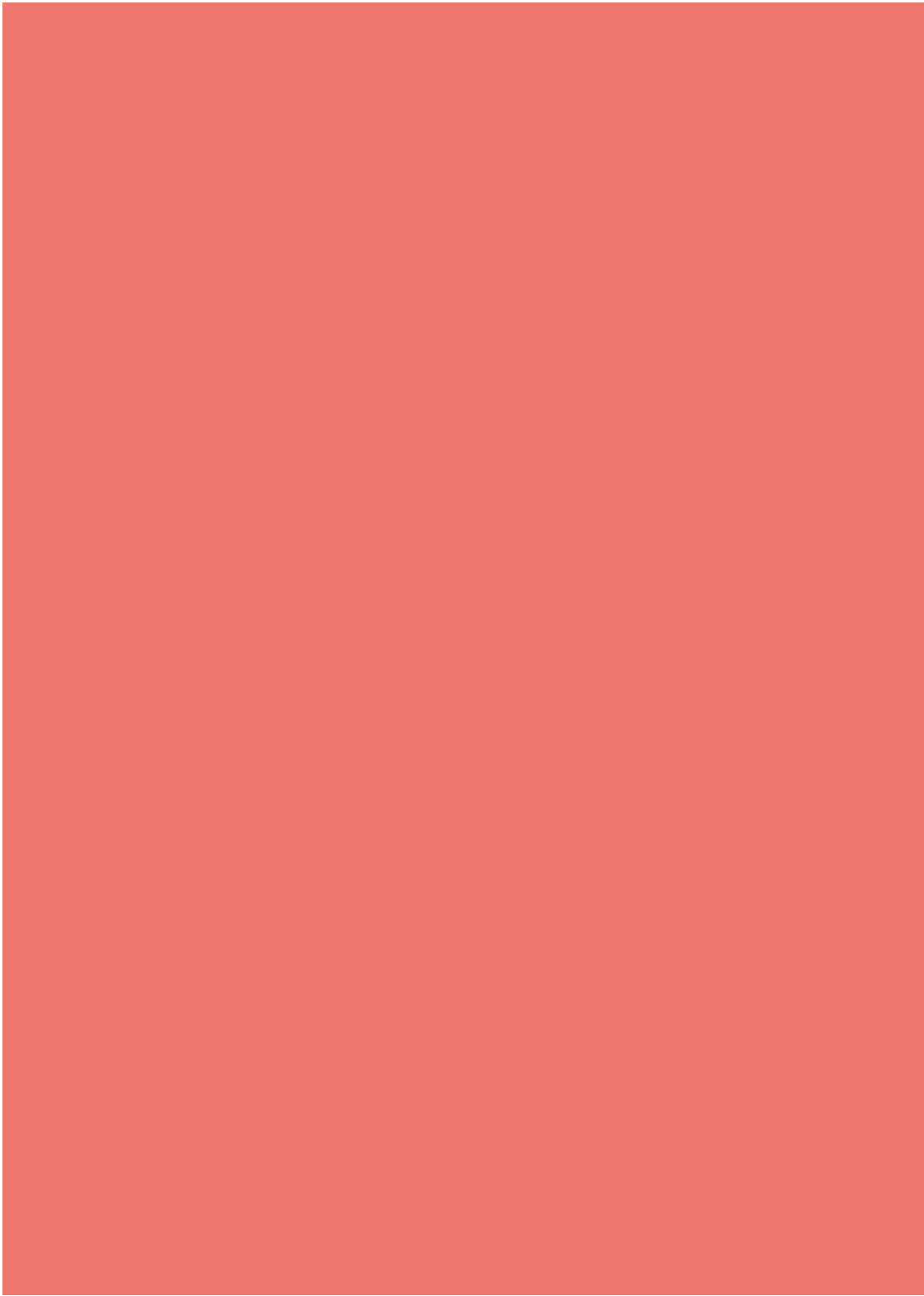




*a peer to peer*  
platform to trigger  
**trust-based relationships**  
among the members of  
a cooperative community.



**POLITECNICO**  
MILANO 1863

Msc in Product Service System Design  
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Academic Year 2018-2019

***A Milano***  
*conferma di come uno  
slancio di fiducia verso  
<<il diverso>> può  
arricchirti la vita.*

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## ABSTRACT | ita

Nel corso degli anni sta nascendo, nel campo del design ed in particolare legato all'innovazione sociale una significativa attenzione sul tema delle città, analizzando la qualità della vita sotto diversi aspetti come specchio del benessere dei cittadini che ne fanno parte. In questo contesto, ci si rende conto di come la casa sia un'infrastruttura indispensabile dei progetti di vita individuali, la prima leva di accoglienza o esclusione. Oggetto di analisi di questa tesi magistrale in Product Service System Design è stato il concetto di abitare e di casa, intesa non come mero prodotto di welfare tangibile, ma piuttosto come una "palestra di relazioni", dalla complessità proporzionale alla grandezza del gruppo comunità che lo abita. In generale, la mia ricerca, teorica e pratica, si è focalizzata sulle comunità che hanno deciso di intraprendere un percorso di vita quotidiana in ecosistemi di abitare collaborativo presenti nel territorio milanese. In seguito ad una metodologia di analisi partecipativa e ad un community-centered approach, è emerso come una scelta tale possa generare benefici dal punto di vista della sostenibilità sociale, ambientale ed economica, ma allo stesso tempo possa comportare la nascita di una serie di problematiche come il disinteressamento e la mancata partecipazione ad attività collaborative, essenza di tali sistemi abitativi. Tra le cause rilevate sono emerse una mancata comunicazione, la presenza di aspetti socio-caratteriali differenti e in particolare la mancanza di fiducia. Come Service Designer ho deciso di trasformare i punti di debolezza rilevati in un'opportunità progettuale che ha portato alla nascita di TocToc: una piattaforma peer to peer progettata per potenziare relazioni basate sulla fiducia tra i membri della comunità della Cooperativa Vercellese di Milano. La piattaforma si propone come una soluzione abilitante in quanto sfrutta l'immediatezza della tecnologia e del digitale, oggi più che mai alla ribalta, per offrire alla comunità un portale (di cui loro sono al tempo stesso fruitori e gestori) che permetta loro di ampliare la conoscenza reciproca e potenziare il livello di interazione partecipando, organizzando e proponendo attività collaborative di interesse comune. TocToc vuole essere la dimostrazione di come uno strumento digitale, fornendo le giuste informazioni nel modo più adatto, possa innescare l'abbandono di un atteggiamento diffidente verso l'altro che, con gradualità, si trasferirà naturalmente anche nell'interazione offline.

**ABSTRACT | eng**

Over the years, in the field of design and social innovation in particular, significant attention is being paid to the theme of cities, analysing the quality of life in various aspects as a mirror of the well-being of the citizens who are part of it. In this context, it is possible to realize how the home is an irreplaceable infrastructure of individual life projects, the first source of welcome or exclusion. The object of analysis of this thesis of master in Product Service System Design was the concept of living and home, understood not as a simple tangible welfare product, but rather as a “gym of relationships”, with complexity proportional to the size of the community group that inhabits it. In general, my research, both theoretical and practical, has focused on communities that have decided to begin a daily life path in collaborative living ecosystems in the Milanese territory. Following a methodology based on participatory design and a community-centred approach, it has emerged that such a choice can produce benefits from the point of view of social, environmental and economic sustainability, but at the same time can lead to the raising of a series of issues such as lack of interest and non-participation in collaborative activities, that are the core of such housing systems. Among the causes identified there were a lack of communication, the presence of different socio-cultural aspects and in particular the lack of trust. As a Service Designer, I decided to turn the identified weaknesses into a design opportunity that led me towards the creation of TocToc: a peer to peer platform designed to enhance trust-based relationships among the community members of the Cooperativa Vercellese in Milan. The platform is proposed as an enabling solution because it exploits the immediacy of technology and digital, now more than ever in revenge, to offer to the community a portal (of which they are both users and managers) that allows them to deepen mutual knowledge and enhance the level of interaction by participating, organizing and proposing collaborative activities of common interest. TocToc wants to be a demonstration of how a digital tool, by providing the right information in the most suitable way, can change the human behaviour toward a more trustful approach, that step by step, will move naturally also to offline interaction.

# FOREWARD

# The reason behind the choice

**“TocToc: a peer to peer platform to trigger trust-based relationships among the members of a cooperative community”** is the name of my experimental thesis and my last work as PSSD student at Politecnico of Milan. It aims to focus on the concept of trust among the community's members who live in collaborative living contexts in the Milanese territory. I wondered about what the output of this research could be, and, in the end, I decided to design a new tool, a platform. The value of this project does not lie in the platform itself, but in the behaviours, it generates towards those who use it. *“It was created with a view to create the right conditions for certain forms of interactions and relationships to happen” (Meroni et Sangiorgi, 2011).*

I grew up with the idea that it is fundamental to understand why things happen, what drives us to make one choice rather than another. For this reason, first of all, I would like to share with you readers the source of this path research that has led me to approach the world of collaborative living, approaching it under a key of reading particularly focused on the trust issues in communities. **So, when did collaborative living trigger my curiosity?**

My approach to Social Innovation was born during the synthesis lab in my last year of PSSD. Through the teaching of my professors, including Liat Rogel, my current speaker, I was able to experience and touch how, thanks to Service Design and Social Innovation, it is possible to develop strategies and ideas that lead to satisfy the economic and social development of a reference community. Seeing the figure of the service designer as a guide for these people made me feel fulfilled. And this is exactly what happened during the laboratory, when we approached, with all the issues, to the Gallaratese community and my team and I were able to develop the right strategy to connect people and places through their passion. From there I came into contact with **Housing Lab**, a non-profit association created with the aim of spreading good examples, sharing skills and experience social and collaborative living. I had the opportunity to map and visit the different co-living realities present

in the Milanese territory with their different types of houses, but above all, I could get in touch with the inhabitants and listen to many different stories. The more they talked about the benefits and difficulties of co-living, the more I felt a particular empathy towards them. This is because I also experienced at the beginning of my university career, a similar situation that certainly influenced the choice of the thesis topic.

**Pino Cacucci** in his book “Un pò per amore, un pò per rabbia” of 2012 said that **“roots are important in a man's life, but we as humans have legs, not roots, and legs are made to go elsewhere.”**

With this quote fixed in my mind, at the age of 19, like many of my peers, I moved from Brindisi to Milan, to attend the Design faculty at the Politecnico of Milan and begin to combine together the pieces of my future. The weeks before departure have been a combination of rush and excitement for what the new experience would have given to me. But, as the X date was approaching, melancholy and the fear of leaving the comfort zone and my network of knowledge was becoming increasingly tangible. For the first time until then, I began to live with more awareness of situations, habits and people that had been part of my **“everyday life”**; everyday life enclosed in that whole system that was my home.

When I arrived in Milan, clinging to habits and mental frameworks<sup>1</sup> belonging to a young girl who had always lived in a small town, I found myself crossing the entrance of Piola's **“Campus Città Studi”** residence, realizing in a moment how that building would become my new nest. 90 students, 2 washing machines, single, double and triple rooms, shared bathrooms and study area, all under the same roof and everything smelling of sharing.

<sup>1</sup>Mental framework: mental models are shared cognitive beliefs that guide actors' behaviour and interpretation of their environment (Dequeh, 2013; Strandvik et al., 2014).



Although today I am more than proud and happy about that choice, I admit that the impact was far from simple. Changing cities, losing my network of friends and finding oneself sharing so many daily practices since “good morning” was not something I was used to. The mood was like feeling constantly “**outsider**” even though I was inside what would be, at least for a while, my new home.

But after a few weeks of bedding, the situation began to change; those 90 students, initially labelled as strangers, began to be associated not only to a room number, a first name, a surname, but also and above all to a story. And it was thanks to the stories that each of us had the generosity to share that I realized that we were not strangers. We came from different backgrounds, different faculties and sometimes different languages, but we all shared a common path towards building our future in what we hoped would become the “**city of opportunities**”.

Thanks to this experience I lived first-hand for 3 years, I have better understood the meaning of collaborative living and sharing concepts. Breakfast in the morning, lunches and dinners in the mess hall, afternoons in the study room, the management of shifts for the use of the laundry, meetings for the organization of sociality, these are just some of the actions that have become part of my daily routine, all characterized by a common element: live as a community. The path has not been easy; we have learned on us, how the freedom of individuals is a cornerstone of our way to conceive democracy; on the same time, it is important to be able to channel this freedom towards a common goal, through tools and management teams created to benefit the community and therefore also the individual. In this thesis, as a future Service Designer, I also wonder whether the tools available nowadays are exhaustive or can evolve and innovate in parallel with the times we are living in. In fact, the risk may be that individualism and sometimes selfishness, that by nature characterize the human being, can be lurking in a dangerous way; inevitably 90 cognitive beings have 90 different ways of reasoning and it was not unusual to hear phrases like “**why should I trust what you say and not my idea?**” After such an experience, I’m especially committed to trust, and I’m going to focus on it during this thesis project in a particular way. It is not something taken for granted, of course some people are more inclined

than others, but in any case, I understood how trust between individuals who belong to a community, is a seed that has to be watered day after day in order to flourish.

For this many reasons, I thought it would make sense to refer to the 3 years spent living collaboratively at Camplus Citta Studi as the starting point of this research and today re-interpret it under the eyes of a Service Designer. Because it was there that I learned for the first time what it means to live in a community with all the struggles, but above all the benefits that come with it. Thus, it is precisely the communities and the relationships between individuals in the context of collaborative living that I want to focus on.



Figure 1. Cafeteria of the residence Camplus Città Studi. [photo]

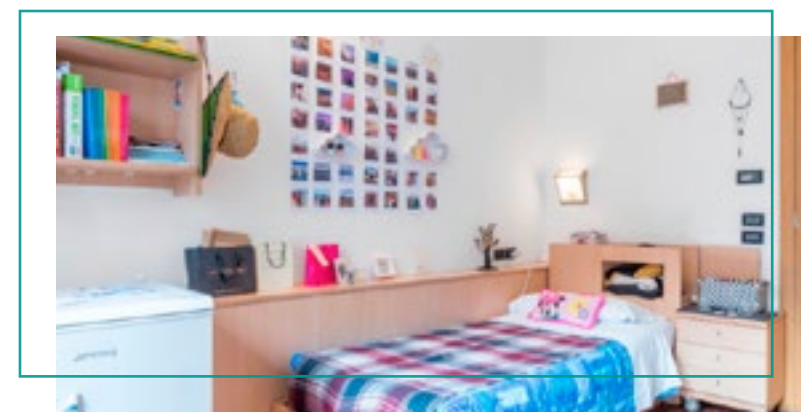


Figure 2. My room in Camplus Città Studi. [photo]

# Community **B** Centred Approach, Participatory Observation and Design Thinking

Regarding the theme of living the Anglo-Saxon language helps us, as Service Designer. It reveals a different sensibility compared to the Italian one, so much to coin two different words to indicate what in Italy we simply call "casa". This distinction is not the result of a stylistic approach or excessive minuteness, but on the contrary, it derives from a deep and careful understanding of the very concept of living. Anglo-Saxons use the term house to refer to space as a building, a physical construction, a place to live. The term **home**, on the other hand, includes the concept of family understood as a family nucleus, therefore more effective. Therefore, it is a word often used to refer to the house as a concept of family nest<sup>2</sup>.

The second meaning is the one closest to the key through which I dealt with the subject of living. During this thesis, in fact, I will be far from considering the house, and its typologies, as simple buildings. Even the adjective collaborative, which precedes the term living, lets us perceive a set of actions and relational values that revolve around people.

If the examples of collaborative living constitute our home, as a kind of mathematical equation, it will not be difficult to understand how communities, living within, represent the concept of family metaphorically.

**HOME : COLIVING = FAMILY : COMMUNITY**

<sup>2</sup> Italia.online, *Supereva.it*. Retrieved on 9th of March, 2020. URL <https://www.supereva.it/che-differenza-ce-tra-house-e-home-in-inglese-10154>

. Even the adjective collaborative, which precedes the term living, lets us perceive a set of actions and relational values that revolve around people. If the examples of collaborative living constitute our home, as a kind of mathematical equation, it will not be difficult to understand how communities, living within, represent the concept of family metaphorically.

Having understood this, I asked myself: **what is the most effective approach to the individuals who make up the communities?**

Having in mind the importance of the meetings in Camplus, where we as students proposed and talked with the directors about solutions for our "**good living**", I decided to have the most direct contact possible with my target, trying to live it during their daily practices. It was important to listen to the needs of the individuals, but even more important, in such a context, was the ability to bring them back to a common sphere, for the benefit of all. For this reason, more than a **user-centred-approach**, a **community-centred-approach** was put in place, "**that is more helpful when the aim is to generate systemic and lasting changes**" (Ogilvy, 2002). Holding a deep understanding of how a community works, collaborating with it, practising participatory research make it possible to start, with a good chance of success, processes of strategic change (Meroni & Sangiorgi, 2016, p.159). So, for community-centered-approach I mean when not only the single member is considered but also groups of members as a whole. A community view of a certain difficulty should be considered, and future views should be created that represent the whole. The participation of the community in the design of their own building can influence not only the way the buildings will physically result, but also (and most of all) its social sustainability on a long term (Rogel, 2013, p.47).

The community-centred-approach is linked to **participatory research**, which has proved to be the best strategy to probe the needs and habits of the different communities I have interfaced with. **But why is participatory research effective in Design Research?** Above all it's important to specify that "**participatory design is seen as a way to meet the unattainable design challenge of fully anticipating, or envisioning, use before actual use, takes place in people's life- worlds**" (Rogel, 2013, p.44). Anthropologists and sociologists, from whom we often borrow research methods, teach us how the value of participatory observation resides in joining a

group as a participating member to get a first-hand perspective of them and their activities. Instead of observing as an outsider, they play two roles at once—objective observer and subjective participant. Participating in the group gives them the ability to experience events in the same way other group members experience them (Ross, 2014).

These ways of working and doing research are actually nothing more than practices adopted in the different stages of Design Thinking. One of the first to use this term was Peter Rowe in his book *Design Thinking*, published in 1987, and today, more than ever, Design Thinking proves to be a process capable of keeping up with an increasingly complex and interconnected world. Also, it offers a means to grapple with all this change in a more **human-centric manner**<sup>3</sup>. Although the names of the stages of Design Thinking may vary according to the reference model (IDEO, NN/g, British Design Council and so on...) design thinking in its generality should be understood as different modes which contribute to the entire design project, rather than sequential steps. All of them aim to achieve a common understanding." The names of the phases I have taken as a reference are:

- **STAGE 1:** Empathize—Research Your Community Needs
- **STAGE 2:** Define—State Your Community' Needs and Problems
- **Stage 3:** Ideate—Challenge Assumptions and Create Ideas
- **STAGE 4:** Prototype—Start to Create Solutions
- **STAGE 5:** Test—Try Your Solutions Out

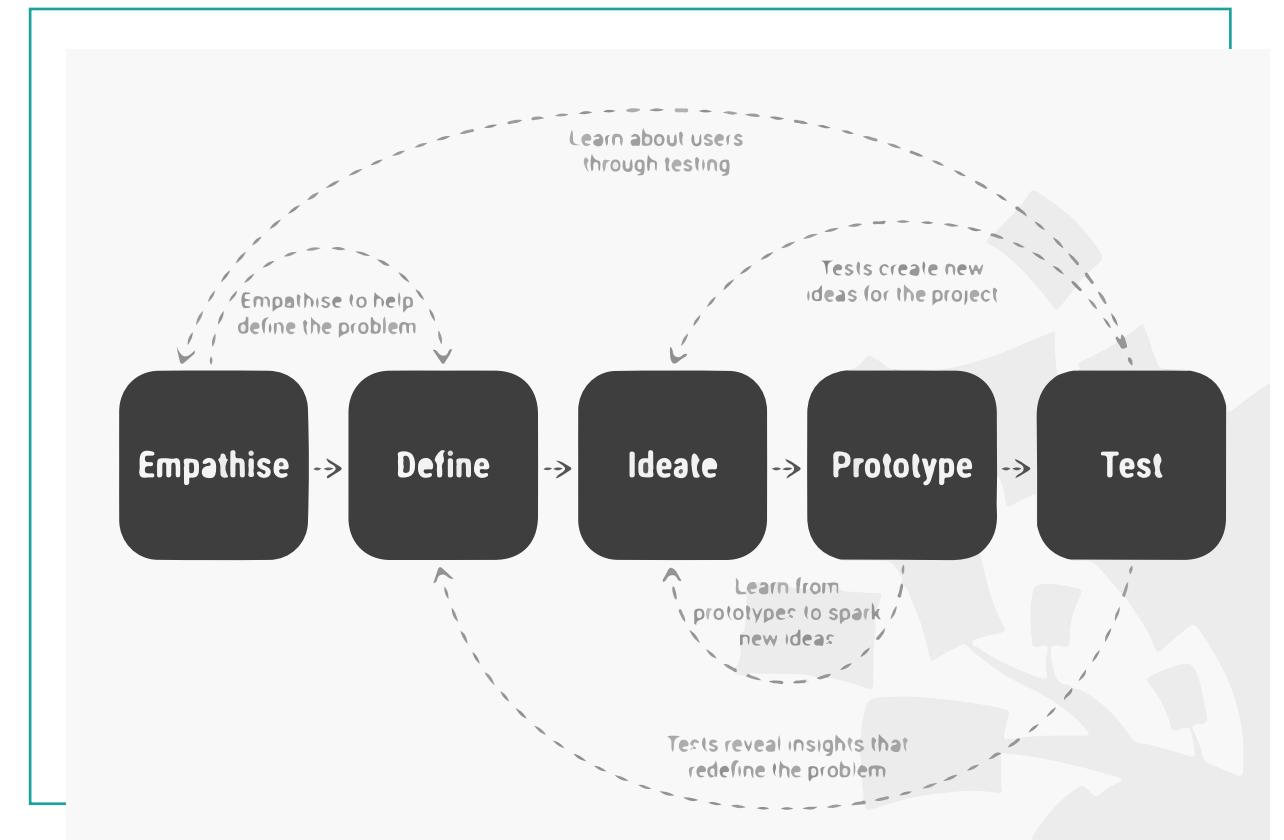


Figure 3. Design thinking: a non linear process. [chart]

<sup>3</sup>Interaction Design Foundation, *Design Thinking*. Retrieved on 9th May, 2020. URL <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/design-thinking>

# Roadmap

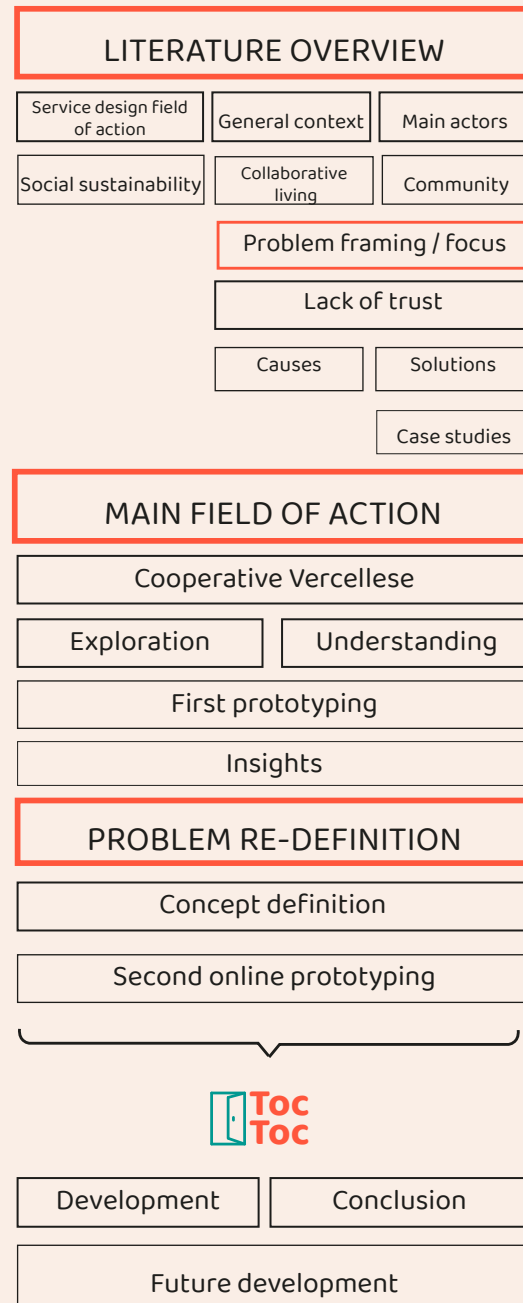
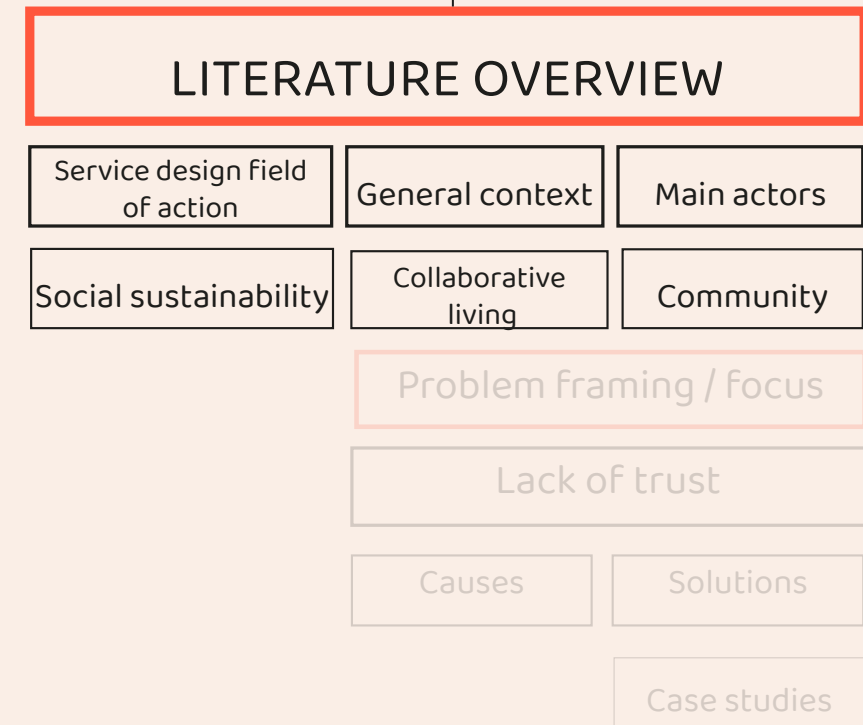


Figure 4. Roadmap of thesis project. [chart]

# PART ONE



## Service Design

### 1.1.1 Design: an evolving discipline

During the last decades Design as a discipline has gone through a phase of transition, growing, and broadening its role and points of interest (Pierandrei, Remotti, Tang, Kuria & Anfossi, 2018; Enriquez, n.d).

The term “design” and “designer”, which has usually been associated with the areas of aesthetics and industrialization, is now applicable to many areas even far apart: fashion, interior, web, interaction, service design and so on.

The result is that today design is recognized by a growing number of people *“as a way of thinking and behaviours that is applicable to many situations”* (Manzini, 2015, p.29). This has contributed to make the figure of the “designer” a less clear figure than in the past, but at the same time more widespread. If you think about it, design is wherever we look. In every time and place in our daily life environments and objects that were designed surround us. It's not hard to understand the reasons behind all this (for design's success, and for the confusion over its meaning): in recent years we have witnessed a rapid and radical transformation of social and technological systems and design, that by its nature links the gap between the two, could not avoid being transformed at its roots. In particular, design is nowadays increasingly used to address social changes, focusing on people's actual needs (Manzini, 2015).

### 1.1.2 Field addressed and impact in our daily life

We don't realize it but, the commitment of design to these issues and the impact it generates can be seen in the simplest acts of our daily life. Simple gestures yes, but they characterize our way of living in a unique way. Take for example the concept of communication and how it was developed over the years, through the design of an object like the mobile phone. In the time of writing this dissertation, in which more than ever we have to test our ability to reinvent ourselves due to a situation of forced isolation never experienced before, we are going to realize



how the cellular object, now definable smartphone, is an example of **good design**. This because not only it provides us new communication opportunities valid for a wide target, but it has also modified the concept of communication, freeing it from physical limits and therefore going to outline new habits in users. Always referring to the health emergency situation we are experiencing due to COVID19, I realize how the smartphone has turned into a sort of “magic box” that allows the user access to a series of services, which allow him to fulfil the same social needs he needed before, but through totally different actions. In these days the coffee break is no longer at the bar, but is on Houseparty, with friends or strangers connected with whom you chat and play; the artists no longer write the songs in the studio with their producers, but they do it live streaming on Instagram, receiving suggestions of verses from their fans. Even the way of education has changed, embracing digital. Now, this way of communicating would have been totally unthinkable without the intervention of design in the development of ideas and tools that make it possible. We will go into more detail on how the tools designed, such as platforms, websites, etc., have influenced our lives and habits in chapter 3.

So, for the topics that we will address later, it is important remember that **“design can change the way we live. In a matter of act” (Rogel, 2013, p.27).**

Following the wave of these new requirements, about 30 years ago a new discipline related to design began to develop: the design of Services. We are used, ironically, to measure the novelty of a profession by evaluating the difficulty of explaining it to our grandparents, with known terms and concepts.

According to this logic, **Service Design is confirmed as a very contemporary discipline** because it is rare to find a univocal definition. The reasons for this confusion around the term, are due both to an abstract component of the concept and to a great terminological disorder, in which expressions such as system design, experience design, design for social innovation, etc. are used inappropriately to indicate a new way of doing design.

However, it is possible to frame the reference scenario to which this new framework belongs. In this regard, the architect and PhD in Design Anna Meroni in the preface of the book “Service designer: the designer grappling with complex systems” by Roberta Tassi gives us a description of service design such as **“a way that deals**

**with a systemic dimension, which includes elements of quality not limited to the physical dimension of artefacts, which gives people creative skills and responsibilities, which must rethink the needs of individuals and the planet according to priorities other than the past, which has to find the human face of technologies and which cannot disregard aspects of social, environmental and economic sustainability”.** Again, in order to understand the concept well, the meaning of the words must be explored. **What is intended by design has been clarified beforehand, but what is meant by service?** The banks, the hospital, the post office, car sharing, are all services, born for different purposes, but with something in common. **“Service are artefacts that affect our behaviours and lifestyle more than products: they can be crucial in changing habits, in “de-materialize” people’s lives, in creating new social and productive networks”**

Unlike a product, the total success of a service depends on many factors, some of which are closely related to the human and emotional component of the users but also of those who provide the service. For this reason, one of the main characteristics is the fact of being unpredictable, we cannot control them in every aspect. So, what the designer can do to face this weak point, is to get into the perspective of not designing services but design **for services**.

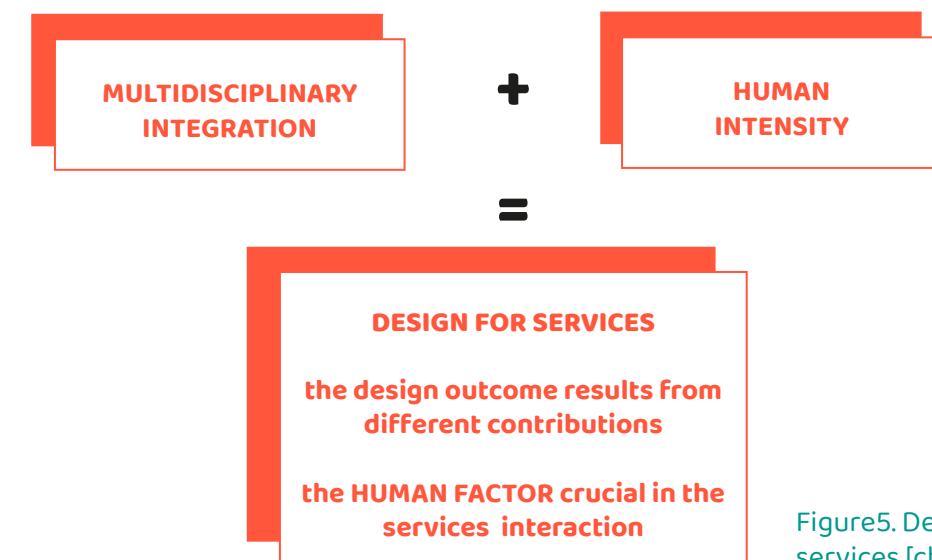


Figure5. Design for services [chart]

<sup>4</sup> Anna Meroni, Design for Sevices, Melburne. Retrieved March 25, 2020. URL <https://vimeo.com/51024366>

***“Design for services means create the condition for certain forms of interaction and relationship to happen” (Meroni et Sangiorgi, 2016).***

Services have a systemic influence because they change the lives of individuals, but they also belong to a community living within a city. Therefore, services in the city change the way ones live. Services for education, health, mobility, housing etc can be designed in order to really respond to people's need in city and in order to change the way people behave towards a more sustainable lifestyle and a better quality of life for the community and the individual.

## Toward social sustainability **1.2**

The concept of sustainability is a word that has been termed on three main levels: the social, the economical and the environmental one. Our society is constantly looking for solution for a more sustainable world under different aspects. At the 2005 World Summit on Social Development it was noted that for sustainability to take place, the reconciliation of environmental, social equity and economic demands – was required<sup>5</sup>

When the discipline of service design began to take hold 30 years ago, the first research explored the nature of services or product-service in relation to environmental issues. This area of research was represented by Ezio Manzini, a national and global sustainability scholar and founder of DESIS<sup>6</sup>, who promoted services as ***“an opportunity to reorient the current system of production and consumption towards environmental and social sustainability” (Meroni & Tassi, 2019).***

<sup>5</sup> United Nations General Assembly (2005). 2005 World Summit Outcome, Resolution A/60/1, adopted by the General Assembly on 15 September 2005. Retrieved on March 27, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Network internazionale su design per l'innovazione sociale e per la sostenibilità.

Firstly, I would like to take a step back to understand the use of the word sustainability: The big talk about sustainability as, I refer to here begins in the 1980! The **Brundtland Commission of the United Nations** defined sustainable development as: ***“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”***<sup>7</sup>

Achieving sustainability is an objective belonging to different areas and situations. However, if we were to indicate the 3 pillars of sustainability, they would certainly be the economic, environmental and social sectors. For its versatility and the benefits, it can bring to our society, when it is reached or at least approached, there are many experts who deal with this matter and among them there are also designers. It is no coincidence that there is a specific section called **“design for sustainability”**.

**But what is the role of design in this field?** In the case of design to achieve sustainability, we are no longer talking about classic design but strategic design.

Carlo Vezzoli speaks about it saying: ***“The strategic design differs from the more classic product design, because it extends its action to the system of products and services that together satisfy a certain demand for well-being. It's like going from designing a machine to designing mobility in a given context.”***<sup>8</sup> When

approaching sustainability, it is important to have this kind of perspective because the system level allows us to have more radical innovations and, potentially, more advantages. The most challenging obstacle is to move from a hypothesis - that of interest in terms of sustainability - to a more operational dimension. The fact that new, more sustainable solutions are considered better than existing products is very important. In order to achieve a sustainable society, we know that major changes in current production and consumption models will have to take place. And it's a process that has to take into account the long lead times to produce results...

In the environmental field, for example, there has been a shift from end-of-pipe approach policies to increasingly preventive measures aimed at reducing the cause of pollution upstream. Initially prevention was applied to industrial processes (clean

<sup>7</sup> United Nations. 1987. “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development.” General Assembly Resolution 42/187, 11 December 1987. Retrieved on March 27, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Scotti, T., (n.d). Design strategico per la sostenibilità. Lifegate. URL [https://www.lifegate.it/persone/stile-di-vita/design\\_strategico\\_per\\_la\\_sostenibilita](https://www.lifegate.it/persone/stile-di-vita/design_strategico_per_la_sostenibilita)

technologies) and then it was extended to industrial products (green products). More recently, thanks to the intervention of design we have been directed towards a system innovation understood as that innovation that transcends the single physical artifact for broadening relations between enterprises and other socio-economic actors. Concerning this, design also plays a meaningful role in the shaping of innovation on the economic side in terms of sustainability. Always taking a step back is important to know that we are talking about sustainable economics when we refer to ***“an economic model that places people, the environment and quality of life at the centre of its operations, seeking to combine development with fairness, solidarity and protection of the common goods”***<sup>9</sup>

Comprehensive examples of how design can influence the sustainable economy are projects based on the circular economy principle. The design applied to the circular economy it's basically a new way to design, make, and use things within planetary boundaries. Shifting the system involves everyone and everything: businesses, governments, and individuals; our cities, our products, and our jobs. By designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems we can reinvent everything.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 6. It's called the circular economy. [chart]



Figure 7. Circular by design. [chart]

<sup>9</sup> L'economia sostenibile secondo Bologna is fair. (2018). Retrieved on April 14, 2020. URL <https://www.bolognaisfair.it/economia-sostenibile/>

<sup>10</sup> Ellen Macarthur Foundation. (2017). What is the circular economy? Retrieved on April 15, 2020. URL <https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/circular-economy/what-is-the-circular-economy>

Speaking about the system, you can see how the pillars of sustainability are connected and an innovation in one field implies transformations and has consequences in the other. In developing this thesis, I decided to start from the lowest step. I believe that economic and environmental innovation cannot be separated from social innovation. As can be seen in **Figure 3**, among the 6 factors that lead to economic-environmental innovation, 2 of them (networked participation, regenerative behaviours) touch the relational-social sphere. Very often one forgets to take care and pay the right attention to personal everyday life. In my opinion a bottom-up strategy should be implemented: to learn first to create a team- a community where the individual is able to trust his **“neighbour”**, and able to exploit diversity as a source of dialogue and confrontation.

If we think of the world as a system, it will be easier for us to adopt the view that the actions/habits of the individual lead to consequences that go beyond the boundaries of “his garden”. That's because the world system is nothing more than the sum of the actions of many individuals. For this reason, **do we ever wonder if the “big” problems of our environment are only the result of a society too focused on the prevalence of individuality? Perhaps do people still think too rarely according to a spirit of community?** To give a practical example, if ideally all the inhabitants of a condominium decided to adopt a collaborative “car sharing” service. there would be far fewer cars on the road, and this could bring benefits to air quality as well as saving money for the families involved.

This example shows how the social part of sustainability, if developed well can influence both environmental and economic issues. So, basically, we can state that ***“sustainability issues are urgent, and it is clear more than ever how the way people live, their lifestyle is of a great influence”*** (Rogel, 2013).

In this project, I would like to focus deeply into **social sustainability** that is essential for understanding the potential innovation in the collaborative housing field.

**DIVERSITY + EQUITY + QUALITY OF LIFE + DEMOCRACY + MATURITY**

=

**SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**



# Change **1.3** to innovate

## 1.3.1 The fluid world

*“In the liquid-modern world, the solidity of things, as well as the solidity of human relations, seems to be considered bad, as a threat: after all, any oath of fidelity and any long-term commitment (not to mention indefinite ones) seem to announce a future burdened with restrictions to freedom of movement and reduce the ability to accept the new and still unknown opportunities that (inevitably) will arise. The prospect of finding oneself entangled for the duration of one’s life in something or a relationship that cannot be renegotiated seems definitely repugnant and frightening.”<sup>11</sup>*

These words, extracted from the book “Things we have in common: 44 letters from the liquid world” belong to one of the greatest figures of sociology, as well as philosopher and academic. We are talking about the Polish **Zygmunt Bauman**, who bequeathed pages and pages to us, helping to outline the transition from modernity to post-modernity and related ethical issues. The sociologist theorized one of the most effective laws of postmodernism: **contemporary society is steeped in Fluidity**. To be “modern”, according to Bauman, meant to be “in the making”. Hence the expression “liquid modernity”, and “fluid world” precisely to underline the fact that “the only constant is change and the only certainty is uncertainty”. While in the previous, “solid” phase, individuals wished or could hope for the control of their own future and a state of perfection, in this new phase of “modernization” the future appears unknown and for this reason no one wants to run the risk of missing opportunities, opportunities and experiences still unknown but unavoidable. (Carletti, 2017). While Bauman also emphasizes the negative consequences that such fluidity causes in man, namely the sense of uncertainty, uneasiness, connected loneliness... Other researchers focus on a much more positive view.

<sup>11</sup> Citation taken from DePalma, L., (2019, June 16). *Bauman e il concetto di liquidità*. Artwave. Retrieved on April 16, 2020. ULR <https://www.artwave.it/cultura/cultura-e-societa/bauman-sociologia-amore-liquido/>

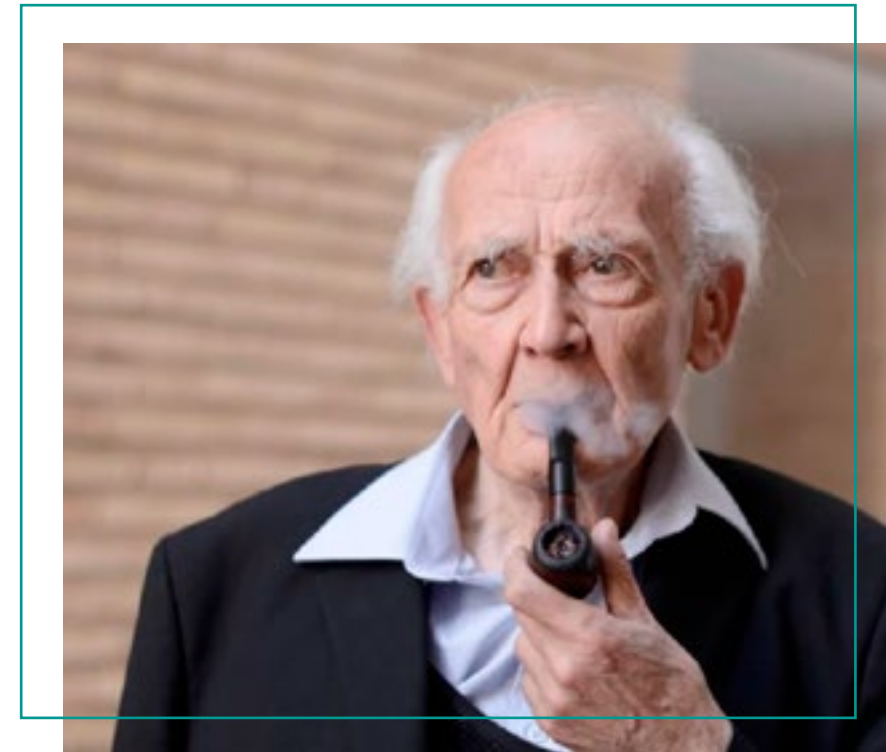


Figure 8.  
Portrait of  
Zygmunt  
Bauman. [photo]

The philosopher and writer **Michel Serres** and the sociologist **Edgar Morin** in their writings, introduce the concept of a fluid world as not only a risky concept but also an opportunity for new possibilities. It is compared to the solid world made up of solid social and productive organizations. Such solidity is given by the difficult penetrability of space and the limitations in the transmission of information. All this has created immobility in the factor of the permanence of time of social conventions leading to a resistance for transformations and organizations. In recent times, however, the arrival of connectivity has dissolved this rigidity, just as temperature does with solid materials, *“strong bonds evaporate and light and variable social networks appear” (Manzini, 2018).*

**Manzini**, addressing the topic in his book “Politiche del quotidiano” tries to separate the fluid character of contemporary reality from the problems it generates today, and hypothesizes that the fluid world could be better than the past. The fluid world speaks to us of *“collective action as the only possibility to build favourable environments” (Manzini, 2018).*

## 1.3.2 Daily dimension and “systemic discontinuity”

Ezio Manzini and Francois Jègou also address the theme of change and sustainability in their book “Sustainable Daily: Scenarios of Urban Life”. The theme of the sustainable city and its possible foreshadowing can be addressed by adopting different points of view and operational methodologies. In this case Manzini takes as a specific reference the daily dimension of existence, which has two complementary meanings: the world seen by those who live in it and a socio-technical world on which it is possible to operate with bottom-up strategies, that is to say starting from the local sphere. The reference to everyday life does not have a value of dimensional scale, but is rather definable as *“the context for the action of a subject: the whole of what binds or opens opportunities to his daily life, and that is extended to wherever, with his choices and actions, he is able to influence” (Manzini, 2003).*



Figure 9.  
Portrait of Ezio  
Manzini. [photo]

Figure 9. Portrait  
of Francois Jègou.  
[photo]

A qualitative consideration is that sustainable development requires industrialized societies, those that have recently become industrialized, and those that are not yet industrialized, to work to implement ideas of development that are divorced from those used until now, questioning the current system. Therefore, an essential act to be implemented will be a so-called “**systemic discontinuity**”, i.e., as Manzini (2003) defines it, *“a form of change at the end of which the system considered [...] on which industrial societies are based will be different, structurally, from what*

*we have known so far” (p.37).* When we speak of the system considered, we mean all the dimensions that make it up: environmental, economic, institutional and social.

In this thesis work I will focus on the benefits of a systemic discontinuity applied mainly to the social system, in relation to the relationships between the actors of a collaborative housing context. It may seem a paradox, but in this area discontinuity must be applied to the present way of life, still too much focused on individuality, while the neighbourhood relationships of the past, of our grandparents, are a model from which we can take inspiration to reinvent ourselves.

The only thing that concerns the future is that it will imply a profound break with the ways of doing and being known so far. Everything else, the ways, the timing, the implications of this vast phenomenon, are completely unknown and will depend on the combination of a large number of factors. First of all, the behaviour of the different social actors. The future is certainly open and unpredictable, but the present contains in itself the premises for all the different possible future scenarios. Thanks to the awareness of what is happening in the present, with strengths and weaknesses, it is possible to make scenarios outlining the strategy of change and discontinuity to follow, to move towards a greater chance of a successful **possible future**.

# Social 1.4 Innovation

## 1.4.1 Between contemporary definition and history

During my research I came across an interview Daniela Selloni gave to Ezio Manzini about his book. I was impressed by these words that I found perfectly in line with the speech I'm facing about change: *“The starting point is that, in a world in rapid and profound transformation, everyone plans. Where “everyone” means individuals, groups, communities, businesses, associations, but also institutions, cities*

*and entire regions. And <<they design>> means that all these individual and collective subjects, whether they want to or not, are driven to put in place planning skills to define and implement their life strategies. The result of this widespread design is that the whole of society can be seen as a great laboratory in which new social forms, solutions and meanings are produced. In which social innovation is done.”<sup>12</sup>*

For these actors who are heading towards design directions, the figure of the service designer plays the role of “expert”, that is, a guide that provides them the tools and strategies to coordinate these intertwined actions of co-design. For this reason, design itself has been a fertile ground for **Social Innovation**.

The conceptualisation and diffusion of the phenomenon of “social innovation”, as it appeared at the beginning of this century, has been largely driven by the British researchers of Young Foundation and Nesta. Their most mature definition is contained in the “White Paper on Social Innovation” written by Robin Murray, Julie Caulier Grice and Geoff Mulgan and says:

*“We define social innovation as new ideas (products, services and models) that meet social needs (more effectively than existing alternatives) and at the same time create new relationships and new partnerships.”*

But let’s understand what the history of this term is and where it comes from.

The term social innovation has assumed over time a multiplicity of meanings due to a path that has touched many areas/sectors from its birth until now.

The first fertile ground for the birth of values linked to social innovation can be found in France and England during the First Industrial Revolution (1800-1880). In that period, there was a radical change in the ways and conditions of production of manufacturing goods and in all sectors of economic and social life:

- The birth of factories
- Standardized production processes
- Transport implementation
- Division of society into two classes: capitalists vs. proletarians
- Luddism<sup>13</sup> birth

<sup>13</sup>Movimento operaio che in Gran Bretagna, nel 19° sec., reagì violentemente all’introduzione delle macchine nell’industria (ritenute causa di disoccupazione e di bassi salari). URL <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/luddismo/>

These changes generate a series of new social needs related to health, quality of work, places to live, social relations and power. In each area, proposals are being developed that are in fact innovative in social terms.

The discourse on social innovation does not end in that first “subversive” phase (1800-1880). It is at the end of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century that the term enters strongly into sociological theories, associated with technological evolution and social change.

The Second Industrial Revolution also brought with it a series of changes on a large scale:

- Increased speed of transformations
- Advances in medicine
- Expansion of the communication system
- Expansion of the communication system

*“These phenomena generate a revolution in man’s relationship with time (speed) and space (distance) that strongly impact the social system (relationship)”*

(Busacca, 2013). It is the American sociologist Lester F. Ward (Ward, 1903) who introduced the concept of social innovation to elaborate a theory on social change in which “innovation” is one of the principles. In his theory, Ward combines social innovation with variance in biology. He affirms that in social, as in organic structures, the tendency is to preserve and reproduce, always maintaining the same structures. But in society, as in organisms, there is a surplus of energy that must be reworked. This surplus, however, is not widespread; it is an exceptional product. In theory, all social energy, if equally distributed, could leave a small surplus in every member of society. But the reality is different: there are a large number of individuals in which the level of social energy is low and small groups in which it is plentiful, and it is from this surplus that social innovation arises (Busacca, 2013).

One factor that may favour the lack of total clearness regarding the term “social innovation” is precisely the term **innovation**: what is the innovation we are talking about?

In this regard, we are helped by the Austrian economist and essayist Peter Ducker, for whom there are two main areas of innovation: technological and social.

While technological innovation is the result of a greater understanding of nature and its channelling into new capacities for control, prevention and production; **social innovation is the result of a greater understanding of social needs** and



**resources and the development of tools to satisfy them.** In both areas' innovation provides new capabilities, makes technology open-ended and allows it to go beyond reforms and revolutions in society. For Drucker the impact of social innovation is similar to that of technological innovation: it opens up social organizations, makes the organizational leap towards new social goals and the organized development of new tools and institutions, gives the possibility to choose between different possible ways to pursue social goals and between different goals to be achieved through given approaches, tools and institutions (Busacca, 2013).

There is a multiple use of the term social innovation. The review conducted by Caulier-Grice and colleagues (Caulier-Grice, Davis, Patrick, Norman, 2012) shows how the term is used to describe it:

- social change and the role of civil society
- the attention (new in non-profit) to management
- the emphasis placed on the world of entrepreneurs
- the implementation of new artefacts that meet social needs
- the interaction between the different actors of the social context

Social innovation thus becomes an all-encompassing umbrella term that according to Euricse (Euricse, 2011) ***“intercepts simultaneously welfare solutions, citizen empowerment and the social use of (technological) innovations”***.

# Communities

## 1.5.1 Definition

***“A closer look at contemporary reality allows us to observe a composite and dynamic social landscape in which there are various ways of thinking and doing. They are the result of the initiative of creative and enterprising people who, confronted with a problem or an opportunity, imagine new solutions with values, both individual and social. These initiatives aim to (re)connect people with the places where they live and to regenerate mutual trust and the capacity for dialogue. And, in so doing, to create new communities.”<sup>14</sup>***

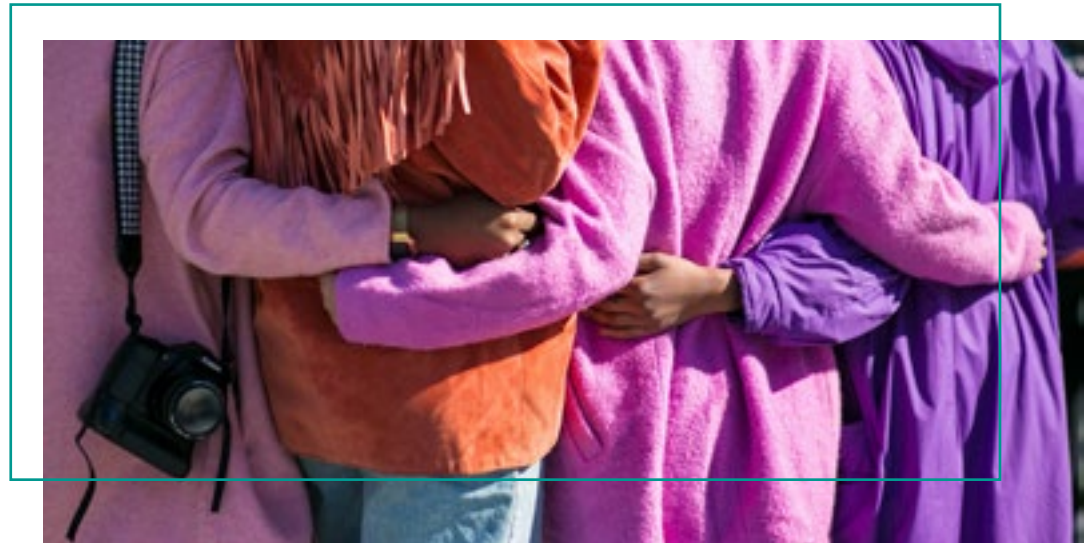


Figure10. Hug among community members. [photo].

Because of the continuous reference of Service Design to the community concept, the meaning of this term should be clarified: as the Cambridge dictionary states, for community we mean ***“the people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group, or nationality”*** (Cambridge dictionary, 2018). However, according to the reality that surround us, we can state that the concept of community has become wider. Nowadays the communities are getting more and more heterogeneous, embracing members who came from different nationality, with their own experiences, problems and interests. Linked to that, it is recognized that Service Design considers the ability and knowledge of service user and wider communities as a primary power for the service development. Also, Service Design creates understanding about the concept related to the local empowerment (Miettinen et al., 2018; Pierandrei, et al., 2018). It means that designer have the strategic role for communities ***“to influence the participatory process for citizen engagement or service user involvement”*** (Pierandrei et al., 2018, p. 2).

<sup>14</sup> Manzini, E. (2018). *Politiche del quotidiano. Progetti di vita che cambiano il mondo*. Edizioni di comunità.

Some of the initiatives born from this teamwork are:

- Collaborative social services
- Distributed and open forms of production
- Collaborative Welfare
- Proposals of cities as common goods

The common factor is that people involved break with the individualism, proposed by the dominant culture, as the sociologist Bauman<sup>15</sup> also stated, and decide to collaborate in order to achieve results that have value for each individual and for all.

## 1.5.2 Community between freedom, safety and understanding.

Mentioned earlier, the Polish Zygmunt Bauman is one of the most important contemporary sociologists of our time. His analysis focuses essentially on postmodern society or as he prefers to call it “**liquid modernity**”. Symbolic is the original title of the book by Bauman that I analysed, “**Missing Community**”.

The sociologist in fact deals with and analyses the theme of the community, not just any community, but the “community that we lack”. **Why should we miss the community?** According to Bauman, the cause is the lack of safety, which is essential for happiness, but which has always afflicted man, leading him, as the sociologist Ulrich Beck also claims, to seek **individual** rescue from common problems. But this action does not achieve the outcome desired because it does not attack the roots of insecurity but rather, makes us even more uncertain. Self-preservation as an answer is tended to be true every time, we seek **certainty**.

**Where do we find that certainty?** In **ourselves** and in **our strongholds**: home, family, neighbourhood, etc.. But in doing so, we grow suspicious of those around us, of “the stranger”, a problem that I will explore in more detail in chapter 3. However, according to the sociologist, the term “community” has inspired in each individual a sense of protection, which evokes what we need to feel confident. The community encloses the sense of collectively precisely because each individual is interdependent on the

<sup>15</sup> Bauman, Z, (2001). *Voglia di comunità*. Economica Laterza.

other. In a community, therefore, one seeks freedom and security, but having both is complicated, says Bauman (2001).

**But there are examples of successful communities, so what is the secret?** To answer this question, this time, we refer to the theories of the German sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies who in his homonymous work<sup>16</sup>, presents the dichotomy between **Gemeinschaft** (community) and **Gesellschaft** (nascent society), two categories used by the sociologist to classify social ties into two opposite sociological types that define each other. The difference between community and nascent society, according to Tonnies, lies in the mutual understanding of all its members. It is important to specify that understanding does not mean consensus, since the latter is basically born from an agreement reached by people who think differently, after exhausting negotiations. Understanding is here understood as something common and natural, a mutually binding feeling through which the inhabitants of the community remain united and understood.

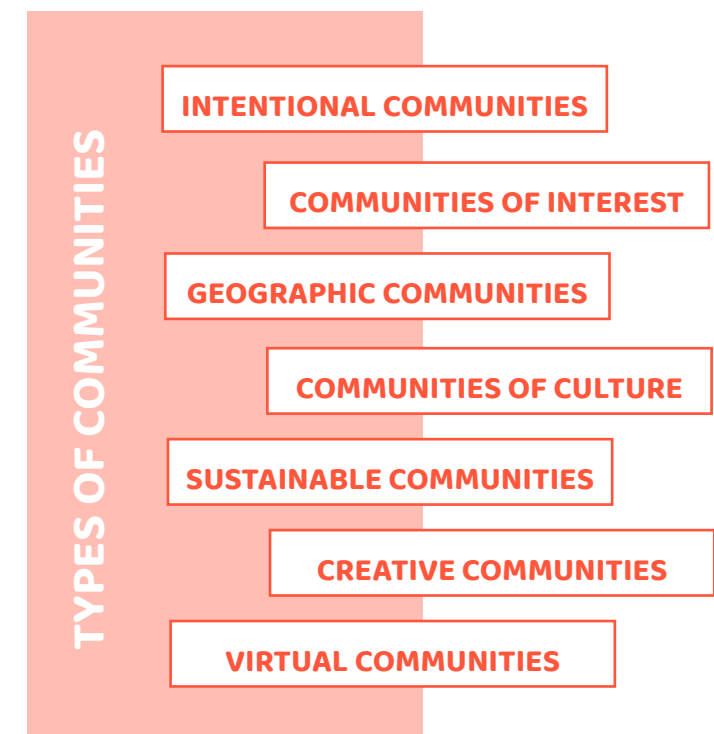


Figure 11. Types of communities. [chart]

<sup>16</sup> Tonnies, F. (1887). *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Bertrams Print on Demand.

## 1.5.3 Community as a space of opportunity

Ezio Manzini said that in the path we are taking towards a more current community scenario, we need to identify to whom the point of view of history belongs. In our case the protagonist is the human being who, together with other human beings and not, inhabits the world in its fluid everyday life. This does not mean an anthropocentric approach because the human being we are considering is not an abstract person, but a concrete person, interesting for us because with all his limits he co-habits the world. A world that does not answer to a unitary logic but is always *“the result of different will and interests, and of unpredictable randomness. And so, there is always a possibility of finding spaces in which people can do and think differently” (Manzini, 2018, p.35).*

From the meeting and the comparison to which men participate, social forms are created: “intertwined relationships between people that, lasting long enough, acquire recognizable characteristics”<sup>17</sup> Anche le comunità possono essere descritte come *“intrecci di conversazioni, e la loro natura dipende dal tipo di conversazione che in esse avvengono e dalle loro motivazioni” (Manzini, 2018, p.37)*, It is precisely the reasons that drive a community to create itself that define its nature: community of interest if there is a common theme at the centre or community of purpose (within which there are the communities of place) if they are united by actions. We will talk about the latter specifically later. Returning to our protagonist, we can say that daily life cannot be described outside the encounters it makes, which constitute its social environment. It is precisely the way in which these meetings and conversations take place that defines the community.

In spite of their diversity, the various types of communities that innovation produces have their own characteristics compared to other social forms. Let's see in brief what kind of opportunities we are talking about:

**1. THE POSSIBILITY TO CHOOSE:** The links built within are the result of a

<sup>17</sup> Così le descrive Georg Simmel (1858-1918), il sociologo tedesco i cui studi hanno introdotto il concetto di struttura sociale e, così facendo, hanno posto le basi della social network analysis.

choice. Those who participate in this type of community do so in order to find their own identity. Therefore, communities like these, gain more value for their members when there is a high degree of diversity of opportunities to meet.

**2. “SPACE” OF OPPORTUNITY:** one of the most characterizing attributes as they are environments where opportunities for expression, comparison, search for solutions are offered. They are therefore defined by the quantity and quality of the conversations that are active in them.

**3. A CONSTRUCTION BY PARTS:** in contemporary communities, the expression community building must be taken literally because they cannot be designed as if they were organic entities.

**4. A CONTINUOUS REGENERATION ACTIVITY:** once the community is established, one begins a management phase that includes a continuous project activity with which to maintain the conditions of existence over time.

**5. THE FORMATION OF COALITIONS:** it can happen that within a community there are more active members with a good degree of mutual understanding. They will form project coalitions that will work to put collaborative ideas into practice.

**6. HYBRID COMMUNITIES:** Currently all new communities live in hybrid offline and online environments. For the first part, living spaces provide the opportunity for physical interaction. While for the latter, digital platforms are the most used tool. In the case of communities of purpose, the platform facilitates their different activities (meeting calendars, coordinating activities, circulating information), while in the case of communities of interest, the platform makes it possible to connect and activate around a theme (a proposal for an activity, an event, a project).

Experience tells us that both communities of interest and purpose are important: the former without the latter risks remaining theoretical and impractical and vice versa.

# ENABLING ECO- SYSTEM .2

## The idea of **2.1** place evolution

What has been said so far about the new communities also has considerable implications for the evolution of the idea of place. There is in fact a connection between space and community. Starting from the assumption that the place is a space endowed with meaning, Manzini (2018) defines the latter as the result of human conversations. Therefore, it can be said that a place is a space where people who have reasons to talk about it are placed. Thus, to conclude the concept behind the idea of place: *“it is a space inhabited by a community interested in the place where it lives” for different reasons (Manzini, 2018, p.45).*

**conversation 1 + conversation 2 = MEANING**

**PLACE = SPACE + MEANING**

**PLACE = SPACE + (conv1 + conv 2)**

Figure 12. Explanation of the concept of place. [chart]

For pre-modern communities, this connection was quite predictable and immediate: there were mostly stable, permanent communities, based on a strong interweaving of strong bonds related to activities limited to physical space. But on the other hand, if we reconnect to the concept of **“fluid and connected world”**, introduced in the first chapter, it has cleared that things may be no longer like that today. New communities are always placed in a space and produce place, but what changes is the entity of the latter. Space can be also hybrid, i.e. both physical and virtual, and the places that are produced are also **hybrids**, endowed with soft meanings as well as the conversations that generated them (Manzini, 2018). The concept of space is a very broad concept that touches on different thematic areas from housing, health, education, etc., but the underlying meaning remains the same. About education, Guglielmo Trentin, research director of the Institute of Educational Technologies,



reports in one of his works the definition of hybrid spaces, taken from the book by De Souza e Silva, a Professor at the Department of Communication at North Carolina State University (NCSSU) and Director of the Mobile Gaming Research Lab:

*“In this connected world (always-on) hybrid spaces are like dynamic spaces, which are constantly transformed by the simultaneous movement of people in physical and digital space, thus fostering the inclusion of remote contexts in those experienced at the moment.”*

He adds:

*“Spaces and contexts in which natural agents (people) and artificial agents (digital resources) sometimes seen as one (the person with his/her mobile device) coexist and interact. Spaces and contexts full of information and interpersonal relationships that foster mostly informal knowledge flows” (Trentin, 2017).*

As said before, the report focuses on the world of education, whose key point is to understand how the potential of hybrid spaces can be exploited to open new scenarios with more active and participatory teaching-learning processes. Regardless of the specific field, these thoughts, leads us to a deep reflection on the new hybrid dimensions in which we are dipped: they are not the simple product of a mechanical combination of real and virtual components, but rather of a sort of mutual interpenetration facilitated by what the philosopher Luciano Floridi calls **infosphere**.

Taking a more philosophical and theoretical point of view, in the book “The information revolution” Floridi introduced the concept of the infosphere in relation to its important role in this interweaving of hybrid dimensions. Specifically, the term infosphere refers to *“that environment within which all processes, services and informational entities are found” (Trentin, 2017)*. The human being is moving inside the infosphere and technologies are not simply tools that allow us to interact with this new informational environment, but real doors that allow us to enter into it.



Figure 13. Hybrid spaces in the infosphere. [chart]

The illustration above shows a visualization of the theories explained so far. It is important to bear in mind that although there are elements that clearly refer to the world of pedagogy, the system of operation remains applicable to the housing environment as well.

For this reason, I have developed an adaptation of the same picture but introducing the private and public components of housing as **“physical spaces”**.

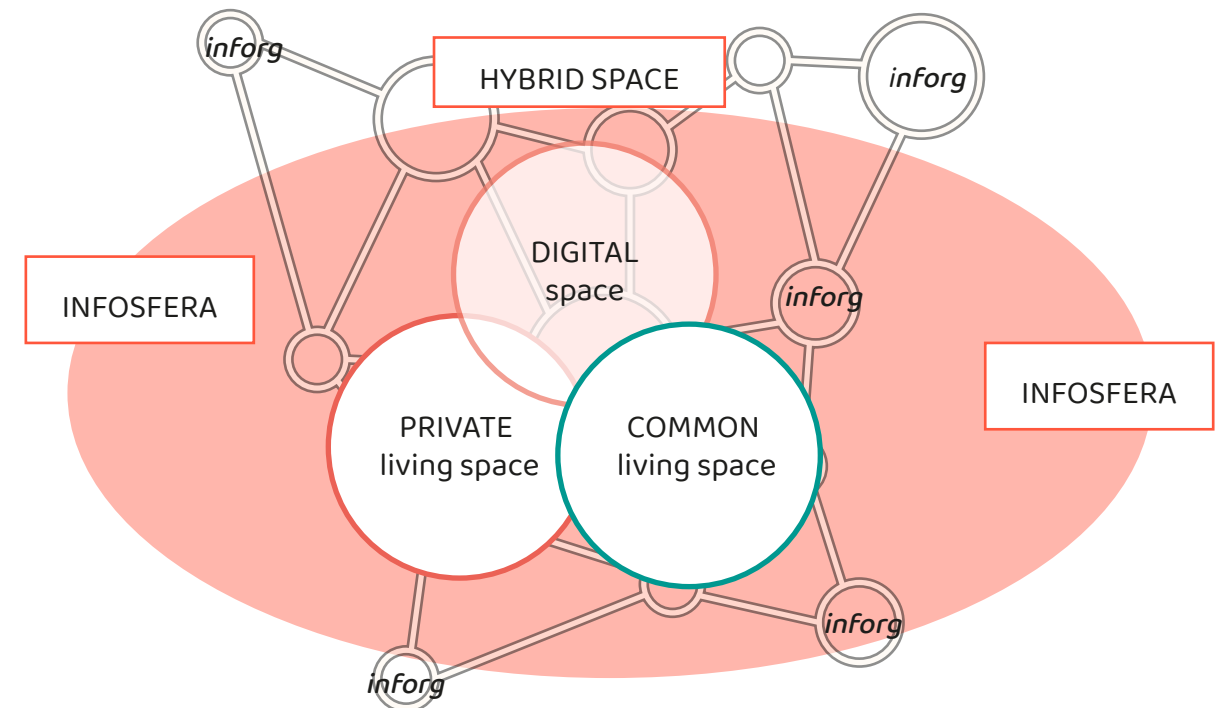


Figure 14. Hybrid spaces in the infosphere re-adapted to living context. [chart]



As you can see from the figure, in many respects we are not isolated entities but rather organisms interconnected, which are defined as “inforG”. Therefore, the so-called crisis of communities and places is not linked to their disappearance but rather to an evolution. And as mentioned earlier, change is the prerogative for innovation. In the following chapters we will go to dissect the two parts of the hybrid spaces (offline and online), always with a magnifying glass to the nature of the bonds that these enabling ecosystems could create.

## 2.2 Collaborative living: the offline side of community bonds

### 2.2.1 The features of “living”

*“In recent years, the theme of living has become central to the political, social, economic and cultural debate in Italy and Europe, not only in terms of measures to contain housing discomfort, but also in reference to the total human and social experience of living” (Ferri et al., 2017, p.125).*

Living is a way of building society. Technological innovations and the (de)structuring power of communication flows have matched the urgent need for places where social tangible links can be established. social tangible. The sense of community and belonging to an “us” have become goals to be achieved through living. So, places like the house and the neighbourhood have become more and more the means through which to experience collective belonging. These social dynamics reopen the reflection on what it means to live (Pavesi et al., 2017).

The psychologist Luca Mazzucchelli who is emerging on the scene for a series of interesting ideas, spread during his coaching or in his texts as “Factor 1%: Small habits for big results” highlights the bond that exists between us and ourselves: he compares the figure of the house to our body, simply on a larger scale. The association with our body, which is something we take care of in our daily lives in order to feel good, is aimed at letting pass the message of how fundamental is the living context

in which we live and how much it can affect the person. In fact, *“the environment is not only the background to life but is an integral part of the psycho-physical well-being of individuals” (Spadoni, 2019).*

**But what does it really mean to live?** Consulting the dictionaries of the Italian language under “living”, you can find the following definitions: “to have as a habitual dwelling” or “to live permanently in a place”. If, however, the notion of dwelling is brought back to our daily experience, these definitions certainly appear reductive. There is no doubt that the meanings of this term, both in terms of individual biographies and in terms of the social system, are much more complex.

The Urban Sociologist and Social Entrepreneur at the University of Milan Bicocca, Pietro Palvarini in his paper *“La vivibilità nella città contemporanea” defines living as “a system of actions and relationships organized around the different places where actors lead their daily lives” (Palvarini, 2010).* It is precisely the birth of actions and relationships that allows us to define the infrastructures that make up living as the offline side of community bonds. In order to give a more complete picture of what is meant by “living”, the experts have explored it in its peculiarities.

Living is:

- Process
- Located
- Active
- Complex

Let us see in more detail

**LIVING IS A PROCESS:** Living is not an object, but a process. As such, it is not static, but develops in time and space. Modernisation processes have led to a reduction in the meaning of living in an objective sense and to a substantial convergence between living and dwelling.

In the market economy, housing has become a commodity like any other, a consumer product, which (if not provided by the state) must be found on the market, purchased and maintained through money (Paquot, 2007). The paradigm of the modern inhabitant is consequently shaped on the model of the consumer (of housing products), or the user (of housing services). This objective and technicalist vision can be contrasted with a notion of living as a process, i.e. a set of practices continuously acted by individuals, a human work that is made of actions but also of relationships.

Thus, reporting the words of Bricocoli and Cemereri<sup>18</sup>, Palvarini wrote about it:

***“Then living refers to making “intimate alliances”, to remaining anchored, with beings or things to which one is permanently connected, in ways that are shaped over time and that define in a very personal way the terms of what is or is not appropriate to do in that given context”.***

**THE LIVING IS LOCATED:** Living always implies a rich and meaningful relationship with places. It is for the individual a way to establish an active and dynamic relationship with the physical and social space around him, to create a material and symbolic link between himself and the world. It requires a continuous process of active construction of places by the subjects. Living is the most intimate relationship with the environment (Saegert, 1985). As we will explore more detail later, places full of meaning are not only those that are closely linked to the dwelling core. The territoriality of living, in fact, is not exhausted within the dwelling. Living and dwelling are not co-extensive terms, since the living experience usually includes places outside the dwelling (Crague, 2003) but which are part of a housing system. There is also a sort of polytopic residential territory, emblematic of the contemporary society of mobility: it is made up of several places of residence (more or less permanent), numerous “elective” spaces, which the individual chooses to carry out certain activities, and other places whose attendance is required (Stock, 2006). The tourist, the migrant, the businessman, the artist, the out-of-office student, the academic, possess the profiles of the multi-resident individuals (by necessity or by choice). They build a changing and complex plot of paths that ensure the accessibility to the different places of their rest and work and the connection of the different biographical times corresponding to their movements and stops.

**THE LIVING IS ACTIVE:** Living can be defined as a form of social action. The type of action that is called into question here differs, from that implied in the modern model of living. The latter, reducing living to a mere function among others (working, circulating, recreating oneself), interprets housing action exclusively according to the canons of rational action. If the house is a “**machine à habiter**” - according

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<sup>18</sup> Bricocoli M., Centemereri L. (2005). *Abitare: tra l'alloggio e la città. Quando le politiche entrano in casa*, in Bifulco L. (a cura di), *Le politiche sociali. Temi e prospettive emergenti*, Roma, Carocci.

to a metaphor coined by Le Corbusier (1923) and widely used by the architects of the Modern Movement - living is considered to be a sum of effective behaviours because they are based on the principle of rationality. Living as it is understood under the eye of a service designer is rather an intersubjective work, charged with cultural and social meanings: the inhabitant does not simply reproduce a process, but reinterprets it, attributing meanings to his or her own practices and modifying existing housing models according to individual needs or socially structured preferences. In this work of continuous mediation not only rationality is involved, but also psychological and emotional components, established practices and habits play a decisive role (Palvarini, 2010). This concept implies the passage from a **model of inhabitant-consumer of the product-home, to one of inhabitant-social actor**. An individual able to modify the context but at the same time able to adapt to it.

**LIVING IS COMPLEX:** Finally, living is a complex system of practices and relationships with an environment. The residential or housing component is only one of the aspects inherent in the notion of living, which embraces multiple practices related to different domains of social life: work, consumption, leisure, mobility. But living is not only a complex of actions; it is also **made up of the set of social relationships that the inhabitant establishes in the conduct of his daily life: family relationships, friends, cohabitation, neighbourhood**.

Living has a fundamental role in achieving individual and family well-being and is one of the pillars on which the quality of life in contemporary societies is based. The productive, technological, and cultural changes that have been taking place in urban societies in recent decades certainly tend to make the picture of contemporary living more complex. On a domestic scale, the complexity of living can be found in the design of physical spaces and in particular in the configuration of the interior of the home. It goes from the functional rigidity and specialization of individual rooms to the privilege of features such as flexibility and multifunctionality of spaces (Tosi, 1994).

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## 2.2.2 From traditional concept of home to the “extended” home

The evolution of the house is one of the most stimulating themes to understand the cultural and social change of a population. It is such a broad and complex concept that finding a unique definition of what is meant by “home” is something very difficult. But let us try to explore the transformation it has been through to arrive at the concept of collaborative living. The need for a home considered as “most basically, shelter from the elements; it is security and privacy from the outside world”<sup>19</sup> is a natural instinct of humans as well as animals. Just think of wolves’ dens, birds’ nests or bees’ hives, etc., which are nothing more than purpose-built spaces to have a safe place suitable for the growth of the family or the whole community. The concept of a house built for people was born in prehistoric times and in particular with the passage from nomadism to sedentariness. By choosing a stable place in which to live, the need to replace the natural shelter of the cave with a safer shelter that would defend against bad weather and animal attacks grew. Over time, the concept of accommodation as a place of protection became something more complex: **“it is space in which to relax, learn and live; it is access to more or less comfort, but the home also places the household in a specific neighbourhood context which may influence accessibility to relatives, friends, shopping, leisure, public services and employment”**.<sup>20</sup>

The house started to be a status, a demonstration of possessions and a dream. It became that object of desire for which you invested your earned wages (approx. 30% of the income in USA and Europe). The concept of the house as we know it today has changed radically in modern times. Most people in developed countries perceive the home as a private space. **“A place, separated from the outside world, that hosts one or more members of the household, divided into rooms that have specific purposes” (Rogel, 2013).**

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<sup>19</sup> Housing policy in the eu member states: Directorate General for Research, Working Document, Social Affairs Series. URL [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/workingpapers/soci/w14/text1\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/workingpapers/soci/w14/text1_en.htm)

<sup>20</sup> Housing policy in the eu member states: Directorate General for Research, Working Document, Social Affairs Series. URL [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/workingpapers/soci/w14/text1\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/workingpapers/soci/w14/text1_en.htm)

The concept of the rooms like the usage of bedroom or bathroom, for example, are new concepts that were integrated into houses mainly after the world wars.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the model of housing in Europe in the middle ages had basically no private spaces. The same spaces were used for living, working, and sleeping. Therefore, passing inside a room just to reach another one was a normal thing to do. Only about 100 years ago through the rising of corridors, as a tool to separate different groups of people – the servants – from the served, the jailed from the jailors, and workers from distractors”<sup>22</sup> the circulation was divided from destination, and turning rooms into a series of dead ends.

The house in the modern era has increasingly moved towards a process of privatization of space (kitchen, bathroom and living room remain in common) where indeed greater privacy and individuality were synonymous of better economic condition. As proof of this In his book “Dell’abitare”, Maurizio Vitta writes: **“A house narrate the resident, it draws its figure, it represents the resident in front of others and for others in the extent to which it is put into shape by those who live it.”**

However, this search for more individual space in the home has led to less frequent interactions between the inhabitants.

So, the house is a lot about balancing private and public space.

In his book, “The Hidden Dimension”, Edward T. Hall introduces for the first time the following dimensions of spaces:

- **INTIMATE SPACE:** the closest “bubble” of space surrounding a person. Entry into this space is acceptable only for the closest friends and intimates.
- **PERSONAL SPACE:** the region surrounding a person, which they regard as psychologically theirs. Most people value their personal space and feel discomfort, anger, or anxiety when their personal space is encroached.
- **SOCIAL SPACE**—the spaces in which people feel comfortable conducting routine

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<sup>21</sup> Worsley, L. History of the Home. URL [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/middle\\_ages/history\\_of\\_home.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/middle_ages/history_of_home.shtml)

<sup>22</sup>Jusczyk,T. Consider the corridor: lessons from architectural history. URL <http://inside.shepleybulfinch.com/2011/02/considerVtheVcorridorVlessonsVfromVarchitecturalVhistory/>

social interactions with acquaintances as well as strangers.

• **PUBLIC SPACE**—the area of space beyond which people will perceive interactions as impersonal and relatively anonymous.

In western countries one may say that the house is hosting intimate and personal spaces mostly. The bedroom and the bathroom particularly address the intimate dimension. The rest of the house, where there is contact with other family members can be called personal space. The living room and the kitchen may become social places when hosting friends (Rogel, 2013). We have understood, however, that *“lifestyles are constantly evolving and it is precisely in the home - the theatre and the stage of daily experiences - that the most relevant socio-economic, technological and cultural changes take place, the result of the advanced present in which we live and the imagination of the future.”*<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to the wealthy slice of people who competed with those who accumulated more **“intimate space”**, on the other hand there was the remaining part of the cake consisting of a lower middle class often made up of families who, perhaps more out of necessity, began a path of sharing within the city housing. Urban dwellings are the answer for the large amount of people that slowly gather in cities. **“Those put together many apartments in order to use a given area to create enough space for many people. People have to share a lot of space and live next to each other without intruding the intimate and personal space. Many spaces around the house are social spaces like the stairs, the sideway or the square”** (Rogel, 2013). Following this housing model, opportunities for social meetings and interaction among the members of the community become much more frequent. The structure of city housing makes it easier to implement services. When many people share the same roof, one can easily imagine they can also share a series of services fitting their needs. Northern Europe at the beginning of the 20th century, proved to be a pioneer in proposing housing prototypes that followed this line, showing strengths and weaknesses.

<sup>23</sup> (n.d). (2016, Febraury 1). Living Scapes – *Stili di vita e dell'abitare contemporanei*. Byinnovation. URL <http://byinnovation.eu/living-scapes-stili-di-vita-e-dellabitare-contemporanei/>

In fact, the city of Moscow in late 1920 saw the birth of the **Narkomfin building**, designed by the Association of Contemporary Architects, addressed by Moisei Ginzburg and Ignaty Milinis. It is a clear example of Russian Constructivism, a first prototype of this new paradigm “transitional” of collective life. Made up of 50 residential units divided into 4 blocks, the building integrated the private apartments and common facilities such as gym, solarium, dining room, etc. The architect's nephew, in an interview, also emphasized the important function of transitory spaces such as the corridor.

In this regard, he says:

*“the upper corridor was not just an element in the house's system of communications; it also served as a recreational space. Also recreational were the open first storey and the usable roof. All in all, the house had a wide range of public spaces linking it with its surroundings”* (Rogel, 2013, p.52).

Unfortunately, the idea that the building's configuration could have an impact on people's way of life was not as bright as the architect expected.

Ginzburg planned having the day of a housemate in mind; for example he had to get up early in the morning and go straight to the roof to exercise or since it was possible to eat together in the café-refectory, the kitchens were smaller than the ordinary. Too bad that the residents did not share this logic and preferred to cook in the individual “cells”, wash clothes at home and avoid gymnastics (Kostina, 2015).

This demonstrates that building and architecture alone cannot influence the inhabitants without the right political or social support.

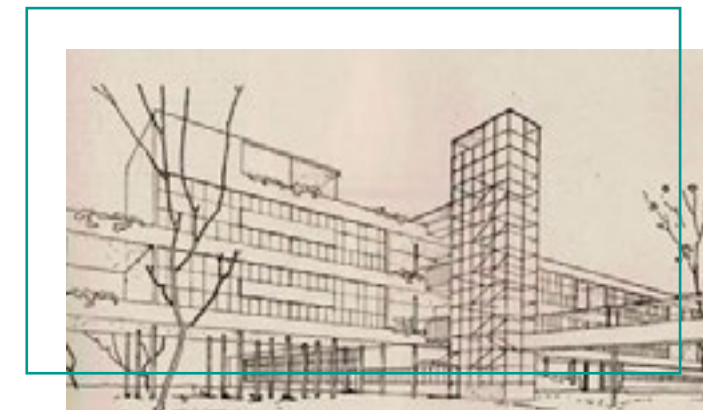


Figure 15. Narkomfin Building, Moscow, 1928-1932, Moisei Ginzburg. [draws].



As can be seen from the illustrations, the concept marked a transition from the traditional home composed by totally private apartments to a new type of social housing with some areas in common. This new model has sought a balance between the individual, the family, and the wider social group.

Other famous examples such as Le Corbusier's I **"Unité d'Habitation"** and the Swedish model of "central kitchen idea" follow on the same wave line.

The first one located in Marseille (1952) was over-named a "living machine" and named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2016. It is proposed to the public as a vertical city consisting of 18 floors of apartments, where the individual spaces of the 1700 residents are placed in the middle of the common areas. The seventh and eighth floors are crossed by public corridors equipped with all the main services: shopping centre, butcher's, fishmonger's, greengrocer's, bakery, and many other services.



Figure 16. Facade Unité d'Habitation [photo]

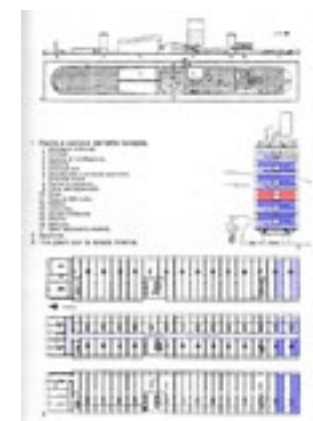


Figure 17. Plans and sections of the Unité d'Habitation of Marseille with the indication of the duplex apartments on two floors (bluscuro and light blue) and the type of services common to a single floor. [technical drawing]

■ PUBLIC SPACE  
■ PRIVATE SPACE

<sup>23</sup> (n.d). (2016, Febraury 1). Living Scapes – *Stili di vita e dell'abitare contemporanei*. Byinnovation. URL <http://byinnovation.eu/living-scapes-stili-di-vita-e-dellabitare-contemporanei/>

Moving to Sweden, the **"central kitchen idea"** model was proposed as an input towards collaboration, son of a functionalistic approach that sees Louis Sullivan as one of the greatest exponents. Functionalist architects believed that the ways buildings are used and the types of materials available, should determine the design. This included a complex look on the community of people living in certain buildings.



Figure18. Sven Markelius kollektivhus vid John Ericssonsgatan [photo].

*The word "collective housing unit" ("kollektivhus" in Swedish) seems to have been introduced by the functionalists. In Sweden the idea was mainly developed by Sven Markelius, architect (later professor) and Alva Myrdal, social reformer.<sup>24</sup>*

Alva Myrdal wrote: *"Urban housing, where twenty families each in their own apartment cook their own meat-balls, where a lot of young children are shut in, each in his or her own little room – doesn't this cry for an overall planning, for a collective solution?!"<sup>25</sup>*

She saw the need and the potential in urban dwellings and the kitchen was a starting point together with a place for children to socialize. In this case, the choice of a space for collaboration derived from a practical need: cooking remains one of the main activities for women to manage beyond their work; to offer quality

<sup>24</sup>Vestbro, D. (1992). Central kitchen to community co-operation- Development of Collective Housing in Sweden. Open House International Vol 17, No 2 p 30-38.

<sup>25</sup> Myrdal, A. (1932) Kollektiv bostadsform. Tiden 1932, 601-608.

dishes for the whole family the women in the early 20 had to think about going out for grocery, preparing, and washing. This became difficult as more and more women went to work in the morning and got back home just in time for dinner. On the other hand, children alone in their house were isolated and did not cultivate social relationships. This is the reason why in the 1935 was built the first functionalist collective housing unit in Sweden was built in 1935 at **John Ericssonsgatan 6** in Stockholm by Sven Markelius

Despite different paths, the common root of the above-mentioned case studies is the fact that they proposed themselves as revolutionary prototypes not only regarding the concept of home but also lifestyle. They tried to provide a guide, through their architectural object, for the reconstruction of society.

If these have been the pioneers of the past, **what are the housing models proposed today on the front of collaborative living and the ecosystem home as enabling social interaction?**

The new research laboratory and intelligence centre of the Salone del Mobile in Milan has conducted **“LivingScapes”**, a research aimed at intercepting the main trends emerging at international level in the world of design and living.

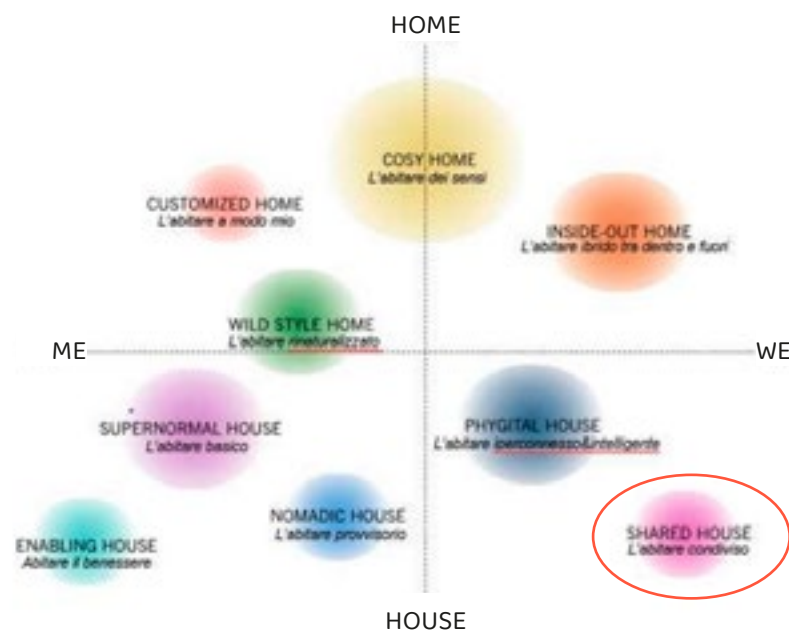


Figure19. Positioning map Living Space research [chart].

As you can see from the matrix, we have in front of us many types of dwellings positioned on the graph according to certain parameters. The variety of typologies is due to the fact that the house changes and evolves with the evolution of contemporary social and cultural instances. The digital revolution and the emerging paradigm of the sharing economy (Airbnb, social eating, etc.) are redesigning and redefining private spaces with a view to an ever-increasing encroachment on public space.

New technologies have made homes hyper-connected, transforming them, first and foremost, into new workplaces as well as adaptive “organisms” hovering between the physical world and the digital world.<sup>26</sup>

As you can imagine from the speech made so far and from the case studies previously proposed, the ecosystem that I have examined, from the point of view of service design and which served as a scenario for the development of my project is that of the shared house.

By shared house we mean **“the community-driven house that translates new collaborative instances. It is the “families by choice”, i.e. those not united by family ties, who choose to co-habit, sharing some spaces of domestic life and giving rise to new formulas and types of housing. It is the place where people who share practices, values, inclinations and existential choices, or between humans and animals, co-tenants in all respects with specific needs and needs, are designed to live together”.**

The shared house model could be clusterized in four main categories così riassunte da Liat Rogel (2013):

**1. COMMUNES OR OTHER IDEOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL COLLECTIVE HOUSING:**

A commune is an intentional community of people living together, sharing common interests, property, possessions, resources, and, in some communes, work and income. The people living in communes may have more or less spaces and resources

<sup>26</sup> LivingScapes – Stili di vita e dell'abitare contemporanei (credits: Salone del Mobile.Milano Trend Lab). Actiongiromari. URL <https://actiongiromari.it/design/livingscapes-stili-di-vita-e-dellabitare-contemporanei-credits-salone-del-mobile-milano-trend-lab/>

shared.

**2. COHOUSING:** *“Cohousing is a new way of collective living where inhabitants share spaces, services and activities. In this way it is possible to rediscover the lost sense of community” (Rogel et al., 2018).*

The cohousing communities combine the autonomy of private dwellings with the advantages of services, resources and shared spaces (micro-nurseries, laboratories for DIY, car-sharing, gyms, guest rooms, gardens so on.) with benefits in both social and environmental terms. They typically consist of a settlement of 20-40 housing units for families and singles. Participatory planning may or may not occur. When it does, it covers both the construction project itself and the community project: what and how to share, how to manage services and common areas.

**3. CONSTRUCTION COOPERATIVES/COLLECTIVE:** Building co-operatives are cooperative housing corporations where individuals or families work together to directly construct their own homes in a cooperative fashion. Members of this type of co-operative purchase building materials in bulk and co-operate with other members of the co-op during the construction phase of the co-operative. Once the housing has been completed the members usually own their homes directly. In some cases, roads, parkland and community facilities continue to be owned by the co-operative. This typology will be discussed in more detail in the following sub-chapter.

**4. TEMPORARY HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR SPECIFIC PEOPLE:** These offer accommodation for some time (days, weeks of some years) to a specific population. Here you can find for example: Student’s residency, hostels, elderly partially assisted housing. It is important that there is a collaborative atmosphere and not only the sharing of spaces.

The pieces of this path therefore fall within what Manzini called **“extended home”**: a physical and social context articulated in private and semi-private spaces in which, in an open and flexible way, the different functions of everyday life are distributed.

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## 2.2.3 Potentialities, practical and social values

From the age of 18 months with a particular peak around 2-3 years of age, children go through <<is mine!>>. A phase of strong ownership, of inability to share, even to tolerate someone touching one of their toys, an object they have their eyes on.<sup>27</sup> Parents and/or educators face the challenge of teaching them the art of sharing and collaboration. Pedagogy is a wide world and surely there are specific reasons behind this childish nature, which we will not explain here. This example, which we have all experienced directly or indirectly, puts us in front of a reflection: sharing is certainly something delicate, which needs care and attention. So, what drives people to share not only an object, but their everyday life, some spaces of their living environment? In this sub-chapter we will try to understand what are the potential and social value that generates such a choice and how design can be a facilitator.

Taking in reference the emblematic example of co-housing we know that originally, as for many social phenomena, it was born as an innovative response to some emerging needs of Western society, arising from the progressive dissolution of parental networks, the instability of the world of work and the constitutive fragility of welfare services (Stewart, 2002).

Today it represents an evolved form of re-construction of the socio-relational fabric of inhabited places, proposing a model of co-residence (not co-habitation) that supports the feeling of belonging and responsibility towards one’s own territorial context while preserving, at the same time, the privacy and independence of each single family nucleus (Narayan, 1998).

From the 2017 report of the **Housinglab** association emerges that the motivations of cohabiting groups to the question **“why to live collaboratively”** are multifaceted. Some common answers refer to “developing elective neighbourhood experiences”, such as the possibility to start a process of knowledge and collaboration with people who feel similar or motivated towards the same way of living. A second group of answers brings out a motivation linked to the greater possibilities of personalisation of living spaces allowed by co-design: “to design the house and common spaces in first person” to meet the needs of both the family and the group.

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<sup>27</sup> (n.d). (2019, July 5). E' mio! La 'fase possessiva' nei bambini. La Stampa. URL <https://www.lastampa.it/mamme/2017/11/14/news/e-mio-la-fase-possessiva-nei-bambini-1.34384625>

Therefore, one of the major driving forces in undertaking such a path is the awareness of the possibility of increasing the qualitative component and increasing the freedom of access to quality supplementary services.

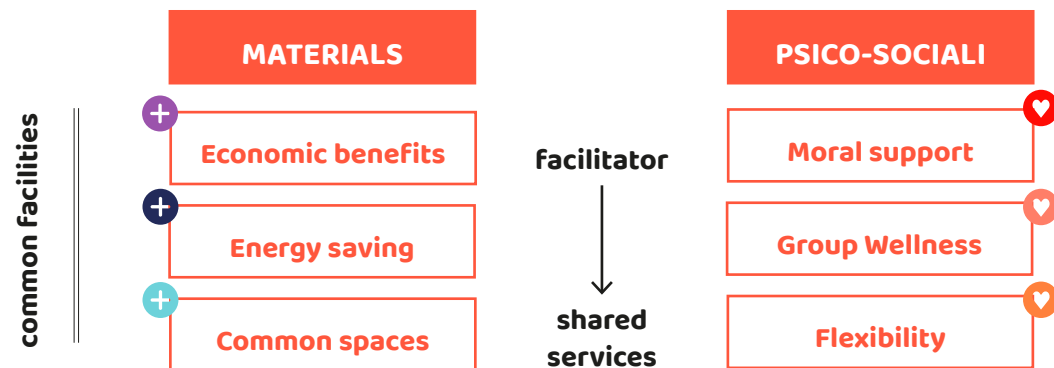


Figure20. Benefits of collaborative living [chart].

From the combination of field and desk research multiple advantages have emerged, as shown in the graph above, in materials, therefore tangible, measurable and psycho-socials one.

The cluster of material advantages is composed of what are called common facilities. It has emerged how the "extended home" model makes it possible to limit the use of equipped domestic space per capita and, by making the best use of the equipment provided, reduces the resources consumed per unit of service rendered (and therefore, per unit of satisfied user). The economic benefits (collective user agreements, energy savings, etc.) are an indicator of functionality because the more costs are shared, the greater the savings will be, with a consequent improved functionality of the structure (Sapio, 2010).

From the point of view of spatiality, the "extended house" proposing the development of equipment and shared spaces for public or semi-public use, frees the domestic space, for private use, from unwanted functionality and equipment. Consequently, common spaces become what Melzer defines as the "heart of the community" (2000), the hub of exchanges and interactions.

The value on which I focused most, as a Service Design student, is precisely the nature and origin of shared services that the community can use. I consider them one of

the most important advantages because it is thanks to involvement of residents in them, that the members of the community go to a certain common space, are able to manage the budget better, create groups of responsibilities, trigger communications that they might not have had otherwise. And it is in this area that, as we will see in the following chapters, the designer comes into play, whose role as facilitator is aimed at designing the most suitable service for a specific community.

From a more ephemeral point of view linked to the psycho-social sphere, the choice of living in a context of collaborative living can lead to a more complete sense of well-being that implies harmonious conditions of relationship between the individual and the human and environmental context. *"The factor of well-being represents an elective functional indicator, where in its fullest meaning, it expresses the paradigm of a new social and civic culture whose cornerstones are underlying by principles such as the horizontality of processes, participatory democracy, respect for feelings of distributive justice, the presence of mutualism and reciprocity, the expression of everyone's creative potential" (Choi, 2004).*

A further social advantage that those who live in a context of collaborative living have is that, in most cases, they can manage themselves by following a bottom-up strategy, which involves the creation of a flexible ecosystem: a flexibility understood as the possibility of implementing life strategies that can be adapted over time, a strategy that strongly takes into account the needs and requirements of the community group that has been formed.

Last but not least, one of the greatest social values of collaborative living is the fact of living in a context where the feeling of loneliness is somewhat set aside, and moral support is tangible.

Those who have moved to a new city for work or study have been able to test how difficult it is to rebuild their own network of contacts and friendships. You can be lucky and find your neighbour to welcome you with a slice of cake or, on the other hand, find yourself in a building where you can barely exchange "good morning" for the stairs. Collaborative living with the spread of "good neighbourhood practices" tries to bridge this social gap.



## Physical distance cause Covid: the resilience of communities and their benefits.

An emblematic example that has been under the eyes of the whole world lately, have been the good neighborhood practices born in many Italian and worldwide dwelling, during the COVID19 lockdown. Certainly what we have experienced and are still experiencing was an extreme situation, but the examples that I will report below are actually activities that already happen in many collaborative homes, and it would be great to see them extended to other contexts by definition less collaborative. The practices told switch between those aimed at leisure and fun for such a mentally stressful situation, up to those more related to practical help.

### 1) Tombola from the balconies. ❤️ ❤️

The residents of 4 Novembre street and part of dell'Unità d'Italia square in Ronchi dei Legionari know something about it. As in a real Festival, on Easter Monday the inhabitants decided, even though they did not all live in the same building, to respect the tradition and, keeping all the safety rules, they played to Tombola game. the only difference was that the exit of the numbers, this time, was waited at the window or on the terrace of the house. It became a real Tombola from the balconies.



Figure21. Balcony bingo [photo]

### 2) FrescoFrigo in Social Village + +

No less important was the Social Village of Cascina Merlata in Milan, which thought of a service that would satisfy the most practical needs. The aim was to allow residents to go shopping without leaving home, avoiding both queues at supermarkets and the delays of online services. So **FrescoFrigo**, an Italian startup, installed five "smart" refrigerators for the over 900 people living there (397 apartments in all). A large part of the range of refrigerated market counters was available to condominiums just a few steps from the hallway. What's more, with maximum flexibility, since purchases can be made seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. Simply unlock one of the refrigerators via QR Code with the dedicated mobile app, pick up the products and finish shopping by closing the door. The refrigerator itself will take care of the rest. Since the items are equipped with Rfid tags, a technology with radio frequency identification, the system will be able to monitor every change in the inventory. In addition, thanks to the cloud, it will be able to automatically report to retail partners the food to be restocked and charge the user the cost due directly in the app (digital restaurant tickets are also accepted).



Figure22. FrescoFrigo in Cascina Merlata [photo]

### 3. A un metro di distanza

Or again, why give up cocktail hour? This situation of physical distancing (I prefer call like this rather than social distancing as many say) has highlighted even more how communities are not closely linked to a physical place, but especially in 2020, technology can, at least in part, play a very important role.

This is the case of the community initiative “a un metro di distanza” launched by the CommunityToolkit team that organized a digital aperitif to stay in touch with the already established network and meet new members. The goal was to confront each other without renouncing a ritual very loved especially by us as Italians. In this example, the benefit of sharing should be taken in a more ambiguous sense, it goes beyond merely living physically in a collaborative home. With the right tools, the benefits of a community can be experienced even from a distance. We will explore this topic in more detail in the following chapters.

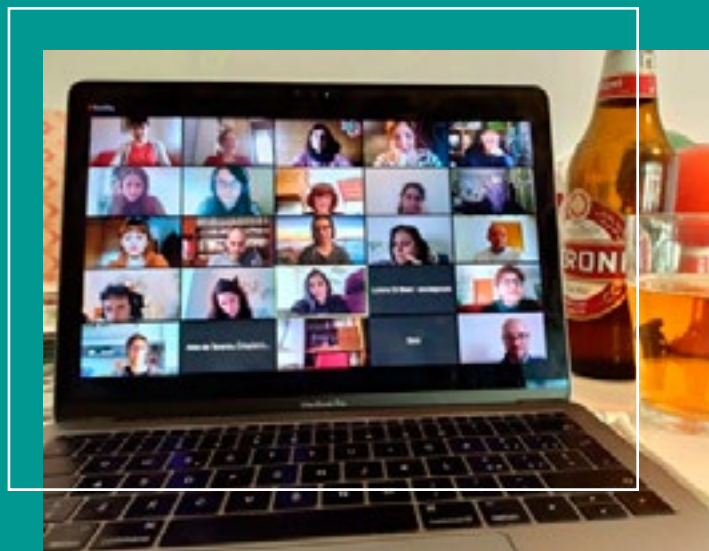


Figure 23. Digital Aperitif. [photo]

### 2.2.4 Potentialities, practical and social values

Some research has highlighted difficulties and obstacles of living in a collaborative living model (Weeks, 1999).

Future cohabitants and promoters are faced with two main problem areas: the first refers to the technical and implementation aspects that affect the feasibility and timing of the intervention for instance the choice of the land or building to be renovated which lengthens the timing especially if the Municipality is involved.

In fact, the design and bureaucratic process is often long and leads to the lack of a shared language between building regulations and collaborative practices and a reference legislation.

In the image below it is possible to observe the long process that precedes the formation of a community of future cohabitants.

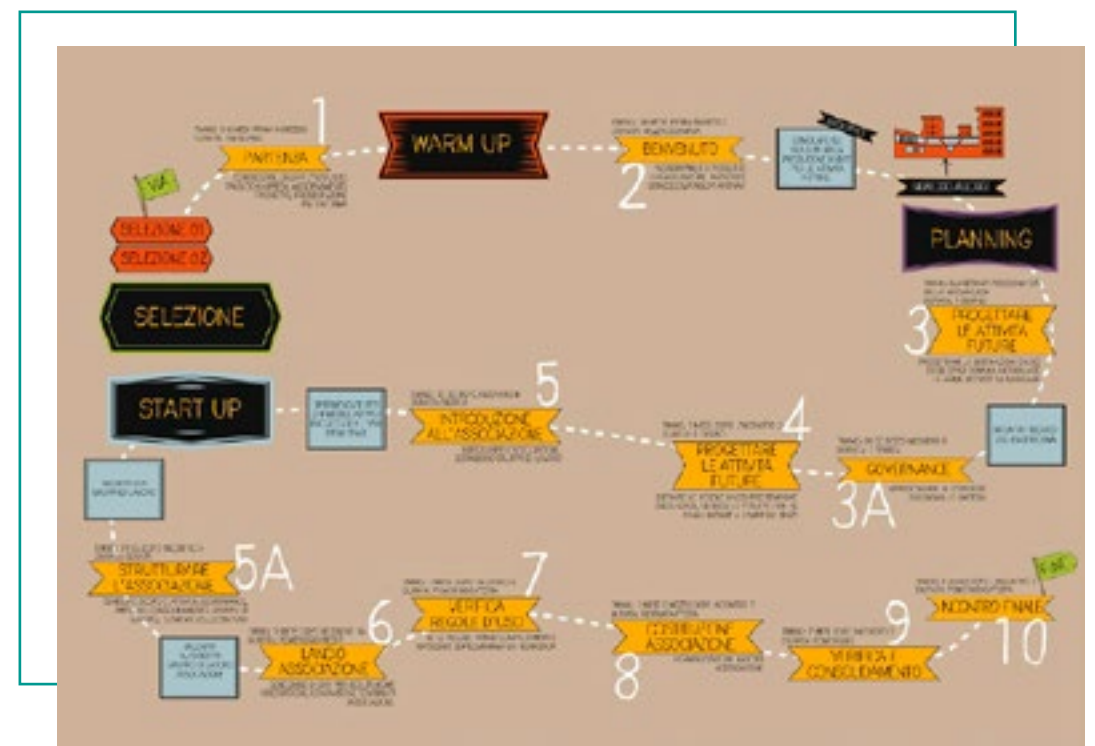


Figure. 24 Accompanying trajectories and community start-ups. [illustration]

# Specific field of action: social housing

## 2.3.1 The fluid world

The city of Milan was my first “second home” and the first city that gave me a lot of challenges and, at the same time, made me achieve as many results. It was here that for the first time I experienced on my skin the meaning of living collaboratively, building what today I call “**community/family by choice**”. It was here that, thanks to my university career, first as an interior designer and then as a service designer, I embraced the world of living from a more in-depth and innovative point of view. Therefore, the field of action in which I wanted to test my project idea is the Italian metropolis of Milan.

First of all, we indagated what is the perception of the Milanese inhabitants in terms of **collective social representations**: a research survey carried out by the Indaco Department of the Politecnico di Milano in collaboration with Innosense-Cohousing Venture has surveyed a sample of 3,5000 people to explore the experience of living in Milan and the attitude to adopt sharing oriented lifestyles; the most interesting research insights for my project were the following ones:

- **90%** denounce the loss of neighborhood and neighborhood dimensions and aspire to a dimension of life with strong social values (friendship, mutuality, sharing).
- **40%** of the sample have never met their neighbors but 75% would like to do.
- **25%** said they suffer from <<social loneliness>>.

Also, having been in close contact for several months with the HousingLab association I relied on the mapping they carried out in 2017 to analyse the situation of collaborative housing in Milan.

First of all, it should be specified that the subjects of the mapping were the collaborative dwellings understood as: *“housing units that not only offer a basic solution (housing), but integrate within them services that promote relationships between neighbours for the management of everyday life” (Rogel 2013, & Corubolo 2012).*

The mapping took into account all projects that meet at least two of the three

The second area of obstacles concerns the managerial and **social aspects** of collaborative housing: it is difficult to form a solid and lasting group able to remain cohesive, to carry the project forward and to “**keep the group maintenance meetings constant**”. Specifically, in communities with a frequent turn-over phenomenon, internal conflicts are less manageable (Meltzer, 1999).

In addition, it emerges as a common trait the difficulty to manage the decision-making moments, crucial steps in the progression of the project but which still represent a factor of tension and disorientation regard to the most useful methods and tools needed to regulate the design and management of cohabitations.

Reconnecting with the phenomenon of the turnover of residents, it goes without saying that there is a problem that can affect the community and that is often underestimated: the **LACK OF TRUST**. According to this it's important to have in mind the idea that living next door to each other, with perhaps several common spaces at our disposal, but remaining closed in our bubble, does not make us a community. In the next chapter we will deal in detail with the importance of trust among the members of a community, a feeling that if absent can lead to disastrous consequences for the unity of the group.

These internal contrasts can be more easily mitigated if the social manager is present in the house.

The **Social Manager** is a new professional figure who carries out, directly or indirectly, all the activities related to the management of real estate and the community, dealing with the relations with tenants, the collection of rents and the management of the dwelling, also understood as the enhancement of the place and relations with the surrounding environment.

The social manager collaborating with figures such as the designer can bring resources of important innovations to the community.



requirements described here:

- The existence of outdoor and indoor common areas (common rooms, play area, terrace, vegetable garden...).
- The presence of services and/or activities managed by the community of inhabitants (condominium laundry, GAS, time bank, etc.).
- The adoption of a participatory design process.

Some existing networks, such as the **National Cohousing Network** and Legacoop Abitanti, also contributed to the survey.

Data were collected from 20 February to 30 May 2017 and then analysed internally at HousingLab.

Below are some graphical views, from general to particular, of the results obtained and recovered from the HousingLab Report:

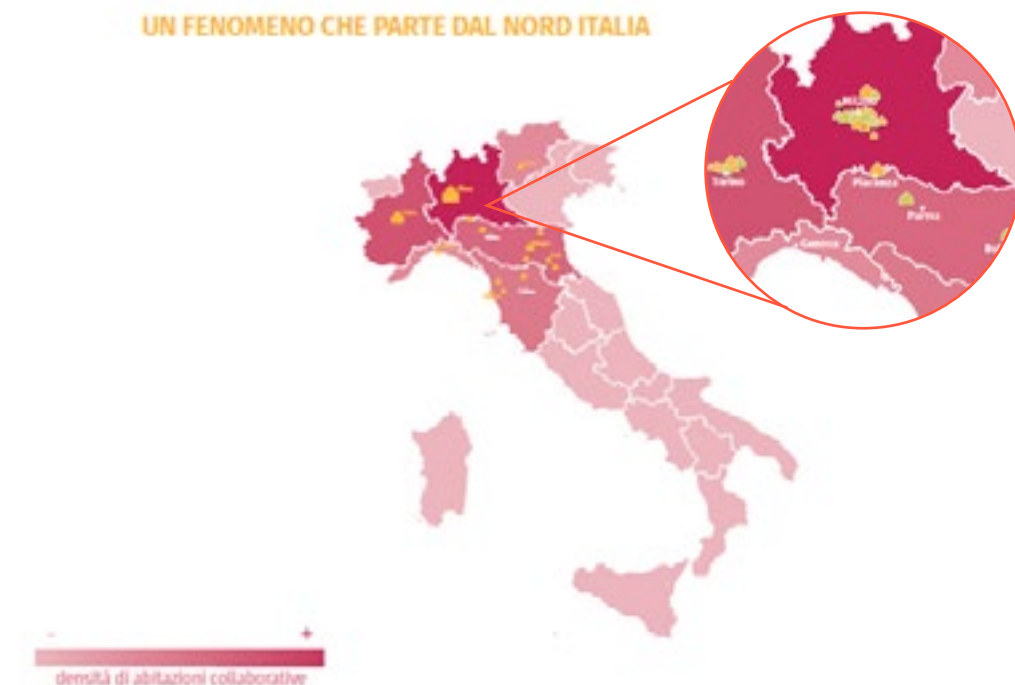


Figure25. Collaborative living situation in Italy. [photo]

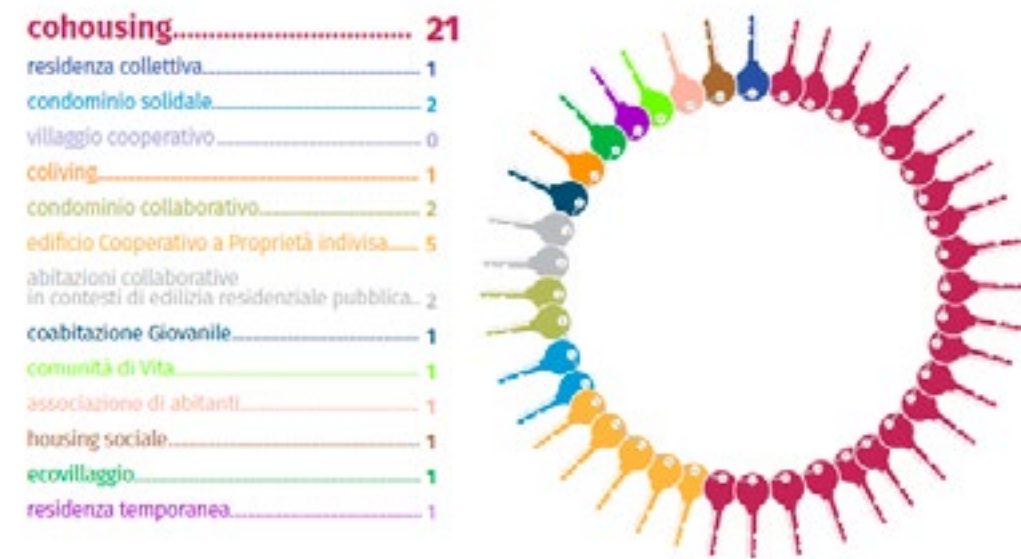


Figure26. Definition housing project. [photo]

Moreover, during my research period at HousingLab I had the opportunity to attend a presentation on the effectiveness of collaborative services, in the Legacoop Lombardia office.

Legacoop Lombardia, is a regional branch of Legacoop, based in Milan.

Founded in 1886, the National League of Cooperatives and Mutuals is the oldest of the Italian cooperative organizations. Legacoop works to promote the development of cooperation and mutuality, economic and solidarity relations of its member cooperatives and to promote the spread of cooperative principles and values.

Specifically, Legacoop Lombardia now brings together more than 900 registered cooperatives active throughout the Lombardy region, for a total of 1,251,834 members and 37,483 employees, with a production value of over 4 billion euros.

Since during the meeting, which turned out to be particularly interesting, the possibility of dealing with a problematic and challenging context was born, putting into practice the value of service design strategies, I decided to approach the world of relationships and dynamics between communities inserted in challenging cooperative contexts.

## 2.3.2 Social housing

As a constant modus operandi of this work, before approaching a specific topic we try to understand the origin of the term and the history. Thus, cooperatives took their origin from what are called **Social Housing**. Taking a step back it important to clear that the current response to the demand for housing in Italy is in fact the evolution of a centralized welfare model, generated by a regulatory framework that, starting in 2008, triggers a deep change in the social housing sector, calling for the resources of private economic entities to provide a **"service of general interest"**. It can only be "the experience of the past" the starting point to understand in which direction housing policies in Italy are moving today and to develop a culture and civic sensitivity on the issue of social housing. In the case of the so-called "Social Housing" access to the house is subject to adhesion to a housing, community and management model, which also implies an investment of an emotional and ideological nature (Ostanel, 2017). Below follows a scheme that better explains its definition and distinctive elements.



Figure26. Social housing definition, authors' elaboration. [chart]

## 2.3.2.1 Cooperatives: origin, values, types

Once we have identified the macro-category in which the cooperatives are included, we go deeper into the historical reasons behind their birth and their main values. Robert Owen in "The Social System Constitution, Laws and Regulations of a Community" of 1826 said that **"there is only one way in which man can possess in eternal life all the happiness that his nature is capable of enjoying, and that is the union and cooperation of all for the good of all."**

**In the world...** The first hints of cooperation can be traced back to France in 1844 when the "Equitable Pioneers", 28 weavers animated by Owenian philanthropism and led by Charles Howart, set the fundamental principles of cooperation in their statute: solidarity, internal democracy and mutuality. Thus, was born the first consumer cooperative, where members buy together the products they need, different from production and work, where the main objective is to produce goods and services that guarantee work for members. The first production and work cooperatives were born in France in 1848, in response to the high unemployment of the time, one of the most famous is the Atelier social of Cliché, specialized in producing clothing for the national guard on the principle of equal pay for all and equally distributed earnings (Legacoop).

**While in Italy...** Also in Italy the first cooperative experience is of consumption and is recorded in 1854 in Turin (Magazzino di Previdenza), followed two years later by the model of production and work of the Artistic-Glass Association of Altare, a small town in the province of Savona. Here on Christmas night in 1856, 84 dissatisfied and harassed glassworkers decided to set up a cooperative, also thanks to the moral impulse of the doctor Giuseppe Cesio, a Mazzinian and philanthropist. Bringing together capital and work in the same hands, the Ligurian glassmakers immediately set up the first forms of social security, a pension fund and a mutual aid society (Legacoop).

### But what is cooperative?

The definition of cooperative is set out in Article 828 of the Code of Obligations as follows: **"A cooperative society is the union of a variable number of persons or corporatively organised commercial companies, the main purpose of which is**

*to increase or safeguard, by common action, certain economic interests of its members”.*<sup>31</sup>

The 8 principles of cooperation:

- **ONE HEAD ONE VOTE**
- **PARTICIPATION**
- **THE MUTUALISTIC NATURE**
- **THE NON-SPECULATIVE NATURE**
- **THE DOOR OPEN**
- **INTERGENERATIONAL SOLIDARITY**
- **INTER-COOPERATIVE SOLIDARITY**
- **MUTUALITY TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD**

About the classification, the analysis shows the presence of different types of cooperatives: community, consumer, agricultural, transport, housing, etc.. However, the one we will focus on most is the housing cooperative.

The housing cooperative is a union of people, it is a non-profit company, it is an intermediate form of housing between private property and rent, it is a democratic organization.

#### **Aim:**

The purpose of the housing cooperative is to cover the living space requirements of its members on acceptable financial terms and on a long-term basis in accordance with the principle of mutual assistance and co-responsibility. Each housing cooperative society has its own characteristics, culture and history and follows the principles it has set itself and which are enshrined in its articles of association.

#### **Motivations:**

The willingness to undertake a cooperative dwelling path is the aspiration to regain lost dimensions of:

- sociality,

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<sup>30</sup>Bosco, M. (2018). Cooperativa di abitazione, cosa è e come funziona. Espazium. URL <https://www.espazium.ch/it/attualita/cooperativa-di-abitazione-cosa-e-e-come-funziona>

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.fibo.it/download/fibo\\_manuale.pdf](http://www.fibo.it/download/fibo_manuale.pdf)

- of mutual aid,
- good neighborhood

wish to reduce the costs of running daily activities (e.g. by sharing services and purchases or by involving several generations, the costs of providing for our ageing society could be reduced).

#### **Typologies:**

In addition, housing cooperatives can be organised in different ways, e.g. in “self-managed cooperatives of inhabitants”, tenants and home communities have more competences, can be responsible for renting, management and maintenance, while in “rental cooperatives” tenants who are members of the cooperative participate in the capital but, in general, the administration has a prevailing role. Often it is the size of the cooperative that determines the type of management, the larger it is, the more complex the management of maintenance and administration will be done by professionals hired by the cooperative.

Among the 8 principles of cooperation, we are particularly interested in the **PARTICIPATORY ONE**. In fact, it may happen that in some contexts, despite the fact that the cooperative was born with the noblest aims of collaboration and the building is equipped with common spaces dedicated to hosting collaborative activities, in some challenging context the participatory component has been lost in time.

We wonder what leads to such a situation and what can be the weak point of a community affected by this?

In the following chapter, the heart of this thesis, one of the possible causes that can weaken the unity of a community will be investigated.

# PART TWO

## LITERATURE OVERVIEW

Service design field  
of action

General context

Main actors

Social sustainability

Collaborative  
living

Community

Problem framing / focus

Lack of trust

Causes

Solutions

Case studies

## MAIN FIELD OF ACTION

Cooperative Vercellese

# 3. DESIGN FOR TRUST

Before dealing with this very important chapter, I think it would be useful to take stock of the situation of the topics we are dealing with so far, in order to understand what the correlation between the concept of trust and the world of living is.

In the previous chapters, first of all, the concept of community in its various typologies and declensions has been investigated. Afterwards, the living ecosystem in which communities live with a particular attention to the world of collaborative living has been described. From this macro-set the context of specific interest of this thesis has been brought out, namely the world of Housing Cooperatives, which we have defined as

“a cooperative society is the union of a variable number of persons or corporatively organised commercial companies, the main purpose of which is to increase or safeguard, by common action, certain economic interests of its members”.

Since Cooperatives are nothing more than a form of community, we remember in this regard quoting Manzini, that:

“a closer look at contemporary reality allows us to observe a composite and dynamic social landscape in which there are various ways of thinking and doing. Result of the initiative of creative and enterprising people who, confronted with a problem or an opportunity, imagine new solutions with values, both individual and social. These initiatives aim to (re)connect people with the places where they live and to regenerate mutual trust and the capacity for dialogue. And, in so doing, to create new communities.”

By comparing the two definitions I wanted to highlight two terms that lead us to a further point of reflection. The terms in question are common action e mutual trust. The choice was not made by chance but driven by the relationship of mutual dependence between the two. In fact, without mutual action the possibility of common action is very limited, if not impossible.

To better understand what we are talking about, we introduce a third expression that clarifies the concept of “common action” with an eye on the theme of living, that is constructed conviviality. It means a conviviality that is built by doing things together and activating initiatives that become in themselves the field on which the sociality growth is cultivated.

In light of this, it is fair to wonder what drives a group of people to take a common

path, to collaborate among themselves, to participate in the initiatives proposed by the community despite the differences that distinguish them from each other?

Manzini tried once again to give an answer and wrote:

“for whatever reason people decide to meet and do something together, each participant must have a conviction that the others will honor the commitment. They must trust each other. Indeed, reciprocal trust is the fundamental ingredient of any kind of collaboration and therefore of social organizations” (Manzini, 2015, p. 174).

Thus, trust turns out to be that ingredient without which “I” as an individual I do not develop interest in the actions proposed by the “we” of the community. But automatically, by not feeling part of them, I perceive them into “their” actions, distancing myself. And usually we are indifferent to something when we do not feel we have something to share, when we do not feel a sense of belonging.

About this in the book “Living Together – Roland Barthes, the Individual and the Community” it is claimed that:

“to belong and to be seen are basic needs for humans. To belong has been the evolutionary key not only to our cognitive abilities but also our sociality at large, our empathy and morality. Social trust is a key concept for good groups and good societies” (Johansen et al. 2018).

So, if we were to draw up the recipe for building a strong community, the ingredients would probably be these:

Sense of belonging: for almost anyone, a sense of collective and cultural identity is a powerful source of motivation for active involvement. If residents feel like they don't belong to a place, it is difficult for them to invest time and energy to work on improving things around them.



# Trust as a precondition of a healthy Social Capital

Alongside the issue of trust, it is logical and useful to address the issue of capital. It might seem strange to associate such an ephemeral and intangible value as trust with a term that is measurable and typical of the economic side, but in this sub-chapter we will try to clarify the reason for this correlation.

First of all, let us clarify what is meant by capital; it must be defined that in economics, capital is made up of goods that can increase its power to perform economically useful work. For example, a stone or an arrow is the capital for a hunter-gatherer who can use it as a hunting tool; in the same way, the streets are the capital for the inhabitants of a city. Capital differs from land and other non-renewable resources in that it can be increased by human labour and does not include some durable goods.

In the light of this definition and with the proposed examples we can venture to say that trust is the capital of communities. To be precise, we are not talking about capital in the general sense of the term, but rather social capital.

The World Bank defines social capital as “the norms and social relations embedded in social structures that enable people to coordinate action to achieve desired goals” (Prusak & Cohen, 2001).

Robert Putnam, the Harvard political scientist, describes it similarly. “Social capital,” Putnam writes, “refers to features of social organizations such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit”.

Their definition, which underlies the exploration of what social capital looks like, how it works in organizations, how investments are made in it, and what returns organizations and individuals can expect from those investments, is as follows:

“Social capital consists of the stock of active connections among people: the trust, mutual understanding, and shared values and behaviors that bind the members of

human networks and communities and make cooperative action possible.”

Social capital stress the importance of collaboration in fact it makes an organization, or any cooperative group, more than a collection of individuals intent on achieving their own private purposes. Social capital bridges the space between people.

Its characteristic elements and indicators include

- high levels of trust
- robust personal networks
- vibrant communities
- shared understandings
- sense of equitable participation in a joint enterprise

All things that draw individuals together into a group. This description of social capital suggests appropriate organizational investments —namely, giving people space and time to connect, demonstrating trust, effectively communicating aims and beliefs, and offering the equitable opportunities and rewards that invite genuine participation, not mere presence.

Social capital, like other forms of capital, accumulates when used productively. Linking cooperation to the economic concept ‘capital’ signals the investment or growth potential of a group’s ability to work jointly.” In the book *Cross Currents: Cultures, Communities, Technologies*” the authors explain how and why social capital accumulates: Stocks of social capital, such as trust, norms, and networks, tend to be self-reinforcing and cumulative. Successful collaboration in one endeavour builds connections and trust—social assets that facilitate future collaboration in other, unrelated tasks” (Blair et al., 2012).

This cumulative process underlies the value and power of social capital and makes it somewhat difficult to discuss systematically. Many of the elements of social capital are both cause and effect, simultaneously its underlying conditions, indicators of presence, and chief benefits. And our focus on trust could be as a key example. In fact, without some foundation of trust, social capital cannot develop—the essential connections will not form. So, trust is a precondition of healthy social capital. Not surprisingly, high levels of trust also tend to indicate high social capital. And the trust-based connections that characterize social capital lead to the development of

increased trust as people work with one another over time, so trust is also a product or benefit of social capital, and a source of other benefits. (Murphy et al. 2012).

# 3.3 What undermine trust

## 2.3.1 The fluid world

For now, we have talked about all the positive effects that a good level of interpersonal trust can generate, but, despite this, we should not forget how difficult it is to achieve it.

Trust is like the summit of the mountain of social relationships, once you reach it, then the path is downhill, but the path for reaching it presents several obstacles that are nothing more than the prejudices which our culture has passed on to us.

“Don't take candy from strangers” this apparently trivial sentence was perhaps one of the first teachings given to us by our parents in relation to the right attitude to take when approaching the outside world and consequently when dealing with people.

In reality this is anything but a trivial phrase, because it is in fact the symbol of the prejudice with which they raised us that is to say: strangers equal danger.

“trust is more likely to arise in a network of like-minded people sharing a joint identity” (Kramer et al., 1996). It would probably be wrong not to admit that in some circumstances this teaching has proved to be true, but to continue living like this in 2020 would be a pity, it would be a shame, it would be a foreclosure of an infinite number of opportunities. As an example, it would be a bit like not taking the car anymore because of the probability of a car accident.

The origin of man's suspicious nature has been a topic of interest to many

philosophers, psychologists and other more recent and non-experts who have tried to trace its path of origin.

The Polish sociologist and philosopher Bauman in his book “Voglia di comunità” addressed the subject by giving us his view of the facts.

From his point of view, this attitude should not be read as an emphasizing of the self-sufficiency of man who does not need anyone, but on the contrary, it is actually the consequence of a strong insecurity and fragility of human beings. Everything starts from the fact that men tend to find individual solutions to systemic/general problems, in fact, he writes “we seek individual salvation from common problems” (Bauman, 2001).

But this behaviour does not achieve the desired effect because it does not address the roots of insecurity but rather makes us even more uncertain.

It is a behaviour that can be traced back to the concept of self-preservation: behavior that we put into action every time we seek certainty.

During this research, diffidence grows in us towards those towards strangers. Strangers are the very embodiment of insecurity and consequently they personify the uncertainty that troubled our lives. From a certain point of view, as strange as it is perverse, their presence is refreshing, even comforting: our suffused and fragmented fears, difficult to frame and define, now have a concrete scape goat;

Thus grows in us the distrust towards those around us and especially towards those who show sides that are far from our being, but often we limit ourselves only to the appearance because it is the only thing we can see in this <<wide-ranging and ever-changing crowd of strangers of all races who constantly cross paths>>.

So, if not in the outsider, where do we find that certainty?

In ourselves and in our strongholds: home, family, neighborhood, etc. in what is our comfort zone.

It may happen, however, that if we take to the extreme the attitude to escape from those who show sides that are different from ours, the figure of the stranger may also appear in what used to be members of our community.

It's no accident the quote

“trust is more likely to arise in a network of like-minded people sharing a joint identity” (Kramer et al., 1996).

This prejudice is what has also undermined the start of the launch of the now very

successful Airbnb hospitality service, which we will go into more detail about later. As proof of this, the company's team Airbnb did a joint study with Stanford, where they looked at people's willingness to trust someone based on how similar they are in age, location and geography. The research show, not surprising that we prefer people like us.

"The more different somebody is, the less we trust them and now, that's a natural social bias" said Joe Gebbia, the co-founder of Airbnb during his TED "How Airbnb designs for trust".



Reconnecting this discourse to the collaborative living communities examined, the result that can be observed is that strong ties among neighbours are simply no longer the norm in many urban communities (Fischer 1982; Wellman 1979). Those that are created instead are fewer intimate connections that Granovetter (1973) calls "weak ties".

### 3.4.1 The trust leap and the climb of trust stack

The figure of the foreigner described above actually symbolizes everything that belongs to the field of the unknown.

In the visualization proposed above is shown how the man, represented by the green label, prefers to remain anchored in the comfort zones of the world known to him because to face the unknown part he will have to overcome the risk of uncertainty. The word risk is a term to be kept in mind when dealing with the issue of trust. The author and trust expert Rachel Botsman during a TED held in June 2016 and entitled "We've stopped trusting institutions and started trusting strangers" approaches the topic:

"Trust is an elusive concept, and yet we depend on it for our lives to function. Trust works differently according to the context, is a word that we use a lot, and which have a lot of definition. And most can be reduced to some kind of risk assessment of how likely it is that things will go right. This definition of trust make it sound rational and predictable, and it doesn't really get to the human essence of what it enables us to do and how it empowers us to connect with other people. I prefer defining trust as a confident relationship to the unknown. If you see trust with this lens, it is possible to understand why to place our faith in strangers"

Establishing this "confident relationship" to the unknown is however possible thanks to what Rachel calls "Trust leap". A trust leap happens when we take the risk to do something new or different to the way that we've always done it. A trust leap happens when we take the risk to do something new or different to the way that we've always done it. For you to leap from a place of certainty, to take a chance on that someone or something unknown, you need a force to pull you over the gap, and that remarkable force is trust.

## STUCK IN UNCERTAINTY



Unconsciously, human beings are remarkable to take a trust leap. For example, it happens every time we shop online, typing the data of our home in a site that we don't know the background, but we trust.

By repositioning ourselves in the world of design, man manages to overcome this prejudice every time he uses services that break these patterns such as Bla Bla Car. So, what happens once you decide to implement the Trust leap?

From studying hundreds of networks and marketplaces, there is a common pattern that people follow, and the expert call it "climbing the trust stack."

-On the first level you have to trust the idea.

-The second level is about having confidence in the channel attraverso cui il servizio incontra gli utenti

-And the third level is about using little bits of information to decide whether another person is trustworthy.

The first time we climb the trust stack is always weird, even risky but we get to a point

where these ideas seem totally normal. Our behaviors transform, in other words, trust enables

change and innovation.

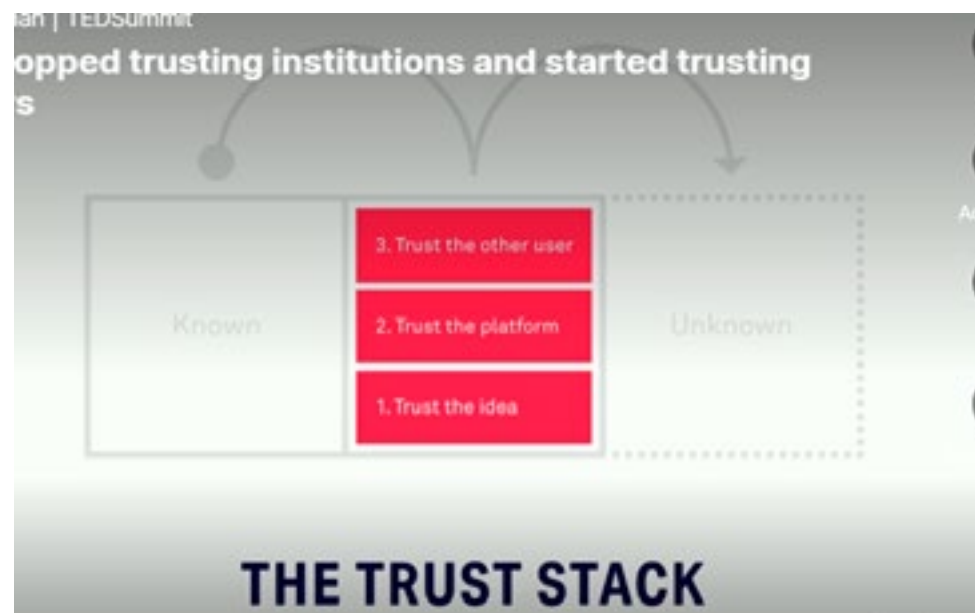
## 3.5 Digital side of trust: online community building

The world we live in has become disconnected. Communications have become shallow and less authentic

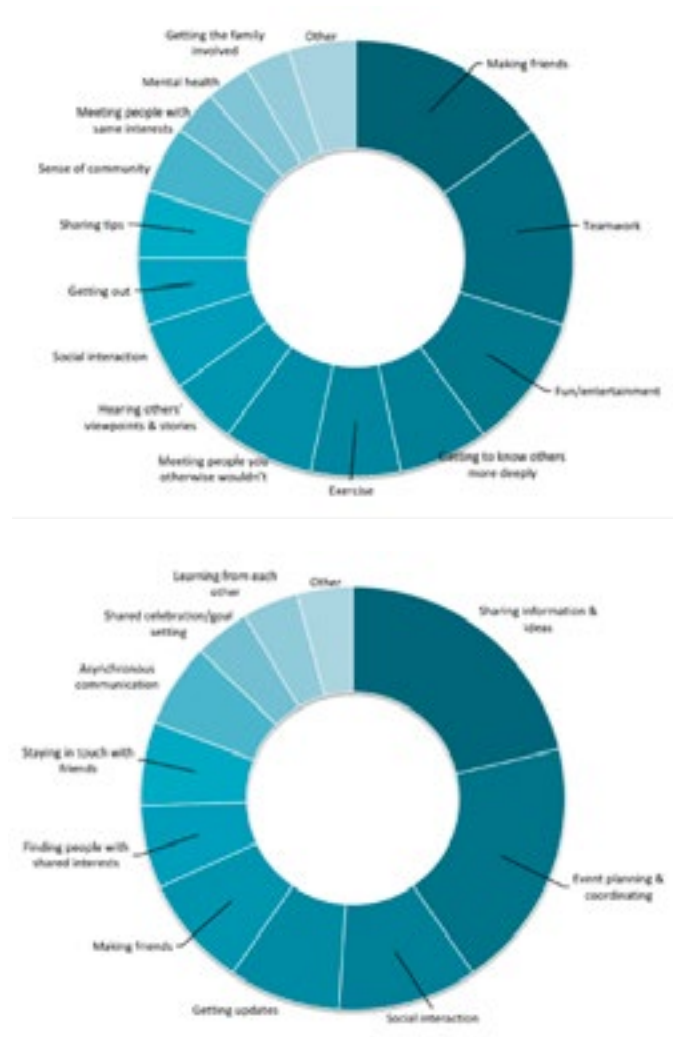
So, how can we avoid this shallowness and design more depth into our interactions with others?

Brené Brown's book *Braving the Wilderness* takes an in-depth, research-based approach to exploring this topic. She has conducted grounded theory research to learn what makes people feel like they belong. She found that trust is a key component of belonging. What makes people trust? Brown created the BRAVING framework, which comprises the following elements that must be present for people to trust one another:

- Boundaries
- Reliability
- Accountability
- Vault
- Integrity



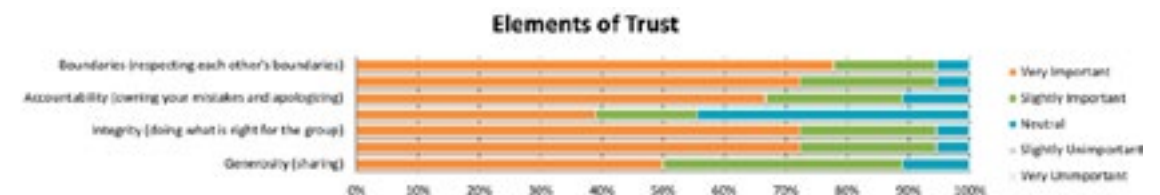
The survey results showed that in-person interactions foster new friendships, teamwork, and entertainment, as shown in Figure 2. We also learned that online interactions foster information sharing, the planning of in-person events, and maintaining relationships over time, as shown in Figure 3. Both types of interactions encourage more social interaction and meeting people we otherwise would not meet (McHarg, 2018).



In the survey responses, many of the open-ended comments indicated that “trust is important to people when joining new communities” (McHarg, 2018).

In the early years of online community building, trust could be a challenge because people had no way of verifying the trustworthiness of strangers on the Internet. Today’s online tools mitigate this problem somewhat because they show how people are connected to each other and facilitate our keeping in touch with people we already know. Nevertheless, the need to be able to trust people to feel really connected still exists. Much of what causes hostility in online communities involves a lack of trust.

Moreover, to understand the impact of trust on online and in-person communities, the investigation team asked respondents to rank the elements in Brown’s framework to determine whether they were important to people. Respondents ranked most of them as being pretty important. Figure 4 shows the survey responses regarding these elements of trust.



Now we will try to tell the meaning of these 7 elements through emblematic quotations of their “creator” and then understand how they can be used in practice to foster trusts.

- 1) Boundaries: “You respect my boundaries, and when you’re not clear about what’s okay and not okay, you ask. You’re willing to say no.”—Brené Brown
- 2) Reliability: “You do what you say you’ll do. This means staying aware of your competencies and limitations so you don’t overpromise and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.”—Brené Brown
- 3) Accountability: “You own your mistakes, apologize, and make amends.”—Brené Brown
- 4) Vault: “You don’t share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept and that you’re not sharing with me any information about other people that should be kept confidential.”—Brené



Brown

5) Integrity: "You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them."—Brené Brown

6) Non Judgement: "I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgment."—Brené Brown

7) Generosity: "Generosity—You extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words, and actions of others."—Brené Brown

But how service designer we ask: how can we translate these learnings to our future solution that foster the trust community building?

1. Provide clear rules of engagement.

Trust elements: Boundaries, Vault

Providing clear rules will help group members maintain clear boundaries and respect each other, providing a safe environment in which people can feel that they belong.

2. Make it easy to meet in person.

Trust elements: Reliability, Accountability, Integrity

Easy event-planning functionality should be a key feature of any tool for building communities. This fosters in-person and deeper relationships. Such a tool should also include features that encourage people to attend events—for example, displaying a list of other members who are going to the event.

3. Encourage open information sharing.

Trust elements: Reliability, Accountability, Integrity, Nonjudgment, Generosity

Sharing information freely encourages discussion and honest dialogue. This helps members to foster long-term relationships and build trust within the group. The more sharing happens, the more members will get to know each other—both before and after they meet in person.

4. Facilitate one on one communication.

Trust elements: Boundaries, Accountability, Vault, Nonjudgment

Being able to take interactions offline helps people to navigate misunderstandings, build deeper bonds, maintain privacy, and avoid judgment.

5. Facilitate finding people with shared interests.

Trust elements: Reliability, Generosity

Allowing people to find each other and form groups around their shared interests is the cornerstone of building communities. If people can't find each other, a community can't exist.

6. Encourage truth telling.

Trust elements: Boundaries, Accountability, Integrity

Don't let people hide behind anonymity and facilitate the reporting of rule breaking. This helps foster long-term relationships that lead to deeper connections.

In conclusion, after this analysis it can be stated that also online communities can help people build real relationships if we design them to facilitate trust. In the next part we will analyze how digital trust has become the foundation of a new kind of economy.

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### 3.5.1 Digital side of trust: online community building

The term collaborative or sharing economy has strongly taken hold in our socio-economic culture in recent years. It is a very sought-after type of economic system because it brings with it a series of benefits in terms of economic, social and environmental sustainability, just think of the services of re-using of clothes to give a practical example.

What little is discussed, and perhaps few people know about are the pillars on which this economy stands, and trust is one of them. Let's look at how.

Let's start by saying that the more objective meaning of the term defines the sharing economy as

"an economic system that is based on people sharing possessions and services, either for free or for payment, usually using the internet to organize this."

Or

"the sharing economy is commerce with the promise of human connection. People share a part of themselves, and that changes everything" – Joe Gebbia, Airbnb Co-Founder.

Another term indicating the same concept is that of collaborative consumption: "a social and economic system driven by network technologies that enable the sharing and exchange of assets from space to skills to cars in ways and on a scale never possible before" (Botsman, TED2012)

We note how the digital component is common to both definitions. This is now inevitable because, although there are movements and campaigns that attempt to identify technology as the emblem of alienation and the bitter enemy of human relations, on the contrary, especially in the last decade, it is proving to be an accelerator or incubator of community building.

In this part of the thesis we tried to show how technology is transforming the social glue of society: trust between people.

Trust, in fact, can help alleviate the uncertainty that is often felt in a complex environment, and as such, "trust should be expected to be increasingly required as a means to mediate the complexity of the future that technology will generate" (Luhmann, 1979, p. 16).

It is a wide field, very fascinating since there are a lot of things that we do not know.

For example, "Does the way we build trust face-to-face translate online?" "Does trust transfer?"

Let us try to explain some concepts that can clarify these curiosities by adopting a sociological starting point to understand trust in the context of the economy of sharing" (Mareike Möhlmann, 2018).

This approach is in contrast to economic literature which often considers trust as an "implicit form of trading" when describing certain transactions. But trust should be understood as a more complete concept, able to capture even the less explicit conditions such as personal character traits that could be strongly influenced by socialization processes, and the institutional contexts in which individuals act (Zucker, 1986).

From family-institutional based trust TO platform-mediated peer trust

Furthermore, it is clear that there has been a change in the concept of trust by passing from

family-institutional based trust to platform-mediated peer trust. Originally, trust was given only to certain family members or friends so that an intimate and homogenous community with shared norms was created.

(Cook, 2001; Putnam, 2000).

Later we have seen the advent of social networks such as Facebook, MySpace etc. Social networks that have had the ability to mediate trust relationships (Cook et al., 2005, 2009; Foddy et al., 2009), aimed to socialization, since trust is more likely to arise in a network of like-minded people sharing a joint identity (Kramer et al., 1996). The interesting part of their success is the fact that they have managed to create trust among members even locally distant from each other. Based on the success of networked companies such as Facebook and eBay, it has emerged that in the digital world connections between strangers are easily possible, which in turn facilitates sharing activities in the marketplace (Mazzella et al., 2016; Möhlmann, 2016; Sundararajan, 2016).

It is along this path that two trends are taking hold.

-the rise of "cooperative platforms

-the Community repositioning of traditional platforms.

You have to think of the sharing economy in a cooperative sense. Thus the users of

the platform also become managers of the platform.

It goes without saying that the emerging peer-based economy requires a carefully calibrated system of trust (Mazzella et al., 2016). Let's see how it is structured.

Platform-mediated peer trust in the sharing economy: Trust in multiple entities

Trust in platforms presents itself as a triad between the digital platform provider and the peers acting that platform (Hawlitschek et al., 2016b; Möhlmann, 2016; Weber, 2014).

The platforms act as intermediaries, combining the peers and taking on certain tasks to ensure the smooth running of activities, operations (Hagiu e Spulber, 2013; Parker e Van Alstyne, 2005).

In this triad of trust, we can distinguish between interpersonal trust and institutional trust.

Interpersonal trust is at the heart of trust in the economy of sharing as it relates to peer relationships acting on these platforms.

The provider of the sharing platform is a facilitator of interpersonal trust,

As a starting point for interpersonal trust we refer to Mayer's (1995) definition of reliability:

"willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of another party, based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party"( Mayer et al., 1995)

The 3 key points are 1) skill 2) goodwill and 3) integrity.

- 1) Skill refers to the relevant skills of a trustee, skills and enabling characteristics
- 2) Goodwill is the perception that the trustee has good intentions
- 3) Integrity refers to the trustee's principles that the trustee thinks are acceptable

Since the economy of sharing is based on interactions, interpersonal trust is certainly an important element, but institutional trust also has its value.

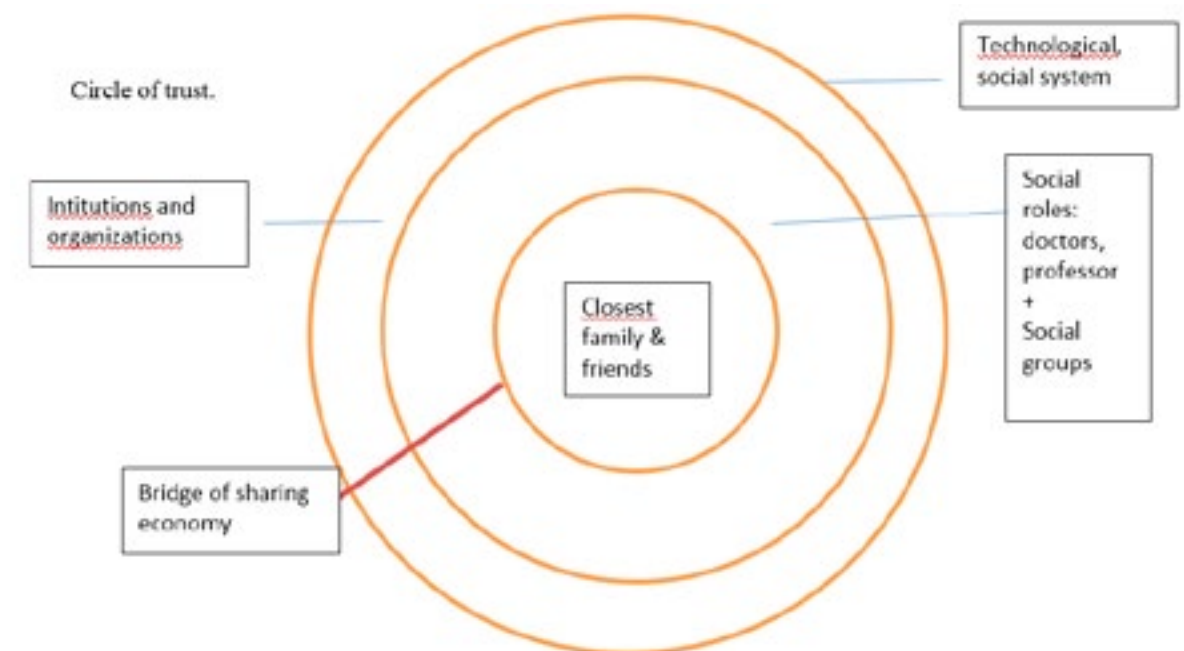
Shapiro (1987) refers to institutional trust as trust in the security of a situation, for

example on the basis of guarantees or safety nets. Just as (Zucker, 1986) identifies institutional aspects, such as the underlying structures and guarantees that are evident in social contexts, as a crucial mechanism for the creation of trust.

Also, at the beginning of the chapter we wondered if trust was transferable.

WII, Stewart (2003) uses the label "trust transfer", theorizing that not only trust may be transferred from one source to another but it do it in a hierarchical order (Stewart, 2003).

Fukuyama (1995) refers to a "radius of trust", a term later adapted by Sztompka (2000) to become "circles of trust". The authors argue that trust spans personal relationships, functional systems and abstract social objects, and that these circles are all interconnected. However, behind the entire trust circle lies a "primordial form of trust – in people and their actions" (Sztompka, 2000, p. 46). At the core of the trust circle are our closest family and friends; next, we place our trust in people fulfilling familiar social roles (such as doctors, professors and judges) and social groups (football clubs or student clubs), followed by institutions and organizations. Trust in technological systems, as well as trust in the overarching social system or the current social order, lie on the outer perimeters of the trust circle (Sztompka, 2000).



Applying this logic to the sharing phenomenon, we observe that sharing economy platforms bridge the different trust circles. Interpersonal trust in peers is located at the very core of the trust circle. Digitally-matched peers tend to have real-life contacts following their initial interactions on a sharing economy platform – for example when using sharing economy services such as Airbnb or Uber. However, sharing economy platforms must also establish institutional trust, at the outskirts of the trust circle, as platforms engage in more traditional organization–customer relationships with participating peers

## Successful cases of platform-mediated peer trust

In this last part of the chapter, all the theories and guidelines described so far take shape in the list of platform-mediated peer trusts proposed.

These are a successful example of services that have succeeded in the intent of community building among people never seen before, making their users go beyond the prejudice of the foreigner and creating, through the tool of technology, a very solid community.

In addition to social and ideological success, these cases have managed to achieve very important economic goals



### 3.6.1 Airbnb: when their home become your home

Almost certainly everyone will have experienced or heard of Airbnb's home sharing service. This is the service that matches the work done so far because it combines the two crucial elements of home and trust.

But what exactly is Airbnb and why does it have to do with trust and the economy of sharing?

Airbnb is a peer to peer marketplace that matches people who have space to rent with people who are looking for a place to stay in over 192 countries. (TED)

The Co-Founder of the Joe Gebbia service has decided to focus on one of the oldest businesses rooted in human history between tradition and popular beliefs: that of hospitality. As ancient as it is, in reality it is far from simple because "authentic hospitality isn't created from a template" (Aufmann, n.d) but it's unique depending on the context, the host it takes place in.

For Joe Gebbia and his team, hospitality is so serious that it isn't a trade, it's a craft, especially "exceptional" hospitality made of small gestures and attention to the guest. Put simply, being a good host is about being a good person.

This service fits perfectly into the previously addressed field of the economy of sharing because for the Co-founder "the economy of sharing is trade with the promise of a human connection. People share a part of themselves, and this changes everything" (Gebbia, 2016). In placing people and human interactions at its core, the economy of sharing seeks to mitigate our inherent unknown danger of prejudice by designing and facilitating trust building capabilities among strangers whose interactions are enabled through digital platforms.

Thus, how a company that depends on the willingness of strangers to trust one another could work so well across 191 countries?

The answer may seem repetitive, but once again the answer is "simply" trust. This is a particular kind of trust because it's not the classic trust of a company that leads customers to trust their product or service, but Airbnb leads to trusting the host of the guest and vice versa. Social innovation is about trusting each other,

trusting people.

And all this would not have been possible without the power of technology to build trust between strangers.

But how do you design trust between strangers on an online platform that does not allow, at least initially, face-to-face interaction?

This is where the role of the service designer comes into play. Let's see how it is possible to design for trust.

The steps to follow can be summarized as follows:

1) Design as a mutual friend: this step is easily explained by the example of the party. Let's imagine that we were invited by our friend to a party at the house of someone we don't know. We don't know anything about the party or the host. Let's imagine now that we arrive at the place of the party before our friend. We will start to feel out of the comfort zone as we don't know anyone, and we'll struggle to engage in discussions with random people or retire in a corner. The conclusion would be that we haven't had a caring friend and that's what happens when the platform is not well designed.

So who we as designer are? We should play the role of the mutual friend who invite you to the party, but not the friend described above, but on the contrary the friend who gives you the information about the party, who once you arrive introduces you to others, the one who makes you feel comfortable.

In the community design sector this figure is called social manager.

2) Designing for the first impression: this second step brings with it a core concept for building digital trust that is the reputation. Airbnb is based on reputation. "A well-designed reputation system is key for building trust" said Rachel Botsman during her TED on the same service.

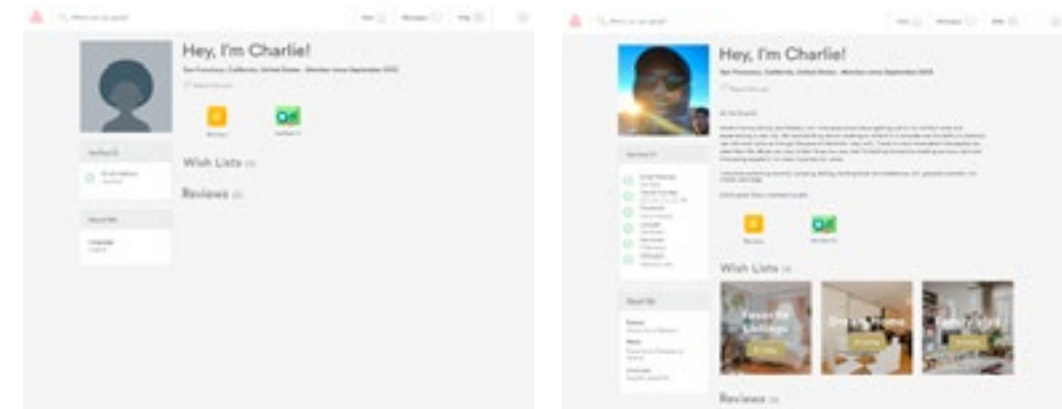
Reputation is a bit like our curriculum vitae, a certificate that fosters a double impulse of trust between the user and the host.

How can you control the level of reputation?

This leads us to another important step

3) Trust take effort: In Airbnb, as in many other platforms, it is important to create an

online profile that collects the information needed to represent the user using the platform, whether they are a guest or host.



The two images proposed above are a trivial but effective example that makes us understand the importance of creating an online space that speaks about us in a truthful way. The proof is simple: if we were faced with two such profiles, which one would we be more inclined to choose as host? The answer is quite obvious.

Because trust in Airbnb is dual and shared, even a guest effort is well appreciated by the host. The tool the guest has to make a good impression is the trustworthiness ovvero inviare messaggi all'host nel periodo pre-alloggio:

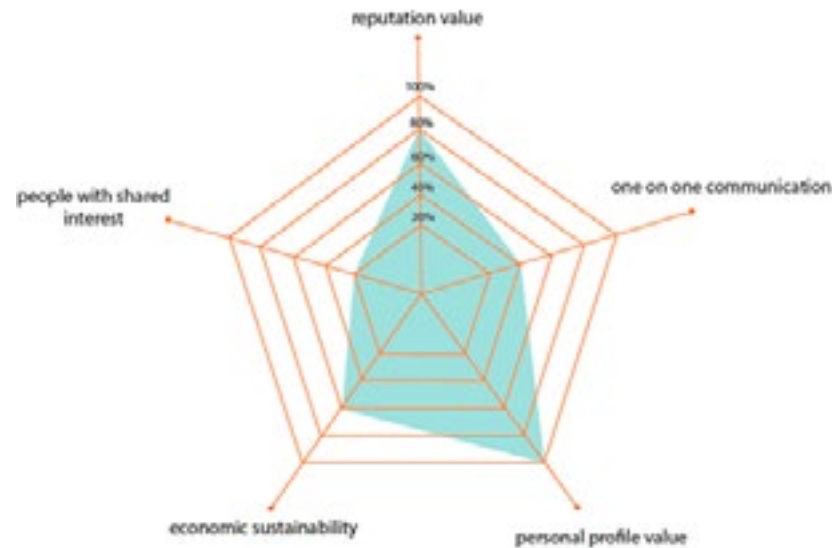
"If people take care with their first message to you and say a little bit about themselves...you relax a bit about it...trust takes effort"





The image shown by Joe Gebbia during the TED “Design for trust” shows how a guest who provides the right amount of discussion on the choice of accommodation is more likely to be accepted than someone who writes a miserable message or who goes into too much detail.

To conclude, staying with a stranger in a foreign place creates an opportunity for authentic understanding for someone completely different from you. With trust as the social glue to keep it all together, the relationships being formed on Airbnb provide to the users an opportunity and challenge way bigger than anything we could have imagined: making the world a more welcoming place.



### 3.6.2 Airbnb experience

You know how most travel today is, like, it's efficient and consistent, at the cost of local and authentic. What if travel were like a magnificent buffet of local experiences? What if anywhere you visited, there was a central marketplace of locals offering to get you thoroughly drunk on a pub crawl in neighborhoods you didn't even know existed. Or learning to cook from the chef of a five-star restaurant?

These are the questions that the Airbnb team asked themselves and that led them to decide to expand the platform with Airbnb experience.

This section offers the guest the opportunity to experience the location they will visit at 360° by getting in close contact with the locals and then emphasizing the possibility of transforming an online community into something real, in face to face interactions.

The principles on which it is based are the same as the classic Airbnb, with the difference that rather than choosing an apartment I have the opportunity to choose the experience that best suits me among horseback riding, cooking classes, etc.. In addition, the platform provides both technical details of the experience such as number of people allowed, cost, day, etc., and information about the quality of the activity from the feedback of those who have done it before.

In this case we notice that we no longer trust only a person who has a material asset, but we trust the talent, the skills that that person decides to share with others

### 3.6.3 Posso.it

Il servizio We talked in the previous chapter about good practices born in homes under the wave of the health emergency and social distancing caused by COVID19. Well, another positive element resulting from this dramatic situation was the birth of POSSO.IT, a digital platform created by One More Pictures and realized by Direct2Brain in collaboration with RAI COM, online from Wednesday, April 8th.

It takes up the Airbnb experience format with two small differences that make it unique: the first is a platform that users can use completely free of charge and the second is aimed at building a community that currently remains in the online world, which does not imply face to face interaction, which is a bit what we are slowly trying to adapt to.

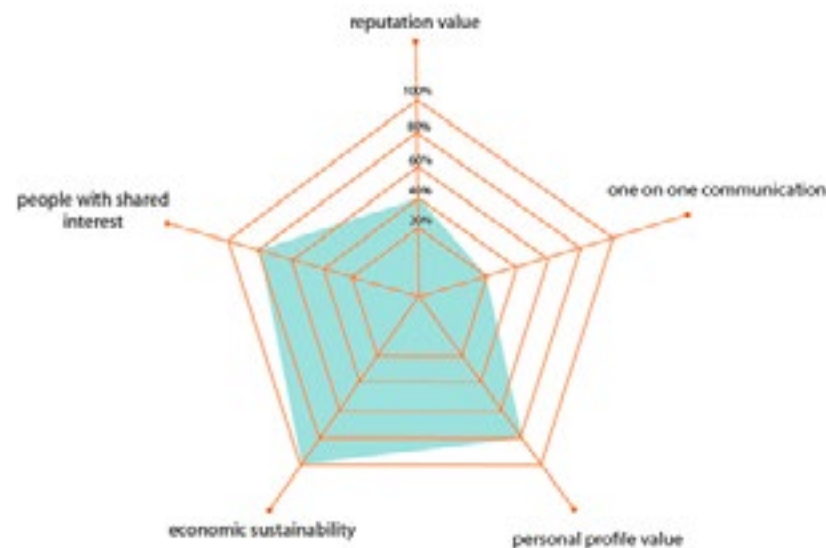
But what do you share on Posso.it?

Everyone can put their skills, abilities, concrete know-how, a small part of their time. And I can look for the answer to the question and the solution to the problem that would have been more easily at hand at another time.

The user can choose between different thematic areas such as art, culture, cooking, but also those we would never have expected because everything depends on what each of us can do.

POSSO.it also cares about the importance of the profile, for this reason before being able to take advantage of other users' tutorial videos it is mandatory to complete your own, indicating the competence you would like to share with other members of the community.

The technology helps to bridge the physical distance, which is mandatory currently, and brings people closer who want to use their time also to make themselves useful, in any of the millions of POSSIBLE ways.



### 3.6.4 BlaBlaCar

Founded on the same pillars as Airbnb and placed within the economic model of collaborative consumption on 16 September 2006, Frédéric Mazzella and Nicolas Brusson founded BlaBla Car: a carpooling web platform operating in 22 countries. With 80 million users, it is the most widely used in the world.

The idea of sharing is very similar to that of Airbnb, with the difference that here we are moving on to another sector: the transport one. The benefits that are gained are not only social, but also economic and about environmental sustainability.

In fact, Blablacar is one of the most interesting ways to travel low cost by taking advantage of car rides and sharing expenses with the driver and possibly with other passengers.

Analizzando le FAQ del servizio, si nota come una delle domande più gettonate sia quella dell'affidabilità del servizio, soprattutto perché guidare da affrontare con estrema serietà.

Here too, however, the secret lies behind the value of reputation, which becomes synonymous with trust.

In fact, on BlaBlaCar each member has a personal tab with a photo and a brief description, the number of trips published, and the reviews left to him by other users. The system of evaluation through reviews allows you to know the experiences of other passengers or drivers, which give you the opportunity to get an idea of the person who offers or asks for a ride.

#### Cinque livelli

	Principiante	Apprendista	Interdipite	Esperto	Ambasciatore
Email e cellulare verificati	Bonvenuto!	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Preferenze indicate		✓	✓	✓	✓
Foto profilo inserita				✓	✓
Feedback positivi ricevuti		1 feedback	3 feedback	6 feedback	12 feedback
Percentuale di feedback positivi		60%	>70%	>80%	>90%
Isotta/a da almeno		1 mese	3 mesi	6 mesi	12 mesi

The platform sets the maximum goal for its users to become ambassadors.

Ambassadors are considered the best BlaBlaCar users as:

- Other users trust them, contact them first and their cars fill up faster.
- If they wish, ambassadors can participate in TV interviews and focus groups and are involved in the development of new features on BlaBlaCar.

So, what does the level of experience on this platform depend on?

The answer to this question takes up a point of "how to design for trust" addressed in the previous case study, namely: trust takes effort. The level of the user depends

on 4 factors:

- Check your e-mail and mobile phone number
- The completeness of the profile
- Positive feedbacks (3 to 5 stars) received
- How long have you been a member

To conclude, BlaBlaCar is a beautiful illustration of how technology is enabling millions of people across the world to take a trust leap, quella di cui ci parlava Rachel Botsman

Let me use BlaBlaCar as an example to bring it to life:

-On the first level you have to trust the idea. So you have to trust the idea the idea of ride-sharing

is safe and worth trying.

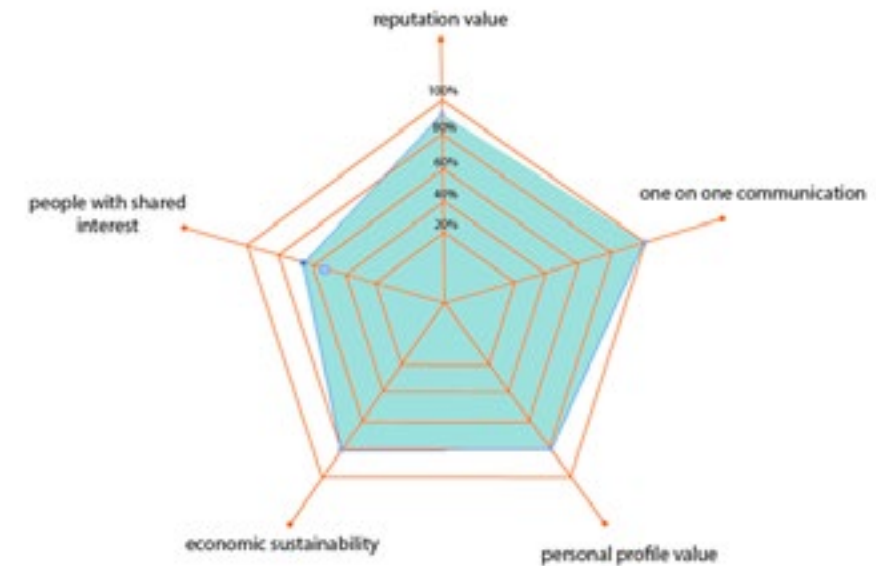
-The second level is about having confidence in the platform □ that BlaBlaCar will help you if something goes wrong.

-And the third level is about using little bits of information to decide whether others person is trustworthy.

Personally, I've never had the opportunity to test BlaBlaCar directly, but my roommate uses it often, and to today it's 2 years that she has a relationship with a guy she met on a BlaBla car trip. So, I could say from indirect experience that trust between "strangers" can go much further.

Personally, I've never had the opportunity to test BlaBlaCar directly, but my roommate uses it often, and she has been in a relationship with a guy she met on a BlaBlaCar trip for 2 years. So, I could say from indirect experience that trust between

"strangers" can go much further.



## 3.6 Conclusion

To sum up, after the excursus of these successful platform-mediated peer trusts has emerged that the

core it's about empowerment. It's about empowering people to make meaningful connections, connections that are enabling us to rediscover a humanness that we've lost somewhere along the way, thanks to services that are building on personal relationships versus empty transaction. This idea that seems so innovative today takes us back to old market principles and collaborative behaviours that are hard-wired in all of us; have simply been renewed for the digital age we're living in...

We cannot deny that the way trust flows through society is changing, and there is a big shift away from the 20th century with institutional trust towards the 21st century that will be fuelled by distributed trust.

Trust is no longer top-down It's being unbundled and inverted, a new recipe for trust is emerging that once again is distributed amongst people and is accountability-based.

# PART THREE

Problem framing / focus

Lack of trust

Causes

Solutions

Case studies

## MAIN FIELD OF ACTION

Cooperative Vercellese

Exploration

Understanding

First prototyping

Insights

# 4. HYPOTESIS

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## 4.1 Insights to sum up

The path of analysis carried out so far has dealt with several steps aimed of setting the readers' mental frameworks on a common level. Through a literature overview we went to the origin and the most suitable definition for this work of concepts such as design for services and social sustainability. Then the general context of collaborative living was analysed, getting to know the pioneers, the social, environmental, and economic benefits, but above all the weaknesses that could affect the collaborative communities. Particular attention was paid to the specific cooperative context, since one of them will be the main field of action.

Framing the problem of many of these complex contexts such as lack of trust, a focus was made on it to understand its origins, values, and the guidelines to follow to trigger it among a community.

In addition, has been proposed successful services which based their channels on trust for the construction of powerful online and offline community building.

Before moving on to the experimentation and the actual project, will follow a list of the insights elaborated so far:

- Change is the basis of innovation
- Social services, collaborative living, community management are field of social sustainability
- Collaborative life-style choice is a vocation and challenge at the same time
- There are different types of communities according to the context and some can be hybrid
- The search for individuality has led us from the strong bonds of the past to weak ties
- Stranger is equal of danger
- Collaborative living models are a complex gym of relationships
- Among the signs of a solid cooperative there is the constructed conviviality
- Trust is the root of social capital
- Trust takes effort
- A well-designed reputation system is the key for building trust
- Platforms can be an enabling solution for empower community building both on

online and offline side

-Design for services means create the condition for certain forms of interaction and relationship to happen

-Service designer should act as a mutual friend = social manager

### 4.2 Project hypothesis

Starting from these new awareness we try to outline a project hypothesis. The starting concept is that for a collaborative community to define itself as such, it is not enough to live in an infrastructure that includes common spaces or born with all the good intentions, by first members, to live a shared everyday life.

Therefore, if the members of a community are non-participative, alien to each other, a solution can be to find a way to reinvent their relational framework, renewing the concept of trust according to their context. My role as a service designer, consists in embodying the role of the mutual friend who designs a tool able to set the right conditions to guide new relational flows, in order to foster the spontaneous birth of good neighbourly practices.

In the next chapter will follow the methodological process that led to the final output.



# METHODOLOGY ADOPTED .5

## 5. Process and Methodology 5.1 Research method adopted



When I had to plan the methodological process to follow for this project, I started from a simple awareness that influenced my whole path.

During my studies as a service design student I have always designed products and services that had as their final target people: from diabetics to new mothers, students, etc.. The goal I found myself chasing was to design something that would improve the life of my target (a jersey with sensors that would monitor diabetics during sports activities, an application to help support new mothers in their reintegration into the world of work, etc.). This was the first time I found myself having to design a solution that would reinvent relational dynamics (trust specifically) and interactions within a living community.

The challenge was hidden in the fact that a fundamental prerogative of people, especially in the area of relationships, is to be unpredictable, changeable, subjective, and with dynamics that are difficult for some to share.

This basic thinking, combined with the support provided by some HousingLab members, has given me the push to undertake an immersive path of field research. The common thread that regulated the whole exploration and methodology part was the will to elaborate insight from the direct observation of the inhabitants in their living context, co-designing and listening to as many stories and experiences as possible. For this reason, the approaches used in different moments of the research

were: design ethnography, users storytelling, design empathy, participatory design

## 5.1.1 Design ethnography

Predicting what will work best for users requires a deep understanding of their needs. Research methods like focus groups and surveys have obvious face validity but they continually fail to provide the insights that design teams need in product discovery. The reason is that these techniques require users to predict their future behaviour, something that people are poor at doing

An alternative method is to examine what people do, rather than what they say they do. This approach is based on a simple premise: the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour. What people do is a better indicator of the underlying user need than what people say (Travis & Hodgson, 2018)

To avoid simply asking users what they want, user researchers have appropriated methods from ethnography and applied them to user research. This technique is broadly known as 'design ethnography' but it differs in important ways from traditional ethnography.

What is ethnography?

Ethnography is the study of culture. Bronislaw Malinowski, who studied gift giving amongst natives in Papua, wrote in the book "Argonauti del Pacifico occidentale. Riti magici e vita quotidiana".

'The final goal is to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world.'

Replace the word 'native' with the word 'user' or extend the metaphor and think of your users as a 'tribe' and you can see why this approach could offer value in product and service design.

Some of the defining characteristics of ethnography are that:

- Research takes place in the participants' context.
- Participant sample sizes are small.
- Researchers aim to understand the big picture: participants' needs, language,

concepts and beliefs.

- Artefacts are analysed to understand how people live their lives and what they value.
- Data is 'thick', comprising written notes, photographs, audio and video recordings.

It's a struggle to use a traditional ethnographic approach in modern product development, mainly because of the timescales. That's not to say it's impossible: Jan Chipchase (who specialises in international field research) says he spends half the year travelling around exotic destinations. But most people who practice design ethnography in business would agree with these distinctions:

- The purpose of traditional ethnography is to understand culture.
  - The purpose of design ethnography is to gain design insights
  - The timescale of traditional ethnography is months and years. The timescale of design ethnography is days and weeks.
  - Traditional ethnographers live with participants and try to become part of the culture. Design ethnographers are visitors who observe and interview.
- With traditional ethnography, data are analysed in great detail over many months. With design ethnography, there is 'just enough' analysis to test the risky assumptions (Travis & Hodgson, 2018).

## 5.2 Explore and understanding

### 5.2.1 HousingLab and Milano 2035 mapping

The design ethnography and exploration phases were carried out during the summer period, precisely between May and July 2019.

From the very beginning, the desire has been to examine the contexts of collaborative living present in the Milanese territory, in order to analyze realities immersed in a background similar to that of the Cooperativa Vercellese, my main field of action.

During this phase of desk research, I was supported by my colleague Eugenia, because we had in common the central thread of the thesis project, that of collaborative

living. But, despite the same scope of analysis, the different focus allowed us to develop two distinct outputs with different targets.

Moreover, as already mentioned, I receive the support of HousingLab, a reality engaged in the study and design of collaborative living.

In particular, the choice of the realities to be investigated started from a mapping that the members of HousingLab have done and that we have implemented and updated according to the answers we received through the Call MI2035. But what is Milano2035?

The knowledge of the Milano2035 Project is always to be placed in the months of research from May and July, always by means of the support with HousingLab.

The project has been conceived and realized by significant realities in the territory of Milanese living such as: Fondazione Dar Cesare Scarponi Onlus, Società Cooperativa Dar=Casa, La Cordata scs, Associazione MeglioMilano, Cooperativa Genera, Acli provinciali di Milano, Cooperativa sociale Tuttinsieme, Associazione CSV Milano, Università della Bicocca – Dipartimento di Sociologia e Ricerca Sociale, Politecnico di Milano, Villaggio Barona, Cooperativa sociale Officina Abitare, Fondazione San Carlo Onlus.

Milano2035 offers housing opportunities in different contexts: residences that host young people and also families and people with fragility, private accommodation in intergenerational cohabitation with self-sufficient pensioners, apartments in popular buildings. The idea comes from the awareness of the high prices that have hit the Milanese housing market in recent years, which faces a very high demand compared to the supply, but whose prices do not allow to satisfy it.

Milano2035 focuses on those so-called “weak” groups that are certainly most affected by this situation, such as young students or workers, who still do not have a solid economic capital and find themselves living in situations that are very limited in terms of both space and quality of life.

Milano2035, with the help of its partners, offers to students and young workers accommodation opportunities at moderate prices, proposing a new way of living, based on sharing and solidarity between inhabitants and neighbours.

So, collaborative Living allows young people to feel part of a community, even if they have recently arrived in the city, even when relatives and friends are far away.

## 5.2.2 Call Mi2035 – the importance of each story

Identifying people willing to share their experience with the public was possible because HousingLab has promoted the Call Mi2035 within the Milano2035 project: a survey of young people between 20 and 35 who are experiencing or have experienced new ways of living in Milan and the metropolitan city.

The spirit of the Call is expressed by this quote that anyone who visited the site could read: “We believe that building and telling an imaginary story more aware of what it means to choose or to find oneself living an experience like that, helps to raise awareness of the urgent problems of young people in finding a home and helps to create networks and communities of young inhabitants who are spokesmen for new ways of living”.

Regardless of the specific objective for which Call Mi2035 was born, it has to be said that this collection of stories was very meaningful from my point of view as a designer, as it allowed me to take research to a higher level and reach new awareness less related to my old mental frameworks on the subject.

But why is the telling of experiences and stories from the point of view of us designers so important?

Storytelling is one of these tools, mentioned in many articles as a proper means for service design or in design practise in general (Brun, n.d).

“The first reason for considering storytelling in design, is to collect stories, insights, meanings, memories etc. from users that inspire and inform design” (Mattelmäki & Viña, 2012).

In particular “stories are the vehicles that we use to condense and remember experiences, and to communicate them in a variety of situations to certain audiences” (Forlizzi & Ford, 2000, p.420).

Moreover, they are context-dependent and represent a part of the sense making process as well as experienced reality of the storyteller.

Thus, especially in the early design process, designers consider storytelling a valuable tool, since they prefer contextualized information grounded in real life, to collect valuable insights and gain empathy toward user’s true-life situations (Brun,

n.d; Mattelmäki & Viña, 2012).

Before immersing ourselves in the selected contexts, we paid a lot of attention to the intelligent collection of the answers that came to us, organizing them in an excel collaborative file so that for each collaborative structure we had the information of the respective contacts.

## 5.2.2.1 Prendi in casa uno studente: a trust leap to over the age gap

The project

Among the partners in the Milano2035 project there is MeglioMilano, a non-profit association founded in 1987 by the Chamber of Commerce, Unione Confcommerio and Automobile Club di Milano with the main objective of improving the quality of life in the city. It operates as a subject of urban stimulation in close collaboration with organizations, institutions, companies and individuals.

Meglio Milano insieme a Fondazione Cariplo ha dato vita al progetto "Prendi in Casa uno studente", che ha riscontrato un forte successo in tutta la metropoli.

The first peculiarity of the project is that it can be considered as a collaborative living initiative even if it does not prevent the presence of houses with common spaces. The space for physical interaction is that of a normal house, the added value is given by the residents.

The initiative involves the cohabitation between a self-sufficient pensioner with space in the house and a young non-resident in Milan in search of accommodation to share company, housing and new experiences in the city. The guests do not pay a real rent but participate in the household expenses with a reimbursement of 250-280 euros per month, collaborate in daily matters, make themselves available for some company, maintaining their own autonomy.

In this way, a virtuous circle is activated, which contributes to reducing the loneliness of the pensioner by providing him/her with new stimuli and guarantees the student a familiar and quiet environment in which to study, at a low cost.

If we reconsider Bauman's theory addressed in the focus on trust that strangers is equal danger, "Prendi in casa" at first glance has all the credentials to be a challenging initiative because in addition to combine two strangers in the same house, it implies the cohabitation of two figures with a deep age gap that goes to emphasize even more the difficulties in finding common points. Nevertheless, "Prendi in Casa" is one of the most successful projects of MeglioMilano with over 600 students who have requested the participation only in the last year, and 630 student-east cohabitations started. We had our storytelling thanks to the conversation with Eleonora Luzzati, a student who took part in the project that allowed us to understand that in this situation you can make a trust leap and live in harmony with the other tenant.

### The story of Eleonora

Eleonora is originally from Genoa, she is a student at the 2nd year of Social Service at Bicocca in Milan. In the first semester of 2019 she started an Erasmus course so once she returned to Milan she needed accommodation for 4-5 months and on this occasion she developed the desire to apply to MeglioMilano.

She had already had experiences of sharing the house with the simple format of roommates like out-of-school students, but such an experience was new for her. Because of the distance, we had a video chat with Eleonora, but it still allowed us to understand to many things about her, her experience and how she has managed to establish a relationship of trust with a stranger much greater than herself. Eleonora had this experience with Mrs. Carla, a 94-year-old Milanese doc, self-sufficient and very active, with whom "we have established a relationship that goes beyond just living together, but which today I can define as friendship" (E. Luzzati, personal communication, June 19, 2019).

Below are the most significant extracts from Eleonora's storytelling:

"If I had to describe my path of cohabitation with three adjectives it would be Security in many different ways because you have someone waiting for you at home, getting rich by sharing and courage because they are projects that may seem trivial but they really have a strong impact on people".

"The economic need was the first thing that drove me to choose such a path. However, I felt the need to want someone who knew Milan well and who could be my guide."

"I don't hide that I was a bit afraid of not knowing with whom they would approach me, but the project is very attentive to this aspect, in fact before confirming your

## 5.2.2.2 Green Opificio: the advantage of starting together

### The Project

The second example of collaborative living in which we became involved is the new Green Opificio apartment complex, located in the Bovisa district of Milan. The project is a nice intergenerational mix because the closeness to the university and the innovative housing context made it an attractive point for young people (students, young workers, young couples), together with families, with more or less grown up children. Being newly built, particular attention has been paid to the inclusion of innovative elements in the field of environmental sustainability. Each family unit has its own one-room, two-room or three-room apartment available according to its needs. As far as the collaborative part is concerned, the presence of common areas (gym, living room, children's room, garden, laundry) has helped the socialization and the organization of collective activities: the party mood has proved to be from the beginning the binder among the inhabitants, young and old. Over time everyone has found their own role in the community (those who manage the gym, those who manage the living room, those who organize events and courses) and so the residents have started, in addition to parties, to plan also more structured activities: a Solidarity Purchasing Group, fitness courses, exchange boards.

A simple website, managed by the inhabitants, allows them to communicate the scheduled activities, book common areas, share documents, and to make the following information available to them

In the context of GreenOpificio you can breathe the presence of a solid community: the group, under the guidance of HousingLab, has followed a community building path for 10 months. During the course the association has been involved in community building, capacity building and service co-design. The intent was to bring the community to its own autonomy, initially guiding the management in a stable way and then leaving more and more responsibility to the inhabitants themselves. Designing collaborative housing means acting in parallel on two closely related levels: that of relationships, accountability and common vision, in other words of an alignment and mutual trust, and that of the spaces and activities that represent and shape the system of relationships and allow to give value to collaboration.

## The story of Martina

Martina is a 26-year-old girl who lived in Genoa with her parents and who has decided for love to move to Milan. A little over a year ago she decided to take a big step and buy an apartment of her own, inside the complex. We retrace Martina's collaborative experience through her words:

"We liked the idea of an " smart" and careful house, but even more we got attached to the idea of living in a sort of student house, but with adults!" what characterizes it is the fact that it is a young apartment building, everyone who came here wants to start living in the best possible way here.

"We were all very excited to be part of this new project when we arrived here, and this enthusiasm resulted in a great desire to share and participate. When I talk to my friends about it, they are amazed that we are so close and that a real friendship has been established between us. For me, who didn't live in Milan, it was significant to find friends in a very short time!"

"Of course, managing these shared spaces requires time and energy and of course there is no lack of conflict, especially between renters and leaseholders. We had to confront each other about our needs and we learned to equip ourselves with the right tools to communicate at best with each other, to give us shared guidelines (we wrote a regulation for the use of common spaces), to organize courses and condominium events, to keep the spaces tidy and functional".

"Even if making decisions together and finding an agreement is sometimes tiring and takes time away from everyday life, I feel like saying it's worth it, I never thought I'd find in a big city like Milan that family relationship between neighbours I was used to when I lived in Genoa with my parents".



The impression that we had after the visit of GreenOpificio and after chatting with some residents is that of a complex with a very high level of social interaction, which has succeeded with the right tools and strategy to overcome possible contrasts. Also, in this case we see what are the factors that have allowed this level of trust.

### 5.2.3 Socialhousenet workshop

The most intense ethnographic design experience we had the opportunity to carry out in this methodological phase took place in the Cohousing Ecosol in Fidenza.

Getting in touch with this collaborative housing reality was possible thanks to the network of Socialhousenet and its partners: Fondazione Politecnico di Milano, Mondo di comunità a famiglia, Poli.Designe Playres.

Socialhousenet was an appointment of itinerant workshops lasting 20 months whose proposal was to decline the requests of the public notice regarding the complexity of the phenomenon of social housing and collaborative living in order to support the research and elaboration of alternative ways and styles of housing by young people. This idea has had a double value from the beginning:

On the one hand, it was intended to promote the development of young people's skills and abilities through the prototyping of collaborative service projects, in the context of solidarity housing contexts capable to foster the development of social and individual well-being.

On the other hand, it aimed to bring out from the territories and communities involved in the project activity relevant and promising forms of sociality to be accompanied, through the work of the young people involved, in the transition from informal practices to activities capable of providing structured employment opportunities in the socio-economic contexts concerned, providing participants with tools and skills that could stimulate them to pursue the path undertaken independently.

Each workshop has been structured in four phases, defined by the Double Diamond model, a creative process developed in 2005 by the Design Council that is the basis of the Design Thinking methodology and that organizes the generative path of design solutions for subsequent divergent phases - of free space for conception and creativity - and convergent - of definition and development of the idea. It was

Specifically, the workshop I took part in, was the Workshop 5 held in Ecosol from 21-23 June 2019 and entitled Abitare il quartiere: dal cohousing ai servizi collaborativi di quartiere.

### 5.2.3.4 Ecosol: how to gain neighborhood trust

Ecosol cohousing represents a mixed living experience, where the Camminando community and other families who, while not embracing the values of MCF, have chosen to live in a collaborative and supportive context. The building is of recent construction (2007) and has the following features:

- Spaces, Common Services: GAS, babysitting, car sharing, garden, mutual aid and everything the group will choose over time to share.
- Zero Emissions: particular attention has been paid to the environmental aspect. The building is equipped with a photovoltaic system that during the year produces all the necessary energy for the building.
- Open to the territory: brings together people who are interested in characterizing their living as a place of relationship, welcome, participation and as a source of well-being for themselves and the territory.
- Self-construction: for the common hall and other works, the self-construction technique was used. In particular, the salon has been buffered with bales of straw by the condominiums themselves.

The impression one gets when living for 3 days 24 hours a day in Ecosol's Cohousing and observing the interactions between the inhabitants is that one of a system with a perfect internal balance. The interactions between the inhabitants are multiple and well-structured in the different common spaces, the atmosphere is peaceful and proactive. Good practices of mutual help are the order of the day.

The mission of the Workshop in fact included co-designing a solution that would allow cohousing to integrate more effectively into the Europa neighbourhood that housed it. To make cohousing not only a service provider for the neighbourhood, but also a trigger and infrastructure for the activation of collaborative practices and services involving the whole neighbourhood.

So, in this case the trust leap had to go beyond the boundaries of collaborative housing and open up to the neighbourhood.

The stages of the workshop that led us to the elaboration of the final concept were:

- users shadowing
- cognitive path in the neighborhood
- insight brainstorming
- define the concept
- prototyping with inhabitants and neighbourhood
- final presentation



The solution

From the need to meet in shared spaces, to come together to collaborate and make decisions together, the idea of a neighbourhood platform emerged as an online and offline place for the aggregation of activities and services that will be able to articulate and develop over time. Below is the scheme that displays its characteristic elements and their respective connections in order to give life to this extended community of which the neighborhood is part.

## 5.3 Participatory approach

From September onwards, my methodological path has focused exclusively on the specific contest that is the Cooperativa Vercellese. The design strategy that the service designer decides to apply approaching its main users is very important. In addition to the shadowing tools, that would allow me to observe their interactions without influencing them, in a sort of invisible guise, I knew that, once I had framing the specific problem, I would have wanted to involve them by triggering a participatory approach according to their reactivity.

But, what does it mean participatory approach and why it is so important?

Is recognized that Service Design considers the ability and knowledge of service user and wider communities as a primary power for the service development. Also, Service Design creates understanding about the concept related to the local empowerment (Miettinen et al., 2018; Pierandrei, et al., 2018).

It means that designer have the strategic role for communities "to influence the participatory process for citizen engagement or service user involvement" (Pierandrei et al., 2018, p. 2).

For this reason, "the first step of a service design process is to design the process itself" (Bækkelie, n.d, p. 3), suitable to the context and able to create local dialogue that can contribute to the capabilities of communities (Miettinen et al., 2018).

As shown by various projects and research, the right approach to achieve this goal is the participatory one.

"Participation in Participatory Design intends investigation, reflection upon, understanding, establishing, developing and support of mutual learning processes as they unfold between participants in collective reflection-in-action during the design process" (Akimenko & Kure, 2017, p. 2).

In this compound, users can join the design team as “expert of their experience” (Sanders & Stappers, 2008, p.12), but to take on this role, it is necessary to give them the appropriate tools for expressing themselves (Sanders & Stappers, 2008).

## 5.4 Cooperativa Vercellese: the main field of action

### 5.4.1 a 100-year history

Cooperative Vercellese is part of the network of cooperatives managed by Legacoop Lombardia. The idea to focus my project on them specifically came up during a presentation on collaborative services at Legacoop Lombardia's headquarters, during which Gabriele Bianconi, a member of its Board of Directors, was present.

Located in Via Caccialepori n°4 and 8, in the lively district of De Angeli in Milan, the structure whose official name is Cooperativa Case Popolari Vercellese (CCPV) is inhabited by 310 tenants (the number may vary for deaths and changes); and 185 apartments distributed on 12 stairs. The cooperative brings with it a history rooted in 100 years, rich in traditions and successes that have made it a point of reference for the cooperatives of the twentieth century.

The history of Vercelli is a story of “beginning with a vital desire for sociality and at the same time the willingness of a group of people of popular extraction to join forces and abilities to survive in a society where food, home and work were difficult goals to achieve” (Perin, 2011, p.7).

Therefore, cooperation was born mainly as a response of the poorer classes to the hardship and economic difficulties of everyday life and launched experiences of entrepreneurship from below. Founded on the principles of mutuality, solidarity and democracy.

The cooperative, founded in 1910, has passed through important moments of Italian history such as Fascism and this has led it to a structural evolution over time. It lived its moment of glory around the 60s, a period in which the ballroom, the club, the cooperative bar and the bowling alley were swarming with people.

Unfortunately, over time something was lost and in fact in the book that tells the

story we read this emblematic phrase:

“despite the progress and growth of the Vercelli area, from the stories of the members about the life of the past, one can feel a regret: the awareness of having lost that sense of belonging to the Cooperative that made it pleasant and natural to voluntarily take action for a common cause” (Perin, 2011, p.39).

Still the partner Franco Pisati tells:

“it wasn't like now that there's a rulebook, there's a list of houses, and the first one who's on the list gets the house. In its time the Council decided, looked in the face who needed it the most, who frequented the cooperative more” (Pisati, 2011, p.68).

The testimony of Mr. Pisati tells of a cooperative, much more caring for the individual, based on the attention and the real motivations of those who wanted to take a similar path. A bit like saying that before obtaining the privileges of cooperation you had to earn the trust of the board of directors.

(aggiungere foto storica scannerizzate dal libro).

### 5.5 Discover and Define

As we know, testimonies read in books, however significant and real, are not enough. Field research should always be implemented with accurate field research. So my colleague and I, after a first inspection that allowed us to get an idea of the structure and state of the common spaces such as library, theater room, courtyard and bowling alley, we attended a series of meetings with Gabriele Bianconi, member of the CCPV board. Gabriele told us his vision of cooperative life in Caccialepori, (a vision I have to say by now rather disenchanted), however together we tried to understand what the best opportunity for a first meeting with members could be.

It's October 2019 and for us it's the beginning of what, referring to the Double Diamond of the Design Council, will be the event that will start the Discovering phase in which gain insight through contextual inquiry.

## 5.5.1 Festa dell'uva: a first approach with the inhabitants

We started to wonder what would have been the best way to meet a cooperative community that totally ignores your role and how to establish a relationship of mutual trust between us, as designers, and them. We knew that if we had organized our own event, maybe also thanks to Gabriele's word of mouth, the response would have been scarce if not existing, because for the usual theoretical discourse we were "the strangers". So, we decided to join one of their traditional events, the Festa dell'Uva on October 19, 2019.

Hence, the reasons that prompted us to participate were the following:

- to take an active part in a cooperative social occasion
- deepen the context and relational dynamics
- analyse the way and the degree of cooperation and participation of the inhabitants
- make us known and gain their trust

Is it fair now to wonder why the Grapes?

Wine was a great source of pride for the old members of the Vercelli area. "Before the war, more or less in the Thirty-Five" - explained Giovanni Emolli - wine began to be produced and the older, then children, still remember the grapes that arrived in the Cooperative, the pressing, the cellar, the barrels.

Another member Emilio Minoia writes:

"The cooperative has also become a wine seller. They came from all over Milan to get the wine here. In those years there were an infinite number of bars and taverns... but the wine was made here, the others had already made it."

These testimonies show that the Festa dell'Uva is nothing more than an annual celebration (the only one left together with the one on May 1st) to remember how wine production in the 1950s was one of the social pivots around which life revolved, but also a significant economic resource for the cooperative.

Toolkits used

Besides being there as observers, we have never lost sight of our role as service designers. For this reason, among the various areas dedicated to food, drinks, games and lottery, we have set up our own space with a series of toolkits and ad hoc projects to get to know the uses, customs and needs of the inhabitants.

The activities in question have been:

1. community shots
2. everyday pills
3. future scenarios
4. survey

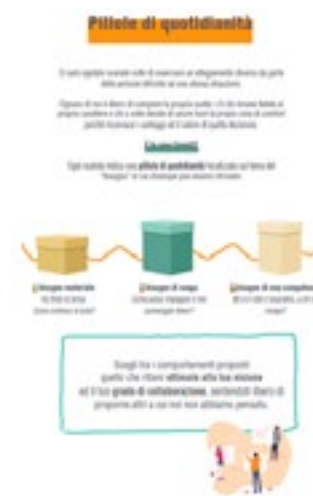




## 1. Community Pills

The Community Pills toolkit was born on our need to know the level of collaboration and interaction of the inhabitants in three different situations of daily life: a material need, a need for expertise or a need for leisure.

So, we prepared 3 boxes containing the question about the respective need, with the possibility to choose 3 possible behaviours. Each inhabitant could write a tag the answer closest to their collaborative nature and put it in the corresponding box.



## 2. Community shots

Community shots more than a real toolkit was a useful way for us to collect visual information and inhabitants as a way to talk to each other and approach us driven by curiosity to see themselves in photos.

With a polaroid we captured the highlights of the festival, with a sensitive eye to the types of interactions that were going to be established (age, mode, etc.), and **gradually we hung the photos on a string so that they were visible to all.**

## 3. Future Scenarios

This toolkit included the proposal of 3 scenarios designed to understand the needs of the residents and what would be their ideal cooperative. The first two scenarios were proposed by us, and residents with stickers had to vote for the one they liked. The visions we proposed were:

-the collaborative pinboard that proposed a reference space conceived as a place of meeting and dialogue where one could discover the proposals and interests concerning the individuals of the community. And to be a way to create groups based on common affinities.

-Returning to the origins: let's start again from this idea, to propose a new system based on good neighbourly relations and activities focused on being together and helping each other as well as our grandparents, and who before them, taught us





## 4. Quantitative and qualitative surveys.

Since we knew that due to the activities of the party or perhaps for a greater mistrust we would not be able to catch up all the participants with our toolkits, we also distributed a survey with the aim of collecting quantitative (average age, origin, time of stay) but also qualitative data (the collaborative activities in which you participated, describe the cooperative with adjectives, etc.), as well as a trick to get the contacts of members thanks to the dedicated section.

Moreover, in order to reach also those who for x reasons were not present at the festival, we managed to have the questionnaire shared also on the Fb page of the Cooperative "**W la cooperativa**".

### 5.5.2 Level of library usage

Participation in the Festa dell'Uva allowed us to approach the inhabitants by establishing a first relationship and gathering some contacts that proved to be more open to a participatory approach. However, the strategy we considered most effective to apply was slightly different from the classic co-design meetings.

In fact, although we had identified some figures available for co-design, the number was rather limited and at the same time we noticed some contrasts between these same figures. This situation led us not to organize scheduled meetings with dates and time, for fear of **low participation but rather to go every Sunday to the building, place ourselves in a strategic point with our desk and toolkit so as to intercept the flow of passages. This strategy has certainly allowed us to increase our visibility, making us expand our network of knowledge to residents that otherwise we would never have known.**

**So on November 16th our second surprise co-design activity took place, aimed at imagining together a new fruition for the common space of the library, used in an extremely reduced and monotonous way.**

Why did we decide to build the second activity on the theme of common spaces? Considering in the reality of the inhabitants of Caccialepori the lack of an effective communication both physical (notice boards, touchpoints) and digital (no representative site, no social exchange platforms) we identified in the common physical spaces a possible alternative channel.

The toolkits used

Also, in this meeting the toolkits used were designed specifically for the cooperative, based on the answers that my colleague and I needed.

Specifically, they were:

1. let's imagine together
2. use of space
3. how can you contribute?

1. Let's imagine together

This toolkit rather than proposing an involvement of the users in a real activity had the aim to show the inhabitants the current condition of the common library space and at the same time to present an inspiring scenario on the possible future use of the space by pressing on the concept that even simple actions can give added value.

2. Use of space

The toolkit aimed to investigate the behaviour of the inhabitants towards the library, trying to deepen the motivations behind a certain choice and better understand the target audience.

### 3. How can you contribute?

The last tool helped us to evaluate the attitude of the inhabitants, putting them at the centre and pushing them to activate themselves personally through the possibility of contributing on a material level (exchange of goods) or by implementing their own skills so as to form a sort of team of responsibility.

#### 5.5.3 The library is also...a market exchange

In the last meeting held on December 14th November 2019, we finally wanted to organize a prototyping event to test the participation of the inhabitants in a day during which the library space would regain new life through two activities proposed directly by them.

Two weeks earlier, in fact, we had left on the two entrances of the Cooperative, a poster where members could leave proposals for activities that they would have liked to carry out in the library and if their involvement would have included only participation or even organization.

The most popular proposals were those of an exchange market for objects, books, games between residents, so that what was superfluous for some could become valuable for others.

We communicated the event both with physical posters and through the Fb page of the Cooperative.

What happened during the event was quite emblematic, in fact the participation was considerable, however many people preferred to remain anonymous or leave the materials in the administration office or directly in the library with a note.

This attitude brought to light a willingness to help but without showing the identity, an introverted way of acting, a lack of courage in offline and physical interactions except for activities proven over time (and therefore known and therefore trusted) as happened with Festa dell'Uva.

### 5.6 Insight: a challenging context

This period of exploration, testing and co-production activities with residents and members of the Board of Directors of the CCPV, allowed me to reach a much higher level of knowledge of the context both from the quantitative and qualitative point of view. Finding the right strategy, channel and approach with the residents was one of the biggest challenges. Some more than others were reactive, collaborative and willing to share all their experience, but above all they were inclined to change. In the chapter on trust, I wrote that the designer should act as a mutual friend to build trust among community members. It was with this team of more active partners that I felt like I had planted the seed of trust, the seed that allowed them to take an interest in my project for having understood that it was something done to help them.

Obviously, there was no positive feedback from everyone, some of them remained closed in their shell. But I noticed how very often these figures matched with the loneliest ones even within the cooperative. Both these two opposite attitudes were the main source of inspiration to create a solution that would provide a meeting point.

To take stock of the situation, in the list below I will summarize the most meaningful insights that led me to the definition of the specific problem from which, in the next phase I started to develop the output of my project.

Quantitative Insight:

- is a cooperative structure with a medium-high age range, 40% of tenants are between 50 and 70 years old.
- 46.7% are workers, so they spend a lot of time away from home.
- 53.3% are small households, consisting of husband and wife.
- 90% of the inhabitants have become members because they have a generation of members behind them.

Qualitative Insight:

- Poor inclusion activities to overcome the turn-over effect.
- The economic benefit and following tradition are the main reasons for living in a cooperative. There is a lack of mutual common vocation to collaborative life.
- The most important interactions are the digital ones that come to life on the Fb page, despite being managed and conveyed only by the most active people.
- The collaborative activities carried out meet the interests of those who organize them, generating little participation.
- Many residents feel the absence of a single channel where they can find updates and communications related to their daily life.
- There are many proactive figures who do not find the right listening or space to rise up for the benefit of community.
- The impulses of mutual aid are present, but the protagonists are small groups separated from each other.
- Commonplaces are mainly used by senior citizens' clubs
- Wish to open the common spaces to the neighborhood community as well.
- Lack of knowledge among members

# PART FOURTH

Exploration

Understanding

First prototyping

Insights

**PROBLEM RE-DEFINITION**

Concept definition

Second online prototyping



Development

Conclusion

# 6. CONCEPT DEFINITION AND SERVICES DEVELOPMENT

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# Final aim of the project **6.1**

From the insights collected during the meetings with the community in the months of research and testing on-site, new awareness were born about the strategy to follow keystroke in order to achieve relevant objectives to improve the situation of the Cooperativa Vercellese. What I learned from the methodological phase was the awareness that you cannot expect a cooperative community (although the type of housing defines it as such), if the **relational intensity** and the **participant involvement** are not of a certain type.

Infact *“collaborative organization as they appear today are characterized by a variety of social ties of all strenhths, ranging from the strongest to the weakest. The characters of these ties party arises from the very nature of the issue that the organization is dealing with. However, this also depends on how the basic idea behind the organization evolves, moving from proposal in which it is essential to establish strong ties to ones in which there are various combinations of strong and weak ties” (Manzini,2015, p.101).*

As proof of the importance of ties Granovetter<sup>49</sup> in 1973 propoused a theory of the strenght (and weakness) of social ties. He defined three type of interpersonal ties that were **strong, weak and absent**. The tie strength can be measured as a combination of the amount of time, the affective intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding=trust) and the reciprocal services that characterize the tie.

Among the members of the Vercellese cooperative I have identified a **coexistence** of different types of ties based on personalities that vary according to character, background, habits, etc.. This non-uniformity automatically generated a prevalence of **weak ties**.

It is necessary to keep in mind that **not everyone is interested and not everyone is always participating or feeling comfortable to participate maybe because he doesn't how to empower his/her relational capabilities**.

<sup>49</sup>Granovetter, M. (1973). The Strenght of Weak Ties. American Journal of Sociology 78, no.6, pp.1360-1380.

As service designer Chiara Gambarani says in an interview on Archdaily , *“Collaboration is not an “ideal, but a way to improve the quality of life and generate informal welfare systems.Understanding the advantages that collaboration can offer (saving money, saving time, sharing interests, mutual help) is the first step to involve the community and motivate them”.*

And this was the famous starting “button” to push to develop an enabling solution solution that would bring the cooperative back to its precondition for the existence.



Figurex. Cooperative moment.[chart]



## First Concept

During the participatory activities with the cooperative I met different types of members of different ages and backgrounds, but some frustrations were a constant:

- A hostile climate, of distrust
- The absence of an official communication channel (except page fb)
- An almost top-down and hierarchical management of meetings that generates a calendar of meetings with monotonous activities in the theme and that mainly satisfy the interest of a few.

Trying to find a meeting point between the various needs, the idea of designing a communication and meeting management platform for the members of the Vercellese cooperative arises.

The advantages of such a tool lay in the fact of providing members an official channel without an admin that conveys information, instead where the relationship is between peers.

The other important element that the platform was supposed to have, was to offer members a space where they **could get better known by the community**, tell their interests and skills in order to discover new matches with partners, driven by the same interests and maybe, gradually build a collaborative meeting using the common spaces. Therefore, in this first creative phase the platform would have been a sort

The advent of lockdown has certainly made the prototyping and comparison with users about these first design ideas harder.

However, thanks to the relationship established during the research phase and the digital communication channels, that have had their revenge during these last months, I was able to gather feedback and make implementations to the initial concept, reassessing the role that technology plays in a context where the level of knowledge between members, despite living in the same structure, is limited by a reduced trust leap to the other.

Moreover, it may seem odd but, during these online prototyping, I had the opportunity to meet new members of the Vercellese cooperative, such as Valentina, a **young active-minded partner**, whom I had not had the chance to meet during my research in the field. Valentina, telling the story of all the mutual aid activities she carries out in the Cooperative, gave me significant elements that allowed me to close the circle, framing even better the context, but above all the attitude of those who live there. Until then I had only perceived, albeit with pleasure, the willingness of some members to undertake a path of change in their daily lives, focused on mutual aid and collaboration. But in this last phase of confrontation I had the confirmation of the existence of a team, even if small, of members driven by the right motivation, so that they were personally activated to build a participatory-reality atmosphere, even if in their own small way. From this awareness the definitive concept was developed.

## Prototyping online ed implementazione del servizio.



Figurex. digital Feedback with Valentina. [photo]



Figurex. Valentina members of Vercellese. [photo]

# 6.4 Final service definition

## 6.4.1 Purpose of the service.



Thus was born **TocToc: a peer to peer platform to trigger trust-based relationship among the members Cooperative Vercellese.**

The general idea remains similar to that of the initial concept, but some details, both structural and conceptual, have been changed in order to make the fruition more valuable.

But let's see them in more detail

The general idea behind it is already hidden in the name "TocToc", a short onomatopoeia that is easy to understand, because it is in the imagination of all of us since we were children; in fact, *toc-toc* is the sound that reminds us to knock on someone's door, an element that is also visible in the logo. It is a meaning, however, that goes beyond the mechanical action of knocking, but rather I wanted it to turn into a metaphor, that of coming out of the shell of individualism that often overwhelms us, to make an impulse of courage and trust and "knock", then generate an encounter with the other, which in the case of Vercellese can be transformed into an encounter with his own community.

About meetings, Buber (1996) wrote *"all actual life is encounter"*. In his conceptual model Buber maintains that and individual really becomes a

person only when he or she engages with the other in a relational encounters".

In fact, the main function of TocToc is to be a platform, comparable to a toolbox that in the hands of the community enables it to generate the type of collaborative encounters that best suit their person.

The attention to be paid to the generation of meetings in a cooperative community is confirmed by Richard Sennett who in his book defines the cooperative *"as an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter" and during which "exchange something (time, care, experiences, expertise, etc) in order to receive benefits; in other words, they create a shared value"*.

One of the most significant implementations made after the online co-design phase concerns the way **interactions are carried out**. I made a reasoning influenced both by the theoretical discourse and supported by practical examples on trust, and by the change in the way of communication born during this lockdown. The result was the awareness that for a community where many members do not know each other and therefore do not trust each other, the possibility of a meeting only physical from the first time could be discouraging, or even would have favored those who already had a close relationship.

For this reason one of the principles on which Toc Toc is based is to debunk the myth that technology takes us away from each other, **but rather propose it as something that allows us to break the ice** more easily because it takes away the embarrassment of face to face, allows us to access a series of information much faster and is immune to spatial or motor limitations (elderly people). for you to trigger a face to face interaction. Not an obstacle but an implementation.

In addition, the use of the portal has included all those trustworthinesses, analyzed during overviews of the literature and case studies of successful platforms that trigger a feeling of trust and belonging to the same system.

## 6.4.2 Offering map

L'offering map ci mostra più nel dettaglio le possibili funzioni fornite dalla piattaforma agli utenti, dividendole in clusters. In questo caso le principali sono: informare, interagire, suggerire.



## 6.4.3 The actors of the services

### PERSONAS

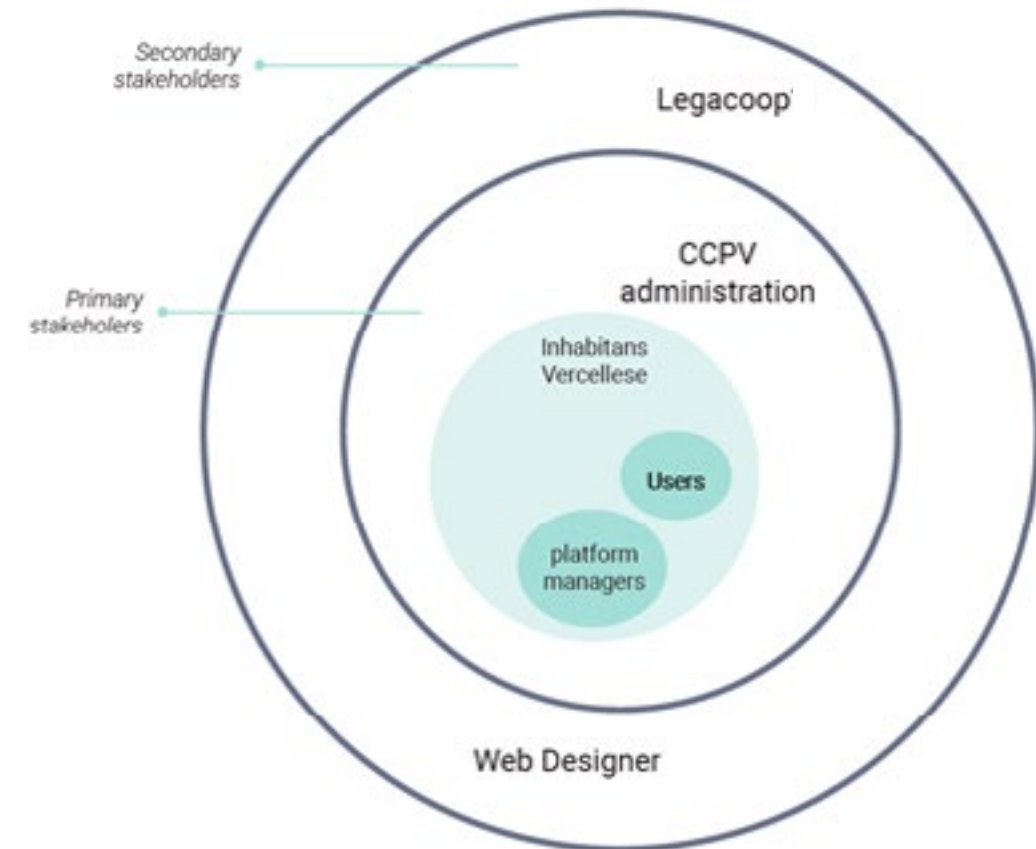
Toc Toc was designed to be enjoyed by all members of the Cooperativa Vercellese trying to meet the needs of the various personalities encountered, with their strenght and weakpoint.

### STAKEHOLDER MAP

Thanks to the stakeholder map it is also possible to observe the indirect users of the platform, sensing the hierarchical relationships between them.

In the **primary stakeholder** we obviously have the inhabitants of Vercelli divided in turn between simple users and platform managers who are responsible for ensuring that the platform is used at its best, all respect its values and also have the task of acting as intermediaries for any suggestions or communication received from TocToc with the CCPV administration.

In the **secondary stakeholder** we have the professional figures as web designers who can help in the practical programming of the platform and the Legacoop body. We will deepen its possible role in the following chapter



## THE BUSY PARTNER



VITTORIO VILLA

GENDER Male  
AGE 70  
JOB pensioner  
ORIGIN Milan, IT  
STATUS Widower

alone well-known

nostalgic

TIME



COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT



COLLABORATIVE ATTITUDE



TRUST LEAP toward the others



BB

*I lived the cooperative in its glory days! There was a strong bonds within the cooperative. Now I feel a bit lonely, it would be nice to repeat that atmosphere today, but they seem to have forgotten the value of the cooperative*



### CHANNEL of INTERACTION



tablet



one-on-one communication



call phone

### DESIRE

In need of help for some daily activities.  
Sharing his knowledge  
Socializing without being a nuisance  
Bringing back the cooperative climate of the past.

### CONCERNS

Sense of loneliness at home.  
Little physical mobility.  
In need of help for some daily activities.

## THE NEWCOMER



EMANUEL LOPEZ

GENDER Male  
AGE 45  
JOB Writer  
ORIGIN Bilbao, ES  
STATUS Married

insecure willing

out of comfort zone

TIME



COMMUNITY INVOLVMENT



COLLABORATIVE ATTITUDE



TRUST LEAP toward the others



BB

*I decided to come in Vercellese because I'm a very sociable person. Unfortunately, I've had few opportunities to get to know the other members. I would gladly participate if I heard about some socializing activities.*



### CHANNEL of INTERACTION



website



one-on-one communication



smartphone

### DESIRE

Integrating himself and his wife into the community life.  
Being aware of cooperative updates.  
Participating to social activity

### CONCERNS

Felling as the stranger.  
Not being sure that he can count on someone in case of need.  
Few opportunity of community building.



## 6.4.4 Website screens and user actions

During the design of the functions possible through the use of the platform, the notions acquired about the guidelines in case of designing platforms that generate trust have been very useful. Wearing the shoes of the now famous “mutual friend”, I have taken into account the teachings:

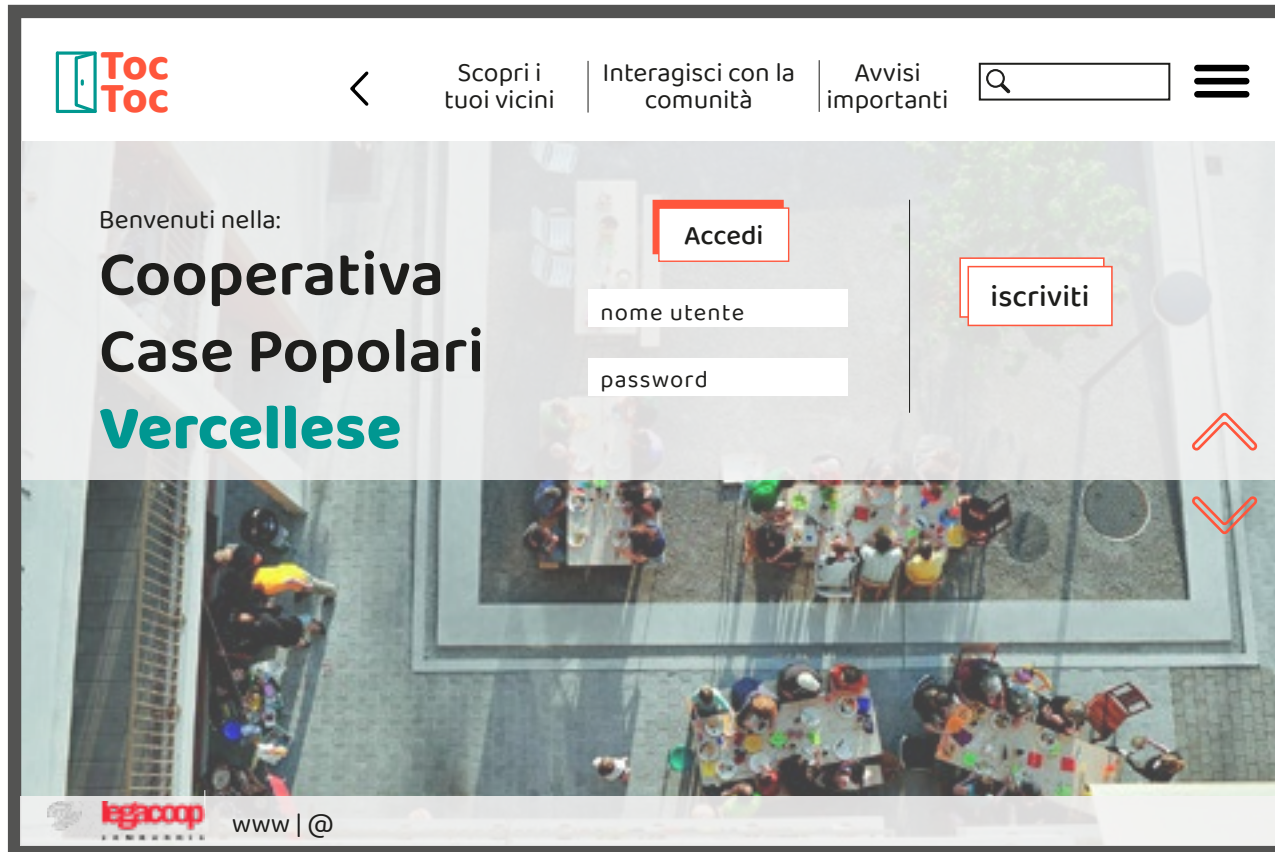
- **TRUST TAKES EFFORT**
- **A WELL-DESIGNED REPUTATION SYSTEM IS KEY FOR BUILDING TRUST**
- **THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIABILITY AND SO ON.**

Let's see thanks to a mockup of screens, in which sections of the platform these elements emerge.



### 1. LANDING PAGE:

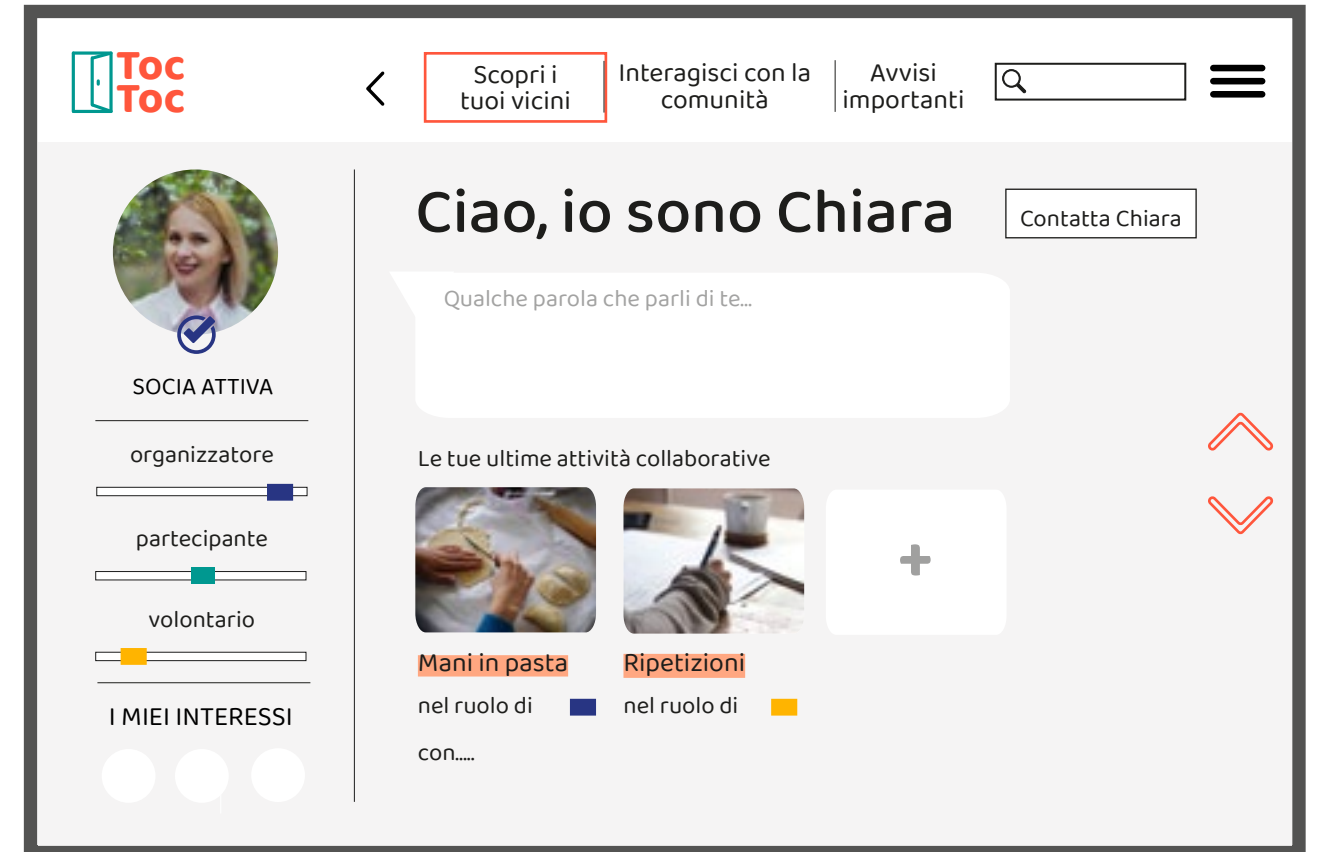
In this first landing page the user selects his or her own cooperative, in order to then start navigating through his or her portal. Moreover, he can know the mission of the TocToc project and have an overview of the other cooperatives in the area.



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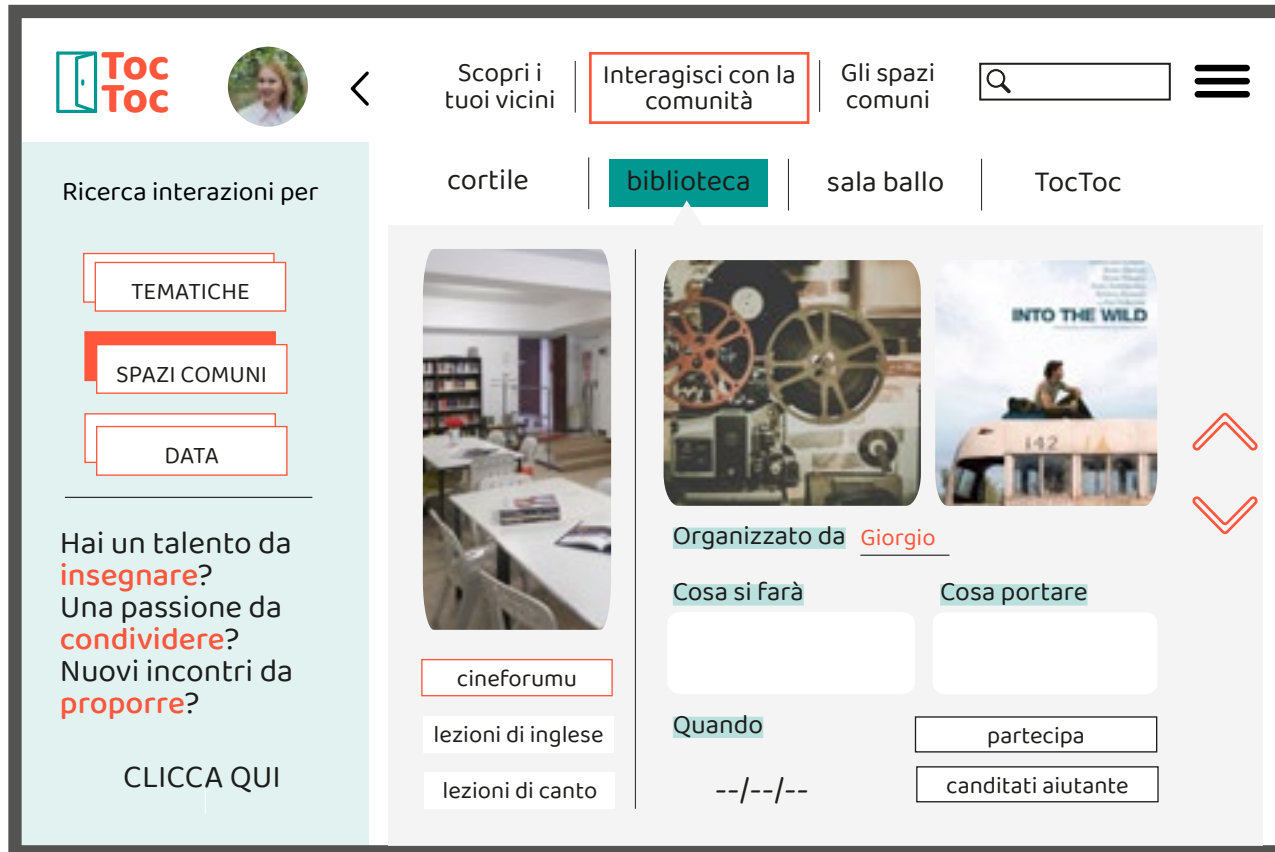
## 2. HOME PAGE OF COOPERATIVE VERCELLESE

In this section the member enters his credentials if he has already logged in, otherwise he has the possibility to register. After registering he will be asked for information to complete his profile.



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**3. EXAMPLE OF PARTNER PROFILE** This area allows members to get to know each other, learning not only basic information about each other's lives, but also their interests and activities. Reputation is important to build trust and encourage participation so levels of organisation, participation or volunteering will be highlighted in each profile. The most active users are marked-

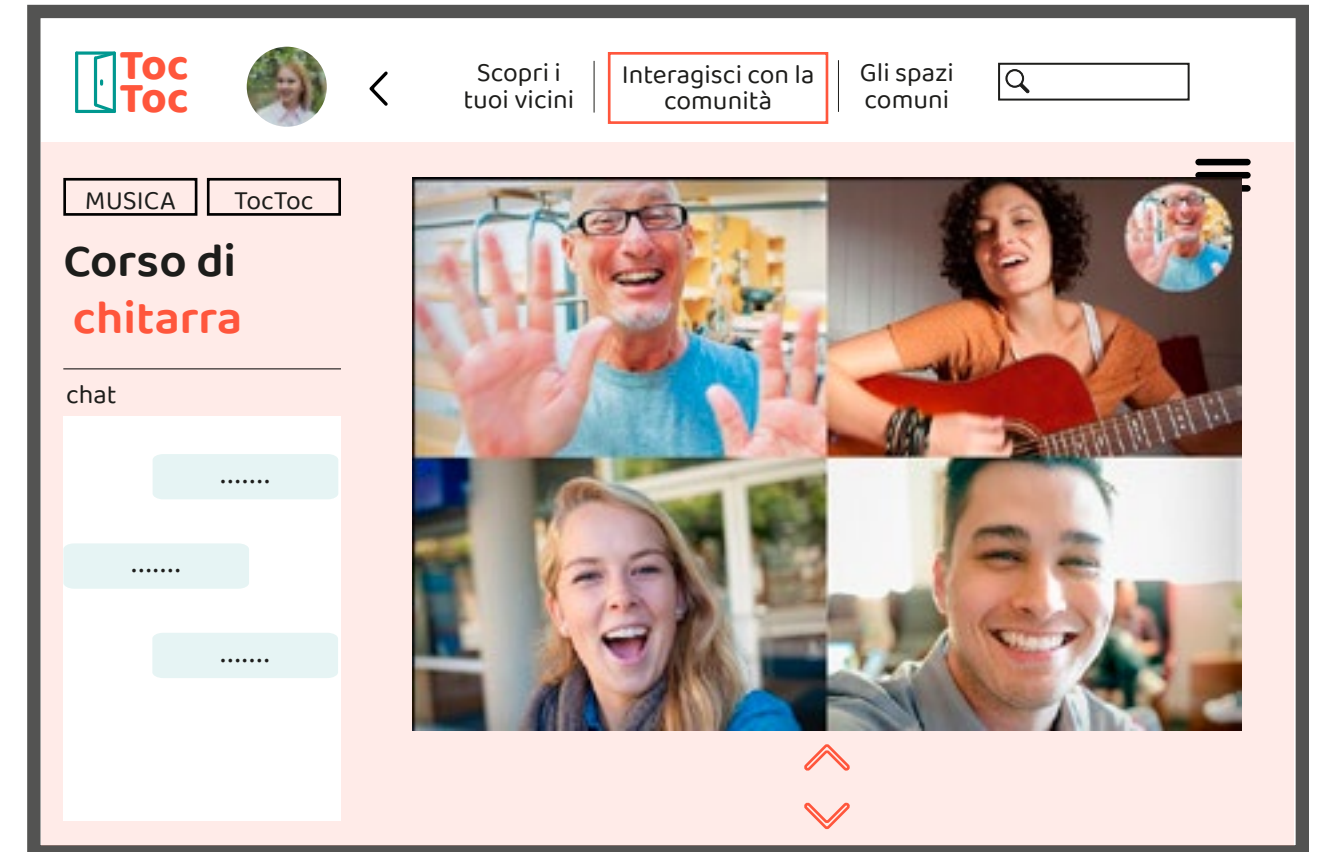


#### 4. SECTION OF THE INTERACTION

In this section the user can see the collaborative activities that can be carried out in cooperatives organized by theme, location and dates.

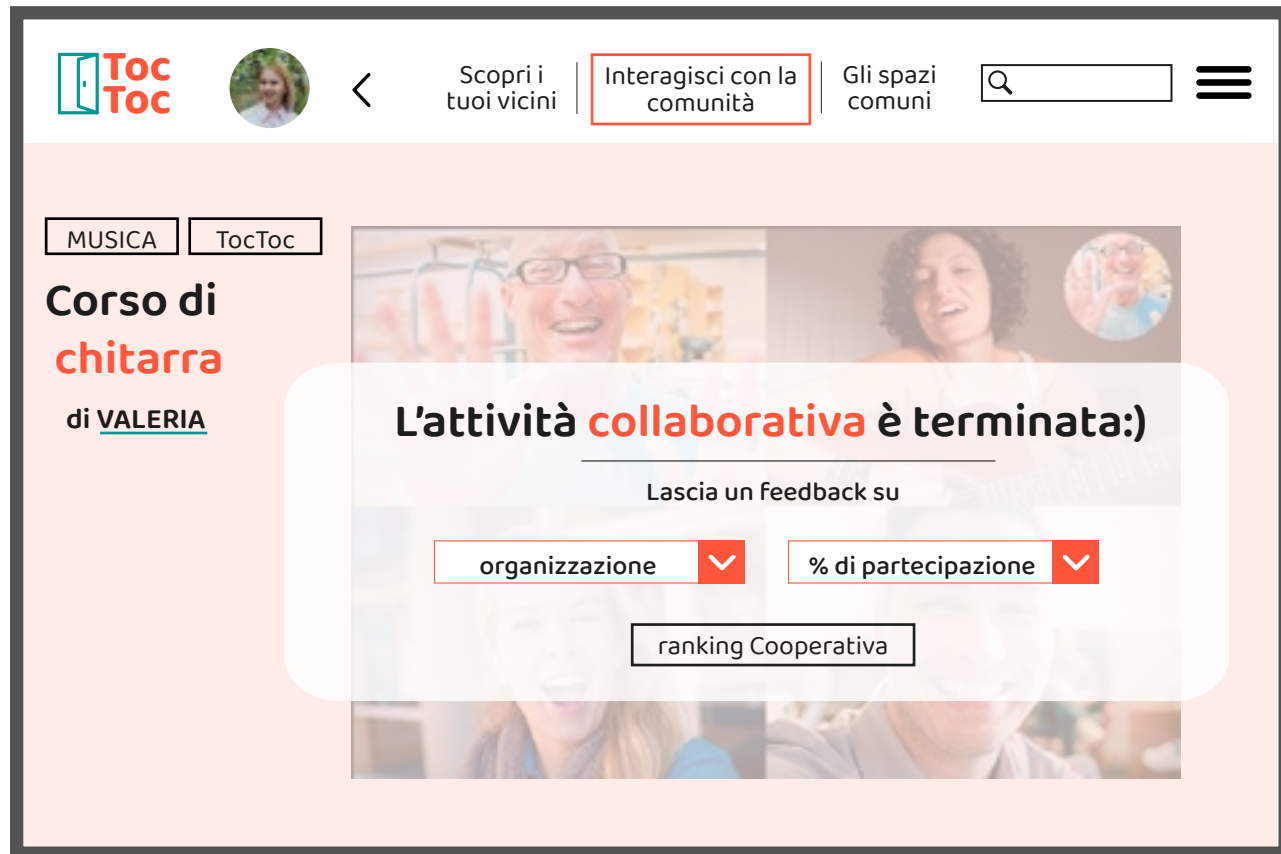
For each activity chosen will be indicated the necessary to participate and who is organizing it. You can indicate whether to register as a participant, organizer or helper.

In this area it is also possible to suggest other activities to carry out.



#### 5. DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Screenshot of a remote activity, held directly via the TocToc platform



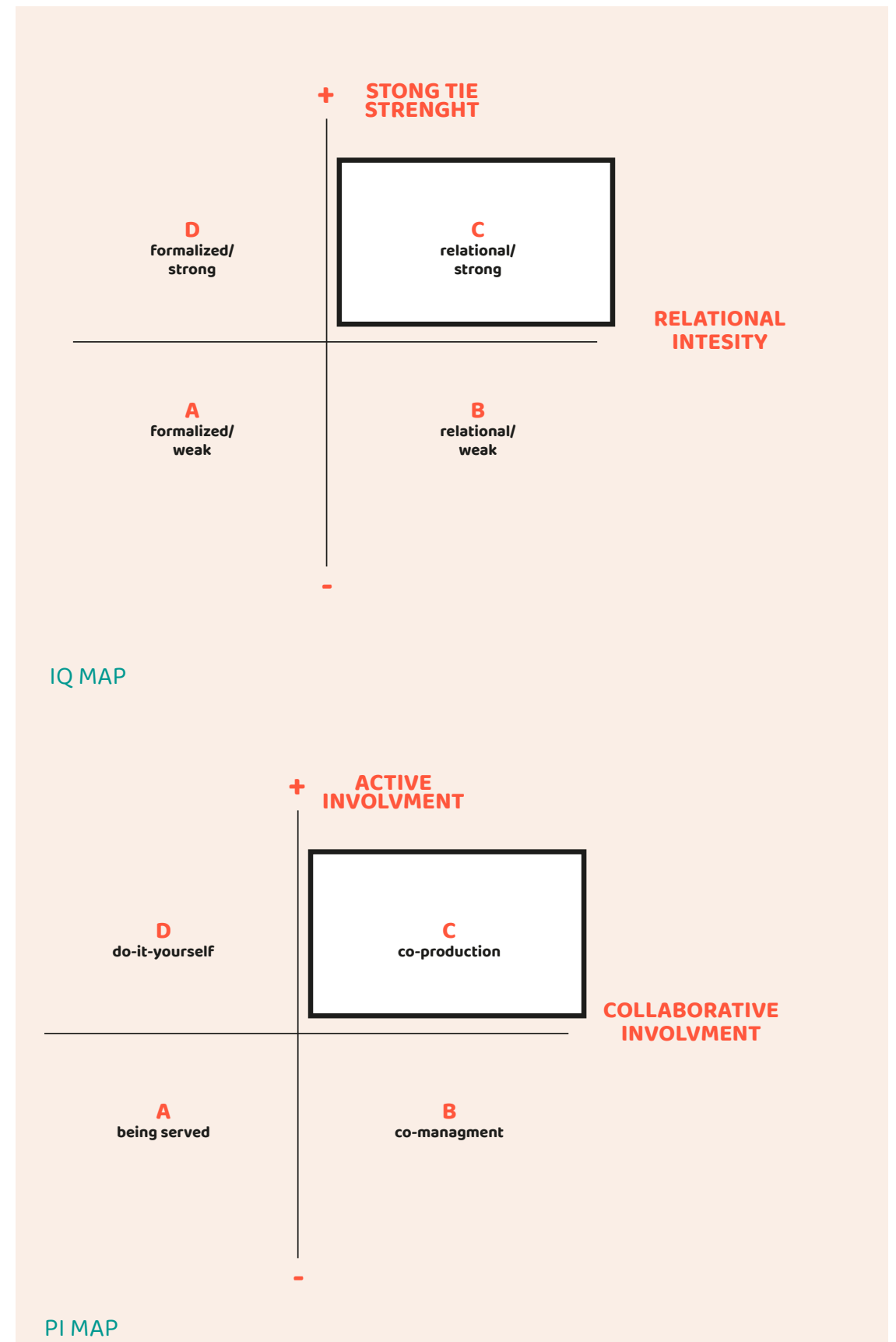
# 7. CONCLUSION

## 5. FEEDBACK

Possibility for participants to indicate the level of satisfaction of the organiser or the level of participation in general. In addition there is the possibility of observing the status of the Cooperative with a sum up on the progress of participation, good practices, etc..

# 71 Future benefits

Toc Toc is a product-service focused on relationships and relationships in communities, which by chance was born and developed in a historical period that is making a big change in our habits of approach and interaction with others. Until a few decades ago, technology and social media were cited as the greatest antagonists of interpersonal relationships because they generated an excessive alienation from reality. And it probably was. But today, 2020, the situation has changed dramatically, and we can all see it with our own eyes. Digital interactions are no longer the enemy, but they are the friend with an extra gear that allows us to do things that we couldn't. To trigger in a challenging community a high degree of active involvement and a strong Interaction quality, is not a result you get right away. It's a long road, for which you have to be patient. Knock Knock still hasn't had a chance to be 100% tested yet, and this is one of the moments when we understand that even technology can't help us, but I've tried to make an imagination boost, based on theoretical research so far. I think it can be said that a platform like Toc Toc will have achieved its goal when it will be tangible, among the members of the community, a change in the type and quality of their encounters towards quadrant C of the **quality map (IQ) and Participant involvement map (PI).**





# 7.2 Possible partnership

In the stakeholder map I left the figure of Legacoop pending, announcing a clarification of the role it could play for the platform in a future vision.

As we have explained, Legacoop Lombardia, the regional department of Legacoop, is structured in associations and sectors that play a role of representation, protection and management of the Cooperatives in the territory.

We have often wondered in this project what the role of service design was in similar contexts. It has been pointed out that good intentions and noble ideologies are often not enough to maintain a level of relational quality in line with expectations. It is no coincidence that in many social but also economic and business sectors the figure of the community manager is increasingly in demand.

Specifically, since the Toc Toc project focuses on this very issue and has focused on a context under the management of Legacoop, I hypothesize the possibility that in the future the association may decide to dedicate a department to us service designers with the role of intercepting the needs and requirements of members of cooperatives in difficulty, designing enabling solutions for their problem.

For this reason I imagine that in a future, but plausible scenario, Toc Toc could be a platform financed and promoted by LegaCoop Lombardia and that it could also be the portal for all the cooperatives in the area that decide to join.

On a practical and functional level, one might think that the first time the user accesses the platform, he will be asked to indicate the cooperative he belongs to and only afterwards his private credentials will bring him to the specific area of his collaborative living.

In this way, the possibility to use the same channel to reach the resolution of a situation common to many cooperatives and maybe the organization of comparison events between different cooperatives could lead to a strengthening of the socio-relational quality not only between the different realities of the same territory.

Il progetto TocToc | Le cooperative a Milano | Legacoop



una piattaforma peer to peer per avviare relazioni di **FIDUCIA** e **PARTECIPAZIONE** nella tua comunità cooperativa.

Scegli la tua cooperativa 



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