



B-YOUTH FORUM

Young people and public space in the city of Milan

Silvy Boccaletti silvy.boccaletti@unimib.it
Stefano Malatesta stefano.malatesta@unimib.it

Università degli Studi di Milano – Bicocca



The research framework: MUSA

MUSA (Multilayered Urban Sustainability Action) is an Innovation Ecosystem funded by the Ministry of University and Research within the framework of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan

4 academic partners:

- University of Milano-Bicocca
- Politecnico di Milano
- Bocconi University
- Università degli Studi di Milano

+ **public and private partners**

Main goal: develop a response to the challenges of the transition of the city of Milan towards sustainability

Different areas of interventions:

- Social and digital dimension
- Health and mobility through science
- Technology
- Human sciences and citizenships



The research group: B-YOUth Forum

First step:

- creation of a participatory research group called **B-YOUth Forum**, open to young people between the ages of 14 and 25

B-YOUth Forum vision:

- adopt a cross-sectoral, youth-led and cooperative approach to conduct research on young people and public space

B-YOUth Forum methodologies:

- qualitative approach, arts-informed participatory methods, audio-visual methods, qualitative interviews and field observations

Main goal:

- use the research tools and critic analysis to encourage young people to participate in civic engagement and advocate for change in their daily lives

January 2023



The research questions

How young people appropriate and use public space in Milan?

How youth geographies can contribute to the contemporary geographical debate on public space?



The preliminary phase: focus group and collage techniques (1)

Preliminary brainstorming on the theme of young people and public space with:

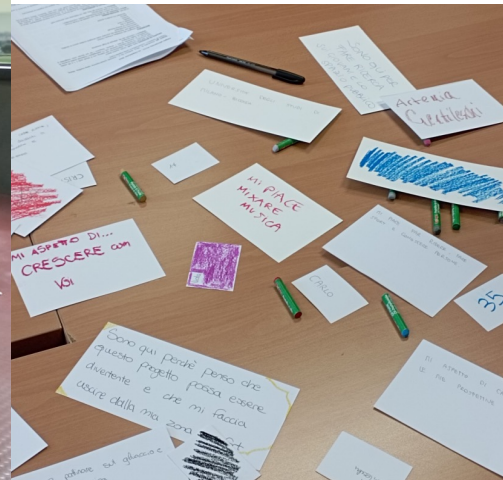
- weekly informal meetings with our research group B-YOUth Forum
- focus group
- collage workshop activities, a versatile art form that accommodates multiple texts and visuals in a single work

Main theoretical discussions:

- boundaries between public/private spaces and youth/ adult places
- young people agency and young people participation to public life



February 2023



The preliminary phase: field observation and semi-structured interviews (2)

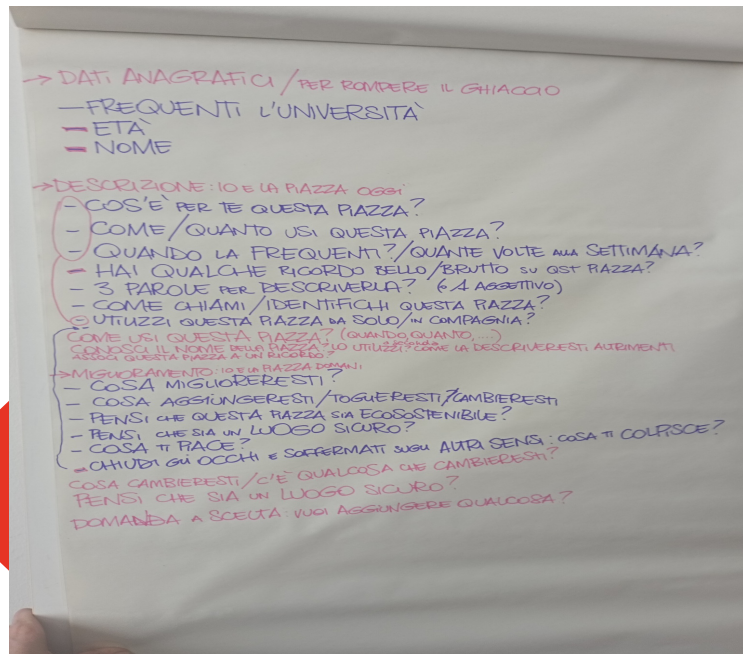
1) preliminary field observation of different public spaces in Municipio 9 (mainly squares and parks)

2) activities of taking notes and pictures about how these squares are appropriated by young users

3) brainstorming and construction of a semi-structured interview outline

4) preliminary interviews submission to university students and inhabitants, useful to investigate about their perception and use of public space

March – April - May 2023



The delimitation of the field: the squares of Bicocca district

Bicocca district: area on the northern outskirts of Milan, which was occupied by the Pirelli industrial complex until the late 1980s when the industrial area turned in a university and business district.

Bicocca's squares: places of daily passage for different segments of population, such as young university students, and university workers (mostly temporary users), young inhabitants, university's employees, young people from the suburbs, especially urban crews affiliates to hip hop/trap music.

June 2023



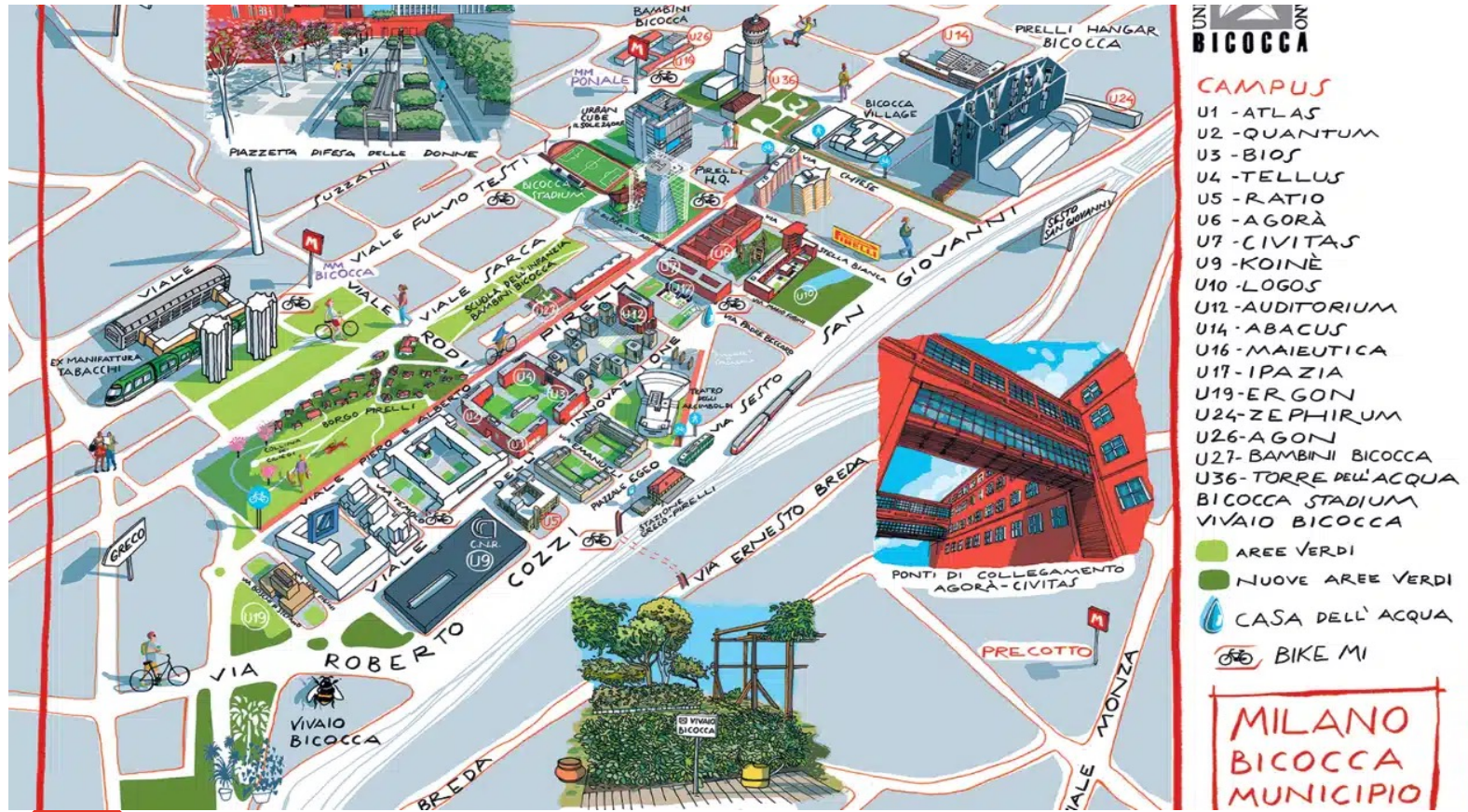
Currently these squares are also **affected by a urban regeneration** project, aimed at improving the liveability and sustainability of these public spaces.

We are also interested into these squares mainly because:

- their use changes throughout the academic year and during day/night
- they exhibit different nuances of publicness/privateness concepts



Bicocca's district



THE FOUR SQUARES:

PIAZZA ATENEIO NUOVO

PIAZZA DELLA TRIVULZIANA

PIAZZA DELLA SCIENZA

NUOVA PIAZZA BIM

Credits: Carlo Stanga



Future steps: a participatory geographic film

Future step 2023 – 2024:

- combining field observation and **filmic geography** → using filmmaking as a practice to do research on geographical processes to observe the use of the squares by users
- Involving young researcher to conduct on-site interviews with university students and inhabitants filmed by the camera

Output of this research:

A **participatory documentary focused on young people use of the Bicocca district's squares**, involving young people in a collaborative and inclusive filmmaking and research process.

The film will be presented on October 2024 during **FESTIVAL GENERAZIONI**, an event organized by B-YOUTH Forum, which deal the themes of youth participation, social inclusion and public space, promoting due day of workshops and consultation.





Thank you for your attention

Silvy Boccaletti

silvy.boccaletti@unimib.it

