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**Master's degree in
Human Rights and Multi-level Governance**

MANAGING URBAN SPACE TOWARDS INTERCULTURAL AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES.

A CASE STUDY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ARCELLA, PADUA

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To all the "mediators, bridge builders,
wall vaulters and frontier crossers"

A tutti i "mediatori, costruttori di ponti,
saltatori di muri, esploratori di frontiera"

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ACRONYMS

EC   European Commission

COE   Council of Europe

CSO   Civil Society Organization

EU   European Union

ICC   Intercultural Cities Programme

UN   United Nations

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UN-HABITAT United Nations Human Settlements Programme

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INTRODUCTION

The descending slope of the bridge lets the bike smoothly enter in a new urban realm. The noise of the trains from the nearby station accompanies the slalom among people that walk and linger in front of the shops lined up next to the sidewalk. A kebab, a Romanian grocery shop, a café, colorful vegetables and fruits on display, a shop-window packed with "African" products. Across the roundabout, the sight of a mural is visible through the bustle of cars, bikes and trams on the street. A hand points, or tries to grasp, a flock of butterflies and the sky. On the same yellowish wall, two enigmatic figures with beaks watch over the lively crossroad.

There are three possible directions to take. One might lead the bike towards a street that at night becomes alive with shady activities. Following another street, the bike might arrive to a point where the sidewalk becomes wider and a small square appears, crowded by people sitting at the tables of cafes and restaurants, on the benches under the shades of a couple of trees, or simply strolling by. The third street from the roundabout follows the tramline. This way lets the bike cross the entire neighborhood from South to North, passing by a bookshop, a movie theater, countless shops, "ethnic" restaurants, a fish street vendor, a grey and massive high-rise, an abandoned building where colorful geometric shapes peek out from the blind windows, following the tramline up to one of the last tram stops. There, the tall chimney of a former brick kiln industry stands out over the tables of the restaurant that took over the spaces of the industry.

The bike leaves the smog and traffic of the street. Suddenly, the trees and large fields next to the unpaved path transform the urban landscape into countryside, recalling the abruptness and intrusion of the city into the dwindling fields of a fading rural past. The bike stops by a large park, in one of its corner a community vegetable garden grows. Following a bike path through the buildings, the bike reaches another cozy park where children and parents play cheerfully. Then, it is easy to get lost in the entangled streets, where the compact urban fabric made of low houses leave

space sometimes to delicious Liberty villas. The sight of the tall tower bell of the oldest church in the neighborhood helps finding the way.

The park where the bike stops is shaded by tall trees. Women with veils chat and observe their children playing. On the close sport-field, young Philippines play basket and listen to music. In the other field, other young people play football. Some people read and talk sitting on the benches, while some exercise and others take a nap on the grass. Voices that speak different languages cross the air of the park.

This description depicts Arcella, a neighborhood of the city of Padua that is the subject of the case study of this research. However, this description might well fit with a countless number of other peripheric urban neighborhoods, in an indefinable number of cities in the entire world.

The elements depicted that can be encountered crossing its street offer in fact emblematic signs that recall much wider challenges that the urban world has to face: the steadily and incessant expansion of cities, the traffic and pollution, the cumbersome legacy of an industrial past, the blight of some urban areas, the adaptation of its inhabitants to changes and to evolving urban and collective identities, the challenging co-existence side by side of different lifestyles, cultures and religions.

Therefore, cities are the forefront in the struggle to find effective ways and innovative solutions to address some of the most complex, urgent and arduous challenges of the world: environmental sustainability and living together with difference.

For this reason, the important "glocal role" that cities play has directed the decision of the research to consider the study of a local and small-scale urban reality as an extremely valuable opportunity for analyzing how these challenges are faced on a daily basis by the people that live and cross the urban world.

Together with the attempt to analyze how such complicated endeavors are undertaken, the starting point of the research was also the belief that the observation of this urban world might offer important contribution regarding ways and modalities to approach these challenges. In fact, as the initial description

illustrates, in the midst of trafficked streets and neglected buildings, new signs of hope appear in the bustling life of the streets, in the bike paths, in the murals that color the walls, in the squares that become spaces of conviviality and in the parks that become places of encounters.

The research aimed therefore at investigating how a multicultural urban reality can change and be transformed into an intercultural and sustainable city. "Multicultural" is considered as an adjective that can aptly describe the multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-religious reality of modern cities. However, while it describes the reality, it does not offer any explanation on how this diverse reality is perceived, experienced and lived by its inhabitants. "Intercultural" is on the contrary the ideal objective of creating a city characterized by the emergence of a "urban civitas" (Bekemans 2013a), a society based on inclusion, respect and appraisal of diversity, dialogue, awareness of the benefits of encounters, respect of human rights, and guided by principles of solidarity, human dignity and equality.
The wish to investigate how urban societies might be guided towards the creation of intercultural cities starts from the premises that the concern about environment cannot be separated anymore by any action that aims at fostering change and favoring human beings. Hence, the project of creating different cities and "urban civitas" needs to combine in an inseparable way the aim of becoming intercultural with the aim of struggling for sustainability and environmental protection.

This is the framework and context of our research. Starting for these premises, the research aims at offering new contributions and reflections about the challenging endeavor of managing urban space towards intercultural and sustainable cities, through the case study of the neighborhood Arcella.
The first part of the thesis offers a contextual, conceptual and theoretical framework of the relevant academic debate emerged in relation to cities and diversity, while the second part presents the data, the findings and the conclusions emerged during the case study analysis.

PART I

Intercultural and sustainable cities.

Conceptual and theoretical framework

Introduction

The first Part of the thesis focuses on the issue of managing diversity in cities with the aim of creating intercultural and sustainable urban environments. The most relevant academic research emerged in this field is considered, as well as the approaches and policies applied by states and institutions.

The first chapter deals with the stage of our discussion, the city, highlighting the uniqueness and features of cities and their role for the creation of inclusive and sustainable societies. The reasons why cities play a central role both at local and global level is taken into consideration, together with their role as a linkage between the two levels. The discussion then presents the major issues that have contributed to complicate the management of urban environments, and which elements and processes have posed new challenges for native citizens, newcomers and policy-makers. After having taken into account the elements of difficulty, the discussion reflects on which ways and for which reasons diversity can become a force and potential for cities, instead of an element of disruption.

The second chapter presents the approaches that have been proposed for managing diversity in societies and in particular in the cities. The discussion introduces the major approaches proposed by states and institutions, highlighting an important shift from the paradigm of multiculturalism to the paradigm of interculturalism, an approach based on intercultural dialogue. The role of institutions such as the Council of Europe and the United Nations in framing new narratives and policies recommendations regarding intercultural and sustainable cities is also taken into consideration. The chapter deals with both guidelines and approaches planned at the policy level, but also consider which processes and contexts may encourage people to get into "meaningful encounters" that can challenge stereotypes, racist positions and attitudes of closure towards diversity.

In the third chapter, the reflections and conclusions based on the ideas presented in the first two chapters lead to the presentation of a proposal for an "integrated,

interconnected, multi-directional and intertwined" approach to managing diversity. Acknowledging the necessity to consider the issue in an interdisciplinary way, space of reflection and discussion is given to investigate the role of the various actors in fostering the creation of intercultural and sustainable cities. The discussion presents the strategic and transformative role played by the "agents of change" and the energies and forces that different actors can bring to the project. The role of planners is stressed, highlighting the centrality of emotions and of "therapeutic approaches" to planning with diversity, as proposed by Sandercock (2000b). An important correlation between the potential of intercultural dialogue and intercultural policies in suburban environments and urban revitalization is highlighted, with the belief that suburbs environments (especially the most negatively stigmatized and in need of revitalization) can offer the best suitable place to boost a fruitful mechanism of social and urban transformation if the forces of intercultural dialogue and urban revitalization are combined together.

Chapter 1. The actor and contextual setting

1.1 The uniqueness of cities

"I look into my crystal globe, and I dream of the carnival of the multicultural city: I don't want a city where everything stays the same and everyone is afraid of change." Leonie Sandercock (2000a)

"The cities everyone wants to live in should be clean and safe, possess efficient public services, be supported by a dynamic economy, provide cultural stimulation, and also do their best to heal society's divisions of race, class, and ethnicity. These are not the cities we live in." Richard Sennett (2006)

Sandercock and Sennett bring together dreams and wishes of urban dwellers to create an ideal image of cities. Their imaginings are based on the belief that cities possess some elements of uniqueness that can foster the creation of cities that are multicultural, ready to continuously adapt and change, flexible, welcoming, dynamic, lively, innovative. Nonetheless, Sennett tears to shred immediately this ideal image: "these are not the cities we live in". Taking into consideration both the potential of cities, as well as their actual complexity and challenges, shall we consider the picture they depict just a visionary imagination, or is it possible to find ways to bring about this envisioned horizon?

The urban world has always offered the best place for imaging ideal images of societies and communities, being able to become a "locus of tolerance and freedom, conviviality and democracy" (Marconi 2016). Geographers, urbanists, architects, anthropologists and sociologists have been extremely fascinated by the intrinsic characteristics of cities, and from the forces and energies that cross the urban environments and in unpredictable ways create special and unique environments. Lewis Mumford sings the praises of the city with such a

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magnificent picture of the city as a place of interconnections and cross-fertilization of human experience:

"The city, as one finds it in history, is the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community. It is the place where the diffused rays of many separate beams of life fall into focus, with gains in both social effectiveness and significance. The city is the form and symbol of an integrated social relationship: it is the seat of the temple, the market, the hall of justice, the academy of learning. Here in the city the goods of civilization are multiplied and manifolded; here is where human experience is transformed into viable signs, symbols, patterns of conduct, systems of order. Here is where the issues of civilization are focused: here too, ritual passes on occasion into the active drama of a fully differentiated and self-conscious society" (Mumford 1938)

Such ideal image of urbanity and of cities as favorable and virtuous environment that nurtures civic virtues and nestles the best of humanity has been put under constraints by the forces that have shaped the urban spaces of the 21st century. The hallmarks of the last century, globalization and post-colonialism, have affected the world with the increasing growth of migrations and flows of people crossing borders and starting new lives in a different country. Cities are the first harbor that welcome the newcomers, where they get for the first time in contact with the new reality, and where most of them decide to settle down for a new life.

The relevance and crucial position of cities is stressed by UN, through the UN Habitat agency, presenting urbanization as one of the major trends of the century and one of the major challenges for the future. Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General, stresses that "today, cities are home to 54 per cent of the world's population, and by the middle of this century that figure will rise to 66 per cent" (UN World Cities Report 2016).

Therefore, urban environments continue to grow, not just in terms of seize, but especially in terms of diversity and complexity of problems that face societies, not just "national societies", but also the "global society". In the city, global problems and challenges become concrete daily issues to be tackled by everybody who lives, experiences and crosses the city. Cities become therefore home of a multicultural, diverse and extremely complex population, rooted on a local sphere and at the same time connected to the entire world. As Marconi states "it is in the city that the demographic reality of cross-difference relationships between newcomers, long-standing immigrants and native inhabitants takes place" (Marconi 2016), and "it is a city level that the negotiation of ethnic identities takes palace on daily basis" (Amin 2002, cited in Marconi 2016).

Cities are for these reasons the central stage dealing with the crucial question facing 21st century societies: how to live with diversity, and how to find ways to accommodate and manage the new multicultural and diverse population of the city?

The crucial point becomes the challenge to find ways to *live* together, and not just to *coexist*, in cities, and to understand what "it might mean to manage difference in ways that could be transformative rather than repressive" (Sandercock 2000b). Zukin thinks that in our cities "the old civic virtues for mingling with strangers – civility, security, tact and trust – have lost their meaning in the fear for physical safety and the dramatization of ethnic diversity" (Zukin 1996, cited in Marconi 2016), and she wonders "whether all of us, children of various Diasporas, can find a home in the city" (Zukin 1996).

Sandercock stresses the connectivity and interdependence that has become intrinsic of modern societies and the world, stating that "*whether we like it or not, we do share space on the planet with others who in many ways are not like us, and we need to find ways of co-existing in these spaces, from the next-door neighbor to the street, neighborhood, city and region*" (Sandercock 2000b).

Cities therefore connect the global with the local, because they are not just crossed by people coming from the entire world, but also because they reflect in the local

and daily reality major global challenges and concerns. As Pace puts it, "*the new diasporas some immigrants tend to create in Europe seem to be interfaced locally and globally, because they are at the same time rooted in a particular space (the city) and also in the global world, embodying the current economic, social and religious changes that are taking place globally*" (Pace 2010). Their special role and position is highlighted especially in some cities, the "global cities", as Sassen (2001) proposes to call them, which are cities that because of their diversity and their concentration of strategic functions, services and powers perform socio-economic and political roles on a global stage. Therefore, the role of cities as connector of the local to the global and vice versa, let them play a strategic "glocal role", serving as a cross point between people living in a local space that is affected by the forces of globalization, in terms of resources, movements of people, but especially in terms of global challenges that first and foremost come into reality in the physical urban spaces.

In the European Union context, European cities are placed furthermore at a strategic level, because within the multi-level governance paradigm and the rules of subsidiarity that characterize the governance of EU, cities and municipalities are given high relevance because they are the last level of governance, the closest to the citizens. Also within a state, often cities play a more decisive role than the one of central government in managing policies of integration and inclusion. In fact, as Balbo (2009) highlights in the case of Italian cities, even if the central government is responsible of migration policies, cities have wide freedom of choice and decision in the matters of inclusion and for the actual application of measures that are declined to the local context. Balbo proposes a different terminology, distinguishing "migration policies", issued from the central government level, and "migrant policies", planned at the local level (Balbo 2009).

Together with these concerns, cities because of their seize, density and strategic functions, play an important role in the other major global challenge of the century: environmental sustainability. UN Habitat, the program of UN working towards a better urban future, declared in the 2012 "Manifesto for Cities" that "the

battle for a more sustainable future will be won or lost in cities" (UN Habitat 2012). The manifesto highlights that the ways cities are planned, built and managed now will determine the outcome of our efforts to achieve a sustainable and harmonious development tomorrow.

For all these reasons, the debate on the ways to create sustainable and intercultural cities is more urgent than ever. The discussion therefore will try to investigate if and how cities could become inclusive, intercultural and sustainable. Cities that are inclusive are cities that have accepted and given same rights to newcomers. Equal access and equal rights is their motto. Cities that are intercultural are cities with communities that thrive because they believe that dialogue among its inhabitants is what to strive for, with the belief that mutual exchange and mutual influence of personal identities and cultures is both an individual and collective enrichment. Dialogue and meaningful encounters is their motto. Cities that are sustainable are cities that recognize that all the people share spaces together on the world, as well as a common destiny, and this shared space and the commitment to safeguard it is what unites the global population in the effort to protect the environment. Practices and mindsets that are respectful of the environment is their motto.

The cities that could thrive from these ideals are "cities for everybody", and at the same time spaces where "everybody is for the cities". The efforts for the envisioned horizons should be shared by everybody and participation of "empowered citizens" should be the key for the change. Cities have the possibility to become home for everybody, but keeping in mind that "cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody" (Jane Jacobs 1961).

What happens in the cities has in impact on the world, and at the same time the world, in its huge variety and diversity and with the global challenges that affect each of its inhabitants, is reflected in the cities. In these "mongrel cities", as Sandercock calls them, dialogue and participation could foster a real change, a

change that leads to the creation of "mongrel identities", if the transformative power of dialogical encounters is recognized, unlocked and appraised. In the opinion of Jane Jacobs, cities possess the seeds of their own destruction and of their own regeneration (Jane Jacobs 1961). If cities manage to catalyze their energies and unique elements, then they can be the concrete fieldwork of the changes we wish to occur on a global scale.

2.2 Changing cities and urban challenges

"I don't want a city where young African Americans have to sell drugs to make a living, or Thai women are imprisoned in sweat shops in the garment district where they work sixteen hours a day six days a week; where boys carry guns to make them feel like men, and suspicion oozes from plaster walls, and white neighbourhoods call the police if they see a black/stranger on their street. I don't want a city where the official in charge refuses to deal with the man standing at his desk because everything about him is different; where immigrants are called 'blackheads" and forced to find shelter in the industrial zone; where whites pay more and more of their private incomes to protect themselves from "strangers', and vote for officials who will spend more of everyone's tax dollars on more law and order rather than more schools and health clinics; where political candidates run on promises of cutting off services to 'illegal immigrants'; where the media teach us to fear and hate one another and to value violence in the name of "patriotism' and 'community'. I don't want a city where the advertising men are in charge and there are no circuses for those without bread. I don't want a city where I am afraid to go out alone at night, or to visit certain neighbourhoods even in broad daylight; where pedestrians are immediately suspect, and the homeless always harassed. I don't want a city where the elderly are irrelevant and 'youth' is a problem to be solved by more control. I don't want a city where my profession - urban planning - contributes to all the above, acting as spatial police, regulating bodies in space ..." Sandercock (2000a)

The words of Sandercock depict a typical example of the urban environment of a city that has failed to find ways to accommodate diversity. Diversity has prompted the emergence of the feelings of anxiety, fear, insecurity, and the creation and strengthening of prejudices. Why cities often become such gruesome and worrisome places, and how can this be prevented? How can diversity be accepted and appraised, and which factors have made such processes increasingly difficult? Why the transformative potential of diversity has been turned into an engine producing negative and destructive attitudes and responses?

The most critical element to make urban societies and their challenges more complex, is that cities are now characterized by super-diversity, as Vertovec calls this condition, that is a situation "*distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade*" (Vertovec 2007). The diversity faced by cities is increasingly more complex, multi-faceted and multi-layered. Together with the presence of people from different countries, ethnicities, religions and cultural affiliation, an increased awareness about the multiple sides of diversity has emerged.

What had been for long considered the only elements of diversity, ethnicity and religion, have been recognized just as some aspects of the much more complex set of elements that compose personal identities, with the aim of escaping from the trap of inserting people into fixed and simplified affiliations or identities. With the words of Langer[1], "*it is evident that if one wants to favour living together, rather than ethnic (self-)isolation, one will need to put value in all the other dimensions of private and community life which are not above all ethnic*" (Langer 1994). Any approach to diversity should therefore consider carefully the intersection of

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[1] Alexander Langer ('46 Vipiteno, Italy – '95 Florence, Italy) was an activist and political figure from South Tirol who spent his life for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and for the understanding among cultures, becoming an idiomatic figure of a mediator among cultures. In the Appendix 3 it is possible to find his writing *"A Tentative Decalogue for the Art of Inter-Ethnic Togetherness"*, that is considered of extreme value and inspiration for the issues treated in this thesis.

different aspects that shape and form identity, not just ethnicity or religion, but the entire set of variables, affiliations and also vulnerabilities, in what can be called the intersectionality of multiple identities (Valentine 2012).

Alongside the recognition of multiple identities, socio-economic differences and difference in powers have been recognized as major elements that matter and influence the way people belonging to different groups consider each other and to which extent they are prone to adopt positive approaches towards the Other. The economic crisis in the Western cities have furthermore deepened the sense of uncertainty in the present and towards the future, feeding anxieties and fears and influencing negatively the attitudes of native inhabitants towards the newcomers, intensifying differences as well as the difficulties to encourage the emergence of supportive approaches and acceptance of diversity. Valentine (2010) stresses that in situations of personal and community insecurity (often grounded in economic problems) it is easy to witness to the emergence of narratives of injustice and victimhood from the native population, that tend to perceive as an economic and cultural threat the newcomers, using them as "a scapegoat for their own personal social or economic failures" (Valentine 2012).

In cities, where people meet with diversity on a daily basis, the hope that the sharing of public spaces, mixed housing estate and the serendipitous daily encounter with strangers would ease the coexistence with the Other, has showed its shortcomings. On the contrary, these elements can strengthen the negative views or stereotypes that people create to describe and interpret reality and what is different (see for example Amin 2002; Valentine 2012). At the same time, what was thought to be a positive achievement, such as an attitude of tolerance, has also proved not to be enough neither. In fact, tolerance can hide subtle assumption of superiority from the majority group, a condition that could hardly serve as viable starting point for the emergence of a process of mutual understanding, social cohesion and community building.

Therefore, in order to understand how to tackle this unstable situation, and how to make cities places that can be called home by people of multiple identities, it must be recognized that the challenges of such complex urban environments are on different levels and of different nature, depending on which subjects are concerned: policy makers, native residents, and newcomers.

First, the challenge at the level of the policy makers is to find a way to develop policies that are not discriminatory and to find ways to make everybody in the city not discriminated and entitled of the same rights of all the other urban citizens.

Second, at the level of the native residents, often negative attitudes are connected to fears developed in a difficult and unstable reality, such as fear of losing privileges or fear that the taken for granted and established reality and public life habits could be threatened. This leads often to the creation of a myth of a lost and shining past, that is often on the contrary disconnected from the reality, with the emergence of "revanchist" narratives (Balbo 2016).

Newcomers and long-standing immigrants have to face opposite problems: how to start feeling part of a new community, how to start being connected to this reality and how to cope with the situation of being addressed by prejudices and general unescapable categorization that push them towards isolation rather than integration. Furthermore, the availability of modern technologies of digital communication that allow migrants to keep in contact with their motherlands create difficult situations of lives that can be simultaneously rooted in two places. As Marconi (2016) explains, migrants can now maintain strong ties with their communities of origin, that allow them to carry on social interactions in dual complementary relationship systems, one that is 'analogue', the city where they moved, and one that is 'digital', their transnational networks. Thanks to these contacts, "the struggle of migrants to integrate, adapt and commit to their new urban environment today has an additional 'escape route'" (Marconi 2016), in which they can find psychological and economic support that once had to be found solely or primarily in the social networks of the new city.

When cities do not manage to find ways to identify and manage each challenge faced by the different levels and sectors, the outcome would be the strengthening or development of attitudes of closure and individual safeguard, which lead to actions, changes of behaviors and the creation of visible and invisible lines of demarcation. In the most extreme cases, this lead to the emergence of urban parallel worlds inhabited by different people that seldom get in touch with each other or cross their ways during their daily lives. Physically, this turns into the creation of ghettos or ethnic enclaves where migrants are concentrated, or to gated communities, where native residents think to protect themselves from "contamination" with others.

Even in cities and societies that claim to have embraced non-discriminatory laws, policies and practices, examples from realities show that subtle inequalities and injustices are embedded not just in mindsets and attitudes, but also in the urban fabric. One of the most visible and clear sign of difference in a pluralistic society is religion. The accommodation of different religious signs and places of worship in the urban public spaces reflect often a clear demarcation and inequality in many countries where freedom of religion is taken for granted, but in practices not all the religions have yet come to be considered truly in an equal way. An emblematic case is the referendum "against minarets" approved in Switzerland in 2009. Other examples can be found analyzing the location of places of worship that do not belong to the mainstream religion of the state, that often tend to be placed in the periphery of the cities, in industrial areas or in isolated locations (Sandercock 2000).

Other powerful forces that can strongly influence, negatively and positively, the attitudes and mindsets of city inhabitants are the narratives that concern diversity and cities. These narratives can be created by policy makers, both at national and local level, and by the media. The media in fact play a crucial role, potentially disruptive, in shaping the perceptions of the people towards the place they live in and the image of the other people they share the city with. Media can be responsible for the creation of the so-called moral panic (Cohen 1972, cited in

Cancellieri and Ostanel 2015), when events and situations concerning migrants and the Others are excessively dramatized, other aspects of the reality are overshadowed and an exaggerated light is put only on negative stories or examples that become the benchmark to interpret reality. Public discourse and the media in this way favor the circulation of a stereotyped image of the migrants' presence in the urban landscape, that does not take into consideration specificities and the wide range of diverse situation that are on the contrary present in the city.

Under such difficult conditions characterized by fears, negative narratives, inequalities and injustices, prejudices, an unstable future and a fragmentation of sense of community, is it possible to still hope that cities could foster the creation of societies able to take care of the hurdles the world place on them?

1.3 Diverse, sustainable and creative cities

"I want a city where people can cartwheel across pedestrian crossings without being arrested for playfulness; where everyone can paint the sidewalks, and address passers-by without fear of being shot; where there are places of stimulus and places of meditation; where there is music in public squares, and buskers don't have to have a permit and street vendors co-exist with shopkeepers. I want a city where people take pleasure in shaping and caring for their environment and are encouraged to do so; where neighbours plant bokchoy and taro and broad beans in community gardens" (Sandercock 2000a)

The complexity brought about by diversity in cities can lead to problematic situation that seem insuperable, but conversely this diverse environment can offer unique opportunities. Diversity, if it is recognized as an asset and powerful resource, could become the engine to foster the creation of creative, inclusive and innovative environments.

As proposed by Bekemans (2013a), cities offer a favorable environment and possess some characteristics that enable the creation of "urban civitas", that in the opinion of the author are societies based on inclusion, integration and respect and appraisal of diversity, namely societies that are aware of the benefits of intercultural dialogue and that are guided by principles of solidarity, human dignity and mutual enrichment. Cities can encourage the creation of these "urban civitas" because of some of their inherently characteristics and thanks to the promotion of some process. Cities are the natural places of exchanges, of encounters and of diversity, because of the multiplicity of cultures and identities that build up their reality. If the encounter with the other and with diversity, instead of being limited to coexistence, turns into being an exchange and a dialogue that mutually influence, the potential of the intrinsic multifaceted identity of cities becomes a strength that bring about many relevant and positive changes, such as the appraisal of different cultures as wealth and source of inspirations. Furthermore, cities are able to shape collective imaginaries and perceptions, because of shared memories and history, architecture and urban spaces. Therefore, a favorable urban context plays a major role in shaping identities and supporting citizenship building, and should be guided by glocal strategies and cooperation among sectors in shaping urban spaces.

Bekemans (2013a) highlights some of the challenges cities have to face in order to foster the appearance of 'urban civitas'. These challenges are related to various fields, such as inclusion, education, housing and public space. Cities have the potential to turn these challenges into opportunities, if they are managed in the proper way. Therefore, there should be a proactive action for fostering access to services, through the offer of affordable and efficient transport services, the promotion of alternatives sustainable lifestyles such as for example the use of bikes, the access to public services online, the projects of urban renewal and regeneration of deprived areas, the appraisal of cultures and creation of opportunities for encounters, the education programs aimed at fostering respect of diversity. All these efforts can change the image of cities, creating more sustainable and livable environments, boosting new sense of identification and

new identities. Therefore, cities can become sources of identity, integration and inclusiveness, engines of creativeness, innovation and sustainability, centers of social inclusion and intercultural dialogue.

As the activist and urban writer Jane Jacobs states, "*cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody*". In her vision, the value of cities stays in their character of being dense, diverse, lively and vibrant. She believed that cities are complex and living organisms, as she points out: "*The difference is the difference between dealing with living, complex organisms, capable of shaping their own destinies, and dealing with fixed and inert settlements, capable merely of custodial care (if that) of what has been bestowed upon them*" (Jane Jacobs 1961).

She stressed the importance of the life that thrive in the streets of cities, the centrality of parks and the need of "eyes" on the streets that guarantee safety in the public areas. She considered the life unfolding on the sidewalks of a vibrant city as a "sidewalk ballet", where people intermingle together in unpredictable and harmonious ways. For this life to be thriving, she advocated for the importance of mixed-use neighbors, saying that "*intricate minglings of different uses in cities are not a form of chaos. On the contrary, they represent a complex and highly developed form of order*" (Jane Jacobs 1961).

Talking about the importance of high density, she stressed the fact that

> "*...that the sight of people attracts still other people, is something that city planners and city architectural designers seem to find incomprehensible. They operate on the premise that city people seek the sight of emptiness, obvious order and quiet. Nothing could be less true. The presences of great numbers of people gathered together in cities should not only be frankly accepted as a physical fact – they should also be enjoyed as an asset and their presence celebrated.*" (Jane Jacobs 1961)

Cities can change and provide energies for the creation of new urban ideally-imaged environments, and the engine for these changes is the civil society. Jane

Jacobs, not just with her words but also with her personal commitment in the opposition to the top-down planning of cities she lived in, stresses the guiding role of urban activism and the key role of a community-based approach. If spatial planning does not take into consideration the participation of the residents, it will fail to address the real needs of cities. The dwellers of cities are ultimately the ones who possess knowledge and understanding of the real needs, problems and challenges of the cities. For these reasons, there is a need to engage them in new and alternative ways and to get the inhabitants involved in every process of designing and understanding the cities.

With the emergence of a growing numbers of new dwellers of the cities, the migrants, it is of greater relevance not just their involvement in the city life and city planning, in order to prevent the possible resulting problems of a failed involvement (social exclusion and physical exclusion into ghetto areas), but also in order to understand how they live and experience the cities. Because of their different backgrounds, experiences and networks the way they live and experience the city is definitely highly different than the "traditional" way of a local dweller. New projects of analysis should be promoted, aiming at a participatory analysis and understanding of the paths, places and symbols relevant for the migrant communities in the city, in order to uncover a hidden geography of symbolically spaces and movements throughout the city. A relevant project in this context is the research led by urbanists and social workers in the metropolitan area of Milan, "The Uprooted City. Migrants Mapping Milan", led by the urbanist and architect Pezzoni (2013).

The diversity of ways of living and crossing cities has to be therefore extremely carefully taken into consideration, for any attempt to foster the creation of 'urban civitas' in cities that are intercultural and sustainable. Diversity offers the possibility to meet with the Other, with new worlds and perspectives that spark inspirations, creativity and innovative ideas. These same qualities, emerging from diverse environment, are the skills needed in order to address the complex challenges that cities place on their residents.

Chapter 2. The conceptual approach

2.1 Approaches to manage diversity

"I dream of a city of bread and circuses, where those who don't have the bread aren't excluded from the circus. I dream of a city in which action grows out of knowledge and understanding; where you haven't got it made until you can help others to get where you are or beyond; where social justice is more prized than a balanced budget; where I have a right to my surroundings, and so do all my fellow citizens; where we don't exist for the city but are wooed by it; where only after consultation with us could decisions be made about our neighbourhoods; where scarcity does not build a barbed-wire fence around our carefully guarded inequalities; where no one flaunts their authority and no-one is without authority; where I don't have to translate my 'expertise' into jargon to impress officials and confuse citizens." (Sandercock 2000a)

If cities do not want to be turned neither into places where people just coexist together with indifference nor in places where conflict is rife among different groups, successful ways to make every person feel at home should be found, as well as ways to make people feel part of a community, connected around shared objectives and common purpose and aware of sharing a common destiny (Sennett 1994, cited in Sandercock 2006a).

What seems a utopia is on the contrary what have prompted the response of states, institutions and scholars to propose ideas and plans to tackle the issue, and to "manage our co-existence in shared space" (Healey 1997). Institutions and states have mainly focused on shaping laws and policies that could accommodate the increasingly diverse societies and ensure to all of the members the same rights. Alongside with this, researchers and scholars from different fields (geography, sociology, urbanism, psychology, anthropology) have tried to analyze the relations among people, aiming at finding ways to foster processes of community-

building in diverse environments, and at analyzing how feelings of common belonging, creations of shared identities, approaches of mutual support and mutual help could emerge. In fact, policies by themselves cannot change any behavior or attitude. They are just the starting point, to different extents apt or not, to create enable environments where people move in unpredictable way. Therefore, how can the encounter in the city not be disruptive but on the contrary turn into a process of fruitful and mutual growth?

This discussion, together with empirical analysis and experiences of failed or successful policy projects and actual practices, have prompted changes and shifts from different approaches and the definition of new ideas as well as visionary projects. The progression of different approaches and the most relevant hypothesis regarding interpersonal contact and encounters in cities will be analyzed in the following sections.

2.2 State's approaches

"I want a city where the community values and rewards those who are different; where a community becomes more developed as it becomes more diverse; where 'community' is caring and sharing responsibility for the physical and spiritual condition of the living space" (Sandercock 2000a)

Galtung (2003a, 2003b), analyzing the interactions of different cultures and the conflicts that may upraise when dealing with diversity, speaks about four approaches, or stages, for managing cultural diversity: *intolerance*, meaning the cultural monopoly of the majority, with the only possibility of assimilationism and disappearance of the minorities, characterized by an attitude that stresses the existence of one single dominant culture; *tolerance*, "*I am so generous that I tolerate that you exist*", that signs the transition from a 'multicultural world' to 'multicultural societies', with human rights accorded to minorities; *respect and dialogue*, based on mutual respect and curiosity, namely "*how wonderful that you*

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are different from me, then we can learn from each other and maybe develop something ", where the parts understand the potential of mutual enrichment; and *mutual learning,* a last 'transcendent' approach, with a deeper identity-culture evolution, and a transition from a multicultural society to multicultural persons, with the active coexistence of more than one culture inside one person, not only inside a society. At this stage something new happens, "*the Other is not only explored; we take him /her on, as a part of Self. Her language becomes also ours, his cooking becomes also ours. We not only know his/her history, we feel the trauma, the glories, the suffering, the hopes. We live Other, Other lives in us. Above all the relation is symmetric" (Galtung 2003a).*

The policies the states have adopted to manage their diverse societies can be seen as stretching among the extremes highlighted by Galtung. The three major approaches deployed are assimilation, multiculturalism and interculturalism.

Assimilation

As Wilson points out, "assimilation evacuates the host community of any responsibility by burdening the migrant (or refugee) with the responsibility to integrate into a taken-for-granted national society" (Wilson 2013). In this model what is stressed is the protection of the national identity values, with a concern of national culture to be protected. Newcomers should comply with the national values, also by means of tests that verify this (similar instrument also of the civic integration model), and they should be assimilated into the dominant culture. Alternative minorities cultures tend in the end to disappear.

Multiculturalism

On the contrary, in the multiculturalism approach states recognize the value of minorities and of their culture, according to them equal rights of the majority. There is a stress on the acceptance of pluralism and cultural diversity. Multiculturalism offers a wide range of possible policies, and it has been declined

in different ways by states. Barrett (2013) highlights a wide range of declinations, such as integrationist, pluralistic, melting-pot, constitutional, ethnic, equity, civic, integrative, symbolic and dialogical forms of multiculturalism.

Recently, there has been an increasingly public rejection of this approach, highlighted also by speeches of political leaders. One reason of this backlash against multiculturalism, as Beck (2006) highlights, is that cultures are treated as homogeneous factors and entities. Sen speaks about "tyrannical implications of putting persons into rigid boxes of given 'communities'" (Sen 2007). Furthermore, multiculturalism has focused on a vertical relation between state and cultural groups, whereas horizontal relations between different group have been disregarded. A major critic to this approach has been also the tendency to cultural relativism, with the result of acceptance of illiberal practices. Agustin (2012) outlines that if assimilationism is characterized by domination, multiculturalism produces retreatment.

The major negative result of this approach has been the co-existence of different cultures, leading to parallel lives, conflicts, communal segregation, incomprehension, emergence of fundamentalist tendencies and confrontation among groups. Sandercock (2006a), taking into consideration the reflections and ideas proposed by different authors about the critical elements of multiculturalism, summarize the three fatal flaws of 20th century multiculturalism in this way: "*a state-based project, an ethno- and racially based approach grounded in a static understanding of culture, and a product of racialized Western liberal democracies living in an yet unresolved postcolonial condition that confounds the best of liberal intentions*" (Sandercock 2006a).

Nonetheless, there is still ongoing discussion in the academic realm about the presumed "rise and fall of multiculturalism", and as Kymlicka (2010), one of its major proponents, suggests we should not abandon tout-court the principles and achievements of multiculturalism, that in his view are much greater than what the public discourse and practice would suggest. There are different types and

declinations of multiculturalism that have been embraced by states, "to the point that it is perhaps most appropriate to speak of 'multiculturalisms'" (Zapato-Barrera 2015). Moreover, its basis as a project that recognize equal rights to all the people regardless of their origins or ethnicity should be far from being disregarded as irrelevant.

What most of the discussion over multiculturalism agreed on is that multiculturalism have not addressed a crucial aspect, missing an important scope. It is a project and an approach that well fits into the relation between the states and its minorities and different groups, but at the same time does not address and influence the level of the relations between people and groups. Especially for this reason, it has not been totally abandoned, and it could still provide a basis for the states to create an enabling environment in terms of policies and laws that ensure the equality of its citizens. Despite the critics she presents, also Sandercock states that the "conclusion is not that we should abandon the multicultural project. Rather, it needs to be rethought" (Sandercock 2006a). Thus, how to move forward and to take into consideration that "we cannot integrate 'them' as long as 'we' remain 'we'; 'we' must be loosened up to create a new common space in which 'they' can be accommodated and become part of a newly constituted 'we'" (Parekh 2005)?

Interculturalism

The debate among scholars and experts have prompted the attempt to provide an alternative viable way to solve what multiculturalism had disregarded, namely interactions among between people (Zapata-Barrero 2015). New visions, ideas and approaches have been encompassed under the name interculturalism, an approach based on intercultural dialogue, that Zapata-Barrero (2015) presents as an approach that does not center in what is different but on what is similar, and is a strategy to manage a dynamic process of interaction based in what is common. He stresses that "*interculturalism emphasizes [...] what is (or can be) shared between people or groups, rather than exibiting what is unique and 'must be*

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recognized and respected' among people who see each other in terms of 'otherness'" (Zapata-Barrero 2015).

Interculturalism is therefore an approach that builds upon the basis of multiculturalism, but it is characterized by a further evolution that combines cultural diversity, integration and the building of new collective identities. The major institutional document on this regard is the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. Living together as Equals in Dignity" (CoE 2008) by the Council of Europe, which stresses that interculturalism "*takes from assimilation the focus on the individual; from the multiculturalism the recognition of cultural diversity. And it adds a new element, critical to integration and social cohesion, of dialogue on the basis of equal dignity and shared values*".

Interculturalism encompasses an approach that aims at the personal engagement of different groups and individuals in a dialogue, based on the assumption that culture and identity are not impenetrable conceived, but rather they develop through the encounters and interaction with the Other. This approach is much more transformative, its characterized by a two-way process where both majority and minorities make mutual accommodations and are open to changes, and it has at its core the concept of intercultural dialogue. Intercultural dialogue can be seen as "an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other's world perception", as stated in the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue.

The major aim of this approach is the development of a sense of community and common belonging, as expressed by UNESCO with the concept of "learning to live together". It embraces a commitment to efforts aimed at the understanding of others history, traditions and spirituality, that *"would provide a basis for the creation of a new spirit which, guided by recognition of our growing interdependence and a common analysis of the risks and challenges of the future, would induce people to implement common projects or to manage the inevitable conflicts in an intelligent and peaceful way [...] and to escape from the dangerous*

cycle sustained by cynicism and complacency" (Delors 1996). An important factor to be considered is also interreligious and interfaith dialogue, that could be seen as a particular sphere of intercultural dialogue, guided by the same principles.

The approach of interculturalism is therefore based on the belief that the encounter with diversity and with the Other is a source of mutual growth, enriching societies and individuals. It resembles therefore the last stage of the process envisioned by Galtung (2003a), the stage of "mutual learning". This stage, with its characteristic of "transcendence" for individuals and societies, would lead to the creation of multilingual persons (at home in more than their "mother tongue"); multibodylingual persons (mastering more than one body language), multiculinary persons (enjoying more than one culinary idiom); multireligious(/ideological) persons (receiving their guidance and deep identity from more than one religion/ideology) (Galtung 2003b).

Interculturalism appears not just a political project or a set of policies, but it offers especially a powerful new vision and ideals to follow. Kymlicka (2012) talks about a new myth, stating that "*the 'interculturalism as a remedy for failed multiculturalism' trope is not really intended to offer an objective social science account of our situation, but is rather [...] intended to serve as a new narrative, or if you like, a new myth"* (Kymlicka 2012:213, cited in Marconi 2016).

Also Levey (2012) stresses that multiculturalism "*has become so mired in controversy and is so maligned in public debate that its semantic capital, as it were, has been spent"*. It could be therefore crucial to have "*a new or different label that could appeal and be publicly sold [...]. That interculturalism is nonetheless being embraced and promoted by the Council of Europe, among others, as an alternative to multiculturalism suggests that political considerations and convenience and not merely semantics is involved"* (Levey 2012).

In dealing with such a complex issue such as the one on how to accept, manage and appraise diversity in our society it is necessary to recognize the potential of new myths and new narratives in being able to guide and to frame new collective visions to strive for. Therefore, new terms that carries strong and new semantics capital can prove to be extremely helpful in creating new ideas, ideals, inspirations, narratives, visions and myths. To put it with the words of Marconi (2016) new terms can serve to express something that is "an idea but also an ideal", which is able to influence deeply public perceptions, inspire, serve as a guide and underpin public and state policies.

How to reconcile the actual reality of multicultural societies moving towards an intercultural society? In this regard, the term multicultural is used to describe the reality of modern cities and societies, whereas intercultural is the term that can be used to address the direction to move forward. Multicultural describes the present, and intercultural describe a possible and envisioned future, the direction to go and what to strive for. Kymlicka (2003) captures the possible interconnection of multiculturalism and interculturalism in shaping the idea of creating ''multicultural states and intercultural citizens'':

"*One way to explore the idea of 'multicultural' or 'intercultural' citizenship, therefore, is to try to identify its underlying images of the state and of the individual. On the one hand, we can ask about multiculturalism at the level of the state: what would it mean for the constitution, institutions and laws of the state to be multicultural? I will call this the question of the nature of the 'multicultural state'. On the other hand, we can ask about interculturalism at the level of the individual citizen: what sorts of knowledge, beliefs, virtues, habits and dispositions would an intercultural citizen possess? I will call this the question of the 'intercultural citizen'. Ideally, these two levels should work together in any conception of citizenship: there should be a 'fit' between our model of the multicultural*

state and our model of the intercultural citizen. The sort of multicultural reforms we seek at the level of the state should help nurture and reinforce the desired forms of intercultural skills and knowledge at the level of individual citizens. Conversely, the intercultural dispositions we encourage within individual citizens should help support and reinforce the institutions of a multicultural state" (Kymlicka 2003)

Especially in the urban realm, the idea of applying the paradigm of interculturalism seems to offer powerful tools and narratives, boosting the idea of the intercultural city, where the interculturalism approach could ease the disparities and difficulties of the increasingly diverse cities, enhancing the promotion of peaceful cohabitation, equal right to the city, social cohesion across differences, and collective civic growth (Marconi 2016).

The idea of the "intercultural city" will be presented in the following paragraphs, explaining which meanings are given to this concept and in which contexts it was developed.

2.3 Responses by international actors

States are not the only actors concerned when it comes to framing policies, guidelines and narratives regarding the management of diversity. The world, especially in the European context, is characterized by the presence of different institutions and actors at different levels, that together frame a multi-layered and multi-level type of governance. The major supra-national institutions that have been involved in the debate about managing diversity and creating sustainable cities are the Council of Europe and the UN, through UNESCO for what concerns diversity and UN Habitat for what concerns challenges specifically related to cities.

Council of Europe

For what concerns the promotion of intercultural dialogue in the European context, the European Commission played a less dominant role compared to the role of the Council of Europe. In fact, one of the most important contribution to the emergence and promotion of the new approach based on intercultural dialogue has come from the Council of Europe. The benchmark of this evolution is the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. Living together as Equals in Dignity* of 2008. The document is the result of a series of discussions and conferences occurred within the CoE (the most relevant are the 2005 Opatija Declaration and the 2005 Faro Declaration of the CoE's strategy for developing Intercultural Dialogue). The White Paper emphasizes intercultural dialogue as the model chosen to deal with cultural diversity, an approach based on the three core values of the CoE: human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The CoE proposes to abandon the discourse of majority-minority, and focuses on a cosmopolitan vision, embodying not just European rights, but universal rights: *"cultural diversity should go beyond the 'majority/minority' dichotomy, extending to the complementarity of the 'universal' and the 'singular', so that intercultural dialogue is experienced in a flexibile, dynamic and open way"* (CoE 2005).

In the White Paper, intercultural dialogue is presented as an instrument to develop inclusive societies, new collective identities and common shared views, and to prevent marginalization, conflicts and failed integration. According to Bunjes (2013), the White Paper is based on three notions: all human beings should be able to enjoy equal dignity, a cohesive society should be based on a set of universal values, and everyone should have the responsibility for bringing about an intercultural society.

The most interesting contribution to the promotion of intercultural dialogue in cities comes from the Council of Europe, with the institution in 2008 of the Intercultural Cities Programme, a joint program with the EU. The program aims at creating a worldwide network of cities that choose to publicly advocate for

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diversity and a pluralistic city identity, considering diversity as an asset and accepting the mutual cross-fertilization of cultures when meeting in public spaces (Khovanova-Rubicondo 2016). The cities that take part to the network are helped through experts and peer support to:

"1. Create a sense of pluralistic identity based on the pride and appreciation of its diverse population and minimize ethnic tension and conflict.
2. Set up a governance model empowering all members of the community, regardless of their origin or status, and thus benefit from their talents, skills and links with developing markets.
3. Break the walls between ethnic groups, build trust and thus ensure cohesion and solidarity
4. Make the public space and services accessible to all and end the vicious circle of poverty and exclusion which goes hand in hand with ethnic segregation.
5. Empower intercultural innovators in public institutions and civil society and through them ensure that policies encourage intercultural interaction.
6. Build a positive discourse and encourage a balanced approach to diversity in media to foster positive public perception of migrant and minority groups"

Different policy dimensions must be addressed in order to put into practice an effective intercultural urban management strategy. The Intercultural Cities Programme (ICP) highlights the following ten policy dimensions: education and training; urban public space; housing and neighborhoods; urban safety; business and employment; economy and income generation; arts and sports; public services and civic administration; media and communication; international relations.

The network provides guidelines, tools, indexes and different kind of peer support to the cities that are part of the network or aim at joining it. Up to now (2017), the network has embraced 123 cities, spanning across the entire continent and

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beyond, from big cities to medium and small-seize municipalities. The network includes cities from the EU, such as Paris, Milan, Berlin-Neukölnn, Dublin, and Lisbon, and other from outside the EU, such as Mexico City, Reykjavik, Montreal, Rabat, Odessa, Oslo, Ballarat (Australia), Limassol (Cyprus), Bursa-Osmangazi (Turkey) and Hamamatsu (Japan). Within the Intercultural Cities Programme there are different networks to which cities can be part. The International Intercultural Cities Network encompasses most of the participant cities, while some cities take part just to the part of the project related to the Intercultural Cities Index. Together with the international network, there are also some national networks in 5 countries: Spain (Reci - Red de Ciudades Interculturales Ciudades Interculturales, 17 cities, set up in 2011), Morocco (RMCI, 11 cities, set up in 2016), Portugal (RPCI, 12 cities, set up in 2012), Ukraine (ICC-UA, 6 cities, set up in 2015), Norway (City Network on Diversity and Ethnic Equality, 6 cities, set up in 2010) and Italy (Città del Dialogo, 26 cities, set up in 2010).

The cities of the program undergo expert and peer reviews of their policies, governance and practice, with the results presented in the form of narrative reports and city profiles. Furthermore, the program has created an Intercultural Cities Index, which is a tool to assess through a questionnaire the achievements of cities of cities in a set of areas related to interculturalism. It contains indicators and aims at visually showing where a city stands in relation to intercultural integration, where efforts should be focused and which other cities could provide examples of good practice in the areas where needed. The index provides an accessible tool to monitor progress and to communicate results with a wider audience.

According to Khovanova-Rubicondo and Pinelli (2012), the Intercultural cities approach proposed by the Council of Europe could provide suitable tools to manage diversity and create intercultural societies, for different reasons: it regards diversity as an asset for local development; it promotes the active involvement of public institutions, business organizations, local NGOs and community associations in policy formation (empowering cities' diverse communities and helping migrant to integrate in and contribute to the economic and social life of

the city); it promotes the vision of a city where informal encounters are easy and facilitated by the design of urban spaces and institutions (promoting open spaces of interaction, which will help breaking diversity fault lines, sustaining trust and social cohesion and facilitating the circulation of ideas and creativity); it acts across a variety of domains (mobilising citizens across other-than-ethnic issues weakening cultural divisions); it fosters high level of trust and social cohesion (helping to prevent conflicts and violence, increasing policy effectiveness and make the city attractive for people and investors alike). The benefits of this approach can embrace both the economic, political and social sphere of cities, expand to city administration and governance, urban planning and housing, education, public service, business and entrepreneurship, quality of social capital, innovation, civic engagement, social cohesion, and to the variety of choices in cultural and social life of all citizens (Khovanova-Rubicondo and Pinelli 2012).

European Commission

The approach of the European Commission (EC) to intercultural dialogue has been less direct and overt than the one of the CoE. Agustin (2012) argues that in the EC policies cultural diversity is described as enrichment, but the main concern remains on reconciling diversity with the common European identity. The EC documents and policies do not provide a clear definition of intercultural dialogue, and the approach towards they tend is the civic integration model, aiming at the definition of common collective European identity and values.

Despite this critic, some hallmarks of the concern of the EC for intercultural dialogue can be the decision to declare the year 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The EC declared that *"main aim of the Year is to raise the profile of intercultural dialogue, which is essential for creating respect for cultural diversity, improving coexistence in today's diverse societies and encouraging active European citizenship"* (European Parliament, Council of the European Union 2006).

UNESCO

At the level of UN, UNESCO provided a contribution to the institutional building of intercultural dialogue through the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001). The declaration highlights the richness engendered by cultural diversity, conceived as common heritage of humanity, and affirms the related commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

> *Art. 1 [...] As a source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature. In this sense, it is the common heritage of humanity and should be recognized and affirmed for the benefit of present and future generations.*
>
> *Art. 2: In our increasingly diverse societies, it is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and groups with plural, varied and dynamic cultural identities as well as their willingness to live together. Policies for the inclusion and participation of all citizens are guarantees of social cohesion, the vitality of civil society and peace. Thus defined, cultural pluralism gives policy expression to the reality of cultural diversity. Indissociable from a democratic framework, cultural pluralism is conducive to cultural exchange and to the flourishing of creative capacities that sustain public life.*

UN Habitat

Also UN Habitat is concerned with the issues related to urban management. Even if the guidelines and proposals proposed by UN Habitat are more focused on sustainability of cities, it is important to reiterate that all the challenges that cities face are intertwined together. "Well-planned cities afford all residents the opportunity to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives. Well-designed cities present nations with major opportunities to promote social inclusion, resilience, and prosperity" states the UN Habitat in the document "*The city we need*". UN Habitat presents some key elements for the promotion of well-planned cites in the

manifesto *The City We Need 2.0. Towards a new urban paradigm*, which was prepared by a group of international experts before the Habitat III Conference as a new vision for the cities of the future. The manifesto outlines ten principles on sustainable urban development: *The City We Need is socially inclusive and engaging; it is affordable, accessible and equitable; it is economically vibrant and inclusive; collectively managed and democratically governed; it fosters cohesive territorial development; it is regenerative and resilient; it has shared identities and sense of place; it is is well planned, walkable, and transit-friendly; it is safe, healthy and promotes well-being; it learns and innovates.*

Assessment

International institutions and organizations have proved to play a vital role in the development of new approaches for managing diversity in urbans spaces, such as the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue by the CoE shows. Furthermore, they provide a constant production of materials in the form of guidelines, guides, compendium of best practices and positive examples.

However, it should be highlighted that even if good practices shared among the actors involved can provide food for thought, these examples have also some limits. In fact, as Amin (2002) stresses, a successful project is the product of local context and local energies. In his opinion, "*a search for national and international examples of best practice, seeking to implant them in different settings or to derive a common standard from them is futile, because it removes the site-specific circumstances and social relations that made a local solution workable*" *(Amin 2002).*

Furthermore, this attempt does not take into consideration the national public cultures, the political culture and the set of local practices such as immigration and citizenship rules, national and local integration policies, attitudes to minorities, and sanctions against racism and ethnic discrimination (Amin 2002). He stresses that in order to find the best solution for each place, the key is to unlock the possibilities rooted in the dynamics of social engagement in particular places.

Bearing these considerations in mind, the contributions of international actors can have important results and a strong impact. Even if one of the critics is also that their position may appear sometimes excessively idealistic, this is part of their vital role as supranational institutions without legally binding provision for the actions of local actors (in the case of CoE and UN when international treaties are not concerned).

They provide important tools and useful elements to the actors for embracing some of their strategies, or for deciding to take part in international networks. This can be done in the form of recognition of good practices, international legitimacy to local policies and projects, sharing of idealistic visions and creative solutions, definition of areas of concerns, assessment, access to expert review, consolidation of positions and peer-support. Without disregarding their role, it is important to carefully pay attention that their recommendations and documents would not just remain catch phrases without any application matching the reality.

Some positive steps sparked from their contribution can be found in the emergence of national networks from the model of an already existing network, such as for example in the case of national networks of intercultural cities created within the Intercultural Cities Programme (which is international).

Other ways to spur effects on the field, and transfer visions into concrete projects that encompass ideals, could be through the provision of funds though calls for application for projects inherently concerned with intercultural and sustainable urban management, an instrument widely deployed already by the EU. Another modality to strengthen the commitment of actors involved in these projects could be an attempt to include them in direct opportunities to meet the institutional partners and other actors involved in the same projects.

International institutions do play a crucial role in fostering change, providing innovative and creative tools and creating common visions. Further progress in order to make concrete their ideal visions should be examined and proposed. It should be reminded that a comprehensive approach towards intercultural and sustainable cities should be able to take advantage of all the unique resources that every actor sharing the same vision could offer.

2.4 Citizen to citizen level

"I want a city where my profession contributes to all the above, where city planning is a war of liberation fought against dumb, featureless public space; against STARchitecture, speculators, and benchmarkers; against the multiple sources of oppression, domination and violence; where citizens wrest from space new possibilities, and immerse themselves in their cultures while respecting those of their neighbours, collectively forging new hybrid cultures and spaces.
I want a city which is run differently from an accounting firm; where planners 'plan' by negotiating desires and fears, mediating memories and hopes, facilitating change and transformation" (Sandercock 2000a)

Despite the methods that institutions and states have proposed and developed in order to manage diversity, a fundamental question remains: what kind of intercultural policies can manage to successfully make urban citizens engage in meaningful encounters that work in the directions of creating intercultural societies? How to translate the ideal into reality? How the practices of interculturalism projects can influence the interactions among people, in ways that they become a road towards the creation of intercultural societies and intercultural cities? What happens, on the ground, when people meet with diversity? How can the emergence of behaviors and attitudes making real the ideal of intercultural communities be favored?

It has been widely acknowledged by researches that the simple coexistence and exposure to diversity in cities does not lead automatically to openness towards diversity (see for example Valentine 2012). Various scholars have examined what happens when people meet with the Other, especially with whom is ethnically or culturally different. Which could be therefore the right settings, conditions or circumstances that can destroy prejudice and foster a real encounter with the Other? We consider "encounter" with the meaning of "intercultural encounter",

therefore an encounter in which both parts engage in a mutual acceptance and understanding of differences, being enriched by the meeting with the Other.

Gordon Allport (1954) and his contact hypothesis have been recalled often in this field. He claims that, under right conditions (the necessity for participants to have a sense of equal status and a common purpose or activity, so that the engagement is realistic and not artificial, and a sustained support of the wider community within they occur), the contact between different groups lead to knowledge of each other, and mutual feelings of anxiety and uncertainty are lessened, trust and empathy are enhanced and as a result negative attitudes are changed (Wiesemann 2011).

Valentine contributes to the discussion, stressing that there has been often a tendency to "*a worrying romanticisation of urban encounter and to implicitly reproduce a potentially naïve assumption that contact with 'others' necessarily translates into respect for difference*" (Valentine 2012). She has investigated into the nature of prejudices, and found evidence that a celebration of serendipitous encounters carries a misleading and wrongful hope, because there is wide empirical evidence that contact with difference leaves attitudes and values unmoved, and even hardened (Valentine 2012). Meeting daily in public spaces with diversity is not enough to address prejudices and promoting change of attitudes.

In order to unlock its transformative potential, the contact with the Other must meaningful (Valentine 2012). With "meaningful contact" she means a contact that actually changes values and translates beyond the specifics of the individual moment into positive respect for others and not merely tolerance (Valentine 2012). Prejudices are much more difficult to be destroyed, and taken for granted civilities in public and shared spaces should not be confused with respect for difference. Tolerance and "political correctness" influence public behaviors, but often conceal the privatized nature of many prejudices, that appear in "privatized" spaces and are not overtly expressed in public (Valentine 2012). At the same time,

tolerance conceals set of power relations, and leave untouched question of who has the power to tolerate (Weymiss 2006, cited in Valentine 2012).

Valentine concludes therefore that there is a clear gap between the way a person behaves in public encounters, that could be politely, while at the same time implicitly holding prejudices, that remain untouched by the encounter. There is therefore a *"clear gap between individual values and practices in public spaces. If we are to produce meaningful contact between majority and minority groups which has the power to produce social change this gap needs to be addressed. We need to find ways in which everyday practices of civility might transform prejudiced values and might facilitate liberal values to be put into practice"* (Valentine 2012). Valentine warns also that "*individual everyday public encounters don't change people's general prejudices because they do not destabilize white majority community based narratives of economic and/or cultural victimhood"* (Valentine 2012), that are a response to a risk society where old certainties are continually being eroded by unprecedented socio-economic change (Beck 1997, cited in Valentine 2012). In her opinion, first and foremost "*we need an urban politics that addresses inequalities (real and perceived) as well as diversity: that recognizes the need to fuse what are often seen as separate debates about prejudice and respect, with questions of social-economic inequalities and power"* (Valentine 2012).

A way to stimulate this "meaningful contact", as Valentine urges, could be found in the "micropublics of everyday social contact and encounters", as Amin proposes. Amin (2002) recognizes that proximity (whether in public spaces or mixed housing estate) is not enough to bring about social transformation. He investigates possible solutions to the "problem of interethnic intolerance and conflict in urban contexts where mixture has failed to produce social cohesion and cultural interchange" (Amin 2002). The hope placed upon the potential of public spaces in his opinion is also overstated, because city public spaces are not per se "natural servants of multicultural engagement" (Amin 2002).

Nonetheless, he is truly convinced that urban environments offer the opportunity of "negotiation of difference within local micro-publics of everyday interaction" (Amin 2002). These micropublics foster cultural understanding and social transformation because they create spaces of interdependence and cultural destabilization. They are sites of purposeful organized group activity that provide the opportunity of breaking out of fixed patterns and learn new ways of being, relating and interacting (Amin 2002). These micropublics include mixed sites of everyday contact and transitory sites, such as workplace, schools, colleges, youth centers, youth leisure spaces, sports clubs, communal gardens, urban murals, legislative theatre, and initiatives inculcating civic duty. These micropublics act as spaces of cultural displacement, "placing people from different backgrounds in new settings where engagement with strangers in a common activity disrupts easy labelling of the stranger" (Amin 2002). They key is creating moments of cultural displacement, inculcating a habit of practice, and not just co-presence, that lead to cultural displacement and cultural transgression, through engagement and prosaic negotiation (Amin 2002).

In Amin's opinion micropublics-contacts that challenge prejudices could happen, but on the basis of a recognition of full citizenship to everybody. In order to let the potential of micropublics happen, in his opinion wider changes should happen also at the level of definition of national identity and belongingness to the nation:

"Race and ethnicity need to be taken out of the definition of national identity and national belonging and replaced by ideals of citizenship, democracy, and political community (in the sense suggested by Parekh, 2000) as the basis upon which nationhood is constructed. It requires imagination of the nation as something other than a racial territorial space, perhaps via a ``planetary humanism'' (Gilroy, 2000) that returns the nation as a space of travelling cultures and peoples with varying geographies of attachment. Then, the problems faced by the ethnic minorities and the anxieties of marginalised white working-class communities can be tackled as problems of citizenship and social justice in a country for all, with

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differences of ethnicity not overblown or played up for exclusionary political gain." (Amin 2002).

This perspective would let citizens become empowered subjects, equals in the right to claim the nation, and members of an open and plural political community, where agonism is made possible (Amin 2002).

With this backdrop in mind, it is also important not to overshadow the researches of other scholars, that on the contrary still support the potential of daily casual and superficial encounters in the city's public spaces. In the opinion of Fincher (2003) in fact planning for diversity and difference in cities require three different types of planning: planning for diversity (for the diverse range of people who cross and use the city), planning to reduce difference (equality of access across places) and planning for encounter (to encourage interaction and contact). Planning for encounter is based on the belief that spaces can be planned to make encounter with strangers in the cities, that is the benefit of urban life, more likely, pleasant and unaccompanied by anxiety.

The idea of Fincher is grounded on the studies of Lisa Peattie, who developed the concept of conviviality (Peattie 1999). Unlike community-building activities, which aim at establishing long-term relationships and connections to a particular space, conviviality is something more fleeting and it concerns the small connections made with other that can make us feel happier or part of a population as a citizen (Fincher 2003). In the opinion of Peattie, "*conviviality points to the social energy in all sorts of small or dissenting manifestations*" (Peattie 1999, cited in Fincher 2003). Therefore, according to Fincher planners play a crucial role in promoting social transformation and social capital formation through encounters, and they are responsible for "*recognizing, identifying and supporting accessible spaces that welcome people and encourage convivial interaction*" (Fincher 2003). Keeping the three crucial tasks of planning in mind, Fincher believes that:

"the cities of difference, diversity and encounter that we live in, work in and plan for, will become with our efforts cities of more blurred boundaries. This will distinguish them from those cities of ever-more pronounced distinctions between income and other groups whose social places are etched in ever-more-pronounced spatial segregation. Diverse groups' needs will be recognised. Entrenched differences -locational disadvantages and advantages -will be minimised. Convivial interactions - the coming together of strangers - will be encouraged. Of course, to allow all this, peoples actual activities and lives will be given greater prominence in planning thought and practice [...] and at least as much emphasis as we currently pay to land uses and the monitoring of building developments" (Fincher 2003).

Fincher and Iveson (2008, cited in Wiesemann 2011) stress that the opportunities of convivial encounters offered by public spaces in form of fleeting encounters or more purposeful interactions allow people to relate to each other on the basis of other temporary identifications alongside their fixed identities. Referring to the researches by Allport, Brown and Hewston, Wiesamnn (2011) explains that in such contexts it is possible to create overlapping identities, given that participants can share a common status.

Wiesemann (2011) also emphasizes the role that fleeting encounters in everyday public life play in providing opportunities for moments of transgression and convivial forms of contact. Wiesemann recognizes that encounters in public spaces can provide ground for hardening prejudices, because such encounters are experienced and interpreted through the lens of existing stereotypes, overarching narratives and negative public discourses. However, he expresses the belief that such encounters can also "destabilize fixed notions about the 'Other' and transmit a sense of 'togetherness in difference'". He defines these events as "transgressive moments" that can arise in everyday public life, where the Other is experienced differently to the stereotypical expectation, and the fixed notion of the Other is destabilize. This can happen when people come together in an everyday context

on the basis of shared activities and interests, constructing temporary identifications that can enable sociability and a feeling of "togetherness in difference", carrying the transformative potential for changing attitudes toward the Other (Wiesemann 2011).

Sennett (2006) contributes to the debate emphasizing the idea of the "open city", where also through choices of planning diversity can become a factor of enrichment and mutual exchange. In his opinion there is interaction between physical creation and social behavior. Cities should therefore abandon the idea to be based on balance, coherence and equilibrium, and embrace the idea of being open to dissonance and never-ending process of adaptation and change. While in the modern cities the boundaries/walls dominate the space, segregating parts by functional isolation, cities should build on the border/membrane, where things and people get in contact. While a closed city belongs to the "masters", the open city is a bottom-up place which belongs to the people. According to him "we have to embrace less re-assuring, more febrile ideas of living together, those stimulations of differences, both visual and social, which produce openness" (Sennett 2006).

Assessment

Within a strategy towards intercultural and sustainable cities it is exactly the level of citizens' interaction that poses the biggest challenge. As already mentioned, the fact that states could embrace and apply intercultural strategies leave unsolved the question on how to foster changes in attitudes and behaviors towards the Other, when it comes to encounters between individuals in their lives and daily experiences. As Kymlicka (2003) reminds, this strategy works towards two complementary objectives: the creation of multicultural states with intercultural individuals. The states therefore are crucial in providing policies and laws (regarding non-discrimination, equal access, immigration policies, citizenship) as well as visions to be shared through public discourse that create enabling environments with enabling factors from which the change in the society can effectively flourish. This is a necessary step, that might be the starting point or already a result of previous processes of influence emerged inside civil society.

The two levels, states and individuals, should work hand in hand and be addressed together. Addressing just one would leave a project for intercultural and sustainable cities just as an empty container, devoid of the energies that could translate it into reality, which are the energies of the individuals. Societies can change when individuals change, and it would be extremely daring to hope that a state embracing intercultural and sustainable policies and approaches would automatically lead to a change in people's perceptions, attitudes and behaviors.

The meeting with the Other has always proved to be a difficult and critical moment, as the literature presented has showed. The simple opportunity of meeting with diversity on a daily basis that urban environments offer has proved not to be enough and, on the contrary, it could lead to hardening prejudices. The meeting in public spaces, especially if they are planned with an intercultural approach, should be considered as crucial, nonetheless being aware that this is just one of the elements of the much wider strategy that should be deployed to foster intercultural meetings among people.

Furthermore, another factor that should be carefully considered is the increased complexity that surrounds individuals and societies, generated by economic instability, and the unstable and "liquid" futures and presents (Bauman 2000), characterized by chaos, instability and extreme flexibility. These factors create an environment and conditions for intercultural approaches more difficult and complex, with an increase in fears, anxieties and feeling of uncertainty. In this context, what is different resonates much stronger as a further element of threats to current unstable conditions.

As Sandercock highlights (2000b), managing diversity in cities is always a matter of managing fears, a problem that had been addressed for long with the attempts to create rational cities through control, containment and manipulation. However, she proposes the idea of recognizing that fear is an unavoidable element of individuals identities, and therefore of cities. It should be recognized that that "*individual identity is often suffused with anxiety, and that these anxieties are projected onto the figure of the stranger, whose very presence seems to challenge*

and undermine the known social order on which our identity is based" (Sandercock 2000b). Referring to Kristeva (1991), this projection often conceals conflicts between the self, and a mixture of fears and desires, and, consequently, the "*stranger is also within ourselves*" (Sandercock 2000b). The presence of stranger threatens to bring chaos into the social order, provokes fears of annihilation, creates the risk of the dissolving of boundaries and the dissolution of identity (Sandercock 2000b). Nonetheless, Sandercock highlights that the position towards the stranger is always of ambivalence, because it "*expresses fear and desire fused into one, and is thus doubly unsettling"* (Sandercock 2000b).

Therefore, in order to manage this complexity and to address these fears, it should be taken into account not just the importance of urban spaces carefully planned, but especially the need of creating occasions of real encounter. These constructive encounters could be prompted in "micropublics of encounters", as Amin (2002) proposes.

This complex strategy cannot be based just on the role of states, but it should especially take into consideration actors that are involved directly with individuals, with their fears and their desires. The role of these actors will be analyzed in the following chapter. In a multilevel governance perspective, states would therefore prompt the preparation and deployment of actors in different sectors and fields that address the issues of fostering constructive encounters through purposeful shared activities within "micropublics" of social interactions. Bearing in mind a multi-layered perspective to address the issue, a strategy that addresses fears of native citizens, as well as of newcomers, could heal the fractions and apparently unsurmountable divisions created by these fears. Such strategy would support people towards considering encounters and coexistence with diversity not as an element of threat but as an opportunity of mutual growth.

Chapter 3. A proposal for an intercultural and sustainable city project

3.1 An integrated, interconnected, multidirectional and intertwined approach

The previous chapters have highlighted which forces put cities at stake, which challenges are placed upon them, and which responses states and institutions have tried to give to the crucial matter of living with diversity. The broad discussion emerged among scholars has showed the presence of different and sometimes conflicting ideas and proposals on how to manage diversity and foster real contacts and meaningful encounters between people. The discussion has focused also on the presence of different levels of governance and decision-making, that with different tools and instruments propose different solutions towards the creation of intercultural and sustainable cities.

After having taken into consideration this wide range of proposals and ideas, it seems that any project that addresses the challenges of intercultural and sustainable cities should take into consideration all the sectors, levels, spheres and groups involved. A project that takes into consideration just the approach of the state towards diversity seems to lack fundamental elements, such as multiculturalism proved. A project that takes into consideration just the interactions between people leaves the question of legal rights and access to services, for which the state is responsible, unanswered. A project which takes into consideration just the planning of urban spaces seems to forget that spaces by themselves cannot make cities intercultural, meaning that they are based on meaningful encounters. Among all the contradictory and opposite ideas, each of them proposes important elements for effective transformation.

How to reconcile all the benefits, forces and potential that each of the different approaches, levels, sectors and actors offer to contribute to the challenge of creating intercultural and sustainable cities?

Characteristics

What seems necessary for an intercultural and sustainable city project is an *integrated*, *interconnected*, *multidirectional* and *intertwined* approach.

- The approach should be *integrated* means that it takes into account all the elements of disparities and inequality, and not only the most apparent elements of diversity such as ethnicity and culture. An integrated approach recognizes that most of the division and feelings of insurmountable differences are based on socio-economic disparities based on structure of powers that make people feel different and discriminated. States and administrations play the biggest role as factors of change in this context, as Kymlicka (2010) reminds. The state should be responsible to issue policies and laws for a broad and encompassing citizenship. It should furthermore facilitate accessibility to services for everybody. The vulnerabilities of some groups should be fully-recognized and addressed, recognizing the intersectionality of discriminations and disparities that can occur for example in the case of women, elders, disabled and other vulnerable groups. Overall, a right to the city should be recognized fully to everybody, and city should become inclusive.

  This is the level where central governments and other level of governance (municipalities, local governments) can work, issuing policies, regulating, and ultimately creating an enabling environment for the other aspects of this comprehensive approached to be applied.

- The approach should be *interconnected* means that it takes into consideration all the actors concerned in the urban realm. It is a

comprehensive approach built on the joined forces of each of the actors involved. It is based on the belief that to boost transformation dialogue should happen between people, to boost intercultural societies, but also between the different sectors that manage diversity and promote intercultural dialogue. Only by joining the forces it would be possible to enable the emergence of alternative ideas, creative solutions and imaginative different approaches. Each sector and actor in fact brings its unique perspective, expertise, set of skills and resources, that are necessary in order to address a multi-faceted and complex problem. Social workers, community psychologists, urban planners, architects, civil society organizations personnel, educators and all the other actors involved in change should be encompassed in a comprehensive idea of managing cities and finding together viable solutions to problems. All the sectors could appraise their own specificities and prompt a process of mutual learning thanks to a process of dialogue and confrontation. This process could bring benefits similar to the ones brought by intercultural dialogue to citizens and societies, in terms of cross-fertilization of ideas and personal growth based on the discovery of new elements from who is different. In this way different spheres crucial to the transformation of cities, such as for example education, planning of urban spaces, cultural offer, services and community-building, would favor from the contribution of different assets and ideas.

- The approach should be *multidirectional* means that it is simultaneously a conjunction of top-down, bottom-up and transversal forces and contributions. Having already stressed the necessary role that states and central government play, it should not be overshadowed the role of civil society. Civil society should be granted voice and power of decision, and efforts to make all the groups of civil society dialogue should be promoted. This side of the approach would be built over the idea that civil society is the one that best possesses knowledge of the necessity and problems, as well as potential and resources of the areas they live in.

Nothing built or provided from the top could manage to become as meaningful as a project that have taken into consideration the necessity of the local population, that have listened to their ideas and brought their forces together for the realization of the project. In this way projects of various forms that are relevant and significative for the city (i.e. cultural festivals, regenerations of urban spaces, courses and any other type of shared initiative) could foster the coming together of people around a shared objective and common purpose. These projects could enable the creation of material or immaterial projects that strengthen the sense of belongingness to a place or to a community. Therefore, the ability to listen and be open to contributions from all the directions should be one of the aims of any approach. States and institutions are in this regard also the actors responsible for providing new narratives, ideals to strive for and common imagined futures that offer paths to follow to the actions of civil society.

- Finally, the approach should be *intertwined* in the sense that it recognizes that the challenges of cities should be faced joining forces together, with the belief that problems can become opportunities. Each problem and challenge of cities could be turn into occasion of change and opportunity of transformation, if they are considered as a part of a bigger general challenge that can build over its shortcomings to make them become opportunities. A wider consideration of problems, tools and resources would be needed, because problems could be solved if they become instruments towards the aimed objectives, in a kind of virtuous circle.

Therefore, the challenges of integration and inclusion of newcomers, to make them feel part of a community and promote new sense of belongingness, together with the challenge of social cohesion, between natives and newcomers in order to destroy walls and create stronger communities, should be considered both as aims but also as instruments to

address other urban challenges: environmental sustainability and urban regeneration.

Priority Project Areas

Projects that concern environmental sustainability and urban regeneration could become the occasion to involve citizens of all different origins, creating opportunities of encounters and of working together towards a shared aim. In this way all the challenges would be addressed, using each challenge to address the other and bring about transformation in each sphere.

- For what concerns environmental sustainability, initiatives such as urban communal gardens, construction of bike paths, days of clean-ups could offer spaces for interactions between people, and at the same time raise awareness about environmental protection, as well as promoting the promotion of activities that foster environmental sustainability.

- With regards to urban regeneration, the problems of abandoned spaces, empty areas and run-down parts of the cities could become likewise opportunities to bring people together around a common purpose. The benefits would be both for community cohesion as well as in the amelioration of urban spaces, with the creation for example of spaces for the community in the forms of community centers, urban parks or even the creation of affordable housing or co-housing projects. Another spill-over effect would be the change of the image of an area or the neighborhood, that could become an element for "branding" a new image of the place to make it become even a tourist attraction, or it strengthen the pride that comes from the sense of belonginess.

Strenghts

Two important elements of this comprehensive approach should be kept in mind.

- First, that it is an approach which is best suited for the neighborhood scale, such as Jane Jacobs (1961) through her observations has showed. Neighborhoods have proved to often be the core of the sense of belongingness of the people. Each neighborhood in a city has different and specific histories, resources and problematics. Therefore, it would be much easier and viable to foster the creation of sense of belongingness to a smaller area rather than to the much bigger, more complex entity of the entire city. Some neighborhoods furthermore become kind of independent city within the city, because of different factors (i.e. seize, number of inhabitants, concentration of a wide range of services and amenities that do not force people to move out of the neighborhood to look for these elements in other parts of the city). Therefore, efforts to make people feel part and responsible of a much more close, tangible and concrete space of interaction such as the neighborhood could be the key to reach effective results. This does not mean that the promotion of identity-building should disregard wider affiliation to the city, state or the universal community, but just that the neighborhood could be the most suitable space for the creation of ideals and feelings that encourage local action but that in their scope expand much further than the neighborhood scale.

- Second, it is an approach based on dialogue. In the same way as dialogue is conceived as the best way to foster the creation of intercultural societies, dialogue is also the basis for the realization of the aims that this approach strive for. Dialogue can build different societies, individual identities and cities.
Dialogue could become the key of the "mongrel cities" we live in, as Sandercock (2006a) calls them. Mongrel cities are places characterized by difference, otherness, multiplicity, heterogeneity, diversity and plurality

(Sandercock 2006a), cities that have started to change their identities, forms and images because of the diverse forces and people that cross them. These cities in the opinion of Sandercock offer the possibility to "living alongside with others who are different, learning from them, creating new worlds with them, instead of fearing them" (Sandercock 2006a). These same possibilities are the ones envisioned by the potential of dialogue in cities. Citing the author Rushdie, Sandercock envisions the idea that through dialogue and encounter new "mongrel identities" or "mongrel selves" could be created in cities, because of the "change-by-fusion, change by-conjoining" (Rushdie 1992) and the celebration of "hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combination of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs" (Rushdie 1992).

Cosmopolitan urbanism as the reference framework

In line with the elements that the aforementioned *integrated*, *interconnected*, *multidirectional* and *intertwined* approach has highlighted, Sandercock proposes the idea of "cosmopolitan urbanism" as a normative project necessary to respond to the empirical reality of multicultural cities. It has two dimensions, one of being a social imaginary of living together in difference, and the other of being a political philosophy (Sandercock 2006a). It is a utopian and political project. Sandercock explains that this "social project of cosmopolitan urbanism":

"has a research and policy focus at the level of the neighborhood, looking for and encouraging intercultural encounters and exchanges, inventing local institutions and designing public spaces that create the spaces for such interaction in the daily negotiations of difference that characterize urban life [...]. Organizational and discursive strategies are also necessary in order to build voice, to foster a sense of solidarity across differences, to develop confidence among disempowered groups, and to mediate when dispute arise" (Sandercock 2006a)

There are five interrelated components of the intercultural perspective at the basis of the cosmopolitan urbanism that Sandercock proposes:

1. The paradoxical dialectics of identity/difference: "No culture is perfect or can perfected, but all cultures have something to learn from and to contribute to others. Intercultural dialogue is thus a necessary component of cultural growth and development. […] Cultures are always evolving, dynamic and ultimately hybrid, containing multiple differences within themselves that destabilize rigid understandings of identity" (Sandercock 2006a). "Cultures grow through the everyday practices of social interaction" (Sandercock 2004).

2. An agonistic democratic politics: "An agonistic politics entails broad social participation in the never completed process of making meanings and creating values. An agonistic politics implies the […] end of a single dominant culture in any polity, perpetual contestation over what is or might become common ground, and negotiation towards a sense of shared destiny." (Sandercock 2006a).

3. The right to difference. "Interculturalism recognizes […] the legitimacy and specific needs of minority and subaltern cultures. However, the right to difference at the heart of interculturalism must be perpetually contested against other rights (human rights, for example) and redefined according to new formulations and considerations. The right to difference must always be tempered by the imperative of peaceful coexistence and the recognition of shared societal and global challenges such as ecological sustainability and social justice." (Sandercock 2006a)

4. The right to the city. "The right to the city is the right of all residents to presence throughout the city, the right to inhabit and appropriate public space, and the right to participate as an equal in public affairs, to be engaged in debating and designing the future of the city and creating new intercultural spaces and built forms, and new ways of being together in the city." (Sandercock 2006a)

5. A shared commitment to political community. "A sense of belonging in an intercultural society cannot be based on race, religion, ethnicity or any other such marker of identity/difference. [...] [it] must me based on a shared commitment to political community, and specifically to a political community founded on the principles of an agonistic democratic politics. [...] [it] requires an empowered citizenry, which in turns means addressing prevailing inequalities of political and economic power as well as developing new stories about and symbols of national and local identity and belonging." (Sandercock 2006a).

In the opinion of Sandercock political life must be dialogically and agonistically constituted, and must be based on the recognition that the conception of difference is itself historically contingent and inherently relational (Sandercock 2006a). There are some preconditions for this political life such as "*freedom of speech, participatory public spaces, empowered citizens, agreed procedures and basic ethical norms, and the active policing of discriminatory practices*" (Sandercock 2006a).

Assessment

Our "mongrel cities" could become places that nurture "mongrel identities" if they manage to foster the emergence of *"such essential political virtues as mutual respect and concern, tolerance, self-restraint, willingness to enter into unfamiliar worlds of thought, love of diversity, a mind open to new ideas and a heart open to others' needs, and the ability to live with unresolved differences"* (Parekh 2000: 340), which are at the basis of the paradigm of intercultural dialogue. Parekh warns that an intercultural political community *"cannot expect its members to develop a sense of belonging to it, unless it equally values and cherishes them in all their diversity, and reflects this in its structure, policies, conduct of public affairs, self-understanding and self-definition"* (Parekh 2000: 342).

Cities can offer opportunities for the emergence of cosmopolitan urbanism and for the application of an *integrated*, *interconnected*, *multidirectional* and *intertwined* approach, because of the diversity, spaces, energies, forces as well as challenges that cross them. They offer the best starting points of a process of change. However, who can be responsible for unlocking this potential? In cities there are special actors, forces and spaces of change that together can work for the envisioned horizons of more inclusive, intercultural and sustainable cities. These elements will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

3.2 Actors and forces of change

In order to develop such an ambitious and multifaceted project as the one of an intercultural and sustainable city, applying an *integrated*, *interconnected*, *multidirectional* and *intertwined* approach, cities have to recognize and appraise which are the actors involved in the projects and the resources that could be mobilize in order to reach the envisioned aims. Different actors from different sectors are involved, such us planners, social workers, political and community leaders, religious leaders, education professionals, civil society organizations, journalists, researchers. All these actors should be addressed by strategies that aim at empowering them with cultural literacy and intercultural competences.

Developing intercultural competences

Cultural literacy is defined by Wood and Landry as "*the ability to read, understand, and find the significance of diverse cultures and, as a consequence, to be able to evaluate, compare, and decode the varied cultures that are interwoven in a place*" (Wood and Landry 2012).

The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue of the CoE highlights that intercultural competences are necessary in order to best manage and appraise cultural diversity, and avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts. These competences are not

acquired automatically, instead they have to be learned, practiced and maintained throughout life. Deardorff (2006) defines intercultural competence as a set of values, attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and behaviors needed for understanding and respecting people, interacting and communicating effectively and appropriately, establishing positive and constructive relationships.

On the basis of this definition, Barrett (2013) highlights in depth the components of intercultural competences, such as for example valuing diversity and pluralism of practices, being open and curious, being willing to question what is usually taken for granted, seeking opportunities to engage and cooperate, being communicative aware, being willing to learn about different histories and traditions, developing cognitive skills (empathy, multiperspectivity, listening, flexibility, interpretation, critical evaluation, discovering of information) and other behavioral skills (adaptation, linguistic and discourse, plurilingual, mediation). Intercultural competences are characterized by an active participation in society, and for this reason, as Byram (2008) says, they engender active intercultural citizenship. For Stenou (2015), former director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue at UNESCO, for the fertility of intercultural dialogue three elements are necessary: self-reflexivity (ability to critically asses and understand, and to question yourself), acceptance of other visions of the world (but avoiding cultural relativism), readiness to spur new horizons (embrace and create new ones in conviviality).

Actors as "agents of change"

Among all the crucial actors from different sectors, and the forces and resources that they offer to the project, it is important to highlight the fundamental role played by some actors in their communities as "agents of change". "Agents of change" are those people that for different reasons, such as education, past experiences or involvement in activities or projects, have developed a strong feeling of attachment to a place. Together with this, they are often moved by a "cosmopolitan feeling of belonginess", again for different reasons, that could be

rooted in experiences abroad, upbringing in multicultural environment or education. This brings them to develop an attitude of curiosity and appraisal of what is different, making them "citizens of the world", and letting them enrich their identity, because they are aware of the commonality shared by humanity rather than making them feel attached only to a country identity or a particular culture.

The origin of the entangled range of factors that lead to the development of such open-minded, curious and cosmopolitan identities are difficult to trace. Further research is needed in order to understand which kind of life-experience have made possible the emergence of such attitudes, in order to try to foster similar experiences of formation and education for other people. Enabling environments that offer opportunities of intercultural growth, intercultural exchange and development of civic and ethical values should be promoted with the aim of boosting the emergence of the features that characterize these type of individuals, that could be also identified as "intercultural individuals", "citizens of the world" or "cosmopolitan individual".

Anyway, these simple characteristics do not make them automatically "agents of change". These features of their identity could simply influence their behaviors towards the Other in cities, and maybe influence mindsets of others through example and dialogue. However, they become "agents of change" when their personal belief, mindsets and attitudes lead them to decide to put themselves on the first line and personally get engaged and commit themselves for a process of transformation and change in their communities. These people are moved by the belief that something can be changed, and someone has to start this change, taking advantage of human and material forces offered by the territory. They are moved usually by a strong set of values which, as previously mentioned, comes from the very complex set of life-experiences, and make them able to believe in alternative and ideal futures.

They can do this in very different ways, and the space of opportunities for them to

act is unlimited. It can range from very different type of projects in the field of the art, education, environmental sustainability, both on a volunteering basis as well as activities for profit that nonetheless follow ethical principles and are aware of the social changes they can bring alongside their economic gain.

Agents of change are both single individuals, or more people that are strongly bound by a shared idea and commitment, or often by strong relations of friendships, that decide to act as a team and lead their projects together. In this way, they can catalyze their forces and energies because of the mutual support that increase their transformative power and their ability to overcome challenges and obstacles.

"Agents of change", to sum up, are people that are moved by the willingness to commit themselves to the place and community they are part of and to get engaged in first person for a change. They are people who have a utopian vision which is transformed into concrete ideas and tangible projects, and who decide to share this vision with the others, the "neighbors" of their lives, motivating them for a change and making them supporters of the project or providing them opportunities of change. They are precious resources for the place they live in because they are vital sources of inspiration, energies, specific or special skills, or rare social skills, that they decide to share, put at the service of their community and not to keep solely for themselves for their individual projects. Their projects become collective, and their visions too.

Their role and contribution could resemble the ones of leaders, but it should be stressed that even some of them may become leaders, starting formal associations or movements or deciding to engage in political careers, this is not the automatic path to be followed by all of them. The collaboration among them could also become a strong asset, providing opportunity of enriching their roles and their ideas.

Although the actions of "agents of change" could be powerful by itself, because

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they are supported by strong values, ideals and beliefs, their actions should be supported not just by civil society but also by the administration, in order to prevent the emergence of feelings of frustration and disenchantment when they meet unavoidable obstacles and failures. Their role in the neighborhoods or cities as agents of change for integration and urban regeneration, should be recognized by the administration and economic and strategic support should be given to them. This support could be in form of public funding, support for accessing to European funding, creation of enabling policies but also for example with the provision of spaces. They should be considered as special forces and resources to lead changes and transformations, their role should be acknowledged, and administrations should identify and consult them when framing policies and projects for the neighborhood.

These special "agents of change", together with all the actors involved in the project for an intercultural and sustainable city, should be aware of all the forces and instruments at their disposal. In this regard, it is of extreme importance to highlight that the local dimension is what should be constantly kept in mind. Any project that wants to take advantage of forces or resources and use them as instruments for change, such as for example joint activities, narratives, shared projects, should first and foremost be aware of the unique features and resources that the local space offers.

With a local development perspective, it must be recognized that the local territory could offer the same assets to resolve its problems. In order to give some examples, that will be further analyzed in the second part of this thesis, the presence of universities, students, planning schools, particular physical features of the city, a strong identity, history or sense of belongingness could become the resources and forces to be applied in the process of change. Local features and unique special factors should be recognized and appraised, with the aim of using them both as concrete tools of work for the change, as well as instruments to mobilize people's motivations and imaginings.

Crucial actors

Aware of the importance of embracing a local perspective, the discussion will now highlight some crucial actors and stakeholders that play important roles, keeping in mind that for a project to bring about positive and effective results, an approach that aim at joining the forces of all the sectors is fundamental.

1) Education and teachers

With education is meant not just the formal education, but also the non-formal and the informal. Education should be the central tool to enhance intercultural competences and to create responsible citizens. In this sense, education aims at a comprehensive personal development, allowing individuals to develop awareness of social problems, prompting active participation in social and political life, promoting adherence to universal values, and fostering development of personal attitudes of tolerance, respect and mutual understanding. In the context of education, very relevant is the contribution of UNESCO and the four pillars expressed in the Delors Report for the life-long learning: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together (Delors 1996).

Of crucial importance is the focus on teachers, as actors of change, and on their intercultural capacity-building. Another fundamental element is the enrichment of curriculum with the opportunities of studying abroad, cultural exchanges, multi-cultural projects (paradigmatic example of the positive outcome of students exchanges in fostering collective sense of belonging is the Erasmus Programme launched by the European Commission in 1987). In the context of education and capacity-building it is then crucial to value the role of NGOs committed to intercultural projects, and also the role of youth movements that entails the values of solidarity, respect, mutual help, team-working and open-mindedness (such as the Scouts movement).

2) Media, visual communication and journalists

Media play a central role in the construction of collective imaginaries and of stereotyped images. For this reason, it is crucial to foster programs of intercultural awareness, given the high relevance and strong power of the images, stories, words, provided by the media, that influence our perception of the Other and not just what we think, but also how we act. According to UNESCO, only free, pluralistic and professional medias can promote a real intercultural understanding. Being aware of the constant tension between freedom of expression and respect of cultural differences, media should ensure that every culture has space to freely express itself.

On one side, the media can be a negative tool for delivering and reinforcing of stereotypes and prejudices. Furthermore, they can provide a space for hate speech. On the other side, they have the potential to provide better and deeper information, challenging negative preconceptions and fostering mutual understanding. They should provide "new images" that replace false misconceptions and generalization, making visible all relevant aspects that risk to remain hidden or forgotten. For this purpose, a special relevance should be given to visual communication, one of the most powerful and immediate tool to influence people's visions of the world. As Hall (1997) underlines, like language, visual discourse is also a key site for the negotiation, consolidation and naturalization of major cultural narratives and collective identities.

3) "Mediators, bridge builders, wall vaulters and frontier crossers"

Vital for the promotion of intercultural dialogue and of a society guided by respect, tolerance and mutual understanding is the role of all the individuals that decide to engage themselves in an active process of intercultural dialogue. In this way, embracing the values of intercultural dialogue, they become mediators among cultures, and especially they are potential agents of change. In fact, they have the potential to influence the societies and communities in which they live spreading and sharing with other best attitudes (similar to the best practices at institutional level) of understanding and living together. It should be envisaged

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that their proactive potential of change should act both across different cultural groups and also across generations. Their potential is enhanced when they happen to play also key-roles highly visible for the public and the civil society, such as teachers, professionals of NGOs, political leaders and religious leaders,. On the negative side, we can observe at the same time the high relevance of people preaching for confrontation, opposition to the diversity and encouragement to hate. This is why the role of what the individuals, that can be called "Mediators, Bridge Builders, Wall Vaulters and Frontier Crossers" (Langer 1994), is of crucial importance, because they are characterized by some intercultural competences (such as curiosity, courage, willingness to overcome stereotypes and ability to change their mindsets) that can influence others around them and bring positive outcomes in the place where they live and interact.

According to Keane (2013), individuals aware of the responsibility to active participate in the construction of new societies based on solidarity, mutual respect and human rights, embracing a cosmopolitan vision, are the "citizens of a new global order", described in this way: *"They live here and there; they learn to distance themselves; they discover that there are different temporal rhythms, other places, other problems, many different ways of living. They discover the "foreigner" within themselves; they are invited to question their own dogmas, even to extend ordinary standards of civilty – courtesy, politeness, respect – to others whom they will never meet"* (Keane 2013).

4) Universities, researchers and students

Researchers offer valuable resources for the understanding of complex realities such as the ones in the cities and for trying to offer innovative ideas for the solutions of problems. Even if their researches offer broad and rich understanding of societies, social processes and local realities, their scope remains often limited to the academic realm. A project for an intercultural and sustainable city should therefore try to take advantage of the production of knowledge offered by the university and try to promote the engagement of students in projects that allow them to put in practice what learnt in projects that benefit cities. Students and

academic research offer such a wide, rich and powerful potential force, that cities should never underestimate their role, and on the contrary should find ways to take advantage of their knowledge and skills to put them at the service of their communities, in a mutual process of exchange and growth.

In some fields, for example sociology, anthropology and psychology, the methodology applied by the action-research[2] (see Frisina 2013, 2016; Mastrilli, Nicosia and Santinello 2013; Santinello 2009) seems to have already recognized the important role and contribution that researchers effectively play on the field, involving the subjects of their researches directly in a process of change that make them not just "object" of research, but at the same time "subject". When this methodology is applied in the empirical research, the aim of the researchers is not only to gather raw data to analyze a situation or complement theories. The research is recognized as an action that is not just studying a place, situation or context, but as a process that intervenes in the reality studied, is not 'neutral' and interacts with the reality and its subjects, with the aim not just to study but also to spur positive social transformations in the case of a problem. The active involvement of the people in the study could therefore offer the opportunity of self-reflection, expression of personal perspectives, recognition of roles of the subjects involved, and increased awareness and collective and personal growth, envisioning the possibility of the research process as an element prompting changes and transformations. This approach also pays attention to the context and the social relations not just as element of a problem, but also as resources for change. The research and the researchers enter therefore in a reality as potential 'agents of change'. Researchers that embrace this methodology decide therefore to conduct a research and at the same time to participate to change a situation.

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[2] The action-research methodology was introduced by the psychologist Kurt Lewin in the '40s.

A specific qualitative method of action-research is the photovoice[3], which has showed its benefits for bringing about changes, as a tool for documenting reality and at the same time empowering the subjects involved, thanks to a combination of social actions and photography (Mastrilli, Nicosia and Santinello 2013).

This method, through a combination of photography and groups discussions, aims at prompting members of community to identify their perspectives and use them as tools for social change. It is a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community (Wang and Burris 1997). This method is highly effective in multicultural and urban contexts in order to identify problems, personal perspectives and empower community members. The discussion of photographies taken by the members could be a means of catalyzing personal and community change (Wang and Burris 1997). The methodology has three main goals: "*to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and to reach policymakers*" (Wang and Burris 1997).

Together with its use in this methodology, in a broader sense photography has proved to be a powerful method in order to facilitate dialogue, highlight local problems, promote the creation of new narratives, change public image of neighborhoods and foster social changes, and its potential as a tool for change in multiple directions should be appraised, recognized and be deployed in various contexts.

5) Civil society and civil society organizations (CSOs)

As already mentioned, one of the crucial points of a comprehensive approach for bringing about intercultural and sustainable cities is the involvement of civil society. Often civil society takes action to compensate for the immobility or inability of the governments to respond to cities challenges (Marconi 2016). Alongside with the policies and interventions of governments, and sometimes in

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3 The photovoice was developed by Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris in the early '90s, as a method to be applied in the context of public health, women's studies and women's empowerment as an important tool for participatory needs assessment.

conflict with it, "NGOs, social movements, grass-root activism and community groupings of different kinds, provide aid and support to marginal groups, promote inclusive initiatives, experiment with new ways of living together and claim rights" (Marconi 2016).

Together with this, it has been mentioned already that civil society has the best knowledge of its own strengths, resources and necessities. Therefore, central governments and local city halls should find ways to create enabling environments and enabling conditions for the actions of civil society groups and for acknowledging, strengthening and providing resources to local associations and organizations. Spaces and opportunities of intervention, dialogue and joint action should be provided to all the wide range that associations and groups that inhabit the city sphere and enriches it with their presence, contributions and projects.

6) Urban planning, planners and architects

In a city, planners play a vital role. Even if, as already mentioned, we should be aware that public spaces by themselves cannot enable automatically positive and meaningful encounters among strangers and city dwellers, the lessons of Jane Jabobs (1961) prove that the ways cities are planned do matter for the thriving of city life. Planning projects should therefore keep in mind the role of civil society previously explained, and they should be conceived as shared efforts between planners and citizens, and as participatory processes that bring different groups into the planning project. Instead of top-down projects, the voice of citizens should be heard (Jane Jacobs 1961), with the important contribution of the grassroot level. New planning projects, such as for example for parks, squares or renovation of other public spaces, could become an important tool for engaging people and let them share their ideas, present their proposals and get together for the creation of a shared space. The spaces created would therefore represent the diversity of the people that would use and experience it, both through the contributions that they gave to the development of the project, and also through a symbolic expression of this diversity.

An emblematic and visionary example of a participatory process, organized in cooperation and aiming at intercultural dialogue, is a park situated in Copenhagen, the Superkilen. It is a project of urban regeneration of Nørrebro, a neighborhood characterized by a great multi-ethnicity, which has experienced many problems of violence, degradation and social exclusion. The inhabitants have been included in the planning of the park, being asked to propose an object coming from their countries that would be brought to the park. Now the area has become a symbol of identification for the neighborhood, and the center of the social life of the inhabitants, where they meet, just to give some example, among trees from Japan, sitting on benches from Turkey, around a fountain in Moroccan style[4]. The area is symbolically a support and appraisal of diversity, through the artistic expression, and practically a place of meeting, where intercultural dialogue can effectively be boosted.

The project is just an example of how inclusion and constructive encounters could be fostered through urban regeneration (as a tool) and a participatory approach (as a modality). It is hence embedded the value of an inclusive and participated project: people will tend to feel a sense of identification to the project, and develop a feeling of care for it, making the project sustainable and giving a real meaning and a "soul" to it.

Sandercock (2000b) suggests another alternative role that planners could play, proposing planners to use a "therapeutic approach", that is a dialogical approach which "brings antagonistic parties together to talk through their concerns. This requires an open and communicative planning process, involving negotiation and mediation in working through a problem with those directly affected" (Sandercock 2000b). The role that she suggests that planners should play is yet not at an easy on, as it would require a set of skills that goes much further than the ones usually needed by planners and developed in planning schools. In fact, "it requires life experience, communicative skills and, in multicultural or multi-ethnic

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[4] In the park each one of the ethnic groups is represented by an object. It has been designed by the studios Topotek 1, BIG and Superflex.

contexts, cross-cultural understanding" (Sandercock 2000b). Throughout the discussion that the planners organize with citizens, following a participatory approach, she proposes that space for the emergence of opinions, personal stories, fears, anxieties and critical positions should be envisioned, creating a space "for speaking the unspeakable, for talk of fear and loathing, as well as of hope and of transformation" (Sandercock 2000b). This space created in the process of planning will therefore offer the opportunity of discussion, negotiation, agreement, speaking, listening, learning and also the performance of *"a sort of cathartic function for all those carrying anger or fear or betrayal inside themselves – the words will also be heard, in their full emotion, by those whose ears and hearts have previously been closed"* (Sandercock 2000b). In her opinion, the therapeutic approach offers the possibility of transformation because it enables collective growth, similarly to the way that therapeutic approach in psychanalysis allows individual growth, and it resolves the dividing line between reason and emotions (Sandercock 2004). She cites the researches of Martha Nussbaum (2001) about the "intelligence of emotions" stressing the irrelevance of trying to bracket emotions out of what are considered serious deliberations (Sandercock 2004).

The role of planners could become therefore even more critical and crucial for transformation and could put them in a more central stage in the process of managing diversity and facilitating intercultural dialogue. Sandercock thus explains that "the work of planners in 'managing difference' is the work of negotiating fears and anxieties, mediating memories and hopes, and facilitating change and transformation" (Sandercock 2010). Their role should be about "getting people to deal with the fears which immobilize individuals and communities and which plague huge restraints on growth, change and harmony" (Sandercock 2000a).

Assessment

As already mentioned, one of the pillars of the comprehensive approach for managing urban diversity and urban spaces is the synergic actions of all the actors involved. Each sector provides specific resources and skills for the project of change, and the people who operate in each of the sector can potentially become 'agents of change'. To sum up, the most relevant actors could contribute in different ways to the project.

In the field of *education*, the role of teachers and educators could foster the development of the future society, based on respect and appraisal of difference. Their role is recognized as crucial, because schools are the only places that are effectively reaching all the "citizens of the future", and it is in schools where the encounter and confrontation with diversity is effectively experienced.

In the field of the *media and communication*, journalists contribute to the creation and spreading of narratives and images, both reporting elements of public discourse (politicians, community leaders, public figures) and both following their own internal editorial choices. This could be sided with political positions or simply inclined to different extents towards reiteration of negative images, or on the contrary towards more constructive and proactive positive approaches. Their role could therefore be potentially disruptive, strengthening prejudices, conveying and spreading "moral panic". At the same time, if they can become crucial actors in spreading new visions, stories of positive examples, and encourage people towards hope instead of despair. Within the field of communication, the role of photography and visual communication should be considered carefully, as potential elements to carry strong messages and boosting empathic feelings.

In the field of *university*, students and researchers could also be put at the service of the communities where the centers of studies are located. Applying the methodology of action research, or simply embracing a wider audience rather than just the academic one, this sector could provide important and unique and

specialized skills, tools, resources for social transformations. Local communities and the university community could take advantage from each other, one providing a field of research (for researchers) and a field for applying what studied (for students), while local communities would favor from the injection of both of academic production as well as of human energies contributing to solve their needs and problems, or providing them the opportunity to raise awareness about them.

In the field of *urban planning*, architects and planners could plan urban environment that are created through participatory processes that involve the entire diverse population that lives and uses urban spaces, as well as creating public spaces that reflect this diversity and that are open, accessible, comfortable, welcoming and beautiful. These places should therefore be planned, taking into account all the needs, desires and multiple differences (and vulnerabilities) of the city dwellers. Taking into consideration the different perspective and uses of public spaces by children, women, elders, young people, disabled, people belonging to different cultures and religions, would favor the creation of spaces that accommodate and welcome everybody. These characteristics could encourage people to use those spaces and offer through them the opportunity of encounters and conviviality. Consequently, the urban "spaces" could become "places" that are perceived by everybody as shared physical environment to care for, that can be easily used and accessed, and that become elements in which people feel recognized in.

Furthermore, the potential role that planners may play should be clearly recognized, when applying participatory processes that put them in contact as important points of reference for communities, and as "*negotiators of fears and desires*". Sandercock (2000b) proposes to highlight the benefits that they could bring to communities if they embrace a dialogical therapeutic approach during their job.

In the sphere of *civil society*, associations, organizations and informal groups of citizens are often the real activators and promotors of change, especially in the

case when states lack resources or willingness to commit and engage in intercultural and sustainable projects. The unique energies and contribution that grass-roots initiatives can bring to processes of change should be valorized, recognizing that they often have the ability to effectively involve and prompt the engagement of citizens around real needs and necessary changes.

The interrelation and synergy of all actors involved should be encouraged in order to apply effectively the integrated, interconnected, multidirectional and intertwined approach suggested. Within this vision, states and institutions should have the role of raising awareness about their roles by training them, involving them in shared projects, connecting them, providing tools and resources, and creating enabling conditions for their collaboration and for joining their forces. With the embracement of a synergic strategy towards changes, their impact would be therefore amplified extensively.

To complement all these specific and professional actors, a category of actors that span through all the sectors is the one of "*mediators, bridge builders, wall vaulters and frontier crossers*". These are people who have embraced an attitude of curiosity toward the Other and toward diversity, and who consider differences as sources of growth, personal and collective enrichment. These people are prompted to get out of their comfort zone and take advantage of all the opportunities at their disposal to meet with the Other. They become active "agents of change" when they decide to commit themselves personally to the creation of opportunities of encounters, guided by a vision aiming at contributing to the creation of intercultural and sustainable cities. This could happen in different ways, such as with the engagement in projects, in commercial or not-for profit initiatives or with personal life choices.

A fundamental question remains: how to spur the emergence of mediators and agents of change?
Further research is needed in order to identify which kind of experiences could favor the emergence of the attitudes that distinguish these people and make them

play such as a special and crucial role in their community. It could be useful to keep in mind the role that some educational projects and environments characterized by strong values and supportive approaches play.

To cite an example, the environment and ideology such as the one created by the Scouts movement could provide interesting elements of reflection. The education methodology of Scouts is in fact based on a recognition of the intrinsic value of everybody and the belief of equality of all the human beings. The methods applied in order to support these values are team-working, collaboration among everybody and the belief of the fruitful cross-fertilization of ideas sparked when confronting with others. Furthermore, they boost the emergence of creative processes for solution of problems, through techniques that promote the appraisal of what is at your disposal to solve the problems and the identification of resources for change concealed in the same needs and problems to be solved. Alongside with this, they promote through their activities awareness-raising for respect and defense of the environment. The Scouts offer therefore an educational method based on team-working, that prompts the appraisal of collaboration and solidarity, the recognition of the value of each human being and the care for the environment through the active engagement with it. Nonetheless, a limit of most of the Scouts groups is that, even if open to everybody, they are faith-based. This is therefore a limit to the number of people that could be interested and embraced in their initiatives and activities.

All these values and outcomes promoted by the Scout movement very well fit into the project for the creation of intercultural citizens that work for creating intercultural and sustainable cities. This is not to suggest that the Scout movement could possess a healing power for the biggest challenges and problems of societies. It is just to highlight how the space created within their activities, with their values, methodology and techniques, have high resonance for the people involved, and it should be take carefully into consideration when considering ways to promote the emergence of personal attitudes that contribute to projects of intercultural and sustainable cities.

3.3 Spaces of change and suburbs revitalization

After having considered the actors and forces of change, space of discussion is now given to the spaces where these changes can happen. Urban spaces are considered not just as the actual setting where change can happen, but also by themselves as opportunities and instruments of change. As already mentioned, projects of regeneration of public spaces, if they follow a participatory approach led by planner or other actors (Sandercock 2004) could lead to the creation of "micropublics" (Amin 2002) where people get together around a project with a common purpose and a shared aim.

The intertwined approach already mentioned would allow a double challenge to be tackled: integration of people, and urban regeneration. In fact, the outcomes of projects of regeneration and renewal of abandoned, empty or degraded spaces, will benefit cities in manifolded ways, in terms of physical appearance, but also in terms of giving new image to a part of the city, new possibility of identification and opportunity of encounters. To list some examples of viable communal projects of urban regeneration, we should consider urban gardens, regeneration of old buildings, empty spaces or parks, bicycle paths and urban art (graffiti, murals, street art).

At the same time, this kind of projects would contribute to the aimed objective of creating a sustainable city. A sustainable city can be observed especially in the ways public spaces are managed. A sustainable city is aware of the burden of environmental sustainability, it raises awareness among its citizens, and finds ways to ameliorate its conditions and solve its problems thanks to its inherent strengths, resources and local uniqueness, reconverting what already exist instead of wasting new resources or destroy other green areas.

Peripheric urban spaces

A special space of discussion should be given to the particular conditions of the suburbs and peripheric neighborhoods of cities. Suburbs present different critical conditions and elements, in terms of spaces and identity. Often, they are area of recent construction and development. A recent past has not allowed them yet to develop an identity rooted in historical events or historical places, unlike the historical centers of the cities. Being places of recent urbanization, that get expanded when cities needed more space for industries and housing, they are often characterize by chaotic planning that did not take into consideration esthetical concerns. In short, they are not beautiful and they do not offer strong historical spaces or symbols of identification. They often tend to host spaces that are not well-kept, run-down or abandoned, and that favor the insurgence of illegal activities in public spaces, such as drug dealing. Sometimes, they do not offer services, spaces of aggregation or cultural opportunities, which leads inhabitants to use them just as dormitory, forcing them to move to the city centre. For all these reasons, they become often addressed with negative stigma of being run-down and dangerous areas. The narratives created by media and public figures often strengthen this idea, presenting a one-sided image of the areas that depicts just the most critical aspects and leave other factors concealed.

Furthermore, these areas become often the place where migrants concentrate, because of the affordability of housing, or because of the possibility to start their private businesses often as shopkeepers offering products (food, garments etc.) from their native countries.   For these reasons, this kind of neighborhoods in the suburbs are the places of a city that most would favor from the implementation of an integrated, interconnected, multidirectional and intertwined approach, based on intercultural dialogue.

Suburbs offer key resources, forces and spaces for the creation of a new city to become reality. At the beginning of the processes, they would be places where different inhabitants coexist together and are separated by walls of distrust and

suspicion, places that are considered dangerous, not visually-pleasant, without resources and without an identity in which their inhabitants recognize themselves and are proud of. On the contrary, the sense of living in a ghetto or in a run-down area will be strengthened to the outside world by the narratives created in the public discourse and by the media. They would be places that seem to have been left abandoned, for which nobody cares and which lacks social capital.

These same elements are the starting point of a process of change, when they are recognized as elements that could become opportunities of change. The spaces offered by the suburbs, often wider and more flexible to adaptation than complex entangled urban fabric of the city centre, could become opportunities of regeneration, and become landmarks and symbols of the neighborhood. The concentration of different ethnicities and cultures could become a symbol of pride for the inhabitants, when they decide to embrace diversity as an element of enrichment. Furthermore, even the continuous negative stigma reiterated by the public discourse could become a force to mobilize the inhabitants against it, fostering the emergence of alternative positive narratives created by the locals, who decide to show all the positive aspects, resources and richness of the neighborhood. Furthermore, often suburbs offer a kind of "hybrid place", because even if they are part of cities and present characteristics of life in a city, often the "city-feeling" of the area is blurred into a "village-feeling", where people are more likely to meet casually friends on the streets or become acquaintances with local shop-keepers because of the proximity that the smaller scale of the neighborhood offers.

Assessment

The challenges of cities of integration, regeneration, sustainability and community-building in the suburbs become therefore more evident, deep and crucial to be addressed. What is often considered as "the problem of suburbs" by city planners and politicians would be therefore tackled as an opportunity of change to be started from the grassroots, instead of mere intervention in a top-

down perspective. Bazzini and Puttilli (2008) proposes a relational approach, based on self-government and empowered communities that build upon the social and territorial capital of the neighborhood, and at the same time in the process they expand and increase them.

Suburbs are therefore the most suitable places for the project of intercultural and sustainable cities, and if they manage to appraise their human resources and local uniqueness, they would become the "cities of the future", as Renzo Piano imagines:

"Suburbs are the city of the future, the city where human energy is concentrated and the city that our daughters and sons will inherit from us. A gigantic work of mend is needed, and we need ideas. Suburbs are the city of the future, they are not photogenic and often they are a desert or a dormitory, but they are rich of humanity. So, the destiny of cities are the suburbs. […] Often the term "suburbs" is associated with urban blight. I wonder: do we want to leave this as our legacy? The suburbs are the great urban bet of the next decades" (Piano 2014).

Conclusions

Cities are at stake. The forces of globalization and the worldwide migration seem to have undermined their ability that throughout history let them prosper and become the core of the progress of humanity. States and institutions struggle to put in practice effective instruments and policies that can manage their diverse and multicultural population. Racist feelings, prejudices, anxiety and fears become harder to be destroyed due to the unstable present and even more dwindling future. Invisible and visible walls divide people and cross the urban fabric. The Other become the scapegoat for fears and failures, and the media and public discourse tend to strengthen this feeling, while alternative narratives fail often to let them voice heard. At the same time, the world calls upon cities to make decisive and strong efforts to respond to the threats posed by the environmental crisis.

Against this backdrop that seems to lead to an unescapable destiny of failure of the cities, never-ending increasing complexity, conflicts and strikes, new ideals and myths have emerged and proposed new possible paths towards a better urban future. Interculturalism, an approach based on intercultural dialogue, have started to be proposed as the aim, instrument and tool that foster change in the cities.

The belief that life in the city can thrive because of urban diversity, as Jane Jacobs (1961) suggests, or that cities can offer the best environment for the development of "urban civitas" as Bekemans (2013a) proposes, bring new elements to the optimistic plans for building cities that are inclusive, intercultural and sustainable. Critical assessment and analysis of aspects of urban environments bring new elements of reflections for a project of change, but the power of ideals and imagined futures and ideals should never be disregarded, thus combining awareness of reality, with its problems and resources, with imaginative and creative visions. Cities could be able to "develop a glocal democracy, fostering intercultural dialogue, building inclusive local habitats, developing plural

citizenship, and in general mainstreaming human rights in all of its operative guidelines inside and outside the city" (Papisca 2011).

The realization of "cosmopolitan urbanism", as Sandercock (2006a) imagines, could be realized in cities, with the help of an "integrated, interconnected, multidirectional and intertwined" approach, rooted in intercultural dialogue, for the management of urban societies and urban environments. This approach would take all the forces, actors and spaces of a city into consideration, aiming at combining them together in a comprehensive project of change.

If the process of change would manage to consider all the challenges of the city as interconnected to each other, and to reveal the opportunities that each of this challenge present for a mutual union of forces to solve them, the envisioned aim of creating intercultural and sustainable cities together could become reality, keeping in mind that "we are all co-dependent, empowering a part, means empowering the whole, division threatens the survival of society as a whole" (Council of Europe 2013).

PART 2

Case study analysis of Arcella,

a neighborhood of Padua.

Introduction

The second Part of the thesis deals with the case study analysis carried out as a tool of research and investigation of the ideas analyzed and proposed in the first Part of the thesis. The subject of the case study concerns Arcella[5], a neighborhood in the North part of the city of Padua (Veneto, Italy).

The territory of Arcella is circumscribed by some clear human-built borders: its West and South border is marked by the railway, its North border by the highway Autostrada A4 and its West border by the trafficked large road Via del Plebiscito. The entrance to the neighborhood is facilitated by a limited number of viaducts and overpasses.

Having as a reference the data provided by the municipality of Padua regarding the demographic situation at 31 December 2016, the residents of the neighborhood amount to 33.823, that accounts for 16,1 % of the entire population of Padova (209.829 residents). The foreign population accounts for 27,4 % (9.268) of the entire population of the neighborhood (total number of foreigner residents in the city is 32.984, that means that 28 % of the foreign residents of Padua lives in Arcella). It is the most densely populated area of the city (approximately 7.145 inhabitants per square kilometre), and the area with the highest percentage of foreigner residents. The main countries of origins of the foreign population are Romania, Moldova, Nigeria, Morocco, China, Albania, Philippines, Bangladesh, Ukraine and other countries.

The area is often labelled as "a city in the city", because of its considerable number of residents, its density, its characteristic of being physically separated from the rest of the city, the presence of many essential services for the residents and its distinctive identity and history.

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[5] For an exact description of the territory that was selected for the case study, and the reasons that prompted the definition of its borders for the purpose of this research, see Chapter 1.3, Historical and demographic overview of Arcella, page 103.

Arcella is often referred to as a neighborhood with problems of criminality, drug dealing and neglected urban spaces. The local media (i.e. *Il Mattino di Padova, Il Gazzettino, Padova Oggi*) have contributed to the consolidation of the negative stigma of the neighborhood, reporting news about the area often with one-sided opinions, or with a predominance of articles reporting the negative aspects. For these reasons, there is a strongly established image of the area, both in Padua and outside, as a dangerous and not appealing neighborhood.

Nonetheless, the area is not characterized only by these phenomena. Recognizing the existence of the problems afore-mentioned (concentrated especially in some limited areas, remarkably in the proximity of the train station), the neighborhood is rich of initiatives by associations and civil society groups that aim at restoring the image of the neighborhood, fostering a shared sense of belonginess, promoting initiatives of cooperation and integration, boosting community-building processes and proposing ideas for the regeneration of spaces and creation of public spaces. In some other independent media (i.e. *La Difesa del Popolo*), the area has been described as an experimental place for the "city of the future", characterized by super-diversity and the necessity to find ways to deal with and live with diversity.

For these reasons, the neighborhood was particularly apt for an analysis that took as a reference the theoretical framework developed in the first part of the thesis. The analysis of the area served for a grassroots investigation of a multi-ethnic neighborhood that is struggling to appraise its identity, to change its public image, to find new ways of facilitating integration and living together and to promote sustainable ways of living and of using public spaces.

However, it is important to bear in mind that our analysis reflects an on-going process that is far from being concluded, because it is facing challenges, prejudices, psychological constrains and other barriers (such as power relations and economic differences). Our applied research proposes an insight of the causes and effects of the processes of change through the study of Arcella. The aim was to try to shed new light on the role and potential of urban areas, that thanks to

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their diversity and shared and bottom-up initiatives, can foster the process of creation of "urban civitas", namely communities that are inclusive, cooperative, and respectful of diversity and of shared spaces.

In the first Part of the thesis, it was highlighted how a comprehensive and multi-layered strategy could be essential as a way to address the challenges of diverse urban environments towards the creation of intercultural and sustainable cities. The necessary elements of this strategy were presented, with a focus on the actors of change, the resources and the tools that play crucial roles in this strategy. The research, adopting the case study methodology, has therefore focused on the processes that have emerged in Arcella as a response to the evolution experienced by the neighborhood, characterized by a growing diversity and the formation of a new identity. The research has identified the actors involved, the resources used and the tools (also innovative and creative ones) applied. At the same time, the research investigated which are the shortcomings, the needs of the neighborhood and the obstacles of the processes of change. Thanks to the involvement in the life of the neighborhood and the conversations with the residents, it was possible to gather the perceptions, personal images and opinions of the inhabitants about the life in their neighborhood.

An important focus of the research was on the narratives that were created about the neighborhood, especially from "outside", and which narratives emerged from "inside" in response to them. The research aimed also at inquiring if the opportunity of encounters created and promoted through events and initiatives in the neighborhood favoured the creation of a shared sense of belongingness to the place, with the result of the strengthening of collaboration among people, a stronger identity and a bond with the place.

In order to present the results of the research, the structure of the second Part is organized as follows.

The first chapter offers a contextual setting of the case study, with an introductory detailed explanation of the methodology used during the research, and a presentation of the data gathered. It then offers an insight on the elements that characterize and distinguish Italian cities from other urban environments. In conclusion, it gives an overview of the geography, demography and history of the Arcella neighborhood, in order to offer some necessary elements for the understanding of its current situation.

The second chapter deals with the analysis of the results. Its first section offers a descriptive analysis, describing which actors play important roles, which spaces are considered crucial, and which are the perceptions of the residents about the resources and assets, problems and needs, worries and desires, negative and positive aspects of the life in the neighborhood.

The second section of the chapter is a critical assessment of the processes of change that have emerged, which projects sparked these changes, which tools and resources were applied, and which innovative elements of reflections these processes offer. The final section offers an assessment providing an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis) of the neighborhood, considered as an example of the creation of an intercultural and sustainable city. It ends with the attempt to outline some perspectives for the future of the neighborhood, based on the findings of the research.

Chapter 1. Contextual setting of the case study

1.1 Methodology and data gathered

According to the framework proposed by Creswell (2003), the paradigm and the philosophical assumption at the basis of the research conducted were the ones related to the participatory/advocacy approach. The choice was motivated by the nature of the research problem, inherently linked to political issues, and aiming at a collaborative process and a change-oriented conclusion as a shared "agenda for change".

Concerning the strategies of inquiry and methodologies, the choice was oriented to the qualitative methodology of research. This choice was motivated especially by the type of research problem, as well as by personal experience. As the research is related to people's perceptions, opinions, ways of living and experiencing places and contacts with the others, the qualitative approach best fitted with the topic and better offered the opportunity of an in-depth analysis. For what concerns the importance of the personal attitude of the researcher in the choice of the tools of research, the qualitative strategy was considered the best one in order to respond to the desire of a personal direct contact and involvement in the matter of research, becoming in first person an active and involved learner.

Within this qualitative framework, the strategy of inquiry adopted was the case study approach, with the selection of the neighborhood Arcella (Padua) as the case study of the research.

For what concerns research methods of data collection and analysis, the main method adopted for gathering data was semi-structured interviews[6].
Furthermore, the methodology related to visual methods was also embraced in order to analyse some projects which produced photographs of the neighborhood

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[6] A list of the interviews carried out can be found in the Appendix 1.

and to collect visual material that expressed the themes treated in the research, observing how urban spaces are lived and experienced.

The initial phase of the research concerned the analysis of previous academic findings carried out in the neighborhood and in the city of Padua regarding diversity, immigration and integration (see Cancellieri 2015, Mantovan and Ostanel 2015, Romania and Zamperini 2009). An analysis of the demographic and statistical information provided by the municipality of Padua was conducted in order to gather necessary information of the neighborhood and its population. An analysis of online media sources was carried out in order to depict the image of the neighborhood created and promoted by the media, with reference mostly to articles available online on the webpages of the local media *Il Mattino di Padova, Il Gazzettino, Padova Oggi, Il Corriere del Veneto, La Difesa del Popolo*.

The fieldwork took place from June 2017 to August 2017.
The semi-structured interviews were conducted both with residents and key-persons engaged in social work or associations dealing with projects of intercultural dialogue, urban regeneration and integration. Interviewees were selected in terms of age, gender and ethnicity in order to represent the diversity of inhabitants of the neighborhood as much as possible. The interviews focused on biographical aspects, everyday life in the neighborhood, perceptions of the neighborhood (needs, resources, hopes and concerns), involvement in the life of the neighborhood, perceptions of diversity and of the Other, personal experiences that influenced the perceptions of diversity.

A total of 29 interviews, which lasted on average one hour, were carried out between 27 June 2017 and 8 August 2017.
The group of interviewees included 11 residents, 4 people member of the staff of a cultural/religious organization, 1 teacher, 1 group of photographers, 1 group that started a project on social media, 2 booksellers, 1 film director, 1 responsible for a project of a documentary about the neighborhood, 4 social workers involved in associations or projects in the neighborhood, 2 journalists, 1 architect, 1 student

who run a project in the neighborhood, 1 representative of a sport association, 2 local shop-owners, 1 political leader member of the newly-elected municipal council.

The group of 11 residents included 6 women and 4 men; 4 of them were parents of young children; 6 of them were of Italian origin, while 4 of them were of foreigner origin (2 from Cameroon, 1 from Uruguay, 1 from Republic of Moldova). 2 of them were above 70 years old.

The majority of the people interviewed not on the basis of being residents but because of their role as representatives of stakeholder groups active in the neighborhood, were nonetheless also residents of the neighborhood.

In order to facilitate the conversation, in some cases a map of the area was provided during the interviews, in order to highlight spaces of the neighborhood crucial for the people interviewed.

The interviews were carried out in Italian. The quotes and exerts of interviews presented were translated into English by the author of the research.

In order to respect the privacy of the people interviewed, all of them were informed about the possibility of remaining anonymous. Given that just some of them, especially most of the people involved in projects in the neighborhood, gave the authorization for the publication of their names, the final decision was to leave anonymous all the interviewees. All the names will therefore remain anonymous, with the provision of some essential data about the age, gender, country of origin or other particular conditions (i.e. their conditions of being parents or unemployed) of the interviewees.

Although the conditions and the limited time frame did not allow the use of a methodologically proper participant observation, the fieldwork was nonetheless carried out with extensive time spent in the neighborhood, moving around the neighborhood by bike or on foot in order to explore and get the best knowledge of the local space and local events and initiatives. The exploration of the

neighborhood and the participation to community activities were accompanied by the collection of photos and fieldnotes.

The researcher took part into two meetings of two groups active in the neighborhood, being *Tavolo Arcella* and *Rete Arcella Viva*.

A crucial element that facilitated the initial exploratory stage of the research was the participation of the researcher from June to August 2017 to the workshop *Premio Città Futura*, a project aimed at creating a documentary about the neighborhood. The possibility of participating as a member of the staff carrying out the video recordings and meeting local actors allowed the researcher to gather an initial overview of the main local stakeholders and processes ongoing in the neighborhood, which was crucial later for directing the topics of the interviews and the choice of people to interview.

1.2 Italian setting of cities

The present setting of most Italian cities exhibits some specificities that differentiate them from other cities in Europe and in the Western world. This seems necessary to be outlined in order to understand the issues at stake when talking about the management of diversity in the Italian urban environments.

An important element is that Italy has become just recently a country that attracts a constant growing number of immigrants. In the last twenty years the immigration movement has intensified and has started to characterize a country that was previously a country of emigrants. However, it is important to remember that the phenomena of immigration from foreign countries to Italy was preceded by a phenomenon of internal migration from the regions in the South to the regions in the North, where industrial and productive centres were mainly located. Even if it could be considered an inherently different phenomenon, it is nonetheless interesting to observe that this process also caused in some cases the emergence of stigmatization, prejudices, discriminations and challenges of living

together with whom was considered different, even if legally part of the same nation.

Cities of difference

It is of extreme importance also to consider that Italian cities are not characterized by the presence of ethnic enclaves, as Briata (2012) highlights. In Italy it is possible to observe an absence of ethnic concentration, because usually settlements are deeply multi-ethnic and they are not conceived as ethnic enclaves, but as '*cities of difference'* (Briata 2012). Briata stresses that usually the most common form of concentration is not in housing, but in commercial areas. In fact, the immigrants' economic activities sometimes occupy spaces that are no more used by Italian entrepreneurs. Also Fioretti (2010) stresses that the model that has often been used to interpret diversity in Italian cities is the one applied for Northern European cities. Unlikely Italian cities, Northern European cities face challenges in concentrated places (such as the inner cities in the UK and the banlieues in France), whereas the "immigrants housing insertion in Southern European cities does not follow concentrative patterns" (Fioretti 2010). Therefore, social mixing approaches that are adopted to address the issue in those cities may not be apt when taking into consideration the Italian cities.

Nonetheless, even there is evidence from data and literature that ethnic concentration is an uncommon phenomenon in the Italian context, Briata (2012) highlights the aggressive public debate about immigration that often uses the terms *banlieues* or *ghettos* to label some neighborhoods or parts of the city. These terms are widely deployed especially by the media. Despite the use of these terms and the creations of such images*, "Italian multi-ethnic environments are cities of differences where the majority of the residents are Italian. And Italian-born residents usually do not feel comfortable with the negative descriptions of their neighbourhoods made by the media and policy makers. Descriptions operated from outside are quite different from those made by people living inside these places*" (Briata, 2011). The neighborhood that served as case study for the research presented exactly these characteristics and the emergence of these processes.

Security policies

Another factor that has become a hallmark of urban policies in Italian cities is the focus on "*security policies*" adopted by many mayors (Romania and Zamperini 2009). The responsibility and competence for governing security in cities belonged to the Italian central government until 2008, when the Ministry of Interior issued an administrative order on "*Public safety and urban security: definition and fields of application*" (Ministry of Interior, Decreto 5 August 2008). Thanks to this order mayors were granted more powers of intervention in matters of governing, preventing and combating situations of criminality and urban decay, in order to control the "*décor*" in urban environments and limit the behaviors of people that pose a threat to it, such as drug dealers, prostitutes, beggars and drunk people. This order marked the beginning of a trend among mayors of focusing around the idea of combating the "*degrado*" (urban blight, decay) of cities. This political and public discourse is dominated by these issues and terms especially during elections campaigns.

The possibility for mayors to intervene directly prompted a series of "*mayor ordinances*" that made some mayors become well-known in the public discourse as "sheriff-mayors" (Romania and Zamperini 2009). Some of these measures concerned for example the removal of benches in almost the entire territory of some cities (Treviso, Padua) in order to prevent them to become places of "*degrado*" (because used by beggars, homeless or other people perceived as "deviant"). Other examples can be found in the city of Padua during the administration of the mayor Massimo Bitonci (Lega Nord, 2014-2016). A harshly debated mayor's ordinance was the one that got the nickname of "*anti-kebab ordinance*", issued by the mayor in April 2005. The ordinance forced the commercial activities in the area of the station (concerning also a part of Arcella) to close down their activities not later than 8 pm. This measure had officially the objective to prevent the presence of people at night that used those shops as places to buy alcohol, and then posing concerns for the security and wellbeing of the area. The ordinance was widely criticized by the shop-owners of the area. Many

of them, together with some associations, movements and trade unions, perceived the ordinance as detrimental for the local businesses, and as an attack primarily against the foreign food shops (kebab and similar), whose presence is predominant around the station. Another debated ordinance was the decision to fence some of the public playgrounds of the city, and to give the permission to enter only to adults accompanied by children (similarly avoiding the spread in parks of behaviors considered against the urban decorum and security).

Padua offers therefore a clear example of a city where local urban policies and public discourse have been centred in the maintenance of order and security in the city, and the fight against "*degrado*". This strategy has often targeted some specific areas of the city or some neighborhood (as it happened with Arcella), maintaining them at the centre of the public and political discourse and consolidating their negative image and the concerns of citizens. One element considered as one of the mayor threats is the problem of microcriminality and the so-called "crimes without victims" (Romania and Zamperini 2009), such as drug dealing and prostitution. These practices, even if they do not pose explicit threats or dangers on the urban dwellers, they are perceived as a strong element of insecurity. The fact that these illegal activities are performed mainly by foreigners (while on the contrary the customers are mainly Italians) intensify stereotyped and negative images.

Another strategy used by public administrations, including in Padua, to guarantee the safety of citizens is the deployment of military forces in support of local police forces, within the operation named "*Operazione Strade Sicure*" (safe street procedure), launched in 2008 by the central government. The presence of military vehicles in the streets of cities and in places considered critical should play as a deterrent for criminal behaviors and maintain order and a feeling of security in those areas. Nonetheless, the presence of the military could be also questioned, debating if it could be the most effective measure for prevention of crime or if it could on the contrary strengthen the feeling of urban dwellers of being in situation of danger and emergency (Romania and Zamperini 2009).

The role and the position of mayors is therefore crucial when considering any kind of urban policy. Their position makes them strategic negotiators of "*fears and desires*" (recalling Sandercock words) of the citizens of their cities, especially after 1995, when the direct election of the mayor by the citizens was introduced. Especially during election campaigns, political candidates often deploy rhetoric or narrative strategies that aim at the emotions of people, leveraging in a powerful way especially over their fears.

Therefore, their role and attitudes could prove to be a strong deterrent, or on the contrary a powerful facilitator, of any projects of integration and consolidation of intercultural practices.

Hyper-visibility

Other aspects to highlight when taking into consideration the setting of Italian cities is the level of "*hyper-visibility*" that often affects the presence of foreigner residents in urban spaces (Cancellieri 2015). The use of space by foreigners is often considered by local citizens as "socio-geographical transgression" because it challenges the taken for granted spatial order and the established behavioral conventions (Cancellieri 2015). Bodies in space constitute "*a practice-sensory realm in which space is perceived also through sight, smells, tastes and hearing. It produces a space that is both biomorphic and anthropological*" (Simonsen 2010, p. 174, cited in Cancellieri 2015).

Urban spaces are reshaped by the non-standard presence and the new uses made by foreigners and newcomers, in a process that make them "*spatial actors in that they try continuously to use and re-signify urban spaces in order to search out symbolic as well as material resources*" (Cancellieri 2013). Their hyper-visibility is reinforced also by the fact that often they start to use spaces that have been abandoned or less used by Italians (Romania and Zamperini 2009), to the extent that some local residents would have the misleading impression of an invisible segregation or a feeling of being "invaded".

As Cancellieri (2015) stresses, media are often the vehicles for fuelling the feeling that foreigners pose a threat to the appropriate use of urban space, creating 'moral

panic', which "may lost its short-lived feature for becoming a long-term atmosphere of continuous 'moral panic' characterized by the circulation of a stereotyped image of migrants as risk factor" (Cancellieri 2015, citing Lupton, 1999; Hier, 2011).

1.3 Historical and demographical overview of Arcella

1) Location

The area considered for the research is located in the north part of the municipality of Padua. The name Arcella is an improper name that has become the general term in the public discourse for referring to the area that became the case study of the research. The area studied covers the territory physically delimitated by human-built borders: the south border is designed by the train station and the railway Vicenza-Venezia; the north border is designed by the highway Autostrada Serenissima; the west border is designed by the railway Padova-Camposampiero/Cittadella/Bassano del Grappa; the east border is designed by the highly-trafficked road Via del Plebiscito.

The name Arcella is therefore not an official designation for the area, but it is the name that is mostly used by public figures, residents and the media to refer to this physically-delimited area that can be defined also with other more specific designations, and whose borders differ on the basis of which designation is used.
The municipality of Padua officially considers the area in the north of the city as an administrative neighborhood with the name "*Quartiere 2 Nord*" (North neighborhood), which is subdivided in 4 "*unità urbane*" (urban units): Pontevigodarzere, Prima Arcella or Arcella[7], San Bellino and San Carlo.

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[7] For the purpose of this research, the denomination Arcella will be used to refer to the area subject of the study, while the name Prima Arcella will be used to define one of the subdivisions inside the neighborhood (it is the far south part of the neighborhood, as it is possible to see in Map 1.5).

While Prima Arcella, San Bellino and San Carlo are included in the physically-delimited area afore-mentioned, Pontevigodarzere is the area located in the far north of the Quartiere 2 Nord, separated from the other urban units by the highway. For this geographical reason, it is considered as a separate entity, that is characterized by some peculiar historical and social development. The public discourse tends therefore to consider Pontevigodarzere as a separate entity, even if administratively it is considered just as an urban unity part of the Quartiere 2 Nord.

On the contrary, the other three urban units are considered by the public discourse as a more cohesive entity, that is mostly referred to with the general name Arcella. Even if it is important to highlight that the area called Arcella is characterized by some internal differences and sub-neighborhood peculiarities (in terms of urban asset and historical development), the researcher decided to adopt the name Arcella recognizing the historical and geographical reasons that prompted the public discourse to consider the area with this name. Arcella, as the space included in the afore-mentioned borders, is therefore considered as a neighborhood, with some peculiar internal differences, but that is characterized by a common historical development and by the presence of a strong sense of identity. This last element was crucial for the decision of considering the area as a clearly separated entity from the rest of the city and from the other urban unity Pontevigodarzere. For all these reasons, Arcella, as represented in Map 1.4, is defined for the purpose of this research as a "*city neighborhood*".

The data considered in order to analyze the demographic situation of the neighborhood adopted the divisions defined by the municipality, that subdivides the area in three urban units, Prima Arcella, San Carlo and San Bellino, as represented in Map 1.5.

During the interviews with residents of the neighborhood, a more specific definition of internal division of the neighborhood has been highlighted. Some of them described the neighborhood as characterized by the presence of different "*rioni*" (Italian word referring to small delimitations of territory, mostly

developed because of historical reasons), with a clear distinction between the Prima Arcella (where the presence of foreigners is more visible) and the rest of the neighborhood (perceived as more "residential"). Other residents highlighted that the real factor for the definition of clearer and more specific urban units within the neighborhood are the local Catholic parish churches. In Arcella there are 8 parish churches, that have been central in the history of the neighborhood as references for the local communities, and still nowadays play an important role both as spaces of religious practice and as spaces of aggregation.
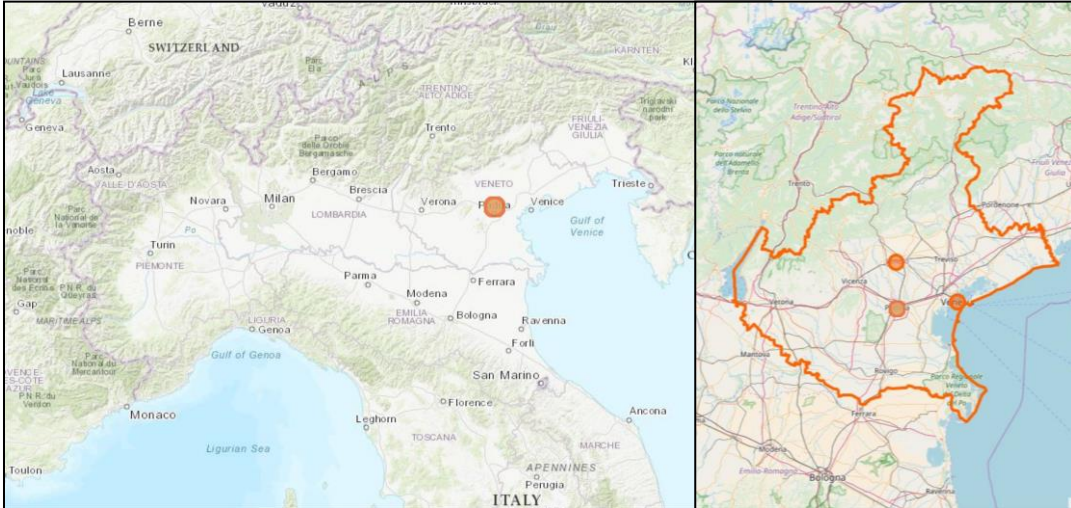
Map 1.1: The location of Padua in Italy and in the region Veneto
Source: OpenStreetMap
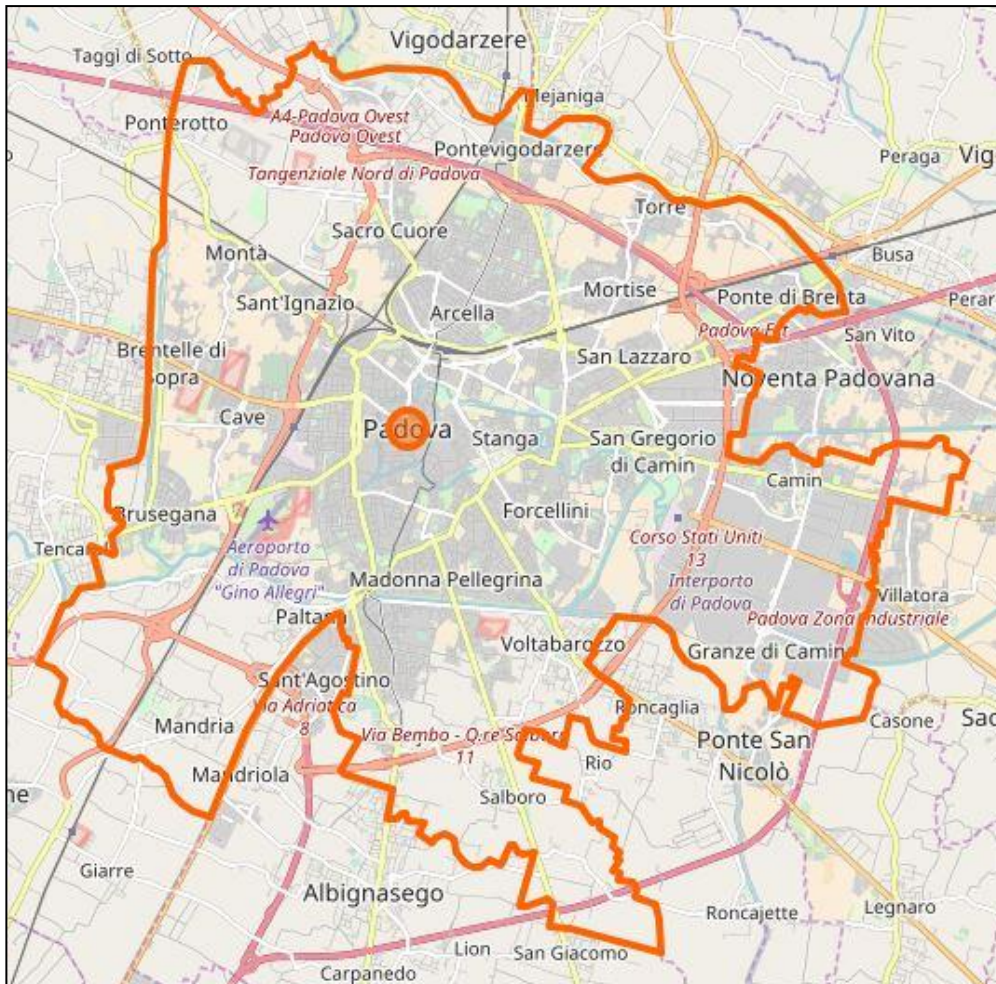
Map 1.2: The borders of the municipality of Padua. It is the third largest city in Veneto,
after Venice and Verona / Source: OpenStreetMap
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QUARTIERI E UNITA' URBANE DI PADOVA

Quartieri		Unità Urbane	Quartieri		Unità Urbane
Centro	1.1	Piazze	**Sud-Est**	1.5	Città Giardino
	1.2	Savonarola		8	Sant' Osvaldo
	1.3	Santo - Portello		9	Madonna Pellegrina
	1.4	Prato della Valle		10	Voltabarozzo
	5.2	Stazione Ferroviaria		11	SS. Crocefisso
Nord	23	Pontevigodarzere		12	Salboro
	24	San Carlo		13	Guizza
	25.1	Arcella	**Sud-Ovest**	2	Sacra Famiglia
	25.2	San Bellino		3	San Giuseppe
Est	5.1	Fiera		4.1	Porta Trento Sud
	6	Stanga		4.2	Porta Trento Nord
	7	Forcellini		14	Mandria
	26	Mortise	**Ovest**	15	Brusegana
	27	Torre		16	Cave
	28	San Lazzaro		17	Brentelle
	29	Ponte di Brenta		18	Sant'Ignazio
	30.1	Zona Industriale		19	Montà
	30.2	Isola di Terranegra		20	Ponterotto
	31	Camin		21	Sacro Cuore
	32	Granze		22	Altichiero

Map 1.3: The administrative division of the municipality in neighborhoods (quartieri) and urban units (unità urbane)
Source: Comune di Padova Cartografia Online

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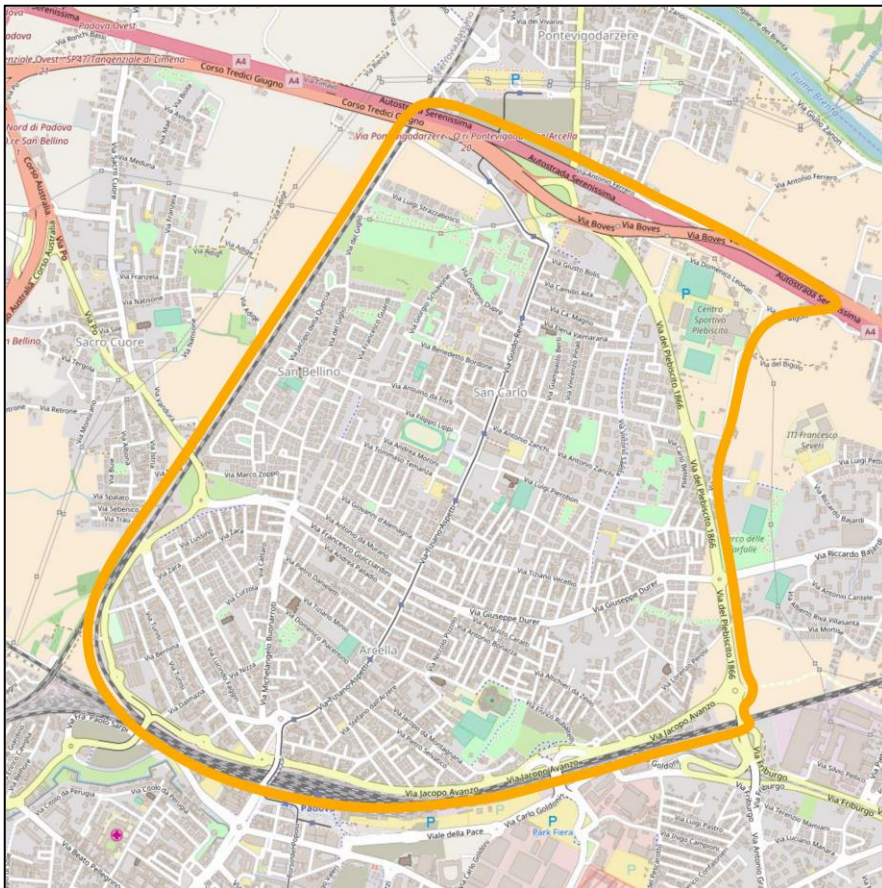
Map 1.4. The border of the neighborhood Arcella, the area subject of the study.
Source: Google Maps, OpenStreetMap
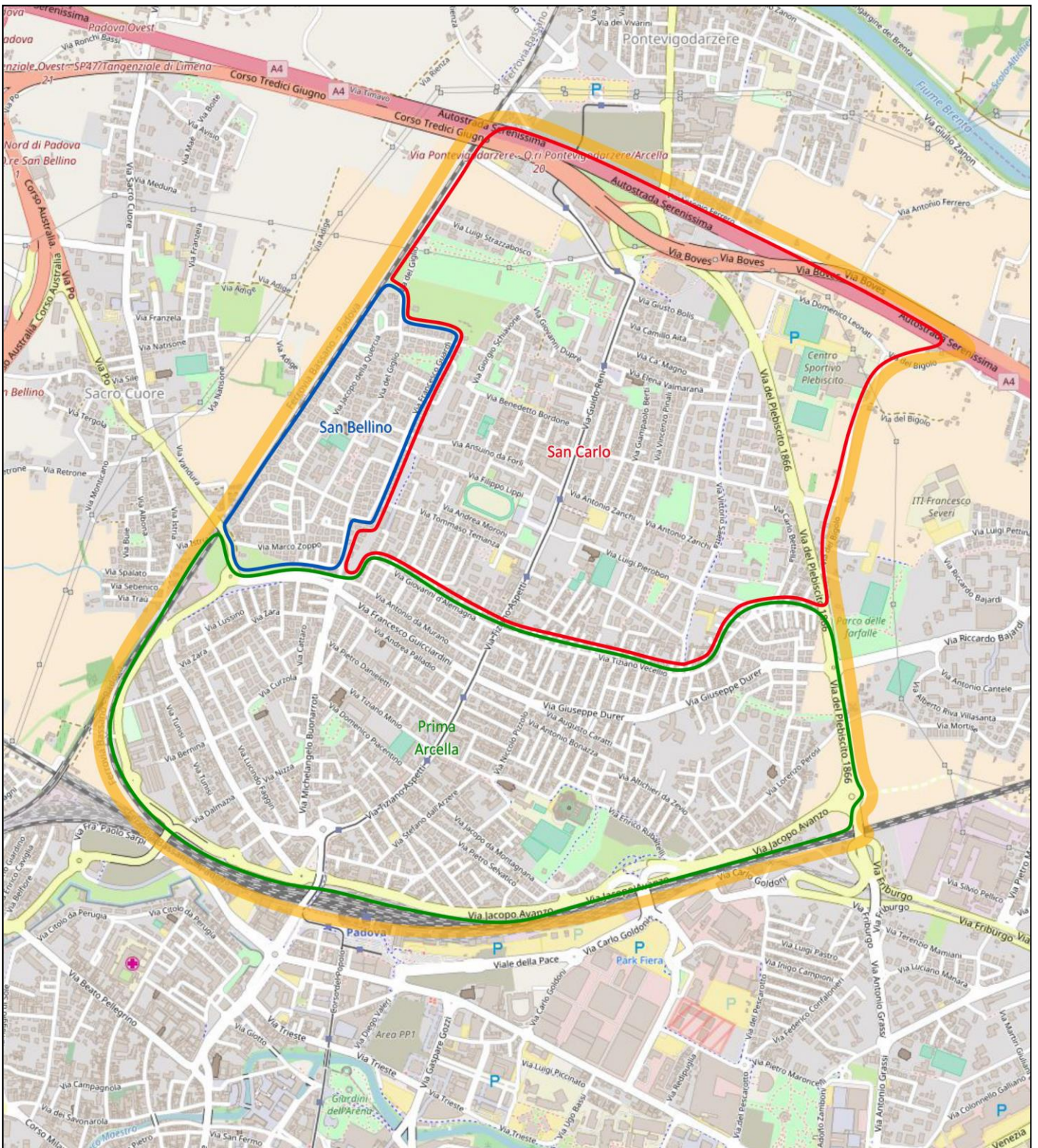
Map 1.5: The urban units that are part of the neighborhood Arcella:
Prima Arcella, San Carlo and San Bellino.
Source: OpenStreetMap

2) Demography[8]

According to the statistic office of the municipality of Padua[9], based on the situation on December 31, 2016, the residents of Arcella are 33.823, that accounts for 16,1 % of the entire population of the city (209.829). The neighborhood has an area of approximately 4,734 Kmq.

The neighborhood is characterized by a high population density. While the density concerning the city is 2.260 (residents per square kilometer), the density of the urban units is as follows: Prima Arcella is 6.948, San Carlo is 6.641 and San Bellino is 10.137, with an overall density of 7.145 for the entire area of the neighborhood (see Table 1). This area is the one with the highest population density of the entire city.

Table 1. Population distribution and density of the neighborhood

URBAN UNIT	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	DENSITY
Prima Arcella	7.644	7.990	15.634	6.948
San Carlo	7.091	7.629	14.720	6.641
San Bellino	1.635	1.834	3.469	10.137
ARCELLA	**16.370**	**17.453**	**33.823**	**7.145**
PADOVA	**98.604**	**111.225**	**209.829**	**2.260**

Source: Annuario Statistico Comunale 2016; personal elaboration

Throughout the city the number of births in 2016 was larger than the number of deaths. It is important to highlight that, out of all the urban units of the city, the largest number of births happened in Prima Arcella and in San Carlo. Quartiere 2 Nord was the neighborhood with the largest number of births among all the administrative neighborhoods.

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[8] In the "Appendix 2. Data visualization" it is possible to find a series of illustrative graphs, elaborated by the author, which aims at providing visual and more accessible modality of presentation of the data listed in this section.

[9] All the data refer to the most recent comprehensive demographical and statistical information provided by the municipality of Padua, which were the data concerning the year 2016.

The neighborhood is furthermore the one with the less negative natural increase rate of the entire city (see Table 2).

Table 2. Births and deaths in Padova and Arcella

	BIRTHS	DEATHS	
Q. 2 Nord	327	368	- 41
Q. 4 Sud-Est	326	461	- 135
Q. 6 Ovest	282	365	- 83
Q. 3 Est	275	456	- 181
Q. 5 Sud-Ovest	172	506	- 334
Q. 1 Centro	165	434	- 269
PADOVA	**1547**	**2591**	**- 1044**
Prima Arcella	135	149	- 14
San Carlo	129	137	- 8
San Bellino	28	33	- 5
ARCELLA	**292**	**319**	**- 24**

Source: Annuario Statistico Comunale 2016; personal elaboration

For what concerns the age of the residents, 4.268 of them are between 0-14 years old (12.61 %), 21.362 are between 15 and 64 (63.15 %), 8.193 are over 65 (24.22 %), a structure that reflects the average configuration of the age distribution of the population of the city (see Table 3).

Table 3. Age distribution of the neighborhood

AGE	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
0-14	4.268	12.61 %
15-65	21.362	63.15 %
> 65	8.193	24.22 %

Source: Annuario Statistico Comunale 2016; personal elaboration

For what concerns the presence of foreign residents, 9.268 residents are of foreign origins. Among them, 4.525 are women, while 4.743 are men. Among them, 2.152 are under 18 years old (23,22 %), while 7.116 are over 18 years old (76,78 %) (see Table 4). The presence of foreigner residents in each single urban unit

accounts as follows: 49% (4.545) of them are in Prima Arcella (accounting for 29,07 % of the entire population of the unit); 42 % (3.892) are in San Carlo (accounting for 26,44 % of the entire population of the unit); 9 % (831) are in San Bellino (accounting for 23,96 % of the entire population of the unit) (see Table 5).

The residents of foreigner origin accounts for 27,4 % of the entire population of the neighborhood, an element that highlights a consistent concentration of foreigners in the area, compared to other part of the city. The total number of foreigner residents of the city accounts for 32.984 (15,72 % of the entire population). This means that 28 % of the residents of foreign origin of the entire city lives in Arcella.

Table 4. Age and gender population distribution in Arcella and Padova

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	<18	>18
ARCELLA (Foreign residents)	4.743	4.525	9.268	2.152	7.116
PERCENTAGE	51,18 %	48,82 %	100 %	23,22 %	76,78 %
ARCELLA (Italian residents)	11.627	12.928	24.555		
PERCENTAGE	47,35 %	52,65 %	100 %		
ARCELLA (Total residents)	16.370	17.453	33.823		
PERCENTAGE	48,40 %	51,60 %	100 %		
PADOVA (Foreign residents)	15.387	17.597	32.984	7.059	25.925
PERCENTAGE	46,65 %	53,35 %	100 %	21,40 %	78,60 %
PADOVA (Italian residents)	83.217	93.628	176.485		
PERCENTAGE	47,15 %	53,05 %	100 %		
PADOVA (Total residents)	98.604	111.225	209.829		
PERCENTAGE	46,99 %	53 %	100 %		

Source: Annuario Statistico Comunale 2016; personal elaboration

Table 5. Distribution of foreign residents in the urban units of the neighborhood

URBAN UNITS OF ARCELLA	FOREIGNER RESIDENTS	TOTAL RESIDENTS	PERCENTAGE[10]
Prima Arcella	4.545	15.634	29,07 %
San Carlo	3.892	14.720	26,44 %
San Bellino	831	3.469	23,96 %
ARCELLA	9.268	33.823	27,4 %

Source: Annuario Statistico Comunale 2016; personal elaboration

Among all the administrative districts of the city, Arcella is the neighborhood with the highest concentration of foreigner residents. The total number of foreigner residents account in the different districts as follows: 12,84 % (3.318) of the population of Quartiere 1 Centro (25.835); 26,78% (10.460) of the population of the entire Quartiere 2 Nord (39.066); 15,74% (5.966) of the population of Quartiere 3 Est (37.899); 12,04% (5.648) of the population of Quartiere 4 Sud-Est (46.923); 10,13% (2.832) in Quartiere 5 Sud-Ovest (27.955); 14,80% (4.750) in Quartiere 6 Ovest (32.095); 10 without stable residence (see Table 6).

Table 6. Distribution of foreign residents in the administrative neighborhoods

NEIGHBORHOOD	FOREIGNER RESIDENTS	TOTAL RESIDENTS	PERCENTAGE[11]
Q. 2 Nord	10.460	39.066	26,78 %
Q. 3 Est	5.966	37.899	15,74%
Q. 4 Sud-Est	5.648	46.923	12,04%
Q. 6 Ovest	4.750	32.095	14,80%
Q. 1 Centro	3.318	25.835	12,84 %
Q. 5 Sud-Ovest	2.832	27.955	10,13%
No stable residence	10	/	/
PADOVA	32.984	209.829	15.72 %

Source: Annuario Statistico Comunale 2016; personal elaboration

[10] The data refer to the percentage of the foreign residents out of the total population of each urban unit.

[11] The data refer to the percentage of the foreign residents out of the total population of each administrative neighborhood.

Padua is a city which witnessed in the last twenty years a constant and fast increase in the number of immigrants. In 1995, the foreigner residents were 3.695, while in 2005 there were 18.263 foreigner residents, increased therefore by almost five times in ten years. Since 2010 there has been a stabilization around the 30.000 units (in 2010 there were 30.933 foreign residents, in 2015 there were 33.395, with a slight decrease in 2016 to 32.984).

The main countries of origin of the foreign residents in the Quartiere 2 Nord[12] are Romania (3.000), Republic of Moldova (1.258), China (1.052), Nigeria (971), Bangladesh (785), Philippines (457), Morocco (447), Albania (259), India (246), Pakistan (191), Sri Lanka (179), Ukraine (164), Cameroon (162), Kosovo (105), Tunisia (90), Serbia (63), Croatia (52), other countries (979) (see Table 7).

Another important factor to take into consideration when talking about the population of the neighborhood is the significative presence of students in the area, that are attracted by a more affordable housing offer. It is not possible to provide exact data about the number of students that live in the area, because usually students do not change their original residence when moving to the city of study, because of their temporary presence.

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[12] The data in this case refer to the entire Quartiere 2 Nord because the specific data about the single urban units were not available. The total number of foreigner residents in the Quartiere 2 Nord is 10.460, subdivided in 9.268 (88,6 %) in Arcella and 1.192 (11,4%) in Pontevigodarzere.

Table 7. The country of origins of the foreign residents of Quartiere 2 Nord

COUNTRY OF ORIGING	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE[13]
Romania	3.000	28,7 %
Republic of Moldova	1.258	12,03 %
China	1.052	10,06 %
Nigeria	971	9.28 %
Bangladesh	785	7,50 %
Philippines	457	4,37 %
Morocco	447	4,27 %
Albania	259	2,48 %
India	246	2,35 %
Pakistan	191	1,83 %
Sri Lanka	179	1,71 %
Ukraine	164	1,57 %
Cameroon	162	1,55 %
Kosovo	105	1,00 %
Tunisia	90	0,86 %
Serbia	63	0,60 %
Croatia	52	0,50 %
Other countries	979	9,36 %
TOTAL	10.460	100 %

Source: Annuario Statistico Comunale 2016; personal elaboration

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[13] The data refer to the percentage of the nationality out of the total foreign residents of the Quartiere 2 Nord.

3) *History*[14]

The historical development of the neighborhood is crucial in order to understand the present situation and its critical aspects, the urban development, the toponym, the creations of its landmarks, the local traditions and the strong sense of identity that characterizes the neighborhood.

The territory that Arcella covers is located outside the walls of the city of Padua, which were built over the centuries, starting from the original Roman walls. The walls were reinforced under the ruling of the Carrara family over the city during the 1300 and later in 1500 during the period of domination of the Republic of Venice over the city. The walls were the defense against military attacks from invaders and protected the city centre. The area outside the walls was countryside, characterized by the presence of scattered small rural settlements.

The historical event that made Arcella a special place that stood out from the other villages of the countryside is connected to the popular religious figure of Sant'Antonio, the most important patron saint of the city. Sant'Antonio was born in Lisbon in 1195, and after various travels he arrived in Padua in 1227. The population of the city regarded him as a special figure and started immediately to worship him. Its cult has lasted until nowadays, attracting pilgrims from the entire world to the city. The history of Arcella was strongly influenced by his life events. The 13th of June of 1231 he suddenly felt sick while he was in the nearby village Camposampiero. He asked to be carried to city, but during the transportation he managed to arrive just to a monastery[15] that was situated in the territory of nowadays Arcella, where he died. The place where he died, the "*cella*" (cell of the convent) became immediately a destination for worshippers, and presumably the origin of the name Arcella traces back to this event. The church is still today

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[14] The source of the entire historic overview of the neighborhood is "*Padova Nord. Storia di un quartiere*" by Leopoldo Saracini (Padova, 2002).

[15] Allegedly, some reports suggest that the initial monastery had been set up by San Francesco (saint patron of Italy) in 1220.

called Santuario dell'Arcella (or Sant'Antonino, in order to distinguish it from the Basilica di Sant'Antonio, located in the city centre and which has become the main center of worship of the saint).

The Santuario therefore became since 1231 an extremely important centre for the area, and the monastery and the church began to be expanded. What was for the citizens of the area a point of reference and a strong element of local pride, in 1500 faced a big threat.

The Republic of Venice was governing Padua, which was considered a strategic city because of its location. In 1509 the Republic of Venice, or the "*Serenissima*", was about to be attacked by the Lega di Cambrai, a league of different European states, under the guide of Maximilian I of the Habsburg family. In 1509 the army of Lega di Cambrai started their attacks, and while they were preparing the attack against Padua they established their headquarters exactly in the monastery of Arcella. The siege of the city in September 1509 ended up with the defeat of the troops of the Lega di Cambrai during the attack to the Bastione della Gatta, a bastion in the North city walls. The retreat of the army left behind a tragic legacy: the spread of the plague. The monastery became for a period a lazaret for the local area.

Even if the defensive plan of the Republic was successful, as Padova was an important stronghold and was crucial to be protected from future assaults, the Republic of Venice decided to adopt a new special strategic plan. The area outside the city walls would have to be totally destroyed, sweeping away every settlement and every tree, in order to deprive the invaders of any element that could be useful for their defense. The material collected from the buildings (houses, churches, villas) would have to be used for the reinforcement of the walls. This is what became known as the "*Guasto*" (the damage).

The "*Guasto*" swiped away centuries of history and worthy elements of architecture that had been built around the city. The Santuario of Arcella was exactly in the area defined by the Republic of Venice for the planned destruction.

Even if the inhabitants made every possible effort in order to prevent its destruction, the Republic of Venice did not allow any exception. The monastery, the church and the preserved "*cella*" where the saint died had to be destroyed. However, the inhabitants managed to partially transgress the decision imposed, changing the destiny of the area. They left a small votive capital in the place where the "*cella*" was located. This was the only element that survived the entire destruction of the area, and continued to be a place of worship during the following years.

In 1672 the Republic of Venice officially allowed the reconstruction of the sanctuary in the place designed by the votive capital. In 1675 the new church was completed. The connection therefore between the ancient Arcella and the new Arcella is this votive capital.

The area continued in the later centuries to be part of the countryside that surrounded Padova, with the revival of the cult around the Saint. An important date is the construction in 1792 of Viale Arcella, a tree-lined road that conducts to the Santuario. Since its construction the population has celebrated its anniversary with a popular festival held each September. This festival, called "*Sagra delle Noci*[16]" (countryside festival of the nuts), is celebrated in the surroundings of the Santuario. This festival, together with a procession celebrated each June 12 to remember the death of Sant'Antonio, are part of the ancient folklore of the neighborhood, still persisting nowadays. These annual events and their maintenance throughout the centuries show the pride and affection of the inhabitants for these moments of festivity and their willingness to maintain local traditions that are strictly embedded with the history, the identity of the place and the feeling of identification with it.

With the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century the rural nature of Arcella started to change. The construction of the railway in 1842, that

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[16] There are two possible grounds for explaining the origin of the name of the "Sagra delle Noci". October is the period when nuts ripen, and a nut tree was also the place where Sant'Antonio had built a suspended tree-hut where he could find relief during his prayers.

until today clearly cuts the area from the city centre, was the starting point of the new modern development of the area. In 1903, in order to facilitate the communications and transports between the city centre and the north part of the city, the first concrete viaduct of Italy was built next to the train station, by Daniele Donghi[17]. The viaduct, *Cavalcavia Borgomagno*, has become an important landmark of the area, and it serves symbolically as the main *entrance door* to the neighborhood, that, as previously mentioned, has extremely defined human-built borders that surround its entire territory.

The area has been crossed since ancient times by important lines of connections towards the cities in the North and the North-West. With the construction of the railway, and subsequently the viaduct, the expansion of the city towards the North was facilitated. Since the turn of the 20th century, it started to grow, and it quickly became the neighborhood of the city with the largest number of inhabitants.

This expansion started without any plan aimed at controlling and managing it. Just in the 1933 the first town plan "*Piano Piccinato-Munaron*" was developed, recognizing the necessity to control the urban expansion of the North settlement. However, World War II placed new challenges to the troubled destiny of destruction and reconstruction of the neighborhood. From December 1943 until 1945 the area suffered the most from the aerial bombings, probably because of its proximity to the station. Most of inhabitants were forced to flee. By the end of the war, 90 % of the houses, streets, schools, churches and cemeteries had been destroyed. The artistic heritage of the Liberty and Art-Decò villas built at the beginning of 1900 was seriously damaged. The only building that remained almost untouched was the church tower of the Santuario, which was used during the war as air-raid shelter. It was soon elected by the population as the symbol of the resistance and rebirth of the neighborhood.

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[17] The engineer and architect Daniele Donghi was also responsible for the reconstruction of the church tower of St. Marco in Venice, after the collapse in 1902.

Figure 1: Via Pietro Selvatico after the aerial bombings of December 16, 1946
Source: "Arcella e la sua Storia" Facebook page

Figure 2: the tower bell of the Santuario after the aerial bombings of the World War II
Source: "Arcella e la sua Storia" Facebook page

The war had some disastrous and long-term consequences on the future of the neighborhood, that still weighs on the present neighborhood and caused the emergence of new challenges. After the war, the people that left their homes during the bombings started to return to their houses. The area was therefore in urgent need of new buildings and infrastructures. The reconstruction was organized in a chaotic and unplanned way, without any regard to the town plan developed before the war. The process that began in those years went on relentlessly.

The major challenge that the neighborhood had to face was the increase of the population caused by the return of the displaced people, the births increase and a plan of displacement of residents who were living in disadvantaged conditions from the city centre to the North of the city. Furthermore, the lack of control over the reconstruction favored real estate speculations and the disorganized building expansion of the neighborhood.

In order to try to limit the damages, in 1957 a new version of the town plan Piccinato was prepared. This town plan continued to be changed between the '60s and the '70s. Finally, in 1975 Piccinato prepared a new town plan called "*Variante al Piano Regolatore*", that aimed at reconfiguring the area as a real independent, self-sufficient autonomous entity, that could be considered as a "*Padova Nova*" (new Padua).

However, by that time some of the consequences of the chaotic reconstruction were hardly possible to be tackled. The population had increased by four times, and the neighborhood was strongly dependent upon the city centre for most of the services.

Meanwhile, the social and economic structure of the neighborhood had deeply started to change. Following the economic boom after the war, many industries decided to locate their production in the neighborhood. Some of the most important were Saimp, Sangati, Fornace Morandi, Idrotermici, Pilli. The neighborhood became therefore a "*worker neighborhood*".

The transition from being a rural area to an industrial neighborhood was crucial

not just in terms of the new asset of the population, but also in terms of a transition from a countryside landscape visually characterized by scattered small houses and unpaved white roads, to asphalted streets and the disappearance of most of the green areas, victims of an indiscriminate urbanization and spread of concrete. According to Saracini (2002), this change from rural class to a worker class was also crucial in boosting the current wealth of the neighborhood in terms of associations and social groups, whose roots could be found in the traditional spirit of involvement in self-help or collaborative associations peculiar of the working class. This might have left a sign in the spirit of the population that could explain the great involvement in community projects and associations.

Figure 3: the former industry Sangati, where now Torre Gregotti is situated
Source: "La Difesa del Popolo" Webpage

The town plan of 1975 included the decision to close the industries of the area and relocate them in the new industrial area of the city, prompting the neighborhood to become a residential and commercial area. The former industrial buildings were converted into residential spaces or commercial centres. The area offers still nowadays a very interesting heritage of industrial architecture. The most interesting example of industrial renewal is the former *Fornace Morandi*. It has

been reconverted, maintaining its original peculiar structure, to host offices and a restaurant. However, the backlash of this successful renewal is the construction of new houses in some of the last remaining rural spaces in the surroundings (Cipriani, 2011).

The urban speculation still kept thriving in the following years with some debatable new urban projects, such as the plan to build a mammoth complex with four high towers along the main road that crosses the neighborhood from South to North (Via Tiziano Aspetti and Via Guido Reni) according to the Gregotti project of the '80s. Only one of the original four towers would be built, and the residents of the neighborhood expressed their refusal for the completion of the project during a referendum in 2006. The mobilization of citizens against the project is a remarkable sign of a grass-root activism in opposition to the idea of top-down urban plans, and in favour of bottom-up and participated urban planning.

An important new infrastructure for the neighborhood was the construction in 2007 of the tramline that crosses the entire neighborhood and connects it to the city centre. Even if initially the tram was welcomed by some residents with scepticism and by critics, caused by concerns related to traffic increase and reduction of the available parking space in front of the shops along the road, the tram has proved to be an important and crucial element of connection with the city centre, and one of the landmarks of the neighborhood.

The image of Arcella today is the one of a neighborhood densely populated, with a strong presence of concrete, trafficked roads and reduced number of green areas. These characteristics, caused by the urban development after the war, often strengthen a chaotic and claustrophobic feeling in some parts of the neighborhood (especially along the main roads Via Tiziano Aspetti, Via Guido Reni, Via Jacopo Avanzo). However, it should be highlighted that the neighborhood is highly diverse in its territory, and even if most of it is characterized by being urbanized, some parts still offer green places, more open landscapes and a traditional architecture typical of the period prior to the war (Liberty and Art-decò villas).

Still, the most interesting aspects of its history have left a sign in its present configuration. The most visible building, because of its height is Torre Gregotti (Gregotti Tower), while Cavalcavia Borgomagno (the viaduct) has become one of the most emblematic symbols of the neighborhood. Even if other "*entrance doors*" to the area have been built, thanks to the construction of three new overpasses in the South part of the city (Camerini-Guicciardini, San Marco, Sarpi Dalmazia), Cavalcavia Borgomagno is still the main "*entrance door*" and also one of the most debated places of the area, because of the drug dealing that is concentrated between it and the train station.

Another significant landmark both visually and also historically, is the Santuario. It is interesting to observe that, even if apparently it could be significant just as a religious symbol, the church and the church tower played important roles during historical events that influenced the history of the neighborhood. To sum up, the church has become since 1231 an important destination of worship because of the death of Sant'Antonio, one of the church pieces was the only remaining part that avoided the destruction planned by the Venetian *Guasto*, and the church tower was one of the few buildings that survived the World War II aerial bombings. Even if it is a religious building, it could serve also a symbol of a history of destruction, rebirth, radical change and continuous adaptation that has become the hallmarks of the history and identity of the neighborhood.

Arcella of 2017 is a territory where signs of its history can still be strongly perceived, not just in the urban fabric, but especially in the local traditions that are still alive, in a sense of belonging and attachment to the place of many residents, and in the perception of an identity of the place shaped by historical events, both positive and dramatic. The sense of community and shared identity that characterized the area during the past events has left an important heritage in the neighborhood of today. According to Saracini (2002) the rural identity of the territory and later its worker identity, as workers and farmers are the humblest social classes, favored the emergence of a spirit of solidarity and a tendency of aggregation. The strong bond to the territory and local identity typical of the rural

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communities and the importance of mutual support among workers contributed to the birth of associationism. In a similar way, also the religious centres of the area gave their contribution as space of youth aggregation, following the new social approach adopted by the church since 1891 (with the Rerum Novarum encyclic).

The history of Arcella is reflected nowadays in a rich heritage of associations, well-known industrial activities[18], parish churches, local choral and theatre groups and numerous sport associations. All these actors and factors have contributed throughout the history to offer symbols of identification, spaces of aggregation, opportunities of socialization and provision of services to the local population, shaping the local identity.

Thus, Arcella is a place where the past has left strong signs in the present identity and urban configuration of the territory, reflected in traditions and a strong identity, and that is struggling now to face the new challenges of the present. It is a place where the past donated a strong heritage, where the present offers the sight of a new society in the making, and where an envisioned future could be able to be built. It is a crucial place for the challenging attempt to reconcile the strong attachment to past and local traditions of the old residents with the new aspirations and use of spaces brought by its new residents.

May the local traditions be able to survive and embrace the newcomers, and be combined with newly shared memories or new emerging traditions? May the strong identity that characterize the past generations evolve in something new that is inclusive and strongly felt by everybody? May Arcella become the "*city of the future*", whose seeds might be already found in the neighborhood? May Arcella become an intercultural and sustainable urban space? These are many open questions we want to explore in the next chapter.

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[18] Even if the industrial activities have been dismissed, still the buildings or areas where they were located are called by the inhabitants with their name preceded by "ex" (for example ex Sangati, ex SAIMP, etc.). This expresses their persistence in the local memory of the neighborhood.

Figure 4: an aerial view of Arcella in the '50s
Source: "Arcella e la sua Storia" Facebook page

Figure 5: a recent aerial view of Arcella
Source: "Arcella e la sua Storia" Facebook page

Chapter 2. Analysis of the results

2.1 Descriptive analysis. A map of the neighborhood

Arcella is a complex environment, where the memory of the past, the challenges of the present and the wishes for the future are interlaced together, and where the aspirations, needs, concerns and wishes of its inhabitants cross the daily life of the neighborhood and of its spaces.

In order to understand the processes that have emerged in the neighborhood, and assess them with the lens of an integrated, multidirectional, interconnected and intertwined approach for building intercultural and sustainable cities, it is necessary to understand the physical and human fabric that compose the life of the neighborhood. In fact, this comprehensive approach, based on a bottom-up perspective, needs to take into consideration each aspect of the life in the neighborhood, and all the relevant actors involved in it. This approach takes into account all the actors and the resources they bring to the project, finding resources in the places that can serve to heal the problems and shortcomings of the neighborhood.

We will offer therefore a "map" of the neighborhood, highlighting some of the most relevant *actors*, and the *services* they provide, showing crucial and critical *spaces*, and depicting an image of the neighborhood and of its needs, resources, problems and challenges through the *perceptions* of its inhabitants[19].

1) Actors and services

This section highlights the relevant actors involved in the matter of the research. Keeping in mind the multidirectional side of our approach, the actors taken into consideration have been separated on the basis of their belonging to different

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[19] The actors and spaces that have been mapped are the result of the observations and of the elements gathered during the interviews and during the investigation on the field.

realms: civil society, institutional, political, religious, commercial, media, social media, cultural, artistic/creative, sport. The actors are presented with an overview of the services they provide, the projects they organized, the tools and approaches they apply, the resources they use and the relations among them (both with actors in the sectors, and with actors of other sectors).

Civil society (associations and informal groups of citizens)

One of the most interesting aspect emerged during the research is the wealth of the neighborhood in terms of associations and other civil society organizations or informal groups.

Some groups are physically present in Arcella (their offices, places of meetings, headquarters), others have been included because they have played relevant roles in the neighborhood during activities or projects, and therefore they have effectively engaged in the life of the neighborhood.

R.I.D.I.M. - Rete Italiana Donne Immigrate (Italian Network of Immigrant Women) is an association whose president lives in Arcella, and that has collaborated in some important projects in the neighborhood. The association was formed by some of the participants to a training course on the topic of prevention and combat of gender violence promoted by the University of Padua (Department of Philosophy, Sociology, Pedagogy and Applied Psychology) from October 2010 to June 2011. The course was financed by the European Union, within the Daphne III programme (Combating violence towards children, adolescents and women, 2007-2013). The course was open to women of foreign origin or women belonging to ethnic minorities. At the end of the course the participants received a certification as "community mentors". A community mentor is a figure that can play as a connection between the institutions and the local communities.

The objectives of the association, created by approximately 30 of the participants at the end of the course, focus on combating and preventing gender violence, strengthening resilience of women, creating networks among women (both

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immigrants and Italian) and raising awareness against stereotypes and gender violence. The association organizes and participates in conferences, public events, books presentation, theatre performances, photos exhibitions, workshops in the school of the territory. It collaborates often with other associations and municipalities of the local territory.

R.I.D.I.M. took part in the project "**ContArcella**", a project organized and managed by a group of associations in the neighborhood. It contributed with a workshop of photography and a photo exhibition called "**Raccontaci l'Arcella**".

In 2016 the president of the association was responsible for the project "**Incantamondo**", a series of readings of fairy tales coming from different parts of the world and read in the original language. The meetings were organized in the independent local library BiblioSanBe.

Xena is an association which promotes intercultural meeting and exchanges. Although it is not located in the neighborhood, it was the leader association in many projects that focused on the area. In 2014, it organized the project "**Photosocial**", with volunteers from the European Voluntary Service. The project was based on the methodology of the photovoice, and aimed at showing the neighborhood though the eyes of the photographers participating in the project. One of the shortcomings of the project was that it mainly involved not local actors. On the contrary, two of the most recent projects led by the association ("**ContArcella**" and "**Play Together**") are a collaboration among actors mainly situated in the neighborhood.

For what concerns the relation with the institutions, the association mainly operates independently. The funds for their projects come mainly from private foundations or from the European Union. An important source of financing is the local philanthropic foundation Fondazione Cariparo (belonging to the banking sector), that assigns funds to projects benefitting the community through a public call for applications (*Bando Culturalmente* and other public competitions). The association Xena is therefore not dependent on public funding, although they would appreciate some political and mediatic support.

The association developed a methodology that is at the basis of many of their projects called "*Go Deep*". This methodology was a combination of two other methodologies (the *Oasis Game* and the *Process Work/Art Democracy*). It focuses on the assets of a community or a territory instead of a focus on the needs and shortcomings. The appraisal of these assets is the starting point for the change in the communities and in individuals. This approach was at the basis also of the projects developed in the neighborhood.

Amici dei Popoli is an association founded in 2000. Their activities are mainly in the field of education and support of interculturalism. One of the activities they organize is courses in the schools on the topic of interculturalism and the promotion of open-mind attitudes. The association provides also linguistic facilitation and school support for the students of the local schools. Another initiative refers to the creation of an Italian course for women of foreign origin. The important aspect of the project is that it offers not just a language course, but also a baby-sitting service. This gives the opportunity to the mothers to participate to the course, that is held in the morning in some vacant rooms of a local school. The association was also part of the project "ContArcella", and collaborates with other associations in the area.

The *Cooperativa Sociale Il Sestante Onlus* is a cooperative that is involved in the neighborhood dealing with community building projects and asylum seekers reception. In 2016, one of their houses intended to host asylum seekers was severely damaged by unknown people. Following this event, and the concerns and complaints of some neighbors regarding the arrival of the asylum seekers, the cooperative organized a meeting with the residents aimed at sharing and listening to opinions, concerns and remarks. Since the arrival of the asylum seekers, the personnel of the cooperative have offered the neighbors the possibility to get in touch directly with them for any issue that could be problematic.

The group *Gruppo Vivere Bene San Bellino* was created out of the desire of a group of parents of one of the local schools to ameliorate the conditions of some green spaces around the school. Throughout the last 10 years they have mobilized energies and funds for the creation of some projects that concerned raising awareness for the promotion of an "environmental-friendly mentality". The most successful project was the creation of bike path on what was formerly a private and empty territory. The bike path is just the initial part of a much larger project for the creation of a "Greenway" that would cross the entire neighborhood and connect it to the city centre in the South and to the river Brenta in the North. The project encompasses also the creation of urban gardens along the path (some of them have been already created) and the creation of other spaces for meeting and recreational activities. In the planning of these spaces some high schools of Padua have been involved in order to propose ideas and project. Another purpose of the group is in fact to promote respect and appraisal of the environment starting from the school and the young generations.

Another more recent project is the beginning of a co-housing initiative. It aims at buying some abandoned buildings in the area and convert them into shared spaces of living following environmentally friendly principles. One of the spaces highlighted as suitable for this project is an abandoned house in the biggest park of the neighborhood, Parco Morandi.

The work of the group is coordinated by an architect from Argentina. In his opinion, one of the most difficult challenges of the project for the creation of the bike path was to invite residents to participate. He admits that the result, which took almost 10 years, would have not been possible without his personal effort and willingness to bring about the project. The project was finally realized also thanks to the contribution of the municipality. This was crucial for the expropriation of the private uncultivated field. The architect tells that at the beginning he was hindered by some residents who did not like the idea (addressing him with words such *"Go to do the farming reform in Argentina"*), and many others who believed that the project was impossible because of their distrusts towards the institution. In his opinion, the politics have gone very distant

from the population in the last years and this has created a feeling of distrust spread among many people. He says that:

"if people are not aware that everybody could do something to improve their territory, nothing will be done. It is up to us to improve it".

Another civil society group is ***Volontari per il Quartiere – Padova***. The group was created in 2016 in the neighborhood out of the initiative of a group of people that wanted to improve the situation of some neglected and dirty spaces. The group has the aim to get involved in the cleaning of areas in the entire city that suffer of problems of abandoned garbage, in order to improve the neighborhoods and create moments of aggregation.

Rete Arcella Viva is a network that gathers different civil society groups, groups of citizens and individual citizens. It adopts a bottom-up approach, that through the participation of residents of the neighborhood identifies needs and priorities in order to present them to the public administration and consequently, urge action from the public administration for a change.
Two of the actions of mobilization concerned a petition to block the project of a supermarket on the Parco Fantasia: its presence was not considered necessary for a neighborhood with an already rich commercial offer, and a petition to block the project for a reconversion of the Stadio Plebiscito, which was considered a pointless investment.
One of the participants to some of these activities expressed her opinion about the

"need of a creative action to stop the spread of concrete. Otherwise we give up in front of the power of the ones who have money. When it is detrimental for the community, we have to stop it. [Rete Arcella Viva works because it is] catalyzing diversity around a project of discovery and protection of the territory. It is a good experiment".

BiblioSanBe is an independent library that was created in 2014 by a group of parents living in the urban unit San Bellino. Through the access to some funds granted by the private philantrophic foundation Fondazione Cariparo they bought the furniture and books for opening the library. The library is situated in the premises of the parish church San Bellino, and is managed by a volunteer group of parents. The library hosts initiatives and events, such as the series of readings of foreign fairy tales "**Incantamondo**".

Other associations in the neihgborhood offer social services and cultural activities, such as the association *Domna*, or to homeless people, like the day-care centre *La Bussola*.

The neighborhood hosts also the social centre *Pedro*, politically active also during many actions in support of asylum seekers and migrants. In the spaces of the social Centre every Saturday morning the organic market "**Campi Colti**" is hosted that offers products of local small producers.

Institutional

The Social Service department of the municipality of Padua intervenes in the neighborhood with two particular initiatives, alongside the traditional support to people and families in need.

In the neighborhood there are two *C.A.T., Centro di Animazione Territoriale* (Territorial Recreational Centre), "Gig" and "Jump". They offer a space for children from 6 to 14 years for recreational activities and scholastic support, managed by educators from a cooperative.

Tavolo Arcella is an initiative established in 2007 by the Social Service department of the municipality in order to create a platform of coordination of the different actors present in the neighborhood which are involved in social projects.

It includes mainly representatives of the local schools, associations, local parish churches, informal groups and single citizens. It aims at being a connection between the Social Services and the local reality, and to provide an opportunity of meeting, connection and discussion among the different stakeholders of the territory in order to manage and plan common projects and strategies. The direction of Tavolo Arcella is granted by the public administration to a cooperative, through a public competition. At the moment, it is coordinated by the president of the cooperative **Train de Vie**, whose members are social workers from different fields that since 2012 have focused on community building projects for the municipality of Padua.

The coordinator of Tavolo Arcella explains that

"one of the main problems which has emerged in the last two years is isolation, both of the people in need, that tend to close on themselves and subsequently to ask for help to the institutions [...] And also by who provides aid: the various associations, actors, schools. [...] We have to be open".

Therefore, one of the main purposes of Tavolo Arcella is to facilitate the collaboration among the different stakeholders, in order to find resources and ideas for the solution of needs and problems of the neighborhood and its inhabitants.

Its public meetings are held once a month, and they take place in the **C.A.T. Jump**. The work of the group is carried out with an initial mapping of the needs of the neighborhood. The discussion about the needs allow the participants to get to know each other, share their perspectives and identify which resources they can provide to the community. The main target of the Tavolo Arcella is families and children, but the projects scope gets enlarged to encompass also other residents such as elders.

The approach of Tavolo Arcella is rooted in the "*Welfare Generativo*" (Generating Welfare). The "*Welfare Generativo*" (*WG*) is an approach developed in Italy in 2012 by the Fondazione Zancan. The WG is seen as a new model of

welfare, that is not dependent on the provision of financial aids by the state, but it focuses on the possibility to "regenerate" the resources already present in a territory or community and empowering the people in need, in order to improve the impact of the social policies for the benefit of the entire community (www.welfaregenerativo.it).

The approach of Tavolo Arcella aims therefore at empowering the people of the territory to let them be autonomous and self-sufficient. Following this model, Tavolo Arcella aims first at coordinating the provision of services to satisfy the needs of the residents, through the creation of initiatives, activities and projects. The following and envisioned step is that the people who have taken advantage of these services would then be empowered for the solution of their own problems and needs.

Some examples of the projects supported by Tavolo Arcella are language courses for immigrant mothers, sewing courses for immigrant women, festivals of the associations. These initiatives aim at offering to the participants opportunities of meeting, network building and acquisition of new competences, that could later allow them to have new skills and to provide new resources to the community (also in terms of social capital). The main idea is therefore to enable the development of relation of reciprocity and process of mutual help and self-help, from the first step of letting people get to know each other to the last step of reaching autonomy, when people are freed from the dependence on social aid.

Education

In the neighborhood there are different elementary and middle schools: *3°* *Istituto* (elementary schools Leopardi and Muratori; middle school Briosco), *4°* *istituto* (elementary schools Rosmini and Salvo d'Acquisto, middle schold Zanella), *5° Istituto* (elementary schools Deledda and Mantegna, middle school Donatello). There are also three high schools (ENAIP, Liceo Scientifico Eugenio Curiel, IIS Giovanni Valle).

The neighborhood hosts also the first Italian-Chinese school. The lessons in the school are taught in Italian, Chinese and English by native speakers. The venture

includes a nursery, primary and secondary school, and is open to day students and boarders. On one of the walls of the school there is a sign that reads *"Without English, without a job. Without Chinse, without a future"*.

Among the interviewees, a teacher of one of the primary schools expressed her opinion about the new challenges that school and the education system are facing. She told that the usual distance that she has always tried to maintain with children and family in this multicultural environment is very difficult to be kept. In most of the schools of the neighborhood in fact the classes are multicultural, and in some of them the students of Italian origin are the minority. This de facto multiculturalism in the classes makes her say that

"I don't distinguish anymore an intercultural project from other projects. For us this is the reality".

The teacher expresses the difficulty to manage this new reality, presenting many elements that have increased the burdens and responsibilities on the teachers. The situation became more difficult especially after the decision by the previous public administration (run by the mayor Massimo Bitonci) to abolish the figure of the mediators. The mediators were responsible for welcoming the new families, explaining them the Italian school system and accompany the children through the transition into the new school system. The teacher says that

"it is a very exhausting context, but it is also extremely stimulating. […] But you always feel quite inappropriate, because you find yourself alone to face things that do not pertain your job. From signaling difficulties, to give support…".

Furthermore, she stresses the excessive increase of bureaucracy issues related to safety and security, which created often obstacles and long processes of authorizations for the implementation of projects. She explains also that many extra activities lack funds, but despite this the teachers decide to organize them because they are convinced of their importance. She stresses the importance of

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activities that let students learn the geography of the new territory they live in, such as tours of the neighborhood, visits to the local library, to the movie theatre and the city centre.

She explains the difficulties that arise in the relations with families, saying that

 "*sometimes the parents don't trust us, and we don't trust them because they tell us unbelievable stories, often to justify the fact that they don't have a lot of time to spend with their children. The main concern is in fact the job and the food. […] There is mistrust, they think that we are racist. But the distance starts to disappear, when they get to know us, but it takes a long time*".

Abandoning partially the distance that she used to maintain with the students, she slowly became an important point of reference for the children and their families. An element that she highlighted is the decision of many families to leave Italy and move abroad.

She explains that usually the families of the children of Italian origin have no problems with the multiculturalism of the classes. On the contrary, usually their decision to enroll their children in the schools of the neighborhood is based on the desire to let them grow in a multicultural and diverse environment.

A successful initiative that managed to put in contact the school with families was an open party with a potluck picnic organized in one of the parks of the neighborhood in collaboration with the trade labors.

Religious and cultural

The main religious actors in Arcella are the Catholic parish churches. In the neighborhood eight parish churches can be found: ***Santuario dell'Arcella***, ***Santissima Trinità***, ***Gesù Buon Pastore*** and ***S. Lorenzo da Brindisi*** in the urban unit Prima Arcella; ***San Bellino*** in the urban unit San Bellino; ***San Carlo Borromeo***, ***San Gregorio Barbarigo*** and ***San Filippo Neri*** in the urban unit San Carlo. The parish churches have played throughout the history of the neighborhood an important role as places of sociality and aggregation, especially

for the younger generations. They provide spaces for practicing sports (playgrounds, sport fields), for meeting and for gathering of the local community.

Their central role, even when the neighborhood is still important, has been challenged by the evolution of a multi-ethnic society. During the interviews, many interviewees recognized the role still played by the church, but also complained about the lack of nonreligious places of aggregation and the need of them. Moreover, some people interviewed who belong to parish churches communities complained that less people attend the parish churches activities.

Nonetheless, their central role in the neighborhood is still clearly visible, they are part of local networks (such as **Tavolo Arcella**) and collaborate with the municipality, and many parish churches offer services that are not related just to the religious sphere. One of the most important services they offer to the neighborhood is the management of after-school programs that host children and provide aid for homework, with the help of professional educators and volunteers. There is a coordination of this service among the schools, the municipality and the different parish churches involved in the project. The majority of the students who benefits from this service are children from parents of foreign origins.

Moreover, some churches offer in their buildings places for other associations, such as Caritas (a charitable Catholic association that offers aid to the people in need). The church of Gesù Buon Pastore hosts for example the NGO Amici dei Popoli, a centre for asylum seekers managed by the association Popoli Insieme, a shelter house (in collaboration with the Social Service unit) where people in need are hosted, a Scout association and other youth clubs. Some representatives of the church interviewed highlighted that an increasing number of foreigners is taking advantage of the activities offered in the parish church, enrolling their children to the youth clubs and sport courses.

In the neighborhood, there are also other centres belonging to different religions. There is an evangelic church, ***Chiesa Cristiana Evangelica Assemblee di Dio in Italia***, located in Via Altichieri da Zevio 3.

A significative number of other religious centres is located in a peripheric area of the neighborhood, where warehouses are mainly concentrated, together with some private houses. In Via Tunisi 27b it is possible to find the orthodox Moldovan church *Biserica ortodoxa Sfinta Parascheva*. The building where the church is located was a warehouse occupied by a night club before the church was created. The walls of the warehouses in the street of the church are entirely covered with murals. In front of the church there are three large murals created by a Moldovan author that depicts scenes from the Moldovan tradition.

Near to the orthodox church, in Via Bernina 18, a complex of former warehouses hosts a very diverse type of communities, religious celebrations and activities. In the large complex until few years ago there were three nightclubs; they were closed, mainly as a response to the many complaints by residents about noises and disorder in the area. Now the buildings have become the place of gathering for *Al Farouk*, an Islamic cultural centre run by the association Meccha, the evangelic Chinese church *Chiesa Cristiana Evangelica Cinese di Padova* and other Christian places of worship and associations belonging to communities from the African continent: *All Christian Fellowship International*, *Christ Apostolic Church Of God Mission, Holy Covenant Adoration Church, Associazione Culturale Congolese A.C.C., Unione Sacra d'Africa*. The same complex hosts also a gym for climbing, Intellinghenzia Project, and the recreational centre for children Mappaluna.

The concentration of these religious places in a peripherical and industrial area that is not highly visible by the local residents reflects the tendency highlighted by Sandercock (2000b) of allocating spaces for the "new religions" in the light industrial zone, separated from the residential areas and not connected by public transportation.

A different example is offered by the other Islamic centre of the neighborhood. The *Bangladesh Islamic Cultural Centre Padova Italy* is located since 2012 in Arcella. The premises of the centre reflects the same tendency of spaces allocation for the "new religions". In fact, the centre is situated in a

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building formerly used for car fixing activities, warehouse and a gym and now privately owned by the association. Nonetheless, the location of the centre differs from the case of the other religious centres. The building is located in Via Jacopo da Montagnana 7, Prima Arcella, in the proximity of the main street Via Tiziano Aspetti, where many commercial activities of the neighborhood are situated.

The aim of the association is to organize language courses (Bangladeshi, Italian, Arabic) and to provide a space where to gather for prayer and for celebrating cultural and religious festival together. The main purpose is therefore the maintenance of the cultural roots, especially for the younger generation, through the study of the mother tongue and the maintenance of religious and cultural traditions. The language courses are held by an imam. One of the members of the community interviewed expressed the importance of the centre as a place "*for the future of the children*", who in the school speak Italian but have an opportunity to learn their mother tongue in this centre.

The centre is run by a council of 21 members; the total number of members of the association is approximately 350. Despite most of the participants to the activities of the centre are from Bangladesh, there are guests also from other countries that take part to festivals or celebrations. The members of the staff administration who were interviewed told that also some Italians happen to take part to some celebrations. They told that the contact with the public administration and some political figures from the centre-left was easier than the contact with the centre-right public administration.

The centre is open every day, and the community gathers especially during the weekends and for the celebration on the holy day Friday. Other festivals celebrated are 'Eid-ul-fitr' (the end of the Ramadan), the International Mother Language Day of Mothertongue (21 February) and other festivities such as the Italian New Year's Eve. The costs to maintain the premises and the activities are covered by donations of the members of the community.

The local media reported widely about complaints and opposition by some neighbors and by the public administration against the centre. In July 2015,

approximately fifty residents started a collection of signatures for a petition against the centre, complaining about the socio-hygienic conditions of the centre, noises and problems with viability and parking places created by the numerous guests of the centre. The then mayor Massimo Bitonci welcomed their claims expressing his concerns for the "run-down" conditions of the building.

In December 2015, the centre was attacked at night by a paper bomb thrown, together with damages on a door of the building.

When asked about the relation with the neighbors, the members of the administration staff interviewed insisted on the fact that the atmosphere in the centre and in the area has always been quiet and there have been no problems with the neighbors. They stressed that since they are in the building, the streets in the surrounding have been kept much cleaner and tidier. One of the persons interviewed expressed the opinion that at the beginning proximity with what is new brings always problems, but after getting to know each other it is possible to live together quietly and peacefully. During the interview, it was clear that there was a certain attitude of caution and prudence. Nonetheless, the interview was carried smoothly, until the point when the interviewees suspected that the researcher was a journalist. Their attitudes changed immediately to what was perceived as a stance of closure and suspicion. This reaction was interpreted by the researcher as a consequence of the past events reported in the media which presented the centre in a bad light. This may have resulted in an extreme feeling of mistrust towards the local media and an attitude of closure, explained by the concern that the words and opinions they share might be used in a misleading way against them and their activities. This reaction proves to which extent the local media played an important and, in this case disruptive, role in the matter of integration, acceptance of difference, circulation of stereotypes, facilitation of smooth relations between the different communities of the territory.

Political

As previously mentioned, Arcella has been a central issue in the political discourse, which also contributed to the spread of the negative image of the

neighborhood. The recent election campaign, that led in June 2017 to the election of the new mayor Sergio Giordani (centre-left), put even more light on the neighborhood, whose votes were considered crucial for the victory of the elections.

According to many interviewees, the previous city council had focused mainly on the negative aspects of the neighborhood, and on the priority of combating the urban decay of the area and reinforcing security measures. During the election 2017 the majority of the votes of the neighborhood during the second ballots went to the new candidate Sergio Giordani. Many people interviewed considered the result of the elections, that did not reconfirm the previous mayor Massimo Bitonci (centre-right), as a sign of disappointment for the previous positions of the council towards the neighborhood.

After the first ballot, the forces supporting the candidate Sergio Giordani created a coalition with another new political force, the civil list *Coalizione Civica*, led by Arturo Lorenzoni (who is now deputy mayor). The civil list *Coalizione Civica*, created by a movement of residents in October 2016, offered a new approach in the direction of deliberative democracy, that embraces a bottom-up and participatory approaches. The experiment of the participatory budgeting of Porto Alegre[20] was for the list an inspiring model.

Some of the proposals that they presented in their electoral program stressed a focus on environmental sustainability, regeneration of neglected spaces and creation of more direct forms of participation and involvement of citizens into the public decisions, all issues which concerned the neighborhood Acella.

For what concerns the governance of neighborhoods, the new administration has pointed out the necessity to bring the institution closer to the citizens through the presence of committees in the neighborhoods. Until 2014 each neighborhood had a "*Consiglio di Quartiere*", a group of representetives directly elected by the citizens. In 2014 the "*Consigli di Quartiere*" were substituted with the "*Comitati di Quartiere*", a new organ that had only an advisory role and that resembled the

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[20] In 1989 the municipality of Porto Alegre (Brazil) launched the participatory budgeting experiment, based on a process of direct democracy that entitle citizens to decide how to invest a part of the resources of the municipality.

political structure of the municipal council because the members were nominated by the mayor. The proposal of Coalizione Civica was to make all citizens part of public discussion and decision, through the creation of thematic groups and various "*laboratorio di rione*" (neighborhood laboratory) that could be open to everybody and offer the possibility of discussion and deliberation on the matters that concern the neighborhoods. Another proposal addressed the lack of public funds and suggested to foster the application for projects of urban regeneration funded by European Union funds.

The centrality of Arcella for the governance of the city can be seen also in the decision of the new mayor to define the neighborhood as a specific section of the new political program, first during the election campaign proposing the plan "*Patto per l'Arcella*" (Pact for Arcella), and then being responsible for the "*Progetto Arcella*" (Arcella project) and assigning a specific member of the council as delegate to the neighborhood.

Media

Most of the interviewees expressed the opinion that the local media had most of the responsibility for creating a negative, unprecise and stereotyped image of the neighborhood. The local sources that mostly focused on the provision of negative news about the neighborhood *are **Il Mattino di Padova, Il Gazzettino - Padova** and **Padova Oggi***. The aspects that the news highlighted are the phenomena of drug dealing, prostitution, micro-criminality and scuffles among groups mostly of foreigners.

An opposite direction was taken by **La Difesa del Popolo**, a newspaper affiliated with the local diocese. The newspaper opened on their webpage a section called "**Sguardi d'Arcella**", whose responsible was a young journalist doing a stage in the newspaper within a project financed by the Veneto Region. The director of the newspaper and the journalist, who is not native of Padua, decided to start the project aiming at telling the reality of the neighborhood in a different way. The news focused on stories of the diverse people that live in the

area, and encompassed more communication forms (such as the writing form, the photography and the web, through the creation of a Facebook page for the dissemination of the stories). The idea originated from the personal interest of the two journalists, much based on the commitment to provide a more balanced and less biased information about the neighborhood. The journalist in charge of the project stated that his *"aim was to 'normalize' the situation"*. The purpose of the project was therefore to tell about the neighborhood through the eyes and stories of the people who know and live it.

The series of articles contained some longer reports about the history of the neighborhood; they highlighted its evolution and changes, and gave an insight in the life of common people that are involved in activities in the neighborhood. The people whose stories and perspectives have been told are very varied, ranging from young, old, members of parish churches, organizations or sports association, shop-keepers, to Italians and foreigners.

In the opinion of the director of the newspaper, the project wanted to show the potential of the neighborhood considering it with a positive outlook. The aim was not to embark in an ideological battle, but in his opinion *"just doing journalism, that is telling what happens in a honest manner. What happens sometimes is not told"*. The newspaper is religiously-affiliated, but the message that they conveyed with the project was a universal one. In his opinion,

"[one of the aims] was to let emerge the layer of good deeds that there is in society, and that doesn't find space on the newspaper usually. We believe that there is a point of meeting between believers and non, of all the people of good will that look at humanity without a cynical outlook, that is able to go beyond the language and the color of the skin."

The director stressed the fact that a new type of information is crucial for documenting and supporting the new reality of the city and of the neighborhood, both for the "original" Paduans, and also for the new-comers. He said that

"Historic Paduans (people who have been here for more than 30 years) need this type of information. We are in the rush of an epochal change. [...] We have not metabolized the possibility that a Paduan resident could have a Sikh turban, or that he can be Muslim. But they are Paduan. The diversity has especially sparked in the school, where multiculturality is reality. It is also a process that is spreading among the parents. The historic citizens need this kind of information to be helped, accompanied to understand that the world is changing, it is not as it was once in the past. [...] But we shouldn't demonize this time and we should understand that Arcella is beautiful also if there is the Romanian shop and the 'casoin' [word from the Venetian dialect indicating a small local grocery shop]".

Also for newcomers a different and new type of information would be crucial. In his opinion, *"we have a de facto multicultural society, but we don't have a multiethnic publishing industry".* Newcomers therefore cannot read news in their languages that pertain the place where they live. In his opinion, this could be useful and important in order to give the possibility to newcomers to discover, get integrated and better understand local values and traditions. As he said,

"There is a difficulty for foreign families to understand that also this context brings values, that shouldn't disappear. [...] And that they could virtuously get involved in this"

<u>Social media</u>

Many groups and projects ongoing in the neighborhood have found in Facebook a crucial platform for the spread of information, and also a way of virtual gathering of impressions, opinions, complaints and appraisal of Arcella.

Some initiatives such as "***SìAmo Arcella", "Sguardi d'Arcella", "ContArcella"*** and ***"Rete Arcella Viva"*** have used the social media for updates about their projects. Other groups, such as for example ***"Sei dell'Arcella se…",***

"We love Arcella" and *"Quartiere ARCELLA"* were created for the purpose of giving the opportunity to the members to share initiatives, photos, opinions about the neighborhood. Some pages, such as *"Arcella Liberty"* and *"Arcella e la sua Storia"* are focusing on the history and the architecture heritage of the neighborhood. It is interesting for example to observe the posts regarding old photos and postcards of the neighborhood, as well as photos of current events and initiatives.

The most interesting case is the page "*Arcellatown*", created in early 2017. It has become extremely popular in a very short time. The majority of the people interviewed knew the existence of the page and they spoke about it with enthusiasm, considering it a very interesting and positive initiative. The page has been created by two friends, 30 years old, who grew up in the neighborhood. The driving motive was the wish to show the positive aspects of the neighborhood, and to encourage people to visit and to live the neighborhood. They use irony as a powerful tool to raise the interest of people, to make them laugh both over signs of identification with the neighborhood, but also about its problems. The modality that they have adopted has proved to be successful, and the creators of the page are themselves surprised of the high resonance the page acquired and the response they got from the residents. Many people have become active on the page, and the posts and photos often spark discussion among the users. Many have started to contact the administrators with provision of new photos and recommendation of local initiatives.

The page has slowly started to become increasingly concerned on more "serious" topics, to the extent that during the election campaigns they were criticized as being covertly partisan. Others contacted them with the proposal to collaborate together in a political project, and others suggested that their page influenced also the election results. Despite this, the administrators have made clear that the page was not meant to support any of the candidates, but that it has simply an open-mind approach to diversity and to the reality of the neighborhood.

The page has therefore become a kind of powerful incubator of a re-emerging sense of pride and identification of the residents, a space of discussion, a way to

propose projects for the neighborhood, and a platform for spreading information about the events going on in the neighborhood, everything done with a distinctive touch of irony and wit.

The creators of the initiative expressed during the interview the possibility that the initiative could move at one point from the virtual sphere to the reality, with the organization of a festival or similar initiatives. So far, the social media strategy has proved to be successful and to gather the interest and affection of many residents.

Sport

The neighborhood is extremely rich in sports associations, both private and connected to the parish churches. The most important sports centres are the centres **Colbacchini** and **Plebiscito**.

A sport association whose activities have also focused on Arcella is the independent **Polisportiva San Precario**. All the members of the sports association are volunteers, and the focus of their activities span beyond the simple sport practice. Two of their initiatives were of particular interest for the neighborhood. They were responsible for the renovation of the sports fields in one of the most popular parks of the neighborhood, Parco Milcovich, and for a festival in the park that reached its second edition this year. Furthermore, they created a team called **"Welcome Team"**, that is formed half by Italian and half by asylum seekers.

The Polisportiva San Precario is also in contact with cooperatives of the area that host asylum seekers, and have involved some of them to work in summer during the festival **"Sherwood"**. The sport association took part in some public discussion of **Coalizione Civica**, and was also contacted by the new public administration for advisory purposes.

Artistic/creative

SìAmo Arcella is a group of 5 photographers that started to photograph Arcella in the early June 2017. Their name is a deliberate pun, because it can

sound as two different meanings: "*Sì Amo Arcella*" ("*Yes, I love Arcella*") and "*Siamo Arcella*" ("*We are Arcella*"). The group was born out of the desire of a group of friends who are passionate about photography to start a personal project, with their words *"not just to speak about photography, but do something"*.

None of them lives in Arcella, but they are familiar with the area for different personal reasons. They picked the neighborhood as the subject of their photos because in their opinion it offers a huge potential in terms of people and stories. Furthermore, there was no other photography project in the city that focused on Arcella.

Their starting point is the wish to document the diverse reality of the neighborhood, offering to the public an insight in the neighborhood through the photos they are publishing on their Facebook page. The photos they are gathering reflect the different approaches of each of member of the team (such as portraits, street photography, staged photography, landscape/architecture photography).

Since the beginning of their activities, the group has documented many public events that took place in the neighborhood. In October 2017 they organized also a "photo-walk" which was part of a larger competition opened worldwide (Scott Kelby worldwide Photowalk 2017), that saw 46 participants walking together through the neighborhood gathering photos.

The members of SìAmo Arcella clarify that they are not working as journalists or activists. Their principal aim is to use the artistic expression they are passionate about to document the reality of Arcella. Nonetheless, they do not exclude for the future the possibility to focus on topics that could push them more towards a type of documentary photography or photojournalism.

During their activities, they were welcomed by many residents in a very positive way. They found some difficulties when approaching some residents of foreign origin, but they tried to overcome this obstacle asking for some suggestions to *Arising Africans*, an association that gathers second generation Italians.

Another important aspect of Arcella in the field of artistic and creative creations is the presence of many murals and street art pieces. Many crews of street artists have chosen Arcella as the ideal space for their work, because of the abundance of

warehouses, large walls or run-down buildings. Besides young street artists, the area is also rich with pieces created by popular street artists from Padua. One of the most well-known street artist in the city, **Tony Gallo**, lives in Arcella and has created some pieces in the neighborhood. Other pieces that can be found in the neighborhood are signed by **Kenny Random**, **Alessio-B** and **Joys**. All of them are street artists with a well-known reputation also abroad.

A young street artist had recently the idea to organize two tours for visiting the areas where the murals are concentrated. The initiative was successful, proving that the "*graffiti tourism*" that has become popular in many cities in Europe could prompt the neighborhood to recognize the presence of this artistic expression as an important asset, not just in terms of tourism but also in terms of ameliorating some spaces in need of regeneration. The association **Geos**, that was created in memory of the local young street artists Giacomo Ceccagno (whose stage name was Geos), is working in this direction, trying to facilitate the collaboration of young street artists in common projects and to appraise the role of street art.

Commercial spaces

The neighborhood offers a very wide range of shops and commercial activities. What was pointed out by many of the interviewees is the rich offer of restaurants of different countries and shops that sell "ethnic" products (both food and accessories). Especially around *Cavalcavia Borgomagno*, most of the shops are run by residents of foreign origin, that took over empty spaces left by Italian owners and provide a choice of cheap products. The presence of this wide variety of diverse shop marks visually and symbolically the arrival to the neighborhood.

The main street Via Tiziano Aspetti (that later changes its name into Via Guido Reni) is the street where most of the retailing activities of the area are concentrated, and where it is possible to find a great variety of shops and ethnic restaurant.

In the nearby of Cavalcavia Borgomagno, it is possible to find within walking distance the presence of a restaurant with an offer of organic and 0 km

food, the ***Osteria di Fuori Porta***, and the last movie theatre of the neighborhood, ***Cinema Multiastra***. The restaurant and especially the movie theatre are two places of the neighborhood that have managed to attract the attention also of people that come from outside the neighborhood. The restaurant organizes also some free events such as the series of music and dance **"Arcella Folk"**. Another space of recreation that has become well-known also outside the neighborhood is the pub ***Gasoline***, located in the far North of the neighborhood.

In the neighborhood there is also a space that offers the possibility of an ethical and responsible shopping, thanks to the presence of a shop run by the association ***Angoli di Mondo***, where it is possible to find "ethnic" products, products from the fair trade and second-hand items.

It is also interesting to observe the presence of new agencies, in the field of web management and design. One of them, the 3D printing company ***3DiTALY Padova***, seems to use the location in the neighborhood as a "branding" strategy, saying that *"[we open in Arcella], a historic city neighborhood often in the spotlight because of its complex and multiethnic nature. Fully in line with our philosophy, we start from here to enhance from the bottom a socio-economic texture that made the story of the small and the middle entrepreneurship, which was severely drained by the modern crisis"* (https://www.3ditaly.it/padova/).

Limerick is an independent bookshop located on the main street Via Tiziano Aspetti, in the same building that hosts also the movie theater ***Multiastra*** and its cafè. The library is run by two young women, friends and former colleagues at the University of Padua, who decided to take up a challenge and follow their shared dream of creating a literary-cafè. Their project started to become reality in 2013, when they attended a course for training and support to start-up projects organized by the Veneto Region. Between 2013 and 2015 they struggled to find a space for the library, that could offer convenient visibility, location and rent prices. One of the problems they encountered during their search was the difficulty to find an affordable space, because of the stubbornness of many owners of vacant spaces (that are abundant in the area) to lower the prices,

preferring to leave the space empty instead of considering the possibility to lower the rents. Despite this, the two booksellers were convinced to open the bookshop in Arcella. They had been living since they were students in the area, and they got affectionate to the place. In their opinion, the neighborhood has a lot of potential, but it is often concealed by many prejudices that dissuade students and outsiders to move to the neighborhood. The neighborhood on the contrary is extremely livable, and it offers all services. However, they also felt the need of spaces of aggregation, and the idea of the bookshop originated also from this need.

Their aim was the creation of a place where people can meet, spend time, get to know each other through activities and time shared together. They project is aimed therefore not just at selling books, but also at offering possibilities of encounters.

Some of the activities organized throughout the year are meetings with authors, presentation of books, workshops for children in the library and in schools (about journalism, archeology, etc.), courses of reading out loud and of creating writing.

The response they got from the neighborhood was extremely positive. Many people, even already during the work of restoration of the space, were entering the shop to say thanks for the decision to open there. Many mothers are thankful for the presence of a place where they can not only buy books, but that also find stimulating activities for their children. One of the booksellers says that:

"I am touched when people thank us for opening. It was needed, after people had to listen for so many years things like: 'oh my God, you live in Arcella, it is such an awful, terrible, dangerous place, how can you stand it?'. Finally, somebody was giving them a sign in an opposite direction. A positive sign, […] because somebody was finally saying that your neighborhood is beautiful and it is a place where to invest. Even if it is a kind of uncultivated field, you can find there a lot of things."

The clients of the bookshop are mainly families, even if the booksellers had expected more students, given the large number of them that live in the area.

Another target is the foreign population of the neighborhood. They explain that it is more difficult, and they are still struggling to find new ways to involve them, asking directly to foreign families whenever they have the opportunity.

In the bookshop there is a selection of books in different languages (English, French, Chinese, Arabic, German), but not so many people look for them. They think that this offer could be beneficial for the families of foreign origins, because it is an opportunity for the children for maintaining the written form of their mother tongue and not just the spoken form. A possible way they have found in order to reach out to foreign families is the organization of projects in schools, or the collaboration with associations of foreigners. For example, they celebrated the Chinese New Year's Day together with a Chinese-Italian association. In their opinion, it is crucial to find a channel that could facilitate the connection with groups of people of foreign origin. The modality of involving an association as a channel for reaching out to new people proved to be a successful method. Another association they collaborated with is *Arising Africans*, a group that gathers second generation Italians. So far, the process of involving new people of foreign origin develops slowly but steadily, especially through the engagement of mothers.

Limerick has collaborated in different occasions with associations of the neighborhood. They took part in the projects "**ContArcella"** and **"Play Together"**. Another occasion that prompted them to collaborate with other local shop-owners of the area was the mobilization against the mayor decree "anti-kebab", that imposed the closing of the businesses of the area at 8 pm. All the other shop-owners affected by the decree are of foreign origin, and this was an opportunity to meet and discuss with them during initiatives of meeting and sharing organized by a trade union.

Ruvido Barber Rock Club is a barber shop that opened in May 2017 and is located in Viale Arcella, next to the Santuario di Sant'Antonino. The purpose of the owner is to combine a traditional barber shop, designed with a rock style, with the organizations of concerts and initiatives free of charge and open to all residents. From May 2017 to October 2017 there have been three open concerts

and the owner of the shop collaborated to a "*pumpkin scavenger hunt*" for Halloween 2017, organized by a parent of a student of a local school, that involved the participants in a search through the neighborhood.

A space that has become a place of gathering, meeting and conviviality is the *Piazzetta Buonarrotti*. Especially after the opening of a Kebab and pizza restaurant run by a resident of foreign origin, the small square has become a lively and common place of meeting for friends and families. Many of the interviewees lamented the lack of a public square in the neighborhood, and Piazza Buonarrotti despite its limited seize is one of the few places that offer bars, restaurants with cheap prices, some benches under the trees, spaces for sitting outside and other nearby shops such as an ice-cream place, an art gallery, a flower shop and garments shops.

The owners of the shops of the square and the surroundings have gathered in a group with the aim of managing the public space in front of their activities and in the square, in order to keep it clean and inviting. Lamenting the lack of efforts of the public administration for the upkeep and cleaning of the area, they have organized an informal committee for gathering among them the financial resources necessary to pay a person responsible for cleaning the public spaces every day.

All these elements have favored the new central role as a hub of meeting and conviviality that the square has acquired.

All the afore-mentioned cases, especially the library *Limerick, the Ruvido Barber Rock Club* and *Piazzetta Buonarrotti,* can be examples of how business activities committed to the place where they are located can favor the revitalization of an urban area.

Table 8: List of actors

CIVIL SOCIETY (ASSOCIATIONS AND INFORMAL GROUPS)	R.I.D.I.M. - Rete Italiana Donne Immigrate Xena Amici dei Popoli Cooperativa Sociale Il Sestante Onlus Gruppo Vivere Bene San Bellino Volontari per il Quartiere – Padova Rete Arcella Viva BiblioSanBe Domna La Bussola Social centre Pedro
INSTITUTIONAL	C.A.T. - Centro di Animazione Territoriale Tavolo Arcella
EDUCATION	3° Istituto, 4° istituto, 5° Istituto ENAIP, Liceo Scientifico Eugenio Curiel, IIS Giovanni Valle
RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL	Santuario dell'Arcella, Santissima Trinità, Gesù Buon Pastore, S. Lorenzo da Brindisi, San Bellino, San Carlo Borromeo, San Gregorio Barbarigo, San Filippo Neri Chiesa Cristiana Evangelica Assemblee di Dio in Italia Biserica ortodoxa Sfinta Parascheva Chiesa Cristiana Evangelica Cinese di Padova All Christian Fellowship International Christ Apostolic Church Of God Mission Holy Covenant Adoration Church Associazione Culturale Congolese A.C.C Unione Sacra d'Africa Al Farouk Bangladesh Islamic Cultural Centre Padova Italy
POLITICAL	Member of the municipal council delegate to the neighborhood
MEDIA	Il Mattino di Padova Il Gazzettino Padova Padova Oggi La Difesa del Popolo
SOCIAL MEDIA	Arcellatown Sei dell'Arcella se… We love Arcella Quartiere Arcella Arcella Liberty Arcella e la sua Storia
SPORT	Polisportiva San Precario Sports centres Colbacchini, Plebiscito and others
ARTISTIC/CREATIVE	SìAmo Arcella Street artists: Tony Gallo, Kenny Random, Alessio-B, Joys and others
COMMERCIAL SPACES	Osteria di Fuori Porta Cinema Multiastra Gasoline Angoli di Mondo Limerick Ruvido Barber Rock Club Piazzetta Buonarrotti

2) Perceptions

The bottom-up approach is a basis of the strategy for an intercultural and sustainable city highlighted in first Part of the thesis. This approach puts the people that live and cross the city at the centre of every project. This choice is motivated by the belief that they are the subjects that best have knowledge of the criticalities and reality of the urban space. For this reason, this research cannot overlook the subjective and personal perceptions of the people that live and know Arcella. Their perceptions are crucial in order to depict an image of the neighborhood through the eyes of its inhabitants, embracing its *problems and needs*, its *resources* and *assets*, the *positions towards the Other* and the *worries and desires* for its future.

Images and descriptions of the neighborhood

The interviewees were asked to provide an image that could describe Arcella. The choice was totally free, and while some of them provided a metaphor that describes the way they perceive the neighborhood, others provided a space that is significative for them, and still others a memory of past experiences in the neighborhood. Among their answers, it was possible to observe the emergence of images connected to the future, to the past, to the multicultural nature of the neighborhood, to the feeling of being in a village, to the changes the neighborhood has undergone.

Many associated with the neighborhood a positive image of being a place of diversity and multiculturality, describing some of the spaces or moments when it is more visible.

"A tree with fruits of different colors. There is something that we all have in common (this neighborhood). And this neighborhood has many potentialities. It is an historic neighborhood. This is the tree. The fruits are the diversity, the

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immigrants. Some of them leave, and those are the fruits that fall. But next year new fruits will come. The wind are the politicians, the mass media. The wind comes, but the tree stands. The ones who are fed up go away, the ones who are strong, like us, remain." (Man, 42, Cameroonian)

"A table full of people that speak with each other. Municipality, associations, schools. People that speak at the table, this is Arcella. People that speak together means the reduction of those useless distances that are preconceived but when you look at reality do not exist." (Man, 39, Italian)

"Three people biking on the Cavalcavia Borgomagno. A bold guy with beard, a black guy and another from North-Africa. Borgomagno is not the heart of Arcella, but it represents it, maybe because it is a transition." (Man, 41, Italian)

"When I see many people walking on the sidewalk, Italians and foreigners. The Prix [a local supermarket], you see the people that actually live Arcella." (Woman, 26, Italian)

"I think about the "Manifeste du Tiers-paysage" [Eng. Manifesto of the third landscape] by Gilles Clemente. Some area, large or small, that are at the periphery between the urban and the natural. For example, flowerbeds that grew wild. I think that Arcella is a kind of third-landscape. He calls it refuge for the diversity. He makes an analysis of the richness, of the variety of species that are concentrated in these very tiny spaces." (Woman, 31, Italian)

"Sunday mornings when you go out and you find all the families outside: women with veils, Indians with turbans, the old Venetian man, all together." (Man, 43, Italian)

"Angoli di Mondo, where there are second-hand products and fair-trade products. I go here very often, almost once a week. I go to buy the coffee that my boyfriend loves, or the masala curry for cooking. There are people that come from

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different countries. You start to recognize the same people after a while. I like to drop by, take a peek on the other people and the things they have." (Woman, 34, Moroccan)

Some of them provided an image that associates the challenges of multiculturality with new hopes for the future.

"The greengrocer next to the Borgomagno tram stop [run by foreigners]. It is point of reference for many people. I've seen there an old woman that probably was born and grew up here. It means that you just have to let it live, and look in the daily life to understand that the neighborhood is lived." (Man, 29, Italian)

"I think about the Maxifrutta [a greengrocery]. There are people from the entire world, and many old people too. You can find there this diverse humanity that, as outside, is a bit mistrustful and at the same time helps each other. It gives me a lot of hope." (Woman, 48, Italian)

Other interviewees with their images expressed the feeling that the life in the neighborhood resembles the one in a village.

"A bike. I move around by bike. This is a neighborhood that could be lived by bike. There are services, sport activities and cultural events. And it is manageable and livable. It could become a neighborhood where cars are eliminated and there are just bikes." (Man, 36, Italian)

"A small village." (Woman, 55, Italian)

Other images provided express the fact that they can find in the neighborhood a particular and distinctive atmosphere.

"Parco Milcovich during the festival organized by San Precario. It's a dimension I've always looked for, and I thought I could find in other foreign dimensions. I

make this comparison because I know there are other places ahead of us. To go there [to Parco Milcovich] during an afternoon, and find people that play their dances, see guys that fix the sports fields, and people that drink, stay together… it is a beautiful dimension, where I could stop, leave everything else and stay there, observing and letting the time passes serenely. It's my dimension. To stop for a while. Arcella gives me this serenity, this positivity. I can say that I have all what I need to let me feel as a citizen inside a dimension of reality. But I can do it with serenity, with a spirit of observation. The image of Parco Milovich celebrating, and I, calmly drinking my beer." (Man, 29, Italian)

Other images recall some significative places of the neighborhood.

"Entering the Cavalcavia Borgomagno. It is almost an initiatory message. You enter and… I'm attracted by the street art and the graffiti. And the fact that you can see immediately something beautiful, with a message behind it, it comforts me, it makes me take a sigh of relief. I think about the people that enter this neighborhood, my friends, and it lightens me up, it makes me think about something positive." (Man, 29, Italian)

"Piazzetta Buonarrotti" (Man, 30, Italian)

"Parco Milcovich encloses all its multiculturalism, and its being so lively. There are people that do jogging, playgrounds for children, people that play, young people, old people, caregivers, benches." (Man, 31, Italian)

"The park is the emblem of the life here, it is a bit of everything." (Woman, 33, Italian)

Some interviewees, that grew up in the neighborhood, associated the image of Arcella with their past memories.

"The historic Arcella, where there is the Santuario. There are activities, spaces and structures. The sport centre Colbacchini, where I used to spend time when I was young. It was the only place for meeting outside the parish churches." *(Woman, 61, Italian)*

"The small lanes, the glycine flowers, where I used to walk by myself, I would be scared to let my son going around alone now! And the Patronato [parish church institution for children and young people]. The cinema of Saturday afternoon. There was nothing else, that was the only place of aggregation. it was a type of aggregation that felt like being in a village. There are no big buildings, everything it's at human-seize (manageable, livable)." *(Man, 47, Italian)*

"The Patronato. Many young people passed through it. They are bond to it. It keeps together many different things. The sport, chatting with friends… and also Liceo Curiel, it is an Arcellan institution!" *(Man, 43, Italian)*

One of the images recalled one of the traditions of the neighborhood.

"Arcella is well-known because here St. Antonio passed away. On June 12 there is a procession. It is marvelous, with people with costumes. Here in the church we sewed the costumes for the pageboys. It is a very significative event." *(Woman, 71, Italian)*

Some of the interviewees associated their image of the neighborhood with some more critical aspects.

"The station, trains, noises, dirtiness and urban decay that you can see from here. You have to remember that Arcella is beautiful but it is not an utopia, it is a neighborhood with its weaknesses, sometimes exaggerated, but they exist. It's not right to say that it's an extremely beautiful neighborhood. There is also this, the urban decay. You see the centre from here, it seems close, but in reality it is very distant." *(Woman, 26, Italian)*

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"Arcella of today is the park for dogs, that is abandoned and neglected. Arcella of my childhood: there were people that care for it, that clean and keep it tidy. There was more cleanliness, efficiency, less criminality. The children could play in the streets. But citizens cannot do nothing, the change should come from who has power. [When you come here now] it seems that you have changed country, not city." (Man, 42, Italian)

"The mess and crowd that there is in a station. Everybody tries to get to the train, but nobody knows each other. Everybody goes to take their seats, but they don't know where. They shove each other, but they don't know each other." (Man, 81, Italian)

The images of some of the interviewees were also connected to the contradictions of the neighborhood, but also to its potential as a place that looks ahead and can provide new hope for the future.

"Despite the fact that some political actors may consider Arcella as a calamità (calamity), I take away the accent from the word and I consider the neighborhood a calamita (magnet), because it is a point of attraction and convergence under many points of view. It is a magnet-neighborhood because it has this ability to attract and sometimes to repel people." (Woman, 50, Somalian-Italian)

"A science fiction movie. Something ahead, of the future, with its pros and cons." (Man, 46, Italian)

"A book that you can buy on Amazon Prime. A book of photos and humanity. A click was enough and you would get it the day after. It was at our disposal and we did not realize it until this moment." (Man, 40, Italian)

"Children with balloons." (Woman,64, Italian)

Together with the images of Arcella, the interviewees provided various other descriptions of the neighborhood, that in their diversity express the complexity and multi-sided reality of the neighborhood. These descriptions recall the themes emerged through the images.

Among their descriptions, it was possible to find the frequent association of the neighborhood with other well-known neighborhoods in foreign cities.

"It seems to me a piece of Paris, like the Belleville neighborhood that Pennac was describing in his books." (Woman, 48, Italian)

"Little Bucharest, Little Berlin… Arcella is a laboratory of Padova, it is ahead, it is the future of Padova." (Man, 39, Italian)

"Arcella is described with metaphors and clichés, in good or bad. Like the Bronx. But the Bronx has become a great neighborhood, you are making a compliment for Arcella! Others see Arcella as Kreuzberg." (Man, 29, Italian)

"I think about Barcelona, the Poble Sec, the Raval, that became very touristic places. They were not so different than here. I don't think that Arcella will become Kreuzberg of Berlin, but we can work to show the things that we have, and go to live them." (Man, 43, Italian)

Some of the interviewees talked about the strong identity that it is possible to find among the neighborhood residents.

"Arcella is this. It is an uncultivated place that, on purpose, was left to itself. Despite the fact it is entirely left to itself, because politically it was chosen to do this, it is a neighborhood that resists. There is a pride to live in Arcella. It has almost become a counter trend. There will be gentrification, but I hope not." (Woman, 31, Italian)

"It has always had a strong identity. It was a corner of the old Veneto, not touched by the dynamics of the big city. In just 15 years it has become a medley of identities. This strong identity maybe was also caused by the physical demarcation, and following its history (the Guasto, the monastery, the most damaged during the war, the industries). When I was a child it was a mix of city and countryside." (Man, 47, Italian)

Another recurring description was the consideration of the neighborhood as a "laboratory" for changes, innovation and new future visions, a neighborhood that is distinctive and different from the other parts of the city. Some of the interviewees expressed also the physical isolation of the neighborhood from the rest of the city.

"Arcella has been always ahead than Padua. For example, it was the place of immigration from the South. Then the students arrived, and then the immigrants. Arcella has been what then later Padua became. It is the privileged place to make integration and build the Padua of the future. There are many cooperatives and associations. There are the potential and the energies. There are problems, but also the forces to solve them. However, we need from the administration the willingness to invest. We need money that cannot be found just in the private sector. Administration should decide to invest because it is strategic for the future." (Man, 36, Italian)

"It seems to me the first suburb of a random city of the world. It is the only part of Padova that is a city. It is an open-air laboratory for integration. It is the city of future, and it is already the Padova of the future. It is lively because there are problematics, but also discussions and reflections. There is a great contribution from migrants: commercial contribution. They invested and started to give jobs. The city centre is not a city, it is a place for fun. It is not a real glimpse on society. […] There is a non-defined border [between the city centre and the neighborhood]. Visually, people change, as if there were a border." (Man, 46, Italian)

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"[It is like] A neighborhood of a metropolitan city, that is an European reality. Not of Padua, but of a big city." (Man, 54, Italian)

"For the people who are cosmopolitan, Arcella it's much more interesting than the rest of the city." (Man, 40, Italian)

"Arcella is a social laboratory. For me it has all the characteristics of a neighborhood which I wish would be the neighborhood of the future: because here different realities and spaces cross and clash with each other. I was criticized for the use of this term [laboratory] because some considered it as [a term for] a place for test subjects. In my opinion, it is a beautiful term: it is a place where you experiment. […]. It has all the possible parameters and shades to let it become a city of the future, a future dimension." (Man, 29, Italian)

"This neighborhood is a laboratory. The hope is that it will give fruits. Many things already started to move. For example the co-housing, kebab mobilization, Arcellatown. There is a desire to get engaged, this has catalyzed attention." (Man, 31, Italian)

Some of the interviewees talked about a "special energy" and the distinctive atmosphere of the neighborhood.

"It has the liveliness of the young people, the experience of the old people, and the willingness of many foreign families to get integrated. You see that when you give them [the foreign families] spaces they are very happy to participate, they don't want to stay by themselves and have a separate life." (Woman, 61, Italian)

"Many students stay here because they realize that it is a neighborhood that has a life that others do not have." (Man, 36, Italian)

"Many new young people have decided to come here. Greener area than others. You never get bored, there is life, there are always people around. The Arcellani live their neighborhood." (Man, 31, Italian)

"Arcellatown gives the impression of a quirky neighborhood, where you feel good, you don't get bored." (Man, 31, Italian)

"It seems to be in a village. There aren't noises, it doesn't seem to be in a city. There is the smell of grass." (Woman, 55, Italian)

"I, as an outsider with my identity, keen on street art, I like walking in green spaces ([my native city] is covered with concrete), streets here are large. I like to linger smelling the scent of a different cuisine or of a traditional minimarket. To know that there is the church of the orthodox community, that there are many churches, for me it's a wonderful dimension. […] I moved here from the city centre. I had a good experience in the city centre, but it's not for me. This is my reality. […] I find here what I couldn't find in other cities like Milan and Rome. The human contact with people, that also in my native city couldn't find, and here I found." (Man, 29, Italian)

"Hidden treasures of Arcella. It is not a neighborhood that reveals itself immediately. It's a neighborhood where you have to dig in order to find the beauty." (Woman, 34, Moroccan)

Some of them expressed the changes that the neighborhood has undergone, and also the emergence of a kind of "revanchist past", that tends to idealize the life in the past as better than the current situation. Others, on the contrary, expressed the opinion that the past of the neighborhood posed similar kind of problems that are also visible today.

"It was considered a Città Giardino [garden city]." (Woman, 34, Moroccan)

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"In the 80s it was amazing. Wonderful. No drug dealers. During the day you could be quiet." (Man, 42, Italian)

"Drug addiction has always been a problem, [and it was what] is called now degrade. How to spend time after school and work, it's the problem of many low-income neighborhood." (Man, 43, Italian)

"It's always been a worker neighborhood, always some kind of difficulties. [There is a] distorted image. Rich and poor people, depending on the area, and it has always been like this." (Man, 43, Italian)

Many of the interviewees talked about the strong feeling of belonging, the affection and the attachment that they developed for the neighborhood. Some of them expressed also the fact that this prompted their willingness to get directly engaged in the solution of the problems of the neighborhood.

"I decided to live here. The people who live here, find it difficult to leave. I decided to be part of the community. I knew where to live, but I decided how to live. As a necessity: get engaged and risk." (Woman, 48, Italian)

"I've always lived here. I don't know if it is an ancestral bond, or just convenience, or inertia. But I don't feel the necessity to go away. This is already significative!" (Man, 43, Italian)

"I'm attached to the neighborhood. Also because there is the station. It gives me the impression that when I want I can leave." (Woman, 33, Italian)

"People are attached to the place. It is almost like a village. There is a very strong sense of attachment, for the people that were born and grew up here." (Woman, 61, Italian)

"Arcella is a complex neighborhood, and I love it for this reason. If there are problems, I want to be part of the solution. I don't want to be part of the problems or of the ones that complain about the problems. I hope that more people would make group together." (Woman, 31, Italian)

"Everything depends on the way you live, the way you take care of things. If you want to take care of the place where you live, go and pour water on the flowers so that they can live and grow well. If you don't do anything, and you stay there, and everything is uncultivated, and then there is the savanna, you cannot say "that's awful". You didn't do anything. Like these vases in the streets. If there is nothing, nobody is taking care of that vase. But it is a vase, it has the potential of having many beautiful flowers inside, but nobody cares, and what people do? They throw butts. Until it caught fire. Now I have a vase with a hole. I cannot do anything with it. And now? It is awful, but me myself was the first one that didn't do anything, and then one after the other everybody threw butts. With the neighborhood, it's the same thing." (Woman, 31, Italian)

"Some years ago I was going around the neighborhood and thinking that it's terrible. Now I go around and I am optimist. There are problems, but I am convinced it is possible to solve them." (Man, 30, Italian)

Problems and needs

All interviewees recognized micro-criminality as one of the most critical aspects of the neighborhood. This is the main feature of the neighborhood conveyed by the media. Nonetheless, the interviewees recognized that the actual problems caused by micro-criminality were usually not direct dangers or threats caused by behaviors connected to micro-criminality (except thefts). The real problem connected to micro-criminality was the creation and spread of a negative image of the neighborhood as a dangerous and unlivable neighborhood. The creation of this image had many consequences, especially the consolidation of a perception of fear that influenced many residents. Some interviewees expressed the opinion that

also the security campaign that was focusing on the neighborhood strongly influenced the public opinion, through the media and political leaders discourse. Many interviewees expressed the opinion that the perceived fear does not find evidence in real events that could confirm the idea that the neighborhood is more dangerous than other areas of the city. One of the interviewees said for example:

"I hear stories, but I've never had problems. I don't see them, even if I know there is drug dealing and prostitution. I don't consider any place dangerous. In the parks there are different uses: at some hours care-givers, at others drug addicted. But if you don't live your neighborhood because you're afraid, they arrive." *(Woman, 55, Italian)*

Furthermore, the image conveyed suffered from generalization. In fact, the problems of micro-criminality are concentrated in some areas of the neighborhood, particularly in the area near the train station (Cavalcavia Borgomagno, Via Annibale da Bassano). As one of the interviewed said,

"The media disregard the fact that doesn't exist just one Arcella, but many. It is like a small city with many 'rioni' [parts of a city]. They give a monolithic image, that is the one that usually outsiders see when they overlook from the station and see the surrounding area, that certainly isn't inviting. [...] My friends are surprised, they think that they are coming to the Bronx, instead it is almost boring. [...] There are many Arcellas, but it is difficult to understand from the newspaper." *(Man, 43, Italian)*

This stereotyped image, that has been applied to the entire neighborhood, has many consequences, such as a consolidation of fears and the spread of moral panic. The bad reputation of the area, that also spread beyond the city of Padua, has also caused in the opinion of some of them a dangerous depreciation of the real estate value. This image strengthened the prejudices and the idea that the neighborhood is just a problem. As two interviewees said,

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"[The spread of this kind of image] caused the abandon of the area. If everybody says it is awful, I'm not encouraged to care for the place." (Woman, 31, Italian)

"Journalists asked how to solve the problem Arcella? But why always a problem? [...] Media influence a lot. Many people are scared because of what they read, more than because there are real problems. [there is] Danger in some areas, but you cannot generalize to the entire neighborhood. [...] Administration should do counter-information, don't be influenced too much." (Man, 36, Italian)

Other events in the opinion of the interviewees contributed to the spread of behaviors connected to micro-criminality and to the perception of a lack of security. The lack of shops or bars opened at night, or the closure of some them by 8 pm as mandated by the previous mayor ordinance, was considered by some interviewees as a problem. In the opinion of one of them,

"If you invest in a place, it gets better, and the problem of security disappears. [...] When shops close down, they become abandoned places of blight and abandonment." (Man, 36, Italian)

Another important set of problems of the neighborhood is connected to urban spaces. A large number of the interviewees highlighted the need of spaces for aggregation. Despite the role of the parish churches as places of aggregation is still relevant, many interviewees expressed the wish to have a space that is not religiously affiliated. Many proposed the idea of the creation of a civic and cultural centre in the neighborhood, where people could meet, spend time and do activities together. One of the interviewees expressed the idea that this kind of space would be crucial especially for young people:

"We need places of cultures, serious places, where the young people can discover their interests. If they discover their interests, then they can direct towards a future. [...] We could build a centre finding the funds among the residents, and make a structure funded by all the citizens." (Woman, 71, Italian)

One of the interviewees that volunteers for an association expressed also the desire to have a space free of charge that could be available for activities of associations that lack funds for renting a room for their meetings and voluntary activities. Others expressed the wish of the creation of "aule studio" (rooms for studying) for the numerous students that live in the neighborhood. Despite the presence of a small public library, one of the interviewees expressed the need of creating a space more accessible and better-equipped.

Besides the need of structured and formal spaces such as a civic and cultural centre, libraries and "aule studio", many lamented also the lack of informal public spaces such as squares and green areas open and accessible to everybody. Some interviewees lamented the lack of benches in the neighborhood, and others lamented the fact that some green areas have been fenced and became accessible just to people accompanied by children. Many referred to the successful experience of the Piazzetta Buonarotti. In their opinion, it has become a pole of attraction and aggregation also thanks to the welcoming environment created by the presence of tables of the bars, benches, flowerbeds, trees and the bars.

Furthermore, interviewees complained about the limited number of spaces of socialization such as pubs or bars. Many pointed out that there should be more events or places that could be unique and also attract people from other parts of the city. Some of the interviewees said:

"When you need something you go to the city centre. Situations of conviviality should be created here without forcing me to go to the city centre. For example, restaurants low cost, for students and young families that live here because it costs less." (Woman, 34, Moroccan)

"There are no initiatives and spaces for meeting. It's an old neighborhood, we have to prompt young people to live it, otherwise it will not change a lot, it will remain the same." (Woman, 26, Italian)

The interviewees expressed also the need of beautiful spaces, and of improving some areas that in their opinion have not the characteristics of being beautiful or welcoming.

"If a person lives in an ugly place, [...] for example in spaces of endless concrete, she/he gets used to it, and becomes ugly too. You need things that are beautiful in front of your eyes. Even just trees, or a clean neighborhood." (Woman, 48, Italian)

"The most trafficked and used ways should be improved. A bike path on via Tiziano Aspetti for example. And the Cavalcavia: put trees, let it become a promenade. Why don't we make it more beautiful, taking advantage of architects and university that we have in the city?" (Woman, 33, Italian)

"Opening more shops, but that have the characteristics of being beautiful, welcoming, treated with care, that can thus make the area more beautiful, and more welcoming." (Man, 43, Italian)

Another topic that widely emerged during the interviews is the presence in the neighborhood of many neglected spaces and abandoned buildings: it was proposed that they could be reconverted into public spaces and centres for activities. The run-down buildings that were pointed out are the Ex Coni in the Piazzale Azzurri d'Italia, the Ex Hotel Abritto on the Cavalcavia Borgomagno, and the Ex Configliachi on Via Guido Reni. One of the interviewees stressed the fact that other spaces should follow the example of the park Parco Milcovich, that was revitalized and became a lively space, where families meet and where it is possible to freely practice sport.

Furthermore, in the neighborhood there are many abandoned private buildings. In the opinion of some of the interviewees, the reluctance of many owners to sell or to lower the prices of those buildings blocks the commercial possibilities of the

neighborhood. Many considered these "wasted" or empty spaces as an act of depriving the residents of the potentiality of those spaces.

Many interviewees pointed out that the neighborhood suffered also by the fact of not being kept thoroughly clean and neat. In their opinion the neighborhood was left to itself and the public administration did not effectively respond with interventions and investments addressing the area.

Another problem connected to the urban space that emerged during the interviews is the traffic in the area and high levels of pollution. One of them said that

"Arcella is the most polluted area of Padua, and Padua is one of the most polluted areas of Italy. Nobody says this, if you say it, it seems you want to be the alternative one." (Man, 43, Italian)

For what concerns the network of actors and activities that crosses the neighborhood, one of the interviewees expressed the need of a better synergy among them.

"There are resources, but there is not a real coordination. I discovered many initiatives, informal groups, that know each other. They know what the others do, but I don't see a strong coordination. Many have resources of different kind, and offer different activities. We should try to create something really togethere. There are many but they are weak, because they are separated. […] Guide them. Know what they do, where they are, collaborate, recognize their role by the territory and by the institutions. There should be a real recognition of what they do." (Woman, 26, Italian)

Other interviewees also identified the difficulty in collaborating with the public administration, particularly problematic because of the political orientation of the last municipal council. Among the interviewees the need of a more effective

collaboration with the institutions emerged often. One of them, who volunteers for an association, said that:

"It would be important to create a synergy between the CSOs and the public institutions. It is not possible that everything becomes a responsibility of the CSO volunteers. Volunteering can do great things, but it has its limits, often financial limits. We have to find funds. Many European funds are disregarded because there is no knowledge about them. The municipality should make an effort to find them and propose to the associations to apply for these funds. We can find money, even if the municipality does not have them." (Woman, 50, Somalian-Italian)

Resources and assets

In order to solve the problems and needs of the neighborhood, it is crucial to identify which are the resources and assets of the place in the opinion of the residents.

One of the most appreciated aspects of the neighborhood is the presence of many services. Many interviewees talked about the presence of supermarkets, shops and a good network of public transportation. Many of them appreciate the fact that the neighborhood is livable also on foot. Others talked about the wide range of commercial choices at different and also affordable prices. Furthermore, many interviewees highlighted the multicultural offer in terms of grocery stores and restaurants as an important asset of the neighborhood. One of the interviewees expressed her appreciation with the following words:

"I call it a small London, a SoHo. If you want to eat ethnic food, you can find it. You can find ethnic shops, Chinese hairdressers, Chinese tailors, halal meat, competitive prices. You find many opportunities at different prices." (Woman, 50, Somalian-Italian)

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Another asset of the neighborhood stressed by many of them is the large number of associations and civil society organizations that work in the neighborhood and collaborate with each other, creating an increasing number of projects and providing services to people in need. One of the interviewees spoke about this saying that:

"[There is a] very strong network of initiatives, by privates, inhabitants, cooperatives. They are really interested in the neighborhood and want to appraise it. They work silently, there is not so much media coverage of this. I discovered that Arcella is lively." (Woman 26, Italian)

Some spoke about the energy that emerges from the many ongoing initiatives.

"The positive thing is the effervescence that you can breathe here. From my position, as an outsider that has lived in many different parts of Italy, I haven't found always this kind of atmosphere. It is awesome because of this. It is amazing when networks among people are built, when people collaborate with each other. Even just this is wonderful, much more than positive." (Man, 29, Italian)

Furthermore, many interviewees mentioned the strong identity of the neighborhood. According to some of them, the pride of living in the neighborhood and the attachment to it have been strengthened as a response to the protracted negative campaign that addressed the neighborhood. Two of the interviewees talked about this reaction saying that:

"To be considered the ones who live in a run-down area is not nice, besides being not precise. I hope that after this electoral campaign there will be no need any more to use Arcella as the negative basis for comparison. [...] The reaction that we could see with the results of the election, but also with the page Arcellatown, shows that when everybody denigrates you, you develop a stronger pride and sense of belonging. Much stronger than if people would speak well about it." (Man, 43, Italian)

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"People are tired to hear that Arcella is a problem, an unsafe place. They want their neighborhood to be redeemed. In many events I've seen this wish to get together and to live the neighborhood notwithstanding the fears depicted by the media." (Man, 36, Italian)

In the opinion of one of the interviewees, the attachment to the neighborhood is marked by clearly defined positions.

"If you leave here you inevitably take a position. Whether you hate it because it's not anymore as you remember when you were young, or you love it, you have to defend it and convince people to change their opinion about the neighborhood. There are just the extremes positions." (Woman, 31, Italian)

Another positive aspect of the neighborhood mentioned by the interviewees is the new use of urban spaces promoted by new-comers. Many interviewees mentioned the presence of people that play cricket in the parks or in spaces such as the parking place of a supermarket or other green areas next to the streets. One of them expressed their appreciation of this new use of streets saying that

"Children play on the street as we used to do. It is something that we haven't seen for a long time." (Man, 43, Italian)

Some of the interviewees expressed also pride for their neighborhood as a place rich of successful sport teams (rugby, water polo, rhythmic gymnastic, football). The presence of the Santuario di Sant'Antonino, was considered by one of the interviewees an interesting element that could prompt pilgrimages and a sort of "religious tourism" in the neighborhood.

Some of the interviewees pointed out the big potential that the neighborhood has as a place of experimentation, stressing also the need to take advantage of this potential.

"It is like an unrefined diamond, that many don't recognize. It could become much more than the simple neighborhood behind the station. It can become a very lively point of convergence, it has all the potentialities to become. But we need a real requalification. We have to create spaces for young people. We need to gather the needs and give a response to them, otherwise nothing will change. There are so many young people that would like to live something more. The centre is not everything. It is beautiful abut it is beautiful also to give space to the suburbs. They have many resources and we have to take advantage of them." (Woman, 26, Italian)

"It has all the ingredients to be a modern neighborhood, in a European way. Padova is Veneto, Arcella is Europe, many say this. […] You breathe a different air. We need to appraise this. Otherwise there are the ingredients and the potential, but they remain separated ingredients, the cake will never be created!" (Woman, 31, Italian)

They expressed also the idea that the neighborhood offers a space with elements that could favor the creation of stronger communities. One of the interviewees said that:

"I like the idea of going around the neighborhood and recognize and know the people that are around me. This is it's potential, it's like a city in the city. You can manage to make community, in each 'rione' people know each other. In the neighborhood, even if it's big, you recognize each other. It makes the difference in the place where you live. Knowing where you are and who is there. If we know each other, we also feel safer. For me security means that I know the people, and that I can be confident." (Woman, 31, Italian)

Others stressed the fact that the neighborhood potential is connected to the fact that it could offer a vision of the cities of the future.

"It is a vision of what is future. Our daughters and sons will me mixed, with all this mixed race and amazing mixes. This is the world, this is globalization. You may not like globalization, but is an unavoidable process. You cannot go back. [...] It is a vision of the next world. It represents the diversity in Padua."
(Woman, 34, Moroccan)

Multiculturality and the Other

A part of the field research aimed at gathering the perceptions and opinions of the local residents in order to find out which are the aspects that prove to be more critical for the coexistence, which are the opportunities of encounters, and what are the requirements for managing a multicultural environment.

Most part of the residents stressed that multiculturality is the reality of the neighborhood. It can be encountered in the streets and in daily life situations, in the supermarkets, in the schools, in the sport centres, in the parks and all the public spaces.

In fact, some of the residents expressed the opinion that they do not feel the need of initiatives which create an institutional intercultural space. However, they expressed the general wish of being able to meet and get in relation with their neighbors, regardless of the culture or country of origin.

Nonetheless, many recognized that there are some categories of people in society, especially old people, that might have less opportunities to meet with diversity. Therefore, more initiatives should be addressing them. In fact, one of the interviewees (who is 81 years old) stressed on the contrary that he feels the need of dialogue. He said that:

"We need opportunities for dialogue. We lack dialogue and human relations. If only there were this purpose, through associations, to create these opportunities. But there is not, everybody shut themselves away." (Man, 81, Italian)

Another interviewee expressed a similar opinion and stressed the tougher challenge that the old sector of population is facing, saying that:

"It's the weak layer of population. They have less tools. They feel more threatened. The world (also visually) that they knew has changed, and they don't have any more the frameworks of interpretation apt to interpret it. They shut themselves away." (Man, 46, Italian)

Some interviewees who are involved in education complained about the decision of the public administration to abolish the service offered by the cultural mediators. These were considered crucial in their opinion. One of them said:

"I saw it in the school of my daughter. There are problems and lack of dialogue between schools and families. If you don't have mediators it is difficult to communicate and understand (notices, convocations…). We should strengthen the service of cultural mediators and bring back facilitators to the streets of the neighborhood." (Woman, 50, Somalian-Italian)

During the interviews, it was possible to observe that the clashes that could arise in the meeting with the Other were especially connected to different lifestyles, behaviors, ways of home-making and of using spaces. One of the interviewees explained that:

"[It is about] different ways to live your daily life. It gets difficult when you're close to each other. The conflict can arise from trivial things that disturb daily life. Loud voice, smell of cooking… the only thing you can do is speaking." (Woman, 34, Moroccan)

Similarly, another interviewee pointed out the fact that she is disturbed by what she considers behaviors that are not respectful of public spaces. It should be noted nonetheless that some interviewees stressed the fact that sometimes what could be

considered a cultural clash is in reality a generational conflict. The interviewee lamenting a disrespectful use of public spaces said that:

"There is too much Africa around. They are rude, and careless for the city. I am willing to help everybody, but I would like that people behave politely. For example, they have to pay the tickets on the bus. Now the city is dirty. There are many unpolite people, also among Italians… but… we lack good manners. On the bus there is always chaos by those Nigerians especially. There is an increased rudeness." (Woman, 71, Italian)

The same interviewee, who is involved in many activities that support people in need, especially foreigners, was very critical on the position of the government in support of asylum seekers, and expressed some concerns about the future.

"My mother migrated to Brazil. They went there with documents, to work, without being dependent on the state. Why country in the world go to take people and then support them economically?[21] […] Let's see where we will end up" (Woman, 71, Italian)

"We work for peacefully coexistence, to let community grow. We try to coexist together, otherwise… we need to try to do this. But the least they come, the best it is. I know many, and I try to help them. If less of them come, it is better. Because one day… they are already thinking to create a party. Unfortunately, Islam means submission. Their civil code is the Coran, not our civil code. Do you think that, because they are in Italy, they use our laws and not theirs?" (Woman, 71, Italian)

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[21] This comment is connected to a current wide-spread critic related to the humanitarian crisis ongoing in the Mediterranean Sea. The critics of many concern the rescues of boats in danger, that many see as a direct encouragement of migration and as an excessive measure that not only aims at saving people in danger, but also directly guiding them across the sea. The critics usually address also the system of reception of the asylum seekers, that provide them an accommodation and a daily allowance funded by Italian public funds and European Union funds.

This mix of fears and generalized image of the Other confirms the fact that often prejudices and stereotypes that are concealed in the public life, often appears in private spaces of conversations.

Also during other interviews, it was possible to observe the emergence of a feeling of frustration and disappointment among the interviewees. This feeling was often caused by what they consider an unfair treatment by institutions, biased in favor of foreigners. Two of them talked about the problem with these words:

"I don't count anything because I'm Italian. If I were foreign I would receive more aids. I'm unemployed. Why don't you help us, Italian government? You should do it with your citizens, not just with foreigners. We should be careful with these human rights. We go to take them on their coasts. We give money to them. I'm really disappointed as an Italian. But after all I'm not influenced by this, I don't consider them [the foreigners] in a different way. But we are abandoned by the social services." (Woman, 55, Italian)

"The problem is not foreigners, but foreigners that don't behave well, and the public administration that it isn't able to face these problems. […] The problem is not Italians or foreigners, it's laxity. The foreigners are released after few days, the Italians remain in jail. There is no control." (Man, 42, Italian)

Most of the interviewees expressed the opinion that they see the potential of integration in the future generation, and that what now is happening is a moment of adjustment, adaptation, observations and acceptance.
Regarding the moments of meeting and opportunities of encounters, many stressed that the most crucial space is school. In their opinion, children are the most facilitated in getting to know the other without prejudices and preconceptions. However, some parents stressed the fact that they could observe some discriminatory behaviors among children that in their opinion were a direct influence from their parents. Others said that it is not always easy to get in touch and create relations with other parents of foreign origin, even if their children act

as a connection. One of them said that for example the economic differences and the differences in education were in her opinion a hinder for conversation and the possibility to find common ground.

One of the interviewees talked about an unexpected opportunity of encounter that was offered by people who beg and offer help in front of the supermarkets. Some old people for example could benefit of their help, and in her opinion also this was a step towards overcoming diffidence. She told that:

"They know everybody, the families, the personal stories. They have become a social point of reference. They have found an unbelievable space. They are now invited to go for lunch to these families." (Woman, 61, Italian)

Furthermore, it is extremely relevant to remember that many people of foreign origin, especially women, even if previous professional experience or high level of education, when they arrive to Italy start to work in the field of assistance or nursery. Both the women interviewed of foreign origin worked in this field, and stressed the fact that they have become important points of reference, support and company of old people otherwise lonely.

For what concerns the foreign people interviewed, all of them expressed the importance for preserving their language and their traditions, especially for their children. One of them expressed this wish saying that:

"Citizenship it's not just a piece of paper, but it's also in the heart. In the heart we are Italian, but you cannot forget your origins. […] I don't want my children to forget their origins. In their mind and behaviors they are Italian, but they have to know about their origins." (Man, 42, Cameroonian)

The people interviewed were well-integrated in the life of the neighborhood and the city, whether in activities with the church, as volunteers in the civil protection or involved and interested in political activities. However, one of them involved in

politics admitted that he decided to stop attending local meetings because of the attitudes of some of the members that he considered discriminatory. He also highlighted another problem that in his opinion is central for the future of the Italian society, connected to the lack of jobs and job future opportunities for his children.

"The lack of jobs is the biggest problem. An immigrant is a new poor. The system doesn't give the opportunity to an Italian, and even less to an immigrant. When I'm doing a non-skilled job, I'm stealing it to a person that could do just that one. It's a good country, but there is no help for anybody, neither Italians nor foreigners. […] A country should help for the upkeep of children and for people who are unemployed. I would like a country that recognizes the efforts I did. Italy has so many things (skills, knowledge, technology). Italians work, but there is no reward. […] Everybody leaves. If I leave, I do it with bitterness. But the most important thing is the future of children. My children will not accept to do cleaning job. They feel Italian. If frustration rises, there will be rebellion and new claims." (Man, 42, Cameroonian)

Desires and hopes, worries and risks

The analysis of concerns and hopes for the future can provide further elements of reflection for better assessing which are the most urgent needs felt by the residents.

One of the concerns that often emerged in the interviews is the fear of isolation, both among residents and also concerning the entire neighborhood in relation to the rest of the city. Many of them, both native Italians and people of foreign origin, talked about the concern that the neighborhood could become a ghetto. Some expressions of these concerns are for example:

"Italians fear immigrants. They are fleeing from Arcella. This is a negative bomb. The more they leave, the more migrants come. It could become a ghetto, unmanageable. Don't do the mistake that the French did. The good thing here in Italy is that there is this mix. This melting pot prevents this kind of problems. […] If my neighbor behaves well, it influences my behavior too, I'll tend to change. If everybody behaves bad, everything will change towards the worse. […] School complain that there are just foreigners. Why do you complain? It's your decision not to enroll your children here." (Man, 42, Cameroonian)

"…that it could become a ghetto, that remains just the neighborhood with a lot of foreigners and don't evolve in something else. But there are many schools. The children are strong, they overcome this." (Woman, 34, Moroccan)

"Ghettoization, like Molenbeek in Belgium. That it becomes a neighborhood of just immigrants. But the 'Arcellani' have a very strong identity, it's like an independent town and they defend it." (Man, 54, Argentinian)

Others were concerned about the risk that attitudes of closure and exclusion can pose to the neighborhood. This risk in their opinion concerns especially old people and the ageing process in the population of the neighborhood. An example can be found in these words:

"… that we shut ourselves away from reality, and we look just to the past. It is easy to look with nostalgia, once it was better. But it doesn't bring anything. There is the risk that every change is seen as a danger and not as a potential. Many people here live like this." (Man, 36, Italian)

"I wish new young people would come and settle down. I'm worried that the ageing process would transform it in a dormitory, depriving it of its energy." (Man, 47, Italian)

Nonetheless, even if feeling the need to look towards the future and not the past, one of the interviewees expressed also a concern for the maintenance of the local traditions, saying that:

"May Arcella manage to remain Arcella? To maintain its distinctive identity, to maintain it's feeling of belonging, its social relations, a lively community? [...] For example, the procession of St. Antonio: it just seems a folkloristic event. But actually it bears an emotional, historical, devotional, identity investment that lasted for decades. I'm worried that this will disappear. Not because of the foreign part of society, but because of the Italian part that has lost its identity roots. the spatial and mental borders we had have disappeared, which are the new borders now?" (Man, 47, Italian)

Many were also concerned that the strong negative image of the neighborhood would continue to be the hallmark of the place presented by the media.

"The atmosphere of fear conveyed by the media and public administration could block a positive process." (Woman, 61, Italian)

"[I hope] that they don't call the neighborhood banlieue anymore. We start from a wrong premise. That it is a problematic neighborhood, instead it is a neighborhood with things to be improved and appraised. I wish on the media they will speak about other things, positive news. We shouldn't hide the problems, but also show what good things happen." (Man, 43, Italian)

Other interviewees expressed concern connected to the environment, the spread of concrete and the increase of the traffic and pollution. One of them said:

"It is dangerous to think that concrete and fences can be better instead of green areas." (Man, 54, Italian)

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A large number of hopes for a change in the neighborhood were related to a wish for a change in the political sphere, mainly in the direction of a more direct participation of the citizens.

"[I hope the new political leaders will be] clever and able. I hope that the new administration would launch daring new proposals with the aim of community building. We need collaboration of everybody to improve things." (Woman, 61, Italian)

"I hope that this new experiment in the political field could work and open new hopes for the entire neighborhood, that they would understand this wish to appraise, take advantage of potentialities of a neighborhood that already have them, instead of suffocating it. [...] And also that the citizens would start to look at the neighborhood with new eyes, cleaned from the rest. If there are problems, let's face them together and try to solve them. If there are good elements, let's appraise them, be surprised by them and live them." (Woman, 31, Italian)

Regarding integration and multicultural coexistence, the interviewees expressed some ideas and pointed out some crucial sectors where more efforts should be devoted. Many of the interviewees talked about the crucial role of schools, as well as of parks and sports activities.

"Everybody attends school, it is from there that we should start, to make people feel attached to the city. Getting attached to the city means knowing it. There are so many beautiful things in Padova. If you let people discover them, then they start to appreciate and like them, and would get more involved in the life of the city. I would like to propose a project for a visit of the city, to show the city to new people arrived" (Woman, 71, Italian)

"School is the best place to do integration. Because from the level of children you can get to the parents. [...] Parks are the place where children and parents see

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each other in natural manner. We should plan structures that could facilitate this." (Man, 36, Italian)

"We should promote the idea that sport is an important investment for their children. The administration should work to spread these messages and should invest in this. Take advantage of initiatives based on sport developed by associations and cooperatives, and structure and plan and spread this kind of activities." (Man, 36, Italian)

For many, the strongest hopes for the future were linked to children and the new generations.

"I don't see new generations in difficulties. We are managing an emergency, but the biggest investment should be done in the school." (Man, 46, Italian)

"It is a richness to have many nationalities for them, not a limit. Through a child you open up your mind. They are without malice. The adults put it, instead they freely choose. They live in a situation that is different from ours, they are much more open, they grow up in a different society." (Woman, 33, Italian)

Another interviewee talked about the wish of creating new networks and opportunities of encounters.

"It is important to work in networks, with a bottom-up approach. Not just with foreigners, but also with local people. We shouldn't work as isolated compartments. We should bring autochthons and immigrants to interact through fun projects that get families, children, adults, women and men involved. It is important to expand transversally to all the segment of population. Some examples could be: workshops of documentary, documenting together the city; cooking course - they are useful for dialogue. The fear arises from the lack of knowledge of each other. Because it is not just that Italians are racist, but also the immigrants. The reason is because we don't know each other. Therefore there is

the need of opportunities of encounter, confrontation, conviviality, and also of contrast, but of constructive contrast. We need to know differences, that doesn't mean accepting them, but respecting them. We need an education project from the childhood." (Woman, 50, Somalian-Italian)

Other interviewees expressed the wish to create new spaces of aggregation and of conviviality.

"A movement for taking back spaces to live in not structured manner/sociality. In meeting in a square, in the park, on a bench, to talk together." (Man, 43, Italian)

"Rehabilitate some spaces and give more space to green areas, as it has been done in other European cities. Even destroying buildings: in Parco Piacentino it was done, there was a fabric before the park. Rehabilitating some spaces and making them spaces of aggregation and public green areas. The neighborhood needs this. It is not easy to do this in Italy. I hope we won't go backwards. We have to give space to the needs of the citizens." (Man, 36, Italian)

<u>Assessment</u>

The richness, variety and complexity of the perceptions gathered among the urban dwellers of Arcella show how challenging is the creation of "urban civitas", and how many big and small obstacles should be still overcome for intercultural and sustainable cities to be transformed from an ideal vision into reality.

The problems and challenges facing the neighborhood are manifolded, and they were recognized by both the more concerned, disenchanted and worried interviewees, as well by the more idealistic, visionary and positive ones.

However, what distinguished the approach of most of the interviewees in relation to the problematic conditions and difficulties of the neighborhood was the wish to regard the reality with a positive outlook.

This positive outlook seems to have prompted them to consider the challenges as opportunities, and in various ways to get engaged in first person for the improvement of the life in the neighborhood and the creation of something new and different. Their response to this wish resulted in a precious contribution in terms of energies, time, creativity, courage and originality that they offered to the neighborhood. Their ability to envision new horizons and to believe that change might happen starting from small actions should not be disregarded, and their approach should be considered a guiding example for any project that aims at sparking changes.

Among most of the interviewees, it was possible to observe the wish to react against the "stigma" created against the neighborhood, and the wish to tell another story, another side, and another reality about their neighborhood. This reality clearly appeared during the interviews and was depicted in all their perceptions previously presented.

This offers interesting hints of reflection, to suggest that all the realities and challenges that seem just difficult and insuperable, when looked with another perspective might offer new elements, new aspect that were overshadowed, and offer new hopes, tools and solution for being considered in a new and positive way, and this approach might be applied to intercultural integration as well as to any other urban issue. Top-down approaches and distant observation will never be able to discover what smaller scale and personal experiences and interactions could suggest.

3) Field research-based geographical visualization

The data gathered during the interviews provided important information for highlighting some critical and crucial spaces in the neighborhood. These places have been gathered in the following maps.

The first map represents the religious spaces of the neighborhood. It reflects the variety of religions practiced in the neighborhood. The historical Catholic

churches are located on the map, together with the churches of other religions and the centres of other religions, particularly the complex in Via Bernina 18 that hosts many different religious practices.

The second map shows the most important green areas of the neighborhood. Parco Milcovich is the park described by many residents as the place of multiculturality. Other parks located on the map are Parco Piacentino, popular for many families, Parco Fantasia, whose existence is threatened by the construction of a supermarket, and Parco Morandi. In both Parco Morandi and Parco Milcovich there is an area devoted to urban gardens. The map presents also the part of the "Greenway" project that has been built and includes the bike path and a nearby urban garden.

The third map highlights the areas where murals and graffiti are concentrated. It presents also the location of some art works created by some well-known artists such as Tony Gallo, Alessio B, Joys and Kenny Random.

The fourth map presents some of the neglected spaces and abandoned buildings that in the opinion of many interviewees could be converted into spaces of aggregation for the community. Together with some abandoned buildings in the neighborhood, the map shows also a very large and currently empty and fenced lawn nearby the square Piazzale Azzurri d'Italia (which is currently a parking place).

The fifth map presents two crucial spaces: Cavalcavia Borgomagno, that many interviewees described as a kind of entrance to the neighborhood, and also as a critical space for what concerns security; and Piazzetta Buonarrotti, an important space of aggregation for the neighborhood.
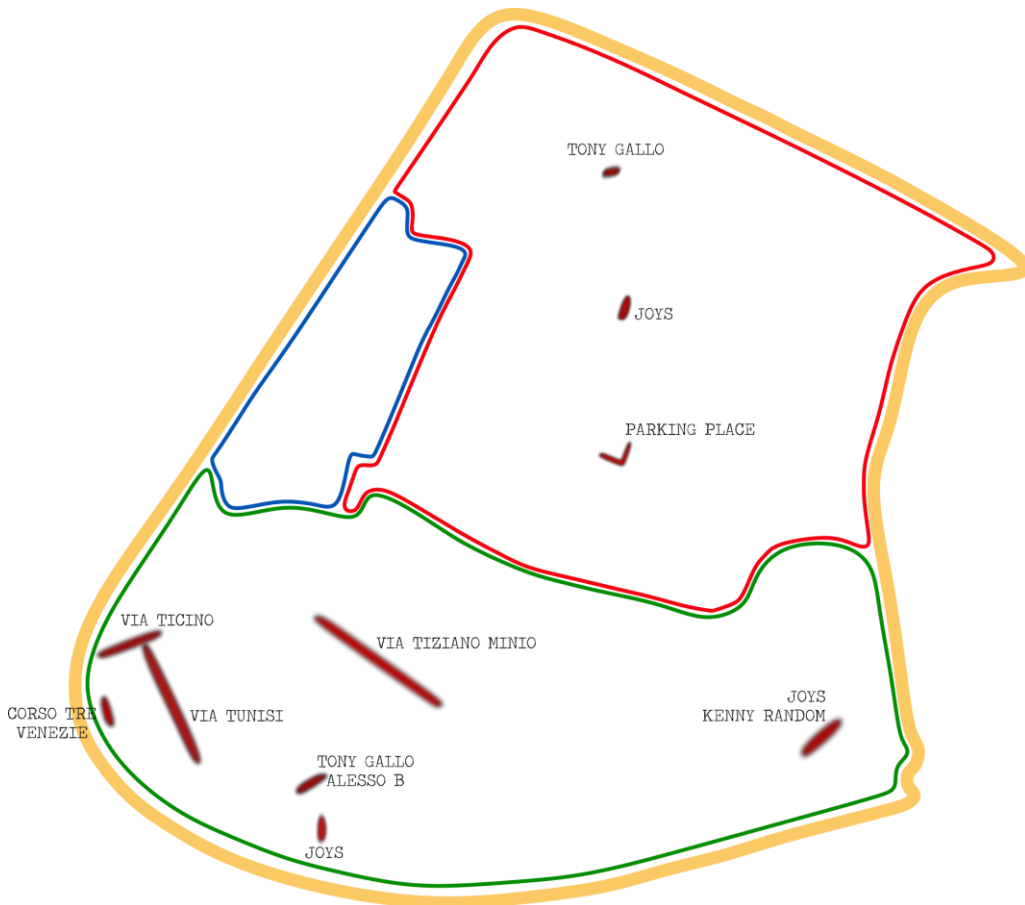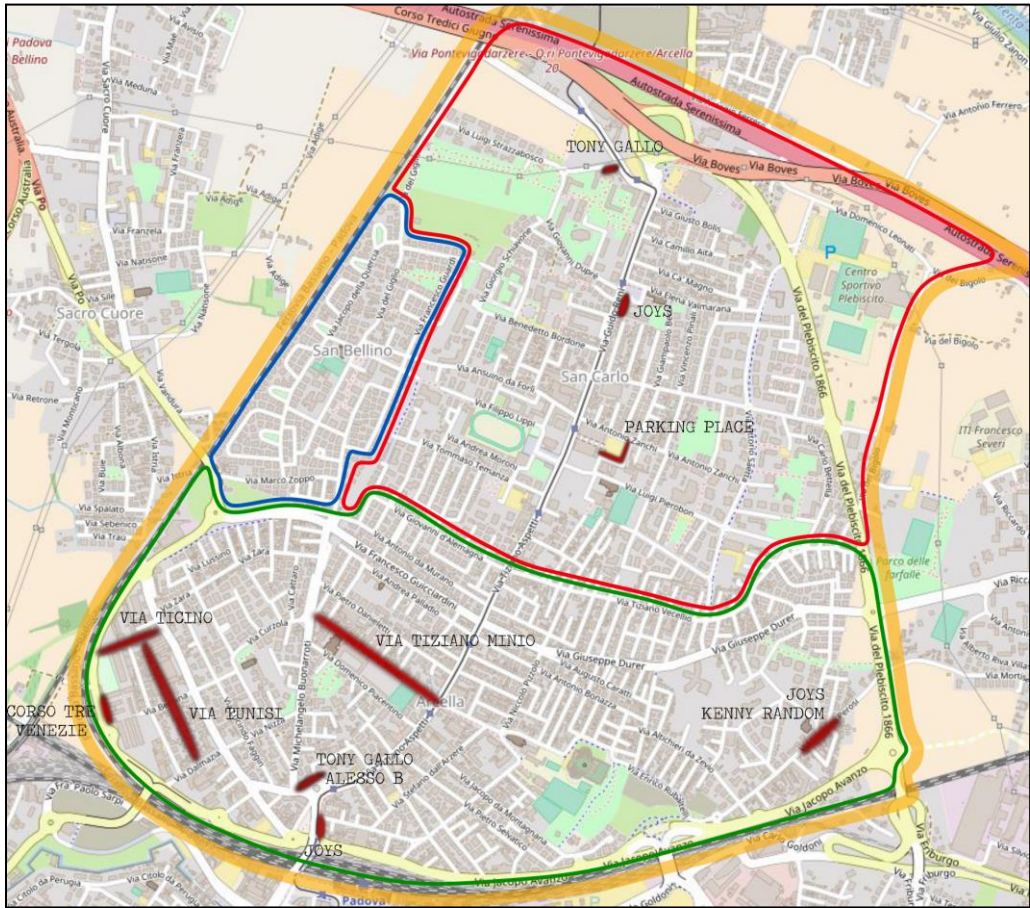
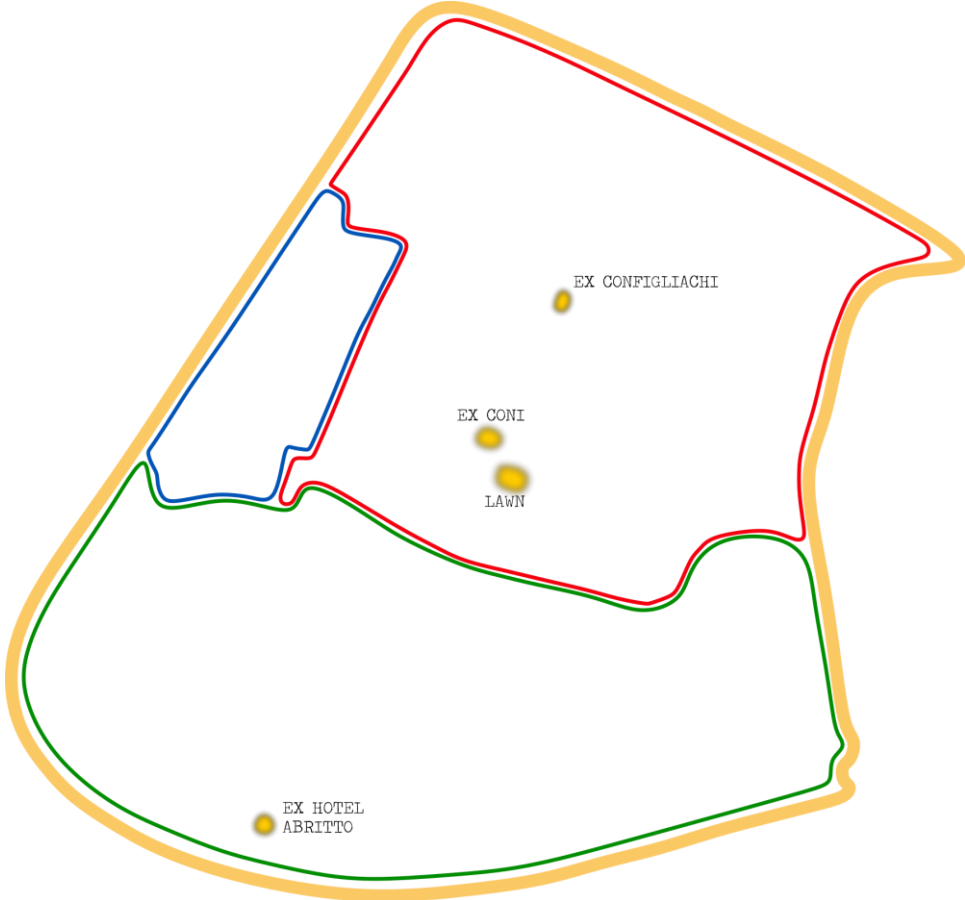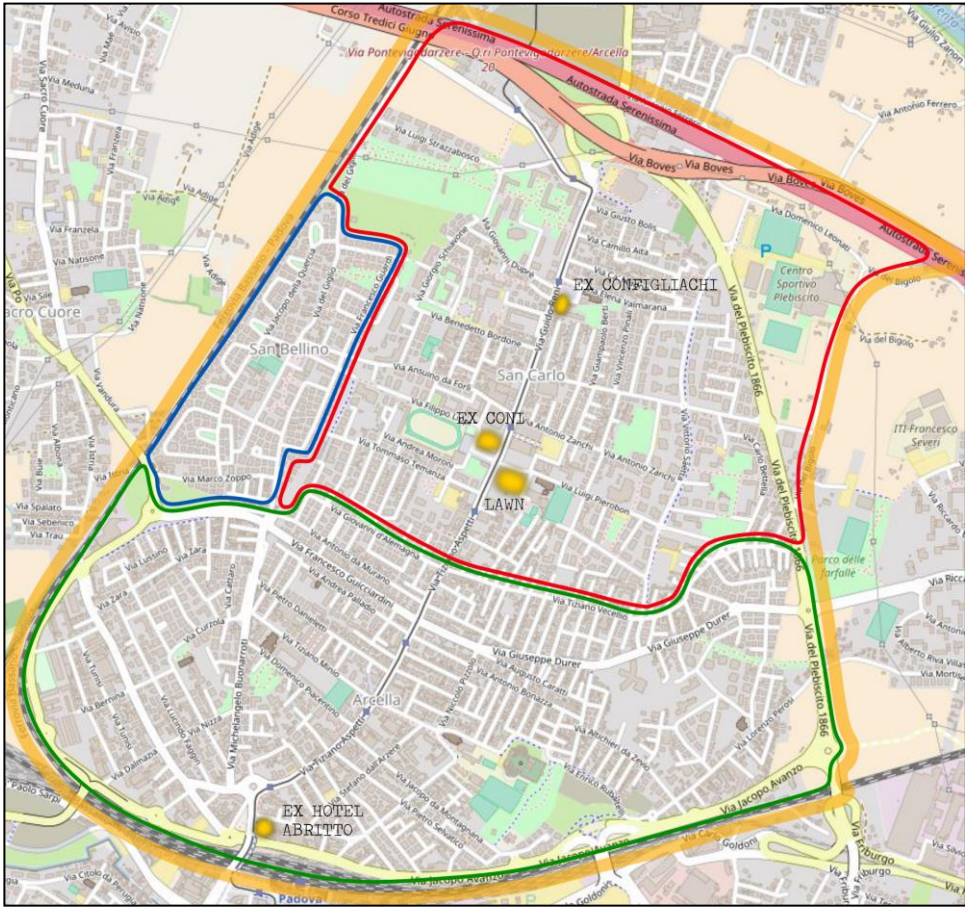The sixth map shows a comprehensive image of all the elements presented in the previous maps.
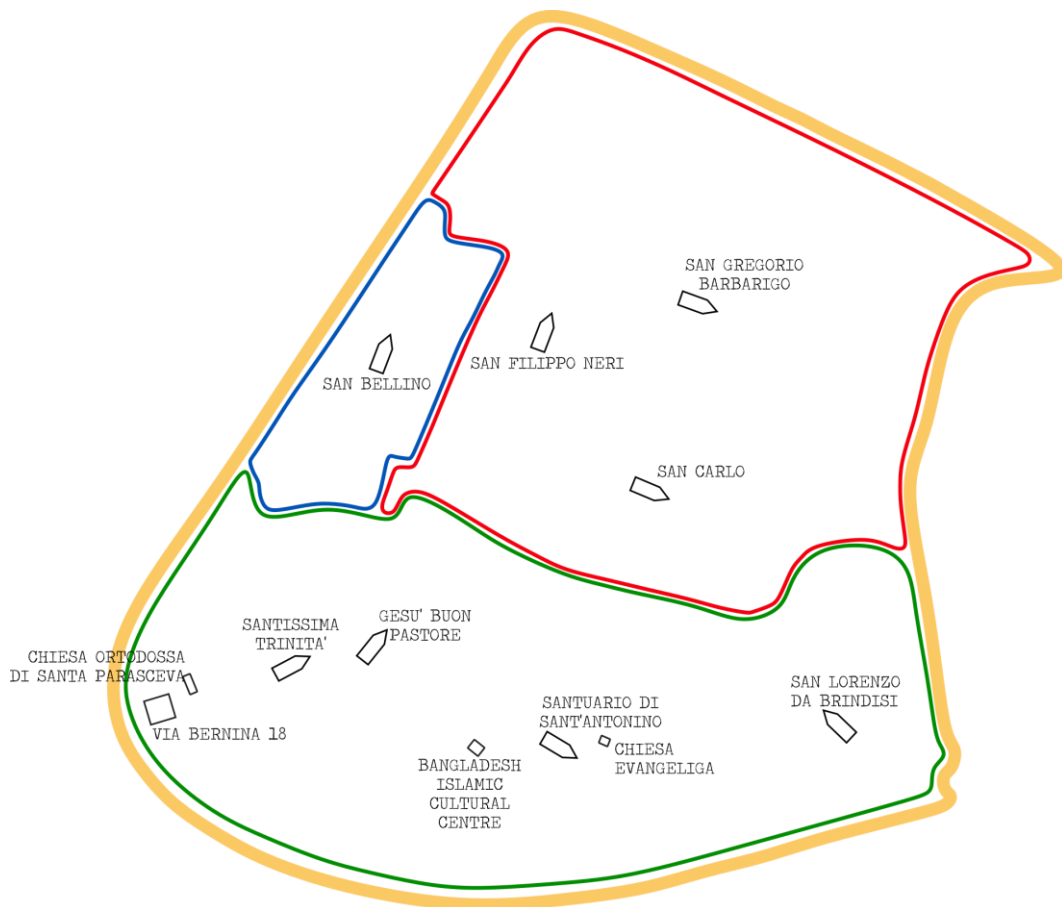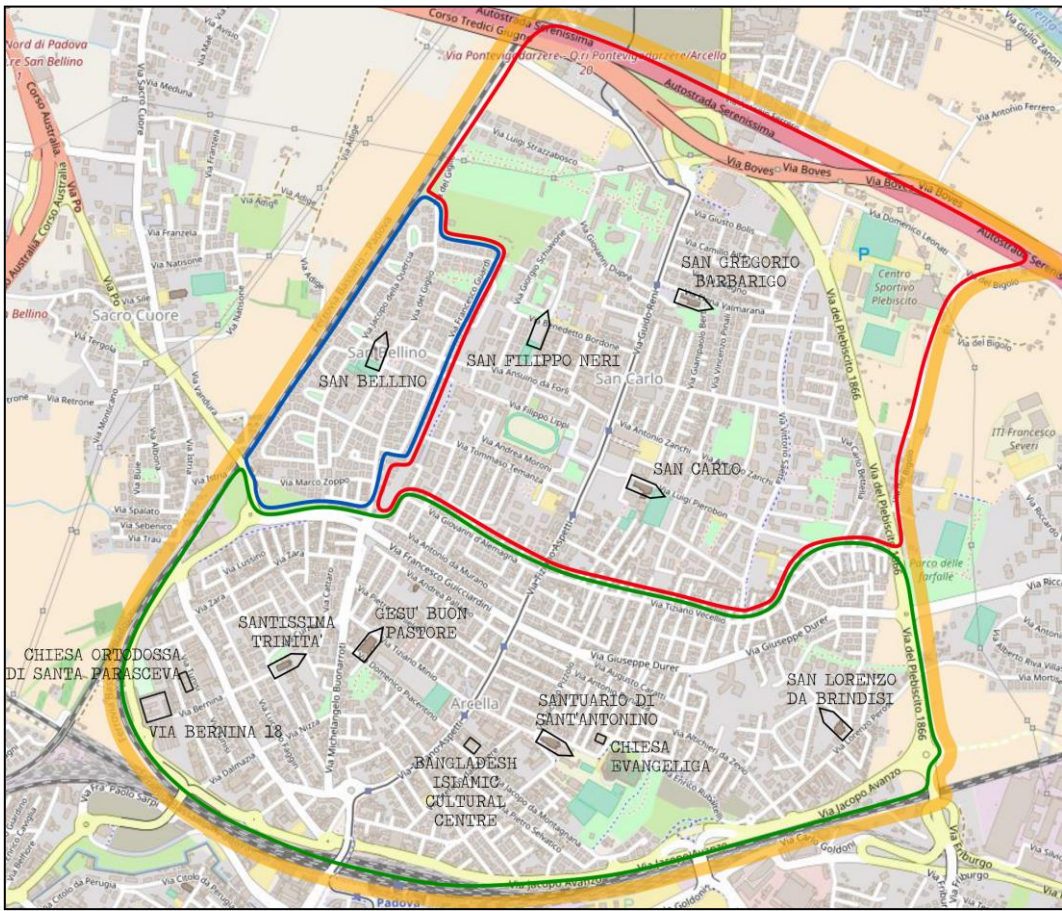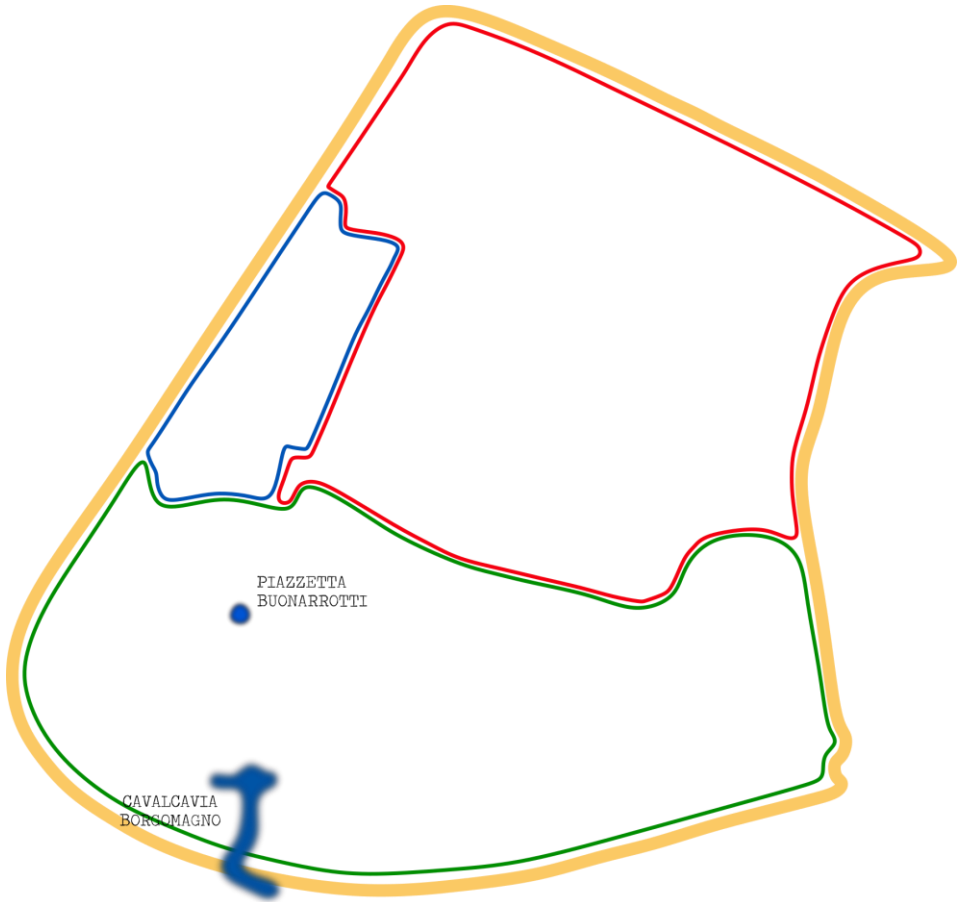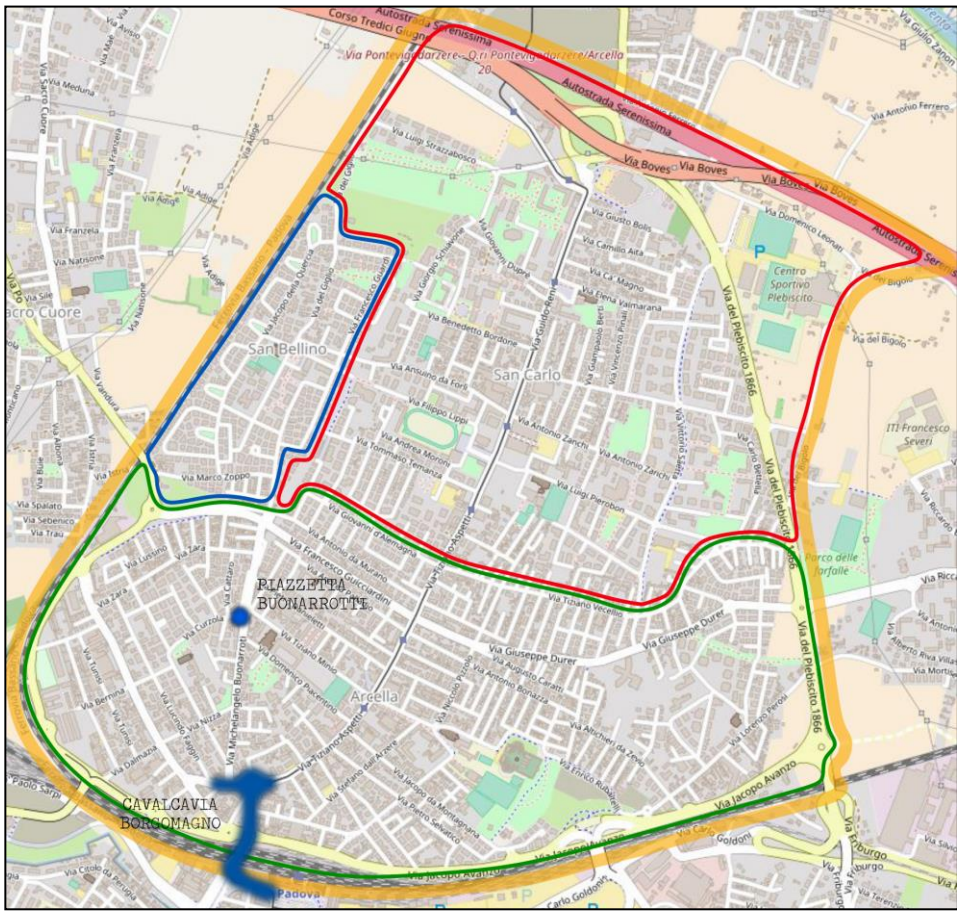
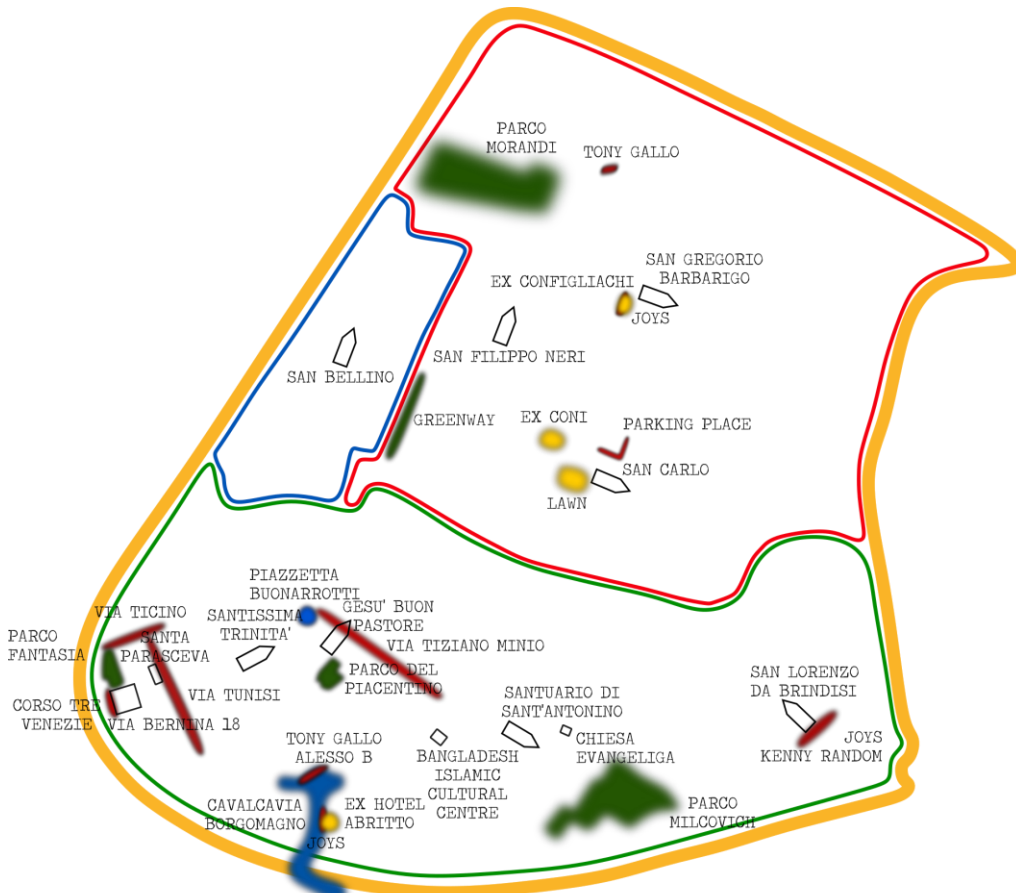Map 2.1: Religious spaces
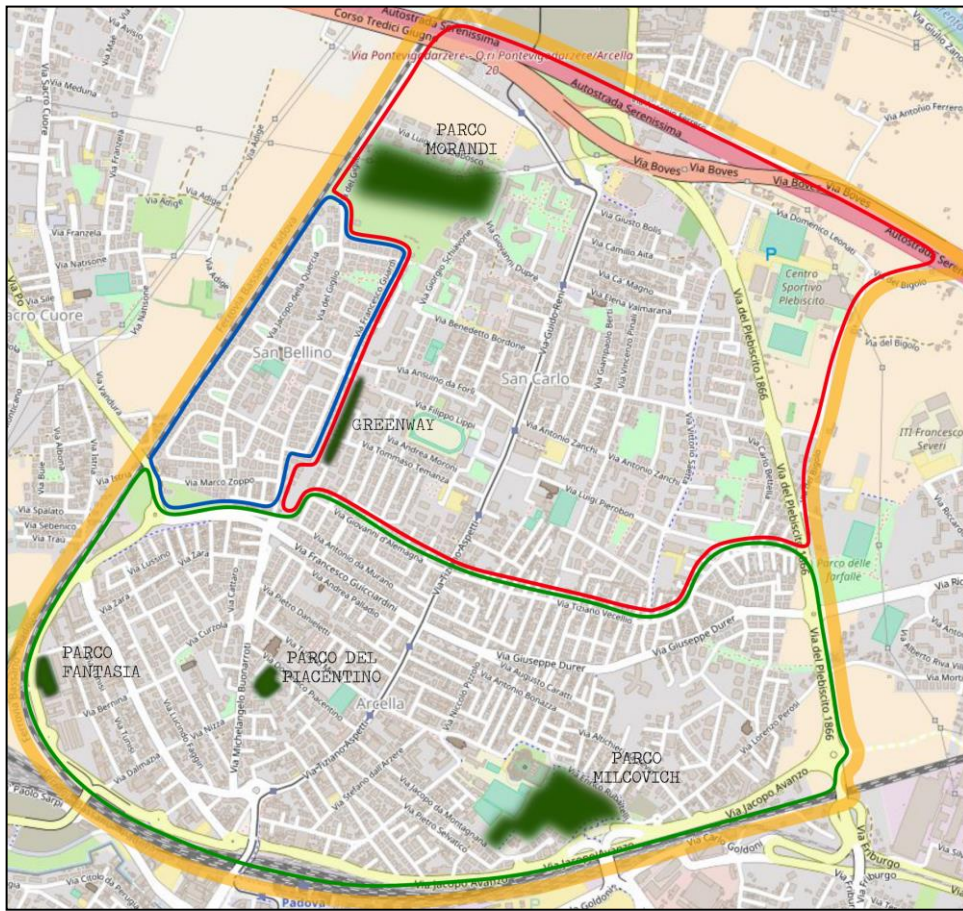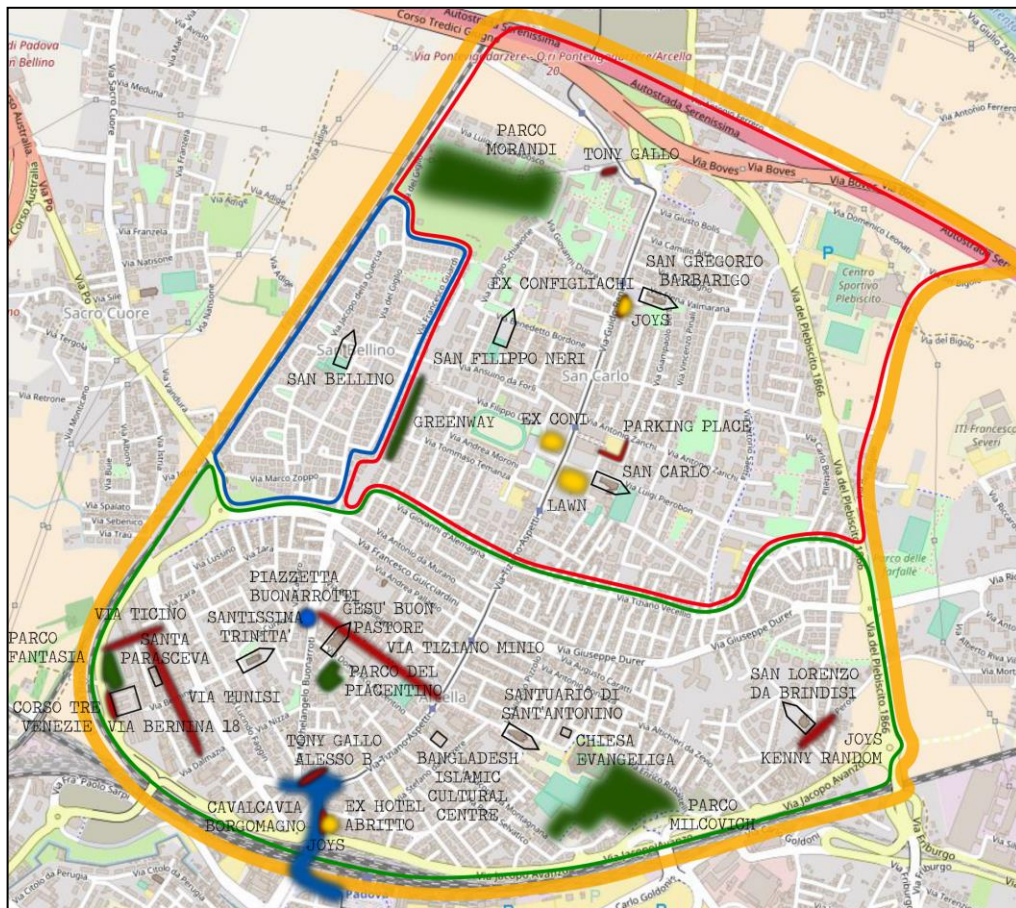
Map 2.2: Green spaces

Map 2.3: Urban art

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Map 2.4: Neglected spaces

Map 2.5: Crucial and critical spaces

Map 2.6: Comprehensive map

2.2 A critical assessment. Processes of change

From the material presented in the previous section it is possible to observe the complexity and multi-sided identity of the neighborhood, as well as the large number of actors, initiatives, networks, projects and energies that cross the neighborhood.

Among all the processes emerged, some are particularly interesting for the analysis of processes of change that could lead to intercultural and sustainable cities.

The most interesting processes of change concern the emergence of new narratives and the use of innovative tools (i.e. visual tools and social media) to foster a new image of the neighborhood and to prompt the participation of residents, the creation of opportunities of encounters from the bottom-up, the emergence of synergies among the actors of change, and the key-role of agents of change.

These processes will be analyzed in the following paragraphs, highlighting which elements and contributions they provide to the reflection about ways and modalities that could enable the promotion and creation of "urban civitas" in intercultural and sustainable cities.

1) Narratives

A narrative about a place or of a reality can be provided by institutional actors and conveyed by the media. In the case of Arcella, the new narrative that emerged was on the contrary a response and reaction to the image of the neighborhood presented in the political and public discourse, and mainly shaped by the media. Some of the most interesting initiatives in the neighborhood were created exactly with the purpose of showing a new image of the neighborhood, and providing the opportunity to present new positive sides of the life in the neighborhood.

The project **"ContArcella"** aimed at letting the neighborhood become alive through the narration. The expedient was the idea of re-reading and re-telling the neighborhood as it were a book, in order to destroy the wall of prejudice that in the opinion of some of the organizers *"suffocates the neighborhood"*. Instead of concentrating on the difficulties and critical aspects of the neighborhood, the project tried to let emerge the resources and uniqueness of the neighborhood. In the opinion of one of the creators in fact, the neighborhood does not need to be "regenerated", but has to be appraised in its elements of beauty and uniqueness. The project, that lasted one year and involved different actors, included different activities: intercultural tours through the neighborhood; a public festival organized in a local park where, where asylum seekers where involved for playing music, and where a "Human Library[22]" section was organized; workshops; a photo competition for the creation of postcards of Arcella; meetings in the parks with a bike that became a mobile library; and the creation of an illustrated book about the neighborhood.

The project offered the possibility of a collaboration between different actors, both associations (such as *Amici dei Popoli, Xena, Angoli di Mondo, R.I.D.I.M., Fuoritarget),* as well commercial activities (the bookshop *Limerick*) and artists (i.e. the comics publishing house *Beccogiallo*). This collaboration offered the possibility of joining different forces and modalities that each actor offered to the project, and that comprehensively were directed to same objective: the discovery of the neighborhood.

The book that was created as the conclusive phase of the project is called ***"Arcelledario. L'ABC del Quartiere Arcella di Padova"*** (The "Arcelledary". The ABC of the neighborhood Arcella of Padova). The book offers a comprehensive

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[22] The Human Library is a project started first in Denmark in 2000 which aims at combating prejudices through the sharing of personal stories (mainly of people discriminated on different basis). The idea of the project is that people can be read as books, and become available to the readers for telling their personal stories. In the case of Arcella, the project was aimed at sharing stories about personal experiences in the neighborhood. One of the stories for example concerned the bombings during the World War II.

variety of the distinctive elements of the neighborhood, providing information that concerns its history, its demography, its landmarks and its elements of uniqueness. For example (Figure 6), the images and text of the books talk about the urban art, the parks, the urban gardens, the landmarks such as Cavalcavia Borgomagno and Santuario di Sant'Antonino, the architecture heritage (e.g. the numerous Villa Liberty), the multiculturality of the neighborhood, the sports activities (from the most traditional such as football, to new ones such as cricket). The book also talks about other aspects that emerged during the interviews: the multiple change of identity that the neighborhood has undergone (from rural neighborhood, to industrial and finally multicultural), the similarity and comparison to other neighborhoods of European cities, the need of the participation of the residents for prompting changes, and its nature of being a place of daily encounters with diversity.

In sum, the book offers through a very simple and immediate form (i.e. the alphabet and the drawings) an effective message about the richness of opportunities of the neighborhood and the affection for it.

ARCELLA

È il quartiere a Nord della ferrovia di Padova, il più popoloso e il più multiculturale. Protagonista di distruzioni e ricostruzioni, passaggi e morti di Santi, è un quartiere demograficamente ed economicamente diverso dal resto della città: un po'' campagna, un po' periferia operaia, un po' quartiere di villette, un po' ordinario degrado urbano.

BORGOMAGNO

Un cavalcaferrovia che è ponte e porta d'ingresso all'Arcella. Costruito nel 1903 in sostituzione di un passaggio a livello (unico attraversamento dei binari tra Padova e Vicenza) ha rappresentato per oltre un secolo il ponte tra la città e il quartiere nord, che all'epoca era davvero "tutta campagna". Progettato da Daniele Donghi, è il primo manufatto in calcestruzzo realizzato in Italia!

CAMPANILE DI SANT'ANTONIN

Un Sant'Antonio di 5 metri, in piedi sul tetto verde del campanile, rappresenta un inconfondibile punto di riferimento nel labirinto intricato delle stradine arcellane. Ogni anno a settembre si "dà fuoco" al campanile a chiusura del Palio di Sant'Antonin. Le otto campane rintoccano dal 1922 e furono comprate con una vera e propria campagna crowdfunding lanciata dal parroco! Sette portano il nome di personaggi storici legati a Sant'Antonio, mentre la più piccola è dedicata ai bambini. Il campanile è uno dei pochissimi edifici rimasti in piedi dopo i bombardamenti del 1943.
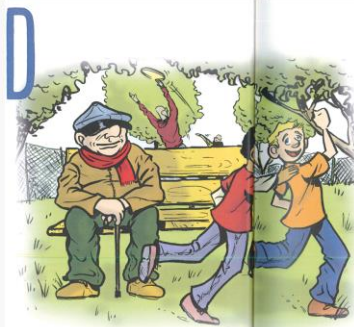
DOMENICA

La domenica il quartiere assume una dimensione molto speciale: la colazione al bar, le partite dei bambini nei diversi campi di calcio, pallavolo o basket, il pomeriggio nei parchi del quartiere. Un giorno speciale per scoprire e vivere l'Arcella con più calma e un gusto tutto particolare.

LIBERTY

Nel passaggio tra l'Ottocento e il Novecento, per la strategica vicinanza alla ferrovia, la zona si è trasformata e arricchita fino a diventare, negli anni Venti e Trenta, un quartiere in pieno sviluppo e in espansione edilizia. Le chiare tracce di questo periodo si riconoscono facilmente sia nelle facciate in stile Liberty delle case, che mantengono il loro pregio anche sotto un'incipriata di smog, sia negli enormi edifici ormai in disuso, abbandonati da anni al rimboschimento.
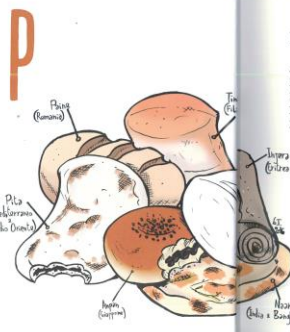
PANE QUOTIDIANO

Anpan - Giappone
Mantou - Cina
Naan, Rumali, Roti - India e Bangladesh
Injera - Eritrea ed Etiopia
Pita - Mediterraneo e Medio Oriente
Pâine - Romania
Tinapay – Filippine

… e chi più pane ha più ne metta!
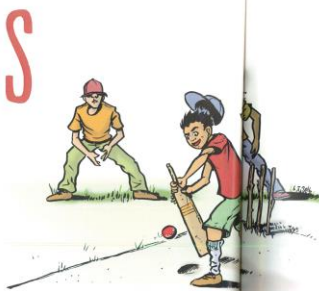
SPORT INTERNI ED ESTERNI

Atletica allo Stadio Colbachini, calcetto al patronato, basket al parco e cricket nel parcheggio. Non essendoci molte piazze "da vivere", gli arcellani colonizzano aree verdi, cavalcavia, parcheggi di supermercati e zone dismesse per fare sport, chiacchierare con gli amici, organizzare picnic e imparare ad andare in bicicletta. Se c'è spazio… si usa!

X – Y – K – J – H – W

Xiao, Yolanda, Kevin, José, Hissa, William… questi nomi sono comuni all'Arcella, così come Andrea, Michele, Silvia o Marta. E sono tutti nomi bellissimi.

Figure 6: Some pages of the book "Arcelledario"
Credits: Texts by Emiliano Bon and Grazia Raimondo
Images by Giacomo Taddeo Traini

2) Visual tools (photography and video)

The project "**ContArcella**" includes also one of the innovative tools that have been deployed in many initiatives as a method for providing new images of the neighborhood and for discovering the neighborhood: photography.

One of the initiatives of "ContArcella" was in fact the photo competition "**ScattArcella**". The competition was open to everyone, and the photo selected as winners were printed as postcards. The aim was to offer new postcards that could show new aspects of the neighborhood and could complement the already existing old postcards that mainly represented religious spaces or old views of the neighborhood. The criteria for selecting the winning photos were the "*originality, the inclusive perspective and the active research of the beauty of the neighborhood*" (Facebook Page Cartoline dall'Arcella - Contest Fotografico ScattArcella).

The winning photos were exhibited in some local shops of the neighborhood. They represent some distinctive aspects of the neighborhood: the street art and some hidden artistic beauty; one of the parks of the neighborhood, Parco Morandi, with the mobile library-bike of the project "ContArcella"; two landmarks of the neighborhood: the tram over Cavalcavia Borgomagno; a message of solidarity ("Ama, puoi", "Love, you can") (Figure 7).
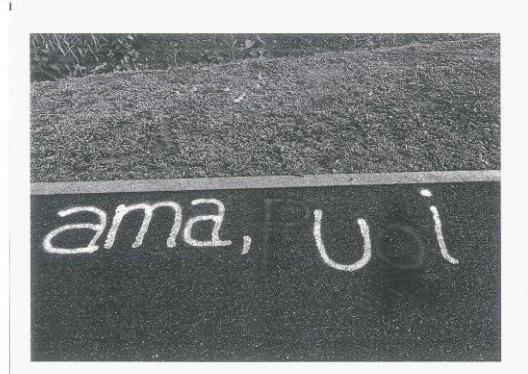
Figure 7: The postcards of the project ContArcella
Credits: Marco Bernardi, Grazia Raimondo,
Giovanni Sgobba (2), Stefania Rizzo

Another initiative part of the project "**ContArcella**" was also focusing on photography. The project "**Raccontaci l'Arcella**", managed by the association R.I.D.I.M., used the methodology of the photovoice during a workshop aimed at involving women that lived or knew very well the neighborhood.

The group that took part in the workshop was made of four Italian women and four foreigners (one British-Italian, two from Ethiopia and one from Morocco). The activities of the workshop were led by a photographer and an anthropologist, and included meetings and walks in the neighborhood. The aim of the project was to prompt a discussion, through the production of photos, about topics such as the belonging to the neighborhood, the perception of comfort or danger in the urban spaces, and the emergence of significative places.

The photos produced by the participants were selected and organized in a photo exhibition that was presented in many public occasions in the neighborhood. In the opinion of one of the project organizers, an important request that emerged during the project was the need of a place for women and for socialization, where they could for example drink a tea, dance, exchange recipes and cook together. Some of them, through the photos, highlighted some spaces that could be converted in places where women can meet.

Other topics revealed by the photos are the diversity and the multiculturality of the neighborhood (Figure 8). One author captured an Ethiopian shop that offers ethnic products. In another photo, there is a palm that reminds the author about her native country. A photo shows a greengrocer in the nearby of Cavalcavia Borgomango, and wants to express the variety of ethnic as well as traditional shops and commercial activities. Another photographer depicted the market as a place of sociality and multicultural encounters, while others decided to show he variety of religious elements in the streets. Piazzetta Buonarrotti, as an imporant place of conviviality, is depicted, as well as some local well-known residents to stress that "*it is people that live spaces and make them special*", as the author

writes. A photo shows some old games still played in the streets to express the still existing link with the past and tradition.

Other photos (Figure 9) focus on the urban spaces of the neighborhood: the urban art in Via Tunisi, the social centre Pedro, murals and flyers written in foreign language (the description of the photos was: *"Welcome to Arcella, where also the walls speak different languages and idioms"*), and the infrastructures of the neighborhood connecting it to other parts of the city.

Other photos (Figure 10) present some more critical aspects of the neighborhood: some abandoned spaces that could be transformed (e.g. the former Steiner school, the building ex Coni), the feeling of unsafety at night caused by the absence of people in the streets, the danger of the tram tracks, and the restricted access to some parks of the neighborhood. One of the photos, that shows balloons in the sky, represents the attachment of the author of foreign origin to the neighborhood. The comment to the photo written by the author expresses this bond*: "One year ago I moved to another neighborhood, but Arcella remains in my heart. There my daughters grew up, and there, every time I go back, I feel at home"*.

Figure 8: Photos from the photo exhibition of "Raccontaci l'Arcella"
Credits: Arsema Desalegn, Askale Zelelew, Marina Canapero, Askale Zelelew, Maria Rita Saraceno, Meryem Chaaban, Maria Rita Saraceno

Figure 9: Photos from the photo exhibition of "Raccontaci l'Arcella"
Credits: Daniela Sartori (2), Marina Canapero (2), Daniela Sartori
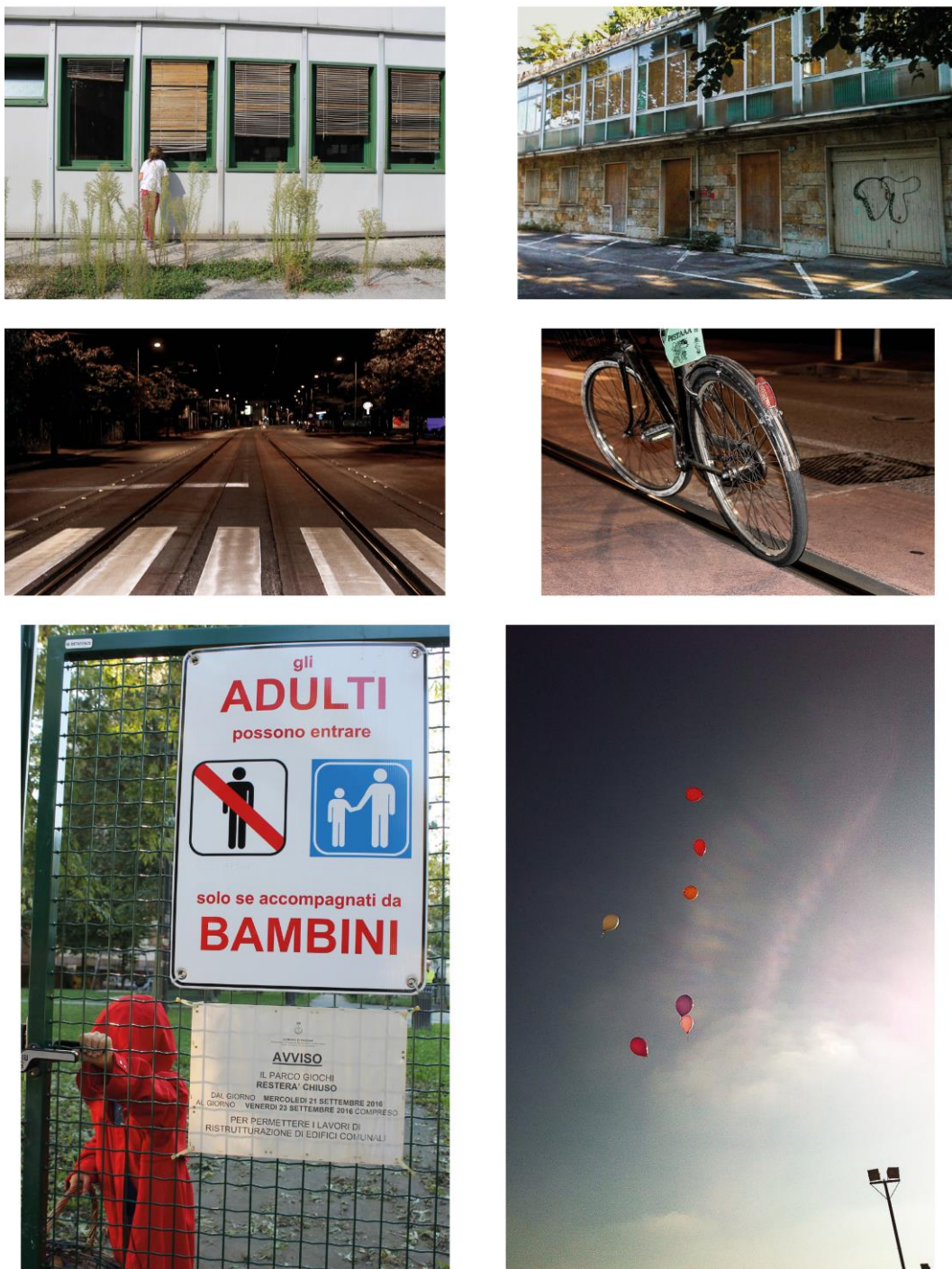
Figure 10: Photos from the photo exhibition of "Raccontaci l'Arcella"
Credits: Cristina Belfanti, Manuela Carlon (2), Cristina Belfanti, (2), Meryem Chaaban

"**ContArcella**" was not the only project that deployed photography to convey new messages, to appraise and to prompt the discovery of the neighborhood. Also other projects that focused on the neighborhood decided to use photography as a tool for communication and for the creation of more personal, direct and less generalized images of the neighborhood.

The project "**Sguardi d'Arcella**" (Gazes/Views of Arcella), presented by the newspaper La Difesa del Popolo, aimed at using photography in order to provide a new type of information about the neighborhood through the stories and voices of its inhabitants. Photography played a central role in the project, not just as a visual tool to enrich the personal stories of the people interviewed, but also as a device in order to provide a new type of information that did not find space in other local media.

The journalist in charge of the project decided to use photography because it allowed him to provide a name, a face and an identity to the people that live the neighborhood. With this choice, he wanted to contrast the type of information provided by other media, which mainly talked about micro-criminality and other negative aspects of the neighborhood, focusing on emergency situations, often providing generalized information with opinions from unknown sources and a lack of in-depth interviews.

His choice was therefore encouraged by the wish to provide an information as neutral, unbiased and less generalized as possible. Photography let him pursue this aim, and it facilitated the relation with the subjects of its stories.

In his opinion, photography is *"the best device to allow this. It is as a natural instrument. You enter in a different relation with the other person. It's the most direct device. It puts you in contact with the person".*

The photos that accompany the articles are portraits of people that live or have a relation with the neighborhood. For example, they show people engaged in projects in the neighborhood (e.g. bookshoppers, architects, students, social workers, athletes), some of its crucial spaces (e.g. parks, urban art, bike paths, streets), its religious and cultural variety, its historical traditions (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Some of the photos of the project "Sguardi d'Arcella"
Credits: Giovanni Sgobba / Source: La Difesa del Popolo webpage

Another initiative that has enriched the narrative and the image of the neighborhood with new visions and views is the photography project "**SìAmo Arcella**". The wish of the group of amateur photographers to start a photography project found in the evolving and diverse reality of the neighborhood the perfect subject. Even if with different approaches and styles of photography, the common aim of the group of photographers is to analyze a reality close to them, looking at it in a different way and finding new perspectives to look at that place. In the opinion of one of them, their project aims at documenting the reality of the neighborhood, and it is based on these premises:

"It will become a visual story of this place, with different styles, perspectives and also different purposes. The common purpose is to do something that we like. We like exploring people and places, even if already seen, and look at them with a different perspective [...] You don't need to go far away. If I look in a different way what is around me, I'd find something new. There is always something beautiful in something awful."

Their work could resemble the project "Humans of New York", a photographic anthology of faces and stories of people living in New York City. Similarly, also the photographers of **"SìAmo Arcella"** think that *"for us it's people that tell something. To tell the story of a neighborhood you tell it through its people".*

In the opinion of one of them, photography is a powerful tool for the following reasons:

"You can beyond prejudices and barriers with photography. The universal message that I can look for with my photography is the one of humanity. I have a person in front of me, that can be different. But the beauty of humanity is in its diversity. Photography lets me get in contact with freedom with this humanity.

So far, the photographers have created a collection published on their Facebook page of portraits and street scenes of the neighborhood, that show in a creative and innovative way its variety, in terms of cultures, generations and urban spaces (Figure 12, Figure 13, Figure 14).

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Figure 12: Photos from the photo-project SìAmo Arcella
Credits: Alessandro Tegon / Source: SìAmo Arcella Facebook page

Figure 13: Photos from the photo-project SìAmo Arcella
Credits: Alessandro Tegon, Fabio Boer / Source: SìAmo Arcella Facebook page

Figure 14: Photos from the photo-project SìAmo Arcella
Credits: Fabio Boer, Alessandro Tegon, (5), Marco Ferrandi, Alessandro Tegon
Source: SìAmo Arcella Facebook page

Their project was enriched by the organization of a photo-walk through the neighborhood, open to everyone. The participants contributed to the creation of a series of photos that capture in depth the variety of people and stories of the neighborhood (Figure 15). The photos were selected, published online and presented in a photo exhibition during a local festival at one of the local churches.

Figure 15: Photos from the photo-walk organized by SìAmo Arcella (October 7 2017)
Credits: participants to the photo-walk [unknown authors]
Source: SìAmo Arcella Photowalk webpage

Another project that aimed at documenting the neighborhood with visual tools was the project "**Premio Città Futura**". The project was launched by the association *Euganea Movie Movement* in collaboration with the cooperative *Cooperativa Sociale Il Sestante Onlus*, as part of the initiative "S'Illumina" promoted by SIAE[23]. The initiative aims at funding projects that focus on the creation of cultural activities in the peripheries of cities, involving young people and young artists under 35.

The project "Premio Città Futura" awarded three young film directors, that were responsible for leading three documentary workshops open to young people. The final product of the workshops was a short documentary about the neighborhood.

In the opinion of one of the organizers, the choice of focusing on the neighborhood was motivated by the wish to "*photograph the current situation, discover the real Arcella, and not the one conveyed by the media*". The film director responsible for the project had already experience with documentaries about areas of the city highly stereotyped and oppressed with negative perceptions. He explained that:

[The idea was] to use the stereotype that there is in the city about the neighborhood and be able to turn it upside down. There is a big distance between the public and political image and the reality that you discover when you go to visit that world. [...] It is the same approach I had when I did the movie about Via Anelli[24].

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[23] Società Italiana degli Autori ed Editori (Italian Society of Authors and Publishers) is the Italian copyright collecting agency.

[24] "Via Anelli", by Marco Segato (2008) is a documentary about the residential complex "La Serenissima", located in Via Anelli (Padova). The area suffered of severe problems of drug dealing, micro-criminality and overcrowding up to the point that the public administration decided for the clearing out and the transfer of the inhabitants to other parts of the city (a process carried out between 2005 and 2007). The area was often represented as a "ghetto" because of the high presence of foreigners, and especially after the decision by the public administration to build a fence around some of the buildings in 2006. The fence was aimed officially at guaranteeing the safety of the surrounding residents. It was highly criticized in the public discourse and in the media, and considered by some as a measure of ghettoization.

In his opinion, the documentary offered the possibility to provide to the public new tools for considering reality, prompting people to reflect and to ask new questions, more than giving answers. In fact, he said that:

"I think that a place, a territory, a neighborhood, that tells about itself, in a good or bad way, it's a place that is alive. So, welcome to all the critical aspects, that prompt people to get interested!"

The power of documentary as a tool to let people discover places or sides of reality that are not accessible to them can be found in his words:

"The fear increases then you don't know something. When you know it, you have some tools and instruments to face it. […] With the documentary and the cinema you become an instrument for having access to worlds that others can see from their home. This is the power of documentary"

The project was organized in collaboration not only with the cooperative **Cooperativa Sociale il Sestante Onlus**, that had strong knowledge of the territory and could more easily get access to the neighborhood, but also with other actors such as the ethical bank **Bancaetica**, the movie theater of the neighborhood **Cinema Multiastra**, and the association **Nadir**. The collaboration aimed at involving actors who adopted similar approaches, being involved in projects that aim at revitalization of some areas through cultures (the association Nadir is located in **Piazzetta Gasparotto**, a square nearby the train station that is undergoing a process of urban revitalization carried out through participatory modalities). Working in a network, in the opinion of the film director is fundamental in order to stimulate originality of the project, and also to involve more public and make the initiative sustainable.

3) Social Media

Another tool that was used by some actors in the neighborhood in order to provide a different representation of the neighborhood is Facebook. The experiment of the page **"Arcellatown"** is particularly interesting.

The page shows the potential of the social media platform, on one hand to gather the sense of pride of many residents, and on the other hand to prompt discussion through the provision of hints for reflections (often with strong comments that gathered also critics).

Regardless of the positions taken by the page, the interesting aspect is the success that it has gathered among users, managing to become a platform that praise symbols, elements of identification and landmarks of the neighborhood, that gather people linked by a sense of pride and attachment for the neighborhood, that encourage residents to share opinions and critics, that make irony about the negative aspects of the neighborhood, and that puts lights on the initiatives and unique elements of the neighborhood. What is extremely important to stress is that the page approach is centered on inclusiveness. The identification and strong sense of belonging to the neighborhood, that the page encourages, wants to be therefore not an element to create identity affiliations that exclude others. On the contrary, it suggests a type of approach and mindset that encourage people to live and engage in the life of the neighborhood, accepting and praising its diversity as a unique and important feature.

The page also proposes some actions that have an impact in the "real world". For example, the administrators of the page launched the sale of stickers, maps and flags of the neighborhood, stating that the profit would be invested in local projects ongoing in the neighborhood.

Some of the posts of the page talk for example about the street art of the neighborhood, other encourage reflections about integration and the meeting with the Other, and other talk about the uniqueness of the neighborhood (Figure 16).

The possibility of virtual projects to first strengthen bonds to a place and among residents or neighbors and then to be translated into actions and changes in reality has been already showed by projects such as the "Social street[25]". One of the interviewees exactly stressed the fact that she thinks the neighborhood could offer the right conditions for the creation of a "Social street". In her opinion,

"There is fertile territory for this. It should be open to families, old people and not just young people" (Woman, 26, Italian)

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[25] The Social Street is an initiative started in Via Fondazza, Bologna (Italy) in 2013, with a Facebook group aimed at giving the possibility of neighbors to help each other and meet, creating relations of solidarity and favoring inclusiveness.

Figure 16: Posts from the Facebook page Arcellatown
Source: Arcellatown Facebook page

4) Opportunities of encounters and celebration of diversity

Another project that took inspiration from the model of the social street and used Facebook as a tool for facilitating the encounter was the project "**Progetto Città Gentile**" (Kind City Project). The aim was to boost the creation of a kind city, through kind neighborhoods, thanks to actions of solidarity, kindness and social cohesion. The project was coordinated by a professor of community psychology of the University of Padua. The students involved were in charge of creating projects of interventions in local communities, with the aim to appraise the territory, its initiatives and resources. A group of students decided to focus on the neighborhood Arcella, and to address young people between 18 and 30 years old.

The project applied a bottom-up approach, based on the belief that ideas generating from local actors sharpen the sustainability of the project. Their analysis of needs and resources highlighted the lack of cultural and recreational opportunities for young people, and the need of environmental and urban rehabilitation. Taking into account the need of creating moments of encounter, the first kind action they organized was a "Spritz con Baratto" (Spritz with Swap-market) in Piazzetta Buonarrotti. The organizers managed the activities through the Facebook group. When their project was concluded, their wish was that the group created would have kept meeting independently. One of the organizers pointed out that unfortunately this did not happen, maybe because their presence in the group as organizers of initiatives should have been extended for a longer time. Nonetheless, she stressed out that the interest and the participation to the project was extremely positive. She explained that:

"The neighborhood is lively, it is lived and people want to live it. There is willingness to do, to make it more beautiful and to appreciate it more"

Among the numerous initiatives and festivals organized by associations in the neighborhood aimed at favoring opportunities of encounters, it is interesting to observe especially two initiatives aimed at presenting, appraising and discovery the variety of cultures of the neighborhood.

The first is an initiative launched in the primary school Salvo D'Acquisto by the association *Arc.A.Dia*, called **"Un museo grande quanto il mondo"** (A museum as big as the world). The aim of the project was to create a "*participatory museum*" with objects that represent the culture or place of origin of the families of the children. Together with the provision of a representative object, the families were also invited for a moment of conviviality where they could share a story of the object or of their lives.

The project lasted one year (a.y. 2015/206) and culminated with the exhibition of the objects gathered, with a catalogue of the objects and their stories, and with a video of the interviews conducted with the parents. The exhibition included books, photos, traditional dresses and other memories.

The other initiative created in the neighborhood is the "**Picnic del Mondo**". The origin of the project comes from the idea of a group of parents of a local school to organize an event that could let the families and the children meet together. The event, organized once a year, reached its second edition in 2017. Although the event is not religiously-affiliated, it was organized in the spaces of the parish church of San Bellino, because of the possibility to have easier access to these spaces compared to public squares and parks (that need a series of authorizations and requirements). During the event, the families and participants were invited to bring traditional food of their country of origin. Many dressed traditional dresses of their cultures. During the afternoon different groups of musicians and dancers performed music and dances. One of the organizers is a father that got inspiration from the multicultural reality of the class of his child, and had the idea to create the event with the collaboration of other parents. He told that the involvement of people that he calls "ambassadors" was crucial in order to be able to reach out and involve different groups of foreign origin. These

"ambassadors" played the role of connectors with the foreign communities and managed to involve a great number of people.

The event was documented by some photographers of the group SìAmo Arcella (Figure 17, Figure 18, Figure 19). Their photos represent the extremely rich and colorful variety of the participants to the event.

Figure 17: Photos of participants to the event "Picnic del Mondo" (09/24/2017)
Credits: Alberto Garavello and Marco Ferrandi / Source: SìAmo Arcella Facebook page

Figure 18: Photos of participants to the event "Picnic del Mondo" (09/24/2017)
Credits: Alberto Garavello and Marco Ferrandi / Source: SìAmo Arcella Facebook page

Figure 19: Photos of participants to the event "Picnic del Mondo" (09/24/2017)).
Credits: Alberto Garavello and Marco Ferrandi / Source: SìAmo Arcella Facebook page

One of the elements that most clearly emerged in the study of the neighborhood is the fruitful synergy that was created among associations, groups and single actors working in the neighborhood with similar aims or approaches.

The people interviewed stressed that the possibility to work in network is a successful strategy for many reasons. Presenting a project conceived and organized by more organizations facilitates the access to funds granted through call for applications. Furthermore, it gives the possibility to the projects to achieve a better success in terms of involvement of participants, and it favors the creativity and originality of the projects allowing the possibility to use different modalities and focusing on different sectors.

It was also very interesting to observe that some actors who were involved in the neighborhood with independent projects became soon integrated in the network. For example, the journalist in charge of **"Sguardi d'Arcella"** stressed the fact that during his work he managed to create relations that, subsequently, were transformed in further involvement into other projects concerning the neighborhood. Likewise, also one of the creators of the **"Progetto Città Gentile"** argued that the project was an occasion for getting to know the network working in Arcella and becoming involved in new projects. Both of them became involved in a virtuous network of social relations that exist in the neighborhood.

What seemed crucial in many projects started in the neighborhood is the role of people who became "agents of change". As mentioned in the first Part of the thesis, agents of change are people that out of a personal initiative decide to get engaged and serve the community they live in, through a project or the provision of an innovative idea. The research showed that the neighborhood is extremely rich of agents of change, and their actions and efforts have a strong impact in the neighborhood. Among many, we refer for example to the creators of the bookshop Limerick, the barber that opened the Ruvido Barber Rock Club, the architect that fought for the creation of the bike-path, the creators of Arcellatown and the father who had the idea to create the "Picnic del Mondo". Regardless of the modality or project they are involved in, and of the volunteering basis of their engagement or

the commercial aspect of their activity, these agents for change were connected by a wish to engage in first person for a change in their neighborhood. They felt urged by a wish to face the problems together, appraise the diversity and uniqueness of the neighborhood. The key of their success seems the capacity of believing in the possibility of changing, and the ability to transform a single wish into the decision to engage together in a change and into a shared project.

What emerged very clearly from the research is that without the personal engagement, efforts, perseverance and energy of these actors, many innovative ideas and projects created in the neighborhood would have never been possible.

It is especially thanks to their engagement that the processes of change towards intercultural and sustainable cities seem to be successful.

2.3 Perspectives for the future

As it clearly emerged during the analysis of the qualitative data gathered, Arcella offers many interesting elements and unique opportunities for reflecting about processes that emerge in multicultural urban environments. Will the processes sparked in the neighborhood favor the strengthening of an "urban civitas" that can lead to the effective construction of an intercultural and sustainable city?

The research proves that the path in this direction has been already undertaken, not just because many actors share and express this wish, but also because many of them have decided to pursue the wish with effective actions, initiating processes of change. In fact, as already highlighted in the first Part of the thesis, many studies and examples from urban environments illustrate that the simple coexistence with diversity is not enough for overcoming prejudices and stereotypes, and to let an actual integration happen.

The simple coexistence in a "multicultural" place would not lead to such an ambitious horizon as the creation of "intercultural" cities. Multicultural environments are places where people live side by side in the city with indifference (or tolerance) with the Other and with the urban space. On the contrary, intercultural cities are created when their urban societies are guided by the principles of dialogue, and the awareness of being part and responsible for the wider global community. This "urban civitas" would be therefore aware of the need to respect and appraise the encounter with the Other, as a moment of enrichment and personal growth, as well as the respect and defense of the environment, whose protection should be embraced by everybody. Intercultural and sustainable cities offer therefore the possibility to their residents to get engaged together, care for the common spaces and meet the Other.

The study of Arcella has shown many actions moved by ideals and wishes of change that can be crucial for pursuing the project of intercultural and sustainable cities.

As the process started in the neighborhood is ongoing and rather recent, it is not possible to draw conclusions about the more or less effectiveness of the actions undertaken. Although the final effects of this process can only be analyzed in a long-term perspective, it is possible to identify the main elements that have proved to be crucial for starting this process. We will therefore analyze which strengths and weaknesses the neighborhood possesses for the pursuit of an intercultural and sustainable city, as well as identifying which opportunities and threats can favor and hinder the process. The analysis will be guided with a reference to the integrated, interconnected, multidirectional and intertwined approach presented in the first Part of the thesis, and conceived as the approach that presents the necessary elements for the creation of an effective strategy of change.

1) SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis gives the opportunity to highlight which elements can favor and be helpful, or on the contrary can hinder and be harmful, for the achievement of the objective, in our case building "urban civitas" in intercultural and sustainable cities. The elements are interconnected and influence each other. An in-depth analysis of them is useful in order to suggest possible future developments.

Strengths

The strengths are all those elements that are already present in the reality of the neighborhood and create an enabling environment for further future projects to be implemented. These elements of strength should be further consolidated, favored and not hindered, and considered as the key factors for new strategies.

- One of the strengths of the Arcella neighborhood is the presence of a variety of civil society actors that work in different fields and provide support and services for different sectors of the society. Actors involved in

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projects range from community-building, creation of new narratives, organization of cultural events, awareness-raising about environmental issues, environmental protection and sports. Their actions address asylum seekers, homeless people, people in need, women, old people, children and teenagers.

- Another strength of the neighborhood refers to the differentiated coordination of the projects and the network among the actors, residents and civil society groups. Various actors are involved in the projects in order to implement them together, sharing resources, ideas, modalities and tools.

- Among the residents we recognize a strong pride, attachment and sense of belonging related to the neighborhood. This factor is important because in many cases it prompted people to be willing to work for the community, to engage in projects and to share initiatives with others.

- The rich history of continuous regeneration and change of the neighborhood has left its signs in the present, leaving a heritage of traditions and symbols of affection and identification. Even if most of them are related to the religious sphere, they represent an important element and an opportunity of aggregation, being an integral part of the local culture. This cultural heritage is also connected to the rural past of the neighborhood (it is important to remember that the transition from a rural environment to an industrial and urban environment has happened within the course of a few decades after the World War II). The rural nature and the historical traditions have persisted for example in the numerous "sagre" (local festivals), celebrations and processions.

- Also, the urban fabric shows the signs of this historical past. Even if negatively affected by the chaotic and not controlled urban development following the World War II, the neighborhood is rich of elements of beautiful architecture heritage visible in the Liberty villas[26].

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[26] In this regard, it is relevant to point out a project of mapping the Liberty villas of the neighborhood carried out by a young resident of the neighborhood. Its project is available online on the page: https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1Xt-rJTmmV8XPV2z_3_i7fhmXWmg&ll=45.42788035332359%2C11.885805650000066&z=15

Together with this ancient art heritage, the neighborhood is enriched by the elements of a modern and more recent art, in the form of graffiti and murals[27]. Many European cities have already started to consider street art as an opportunity for tourism and esthetical appraisal of neglected spaces. It is important to remember that graffiti and murals can contribute to an amelioration of neglected, dull, abandoned gray spaces (that are the natural spaces of appearance of street art). Street art also often conceal messages that might be connected to the territory or local circumstances.

- Another strength of the neighborhood is the presence of many actors that carry out their work relying on assets-based approaches. This means an approach that aims at identifying assets and resources with the belief that they are the key for resolving shortcomings or problems affecting individuals or communities. Such an approach can be applied to a territory as well as to individuals. In the neighborhood for example it was possible to observe the application of this kind of approach in the "welfare generativo" at the basis of Tavolo Arcella, the "Go Deep" methodology developed by the association Xena, and the idea to find talents among the people (especially the people in need) that prompted the creation of the sewing-course for foreign women. The latter was based on the idea to find the talents and translate them in opportunities of meaningful encounters through shared activities, job opportunities or in opportunities to contribute to the community with a service.

A complementary approach is the one embraced by projects such as ContArcella or Arcellatown, that aims at appraising the positive elements of the neighborhood and adopting a positive and optimistic approach to address the critical issues of the neighborhood.

- Another strength is the presence of associations that work with modalities that favor dialogue. It is the case for example of the cooperative ooperativa Sociale il Sestante Onlus. An interesting opportunity offered by the

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[27]It is possible to find also an interactive map of the street art pieces of the entire city of Padua, including the ones present in the territory of Arcella. The map can be found online on the page: https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1r7CuDo2b86CyDvPvqdtRCHHsg08&ll=45.40 783778479815%2C11.866501698583988&z=13

cooperative to the residents was the discussion organized with the neighbors of a prospective house for asylum seekers. The moment let the residents on one side express their fears and concerns, and on the other side it let the cooperative explain the purposes and modalities of the projects. This experience shows the possibility of creating moments of "agonistic", and not "antagonistic" discussion, where people can let their voice be heard and where different sectors of societies can express and negotiate their needs and desires, finding common solutions.

- Another crucial, and probably a sine qua non condition for most of the changes sparked in the neighborhood, is the presence of agents of change. These people are willing to work for the community; they have decided to be engaged and involved by accompanying changes and providing opportunities of change. These agents of change are moved by a strong awareness about societal or environmental needs, and the wish to care for the place, to appraise its positive aspects and to work for changing and improving the critical aspects.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses of the neighborhood are all the factors that in the current situation are an obstacle for the processes of change. Prompt solutions for their amelioration should be found, involving all the actors that can provide help to address them. A strategy following an intertwined approach to address the weakness should be based on the belief of the potential of problems of mutually solving each other.

- One of the weaknesses refers to the difficulty to involve some sectors of the society in the projects, or to request their participation. A critical group is for example old people; they are the most vulnerable group, and suffer the strongest impact from the change (also a visual change) of the world they were accustomed to. Other sectors of society have more opportunities

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to meet with diversity, to be easily contacted or to be involved in projects (for example parents through their children and schools).

- Another weakness is the ability to prompt participation and to reach to the sectors of society that have different views. The interviews showed in fact the difficulty that some actors have in fostering the participation of residents in projects, and also the difficulty to discuss with people that have negative perceptions about the multiculturality of the neighborhood.

- Another weakness, connected to the possibility to encourage people to active participation, is the lack in Italy of a tradition of participation and participatory democracy. Furthermore, the lack of trust of many people in institutions can prevent fruitful engagement or can create a feeling of frustration.

- Another weakness relates to the scarcity of media sources that provide fair and honest information about the neighborhood which is not exclusively connected to micro-criminality. The lack of multi-lingual and multicultural sources of information can also be considered a weakness that prevents the possibility of information to reach to a wider part of society.

- The presence of micro-criminality in some areas of the neighborhood very much presents a harmful element. This problem should be addressed in the first place by the actions and choices of the public administration. However, most of the interviewees complained about the laxity and lack of effectiveness of the measures taken by the public administration to control the problem, and they recognized the difficulty in finding viable solutions to the problem[28].

- Another element of weakness related to the facilitation of integration is the lack of cultural mediator in schools, who were mentioned by many interviewees as extremely important for the creation of connections with the newcomers, both children and families.

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[28] A possible contribution for finding solutions to problems that seem impossible to be eradicated, is for example a reflection proposed by a social worker former president of the cooperative Il Sestante: the creation of "red-districts" in cities (similar experiences exist in other parts of Europe), area designated where activities of drug-dealing and prostitution can be thoroughly kept into control and where the necessary assistance in situations of dangers and need can be provided.

- Another critical element is the reliance of many projects on the possibility to finance their activities through calls for applications. This method limits the life-span of the projects and make them dependent on the possibilities to find funds. Remarkably, the provider of funds most mentioned by the interviewees is the Fondazione Cariparo. Furthermore, many projects are based on the action of volunteers, which, even if crucial, cannot be the only basis for projects. The related problem to the presence of limited funds is a strong competition among associations; this might prevent the possibility to create networks and alliances.
- A related element concerns the difficulty in collaborating and dialoguing with the public administration authorities. Also the lack of recognition and support (economic or mediatic) of the projects and actors that undertake valuable actions for the community is a real problem for the launching of urban projects.

Opportunities

The opportunities that could favor a process of change in the neighborhood are the external elements that could provide helpful elements, as well as some elements present in the neighborhood whose potential has not already been taken advantage of.

- One of the main opportunities that the experience of the neighborhood has taught is the discovery of the importance of "ambassadors", being people who can act as a channel, bridge or connection between different groups. These people might become points of reference for the community and act as connectors. They can be crucial for involving more people, reaching out to others and providing knowledge and understanding about different cultures or religions because of their knowledge, origin or belonging. Their role could be strengthened.

- Another opportunity is related to the official recognition of relevant actors, the role of agents of change and the possibility to boost initiatives that prompt their activation and mobilization.

- Another opportunity can be offered by the presence in the political sphere of political actors that foster participatory processes and bottom-up approaches, such as for instance the ones proposed by the civic list "Coalizione Civica". This type of processes could offer the possibility of the creation of spaces of negotiation, discussion and debate, where people's opinions and ideas are heard and taken into consideration. The fact that the political force is not affiliated to any political party could favor the possibility to reach a wider spectrum of people beyond particular political identification. This could be crucial in order to favor the emergence of a new feeling of trust among people towards institutions and the public administration.

- An interesting aspect refers to the opportunity of the neighborhood of providing fertile space for artists. The opportunity of empty spaces and spaces to be regenerated could be crucial in order to attract the interest of artists and also to involve them, with a possible envisioned aim of letting the neighborhood become a cultural and artistic hub. Examples of this kind of artist-driven developments can be observed in many neighborhoods in other European cities. They attract the interests of artists because of the availability of spaces and the low-rents of the area. This characteristic could offer a further element of uniqueness of the area and favor a new reputation of an artistic and innovative place. Moreover, the potential of local artists and young artists could provide benefits for the appraisal of common spaces

In this regard, it is interesting to consider the words of a local songwriter, who lived in the neighborhood and received lots of inspiration from the place. She says that the reasons why she and other artists love suburbs is *"because unlike the consolidate city centre, they are a continuous work in progress, areas of strong mutations and contaminations, able to host also extreme experimentations. Artists love them because they are stimulating,*

you find a lot of material to work on. So many things that can be given back." (Elisa Bonomo)

- Another opportunity for the neighborhood to create an "urban civitas" is its ability to attract the interest of "cosmopolitan people", people that with open-minded attitudes consider the multiculturality an asset and an element of fruitful mutual discovery.

- The grassroots and neighborhood-based approach also provides arguments for the possibility of building a stronger community, because of some of the elements highlighted by the interviewees. This kind of community could be intended not in an exclusive sense, as one of the interviewees pointed out as dangerous, but on the contrary as an inclusive community. Therefore, a community rooted in a sense of belonging to a place, but also open and able to welcome the newness and diversity. Becoming a stronger community could also mean a creation of a value-based community (i.e. inclusiveness, respect of the environment, common care of the shared spaces, etc.).

- Another opportunity concerns the search for project funding. Possible financing of urban regeneration projects could be provided by the access to EU funds. This should be guided by the municipal administration and invested in projects led by local actors.

- Another important opportunity to take advantage of is the presence of universities in the area as applied learning places. They offer a great wealth in terms of knowledge and human capital. The collaboration with important centres of studies such as the University of Padua and with schools of architecture and urban studies (remarkable is the presence in the nearby Venice of an important university for architecture and urban studies, the IUAV) should be favored. Students should be involved in projects that address the area or that could favor it. The benefit that the University could provide by serving the territory they are located in should not be disregarded. Collaborations should be favored.

- Another important opportunity is provided by the local schools. They should be viewed as places where the new generation could start to

interact with each other, as well as places that can act as a connection with the parents and families.

- An opportunity related to the creation of new narratives could be offered by the decision of institutional actors to engage in the promotion of new narratives around values of inclusiveness. This new story telling could also be favored by new symbols, rituals and public expressions that become elements of identification for everybody.

- Another opportunity offered by institutional actors could be the decision to foster a full accessibility to public services (easing procedures of access or providing linguistic facilitations). The neighborhood already offers the example of a "multi-lingual post-office", the first in the region.

Threats

The threats to a process of change in the neighborhood are elements that are created especially by conditions external from the neighborhood. If these conditions do not change, new dangers and problems may emerge and hinder processes of changes already started. Nonetheless, the possibility to address these threats cannot be assigned solely to the neighborhood, because some of them concern larger national economic and social issues. Institutions and the public administration have herein a clear responsibility.

- One of the elements that could hinder and make more difficult a process of change is the feeling of discomfort, dissatisfaction and mistrusts of many people towards institutions. This feeling is complicated by the current negative socio-economic juncture and the still ongoing attempts of the country of recovery after the economic crisis. The lack of jobs, the youth unemployment and other economic difficulties create a situation of unstable present and uncertain future that could discourage positive attitudes of people toward projects aimed at creating intercultural societies. In fact, as it was clear during some of the interviewees, some people have the perception of an unfair treatment of the central government and

institutions towards foreign people, both for what concerns economic aid and justice. Dissatisfaction could be dangerous because it could easily be transformed in the search of a scapegoat for explaining personal and community difficulties, dangers and obstacles.

- Personal socio-economic differences could hinder real integration and the possibility of many people to take part to other activities that are aimed at creating moments of conviviality or projects created together, especially in the case of harsh economic difficulties that force people to give priority just to the subsistence.

- Another element that could limit and pose a threat to the process is related to citizenship issues. In fact, a large part of the residents of foreign origin is left out from public decision because does not have citizenship, hence does not have the right to vote. In 2017 there has been wide public and political debate about the proposal of changing the citizenship law, that at the moment is mainly based on a *ius sanguinis* principle. The main critical side of the current citizenship law is that people born in Italy from immigrants (therefore the so-called "second generation") can apply for the Italian citizenship only when reaching the age of 18 and on the condition of having lived in the Italian territory with continuity. This limits the possibility of de-facto Italians (being born, having lived and attended schools in the country) to be considered fully citizens before the achievement of 18 years old. The proposals of change address especially their condition, and aim to introduce a new law that could be a combination of *ius sanguinis, ius soli* and *ius culturae*[29]. It is important to remind that in order to foster the creation of intercultural cities and societies a necessary condition is the action of the central government for a full recognition of rights and citizenship.

- Another threat that could hinder processes of change and revitalization of the neighborhood is the wasted opportunity of many spaces in the neighborhood that remain empty because the owners are not willing to

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[29] One of the news conditions proposed was to the possibility to grant citizenship to under aged who arrived in Italy before 12 years old and attended 5 years of school or professional education.

lower prices. As it emerged during the research period, this could block many projects of young start-ups who, even with the best intentions, are not able to afford the costs of renting a space.

- With a long-term perspective, also the possible gentrification of the area could become a threat. In fact, the area is now densely inhabited by students and people of foreign origin especially because of the convenient housing offers.

2) Proposals

Based on the SWOT analysis of the neighborhood and the needs and desires expressed by its inhabitants, it is possible to propose which approaches could be useful for managing the reality of the neighborhood, together with an example of an ideal project that could apply an interconnected, integrated, multidisciplinary and intertwined approach.

Approaches

An interconnected, integrated, multidisciplinary and intertwined approach applied to the management of the neighborhood could support the progress towards interculturality and sustainability. As presented in the first Part of the thesis, this approach is based on a bottom-up perspective, it takes into account the multilayered and multisided nature of identity, it favors the collaboration of all the actors, and it is rooted in a recognition of the assets in order to frame strategies for addressing problems that mutually can be solved.

Applying this approach in projects, strategies and proposals for the future of the neighborhood would mean to identify and be able to involve all actors and energies of the territory and let them dialogue together.

A complementary approach that could provide important hints of reflection for the neighborhood is the "pragmatic approach" proposed by Cancellieri (2017) for the management of multicultural societies. It seems very relevant to point out this approach because the researcher is native of the area and carries out his research at the University IUAV. This consideration is important following the principles proposed for an effective process of change, that tries to involve the production of knowledge and skills provided by local universities and researchers that work in the territory, that might have better identified peculiarities and local characteristics.

The first element of the approach proposed by Cancellieri is in fact the appraisal of the "*patrimony of researches*" produced by practitioners and researchers, and to favor a collaboration and alliance between universities, institutions and practitioners.

The second element is the adoption of a perspective based on *intersectionality*, recognizing not just the ethnic or cultural diversity, but also the diversity of gender, generation, language, religion, social class, phenotype etc. Each subject is a complex entity of more traits and elements of identification. The recognition of intersectionality in the opinion of Cancellieri has two sides. One is "the dark side", because more factors can be elements of vulnerability for the individual, that can be discriminated on the basis of different and multiple grounds. This side could help to understand the multiple stigma that address some sectors, and to allow a better definition of effective measures that could prevent discrimination. However, the recognition of the different elements of diversity of each person has also a "bright side". These elements of diversity could be the factor of unification of a different group of people (e.g.. being women, being parents, being young, being residents in the neighborhood). Looking with a different perspective, the elements of diversity can therefore become elements of affiliation and similarity with others, and projects that are centred on these elements could be more effective than projects that focus for example on the "simple" integration of foreign people.

The third element is the recognition of the centrality of *translocalism and transnationalism*. Individuals are now increasingly more connected and

interconnected to different places, and they are subject of processes that combine their personal *roots* with the *routes* they undertake across the globe (virtually or physically). These characteristics involve not just migrants, but in general the entire society that live in the current globalized world.

The last element of the approach suggests a new *agonistic vision*. First, recognizing that the conflicts often are not based on ethnic or cultural clashes, but sometimes on different elements (it is the case for example of inter-generational conflicts). Second, an agonistic perspective should favor the possibility of engaging in conflicts in constructive ways, letting them become opportunities of debate, emergence of needs and creations of new bonds and fertile alliances.

Project: participatory urban regeneration

A proposal for an ideal project for the neighborhood applies the interconnected, integrated, multidisciplinary and intertwined approach, and addresses what seems to be one of the most urgent and strongly felt needs of the neighborhood: to have opportunities of meeting, knowing each other, living the neighborhood, and having public spaces where these opportunities of aggregation, conviviality and sociality could happen.

Taking these urgent requests into account, we can consider what the neighborhood offers: a variety of empty abandoned places, that are both an opportunity to take (as they offer a space that has the potential to be used and transformed) and a problem to address (being run-down buildings, not visually pleasant or even dangerous). Applying an intertwined approach, it would be possible to address the two issues and spheres in a combined way, on one side integration and opportunities of meeting, and on the other side regeneration of spaces. In fact, the attempt to tackle these two needs can be combined in a single strategy, in which each of the elements works for the solution of the other.

The strategy could see the regeneration of these places as a project conducted with a bottom-up approach, assuming the involvement of residents in the planning of the new space. The involvement of residents should take place not just in the

phase of ideating proposals, but also in the phase of actually working for the regeneration of the spaces.

The proposed *participatory* process could offer the possibility of creating opportunities of discussion, therefore providing the opportunity of mutually beneficial confrontations. People could express their worries, desires and concerns and, consequently, realize and implement common decisions through negotiation. This crucial opportunity should not be seen not as a mere moment focused on the creation of a plan for the new space, but as an important opportunity of "meaningful encounter" in which people can meet and confront themselves with diversity and find ways to deal with it.

The project should be managed in a *multi-directional* way, with the voices of the citizens as the ultimate decision-makers, but also with the public administration undertaking a clear and defined role as leader, supporter and promoter of the project. The collaboration among the two spheres should be clear, also in order to try to address the problem of mistrust towards public institutions widespread in the community.

The project furthermore should take into account the need of an *integrated* approach, that takes into account not just differences in culture or country of origin, but also the vulnerabilities that some people face. It should therefore find ways to involve groups of people with special needs, such as women or people with economic problems. If the project wants to result in the creation of a lively place accessible and open to everybody, should propose modalities for the creation of a space that takes into account specific needs or hindrances, such as for example the mere problem of many women of not having the possibility to afford babysitting and having moments of free time for themselves. Another element is the possibility to offer "free of charge" spaces, taking into account the difficulty of some people to spend time in spaces where it is necessary to pay to stay (e.g. bars, pubs, movie theaters etc.). These and other special needs that might emerge should be taken into consideration when planning the spaces of the centre of meeting and aggregation and the services that it could offer. Furthermore, these elements of diversity could be the element for favoring the participation and

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collaboration of people because of their shared element of identity of being mothers, young, old, unemployed etc.

The project should finally be *interconnected*, because the work could be led by social workers (mapping needs), psychologists and cultural mediators (favoring discussion) and urbanists and architects (in order to translate into reality and to give a built form and a shape to the wish, needs and proposals of the residents). Furthermore, the project should aim at facilitating and encouraging the participation and contribution of students, researchers, professors and experts from the local universities.

Following this strategy, the project could be therefore sustainable and favor the attachment, use, and common care of the people, because of the role that they played in the planning, building and implementation of the project. The process would end up in the creation of a place that is a lively and real place of meeting and aggregation, as well as a symbol. It could in fact become representative of the diversity and could embed some fundamental values that the neighborhood might have decided to show in an artistic, visual or structural way (for example the respect of diversity, the inclusion of everybody, the respect for environment, etc.). This space could therefore become a symbol and an actual space of meeting and aggregation, whatever forms it takes (a cultural centre, a park, a square, etc.).

Conclusions

The case study analysis, supported with a great variety of different opinions, perceptions and perspectives that emerged during the research, has shown a neighborhood that is facing the challenges common to all our multicultural cities. The challenges refer to: the ability to mediate between different worldviews of urban residents; the capacity to accept changes and to evolve in new directions; the difficulty to adapt to a new world that also sensorially (with new sounds, sights, and smells) is different; the ability to deal with the emotions of their residents, and to listen and find answers to their fears, concerns, wishes and desires; the capability of accepting the evolving nature of identities (personal and collective); the possibility to become inclusive and non-discriminatory; the possibility to become place of encounters and to heal loneliness and isolation; the capacity to strengthen or foster the emergence of feeling of belonging and to overcome individualism in order to foster participation, solidarity and collaboration; the ability to overcome negative narratives and propose alternative positive images and new daring ideals for the future; the capability of raising awareness and finding ways to address the environmental crisis. This entire set of challenges could be summed up in one comprehensive urban endeavor: the capacity of transforming urban places and spaces into intercultural and sustainable cities.

The research has tried to address which processes that emerged in the neighborhood Arcella could be positive and constructive in finding solutions to the problems that arise from complex and ever-changing realities and in finding new ways to respond to some of the urban challenges. The inspiring processes that could be observed are the creation of new narratives that could foster a new image of the neighborhood for strengthening the identity of the places and encouraging people to actively participate in urban life; the new tools and modalities that could be helpful and provide great benefits for the creation of these new narratives; the role of agents of change, who, through their actions,

personal initiatives, ability to collaborate and especially to inspire others, can prove to be crucial for any process of change.

Keeping in mind the words of Jane Jacobs (1961), *"cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody"*, it is relevant to suggest that the collaborative processes, bottom-up approaches and synergies taking place in the neighborhood should be promoted and strengthened. This approach of managing urban space and urban life should be based on dialogue and inclusiveness, that could envision a change towards the creation of new hybrid identities or, as Sandercock (2006a) puts it, of new *"mongrel identities"* that thrive in our *"mongrel cities"*. With this perspective, diversity is therefore conceived as an element of mutual enrichment that can happen through dialogue, and not as a threat of deprivation.

Are the processes launched in Arcella going in the direction of the creation of sustainable and intercultural cities, favoring the neighborhood, its residents and the entire city? Do they offer a positive model and a guiding example for others? These are still open questions to which only the future can provide an answer. Further in-depth research would be needed, and might take advantage of the empirically based findings presented in this research.

Nonetheless, what we can already observe is that the neighborhood seems to possess a special *"genius loci"*, an intrinsic nature and spirit, of being a place characterized by continuous regeneration, transaction and reconstruction. Throughout its history "Arcella" has experienced developments and events that forced it to change and mutate its identity and urban configuration several times.

Even if the future of the neighborhood cannot be predicted, the wish and energy to change and creatively face new challenges, without remaining immobile, already gives great hopes. What seems crucial, more than any other factor, is exactly the ability of a city to evolve, mutate, move, change.

As Jane Jacobs (1961) suggests, cities and urban neighborhood can be in fact considered as living entities. If an urban entity is lively, in progress and not stuck in an immobile present, the benefits of this thriving urban life could embrace and

permeate the city with its energy and be perceived by the urban dwellers when crossing its streets, full of life, people and encounters. Suburbs could offer therefore special opportunities of changes, because they offer spaces of opportunities and experiments. They are the places where usually diversity is most visible, and because of their evolving nature they could be living laboratories for proposing new visions and horizons of conviviality, meaningful encounters and true dialogue.

As Jane Jacobs believed,

"Dull, inert cities, it is true, do contain the seeds of their own destruction and little else. But lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration, with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves." (Jane Jacobs 1961)

CONCLUSIONS

In the increasingly diverse, interconnected, multifaceted realities of our modern cities some of the most challenging issues for the future of our societies and of the world are happening: living with difference and creating communities respectful of the Other and of the environment.

The aim of this work was to explore urban realities in order to better understand which are the issues at stake for the creation of intercultural and sustainable cities, and which directions can be taken in order to deal with them. The work has tried therefore to explore which ideas have emerged among scholars and in the practice to tackle these challenges.

The thesis has highlighted the issues that contributed to the increasingly complexity of the urban world. The increasing diversity, interconnection, economic instability, migration flows, fluidity of the present and uncertainty of the future are some of the elements that have contributed to the new hurdles placed on cities.

With the perspective of a multi-level governance that recognizes that the decisions, policies, practices in the urban realm are a combination of the contribution of different actors at different levels, the research identified the main approaches and initiatives that cities, states and international organizations have proposed for addressing the issues of multicultural societies.

Alongside with this aspect, the thesis has taken advantage of the research and analysis carried out in the sociological and anthropological academic field. In fact, the policy and legal framework is not the only context that should be taken into account when fostering the creation of intercultural cities. While the action of states is fundamental in order to create the conditions of equality and recognition of human rights, issuing non-discriminatory laws, guaranteeing a universal access to services and the right to the city for everybody, it is only one of the strategic elements of change. As Kymlycka (2003) rightly highlights, it is the creation of

"*intercultural citizens*" and societies, in *"multicultural states"* that should be envisioned.

In order to create the conditions that could prompt the emergence of "intercultural citizens" it is not only necessary to analyze and observe which mechanisms appear when people meet with diversity in the city, but also how encounters might be considered for their potential of mutual enrichment and not as causes of fear and retreat. The issue of daily life coexistence with diversity has been analyzed by many scholars, who warn about the fact that simple coexistence in urban life might lead even to the strengthening of prejudices and attitudes of closure, while on the contrary a positive approach to diversity might happen through "*meaningful encounters*", that can challenge personal views and let new perspectives grow.

Much attention was given to Sandercock's focus on the role of urban planners. These might be crucial actors not just in order to create urban spaces that possess the potential of becoming lively, welcoming and accessible to everybody, but also actors that might play a role in guiding communities to grow, share and face their rivalries, oppositions, fears and desires together. She reminds how crucial is the role of planning for the life of our cities and societies, and how strategic might be the role of planner for intercultural and sustainable cities in the following quotation:

> *"The human spirit at the heart of planning engages every day in a dance of faith and hope, engages in a struggle to moderate greed with generosity, to conjoin private ambition with civic ambition, to care for others as much as or more than we care about ourselves, to think as much or more about future generations as we do about our own, to thoughtfully weigh the importance of memory alongside the need for change, to greet a newcomer in the street rather than ignoring her, or worse, insulting him, or telling them to go back where they came from.*
> *Planning deals with people's visions for the future of their cities. What could be more precious, in terms of giving meaning to life beyond the here and now?*

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Planning deals with land, what it means to people in the present and what they want it to mean in the future. What could be more precious, in terms of our attachments to home and place making?

Planning deals with how people relate to each other within and between groups and communities. What could be more precious, in terms of our deep need for connection with others?

And planning deals with how we as a community take care of one another (or don't, but should). What could be more precious, in terms of our universal human fears of sickness, old age, poverty, and death."
(Sandercock 2006b)

The research, subsequently, carried out an investigation on the ground in order to look at the reality of an urban neighborhood facing the problems and challenges common to many urban environments.

The choice of the case study was motivated especially by the presence of some strategic elements in the neighborhood such as: the high density and concentration of a large diversity in terms of origins, cultures and religions; the negative stigma affecting the area; the nature of being a post-industrial suburb; the severe level of pollution; the pervasive expansion of the built environment and the spread of concrete; a history rich of significative events; the presence of an extremely active and engaged network of civil society actors.

Far from being exhaustive and aware that further investigations and research could be of added value, the study of this area and of its dynamics has offered the unique opportunity to better understand the perceptions, desires and concerns of its people. The decision of analyzing this reality through the method of interviewees was rooted in the belief of the extreme importance of bottom-up approaches. This method allowed the possibility to listen to the proposals of the residents and people who work in the neighborhood, and to observe the energy and creativity that they have applied in order to face the challenges of the neighborhood.

The processes of change initiated in the neighborhood were of very high value for this research and showed to be prompted by a desire to collaborate, a strong sense

of pride and attachment to the neighborhood, the wish to tell a different narrative about the neighborhood, and the crucial actions of agents of change. Simultaneously, also other causes of hindrances for the realization of intercultural and sustainable cities emerged clearly, ranging from fears, instability, mistrust to disenchantment.

The case study analysis offered therefore material of reflection and of inspiration, allowing the possibility to find confirmation of the theoretical framework in its neighborhood-based application, but also providing new important elements of reflection that influenced the development of new ideas and proposals to contribute to the discussion about intercultural and sustainable cities.

Consequently, the combined analysis of the case study and of the relevant academic debate offered the possibility to develop the suggestion of an integrated, interconnected, multidirectional and intertwined approach as a viable approach to be applied in multicultural contexts and projects in order to boost the creation of intercultural and sustainable cities. This approach takes into account the different elements of diversity and vulnerability, that characterize each individual, taking inspiration from the theories related to intersectionality. It considers the necessity to foster collaboration and synergies among different sectors and to let skills and knowledge be shared and projects be strengthened. It also recognizes the necessity to build bottom-up strategies, in spite of the need for a multidirectional collaboration between civil society and institutions. In sum, this approach suggests looking at all challenges and shortcomings with a comprehensive vision, finding innovative and creative solutions that can let problems be mutually solved. These challenges are interconnected and should be tackled together, while being simultaneously addressed. A strategy that responds to urban challenges (i.e. integration, neglected spaces, isolation, environmental protection etc.) in a comprehensive way should be favored. Finally, it is an approach based on dialogue, recognizing the importance of moments of agonistic dialectics that might lead to meaningful encounters.

The two parts of the thesis, i.e. the theoretical framework and the case study, have therefore been developed together. On one hand, some important contributions for scholars and researches have offered the possibility to propose new elements of reflection for the management of diversity in the neighborhood, and at the same time the neighborhood has offered an important contribution to the theories presented.

In fact, the case study analysis has offered the recognition of precious elements and emblematic processes which emerged spontaneously in the neighborhood. They are considered strategic for the development of intercultural and sustainable cities. While identifying criticalities and weaknesses of the processes of change, our research effort has purposefully focused on the positive and powerful elements of change gathered during the research. In fact, we have tried to use the same lens that Jane Jacobs used during her research and observation: an affectionate and sympathetic gaze that looks at the reality of cities, street life, urban dwellers and their relations without prejudices, curious and open to new discovery. This approach allows the possibility to be enriched by the world in its multifaceted and endless forms that appear in cities and to be surprised by the unfolding of the mysterious life in cities, made of unpredictable forces and energies that spark from a unique element: the encounter with the Other and with the world.

Thanks to this approach, the research has allowed the recognition of the most powerful force and element of change in the neighborhood: the passion, commitment and ability to transform dreams into reality of many of the people encountered in the neighborhood. These people, called "agents of change", have proved to be inspired by the reality of the neighborhood, even if problematic and complex. They have decided to be engaged with their time, energies and creativity, believing in the potential they have seen in the neighborhood and in the possibility of creating something new and different, taking advantage of the tools at their disposal in innovative and visionary ways.

A strategy to foster intercultural cities should especially take into consideration their potential and take advantage of their inspiration, creating enabling environments, conditions and moments for letting their energies and passion be shared and transformed into larger tangible projects and effective changes.

The ideas proposed by Jane Jacobs seem to find fertile ground and confirmation in the neighborhood. She advocated for the creation of diverse, dense and mixed-use neighborhoods, for the importance of local urban entrepreneurs, for the crucial role of life in the streets, on the sidewalks and in parks. She considered all these elements as the key for creating lively and livable cities that favor conviviality, encounters and the resolution of their own shortcomings.

The life in the neighborhood Arcella, for its present characteristics and for the wish of many to work in the direction of valuing diversity and favoring the creation of lively and vibrant communities, seems therefore the confirmation that such a fertile ground might lead to the emergence of agents of change and the possibility that, thanks to dialogue and passionate individuals in cities, positive change might occur in societies.

In conclusion, the research suggests that cities can provide the possibility of becoming intercultural and sustainable if they are able to involve everybody, to favor participation, to benefit from local expertise and ideas, to offer places of conviviality and moments of meaningful encounters, to host diversity in terms of people as well as of spaces and services. These features could favor the emergence of lively and vibrant urban communities, shaped both by problems but especially by the wish and the desire to engage together for solving them, and able to believe in new visions and perspectives. New visions and realities might emerge in these lively and visionary neighborhoods, being laboratories of conviviality that offer the right and appropriate space and place for building the "cities of the future". The neighborhood Arcella in Padua is certainly a promising grassroots example of managing urban governance in a diversified environment, towards intercultural and sustainable cities.

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Appendix

1. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

01) Resident, woman, 50 years old, Somalian-Italian, R.I.D.I.M., 27/06/2017

02) Social worker, man, 39 years old, Italian, Tavolo Arcella, 29/06/2017

03) Journalist, man, 29 years old, Italian, 30/06/2017

04) Residents, men, 34, 37 and 50 years old, Bangladeshi, Bangladesh Islamic Cultural Centre, 02/07/2017

05) Resident, woman, 71 years old, Italian, 05/07/2017

06) Teacher, woman, 48 years old, Italian, 10/07/2017

07) Resident, man, Italy, 43 years old, 11/07/2017

08) Book-sellers, women, 31 years old, Italian, Limerick, 11/07/2017

09) Social worker, man, 43 years old, Italian, association Xena, 14/07/2017

10) Photographers, men, 40 and 41 years old, Italian, SìAmo Arcella, 14/07/2017

11) Resident, woman, student, 26 years old, Italian, Progetto Città Gentile, 17/07/2017

12) Resident, woman, Italy, 61 years old, association Amici dei Popoli, 17/07/2017

13) Resident, woman and mother, 33 years old, Italian, 17/07/2017

14) Resident, man, 54 years old, Argentinian, Comitato Vivere Bene San Bellino, 19/07/2017

15) Resident, woman, 64 years old, Italian, 19/07/2017

16) Journalist, man, 47 years old, Italian, 24/07/2017

17) Resident couple, man, 42 years old, woman, 36 years old, Cameroonian, 24/07/2017

18) Council member, man, 36 years old, Italian. 24/07/2017

19) Resident, woman, 55 years old, Italian, 25/07/2017

20) Resident, man and father, 42 years old, Italian, 25/07/2017

21) Shop-keeper, man, 64 years old, Italian, 25/07/2017

22) Resident, man, 81 years old, Italian, 25/07/2017

23) Resident, man, 56 years old, Uruguayan, 26/07/2017

24) Resident, man, 31 years old, Italian, member of Polisportiva San Precario, Italian, 27/07/2017

25) Creators of Facebook page Arcellatown, 30 years old, Italian, 31/07/2017

26) Film director, man, 44 years old, Documentary project Premio Città Futura, 01/08/2017

27) Resident, woman, 34, Moroccan, Documentary project Premio Città Futura, 03/08/2017

28) Resident, woman, Moldovan, 45 years old, 02/08/2017

29) Social worker, man, Italian, 46 years old, cooperative Cooperativa Sociale Il Sestante Onlus, 08/08/2017

2. DATA VISUALIZATION[30]
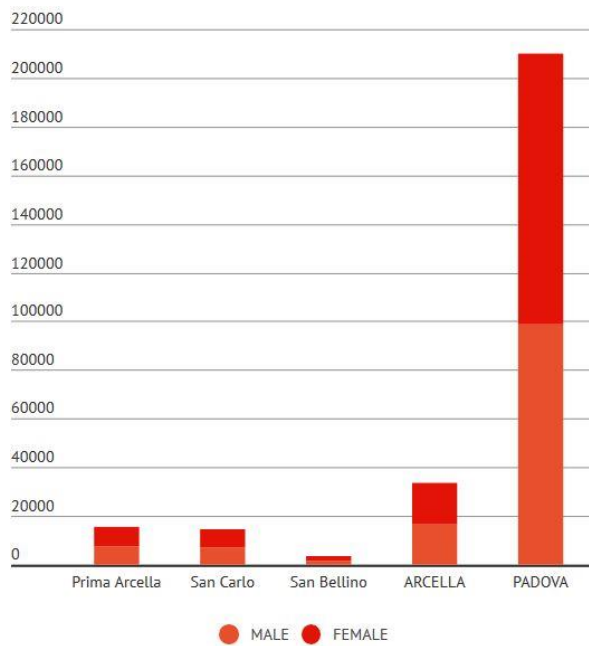
Chart 1: Population gender distribution in Arcella and Padova

Chart 2: Births and deaths in the city, year 2016

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[30] The source of the data is the Annuario Statistico 2016, by Padova municipality. The graphs were elaborated by the author.
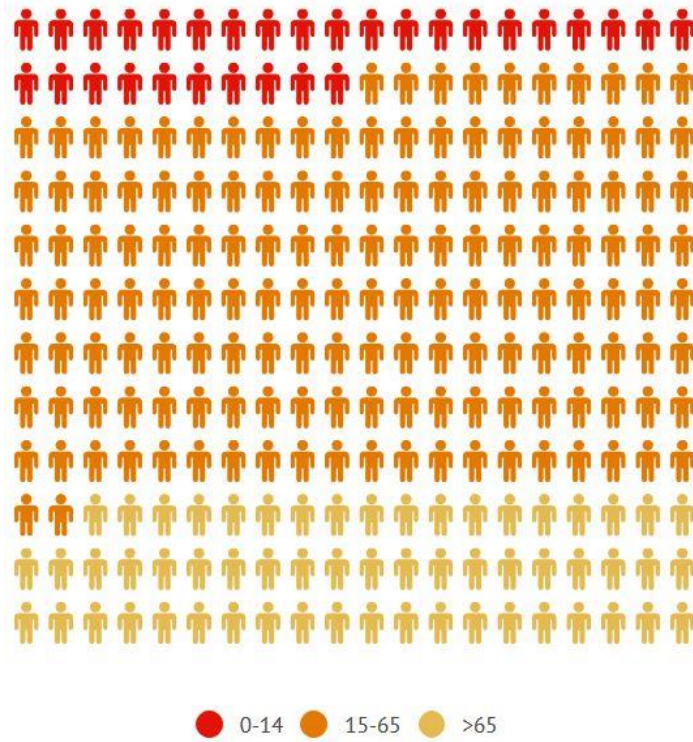
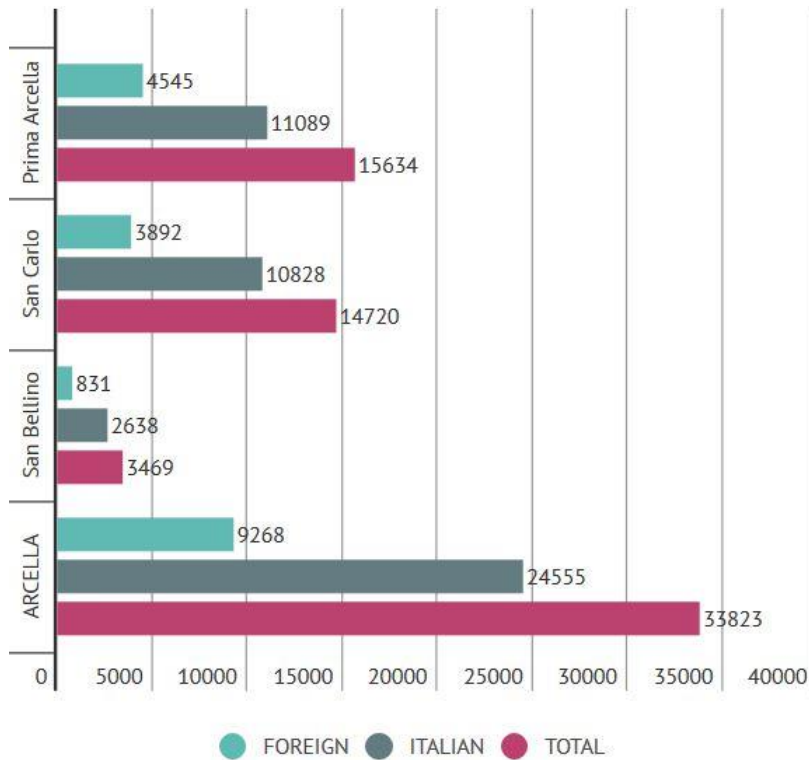Chart 3: Population age distribution in Arcella

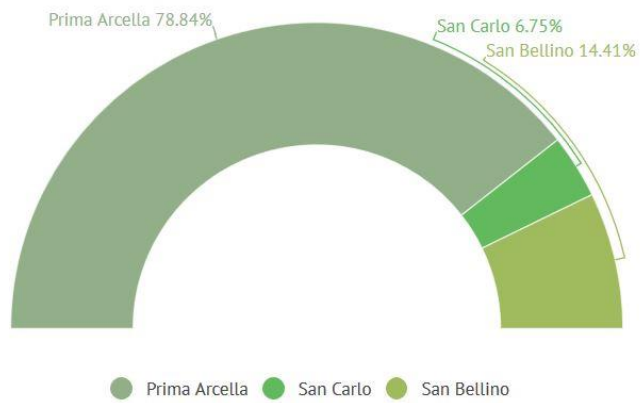Chart 4: Foreign residents distribution in the urban units of Arcella

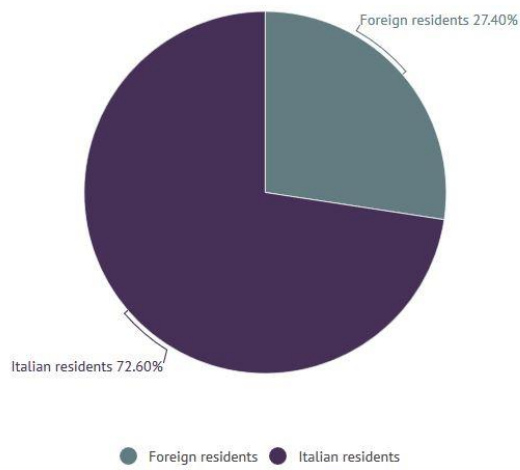Chart 5: Distribution of total number of foreign residents in the urban units of Arcella

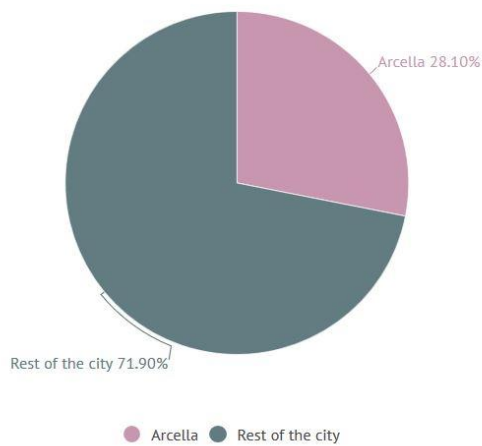Chart 6: Percentage of foreign and Italian residents in Arcella

Chart 7: Distribution (percentage) of total number of foreigner residents of the city
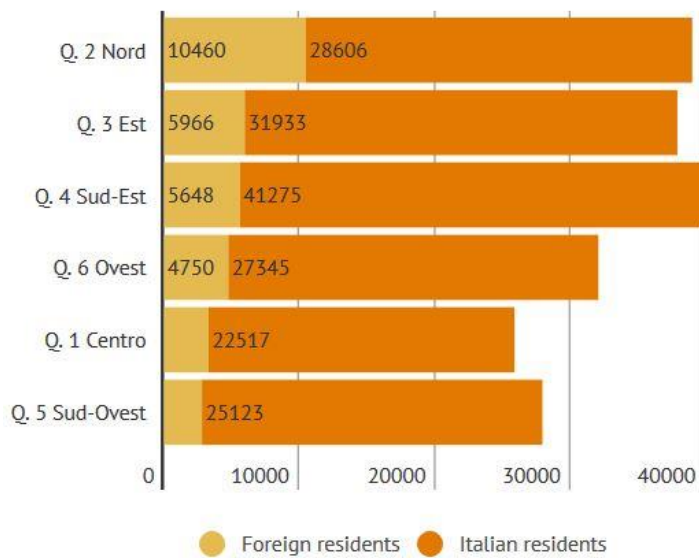in Padova and Arcella

Chart 8: Distribution of foreign and Italian residents in the various administrative neighborhoods
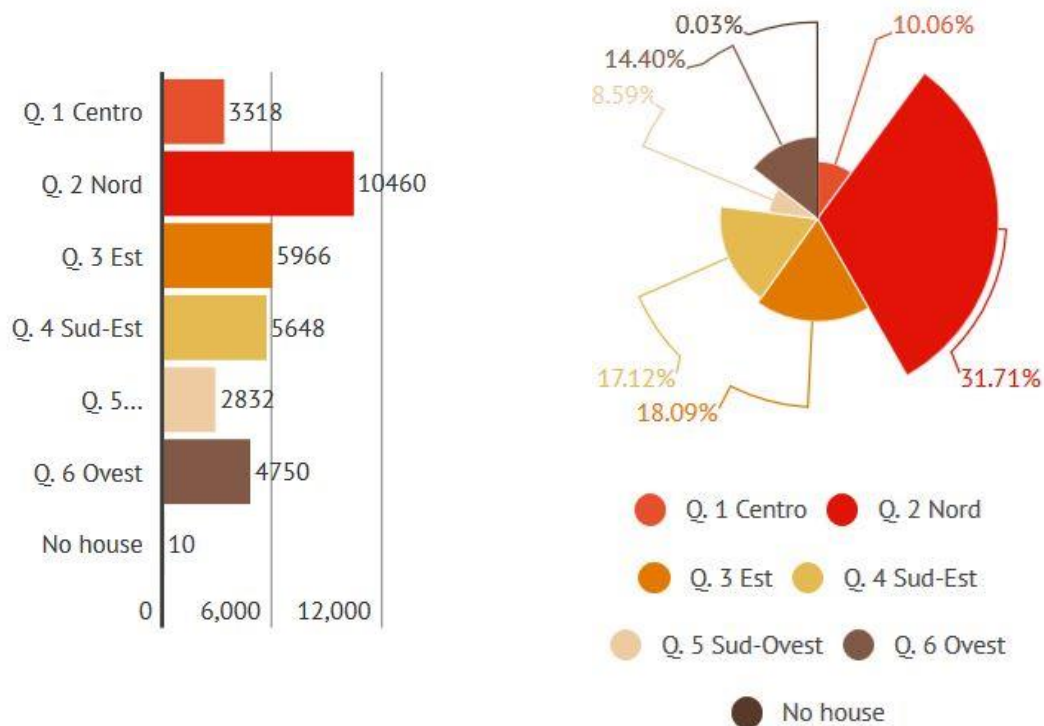

Chart 9: Distribution of foreign residents in the various administrative neighborhoods

Chart 10: Distribution (in percentage) of the total number of foreigner residents of the city in the various administrative neighborhoods
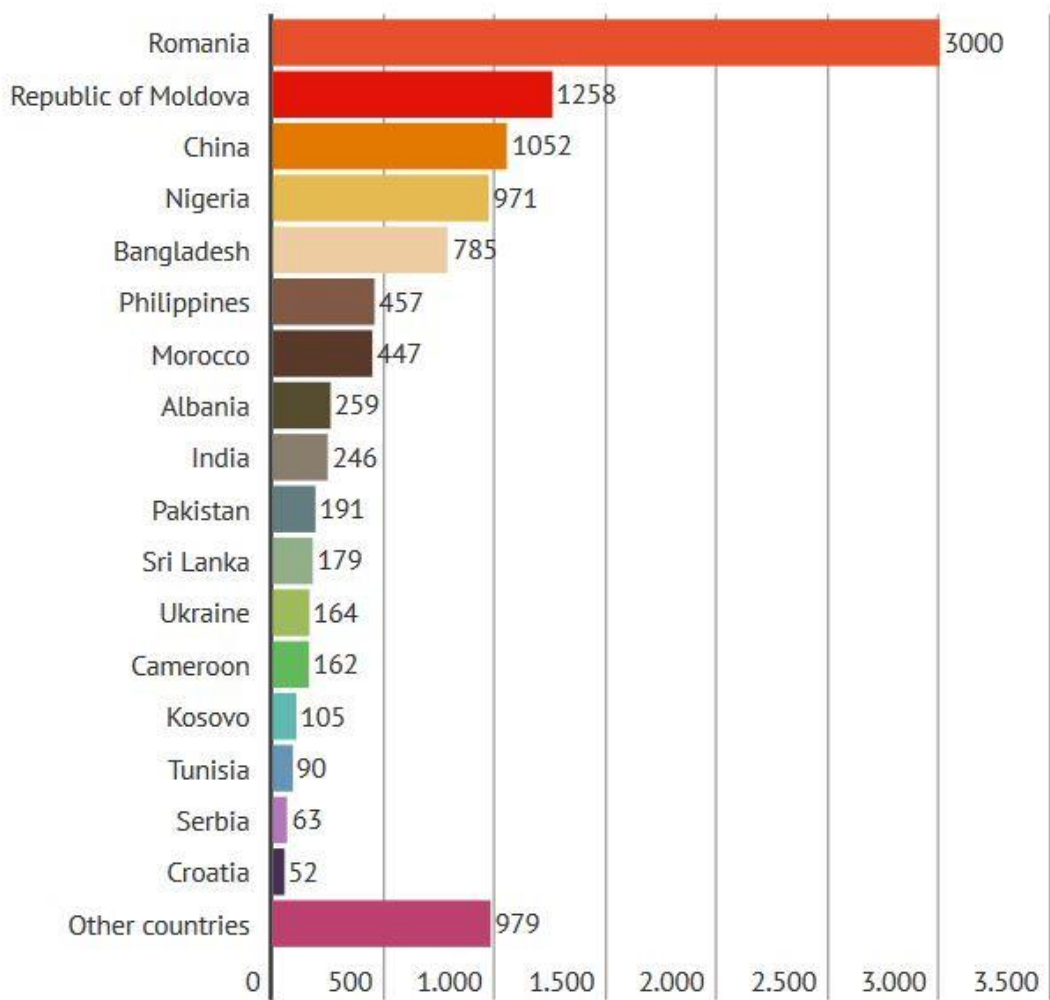
Chart 11: Origin of the foreigner residents in Quartiere 2 Nord

3. A Tentative Decalogue for the Art of Inter-Ethnic Togetherness

By Alexander Langer
1 April 1994, Arcobaleno, Trento (Italy)

1. A multi-ethnic co-habitation will be the norm rather than the exception; the alternative is between ethnic exclusion and living together.

Situations of communities living together with different languages, cultures, religions, and ethnic backgrounds on the same territory will be increasingly frequent, especially in the cities. And this is not news. In the European cities of antiquity and the middle ages as well, there were African, Greek, Armenian, Jewish, Polish, German, Spanish and other neighbourhoods.

Multi-ethnic[31], multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-national living together is therefore, and will be increasingly normal, rather than exceptional. This does not mean that it will be easy or evident, on the contrary. Diversity, the unknown, what is strange complicates life, creates fear, and can become the object of diffidence and hatred, it can spur competition to its extreme realization of "mors tua, vita mea".

This is demonstrated by the very experience of someone who from one valley comes to the next one to be married, and therefore must adapt and at the same time demands respect and adaptation. The ever growing migrations and the mobility which modern life imposes inevitably trigger a higher level of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural interaction, in all corners of the world. For the first time in history, it is - maybe - possible to choose in full conscience to deal with and resolve in a peaceful manner these numerous movements of people, communities, populations, even if their origin often is to be found in violence (misery, exploitation, environmental destruction, war, persecutions, etc.).

But rethorics and declared good will are not sufficient: if one really wants to foster living together among diverse people on the same territory, one must develop an intricate art of togetherness. Besides, it is increasingly evident that the approaches based on the affirmation of ethnic or similar rights - be they national, confessional, tribal, or "racial" - through objectives like the ethnic state, or ethnic secession, ethnic purification, national homogeneization, etc., lead to conflicts and wars of an unforeseeable scope. The alternative between ethnic exclusivism (however it is motivated, even in self-defence) and multi-ethnic living together is the key question of the ethnic issue today, whether one deals with oppressed or minority ethnic groups, recent or older immigration, religious minorities, ethnic reawakenings, or inter-ethnic, inter-confessional, inter-cultural conflictuality.

Multi-ethnic living together can be perceived and experienced as an enrichment and an opportunity for something more, rather than as a condemnation: we do not need sermons against racism, intolerance and xenophobia, but experiences and positive projects, and a culture of living together.

2. Identity and living together: never the one without the other; neither forced inclusion nor forced exclusion.

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[31] The term "ethnic", "ethnicity" is used here as the most comprehensive of all the natural, linguistic, religious, cultural characteristics that define a collective identity and that could exacerbate it until ethnocentrism, the collective egomania most widespread nowadays.

"The clearer we are separated, the better we will understand each other": there is today a strong tendency to deal with the problems of multi-ethnic cohabitation through more precise separations. "Melting pots" do not have a large consensus, even where they were declared as a clear objective (for example, in the USA), and there are countless rebellions against more or less forced assimilation. At the same time, one witnesses the existence of movements for equality, against marginalization and ethnic discrimination, and for equal dignity.

Policies for the forced inclusion (assimilation, prohibition of language or religion, etc.), or forced exclusion (marginalization, "ghettoization", expulsion, eradication, etc.) have given no positive results. One must guarantee a wider number of individual and collective choices, accepting moments of ethnic "intimacy" as an expression of identity which must not necessarily harm inter-ethnic meeting and cooperation. The guarantee that one can maintain one's identity on the one hand, and an equal opportunity to participate on the other, must feed into each other in a reciprocal manner. This obviously requires that not only the public regulations and the orders orient their efforts in the direction of a friendly cohabitation among the concerned communities, but above all that the communities themselves wish to do so.

3. To know each other, talk among each other, inform one's self, inter-act: "the more we have to do one with the other, the better we will understand each other".

Living together offers and demands a lot of possibilities of reciprocal knowledge. In order for it to happen with equal dignity and without marginalization, it is important to develop the maximum level of mutual knowledge possible. "The more we have to do one with the other, the better we will understand each other", could be the counter-proposal to the separatist slogan mentioned above. Learn to know the language, the history, the culture, the habits, the prejudices and stereotypes, the fears of the different communities living together is an essential step in an inter-ethnic relation. An important function can be taken on by common information sources (inter-cultural, multi-ethnic newspapers, radio and TV broadcast, and the like), common opportunities of learning and pleasure, getting together occasionally and reciprocally, a chance to share - even if only exceptionally - "internal" events of a community that is different from one's own (feasts, rites, etc.), even some simple invitations to lunch or dinner. Common story books, common celebrations of public events, even perhaps moments of common prayer and meditation can do a lot to avoid the risk that ethnocentric visions are consolidated to the point that they become obvious and natural.

4. "Ethnic is beautiful"? Why not?, but not at only one dimension: territory, gender, social position, leisure time and many other common denominators may be important as well.

At times, for different communities, the ethnic organization of society can have its legitimacy and even its good reasons to exist: however it must be out of a free choice, and not become in turn integralist and totalitarian. This means that we will have to accept ethnic parties, ethnic associations, ethnic clubs, and often also ethnic schools and churches. But it is evident that if one wants to favour living together, rather than ethnic (self-)isolation, one will need to put value in all the other dimensions of private and community life which are not above all ethnic. And first of all, the common territory and its care, as well as professional, social, age-group, and in particular gender-linked objectives and interests; women can better discover and experience common objectives and sensitivities.

One must avoid that people live all their lives and all moments of their daily existence inside ethnic structures and dimensions, and therefore offer them other opportunities

which normally are of an inter-ethnic nature. It is essential that people can meet and talk and show their value not through the "diplomatic representation" of their own ethnic group, from block to block, but directly: it is therefore quite relevant that each person may enjoy strong individual human rights, next to the necessary community rights, some of which will also have an ethnic connotation (use of the language, protection of traditions, etc.); not all community rights need be applied and channelled only according to ethnic lines (for ex., social rights - a home, a job, assistance, health - or environmental rights).

5. Define and delineate in the least rigid way possible one's belonging, do not exclude multiple belongings and interferences.

Normally, ethnic belonging does not require a particular definition or delimitation: it is the fruit of history, tradition, education, habits, before it is a question of options, will, and precise choice. The more a definition of belonging and of a delineation against others becomes rigid and artificial, the more there is a danger of an inherent vocation to conflict. The emphasis on discipline or worse the ethnic imposition in the use of the language, religious practices, dressing habits (with the extreme expression of imposed uniforms), in daily attitudes, to the point of a legal definition of belonging (registration, remarks on documents, etc.) carry with them an unhealthy pressure to count eachother, to the test of force, to rope pulling, to the erection of barricades and physical borders, and to the demand for a territory to be exclusively for one's own group.

On the other hand, to consent and enhance a more flexible and less exclusive practical sense of belonging, and therefore allow for a certain osmosis among different communities and multiple references on the part of "border" subjects, helps to create "grey zones", with a low ethnic definition and discipline, and therefore enhances free exchange, inter-communication, inter-action.

To avoid all legal forms of "tagging a label" on people from an ethnic (or confessional, etc.) point of view, is part of the measures to prevent conflicts, xenophobia, and racism.

The self-determination of subjects and of communities must not stem from the definition of one's own borders and of limits to access, but rather it should come from the positive definition of one's own values and objectives, and it must not reach the point of exclusionism and separateness. One must favour a concept of loyalty open to several communities, and not an exclusive one, a concept in which above all sons of immigrants, children from "mixed families", people stemming from more pluralistic and cosmopolitan backgrounds can recognize themselves.

6. Recognize and evidence the multi-ethnic dimension: rules, rights, languages, public signs, daily gestures, the right to feel at home.

The coexistence of different ethnic groups, languages, cultures, religions and traditions on the same territory, in the same city, must be recognized and made visible. The members of different communities that live together must feel that they are "at home", that they are citizens, that they are accepted and rooted (or that they can plant roots). Bi-(or multi-)lingualism, the possibility to establish diverse religious, cultural and linguistic institutions, the existence of specific structures and opportunities that put in evidence and give value to each ethnic group present, are important elements for a culture of togetherness.

The more one will organize the coexistence of languages, cultures, religions, characteristic signs, the less one will have to deal with fights about the validity of locations or of territories for that or the other ethnic group: it is necessary to dilute all forms of ethnic exclusivism or integralism in a natural coexistence of multiform signs, sounds, smells and institutions.

Europe has learned the hard way to accept the presence of several confessions that can coexist on the same territory without trying to dominate on all the others or to expel each other in turn: now the same process must take place purposefully in relation to the multi-ethnic reality; coexisting among different ethnic groups on the same space, with appropriate individual and collective rights in order to guarantee equal dignity and freedom for all, must become the rule, not the exception.

7. Rights and guarantees are essential, but they are not enough; ethnocentric norms favour ethnocentric behavior.

One must not believe that ethnic identity and inter-ethnic living together can be guaranteed above all by laws, institutions, structures and courts, if they are not deeply rooted among the people, and if they do not have a foundation in a widespread social consensus; but one must not underestimated for that matter the importance of a clear and reassuring normative framework, that guarantees to all the right to one's own identity (through linguistic, cultural, educational rights, means of information, etc.), to equal dignity (through the guarantee of full participation, against all discriminations), to necessary self-government, without any tendencies to annex in favour of one of the ethnic communities living together.

It is especially important that situations of inter-ethnic coexistence benefit from a status of autonomy that pushes the local community (all of it, without any ethnic discrimination) to take its fate in its own hands, and fosters inter-ethnic cooperation, so as to develop a common territorial (and "Heimat") conscience: this can help to discourage attempts at resolving tensions and conflicts with far-fetched arguments on the territorial "status" (annexes, change in the borders, etc.).

And one must not forget that laws and structures which are heavily ethnocentric (i.e., that are based on the continuous emphasis on ethnic belonging, on evident ethnic separation, etc.), inevitably lead to an escalation of conflicts and tensions, and to the generation or reinforcement of ethno-centric attitudes, whereas - on the contrary - laws and structures that are supportive of inter-ethnic cooperation, can encourage and strengthen choices of good living together.

8. The importance of mediators, bridge builders, wall vaulters and frontier crossers.

In each and every situation of inter-ethnic coexistence, one must deal, in the beginning, with a lack of mutual knowledge, relationships and familiarity. It is therefore very important that there exist people, groups, and institutions that situate themselves consciously at the border between the communities living together and cultivate intensively all manners of knowledge, dialogue and cooperation.

The promotion of common events and moments of meeting and common action, does not appear spontaneously, but requires a stubborn and yet delicate work of awareness-building, mediation and familiarization, which must be developed with care and credibility. Next to the identity and to the more or less clear borders between the different ethnic aggregations, it is fundamental that someone, in such societies, be committed to the exploration and the overcoming of borders: this is an activity which in times of tension and conflict may seem like contraband, but which is decisive to soften rigidity, make borders relative, and favour inter-action.

Explosions of nationalism, chauvinism, racism, religious fanaticism, etc., are among the most disruptive factors of civil togetherness to be known (worse than social, ecological or economical tensions), and they have an impact on practically all dimensions of collective life: culture, economy, daily life, prejudices, habits, and of course politics and religion. There is thus a need for a strong capacity to face and dissolve ethnic conflicts. This means that in every ethnic community one needs to bring to the fore those people and forces that

are capable of self-critique with regards to their own community: real "traitors of ethnic compactness", who however must never transform themselves in defectors, if they want to keep their roots and remain credible. Precisely in the case of conflicts, it is essential to relativize and diminish the drives that lead the different ethnic communities to seek external support (protective powers, external interventions, etc.) and put in value the elements of common linkages to the territory.

9. We need "betrayors of ethnic compactness", but not "deserters". And a vital condition: to ban all forms of violence.

In a situation of inter-ethnic coexistence, it is rare that there are no tensions, no competition, no conflicts: unfortunately, conflictuality of ethnic, religious, national, or racial origin has an enormous power of involvement and mobilization and involves so many elements of collective emotionality, that it is difficult to govern and bring back to reasonable solutions if it slips out of control: explosions of nationalism, chauvinism, racism, religious fanaticism, etc., are the most disruptive factors of civil cohabitation known (more than social or economic tensions), and involve practically all dimensions of community life: culture, economy, daily life, prejudices, habits, as well as politics or religion. One therefore needs a high capacity to deal with and dissolve ethnic conflictuality.

This means that every ethnic community will need to give value within its ranks to the people and forces who are capable of exercising self-criticism, and criticism towards one's own community: real "betrayors of ethnic compactness", who however must never transform themselves in deserters, if they want to maintain their roots and remain credible. It is precisely in conflict situations that it is important to make relative and diminish the forces that push the different ethnic communities to seek exterior support (protecting powers, external interventions, etc.) and give value to the elements of common linkage to the territory.

One necessity emerges above all: to ban all forms of violence, to react with the maximum decision each time that the germ of ethnic violence appears, which - if it is tolerated - risks to trigger spirals that are really devastating and beyond control. In this case as well, laws and police are not enough, one needs a decisive social and moral repulsion, based on strong roots: a convinced and convincing "no" to violence.

10. The pioneer plants of a culture of togetherness: mixed inter-ethnic groups.

Mixed inter-ethnic groups (however small they may be) can have a extraordinary value in situations of tension, conflictuality or even simple coexistence. They can experiment on their own skin, and in what could be called a courageous pioneering laboratory, the problems, difficulties and opportunities of inter-ethnic living together. Inter-ethnic groups can have their own precious value and carry out their activities in the most diverse fields: from religion to politics, from sports to socializing in leisure time, from union work to cultural commitment. In any case, they will represent the most advanced point of experimenting living together, and therefore deserve total support from those who care for the art and culture of togetherness as the only realistic alternative to the reappearance of a generalized ethnocentric barbarianism.

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This work is the conclusion of a very long journey, that has unfolded in many surprising, amazing and unpredictable directions. It tells about me, and it was inspired by what I discovered during all the experiences carried out during this life journey and these years of university as the most precious gift that can let us grow, be enriched, and discover new worlds: the encounter.

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Murals. Arcella, November 2017