



Research Cluster: Trans-Form – exploring design, art and social practices for political and eco-social transitions | Timespan: 2014

People's Republic of Bolzano

Team

PI: [Matteo Moretti](#)

CI: Gianluca Seta

External collaborators: Corriere dell'Alto Adige

Websites: <http://www.peoplesrepublicofbolzano.com>

<http://www.repubblicapopolaredibolzano.it/>

More information: design-art@unibz.it

Combining a statistics-based investigation and a series of qualitative interviews, the People's Republic of Bolzano project aimed at inviting citizens to discover who the members of the Chinese community living and working in the city are, what they think of Italy, its local culture and society. Contrary to the common belief – propagated by local media - that Chinese people are “invading” the city, the project helped reveal that, while we have and are witnessing a small-scale migration of Chinese people to Bolzano, they are not creating a ghetto in the city. Rather, they are integrating within it. This project, is the result of a web based long-term journalistic enquiry. It features animated and interactive infographics, maps, and a series of qualitative interviews, which help reshape the identity of the local Chinese community through digital media, in order to contrast with the dominant and misleading narrative by the local media.



Figure 1. Homepage of the visual journalism project, 2014.

Through a design project based on more transparent and balanced information, thereby allowing a broader audience to inform itself on such a complex and multifaceted issue, the project opened a local debate about the integration of the Chinese people in the city, that led the local media purveyor of the “invasion” theory to reverse its narrative.

People’s Republic of Bolzano has awarded with the Data Journalism Award 2015 (best data visualisation of the year, small newsroom) and the European Design Award 2016 (Bronze, digital infographics).

Speaking freely 随心所欲

The Westernisation of the parents

Yanghui Chen comes from Zhejiang and has been in Italy since he was 4. "I was completely brought up in a Western society - he explains - and almost all of my friends have been Italian. My parents acquired a way of judging that uses the Western method as a yardstick. I was brought up differently. As a parent you can't act as if you have a 'typically' Chinese child. I don't want to marry a Chinese girl. I'm not attracted to them physically, I find Western women far more attractive."

The Westernisation of the parents
Yanghui Chen comes from Zhejiang and has been in Italy since he was 5.

Relations with the homeland
Hongling Yang has lived in Bolzano for 20 years, one of the first to live here.

You don't live just for yourselves
Yi Yi Chen from Wenzhou, has been in Italy since she was 7.

The stereotypical view of the Chinese
Xiaofeng Wang, computer science researcher at the Unibz, married with one children.

Gender equality
Yingjun Chen, economy student at the University of Trento, she arrived in Bolzano 7 years ago.

Making money is a priority
Mouzhi Ge was able to keep up with the competition among Chinese families, working as a researcher at the Unibz.

The "bananas"
Romina Chang, was born and grew up in Bolzano, reveals the difficulties of being a "banana", Chinese and Western inside out.

Chinese enterprise
The cook Jun Wu Xu, said "Maximum", tells the story of his family, originated in China as farmers.

Figure 2. Qualitative interviews, 2014.



Figure 3. Data visualizations that debunks the stereotype about Chinese restaurants “invasion” in Bolzano, 2014.

Publications

Moretti, M., & Burgio, V. (2017). Infographics as Images: Meaningfulness beyond Information. MDPI.

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Moretti, M. (2017). People’s Republic of Bolzano. *Sciences du Design*, (1), 18-21.

Moretti, M. (2015). Reporting the ‘invasion’: perception and reality of Chinese migrants in Bolzano, Italy
Data Journalism: Inside the global future., 234-241.