with a focus on policy, planning management and design. It is concerned with understanding the multi-faceted and uneven process of contemporary urbanisation, and strengthening more socially just and innovative approaches to policy, planning management and design, specially in the contexts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East as well as countries in transition.

The central purpose of the DPU is to strengthen the professional and institutional capacity of governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to deal with the wide range of development issues that are emerging at local, national and global levels. In London, the DPU runs postgraduate programmes of study, including a research degree (MPhil/PhD) programme, six one-year Masters Degree courses and specialist short courses in a range of fields addressing urban and rural development policy, planning, management and design.

Overseas, the DPU Training and Advisory Service (TAS) provides training and advisory services to government departments, aid agencies, NGOs and academic institutions. These activities range from short missions to substantial programmes of staff development and institutional capacity building.

The academic staff of the DPU are a multi-disciplinary and multi-national group with extensive and on-going research and professional experience in various fields of urban and international development throughout the world. DPU Associates are a body of professionals who work closely with the Unit both in London and overseas. Every year the student body embraces more than 45 different nationalities.




To find more about us and the courses we run, please visit our website: www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu

The MSc Building and Urban Design in Development

is an intensive 12 month programme that immerses students in the theory and practice of urban design and its role in building just cities and communities. It emphasises the need to reconsider how we go about planning, designing, and building cities. It calls for a radical rethink of conventional practices to tackle increasingly conflicting political visions and the challenges these produce. It reconceptualises classical notions of 'design' beyond the practice that conceives only the physical form of the city to one that engages a social-political process that explores complex formal and informal acts, from policy making and master planning to artistic protests and everyday citizen-led creations of place. The MSc BUDD equips students with the practical and analytical skills needed to design holistic, place-based interventions that tackle conflicting agendas at different urban scales. Its intention is to cultivate socially-sensitive urban practitioners who can promote human-centric responses to the challenges of marginalisation, inequality, informality, extreme density, gentrification, and environmental degradation. The course tackles the paradigms of participation, resilience, the politics of architecture, and design activism as mechanisms for spatial transformation. Unique to this programme is its desire to immerse students into the field of spatial thinking through critical theory and philosophical reflections. It debates and analyses the political economy and power dynamics at play, through the multiple lenses of social, cultural, economic, environmental and political drivers. In so doing, it allows students to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which such acts reinforce or change engrained spatial issues. The programme also encourages students to explore and identify actors, entry points and positive forms of power that can achieve just urban outcomes.

www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/programmes/postgraduate/msc-building-urban-design-in-development

Visit our website

 www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu
 www.facebook.com/dpuucl
 www.twitter.com/dpu_ucl



dpu
Development
Planning Unit

The Bartlett

