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Daniela Selloni

CoDesign for Public-Interest Services

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To my families

Foreword

Ezio Manzini

1. This book centres on codesign: the idea that different people with differing ideas and motivations, from a variety of backgrounds and with different skills can take part in a series of conversations that seek to change the state of things. To do so, these conversations must gradually lead to a multiplicity of intermediate results, they must: align the ideas and motivations of the various participants; produce shared visions and aims; create the conditions whereby participants are able to make best use of their skills and abilities; develop their aptitude for collaboration in order to determine what steps to take and put their decisions into effect. How and why this may happen is a theme that has been widely addressed in recent years. In this book, Daniela Selloni presents an updated, critical state of the art on the discussions underway and the experiences that underlie them. She particularly focuses on an application field of great and growing importance: that of public services. From here, Selloni indicates and develops various interesting lines of reflections on codesign seen, for example, as a form of citizen empowerment, as a pre-condition to co-production, as a key competence for the public sector. Among these we also find that of codesign (particularly codesign for the public sector) as an instrument for the regeneration of democratic practices and the very idea of democracy itself.
   To this purpose, quoting Victor Margolin, the author reminds us that there are two modalities in which design and democracy may come together: as "*design of democracy*" and as "*design for democracy*". Design of democracy, writes Selloni, "*is related to the design of institutions and procedures that characterises a democratic political system*". On the other hand, "*design for democracy… includes the codesign process for the public interest, conceiving it as a form of citizen participation to improve the structure and the procedures of democracy*". Given these definitions and after highlighting the importance of design of democracy as a new field of design activity, and therefore as new terrain on which design and democracy can meet, the author pays particular attention to the

second modality, i.e. to design for democracy. This is a highly topical theme of great significance which, it seems to me, can be seen as a sense frame for all the other useful and important lines of reflection that the book contains.

2. In the closing chapter, when discussing the political significance of codesign processes, Selloni writes: "*This is something 'political' and very close to Arendt's notion of politics (1958): her understanding of politics is a participatory and active form of citizenship based on civic engagement and collective deliberation*". In my opinion, these ideas of politics and citizenship have notable implications for design for democracy and, more precisely, for codesign as a process able to regenerate the ideas and practices of democracy. Indeed, since codesign is based on a series of conversations aimed to create shared visions, objectives, practices and strategies, in line with Arendt's ideas, it can and should also be seen as an instrument for building citizenship, and thus for creating a democratic society in which citizens who are involved in various design activities on different questions and scales play an active part.

   In this framework, the book maintains that this diffuse design activity may be stimulated and supported by the codesigning ideas and tools that have been developing in recent years, and that to this end a new generation of designers, specifically prepared to deal with such matters, must play an important role: design experts able to activate and support codesigning processes that lead to interesting results and that, at the same time, contribute to regenerating the ideas and practices of democracy.

   Against this concrete operational background, this book implicitly introduces a more profound question: can we talk about a democracy in the sense of a space in which a variety of projects may emerge and flourish, collaborating and/or competing together?

3. On closer examination, every possible acceptation of the idea of democracy implies some degree of design among the people who put it into practice: if democracy is a space in which different ideas may emerge, flourish and be compared, then in order to take part, everyone must design their own system of values, convictions and ways of approaching the public debate. For those who are used to living in a democracy all this may seem obvious, but in fact there is little obvious about it. In traditional societies and non-democratic regimes everyone is required to follow the rules laid down by tradition or by the powers that be. By contrast, as Anthony Giddens has so lucidly written, in post-traditional societies, and above all when they are democratic to any degree, everyone—whether they wish to or not—must design day by day what to do and how to do it.

   Having said this, having observed the universal nature of the relationship between democracy and design, I believe that today, more than in the past, there are good reasons for highlighting it; for considering its implications and bringing it to the forefront, bearing in mind the characteristics of our current situation. In a post-traditional world in rapid, turbulent transformation, all subjects (both individual and collective) find themselves in the contradictory

condition of having more and more often to put design choices into effect on the widest range of issues; *and* of increasingly having to confront the difficulty if not the impossibility of doing so. This generates fatigue, failure, frustration and encourages attempts to flee towards false simplifications of the complexity of things (simplifications that promise to reduce the fatigue of designing in complexity).

4. In view of all this, democracy should (also) be seen as the regime that is more likely to offer everyone the best possibility of planning and organising their own lives. To paraphrase the words of Amartya Sen, we could refer to a democracy as a regime that inclines towards allowing everybody the possibility of designing how to be what they want to be and do what they want to do, and of putting this into practice: an environment where codesigning processes can emerge and flourish, in which their variety is protected and encouraged and their pathway towards achieving concrete results is supported by adequate tools and infrastructure.

   As well as these basic reasons, there is also a contingent and highly topical reason for highlighting the association between design and democracy: it enables us to contrast the success of an idea of direct, on-line democracy. Using the appeal of digital technology and social media this idea proposes a dangerous simplification of reality, reducing choices relating to the public good to a sort of continuous plebiscite (avoiding the effort of creating shared opinions and of mediating between differing opinions). In contrast to this, highlighting the close association between design and democracy proposes a new form of indirect democracy, parallel to representative democracy: democracy as a space in which a variety of shared ideas and practices are developed (often a long and difficult process). Such ideas and practices are born from dialogue and the effort it requires. And it is in their dialogical nature that the guarantee lies of leading to results that are more coherent with the irreducible complexity of the world.
5. I will conclude with a personal observation, encouraged by reading this book. The idea of a design democracy is based on a model of society in which every human being is seen as a node in a vast, intricate social network: a potentially intelligent, positive node capable of designing.

   Undoubtedly, seeing how the world is going today, this model may seem too naive and optimistic… and maybe it is. We know perfectly well that all of us have an enormous potential for stupidity and negativity and that, now more than ever, it is often this negative side that we tend to bring out. However, having ascertained this tragic state of affairs, what else can we do as ordinary citizens and as designers other than working to give our better side the chance to exist? Which means: what else can we do other than try to create contexts that enhance people's intelligence, their relational, creative and collaborative capacity and ultimately their capacity and wish to design? And what else could expert design do other than come forward to fuel this great and much needed creative process with ideas, and support it with tools—such as those that this book offers?

Ezio Manzini, for more than two decades he has been working on design for sustainability and, most recently, on design for social innovation (and he started DESIS, International Network on Design for Social Innovation (http://www.desis-network.org). He has explored design potentialities in different fields, such as: Design of Materials, in the 80s; Strategic Design, in the 90s; Service Design, in the last 10 years.

Presently, he is Honorary Professor at the Politecnico di Milano and Guest Professor at Tongji University (Shanghai). His most recent book is "Design, When Everybody Designs. An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation", MIT Press 2015.

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Ezio Manzini has been my main source of inspiration: this is evident in the whole book. He was the first to spark my interest in the themes presented here, and the conversations we had during recent years represented actual turning points in revising my work. He is also the author of the Foreword section: he has provided an original synthesis of my book by highlighting and expanding my reflections.

I wish to particularly thank three colleagues from other DESIS Labs, who have shared their experimentations with me and thus enriched the contents of this book. Eduardo Staszowski from Parsons DESIS Lab, with whom I collaborated on "The NYC Office of Public Imagination", has contributed by refining and deepening many important concepts. Virginia Tassinari, from LUCA DESIS Lab, has provided her original perspective in highlighting the main results of "Welcome to St Gilles". Adam Thorpe, from UAL DESIS Lab, has helped me to clarify the notion of collaboration, through the "Green Camden" Project.

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Finally, I wish to thank my familiy, especially Brian and our child about to be born.

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About the Author

Daniela Selloni is a Service Designer, Research Fellow and Adjunct Professor at the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano, where she teaches the Master's Degree in Product Service Systems Design.

She is member of POLIMI DESIS Lab (part of the DESIS network, Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability) within the Department of Design of Politecnico di Milano, where she works in international and Italian research programmes. Her research interests cover service design and social innovation, focusing on citizen activism, methods and tools for codesign, public services and policies, design for local development and sustainability.

She also acts in an advisory capacity for start-up incubation programmes and organisations from the private and third sectors, strengthening the intersection between service design, the sharing economy and the notion of collaboration.

She has been Visiting Scholar at Parsons, The New School for Design in New York. She holds a Ph.D. in Design from Politecnico di Milano.

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Introduction

1. This book talks about codesign, and more specifically about the various forms codesign might take in times of rapid and profound transformation, in which the most pressing societal challenges need to be tackled in a more innovative and collaborative way.
   Services are presented as the main application field of codesign, but this represents just the starting point for discussing codesign as a process that is able to spark and enhance the creative contribution of citizens and other actors of society in improving the state of things within the public realm, i.e. as a way to empower people and to regenerate democratic practices.
2. This book originates from the observation of an emerging phenomenon and its relevance for the theories, methods and profession of design: the activation of people in various areas of society to organise and manage new services and solutions, i.e. groups of citizens who self-organise to solve their own problems, by starting to transform what is already there without waiting for a bigger, top-down change.
   'Creative communities', 'active citizenship', 'social innovators' and other diverse forms of collaborative activism currently contribute to the development of an alternative system of services, which is characterised as being between an amateur and professional organisation, the public and private sector, the market and society rules, the profit and not-for-profit venture.
   This is the area of public-interest services: services whose purpose is to supporting the well-being of citizens, and generating benefits for the community. Essentially, it is about the creation of services that may be considered 'public' even though they are not public at all, because they are not provided by the public sector, but by a configuration of actors in which the state is just *one* of the actors and not necessarily the principal one. Citizens can be well served by a diverse range of providers that might prove to be in the public interest and citizens themselves can become active partners in service design and production, becoming veritable resources rather than being only considered as users.

This book questions what design can do for such services, especially focusing on the codesign process by presenting a series of case studies, and, more specifically, focusing on an extensive experimentation, conducted by the author in the city of Milan: '*Creative Citizens*'.

3. The first part of this book is devoted to framing the background of public-interest services by describing a set of social and economic transformations that characterise our era. It connects the renewed activism on the part of citizens to the wider concept of social innovation, including within this framework new forms of economy, such as collaborative consumption or the sharing economy, and new forms of welfare, known as relational welfare, second welfare, co-production etc.

   After having explored the complexity of these phenomena and provided a tentative definition of 'public-interest services', the first section introduces a set of key concepts for the rest of this work: some of which are related to specific design areas, such as design for services and participatory design. The notions of infrastructure and infrastructuring are then introduced.

   All these concepts are important because this book assumes that the creation of a dedicated infrastructure (and related infrastructuring process) to codesign services with citizens building upon their existing initiatives may avoid their decline and ultimate failure, facilitating the emergence of a new generation of public-interest services and the creation of a catalyst for local change, hopefully fostering a productive encounter between the top-down (institutions) and the bottom-up (active citizens).

4. The second part compares four case studies that adopt a codesign approach to triggering and infrastructuring local bottom-up activities into public-interest services and also into other long-lasting programmes and policies.

   First, an extensive case study is described in detail: it represents the core of this book because most of the assumptions and reflections here are derived from the action-research activity, 'Creative Citizens'.

   This experimentation originated within the POLIMI DESIS Lab of Politecnico di Milan and consisted of a series of intensive creative sessions to codesign services with citizens in one specific Milanese neighbourhood, Zone 4. Thanks to 'Creative Citizens', the author had the chance to experiment with a long-lasting codesign process and to generate actual results—a collection of six everyday services that are currently evolving in different ways, envisaging an intersection with the public sector and originating the birth of new social start-ups.

   Second, a number of experimentations took place within three research labs within the international network DESIS, in order to compare them with 'Creative Citizens'. These are: 'Welcome to St Gilles' (LUCA DESIS Lab, Belgium), "Green Camden" (UAL DESIS Lab, UK) and "The NYC Office of Public Imagination" (Parsons DESIS Lab, USA).

   All these experimental activities share the objective of 'infrastructuring' bottom-up initiatives by adopting a codesign approach and, at the same time,

they combine methods from different disciplines, such as performing arts, sociology, economy, urban planning and policy making, which corresponds with other current social innovation experimentations.

These experimentations are then discussed according to a set of common features: describing their legacy after some years (they occurred between 2012 and 2014); the adoption of a community-centred design approach; the importance of designing services as a start or end point; and the role of the designer in such processes.

5. Building on analysis of the experimentations, the third part of the book attempts to outline the notions of collaborative infrastructure and related infrastructuring process.

   The idea of a collaborative infrastructure is developed by proposing a set of distinct features, such as the idea of combining of human and non-human elements in the creation of experimental spaces in which citizens, representatives of the public, private and third sectors can meet and fruitfully collaborate, together with the presence of various experts, and most specifically, design experts.

   This collaborative infrastructure should be tightly organised but also modular and flexible; it should be able to set 'weak framework conditions' that enable things to happen. In this sense, the notion of collaborative infrastructure is then related to that of 'enabling platform' and, more generally, to those experimental spaces known as 'Public Innovation Places' in which citizen participation is fostered and innovation in the public realm is pursued.

   Together with the idea of a collaborative infrastructure, a possible infrastructuring process is outlined: it is composed of ten steps, ranging from meeting a community, to making prototypes, to establishing roles and rules. The steps are not chronological, but iterative; each stage may be viewed as independent but at the same time as part of a wider framework. Thus, this 'infrastructuring' process represents an attempt to explore the issues related to incubation and replication of solutions and services and, in a more extensive way, it might be viewed as an attempt of discovering how social innovation could grow thanks to the adoption of a codesign approach.

6. Finally, this book provides two main avenues of reflection: one is about the expert designer's role, the other is about the wider meaning of codesigning for the public interest.

   The role of the expert designer is discussed essentially to avoid a diffuse simplification in which designers are chiefly considered as facilitators of collaborative processes. In the experimentations described, designers take on a wide range of roles, in which they emerge as contributors with ideas and visions, bringing a complex and refined design culture to a situation in which everybody, from citizens to public servants, designs. It is important to highlight how designers are becoming advocates in building a bridge between top-down and bottom-up, by actually playing the role of cultural operators who carry out a set of sense-making activities, and, hopefully, fostering an actual cultural change.

In conclusion, codesign is discussed not only in relation to the creation of public-interest services, but also in connection to the codesign of more complex items, including services, policies and innovation programmes.

The codesign process for the public interest has been presented as a process to enhance public imagination and hope, but, in this book, it is also intended as a form of citizen empowerment, as a key competence for the public sector and, thus, as a 'public service' itself. From this perspective, codesign is conceived as a great opportunity to regenerate democratic practices, by engaging in public discussion and common action. This is not a simple process. Indeed, this book wishes to emphasise how codesigning for the public interest is a complex and strenuous effort, far removed from many other current participatory processes worldwide that exist simply as single events or isolated performances.

The book concludes by linking with the current discussion on design and innovation, and by highlighting that the popular design thinking approach to create innovation (a popular "mantra" for solving any kind of problem in the public and private sectors) is de facto a codesign approach that uses the same tools and follow the same rules.

Similarly, the notion of social innovation that is currently a sort of "buzzword" and a "panacea" for approaching any kind of challenge, is de facto a codesign process for the public interest, meaning a collaborative and creative way to tackle the most pressing social issues of our era, and hopefully, to change things collaboratively.

One final note: this book is written by an Italian author and emerges from an Italian context of experimentation. Therefore, all this work is founded on Italian design culture and its long tradition, with the aim of contributing by taking a small, but hopefully significant, step forward.

Part I
Framing the Scenario of Public-Interest Services

The first part of this book is devoted to outlining the scenario of public-interest services, which results from the intersection of a series of phenomena that are currently occurring in our society.

We start by framing the renewed activism of citizens and connecting it with the wider concept of social innovation, obtaining a system of relationships with new forms of economy, such as a sharing economy or collaborative consumption, and new forms of welfare, known as relational welfare, second welfare, co-production, etc.

Thus, the first chapters attempt to explore the multi-dimensional phenomenon of citizen involvement in a variety of public initiatives that range from simple activism to actual participation in welfare and governance activities.

Following this experimental investigation, Part I goes on to provide a tentative definition of 'public-interest services'. These services emerged from a hybrid area between public and private, profit and not-for-profit, amateur and professional, market and society: it is precisely within this area of public-interest, in which a configuration of actors of diverse natures (coming from citizen activism, and the public, private and third sectors) undertake an unprecedented collaboration to reach a common purpose.

The author questions what design can do for such services (specifically service design and participatory design), assuming that the creation of a dedicated infrastructure—and a related 'infrastructuring' process—may produce positive effects on codesign services with citizens building on their existing initiatives:

– to avoid them diminishing and ultimately failing;
– to develop solutions that are efficient, effective and sustainable from an environmental and a social point of view;
– to foster the encounter between the top-down (institutions) and the bottom-up (active citizens).

Chapter 1
Citizen Activism and Social Innovation

Abstract This chapter aims to briefly describe the worldwide phenomena of creative communities (Meroni in Creative communities. People inventing sustainable ways of living. Edizioni Polidesign, Milano, 2007) and citizen activism: a growing number of people who use their capabilities and existing assets to experiment with new and more sustainable ways of living. They are currently developing a new generation of services and, at the same time, new forms of participation in the public interest, shifting from simple citizen activism to effective active citizenship. This results from the evolution of the first creative communities of the 2000s into actual social innovators, as the socio-behavioural context is currently more mature; and the same is also happening for the socio-technical context (Meroni and Selloni in Design roots: local products and practices in a globalised world. Bloomsbury Academic, 2017). In fact, the final part of the chapter is devoted to developing the notion of social innovation, combining it with citizen activism, and starting to introduce those things design can do to support the promising initiatives of such social innovators.

1.1 Creative Communities

Contemporary society is undergoing a profound transformation, characterised by new needs and desires. To solve its problems, experts of various kinds are required who will collaborate to find solutions: as Landry (2009) argues "yet ordinary citizens are also experts, they are expert in their own concerns and what they want…" (p. 246).

In this regard, Blears (2008) also points out that local people often know what the solutions to problems in their area are, but are too often excluded from the process. He states: "if we want the highest quality services that really meet people's needs then we need to find better ways of hearing what they have to say and put communities in control of the services that affect their lives" (p. 6).

Meroni (2007) was one of the first authors to investigate the potentialities of local people by introducing the notion of creative communities: "people who

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cooperatively invent, enhance and manage innovative solutions for new ways of living" (p. 30). Since the beginning of the 2000s, a city's problem is now being solved from the bottom up, starting to innovate what is already there without waiting for the arrival of a bigger, top-down change.

Jégou and Manzini (2008) may also be considered as pioneers in exploring the emergence and development of creative communities: from their research, they deduced that creative communities are a result unique to contemporary cities because they are born and develop more quickly in contexts characterised by diffused knowledge, a high level of connectivity, and a certain degree of tolerance towards non-conventional ways of living.

The aim of creative communities is to improve the quality of urban life, making it more sustainable, pleasant and conducive to socialisation. To use Cibic's (2010) expression, they seek to transform the city into a "lovely place". Where "lovely place" means a place in which life is full of opportunities, where people can meet and do things together, "where children can play in a safe environment, where there is greenery and where the architecture, regardless of its style, provides the support for telling a story, creating a place whose beauty lies in the overall quality it generates" (p. 21).

It is our intention to outline some of the features of creative communities, in relation to what has been happening in contemporary society in recent years, in order to describe better the changes happening in the services provided in cities.

In a way, creative communities are the symptom of a transformation, defined by Maffesoli (2004) as the decline of individualism and a return to tribal times. He states that "the autonomy of the middle classes is being succeeded by the heteronomy of tribalism, however you wish to call it—districts, neighbourhoods, interest groups, networks—we are witnessing the return of affective and emotional investment" (p. 190).

The stress is currently placed on us and on everyday life, which means refocusing on proximity. Likewise, in his book, *The Time of the Tribes. The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, Maffesoli (2004) argues that the contemporary age privileges the spatial and its various territorial modulations. We are trying to give meaning back to district, to neighbourhood practices and to the affective components they generate because this enables us to create a network of relationships.

This "sentiment of tribal belonging" can be supported by technological development offering speed of contact and of the supply-demand cycle. Thus, it is the ICT system that has, in some way, made this return to the tribe possible in the form of micro-groups. It is not surprising that the network paradigm can be seen as a re-enactment of the ancient concept of community: an existential and operative aggregation, a model that comes from archaic, pre-industrial cultures, based on trade/exchange and community conviviality.

Creative communities are the heirs of such cultures and in bringing these up to date technologically they do not stop with the ordinary use of existing technologies, but they go on to use them in original, unprecedented ways, "putting products and services normally available on the market into a new kind of system" (Jégou and Manzini 2008, p. 30). Furthermore, thanks to the web, they have acquired access to

a capital of knowledge that would otherwise have remained the exclusive privilege of what Giddens (1994) calls 'the expert systems', which are currently at crisis point, at least in their traditional form. Indeed, the free circulation of information is forming new expert systems.

The experience of creative communities has taken a more definite and ground-breaking shape in recent years as part of the sharing economy and/or collaborative consumption, which Botsman and Rogers (2010) have described as traditional sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting and swapping redefined through technologies and peer communities. This definition comes from their book, *What's Mine Is Yours* (2010), in which they explain how the sharing economy is no longer a niche economy but a veritable market which produces sizeable numbers and turnovers that are growing extremely rapidly (for a further development of this topic see the chapter devoted to sharing economy).

The sharing economy, even if it is a polysemous and controversial notion, may be understood here as an example of a possible evolution of creative communities into groups that regulate their exchanges through the use of digital platforms and the adoption of a peer-to-peer approach. In fact, many things have changed since the first exploration of creative communities in the 2000s, and we can observe a variety of evolutions that may be summarised in what Meroni and Selloni (2017) have defined as the transformation of creative communities into actual social innovators.

In this regard, the final paragraph of this chapter is devoted to framing the notion of social innovation, acknowledging that it is a significant driver of change and reflects a paradigm shift that has occurred in the way the relationships between top-down and bottom-up, citizenship and governance, social and commercial entrepreneurship, profit and non-profit business are understood and put into practice (EC2 2013).

Hence, we are arguing that this shift from creative communities to social innovators may be viewed as a movement from something that was pioneering to something that aims to become mainstream and find a position in society's ecosystem.

It is not by chance that such groups of social innovators, heirs of the first creative communities, look for support from public administrations, not only as a response to the crisis of the welfare state, but also because they want to reconnect with governments.

This is why many citizens have started engaging in participation movements, in order to change the power dynamics and to be more involved in the decision-making process. The TEPSIE project (2012) explored this phenomenon and identified two kinds of engagement: public participation, meaning a form of individual engagement within the institutions of democracy; and social participation, which is more closely related to civic engagement in local communities and associations.

The next paragraphs on active citizenship and social innovation explore in more detail the evolution of creative communities and present the main critical issue this book is seeking to analyse: even if creative communities have grown, the majority

of their activities still show high levels of disorganisation and transience, and they experience numerous problems in diffusing and scaling-up. In this regard, the book outlines the hypothesis that an infrastructuring process that adopts a design approach may offer a possible solution.

1.2 Citizen Activism and Active Citizenship

Creative communities may be viewed as a constructive form of citizen activism.

By activism we are mainly referring to collective actions that seek to put forward a vision for a better society, hence to a type of activism that is progressive and focused on contents, in which citizens are active agents in the creation of well-being.

The word 'activism' is an umbrella term that can refer to a variety of actions in social, environmental and political fields; it can be local or dispersed and based on individual or collective actions. We hereby propose the definition of activism suggested by Fuad-Luke (2009): "activism is about…taking actions to catalyse, encourage or bring about change, in order to elicit social cultural and/or political transformations. It can also involve transformation of the individual activists" (p. 6).

In mapping contemporary activism, Fuad-Luke (2009) outlines the 'Five Capitals Framework', identifying five key areas of activism: financial capital, natural capital, human capital, manufactured capital and social capital.

In this book, we refer mainly to activism initiatives in human and social capital, and above all to a form of activism that is quite different from the conventional meaning of resistance against the status quo. Citizen activism of creative communities is related to finding solutions rather than protesting about problems. This does not mean that protest movements are not useful, but just that our intention here is to focus on an emergent type of citizen activism that deals with designing solutions for daily life, in which active citizens contribute to the general well-being and, thus, to the public interest.

From this perspective, citizen activism may be viewed as a form of participation in public life, and in a certain sense, a basic right of democracy, which is a process leading toward more active citizens and a means of generating more efficient and effective programmes and policies (Cornwall 2008).

Hence, we wish to highlight an interconnection of citizen activism, participation and active citizenship: they are three steps of a progressive path in which citizens exercise their powers and responsibilities in policy-making.

In the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty at the end of 2009, the European Union suggested a number of important changes with regard to the concept of citizenship in order to outline the key methods of involving citizens and their associations in shaping the European political agenda. The Citizenship Programme 2007–2013 envisaged two important actions entitled 'active citizens of Europe' and 'active civil

society'. More specifically, there is an area devoted to innovative methods of citizen activism and participation, in which a variety of transnational and cross-sectoral projects are enhanced.

The latest EU Programme on citizenship, named 'Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014–2020' continues in this direction, with the aim of improving public awareness and knowledge about the rights, values and principles deriving from Union Law. Above all, it encourages the engagement of citizens in all aspects of the life of their community, from those initiatives that deal with solving daily problems to a more extensive participation in the construction of a collective European awareness.

In this way, the citizen activism of creative communities and the elaboration and the dissemination of their good practices are strictly connected to the notion of public participation, and hence to a comprehensive idea of active citizenship that deals with the exercise of both rights and responsibilities.

1.3 Social Innovation

In this paragraph, we aim to provide a brief overview of social innovation, more specifically the most recent conceptualizations and interpretations of this term, which is multidimensional and has many meanings.

We also attempt to frame the relation between design and social innovation, highlighting the emergence of a new design field that Manzini (2015) defines as 'design for social innovation.'

Despite a growing interest among policymakers, foundations, researchers and academic institutions, it is widely recognized that social innovation lacks a consistent definition. The rapid spread of the term has caused a number of conceptualizations that have extended their semantic field.

Jenson (2013) applied the idea of a 'quasi-concept' to describe social innovation, which relates to McNeill (2006), who describes it as "a concept which … is more than simply a slogan or 'buzzword' because it has some reputable intellectual basis…. What is special about such an idea is that it is able to operate in both academia and policy domains." Such ideas are used—in a gesture towards Antonio Gramsci—to frame an issue so that "… favoured ideas seem like common sense, and unfavoured ideas as unthinkable" (p. 335).

The idea of 'quasi-concept' is particularly meaningful for comprehending social innovation, because it stresses its hybrid character and flexibility, which, from one side is open to criticism on theoretical and empirical grounds, and on the other side it is precisely this indeterminate quality that makes social innovation interesting and useful. Hence, as Jenson (2013) argues, social innovation is not merely a buzzword, but a sort of device for framing changing relationships and increasingly blurred boundaries between the state, the market, family and community in response to welfare challenges. This openness to diverse interpretations may be one reason why

a wide range of organisations and sectors have felt comfortable adopting the term and engaging in the discussion surrounding it.

Thus, we here propose a brief review of social innovation literatures, starting with the reasons for its success and proliferation.

The failure of the modern welfare state and conventional market capitalism caused the emergence of a series of 'wicked problems', such as resource scarcity, climate change, ageing populations, clinical disease, health costs etc. Existing structures and policies lack solutions to these challenges, therefore politicians and business leaders are currently looking to social innovation as a way to develop alternative solutions.

Hence, social innovation has emerged as a possible response to tackle the most pressing social, demographic and environmental issues, and in recent years, the notion of social innovation has attracted interest from political and economic leaders, both in the EU and the US.

The European Commission considers social innovation as a crucial field to develop. The Commission's actions on social innovation stem largely from the Europe 2020 Flagship Initiative, 'Innovation Union', which was launched in 2010 to foster Europe's capacity to innovate. In this initiative, there are two commitments with specific regard to social innovation: Commitment 26, about the launch of a European Social Innovation pilot that provides expertise and a networked 'virtual hub' for social entrepreneurs and the public and third sectors; and Commitment 27, about the support of a considerable research programme on public sector and social innovation.

In the US, former President Obama created a specific unit, named 'The Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation', recognizing that the best solutions to societal challenges will be found in communities all across the country.

The most well-known definition of social innovation is provided by the Young Foundation (one of the most prominent organisations in the promotion of social innovation) in *The Open book of Social Innovation*: "new ideas (products, services and models) that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. In other words, they are innovations that are both good for society *and* enhance society's capacity to act" (Murray et al. 2010, p. 3).

To extend this definition, we include the notion of social innovation provided by Phills et al. (2008) in the Stanford Social Innovation Review: "a novel solution to a social problem that is more effective, efficient, sustainable or just than existing solutions and for which the value created accrues primarily to society as a whole rather than private individuals" (p. 36). They argue that social innovation can be a product, a process or a technology, but also a principle, a piece of legislation, a social movement, or a combination of them.

In addition, Jégou and Manzini (2008) in their book, *Collaborative services*, state that "the term social innovation refers to changes in the way individuals or communities act to solve a problem or to generate new opportunities. These innovations are driven more by changes in behaviour than by changes in technology or the market and they typically emerge from bottom-up rather than top-down processes" (p. 29).

One of the most recent and comprehensive contributions in discussing social innovation comes from TEPSIE, a research collaboration among six European institutions aimed at understanding the theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for developing the field of social innovation in Europe.

In Part 1 of this research, curated by the Young Foundation, Caulier-Grice et al. (2012) provide the following definition: "social innovations are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act" (p. 18).

They build upon the previous definition of Murray et al. (2010) and they further the notion highlighting the core elements of the concept:

- *Novelty*: social innovation does not need to be original, but it does have to be new in some way (new to the field, region, user etc.), or to be applied in a new way.
- *From ideas to implementation*: social innovations are concerned with practical implementation and application of a promising idea into a sustainable service or initiative.
- *Effectiveness*: social innovation should be more effective than existing solutions, meaning that it should create a measurable improvement in terms of both quantitative and qualitative outcomes.
- *Meets a social need*: social innovation should be designed to meet a clear social need, this means that the focus is put precisely on needs, not on problems or rights.
- *Enhances society's capacity to act*: social innovation should empower beneficiaries by creating new roles and relationships, by developing new assets and capabilities (or better use of existing assets and resources). The process of social innovation should entail changes in social relations, especially in terms of governance, and increase the participation of vulnerable, marginalised and/or under-represented groups.

Another important classification provided by the TEPSIE research deals with different forms of social innovation, building on the work of Schumpeter (1934). The authors identified seven types of social innovation that reveal different levels of complexity: new products (such as devices to support people with disabilities); new services (such as collaborative services); new processes (such as peer-to-peer collaboration or crowdsourcing); new markets (such as fair trade); new platforms (such as new legal platforms for care); new organisational forms (such as community interest companies); and new business models (such as social franchising).

According to Caulier-Grice et al. (2012), these types of social innovation are often hybrid because social innovation does not refer to any particular economic sector, but encompasses all four: the public sector is traditionally social because it delivers services for which the market is inadequate; the private sector generates

social innovation in the forms of social enterprises and fair trade; the non-profit sector is mainly social and deals with the delivery of those services not met by private or public sectors; and the informal sector is a powerful source of social innovation in the forms of networks, associations and movements.

Organisations working within the field of social innovation often operate across sectoral boundaries, in a hybrid area between public and private, profit and not-for-profit, amateur and professional, market and society. This hybrid feature will be discussed further within the chapter devoted to define public-interest services, one of the key-concepts of this book.

In conclusion, an overview of the social innovation process is proposed, building upon the extensive research done by Murray et al. (2010) in *The Open Book of Social Innovation*.

Six stages of the innovation process are defined:

1. Prompts—which highlight the need for social innovation;
2. Proposals—where ideas are developed;
3. Prototyping—where ideas are tested in practice;
4. Sustaining—when the idea becomes everyday practice;
5. Scaling—growing and spreading social innovations;
6. Systemic change—involves re-designing and introducing entire systems and will usually involve all sectors over time.

These phases are iterative and often overlap; because social innovation processes are not fluid and linear, they are often filled with inferences and rarely reach the last stage of systemic change. Hence, one of the main problems is how to scale and diffuse these processes, in other words how to grow social innovation. This is an open question, currently being investigated in several EU research projects.

1.4 Design for Social Innovation

A variety of methods and tools are used in the field of social innovation, and those related specifically to design bring an important contribution. In his intervention at the 'Social Innovation Exchange conference' (2009), Geoff Mulgan, chief executive of Nesta (and former director of the Young Foundation), summarized the strengths and weaknesses in applying design to social innovation. Among the strengths are: new perspective and clarity; systemic thinking; visualisation techniques that involve different stakeholders; rapid prototyping; a user-centred approach etc. Key weaknesses include: high costs; a lack of economic understanding or organizational perspective; and a lack of skills for implementation.

The British Design Council's RED represents one of the early attempts in applying design to social innovation; it was active between 2004 and 2006 and it aimed to tackle social and economic issues by using design-led innovation.

Things have evolved since then, and currently it is possible to observe a wide movement around the world focused on developing social innovation through design. The main representatives of this movement in Europe are design agencies like Think Public, Engine and live|work: these are all service design studios and this shows how design for services is crucial in developing social innovation. In the US the movement is mainly represented by IDEO, an international design and consulting firm that uses design thinking and human-centred design to address issues such as poverty, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, access to financial services, gender equity etc.

One of the earliest and longest-lasting examples of design for social innovation is the work done by the author's research group at Politecnico di Milano, where Ezio Manzini founded the network DESIS several years ago. This is an international network of design researchers and design schools interested in design for social innovation and sustainability. Article 1 of the DESIS statute states that its purpose "is to promote design for social innovation in higher education institutions with a design discipline so as to generate useful design knowledge and to create meaningful social changes in collaboration with other stakeholders".

Manzini, in his article 'Making Things Happen: Social Innovation and Design' (2014a), attempts to provide a definition of design for social innovation, highlighting the emergence of a new field of design activities. He points out that designers must use their skills to support promising cases of social innovation, in other words to make them more visible by designing their products, services and communication programmes, and thus supporting their upscaling. Manzini refers to a set of new approaches, sensibilities and tools that are transversal and range from product to service design, from communication to interior design, and from interaction to strategic design. However, when dealing with social innovation, design for services and strategic design seem to be crucial: the first focuses on the quality of interactions, while the latter supports the creation of innovative and unprecedented partnerships. At the end of his article, Manzini also highlights a close connection between social innovation and participatory design, as proposed by Ehn and his colleagues of Malmö University (for a more detailed description, see the paragraph devoted to participatory design), because they are both dynamic and pluralistic processes characterised by consensus-building methodologies and complex codesign activities based on the use of design artefacts (prototypes, mock ups, design games etc.).

Hence, according to Manzini, design for social innovation does not create a brand-new design discipline, but is "a constellation of design initiatives geared to making social innovation more probable, effective, long-lasting and apt to spread" (p. 60).

In exploring the connection between design and social innovation, Manzini (2014b) also points out the difference between social design and design for social innovation. In a post featured on the DESIS website, he argues that they are two separate and different concepts and that any misunderstanding is mainly generated by the meaning of the term 'social'.

The use of the expression 'social design' started several years ago: 'social' is adopted as a synonym for 'very problematic condition' that requires urgent intervention, in which design experts must work for free. In this perspective, social design is seen as a sort of complementary activity.

Conversely, design for social innovation considers the term 'social' as being related to the way in which people generate social forms, and the aim is to design solutions that generate not only new social forms and but also unprecedented economical models.

Concluding his post, Manzini points out that while social design mainly addresses poor people, design for social innovation is more extensive and it also includes the middle and the upper classes, because it deals with any kind of social change towards sustainability. He states that "the design for social innovation, even though, at the moment, is still very far from being mainstream, by its same nature, is not a complementary design activity. It is, or at least it could be, the anticipation of what, hopefully, will be the design of the 21st century. And therefore, and very pragmatically, it proposes a design activity in which, if the more favourable scenario would be realized, the majority of the design experts could have a role and make their living".

The work done within the DESIS network since the first observation of creative communities in 2007 to their evolution into actual social innovators led Manzini to write the book, *Design, when everybody designs* (2015), an introduction to design for social innovation in which he describes a scenario characterised by *diffuse design* performed by everybody and *expert design*, performed by those who have been trained as designers. He argues these two forms of design should interact and that, more specifically, design experts have to trigger and support meaningful social changes, outlining a dynamic and promising field of application for design experts in the coming decades.

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Chapter 2
New Forms of Economies: Sharing Economy, Collaborative Consumption, Peer-to-Peer Economy

Abstract The aim of this chapter is to provide a synthetic overview of those forms of unconventional economies known by a variety of terms including sharing economy, collaborative consumption, peer-to peer economy and on-demand economy. Currently, there is wide-spread discussion around this phenomenon and a number of crucial issues have drawn the attention of media and government. We will attempt to frame the boundaries of the sharing economy, outlining the related driving forces and its central features, and highlighting how this notion is problematic and blurred. We will also discuss emerging criticalities, such as tax avoidance and labour deregulation, by providing concrete examples. Finally, we will explore the social side of the sharing economy, which is central to a more effective framing of the diversity of public-interest services.

2.1 Attempts to Frame the Umbrella-Concept of Sharing Economy

The phenomenon of the sharing economy has undergone significant growth, especially since the 2008 crisis: both media and dedicated literature showed an increasing interest towards this umbrella concept whose boundaries are still blurred, which is why it is not simple to provide a unified and 'official' definition.

In fact, the name 'sharing economy' may be interpreted under different labels: collaborative consumption, collaborative economy, on-demand economy, peer-to-peer economy, zero-marginal cost economy, and crowd-based capitalism are just some examples of the different interpretations that are currently interconnected to the notion of sharing economy.

We wish here to briefly provide an initial assessment of the sharing economy, starting from the drivers that prepared and facilitated the emergence of this phenomenon, then exploring the meanings of the different labels, and finally including the most recent conceptualisations.

According to a study developed in 2010 by Latitude in collaboration with Shareable Magazine (one of the most prominent publications on sharing economy),

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it is possible to distinguish four main driving forces that supported the emergence of the sharing economy:

- *Technology*: web and mobile technologies play a critical role in building large-scale sharing communities, because they offer speed of contact and of the supply-demand cycle. Practices of sharing, renting and bartering already existed before the internet, but it is evident that the emergence of new web and mobile technologies has accelerated and facilitated the rise of the sharing economy, enabling upscaling and enhancing economic impact.
- *Environmental concerns*: sharing and sustainability are connected concepts; many people who decide to adopt sharing practices consider their choices as being 'better for the environment'. In times of scarcity, to share resources and assets means to collaborate for more sustainable ways of living.
- *Global recession*: the most popularly perceived benefit of sharing is saving money. This is particularly crucial in times of economic crisis (a crisis that affects not only the market but also governments and thus the welfare state), in which people lose purchasing power and, at the same time, gain increasing awareness about purchasing decisions, stressing practicality over consumerism. However, the idea of 'saving money' is not opposite to that of doing something 'good for society and environment', these two principles are both important for those people who decide to adopt sharing practices and use collaborative services.
- *Community*: the network paradigm can be seen as a re-enactment of the ancient concept of community. What is happening now is that online connectivity also facilitates offline sharing and social activities, allowing direct contact among people who live in the same area but do not interact.

Hence, the emergence of the sharing economy is the result of the interlinking of different drivers, in which global recession certainly plays a crucial role, but for the purposes of this book, the re-enactment of the ancient concept of community also deserves particular attention: we will examine it more deeply in the next paragraph, which is specifically devoted to analysing the social character of the sharing economy.

In order to explore the different labels under the umbrella concept of the sharing economy, we first introduce a practice-oriented definition, provided by Codagnone et al. (2016) in a Policy report by the Joint Research Centre, the European Commission's in-house science service. They state that the expression sharing economy is "commonly used to indicate a wide range of digital commercial or non-profit platforms facilitating exchanges amongst a variety of players through a variety of interaction modalities (P2P, P2B, B2P, B2B, G2G) that all broadly enable consumption or productive activities leveraging capital assets (money, real estate property, equipment, cars, etc.) goods, skills, or just time" (p. 22).

This pragmatic definition is broad and neutral, quite distant from the first enthusiastic analysis found in the work of the pioneers of the sharing economy, such as Rachel Botsman and Lisa Gansky.

In 2010, Botsman and Rogers published the first book about the sharing economy: *What's Mine Is Yours—the rise of collaborative consumption*, providing a general definition of: traditional sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting and swapping redefined through technologies and peer communities.

They also explain how the sharing economy may become more than a niche economy, because it may be considered as a veritable market that produces sizeable numbers and increasing turnovers. Indeed, the sharing economy has been named by TIME as one of the '10 Ideas That Will Change the World', highlighting the enormous social, economic and environmental potential of this phenomenon.

AirBnB (a platform for the rental of private accommodation), Zipcar (one of the first car sharing companies) and Taskrabbit (a platform to directly broker personal services) are just some examples of how the sharing economy can grow and provide a wide variety of services that shift from ownership to access and build upon distributed networks of connected individuals and communities.

In their book, Botsman and Rogers propose the following distinction between different forms of the sharing economy:

- *Collaborative consumption*: an economic model based on sharing, swapping, trading, or renting products and services, enabling access over ownership. It is reinventing not just what we consume but how we consume. It has three distinct systems: redistribution markets, collaborative lifestyle, product service systems.
- *Collaborative economy*: an economy built on distributed networks of connected individuals and communities versus centralised institutions, transforming how we can produce, consume, finance, and learn. It has four key components: production, consumption, finance and education.
- *Sharing economy*: an economic model based on sharing underutilised assets, from spaces to skills to items for monetary or non-monetary benefits. It is currently talked about mainly in relation to P2P marketplaces but equal opportunity also lies in the B2C models.

In a way, this first attempt to distinguish different forms of the sharing economy shows how it was difficult to outline the concept from the very beginning.

Among the first attempts, we may also include the work of Lisa Gansky who introduces the notion of 'mesh' in her book, *The Mesh: why the future of business is sharing* (2010). This is a type of network that allows any node to link in any direction with any other nodes in the system. Hence, it is about the sharing or meshing of talents, goods and services, in which the reference model is based on a series of transactions, on sharing something over and over. The central strategy described by Gansky is 'product multiple times', meaning that multiple sales multiply profits and customer contact, and multiple contacts multiply opportunities for additional sales and for deepening and extending relationships with customers. Gansky also creates an online directory (meshing.it) of existing collaborative systems/services/initiatives on a global scale: it is constantly evolving and it offers a variety of categories, such as education, energy, entertainment, food, real estate, travel etc.

Botsman and Rogers have created a similar directory on their website and there is also a specific Italian directory of collaborative services (collaboriamo.org), developed by Mainieri (2013), who is the author of the first Italian book on this topic.

Since 2006, Bauwens, has talked about P2P economy, starting with a definition of peer-to-peer dynamics: he states that P2P refers to those processes that aim to increase the most widespread and equal participation by participants. P2P processes create use-value through the free cooperation of producers who have access to distributed capital: they produce use-value not for the market, but for a community of users that governs these processes making use-value accessible on a universal basis. In this sense, he talks about third mode of production, third mode of governance and third mode of ownership. Which is why P2P can be termed as the sharing economy: "you contribute what you can and take out what you need". This is not a freeware economy: it is necessary to give a little to have access to the whole, and in Bauwens' view, major issues facing the world today, such as protecting the planet, can only be successfully tackled by a P2P economy and thus a P2P society.

To complement this brief overview of the first attempts to define the sharing economy, we summarise a more recent study developed by Pais and Provasi (2015), who describe six classes of different sharing economy practices.

1. *Rental economy*: an economy that comprises rental schemes run by companies specialising in goods, which are generally under-used when the users have exclusive private ownership of them (example: car sharing such as ZipCar).
2. *Peer-to-peer economy*: an economy that concerns goods that are also under-used but which are offered directly by their owners (platforms such as AirBnB).
3. *On-demand economy*: an economy characterised by the use platforms that broker personal services provided by professionals and non-professionals (platforms such us Uber, Blablacar or TaskRabbit).
4. *Time banking and local exchange trading system*: similar to the previous one in terms of the services offered, but this shows a fundamental difference in the lack of money in the transactions, employing instead forms of barter based on the use of alternative currencies or time as the unit of value of the services exchanged (platforms such as TimeRepublik).
5. *FLOSS—free/libre open source software*: the oldest of the sharing economy experiences related to the free or open source software programs produced by communities of advanced developers and users (Linux).
6. *Social lending and crowdfunding*: it is about the application of finance to a sharing economy including direct loans between people and platforms that help raise the capital necessary for the development of a new idea among those potentially interested in it (platforms such as Kick starter).

According to Pais and Provasi (2015), these categories are useful in outlining the boundaries of the sharing economy, providing some indications of the magnitude of the phenomenon that is constantly growing. A recent study developed by

consultancy firm PWC (2015) estimates that the sharing economy generates a value of 15 billion dollars compared with 240 billion by the traditional economy for the same sectors, and by 2025, the amount is expected to reach about 335 billion dollars, equivalent to 50% of the total value.

To conclude this overview, we take into consideration two other recent analyses that led Rifkin (2014) to frame the concept of 'zero marginal cost economy' and Sundararajan (2016) to outline the idea of 'crowd-based capitalism.' Both conceptualisations deepen the relation between the sharing economy and the current capitalist system, even if they predict different scenarios. While Rifkin, taking some risks, talks about the end of capitalism, Sundararajan prefers to draw a possible transformation of capitalism in a crowd-based perspective.

On the one hand, Rifkin (2014) argues that the emergent sharing economy will overthrow capitalism, which is currently experiencing a value crisis based on a revolution in marginal costs that is destroying the profit rate. This means that economy and society will re-orient themselves around a collaborative commons, with a more peripheral role for the market dynamics: a third industrial revolution is on its way, thanks to the emergence of the internet of things that is leading us to an era of almost free goods and services and accelerating the rise of the collaborative commons. According to Rifkin, by 2050, the collaborative commons will likely settle in as the primary arbiter of economic life in most of the world: prosumers are producing and sharing their own information, entertainment, green energy, 3D-printed goods, and enrolling in massive open online courses on the Collaborative Commons at near zero marginal cost. They are also sharing cars, homes, and even clothes with one another via social media sites, rentals, redistribution clubs, and cooperatives, at low or near zero marginal cost.

Various experts have criticised this idea of zero marginal cost economy, for example Ogden (2014) points out that Rifkin seems to ignore issues of political power and economic incentive that shape our daily lives and our future, and also argues that the so-called sharing economy (especially in reference to cases such as Uber) is still a form of capitalism.

More cautious than Rifkin, Sundararajan (2016) does not predict the end of capitalism and he states that there is no single model for these new economic forms, but that, considered together, they create a shift in how we think about everything from utility to capital to labour to employment.

Sundararajan rather talks about a new form of capitalism that is crowd-based capitalism, a sharing economy based on peer-to-peer commercial exchange that may supplant the traditional corporate-centred model. In describing this transformation, he focuses particularly on how government regulation, jobs and social fabric may be affected by this new blurred commercial exchanges. He draws attention to those working in the sharing economy, who may range from empowered entrepreneurs who enjoy professional flexibility and independence to disenfranchised digital labourers who use platforms in search of the next job.

In short, Sundararajan stresses how policy choices are critical and proposes new possible directions for self-regulatory organisations, labour law, and funding of our social safety net.

The aim of this brief overview was to highlight the controversial character of the sharing economy, showing how difficult it is to provide a single definition. In spite of this complexity, we have attempted to establish a rough framework, in order to draw attention to some distinctive dynamics and to show how discussion around this phenomenon is increasing.

2.2 Emerging Problems: Lack of Legal, Fiscal and Labour Regulation

As stated, the sharing economy is a critical concept with many meanings and several important features have drawn the attention of governments and the media, especially in the last years, in which it has been possible to experience a more mature 'version' of many sharing economy services.

The most widespread peer-to-peer platforms such as AirBnB and Uber are currently facing serious problems relating essentially to two main issues: tax avoidance and deregulation of the labour market.

It is well-known that AirBnB provides an online platform to allow individuals to rent out their rooms or apartments to visitors: although this is not in itself illegal, in many cases the rentals advertised on the site fall foul of local housing laws and regulations. Currently, AirBnB is facing legal problems with several city authorities around the world: in particular, it has long had a contentious relationship with the city of New York, but we can also quote Barcelona, Berlin, Paris and Amsterdam, among others (The Guardian 2014; The New York Times 2015; The Atlantic City Lab 2016). Although New York City was the first market for AirBnB in the US, the city's government has never welcomed the $30-billion company (Skift 2016): according to local regulations, owners or tenants can legally rent their apartments just for short periods, more specifically less than thirty days. This strict regulation caused a long controversy, the last stage which is that, soon after Governor Andrew M. Cuomo of New York signed a bill imposing steep fines on AirBnB hosts who break the regulations, the company sued the city, its mayor, and the state attorney general.

In Europe, Barcelona has one of the toughest official attitudes to vacation rentals: landlords have to acquire a permit from the city to rent their property out, and, in December 2015, AirBnB was sanctioned with high fines for listing apartments that didn't have this licence (The Atlantic City Lab 2016). It is interesting to note that Barcelona's restrictions came after a wave of popular protest against exploitative landlords and harassment of tourists.

This controversy has not yet been solved and we are in the middle of a long dispute that clearly highlights the lack of a shared legal and fiscal regulation that is capable of managing the specific situations.

But, probably, the most 'famous' contention related to the sharing economy is the case of Uber: this is a ridesharing service that originated in San Francisco and is

now available in many other cities in the world. The company uses a mobile app to connect passengers with drivers of vehicles for hire and clients request rides and track their reserved vehicle's location using the same app. According to The Telegraph (2016), Uber is currently worth more than $60 billion, making it the most valuable startup in the world.

Over the last few years, Uber has expanded across the world and has been embroiled in very public, sometimes violent protests, in particular on the part of taxi drivers and taxi companies who believe that ride-sharing companies are illegal taxicab operations that engage in unfair business practices and compromise passenger safety. Since 2014, protests have been staged in many countries, including the US, England, Germany, India, Taiwan and Australia. In 2015, there had been at least seventy different disputes around the world relating to Uber, most of them concerned with regulatory action, but it has also been sued dozens of times by city governments and taxi unions (The Telegraph 2016).

Uber also faced protests from its own drivers as they feel they have been misclassified as independent contractors instead of employees, and that they should receive certain expenses and benefits from the company as compensation. This is probably the most obvious 'revolution': Uber, and more broadly, the app-driven labour market, is creating a great change in the notion of work, transforming traditional jobs into a set of micro tasks that can be assigned to individuals when they are needed, which means they do not have salaries, expenses or benefits such as healthcare and insurance, as does a full-time employee.

This is the so-called 'uberisation of work', that, according to Sundararajan (2016), is defining a new category of work, which is not full-time employment nor is it about running your own business. He maintains that these 'new jobs' blur the lines between the personal and the professional, changing the meaning of what it means to have a job, and affecting the economy, the government and the social fabric.

The cases of AirBnB and Uber essentially illustrate the same problem: a lack of legal and fiscal regulation, together with a total deregulation of the labour market.

Most of the activities under the umbrella of the sharing economy are positioned within this 'grey area' because the current legislation of many countries does not consider their existence (neither do transnational laws, such as EU law, even though some attempts have been made[1]). Sometimes it is possible to refer to old and generic rules, in other cases rules are totally missing and here, as has been said, there is, room for disputes, especially with 'traditional companies' that feel threatened by what they deem as unlawful competition. There is, as yet, no shared way of addressing these situations, each city/country is currently considering such issues in different ways. The lesson learned from these disputes is probably that it is

[1]With the 'Communication on the European agenda for the collaborative economy', issued on June 2016, the EU provides clarity on applicable EU rules and policy recommendations to help citizens, businesses and EU countries fully benefit from the new business models and promote the balanced development of the collaborative economy. This hopefully represents a first step towards a clearer and more precise EU regulation on the sharing economy.

not possible to return to the previous situation: the sharing economy seems not to be a reversible change, because on the one hand, citizens are getting used to these conveniences and on the other, the emerging companies have grown and have increased their businesses significantly in recent years.

For this reason, we look to Codagnone et al.'s study (2016), which outlines four possible evolutions for the sharing economy, leaving room for further observations and research:

- *Great transformation*: this is the most optimistic evolution which coincides with the early utopian views on crowdfunding and the sharing movement. It coincides with a community-led path that leads to green, social, and fair economic prosperity. In this, the re-embedding of the economy occurs through changes in behaviour and culture: on the part of people and firms, who internalise the principles of collaboration and sustainable consumption, and on the part of governments, which can use platforms to provide public goods and services.
- *Regulated sustainability*: in this path, governments are protagonists because they push for the re-embedding of the economy through regulatory and traditional interventions, aiming to guide society towards sustainability and to solving the main issues related to the disempowerment and inequality developed by the sharing economy.
- *Growth-oriented globalisat*ion: in a way, this is the status quo development path, characterised by minimal government intervention: market forces are left uncontrolled, leading to increasing inequality and social polarisation. People and companies are empowered in a more competitive and individualistic way, under the imperative of economic and globalised growth, contributing to the creation of human capital specialisation and 'virtual labour migrations.'
- *Barbarisation*: this is the path in which the sharing economy totally flows into 'uberisation': an evolution without government intervention, in which "traditional firms and work are dis-intermediated, decentralised, and parcelled, to be re-intermediated through algorithms" (Codagnone et al. 2016, p. 29), leading to a scenario in which unemployment and inequality rise to unprecedented levels.

For the purposes of this book, the two first evolutions seem to be particularly significant, and, therefore, a more extensive reflection on the social side of the sharing economy was found to be necessary and is addressed in the following paragraph.

2.3 Exploring the Social Side of the Sharing Economy

The notion of the sharing economy is central to a better depiction of public-interest services: as previously said, it is closely connected to the interlinking of active citizenship, social innovation, new forms of economies and new forms of welfare,

because it is precisely this interconnection that is the main object of reflection in the first part of this book (and also corresponds to the structure of these first chapters).

In this paragraph, we wish to explore the social character of the sharing economy, by briefly discussing its most important features and, more specifically, by focusing on the concept of social reciprocity.

In their article entitled 'Sharing Economy: A Step towards the Re-Embeddedness of the Economy?', Pais and Provasi (2015) argue that the failure of the two most important economic models of the 20th century (the Keynesian and the neoliberal) left a vacuum that, in a way, is being filled by the sharing economy. This is happening because the previous models contributed to 'disembedding' economic relations from their social ties and, now, the sharing economy seems able to occupy this vacuum "by experimenting with collaborative social forms able (at least potentially and ideally) to embed economic relations once again in social ones" (p. 353).

Pais and Provasi developed a working hypothesis that the sharing economy may help in remedying these failures by experimenting with new forms of relationship between economy and society. In order to investigate this issue, they built on the work of Polanyi (1944, 1957) who analysed three forms of integration between economy and society: exchange, reciprocity and redistribution.

Polanyi's studies are currently undergoing significant revaluation and various authors reference his work: the notions of exchange and redistribution are quite clear (exchange is mainly associated with market dynamics and redistribution is mainly connected to state-based ones, i.e. centralization), leaving reciprocity as a third area that is not defined at all.

Put simply, the notion of reciprocity may be linked to non-economic forms that we can find in pre-modern societies, operating in terms of the symmetry of the different social groups (families, clans, communities), but, as Pais and Provasi (2015) argue, one of the merits of Polanyi lies in his having intuited that reciprocity may be important even for modern societies.

Reciprocity is already present in modern societies in the form of primary relationships (such as friendship, kinship or proximity) and it has been associated with the so-called 'economies of the gift' investigated by a number of authors (Mauss 1924; Malinowski 1922; Gui and Sugden 2005; Bruni 2008).

Pais and Provasi (2015) are continuing to explore the notion of reciprocity in modern societies by connecting it to what is happening around the perimeter of the sharing economy. For this purpose, they distinguish three different types of reciprocity:

1. *Reciprocity in the strict sense*: this type of reciprocity is an asynchronous and non-equivalent exchange, very close to the forms of reciprocity defined by the economies of the gift. A person who begins a cycle of this reciprocity combines instrumental interests with intrinsic willingness to cooperate, accepting the risk of not being repaid. If we look at the current sharing economy, some activities may be included under the label of the reciprocity in the strict sense, such as

couchsurfing (a form of hospitality among strangers) or types of crowdfunding that are donation based.

2. *Collaboration*: this is intended as a weak form of reciprocity, because it is a short cycle (the return is soon made and is equivalent to what has been given) and instrumental motivations prevail over intrinsic ones. Both parties benefit from the collaboration, but they are not obligated to enter into a relationship that goes beyond the current situation. A form of indirect trust is established thanks to the capacities of the institutional context (in which the collaboration takes place) to provide the proper tools in order to continuously manage such collaboration. The service BlaBlaCar (a car pooling system in which a motorist provides free places in his car) is an example of a sharing economy activity that falls under this type of reciprocity; as do the platforms of 'social eating' in which a food lover organises a dinner in his home and a group of strangers join the event. What matters in this collaboration are the characteristics of the owner, in other words his/her reputation, which is built through an algorithm that processes the ratings made by earlier users.
3. *Common-pool arrangements*: this type of reciprocity aims to create new communities of interests or values. These communities are composed of people who share a strong sense of belonging and make a motivational investment in the group, generating trust. Part of their individual freedom is sacrificed in order to receive in exchange an identity and a shared aim, establishing moral obligations towards all members of the group. If we look at the current sharing economy, some examples of common-pool arrangements are quite old, such as activities related to open source, and others are more recent, such as those connected to open design and manufacturing, where distributed communities collectively design a new object or service that is made available with a creative commons licence.

In this work, the notion of reciprocity, and more specifically, its interpretation as common-pool arrangements, are central, because they show a clearer picture of the possible social and institutional innovations of which the sharing economy is capable. For example, the Italian phenomenon of the Social Street (informal groups of residents of the same street coordinated through a closed Facebook group) may be included within common-pool arrangements. In this case, digital relationships enhance real ones and activate a community who shares items/services and collaborates to reach different possibilities.

The creative communities described in the first chapter of this book are not dissimilar to the Social Street, in that they exercise various types of reciprocity in which the common-pool arrangements represent a change in relationships not only among individuals, but also between citizens and institutions.

Hence, the 'social character' of the sharing economy described here is an integral part of the scenario of public-interest services that we are attempting to outline. Creative communities, active citizens, social innovators and common-pool arrangements are all part of the same phenomenon: a system of services placed in a hybrid area between amateur and professional, public and private, market and

society, profit and not-for-profit. This area does not represent a new model, but, using the words of Pais and Provasi (2015), it experiments with the 're-embedding' of the economic relations in the sphere of social reciprocity and, thus, it establishes a different equilibrium among market, state and society.

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Chapter 3
New Forms of Welfare: Relational Welfare, Second Welfare, Co-production

Abstract This chapter offers a more comprehensive framework for the heterogeneous scenario of public-interest services by briefly outlining the emergence of new forms of welfare that deal with greater citizen involvement. This is a global trend, occurring essentially because of austerity measures that push governments to deliver more value while reigning in expenditure. One possible solution is based on the idea of co-producing services with citizens: the theories of relational welfare, open welfare and second welfare build specifically on the fundamental concept of co-production. The idea of citizen involvement in the provision of public services is then transferred to more extensive participation in government activities, briefly outlining the theories of the entrepreneurial state, the partner state, and the P2P state. Finally, some criticisms are highlighted, in spite of the many enthusiastic voices surrounding this topic: citizen involvement can be understood as form of empowerment, but also as a form of 'exploitation' in which governments relinquish their responsibility, causing a dismantling of the welfare state, thus, launching a call for further research into this complex issue.

3.1 Relational Welfare, Open Welfare, Second Welfare

The emergence of new forms of welfare represents a response to the crisis that has unfolded in the welfare state since the 1980s. Even if the welfare state has improved the lives of millions of people, it is undeniable that it is not able to tackle the most pressing current social issues, not only because of a lack of financial resources, but also because it is too centralised and inflexible. What is happening today is that modern states no longer provide protection against the uncertainties of life by publicly funding housing, sustenance, health care, pensions, unemployment insurance, sick leave, child care etc. As Cottam points out, "the current parameters of the debate around welfare reform are inadequate. A relentless focus on finance and costs has obscured the systemic challenges facing our post-war welfare institutions. Although exacerbated by the current financial crisis, these challenges have

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deeper roots, and are as much about culture, systems and relationships as they are about money" (2011, p. 134).

In other words, the industrial model of service delivery and centralised bureaucracy has not been fundamentally questioned.

Zamagni (2014) describes the evolution from a two-sided paradigm of service provision (in which there is, on one side, the state-provider and the citizen-user on the other) to a paradigm of service co-production among different actors. He frames this evolution by outlining three main phases: 'old public administration', 'new public management' and 'new public governance': many authors have studied these central topics, including Dunleavy and Hood (1994), Mulgan and Albury (2003), Hartley (2005), Christensen and Laegreid (2007), and Osborne (2010).

In the first phase, the citizen is merely a 'user' who can only use his/her 'voice' to protest, in the second, the citizen is a 'client' whose options are to have a 'voice' or to 'exit', meaning that he/she can choose another service provided within the market. The shift from the first to the second phase has been quite rapid; what is complex is the transition from 'new public management' to 'new public governance', in which the citizen is no longer viewed as user or client, but as an actual 'bringer of needs and assets'.

In a way, Cottam and Zamagni are addressing the same issue that deals with a deep structural reform of the public service delivery, focusing on citizens as potential co-producers and, thus, suggesting new forms of welfare.

More specifically, Cottam (2011) developed the concept of 'relational welfare', meaning a shift from a transactional model of delivering services to a relational one, in which services value, and build on, relationships. According to Cottam, this model not only costs considerably less in financial terms (because it is co-produced by a variety of actors) but it also fosters social capital.

To more clearly define the notion of relational welfare, we provide the example of 'Participle', a well-known social business founded by Cottam in which she tested her idea of relational welfare over the past ten years.

In 2007, Participle created a partnership comprising a London borough council, the Department of Work and Pensions and a media company to develop new solutions for an ageing population. This led to the creation of the 'Circle' movement in 2008, a membership organisation for older people, which takes care of everyday worries via a strong social network.

Circle is open to anyone over the age of fifty who lives within the geographic area of a local 'circle' of a few blocks and "it combines the functions of a concierge service, cooperative and social club" (Meroni and Sangiorgi 2011, p. 133). Members pay a low monthly subscription fee, which encourages a feeling of ownership over the service, and they participate in a variety of monthly events, where they connect with people who share their interests. They can access help with gardening, paperwork, DIY, shopping and technology on demand from a choice of non-professional with people that share their interests. They can access help with gardening, paperwork, DIY shopping and technology on demand from a choice of non-professional neighbourhood helpers, all with different skills but who live nearby, thus creating a network where people can be each other's solutions.

Circle represents a good practice of relational welfare and, at the same time, it is a working example of what future public services could look like. It has had a real impact on a local scale, bringing real improvements to people's lives.

Currently, there are two regional Circles, in Nottingham and Rochdale, which are continuing to grow. Although the effectiveness of Circle has been proved at the local level, scaling-up on a national level still remains under construction. This is essentially because it is necessary to create a specific business model that combines time, skills and money (Cottam and Dillon 2014) and is able to function in a competitive context such as London.

In one of her first essays, Cottam (2011) attempted to translate Circle's practices into a wider vision, conceiving a more shared and collective model of welfare and identifying five distinct principles:

- *Take care of root causes*: regardless of which welfare model is adopted, it is essential to have an economic strategy that considers root causes.
- *Adopt a development approach*: instead of starting dealing with initial problems, it is necessary to develop an overall vision. "Such a vision would be realised in practice with tools and systems designed to support developmental approaches, underpinned by measures which in turn would reinforce development, relationships and collective resource pooling" (Cottam 2011, p. 142).
- *Be infrastructure light* (*relationship heavy*): the traditional centralised infrastructure is no longer at the core of the welfare system; relationships and social contact represent the essential part of the new model, and they are supported by the 'light' and diverse possibilities of modern technology.
- *Source and champion alternative models*: it is necessary to invest in future models as distributed systems that can support collective capacity and shared solutions. The state should allocate a greater part of GDP to research and development in a systematic manner, not only for short-term pilot schemes.
- *Facilitate the dialogue*: politics needs to create the conditions for a relational welfare state, which will also set the conditions for new forms of creative, developmental conversation beyond the traditional political meeting or focus group. This conversation should be something shared, collective and relational.

As Cottam (2013) argues in her article 'From transactional welfare to relational welfare', "the mantra is don't assess and refer me, enthuse and support me'." From this perspective, relational welfare models are open to all (like the problems they address) and the more people use relational services, the stronger they are.

As with relational welfare, a variety of models have emerged in response to the crisis of the welfare state. The model known as 'open welfare', developed by Cottam and Leadbeater in 2004, may be viewed as the first elaboration of the notion of relational welfare. The authors suggested an open model of public services delivery based on "mass, participatory models, in which many of the 'users' of a service become its designers and producers, working in new partnerships with professionals" (p. 1). They highlighted the need for a broad participation enabled by the design of a collective space/platform in which people can share ideas and

communicate, thus, blurring the boundary between users and producers in a truly open welfare system.

In addition, we include the notion of 'second welfare' developed by the two Italian scholars, Ferrera and Maino, who describe "a mix of social protection and social investment programmes which are not funded by the state, but provided instead by a wide range of economic and social actors, linked to territories and local communities, but open to trans-local partnerships and collaborations" Ferrera and Maino (2011). In the Italian context, representatives of the third sector, not-for-profit and voluntary sectors are traditionally linked to the provision of (social) services: the main idea of second welfare is to empower this constellation of actors at a local level, involving citizens and also including other members such as bank foundations, social investors and philanthropic organizations.

This 'second welfare', according to Ferrera and Maino (2011), is not a substitute for the 'first welfare' that is the welfare state. Instead, it is a form of complementary welfare that can offer important integration to public services, especially in these times of crisis and societal transformation.

3.2 Co-production

Basically, all these models of welfare build upon the same fundamental concept: the idea of co-production. In this section, we will attempt to provide a brief introduction to this this notion that is central in describing the scenario of public-interest services.

The concept of co-production was originally coined in the early 1970s by Ostrom (Nobel Laureate for economics) and her team at Indiana University. She defined co-production as the "process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not 'in' the same organisation" (1996, p. 1073).

More recently, the notion of-coproduction has been deeply explored in relation to public services, especially in the UK. In '*The Challenge of Co-production*', Boyle and Harris (2009), start analysing the crisis of the welfare state and they present co-production as a new way of re-thinking public services: "co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal partnership between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of changes" (p. 11).

They argue that the welfare state is not able to solve the most pressing problems, and is essentially dedicated to efficiency, neglecting its final users, i.e. citizens. The central idea in co-production is that people who use services are hidden resources: it goes beyond the simple idea of citizen engagement or user involvement, because it fosters a balance of power and responsibility among service professionals and individuals, who can contribute to the delivery of their own services by using their knowledge and skills.

From this viewpoint, co-production means building mutual support systems and supportive relationships and it is described by Boyle and Harris as "the model by which public services can begin to prevent social problems like crime and ill-health, understanding that this is only possible by providing a catalyst for citizens to broaden the range of what they already do or can do in the future" (p. 14).

The two authors also clarify what is *not* co-production: for example, codesign or consultation processes that ask users for advice and opinions. Table 3.1 shows "how co-production occurs in the critical middle ground when user and professional knowledge is combined to design and deliver services" (p. 16).

Therefore, co-production fundamentally changes the way services are delivered, recognising people as assets, promoting reciprocity and shifting the balance of power; as similarly, the notion of collaborative services "where the end-users are actively involved and assume the role of service co-designers and co-producers" (Jégou and Manzini 2008, p. 32).

In recent years, the notion of co-production has become quite popular, drawing the attention of numerous authors, who have attempted to deepen and expand its significance, from reforming public services to conceiving new models of governance.

Pestoff (2012) argues that governments can involve citizens in the co-production of goods and services, both for reasons of improving efficiency and effectiveness of public services and policies, and for achieving other important social goals, such as citizen empowerment and participation, i.e. supporting democracy. Botero et al. (2012) talk about co-production and peer production, stating that, "there are changes taking place in how the role of citizens in society is expected from them" (p. 6).

Table 3.1 User and professional roles in the design and delivery of services (Boyle and Harris 2009)

		Responsibility for design of services		
		Professional as sole service planner	Professionals and service users/community as co-planners	No professional input into service planning
Responsibility for delivery of services	Professionals as sole service deliverers	Traditional professional service provision	Professional service provision but users/communities involved in planning and design	Professional as sole service deliverers
	Professionals and users/communities as co-deliverers	Users co-delivery of professionally designed services	Full-co-production	User/community delivery of services with little formal/professional
	Users/communities as sole deliverers	User/community delivery of professionally planned services	User/community delivery of co-planned or co-designed services	Self-organised community provision

Bason (2013) is expanding the idea of a more networked and inclusive model of governance and service provision, shifting from a classic 'bureaucratic' model to a 'new public management', highlighting how co-production can contribute to create new forms of participatory governance.

The following section offers a more detailed exploration of these theories, demonstrating how the discussion about welfare is currently open to different evolutions—some more incremental, others more radical. It is shifting from the development of new, different forms of welfare to the conception of new forms of state welfare that enable and empower the social creation of value by its citizens, in which co-production is the core notion.

3.3 The Entrepreneurial State, the Partner State, the P2P State

As previously stated, a direct consequence of conceiving new forms of welfare is to imagine new forms of the state.

This paragraph introduces three interconnected concepts of state: the entrepreneurial state of Mazzucato (2013), the partner state developed by Orsi (2007) and the P2P state conceived by Bauwens (2012).

The entrepreneurial state was proposed by the well-known economist Mariana Mazzucato and has been of great interest to numerous politics and scholars. This notion is not directly connected to welfare, but it is useful to show the importance of overcoming the idea of the state as a mere provider of services, or worse, as a spender.

In her book, '*The Entrepreneurial State: debunking private vs. public sector myths*' (2013), Mazzucato argues that by privatising public goods and outsourcing government functions, we are 'killing' the ability of government to think big and make things happen that otherwise would not have happened. In this view, the state is simply a 'spender' and a 'regulator', and not a key investor in valuable goods and services. The state is losing its knowledge and capabilities, and, thus, the challenge today is to bring expertise back into the government in order to pilot important missions of the future. Mazzucato gives a clear example of what happens when the state acts as an 'entrepreneurial state': all the technologies that make the iPhone smart, such as internet, GPS and touch-screen display, were pioneered by a well-funded US government. These are the results of work within agencies driven by 'big missions' (mainly around security), thus funding not only 'public good' research but also applied research.

In this sense, the public sector must produce public goods, and, through the creation of new missions, it catalyses investments from the private sector. These

new missions should tackle the most pressing social issues of climate change, ageing, inequality and youth unemployment. Hence, Mazzucato essentially regards the state as a leader in radical innovation.

The other two notions of state are directly interconnected: to develop his idea of the P2P state, Bauwens refers to Orsi's previous conception of the partner state.

The Italian political scientist Orsi (2007) theorised a form of state that enables and empowers the social creation of value by its citizens. He points out that the existing form of the state needs to be changed: "More specifically, the achievement of a socio-economic order able to generate virtuous mechanisms aimed at facilitating the inclusion of all of its members in the social, political, and economic life of the community calls for a substantial transformation of the State into what can be defined a Partner State, that is, respectful of interests, decisions, and needs of persons-in-community."

Citizen participation is a central idea of the partner state: it should not be seen merely as a means, but also as an end in itself. Such an end can be identified as the empowerment of people; a process that makes those who don't belong to political or economic elites aware of their potentialities as pro-active actors within the broader socio-economic reality. Orsi stresses the fact that the promotion of any empowering and enabling form of participation should move from a deeper approach to redistribution, because the maintenance of sharp inequalities would inevitably "reproduce a dystopic society built along a hierarchical line."

Within the notion of a partner state, there is the recognition that a model of economic development based solely upon market-oriented processes has emerged, with the state in a secondary position rather than bringing about the desired emancipation for all. Here, the partner state is similar to the entrepreneurial state: both aim at pursuing big missions characterised by the state taking an active role as innovator and stimulus for change. However, the basic aim of the partner state is to redistribute social and economic power in a way that would enable all its members to participate on equal grounds in the active life of the community.

The P2P state conceived by Bauwens (2012) is an evolution of the idea of the partner state. "This then is the Partner State, namely, public authorities which create the right environment and support infrastructure so that citizens can peer-produce value, from which the whole society then benefits" (p. 39). The peer production of common value requires civic wealth and strong civic institutions: "in other words, the partner state concept 'transcends and includes' the best of the welfare state, which includes the social solidarity mechanisms, high educational attainments, and a vibrant and publicly-supported cultural life" (p. 39).

The ideas of Orsi and Bauwens are crucial for this book, which endeavours to explore citizen participation in the public interest: their notions of partner and P2P states offer the most radical perspective on this participation, because they both envision "a network of democratically-run for-benefit institutions, which protect the common good on a territorial scale" (p. 40).

3.4 Emerging Problems: From Empowering to Exploitation

Moving on from the early, enthusiastic voices about citizen participation in new forms of welfare, it is possible (and important) to look at some of the criticisms: more specifically, that participation can become a sort of 'motto' in whose name the state shifts its responsibility onto citizens.

For example, the Big Society programme launched by David Cameron in the UK some years ago received severe criticism because of its superficiality in dealing with civic autonomy and action. He presented the idea of Big Society as a way to transform the country by creating new laws that could enable local people to take over public assets and run public services.

According to Birrell (2014), who worked as Cameron's speechwriter during the 2010 election campaign, "at its core, the Big Society is an attempt to connect the civic institutions that lie between the individual and the state […] It is born out of recognition that our centralised state has become too big, too bureaucratic and just too distant to support many of those most in need of help, and that it deters people from playing a more active role in public life".

In political terms, this means handing over power to the lowest level possible, in the hands of local people, and thus launching a challenge to the centralised state.

According to several authors, Cameron's personal vision of a more active civic society lacks definition about the means by which such ideals can be realised. Bauwens (2012) points out that the Big Society programme "uses a superficially similar language of civic autonomy and action, but hides a completely different practice, i.e. one based on a strategy to further weaken the welfare state and its provisions," and "a partner state cannot be based on the destruction of the public infrastructure of cooperation" (p. 32). Orsi (2007) also argues that any form of participation should build upon an actual power re-distribution and that the approach to power characterising the state should be one of responsiveness.

Hence, this rhetoric on citizen participation runs the risk of becoming a cover for the dismantling of the welfare system and for a progressive reduction in responsibility on the part of the state. Thus, the line of demarcation between empowerment and exploitation is blurred, which is why it is necessary to reflect carefully on how to balance the role of the citizen with that of the state.

The point of view within this book is similar to that of Bauwens (2012) and Orsi (2007): in order to activate true empowerment, the best aspects of the welfare state are needed, meaning that the state should provide the right environment and appropriate support infrastructure for citizens to participate and really benefit from the redistribution of power.

In conclusion, we present an Italian case study that, in some way, can be understood as a way of enhancing new forms of welfare, and, to a lesser extent, as a way of testing the idea of the partner state. This is the so-called 'Bologna Regulation on the collaboration among citizens and the city the care and regeneration of urban commons' (2014).

It is comprehensive regulatory piece, consisting of thirty-six articles, that outlines how local authorities and citizens together can manage urban public and private spaces and assets. It may be viewed as manual for collaboration, created so that citizen participation in the governance of the city should no longer be a sporadic event, but a normal way of administrating.

The Bologna Regulation provides a regulatory framework without limiting the creative, proactive freedom of citizens, and it is based on a set of values and principles that are clearly stated in the first part of the document: mutual trust; accessibility and transparency; responsibility; inclusiveness and openness; sustainability; proportionality; adequacy and differentiation; informality and civic autonomy.

Within 'Title I' that offers a set of general rules, Sect. 7 deals with the promotion of social innovation and collaborative services: this is particularly relevant for the purposes of this book, because it is linked to the idea of providing support for those active citizens who create collaborative services, and thus, promise forms of social innovation. In short, these principles are based on viewing the private citizen as a resource and not a problem; as an actor capable of contributing actively to the administration of the city.

Two years after its publication, many other Italian cities have adopted the Bologna Regulation, attempting to adjust it to their specific local contexts: a widespread experimentation is currently taking place, in which a shift from theory to practice is urgently needed to understand how to maintain a balanced relationship between citizens and institutions. This must happen without crossing over the thin line between empowerment and exploitation, avoiding, on one side, the transfer of too much responsibility to the hands of the citizens, and, on the other side, the dismantling of the welfare state and a progressive loss of responsibility on the part of the institutions.

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Chapter 4
Design for Public-Interest Services: An Emerging Field of Experimentation

Abstract The first part of this book describes the complex scenario in which the idea of public-interest services originates, by combining the different phenomena of citizen activism, social innovation, new forms of economies and new forms of welfare. This chapter aims to provide a definition of public-interest services (initially, by focusing on the related concept of public interest), building on the framework already depicted and on ideas from the existing literature. The other important contribution of this chapter is the connection between public-interest services and different areas of design: when we speak about design for public-interest services, we consider design for services, participatory design and co-design, which are discussed in detail in Sects. 4.3 and 4.4. The author then attempts to investigate what design can do for public-interest services, and to answer this question more effectively, she introduces the idea of an infrastructure (and a related 'infrastructuring' process) to support the emergence, the development and the consolidation of such services. The final paragraph of this chapter is develops this notion of infrastructure by building on the extensive literature related to this concept, and, thus, prepares the ground for further formulation (the idea of a 'collaborative infrastructure') that is presented at the end of the book.

4.1 Defining Public Interest

For the purposes of this book, it is crucial to grasp the definition of 'public-interest services'. More specifically, the conceptualisation of 'public interest', formulated by exploring diverse contributions from several disciplines, represents the basis upon which the definition of 'public-interest services' can be built.

We will attempt to trace a synthetic framework of the public-interest theory, referring to several authors who have dealt with the topic.

One of the most important sources is Dewey's seminal book, '*The Public and Its Problems*' (1927).

His approach is pragmatic and his conceptualisation of public interest can be synthesised into three main points:

D. Selloni, *CoDesign for Public-Interest Services*, Research for Development,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-53243-1_4

- *public interest's nature is contextual*: it is an ideal that emerges on a case-by-case basis, by a public who wants to defend its common interests 'as a public'. Hence, in Dewey's view, public interest is not absolute or universal, but is embedded within a particular situation. He focuses on a 'public interest in action', on the commitment of a 'public' highlighting issues and promoting dialogue among its members.
- *the role of the community is emphasised*, that means to focus on the key roles of public discussion, participation, deliberation, social learning and thus, transformation of interests. A common awareness of a shared interest is formed and strengthened by face-to-face and open discussion, and this encourages the emergence of more inclusive interests.
- *the notion of public interest is fallible and can relate to conflict*: there can be misunderstanding about what is in a community's interest at any point in time and in any given situation. Hence, the democratic process of debate and deliberation can reveal underlying shared interests and produce conflicts among individuals and groups. But, by looking deeper at these conflicts, it can be argued that the discussion process itself encourages the preservation of the public interest.

Dewey (1927) points out that public interest is created by a public motivated to secure its common interests as a political community: this is a type of commitment that ensures not only the identification and maintenance of such interests but also the development of individuals as fully self-realised citizens.

It may be argued that Dewey's public interest theory is pragmatic but hopeful at the same time: this is also suggested by DiSalvo and Le Dantec (2013) who state that, in Dewey's pragmatism, we find a deep optimism about society's ability to tackle a challenge through sharing ideas and opinions.

Another key author to be considered in defining the notion of public interest is essayist and journalist, Walter Lippman. In his book, '*The Public Philosophy*' (1955), he states: "(the) public interest may be presumed to be what men would choose if they saw clearly, thought rationally, acted disinterestedly and benevolently" (p. 40). Such a definition implies that citizens are intellectually incapable of effectively governing themselves, or that they have little capacity to be rational participants in a democracy. This elitist conclusion is quite different from Dewey's position: the 'Lippmann-Dewey controversy' is well-known and has stimulated debate in several areas, including political philosophy, social science disciplines, media and communication studies.

It is not necessary to describe in detail the numerous disputes that have characterised this discussion. We wish to emphasise here that Dewey's book '*The Public and Its Problems*', as its title states, analyses a number of critical aspects: special interests, powerful corporate capital, selfishness and other general impediments that make effective public deliberation difficult. But, in spite of these obstacles, Dewey holds a more optimistic view than Lippmann about the public and its potential, and about the ability of citizens to develop the motivation to identify and secure their shared interests.

The notion of public interest has also been analysed by Flathman, in '*The Public Interest: An Essay Concerning the Normative Discourse of Politics*' (1966). Here, he points out that consideration of public interest as a concept is essential, even if it remains an undefined ideal: the term public interest refers generically to a body of substantive truths or principles. According to Flathman, in spite of its ambiguity, public interest is a normative standard and it raises all those problems generally associated with standards. He argues that public interest is a general principle adopted to justify public policies: "…it has no general, unchanging, descriptive meaning applicable to all policy decisions, but a non-arbitrary descriptive meaning can be determined for it in particular cases. This descriptive meaning is properly found through reasoned discourse which attempts to relate the anticipated effects of a policy to community values and to test the relation by formal principles" (Flathman 1966, p. 82).

Like Flathman, political scientist Fesler (1990) also suggests a definition of public interest as an ideal construct, it is something to be strived for as other similar principles such as justice, liberty, integrity etc. He states: "…These and other ideal values cannot be absolutes but must be reconciled when in conflict in concrete cases" (p. 91).

In this brief discussion of the history of the public interest theory, the notion has been differently defined as a process, a goal and an ideal construct. But, as Bozeman (2007) argues, "many of the concepts that capture the popular imagination are just as ill-defined and just as subject to disagreement as public interest concepts. If we consider the ideals that societies, governments, and individual citizens hold dear, ideals such as liberty, freedom, equality, benevolence, social justice, and democracy, we know that these terms have many definitions and that there is little agreement as to how to measure them or whether to measure them at all" (p. 86).

Like Dewey, Bozeman is looking specifically for a more pragmatic formulation and process-oriented definition of public interest.

Consequently, based on the work of these two authors, we propose the following definition:

> Public interest refers both to a set of outcomes and to the process of reaching them. The outcomes are those that best serve the long-term survival and well-being of a social collective construed as a 'public'. The process is the construction of a 'public' in a particular context and around a specific issue. This process should amplify the interests of the public and hopefully lead to a change of the status quo.

Hence, we seek to keep the ideal part of the public interest notion, serving the well-being of a social collective, and at the same time to keep the component related to the process of interest transformation, by means of participation, deliberation and social learning. Here, we wish to outline a form of 'public-interest-in-action' and, therefore, to highlight its transformative potential and situate its action in a particular context, emphasising the contextual nature of the notion.

4.2 Defining Public-Interest Interest Services

The present definition of public interest represents the basis for building the concept of public-interest services.

Public-interest services can be defined by identifying their *aim* (why), *object* (what), *providers/users* (who), and *context* (where).

We propose the following working definition, continuing to build upon the work of Bozeman (2007) and Dewey (1927), and also considering a preliminary study that the author developed in her doctoral research (Selloni 2014):

> Public-interest services aim at best serving the well-being of a social collective. They arise from a configuration of citizens construed as a 'public' around a crucial issue in a local context. They are distinct from the state and from the market, while they are provided within a hybrid area encompassing both.

In order to further clarify the definition, we will elaborate on the connected elements in more detail:

- *Aim*: long-term survival and well-being (Bozeman 2007), increasing the quality of life of a social collective. This, related to the general aim of public-interest services, stresses the ideal character of the concept.
- *Users*: private individuals who assemble to form a public body (Habermas 1962), i.e. using Bozeman's (2007) words, a configuration of citizens construed as a 'public', able to amplify their interests and also sharpen the skills necessary to activate a process of participation, deliberation, and social learning. This configuration of citizens is an actual community having a key role in defining public interest case by case.
- *Object*: the 'common affairs' described by Fraser (1992), in other words, crucial issues that originate when citizens experience something negative beyond their control (such as market or government activities) and they have a common interest in controlling the related consequences. These fundamental issues can relate to a wide range of applications: health, food, education, culture and many others.
- *Where*: a specific context related to the configuration of citizens cited before. As DiSalvo and Lukens argue (2009), this community might be physical, such as a neighbourhood, or it might form around distant and mediated interaction (DiSalvo et al. 2008). Moreover, DiSalvo and Le Dantec (2013) observe that, on a smaller and more intimate scale (thus a local context), it is easier to identify and share issues.
- *Providers*: a configuration of actors between state and market, public sector and private sector. Citizens can be well-served by a diverse range of providers, who may prove to be acting in the public interest. This is a fundamental element in defining public-interest services, because it is not obvious that public interest is well-served by the state, nor by the exercise of a private economic authority (similar to Habermas' (1962) concept of the public sphere crossing over both private and public realms). Hence, providers of public-interest services share the

same aim: in this way, citizens themselves can become providers of those services, through co-production, and thus, delivering services in an equal and reciprocal relationship among all the actors involved (Boyle and Harris 2009).

The proposed definition of public-interest services seeks to conciliate the need to preserve the ideal value embedded in the notion of public interest and the practical application through services corresponding to the issues identified as crucial.

Nevertheless, to give a clearer and more accurate definition, a comparison with the notion of 'public services' is required.

By 'public services', we usually mean a set of services provided by the public sector, i.e. by a government to people living within its jurisdiction. Generally speaking, this notion is related to the idea of the welfare state, of public agencies that provide services to citizens. It is also connected to the notion of public goods, because public services may sometimes have the characteristics of public goods, being non-rivalrous and non-excludable (Weimer and Vining 1999).

As previously stated, the argument that the welfare state is incapable of successfully tackling the most pressing social issues, has raised the issue of reform within public services. A broad discussion around this topic is currently taking place, especially regarding the possibility of involving a wide range of diverse actors in the provision of those services.

This involvement can be conducted by carrying out market-based reforms for the delivery of public services (and this is considered problematic because it can alter relationships between citizen and the state) or by activating a co-production process considering people who use services as crucial resources for the delivery of those services themselves (Boyle and Harris 2009), see Sect. 3.2.

In this problematic and uncertain context, we may argue that the concept of public-interest services is needed to identify a wide—but specific—range of services aiming at serving the well-being of citizens but not necessarily provided by the public sector, and thus, not entirely construed as 'public'.

Building upon the framework described in the previous chapters, we offer a scheme for positioning public-interest services within the wide spectrum of services identified in these times of societal transformation. We are referring to the framework traced between the notions of citizen activism, sharing economy, relational welfare, traditional public sector, etc. that can be viewed as different service areas.

In Fig. 4.1, public-interest services are positioned between the public and private sectors because the focus is not on the nature of a specific provider, but on a wide range of diverse actors involved in service development.

Furthermore, they are placed in the area connected to a relational model rather than a transactional one: this positioning is of fundamental importance, because it is connected to the key role of users (a community) in defining public interest case by case and establishing relations. This difference between 'transaction-based' and 'relation-based' refers to Cottam's essay 'Relational Welfare' (2011): on the left side of the scheme are those services characterised by a transactional model, in which services are delivered and users are served by a transactional relationship, i.e. standard services.

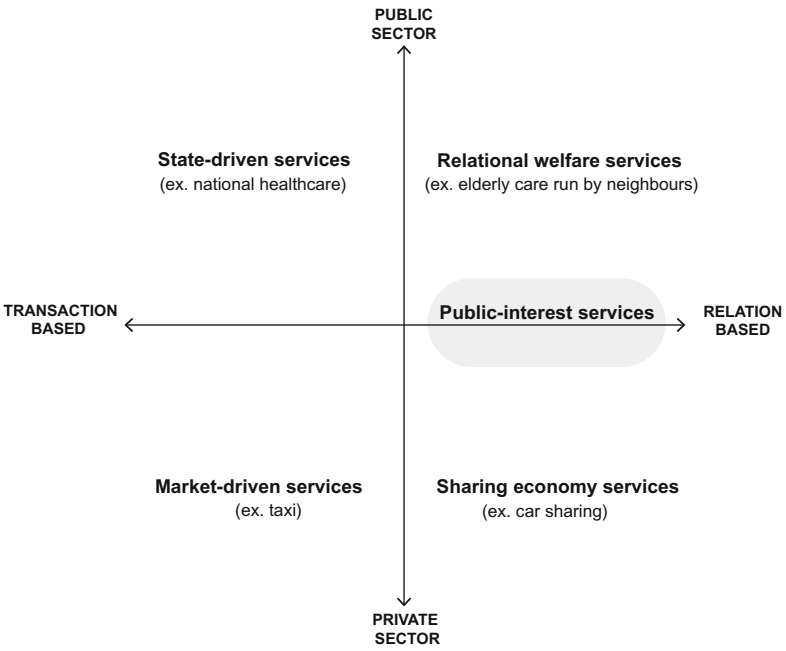

Fig. 4.1 Public-interest services positioning

The right side identifies services characterised by a relational model, in which users try several forms of relationship by identifying an issue, discussing, deliberating, and, hopefully, participating in the whole service development through sharing goods and tasks and truly collaborating in producing the service, i.e. co-producing it.

Consequently, in the following section we integrate the notion of public-interest services with the discipline of design for services, as well as expanding upon the related and fundamental concepts of participatory design and codesign.

4.3 Design for Services

After having proposed a definition of public-interest services, we would like to extend this concept in connection with the central design area of this book, represented by design for services.

We adopt the notion of 'design for services' instead of 'service design', as suggested in Meroni and Sangiorgi's important book, '*Design for services*' (2011): they point out that service design is essentially a disciplinary term, while the expression 'design for services' focuses precisely on articulating what design can do for services and how this connects to existing fields of knowledge and practice.

They state that the use of the word 'for' is crucial, because it implies the idea of transformation, of an action in progress that can affect not only the service as an object, but also more complex entities and systems, involving a multiplicity of interactions. This is even more appropriate for public-interest services, that relate to a 'social collective construed as a public'.

In fact, the European Union has conferred a fundamental role to services in its programmes (for example within Horizon 2020), as a method of tackling social and economic challenges and, thus, relating to complex and structural issues.

Hence, design for services is viewed as a pathway to innovation, by finding new solutions and opening up new opportunities for well-being, especially with regard to public services and public-interest services 'aiming at best serving the well-being of a social collective'.

Design for services' methodology and approach can, thus, be adopted to increase innovation: as Miettinen and Valtonen (2012) argue, design for services is currently establishing itself as both a practice and an academic discourse and it has developed a variety of methods and tools coming from different disciplinary fields, such as marketing, ethnography, industrial design, business and management.

This set of methods and tools is central in involving multiple actors in the innovation process as users, entrepreneurs, designers and researchers, enabling a systemic and detailed vision of it at the same time.

In view of this, it is evident that a systemic and transformative conception of design for services is crucial for the purposes of this book.

This connects with Buchanan's reflection (2001) on the well-known future evolution of design: he argues that the increase of scale and complexity of contemporary societal challenges requires a growth of scale and complexity of design. He envisages four orders of design:

- communication with symbols and images (graphic design);
- design of artefacts (industrial design);
- process, activities and services (interaction design, service design);
- systems and environments (urban planning, organisational design etc.).

Hence, according to Buchanan, design for services is included in the third order related to process and activities. Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011) also stress this point, arguing that design for services has been generally identified with the interaction order, where interaction refers to how individuals relate to other individuals through the mediating influence of products and these 'products' may be physical artefacts, experiences, activities or services. In this book, however, we suggest that, when referring to public-interest services, design for services is entering the fourth order identified with systems and environments, thus highlighting its transformative power.

This is a critical point, because designing for public-interest services is not only about designing interactions but also designing systems with multiple dimensions that concern society, government, community, public policy etc.

It is important to notice that Buchanan's orders are not rigidly fixed and separate, they are dynamic because they reflect a real complexity.

Both the third and the fourth orders are currently receiving a growing amount of attention: public-interest services are positioned at their intersection, between designing interactions and designing wider systems. As stated, public-interest services are related to the long-term survival and well-being of a social collective. This implies the need to design a network of interactions and to use the transformative power of design for services to tackle crucial issues and, thus, activate a social innovation process.

After having shown how public-interest services relate to design for services in its more systemic and transformative conception, we continue to connect the two notions by referring to the two main perspectives adopted by design research in its approach to services (Meroni and Sangiorgi 2011).

The first research stream is the 'interaction paradigm', which considers 'how' services are delivered, while the second is the 'functional paradigm', which focuses on 'what' services can offer. The former has focuses primarily on service effectiveness and on the user experience. Our focus will be on the latter, because the functional paradigm considers forms of consumption and production, hence, on more sustainable lifestyles that can have a more profound effect on the notion of public-interest services.

Manzini et al. (2004) have strengthened the idea of providing functions instead of products, for example, to focus on mobility rather than on cars.

Public-interest services are closely connected to the idea of thinking about functions: functions are, in a certain way, public-interest concepts related to the notion of access. Public-interest services do not require ownership and they can be conceived as 'solutions' oriented at 'best serving the well-being of a social collective'; in other words, they should provide access to essential functions of everyday life, overcoming, hopefully, traditional consumption patterns and behaviours (Manzini 2008).

In short: public-interest services relate to design for services in its more systemic and transformative conception, and furthermore, they relate especially to the 'functional' paradigm, offering access to essential 'functions' of everyday life by developing 'solutions' for a social collective construed as a 'public'.

This reflection on design for services continues with reference to the IHIP framework (Zeithaml et al. 1985): how do public-interest services relate to the four main characteristics of services—*Intangibility, Inseparability, Heterogeneity* and *Perishability*?

Numerous authors have dealt with these four characteristics (e.g. Edgett and Parkinson 1993; Lovelock and Gummesson 2004; Meroni and Sangiorgi 2011), and even if there is no definite conceptualisation, they still represent a basic reference in design for services.

Intangibility relates to the fact that services are not physical goods: they are immaterial. Such a characteristic does not affect the notion of public-interest services: on one side, this dematerialisation is related to the 'functional paradigm' discussed previously and it deals with providing access to users through 'light

solutions.' On the other side, the lack of concrete evidence asks for touch-points, prototypes, visualisations and any other form of representation and tangibility.

This is even more important when dealing with public-interest services: to use material evidence is essential to empathise with a community and create an 'object' for discussion in a particular context and around a specific issue.

The characteristic of *inseparability* focuses on the necessary presence of the user during the service performance. Starting from the assumption that "design for services conceive users as a resource rather than a burden or a problem" (Meroni and Sangiorgi 2011, p. 19), user involvement is crucial in every stage of the service, not only in the delivery phase.

Hence, inseparability means dealing with different levels of user participation and refers to the concepts of codesign and co-production.

Codesign in public-interest services has a strategic importance because it relates to the construction of a 'public' around a specific issue and, above all, the process of codesign should amplify individual interest into a public interest. The concept of co-production deals with the notion of collaborative services (Manzini 2008) and the co-creation model suggested by Cottam and Leadbeater (2004), which requires the inclusion of users in every stage of the solution and the use of a set of virtual and physical resources connected to a specific context.

The codesign and co-production of services have a significant relevance in public-interest services because they deal with the long-term survival and well-being of a social collective, hence, process and outcomes should be code-signed and co-produced by users-citizens. These two co-creative stages are both crucial, one (codesign) may be considered as an essential pre-condition for the other (co-production), this is not necessarily a chronological path, but a continuous and iterative process, in which codesign and co-production are performed when needed (the final part of this book provides a more extensive reflection on this issue, which is crucial for the discussion regarding the possible infrastructuring of public-interest services).

Heterogeneity is the third key characteristic and it refers to the fact that services are variable, depending on several factors such as time, space and the people involved. Every service situation is different, which is why Maffei and Sangiorgi (2006) talk about 'situated actions', influenced by the socio-cultural and organi-sational context.

As we argued in the definition of public-interest services, the context in which a configuration of citizens originates is fundamental and, as DiSalvo and Le Dantec (2013) observe, within a smaller and more intimate scale (a local context), it is easier for issues to be converted into solutions. The context of this service encounter has multiple dimensions: it is social, cultural, organisational and, in relation to public-interest services, it is also 'public'.

Finally, *perishability* deals with the impossibility for services to be stored and with the difficulty of managing supply and demand. This is also connected with the issues of scaling up and replicating: to achieve these two objectives, "service solutions need to consider the interactive nature of services and their local dimensions" (Meroni and Sangiorgi 2011, p. 23). The idea of replicating a set of

public-interest services is both challenging and difficult: on the one hand, they refer to values that are 'public' and valid in most contexts, on the other hand, multiple elements should be adapted to new situations, being aware that it is difficult to replicate relational qualities (Cipolla 2006).

Meroni and Sangiorgi conclude their book, '*Design for Services*' (2011), with a map showing four possible fields of applications within the area of design for services:

- designing interactions, relations and experiences;
- designing interactions to shape systems and organisations;
- exploring new collaborative service models;
- imaging future directions for service systems.

Design for public-interest services could be positioned in the top right-hand section of the map, between 'exploring new collaborative service models' and 'imaging future directions for service systems' (see Fig. 4.2).

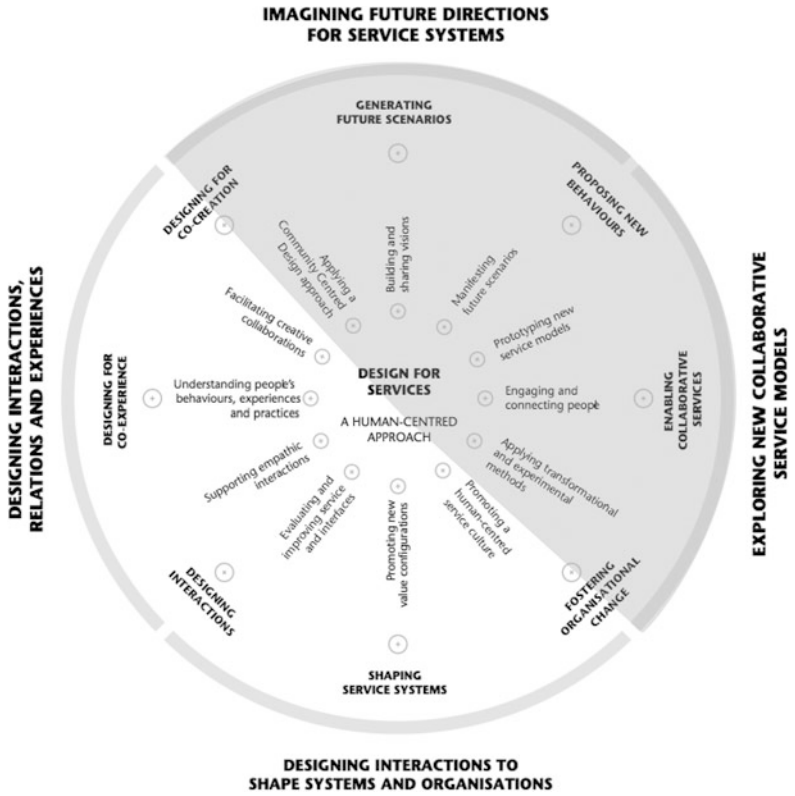

Fig. 4.2 Positioning public-interest services within Meroni and Sangiorgi's map of areas of application in design for services (2011)

In the area related to new collaborative services models, services are viewed as platforms that enable people to participate and collaborate within their communities in order to achieve their aims and, thus, to improve their lifestyles.

This is particularly suitable when envisioning a system based on interlinking public-interest services: using the words of Manzini (2008), we refer to technical and social networks where people, products and places interact to obtain a common result. Furthermore, as the map shows, the action of 'engaging and connecting people' is crucial, and in doing so, 'applying transformational and experimental methods' is a suitable approach.

The second area, related to imagining future directions, deals with the aim of generating and sharing visions, and this is embedded in the very notion of public-interest services, which have to serve 'the public interest' and ensure that it is organised for the future.

This need to generate future scenarios is intrinsically connected with the 'ideal' character of the concept of public interest, which is related to 'proposing new behaviours' and imagining new sustainable lifestyles, as the map demonstrates. A 'strategic conversation' (Nardone and Salvini 2004) among different stakeholders and citizens can be an appropriate approach to collectively building a scenario and exploring how public interest will be represented and served in the future.

4.4 Participatory Design and Codesign

Participatory design and codesign are two interconnected concepts, even if there is not a great deal of agreement about what they are and how they relate.

Initially in this section, we present an outline of the most established area of participatory design and, more specifically, its recent connection with the concept of social innovation.

Subsequently, we deal with the notion of codesign, being aware that, in a way, it represents a more recent conceptualisation of participatory design, identifying a specific approach that deals with the idea of including a variety of actors to reach a common goal, that, in this book, corresponds to the process of involving citizens in formulating a set of public-interest services.

Participatory design at a glance

Participatory design has been practised in a number of different areas, such as the field of technology development and use in organisations; it has been extensively applied in urban planning and community development, and currently it is facing a set of challenges related to changing social, economic, technical and political landscapes.

For the description of participatory design, we refer mainly to the Scandinavian school and more specifically to Ehn and his colleagues' work.

Participatory design started to develop in the '70s, to face the challenge of introducing new technologies into the workplace, specifically, numerical control machines and computers (Ehn 1988). This was seen as an opportunity to enhance workers' skills and expertise and to make technological innovation more democratic in the Scandinavian countries. It was assumed that individuals affected by a design should have a voice in the design process, and this assumption was not neutral, but political: by making this statement, Ehn and his colleagues did not expect consensus, they were ready to face controversy and conflict around 'an emerging design object' (Ehn 2008).

Hence, participatory designed emerged both as a movement towards democratisation at work, to include legitimate worker participation, and as an engagement process, involving not only participants' explicit expertise but also their 'tacit knowledge' (Ehn 1988; Greenbaum and Kyng 1991).

In his renowned article 'Participation in design things' (2008), Ehn describes how participatory design has changed since its origin: he points out a shift from a participatory design oriented to work within companies and organisations to a participatory design dedicated to enhance processes of empowerment and change within communities.

This shift has a specific relevance for this book: participatory design and the notion of public-interest services both relate to the idea of involving a community, a configuration of citizens construed as a 'public'.

Furthermore, in his article, Ehn points out another important shift: from designing 'things' (objects) to designing 'Things' (socio-material assemblies). This is a shift from traditional participatory design, whose object is a specific product or service, to a new form of participatory design for realising a socio-material assembly, defined with the term 'Thing'.

As Björgvinsson et al. (2010) argue in their paper 'Participatory design and democratizing innovation', this shift is particularly evident when participatory design enters the public sphere and everyday life, in a process of 'Thinging' and 'infrastructuring' of innovation intervention. They describe how participatory design is changing its traditional agenda of democracy at work to 'democratize' innovation in other public and open milieu, where controversies are allowed to exist more readily than in work places. "…Design and innovation activities have become distributed across contexts and competences often blurring the borders between citizens, private companies, the public domain and academia. This reorientation is also due to the condition that user driven innovation has become widespread" (Björgvinsson et al. 2010, p. 42).

Hence, according to these authors, participatory design is currently facing the challenge of how to stimulate other perspectives on participation and democratisation, and this challenge is particularly meaningful in relation to public-interest services, which originate within a hybrid milieu, precisely at the intersection between private and public spheres, across organisational and community borders (see Sect. 4.2).

Dealing with this evolution of participatory design, Ehn (2008) also suggests a definition of "design as participative, entangled, meaning—making design-games" (p. 95), building upon Wittgenstein's language-game theory (1953).

Participatory design is seen by Ehn as a combination of various design-games with special attention given to material components, to non-human participants involved in socio-material assemblies. More specifically, they are artefacts as prototypes, mock-ups, models and sketches that can act as 'boundary objects' (Star 1989), connecting the various language games. Ehn defines these artefacts as design devices: they play the role of 'representatives' for the evolving object of design, and, at the same time, they are conceived as socio-material 'public things' necessary to support participation.

Hence, design devices are participatory design tools that may be viewed as actual 'performative artefacts', playing an active role within the design process. In reference to the notion of public interest, they are fundamental tools when constructing a 'public' in a particular context and around a specific issue. They are not only representatives of the design object, but also tools for aligning different participants and different matters of concern, in other words, for aligning interests, and thus, amplifying individual interests into public interests.

Manzini and Rizzo (2011) also offer an important perspective, by linking participatory design to social innovation.

They argue that participatory design is dynamic, in fact a linear and traditional codesign process can be complex and contradictory at the same time. The role of designer in this process is to mediate among different interests, thus, again, amplifying individual interests into public interests by using the designer's specific competence to create what Ehn calls design games and their equivalent design devices.

According to Manzini and Rizzo (2011) participatory design may be seen as a constellation of design initiatives that aim to construct socio-material assemblies where social innovation can develop.

They use the term 'design initiatives' instead of 'design games', and this replacement is crucial in a social innovation perspective, because it refers to a "sequence of actions where professional designers play a leading role and where specific designs are used to trigger new actions and sequences of events" (p. 201).

Participatory design is regarded by Manzini and Rizzo as a way to integrate, enhance and diffuse social resources and this view is connected to the notion of social innovation conceived by Mulgan (2006). 'To integrate and enhance social resources' means essentially to consider participants not as users with problems but as actors able to offer specific competences and local knowledge. From this point of view, participatory design can be seen as social-material assemblies that allow the emergence and promotion of such resources. The shift from 'design games' to 'design initiatives' focuses on the role of participants who become social actors able to use their creativity, organisational capabilities and entrepreneurship to imagine and develop new solutions and, if this occurs, participatory design and design for social innovation converge and, in a way, overlap.

Manzini and Rizzo (2011) refer to bottom-up initiatives in which a number of diverse actors collaborate to imagine and produce a social change, similarly to that which was analysed in the first chapter of this book, describing creative communities, active citizens, etc. These are encouraging cases of bottom-up social innovation that, according to the authors, can be considered as a form of participatory design, more specifically a participatory design project in which social innovation is viewed as the result and the main driver at the same time.

Hence, what is relevant in Manzini and Rizzo's perspective, is that those 'socio-material assemblies' described by Ehn can be interpreted as favourable environments where social innovation can emerge and grow.

Along the same line of reasoning, Bannon and Ehn (2012) agree that there is significant potential for participatory design to contribute to social innovation initiatives, but, at the same time, this implies a number of different challenges: introducing design practices into environments where no object is being designed, where local actors with different agendas and resources interact, and where the designer is just one among other professional actors who contribute to promote social change.

Codesign at a glance

The practice of collective creativity in design has been around for almost forty years, under the name of participatory design: currently, however, the related expression 'codesign' has received much attention and caused division, taking different paths in the US and in Europe (Sanders 2013).

To introduce codesign, we refer to the work of Sanders and Stappers (2008), who begin their conceptualisations by providing two separate definitions for co-creation and codesign.

By co-creation, they refer to "any act of collective creativity, i.e. creativity that is shared by two or more people", while they use codesign to describe the "collective creativity as it is applied across the whole span of a design process" (p. 2).

The first definition is broad, with numerous applications in various domains, whereas the notion of codesign is narrower: it is conceived as a specific formulation of co-creation applied within the design area, a creative cooperation of people and designers working together in the same process, in which 'people' may be considered as users, and more specifically, for the purposes of this book, as citizens involved in the design of public-interest services.

Sanders and Stappers (2008) also analyse the design process in order to identify the specific stages in which codesign might take place, and they illustrate how the use of codesign is especially meaningful in a phase named 'front-end'. This was formerly called 'pre-design' and it is the stage for exploration, for gaining inspiration, and for exploring possibilities as to what the object of design is and what should be excluded. This phase is described as 'fuzzy' and chaotic, and is followed by a traditional design process, refining the concept (product, service, interface, etc.) and prototyping it, on the basis of user feedback.

Hence, according to these authors, codesign is crucial at the moment of ideas exploration and generation but, at the same time, participation at the moment of decision is also gaining in interest. They develop this idea by assigning significant potential to participatory practices in the solution of large-scale problems, referring to Cross (1972), who was one of the pioneers in conceiving codesign as a means of tackling the most pressing social issues.

This conception of codesign as an important method of generating ideas and taking decisions has significant relevance in public-interest services, where a high level of participation is required, especially in the 'front-end'. In fact, it is necessary at this stage to explore needs as desires, in order to identify an issue and gather a configuration of citizens around it. Furthermore, codesign should also support the decision-making process that is the 'deliberation phase', in which several factors are considered in order to best serve the public interest.

Attempting to link codesign to the wide history of participatory practices, Sanders and Stappers (2008) present codesign as an evolution from the convergence of two different approaches: the user-centred design approach, coming from the American tradition, in which the user is seen as a 'subject' and the participatory approach led by Scandinavian countries, characterised by a view of the user as a 'partner'.

They observe how the shift from user-centred design to codesign is changing the role of key-actors in the design process. In a traditional user-centred design process, users are seen as an 'object of study': designers and researchers observe 'their object' and they ask questions through interviews. In the codesign process (similarly to Manzini's 2008 conception of 'users as resources'), users are considered 'experts of their experience' and thus, play a key role from idea generation to the development of a service.

Sanders and Stappers describe how in the codesign process, roles get mixed up: users/citizens bring their knowledge and experiences and designers/researchers contribute with their competences, and together develop proper codesign tools.

Hence, in this view, users may be considered as actual 'codesigners', even if designers still play a critical role in mediating, facilitating and guiding people's creativity. No less important, the users' contribution is essential in creating tools for the codesign process.

Currently, numerous collections of codesign tools and techniques are emerging and being dispersed: to outline a brief overview of this phenomenon, we adopt the framework proposed by Sanders et al. (2010).

They distinguish three main areas, based on the 'form' of tools and techniques that can serve for 'making', 'enacting' and 'telling'.

Making refers to tools and techniques for making tangible things, for example maps, collages, models, mock-ups, low-tech prototypes etc. Here, making tools are very similar to what Manzini and Rizzo (2011) call 'tools for conversation', Star (1989) calls 'boundary objects' and Ehn calls 'design devices' (2008). Making tools serve to embody ideas in the form of physical artefacts, facilitating communication and social interaction.

On the other hand, telling tools and techniques are useful to support verbally oriented activities such as talking and explaining. Examples of these tools are techniques like self-observation, documentaries and diaries, cards for organising ideas, storyboarding, experience timelines and maps. All these tools are useful in telling future scenarios through verbal or visual descriptions.

Enacting refers to tools and techniques that facilitate acting and playing; they include role-playing and improvisation, usually supported by props. Enacting is pretending in a certain way, and it is related to the simulation of future experiences. Examples of enacting tools are game boards, 3-D space models, props and black boxes.

The combination of these three different sets of tools and techniques allows people to express their creativity and participate by entering the codesign process at any point, making and using things, telling stories and enacting experiences. Undoubtedly, the real situation is more confused and borders between categories are blurred, possibilities of combinations are infinite and the list of codesign tools is continuing to grow. An extensive overview of codesign tools is offered in the second part of this book, with reference to the various experimentations that are discussed.

In a more recent article issued in 2014, Sanders and Stappers provide a specific focus on making tools, arguing that, over the last ten years, we have experienced a change in how we approach making tools, using them not only once the design opportunity has been identified, but also at the beginning of the process, in the so called 'front end'.

More specifically, we can argue that making has become an activity in which participants can engage during every phase. In later stages, making tends to take the form of a prototype for testing ideas, but, at the same time, numerous recent codesign activities have been characterised by 'iterative prototyping', which supports the growing of early conceptual designs into mature items (products, services, environments etc.). As Sanders and Stappers (2014) point out, in making, people can bring their insights to the surface, evoking a discussion because the phenomenon is 'on the table', and, thus, allows different hypotheses to be tested and situations that did not exist before to be experienced.

Making tools are currently being used as vehicles for collectively exploring and testing ideas about future ways of living. The use of 'making' as a way to make sense of the future is a type of creative act that involves construction and transformation of meaning: this is particularly relevant when we aim to amplify individual interests into public interests, and thus, to support transposition of meaning.

This discussion ends with Muller (2013), who attempts to define codesign as a sort of hybrid space, 'an in-between region' for designers and end-users.

Muller essentially defines this 'third space' in reference to HCI work, but we recognise various similarities with the hybrid area of public-interest, which, as stated, it is a true in-between area (between public and private sector, profit and not-for-profit, amateur and professional, market and society) in which codesign activities should be practised.

According to Muller, this 'third space' is a fertile environment in which participants can combine diverse knowledge into new insights and plans for action. He states that different experiences can characterise this space, such as challenging assumptions, learning reciprocally, creating new ideas through a continual negotiation and co-creation of identities, carrying out discussions across and through differences. And, it is precisely these dialogues within differences that become stronger when engaged in by groups, emphasising a shift from individuals to collectives (Carrillo 2000).

As such, this hybrid space connects differences and creates a bridge between different actors as occurs within the arena of public-interest services. This arena is an actual codesign space in which inspiration, exploration, discussion and deliberation are activities that need designers' support. Involving a group of citizens and other interested actors in a codesign process is crucial to facilitate decision-making and consequent service development.

The next step should be the involvement of actors in the production process, shifting from engaging to actually empowering people. Their contribution may span all stages of the service, from the generation of ideas to actual realisation, from codesign to co-production, leading to actual results, as we will see in the second part of this book, dedicated to describing actual experimentations in this field.

4.5 Infrastructures and Infrastructuring

'Infrastructure' and 'infrastructuring' are two crucial notions for this book. They are interwoven and also firmly linked to participatory design, codesign and social innovation. In this section, we provide an overview of literature on 'infrastructure' and 'infrastructuring', aiming to prepare the ground for developing a more specific conceptualisation of what, and how, an infrastructure should be able to support the emergence and consolidation of public-interest services (the final part of the book offers a definition of a particular collaborative infrastructure and the related infrastructuring process in ten steps).

Both 'infrastructure' and 'infrastructuring' appear in the work of Ehn (2008) and Björgvinsson et al. (2010), who build upon Star's theorisation on infrastructure in her articles, 'Steps Toward an Ecology of Infrastructure: Design and Access for Large Information Spaces' (Star and Ruhleder 1997) and, 'How to Infrastructure' (Star and Bowker 2002).

Speaking of participatory design in the field of social innovation, and even more in connection with public-interest services, the need for infrastructures to support this innovation has been acknowledged. In this sense, infrastructures can be interpreted as intermediaries for facilitating connections among diverse actors and elements, stakeholders and resources. More specifically, "what type of infrastructure is a central issue since innovation today, to a large degree, demands extensive collaboration over time and among many stakeholders" (Björgvinsson et al. 2010, p. 43).

Star and Ruhleder (1997) started to study infrastructures to more fully explore how technology affects organisational transformation. They points out that this relation has a paradoxical nature: "it is both engine and barrier for change; both customizable and rigid; both inside and outside organizational practices. It is product and process […] It arises from the tension between local, customized, intimate and flexible use on the one hand, and the need for standards and continuity on the other" (p. 111).

Coincidentally, in defining the notion of infrastructure, Star and Ruhleder emphasise that it is fundamentally a relational concept, by quoting Bateson (1979): "what can be studied is always a relationship or an infinite regress of relationships. Never a *thing*" (p. 249).

Hence, the relational character is at the core of the notion of infrastructure: it is something that emerges in practice, in a specific situation, and is connected to other elements, such as people and activities. And so, infrastructure is not a thing, but a relation, it is not a noun, but a verb signifying a practice or process.

This is why, in a more recent work entitled, 'How to infrastructure', Star and Bowker (2002) talk about 'infrastructuring', emphasising a focus on 'doing' and meaning that it is possible to 'infrastructure' a set of elements and actors. In this scenario, they conceive infrastructure as not only relating to technology and organisational transformation, i.e. in terms of human versus technological components, but also in terms of a set of interrelated social, organisational, and technical components or systems.

This shift allows a connection with the design process, by also taking into account the social dimensions of infrastructure. Here, the expression 'infrastructuring' is used as a more comprehensive term for the 'design' activities of professional designers and users (Karasti and Syrjänen 2004; Karasti and Baker 2004; Pipek and Wulf 2009), stressing the need for modifiability of infrastructures, for flexible and open design processes, for a long-term rather than a short-term timeframe.

This encounter between individuals, communities and infrastructures has been expanded by Ehn (2008): "Infrastructure or rather infrastructuring is a socio-material public thing, it is relational and becomes infrastructure in relation to design-games at project time and (multiple potentially conflicting) design-games in use" (p. 96).

In connecting infrastructures and design processes, he identifies a number of 'infrastructuring strategies' to support the flexibility, openness and configurability of infrastructures as 'socio-material public things'. Here, we propose a selection of Ehn's strategies:

- *Formats and protocols*: the reference metaphor for the design of protocols or formats is architecture, i.e. the development of principal solutions with a set of clear features, like the principles developed for identifying a 'basilica'. Therefore, protocolling and formatting are related to the elaboration of recognisable characteristics.
- *Configurations*: setting a configuration means essentially to 'adapt a space' for numerous uses and identities and to 'configure the diverse devices' within the

physical space. Hence, this infrastructuring strategy relates to flexibility and to providing means for different configurations.
- *Components*: the 'component strategy' is based on the idea of developing a configurable infrastructure by using general building blocks, applying a sort of 'LEGO approach'.
- *Patterns*: to elaborate a pattern means to find a way to sustain user participation in local planning and appropriation of their own environment; the focus is precisely on the support for the appropriation in use, or better "as vehicles for design in use" (p. 97).
- *Ontologies*: according to Fensel (2003), an ontology consists of a set of concepts and relations that characterise a certain domain. Ehn (2008) compares an ontology to a dictionary or glossary, equipped with a structure that enables its content to be processed. Ontologies are particularly useful for exploring complex domains; it is not possible to define universal and absolute ontologies, rather, to be considered as an effective infrastructuring strategy, they need to be situated and continuously negotiated, and so, to be open and controversial.

Building upon the work of Star and Ruhleder (1997), Björgvinsson et al. (2010) later specify the concepts of infrastructure and infrastructuring.

They argue that infrastructure is not a substrate on top of which other actions can run, but rather an ongoing alignment between contexts. Contexts and practices experience many concurrent changes and this requires a continuous infrastructuring and aligning of conflicting interests. From this point of view, infrastructuring can be intended as a continuous process that goes beyond the design phase and critically encompasses many other stages, such as selection, development, deployment, enactment etc., (and in elaborating this conceptualisation, they refer to the work of a variety of authors, such as Karasti and Baker (2004), Twidale and Floyd (2008), Pipek and Wulf (2009).

Hence, summarising the contributions of all these authors, 'infrastructure' and 'infrastructuring' emerge as relational, situational, flexible and open concepts, in between customisation and standardisation, both product (infrastructure) and process (infrastructuring). On the one hand, they are characterised by elaborating formats, configurations, patterns etc., on the other hand, they are open to controversies.

In order to provide a more extensive overview of the notion of infrastructure, we also refer to the work of several authors who link the concept of infrastructure with that of 'enabling platform', often related to social innovation (Seravalli 2011; Sangiorgi 2011; Jégou and Manzini 2008; Morelli 2007).

Seravalli (2011) points out that infrastructures are needed to support the flourishing of social innovation and, within this process, they play the role of intermediaries. These forms of mediations are enabling platforms that she defines as situated systems of human and non-human actors whose aim is to sustain bottom-up initiatives and cross-sector networks by responding to 'the meta-technological demands' of social innovation activities. To reach this objective, enabling platforms

should give value to local stakeholders and resources, and thus, be deeply rooted in a given context.

She also argues that, as for Ehn (2008) and Star and Ruheleder (1997), infrastructures and enabling platforms should be open and flexible, 'characterized by a certain degree of indeterminacy', in order to leave the possibility to the involved stakeholders to initiate their own activities after the design of the platform is concluded.

In connecting enabling platforms and social innovation, Morelli (2007) points out that we are experiencing a shift from the provision of finite solutions (products) to the provision of semi-finished platforms, in order to enable people to create value not only according to their individual needs, but also generating a new social quality by empowering users and other actors, as institutions or service providers. These platforms allow different combinations, fostering "each actor to generate an economy of scope" (p. 10).

Jégou and Manzini (2008) define enabling platforms as a system composed of material and immaterial elements intended to develop a favourable context for creative communities and other promising cases of social innovation in order to enhance their possibility to emerge and evolve into lasting forms and to become facilitators of the transition towards a sustainable society.

Thus, enabling platforms are described as framework conditions, i.e. infrastructures, able to support a variety of initiatives that evolve into actual creative communities, then into collaborative services and hopefully into lasting forms, such as social enterprises.

Morelli (2007) and Jégou and Manzini (2008) describe enabling platforms as modular systems in which the competences and roles are specified; they are open to different combinations and characterised by flexibility and indeterminacy, as are the infrastructures described above.

Sangiorgi, in outlining her seven 'Transformational Principles' (2011), identifies the sixth principle as 'Building Infrastructures and Enabling Platforms'. She connects Star's (1997) and Ehn's (2008) notion of infrastructuring to that of the platform defined by Skidmore and Craig (2005), describing a platform model that is capable of supporting different, sometimes even incoherent, sets of activities, making it difficult to recognise where the boundaries of an organisation start and finish.

Sangiorgi refers more specifically to design service platforms, in which, as in Jégou and Manzini's notion of 'collaborative services' (2008), participants become co-creators of the services. In this context, "designers cannot design fixed entities and sequences of actions that allow little adaptation and flexibility. Platforms made up of tools, roles and rules delineate the weak conditions for certain practices and behaviours to emerge" (p. 36). Hence, Sangiorgi demonstrates the need for a certain degree of indeterminacy, in order to adapt the use of platforms to a diverse range of contexts and situations over time.

The idea of infrastructuring a set of resources and diverse actors in a specific context and timeframe is central to the development of public-interest services. More specifically, infrastructuring the activities of creative communities may be a fruitful strategy to capture and orient many bottom-up initiatives and, hopefully,

transform them into public-interest services by using the knowledge and techniques coming from design for services and participatory design. The idea of creating infrastructures as intermediaries to support social innovation is a fundamental matter; one possible typology of infrastructure may be a 'socio-material public thing' in which codesign and co-production are both process and outcome, an infrastructure composed of modules and roles that can be combined in different ways, enabling actors to generate economies of scope for the public interest.

The last part of this book deals specifically with outlining a type of infrastructure (and related infrastructuring process) that originates from the combination of the existing literature on the topic presented in this section with the lessons learnt from the action-research experimentations described in Part 2.

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Part II
Experimenting with Public-Interest Services

The second part of the book is devoted to comparing a series of case studies related to the "infrastructuring" of bottom-up initiatives into actual public-interest services in order to extract and deepen a set of common features.

First, an extensive case study is presented: this is the 'Creative Citizens' experimentation conducted by the author within the POLIMI DESIS Lab of Politecnico di Milano. The project consisted of a series of intensive creative sessions to codesign services with citizens in one specific Milanese neighbourhood, Zone 4. The final result of 'Creative Citizens' is a collection of six everyday services codesigned with the participation of local people that are currently evolving in different ways, envisaging an intersection with the public sector or initiating new social enterprises.

Second, three experimentations are described that were carried out in research labs within the international network DESIS, in order to compare them with 'Creative Citizens': 'Welcome to St Gilles'—Belgium (LUCA DESIS Lab), 'Green Camden'—UK (UAL DESIS Lab) and 'The NYC Office for Public Imagination'—USA (Parsons DESIS Lab). All these experimental activities share the objective of "infrastructuring" bottom-up initiatives adopting a set of sensibilities, methods and tools coming from design research and, at the same time, combining approaches coming from different disciplines, such as sociology, economy, urban planning and policy making.

In the final part, we identify a set of common features that characterise all these experimentations: analysing their legacy; the use of community-centred design as a common approach; considering designing services as a start and/or end point; and, finally, a reflection on the designer's role in the public realm.

Chapter 5
The 'Creative Citizens' Experimentation (POLIMI DESIS Lab)

Abstract The 'Creative Citizens' (www.cittadinicreativi.it) project occurred within a community of residents located in a particular neighbourhood of Milan (Zone 4). It consists of a set of codesign experiments that lasted for about five months in the spring of 2013, coordinated by the author under the auspices of the POLIMI DESIS Lab—Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano.

The experimentation was based on a year of deep immersion within the community of Zone 4: after having prepared a fertile context, the objective was to carry out an extended programme of codesign sessions to test methods and tools of participatory and service design. Starting in this way with an analysis of local needs and desires, an important objective was to explore new service areas in order to expand the initial work on food systems and to cover a more complete range of daily life activities.

The idea at the core of 'Creative Citizens' was to involve the same group of people in two-hour-long weekly meetings over several months, and so to organise a set of systemic and intensive codesign sessions that would allow the topic to be tackled in greater depth.

The guiding concept is to establish a 'protected environment' (Ceschin 2012) for action research, by involving the most active citizens of a community, by identifying the most attractive topics and by creating a simple path for creative participation, precisely because everyone can become a 'designer of their daily life', at least for a few months, while having fun at the same time.

To organise such a programme, several issues had to considered, which are described in more detail in the following paragraphs of this chapter:

- *ethnographic immersion* within the context;
- food systems as '*boundary topic*';
- find a proper *location*;
- involve a sufficient number of people representing the *community*;
- involve local *stakeholders*;
- identify *topics* to be addressed;

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– create a *communication* campaign;
– schedule a *programme of codesign sessions*;
– prepare a set of codesign *tools*.

5.1 A Deep Dive into Zone 4

Before starting the intensive 'Creative Citizens' programme, a preliminary year-long phase was dedicated to preparing a fertile context for the experimentation. It consisted of a 'deep dive' in Zone 4 to collect data in the field and gather stories about the neighbourhood by employing different methodologies, essentially coming from ethnographic research and participatory design.

In this deep immersion, the author became an actual 'member' of the community by participating in meetings, events and various activities. She was also included in a local digital platform, a Google Group for sharing information about the neighbourhood. In particular, she spent a considerable amount of time contacting parents groups, time bank associations, mutual aid groups, and representatives of the third sector in order to find the most active members in the community and involve them in the subsequent codesign sessions.

Such deep immersion was characterised by an approach that Meroni (2008) defines as 'community-centred design', suggesting that the community (rather than a single user) might be a subject of interest for design. In this perspective, a community situated in a specific neighbourhood is considered as the proper scale of intervention to activate social change.

This first phase benefitted from a research context that already existed: the POLIMI DESIS Lab's research project, 'Feeding Milan—Energy for change', whose main areas of experimentation were the Agricultural Park South Milan (bordering on Zone 4) and the 'Earth Market', the first farmers' market on public land in the city of Milan, situated in the heart of the neighbourhood. Within this project, a service design team integrated a multidisciplinary group of agriculturalists and gastronomists to design a network of interconnected services based on the principles of a short food chain, multifunctionality and collaboration between stakeholders in order to develop a scenario of sustainable agriculture and food supply for Milan.

Hence, the first contact with the Zone 4 community occurred within this research framework, specifically building on an experimental activity developed within the Earth Market: a set of codesign initiatives taking place during the monthly market. The 'Ideas Sharing Stall' provides a physical space within the market in which to make contact with potential users of the services to be developed, to co-create, prototype and test ideas before their actual implementation.

These experiments offered an opportunity to meet a huge variety of local stakeholders, such as producers from the peri-urban area, representatives of associations, retailers, and residents attending the market. This rich diversity of people

and multi-functionality of purpose (Cantù 2012) created a good environment for codesigning social innovation.

People passing by the stall were asked if they would be willing to use some of the potential solutions presented and if they would help in defining the service features that best suited their needs. The 'Ideas sharing stall' worked as the engine of the 'Feeding Milan' project, activating a continuous dialogue between local stakeholders regarding the services to be implemented, and creating a flywheel effect for those ideas (Cantù and Selloni 2013). In fact, while codesigning at the Earth Market, researchers interacted with a very diverse group of people, obtaining first-hand ideas and feedback on the services to be developed, and starting a process of citizen participation in defining how the city should be. The 'Ideas Sharing Stall' experimentation had the effect of informing and engaging producers and consumers in the first step of a potential process of change.

Initially, therefore, it was crucial to build on the experiments developed within the 'Ideas Research Stall' involving potential users in a series of short codesign activities with passersby. The main idea was to use the 'Ideas Sharing Stall' as a window where producers and citizens, together with potential stakeholders in the public and private sectors, become familiar with services that could potentially be implemented in the city. These would be inspired by previously proposed solutions, at least in draft form, to attract their interest and start a conversation.

Additionally, in this first phase, some exploratory experiments were held at other locations outside the Earth Market and on other occasions, such as Cascina Cuccagna (an old farmhouse restored by active citizens) and 'Fa' la cosa giusta', the first national fair on conscious consumption and sustainable lifestyles in Italy. Common to these experiments was the use of short codesign activities with passersby, basing them on existing situations, collecting insights, and making contact with the most active members of the community.

5.2 Food Systems as 'Boundary Topic'

As a consequence of building the experimentation on the 'Feeding Milan' project, the first exploratory codesign activities were focussed around the single theme of food systems, a subject with a strong social and convivial character, and able to gather many people together, particularly in the Italian context.

This is why food systems can be defined as a sort of 'boundary topic', based on the notion of 'boundary object' suggested by Star (1989), which means that to identify a community it is necessary to bind it to a specific and identifiable topic, and this theme has to be able to arouse interest and spark off a conversation. Practical things and everyday issues are good examples of 'boundary topics', and food is perceived as one of the most important subjects in people's life, dealing with health, sustainability and also the everyday issues of shopping and cooking.

Hence, we started to gather active citizens around the topic of food systems in a process similar to the formation of a 'public' around a critical issue described by Dewey (1927) and as described in previous chapters.

According to Dewey, a public is called into being when citizens experience something negative beyond their control. Hence, a public only originates when it has a reason to congregate around a crucial question. This is exactly what happened in Zone 4 with food systems.

At the end of this first year of ethnographic immersion and exploratory experiments, the Municipality of Milan decided to relocate the Earth Market to another neighbourhood, which generated much displeasure and protest within the Zone 4 community.

The local people felt they were being deprived of an important public space, and experiencing a kind of social exclusion. In fact, the relocation of the Earth Market was the first spark that triggered cohesion around a more extensive notion of food systems dealing with access to fresh and good quality food.

A group of about sixty citizens created an email list to organise a protest and they contacted media and the press to guarantee publicity. They also invited the author to attend several meetings of the Zone 4 local committee and this was the first step to her establishing a deeper connection with them.

This first phase was crucial in preparing the ground for the following and more intensive part of the experimentation, i.e. the 'Creative Citizens' programme. We spent a considerable amount of time immersing ourselves in the context, not only through participant observations, but actually taking part in the activities of the community. In particular, we attended many events at Cascina Cuccagna, talking with citizens and members of local associations about their needs and wishes, and what they felt were the most important issues for the neighbourhood.

Hence, our 'entrance strategy' as designers was not simply as traditional ethnographers, but more by adopting the 'community-centred design' approach mentioned above, and thus by becoming a member of the community itself. We did not receive any 'official mandate' to work with this community, which might be viewed as problematic in an official, institutionalized situation. We simply 'inherited' a small community from the 'Feeding Milan' project and decided to expand this work through a deep dive within the context of the group.

Thus, it may be argued that this first phase was essential in creating a small community of people ready to participate in a more intensive programme and, therefore, in preparing the ground for the next phase: the 'Creative Citizens' programme.

5.3 Location: Cascina Cuccagna

The 'Creative Citizens' experimentation took place in a space that symbolises Milanese activism—the Cascina Cuccagna, one of sixty farmhouses owned by the Municipality of Milan that have been saved from decay and neglect by a group of active residents.

Thanks to this bottom-up initiative, the Cascina has been revived: it is now a green oasis in the centre of the city, a piece of countryside situated just outside the former city walls in the Zone 4 neighbourhood.

Brief history of Cascina Cuccagna

Cascina Cuccagna, built in 1695, is one of the oldest farmhouses in Milan. It was originally used solely as a farm, but it later became the first Milanese farmhouse to have both residential and productive functions. Thanks to its structure, which is open to its surroundings, it evolved into a sort of multi-functional centre at the beginning of the 19th century, housing a craft workshop and a tavern, which are fixed in the neighbourhood memory.

In 1984 it became the property of the Municipality, which was the first step towards its decline, as Cascina Cuccagna was left empty and declared unfit for use.

As a result, a group of Zone 4 residents created a "network of skills, energy, professionalism and resources" (Vicari Haddock and Moulaert 2009, p. 213) to develop a project to restore and transform the farmhouse into a multi-purpose centre for cultural and territorial participation. In the late 90s, this group founded the 'Cuccagna Cooperative', a collective working to bring the case of Cascina Cuccagna to the attention of other citizens and institutions. Most importantly, they took on the responsibility of developing an 'action-plan' that involved city planners, architects and engineers, and included a restoration project of the farmhouse and its garden.

The birth of the 'Cuccagna Cooperative' represented the start of a wave of urban activism that in 2005 created the 'Consortium Cantiere Cuccagna', a wider network of local associations, cultural and social organisations and representatives of the third sector. The Consortium applied to a public call to manage the farmhouse, and obtained a twenty-year concession to use the space. This was the first step of a slow but progressive reconstruction of Cascina Cuccagna, which is now reopened to the public.

Today, Cascina Cuccagna aims to become a permanent laboratory for civic participation and a new public venue to welcome and support the creativity of individuals, groups and associations by providing space, equipment and collaboration. The farmhouse is currently organising residency opportunities for original projects with the same mission.

'Creative Citizens' responded to the call for the assignment of temporary spaces in the Cascina, presenting a programme focused on participatory design between designers and local communities using the tools of service design research. The project received the endorsement of the Zone 4 Board of Local Government in direct connection with the Municipality of Milan (Fig. 5.1).

Fig. 5.1 The Cascina Cuccagna (http://www.cascinacuccagna.org)

5.4 People: A Community of Local Activists

'Creative Citizens' was an experimentation that involved a community of thirty citizens with weekly meetings from February 2013 to the end of June 2013. It brought the expertise of researchers to the service of ordinary people in Cascina Cuccagna, creating a laboratory of solutions for everyday problems, improving existing services and designing new ones, acting as a sort of semi-public office for service design, and connecting citizens with designers, local stakeholders and institutions. In other words, creating a positive environment for codesigning social innovation.

After a year of deep immersion within the community of Zone 4, a small group of active citizens emerged. Daniela, Massimo, Stefano, Elisa and Inge are very committed people who represented the 'hard core' of the thirty 'Creative Citizens' taking part in the experimentation. We consider this small group to be real 'heroes', people who believe in the importance of changing things, starting with their own daily life.

These five 'heroes' differ in terms of nationality, age, income, political views and type of employment, but they share a vision about a collaborative neighbourhood and about a new way of considering public goods and services. They also see themselves as part of a group of 'social entrepreneurs' able to make a difference in society by setting up a diverse range of initiatives responding to social needs. In fact, they have already set up some activities: Stefano is one of the founders of the local Time Bank, Daniela and Massimo are members of the principal local

committee of activists, Inge has a blog on food activism, and Elisa, who has just graduated in design, views her social commitment as a potential form of job creation. They all feel the responsibility of taking care of the commons and they considered the 'Creative Citizens' project to be a powerful means of establishing a dialogue with the Municipality by presenting new ideas.

In addition to this 'hard core' group, fifteen other citizens attended the experimentation with a somewhat different attitude: they could be described as being 'interested' in some of the topics without showing a strong commitment, but having a positive attitude and an openness towards social innovation. We contacted these people mostly by word of mouth and through a communication campaign within Cascina Cuccagna, an important gathering point where many people pass by.

We observed a progressive growth in participation of this group, with the biggest number attending the final presentation to the Municipality. On this occasion, many of them were active in explaining the services we designed together and we realised how deeply they had understood the process: their explanations were full of details and insights, and they seemed to be very proud of being part of such a group. They ranged from young to old and a majority of women.

Certainly, they are not 'first movers', but their trust in the experimentation grew session by session, by being involved in a real process of empowerment.

There was also another group (of about ten citizens), that we have defined as 'passersby', who only attended a few sessions. These participants came to Cascina

Fig. 5.2 'Creative Citizens' flyer

Cuccagna to enjoy the garden or the bar and they chanced upon a 'Creative Citizens' meeting, and decided to join the session. Some of them then decided to attend later experiments, generally those concerning the same topic. Hence, we might argue that some people were 'thematic participants', interested in specific issues and not in the whole experience (Fig. 5.2).

5.5 Stakeholders: Associations, Local Shops, Committees and Institutions

An important precondition for 'Creative Citizens' was to connect with local stakeholders and existing initiatives.

Initially, we established a crucial contact with the committee of local activists: it is known as 'Committee for Milan—Zone 4' and it originated as a part of the so-called 'Orange movement' who supported Giuliano Pisapia, former mayor of Milan, during the mayoral elections in 2010. After the election, the committee transformed itself into a type of social movement for the revitalisation of the Zone 4 neighbourhood. We attended several of their meetings and we were accepted as members of the Google Group in which they exchanged information, suggestions and opinions. This approach is very similar to what Meroni (2008) defines as 'community-centred design': the designer is 'embedded' within the community and he/she is part of it. In this case, the connection was very important because we met Daniela and Massimo who later became key participants in 'Creative Citizens'.

We also established an important connection with the Zone 4 Board of Local Government, thus building a bridge with the administrative institutions: they officially endorsed the project and this represented the starting point for further dialogue. In particular, one member (the Council Delegate of Culture) attended several sessions and then became a real advocate for the services generated within the 'Creative Citizens' programme.

Another important local actor was the Cuccagna Time Bank, which was involved from the beginning in a variety of ways: it was a stakeholder and at the same time it was itself an activity in need of improvement. After some preliminary meetings with Time Bank members we decided to dedicate three sessions of 'Creative Citizens' to its re-design, and Stefano, one of its founders, became one of the most active participants in our experimentation.

We also tried to maintain contact with the existing network of stakeholders of the 'Feeding Milan—Energy for Change' research project, because many of them were closely connected to Zone 4. For example, Davide, one of the two Earth Market bakers, opened a new shop very close to Cascina Cuccagna, which contributed to the revitalisation of the social fabric of small local shops. He also applied for a municipal grant to restore the old market of 'Piazza Zanta Maria del Suffragio', which opened the project to other local groups' initiatives for renewing the space.

Other stakeholders from 'Feeding Milan' were the local food shop, 'Bottegas' and representatives of the Agricultural Park South Milan, which borders on Zone 4, whose contributions were dedicated to sessions devoted to food systems.

Another important stakeholder was Rossella Mileo, a lawyer and representative of a Legal Help Desk at Cascina Cuccagna. From the very beginning, she understood how 'Creative Citizens' could extend her help desk into a more wide-ranging service. She attended several meetings and also brought other stakeholders into the project.

There were many other stakeholders involved on a smaller scale: parents' associations, enterprise incubators, communication agencies, museums etc. These showed interest and participated, but without the necessary continuity to be recognised as part of the main stakeholder group.

5.6 Topics: Four Thematic Cycles

The project consisted of a series of codesign sessions dealing with four different service areas: sharing networks, bureaucratic advice, food systems and cultural activities; all of which were connected to simple daily tasks and to existing services and places, such as time banks, purchasing groups, local shops, markets and fairs.

These four topics originated in different ways: as described earlier, food systems played the role of 'boundary topic' with a strong social and convivial character, able to gather many people together, especially in the Italian context.

The topic connected to the sharing of skills and objects emerged thanks to the involvement of Cuccagna Time Bank, which had already tried to create a 'task-sharing system' within the neighbourhood. But mainly, this topic emerged by analysing the needs and desires of Zone 4 residents during the initial sessions, especially in relation to sharing goods: they said they were even ready to share their cars, and declared that they preferred to have access to certain types of objects rather than owning only one.

The topic of 'culture' is represented here in the form of 'zero-mile tourism'. This was felt to be fundamental in a neighbourhood that suffered from a lack of cultural offerings (the restoration of Cascina Cuccagna was one attempt to revitalise local cultural life). Furthermore, Zone 4 is considered to be outside the traditional tourist routes in Milan; therefore, residents worked together on innovative tourism proposals to attract visitors and offer them the possibility of taking 'unconventional' tours.

There are a variety of reasons for including 'bureaucracy' as one of the main topics of 'Creative Citizens'. Since bureaucracy in Italy is perceived as the most pressing issue in people's daily lives, the idea of using codesign to provide improvements in this field was seen as very attractive from the beginning. Moreover, the participation of Rossella Mileo and her Legal Help Desk contributed greatly to expanding this topic and exploring possible solutions for improving citizens' relationships with legal, fiscal and bureaucratic issues in general.

Fig. 5.3 Thematic cycles of the 'Creative Citizens' project

Many other topics emerged during the codesign sessions and this offers material for further experimentation, but within a programme of five months it was impossible to tackle more than four subjects (Fig. 5.3).

5.7 Communication: Visual Identity and Local-Digital Campaign

When we won the call for the assignment of temporary spaces in the Cascina Cuccagna, we immediately realised that a communication campaign was needed to attract potential participants and to inform the rest of the community that something 'new' was happening in the neighbourhood.

We started by coming up with the name ‘Creative Citizens’, which gives the idea of a new active citizenship empowered by design; then we created a logo and graphic guidelines for the whole initiative.

This work might appear superficial, but it had a crucial role in transforming ‘Creative Citizens’ into something different from traditional activities connected to the third sector, social services, volunteer programmes or other activities with social purposes.

Talking with residents, we discovered that they perceived ‘Creative Citizens’ as a ‘cool project’, something fresh and smart, not boring and depressing like other initiatives. This was an important finding, and it encouraged us to proceed with a digital and physical communication campaign.

On the one hand, we developed a website, a Facebook page and a newsletter, and we started tweeting about every activity or news item connected to ‘Creative Citizens’. On the other hand, we attempted to reach people directly on the spot, with flyers and posters placed in key sites of the neighbourhood (schools, churches, reception desks, mailboxes, and gathering points such as bars, clubs and associations).

Furthermore, Cascina Cuccagna became a sort of ‘communication partner’, posting news about our activities on its social networks and websites, but the most powerful means of communication was the bulletin board placed at the entrance of the farmhouse, that was seen and consulted by everyone who passes by (Fig. 5.4).

Fig. 5.4 Flyers inviting people to the codesign sessions of the ‘Creative Citizens’ project

5.8 Codesign Sessions: From Creating to Prototyping

The four service areas were organised in four cycles, each consisting of three creative sessions, which can be viewed as three steps of a progressive path.

The first meeting was a *warm-up session*, to familiarise people with the topic by presenting good practices from all over the world. It aimed to inspire and offer visions of a possible new way of living. Participants selected the most appealing and relevant elements from the international practices, which would be combined in the second session to create as advanced a service concept as possible. This second meeting was a *generative session*, a sort of collective brainstorming bringing together citizens' desires and good practice insights. In the third session, the objective was to move from an ideal service to a real one, identifying the resources that could be involved in the development of the service. As it was a *prototyping session*, physical mock-ups were used to shape a service appropriate for the area in question i.e. Zone 4.

In this last session, strategic players already active in the neighbourhood—local associations and committees, representatives of institutions and professional advisors—were invited to join forces and produce synergy, receive encouragement from one another and draw inspiration from existing activities.

This support not only fed the 'professional' side but also the emotional side, because establishing connections between initiatives is the easiest way to activate a mutual process of teaching and learning, and sharing skills, platforms and places.

In addition to the codesign sessions, we also organised other types of meetings, public presentations and exhibitions to inform the local community of the activities that were happening. This way of sharing information was crucial for project dissemination: one successful strategy was to connect exhibitions and presentations with existing events, including the Milan Design Week, a cultural programme organised by the 'Triennale di Milano' museum and many other initiatives. We called these 'special sessions', in order to differentiate between them and the codesign sessions.

A short description of each of the ten codesign sessions and three special sessions held during 'Creative Citizens' is here provided.

Codesign Session 1—Good practices in services for exchanging goods and skills

The first meeting was devoted to the topic of 'services for sharing goods and skills', in which we introduced an overview of the sharing economy, and explored existing services among a selection of good practices from all over the world. Examples ranged from start-ups producing consistent revenues (such as AirBnb and Task Rabbit) to micro-economies created by local communities, based on barter and gifting (such as the Street Bank).

This introduction was followed by a discussion identifying strengths and weaknesses of the services and evaluating their positive or negative features by using stickers. The selection of the most promising characteristics was the first step in a short brainstorming session, aimed at connecting the lessons learned from the

Fig. 5.5 Codesign Session 1—'Good practices in services for exchanging goods and skills'

cases to the reality of daily life in Zone 4, as well as turning problems into opportunities and focussing not only on needs but also on wishes (Fig. 5.5).

Codesign Session 2—Re-designing the local Time Bank

The main purpose of the second session was to design a service specifically dedicated to the exchange of tasks and skills within the community. This resulted from an input from the first session, attended by several members of the local 'Cuccagna Time Bank', who revealed the necessity to re-design their exchange system using service design methods.

By using a site-specific journey map, we explored all the stages necessary to accomplish the tasks/skills exchange and identified all the required elements for each phase, with specific focus on technologies and digital tools (e.g. Google docs, calendars, spread-sheets etc.).

We also attempted to summarise and classify all the possible skills and what kind of daily tasks are the most needed (from exchanging English lessons to solving bureaucratic problems), by using a set of stickers with icons for each category. We devoted considerable effort to focussing on the benefits for users and to outlining a system for evaluating the accomplishment of a task, looking at on-line reputation systems.

Finally, we further expanded all the questions related to assurances and agreements, by using a set of 'Help Cards' specifically designed to explain these 'complicated issues'.

A map of Milan was used to indicate available spaces for accomplishing some of the tasks; this map became an essential tool and was used consistently in every session (Fig. 5.6).

Fig. 5.6 Codesign Session 2—'Re-designing the local Time Bank'

Codesign Session 3—Designing the Objects Library

The aim of this session was to develop an idea from the first meeting dedicated to case studies on services for sharing goods and skills. The concept was simple: to create an Objects Library, a physical and digital space for the exchange of goods in the neighbourhood. Hence, after focussing on the intangible assets characterising the local Time Bank, we now devoted our efforts to the exchange of tangible items, shifting from sharing skills to sharing products.

The session started with a set of 'Suggestion Cards' to reveal potentially unexpected ways of using our objects. To better develop the service idea, we designed a map visualising the 'shelves' of the library, showing different types of transaction (the favourite transaction was to borrow objects with the possibility of renting those with high sentimental/economic value). The map also displayed the frequency of usage of products, ranging from occasional, short period (e.g. baby products), to daily use. We 'filled' the shelves of the library with coloured stickers representing the different categories of products.

We also focused on the service business model by using an 'Actors map' to identify possible local stakeholders who would be able to invest both financial and physical resources in the project.

Finally, we studied the city map to highlight places available for locating the library in Zone 4 (Fig. 5.7).

Codesign Session 4—Re-designing the local Legal Help Desk

Session 4 was aimed at redesigning the local Legal Help Desk, managed by a lawyer, Rossella Mileo. She provided an analysis of the problems encountered in running the Help Desk; using a service map, she showed all the stages from booking an appointment to the collection of user feedback.

Particular attention was given to the fact that the service offered is organised into "legal categories", which are intelligible to the lawyer-provider but not to the users-citizens. This use of bureaucratic and complex language was highlighted as one of the main barriers to accessing the service. For this reason, we provided a set of 'Help cards' that explained the different types of law: civil and criminal, administrative, employment etc. The session was intended to interest citizens in the topic of legal services, and the contribution of the 'Help cards' in providing specific knowledge was appreciated.

An opportunity arose as an outcome of the meeting: the Help Desk could evolve further into an extensive 'services centre' offering information and bureaucratic first aid in a variety of domains: legal, fiscal, architectural/building advice and many others (Fig. 5.8).

Codesign Session 5—Good practices in food services

The aim of the session was to identify key features of design services that could work in Zone 4 and in the city of Milan. The warm-up began with an overview on food-related services from around the world, with case studies divided into two main clusters: shopping and eating.

Fig. 5.7 Codesign Session 3—'Designing the Objects Library'

It became clear that people preferred 'informal and bottom-up' services, ones originating from citizens' ideas, such as the collaborative 'Park Slope Food Coop' in New York or 'The People's Supermarket' in London. The most popular case was 'Restaurant Day' that originated in Finland in 2011, 'a worldwide food carnival when anyone can set up a restaurant, café or a bar for a day'.

In addition to these existing cases, we presented some ideas generated within a design studio at the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano, entitled 'Accidental Grocers'. The purpose of the course was to design services to be embedded in the Local Distribution System in collaboration with the research project 'Feeding Milan—Energy for Change'. The Local Distribution System was presented as a system of alternatives to large-scale retailing, based on disintermediation and short food chains between the urban area of Zone 4 and the Agricultural Park South Milan.

Fig. 5.8 Codesign Session 4—'Re-designing the local Legal Help Desk'

We asked the participants of Session 5 to vote for the services, by using stickers indicating different levels of appreciation. At the end of the session citizens indicated some useful spaces for the Local Distribution System directly on the map of Milan (Fig. 5.9).

Codesign Session 6—Designing 'Restaurant Day'

After a brief introduction about services on food sharing, we analysed in detail the possibility of organising a Restaurant Day in Milan, specifically in Zone 4.

We started by showing a video of the initiative, to give a better understanding of how Restaurant Day works. It began in Finland but quickly gained global attention. It takes place on the same day around the world and in this session, we looked at the next available date—May 18th 2013. To open a 'restaurant' for one day, it is necessary to subscribe on the website, specifying time, location (private or public),

Fig. 5.9 Codesign Session 5—'Good practices in food services'

menu and the maximum number of clients. Restaurant Day had never been held in Italy, and the idea of organising one in Zone 4 was seen as an excellent opportunity to open up the neighbourhood to other inhabitants of the city.

We studied every step of the service, using screenshots from the website, to experience the entire journey from subscription to cooking and delivery of the food, as well as administrative issues. Then we considered the feasibility of a Restaurant Day in Zone 4 by using a matrix and a map of the area and we found some suitable public spaces that were available. The matrix was also useful in identifying roles the citizens would have to assume to make a local Restaurant Day happen: 'chef', 'assistants' and 'eaters'. One of the significant ideas to emerge was to organise a '*merenda*' in pure Italian style, a collective picnic during the afternoon. The menu was chosen in compliance with hygiene requirements for similar events, i.e. that nothing is processed or cooked on the spot.

Several citizens were inspired to hold a Restaurant Day in their homes, and we discussed how to organise these types of in-door initiatives. At the end of the meeting, we briefly discussed the topic for the next appointment (May 16th)—the development of a physical and digital neighbourhood food network within Zone 4 (Fig. 5.10).

Codesign Session 7—Designing Facecook—a neighbourhood food network

The main concept in this session was about connecting all actors in the neighbourhood related to food: restaurants, small shops, farmers markets, bars and citizens with a passion for cooking and organising dinners and food events in general.

This network was given the name 'Facecook' and it was conceived as a platform equipped with physical and digital tools to facilitate contact among members.

Fig. 5.10 Codesign Session 6—'Designing Restaurant Day'

We started by designing a simple website supported by existing tools such as Google docs, Google Maps and a Facebook group. At the same time, we also thought about the importance of including tangible elements, like notice boards on buildings in the community as ways of sharing food, advice, recipes and news of local events.

To codesign the website, we used a mock-up of a laptop: it was a paper-cut object where screen-shots could be inserted to stimulate discussion about issues on contents and usability of the interfaces.

We decided to create three thematic areas:

- members, both private and public (single citizens or purchasing groups, restaurateurs and retailers);
- providing basic information, both permanent (a local map, named 'Food Compass', showing all the food-related places in Zone 4) and temporary (news and events with weekly schedules);
- a specific area related to food services and divided into three main categories: shopping (e.g. the exchange of food nearing its sell-by date among citizens, restaurateurs, retailers and street markets); preparing food (rental/loan of equipped spaces and specific tools); sharing meals (organising services like a series of "aperitivo" in private houses that are open to neighbours).

This last area was discussed in depth, sketching journey-maps for each activity. The platform was intended to be easily achieved, supported and maintained by an active community of people.

Finally, we also discussed the possibility of transforming 'Facecook' into a 'quality mark' for the neighbourhood's retailers and restaurants by crowd sourcing opinions to create a 'bottom-up quality standard' (Fig. 5.11).

Codesign Session 8—Designing the Citizens Help Desk

The intention of this session was to transform the Legal Help Desk managed by Rossella Mileo into a 'multi-service Help Desk' involving professionals from various fields: architects, psychologists, accountants etc. Architect, Clara Villani attended the meeting, while Daniele Zighetti, an accountant emailed inputs related to his area of specialisation.

Rossella started by summarising the problems encountered in providing expert advice without the need for a lawyer's intervention: many people go to the 'Help Desk' to solve minor issues that do not actually require a lawyer's services but would benefit from another kind of professional support.

This gave life to the idea of a 'multi-service Help Desk': if citizens do not know how to identify their problems or what kind of professional to contact, one possible solution could be creating a network of experts in different fields.

We systematically analysed all the issues related to giving legal advice as a starting point to applying the service's characteristics to other 'Help Desks'.

The first issue was one of user choice: we proposed an on-line form for the most important information (personal data, type of problem, etc.) in order to understand

Fig. 5.11 Codesign Session 7—'Designing Facecook—a neighbourhood food network'

whether the client really needs a meeting or if it is better to steer him towards another type of advice or even enable him to fill the documentation by himself.

The second issue was related to the difficulty in fully understanding the 'Legal Help Desk' offer: citizens highlighted that the 'legal categories' were intelligible to a lawyer but not to users. We therefore discussed a different linguistic approach, using common words to clearly show the service on offer, identifying categories such as 'family, home, condominium, inheritance and succession, consumer, individual, work…'.

A similar comparison was made for the 'architectural/building' domain: it was necessary to define the different kinds of problems that could be solved by the architect, from 'building interventions' (extensions, design, restructuring…) to 'permits/contracts/agreements'.

Fig. 5.12 Codesign Session 8—'Designing the Citizens Help Desk'

Finally, we identified other possible fields to be included in the 'Citizens Help Desk': condominium issues, immigration problems, and issues related to sustainability such as energy saving and recycling (Fig. 5.12).

Codesign Session 9—Good practices in cultural services

This was the first meeting devoted to the topic of 'cultural services', in which we introduced an overview of good cultural practices from Italy and all over the world. The selected case studies were divided into three macro-clusters:

– 'Zero-mile Tourism', dedicated to the discovery of interesting hidden places at the local level, where users are both visitors and residents (e.g. the alternative tourist routes in Turin, within the project 'Urban Guides' or 'Gidsy', generated by a group of travellers in search of an expert guide).

– ‘Public art projects’, especially those with a collaborative approach, where citizens participate in an active way (e.g. the project ‘Before I die’, by Candy Chang, an American artist who created a “neighbourhood board” where residents could share their wishes).
– ‘Local and diffused initiatives’ happening at the same time in various places (e.g. ‘Piano City’, a 3-day-event dedicated to the organisation of piano concerts in private and public spaces in Milan).

Many of the cases belonged to different categories at the same time, because borders among these kinds of initiatives are quite blurred: they are in between activities to revitalise public spaces, projects aimed at rebuilding the lost identity of a neighbourhood; various forms of storytelling to narrate anecdotes from daily life.

We evaluated the various cases, especially looking to identify the level of collaboration and inclusion of citizens in the service. Finally, we ‘extracted’ the most interesting features to be applied in a specific cultural activity for Zone 4, to be discussed and extended in the next session (Fig. 5.13).

Codesign Session 10—Designing ‘Zone 4 Ciceros’

The main concept here was to creatively use the knowledge of local inhabitants, by organising a set of ‘urban tours’ to discover hidden monuments, abandoned but charming buildings, unexplored places…

We divided the tours into different categories to allow the telling of and listening to original stories: a bike tour based on industrial archaeology; a walking tour to discover the oldest trees in the neighbourhood; and a nighttime tour of the roofs to admire the stars.

We attempted to establish a set of rules for the selection of the guides we called ‘Ciceros’. One possibility was to create a ‘Committee of the Wise for Zone 4’, who would be responsible for selecting the city dwellers/guides, with Cascina Cuccagna to be used for training courses in public speaking and acting. We also identified a local theatre school who were able to deliver storytelling classes.

We used a map of Zone 4 with markers and symbols representing the city dwellers/guides in order to sketch tours directly on the map and understand levels of difficulty, time, necessity for bikes etc.

An important decision was to assemble ‘Zone 4 Ciceros’ on a website, and a mobile application to geo-localize tours and facilitate registrations and money transactions: we proposed charging a small amount for booking a tour, thus generating a sort of micro-economy. In addition, the website and mobile app could be used for evaluating guides and tours, by collecting users’ feedback and by adopting simple grading systems. We also decided to adopt Cascina Cuccagna as a meeting point, a sort of travel agency where all the ‘urban tours’ are displayed on fliers and in booklets (Fig. 5.14).

Special Session 1—Milan Design Week 2013

The ‘Creative Citizens’ project was invited to participate in the ‘Good Design 2013. Lavorare bene/Abitare meglio’ programme during Milan Design Week 2013.

Fig. 5.13 Codesign Session 9—'Good practices in cultural services'

The selected location was the Agorà of Cascina Cuccagna, an outdoor space in the courtyard of the farmhouse, in which we set up a small exhibition describing the services for Zone 4 realised during the various co-creative sessions.

The exhibition was composed of several paper-cut mock-ups, real 'boundary objects' to attract visitors, who were both international tourists and local inhabitants. One of the main purposes was also to explain that design, today, is not only related to physical objects, but also to intangible systems like services, and that this can be applied to the reality of daily life in a specific neighbourhood.

We also organised a participatory activity, a collective brainstorming of desires and dreams using cards with a sentence to be completed: 'I want… in my neighbourhood', following the example of the American artist Candy Chang.

Fig. 5.14 Codesign Session 10—'Designing Zone 4 Ciceros'

At the end of the afternoon we collected more than fifty cards, in which a range of desires emerged: from extreme ideas like transforming a neighbourhood apartment block into a forest, to selecting outdoor places for music rehearsals (Fig. 5.15).

Special Session 2—Codesign Session at the Triennale Di Milano Museum

A Milanese cultural association, 'Connecting Cultures', invited 'Creative Citizens' to attend the 'Milano e oltre_una visione in movimento' programme at Triennale di Milano museum.

The session involved students from a Product Service System Design studio in the School of Design at Politecnico di Milano. The aim of the session was to launch the thematic cycle dedicated to cultural services to be continued in the next session at Cascina Cuccagna.

Fig. 5.15 'Creative Citizens' at Milan Design Week 2013

We began by considering the map of urban farmhouses located in several areas of Milan; hence, in this special session, the focus was on the whole city, not only on Zone 4.

The design brief given to the students was to transform sixteen abandoned farmhouses into cultural hubs containing bottom-up initiatives and activities.

At the end of the session, eight service concepts had been generated. The service ideas focused on eight users that could be considered 'original cultural producers' (i.e. between professional and amateur): artists, writers, directors, collectors, curators, performers, city guides and musicians.

The students designed services to support these people, considering how the farmhouses could be employed as key places in providing such services and in supplying infrastructures, materials and tools. The main purpose was to generate an

original form of cultural life in the city, sustaining ordinary people who are simply passionate about art, music, cinema and other forms of cultural and artistic expression.

Each group of students received a kit including a storyboard with six frames and a map for describing all the tools and skills necessary to set up the service. The workshop started at 4.00 pm and at 6.30 pm citizens came to view and evaluate the presentations.

Ideas generated by the students ranged from city tours organised by ordinary people, to the transformation of farmhouses into movie locations, to the creation of a market place for collectors (Fig. 5.16).

Fig. 5.16 Codesign Session at the Triennale di Milano

Special Session 3—Final Presentation to the Municipality of Milan

On June 20th 2013, the final presentation of 'Creative Citizens' showed the results of the experimentation to the Municipality of Milan and to local residents. The presentation was implemented through an exhibition of the services and the codesign process that had lasted more than four months.

Pierfrancesco Majorino, Council Member for Social Policies at the Municipality of Milan and Rossella Traversa, member of the Culture Commission of the Zone 4 Local Government Board as well as other public officials and representatives of the Department of Design (Politecnico di Milano) attended the presentation.

The exhibition was divided into five areas: an introductory area to explain the 'Creative Citizens' project in detail (four months of experimentation, ten codesign sessions, three special sessions, thirty citizens attending the programme) and four areas dedicated to the different service clusters.

Fig. 5.17 Presentation to the Municipality of Milan

We also set up a visual projection to support the oral presentation that was specifically addressed to members of the Municipality, who had stepped in at the end of the discussion, offering their contribution from a political perspective. They appreciated the experimentation and they confirmed a potential contribution in terms of space and materials: the Municipality cannot support the project from a financial point of view, but it can offer physical resources and administrative assistance. This connection with the public sector will be dealt with in more detail in the final part of this book (Fig. 5.17).

5.9 Codesign Tools: Inspiring, Framing and Implementing Tools

The most demanding part in organising the 'Creative Citizens' project was to design and develop tools for the codesign sessions. In recent years, many toolkits have emerged relating to design thinking, service design, social design, social innovation etc., and have been developed by numerous agencies and researchers such as Nesta, Livework, Ideo, FrogDesign, ThinkPublic and Lucy Kimbell.

All these toolkits offer multiple suggestions and inspirations, but from our experience, adaptions are always necessary, because each context has its own peculiarities. Furthermore, we had to adapt and translate their 'tone of voice' and to shift from a scientific/entrepreneurial or academic language to a more popular and accessible one.

Consequently, we had to adapt and even reinvent every tool, and, session-by-session, we became more expert in applying changes and making tools more immediate and easy to understand, hopefully without losing any complexity or detail.

For each session we designed tools with three main purposes:

- *inspiring tools*, to trigger or reveal unexpected ways of doing things;
- *framing tools*, to create a shared way of doing a specific thing;
- *implementing tools*, to introduce a model into a local context, involving real players.

Table 5.1 shows a classification of the different tools we used.

This classification can be compared with Sanders et al.'s categorisation (2010), in which they recognise three main typologies of tools that for 'making', 'enacting' and 'telling'.

There is a correspondence between the 'making' and the 'implementing' cluster, because both deal with rapid prototyping and tangible things. But, the 'implementing' tools also serve to create a direct contact the local context, and, therefore, in identifying tangible resources that can be involved in service provision.

Both 'making' and 'implementing' tools are prototypes that work as 'boundary objects' (Ehn 2008; Star 1989), because they allow the temporary alignment of

Table 5.1 Overview of the tools designed for the 'Creative Citizens' project

Inspiring tools	Framing tools	Implementing tools
Good practices boards (case studies, storytelling) Suggestion cards (pictures and key words for envisioning scenarios) Video-stories (video storytelling for envisioning scenarios)	Evaluations notes (a set of notes to evaluate main features of proposals and prioritise ideas) Polarity maps (maps for organising concepts and framing possibilities) Service maps (a collection of service maps with diverse scopes, as offering maps and tailored journey maps) Service resources (a set of service modules representative of the various material and immaterial elements to frame service front-stage and back-stage) Help Cards (a collection of cards with explanations of specific issues)	Actors maps (a collection of different maps focusing on the service system e.g. stakeholders map and system map) Localisation maps (a collection of maps for identifying physical resources in a local context) Service kits (service evidences working as touchpoint prototypes) Mock-ups (small and full scale 3D service prototypes)

participants cooperating for a precise length of time. Above all, it is important to align diverse stakeholders who may have different agendas, but, thanks to boundary objects, who share a temporary common ground on which to discuss and explore the possibilities of collaboration.

We may also draw a parallel between 'telling' and 'inspiring', because both relate to telling stories and sharing visions, even if, in using the term 'inspiring', we highlight the need to enhance imagination and open up new perspectives, while Sanders et al. (2010) also include tools for explaining and evaluating within this category.

On the other hand, there is no correspondence between 'enacting' and 'framing.' In our experimentation, we did not use any 'enacting tools' like game improvisations or bodystorming. Instead, we used tools for 'framing' the service in every detail: once the main concept was defined, we felt it necessary to provide tools for decision-making, in order to involve the citizens in making choices and identifying the most suitable options according to their needs and preferences. Therefore, this set of tools is more related to providing explanations and frames for discussion and decision-making.

In conclusion, we might assert that all these tools, even those with multiple goals, all serve to visualise and materialise solutions, by giving tangibility to ideas and bringing objects for discussion to the codesign table. This is particularly crucial when dealing with services that are by definition intangible and require more detailed representation and materialisation than other design objects.

5.10 Final Results: Six Public-Interest Services

During the 'Creative Citizens' project, six services were developed, relating to the four different service areas mentioned in the previous chapter: services for sharing goods and skills, legal and bureaucratic services, food services and cultural services.

Regardless of their application, these services may be considered as actual public-interest services. They were codesigned with people, starting from individual interests and, session-by-session, they were expanded into public interests, laying the foundations for a set of collaborative services for the local community.

Moreover, each service has a citizen as its 'hero', meaning that during the process, interests in various application fields spread spontaneously through the groups and the most successful services were those that found a great representative. The need for a 'service hero' was specifically recognised at the end of the process, when a set of 'ready-to-use' solutions was available to the community, but without any significant personal commitment, the services might not actually be developed. Together with a 'service hero', the involvement of a local stakeholder was also needed.

Cascina Cuccagna became a key actor for some services, not only in offering space but also by acting as the actual provider of the service itself. Thus, it was able to take advantage of its already existing assets: a network of associations, a group of project managers and administrators, a website and related social networks, a set of suppliers, a logistic system, etc.

Hence, this combination of 'service heroes' and 'committed stakeholders' originated from existing resources available in the local context. 'Use what already exists—reduce the need for new', is one of the general principles of sustainability stated by Manzini and Jégou in their book 'Sustainable Everyday' (2003). "Since we need to minimize intervention, before thinking up something new, enhance what is already there" (p. 56). And this is what happened during 'Creative Citizens', not only because it was a 'low-cost' project, but also because a real effort was made by all the participants to identify available resources, precisely because they were 'experts' about their local context and proud to share this knowledge for public interest.

In Table 5.2, we display an overview of the six services related to their respective areas, with a synthesis of their identity and current evolution.

Service 1. Objects Library

The Objects Library was conceived as a service for sharing goods in the Zone 4 neighbourhood. Citizens took inspiration from existing exchange platforms on the web and explored these during the warm-up meeting.

The principal idea is that having access to objects is more convenient (and also better from an environmental perspective as well as a personal/social one) than owning them, particularly the types of products we use just once a month, or even

Table 5.2 Synthesis of services generated within the 'Creative Citizens' project

Thematic Cycle 1: Services for exchanging goods and skills
Service 1. Objects Library: a physical and digital space for bartering, borrowing, gifting, and renting goods in the Zone 4 neighbourhood
Service 2. Augmented Time Bank: a system for the exchange of skills and small tasks, within condominium blocks and the wider neighbourhood, starting from the Cuccagna Time Bank
Thematic Cycle 2: Legal and bureaucratic services
Service 3. Citizens Help Desk: a service for information and bureaucratic first aid, in a variety of domains: legal, fiscal and architectural/building advice
Thematic Cycle 3: Food services
Service 4. Facecook: a neighbourhood food network connecting restaurants, markets, shops and local residents
Service 5. Local Distribution System: an alternative distribution network to connect Zone 4 with the Agricultural Park South Milan area, based on the principles of disintermediation and participated logistics
Thematic Cycle 4: Cultural services
Service 6. Zone 4 Ciceros: places in Zone 4 adopted and explained by a citizen-guide, organising unconventional tours to discover hidden or forgotten spots

less frequently (drill, stroller, skis, garden tools etc.). Hence, one possible solution is to borrow them from our neighbours, and the Objects Library provides a set of rules and roles that result in a better method of organising this type of exchange.

The Zone 4 Objects Library is a space in which citizens share these types of objects and make them available through a codified system of exchange, through a variety of transactions: bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting and swapping.

Citizens identified a specific place in the neighbourhood for the library: the former market located in Piazza Santa Maria del Suffragio. This represents an innovation compared to existing exchange platforms: Zone 4 citizens prefer to carry out the 'exchange transaction' outside their homes, in a 'third place' that is recognised as a meeting point, a semi-public space in between private and public.

In parallel, a digital platform is also required: a sort of 'Facebook' for objects, in which every product has a profile describing its characteristics and availability, and is also necessary to carry out booking transactions. During the codesign sessions, citizens made specific choices about object types, rules, rewards etc. and they made all the necessary decisions to define how the service works.

At the end of the process, Stefano Manfredi, became the 'service hero' for the Objects Library. He was the first to propose the former market as the ideal place to house the library, and he proposed the public application related to the assignment of that space issued by the Municipality of Milan.

'Davide Longoni Bakery', one of the major local stakeholders identified at the beginning of 'Creative Citizens', won this application, proposing a project for a multi-functional space hosting various small food shops and a bar, and also leaving space for other initiatives. Stefano is currently in contact with Davide: his idea is to establish a sort of 'exchange corner' for objects as part of the bar, which is in the

centre of the old market and could work as a meeting point. Stefano's idea is to set up a 'temporary exchange corner' that would be open several times a week, and he is proposing himself as 'employee', since he is a freelance architect in search of additional forms of income. Davide is willing to host and support any form of 'social activity' within the project since the market has been restored and has recently been reopened to the public.

In summary, this service is currently evolving towards a sort of social start-up, in which a small group of citizens is helping Stefano create the conditions to initiate the activity by using a low-tech platform (a Google group) and by temporarily exchanging objects at the 'Punto di incontro' room at Cascina Cuccagna, while waiting for an exchange corner to be set up in the new market.

Service 2. Augmented Time Bank

The Augmented Time Bank is a platform in which citizens can share their skills and their spare time. Teaching lessons, small tasks such as shopping or going to the post office, assembling furniture, and babysitting are just a few examples of a wide range of activities that it is possible to share with neighbours.

This service builds upon the existing 'Cuccagna Time Bank': many of its members joined the codesign sessions of 'Creative Citizens' and were happy to share with other participants the problems they had encountered while running the service.

The main target group is the younger generation because most of the current participants are retired people. Two connected strategies were identified: first, to create a digital platform for sharing skills and tasks; second, to extend the range of activities to those that are more relevant to, and used by, the younger generation, dealing with music, photography, video making etc. The Cuccagna Time Bank, unlike other existing time banks, also has access to a physical space, a room within the farmhouse, and this is crucial for hosting lessons with many participants. This may be attractive for young people who often prefer to do group activities.

During the codesign sessions on this topic, participants defined a set of key characteristics for the digital platform, useful not only for 'booking' tasks but also to consult the profile of each participant, in order to have information about the skills and level of appreciation among other members. Peer-to-peer evaluation was recognised as one of the most important factors for building trust among participants and for enhancing the quality of the service. Unfortunately, the building of this platform is experiencing some difficulties in finding an appropriate professional available to develop a whole project (an app and a website) and members are currently using Google Tools combined with other 'analogical tools' necessary for interacting with those participants who are not familiar with the digital ones.

One possible solution that recently emerged is to join a global time bank, known as 'Time Republik': this network already has a platform and is looking for contacts with neighbourhood time banks in order to develop a stronger link with local contexts where people meet and interact.

In conclusion, we would argue that the re-design of the Cuccagna Time Bank worked essentially in building awareness about a possible improvement of the existing service, focusing on several aspects that needed more effort or professional support. No citizen became the 'service hero' of the Augmented Time Bank: a small group of members has driven a number of improvements enhanced by codesign sessions, but the peer-to-peer evaluation system among participants is still lacking and they are currently considering whether to join Time Republik for using their set of pre-defined tools.

Service 3. Citizens Help Desk

The 'Citizens Help Desk' is undoubtedly the best and most original result among the services generated within 'Creative Citizens'. The idea arose from the enthusiastic contribution of Rossella Mileo, a lawyer who established a 'Legal Help Desk' within Cascina Cuccagna to provide a sort of 'initial orientation' about issues raised by citizens.

Rossella joined several codesign sessions in an effort to improve her legal advice service, but from the beginning, and thanks to discussions with other participants, a much bigger idea emerged: why do not we transform the 'Legal Help Desk' into a more comprehensive help desk supporting citizens in all the 'bureaucratic issues' that needlessly complicate daily life?

This was the first spark in creating the 'Citizens Help Desk', a service for information and bureaucratic first aid within different areas: legal issues (both civil and criminal law), construction-building, accounting-fiscal, and condominium administration etc.

The 'Citizens Help Desk' is currently running at Cascina Cuccagna, and is divided into thematic help desks working on a temporary basis and operating by appointment. Currently there are eight help desks running on different days and the number of citizens asking for advice is continually growing. All the help desks share the same booking system on the Cascina Cuccagna website and a clear public identity specifically designed for the service. We have also developed a mobile and flexible set-design that can be adapted for different rooms in the farmhouse, because it is impossible for Cascina Cuccagna to guarantee the availability of the same space every afternoon of the week.

Hence, this service was designed specifically to be adapted for a multi-functional space and a number of different providers (the various professionals giving advice), and also to be easily managed by Cascina Cuccagna. The 'Citizens Help Desk' is offered for free, but one of the most pressing issues is to include a sort of 'low-price list' for certain types of advice. We are exploring this possibility for two main reasons: experimenting with a sort of micro-economy and also because many citizens seem to trust the service more if they pay for it, even if it is just a small amount of money. Therefore, we are discussing a possible shift from a 'not-for-profit' to a 'low-profit service', and this discourse seems to be crucial for public-interest services: many public services are free and all the 'market' services are for profit; hence, public-interest services may have a low-profit character in order to guarantee economic sustainability and at the same time serve the public interest.

Another important step in the evolution of this service is that the Zone 4 Local Government Board recently decided to give official endorsement to the 'Citizens Help Desk', recognising the public value of the service and also discussing possible replication within other neighbourhoods. From this perspective, the 'Citizens Help Desk' may evolve into something different, by being 'embedded' within the public sector and becoming an actual municipal service, hence many possible paths are currently under discussion.

Service 4. Facecook

'Facecook' is a platform for connecting all those related in some way to food in the neighbourhood: restaurants, markets, shops and local residents passionate about food culture.

The idea of creating this connection came from analysing different needs during the codesign sessions: people who want to do food shopping in a more pleasant and efficient way; restaurants aiming at improving their use of space; local shops that are trying to reduce waste, etc.

By creating a 'Facecook' website and also relying on existing social networks, this platform aims to connect a resident who wants to organise a dinner for many friends to a restaurant renting its space on the day it is closed …or facilitating the borrowing of kitchen tools among members; organising home food events such as potluck dinners etc.

The 'Facecook' website was codesigned over several sessions and a set of rules and roles for members was discussed. 'Facecook' originally identified its 'service hero' in Inge de Boer: she runs a blog about food and she attended all the codesign sessions related to this topic, and also held a 'Restaurant Day' in her home. Unfortunately, she can no longer work with 'Facecook', because, coincidentally, she was hired as Content Manager by Expo 2015 (the Universal Exposition in Milan, whose main topic was 'feeding the planet').

Hence, 'Facecook' is currently a 'ready-to-use' solution in search of a new 'service hero' and in the meantime, another possible evolution has emerged. During the codesign sessions, 'Facecook' was conceived not only as a platform, but also as a sort of 'high quality brand' that may be awarded to local restaurants and shops. This 'brand' is generated by residents of Zone 4 who evaluate their 'neighbourhood food system' and it is displayed on the website and at the actual location. In addition, a possible synergy recently emerged: Cascina Cuccagna is attempting to launch a project called 'Cuccagna District', a network of 'suggested' local markets and shops in which it is also possible to get discount. The idea is to merge the two initiatives, relying on the 'Facecook' website and on the existing 'Cuccagna District' network, but this is a long and a difficult path, and it does not replace the need for a 'service hero', who is crucial in supporting a project and making things happen. For now, everything is in the hands of the Cuccagna project managers and relies on their capacity of envisioning this network as a powerful means for creating convivial events involving different actors within the neighbourhood.

Service 5. Local Distribution System

The 'Local Distribution System' is quite different from the other services because it was originally generated within the 'Feeding Milan—Energy for Change' research project and it then became a topic for discussion within the 'Creative Citizens' project. In fact, it refers to the creation of an innovative logistics system for connecting farmers in the Milan South Agricultural Park and Zone 4, which borders the park.

It is a system of alternatives to large-scale retailing, based on disintermediation and short food chains and it seeks to foster as direct as possible a meeting between demand and supply, between city and countryside. In this diffused local distribution system, ordinary people play a strategic role because they become the mediators between end-users and peri-urban farmers.

Hence, the 'Local Distribution System' is a not a single service but a set of different services in which people are actively involved. Citizens may activate the services themselves as they require them by using a series of public (neighbourhood shops and offices) or private (condominiums) points and connections already present in the urban system. These become delivery points for local fresh food, which people may access easily after ordering the produce online. Places in the city may be used not only as delivery points, but also as trading points. For example, a group of citizens may use private courtyards to organise a peri-urban farmers market, opening the doors of their own homes and creating a semi-public meeting place: a condominium market. Or, a citizen may become a service promoter, not only by setting up delivery points but also, in a scenario-in-progress, acting as a link in the distribution chain between countryside and city by using, for example, the commuter routine of many city dwellers.

Many of these ideas come from a design studio entitled 'Accidental Grocers' held in the Master of Product Service System Design at the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano. These service concepts were discussed at Cascina Cuccagna and the farmhouse itself has been identified as a key-point in alternative logistics, but currently the 'Local Distribution System' seems not to be working effectively because the ownership of this project is not clear. Citizens did not warm to this set of services for several reasons: they feel the system is too complicated, and they prefer simple and short-term solutions, furthermore they see the system as something 'embedded' in the bigger framework of the 'Feeding Milan' research project, and are relying on that for its development.

Service 6. Zona 4 Ciceros

'Zone 4 Ciceros' is a 'zero-mile tourism' service run by citizens, who identify special places within the neighbourhood (and the stories behind them), in order to become local guides of unusual city tours for small groups. The selection of places does not correspond to official guides because it is done directly by residents who are 'experts' of their local context and know better than anyone the hidden but attractive sites.

During the codesign sessions, some enthusiastic citizens suggested possible 'alternative tours' for Zone 4, including the 'Trees Tour', the 'Industrial Buildings Tour', the 'Stars Tour', the 'Neglected Monuments Tour', offering themselves as guides.

To set up this 'zero-mile tourism' service, it was recognised that guides needed to be trained as 'storytellers': it is not enough to know a good story and its local context, it is also necessary to be able to tell the story and entertain people. For this reason, the need for a link with a theatre school was stressed, to 'educate' the citizens.

All the contents of the tours are defined, what it is still missing is a mobile app to geo-localize and book visits. The service can work only if a minimum number of participants is reached and they pay a fee for the tour, as occurs in many other similar services.

Unfortunately, the development of the mobile app still represents an obstacle for the realisation of 'Zone 4 Ciceros', and currently a temporary 'neighbourhood travel agency' has been set up as 'Punto di Incontro' at Cascina Cuccagna. It is a sort of info-point about tours in which it is possible not only to get information, but also to propose other alternative visits within the neighbourhood. Hence, it can be seen that the foundations for this service are laid, but further development is still needed, and this is also missing because 'Zone 4 Ciceros' lacks a 'service hero' to supervise the initiative. For now, some members of the Cuccagna Time Bank are seeking to 'keep alive' some of the activities, and this is important because, following the Universal Exposition in 2015, Milan has become a very popular destination for tourists from all over the world.

Figure 5.18 displays the current state of evolution of each service, between failure and success. We consider all the services generated during the research as actual results, even if they are close to failure, because they testify even more strongly to the need for an infrastructure to support them in a transformation into actual public-interest services.

Hence, each service is now at a different stage of development, depending on the opportunities found in the neighbourhood and in the network of institutions and stakeholders.

In summary, it is possible to identify three lines of evolution:

- to envisage an intersection with the public sector (Citizens Help Desk)
- to foster the creation of original service start-ups (Object Library)
- to join existing services provided within the Cascina Cuccagna (Augmented Time Bank).

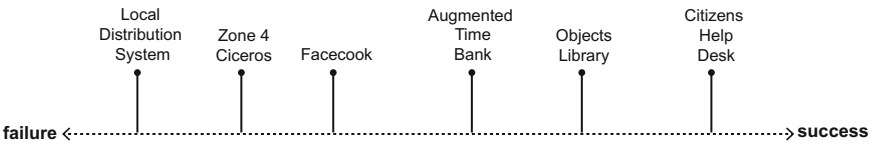

Fig. 5.18 Overview of the current state of evolution of 'Creative Citizens' services

All these services share a common model, in which citizens play an active role. This model builds on that of collaborative services (Jégou and Manzini 2008), and a deeper reflection on this topic is proposed in the final part of this book, in order to analyse how the roles of users are changing and assuming a growing centrality in service organisation.

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Chapter 6
Comparing 'Creative Citizens' with a Set of Interconnected Experimentations

Abstract This chapter describes a set of experimentations within different DESIS Labs: 'Welcome to St Gilles' (LUCA DESIS Lab), 'Green Camden' (UAL DESIS Lab), 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' (Parsons DESIS Lab). These experimentations are part of a DESIS thematic cluster named 'Public and Collaborative', a design research initiative on public services and public realm-related topics, such as affordable housing social integration, neighbourhood improvement, daily services and, more generally, public sector innovation policies. As Manzini and Staszowski (2013) claimed, 'Public and Collaborative' originated from the empirical observation that several design schools and DESIS Labs in Europe, Canada and the United States were already doing research on the intersection of design, social innovation and public policy. The experimentations here presented are design courses developed with students and researchers who immersed themselves in a specific neighbourhood, in direct contact with the society and its members, as in 'Creative Citizens'. They are situated between design activism and public sector innovation, and they include on one side, communities of local residents and on the other, public servants and policy makers, attempting to define a middle ground in which design may play a crucial role.

6.1 'Welcome to St Gilles', Belgium (LUCA DESIS Lab)

'Welcome to St Gilles' is a project devoted to developing small design interventions to meet the social needs of the people living in the Saint-Gilles neighbourhood in Liège (Belgium). It ran throughout the academic year 2012–2013 involving students and educators from eight different design schools[1] in the Euregion Meuse-Rhine.

[1]The eight schools are: ABK Maastricht (NL)—www.abkmaastricht.nl; Hogeschool ZUYD Maastricht (NL)—www.hszuyd.nl; Design Academy Eindhoven (NL)—www.designacademy.nl; ENSAV/La Cambre Bruxelles (BE)—www.lacambre.be; ESA Saint-Luc Liège (BE) www.saintluc-liege.be; ESA/Saint-Luc Tournai (BE)—www.stluc-sup-tournai.be; Gut Rosenberg (DE)—www.gut-rosenberg.de; MAD Faculty Genk (BE)—www.mad-fac.be.

D. Selloni, *CoDesign for Public-Interest Services*, Research for Development,
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The initiative originated from the Design Biennial of the city of Liège called 'Reciprocity', with the support of the regional public Institution for Design (Wallonie Design) and of 'REcentre', a Euregional Project for Sustainable Design.

In this chapter, we pay particular attention to the work done under the auspices of the LUCA DESIS Lab within the MAD Faculty at the LUCA School of Arts in Genk, initiated by Virginia Tassinari, researcher, assistant professor and leader of the 'Welcome to St Gilles' project.

The neighbourhood of Saint-Gilles used to be an area of artisans and small shops, but in recent years it has been experiencing a loss of identity, due in part to the large number of schools in the area that are creating a disproportionate mix of students and local inhabitants. Many residents are leaving the neighbourhood and the local community is facing a series of problems connected to personal safety issues: the presence of many abandoned buildings and shops; actual seasonal fluxes in the population caused by the high number of students; an increasing amount of abandoned garbage in the street; and, more generally, a lack of social resilience and cohesion. A sense of fatalism is felt by the citizens who have lost their individual sense of responsibility towards the public sphere (Tassinari 2012).

The project involved a variety of diverse actors: students from eight design schools from Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany, neighbourhood residents, local entrepreneurs, civil servants, policy makers and experts in social innovation. The overall aim was to collaborate and codesign innovative proposals for the neighbourhood: students came up with around eighty small design-driven interventions that, at the end of 2012, were showcased in the exhibition 'Welcome to St Gilles' during the Design Biennial 'Reciprocity' in Liège.

The first phase of the project was to explore the explicit and latent needs of the neighbourhood: it was a mapping activity in which students immersed themselves within the local community using an ethnographic approach. This step was fundamental in identifying the key challenges in order to start developing proposals, and each school chose a different challenge to try to turn it into an opportunity. The aim was not to provide effective solutions, but to propose simple ways to change the local dynamics, seeds of change upon which to build new activities and work on a continuous and ongoing implementation.

As Virginia Tassinari states in her article within the 'Reciprocity' catalogue (2012), the students initially met some resistance from citizens, but after spending a year in the neighbourhood, their enthusiasm was contagious and particularly effective in building a sense of trust. For example, some local inhabitants hosted students from MAD in their houses, starting a period of 'co-living': eating with them; shopping in local groceries; visiting their working space; joining activities with local associations and sport clubs, in other words experiencing real life in Saint-Gilles.

This was a way of creating empathy with residents and the same occurred with students from the Design Academy and Hogeschool Zuid, who decided to spend whole days in the neighbourhood, not only to observe the current situation but also to actually get in touch with people and start a social conversation.

During their neighbourhood immersion, students experimented with a great variety of design tools (Tassinari 2012):

- 'Cultural probes', in order to create a dynamic conversation and avoid the typical question-answer interaction, by enabling people to be proactive in a playful way by using visual probe kits, and, thus, providing access to a kind of information that is emotionally and symbolically relevant.
- 'Urban probes', provoking reactions on the part of citizens: students designed a sort of 'Street Trophy' asking people to elect a 'local hero', in order to identify the people who play a key role within the community and to develop a list of 'heroes' to interview.
- 'Street installations', such as setting up an outside living room in the park, bringing indoor furniture into the middle of the public space and creating a positive environment for relaxing and talking with the local inhabitants about Saint-Gilles and their personal experiences.

Students from La Cambre supervised by François Jégou, explored Saint-Gilles as a sort of 'Diffused Campus' (Jégou et al. 2013) with the aim of strengthening the social fabric between students studying there and local inhabitants, conceiving the whole neighbourhood as a distributed and integrated campus, rather than a centralised one.

The students created short video sketches to present possible ideas of collaborative services to the residents, such as mutual help bicycle repair, student 'adoption' by local families, a mini-job and help platform, organic vegetable home delivery etc. More specifically, a number of cooking and eating services were developed, bringing students and families together to try new recipes and experience different food cultures, sharing meals together and, thus, using the power of food to create conviviality and, hopefully, refurbishing the social fabric.

This set of different interventions produced a large amount of data that, in a second phase, have been elaborated and clustered in order to develop actual design propositions: during this phase, students benefitted from the advice of several design experts, such as Nik Baerten, Thomas Lommée and François Jégou, who were involved in the project in the dual role of teachers/advisors for all the design schools. This phase consisted of a series of feedback sessions, not only among experts and students using a top-down approach, but also among the students themselves, using a dedicated blog that became a tool for exchanging suggestions and insights in a peer-to-peer way.

After having developed and discussed different design propositions, the students started to prototype their ideas, in order to make them tangible and visible, creating storyboards, 3D mock-ups, low-tech models, actually "thinking with the hands" and "translating thoughts to acts" (Tassinari 2012). Local inhabitants and stakeholders were involved in this prototyping session to test possible reactions and interactions and, as a consequence, changing and improving the original idea.

This continuous and ongoing codesign approach was adopted by all the schools involved in 'Welcome to St Gilles', in spite of the different paths followed by each and it may be considered a distinctive feature of the project.

This characteristic emerged also in the design of the 'Welcome to St Gilles' exhibition developed by Thomas Lommée during the Design Biennial 'Reciprocity', which was held in the neighbourhood at the end of 2012. The exhibition may be regarded as the last step of the design programme developed by the schools and, at the same time, the first step for implementing the project and launching a new phase.

The main aim of the exhibition was to give the ideas back to the local inhabitants and stakeholders, in order to collect other feedback and continue the conversation, hence, the exhibition itself was conceived as a sort of prototype, a sort of extensive 'boundary object' (Star 1989) for social conversation.

After the exhibition, residents spontaneously adopted some of the projects and started to implement them and, together with the authorities of Liège, also started to explore a possible self-sustaining system for these ideas, benefitting from the support of existing public frameworks.

As Massoni (artistic director of Reciprocity Design Liège) stated: "Welcome to St Gilles is not a quick fix series of solutions but an incremental testing ground that draws on the existing expertise, structures and lives lived in the community, while offering the insights and ideas of those that may just be passing through" (2015, p. 62).

The most important first outcome of 'Welcome to St Gilles' is the creation of the 'Mouvement Saint-Gilles', a local organising committee where citizens regularly meet and organise activities and events. Many ideas coming from the students have been implemented by this committee, such as a neighbourhood journal, a musical procession and other initiatives. In a way, 'Welcome to St Gilles' may be considered a sort of extensive 'warm-up' for citizens' creativity, stimulating their desires and ambitions of implementation, to be shared with other inhabitants, civil servants and policymakers.

The 'Mouvement Saint-Gilles' worked as a catalyst for the existing activities and a vehicle for overcoming the individual approach, unifying all the 'neighbourhood voices' in one single voice. Many other associations have subsequently joined this local committee and currently this conversation also regularly involves the local public authorities.

Another important outcome is that 'Welcome to St Gilles' has become a sort of 'intervention format', known as 'Welcome to_', which has been recently applied in the neighbourhood of Trasenster in Seraing, a former industrial town 12 km from Liège.

The project 'Welcome to Seraing', curated by Nik Baerten and Virginia Tassinari, was developed in collaboration with a group of international designers,[2] regional fablabs and, at a later stage, students of the MAD Faculty.

[2]Pablo Calderon Salazar, Henriëtte Waal, Yara Al-Adib and Elisa Bertolotti.

As Baerten and Tassinari state in a recent interview: "the whole process was a meeting ground for people to realise: 'hey, I'm not alone in doing this.' It's also about a different approach based on doing stuff, reflecting together and creating tools to enable certain processes to happen in a more tangible way" (2015, p. 64).

The results of 'Welcome to Seraing' have been showcased in the Design Biennial 'Reciprocity' 2015 and currently the project is continuing with a small core of people who are becoming more and more engaged: this is an attempt to empower citizens to implement the project without the presence of designers and, hopefully, benefiting from the support of public authorities.

According to Baerten and Tassinari (2015), the ongoing question is how to avoid this kind of intervention being exploited by local policymakers, who have the responsibility to solve problems. On the other hand, it also true that for decades citizens have not even considered the possibility of playing a role in society, and they suggest the need for a new middle ground that maintains the best of both worlds.

6.2 'Green Camden', UK (UAL DESIS Lab)

'Green Camden' is a project devoted to designing new ways to change behaviours towards more sustainable ways of living, with the aim of helping citizens to:

- reduce carbon emissions;
- adapt to a changing climate;
- reduce, reuse and recycle;
- improve air quality;
- improve biodiversity.

It took place in the borough of Camden in London at the beginning of 2012, involving local residents, students and educators from Central Saint Martins (University of the Arts London—UAL) and the London Borough of Camden's Sustainability Team.

The initiative originated from the 'Green Zones' programme, which identified thirty neighbourhoods in the borough with community groups committed to delivering a variety of actions related to reduced carbon emissions (such as cycling or food growing). More specifically, this programme encourages residents to carry out sustainable actions in a collective and collaborative way, providing a sort of 'action plan' to achieve their goals and to catalyse the uptake of up to seventy different actions.

Among the various Camden neighbourhoods involved is King's Cross, where Central Saint Martins is located. This is why, in January 2012, Camden Council approached UAL DESIS Lab, which is coordinated from within UAL's Socially Responsive Design and Innovation Hub at the Design Against Crime Research Centre (DACRC).

Adam Thorpe is the coordinator of UAL DESIS Lab and, together with Lorraine Gammain, he involved BA Product Design students and MA Applied Imagination students to participate in the 'Green Camden' project to codesign sustainable futures with local citizens, with the collaboration of the London Borough of Camden's Sustainability Team.[3] The involvement of the council to the project was crucial, and, despite government cuts and the UK's austerity conditions, they agreed to contribute in a variety of ways: providing experts, networking with community groups from the Camden Green Zones, and providing a commitment to implement project outcomes.

In the first phase of the project, in February 2012, students familiarised themselves with 'Green Camden' sustainable actions, choosing specific ones to engage with and researching other similar case studies.

More specifically, students selected an action from the list provided by Camden Council and reflected on how to transform it into a collaborative service.

In order to better identify and communicate with the different community groups, a weblog was set up[4] and the council was asked to contact all their 'Green Zones' representatives to introduce the project and share the weblog address with the residents.

The weblog worked as a meeting point for students and citizens, providing all the necessary information about the project and a template for residents, in which they could upload a description of their sustainable actions and a request for design assistance. In order to boost this dialogue, students developed a first set of proposals on four topics:

- re-use and recycle (plastic bags, Tetra Paks, etc.)
- local and seasonal food (food growing, accessibility)
- saving water
- working locally.

These proposals were then uploaded on the weblog, working as a 'boundary object' (Star 1989) for conversation and, thus, supporting the matching of student interest with resident needs. Hence, at this stage, students' ideas worked as a 'call for collaboration', introducing a set of initial hypotheses ready to be redefined and implemented.

In March an exhibition was organised to effectively illustrate students' proposals to the residents: each student had five minutes to present their idea and this short introduction was the first step of an actual collaboration in designing sustainable solutions together. The process of matching students and community groups happened both on-line and off-line, and it continued throughout March.

In April, several meetings among students and 'Green Zones' teams were organised directly in their local areas. These visits were intended to gather

[3]Anna Ware, Ines Carvalho and Katy Mann.

[4]More information on the Green Camden weblog is available at http://desisgreencamden.jimdo.com/.

knowledge about the context and to map availability of required resources and available assets that could be used in the design interventions.

After the mapping exercise, students developed and visualised their service proposals, which then became the focal object of a codesign workshop with residents to detail service maps and generate initial product design proposals.

This was refined in a second workshop with citizens in May that was essentially a 'review meeting' to more clearly specify the characteristics of the services and the related products.

Lastly, students worked to implement their ideas building on the results of the two codesign workshops and delivered their projects in a public presentation to the entire project team—staff (CSM and Camden) together with citizens.

Among the final proposals are[5]:

- a smart compost container for public spaces to promote local food growing;
- a service to reuse bags in local businesses called 'BagBank';
- a service to wash cars that uses rainwater harvested from large roofs, called 'Ecorain Carwash';
- a kit for households called 'Super 25' including an App to track and notify consumers of foods' use-by-date.

The final exhibition opened to the public in June 2012 and was part of the students' degree shows at Central Saint Martins. A number of films explaining the design proposals in three-minute elevator pitches were presented for public view and several stakeholders were invited to offer their reflection on potential implementation. The attendance was quite significant: it has been estimated that 10,000 people visited the exhibition and this represented a great opportunity to disseminate the project results among the art and design community, producing positive review and support.

Thorpe and Gammain (2013) developed several reflections about the process and results of 'Green Camden', highlighting some critical points related especially to expectation management and to service design education.

The involvement of Camden Council produced a sort of passivity on the part of the residents: they expected the council to fund and implement proposals, even though when the project started they were fully aware of the austerity conditions, without any possibility of extra funding. This seemed to stimulate further discussion about how to go forward with the codesigned proposals involving residents and Camden's sustainability group, with the support of UAL DESIS Lab staff.

Another 'false' expectation concerned the role of designers within the process: Thorpe and Gammain argued (2013) that numerous residents considered design students as 'stylists', able to make it all 'pretty.' At the same time, students limited themselves to merely responding to community needs rather than proposing and asserting their point of view, thinking that this 'passive' and 'respectful' attitude

[5]The proposals presented have been developed by the following students: Fernando Laposse, Lubna Jamaldin, Natalie Denise Ng and Fei Xie.

was the right codesign approach. Hence, there was some misunderstanding as to the role of designer considered on one side as 'stylist' and on the other as 'facilitator'. This was not the only interpretation of the design contribution but, in a sense, it shows how it is difficult to fully profit from the adoption of codesign methods and tools.

Thorpe and Gammain (2013) also highlighted the difficulty in sharing service design knowledge with BA Product Design students: they were required to map residents' journeys while undertaking their sustainable actions to create service systems blueprints, in other words, to familiarise themselves with service design tools and to combine them with a set of participatory techniques to engage with citizens.

Nevertheless, their knowledge in product design helped in developing 'product touchpoints' (Shostack 1982) that became a consistent part of the collaborative services codesigned with residents and also served as prototypes to stimulate conversation.

To help the BA Product Design students, UAL DESIS Lab staff decided to involve postgraduate students from the MA Applied imagination MAAI course. Many of them were interested to learn more about the collaborative and participatory design processes used by DESIS and they provided an important peer-to-peer support for the younger students, actually extending the community of 'design experts' involved in the 'Green Camden' project. The MA Students also developed a toolkit for the co-elaboration of desirable futures and how to tell a story that could be easily understood by all actors, called '*The Magic Beans*'. As Thorpe and Gammain (2013) stated, this collaborative vision tool was a sort of boundary object (Star 1989) that facilitates the codesign process in both perspectives described by Ehn (2008), working as a 'design device' displaying several functions and as a'design thing' stimulating new way of thinking and behaving.

The entire 'Green Camden' project, according to Thorpe and Gammain (2013), may be considered as a prototype because it engaged a diverse community of social actors in a codesign process for the first time, without setting the conditions for implementation as the ownership of the project was not clear. The positive point was that 'Green Camden' was able to start a new collective conversation and build capacity among the community, opening up new forms of collaboration that also included Camden Council. In fact, one outcome of the project is that the design educators from UAL DESIS Lab have been asked to train Camden Council staff who finance and facilitate community projects linked to the Camden Social Innovation Fund that supports social enterprises that address community needs.

In a more recent article, Thorpe et al. (2016) describe the evolution of the 'Green Camden' project: in 2013 an extensive workshop was organised, in order to test a prototype of a possible strategic collaboration among different social actors: researchers, groups of citizens, department heads and project managers from Camden Council and other representatives of local institutions—more than 100 people attended the workshop. This was a key moment in gaining awareness of the potential of the collaboration between design education and local government to

develop together social innovation practices that hopefully result in public-interest services.

Currently, the collaboration between University of the Arts London and the Borough of Camden has become an actual strategic partnership that results in a common programme of activities, and in the creation of a 'Public Collaboration Lab' model to research the re-design and delivery of public services. This is particularly relevant in view of the fact that, by 2017, funding to Camden from central government will be cut by 50%.

The council identified various issues connected to several public services, most specifically in the areas of Home Library Services and Adult Social Care services. This is a starting point to work on common challenges that share similar problems, such as offering digital support to citizens, seeking opportunities for 'cross silo' service integration (ibid.), integrating volunteering etc.

From the first 'Green Camden' project in 2012, many steps forward have been achieved; they are, however, more related to the creation of a 'cultural change' within government than to the development of actual public and collaborative services. Ongoing research is attempting to build local government design capacity through collaboration with design education: this research will map the UK landscape for similar collaborations, and explore the contribution of design to diverse Public Collaboration Labs, describing the working practices, impacts and outputs in order to understand how promising this model could be.

6.3 The 'NYC Office for Public Imagination', USA (Parsons DESIS Lab)

The New York City Office of Public Imagination' was an experimental studio course taught at the Transdisciplinary Design MFA Programme in 2013, under the auspices of Parsons DESIS Lab, founded at The New School by Eduardo Staszowski and Lara Penin. The author had the opportunity to take part in this experimentation as she was a visiting researcher at Parsons School of Design in Autumn 2013.

The challenge was for students to design a fictional government agency to promote social innovation and enhance community resilience in the Lower East Side of Manhattan. From a research perspective, the course represented an attempt to investigate new models for public innovation units, finding a position for them inside the existing structure of the city government and imagining what that agency would do if it adopted a design approach.

The Municipality of New York, more specifically the Mayor's Office and a group of public servants, collaborated from the beginning of the project. This collaboration was the result of a previous cycle of events known as 'Civic Service Forum', a series of lectures organised by Eduardo Staszowski, Dave Seliger and Elliott Montgomery and hosted by the Parsons DESIS Lab for government

employees to share strategies on creating cultures of innovation within their organisations. The main purpose was to spread innovative ideas across sector lines, breaking down the boundaries between New York City agencies, and empowering civil servants to become entrepreneurs. Hence, the idea was to bring together those who serve their city to talk about the improvement of the services they provide.

The course was enriched by lectures from practitioners of different 'public labs', such as Kit Lykketoft, Deputy Director of MindLab in Denmark, Bryan Boyer, former Strategic Design Lead at Sitra and the Helsinki Design Lab in Finland, Andrea Coleman, former CEO of the Office of Innovation at the New York City Department of Education, and Dave Seliger, a civil servant with the City of New York working in civic innovation and technology. The students were also able to attend a presentation on the 'Creative Citizens' project given by the author.

The 'The New York City Office of Public Imagination' project's context was the Lower East Side, an area characterised by gentrification, segregation, disconnection in the perception of history, social disintegration, and loss of culture/character. Residents are losing their sense of belonging to the neighbourhood and are also showing a lack of confidence in the fact that they can make a difference. This context was specifically selected because of these pressing issues and also because of its great history in terms of citizen activism. In addition, during the Fall 2013 term, students had the opportunity to use a vacant store in Stanton Street, in the heart of the Lower East Side, and thus, to simulate pilot projects in direct contact with the neighbourhood.

The course was divided into four main phases:

A first exploration was dedicated to researching existing design-driven and social innovation initiatives within the public sector, in order to extract a set of 'design principles' and create a first 'draft vision' of the NYC Office for Public Imagination.

The aim of this investigation was twofold: to map existing government structures that adopt a design approach, and to take inspiration from the most interesting elements of these case studies to envision the main features of the NYC Office for Public Imagination.

A second investigation was devoted to identifying 'grassroots social innovation stories': experiments, programmes, collaborative services animating the urban scene based on people's creativity and entrepreneurship, making use of existing, physical social and cultural assets. The goal was to select meaningful stories, be inspired by original ideas and learn how they can inform the development of the NYC Office of Public Imagination.

A 'deep dive' in the Lower East Side was then conducted to collect data in the field and gather stories about the neighbourhood by employing different methodologies, essentially coming from ethnographic research. Literature/desk/digital research was also used to collect relevant information about the area and its history. The aim was to map out problems, priorities and opportunities in the neighbourhood by combining 'official' and 'latent' issues in order to define major programme areas for the NYC Office of Public Imagination and to more effectively design activities and services provided by the agency.

Finally, a set of participatory prototypes were held to test four different concepts of the NYC Office of Public Imagination. These experiments were developed over four weekends between November and December 2013 in the Stanton Street location and in other selected 'hot spots' within the neighbourhood. Citizens, public servants, designers and researchers participated in these prototypes: the main aim was to collect feedback on actual programmes, activities and services and to use them to refine and improve the identity of the NYC Office of Public Imagination.

A brief overview of the different concepts and related participatory prototypes follows:

The first concept, the 'Public Goods CO-OP',[6] is conceived as a branch of NYC's Office of Public Imagination that responds directly to the mayor's office and uses design to give communities a voice in the New York City government. More specifically, it uses critical design and collaborative ideation in order to engage citizens and generate community-supported political reforms.

The 'Public Goods CO-OP' attempts to interact with citizens in an approachable way by using the façade of the storefront in Stanton Street to collect feedback regarding local policies and current conditions of the Lower East Side (LES). Then, government offices, local NGOs and non-profits use this feedback to facilitate bottom-up initiatives, and they participate in the 'Public Good CO-OP's Development Workshops' to codesign with the CO-OP design staff. Another possibility is to take part in 'Visioning Workshops' with local citizens to evaluate potential concerns and collect community insights for further implementation.

In this model, solutions can be produced in two different but interconnected ways: the community generates ideas that are then 'bought' by government agencies, while the government produces in-store solutions to verify that top-down policies are understood and appropriate in meeting the community's needs.

By adopting this approach, two benefits are possible: the success of ground-up initiatives is ideally increased, and, additionally, this virtuous cycle improves education and builds citizen approval of top-down policies, providing government with continuous feedback.

In this way a bridge is built between top-down and bottom-up: the 'Public Goods CO-OP' allows direct communication between government and local residents, while simultaneously cultivating community resilience through collaborative, 'political' innovation.

The 'Public Goods CO-OP' mainly uses two kinds of codesign tools: prompt objects and prompt boards. Prompt objects are useful for encouraging conversations and discussions around relevant community issues. They are created by the Public Goods staff, but also from the prompts and concerns that are integral to the storefront experience. They take inspiration from the 'boundary objects' concept developed by Star (1989) and further developed by Ehn (2008).

[6]The 'Public Goods CO-OP' was developed by Meagan Durlak, Reid Henkel, Joseph Wheeler, Michael Varona.

Prompt boards serve as conversation pieces for the community, while also helping the 'Public Goods CO-OP' generate ideas for the objects used in the storefront, and for the development of the ideation workshops.

The long-term aim of the 'Public Goods CO-OP' is to increase community resilience by enacting a virtuous cycle of codesign and co-production between government and community members by using the CO-OP as a platform to facilitate encounters and integration, generating dialogue, community empathy and strengthening LES citizens' understanding of the services offered by their local government.

The second concept, 'Let's table'[7] has been developed to answer a specific issue: LES residents are feeling more and more powerless in the face of rapid change in their neighbourhood. Conceived as an agency created under the mandate of the Mayor's Office, it consists of a set of public events and social games for harvesting ideas to solve local problems.

More specifically, it is a programme divided into five main steps:

- crowdsource issues to be addressed;
- recruit a set of participants from residents, government, business owners and community members;
- bring the 'magic' ingredient: a 'table' to create logical solutions twice a year;
- prepare and pitch prototypes of the solutions with/to relevant issue owners;
- mid-to long-term follow-up consultancy to help implement the solutions.

'Let's table' uses a quite varied set of tools: a mobile table, a set of interactive posters and a digital platform. The mobile table serves as an attractor and catalyst for sourcing ideas, while interactive posters provide a permanent collection of insights and suggestions directly in the hot spots of neighbourhood. Additionally, it is possible to crowdsource feedback by using an online platform.

'Let's table' holds twice-yearly events. These two-day ideation and prototyping events bring together residents, community stakeholders and government decision-makers to co-develop ideas for the community.

There is also a 'mobile adaptation', 'Let's table to-go', that is specifically conceived for community groups, resident associations and local businesses.

The first version is designed to tackle more complex problems: a pre-research is required, staff presence and facilitation are necessary, and prototypes and follow-up sessions by staff are included within the process. The mobile adaptation can be used by citizens in any situation and it is more suited to solving small problems that do not require the presence of government members. Both versions were prototyped between November and December 2013, the first using the location in Stanton Street for simulating a full 'Let's Table' event, while the mobile adaptation was prototyped and used within the Parsons School of Design.

[7]'Let's table' was developed by Christopher Taylor Edwards, Selim Budeyri, Song Sichun, Lillian Tong, Jie Wang.

The main goal of 'Let's table' is to change the way in which residents and government interact, allowing more horizontal connections that are faster and less bureaucratic. Genuine connections spark powerful ideas with the right tools and this is a more inclusive way of creating effective local solutions.

A third concept is 'Talk on the block',[8] an agency positioned within the office of the Chief Advisor for Policy and Strategic Planning to collect stories and visions block by block: it is a platform for collaborative mapping and collective decision-making at a neighbourhood level to share insights about the past, present and future of a city block.

The problem identified by 'Talk on the block' is how gentrification has a negative effect on new local businesses. There are issues of distrust towards newcomers that build on a lack of community acceptance: a format such as 'Talk on the block' specifically aims at neutralising those tensions, by keeping the concerns of local historic values in balance with a positive economic development.

From this perspective, 'Talk on the block' is a sort of platform in which valuable information is collected: suggested business proposals are provided on an online website where entrepreneurs can showcase their business in a way that will both respect the locals as well as benefit their hopes for monetary profit.

It provides an interactive map that allows citizens on each block to see what businesses already exist and identify what they want. Then, a workshop is held to design business models from ideas collected from the residents of the block together with existing and potential business owners (entrepreneurs). Finally, 'Talk on the block' provides data of what community members need and want and what possible business models are developing directly to the 'Department of Small Business Services' and the 'Department of City Planning.' Hence, government can have a better idea of the needs and desires in this area along with an idea of possible business models. Also, entrepreneurs or new business owners can plan their business through our website.

A participatory prototype was held on the block around Stanton Street and Remington Street, using a physical map on which people passing by could directly interact by leaving insights and suggestions. Then, a workshop was held to create potential business models with residents and entrepreneurs and results were communicated to the government agency.

As a consequence of this participatory project, more start-ups may open with values and services influenced by local desires, resulting in a more accepted business category, acknowledged business service models and long-term profit returns. On the other hand, the local community learn to realise that their opinions are sought after and are valuable in expanding and benefitting the neighbourhood.

'Imagine your park'[9] is a programme of the 'NYC Office of Public Imagination' developed within the NYC planning department that created a space for citizen

[8] 'Talk on the block' was developed by Doremy Diatta, Melike Kavran, Shahrezad Morssal, Rachelle Tai'.

[9] 'Imagine your park' was developed by Liz Blasi, Colleen Doyle, Gulraiz Khan, Taylor Kuhn.

participation in the East River Waterfront access debate through fellowship, a visioning exercise and an exhibition.

The project is developed around a specific issue: the NYC Planning Department is tasked to create master plans for large-scale city projects and in this scenario, community participation, a critical component of the exercise, provides an opportunity for improvement.

The recognition of the need of public participation is a consequence of the reaction to the East River Waterfront Plan, published in 2004–2005: these plans were not responsive to the needs of the surrounding community and did not include any mechanisms for community input or participation in decision. That is why the main goal of 'Imagine your park' is to enhance governance through citizen participation.

The project has three key programme areas:

- fellowship: to have a multi-disciplinary exploration of the civic issue under consideration, as well as to ensure that the most current and innovative ideas are brought to the table in considering the solution;
- visioning: to ensure community participation at the onset of the planning process, and that their voice is considered by the government. To create engaging and fun ways for citizens to share their ideas for the city;
- exhibit: to showcase all relevant visions for addressing the civic issue, from capital projects, to organisational plans and community visions. To provide a space for critical conversation between stakeholders.

'Imagine your park' worked between November and December 2013 as a pilot project with Partnerships for Parks, a partner of the Parks Department, to solicit citizen input into reimagining the East River Park and waterfront access for Lower East Side residents.

The 'visioning exercise' reached out to hundreds of LES residents and actively involved at least 30 people in an exercise that allowed them to share their visions for the park on Imagination Boards. The two-day exhibition (held on Stanton Street) shared the findings of an internal fellowship exercise, along with citizen input from the visioning exercise. It brought together city planners, local activists and organisations, and the residents of Lower East Side to a table rich with information. Hence, the exhibition connected some of the existing stakeholders, and sparked conversations about those things residents want to prioritise.

As Penin et al. (2015) stated, this studio explored "the possibility for design to go beyond consultation and critically think about participation in a way that orients thinking towards future possibilities for collaboration in areas of governance and public life" (p. 443). This is closely connected to the theme of the DESIS research cluster 'Public and Collaborative', coordinated mainly by Parsons DESIS lab, which is to explore the intersection of design innovation and public policy by bringing together government agencies, not-for-profit or charitable sector organisations and academic research labs.

The 'NYC Office of Public Imagination' can be seen as part of a series of initiatives that complement each other, in which the 'office' is part of the more reflective and speculative side of the 'Public and Collaborative' research programme, working for students as a 'hypothesis' to be confirmed, while currently there are a number of actions developed within the actual spaces and constraints of city agencies, that, in a way, may be seen as the natural continuation of the 'NYC Office of Public Imagination'.

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Chapter 7
Reflections from the Comparative Analysis

Abstract After having described different experimentations within the 'Public and Collaborative' cluster, we will examine them here according to a specific set of dimensions/features. The first is about their legacy, since some years have passed; the second deals with the adoption of community-centred design as a common approach; and the third is about their key action, to design services. Then, a reflection about the roles of designers in each experimentation is provided, commenting on the risk of designers' contributions being exploited for political propaganda. This chapter is based on a series of interviews the author held with the key representatives of selected experimentations: Virginia Tassinari—'Welcome to St Gilles', Adam Thorpe—'Green Camden', and Eduardo Staszwoski—the 'NYC Office of Public Imagination'. Many of the insights and reflections come from these pleasant and rich conversations.

7.1 Legacy of the Experimentations

Some years have passed since the launch of 'Creative Citizens', 'Welcome to St Gilles', 'Green Camden' and the 'NYC Office of Public Imagination' and it is now possible to frame a discussion about their legacy. This is not an evaluation of their 'results'; instead, it is an open reflection about the different relationships and forms of collaborations that emerged between public and private actors as well as local communities during and after these experimentations.

It is possible to talk about 'direct' and 'indirect' legacy, meaning that there is a kind of legacy that may be considered as an evident consequence of the experimentations, while there is also an 'indirect legacy' that seems to be less consistent at first analysis, but that may be viewed as a set of interconnections that continuously refer to the experimentations.

'Welcome to St Gilles' left a legacy that is both direct and indirect.

First of all, it was a pioneer project that opened new possibilities of research within the MAD Faculty of the LUCA School of Arts. Indeed, it was after 'Welcome to St Gilles' that a research group within the university started to work

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on sustainable scenarios and social innovation. Interestingly, LUCA DESIS Lab is currently opening a new cluster about refugees collaborating with the Municipality of Genk.

After 'Welcome to St Gilles', many students started to consider their professional future in a different way, thinking of themselves as service designers able to work in the field of social innovation.

Hence, the project left a consistent legacy within the school and the research group, and also within the neighbourhood. In fact, after 'Welcome to St Gilles' a Neighbourhood Committee (Comité du quartier) was set up and this may be viewed as an actual result of the experimentation. This committee organised small local initiatives (parties with marching bands, pop-up markets of ideas, urban meetings, new shop windows in vacant stores etc.), established direct relations with the municipality, and was also able to get some funding for its initiatives.

More generally, after the experimentation, the neighbourhood of St Gilles became quite well-known and the municipality of Genk became more interested in the area. Virginia Tassinari, during the conversation with the author, also maintained that some tangible signs of 'gentrification' are evident, such as the presence of new businesses, new bars, new ateliers and laboratories.

The Neighbourhood Committee is currently a key presence and they are developing activities with residents without the participation of design researchers: 'Welcome to St Gilles' is perceived as a very real part of their story and this strong identification may be considered as a result.

However, Virginia Tassinari was a little concerned about the loss of the 'aesthetic and innovative character' of the Neighbourhood Committee's activities that didn't involve designers: for example, a neighbourhood newspaper was created but it seemed (to her) to not be very interesting and similar to local newspapers published by the church or other cultural associations. Her assumption was that, without designers, the residents had lost any incentive to innovate, but the fact that they were continuing to activate initiatives may be considered as a great result.

The main legacy of 'Welcome to St Gilles', however, is the creation of an intervention format for urban regeneration: it is known as 'Welcome to_' and has been replicated in the Walloon municipality of Seraing ('Welcome to Seraing') and another project is starting in the city of Liège ('Welcome to La Barrière').

The ownership of this intervention format is blurred, it is shared between residents, design researchers and Reciprocity (the International Biennial of Design Liège). In a sense, it was Reciprocity that fostered the creation of this format by searching for design ideas not only related to products, but also to social innovation and, thus, preparing the ground for the emergence of 'Welcome to_.'

The different editions of 'Welcome to_' did not apply exactly the same format: for example, in 'Welcome to Seraing', design students were not included in the first steps, and the process started with an 'intensive camp' in which design researchers immersed themselves in the field using an ethnographic approach. It was a sort of 'immersive residence', cooking, eating and spending time with local residents, and developing small exhibitions together.

This process was reiterated several times, and students were involved in a second phase to refine the first concepts created with residents, re-shaping the same ideas several times.

Many different strategies were put in place, one was to identify neighbourhood heroes (by posing questions such as 'what are your skills?') and then a 'Mural of Ordinary Heroes' was painted on a neighbourhood building. Another strategy was to use a local puppet theatre to tell positive stories about the neighbourhood, and residents are continuing to tell these stories. In all the interventions of 'Welcome to_', the main activity carried out by design researchers was to build upon what already existed in the local context, such as the puppet theatre or the dinner club, without developing something totally new, thus making creative use of the assets present.

Another crucial feature of this format was to involve public servants, actually developing a process of empowerment: more specifically, in 'Welcome to Seraing', two public servants played a crucial role. Thanks to the project, they felt able to restart doing something for the neighbourhood and they organised a permanent exhibition in which several codesign sessions with residents are currently being held. They are looking for new funds for the next five years.

In conclusion, the format of intervention, 'Welcome to_', is continuously undergoing changes and iterations; it is an open format, in which several design strategies can be adopted that share the aim to activate local residents and build a bridge with the public sector in order to foster new collaborations between citizens and institutions.

According to Adam Thorpe, 'Green Camden' also left a direct and an indirect legacy. The first is represented by the Public Collaboration Lab, a funded research project exploring strategic collaboration between the local government and design education, while the indirect legacy is related to strategic learning about how to work with an organisation such as the council.

None of the student projects (consisting mainly of rough prototypes and service blueprints) has been implemented to date: 'Green Camden' was more of an 'insight work', because it represented a change in the way of working with the community.

In fact, the 'Green Camden' project was the starting point of a fruitful discussion between researchers of UAL DESIS Lab and Camden Council, who were interested in learning how to engage citizens in a more successful way, going beyond the single relationship with Camden Sustainability Team and thus enlarging the conversation. After 'Green Camden', researchers from UAL DESIS Lab and the council established a stronger connection, sharing ideas and information, developing a mutual coaching relationship, and discussing possible design interventions to work closely with citizens.

In 2013, a one-day workshop was organised that included academics, community groups, local authorities, and service managers from the council; also invited were a number of international participants to give a better understanding of how other countries approach the issue of citizen engagement and service innovation. As Thorpe et al. state (2016), this workshop was important because it resulted in an

increased understanding and acknowledgement of the potential of design education/local government collaboration in social and service innovation learning and practice.

Following this event, a network was developed among the council, local associations, companies, social enterprises and design researchers to re-focus the agenda of local government on the issues of citizen engagement and community resilience. Hence, a great knowledge exchange between diverse actors was enhanced, creating a common framework to structure collaboration. The aim was also to work with different parts of the council, involving areas such as transportation, employability, communication, and, thus, going beyond issues related to sustainability.

The Public Collaboration Lab that originated from this 'preparatory' work carries out six projects strategically located within various parts of the local government, dealing with different topics such as public libraries, climate and building control, waste management, adult social care etc. and attempting to understand what design can do in different contexts and different services departments.

The Public Collaboration Lab may be understood as an actual 'Public Innovation Place', defined in 'Public and Collaborative' as 'authorising environments' that foster experiments. These spaces may have different names (Living Lab, Change Lab, Gov Lab, etc.), but they all have some common features: they are able to bring together a variety of actors, both public and private, with a diverse array of skill sets and expertise, in order to facilitate innovation in a safe space free from many of the constraints of partner-specific mandates, policy issues, and procedural restrictions.

The Public Collaboration Lab attempts to test this 'lab model' and to experiment codesign methods working with service providers and users, focusing on people's needs and desires, and including citizens in the design and delivery of public services.

Moreover, the lab attempts to work at different stages of local government strategy: Adam Thorpe defines the Public Collaboration Lab as a 'project located between the lines' that helps the transfer of information and exchange of knowledge between the policy-making implementation line and front line of service delivery, and thus, working between different levels and different services. It is a sort of multi-layered action research that applies a diverse range of 'open' collaborative, iterative and 'agile' (Beck et al. 2001) approaches to tackle the context of local government that is complex, networked and frequently 'agonistic' in nature.

Finally, speaking about the possible replication of the lab model in his interview, Adam Thorpe points out that the Public Collaboration Lab is a council lab located in a specific context, and understanding people in a place through an immersive ethnographic research is crucial. But, in spite of this strong relation with the place, a kind of replication is possible, because 'what we do' as designers is context specific, but 'how we do' can be global.

Hence, the work of design researchers is now to define a set of overarching principles, refining methods and approaches; it is a long path of investigation that builds upon the hard work done in the last eight to ten years, but still many more experimental labs are needed to better evaluate their effective impact at both the policy and service levels.

According to Eduardo Staszowski, the main legacy of 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' is a constellation of diverse activities—multi-stage (various activities that work in parallel) and multi-level (from services to policies). These activities are more tangible and concrete than the original experimentation, which was essentially related to speculative and critical design.

For example, 'Designing for Financial Empowerment' is part of the legacy of 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' and it is a cross-sector initiative to explore how service design can be used to make public sector financial empowerment services more effective and accessible. It is a sort of lab for financial inclusion, done in collaboration with some city agencies, such as the NYC Department of Consumer Affairs Office of Financial Empowerment and other partners such as the Mayor's Fund to Advance New York City and, of course, the group of researchers of Parsons DESIS Lab.

As suggested in the website of 'Public and Collaborative NYC', this initiative envisions New York City challenging the cycle of poverty by holistically examining current public policy and service offerings; understanding the various needs of the city's most vulnerable populations; and enabling community members to participate in the codesign of the very services they use, together with policymakers, advocates and service providers.

Hence, this initiative builds upon the network of relationships started with 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination', meaning that it benefits from the connections activated both with the municipality and with citizens, and, of course, it also builds upon the experimental methods adopted to engage people and codesign services with them.

Another activity that may be considered as part of this legacy is related to the use of Public Libraries in many different areas of the city, such as Brooklyn, Queens and The Bronx, as 'service locations', creating new spaces for the provision of services. This was an experiment to transform Public Libraries into actual service providers, the intention was similar to what was done within 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' that exploited existing places (vacant stores) in the city to deliver public services. In this case, the idea is to convert the libraries into hybrid places that provides a wide range of services, not only those related to the traditional activity of a library.

But, one of the major legacies of 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' is probably the creation of a new service design group within the municipality: this group is composed of former students of Parsons DESIS Lab who may be viewed as emerging design champions working within the Mayor's Office and City agencies, working at making public services as effective and accessible as possible for New Yorkers.

On June 1st 2016, Service Design Day was celebrated; it is an international event dedicated to showcasing the practice of service design: in New York City, members of the municipality decided to mark the occasion by affirming their commitment to this important discipline and highlighting how they were continuing to embed the practice within their government. This is crucial not only on the part of citizens/users but also on the part of public servants: by applying a service design

approach, public servants can better meet the needs of citizens and service providers alike through solutions that consider people, processes, communications, and technology together in a holistic perspective.

The creation of a service design group within the municipality is an important achievement, particularly because it demonstrates the emergence of a mature awareness on the part of policymakers and public servants as to the possibilities offered by service design and, more generally, by design interventions within the public realm.

This awareness is also more solidly consolidated among the students: after the experimental course of The NYC Office of Public Imagination, many students found 'a new field of interest', new professional areas and new job descriptions that deal with service design, codesign and design for policy in the public realm.

Currently, within Parsons DESIS Lab, a number of Ph.D. theses have been developed on this topic, one of these is an extensive project on the creation of an experimental office similar to 'The NYC of Public Imagination', again using speculative and critical design as a way to change roles and rules within the public realm.

Hence, the legacy of the first pioneering experimentation is a constellation of different initiatives not always interconnected, but the crucial legacy is most probably the achievement of this awareness on the importance of design intervention in the public realm on the part of each actor, ranging from civil servants, policy makers, to students and design researchers themselves.

The legacy of 'Creative Citizens' has been partly presented in the previous chapter, describing the six services that originated from the experimentation. This is a direct legacy, because it consists of concrete results, but 'Creative Citizens' also has an indirect legacy (that we are still analysing), characterised by the fact that this experimentation has become an Italian best practice, influencing the emergence of new policies, at least at a local level. In the final part of this book we will present a conceptualisation of the 'Creative Citizens model', thus deepening a reflection about its possible replication.

7.2 Community-Centred Design as Common Approach

All the experimentations described are context-based, meaning that they start from a specific place that presents specific challenges.

In a way, all the neighbourhoods involved (St. Gilles in Genk, Camden in London, Lower East Side in New York and Zone 4 in Milan) share the same types of problems. Of course, there are distinctions but the main issues deal with social and cultural inclusion, sustainability and gentrification.

Moreover, each experimentation has a central challenge to tackle that worked as a sort of 'boundary topic', as an issue that raised the interest of residents and led to the creation of a group of citizens willing to collaborate with design researchers.

In St Gilles the main problem was the loss of the original identity of the place caused by the disproportionate mix of students and local inhabitants; while in Camden the most important challenge was in promoting a sustainable behaviour among the residents in such a large neighbourhood; in the Lower East Side the central issue was related to gentrification that led to the loss of cultural identity; and in Zone 4 the main problem was connected to insufficient services being offered in the neighbourhood, especially related to food services and cultural activities, which created a form of social exclusion on the part of the residents.

The first step for design intervention in all the neighbourhoods was a deep immersion of design researchers within the context, adopting an approach that at DESIS we call community-centred design. As previously mentioned, this is an approach that must provide for the presence of designers in the community for long enough to activate a particular initiative or initiatives, creating and visualising a common and shared aim, enabling the community itself to pursue a path of innovation and implementation (Meroni 2008, 2011).

The community-centred design approach was adopted in each experimentation, applying two types of skill (Manzini and Meroni 2013): one is related to developing knowledge about the selected community, the other is the capacity to creatively collaborate with non-designers, hence to use design knowledge to design *with* and *for* the community, developing specific tools to enable them to codesign solutions to their own needs.

This ability to collaborate with non-designers is particularly meaningful when dealing with local residents, because it means understanding values and behaviours, not only following a traditional ethnographic approach, but also in a design activism perspective in the sense suggested by Markussen (2011). He argues that design activism is not a protest or a demonstration, but a *designerly* way of intervening in people's lives. Hence, it is not a simple ethnographic observation, nor a collection of complaints and conflicts or a resistance against the status quo, it is about finding solutions together: the kind of design activism that was put in place in the various experimentations is in fact a propositional and constructive activity.

In this sense, the community-centred design approach adopted is similar to the notion of design activism suggested by Fuad-luke (2009): "activism is about… taking actions to catalyse, encourage or bring about change, in order to elicit social cultural and/or political transformations. It can also involve transformation of the individual activists" (p. 6).

We may argue that the four experimentations started to work in the field by adopting this hybrid approach that combines ethnographic research, community-centred design and design activism: for example, in 'Welcome to St Gilles', listening to the residents, getting in touch with their stories and their backgrounds was a crucial warm-up activity that, in a second phase, was used to better outline their symbolic imaginary. In 'Green Camden', students started to get in touch with the community by documenting citizens' routines and life patterns in order to build future scenarios to be proposed. The field work in preparing 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' was something in between a 'situationist' and a provocative action: students and researchers waylaid residents by staging short performances on

the street. They also adopted a similar approach to involve public servants, by organising small exhibitions and role plays.

In a different way, the strategy used in 'Creative Citizens' to get in touch with the most active part of the local community was to join existing 'activism events', by setting up a stall for illustrating a codesign programme to improve residents' daily life.

After this first 'contact phase', the four experimentations started with a series of codesign sessions: they share the same codesign methodology, which is not new, but shows some common traits with what other researchers have done in previous years: generative workshops with diverse participants and applying a specific range of tools, iterative prototyping and testing [as stated in the first part of this book, we mainly refer the participatory design tradition of Ehn and his colleagues of the Scandinavian School (Ehn 2008; Björgvinsson et al. 2010; Bannon and Ehn 2012) and to the work done by Sanders and Stappers in defining and systematising codesign theory and tools (Sanders and Stappers 2008, 2014; Sanders et al. 2010)].

The preparatory fieldwork and the codesign activities have a high aesthetic quality in common, and this is a characteristic that should distinguish design interventions from other activities that share the same purpose but not the same method.

When we argue that the described experimentations were 'aesthetically beautiful', we mean that they were pleasant, colourful and invoked positive emotions. They used a set of design-friendly tools, in order to facilitate and make participation more enjoyable and convivial (Cantù and Selloni 2013).

In this sense, the codesign tools used within the experimentations were similar to the artefacts described by Markussen (2011), who states that activist design artefacts support social change "through their aesthetic effect on people's senses, perception, emotions, and interpretation" (p. 6).

7.3 Designing Services as a Starting and/or Ending Point

Designing services with citizens and various other actors was an activity included in each experimentation, even if it was approached in different ways. In some it played a key-role, in others it was just one among many activities. It is also interesting to note that in certain cases, designing services was the start point for enhancing a greater change, in other it represented the end point, corresponding to the final objective of a specific programme.

In this paragraph, we wish to reflect on the role of designing services; also, because service design is a key-discipline for this book and we want to better investigate its transformative power by following the suggestions of Sangiorgi (2011). In her article, 'Transformative Services and Transformation Design', she proposes discussing services less as 'design objects' and more as 'means' for supporting the emergence of a more collaborative, sustainable and creative society and economy. Hence, she considers services not only as items to be designed, but as a means for societal transformation. In the four experimentations described here,

services have different forms of transformative power: in a way, it is possible to argue that the process carried out to design services resulted as a process of innovation that involved many different actors.

For example, in 'Welcome to St Gilles', designing services was considered by researchers as a minor action: residents devoted their participation to design events or small initiatives, also because it was quite difficult to imagine new services in a neighbourhood in which some basic services were missing.

What occurred is that, thanks to 'Welcome to St Gilles', citizens had the opportunity to reclaim services by establishing a direct dialogue with public servants and policymakers, asking for a set of services that were missing to be reintroduced in a top-down way, such as the post-office, and the local train station that had been closed for many years.

This was an important achievement: we may argue that 'Welcome to St Gilles' created the conditions for re-establishing some services, for fostering the birth of some new ones, and for developing a renewed awareness on the part of citizens.

In the 'Green Camden' project, designing services was conceived as part of a bigger system of engagement composed of an intense ethnographic field work and a set of conversations held with residents: it was a continuous process of consultation that might also be considered a political process.

Some activities dealt specifically with designing services, such as the work done with library services, other activities were considered as educational challenges (for example the challenge, 'we want people to recycle more'). One of the main reasons for working with services was that the council was facing conditions of austerity and cost saving, and so it was particularly interested in finding new ways of delivering services, primarily by enhancing change behaviour.

But, more than designing services, the council was interested in exploring different ways of consulting with people: design was perceived as a means of delivering many contributions, in which the emphasis could change, sometimes on services, sometimes on policies and strategies, sometimes on implementations. Hence, the use of service design was embedded in a 'circle' with different levels and with different accents. In the 'Green Camden' project, services were considered as implemented and sponsored by policies, as a part of a bigger circle, in which the political process informs the policy and the policy informs the way in which services are delivered and measured.

In 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination', designing services was perceived as the most important action. But, in a way, the role of designers was marginalised to this specific activity, used as the 'entry level', as a means of opening the doors of public administration.

Eduardo Staszoswki noticed that sometimes dealing with services was merely a technocratic issue, a work to be done with bureaucrats, and it was difficult to raise the level of the discussion. This was seen as waste of opportunities: what designers can do may be more than designing services, because it is often connected to reframing problems and aligning the interests of different actors.

Hence, according to Eduardo Staszoswki, dealing with services has some limitation, because it is difficult to change the level of conversation and shift to

policies, thus gaining more power in decision-making: from this perspective, services may work well as the entry level, but not as the exit level because they may experience some difficulties in becoming transformative and enhancing a greater change.

We may argue that, in the experimentation of 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination', service design was useful in going beyond; it was a sort of 'boundary object' itself, able to open the conversation on a specific issue and then, hopefully, to create a new public policy, because designing new services often requires new policies.

In 'Creative Citizens', designing services was the central issue; the whole programme was structured to create new services step by step, and we explicitly used methods and tools coming from service design research.

We have already described the main results of the experimentation: six services that are currently experiencing different evolutions, and in a way, they represent both the entry and exit point of the whole process.

In the third part of this book, we will conceptualise the various stages of this 'infrastructuring' process, now we wish to highlight that even though three years have passed, 'Creative Citizens' still represents a good practice in the Italian research scene in co-creating services (both in the design part and in the service part) and it has also inspired a municipal policy of the Department of Social Policy. This is to highlight that, also in this case, the experimentation started designing services and ended by influencing policies, intersecting different topics and different levels.

It seems that what is missing is a codified process that applies design methods and approaches at each level, aiming in particular at reaching the political level in which decisions are taken according to a specific vision and strategy.

In conclusion, it is interesting to note that the issue of designing services as a start or end point deals essentially with considering design not only as a problem-solving activity but also as a sense-making activity (Manzini 2015). We mean that designing services may be seen superficially as an activity to find innovative solutions, but, in some cases (such as the four experimentations described), the process that is put in place has a great transformative power, especially when dealing with citizen and public servant engagement. It is about enhancing a cultural change, therefore, to carry out an activity that deals with sense-making, working within communities for socially progressive ends.

7.4 Designer' Role and the Risk of Instrumentalisation for 'Propaganda'

Another interesting dimension to compare within the four experimentations is the role played by designers. In the final part of this book we will devote an entire chapter to this topic, with particular reference to 'Creative Citizens'.

Here, we wish to highlight the specificities of the designer's role within each experimentation by identifying diversities and similarities.

For example, in 'Welcome to St Gilles' the designers' role was that of facilitator: as this project may be viewed mainly as an activity of social cohesion, the role of designer was to connect residents, to let people talk with each other, in other words to create proper relational conditions. In a way, the designers carried out a form of 'light empowerment' and this empowerment was mainly devoted to rebuilding relationships between residents, local businesses, public servants, students and other actors who were experiencing forms of social exclusion.

The role of designers was different in 'Welcome to Seraing' because their work with citizens was developed in a more horizontal dimension, not as 'connectors between people', but staying with them in an immersive experience. Instead of playing a relational role, designers performed the role of 'provocateur', meaning that they spent time in the neighbourhood instigating residents to do something new, to behave differently. There was the risk that designers were perceived in a naive way as 'neighbourhood clowns', but, on the other hand, their message was quite strong: they used a sense of humour to bring optimism into a neighbourhood that was overwhelmed by serious problems.

This is similar to the 'humoristic methodology' developed by Sclavi (1989) who argues that, if we want to understand the complex dynamics of communication, we must take a successful intercultural communication as a point of departure, building upon two principal insights: the first is to observe complex events through a process akin to the dynamics of humour, the second suggests that the dynamics of humour can elicit a deeper appreciation of the cognitive input of emotions.

Hence, the work done by designers both in 'Welcome to St Gilles' and 'Welcome to Seraing' is similar to that of an anthropologist-performer whose main activities have a strong relational character combined with the attitude of an agitator-provocateur.

The role of designer in 'Green Camden' was to listen and collect together different voices, to understand complexity and then, above all, to make visible the value of a specific situation.

According to Adam Thorpe, this activity of 'making things visible' is crucial, because it enhances a discussion about different ways in which to do a thing, analysing what is the potential, conceiving visions and providing tangibility to ideas, in order to show to people "how it looks like".

Hence, in this case, the role of designer is to make and use tangible items to activate processes of engagement and negotiation, sharing agency and, hopefully, sharing the power to change things. In fact, the final objective is empowering people in order to make them able to influence decision-making. Here, codesigning may be seen as a service for society in which designers play a crucial social role.

In 'Green Camden', designers ended up working in a very political environment and there was the risk that their activities were used for the local political agenda. This is a common feature that 'Green Camden' shares with the other experimentations: the risk that the work of designers is instrumentalised and becomes part of the 'propaganda' of the local governments. What is happening is that governments have understood the power of design, because, given some constraints, it is about designing futures in collaboration with citizens, understanding the roles and the

variables, and displaying what and how they risk by delivering different options of future scenarios.

Governments also see design activities as very attractive because they are easily exhibited and communicated, in order to show that they are 'doing something' with and for citizens. According to Adam Thorpe, this is a matter for reflection for the next steps, because, once designers and governments meet, it is necessary to find the right way to collaborate, to be more strategic, to understand how to integrate each actor together in a collective conversation, i.e. governments, designers and citizens.

In 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination', the role of designer was conceived as 'disruptive', meaning that designers bring an experimental approach into contexts where it is not usual, such as public administration.

This means that designers are seen as 'those who bring problems', but in a positive way, in the sense that they are able to 'unlock situations' that are otherwise difficult to approach. Hence, in contexts in which certainty and rigour are needed, designers bring a 'comfort with ambiguity' (Brown 2009): this is why, according to Eduardo Staszowski, it is necessary to create proper spaces in which designers may perform these 'subversive jobs', which is twofold, on the one hand it gives voice to citizens, on the other it brings ambiguity within governments.

'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' was an actual prototype of these 'experimental spaces' in which designers collaborate with citizens, public servants and policymakers; here designers may play their disruptive role, bringing innovation in the public realm.

In 'Creative Citizens' the designer assumed multiple roles: this is why in the final part of this book a chapter is dedicated to the description of this wide range of roles, building upon the discussion in this paragraph.

Finally, we wish to highlight one feature that all the experimentations have in common, which is the risk of instrumentalisation of the designers' role for local government propaganda: all the design researchers involved in these case studies argued that they clearly perceived that their work was used for a sort of 'social whitewashing' and for institutional communication purposes. This may be viewed as a problem and an opportunity: if we consider the second case this is a chance to create a middle ground, in which individual and collective interests meet, rediscovering some lost relationships, and bringing the best of each realm; in a way, as Eduardo Staszowski argues, rediscovering the 'political', and thus creating physical, metaphysical, institutional spaces that make political actions possible (Arendt 1958).

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Part III
Infrastructuring Public-Interest Services

Building on the initial theoretical framework and on the comparative analysis of the selected experimentations previously presented, the third part of this book outlines two related concepts, which can be interpreted as both 'product' and 'process': a collaborative infrastructure and its related 'infrastructuring' process to support informal initiatives of active citizens towards their transformation into actual public-interest services.

The first chapter defines the notion of collaborative infrastructure, by identifying its main features and connecting it to the concept of 'enabling platform' and, more generally, to those experimental spaces in which citizen participation is fostered and innovation in the public realm is pursued, i.e. the so-called Public Innovation Places.

Then, an infrastructuring process is outlined in ten key steps, which are presented as a set of 'design actions' that are not chronological but flexible and iterative. By building on the lessons learnt from the various experimentations, we aim to highlight what kind of contribution design can bring to each step, reflecting specifically on how to support citizen participation in the creation, development and implementation of public-interest services, focusing especially on the codesign and co-production stages. Finally, we consider the actual implementation of such activities, dealing with the issue of incubation and replication of solutions that is a topic of study in many other research projects.

The book concludes with two main contributions: one is a critical analysis of the role of expert designers in such processes, indicating that it is more than simply facilitating codesign activities. The other is a more extensive reflection on the meaning of the codesign process for the public interest to not only develop services, but also to codesign other more complex 'items'.Therefore, codesign for the public interest is viewed as a form of citizen empowerment, as an important pre-condition to co-production, as a key-competence for the public sector, and, above all, as a novel form of democracy that can significantly enhance citizen participation and foster innovation within the public realm.

Chapter 8
Defining a Collaborative Infrastructure

Abstract The research into 'Creative Citizens', and, to a lesser extent, into 'Welcome to St. Gilles', 'Green Camden' and 'The NYC Office for Public Imagination' represented the prototype for a possible collaborative infrastructure dedicated to the codesign of public-interest services in a specific neighbourhood and timeframe. In this chapter, building on our experimentations, we attempt to extract a working definition of collaborative infrastructure and to outline some key characteristics, by also connecting this notion to that of 'enabling platform'. Finally, we introduce the notion of Public Innovation Places as a possible type of collaborative infrastructure, providing a general overview of the worldwide emergence of experimental spaces that aim to support innovation in the public realm.

8.1 Characteristics of a Collaborative Infrastructure

Taking a step back, we wish to refer to the specific questions of this book: How can bottom-up initiatives be transformed into public-interest services? What kind of infrastructure could support this transformation? How could this infrastructure become a catalyst for local change?

How could design contribute in creating this infrastructure? The need for infrastructures has also been recognised by other authors; for example, Björgvinsson et al. (2010) point out: "what type of infrastructure is a central issue since innovation today, to a large degree, demands extensive collaboration over time and among many stakeholders" (p. 43). Furthermore: "this challenge means actively exploring alternative ways to organize milieus for innovation that are more democratically-oriented than traditional milieus that focus on expert groups and individuals" (p. 49).

After having tested a rough prototype within the 'Creative Citizens' project, we realized that such infrastructures should essentially be intermediaries for citizens. They are 'socio-material public things' (Ehn 2008) that allow direct citizen participation, which, at the same time, may be favourably mediated by design.

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The kind of infrastructure we are seeking to define, should work as a sounding board to amplify individual interests into public interests, and thus, give a common voice to citizens.

In our research, this 'amplification process' is supported by a set of methods and techniques coming from participatory design and design for services that have contributed to create a temporary environment for 'public conversation', a 'catalyst of diverse voices', an arena opened to debate; but, above all, and thanks to design, this arena is open to proposals, because, as Margolin (2012) points out, design is essentially a propositional activity.

Building on the prototype of 'Creative Citizens' and the other experiments described in this book, it might be possible to provide this tentative definition of collaborative infrastructure:

> a situated system of material and immaterial elements conceived to enable citizens to create value, not only according to their individual needs, but also to serve the public interest and thus, support the evolution of creative communities into new forms of welfare or social enterprises, facilitating the encounter between top-down structures and grassroots initiatives.

Hence, the central idea is the creation of a 'transformative infrastructure', and we use the term 'transformative' because it should be able to transform the most promising bottom-up activities into functioning public-interest services. Nevertheless, during our research, we noticed that, no less important than the creation of new solutions, this emerging infrastructure played a crucial role in enhancing public imagination and hope, especially in the Italian context.

This was a sort of 'side effect', something unexpected that made us reflect on the power of design in engaging and empowering people by creating shared visions.

Hence, another definition of collaborative infrastructure is possible:

> a situated system of material and immaterial elements conceived to enable citizens to create value, not only according to their individual needs, but also to serve the public interest and thus, enhance public imagination and shared visions about future, establishing the ground for long-lasting changes.

Both definitions co-exist because they are complementary and interconnected. They represent two different aspects of our research, one related to 'make', the other one to 'prospect' and 'imagine'. Hence, on one side, this infrastructure supports collaborative practices for developing services, and on the other side, it stimulates visions about the future, and more specifically about future daily life, which is envisioned as something close and achievable.

Considering this infrastructure as a system made up of non-human elements and human actors for making and imagining, questions emerge about what kind of resources are involved and who organizes and participates in those collaborative practices. We outline a brief overview—a list of elements and actors building on the the infrastructure and infrastructuring theories (Star and Bowker 2002; Ehn 2008) and on 'Creative Citizens' and the other experimentations described in this book.

'Non-human elements' might be material and immaterial resources such as:

- *spaces*, both public and private, deeply rooted in a specific context;
- *competences*, a set of skills embedded in a particular creative community;
- *information*, specific and available knowledge on a topic;
- *language*, images and symbols, a shared form of communication and imagery;
- *tools*, digital and physical assets;
- *roles and rules*, regulations and contracts, part of a possible model of governance.

'Human actors' might be individuals or groups:

- *active citizens*, deeply rooted in their context, for example on a neighbourhood scale;
- *stakeholders*, local associations and small shops, but also bigger players with financial and/or political power;
- *representatives of the institutions*, especially local and committed public servants;
- *various kinds of experts*, researchers, facilitators, designers, sector specialists etc.

This list is not definitive in itself; what we wish to highlight is that all these human and non-human resources may be considered as 'modules' that can be combined in different ways, generating a wide range of diverse services and thus enabling actors to generate economies of scope for the public interest.

Here, the concept of the so-called economy of scope is crucial: as Panzar and Willig (1981) argue, there are two main systems for setting up costs of productions: one is by increasing the quantity of one type of production, and so relying on scale; the other is by increasing the scope, meaning that the same set of resources is used for different purposes. Hence, the core idea in the economies of scope is to spread the costs of acquiring and maintaining the same means of production across a range of diverse activities.

The same principle may be applied to a collaborative infrastructure for public-interest services: common resources are employed and combined to produce various services. The notion of the economy of scope is even more relevant in our discourse, because in supporting a variety of uses, it combines together diverse interests. Thus, from our perspective, this notion might represent an economic motivation to amplify individual interests into public interests.

We have described one feature of such collaborative infrastructure—modularity: our purpose in this paragraph is to outline the other features. On one side, they are ideal characteristics, but on the other, they emerge directly from experimentation.

Below is a description of each characteristic; while some of them seem to be opposed to others, this is not considered as an anomaly, but as a part of a controversial notion:

- *formatted*, meaning that a collaborative infrastructure should rely on a set of recognisable standards, dealing with tools to be used, strategies to be adopted, and rules to respect. In other words, a set of principal solutions on which to base

the infrastructure. This characteristic reflects the 'formats and protocols strategy' suggested by Ehn (2008);

- *undetermined*, which also encompasses the notions of flexibility and openness. This characteristic is strictly interwoven with the previous one, because it reflects a polarity between customization and standardization, between the need of formats and the need to adapt them to diverse uses and situations. Hence, a certain degree of indeterminacy is required, which also means leaving the infrastructure open to changes over time and to further implementations by other actors;
- *situated*, meaning the close connection of an infrastructure to specific spatial and temporal dimensions. A collaborative infrastructure should be deeply rooted to a context, and particularly so at a neighbourhood scale, as we learnt from 'Creative Citizens', 'Welcome to St. Gilles', 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' etc. This scale of intervention is the scale of community. As Meroni (2008) states: "elective communities (defined by interest, geography, profession or other criteria) are sufficiently larger than the individual to impose moral restraints that transcend the individual will, but still small enough to be recognised as representative of individual interest" (p. 14). This can be interpreted as an acceptable compromise between individual interests and the public interest. It is significant to note that Meroni's notion of community can be linked to Dewey's 'public' (1927), in which a common awareness of a shared interest is formed and strengthened by open discussion, encouraging the emergence of more inclusive interests. By 'situated', we also mean that this collaborative infrastructure is embedded in a context and/or in a community: using Star's words (1999) words it is "sunk" into, inside, other structure. Hence, the nature of the infrastructure is contextual: it emerges on a case-by-case basis and it is embedded within a particular situation;
- *modular*, refers to the previous reflection on a set of human and non-human resources that can be considered as modules to be combined in diverse ways in order to develop various public-interest services, according to the principles of the economy of scope. Furthermore, this characteristic is related to the 'component infrastructuring strategy' suggested by Ehn (2008), who also talks about the 'LEGO block' approach. In other words, it means to develop a configurable infrastructure, working with general building blocks, components and component assemblies.
- *hybrid*, meaning that this infrastructure cuts across organisational, sectoral or disciplinary boundaries and it establishes unprecedented connections between different actors and networks. It includes both private and public sector, third sector and configurations of citizens, creating unusual combinations of existing actors and elements;
- *weak*, meaning a light, incoherent and fallible infrastructure. The term here is that suggested by Vattimo in his 'Weak Thought' (1983), referring to an infrastructure that is relative and relational, in which an interplay of interferences and differences takes place. In this interplay, as Skidmore and Craig point out (2005), a set of diverse and sometimes even incoherent activities are

developed. Moreover, "the result of taking the platform model seriously is that can become very difficult to know where the boundaries of organization start and finish" (p. 28). Even if they talk about platforms and organisations, their discourse can be referred to a collaborative infrastructure that is 'weak', in the sense that it is not a fixed and absolute entity with clear boundaries. We intend here to describe a 'light' infrastructure, that, in being 'weak', is unsettled and at the same time more receptive, and thus, able to take advantage of interferences and differences. Finally, in describing the weakness of this collaborative infrastructure, we also include the notion of fallibility: connecting differences may sometimes lead to conflict, there can be misunderstandings as to what is in a community's interest at any point in time and in any given situation.

- *empiric*, meaning that this infrastructure is shaped by attempts and operates by making attempts. This is a key characteristic: it is crucial to make a wide number of (more or less successful) attempts because they lead to the exploration of possibilities and open up to multiple understandings. Hence, this empiric notion is connected to a 'learning by doing' approach and to a wide range of experimental and creative activities. Here, there is a connection with Dewey's pragmatist thinking: he defined these activities as forms of: "controlled inquiry: framing situations, searching, experimenting, and experiencing, where both, the development of hypothesis and judgment of experienced aesthetic qualities, are important aspects within this process" (Binder et al. 2011, p. 10).
- *iterative*, stressing a specific meaning of the previous characteristic. The idea of iterating a process, of doing and re-doing, is embedded in the notion of 'empiric', in order to improve methodologies and practices.

The outlined characteristics may be understood as framework conditions for certain practices and behaviours to emerge, they are 'weak conditions' that allow adaption and flexibility.

Hence, it is possible to define such collaborative infrastructure as a set of 'weak framework conditions' for making attempts, and this leads us to shift from infrastructure to infrastructuring, which will be developed further in the following chapter.

8.2 Public Innovation Places as Collaborative Infrastructures

In this section, we illustrate an example of existing collaborative infrastructures already mentioned in the second part of this book: the Public Innovation Places.

This concept originated under the DESIS research cluster, 'Public & Collaborative', and it addresses a wide range of "experimental sites, agencies or labs created to tackle innovative solutions to public problems and dedicated to the creation of networks and partnerships; launching projects, events, and platforms. PIPs can bring together a variety of actors, both public and private, with a diverse

array of skill sets and expertise around a set of issues" (Public and Collaborative 2016).

Such a definition is quite broad and does not aim to outline the precise boundaries of Public Innovation Places; probably, their main feature is that they are spaces for experimentation in which collaboration between different actors is facilitated by providing an 'infrastructure' to meet up, interact, discuss different possibilities, and develop prototypes to test them.

If we look worldwide, we are currently witnessing the emergence of a heterogeneous range of Public Innovation Places: they have different names such as Living Lab, Change Lab, Innovation Lab etc. and they represent diverse types of collaborative infrastructures. What they have in common is that they foster the encounter between the bottom-up and the top-down: hence, on the one side there are active citizens, grassroots groups and social innovators in general, while on the other, there are representatives of the institutions, public agencies and private investors, all working together to find innovative solutions for the public interest. Hence, Public Innovation Places may be perceived as actual enabling platforms, as described in the previous paragraph.

During a research activity at Parsons DESIS Lab, we attempted to distinguish between diverse types of Public Innovation Places: we focused particularly on 'Government Innovation Labs', meaning a specific series of labs connected to the public sector that originate directly inside governments.

"A Government Innovation Lab is a specific type of 'Public Innovation Place' characterized by a direct connection with the public sector and created to tackle complex challenges that more traditional governmental structures seek to resolve. Government Innovation Labs experiment with and propose innovative public services and policies, while at the same time, try to reform and change the way government operates" (Public and Collaborative 2013). A map[1] was developed by the author and Eduardo Staszowski (Parsons DESIS Lab), with the expert advice of Christian Bason (Danish Design Centre) and Andrea Schneider (Public by Design), to illustrate and monitor the emergence of 'Government Innovation Labs' across the world.

This map was created to examine labs' existing structures and capabilities, taking into consideration their different organisational models, core activities and degrees of government participation. Labs that receive stronger support and participation from government are called 'gov-led', while labs that have a connection with governments but operate more independently are called 'gov-eabled'. The map also reveals different types of activities the labs carry out, ranging from more analytical and speculative activities to more concrete actions leading to piloting and implementation. In between these two 'think' and 'do' poles, there is also a hybrid zone that includes activities such as networking, communication, consultation and capacity building.

[1]The map on Government Innovation Labs is available at http://nyc.pubcollab.org/public-innovation-places/.

Hence, such a map represents an attempt to understand how these kinds of collaborative infrastructures work, with a specific focus on their model of governance, their way of engaging citizens, their modalities to involve public agencies and aggregate different professionals.

We analysed several Government Innovation Labs across the world, from MindLab in Denmark to New Urban Mechanics in the US: three years have passed since the first elaboration of this map and during this time some labs have expanded, some have closed, and others have experienced difficulties in reaching effective and measurable results. This is because they represent the first attempts of testing collaborative infrastructures in an organic and well-framed way, and, thus, problems and failures are more possible in these early stages. But, as Jégou (2012) said in a public lecture at Parsons, these types of experimental labs 'have the right to fail', meaning that they are a space for trial and error, protected environments in which it is possible to test different ways of doing a specific thing.

This is similar to what Tassinari (2013) calls 'spaces of exception': Public Innovation Places are a kind of in-between space in which exceptions are allowed and this may represent the starting point for introducing new rules. Tassinari bases her observations on the notion of 'state of exception' in the philosophy of Carl Schmitt and Walter Benjamin, and later, Italian philosopher, Giorgio Agamben, who argue that the establishment of the rule is based on the exception to that rule. In applying this concept to Public Innovation Places, Tassinari observes that they embed the potentiality to change the state of things by growing from a niche (that is the state of exception) to a mainstream, and thus, introducing as a 'standard' certain ways of doing, such as code signing and co-producing public-interest services.

Some authors have highlighted the risk that Public Innovation Places (and more generally the various Change Labs, Innovation labs, Living Labs etc.) cannot get out of the niche, meaning that there is the possibility that they just 'stay' in their 'state of exception'. For example, Leadbeater (2014) states that "everyone it seems wants to experiment their way into the future and to do so they want labs". In the past three years, a great emphasis has been put on the mainstreaming of experimentation and it seems that the solution to each problem is to establish a lab, with the risk that it becomes a 'niche for innovators'.

Even if this risk is real, we think we are just at the beginning of this experimentation phase with collaborative infrastructures and that they are still far from becoming mainstream. They are situated on the borders of society and still represent the exception, a space where the encounter between bottom-up and top-down is allowed and in which it is possible to imagine and develop a 'reservoir of alternatives' (Westley et al. 2012).

In addition, when we define Public Innovation Places as protected environments that have the 'right to fail', we do not mean that they are closed research labs reserved for innovators: actually, they experiment within real circumstances, dealing with real people and real-life situations.

We think it is important that such collaborative infrastructures continue to "research in the wild" (Callon et al. 2011) within local contexts, and that they are then able to extend their work and operate at different scales.

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Chapter 9
Infrastructuring by Design

Abstract In this book, we regard the initiatives of creative communities as a matter of infrastructuring and this involves considering what kind of process might support these activities towards a transformation into working public-interest services. We loosely tested with this process within the 'Creative Citizens' project and, to a lesser extent, within 'Welcome to St Gilles', 'Green Camden' and 'The NYC Office for Public Imagination': we built it on the go, adapting the process step by step, without a fixed sequence of actions, just setting the 'weak framework conditions' in order to make things happen. This is a critical chapter of the book: we attempted to outline the whole journey into an infrastructuring process of ten main phases, from the first step of meeting a community of active citizens to the implementation stage focusing on service legacy and legitimacy. Hence, after having identified the characteristics of a collaborative infrastructure in the previous chapter, we now describe how such an infrastructure becomes an on-going process of infrastructuring a set of resources and actors in a specific context and timeframe that, hopefully, can be applied to other situations. This also means dealing with the issue of possible replication of such processes, which is why, at the end of the chapter, we compare our infrastructuring path to other frameworks in which citizen participation and design intervention play a central role.

9.1 The Infrastructuring Process in Ten Steps

We attempted to outline an ideal framework of the infrastructuring process by dividing it into ten key steps: only the first seven stages were fully tested during our experimentations, but, for the purposes of this book, we drafted the whole process to envisage a possible replication.

The steps are not fixed and, as separate phases, they blur into each other; they can be conceived as chronological stages but at the same time they can be altered, and many of them are iterative.

Each step is introduced with an initial descriptive part that combines empirical examples from the experimentations with concepts from the reference literature, in

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order to support the step's main underlying arguments. This descriptive part is then followed by a more critical part, named 'Inferences', in which we attempt to highlight the main difficulties and dilemmas that have emerged for each phase. In particular, there is extensive explanation of the codesign and co-production stages, as they are central in this book.

Below is a general overview of the process, with subsequent descriptions of the individual stages:

(1) **Meet a community**—amplify individual interests into public interest
(2) **Select service topics**—gather around important local issues
(3) **Identify local stakeholders**—organize meaningful encounters
(4) **Identify a symbolic place**—set up a space for conversation and discussion
(5) **Develop a programme**—align agendas and interests
(6) **Codesign**—enhance public imagination
(7) **Prototype**—enact service rehearsals
(8) **Co-produce**—make services together
(9) **Co-manage**—define roles and rules
(10) **Implement**—service legacy and legitimacy.

9.1.1 Meet a Community—Amplify Individual Interests into Public Interest

A precondition for triggering a 'supporting process of bottom-up initiatives' is the focus of a community. Several authors (Jégou and Manzini 2008; Meroni 2007) considered a community situated in a specific neighbourhood as the proper scale of intervention to activate social change. As previously stated, Meroni (2008) talks about 'community-centred design', suggesting that the community (rather than a single user) might be a subject of interest for design.

Relying on our research on identifying and approaching a community, two paths are possible for a design researcher.

The first is a long path of immersion in a specific context, using methods coming from ethnographic research, by participating in local events and activities, and empathising with the residents. This was the path taken within the Zone 4 neighbourhood of Milan during 'Creative Citizens': we started by connecting with a small group of active citizens and we spent one year expanding the group.

The second path might be to intervene in a community that is already willing and able to try out a process of empowerment: several municipalities (especially in our experience in Italy) indicated this possibility to our research group, as a sort of invitation for a 'design intervention' in a neighbourhood. This is the 'faster path' of the two.

Regardless of the route for coming into contact with a community, the principal focus in this phase is on the formation of a 'public' around a critical issue. As we

stated in the first part of the book, defining the notion of 'public' and building upon the pragmatism of Dewey (1927), a public is called into being when citizens experience something negative that is beyond their control. Hence, a public only originates when it has a reason to exist around a crucial question.

We want to emphasize here that it is necessary to identify an issue that becomes central in establishing a boundary for a plurality of voices and opinions, and thus, amplifying individual interests into public interests. To create a configuration of citizens is necessary to identify 'a boundary topic.'

We developed the notion of 'boundary topic' from the concept of 'boundary object' suggested by Star (1989) and, above all, relying on our research in Zone 4. The first group of active citizens experienced something negative beyond their control: the relocation of the Earth Market to another neighbourhood, and thus, they were deprived of an important public space and experienced a form of social exclusion.

The 'relocation of the Earth Market' was the first spark that ignited a cohesion around a more extensive 'boundary topic' that is represented by food systems, through access to fresh and good-quality food.

Hence, in order to identify a community, it is necessary to give it a boundary through a topic, through practical things and everyday issues: individual interests should merge with public interest, and hopefully achieve a balance. From our research, we learned to 'take care' of individual interests because they are a powerful source of motivation and energy.

We also had the opportunity to observe the importance of the emergence of a conflict and thus of a 'boundary topic' in the other projects: for example, in 'Welcome to St Gilles', the main issue was the disproportionate mix of students and local inhabitants. This concern was shared by the whole community, which is why the first design intervention was to 'actually' bring students into the neighbourhood, starting a sort of co-living period in which some local inhabitants hosted students in their houses, and, thus, creating a sort of community to experience together the real life of St Gilles.

In 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination', a conflict emerged between local residents and institutions: the main issue was related to the loss of identity of the Lower East Side, due to a major process of gentrification that was transforming the neighbourhood from a popular area into an exclusive one. The original inhabitants accused the institutions for having allowed and facilitated such a gentrification process, by placing the area in the hands of large real estate companies. Hence, in this case, the formation of a 'public' around this crucial 'boundary topic' was quite simple, because it already existed in a concrete form, and the work of the design researchers was to make this discontentment more explicit and channel it into a propositional activity rather than a polemical one.

Inferences

In this phase, several critical points emerged. The first problem is shared with many other participatory projects: only a very small segment of the community

participated, by actually investing their time and resources. Who gets to participate and to what extent is a crucial question: for example, within 'Creative Citizens', only a small group of citizens decided to actively take part. Nevertheless, we noticed that during the journey, another group of interested people joined the community and we realised that 'participation creates emulation', and this represents a small but important finding for this book. Indeed, this second group of participants was moved to take part because they perceived that 'something was happening in their neighbourhood'. Hence, their motivation was their concern about being excluded from a process of (social) innovation that was also useful for their daily lives. And furthermore, participation creates emulation not only because it might contribute to solving practical issues, but also because it encourages hope and positive attitudes. In this way, participation becomes an 'aspirational' activity.

Another critical aspect is the question of the 'entrance' of the design researcher into a community. This is related to the idea of a 'mandate': Who gives the mandate to the designer for working with a specific community? How does the selection happen? As stated in the chapter devoted to 'Creative Citizens', we started working with the Zone 4 community because we 'inherited' it from the 'Feeding Milan' project and our research represented a 'natural' consequence to that activity. Hence, in our case, nobody gave us a specific mandate, we simply offered ourselves to carry out a programme of codesign sessions and some people decided to attend them. Then, as design researchers, we realised that 'entrance strategy' is an important question that needs to be more structured, and we did not find one definitive answer. We developed several hypotheses, but we think that the best way to start such a process is for governments to give a mandate to the designer. This should be the official way to activate a participatory process, but it implies that governments are aware of the power of design and that they also have significant knowledge about the needs of any specific community.

Another possibility is that a group of citizens decides to involve a designer in solving a community problem thanks to his/her ability in using particular methods and tools. But this hypothesis is even more complicated than the previous one, because it implies that people recognise themselves as part of a community and that they are aware of the possibility of involving a designer.

9.1.2 Select Service Topics—Gather Around Local Relevant Issues

Identifying a community and selecting service-topics are two sides of the same coin; however, we decided to separate them into two distinct phases because we wish to focus on the importance of topics and on how they may be divisive and transformative.

As previously stated, citizens come together because they experience something negative beyond their control, and this becomes an important issue, a common

cause that aligns and amplifies interests. Social innovations often arise from such situations; what is crucial in these processes is to transform a protest into a proposal, and here lies the power of design as 'propositional activity' (Margolin 2012). More specifically, within our experimentation, 'Creative Citizens', the shift from protest to proposal was put into practice by designing services. Many issues that emerged in Zone 4 were tackled by conceiving new services: services to fill a lack of cultural facilities; services to guarantee access to fresh and local food; and services to solve bureaucratic problems.

Hence, this step highlights the importance of envisioning issues such as service-topics, in order to identify areas to work on and to allow the concrete side of abstract and intangible topics to emerge.

However, not all issues can be transformed into services: some have a strong symbolic meaning, without any possibility of being rooted in practicality. We distinguished between 'symbolic and emotional issues' and 'practical and daily issues': both are useful in creating a configuration of citizens, the first to stimulate public imagination and collective consciousness, the second to solve daily problems, especially in times of austerity measures and consequent 'service scarcity'. Furthermore, in selecting topics, many members of the community preferred to concentrate on those having some sort of 'business potential', in other words, on possible forms of complementary income by creating small local economies and establishing new social start-ups.

Another example comes from 'Welcome to St Gilles', where the majority of topics emerged from the local context and reflected the difficulties of a neighbourhood in which even basic services, such as the post office or the train station, were missing. This is why the main issues that arose during the experimental activities displayed an essentially symbolic value, in order to first rebuild a collective awareness on the part of the citizens. For example, the topic of food worked to achieve just such an aim: organising dinners and cooking together were activities that essentially showed a convivial character, which is necessary to re-build social ties and increase the awareness of being a community.

Another topic that emerged was related the problem of empty businesses: this was a local issue able to bring people together because it affected daily life in the public space. Some experimental activities concentrated on imagining and prototyping new uses for these unused spaces: design researchers and local residents together set up actual 'mises-en-scène' to rehearse different ways to revive these places. Even if it was a temporary and practical activity, the idea essentially had a symbolic meaning: it did not solve the problem, but actually brought the issue into the spotlight, facilitating the emergence of the topic and emphasising its urgency.

Inferences

If a community group aims to bring a specific topic to the attention of institutions, one effective (but difficult) strategy is to start to carry out initiatives on that issue, and by doing this, to challenge the official agenda of governments and hopefully obtain support on the selected topic. This may also be a way of bringing people

together: it is easier to gather individuals along the way, building on previous activities. In this way, design can have an important role, because, as we tested in our projects, it is able to stimulate and amplify what already exists.

This was what exactly occurred in 'Green Camden', where the selection of topics resulted from the fundamental combination of top-down demands with bottom-up initiatives. In fact, the Borough of Camden developed the 'Green Zones' programme to support the existing initiatives of community groups who aim to reduce carbon emissions by carrying out a variety of actions, such as cycling and local food growing. Hence, sustainability was the main topic, intended in its most practical and concrete application to daily life. The relevant local issue had already emerged directly from the bottom-up, but there was an important recognition on the part of the institutions who developed a sort of 'action plan' in order to support these groups in carrying out sustainable actions in a more collective and collaborative way.

However, it is often simply not possible to agree about the selection of issues: indeed, this is a space for conflicts. Many interests remain individual without being amplified into public interests; many issues retain their initial character without developing counterproposals; and many small initiatives remain unexploited without creating shared consensus and thus releasing their full potential.

Nevertheless, from a different perspective, controversies may be viewed as an asset, because they may prevent a unfruitful questions becoming the focus, and a hierarchy to be established within the most pressing social issues.

9.1.3 Identify Local Stakeholders—Organise Meaningful Encounters

Together with a composition of citizens, a group of local stakeholders is needed in order to enhance a strategic conversation, allowing differentiation in views but also bringing people together toward a shared understanding of the situation (Meroni 2008) and, thus, facilitating the emergence of negotiations and alliances.

For example, during our 'Creative Citizens' experimentation in Zone 4, we mapped existing services, activities and associations with the aim of establishing connections and involving them in our programme.

The meeting between citizens and local stakeholders (from small shops, markets, bars and committees) was a 'meaningful encounter', because it later became an alliance to face local economic problems and to address issues with institutions in a shared and formalised way.

In the project, institutions participated in the process by giving an initial endorsement, while within 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination', institutions became part of the 'community', because public servants were directly involved in the process. We understood that the role of institutions in these meaningful encounters is twofold: they represent the counterpart of citizens, small local

businesses and associations; or, they may be invited to take part in the process, collaborating in defining issues and a common agenda.

Again, amplifying and aligning interests is the central issue: this constellation of stakeholders is composed of diverse actors, who, in spite of their different concerns, may establish an alliance to reach a common scope. As previously stated, they belong to a hybrid area between public and private, market and state, profit and not-for-profit, amateur and professional: it is about the formation of a temporary group of diverse actors who come together to face a specific problem and solve it.

These configurations of actors may change over time according to a particular challenge, in any case our most important contribution as design researchers was to build a common ground where interests could potentially be negotiated and hopefully aligned, specifically giving space to the voice of citizens and marginalised groups.

From our experimentations (especially from 'Green Camden' and 'Creative Citizens') we learnt that the role of universities and research centres in enhancing this strategic conversation was important and certainly deserves more attention in future research: we were perceived as neutral actors able to organise and manage such 'meaningful encounters'. This neutrality was not intentional in connection with the role of facilitator, because we actually brought along our visions and ideas, but in relation to our 'status of researchers'. This 'status' was considered a sort of 'guarantee' that our main interest was the success of the initiative, and thus, that our intervention was necessarily devoted to letting different opinions emerge, but above all, to develop proposals and achieve actual results by finally supporting a shared view of doing a specific thing.

Inferences

Even when we refer to temporary encounters on a local scale, we are dealing with the same dynamics of large multi-stakeholder groups and cross-sector collaborations. The main difficulty we faced as design researchers was to understand how to support a meaningful encounter capable of expressing a balanced configuration of power relations and at the same time to get real results.

We did not solve this issue, but, during 'Creative Citizens', we attempted to overcome this twofold challenge by moving from an 'agonistic' perspective to a strategic design approach. This change was by no means intentional, but naturally resulted from the need to achieve a set of definite goals (i.e. developing a set of services) that, at a certain point, emerged as crucial because the alternative was just to deal with a fair and equal process of participation without developing any solutions for local problems.

This movement, or more precisely, this interplay between an agonistic perspective and a strategic design approach was also discussed by Hillgren et al. (2016) who, in their enduring design experimentations in Malmö, alternated between these two approaches in a dynamic way, including, too, a 'commoning' element: "While the processes of agonism embrace plurality, mobilize marginal actors and bring together adversaries—and the notion of commoning pushes for

equal and mutual ownership—the practice of strategic design rather focuses on mobilizing allies that can increase the power of the marginalized voices" (p. 90).

In our experience, more than this interplay, it was the strategic design approach that specifically helped us in 'mobilizing allies' and in creating coalitions to share values and support the alignment of interests (Manzini 2015).

Ceschin (2013) argued that, by adopting a strategic design approach, the exploration of all those contextual conditions (technical, sociocultural, institutional and organisational) appears crucial to increase the potential for successful implementation. Within the 'Creative Citizens' project, this approach was useful not only in identifying the most important local stakeholders, but above all, in bringing them together in meaningful encounters towards the creation of strategic networks able to challenge the current situation.

As Hillgren et al. point out, continuing the work of Callon and Latour (1981), such strategic design approach may help to carry out "a process of translations where heterogeneous actors and voices become homogenous and where one actor can become spokesperson for many others" (Hillgren et al. 2016, p. 96).

We could argue that our experimentations may be intended as a continuous effort to transform the heterogeneous into something homogenous: we attempted to do it by advocating the most promising shared view, and while we did not succeed in each situation, here there is room for experimenting with other approaches and, thus, for further research in this direction.

9.1.4 Identify a Symbolic Place—Set a Space for Conversation and Discussion

Creating a safe space for experimentation also means identifying a meaningful place in the neighbourhood for codesign sessions, prototypes, meetings, storage of physical resources etc.

During the 'Creative Citizens' project, we deliberately connected with Cascina Cuccagna, because it is a 'hot-spot', a pleasant place that is well-known and accessible. This choice was of vital importance, because Cascina Cuccagna is seen by people as a symbolic place for citizen activism. In addition, it is a beautiful place, a piece of countryside within an urban context, and this makes people want to come and spend time there.

Another important pre-condition in setting a space for experimentation is to choose a 'connected place' with an existing network composed of local associations, regular users and supporters. This kind of choice may facilitate people's involvement: in our specific case, we had neither time nor resources to select a neglected place and revitalize it, thus, Cascina Cuccagna represented a possibility for moving our experimentation quickly ahead.

Setting the space with citizens on a case-by-case basis was even more important than the selection of the right place. This space setting implies the change of

function depending on the type of session and activity, which is why a modular and flexible set design was required.

But above all, the most important function of this space was to host meaningful encounters, and in this way, there are many metaphors to suggest how it may be viewed: a contemporary 'agora'; an 'arena' for discussion and conflicts; a 'neighbourhood living room for conversation'; a 'laboratory' for research; a 'co-working' space; an 'incubator' for innovative solutions, and many others. One of the most relevant metaphors is 'a space for trial and error', a 'protected environment' (Ceschin 2012), a theatre stage on which to enact participatory prototypes to make innovations visible to and understandable for, the people.

Finally, a reflection on the nature of this space is needed: as stated previously, this kind of space can be classified as a 'public innovation place', able to bring together a variety of actors, with a diverse range of skill sets and expertise around a set of issues. These spaces are located in the hybrid area between the public and private, renovating the concept of 'public space' by extending its meaning as a space for 'democratizing innovation' (Björgvinsson et al. 2010).

The situation was quite different in the other experimentations: for example, in 'Welcome to St Gilles' there was no unique space, but instead a collection of small places around the neighbourhood in which different activities were carried out according to the contextual conditions. Local bars, vacant stores, private homes and outdoor public spaces were selected to host experimental initiatives, making the neighbourhood lively and scintillating for a certain period. Unfortunately, after the project had finished none of these places became a real landmark, a stable point of reference for the residents, because it was difficult to shift from the temporary situation into a permanent one.

In 'Green Camden', Central Saint Martins became a key place within the neighbourhood: this was a unique circumstance, because the university is located in the same area as the experimentation. The most important events related to the 'Green Camden' project were hosted in the university, such as the final exhibition, which represented a definitive moment for the whole experimentation. However, it was also difficult in this situation, to extend the 'role' of the university as a central place within the neighbourhood after the end of the project. In any case, this attempt represents a first effort towards the transformation of education and research centres into authentic 'public spaces.'

Inferences

In choosing, setting and managing a space (or different spaces) for experimentation, the main problem was related to the temporary character of the activities that were carried out. None of the selected places became an enduring point of reference for the residents, with the exception of Cascina Cuccagna, which was already a landmark in Zone 4. This failure was due essentially to the conditions of each experimentation, which were planned to work for a limited timeframe, but also because of our incapacity as design researchers to imagine and programme an implementation phase, such as actively involving other stakeholders, above all, the public sector.

This transience had negative consequences on the perception of the citizens and other actors relating to the ownership of these participatory spaces. The ownership was distributed and this impermanence had repercussions on the (co)management of the space and its resources. When the ownership of a space is blurred, many obstacles arise in assigning roles and defining rules for use of the space, and this is even more evident when it is used for a short time.

One possible solution is to share this task with the small number of active and committed participants who are strongly motivated to take on responsibilities, as occurred in Cascina Cuccagna, where the original active citizens who saved it from abandon and decay also founded an association that is still at the core of the organisational activities of the Cascina.

This may be a possible direction to follow: coincidentally, the Municipality of Milan is currently attempting to foster the emergence of these spaces (locally called 'community hubs') in different parts of the city. Their strategy is to build on existing groups of highly committed citizens who already use a place for meetings and other recreational activities, by offering them the appropriate support. This positive combination of citizen activism and public sector commitment could be the starting point for an improvement in shaping the identity and activities of these community hubs, and thus, creating a proper environment for participatory experimentations.

9.1.5 Develop a Programme—Align Agendas and Interests

The selection of the most important issues represents the first step in developing a common agenda for researching new solutions. In the 'Creative Citizens' project, this agenda was something between a participatory action research plan and a programme of events for revitalising a neighbourhood. Setting the agenda also meant sharing it with citizens, by organising a communication campaign with two objectives: to invite citizens to join in and to announce that something new was happening within the neighbourhood. Communication was developed locally and focused on specific groups/entities: neighbourhood markets, parents' groups, local shops and associations. Furthermore, we integrated these activities with traditional communication via social networks. This was an attempt to make 'our' research agenda 'public' and to inform citizens about the whole means of participation. Designing a programme might seem a minor detail, but it is important because it is 'setting conditions' for an alliance.

We developed a first draft of our research agenda as an in-progress script, and then changes emerged both in topics and types of meetings. We have already discussed the importance of selecting issues, and, during the research we also discovered the importance of organising creative sessions to produce 'contents' and exhibitions to show these contents to the rest of the community. Alternating these two types of meeting was a good strategy for revealing and sharing issues in a systematic way.

This also occurred in the other experimentations: especially in 'Welcome to St Gilles' and 'Green Camden', the exhibitions were critical in diffusing information about their activities with the greater part of the local community, as well as sharing their agenda and setting priorities for the next steps.

Inferences

An important question for the design researchers was how to align 'our' research agenda with the 'agenda of the neighbourhood': what emerged as crucial (and also useful) was to connect our experimentations with existing events and thus, to actually build on local activities in order to approach people and increase the number of participants involved.

The alignment of these agendas was a problematic issue and it was difficult to create a real convergence: to align the agendas means to align different interests and this is always filled with complications and needs more time than simply drafting a programme.

The setting of our research agenda was essentially a top-down process: in 'Creative Citizens', we did not share the main points with the community in advance, and, considering that it was a temporary programme lasting six months, we had to speed up some phases, and thus scheduled activities without asking for advice, but just announcing them. Furthermore, our agenda was strongly connected to the objectives of the research, which is why the drafting of the process and its main steps was not a subject for discussion, nor a matter for consensus. What we are suggesting here is that debate is probably not necessary at every stage: continuous consultation is laborious and can sometimes be a redundant and futile exercise. However, we recognise that a better alignment of our agenda with the local agenda could have produced positive consequences for the whole participatory process.

In 'Creative Citizens', another important type of 'alignment' that was missing, was the precise alignment of our agenda to that of the public sector. As stated previously, at the beginning of the experimentation we received an official endorsement from the Municipality, but we did not compare our agenda to the programmes and activities already put in place by the local public administration. A preliminary alignment of agendas would be useful in avoiding, for example, the failure of some of the services that resulted from 'Creative Citizens', by selecting, from the outset, those issues that had a central position in the 'public' agenda, and, thus, ensuring continued support.

Conversely, the 'Green Camden' project was organised to favour the alignment of the top-down agenda of the Camden Council with the bottom-up agenda of the residents: sustainability was the main issue, and it emerged both from the autonomous initiatives of citizens and from the local public administration programmes, with the creation of 'Green Zones.' This joint effort to align agendas guarantees more permanent interventions, and, even if it is not possible to find an agreement on every point, it allows different efforts to follow the same general direction.

9.1.6 *Codesign—Enhance Public Imagination and Hope*

Codesign represents the crucial stage in which the expertise of design researchers comes into play, and this section represents a preliminary discussion on this important subject. The final chapter describes in more detail the main characteristics of codesigning for the public interest, and provides a set of conclusive reflections on 'Codesign for Public-Interest Services', the main topic of this book.

Here, we provide the analysis of one key feature that characterises the codesign stage and is related to the possibility of developing a collective form of imagination.

In the 'Creative Citizens' project, most of the time was spent on planning and designing the codesign phase: the final objective was to define a set of advanced service concepts, and, in doing this, a fundamental requirement was to consider codesign as an activity to enhance the public imagination. As stated in the 'Creative Citizens' website, codesign might be intended "as a simple path of creative participation, precisely because everyone can become 'designer of their daily life', at least for a few months, while having fun at the same time". We intentionally avoided traditional workshops, experimenting with diverse forms of co-creating during the design process. The main aim was to let the citizens' skills and ideas emerge in a 'public' and 'shared' way, shifting from individual ideas to ideas for the public interest.

Even though we applied several methods and techniques from traditional participatory design workshops, we attempted to set up creative explorations that seemed to be closer to open conversations (what we called 'warming-up sessions') and to arrange 'generative sessions' that seemed to be closer to neighbourhood meetings for considering and approving solutions for the public interest.

Hence, these codesign sessions were something between a creative workshop and a 'public debate' or 'political meeting'. The merging of codesign methods and techniques within a 'public debate' represents a peculiarity of the 'Creative Citizens' project. The core idea is to support citizens through the imaginative power of design: developing a 'public imagination' seems to be a good strategy for empowering people.

The same occurred in 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination': in this case, the explicit objective was to engage citizens by creating visions together, by imagining new desirable futures in which services are conceived in a different and more attractive way. The idea of expressing opinions and suggesting improvements was itself considered as a 'new' public service, delivered in an office dedicated to this specific activity. 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' could be viewed as a sort of 'codesign office', in which the activity of citizen engagement is performed by adopting a set of codesign methods and tools. The main characteristic of this kind of approach is that it uses visualisations and objects to share ideas and inspire citizens' imagination. This is one way to manage a conversation among multiple actors, by offering a common item about which to dialogue and reflect.

A fundamental feature shared by all the items used in the various experimentations described in this book is aesthetic quality, conceived as an integral part of

the codesign process and as a fundamental attribute to stimulate public imagination. Codesign sessions within the 'Creative Citizens' experimentation were amiable and resulted in people socialising; the aesthetic quality was the harmony that came from combining agreeable locations with a fitting set of design-friendly tools, in order to facilitate and make participation more enjoyable and convivial (Cantù and Selloni 2013). The aesthetic quality conferred an aspirational character to the experiences, and so appealed to the people who wanted to join them. This is not unlike what Markussen (2011), building on the work of Fuad-Luke (2009), described as central in discussing "activist design artefacts that promote social change through their aesthetic effect on people's senses, perception, emotions, and interpretation" (p. 3).

In describing 'Welcome to St Gilles', Virginia Tassinari showed how the aesthetic quality of their codesign activities was a distinctive feature of their work, making their interventions more pleasant and appealing for participants. When the engagement activities were left in the hands of the local associations this 'aesthetic quality' was in some way compromised, because they were not able to reproduce the same level of 'attractiveness' for citizens.

Hence, the contribution of design researchers in the codesign phase is crucial: without the designers' intervention it is quite hard (if not impossible) to effectively carry out this stage, which is fundamental in inspiring people, enhancing public imagination and hope, and in generating visions of better ways of living together (Selloni 2014).

Inferences

One of the major issues that emerged during the codesign sessions of 'Creative Citizens' was to moderate the 'tone of voice' of the meetings. On the one hand, we used the traditional methods and techniques of participatory design, and on the other hand, we attempted to create pleasant and productive situations, sometimes shifting from our role of designers and researchers to that of simple citizens sharing the same problems as the other participants. This also entailed a shift from an academic and scientific language to a more popular one, and a continuous adaptation of our specific contributions to the meeting. We experienced real difficulty in managing the 'mood' of the sessions, which is why we played many roles at the same time, but this flexibility was needed both to achieve better results and to establish a better relationship with the people.

A more extensive reflection about the designer's role in these situations is provided in Chap. 10.

9.1.7 Prototype—Enact Service Rehearsals

Creating service prototypes is necessary not only to test solutions but also to reinforce the idea of 'making services together' within a community.

Prototyping, whether rapid, slow or participatory (Coughlan et al. 2007; Blomkvist et al. 2012), is one of the characteristic actions of design, and its specific application to services is recognised as a collaborative and emotional effort (Rae 2007; Blomkvist and Holmlid 2010; Miettinen et al. 2014). During our research projects, we experimented principally with two forms of service prototyping: rapid and participatory.

We dealt with rapid prototyping in 'Creative Citizens': once having elaborated service-concepts, we created physical mock-ups in order to represent and explain the services. This physical representation was important for two main reasons: first, to give substance to services that are by definition intangible; and second, to test the services with citizens and, in doing this, reinforce a sense of collective ownership of the services.

One particular characteristic of the rapid prototyping during 'Creative Citizens' was the use of 'low-tech' prototypes in order to simulate service situations in the simplest and most direct way. We adopted this strategy particularly for digital prototypes: we used Google tools (Google docs, groups, calendars etc.) to simulate possible service platforms and social networks for exchanging information and feed-back on service concepts. Making 'fake' and 'low-tech' interfaces with citizens represented an attempt to test a collective adaptation and implementation of services.

On the other hand, in 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' we implemented different participatory prototypes to carry out simulations of the office over a limited range of time. This represents an actual collective 'service rehearsal' in which everything is set: space, props, service script, roles and rules etc. Citizens are welcome to participate and try out services options within this 'fictional office': the four weekends on which we prototyped 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' became actual events.

Hence, participatory prototypes aim not only at simulating situations, but they also serve to build community awareness and consensus around public-interest issues. They are actual 'mises-en-scène' of possible ways of living, of future visions, able to extend the social conversation to the rest of the community.

Furthermore, these participatory prototypes might work as 'demonstration arenas' for institutions: one possible strategy is to invite representatives of the institutions to these events to show them possible innovative solutions for dealing with services and citizen participation, and thus searching for support and legitimation.

Inferences

The main problem with rapid prototyping is that it is essentially a top-down process managed by designers, who have the expertise to produce physical and digital mock-ups. This occurred in 'Creative Citizens': we did not develop the prototypes together with participants, because we needed to accelerate the process by presenting ready-to-use artefacts, and because we wanted to keep some kind of control over the process, by ensuring a high aesthetic quality of these items. This also happened in 'Welcome to St Gilles', in which prototypes were viewed as part of an

artistic intervention within the neighbourhood, in which the boundary between experimenting and provoking was blurred.

However, we recognise that in a longer-lasting process, it would be useful to make these rapid prototypes together with participants, utilising their skills and knowledge, in true collaborative fashion. This allows people to 'experiment together' and doesn't diminish the value of prototyping by simply asking participants for feedback.

In participatory prototyping, there was the risk of transforming simulation activities into 'events', and thus, of losing the original scope of testing situations and reducing the prototypes to 'neighbourhood parties'. This happened in several situations: the main difficulty was to manage the boundary between testing and entertaining. We had to consider the fact that many people were participating on a voluntary basis and, thus, we could not propose too many time-consuming activities, and because it was difficult to adapt the type of activity to the diversity of participants. We had to limit and simplify some prototypes to make them understandable for everyone.

Hence, we were not always able to maintain a balance between testing and entertaining, and sometimes we noticed that such 'performances' worked more as 'team building activities' rather than actual simulations to make evaluations and take decisions. In fact, this balance is important in collecting more accurate results and it is possible to achieve guiding interactions and leave enough space for accidents and improvisation, as we experienced on a few occasions during 'Creative Citizens'.

However, as we were also working to create a community and enhance coalition, the fact that some prototypes worked as 'team building events' should not be regarded as negative: these activities are also important, especially when adopting a community-centred design approach, and they should be not seen as a waste of time.

This represented an opportunity for us to raise more awareness about the risk of 'eventification' in participatory prototyping and to pay attention when deciding when a 'simulation as test to be evaluated' is needed rather than a 'simulation as performance to be enjoyed', which may be useful for other complementary purposes.

9.1.8 Co-produce—Make Services Together

We here wish to propose co-production as a twofold concept: on the one hand, it is related to service development, and on the other, it is connected to service performance and delivery. This distinction is important, because the former reflects on the possibility of an actual co-elaboration/co-development, while the latter refers to the more traditional meaning of co-production, in which people are considered as fundamental assets in the delivery of services.

Within the 'Creative Citizens' project, we noticed that, after an initial codesign phase, people were determined to actively contribute to developing the service in every detail: by elaborating all its touch points; taking decisions; and 'shaping' the identity of the service. In our opinion, this contribution represents a step between codesign and co-production, as defined by Boyle and Harris (2009): "co-production means delivering public-services in an equal and reciprocal partnership between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours" (p. 11). The central idea of co-production is that people who use services are hidden resources: it goes beyond the simple idea of citizen engagement or user involvement, because it fosters a balance of power and responsibility among service professionals and individuals, which can contribute to the delivery of their own services by using their knowledge and skills.

What we are suggesting, is that 'making services together' represents an opportunity to re-think public interest and to actively contribute to realising services that are more citizen-oriented. 'Making services together' should facilitate actual co-production, changing the way the way services are delivered, recognising people as assets and promoting reciprocity.

Furthermore, co-developing means conceiving a service in every aspect—both digital and material elements. Identifying physical resources is part of this process, because it involves thinking about how the service works: Which places in the neighbourhood can become key spaces? How to organise logistics building on already existing assets? Hence, co-development also relates to service organisation and relies on economies of scope in considering the same set of resources to deliver different services. This means creating a 'platform of local resources' which is also a way of building a more profound sense of co-ownership of these services.

What we are illustrating here is that service co-development relates essentially to taking decisions about service identity, to elaborating touch-points, and to defining details; in other words, accomplishing those actions that are peculiar to design for services. Hence, citizens not only contribute to creating a service concept according to their needs, as occurs in traditional codesign processes, but they become real 'service makers' (Selloni 2013). To encourage and facilitate co-development (and also to lay the foundations for an effective co-production in service performance and delivery) the idea of setting a 'fab-lab' of services within Cascina Cuccagna has emerged (Selloni 2013).

In defining a 'fab-lab of services', we propose a parallel between the familiar scenario of making and makers (Micelli 2011) in the self-production of products with that of collaborative services, associated with bottom-up activities made by ordinary people who themselves produce the services they need. Hence, self-production of services may also be possible, especially if supported by 'making-facilities' similarly to those available in a fab-lab.

We are suggesting the creation of a 'fab-lab of services' as an environment dedicated to co-development and co-production, where active citizens can find and make use of 'service-making facilities' in order to set up a number of public-interest services for the neighbourhood.

In attempting to outline the main characteristics of this environment, we are developing the definition of fab-lab provided by Fabfoundation: a technical prototyping platform that provides widespread access to modern means for innovation and invention, providing stimulus for local entrepreneurship. It is a place to play, create, learn, mentor, invent, and, furthermore, it is part of a global network of centres that share common tools and processes.

Fab-labs are flourishing all over the world and self-production is enjoying a revival: craftsmen, designers, amateurs and enthusiastic citizens are taking advantage of possibilities offered by the web, new software and 3D printers to produce objects and share stages of production.

Therefore, a fab-lab becomes a support centre for services in their development phase; a reference point for active citizens; an environment where encounters among multiple actors happen, creating synergies and partnerships to produce and deliver services. In this way, citizens can become "veritable 'service makers'" because they set up service activities that are often halfway between amateur and professional, profit and non-profit, based on sharing, bartering and renting goods, services, skills and knowhow. Indeed, we can even claim that they are 'service thinkers and makers' because "their contribution may cross all stages of the service, from the generation of ideas to actual realization" (Selloni 2013, p. 4).

A fab-lab of services in this form may be a hybrid place, partly physical and partly digital, in which various service modules are available: these are 'pieces' of services ready to be combined and fitted into diverse activities; they are different 'functions'—part of a common platform that uses the same resources, applying the principles of the economy of scope (Panzar and Willig 1981)

Everyone can use a piece or develop new parts, by sharing skills and knowhow, according to the peer-to-peer relationships described by Bauwens (2012).

Digital service modules may be calendars for planning a common agenda, establishing roles and work shifts, as we did in the 'Cuccagna Time Bank', by using a Google Calendar for organising different tasks. Many other digital service modules are available on-line and they can be used by designers and citizens together to allow shared and easier use. In 'Creative Citizens', we started using 'low-tech' and well-known 'modules' such as 'Google Tools', but in a future evolution, based on the contribution of designers, 'civic hackers' and passionate citizens, it will be possible to expand and incorporate other, more complex, modules.

Modules for purchasing transactions, for booking spaces, objects and events, for creating websites, apps and newsletters, for planning communication campaigns… these are already available online and they allow several people to self-organize events, tasks and other kinds of actions (some examples are: Eventbrite, App Maker, TimeRepublik etc.).

During the 'Creative Citizens' project, people showed a growing interest in managing such tools and, as designers, we put our expertise at their service. This 'way of doing' is quite similar to what happens in fab-labs, which is why we started imagining setting up a fab-lab of services within Cascina Cuccagna: the basis for this kind of infrastructure was already present, a specific place, a group of

committed citizens, a group of designers and researchers, and a collection of service concepts to be applied within the neighbourhood.

Moreover, during the project we listed all the spaces in Zone 4 available to host and support services: these are 'physical service modules' that, together with digital ones, laid the foundations for a platform of resources to be combined to develop different services.

The various services generated within 'Creative Citizens'—'Object Library', 'Augmented Time Bank', 'Citizens Help Desk', 'Facecook', 'Local Distribution System' and 'Zone 4 Ciceros'—share a common block of basic resources (website, spaces, a set of low-tech touch points done in paper-cut etc.), even if they are currently experiencing difficulties in finding other resources necessary for full development.

The idea that emerged at the end of 'Creative Citizens' was to set up a temporary fab-lab of services in a room at the Cascina Cuccagna known as 'Punto di Incontro' (Meeting Point). Here, a small group of citizens would be available twice a week to work on services generated by developing touch points and other details, based on feedback given by citizens passing by, because this room is open to the courtyard of the farmhouse.

Moreover, a few laptops and traditional printers are necessary to sustain this level of fab-lab, so the initial investment is lower than for a 'standard' fab-lab, in which 3D printers and laser-cutting machines represent a much greater cost (N.B. many 3D printers are now available at ever decreasing costs). However, even if this conception of a fab-lab of services is temporary and low-tech, a small initial investment is necessary, not only for basic equipment, but also for designers who want to support citizens in developing and producing services. Here, there is room for further research, especially about innovative business models that could be applied to these kinds of collaborative spaces.

Inferences

The main stumbling block in co-development and in co-production, is who gets to participate and to what extent. In our research, only a very small portion of the community was able to invest time and resources.

Moreover, in co-development, citizens are required to become 'service-experts', an, in a way, they are already experts, "they are expert in their own concerns and what they want…" (Landry 2009, p. 246). However, at this stage, only the most committed and skilled people are able to contribute: this represents a critical issue, but, at the same time, we think that having a large number of participants may create difficulties in the management of this process.

On the other hand, as we have already discussed, in the co-production stage, the line between participation and exploitation is very blurred. Co-production should not be intended as a way to put services in the hands of local people, by totally passing power to the lowest possible level, but, on the contrary, it is necessary for all actors to share this power in a responsive way: the role of each co-producer

should be clear in advance and all parties should make substantial resource contributions, thus activating processes of knowledge sharing and mutual learning.

The role of the public sector is particularly important because, it should be the guarantor that the co-production process occurs in a fair and transparent way. This is even more important in our scenario, in which there is the risk of co-production becoming characterised by the rhetoric of participation and self-entrepreneurship, especially when proposing the idea of service-makers (Selloni 2013).

How to involve people in a fair and equal way remains an open question: the majority of scholars today are focussed more on the benefits of co-production rather than on its risks (Vanleene et al. 2015), and here there is room for further research.

To conclude, we wish to highlight some inferences related to the idea of creating a fab-lab of services, as previously suggested. The main problem is that we did not test this idea at all, and more work is needed, not only to set physical and digital resources but also to experience a model of governance, and establish roles and rules within this kind of collaborative space. In addition, the idea of setting a fab-lab of services also includes envisioning a service implementation phase, because is not useful to develop a number of local services if we are not able to regard them from a long-term perspective. We learned from our experimentation, that, in order to guarantee the long-term survival of services generated from the bottom-up, we have to identify a 'main partner' able to support them over an extended timeframe. This may be the public sector, a local association, or even a company.

There is also room here for further research: several municipalities and organisations demonstrated interest not only in replicating 'Creative Citizens', but in setting up an actual fab-lab of services. Michele d'Alena, a public servant from the Municipality of Bologna, suggests that "every neighbourhood should have its own fab-lab of services for infrastructuring citizens' initiatives and, doing so, they also support the work of the public sector".

9.1.9 Co-manage—Define Roles and Rules

During the 'Creative Citizens' project (and the other experimentations described in this book), we did not test an actual co-management of tangible and intangible resources based on a local level. However, several issues connected to the definition of roles and rules (and, thus, related to possible different forms of co-management) arose at the end of the 'Creative Citizens' process and contributed to our reflection about the possibility of establishing a 'fab-lab of services' within Cascina Cuccagna.

Numerous questions emerged: How to share local resources? How to organize collective access around the use of a resource? How to deal with a platform that evolves in time, providing citizens with the possibility to change roles? Which rules are at play? Which behaviours are fostered? How to manage a set of integrated public-interest services?

In exploring these critical issues, a common element appears: the simultaneous need for flexibility, transparency and openness. This is particularly evident in defining rules and roles.

With regard to rules: citizens need to establish their own rules, but it is equally necessary to leave open the possibility of changing them.

At the end of 'Creative Citizens', the most committed group of people spontaneously began to define a set of possible rules, outlining a rough model of governance for Cascina Cuccagna. These rules are about use, access, membership, ownership and many other critical issues that arise from a shared management. We suppose that, if participants define rules for themselves, on the basis of local conditions, resource management might be more successful. But what matters is that such rules should be transparent and clear and that they emerge from the specific practice: hence, it is crucial to leave open re-negotiation on the basis of issues that emerge over time. In fact, the possibility to re-negotiate rules is as important as re-negotiating roles.

Roles should be well-defined on the basis on citizens' interests and skills. At the same time, citizens should have the possibility of experiencing different roles, contributing to the management of resources in various ways and also playing diverse roles in relation to different situations. Indeed, thinking about roles also means considering how power is distributed among those involved and this leads to a more complex discourse on the model of governance than this form of collaboration implies.

Inferences

Since we did not test this phase, we offer a limited reflection about the main difficulties that face an eventual governance model for this kind of practice.

First of all, we think that there is a conflict between a set of pre-determined rules and roles (that are well-defined and transparent), and the need for change, experimentation and flexibility. On one side, we observe the need for clear boundaries, but, on the other, this may also lead to limited participation and the exclusion of some groups of actors.

Hence, the focal point of this discussion for designers, is how to create those favourable conditions that allow the emergence of a more inclusive model of governance, within a service itself, within a fab-lab of services, and, more generally, within these kinds of collaborative spaces.

A more inclusive model of governance referring to the public sector has been explored by several scholars (more specifically to a notion of public sector that includes both public management and policy making) and many concepts emerged, such as 'participatory governance' (Turnhout et al. 2010; Fischer 2012) and 'collaborative governance' (Ansel and Gash 2008; Donahu and Zeckhaus 2011).

More specifically, Ansel and Gash (2008) talk about the need for an 'institutional design' that should refer to the basic protocols and ground rules for collaboration, in order to create a sort of procedural legitimacy for collaborative processes.

They argue that it is important to design clear ground rules and transparency of process: all the principles associated with the notion of access to these kinds of collaborations are important because they deal with who should be included. In their idea of collaborative governance, a wide range of actors should be involved: public agencies, non-state stakeholders, and citizens, i.e. all the actors involved in the public interest area as defined in this book.

There are also rules that it is difficult to design, such as those related to consensus, because even if collaborative models of governance are generally consensus-oriented, consensus is not always achieved. This is an open issue, because consensus is not always required, and also because some of the decisions taken according to strict consensus rule lead to a 'least common denominator' outcome that it is not always the best one.

Ansel and Gash also state that, together with a clear design of rules, an explicit definition of roles is also important, which means defining a formalisation of governance structures.

In this regard, Donahu and Zeckhaus (2011) argue that in defining roles within collaborative models of governance, "the repertoire of potential roles has grown richer, more sophisticated, and, not surprisingly, more confusing" (p. 9). In collaborative forms of governance, there are private roles that produce public value and this is a broad spectrum that involves all the actors previously identified, (citizens, local associations, private companies etc.).

It is evident that more research is needed within this area: as designers, we are good at triggering collaborative initiatives and in making things happen, but we are less expert in how to implement such activities and in designing roles and rules for long-term collaborations.

9.1.10 Implement—Service Legacy and Legitimacy

In the second part of this book we have already analysed the 'legacy' of each experimentation described, illustrating, the long-term outcomes of the various codesign processes. It has been argued that part of this legacy is indirect, and performed as a sort of 'cultural influence', and another part is direct, and refers to specific outcomes originating from the codesign process.

In this section, we wish to focus more precisely on the services generated in our experimentations, especially within 'Creative Citizens', which gave rise to six services whose implementation is undergoing some difficulties.

'Service legacy' refers to how these kinds of public-interest services are managed over time, and thus, how to establish the 'ownership' of the service and its possible evolution.

In defining public-interest services, we focus on the identity of service providers, referring to a configuration of actors between state and market, public and private sectors. This diverse range of providers includes actors from different realms but who share the same aim of serving the public interest. A question arises about how

to legitimise and implement this new generation of services: should citizens take ownership of the service and thus become actual social entrepreneurs? Or is it better to find a stakeholder ready to bet on one specific service? From the 'Creative Citizens' experimentation, we learned that citizens do not always intend to become entrepreneurs, and many active groups do not aim to institutionalise themselves. They prefer rather to receive legitimation from institutions or organisations and to let their activities merge into something bigger, or keep their activities as they are. Among the services generated within 'Creative Citizens', there are some services that are evolving and growing, and they are precisely those that have found a stakeholder able to support them, as with the 'Citizens' Help Desk', which is sustained by Cascina Cuccagna and the Municipality of Milan.

This is an important finding, because it means that, in the activity of infrastructuring public-interest services, it is necessary to identify in advance an actor who is designated as 'successor' and thus, who takes care of the service, ensuring its continuation.

In this scenario, we think that the public sector can still play a crucial role: we argued that public-interest services are provided by a configuration of actors in which the state is just *one* of the actors and not the principal one, but we did not intend to exclude the public sector, rather to assign it new roles. One role may be to take responsibility for the evolution of these services, meaning that the public sector itself can 'embed' such services within its system, or the public sector becomes a sort of 'tutor' that searches for other actors able to sustain services over the time, becoming the 'guarantor' and the organiser of this 'call for players'.

Inferences

The implementation phase presents several problems due to the fact that our experimentations did not reach this phase, nor have they planned in detail how to cultivate this evolution.

Here, the essential question is how to facilitate the shift from pilot activities to actual and long-lasting services. As we stated before, this is a matter of building mediations able to connect these activities to bigger organisations that have the same interests and share the same values. After having verified that not everyone wants to become entrepreneurs, we think the driver for legitimising these activities should be public and related to institutions; hence, intermediaries are necessary to build this bridge. 'Creative Citizens' has worked as an intermediary between the committed citizens of Zone 4 and the municipality, establishing an initial but fundamental link to implement all the services generated within the project.

Finally, there is another question that directly affects our role as designers and it is our 'exit strategy' within the implementation phase: after having accompanied a group of people in such a process, when is the right moment to leave? We did not find a solution to this important question, because of the multiplicity of dimensions, factors and actors involved in a participatory process. We were not able to coordinate each aspect: this was also due to financial issues and time limits and to the fact that a greater number of researchers is required to investigate this question over a longer period.

In 'Creative Citizens', the process ended with a set of solutions ready to become social enterprises, public sector services or volunteering programmes. Our role in this implementation phase was not clear: many citizens still felt the need to consult us about making decisions, while others were able to go ahead with their project without involving us, or at least asking only for occasional advice.

In order to better support these groups, we think that a sort of incubation phase would be useful, similar to the incubation programmes for start-ups that are popping up all over the world. After all, the 'infrastructuring' process described here, can also be viewed as an attempt to extend the issues related to incubation and replication of services and, more broadly, it can be seen as a way to explore how social innovation can grow. (Encouragingly, numerous EU research projects have been investigating these topics: Transition—Transnational Network for Social Innovation Incubation[1]; Benisi—scaling social innovation[2]; Wilco—welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion[3] and Tepsie—growing social innovation[4]).

9.2 Comparing the Infrastructuring Process to Other Frameworks

The ten-step process we described might be viewed as a sort of ideal process of social innovation (even if filled with dilemmas), in which citizen participation plays a crucial role. Other attempts have also been made: Meroni et al. (2013) talk about a 'social innovation journey' in thirteen stages; the authors of the TEPSIE research (Davies and Simon 2013) analyse the connection between citizen engagement and social innovation, providing various types of framework. The International Association for Public Participation (2007) that moves from inform to consult, to involve, to collaborate, and finally to empower., which is displayed in Table 9.1. This spectrum can be partially linked with our 'infrastructuring process', connecting steps to the broader phases of informing, consulting etc.

The first four steps (1) identify a community, (2) select service topics, (3) identify local stakeholders, (4) identify a symbolic place can be included in the 'inform' area. This phase serves to create conditions for stronger participation and it can also be viewed as a 'design before design' phase (Ehn 2008), in which sharing knowledge of selected topics with a specific community lays the foundations for further collaboration. The consultation phase deals essentially with the step related to the development of a programme, in which 'consulting' means obtaining public

[1]For further information on Transition see http://transitionproject.eu.

[2]For further information on Benisi see http://www.benisi.eu.

[3]For further information on Wilco see http://www.wilcoproject.eu.

[4]For further information on Tepsie see http://www.tepsie.eu.

Table 9.1 Spectrum of public participation (International Association for Public Participation 2007)

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public participation goal	To provide the public with balanced objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback in analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public

feedback on 'aligning agendas and interests.' The phase characterised by citizen involvement and working directly with people, combines both the codesign and prototype steps, while a stronger collaboration is put in place within the stages related to co-production and co-management. According to this spectrum, an actual level of empowerment is reached only when the final decision-making is put in the hands of the public; this phase can be connected to our implementation step, when it is necessary to take decisions about 'service legacy.'

Thus, our 'infrastructuring' process of bottom-up activities in public-interest services can be viewed as a path of progressive participation, from the 'lowest' level of information to the 'highest' level of empowerment.

Another interesting framework is provided by the TEPSIE research programme (Davies and Simon 2013), which identifies three main functions in citizen engagement: (1) providing information and resources; (2) problem solving; and (3) taking and influencing decisions. Such synthesis is useful in allocating the ten steps across these three main areas, that, in our opinion, may also correspond to the phases identified by Ehn (2008) 'design-before-design', 'design-in-use' and 'design-after-design.'

According to TEPSIE research (Davies and Simon 2013), the "first function of citizen engagement is for citizens to provide information about their needs, preferences, ideas and opinions" (p. 8). This category also includes the provision of resources such as time and money and, therefore, also includes participation in the form of volunteering: all the first five steps of our infrastructuring process are included in this area.

The second function of citizen engagement describes activities bringing people together in order to solve social problems: "Activities which fall under this category, for example, include competitions, codesign workshops, social innovation camps, co-production, certain kinds of deliberative processes, and so on" (p. 8). This area consists of steps related to codesign, prototype and co-production.

The third function is about taking and influencing decisions. This kind of activity goes beyond deliberation by giving citizens real power over decision-making: people have a direct involvement in these activities, they may control or have influence over decision-making processes and the implementation of those decisions. Activities which fall under this category are, for example, formal governance roles within a co-operative or a social enterprise, or within a particular community. The final two steps of co-managing and implementing are included in this area.

Another framework we wish to include in this comparison is that proposed by Steen (2013), in his attempt to outline the main phases of the codesign process. He argues that codesign may be viewed as collaborative design thinking and, at the same time, as a process of 'joint inquiry and imagination.' In illustrating this framework, he builds on the pragmatism of Dewey, who also represents an essential point of reference for this book.

The process is composed of five main phases: (1) the indeterminate situation; (2) institution of a problem; (3) the determination of a problem-solution; (4) reasoning; (5) the operational character of facts-meanings.

The first two steps can be viewed as a way of exploring and defining a problem and they broadly correspond to the first five stages of our infrastructuring process, because they deal with framing a situation (context, people, places) and identifying conflicts that lead to the gathering of a social collective around these problematic issues. Hence, the 'institution of a problem' is the result of an agreement between the members of the community involved.

Phase three, which Steen calls the 'the determination of a problem-solution' represents the core of the codesign process, in which, problems and solutions are simultaneously explored and defined, and it corresponds to stage six of the infrastructuring process, which applies specifically to codesign and enhancing the public imagination. Here, Steen proposes a distinction between perceiving problems and conceiving solutions, arguing that they are both creative phases, in which people's imagination is stimulated. In the perception of the problem, participants' 'moral imagination' is brought into play, which means they adopt a highly empathic approach, by using their thoughts and their feelings. The same happens in the conception phase, in which imagination is applied not only to rehearse problematic situations but also to envisage alternative and desirable situations.

The two final steps proposed by Steen deal with trying out and evaluating solutions and here there are some inconsistencies in comparison with the infrastructuring process. Primarily, following Dewey's lead, Steen proposes a 'reasoning' stage in which the various solutions are compared and subjected to a critical analysis, and this step is not explicitly included in our path. Second, Steen's process concludes with a phase named 'the operational character of facts-meanings' that essentially deals with prototyping, in which people test their roles and rules, actually negotiating their interests. This last stage encompasses the prototyping phase of the infrastructuring process and, in part, the co-management step, in which roles and rules are defined in order to outline a proper model of governance for the identified solution. The co-production and implementation stages that are crucial in our infrastructuring process are missing in Steen's proposal, because he essentially

focuses on ‘unpacking’ the codesign phase, without actually considering what happens once the idea is defined and tested.

However, we think that Steen’s process of ‘joint inquiry and imagination’ shares many similarities with our path, essentially because he highlights the importance of critically framing an issue and because he assigns a key role to imagination throughout the process, regarding imagination as an empathic projection and as a way to escape current patterns and frame alternatives. In addition, Fesmire (2003), in his book on Dewey, argues that imagination can be viewed as “a capacity to engage the present with an eye to what is not immediately at hand” (p. 67), and, thus, he highlights how imagination is integrated into everyday life and learning, not only by envisaging an alternative future building on the desirable in the present, but also by inventing the instrumentalities of its realisation.

These comparisons with other frameworks illustrate how many projects and researchers are currently dealing with this important issue of ‘infrastructuring’ social innovation or codesign processes in general. Even though there are various different perspectives and approaches, there is a form of alignment in the collection of issues and enhancement of their amplification from the individual level to the public level, thus, concentrating on the crucial shift from simple engagement to actual empowerment by the use of design (Fig. 9.1).

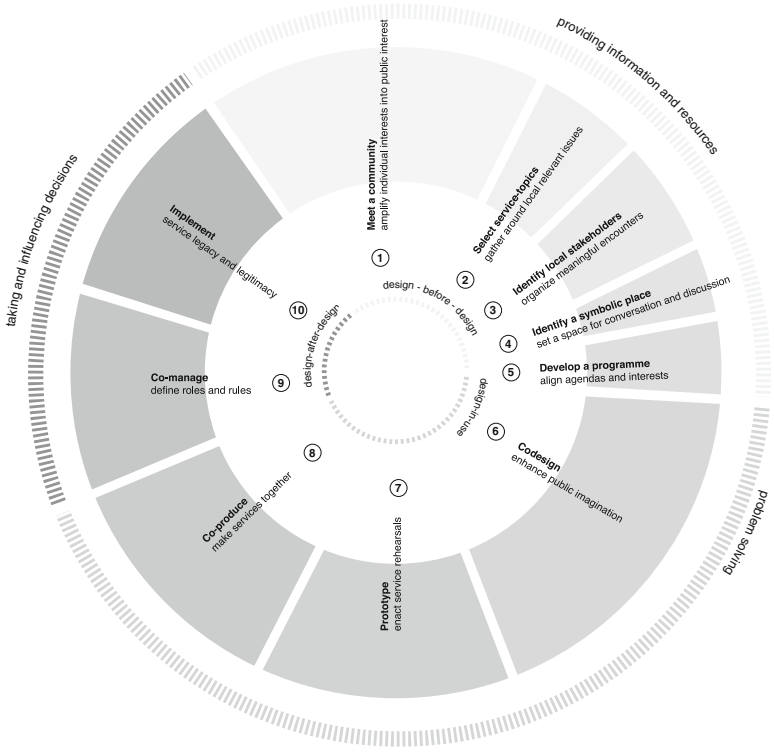

Fig. 9.1 A comparative overview of phases within the ‘infrastructuring process’

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Chapter 10
Expert Designer's Role—Much More Than Facilitating

Abstract The aim of this chapter is to present an overview of the expert designer's roles building upon the work done within the various experimentations described. Other authors developed extensive analysis on this issue, positioning the role of designer in between polarities of opposite concepts, such as 'facilitator with tools' versus 'proponent with contents', 'visualizer' versus 'visioner,' 'guide' versus 'trigger', etc. In this chapter we argue that the role of designer is also that of building a bridge between the top-down (institutions) and the bottom-up (citizens), becoming a sort of 'advocate' and, above all a 'cultural operator' whose role goes beyond the facilitation of a codesign process, but it deals with introducing a new (design) culture within a specific situation.

In his book, '*Design, When Everybody Designs*', Manzini (2015) proposes a distinction between 'expert design' and 'diffuse design'. This differentiation is our starting point in the analysis of the role of designer in the various experimentations described (Fig. 10.1).

Manzini bases his reflection on a simple statement: everybody is endowed with the ability to design, meaning there is a natural design capacity in all of us that we can use to tackle a problem and find a solution. However, not all are competent designers and only few become design professionals.

Hence there is a type of design which is put into play by 'non-experts', and that Manzini defines as 'diffuse design', while 'expert design' is performed by "people trained to operate professionally as designers, and who put themselves forward as design professionals" (p. 37).

This distinction is important because, within our research projects, we experienced both types of design: a community of citizens using their natural design capacity to solve daily problems, and a group of designers working as professionals and, thus, applying a specific set of methods and tools.

In this chapter, we focus particularly on the role of expert designers, because the more this kind of process develops and matures, the greater the responsibility for expert designers. The interactions that occur between expert designers and other people give rise to codesign processes, which, hopefully, might become social

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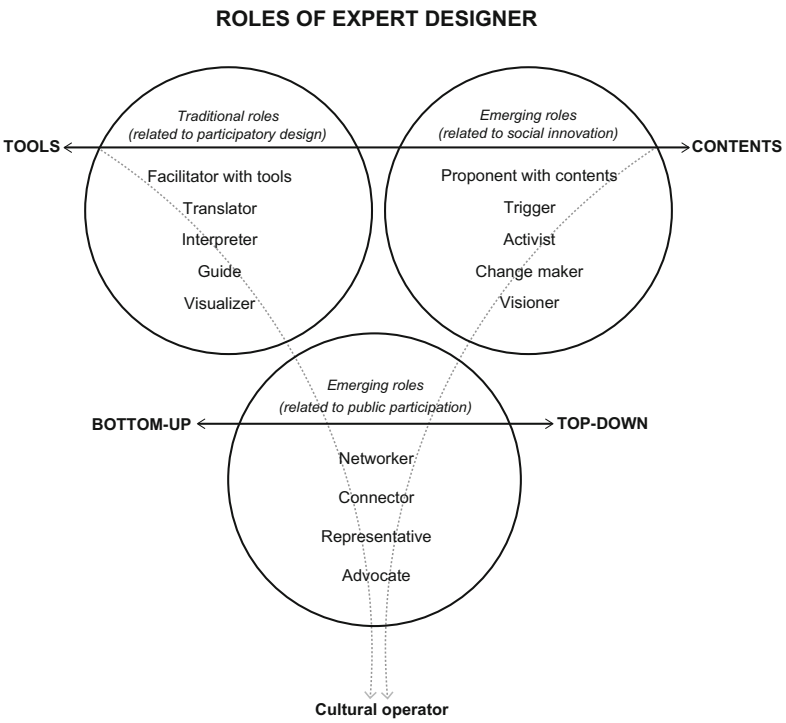

Fig. 10.1 An overview of expert designer's roles within this book

innovation processes in which the power and authority of expert designers are even more relevant.

To start our reflection on the contribution of expert designers, we wish to stress the plural term 'roles' instead of the singular 'role': this is because all the designers involved in these experimentations played different roles in relation to diverse situations. All these roles utilise an exploratory attitude, connected to the peculiarity of each situation, and thus, also show a strong empirical character, because all the processes were informed by trial and error, working on specific contextual conditions.

This diverse range of roles may be described by a polarity between 'tools' and 'contents'.

We will attempt to outline these two conceptual areas, referring to design literature and our experimentations, and by emphasising the fact that they are not in conflict, nor are they alternatives, but they are in fact complementary. Moreover, they are not two separate, disconnected areas and their borders are blurred.

Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011) described clearly how discussion, especially in design for services, should shift from 'tools' to 'contents'. They state that designers should have their own view of the world, and why the main question changes: "how

do we conciliate the role of designer as a facilitator to (of a conversation about what to do), with that of a proponent (that is bringer of visions and proposals)?" (p. 5).

Hence, this polarity is essentially about distinguishing the role of facilitator focused on tools from the role of proponent focused on contents. Similarly, Manzini and Rizzo (2011) talk about the 'extension' of the designer's role from 'facilitator', supporting on-going initiatives, to 'trigger', making new initiatives happen. They point out that the latter seems to be the most promising role, especially in reference to emerging social innovation processes.

Nevertheless, the role of designer as facilitator is the most widely recognised, particularly within the participatory design tradition. According to Sanders and Stappers (2008), it is important to learn how to facilitate people's expressions, and in doing so, it is crucial to lead, guide, and provide scaffolds to encourage creativity at all levels.

Therefore, several terms emerge to define the designer's role: 'facilitator', 'translator', 'guide', 'interpreter'. All these terms mean that designers hold highly developed skills that are relevant to bringing people into the design process.

In our experimentations, and most specifically within the 'Creative Citizens' project, we brought to the codesign table our expertise made up of methods and tools and we were recognised as specialists having control over the process. We set the scenes, provided tools and, above all, our capacity to trigger imagination through visualisation. Making things visible is crucial, especially for services that are by definition intangible, and also because this contributes to creating clearer objects for discussion.

Visualisations (and also their embedded aesthetic quality) are a powerful means for sharing, translating and communicating ideas and they facilitate and make participation more enjoyable and convivial.

However, during codesign sessions, we often felt the need for a shift from 'visualisations' to 'visions', and this represented a crucial point for the evolution of our role from 'facilitator with tools' to that of 'proponent with contents'. In fact, especially in the last codesign sessions, we brought to the table proposals that were able to go beyond the imagination of the other participants and, above all, able to open new possibilities and to amplify the discussion. In this regard, Meroni and Sangiorgi (2011) point out: "designers can be both facilitator and provoker: the tools they use do not serve only to make ideas co-created by the group more visible and more assessable (visualising) but also stimulate the group by feeding the discussion with original visions and proposals (visioning)" (p. 5).

Hence, after having explored the first point of the polarity between 'tools' and 'contents, our aim is now to investigate the second one, shifting from our role as 'facilitators' to that of 'triggers'. Even though this is an emerging area of exploration, several authors have demonstrated how the designer's role is evolving into that of 'provoker', 'trigger', 'change maker', and 'activist', especially when dealing with social innovation and participatory projects (Sanders and Stappers 2008; Brown 2009; Fuad-Luke 2009; Manzini and Rizzo 2011; Markussen 2011; Margolin 2012; Meroni et al. 2013; Manzini 2016).

In this second conceptual area, the range of activities is wide; from making proposals 'out of the box', and thus conveying powerful visions, to actually making things happen, by launching design initiatives that are often socially meaningful and understandable as forms of design activism. Hence, in defining the designer's role as a producer of 'contents', we use the term 'contents' to refer to both 'visions' able to provoke and motivate and to 'actions' that are concrete interventions aiming at supporting transformation processes.

In this discussion, the definition of design activism suggested by Fuad-Luke (2009) seems to be particularly meaningful: "design activism is design thinking, imagination and practice applied knowingly or unknowingly to create a counter-narrative aimed at generating and balancing positive social, institutional, environmental and/or economic change" (p. 27).

Here, 'visions' and 'actions' appear closely connected: visions are defined as 'counter-narrative', able to spark off 'practices', actual interventions aiming at changing things.

Designers are able to think out-of-the-box and this is the specific ability to propose counter-narratives related to new and more sustainable ways of living. During 'Creative Citizens', we had the feeling of working towards building a counter-narrative for the community of Zone 4 and this was evident in every session. Our initial role of facilitators moved progressively to that of provokers, sparking off unprecedented visions that were then amplified by participants, creating together a 'counter-narrative' for the public interest.

This role of trigger/provoker is directly connected to that of 'happener': when we shifted from code signing to prototyping, we understood how making things together can be immensely powerful. In prototyping activities, visions become more tangible and participants can more easily experience a 'possible change'. They feel themselves a part of a bigger process, characterised by a series of attempts at changing a specific situation.

Hence, 'bringing visions' and 'making together' are two actions that have characterised our role of designers within a community. In the first action, we played a leading role, while in the second, we were also participants, and 'power' was redistributed among the citizens, who, in some cases, became actual 'change makers'.

This 'pro-active' conception of the expert designer's role highlights how the role of facilitator is narrow, in spite of the diffuse 'rhetoric on facilitation' that we can observe in the current discussion about codesign processes.

Manzini (2016) noted how the central point in codesign activities is to provide space for the perspectives of many different actors, but "this original good idea has developed into an ideology that also is limited and limiting" (p. 57).

Hence, the contribution of expert designers is reduced to a sort of circumscribed administrative activity, where creativity and design culture tend to be less important and insignificant. Many times, the role of expert designers is weakened into that of a process moderator who asks other participants for their opinions and summarises them on Post-its. This is why Manzini (2016) talks provocatively about 'post-it

design', a way of conducting a codesign process that reduces activities into polite conversations where everybody gets on with his/her task.

From our perspective, the contribution of expert designers in bringing visions and ideas by proposing contents is crucial, and here lies the very nature of design activity, which is more complex than moderating participatory exercises and it is essentially a propositional activity (Margolin 2012).

Among the diverse roles of the expert designer from 'facilitator' to 'proponent', there is another area to explore, which is connected to the ability of the designer to build bridges and networks. This area is closely connected to the other two, but our intention here is to stress the designer's ability in 'connecting differences.'

During 'Creative Citizens', we often felt that the definition of 'facilitator' did not fit at all with what we were actually doing. We devoted a considerable part of our time to building a network among the different actors: citizens, local stakeholders, institutions, members of Cascina Cuccagna etc., and this activity is still evolving. As Jégou and Manzini (2008) suggest, the idea of the single designer driving the process is substituted by the idea of designing a network that, in our specific case, means also establishing alliances that will hopefully become actual partnerships.

In this process, we acted as members of the network, initially, by immersing ourselves in the community. Before starting 'Creative Citizens', we spent a year establishing contacts with the most active members of the Zone 4 community, and by doing this we became part of the group: "conventional professional advice is here replaced by a situation where the designer is 'embedded' in the community" (Meroni et al. 2013, p. 3).

Hence, our attempt is to describe a shift from designing 'for' the community, to designing 'with' the community, by creating spaces of intervention where a diverse range of actors meets. Certainly, these spaces are open to conflicts, but they are also spaces for creating synergies and partnerships to take the initiatives further and then become autonomous.

But, what clearly emerged from the project was the role of 'connector': an attempt to build a bridge between bottom-up and top-down. This is directly related to the main objective of this book, the creation of intermediary infrastructures and the use of design to support citizens' initiatives and transform them into public-interest services.

We spent time and effort attending meetings with representatives of institutions to advocate the 'Creative Citizens' project and we also organised an official presentation for members of the Municipality of Milan to disseminate results and make requests on behalf of the citizens.

This role was completely new to us and, little by little, we became aware that the citizens were spontaneously assigning this task to use, that we synthesised for them the expression 'designers as advocates.' Such a role is similar to that of activist, but it is embedded with a more 'public' and 'official' character and introduces the work of designer into a new arena that is more 'political'. This conceptualisation is still a work in progress, but our experimentations demonstrated that designers might contribute to mediating between the bottom-up (active citizens) and the top-down

(institutions) and that this mediation is not only a matter of facilitating, but of envisioning, supporting and advocating.

In conclusion, we wish to add a short reflection on an essential 'quality' that should inform the designer's attitude within these processes: it is 'humility'. As Sangiorgi (2011) states, "design literature is generally characterised by a highly positive rhetoric on the role and impact of design in society, while a more critical approach is becoming increasingly necessary" (p. 37).

This is an important observation, because it focuses on the need for reflection and it breaks away from an emerging enthusiastic train of thought that sees design as 'a panacea' to social and economic problems. Designers are currently entering unprecedented 'stages', working from socially progressive ends: democracy, politics, community organization, etc., and this is happening because they are particularly appreciated for their capacity to think 'out of the box', thus providing new visions and solutions. But, due to the fact that designers are quite new to these activities, we think that an attitude of humility is needed and this is what we often felt during our research. To have a humble attitude means to listen to and hear the diverse voices within a community.

This empirical observation is supported by Manzini (2016) in his article, 'Design Culture and Dialogic Design'. He talks about the notion of 'participation-ism', which is "a sort of cultural aphonia that induces design experts to refrain from expressing themselves" (p. 57).

This approach, which could reduce the role of expert designers to mere facilitators, could, conversely, also favour what Manzini calls a 'dialogic cooperation', i.e. a conversation in which listening and speaking are equally important. This is vital to change opinions and converge towards a common view, collaboratively creating results.

The humble attitude and the dialogic cooperation could possibly contribute to overcoming the "big-ego design" (Manzini 2016) of the past century and the excessive emphasis that has recently been placed on the potentialities of design to tackle the most pressing social issues.

After all, design is an experimental activity, without any readymade solutions or infallible methods, hence, combining a dialogic cooperation with a trial and error process (that results from making things) might be a distinctive feature of the role played by expert designers in future social innovation processes.

This role, as Manzini (2015) argues, has great cultural value: similarly, an expert designer might be viewed as a sort of 'cultural operator' who, in creating new collective visions, suggests a new idea about living and thus, a new culture. In our experimentations, we often felt we had covered this role: one of the main difficulties was to introduce a new 'culture' into the variety of situations and systems we dealt with, but this was just the beginning of more extensive and complex process that we did not manage to conclude. To become actual cultural 'operators', or 'cultural ambassadors', we need to experiment more and for longer periods: here there is room for further research and we wish to continue in this direction.

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Chapter 11
Codesign for the Public Interest

Abstract The aim of this final chapter is to present a more detailed picture of several characteristics of codesign for the public-interest. In describing the infrastructuring process in ten steps, we have already stressed the importance of codesign as way to enhance public imagination, especially in a hybrid area between public and private, profit and not-for-profit, amateur and professional, market and society. This is the area of public-interest, in which a configuration of diverse actors (coming from citizen activism, and the public, private and third sectors) undertake an unprecedented collaboration to reach a common purpose, i.e. to design services together. In this chapter, we analyse the codesign process for the public interest, not only as it relates to the creation of new services, but also in connection with the codesign of other 'items' in a multi-level perspective (including services, policies and innovation processes etc.). Therefore, we will present several features that highlight the complexity and possible extension of the value of the codesign process, ranging from considering it as a form of citizen empowerment, to regarding it as an important pre-condition to service co-production, or as a key-competence for the public sector. The chapter (and thus the whole book) concludes by focusing its attention on the prominent position that codesign processes (especially when devoted to supporting the public interest) are reaching in the current, more general, discussion on design and innovation. The popular design thinking approach is de facto a codesign approach; many (social) innovation processes are de facto codesign processes (for the public interest): • Codesign as a form of citizen empowerment; • Codesign as a collective and active reflection; • Codesign as a precondition to co-production; • Codesign as a public service (and key competence for the public sector); • Codesign as a form of citizen participation and democracy; • Codesign process as (social) innovation process.

Codesign as a form of citizen empowerment

One of the main lessons learnt from our experimentations is a specific conception of codesign as a form of citizen empowerment.

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To explore this idea further, we will look more closely at the notion of empowerment, because this is a broad concept that needs to be explained.

According to the TEPSIE research (Davies and Simon 2013), and McLean and Andersson's study (2009), it is possible to distinguish between subjective empowerment (the feeling of being able to influence decisions) and objective or 'de facto' empowerment (actually being able to influence an outcome or a decision). Another possible form is 'de jure' empowerment (power that is manifested in opportunities and rights provided through law, contract or other official record).

During 'Creative Citizens', we observed that the sessions were most likely to provide citizens with subjective empowerment and also had the potential to deliver 'de facto' empowerment at the local level. The most important result of 'Creative Citizens' (more important than the six services that are currently working) has been to foster the feeling of being able to influence/control/affect a situation. We think that this level of subjective empowerment has been reached thanks to the power of codesign: as stated, this phase has been fundamental in inspiring people, enhancing imagination and hope, and bringing visions of better ways of living together.

It was during the codesign stage that citizens began to develop skills and capacities, enhancing their confidence in the possibility of being able to affect their local situation. This individual, subjective feeling, at the end of the codesign programme, has merged into a more shared vision, something similar to the concept of 'public imagination' that we explored in the New York City experimentation. Therefore, codesign and some specific factors of local context contributed to fostering a shift from subjective empowerment to a sort of 'collective empowerment', in which citizens perceive themselves as 'collective actors' aware of the possibility of playing a key role in designing and changing things.

Codesign has worked, first, to develop subjective empowerment (and this result is not obvious) and, second, to merge these subjectivities in creating a collective awareness. This process does not lead automatically to objective empowerment, but this is not sufficient reason to underestimate the importance of this 'virtuous' flow sparked by codesign. Moreover, according to McLean and Andersson, there is some evidence indicating that subjective empowerment has the potential to deliver real 'de facto' empowerment, depending on the context in which the activities are operating. This is one more reason to evaluate the importance of subjective empowerment and of local conditions, because "many things need to be in place to result in genuine 'de facto' empowerment" (Davies and Simon 2013, p. 12).

The 'virtuous' flow from subjective to collective empowerment can also be described using the definitions of 'instrumental and transformative benefits' that arise from participation. This distinction has been elaborated on by Brodie et al. (2011) in their study, 'Pathways through Participation', in which instrumental benefits are defined as skills, connections, networks, self-help and improved access to job opportunities, while 'transformative benefits' rely on new friendships, a heightened sense of community, confidence, greater sense of self-worth and greater wellbeing.

It can be argued, therefore, that subjective empowerment generates instrumental benefits, while collective empowerment is more connected to transformative benefits.

Our discourse focuses on the 'weak' side of empowerment, meaning that the majority of experimentations aim at generating measurable outcomes, related to objective empowerment, and therefore subjective empowerment might be viewed as less important or subsidiary. What we are indeed suggesting, is that subjective empowerment and all related instrumental and transformative benefits represent a fundamental result, because they contribute to raising collective awareness and to shifting from individual interests to public interests, and thus, laying the foundations for achieving real outcomes, such as new community facilities and services.

In other words, codesign has a sort of 'soft power' that enhances a 'weak' form of empowerment [weak has to be understood according to Vattimo's (1983) meaning], generating public imagination and hope, and this relies on the very nature of design, i.e. a propositional and inspirational activity (Margolin 2012).

Furthermore, by being inspirational and an activator of subjective empowerment, design also relies on its 'aesthetic' value, which is a fundamental ingredient for enhancing visions, as previously stated. For example, codesign sessions within the 'Creative Citizens' project were pleasant and resulted in socialising within the group, where the aesthetic quality was the harmony that came from combining agreeable locations with a proper set of design-friendly tools, in order to facilitate and make participation more enjoyable and convivial (Cantù and Selloni 2013). The aesthetic quality confers an aspirational character to the experiences, so they appeal to the citizens, who want to become part of them.

Building on the idea of a 'soft power' of codesign and 'weak empowerment', we propose that the whole process of infrastructuring under discussion may be viewed as a sort of 'weak infrastructuring'. We mean that it is not always possible to set up long-term processes and reach measurable outcomes. In addition, sometimes it is necessary simply to trigger activities, especially in contexts like Italy, where the culture of social innovation is relatively recent.

Certainly, in more mature contexts long-term processes are needed in order to evaluate the impact more effectively, but we wish to emphasise that in short- and mid-term processes like 'Creative Citizens' and the other experimentations, there is some kind of impact to evaluate. This is subjective empowerment, and its complexity in being evaluated should not represent sufficient reason to underestimate the importance of its 'emotional results' in terms of enhancing imagination and hope, especially in times of crisis and austerity.

This is actually a form of 'empowerment by codesign' and it is not only emotional: after having participated in such a process, citizens felt ready to get in touch with institutions and stakeholders, in order to take the services forward. This entails "empowering people through leadership development and enhancement of their capacity to collaborate with other strategic players, working on coalition building"

(Cantù and Selloni 2013, p. 13). Therefore, in the codesign phase, citizens reached a collective awareness of the possibility of playing a key role in designing and changing things, more specifically those services that affect their everyday lives and their community, i.e. public-interest services.

Codesign as a collective and active reflection

The codesign process for public-interest services that we experienced in our research projects shares one of the features that Bannon and Ehn (2012) ascribe to participatory design, when, following Dewey (1938), they defined it as a 'reflection-in-action'. They view creative and investigative processes as growing out of encounters with real-life situations, a pattern of controlled enquiry, which means framing situations, searching, experimenting and experiencing.

This is similar to Steen's (2013) definition of codesign as a process of 'joint enquiry and imagination': he argues that codesign is a reflective activity that combines together existing elements (both tangible and intangible) to create unprecedented arrangements and, thus, something new. Steen also builds upon the inspired pragmatism of Dewey (1917) in considering codesign as an enquiry in which diverse individuals use the power of intelligence to imagine a future, "in which participants are able to express and share their experiences, to discuss and negotiate their roles and interests, and to jointly bring about positive change" (Steen 2013, p. 24).

From this perspective, the codesign process for the public-interest is seen as a collaborative design thinking process, a sort of collective reflection that is more than the generation and connection of knowledge: Steen (2013) suggests that one of the main features of codesign is the combination of thinking and feeling, doing and reflecting, divergence and convergence, which is similar to the 'reflection-in-action' described by Bannon and Ehn (2012).

More specifically, using Steen's words: "codesign participants combine inquiry—a move from the outside world and others to the inside world, so that they can be curious and jointly learn— and imagination—a move from the inside world to the outside world and others, so that they can be creative and jointly bring about change" (2013, p. 28). We affirm that this occurred within the 'Creative Citizens' project, and, to a lesser extent, within the other experimentations described in this book: a sort of 'collective and active reflection' was carried out, starting from critical and conflicting issues (hence at a moment of divergence), which, afterwards, becomes a convergence of interests thanks to the constructive power of design.

This conception of codesign as a 'reflection-in-action' was also explored by Schön (1983) who considered designers to be 'reflective practitioners': his thought is currently considered as standard reference in the participatory design community.

According to Bannon and Ehn (2012), the perspective assumed by Schön is in contrast to the rational, problem-solving approach to design and this was exactly what we experimented in our research projects. Even if 'Creative Citizens' generated actual results in the form of six public-interest services, even if the other experimentations left a tangible legacy that answered local problems, these various

codesign processes worked more as a reflective, exploratory practice that outlined the boundaries of the public-interest domain, than as a rational problem-solving model.

As we can verify three years after the beginning of 'Creative Citizens', its legacy is currently more influential in terms of 'process' rather than in terms of 'products': the codesign process that was carried out currently represents good practice at a local level and has inspired other projects and even municipal policies, while the generated services are continuing without the same influential power.

This way of conceiving the codesign process for the public-interest as a collective and active reflection rather than a problem-solving model is close to what Manzini (2016) argues when he confronts sense making and 'solutionism.'

Starting from the assumption that design has always been considered a combination of problem-solving capability and sense making, he argues that the discussion in the past two decades has essentially concentrated on the problem-solving and pragmatic side, leaving aside the cultural dimension, and, thus, generating a 'subculture of solutionism. On the contrary, our society, which is complex and diversified, not only needs to solve problems, but it also demands hope, a system of meaning, sense and stories. This is what the codesign process can actually bring: we discussed codesign for the public-interest as a way to enhance public imagination; as a way to empower people; as a collective and active reflection, and all these activities are oriented to sense-making rather than to problem-solving. As Manzini (2016) points out, "before being a technique, design is a capacity for critical analysis and reflection, with which design experts produce knowledge, visions, and quality criteria that can be made concrete in feasible proposals" (p. 54). This is addressed to the notion of design in general, but it also fits with codesign for the public-interest as a way of facilitating critical and collective reflection of the current system and, thus, of generating collaborative responses.

Codesign as a precondition to co-production

Another lesson learned from our experimentations, and especially from 'Creative Citizens', is that codesign is crucial to better organisation of the co-production of services as described by Boyle and Harris (2009), already mentioned in the first part of this book and discussed as a fundamental stage of the ten-step infrastructuring process.

According to Boyle and Harris, co-production can be considered as a way to innovate in public services, shifting the delivery of services to a range of different actors in an equal and reciprocal relationship, rather than relying on a unique (public or private) provider. Ostrom (1999) considers co-production as a way through which synergy could occur between what a government does and what citizens do, and, more extensively, according to Pestoff (2004) and Vamstad (2004), co-production can be viewed as the rising organised involvement of citizens in the production of their own welfare services.

Thus, co-production emphasises the shared character of the production process, while codesign stresses the shared character of the creative process: they both

represent a specific interpretation of user involvement, which, in the public-interest domain, is intended as greater citizen participation in both processes.

Based on our experimentations, we wish here to demonstrate how codesign can facilitate the development of co-production processes in a more transparent, fair and effective way.

For example, some of the public-interest services designed within 'Creative Citizens' can be regarded, as 'services ready-to-use', or better, 'services ready to be co-produced': during the codesign process, we decided how they work, we designed the related touch-points, and we prepared and tested several prototypes.

Hence, the same actors who should participate in the service production process have previously shared crucial information about the service, meaning that they codesigned a concept and together they outlined its most important features, i.e. agreeing on its main values. This implies that everyone is informed about, phases, roles and rules of the service and, thus, it should be easier to carry out a service co-production process that has been previously conceived, discussed and tested.

In a sense, codesign can be understood as a useful way to align the interests of the diverse actors who are then involved in the co-production process, considering all participants as partners and actually substituting responsiveness with collaboration (Brandsen and Pestoff 2006). In this way, people are viewed as actual resources, and their participation to the codesign and co-production processes has a great transformative potential for all the actors involved (both from the private and public sectors).

As already stated, codesign and co-production appear as closely and explicitly interconnected, especially in the notion of collaborative services provided by Jégou and Manzini (2008), in which service end-users are actively involved and assume the role of codesigners and co-producers. Collaborative services for the public-interest are oriented at "best serving the well-being of a social collective" (Selloni 2014), in other words, they provide access to essential functions of everyday life, aiming to overcome traditional consumption patterns and behaviours.

The principle of co-production in collaborative services goes beyond the simple idea of citizen engagement or user involvement, because it is related to the balance of power and responsibility among all the actors involved, so that, in doing so, it challenges the current way of doing things and it fosters, hopefully, social innovation processes.

Here, we wish to stress that collaborative services extend the concept of co-production in a perspective that is more design-oriented, as its focus is not only on 'doing' (i.e. co-producing services) but also on 'thinking' (i.e. codesigning services). Indeed, the author, in a previous article, speaks about citizens as both 'service thinkers and service makers' (Selloni 2013).

In preparing the ground for co-production, codesign also deals with defining roles and rules within a service, and this is even more important for public-interest services, where numerous diverse actors are called into play and the scenario is complex and fluid. In fact, if we discuss important issues through an initial collaborative and deliberative design process, we will probably avoid the need to face certain problems in the second phase.

In this sense, codesign may be viewed as an important pre-condition to co-production, meaning that it could work as a facilitator, preparing the ground from an organisational perspective and also preventing conflicts among actors by aligning the different interests. Especially in these hybrid contexts, between public and private, profit and not-for-profit, amateur and professional, the codesign process for the public interest could act as a sort of compass to provide orientation between boundaries, because sectors are blurred and, from time to time, it might be necessary to re-discuss contents, roles and rules.

Hence, codesign may be viewed as a continuous, on-going activity that becomes embedded in collective processes, where each actor may change his role several times, shifting from a leading role to a minor one, promoting reciprocity and shifting the balance of power. Here, codesign not only facilitates co-production, but also co-management and co-governance, becoming a useful, iterative 'reflection-in-action.'

Codesign as a public service (and key competence for the public sector)

By arguing that public-interest services are provided by a configuration of actors in which the state is just *one* of the actors and not the principal one, we do not mean to propose dismantling the welfare system and a progressive loss of responsibility on the part of the public sector. The emergence of public-interest services may represent a response to the austerity measures in the provision of public services, but we still think that the state has a crucial role to play. This cannot be the same as in the past, but will be a new one.

From the 'Creative Citizens' project, we learned that people (including the representatives of the private and third sector) considered the state (in our case it was represented by the Municipality of Milan) as the final recipient and evaluator of their codesign activities. In a way, this new role may be related to the codesign process, becoming a sort of 'guarantor', an 'expert' of collaborative practices, because, to solve complex problems we need to act collectively.

Here, another reflection about codesign for the public interest emerges: it should be considered as a key competence of the public sector, which has to be able to manage collaborative processes at different levels.

Codesign itself should become a public service provided by governments to citizens, representatives of the private and third sector, and individual civil servants within public administrations. This requires public service actors to be educated in the codesign of services, dealing with all the methods and tools adopted within codesign processes, engaging various stakeholders and developing a service from the initial concept to the production and delivery phase.

This notion is supported by the emergence of some EU calls that clearly ask for codesign expertise to be established within governments: for example, among the Horizon 2020 calls, a specific call entitled, 'Applied co-creation to deliver public services' was issued in October 2016, with the aim to "bring together a variety of actors in society, such as public authorities, citizens, businesses, researchers, civil society organisations, social innovators, social entrepreneurs, social partners, artists

and designers, to co-create demand-driven, user-friendly, personalised public services and make effective decisions" (EU 2016).

This call is clearly looking for research projects that are able to demonstrate how governments can act as a broad, open collaboration platform that enables third parties to design, aggregate, produce and deliver new public services or making decisions.

This implies that codesign is becoming normal practice in public service that can involve a variety of actors for many different scopes, not only to codesign services, but also plans and policies.

From all the experimentations described in this book, the need to foster a codesign culture within governments emerged as clear and relevant: universities and researches centres such as the DESIS Labs can play a crucial role in this. They are expert in education and codesign, in many cases they are part of a public institution and, thus, they know the 'context'. They are able to carry out two key activities, teaching and experimenting, at the same time and, no less important, they serve the public interest because this value is an integral part of their mission.

In conclusion, if governments embed a 'codesign culture', it is easier to increase and deliver collaborative processes, because they become a standard practice that can be constantly improved and implemented.

Codesign as a form of citizen participation and democracy

All the case studies described in this book are experimentations in which citizen activism and codesign activities for the public interest are tightly interconnected. 'Creative Citizens', 'Welcome to St Gilles', 'Green Camden' and 'The NYC Office of Public Imagination' may be considered as part of a wider conversation about new forms of citizen participation in the public realm and about the role of design within these processes.

A fundamental contribution to this discussion is provided by Margolin (2012), who analysed the relation between design and democracy, stating that design can improve democracy and thus increase citizen participation in the structures and in the processes typical of democracy. In this regard, he distinguishes between 'design *of* democracy' and 'design *for* democracy'.

The first is related to the design of institutions and procedures that characterise a democratic political system, hence, on one side it is about the design of departments, agencies, and bureaus that facilitate a democratic governance, and on the other, it is about the design of procedure such us laws, regulations, rules that establish the boundaries for human behaviour.

In defining design of democracy, Margolin refers to the 'Fourth Order Design' described by Buchanan (2001), meaning the designer's engagement within the realm of complex systems and environments. This is related to design beyond objects, to a more holistic perspective that includes new and more systemic areas of design. This idea of design of democracy deals with the design of systems and entities, such as governmental agencies that apply design knowledge to innovate the democratic system. The Public Innovation Places previously described fall under this 'category', as does notion of 'collaborative infrastructure' (see Sect. 8.2).

However, it is the notion of design for democracy that is more interesting for the purposes of our discussion, because it includes the codesign process for the public interest, conceiving it as a form of citizen participation to improve the structure and the procedures of democracy.

Margolin (2012) describes design for democracy as closely connected to the design of opportunities for citizens to participate in democratic processes, hence it is about the mechanisms and instruments that allow this participation, which means being actively involved in the process of government.

The range of activities that falls under design for democracy is wide: from citizen consultations to influencing negotiations, to more interactive forms of participation such as the codesign processes described in this book.

Citizen participation to improve the quality of democracy is particularly necessary to overcome unresolved democratic challenges that characterise our era, such as "an increasing level of exclusion of the lower third of the demos from participation, an inferior representation of their interests, and a loss of democratic sovereignty in policy making" (Merkel 2014, p. 11).

In fact, we are currently experiencing a crisis of trust in political elites, political parties, parliaments and governments, combined into a general discontent among citizens at a global level.

In this scenario, we argue that processes of codesign for the public interest can help to overcome this sense that democracy is failing. This resembles Staszowski et al.'s (2014) call for 'design for participation': a way to re-imagine public policies and services by transforming relationships among designers, civil servants and citizens, making the design process more inclusive. This type of design work is necessary, especially in these times in which narratives of greater citizen engagement are emerging more and more in response to unresolved democratic challenges and issues related to economic recession.

In presenting this notion, Staszowski et al. (2014) suggest a shift from participatory design to design for participation, arguing that there is the risk that participatory design could become just a tool to contain citizenship dissatisfaction, while working extensively and explicitly "towards greater participation and collaboration with the public, can in fact open up the notion of citizenship in more tangible and meaningful ways" (p. 3).

From this perspective, codesign for the public interest may be intended as a form of design for participation: it is about overcoming the sense of artificial engagement that can sometimes result from participatory design, and about elaborating a deeper reflection on the transformative power of design as a source of innovation for governments. Therefore, it is about activating a more extensive and ethical reflection on codesign processes, also focusing on the 'political' speculations related to these activities: they can be reduced to artificial programmes or events, held just for the 'sake of participation', running the risk of being exploited for 'propaganda' (see Sect. 7.4).

Another fundamental question to consider is: if codesign for the public interest is a form of citizen participation in the structures and the procedures of democracy, might it be also considered as a possible way to challenge existing social and

political power structures? In other words, might it be considered as a way of re-distributing power?

In his panel at the conference 'How Public Design?', held in Copenhagen in 2013, Eduardo Staszowski talked about the relationship between design and politics: "we can re-design and renew the idea of the political. Design can do more than just create better public services. We can ask ourselves how we can use design as a tool for reconnecting with citizens in new forms of political participation and political possibilities".

In this way, designing new forms of participation deals not only with the idea of democracy, but also with a new idea of politics, because it is about challenging the relationship between citizens, public servants and politicians through design.

There is currently an enormous challenge in the public realm: decision-making remains concentrated within the hierarchies and bureaucracies of the political system. Designers have a role in facing this challenge, entering the political stage not only using a set of participatory methods, but actually transferring the design mind-set into government mechanisms. In the previous section, we explained how this 'transfer' of expertise is crucial and deals with educating and experimenting. Of course, 'incorporating a codesign culture' into such hierarchical and bureaucratic structures is not easy, and we are still at a very preliminary phase.

The lesson learnt from all the experimentations discussed, is that they probably underestimated the actual potential of codesign processes, at least at the beginning.

For example, 'Creative Citizens' started with the clear and simple aim of codesigning services with the people of a specific community, without considering that this activity deals also with creating a pleasant environment for greater empathy and trust between citizens and institutions. It was not only about codesigning services, but also codesigning across different levels, from services to policies (and thus adopting a multi-level approach), activating shared decision-making and, hopefully, redistributing power.

This is something 'political', and very close to Arendt's notion of politics (1958): a participatory and active form of citizenship based on civic engagement and collective deliberation.

According to Arendt, it is only by means of direct political participation, that is, by engaging in common action and public discussion, that citizenship can be reaffirmed and political agency effectively exercised.

We did not undertake sufficient experimentation to fully understand whether codesign is truly capable of activating a more direct form of citizen participation able to influence power structures. Here, there is room for further research, but for the moment, we can build on the assumptions and evidence that codesign is a form of citizen empowerment and should be a new public service provided by a government that has embedded this expertise within its structures.

Co-design process as (social) innovation process

Our concluding reflection is about the position of prominence that codesign processes for the public interest are starting to have in the current discussion on (social) innovation and design thinking.

First, we argue that design thinking processes are, de facto, codesign activities that involve a variety of participants, and this occurs even more in a hybrid area characterised by the presence of numerous actors, because it is situated between public and private, profit and not-for-profit, amateur and professional, market and society.

Second, many innovation projects are currently organised as codesign activities and this is even more visible in social innovation processes, in which a variety of actors needs to be involved.

These two reflections recognise that the most pressing social issues are complex problems that should be tackled by adopting a codesign approach, which includes complexity rather than rejecting it. As stated, the codesign processes carried out within the selected experimentations dealt with a number of critical issues, ranging from the conflicts emerging in various communities, to the difficulty in aligning interests, to find the right stakeholder for the project's implementation.

This view is shared by authors such as Brown and Wyatt (2010), who argue that "systemic and interconnected problems need systemic and interconnected solutions" (p. 35), while Manzini (2016) points out that, "in emerging design, project results are complex, hybrid, dynamic entities, and we do not yet have language for talking about them, history to compare them with, or until now, arenas in which to discuss them" (p. 56).

Manzini (2016) also states that every design process is codesign, and, thus, it must provide space for the perspectives and active participation of numerous diverse actors, "codesign is a complex, contradictory, sometimes antagonistic process, in which different stakeholders (design experts included) bring their specific skills and their culture. It is a social conversation in which everybody is allowed to bring ideas and take action, even though these ideas and actions could, at times, generate problems and tensions" (p. 58).

In this, he outlines a codesign space where different practices can meet and controversies are allowed to exist, an arena open to debate and proposals from other cultural worlds, where shared experimentation and comparison of experiences across diverse sectors bring participants to confront real-life situations, combining different perspectives.

In conclusion, we wish to claim that codesign may be viewed as the design today. For example, we believe that all the emphasis currently placed on the design thinking approach lies essentially in its codesign component: indeed, the design thinking process corresponds in many phases to a codesign activity. In addition, if we conceive design as way to create innovation (and today the two concepts are often associated as a sort of 'mantra'), codesign represents one of the main 're-sources' in carrying out such innovation.

In this book, we analyse codesign in its specific application to the public-interest domain, because it is precisely in this area that the most pressing social issues arise.

This requires reflection on social innovation processes, and more specifically on how the codesign approach may produce benefits, because a constructive and fruitful collaboration between different actors is needed.

In addition, we focus on services as a specific object of the codesign activity, because services are systemic and intangible, but at the same time easily understood by the majority of people. Codesigning services for the public interest is a great training ground for codesigning other more complex items, across different levels and, thus, learning how to codesign organisations, plan, policies, etc.

We wish to continue studying and experimenting with codesign for public-interest services, because this process represents an archetype for many other codesign processes for the public interest that are increasingly required to collaboratively tackle the challenges of our era.

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Afterword—The Cultural Territory

Anna Meroni

The work of Daniela Selloni is a superb example of social innovation in action. It is a mature work, or better, an ingenious and visionary experiment that has grown rapidly and helped all of us (in the POLIMI DESIS Lab) to advance and progress significantly.

It started in a fit of enthusiasm and some naivety, just like all social innovations. Actually, none of us around Daniela (including her, I suspect) had a concrete idea of the outputs (and none at all of the outcomes), but we were all very eager to support her in making it happen, to participating in the adventure and to activating our imagination. I still remember brainstorming for the title of what was to become 'Creative Citizens'.

So, it was a true 'exploration' of possibilities with the ambition of making something happen in a neighbourhood of Milan. But what kind of something? Something in between a designer and a citizen action: a form of activism in which designers were citizens with more design expertise, willing to challenge their ability to engage other citizens for the purpose of creating services for the common interest of the neighbourhood, the city, and finally themselves.

We were confident of being able to manage the situation by relying on the experience of the 'Feeding Milano' project, which had been experimenting with codesign for a long time, but there were no precedents in the city, and no commitment from the 'authorities' or from any other organisation. It was a fully self-committed and self-supported action.

What kind of value would be created and for whom, was, honestly, an assumption without a strong foundation.

So, 'Creative Citizens' was a true social innovation in the most widely accepted sense: bottom-up, but 'design driven'; aiming at creating social value without knowing exactly how; changing social roles without being right to do it; and, most of all, (ad)venturous.

Time after time, we recognise the value generated and presented so comprehensively in this book. Therefore, it can be viewed as a social innovation story on how service design methods and tools can activate social innovators in different ways. Yet, it is not a book about methods and tools: above all it is about creating a

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mind-set and a cultural territory, that is an areas of competence, experience and awareness.

Throughout this book, we not only learn that, it is possible, through design, to enable citizens to act in a more expert and competent way, but also that an effective codesign experiment capable of producing both ideas (visions) and an exemplification of an envisioning process, can engage public administration in a self-reflective and learning process. In fact, we dare to claim that 'Creative Citizens' has worked as a programme of 'indirect incubation' to plant in the public administration and the social innovation ecosystem the idea that codesign can contribute not only to solving problems, but also to envisioning new possibilities for previously overlooked challenges.

We need today this cultural territory in our cities, made up of fresh ideas and expectations about the qualities of life, how to live together, and our role in a collective perspective. We need to become more receptive to innovative proposals, more open to transformation and more pro-active in social processes.

'Creative Citizens' has exemplified how a well-structured codesign process can act as a form of cultural activism and foster social innovation in the early stages by challenging citizens, organisations and public administration to explore social challenges. While introducing provocative design artefacts and unfamiliar perspectives to people's perceptions, it has also proposed a constructive intention and brought a pragmatic stance. It has combined listening and talking.

One of the most important things Daniela's work has impelled us to think about is that codesign can generate unwelcome effects, too. In fact, the practice is likely to produce frustration and naivety if it is not supported by a mastery that is not limited to the tools but extended to service design and the specific topics, and if citizens (or participants) are not actually made able to fully understand and deal with the contents of the activity.

Frustration, with regard to the process, because the efforts and enthusiasm of designing together are rarely satisfied by the actuality of the outputs. We, as a community, must feel like we play a crucial part in making them happen, and a large part of the reward of a good codesign process consists in creating this awareness.

Naivety, because without real effort by the designer to go beyond facilitation (so well explained by Daniela when speaking about the designer's new roles) and to propose contents and stimuli that may quickly raise the conversation to a more 'expert' level, results may show ingenuousness without ingenuity.

This is why there is a fundamental reason for expert design to be part of these practices, and why we believe that design is not the same as facilitation.

To support this idea beyond Daniela's extensive argumentation, I would like to quote the architect, Alejandro Aravena, curator of the Venice Architecture Biennale2016: during a presentation at La Triennale Museo of Milano (July 18, 2016), he clearly pointed out how codesign can be a very good practice for having the right questions from the community, but not the answers. To provide the answers, expertise is needed.

Therefore, the practice proposed by Daniela is much closer to a "codesign driven by proposals" than a "codesign driven by issues". In other terms, it is visionary, provocative and stimulating, more than explorative, conversational and needs-related. Her work has been largely oriented to creating cohesion, supporting dialogue and sharing a common language, but also avoiding the dangerous over-simplification of registering the needs and the ideas of 'the people'. No 'direct-democracy' as Ezio Manzini soundly states in the foreword.

Finally, we need to understand how to scale this experiment up and out of social innovation. So much has been said about the fact that for social innovation to become a practice calls for changes in the regulatory framework and in the policies.

This is certainly true. Yet, this is a special case, because it is a 'service' that may: promote transparency and participation in a democratic system; make a government more open and collaborative according to the European Commission; and make the citizens more knowledgeable and aware of their rights, with better access to information on public services, and consequently higher expectations of service levels. If this is the case, we believe that this kind of codesign and co-creation practice should become a service of the public administration, a public service.

Several experiments have been carried out in this field across Europe: this one follows the same path, adding original knowledge about how to foster social innovation at the early stage from the bottom-up so to advise policies that come from the top-down. As a form of cultural activism with a pragmatic aim, it has also proved to be an activator of community engagement and civic commitment around shared challenges that can make people more active and receptive to innovative proposals.

As designers, we have therefore learned a great deal. Including the risk of using codesign as a trend and reducing it merely to a 'nice experience.'

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