Inclusive development & civic wealth in UNESCO sites.
A pilot project to regenerate the stables of the Duke Federico da Montefeltro in Urbino

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Abstract

The study focuses on how local administrations can activate and foster the process of linking cultural heritage to civic wealth creation by engaging different stakeholders in urban regeneration initiatives. The research design relies on the observation of a project known as "the Relaunch of the DATA space" – the stables of the Duke Federico da Montefeltro – in Urbino (Italy). The premises that activated local communities to collaborate on the project have been reconstructed and interpreted under the theoretical lens of civic wealth creation. The methodology adopted to reconstruct the processes put in place, the premises and factors that activated the mechanisms supposed to create civic wealth and the outcomes generated, was based on a qualitative approach. Multiple sources (both primary and secondary sources) were used to grasp stakeholders' opinions on culture-led regeneration initiatives and to identify approaches for citizen engagement, including semi-structured interviews addressed to key actors involved in the project, analysis of public documents and public discussions, municipality website and the city strategic plan. Findings highlight that the rediscovery and reuse of one's cultural heritage rooted in a common identity may become the glue that favours networking and the community's wellbeing. However, as civic wealth creation requires the key stakeholders' expectations come together, our case study reveals that collaboration among stakeholders strongly necessitates the support of the local administration as a facilitator/orchestrator, pursuing balance among different visions and needs over time.

Lo studio affronta il tema di come le amministrazioni locali fronteggiano la sfida di rigenerare le città storiche culturali grazie all'impegno delle comunità e degli stakeholder valorizzando il patrimonio culturale (CH). Il caso di studio presentato è quello della città di Urbino (Italia), patrimonio UNESCO. Il disegno di ricerca si basa sull'osservazione di un'iniziativa specifica, nota come "il rilancio dello spazio DATA" (le scuderie del Duca Federico da Montefeltro risalenti al Rinascimento). Le premesse che hanno attivato le comunità locali a collaborare al progetto sono state ricostruite e interpretate sotto la lente teorica della creazione di ricchezza civica. La metodologia adottata per ricostruire i processi messi in atto, i fattori che hanno attivato i meccanismi di generazione di ricchezza civica e i risultati generati, si è basata su un approccio qualitativo. Per cogliere la percezione degli stakeholder sul CH e identificare gli approcci per il coinvolgimento dei cittadini, le informazioni sono state tratte da una molteplicità di fonti primarie e secondarie (interviste non strutturate rivolte agli attori chiave coinvolti nel progetto, analisi di documenti e discussioni pubbliche, delibere del Consiglio comunale, analisi del sito web del Comune). I risultati evidenziano che la riscoperta del proprio patrimonio culturale, basato sull'eredità del passato ma riutilizzato nella vita quotidiana, può diventare il collante che favorisce il networking e il benessere della comunità. Tuttavia, poiché la creazione di ricchezza civica richiede che visioni e interessi dei principali stakeholder convergano, il caso di studio rivela che la collaborazione tra gli stakeholder ha fortemente bisogno del sostegno dell'amministrazione locale come facilitatore/organizzatore capace di perseguire nel tempo un equilibrio tra le diverse esigenze e aspettative.

1. *Introduction*

Urban regeneration rests on an integrated and comprehensive vision aimed at solving urban problems and promoting the development of the concerned communities, that is to say people who share place, identity, social practices and interests[1]. Urban regeneration is a broad practice that can be applied to suburban degraded districts and buildings[2], city centres[3] and historical towns[4]. The latter, although rich in cultural heritage (CH), often lack social and economic opportunities and suffer from the risk of desertification of their historical centres[5]. In this context, local public administrators could try to breathe new life into historic centres by reinventing the way spaces can be exploited and building on culture, as well as try to generate new opportunities and civic wealth[6] by resting on local knowledge (intangible cultural heritage, traditions, cultural legacy) and capabilities. In other words, CH can act as a glue around which community members, supporters and entrepreneurs collaborate to create civic wealth.

Accordingly, to inform the study we relied on two main streams of research dealing with the relevance of cultural heritage as a driver for sustainable growth and the role of the public administration in triggering ecosystems to mobilise socialisation, economic growth and cultural development[7]. In this vein, the main research question underpinning this study is the following: how can local administrations activate and foster the process of linking cultural heritage to civic wealth creation?

To this end, the paper draws from Lumpkin and Bacq's theoretical framework[8] for civic wealth creation and studies on cultural heritage revitalisation through participatory governance processes[9]. These two streams of research offer a conceptual structure that allow us to understand the type of initiatives launched and the role played by local administrations, the stakeholders involved and the approach used to design and implement the initiatives.

Building on prior findings[10], we focused on the case study of Urbino (Italy),

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[1] Roberts 2000; Stolarick, Florida 2006; Cooke, Lazzeretti 2008; La Rosa *et al.* 2017.
[2] Jung *et al.* 2015.
[3] Balsas 2022.
[4] Ertan, Eğercioğlu 2016.
[5] EU 2015; Micelli, Pellegrini 2018.
[6] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019; Rock project, <https://www.rockproject.eu/>, 26.07.2023.
[7] Loulansky 2006; Jimura 2011; Macdonald, Cheong 2014; European Commission 2015; Girard 2010; Girard *et al.* 2015; Sacco *et al.* 2014; Echter 2015; Nyseth, Sognnæs 2013; Nocca 2017; Hribar *et al.* 2015; Sacco *et al.* 2019; Dameri, Demartini 2020; Biondi *et al.* 2020; Rakitovac *et al.* 2021.
[8] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.
[9] Sacco *et al.* 2019; Feehan, Zingsheim 2019; Biondi *et al.* 2020.
[10] Aureli *et al.* 2020; Aureli *et al.* 2021a and 2021b.

a small city whose historical centre has been classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Namely, in 2018, the city launched a broad project – embedded in the UNESCO site management plan[11] – to regenerate and revitalise public spaces[12]. The city of Urbino offers, indeed, an interesting laboratory to scrutinise this issue from both a theoretical and practical point of view and advance research by discussing how a local administration may leverage a World Heritage Site to foster the regeneration of the local economy and bring about positive societal change.

The study is grounded on a qualitative approach useful to reconstruct the processes that were put in place, the premises or elements that activated the mechanisms that were expected to generate civic wealth and the outcomes that were generated. Both primary and secondary sources were used to gather information, including semi-structured interviews with key actors involved in the project and the analysis of public documents, such as the municipality website, public discussions on social media and the city strategic plan.

Findings highlight that initiatives or projects focused on cultural heritage promoted by local administrations may contribute to the vibrancy of the community, maintain the city's identity and revive the feeling of belonging to a specific history, culture and place. The process of recognising one's identity in the place they live contributes to a coalescence of values and expectations of the communities living there, without which it is difficult to achieve the economic, social and environmental impacts that institutions expect from interventions for the regeneration of the city's fabric. Moreover, findings point out that civic projects, like the one investigated here, are successful when different key stakeholders are involved and a participatory governance approach is adopted[13].

Our research suggests policy makers and public officers of small historic towns take into account both local history and traditions and emerging needs from communities[14] when planning projects for the city development. To respond to the challenges of long-term revitalisation, all city actors (i.e., citizens, politicians, public officers, experts, entrepreneurs, researchers, investors, urban planners) are called to nurture a cultural ecosystem and to promote a participatory and integrated approach to culture-led urban development projects.

This paper contributes to fill existing gaps in the literature on urban regeneration leveraging on CH by focusing on the relational role that local administrations can play as mobilisers of a social ecosystem, and by analysing the case study of a small town that, despite being a UNESCO site, is experiencing depopulation, limited tourism inflows and the decline of entrepreneurship.

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[11] Municipality of Urbino 2013 and 2016.
[12] Aureli, Del Baldo 2022.
[13] Franch 2020.
[14] Montella 2009 and 2010.

Moreover, to our knowledge, our study is the only one to extend the theoretical lens of the civic wealth theoretical framework[15] to culture-led sustainable development initiatives.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: section two presents the research streams we built on; sections three and four present the interpretative framework and the research design. Findings, relying on the case study's narrative, and emerging issues are pointed out in section five. Conclusions follow in section six, including some considerations about a further research agenda.

2. *Literature Review*

2.1. *Sustainable growth and the regeneration of historic city centres leveraging on Cultural Heritage*

Cultural Heritage (CH) includes tangible aspects of culture (physical artefacts), such as buildings, monuments, books, natural heritage (e.g., landscape) as well as non-material components (intangible attributes), such as local know-how, tacit and codified knowledge linked to arts, local crafts and traditions, which are embodied in social practices and community life[16]. CH is an important catalyst for growth, employment, social cohesion and local development.

In recent years, the role of CH has been extensively recognised by both scholars and policy makers as a driver to achieving sustainability[17]. However, there is still need for empirical-based and systematic studies on how CH and sustainable development can be successfully integrated[18]. Policy makers in particular call for evidence-based research to support strategic policy developments both on the European level as well as on national and local levels and thus to ensure that public and private institutions fully realise the potential of CH and put into practices the principles and spirit of the Faro Convention, adopted in 2005 under the auspices of the Council of Europe[19], as well as of the Hangzhou Declaration, adopted in May 2013 under the auspices of UNESCO[20] that respectively put people and human values in the centre of a renewed understanding of CH, and recognises the value of CH as a driver for sustainable development.

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[15] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.
[16] Throsby 1999 and 2003; Blake 2000; Vecco 2010.
[17] Rodwell 2003 and 2008; ICOMOS 2015; UN 2015 ; Camagni *et al.* 2020.
[18] CHCfE Consortium 2015; Cerquetti 2016.
[19] Council of Europe 2005.
[20] UNESCO 2013.

A holistic perspective sees CH as socially constructed, dynamic and functional. CH is conceived both as an element and a tool for socio-economic development[21] and an integral element of territorial capital, capable of influencing local economic dynamics since: «it shapes cultural and psychological attitudes of local communities; represents an important component of local social and identitarian capital; enhances creativity of the local intellectual and artistic milieu»[22]. Hence, CH promotes social cohesion and equity (e.g., it strengthens communities, where citizens associate the historic environment with a shared identity and attachment to the place, including disadvantaged or socially excluded people)[23], inclusive economic development (e.g., cultural and creative industries contribute to revitalising the industrial fabric of historic areas) and environmental sustainability of urban areas (e.g., adaptive re-use of the existing fabric and buildings, historic areas and downtowns transformed into efficient and ecological spaces).

As emphasised by UN-Habitat, CH provides quality, sense and meaning to urbanisation processes, promoting the implementation of attractive economic, social and cultural spaces in metropolitan areas, where many values can be generated[24]. Hence, the revitalisation and the social upgrading of historical city centres represents a strong priority of urban regeneration policies[25]. Therefore, its conservation and valorisation are at the centre of a lively debate on how CH contributes to revitalising cities and historical districts[26].

Interventions in historic sites, such as the ones included on the UNESCO heritage list, encompass actions to preserve and enhance CH. Safeguarding CH necessarily involves the preservation and reinterpretation of a site's cultural values. Indeed, the sustainable social renewal of historic city centres as well as rural areas includes both preservation and development through strategies and actions designed to improve inhabitants' living conditions and attract tourists, investors and entrepreneurs.

Urban regeneration is vital in historical cities that are rich in CH but lack social and economic opportunities for citizens and risk the desertification of their centres[27]. The key challenge is to reinvent the way spaces are exploited, building on culture to breathe new life into historic centres and activating local knowledge and capabilities that generate new opportunities to achieve civic wealth creation[28].

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[21] UN-Habitat 2008; CHCfE Consortium 2015.
[22] Camagni *et al*. 2020, p. 35.
[23] Loulansky 2006; Echter 2015.
[24] UN-Habitat 2008.
[25] Rudokas, Grazuleviciute-Vileniske 2021.
[26] UNESCO 2008 and 2011; Murzyn-Kupisz 2012; Azmi *et al*. 2021.
[27] Stolarick, Florida 2006; Cooke, Lazzeretti 2008; Ertan, E ercio lu 2016.
[28] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019; Bacq *et al*. 2020; Rock project, <https://www.rockproject.eu/>,

In this vein, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) acts as a laboratory of ideas and innovative experiences to capitalise on the full potential of culture and creativity for sustainable urban development. Best practices relative to large cities[29] and great tourist destinations[30] have highlighted the factors and processes that leverage from tangible and intangible CH to sustain citizens' social, cultural and economic wealth[31], thus increasing urban sustainability[32]. However, it must be pointed out that the role of culture and creativity in urban processes could also «legitimise and even encourage organised forms of appropriation of common symbolic and material resources»[33], as in the case of culture-driven gentrification[34].

Minor attention has been addressed to the recovery and resilience of historic villages and small towns[35]. This represents a gap in both tourism literature and studies on urban regeneration that have focused on large cities with problems due to overtourism. When cities undergo overtourism[36], congestion, high costs of living and more facilities that cater only to tourists' needs, it pushes local residents to move out, so cities often end up losing their most valuable resource: the local community[37]. On the contrary, this article fills this gap and focuses on contexts, such as small villages and cities in inland areas affected by depopulation for various reasons, where the mobilisation of cultural resources for economic revitalisation could be pivotal for the development of a "culture-based economy"[38]. Historical villages and towns have many attributes (e.g., natural and artistic attractions, pedestrian zone, restaurants and other leisure services, retail shops) that create a dynamic social and cultural place and make the location a great place dear to the community and capable of attracting visitors and entrepreneurial activities. However, many of these locations suffer from unemployment, disengagement and economic stagnation[39]. Individually, small towns do not have the capability to compete with larger destinations to attract visitors and residents, but they could cooperate to attract some tourist flows in small cities and reduce the negative urban socio-environmental damages caused by overtourism in near big cities[40].

26.07.2023.
[29] Carillo 2004; Zukin *et al.* 2015.
[30] Martí-Costa, Pradel 2011; Ginzarly, Teller 2018.
[31] Magistretti *et al.* 2020.
[32] Cervellò-Royo *et al.* 2012; Nyseth, Sognnæs 2013; Echter 2015; Nocca 2017.
[33] Sacco *et al.* 2019, p. 200.
[34] Atkinson, Bridge 2005; Zukin *et al.* 2015.
[35] Azmi *et al.* 2021.
[36] Jover, Díaz-Parra 2020.
[37] Higgings 2020.
[38] Amin, Thrift 2007; Power, Scott 2004; Rakic, Chambers 2008.
[39] Thurley *et al.* 2015; Micelli, Pellegrini 2018.
[40] Amore *et al.* 2020; Yuval 2022.

2.2. *Participatory Governance for culture-led urban regeneration projects*

Putting the community at the centre is fundamental to maintaining the vibrancy of a local area and implementing regeneration projects based on CH. Many past initiatives of local governments failed because their investments only focused on cultural heritage restoration or architectural development projects, while social and economic benefits are achieved if wider targets than restored/innovative buildings are set and pursued[41]. The engagement of the broader community and participatory governance, which involves citizens and other stakeholders in the culture-led processes of urban regeneration, are critical to generating lasting impacts over time as «the community model assumes that the resources of a territory are used in such a way as to preserve their value over time. Governance in the community model is multi-stakeholder and founded on the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social and environmental»[42].

To respond to the challenges of long-term revitalisation, all the city actors (i.e., politicians, civil servants, experts, entrepreneurs, researchers, investors, urban planners and also citizens and city users) are "called to action", promoting a participatory approach[43].

The cultural regeneration of a territory is achieved, indeed, through a plurality of cultural participative initiatives that involve different stakeholders and unfold over time[44]. A single project relating to the investment of contributions for the preservation of cultural heritage will not be sufficient to trigger a virtuous spiral of cultural, social and economic growth and impact civic wealth. The idea behind this positive spiral is transforming people into "cultural citizens" who, in turn, would nurture culture as an endogenous growth process[45].

It is therefore a virtuous growth path that must be activated and nurtured over time and that requires an orchestrator(s), usually a public actor. But it can also be a grassroots initiative, in which citizens (for example, members of an association) of a community initiate a cultural project for the regeneration of a public space, a district or a historic city centre[46]. The role of the orchestrator(s) is fundamental in shaping the vision and enabling participation of all relevant stakeholders[47]. The starting phase of a culture-led regeneration project is char-

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[41] Feehan, Zingsheim 2019; Sacco *et al*. 2019.
[42] Franch 2020, p. 134.
[43] Del Baldo, Demartini 2016; Aureli, Del Baldo 2022.
[44] Biondi *et al*. 2020.
[45] Sacco, Segre 2009.
[46] Aureli *et al*. 2020; Demartini *et al*. 2020.
[47] Biondi *et al*. 2020.

acterised by the orchestrator's vision, which is long-sighted and requires others to be convinced of its aims and merits. Hence, a key issue is to transform the individual visions of single actors and, specifically, their means and ends into a joint understanding. As Della Lucia and Trunfio argue «in the creation of a shared vision of urban development, the greatest challenge is to overcome the significant barriers that inevitably arise when a wide variety of stakeholders are involved, all with different backgrounds, power agendas, aims, roles and competencies»[48].

For this reason, in order to achieve a shared strategic vision behind projects of urban culture-led development, it is fundamental for policy makers and public administrators to understand how the different stakeholders perceive and intend to enhance their city's CH[49].

This aspect is of paramount interest to the public administration of small towns that have a great historical and artistic heritage but limited funds to devote to culture, suffer from a demographic decline and often experience economic decrease.

3. *Civic wealth creation as an interpretative framework*

Civic wealth creation (CWC) is the creation of social, economic and communal endowments that benefit local communities and allow these communities to be self-sufficient, therefore, generating positive societal change and a sustainable impact[50]. So, the concept of civic wealth goes beyond the material resources and physical assets of a community to include intangibles such as health, happiness, culture and social justice. Civic wealth is created through local stakeholders' collaboration and takes the form of new or improved local capacity, and tangible and intangible resources that help to find solutions to community problems and bring about change[51].

This conceptual perspective proposed by Lumpkin & Bacq[52] assumes that civic wealth is created when the following three key stakeholder categories mobilise their resources and collaborate: community members, supporters (like donors and institutions) and entrepreneurially-minded agents. When they come together to build new capacities and create positive change, civic wealth is produced.

One fundamental aspect of this framework is that communities (people

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[48] Della Lucia, Trunfio 2018, p. 36.
[49] Del Baldo, Demartini 2021.
[50] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.
[51] Alvord *et al.* 2004; Haugh 2005.
[52] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019 and 2022; Bacq *et al.* 2020; Bailey, Lumpkin 2021.

who share a place, identity, social practices and interests) are considered actors in societal change rather than merely passive beneficiaries[53]. They collaborate and are intimately involved in creating and implementing solutions to economic inequality issues, demographic decline and other problems. Therefore, communities directly contribute to creating real societal impacts[54].

Management scholars have increasingly highlighted the importance of communities for societal impact creation[55] and the role communities play at the intersection of entrepreneurial activity and societal impact creation[56]. Societal impact, defined as beneficial outcomes that contribute to advance societal well-being and societal functioning[57], encompasses many different target populations, including individuals, organizations, and/or the natural environment in both current and future generations. Moreover, societal impacts may manifest at a micro and a macro level, with effects that can be both intended and unintended as well as short- and long-term.

This focus on communities is in line with UNESCO's strategic objectives included in the World Heritage Convention since 2007[58], stating that the identification, management and successful conservation of heritage should not be done against the interests, or with the exclusion or omission of local communities. Most revitalisation projects in UNESCO sites actually rely on community involvement as a key factor for ensuring territorial development[59]. However, the CWC framework goes further as it suggests engaging communities to raise them as active players, and not just to collect their perspectives and needs.

Indeed, what makes the CWC framework innovative is the collective action achieved through the collaboration of multiple stakeholders with different logics[60]. In addition, this framework has the capability of shifting the focus to a "civic" or meso level of analysis, i.e., neighbourhoods, villages and communities, where many interwoven societal change initiatives can take place.

Evidence of CWC processes reported in the literature mainly refers to actors such as cooperatives, social enterprises and not-for-profit organisations collaborating in healthcare, housing, nutrition, education activities and offering services to the poor. Hence, their entrepreneurial efforts contribute to increasing both the well-being and economic self-sufficiency of disadvantaged people in the local community[61]. Surprisingly, none of the examples or case

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[53] Peredo, Chrisman 2006; Glynn 2019; Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.
[54] Branzei *et al.* 2018.
[55] Lumpkin *et al.* 2018.
[56] Peredo, Chrisman 2006; Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.
[57] Stephan *et al.* 2016.
[58] WHC 2007.
[59] Nicholas *et al.* 2009; Vollero *et al.* 2016.
[60] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.
[61] *Ibidem.*

studies reported in previous studies refer to cultural heritage-related activities, although «cultural heritage is inevitably implicated in the creation of a sense of community»[62] .

4. *Research design*

4.1. *A paradigmatic case-study considered a pilot project for other European historic urban centres*

This paper focuses on the case of Urbino, a UNESCO world heritage site affected by a socio-economic decline because citizens and businesses increasingly move to nearby cities where they find more opportunities, services, jobs and a better quality of life. Preserving the vibrancy and well-being of the community represents a challenge for the local government, which launched a series of initiatives under the project named "Urbino perBene"[63].

The "Urbino perBene" project was launched in 2017 by the municipality under the patronage of MiBACT (The Italian Minister for Culture and Tourism) and the UNESCO. It was set in motion in 2013, when Urbino and Florence's municipalities approved a memorandum of understanding aimed at tailoring the "Firenze perBene" project to the city of Urbino to push city users to adopt good practices, enhancing their consciousness of being in contact with commons typical of a universal CH, unique and exceptional in value. Namely, the "Urbino perBene" project was embedded in the UNESCO site management plan of Urbino[64] and aimed to: enhance the citizens, residents and tourists' awareness towards historic and artistic heritage of the city for people's involvement in its conservation and enhancement; promote good practices in favouring the safeguarding of the site for future generations of an invaluable asset; requalify the historic city spaces in harmony with the aesthetic canons of the city and the cultural values of the local communities; create a favourable milieu for the spur of new ventures with an impact on the wealth and wellbeing of residents and tourists.

Within the project "Urbino perBene", we decided to address the attention on a specific initiative called the "Relaunch of the DATA space" project, which takes the name from the historical building named DATA or "Orto dell'Abbondanza". In doing so, we applied a purposeful sampling technique[65]. The DATA has been selected for the following main reasons: a) it was identified as

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[62] Howard 2003, p. 147; Byrne 2008, pp. 170-171.
[63] Aureli *et al*. 2020, 2021a, 2021b.
[64] Municipality of Urbino 2013 and 2016.
[65] Etikan *et al*. 2016; Patton 1990.

an urban regeneration project for the valorisation of a UNESCO World Heritage Site; b) it had received attention and media coverage at the regional level; c) it is considered a pilot project for other European historic urban centres; d) it included a considerable number of different initiatives and expected impacts; e) it implied the involvement of different stakeholders; and e) it was ongoing at the time of the data collection.

As an urban laboratory working towards requalifying the historic building and creating a favourable milieu for socialisation, innovation and creativity, DATA provides an example of a historical and military place, embedded in a UNESCO site (the historic centre of Urbino) converted into a cultural, social and economic engine. Indeed, it has been headquartered in the ancient stables of the Duke Federico da Montefeltro, built in the 15th century as a part of the nascent Ducal Palace under the supervision of the famous architect Francesco Di Giorgio Martini. Thanks to the intervention of a prestigious architect Giancarlo De Carlo, in 1998, the DATA space was renovated and transformed into a more modern building with three internal decks at different communicating levels, with the intention of making it a multifunctional centre equipped with a library, exhibition spaces and a multimedia study centre. The Municipality started the renovation of DATA spaces in 2010 with the funding obtained from the 54th Venice Biennale to host the Marche section of the Italian Pavillon. Students (attending the ISIA, a famous school of graphic design located in Urbino) were entrusted with the design by portions of the first level deck, devising an extremely inexpensive way to contemplate different and possible uses of a large space with the support of the KTO (Knowledge Transfer Office) at the University of Urbino.

Although the project was launched thanks to public funds, and its management coordinated by civil servants, its whole implementation involved various stakeholders (included private investors), who contributed to the deployment of the initiatives grouped under the label of "DATA project". From a technical point of view, only the first part of the work (which began in 2019), covering the first deck or floor, has been completed. The second and third floor will be completed after receiving new funding. From the planning perspective, the use of all floors and spaces has already been designed (see Table 1) with the help of various stakeholders that have reflected on the different needs of the local communities.

Namely, among the stakeholders involved, we should mention the local art high school and other secondary and high schools (in particular the ISIA), members of local associations and not-for-profit organisations keen on proposing and managing events hosted in the DATA spaces; local NGOs and an association of retail shops located in the historical city centre of Urbino; the CEO of a consultancy firm and incubator for start-ups; the University of Urbino, its professors and students, interested in organising seminars and conferences, hotel management schools and operators in the food and wine sectors.

These subjects participated in round tables promoted by the municipality and meant as a place for discussion. After several meetings, they jointly decided to implement key actions aimed to identify the issues associated with the use of the city centre and its heritage by both tourists, permanent inhabitants and students and then launch initiatives to foster behaviours that favour heritage conservation and socioeconomic development.

	MULTIFUNCTIONAL SPACE DESCRIPTION	STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED
LAB	Space where didactic workshops can be organised to share experiences and skills: crafts and co-working courses. It includes the Mediateca and the Medialibrary that offer a large heritage of books, music and movies.	Urbino University students and Arts High school students need spaces to study and carry out practical works, also in conjunction with businesses and artisans.
TÓ	You bring items, clothes and furniture to exchange here. It is also a place for seminars, conferences and musical events.	Citizens and students' needs for a second-hand market; Tourists attracted by musical events.
TATA	Place where youth bring their plants, which are entrusted and cared for by real green thumbs.	Youths need for green spaces.
BLABLA	A bistro and tandem space where one can learn a foreign language by conversing with a native speaker. In addition, the bistro serves as a meeting place.	High school and university students need meeting places.
"Bring a Book" Library	A library created through the contribution of the bearer of a book. The DATA must host a space dedicated to reading.	Citizens/Residents meeting places for reading and socialisation.
LÍ-LÁ	Renters and owners can post their offers for houses and other spaces.	Citizens, students, small entrepreneurs and real estate businesses may find a platform for exchange.
Laboratories	Participatory Urban Planning Lab, Social Lab, Theatre Lab, Cinema Lab and Innovation/ Contamination Lab. Ease of use of spaces by associations for organising initiatives and events.	Citizens, Students, Businesses, Local associations and NGOs may find a place for co-creation.
GNAM	A free space to taste, share and buy local typical dishes.	Tourists searching for experience and shopping; food and wine businesses that want to have more visibility.

Tab. 1. DATA as a multifunctional space to host laboratories, ideas and activities (Source: Authors' elaboration)

4.2. *Research method: data collection, coding and analysis*

The paper has adopted a qualitative approach to reconstruct the processes put in place, the premises or factors that activated the mechanisms supposed to create civic wealth and the outcomes generated. Information on the case study was obtained from primary and secondary sources: semi-structured interviews addressed to key actors involved in the project; analysis of public documents, including the minutes of the City council's periodical meetings, municipality website, public discussions (press releases and social media) and the city strategic plan; findings from authors' previous contributions. As highlighted by academics, scanning data from multiple sources is vital to grasp people's perceptions of CH[66] and to identify approaches for citizen engagement[67].

The semi-structured interviews revolve around the following key topics that were addressed to all subjects contacted:
- – the personal opinion about past and possible future initiatives designed to promote or transform Urbino into a place of inclusion, where it is beautiful to live and where economic and social development can be achieved;
- – the perception about the local administration's vision of the historic centre of Urbino;
- – the perception about the mechanisms used and solutions developed by the municipality to involve and engage stakeholders in devising a strategy for Urbino and find a way to combine the different stakeholders' visions about Urbino;
- – the judgement about the tangible and intangible results achieved with the Data project;
- – the opinion about how the UNESCO recognition should be enhanced.

The interviews were run from the end of 2020 to the end of 2022, lasted about 90 minutes each and have been addressed to the following informant people, selected as key representatives of the main institutions involved in the DATA project: the Vice-major and actual Councillor of the Municipality of Urbino appointed for tourism activities and for the UNESCO city plan (already interviewed as the former Councillor for city planning); an architect from the city planning office of the Municipality, responsible for urban regeneration, who also dealt with the drafting of the UNESCO site management plan; a consultant for public communication of the city Council; three local representatives of the main art schools (i.e., the principal of the local art high school; the director of the Academy of Fine Arts of Urbino; and the managing director of ISIA, a famous school for graphic design and visual communica-

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[66] Sontum *et al*. 2018.
[67] Billore 2021.

tion); the representative of a local entrepreneurial association; the CEO of a consultancy firm for start-ups involved in the innovation/contamination Lab located in the DATA space. The texts from the interviews and public documents have been transcribed and then coded with NVivo software[68] to imbue an inductive study with "qualitative rigour" while still retaining the creative and revelatory potential for generating new concepts and ideas[69].

The coding was performed by two members of the research team, who employed reliability checks and tests of internal and external validity[70]. A multiple step analysis process was used. First, the authors developed a list of potential codes generated based on prior research[71]. This initial coding scheme is based on the concept of CWC elaborated by Lumpkin and Bacq[72] and their explanation of civic wealth as the outcome of three relevant mechanisms or strategies (i.e., engaged participation, collaborative innovation and resource mobilisation) that key stakeholder groups (i.e., local communities, enterprises and supporters) use to generate civic wealth by providing a wide array of resources (such as financial, technical and political assistance) (see Fig. 1).
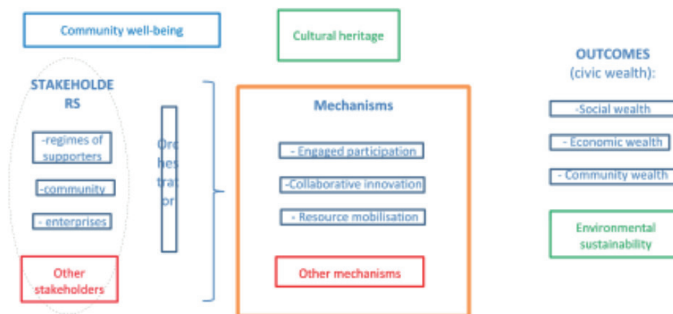

Fig. 1. First coding scheme from the CWC perspective (blue squares) integrated with concepts from urban regeneration literature (green square) and open coding (red squares)

Since Lumpkin and Bacq[73] emphasised that mechanisms for civic wealth creation are effective only when different stakeholders intentionally pursue a joint interest that brings about positive societal change, we created a code for the assumed common goal of improving the well-being of the local community. As previously stated, putting the community at the centre is fundamental

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[68] Miles *et al*. 2013.
[69] Gioia *et al*. 2012
[70] MacQueen *et al*. 1998; Miles, Huberman 1994.
[71] Sherraden *et al*. 2000.
[72] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.
[73] *Ibidem*.

to implementing regeneration projects based on CH[74]. The underpinning idea is transforming people into "cultural citizens" who, in turn, would nurture culture as an endogenous growth process[75].

In addition, Lumpkin and Bacq suggested that the processes of CWC often require a facilitator (usually a public actor), who initiates stakeholder engagement; therefore, we coded the role of the public administration (PA) in the project. This is also consistent with the role of orchestrator for culture-led urban regeneration projects[76].

In the second step, the initial coding was improved by adding concepts useful to identify the cultural heritage of the city and the dimensions associated with urban regeneration. Not included in the framework of CWC, but strongly emphasised in debates on urban regeneration, is the concept of environmental sustainability of urban areas based on innovative and more efficient use of buildings and spaces, which was identified with a specific code[77].

Subsequently, open coding was adopted to benefit from interview respondents' phrases and unique experiences as sources of inspiration for the code list[78]. On a regular basis, the team members shared the outcomes of the coding during face-to-face meetings and teleconferences to discuss questions arising from the empirical investigation and identifying the main features of the observed phenomenon.

A final step of code refinement emerged from the reading, in addition to the subsequent analysis of textual data, as we also wanted to remain open to objective-related data that may fall outside the realm of the presumed constructs. These final steps led to the creation of additional codes mapping other stakeholder groups.

Namely, additional key stakeholders have to be considered to fully understand the processes in place: tourists and institutional CH preservation bodies. Since these stakeholders are not included in the Lumpkin and Bacq's framework, it is worth elaborating on the reasong we have developed a data coding process.

Tourists do not belong to the community, nor are they necessarily customers of local and community-based enterprises. Tourists perceive themselves differently from citizens or community members and vice versa. Tourists do not enjoy a common bond with community members because they do not develop shared experiences over time with the other actors[79]. However, tourists, similarly to citizens, temporarily (for the length of their stay) benefit from the actions put in place to improve the well-being of a community (e.g., social and cultural events

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[74] Franch 2020.
[75] Sacco, Segre 2009.
[76] Della Lucia, Trunfio 2018; Sacco *et al*. 2019; Biondi *et al*. 2020.
[77] Nocca 2017.
[78] Strauss, Corbin 1990.
[79] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.

designed to engage with the public, and enjoy the well-being and beauty of a place). As stakeholders, tourists might be engaged in processes of wealth creation. Tourists do not have bonds of kinship and citizenry[80] that motivate them to participate, but they can be taught to have both rights and duties when "consuming" CH (i.e., visiting a site, interacting with the local population), which can foster a sense of responsibility to contribute to improving living conditions and sustaining local economic and environmental development. Tourists can also support the enhancement of the local CH by becoming donors or ambassadors of museums, archaeological sites and cultural activities.

Another CH-related and relevant stakeholder is represented by the bodies in charge of the preservation of cultural heritage like the National Commission for UNESCO and the Superintendence of Monuments and Fine Arts. They belong to the category of regimes of supporters as they might bring resources and the authority to act in a civic setting.

Following an interpretivist approach[81], we attempted to be receptive to capturing meanings within human interactions[82]. Yet, the interpretivist stance enabled us to use data to observe and theorise about aspects of the social world under the lens of the CWC framework while seeking to discover patterns that could be used for further research.

5. *Results of the analysis*

The DATA project elicits a discussion on the role of CH in the city of Urbino's path of development. Hence, the focus of the interviews also included the vision of the development of Urbino's historic city centre by different subjects. This is in line with the framework of CWC, which requires that the underlying logics of key stakeholders come together to promote initiatives that improve community well-being[83]. Hence, in the following section, we will present the different perspectives of the interviewees on CH as a lever for civic wealth creation.

5.1. *Stakeholders' perspectives on CH as a lever for civic wealth creation*

Supporters
From the point of view of the former Councillor for the city planning (then Councillor for Tourism development and the UNESCO management plan),

[80] Putnam 2000.
[81] Schwartz-Shea, Yanow 2013.
[82] Dey 2003.
[83] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.

that we consider both a supporter and a facilitator of the project, the DATA initiatives represent a way to activate a catalytic process of the energies present in the territory: «experimenting with the DATA possibilities of use – letting an old space live and living the space to make it alive and trigger ideas, energies, relationships and contaminations among different actors: youths, schools and university students, entrepreneurs, artists, etc., made it possible to verify the concrete feasibility of the cultural, economic and tourist revitalisation project, leveraging local excellence». From his words a predefined conception of the city's vocation does not emerge, but rather the awareness that the reuse of cultural heritage can mobilise different stakeholders and engage citizens so that local knowledge (or *genius loci*[84]) can be recombined and revitalised through experimentation.

Members of the Communities

Representatives of local art schools express a vision of regeneration of the territory more anchored to the enhancement of the exceptional nature of its cultural heritage. Although the cultural heritage of Urbino, recognised all over the world, dates back to the Renaissance period, they believe that an important example of revitalisation took place in the 900s, thanks to great men of culture (including Italian writers such as Volponi, Luzi, Parronchi and even the Noble Prize Ungaretti; scholars such as Carlo Bo and internationally renowned architects such as De Carlo) who have been able to appreciate and enhance the city, seen as an example of beauty and culture. From this perspective, the words of the Director of the School of Fine Arts are exemplary: «the historic centre of Urbino must rediscover its own identity and express a new renaissance, based on the principles of Humanism». Consistently, the DATA project should be «a space devoted to *Ars* (Latin word that stands for talent/genius) and *Techne* (ancient Greek word for know-how)». The conception underlying the new functions to be attributed to heritage assets is, therefore, that of offering spaces to develop new technologies and skills for the arts. «A fluid space, a laboratory that recalls the humanistic conception of the knowledge of the enlightened Cortegiano, artist, scientist and scholar at the Duke's court». The renewal of the city must, therefore, focus on the enhancement of art, beauty and quality of life focusing above all on the cultural impact of regeneration projects and considering a valorisation of CH that aims at the development of economic wealth less appropriate.

The participation of the bodies in charge of the preservation of cultural heritage like the National Commission for UNESCO and the Superintendence of Monuments and Fine Arts is (almost) mandatory and their logics of action is extremely polarised toward the commitment to maintain and protect the CH

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[84] Vecco 2020.

under their supervision. According to the CWC framework, supporters usually collaborate because they want to influence societal change[85], but CH preservation bodies have to protect, as an example, the outstanding universal value ("OUV") of the World Heritage Sites. However, their role is often perceived by local entrepreneurs and other members of the communities as a bound on innovative and creative processes that use CH as leverage for development as demonstrated in our case study. «Preservation bodies created delays, administrative obstacles and limitations to possible creative uses of CH because they were not fully engaged in the project» (representative of a local entrepreneurial association).

Enterprises

Entrepreneurs complain that, «the culture and practices of Urbino have remained unchanged over the years» while there are relevant societal challenges to face; «Urbino is a place of dreams, it does not innovate, politics does not think about the future» (CEO of the consultancy firm). With respect to the city's great cultural wealth, the opinion is that synergies must be created between institutions, associations and the university to develop economic wealth. «The university cannot be sufficient on its own; it must be part of these synergies. It must be an integral part, an active part... it is often neutral and this is not good... because everyone must understand that, working together, we can create those synergies, those potentials that we struggle to create on our own... otherwise we remain locked in an economy that is no longer enough» (representative of local entrepreneurial association).

Local entrepreneurs also complain of very poor involvement of tourists, which is evidenced by their very short stay: «A half day visit of the site and no consumption of local services is connected to no attachment to the place and its history, poor respect of tangible artefacts and… no financial resources flowing to the territory in the form of visitor spending» (representative of local entrepreneurial association).

As for the DATA project, the involvement of a start-up incubation centre within the Lab spaces assumes that it is possible to create business models that are self-sustaining thanks to the fact that the various actors (public, private and civil society) pool resources to generate civic wealth. «DATA does not have to produce profits; the aim is to use the bistro to produce profits with which to finance the co-working space and the other Labs so that citizens and students can use them for free» (CEO of the consultancy firm). However, this objective failed to be fully realised due to the short-sightedness of the stakeholders. «We have organised round table discussions and meetings to understand the feasibility of organising different activities at the DATA, but there

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[85] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.

has always been the problem of getting the shopkeepers, politicians, residents and managers to agree on how to make the DATA work» (representative of local entrepreneurial association).

5.2. *The point of view of the Public Administration as the activator of the city regeneration processes*

In order to explore the mechanisms adopted by the Public Administration (PA) to involve the stakeholders in the city regeneration processes, it is useful to start diachronically and from the objectives that the municipality has set itself in launching the main project "Urbino perBene". The latter was conceived as a tool useful to trigger and improve dialogue with citizens and city users and collect new and fresh insights (i.e., by addressing attention to the perceptions and perspectives of youth, tourists, city users and inhabitants of the centre). The results obtained from the questionnaire administered to students, tourists and permanent inhabitants[86] allowed us to understand the coexistence of different and sometimes conflicting viewpoints, needs and perceptions among city users, and collect suggestions to trigger innovative ideas to make the historical centre more attractive, in the renewal and regeneration of the cultural and socio-economic fabric[87]. Then, the local PA played a key role in initiating collaborative actions, aimed at fostering dialogue and facilitating the composition of single "voices" and views, eliciting several projects, and among them, the DATA project.

The local municipality identified the desire for city regeneration as a shared interest capable of activating collaboration and generating change. Hence, the DATA project was born «to serve as a common place to bring together the energies of the territory and convey them to sustain the economic, cultural and touristic revitalisation of the city» as reported by the former Councillor for the city planning. The local municipality was actually the actor that initiated the public debate and organised meetings on the usage of DATA, and it was the entity that allocated funds to this project. Discussions and great participation in meetings seemed promising. One year of experimentation in using the three floors of DATA to organise events, exhibitions, public meetings and open a co-working space for start-uppers, a library, a showroom of local products and a bistro also seemed successful in its attempt to engage artists, inhabitants, entrepreneurs and tourists. However, it must be said that, «the DATA project is still a work in progress» as stated by the Vice Major, and after one year of experimentation, the spaces were not more accessible due to Covid-19 restrictions from 2020.

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[86] *Ibidem.*
[87] Sacco, Segre 2009.

6. *Discussion*

The main research question underpinning this study was the following: how can local administrations activate and foster the process of linking cultural heritage to civic wealth creation?

To this end, this paper draws from Lumpkin and Bacq's (2019) theoretical framework for CWC to understand the role played by local administrations, the stakeholders involved and the approach used to design and implement the initiatives.

CWC requires that the logics underlying the key stakeholders coalesce to advance initiatives that improve the well-being of the community, while in our case study, different priorities make it difficult to amalgamate different expectations and create common visions to preserve but also enhance the city's CH. Despite a widespread consciousness that CH is a common good, different needs and expectations among inhabitants and temporary dwellers (i.e., students) emerged, similarly to what was reported in our previous research on the project "Urbino perBene"[88]. We have found that youth attribute great cultural value to the heritage of Urbino, collectively recalling all the attributes identified by Throsby[89], namely: Historical, Aesthetic, Symbolic, Spiritual, Social values. As far as their quality of life is concerned, the majority of students believe that the concession of public spaces for cultural, commercial and spontaneous events and the organization of "white-nights" or museum openings at night could involve more students to benefit the CH. Youth can bring stimulus and a regenerating power that, if correctly conveyed by the public administration, can help a historic centre like Urbino to avoid remaining crystallised over time as a museum city[90]. On the other hand, residents complain about defaced buildings and abandoned waste. They demanded campaigns in favour of the civic sense to preserve the value of the historic centre and the quality of life of residents, which often does not fit in with the expectations of students living on a university campus-city.

Our thorough analysis of this case study adds to previous results[91] that while the participation of supporters (i.e., the local municipality) was clear and demonstrated by the commitment to supply financial and human resources and legal authority to the project, community members and enterprises moderately contributed. To sum up, limited participation of students and inhabitants do not favour community empowerment and poor involvement of entrepreneurs do not favour the development of effective and long-lasting entrepreneurial solutions that can nurture the regeneration of a city after the stop of public funding for restoring or enhancing CH.

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[88] Del Baldo, Demartini 2021.
[89] Throsby 2003.
[90] Del Baldo, Demartini 2021.
[91] Aureli *et al*. 2020, 2021a, 2021b.

In this vein, it is important to discuss the role that the Municipality played as a facilitator of these urban regeneration processes.

The case study reveals that after one year of experimentation, the spaces were not more accessible and the vision of the use of the place in the future is still not clear. Most importantly, the project did not develop capabilities in the community useful to continue creating civic wealth. The civic vibrancy given by the encounter of inhabitants, artists, students and entrepreneurs in the DA-TA space stopped very soon after.

Furthermore, we deem that one key strategy was partially missing: the engagement of all stakeholder categories.

Strong communication and public meetings with citizens promising a participatory decision-making process in designing the uses of the DATA space generated an initial phase of enthusiasm and resource mobilisation. Besides the restored building of the project, volunteers, professional networks and personal relationships were devoted to the project and contributed as material and immaterial resources to civic wealth creation by building cohesiveness and strengthening mutual interactions among stakeholders. But, besides a few cases, the sharing of ideas, knowledge and expertise in such meetings, despite the intentions of the former Councillor for the city planning, did not fully translate into practice with concrete collaborative innovations outcomes. Our findings are consistent with those of Franch[92] and Biondi *et al.*[93] that putting the community at the centre is fundamental to maintaining the vibrancy of a local area and implementing regeneration projects based on CH. Moreover, we deem that the perseverance and constancy of public administration action over time is a success in culture-led urban regeneration processes. Sporadic or time-limited initiatives such as DATA experimentation do not allow for the modification of citizens' behaviour and transforming them into "cultural citizens", as advocated by Sacco and Segre[94].

Furthermore, a lack of tourist involvement reduces the financial resources flowing to the territory in the form of visitor spending and donations for the restoration and enhancement of CH. Indeed, in the light of the CWC interpretative framework, a lack of tourist involvement reduces the magnitude of economic wealth created because less cash flows from visitor spending are available for locals, and financial flows for CH are limited to the regimes of support provided, which might be (as in our case) temporary or limited to one single funding action (e.g., EU funds for a specific time-bound project).

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[92] Franch 2020.
[93] Biondi *et al.* 2020.
[94] Sacco, Segre 2009.

7. *Conclusions*

Previous insights from our ongoing research project on the urban regeneration of small historical towns allowed us to identify the main challenges that a city manager of a small historical town has to face: attract talent, create jobs and trigger the spur of new ventures, establish spaces for artists and cultural activities, preserve and promote local know-how and develop a strategy to attract SMEs belonging to the cultural and creative sector[95].

In this paper, we deem that a promising solution for historic towns' resilience, which allows them to overcome all these challenges and foster local development, is to activate processes of CWC, i.e., the creation of social, economic and communal endowments that benefit local communities and allow these communities to be self-sufficient, therefore, generating positive societal change and sustainable impact.

In the attempt to contextualise the CWC framework proposed by Lumpkin and Bacq[96] to the case of small historical towns trying to leverage their cultural heritage, we found two key aspects: i) the Municipality can act as a facilitator of the wealth creation process when it involves multiple stakeholders and ii) tourists as well as CH preservation bodies are key stakeholders that shall be directly addressed and actively included in the socio, cultural and economic development plan of a UNESCO's protected heritage site.

Consistent with findings in previous research on CH urban regeneration projects[97], our results reveal that the collaboration among stakeholders strongly necessitates the support of the local administration. Involving multiple stakeholders in societal change initiatives is a key point and calls for managing assets through public-private cooperation to reconcile different (and sometimes conflicting) interests into a shared vision[98]. From the perspective of Urbino's municipality, the DATA project represents an experimentation to learn how to better involve citizens in the protection and revitalisation of the site. However, our case study also reveals that Urbino's Municipality is still at an initial step that requires progress. Therefore, we deem that the role of the PA was rather that of a stimulator and its participatory governance approach is still in its infancy stage[99]. Different visions of different stakeholders still exist on the value they attributed to CH in driving the socio-cultural and economic regeneration of the place. Such visions mirror and underpin different interests and expectations on the quality of life in a historic centre like Urbino. Preserv-

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[95] Aureli *et al*. 2020.
[96] Lumpkin, Bacq 2019.
[97] Biondi *et al*. 2020.
[98] Aureli *et al*. 2021a and 2021b.
[99] Abraham, Platteau 2004; Sacco *et al*. 2014; Della Lucia, Trunfio 2018; Farinosi *et al*. 2018.

ing the city's identity while enhancing creativity and revitalising traditional knowledge is a challenge for policy makers, called to experience an innovative, collaborative and circular systemic approach for adaptive reuse of historic city centres by implementing a repertoire of successful heritage-led regeneration initiatives. Additional issues may affect historical World Heritage Sites where local communities and local people's attitudes towards the conservation of the cultural environment can diverge[100].

Then, with reference to the key actors that may contribute to CWC, we found two additional stakeholder groups that are peculiar to cities rich in CH and listed as World Heritage Sites: tourists and CH preservation bodies. They do not belong to the stakeholder categories identified by Lumpkin and Bacq (2019) but shall be involved in the mechanisms for CWC. Evidence from our case study revealed that their poor engagement and cooperation reduce the number and magnitude of results and outcomes. The consequence of weak engagement, collaboration and resource mobilisation in CWC processes is the generation of partial or weak forms of CWC – as theorised by the CWC perspective.

The future steps of our research must consider, in particular, that forms of collaboration with CH preservation bodies are governed by existing regulations and, consequently, a CWC model that wants to leverage CH cannot ignore the examination of the regulation for the governance of our cultural heritage, also in light of the new forms of public-private partnership.

Another aspect, in our future agenda, that requires further research is the actual participation of communities in decision-making processes concerning cultural policies in a given territory. In democracy, cultural heritage represents a common good, how to create civic wealth cannot disregard the analysis of the evolution of the regulatory and political context in which the actions of individual actors unfold. As emerges from other experiences[101], participatory governance processes of the cultural commons are dynamic, unfold over time, take place on a specific territory and require continuity and perseverance.

Despite the interesting findings and the practical implications, this study is not without limitations. The main limitation is related to the research approach used. Although based on the most rigorous coding framework, qualitative research based on a single case study mainly entails a certain degree of subjectivity. Risk of bias, like the researcher's personal opinions and preferences, may influence the research results. In addition, it is difficult to generalise findings from one case study to other settings.

[100] Jimura 2011.
[101] Demartini *et al*. 2020.

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