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HOW SCENARIO BUILDING AND SERVICE DESIGN CAN CONTRIBUTE TO PLACEMAKING: THE CASE OF THE TOURIST HARBOUR CARLO RIVA IN ITALY.

Daniela Selloni[a], Marta Corubolo*[a]

a Polimi DESIS Lab, Department of Design, Politecnico di Milano, Italy
* marta.corubolo@polimi.it

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ABSTRACT | This paper presents a case study: the design of future service scenarios for the Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva in Rapallo, the Italy's most important private marina destroyed by a storm in 2018. Historically, design has been viewed as a reflective practice aimed at creating futures to address complex challenges and this is why a group of design researchers and students from the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano were involved in an exploratory workshop to provide original solutions. The traditional urban planning approach has emphasized the consistency of the urban form of the built environment; however, such approach can be complemented by combining a service logic to the spatial planning perspective and this was precisely what was experimented during the workshop. The scenario building methodology and the service design discipline were employed to develop some scenarios to imagine the future of the harbour throughout the workshop, which encompassed three phases: a research stage to get in touch with the context, a concept generation to originate a great variety of ideas and a third phase to build final scenarios and their service solutions.

The scenarios resulted from the workshop served as a basis not only to stimulate the conversation among stakeholders, but above all to enhance the quality of their conversation, providing originality, detail and specifics on space and time. This could be viewed as a part of a wider placemaking strategy aimed at creating an innovative harbour in which (service) designers can provide a valuable contribution to the existing work of urban planners, architects, and policymakers.

1. Background Knowledge: Urban Planning, Service Design, Scenario Building

This paper moves from an unexpected extreme weather event occurred in 2018, a storm that destroyed the Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva in Rapallo, the most important Italian private marina. After this natural disaster, the necessity to redesign the area in light of climate changes and with a more community-centred approach clearly emerged. The real-estate company in charge for the re-opening of the harbour, named Bizzi & Partners, recognized the importance to adopt a different approach to conceive an innovative marina in harmony with the environment and, to achieve this aim, they involved a group of design researchers from the the Polimi DESIS Lab of Politecnico di Milano. Output of this collaboration was the ideation and development of a special educational activity, including students coming from different Masters' Degree of the School of Design who engaged in a dedicated workshop to envision future scenarios for the Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva.

Design has historically been conceptualised as a reflective practice which aims to build futures in response to problematic situations that are uncertain, disordered and indeterminate (Dorst, 2015; Schön, 1983). Here is why Bizzi & Partners identified the design discipline as a valuable set of approaches and methods to tackle the challenge of reimagining the future of the Rapallo marina. Another important element identified by Bizzi & Partners was to consider both the tangible and intangible dimension of the project, i.e. the physical spaces and services to be provided, therefore the expertise of the Polimi DESIS Lab in service design appeared as crucial to build a future scenario in which the spaces are informed and shaped by the activities that take place there.

The traditional urban planning, since the 1950s, was focused on the coherency of the urban form of the built environment and its developmental process with the functional necessities of an area (Beauregard, 2003); however, this approach needs to be expanded by embedding a service logic to the spatial planning perspective (Vargo & Lausch, 2016; Meroni & Selloni, 2022). This is because services are hybrid artefacts that can be viewed as technical and social networks where people, products and places interact for a common purpose (Mont, 2002; Meroni & Sangiorgi, 2011). Hence, assuming a service design perspective in spatial planning means to deal with complexity and to consider a systemic dimension to better organise the people and the infrastructure that may enable interactions in a given place.

The adoption of a service design approach was indeed complementary to the use of the scenario building methodology throughout the experimental workshop to envision the future of the Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva. Such methodology has a long history in business, government, and military sectors: Warfield (1996) suggests that a scenario is a narrative description of a possible state of development over time, it is useful to stimulate imagination and to conceive speculative thoughts about future evolutions. In general, it is possible to argue that scenario-building and foresight methodologies, incorporate diverse techniques, perspectives, and practices from various research and application fields, including Future Studies (Voros, 2001; Dunne & Raby, 2013; Fry, 2020;) and Strategic Planning (Hillgren et al., 2020; Jantsch, 1972). Additionally, strategic foresight has been integrated into the planning processes of the European Commission, with current efforts focused on incorporating it broadly into policy development across all sectors (European Commission, 2020). More specifically, according to Ogilvy (2002) scenarios are stories about the future conceived in a narrative and visual form and this is precisely the way in which design researchers formulate future narratives, i.e. by combing storytelling and visual elements. In the design field, Manzini and Jégou (2004) talk about 'DOS - Design Orienting Scenarios', defining a scenario as a vision for the future that is motivated and illustrated through specific solutions. They are useful to explore a panorama of alternative possibilities and act as 'thinking material' to orient conversations between actors, in other words they are "tools designed to facilitate the design process" (Manzini & Jégou, 2004, p. 193). For the purposes of this paper, it is important to highlight that the idea to characterize a scenario through specific solutions is peculiar to service designers: they use to craft scenarios around a service-logic, by mainly envisioning scenarios of interactions and relationships among people in a way that is anticipatory of the design of the physical space (Selloni et al., 2023). Here is why, during the workshop 'Design of future

scenarios for the Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva' students and researchers firstly envisioned how people could interact and relate within the space of the harbour so that these dynamics can be given priority when planning the related physical layout. Hence, in the next paragraph, an in-depth description of the 'Design Orienting Scenarios' developed during the workshop will be provided, focusing firstly on their service offering and secondly on their application in space and time, while in the final paragraph, a reflection on a wider placemaking strategy for the Rapallo marina will be drafted.

2. Case Study: Design of Future Scenarios for the Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva

Design of future scenarios for the "Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva" is the title of a special educational activity that was carried out at the School of Design of Politecnico di Milano involving a group of 20 international students selected from 3 different master's degrees programme: Product-Service System Design, Interior and Spatial Design, and Naval and Nautical Design. The group of students was created after a selection process and included them in an extensive workshop, conducted from March to May 2022 and designed as a contest for the envisioning of the futures of the marina.

As anticipated, the initiative was part of a larger process of rebuilding, rebranding and managing the tourist harbour 'Carlo Riva' in Rapallo damaged after a sea storm in 2018. Such a process, which is currently in the final phase of the construction site, met the teaching activity at a transition point between the closing of the architectural master plan and the beginning of the design of the intangible elements. This represented a key moment: the main spatial elements were already defined and played the role of creative constraints, and, at the same time, it was still possible to influence the detailed physical layout's choices through the design of scenarios embedding services and activities. Hence, building upon such constraints, we defined a brief that guided the students in the main phases of research, concept generation and development of future scenarios. The following paragraphs will describe these three main phases and the process of setting up and conducting the didactic experience while introducing the 4 emerging scenarios.

2.1 Phase 0: Setting Up and Defining a Brief

The initial phase comprised formulating a brief, followed by a collaborative problem-framing stage with Bizzi & Partners and Tectoo, the architectural firm responsible for developing the master plan. The components contributing to the brief were categorized into two groups: firstly, functional elements necessary for envisioning a novel offering for the harbour, and secondly, potential opportunities aimed at establishing a specific identity for the marina and therefore for the various identified targets.

Regarding the first category, the brief was to create a 'high-end tourist harbour', a marina providing the most complete and updated range of services that could characterize an efficient and pleasant future destination, considering environmental and social sustainability as the basis of the whole project. In fact, although the main customer is the international tourist, the brief indicated as the core element of any proposal the need to imagine this new place as an extension of the historic city of Rapallo. And therefore, to overturn the logic of exclusivity and privacy on which the old marina had been designed, adopting an inclusive, open and above all integrative approach as well as a community dimension.

> "It is an inclusive space devoid of barriers and borders, warmly embracing guests, tourists, and city residents alike. This dynamic environment thrives in every season, seamlessly integrating into the daily life of the city. It serves as a hub where individuals can encounter and enjoy a variety of new services." (from the original brief)

Finally, two must-have requirements have been thoughtfully integrated as key components in each scenario:

- **Sustainability**: this involves embracing advanced approaches to environmental responsibility, optimizing resource utilization, and actively addressing waste and impact through practices such as recycling, repairing, and reusing.
- **Technological Advancement**: this encompasses the seamless incorporation of innovative solutions and the integration of the latest technological products to enhance the port's services and offerings.

As regards the second category, the brief was complemented by a series of contextual project opportunities in different areas, arising from a preliminary analysis of both emerging global trends and the specific vocation and resources of the place. These opportunities have been crafted as potential avenues for further exploration concerning their connection to a local scale, including local services and initiatives. Additionally, they extend to a national scale, delving into characteristics and vocations acknowledged as typical of Italy. Furthermore, they reach an international scale, examining the offerings of marinas in the Mediterranean. This analysis refers to both competitive perspectives and considerations of complementarity within the tourist circuit. The same approach of examining various scales is also applied to the analysis of potential users. This encompasses not only the marina's primary international target but also includes considerations for internal tourism. Most importantly, it involves viewing the residents of the area as potential new users but also potential co-designers and co-producers of services and spaces.

The four identified areas of opportunity are:

- **Sports**: The Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva is a marina highly specialized in water sports. It stands as a centre of excellence in sailing, offering a comprehensive experience for sailing enthusiasts—from learning and practice to competition and the sheer enjoyment of sailing. Additionally, it provides a diverse range of sports, promoting a holistic approach to well-being for its users.
- **Tourism**: The Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva emerges as a new focal point for Mediterranean yacht tourism, providing a comprehensive hospitality experience encompassing accommodation, dining, well-being, and entertainment. In this context, Rapallo is seamlessly integrated into the Golden Triangle of Yachting, alongside the Italian Riviera, French Riviera, and Sardinia.
- **Heritage**: The Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva serves as a hub for the cultural and natural heritage surrounding Rapallo. It is a space where individuals can engage in learning and practical experiences related to biodiversity, environmental sustainability, and landscape protection. It acts as a gateway for exploring and discovering the historical and cultural sites within the area.
- **Design**: The Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva serves as a showcase of Italian design, where the essence of "made in Italy" is manifested in every facet of the environment, services, and activities offered to users. It encapsulates the most authentic and sophisticated Italian experience.

2.2 Phase 1: Research

The initial phase of the programme included both desk research and on-site activities. As students delved deeper into the information provided in the brief regarding future directions and requirements, they seized the opportunity to visit the Rapallo harbour area, which has been inaccessible since 2018 (Figure 1). During this on-site exploration, students engaged with workers and residents of the city, previously identified by Bizzi & Partners. The crucial aspect of this phase was the interviewing of citizens who serve as recipients of the services and beneficiaries of the harbour. This hands-on activity played a pivotal role in gaining insights into the needs and perspectives of the local community, enriching the overall research and educational experience.

Figure 1. Visit to the city of Rapallo and to the building site of the marina (pictures by the authors).

2.3 Phase 2: Concept Generation

The students actively participated in a series of brainstorming sessions aimed at generating a wide array of ideas. The use of the 'DOS - Design Orienting Scenarios' was crucial in exploring possibilities for different futures, moving from the seeds of the present and identifying possible solutions in form of services to be further developed in the following phases. Such methodology makes it possible to explore a range of experiences that people could have in the marina spaces in future, even before these spaces are designed in detail. This set of services and relationships manifested in the scenarios helps build the identity and distinctiveness of each of the scenarios.

Exploring the opportunities outlined in the brief, the students identified a series of influential factors that could shape the design of both scenarios and services. These factors encompassed various polarities of concepts, including Temporary vs Permanent, High Season vs Low Season, Private vs Public, Reserved for Clients vs Open to the City, Personalized vs Standard Offering.

Such dichotomies served as key elements to stimulate the creative phase. They provided a structured framework for considering and conceptualizing different aspects of the potential offering. The outputs of this phase culminated in a series of 'draft scenarios', which would be further refined and selected for the consequent development. This iterative process allowed for a dynamic exploration of possibilities and laid the foundation for more focused and detailed design choices.

2.4 Phase 3: Development of Future Service Scenarios

In the third phase, students built four specific scenarios, for each of them they outlined the following items:

- a general description in the form of a narrative and a visualization highlighting the most important characteristics of each future Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva.
- the main and additional services, therefore exploring the offering and the set of experiences provided to the different targets: from the tourist to the local citizens, including marinas' staff and workers.
- the main user journeys to map out the complete user experiences, touchpoints, and stakeholder maps. These visual representations provided a comprehensive view of how people would interact with the services, illustrating key touchpoints (both tangible and intangible ones) and identifying important actors to be involved in the scenarios, according to different roles and levels of engagement.
- the usage technology and the adoption of technological solutions both by exploring the development of innovative touchpoints as well as by integrating such innovations as part of the offering (see scenario 2 as an example).

This process of scenario generation and development aimed to establish a clear framework for understanding both the distinctive character of each scenario, in terms of actual offering and experiences, but also the stakeholder engagement plan, essential to implement the vision of the future marina. Moreover, it allows to start connecting the level of human interactions with the level of spatial interactions and design, thus contributing to imagine a new 'place' as anticipated in the introduction.

Here below there is a description of the four scenarios, written in the typical storytelling form of the scenario building methodology, which attempts to provide a specific and visionary narration at the same time.

Scenario 1. The Harbour of Amusement: offering 'sportainment' adventures.
Imagine a harbour where visitors embark on an unforgettable "sportainment" adventure, featuring recreational and multi-experience port entertainment facilities unique to the space (Figure 2). The marina has the potential to set a new standard for the region, offering one-of-a-kind experiences for adventure seekers of all ages. From the amusement of wellness to the thrill of intense emotions, individuals can interact with others and have fun.

Picture a scenario where a wholesome family of yacht owners and visitors enters the harbour area in the morning, ready to embark on an unforgettable "sportainment" experience, ranging from recreational multi-experiences to adrenaline-fueled adventures. What if the harbour spaces facilitated playful interactions among visitors and guided them toward community building? Envision the unique sports spaces unveiling new rules and introducing new sports/activities exclusive to Rapallo!

According to the findings, theme parks attract more visitors than any major sports league worldwide, and by a significant margin. Furthermore, sports entertainment is a global industry that has experienced exponential growth in recent decades. Given the diverse activities, locations, and users, there is ample opportunity for a profoundly multi-experiential and community-building experience.

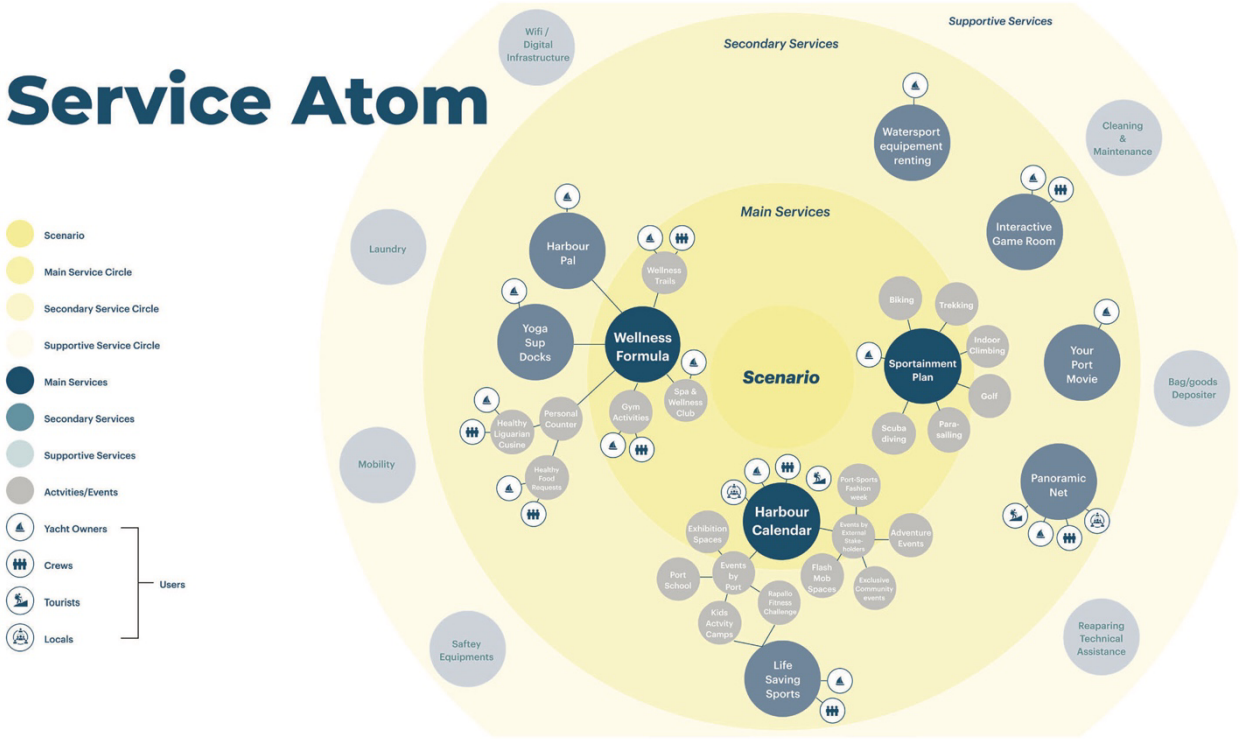

Figure 2. The Harbour of Amusement: offering map (students: A. Bosso, G. Musumeci, A. Panzetti, and D. Perera).

Scenario 2. Europe's leading carbon-negative marina: setting a new standard for sustainable marinas. We live in a new world where the reality of climate emergency is on our doorsteps and can no longer be ignored. Rapallo's Carlo Riva Tourist Harbour knows this reality well and is determined to set necessary ecological boundaries to reduce emissions at the local level and become Europe's leading carbon-negative marina (Figure 3). Rapallo is setting a new standard for the future of marinas by proving it is possible to create a new sustainable ecosystem around how marinas and harbours are run. You just need to be brave enough to leap. The many people who live, work, and holiday in Rapallo are ready to embrace a green economy, live sustainable lifestyles, and contribute to this dynamic, green zero-carbon future. Rapallo is installing the systems and infrastructure needed for this resourceful and innovative green future to become a reality by becoming a car-free private marina. Through their awakened respect for nature, Rapallo is creating pathways for empathy and ingenuity and brings forth a response that breaks free from convention and defies the system.

Those to visit Rapallo will find various products, services, and systems that encourage and enable hassle-free green consumerism. Not only this, but they will also feel refreshed by its spirit and virtue. However, becoming carbon negative admitting marina does not happen overnight, and it takes the coming together of several solutions to create a truly efficient and sustainable ecosystem.

Figure 3. Visualization of scenario 2 “Europe’s leading carbon-negative marina” (students: C. Ravasi, M. Torres, S. Checker and S. Peluzzi).

Scenario 3. Design Bay: aspiring to transform the marina into a hub of nautical design.
In a context marked by a great history of design, the new Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva was born. Starting from its history and from the importance that this place had for the engineer Carlo Riva, Design Bay wants to transform the Marina into a place of reference for nautical design. It becomes a place for everyone, where users can enjoy the best services and live premium experiences, enriching their passion for boat design. This will be possible thanks to the creation of spaces that will be simultaneously related to leisure and culture. In the marina, it will be possible to enjoy the Italian beauty in its simplicity: having a typical aperitif while admiring the hulls rocked by the waves and learning more about the world of boat and product design, thanks to exhibitions, courses, activities, and shops open to everyone (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Visualization of scenario 3 “Design Bay” (students: A. Colombo, G. Frattini, L. Imperio, B. Akyazici, O. Saglam).

Scenario 4. The Floating Resort of Rapallo: combining sea and land tourism to build a destination suitable both for work and vacation.
The harbour of Rapallo presents a unique opportunity to extend a luxurious experience as imagined by Carlo Riva between land and sea. The Floating Resort is a craft of luxury between land and sea, envisioned as an epitome of the ‘Carlo Riva style’. It offers a seamless transition from the shackles of mundanity to the gift of rejuvenation. From the moment of docking, the yachts become the resting abodes to a world of pampering and entertainment, just as cottages are to resorts. Responding to the remote lifestyles of today, it presents a unique destination for celebrating life on vacation and at work alike (Figure 5).

Nowadays tourists are totally connected with all available experiences they could reach. Harbours are changing their approach toward very different solutions, becoming a point of reference in a specific area. Carlo Riva Harbour could become the one where tourists find new engaging entertainment based on the idea that the sea mixes with the land generating a unique surface where the show takes place. Around it, people will meet and share the experience and enjoy the journey as a yacht owner, as a Rapallo resident, as a tourist, and as part of the Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva.

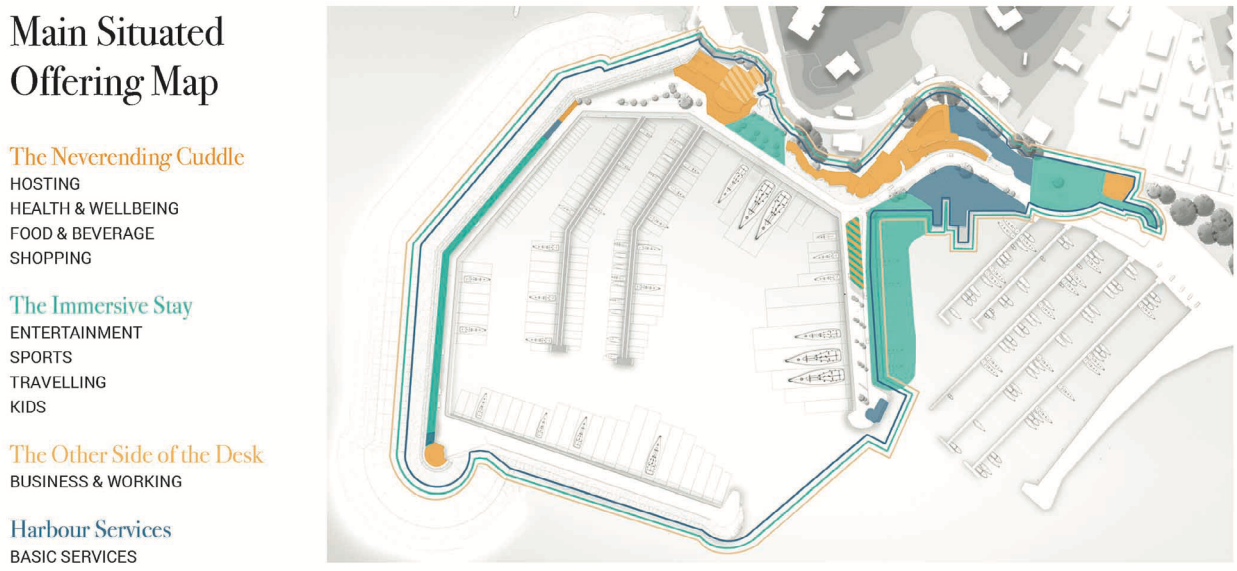

Figure 5. The main situated offering map of scenario 4 “The Floating Resort of Rapallo” (students: M. Diaz Gonzales, G. Lisoni, G. Luciani, G.Martini, R. Mondal).

Finally, a public presentation took place at the Municipality of Rapallo in the presence of the city's mayor, council members, and representatives from Bizzi & Partners. The outcome of this phase contributed to a broader and comprehensive conversation concerning the future of Rapallo, wherein the new marina played an integral role. The scenarios crafted by students offer a valuable framework for envisioning the city's future, thanks to their ability to incorporate and integrate a diverse range of spatial and service elements.

3. Service-Oriented Scenarios as a Placemaking Strategy

The scenarios elaborated during the workshop served as a stimulus for the executive project as each of them made emerge potential elements that, selected and combined in the most appropriate way for Rapallo and its context, can be considered as an integral part of a wider placemaking strategy to create an innovative harbour. More specifically, the identification of several service solutions was useful in imagining an unprecedented use of the spaces, which become then actual ‘places’ thanks to the involvement of physical, cultural, and social identities into the equation. The transformation of a space into a meaningful place (LeGates & Stout, 2020; Gehl, 2013) is precisely the very aim of a placemaking strategy and, in Rapallo, this was possible thanks to the inclusion of intangible elements extending beyond the physical aspect. Granata, in her book about placemaking (2021), states that traditional urban planning and architecture have long lost their role as society’s spur, their capacity to transform places and conceive long-term visions. Here is why the adoption of the scenario building methodology and of a service design approach was useful to shift the focus on people and their interactions, aiming at strengthening social relationships to share meanings about a place (Buser et al., 2013 in Romeiro, 2017). In the same vein, Granata (2021) continues arguing that placemaking centres mainly on behaviours, nature, feelings, and lifestyles, employing an envisioning perspective that originates in the real world but looks further, perceiving possible connections, and integrating apparently unrelated components into new opportunities. Therefore, she highlights that complex urban projects (as that of the Tourist harbour Carlo Riva is) need a great variety of ‘placemakers ‘who are not only architects or policymakers but more widely ‘inventors of places’ who elaborate on people's necessities and desires and generate a common future vision. It is not by chance that the real estate Bizzi & Partners and the architectural firm Tectoo recognized the need to include in their strategic conversation experts in service design and scenario building and to benefit from the fresh perspective of design students. After the natural disaster of 2018, the pressure on the part of the community and the municipality of Rapallo to develop a more meaningful project in a strategy of adaptation or mitigation to climate change was high: however, it was not only a challenge related to

environmental sustainability, but it was also about envisioning a way to build communities around that place, identifying activities and services, ensuring diversity and inclusion, in other words to create a new 'place' as integral part of life's people. The work of the students in conceiving scenarios in which tourists and local communities coexist and interact was a key component in building a wider placemaking strategy in which both time and space are carefully designed and combined. One of the distinguishing features of the service-oriented scenarios built by students was precisely the development of a calendar considering a variety of time ranges, from the seasonal dimension to weekly or daily levels that need different reasoning and approaches and conceive the wide plethora of services in a systemic and progressive way. Another 'time feature' that was attentively designed was the distinction between permanent and temporary activities: this was important to make an estimate of the effort needed for each service and, above all, to better define the hierarchy of the service offering, identifying the main one and what was on the contrary considered secondary. The adoption of a well-known tool as the service offering map (Foglieni et al.2018; Morelli et al.,2021) with the 'time filter' integrating permanent and temporary activities was made in every scenario and was considered a fundamental ingredient in a planning perspective, not only by Bizzi & Partners but also by the Municipality of Rapallo who expressed a clear interest in considering such agenda the starting point for the future. The inclusion of the time dimension into the project is a specific characteristic of service design (Meroni & Sangiorgi, 2011; Sangiorgi & Prendiville, 2017) and its integration in a wider placemaking strategy was particularly meaningful in the case of the Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva, as the objective was to envision the transformation of a place over time. The time issue was central not only in terms of the 'service agenda' for the harbour, but also as a fundamental reference in applying scenario building: this methodology is employed considering a future perspective, in the case study described it was specifically a timespan of about 10-15 years. The medium and longer term are particularly useful in complex situations, full of uncertainty and conflicting issues (Leney et al., 2004) especially because they usually cover a broad spectrum of elements, including demographic shifts, geopolitical and climate changes, and disruptive technologies. They demand a higher level of creativity and the capacity to imagine alternative futures that may seem distant or speculative (as some of the Rapallo scenarios are, as 'Europe's Leading Carbon negative Marina' scenario) but they complement and extend the value of traditional forecasting and above all they are useful to ignite a conversation among stakeholders. The four scenarios designed by students for the Tourist Harbour Carlo Riva contributed not only to encourage but above all to enhance the quality of the overall conversation, providing originality, detail and specifics on space and time. They served as basis for the wider placemaking strategy that Bizzi & Partners together with the Municipality of Rapallo intend to develop and apply in future.

Preparing and cultivating the ground for making this conversation flourish is precisely what Selloni and Meroni (2023) suggest in their attempt to define design for placemaking: "a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm by acting on soft infrastructural and intangible (cultural, relational, policy, etc.) levels to maximize communal value/common good and sustainability in a community-centricity perspective and configure, re-configure and re-signify the space (from space to place)" (p.2). Hence, the contribution of the service design researchers and students in the case study here presented can be defined as a pioneering activity of design for placemaking valuable for the future: here there is room for further research as the work of designers can provide an effective contribution in complementing and expanding that of urban planners, architects, and policymakers.

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About the Authors:

Daniela Selloni is an Assistant Professor and researcher at Polimi DESIS Lab, Department of Design - Politecnico di Milano. She works on service design, social innovation, placemaking and more specifically on how co-design can be experimented in public and private organizations.

Marta Corubolo is a researcher at the Polimi Desis, Department of Design - Politecnico di Milano. Her research interests focus on service design and design for social innovation, codesign methods and participative processes.

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