The Role of the Municipality in a UNESCO Site: which Mechanisms Could Leverage Civic Wealth Creation?

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Purpose – Drawing from prior research on participatory governance systems suitable to Cultural Heritage interventions of urban regeneration this paper aims to investigate the role played by a local key stakeholder such as the municipality in activating those mechanisms that allow the creation of civic wealth through the lenses of the theoretical framework of civic wealth creation proposed by Lumpkin and Bacq (2019).

Design/methodology/approach – The investigation of the case of Urbino (Italy) whose UNESCO management plan has been recently revised has been grounded on a qualitative-driven approach (focused on a case study method, suitable for an exploratory analysis) and using a triangulation of tools to collect information (semi-structured interviews, participating observation and secondary sources).

Findings – Findings highlight that the municipality acted as an orchestrator to activate stakeholders' engaged participation, collaborative innovation and mobilization of resources necessary to create the social, economic and communal endowments that benefit the local community. However, several gaps also emerged that represent lesson learned to be addressed in future development projects.

Originality/value – In the attempt to question if and how CH can be a trigger for Civic Wealth Creation in small historical town, the paper contributes to contextualize the CWC framework proposed by Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) by identifying the role of the PA as orchestrator or at least stimulator of a participatory approach to the governance of cultural heritage as a driver for creating civic wealth.

Keywords – civic wealth creation, historic center, municipality, UNESCO, stakeholders engagement

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1. Introduction

In recent times, culture-led urban regeneration projects (Jung et al., 2015) applied to historic centres (HC) have come to the forefront as a rising civic need and a key challenge for policymakers and city managers, who are urged to stimulate positive socio-economic impacts. Urban regeneration projects should be grounded on stakeholders' engagement and capable to balance different stakeholders' needs and expectations that are sometimes conflicting, especially in UNESCO heritage sites. According to the literature, a participatory governance is a condition to generate positive and lasting impacts over time (Sacco et al., 2019). In this vein, drawing from prior research on participatory governance systems suitable to Cultural Heritage interventions of urban regeneration, this paper aims to investigate the role played by a local key stakeholder such as the municipality in activating those mechanisms that allow the creation of civic wealth (Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019; Bailey and Lumpkin, 2021).

Through the lenses of the theoretical framework of civic wealth creation proposed by Lumpkin and Bacq (2019), this paper investigates the case of Urbino (Italy) whose UNESCO management plan has been recently revised. Grounded on a qualitative-driven approach (focused on a case study method, suitable for an exploratory analysis) and using a triangulation of tools to collect information (semi-structured interviews, participating observation and secondary sources) paper findings highlight that the municipality acted as an orchestrator to activate stakeholders' engaged participation, collaborative innovation and mobilization of resources necessary to create the social, economic and communal endowments that benefit the local community. However, several gaps also emerged that represent lesson learned to be addressed in future development projects.

2. Theoretical development

2.1. Urban regeneration in UNESCO sites

Urban regeneration is a policy intervention aimed at improving environmental quality negatively affected by excessive urbanization and/or large quantities of abandoned urban areas. Often used interchangeably with urban renewal, it aims at improving the physical, social, economic and ecological aspects of urban areas through various actions including redevelopment (new constructions on a site that had a pre-existing use), rehabilitation (restoring a building to good condition and operation) and

heritage preservation (Zheng et al., 2014). This type of intervention is intrinsically sustainability-oriented as it addresses issues related to pollution and waste, unemployment, social exclusion and well-being, just to name a few aspects. Its application involves various planning issues and different stakeholders. As explained by Zheng et al. (2014), planning shall commensurate different material elements such as land, housing, infrastructure and heritage, but also relational aspects are also extremely important because stakeholders, their actions and relationships nurture the mechanisms of urban renewal. In particular, these authors emphasise the role of three key stakeholders categories in urban renewal projects: local and national officials in environmental, economic development and cultural departments on one hand, private actors like businesses and institutional entities on the other hand, and finally end users or the public in general that benefit from the outcomes of the project. Recent real-life examples, like the case of Barcelona (Degen and Garcia, 2012) and the city of Catanzaro in Italy (Della Spina, 2019), demonstrate that cultural heritage may provide a relevant contribution to urban regeneration (Jung et al., 2015). Cities awarded as UNESCO sites, which are rich in cultural heritage, have therefore a powerful driver to activate when it is necessary to revitalize cities or local areas (UNESCO, 2010; Murzyn-Kupisz, 2012 Uroševic, 2015; Angrisano et al., 2016). However, similar projects do not always lead to the same results because the stakeholders involved have different needs and different powers that they exercise in the renewal process (Zhao et al., 2021).

2.2. Heritage conservation and valorisation through participatory governance

Heritage conservation and valorisation are key topics on the agenda of many cities and regions (UNESCO, 2011; Echter, 2015; Ertan and Eğercioğlu, 2016). They are at the basis of community wellbeing and also represent drivers for development (Couch and Dennemann, 2000; Camagni et al., 2020). Cultural heritage may increase tourism that becomes a community development tool for many places (Jimura, 2011). Moreover, projects of heritage conservation can bring a variety of social, environmental and economic benefits like the creation of associations or the launch of social enterprises (Macdonald and Cheong, 2014). According to the Historical Urban Landscape (HUL) approach, cultural heritage is intrinsically associated to urban regeneration because historical urban areas are the result of the layering of cultural and natural values (Rey-Pérez and Roders, 2020). Therefore, programs and interventions on cultural heritage generate positive impacts on the location, which range from city health, regeneration of local economy with innovative activities, local employment,

poverty reduction and resilience of urban infrastructure; making cities more inclusive, safe and sustainable (Fusco Girard, 2010; Fusco Girard, 2014; Aureli and Del Baldo, 2022).

A common limitation of previous studies is that they assume that policies of heritage conservation and valorization are planned and implemented by governments and local authorities adopting a top-down approach (Loulansky, 2006). More recently, the European Commission suggested to prefer mixed top-down/bottom-up approaches to active cultural heritage as driver of transformation and development (European Commission, 2015). Research has demonstrated that a more participatory approach that involves the local community in the decision-making process regarding CH valorisation could generate effective results (Hribar et al., 2015; Sacco et al., 2019; Rakitovac et al., 2021) and contribute to pursue the so called 'common good' (Spence and Schmidpeter, 2003). Cities are the settings where participatory governance takes place (Kazepov, 2005; Piattoni, 2010). In particular, participation of local inhabitants in the preservation of their heritage is even more important in UNESCO sites and it is actually part of the mission of World Heritage Centre (UNESCO, 2010). Therefore, research and policy makers are called to design tools and approaches for improving city governance. For example, multi-stakeholder forums and workshops may contribute to identify shared solutions, foster the creativity, resilience and sustainability of the city at the same time, while reducing the conflict between specific interests and general ones (Hribar et al., 2015; Del Baldo and Demartini, 2021; Biondi et al., 2020). Such participation has the potential to transform the urban setting into a social laboratory within which encouraging social innovation.

2.3. Civic wealth creation

Culture-led urban regeneration projects aim to improve the 'common good', usually defined as the wellbeing of the community at large. They entail objectives of social inclusion and cohesion, improvement of the quality of the environment, development of tourism and economic activities (Hribar *et al.*, 2015). An alternative view is to look at renewal projects as drivers for civic wealth creation a concept developed by Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) to identify the creation of social, economic, and communal endowments that benefit local communities and allow these communities to be self-sufficient, therefore generating positive societal change and sustainable impact (Bailey and Lumpkin, 2021). Civic wealth includes both material and intangible resources such as health, happiness, culture and social justice. It takes the form of new or improved local capacity, capabilities, culture, material and immaterial resources that help

to find solutions to community problems and bring about change (Alvord, Brown, & Letts, 2004).

Similar to what theorized by urban regeneration studies, also Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) attribute a relevant role to stakeholders, but their major emphasis is on communities or residents, which become key actors for societal change and not merely passive beneficiaries (Glynn, 2019). The local community directly contributes to create real societal impacts (Branzei et al., 2018) when collaborate with other two stakeholder categories: enterprises and supporters/facilitators (i.e., providers of financial, technical, and political assistance). If one stakeholder category is not committed because its interests diverge from others' interests or because they are only partially involved, civic wealth is not created, although other positive impacts can still be achieved. The mechanisms or strategies to achieve fruitful collaboration that generate civic wealth are mainly three: engaged participation, collaborative innovation and resource mobilisation (Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019). The key actor (or orchestrator) that may initiate the process of civic wealth creation can be any key stakeholder, who is committed to bring about positive societal change or maintain the civic vibrancy of a community. Although, in practice, this stakeholder is usually a public subject.

3. Case study analysis

The paper adopts a qualitative research approach focused on a case study method, suitable for an exploratory analysis (Yin, 2009). Namely, the paper describes the challenges and the progress experienced by an Italian local administration in involving stakeholders of a historical town and renowned tourism destination – the city of Urbino – in a project of local revitalisation and urban renewal.

The city is included in the list of World Heritage sites (UNESCO, 2011) and represents an interesting case study because it suffers from job opportunities for young people and social cohesion among the city users that can be categorized in two distinctive groups: local citizens and university students, having different needs and expectations. The city is not fully developed from a tourism perspective as it could be considering its rich stock of tangible monuments and art pieces. Moreover, it suffers from disengagement and economic stagnation like many Italian historic enters that have progressively lost their social and economic attractiveness (Micelli and Pellegrini, 2018; Thurley *et al.*, 2015).

The city launched a two years project, called "Urbino per bene"

(Urbino for Good) aiming to achieve an economic regeneration process investing in cultural heritage conservation and revitalization and designed to create occasions for introducing new skills, ambitions, values and standards (Aureli, Del Baldo and Demartini, 2021a; 2021b). A summary of the objectives, steps and outputs of the project is presented in table 1.

Table 1 – Urbino perBene - Educare al Bello project (Urbino forGood-Cultivating beauty)

Summary of the project	In recent years, vandalism has occurred in the historic centre related to the staining and damage of artistic and architectural works, buildings and urban buildings, which has been accompanied by the abandonment of waste on public land. The project supports the importance of culture and education, raising awareness and promoting respect for the environment and the protection of CH to combat degradation behaviour by increasing youth awareness and urban decorum and enhancing the cultural and environmental heritage of the UNESCO historic centre of Urbino site.
Aims and Objectives	 to enhance the citizens, residents and tourists' awareness and their respectful and attentive attitude towards historic and artistic heritage; to increase awareness of the exceptional beauty of the historic centre, calling for people's involvement in its conservation and enhancement; to promote good practices in favouring the safeguarding of the site for future generations of an invaluable asset.
Objectives	 educate people to understand and respect the CH of Urbino; educate to have a reciprocal coexistence and good behavioural practices; raise awareness of the artistic, monumental and landscape beauty of the area; develop ecological awareness. extend the knowledge of the CH of the city to all students; raise awareness of socio-environmental problems to fight the "vandalism" phenomena; reflect on the condition of the CH so that it can also be transmitted to future generations; to lay the foundations for the direct involvement of young people and students in the implementation of future projects. promote the participation of young people in the development of fundamental • values for the protection of the common good such as respect and civic sense; encourage students' civic training in the enjoyment and safeguarding of an invaluable asset, heritage of and for all; make young people protagonists of the process of valorisation and protection of the artistic and environmental heritage.

Recipients	 Italian and international students of the University of Urbino Carlo Bo; middle school students from 11 to 13 years old and high school students from 14 to 18 years; Italian and foreign visitors and tourists; residents and native inhabitants of the historic centre; shopkeepers, traders and operators of the city-centre.
Methodology	 Collection of information through questionnaires (direct/personal and online submission); Promotion and support of a set of informative and operative initiatives in collaboration with organisations, institutions and individuals belonging to the local community; Participation in the cultural, social and economic events of the city with the Urbino perBene project.
Activities	 creation of questionnaires to be addressed to the different categories of Urbino's city users; creation of a decalogue with suggestions (in Italian and English) useful for enjoying the city and respecting its places and values; creation of a map of the centre, indicating its public and tourist services (i.e., drinking fountains, squares and gardens, info points, toilets); training courses, laboratories and projects to be promoted in collaboration with students of institutes and high schools of Urbino and the University of Urbino Carlo Bo aimed to sensitise young people to artistic beauty and historical and cultural value; survey of the quality of the tourist service of the UNESCO site through questionnaires to be submitted to foreign tourists.
Tools	Human resources and materials made available by the schools, universities, volunteers, not-for-profit and civic organisation, local institutions.
Collaborations	 collaborations with ISIA (High School of design) for the realisation of the city map and the decalogue "Urbino perBene"; collaboration with not-for-profit organisation (i.e., Anteas and Arts Regresso Association) for the organisations of events; collaboration with the local university department and the local school for the organisation of seminars, conferences, laboratories. collaboration with volunteers (Volontari per Valbona) and Arts Regresso Association for the removal of graffiti and the restoration of areas and buildings damaged by vandalism.
Outputs	 seminars, congresses, conferences, laboratories and debates in university classrooms and schools; meetings and social events promoted in favour of the protection of the artistic and architectural heritage, organised in collaboration with local partners (i.e., Anteas); elaboration of informative/qualitative questionnaires in Italian and English city map and decalogue for city users; graffiti cleaning started on the municipal properties defaced and smeared by vandalism; these activities have been accompanied by information and communication campaigns aimed at the various categories of city users.

One key activity of this project referred to the re-use and functional recovery of a dismissed area of the historical city centre called "Data". This area is located in the ancient stables of the Duke Federico da Montefeltro, built by the famous architect Francesco Di Giorgio Martini in the fifteenth century as a part of the nascent Ducal Palace. Its recovery provides an example of a historical and military place converted into a cultural and economic engine. A first attempts of recovery dates back to 1998 when of a prestigious architect Giancarlo De Carlo renovated the external walls and transformed the internal area into a three-storey building. However, after this initial recovery the space was never used or opened to the public. Years later, within the Urbino per Bene project, the Public Administration (PA) decided to recover this area and transform it into a multifunctional center equipped with a library, exhibition spaces and a multimedia study center (see table 2). To reach this goal the local PA played a key role in initiating collaborative actions, aimed to fostering dialogue and facilitate the composition of single "voices" and views on possible or alternative destinations of the space.

Since the Data space is inside the historical center of the city recognized as UNESCO site, its recovery was also included in the UNESCO site management plan. Consequently, it was identified as an urban regeneration project for the development of a UNESCO cultural heritage site, received attention and media coverage at the regional level and implied the involvement of different stakeholders.

The case study was analysed collecting information from different sources: semi-structured interviews, participating observation and secondary sources (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014). Semi-structured interviews occurred with key representatives of the main institutions involved in the process, including: the prior Councilor of the Municipality of Urbino appointed for the city planning and, currently, for Tourism; a consultant for public communication of the city Council; three representatives of the local art schools involved in the reuse of the Data space (i.e., ISIA - the Higher Education in graphic design and visual communication; the Academy of fine arts; the Artistic high school of Urbino); the local representative of the Trade association of crafts and small businesses. The outcomes of the interviews were discussed among researchers to identify the main features of the observed phenomenon. In this vein, we found the use of excerpts highly worthwhile, as they draw attention to the interviewees' perceptions. Finally, information was extracted from the analysis of public documents such as the municipality website, public speeches and the city strategic plan of 2016.

Table 2 – Plan of possible uses of the DATA space

LAB	Didactic workshops to share experiences and skills: crafts and co-working courses. The Mediateca and the Medialibrary offer a large heritage of books, music, cinema.
TÓ	Here you bring items, clothes and furniture to exchange. It is a place for seminars, conferences and musical events.
TATA	Place where the boys bring their plants, which are entrusted and cared for by real green thumbs.
BLABLA	Tandem space in which to learn a foreign language by conversing with a native speaker partner. In addition, the bistro serves as a meeting place.
"Bring a Book" Library	The goal is to create a library through the contribution of the bearer of a book. The DATA must host a space dedicated to reading.
LÍ-LÁ	Renters and owners can post their offers.
Laboratories	Participatory Urban Planning Lab, Social Lab, Theater Lab, Cinema Lab and Innovation Lab. Ease of use of spaces by associations for organizing initiatives and events.
GNAM	A free space to bring, taste, share and buy the typical dish of the local are.

4. Findings: the role of the municipality as orchestrator

The strategic plan of the city drafted in 2016 represented a first attempt to directly involve multiple actors and implement the HUL approach (UNESCO, 2011) to the urban regeneration project of the city centre, thus changing the top-down approach that was prevailing in the previous years when the PA acted more as a "patron of the heritage". In this vein, the project "Urbino per bene" was conceived as a tool useful to trigger and improve dialogue with citizens and city users and collect new and fresh insights (i.e., by addressing attention to the perceptions and perspectives of youth, tourists, city users and inhabitants of the centre). Hence, the results obtained from the questionnaire administered in early 2018 to students, tourists and permanent inhabitants (Del Baldo and Demartini, 2021) allowed the municipality to understand the coexistence of different and sometime conflicting viewpoints, needs and perceptions among city users, and collect suggestions to trigger innovative ideas to make the

historical centre more attracting, and to engage citizens (included youth) in the renewal and regeneration of the cultural and socio-economic fabric (Blessi *et al.*, 2016).

From the municipality perspective the DATA project represents an experimentation to learn how to better involve citizens in the protection and revitalization of the site. As the former city planning councilor states: "DATA was born as a common place to bring the energies of the territory and represented a space for hosting and sharing, and a useful laboratory to trigger ideas, relationships and contaminations among different actors: youths, schools and university students, entrepreneurs, artists, and other city users. The experience made it possible to verify the concrete feasibility of the cultural, economic, tourist revitalization project, leveraging local excellence" (the former city planning councilor).

Hence, drawing from the PA point of view, it could be considered as a first initiative of a regeneration path embedded in the strategic plan of the city and in the UNESCO management plan.

"Private actors (i.e., entrepreneurs, associations, and citizens) begin to move. All this in line with the UNESCO management plan initially approved in 2013 which contemplates public-private synergies. The current urban regeneration project requires a great amount of financial resources; to complete it, new funding is needed" (the former city planning councilor).

The local PA played a key role acting as a stimulator in starting collaborative actions and supporting the process of involvement and awareness of the various communities and city users and initiated a participatory governance approach. The former city planning councilor tried to play as "an orchestrator" – gathering together diverse actors, ranging from public to private, industrial associations, local communities, as well as citizens. However, mediation among different points of view was not easy because different visions emerged about how CH should drive the socio-cultural and economic regeneration of the place.

People and institutions more attentive to the arts and the diffusion of an artistic culture suggest that:

"The historic center of Urbino must rediscover its own identity and express a new renaissance, based on the principles of Humanism" (representative of local art schools and expert of CH). Accordingly, the city renewal should focus on "public investments devoted to the creation of libraries, museums and activities that can employ young artists, so that they will not leave the city after the art school... investments should also focus on aesthetic education of small traders, entrepreneurs and inhabitants that offer or ask for services that are in sharp contrast with the artistic beauty of the city".

Others, like a representative of the entrepreneur category complains that:

"the culture and practices of Urbino have remained unchanged over the years, while

there are grand societal challenges to face"; "Urbino is a place of dreams, it does not innovate, politics does not think about the future" (a representative of local entrepreneurs).

while students ask for more engaged participation and resource mobilization:

"One must not to exclusively meet the demands of current residents, because it could lead to the progressive and harmful ageing of a city which, although based on a very important historical legacy, nevertheless, has an extreme need for the vitality of young people and their energy in developing new opportunities and prospects for the future" (a student, temporary city dweller).

Such visions mirror and underpin different interests and expectations among stakeholders on the quality of life in a historic center like Urbino and the perspective of urban revitalization expressed by different communities with "different souls".

Therefore, we think that the role of PA was rather that of a stimulator and a participatory governance approach is still in its infancy stage (Farinosi *et al.*, 2018; Biondi *et al.* 2020).

5. Discussion

5.1. A revised framework on Civic Wealth Creation

Our findings revealed that CH is considered by many actors of the Urbino project as the driver for creating Civic Wealth but we did not find the framework of Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) fully able to explain the role of the actors involved in the project, their relationships and the outcomes obtained.

We posit that additional key elements have to be considered to fully understand the processes in place and the reasons for different or partial outcomes obtained.

One important remark is to add other key stakeholder categories to analyze separately from the proposed three categories. When dealing with CH, tourists are important stakeholders that perceive themselves as different from citizens or community members and vice versa. Tourists do not enjoy a common bond with community members because they do not develop shared experiences over time with the other actors (Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019). However, tourists, similarly to citizens, temporarily (for the length of their stay) benefit from the actions put in place to improve the well-being of a community (e.g., social and cultural events designed to engage with the public, and enjoy the well-being and beauty of a place). Tourists are therefore a stakeholder category that might be engaged in

processes of wealth creation but paying attention to their different values and needs.

In addition, institutional CH preservation bodies have to be analysed separately from the category of supporters. Bodies in charge of the preservation of cultural heritage like the National Commission for UNESCO and the Superintendence of Monuments and Fine Arts theoretically belong to the category of regimes of supporters as they might bring resources and the authority to act in a civic setting. However, their participation is (almost) mandatory and their logics of action is extremely polarised toward the commitment to maintain the current status of CH under their supervision. Their support is strongly associated with rules and limitations to actions.

A lack in specifically addressing the stakeholder category of tourists has not allowed the PA to define the right mechanisms for their engagement. A lack of engagement of tourists leads to a very limited amount of economic wealth created by tourism flows. Tourists are not engaged; they opt for a very short stay in the historical center and are not willing to spend money for local goods and services. Therefore, no cash flows from visitor spending become available for locals to improve their capabilities and well-being.

Similarly, CH preservation bodies are not engaged but necessarily addressed (with requests for permission to operate or use a site) and therefore they often impose burdens on innovative and creative ideas on using CH to launch projects.

A correct identification of stakeholders and appropriate tactics of engagement are necessary to allow all these subjects to dialogue and achieve benefits for the community. CWC requires that the logics underlying the key stakeholders coalesce to advance initiatives that improve the well-being of the community, while in the case study analyzed several difficulties in amalgamating different priorities emerge.

5.2. Future research

The case study analyzed revealed that culture and artistic knowledge and capabilities that belong to the tradition of a city rich in heritage can be the lever of innovation and boost civic wealth.

Empirical data allows us to identify the main challenges that a city manager has to face: attract talent, create jobs and trigger the spur of new ventures; establish spaces for artists and cultural activities; preserve and promote local know-how; develop a strategy to attract SMEs belonging to the cultural and creative sector. Moreover, it shows the relevance of involvement of multiple stakeholders in societal change initiatives and the

importance of managing assets through public-private cooperation. However, it also identifies the missing elements that hindered the city to continue exploiting its potential related to cultural heritage such as the absence of a financing ecosystem available for the creative and cultural sector and the scarcity of resources.

In this paper we deem a promising solution for historic towns resilience and development is to activate processes of CWC, i.e., the creation of social, economic, and communal endowments that benefit local communities and allow these communities to be self-sufficient, therefore generating positive societal change and sustainable impact.

In the attempt to question if and how CH can be a trigger for Civic Wealth Creation in small historical town, our paper contributes to contextualize the CWC framework proposed by Lumpking and Bacq (2019) by identifying the role of the PA as orchestrator or at least stimulator of a participatory approach to the governance of cultural heritage as a driver for creating civic wealth.

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