

Lost in participation: conflicts and motivations in participatory culture-led regeneration projects

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Abstract

The research explores the frictions and tensions that may arise between stakeholders with conflicting aims in culture-led urban regeneration projects. Using ethnography (particularly “deep hanging out”), the core part of the paper empirically investigates a participatory operatic project, OperaCamion, developed within a complex governance structure, involving public institutions, a creative team and two opera theatres; adaptation of operas have toured public spaces and, in Palermo, resulted in a co-production with citizens. Through fieldwork, the paper illustrates the tensions resulting from conflicting needs and points out the need for accurate partnership design and an appropriate selection of participants, followed by negotiation and conflict mitigation strategies in order to ensure that all the involved stakeholders gain benefits and derive value from the partnership, and that the culture-led regeneration project is delivered successfully.

La ricerca esplora le frizioni e le tensioni che si generano fra portatori d'interesse con obiettivi conflittuali nei processi di rigenerazione urbana a trazione culturale. Una prima parte teorica esplora il contributo della cultura alla rivitalizzazione delle città, e particolarmente dei vuoti urbani, tramite processi di co-creazione. Utilizzando l'etnografia e interviste semi strutturate, la parte centrale del contributo esplora empiricamente un progetto operistico partecipativo, OperaCamion, sviluppato da un partenariato complesso che ha coinvolto le istituzioni pubbliche, un team creativo e due teatri d'opera; degli adattamenti di opere sono stati eseguiti in alcune piazze pubbliche e, a Palermo, sono risultate in una coproduzione coi cittadini. Attraverso l'indagine sul campo, la ricerca illustra le tensioni che risultano da bisogni conflittuali ed evidenzia la necessità di progettare accuratamente il partenariato, adottare la negoziazione e strumenti di mitigazione del conflitto così da garantire che tutti i portatori di interesse possano ricavare benefici dalla cooperazione, e che il progetto di rigenerazione culturale sia espletato con successo.

Keywords: urban regeneration; community arts; participatory governance.

Parole Chiave: rigenerazione urbana; arte di comunità; governance partecipativa.

Justice and creativity in the contemporary city: a complex duality

The development of the contemporary city, complex and fragmented, is driven, at least from the viewpoint of policymaking

and planning, by an intertwining set of drivers, which have been thematized as the global city, the sustainable city, the resilient city, the creative city, and the smart city (Hatuka *et al.*, 2018).

Among these, the creative city is probably the earliest domain to have developed, as a result of the post-industrial drift of the economy in the global north (McGuigan, 2012). This drift has generated a proliferation of actions across different scales and from the initiative of different actors – embracing the local, the urban and regional scales, the bottom-up, the middle-ground and the top-down. These actions were inspired by the somewhat universal belief of culture's capacity to generate positive transformations in local economies; particularly, of its ability to drive growth (Santagata, 2006), to boost local identity (Throsby, 2001), to generate social cohesion (Belfiore and Bennett, 2008) – ultimately, to generate creative cities, intended as urban environments with a thriving creative economy (Thiel, 2017), able to produce spillover effects over other sectors and society as a whole (Scott, 2000).

Of all these beneficial effects, the role of culture in urban regeneration has been central in both research and policy for decades. The concept of urban regeneration entails, necessarily, that of recovery from a crisis – the transition from the industrial to the post-industrial economy in cities has produced, in facts, a twofold shock in cities whose main productive driver had been the manufacturing one: one was mainly economic and intangible, relating to a shifting demand of skills in the workforce and a change in the productive mechanisms (Swank, 2014); the second one was, necessarily, a spatial one, as the transformation of production and the progressive dismissal of manufacturing plants produced the abandonment of many productive districts and areas (Grinski and Ferber, 2001).

The consequence of the first shock was a restructuring of the labor market and the quest for new skills which complied with the new design intensive economy, leading to the notion of creative class (Florida, 2002). The consequence of the second was the need to adapt the existing building stock to new functions and uses which matched the new productive mechanisms and the new needs of the creative city dwellers. The combination of these two factors has produced a proliferation of culture-led interventions for which an ultimate taxonomy is still missing, but which can

be epitomized from the literature: the development of cultural clusters and creative districts (Cooke and Lazzarotti, 2008), the 'arts factories' phenomenon which revitalized through creative uses former productive plants (High, 2017), flagship cultural projects aimed at rebranding cities – the most famous example being that of Bilbao (Zencker *et al.*, 2013), creative city policies to stimulate the local creative economy (Montalto *et al.*, 2019) and the related international networks such as the European Capitals of Culture and UNESCO Creative Cities Network (Liu *et al.*, 2014).

This belief, which has dominated the early scholarship on culture and creativity in the urban domain, was soon counterbalanced by the awareness that culture could not be a panacea, but that on the contrary many were left behind by the creative policy of cities, which was, on the one hand, focused on the city centre or in strategic downtown districts (Rosenstein, 2010) and, on the other, was able to further marginalize the poorer fringes of the urban population through renewal which entailed the rising cost of housing and living (Zukin, 1987), being «far from incompatible with persistent concentration of unemployment and social deprivation and high levels of social and economic inequality» (Boddy and Parkinson, 2004: 428).

A renewed awareness was generated around the fact that, regardless of the 'content' of urban economic policies (knowledge, creativity or manufacture-driven), the goals and aims of an economic agenda embedded in a neoliberal system produced the same effects in the industrial paradigm as well as in the creative one. This entailed a twofold corollary. On the one hand, inclusion started to become a prominent aspect in the design, implementation and evaluation of regeneration interventions – that is, the acknowledgement of the role of the communities and users that live, experience and contribute to placemaking (Sharp, Pollock, Paddison, 2005). Thus, participation became pivotal in the urban governance scenario at the global scale, attempting to overcome the distortions of top-down policy by including citizens and other urban actors in the co-design and co-plan of regeneration interventions (Ferilli *et al.*, 2016); this approach is believed to be able to overcome an over-reliance on economic aims in culture-led interventions, to create sustainable communities and to produce more beneficial

and lasting effects on society as a whole (Jung *et al.*, 2015). On the other, in the cultural domain, a revival of participatory practices and of cultural democracy policies which challenged the flagship policy and growth paradigm centered on cultural and creativity intensified. Originating from the community arts movements of the 1970s (Gross, Wilson, Bull, 2017), which placed an emphasis on the participants' role and voice in the production of culture, the contemporary discourse on cultural democracy aims at placing local stakeholders at the heart of cultural policy. Two scholarships can be distinguished within the discourse on cultural democracy: one aims at promoting accessibility to the so called "high" arts, thus tearing down the physical and perceptive barriers of conventional art forms; another seeks to elicit cultural capabilities, i.e. opportunities for artistic self-expression and personal self-development beyond the boundaries of conventional art forms, comprising everyday creativity (Gross and Wilson, 2018). The combination of participatory governance and culture-led regeneration projects with a focus on cultural democracy has the potential to be more sustainable, being grounded on local conditions, identity and needs (Sepe, 2014), and able to produce lasting effects in the long term by involving local dwellers in the design and implementation of processes and projects (Ferilli *et al.*, 2017). While participatory practices aimed at fixing the distortions of centralized policy, they manifested distortions themselves quite early (Fung, 2015), which will not be further explored in this article. Similarly, the tensions which, in individual artists and artistic movements, derive from engagement in urban regeneration projects and, more broadly, with either asserting or contesting power have been already investigated (Slegenthaler, 2017; McLean, 2014). What will, on the contrary, be explored, is another aspect of culture and participation which has always been overlooked by the literature and which, therefore, requires closer attention: especially when participatory processes are well designed, they are able to attract stakeholders having very different characteristics; as a consequence, frictions and tensions may arise due to diverging views, objectives and needs when implementing the regeneration project – resulting in potential disruptions and alterations for the regeneration intervention. Especially in the cultural domain, what is seldom

observed is the possible conflict between the aim to achieve two different aims: artistic quality, which has been variedly understood as originality and technical expertise (Kozbelt, 2004), congruity and fit (Boerner, 2004); and that of producing a societal impact, comprising the educational capacity of the arts as well as their effect on well-being and self-development (Belfiore and Bennett, 2008). The aim of this paper is to present an empirical stance where these conflicts have been observed, in order to produce factual knowledge on how the motivations and objectives of individual stakeholders intertwine and diverge in order to better address conflict in projects of culture-led urban regeneration.

The OperaCamion project: context and overview

The empirical example provided in this paper, in particular, refers to a project which sought to promote cultural democracy of the operatic repertoire in peripheries. The project, named *OperaCamion* (literally “Opera Truck”) ran from 2017 to 2019 and consisted of a truck touring peripheries in several Italian cities and small towns in rural territories, stopped in squares and opened up, transforming into a stage and performing opera for free to audiences who wouldn’t, otherwise, have the chance to experience opera. Operas were cut and adapted, costumes were bold and daring, and margin for improvisation was created for the artists because of the informal characteristics of the setting and audience behaviors. During the three seasons in which it operated, it toured sixteen cities and brought forty performances onstage in abandoned squares; being entirely free, it was produced at the expense of the theatres and of the supporting municipalities (namely Rome and Reggio Emilia). The original project, in Rome, covered all of the city’s municipal units. Since access to the performance was entirely free and no tickets were issued, it is impossible to provide exact figures about attendance. It has, however, been estimated that more than ten thousand people got to experience opera for free only in Rome, and only in 2017 (World Cities Culture Forum, 2017). In 2018, in Palermo, after a year of ‘regular’ performances, the project stopped in the Danisinni neighborhood, a dramatically marginalized urban depression where the performance was transformed into a coproduction with the local inhabitants,

orbiting around a very active community of dwellers who are regenerating the area through partnerships and collaborations with cultural institutions.

In the Roman case, the extemporaneous and temporary nature of the performance did not allow for proper regeneration interventions to occur; yet, maintenance and caring activities for neglected spaces in disadvantaged neighborhood allowed to redesign, though temporarily, the use of those spaces for local dwellers, who were able to reappropriate those spaces through a cultural initiative. The reappropriation of neglected spaces was further corroborated by the fact that audiences, by bringing their own seats to reproduce the theatrical space in the unbuilt environment, were able to redefine the meaning of such spaces (Sabatini, 2020). In Palermo, instead, the length of the project, which developed over a longer time span and with a single urban community, allowed for the permanent regeneration of spaces as well as for a lasting involvement of residents in regeneration and cultural activities.

Method

The findings presented in this research are the result of two different processes: first, a series of semi-structured interviews (Schmidt, 2004) was conducted with many of the agents who took part to the project from 2016 to 2019 in three different local manifestations: Palermo, Rome and Reggio Emilia. The interviewees ranged from the institutional representatives of the Theatres, who enabled the production of OperaCamion by providing resources and their infrastructure, to the direct producers of the project, in charge for coordination and monitoring, to the performers themselves, which enacted OperaCamion onstage. All interviews were conducted with single interviewees, except for a group interview conducted with four singers from the OperaCamion production, who took part to different performances. The total number of interviewees was sixteen, with the interview period lasting a month overall. Second, a period of onsite observation was conducted in Palermo, where the project transformed radically, for two weeks. There, the method of 'deep hanging out' (Walmsley, 2018) was used in the neighborhood of Danisinni, where the co-production of the OperaCamion performance occurred between local dwellers and

the Theatre. Walmsley defines 'deep hanging out' «a practice of observation grounded in participatory dialogue». It is not simply an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon in the natural setting in which it occurs: it is an operation of co-research, a «fieldwork method of immersing oneself in a cultural, group or social experience on an informal level» (Walmsley, 2018: 277). The weeks in Danisinni allowed to develop the research within such methodological framework, spending time with the Danisinni people, attending their meetings, having one-to-one conversations with the dwellers and contributing to their activities.

Involved actors and motivations

According to stakeholder theory, people interacting within a given setting can be articulated in 'core' and 'fringe' stakeholders (Hart and Sharma, 2004): the former consists of those who put more efforts in the implementation of projects and processes, while 'fringe' stakeholders can be interpreted as those who partake and benefit less from the project. Besides efforts and benefits, also motivation and shared values can determine the belonging to the two categories. In the words of Bertacchini *et al.* (2012: 8),

«The production of a given culture by the agents belonging to the "core" generates positive externalities that increase the value of the collective good. In the peripheral zone, instead, we can observe [...] agents that in the absence of some enforcement mechanism can exploit the collective good, but only marginally contribute to its production».

In OperaCamion, the motivations and subsequent willingness to contribute to the project varied greatly between the different involved actors. They are illustrated below.

Institutional actors: the representatives of the theatres which placed human, financial and tangible resources at the service of the project; they oversaw the decision making and the material organisation of the project. In addition, Municipal institutions oversaw the production and agreed the locations with the theatres, providing in-kind resources and institutional support to the implementation of the project. According to their own statements, OperaCamion

«isn't just an operation of cultural promotion, but an intervention on the broader theme of inequalities», and the synergy which was created with the Municipality originated from «a common vision between the administration, the major, the theatre, its superintendent – two communities working together, which share a common vision of the city».

Creative team: it conceived the project in its artistic dimension, and ideated the dramaturgic adaptation, the musical cuts, costumes and scenography. For them, OperaCamion represented an occasion to innovate opera theatre in both form and content, redefining the access mechanisms to such artistic forms – as posited by the director,

«I thought the solution was to bring theatre in a square, to give it a popular dimension, placing the performance on a truck that could easily tour public spaces for an audience not consisting of insiders and opera lovers. I wanted to claim a new role for opera: that of clever cultural *entertainment*».

Artists: in the case of Opera di Roma, most of the casted singers belonged to the theatre's Young Artist Program (YAP hereon), a two-year course aimed at facilitating the entrance of emerging artists in the professional world of opera. Besides singers, the YAP's aspiring directors, scenographers, costume designers and light designers were involved in the realization of the project. Some of the YAP's singers were casted also for other performances of OperaCamion in other cities. They shared the views and motivations of the creative team, to the point that many manifested their willingness to do it for free or to do it on a permanent basis: «This is among the most beautiful things I did in my entire life. It was so beautiful it created some sort of addiction», one actor stated, while one of the singers recalled

«I told [the director]: if you found a theatre company, I'll go where you go. Not all singers thought this way, it depends on your personality, but to me, it was much more important to sing this way than in Opera di Roma – I'd rather have OperaCamion every night».

Audience and communities: since the research took place during COVID and performances did not take place, it was not possible to meet – and, consequently, gather information from

– the audience which took part to the different OperaCamion productions. Yet, indirect testimonies from the interviewees have been collected about how the project fostered cultural democracy for the participants: a man said «he'd waited all his life to go to Caracalla¹, and in the end it was Caracalla that went to him», while in Danisinni the impacts of the project were predictably wider, due to the greater involvement of the community; with particular reference to children, an artist recalls that

«in Danisinni there were children that, in the beginning, stole our props, and in the end greeted us telling 'we want to be opera singers, we want to be dancers'. This might not last forever – someone will come and say 'you can't do that', but you are there to show them that they can make it».

Mediators: among the stakeholders involved in the project there were also figures who can be regarded as brokers (Obstfeld *et al.* 2014); very diverse cases include the production manager in Rome, which set arrangements for the squares, bureaucracy, logistics and communication between the Municipality and the Theatre, or the Franciscan Friar who was pivotal in the cultural regeneration of Danisinni, and mediated the interaction between the cultural institutions who cooperated with the community and the community itself. Motivations were as diverse as the typology of mediators: the production manager was aligned with institutions in stating that «OperaCamion has intercepted some problems, has interpreted a sense of widespread need, tied to the necessity to create an opening in the interaction between society and opera», while for the NPOs and volunteers working in Danisinni the relationship between art and place was mutually beneficial:

«a path which gave dignity and value not only to the place [Danisinni], but to art itself: opera is inscribed in theatre, but it can also be done in public squares [...] offering itself to every social class and every culture».

¹ The open air opera festival held in summer in the ancient baths of Caracalla in Rome, hosted by Opera di Roma.

Conflicting views and frictions

The project proved successful from many viewpoints: people in marginalized neighborhoods got the opportunity to experience a supposedly form of art in unconventional spaces, in the case of Danisinni they were even able to co-produce it and be provided with musical training, while the physical space of the neighborhood small but permanent regeneration interventions were put in place by the theatre itself, as safety paths were created, the electrical system was renewed and embankments were levelled. The project took into consideration local conditions and adapted to local needs as demonstrated by the change in modality and format which occurred with the Danisinni community.

However, as has been explained in the first section, the many different motivations and objectives of actors taking part in projects of urban regeneration inevitably leads to frictions in the implementation. The line can, in this sense, be drawn between core and fringe stakeholders: willingness to contribute was determined by motivation: when this motivation was absent, a fracture was created between core and fringe community – the former being committed to the different socio-cultural layers of the project, and the latter detaching themselves from its radically innovative aspects in both content and form. This determined a strong polarization between those who were committed to the project and those who weren't. This session presents an overview of the main tensions which characterized the development of OperaCamion in both its manifestations in Rome and Palermo.

Tensions with the institution. Because of the very stern regulatory framework for the performing arts and for opera specifically in Italy, institutions were initially not receptive to the project, and OperaCamion resulted from the struggle of the creative team and the artistic directors. As one of them recalls, «I had to climb mountains all by myself» and «I had to clash with the classical production of a traditional theatre», complaining about the “medieval hierarchy” of the theatre. The director quite proudly remarked that he was able to

«force the orchestra syndicates to have the musicians rehearse in cow dung... it was something so *necessary* [emphasis added], that if they

refused to do it they would have looked like idiots, because I could have given a call to a journalist to tell them that they refused to play with forty amateurs in a mafia-confiscated land... I would have made a scene».

Tensions between artists. Tensions between artists with a conflicting view of what opera should be and where it should be performed were the most evident throughout the project. The very strong willingness to contribute that many young performers manifested was the result of a shared view which combined artistic innovation with the societal vocation of the project – which wasn't, however, shared by all the artistic participants to the project. The difference between young and more 'flexible' artists and seasoned musicians, an artist said that

«when the institution provided the most professional musicians it took away so much more [...] It put on a plate the musical bravura of 30 years in an orchestra, on the one hand, and beginners, on the other – yet, the spirit was entirely different».

This fringe community, especially singers and musicians who, not sharing this view, felt almost offended by the project's detachment from theatrical artistic standards and, consequently, felt less motivated to participate to the project; in some cases, they even obstructed it explicitly. One of the volunteers recalls the difficulty of inducing musicians from the theatre to play in the Danisinni Farm, acknowledging that «it was unprecedented for them as well». A paradigmatic example was provided by what an artist called "strike of the gnats": during the last day of rehearsals the orchestra began complaining about the video animations in the backdrop of the stage, which were picturing gnats moving frantically. They abandoned the rehearsals. Another element of friction was caused by the coproduction with the audience, as some artists felt that their own role was belittled - «When professionals come into a square, this is much more important than working with amateurs», an artist commented.

Audiences. OperaCamion was a double-edged sword: if, on the one hand, it provided cultural democracy and cultural opportunity

in neglected neighborhoods, on the other it triggered negative reactions from both opera lovers (the so-called *loggionisti*) and people who manifested NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) reactions. The first was the case of opera critics, none of whom came to see (and review) OperaCamion – «because they are too attached to their rites», the creative team thought; regarding the performances in Reggio Emilia, a city in Northern Italy where OperaCamion was performed right after the first COVID wave, the artistic director of the city's theatre claimed that «a part of Reggio's melomaniacs would have pissed me off, because that performance isn't perfect; knowing I had a demanding audience I had to be very careful in doing that». In Bologna, the singers recalled that rehearsals were interrupted by a man screaming from his balcony that he had to go to work the day after.

Discussion

What determined the success of the initiative was the scale of the intervention: in the case of Rome and the cities which OperaCamion toured, interventions were extemporaneous and revitalized abandoned squares in neglected neighborhoods, providing citizens with cultural opportunity (Gross and Wilson 2018) and allowing for the reappropriation and the re-semanticization of spaces which were devoid of meaning (Sabatini, 2020) – notwithstanding the enhanced safety of the squares, where, for instance, drug dealing was interrupted as testified by both the creative team and the superintendent. In the case of Danisinni, the regeneration experience was deeper, as it foresaw the active involvement of the local community in designing and producing the performance and produced minor yet permanent transformations to the built space of the neighborhood. Multi-stakeholder cooperation was, additionally, a crucial factor, as it allowed to address the complex challenges of the project from a composite perspective, introducing artistic innovation to the operatic canon, consolidating the relationship between theatrical and municipal institutions and shifting, across the duration of the project, the deep imbalances of the cultural infrastructure between culture and periphery (Rosenstein, 2010). What hindered its continuation over the years was, on the contrary, the political instability related to the changes in administration of both theatres; the lack of funding for these types of projects, which

are not foreseen by the Italian funding for the performing arts (Sabatini and Trimarchi, 2019) and, more importantly, the recent COVID pandemic. Additionally, the project bears the limitation of being an experiment and a scattered example: systemic action would be required to address the inequalities of the involved cities and a restructuring of the cultural infrastructure to really promote cultural democracy.

What can be noted from the research that has been conducted is the variety of motivations underlying the involvement of diverse stakeholders in the project, and how a twofold effect is produced from this interpolation: on the one hand, the project gained depth and complex value was generated for all stakeholders, resulting in an artistically innovative project which redesigned institutional relationships and the theatre's positionality within the urban grid. On the other, frictions are created between fringe and core stakeholders who have conflicting views: first, about how the project should be carried out and implemented, and second, whether it should be implemented at all (as was the case with the artists' obstructionism). In this latter case, what can be noted is an element which seldom comes to the fore in research about participatory culture-led interventions: as institutions pursue projects whose main objective is artistic, not all the artists involved might share these motivations, but might be more concerned with artistry than they are with the societal objectives pursued by the organization. The involvement and willingness to contribute depends, therefore, largely on artists' self-perception, views and, as has been indicated by the interviewees, on their expertise and even age. This allows to propose a distinction between fringe and core stakeholders based not only on their efforts in the project (Hart and Sharma, 2004), but primarily on their sharing of views, values and motivations in pursuing project objectives.

Conclusions

The article is inscribed in research about culture-led urban regeneration. In particular, it has illustrated the initial approach to such regeneration policies, which were used to revitalize cities and revive the economy (High, 2017; Santagata, 2006; Montalto *et al.*, 2019) after the decline of the manufacturing paradigm (Grimski and Ferber, 2001). Creative-led interventions

and policies have often pursued, however, objectives of growth and urban competitiveness regardless of the social cost that this might have entailed, namely gentrification, marginalization and inequalities (Zukin, 1988; Scott, 2007) which were translated in the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial and design-intensive, creative-led economic model for urban growth. It has then posited the research in the domain of participatory artistic interventions of regeneration (Sepe, 2014; Ferilli *et al.*, 2016), which, though more modest in scope and impact, have the potential to produce more lasting effect by virtue of their collaborative approach and the framework of cultural democracy, aiming at widening people's opportunities to experience culture and to self-express themselves creatively (Gross and Wilson, 2018). While literature exists on the limitations and controversies of participation (Fung, 2015), the research originates from the need to further explore the motivations and frictions which underlie multi-stakeholder cooperation in complex urban regeneration projects.

The research has thus introduced the case of OperaCamion, a project which has toured Italian peripheries and neglected squares to bring opera for free to audiences with limited access to cultural opportunities. In Palermo, the project was transformed into a regeneration action co-produced with the local dwellers of the Danisinni neighborhood. The project has foreseen the involvement of two theatres, of a creative team, of several artists, of audiences and of volunteers and mediators, all having diverse motivations, ranging from artistic quality (Boerner, 2004) to artistic innovation and societal objectives (Belfiore and Bennet, 2008). The presence of manifold stakeholders was the reason for the project's success (even though it could not ensure its prosecution beyond COVID) and, at the same time, the source of many frictions within the institution, between artists and the creative team, among the audience (sometimes engaging in NIMBY behaviors or in conservative approaches towards the operatic canon) and even between artists and the audience, when the latter was engaged in the coproduction.

The research thus illustrates the need to identify carefully the stakeholders engaged in the coproduction, but also to take into considerations their motivations; in the particular case of artists, artistic quality and innovation appear as relevant as

the societal drivers, and should be pursued accordingly. These motivations need to be framed since the design phases of the interventions in order to incorporate them in the project itself in a manner which reflects the role of stakeholders within the project, precisely with the aim of avoiding frictions or at least understanding how to better manage these frictions. The study, then, sheds a light on the importance of initiating participation and cooperation activities in the early stages of regeneration interventions in order to analyze and test stakeholder interactions, and to frame the goals and aims that they, in the first place, have in partaking to the process. The understanding of such motivations might lead to a better management of projects and processes where cultural institutions, municipal actors and citizens are involved, and they would ensure not only that the project is successfully implemented, but that all the involved stakeholders gain value from the partnership. Research on participation has often focused on the difficulties of engaging with different stakeholders, without focusing on the frictions and tensions arising during the implementation process; this type of study presents a stance in this respect, opening new research possibilities within the framework of cultural interventions of urban regeneration. The research approach has the potential to be applicable also in other domains of participatory governance and regeneration projects.

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