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Selena Aureli, Mara Del Baldo,  
Paola Demartini, Martin Piber

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# CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A TRIGGER FOR CIVIC WEALTH CREATION AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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**7** CORPORATE GOVERNANCE  
E SCENARI DI SETTORE DELLE IMPRESE



Roma TriE-Press  
2023





Università degli Studi Roma Tre  
Dipartimento di Economia Aziendale



Selena Aureli, Mara Del Baldo,  
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## *Foreword*

# Cultural Heritage as a Trigger for Civic Wealth Creation and Sustainable Urban Development: Changes and opportunities for CH

In the last years several changes occurred in our Western societies, one of these, without any doubt the most promising, is the increased awareness about the Cultural Heritage value, as a patrimony for each society and for each member of it. The Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, signed in Faro (Portugal) on 2005, marked a significant milestone for those who are working for the preservation and management of Cultural Heritage. New approaches were affirmed, concepts clarified, and a common path was set with an innovative perspective.

Recently, in the Framework of the Next Generation EU, the Ministry of University and Research of Italy, according to the Italia Domani Project (PNNR) made an open call to fund an exceptional partnership within research centers, education institutions, private companies and foundations, named CHANGES.

Started in December 2022, CHANGES is the acronym for Cultural Heritage Active Innovation for Next Generation Sustainable Society, an impressive and ambitious plan of research and education activities that includes the Hub in DTC Lazio and Sapienza University and is articulated in 9 Spokes, each one of them with a special focus.

The project aims to make an important step forward in the Cultural Heritage field, in its digitization, transformation in a more sustainable and open system through a multi-technological and transdisciplinary Ecosystem for training, research, and technology transfer related to Humanistic Culture and Cultural Heritage.

Within this framework, it is a particular pleasure for me, as Scientific

Coordinator for Roma Tre University in the CHANGES Project, to welcome and present this volume, edited by Selena Aureli (University of Bologna), Mara Del Baldo (University of Urbino), Paola Demartini (Roma Tre University) Martin Piber (Universität Innsbruck). This book is the result of international research activities reported in the track Cultural Heritage as a Trigger for Civic Wealth Creation and Sustainable Urban Development of the Conference IAS-EUROMENA, held in Rome, in June 2022.

This book represents indeed one of the first publications related to the Changes Project and we are very grateful to all colleagues who collaborated in its realisation and publication. A special thank goes to Paola Demartini that proposed its publication and all the editors. I really express my gratitude to all the colleagues of Spoke 8 led in Roma Tre by Michela Addis, and Sapienza University Coordinators Carlo Bianchini and Paolo Carafa, who are doing a great work.

This book represents a very important first step in a common path that promises to give real changes and innovative approaches in the field of Cultural Heritage, its preservation, its management, the governance systems for Civic Wealth Creation, the model of accessibility to CH, the dialogue within different levels of administrations and Municipality, the Creation of Civic Wealth, and also community engagement and self-management, up to new accountability for cultural organisations.

The book is published by Roma Tre E-press, so a special thank to the Director Vincenzo Zeno Zencovich and the staff of Roma Tre e-press, and to our University that is always supporting our research work.

Manfredi Merluzzi  
Changes Scientific Coordinator for Roma Tre University



*Presentation of the Series and Volume 7*

*Corporate Governance and Business Sector Scenarios. Emerging Issues*

Corporate Governance is a theme of interdisciplinary research. It is a contemporary issue but is continuously evolving.

The objective of the Corporate Governance Series launched by the Department of Business Studies, Roma Tre University, is to offer students, professionals and scholars the opportunity to reflect on and discuss emerging issues. In particular, we focus on the Italian context also read in comparative terms with respect to other countries.

The main strands of research of this Book Series are the following:

- Governance and the regulatory context;
- Governance and performance;
- Governance and control systems;
- The governance of ecosystems;
- The governance of cultural and creative companies and initiatives for the enhancement of the Italian Cultural Heritage.

The Series will welcome scientific contributions, essays or conference proceedings, in which at least one author belongs to the Department of Business Studies. Contributions of both a theoretical and empirical nature, written in both Italian and English, may be submitted. Works published in the Series are subject to ‘double-blind’ peer review, based on criteria of quality, efficiency and timeliness.

The above-mentioned research strands are also pursued by the Governance Lab (Department of Business Studies, Roma Tre University). This Lab includes a ‘Governance and Innovation in Cultural Heritage’ section, which is part of the research network of the centre of excellence DTC Lazio (Distretto Tecnologico Beni e Attività Culturali - Cultural Heritage Technological District).

This publication is synergic with manifold projects carried out by scholars of the Department of Business Studies involved in research on the governance and management of Cultural Heritage.

First of all, we would like to mention the H2020 project ‘SoPHIA’ - Social Platform for Holistic Heritage Impact Assessment, whose team of researchers contributed a chapter to this book. Then, the same researchers

are part of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) network, a creative and interdisciplinary initiative that connects the European Green Deal to our living spaces and experiences. Finally, I am currently involved, as principal investigator, in the Spoke 8 of the project 'CHANGES'-Cultural Heritage Active Innovation for Next-Gen Sustainable Society, an enlarged partnership funded by NextGenerationEU funds. Hence this book may provide some insights on sustainability and resilience of CH by scholars in business administration useful for the advancing of a multidisciplinary research project such as CHANGES.

Paola Demartini  
Department of Business studies  
Roma Tre University



## *Preface*

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

This book entails the research projects presented in the track *Cultural Heritage as a Trigger for Civic Wealth Creation and Sustainable Urban Development* of the Conference IAS-EUROMENA, held in Rome, June 2022. The selected papers undergone a double review process. As it follows, they were first revised in light of the reviews received by anonymous peer reviewers and then updated on the basis of the suggestions received during the Conference IAS-EUROMENA 2022.

The IAS-EUROMENA 2022 Conference took place in Rome, on June 27-July 1. The main theme of the Conference is: *Next Generation Governance and Young Global Public Administration: Mobilizing People, Skills, Energies for a Sustainable New Normal*.

The IAS-EUROMENA Conference is a scientific event targeting public administration scholars and professionals from all over the world. The International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) is an international non-profit organization with scientific purposes. IIAS is a federation of member states, national sections and academic research centres jointly elaborating public administration solutions to the policy challenges of the day. The EUROMENA Dialogue is a scientific event in the field of public administration, especially targeting the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean sea, and the Middle East; addressed to PhD Students, scholars and professionals

The joint conference IAS-EUROMENA 2022 was co-organized by: The International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS); The University of Rome Tor Vergata; Luiss University - Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli (LUISS); Scuola Nazionale dell'Amministrazione (SNA); The Middle-East and North Africa Public

Administration Research network (MENAPAR); Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE); The European Group for Public Administration (EGPA).

The General Rapporteur of the IIAS-EUROMENA 2022 Conference is Prof. Dr. Geert Bouckaert, KU Leuven (Belgium). The Chairpersons of the IIAS-EUROMENA 2022 Conference are: Prof. Dr. Marco Meneguzzo, University of Rome Tor Vergata (Italy); Prof. Dr. Denita Cepiku, University of Rome Tor Vergata (Italy); Prof. Dr. Aristide Police, LUISS (Italy); Prof. Dr. Giovanni Orsina, LUISS (Italy); Prof. Dr. Paola Severino, SNA (Italy); Prof. Dr. João Salis Gomes, ISCTE - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (Portugal); Prof. Dr. Geert Bouckaert, KU Leuven (Belgium); Dr. Sofiane Sahraoui, IIAS (Belgium).

The scientific committee of the IIAS-EUROMENA 2022 Conference is composed of: Prof. Jean-Patrick Villeneuve, USI (Switzerland); Prof. Paolo Biancone, University of Turin (Italy); Dr. Najat Zarrouk, ALGA (Morocco); Prof. Gustavo Barresi, University of Messina (Italy); Prof. Paola Demartini, University of Roma Tre (Italy); Prof. Lucia Giovanelli, University of Sassari (Italy); Prof. Anna Simonati, University of Trento (Italy); Prof. Jean-Michel Eyméri-Douzans, Sciences Po Toulouse (France); Prof. Xavier Ballart, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain); Prof. Fabienne Maron, IIAS (Belgium); Dr. Steve Troupin, IIAS (Belgium); Mr. Ali Debbi, ENA (Algeria); Prof. Michele Pizzo, University of Campania L. Vanvitelli (Italy); Prof. Gabriella Racca, University of Turin (Italy); Prof. Loredana Giani, European University of Rome (Italy); Prof. Francesco Manganaro, Mediterranea University of Reggio Calabria (Italy); Prof. Bernardo Giorgio Mattarella, LUISS (Italy); Prof. Massimo Papa, University of Rome Tor Vergata (Italy); Prof. Alessandro Mechelli, University of Rome Tor Vergata (Italy).

The IIAS-EUROMENA Conference Scientific Committee selected, among the others, the following call for paper: *Cultural Heritage as a Trigger for Civic Wealth Creation and Sustainable Urban Development* organized by Prof. Selena Aureli, University of Bologna, Prof. Mara Del Baldo, University of Urbino, Prof. Paola Demartini, Roma Tre University and Prof. Martin Piber, University of Innsbruck. Based on the belief that cultural heritage assets play a substantial role to sustain innovation and create social, cultural and economic wealth, the call posed 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?*

Several researchers answered to the call and their papers were reviewed and accepted for presentation at the Conference. Two presentation sessions were scheduled to allow all researchers and scholars to present and discuss their research projects at the Conference.

Finally, this book entails the papers presented in the track *Cultural Heritage as a Trigger for Civic Wealth Creation and Sustainable Urban Development*, revised and updated in light of the suggestions received during the Conference IIAS-Euromena 2022.

Editors would like to thank the authors, reviewers and discussants for contributing to the debate on the proposed topic. A special thanks goes to Prof. Marco Meneguzzo, scholar and expert in cultural heritage management for pushing them to propose this track.

Selena Aureli  
University of Bologna

Mara Del Baldo  
University of Urbino

Paola Demartini  
Roma Tre University

Martin Piber  
Universität Innsbruck



### *List of researchers*

**Selena Aureli** is Associate Professor of Business Administration and Accounting Studies at Bologna University, where she teaches Financial Reporting, Business Planning and Management Accounting. She serves as Program Director of the international bachelor degree in Financial and Business Management at Rimini Campus, Bologna. During her career, Selena Aureli has been visiting professor in several European universities, participated to numerous conferences and given speeches in Italy and abroad. Her major research interests are in the field of sustainability, management accounting, performance measurement, small and medium sized businesses and entrepreneurship. Her latest work on sustainability and cultural heritage entitled Stakeholders' consciousness of cultural heritage and the reconciliation of different needs for sustainable development, has been published in the Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development. She also serves as member of several international research organizations, reviewer for several international journals and is editorial board member of *Piccola Impresa/Small Business*, *Int. J. of Digital Culture and Electronic Tourism* and *Management Control*.

**Elena Borin** is currently Associate Professor at Link Campus University (Rome, Italy). Before this position, she was Director of the M.Sc. in Arts and Cultural Management and Coordinator of the Research Team in Arts and Cultural Management of Burgundy School of Business (Dijon, France). She holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Ferrara (Ferrara, Italy) and was awarded the title of *Doctor Europaeus* (European Doctor). She has been a member of the scientific committees of several academic programs, scientific journals, congresses, and international committees among which she is Board Member of ENCATC - European Network on Cultural Management and Policy (based in Brussels, Belgium), where she serves as the delegate for research activities. Her main research interests are cultural governance, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and cultural ecosystems. She is the author of several international publications regarding cultural management and governance and in 2016 she won the ENCATC Research Award for Cultural Policy and Management.

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**Mauro Baioni**, is Researcher at Roma Tre University, Department of Architecture. Urban planner, PhD in Urban Policies. Consultant of public administrations and research institutes, manager of planning offices and designer of urban and territorial plans at the metropolitan and provincial municipal and implementation scale. From 2013 to 2015, staff member of the Councillor for Urban Transformation of Rome Capital. Curator and author of books and essays on urban planning.

**Luca Battisti** holds a PhD in Agricultural Sciences, Forestry and Food, with a thesis based on the ecosystem services provided by the landscape and urban horticulture. During his academic career, he did a study period at the Humboldt University and the Technical University of Berlin. In 2020, he won a research grant in collaboration with the UNESCO. He is also a member of Siep - IALE - Italian Society of Landscape Ecology and International Association of Landscape Ecology, of the Italian Society of Silviculture and Forest Ecology (SISEF), of Legambiente (Turin) and of the UNESCO Centre in Turin.

**Alessandro Bollo**, professional and expert in Cultural Heritage management.

**Chiara Certomà** is Assistant Professor in political-economic geography at the Department of Economic, Social, Mathematical and Statistical Sciences (ESOMAS), University of Turin. She is fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Science, Technologies and Society (IAS-STs) at TU Graz; and she is also visiting professor with the Institute of Management of the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, Pisa (Italy); and as a research fellow with the Centre for Sustainable Development – CDO at Ghent University. Her research interests are focused on innovative forms of urban governance&planning in the context of pressing environmental challenges and the digital revolution.

**Laura Corazza** is Assistant Professor at the Department of Management, University of Turin. She is also the Editor of the University's sustainability report and Editor-in-Chief of Journal of Public Affairs. She has visited Laurea University of Applied Science (Finland), The Open University (UK) and University of Agder (Norway). Her research interests include stakeholder engagement, sustainability accounting and accountability in private, public, and social enterprises. She has lead an European project oriented to the adoption of New European Bauhaus concept.



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**Annalisa Cicerchia**, is an economist of culture, with extensive field research experience. She has been working on the impact of policies and interventions on and for culture since the early 1980s. Since 1990, she has worked on strategic planning and evaluation for the cultural sector, focusing on the evidence needed to underpin decisions and to accompany their implementation. She is a senior researcher at the Italian National Institute of Statistics, a member of the Editorial Board of the journal *Economia della Cultura*, of the EUROSTAT's Expert Group on Culture Statistics, and vice-president of the Cultural Welfare Center. Since 1999 she has been teaching at the University of Rome Tor Vergata; she teaches and is part of research groups at the University of Roma Tre, the University of Bolzano, and at the Italian National School of Administration. Her main topics are participation and cultural practice, economics and management of cultural organisations, the contribution of culture to sustainable development, and the relationship between well-being, health, and cultural and artistic practice.

**Dario Cottafava** is a Research Fellow at the Department of Management of the University of Turin where he is currently investigating the socio-economic impacts of megaprojects and sustainable infrastructures. He holds a Ph.D. in "Innovation for the Circular Economy, a master's degree in "Material for energy and environment", and an Italian-french dual master's degree in "Physics of Complex Systems" between Paris XI and the Polytechnic of Turin. His research interests span from Circular Economy and environmental assessment to Education for Sustainable Development and behavioral change studies. His research studies have been published in various international peer-reviewed journals such as *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal*, *Sustainable, Production and Consumption*, and *Resources Conservation and Recycling*.

**Federico Cuomo** holds a PhD in Innovation for the Circular Economy. He is currently a post-doc researcher at the Department of Culture, Politics and Society of the University of Turin.

**Mara Del Baldo** is Associate Professor of Business Administration and Accounting Studies at the University of Urbino where she teaches Financial Accounting and Economics of Sustainability and Accountability. Mara has been a visiting professor in several European Universities, received invitations to international conferences and is a member of different international and Italian scientific networks. She is board member and serves as a reviewer of several international journals. Her main research interests include, among others,

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entrepreneurship and small businesses management; Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainability; integrated reporting and accounting and gender. She published in several Italian and international journals as well as in books of the Springer Series on CSR, Ethics and Governance. Her latest work on sustainability and cultural heritage entitled Stakeholders' consciousness of cultural heritage and the reconciliation of different needs for sustainable development, has been published in the Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development.

**Paola Demartini** is Full Professor of Economia Aziendale at Roma Tre University, Department of Business Studies. She is the Head of the Corporate Governance Lab, which includes a special section on the Governance of Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Culture. She has been member of the leading research team engaged in a H2020 project titled SOPHIA - Social Platform for Holistic Heritage Impact Assessment. Currently, principal investigator of Changes-Cultural Heritage Active Innovation for Next-Gen Sustainable Society, an enlarged partnership funded by NextGenerationEU funds. She is board member and reviewer of several international journals. Her main research interests include: Entrepreneurship and small businesses management; Corporate Social Responsibility, Social and environmental accounting and accountability; Management for cultural heritage and civic wealth creation.

**Fabio Donato** is Full professor at the Department of Economics and Management of the University of Ferrara (Italy) and Italian Counsellor for Research and Innovation to European Union (Permanent Representation of Italy at the European Union, Brussels, Belgium)  
He has been director of the Master in Cultural Management MuSeC (University of Ferrara) and President of the Scientific-Technical Committee "Museums and Cultural Economics" of the Italian Ministry of Cultural Activities and Tourism. He is the author of more than 80 publications on business administration, with a specific focus on cultural management and governance, in national and international books and journals.

**Raffaele Fiorentino** is Full Professor in Strategic Management and Business Valuation at the Parthenope University of Naples, Italy, where he is the Director of the "Business and Economics" Department. He holds a PhD in Business Administration from the University of Naples Parthenope, Italy. His research interests are related to strategic management, business evaluation, mergers and acquisitions, green management, creative and cultural industries. He published in

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several international journals, including *Small Business Economics*, *Studies in Higher Education* and *Management Decision*.

**Jacopo Fresta** is Research Fellow at the Department of Management, University of Torino.

**Michael Habersam** is Professor at the Department of Organisation and Learning at Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck/Austria. He teaches courses in role making/taking by management accountants, arts and cultural management, pluralist perspectives and schools of thought in management and economics. His research interests focus on the evaluation of European Capitals of Culture, theories and practices of management and leadership in cultural organizations, the role arts and cultural management could play in transforming our economy in favor of civic wealth and wellbeing, aesthetics and the development of awareness in diverse organizational settings.

**Loris Landriani**, PhD, is Associate Professor of Business Management at the Department of Business and Economic Studies of the Parthenope University of Naples. He is currently a professor of Business Administration and Strategy. In the past he has taught, always at the Faculty of Economics: Accounting and Budget, Corporate Strategy, Company Evaluation, Governance and Control of local utilities, Financial communication. He has been a visiting student at the Department of Organization and Leadership of Columbia University, New York. His research interests mainly concern local utilities, viewed from the perspective of government, control and evaluation. In particular, he has dealt with transport, water services, kindergartens and cultural heritage. He is the author of numerous national and international researches and publications on these topics.

**Alessandra Lardo** is Associate Professor of Accounting and Business Management at the Department of Business and Economics, Parthenope University of Naples (Italy). From November 2019 to November 2022, she has been Senior Lecturer (240/2010 Law, art. 24, paragraph 3, letter b)). In 2017, she obtained her Ph.D. in Business Administration at the University of Cassino and Southern Lazio (Italy). Her research interests cover the following topics: strategic management, knowledge management, management control systems, intellectual capital disclosure and intellectual property rights management, corporate social responsibility, corporate governance. She is author of articles, books and chapters of books regarding intellectual capital disclosure, business models innovation in the digital

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era, knowledge transfer and performance measurement.

**Lucia Marchegiani** is Associate Professor of Business Organization and Human Resources Management at Roma Tre University, where she teaches Human Resources Management and Knowledge Management in the Digital Age. Her research interests cover topics such as Creative and Cultural Industries, Innovations and Organizations, Experimental Organizational Behavior, Knowledge Management and Social Media, Management and Sustainability, and Participatory Approaches in Culture. She has been visiting scholar at the Copenhagen Business School (DK), IESEG Business School (F), University of Copenhagen (DK), and ISC Business School at Paris (F). She has been Chair of the “International Conference on Sustainable Cultural Heritage Management”, and Scientific Coordinator of the NetMUSE international research project. Currently she is member of the leading research team engaged in a H2020 project titled SOPHIA - Social Platform for Holistic Heritage Impact Assessment.

**Stefano Marciano** is a PhD Candidate in Management and Accounting at the Department of Business and Economics of the Parthenope University of Naples, Italy. His research interests are related to strategic management, business evaluation and performance measurement.

**Michela Marchiori** is Full Professor of Business Organization and Change Management at the Department of Business Studies in Roma Tre University. Since 2016 she has been member of the project “Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Culture: Transferring knowledge, Managing Outcomes, and Enabling Sustainability” founded in collaboration between Corporate Governance Lab (Roma Tre University) and Institut für Organisation und Lernen (Innsbruck University). She is the current Director of the post-graduate, lifelong learning “Master in Management, Promotion, Technological Innovations in Cultural Heritage” and Director of the 2-year-long post-graduate, lifelong learning “Master in Economics and Management of Culture Heritage” both founded by the Department of Business Studies. Currently she is leader of a research team engaged in a H2020 project titled SOPHIA - Social Platform For Holistic Heritage Impact Assessment.

**Marucci, Flavia** is Research fellow at Roma Tre University.

**Martin Piber** is Professor at the Department of Organisation and Learning at

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Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck/Austria. He is and has been teaching in several bachelor, master-, PhD-, and further education programs in Austria, Germany, Italy, South Africa, Spain, and Sweden. His research and his publications focus on theories and practices of the management of cultural organizations, management control and performance measurement, the relevance of art and culture for society, aesthetics, and business ethics. Among others he was visiting professor at the University of Cape Town, the University of Stockholm and the University of Pavia. He is scientific director of the executive MBA program of the University of Innsbruck at the Center of Science and Training in Bregenz/Austria. Currently he is member of a project team to assess the impact of European Capitals of Culture and member of the steering group for Bodø 2024.

**Daniel Torchia** is a Research Fellow and Lecturer at the Department of Management, University of Turin. His main research interests are alternative forms of organisations and Critical Management Studies. Specifically, he looks at organisational models that promote more humane forms of management by going beyond mere means-end rationality. Daniel is an organizational ethnographer and has done research in football organisations, which has been published in journals like *Culture and Organization* and *Managing Sport and Leisure*.



## CONTRIBUTIONS





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

*Selena Aureli, Mara Del Baldo, Paola Demartini, Martin Piber*

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 m<sup>2</sup>) 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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# Governance Systems for Civic Wealth Creation through a New Accessibility to Cultural Heritage: the Case of “La Paranza”

*Raffaele Fiorentino, Loris Landriani, Alessandra Lardo, Stefano Marciano*

**Purpose** – The aim of this research paper is to analyse the role of governance models for the creation of civic wealth through recovered cultural heritage (CH).

**Design/methodology/approach** – We perform field-based research using the case study method. The case study method is particularly suitable to address our research objective because it allows for conducting an in-depth and exploratory analysis of Governance systems phenomena in relation to CH. We selected the case of the social cooperative “La Paranza”, founded in the Rione Sanità, a neighborhood of Naples, in 2006. We use semi-structured interviews, corporate reports and secondary sources

**Findings** – The analysis carried out shows how the initiative of a group of young people, rooted in an area that is not favourable for historical and social reasons, under the guidance of a local parish priest and with the initial help of a team of professionals and a funding entity, succeeded in enhancing an entire neighbourhood by focusing on the recovery of the Catacombs of St. Gennaro, as a catalyst for the recovery of the people living in the social space in which they insist.

**Originality/value** – The originality of our study consists in demonstrating that cultural assets, as a ‘new’ category of common goods, no longer become the goal of governance interventions in this sector, but rather a tool for the regeneration of places and, above all, of people, opening to a real civic wealth.

**Keywords** – Cultural heritage management; governance systems, civic wealth creation, urban regeneration.

## 1. *Introduction*

Inclusion and accessibility of cultural heritage (CH) are the cornerstones for cities sustainable development and for stimulating processes of civic wealth creation, in order to better pursue the objectives expressed by the 2030 Agenda and the New European Bauhaus: a better coexistence of citizens in “beautiful”, sustainable, accessible and inclusive places. The tourism paradigm, which has traditionally oriented the management of the CH assets, already severely stressed by the pandemic emergency, no longer appears to be the goal to which the system’s efforts should be directed; actually, there are other emerging values to focus on: such as, for example, the sustainability, the local stakeholders’ engagement, urban regeneration, civic wealth.

In this scenario, despite the increasing academic and managerial debate, there is the need for more studies on the drivers of successful CH management for sustainable urban development processes. Therefore, the aim of this research is to analyse the role of governance models for the creation of civic wealth through recovered CH. Although corporate governance is one of the main topics in business research, there are few studies focused on governance, institutional relations and management practices for the CH field. Currently, there is the need for in-depth studies on the governance systems, and the related management implications, to find models and best practices able to better connect the CH of a specific territory with its stakeholders.

In order to achieve the research aim, we perform field-based research using the case study method. The case study method is particularly suitable to address our research objective because it allows for conducting an in-depth and exploratory analysis of Governance systems phenomena in relation to CH. We selected an illustrative case, the case of the social cooperative “La Paranza”, founded in the Rione Sanità, a neighborhood of Naples, in 2006. We use semi-structured interviews, corporate reports and secondary sources. The results are based on a qualitative analysis of all the collected data.

Our findings highlight how the specific governance system, the mission and the related management practices allowed: on the one hand, the creation of cultural value through the recovery of several degraded CH assets, toward new forms of inclusive accessibility and expanded fruition (also for people with disabilities); on the other hand, the creation of economic and social value linked with the increase in employment of young people (at risk of poverty and delinquency), the active engagement of local citizens and other associations operating in the neighborhood, and the

private or public sponsors, in order to sustain the civil needs, develop new start-ups and trigger an important change in the society. Numerous theoretical, managerial and policy implications can be derived.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. First, section 2 outlines the relevant literature on CH management, urban regeneration (UR) initiatives and civic wealth creation. Section 3 explains the methodology and the analysed frameworks. Section 4 presents the case study, and Section 5 contains our discussion and implications of the study. Section 6 describes primary conclusions.

## 2. *Literature review*

CH management and UR have received increasing attention in the last few years, in line with ongoing growth of research on sustainability and sustainable development issues. The aim of our research is to analyze the role of governance systems in creating civic wealth through the regeneration and the reuse of CH. Therefore, in this section, we provide a review of the main literature about the two pillars of our research study: CH governance and UR; Civic wealth creation.

### 2.1. *Cultural Heritage governance and Urban regeneration*

CH is defined as the legacy of *artefacts, monuments, a group of buildings and sites, museums that have a diversity of values including symbolic, historic, artistic, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological, scientific and social significance* (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Framework for Cultural Statistics, 2009, p. 25). Cultural assets can be seen as a special kind of common goods, which belong to a group or society that inherits them from past generations, maintains them in the present, and serves them for the benefit of future generations. Cultural assets and common goods have some similarities, both belong to a community that has the right and duty to exploit the cultural value of the asset, regardless of who the legal ownership belongs (Dameri; Moggi, 2021) and both are vulnerable to the tragedy of the commons (Ostrom, 1990). Regarding the tragedy of the commons, concerning the possibility of destruction of goods due from users' misbehavior, cultural assets are suffering a harder kind of tragedy, ranging from the overutilization of crowded cultural sites to the underutilization of small museums, monuments and cultural sites. With the aim of avoiding tragedy, governance models are needed and they must be able to foster economic development through tourism flows as well as preserve and enhance the CH (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Shipley and Kovacs, 2008;

Aureli and Del Baldo, 2022).

CH has finally been considered as engine of socio-economic development and regeneration and, in this perspective, culture-driven UR is considered to be the engine of a new urban sustainable development (Miles and Paddison, 2005). UR is an urban development strategy that enables effective improvement of the urban physical environment, promotes economic growth, and protects CH through projects that involve land reutilization, reconstruction of old residential buildings, redevelopment of brownfield sites, renovation of commercial areas, and other social and cultural improvements (Xie *et al.*, 2021).

Therefore, despite some scholars focus their attention more specifically on CH, while other scholars on UR, the research on governance models for successful management of CH are strongly related to studies regarding UR projects. Indeed, from our knowledge, in the search of efficient and effective governance models some features and best practices have emerged in common. First, the main common features identified are (i) the need to actively involve the local community (Jung *et al.*, 2015; Dubb 2016; Lumpkin and Bacq, 2018, 2019; Dameri, Moggi, 2021; Li *et al.*, 2020), (ii) a wide variety of stakeholders (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Jung *et al.*, 2015; Aureli, Del Baldo, 2022) in CH and UR projects and (iii) the use of top-down and bottom-up approaches for governance models (Xie *et al.*, 2021).

Community participation (i) is a process that is vital to enhance long-term sustainable heritage management (Landorf, 2009). Furthermore, with the approval of the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape, community participation is recognized as a fundamental tool in heritage management and UR practices (Taylor, 2016; UNESCO, 2011; Veldpaus *et al.*, 2013).

For analyzing and measuring the impact and the grade of engagement of the local community, Li *et al.* (2020) defined a framework which considers four variables: the engaged communities, the participatory methods, the degrees of participation and the steps within CH and UR management. The variable of engaged communities regards several stakeholders involved in the cultural initiative, each with their own characteristics. The variable of participatory methods has the aim to explain how the local communities effectively participate in the management and governance process. Regarding the degrees of participation, the purpose is to explain in which way the local community is involved in the decision-making process, whether it is considered only as an information provider or also as a management partner (Li *et al.*, 2020). The last variable considered is the steps within CH and UR management that, usually, is divided in three phases. The first phase concerns identifying the scenario

to understand contexts, the second phase regards programming to develop strategies and the last phase is related to the implementation of the strategies.

In addition to the active engagement of the local community, the second common feature analyzed in governance models is the collaboration of a wide range of stakeholders (ii) who work together with a shared vision and common goals. The cooperation occurs when several groups want to provide a feasible solution to a common problem, so stakeholders collaborate to obtain various benefits, possibly avoiding the cost of resolving adversarial intra-stakeholders conflicts in the long term (Jung *et al.*, 2015). The stakeholders, depending on the different contexts, could offer their support in various ways: economic support, provided through funding and donation; in-kind support, provided through volunteer actions; capability support provided spreading knowledge, helping people to realize their own entrepreneurial activities (Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019).

Another common topic of research emerged from the literature review deals with the process of implementation and organization of CH and UR projects. Many Scholars discuss the approach of the governance models (iii) that can range from top-down to bottom-up and from unitary to multiple view. According to Xie *et al.* (2021), there are three models: government governance, entrepreneurial governance, and civic governance. In government governance, the governments need to make all the relevant decisions from the planning phase to the action phase and try to take everything under control. In this kind of model, the enterprises, citizens and other stakeholders *barely have opportunities to make some decisions and they can only deliver projects according to the instructions of government* (Xie *et al.*, 2021, p. 12). This model is oriented toward a top-down approach, where enterprise and citizens are often considered only as information providers, not as management partners (Li *et al.*, 2020). Whether, on the one hand, a government-sponsored cultural initiative ensures almost all the development cost, the respect of the rule and citizens right, on the other hand, this leads to problems concerning the lack of both financial resources and time for other cultural initiatives. Since the government cannot manage all cultural initiatives simultaneously, both for time and financial resources, entrepreneurial governance emerges. Entrepreneurial governance means that there is a collaboration between the public and the private sector, where the partners are the government and the private enterprise. This is a hybrid between a top-down and bottom-up approach, where the public and private sector work together to achieve common goals. The benefits from entrepreneurial governance are the engagement of the private sector in the decision-making process which can help to handle the fiscal crisis, promote

the local economy, improve output at lower cost and share the risks (Xie *et al.*, 2021). Although entrepreneurial governance can bring benefits, it also has cons: this model of governance pays more attention to the economic outcome compared to the civic wealth creation and the local citizens are still excluded during the decision-making process. Whereas a model which includes the local citizens in the decision-making process is the civic governance model. In a narrow sense, civic governance means that citizens can be involved in each decision-making process and enjoy equal rights (Li *et al.*, 2020) and could create and handle a cultural initiative. This is a bottom-up approach that, on the one hand, brings some pros such as a civic political participation, local economy growth, sense of belonging and civic identity, from the other hand engaging citizens in decision-making processes would lead to delays, conflicts, and division.

Considering these governance models and on the light of the case study in literature analyzed (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Jung *et al.*, 2015; Lidegaard, 2018; L.; Dameri, Moggi, 2021; L. Biondi *et al.*, 2020; S. Aureli and M. Del Baldo, 2022) the most appropriate models are those with active participation of stakeholders and the local community, since their presence has proven to be a critical success factor.

## 2.2. *Civic Wealth Creation*

The concept of sustainability and sustainable development has been one of the most discussed topics in recent years. The discussion about this topic dates to the early 1970s, when it became clear that development could not only be associated with economic growth, but that attention should also be directed to environmental and social issues (Nocca, 2017). The most common definition of sustainability is provided in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the Brundtland Report. It defines sustainability as a process with the aim of achieving environmental, social and economic improvement both locally and globally, in order to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Report, 1987).

CH is strongly linked to the concept of sustainability and sustainable development because cultural assets (tangible and intangible), just like natural resources and the environment, belong to humanity and must be preserved for future generations. Despite the importance it acquires in recent years, the value and potentialities of CH have not yet been fully understood. Indeed, even in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in the 2030 Agenda, the CH and the CH management plays a marginal role (Nocca, 2017) due to the heated discussion on the relationship between

sustainability, sustainable development and CH, because, on the one hand there are those who argue that culture belongs to the past and we have only a conservative role, and on the other hand there are those who argue that it has the power to promote truly sustainable development (Demartini *et al.*, 2021). Sustainable development of CH can be a key factor in improving community quality of life through economic, social and environmental development and growth (Demartini *et al.*, 2021). The simultaneous improvement of these three elements leads to the civic wealth creation. Indeed, Lumpkin e Bacq (2019) believed that civic wealth creation is achieved when three different types of wealth, the economic, social, and communal/environmental converge simultaneously.

CH management can create civic wealth not only indirectly, leading to economic, social and environmental development of the place where the asset has been recovered, but also directly by making cultural assets accessible that were not accessible before. Accessibility can be offered in different forms, one of these concerns the recovery and accessibility of cultural assets that are completely or partially inaccessible due to decay and degradation which risks the safety of visitors. Another form concerns the accessibility of CH to people with disabilities. The Convention on the rights of people with disabilities (UN, 2006) stated that it is a right of people with disabilities to participate in cultural life and have the possibility to have free access to all cultural assets. Therefore, making CH accessible to people with disabilities is an important form of civic wealth creation. Instead, an alternative form of accessibility has been influenced by the advent of digital technologies, which have significantly accelerated experimentation with new opportunities for organizing CH activities (Jung *et al.*, 2018; Lazzarotti and Sartori, 2016).

Although corporate governance is one of the main topics in business studies, there are few research studies focused on governance, institutional relations, and management practices for the CH field. From the lack of a specific literature, we made research in comparable sectors of research, and the main results we found in research streams of CH, civic wealth creation and UR.

Our research answers the need of studying the drivers for successful CH accessibility and management through specific governance systems able to allow UR and civic wealth.

In an attempt to fill this gap, we formulate the following research questions:

RQ<sub>1</sub> - What is the role of CH governance models for civic wealth creation?

RQ<sub>2</sub> - How can a specific governance model represent a driver for successful CH accessibility and management?

### 3. *Research framework and methodology*

#### 3.1. *Research framework*

This section presents the Shipley and Kovacs (2008) and Xie *et al.* (2021) frameworks related specifically to CH and UR governance used to build our research design and to answer the research questions.

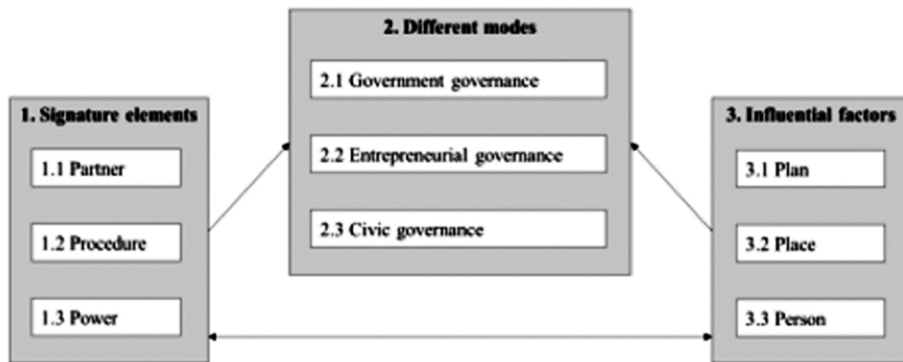
Shipley and Kovacs (2008), with the aim of defining principles of good governance which could be used in the management of CH, have compared the set of governance principles based on the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP, 1997) provided by the Institute on Governance in the 2003 with the content of UNESCO and International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) charters and conventions. The reference principles are legitimacy and voice, direction, performance, accountability and fairness.

Legitimacy and voice is a principle based on the existence of a supportive democratic and human right context, an appropriate collaboration in the decision-making process between all the categories of stakeholders and citizen participation at all levels. Direction is a principle based on strategic vision which includes human development and historical, cultural, and social complexities; moreover, it includes the existence of system-wide plans, quantified objectives for management, and established priorities for planning periods. Performance consists of cost effectiveness and efficiency in the achievement of objectives, responsiveness of institutions and coordination of stakeholders' efforts and the ability to learn and adjust management based on experience. Accountability refers to unequivocal assignment of responsibilities and authority and the capacity of public and institutional stakeholders, citizens, civil society and the media to access relevant information. Fairness is based on respect for the rights, uses and traditional knowledge of local people, management of conservation sites achieving a balance between costs, benefits, and equitable human resource management practices for staff. From this study emerged that these principles are robust and useful for heritage management and they form a strong basis for the development of governance principles intended for use with heritage sites and organizations dealing with CH conservation.

The second framework of Xie *et al.* (2021) identifies a governance model focused on UR able to help decision-makers to develop appropriate governance modes. The Authors identify three aspects that can be considered the general formula of urban regeneration governance (URG) (Fig. 1): (i) the signature elements, (ii) the categories of URG modes based on different arrangements of signature elements and (iii) the factors influencing the practice of URG.



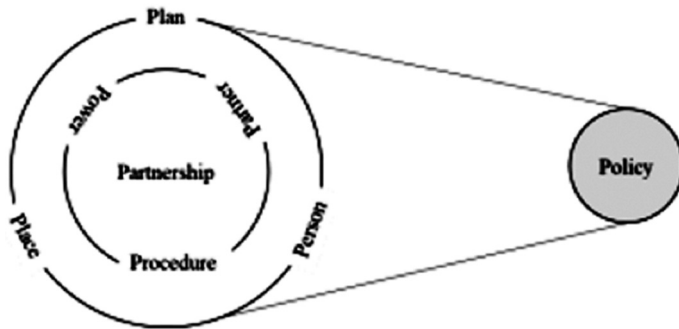
Fig. 1. – The general formula of URG



The distinctive elements (i) include the partners, the procedures and the power. The Partner can come from a public/private sector or from the society, such as central government, local government, private company, NGO's, university, and so on. With regards to the procedures, UR includes four of them: scoping, planning, financing and implementation. Concerning the power, the Authors define it as the capability *to influence the process of events, to change behaviors and attitudes, and get people to do something they would not otherwise do* (2021, 7). Generally, the distribution of the power among the URG partners is hard to balance because each partner has its own interests and goals to achieve. According to how partner, procedure and power are arranged, there are three categories of URG models (ii): government governance, entrepreneurial governance, and civic governance (3[SM1]). Moreover, the validity of URG models is influenced by some three influential factors (iii): plan, place and person. The plan concerns the activity of guiding and the definition of targets able to meet the actual demands of stakeholders in order to achieve high social value. About the place, it is needed not to ignore the influence of historical and geographical characteristics of a specific area, because each area is different and often a strategy or a plan used to an area is not valid for other areas. In the decision-making process it is important analyze the main features of the place and only after evaluating the best strategy to implement. The latest influential factor is person; the people can be key actors in the UR process because, with their capabilities and experience, can help in the decision-making process to adopt the solutions most in line with the needs of the local community.

Based on these aspects, the Authors devise the “8p model” (Plan, Place, Person, Partner, Power, Procedure and Policy) grouped into three circles (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 – The URG 8p model of Xie *et al.*, 2021



### 3.2. Research methodology and data collection

Selecting a research methodology is a critical step in a research project (Yin, 2014). In answering RQ1 and RQ2, we perform field-based research using a single case study method. We use the Shipley and Kovacs (2008) and Xie *et al.* (2021) frameworks for analysing the illustrative case study of the social cooperative “La Paranza”, founded in the Rione Sanità, a neighborhood of Naples, in 2006. This method investigates how specific CH governance models can be used to create civic wealth, especially in a district at risk of poverty and delinquency. According to many Scholars (Yin, 2014; Birkel *et al.*, 2019), case studies are a particularly useful research methodology when a new, complex and evolving context is under investigation. Therefore, the case study method is particularly suitable to address our research aim because it allows for conducting an in-depth and exploratory analysis of Governance systems phenomena in relation to CH.

To support our analysis, a research protocol was implemented (Table 1) following the prescriptions stated in Yin (2014).

Table 1 – Research validation strategy

Test	Strategy	Phase
Construct validity	Multiple data sources Validation of the construction through the key components of the organisation	Data collection Design of the study
	Integration of two frameworks developed by the literature (Shiplely and Kovacs, 2008; Xie <i>et al.</i> , 2021)	Construction of the findings
Internal validity	The Cooperative’s features and consistency with research aims	Selection of the case
	Willingness of the Cooperative to participate in the research	
	Preliminary analysis of multiple data sources and triangulation for case acceptance	
External validity	Validation with external references	Construction of the findings

Indeed, Yin (2014, p. l. 649) asserts that a case study should be conducted rigorously using multiple sources of data. As such, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the communication manager and cooperative member Vincenzo Porzio and with the president Giovanni Maraviglia. According to Qu and Dumay (2011, p. 246), “the semi-structured interview involves prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses”. The questions focus on critical success factors, actors engaged in the cooperative, governance model adopted, recovery of and accessibility to the CH managed, impact of the Cooperative activities on “Sanità” neighborhood and accountability to stakeholders.

Each data source was scrutinised, then codified and categorised using the chosen frameworks in Shipley and Kovacs (2008) and Xie *et al.* (2021). The data were principally gathered between March 2022 and May 2022. The sequence of data collection began with an initial analysis of the Cooperative La Paranza website and newspaper articles about the Cooperative. Then, we accessed the financial reports through the Italian company information and business intelligence database called AIDA (Analisi Informatizzata delle Aziende Italiane) database available at the time of the study (we found the yearly reports for the years from 2012 to 2021). Subsequently, we developed the questionnaire according to the framework and we performed the two interviews.

#### 4. *Case study description: “La Paranza” Cooperative*

The project of the Cooperative “La Paranza” was founded in 2006 in the Rione Sanità, one of the districts of Naples with the clearest evidence of great socio-cultural inequality and huge resources existing side by side. The Cooperative started its activities with the management of the Catacomb of St. Gaudioso, in the Basilica of Santa Maria della Sanità. This journey led the Cooperative to being awarded with the artistic-historical tender by the CON IL SUD Foundation in 2008. This was the first step in the process that led to the recovery, management and opening of the Catacombs of St. Gennaro to the public.

Through the Cooperativa La Paranza’s project, Rione Sanità has gone from being an urban periphery in the middle of the historic center to being a virtuous model for the protection of CH and the revitalization of employment for an entire neighbourhood in just over 10 years.

The Cooperative devotes all its knowledge and efforts to supporting new businesses and inspiring hope among the youth. Indeed, “Casa del Monacone” and “Casa Tolentino” are the results of two projects for the reclamation and development of local resources. These two accommodation facilities, created from renovated convent buildings, allow tourists and pilgrims to spend a few days in the city of Naples, experience the warm welcome and share the values of the Cooperative. In fact, visitors to the Catacombs have increased from 5,000 in 2009 to 150,000 in 2019. A growth unmatched by any other site or cultural asset in the city of Naples. In the same years (2009-2019), the Cooperative’s employees grew from 5 to 34, demonstrating how UR and cultural enhancement projects that start and are managed through the bottom-up approach are able to create employment.

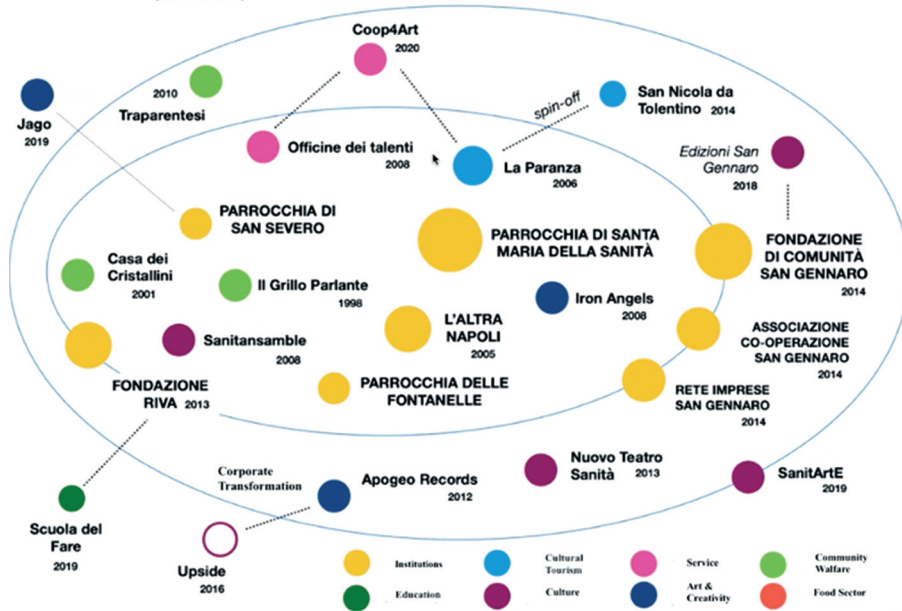
The critical success factors of the La Paranza Cooperative are manifold and most of them, although already identified in the literature (Xie *et al.*, 2021; Dameri and Moggi, 2021; Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019), present elements of originality and distinctiveness. First, the protagonists recognise the importance of the available assets: the Catacombs of St. Gennaro and St. Gaudioso. These are places with a great historical, cultural and archaeological tradition, but above all emblems and symbols of the Rione Sanità’s territorial community: physical spaces, to which all residents are linked, passing on the centuries-old tradition, as evidence of the noble origins of the entire city. At the same time, places that have been abandoned for decades, inaccessible, degraded like the entire neighbourhood, confirming the intimate bond between cultural assets and the territories in which they are born and live. As the head of communications stated:

“the prodigious recovery and enhancement work carried out by the Paranza (over 12,000 square metres of recovered heritage), had the ultimate goal of not only addressing the places themselves, but of convincing an entire neighbourhood that the rebirth of an asset is a new start for all those who, in various ways, have seen it, lived in it, preserved it, even neglected it”.

The theme of people at the centre of the project is also part of the second element of success. The authors refer to it as “leadership and vision”. In fact, over 15 years ago, the start of the adventure saw the enlightened guidance of the parish priest of the Church of St. Gennaro, Father Loffredo. Among his most significant intuitions was that of making young people of the Sanità district “see” the beauty that surrounded them, first through trips to European capitals (a path of ‘comparative’ education), then through the opportunity to combine this beauty with a job. From the very beginning, La Paranza was characterised as a non-profit cooperative, through a democratic structure with a board of directors, a members’ meeting, a functional organisation chart (6 areas: communication, maintenance, training, finance, human resources, entertainment), a monthly meeting with the staff (to date about 40 employees, 80% of whom are residents of the Rione) and continuous round tables and listening sessions with all stakeholders. At the corporate level, a dense network of relationships has been established with all players in the Sanità neighbourhood (Fig. 3), both formal and informal ones.

Fig. 3 – Network relationships of the Cooperative La Paranza

Network relationships of the “Rione Sanità”  
(2006-2020)



Source 1 – File provided by the interviewees

La Paranza is part of the Co-operazione San Gennaro Association, which brings together all third sector operators working in the Rione Sanità. In turn, this association is part of the San Gennaro Onlus Community Foundation, which brings together other local parishes, private companies, families, and other foundations (12 partners in total). It is a true integrated chain of activities and skills ranging from hospitality to publishing, from culture to architecture, from commerce to solidarity, and so on.

As the interviewee stated, in this network, the Association “L’Altra Napoli Onlus” played a central role. Indeed, in the start-up phase of La Paranza, L’Altra Napoli Onlus offered its legal and economic expertise free of charge (a sort of incubator) to ensure the full autonomy of the Cooperative La Paranza to date, and, above all, contributed to the victory of the approximately € 500,000 funding call made available by the “Fondazione con il Sud”.

Then, another distinctive element is the relationship with the final customer, the visitor to the catacombs. In this respect, the Paranza has decided to make reservations compulsory for access to the sites and to

conduct only guided tours. While this has required staff continuous training and the care and enrichment of every detail of the visit, it has also created an exclusive relationship with tourists. This relationship is evidenced both by the exponential growth of tourists (from 5,000 in 2006 to more than 150,000 today) and by the winning of the Global Remarkable Venue Awards (in the best experience in the world section) in 2020, the international award that celebrates museums and attractions that have been able to offer their users “exceptional” discovery experiences.

Moreover, the Catacombs of St. Gennaro are the only site of their kind in the world that is fully accessible. In 2009 a decision was made, together with the Tutti a Scuola association, to remove all the architectural barriers and to create walkways and ramps, so that the site could be accessible to everyone. In association with SAAD (University Service for activities by students with disabilities) of the Suor Orsola Benincasa University and the Iron Angels social cooperative, the Napoli tra le Mani (“Naples in your Hands”) project was launched to create a route for blind and visually impaired visitors, through tactile exploration with metal plates that provide descriptive details of the place.

We can assert that the neighbourhoods’ historical, architectural, artistic and archaeological heritage of the Rione Sanità, with the prominent element of the Catacombs of St. Gennaro, has been transformed into a model of CH enhancement, celebrated as an exemplary case of community involvement in CH management. Our findings highlight how the specific governance system of the Cooperative allows the creation of cultural value through the recovery of several degraded CH assets, toward new forms of inclusive accessibility and expanded fruition (also for people with disabilities).

## 5. *Discussion and main implications*

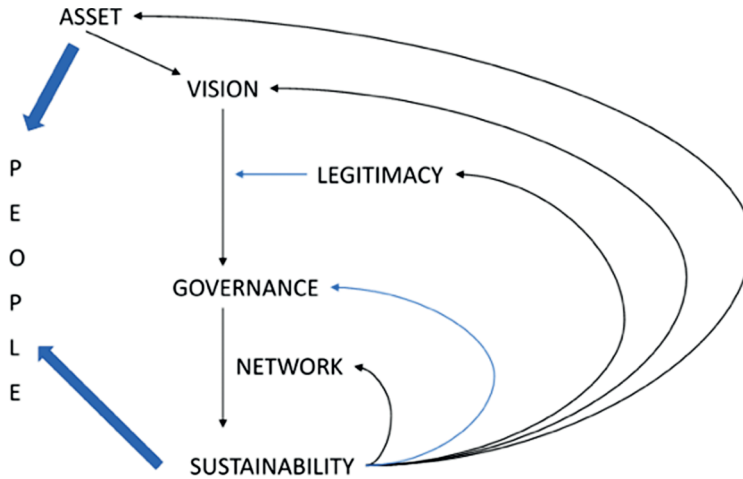
### 5.1. *Discussion of results*

The literature on governance models characteristics to foster UR and create civic value through CH, although recent, is convergent on some issues. Examples include stakeholder engagement (Li *et al.*, 2020; Aas *et al.*, 2005), the role of legitimacy and space (Biondi *et al.*, 2020; Lumpkin *et al.*, 2018; Shipley and Kovacs, 2008), the weight of networks (Xie *et al.*, 2021; Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019), and co-design practices (Aureli and Del Baldo, 2022).

These models may also fit well with the reality of the case study examined, La Paranza Cooperative, which, however, as can be deduced

from the results described above, presents elements of originality such as to allow a new and better “focus” on the models themselves. At least five peculiar critical success factors emerge from the interview, not to be understood in order of priority but in a dynamic and connected way (Fig. 4): assets; vision; legitimacy; governance and networking; sustainability.

Fig. 4 – The governance model of La Paranza Cooperative



By means of assets, we mean the set of resources, tangible and intangible, available to an institution (Lumpkin *et al.*, 2018). In the case of the Paranza we certainly refer in the first instance to the CH of Catacombs of St. Gennaro and St. Gaudioso, treasures of history and archaeology that for thousands of years have testified to the first burials of Neapolitan Christians.

Then, there are the financial assets, about which more will be said later. Certainly, the allocation of funds to the Paranza by Con il Sud Foundation, if on the one hand it guaranteed the start-up, on the other it created trust and stability in the organisation, favouring the consolidation, autonomy and sustainability of the project. It is hard to imagine what could have been achieved without the substantial injection of initial liquidity.

Finally, the main asset: the women and men of the Paranza. The vision of the Paranza is clear, simple and essential, as much as it is profound and meaningful: to put people at the centre. It may seem trivial, but in the context in which this philosophy was born and in the classical paradigm of CH, the logic appears to be completely reversed. In fact, the regeneration of a cultural asset becomes the tool for the enhancement of



people, not the end in itself or perhaps the means to attract tourists.

Since the beginning, all stakeholders have perceived some absolute novelties in this project (Aas *et al.*, 2005), as the President told us:

“profit was not the goal; the activities were open to all and not only to a few circles of experts; the initiative was based on the energy and courage of young people, who were not responsible for the degradation of the past; everyone would be involved and everyone would benefit from the results; the initiative was sustainable; the redemption of the district was to start from legality and the creation of opportunities, work and wealth”.

The method followed included education in beauty as a tool for emancipation. The recovery of places was to recover people, recreating a virtuous circuit in which the empowerment of people would become the main lever of sustainable development. As an anecdote, the HR manager told us that often in interviews to assess candidates, motivation prevailed over qualifications and preparation.

Legitimacy refers to the ability to interact and operate in the territory, being recognised as authoritative actors (Di Maggio and Powell, 1991). Authoritativeness is particularly decisive in contexts of informal governance, i.e. where traditional mechanisms, based on institutions (the state, local authorities, laws) or the market, are ineffective, produce unsuccessful results, not least because they are not recognised by the citizens themselves and are therefore deemed unreliable (Marchegiani *et al.*, 2014).

In our case, such legitimacy derives from *ex ante* and *ex post* elements. Firstly, La Paranza was perceived, at least initially, as an experience born within the Church. This institution has historically enjoyed great trust, precisely in the contexts mentioned above, which are also often characterised by traditional cultural legacies, poverty, low schooling, etc. The Church is therefore seen as a moral institution, neutral and superior between the state and the market.

The Paranza’s other element of authoritativeness derives from its knowledge of the territory and from identifying itself, through its founders, as a daughter of the district. In other words, no one else could have carried out such an initiative if not the young people born and integrated in the Rione Sanità.

According to theories of business efficiency, the most effective ownership system is the one that ensures the lowest costs for the company in its operations, both in the markets and through its governance mechanisms. The most suitable owners for a firm are those for whom the costs of market imperfections are most severe or most damaging to them

and who therefore tend to constantly reduce them (Hansmann, 1988). In the present case, we are of course talking about the Paranza boys and residents: the main users or beneficiaries of cultural assets should be their primary managers.

But legitimacy does not only derive from a starting condition; rather, it has become authoritativeness mainly due to the results achieved and the instruments used (Shiple and Kovacs, 2008). As can be seen from reading the financial statements, La Paranza now provides stable employment for around 40 young people, 80% of whom come from the Sanità district, and has sustainable management from an economic, financial and social perspective. The success factors are related to the legal form (the social cooperative) as a non-profit organisation (Landriani and D'Amore, 2009; Alvino and Petrillo, 1998), to the mode of operational governance (Ostrom *et al.*, 1999), and above all to the strategic governance that, through the networks outlined, includes and creates commitment with all local stakeholders (Hribar *et al.*, 2015; Sclager *et al.*, 1994). For these reasons, it is believed that only in this way can such an initiative be successful.

The enlarged and inclusive governance model of the Paranza, typical of the public governance framework (Kovac and Gajduschek, 2015), had the capacity to create different entities (the Fondazione di Comunità San Gennaro Onlus, the Associazione Co-Operazione San Gennaro, etc.) to attract different actors (sponsors, private individuals, families, parishes, professionals, etc.) as a strategic lever in defining the growth and success of the project.

Such a model can perhaps be defined as 'enlightened' governance and, in this sense, differs from those known in the doctrine (Biondi *et al.*, 2020; Lidegard *et al.*, 2017), overcoming certain limitations of public governance (Kovac and Gajduschek, 2015). Indeed, despite the prevalence of a bottom-up approach (Dameri and Moggi, 2019), which is often discussed in the literature, contrasting it with initiatives based on top-down drivers (Aureli and Del Baldo, 2022; Aas *et al.*, 2005), La Paranza is growing due to the joint effect of at least two elements that have characterised its governance model: the initial training offered by Father Loffredo and the professionals of the Altra Napoli Onlus and the financial stability achieved following the victory in the Fondazione Con il Sud call for projects.

One of the limitations, in fact, of public governance (Kovac and Gajduschek, 2015) but more generally of the common goods framework (Ostrom, 1990) is precisely the inability to make decisions and the absence of effective leadership. In the Paranza, on the other hand, Father Loffredo's leadership was flanked by the skills of the team of professionals from L'Altra Napoli Onlus, as well as those of other masters (e.g. the artist

Dalisi) who “incubated” the Cooperative, allowing it to mature to the point of determining the autonomy of the cooperative itself, also in financial terms.

### 5.2 *Main implications*

The implications arising from this study are numerous. The case of the Co-operative was discussed taking into consideration the literature analysed, in particular, with the theoretical frameworks of Shipley and Kovacs (2008) and of Xie *et al.* (2021) on UR governance. This framework was implemented with the specific case study by shifting the focus to CH management.

For instance, dealing with ecclesiastical cultural property (place), the role of the moral authority of the Church as the institution needed to start (power) the regeneration process is highlighted as it is endowed, together with the operators, with legitimacy (person). At the same time, the need to consider not only *ex ante* authority, but above all *ex post* authority emerges, which derives from sustainability (policy) and becomes an instrument of self-reinforcement of legitimacy (Shipley and Kovacs, 2008). Power (Xie *et al.*, 2021) thus derives not only from ownership, but also from legitimacy (Biondi *et al.*, 2020; Shipley and Kovacs, 2008). At the same time, place (Xie *et al.*, 2021) means not only the spatial context, but also the characteristic of the assets (Biondi *et al.*, 2020).

Also in terms of governance models, it emerges that purely bottom-up approaches such as self-organisation (Ostrom, 1999) may be insufficient or inconclusive in poor institutional contexts, where asset ownership and operational practices require enlightened leadership and territorial embeddedness (Lidegaard *et al.*, 2017; Li *et al.*, 2020). In this perspective, civic engagement or participatory governance, as well as those to partnerships (Aas *et al.*, 2005; Lumpkin *et al.*, 2018; Aureli and Del Baldo, 2022; Biondi *et al.*, 2020) risk being inadequate to the case under investigation, as they do not clarify the role and responsibilities of the individual stakeholder categories, which are completely assimilated. Therefore, compared to the all-encompassing model of civic wealth (Lumpkin and Bacq, 2019), the case of the Paranza puts people at the centre, among the stakeholders, redefining the weights and priorities of the different categories (community, business and ‘supporting’ institutions).

From a managerial point of view, the numerous best practices implemented by the Paranza were highlighted and, as stated by the interviewees, the management model of the Catacombs was designed to be repeated in other historical and artistic sites. On the operational level, the focus on training as a lever to make the visit experience memorable was combined

with the tool of planning activities to foster knowledge of the end customer. From a policy perspective, the study highlights the need for stable, adequate and lasting financial instruments to support the start-up of such initiatives, as well as the usefulness of tutors and/or incubators.

## 6. *Primary conclusions*

The paradigm of CH management has undergone several evolutions in recent years, especially in Italy, the country with the highest number of cultural assets. In many cases, there has been a shift from an excessive focus on protection to an over-exploitation. If the former had in fact resulted in closed and abandoned sites, the latter has led to the touristification of the great cities of art, excessive crowding of sites, exclusively hedonistic consumption and attention only to the most famous and well-known assets, which have not acted as a driving force for the “minor” ones. Moreover, the peculiarity of the heritage itself, which envisages the co-presence of numerous actors as owners of the assets (State, Regions, Local Authorities, private individuals, associations, the Church, and so on) has not favoured management models oriented towards effectiveness and efficiency, but rather excessive legislative proliferation and bureaucracy.

More recently, the perpetuation of problems such as the scarcity of human and financial resources, bureaucracy and the generalised state of neglect of the assets themselves, together with the overcoming of the ‘myth’ of tourism as a saving phenomenon of the territories, has allowed other frameworks to assert themselves, including UR governance, civic wealth, and sustainability. Moreover, cultural assets, as a ‘new’ category of common goods, no longer become the goal of governance interventions in this sector, but rather a tool for the regeneration of places and, above all, of people, as highlighted in the case study examined in this paper. Therefore, this paradigmatic shift requires a research effort in order to understand both the governance models most suited to the new challenges and the best management practices that can be replicated in different contexts.

From this perspective, our research study examined the case of La Paranza, a social cooperative founded in 2006 in the Rione Sanità in Naples. The analysis carried out showed how the initiative of a group of young people, rooted in an area that is not favourable for historical and social reasons, under the guidance of a local parish priest and with the initial help of a team of professionals and a funding entity, succeeded in enhancing an entire neighbourhood by focusing on the recovery of the Catacombs

of St. Gennaro, as a catalyst for the recovery of the people living in the social space in which they insist.

An innovative governance model, characterised by an inclusive network of all territorial actors and democratic decision-making processes, together with the moral leadership of the ecclesiastical institution and the vision of educating people to beauty, has determined the success of the initiative. A success that can be measured according to different sustainability parameters: economic, social and environmental. Indeed, the cooperative has stabilised about 40 young people, 80% of whom come from the neighbourhood itself, regenerated over 12,000 square metres of artistic heritage, created paths of inclusive accessibility to the CH, brought over 130,000 tourists to visit the catacombs every year and, above all, brought the neighbourhood to life through the rebirth of commerce, hospitality crafts and art.

Among the study’s main contributions is the focus on the role of human resources as a new output of UR processes and the creation of civic value. People thus become the goal, the centre of the new governance models.

Tourists themselves must compulsorily book and take only guided tours, thus fostering the quality of the experience and the customer’s knowledge, but above all forcing La Paranza to carefully train guides (only the most motivated ones are selected, not the most prepared), thus transferring not only the culture of hospitality, but also the culture of the territory. In this sense, one can read the governance model, which, although characterised by a predominantly bottom-up approach, required leadership, competence and operational legitimacy, all levers then strengthened with the performance achieved.

The present work has several limitations, including that it is a single case study. In addition, the sources used were limited as in future research the goal will be to interview other actors in the Rione Sanità and to carry out comparative analyses in time and space.

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

*Selena Aureli, Mara Del Baldo, Paola Demartini\**

**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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\* Authors names are listed in alphabetical order, while each author has equally contributed to the writing of all sections of the chapter.

## 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 Urošević, 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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Aims and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to enhance the citizens, residents and tourists' awareness and their respectful and attentive attitude towards historic and artistic heritage;</li> <li>• to increase awareness of the exceptional beauty of the historic centre, calling for people's involvement in its conservation and enhancement;</li> <li>• to promote good practices in favouring the safeguarding of the site for future generations of an invaluable asset.</li> </ul>
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• educate people to understand and respect the CH of Urbino;</li> <li>• educate to have a reciprocal coexistence and good behavioural practices;</li> <li>• raise awareness of the artistic, monumental and landscape beauty of the area;</li> <li>• develop ecological awareness.</li> <li>• extend the knowledge of the CH of the city to all students;</li> <li>• raise awareness of socio-environmental problems to fight the "vandalism" phenomena;</li> <li>• reflect on the condition of the CH so that it can also be transmitted to future generations;</li> <li>• to lay the foundations for the direct involvement of young people and students in the implementation of future projects.</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• encourage students' civic training in the enjoyment and safeguarding of an invaluable asset, heritage of and for all;</li> <li>• make young people protagonists of the process of valorisation and protection of the artistic and environmental heritage.</li> </ul>

Recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Italian and international students of the University of Urbino Carlo Bo;</li> <li>• middle school students from 11 to 13 years old and high school students from 14 to 18 years;</li> <li>• Italian and foreign visitors and tourists;</li> <li>• residents and native inhabitants of the historic centre;</li> <li>• shopkeepers, traders and operators of the city-centre.</li> </ul>
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collection of information through questionnaires (direct/personal and online submission);</li> <li>• Promotion and support of a set of informative and operative initiatives in collaboration with organisations, institutions and individuals belonging to the local community;</li> <li>• Participation in the cultural, social and economic events of the city with the Urbino perBene project.</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of questionnaires to be addressed to the different categories of Urbino's city users;</li> <li>• creation of a decalogue with suggestions (in Italian and English) useful for enjoying the city and respecting its places and values;</li> <li>• creation of a map of the centre, indicating its public and tourist services (i.e., drinking fountains, squares and gardens, info points, toilets);</li> <li>• 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;</li> <li>• survey of the quality of the tourist service of the UNESCO site through questionnaires to be submitted to foreign tourists.</li> </ul>
Tools	Human resources and materials made available by the schools, universities, volunteers, not-for-profit and civic organisation, local institutions.
Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaborations with ISIA (High School of design) for the realisation of the city map and the decalogue "Urbino perBene";</li> <li>• collaboration with not-for-profit organisation (i.e., Anteas and Arts Regresso Association) for the organisations of events;</li> <li>• collaboration with the local university department and the local school for the organisation of seminars, conferences, laboratories.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• seminars, congresses, conferences, laboratories and debates in university classrooms and schools;</li> <li>• 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);</li> <li>• elaboration of informative/qualitative questionnaires in Italian and English city map and decalogue for city users;</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

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 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.

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# 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

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**Purpose** – The paper presents the case of a small (about 200 m<sup>2</sup>) container garden created in a neglected space within the premises of the School Management and Economics of the University of Turin. The project is part of the framework ‘Proposal for Citizen Engagement’ of EIT Food Cross-KIC New European Bauhaus. ‘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. This autoethnographic study aims to investigate how self-managed, recovered green spaces can lead to increasing social cohesion, sustainable production, and bottom-up community engagement.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The research follows a qualitative methodology, presenting an exploratory case study, complemented by autoethnographic elements, stemming from the direct involvement of the authors in the project.

**Findings** – Findings show that container gardens are rather inexpensive and instruments of social inclusion, equality and sustainable consumption to be scaled-up and applied to different contexts. Moreover, the exchange of good practices between different communities helps empowering the parties and creates an intergenerational knowledge flow. Sustainability therefore becomes key for redeveloping spaces.

**Originality/value** – 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.

**Keywords** – Container Garden, New European Bauhaus, Community, Liquid Modernity, Urban Regeneration

## 1. *Introduction*

The COVID-19 pandemic has added gloominess to already gloomy liquid times (Bauman, 2007), characterised by an ever-growing cultural individualisation of society (Bauman, 2001a). However, Bauman calls for a bottom-up approach, where citizens themselves can recreate a space like the agora, and tackle issues of public interest (2000). Fournier (2013) points out that today's individuals are less inclined to create community, lacking the willingness to make joint efforts. However, she stresses that 'commoing' still remains an efficient and sustainable way to manage resources.

This paper analyses autoethnographically the case of 'L'orto della SME', a small but multi-stakeholder container garden, set up in a recovered outdoor area within the School Management and Economics (SME) of the University of Turin. 'L'orto della SME' is the result of a winning bid to EIT Food Cross-KIC New European Bauhaus, within the framework 'Proposal for Citizen Engagement'. We employ Bauman's framework of Liquid Modernity (2000, 2001a, 2007) to analyse the case and to make several theoretical and empirical contributions. First, we wish to further contribute to discussion around liquid modernity and organisations (Izak, 2015; Torchia, 2016; Kostera & Kociatkiewicz, 2014). Second, we link stakeholder engagement for urban regeneration (Seo, 2020; Biondi *et al.*, 2020; Jung *et al.*, 2015; Aureli & Del Baldo, 2022), with bottom-up organisational forms (Fournier, 2013; Parker, 2002; Parker *et al.*, 2014).

To reach these goals, we pose the following research questions:

- RQ1 What are the challenges for self-managed recovered areas to increase social cohesion, create community and fight cultural individualization?
- RQ2 Can regeneration initiatives run through bottom-up stakeholder engagement practices be successful, despite being centrally funded be successful in managing those different needs?

## 2. *Literature review and theoretical foundations*

### 2.1. *Liquid Modernity and its consequences*

Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has long discussed the implications for society of modernity and post-modernity (later redefined as liquid modernity). Approaching the new millennium, Bauman defined modernity as solid, where wealth and success were measured according to size and volume. Mankind tried to make the world homogeneous, by conquering space and routinising time (Bauman, 2000). Solid modernity failed because

it cannot be made permanent in a world in perennial change (Beilharz, 2001). Then, solid modernity naturally made way to a liquid state that leaves social and economic structures fluid.

Bauman sees liquid modernity as a post-Panoptical age (2000), where the constant obsession of individuals with ends is supported by light capitalism that, on a surface, offers almost unlimited opportunities. Collectivity is replaced by an alienating and vulnerable individuality (Bauman, 2001a), encouraged by liberalisation. Under these conditions, individuals can no longer convert (individual) issues into common problems, failing to become citizens ‘de facto’ (2000). The outcome of this is a society that no longer relies on people’s collective and shared achievements, and that loses its autonomy too. Critical theory’s emancipatory agenda must be therefore set on helping individuals becoming citizens ‘de facto’, active in the public sphere. On this matter, Bauman (2000) advocates a return of the ‘agora’, where private problems manage to become public issues.

In a liquid modernity, community is a declining idea, and all that is left are volatile ‘cloakroom communities’ (Bauman, 2000), which cannot help creating citizens ‘de facto’. This type of community is argued to be both cause and effect of the disorder of our times. However, more optimistic scholars like Elliot (2007) and Atkinson (2008) argue that liquid modernity is not unescapable and all encompassing, and Jensen (2014) sees individuals as innately curious, potential agents of change.

### *2.2. Stakeholder engagement and urban regeneration*

Critical Management Studies (CMS) have recently started re-exploring the value and the potential of the ‘alternative’ as an urgent matter (De Angelis and Harvie, 2013). For instance, Fournier (2013) stresses the value of ‘commoning’ as a resilient form of social organising, which can ‘provide efficient and sustainable ways of managing resources’ (p. 241). Here, we focus on the regeneration of neglected spaces through urban gardening that features common use of resources and production.

Biondi *et al.* (2020) analyse the dynamics surrounding Participatory Cultural Initiatives, which can stimulate co-creation of value in the regeneration of urban spaces. The scholars emphasise how investing in cultural resources can benefit the overall socio-economic welfare of cities and regions. Moreover, the related cultural experiences might stimulate the creation of joint identities, but they also highlight that culture-driven participatory initiatives often require several and diverse stakeholders to come together, which might change over the project life-cycle. Biondi *et al.*’s research (*ibid.*) acknowledges the difficulties in managing multiple

actors and multiple values (Campanale *et al.*, 2021), accounting for the possibility that the project can become hierarchical and bureaucratic, potentially jeopardising its participatory ethos and communal goals.

Looking at the Asian context, Hung *et al.* (2015) underlines the seminal role of local communities in the success (or failure) of projects, and how crucial it is to involve stakeholders early in regeneration initiatives. Here we contend that, to ensure a fairer representation, an early involvement of stakeholders should be coupled with a relational stakeholder perspective (Rowley, 2017). Seo (2020) further explores the specific role of local communities in culture-led urban regeneration initiatives. The author argues that real problem-solving in urban regeneration initiatives can happen only if inclusion is not superficial and that, in many cases, bottom-up interventions strongly rely on some top-down forms of management.

Looking at cultural initiatives as heritage, Aureli and Del Baldo (2022) call for participatory governance to ‘pursue the common good’, stating that bottom-up initiatives truly represent the needs and feelings of citizens and communities. However, they emphasise the necessity for an integrated approach to urban regeneration, based on participatory governance, to make sense of the disconnection between the state and individuals and find solutions to move forward.

### 3. *Method and case study description*

#### 3.1. *Research method*

From a methodological point of view, this research can be categorised as a qualitative exploratory case study (Yin, 1994), but adding autoethnographic features, especially in the articulation of insider knowledge of cultural experience (Jones *et al.*, 2016), with the goal of creating different narratives than what other people might do. Our group, made of academic staff of the University of Turin, has been involved with the project from its conceptual, to the bidding and operational phases, directly engaging with all the stakeholders involved.

In terms of data collection, most data comes from participant observation, given our direct involvement in designing and planning the activities, as well as those related to the garden maintenance itself. We also had a multi-stakeholder focus group and a multi-stakeholder workshop and forum. Finally, we also created a very active group on Telegram, to further cementing the community around the garden.

### 3.2. Case study description

In 2021, as part of the EIT Food Cross-KIC New European Bauhaus (NEB) call for projects 'Proposal for Citizen Engagement', the University of Turin, in collaboration with the Municipality of Turin, presented a project and obtained funding for the creation of an urban container garden of more than 200 m<sup>2</sup>, then called 'L'orto della SME'. The garden is finalised at fruit and vegetable production for ready consumption, to benefit all users, from the university citizenry to local stakeholders.

The project is rooted on the principles of social inclusion and equality, the production of healthy food in urban areas to promote sustainable consumption, the exchange of good practices between different communities, to favour their empowerment and encourage an intra and intergenerational flow of knowledge, and sustainability as a place regeneration strategy. In addition, according to NEB principles, the project has been rooted to pillars such as: 'Inform and exchange', 'Inspire and aspire' and 'Engage and co-create'.

Fig. 1 – The area identified during the first exploration of the area



#### 4. *Project implementation and preliminary results achieved by 'L'orto della SME'*

The project officially kicked off in August 2021, with a WebEx online meeting held by several stakeholders of the University, to set the project up and to start mapping the potential other project stakeholders. It was followed by an internal call to select internal and external participants, and then by a focus groups among all the stakeholders involved.

September 2021 was a month full of meetings and initiatives. We started in September 22 by meeting the City of Turin Disability Services and the Consulta per le Persone in Difficoltà to present the project, check on their interest to get involved, and get feedback from them. In parallel, we met with the Director of a local kindergarten, 'Il Micino' (The Kitten), who showed a great will to explore with us the interplay between children and nature, telling us that already had similar activities in their teaching plan. For the Director, the benefits for children to be in outdoor spaces like our garden, can be found in the establishment of a direct relationship with nature, by appreciating its seasonality and in the removal of the physical boundaries of the classroom. In the same afternoon, as a group of diverse stakeholders, we visited two European funded projects with a similar ethos to ours: VOV 102 and Orti Generali, which were seminal to share ideas on stakeholder engagement, as well as for asking technical questions. A few days later, on September 27, we visited the neighbouring garden 'Oasi', and spoke at length with two of the elders that manage it, who gave us a masterclass on cultivation techniques, and told us how the area developed in the last 50 years.

On October 15, we held a co-design workshop at the SME with a multitude of stakeholders, aimed at designing the container garden and at community building. The first part of the meeting focused on providing design ideas and imagining the space, while also thinking at sustainable solutions, and data were inputted to carry out a SWOT analysis. In the second part, we conducted a focus group to devise specific solutions for all the matters regarding accessibility, garden management and social relations (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2 – Multi-stakeholder forum and co-creation workshop



Another milestone towards the opening of our garden, was the “CleanUp the SME” event, held on November 26. Helped by the university citizenry and Amiat Gruppo Iren (Local multi-utility), we cleaned up 860kgs of waste (Fig. 3).

Fig. 3 – CleanUp the SME event



On December 17, we finally inaugurated ‘L’orto della SME’, with an event attended by over 50 stakeholders actively involved in the garden. Symbolically, seeds were planted at the end of the event, in what has now become a fully harvesting garden that offers, among others, potatoes, sage, borage, spinach and flowers (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4 – Inaugural event of the container garden



2022 has brought beautiful flowers and vegetables, but also a solidification of the communities around the garden. For instance, the kindergarten teachers have brought children to the garden regularly every two weeks; students have held several events, as well as becoming regular visitors for their lunch breaks and revision sessions in the newly added benches and tables. Moreover, the garden has become one of the main stages of the 2022 Researchers' Night for the University of Turin, hosting events on sustainability and on health and wellbeing, in collaboration with the Association Mandala. The expansion project is currently under bidding, showing the community and regeneration potential of the garden.

The garden contributed to requalify the neglected outdoor area of the SME, in terms of its aesthetics (including the dumping situation) and accessibility (for mobility and visually impaired, as well as children). The project also received lots of media coverage, including RAI (the Italian national TV), several donations from citizens and continuing interest for events from the university citizenry. However, it also faces several critical issues, like regulating the use of the space, surveillance and access, and how to generate more visibility.

In terms of impact there are several aspects to consider. Community-wise, the coming together of different university figures at all levels, increased collaboration and it was further enhanced by the encounters with citizens and pensioners. The production of food is influenced by the vital contribution of retired gardeners, who can also serve as intergenerational links to teach techniques and inspire passion in the students. The project also helped creating connections with similar projects in Turin, in other Italian cities, and abroad.

## 5. *Discussion and conclusion*

The call for this project invites European funded initiatives to strive for sustainable solutions for society and the environment. The top-down element of the project did not take away from the participatory governance of the container garden, to stimulate stakeholder engagement and pluralistic decision-making (Mouffe, 1995).

RQ1: What are the challenges for self-managed recovered areas to increase social cohesion, create community and fight cultural individualisation?

In less than a year, the orto has become an intergenerational, multi-stakeholder space for the university citizenry and local stakeholders. The garden has also promoted the idea of 'commoning' (Fournier, 2013), in

terms of common effort for production and maintenance and for the shared identities created around the garden. This was also made possible by a stakeholder engagement process that started early, with events aimed at pushing people's imagination towards a fruitful co-design of the space, and further strengthened by adopting a relational stakeholder perspective (Rowley, 2017), effective in creating cohesive networks.

RQ2: Can regeneration initiatives run through bottom-up stakeholder engagement practices be successful, despite being centrally funded be successful in managing those different needs?

The main challenge was to match the institutional logic with the self-management spirit of the initiative, with the former that can help maintaining a certain degree of control and drive the project to meet NEB's targets, founded on the principles of experience, sustainability and circular economy, inclusion and aesthetics. Finally, in the case of a project expansion or duplication, potentially organisational and managerial issues might arise, or a more commercial logic that can negatively impact on the ethos on which the garden was set up.

To conclude, this paper has presented the case of an urban container garden realised at the School of Management and Economics of the University of Turin, and funded by European programmes aimed at promoting sustainability and inclusion. The study shows the potential for small urban regeneration projects to help creating solid and resilient communities, bringing together a multitude of stakeholders, different values and even different generations. Moreover, the garden helps creating a positive mindset towards nature and sustainable production.

This research provides empirical elements to assess community re-solidification, which are in antithesis to Bauman's individualisation argument, by showing that relational stakeholder engagement approaches and a participatory governance can determine the success of such initiatives on several levels. Further research is needed, as time progresses, to see if the effects on community, democracy, sustainability and inclusion are long-lasting or more volatile.

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# Cultural Heritage Alliances for Sustainable Urban and Rural Development

*Elena Borin, Fabio Donato*

**Purpose** – This paper aims at investigating the potential of creating alliances between cultural heritage in cities and in rural areas for promoting sustainable development at a regional level and in minor rural centers. More specifically, the paper has the objective of better understanding the potential characteristics of governance and management schemes in the partnerships between cultural heritage organizations in cities/rural areas.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The research uses a qualitative approach, presenting a case study analysis of the project *Terre degli Uffizi*, implemented in the Tuscany region (Italy). The case has been selected based on the criteria of relevance and representativeness and analyzed through the triangulation of data as indicated by Yin (2017).

**Findings** – The project *Terre degli Uffizi*, promoted by a famous museum in Florence, the *Gallerie degli Uffizi*, and a bank foundation, *Fondazione CR Firenze*, with the cooperation of the Tuscany region, represents a best practice of partnerships between famous city museum and small cultural organizations located in rural areas. From the analysis, it emerged that, though the project was a top-down initiative, one of its main peculiarities was its flexibility and its capacity to tailor-make the cultural initiatives giving key roles to minor organizations. This creates the basis for the creation of a cultural ecosystem spread in the territory.

**Originality/value** – The results of the analysis contribute to the debate on the cooperation between cultural heritage organizations in cities and rural areas for regional sustainable development, as well as to the reflection on governance systems and management models for unlocking the potential of cultural cooperation for the territory.

**Keywords** – sustainable regional development, public-private partnerships for culture, cultural ecosystem management and governance.

**Paper type:** short paper.

## 1. *Introduction*

The importance of cultural heritage as leverage for urban regeneration and innovation (Aureli, Del Baldo & Demartini, 2021) and new societal models (Dameri & Demartini, 2020) has been deeply investigated in managerial literature. Recently, in line with the SDGs and with a general trend of reflection on the post-pandemic scenarios, there has also been an increasing interest in exploring the role cultural heritage can play in the processes of rural development, especially about the cultural heritage of cities (Escolar & Moyano-Pesquera, 2020). This paper aims at investigating this latter topic, reflecting on the potential of alliances between cultural heritage in cities and rural areas (Borin & Paunovic, 2016) to not only rebalance tourism flows but also promote increased wealth and more sustainable socio-economic development.

More specifically, the paper aims at answering the following research questions:

- What is the potential of alliances between cultural heritage organizations in cities and rural areas?
- How are these alliances established in terms of public-private partnerships and cooperation schemes? What is the role and relationship between urban and rural partners in the governance system and management model?

To address this topic, the authors carried out qualitative case-study research on the program *Terre degli Uffizi* (Lands of Uffizi) promoted for the period 2021-2026 by the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (one of the most visited museums in Italy and the world). The initiative has been launched in connection with previous cultural-enhancement initiatives and is part of a long-term strategy to boost the region and its cultural heritage and to foster widespread and more sustainable development in the area. This program aims at exhibiting works from the Gallery's collection in minor museums located in the Tuscan territory outside the traditional tourist destinations. The analysis focuses on the collaboration established for the program, involving both public and private entities among which museums and bank foundations, thus testifying to an ecosystem approach in addressing the sustainable development of the territory.

After this short introduction, the paper will be divided into four main sections. The first section presents a concise review of the literature on the topic of cultural heritage and urban/rural regeneration and development, with specific reference to the development of the theoretical reflection on cultural ecosystems, public-private, and multi-stakeholder partnerships in rural areas. After this section, a short presentation of the



research design and methodology will be provided. The third section will present the results of the qualitative analysis. In section four, the authors will give some concluding remarks concerning the theoretical and practice debate.

## 2. *Literature review*

The interest in understanding the role of cultural heritage in processes of urban regeneration, development, and innovation has been increasing over the last two decades and has been addressed according to various approaches, mainly related to sociological perspectives (Whelan, 2016), urban planning (Guzmán, Roders, & Colenbrander, 2017; Skrede, & Berg, 2019); tourism (Philipp *et al.*, 2022; Silvestrelli, 2013), but also from a managerial and economic perspective (Aureli, Del Baldo & Demartini, 2021; Pendlebury & Porfyriou, 2017; Zhong, 2016).

In these discussions, cultural heritage is often analyzed as a trigger for creativity and tourism and is primarily related to the reflection on cultural and creative districts (Andres & Chapain, 2013; Comunian, Chapain, Clifton, 2010; Cooke, & Lazzeretti, 2008; Duxbury, Cullen, & Pascual, 2012; Florida, 2005 & 2017; Hristova, Sestic, & Duxbury, 2015). Recently, the reflection on urban regeneration and development through cultural heritage enhancement has been linked to the sustainability topic (CHCfE, 2015; Nocca, 2017; Veghes, 2018), in line with a global trend of research on the role of culture and creativity in sustainable development (Lazar & Chithra, 2022; Montalto *et al.*, 2019; Wiktor-Mach, 2020). The reflection on culture and sustainable development has not only focused on urban territories but also on rural areas, pushing for a rethinking of the relationship between these two dimensions of local development. The possibility to work remotely has questioned the need to live next to industrial areas and enhanced the attractiveness of rural spaces: there is therefore an increasing need to improve the quality of life in these areas (Lange *et al.*, 2022), to which culture and creative initiatives could contribute.

Moreover, improving cultural initiatives in rural contexts could contribute to more sustainable development in many ways. It can help balance urban and rural territories in terms of tourism, offering a solution to overtourism and proposing a model for tourism sustainability (Pechlaner *et al.*, 2015). It can push for the democratization of culture by granting access to it in peripheral areas and to different types of publics, at the same time increasing the connections with different local entities, boosting a sense of belonging, contributing to accessibility and cultural education

(Ayers, 2022; Borin and Paunovic, 2016). In this vein, the theoretical and policy debate led to a reinterpretation of rural areas as ecosystems, loci of interaction among diverse local entities (either public, private or civic, cultural or belonging to other sectors) through dynamic mechanisms based on multi-stakeholder interactions.

Over the past 20 years, the concept of ‘ecosystem,’ derived from the field of biology, has become increasingly popular and adapted to different contexts and domains (Costanza *et al.*, 1997). Among these, there is increasing use of the concept in business and management studies (Basole, 2009; Iansiti & Levien, 2004; Peltoniemi, 2006; Stam 2015). Among many initial definitions, Moore (1996) described business ecosystems as interconnected systems of diverse stakeholders (customers, suppliers, funding bodies, trade associations, labor unions, NGOs, government agencies, and other interacting stakeholders) whose activities support each other. The ecosystem concept was soon embraced by several other sectors and became central to European industrial development strategies (EC, 2020a and 2020b), including the cultural and creative sector. Among the early studies, Holden’s (2004 and 2015) work stands out for his attempt at a definition of cultural ecosystems based on the “ecology of culture” approach. His model – which identifies three main spheres of interaction, namely “commercial culture,” “publicly funded culture,” and “homemade culture” – has been criticized for limiting the domains of cultural ecology to an analysis of the relationships between the cultural and creative industries alone. It has since been complemented by other studies that interpret cultural ecosystems based on the connections and contributions of cultural and creative organizations to an area and its stakeholders (Borin & Donato, 2015; Barker, 2020). A significant stream of research focuses on entrepreneurial ecosystems in the cultural and creative field and explores the motivations for collaborations among components of cultural ecosystems (Ballico, 2017; Protogerou *et al.*, 2016). Other studies have addressed governance issues (Oakes, 2019), exploring the potential of public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder partnerships (public, private, and civic) as tools for coordination and sustainable exchange among actors operating in a cultural entrepreneurial ecosystem (Borin and Jolivet, 2021; Malshina & Firsova, 2018). Indeed, in cultural ecosystems, heritage institutions work alongside cultural and creative enterprises, government authorities, and local communities, while also entering into partnerships with other sectors (Andres & Chapain, 2013; Borin & Donato, 2015). At the level of economic-managerial analysis, talking about cultural ecosystems at the territorial level means above all reflecting on governance systems and management models (Biondi *et al.*, 2020; Dameri & Demartini, 2021) of the territory and the companies operating there, in

line with studies on PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships) and MSPs (Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships) at the territorial level (Borin, 2017; Wojewnik-Filipkowska & Węgrzyn, 2019), which more appropriately reflect a real ecosystem approach. The attention to culture ecosystems and sustainable territorial development has increased during the last ten years, linked to the reflection on the relationship between urban and rural areas (Cerquetti, Sánchez-Mesa Martínez & Vitale, 2019) and has been further stimulated by the pandemic period when the limitations imposed by lockdowns and social distancing have positively impacted on the need to redistribute people flows and inhabitants between urban and rural places (Cerquetti & Cutrini, 2021; Escolar & Moyano-Pesquera, 2020).

Research related to this last point seems particularly interesting in this specific moment when the pandemic emergency is declining, the sustainability issue is pressing and the need to design new models of development that could lead to a more balanced growth of cities and regions is demanding the contribution of different disciplines and economic-social sector for a profound change.

From a cultural management perspective, it could therefore be promising to focus on best practices of cooperation between cultural heritage organizations in cities and rural areas, on their governance systems and management model, to understand the potential of such schemes for the above-mentioned rebalancing of urban and rural areas in light of the debate on urban/regional development. This research aims to address this topic, via preliminary empirical findings that will be presented in the following sections of this paper.

### 3. *Research design and methodology*

As introduced in the previous sections, this paper aims to address the main research questions using a qualitative case study analysis following the case study methodology for single case study research introduced by Yin (2017). The qualitative approach has been adopted since it is generally considered the most suitable for understanding a phenomenon in-depth and for exploratory research (Silverman, 2016).

To answer the main research questions, the authors selected the case study of the cultural project *Terre degli Uffizi* (Uffizi Territory), a multi-stakeholder partnership realized in Tuscany (Italy) connecting the famous museum Gallerie degli Uffizi in Florence with small museums located in rural areas. The partnership was promoted and involved a private bank foundation as well as regional and local authorities in the Tuscan region.

The case was selected based on the availability of data and on the criteria of relevance for the research topics (it presents a suitable case to explore in-depth the research questions), as well as for its representativeness of best practices in terms of urban-rural development (Suri, 2011).

The case has been analyzed through a triangulation of data sources (Yin, 2017), specifically through document and output analysis and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. The data collected were manually coded through an axial coding methodology that allowed the identification of the main themes related to the research issues.

#### 4. *Presentation of the results of the empirical research*

In 2021 The *Fondazione CR Firenze*, a bank foundation located in Florence, and the *Gallerie degli Uffizi*, one of the most famous Florence museums and among the most visited museums in Italy, announced a five-year agreement to launch the initiative *Terre degli Uffizi*, a major project aimed at enhancing Tuscany's art history by cooperation with small museums of the region. The *Terre degli Uffizi* project was launched by the *Gallerie degli Uffizi* to bring new life to the region's lesser-known areas, focusing on local art history to attract a broad and varied audience: the initiative indeed proposed diversified events, exhibitions, and cultural actions to promote and familiarize people with the region's cultural heritage. The project walks the steps of a previous initiative promoted by *Fondazione CR Firenze*, called "*Piccoli Grandi Musei*" (Small Big Museums), which took place from 2005 to 2014: it consisted in promoting and supporting 96 small museums in the province with funds for restorations and renovation, new layouts of the exhibition spaces and publication of scientific catalogues to raise awareness and offer a new narrative of the historical and artistic heritage spread throughout the territory. The initiative was also described as an opportunity to rationalize, renew, and propose a different managerial approach to the cultural assets of the Tuscany museums.

The project *Terre degli Uffizi* is also part of a larger plan to disseminate knowledge of the region's art treasures promoted by the *Gallerie degli Uffizi* under the name *Uffizi Diffusi*, (*Diffusi* meaning "spread over the territory") which aimed at fostering decentralized, sustainable, and territorial tourism while shining a spotlight on the superb art heritage housed in lesser-known museums through loan and joint initiatives between the famous *Gallerie degli Uffizi* and smaller museums of the province and rural areas. *Uffizi Diffusi* undertook an important activity of delocalization and valorization of the art in the Tuscan territory proposing a renewed model of fruition

of the *Uffizi* Galleries' collections. Through the project, the *Uffizi* worked in synergy with the peripheral museums located in the territory, loaning the *Gallerie*'s deposit artworks to them, to foster more sustainable tourism capable of bringing art closer to the territories: *Uffizi*'s works of art were thus made accessible through exhibitions in local museum spaces through jointly organized initiatives.

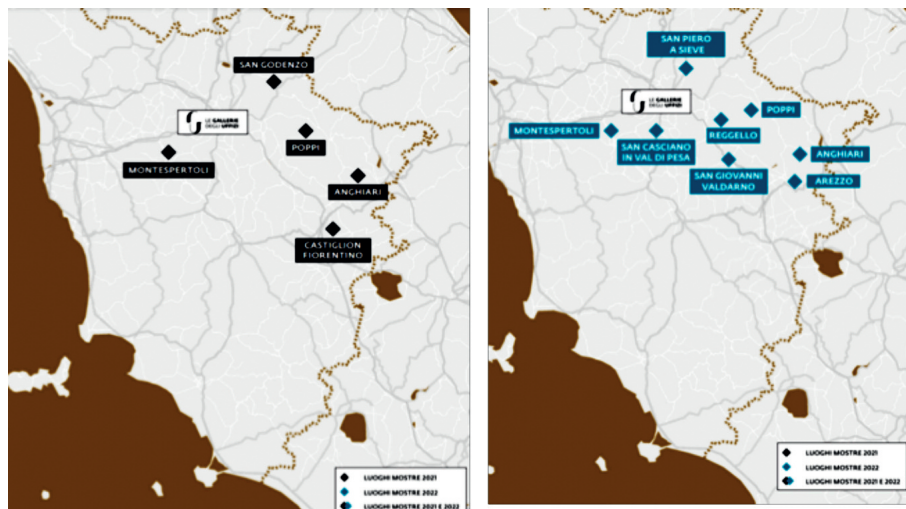
In this broad context, the *Terre degli Uffizi* project represents one of the instruments for the realization of the broader vision of fostering new forms of decentralized, sustainable, territorial tourism, while at the same time enhancing the extraordinary artistic heritage of some of Tuscany's lesser-known museum realities and creating connections between cultural heritage in cities and peripheral areas. The project aimed also at the creation of small local ecosystems triggered by cultural heritage cooperation.

For the implementation of the project, the *Gallerie degli Uffizi* and *Fondazione CR Firenze* have signed a five-year memorandum of understanding, for the period 2021-2026. In the first year of operation, the collaboration took the form of five exhibitions that are part of the celebrations for the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dante Alighieri's death, and at the same time deepen the link between the territory and the museum's collections. As declared by the Director of the *Gallerie degli Uffizi*, "an immediate and concrete implementation formula has been found in the first five exhibitions, all dedicated to sophisticated topics but also firmly anchored to the target territories. These are not initiatives aimed solely at increasing tourism, which was still faltering after a year and a half of the pandemic: they are intended above all for the local population, intending to strengthen the sense of belonging and identity that is at the roots of the highest, noblest civic sense" (Source: *Terre degli Uffizi* website, 2022).

The five exhibitions of 2021 were located in small towns in Tuscany, such as Poppi, Anghiari, and Castiglion Fiorentino (in the province of Arezzo), San Godenzo and Montespertoli (Florence). In 2022, the program increased, involving museums located in Arezzo (a medium size city) and seven small cities: Regello, Poppi, Monterspoli, Anghiari, San Giovanni Valdarno, San Casciano Val di Pesa, and San Piero a Sieve (see Fig. 1 below).

Fig. 1 – Exhibitions organized for the Terre degli Uffizi project  
(on the left: year 2021; on the right, 2022)

(Source: <<https://www.uffizi.it/terre-degli-uffizi#map>>, accessed 20 December, 2022)



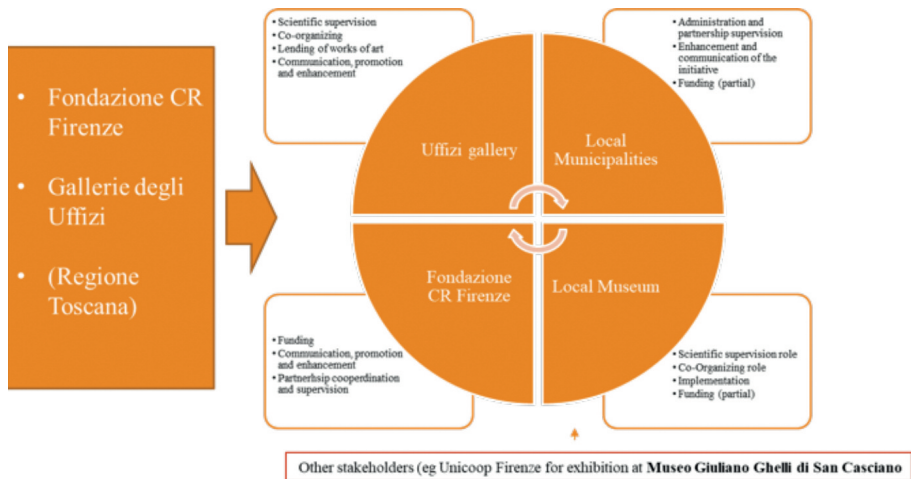
An innovative formula will allow small museums to loan the *Uffizi* artworks over the medium or long term, to consolidate the benefits beyond the usual duration of a temporary exhibition. To ensure the maximum impact of the initiative, an extensive communication and promotional campaign were implemented targeting the *Uffizi* large social audience with the creation of dedicated pages and content both on the website and on the Florentine museum's social channels. Visitors were provided with even unusual visitor routes, made easy to consult thanks to attractive and simplified graphics designed specifically for the project.

In the first year of operation, the project reached a total of 36,131 visitors distributed among the five exhibitions (as of December 2021), and an average increase of 16% in the number of visitors compared to the same period of the previous year to the museums of Poppi, Anghiari and Castiglion Fiorentino (respectively, +18% in Poppi, +14% in Anghiari and +18% Castiglion Fiorentino). According to the results of a visitors' survey launched by the promoters of the initiative, 83% of those interviewed stated that it was the first time they had visited the museum and that the main reason was the *Terre degli Uffizi* event, although they were planning to visit again the museum and the territories in the future. The available data, although partial and concerning just the first period of operation, showed that the exhibitions acted as an attraction point for lesser-known centers,

which also had the opportunity to make their artistic and historical heritage known to a wider public.

The governance of the project is regulated by a memorandum of understanding signed by the *Gallerie degli Uffizi* and *Fondazione CR Firenze*, with the cooperation of the Tuscany region. The organization and governance of each project are however tailor-made for each event and on the characteristics of the museum. For each of the *Terre degli Uffizi* exhibitions, four main subjects cooperate with different roles: *Gallerie degli Uffizi*, *Fondazione CR Firenze*, the local municipality, and the local museum or cultural heritage organization, with the general supervision of the Tuscany region (see Fig. 2 below).

Fig. 2 – Partnership scheme of the *Terre degli Uffizi* project  
(Source: author's elaboration)



*Gallerie degli Uffizi* provides scientific supervision and co-organizes the event, guaranteeing the lending of the artworks and boosting the event through communication and enhancement of the exhibition and related initiatives through its media and communication and PR channels guaranteeing a wider resonance of the event. The local authority where the exhibition takes place is *de facto* in charge of the organization of the exhibition, with administrative and partnership supervision roles, enhancement and promotion responsibilities for the event, while also providing part of the funding. The local museum, instead, had the role of co-organizer especially in terms of scientific aspects and implementation of the exhibitions, also providing parts of funding (mainly with in-kind

contribution). The role of the *Fondazione CR Firenze* is mainly related to funding, communication, and promotion, as well as supervision of the partnership and project implementation.

For the organization of each exhibition, a further protocol of cooperation is signed by the Tuscany Region and the local authority. Indeed, the Region cooperates with each exhibition and related initiatives providing part of the technical services (e.g. part of the funding and granting the use of spaces for the events, while helping the diverse organizing entities to promote the event) and a part of the funding. Moreover, other cooperation had been signed specifically for each event, involving other local stakeholders (for instance, Unicoop Firenze a local economic entity partnered for the exhibition organized at the Museo Giuliano Ghelli of San Casciano).

Thus, the *Fondazione CR Firenze*, *Gallerie degli Uffizi*, and Tuscany Region constitute the governance authorities of *Terre degli Uffizi*, but the project is based on a flexible scheme in which relevant tasks are delegated to small local stakeholders (namely the local authorities and museums), using the visibility and funding of bigger entities to increase the impact of the cultural events on the territories. The coordination among the various actors guaranteed by the two main promoters enables the project to have a potentially long-lasting impact both in terms of local development and in rethinking tourism development as more balanced between the main city museum and the rural small museums. As emerged during the interviews, the project is perceived as a trigger for territorial development, and sustainable tourism development, thus creating value for the territory. But it also contributes to the creation of competencies and skills in the different stakeholders involved, thus stimulating the creation of a thriving cultural ecosystem in which each entity cooperates in a dynamic and interlinked approach.

## 5. *Concluding remarks*

The research presented in this short paper investigates the potential of alliances between cultural heritage organizations in cities and rural areas for territorial development. It explores the topic through a case study analysis of the *Terre degli Uffizi* project, a best practice in the implementation of a multi-stakeholder partnership between a main museum and foundation and small museums and local authorities located in rural territories. The results of the research showed that the project started as a top-down initiative by the major entities, but it was successful thanks to the flexible



partnership scheme, delegating key roles to small partners in the scientific implementation of the events.

The main limitations of the research are related to the fact that the results are associated with a single case study and are referring just to the first year of a six-year project. Further developments could therefore analyze a broader period from a longitudinal perspective and compare this case study with similar cases in other locations to identify common frameworks and characteristics.

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# The Role of Participation in European Capitals of Culture: Various Patterns and Consequences on Impact

*Michael Habersam, Martin Piber*

**Purpose** – Participation plays a prominent role when cities become European Capitals of Culture. This chapter aims at analyzing different patterns of participation and how these patterns relate to diverse impact dimensions.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Two case-studies of European Capitals of Culture in 2018 and 2019, based on qualitative research methodology and method.

**Findings** – The phenomenon of participation is embedded in political settings which result in specific pressures on stakeholders involved, and make some patterns of participation more probable than others. Participation oscillates, shows diverse qualities and remains as well fragile. Actively ‘taking part’ as an intense format of participation allows for impact dimensions to be characterized as emotional, immaterial, opaque, and therefore addresses dimensions beyond numbers and indicators.

**Originality/value** – This article sheds light on the plausible aspects of how patterns of participation relate to impact dimensions, as well as on the difficulties to perceive this relation adequately. Furthermore, we 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, we 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.

**Keywords** – participation, impact, European Capitals of Culture, cultural heritage, regional development, tourism

## 1. *Introduction*

European Capitals of Culture (ECoCs) trigger participation on many stages in various patterns. They are set up in co-evolution with urban and regional development processes and are prepared, implemented and evaluated over a timespan of a decade or even more. They offer spaces, where individuals and organizations meet, connect, and generate knowledge by exchange. Their aim is to provide a framework and platform for artistic creation, entrepreneurial innovation as well as new networking within the social fabric of the city and the connected region(s). In short, it is intended to leverage the cultural heritage and legacy by generating knowledge at present, and in favour of civic wealth in the future (Lumpkin & Bacq, 2019). ECoCs set an example for leveraging these ‘assets’. However, to implement this vision and to strive for a positive impact on wealth creation, the participation of diverse stakeholders is needed. This results in a multi-layered setting of interests, where preserving cultural heritage, improving living conditions of citizens, supporting sustainable tourism and a socio-economic push for a region tending to become depopulated have to be balanced. In our research, we focus, first, on different patterns of participation and ask, who is participating, when and with which motive. A second research aim is to describe consequences of possible patterns of participation on diverse impact dimensions and their role in generating civic wealth.

To bring various processes of participation with possible impact dimensions to the fore (Grundy & Boudreau, 2008), we analyze two ECoCs: Valletta/Malta 2018 and Matera/Basilicata 2019. For both case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1989), a series of expert interviews with executives, staff and stakeholders of the organizational bodies as well as representatives of the funding institutions has been conducted. Other data have been retrieved from official documents and webpages. Both case-studies analyze a timespan of several years because becoming an ECoC is a project for at least a decade. This allows us to describe and analyze different patterns and consequences of participation on impact dimensions over time. The paper starts with a compact glance on the literature regarding participation in cultural projects. Thereafter, the two cases are presented and analyzed. Finally, insights from the cases are discussed, conclusions drawn and an outlook how to potentially proceed in practice and research is given.



## 2. *Participation in Cultural Projects*

Within the literature on participation in cultural projects, different strands of discourse are to observe. Sacco *et al.* (2014) and Eriksson (2019) stress that certain stakeholders already participate in the idea generation and outlining of cultural activities. Therefore, a first pattern of analysis may be to distinguish different stages of participation along the timeline of a project. In a second stance, the management literature focuses on participation in order to improve the quality of decisions taken by responsible actors and the understanding of affected persons (Enke & Reinhardt, 2015). In organizational development, participation is also instrumentalized to reach organizational aims (Nurick, 1982). Cultural projects benefit from participatory action when key stakeholders contribute to planning, organizing and implementation. Participation may as well be a contrast to strategy, in case the latter is generally understood as an overarching narrative with a comprehensive outreach for planned activities. Then, participation is rather the practice part in a strategy-as-practice approach, consisting of small, sometimes hidden and mundane processes in manifold arenas (e.g. Kornberger & Clegg, 2011). In a third stance, participation occurs in terms of programming cultural content and finally, also the involvement of audiences can be understood as participatory action. Biondi *et al.* (2020) mention participation as co-creation, as social innovation and focus further on citizens who participate as co-initiators, co-designers and co-implementers of cultural initiatives within urban settings. They set up the notion of participatory cultural initiatives, analyze how they are ‘orchestrated’ and discuss three different phases: starting, opening-up and implementation. Demartini *et al.* (2020) analyze the conditions of conducting effective participative processes in cultural projects. Our paper bridges various stages and patterns of participation with the impact dimension of ECoCs. Sacco *et al.* (2014) argue, that the impact of cultural projects is always complex and cannot be easily reduced to simple cause-effect relationships. Insofar we will provide a deeper insight how participation might shape various patterns of impact.

## 3. *Two case-studies on European Capitals of Culture*

The following two case-studies refer to Valletta/Malta and to Matera/Basilicata as ECoCs in 2018 and 2019. In general, the competitive process to become an ECoC starts latest six years before the title year by a call published in two or three different cities or regions of member states.

The so-called ‘Bid Books’ of this first round are pre-selected by a Panel of thirteen independent members, resulting in a short-list of cities which get the opportunity to present a refined ‘Bid Book’. Around nine months later the Panel presents its final decision. Afterwards, a monitoring process brings together the ECoC-management of the nominated cities with the Commission and the Panel-members. Latest eight months in advance of the title-year the Panel’s formal role as monitoring body ends. To guide this process, the EU defined in 2006 two specific issues:

“1. As regards ‘the European Dimension’, the program shall: (a) foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector; (b) highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe; (c) bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore.

2. As regards ‘City and Citizens’ the program shall: (a) foster the participation of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad; (b) be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.” (Official Journal of the European Union 2006, Decision No 1622/2006/EC, Article 4).

Furthermore, since 2009 the ECoC-initiative centers on ‘impact’, including participation, subjective experiences and learning as important facets (Piber *et al.*, 2019). However, within the years before the title-year, the situation is quite often very dynamic: Bid Book-ambitions change, fluctuation of personnel results in substantial conceptual changes, stakeholders’ expectations lead to conflicting goals, and (time) pressure grows when the title-year comes closer.

### 3.1. *European Capital of Culture Valletta/Malta 2018*

Malta is a rather small country in Europe, basically composed of three islands: Malta, Gozo and Comino. It has a total population of approximately 520.000 citizens. Consequently, the options to organize an ECoC-project were limited and Valletta – together with other regions – became the only applicant for the country. The project was launched in 2011, finally designated in 2013. From the beginning it was embedded in the long-term cultural strategy, published by the Arts Council Malta (2015). It was the aim of the project to trigger participation and engage creativity: “We need to lead a collective national effort to address current low participation in specific artistic activities” (Arts Council Malta 2015).

From 2013 to 2017 severe political entanglements prevented a smooth preparation of the ECoC-project, of which the assassination of the

investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia is probably the most remembered one. This also had a considerable influence on the Valletta 2018 foundation – the organization in charge of preparing and organizing the ECoC project. Several key members of the organization had to be replaced already in the pre-title period. Finally, the ‘Valletta 2018 Foundation’ presented its program in autumn 2017, a few months before the opening ceremony on January 20<sup>th</sup> in 2018. During this period, also the slogan of the project changed: “Imagine 18” became finally “Valletta 2018: an island-wide fiesta”.

After the title year, Malta established in 2019 the Valletta Cultural Agency as a successor-organization for the Valletta 2018 foundation. This was already rooted in the 2015-strategy document:

“We want to ensure that the investment in the European Capital of Culture programme and the resources in the Valletta 2018 Foundation are developed further after 2018. To do so, we plan to design a legacy programme whereby the current Festivals Directorate within the Arts Council Malta will become an autonomous structure with a remit to develop the current festivals portfolio and new programmes developed through Valletta 2018.” (Arts Council Malta 2015).

It is based on the legacy of the ECoC project and should guarantee a continuity of the long-term cultural strategy. In the mission statement they state: “The Valletta Cultural Agency (VCA) sustains and strengthens the capital city’s vibrant cultural life through the creation of an annual program of creative events developed in collaboration with artists and other public cultural organizations.” (Valletta Cultural Agency webpage, 2022). With the VCA, the established knowhow is made accessible for the future. Among other factors, this is ensured via a continuity of staff: Some former key members of the Valletta 2018 foundation were afterwards employed by the VCA.

In the chronology of the project several patterns of participation occurred. In the first place, we can mention the general participation of citizens in the public life. “We need to pedestrianize different areas, create new public spaces for people to meet, to interact, to actually hold the activities. So, in that sense the city has changed for the better I suppose.” (Impact Researcher, Valletta 2018). Nevertheless, before and even during the title year, the residents felt somehow excluded from the project: “And over the four years, people consistently said the greatest beneficiary would be business, and tourists. And the least beneficiary would be the residents. So, there was always this idea of Valletta 2018 is great for all the people apart from me.” (Impact Researcher, Valletta 2018)

In a second pattern, visitors of events were understood as participants themselves: “The visitor becomes a kind of participative researcher in its own way referring to art.” (Project coordinator 1, Valletta 2018). The explicit aim of the Foundation was to motivate people to participate in events, who were not regular participants of cultural events before:

“I have seen a Farmer who [has] never been to Theatre, came for the first time to the Theatre during the event, and two months later when [the] event was over, I have seen him (..) on another Theatre event which happens to be “cantina”; that was for me one of the most satisfactory moment (...). I have seen him again, again and again. That is the change, we are aiming for” (Program curator, Valletta 2018).

And the most intensive form of participation took place in some projects, where the residents participated even in the planning and the enactment of the events themselves. The projects gave them a ‘voice’:

“So, one important aspect that was you know really influencing the life of the Valletta people, especially in the past years, was change. Basically, they have seen their city changed, and they have very little power to influence that change. Somebody has, however, had the power to influence that change. The people who are the means, the part of the influence of the change, but they were being affected without having any say. I see that the so called/the residents are stakeholders. To get have a stakeholder was simply bent on the stake. Was no choice. They can only adapt. They have no say. And they have no voice. Gewwa Barra tried to, also conquered this, with this dynamic.” (Project coordinator 3, Valletta 2018).

Another project coordinator even said, that the people curated the city: “There were other things, we had a similar philosophy on being open and on being participative as much as possible and letting, letting the community curate this space in a way. And of course, bringing the professionals to curate and shape the input. So, that kind of collaboration for me, in a way, if you say, I, I could consider that a positive impact.” (Project coordinator 2, Valletta 2018).

This was also seen as a political voice of people, who otherwise would not participate in the discursive process of developing opinion: “The project [mainly Gewwa Barra] was like a catalyst for the people and it basically works out well. In this case there was not the government at the centre of the picture but instead the people, or better the citizens of Valletta become the centre and they contributed to make any difference,

from mentality to expertise they need.” (Program curator, Valletta 2018). *Gewwa Barra* was a neighborhood project, where the project members first talked to the residents of an underprivileged area of Valletta, and in a second stance the residents themselves participated and enacted a theater – in their own square in the neighborhood. First, they were definitely hesitating, but thereafter the participation was overwhelming.

However, the research coordinator said, that there was even a disillusionment concerning higher expectations of some citizens: “I feel a very strong sense of not disengagement, but disillusionment by the community, I tend to feel that they expected more, they expected to be sort of invited to participate more actively, probably because the message wasn’t communicated as it should.” (Research Coordination, Valletta 2018). The reason for that might be found in the way the Foundation communicated: “So the dissemination was sometimes done in a very academic way which limited the dissemination as a result, because of the language, the setup, the whole presentation of it.” (Member of the Arts Council, Valletta 2018).

On the other hand, the whole intensity and bandwidth of participation, bottom-up processes and the triggering of grass-root movements were one of the key impacts of Valletta 2018: “I think if I had to sum up the conclusive element of all the reports is the focus on community. It’s the need to have more of a bottom-up, grassroots approach to planning because in the end, if it’s done top-down, it will be self-defeating. It will have very limited impact, limited desire, and it will be just waste of resources, so very simple.” (Member of the Arts Council, Valletta 2018). “And the community programs were the one I think had much more impact, deeper than the large-scale ones of course because the other were spectacle-focused.” (Member of the Arts Council, Valletta 2018). And it was the participation laying the ground for a sustainable impact: “I think that the impact was very positive. From the point of view of participation [...] then at a certain point I also think that they realized this was about, that this spoke a lot as well to, their pride of being [...] you know, from Valletta.” (Project coordinator 3, Valletta 2018).

### 3.2. *Matera 2019*

Matera is located in the south of Italy, in the region of ‘Basilicata’, and is one of the oldest cities in the world, being settled from Paleolithic until present day. The city itself counts about 60.000 inhabitants, surrounded by an ancient landscape, an extension of the ‘Murgia National Park’ which looks like a canyon, and where churches, monasteries and hermitages are located. The main attraction in the city itself are the ‘Sassi’, ancient

habitations built into the rock and declared ‘World Heritage of Humanity’ by the UNESCO in 1993 because of its uniqueness (Baldassarre, Ricciardi, & Campo, 2017). This development is remarkable, having in mind that due to poor health and sanitary facilities in the ‘Sassi’, Matera was even called ‘national shame’ when Carlo Levi’s description of the living conditions in Basilicata/Lucania became widely known after the publication of ‘Cristo si è fermato a Eboli/Christ stopped at Eboli’ in 1945.

In order to implement the ECoC-project, the ‘Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation’ was established in 2014, being in charge of operations, programming and evaluation, and financed till 2022 to support longer lasting effects of a cultural program independently of becoming ECoC or not. Although the foundation emphasized the societal net of the city as well as its manifold social relations with much room for solidarity (Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation, 2014), the motto ‘Together’ in the first version of the Bid Book in 2013 became ‘Open Future’ in the final version one year later. Matera’s ECoC-program was organized around two flagship projects and five main themes. One pillar project was the Open Design School, the other was called I-DEA. I-DEA as an archive of archives “explores the archives and collections of Basilicata from an artistic perspective” (Matera Basilicata 2019). It shows the rich and complex history and culture of the region. And it is a vehicle to re-think traditional concepts of museums and educational institutions (Matera Basilicata 2019 Foundation, 2014). The Open Design School is a physical space in the South of the city, where the foundation, inhabitants and also visitors collaborate together in order to “self-produce everything needed for the cultural program of Matera 2019: from the infrastructure to the service supply” (Matera Basilicata 2019). Apart from this direct aim, the Open Design School was meant to be a place for open talks, open reviews, community workshops and open days. The five main themes were 1) Ancient Future 2) Continuity and Disruptions 3) Reflections and Connections 4) Utopias and Dystopias and 5) Roots and Routes.

In order to meet the aims of a ‘European Dimension’ and the participatory aspects of ‘City and citizens’, Matera combined the interests of the citizens and the visitors of the region which results in resilient and sustainable tourism projects. In this vein, Matera tried to change the self-understanding of tourists as a one-time-visitor of the city. Tourists as visitors did not buy a ticket, but got a so called ‘passport’ by what they became ‘short-time citizens’ of Matera. This should open the door for a better commitment of the tourists to the city and the region. With this specific ticketing-policy, visitors as well as inhabitants got access to all cultural events and all sites of the ECoC-year.

A few years before nomination in 2014, the project to become ECoC began as an idea of a small group of people, founding an association called 'Matera 2019'. Right from the beginning, there was not only enthusiasm, but as well some skepticism if the ECoC-project was probably too ambitious, and in permanent danger to become 'manipulated' by political interests (Journalist). The story is to a large extent one of "political animals" (Member of University) being more or less smart in perpetuating power by evoking the efficiency and effectiveness of hierarchical decision-making compared to bottom-up empowered participative initiatives. Backed by "very strong (...) political support" (Member of University) on national, "but also at the regional level" (Member of University), leadership was executed by persons characterized by critical voices as persons who do not "want to have any forms of interference with the local, (...) whoever could have had a strong opinion, or could be a critical thinker" (Member of University). Some protagonists left the arena, willingly or unwillingly. As a matter of fact, the association 'Matera 2019' became irrelevant in political decision-making after the foundation 'Matera Basilicata 2019' was established (see in detail Demartini *et al.* 2020). The skeptic felt confirmed observing how the foundation started to organize and channel participation, i. e. who is allowed to participate and when to get involved. Consequently, there was immediate critique discussing what characterizes inadequate participatory processes:

"I am aware that it is very complicated to govern this kind of process, but there should have been much more stakeholder engagement in a (more) deep sense (...); a lot of stakeholders have been excluded like the association, like (..) citizens. So (...) in order to engage (...) you need to build a conversation with them, communicate; (...) there [has] been no proper mechanism of involvement of stakeholders. When you involve the stakeholder, you need also to be open to change the plan. Otherwise that's not stakeholder engagement. Why you should ask them if you don't want to hear what they say? Otherwise it's fake (...)". (Member of University).

Having a closer look at one of these stakeholders, the University of Basilicata, its participation was judged as inadequate compared to the "substantial role" (Member of University/researcher) it should play, and provoking non-use of expertise in architecture or "scienze dei beni culturali" (Member of University/ researcher). However, this judgment is a differentiated one, not presented in a black-and-white stereotype, because diverse interview-partners (Member of University/ researcher; Member of University, I-DEA Research member) insisted on reciprocity in this case.

The problem was not only located at the policy-level of the foundation regarding participation but as well ‘homemade’: “The problem is the management of the university.” (Member of University/researcher).

Leaving the perspective on institutional stakeholders, and focusing on citizens we become aware of different views on the quality of participation. Whereas interview-partners agree on how decisive it is for an ECoC in general to be ‘participatory’ (I-DEA Research member; Member of Foundation 1), the judgment varies on how convincing the participation of citizens took place for real. The foundation sent the message that participation was at the core of Matera as ECoCs and gave examples like an online-community to generate ideas for Matera 2019, or an opera-production “with the citizens” (Member of Foundation 1) helping to write the lyrics, the music, all with a “strong community dimension” (Member of Foundation 1), or other community projects which per se had “to be very bottom-up presented by a community” (Member of Foundation 1). Figures on the percentage of involving local cultural organizations range from 50% (Member of Foundation 1) to 80% (Member of Foundation 3).

Other interview-partners who took part in diverse events were more critical. They asked for the quality of participation achieved by the way involvement was planned and allowed for in a top-down manner: “But what’s bottom-up here, I ask (...), there is nothing bottom-up, nothing. If you see other projects, ‘Purgatorio’, (...) it was my favourite one, (...) I won’t forget for all my life. But (...) also in this case people [of] Matera participate in the show, they were part of the exhibition. But they didn’t [participate in elaborating the project, in its planning; original in Italian; translated by the authors]” (I-DEA Research member).

An even more critical aspect of citizens’ participation is seen in a trade-off between top-down planned ‘consumerism’ or ‘spectatorship’ (I-DEA Research member; Member of University/ researcher) versus bottom-up initiatives for ‘real’ participation. The critique refers to ECoC-projects where the format of participation is organized as ‘consuming an event’ instead of being supported to actively taking part in the whole process of preparing and performing a cultural initiative. Top-down oriented planners tend to prefer a consumerism-approach because, compared to bottom-up processes, the results seem to be more predictable and measurable. This is not to say, that the motivation of participants always has to transcend a consuming attitude, which would be a paternalistic approach. But the quality of participation is seen as closely related to being actively involved. The latter is probably achieved more effectively in ‘bottom-up’-approaches to participation compared to events primarily consumed. The main argument is that bottom-up activities have more impact on the individual



because “everything is about the emotional ... the emotion of taking part” (I-DEA Research member). The trade-off between close involvement versus distant consumerism is a value-laden dispute. This becomes clear when interview-partners complain that Matera is seen as “Disneyland” and James Bond-scenery which lacks “respect” for its cultural heritage (Member of University/researcher).

Time pressure plays a role in providing adequate arenas for participation. To communicate with a broad range of participants needs more time than hierarchical top-down planning of events. The nearer the ECoC-title year comes, the more the focus shifts towards ‘delivery’. This has various effects on participation, and further consequences on goal achievement regarding the vision of what an ECoC stands for. There is less time to experiment with different formats of participation, for instance “a theatrical representation with professionals and non-professionals (...) and having also a democratic discussion right after. (...) For me, the mission of the European Capital of Culture is not only to do projects for tourists or big events. That’s not the point anymore.” (Member of Foundation 2) Another effect is, that time pressure fosters a management mentality (and legitimizes its representatives) of a more marketing-oriented functionalist approach to value creation:

“This is some economic value that is created and then profiting. But is there any other form of value? [B]ecause I’m also happy that the economy is growing but as a community I want to see other kinds of value. I would like to see either more initiative in the schools. I would like to see, you know, I’m not saying they didn’t put projects there. But again the feeling is they (...) need to tick the box.” (Member of University).

Furthermore, concentrating on ‘ticking boxes’ probably evaluated exacerbates to focus on qualitative aspects of participation which are less easy to measure or represent – although their ‘immateriality’ would need more attention instead of less. The degree of competences developed during participatory activities, for instance, needs a longitudinal approach to make learning processes visible – for instance having been one of the more than 300 volunteers helping during the opening ceremony, practicing languages, informing tourists and helping to make the events working (Member of Foundation 1). Even more opaque remains the dispersion of these individually built, in participatory activities experienced, competences across the citizens’ communities throughout the city. This transfer from the individual to the organizational may be important for potential changes in living conditions of the citizens in and around Matera via participatory

activities. But how far-reaching the transformation of cultural legacy by dispersed competencies practically occurs is not easily represented by some condensed figures of measurement.

The outreach of transfer and transformation, however, is not only an aspect of competencies built by citizens participating in ECoC-projects, but even more obvious when we focus on the staff of the foundation, because “(...) what is getting lost every time is the capacity building of people working, [in the foundation], the knowledge of people working (...)” (Member of Foundation 2). S/he was not the only interview-partner who was very much aware of the lost potential when participation is not taking place, not developed, not given institutionalized spaces to meet (like a library, theatre, or an archive in Potenza, but not in Matera; Member of University/researcher), or left without perspective for the staff’s expertise to support generating civic wealth for Matera and its region in the future.

There are various further examples given, and many questions raised by our interview-partners, pointing to probably ‘lost chances’. The most prominent was a lack of communication – one interview-partner described the foundation as a fortress with a drawbridge raised (Journalist) – which is directly linked to a lack of participation and (more comprehensive) presentation of the cultural heritage:

“So, (...) we haven’t had the possibility to talk with people [who] decide. [Who] don’t know the place, the city. They have imposed some models that haven’t [been] our models. And they give an imagine of this place [a]s Disney Land, (...) for that I am a little sad. Because we have a culture very, very ancient. And we have a lot of things to say and a lot of things to show [to] people. So, the positive thing is that the people (...) come here; the [in]habitants of Matera are so (...) welcoming (...) they explain the culture (...) and so a lot of people come (...) home with this sort of experience.” (Member of University/researcher).

Although it is a dimension not easily measured – the experiences of people, tourists, getting in profound touch with Materanian culture – it is a dimension of impact on a personal level which may get lost when adequate formats are not developed.

A lack of communication diminishes as well participation in the permanent societal discourse on what ‘culture’ of Matera means. This provides less occasions to create projects connecting with what characterizes the local culture since ages, for instance the cultural heritage in terms of “agri-culture which is dominant in Matera and the landscape. It is Greek, Albanian, the ‘pensiero mediteraneo’ as a non-consumerist philosophy, a different culture from the North” (Member of

University/researcher). From this perspective results a harsh critique: Events with no relation to this cultural heritage, produced by the foundation 2019 representing the capital of culture lost “(...) the sense of the word culture.” (Member of University/researcher) Consequently, there is no impact to expect on the preservation and transformation of cultural heritage.

Another interview-partner sees less of a lack of communication, but rather a tactical use of it to create a double layer communication. Towards the European Union events and projects delivered are communicated in order to get legitimization. “So, it’s a surface. And what is beneath the surface?” (Member of University) As soon as you leave the surface behind, communication becomes a rhetorical but not a participative exercise which could lead to empowerment. To make “(...) this stakeholder really protagonist, (...) I think this didn’t happen.” (Member of University) Consequently, tactical use of communication results in lost chances for participation and impact.”

“(...) the missing point (...) [is] engagement. (..) The level of engagement of citizens in the process I think has been generally very low and people feel very detached, the general detachment in the sense that the city probably didn’t really felt in involved and there is a general feeling that there is a missed opportunity but the missed opportunity is not about the discovery of Matera. It is more about what could have been done. So, there is an internal intuition that this could have been exploding much better to improve the quality of life of the citizens. That is missing.” (Member of University).

Having the big picture in mind, we can confirm the findings of Demartini *et al.* (2020: 180): “Indeed, after the designation was granted to Matera, a progressive decrease in the participatory process can be noted”.

Our second research question aims at describing consequences of possible patterns of participation on diverse impact dimensions, and – in a more general view – on generating civic wealth. What most interview-partners are aware of is the difficulty to represent impact in its diverse dimensions adequately. What is easy to measure are, for instance, numbers of tourist inflows due to the fact of the nomination and media coverage. Or the number of B&B’s established in expectation of more tourists to come. Out of this perspective, Matera was a success but the relation to participatory initiatives is not compelling.

Less easy to measure but well to describe are impacts like becoming proud of Matera. Mere “nomination has created a very strong sense of identity (...) immaterially you feel (...) proud, (...) because you feel the

discovered. You have not to explain anymore when you are talking ‘where are you from?’ Matera. Ah you are from Matera, nice, beautiful. You feel this like Matera is mine.” (Member of University) Similarly, you feel part of a necessary radical change compared to the “bad reputation” (Member of Foundation 2) the South had before, turning it into “confidence” (Member of Foundation 2). An impact more attached to participation is that to participate shows the value of the culture present in terms of “collaboration, generosity, passion, magic but also frugality in Matera. Frugality is (...) a way of life. (...) When you get connected with someone else this is added value. (...) And intensity maybe.” (Member of Foundation 2) Without participation in diverse formats, these aspects of mentality would not be in the focus. Again, these aspects are not represented easily by numbers in a spreadsheet.

What remains opaque in terms of impact, but may provide some legacy, refers to the topic of ‘transfer’. Although “honestly, I don’t even know now how to transfer this experience. (...) Maybe [by] being less ambitious but more focused like. (...) And you can experiment it in another place and because you have some connections (...)”. (Member of Foundation 2) In addition, time lags make impact difficult to present because “you have a seed, not the harvest yet; we still don’t know what we have in terms of legacy. It could be a lot it could be very few.” (Member of Foundation 2) Being confronted with medium- and long-term impact, we could change our methodical repertoire to evaluate impact and “try to capture the quality of the process rather than the output.” (Member of University).

#### 4. *Discussion and conclusions*

The analysis of the two cases with a specific focus on patterns of participation shows a number of similarities, as well as differences. In general, the political setting for participatory initiatives in both ECoCs is remarkably dynamic with direct and indirect effects on both Foundations and the way participation takes place. These effects refer to the replacement of key players and responsible persons, changes in motto and conceptualization of projects, power struggles causing partly paralysis, partly a lack of communication, including a clash of top-down versus bottom-up leadership ambitions of protagonists responsible for management issues. The political channeling of opportunities to participate is criticized as inadequate by protagonist who argue for more empowerment through participation in order to achieve (sustainable) impact in various ECoC-projects. In both cases, we have seen descriptions and judgments

like ‘disillusionment’, that tourists may profit from it more than the residents, or a low level of engagement of citizens and other stakeholders as a kind of disappointing impression. However, it would be an inadequate conclusion to characterize the political arena by turmoil and micropolitics exclusively. A positive effect of political decisions in both cases is the will to preserve the expertise developed by the staff of the Foundation, and to maintain an organizational setting. In Valletta, the cultural ministry decided to continue the momentum of the ECoC-project by employing former Valletta 18-experts in the Valletta Cultural Agency with the intention to further strengthen long-term impact. Matera decided to finance the Foundation for some more years. Which patterns of participation emerge because of these organizational settings, and which impact dimensions may relate to these patterns is, however, not yet to judge based on the empirical material collected so far. Nevertheless, we see an oversimplification and reduction of impact dimensions in ex-post evaluations of ECoC-projects in order to ‘sell’ quick results (see also Sacco *et al.*, 2014).

Concerning participatory practices, similar patterns occur in both cases when quality issues are in focus. The discourse shows a certain fluidity, but as well clear-cut criteria to distinguish more from less quality in participation. To merely consume an event is seen by interview-partners in Matera as a participation of low(er) quality. A high(er) quality is achieved by participating in the process of planning and implementing a project from its beginning. Actively taking part is key and fosters competence building which may disperse and have a community-wide impact on bottom-up projects following. In Valletta, the ‘Gewwa Barra’-project is an example for a bottom-up initiative of high quality where residents planned, participated and enacted a theater play in and about their historic quarter of town. The play was meant to inform politicians and others what the living conditions are and what can and should be changed.

A second observation is the oscillation of participation in both cases. Participation is not a steady phenomenon: it oscillates due to diverse degrees of intensity in participating along the time line, and it takes different forms while the process of becoming an ECoC advances. The association ‘Matera 2019’ has been an initial booster to the idea of becoming an ECoC, but as an influential organization it became irrelevant in decision-making as soon as the Foundation has been established. The engagement of the university started as well with enthusiasm of some protagonists, and far-reaching aims for giving the youth a real opportunity to create civic wealth (Mininni, 2018), but transformed into a much less ambitious involvement due to a lack of top management support. However, the involvement did not fade out but sustained, for instance four

evaluation studies were published on the Matera webpage under ‘reports 2019’. In the Valletta/Malta-case it was clear from the beginning, that Valletta will play a certain role in the ECoC-project. It was the political will to make people participate in the different stages of the project. After this top-down political decision, many events were conducted and co-created in a participatory manner. As a consequence, we saw a continuously rising participation – starting from a low level before the main events started. Finally, in the second half of the title year, the level of participation decreased due to a certain ‘fatigue’ – too many events for too few people.

To focus on oscillation of participation shows how participation is not guaranteed to perpetuate. The way participation takes place depends very much on its context. This brings us back to the political and organizational setting. The Matera-case may tell us not to underestimate the extent to which institutions become ‘personalized’ – with far-reaching consequences. Persons in power decide for the institution on who is allowed to participate and with which degree of involvement, with whom to cooperate, on how the communication with a whole spectrum of stakeholders, citizens and critical voices does (not) take place, or which impact dimensions should (not) be in the focus of evaluations. Consequently, these decisions as well as the allocation of resources are channeled by personal attitudes, values and political background. ‘Resources’ not only mean budgets and staff, but as well attention, communication and estimation. In the Valletta/Malta-case, driven by the background and values of the organizational team, the communication was directed and customized more towards academics and intellectuals, and participatory action concentrated on these groups. Hence, we can conclude, that the protagonists set the stage for which formats of participation are more probable to evolve by determining specific constellations of resources and activities. This is not to say that bottom-up participatory initiatives will not occur independently of dominating resource constellations. But their development will be probably more laborious and time-consuming for the stakeholders involved.

This leads us to the dark side of oscillation, or – as some of our interview-partners pointed out – ‘lost chances’. Often, we do not know about the initiatives not undertaken. What we know not much about is, at least from our case material, how stakeholders interested in bottom-up participation anticipate resource-limitations due to the political setting described, and how they decide on their degree of participation along the time-line – or if they decide not to participate at all. However, in our case-studies there was noticeable regret of ‘lost chances’. A lack of communication or its tactical use, as well as a lack of consciousness regarding the character of the cultural heritage provokes disconnectedness

and superficial activities with little respect for the valuable cultural heritage at hand. Consequently, participation will develop on a low quality-level or even non-participation will be the case. Although it is not always transparent up to which extent an impact is not achieved due to low-level or non-participation. However, experienced participants raise plausible concern over impact dimensions not put into effect. In the following, we will discuss impact related to diverse patterns of participation in more detail.

From both cases, we may learn about the variety of impact dimensions, the difficulty to represent these adequately, and how these may (not) connect with diverse participatory initiatives. At first, we become aware of impact dimensions relatively easy to measure by a set of indicators. This is not to disdain the time and labor necessary to collect baseline data, train personnel to investigate into statistics and interpret responses from surveys. But there is a strong legitimation-function to represent impact-dimensions like how numbers of tourists develop, how many B&B's were established before the title-year and closed after, employment rates in newly established creative industries, social media coverage of specific events, how many pedestrian zones in the historic center haven been declared, etc. The representation of these impact-dimensions is described by one of our interview-partners from Matera as satisfying the communicative 'surface'. Relating these dimensions to patterns of participation, however, shows some limits in argumentation. That more tourists come because of professional marketing campaigns, or more B&B's are built because of quicker administrative permit procedures, are impact dimensions which could be achieved with much less active participation than planning and enacting the, for instance, 'Gewwa Barra' neighborhood theater play in comparison. A consumer-pattern of participation is sufficient, also because many of these impact dimensions are managed by the ECoC-management centrally in order not lose control over this communicative channel to gain legitimation. What we do not know from the case material is, how much of a bandwagon-effect is included (the B&B would have been opened in any case) as one end of a continuum. Or, on the other end of the continuum, how often more active patterns of participation with specific experiences emerge when people come to Matera, are welcomed by Materanians interested in mutual exchange of culture, and take part in discussions on literature or collaborative craftwork-courses. These impact dimensions may develop subsurface, but are usually not covered when impact is represented by numbers and indicators.

The idea of experiences fostered by mutual exchange, which you take home when you leave the ECoC as a kind of immaterial gift, points to impact dimensions based on emotions, which are less easy to measure but

well to describe. The example in both cases is ‘being proud’ or being part of a ‘larger movement’, for instance to change the reputation of your city or, more concrete on community level, to change the living conditions you are confronted with. It is not by accident that citizens in Valletta chose the expressive format of a theater play. And it is rather obvious that we will not succeed in representing these emotional impact-dimensions adequately by numbers. However, we may describe the impact deriving from this ‘actively taking part’-pattern of participation as probably more intense, with more of a leverage of cultural heritage by preserving and transforming it via mutually created experiences, and providing civic wealth through cultural enrichment and exchange. This conclusion is even more compelling if we understand how significant tourism is with its sound entrenchment of local and touristic interests in both cases. Local populations and neighborhood initiatives realize the potential of art and cultural projects for the sustainable development of their city in its region on the one hand. On the other hand, citizens are often much aware of non-sustainable developments like over-tourism in hotspots, gentrification, brain-drain of the young generation, and disdained rural areas progressively depopulated. Consequently, it is important to equally represent urban, regional and touristic interests in ECoC-projects. This will presumably work more effectively by ‘actively taking part’-patterns of participation with a certain intensity to generate impact-dimensions which leverage cultural heritage, preserve and transform it, and hence support civic wealth creation.

The two cases show as well a third range of impact dimensions which remain ‘opaque’. Legacy becomes something uncertain, when you have the ‘seed’, but you do not know how the ‘harvest’ will develop. Large time-lags result in less plausible relations between input and output or outcome. This is not to negate analyzing the relation of impact dimensions with patterns of participation. If some opaque impact dimensions do not clearly point to patterns of participation, we could nevertheless refer to oscillating participation as a strategy to create a cultural potential for civic wealth creation and impact dimensions we cannot know yet. Therefore, we need to trust in open ended processes of relations between impact and participation.

## 5. *Outlook*

Practices of participation in the future may see a shift in perspective. What is lacking when analyzing participatory processes and their diverse patterns in an ECoC-context, is the perspective on ECoC-leadership and



-management itself. If we interpret the term ‘participation’ more widely, we could ask: Who is allowed to participate in developing the ECoC itself and its personnel to handle the success, more precisely “not (...) getting lost because of the success” (Member of Foundation 2, Matera)? Winning the title is a starting point of a vibrant process full of change. What we know about participation from our case-studies is that it oscillates, that the quality and intensity of participation varies in different ECoC-projects, and that political resource allocations support specific formats of participation compared to others. In addition, the timespan of an ECoC is more than a decade. It would be a surprise not to be confronted in all these years with political struggles, fluctuation of leading personnel, cash-flows too late but fast growth in staff. These characteristics of demanding change processes have to be handled professionally. Is the ECoC with its stakeholders aware of what support is needed for its managerial body itself? And if so, who would participate in these change management processes?

Research on participation in the future may reflect on this shift in perspective. This means to embed research on participation and diverse patterns of participatory activities in, for instance, a theory of change and organizational development-approach with a focus on impact. Diverse impact dimensions occur in an obvious relation to participation. To have a closer look at this phenomenon may enhance our understanding of how cultural projects can engage various stakeholders and trigger desired results. Furthermore, this research endeavor could lead towards plausible representations of impact by following the effects of participatory projects and cultural initiatives.

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# A New Accountability for Cultural Organisations

## The SoPHIA proposal to innovate Sustainability Reporting

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**Purpose** – Cultural organizations, which are created to preserve, share and valorise cultural heritage (CH), are one of the engines of sustainable development and resilience of local communities and they need adequate tools to link with their audience and, more generally, with their stakeholders. Against this background, in this paper we highlight the main contributions of the SoPHIA model to innovate the Sustainability Reporting (SR) of cultural organisations.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The research proposition of this paper is to question whether the SoPHIA model, applied to the SR, can be proposed as a dashboard to help the management of cultural organisations to detect the main themes in which a CH project may create an impact on society.

**Findings** – The pilot case study revealed that the SoPHIA model could be usefully adopted in the drawing of the SR to detect and to monitor the main area of impacts of cultural initiatives.

**Originality/value** – 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 SR 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.

**Keywords** – Holistic Impact Assessment; Sustainability Reporting; Cultural Organisations; Dialogic accounting

## 1. *Background*

In recent years, culture has been recognized as having a fundamental role in enabling sustainable development and resilience of local communities (UN 2015; UNESCO 2018). Indeed, culture is considered both the engine of sustainable development (Sacco *et al.* 2009; Cooke & Lazzarretti, 2008) and one of the main domains or pillars to measure sustainability (Nurse 2006; Cicerchia, 2021). Furthermore, due to the social and economic effects of the recent Covid pandemic on the social and economic fabric of our society, cultural heritage has been re-discovered for its potential role for communities to regain a sense of identity and shared values, and to overcome difficult moments (Garcia, 2021; Ginzarly, 2021).

Cultural organizations, which are created to preserve, share and valorise cultural heritage, are one of the engines of sustainable development and resilience of local communities (Bakhshi & Throsby 2009). In this vein, they need adequate tools to link with their communities and, more generally, with their stakeholders for the following reasons:

- to engage with all those who share the same cultural interests and passions to ensure the sustainability of participatory cultural initiatives. Previous literature revealed, indeed, that communication in participatory cultural initiatives emerged as an act of sensemaking that contributes to creating and nurturing participation (Biondi *et al.* 2020);
- to be accountable for the value created, and shared with their stakeholders to gain and maintain legitimacy (Piber *et al.*, 2019).

Accountability is certainly one aspect that is currently less developed by the institutions/organizations of the cultural sector and also poorly investigated by scholars (Carnegie, 1996). In order to be accountable, management needs first clear objectives to be achieved in the planning stage, defined as part of its governance process. To date, however, the vast majority of cultural institutions have developed a non-formalized planning process that is difficult to transform into legacy after a change in management. In Italy, even the State Museums, endowed with special autonomy under the Italian Law, which have made great progress in terms of product-process, supply system, technologies and communication, – except for some cases – still lack consolidated guidelines and practices for developing a strategic approach, which translates into accountability to stakeholders (Solima, 2022).

Given that communicating targets and results to stakeholders require a strategic planning process, there is a problem of governance of the cultural organizations themselves. In other words, the governing bodies

must be the first to show themselves responsive to the issue of identifying objectives for the cultural organizations, which in an integrated planning process cannot disregard the monitoring of both results achieved and the effects of their activities on stakeholders and society (Bruzzone *et al.*, 2021). Which, however, is not yet widespread.

According to the last EU cultural policy trends, the Participatory governance of Cultural Heritage Report (2018) states that protection and safeguarding, management and promotion of cultural heritage require effective multilevel governance and good cross-sectoral cooperation, involving all the stakeholders, from public authorities and professionals to private actors, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the voluntary sector. This calls for a strong development of the participatory governance of cultural heritage, that is to say: new management practices and governance models that seek to actively engage all stakeholders, local and other communities in ‘*open, participatory, effective and coherent*’ processes of governance.

In this vein, the sustainability reporting (also called ‘social reporting’ or ‘mission reporting’ - hereafter SR) of cultural organisations could prove to be an effective tool for planning, communicating and monitoring, as it aims to share with the stakeholders how the organization is contributing to sustainable development by means of the value created across the societal, environmental and economic dimensions. For these reasons, in line with the principles of the dialogic accounting (Brown, 2009), the SR could be seen as an effective tool for dialogue with the stakeholders (Bellucci *et al.*, 2019), or even a participatory management practice (Kingston *et al.*, 2019; Demartini *et al.*, 2020), especially for those cultural organizations characterized by a hybrid governance in which subjects with different institutional logics, such as public entities (i.e., local authorities, or expressions of central government), private for-profit and non-profit entities (such as foundations) and also civil society, participate in defining the objectives of the cultural programme, project or initiative.

However, the main models and standards of SR currently available to the practitioners (i.e. GRI standards, GBS guidelines for Italy), do not respond to the need of cultural organizations to create a close dialogue with their stakeholders for the following reasons:

- they often disclose the value for stakeholders, by rephrasing financial reports without involving stakeholders in the assessment of the value they perceive;
- they do not focus on the direct and indirect impacts created for the community, but only show some key performance indicators that refer generically to social and environmental impacts (e.g., in terms of number

of occupations generated and reduction of energy consumption);  
– they lack of a holistic assessment of the impacts created by cultural activity on communities and, more generally, on society.

These above-mentioned gaps have been scarcely addressed by scholars involved in the study of sustainable management of cultural organizations.

A possible new approach has been proposed by a recent H2020 European project, called SoPHIA (2021), which aimed to draft a Holistic Impact Assessment model to evaluate investments on cultural heritage (CH) and that, we believe, could also provide effective insights and focal points in the process of drawing a SR.

The SoPHIA model adopts a multi-dimensional approach based on three axes (domain, people, and time) to:

- detect the main themes in which a CH project may create an impact on society,
- advocate for all people engaged in the intervention to monitor its impact,
- present a longitudinal perspective to measure the intervention's legacy over time.

The research proposition of this paper is whether the SoPHIA model, applied to the SR, can be proposed as a dashboard (“*a sort of table of Mendeleev's elements*”) to help the management of cultural organisations to detect the main themes in which a CH project may create an impact on society.

Building on these premises, we selected an Italian cultural organization that represents an excellence for its governance model and for the quality of its management: the Polo del '900 (Turin, Italy), and we analysed its sustainability report. This aims at highlighting how the SoPHIA model could play a role in boosting the ability of cultural organizations to reach out to their stakeholders thanks to its implementation in their SR.

Our findings reveal also that the SoPHIA model applied to the SR could become, for the management of cultural organisations, a moment of self-reflection and awareness to identify future objectives/projects and expected impacts, thanks to a participatory process of evaluation (Baioni *et al.*, 2022). Yet, we posit that the SoPHIA model has the potential to trigger an integrated planning cycle to be adopted by the management of cultural organisations.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: section two presents the main feature of the SoPHIA model; section three presents the case study selected to apply the model; discussion and conclusions follow in section four.



## 2. *How the SoPHIA model can innovate the sustainability reporting of cultural organisations*

In recent years, an interesting debate questioning the possibility of using conventional approaches and metrics developed in managerial studies and based on numbers and indicators to measure and communicate the value created by art for society has risen (Holden, 2006; Radbourne *et al.* 2009, 2010; Chiaravallotti and Piber, 2011; Chiaravallotti, 2014; Chiaravallotti, 2016). Yet we need more insights on how cultural programmes, projects or initiatives can contribute to creating value for the society, what impact we can expect and how we can account for the results (Piber *et al.*, 2019; Cicerchia, 2022).

Furthermore, in public expenditure for safeguarding and enhancing our CH, there has been a switch from a logic of spending (“*it is important to allocate funds for culture*”) to one of impact (“*it is important to give evidence of the impacts obtained from the cultural interventions*”). Literature in the field of art and culture policy-making defines impact as a demonstrable contribution to society and the economy and considers it as a proxy for public value and many approaches implicitly accept the supremacy of the economic paradigm (Belfiore, 2015).

However, we deem the construct of impact can be better explained when it refers to the evaluation of connected social processes. Theory of change (Rogers, 2014) defines ‘impact’ as those social changes that are reached and maintained through the interaction of a given programme or project and the changes they have generated with other factors and conditions. Positive and negative changes produced by a cultural heritage intervention, directly or indirectly, intendedly or unintendedly should be considered. Hence, when evaluating the impact of a cultural programme or a project, it is useful to consider the following questions:

- What has happened as a result of the programme or project?
- What real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
- How many people have been affected?

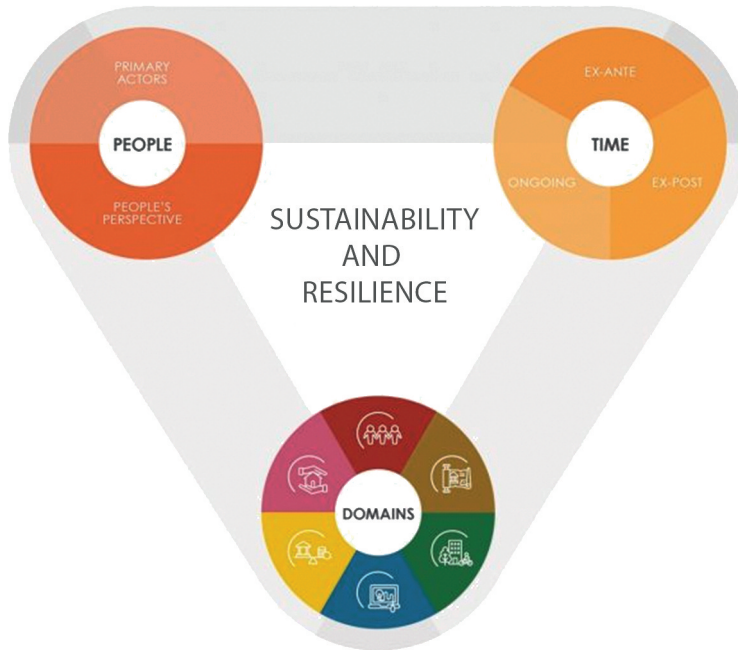
To answer the above-mentioned questions, an innovative approach has been proposed by a recent H2020 European project, called SoPHIA (Marchiori *et al.*, 2021), which aimed to create a Social Platform for a Holistic Impact Assessment model to evaluate investments on cultural heritage (CH).

The SoPHIA model adopts a multi-dimensional approach based on three axes, that emphasizes:

- the multifaceted aspects of the impacts related to CH interventions (multi-domain);

- the complex interactions among stakeholders that can have different and sometimes conflicting interests on CH (people);
- the balance between current needs and the legacy towards the next generations (time) (see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 – SoPHIA concept based on three-axis



Source: Marchiori *et al.* (2021) chp. 4

### 2.1. *The multi-domain approach to detect and account for impacts related to cultural interventions*

The SoPHIA model shifted from the assessment of the impacts generated in the four traditional domains highlighted in literature (environmental, economic, social and cultural) to a new framework focused on areas of impact (themes and sub-themes) that are not necessarily attributable to a single domain. Relevant studies have already highlighted the potential interrelations between the four domains to detect impacts connected to cultural interventions (Yung & Chan, 2015; CHCfE, 2015), as well as unintended consequences of cultural interventions (e.g., Harris & Ogbonna, 2002).

The innovative approach proposed by SoPHIA starts from the analysis of the complex, intersectoral, and multidimensional nature of the impacts.

In fact, impacts are often conceived as unexpected, i.e., unrelated to any planned activities. Positive or negative impacts alike tend to be treated as surprises rather than as the expected effects or consequences of specific actions taken on specific impact areas expressly with the purpose of inducing a specific change.

From the research process that saw the creation of a social platform (Giovinazzo *et al.*, 2021) and the participation of a large number of researchers and experts to discuss on the main impacts related to cultural interventions, finally it emerged the SoPHIA model encompassing six main themes of potential impact: social capital and governance; identity of place; quality of life; education, creativity and innovation; work and prosperity; protection (Fig. 2, and for insights see Marchiori *et al.*, 2021; Arif *et al.* 2021; SoPHIA platform).

*Social Capital and Governance.* Social Capital is manifested through benefits derived from social networks (Bourdieu, 2018), and is an important asset for local development. Social Capital and Governance theme relates to the role that cultural heritage interventions can play in the creation of identity and feeling of cohesion, thereby enhancing the social capital of people interacting with it. However, CH interventions may support, or even undermine building of societal trust.

*Identity of Place.* This theme emphasises the importance of CH in defining and constructing identity and belonging. It refers to the role of CH in the construction of communities (Anderson, 2006) and as part of national tradition (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012). The use of space is also central in the identity of place, both in the context of heritage-led regeneration and adaptive reuse and in the intervention's design and relation with the surrounding cultural landscape.

*Quality of Life.* CH plays an important role in the quality of life of groups as well as individuals living in the urban environment. High quality interventions in heritage are recognized as contributing positively to local communities' quality of life through improved attractiveness of the area, improved connections between people and the built environment, as well as an increased sense of belonging. Subthemes that characterize this area of impact are: living conditions, peace and safety, social life, environment, regional and local development.

*Education, Creativity, and Innovation.* The assessment of an intervention through this theme allows for a deeper exploration of its educational potential. It can be a learning experience which is organised around all three forms of education; formal, non-formal and informal. Within this spectrum, the exploration of what people learn is a question, that is explored within this theme. The arts and creativity topic explores the role

of the intervention in facilitating creative and arts activities. This theme also analyses the facilitation of research and innovation in planning, implementation and monitoring through the intervention.

*Work and Prosperity.* In the last ten years, international policy documents and reports promoted by international institutions (Europa Nostra, UNESCO) have recognized the wide spectrum of economic impacts related to CH interventions. As a result of the interaction with the stakeholders, it was decided to use the term «prosperity», considered by the UN Agenda 2030 to measure progress (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships) (UN Agenda 2030). Namely, prosperity is assessed through the analysis of employment, local cultural production, tourism economy, economic attractiveness, social innovation, and entrepreneurship.

*Protection.* The Protection theme refers to the protection of the CH from natural and human related risks. In addition to environmental risks, human related factors carry the potential to burden existing risks and create additional ones. The theme highlights the need of integrating culture into climate action, through analyzing key factors such as practices related to tourism, the use of resources, and the nature of management practices as part of a CH intervention. Potential impacts include over-tourism, conflicts, increased carbon footprint, and damage to the cultural ecosystem(s).

Fig. 2 – SoPHIA Model - Themes and subthemes



As far as the implementation of the SoPHIA model to detect and account for impacts of cultural organisations, there are manifold innovations to underline.

The first innovation refers to the identification of the main areas of impact through a debate involving scholars and experts. This process, similar to the one that has been applied for years in the Anglo-Saxon world to identify generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) allowed to reach a consensus on what are perceived as the main areas of expected/achieved impacts related to cultural interventions. This should allow an easier and more widespread application of the SoPHIA model in practice.

The second innovation of SoPHIA model lies in detecting interconnections/crosscutting issues and countereffects among themes and sub-themes. Themes and sub-themes are not to be considered as separate entities. In fact, many of them interrelate in more than one way, both positive or negative. Looking at the whole picture and at the interconnections between sectors allows to identify relevant issues to be tackled. When assessing a CH intervention, it is important to include the analysis of countereffects to be aware of (possible) undesired or harmful impacts to people and the environment.

As it aims at generating a holistic perspective, one of the distinctive traits of the SoPHIA philosophy is its comprehensiveness.

Finally, the SoPHIA model builds bridges across the various disciplines involved. This represents a way out of the conventional silos-based approach in the social sciences, which does not imply dismantling the silos, but rather creating areas of controlled merge among them. Each discipline – economics, sociology, cultural anthropology, – retains its own identity, and conceptual framework; and the model guides the interactions among all of them; thus, defining crossover areas and perspectives, potentially able to capture new phenomena and to look at them with enhanced tools (Cicerchia, 2021).

This explains why SoPHIA does not start with a list of indicators. In the classical silos-approach, each discipline produces a list of variables (indicators) to measure, each related to a theoretical frame of reference. Instead, SoPHIA starts with a description of complex domains, themes, and subthemes that describe possible impacts of interventions on CH, which emerge from a multi-discipline approach.

Then in the implementation of the model, the great challenge is to identify tailored indicators that are expressive of the impacts to be measured. As regards this issue, an innovative aspect of the application of the SoPHIA model is the relevance of qualitative indicators (i.e. people

perspective on the quality of intervention) and not only quantitative ones in the evaluation of impacts.

### *2.2. The people's perspective is important to assess impacts*

People-axis is based on the fact that as many perspectives as possible need to be considered when aiming to assess impact in view of sustainability and resilience. Ensuring that all stakeholders get a chance to voice their concerns is seen as a requirement of a successful holistic assessment.

Therefore, the network of stakeholders needs to be identified in order to give evidence if and how their voice is considered in the assessment of impacts.

Stakeholders may include funders, managers, beneficiaries, artists, business and creative firms, educators, visitors/beneficiaries of the interventions, people who live in the surroundings or engage with the area, NGOs and institutions.

The SoPHIA model suggests some focal points for the involvement of stakeholders that could also be adopted for the evaluation of the results presented in the SR, specifically to:

- define a stakeholder map;
- involve the stakeholders in the weighing of the criteria and in choosing the measures to be collected, with reference to the multi-domain framework;
- collect «people's perspective», according to a subjective angle that aims to catch the different opinions on impacts;
- pay a specific attention on communication and engagement methods, avoiding intimidating not-expert/not-educated people (cultural gaps can be significant excluding factors);
- submit to the stakeholders the interpretation/analysis of the results, in order to receive their feedback (especially on those topics they disagree with) to obtain their review and to make explicit the main areas of disagreement.

It should be underlined that identification, intensity and how stakeholders are included in the impact assessment process can make a difference in the drafting of the SR. The latter from a mere institutional marketing tool can become a means of dialogic communication with stakeholders. For this reason, for the sake of transparency, it will be important to preface the SR with a methodological note in which all these aspects are made known.

### 2.3. *Time axis*

The time axis of the SoPHIA model defines at which moment the assessment takes place. The SoPHIA model is useful in all key moments of the life cycle of a CH intervention and beyond (ex-ante, on-going, ex-post). Worthwhile to be translated also for SR, since it might be challenging for cultural organisations to focus on the concept of impact, instead of outcome. In fact, impact may change over time, as subsequent events unfold. A planned impact should be measured ex ante, while an unplanned impact can be reconstructed only ex post.

### 3. *Findings from the case-study*

In this paragraph we focus on the Polo del '900 SR narrative and we will provide some insight on the match between the themes (and sub-themes) of potential impact included in the SoPHIA model and those considered in the Polo del '900 SR.

Polo del '900 is a non-profit foundation in Turin, Italy, with the mission of safeguarding the values of the Resistance and the Italian Constitution, democracy and freedom. It is an institutional initiative, promoted by the municipal administration of Turin, the Piedmont Region, and the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, one the main banking foundations in Italy. Polo del '900 is a multi-level entity, encompassing 25 local organizations; also, it can be considered as an innovation hub, since the 25 participating partners implement cultural programming through co-planning and a constant exchange of ideas among them.

Polo del '900 was previously selected as one of the case-study to test the SoPHIA model (Baioni, 2021) and it was also interesting to analyse its SR.

Since its establishment, the Polo del '900, has published its SR as a reporting and communication document highlighting the contributions of the institutional bodies that represent the founding entities. It is a document edited by a specific staff dedicated to monitoring the relations with the audience and it is based on the principle of transparency and accountability, with the aim of informing and communicating to stakeholders the main interventions and the results achieved in relation to the objectives set by the board of directors.

The latter has to be accountable to funders and founders, as well as to the 25 local partners, users, scholars and citizenship. Hence accountability is a fundamental element for the cohesion and survival of the organization over time.

Drawing on previous research (Asselle 2021, Baioni *et al.*, 2022), the



similarities and discrepancies between the content of the Polo del '900' SR and the spectrum of themes proposed by the SoPHIA model are hereby summarised.

Polo del '900' SR is very easy to read. Moreover, the document structure allows the reader to grasp the logical link between objectives, actions, results and measurements, up to hypothesizing future prospects.

As for the impact, the SR outlines the initiatives and their outcomes, with respect to the following objectives, set by the board of directors:

- *developing and testing models of collaboration and project integration between associations/partners and Fondazione Polo del '900;*
- *implementation and empowerment of the organizational structure;*
- *functional interventions to improve users' experience;*
- *identity strengthening and cultural positioning of the heritage valorisation;*
- *implementation of audience development and audience engagement projects;*
- *creation of partnership, sustainability models and economic networks.*

The themes of the SoPHIA model mostly align with those used by the Polo del '900 to describe their interventions and identify their areas of impact. In fact, data gathering about the occurrences of the keywords demonstrates how some of them are particularly recurrent and clearly indicate the presence of relevant themes: *participation, inclusion, education, training, education, involvement, innovation*. These are, in particular, the words around which the expected impacts unfold.

The search for the themes and sub-themes proposed by the SoPHIA model, the subsequent attempt to attribute them a certain degree of relevance and the comparison between declared intentions and measured feedback, leads to the affirmation that the six themes proposed by the SoPHIA model (i.e. *social capital and governance; identity of place; quality of life; education, creativity and innovation; work and prosperity; protection*) would all seem to have been allocated a uniform level of importance, which stands at the top.

Also considering the difficulty, for the reader, in discerning the different levels of relevance of the various themes, it would seem that all the initial goals were achieved without discrepancies or margins of dissatisfaction. This leads us to suppose that it is not considered consistent with the purpose of the SR to communicate to stakeholders any failures, counter effects or deviations regarding objectives and expected impacts. This is consistent with the lack of guidelines, self-assessment grids and common tools for the cultural sector that facilitate the accountability process of cultural organisations. Even when a SR is available, is difficult to have a complete, consistent and effectively critical report.

#### 4. *Conclusions and future research*

In this paper we highlighted the main contributions of the SoPHIA model to innovate the SR of cultural organisations:

- the SoPHIA model requires the involvement of people in the measurement of impacts and, thus, it can be considered a useful tool for communicating with the various stakeholders in a dialogic accounting perspective;
- the application of the SoPHIA model to the SR could feed that process of information exchange with communities and citizens, thus making cultural organizations more open, dynamic and learning, thanks to the creation of collective knowledge;
- the SoPHIA model, by reporting the results of the activity in the light of the measurement of impacts (positive and negative), may represent a cognitive tool for managers to reflect on the results of their work and revise the objectives and actions accordingly.

The case study analysed revealed that the overarching model of SoPHIA could be usefully adopted in the drawing of the SR of Polo del '900 to detect and to monitor the main area of impacts of their cultural initiatives.

Most of the main themes addressed by the SoPHIA model are already embedded in the narrative of the SR but there is a lack of systematization of the relevant impacts and above all a lack of a holistic method of measuring them.

The implications of our study are manifold.

First, this study contributes to the debate on the evaluation of the value created by cultural initiatives. The measurement of value cannot take place in an organization-centric perspective but must be an expression of the perceived value by the communities that revolve around cultural organizations. This could be an innovative approach also for the drawing of the SR.

Second, this study also proposes a new path of self-reflection for strategic purposes useful for managers and professionals of cultural organizations.

In fact, the SoPHIA model can be considered as a space for action. From a gap analysis between the objectives and priorities declared by the organization and the impact assessment results, it may emerge points of lack, strengthening and consolidation. Hence, the SoPHIA model is a spectrum of possibilities that can be negotiated with decision makers and evaluated with stakeholders.

Finally, we deem that applying the SoPHIA model to the SR of cultural

organizations implies the identification of the priority themes, the objectives and actions to be implemented with the related impact indicators, the milestones and all the operationalization steps. In this journey, it is important to start from the shared definition and measurement of impact, which entails the generation of “changes in the lives of people and their societies” (Ebrahim and Kasturi Rangan, 2014). Hence, a strategic approach can be implemented in cultural organisation as the consequence of this effort.

This last consideration opens up to future research strands to test the SoPHIA model applicability in the planning and design phase of the initiatives of cultural organizations. In fact, it should not be forgotten that the SR is useful for those more advanced institutions that are also concerned with being transparent in their choices. Not all cultural organizations have the resources and skills to use sophisticated and formalized managerial tools such as the SR. Therefore, it will be useful to understand if and how, depending on the context, the SoPHIA model can be used ex-ante in the planning process. The resulting interpretative grid proposed in the SoPHIA model is open and may be adjusted to accommodate different needs in contexts differing in scale, relevance, content, as the evaluation endeavour is typically one with a variable geometry.

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A reinvention of the way space is perceived, building on culture to breathe new life into historic centers, is a rising civic need and a key challenge for policymakers and city managers. This could be achieved by resting on Cultural Heritage, local knowledge, and capabilities to generate new opportunities and civic wealth. A deep understanding of civic and democratic participation in accessing, preserving, and enhancing our Cultural Heritage, is a fertile ground for debate among scholars of various disciplines. The contributions of this book try to nurture the debate on *Cultural Heritage as a Trigger for Civic Wealth Creation and Sustainable Urban Development* from the point of view of management scholars. Namely, this book unfolds around the following three strands of research, closely interlinked:

- governance of cultural heritage as a trigger for civic wealth creation;
- urban and rural sustainable development thanks to stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and alliances;
- reporting on the expected and achieved impacts of cultural projects and interventions for society.

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