.Master Thesis

Il Cantiere di Via Roma

An opportunity for tactical experimentation
in a challenging urban context
through collaborative approach

Mirko Incerti Fornaciari • Matricola: 915526 • A.Y. 2019/2020

Master thesis

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An opportunity for tactical experimentation in a challenging urban context through collaborative approach

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Abstract

Cities are complex systems in constant change, human society has never been as urbanized as it is today, and within these urban fabrics there are continuous processes of change and evolution that affect the physical and social aspects of life. What role can we designers play in assisting these changes, taking advantage of the transformations taking place to steer them in a direction of environmental, social and economic sustainability? In the metropolis, where innovation processes often originate, the role of design is established and consolidated in the gears of urban and social development. My intention instead is to bring attention to medium-sized Italian cities, realities that often remain conservative in terms of ideas, projects and visions, but that represent the most widespread type of urbanization in the nation. The lens then shifts to a particular city, Reggio Emilia, and a particular neighborhood, Via Roma.

In this thesis I will therefore first analyze the dynamics and theories that characterize and will characterize the urban evolution of the 21st century paying particular attention to the phenomenon of tactical urbanism and design for sustainability through bibliographic research, interviews and case studies. This will allow me to learn the key knowledge to carry out a real project on the community of Via Roma, a complex context characterized by strong social and environmental issues in the historic center of Reggio Emilia. The project aims to provide guidelines to bring an innovative and international vision, able to leverage the intrinsic potential of the community and evolve it into a resilient, inclusive and attractive reality. This path will lead me to face different barriers and design challenges, and to interface with dozens of different actors in order to develop concrete proposals really needed by the citizenship. I have therefore developed a synthesis of these multidisciplinary proposals to create a scenario of intervention, realistic, useful and feasible, designed with citizens, for citizens.

Le città sono sistemi complessi in constante mutamento, la società umana non è mai stata così urbanizzata come oggi, e all'interno di questi tessuti urbani avvengono continui processi di cambiamento ed evoluzione che influenzano l'aspetto fisico e sociale della vita. Che ruoli possiamo avere noi designer nell'assistere questi mutamenti, sfruttare le trasformazioni in atto per orientarle verso una direzione di sostenibilità ambientale, sociale ed economica? Nelle metropoli, dove i processi di innovazione spesso originano, il ruolo del design è stabilito e consolidato negli ingranaggi dello sviluppo urbano e sociale. La mia intenzione invece è quella di portare l'attenzione sulle città medie italiane, realtà che spesso rimangono conservatrici in termini di idee, progetti e visioni, ma che rappresentano la tipologia più diffusa di urbanizzazione nel territorio. La lente si sposta quindi su una città in particolare, Reggio Emilia, e un quartiere in particolare, Via Roma.

In questa tesi andrò quindi ad analizzare in primo luogo le dinamiche e le teorie che caratterizzano e caratterizzeranno l'evoluzione urbana del XXI secolo prestando particolare attenzione al fenomeno dell'urbanismo tattico e del design per la sostenibilità attraverso ricerca bibliografica, interviste e casi studio. Questo mi consentirà di poter apprendere le conoscenze chiave per portare avanti un progetto reale sulla comunità di Via Roma, un contesto complesso e caratterizzato da forti problematiche sociali ed ambientali nel pieno del centro storico di Reggio Emilia. Il progetto è volto a fornire delle linee guida per portare una visione innovativa e internazionale, capace di fare leva sulle intrinseche potenzialità della comunità ed evolverla in una realtà resiliente, inclusiva e attrattiva. Questo percorso mi porterà a dover andare incontro a diverse barriere e sfide progettuali, e a interfacciarmi con decine di attori diversi per sviluppare proposte concrete veramente necessarie alla cittadinanza. Ho quindi sviluppato una sintesi di queste proposte multidisciplinari per creare uno scenario di intervento, realistico, utile e attuabile, progettato con i cittadini, per i cittadini.

Contents

1. Introduction

The reasons for this project

The motivations that pushed me to undertake this project are several:

In a first hand, the situation and the moment in which this work was carried out, namely the winter between 2020 and 2021, a period characterized by the restrictions due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. These restrictions did not allow me to embark on a group project or one set abroad, but they did force me to revise my plans and focus on my home reality, my city, which for a long time I had lived in a disinterested way, without paying attention to it. For these reasons I applied as an intern in the mobility office of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia and I was hired to carry out urban planning projects in the northern area of the historic center. For these projects I had to do a lot of research and interface with colleagues, professionals and normal citizens, and it was here that I began to understand that my thesis path could go in this direction. I started working on the community of Via Roma, and as the research continued I discovered the problems but also the potential of such a unique neighborhood.

The second reason why I chose this context was realized later. I learned about the importance of disseminating innovative concepts and visions in contexts that are not the source of those innovations. The theme then was to use my skills and knowledge of complex systems design learned during my international studies and become an ambassador of these techniques and design ideas in provincial realities such as small and medium Italian cities and their administrations. Thanks to this dynamic I learned to appreciate my city, to know it, to empathize with the people who live there. The collaboration has shown that not all people are closed-minded, on the contrary, by continuing to work with them and bring forward ideas I have understood their openness to novelty and innovation, their curiosity and willingness to change, their kindness and goodness of heart towards the most disadvantaged groups, and in all of this I too have learned so much from them, from history, languages, art, traditions and psychology.

These reasons gave me the motivation to continue to design a space-service system together with them, which would leverage these virtues to initiate a positive and constant change over time, both from the point of view of the physical urban structure and from the point of view of social relations and community dynamics.

My field of action:

This thesis project is based on the desire to give new life to a neighborhood and its community. In fact, the project is composed of two fronts that proceed simultaneously and often independently, but united by an holistic vision and a shared goal:

We have on one side the physical project of redevelopment of the space through tactical, quick, targeted urban planning interventions, aimed at conveying a message of alternative lifestyle and mobility but at the same time useful and necessary for a street that has suffered so much economically and from the point of view of social relations during this crisis.

On the other hand there is the "soft" part, a service to catalyze social innovation in the community through participatory activities, co-designed and self-managed by the citizens themselves, a useful service, designed with the goal of lasting over time, to be a positive reference point and resilience for the community.

All of this is set in a context of change, of uncertainty due not only to the pandemic but also to the physical upheavals that affect the area, such as the various construction sites and the inconvenience they bring.

I am convinced that in such a complex situation we can find an opportunity, use every single occasion to our advantage to make the neighborhood more beautiful and more sustainable. Among the opportunities to leverage is the art and culture: here comes into play the Week of European Photography, an annual recurring event that affects the city of Reggio and attracts visitors from far and wide.

Via Roma therefore has the potential, through its own redesign and an important event, to rise again and show the rest of the city that it is not a mere decaying ghetto, but a unique and wonderful neighborhood, more alive than ever.

PSS DESIGN ⟶ **URBAN PLANNING**
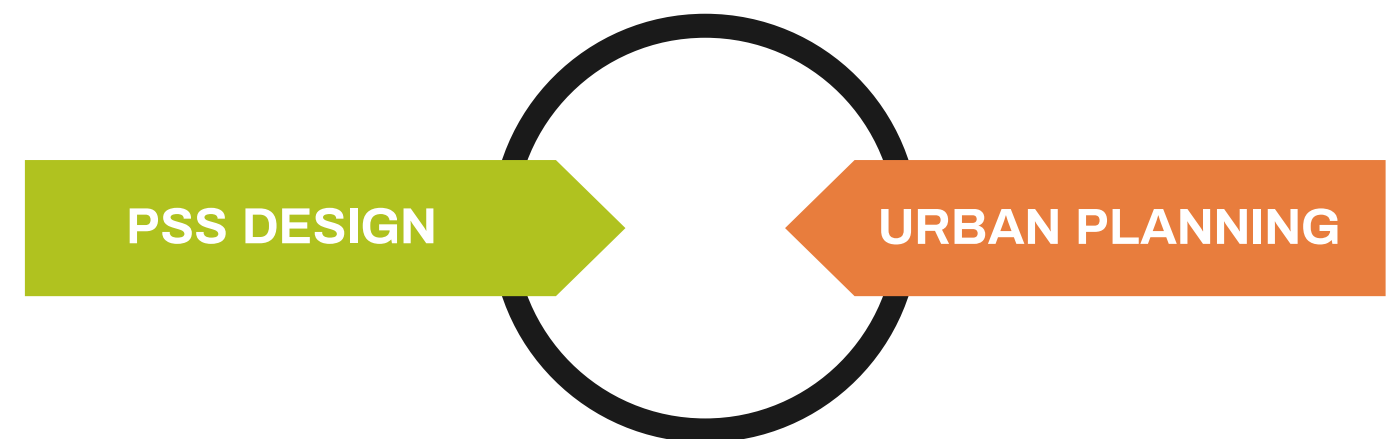
2. Background & Context

2.1 The design of our cities

2.1.1 Public Space

The public space is a physical place where everyone has the right to move and carry out activities of a social and collective connotation within it. It differs from private space in that the latter is privately owned by a single person/company and is often dedicated to intimate personal life or economic purposes. However, there are hybrid spaces with a public-private character, such as shopping malls, places of worship, and theme parks; these spaces are referred to as "private spaces open to the public." Moreover, there are also spaces that are publicly owned but not accessible to all people, for environmental, military or asset protection reasons.

The importance of public space is foundational, which is why public space was declared as a human right in the Universal Declaration of Emerging Human Rights approved at the Monterrey Forum in 2007 (IDHC, 2009). In this statement, it is important to emphasize how it provides the right to participate in all that concerns the life cycle of a public space.

Hannah Arendt, in one of her writings argues for the "political duty of participation as a fundamental expression of freedom"

"Public spaces must be conceived as pedestrian places accessible to all, around which the city is built, where life between buildings is manifested, where individuals become groups and where being together forms citizenship, understood as a sense of belonging to a common good." (Scopelliti, 2021, 2:44:25)

Public space represents the connective tissue of a community

Public spaces are generally accessible to everyone at all times. The quality of a public space is often related to its accessibility by all kinds of users.

Shopping malls have the connotation of a public space, but are privately owned, which is why they are defined as hybrid places.

2.1.2 The street

Is the public space par excellence, representing 80% of the outdoor spaces in our cities, and the way they are designed and managed has a very important impact on the experience of life of citizens.

The street had a multifunctional conception.

Streets have always been at the center of public life, especially in the past, where their function was not relegated to the movement of goods and people from one point to another, but also as spaces for social interaction and business operations.

Fig. 1: Bukit Bintang Intersection. Image source: Unsplash

Fig. 2: KLCC Suria Mall. Image source: Unsplash

2.1.3 Car-centric society

The processes of urbanization and globalization and economic growth linked to consumerism have had, among other effects, an increase in the number of private cars in our cities.

In most cases, cities have been developed in the last century with a car-centric vision, which is proving unsustainable and inefficient: in fact, cars are used only for 5% of their life cycle, and moreover, each car takes away 8sqm of important space that could be allocated to other functions.

In Italy there are 62.5 cars per 100 inhabitants, this figure is one of the highest in the world, the European average is around 50 cars per 100 inhabitants. In some northern European cities, where for years policies have been directed towards sustainable mobility, the figure is much lower, with cities like Copenhagen that record 25 cars for every 100 citizens.

In recent decades, public squares have been turned into parking lots and the street has become a space where cars have priority over other road users.

95

A car spends 95% of its lifetime parked, taking up public space (Il Sole 24 Ore)

2.1.4 A non-inclusive system

Nowadays, the negative effects produced by this system are evident: the growth of cars fleet increases the risk of air pollution, noise pollution, accidents, and traffic congestion. The victims are the most vulnerable users: pedestrians and bike users.

Moreover, children, elderly people and people with disabilities are disadvantaged because of the lack of safety, attractive spaces and efficient infrastructures that do not allow them to move freely even for short distances. The result is that people are discouraged from having a close contact with their territory because they usually travel by car at high speed and they experience the city through the filter of their car windows. La Cecla defines this phenomenon as "Spazio Sradicato"5 (uprooted space) to describe the space that belongs less and less to the people that dwell it.

Contemporary cities must face the challenge of reducing private traffic and encouraging sustainable transport facilities. In this way, cities would become more livable, safer, and more beautiful for the entire community.

Habitual travels - Preferred means of transport in Italy

Car	59,1%	
On foot	22,9%	
Public Transport	7,0%	
Bicycle	4,2%	
Multimodal	3,7%	
Motorbike	3,1%	

(Carminucci et al., 2020)

Here are 200 people in 177 cars

on bikes

on 1 light rail train
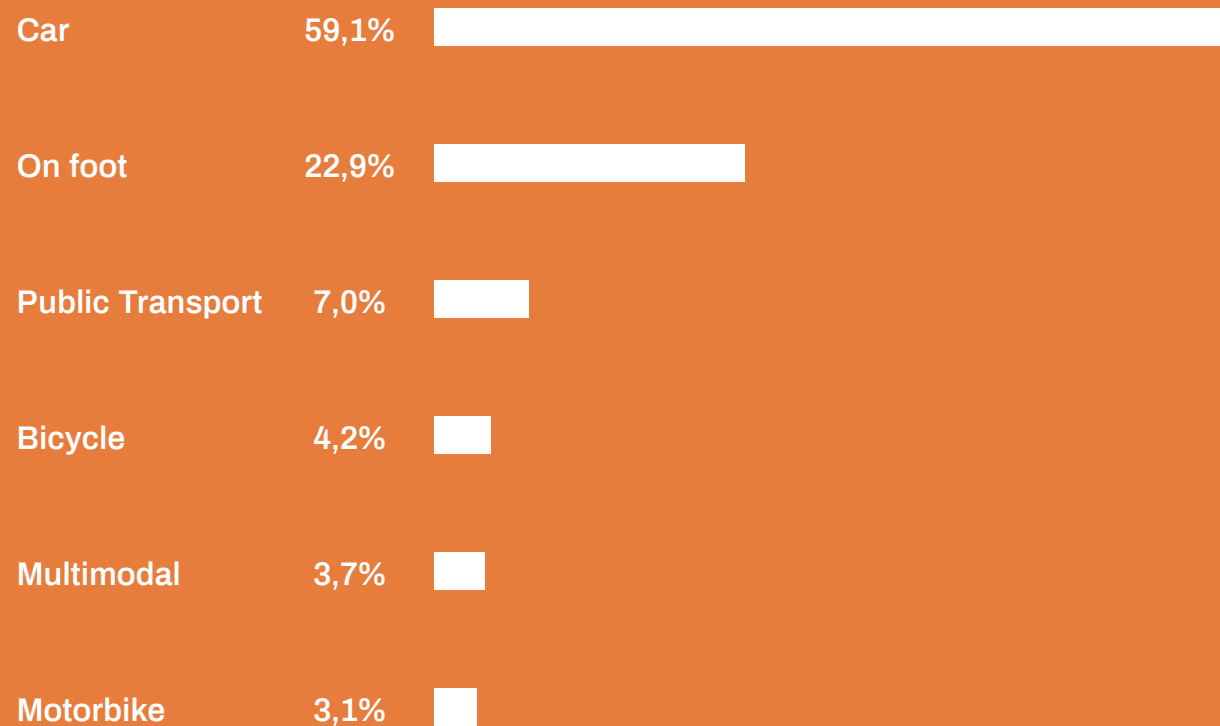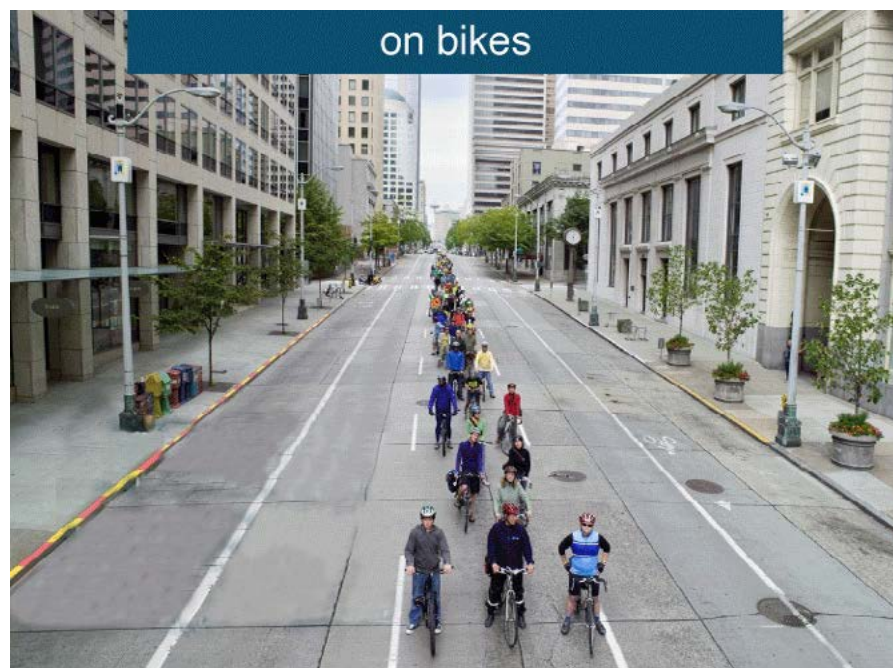
*Fig. 1,2,3: Downtown Seattle flash mob.
Images source: International Sustainability
Institute's Commuter Toolkit Poster*

2.1.5 Interview with Massimo Schinco on public space and the relationship between people and the space itself

Massimo Schinco, psychologist and psychotherapist; he is contract professor in the Laboratory of Design of Environments section I-2 led by Prof. Anna Anzani, School of Design - Politecnico di Milano.

For you, what is the function that should never be lacking in a public space?

The space must be accessible: we must think of the space in terms of inclusiveness, making sure that all people can live there without difficulty. There are still city administrations that do not sufficiently take into account the needs of the weakest people, such as the motor problems of the elderly, or safety and freedom for children. Another aspect to keep in mind is that space has a past, and this past (whether near or far) must not be erased. The identity of places is also made up of what happened to them; history must be made "visible".

How can a space (of any kind) be a catalyst for human connections? What ingredients does it need to be so?

A place must be listenable, made of recognizable memories; every stone laid, someone has laid it, and this has a meaning, it tells a story. One of the important axes of psychotherapy is to give voice to memories, formed through the exchange of affections and experiences. In the design of public spaces, it is important that the voice of memory be heard by the community.

Are there elements or cautions to keep in mind when designing a space to improve people's psychological and physical well-being, with particular attention to children?

Safety is first and foremost, physical safety, but also relational and social safety. Safety gives children the chance to self-organize, to take responsibility, to feel free; in this way adult supervision can be reduced to a discreet and non-invasive control. In this way, the adult is freer, too. Safety brings freedom and responsibility.

What is welcoming (about a space) to you?

Welcoming is when a person who visits a place feels the sensation of having been thought of by the person who designed that place. A place is capable of giving these satisfying reactions, making people feel "considered". If the user of the place feels rejected by the place itself, or invisible in the eyes of the designer, the space loses its function of inclusivity. The space should never convey the message "you don't exist."

Have you ever collaborated with architects or designers to design spaces and experiences within them? If so, can you give me some examples of how the work was carried out?

Each intervention is always characterized by an interdisciplinary cut, my contribution as a psychologist is more related to teaching and only marginally to the professional component. My youthful experiences involved me in a debate that took place in the city where I lived at the time. The debate concerned the decision to decentralize a home for the elderly to a place outside the city, in nature, less polluted. The opponents to this choice (including myself, who was part of the Board of Directors of the public

body that managed the house) proposed instead a restructuring of the original space, in the historic center, to keep the activity in the middle of the urban fabric. This last choice meant more independence in terms of mobility, more proximity to family members, a more active social life for the patients. I experienced firsthand the period of maximum horizontal expansion of Italian cities and the decentralization of services due to the zoning processes after World War II. The city became more and more divided into mono-functional zones, and the historic center emptied of people and activities. With the advent of the economic crisis, the change in the way of life had a strong impact on the health of people, these communities lacked resilience due to the fact that diversity had disappeared, just as a monoculture is a fragile ecosystem. This is not to say that "urban sprawl" is necessarily all bad. The "expanse of cottages" can have its positive aspects, for example in these areas there is less noise and light pollution, which have been shown to be harmful to health. Among the disadvantages of living in residential areas distributed in the suburbs is the distance from basic services and the workplace and often the dependence on the car to get around. And this is where another theme comes in, namely that without proximity, made up of density and diversity of functions in one place, leisure time is reduced, devoted now to commuting. Nowadays coming home for lunch from work is no longer common, the possibilities for family dialogue are reduced. Without the proximity of hanging out, people's lives become tiring and fragmented, and the fallout on relationships becomes heavier, especially in family situations. Moreover, the conversion of a residential suburb into a real village with its own identity and diversity is very difficult.

How can a spatial intervention be designed in a way that raises people's awareness and leads them to question their priorities? (e.g., some citizens may initially oppose a public intervention, but then change their minds once it is over.)
Individuals' interests are often constrained by fear; fear can lead to support for wrong or counterproductive choices; in these cases (such as pedestrianizing a street) changes should be made mandatory. Emergencies (especially health emergencies), are an apt analogy for this concept; patients are required to make sacrifices and obligations in order to have hope of recovery. In the area of health, expert knowledge is more difficult to question, but in other disciplines, such as urban planning, "sick" communities are afraid to face change and take defensive or reactionary positions towards the planner. The system in which decision-making on urban issues works is obsolete, because it is limited to only one part of the process (elections, decision-makers, consequences), and when the consequences do not meet expectations, people come to blame because it is the easy way out. People then need to be brought together, participation makes sure that there can be effective outcomes. Only then do decisions become part of a process again.

Service Designers always look for the dialogue and participation of the end user in the design and creation of the product or service. In what way do you think you can involve citizens in order to give them the maximum creative potential and interesting insights derived from their empirical experience in the context from which they come?
This concept is linked to the previous answer: to have a dialogue you need to have attendance, participation, you need to activate mechanisms of mutual understanding. The designer has his own personal dream when he does his work, and he has reasons that are not always easy for clients and users to understand, especially because the goal may be opaque to users; if, on the other hand, people understand the designer's goal, then it becomes easier for them to appreciate the project as well. In a context where there is so much stratified collective memory, it is even more difficult to create understanding; in these cases, in order to co-design, it is necessary to know how to "make memories speak". There is an important work to be done upstream by the designer, and it is one of communication and study, not only in the context concerned, but also in other contexts where similar situations have occurred.

2.1.6 Insights from the interview

- The memories of a place are as important as its functions, so it is necessary for designers to be empathetic enough to understand the collective memories associated with public space.

- Safety and accessibility for all must always be considered in a public space design, because these two parameters, when applied in the right way, bring inclusivity and freedom.

- Decentralization and zoning of a city's key functions has brought consequences for people's psychological health, given reduced leisure time and increased fragility of communitties to crises.

- Fear drives people, especially in times of crisis and uncertainty, to take defensive positions, and become skeptical of novelty. The designer must be able to convey that "his medicine may be bitter but necessary."

- Collective memory can sometimes be an obstacle in co-design; communication and dialogue are important precisely to give voice to memories and to make citizens understand projects.

Fig. 1 (following page): Tove Ditlevsens Skole, Copenaghen. Image source: Emilie Koefoed, https://emiliekoefoed.dk

2.2 A paradigm shift

2.2.1 How the way we design cities is changing

For many years the way of producing and designing spaces was based on a more technical criterion, and less with a human approach. Citizens could only react to these projects, not interact. This approach gave way to various criticisms of how to design public space, especially coming from the citizenry.

Urban design assumes that city-making needs both abandoning top-down and technocratic approaches, and that city-making is a polyhedric reality; so, no single academic discipline can completely cover it, nor are the actors involved solely the public and/or private developers and their respective technical bodies (Capel, 2013).

Public policies and in particular territorial planning, after years of crisis and partial absence, are finally rediscovering their origins as interventions for the common good. Also for this reason the figure of the planner is destined to change and consolidate in a new shape of urban planning discipline in which the temporary and experimental characteristics of design solutions are considered the norm (Talia, 2016).

First the people, then the public space and only finally the buildings, the opposite procedure never works. The public component of our lives, understood as living collective space is threatened by this dangerous trend.

(Gehl, 2010)

2.2.2 Why this shift is happening?

This diversion toward a more social approach to how urban spaces are designed is not new in the policy landscape. On the contrary, man has always tried to respond to precise needs through the increase of social capital, commercial opportunities and a general increase in the quality of life. The fact that a movement like this finds a place in today's world is also thanks to a series of socio-spatial conjunctures that have determined its success.

There are three main considerations to make:

1-The great economic crisis of 2008, which first hit Europe, America and then most of the world's economies;

2-The demographic changes, which on the one hand show the aging of the population and on the other the increase in urbanization rates (Barbieri et al., 2019);

3-The great development brought by the internet era, understood as a new tool for communications but also for the ability to involve and mobilize people and ideas through the use of social networks.

One of the positive aspects of the economic crisis, for example, was that it put a brake on growth and a development model such as the American one, which in fact was, and at times still is, not very sustainable. For example the birth and spread of a series of movements and theories which, over time, have become more important and have helped to spread ideas and theories about the real impact of mankind on the environment (Brown, Dixon & Gillham, 2009).

Complexity is the basic structure of any contemporary urban work, urban design is an intricate field that calls for interdisciplinary knowledge.

2.2.3 Increasing awarness in sustainable actions

Another reason that is probably more obvious is the increase in awareness and responsibility towards the issue of environmental sustainability and accessibility. With more than 75% of Europe's population now living in urban areas, public space and mobility in our cities has a huge influence on quality of life. Urban traffic generates 40% of CO_2 emissions and 70% of other pollutants, and urban private traffic is responsible for 3.7 million premature deaths in European cities due to air pollution. Another problem is the physical inactivity of many citizens: millions of hours are wasted every year in urban congestion, 2/3 of the European adult population does not reach the recommended level of physical activity and this factor is represented as the 4th highest risk of premature death worldwide (WHO, 2019).

Annual mean, nitrogen dioxide, 2009, based on daily averages with percentage of valid measurements 75% in µg/m³

■ 20 - 40

■ 40 - 42

■ ≥ 42
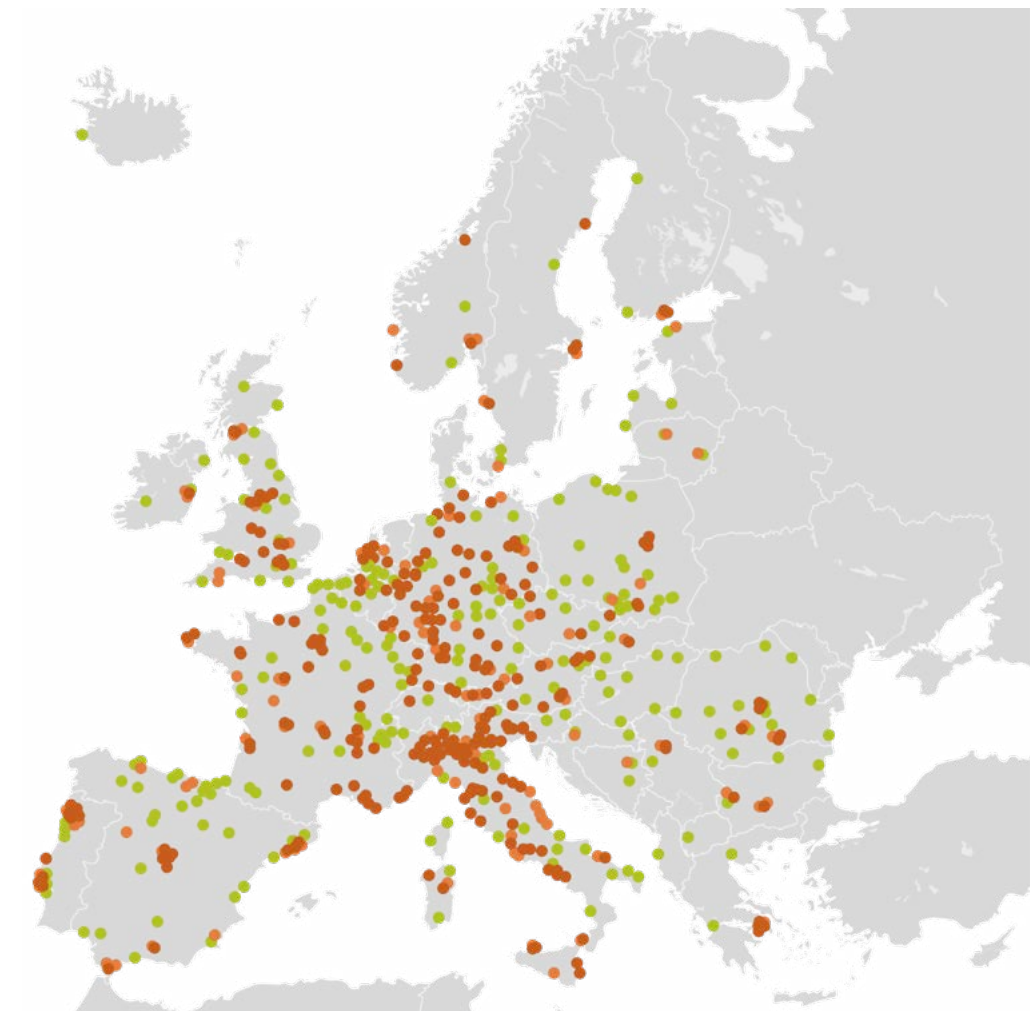
2.2.4 Noteworthy initiatives worldwide

Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40 Cities)

It is a network of metropolitan cities, born a decade ago on the initiative of the then Mayor of London Ken Livingstone, who have signed the commitment to reduce gas emissions. Already in 2006, 40 cities (hence the name of the organization) had joined the network, which has now grown to nearly 100. Cities play a key role in climate change, as major producers of greenhouse gas emissions (those that are part of the C40 network are responsible for 25% of the global total) and as a major source of innovative solutions to the climate issue. C40 is therefore an international forum to stimulate collaboration among the cities of the world, to share knowledge and experiences, to design and launch concrete, measurable and sustainable actions in the management of climate change. With its regular summits, the C40 network aims to implement meaningful local action to address climate change globally. Expert staff work with cities, supported by technical experts, to connect them and facilitate technology sharing, best practice exchange, collaboration and joint action.

Compared to 2011, the actions undertaken by the municipalities of the C40 have more than doubled, reaching, overall, more than 8,000 interventions. There are seven areas of investigation:
- Transportation
- Energy Efficiency
- Energy Resources
- Water
- Waste Management
- Economic and financial developments
- Sustainable communities

● C40 Cities

The strategies and actions adopted by these supranational networks of cities such as C40 are complementary with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations in 2015, especially those goals that are directly related with urbanization and life in cities.

The Reinventing Cities project

Reinventing Cities was a global competition issued in 2018 by the C40 to promote the most sustainable innovations and to present the best proposals for transforming underutilized sites as examples of resilience, serving as a showcase for future urban developments. Recipients of the call were architects, urban planners, designers, developers, entrepreneurs, environmental experts, start-uppers, neighborhood associations, innovators and artists. The aim of Reinventing Cities was to achieve a healthier, greener and economically sustainable urban development through their proposals, starting from the alienation of unused or degraded sites to be allocated to environmental and urban regeneration projects, in accordance with the principles of sustainability and resilience. Cities from every corner of the world participated in the call, including Milan, Auckland, Cape Town, Chicago, Houston, Lima, Madrid, Mexico City, Oslo, Paris, Quito, Reykjavik, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and San Francisco. A total of 46 spaces were identified for redevelopment, including disused or abandoned sites or buildings. Given the great success of the competition, the C40 network has allowed new cities to participate in the call on an ongoing basis so that the project is still ongoing in different areas of the world, including through the new Reinventing Cities Students initiative.

2.2.5 The European situation in terms of policies and guidelines for sustainable urban planning

CIVITAS

The European Union launched the CIVITAS initiative in 2002 to implement sustainable, clean and efficient urban transport measures. The initiative is coordinated by the cities within the network, which currently number 85 across the continent. The network is based on mutual support and cooperation in workshops where ideas and best practices are exchanged between participating cities. Since the initiative was launched in 2002, the workshops have produced more than 900 local initiatives, impacting the lives of 54 million European citizens.

SUMPs

Following the ELTIS Guidelines (approved in 2014 by the European Commission's Directorate on Mobility and Transport) and their update published in October 2019, a *"Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan is a strategic plan that aims to meet the varied mobility demands of people and businesses in urban and peri-urban areas to improve the quality of life in cities. SUMP complements other existing planning tools and follows principles of integration, participation, monitoring and evaluation"* (ELTIS, 2019).

The European guidelines, moreover, define as the main purpose of a SUMP that of creating an urban system that pursues at least the following objectives:

1. improve accessibility for all, regardless of income or social status;
2. increase the quality of life and attractiveness of the urban environment;
3. improve road safety and public health;
4. reduce air and noise pollution, greenhouse
5. gas emissions and energy consumption;
6. economic viability, social equity and environmental quality.

The guidelines also list the main benefits that a SUMP generates, both for local authorities and for the community as a whole:

1. improve quality of life;
2. create economic benefits and reduce costs;
3. make a valuable contribution to improving health and the environment;
4. improve accessibility and mobility fluidity;
5. make more efficient use of the limited resources available;
6. gain public acceptance;
7. implement better plans through an interdisciplinary and integrated approach;
8. meeting legal obligations in an effective and integrated manner;
9. exploit the synergies of multiple institutions and sectors for collaborative planning;
10. move towards a new mobility culture.

More briefly, the drafting of a SUMP has therefore the objective of improving the quality and environmental performance of urban areas in order to ensure a healthier living environment in an overall framework of economic and social sustainability, ensuring that the urban mobility system ensures that everyone can exercise their right to move, without burdening, as much as possible, the community in terms of air pollution, noise, congestion and accidents. In this perspective, the theme of accessibility, understood as the set of spatial, distributive, organizational and managerial characteristics able to allow mobility and an easy use, in conditions of safety and autonomy, of the spaces and infrastructures of the city by any person, is to be understood as a central element for the drafting, implementation and monitoring of a SUMP.

Fig. 1 (following pages): The SUMP poster (based on the EU SUMP guidelines) includes many crucial aspects of a sustainable mobility system. Here are displayed all eight fundamental SUMP principles, which are:

1. *Plan for sustainable mobility in the entire 'functional urban area';*
2. *Cooperate across institutional boundaries;*
3. *Involve citizens and stakeholders;*
4. *Assess current and future performance;*
5. *Define a long-tern vision and a clear implementation plan;*
6. *Develop all transport modes in an integrated manner;*
7. *Arrange for monitoring and evaluation;*
8. *Assure quality.*

Image source: CIVITAS SUMPs-UP

PLANNING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE CITY
EIGHT PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE URBAN MOBILITY PLANNING

1 PLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY IN THE "FUNCTIONAL URBAN AREA"
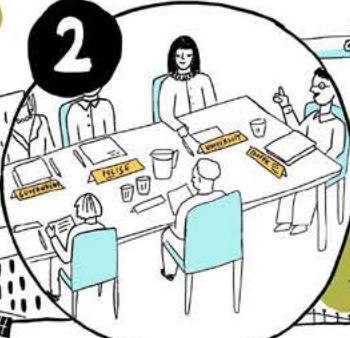
2 COOPERATE ACROSS INSTITUTIONAL BOUNDARIES

3 INVOLVE CITIZENS AND STAKEHOLDERS

4 ASSESS CURRENT AND FUTURE PERFORMANCE

5 DEFINE A LONG-TERM VISION AND A CLEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

6 DEVELOP ALL TRANSPORT MODES IN AN INTEGRATED MANNER

7 ARRANGE FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8 ASSURE QUALITY

© Rupprecht Consult / Illustration: Petra Holländer   www.eltis.org/mobility-plans/sump-concept

2.3 Towards the cities of proximities

Theories and examples on how to design more sustainable communities

2.3.1 The importance of walkability

The urban planner and architectural designer Jeff Speck has dedicated his career to evaluating possible solutions to make cities more livable. One of those solutions is to make a necessary, if seemingly trivial, factor prevail within metropolises: walkability. This is in fact one of the key topics of the book "Walkable City" (2013) in which Speck convincingly explains how it is possible to improve the quality of life by creating practical and rational urban spaces on a human scale.

The analysis focuses on the context to which the author belongs, namely the typical American cities, where spaces designed to be on a human scale are still few. One of their characteristics is, on the contrary, that of not having useful infrastructures for an alternative mobility to cars, and this especially in the peripheral areas. So there is a lack of bicycle lanes, sidewalks, pedestrian islands where people can stroll in peace and quiet and go shopping, enter a bar or stop to rest on a bench. As it happens in the cities of the old continent, where there are lively urban centers often coinciding with the historic centers, with crowded sidewalks and pedestrian areas full of stores and clubs, open even in the evening.

One of the problems of American metropolises and developing countries is in fact the so-called urban sprawl, a term that indicates the rapid and horizontal expansion of a city. It is a phenomenon that develops mainly in the peripheral urban areas, bringing with it a series of problems, including a chaotic urbanization, a reduction of green spaces, a greater distance from services and workplaces, with a consequent increase in the use of the car to move and an increase in the costs of maintaining infrastructure. Speck highlights how important it is to achieve a structural transformation of cities: increasing pedestrian areas is possible and relatively easy and inexpensive. This simple factor is enough

to make a metropolis very livable, lower crime and increase the quality of life, especially in its peripheral areas.

An infrastructural transformation such as this one (moreover realized at the fraction of the cost of maintaining and building major infrastructures aimed at private motorized transportation) can have cascading effects also in daily life: it is necessary to create places that allow people to gather and move freely on foot, which automatically leads to trigger further good practices of urban sustainability such as improvement of the urban public transport network and increase of urban green areas (Speck, 2021).

Fig. 1: Urban sprawl is considered by Speck to be the cause of many of the economic, environmental, and social problems that afflict modern America. Image source: Medium

Fig. 2: "Transit Oriented Developments" (TODs) are among the solutions advocated by Speck as an alternative to sprawl developments to encourage walkability. Image source: KL Sentral, propertyguru.my

2.3.2 The city and its public space must be inclusive

According to Gil Penalosa, architect and founder of the non-profit organization "8-80 cities", life in a city is lived in the streets, the private spaces within the houses are useful, but the streets are the place of sociability, play, relationships and business. A city that functions well is a city that allows its citizens to be able to experience the streets, streets that must be designed with a human approach.

Penalosa through its consulting activities has issued an invitation to governments and city administrations to experiment with new ways of interacting with public space by opening the streets to people and closing them to cars, even temporarily, for a few hours or a few days, to establish new relationships. When you limit access to private vehicular traffic people begin to rediscover the city, by walking or biking people experience the environments, become aware of the surrounding activities and cultural elements and encourage local business.

The process of limiting the use of the private car must go hand in hand with an increase in the offer of alternatives to mobility: from improved public transport service to new cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, to ensure the dignity of people through democratic access to modes of transfer. Working on these two aspects makes it possible, according to Penalosa (2014), to address the main issues affecting the contemporary city: urbanization processes, climate change and a longer life expectancy that increases the gap between generations in the

same territory. In the opinion of Penalosa, "vibrant" cities are those where everything is accessible and adapted to any citizen, from an 8-year-old child to an 80-year-old elderly person.

To achieve this level of inclusiveness, Penalosa has theorized 8 guidelines to improve the quality of public spaces and make them open to every citizen:

1. Architects have great opportunities and responsibilities: the urban population is growing, but cities are organized by building where land is cheaper and by structuring themselves according to the use of cars; a process that must be reversed by making the general interest prevail.
2. Walking is for man as natural as swimming for a fish. However, the possibility to move in safety must be guaranteed and must be a priority. The sidewalk is synonymous with democracy in every city.
3. A successful city is one where the wealthy use public transportation. Investing in the public use of the city is also a way to be attractive.
4. Structure public space through places to sit. It is a symptom of sociability and at the same time improves safety.
5. Everyone learns from everyone. Don't copy, but adapt.
6. It is important to focus on the benefits: culture, education, health, contact with nature, reducing loneliness, ...
7. The community is the expert: listen to children, adults, elders to design.
8. Plan and design cities for the citizens: every child under 4 years old should have a playground less than 10 minutes walk; the elderly, thanks to the increase in life expectancy, are healthy, have free time and experience, are a resource.

Fig. 1: Jakarta car-free day is an event held every year in the Indonesian capital. it is an important event to raise awareness of alternative use of roads. Image source: nowJakarta.id

2.3.3 The value of art in bringing people together

"Cities and citizens around the world are recognizing the potential of art to reimagine roadways and vertical infrastructure, improving street safety, revitalizing public spaces, and bringing communities together" (Bloomber Associates, 2019, p. 4).

Promoted by former New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, the Asphalt Art Initiative aims to regenerate cities' public spaces through art and design, particularly street art and brightly colored decorations of streets, sidewalks and city infrastructure elements. The project is led by Bloomberg Philanthropies with the goal of helping cities that seek, through art and design, to improve road safety, revitalize public spaces and engage their communities. It is therefore a format that sees creativity at the heart of urban development and regeneration, and whose main objective is to involve new cities and disseminate the stories of projects already implemented through a guide, the Asphalt Art Guide.

The goal is for people to have a more "cheerful" relationship with the streets of their city and for them to become something other than the "gray sea" they end up being. It often happens that urban planning interventions are not appreciated or understood by the citizenship, art in these cases helps to make people accept and appreciate the work and mitigate criticism.
The role of art does not stop at acceptance but can be a technique to increase local business, for example the work can become an attractor of tourists and outsiders and promote the activities of the context in which it is located. Moreover, if the work is carried out (and sometimes even designed) by the citizens themselves, the intervention becomes even more valuable. In fact, Bloomberg Philanthropies is dedicated to consulting with city governments and administrations to bring neighborhood residents and community associations to participate in the creation of Asphalt Art interventions.

"We believe that by sharing lessons we learned we can give more city leaders the tools and inspiration to create brighter, safer, more welcoming streets for residents and visitors alike" (Bloomberg, 2019, p. 1).

Bloomberg's strategy is to leverage public art to reshape areas of the city, because street art can transform a space, improve public safety, inspire people, attract visitors, and improve the quality of life for residents. Moreover, when the public art project is incorporated into a more holistic vision for the city that also includes infrastructure improvements, creation of new plazas and bike and pedestrian paths, it goes a long way toward creating an even more vibrant and safe local environment for all.

The vision aims to return the squares to be central places in the life of the neighborhood, no longer just parking lots or areas of passage, but areas to live and in which to live, where government and citizenship actively collaborate both in the concrete implementation and in the design of schedules. The artistic approach aims to return, through aesthetics and creativity, the spaces to citizens who can with activities, meetings or even just living the area to return to give a full meaning to the term square as a place of relations of the neighborhood.

Fig. 1: Coxe avenue in Asheville, North Carolina. Image source: The City of Asheville

It is therefore an urban revolution that looks at a pre-globalized model, but still based on technological innovation regarding the modernization of a series of systems and structures. Another very important aspect of the ideal of the quarter-hour city is the possibility of buying quality food without having to travel long distances to reach the grocery store. In reality, local commerce is already rooted in the urban fabric of many small cties and towns, it just needs to be consolidated. The reasoning behind the quarter-hour city should be read in relation to the contrast between medium-sized urban centers and metropolises.

The 15-minute city is an ecological and social vision of cities that could provide new stimuli to the social life of neighborhoods, promoting cohesion among the people who live there. It brings the city back to its more human dimension, made up of neighborhoods in which all those services that are essential to make the life of the citizen comfortable and of quality are present. This is an ambitious project, which should be read as a crucial opportunity for a more sustainable city model but also as an experience of collective protection in times of crisis.

2.3.4 The 15 minutes city

The vision was presented by the current mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, and follows other similar initiatives already implemented in other contexts of the planet, such as the 20 minute neighborhoods in Portland (United States), or the superblocks in Barcelona. The "Ville du quart d'heure" was theorized in 2016 by Carlos Moreno for the city of Paris, a professor at the Sorbonne University and it was proposed as the solution, the container of all other previous theories related to proximity and sustainable life in cities.

The vision enclosed within the concept of "chrono-urbanism", which is based on the premise that the quality of urban life is inversely proportional to the amount of time invested in transportation (Moreno, et al. 2021). The vision is centered on a metropolis made up of neighborhoods where mobility time is reduced by increasing proximity and density, where everything needed (such as activities to learn, work, share, shop, care, sports, eat, etc.) is a maximum of 15 minutes from home, whether on foot or by bicycle. This city project is presented to respond primarily to the need to create more sustainable urban centers, encouraging a type of mobility that does not pollute. It is an idea that fits perfectly with the needs of European urban contexts. Allowing to start the ecological transformation of the city and improving the daily life of the inhabitants.

The project intends to rethink the common spaces of a sector of the city, redeveloping streets, squares and intersections with the aim of making it easier to move on foot and by bicycle and to attract useful activities to that particular sector of the city. Entire areas of the city could be transformed and rediscovered as spaces that have been underutilized up to now, but suitable for the establishment of new collective services that benefit everyone.

The six essential urban social functions to sustain a decent urban life which, according to Moreno, should be easy for anyone to access: 1) living; 2) working; 3) commerce; 4) healthcare; 5) education; 6) entertainment.
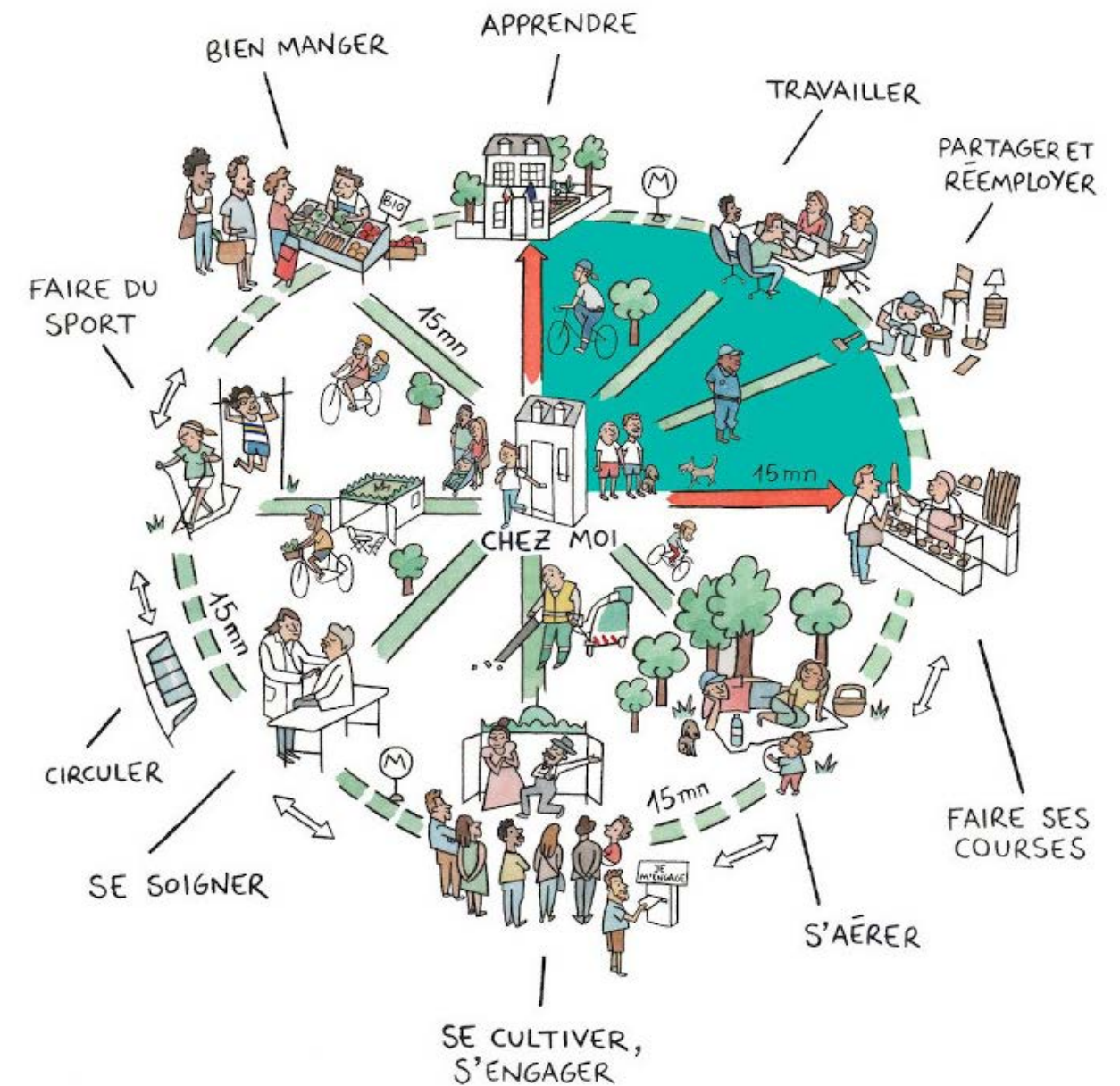
Fig. 1: La ville du quart d'heure poster. Image source: Paris en Commun

2.3.5 How can a city become a 15 minutes city?

Unfortunately, there are parts of cities that are still characterized by a single function such as residential or manufacturing. One of the most important operations to be carried out in order to achieve the "15-minute city" is to bring to the suburbs what can be found in an established fabric. In the European sphere, many cities already have the "15-minute" characteristic, but often this characteristic is limited to small to medium-sized urban centers or sometimes only concerns the central areas of the city.

First of all, it is important to know what is the urban model in which there is a desire to develop this idea of proximity. Is it crucial to know the morphology of the territory involved. If the morphology is compact and complex and different in its organization, it is easier to obtain a system based on proximity. Complexity is the key element that makes it possible to develop proximity, and this level of diversity can be calculated and catalogued. Secondly, it is necessary to set a maximum proximity indicator for basic services (public or private), among these services it is necessary to include the urban green and the public transport stop, for example it can be a radius of 600 meters.
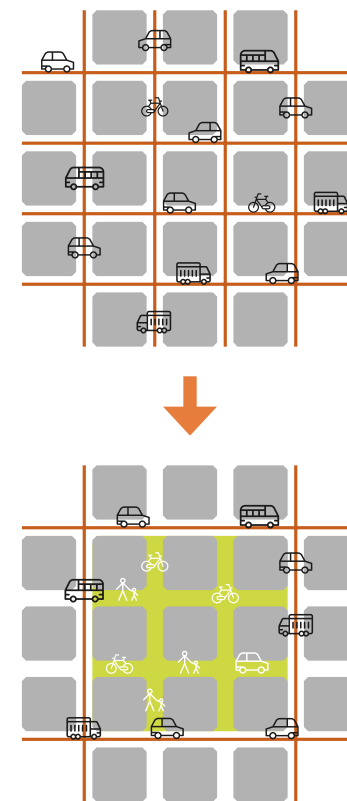
Based on these prerequisites is where the concept of Superillas (a Catalan term meaning "superblocks") comes in. Conceived by Salvador Rueda as early as 1987, these innovations in the urban fabric of Barcelona are blocks of nine boroughs within which city space is taken away from cars and given back to pedestrians and cyclists (Rueda, 1995). The concept centers around the development of a module capable of configuring new spaces of coexistence, according to an organizational model of the urban fabric designed primarily for residents: car circulation is allowed almost exclusively along the perimeter of the nine-boroughs block, while inside, priority is given to other forms of mobility and public green spaces.

Superillas act as catalysts for increased proximity, defining areas of new centrality and as tools to increase the number of economic activities and basic services. Superillas function as economic promotion cells (Rueda, 2018). The same kind of catalyzation occurs thanks to public facilities, green spaces, and mass transit coverage. In the first Superillas experimentation, the number of legal entities and small businesses in the area increased by 30%. In addition, with a 15% reduction in space dedicated to private vehicular traffic, 70% of new space was gained for pedestrians and light mobility. One of the revolutionary ideas of Superillas is the contact and expression of human rights, the project focuses on people, in these new public spaces all the rights of citizens can be developed, from laziness, to entertainment, to democracy. These changes will be implemented gradually through reversible actions, for example through targeted tactical urbanism and with the essential participation of residents.

Fig. 1: Paris is the first city to have adopted the 15-minute city initiative. Image source: Unsplash

Fig. 1: The illustrated concept of superblocks, a 9-block area is defined and within it circulation is limited to residents and service vehicles, enhancing light mobility and walkability.. Image source: By the author, inspired by Rueda, 1995

Another important theme to keep in mind is the issue of alliances, once citymaking was only transport planning or urban planning, but now it is much more, for example it is crucial to relate with the world of production and commerce for the re-organization of working hours (Manzini, 2020). Sometimes the 15-minute city starts from the bottom, from episodes of associationism or social street between neighbors. A short network can be a social street, but it also means decentralizing some services such as neighborhood concierges or solidarity purchasing networks, neighborhood social activities ranging from education, welfare, green, up to points of communication with the administrations.

The 15-minute city does not only translate into spatial interventions, but also starts from finding alliances and having the right context, good foundations are essential for generating profound impact. Living in the vicinity also means being a tourist in your own neighborhood, discovering its history and culture, taking care of the public good, telling, experimenting, being involved, with the aim of acting to bring long-term change (Fassi, 2020). Leveraging social alliances with citizens and economic realities of the context becomes more straightforward and easier to communicate change precisely because it is the citizens who become the bearers of a new way of living the city. Neighborhoods must become models of inspiration for other realities.

In order to change towards the vision of a city of proximities open and capable of living in a system of networks, it is fundamental to reorganize work. The reorganization of workplaces does not mean working from home, but different models of concentration and diffusion. According to Pacchi (2020) it is necessary to think of a network of multifunctional cells, open, distributed throughout the territory, which are not in contrast with density and proximity. In order to achieve this vision it's necessary to understand 4 elements: The types of jobs (and those that will be there in the future); Who the workers are (parents, children, friends, caregivers...); The types of places (for example metropolitan core dense with certain types of functions or outer and rural grid areas); The types of building assets (what types of real estate assets there are, what transformative potential they have).

Reorganization of workplaces and working hours can help transform a city towards a city of proximity if they keep in mind these 4 elements, along with all the other factors of hybridization with respect to the workplace. This also needs the support of governance actions, capable of producing models and pilot projects to test this theory.

In Europe, until after World War II it was the norm to live in 15-minute cities; neighborhoods and centers were designed with walkability in mind. The most difficult task is related to post-World War II planning, those neighborhoods born from the 60s, mono-functional, designed according to market laws and capitalism (Gehl, 2019). A large part of the suburbs of Italian cities were designed from this point of view, whether they are low or high density, their monofunctionality makes them sterile environments for the development of social relations and productive and commercial activities (Talia, 2020).

Cities of proximities does not mean gentrified cities, but open to all social classes.

How, then, can we bring diversity and proximity into those neighborhoods developed in the 1960s according to mono-functionality? It is not necessarily that the 15 minutes model is applicable to all contexts but tactical urbanism can be a way to start the change, moreover there must be the support of the institution to strengthen the effectiveness of interventions. Densification and demolition can be other solutions, ambitious solutions are crucial for the reduction of travel routes.

At the same time is also important to consider the sustainability of the context by maintaining a positive economic and social balance. This is crucial because sometimes these operations generate conflicts and difficulties, for example, many peripheral neighborhoods are afraid of the gentrification process, resulting in higher property prices and increased cost of living for the most disadvantaged classes, forced to move elsewhere, sometimes to places even more marginal and peripheral, and in these contexts it is very difficult to adhere to those concepts of social innovation regarding solidarity and sociality typical of wealthy neighborhoods.

The city of proximity is a city that knows how to self-organize, but above all the theme of proximity is dictated by mobility. If we want to change the purposes of public space, we need to change mobility.

(Rueda, 2010)

2.3.6 What has changed with the pandemic?

A research conducted by the Gehl Agency (2020) on several Danish citizens regarding the collection of data on public life showed that there was a drop in economic and social activity in the historic city centers, while, on the other hand there was a large increase in residents going out to experience the local public areas of the neighborhood, as there was a decrease in the number of passing cars, meeting in the local neighborhood areas became more important. It became critical for administrations and designers to find local solutions that worked for the neighborhood cell contexts.

The focus is therefore shifting to the new meanings of city living, for example how to improve the quality of work from home, or the new roles of neighborhoods in relation to the city center and how they can support activities ranging from production to consumption. Another important theme is understanding how to revitalize public transport and the threats of e-commerce and decentralization on local businesses.

According to Birgitte Svarre, one of the possible solutions to these questions about urban living is to empower a place to accommodate a mix of functions, raise awareness about physical health and provide opportunities for everyone to engage in outdoor activities. Jan Gehl and David Sim (2019) propose rethinking spaces to make them multifunctional while being able to communicate, to give citizens knowledge of what is happening in their neighborhood.

Precisely following these directives, a new vision of a city based on proximity is being developed in Copenhagen. The projects underway are called co-creating copenhagen and 30 minute cycle city. The first concerns the important debate to communicate the benefits of changes in the urban sphere to those who are more reluctant. The second is trying to bring convenience and integration of services to meet all the needs of everyday life by leveraging enclosure, micro-climates, lowering noise levels, quality common spaces with more greenery maintained by citizens and transit-oriented urban developments. "*It is essential to build density for everyday life, because density and diversity mean proximity*" (Sim & Gehl, 2019, p. 12).

Manzini (2021) further supported this thesis by adding how proximity and density are not inconsistent with living well even in a crisis situation such as this. A prime example is that with the current pandemic situation, the topic of 15-minute cities has exploded. Some processes of very selective concentration of activities and functions will continue, but proximity is not at odds with some forms of distribution and diffusion.

Small neighborhood businesses have seen an increase in business, just as small parks have been visited more often at the expense of big city attractions (Gehl Agency, 2020).

The pandemic situation has greatly accelerated the processes of change towards sustainable mobility, work flexibility, and the importance of quality public spaces. It also had the effect of unveiling new processes and trend lines, such as the importance of giving cities a form of prevention towards next upcoming natural disasters.The idea of resilience was already spreading, but with the pandemic, people started talking about a paradigm shift. The city of proximities is suitable for this new paradigm of resilience because it encores economic, environmental and social sustainable development. In this new vision of the city, attention must be given to the sphere of human life, everyday problems and needs.

One of the most important issues concerning life in the city is the concept of time. Time, although being a human concept, has been artificialized to the point of being divided into functions and rhythms aimed at economic production. And this is reflected in how cities have been designed since the Second World War. The problem with modernist urbanism is that the time has disappeared, because for long time our urbanism was leaded by infrastructure, we need today to develop the urbanism by the user, the society. Today, leisure time is cut to the bone, what used to be free time is now devoted to commuting, expecially commuting by car, where road infrastructure is overloaded and congestion is inevitable. For these reasons Carlos Moreno (2020) as a new paradigm post-Covid, converges to the vision of the city of proximity, polycentric cities, where the quality of life is made of density and variety and hybridization, without a square meter intended for a single use.

Fig. 1: With the lockdown measures due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the core centers of cities have emptied, as has the use of public transportation dropped dramatically. Image source: Unsplash

2.4 Public spaces as enabling environments for the generation of spontaneous services

2.4.1 The concept of Design for Social Innovation

The international debate on innovation demonstrates that the technology-oriented paradigm characterizing the industrial society does not include the wider range of innovations depicting the transition from an industrial to a knowledge and service-based society (EU, 2011).

Social innovation thus refers to the capacity of improving social outcomes and creating value for people, places and organizations. In particular, it focuses on new ideas aimed at provoking a positive transformation for the society and its infrastructures.

I consider this definition given by Ezio Manzini (2015, p. 62) as the most appropriate: *"Design for social innovation is everything that expert design can do to activate, sustain, and orient processes of social change toward sustainability."*

Design for social innovation is not a new kind of design: it is one of the ways in which contemporary design already functions.
Design has all the potentialities to play a major role in triggering and supporting social change.
Social innovations are living entities that can survive and flourish only in a favorable environment, and creating this favorable regulatory and economic ecosystem is the specific contribution that the national and local institutions should bring to the process.

Social Design
Social design is a design activity that deals with problems that are not dealt with by the market or by the state, and in which the people involved do not normally have a voice. (Manzini, 2015)

Manzini highlights how any extension of the "design" concept can be the spark to ignite social innovation. It can be service design, transformative design, or design of spaces and products or policies. The key aspect is how the designer interfaces with the project; designing with a systemic, people-centered vision has a better chance of generating social change. Design for social innovation is a design of any nature that pays attention to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the context in which it is implemented.

Given this fundamental pillar, urban design is also rightfully among the processes that can contribute to social innovation.
There are different ways to practice urban design, in this case we refer to a multidisciplinary approach to spatial design, which focuses on people, which aims to improve their living conditions, which gives importance to the prototyping and testing of solutions in iterative cycles in order to obtain the best possible outcome, it is a design that gives attention to relationships, to create solutions that can empower every aspect of the life of the beneficiary, not restrained to mere physical manifestations.

Social Streets

The social street is a spontaneous initiative born for the first time in Bologna in September 2013. The idea came from a resident of a street in the city center who was noticing that the relationships between local residents were practically non-existent. The process was simple and straightforward: he created a Facebook group and hung flyers around the street to promote the group. Within a short time, residents joined the initiative and began talking and getting to know each other. The group then started to have physical meetings and to collaborate on various local issues, such as cleaning, sharing of goods and spaces, mutual aid and simple social services. Since then this social model (which is not associationism) has been exported to other streets and cities and has become an international phenomenon.

Solidarity Purchasing Groups

The solidarity purchasing groups (GAS) are purchasing groups, spontaneously organized, that start from a critical approach to consumption and that want to apply the principles of equity, solidarity and sustainability to their purchases (mainly food or consumer products). The history of purchasing collectives began in 1994 in Fidenza and continued in 1996, where information was released on the behavior of the most important companies in order to guide consumer choice. "GAS" have been formally recognized as "non-profit associations set up to carry out activities of collective purchase of goods and their distribution with ethical purposes, social solidarity and environmental sustainability".

Policy Innovation Labs

These groups intend to be "laboratories for public transformation" or 'do-tanka'. They conduct action research programs to test new methods of policy-making with public stakeholders. Some organization's goal is to increase the capacity of regional governments to innovate, helping them to tap into the potential of social innovation through working with citizens on the design and delivery of public services. For example, in France, the "La 27e Région" team has launched 20 projects in nine different regions across France. To achieve this mission, La 27e Région's multi-disciplinary team (made up of ethnographers, sociologists, designers and others) run practical capacity-building programmes and workshops for policymakers.

Community Supported Agriculture

The model of the CSA is focused on creating community, engaging the customer directly in the activities of the farm, which thus becomes a direct supporter and is encouraged to discover the company, participate in its activities, know closely the production chains. Today more and more European and Italian companies are adopting a similar system of participatory support. A CSA is a project that follows principles of non-hierarchical self-organization and solidarity, and is aimed at the self-production of healthy, local and sustainable food.

Fig. 1: Event in Via Fondazza, Bologna, where the first Social Street was born. Image source: Il Fatto Quotidiano

Fig. 2: Workshop held in 2014 in Marseille under the "La Transfo" program on the issue of unemployment. Image source: La 27e Region

Fig. 3: The cooperative "La Lucerna" is an organic agricultural producer that organizes GAS in the province of Reggio Emilia. . Image source: Coop La Lucerna

Fig. 4: Arvaia is the agricultural cooperative supported by the citizens of Bologna.. Image source: Arvaia's Facebook Page

2.5 The bridge between spatial and service design

Actions/Interactions
- Ethnography
- Contextual Interviews
- Shadowing
- System Map
- Service Blueprint
- Personas

Time
- Journey Map
- Storyboard
- Flow Diagram
- A Day In The Life

Space
- Functional Diagram
- Paper Prototyping
- Desktop Walkthrough
- Scale Model
- Tecnical Drawing
- Digital Representation

2.5.1 How can service design enable residents to use physical spaces in order to improve their quality of life?

Service design and spatial design share many commonalities. By their nature, these disciplines deal with complex systems, whether relational, social, temporal, economic, or infrastructural. For a long time, these disciplines have developed design and visualization strategies and techniques that were distant on paper, but similar in substance.

As pointed out by Sasso (2018) there are several tools that are used in both fields to give visual form to ideas or data collected during research such as prototyping or maps of interaction or customer journeys. The author demonstrates how the two disciplines complement each other because if spatial design gives more attention to the representation and visualization of the concept, the methods of intense and careful research of service design are a very valuable addition to an overall and integral spatial design process.

Furthermore, the interactions and actions that take place within a service must be located in a physical space, which must then be designed accordingly, just as many spaces remain sterile without the social and economic relationships that take place within them, and these interactions can be spontaneous but can also be guided and nurtured by service design. This is especially the case when it comes to product service system design, where services are supported by physical products, which can materialize in the form of spaces.

"Spaces host relational entities and vice versa, services take place in physical environments and determine tangible outcomes" (Fassi, et al, 2018, p. 2)
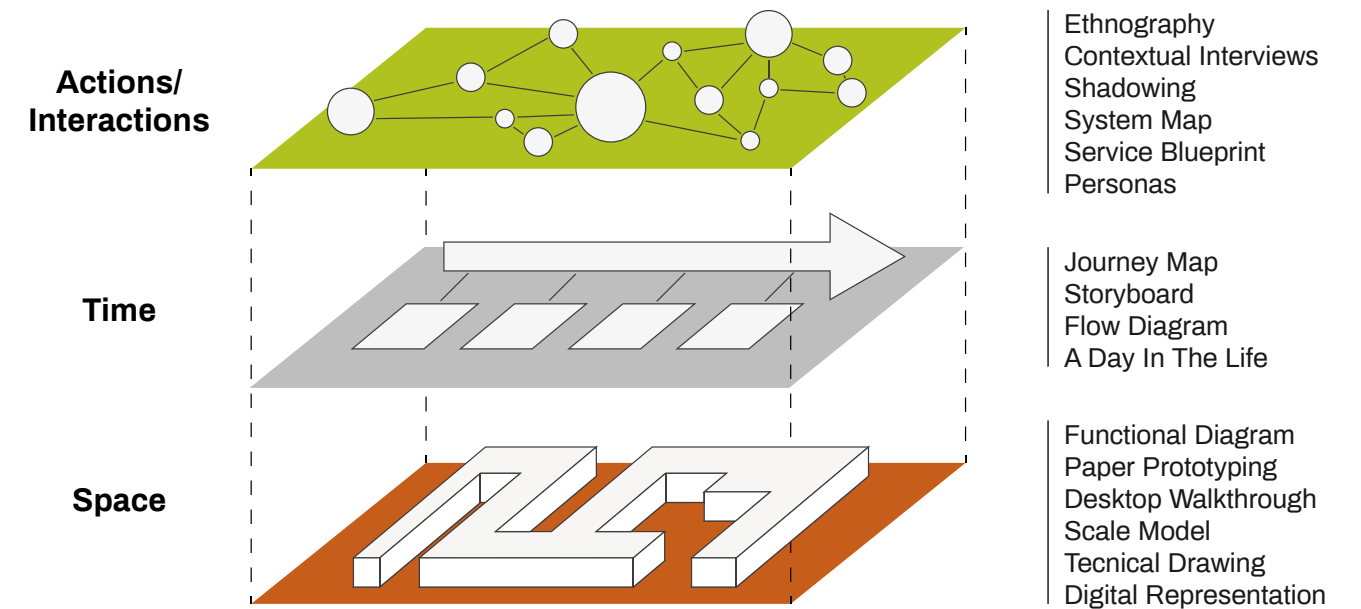
Today it is impossible to think that there are places, public or private, in which the environment is not influenced by its content: by encounters, relationships and human interactions. Similarly, it is difficult to imagine any kind of service - be it physical or digital - without any kind of link to the spatial dimension (Sasso, 2018, p. 6).

Service design can teach spatial design in the field of research and data collection, thanks to its ability, through different tools, to visualize and synthesize complex systems. This stems from a need in service design to visualize during research due to the characteristics of services such as intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (Segelström & Holmlid, 2009). Another important aspect typical of service design is its ability to bring together and make different and distant actors and concepts collaborate, using techniques borrowed from ethnography and sociology. This concept is supported by Mark Stickdorn and Jakob Schneider's book "This is service design thinking" (2011, p. 5), where service design is defined as *"an interdisciplinary approach that combines different methods and tools from various disciplines"*.

Fig. 1: Analysis on multiple levels: space - action - time, with related tools. Image source: By the author, inspired by Sasso, 2018

The growing relevance of the service design sector has therefore affected not only the design field, but several other disciplines too. Nowadays several companies are opening their own in-house team of service design, regardless the field in which they operate. Service Design is becoming more and more popular, probably thanks to its adaptive nature and problemsolving equipment. Among the sectors most influenced by service design is that of spatial design, in fact it has become essential to give a function to a space that is not simply to use it, many spatial designers must design spaces that give experiences within them. It is precisely in the experience component that service design comes into play, which has several tools to better design the experiences and interactions of people with a physical element such as a space. A service designer, given his ability and versatility to work in multidisciplinary environments and given his propensity to listen and empathize with the people who will eventually use the system (be it product, space or service) proves to be a valuable ally for the success of a contemporary spatial intervention, an intervention that is no longer to be seen as individual but as part of a system of relational networks and urban physical elements that make up the complex fabric of a community, and, more broadly, of a city.

2.5.2 How can smart services help in developing a 15 minutes city?

How can we define a smart city? *Definitions of a smart city and its parameters abound and are often used in different ways that stress one or another of its facets. What is common, however, is the use of new technologies to find efficient and affordable solutions to urban challenges* (Joshi-Ghani, Ratti & Charles, 2020, p. 5). The term "Fourth Industrial Revolution" is often synonymous and interchanged with the term smart city. The concept that these two terms have in common is the understanding of the Internet of Things. Internet of Things is used to describe those siutations where digital and network become part of physical processes and systems.

An IoT system can therefore be a city or a community, these entities can increase their own all-round efficency and quality of life thanks to the contribution of digital infrastructure that enhances the connectivity between physical space and city management systems, as well as the communication channel between citizen and local government. One of the fundamental elements of IoT is the collection of data and its analysis. Through the collection of data on life, movements, operations, processes, resource consumption and waste, the government and the citizens can get important feedback on which to build services and spaces tailored to real needs, built to solve specific challenges and needs without unnecessary effort. Moreover *through big data analytics and IoT, a new urban social contract is gradually formed between local government, businessesand individual citizens. The actuation feedback system further enables each actor to become part of the solutions to urban challenges, as well as end users themselves* (Joshi-Ghani, Ratti & Charles, 2020, p. 32).

Moreno et al. (2021) states that the technologies that make up the Internet of Things (Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Machine Learning, Crowd Computing) can lead to a faster actualization of the 15-minute city concept, and consequently produce a higher quality of urban life.
The technologies that the supporters of the smart city concept concern different aspects of the life and economy of a city, among the various aspects there are some that coincide with the rules to be able to achieve a 15-minute city:
Avoid Commuting: some of these smart technologies, such as telecommuting or online shopping, promote a reduction in individual travel by eliminating the need to commute far away.
Improve Density: another commonality relates to real estate; Smart City researchers advocate for mixed-use housing models that promote density and compactness; density is precisely one of the key elements of the 15-minute city.
Feedback Loops: one of the philosophies most supported by the 15-minute city is citizen participation, democracy and self-management: technologies such as Big Data, urban sensors or social media can act as facilitators for communication between

administrations and citizens to improve dialogue.

Data Gathering: the large amount of data, from modal share, to energy consumption, to economic outputs of businesses can be collected and used by the administration to improve the livability of the area.

Eventually, all of these services and innovations are developed with the same common goal of the 15-minute city, namely to save time, optimize, make efficient and sustainable urban processes in order to give citizens as much time as possible to engage in basic social functions. Digitalization has the ability, especially at this time of Covid-19 to ensure sustainable and resilient urban development, and furthermore, actualize the other three key dimensions of the 15-minute city, namely Density, Proximity, and Diversity. *Digitalization is crucial in facilitating optimal consumption of resources* (Moreno, et al., 2021, p. 104).

Fig. 1: The 15-Minute Smart City framework. Image source: By the author, inspired by Moreno, et al., 2021.

2.5.3 Proximity as a key element in building resilient hybrid communities

With the advent of the pandemic, communities found themselves having to interface with forms of sociability. New local communities emerged based not only on a physical place but also supported by digital platforms that took the place of these physical places. Society found itself in a fragile situation due not only to Covid-19 but also to global trends that had been continuing for some time, such as individualism and isolation and hyper-specialization.

"Social resilience requires the existence of groups of people who interact and collaborate in a physical context that they know so that they can self-organize and solve problems during a crisis" (Manzini & Menichinelli, 2021, p. 355)

Cities and communities in this way have weakened and lack the capacity to respond to stress and disaster. Manzini & Menichinelli (2021) therefore propose a vision of a new normal based on resilience. Hybrid communities capable of being versatile and reorganizing in the face of an emergency.

These regenerative strategies are based on proximity: resilient communities are also compact communities, close (in distance), but at the same time open and included in a global network of relationships and collaborations. These hybrid communities can only exist thanks to physical platforms (space, density, proximity) supported by digital platforms that allow them to be open and embrace diversity but still linked to their places of belonging.

The authors then proposed guidelines to best design these platforms to support resilient hybrid communities in the new post-pandemic paradigm:

1. Understand the meaning of hybrid community, starting from the meaning that the members themselves give to it. And from this, design platforms that allow them to be supported and developed with a view to social innovation;
2. A desertified system is a fragile system, as in nature biodiversity is important, also in societies it is necessary to value diversity and connect it globally;
3. It is necessary to raise awareness that there are different ways of seeing the world, and how these visions can influence communities in turn;
4. People and infrastructures need to be active every day for different purposes, that way, in case the unexpected happens, the whole community knows how to flex but not break;
5. The physical structures and resources should be flexible in order to sustain those diverse activities, because hyper-specialization leads to fragility;
6. The platforms themselves should be resilient to sustain resilient communities;
7. Trasparency and democracy are a must-have in those platforms' design;
8. The social, environmental and economic impact of the platforms has to be assessed;
9. The assessment tools and measurements should be easy to read by anyone in the community;
10. Analyzing the impact of the models adopted in order to be validated in a broader, holistic scale.

2.5.4 Certain spatial design interventions can act as catalysts for social innovation

How can service design enable residents to use physical spaces in order to improve their quality of life? Among the various urban planning projects that have public space as their target, it is possible to find some situations in which design is developed precisely from the perspective of a catalyst for social innovation. Examples are co-designed environments, which have an objective of sociality and inclusiveness, not just pure aesthetics. There are projects that have a long-term vision but can start with quick and cheap solutions, often with a bottom-up approach.

Some of these examples can be found in Tactical Urbanism, DIY Urbanism, Guerrilla Urbanism, Placemaking and other forms of modern approaches to urban design. In particular I want to give attention to the phenomenon of Tactical Urbanism, which I will analyze in more detail in the following chapter.

3. Tactical Urbanism

3.1 Definition

3.1.1 Temporary interventions to instigate long-term change

Cities around the world are seeing flexible and short-term projects to advance long-term goals related to street safety, public space, and more. Tactical urbanism can be defined as *"a city, organizational and citizen-led approach to neighbourhood building using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions intended to create long-term change" (*Lydon & Garcia, 2015, p. 3).

Actions can be classified as tactical when they have a vision, a local context, a short-term commitment, a low-risk and high-reward value and the support of a community. Ideally, they even develop social innovation by bringing neighbours together. In the long term, pop-up interventions are intended to get an official sanctioning or create change (Puttkamer, 2020).

"Tactical Urbanism is all about action" (Street Plans Collaborative, 2016)

TACTICAL URBANIST'S GUIDE
TO MATERIALS AND DESIGN VERSION 1.0

DECEMBER 2016 | CREATED BY THE STREET PLANS COLLABORATIVE, WITH FUNDING FROM THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Fig. 1: The T.U. instruction manual. Source: tacticalurbanismguide.com

Fig. 2: Urban regeneration of suburban spaces for "Oltre il Muro", Sapri (SA). Image source: MoMA, Uneven Growth

Fig. 3: Community Market 707, Toronto. Image source: MoMA, Uneven Growth

Although the practice of "do it yourself" to modify a public space to improve the quality of life in an urban space is centuries old, the term Tactical Urbanism is relatively young and was popularized around 2010 to gather under a single term a series of interventions to the public realm united by spontaneity but also by their temporary nature and rapid execution.

In their book "Tactical Urbanism: Short-term Action for Long-term Change" Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia (2015) describe Tactical Urbanism as an alternative approach to urban development with the following five characteristics:

1. A step-by-step approach to catalyzing change, both in opinions and physically in facts.
2. The importance of staying "zero-mileage" - leveraging local solutions to local problems.
3. Using short-term efforts with the goal of bringing long-lasting change.
4. Minimize economic, environmental, and social risks by aiming for the maximum potential rewards by leveraging available resources.
5. Developing social capital among citizens and building organizational capacity among public and private stakeholders or residents.

Nowadays in many Cities, the interest in small-scale urban design interventions in reshaping urban spaces is increasing (Abd Elrahman, 2015).

3.1.2 Previous models to tactical urbanism

"From provisional Roman military encampments, to les bouquinistes illegally selling books along the banks of the Seine in sixteenth-century Paris, to the temporary White City of the Chicago World's Fair of 1892, the hallmarks of Tactical Urbanism have been inscribed in city-building patterns throughout history" (Lydon & Garcia, 2015).

Major tendencies consolidate the recent evolution of Tactical Urbanism in some countries as United States as : The returning back of people to the city, the Great Recession, the prompt use of the Internet and the gap between citizens and municipalities (Lydon & Garcia, 2015).

Perhaps the best example of an ancestor of tactical urbanism can be found in the Woonerf, a Dutch invention originated not by the public administration, but from a community of citizens who wanted a traffic slowdown in their neighborhood. Woonerf originated in the city of Delft by a group of citizens frustrated by the constant problems of traffic and everything related to it such as pollution, safety and congestion. In the Woonerf in fact people have priority over cars, speed is reduced to a minimum thanks to physical measures such as barriers, pots, plants, racks or bottlenecks. The local government did not immediately accept the idea, after several similar episodes where citizens literally changed the road layout to discourage the use of cars, in 1976 the Dutch parliament has legitimized this type of bottom-up intervention. Today, this approach is also gaining ground abroad, and demonstrates the importance of giving freedom of action to citizens and allowing the growth of bottom-up initiatives, which often prove to be the best operations to respond to problems or needs in a given context.

Fig. 1: A Dutch Woonerf. Image source: Wikimedia Commons

3.1.3 Types of interventions

There are several types of urban projects that fall under the broader umbrella of "Tactical Urbanism", they vary in scope, size, budget, implementation approach and level of legality. Often these interventions start at the grassroots level but are then adopted by public or private institutions as best practices. In these two pages are shown some of the typical interventions of Tactical Urbanism:

Chair Bombing

It involves placing chairs that were originally underutilized or built with do-it-yourself techniques in public places where a lack of seating is noted, such as bus stops or secondary plazas.

Food Trucks

Food trucks are small street food restaurants or mobile bars, capable of being deployed in underutilized areas such as parking lots or streets to improve local business and increase the quality of the place.

Defencing

It is the act of removing unnecessary gates and fences located in public spaces with the goal of breaking down barriers between environments and neighborhoods, beautifying surroundings, and encouraging community building. Often these operations are illegal or unauthorized by local authorities.

Open Streets

Temporarily provide safe spaces to walk, bike, play sports, and conduct social activities on streets typically oriented to automobile use. These interventions are done to improve the local economy and raise awareness about the impact of cars in urban spaces.

Guerrilla Gardening

Guerrilla gardening is the act of gardening or adding plants and vegetables on land that citizens do not have legal rights to use, such as abandoned sites, untended areas, or private property. Often with the goal of beautifying the area and creating debate and questioning the concept of private property.

Park(ing) Day

An annually recurring event in which on-street parking is converted into small parks or public green spaces. Park(ing) Day was launched in 2005 by art and design studio Rebar.

Depaving

The act of removing unnecessary pavement to turn driveways and parking lots into green spaces so that rainwater can be absorbed and neighborhoods landscaped.

Paved Squares

Popularized in New York City, paved plazas involve the conversion of street space into public space usable by all people. The pedestrian conversion of Times Square is a primary example.

Pop-up Roadblocks

Temporarily transform commercial streets using inexpensive or volunteer-donated materials. Spaces are transformed by introducing, sidewalk tables and temporary bike lanes.

Pop-up Parks

Pop-up parks temporarily or permanently transform underutilized spaces into community gathering areas through beautification of physical space and increased inclusivity.

Pop-up Cafes

Pop-up cafes are temporary courtyards or terraces built into parking lots to provide more seating for a nearby cafe or passersby. Most common in cities where sidewalks are narrow and where there is otherwise no room to sit or eat outside.

Pop-up Stores

Pop-up stores are temporary retail stores that are installed in vacant stores or properties or underutilized spaces to encourage local business or diversify the functions of the location.

Pop-up Bike Lanes

Citizens paint bike lanes on a street for vehicular use, in addition protections can be added which are usually done by placing potted plants or other physical barriers to make painted bike lanes safer. Sometimes if there is no pre-existing bike lane the physical protection is the only delineator.

3.2 What is the strategy behind tactical urbanism?

3.2.1 From grassroots movements to planned top-down urban interventions

Inherited paradigms of urban intervention, ranging from the postwar state-led modernist programs to neoliberal entrepreneurial market-led agendas of 1980's onwards, are no longer viable to face the current extreme pressure cities have to deal with (Brenner, 2017).

In this context tactical urbanism is seen as a framework that can lead to emerging experiments in the field of urban design, characterized by a bottom-up approach from the people to reappropriate urban space. Actions are always guided by a sustainability-oriented strategy, often focused on the "micro-scale" in circumscribed spaces such as neighborhoods or single streets. These interventions are extremely flexible and based on the sharing of design information and feedbacks, it could be defined as the open source form of urbanism. Actions are often spontaneous and not very planned, based on grassroots do-it-yourself visions of urban renewal that are therefore presented as quick and impactful alternatives to state-led comprehensive plans or market-led neoliberal policies (Graziano, 2021).
To further extent the definition of a grassroot movement is one that uses the people in a given district, region, or community as the basis for a political or economic movement. Grassroots movements and organizations use collective action from the local level to effect change at the local, regional, national, or international level.

Originally, these were initiatives driven by the desire of ordinary people to improve the quality and sustainability of an urban environment they care about, this radical approach was further supported by designers such as Lydon & Garcia (2015) who developed a guide to export more easily the ideals and the tactics of this practice in order to be replicated elsewhere. Later they begin to take on a more procedural and analytical aspect, often becoming interventions intended to create laboratories for design experimentation.
Once institutions understood the potential of a cheap, fast and reversible practice like tactical urbanism they started en masse to adopt such measures in their governances, sometimes wrongly,

"Everyone has the right to live in a great place. More importantly, everyone has the right to contribute to making the place they already live great" (Fred Kent, Founder of Project for Public Spaces).

that is planning the intervention with little or none participation of citizens (one of the pillars on which the movement was based at its birth).
To date there has been an explosion around the world of different examples of tactical urbanism, characterized by different purposes and methodologies, some continue to be bottom-up strategies by residents who want to bring change and without planning, while others are launched by governments and institutions or companies with careful planning with purposes that often go beyond the pure redevelopment of a space.

3.2.2 Some typical T.U. actions can be subversive

The "Tactical Spectrum" chart indicates a range of intervention types: On the left are non-sanctioned interventions, i.e., those projects that ordinary citizens can pursue without the support or need for approval from authorities, in complete freedom. On the right are interventions that require support or approval from local city government; if not, these projects could result in traffic violations due to their nature and complexity. When planning a tactical urbanism intervention it is always necessary to keep in mind variables such as budgeting, permit applications, logistical components and the level of support the local government wants to give to the project so as not to run into technical-legislative obstacles.

Build a Better Block	*Park(ing) Day*	*Pavement to Plazas*
Informal Bike Parking	*Park-Making*	*Pavement to Parks*
Intersection Repair	*Pop-Up Town Hall*	*Open Streets*
Guerrilla Gardening	*Micro-Mixing*	*Play Streets*
Reclaimed Setbacks	*Site Pre-Vitalization*	*Pop-Up Cafes*
Weed Bombing	*Pop-Up Retail*	*Parkmobile*
Chair Bombing	*Food Carts/Trucks*	
Ad-Busting	*Mobile Vendors*	
	Depave	
	Camps	

Unsanctioned **TACTICS** Sanctioned

Fig. 1: The tactical spectrum. Image source: By the author, inspired by Lydon (2015)

3.2.3 The temporary and experimental nature of T.U. is rooted in proven investigatory methods

One of the merits of Tactical Urbanism and one of the reasons municipalities decide to opt for it, is that this approach allows to conduct an experimentation with little amount of investment. If the project doesn't work, only a small part of the budget will be lost, but on the other hand governments will have the certainty of the errors made, avoiding the repetition of them in subsequent interventions.

The typicality of tactical urbanism projects is their reversibility, versatility and low cost compared to traditional urbanism projects. This means that each intervention is easily modifiable or removable in case problems arise. This approach is comparable to the iterative process of design thinking, which makes learning from mistakes its signature to repeatedly improve a project. The approach behind Tactical Urbanism can be therefore found in two methods based on experimentation: Galileo Galilei's scientific or experimental method and the Design Thinking method. In both cases these are procedures to find the right way by learning from previous mistakes.

"Design thinking is a human-centered approach to innovation that draws from the designer's toolkit to integrate the needs of people, the possibilities of technology, and the requirements for business success." (Brown, 2009)

Design Thinking Iteration

Tactical Urbanism Iteration
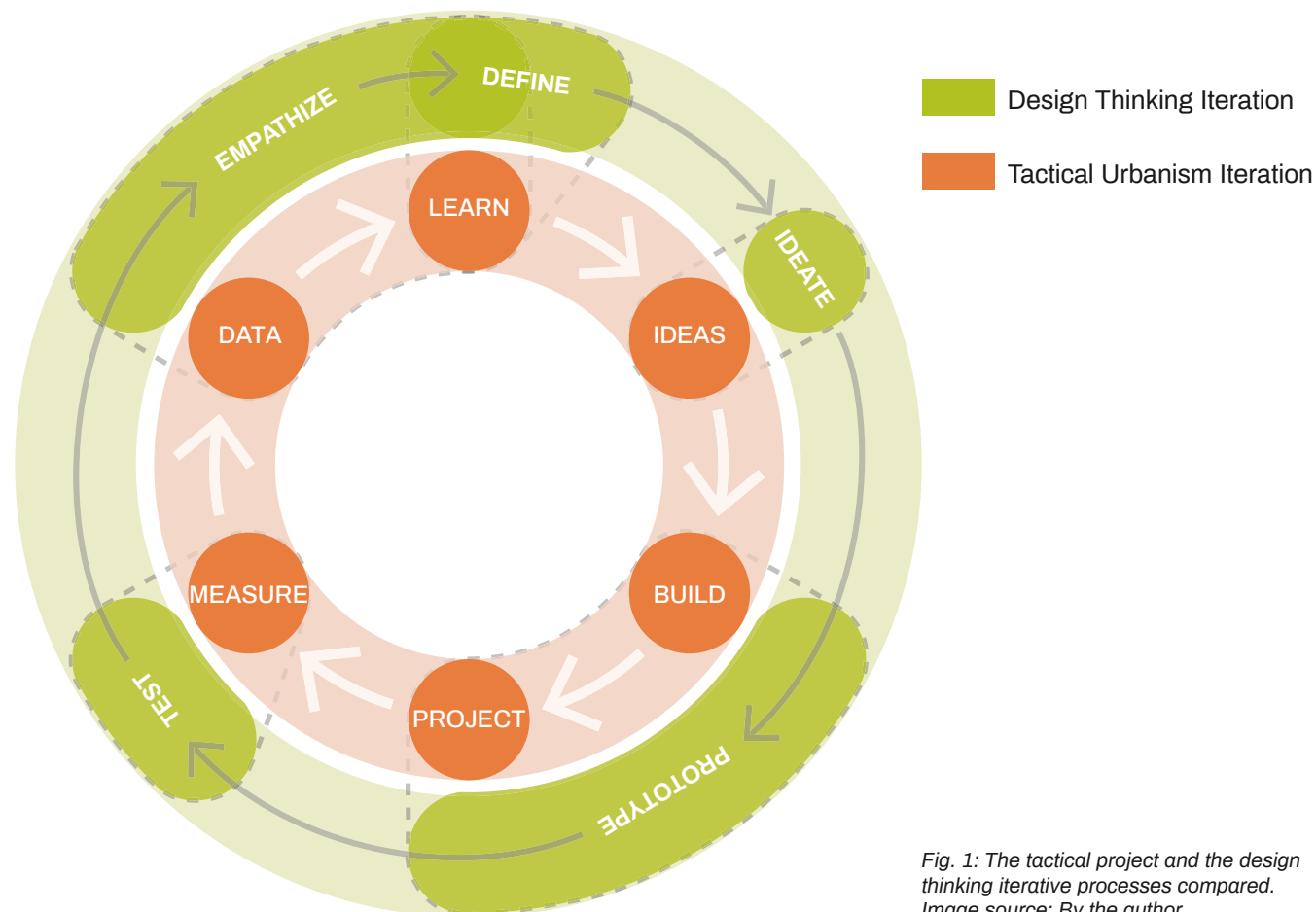
Fig. 1: The tactical project and the design thinking iterative processes compared. Image source: By the author

Galileo's experimental method:

1. **Observation**, where those who are carrying out an investigation of a specific phenomenon ask themselves a series of questions, collecting data and various information essential to carry out the research;

2. **Formulation** of one or more hypotheses through the study and analysis of data, i.e. a first attempt to give one or more answers to the question generated by the observation of the phenomenon;

3. **Experimentation**, where a series of attempts are made to resolve the issues raised by point 1, verifying whether the hypothesis can be considered correct or not;

4. **Conclusion**, where it is tried to arrive at to the formulation of a law able to explain the phenomenon in question.

Design thinking method:

1. **Empathic understanding** of the problem. By consulting experts, observing, engaging with people to know their experiences and motivations. As well as personal immersion in the environment to gain a deeper understanding of the issues.

2. **Definition (the Problem).** Putting together the information gathered during the Empathise stage. This is where the observations are synthesized in order to define the core problems.

3. **Ideation** With solid background from point 1 & 2, designer starts to "think outside the box" to identify new solutions to the problem statement, and starts to look for alternative ways of viewing the problem.

4. **Prototyping** inexpensive, scaled down versions of the product or service, to investigate the solutions found previously. The aim is to identify the best solution to solve the problems.

5. **Testing** the complete product using the solution identified with outside users. The product is investigated and either accepted, improved or rejected according to users' experiences.

Infographic: 5 Stages in the Design Thinking Process. Source: Interaction Design Foundation

3.2.4 Interview with Giovanni Mandelli on the processes of Tactical Urbanism

What is your opinion on the temporary and soft interventions that have been occurring in recent years?

These practices are very interesting because they allow to build at low cost and in a short time new urban situations, this is important because it gives the possibility to experience the changes on their own skin, these practices also allow to test with the aim of informing even the most skeptical citizens. The important thing is that we do not stop at experimentation, tactical urbanism is a tool, not the end product.

What other tools are used to bring new forms of mobility and sociality to city streets?

Participation is fundamental, this can be the prerequisite to create the need and collect the criticalities. The risk otherwise is that the project is alienated from the needs that people experience every day. Among other useful tools, the system of "litmus tests" is used, for example using observation to understand if the intervention has reached its goal, for example if disabled people or children are seen using the new space naturally.

What should be the function that should never be lacking in a quality public space?

To give the possibility of social interaction, between people but also between people and nature, and between people and culture, history, beauty, architecture and stories. This pandemic makes us realize how much we take the other for granted. It is not enough for there to be public space for this to happen, but it must also be of quality, or else its function will fail.

How important do you think it is to involve citizens in the planning of a public space?

It is certainly important, but it is a delicate issue, we need to arrive at the point of synthesis because the citizen often has a purely subjective vision, the one who will approve the project must listen to everyone, but must respond to the different checks (economic, infrastructural, objective ...) Often the citizen does not see the other, the participatory process makes sense but we must know how to arrive at a synthesis.

What is the strategy you use to engage citizens to participate in the design phase of tactical urbanism?

There is no one-size-fits-all strategy, but there are various tools, such as questionnaires, in-person dialogue, sense testing at the site, creating a debate, and many others. The goal is to propose as inclusive as possible. Freedom is participation, we all need to design to not be designed.

It often happens that part of the population affected by the tactical intervention strongly disagrees and opposes the project, how do you manage to make co-design as democratic as possible?

Giovanni Mandelli, architect, active promoter of cycling and founder of Strada Per Tutti, a platform for raising awareness on quality public spaces, currently works as mobility manager for the Municipality of Reggio Emilia. He has been planner and designer of few tactical urban planning interventions in Italy.

If the participatory planning group is completely against the designer's idea, it means two things, either the communication has not been done effectively, or the project itself is not suitable for the context thought, at this point you have to ask yourself some questions. If, on the other hand, the designer is convinced that the proposal is completely wrong, compromises must be reached, and in the end it must be remembered that public space is a common good and therefore imposing one's own idea is not a good thing.

Are you aware of strategies to raise awareness and convince people about issues they may be opposed to or skeptical about?

Experiments are just effective to raise awareness, there are no examples of cases that there has been a reaction that has led back to what was before. The mayor of Paris said in the election campaign "forget about crossing Paris by car" these interventions serve to give more opportunity to everyone to move and use public spaces. The unknown is the time to convince people. Siena for example pedestrianized Piazza del Campo, which cost the mayor his job, but now nobody wants to go back.

When do you think an intervention is considered successful?

From my own perspective is the environmental issue: if the intervention is infrastructural, if it involves the reduction of asphalt surface, increases vegetation, leads more people to use less private car and more other more sustainable means. Another key aspect is road safety, health costs, children's independence, seeing people experience the space, and socialization. Synonyms for successful intervention are therefore the environmental and social safety metrics generated with the intervention.

3.2.5 Insights from the interview

- Tactical urbanism is one of the tools used to raise awareness among citizens and administrations.

- From the point of view of the administration that wants to implement a tactical urban planning intervention, the opinion of the individual citizen can sometimes alienate them from the ultimate goal as the individual only looks "in his own backyard".

- Seeing people from the most fragile categories attend and use the space is the most important indicator of success for the project.

- Experiments bring about changes in people's opinions far more than words, because actions speak for themselves. A communication campaign on the sustainable use of public space often ends with physical trials, just like in Service Design, where prototyping is key part of the process.

3.2.6 Interview with Matteo Dondé on Tactical Urbanism and approaches to proximity

What should be the function that should never be lacking in a public space?

According to research conducted by ARUP, people living in large cities are asking for more greenery, more opportunities to socialize in public spaces and less traffic. The street, which accounts for 80% of the city's public space, used to be the place where the social life of the city took place. The problem arose when the car boom took place, the streets were gradually dedicated more and more to the single function of hosting private vehicle traffic. It is therefore important to recover the social function of the road, which can not be only a place of vehicular flow. A street dedicated to traffic represents a barrier to any other function, for example the birth of Woonerf in Holland in the 60s has allowed to improve the sociality among residents of the neighborhoods affected by these interventions.

What will be the role of neighborhoods in the post-Covid reality?

Neighborhoods will have to respond to the will and the real needs of citizens, the most important of which is attention to health. In this new paradigm people are more attentive to physical health, there is more desire to walk, to do sports, to rediscover spaces. Neighborhoods must act as platforms to facilitate the performance of these activities, as cities within cities, with all the services available within them.

How can density and diversity of functions be brought to those areas of the city that were designed for a single function?

This change can only be done with careful planning, and in these cases top-down planning, managed by local government. Re-establishing multiple functions in a single-use neighborhood is very difficult, but laws like the 1972 Dutch law set an example: no private person could build unless there was a public transportation stop within 500m. Another model to follow is the diversification of the functions of individual buildings, it is essential that in the city of the future there is not a single square meter that cannot support different activities, flexibility is key.

How can tactical urban planning interventions sensitize those citizens who are more conservative or reactionary?

Communication is the key element, the first interventions of tactical urbanism had as their objective communication and awareness on the issues of public space, to make citizens touch with their hands the experiments. For example, in Switzerland, the architect and urban planner Lydia Bonanomi spent many years of her career focused on communication. She launched the campaign "zone 30 gente contenta" (zone 30 happy people) when citizens did not know what a zone 30 was and did not know its advantages. Among the effective methods to raise awareness of tactical urbanism is the constant involvement

Matteo Dondé, urban planner, architect, expert in bicycle mobility planning, traffic moderation and redevelopment of public spaces. He is scientific director at Bikeitalia. it and Bikenomist. Matteo Dondé was one of the first proponents of tactical urbanism in Italy.

of the citizens of the neighborhood concerned in evenings or aperitifs where a new traffic culture is taught, in this way it is possible to create communication from below with informal and pleasant encounters.

How important is the involvement of citizens in the design of a public work, and to what extent?

Involvement is always fundamental, for example, according to the interviewee, the interventions carried out in Milan in collaboration with Bloomberg Associates lacked participation in the design and decision-making phases. The concept of open streets was not explained to citizens. You have to spend time informing citizens, you have to explain to them that, for example, many studies in psychology show that a child who rides a bike to school increases his learning ability. In Milan, at the Corelab tavern for example there are sessions of street psychology, it deals with local conflicts, in these moments you understand how communicating is better than compromising, because compromises generate conflicts. Once you have communicated well, the administration can go ahead and impose the project, and if the communication worked, no one will complain. Data is important, and with data any controversy can be dismantled, the case is Madrid, which experimented with closing a street to traffic during a holiday, and as a result of the success of that experimentation now pedestrianizing interventions has become much easier, because the data speak for themselves.

When do you consider an intervention to be successful? Can you give examples of works that have been carried out that have been successful?

A tactical intervention is considered successful when the citizens start to collect signatures to ask for the intervention to be made definitive. Another aspect that the interviewee believes indicates the success of the intervention is the perception of safety that the space gives once modified. The bivouac is one of the most used arguments by those who oppose tactical urbanism, instead the increase of seating possibilities for passers-by increase the sociality and livability of the street, and if the street lives it is a form of territorial protection, which prevents the appearance of episodes of crime.

How much do quality public spaces influence the generation of spontaneous innovations created by citizens? For example, the differences between Via Fondazza (BO) and Nolo and the prerequisites that existed in these two contexts.

The street dedicated to the function single use by vehicular traffic acted as a barrier to social interactions, it was owned by the automobile. If this idea that the street belongs to the car is not dismantled, nothing can be achieved. In other cases, however, the social street existed before the implementation of the intervention, in these cases when the pedestrianization took place, the community began to actively use those spaces, so the social streets then become containers of promotion of the

movement of tactical urbanism.

Have you ever collaborated with service designers or interaction designers to design experiences related to physical places?
Any extra knowledge in a project is always very useful. If, in addition to function, you bring quality and additional elements, it's all to the benefit of the community. In addition to talking about infrastructure, it's important to keep talking about beauty and quality. The debate must be elevated, it must not stop at controversy, the debate must be public and continuous over time, not only at the city level but at the state level. An important thing to develop in the future is a precise method of communication and outreach to more conservative citizens.

3.2.7 Insights from the interview

- Empowering spaces and buildings to be reused and having the flexibility to accommodate different activities is a viable solution to give a mix of functions to single-function districts.

- When communication is effective in a tactical urbanism intervention, the citizens themselves become the "guardians" of the work, and they become the advocates and promoters instead of the designer.

- Streets dedicated only to private vehicular traffic represent real barriers to sociality and relationships. When these barriers are removed, communities form stronger bonds and become more resilient.

- Data and past experiences are the best advertisement for a project; when citizens understand the effectiveness of interventions, it becomes much easier to implement new projects.

- The attendance of places thanks to the improvement of pedestrian and bicycle accessibility becomes a form of territorial protection that prevents the formation of micro-criminality.

3.2.8 Placemaking and Tactical Urbanism: Analogies and differences

Tactical Urbanism can perhaps be considered as a new way of defining something that has long been present in the policies of medium-large cities and in the behavior of the citizens themselves.

If we think of terms like Placemaking, Guerrilla Urbanism, Popup Urbanism or even Do It Yourself Urbanism we think of movements and design approaches that have many aspects in common between them (Alberti, Rizzo & Scamporrino, 2016). Perhaps we could even use the term Placemaking instead of Tactical Urbanism, it is probably only slight differences that make us opt for one term rather than the other.

Placemaking is thus seen as both a process and a design philosophy.

Placemaking is a multi-functional approach to the planning and management of public spaces. It is tasked with promoting, inspire and create spaces that are healthy for people, that make them happy to spend their time in a given place (Sangalli, 2018).

Placemaking also inspires people to to collectively reimagine and reinvent the public space that surrounds them.
By strengthening the connection between people and the places they share, the creation of spaces refers to a collaborative process through which people can shape the public sphere in order to maximize its value to the community.

In addition to promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative use patterns, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural and social identities that define a place and supports its evolution over time.

Placemaking is a broader term that encompasses different bottom-up approaches, such as DIY urbanism, user-generated urbanism, guerrilla urbanism or urban hacking.

Project for Public Spaces (PPS, 2007) defines the central focus of Placemaking in the connection between people and the ideas, resources, skills and partners who see public space as the key to addressing our greatest challenges.

When it comes to Placemaking we are never talking about initiatives top-down, which can happen in Tactical Urbanism. Placemaking operations have the goal of developing a place that was originally underutilized or misused. They are operations aimed at revitalizing a specific place, often with the goal of improving the sociality and safety of the space.

Thus, if there is one aspect that differentiates Tactical Urbanism from other practices, it is precisely the original dual matrix of the initiative as well as its inherent tactical dimension.

Bike lanes drawn at night by some activists are considered an action of Tactical Urbanism as much as the idea of the New York Department of Transportation to fill Times Square with colored plastic chairs. This example is meant to reinforce the idea that Tactical Urbanism can be both a bottom-up action, as it is typically considered, but also a top-down action with a strategic vision if used in a forward-looking way by local governments.

Fig. 1: Milan guerrilla bike activist creates stencils for clandestine bike lanes Image source: Vice Italia

Fig. 2: Closing Times Square to traffic has created a pedestrian plaza in downtown New York City. Image source: New York Times

Fig. 3: PPS worked with the Northwest Detroit Farmers Market to relocate from a church parking lot to a park adjacent to a community center, which was more conducive for community activities and programming. Image source: Project for Public Places

Fig. 4: Pop-up activities such as stalls sprouted in a space where a public transportation stop is located. Image source: Corriere Roma

3.2.9 Examples of T.U. and placemaking strategies contributing to social innovation

Turning a marketplace into a vibrant community hub:

While the primary function of a market may be commerce, the busiest, most successful markets are places where people want to spend time together. A market is a place for meeting and catching up with neighbors, accessing services, and becoming part of the daily life of a community. Through programming, layout, and amenities, markets can provide many opportunities for visitors to enjoy themselves (Bass, 2016).

According to Project for Public Spaces turning a market in a social hub should take in consideration the following aspects:
1. A variety of uses and activities that build off and synergize with the vendors;
2. Accessible to the community and linked to its surrounding spaces;
3. A comfortable, fun, and attractive place;
4. A social place that is a center of community life.

Tactical urbanism can play an important role in developing a social market by addressing specific community needs precisely because solutions are co-developed by the community, quickly and without a huge expenditure of resources. In addition, the act of co-creating a community space plays a critical role in improving cohesion between people. A key element in developing an attractive multi-purpose center for the community is providing opportunities for people to perform a variety of tasks. For example, some community markets have been reconfigured with the addition of new functions, such as workstations and co-working spaces, these kinds of measures make the space and the surrounding neighborhood a small business hub.

How can bus stops be more than portals to pass through?

Spaces dedicated to transit, such as stations, are generally referred to as "non-places." Marc Augé (1992) defines non-places as opposed to anthropological places, i.e. all those spaces that have the peculiarity of not being identitary, relational and historical, destined to be used in the absence of any form of psychological 'appropriation'. The Project for Public Spaces team conducted a placemaking initiative at several New York City bus stops. The project found how important facilities and retail are around a station, and their accessibility.

The role that T.U. can play is therefore related to the increase of activities and facilities in a given spot through the activation of initiatives such as food trucks, pop-up stores and parklets. This would have the cascading effect of influencing the well-being of the community around the station. *"People spend a great deal of time at and around bus stops, so improving these places can go a long way to improving quality of life. When key destinations are clustered near bus stops, both people's daily routines and the transit systems as a whole can become more pleasantly efficient"* (Critton & Polstein, 2019, p. 32).

3.3 What are the criticisms of tactical urbanism?

3.3.1 Criticism arising from the academic literature

Many emphasize the great potential of DIY approaches for their ability to connect fast, low-cost and creative transformations with processes more established on the physical environment such as those developed by large construction companies and governments but with the exponential increase of these practices around the world, and with the birth of more or less scientific documentation about them, conflicting opinions have begun to emerge about the effectiveness and the real proposition of tactical urbanism in comparison with the urbanism traditionally carried out by governments and administrations.

Some scholars discuss how the processes of tactical urbanism are based on a well-orchestrated expedient to get authorities to accept the illegitimate, namely populist actions: *"if direct action is engineered effectively and a populist groundswell can be created, it then becomes very difficult for institutions to subsequently refuse to forgive"* (Webb, 2018, p. 60). An additional reason is the fact that tactical urbanism's practices favour action over process and permission, so taking action without permission and asking for forgiveness later offers a means of cutting through bureaucracy, competing interests and official jurisdictions.

One of the biggest criticisms concerns the visual sphere of tactical urbanism. Mould (2014) for example points out how the name of tactical urbanism itself has become a brand, able to be sold for commercial purposes to those cities and companies that want to display themselves as "creative and democratic". The researcher argues that tactical urbanism has become *"an apparatus that has captured urban interventionist moments and subsumed and subordinated them into the Creative City mantra and the urban neoliberal development system more broadly"* (Mould, 2014, p. 537). The T.U. has a great potential that can be redirected to the support of speculative investment strategies and has lost its "tactical" and in some ways anarchic character. This focus on the marketing aspect of tactical urbanism distracts attention from the effectiveness of the practice and the actual impact on local communities.

3.3.2 Criticisms collected through field research by the author

Following an analysis by means of questionnaires and field interviews carried out by the author with the citizens of a neighborhood that had been affected by a tactical urban planning intervention, the main criticisms that emerged concerned the function of the new public space.

Many complained that the new intervention had removed the important function of parking for cars and added an unnecessary function for the area. According to the opinions of these citizens, during the planning period of the intervention the opinion of all was not taken into account, and that the design had not been democratic enough. Given this analysis we could therefore add that one of the major shortcomings of tactical urbanism concerns the impossibility of being able to listen to everyone, but, in order to arrive at a concrete project, it is necessary to choose a single path to follow or make compromises, which often lead to disappointing results for some people.

In addition, many merchants and business owners have denounced as inappropriate and dangerous the intervention of tactical urbanism, since it was carried out in a period of precariousness like the one we are experiencing due to the economic and health crisis. The criticisms are based on the fact that this period of instability and crisis is not the right time to experiment with physical interventions that affect mobility and accessibility. Above all, merchants have complained that their only source of income in such an uncertain period were those customers who drove to the store and the experimental intervention has taken away the ability of these customers to park and then be able to attend the store. The biggest issue raised is that it is risky to experiment during an unstable and precarious situation.

3.4 Case studies

3.4.1 Rresearch methodology

I think to best describe a concept or practice, case studies are the most effective method. Hundreds of more or less effective works of tactical urbanism have been produced in recent years. Therefore, I wanted to analyze 10 of them that were different from each other not only in terms of the place where they were carried out or the physical outcome, but also in their approach, execution and organization.

For each case study, I focused on the aspect that interests me most for this thesis: that is, how the engagement of different stakeholders was carried out. For each case I have also expressed personal opinions and criticisms to highlight what I thought were the advantages and disadvantages of each project in order to eventually have a model on which to base the experimentation that I will conduct physically in Reggio Emilia.

3.4.2 Stockport's new pocket park

An interregional initiative to help cities follow "good practices"

Context:

Bridgefield street is located in the center of Stockport, a town with a long industrial history in the Manchester metropolitan area. Despite its centrality, the street is mostly used by logistics vehicles serving the nearby shopping center.

Strategy

This intervention could be considered a top-down approach, the park has been funded by Andy Burnham's Mayors Fund in partnership with Chris Boardman's cycling initiative. It was designed and installed by the municipality in collaboration with Transport For Great Manchester. Since this project started from the RESOLVE interregional program it could be describerd as it started international but intended for the local citizens of Greater Manchester.

How it was made?

The project was launched under ther RESOLVE interreg program, where different participants from various European regions discuss and share "good practices" (RESOLVE, 2020). A workshop was held in January 2019 to introduce parklets from various destinations and share their existing knowledge of how to best implement a parklet. A competition was then held between local architects to design the space, and in July 2019 the parklet was completed and opened to the public.

Engagement process

An evaluation was undertaken to show the effects of the parklet on local businesses and people using the street. This showed that over 98% of respondents thought the parklet was an improvement to the street, with the most popular words to describe it being "modern", "clean", "pleasant" and "safe". Local citizens proposed that an identity be given to the small park, and following this proposal, a mural representing the town's landmarks was added.

Public response

A recent survey showed 98% of people felt that the region's first Parklet improved the street, while 95% thought more should be installed across Greater Manchester (Sustrans, 2019).

Insights

This project represents how dialogue and communication between cities that want to innovate and actors that have experience in determined innovation is critical to making a product that works. During the workshop, policymakers in Manchester were able to test the transferability of "best practices" already proven in the Netherlands. And once the intervention was implemented, the partners stayed in touch to provide the right tools for assessing the impact on the city of Stockport.

Fig. 1 and 2: The Stockport's Parklet. Image source: manchestereveningnews.uk

3.4.3 Piazze Aperte

Local government working closely with neighborhood associations

Context:

Milan is a large city where most of the movements take place by private car. It is also the Italian city with the highest number of cars per 100 inhabitants. This means that the streets have become open-air parking lots, reducing the space dedicated to people. The city is recognized for its widespread associationism, citizens are often united in neighborhood social groups, where they collaborate on issues ranging from politics to leisure.

Strategy

"Open Squares" is a project of the City of Milan, implemented in collaboration with Bloomberg Associates, National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) and Global Designing Cities Initiatives (Bloomber Associates, 2019). The strategy of the City of Milan is holistic, it tends to visualize the city as a whole made up of the different neighborhoods, each neighborhood is resilient and independent. Where all the necessities for everyday life can be found within the neighborhood itself. Among these needs is the need for greenery and public areas, these squares have quickly become new attractors in the neighborhoods.

How it was made?

"Open squares" interventions are temporary, flexible, and easily dismantleable. They are also built while trying to keep costs down. Citizens and associations themselves collaborate in the physical creation of the spaces. In addition, local schools also contribute, to date, approximately 3700 children have collaborated in coloring and decorating the squares. In case the project presents problems, the entire intervention is easily modified (Strade Aperte, 2020).

Keywords
- Top-down
- Citizen's Associations
- Co-creation
- Neighborhood-centred

Who

Municipality of Milan
Bloomberg Associates
Global Designing Cities
Citizen's associations

Where

Various locations, Milan, Italy

Engagement process

The municipality of Milan has interfaced with the associations of the neighborhood to design and implement the interventions. Therefore, it is the associations that have acted as intermediaries between policymakers and citizens. The government has also collaborated with the citizens to create these spaces, but also to manage them, maintain them and plan events. In addition, citizens and associations are invited to dialogue with the municipality, to identify and indicate the next areas that need tactical interventions.

Public response

Sample interviews and site visits were conducted by officials from the City of Milan and the Bloomberg Association. The response from citizens was positive, with more than 70% of respondents happy, many of whom requested that the intervention be made permanent.

Insights

Regarding this project, I admire the government's willingness to test these practices in one of the most progressive cities in the country. The winning element that has led these interventions to be appreciated is collaboration. Studies, designs, ethnographic research and more have been done in conjunction with experienced actors such as academic institutions, neighborhood community associations and large international organizations.

Fig. 1: Piazza Dergano. Image source: bikeitalia.it

Fig. 2: Piazza Arcobalena. Image source: design@large.it

3.4.4 Dig Kingston

Guerrilla gardening actions to question the public realm identity

Context:

Kingston is a medium-sized city on Lake Ontario, it features several low-rise historic buildings. It is a city with an advanced service sector and several quality educational institutions. The people here are quite conservative, this has caused this intervention to spark a lot of discussion among the residents.

Strategy

This is a case of localised sustainability indipendent actions indended to recover an abandoned or neglected piece of land. Guerrilla gardening, as compared to community gardening necessitates a lack of explicit spatial ownership of the garden. The team had not only the goal of beautifying an area and planting vegetables, the real goal was to question the public space, and start a discussion with the authorities about spontaneous sustainable and positive interventions for the city (Crane, Viswanathan & Whitelaw, 2013).

How it was made?

The Dig Kingston team carried out their actions overnight, planting tomatoes and other vegetables in unused public spaces. Guerrilla Gardening is by definition based on reuse, from space to materials, so costs were kept very low.

Keywords
- Bottom-up
- Guerrilla Gardening
- Super Local Scale

Who
Local students group

Where
Downtown Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Engagement process

The goal of the project was not only to garden and produce vegetables, but was also to expose the public to an unexpected garden patch, thus disrupting the normal uses and practices occurring in that space. The team is made up of volunteers who joined the action through an online network. But the main reason for the action was to engage the average citizen, who through the intervention questions the true role of space and the definition of private property.

Public response

This intervention opened up discussion regarding how space was being used in the city and how it could possibly be used differently. Several citizens gave a positive response to the intervention, despite having no idea who had put the project in place.

Insights

Urban agriculture is highly space specific. In the meanwhile, guerrilla gardening is carachterized by subversion, critique, playfulness, spontaneity, self-organisation, illegality and anonymity. In addition to having a sustainable function, for me these actions have a philosophical connotation, from questioning the concept of private property, to giving importance to nature in our lives.

Fig. 1 and 2: The Stockport's Parklet. Image source: Sustainability through intervention: A case study of guerrilla gardening in Kingston, Ontario

3.4.5 Creative Crosswalks

A "dating app" consultation tool to democratize urban planning

Context:

Santa Monica is a city that is part of the Los Angeles metropolitan area, its center is an important tourist hub. In addition to the beaches, an important attraction is the pier with the amusement park and the Third Street Promenade, the only major pedestrian street in the entire Los Angeles area. Downtown is also an important hub for street arts and cultural activities that celebrate the diversity of its residents.

Strategy

This project is part of the larger "Downtown Community Plan" initiated by the Santa Monica government in 2017. The plan lays out a framework that integrates housing, jobs, mobility, historic preservation, public open space, infrastructure, and art and culture into a comprehensive long-term Plan. The purpose of this specific work was, aside from the aesthetics, expanding the cultural, entertainment, and artistic offering to Downtown's identity as the city's cultural heart. The project sets a precedent, not only because of this national context, but also because of the speed and process by which the project was completed.

How it was made?

The "Here.LA" team of artists and urban planners was hired to design and implement the project following an open competition. This work was fully funded by the City of Santa Monica.

Keywords
- Democratization
- Smart Engaging Tool
- Cultural Identity

Who

Santa Monica Council
Here.LA studio

Where

Santa Monica, California,
United States

Engagement process

The peculiarity of this initiative is the public engagement tool, used to understand the needs and wills of the citizens. In fact, under the DCP Santa Monica plan, a web app was created to consult with residents about the future of the area. The app is called City Swipe and it's designed to show residents a series of images and asks them to 'swipe' yes or no answers to simplify and democratise planning processes in order to inform a community plan (Carmichael, 2020). Creative Crosswalks was planned following the feedbacks from the citizens using this engaging tool.

Public response

This is a pilot project to test creative painting in this area of the city. The response of the citizens was closely followed with a questionnaire, the work was appreciated and described as a gentle addition to the experience of walking downtown.

Insights

With cities increasingly interested in making tangible impacts immediately this project showcases how real results can be installed in a short amount of time, while using an innovative community input and high-quality design and materials. I do believe the City Swipe tool is a great example of how a municipality can innovate and understand it's citizens need in a faster and smarter way.
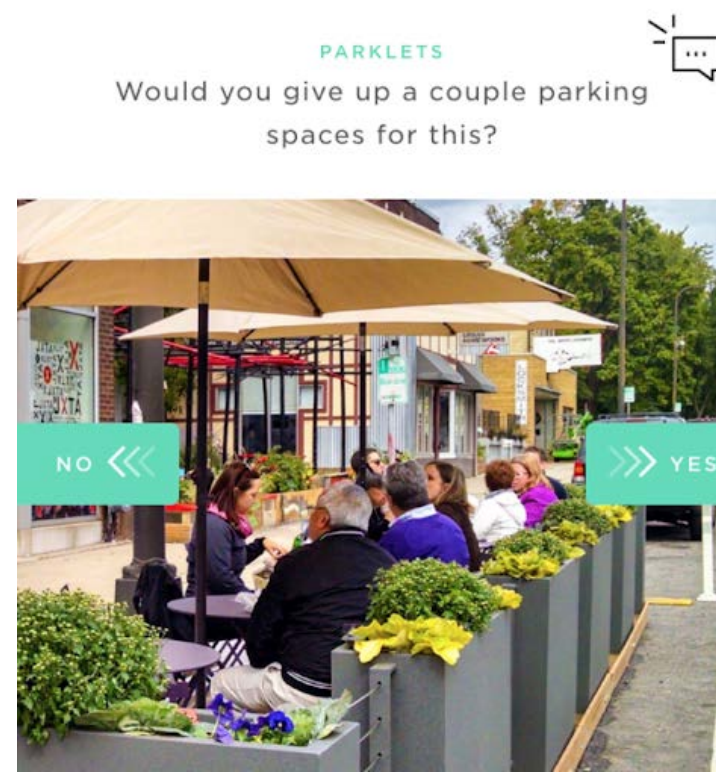
Fig. 1: A screenshot from City Swipe web app

Fig. 2: One of the decorated crossings. Image source: City of Santa Monica Official Twitter Account

3.4.6 Christchurch Pop-Ups

Mobilizing communities to overcome and recover from disasters

Context:

Following the devastating earthquake that hit Christchurch in 2011, many temporary projects were developed. The temporary structures are seen as a flexible, fast and low-cost solution to devastated urban environments, keeping the city 'alive' until a longer-term solution is found.

Strategy

The not-for-profit organisation Gap Filler emerged in the city immediately after the earthquake. The team developed a "city-making" initiative with a long term vision: pop-up was intended not just as a mean of recovery but also a promising model of participatory organisation and democracy. Gap Filler see the small-scale and short-term projects as a great way to encourage experimentation and develop a different model of city building that can evolve and possibly feed into long-term plans.

How it was made?

Gap Filler leveraged local, focusing on emerging designers, supported by established professionals, and built from loaned, reused and donated materials using volunteer, professional and community labour. The Pop-Ups have been a testament to the effectiveness of a collaborative and community-minded process (Reynolds, 2014).

Keywords
- Resilience
- Community-led
- Enabler

Who
Gap Filler team
Local communities
Fletcher Living

Where
Christchurch, New Zealand

Engagement process

The association has run placemaking workshops for and with local governments, development agencies, community groups and business associations. All the projects in the Pop-Up series were developed in co-design session with the local community, leveraging from professional to normal citizens who wanted their city to restart. In some cases, the installations have led to the emergence of fully community-run services and programs to help those left behind by the disaster.

Public response

These pop-up projects are having a transformative impact on how Christchurch is imagined and developed. They play an important role not just in providing missing facilities, but also in mobilising communities and engaging them most directly in changing the places they live in and providing opportunities for community-led businesses and start-ups (Savic, 2015).

Insights

I think these projects show how resilient and creative a community can be even in the face of the greatest challenges. On the other hand the proliferation of temporary projects and pop-ups raises concerns over our increasing reliance on temporary, cheap solutions, potentially diverting everyone's focus from finding more permanent solutions

Fig. 1: Detour Snake Run. Image source: gapfiller.org.nz

Fig. 2: Pallet pavillon. Image source: gapfiller.org.nz

3.4.7 Bruum Ruum!

A playful tool to make citizens interact with their city

Context:

The vibrant city of Barcelona is always looking for something new to engage its citizens and tourists. For years, the administration has been working to make peripheral areas of the city more lively, especially at night. And with one of the highest population densities in Europe, public space takes on a vital function in providing people with relaxing and positive environments.

Strategy

The client of this installation was the Design Museum of Barcelona (DHUB), for the design was called the Catalan designer and artist David Torrents in conjunction with Studio Artec3. The company Led's Control was in charge of the installation and electronic work. The goal of the project was to "give life" to the square, and find a creative way for passers-by to interact with the street furniture to reflect the various colors and sounds of city life.

How it was made?

The installation combines color and sound through 522 inground linear luminaires embedded in a 3,300sqm area. The LEDs react to the intensity of voices and the ambient sound that the city generates using sensors that have been installed around the plaza (Carmichael, 2020). This project has been founded by the museum.

Engagement process

Bruum Ruum! is presenting a dialogue between visitors and the public space through sound and light. The square becomes a great ear that reacts to words, a public space that feels. The main theme of this work is really the ability of the sculpture to engage the passerby in a game, its simplicity makes it extremely clear how it works and induces the citizen to interact with the space.

Public response

It is not difficult to notice adults and children who stop during the evening to talk and sing to the various microphones to generate waves of light on the square. Moreover BruumRuum! has won a "special mention of an intuitive interactive lighting experience" in the International Lighting Design Awards 2014.

Insights

This is a perfect example of a design that entices the user to participate spontaneously. It's a game that fills the night with content, a huge equaliser to gauge the intensity of the sound colors of city life. This work is permanent, but the result it makes is different every time, giving the idea of a square that is alive, like a large animal.

Fig. 1 and 2: Bruum Ruum! Installation.
Image source: torrents.info

3.4.8 Penang's Armenian Street

How independent street art can spark an urban revolution

Context:

George Town is the capital of the state of Penang, in northern Malaysia. it is a strongly multi-ethnic and multi-religious city, with Chinese, Indians and Malays making up the majority of the population. The historic center of George Town is a great tourist spot in Southeast Asia, precisely because of the Chinese and colonial architecture, different cuisine and culture that meets the tropical climate.

Strategy

This is an example of how an intervention completely independent of the hand of government started an artistic and urban planning revolution in the city. It all started when Lithuanian artist Ernest Zacharevic, visiting the city during Penang Art Week, created several works of murals and street art in the old town using old abandoned objects and paint. One could say that this work is completely spontaneous, without a firm strategy behind it. Of course, these works were later welcomed by the city and increased tourism, but they also received a response from the government, which pedestrianized the street mainly affected by these interventions.

How it was made?

Called "the new bansky," the Lithuanian artist began painting on the city's walls at his own cost. The success of his work was such that many other artists were later called upon to create artwork in the city. Seeing the influx of citizens and tourists, in the following years the government of George Town decided to close or partially close the street to car traffic and later other areas of the city center.

Keywords
- Bottom-up
- Street Art
- Transformative Innovation

Who
Artist Ernest Zacharevic
George Town Council
Penang State Gov.

Where
George Town, Penang, Malaysia

Engagement process

Such type of art engages people and makes them express their own creativity in the public realm. The type of engagement with the public in this case, as with Guerrilla Gardening, is provocation. In fact this kind of action can be described as "Guerrilla Art". The engagement process in this case was a cascading one, starting with passersby coming across the work and ending with the city government, which, rather than rejecting it, embraced the idea and leveraged its growing popularity by making the works more accessible by foot and bike.

Public response

The Armenian Street has provoked a fascinating and creative response from its visitors and from locals, in particulary the best response was from the government itself. It leveraged on this tourist attraction, and now George Town is recognized as the center of street art and spontaneous design in Southeast Asia (Caballero & Wong See Huat, 2016).

Insights

As Zacharevic said; "This is street art at its best, when it stops being an individual painting and becomes part of the public imagination". To me, when a singular independent work nurtures systemic transformation to improve the city as a whole, it is always a good thing.

Fig. 1: Armenian Street. Image source: travelnotes.com

Fig. 2: Boy on a chair, one of the installations. Image source: pinterest.com

3.4.9 Waitemata Plaza

Design by trial, testing temporary options to improve a space

Context:

Auckland's waterfront is undergoing a major renovation. Several projects are underway to make the harbor a new prime destination for Auckland citizens and tourists. The city in general is very future-oriented, and also is undergoing a great population growth, the latest estimates indicate that in 2031 the city will reach 2 million inhabitants. Waitemata Plaza is one of the areas affected by the waterfront redevelopment process.

Strategy

The strategy used by the Waterfront Auckland Team to best optimize the end results of urban transformation was "Design by Trial." Design by trial is a fast and low-cost way of taking a project for a "test drive" while building local support. The trials provided some basic amenity that attracted public to come to or through the space and linger. The moving of the furniture allowed the Waterfront Auckland team to engage with users and gather valuable feedback. Importantly, the Waterfront Auckland team monitored the site trials to further understand the needs of the users.

How it was made?

A number of design options were tested over the course of a summer, to soften the existing hard landscaped and exposed public space. These included new pop-up stores, food trucks, an urban beach installation (with moveable loungers and umbrellas), an artificial turf area (with an ice cream pod, café tables and chairs) and a shade tree planters and timber decks made from cargo palettes.

Engagement process

The installations naturally engaged citizens who came into contact with them and tried to use them. Citizens were used as "guinea pigs" to deeply test these interventions, this is part of a strategy often used in co-designing and co-creating pop-up interventions such as stores or public spaces (Overdiek & Warnaby, 2020). At the same time, the Auckland Waterfront team closely monitored user behaviors, both through interviews, videos and remote observations. Some of the videos were then uploaded to social media or websites to gain further user response and feedback.

Public response

The feedback from the site trials informed a new plan for the plaza as a green space with a very strong public art focus and a timber deck adjacent to the water for summer activation uses (Savic, 2015). The new plan was heavily supported by resident and stakeholder groups.

Insights

An emerging approach to developing design solutions and directly engaging communities in the process, is based on testing ideas on the ground, prior to developing a final design or spending a lot of money on implementation. To me this is an effective way to test design proposals in a cheap way and engage end users in the process.

Fig. 1 and 2: Waitemata Plaza during design trials. Image source: waterfrontauckland.nz

3.4.10 Arup's Fitzpark

When the Public-Private-Partnership works at it's best

Context:

London is a fast-growing global city, but population density is starting to reach its limits, and spaces and infrastructure are put under pressure every day to accommodate the millions of people and goods on the move. The city government is promoting positive practices to extract potential from every single public space to make the streets more pleasant and sustainable.

Strategy

This initiative is the perfect example of a public-private partnership. Arup believes that small-scale interventions and projects to increase urban greenery bring real benefits to the city, and wanted to demonstrate its effectiveness (Carmichael, 2020). So the company proposed a JV to launch the project with the Mayor of London and other actors in the central business district of the city. The objectives of the intervention were to improve the quality of life in the street, provide an innovative street furniture for passers-by, increase the pedestrian friendliness of the area and increase biodiversity by planting different plants and flowers to attract bees and other insects.

How it was made?

The entire project was designed in-house by Arup's Landscape Architecture team. Even the construction of the parklet was entrusted to an in-house team. The project was created and founded by the Fitzrovia partnership, a central London Business Improvement District which counts Arup and the Mayor of London's Fund as members.

Keywords
- Private-led
- Joint Venture
- Parklet

Who
Arup Landscape Arch.
Mayor of London
Fitzrovia Partnership

Where
London, United Kingdom

Engagement process

The intervention was monitored during and after. Per se, the Fitzpark was designed internally by Arup, without consulting the public. But since it was a temporary intervention, it was precisely to obtain data about the effectiveness of such a work. The team conducted research with users of the space, and collected data to develop similar interventions in the future (Green, 2017). Parklets are so flexible and versatile that can be easily retrofitted to suit the needs of their street type and context.

Public response

A study conducted by Arup after the intervention revealed that the parklet received 100% support from citizens, and also contributed to a positive impact on local businesses of 70%. passers-by were asked to report their well-being at the time of the interview: before the intervention, well-being was at 19%, while after the intervention an increase in personal well-being of 41% was measured.

Insights

This experience launched by Arup shows how easy it is to collaborate when local authorities are in favor of privately launched interventions that target public space. Despite the fact that this is a temporary intervention, the company wanted to focus on quality, thus increasing the costs of the installation, and for me, the choice to form a Join Venture with the other companies around the area was optimal.

Fig. 1 and 2: Arup's Fitzpark in Fitzroy street.
Image source: arup.com

3.4.11 Pop-Up Bike Lanes

A rapid government response to the Covid-related mobility crisis

Keywords
- Fast Implementation
- Top-down
- Safety

Who
Municipality of Berlin

Where
Berlin, Germany

Context:

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented decrease in vehicular traffic in our cities. As a result, many city governments have used this time to test changes to city streets, implementing quick and effective solutions. Berlin is one such city that has dared to radically change its streets to propose a safe and sustainable alternative to classic mobility.

Strategy

Public transportation became dangerous places, where the virus was spreading quickly. To mitigate the spread of the virus, the city has chosen to focus on the bicycle as a private, single, sustainable and cost-free means of transportation. To encourage bicycling, in april 2020 the city began building temporary bike lanes with the goal of reducing congestion in cars and on public transportation. The corridors that have been adapted so far are part of a wider network of corridors that had been identified for a thorough redesign in line with Berlin's Mobility Law (Kraus & Koch, 2020). These bike lanes were implemented under Berlin's broader sustainable mobility plan to standardize and speed up implementation processes.

How it was made?

The process was fairly straightforward. Once the project was approved in the Senate, the bike lanes were set up in a manner similar to road work, using paint and reflective barriers. Costs were not high since no construction work was involved in the implementation, so they were covered completely by the city.

Engagement process

The government built this new infrastructure based on the demand for cycling among citizens, which was already high in the pre-pandemic period. The design and implementation process was internal to the municipality of Berlin, as it is still a new project, analyses among citizens are underway to understand its effectiveness. If successful, the city could move forward with the plan, making the bike lanes permanent and expanding the city's network.

Public response

Since this is a new infrastructure, the effectiveness will be examined in detail in the future, with a particular focus on protective elements. But as of now, Berlin's citizens are divided on the opinions on the project (Kraus & Koch, 2020). The plan, however, is being emulated in other cities in Germany and abroad.

Insights

I believe that these quick implementations are effective in the short term, but cannot be considered permanent. The sudden increase in bike lanes has also caused an increase in car-bike accidents. This shows that as virtuous as the idea of giving more space to sustainable mobility is, there needs to be a consolidated plan. To date, 14 pop-up bike lanes have been removed because they are too dangerous or out of compliance.

Fig. 1 and 2: Pop-up bike lanes. Image source: media.greenpeace.com

3.4.12 Final insights

The case studies above recount several experiences regarding application methods of tactical urbanism. Given the definition of tactical urbanism, the common elements among these projects are the rapidity of implementation of the work, the high reversibility, and the importance given to the visibility of the work for marketing or communication purposes. A theme that varies from project to project is the level of citizen participation in the design or use of the intervention. In my opinion, the interventions that have had the best impact are those that originated from below by the residents themselves with the "action first" approach. While the projects that came from the top, tactical in nature, but designed without much listening to the communities are those that could present more critical in the long run. Some projects are certainly more impactful than others, for example a guerrilla gardening action does not radically change the face of a city as much as a whole new system of pop-up bike lanes. From the point of view of service design, I admire the audacity of certain interventions to experiment with new methods of active participation through digital platforms.

After analyzing how all tactical urbanism interventions are part of or leverage communication to raise awareness of sustainable mobility issues and more equitable use of the city's public space, I have come to the conclusion that all of these communication methods are discordant and lack an established pattern. Following the exchange of ideas with architect Dondé, I believe that it is essential for the community of designers working in tactical urbanism to develop a common method and process of communication and teaching to explain the citizen the reasons of these projects. This is to make them aware of the potential that tactical interventions have on the community just as a doctor knows how to make his patients understand (and how patients respect the doctor's knowledge) that a certain drug is necessary to improve the patient's health conditions.

This communication method can take cues from tools and methods already used in service design, capable of empathizing with users and stakeholders in purposeful dialogues. In fact, the service designer has always found himself in the limbo of "having to explain" his discipline and its potential to ignite positive change in an organization or community. This experience has led to the development of precise methods and steps to follow in order to communicate effectively with the interested party.

4. Il Cantiere di Via Roma

4.1 Desk Research: The context of Reggio Emilia

4.1.1 Data and history about the city

Reggio Emilia is a city located in the Po Valley, in the center-north of Italy. The city is characterized by a long industrial and cooperative tradition. Over the past 40 years, the urban area has grown considerably, in a manner similar to many cities in northern Italy, expanding its urban limits and absorbing the nearby hamlets. This expansion of the urbanized territory is followed by a steady increase in inhabitants throughout the second half of the last century.

1945

2019

Fig. 1. Two photographs of Reggio Emilia from above, 74 years apart. Images source: Fototeca Biblioteca Panizzi, Google Earth

The planning of the city in the last 30 years has been characterized by a strong horizontal expansion. New areas of the city were built according to the zoning rule, for example the south of the city was designated to pure residential function, while areas to the north were dedicated to industries and factories, due to the proximity to the A1 highway.

The city center kept the commercial and services function: lawyers, doctors, specialists, and other high-level workers continued to flood the oldtown, resulting, over the years in an abandonment by the working-class population due to an increase of the living costs of the area.

About 172.000 inhabitants
65% 15-64 years old
18% foreigners

50% of trips are shorter than 3 km
Strong use of car
65 cars every 100 people
Air pollution problems

263 km of bike paths | 1,5 m/inhabitant

This major transformation of the city's physical form was not followed by careful planning of public transportation. In a city where the bicycle had always been the primary mode of transportation, the private automobile was rapidly taking over.

At present, the city has taken some steps forward, implementing policies that encourage sustainable mobility, and as the years go by, the first results are beginning to be seen. For example, the use of bicycles is back on the rise, as are users of public transport. The city ranks first in Italy for the number of bike paths per inhabitants and thirty-sixth for the public transport offer, boasting a renovated bus fleet and a new high speed train station near the A1 highway.
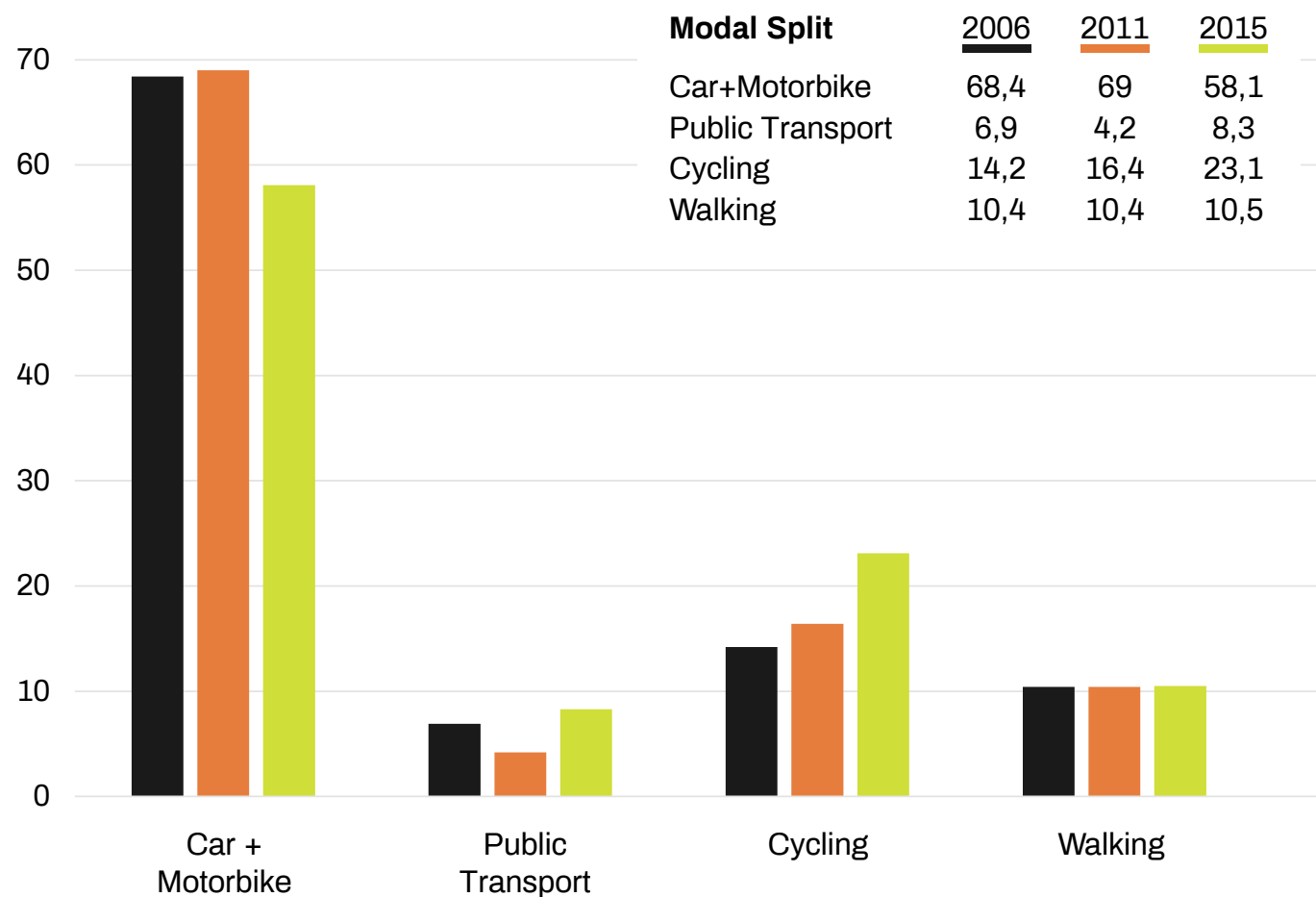
City center, main figures:

Inhabitants: 10.655
Size: 1.26 km²
Nicknamed "The Hexagon"

Modal Split	2006	2011	2015
Car+Motorbike	68,4	69	58,1
Public Transport	6,9	4,2	8,3
Cycling	14,2	16,4	23,1
Walking	10,4	10,4	10,5

Retail businesses:

Retail: ca 1000 businesses
More than 80% small shops (530) - And Ho.Re.Ca sector (256)

Pedestrian zones:

■ Limited traffic areas
■ Fully pedestrian
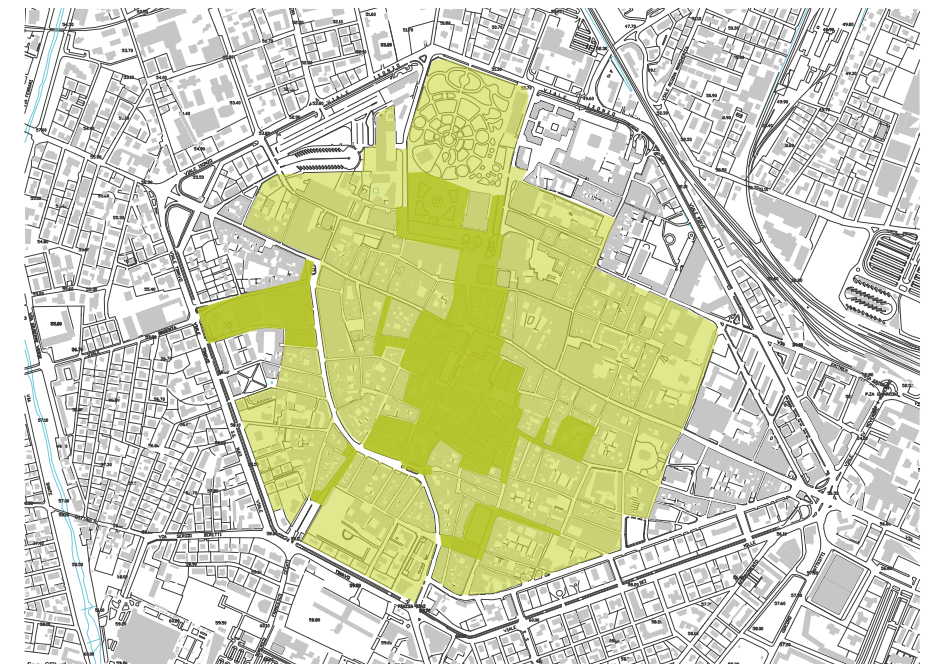
The historic center of Reggio Emilia is highly diversified. The displacement of the working class outside of the hexagon has created a strong inequality in the neighborhood, the contrast is obvious: heavily gentrified areas with high-level stores and professional studios, and at the same time, areas of semi-abandonment, degraded, often receptacles for alcoholics and drug dealers.

In general, the cost of living inside the hexagon is higher than in the rest of the city considering the real estate prices, this has led to a decrease in the population belonging to the middle class in favor of the suburbs.
With a stagnant real estate market, many landlords have decided to rent single apartments to multiple households, resulting in overcrowding for disadvantaged groups such as immigrants or people in poverty.

The research focuses on the downtown district as the project relates exclusively to this area.

Average shopping spending per modal share in the old town:

■	Car	15%
■	Public Transport	24%
■	Cycling	22%
■	Walking	32%
■	Other	8%

City Center Modal Split

	2017	2018	2020
Car	38	43	48
Public Transport	14	20	7
Walking + Cycling	46	35	42
Other	2	2	3
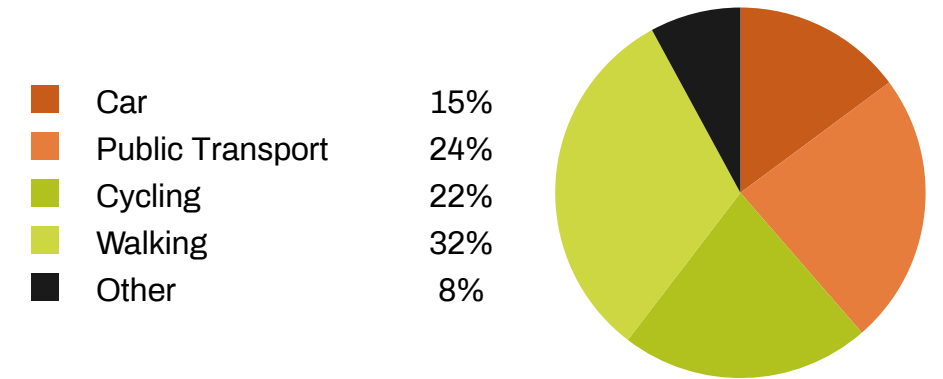
Local government policies of the early 2000s favored the opening of large commercial stores in the suburbs, accessible only by private car.

These new shopping centers have entered into direct competition with the hexagon, as a result, many small stores and merchants have not withstood the competition of large chains, leading to a decline in the commercial offer of the center.

As of now, strolling through the historic center, it's easy to notice a myriad of vacant premises and closed stores, bankrupt due to competition from malls and e-commerce.
Many business owners have decided to relocate because of this decrease in customers and, in addition, because of the exorbitant rental costs of having a space in the downtown area, still considered a "premium" location.

In spite of these data, the hexagon continues to remain a great attractor of visitors and buyers, especially in the warm season.

Fig. 3. A series of vacant premises in Via Roma. Images source: By the author

4.1.2 Via Roma

Via Roma is a street in the historic center characterized by a long and complex history. From Roman times until the last century the street was an important artery to enter the city from the northern plains, was a key place for trade and meetings.

Today the street has undergone a great transformation, with the arrival of many immigrant families, the neighborhood has become a multicultural reality, different from the rest of the historic center, almost as if it lived a life of its own.

Some residents define the area of Via Roma as the last true neighborhood of Reggio Emilia, alive, active day and night, dotted with small local businesses and cultural realities. Unfortunately, however, the neighborhood is also known for its reputation as a "ghetto," the last refuge in the hexagon for alcoholics and drug dealers.

The road also remains one of the only streets in the historic center where it is possible to transit with private cars coming from outside (non-residents).
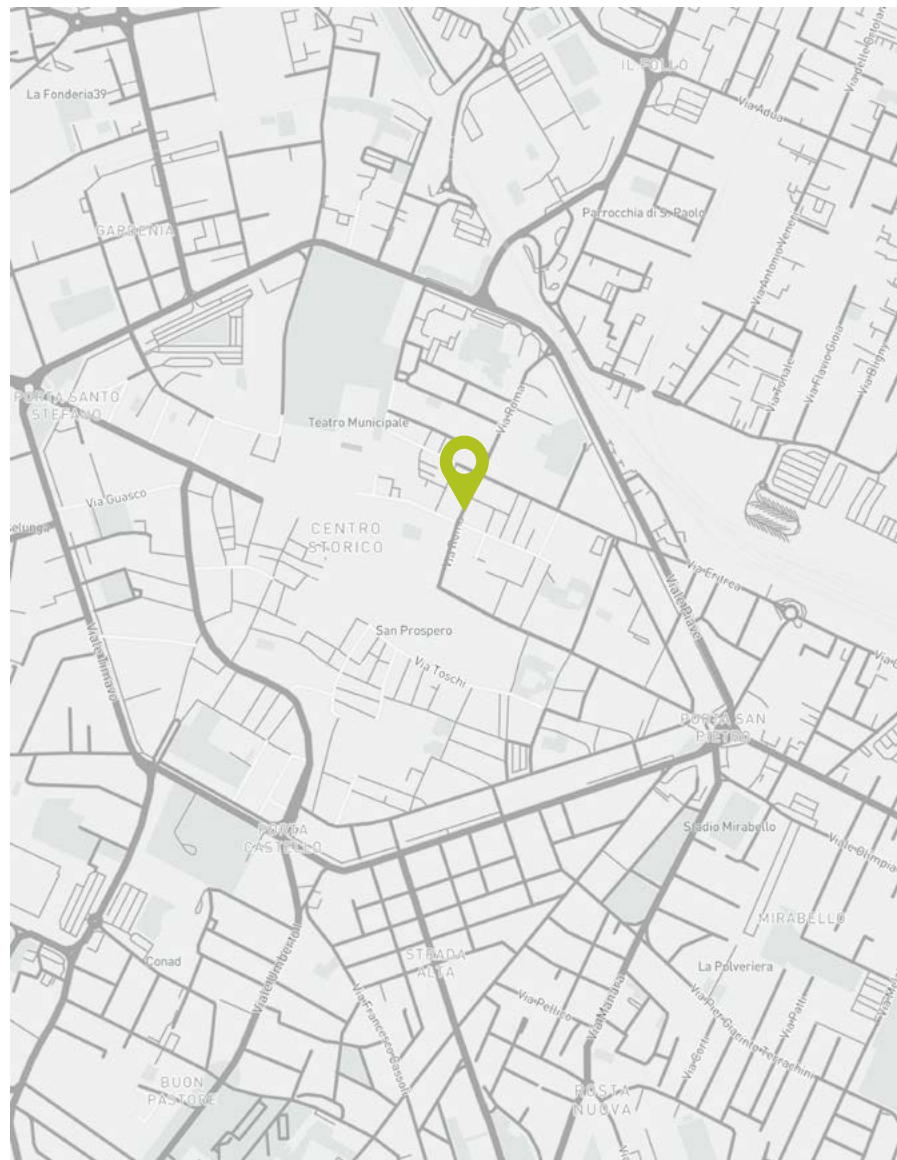
Fig. 1, 2 and 3: Photos of three areas of the street, taken on different days and times.
Images source: By the author

4.1.3 A diverse district

Via Roma is also home to two active residents' and merchants' associations:

Via Roma Zero is a cultural association set up by a handful of residents, which has been promoting the street for years through small spontaneous exhibitions and cultural and artistic activities. The association advocates for a more beautiful, unique, collaborative and culturally active neighborhood.

Via Roma Viva, on the other hand, is the association of merchants and shopkeepers present in the neighborhood, and is responsible for keeping the street attractive as a shopping street even for those coming from outside. Within this association many are in favor of keeping the street open to private vehicular traffic.

Fig. 1 and 2: Some of team's activities, from tree planting to open-air shows. Images source: Via Roma Zero

Fig. 3 and 4: The logo of the event, and the map of via Roma where the exhibitions of the Circuito Off will take place. Image source: Via Roma Zero

4.1.4 The European Photography event in Reggio Emilia

It's an important exhibition taking place in the whole city center of Reggio Emilia every year, it's a recurring event which lasts from the beginning of april and goes on til the end of june and attracts international photographers and visitors. The major events are located in important venues of the city such as museums or exhibition centers. This year's exhibitions, due to the lockdown measures occurred in April, will run from May 21 to July 4, 2021. After the cancellation due to the pandemic of the 2020 edition, this 16th edition of the festival is dedicated to imagination and dreamers capable of generating meanings and visions.

CIRCUITO OFF: Is the independent section that every year sees the spontaneous flourishing of hundreds of exhibitions in the city and presents projects by professional photographers alongside young people at the beginning of their experiences, enthusiasts and associations. This part of the event is more scattered around the city, composed by indipendent and small shows and displays, they can be in public spaces or in private locations like open homes or shops. Actually this is similar in nature to what the Fuorisalone is for the Milan Design Week. Part of this circuit is also the OFF@school project that involves schools throughout the province of Reggio Emilia.

Also the association of via Roma Zero participates in the Circuito Off with the project "artist residencies" namely exhibitions, events and workshops hosted in private houses of the neighborhood and related to the major event. Moreover, an exhibition of local photographers will be set up near the Santa Maria park, near Via Roma.
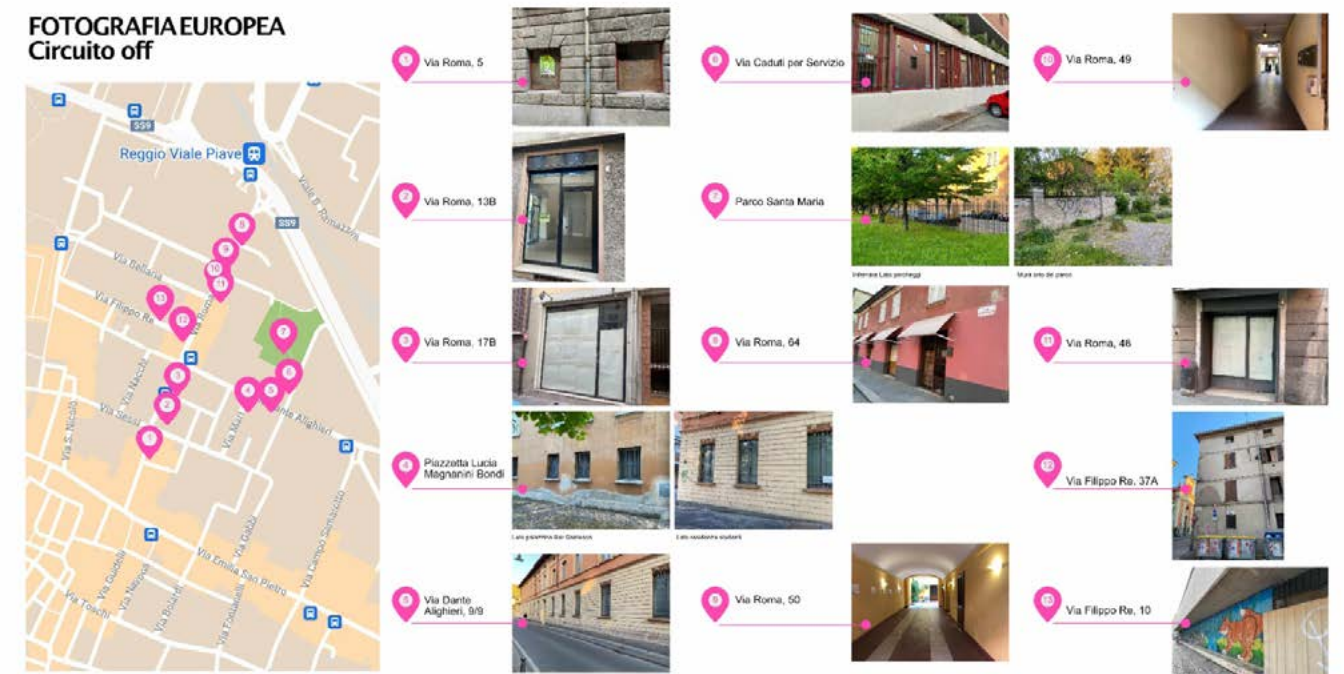
4.2 Field Research: deepen the situation of via Roma

4.2.1 Aim and objectives

This research is essentially focused on understanding the Via Roma people's behaviors, needs and motivations through observation, analysis and feedback techniques. This therefore allows the entire development and design process to be more efficient. Methods used fall into different types, from getting to know citizens to understanding physical elements, often tracing the past history of environments and communities. Research (both field and desk research) is the foundation for any project that involves impacting a system or population and the process makes use of qualitative and quantitative research methods that deal with the analysis of humans (and animals) and their needs.

Public questionnaires can provide a high level of insight on the behavior, attitude and preferences of the general population. Also, because of the huge number of people who answer surveys the data gathered is a great descriptor of the population.

Interview sessions, on the other hand, provide an in-depth understanding of user needs and behaviors, with the goal of sharing the information gathered with the entire project team, and using it to generate ideas related to the digital service.

Is therefore important to understand both the physical abd social contexts in order to design and implement an effective space-service system that responds to the real needs of the people in the neighborhood, it is essential to first understand what those needs are and among those needs those that can be effectively solved by a bottom-up operation like this. And it is also necessary to understand which of the needs are really true and correspond to the whole community, not the need of an individual or a small number of people.

4.2.2 Passive research, observation

Part of the research carried out was through observation, I spent time in the street, sometimes stopping at key points to understand people's behaviors and their use of spaces and objects, how they interact with other people, how they move and where they stop. I also focused on the people themselves, ages, gender, nationality (simply what could be understood through observation). The field research sessions were conducted at different times and times of day, for example at lunchtime on a midweek winter day, other times I was there on the weekend, other times in the evening. I also wanted to pay attention to the things, the spaces, the physical material present in the street, what is present is why it is there, what state it is in, and how it is used. At this stage of the research I took many photographs, especially of the objects and scenes of everyday life, so that I could analyze them later and try to decipher further clues.
Below are some of the clues gathered during the research through observation:

- 81 cars and vans passed through the street between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. (weekday, winter)
- 6 traffic violations committed by motorists
- 3 minibuses per direction (1-2 persons on board each) between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. (weekday, winter)
- 36 bikes passed through the street between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. (weekday, spring)
- The main commercial attractors in the street are: Biosteria della Ghirba (expecially for aperitifs), Amrin Store (cheap grocer and alchool), Bagus (Light cannabis store), Pasticceria Boni (established in the city in 1890), Bar Caribe (fast lunches and strong spirits) and Tabaccheria Bernardi.
- The main non-commercial attractors are CIGL offices, International School of Comics and St. Giacomo's Church.
- Most of the people in who frequent the neighborhood tend to concentrate in the 40m stretch of road adjacent to the church near the Tabaccheria and the Bar Caribe, this is the only two-way section of the street.

Fig. 1: During a field observation session, January 2021. Image source: By the author

Fig. 2 to 7: Photos taken in the street during different periods and times, intended to give a general impression of the atmosphere of the place. Images source: By the author

Legend:

- Schools
- Offices and banks
- Retail
- Ho.Re.Ca
- Places of worship
- Vacant premises
- Cafe's extents

- Limited traffic areas
- Street lights
- Garbage bins
- Bus stops
- Parking
  - Paid parking
  - Residents-only
  - Disabled-only
  - Motorbikes

4.2.3 Survey

In the first place, I prepared an online questionnaire aimed at the residents of Via Roma and those who frequent the area for reasons such as shopping, education, visiting friends, eating/drinking and dealing with offices (the street is home to banks, lawyers, travel agencies and union offices). The questionnaire was emailed to the presidents of the two associations on the street, who then shared it with their members. Given that a portion of the population of Via Roma is not capable of using digital tools, I made an effort to print the questionnaire on paper and distribute it in person to the citizens, I also left some copies with the merchants so that they could give them to their customers to collect as many responses as possible.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections: The first section was related to more broad questions, aimed at understanding the general context and the demographics. The second section was aimed at understanding the opinions and needs of citizens regarding the spaces, streets and physical objects in the neighborhood and how they can be improved, the results of the questionnaire regarding physical assets will be shown in the appropriate section. The last part was more focused on habits and community, social relations and available services, this part will be analyzed more closely in the section on service design.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to know the habits of the people who live in the area, for example to know by what means they move around, what they usually do in the street. Another theme was to understand the situation of the neighborhood from their point of view, to know how they live the spaces, what they appreciate, what is missing and what are the major problems. I wanted to focus also on the degree of integration among the residents and whether they felt part of a community or not. A part of the questions instead concerns the Popol Giost Square project, and the degree of appreciation towards this intervention and what could be improved. Finally, I wanted to understand how much will there is from the citizens to change the current situation and their interest in participating in a possible intervention on the area. For all the questions in the questionnaire I made closed questions but also added the possibility to add cues or indications in order to receive as many insights as possible.

The first part of the questionnaire had a more general character, aimed at having a complete vision of the life in the street, from the habits of movement, age and problems or needs of the community. This part was not specifically addressed to urban planning or to the state of social services present or missing.

Age of the respondents:

21-30	4,7%
31-40	17,5%
41-50	35,1%
51-60	29,2%
61-70	11,1%
71+	2,3%
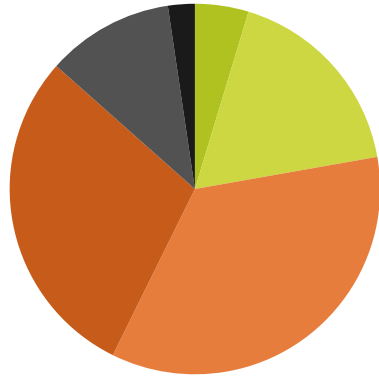
A total of 171 people responded to the questionnaire. Of these people, 58 live there, 97 work/study there, and the remainder are regular or costant visitors to the neighborhood for shopping, business, dining or visiting friends.

What's your preferred mode to reach the place?

Motorbike	1%
Car	70%
Bus	2%
Bike	13%
Foot	14%
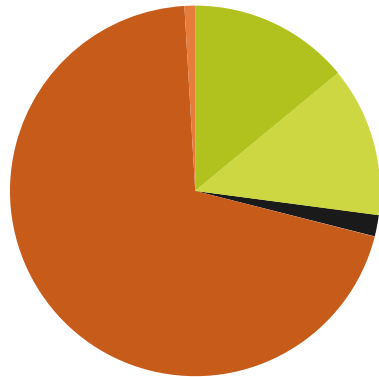
It should be pointed out that many people change their transportation habits according to the season.
In addition, I asked to those who arrive by car where they park: 20% answered "on the street in Via Roma" while 55% on the ring road, the remainder in other streets of the center or outside the ring road. Only 4 people own a private garage.

Are you satisfied with the commercial offer and facilities you can find in Via Roma?

Yes	64%
No	25%
I don't know	11%
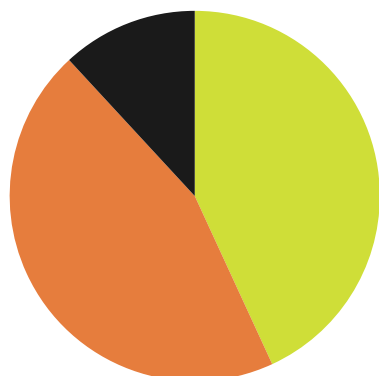
After this question I asked citizens if everything they need on a typical day is available to them within a 10-minute walk. Sixty percent said yes, while 20% said no, that they necessarily have to travel far for even the most basic necessities.

Are you satisfied living/working in Via Roma?

Yes	64%
No	25%
I don't know	11%
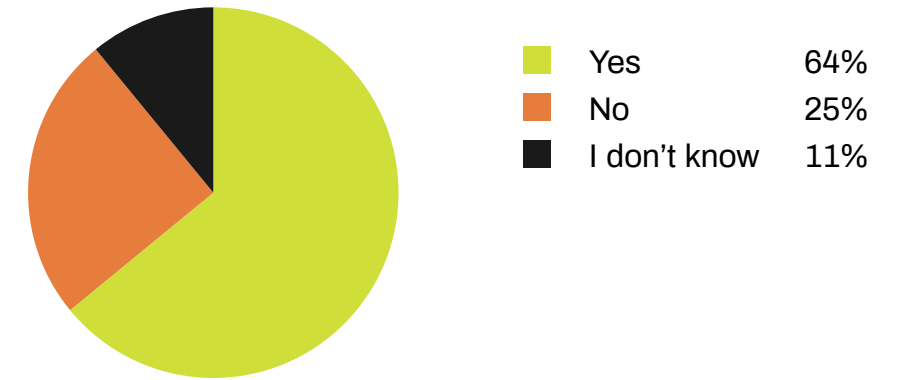
Following this question, I asked if Via Roma needed a major improvement, and 36% said yes, while only 2% said the area is perfect as it is. The rest of the responses asked for specific improvements or some targeted interventions, but virtually everyone did not deny that there were problems to be solved in the street.

What do you think are the biggest issues facing the area?

Citizens were asked what the biggest problem plaguing the area was. On one issue they were unanimous, namely the problem of the light crime. Unfortunately Via Roma is the scene of drug dealing and sometimes drunken brawls happen, to generalize the problem is due to stores that sell alcohol without restrictions and the fact that the area is not very busy in the evening.

The issues concerning private cars instead are divisive, the residents are more inclined to a reduction of the passage of cars for the area, in favor of a possible pedestrianization of the street. While shopkeepers, especially the older ones, tend to consider car access and parking possibilities indispensable for the survival of their business.
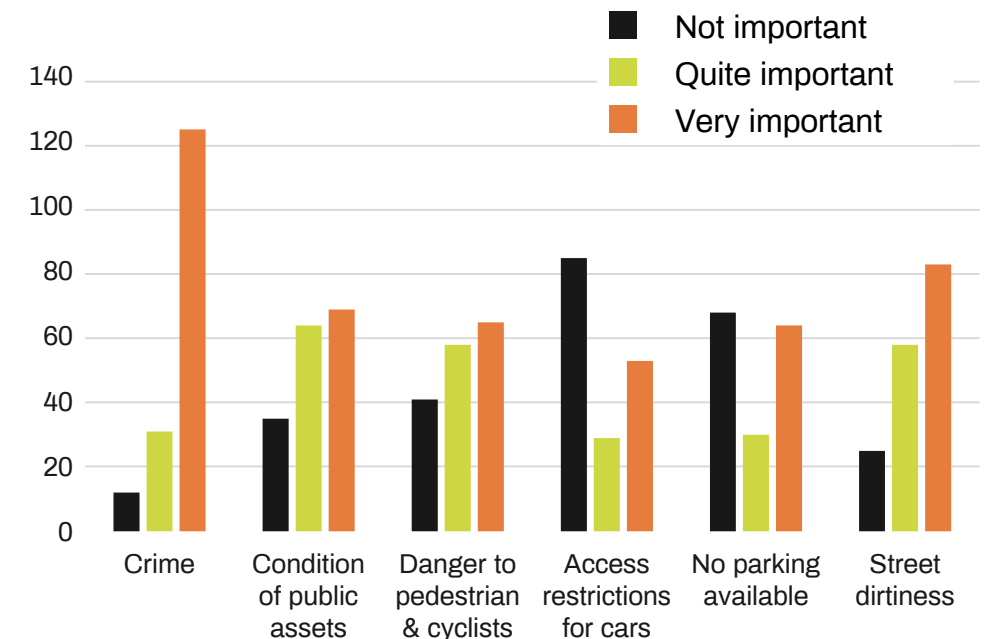
4.2.4 Interviews

In addition to the observation and the questionnaire, I conducted interviews (some in person, others via video call) to explore in detail the problems and the insights to be gained in order to better design spaces and services for citizens. Interviews were conducted with both some merchants and residents. Sometimes the dialogue went beyond questions and the citizens themselves began to propose ideas and concepts to work on, both from the point of view of space and mobility and services.

Map of establishments surveyed, in total 14 including 1 church, 9 stores, 3 restaurants/bars, and 1 office. I refrain from showing respondents' homes (private households) on this map, but a total of 6 families were interviewd.

Thanks to the interviews it was clearer to me to understand the specific requests of each person, it is obvious that everyone "supports their own cause" but there were some respondents (especially residents) who were more altruistic and proposed more social initiatives and more interventions in favor of the quality of public life.

Conti Family:

Via Roma has the potential to be the street of craftsmanship and art, we need a mix of social aggregators (quality places, professional and creative studios) and "garrisons" such as basic services, a pharmacy, an ATM. We need events and initiatives to publicize the artisans, to bring different artistic forms, also with the help of the Liceo Chierici and the School of Comics.

Priest of St. Giacomo Church:

I always ride my bike and I know how dangerous the route is, my congregants come by car, many of them are elderly. Unfortunately, in June I will be transferred, and I am afraid that some people will lose a pillar that listened to them and understood them, especially the poors and weak.

World Games Store:

The street needs improvement from a people's perspective, there is a need for more civility and fewer dangerous or degrading people without restraint. We need positive premises, attractors of visitors and events, then we can think about pedestrianization, pedestrianization is the last step after the place has matured.

Phidias Antiques:

We are willing to leave the car outside of downtown to improve the street. Cultural activities such as Fotografia Europea are the only things that make the neighborhood alive.

Sgarbi Family:

The neighborhood lacks a place that acts as an attractor for social functions, it lacks a hub for listening, sharing, and socializing to bring out the full potential of the community.

Antonelli Bakery:

It would be nice if there were some games for the children here in Popol Giost square that on Sundays is always full of kids.

Haoyifa Chinese Bazar:

Our customers come on foot or by bike, that's how we get to work too. But an important thing for our store is logistics, we need the vans to be able to enter the street to be able to supply us with goods.

Esposito Family:

Poor social network, poor interventions on the social fabric. Needs more cultural proposals of various levels, but we do not want gentrification, we want to maintain its "folk" matrix.

4.3 Designing the spaces

4.3.1 The case of Piazza Popol Giost

Popol Giost Square is a public space of about 770 m² located in the central part of Via Roma. Until the summer of 2020, this square has always been used as a high turnover parking lot (i.e. dedicated to visitors and non-residents). Adjacent to the square is the Scaruffi High School, which has one of its exits right on the square. With the goal of creating a new public space usable by people and a safer and more pleasant exit from school for students, a partial redevelopment project of the square was launched in September 2020, an experimental, low-cost and participatory project.

This project was carried out by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia (so it can be considered as a Top-Down approach) in collaboration with the architect Matteo Dondè and the local association "Via Roma Zero". The event was held on September 23, where citizens of all ages worked together to color the road surface and install new benches and planters.

The intervention was much appreciated by the citizenship in the first moment, the square has gained new life and throughout the month of October events and activities were held, in addition the school children had gained a new pleasant outdoor space to go out in safety.

All the enthusiasm, however, did not cover the as many criticisms: with the arrival of winter and the second lockdown, the school closed and the square was emptied of all activities and users. In a short time the space has become a receptacle for stragglers and homeless, some elements of street furniture have been damaged. In addition, many shopkeepers began to complain about the lack of parking spaces for customers, taken away by the experimental intervention.

This was the first Tactical Urbanism intervention carried out in Reggio Emilia.

Before: The square was used as a paid parking lot

During: Co-creation of the new space, 22 September 2020

After: Half of the square returned to people, students now can get out of school safely

Fig. 1, 2 and 3: The transformation of the space following the september's experimentation. Images source: Comune di Reggio Emilia

4.3.2 Disruption of the space, an opportunity for experimentation

From April 2021 Popol Giost Square will be the scene of an extraordinary intervention of structural renovation of the adjacent school, the square will therefore be freed from parking and will be occupied in part by the construction site and heavy vehicles for the period of 12 months. This is a particular situation, temporary in nature, but there is an opportunity to make the area live despite this uncertain situation. This change to the function of the plaza will have implications for the road system and the availability of parking for those arriving from outside. But it will also be an opportunity to rethink a space that until now was used for the mere function of parking.

Popol Giost is a square that has a rich history, its name derives precisely from the political groups that used the square to make propaganda in the years just before and just after the war, it was a place alive and full of relationships. As Massimo Schinco teaches us, the collective memory of a place must be preserved, it is as important as its function. The identity of this square was lost when it was made into a parking lot, its welcome was lost, and now there is an opportunity to restore it, restore the life that once animated the square.

Available space

Construction site

4.3.3 Field research insights regarding urbanism and physical assets

The questionnaire and the interviews were precisely used to understand not only the state of services and social life, but also the state of physical assets, spaces and furnishings. I dedicated a part of the questionnaire to better understand the needs and opinions regarding the concrete aspect of the street, the aesthetics but also the usefulness and functionality of things and spaces. It is important to note that the questionnaire was distributed in January 2021, still in the midst of the pandemic, so respondents' opinions may be different than in a warmer or pre-pandemic period.
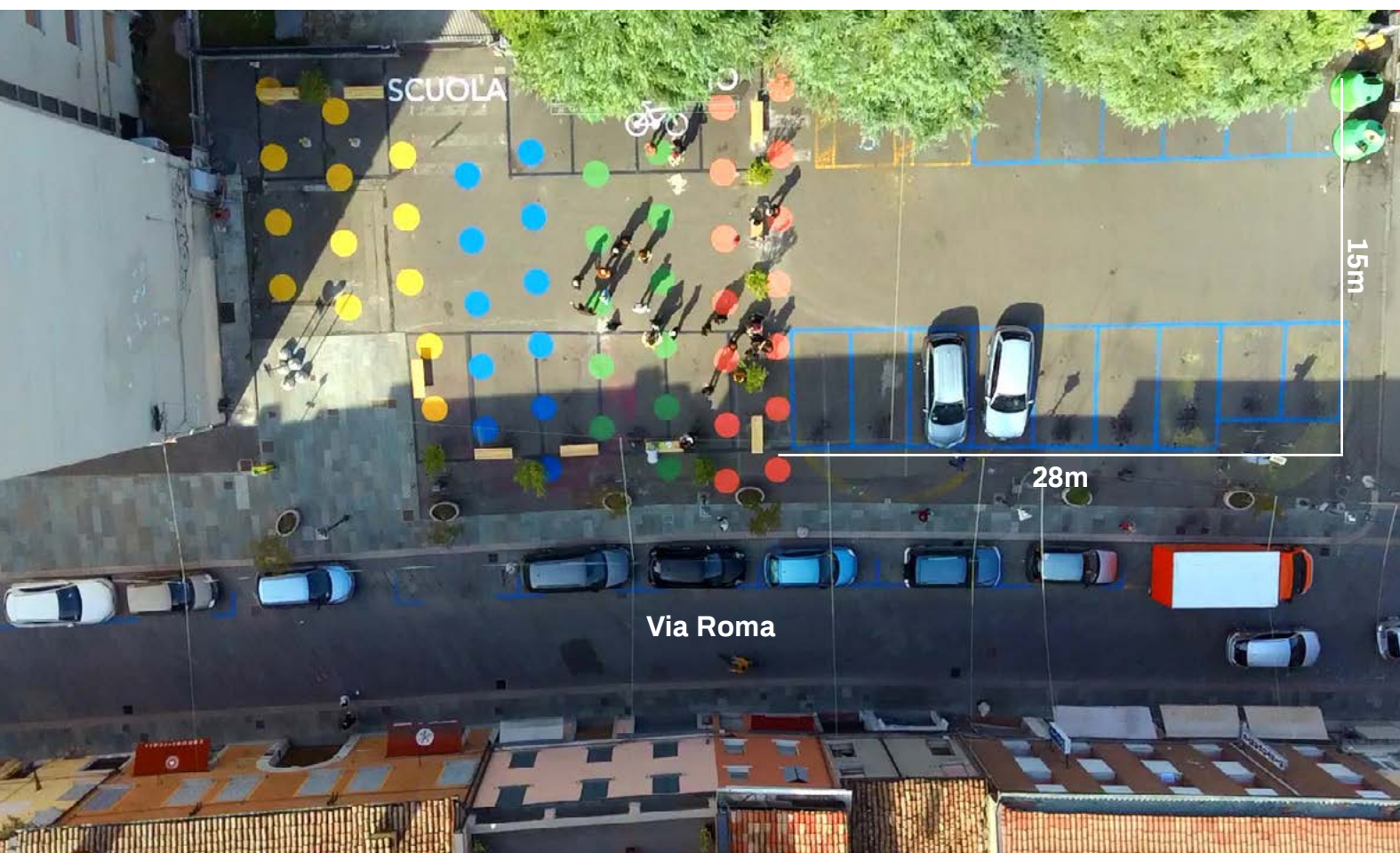
I wish the neighborhood had....

- ■ Useless
- ■ I would like
- ■ Do it now!

More pedestrian areas · Better ligthing and furniture · An art monument · Security cameras · More green & children playground · Gates to limit car traffic

SCUOLA

15m

28m

Via Roma
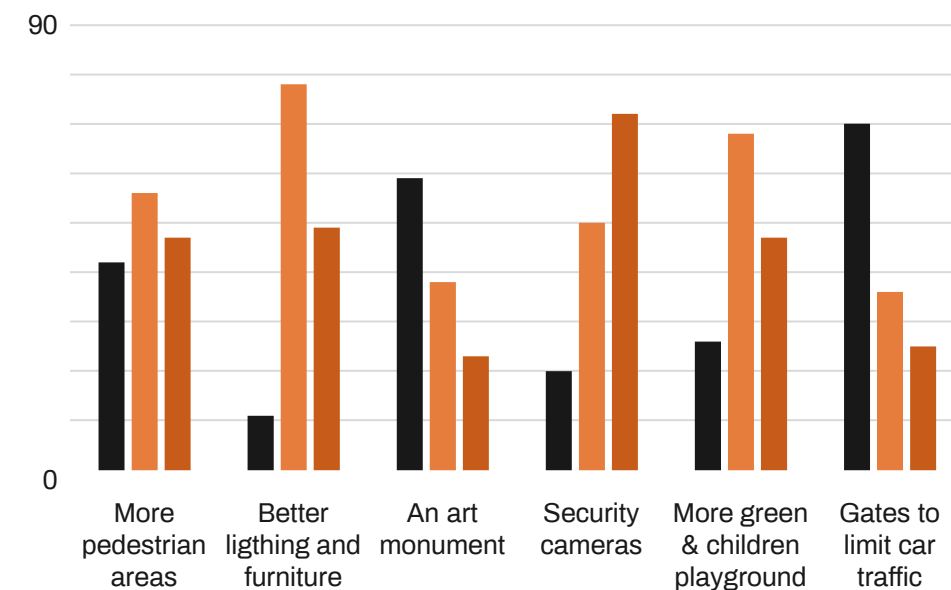
Fig. 1, 2 and 3: The square from above and the area occupied by the construction site. Image source: Comune di Reggio Emilia

4.3.4 Figuring the impact of the intervention through citizen's opinions

One of the questions posed in the questionnaire was about the tactical urbanism intervention carried out in Popol Giost Square in September 2020. Although among the requests of the citizens there was more public space, the majority of people did not like the intervention made in the square. The reason why they did not like it is that according to many people, the space is an additional incentive to bivouac with drunks and wasters. The intervention, however, was more appreciated by residents than by merchants, the latter in fact complain for the reason that fewer parking spaces mean less revenue for the commercial businesses, although the baker who is located just in front of the square was very happy with the project.

How much did you like the intervention done in Popol Giost Square?

38 15 6 6 19 25 15 12 12 12

It's just a waste of resources and space

I love it!
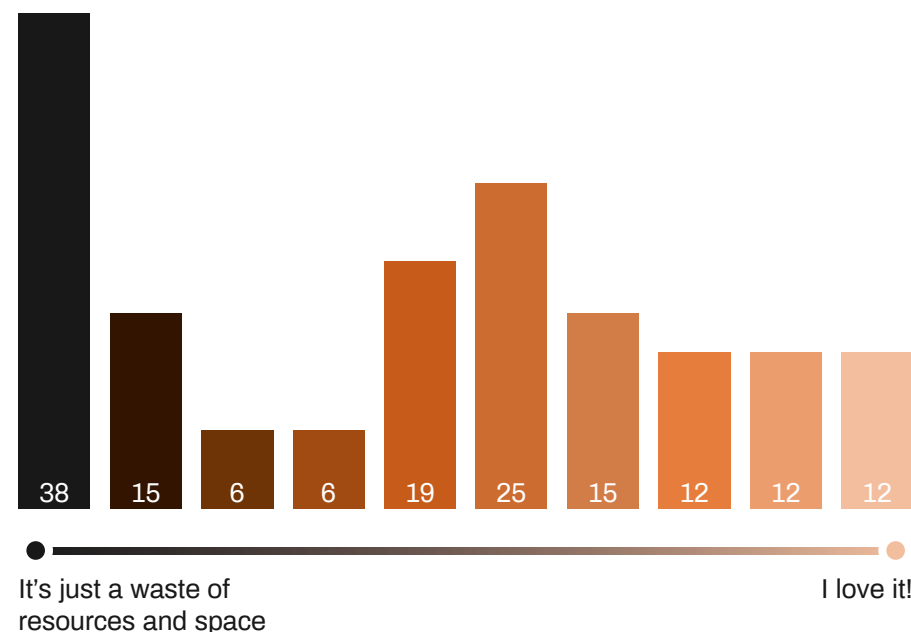
Once the questionnaire was completed, I conducted in-person interviews to better understand the reasons for some of the responses, and the responses from the citizens were clear: the reason the intervention was not appreciated was because of the lockdown, in fact, according to many people they could not have chosen a more wrong time to do such an experiment. The period of the winter between October 2020 and March 2021 the region of Emilia Romagna was practically in a continuous lockdown, and this, in addition to afflicting businesses, also caused the absence of people from the streets. More importantly, because of the pandemic, schools remained closed, so the main function of the plaza - to be a safe and welcoming space for kids coming out of school - was missing.

Annarella, Tentazioni Gioielleria: *This intervention should have been thought of before it was done, we are in a period where the streets and public spaces are deserted, what is the point of an additional public space?*

Silvana, Effetto Donna: *In this situation of economic fragility for my store, the project of the square was another hard blow, it was better to wait for the situation to stabilize.*

Anna, Erboristeria Cosmonatura: *They made the square to get the kids safely out of school, good, but now tell me, where are the kids? they are at home! Those of the municipality do not know how to think a little about the future?!*

Giorgio, Panificio Antonelli: *It would have been nice to see kids playing and spending time in the plaza, it would have given the neighborhood a boost of life. But now it's just bums and drunks on those benches...*

Sara, Galleria 13: *Without the school open it's just another magnet for drug dealers and drunkers on Via Roma.*

It turns out, then, that the main problem lies not in why or how it was done, but in when it was done. According to the locals, the problem could be partially solved with the reopening of the schools, but then there is the inconvenience of the construction site that will occupy the square. For this reason many citizens complain that the intervention has not served any purpose and it would have been better to leave it as a parking area until the construction site would have began.

The project to be implemented must therefore provide for the constant presence of people, activities that ensure that there is a presence by the company at all hours of the day, and even in the evening. In addition, with the construction site in the start-up phase, it is necessary to ensure that the corners of the square bordered by the barriers of the construction site do not become dark and dirty corners. It is therefore important to take advantage of the fence to allocate it to secondary functions and uses, to allow artists to decorate it or exhibit works, for this reason I thought that among the elements necessary for the square are also included exhibition panels with their own light to allow photographers to exhibit their prints during the period of the European Photography.

4.3.5 Tactical urbanism project for the square

Right now the plaza is half used as a parking lot. The other half instead has been the subject of the intervention illustrated in paragraph 4.3.1. The construction site will then occupy the entire eastern area of the square, and a remaining part will be left free for the passage of duty vehicles.

When the construction site moves into the square (around June 2021), the process of removing the parking will begin, and so the remainig space of the square will be freed up to make room for other functions. Initially the project intended to develop a large social common area, with activities such as ping pong tables and a wooden platform to compensate for the uneven state of the road pavement.

The project also included contacting the Camposaz group to activate a participatory workshop to co-produce a wooden structure usable by all, a kind of urban furniture/public work that would attract people to visit it. Unfortunately (or fortunately) for economic reasons these ideas have been discarded in favor of a more pragmatic and realistic approach: the square has the potential to help economically the restaurant activities in the area, allowing them to occupy the space with tables and chairs. This choice was made because of Covid-19, restaurant businesses cannot accommodate customers inside the venue and need summer expanses more than ever.

The Municipality of Reggio Emilia, like many other Italian cities, because of the situation, has given the possibility to Ho.Re.Ca. activities to occupy public land (especially parking spaces) for free with a simple request. This is why it was decided to give the space to the two restaurants that overlook the square, Canossa and Mascetti, which immediately showed interest in the matter.

The two restaurants facing the plaza have shown interest in occupying the space cleared of cars with their tables for summer stretches.

In addition it was thought to provide the space with a small stage where, during the summer evenings, local bands can perform in front of the tables with customers. Moreover, I designed a way to make the construction site and its barriers relate to what remains of the plaza and the expanses of restaurants. I thought that the barriers could be used for displays of photographs from the European Photography event, as if the square would become a small open-air exhibition. Another function to be given to the construction site barrier is the possibility of adding a white canvas on which to project films or soccer matches during evening events or during dinners for restaurant customers and passers-by. Acting on these aspects, public intervention does not aim to create income and employment directly, but, by modifying the characteristics of the context that increase the expected profitability of private investment, aims to increase the attractiveness of places to additional mobile resources (capital, labor, but also new population).

Fig. 1: Co-designing the space with the owner of Mascetti restaurant. Image source: By the author

The square as it is now, half of the plaza is still dedicated to high turnover parking for non-resident cars. There is a loading/unloading parking lot which, however, is often abusively occupied by illegally parked cars.
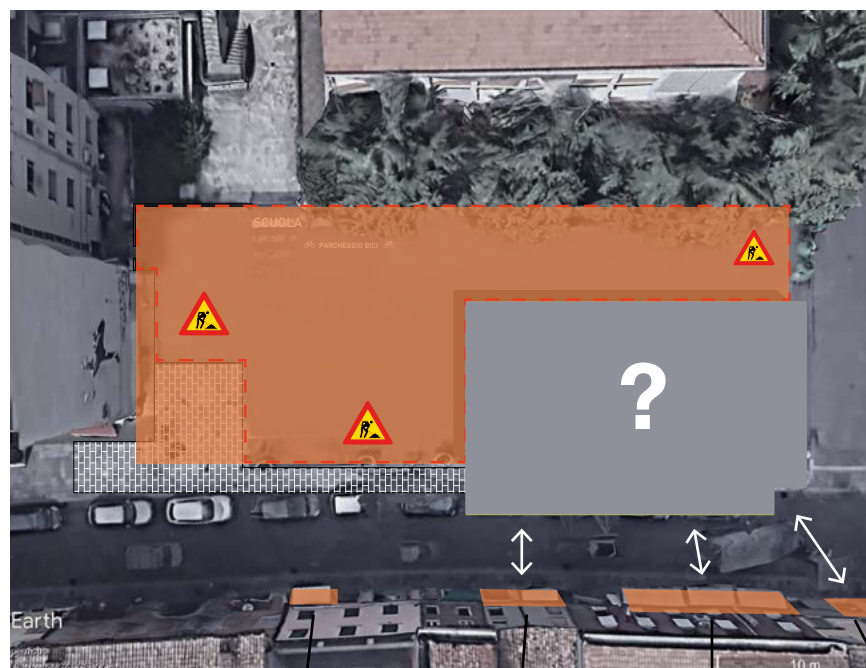
The available space, displayed in gray, also includes the 4 parking spaces along the street near the intersection, the parking space dedicated to loading/unloading freight will be moved back slightly to allow the waiters to move from the restaurants and the plaza and viceversa.

Ho.Re.Ca: Antonelli   Sindbad   Canossa   Mascetti
              Bakery   Kebab   Restaurant Restaurant

It has been decided that it was appropriate to continue the colorful stamp decoration on the floor of the square to give a sense of continuity to the experiments. This is because the area to the left of the square (the one currently affected by the first experimentation) will not be closed by a fence, it will be accessible, the only thing is that it will have to be left free of furniture because of the transit of construction equipment. The decoration of the right side will be uniform and will be made by the same citizens who have offered to collaborate also to have the opportunity of a day of socialization, the realization will take place on May 21-22 in a participatory manner with some employees of the municipality as coordinators.

Site plan:

Legend:

🌳 Planted trees   x7 (already available)

▬ Benches   x10 (already available)

🪣 Paint 4 colors   x4 barrels

☐ Display panels   x20

▬ Events stage   x1 (5x2m)

▭ Cinema screen x1

Fences to divide the construction site from the square

Screen for projections and wooden stage for events, on the rest of the fences are attached the display panels for public exhibitions

The space dedicated to tables is divided between the three restaurant businesses:
Blue: Mascetti
Green: Canossa
Purple: Sindbad
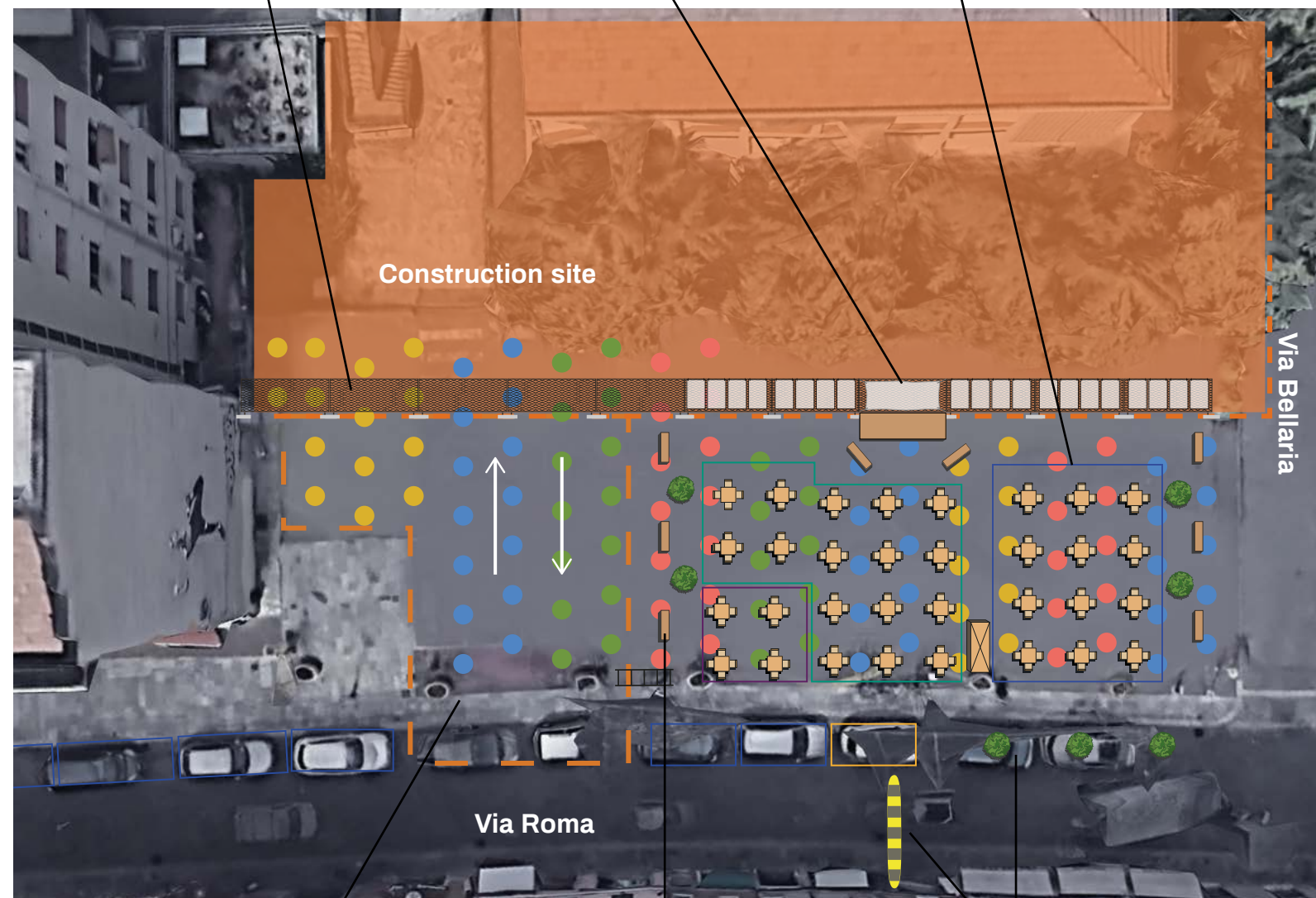
Area to be left free for the passage of construction vehicles

Some benches and planters remain unchanged in their original place, the rest are distributed on the side of the square towards Via Bellaria

Road elements to secure and facilitate the passage of waiters from restaurants to the plaza

State of the art

Vision (by the author)

4.3.6 Tactical urbanism project for the street

The section concerned is the southern area of Via Roma, i.e. the stretch of road from the junction with Via Dante Alighieri to the junction with Via Sessi. The stretch of road is 117 meters long and is located in the Restricted Traffic Zone, in this section the road is one-way down towards Via Emilia. Despite the narrow road section, the street continues to remain accessible to the cars of the residents of the historic center and to all service vehicles, including the H minibus, the street is also open to the passage of freight vehicles for the logistics of some stores on the Via Emilia, it happens in fact to see large trucks cross this narrow stretch of road to supply the future supermarket on the corner of the street and the clothing store OVS. On this stretch there are some commercial activities though, the International School of Comix, some private banks and three shops dedicated to the Ho.Re.Ca.: Tigelliamo, Pasticceria Boni and Café Roma.
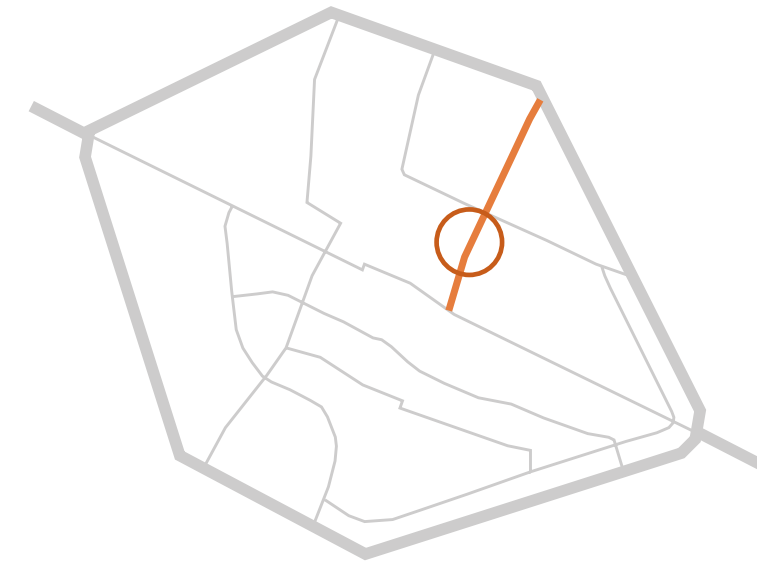
Analyzing the criticalities of this stretch of road:

During the field research, I had the opportunity to study the road and its characteristics. The first and most obvious consideration is that the road in this section is narrow, we are talking about an average road section of 5m. The problem would not persist if there were no (legitimate) on-street parking dedicated to residents' cars. This further narrows the roadway making it difficult for other vehicles to pass, especially buses and transport trucks. In addition, heavy service vehicles and buses are allowed to pass through the street, and space for pedestrians and cyclists is kept to a minimum: the sidewalks are an average of 1.5m wide.

The biggest problem is when people try to cycle along the street coming from Via Emilia. In fact, on all the streets of the historic center, bicycles are allowed to pass in the opposite direction, so as to avoid them going on the sidewalks. The problem is that with the parking lots on both sides of the roadway, bicycles going against the direction must be very careful to avoid the cars coming down the street, and this poor visibility and lack of space greatly increases the danger of an accident. In fact, it is not uncommon to hear of cyclists who fall because of the cars, those who ride bikes are then forced to get on the sidewalk and because of this create further discomfort for passers-by on foot or for couriers.

These issues and also the economic damages this parking situation is causing to the shops have also been pointed out during the interview sessions and meetings:

If possible remove cars parked everywhere, especially fix the bike path, especially in the stretch from the pastry shop Boni to the corner with Via Sessi (every time you risk being run over).

Rainy Island Photography Studio

One time a cyclist almost hit one of the paintings we were unloading from the truck, and this is not his fault, but the space that is too narrow.

Phidias Antiques

Last year I already had a thought about the possibility of putting the expanses outside my venue, but then I gave it up because of parked cars.

Boni Patisserie

We need to put the expanse out, we have virtually no sales this year, plus the comix students would enjoy it when they come out for lunch.

Tigelliamo

Also through the questionnaire has been confirmed the willingness of citizens to remove parking on this stretch of road and favor the local and bars with stretches and parklets, all this disincentivizing illegal parking through physical elements.

In favor of removing parking from Via Dante to Via Sessi?

	Yes	93%
Yes	No	0%
	I don't know	7%

Major problems observed:

The sidewalk is ruined due to the transit of cars and trucks

Parked cars hide store windows and make the street unattractive

Poor safety for pedestrians and cyclists, light accidents are frequent

Insufficient space for two-way cycling, bike use is discouraged

State of the art

- [ ] Resident parking x11
- [ ] Loading/unloading x1
- [ ] **BUS** Bus stop x1
- [ ] Critical areas, i.e. where circulation is made more dangerous due to limited space available or poor visibility - 65% of total street area
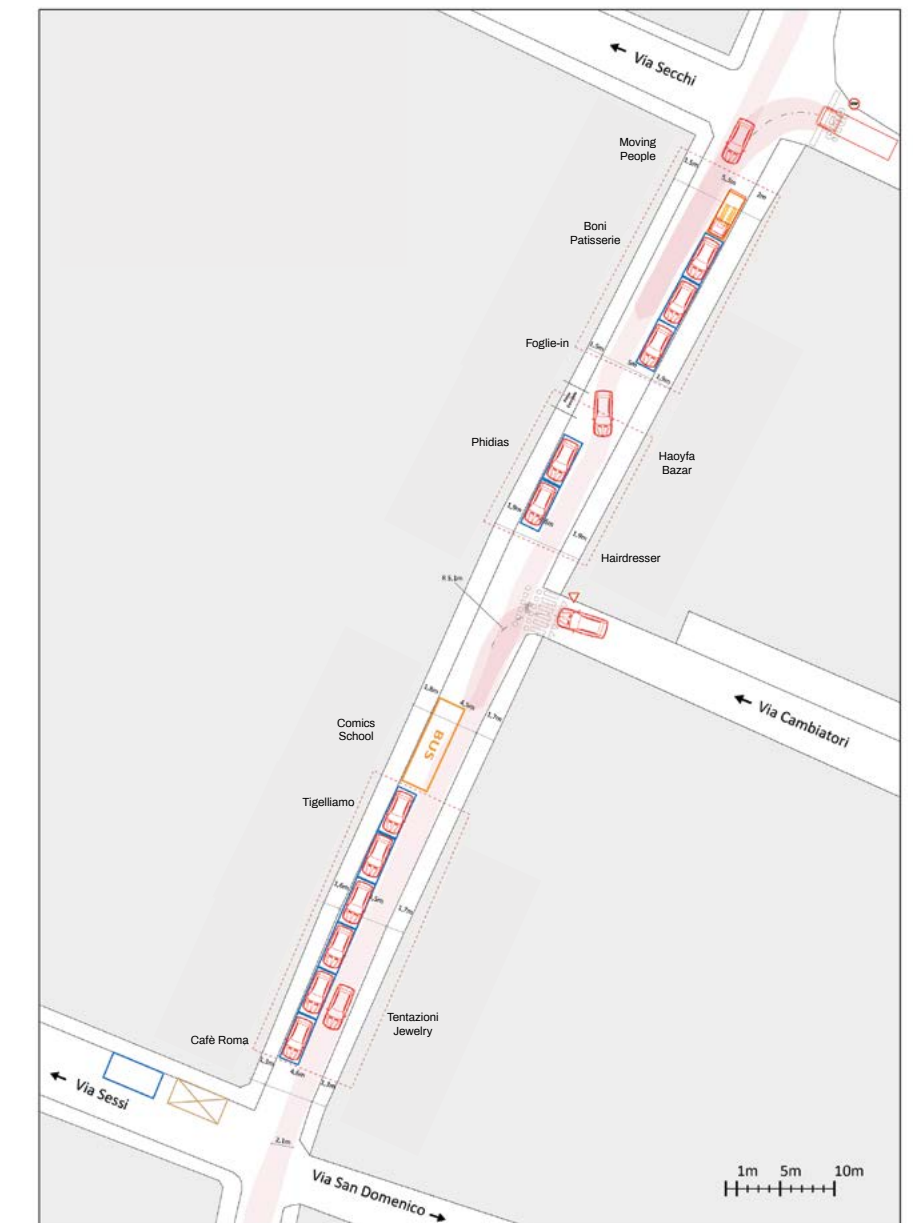
Fig. 2 to 5: Photos showing the presence of citicity on a daily basis. Image source: By the author

Fig. 1 (page 137): Workers remove parking lot pavement markings. Image source: By the author

Site plan

Legend

🟩	Planters	x10
🟫	Parklets	x4
🚲	Pictograms	
▭	Bike Rack	x1
[ ]	Critical areas are now reduced to the 20% of total street area	

← Via Secchi

R 7.2m

Moving People

1.5m

5.3m

2m

Boni Patisserie

1.5m

6m

1.8m

Foglie-in

7m

Phidias

Haoyfa Bazar

1.9m   4.6m   1.8m

R 5.1m

Hairdresser ❸

← Via Cambiatori

1.8m   4.5m   1.7m

Comics School

BUS

❷b

Tigelliamo

1.6m   4.5m   1.7m

❷a

13m

Tentazioni Jewelry

Cafè Roma

1.3m   4.6m   1.3m

DISABLED

❶

← Via Sessi

2.1m

Via San Domenico →

1m   5m   10m

Road sections:

❶

138	300	60	100	136

460

❷a

160	150	273	35	169

458

❷b

BUS STOP

180	50	306	100	169

456

❸

189	280	85	100	191

465

❹

152	200	275	32	196

507

❺

149	150	289	100	204

539

4.3.7 Solutions implemented

First and most important novelty introduced with this project: the parking spaces for residents have been removed, the loading/unloading area is instead maintained (which is however moved to the left side of the street) and the bus stop, in front of the School of Comics, is left unchanged; the bending radii of even the largest vehicles are however guaranteed.

From the technical drawing it is possible to see that now cyclists coming from the opposite direction are more protected thanks to the flower boxes that delineate the separation between the roadway and the two-way bicycle path. Cars are forced to slow down because of these elements on the road, elements that however allow better visibility and aesthetic beauty than parked cars.

In order to allow the bars to increase their activity during the spring and summer period, the installation of wooden parklets has been planned. These are flat platforms that allow the bars to place tables and gazebos and guarantee more safety for the customers who consume, because the street continues to be accessible to traffic. This solution of the parklet platforms allows a reduction of the space occupied compared to a standard car, the parklets were also designed in the appropriate size to be inserted into the context.

This solution is therefore proposed as a better compromise than providing a more usable and safe street for all types of mobility, but at the same time meets the economic needs of bars and restaurants by providing a practical solution that not only improves the potential of the local but also beautifies the street, attracting customers and visitors from outside.

4.3.8 Co-designing the parklets

Since this is a project of tactical urbanism in all respects, the participatory component of the intervention could not be missing. If for Piazza Popol Giost the participatory component was more evident (from the collaboration with the restaurants to the co-creation of the space with the citizens themselves) for this stretch of Via Roma the situation is different. In this case the citizens were unanimous in their decision to remove the parking spaces from the street, but there was a lack of participation in deciding what to do with the space obtained from the removal of parking spaces. The vast majority of the space has been dedicated to the functions of mobility and road safety, such as the dividers to delimit the two-way bicycle path, the planters to prevent illegal parking and the bike rack to cover this region of the historic center with the new arch racks. Therefore, the "commercial" space was missing, that is, the parklet modules to be dedicated to the use of the two premises that required the extension on the street. I therefore assisted the two locals in the design of the parklets, the owner of Tigelliamo was very interested in participating and proposed ideas and needs for her expanse, here are the insights from the session:

- The expanse needs the space of two parking spaces in front of the venue, because due to social distancing rules it is not possible to have customers stand too close together.
- The furniture will be provided by the venue, as well as any gazebo and light bulbs for the evening.
- The parklet should give a sense of safety and security from cars passing along the road, and can be done using pots or wooden separating elements.
- There are manholes at the location where the parklet is to be placed so the possibility to move or open the parklet at a point to inspect the manholes must be thought of.
- The cost of the platform will be borne by the venue, the important thing is to help her find a vendor for materials.
- The intervention must be implemented by the next lockdown measure alleviation.
- The structure must remain within 150 cm of width to avoid the reoccurrence of critical issues related to the narrow road section.
- It is important not to have a height difference between the sidewalk and the platform.
- Need to maintain accessibility for delivery guys (JustEat, Deliveroo...).

First proposal:
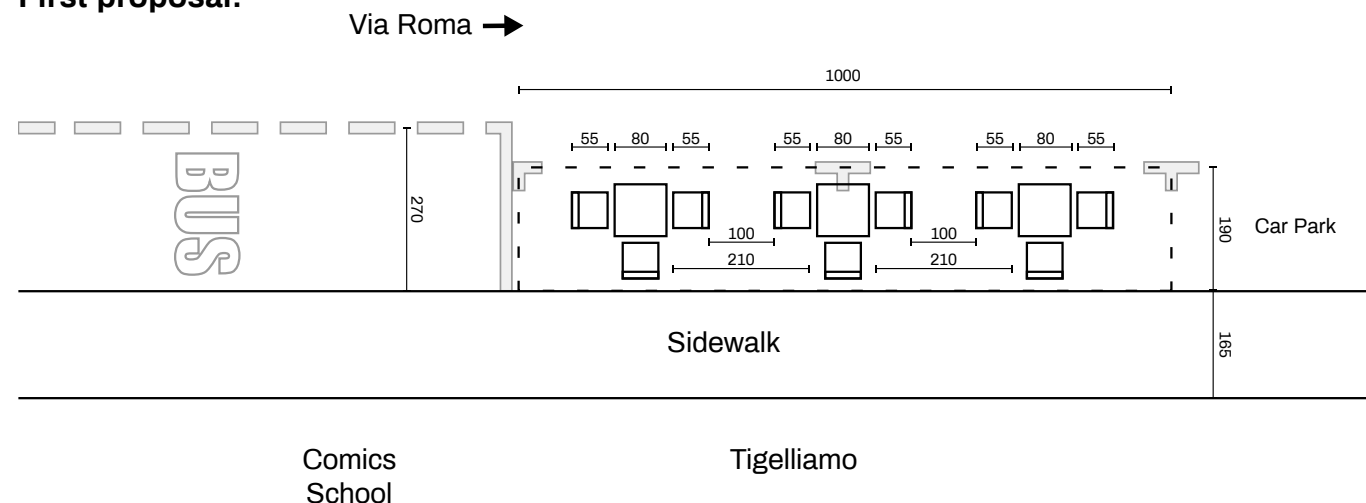
Revised proposal:
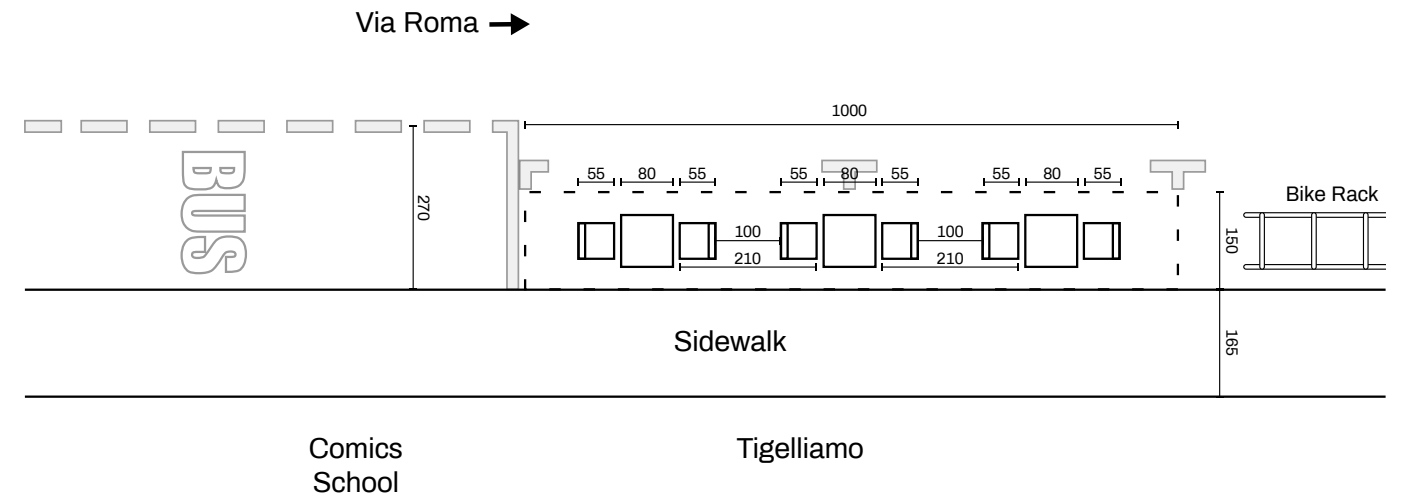
Module base:

I designed a universal module for the parklet, made of wood planks treated to withstand the weather and made so that it is adaptable and versatile, the height from the ground of 10 cm is chosen because it is the average height of the sidewalks compared to the road in that section of Via Roma. The module is made to be able to realize any work on it, it can withstand very high weights thanks to the many (9) wooden beams that support it. I contacted a local carpentry company to ask for a quote on materials and paints. Another option we thought of, instead of using wood for the laths, was to use a wood-like PVC plastic material, which is much stronger and more durable, but also more expensive, which is why it was discarded. It must be remembered that the goal is to keep costs to a minimum because this is a tactical and temporary intervention.
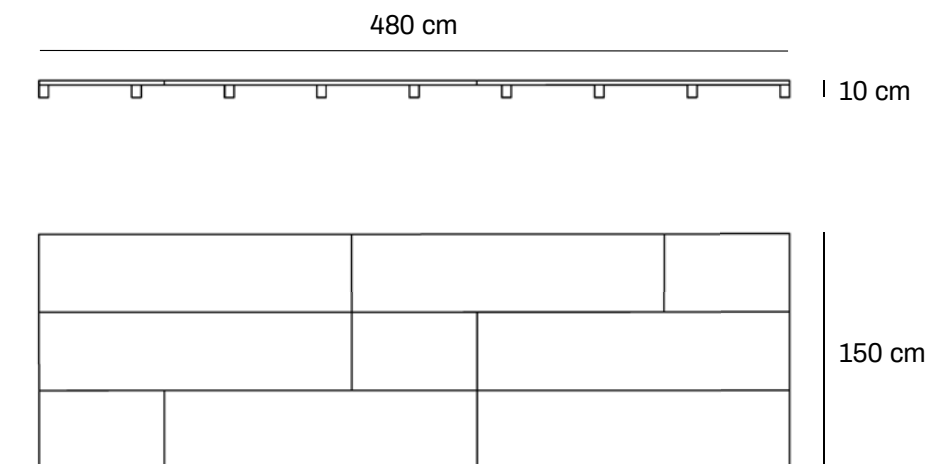
Fig. 1: The two waiters from Tigelliamo with whom I was able to talk about the project. Image source: By the author

Base module components and price (each)

Materials cost: 278,21€
(VAT included)
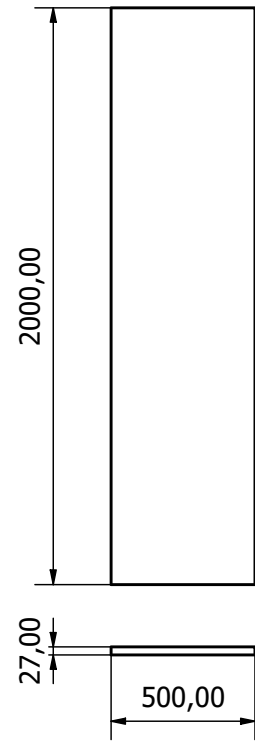
Yellow construction panels	Cut yellow panels	Treated spruce frames	Wood screws 6cm
Quantity: x6	Quantity: x3	Quantity: x9	Quantity: x100
Price each: 18€	Price each: 11€	Price each: 7,5€	Price each: 16€
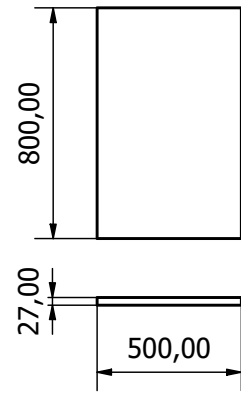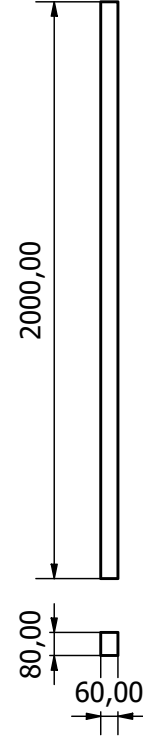
Possible evolutions of the base module

Base

Exhibition   Planters   Catering   Play activities
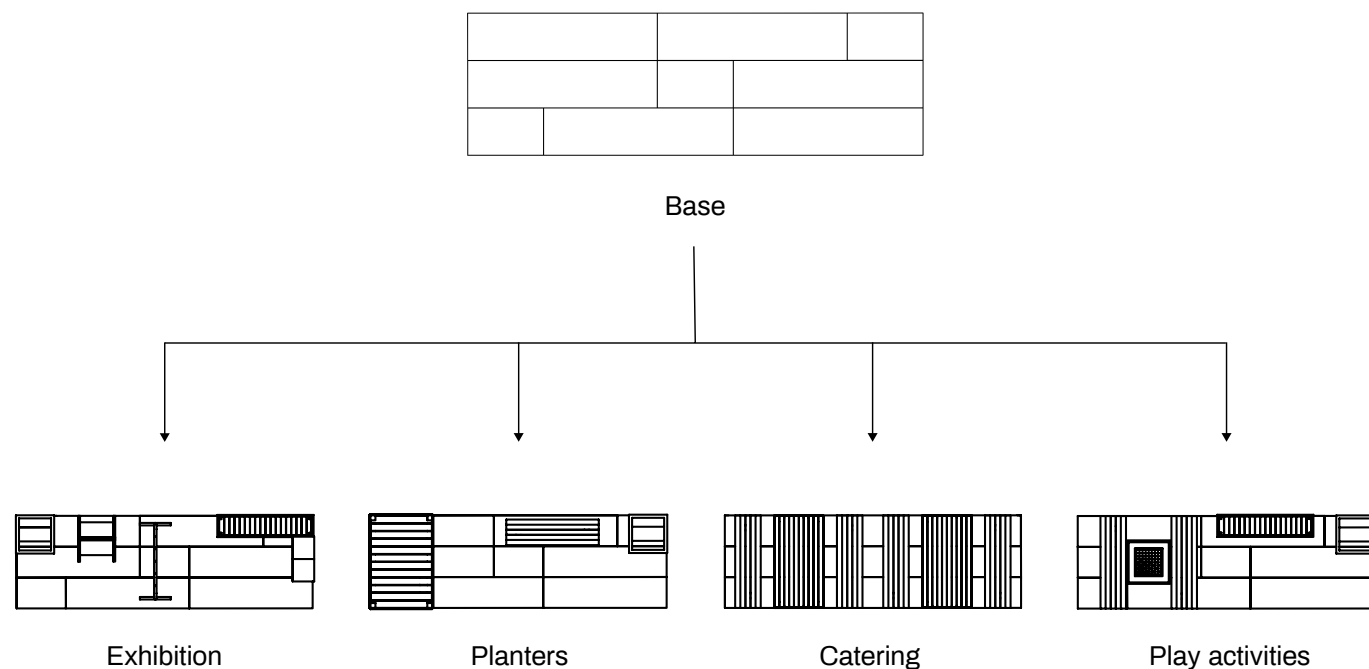
Module for exhibitions

This is a type of parklet designed for stores and galleries, artisans can display some of their wares or during city events such as European Photography, the parklet can act as an independent mini-exhibition.

Module with flowerboxes

This vision comes from the citizens' request to bring more greenery to the street, a parklet is a public space is can be designated for a small public garden with aromatic herbs and decorative plants to enhance the overall atmosphere.

Module for restaurants

The catering module is probably the most feasible and the most likely to be realized, because its function is to host the activities of the local Ho.Re.Ca. that are currently in difficulty due to the restrictions caused by Covid-19.

Module for simple games

Among the parklets for social and non-commercial use (i.e., those intended for the specific use of restaurants and their customers) I also thought of a module that would allow for activities such as small board games, so as to provide a greater attraction in the street.

Fig. 1 to 4: Renders of the various modular ideas for the parklets. Image source: By the author

Fig. 5: Render photoinserted of a possible parklet for Tigelliamo (not related to the technical project). Images source: By the author

State of the art

Vision (by the author)

4.4 Designing the service

4.4.1 Applied method

The process was iterative combining both divergent and convergent thinking. It started with a discover and research stage aiming to identify user needs through behaviour-led design research to understand the problem and its context. This has led to the next stage of activities aligning and interpreting the user needs into the wider objectives of the organisations and society. I then iterated and prototyped these design-led solutions to test their relevance together with local stakeholders.

▲ Research   ▲ Concept Prototype   ▲ Design
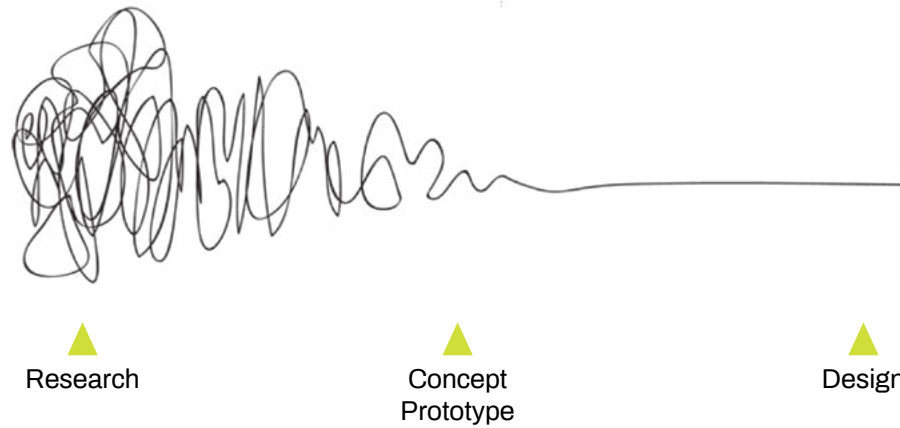
The evolution of the concept was characterized by a series of iterations and rethinks due to various obstacles that formed during the growth of the ideas. To develop the ideas I needed to interface with external people, people who are directly or indirectly involved in the affairs of the neighborhood. But not only them, I had to deal with authorities and external stakeholders, each person bringing a new piece to the puzzle, making the final outcome more complex but also more exciting.

But just adding elements has a problem: it's chaos, too many features trying to fit into a single container. So there was a need to thin out, eliminate the superfluous and keep only the component really useful to the community. For this reason I addressed directly to the citizens, I was able to make meetings (one online and one in person) with some people who live and work in Via Roma to co-define and co-design a social innovation that was tailored to them.

Fig. 1: The designer mind process. Image source: By the author, inspired by Central Office of Design

FRAMEWORK FOR INNOVATION

General Challenge

RESEARCH — desk research observation

CHALLENGE DEFINITION — explorative field research interviews

Specific Challenge

INSIGHTS:
- need for stronger social bonds
- great cultural potential
- mobility issues and conflicts

APPROACHES:
- presidium-creating activities
- leverage on art events
- open dialogue on delicate topics

IDEAS ELABORATION — brainstorming

SOLUTIONS IMPROVEMENTS — co-design session

INSIGHTS:
- Ghirba can be the right place for a community hotspot
- Association can provide some social services

Specific Solution

TOPIC — Via Roma is neglected

The neighborhood has been suffering from economic difficulties and a fragile social ecosystem, crime and neglect have turned the place in a ghetto

PRE-CONCEPT — Tactical urbansim projects as a touchpoint between the citizens and the service developed by the association

CONCEPT — Improve area's social fabric

As the interviews and research pointed out there is a will in the citizens to improve the social relationships and undertake solidarity initiatives

FIRST SOLUTION — Virtual tour guide dedicated to the visitors who want to explore the Circuito Off's exhibitions in the street

SOLUTION — Ghirba Social Hub

Main features of the service: Portineria di quartiere, awareness programs, portals for dialogue, discovery tours Circuito Off via Roma

Simultaneously with the service design process the urban interventions would advance

General Challenge

RESEARCH — desk research observation

CHALLENGE DEFINITION — questionnaire interviews

Specific Challenge

INSIGHTS:
- The experimentation in the square was not liked because it did not have the desired function
- The parking lots south Via Roma must be removed

PROVISIONS:
- The square should be divided between the restaurants
- Safety for waiters
- Fewer parklets because of narrow street

(This part has yet to happen)

ACHIEVE COMPROMISE — planning co-design

DEVELOPMENT — construction co-creation

Specific Solution

TOPIC — Via Roma is non-inclusive

This is still one of the few places in the city center accessible by cars from outside. Square is a parking lot, weaker road users face dangers

PRE-CONCEPT — Co-creating intervention with Camposaz workshop in the square. Promoting artistic works by the schools

CONCEPT — Social parklets, Reception desk

The square project leverages the construction site for its "branding", the parklets on Via Roma are part commercial and part social.

FIRST SOLUTION — Removing some of the social features due to budget constrains,

SOLUTION — P. P. Giost & Via Roma Sud

The interventions are completely converted to commercial function, except for the site fence and stage.

DISCOVER   DEFINE   DEVELOP   DELIVER

The process of this project can be defined as cross-disciplinary, i.e. a coordination and interaction between disciplines in order to achieve a common goal by responding to different needs with a holistic and 360-degree approach. In this case one discipline supports another in its own field of action and vice versa but they are at the same level and there is no discipline that coordinates the others as what it happens in a inter-disciplinary approach.

The stakeholders I have collaborated with also come from a variety of disciplines, such as architecture, psychology, sustainable mobility, and visual arts. But I would call these disciplines more supportive, they are complementary to the main project, their component in the work of both urban planning and service is precisely to give more overall solidity to the project.

Disciplinarity

Multi-disciplinarity

Pluri-disciplinarity

Cross-disciplinarity

Inter-disciplinarity

Trans-disciplinarity
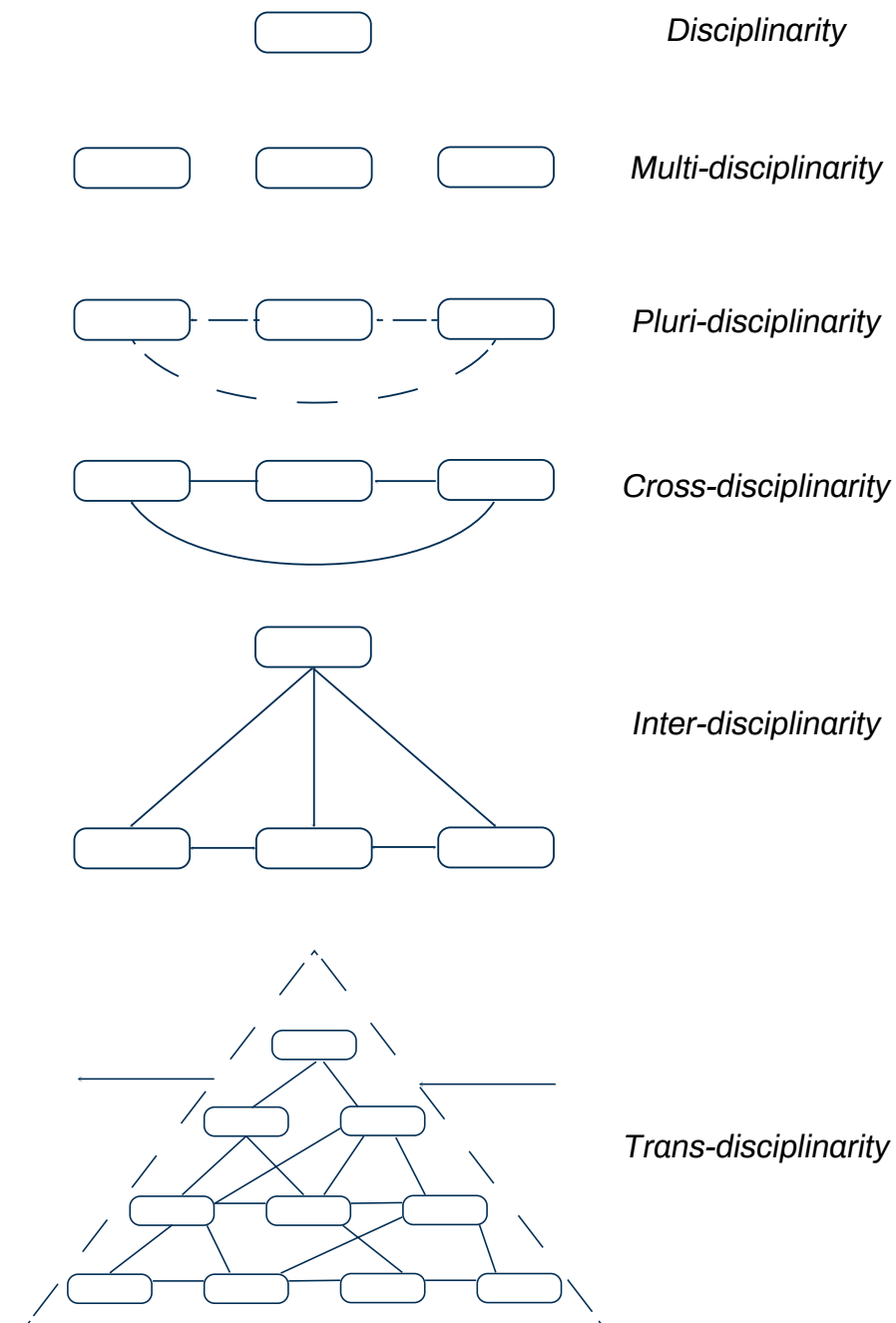
Fig. 1: Scheme of the disciplinary levels.
Images source: Edeholt, H., & Löwgren, J. (2003).

Service development journey

General topic
SOCIAL ISSUES
IN VIA ROMA

Desk research & observation

Hmw?

First meeting with the associations

Surveys
Field research
Interviews

Draft idea (scrapped)
The touchpoint concept
with Creative Living Lab

Frame the topic
Social catalyst activities
for presidium and events

Brainstorming

Fotografia Europea

First concept
Augmented reality-
assisted tour through
the Circuito Off

Co-design session

Concept solution
Ghirba Social Hub
Services offered by the
hub necessary to the
neighborhood:
- Portineria di quartiere
- Support point
- Focus groups
- Circuito Off Tours
- Food solidarity
  distribution

Choosen location
La Ghirba Biosteria

Synthesis

Spatial designs

Scenario
IL CANTIERE DI
VIA ROMA

4.4.2 Challenge definition

After analyzing the results of the context analysis through ethnographic research and in-depht research conducted through questionnaires and online discussions/interviews, it was realized that the main needs of the neighborhood relate to safety and life on the street. The neighborhood therefore needs a strong and resilient and united community that can take initiatives spontaneously in order to attract people from outside and make the street live, day and night. The point then concerns the generation of attractive activities that bring positive people in the area as they act as a "garrison" to reduce bad habits and micro-crime.

In addition, this community support platform must be placed in a physical context as it is the existing one, consisting of the street, activities, bars and restaurants in the area, but also the yard, the square and the summer expanses. Therefore, the project is located in an already built context, which has its merits and flaws, that has supported the existing community for decades.

The main question to ask, then, revolves around leveraging the potential of the physical context and its tactical transformations to create a platform for community resilience and bring the neighborhood back up in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis:

How may we use the available space in a way that can bring more value to the community?

4.4.3 Initial concept: The Touchpoint

The first project involved a partnership between the municipal mobility office and the Via Roma Zero association. The latter was beginning a project to be taken to a national competition sponsored by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. The association's project concerned a mapping of "hybrid" spaces in the city of Reggio Emilia through a collaborative open source platform.

Hybrid spaces were defined as private spaces that perform public functions, such as the common areas of apartment buildings. This project was therefore going to leverage the unused potential of these spaces to give them new functions, useful to the condominium or the neighborhood. The functions can vary from providing space for exhibitions or occasional events, to the possibility of being platforms for small social services such as condo libraries or small nurseries.

The municipality therefore proposed itself as a partner, through the development of tactical spatial proposals such as parklets and intervention in the Popol Giost square as hybrid spaces of the "Via Roma Enlarged Condominium". The urban design interventions would then act as a touchpoint for passersby to come in contact with the service and map of these spaces scattered around the city and would provide a "counter", using these new spaces, to add, report more of these spaces or communicate new activities or public events within them.

The call:
Creative Living Lab is a project promoted by the Directorate General for Contemporary Creativity of the Ministry of Culture to fund urban regeneration projects through cultural and creative activities. It is aimed at public and private non-profit organizations dedicated to culture and creativity and rooted in difficult territories. The fund amounts to 1,1M euros. Selected projects will be funded up to 50,000 euros.
More info at: http://www.aap.beniculturali.it/creativelab.html

Fig. 1: Creative Living Lab Logo. Image source: Direzione Generale Creatività Contemporanea MIBACT

Fig. 2: The inner condominium courtyards of the historic center are the main spaces that the association aims to transform and leverage their social potential. Image source: Il Sole 24 Ore

My project was then implemented in the perspective of touchpoint for a service developed by the association, my task as a designer would then be that of connector between the service of the association and the interventions of tactical urbanism that I was planning with the municipality. An online session was made to better frame this relationship and how the "Hybrid Spaces Desk" could work more concretely. Thanks to this session we were able to define an implementation strategy by following the timeframe of the site and the timeframe needed to implement the physical interventions.

The problem arose because of the "external" stakeholder, namely the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, which, through the call for proposals "Creative Living Lab" (in case of victory by the association) would have provided the economic support to make the project sustainable: the long timing of the ministry did not allow the social project to continue in step with the urban developments on the neighborhood, which, once finished, would have remained unused until the financial support would be released by the ministry.

Initial concept system map:

| Materials | Money | Labour | Informations |
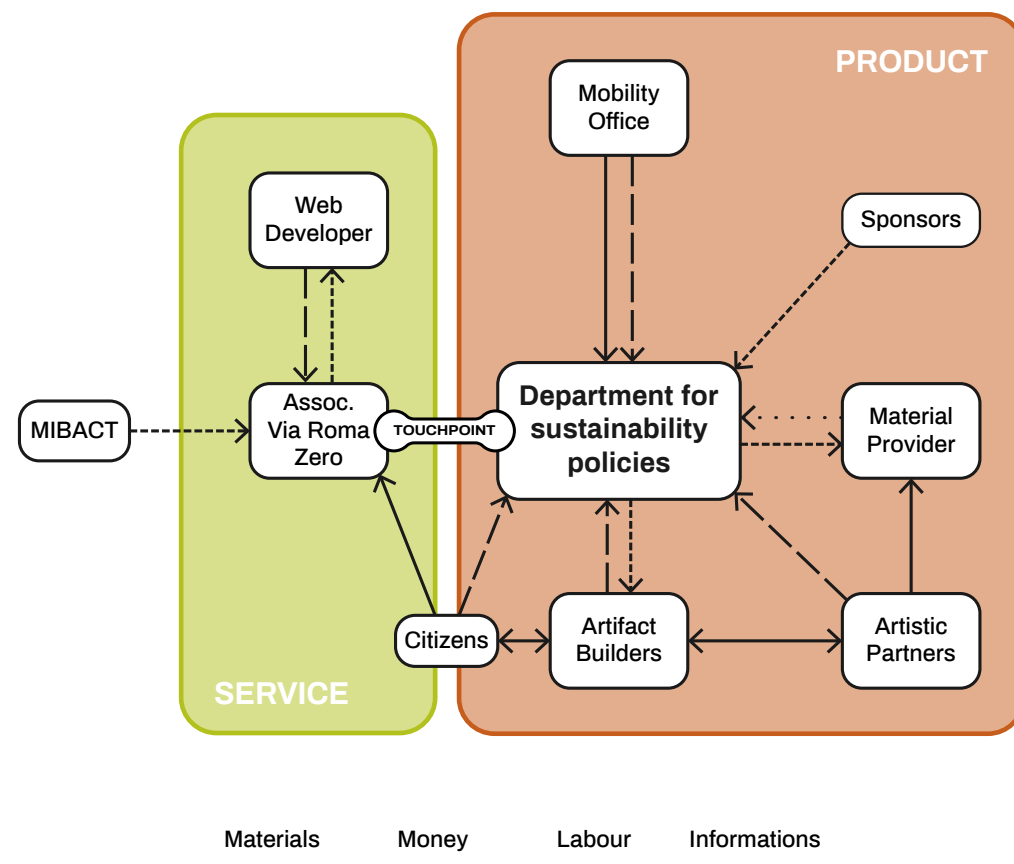
Initial concept road map:

01/12/20 > 28/02/21

The project's concept is proposed to the competition
The service at this stage is just on paper

1. The association develops the inital concept
2. Partnership proposal session with the city gov.
3. Integrating the concept with the urbanism project
4. The draft is submitted to the C.L.L. contest
5. Design the "Hybrid Spaces Desk" for Via Roma
6. Waiting for the results from the ministry...

01/04/2021 > ∞

Project put on hold for funding reasons
The service is ready, it needs the financial support

01/12/20 > 28/02/21

Introduction and engagement
The experimentation of P. Popol Giost is in progress

1. Collecting the citizen's requests and needs
2. Sharing to citizens the intentions of municipality
3. Proposing scenarios to the citizens
4. Search for facilitators and experts with know-how
5. Products co-design with citizens
6. Identify material suppliers and estimate costs

01/04/2021 > 01/04/2022

"Via Roma Work in Progress"
The Scaruffi construction site occupies P. Popol Giost

7. **Construction Phase (April 2021)**

   Freeing up space for merchants and restaurateurs

   Dismantle the furniture in P. Popol Giost

   Collecting materials and tools from partners

   Co-creation of the structures

8. **Fruition Phase (May-February 2021)**

   Shopkeepers use space for commercial functions

   Residents upkeep furnitures & functions of spaces

9. **Decommission Phase (March 2022)**

   Structures are dismantled for the final requalification

01/07/2022 > ∞

Permanent requalification

Partial pedestrianization of Via Roma

Popol Giost Square is permanently redeveloped

L. Masini is pedestrianized and requalified

The viability of the neighborhood is disrupted

4.4.4 Scrapping the Creative Living Lab pathway

The reason revolved around the fact that it was important to give the citizens the possibility to use the service as soon as possible, considering the upcoming summer season and the need to restart activities after the big freeze due to the lockdown. It was therefore crucial to rethink a community service that did not need much financial support, and that could proceed simultaneously with the tactical urbanism project. Although this problem had arisen, I decided that it would still be appropriate to continue working with the Via Roma Zero association, as we had already entered into a process of dialogue and mutual participation and we both wanted to continue working with the goal of improving the social life of the neighborhood.

4.4.5 Reiteration: Restart from field research insights regarding social issues

During the period of developing the first concept, I hadn't yet done very thorough research and some in-person interviews. So it was essential to research the Via Roma community in depth to get a better understanding of how the social fabric of the neighborhood works. This was also helped by the data collected earlier with the online maxi-questionnaire, especially those questions related to the social life and supportive services of the neighborhood.

How included do you feel in the local community?

| 3,6% | 3,6% | 9,5% | 6% | 16,1% | 18,5% | 14,9% | 13,7% | 7,7% | 6,5% |

What community?   Fully included
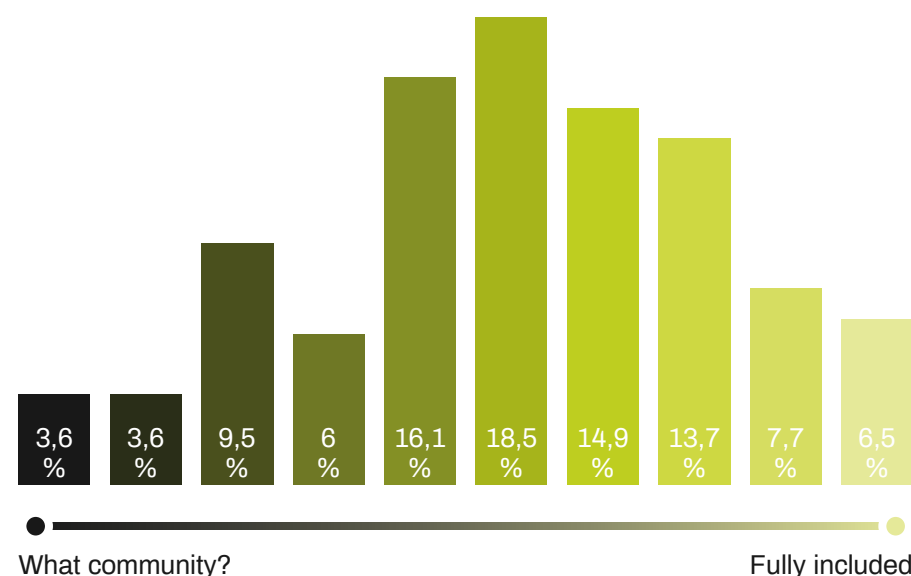
As can be seen from the graph and also from some of the answers to the open questions proposed later in the questionnaire, many of the 171 citizens are aware of the associations, but do not belong to them or participate assiduously. The two associations of the street act as impermeable and almost exclusive bodies.

One is the association "Via Roma Viva" and it is dedicated exclusively to merchants, usually the activities they plan are limited to trade, Christmas lights or cleaning of vacant rooms.

The other association, on the other hand, or Via Roma Zero, is mainly focused on art and culture, the activities they propose are almost always related to art and exhibitions (for example they are very active during the period of European Photography) but according to some citizens, they are not very inclusive and tend to conflict with the other association, especially on issues related to mobility.

On the following page are some of the insights gleaned from the interviews and in-person meetings.

Two impermeable and conflicting associations.

Pierluigi Sgarbi, coordinator of Via Roma Zero Ass.

The most relevant social activities we do are the artist residencies during the Fotografia Europea, for a certain summer period we also organized events and shows in the Santa Maria park.

Irene Russo, member of the Via Roma Zero Ass.

Co-design needs to be told and communicated, you don't call co-design those social activities promoted by the municipality. Those have been non-inclusive, aimed at small niches of people.

Annarella Ferretti, president of Via Roma Viva Ass.

We, the merchants' group, are very united, we have often given each other a hand, even in this period of crisis for commerce, and we are the only ones to create a real presidium in the street, we are the first to call the police when there is a fight.

Francesco Soncini, member of Via Roma Viva Ass.

There is not much dialogue between the groups of citizens, for example those of the Zero association decided the intervention in Popol Giost square, we didn't agree, they went to the municipality and continued with their idea without listening.

Amrin, shopkeeper and resident

I don't speak Italian well and don't interface much with the resident and merchant groups. However, I would love to have an Italian friend to count on when I need a little help here, especially in bureaucratic matters...

Are you satisfied living/working in Via Roma?

	Yes	79%
	No	7%
	I don't know	14%
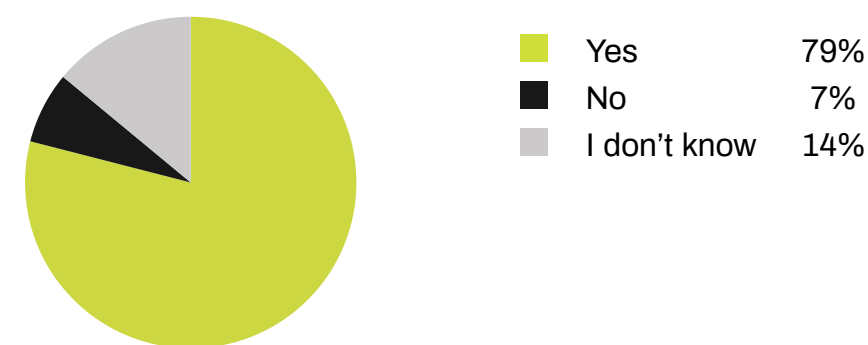
Add a keyword for a social service you would like

4.4.6 Assessment of the spontaneous services developed in the neighborhood

To deepen the research and better understand the context I started mapping the existing spontaneous services in the street, to do this I had to talk to the various representatives of neighborhood associations and get them to tell me the story of the participatory social projects that took place in the street and their successes / failures. It turns out that it is not a very fertile environment for spontaneous social services and innovations, despite this I have found some interesting and surprising projects that have happened in the past few years.

Museo di Strada

It is a fixed and ongoing augmented reality project for visitors to discover the street. Born in September 2020, the virtual/real museum wants to tell the past and recent history of via Roma, which is an ancient street, but has seen also in recent years unique events. These little stories materialize in a audio guide, simply by scanning a QR code on the signs around the street with a smartphone. Realized thanks to the European call Shaping Fair Cities, the museum addresses the major issues of sustainability, gender equality and social inclusion.

Residenze d'Artista during Fotografia Europea

Some residents, especially those who are part of the Via Roma Zero association, make their homes and inner courtyards available to host some independent European Photography exhibitions. In addition, some apartments are made available for workshops and artistic or theatrical performances. The problem with this initiative is that artist residencies are often not publicized much, remaining an experience that only a niche of connoisseurs can experience.

Arte in Vetrina

The city project "Arte in Vetrina" has been developed thanks to the involvement of the Reggio Emilia's city center associations active in the promotion of art, in all its forms, and thanks to the willingness of the owners of the vacant stores in the historic center, who have proved exceptionally sensitive to the desire to give new life to these spaces that are now empty. Via Roma Zero participated in the initiative and it is still possible to see works exhibited in the windows of the vacant stores of the street.

Neighbourhood herb garden

The neighborhood "Magic Garden" is a small piece of land in the Santa Maria park dedicated to the cultivation of aromatic plants and medicinal herbs, the garden is open to all and the association invites citizens to take care of the plants, not just use them and leave the garden bare (which has already happened in the past). The flowerbeds have been recently rearranged and the association intends to invite the children of the nearby Scaruffi school to do didactic garden activities on site.

4.4.7 The theme of discovery and exploration emerges

It is therefore clear that there is already a set of cultural and social foundations on which to develop a service aimed at social innovation. I am convinced that these activities promoted by the association can increase their potential and effectiveness through simple measures that can unify these various components under a single umbrella. What these projects have in common is that they tell the stories of a neighborhood that despite its problems is alive and trying to get back on its feet following the months of closure due to the pandemic and its lockdown.

A possible road on which the service I am planning can therefore turn is precisely the road of "discovery", the discovery of the secrets and hidden gems of a neighborhood apparently rough, but that has much to offer in social and cultural terms.

A path of discovery and reception of visitors from outside can only bring benefits to the community and the economy of the place. Of course it remains the problem of traffic, that until the public administrations opts for a total pedestrianization the critical issues of safety and misuse of public space will persist. But surely a new wave of curious and culturally attentive visitors will bring a form of presidium that many local citizens are asking for. My only doubt about this aspect is that once the surprise effect has passed, after the first visit, the "tourist" will no longer be interested in returning, and the street will begin to empty again.

4.4.8 First concept: improve the digitally-assisted tour of the Circuito Off exhibitions in Via Roma

The research phase was followed by a brainstorming phase to organize and clarify the insights gathered so far. the idea of a digital visitor service project based on physical interactions of the territory then emerged. The idea in fact is based on the discovery of the street and its stories through an augmented reality system. The user interacts with the street through the smartphone in complete freedom. The service is based on the simple idea of the cultural itinerary. The most important thing for this service is the part of motivation and awareness that such a program exists for citizens and visitors.

This hybrid experiential journey leverages on the distributed phisical assets along the perimeter of the street such as the Museo di Strada signs (already in place) but also posters placed in vacant spaces that attract passersby and entice them to undertake this brief exploratory experience.

The process is therefore structured in such a way as to put the visitor at the center and lead him to live a cognitive experience through the physical artistic elements such as photographs, architecture, unique objects but also through the digital interface of his smartphone. Just as in the street museum, here too it will be possible to use the smartphone to delve into the works that are observed, this interaction takes place thanks to the scanning of QR codes or direct research by the user on the interface. This is not an app, but a web-app, a type of software that does not require installation and remains in memory only for the period of use necessary, just to reiterate the high temporariness of the experience. The entire experience is therefore completely down to the user, who can choose what to visit from the options displayed on the map, and can choose the desired route based on their interests and the time that he/she wants to spend in the exploration.

Fig. 1: One of the signs with QR code from the Museo di Strada. Image source: By the author

Fig. 2: A mockup of a possible user interface of the explorative project. Image source: By the author

Persona A: Roberto, 62

Marital status: married
Education: high school
Occupation: retired, ex-employee

Born and raised in Reggio, occasionally interested in visual art, he enjoys photography and visiting the hills of the Apennines. He lives in the southern part of the city, and every Saturday he meets with two friends at a bar in the center, parking his car in the ring road, near Porta Santa Croce.

Laziness	Willingness
Curious	Careless
Tech nerd	Analogic
Available	Busy
Social	Individualist

"Reggio is a quiet town, but despite this there are interesting events sometimes, and we eat well. I like living here, although I am not very satisfied with the work of the local administration."
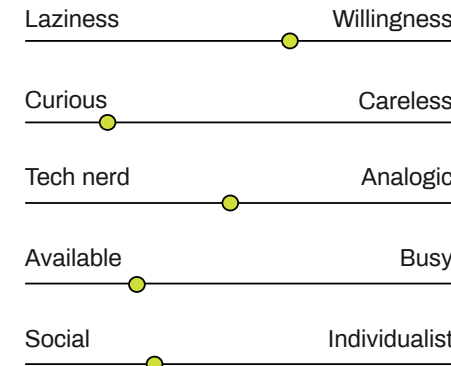
Needs
- Stay healthy
- Maintain curiosity
- Participate
- Live the city

Pains
- Things must work right away
- Doesn't like to leave his comfort zone

Goals
- Visit interesting places
- Discover new stories about Reggio
- Visual inspiration
- Gain artistic knowledge

Roberto's journey during Fotografia Europea

STAGES	Awareness	Consideration	Joining	Tour	Post-Service
ACTIONS & GOALS	While walking to the usual cafe, he passes by a sign never seen	Spends a minute reading the sign. It asks to scan the QR code	Decides to scan code and open the page. A map is shown.. start!	Walks towards a exhibition and start reading from his phone	He is asked to continue the exploration
PERCEP-TIONS	Surprise and curiosity	Already knowing is the Foto. Eu. season	Perplexed. Challenge accepted	Interested, curious, excited	Friends are waiting! Next time for sure.
TOUCH-POINTS	Museo di Strada sign at the beginning of the street (by the arc)	Museo di Strada sign at the beginning of the street (by the arc)	Mobile web-app	Exhibition and mobile web-app	Mobile web-app
SUPPORT PROCESSES	-	-	The server computer recognizes a new user and get his location	Tracking his movements and starts the art's page when he arrives at location	Memorize the choice and the exhibition visited to not repeat it next time
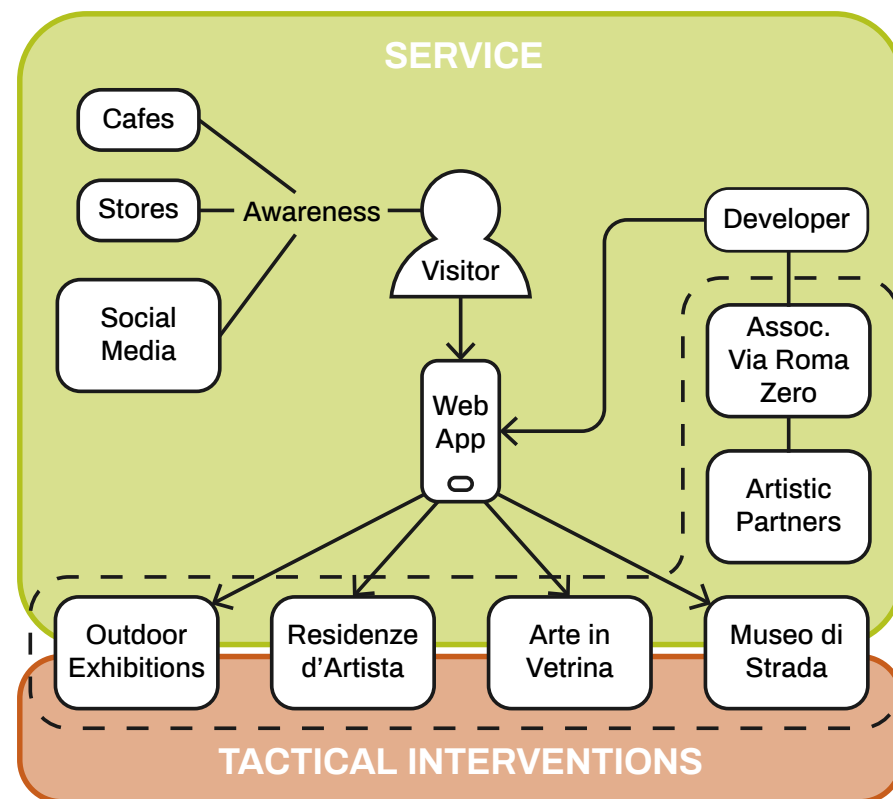
4.4.9 Thoughts on this service

I think this service can have a certain effectiveness and relevance but only during the period of European Photography. In the remaining months it could be used (if you continue to work on marketing) but much more rarely. If during the European Photography there are 4 reasons to use this service (Outdoor Exhibitions, Residenze d'Artista, Arte in Vetrina and Museo di Strada), during the rest of the year the reason is only the Museo di Strada, which is fixed and permanent. The other events are temporary and remain active just for the time of the Circuito Off initiatives.

This project could make sense as a temporary service dedicated to a single season of events, but it lacks the ability to generate a constant and continuous presence in the neighborhood. In addition, this project does not respond to the real needs of citizens found in the research phase, but only partially responds to the issues of giving more cultural life to the neighborhood and attracting more visitors during the events. It is therefore necessary to continue to develop the idea to make the project as inclusive and effective as possible, that it can really be a service that gives a concrete and effective response to the needs and desires of citizens over long time. For this crucial reason the next step must have been the co-design with the citizens themselves.

4.4.10 Co-design to evaluate and further develop the concepts

The co-design session is a fundamental part of the design process of a participatory service like this, and therefore it is very important to design *with* and not only *for* the citizens who will be really involved in this innovation.

For this project I managed to organize two co-design session and those were conducted in different manners and with different goals. The activities were structured in such a way as to create a dialogue among all the participants of the workshop, transforming them into co-authors of the project. People with different skills, backgrounds, visions and operational levels would work on the same table, with the aim of conveying and aligning their ideas towards a common goal. Co-design moments took place primarily in the form of workshops in an informal setting, one online and the other in a downtown coffee shop.

My function in both workshops was that of simple facilitator, for the rest, the participants confronted each other and explored ideas spontaneously through brainstorming. An important thing in order to make the sessions successful was to define and clarify before starting the objective of the Co-design session to facilitate the understanding of the theme and to be able to guide the participants in the co-creation process.

The goal of these sessions for me was to achieve a solid scenario that would respond to the real needs listed by citizens during the interviews but at the same time promote the attractiveness of the area and finally combine these virtues in a system based on proximity and familiarity. It was important for me to make sure that the citizens, living this scenario, would continue to feel at home, since one of the main requests made by people during the questionnaire was precisely focused on the fact that Via Roma is a real neighborhood, complex and alive, and they have no intention of it losing its folk identity.

First session - online - exploratory approach

This session was more oriented to communication of intentions, it took place entirely online in the evening, and was used to understand what kind of social service the citizens of via Roma wanted. Thanks to the modality and time of the event, many people from the community were able to participate (16 participants including myself). I acted as a facilitator for the discussions among the various members. To organize this meeting I turned to Pierluigi Sgarbi, the president of the association Via Roma Zero, and he through his network managed to call the other members and also some of the merchants association.

What went right

Part of the success of this co-design session is to be attributed to the amount of participants. Different backgrounds and as a consequence various mindsets created the right atmosphere and environment for an open discussion and exchange of ideas. All participants were particularly engaged in the conversations as everyone wanted to express their views and opinions. Before this co-design session I had not yet developed a specific and defined service, but I had some key words and the draft concepts shown on chapters 4.4.3 and 4.4.8. Those concepts indicated a direction, but were just drafts. Since this was my starting point I decided to not show my vision to the participants, but leave to them a blank sheet. But surprisingly, the main direction I did found in my concept emerged anyway during the discussion. Thereby my previous research about the issues and needs of the community of via Roma turned out to be true. Citizens, unaware of this, have confirmed the pillars behind my general idea.

What went wrong

Unfortunately, given the mode of the meeting and the fact that some participants were not very familiar with the internet and technology, communication was difficult. Moreover it has not been possible to use any design tool for the reasons listed above. If this session with so many people had taken place in person surely many more ideas and design insights would have been brought out.

This meeting served to confirm the design direction undertaken after the analysis of the research. Namely: aiming for a support service for the needy people in the community that is in proximity to home and familiar.

Fig. 1: Screenshot taken during the online meeting, center Pierluigi Sgarbi. Image source: By the author

Second session - in person - "how this will work?"

The second session was instead more focused on understanding how the real community service would take shape and try to assess different formulas of social innovations that could or couldn't work in the neighborhood. It was here that the main concept took shape, confronting directly with the citizens has helped a lot to filter which ideas were appropriate and which weren't. A key element of this workshop was to make participants identify as much as possible with the vision of a participatory and inclusive community, so I wanted to assign them roles to empathize with the possible future users of a community service. Since it was a live session I wanted to take advantage of it to make visual some of the ideas that came out in the previous co-design session through graphic visualizations such as sketches and small storyboards that I had made for the occasion. My intention was to allow participants to add elements to the drawings so that they could externalize their ideas of service interaction and organization.

Giving roles to the participants and making them draw on a storyboard to visualize the actions.

Portineria di Quartiere theme emerges

During the second session, citizens proposed the idea of a bar or venue that is open often could perform "reception" services and could serve as an aid to people in the community who need something simple and immediate. For example, one participant expressed, *"I had my son do my SPID because I'm not very hands-on, I wonder how a single person would do it, and I know in the street there are some lonely, elderly people."*

This comment made me realize how a neighborhood concierge inspired by the model already seen in other contexts such as in Milan, could be effective in this context where such a service has never existed. I then readily introduced participants to the concept of Portineria di Quartiere, showing case studies taken from the internet and talking about my experience designing a community delivery service developed at the final synthesis workshop in Fall 2019. The concept was very well received by the participants, and they immediately started talking about what bar or venue from the street could perform this service.

Fig. 1, 2 and 3: During the meeting, this co-design was held at Bar Momà, the 6th of May. Image source: By the author

From Portineria to Social Hub

Based on the data and insights gathered from the research, it was defined how citizens wanted services that would help people in need or encourage participation in discussions, dialogues and decisions regarding the neighborhood. A simple neighborhood concierge, however, is usually engaged in less complex tasks than social work, such as receiving packages or temporarily storing materials. It was therefore necessary to deepen the topic of concierge in order to evolve it into a project that could provide assistance to the needy people of the neighborhood and, above all, that would allow the creation and self-management of discussion boards among the citizens themselves. A place to share ideas and learn.

During this phase of the session, I thought it would be appropriate to develop the question of neighborhood tours in more depth during European Photography moments through an augmented reality system. The concept had already been introduced in the first co-design session, but in this case, now that we had developed a more concrete idea of service, I asked how this component oriented to tourism and the discovery of street culture could fit into the Social Hub project. It became quite obvious, even from the other participants, that the hub could be used as a starting point and to learn about the artistic journey in the street.

Offering map developed during the workshop

For the single → | Augmented reality tour of Circuito Off | Delivery, mailing, short-term deposit, storage | Library of objects | Immediate aid for needy people | Solidarity purchases | Roundtables on local issues | → For the collectivity

Fig. 1, 2 and 3: During the meeting, this co-design was held at Bar Momà, the 6th of May. Image source: By the author
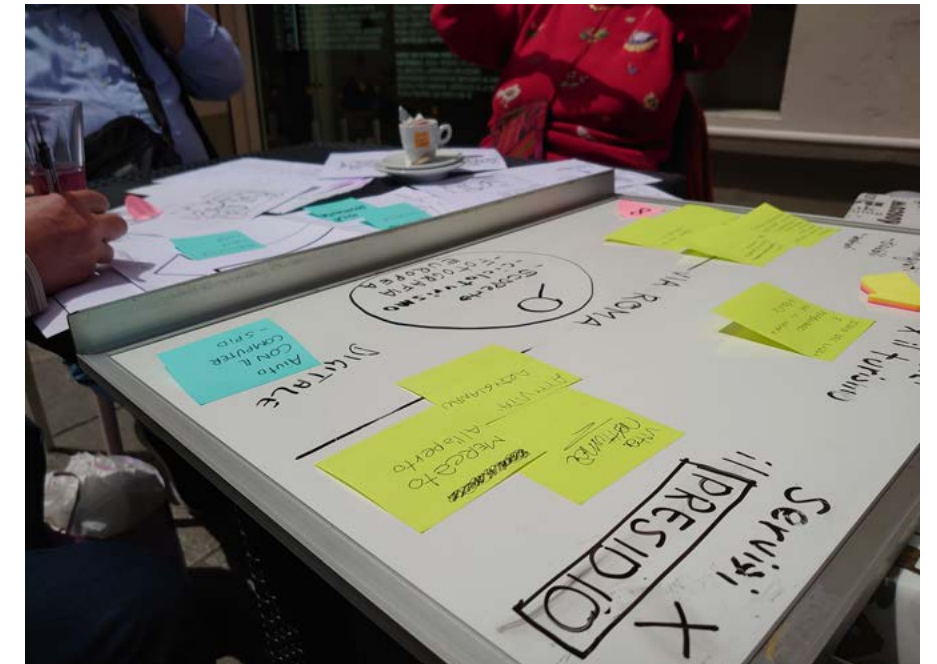
4.4.11 Considerations on the session

The sessions (especially the second one) proved to be effective in designing a system that would be truly useful to the company in Via Roma. While not an absolute innovation, the Portineria di Quartiere is a first for Via Roma, and it is an idea that has enthused all the citizens who attended. This for me was a great success, and I really appreciated that also the participants were willing to proceed and turn this concept into action. I believe that real innovation can also be the implementation of something that exists elsewhere in a context and making sure that this innovation can adapt and tie strongly to the new context. If the concept is proven effective and it's founded on the citizens ideas, it will be a real sign of positive change. Moreover during the sessions it has been reassuring and satisfying for me to be able to see how research done earlier during the lockdown was confirmed by citizens by their intentions and design insights.

What if I could redo the co-design sessions?

One important thing I learned from the past co-designs done over the last years at PSSD was that user research should be done before the co-design workshop is conducted. Because of this precaution, this time I was able to come fairly prepared, empathize better with people and could prepare of more targeted design tools. But I have to admit that the first session did not bear the desired fruit because of the way it was carried out, I felt powerless as a facilitator, while the citizens autonomously undertook discussions among themselves, my role was reduced to that of a listener, perhaps in the future if I had to do an online session again, I would invite fewer people. Regarding the May workshop, I think I should have developed more visually appealing tools, created boundary objects and perhaps tested a desktop walkthrough with the citizens themselves to better understand the processes of the service-system.

4.4.12 Choosing the right location for this service

This episode could be defined as a third informal co-design session, it was done in person, but in a one-on-one manner with association coordinator Pierluigi Sgarbi. Since he was not able to participate in the second session in person with the citizens, I took care of giving him a report on the insights found and the proposal of the Social Hub for via Roma as a gluing concept among the various ideas that emerged.

Example of a Portineria di Quartiere, the case of Portineria14, in Milan:
Portineria14 is a place that, in addition to serving drinks or sandwiches, offers small useful services. Such as the collection of packages and mail, the custody of a set of keys to leave to a friend, the advice of a trusted plumber or electrician. The phenomenon, already present in several Italian cities, is inspired by the famous kiosk "Lulu dans ma rue" in the Marais, in Paris, considered the first experiment of neighborhood concierge, created as a replacement for the traditional concierges of the condominiums, which are in continuous decline.

It remained to be decided where to locate this service in the street, and Pierluigi was direct: he explained that there was no better place than Ghirba, Biosteria della Gabella to insert such a service.

Fig. 1: Portineria14. Image source: Trend&Moda

Fig. 2: Further evaluating the concept of Portineria di Quartiere with the coordinator of Via Roma Zero Association, Pierluigi Sgarbi. Image source: By the author

4.4.13 La Ghirba, Biosteria della Gabella

La Ghirba is a place quite active on social and cultural issues, is a place run by women only and welcomes to work there other girls with social or economic problems, at the moment the staff consists of 6 people. The place is located north of Via Roma, in an old Napoleonic arch, a monument of great importance in the historical context of Reggio Emilia. The place is in concession by the municipality and this allows the workers to devote themselves to social activities without focusing too much on income. La Ghirba in fact is not only a bio-restaurant, but a creative space that promotes cultural, social, artistic and critical consumption activities, it is an ethical, intercultural and participatory project.

So, together with Pierluigi, I moved to go and discuss with the managers of the Ghirba the possibility of starting activities as a Neighborhood Concierge. The girls were very enthusiastic about the idea, also due to the fact that because of the lockdown due to Covid they had a lot of economic problems and a project like this that attracts people from the neighborhood on a daily basis could mean more money for the place. This is due to the fact that whoever stops at the Ghirba to use any of the services of the Social Hub is likely to consume something on the spot and this means economic revenues from the offer of a service that is practically at no cost.

Therefore, the most "technical" part of the project was missing, that is, how to manage this Social Hub and how it would be self-sustaining over time, both with the collaboration of the Ghirba and the Via Roma Zero association. These two actors will be joined by a third cultural association, Associazione Cinqueminuti, which will provide the professional skills of listening and round tables. These themes will be analyzed in the next chapter.

Fig. 3 and 4: The Ghirba Biosteria, views of the exterior and interior with the manager Katrina. Image source: By the author

4.5 Scenario of intervention

4.5.1 Design in depht the processes of Ghirba Social Hub

Through individual design sessions and co-designs with residents, the main guideline for service development could be defined. The Ghirba Social Hub was then analyzed and elaborated as a real platform for social innovation, a new environment in the neighborhood able to catalyze the positivity of citizens and their desire to participate and improve the street. The project also aims to integrate into the scenario the service thought by myself of discovery of the neighborhood through augmented reality for the initiatives of the Circuito Off.

After the analysis of the field research, interviews and insights from the co-design sessions the most important features emerged. The functions that according to citizens should not be missing in such a platform have been defined, now it remains to frame them and describe in detail how these services will work in reality:

Good Neighbor

Ghirba connects citizens, particularly in the neighborhood, creating trust, circularity, sociability and help in solving small domestic problems. Specifically, it is possible to exchange DIY services, computer consulting, heavy housekeeping, visitation and small household help (watering plants or taking care of pets), bill payments, senior grocery shopping and tutoring.

Concierge services

The Concierge provides package and mail receiving services, key storage, grocery delivery and temporary storage of small items.

Sharing objects

The service of "Library of Things" provides for the borrowing of objects (garden tools, toolbox, sewing machine, small appliances, tools, games, etc...) for a limited period of time. The service is accessed by providing at least one object in good condition by the participant.

Itineraries to discover the neighborhood

Cultural itineraries depart from the Ghirba to discover the spaces of the area, this is further enhanced by the presence of the Street Museum and the project of discovery through augmented reality in the initiatives of the Circuito Off of European Photography.

Round table discussion

In the space is promoted the dialogue, it's important to discuss issues concerning the neighborhood. The place can be used just like a condominium space for meetings. Common decisions can be addressed, conflicts can arise, and the concierge acts as an arbitrary mitigator.

Solidarity grocery shopping

La Ghirba already collaborates with an organic farming cooperative for the supply of the osteria's ingredients. The relationship can be improved by giving La Ghirba the possibility to receive unsold vegetables of the day and expiring food at a reduced price or for free, so that they can be distributed to people in need.

What the Ghirba is now:
- Organic ethnic Osteria
- Employment for disadvantaged women
- Live Music
- Hosted some FE exhibitions

What the Ghirba will become:
- Organic ethnic Osteria
- Employment for disadvantaged women
- Live Music
- Hosted some FE exhibitions
- Portineria di quartiere
- Association's HQ
- The touristic "gate" to the neighborhood
- Roundtables
- Assistance to the needy
- Library of things

Social Copy Strategy

Social Promises
- Creating a fertile ground for the growth of the community of the neighborhood.
- Develop a program that enables citizens to continue the above activities independently and on a regular basis.
- Developing trust between the community through the act of helping each other.
- Being a catalyst that allows the growth of more spontaneous social services in the future.
- Provide practical help to people with immediate difficulties or needs, such as helping seniors with digital or giving advice.
- Make up for the shortcomings of people in need with supportive activities such as food distribution.
- Provide useful daily proximity services, without having to go far.

Values
FOR THE SINGLE CITIZEN: Have a familiar and close place to trust with everyday matters.
FOR THE COMMUNITY: Develop a resilient and safer neighbourhood by engaging residents in social activities.
FOR THE VISITORS: The exploratory experience is enhanced and made more interactive, with gamification elements.
FOR THE BUSINESSES: a more vibrant street also means greater actractiveness and economic benefits for local activities.

Reasons Why
- The current community is fragmented and impermeable, participation is low and reduced to just a few members.
- The few social activities that occur are sporadic and related to cultural events.
- Lack of activities aimed at solidarity and mutual aid.
- There are people with needs who don't know where to turn.
- The lack of presence of people in the area causes crime to form.

Target(s)
- Citizens of Via Roma
- Workers in Via Roma
- Artistic partners
- Tourists
- Immigrants

4.5.2 Who are the stakeholders involved?

First of all, it is important to clarify who the actors involved in the service will be. It is certain that there will be the citizens of via Roma (who are also the target of the project), but there are also many other stakeholders who have a supporting position and have the ability to add extra elements to the overall service offer such as the artistic partners of Fotografia Europea, or the contribution of the Cinqueminuti Association in providing the support of professional figures. Other actors, on the other hand, played a necessary role in matters of policy, rules, and bureaucracy, even if they were distant from the service. This happens because this project is real, not just on paper, and public space is tied to rules and decisions often dictated by the administration. This is why I've divided the map into internal and external stakeholders, all of whom have a role in the service, but the internal ones are the key cogs that without them the machine can't run.

EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Local Police

Ho.Re.Ca.

City of Reggio Emilia

Delivery companies

Via Roma Shopkeepers

Association Via Roma Viva

Ghirba Social Hub

Association Via Roma Zero

La Lucerna Cooperative

Team Fotografia Europea

Association Cinqueminuti

Visitors outsiders

Web-app Developer
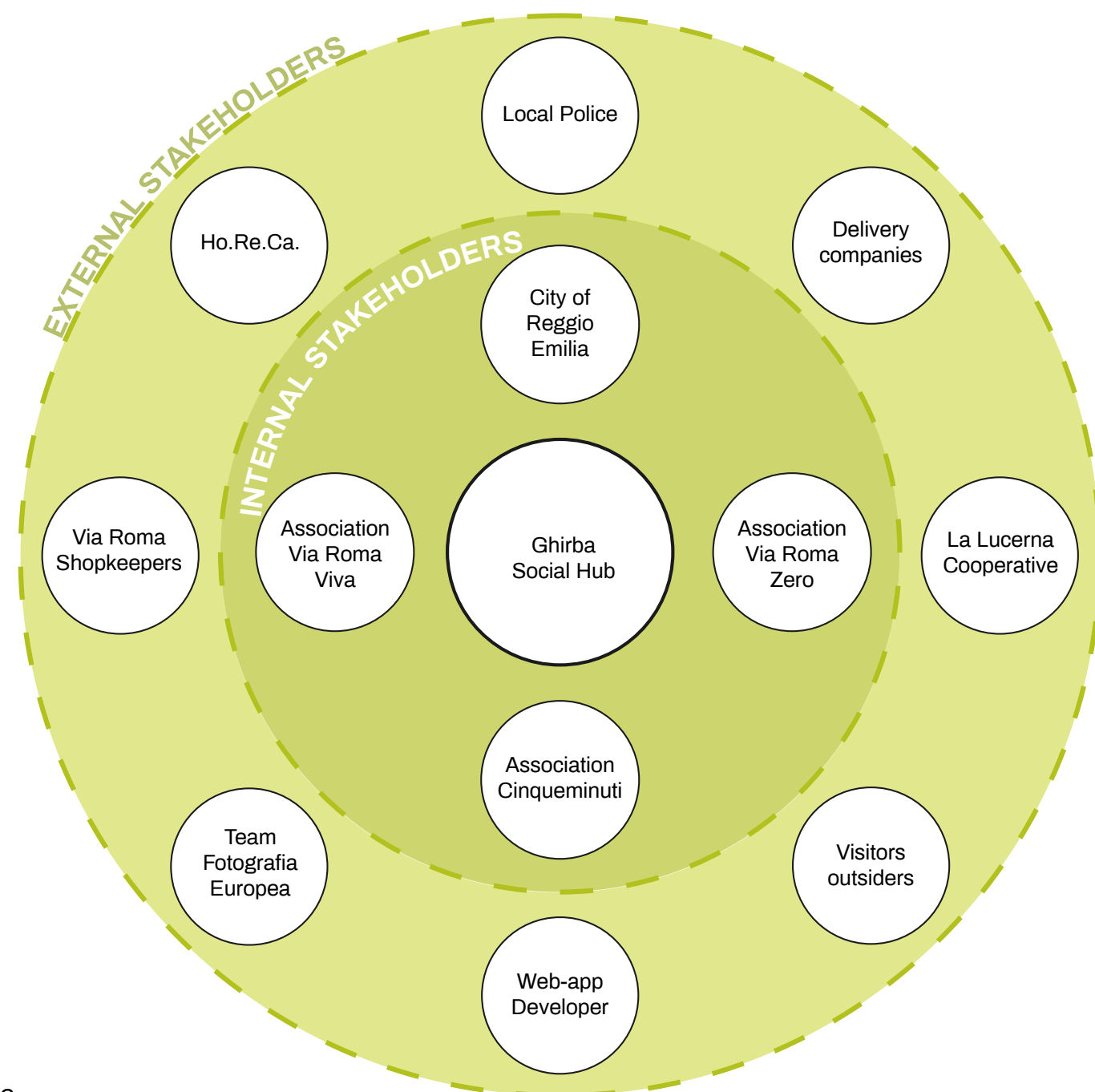
4.5.3 The dynamics of the roundtables

Roundtables or focus groups are citizen meetings focused on resolving social conflicts. The purpose of focus groups is to explore the reasons in favor or against issues concerning physical actions or social dynamics. It is important to implement inclusive strategies to bring about social changes and improvements that affect the social lives of citizens. It is necessary to involve both for and against each new issue that arises so that groups do not become closed and impermeable. The important issue here is to ensure that these meetings function properly and to ensure that they continue consistently over time. For these reasons, outside support is needed, as the citizens themselves may be biased on issues that affect them. There is a need for an arbitrary figure who can organize and manage the sessions. This is where the Cinqueminuti association comes in.

cinqueminuti

The association is well established in the Reggio Emilia context for topics ranging from entertainment to community participation. The association leads and organizes actions of community/networking of the real and invites to the presence and participation addressing to the citizenship to realize together a virtuous circuit of meeting, confrontation and listening, of laboratory experiences and social experimentation. All this is possible thanks to the members of the association, including sociologists, psychologists and teachers. The association is non-profit, and is based on the subscriptions of the members, the association does not have a fixed place where to carry out the meetings, and therefore for this case the Ghirba would be the perfect place to relate these experts with the citizens.

I then received from a colleague at the municipality the number of Daria de Luca, founder of the association. I promptly contacted her via phone call to illustrate the proposal to collaborate with La Ghirba to organize focus groups aimed at conflict resolution in the community. Daria was very willing to participate in the project and accepted the collaboration. He provided me with a calendar of available dates to conduct the first meeting, which was Saturday, May 22.

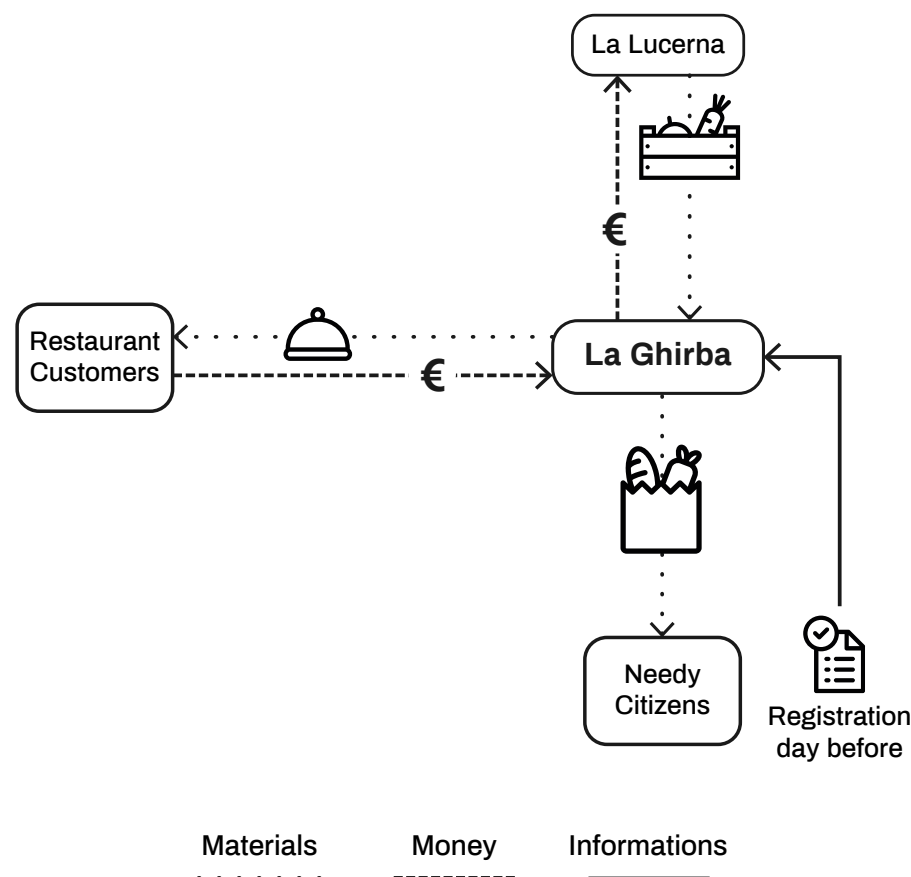*Fig. 1: The logo of the association. Image source: Ass. Cinqueminuti's Webpage*

Fig. 2: The cultural association Cinqueminuti organizes several community actions on the territory of Reggio Emilia. Image source: Ass. Cinqueminuti's Facebook

4.5.4 The dynamics of the solidarity grocery shopping

La Ghirba, as a bio-restaurant, has long been in contact with La Lucerna, an organic farming cooperative located in the Reggiana countryside, for the supply of ingredients and materials for the preparation of dishes. Currently the relationship between the two entities is limited to that of supplier-customer.

My aim instead, following the participatory planning and the insights that have come out regarding the help of people in need through solidarity food supplies, is to bring to a new level the dialogue and the exchange of resources between La Ghirba and La Lucerna. More precisely, La Lucerna, being a medium-large cooperative, also produces a lot of food and vegetable waste; this information was obtained personally by myself through my direct knowledge of one of the farm's employees.

The vision focuses on a process similar to Too Good to Go, which is an app that prevents food waste by producers and merchants by allowing people to get unsold products at low cost. The system in this case would not need an app or complex supporting software. Since the communication is B2B and has already been established for some time through a simple Whatsapp, the process would be immediate: La Lucerna could provide Ghirba with unsold material or material close to deterioration, and in return the cooperative would gain in image and publicity by using Ghirba as a promoter in the area. On the other hand, the Ghirba can then invest these materials and food in charity work and solidarity towards the needy of the neighborhood.

Fig. 1: The logo of the farm cooperative.
Image source: La Lucerna's Facebook Page

Complete system map

Materials (also digital) · Money · Labour · Informations · Space

Concierge Services · Round Tables · Explore the District · Library of Things · Solidarity Groceries Distribution · Good Neighbor

La Lucerna · La Ghirba · Restaurant Customers · Needy Citizens · Registration day before

Registration to pick up your groceries must be done the day before by dropping by the venue in person or via a message.

Materials · Money · Informations

4.5.5 Constructing behavioral models to empathize with possible future service users: Personas

Persona B: Sanjeet, 40

Marital status: married
Education: middle school
Occupation: minimarket owner

Born and raised in Dhaka, Bangladesh, he moved with his wife to Reggio Emilia when he was about thirty years old. Now he has three children and runs a convenience store of his own, but having little knowledge of the Italian language and having relationships only with people from his country, he is not very integrated in the community and therefore does not know very well the opportunities of social service.

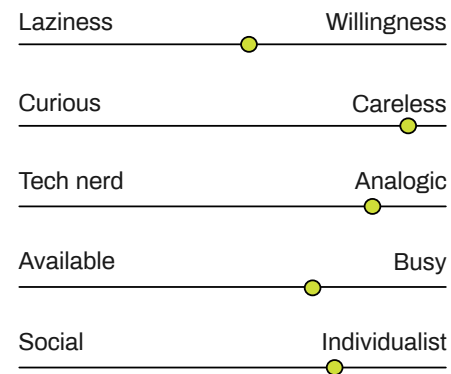Laziness ●——————— Willingness
Curious ———————● Careless
Tech nerd ———————● Analogic
Available —————●——— Busy
Social ———————● Individualist

"I'm excited because I'm buying my first car next month. It's not my fault the drunkards get into fights, but I have rent to pay and I cannot not to sell my beers."
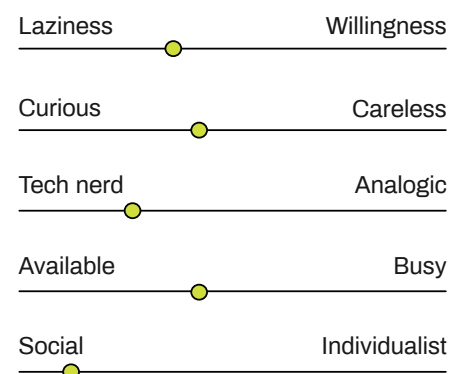
Needs	Pains	Goals
- Sustain the family	- Paying rent	- His first car
- keep the business going	- Finance guard	- join the via roma community
- Help with bureocracy	- Not fluent in Italian	

Persona C: Ruben, 24
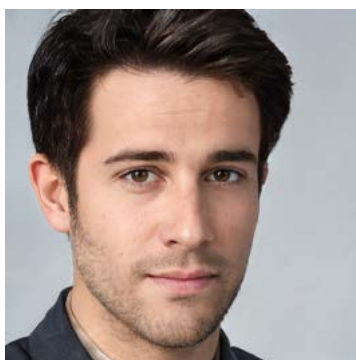
Marital status: engaged
Education: university
Occupation: student

Born and raised in Reggio Emilia, in a medium-wealthy family, he has always lived in Via Roma. His mother is the owner of a prestigious store in the street, he considers himself a leftist, but can't stand immigrants and stragglers, sometimes. He is quite attentive to various artistic events, for this he travels often.

Laziness ——●——————— Willingness
Curious ——●——————— Careless
Tech nerd ——●——————— Analogic
Available ——————●——— Busy
Social ●——————————— Individualist

"When I need to take the girl home it doesn't give her a sense of security to cross via roma on foot with all the stragglers around, so I would like to park close to home."
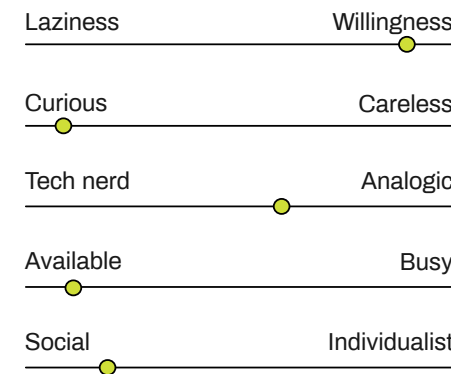
Needs	Pains	Goals
- Parking near home	- Immigrants	- be respected
- maintain the lifestyle	- doesn't like to go out of the comfort zone	- partecipating cultural events
- appear well to the others		- showing off
- more comfortable		

Persona D: Anna, 57

Marital status: married
Education: master degree
Occupation: psychologist and sexologist

Raised in Reggio Emilia, has a study of psychology and sexology in via roma and is interested in the psychophysical well-being of people who attend the street, in particular focusing on children. She also cares about the aesthetics of the street, so she participates very actively in the social and cultural dynamics thanks to the via roma committee.

Laziness ———————●— Willingness
Curious ——●——————— Careless
Tech nerd ———————●— Analogic
Available ●——————————— Busy
Social ——●——————— Individualist

"I would like a more beautiful, green and safe street, especially for our kids. It's been years that every year I organize my "artist residency" in via roma."

Needs	Pains	Goals
- psychophysical well-being of people, expecially kids.	- careless people	- more lively street
- more green spaces		- Increase people's participation in the community
- more actively partecipation		- people with difficulties feel more included

Persona E: Mario, 78

Marital status: widower
Education: elementary school
Occupation: retired, ex-employee at CIGL

He has always lived in Reggio Emilia, now left alone and with grandchildren and children moved far away he no longer has a rapid support with which to interface with the news and technology. He walks everywhere, but his daily commute is just going to the cafe and the newsstand.

Laziness ——●——————— Willingness
Curious ——————●——— Careless
Tech nerd ———————●— Analogic
Available ——●——————— Busy
Social ———————●— Individualist
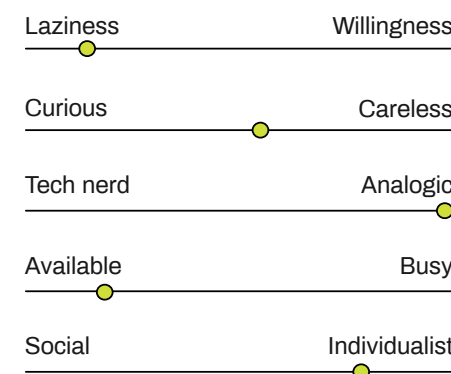
"When I was working I knew all the numbers by heart, now with all these gadgets the magic of communicating with people has been lost."

Needs	Pains	Goals
- help with digital burocracy	- Technology	- reintegrate into society without going through digital mediums
- help for booking the vacination.	- lives alone	
	- he isn't completely autonomous	

4.5.6 Experience journeys of the personas

	Awareness		Consideration	Joining	Service				Post-Service

Sanjeet

ACTIONS & GOALS

Awareness		Consideration	Joining	Service				Post-Service
He has to fill out a document in Italian which is necessary for his business	His fellow countryman who has another store in Via Roma advises him to go to Ghirba	He has never been to the Ghirba, but he decides to follow his friend's advice	A few days later he walks to the Ghirba and enters the local. He is greeted by Virginia, who works there	Virginia asks Sanjeet what she needs, he points to the IRS document	She recognizes the document and reassures him by telling him that she has filled it out before	They proceed together to fill out the paper, she explains him how to do it independently next time	He thanks Virgi for the fast help and suggestions	Before leaving, she reminds him that the next time he comes at the appointed schedule

PERCEPTIONS

| He feels discouraged and powerless | Surprised and curious, regained some hope | Intrigued but also bewildered | He feel relief after the warm welcome | A bit shy but confident | Surprised in a good way, he feels in safe hands | Thankful and joyful | Is very relieved and is already thinking about what to ask for next time | He is satisfied with the service and is thinking about telling it to his friends |

TOUCHPOINTS

| - | - | - | In this case, the first touchpoint he encountered was a waitress of the inn | The touchpoint of the service is still Virginia | - | During this process, in the case of a digital work, a computer is used | - | There is a whiteboard where one can book an appointment |

SUPPORT PROCESSES

| - | When the Ghirba activated the Social Hub service, word got around the neighborhood. | The place already enjoys a good reputation among the citizens of the district as a cozy and informal place | Schedules for small daily helps and suggestion are defined so that employees are not occupied with tavern duties, in this case Sanjeet got the right timing. | The staff makes sure that the people requesting services are actually residents of Via Roma. | Virginia is the one at Ghirba who knows the most about paperwork, she is usually the one who helps with these tasks. | - | - | Timing for this kind of performance is important because a process that is too long could waste the waitresses' time |

Ruben

ACTIONS & GOALS

| He is very upset because a parking place was removed from the street | As a member of Via Roma Viva, receives an email invitation to attend a meeting at Ghirba | It would allow him to understand the reasons behind the removal of parking | The day of the meeting has come, the meeting happens outside the venue, due to Covid reason | The focus group starts and the participants are asked to elencate their feelings regarding the interventions | During the focus group there is a guest who is tasked with illustrating the benefits of this work | Following the focus group Ruben is now aware of the benefits, so he will give it a chance | At home, he decides to subscribe to the newsletter of Ghirba in order not to miss any next meeting |

PERCEPTIONS

| He is angry at the municipality | Bad impression about Ghirba, he thinks it is a dirty place | Curious and interested in participating | He doesn't have many clues about what's going to happen | Finally he can express what he feels | He didn't know about these benefits | It better works, or he will be very angry | He wants to know more about this topic |

TOUCHPOINTS

| - | E-mail comunications from Ghirba to the other associations in the neighborhood | Facebook's page of the event, created by the social hub's staff and Cinqueminuti | The touchpoint in this case is the physical asset of the building and its surroundings | - | The professional guest invited for th focus group is the way for the user to interface with service | - | The digital medium to interact with Ghirba is a e-mail address or Whatsapp account |

SUPPORT PROCESSES

| New urban developments in the street have created divisions among some residents | Trade association agrees with Ghirba for some of the communications to their members | - | The staff has organized the event in a saturday afternoon so to allow as many people as possible to join | This process is typical of a focus group, the professional figure from association Cinqueminti knows very well the steps to take | Association Cinqueminuti has set up this roundtable in Ghirba in order to increase awareness on sustainable city living | The focus group has had the right impact on the citizens offering them a new vision for the city | A staff member in charge of managing the computer communication systems registers him as a new mail subscriber. |

Service Journey Map

Anna

Stage	Awareness		Consideration	Joining	Service			Post-Service
ACTIONS & GOALS	Anna is looking for opportunities in which she can contributes in helping the needy	While having lunch at Ghirba, the waitress tells her about the new social programs	This is the right occasion for her to give a concrete hand to the community	Anna couldn't wait, she enters the organizzator's group by contacting Pier, the head of Via Roma 0	She receive a message by the organizzator becaouse there is someone seeking for listening session	Her first free session takes place with a member of the community, she is contributing to the well-being of the district	Moreover, she starts to managed the focus groups in collaboration with the staff from Cinqueminuti Ass.	She has become a fully-integrated member of the Ghirba social hub
PERCEPTIONS	She is willing to help, but doesn't know where to start	Surprised and curious about the new initiative	She is excited and energized	She knows many from the association, she wants to get into action	Now it's time to get to work and be serious	She loves being useful for someone and contributing to the community	The Cinqueminuti is a new world for her and this is a nice opportunity for via Roma	Her contribution as a professional will be very important in the social hub
TOUCHPOINTS	-	The waitress of Ghriba is the first in person-touchpoint as she get to know about the service	-	Pierpaolo as the coordinator of Via Roma Zero and co-designer of the Ghirba Social Hub	The touchpoint in this case is digital, namely the messaging system of the user	She becomes the touchpoint in this case for the citizen who asked for a listen point	The touchpoint between her and the association is thanks to emails and calls	-
SUPPORT PROCESSES	-	Waiters act as spokespeople for initiatives; many of the social hub projects are spread by word of mouth	The Ghirba social hub is open to accept new stakeholders and professionals in their projects	The process is pretty straightfoward since Pierpaolo would manage the "PR" aspects of the hub	The support digital platform for these comunications is Whatsapp, a waiter receives a request, and she forward it to the interested party	The system allows the users themselves to become part of the processes and services offered by the hub	Cinqueminuti association is constantly in contact with the Ghirba Social Hub since they share similar goals and spaces	The integration process has was very direct and easy since she is already a citizen of via Roma and she can bring professional knowledge

Mario

| Stage	Awareness		Consideration	Joining	Service			Post-Service
ACTIONS & GOALS	Mario has received the invitation to take the first dose of COVID vaccine	He reads on the local newspaper about this new social hub close to his home	He doesn't want to bother his son, so the only choice is try going there	He arrives on foot to the Ghirba and gets welcomed by a member of the staff	He explain that he has to book the vaccination but he doesn't know how to do it	The waitress reassuers him telling that she can do it for him and makes him sit down and asks his documents	She does the booking without problems while asking him his data. The booking is done	He was able to complete this task without bothering his son, he'll come back
PERCEPTIONS	He doesn't know how to book, he needs help	Surprised and curious, regained some hope	It's make or break	He feel relief after the warm welcome	A bit shy but confident	Surprised in a good way, he feels in safe hands	Is very relieved and is already thinking about what to ask for next time	He is satisfied with the service and is thinking about telling it to his friends
TOUCHPOINTS	-	In this case the touchpoint is indirect news intercepting with the user	-	The member of the staff of Ghriba is the first in person-touchpoint he encounters	-	The member of the staff assists herself with the use of the computer of the Ghirba	-	There is a whiteboard where one can book an appointment
SUPPORT PROCESSES	-	When the Ghirba activated the Social Hub service, some people wrote an article about it on the newspaper	-	It's very important to make the user feel in a safe and comfortable place, if not he won't have the desired experience	The waitress is ready to help him in the task and she knows the steps to take since she trained on these processes	The IDs are important in the phase of booking the vaccination and also to make sure he's from the local area	The service was carried out in a way to make it faster, the senior user doesn't need too understand he just wants the job done	Timing for this kind of performance is important because a process that is too long could waste the waitresses' time

4.5.7 Real life prototyping

the prototyping session of the neighborhood concierge service was important in order to be able to touch the previously designed dynamics and evaluate their effectiveness and ease of use. I organized two prototyping sessions in one day:
The first was about a service to help an elderly person who was struggling with digital bureaucracy, in this case actors were used to "role play" the support process. In the second session the theme was the receipt of an online order placed by the customer at the Ghirba; in this case a citizen of via Roma was available to represent the orderer, while I myself acted as a delivery agent at the Ghirba.

Prototyping was an experiment I had never done before, but it proved to be helpful in gaining a thorough understanding of the processes of logistics and social work. it was a fun opportunity to be able to experience the service in reality.

Role play of the computer consulting service:
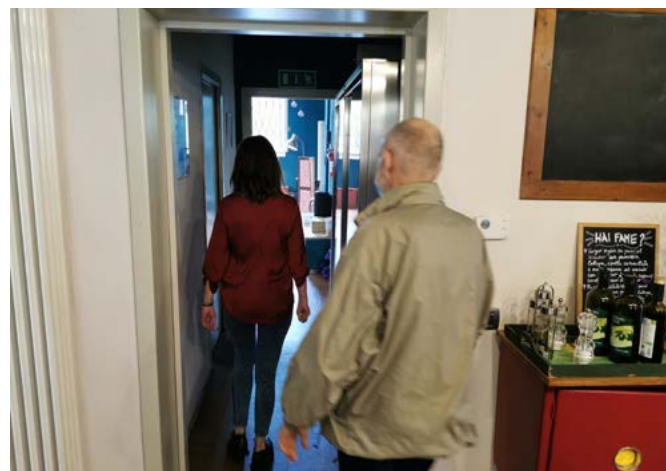
Thanks to this trial conducted in person, I was able to see how the service works. Since this is a fairly simple type of support, the process was straightforward and clear. Katryna from Ghirba assisted with the prototyping and said that such a service would be easy to implement, the only thing is that she wouldn't want to have too many requests, which could then limit her work as a bartender.

Role play parcel receiving service

In this case I myself have performed the task of "concierge" trying to empathize as much as possible with the future true implementer of the service. The process of receiving and collecting online orders from citizens is very straightforward, the only component to be added would be a system to recognize whose order the package is. Both the issue and the solution to it were found exactly during the prototyping session: The citizen must show an ID and a proof of the order before indicating which parcel he wants to pick up.

Considerations after the prototyping

The utility of these prototyping sessions through role-playing was primarily to empathize with the service user. It was also very important to demonstrate the simplicity of the process to the girls who run La Ghirba. One of their biggest concerns that had arisen from them when I went to present the idea of the service was just the fact that they didn't have the material time to perform this kind of help, and besides time some of the girls thought they didn't have the skills or knowledge to provide support. This last prototypation had the effect to show them the semplicity of the service, and this has made them decide definitely to activate the concierge service for the community. This for me is a great achievement, because it means that the service will not remain on paper but will become real, going to positively affect the community.

4.5.8 Assessing the impact of this strategy

During the design I've used typical service design tools to better understand and determine the impact of this service on the Via Roma community and the people who will visit it from the outside. These tools are important because they can visually render the strengths and the result that this social innovation could bring. This scenario then leverages the existing potential of the street through a spontaneous character platform based in an established environment. The graphic below displays the strengths of the future system.
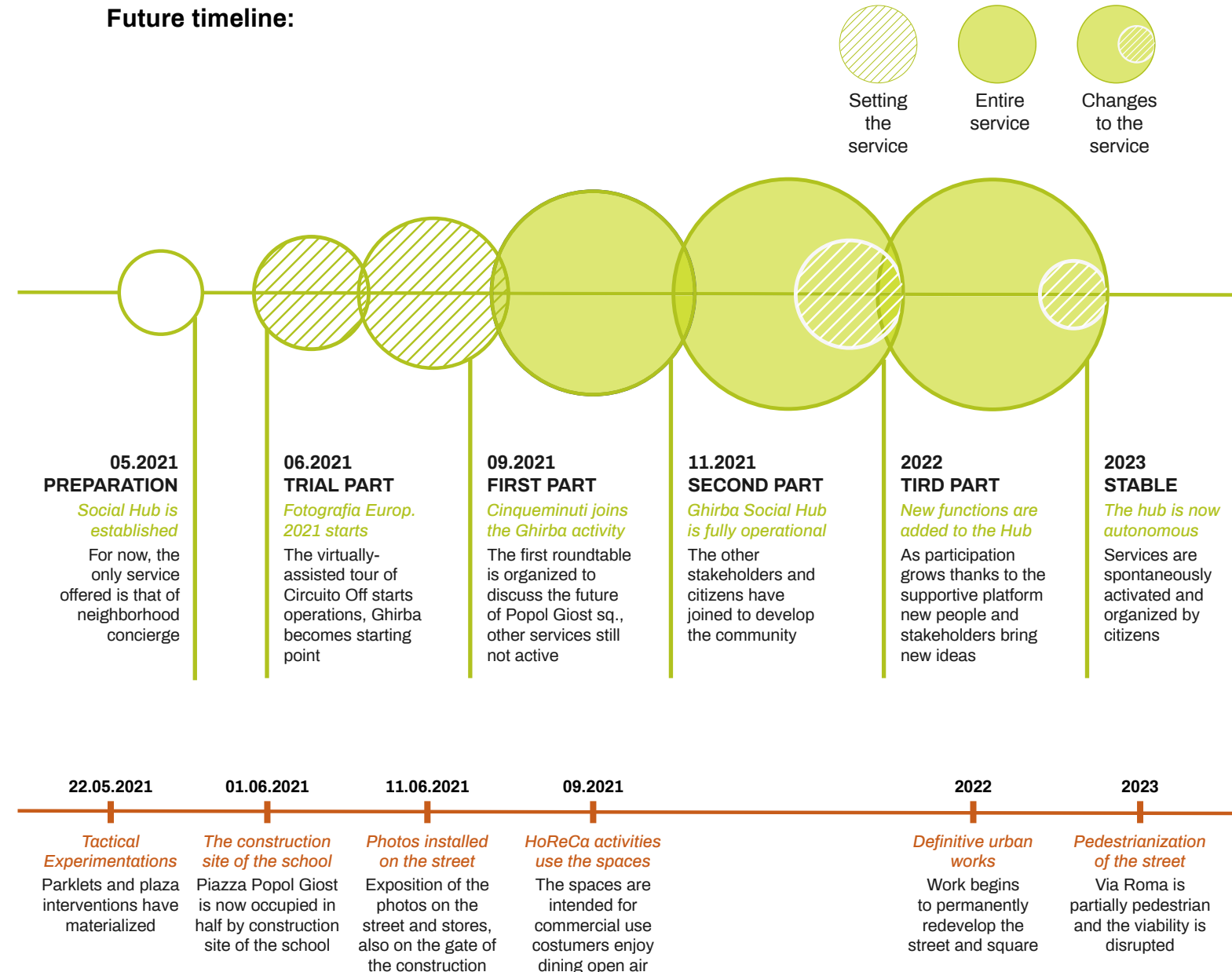
Social Innovation Scanner

Capability
This innovation builds skills for the girls who run the Ghirba, having to deal with managing a new community service.

Entrepreneurship
It does not bring huge economic benefits to the neighborhood but it does allow for an additional revenue opportunity for Ghirba.

Wellbeing
The social hub helps to create well-being and collaborative situations among all neighborhood residents.

Environment
Environmentally, the innovation allows basic functions to be provided at a closer distance, reducing the need for long commutes.

Ghirba Social Hub

Participation
This solution increases participation and a sense of belonging to the community among members.

Identity & inclusion
The service reinforces the sense of social and cultural identity through platforms where relationships between neighbors is cultivated.

Assets: spaces, goods
Accessibility is improved thanks to the new public spaces and increase the usability and proximity of everyday's services.

4.5.9 Scenario: Il Cantiere di Via Roma

Why this name?

BUILDING A COMMUNITY
**+**
BUILDING A PLACE
=
IL CANTIERE DI VIA ROMA

"Cantiere" in Italian means building site, it is a term that is associated with something in the making, under construction. The term is almost always used for the physical construction of buildings or urban interventions. In this case, however, the term has a double meaning: it is, in one way, to indicate the construction of new public spaces through the interventions of tactical urbanism and the ongoing construction of the Scaruffi Levi High School which is affecting heavily the street. But it is also meant to indicate the formation of a resilient and collaborative community through the new platform of Ghirba Social Hub. These events emphasize the fact that the neighborhood is changing, that there are social and urban transformations that will improve the environment of the area and indirectly affect the rest of the city, for a more sustainable and resilient urban life.

Future timeline:

Setting the service | Entire service | Changes to the service

05.2021 PREPARATION
Social Hub is established
For now, the only service offered is that of neighborhood concierge

06.2021 TRIAL PART
Fotografia Europ. 2021 starts
The virtually-assisted tour of Circuito Off starts operations, Ghirba becomes starting point

09.2021 FIRST PART
Cinqueminuti joins the Ghirba activity
The first roundtable is organized to discuss the future of Popol Giost sq., other services still not active

11.2021 SECOND PART
Ghirba Social Hub is fully operational
The other stakeholders and citizens have joined to develop the community

2022 TIRD PART
New functions are added to the Hub
As participation grows thanks to the supportive platform new people and stakeholders bring new ideas

2023 STABLE
The hub is now autonomous
Services are spontaneously activated and organized by citizens

22.05.2021
Tactical Experimentations
Parklets and plaza interventions have materialized

01.06.2021
The construction site of the school
Piazza Popol Giost is now occupied in half by construction site of the school

11.06.2021
Photos installed on the street
Exposition of the photos on the street and stores, also on the gate of the construction

09.2021
HoReCa activities use the spaces
The spaces are intended for commercial use costumers enjoy dining open air

2022
Definitive urban works
Work begins to permanently redevelop the street and square

2023
Pedestrianization of the street
Via Roma is partially pedestrian and the viability is disrupted

What this scenario will offer

Social and physical platforms for increasing accessibility and inclusivity in Via Roma

Physical supports

South Via Roma

Piazza Popol Giost
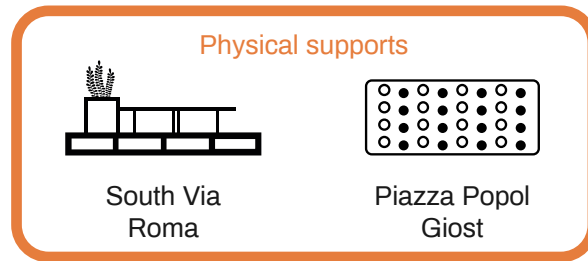
Tactical Urbanism
Improving the quality of the public space and helping the commercial activities

Tactical Interventions

Ghirba Social Hub
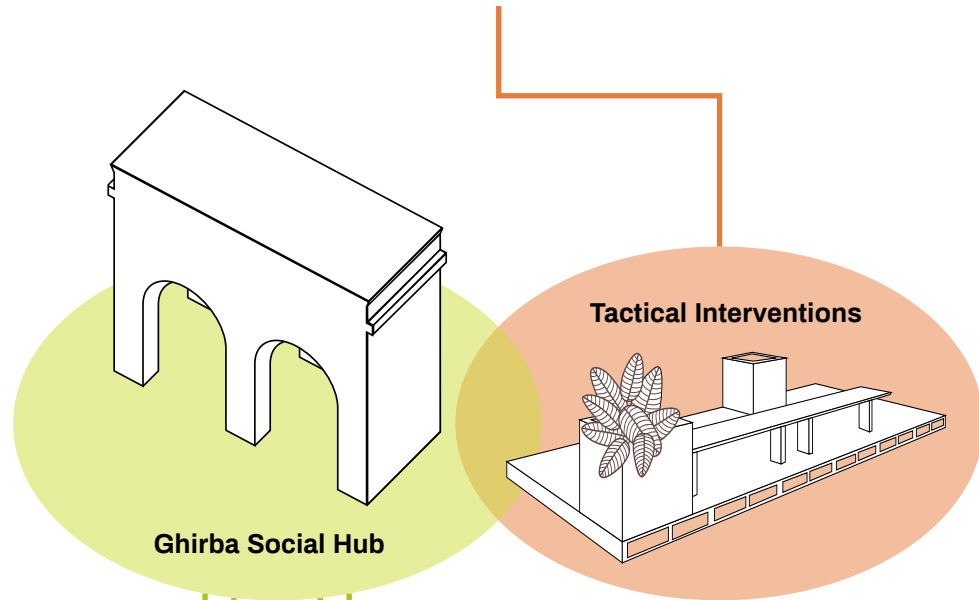
For the single ← → For the commuity

Discovery tours	Portineria Quartiere	Library of things	Good Neighbor	Solidarity Groceries	Round Tables

Digital supports for these services

Dedicated web app	Messages or calls	Shared agenda	Messages or calls	Messages or calls	Shared agenda

5. Conclusions

Final considerations and insights on the project

The idea of the Social Hub and the neighborhood concierge, despite not being an innovative invention but rather, being a concept already tested and established in other realities, was the right synthesis for this participatory design experience in this context. The innovation in this case has been to bring this scenario and these ideas of collaboration in a reality that lacked them, and the key factor in all this is that these ideas have come from the citizens themselves during our service design sessions. Moreover, I am satisfied with the result because the same proposals were appreciated by all the actors involved, especially the Ghirba staff members who were enthusiastic to continue the project and bring it to its concrete realization. I am therefore confident that these intervention guidelines developed in the scenario will be adopted to build a functioning Social Hub capable of catalyzing social innovation in the neighborhood.

On the other hand, from the point of view of spatial interventions, here too the novelty concerns the introduction of these experiments in a sterile context and previously alien to this kind of innovation. The realization of the tactical works will take place during the month of May and I will not be able to validate their effectiveness on this thesis document, but I am confident that the interventions will be positively received by the citizens, having been themselves to co-design and request new spaces that were able to raise the local economy and create presidium to contrast crime and neglect.

The purpose of this scenario was to give concrete guidelines to the actors involved in order to continue with the implementation of services. The purpose was achieved, especially thanks to the collaboration with figures very much inserted in the social networks of the city Pierluigi or Daria, the two coordinators of the cultural associations.

The process

The design process that led to the conception of the intervention scenario was complex and articulated in several ways:

First, the manner in which the project was carried out; the entire design phase occurred during the second national lockdown due to the Covid-19 crisis. This factor was very influential throughout the period, even when the quarantine measures were eased, it was still difficult to hold in-person meetings with citizens and stakeholders. Had the project occurred during a different period than this one, surely the possibilities and opportunities for dialogue and collaboration would have been greater and the collaborations would have had more effective results. The

The design guidelines emerged from the citizens themselves, my role was primarily that of facilitator and organizer of ideas and turning them into a realistic scenario.

I've leveraged on service design as an enabler of communication and awareness platforms to increase the effectiveness of tactical urbanism interventions.

medium most used during these months of planning was above all the video call, thanks to this digital support platform I was able to continue to carry out the project, at a distance, even if not always with the desired aims.

Secondly, the relationship with citizens has not always been fruitful, there have been moments of misunderstanding and conflict that did not allow the dynamics to continue. A very important component of the design of new spatial experiments is in fact communication, and it is for this reason that much of the time dedicated to dialogue with citizens has been used to explain and make citizens understand the benefits, the dynamics, and the reasons behind the interventions, both spatial and social. The very design of the scenario, the Ghirba Social Hub, in fact provides a key function that is that of focus groups, round tables and community meetings are in fact proven methods to effectively communicate and raise awareness of the population on issues important to the sustainability of the neighborhood, which at first glance may seem negative or counterproductive, but instead the benefits materialize in the long run.

The third aspect is that part of the process has been implemented thanks to my collaboration at the Municipality of Emilia and my colleague Giovanni Mandelli, with whom, following the model of NoLo Strade Aperte in Milan (project on which I had the opportunity to work in my previous compulsory curricular internship) we have designed and implemented the interventions of tactical urbanism in the street. Also during my work at the offices of the Municipality my role was multidisciplinary, ranging from the design of environments to situations of technical and economic management of public works. Due to restrictions due to the pandemic this collaboration also took place in a mixed mode.

One of the main insights gained from this experience was in fact the understanding of the main link between service design and urban planning (especially experimental and tactical), and that is communication, the importance of raising awareness, to make the target aware of the qualities and benefits of the physical work. Service design is in fact able to make people collaborate towards a common goal through dynamics that involve the users themselves. The co-design has been fundamental because it has allowed citizens to understand the reasons for the experiments and to be able to carry out a process of autonomous activation in order to raise awareness to the other components of the community that are more conservative for future interventions and experimentation.

Self-criticism

One of the biggest criticisms I can give is the fact that this project is limited to a scenario with guidelines, unfortunately due to the pandemic and consequent distancing measures, the design of spaces and services has been slowed down and its transformative effectiveness diminished. One thing I admit is the fact that I did not analyze in more detail the figure of Pierpaolo as coordinator of communication and contact with service users.

Tied to this is the lack of a publicity and marketing part for the initial phase of the service, that is, the launching phase of the project should be developed more carefully, how citizens will learn about it and how to reach as many neighborhood residents as possible.

I also think that the two projects, that of the service and that of urban planning, could have been more strongly linked; in fact, there is a lack of a solid link between the two interventions other than that of awareness raising and the creation of garrison. This is due to the fact that both interventions of tactical urban planning have been entirely destined to the commercial functions of the restaurants without leaving space for possible social activities, if that had been the case I could have designed a space-service system distributed over the entire street through these physical arrangements. The only part of the service that comes close to this idea of "complete" involvement of spaces and functions is precisely that of the virtually assisted tour of the Circuito Off.

The future of the neighborhood and my perspectives

The neighborhood will be the scene of upheaval for a few more months, in fact the construction site of the school will continue to be present in the daily reality of the inhabitants. In spite of this the spatial interventions will take place soon and the parklets and the square space will be realized in the last weeks of May.

At the same time the neighborhood concierge service will actually start at Ghirba thanks to the staff and Pierluigi, my role for the next period will be to continue to oversee the creation of the concierge and the first moments of the service. Once this machine is up and running the rest of the services will be added gradually and in a more straightforward manner. The biggest problem is always to start, on the other hand the support service to roundtables is already in a start-up phase thanks to the collaboration between the association Cinqueminuti and la Ghirba as well as the project of the tour of the neighborhood during the Fotografia Europea. The neighborhood will continue to live and if these spatial and social projects will be activated, the community will finally have a familiar place that supports it in carrying out social issues regarding the street, the presence

of people along the street will be increased and this will allow a greater garrison to prevent problems related to light crime.

Speaking instead of my figure as a designer and collaborator, I admit that this experience has been an important test for my professional growth. It allowed me to touch the real dynamics of participatory design and the concrete realization of a work, I learned how to overcome bureaucratic obstacles, organization, management of a fragile and fragmented social network, all this in a complicated period due to the lockdown.

I think this exercise has been very important to be able to enter the professional world, I was able to field test my knowledge and skills acquired during the academic course in Product Service System Design as the methods and processes typical of participatory design and ethnographic research with the ultimate goal of fueling social innovation.

Fig. 1: Via Roma from above. Image source: Pierluigi Sgarbi

References

In alphabetical order

[A] Article   [G] Guide
[B] Book   [R] Report
[C] Conference [T] Thesis

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