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Circular Economy and Symbiosis: The Sustainable Regenerative City Model



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- 229 Editorial
Luigi Fusco Girard
- 239 La simbiosi come strumento di rigenerazione
urbana nelle città portuali
Luigi Fusco Girard, Maria Di Palma
- 251 Prototyping shared living: collective residential
experiments
*Jonathan Orlek, Cristina Cerulli, Mark
Parsons*
- 265 Le trasformazioni dello spazio abitativo.
contaminazioni e ibridazioni del costruito
Giuseppina Foti, Domenica Roberta Chirico
- 281 Esperienze di abitare collettivo temporanee
Michela Barosio, Luisa Ingaramo
- 291 Il Dado. La Casa dei Cavalieri-Erranti a
Settimo Torinese
Simona Riboni
- 305 Il valore collettivo nel progetto
contemporaneo: la condivisione, nuovo termine
dell'abitare
Sandra Saviotto
- 325 Abitare il coworking. re-inventare gli spazi
del lavoro
Sara Riboldi, Carlotta Torricelli
- 337 La "Quadratura" di Heidegger come strumento
di lettura: tre edifici dell'abitare collettivo
Candida Maria Vassallo
- 353 "Un'oasi di ordine". Milano Scalo Farini
Valerio Tolve

- 371 Città storica e città contemporanea: progetti per
San Giovanni A Teduccio
Mirko Russo
- 379 Progettare la città contemporanea per parti
Francesca Addario
- 389 John Hejduk. Nuovi programmi
per l'edificio pubblico
Lamberto Amistadi

EDITORIAL*Luigi Fusco Girard***1. The General Scene**

The Calza Bini Research Centre in the last months has been characterized by an effective cooperation with the International Laboratory on Creative and Sustainable City, recognized as a Research Hub by UN-Habitat, and with the ICOMOS-ISCEC (International Committee on Economics of Conservation).

The general aim is to collect evidence and to support research for informing urban policies in urban regeneration and implementing the New Urban Agenda (United Nations, 2015; 2016). The research aims at connecting knowledge with urban planning processes in issues related to the holistic regeneration of cities and also in social inclusion, participatory planning processes while strengthening collaboration amongst cities.

The thematic priority of the research has been to develop creative approaches, tools and solutions for planning, designing and implementing “regenerative strategies” of cities, starting from cities/areas interpreted as drivers of the city system regeneration: as the catalyst of circular city economy, toward a de-carbonized urban economy.

In particular, port cities are proposed as pilot intervention areas whereby spaces of synergies between many actors/functions should be in depth analysed. Those spaces serve as “loci” of symbioses between port and cities in a way similar to living adaptable organisms. The landscape perspective has been proposed. Cultural urban landscape, historic urban places, historic ancient “piazza” are interpreted as spaces of re-use, rehabilitation, restoration: as drivers of circular urban economy, as key component of the city regeneration through social, cultural, economic symbioses, toward increasing resilience. Economic regeneration models play an important role in the sustainable regeneration of cities. Thus, regenerative strategies will take into consideration how new strategies of circular economy (reusing, recycling, regenerating materials, producing and using renewable energies and also regenerating the cultural heritage/landscape of cities) can be promoted and implemented at local level, stimulating new symbioses.

Cities, in particular port cities, are hubs of economic activity, innovation, social exchange, built and cultural heritage, and environmental sensitivity. They can become key for launching a smart sustainable urban, metropolitan, regional development model, starting from local resources to activate creative processes of circular economy through a synergistic approach, combining the port economic, logistic, industrial activities with heritage/landscape regenerations, with creativity of inhabitants. Port areas/cities can thus constitute the entry point and core place for sustainable development for the entire urban/metropolitan/regional system. Clearly, cities in general, are not only engines of economic progress, but they are also the places where cultural heritage is prominently present. This also holds for port cities, which house a wealth of remains from the past: warehouses, waterfront landscapes, historical atmosphere, shipyards, lighthouses, industrial architecture, and so forth. Many port landscapes with an impressive industrial architecture are even recognized as UNESCO sites. Here, the conflict between conservation of historic-cultural values and technological-economic interests may be severe.

Creativity and flexibility are then required to manage conflicts between private and public interests, past and future, new and old values. It seems therefore plausible to seek the anchor points of rehabilitation of urban areas. The general condition is that cities should be able to develop highly innovative strategic approaches of planning, conservation and management that tangibly integrate harbour development into urban development.

The reconstruction of inter-dependencies between different city areas suggests integrating industrial symbiosis model with heritage/culture economic model, with social economic system. An integrated perspective is proposed, connecting public institutions, private entrepreneurs, research institutions and civil society. Participation at all levels is crucial in this holistic approach to ensure the success of the final propositions to be implemented.

2. The Sustainable Regenerative City Model

The sustainable regenerative city model, which comprises a circular, symbiotic, hybrid growing processes is here proposed as a key element towards the Habitat III implementation process. In the context of planning for “inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities” a specific knowledge is going to be produced for contributing to operationalizing the New Urban Agenda. The evaluations of best/good practices are considered as the first step for new knowledge production on the base of specific indicators, for developing new tools, methods and approaches for planning and managing complex urban dynamic system, to foster creativity, resilience and sustainability of the city.

Calza Bini representatives proposed a specific contribution in the UNESCO Meeting in Paris, September 2016, in the World Congress of Terraced Landscape in Venice-Padua, October 2016, and in Quito Meeting on the New Urban Agenda, October 2016 too.

The Paris Meeting, organized by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS), had the aim to discuss SDGs Indicator 11.4.1, in order to identify initial methodological issues and policy priorities, and to better understand the availability of heritage data, to identify potential sources of data at national level, and to make initial recommendations for a global data collection. It also was the context to highlight some limitations of the SDGs Indicator 11.4.1, stressing the inadequacy of the UNSC approved indicator and the need to develop a “suite” of companion indicators that would be more effective. In Quito Meeting a program has been identified for becoming able to implement the 16+1 Sustainable Development Goals, starting from the culture and the cultural heritage/landscape.

3. Which Operational Tools for Implementing a Circular Economic Model?

The Cultural Urban Landscape Approach

In particular, the Cultural Urban Landscape approach, with its complex multidimensional relationships and inter-relationships, has been considered as a key component of human well-being. The landscape has been assumed and interpreted as the result of a complex dynamic and adaptive system, in which the “relationships” are the centre between subjects and natural/man-made systems; between community and ecosystems; and between community and economic components, etc.) (Fusco Girard, 2014). The quality of landscape has been interpreted as the engine of a new economic dynamic: indeed, as the most important endogenous resource, that guides and affects a city sustainable development.

The Cultural Urban Landscape approach is linked to the concept of “regenerative city” (Girardet, 2010), that involves the ability to “restore relations” among people, between people and ecological system, between inhabitants and economic system (Fusco Girard,

2013). In this perspective, the recognition of landscape as common good becomes the precondition for sustainable development, based on empowerment of the local community and on the activation of relationships between stakeholders, transforming conflicting interests into win-win opportunities. The success of the approach centred on the cultural urban landscape requires a strong background of innovative and interdisciplinary tools, adapted to local contexts to identify and protect the historical stratification of the natural and cultural values in urban environments.

New business/management models, regulatory tools and financing tools (funding tools and financial tools) are necessary to make operational the general model. These categories should be integrated with the category of evaluation tools.

To identify effective tools/means of implementation for the operationalization of the Cultural Urban Landscape as a resource for sustainable development, it is necessary to point out to the development model that underpins the general objectives of “sustainable growth”. The circular economy is the general economic perspective that is proposed here for integrating conservation and development. The circular economy (that allows the conservation of use-values for an indefinite period, through the regeneration of resources) generates economic benefits in terms of increase of productivity, social benefits in terms of employment and minor costs of access to goods, also thanks to social enterprise, and ecological benefits in terms of reduction of greenhouse gases and resource consumption. Circular economy is thus able to integrate operationally beauty, economy and fairness.

Cultural and natural capital are both key assets for the implementation of a new development model based on the circular economy. Circular and synergistic approaches for equitable cities and territories should be implemented to overcome the financial-economic crisis and the increasing social and political unrest, promoting the regeneration of relationships and social bonds able to enhance city/territory multidimensional productivity. The civil economy, solidarity economy, circular economy are effective ways to overcome the social and environmental fragmentation and enhance fairness, beauty and cultural and ecological diversity as a resource for economic growth and wellbeing.

Cultural heritage/landscape has a use-value and a value in itself. Both kinds of value must be exploited to turn tangible and intangible heritage into drivers of sustainable growth.

Adopting a circular and synergistic model means to be able to understand the complex relationships (synergies and conflicts) between multiple values, and the role, needs and contribution of all stakeholders (value providers and beneficiaries), valorising all resources in no-waste/no-exclusion/no-impovertment circular/ synergistic value chains.

Cultural heritage adaptive re-use realizes operationally the circular economy, reducing land consumption and allowing the preservation of ecosystem services. It is an integral part of the circular development model, realizing in practice many circuits of the theoretical model:

- reduction of materials use, sinking the need of new land and buildings;
- reuse and shared use of existing goods with new functions;
- maintenance of existing goods (buildings, cultural landscape) ensuring longer life;
- energy recovery, valorising the embodied energy and using renewable energy sources;
- re-creation of value through the use of parts of existing (ancient, historical) buildings (refurbishing/remanufacturing).

Here it is stressed the important role of the closed loops, also in economic terms. How can we identify the best hybridization process between indigenous/local components of landscape and creative new elements of modernity (infrastructure/architectural/planning

solutions etc.)? The implementation of the approach of the Cultural Urban Landscape system can be extended into the regenerative territorial/regional system: how it is possible to stimulate and to multiply the bonds and the circular relations, that is the circular virtuous processes, and then synergies, symbiosis and hybridization processes between different components/institutions/actors?

The circular processes are those that mimic the organization of natural systems, which are able to self-reproduce themselves and “support” other systems at the same time.

The model of “territorial regeneration” implemented through cultural/historic landscape approach requires cooperative-collaborative behaviours of the various components, if such regeneration is to be realized in practice.

A sustainable development model should enhance economic, environmental and social productivity in a synergistic system. The enhancement of productivity in the multiple dimensions of sustainability is the key challenge for future sustainable growth.

A circular model of productivity, where nothing is considered a “waste” but a “resource”, is the way to make operational sustainable development.

The circular economy is the economic model through which our society can achieve the objectives of sustainable development.

The circular economy model can be defined as restructuring the industrial systems to support ecosystems through the adoption of methods to maximize the efficient use of resources by recycling and minimizing emissions and waste (Preston, 2012).

The circularization processes and synergies, which promote resilience and creativity and then sustainability (Fusco Girard, 2010) should be transferred from a sectorial approach to the whole organization of the city, its economy, its social system, its governance to improve the urban productivity (Fusco Girard, 2014).

There are four main principles of the circular economy model:

- considering the reuse from the design to minimize waste;
- using renewable sources of energy and materials;
- studying feedback loops within the system to optimize the production system as a whole;
- maximizing the usage value of products through sharing them among users and prolonging their life through the reuse, maintenance and repair.

The concept of circularization can be applied to zero-waste approaches to material and natural flows (reduce, reuse, recycle) as well as to wider issues, such as economic patterns of investment/re-investment, or political systems of participative multi-level partnership governance. A circular model is the perspective which is here proposed for the regeneration and management of Cultural Urban Landscape towards a sustainable regeneration of urban/rural system, developing suitable evaluation tools as fundamental support for its implementation.

Evaluation Tools: Multi-Criteria, Multidimensional and Multi-Stakeholder

The research addresses the challenge of making Cultural Urban Landscape “productive” through the development of economic, social, environmental, financial, business, regulatory, management approaches based on the circular/synergistic principles. A set of evaluation tools (methods, indicators and matrixes) must be developed for the assessment of heritage multidimensional “productivity” and to allow replication and scaling-up of

successful practices. A comprehensive matrix for impact assessment would include the following categories of indicators:

- tourism and recreation (cultural events and resident's use of heritage);
- creative and cultural/innovative activities;
- typical food and beverage local productions;
- environment and natural capital (natural heritage, cultural landscapes);
- community and social cohesion;
- real estate;
- public financial return;
- welfare/wellbeing;
- cultural value of properties/landscape.

Stakeholders analysis and a revised Community Impact Evaluation approach allows the understanding of synergies and conflicts between different values (economic, social, environmental, cultural) and can help finding creative win-win solutions (Gravagnuolo and Fusco Girard, 2017). Clearly, it is here assumed that an economic approach is absolutely necessary, but it is not sufficient to identify such limits to manage change (Nijkamp, 2012). It needs, therefore, "hybrid evaluation methods" in which the quantitative economic matrix is enriched with qualitative indicators, expressed by social components (social matrix), and environmental components (bio-ecological matrix), to which the need for development of operational tools at local level is linked.

Multi-criteria and multi-group evaluations are key hybrid tools (Fusco Girard, 2014) for the management and the comparison of the positive and negative effects (Lichfield, 2005; Coccossis and Nijkamp, 1995; Fusco Girard and Nijkamp, 2009) to balance and compensate for the different impacts for all stakeholders (public, private, financial, social and civil). The Community Impact Evaluation (CIE), proposed by Lichfield (2005) is a quanti-qualitative approach that considers costs and benefits of alternative projects/programmes to directly and indirectly involved stakeholder groups (Fusco Girard and Nijkamp, 1997; Lichfield, 2005). Stakeholders impact evaluation has been further developed, for example, into social network analysis.

A revised CIE approach can be applied for the integrated assessment of Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) regeneration projects (Cerreta and De Toro, 2014; Fusco Girard *et al.*, 2015; Gravagnuolo and Fusco Girard, 2017), identifying clearly the stakeholders groups directly and indirectly involved in regeneration process, which vary in the specific cases, and effective objectives/criteria/ indicators related to project scenarios.

In this revised CIE perspective, many impacts are to be considered, e.g. the health of people and the health of ecosystems, that have strong impacts on people wellbeing perception.

The Revised CIE and Well-Being Impact Assessment

This perspective considers central in the HUL approach (UNESCO, 2011; 2016) the human dimension of development (United Nations, 1992), based on the pursuit of wellbeing conditions with the direct, indirect and induced effects on:

- the productivity of human capital;
- the vitality and quality of social relations;
- the fight against poverty, marginalization and conflicts among social groups;
- the happiness and prosperity of the social capital;
- the liveability of the urban landscape;

- the sustainability of material resources;
- the economic growth.

The CIE is a multi-criteria evaluation tool capable to supporting policy makers in the analysis of potential impacts of the physical transformations on “social determinants” to identify the most effective solutions for an equitable distribution of benefits to all social groups. It can also facilitate the activation of integrated planning strategies, bringing together all urban sectors, to pursue local objectives of sustainable development, broad and inclusive (as supported by the United Nations Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992) placing human beings at the centre.

The innovation, that here is stressed, is in the research of hybrid business models able to integrate traditional business centred on economic maximization with social and environmental productivity. This kind of hybridization includes the profit and non-profit, traditional and social enterprise, repositioning business in a social and environmental perspective. Short loops are at the core of social and environmental business models. Schaltegger (Schaltegger, 2008; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2008; Schaltegger and Hesselbarth, 2014; Schaltegger *et al.*, 2016) highlights the link between innovative business models and the sustainability transformation of markets.

The mapping and analysis of successful financial, business and management models through suitable evaluation tools allows the drafting of guidelines for leveraging heritage as a resource of sustainable growth. Appropriate tools are needed for the management of the natural and man-made landscape, in order to structure a sustainable economic model. The private sector should enter the process of landscape regeneration but it needs proper tools to assess investment risks related to the technical-economic costs and benefits.

The circular economy is the general economic perspective that is proposed here for integrating conservation and development. It generates economic benefits in terms of increase of productivity, social benefits in terms of employment and minor costs of access to goods, also thanks to social enterprise, and ecological benefits in terms of reduction of greenhouse gases and resource consumption. The success of the approach, centred on the Cultural/Historic Urban Landscape, requires a strong background of innovative and interdisciplinary tools. Taking into account the above reflections, this number of BDC journal, *Circular Economy and Symbiosis: The Sustainable Regenerative City Model* collects some research contributions and some selected papers presented at the 3rd edition of the International Conference *Inhabiting the Future. Living together*, held in Naples, from 1 to 2 October 2015.

The contribution of Luigi Fusco Girard and Maria Di Palma underlines that the city/territory system, to address the challenges of social, environmental and economic regeneration, needs a new development model, based on symbiotic and circularization processes. The symbiosis constitutes a tool to build and multiply the ties at different levels and, thanks to the density of relationships that generates, makes the system more resilient, more efficient and less dissipative; improving its regenerative capacity. The city, and particularly the port city, is the context from which to relate the different economic, social and cultural components, manage complexity using a systematic approach and implement sustainable future visions.

Jonathan Orlek, Cristina Cerulli, and Mark Parsons explore opportunities for shared collective domestic experiences, using practice based research, activism and performance art/architecture to develop critical responses and new architectural roles and meanings. Two

projects, initiated by Studio Polpo, will be explored: a series of residential performances called OPERA (Open Public Experimental Residential Activity) and a newspaper publication titled “Experimental Residential. How Could Short-Term Shared Living be introduced into UK City Centres?”. How can the making of the home be used to connect the personal, domestic and familial with the collective? This question is central to both of the projects described. In bringing these projects together we hope to develop and articulate alternative architectural practices, which invite collective concerns and desires.

Giuseppina Foti and Domenica Roberta Chirico introduce some reflections on the transformation of the city and the already existing definitions in literature that have allowed to reconstruct a scenario of the contamination of the built environment and on the different recovery practices of the existing one. They propose a more ecological and sustainable approach directed by strategies of recycling of the space and hybridizations of the architectural, functional and technological systems. This methodology was applied to different national and international case studies. The result is a study of solutions aiming to the containment of the underlined emergencies, acting according to the standard proposed by the construction sector with respect to the durability of materials, to the quality of jobs and the project of maintenance, to the variability of the living requirements and to the integration consumer-building.

Michela Barosio and Luisa Ingaramo introduce their ongoing research focused on the specificities of temporary housing that are analyzed in terms of size, typologies, conception methodologies. Historically, the most common situation that requires temporary housing to be built is the emergency related to natural disaster. Then migration phenomenon often determines the need of temporary housing for recently immigrated people not able to access private housing market. More recently, due to the raising of family and job insecurity many people need a temporary housing helping them to find new economical and personal balance. Finally homeless people constitute a specific target and an ambitious challenge for temporary housing. This paper describes the specific needs related to each one of these categories. The analysis of several national and international case studies, aims to highlight successful design and management criteria for temporary housing.

The paper of Simona Riboni describes the transformations process of the *Dice*, a town property, that, in 2008, when the communal administration of Settimo Torinese (Italy) decides on the requalification of the building, the project is assigned to *Architettura delle Convivenze* who, together with the association *Terra del Fuoco*, think of imparting a sign of regeneration to the city. The *Dice*, as temporary house for Romany families, includes the artistic-scientific installation *La Casa dei Cavalieri-Erranti*. The process of restoration, where the same Romanis to be housed were involved in self-building, and the contextual installation, on the façade of the building, accomplish a project which, articulated on several levels, is aimed to help establish a new and positive relationship between the building and its surroundings.

Sandra Saviotto analyses the value of collectivity in contemporary design, starting from the profound crisis of contemporary society, where human being and thus the city that “has to be built” are the main characters and where human being is its promoter and its victim at the same time, raises several questions about the current role of its residents, of the architect and about new approaches needed for the architectural project. When speaking about cities and humanity, as a physical component on the one hand and as social component on the other hand, we should ask ourselves what kind of way of living the architect has to bear in mind when dealing with new needs, expectations, desires and dreams of those who live in cities nowadays. All this makes us aware of the fact that we must reconsider the private

living spaces in the sense of intimate and personal spaces as well as the public living spaces that have always been the centre of collective experience. Starting from these assumptions, design exercises have been proposed for a peripheral area of the city of Avola (Sr, Italy), the task is to establish a link between built and empty spaces, physical and social ones.

Sara Riboldi and Carlotta Torricelli underline that it is impossible to use traditional categories to separate residential spaces from working and leisure areas in the contemporary city, where the idea of coworking does not just bring a way of working, but also a new way of thinking the relation between life and work. Sharing workspaces allows disciplinary contamination and drives to the development of an innovative and creative community. The proposed research wants to be an attempt to investigate “new urban typologies” capable of holding together the many needs of different users which think of their workspace not just as a “production place”, but more as a space for human relations and cohabitation: a place to “live together”.

Candida M. Vassallo suggests an interpretation of the *Geviert*, the “Quadrature”, the original unity of living together through which sky and earth, the divines and mortals are same thing, according to the definition of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Recognizing the responsibility and the opportunity given to architecture for post war reconstruction of the living together sense, Heidegger provided a kind of theoretical guide. After 60 years, this article intends to make a remark on the how the “Quadrature” has actually been reconstructed through a short reading of three public buildings rebuilt after the recent wars in the developing countries: Salam Centre for Cardiac Surgery in Khartoum, Sudan; the Kuwait School in Khan Younis, Gaza; the Swat Archaeological Museum in Saidu Sharif, Pakistan.

The paper of Valerio Tolve sets in a summary form a coordinated set of experiences made by project, research and teaching, carried out by seminars, workshops and master thesis, conducted between Scuola di Architettura Civile, Politecnico di Milano and Università IUAV, Venezia. All of these experiences are applied to the same context, the ex-Scalo Farini in Milan (Italy), and carried out from a common point of view that recognizes in architectural design, in its broadest and extensive sense, the only tool for giving shape to places and parts of city. Beyond the specific aspects of the case study, though still at the center of debates, the interest for these proposals is focused on the methodological aspect (therefore teaching, so transmittable) aspect that they support in addressing the issue of urban regeneration, current and necessary for a sustainable development of our cities.

Mirko Russo reflects on the role of urban regeneration as an important opportunity of transformation in order to restore important spaces and make new urban services. In particular, the contribution investigates the role of architectural design in the regeneration of these places through the projects of the students during the internal curricular internship in the Department of Architecture of the University of Naples “Federico II”, whose topic was the redevelopment of some disused railway areas, along the coastline of San Giovanni a Teduccio, in the periphery of Naples.

Francesca Addario analyses the teaching of the architectural culture in the twentieth-century certainly: the urban project does not structures itself through the definition of a “closed” urban block anymore but, instead, through a block that we can define “open” enriching itself with natural spaces that become the base of the composition.

The text analyzes the study research experience realised with the Politecnico in Milan over a large disused railway area, using it as an opportunity to treat the relationship between city and nature, for building in an “open city”. Practically some projects, elaborated in that case,

were chosen as examples and, therefore, because today they appear useful to provide methodological and theoretical suggests, for additional applications based on the same rule and the same idea of city.

At the end, Lamberto Amistadi analyses the contribution of John Hejduk in the context of the global crisis where our development model affects architecture directly. In an epochal epistemic leap, in which all the social presuppositions that the individual used to found his nature as public man on are liquefied, along with his capacity and desire to participate and communicate, the paper intends to investigate one of the roads that John Hejduk's architecture suggests to regenerate the individual while reconsidering its own monumental and representative presuppositions. Hejduk's answer points directly at the heart of architecture, i.e. it concerns the search for a reason in common between architecture and user, passing via the symbolic and archetypal dimension.

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