

BDC

Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II

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Circular Models
for Systemic Adaptive
Reuse of Cultural
Heritage and Landscape



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Indice/Index

- 155 Editorial
Luigi Fusco Girard
- 159 Matera 2019 Capitale Europea della Cultura:
città della natura, città della cultura, città della
rigenerazione
*Luigi Fusco Girard, Francesca Nocca, Antonia
Gravagnuolo*
- 185 Evaluation criteria for a circular adaptive reuse
of cultural heritage
*Antonia Gravagnuolo, Luigi Fusco Girard,
Christian Ost, Ruba Saleh*
- 217 Multidimensional assessment for urban
regeneration: the case study of Pozzuoli (Italy)
Pasquale De Toro, Francesca Nocca
- 239 From tangible to intangible: hybrid tools for
operationalizing Historic Urban Landscape
Approach
Anna Onesti, Martina Bosone
- 257 Una riflessione sul modello di business delle
Ville Vesuviane
Immacolata Vellecco
- 269 Tra paesaggio e ambiente: cupole in Campania
Gianluigi de Martino

EDITORIAL*Luigi Fusco Girard*

The previous number of BDC once again dealt with the circular economy model already discussed during the last years, starting from the Japanese experience (BDC 2013, vol.13, no.1) as well as with the circular city model that has been defined as physical-spatial-territorial transposition of the first circular economy model.

It should be noted that both these organizational models correspond to a specific historical-cultural landscape: they shape/re-shape the landscape. But the issue of the “active” role of cultural heritage/landscape in promoting the circular model has not been introduced yet.

With the HORIZON 2020 “CLIC” project, funded by the European Commission (for around 5 million euros), cultural heritage/landscape has been explicitly considered as a generator of resilience, sustainability and inclusion and thus incorporated in the circular city model. The overarching goal of CLIC trans-disciplinary research project is to identify evaluation tools to test, implement, validate and share innovative “circular” financing, business and governance models for systemic adaptive reuse of cultural heritage and landscape, demonstrating the economic, social, environmental convenience, in terms of economic, cultural and environmental wealth.

The characteristics of cultural heritage and landscape pose significant challenges for its governance. Cultural heritage is a “common good”, whose enjoyment cannot be denied to citizens, although many buildings and landscape structures are privately owned. Furthermore, the large economic resources needed for recovery and maintenance of heritage goods are rarely available to the private owner, often charged of the additional cost of non-use due to limited allowed transformation. The existing governance arrangements currently involve a limited number of stakeholders concerning the historic, aesthetic or religious and socio-cultural values, severely restricting the use of the heritage properties, and charge the central government of conservation costs. The approach of regulatory and planning tools throughout European countries has been to preserve cultural heritage by preventing transformation of buildings or areas having historic-cultural significance.

“The current monument-based, full protection, and government-financed approach that restricts the use of protected properties and relies almost entirely on public funds is incapable of tackling the vast urban heritage of most communities and of sustaining conservation efforts in the long term” (Rojas, 2016). To turn cultural heritage and landscape into a resource, instead of a cost for the community, the structures of authority, institutions and financial arrangements should be adjusted to ensure larger stakeholders’ involvement in decision-making, to attract private investments and facilitate cooperation between community actors, public institutions, property owners, informal users and producers (Rojas, 2016). The risk is that without financing channels the decay of European heritage and landscape will increase, until its irreversible loss.

Flexible, transparent and inclusive tools to “manage change” (UNESCO, 2011) are required to leverage the potential of cultural heritage for Europe, fostering adaptive reuse of cultural heritage/landscape. Tools for “management of change” should consider costs and benefits

at the local level and for all stakeholders, including future generations, and should take into account the cultural, social, environmental and economic costs of disrepair through neglect, compared to the benefits obtained through diverse scenarios of transformation/integrated conservation.

Costs and values of cultural heritage adaptive reuse have to be assessed and compared in a multidimensional space: the relationship between costs and “complex values” influences the willingness to invest in the functional recovery of cultural heritage and landscape. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify what is intended as *value* of cultural heritage. This “complex value” of cultural heritage depends on the intrinsic characteristics, but also on extrinsic (context) characters. Investment costs are related to the materials, technologies and techniques to be used to preserve the cultural value of the heritage/landscape, and to maintenance/management/ operating costs. The willingness to invest increases with the reduction of costs. Then, the social cost of abandonment – and possible irreversible loss of heritage – must be included in the investment choices.

The investment gap in cultural heritage and landscape regeneration can be addressed through careful evaluation of costs, complex values and impacts of adaptive reuse, providing critical evidence of the wealth of jobs, social, cultural, environmental and economic returns on the investment in cultural heritage in a win-win-win strategy (in which public bodies, private subjects and local community benefit can together).

The notion of “complex social value” (Fusco Girard, 1987; 1997) can become very useful in this perspective of implementing the circular economy/city approach because it overcomes the conventional economic/financial approach, stressing the social participatory processes, including the point of view of all stakeholders and actors. It is evident the assonance with the issues that, during the last years, the Interdepartmental Research Center in Urban Planning “Alberto Calza Bini” dealt with about the role of cultural heritage/landscape as a driver in urban/territorial regeneration.

The challenge is not only the economic/financial management of cultural heritage, but the local development and the increase of wellbeing of people, regenerating the “connective infrastructures” of our cities, regenerating micro-communities. The circular economy is the economy of co-evolution, cooperation, collaboration between cities and different actors.

The circular economy perspective is linked to the promotion of a “civil economy” anticipated since 1765 by Antonio Genovesi in his *Lessons of Civil Economy* (Genovesi, 1765). Some of these issues are addressed in this number by some authors, about the role of cultural landscape in regenerating local development.

An important tool is represented by the Italian Law about “Borghi”.

The 2017 was the Year of “Borghi” in Italy, an initiative promoted by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism.

The recent Law “Measures for the support and valorization of municipalities with population up to 5,000 inhabitants and of mountain and rural areas, as well as regulations for the redevelopment and recovery of historic centers” has the objective of supporting structural, economic and social development of areas under conditions of greatest difficulty. Today, the growing scarcity of economic resources available for urban transformations by public administrations requires public-private partnership models for the interventions implementation.

However, problems such as excessive bureaucracy, the lack of definite times, the delay in payments, the regulatory restrictions related to urban and environment planning, make

planning and implementation of projects very difficult, making them less attractive for private investments.

Therefore, the introduction of new integrated planning operational tools becomes fundamental.

This legislation has stimulated some proposals also by the business world. For example, the ACEN (Association of Builders Construction of Naples), in collaboration with the ANCE Campania, presented a series of specific observations on the need to make the “borghi” accessible, to implement a widespread urban and building regeneration, to explicit form of public/private partnerships, to define an operational model for the implementation of the projects, to deepen the measures of reward and incentive.

In line with this trend, the builders, according to a meta-design hypothesis, intend to develop an idea-pilot of “borghi” valorization, aimed at reducing the necessity of public resources and reducing the risks of investment, assuming a mix of interests between the regional administration (financing body and selector of the projects), municipal administrations (which respond to the announcement with a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the “borgo”) and then residents, immigrants and families interested in having a second home (residence or holiday home). These families, after the redevelopment project, can respond to a tender to apply for a property located in the village, after restructuring it.

This experimentation could be initiated in reference to typical “borghi” of the Region with a population of less than 5,000 inhabitants, pursuing macro-objectives such as the hinder land consumption and green, safe and integrated hospitality, according to the principles of the circular economy that are increasingly spreading in Europe. A municipal announcement could be aimed at local cooperatives to promote places and houses, take care of the rent, reception, cleaning, and breakfast services, to organize events, exhibitions, tours and sporting activities. Briefly, this means working on a re-functionalization of “borghi” through a specialization guided by the vocation of the specific territory (for example naturalistic, historical-architectural, eno-gastronomic, sporting vocations, etc.) aimed at attracting on one hand touristic sustainable flows and, on the other hand, subjects/persons interested in provisioning of related services and economic activities.

The paper by Fusco Girard, Nocca and Gravagnuolo proposes some strategies for the regeneration of the city of Matera (Italy), European Capital of Culture 2019, in the perspective of the circular economy.

Gravagnuolo, Fusco Girard, Ost, Saleh aim to develop a first proposal of evaluation criteria to assess the impacts of cultural heritage adaptive reuse projects in the perspective of the circular economy model.

De Toro and Nocca propose a methodology for assessing the multidimensional impacts of city regeneration projects, applying it in the case study of the city of Pozzuoli, Italy.

Bosone and Onesti, through the study of literature and the comparison between some good practices, introduce a methodology for the recovery of built environment and investigates if the actions on the physical dimension of landscape really produce impacts on its immaterial dimension.

The contribution of Vellecco aims to analyze the logic and the critical issues that have inspired the management of the Vesuvian Villas, with the aim of highlighting possible choices of change and arriving at a new and more sustainable business model.

The paper of de Martino points out the important role that churches play in the baroque city

and in a territory of great landscape value, especially with their architectural elements such as domes, selecting some dome case studies to analyze kinds of intervention that avoid to damage both the internal and external surfaces, expression of historical and artistic values that determine the meaning of monuments and of the landscapes they are in.

