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Culture-led urban regeneration projects: participatory good practices in Europe

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Culture-led urban regeneration projects: participatory good practices in Europe

Marco Marucci[1]

Abstract

This contribution explores the relationship between urban regeneration and the protection of local cultural heritage, analyzing obstacles, strategies, and evaluation metrics. It draws on Henri Lefebvre's sociological theory, which divides social space into perceived, conceived, and lived spaces, to better understand urban spaces and their potential for citizen reappropriation. The right to the city implies reshaping space according to the needs of the working classes, generating a "differential space" that challenges homogeneity and fosters new urban forms. The city thus becomes a battleground between opposing planning models: Smart Cities, driven by AI and market logic, and open, adaptive cities based on participation. This tension creates the "dilemma of participation," balancing citizen interests with economic logics, intertwined with Harvey's "dilemma of space," linked to capitalism's expansive dynamics. This essay proposes an interpretative framework to study cultural-led urban regeneration, exploring its local expressions and introducing an analytical tool to assess participation.

Introduction

This contribution aims to explore a set of topics that have been widely explored by academics, focusing on a basic issue: Is it possible to combine urban regeneration with the need to promote and defend local cultural heritage? What are the main obstacles, and what are the best strategies to apply? Are there evaluation metrics for such processes?

To answer these questions, we first analyse some key concepts to find a common ground of definitions and narratives. Some classical interpretations of sociological theory help us better frame the modern concept of urban regeneration which is, in the first instance, a regeneration of spaces, with their permanent dialectic and, often, struggle between public and private spaces.

The first categorization we want to refer to is that of Henri Lefebvre (1975), who conceived the social space as a 'social product', which is the direct result of the typical dynamics of the industrialized world. This social space exists on three simultaneous levels: *perceived* space, *conceived* space, and *lived* space. *Perceived* space is that of material and, to some extent, intangible infrastructures, such as the physical space of urbanization, to which is also added that of the organizational structures that make it possible (institutions, models of enterprise, governance, research); *Conceived* space is that of representations: art, architecture, engineering, sociology, urban planning and other intangible goods; Finally, *lived* space is that of experiences, created by appropriations, by meanings (real or imaginary) given by the subjects who live in spaces and interpret them according to their own needs. This tripartition will be helpful in the initial phase of interpreting the places that will be the subject of the field research, to define within which of these representations these spaces have meaning and to envisage helpful interventions in terms of re-appropriation by citizenship. According to Lefebvre's lesson, in fact, *'droit à la ville'* (1970) means precisely intervening directly in the issues that concern urban space, taking possession of it, conforming, or reconfiguring it according to the needs, aspirations, and desires of the popular

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[1] This contribution is the transition paper for the third year of the PhD School in Social and Economic Sciences, Sociology & Applied Social Research Curriculum. marco.marucci@gmail.com

classes; occupying, reactivating functions, putting the city at the service of the subalterns, in one word: regenerating. This happens, ultimately, through a fourth type of space called 'differential' space, made up of subsystems, partial codes, and messages that reject the homogeneous, displace it, and thus create a new order. *Differential* space is the terrain from which urban utopia can begin to build its concrete future because differences are not yet dominated, repressed, or governed and still result in determinisms, heterogeneities, and, at times, conflicts (Lefebvre, 1980).

Within this epistemological analysis, which we are trying to face today, the shift from the 'abstract' space of globalized capitalism to the 'differential' space, the city takes on a crucial role and meaning. Thus, Cities and urban spaces become a field of experimentation and confrontation between different visions and different urban planning models[2]. These can be inspired, on the one hand, by the Smart Cities model, increasingly based on Artificial Intelligence, addressed to define down to the smallest detail a development path as predictable and in some way absolute, exportable, marketable[3], but which replicates some typical contradictions of modernism and neo-liberalism, including the idea of a 'closed' and 'exclusive' city[4] (Harvey, 2018; Sassen, 2014).

On the other, a participatory, fluid, adaptive planning as presented by eminent studies revolving around the concept of the 'open' or 'anti-fragile' city (Jacobs, 1961; Sennett & Sendra, 2022; Koolhaas, 2022; Hall & Ward, 1998; Blečić and Cecchini 2016). What we might call the 'dilemma of participation' arises precisely from the grip between top-down and bottom-up approaches and different pressures that may concern, for example, the protection of cultural-historical memories or the activation of disused spaces - desired by the citizens - and the construction of new buildings or new market inducements - desired by businessmen. The 'dilemma of participation' conflicts with what David Harvey calls the 'dilemma of space' (2000), which defines the capitalist system's expansive pursuit of profits as the geographical question of the contemporary era.

Considering these premises, this brief essay aims to draw an interpretative framework for the next research, starting from the concept of urban regeneration as a regeneration of spaces in their multiple interpretations and meanings (Roberts 2000; Galdini 2022; Musco 2009; Scandurro and Attili 2013). The concept of cultural-led urban regeneration and some ways it is expressed at the local level will also be explored. Finally, in a concluding paragraph that will introduce the issue of the assessment of participation, a hypothetical analysis tool will be outlined with which to conduct the first classifications of the field analysis.

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[2] The reference is to the different powers competing for spaces and networks within urban spaces: real estate market; digitalisation; civic sharing. See, in this regard, the latest Urban@it (2022) *Seventh Report on Cities. Who owns the city? Ownership, powers, policies.*

[3] An overview of these interventions can be found in the work of Giffinger R. (2007), *Smart Cities - Ranking of European medium-sized cities*, Vienna, Centre for Regional Studies.
The topic is closely connected to the *territorial marketing* and the concept of *attractiveness* that these development policies aim at. See among the vast literature:
Ave G., Corsico F. (1994) (eds), *Urban Marketing in Europe*, Turin, Editore Torino Incontra, 1994;
Ashworth G.J., Voogd H. (1990), *Selling the City: marketing approaches in public sector urban planning*, Belhaven Press, London.

[4] See, for example, critical essays on the Smart Cities model:
Hollands R. G. (2008), *Will the real smart city please stand up*, in City, Vol.12, New York;
Vanolo A. (2014), *Smart mentality: Smart City as a disciplinary strategy*, Urban Studies, 51;
Mela A. (2013), "On the dark side of the smart city idea", in Santangelo M., Aru S., Pollio A. (eds.), *Smart City. Hybridizations, innovations and inertia in contemporary cities*, Rome, Carocci.

1. Regenerating social spaces

“La grande hantise qui a hanté le XIXe siècle a été l'histoire
[...] L'époque actuelle serait plutôt l'époque de l'espace”
(Foucault 1984: 752)

The meaning of spaces has changed and gained importance over the last few decades. In part, this can be well described by the phenomenon of the 'spatial turn', traced back to the writings of Foucault, who was among the first to argue, in a famous speech delivered in 1967 and later translated in 1984 - *Des espaces autres* - that the twentieth century was the 'century of space', characterized by the central role of places and the relationships established between them (Foucault, 1984). The term has since come to denote an entire movement, born in the humanities, which involves numerous disciplines in questioning the multiple dimensions of spatiality (Warf and Arias, 2009).

In recent years, Edward W. Soja was considered the contemporary reference of the *spatial turn*. The *spatial turn* indicated by Soja originates from the theorizations of Lefebvre and Foucault, with the perceived-conceived-visited space and the ‘heterotopias’ (the *other* places of exclusion, the spaces of the *outside*), to demonstrate how geographies are shaped not only by social processes, but social processes, even to a greater extent, are shaped by geographies (Soja, 1989). The American geographer also introduced the notion of 'third space' (Soja, 1996), which we could consider an extension of the *social* space. He captured a complex and sometimes elusive set of ideas that refer to spatial imagery. The *third space* is a fusion of the first and second spaces: one that focuses on the 'real' material world and a second that interprets this reality through 'imagined' representations of spatiality (the second space includes things like maps, plans, memories, and imaginaries associated with first space). This *third* space represents better the complexity of urban dynamics, where cultures, identities, and social practices merge and mix. Soja has suggested that the third space is a place of potential creativity and social change, where artists play a central role in their imagined potential, and is also referred to, in more political terms, as a 'counter space' (Soja, 1996 p. 68). In essence, Soja's concept of the *third* space challenges conventional binary oppositions between real/imaginary, and physical/mental, and emphasizes the importance of recognizing the complexity and fluidity of spatial experiences.

These concepts help us to define what in this contribution will be called ‘urban space’, which must, therefore, be understood as “a range of cultural fields and texts affecting the community” (Warner, 2002). We will focus on the usefulness and potential offered by public spaces, which for Bauman are those that “recognize the creative and life-enhancing value of diversity while encouraging differences to engage in a meaningful dialogue” (Bauman, 2006: p.77), giving new opportunities for the future of urban life.

In these real and imagined spaces, we are facing several modern 'urban regeneration' processes. *Urban regeneration* is a term that refers to a multiplicity of meanings and approaches, some of which are very different. The term 'regeneration' is used in official documents for the first time in 1996, within the European Commission's report 'Sustainable European Cities’ and is defined as an instrument of sustainable development[5], replacing the term 'renovation' used in previous

[5] *"Urban regeneration should be used to meet goals of sustainable development through the recycling of previously developed land or existing buildings, the retention of green field sites and protection of countryside and wildlife. Detailed sustainability objectives, including the establishment of ecological links, improved accessibility, energy*

documents dealing with the same issues[6]. In the 2000s, new meanings were added to the term and the goals of the programs linked to it became more and more ambitious: with the Hanover conference[7], the declared objectives dealt with social justice, the reduction of poverty and social exclusion, and a more liveable urban environment. Goals to be achieved through the construction of an economy that was more socially equitable and capable of protecting the environment. This was followed in 2004 by the 'Aalborg+10' Conference, which focused on ten main themes: governance; urban management for sustainability; common natural resources; responsible consumption and lifestyles; urban planning and design; better mobility, less traffic; local action for health; sustainable local economy; equity and social justice; from local to global[8].

In the modern concept of *urban regeneration*, physical transformation is one of the components, but this must embed also transformative processes, capable of producing new economic and social dynamics over time, which are durable and sustainable (Healey et al., 1992; Furbey, 1999; Roberts and Sykes, 2000; Vicari Haddock and Moulaert, 2009). Specially in the last decades many urban regeneration programs and projects have somehow incorporated attention towards the social inclusion and cohesion of more marginalized social groups (Bonini Baraldi, Governa, and Salone 2021; Oosterlynck, Novy, and Kazepov 2019; Ostanel 2017)

So, the concept differs from 'requalification'[9] which is usually accompanied by real estate speculative processes (Musco, 2009), and from 'renewal', which has historically been put into practice with demolition actions of working-class neighbourhoods, so often coinciding with ethnic minorities to be sarcastically juxtaposed with the term 'negro removal' (Wheeler, 2004).

From an academic point of view, many references have framed the concept of urban regeneration, sometimes very similarly to the institutional approach framing. According to Evans and Shaw, it is the "transformation of a place (residential, commercial, or open space) that has displayed the symptoms of environmental (physical), social or economic decline. What has been described as breathing new life and vitality into an ailing community, industry, and area [bringing] sustainable, long-term improvements to local quality of life, including economic, social, and environmental needs" (Evans and Shaw, 2004: 4). According to Roberts and Sykes (2000: 57), urban regeneration is "a comprehensive, integrated vision and action that leads to the resolution of urban problems and seeks to bring lasting improvement to the economic, physical, social, and environmental conditions of an area that has been subject to change."

The main approaches that attempt to define this broad concept can be summarised in a few schools of thought:

- the business-oriented approach, which emphasises the importance of economic and market potential (Porter, Van Der Linde 1995; Turok, 2005) or fostering the increase of employment (Law 2002)
- the design approach, in its relation between sustainable development and the perspective of urban form (Burton et al. 1997)
- the cultural industries approach (Florida, 2003)
- the social welfare and public health perspective (Burton Jenks Williams 1997)

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efficiency and community participation, should also be pursued. Decontamination of polluted soil, a major concern in many urban regeneration projects, should be seen as part of an integrative approach which provides the possibility for achieving cross-subsidy between sites" (CE, 1996, 10)

[6] See: European Commission (1990*), Green Paper for the Urban Environment,* Brussels.

[7] 3rd European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns (2000), Hannover *Call of Local Authorities on the Threshold of the 21st Century*, Hannover.

[8] European Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign (2004), *Inspiring futures* (Aalborg+10), Aalborg.

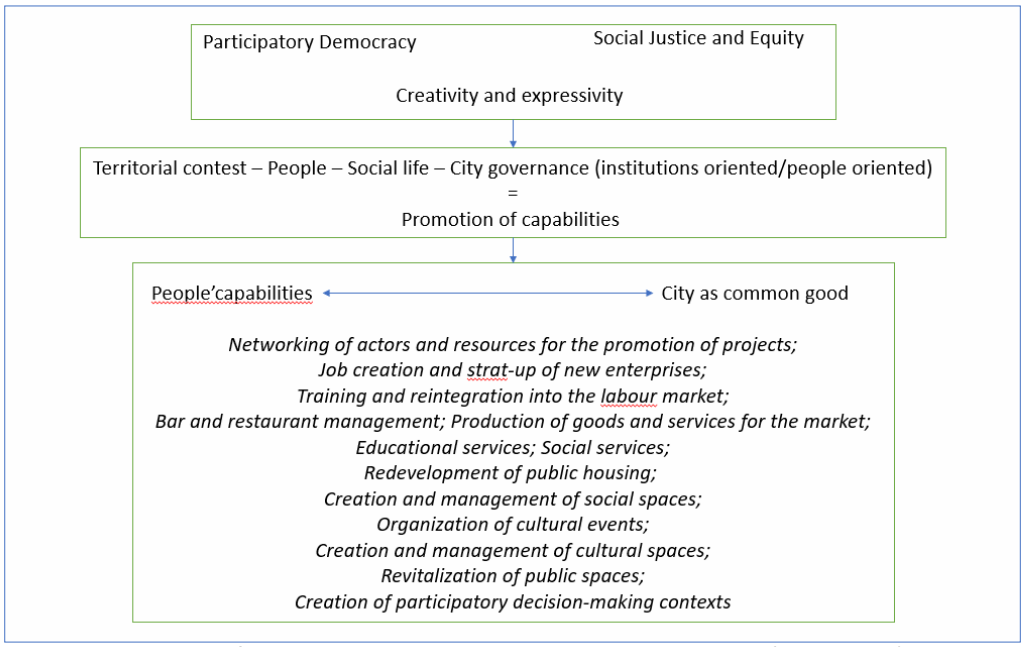
[9] "[Re-qualification is the] transformation of a place (residential, industrial or open space) showing symptoms of environmental decline (physical), social and/or economic." (Borri, 1985).

- the community-based social economy approach and their role in decision-making and the development of social capital networks (Thomas, Duncan 2000; Gosling, 2008)

The dimensions of urban regeneration can be broadly described as economic, social, cultural, physical, environmental, and governance-oriented dimensions that are not mutually exclusive but can lead to different outcomes depending on the weight given to each of them[10].
The expected starting point is the recovery of abandoned, declining, or disused spaces, both from an infrastructural and a social point of view. Claude Chaline (2010) identifies several territories that are the object of such a transformation: historic centres devitalized by commercial competition from the suburbs; historic neighbourhoods or areas in the process of deindustrialization; large industrial areas now incorporated within the urban fabric; disused railway areas; port areas; military areas. Furthermore, we could add many other representations if we consider that some urban spaces are neither in decline nor necessarily abandoned and they can be involved in urban regeneration processes, for example in social or cultural terms.
To introduce the topic of *cultural-led* urban regeneration, it is particularly interesting to mention the classification elaborated by Lavinia Bifulco (2009), in which urban regeneration practices are qualified in consideration of three main frames (figure 1): The first considers the value of democracy and the perceived need of increasing the level of democratisation of choices and processes related to the city life. Both are requirements of political administrative system to open channels for direct citizen participation. In this frame, the emphasis is on the accessibility and transparency of processes and on identifying spaces for public deliberation (frame of 'participatory democracy'); A second frame is about the meaning of democracy, in which ‘equity and social justice’ are the pivot of the meaning system. These values are motivated by a vision of the contemporary city that respects the identities and marginalities; A third frame is focused on ‘expressiveness and creativity’, and the centrality is in the cultural dimension, which is therefore recognised as a vector, rather than an aspect, of regeneration processes.

Figure 1. Frames of urban regeneration

[10] According to Roberts and Sykes (2000), urban regeneration projects have the potential to generate results in at least the following 10 dimensions of social sustainability and policy areas: demographic change (ageing, migration and mobility); education and skills; employment; health and safety; housing and environmental health; identity, sense of place and culture; participation, empowerment and access; social capital; mixing and social cohesion; well-being, happiness and quality of life.



Source: Bifulco L., in Vicari Haddock S. and Moulaert F. (2009: 103)

The author focus on the initiatives promoted 'from below', arguing how "the drive to revitalise and expand the spaces of the democratic process, the idea of a 'just' city in a urban development, and the role assigned to the expressive and creative sphere are inscribed in a perspective aimed at recognising and increasing the freedom of *action*, *choice* and *voice* of the actors and local communities affected by the interventions" (Bifulco, 2009: 97). Under these dimensions, it is possible to include direct changes to: the territorial context, in its different scales (the whole city, the district, the neighbourhood, public housing concentrations); the people, who get to define individual re-integration projects for disadvantaged categories; the social life, thanks to spaces that must be open to a plurality of uses, users, experiences, multiplying exchanges inside and outside; the governance of the city, intended both as expansion of deliberative practices and activation of social policies, even if autonomous from institutions. Interest is placed on the cultural aspects that envisage actions capable of "publicly staging another way of imagining and inventing the city; giving visibility to subjects and instances that are scarcely represented; triggering processes of identification; sustaining the collective memory of places and local communities and its revisitation" (Vicardi et al., 2009: 107).

2. Cultural-Led urban regeneration

"The search for beauty in the project is not enough,
because it has even more value to serve another type of beauty:
the quality of people's lives, their harmony with the environment, proximity and mutual help"
(Laudato sì, Pope Francis, c.150, 2015)

In *cultural-led urban regeneration* practices, a relevant - but not exclusive - role is played by the local public actor, capable of formulating an intentional design focused on culture. The objectives of local (and central) institutions are, however, often focused on economic development, and it is necessary to leave certain preconceptions to imagine a design concept that gives more space to ethical, social and value-based aspects that better meet the real needs of local communities. The literature notes that in the contexts in which the nexus between the enhancement of culture and economic growth had led to the best results, there was community and stakeholder involvement,

but also, and above all, cooperation between public and private actors around the project (Florida, 2017; Beretta and Migliardi, 2012). Underlying the nexus between culture and economic growth is an intensity and complexity of processes and interactions that we call an 'institutional construction' (Busacca, Paladini 2020). Culture is the main instrument through which those human development goals that determine the achievement of high quality of life standards are pursued (Sacco et al. 2011). The strategic role of culture is identified with its capacity to generate creativity, mobility, imagination, and intuition, and thus not only as a factor capable of increasing the quality of life but also as a crucial asset for developing economic and professional opportunities. It is now evident that all urban centres pursuing a local economic development strategy are making culture one of their privileged levers of action, opening museums, building urban regeneration processes around complex cultural-pilot interventions, and experimenting with new forms of horizontal integration between several supply chains, which are different and often distant from each other, but characterised by complementarity in a strategy aiming at innovation (Florida, 2002).

It is mainly since the mid-2000s that many studies and policy agendas have highlighted the importance of cultural and creative activities in the economic and social development processes of territories (KEA, 2006, 2017; CSES, ERICarts 2010; Redaelli, 2019; Evans, 2005a). Culture, a central part of the regeneration initiative, can play a distinctive role in bringing economic benefits to cities. According to Evans and Shaw (2004), there are at least three key benefits of culture's contribution to city regeneration: 1) strengthening the organic development of the urban ecosystem; 2) building partnerships between local actors, and 3) generating economic benefits. At the same time, Porter and Barber (2006) list five key elements for the effectiveness of culture-based urban regeneration actions:

- public debate and participation
- control of real estate market pressures
- promotion of activities and uses not only focused on consumption or production
- inclusion of socio-cultural diversity
- involvement of architects, artists, and local human capital

The *cultural-led urban regeneration*, in the light of the general considerations made in the previous paragraph, must, however, consider the two forces by which it is driven, some times by a contrasting way, other times by overlapping way: The first, driven by market interests, aimed at the promotion of the existing cultural heritage or the introduction of new market channels (also through digital technologies) aimed at the creation of economically induced, which often finds its derivation in *urban marketing* processes (Valdani, 2000; Corsico, 1994; Ashworth & Voogd, 1988); The other, aimed at responding to a local demand, or in any case driven by social organisations rooted in the territory, focused on increasing the wellbeing, the happiness of the community while remaining open to subsequent entrepreneurial-type development.

Local culture, for our discussion, is to be understood as belonging to 'common goods' that the community can freely draw upon and that must be preserved from monetary speculation (Ostrom & Hess, 2006; Radywyl and Biggs, 2013). The size, perspective, and enjoyment of this kind of cultural heritage must, thus, be fully managed by local communities also in the form of social organisations, hopefully with the support of public authorities, even guaranteeing access and enjoyment to a broader public, as recalled by the general 'right to cultural heritage' enshrined in the 2005 Faro Convention[11]. Some declinations of urban regeneration embrace this proposal

[11] The Faro Convention of 2005, ratified by Italy in 2020, establishes the transition from the "right of cultural heritage" to the "right to cultural heritage" and therefore from the value in itself of cultural assets to the value that people must be able to achieve from them. The debate also highlighted how fundamental a social broadening of its perception by subjects hitherto excluded from topics often managed in terms of marked elitism is for the knowledge and protection of heritage.
https://www.coe.int/it/web/venice/faro-convention

better, such as those defined as 'adaptive reuse'. *Adaptive reuse* is defined as a regeneration process "carried out by adapting the content to the container rather than the converse; it involves maximum conservation and minimal transformation. It is the most radical approach to reuse: instead of keeping what still fits, you make it fit so that you can keep all" (Robiglio, 2016). Urban reuse has revealed how historic, industrial buildings and neglected infrastructures can be adapted to new functions, meeting the emerging needs of residents and users in the name of a better quality of life. The reconfiguration and reuse of space are often conducted through bottom-up actions with artistic and cultural objectives.

On this topic, Galdini (2019) has explored the logic of urban physical space reuse and its relationship to land, policy, and culture, its adaptability to new functions and the changing needs of residents and markets. Some experiences of *community-driven adaptive* reuse are also referred to as 'self-made urbanism' or 'hand-made urbanism' (Rosa & Weiland, 2013; Senneth, 2019), or even 'temporary urbanism' (Turku et al. 2023). The original meaning of *self-made urbanism* is a self-built and self-organised city in terms of illegal construction development. The positive meaning of the term concerns the idea of a self-made city based on collective and self-initiated living projects of the urban community to enhance the quality of public space (Litardi and Pastore, 2019).

Many of these experiences are not only characterised in cultural and moral terms but are also conceived as spaces of social and political struggle (Nussbaumer and Moulaert, 2005). This happens not only thanks to the performances' content but also considering where it is performed (e.g. in a disused factory), how it is staged (e.g. involving ethnic minorities). Or simply thanks to the process before (and after) the performance, giving a possibility for local subjectivity to be expressed outside the processes of commodification. In these cases, artistic and cultural events often mark, on a cognitive level, a discontinuity from the past: the cultural event realises something that was not experienced in a specific place.

Alongside these bottom-up experiences, there are European, national, and local programmes[12] that financed and are financing cultural-led urban regeneration projects. The most important is 'Urbact', a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development[13]. Urbact has recently financed projects to build trust and increase neighbourhood cohesion through Cultural heritage. In Italy, we are also experimenting with many initiatives financed by the National Reform Programme PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan), particularly those linked to Mission 5 - Component 2: 'Investment in urban regeneration projects aimed at reducing situations of marginalisation and social degradation[14]' and the 'Integrated Urban Plans[15]' dedicated to the suburbs of large metropolises (Investment 2.1 and 2.2).

An interesting focus on the cultural-led regeneration should envisages a comparison between bottom-up participatory practices and other projects financed by supranational, national, and local authorities. It should investigate, in particular, the level of participation of the local actors

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[12] This is the case of the Bubble project of City Mine(d) in Brussels (Vitale, 2009) or of the various cultural initiatives promoted by Leoncavallo in Milan (Membretti 2007), but also of the Associazione Quartieri Spagnoli di Napoli (de Muro, Di Martino and Cavola 2007).

[13] URBACT funds and supports networks of cities. Partners share ideas around bottom-up initiatives and co-design long-term strategies and urban policies, all at European and local levels. It also funds capacity-building activities and tools for city representatives and urban professionals.
https://urbact.eu/
See also "URBACT Blog", a platform for sharing ideas on current urban issues and innovative solutions for cities in Europe and in the world: https://www.blog.urbact.eu/

[14] https://www.italiadomani.gov.it/content/sogei-ng/it/it/Interventi/investimenti/progetti-di-rigenerazione-urbana-volti-a-ridurre-situazioni-di-emarginazione-e-degrado-sociale.html

[15] https://www.italiadomani.gov.it/content/sogei-ng/it/it/Interventi/investimenti/piani-urbani-integrati.html

involved and verify the effectiveness and sustainability of these projects. The basic thesis is that there is a relationship between participatory projects of cultural-led urban regeneration and an increase in the quality of life and well-being, as argued by several authors, including Jan Gehl (2010), who maintains that it is certainly not empty boulevards or a neighbourhood of detached houses and blocks that affect people's quality of life but rather the diversity and density of relationships that can be established in places.

Evaluating urban regeneration

Within the broader framework of Impact evaluation and, more appropriately, the *Social Impact Evaluation* (SIE) the field-research on 'cultural-led' urban regeneration should focus considering only empirical-based tools that will help us to measure the real effects on what we consider 'tangible factors' (infrastructures and info-structures) interacting with 'intangible factors' (social cohesion, social inclusion, environment, conditions of mobility, security, culture, etc.). Planning an assessment of cultural-led urban regeneration projects we should give the priority in measuring the capacity of new initiatives to enhance the *empowerment* of the community[16] and its *emancipation*, to foster the *capacity building*, and to start a solid *social innovation process*.
Graeme Evans reports the heterogeneity of measurements in cultural-led urban regeneration assessments and conclude that many gaps still hinder a valid impact evaluation (2005b). Evaluation methodology has developed recently for the cultural and regeneration projects (Evans and Shaw, 2001a, 2001b), drawing particularly from environmental health, crime prevention, urban design and quality of life measurement (Rapley, 2001; Grossi et al. 2010), with an interdisciplinary focus on process and participation. The growing use of 'quality of life' indicators[17] seeks to measure a range of environmental and liveability factors at local and national levels, including access to cultural amenities (DETR, 1998). Impacts are quantified wherever possible (or ignored where not) and intangible effects are translated numerically using proxy measurement, such as *Cost-Benefit Analysis* (CBA). If we also consider longitudinal effects in these assessments, the complexity – and the approximation – grows further. Although measures of social impacts through arts participation have been developed (Newman et al. 2003; Matarasso, 1996), the indicators most commonly referred to are those now widely used in the context of neighbourhood renewal and social inclusion, quantifiable - essentially - by reduced levels of crime, increased health and well-being, increased educational attainment, reduced unemployment, greater community cohesion and improved environmental quality. Urban design quality indicators (DQIs) and techniques developed in landscape and pedestrian planning (Gehl, 2001) now draw on more social, observational and qualitative assessment of the user experience. But evidence given by impact assessments is often not specifically analysed in cultural term because culture is not generally recognised in urban policy or environmental and quality of life indicators (such as health, education, employment, crime) and therefore is absent from regeneration measurement criteria (Evans, 2005b). A recent survey in the Italian contest can help us identify a correct qualitative methodology for an initial evaluation of recovery policies for social purposes of abandoned assets (NUVAP, 2023). The research group coordinated by Tecla Livi adopted a multilevel analysis which included: policy analysis of Italian regulations and urban regeneration support programs; a

[16] "Money and originality of design are not enough ... You need many ingredients for big, emblematic projects to work, and one of the keys is the active support of local communities" (Giddens; quoted in Crawford, 2001, p. 2)
[17] The compilation of various indices of creativity and city growth is associated in North America with Florida (2004) and Nichols Clark (2004) and see Gertler et al. (2002) on Canada, although these do not directly address regeneration impact.

selection of transversal themes on which to conduct the first classifications (monitoring & mapping); field-research through interviews to identify enabling/limiting factors for the determination of 'community spaces'; case-studies with in-depth analysis (Naples; Puglia – Brindisi). Alongside this qualitative analysis, based on a multilevel method starting from a deductive classification approach, further analysis tools should be added to allow, on the one hand, recording the geographical scale of reference and trace the territories (even on a micro scale) on which the regeneration initiatives have taken place; on the other hand it is necessary to have a representation of the social relations that these initiatives have produced, through Social Network Analysis (Freeman, 1984; Freeman and Reed, 1983), whose models most used in the literature on socio-environmental cases are those of salience (Mitchell et al. 1997) and that of the "interest-influence" matrix, mainly with a top-down approach (for an overview of SNA tools see Pronti et al. 2022).
Other useful tools for mapping the identified practices come from collaborative tools like QGIS and Felt – free and Open Source based on Geographic Information System. These tools are useful for giving a graphic representation of the initiatives and possibly proposing a collaborative self-implementation system by a network of users who introduce local urban regeneration practices over time.

Conclusion: a methodological tool

"Shared participation is the stage on which the old and the new, the known and the unknown, the established and the hopeful, act out their differences and discover their commonalities"
(Lave and Wenger, 1991)

To find a synthesis of the theoretical apparatuses proposed here, this concluding paragraph attempts to outline a methodological framework with which to frame the cultural-led urban regeneration practices that will be addressed during the doctoral thesis project. This tool must also consider a fundamental aspect related to the actual level of participation of local actors in the territorial contexts that will be analysed. Starting from classical measurements, a seminal study of the "ladder of citizen participation**"** (Arnstein, 1969) illustrates the varietal degrees of participation along a gradient of power-sharing between citizens and service providers. This pilot categorisation has been developed in subsequent analyses (Wilcox, 1994; Eyben, 2003; Allegretti, 2018; Bobbio 2004)**.** There have been numerous classificatory developments, then, drawing on the theory of Stakeholder Analysis (Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997; Eden & Ackermann, 1998, Reed et al. 2009; Dryzek & Berejikian, 1993; Barry & Proops, 1999; Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Fung, 2006; Newig et al. 2013), with methodologies from time to time more discretionary for the researchers (e.g. power-interest matrix) or more deterministic for the subjects involved (e.g. card sorting or self-classification methods), and in line with the 'Reconstructive Democratic Theory' (Dryzek & Berejikian, 1993).
In light of the various considerations made in the last paragraphs, here, a tool for interpreting the complex dynamics of cultural-led urban regeneration is proposed and designed. The framework will be further explored and is, right now, based on three thematic pillars: interpretation of space, actions, and results (table 1). For each of these dimensions, the classification of the territorial initiatives should be investigated through qualitative tools (context analysis, desk analysis, interviews, questionnaires, and participant observation).

Table 1. Classification and analysis tool for spatial initiatives of cultural-led urban regeneration.

Interpretation of spaces			**Interpretation of actions**		**Interpretation of results**	
Perceived space	**Representation space**	**Social space + third space**	**Urban Changing Processes**	**Urban regeneration Frames**	**Collaborative Governance background**	**Impact assessment**
Description of pre-existing physical and institutional infrastructure; Public-private-accessible distinction;	Descriptions of activities, projects, art forms and cultural expressions	Description of the imagery, aspirations of the local community	Requalification (e.g., urban decoration)	Democracy	Complete trust; Partial trust; Mistrust*	Physical regeneration
Description of the current physical and institutional infrastructure	Description of interests (private and public) gravitating around the site	Description of the daily life of the local community	Self-made urbanism (e.g., adaptive re-use)	Social Justice	Antagonism; Agonism; Negotiation; Participation**	Economical regeneration
Description of future/planned physical and institutional infrastructure		Description of conflicts, past or present	Temporary urbanism (e.g., single performance)	Expressivity	Authority and Power; Communication and decisional mode; Participants*** ('Democracy Cube')	Social regeneration
			Regeneration (e.g., Community development)			Enabling/ Limiting factors
Methodological sources (adapted from):						
Lefebvre (1975); Soja (1989)			*Litardi et al (2016)*	*Vicari Haddock S., & Moulaert F. (2009)*	**Campagna (2022); **Trimarchi et al. (2020); ***Fung (2006)*	*Evans (2005b) NUVAP (2023)*

Source: own processing

Considering this framework, evaluations of interventions will be proposed to take into consideration the level of social impact (real and perceived) through a methodology that will be identified during subsequent theoretical investigations. The aim will be to demonstrate: a) that cultural-led urban regeneration is a powerful tool, or at least more powerful than other types of urban regeneration, for the creation of consensus in local development policies; b) the extent and quality of participation in urban regeneration strategies that are fundamental for the sustainability and effectiveness of local planning.

The awareness that “the current literature does not even delve into measurements of the success of both the decision-making processes implemented in the phases […] with measurements of the degree of inclusion, participation and empowerment of stakeholders” (Pronti et al, 2018 p. 23), the future research work should attempt to fill this gap, pivoting on recent similar studies (Campagna, 2022) and on a meticulous work of case study analysis in Italy and abroad. The hope is that scientific researches based on this framework will improve policy advice for better designing what Sharon Zukin has called an "authentic" urban life (2010).

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