

Cultural Heritage as a Trigger for Civic Wealth Creation and Sustainable Urban Development

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Cultural Heritage (CH) sites are the gems of many cities and regions – in Europe and in many other parts of the world. At the moment, we see primarily tourism-oriented purposes of this rich and long-lasting heritage. A fact that causes manifold problems and conflicts: over-tourism, gentrification in key-touristic areas and flagship, suffering city centres in less frequented regions, conflicts between touristic and civic interests, traffic problems, generation of low-income-jobs, to mention only the most obvious.

Urban regeneration rests on an integrated and comprehensive vision aimed at solving urban problems and promoting the development of the concerned communities (Roberts, 2000).

A reinvention of the way space is perceived, building on culture to breathe new life into historic centres, is a rising civic need and a key challenge for policymakers and city managers. This could be achieved by relying on local knowledge (heritage, past knowledge, cultural legacy) and capabilities to generate new opportunities and civic wealth (Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019, Rock H2020 project, Open Heritage H2020 project).

Drawing from various, partly multidisciplinary research fields, culture-led urban regeneration is a multifaceted idea – potentially applied to both, degraded districts and buildings (Jung *et al.*, 2015) and historical cities that, although rich in CH, lack social and economic opportunities and risk desertification of their historical centres (Stolarick and Florida, 2006; Cooke and Lazzarotti, 2008). To this end, this stream of research aims to understand factors and processes that leverage a mutually beneficial coexistence of economic and civic purposes for the unfolding of CH.

Hereby, a broad variety of knowledge assets, tacit and codified

knowledge linked to local crafts and traditions as well as arts masterpieces and other cultural heritage assets play a substantial role to sustain innovation and create social, cultural and economic wealth. Therefore, we pose the question how a local administration can give access, leverage and develop CH assets in a way to support civic needs, unfold new economic action and trigger a fruitful societal change.

We would like also focus on the complex nexus of drivers that lay behind sustainable urban and regional development processes. Cities offer opportunities, not only concerning educational offers and jobs, but also about culture and creativity.

Some streams of research focus on culture and creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development (UCCN, 2004). The social fabric of cities, the cultural offerings and the interaction of various professionals challenge the production of ideas and represent perfect incubators for new societal frames, business models and start-ups (Dameri and Demartini, 2020). A linear view of innovation in cultural context is obsolete, and a more comprehensive ecosystem approach is required to grasp the complexity of the forces in place.

Furthermore, cities also face critical developments and are prone to undesirable effects of modern and postmodern times: poverty, pollution, overcrowding and suburban ghettos, over-tourism and traffic problems are crucial issues on the urban agenda. To cope with these threats for urban development, new trends in city management are emerging. Some of them are rooted in the use of innovative technologies to improve the effectiveness of local policies and services and the quality of life of citizens and firms: ‘digital’ cities and ‘smart’ cities are streams of city management born at the beginning of the millennium and implemented progressively all over the world. These processes should be as inclusive as possible (Biondi *et al.*, 2020; Aureli and Del Baldo, 2022). However, recent developments – especially influenced by the pandemic effects on social life (Huynh, 2020) – show that participation is confined at a superficial layer of these activities and citizens. Local crafts and other parts of the economy can’t exploit the full potential of these cultural commons (Dameri and Moggi, 2019). Hence, a deep understanding of civic and democratic participation in accessing, preserving and exploiting our cultural commons beyond the pure rhetoric of politics, is a fertile ground for debate among scholars of various disciplines.

The contributions of this book try to nurture that debate from the point of view of management scholars. As the word cloud created on the basis of the titles and key words demonstrates (see fig. 1), this book unfolds around the following three strands of research that in some papers are

closely interlinked:

- i) governance of cultural heritage as a trigger for civic wealth creation;
- ii) urban and rural sustainable development thanks to stakeholder engagement, collaborations and alliances;
- iii) reporting on the expected and achieved impacts of cultural initiatives/ projects and interventions.

Fig. 1. – The words of the contributions of this book



Governance of the cultural heritage as a trigger for civic wealth creation

The contribution by Raffaele Fiorentino, Loris Landriani, Alessandra Lardo and Stefano Marciano, titled: *Governance systems for civic wealth creation through a new accessibility to cultural heritage: the case of “La Paranzà”*, shows how the initiative of a group of young people, rooted in the Rione Sanità, a neighborhood of Naples, succeeded in enhancing an entire neighbourhood by focusing on the recovery of the Catacombs of St. Gennaro, as a catalyst for the upturn of the people living in the social space in which they insist. The project succeed also thanks to the guidance of a local parish priest and the initial help of a team of professionals and a funding entity. The originality of this study consists in demonstrating that cultural assets, as a ‘new’ category of common goods, not only are the object of interventions for restoration, but rather they can become a means for the regeneration of places and civic wealth creation.

While in the previous paper we see a process of urban regeneration

fuelled by citizenship, the contribution by Selena Aureli, Mara Del Baldo and Paola Demartini, titled: *The role of the municipality in a UNESCO site: which mechanisms could leverage civic wealth creation?*, aims to investigate the role played by an Italian municipality in activating those mechanisms that allow the creation of civic wealth. Findings highlight that the municipality acted as an orchestrator to activate stakeholders' participation, collaborative innovation and the mobilization of resources necessary to create the social, economic and communal endowments that benefit the local community. In so doing, this paper contributes to contextualize and extend the framework proposed by Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) on civic wealth creation (CWC), by focusing on the governance of cultural heritage as a driver for creating common goods.

Urban and rural development thanks to stakeholder and citizen engagement, collaborations and alliances

The paper by Laura Corazza, Daniel Torchia, Chiara Certomà, Dario Cottafava, Federico Cuomo, Luca Battisti and Jacopo Fresta, titled *Community engagement and self-management in liquid times: the case of the container garden at the School of Management and Economics of the University of Turin*, presents the case of a small (about 200 m²) container garden created in a neglected space within the premises of the School Management and Economics of the University of Turin. The study is one of the very first ones conducted on the New European Bauhaus and shows the value of European-funded cultural initiatives in regenerating neighbourhoods and promoting sustainable practices. The container garden, called 'L'orto della SME', is an example of 'self-governance' (Fournier, 2002), as well as a multi-stakeholder engagement hub for students, academics, local elderlies and professional gardeners to work together and share self-produced vegetables show that container gardens are rather inexpensive and instruments of urban social inclusion, equality and sustainable consumption to be scaled-up and applied to different contexts. Moreover, the exchange of good practices between different communities may create an intergenerational knowledge flow.

While the previous paper illustrates an experiment in the reuse of urban space to develop social cohesion in the light of the principles of the New European Bauhaus, the contribution by Elena Borin and Fabio Donato explores the role of CH in processes of rural development.

This paper, titled *Cultural Heritage alliances for sustainable urban and rural development*, reflects on the potential of alliances between cities rich in CH

and rural areas to rebalance tourism flows and promote more sustainable socio-economic development. To address this topic, the authors carried out a qualitative case-study research on the programme “Terre degli Uffizi” promoted for the period 2021-2026 by the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (Italy) as part of a long-term strategy to enhance the region and its cultural heritage. Namely, this paper contributes to the debate on ecosystem approach to regional development.

Reporting on the expected and achieved impacts of cultural initiatives/projects and interventions

The paper by Michael Habersam and Martin Piber, titled *The Role of Participation in European Capitals of Culture: Various Patterns and Consequences on Impact*, sheds light on how patterns of participation relate to impact dimensions, as well as on the difficulties to perceive this relation adequately. The authors interpret ‘participation’ not exclusively as stakeholders participating in European Capital of Culture-events as consumers and/or (co-)producers, but rather in a reflexive way. Due to the importance of the political and organizational setting as framework for participation and impact, they raise the question who participates in the organizational development process of the management body itself. This shift in perspective is of practical and theoretical relevance.

The research proposition of the paper by Mauro Baioni, Alessandro Bollo, Annalisa Cicerchia, Paola Demartini, Lucia Marchegiani, Flavia Marucci and Michela Marchiori, titled *A New Accountability for Cultural Organisations. The SoPHIA proposal to innovate Sustainability Reporting*, is to question whether the holistic impact assessment model for cultural interventions developed by a H2020 project named SoPHIA, may be applied to the sustainability reporting of cultural organisations. Accountability is currently less developed by institutions/organizations of the cultural sector and also poorly investigated by scholars. The application of the SoPHIA model to the Sustainability Reporting of cultural organisations could feed the process of engagement with their stakeholders and meanwhile it may represent a cognitive tool for managers to reflect on the results of their work.

Finally, we deem there are fruitful research opportunities to contribute to the debate on issues such as impact investments, community engagement & leadership and public leadership, with relation to the following emerging topics:

- mapping and disclosing the impact of Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) with a focus on accounting and governance systems for Cultural Heritage interventions in the area of urban regeneration and civic wealth creation;
- understanding the dilemmas and the development of theoretical frameworks on the risks and ethical challenges deriving from the transformations of our living spaces currently underway;
- accountability, reporting and sustainability in the light of a territorial and ecosystem approach;
- analysis, financing and evaluation of the effectiveness of public expenditure for CH safeguarding and valorisation in line with the Next Generation EU Plans and the New European Bauhaus principles.

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