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### **Dynamics of cultural and social innovation. A critical analysis for the post-pandemic cities**

In the current context of post-pandemic reflections, urban planners, architects and social researchers alongside citizens and local communities are “call to act”, to imagine and build sustainable, inclusive, resilient and beautiful cities of the future. The post-pandemic scenario is a unique occasion to foster the re-imagination of urban and territorial spaces characterised by diversity, fruitful interactions between people of different ages and genders, inclusion of different cultural and creative activities that may be able to deliver formal and informal education services. According to Ursula Von der Leyen, the European cities of the future need a new cultural project (European Commission, 2021). A project that enriches people with creative and artistic experiences (Cerreta et. Al, 2021), where diversity and regenerative “bottom-up” approaches inspired by citizens are promoted. With this in mind, new design visions and urban policies need to be developed, where sustainable regeneration, creativity and social innovation should inspire a cultural transformation process (Tricarico et. Al, 2020). However, it is important to consider whether, in the name of progress and urban development, social and creative approaches are really such or omit soft power, a power capable of shaping people's perceptions through culture (Nye, 2004; Scaffidi, 2019). On the other hand, the use of the word "social" is often used as a controversial symbolic effort to socially "involve" people in decision-making processes, as called by Arnstein (1969) "tokenism".

The present contribution aims to provide a theoretical and empirical framework on this issue, to open a critical debate on how planners, architects and social researchers deal with such scenarios: Are cultural and social approaches really relevant for the sustainable development of future cities?

Are they always synonymous with good and urban progress?

What tools should institutions, academics and practitioners use to ensure effective approaches?

Providing an analysis of examples and a selected literature review, the contribution is built on the conceptual discussion on what we can learn and understand among different cultural and social innovation experiences in Europe. Moreover, providing a set of competences and approaches that policy makers, academics, urban planners and architects may embrace to foster dynamics of cultural and social innovation in contemporary city development.

**Keywords:** socio-cultural dynamics, urban development, progress, soft power, tokenism, critical research

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### **The Co-Evaluation and Co-Design of Culture-led Strategies: The Play ReCH process**

According to the current European scenario, cultural and creative policies and practices place significant pressure on local resources, systems, and infrastructures and demand for novel approaches in governing, financing, and monitoring urban performances with particular attention to unused or underutilized cultural heritage. In this perspective, cities become laboratories where cultural creative processes can be implemented with social cohesion principles based on the donation value expressed by communities. To understand how creative initiatives can contribute to facing unsolved conflicts and building new cultural services tailor-made for a specific context, the present paper explores dimensions, criteria, and indicators of the Cultural Creative Cities Monitor in the real case of “Play ReCH (Reuse Cultural Heritage) creative experience”.

The Play ReCH approach and the “Hack the City Salerno” mission, activated in the Salerno historic centre (Italy), open the reflection on some relevant issues related to how citizens become makers of cultural and creative cities’ policies, and contribute to evaluating and monitoring their implementation at diverse urban scales. The Play ReCH mission underlines how new evidence suggests declining the CCCM conceptual framework and related urban policies assessment, co-defining suitable community-based indicators. Play ReCH was the winner of the 2019 “Welfare Che Impresa” call and it promoted a process of cooperation, gamification and innovation in cultural heritage reuse. The monitoring and evaluating of the cultural and creative process tested in Play ReCH open some relevant questions: how to engage citizens in becoming “sensors” of urban change towards sustainable development? How does Play ReCH respond to some Monitor’s indicators and can contribute to create new ones, particularly in the dimension of the Enabling Environment?

**Keywords:** cultural heritage, cultural innovation, co-evaluation, co-design, gamification, creative and sustainable cities

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### **Collaborative and Cooperative Cultural Heritage Valorization**

In the last decades, the notion of cultural heritage preservation has evolved significantly, and its importance for local, sustainable development has been increasingly recognised. Cultural heritage is no longer merely understood as a fragile good to be shielded from external threats or as a good separated from its social context but as a means to satisfy the material and immaterial needs of a community. Indeed, cultural heritage is deemed relevant for its role and capacity in building a sense of belonging, of local identity, cohesion, and in enabling the creation and strengthening of social capital, and also as a fundamental tool for sustainable development.

This is keeping with the goals of the "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, in particular goal 11 "Sustainable Cities and Communities" and to realise what the New European Bauhaus declared: that is, to build more beautiful, sustainable and inclusive living spaces together. The contribute show the Action Research project that the researcher of CNR IRISS have been developing on the innovative enhancement of cultural heritage as a "commons", with the active involvement of communities, making operational the principles of the "Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society" (Faro Convention). Starting from the idea of "cultural commons", the research aims to define an innovative model of governance and management based on collaboration, cooperation and active involvement of communities, and oriented to implementation of strategies for promoting innovative forms of urban economy and spatial regeneration. In this context, recent European policies consider cultural heritage as "common good" and a key element for sustainable development. In this context, the Faro Convention, signed in 2005, has introduced "Heritage Communities" explicitly defined as "people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and to transmit to future generations" (Council of Europe 2005). The coexistence of different values and social actors shows the need to overcome the collective action dilemmas that characterise the conservation, use, maintenance and management of the common goods (European Commission 2018). The Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD) model developed by Elinor Ostrom (Ostrom 1990; Ostrom, Gardner, Walke 1994) represents a useful tool to understand the complexity of cultural heritage and to improve valorisation processes.

The methodological proposal was tested for the experience of a heritage community called "Friends of Molo San Vincenzo" (FMSV), activated for the regeneration of the San Vincenzo pier in the Port of Naples, Italy.

#### **Keywords (up to 6)**

Cultural Commons, Heritage Communities, Social Innovation, Faro Convention, Urban Regeneration

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**(Re)activating urban dynamics: a place-based approach to promote socioeconomic development and environmental protection in the periphery of São Paulo, Brazil.**

The dynamics of the peripheries of cities with rapid population growth in developing countries are recurrently configured by the overlapping of social and economic problems, such as the scarcity of urban infrastructure and the lack of local work, study, and leisure spaces. On the other hand, these same areas commonly have tangible and intangible attributes that can drive local transformation, (re)activate new urban dynamics and develop city spaces. The city of São Paulo, one of the major financial and urban centres of Latin America, is home to a population of over 12 million inhabitants; despite being known as a dense urban area with few green spaces, the State Capital has 28% of its territory with rural characteristics and natural remnants. São Paulo's southern districts are among the most socioeconomically vulnerable zones of the city and holds within its territory areas of great environmental importance such as rainforests, environmental protected zones, and agricultural production areas. The identification of the overlapping social and economic problems of those peripheral districts added to its important cultural and environmental heritage resulted in the construction of the *Connect the Dots Project*, which is an innovative place-based policy that aims to combine economic development and environmental protection in the periphery of São Paulo. The project received an award from Bloomberg Philanthropies (Mayors Challenge - Government Innovation Program) in 2016 and was designed based on principles of circular economy and value chain, promoting the valorisation of ecotourism, agroecology, leisure activities, water and organic food production in the city's peri-urban areas. Connecting the dots is anchored on three strategic axes: (1) Ecology through economy, (2) Inclusion through production and (3) Nutrition through local and organic food. This work aims to discuss the relationships between the strategies adopted in *Connect the Dots Project* and their contributions to the transformation of the territorial dynamics of the districts in which this project was implemented. The discussion is based on a qualitative analysis and is structured around the systematization of (1) processes (mechanisms and governance), (2) strategies and (3) main results of this policy, pointing to new paths and possibilities for local development that are centred on preservation and sustainable development, tackling vulnerabilities and the active participation of society in this process.

**Keywords:** São Paulo, place-based polices, sustainable development, innovation, circular economy, new peri-urban dynamics.

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**The dynamics of social innovation between higher education and neighbourhood regeneration.  
The Off-Campus project in NOLO, Milan**

Neighbourhood regeneration, based also on the activation of local communities, has been at the centre of attention and experimentation in the last few years, also in relation to the legacy of the pandemic on urban spaces. The attention to dynamics of proximity has led public decision makers and local communities to jointly work on enhancing livability and the quality and distribution of service at local level.

Milan has been no exception in this trend: a city widely recognized as polyarchic, it is characterized by a complex governance, in which a multiplicity of different actors contribute to shaping and implementing the urban agenda. Among those actors, certainly higher education institutions play a relevant role, in a city that sees around 200k students enrolled in its many universities, academies, etc. In the last years, in particular, Politecnico di Milano, a major technical university, has been reaching out to different stakeholders and urban actors in many different ways, but specifically opening up complex interaction spaces at neighbourhood level.

Moving from this background, the paper will critically discuss the rationale and implementation of such outreach activities, also in relation to the different constellations of local actors and governance arrangements.

**Keywords:** pandemic, neighbourhood regeneration, local communities, urban agenda

**Isabelle Soares, Department of Spatial Planning and Environment, University of Groningen**

**Addressing socio-spatial aspects of creativity (SSAC) in public spaces of Dutch university campuses and science parks and the role of evidence for Evidence-Based Practice (EBP).**

Studies on university campuses public spaces have recognized that there is a significant relationship between the built environment and people's perceptions of creativity, called here socio-spatial aspects of creativity (SSAC). There is, however, little empirical evidence to support this claim. This study explores two complementary perspectives regarding evidences on SSAC. Firstly, it quantifies and measures this relationship, using two types of Dutch university campuses as case studies: inner-city campuses and science parks (SPs). This study found statistical associations that locations of built environment feature influenced creativity between people. Secondly, it discusses with practitioners involved in public spaces' projects such SSAC statistical associations and explores their perceptions according to three effectiveness' aspects: credibility, relevance and applicability for practice. While perceptions' alignments among practitioners that the evidence is relevant for evidence-based practice (EBP), perceptions of credibility and applicability vary according to institutional biases, individual experiences and project phase and project roles' involvement. The findings highlight that SSAC must be considered in the planning and design of campuses, as a suite of spatial and perceptual conditions. Also, the outcomes concern to those interested in the research-evidence and practice interface and engaged in planning and design debates focusing on knowledge environments.

Keywords: urban design, spatial planning, public spaces, university campuses, creativity