

## TRACK 2: CULTURE

# CULTURE, PRODUCTIVE HERITAGE AND SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT

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### 1.0 Introduction

Culture is an important driver of innovation for heritage management and spatial development. In recent years, many scholars have analysed this phenomenon to understand the effects on the territory (Dodd, 2020). Culture indeed has a transformative ability to create new flows and growth in the urban space. It positively affects the enhancement of local resources, and promotes social interaction and community spaces (Clark & Wise, 2018). In recent years, much attention has been given to the creative regeneration of marginalised heritage, such as productive heritage (Areces, 2005; Scaffidi, 2021). In Europe there are many cases that have recycled disused heritage through art and culture. At the heart of the debate are innovative communities, where cultural initiatives, art exhibitions, alternative forms of education and cooperation keep heritage alive. These are places often managed by social enterprises that involve citizens and local governments.

These innovative social enterprises indeed promote the creative reactivation of neglected assets through cultural activities, services, and community involvement. Numerous studies have shown that these centres are able to create open and inclusive urban spaces (Scaffidi 2021; Schröder, 2018). They foster moments of debate and social interaction (Walker et al. 2004). These cultural enterprises aim to innovate in the art sector with new management models that promote culture, through social innovation practices. Many policies have been developed to support these enterprises to enhance local assets (Cerreta et Al., 2021). They promote a more open governance that includes stakeholders in decision-making processes, which innovates the development of assets culturally, socially, economically and environmentally.

The research aims to discuss the importance of innovative cultural centres for the development of cities and the reactivation of underused heritage. Considering this purpose, the research examines specific examples where socio-cultural actions have been the driving force behind the creative regeneration of productive assets and spatial innovation. Today, creativity is an important factor in urban transformation. Culture enhances the innovative capacities of a society and plays a relevant role in spatial reactivation. The socio-cultural dimension is explicitly expressed in some examples of heritage reactivation.

### 1.1. Recycling productive heritage

Contemporary society is strongly influenced by the presence of abandoned heritage such as, neglected mining areas and disused industrial sites.

The reactivation of these sites fosters a progressive process of urban and spatial development. Neglected assets are considered as territorial capital and generator of new life cycles (Marini, 2014). Recycling is not limited to the conservation and reuse of the asset, but stimulates the reactivation of local resources by creating new life cycles (Bocchi, 2013, Marini 2013, Ippolito, 2014; Simone, 2014;). Recycling represents the transition from a linear economy to a circular economy that makes sustainability and creativity the core of change in cities and territories. As Bocchi and Marini (2015: 16) state: "[...] an idea of recycling taken not as a mere technical operation of reusing or re-purposing discarded or abandoned materials, but more lustrously as a reinvention of vital meanings, as a reactivation of new life cycles"<sup>1</sup>. The systemic and cyclical approach of recycling leads it to be a strategical process aiming at activating new cultural activities and innovative economies able to self-sustaining its own development (Marini, 2014). This process generates a flow of knowledge and actions through an open source and socially inclusive process (Andriani, Corradi, Massacesi, 2014). Contemporary literature widely shows the importance of recycling local resources including the community and the third sector (Mangialardo and Micelli, 2016). It opens up a new scenario that sees assets as places that are shared and accessible to all, as common goods (Iaione, 2015; Mattei, 2011). According to Christian Iaione, is (2015: 112) "[...] that element that puts people in a position to collaborate, to gather around a table and to start designing the forms of their joint and collective action"<sup>2</sup>. Community participation plays an important role in urban regeneration in terms of cultural heritage revival and innovative social interventions. What is needed, however, are new tools and models that facilitate a system of governance, a collaboration between different stakeholders, in the name of enhancement of the commons. Social enterprises are working in this direction. The latter, in fact, has a social purpose, fosters cooperation between the different actors involved (Andreottola, 2017; Tricarico, 2014; Tricarico et. Al, 2018; Borzaga, Tortia, 2009). This type of enterprise does not act for profit, but for the development of benefits for the local community and the asset, developing cultural outcomes, new economy and local development (Iaione, 2016; Doherty, Haugh, Lyon, 2014). Today, creativity is an important factor in urban transformation. Cultural capital is developed to innovate the place; culture enhances the innovative capacities of a society and plays a relevant role in spatial reactivation. The socio-cultural development of places is explicitly visible in many European examples of heritage reactivation. According to the literature review, some examples of the recycling of neglected productive heritage have been analysed.

## **2.0 Methodology: materials, data and methods**

The research aims to discuss the importance of innovative cultural centres for the development of cities and the reactivation of underused heritage. Considering this purpose, the research examines specific examples where socio-cultural actions have been the driving force behind the creative regeneration of productive assets and spatial innovation. An analysis of contemporary literature on social and cultural development of heritage was carried out. The information on literature and examples was collected through bibliographic research, website surveys, exploratory and dialogic surveys, and semi-structured qualitative interviews with local actors and experts. Empirical examples of social and cultural recycling of neglected heritage selected and studied. Through a qualitative research methodology, the research showcases examples of regeneration of productive heritage in Europe and replies to the following question: What are the effects of productive heritage recycling?

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<sup>1</sup> Original text: un'idea di ri-ciclo assunta non in quanto mera operazione tecnica di reimpiego o riuso di materiali scartati o abbandonati ma più latamente come re-invenzione di significati vitali, come riattivazione di cicli di vita nuovi.

<sup>2</sup> Original text: [...] quell'elemento che mette le persone in condizione di collaborare, di ritrovarsi intorno ad un tavolo e di cominciare a disegnare le forme della loro azione congiunta, collettiva

The selected examples are the following: the Kulturzentrum Schlachthof in Bremen (Germany), the Faust in Hannover (Germany), Real Fábrica de Cristales in La Granja (Spain) and WUK Werkstätten – Und Kulturhaus in Wien (Austria), Periferica in Mazara del Vallo (Italy), Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa in Palermo (Italy), Spazio Punch in Giudecca (Italy), Dolomiti Hub in Artèn, Fonzasco (Italy), Valle Salado in Salinas de Añana (Spain), Mina de Arnao in Avilés (Spain), Matadero of Madrid (Spain), Zeche Zollverein of Essen (Germany), Baumwollspinnerei of Leipzig (Germany), Kulturzentrum Faust of Hannover (Germany) and Ufa Fabrik of Berlin (Germany).

This research analyses the cultural innovation in the enhancement of these sites. The selected cases are former production sites, such as slaughterhouses (Schlachthof, Ufafabrik), manufacturing plants (Real Fábrica de Cristales, Ex Fadda, Cascina Cuccagna), former factories where cotton and celluloid were produced. They are in urban and rural-urban areas, as they are generally in peripheral locations due to their industrial and productive past. This research focuses on the analysis of the recycling of disused productive assets through processes of creative recycling.

### **3.0 Results and Discussion**

The findings show that these cultural communities transform a marginalised heritage into an alive and vibrant ecosystem that promotes social and cultural services for the city. In conclusion, this research wants to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and create new insights for the European context. It is clear from the analysis that all these cases promote a better use of local resources resulting in a structural impact capable of innovating the place over time. Each of these examples has a positive impact on the territory in which they are located through co-design activities, social inclusion, community participation, artistic and cultural events as a means of transformation (Scaffidi, 2019). They are places that drive innovation, where people live and cooperate and, as such, benefit from local activities, new services for the whole urban context. Considering local impacts, the results show four main impacts based on culture and education, social issues, economic creativity and spatial development. Nevertheless, it is clear that culture is one of the main effects of the reactivation of these places.

All these cases are considered as creative hubs that improve the urban context, creating new spaces, building networks, developing international projects and attracting new people, such as permanent or temporary inhabitants and tourists.

In this sense, there are several activities promoted by these social enterprises. The findings show that many of these centres organise festivals and international projects (e.g. Ufafabrik, Schlachthof, Periferica, Valle Salado, Verkatehdas, WUK Werkstätten – Und Kulturhaus), exhibitions (Caos, Spinnerei, Periferica, Verkatehdas, Knos manufactures, Kulturfabrik, Real Fábrica de Cristales) and the development of new offers, sport initiatives, dance and cooking courses, such as Spinnerei, Ufafabrik, ExFadda, Cascina Cuccagna and Schlachthof. All these centres pay great attention to different art forms, with many activities related to literature, music, theatre and film (e.g. Schlachthof, Kulturkampf, Kulturkampf and Schlachthof). Schlachthof, Kulturfabrik, Manifatture Knos, Verkatehdas, Spinnerei) and many of them also offer educational support to children, such as the summer camps organised by Caos in Terni, the educational activities of Kulturfabrik in Esch-Sur-Alzette, the non-formal education of Periferica in Mazara del Vallo and specific cultural courses for children to discover the salt mines of Añana (Valle Salado). These centres aim to build an active community that improves the quality of life, responding to social problems such as the lack of specific offers for the inhabitants of the area by municipalities, local administrations and institutions.

The results show an overall positive impact on the place that improves the local context, attracts new investments, new collaborations, artistic activities and economic creativity. These centres become places for cultural innovative initiatives, but also locations for new businesses, such as shops, bars, restaurants, schools, etc. They are places for new forms of community, meeting places for artists, cultural entrepreneurs, associations, local inhabitants, supporting the socialisation of young people and offering social activities for seniors, children and families. These centres promote the participation of

the local community in their activities, counteract the emigration of younger generations, bridge social distances, increase the quality of life, create new services for different generations. In this sense, the results illustrate the presence of collaborative spaces (e.g. Spinnerei, ExFadda, Schlachthof, Knos Manufactures), family networks (e.g. Ufafabrik), social pedagogical services (e.g. Schlachthof).

These innovative and creative experiences define alternative ways for the future development of Europe. In addition, they encourage the recycling of neglected and underused spaces, such as productive sites, and promote the recovery and sustainable development of assets considered as local resources. Spatial development also stands out for its positive influence on the urban context and its surroundings. The experiences analysed are characterised by the presence of a social enterprise whose ambition is to the urban development of the place by creating cultural innovation, economic growth and social involvement. They play a relevant role in the recycling of disused assets by promoting new cultural spaces for collaboration and creativity and new networking opportunities between inhabitants, institutions and social enterprises.

#### 4.0 Conclusions

Culture is an important driver of innovation in heritage management and spatial development. Neglected assets are considered as territorial capital and generator of new life cycles (Marini, 2014). Recycling represents the transition from a linear economy to a circular economy that makes sustainability and creativity the core of change in cities and territories. It is not limited to the protection and reuse of the asset, but stimulates the reactivation of local resources by creating new life cycles (Bocchi, 2013, Marini 2013, Ippolito, 2014; Simone, 2014). Contemporary literature widely shows the importance of recycling local resources including the community and the third sector (Mangialardo and Micelli, 2016). Today, creativity is an important factor in urban transformation. The socio-cultural development of places is explicitly visible in many European examples of heritage reactivation. Innovative management models have been promoted to reactivate this heritage and create socio-cultural benefits and new economic development (Scaffidi, 2019). Many scholars have analysed this phenomenon to understand the effects on the territory (Dodd, 2020), the resource (Areces, 2005; Scaffidi, 2021) and the community (Clark & Wise, 2018; Tricarico et Al., 2020).

The research aims to discuss the importance of innovative cultural centres for the development of cities and the reactivation of underused heritage. At the heart of the debate are innovative communities, where cultural initiatives, art exhibitions, alternative forms of education and cooperation keep heritage alive. The research examines specific examples where socio-cultural actions have been the driving force behind the creative regeneration of productive assets and spatial innovation. It is argued that these recycling processes have positive impacts on urban space and promote cultural, economic and social development of the asset and the city.

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