

Landscape as cultural intermediary: the living space in the perception and aspirations of young migrants in Italy

BENEDETTA CASTIGLIONI - geographer
ALESSIA DE NARDI - geographer
TANIA ROSSETTO - geographer
GIANPIERO DALLA ZUANNA - demographer
NICOLA BARBAN – demographer
University of Padova

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Landscape

*“Landscape” means **an area, as perceived by people**, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors”*

(European Landscape Convention, art. 1)

From the preamble of the Convention

“The member States of the Council of Europe:

...Aware that the **landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures** and that it is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, **contributing to human well-being** and consolidation of the **European identity**;

...Acknowledging that the **landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere**: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas

...Believing that the **landscape is a key element of individual and social well-being... »**

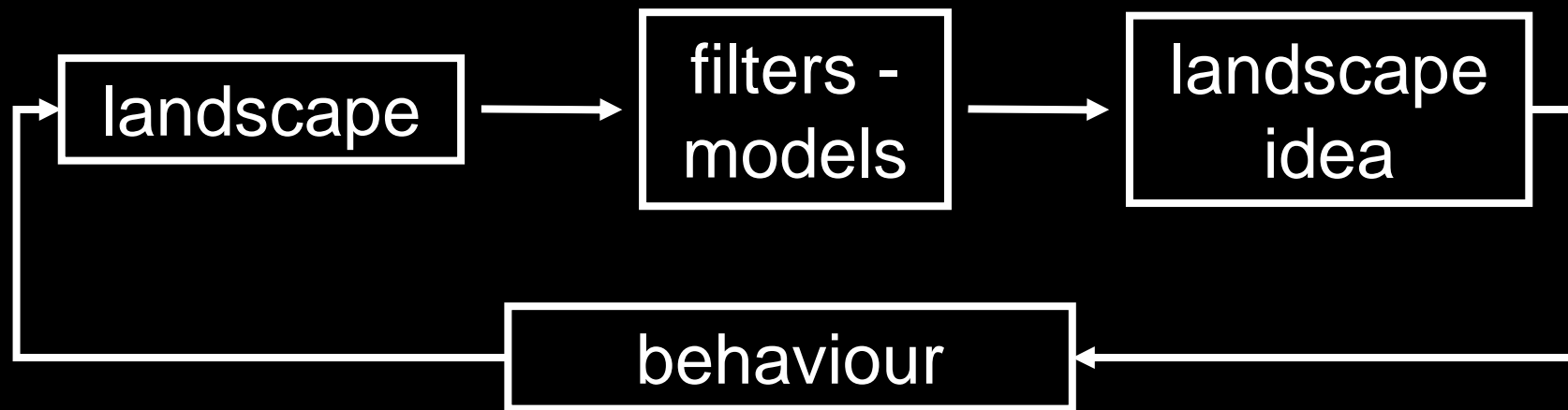




Local landscape

- It is the expression of local culture, it speaks about people that built and transformed it
- It is an element of local identity
- Migrants “lose” their native landscape and “meet” a new landscape; they are going to build their new territorial identity
- Migrants are going to participate in the creating and transforming of the landscape in the place they go to live

Landscape studies (when concerning the relationship between people and places) **and migration studies enrich each other**



Research on **how people perceive landscape** (on landscape ideas) is important to understand how people behave on landscape and **how cultural models act and change**

Research main questions

- In “our” landscape, in the one we were born and grown up, we “feel at home”:
 - How do migrants perceive the “new” landscape?
 - How much they are still linked with nostalgia to their “old” landscape?
 - Is it an element for uncomfortableness, or an element for a new “home feeling”?
- Which kind of relationship are migrants building with the place they live in?
- Are they building a new “spatial belonging”?

The research on landscape in SIOI Project

- Towards teenagers (14-16 years old boys and girls, Italian and foreigner)

Two parts, with different, complementary approach:

- **quantitative** survey (inside the second wave survey; *cfr. Dalla Zuanna yesterday presentation*)
- **qualitative** survey, in two schools in Veneto region

The quantitative survey

- Some questions on the place of life (on landscape) inserted in the list of the phone survey
 - Wide sample (1350 Italians; 550 foreigners, weighted data)
 - Possibility of putting results on landscape in relationships with other data

The qualitative survey

- Qualitative methods are often used in researches on landscape perception and landscape social representation
- Field work allows interaction between Italian and foreign teenagers and a deeper comprehension of territorial contexts

SOME FIRST RESULTS FROM THE QUANTITATIVE SURVEY

Keeping the place where you currently live in mind,
give a score of 1 to 10 to the following aspects:

		Nature	Historical and artistic patrimony	Orderliness and care	Public transportation	Spaces for youth	Stores
ITALIANS	mean	6,49	6,34	6,42	6,07	6,07	6,78
	sd	1,98	2,04	1,89	2,00	2,34	2,12
FOREIGNERS	mean	6,48	6,30	6,93	6,51	6,35	7,28
	sd	1,98	2,16	2,03	2,18	2,43	2,19

Now give a score of 1 to 10 to the following places in terms of **the importance they hold for you:**

		Public square	Shopping mall	School	Public garden	Church	Athletic fields, the gym
ITALIANS	mean	6,91	6,81	7,26	6,80	6,90	7,64
	sd	2,04	2,09	2,17	1,92	2,21	1,98
FOREIGNERS	mean	6,83	7,42	7,71	6,93	5,57	7,97
	sd	2,36	2,06	2,33	2,15	2,94	2,07

Scores given by foreigner children are in general higher than the ones given by the native.

Sports, school and shopping mall are the places preferred by the foreigners

Continue to think about the place you live. Is where you live...

	ITALIANS	FOREIGNERS
Downtown	44,70	60,81
Suburbs	55,30	39,19

	ITALIANS	FOREIGNERS
City	61,15	76,95
Countryside	38,85	23,05

Migrant children have in mind a different model of centre/periphery (downtown/suburbs) and of city/countryside

If you could choose, would you live ...

	ITALIANS	FOREIGNERS
Downtown	65,31	78,41
Suburbs	34,69	21,59

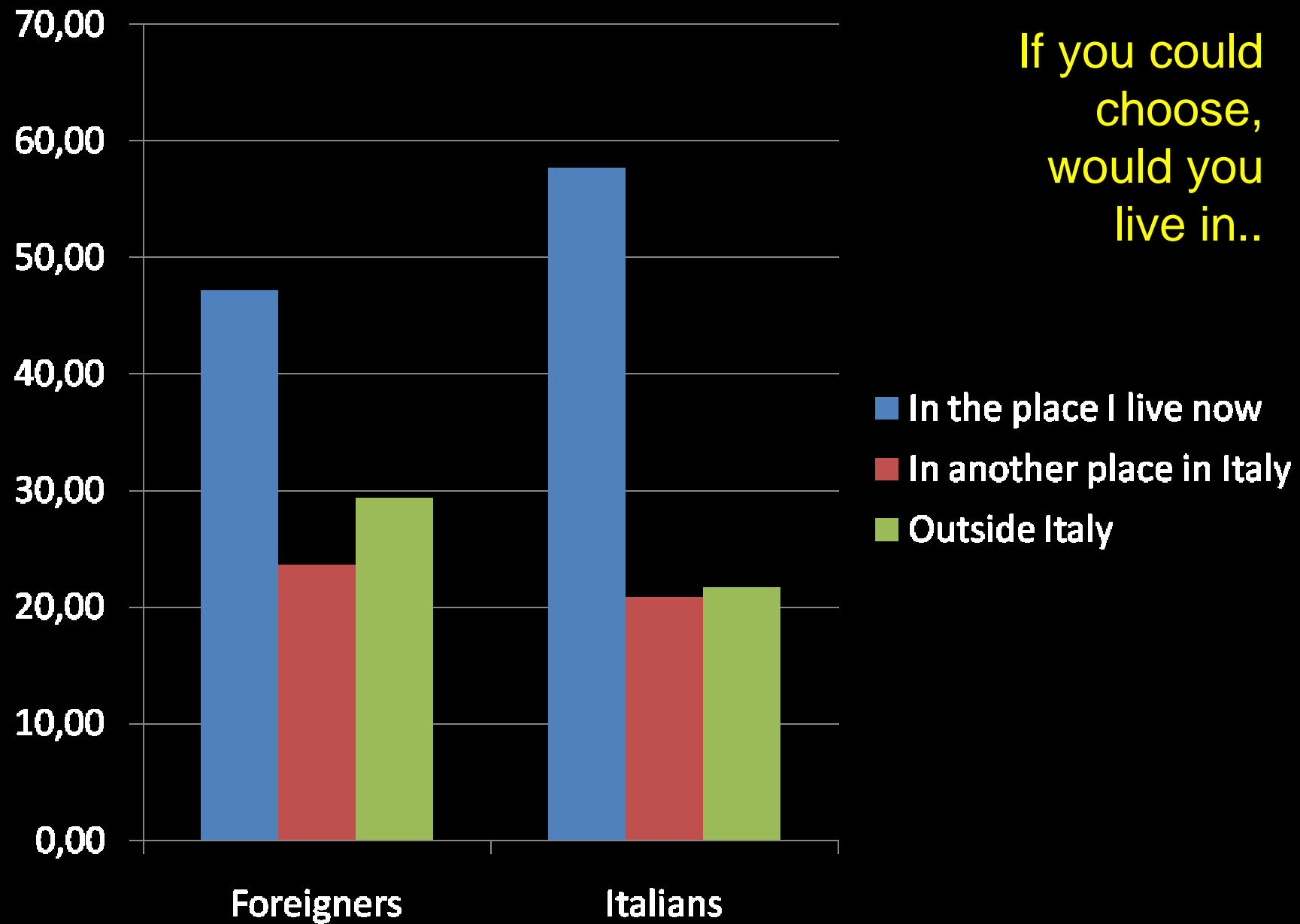
	ITALIANS	FOREIGNERS
City	66,47	82,77
Countryside	33,53	17,23

All teenagers are attracted by the centre and the city.
Migrant children seem to appreciate much more these features of places

Crossing data...

- *City* and *Downtown* are generally preferred: who live (or perceive to live) there, rarely (11 or 12%) wants to move
- Foreign teenagers express the willness to move from a place to another much more than Italian teenagers
- In particular
 - the % of teenagers that lives (or perceives to live) in the suburbs and wants to move downtown is the 65% of the foreign ones and the 46% of the Italian ones
 - the % of teenagers that lives (or perceives to live) in the countryside and wants to move to the city is the 64% of the foreign ones and the 41% of the Italian ones

If you could
choose,
would you
live in..



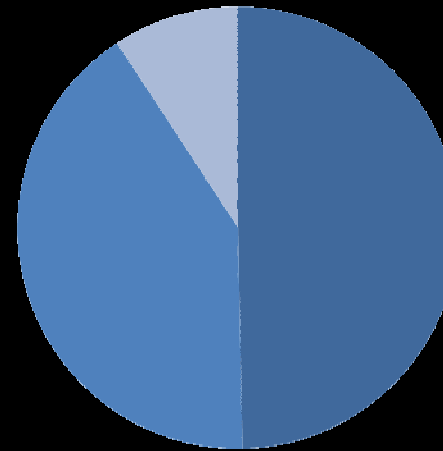
What effect
does what
you see in
your
neighborhood
have on you?

FOREIGNERS

I feel
uncomfortable
9%

I'm indifferent
41%

I feel good
50%

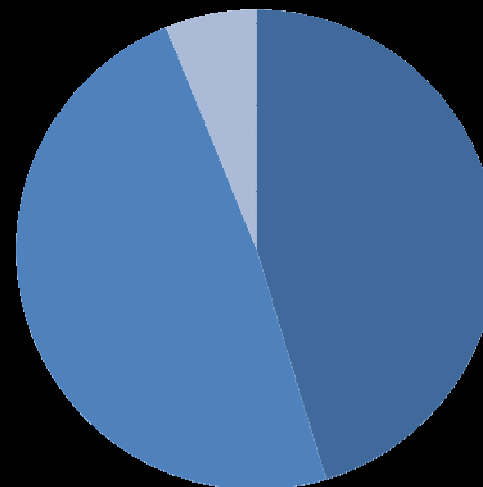


ITALIANS

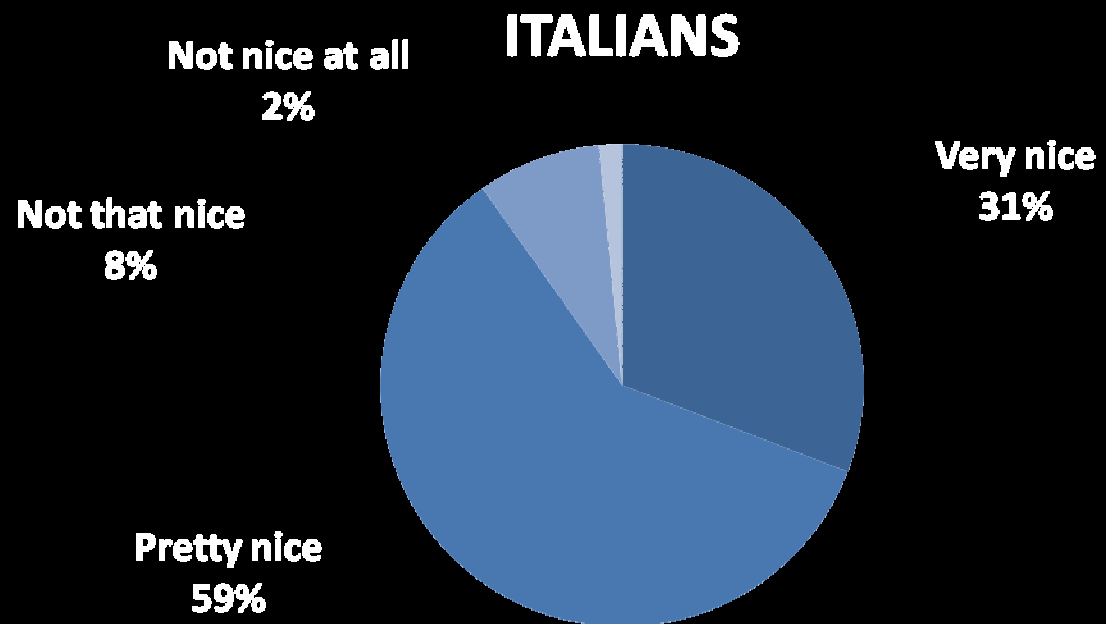
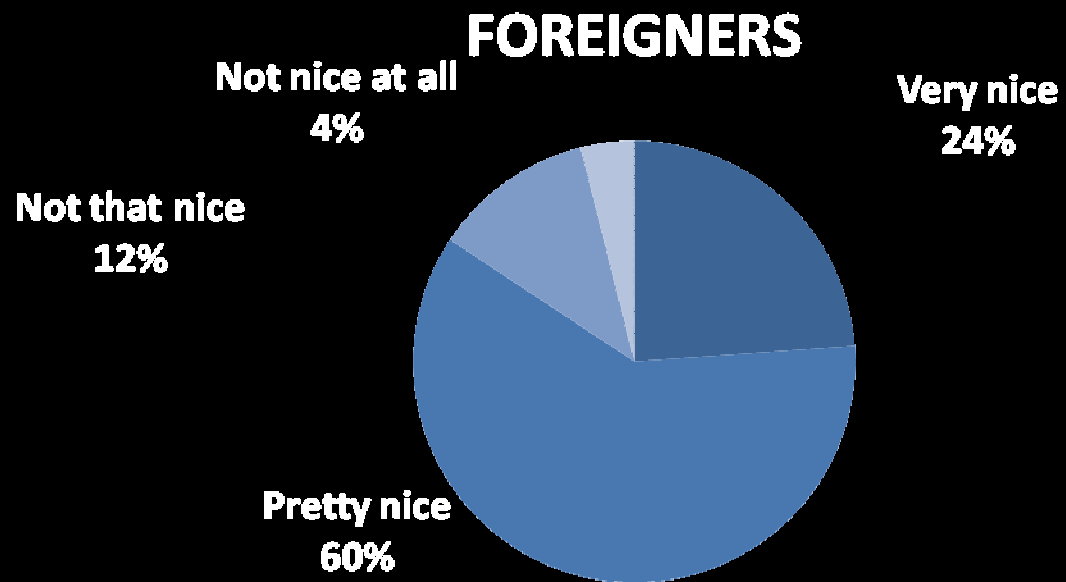
I feel
uncomfortable
6%

I'm indifferent
49%

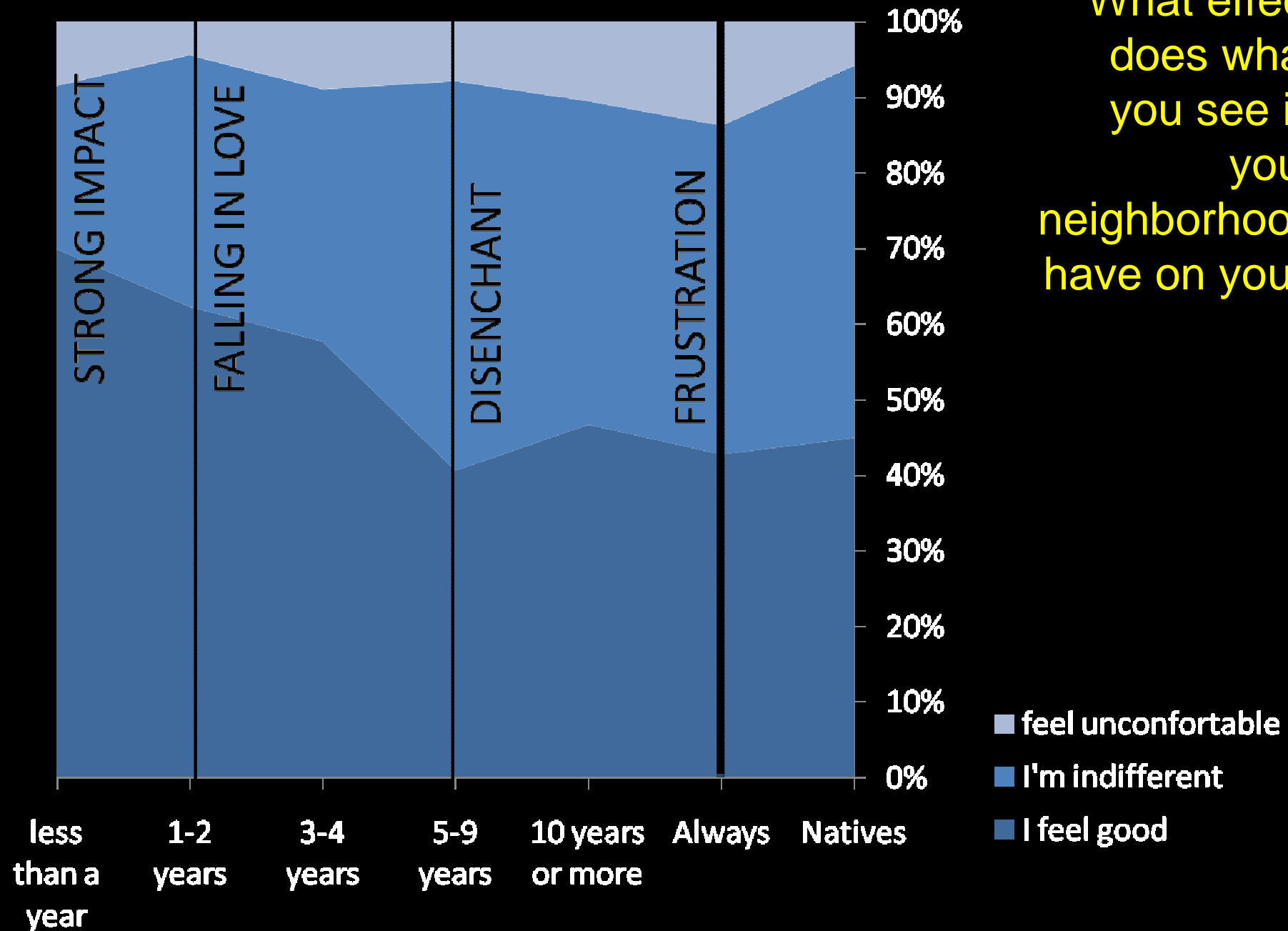
I feel good
45%



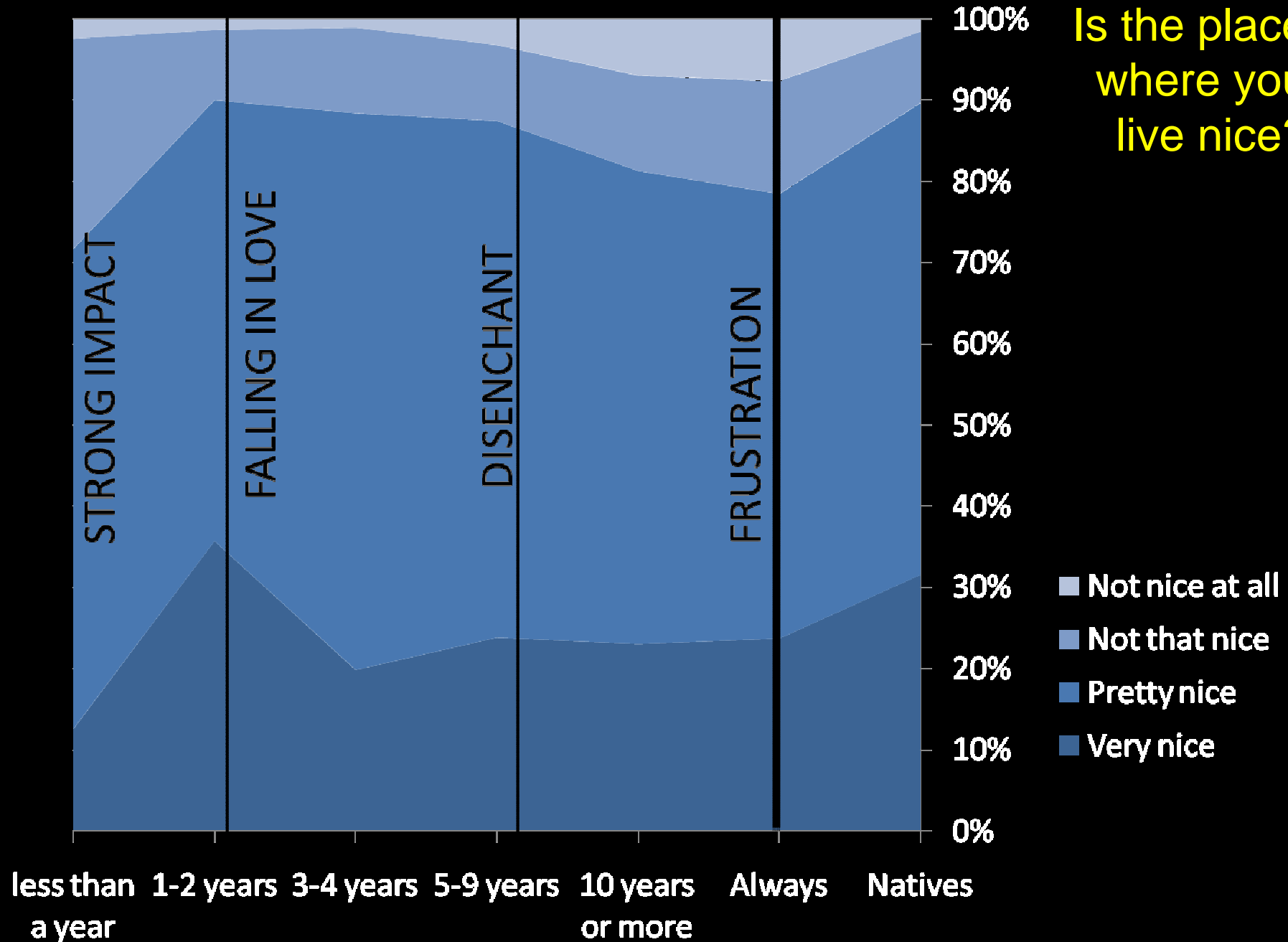
Is the place
where you live
nice?



What effect
does what
you see in
your
neighborhood
have on you?



Is the place
where you
live nice?



SOME FIRST RESULTS FROM THE QUALITATIVE SURVEY

Subjects:

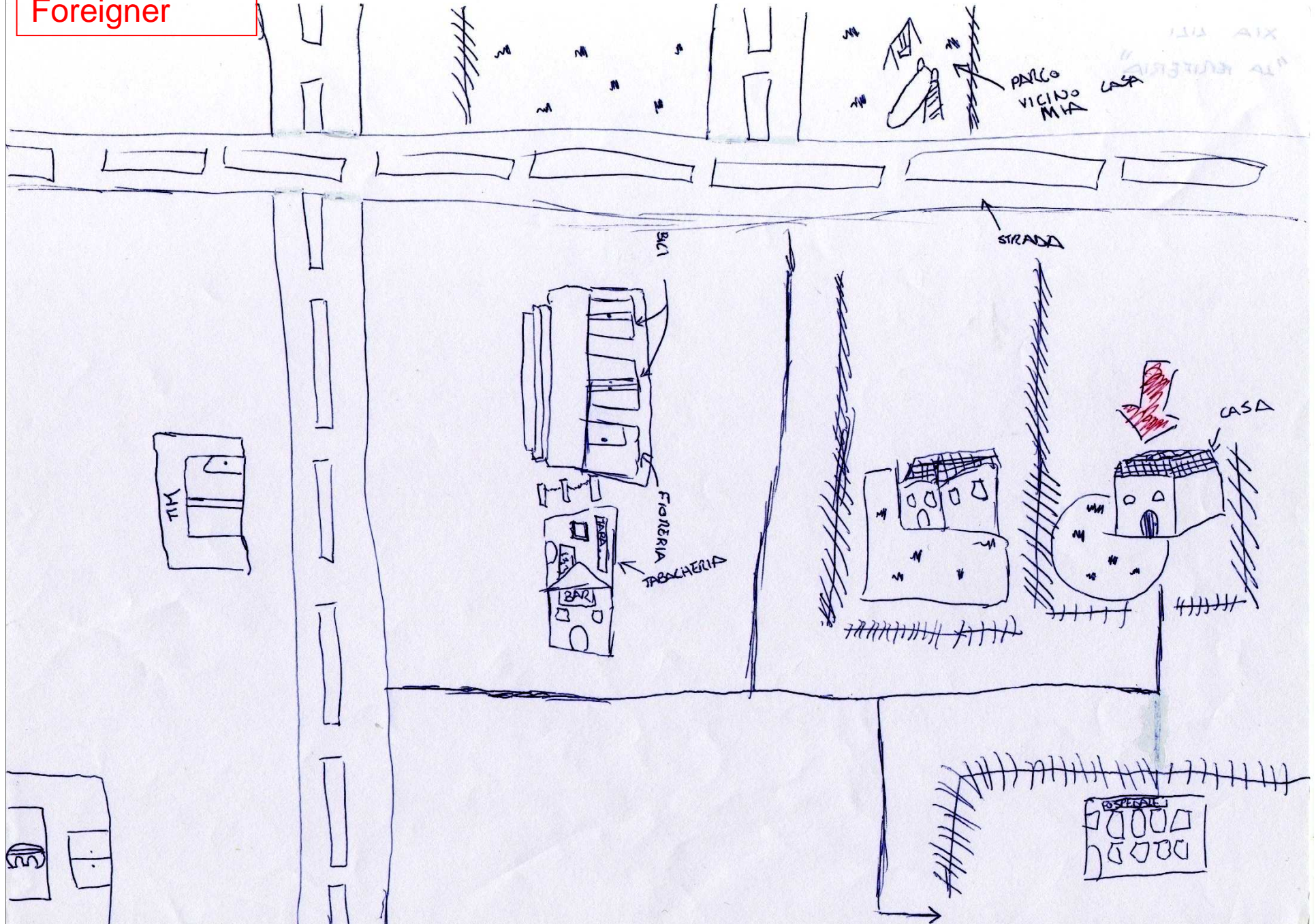
14 year-old pupils attending the school in Montebelluna (Treviso) and a single class in the school of Crespano del Grappa (Treviso)

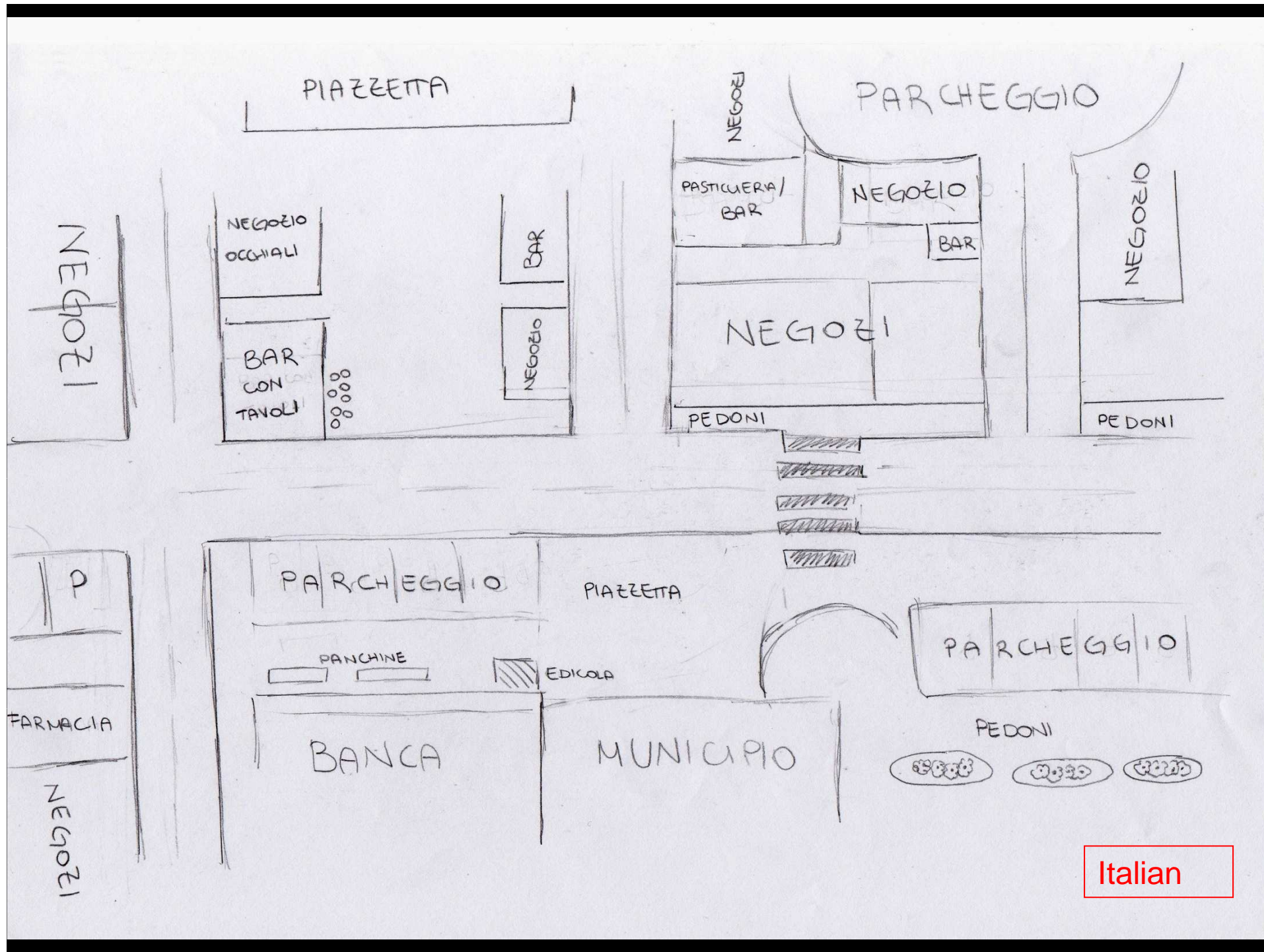


Activities:

- Essay about the characteristics of their living space
- Quantitative survey (the one presented before)
- Qualitative survey
- Drawing of maps
- 18 in-depth interviews
- Group work with a single class (in Montebelluna school)

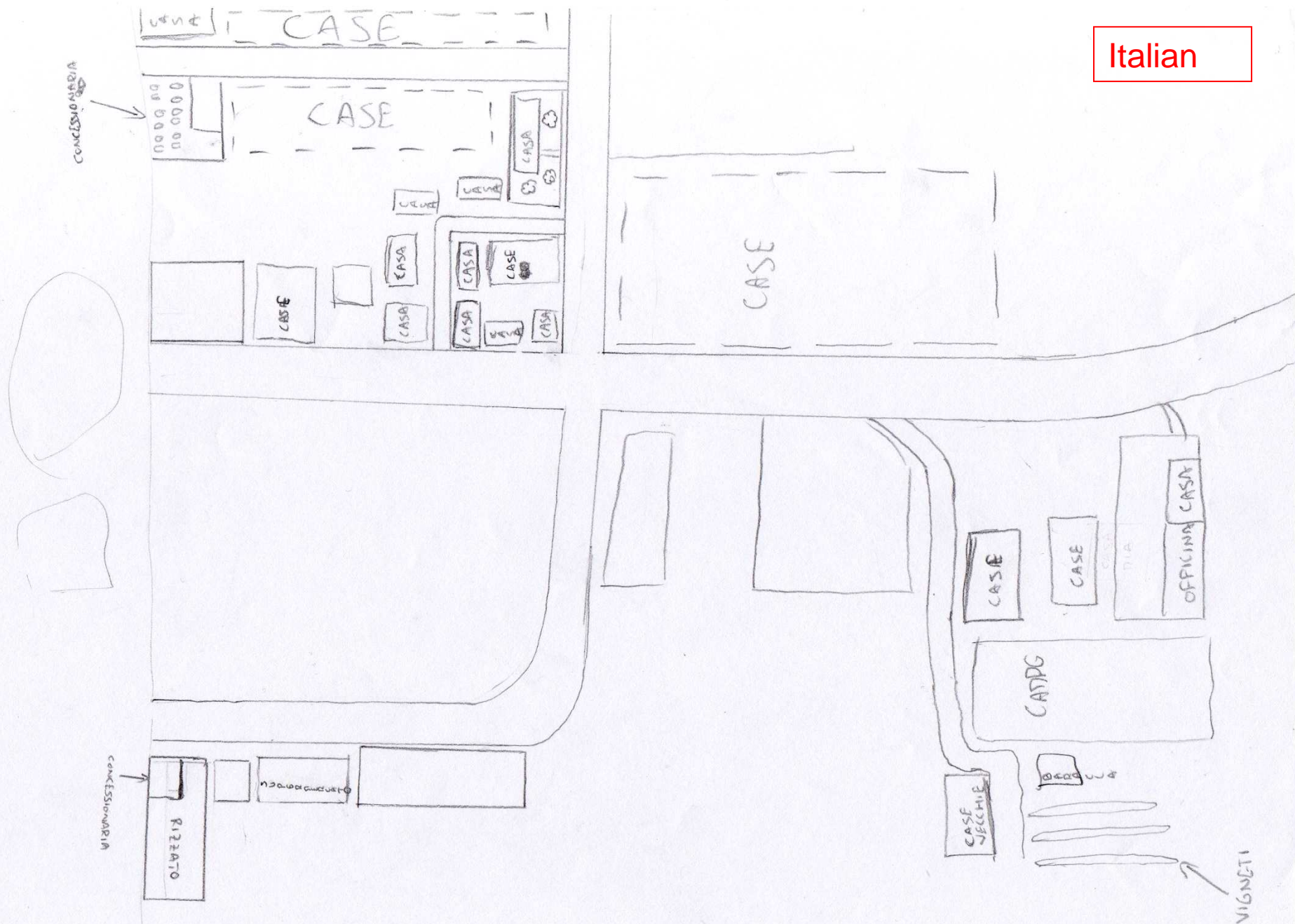
Foreigner

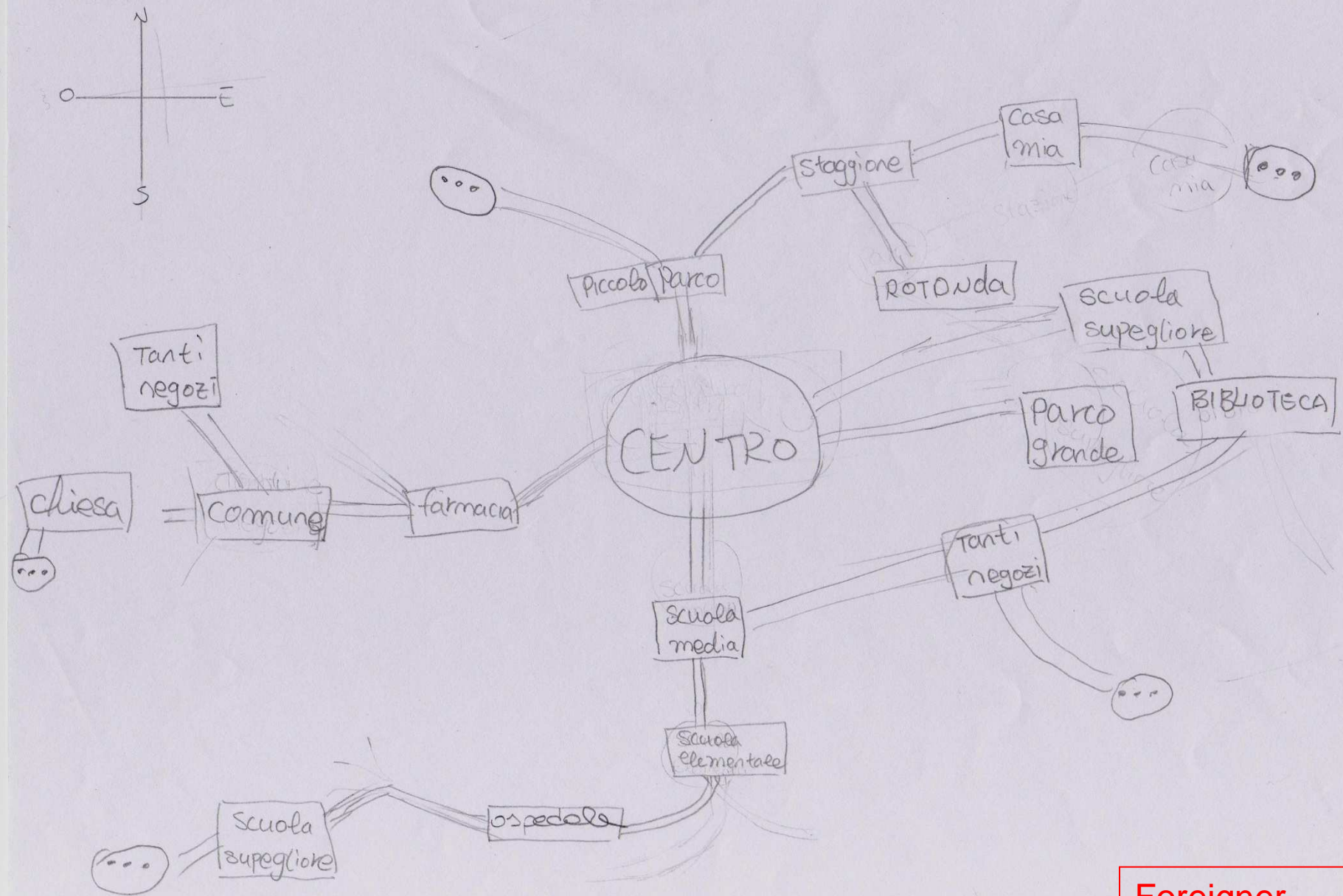




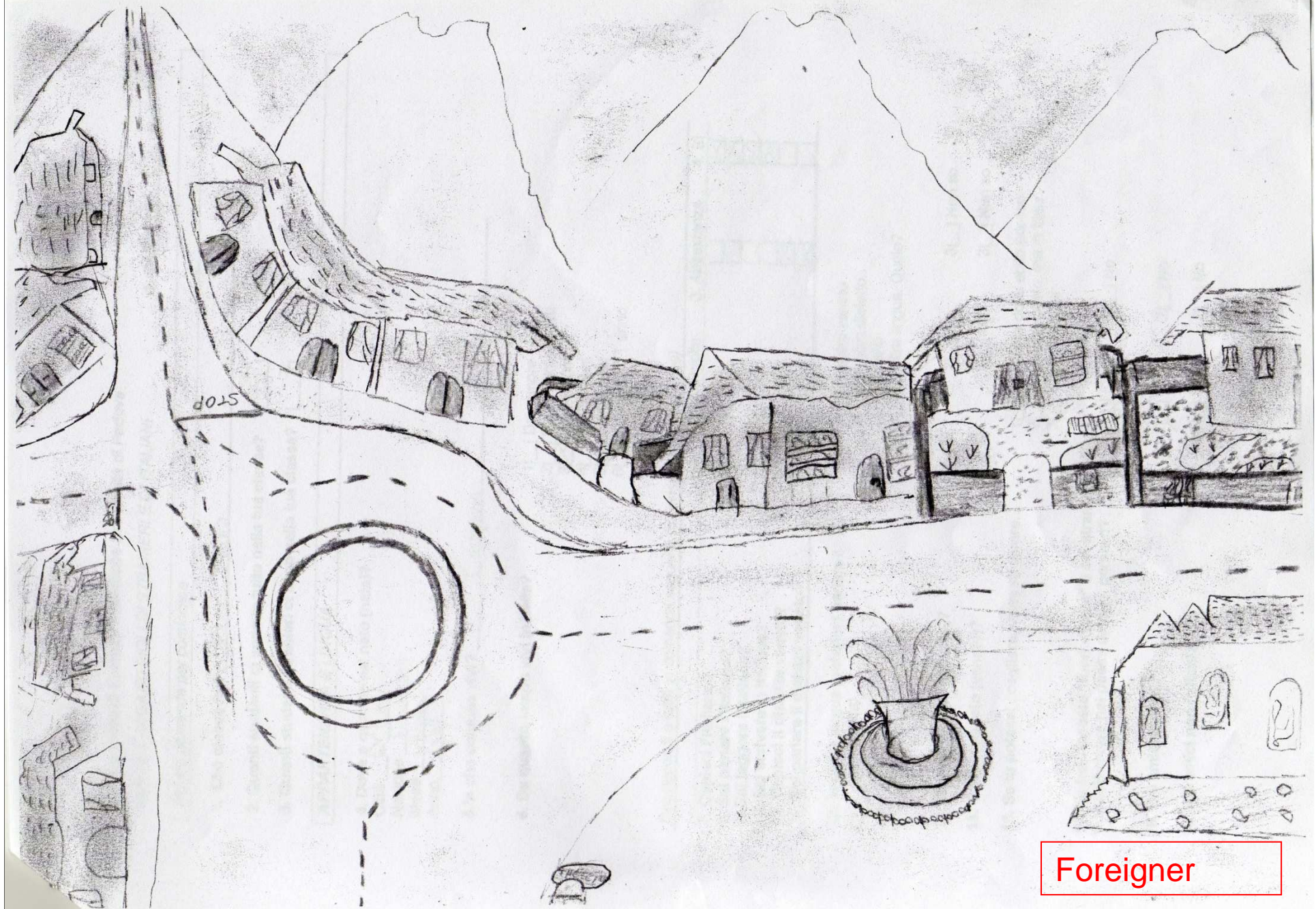
Italian

Italian





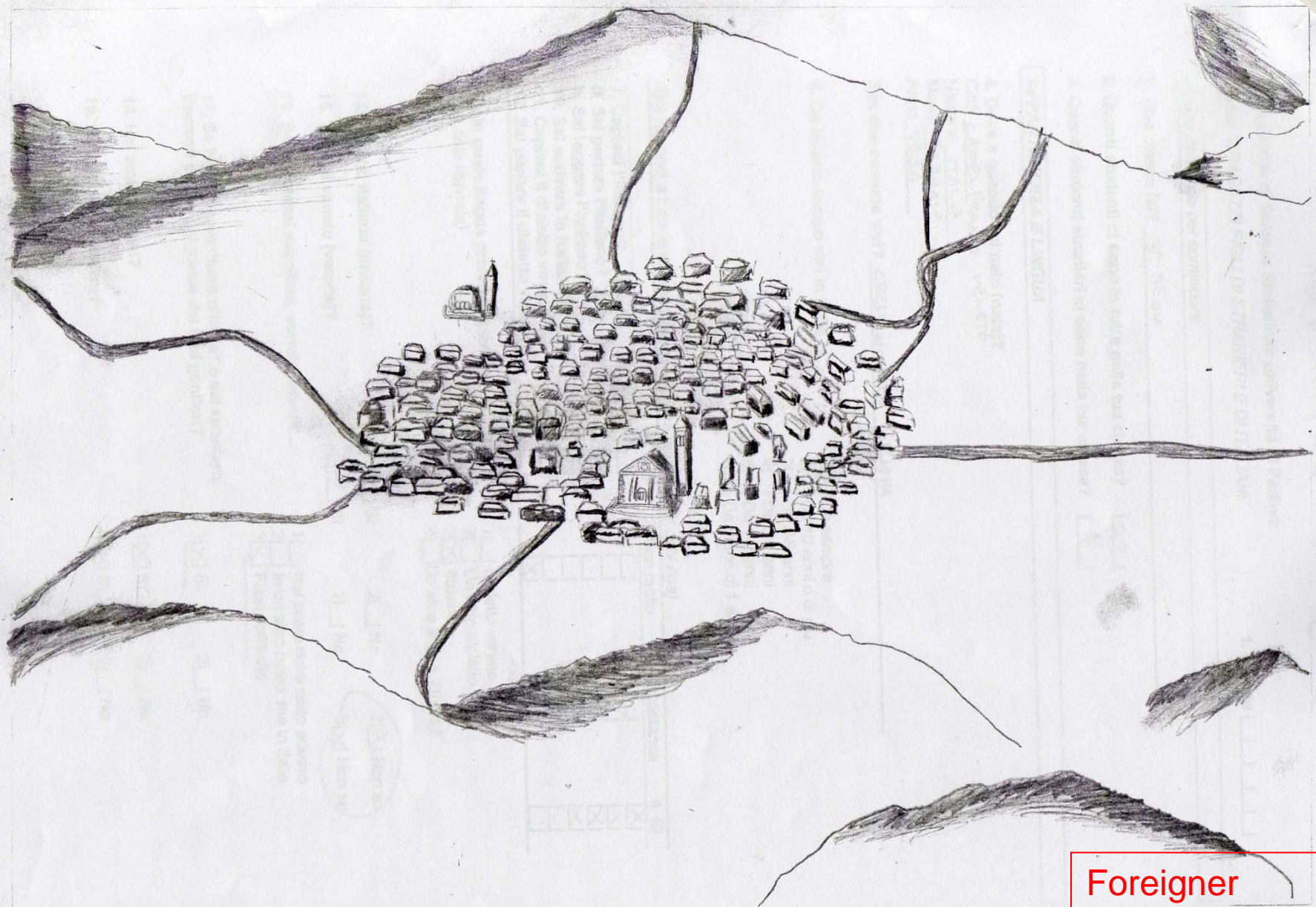
Foreigner



Foreigner



Italian



Foreigner

CRESPINO IS THE WORLD



Italian

Foreigners don't seem to be “lost”, although they have reference points quite different than the Italians:

Foreigners: school, public garden, athletic fields/the gym

Italians: shopping mall, public square, athletic fields/the gym

➡ School as fundamental place for the integration of the young foreigners

➡ Italians give great importance to the quality and the quantity of shops and shopping malls, which are considered meeting places

Montebelluna:

THE PARK AND THE LIBRARY:

**two places of particular interest for the
young students**

Park's functions:

Place of nature



and place of sociality

Ambivalent attitudes:

➡ Foreigners and their families perceive it as a charming place

“To me the park is as the place where I put down roots. Alone.” (Chinese girl who have lived in Italy for less than a year)

“(...) the Manin park is very beautiful, it is big and has many games for children; many activities are organized there: sporting events, the “sport day” and the cross-

➡ ^{country race”} Italians perceive it as an unsure and disturbing place

“(...) in Montebelluna (...), as usual, there are unreliable individuals: you can meet them, for example, at the park”

“(...) the Manin park should be a place for fun and enjoyment: on the contrary, it is a place full of delinquents and drunk people”

Library:

High-quality
architectonic building:
it is a multipurpose
place which attracts all-
aged people



It has become a symbol
of the town: its innovative
style makes it stand out in
the urban landscape

It is regularly frequented both by Italian and foreign students



It is a reassuring place where the foreigners' presence fosters a sense of collective cultural growth



The cultural sharing of places can help to develop the social integration of foreign citizens



Looking at these pictures,
foreigners show greater
curiosity toward places and
greater ability in identifying
them than the Italians



I and Montebelluna are like.../I and Crespano are like...

“Parallel bars”

(Foreigner having lived in Italy less than a year)

“Brothers, which means I feel comfortable in the place I live”

(Foreigner having lived in Italy for 1-2 years)

“Two different things, but it is a place where you can live quite well”

(Foreigner having lived in Italy for 3 years)

“A bee and a flower”

(Foreigner having lived in Italy for 5 years)

“Two good friends and an apple with its seed”

(Foreigner having lived in Italy for 5-9 years)

I and Montebelluna are like.../I and Crespano are like...

“A normal boy and a village”

(Foreigner having lived in Italy for 5-9 years)

“Two brothers held together forever”

(Foreigner having lived in Italy for more than 10 years)

“A nest and a cuckoo”

(Foreigner having lived in Italy for more than 10 years)

“Friends but not best friends, let's say that we argue, get tired and it makes us happy”

(Foreigner born in Italy)

“Father and daughter. I feel part of it, born from its dust”

(Foreigner born in Italy)

I and Montebelluna are like.../I and Crespano are like...

“Two magnets: they reject each other”

(Italian)

“Salt and sugar”

(Italian)

“A biocommunity: we couldn't live without each other”

(Italian)




“A fish and a fish tank, a fish inside a fish tank lives a quite boring life”

(Italian)

“Friends, every day I know it more and more”

(Italian)

Some observations:

-  **In general, Italians feel good in their living space and are attached to it; however, since they are used to live there, most of them tend to take it for granted and don't give importance to it**
-  **At the beginning, foreigners feel uncomfortable in the new place, but they also try to establish a good relationship with it, driven by the need to achieve stability**
-  **As time goes by, the place become more and more familiar and the sense of attachment to it increases, but this feeling not always generate a sense of well-being; the tendency to take the place for granted**

“Are you happy to live here?”


Territorial vs social belonging

“Yes [I am happy to live here], because I have many friends and feel good with all the people” (Italian)

“Yes, [I am happy to live here], because I have a close-knit family and my friends with me” (Italian)

“(...) if I could choose I would stay six months here [in Montebelluna] e six months there [in Mauritius, his family’s home country]: here because I have my friends, there because I have my entire family” (Foreigner)

“Yes, [I am happy to live here], because I feel comfortable with people of my age group (Foreigner)

 **The social factors (e. g. the presence of family and friends) seem to be more decisive than the environmental ones in generating well-being and a sense of belonging to the place**

What does the word “landscape” (nice landscape?) call to your mind?

“The city where I lived before coming to Italy: the skyscrapers, the park where I went every weekend, my friends, my old school, my neighbours, the streets, the youth centres” (Foreigner)

“(...) my native village in Macedonia and also the days I spend there on holiday” (Foreigner)

“(...) a village in Puglia region where I lived for four years: it has a wonderful old town centre and a big square where people meet and take part in many parties and concerts. (...) I don't like those places which are too modern, on the contrary in Puglia region there are still all the ancient traditions; furthermore, buildings and churches are reminiscent of far worlds and past times” (Italian)

“(...) mountains, nature and the sea on the horizon ” (Italian)

Some first conclusions

- ➡ Foreigners show a strong sense of attachment to their home country, but they don't feel uncomfortable in the new living space**
- ➡ On the contrary: they show a better “territorial competence” than Italians and show a greater tendency to wonder about their relationship with the living space**
- ➡ The relationship between young people and their living space is a very complex issue: since this relationship is influenced by many factors, it is fundamental to understand if and how landscape can really constitute a reference point for the identity of young people, both Italians and Foreigners**

This research...

- ➡ It helps us to deepen the quantitative data**
- ➡ It can constitute an occasion of “cultural intermediation” because arouses curiosity in the students, activates a dialogue between them and makes them reflect on some themes they are not used to think about, as for example:**
 - the positive and negative features of their living space**
 - their own relationship with this place**
 - their Italian and foreign schoolmates’ experiences and feelings**