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Sharing Economy for Tourism and Hospitality: new ways of living and new trends in interior design

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Abstract: This paper describes a research conducted in the last year at the Design Department of Design, regarding design and sharing services, especially in the hospitality field.

The term hospitality is used here with a wide meaning, coming from the idea that “Real hospitality is not just welcoming people in on the first night, but liking that they come back and stay, fitting into the city, making their own contribution and making the place their own” (Leadbeater, 2009).

Collection and analysis of more than 61 examples of hospitality sharing services was a useful tool to understand the current international scenario. The collected case studies were presented on 6 positioning maps regarding six specific themes of the study.

Keywords: Sharing Economy, Services design, Space design, Hospitality

1. Framework

For what concerns sharing economy, the goods who registered an immediate adhesion and a growth as shared goods (be it peer-to-peer or business to person) are the durables ones like cars and real estate, mainly because of their wide underuse and high costs of maintenance for the owners.¹ Furthermore,

“The sharing economy has tapped into temporal ‘waste’, converting excess capacity to value and unearthing massive utility from what we already have. As a global community we have so much, but much of what we have we are not using to its capacity, including talent, goods and services. Existing online platforms already address some of society’s urgent needs, especially for urban dwellers. With platforms like BlaBlaCar, Neighborly, Huertos Compartidos, Couchsurfing, FabLab and Open Explorer we are already developing a new kind of social operating system, enabling us to solve local issues while opening a global dialogue. Tighter connections shift our social operating system from an orientation of the individual to the power of peers in collaboration.” (Gansky L. 2015, pgs 80-83)

¹ Dominici G., Roblek, V., Lombardi, R. (2016), “A holistic approach to comprehending the complexity of the post-growth era”, in Erçetin Şule, S. (Ed.), *Chaos, Complexity and Leadership*, Springer International Publishing AG, Cham, pp. 29-42.

As for hospitality in tourism, two major sharing-based service typologies can be identified, both related to the typical IT based structures: client-server and peer-to-peer. Both typologies are interlinked with two broader families differing one from the other by their economic approach. Michel Bauwens² defines them as extractive and exploitative sharing forms, what he calls “netarchical capitalism”, and cooperative sharing forms who create a matrix that identifies the stakeholders and the possible economic exploitation of the shared good. An example of cooperative³ peer-to-peer has been, until 2011, Coachsurfing: a project created by American programmer Casey Fenton in 2003 and born as a non profit tool aimed to connect people willing to exchange hospitality for free that was converted in 2011 in a for-profit corporation.

Flat sharing is also spreading more and more thanks to platforms permitting to share full apartments placing themselves in different positions within the matrix depending on the pursued approach and purpose. From AirBnB to flatshare, spareroom and houseshare, nowadays it is more and more common to use sharing platforms in the hospitality field, not only for short stays, but even for temporary residence. Italy as well has seen a rise in temporary social housing solutions as the Sharing Hotel Residence in Turin, inaugurated in September 2011 to fulfil hospitality needs for medium length stays at controlled prices.

Still within the hospitality field, we also find important experiences linked to the catering field. A good example are Gnammo’s home restaurants and personalized guided tours as the ones offered by Stand By Mi - never a stranger with us⁴, where private citizens offer their time to help in the discovery of the city and its hidden corners, permitting to travellers to see it through the eyes of those living it every day.

In this ever changing panorama, it is interesting to try making order and sorting the existing services available on the market, trying to separate them by typology and, above all, trying to distinguish all platforms on the base of the variable parameters we will present further on in this paper.

2. Serse Research

The research, focused on shared hospitality services, is part of the wider research project “Multi-disciplinary Design of Sharing Services” financed by the FARB 2014 grant whose purpose is a first-time exploration of so called shared economy through different disciplines linked to the design world such as: services design, space design, and communication design. The pivotal characteristic of this research is, in fact, its multidisciplinary approach, something that gives us the opportunity of having different perspectives within the same project.

The first analysis to be carried out had the purpose of creating a map of the existing sharing services, categorized following different logics (e.g., the type of relationship between users, business model, incentive system, etc.). In the next section the analysis carried out will be examined in detail focusing on shared hospitality services. The other explored fields range from sharing services in the world of transport, space sharing, to an overview on service sharing platforms on a full spectrum (food, learning, culture, sport, etc.).

² Founder of “P2P Foundation” and theorist of the new collaborative economies.

³ Rifkin J., *La società a costo marginale zero. L'internet delle cose, l'ascesa del Commons Collaborativo e l'eclisse del capitalismo*, Milano, Mondadori, 2014.

⁴ Mainieri M. (2013), *Collaboriamo! Come i social media ci aiutano a lavorare e a vivere bene in tempo di crisi*, Hoepli, Milano.

The following steps of the research envisaged a detailed analysis of single case studies, focusing on some best and worst practices to take as example for future services and for the designing of future sharing services. After that an analysis of the socio-economic impact was carried out, with particular interest to the local area, the people's community involved and the relationship between physical and virtual spaces, an essential aspect for most sharing platforms.

One of the issues arisen in the different steps of the research was the centrality of the word "trust" when referring to sharing services. Moving from this finding, the last researching phase will focus on this aspect and its effects on the future of planning sharing services.

This paper presents extracts from the first part of the research: the creation of a map of the existing sharing hospitality services.

3. Research approach: methods and tools

As it was said, in order to understand the dynamics of hospitality sharing services nowadays, a specific case studies research was conducted. Prior investigation focused on literature review followed by a collection of sharing services that was made on a global scale. As far as data collection tools were concerned, the conduction of the research involved the development of a suitable system in order to properly categorize the information gathered. Each case study related to the hospitality topic, was deeply analyzed and collected according to different features:

- Typology (What the service offers to share.)
- Methodology (Which is the exchange modality.)
- Platform scale (Is the exchange among a specific community or a global/web one?)
- Description (Short abstract of the service.)
- Founder Origin (Where and when the service was activated.)
- Languages (In which languages the service is available at present.)
- Business Model Turnover Devices (Digital or analogical, and how do they work.)
- Number of Users Relationship among the Users (Direct or indirect.)
- User Experience description
- Similar services

This categorization allowed a detailed and broad data collection divided in four macro areas:

- Sharing hospitality services
- Sharing transport services
- Sharing space services
- Sharing services in other fields (e.g. sport, food, culture, learning, etc.)

In this paper we present the analysis carried out on sharing hospitality services.

More than 60 case studies of sharing hospitality services were investigated. The deep knowledge of each case study features enabled a successive clustering: 22 macro-categories were defined. For each of those categories a significant case study was underlined as the most representative among its analogues, based on different features: offered service, exchange modality and user experience.

Identified macro-categories:

- Peer to Peer house rental Home Away (Vrbo / Vacation Rentals / Homelydays / Tripping / Roomorama / Flipkey Home Escape)
- Peer to Peer house/room/bed rental AirBnB (House Trip / Wimdu / 9 Flats)

- Peer to Peer room rental with Host in Place modality Home Stay (Trapolinn)
- Peer to Peer luxury house rental One Fine Stay (The Unhotel)
- Peer to Peer family friendly house rental Knok
- Peer to Peer house rental for the academic community Sabbatical Homes
- Peer to Peer house exchange Scambio Casa (Love Home Swap / Guest To Guest / My Twin Place / Night Swapping / Home Exchange)
- Peer to Peer co-working space/accomodation rental Outsite (Sundesk)
- Peer to Peer art gallery/accomodation rental My Home Gallery
- Peer to Peer students house rental Accommodation for students (Housing Anywhere)
- Peer to Peer bed rental during city events Bed Sharing
-
- Accommodation in exchange for household care and management Mind My House (Trusted Housesitters / Housecarers)
- Accommodation in exchange for skills and competences sharing Bed and Learn
- Accommodation in exchange for goods or services Baratto BB (Settimana Del Baratto / BB25)
- Accommodation in exchange for goods or services
- Accommodation for students in exchange for social services Humanitas
-
- Free accommodation sharing Couchsurfing (Be Welcome / Trustroots)
- Free accommodation for students offered by retired people Prendi in casa uno studente
- Free accommodation for artists during the Calitri Festival Calibri Sponz Fest
- Free accommodation for pilgrims of the Route of Santiago de Compostela Hospitaleras Voluntarias
-
- Locals providing city tours Vayable (Sidetour / Anyguide / Get Your Guide)
- Locals providing typical gastronomic products All'oste che non c'è
- Condominium sharing services Abito

The macro-categories analysis was followed by a further deeper investigation. In order to present the present hospitality sharing services scenario the case studies have been analyzed with the support of six positioning maps on the following research themes:

- Theme 1 - Type of service / What? (from "To Stay" to "To Do")
- Theme 2 - Geographical Scale / Where? (from Local to Worldwide)
- Theme 3 - Exchange mode / How? (Money / Spaces / Competences / Relations)
- Theme 4 - Type of community / Who? (from General to Specific target community)
- Theme 5 - Level of the relationship between the users / Why? (from No contact to Interaction)
- Theme 6 - Service Activation Date / When? (Timeline)

Furthermore, the analysis has been extended crossing the different themes and representing them on different diagrams. This method resulted in the discovery of the most interesting scenarios, defined by the diagrams, and the more relevant characteristics of the hospitality sector.

- Theme 1 - Type of service / What? (from "To Stay" to "To Do")

The first positioning map indicates the offering typology of each sharing service, in relation with the user experience. The basic level of hospitality services is identified in the simple activity of renting an accommodation as functional need (*to Stay*). The case studies that offer additional activities and services to the bed rental are located on the other extremity of the map. Although the diagram shows the preponderance of case studies related to the traditional and basic definition of hospitality (intended as simple accommodation for the night), it is possible to notice the trend of different sharing services in the offering of additional activities for the user. These activities have been categorized according to different levels of necessity: notably a differentiation was made between the sharing services that entail activities to do with the host (exchange of experiences, enjoy the company, establish a relationship) and to do for the host (services required as commodity exchange).

TOPIC 1: Service typology / What?

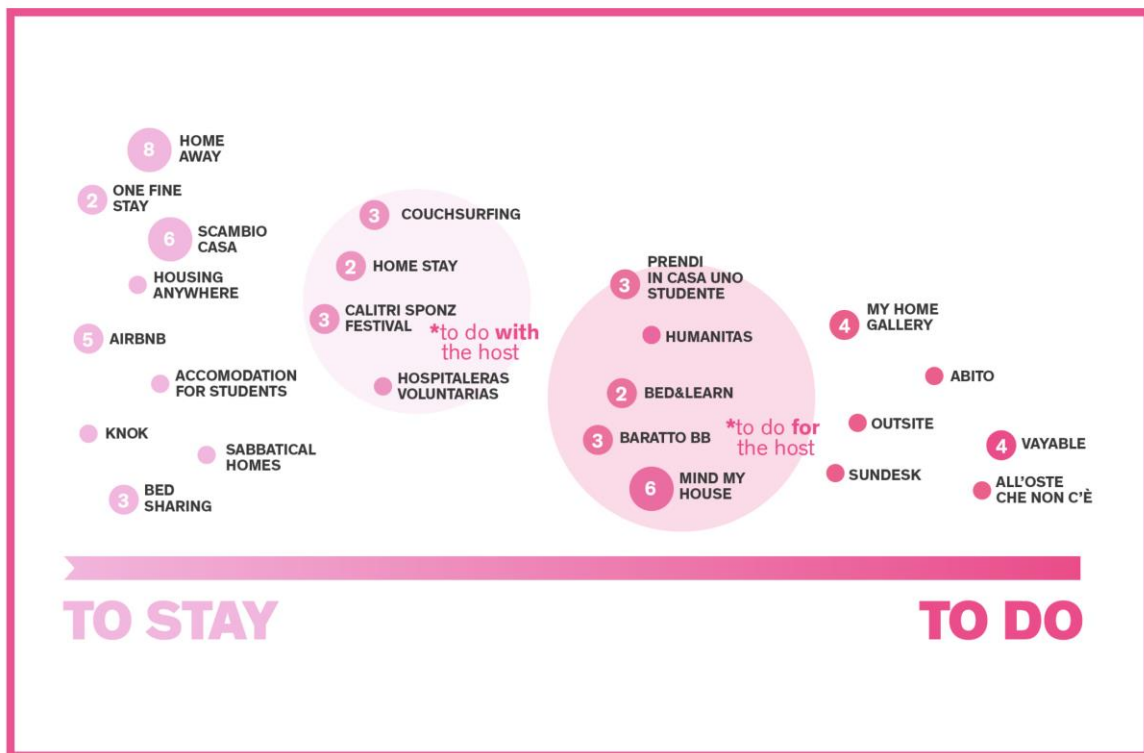


Figure 1. Theme 1 - Type of service / What? (from "To Stay" to "To Do"): the offering typology of each sharing service, in relation with the user experience

- Theme 2 - Geographical Scale / Where? (from Local to Worldwide)

The second positioning map presents the case studies according the geographical scale of the services. This diagram considers the number of users and their networks, shifting from local realities to global ones. For example the Calitri Sponz Fest is a village festival, with a specific and limited number of participants and its accommodation service doesn't have a digital platform. On the other

hand, famous hosting services such as AirBnB are used worldwide through their digital platform with a consequently high number of users.

TOPIC 2: Geographical scale / Where?

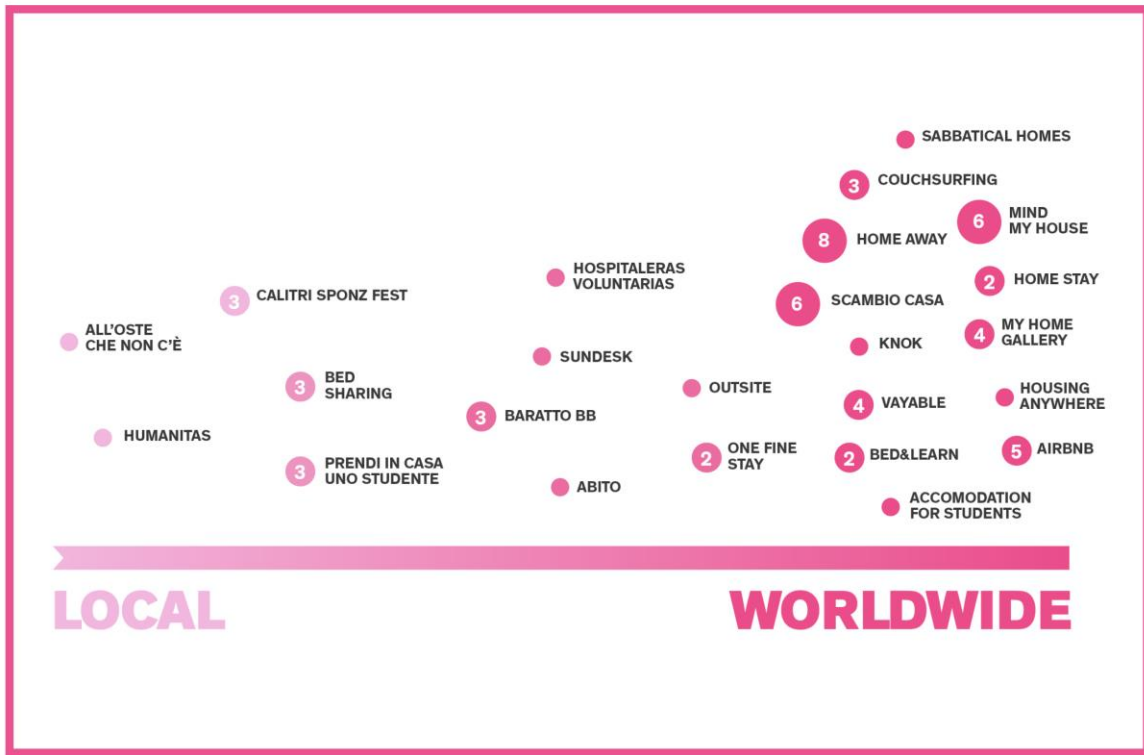


Figure 2. Theme 2 - Geographical Scale / Where? (from Local to Worldwide): the case studies according the geographical scale of the services

- Theme 3 - Exchange mode / How? (Money / Spaces / Competences / Relations)

The diagram related to theme 3 expresses the modality of exchange for each case studies. The majority of hospitality services require a monetary exchange, but it is interesting to notice how, instead, in the other case studies the exchanged commodity turns into intangible goods (services, competences, relationships) that in a stronger way accommodate the innovative values of the sharing economy.

TOPIC 3: Exchange modality / How?

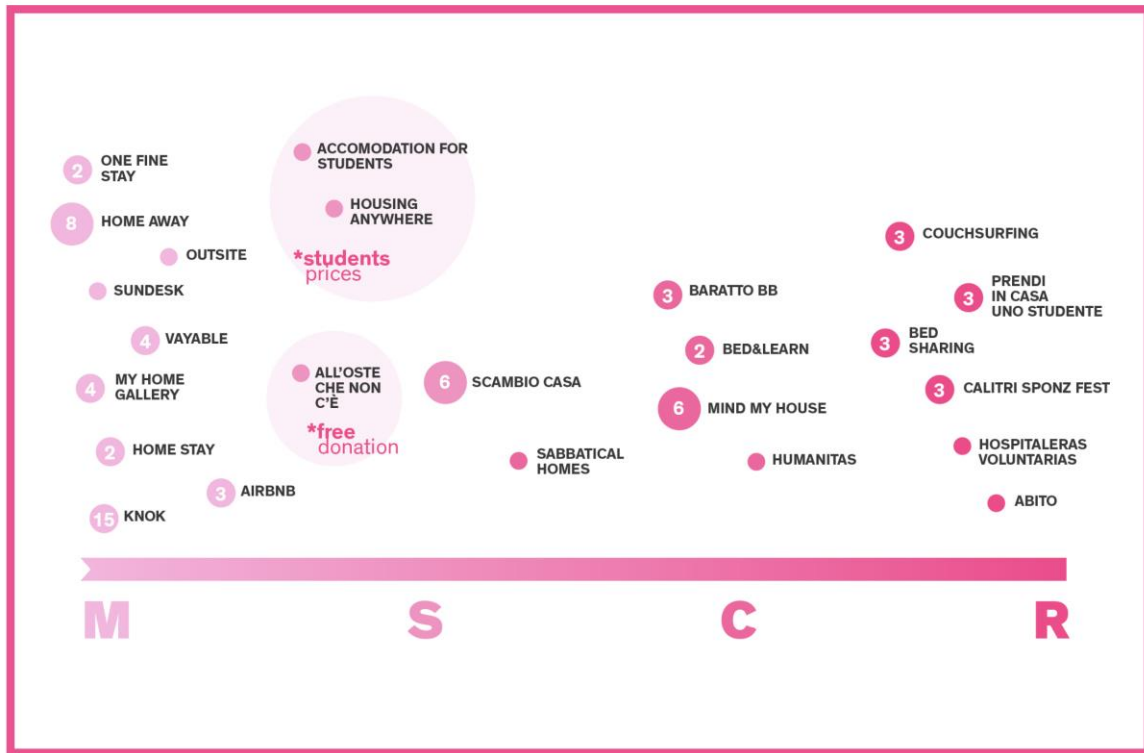


Figure 3. Theme 3 - Exchange mode / How? (Money / Spaces / Competences / Relations): the modality of exchange for each case studies

- Theme 4 - Type of community / Who? (from General to Specific target community)

The fourth positioning map investigates the scale of the target. Specifically, the diagram defines to whom the services are addressed. Starting from a general target, including every typology of user, the map details services that are oriented towards specific target communities based on different levels of exclusivity. The service One Fine Stay provides luxury house rentals: this peculiarity defines a range of users, even if the target is still not explicitly specific. On the other hand, toward the *Specific Community* extremity of the diagram, target communities become narrow and explicitly defined. For example, more than 5 case studies are specifically addressed to students.

TOPIC 4: Which kind of community / Who?

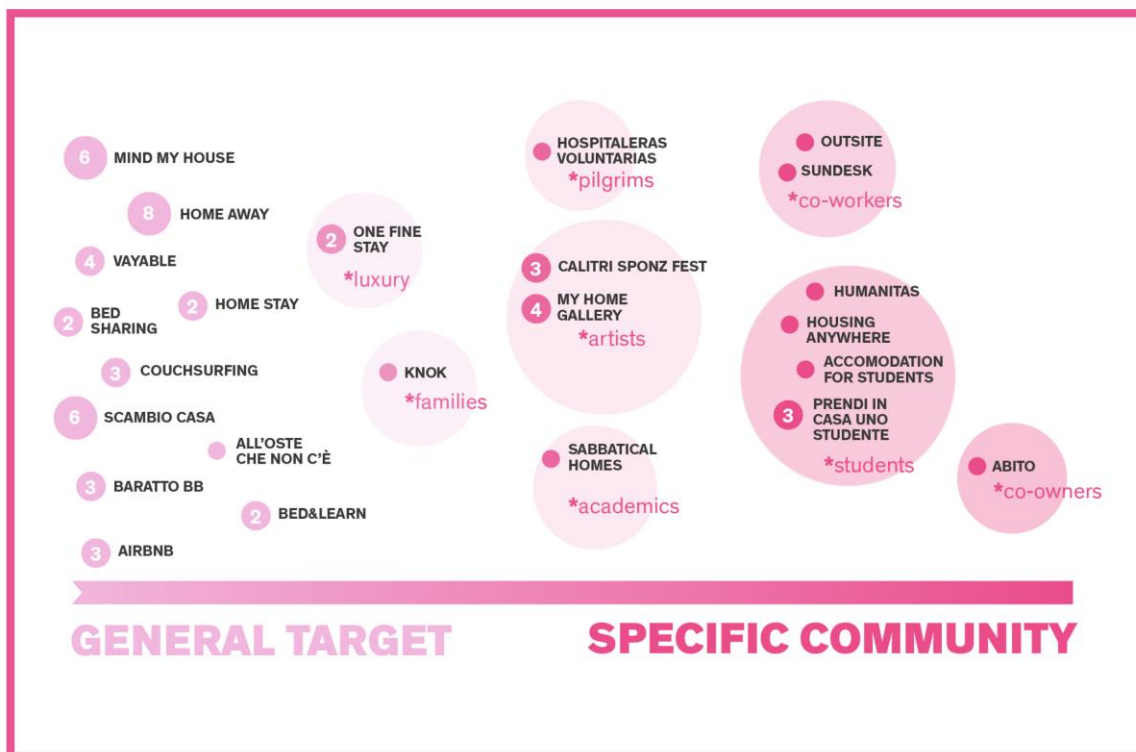


Figure 4. Theme 4 Type of community / Who? (from General to Specific target community): the scale of the target. Specifically, the diagram defines to whom the services are addressed.

- Theme 5 - Level of the relationship between the users / Why? (from No contact to Interaction)

Positioning map number 5 presents the level of relationship between the users. Even if the majority of the hospitality sharing services is Peer to Peer, the level of interaction between the actors is not always strong. Very often the agreement of the exchange happens through the digital platform provided from the service: consequently the contact among the hosts is indirect and with a low (or missing) level of interaction. On the other side, investigating the other case studies it is possible to notice that the relationship between users assumes two main different aspects: it can be spontaneous or required. Spontaneous interaction between users is a consequence of the case studies in which the Host in Present peculiarity is expressed. Furthermore, the interaction between user and host becomes a requirement when it is explicitly part of the service experience. Looking back at the positioning map of Theme 3 - Exchange mode / How? (Money / Spaces / Competences / Relations), evidence is found that when the commodity exchange is expressly based on the establishment of a relationship (the case study Prendi in casa uno studente provides free accommodation for students in exchange of spending part of their free time with the retired landlords, in order to keep them company), the level of interactions between hosts and users is stronger. Finally, services such as Sundesk (that offers co-working spaces plus accommodations), spontaneously enable connections between users themselves, since they allow the presence of different people at the same time in the same location.

TOPIC 5: Relationship among the users / Why?

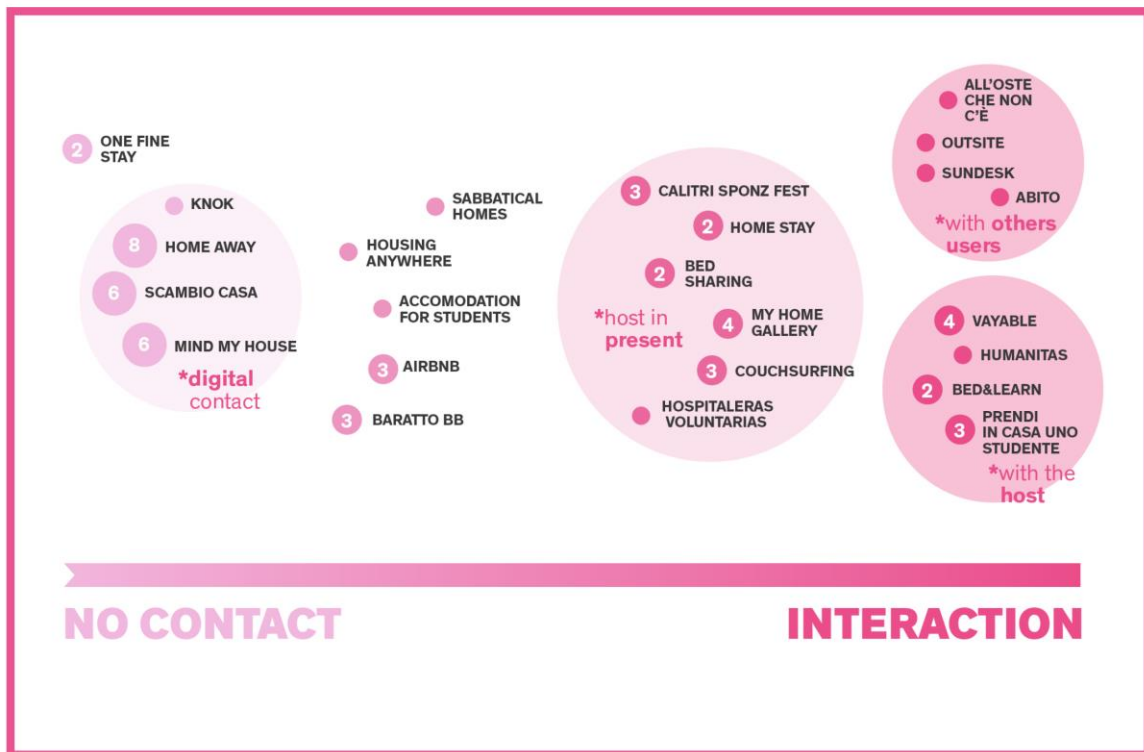


Figure 5. Theme 5 - Level of the relationship between the users / Why? (from No contact to Interaction)

- Theme 6 - Service Activation Date / When? (Timeline)

Finally, the last positioning map, describes a temporal overview related to the origin of each case study. It is interesting to note the 10 years gap between 1992 - when Scambio casa (Home swapping) was born as one of the first hospitality sharing services - and 2002, when other services were born as answers to specific needs (Sabbatical Homes, for academics, and Hospitaleras Voluntarias, for pilgrims: both addressing specific communities commitments).

TOPIC 6: Activation of the service / When?

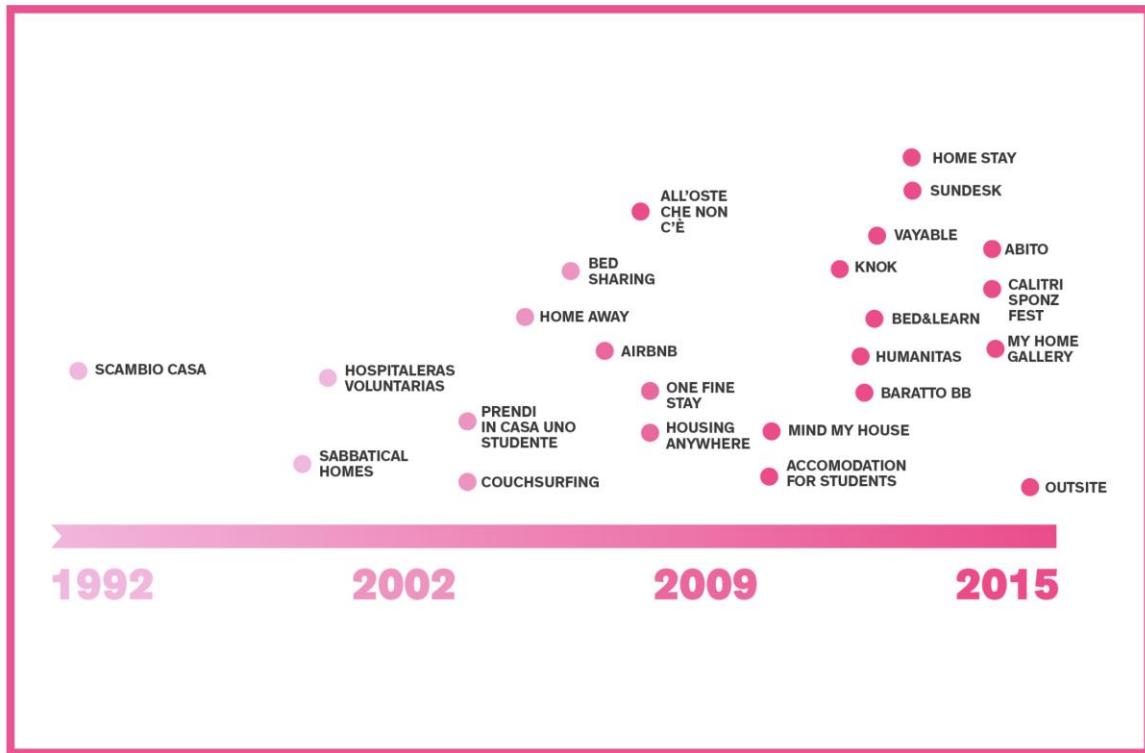


Figure 6. Theme 6 - Service Activation Date / When? (Timeline)

Moving from this first position maps, new ones were created by mixing information on the original maps.

The first example links geographical scale and community typology. Obviously, where the larger the geographical scale the broader is the users target, while on a local geographical scale the community typology is more specific and thus linked by a common interest or activity. Most part of the existing platforms are located in the first quadrant of the map, widespread at a global level and targeting a broad range of users, as in the case of world-famous AirBnB.

TOPIC 2+4

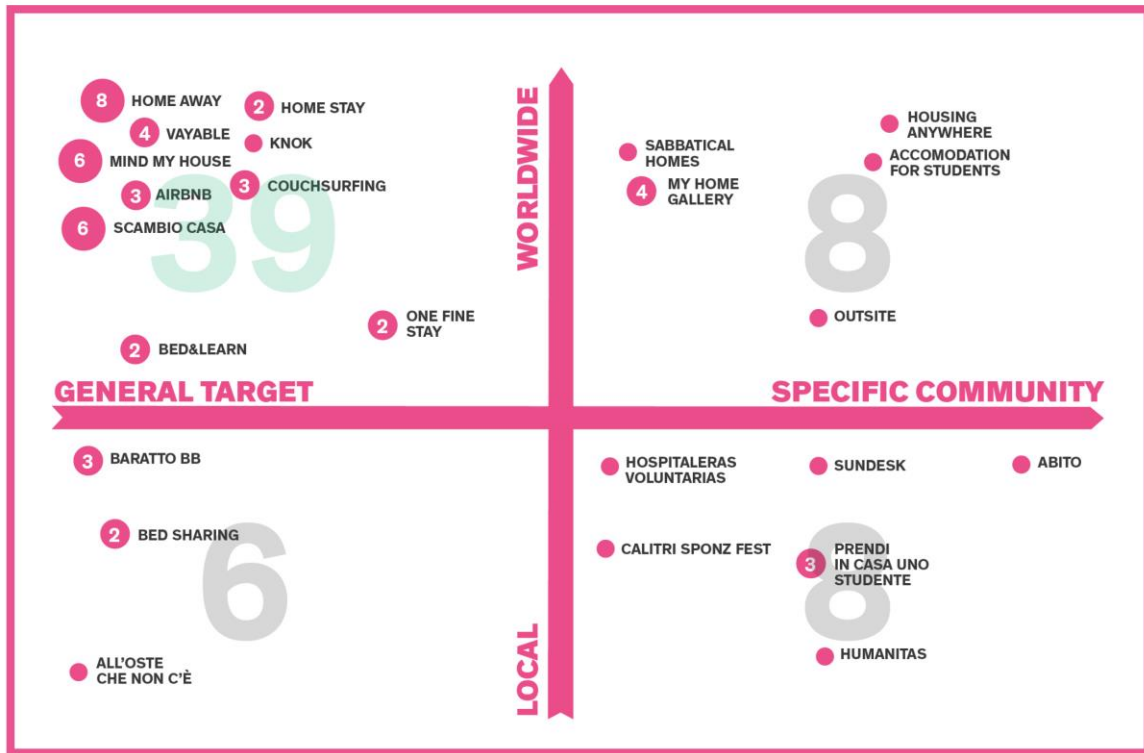


Figure 7. Mixing information on the original maps. Geographical scale and community typology

The second map - created mixing data on service typology and community typology - and the third map - created mixing data on service typology and relations between users - show the trend of the existing platforms: a broad target focusing only on the “to stay” as shared good, a place to sleep, for platforms like AirBnB. Interestingly, we also see the increasing diffusion of sharing platforms requiring a wider interaction and participation of the user in exchange for the accommodation: looking after pets, cleaning, house caring... as exemplified by Mind my House.

TOPIC 1+4

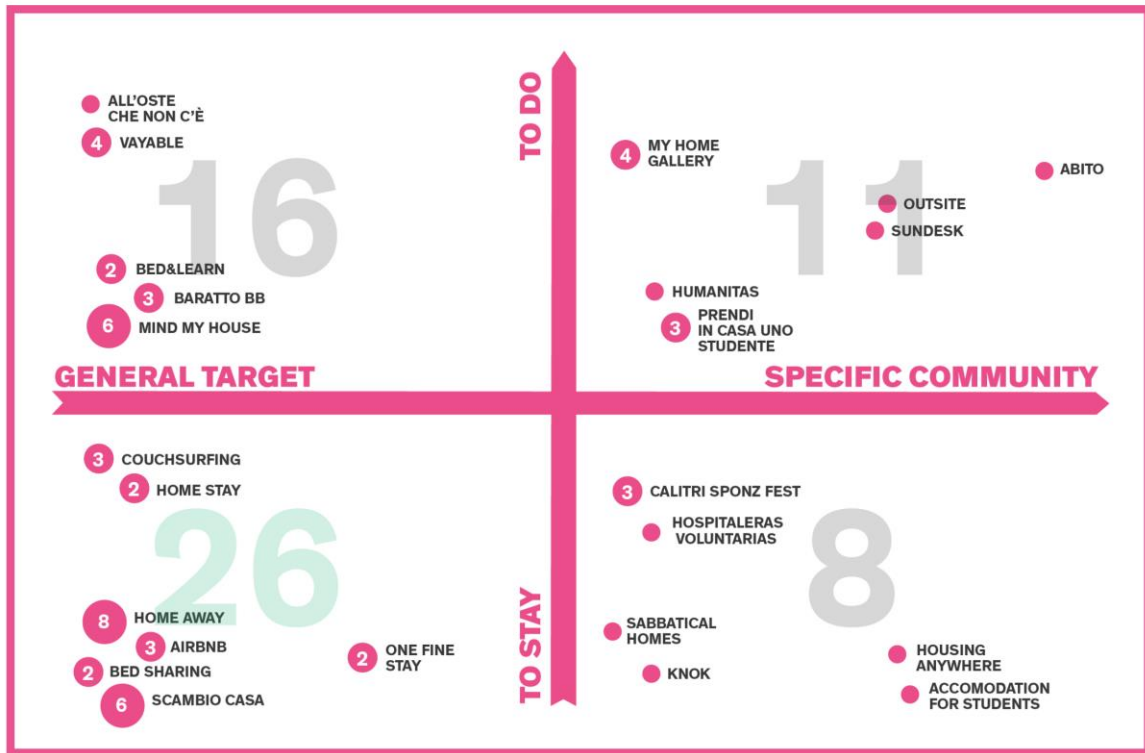


Figure 8. Mixing information on the original maps. Service typology and relations between users

TOPIC 1+5

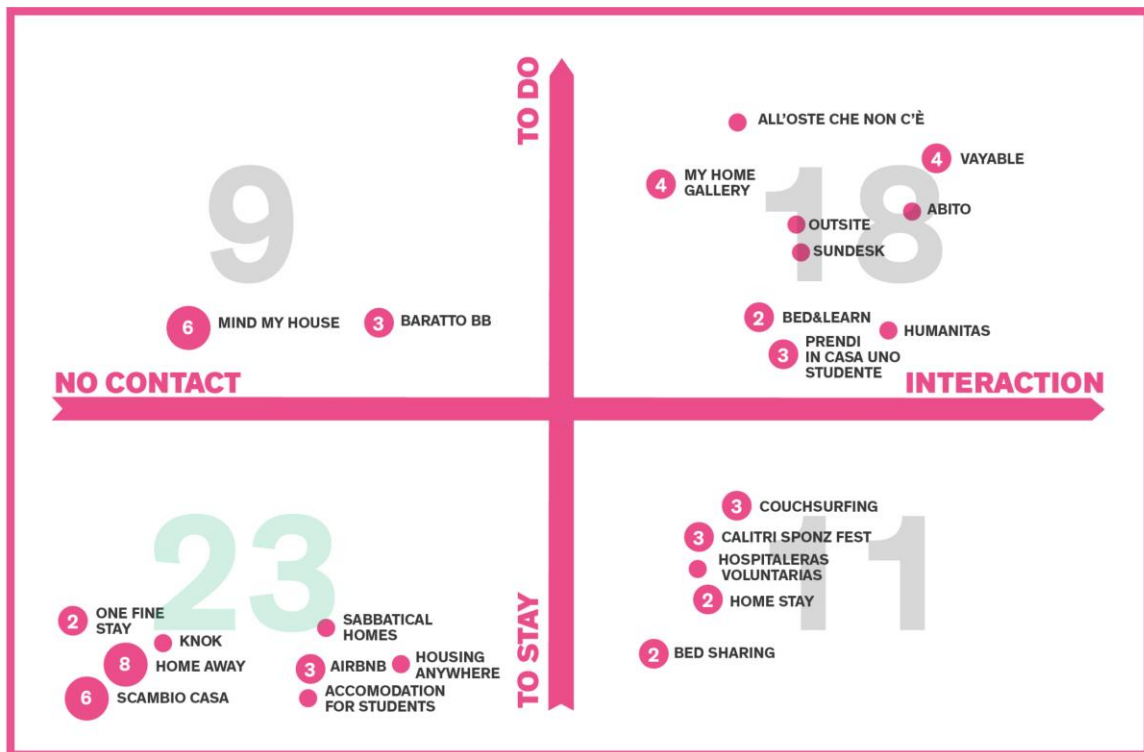


Figure 9. Mixing information on the original maps. Service typology and community typology

These last observations can also be found in the two following maps, created by mixing data on service typology, geographical scale and exchange method: the more the concerned communities are small, specific and local, the easier it will be to obtain trust from the other and make a step forward in the interaction between the stakeholders. In this case, the sharing will not be limited to a money-place to sleep exchange, but will evolve into an exchange of activities, competences and relations!

The last map has been created in order to stress data from the case study and is referring to a specific local community and to relations and competences sharing.

CONCLUSIONS | CASE STUDIES MAP

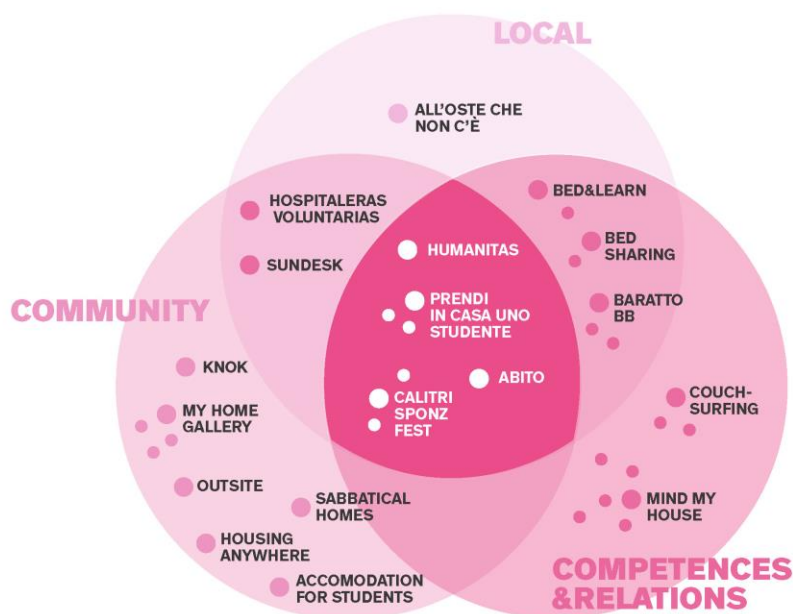


Figure 10. Information map mixing Community, competences, relations and geographical scale

The results of these classifications have been useful in the definition of the following steps for both the research and the experimentation. They also created the conditions for a deeper discussion on relations between space and services design and shared hospitality, and even a first projection of future scenarios.

4. Discussion and conclusion

As we have just seen, the wide classification carried out, the local dimension and the identification within a specific community allows users to go beyond money-based sharing and leads to offer others competences and relations.

This aspect is the most crucial, if we add to these two keywords the most important one: trust in the other.

This aspect has been fully understood by AirBnB co-founder Joe Gebbia, who in one of his last interviews⁵ states that AirBnB is more and more interested in the investigation of the new way of living and the actual transformations of private spaces. Their presence at the last “House of Vision” Exhibition in Japan demonstrates that they can really change our idea of domestic space in the future. They are very interested on designing new form of “houses” starting from the idea of sharing,

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and believing that people can trust each others. To investigate this field they launched an internal division, “Samara”, that “is a design studio at AirBnB exploring new attitudes towards sharing and trust. Samara builds hardware and software that support this direction.”

To imagine that future design scenarios ad domestic environment could be studied on the base of the trust unknown people can have in each other is deeply stimulating.

We can conclude that the questions to which the next steps of this research will try to answer to might be:

- How do domestic environment change basing on the new sharing hospitality forms?
- Which is the role of AirBnB and the other sharing services in the definition of new way of living?
- How will the sharing of private spaces change in our apartments, and will it change our way of living?
- What will be the role of “trust” in the new spaces we prepare to design?

This is a typical case of close relation between services design (the sharing hospitality platforms) and space design (future scenarios in the domestic environment project).

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