



Proceedings of the International Conference
Preventive and Planned Conservation
Monza, Mantova - 5-9 May 2014

1

La strategia della Conservazione programmata

Dalla progettazione delle attività
alla valutazione degli impatti



A cura di **Stefano Della Torre**
Curatela editoriale **Maria Paola Borgarino**



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**POLITECNICO
DI MILANO**



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THE PROGRESSIVE CULTURAL DISTRICT FOR LOCAL CULTURAL GROWTH: THE CASE OF THE MARCHE REGION

Enrica Petrucci

University of Camerino, School of Architecture and Design

Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the most recent results of the progressive cultural district model. In particular, it explores what the Marche Region has achieved in terms of improving the cultural heritage. The system of values referring to the heritage can be related to local development in order to increase territorial competitiveness. One of the tools developed in recent years is the progressive cultural district, which recognises a strategic connection between different cultural areas belonging to various production sectors. The progressive cultural district is characterised by a complex organisational structure that involves various subjects interested in the local development process. If the cultural sector is identified as a bearer of development, the architectural heritage must also be assessed according to different logic. A proper program creates a series of opportunities to produce value in terms of innovation. In an initial phase, the construction of the Marche Cultural District has been oriented towards knowledge of the cultural heritage in order to highlight its potential values. With this knowledge, a second phase has begun in favour of new territorial planning. Forms of cooperation in creating the shared objectives system can give rise to a transformation process that allows for increasing orientation towards a new economic policy for the protection and improvement of the cultural heritage.

The terms “district”, “network”, and “system” are now widely used in the debate regarding cultural heritage and in relation to new economic/management strategies applied to the heritage. As some studies have highlighted, speaking of the concept of “cultural district” or “progressive cultural district” implies an awareness that this constitutes a sub-branch of the industrial district theory, which was developed for the field of economics more than a century ago.

The concept of “industrial district” was introduced and developed by the English economist Alfred Marshall at the beginning of the 1900s, starting with the study of the macroeconomics of some sectors. Claiming that production

advantages on a large scale could generally be obtained either by regrouping a large number of small producers into the same district or by constructing a few large business, Marshall affirmed that when one speaks of “industrial district”, reference should be made to a socio-economic entity composed of a group of businesses that are generally a part of the same production sector localised in a specific area and among which there may be both collaboration and competition (Marshall, 1920).

In Italy, the industrial district was established in the second half of the 19th century as an organisational model typical of a territorial area with a high concentration of highly specialised, small and medium-sized industrial businesses that are generally characterised by intense interdependence in their production cycles and strongly integrated within the local socio-economic environment. The peculiar character of these districts, especially the most dynamic ones, is represented by the collaboration between businesses that share knowledge and develop technological innovation together.

Applying the concepts of organisation typical of the industrial district to the cultural sector is, instead, a recent acquisition. It is characterised by the strong integration of processes to enhance both material and non-material cultural resources, to render the process more efficient and effective, and to optimise its economic and social impacts on the local level. Studies have been aimed at constructing new territorial development models based on multi-disciplinary analysis in order to make an integrated consideration of factors that are sometimes very different. Such research has therefore highlighted how the effects of cultural planning can assume a preparatory role in creativity and innovation for the socio-economic development of a territory. Arising from this is the attempt to identify an ideal space that is recognised by the concept of “cultural district”; this is a recognisable territorial area in which activities of cultural planning and development policies are integrated.

The first practical cases of cultural district date from the 1970s, but only in the second half of the 1980s did they find a solid theoretical base that developed rapidly until it achieved the definition of a new evolutionary model. In fact, each territorial area can be capable of organising its own model of cultural district as a function of specific characteristics of the place coherent with the objectives of an effective process to improve the cultural resources (Hinna, Seddio, 2013).

The process of improving such assets should start with restoration operations in which, through structural rehabilitation, material structures can be adapted for new functions. With such an aim, the means of achieving results

are not insignificant; consequently, the way the restoration is conducted and presented is important. This is achieved by clearly defining quality operational methods and good practices suitable to ensuring that the high profile of the choices is not lacking, for a growth in human capital, production, and the spread of knowledge, for the revision and integration of individual and collective sensitivity, towards planned conservation as an essential prerequisite for enhance. With this term we mean, “Each activity aimed at improving the conditions of knowledge and conservation of the cultural and environmental assets and to increase their use”. We point out the following activities: “a) improving the physical conservation of the assets and their safety, integrity, and value; b) improving access to the assets and spreading knowledge of them through reproductions, publications, and any other means of communication; c) facilitating the enjoyment of the assets by less-favoured classes; d) organising studies, research, and scientific initiatives, possibly in collaboration with universities, cultural institutions, and research; e) organising teaching and outreach activities, possibly in collaboration with educational institutions; f) organising exhibits, possibly in collaboration with other public and private entities; g) organising cultural events connected to particular aspects of the assets or their recovery, restoration, or acquisition operations; h) organising cultural itineraries identified through connections between different cultural and environmental sites, possibly in collaboration with tourism entities and agencies” (Dlgs 112 of 31.3.1998, Conferral of State functions to the regions and local entities, art. 152, c. 3).

Such a multi-disciplinary aspect and the integration of actions in favour of territorial cultural goods was therefore already present in national legislation and was transferred to the regional agencies, who in turn identified a new cultural development strategy. In the current debate, the cultural district has been defined by different authors in different ways, placing attention on various concepts for reference. According to Valentino, the cultural district is a system of relationships that are limited to the territory and which integrate infrastructures and other connected production sectors in the process to improve cultural endowments (Valentino, 2001). The cultural heritage is considered to be the pivot around which the entire system rotates; the system includes enhancement, understood as protection (research and classification), conservation (restoration and conservation), and use (teaching and exposition), according to the logic of allocation based on different degrees of proximity, which provide for the integration of different strategies. According to the distinguished position of Santagata, it is necessary to pay attention to the institutions that supervise the activation and development of the district formula, highlighting the role of

protection exercised by property rights and by the institutions that guarantee their application (Santagata, 2001). Along this line of study, the essential component of Marshall's district, the social environment, is not considered; attention is instead focused more on the organisational component. In fact, different levels of the district are identified. The *Institutional Cultural District* then follows, which foresees the presence of a strategy implemented by the institutions, which also protects property rights. The *Museum Cultural District*, generally located within the historical centre, does not in itself present a cultural heritage of particular significance, but is evaluated and developed thanks to the correct planning of choices. Finally, in the *Metropolitan Cultural District*, there is a notable concentration of cultural goods and a marketing strategy is needed to ensure effective improvement (Santagata, 2003). In Sacco's writings, cultural activities are considered the origin of the district system, emphasising aspects linked to the *economics of knowledge*. The conditions for its development are therefore linked to the characteristics of the reference community, if it is conscious and determined to support the cultural offering, in particular by involving the quality formation sector in order to develop innovation (Sacco, 2002). For all other authors, it is necessary to identify the instruments used to develop the economy of a territory by defining a district-type organisation, when the territory is characterised by a heightened capacity for effective or potential cultural offering.

The most interesting position analysed is the one that places greater importance on the cultural capital of a specific place, understanding its material and non-material assets such as traditions and uses, tacit and diffuse knowledge. This means using such immaterial goods to obtain an added value represented by the "uniqueness" of the goods. In these terms, the concept of development is no longer linked only to tangible factors, to the possibility of making the most of artistic, architectural, and landscape resources, but becomes tightly connected to the capability of developing a strong sense of belonging and capacity-building in the management of one's own territory. According to the theory of Amartya Sen, development can be understood as a process of expansion of the real freedom that humans enjoy. The theory of capacity building represents a revolution in the field of economics because it manages to better frame the scope to which all economic activities tend, which is not so much to increase revenue, as to improve the quality of life through the acquisition of new resources, both material and non-material, necessary for the correct definition and pursuit of individually and socially meaningful objectives. In such a perspective, all the conquests, whether in the public, private, or political spheres, are simply the means to increase some form of liberty, which remains

both the primary goal and principal means to achieving local development (Sen, 2000).

To understand the operational means at the heart of a project for a *Progressive Cultural District*, the Marche Region has been analysed as a case study in which special projects looking at the recovery of buildings, the revitalisation of historical centres, the integrated management of cultural institutions, and the contamination of traditional cultural places (museums and libraries) have been activated in recent years, sometimes with the use of new informational technologies. In addition, work is being done to rationalise the distribution of ordinary resources, bringing into the discussion habitual procedures, identifying more selective criteria, and improving network systems and experiences. The capability of creating long-range (with national and international partners) and short-range (with local subjects) networks is an essential prerequisite for the development of progressive cultural districts. The region is moving to support the planning of inter-disciplinary territorial initiatives, which has emerged in recent years as a spontaneous response to the economic crisis, encouraging intersections between art, architecture, design, audiovisual aspects, performing arts, tourism, craftsmanship, and industry. The Marche Region is at the top of the classification of Italian regions both for its incidence of added value in the cultural production system and for its occupation, with first place for tourism spending activated by the culture, becoming the protagonists in a new district season, particularly attentive to local development in terms of culture.

To describe the experience in the area of the Marche Region in particular, it is necessary to refer to regional law 9 February 2010, "Regulations regarding cultural goods and activities", which introduced the term "cultural district", linking it to activities supporting work in the field of culture. Art. 21, in particular, institutes the *Cultural District of the Marche Region* as a territorial system of relationships between public and private subjects aimed at developing the potential of the regional territory with regards to culture, to guarantee the integrated government of dynamics in the sector and to sustain programs of local development. The reference area deals with the entire regional territory, while the subjects involved may be businesses working in the cultural area, cultural institutes and places, public and private entities, and organisations that provide cultural services beyond the higher-education university system ascribable to the sector of cultural goods and the culture in general. The aim of the district constitution is to provide wide visibility, promoting the development of good practices in the field of culture. This is designed as a system of relationships

between public and private bodies to develop the potential of the territory in the cultural sphere.

In the initial phase, 20 proposals were developed as the fruit of a wide mobilisation of skills, energy, material and non-material resources.

Among the projects presented, 18 were judged to be admissible; of these, 10 were financed for a total of € 2,450,000. Most projects presented actions and interventions that improve the use of ICT both according to an approach using new technologies (augmented reality, app production, advanced diagnostic systems, web portals, etc.) and tools to strengthen the cultural heritage, thereby increasing the level of use and accessibility, and according to a more innovative approach where ICT is considered as an autonomous field of experimentation that collects development opportunities not only in the field of culture, but also in other branches (agricultural/alimentary, social, handmade, industrial, etc.), in order to increase the possibility of new markets.

Most of the projects can be organised into wide areas on the provincial scale, or in large urban centres, also exhibiting in this case both local approaches tending to concentrate more on internal resources (human capital, economics, skills, etc.), and an opposite type open to wider networks and connections. Finally, some projects are characterised by their identification of centres of concentration and specialisation, at the same time spreading activities over homogeneous territories. These are based on a trial vision of conservation, considering the intervention not as an exceptional event, but as the moment for an overall strategy to guarantee careful and effective management.

It is therefore indispensable that operations inserted in the area of the district project are coherent with a conservation program in which maintenance plans are integrated with management plans and scientific results are assessed, thereby adopting the most up-to-date technologies useful to reaching such aims.

More than 48 partners are participants in the district projects. They are centred around public project leaders, as further proof of the interest in investing in product, process, and organisational innovation in the area of cultural, creative, and “cultural manufacturing” enterprises. The initiation of the first 10 projects, now in the activation and monitoring phases, opens up the possibility of searching for European financing within the new 2014-2020 planning period, which can offer continuity and reinforce the initiatives selected.

Regarding cultural resources - understood to be goods, activities, and businesses - one particular non-material element that pervades all projects is especially important: creativity, in as much as it can favour the evolution of the

traditional production system and cultivate new strategies for local development. The actions are therefore aimed at constructing wide, stable territorial networks, attracting investments, and favouring the interaction between art, creativity, landscape, and production quality, exploring the opportunities that can be generated by linking between them a collection of *micro-offers* that otherwise would have no possibility of satisfying demand.

Among the concrete actions identified, we point out those aimed at rendering museums centres of know-how, knowledge, and experience, to improve artificial agricultural and urbanised landscapes to become places of quality, environment, and life, and to develop the cross-contamination between art and the expressive language of modern day.

Contextually, regional-initiative projects have been developed that are coherent with the development of the advanced cultural district and are identifiable in four large areas of intervention. Some activities are aimed at developing knowledge regarding cultural assets spread throughout the municipal territory.

No.	PROJECT	GOALS
1	Adriatic Innovative Factory Project leader: Ancona Chamber of Commerce Total partners: 12 Project cost: € 908,000.00	The project is centred on educational activities and economic enthusiasm on an international scale to create an Adriatic Community in the area of cultural and creative enterprise in order to attract municipal resources in a cross-border area.
2	PLAYMARCHE: a regional district of cultural heritage 2.0 Project leader: University of Macerata Total partners: 51 Project cost: € 847,000.00	The project foresees structuring a supply chain of technical, scientific, and communication professionalism for the production of highly innovative electronic games and entertainment products based on cultural content.
3	BARCO – Creative office Project leader: Montana Alto and Medio Metauro Communities Total partners: 18 Project cost: € 824,547.10	The project identifies the Barco Ducale of Urbania as the home of cultural, touristic, and business activities and services. It is based on actions connecting young talent with groups of experts in order to adopt innovative start-ups.
4	CAMMINI LAURENTANI Project leader: Community of Loreto Total partners: 19 Project cost: € 1,030,000.00	The project develops a system of “Laurentian Walks”, foreseeing the building of a system of accommodation and use of the path as a pilot project tightly correlated with forms of slow mobility in order to enjoy the cultural heritage and the landscape.
5	Cultural District of the Province of Fermo Project leader: Province of Fermo Total partners: 23 Project cost: € 1,185,500.00	The project identifies three areas (cultural/touristic, technological, and manufacturing/creative), placing the new Fermo Terminal as the main point of access to the territory in order to connect to other physical stations and concept stores linked both to the 23 museums in Fermo and to the shoe-making business system.
6	CreATTIVITA' Project leader: Province of Pesaro Total partners: 67 Project cost: € 1,009,600.00	The project is aimed at developing a digital platform for production and innovation in the enjoyment of cultural content in service of both business and tourism.
7	AMAMI (Actions-multiplicity-art-manufacturing-innovation) Project leader: University of Camerino Total partners: 28 Project cost: € 800,000.00	The project is organised into three areas: developing cooperation between local reception systems, supporting the development of innovative ideas and projects in cultural, creative, and manufacturing enterprises, and developing a network system to promote the district.
8	Piceno Progressive Cultural District Project leader: Piceno University Consortium Total partners: 14 Project cost: € 750,000.00	The project is aimed at improving the cultural heritage of all things beautiful (artistic/historical heritage), good (enogastronomy heritage), and well-made (craft and manufacturing heritage) present in the Piceno territory, regenerating and innovating through actions guided by design.
9	Valley of Creativity Project leader: Community of Fabriano Total partners: 16 Project cost: € 882,280.00	The project foresees the realisation of a centre for documenting the art catalogue on paper and services connected to creating it in the paper and filigree museum of Fabriano. The actions revolve around the theme of craftsmanship ideas to make the zone attractive to creative people and professionals.
10	Pesaro event and festival district Project leader: Community of Pesaro Total partners: 12 Project cost: € 749,150.00	The project foresees placing at the museum centre of the Community of Pesaro a factory specialised in services for the organisation, production, and promotion of festivals in the region and elsewhere, in order to increase work opportunities and generate interesting economies for benefactors.

Tab. 1 - The 10 DCE selected by the Marche Region.

The knowledge instrument has allowed a second phase directed at the spread of information to be activated. The census of cultural goods in the Marche Region, cataloguing, the insertion within projects of territorial and development planning to relaunch the Marche Region has led to the localisation of the widespread heritage and to the identification of a cultural landscape, which the inhabitants are becoming aware of slowly but surely.

The Region has already initiated an extraordinary plan of digitising the cultural heritage for online access, pointing towards improvement as a development instrument for a new cultural and creative industry. The initiatives undertaken include the construction of a portal called “Marche Cultural Goods” born with the aim of furnishing a single access tool based on an informative system (SIRPaC) that integrates digital resources with the conviction that the knowledge and documentation of cultural objects represent the essential and fundamental requirements for each protection and improvement measure.

Consulting the catalogue offers a view of the entire regional heritage, highlighting the interrelationships that link different expressions of local cultural identity: architectural monuments, sites, and cultural places in general can be explored together with works of art, archaeological findings, sociocultural anthropology, the historical/scientific heritage, and the material and non-material evidence contained or represented in them.

No.	PROJECT	GOAL
1	Trio Project	Develop projects for education and professional refreshment.
2	SIRPAC	Creation of the Regional Information system for the Cultural Heritage.
3	Access to the information system Online catalogue	Improvement of libraries, a search system to become familiar with sites, schedules, assets, services, using multiple search parameters.
4	Technical infrastructure	Construction of platforms to provide video and multi-video conference systems.
5	Social networking services	Creation of an informational structure that manages on-line networks based on social relationships.
6	Access to the museum portal	Construction of packages, itineraries, and services to become familiar with sites, schedules, offers, etc.

Tab. 2 - On-line services for the Marche Region to simplify its use.

The data allow a basic search to be made of the information in order to correctly identify the goods. The regional administration has activated a project to reengineer the database, which is at the heart of the information system, according to a flexible architecture, allowing for its integration with other databases and at the same time simplifying insertion, publication, and consultation operations. The new system, created in accordance with national and interna-

tional standards and internal instruments for managing and publishing catalogued information, has allowed the region to achieve interesting results in the area of projects linked to the interoperability of both national and international cultural information systems. In addition, an Archaeological Charter of Le Marche has been developed to understand the archaeological heritage as material evidence of the territory's uninterrupted participation, which is only apparently peripheral, in world history. In fact, the Marche Region is rich from the archaeological point of view, where sites are merged into the landscape in a harmonious and suggestive manner, and where each place, each museum, tells the history of a land that has developed since very ancient times. Beginning from the middle of the 1990s, the Region has adopted legislative means aimed at "preserving, and enhancing" its rich archaeological heritage. In many respects, Regional Law n.16/1994 can be considered the forerunner of several proposals to rethink the protection of archaeological sites and as an example of integrated planning focused on the rediscovery of the landscape. Thanks to the close cooperation between the State, the Region and local authorities, this law outlines the framework of the archaeological system of the Marche Region and defines implementation strategies through specially designated funds. The sites therefore become an entity included within the environmental framework and the centre of territorial touristic and economic activities. Their management is to be implemented through the mediation between different planning means and the collaboration of all authorities involved. The most original feature of the *Marche Archaeological Charter* is not only its systematic cataloguing, but also the geo-referenced localisation of most of the archaeological sites through a GIS system that allows multiple levels of reading to be superimposed and thematic maps to be created.

Developing projects and making new instruments available in support of territories is now, more than ever, strategic for policies in favour of the cultural heritage. In a new competitive scenario, the culture acts as a real *synergic agent* that frames individual interventions in an overall definition of the identity of the territorial system and the communities that inhabit it. Different cultural initiatives become a language that, deeply involving the rational as well as the emotional dimension, help citizens to understand how the transformation of the territory and the city imply a potential transformation of life and professional opportunities, essential objectives to pursue when adopting and creating new ideas, considering innovation as an opportunity. Culture is becoming more and more a laboratory of ideas that proceeds with logic similar to scientific research; it opens new possibilities and indicates new behavioural models. Cul-

tural content (museums, exposition spaces, cultural centres, multi-purpose spaces, and so forth) is certainly one of the realities in which more hope is placed when thinking of a new model of cultural district that knows how to insert the mechanisms of the cultural offering within a vital, competitive scenario of local economic development. Now widespread international cases such as these perform two important functions within the district system: attraction and activation. They become places in which to express most completely and efficiently the entire symbolic world on which the theory of values is built. The recognition of values, in which conservation and the restoration of a cultural asset is primarily implied, represents one of the most important conceptual and methodological acquisitions of twentieth-century thought, the fruit of a theory proposed at the beginning of the century and successively reinterpreted in the process of defining conservation and restoration concepts. The expanded process of attribution and computation of values requires adopting assessment methods and cognitive instruments in addition to a particular historical/critical sensitivity, which, making use of principles pertaining to multiple disciplines including economics, allows each of the values potentially present in the cultural heritage to be estimated in order to direct policy choices (Baldioli, 2012: 40). Regarding the rest, keywords such as *goods* and *heritage*, *value* and *improvement*, used to describe the vast idea of *cultural asset*, are borrowed precisely from the economic sector and assume a broader meaning. Nevertheless, the reasoned focalisation of the intertwining of the economic/cultural heritage cannot overlook the awareness that, in the history of the constant relationship between the two spheres, the reasons of the economy are imposed, for presumed practical needs, much more than those of the culture (Boscarino, 1992: 9).

Rather than following predefined formulae, it is then necessary to ensure that there is a dialogue between territorial players in order to define a cultural project model. Such a project is founded on the growth of cultural skills, local capabilities, and openness to innovation while respecting traditional good practices.

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