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Stakeholders' consciousness of cultural heritage and the reconciliation of different needs for sustainable development

Abstract

- **Purpose**. The paper investigates the approach and tools adopted by an Italian city, included among the UNESCO World Heritage sites, to involve different stakeholders in the protection and valorisation of its historical centre to achieve goals of sustainable development. It focuses on the role of local authorities as the key actor that should engage different city users to jointly achieve heritage conservation and socio-economic development.
- **Design/methodology/approach.** Data were collected thanks to researchers' direct participation to a project launched by the municipality of Urbino, which involved several local stakeholders and lasted about a year. Participant observation allowed to collect informal interviews, join to collective discussions and reflect on direct observation of activities undertaken.
- **Findings.** The case study analysed suggests how participatory governance may be effective in fostering responsible principles in "asset usage" by any type of city users and how citizens actively co-design and co-implement initiatives of heritage revitalization when engaged in CH policies.
- **Originality.** The paper addresses a long-standing problem never solved: how to enhance the consciousness of the cultural heritage among stakeholders and reconcile their different and conflicting needs in the historical urban environment in the process of revitalisation.

Key words

Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, historic cities, participatory governance, stakeholder engagement, sustainable development, world heritage, urban landscape approach

1. Introduction: the link between heritage and sustainable development

Heritage encompasses all tangible and intangible (natural and cultural, movable and immovable) assets inherited from the past and transmitted to future generations by virtue of their irreplaceable value beyond their mere utility or money's value[1]. We need to protect heritage because it anchors people to their roots (Licciardi & Amirtahmasebi, 2012), it is a source of identify for future generations and can be a catalyst for an area's regeneration through leisure, education, tourism and economic development (Tweed and Sutherland, 2007; Nijkamp and Riganti, 2008).

Heritage management, based on the strategic valorisation of local cultural resources, can strengthen the identity and economy of the local community, create new jobs, increase the quality of life of local residents and the pleasure of visitors, improve the image and attract investors. However, also mixed results can be generated as demonstrated by the usage of heritage by tourism industry (Alzua, O'Leary, and Morrison, 1998; Ashworth, 2000). For example, being designated as a world heritage site (WHS) brings increased visibility and international recognition that attract international visitors but also possible negative changes (Jimura, 2011, Leask and Fyall, 2006; Rakic and Chambers, 2008) and conflicts between conservation and visitation of the site (Shackely, 1998). This proves that heritage should be leveraged in the light of sustainable development, as mentioned by 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (United Nations, 2015), to safeguard local culture, the environment, and ecosystems, while improving the welfare and livelihoods of local communities at the same time (Fusco Girard, 2015; Petti et al., 2020).

A balanced relationship between goals of urban heritage conservation and those of social and economic development is necessary to meet the needs of present and future generations (UNESCO, 2011). Three United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), namely SDG no. 4, 11 and 15, conceive heritage as a tool for sustainable development. They indicate that:

- care of tangible aspects of culture like buildings and monuments contributes to improve urban spaces and make them attractive for cultural tourism industry (UN-Habitat, 2014; Unesco, 2018).
- safeguard of intangible aspects like local traditions and social practice leads to the valorisation of local handcraft and traditional crafts recovery and
- protection of the territory that builds the local landscape is relevant as the landscape itself may bring tourism (like in rural and mountain areas), generate income for the local community and help integrate historical environments with areas of new development (Pérez and González Martínez, 2018).

Despite several potential benefits related to heritage conservation, some scholars have disregarded further economic and social advantages (besides tourism-related ones) like the creation of new associations, social enterprises (Macdonald and Cheong, 2014) and creative industries (Dameri and Demartini, 2020). Heritage can strongly contribute to processes of regeneration and sustainable development of cities and regions (Roders and van Oers, 2011), but there is still need for empirical-based and systematic studies on how heritage conservation and sustainable development can be successfully integrated (CHCfE Consortium, 2015; Labaldi, 2017).

[1] For an examination of different definitions of heritage formulated through the years and in different geographical settings see Ahmad (2006).

A stream of literature that focuses on how to achieve heritage conservation and local urban development at the same time is the Historical Urban Landscape (HUL) approach (Rey-Pérez and Roders, 2020). This approach sees urban heritage as a social, cultural and economic asset for the development of cities. It suggests considering heritage as a "living heritage" made by cultural values and relationships that interact through time (Fusco Girard, 2015). In fact, historic urban landscape refers to urban areas understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of 'historic centre' to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting (Unesco, 2011). This implies that conservation should not be limited to tangible historical buildings but be also translated in preservation of the human life quality, enhancing the productive and sustainable use of urban spaces, while recognizing their dynamic character. This holistic and value-based understanding of heritage calls for integration of public policies and local multi-dimensional relationships as a mean to jointly achieve conservation and development.

Another stream of research investigating how to preserve and leverage heritage refers to the field of public management. Recent research found out that cooperation and participatory approaches better contribute to achieve preservation and economic development (Biondi and Lapsley, 2014; Biondi et al., 2020; Dameri and Moggi, 2019). One limit of past studies on heritage public policies is their top-down approach, i.e., they assume that heritage conservation and valorisation have to be planned and implemented by government authorities and often report examples of centralized planning. However, this assumption can be risky. As highlighted by Loulansky (2006), the valorisation of both tangible and intangible aspects of culture needs the involvement of the people living in or visiting the location. In this vein, a keystone is the participation of the local community in the decision-making process regarding cultural heritage protection and valorisation (Uroševic, 2015.)

By bringing together two apparently disengaged streams of literature (Jones and Evans, 2011), i.e., public management literature on participatory governance and studies on historical urban landscape, we believe that it is possible to better understand how to strategically use the city's more valuable assets consisting of its unique cultural, historical and natural heritage.

In details, drawing from the assumption that a more participatory approach could generate better results, the paper aims to understand how a municipality lacking for financial resources (and therefore unable to design and implement relevant strategic plans of development) may promote projects that contribute to achieve heritage conservation and socio-economic development by engaging different stakeholders. 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 – included in the list of World Heritage sites. The city represents an interesting case study because it is not fully developed from a tourism perspective as it could be and aims to achieve an economic regeneration process investing in cultural heritage conservation and revitalization. Findings suggest that small cultural initiatives may enhance the consciousness of the cultural heritage among stakeholders and open up a dialogue to reconcile their different and conflicting needs in the historical urban environment.

Findings also suggest that it is fundamental to focus on people (not only monuments), functions (not objects) and sustainable use (not only preservation) of buildings and other objects involving inhabitants, tourists and any key stakeholders that can jointly contribute to community and economic revitalization. Encouraging

participation of local people in the preservation of their heritage is actually part of the mission of WHSs (World Heritage Sites) (UNESCO, 2010) and the case study here analysed reports how sustainable heritage-related projects shall be based on multi-actor involvement (Ashley and Crowther, 2012).
The article is structured as follows. First, we introduce the studies that theorize how cities, i.e., local governments, should valorise heritage and foster sustainable development. Second, after presenting the methodological approach, we describe and discuss the experience of the city of Urbino (Italy) whose specific historic urban matrix fits into the HUL approach, to shed light on the results driven by a participatory governance approach applied to a heritage-centred development project. Finally, we introduce some reflections and conclusions.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Protection and valorisation of cultural heritage (CH) in historical cities according to the Historical Urban Landscape approach

Both UNESCO and ICOMOS agree that cultural heritage (CH) – defined as material and immaterial representations of cultures that range from monuments and artefacts (tangible aspects) to landscapes, routes, languages, festivals and practices (intangible aspects) – has the potential for socio-economic development (Vecco, 2010; Hribar et al., 2015; Petti et al., 2019). Within the current discourse on the transformation of CH in a driving force for development (Rodwell, 2003 and 2007), it is demonstrated that heritage sites provide a range of both market and non-market benefits to society that, in turn, generate opportunities for policy interventions regarding the conservation and promotion of the sites themselves (Alezandrhakis et al., 2019).
CH has to be valorised because it is an important catalyst for growth, employment, social cohesion and local development. For example, valorisation of historic city centres may enhance real estate values for their uniqueness and 'sense of place'. Moreover, historical centres may act as enablers for social cohesion, inclusion and equity when citizens associate the historic environment with a shared identity and attachment to place (Loulansky, 2006; Echter, 2015).
Recently, CH has been acknowledged as a key component of the city system and viewed as a dynamic, complex and adaptive subsystem that evolves over time due to interdependences between human, natural, social and other types of capital, circular processes and synergies (ICOMOS, 2015; Fusco Girard et al., 2015; Fusco Girard, 2013). Therefore, many actors and activities affect CH sites (Carbone, 2016). This complexity should be managed adequately to protect and valorise heritage at the same time.
Historic urban landscape (HUL) is a recent approach proposed by UNESCO (2011) that belongs to this line of thought. HUL suggests that it is possible to integrate CH conservation and sustainable socio-economic development of cities (Greffe, 2009) if we recognize the urban landscape as an “organism” made of complex characters, and multidimensional inter-relationships (Veldpaus and Pereira Roders, 2014).
The attempt to integrate sustainable development with the conservation and protection of CH of cities has been made by the UN-Habitat New Urban Agenda, which highlighted the role of HUL for the achievement of many SDGs. The role of HUL in local development processes has been recognized because «cultural urban heritage/landscape provides quality, sense and meanings to the urbanization

processes, promoting the implementation of “places” as attractive (economic/social/cultural) spaces in the city/metropolitan areas, where many plus values are produced» (UN-Habitat, 2014, p. 49). Accordingly, HUL is intended as a driver for urban development because it contributes to reduce poverty, increase local employment (through sustainable tourism), regenerate local economy (by fostering innovative activities, such as creative industries; Dameri and Demartini, 2020), drive social innovation (Jung et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2011; Voorberg et al., 2015) and make cities more inclusive, safe and sustainable (Fusco Girard, 2015).
The HUL approach has been applied to large and small cities, to old and modern settings. While its concept of heritage doesn’t change within different contexts, its implementation varies instead. Not all the six critical steps proposed by Unesco (UNESCO, 2015) to implement the HUL approach are always applied (Rey-Pérez and Roders, 2020). However, the second step is deemed as particularly important as it defines the values and attributes that all stakeholders agree to protect as should emerge from stakeholder consultations and participatory planning initiatives. Participation emerges as fundamental to operationalize an active approach to HUL conservation (Tas et al., 2009; Aas et al., 2005). In this vein, the HUL approach emphasises the role of stakeholders and the local community to lead to a democratic model of urban governance (Kazepov, 2005) resting on participation of different actors. It requires new governance approaches for planning and managing complex and dynamic urban systems to achieve the most effective integration between CH and socio-economic development and reduce the conflict between specific interests and general ones.

2.2 Participatory governance and multistakeholder involvement to trigger CH policies

Participatory governance is a concept born in public policy and public management studies that refers to the democratic mechanisms used to involve citizens in public policy-making processes. Sometimes referred as collaborative, citizen-centered or shared governance (Del Baldo and Demartini, 2012 and 2018), its distinctive element is the attempt to give a deliberative power to people (Fischer, 2006; Gustafson and Herttig, 2016). This type of governance is multi-actors in nature and rests on social dialogue and socio-economic inclusion (Sacco et al., 2014; Sacco et al., 2019). To be effective it requires vertical and horizontal subsidiarity and partnerships, thus moving from hierarchical (top-down) forms of policy planning to interactive cooperation based on the involvement of multiple stakeholders (Ashley and Crowther, 2012).
The form and functioning of this type of governance vary depending on the contextual setting and the specific task or purpose they are set up to achieve, e.g. information seeking, policy formulation, resource exchange or development of temporary projects (Hysing, 2020).
Both empirical and theoretical-based studies indicate that forms of participatory governance to pursue the common good (intended as the wellbeing of the community at large, the local community and its components) need for institutional contexts where networks formed by a large set of actors - public bodies, not-for-profit organizations, private enterprises and citizens - are involved in policy making and contribute to deliver public goods such as education and culture (the so called commons; see: Hess, 2012; Euler, 2018), to manage related issues, i.e. the consumption and use of environmental assets (Winter, 2006; Romeiro and Costa, 2010; Bramwell, 2005 Habish and Loza Adaui, 2013) and generate social innovation

(Googins, 2013; Grieshuber, 201). Networks, whose goals are to promote and operationalize sustainable development, are considered as assets of the relational capital of local areas (Lerro and Schiuma, 2009), and are appreciated as strategic knowledge resources affecting a territorial system's performance and its processes of value creation.

Prior research in the field of public management has pointed out the emergence of so called 'hybrid forms' of local governance based on networks where public and private actors cooperate. These networks contribute in the delivery of public services (Hood 1991; Rhodes, 1997; O'Flynn, 2007, Kooiman, 1993; Beaumont and Dredge 2010; Zapata and Hall 2012) and adopt mechanisms inspired by the stakeholder theory construct (Freeman et al., 2010), such as multi-stakeholder forums, to identify solutions and overcome fragmented views.

With reference to CH, several empirically-based studies (EAHTR, 2007; ICOMOS, 2015) point out that collaborative forms of governance developed over time and adjusted to the local context are among the conditions under which the heritage of historic city is being preserved in urban regeneration programmes (Uroševic´, 2015; De Medici et al., 2018; Dameri and Demartini 2020). Namely, "the shift of the governance model of the cultural sector from a "micro" perspective to a "meso" perspective, involving multiple partners and stakeholders, seems to manage better with the traditional reliance of the sector on public funding and private sponsorships and with the new opportunities offered by regional projects of culture-led regeneration and development" (Dameri and Demartini, 2020, p. 4).

A form of governance that imply participation of different actors - from public sector to private stakeholders and civil society - to co-design CH policies and programmes and use CH as a resource for community and territorial development, is not easy to implement. In order to consult, enrol and obtain active contribution to decision making from stakeholders when dealing with CH, it is necessary to build a shared vision to anchor the goals and norms of heritage preservation and revitalisation.

The HUL approach indicates that to leverage city development while conserving places, it is necessary to (first) identify and (second) share values of the local community and use them as "the engine" to activate circular processes and trigger synergies between different city actors and points of views that promote resilience, creativity and thus urban development in a sustainable way. Collaboration based on shared values is fundamental (Nyseth and Sognnaes, 2013; Dubini et al., 2012; Sacco et al., 2019; Biondi et al., 2020) because critical features relating to the combination of conservation and development of historic towns (like the loss of identity and abandonment of traditional vocational activities when pursuing globalization or overexploitation and gentrification when increasing tourism flows) (Dameri and Moggi, 2019) call for balancing the interests of different stakeholders through coherent and shared solutions.

For example, research investigating the economic, physical and socio-cultural changes resulting from transforming CH into a tourism product (Greenwood, 1989) suggests that besides positive perceptions tied to tourism's potential for job creation, income generation and enhanced community infrastructure, there are also negative perceptions due to socio-cultural and environmental costs (Andriotis and Vaughan, 2003; Andereck and Vogt, 2000). When a tourism destination becomes a WHS, local people have positive attitudes because this status brings huge prestige at international and national level, it positively influences the decisions of local planning (Smith, 2002) and leads to an increase in local people's pride in their culture (Evans, 2002; Shackley, 1998). On the other hand, Orbasli (2000) warns that becoming a

WHS may place additional pressures on the physical and natural environment, and therefore may negatively impact local people living in the site. Therefore, more opportunities for local people to express their opinions in the decision-making process of local strategies should be created. Policy makers should remove the cultural barrier to community integration and participation. Residents should be empowered and made fully conscious about the importance to adopt a proactive role (Del Chiappa et al., 2016; Ghasemi, 2019).

Cities are the contexts within which people engage in participatory governance and politics (Kazepov, 2005; Piattoni, 2010). The direct involvement of ordinary citizens in the initiation, formulation, implementation and monitoring of public policy is increasing throughout the world (Kazepov, 2010). Bottom-up initiatives are considered more authentic expressions of citizen's sentiment, claims and demands. The synergistic benefits of local participation may transform the urban context into a social laboratory within which increased freedom for the grassroots to experiment encourages social innovation in complex and diversified societies (Silver et al., 2010, p. 456). However, top-down collaborative governance initiated by the government is more frequent. In this case public managers play a more direct role in structuring and managing the collaboration, which is used as an instrument to strategically and purposively address complex problems (Hysing, 2020).

EU institutions and member states at a national, regional, and local level recommend the adoption of an integrated approach to heritage based on participatory governance as well as a growing body of literature across a diverse range of disciplines (Spence and Schmidpeter, 2003; Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Biondi et al., 2020). Several EU projects have been based on collaborative forms of governance for regeneration and adaptive reuse of historic city centres (Dameri and Moggi, 2019). These projects (such as the "Forget Heritage") have experimented participative management of urban cultural commons, overcoming traditional and centralised model of cultural public management (Zan et al., 2007). They inspire the replicability of successful models of heritage-led regeneration initiatives, addressing the specific needs of historic city centres, delivering new ways to access and experience CH, ensuring environmental sound solutions, city branding, bottom-up participation, while increasing liveability and safety in the involved areas.

3. Method and case study description

3.1. Research method

In accordance with the theoretical background described in section 2, this paper aims to investigate the governance of a city recognized as World Heritage site since 1998, which is complicated by the fact that it requires to catalyse different subjects and views on issues pertaining to the role of culture and urban development, as well as aspects of urban management and tourism development (Evans, 2002; Ginzarly et al., 2019).

In details, the analysis is centred on the historic centre of the city of Urbino (Italy), recognized as UNESCO World Heritage site. The choice of Urbino is related to its international fame as city representing the Italian Renaissance art and architecture, which the Municipality is still trying to leverage for tourism development. Moreover, the Municipality has to deal with different types of city users characterized by different needs: university students that live in the historical centre and call for modern facilities, permanent inhabitants that live in the countryside and access the

historical centre to work or simply enjoy shops and services, and tourists that seek easy access to the old part of the city.
A qualitative research approach based on case study analysis appeared as the most appropriate because, as stated by Yin (1994), it allows to collect information on emerging issues and provides a link between theory and practice. Acknowledging that the small-scale nature of case study research hinders generalization and explanatory power, we consider the selected case study as exploratory.
Drawing from the assumption that a more participatory approach governed by local authorities (and not led by national governments) could generate better results, the experience of the selected case study is analysed in light of the six steps proposed by Unesco (Unesco, 2015) to implement the HUL approach: (1) mapping natural, cultural and human resources (2) the incorporation of the community in decision-making on which heritage values (landscape, economic, social, environmental, etc.) to protect and why, (3) the consideration of vulnerabilities that affect the heritage, (4) the integration of information generated (heritage values and vulnerability status) in an urban development framework, (5) the prioritising of actions for conservation and development and (6) the establishing of local partnerships (Rey-Pérez and Roders, 2020).
These six implementation steps have been developed to help design a Unesco site management plan (as performed by the city of Urbino when drafting its Management Plan of 2013), but the relevance of the HUL approach make them also potentially helpful in the design of specific projects or initiatives that have the goal of integrating conservation with development. Therefore, presence or absence of these steps are searched in a city project called “Urbino per bene”. Data has been collected from direct participation of one of the authors to the project (from 2018 to 2019 included). This allowed to collect information on the challenges faced, partners involved, and tools used (regulatory, institutional and technical) to engage different stakeholders in the goal of preserving the heritage while sustaining local development. Additional insights were obtained from researchers’ personal notes took at seminars and public speaking, informal interviews and textual analysis on official documents and minutes of project meetings. In total, 6 interviews were organised: with two municipality representatives (the coordinator of the city’s urban planning department and the tourism councilor), the principal of a local high school involved, the director of the higher education organization specialized in Visual Communication and Graphic design and two members of local associations. Interviews were unstructured to obtain more spontaneous accounts of the projects. Duration was variable (from 10 minutes to 40 minutes) depending on the willingness of the subject to describe its point of view. Both researchers participated to the interviews that were transcribed to better pick up on insights and check real participation to the project. Extracts from the interviews are used in the following description of the case study to offer a real voice from stakeholders involved.

3.2. Case study description

Urbino is a historic city dating back to the 15th Century located in the Marche region. It has a brick-built historic centre delimited by Renaissance walls, which are still preserved in their integrity. The city has some buildings of extraordinary beauty, such as the Palazzo Ducale, the Cathedral and a complex of oratories, which keep numerous art works and are flanked by numerous properties that belong to the category of protected cultural heritage. Urbino was the birthplace of the master

painter Raphael and attracted some of the most outstanding humanist scholars and artists of the Renaissance, who created here an exceptional urban complex of remarkable homogeneity.

Despite its beauty, Urbino is not a developed tourism destination. Urbino seems unable to attract viable levels of national and international visitors and convince them to stay overnight. Statistical data indicate less than 90.000 arrivals per year in Urbino (Table 1) and the trend is decreasing in the last 5 years. According to a survey performed by Conti et al. (2018), only 34% of tourists are foreigners and they mainly arrive from nearby France, Germany and UK, while nearby cities located in Umbria and Tuscany attract tourists from Asia and Americas. They also found that only 35% of visitors stay in Urbino. Half of arrivals (Table 1) refers to tourists staying in a city hotel for only two days. The rest of arrivals refers to alternative accommodations, mainly located in the countryside, where tourists spend about ten days. The main tourist attraction of Urbino, the Palazzo Ducale, welcomed 178.000 people on average every year from 2010 to 2016. However, tourism flows are irregular. The visitors' carrying capacity of Palazzo Ducale is not fully used (Cimnaghi and Mussini, 2015) but in some special occasions (e.g., exhibitions, free of charge entrance days) the site was not able to manage the large amount of tourisms, as happened during the latest exposition on Raphael that attracted 23.000 visitors in one single day. Nor local facilities (e.g., restaurants, cafes, transport systems) seem designed to welcome large tourist flows.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

The city's economy does not rely on tourism but on the University of Urbino, founded in 1506 and counting about 13,000 students enrolled. The University generates jobs and other satellite activities (Maggioni, 2017; D'Alpaos, et al., 2017). Many permanent inhabitants are employed at the University premises located in old buildings of the city centre. Several permanent inhabitants rent their old brick houses to students preferring to move out from the city walls. Only 1,000 out of the total 14,000 permanent inhabitants live in the historical centre. Since classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and other university offices are located in old buildings of the historical centre, most of the architectural and tangible heritage is continuously used by many students in their daily life. Their presence, together with irregular tourism flows and university graduation weeks that generate the arrival of many occasional visitors (friends and relatives of students), may put conservation of the artistic heritage at risk. At the same time, it challenges the local cultural heritage because it transformed shops and urban spaces to respond to students' specific needs (i.e., more restaurants, pubs and bars and less traditional handcraft shops and art galleries). Local citizens abandon the habit of having a walk in the centre and lose their attachment to the place.

To sum up, the preservation of Urbino's historical city centre is threatened by two type of pressures: irregular tourism flows and presence of a large amount of students (Maggioni, 2017). Civic respect for heritage preservation is therefore important. Permanent inhabitants could be facilitators but their relationship with university students' presence is sometimes in conflict. As many other small cities attracting a relevant number of students, the municipality of Urbino has difficulties in putting together the interests of these different subjects. While both local governments and the University want a conducive and welcoming environment for students because their presence sustain local economy, many permanent inhabitants (and their elected

political representatives) want to limit the presence of students that compete for the same space and services due to the so-called 'not in my back yard' syndrome.
An important attempt made by the municipality to address the issue of achieving heritage conservation and local development by integrating different stakeholders' need is represented by a pioneer project called "Urbino per Bene" (translation: "Urbino the right way"), which is described in the next section.

4. The implementation and results achieved by the project "Urbino per bene"

4.1. The project in brief

At the end of 2017 the municipality of Urbino (with its two departments of urban planning and tourism development) launched a one-year project to sensitize permanent inhabitants, traders, visitors and students – the key stakeholders and users of the city – to the preservation of the artistic and cultural heritage of the city. The goal was to:

1. make them aware of being in a protected UNESCO site,
2. promote good behavioural practices among "city users" (mainly permanent inhabitants, students, visitors) and
3. improve active participation of all type of "city users" in the protection of the urban and natural landscape.

The project follows a similar scheme launched by Florence from 2016 to 2018 and followed by other historical cities designated as UNESCO sites. It can be defined as a project of participatory governance because it involves national (like the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism-MIBAC) and local authorities on one hand, citizens of Urbino represented by associations and local institutions on the other hand (see the official project partners displayed on Fig. 1), which were called to work in partnership. The triggering event that pushed the municipality to start the project was the increasing amount of vandalism and damages to urban furnishings occurred in the preceding years.

Figure 1- *The first official presentation of the project "Urbino the right way" with all partners involved*

The project abides and temporally follows two existing milestone documents regarding the city's heritage conservation: i) the Unesco site management plan required by Unesco to ensure and conserve the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of Urbino as example of building and architectural ensemble that illustrates the Renaissance period (Municipality of Urbino, 2013) and ii) the strategic plan of the city (Municipality of Urbino, 2016). From the municipality perspective, "*the project represents an experimentation to learn how to better involve citizens in the protection of the site*" (as declared in a public speech of the Major). While the management plan is more a central planning instrument for the conservation of heritage that involved local stakeholders in two institutional meetings, the project represented the occasion to better dialogue with citizens and also to collect new and fresh insights to review and renew the management plan for the forthcoming 2019.
The most interesting aspect is that the municipality did not act alone, but it called for stakeholders' collaboration to achieve the mission of the project. "*The first step of the project was a public call for participative action addressed to local organisations and individuals from across the city*" - as reported by the coordinator of the city's urban planning department. Minutes from internal meetings and official municipal acts indicate that several subjects joined the project: the University of Urbino (aiming to involve professors and students), three high schools and a secondary art school, the Italian State's cultural heritage department supervising the Palazzo Ducale, two local NGOs and a retailer association grouping shops located in the historical city centre of Urbino. These subjects participated to "working tables" as place of meeting and discussion. After several meetings, altogether, these actors jointly decided to implement two key actions. First, the identification of issues associated to the use of the city centre and its heritage by tourists, permanent inhabitants, and students and the collection of their perceptions on how to increase heritage preservation. Second, the identification and launch of initiatives aiming to foster behaviours that favour heritage conservation and socio-economic development. The main initiative named 'Vivi Valbona' and other initiatives identified were not listed in order of priority and implementation was driven by personal interactions (not formalized mechanisms) between public and not public subjects that continued meeting until the realization of these initiatives.

4.2. Starting from stakeholders' voices

A questionnaire administered in early 2018 to students, tourists (Italians and foreigners), and permanent inhabitants was designed by the municipality after consultation with the partnering actors to understand how these three stakeholder groups use the historical city centre, if they perceive the heritage of the city as deteriorated and to collect their suggestions for improvement (what may increase or generate positive behaviours). After a pre-test, 100 fully completed questionnaires were collected, distributed as follows: 50 students, 30 residents, 20 tourists. Questions regarded the following aspects:

- Reasons for visiting/using the city centre;
- Problems in enjoying the city centre;

- Suggestions for enhancing how the people experience the city centre;
- Suggestions on what can increase city users' commitment toward urban cleanliness and heritage preservation.

Results indicate that different stakeholder categories have a slightly different usage of the historical city centre. Tourists enter the pedestrian zone to visit monuments, churches and the Palazzo Ducale. Students go the centre to shop, have a walk and go to cafes and pubs (100% of respondents), to attend classes (87%) or simply because their apartment is there (36%); some students also indicate other minor reasons like reaching the bus station in the centre or taking out their pet (18%). Permanent inhabitants enter the historical centre to have a walk and go to cafes (87%), shop (80%), reach their workplace (57%), because they live there (53%) or other minor reasons (17%). Since there are daily lectures, students enter the centre "always" (82%) or "often" (18%). Inhabitants go to the centre slightly less: some said "sometimes" (6%), "often" (17%) and many said "always" (77%) because they live there.

When asked about the problems that affect the historical centre of Urbino, stakeholders show different perceptions (Table 2). Students are mainly concerned about public transport means that allow them to reach the city centre. All students (100%) complain about the lack of night-time transport services, the excessive costs of tickets and the problem of crowded buses (90%). For permanent inhabitants, the biggest problems are defaced buildings (87%), the dropping of pets (87%) and abandoned waste (80%). More than half of permanent inhabitants report loud noises, especially during the night, attributed to students partying at pubs. Permanent inhabitants perceive a lack of care in the maintenance of the city décor and negligence from students and people in general that leave waste or do not care about their animals' ejections. Tourists (45%) did not like the presence of defaced buildings in the historic centre, which seems to be their most important concern together with the presence of architectural barriers (40%) that prevent people with disabilities to access monuments and churches. Cleanliness is not a relevant problem for tourists.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

In line with the perceived problems, surveyed city stakeholders suggest different strategies for improving accessibility to and taking advance of the city (Table 3). Students mainly claim for more buses at night (100%) and public toilets (78%), permanent inhabitants recommend surveillance (87%) because they held that students generate waste and noise at night, while tourists advocate public toilets (65%) and the removal of barriers (60%).

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Finally, surveyed people were asked to indicate what may favour a sense of civic duty (especially in light of artistic heritage conservation) and make the historical centre more attracting. Also in this case, answers indicate different viewpoints between students and permanent inhabitants. The majority of students and visitors believe that concession of public spaces for cultural, commercial and spontaneous events (64%) and the organization of white nights or special museums free openings (56%) can push more people to visit the historic centre, understand its value and protect its conservation. On the contrary, permanent inhabitants believe that

awareness campaigns (57%) and a greater control on the respect of rules with penalties for offenders (63%) might be more effective in avoiding negative consequences related to poor care of the location. No student indicates rules and sanctions as a viable mean for improving the conditions of the city or the quality of the community.
According to permanent inhabitants, the recent acts of vandalism are due to students that do not respect cultural heritage (53%), although some of them (23%) consider these episodes as occasional. Only 13% of permanent inhabitants state that students' care for the local heritage is not decreasing. Half of the students interviewed do not believe that respect for cultural heritage shown by their university colleagues is diminishing (54%) and some of them believe that these are isolated episodes that cannot be linked to a lack of general respect (26%); only the remaining 14% say that students may have decreased their civic sense. On this topic, visitors do not take a clear position and many said "do not know".
According to the majority of students (58%) people using the city centre moderately contribute to keep streets clean and 18% of them believe that there is high commitment from whoever use the centre (Table 4). Similarly, 53% of permanent inhabitants believe that there is a modest effort in maintaining cleanliness but they are more pessimistic as 30% of them affirm that city users show poor commitment or no commitment at all in keeping the city free from dirt. While the responses given by visitors are more varied, permanent inhabitants perceive the presence of a negative behaviour that has to be managed.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

4.3. An experiment to achieve conservation and regeneration of the historical centre

After careful examination of the questionnaires collected, the municipality launched a one-year experiment for the concession of public spaces of the city centre to cultural and commercial events, which was one of the strategies emerged in the questionnaires to improve civic engagement. In detail, public streets of an historical district of Urbino named 'Valbona' were closed down to traffic during specific weekends to allow a local association made by permanent inhabitants and retail shop owners to organize concerts, public speaking, fashion shows, local open-air markets and similar events that could improve the usage of the city centre by locals, tourists and students (see Figure 2). This initiative was intended as the base for the redevelopment and enhancement of the district, as "*a process of raising awareness and active involvement of residents, traders and other different city users interacting with this important area"* (said one civil servant of the municipality).
Attracting people to visit the district on foot (while allowing for car parking in a close area) had the aim to ensure greater usability of spaces for meeting with other people, favour accessibility to historical centre and increase business activities. The district was meant as a natural shopping centre, where a potential increase of trade could revitalize the historical centre and favour the return of permanent inhabitants.
According to one municipality representative "*the experiment of Vivi Valbona was successful in terms of creation of social cohesion, number of people attracted and increased consciousness among inhabitants and students of the beauty and heritage they can benefit every day"*. A permanent inhabitant also said that '*the revitalisation*

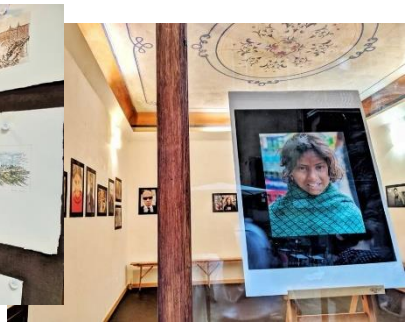
of the area allowed for the arrival of innovative activities like temporary shops and exhibitions and made perceived increased real estate values".

Figure 2- *Activities and events launched in the local district*

Leaflet to go to Valbona district

Public events

Temporary exhibitions



Lyrical concert

Music concerts

Public poetry reading

Some churches were used to organize concerts (meaning that also ecclesiastical institutions were involved and collaborated to the project). Private citizens and firms owning some empty spaces of old buildings were solicited to temporarily give their premises to local handicraftsmen to sell their products and tell the story of how products are manufactured and what they represent (Figure 3). The municipality contributed with the application of temporary pedestrian areas, urban green layout (Figure 3). The greatest effort was made by two local associations that leveraged on the attachment of the local traders and permanent inhabitants to the place where they work and/or live. These associations were able to gather people to jointly conceive and plan events. They involved owners of vacant shopping premises to obtain additional spaces where to arrange shows and markets. They created small organizing committees to take care of different activities and involve other actors, activating a sort of snowball effect. For example, events communication and promotion toward citizens and tourists was done in collaboration with a local higher education organization specialized in Visual Communication and Graphic design, which in turn involved another school. Some events were co-organized with other regional and national associations promoting education and sustainability.
As reported by one association member, the experiment was successful because "*a small group of inhabitants was able to involve other people and associations and the project attracted funding from the private sector, i.e., small traders, that invested time and money to set up exhibitions and small temporary shops"*.

Figure 3 – *Improvement of urban décor and economic valorisation*

4.4. Other initiatives

Another important initiative launched regarded the creation and distribution of brochures to students and visitors, indicating where the main points of interest (fountains, monuments and places to visit) and city information points (squares and main streets) are located. Brochures were created by students and teachers of a local art high school and distributed by volunteers of NGOs in key points of the city. Brochures were meant to improve people awareness of being in a historical place that needs to be preserved. In fact, they included a handbook of ten suggestions (in Italian and English) aimed to inspire city users to good practices and behaviours, develop an ecological conscience, improve their knowledge about Urbino as a unique heritage for all humanity and stimulate the need to safeguard it for future generations. Examples of some suggestions are: "*Do not litter. Don't sit on the steps of churches to eat but take advantage of the gardens to refresh yourself. Use public transport and bicycles. Prefer accommodations that are attentive to sustainable tourism. Buy local crafts and choose restaurants that use local products so you can taste the best of Marche culture and hospitality"*.
At the same time, a stream of initiatives addressed to students and permanent inhabitants was organized. Among others, we cite the organisation of promotional events and seminars held at the University of Urbino to sensitize permanent inhabitants and both high school and university students on cultural heritage protection. Direct participation allowed to understand that these events and seminars also offered a space for public debate and the resolution of conflicts between students and inhabitants.
Other events were organized to attract students to join participatory voluntary-based cleanings of the buildings disfigured by graffiti (Figure 4). Celebration days for the removal of graffiti and restoration of areas damaged by vandalism were arranged, where citizens could appreciate the efforts made by students. Besides the concrete contribution to tangible heritage preservation, these "*initiatives also contributed to increase social cohesion and tolerance for one another*" as reported by the Director of the Visual Communication and Graphic design high school. Internships for high school and university students related to the project were launched, as well as broadcasting activities to make the project known and disseminate good practices through Internet and social media.

Figure 4 – Cleaning of walls of the historical centre

5. Discussion

The public call launched by the municipality indicates that interested stakeholders were included in the project from its very beginning and suggests an effort of the municipality toward the adoption of participatory planning, which can be classified as a form of top-down collaborative governance in this specific case. In details, the approach adopted by the municipality was to incorporate community stakeholders (i.e. citizens, schools, entities and their different associations and networks) in the decision-making process, mainly through working tables as place of discussion and consensus reaching.

Search for multi stakeholder dialogue and engagement represented a fundamental step because, as emerged from the questionnaire, there are different stakeholders perceptions and needs associated to the historical centre that have to be reconciled. As in the case of historical walled cities (Colavitti and Usai, 2019), social aspects i.e., laying the foundations for the discussion and resolution of conflicts between city users, have to be considered in order to define an integrated strategy for CH.

Questionnaire results showed that permanent inhabitants are really concerned about the cleanliness of the historical centre, damages to buildings and art works disfigured by vandalism. On the contrary, students (and tourists to some extent) are more concerned about the lack of means of transport, focus on their daily needs of living the historical centre as any other modern city and do not perceive the problem of disfigured buildings. Such differences indicated to the municipality that permanent inhabitants mainly focus on the “tangible” dimension of heritage, i.e. buildings, and its historical and artistic value, while students mainly focus on the social value of heritage. These values represent the point of departure in the management and development of the city project as recommended by the HUL approach.

Identification of natural, cultural and human resources as suggested by the first implementation step of Unesco recommendation (Unesco, 2015) seems apparently missing, but in reality, it took another form. The mapping of resources was not necessary because already done in 2013, when the city prepared its management plan. While identification of common values useful to improve the décor of the city, its usability and possible development emerged as a more important activity for the project design.

Interestingly, the questionnaire also allowed the municipality to better understand that the socio-economic pressures due to the presence of many students may generate possible vulnerabilities (i.e., damages to buildings and modernisation of the city centre by changing its shops) that put both the tangible and cultural heritage at risk, while tourism flows do not emerge as factors that could expose the city to negative consequences. This represents the third step of the HUL implementation approach. It is not comprehensive as recommended (e.g., it does not address vulnerabilities related to climate change), but still relevant to identify key issues to address.

Unfortunately, information gathered with the questionnaire on values and vulnerabilities was not integrated in a development framework as suggested by the implementation step no. 4 of HUL approach. On one hand, this is somehow coherent with the fact that the scope and goals of the previous steps were not intended to develop a new management plan, but to design a one-year project. On the other hand, this lack of integration suggests a possible gap in the capability of the

initiatives planned to catch all possible interdependencies. Similarly, the participatory approach did not issue a precise list of priority actions for conservation and development (as required by step no. 5). As already reported, the municipality and the stakeholders involved identified and launched some initiatives that can be considered temporary experimentations.
Finally, collaboration was transitory, i.e., aimed at organizing concerts, events and other initiatives. Long-lasting local partnerships that may contribute to long sustainable development did not emerge (step no. 6). Mechanisms for the coordination of the various activities between different actors were not designed and coordination was based on personal interactions.
We can state that the second step prescribed by the HUL approach, consisting in consensus reaching through participatory planned represented a central activity, while, similarly to what reported by past empirical studies (Rey-Perez and Roders, 2020), some steps of the implementation road suggested by the HUL approach were not executed, confirming that this approach is difficult to be applied in real contexts.
The experiment of the historical district “Valbona” transformed into a pedestrian open-air shopping centre is the most interesting as it achieved active collaboration and engagement from different city users. This laboratory represents a good practice of a city’s economic regeneration process derived from investing in cultural heritage protection and revitalization. It focused on maintaining cultural heritage by integrating it in the daily life of people. In other terms, it tried to put into practice the HUL approach that brings heritage conservation to a new visioning linking tradition and modernization, past and present in a systemic and synergistic perspective (Fusco Girard, 2010; Nocca, 2017; Ginzarly et al., 2019). In addition, the positive comments on this laboratory indicate that the arrangement of community-based cultural initiatives represents a concrete action for regenerating the social, economic, and environmental fabric of urban settings. These initiatives increase civic engagement and community pride, confirming what found by Dameri and Moggi (2019), and proved to lead to urban regeneration (Bailey et al., 2004; Sasaki, 2010). At the same time, the case study confirms that cultural projects, events and experiences need to be based on collaborative dynamics and a participatory approach to be successful (McWilliam et al., 2009; Dameri and Demartini, 2019; Biondi et al., 2020).
Different actions experimented in the case study analysed represent possible paths in which to reconcile mutual expectations, which rely on the willingness and common commitment of those involved (traders, citizens, associations, etc.). In order to be effective, these paths required a collaboration and a sharing from below (the so-called bottom-up approach) that was based on stakeholders’ dialogue and gave rise to interactive planning and different forms of cooperation based on the involvement of different local actors of the community as suggested by the literature (Aas et al., 2005; Cole & Ostrom, 2012; Ashley and Crowther, 2012, Dameri and Moggi, 2019).
The brochure prepared by the municipality suggests that its management is aware that conservation can no longer be based on the objects’ intrinsic quality but it must be founded on people’s ability to recognize its historical and social values upon which to build the cultural identity as suggested by Vecchio (2010). Also the cleaning of disfigured buildings made by volunteers and high school students, represents a mean for achieving the goal of improved urban décor and sensitizing participants to the protection of the historical centre at the same time.
Finally, the case study suggests that the role of the local administration was fundamental in starting collaborative actions, fostering dialogue and facilitating composition of single "voices" in shared projects. If key stakeholders do not share

agendas and interests, it is difficult to implement a sustainable development approach based on heritage preservation (Labaldi, 2017). At the same time, it suggests that a municipality cannot act alone, politicians and civil servants need to involve other stakeholders (Kazepov, 2005; Piattoni, 2010) in order to leverage the territorial relational capital (Lerro and Schiuma, 2009) and engage citizens to actively solve collective problems (Habish and Loza Adaui, 2013) and work towards the common good (Spence and Schmidpeter, 2003). As argued by scholars, common awareness of the cultural heritage resting on the attachment to the place (Echter, 2015) and the socio-economic value that it may generate, can strongly contribute to start collaboration among stakeholders (Kazepov, 2010; Silver et al., 2010).

6. Concluding remarks

The project here described is similar to what implemented in Florence and Mantua, which are also UNESCO sites. However, differently from Florence and other famous Italian tourism locations, the project of Urbino did not search for sustainable development by reducing the negative consequences of tourism overcrowding; it aimed to enhance the consciousness of the CH among citizens, tourists and other stakeholders, reconcile their different and conflicting needs, and achieve preservation of its historical city centre while improving its usability.

The case of Urbino offers an example on how to integrate cultural heritage conservation and socio-economic development of cities based on dialogue – here solicited by the local public administration - among different stakeholders. It shows how heritage conservation is not in opposition to development (Greffe, 2009) and how it can contribute to the quality of life of communities (Labaldi, 2017). It shows how it is possible to achieve multidimensional results: enhancing people's awareness and respect for the heritage, improve the tourism vocation (attracted by historical buildings but also events and markets organized by local associations), increase social cohesion (in particular between students and citizens), generate economic results (more trade, arrival of innovative activities and real estate value improvements) and reduce environmental negative impacts (stopping traffic) at the same time.

For this reason, we can state that this research contributes to the debate on culture as a driver for local regeneration, urban development and sustainable growth (Saccto et al., 2014; Sacco et al., 2019). Moreover, it contributes to acknowledge participatory governance as a mean to engage citizens, traders, associations and local institutions in cultural initiatives as co-creators and co-implementers (Voorberg et al., 2015). In this vein, local actors are not merely invited to discussions or consultations, but they have "deliberative power", which means the ability to decide and implement policies.

Being this experimentation based on the idea that the historical centre has not only an aesthetic and historical value, but also a social and economic value that evolve in time through human relationships, as assumed by the HUL approach, we expected to find the application of its implementation guidelines on the design of the project. The project and its related initiatives were only partially developed based on the HUL's six critical steps for implementation instead, although the city management plan, which represents the broader framework of reference for the project, was developed following this methodology. This indicates that the HUL approach is difficult to implement or requires some adaptations when used for planning small cultural

initiatives. In addition, main initiatives realized are directly related to the suggestions emerged from an initial questionnaire designed and implemented by the municipality. Its structure, content and limited number of respondents represent an important bias that can reduce the possible benefits of the project or may have pointed all efforts to a certain direction. The fact that questions do not elaborate on general issues of heritage conservation but ask for specific aspects may be a limitation.
Unfortunately, the project and related cultural initiatives did not continue in the following years. Although it was designed as an experimentation from its very beginning (therefore not intended and funded to last for several years), its inability to grow and become a permanent form of collaboration can be seen as a limitation of the project. This stop is a risk for the city of Urbino because cultural heritage protection and valorisation should be ongoing activities to generate long-term results and anchor the goals and norms of preservation in the population (Nyseth and Sognnaes, 2013). However, we also have to acknowledge that at the time of writing, the management plan of the city, in accordance to the Unesco provisions, is under revision and the municipality has re-started the process of stakeholders' involvement by re-considering the attributes and the priorities of the site.

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