
Editorial

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At the turn of the millennium, many scholars became interested in revamping the concept of creativity. This one word encapsulates a bundle of quite specific properties of mainly urban settings and explains their often unexpected continuous development processes. Creativity is a multifaceted and multidimensional topic. It reflects the evolution of current societies facing a challenging transition from an industrial to a post-industrial service-intensive economy, where information and communication technologies support the development of non-material and cultural productive sectors. Modern cities are engaged in a competition based on the ability to nurture innovation.

Notwithstanding the many contributions to the study of creativity, in recent contributions Florida (2002) and Landry (2000) illustrate the meaning of creative class and city, and reopen the discussion on the determinants of regional and urban development in contemporary societies. After almost a decade, these concepts are tackled in a multifaceted and polydimensional framework. Because of the specific nature of the concept of creativity, addressing the pre-conditions for the birth of creative settings is not an easy task. In situations dominated by uncertainty and complexity, policy makers have to adopt new approaches and tools to understand and support the possible innovative and creative paths.

This special issue gathers 14 contributions on the role of innovation and creativity in urban management. The articles, which will be summarised in the following paragraphs, can be divided into two groups. In the first group, challenging arguments and theoretical

underpinnings are presented and discussed, and in the second, experiences and case studies are provided.

The first group consists of four articles.

In the first essay, Cecil Steward and Sharon Kuska reflect on the nature of creative cities, which are made up of many distinct characteristics within the five domains of sustainability: environmental qualities; socio-cultural conditions; technological applications; economic patterns and vitalities; and supportive, democratic public policies. All of these characteristics are dependent upon sustainable design, sustainable planning and responsible urban administration for the creative and sustainable human habitat. They are based on the assumption that each key characteristic within these five domains is potentially a sustainability indicator that can be designed, planned and tracked over time for urban sustainability efficiency and effectiveness.

In the second article, Maria Cerreta and Pasquale De Toro begin with what they call 'integrated assessments' and propose multidimensional tools drawn from different approaches and fields of knowledge as a suitable decision support tool for public participation at a territorial and urban planning level. They introduce an approach based on spatial analysis combined with multicriteria and multigroup methods able to support evaluation, especially in the field of land-use planning. By exploring the potential of this integrated spatial assessment (ISA), it is possible to implement a multidimensional value-focused way of thinking, conceived as a path open to a 'creative' decision-making process.

The third paper, by Roberta Arbolino and Pietro Rostirolla, concerns situations occurring in the city of Naples, characterised by the degradation and depletion of local resources whose future use is seriously impeded. The authors focus on the lack of organisational and managerial skills in integrated project planning that leads to situations in which decision-making is very slow, discourages innovations, and supplies remedies that become quickly obsolete. In particular, the authors analyse a useful methodology to achieve the best financial resource allocation between the sectors involved and an organisation that simplifies and accelerates decision-making procedures to facilitate private participation.

In the fourth essay of this special issue, Cristina Garzillo starts by recognising that urban areas play a vital role in creating a Europe that is both sustainable and competitive, and provide high environmental and social quality, while at the same time being pioneer regions for economic and scientific innovation and creativity. Local authorities therefore need to have access to the latest technology and techniques developed through research, and, in turn, research has to respond to the needs of local government. During the past decade, numerous research projects, many of which have been funded through EU programmes, have produced a wealth of tools and instruments with a focus on sustainability. However, the potential of this wealth is not fully used, as many of these tools are hardly known by their target group, and thus not employed. In her paper, the author advocates integration between research and practice as not just a worthwhile aspiration but as a possible way of effectively implementing local sustainability.

The ten remaining essays belong to the second group and report on case studies: the authors present some details of development processes by coupling innovation and creativity.

In the fifth article, Luis Valenzuela and Juan Pablo Blanco illustrate the case of Santiago, the capital city of Chile, which has undergone numerous changes in its urban fabric owing the process of liberalisation and globalisation of its economy since the

mid-1980s. The urban structure shows the consequences of this type of development, which affects its social, physical and economic configurations. Behind those changes, the city has developed internal dynamics related to the innovation capacity of its economic structures: a high concentration of knowledge-based activities. According to Valenzuela and Blanco, these economic assets, recognised as ‘cross-cutting’ for the development of the natural resource sectors, are the information and communications technology and biotechnology sectors, mainly clustered in Santiago, a traditional hub for higher education institutions, economic power, administrative government and urban services of high standard.

In the sixth article, Tadeusz Stryjakiewicz and Michał Męczyński report on the results of ACRE, an EU framework programme research project, concerned with the identification of mutual interdependencies between the process of accommodating creative knowledge and the competitiveness of metropolitan regions within the enlarged EU. In particular, the project focuses on the role of so-called ‘soft’ factors for stimulating creative urban processes. Stryjakiewicz and Męczyński start by briefly describing the ACRE project in the context of Florida’s concept of a creative class and a creative city, and then present some preliminary results on the example of the Poznan metropolitan region while discussing the challenges and implications for urban policy. They focus on the case of Poznan, as it shows the character and typical features of creative processes in post-communist metropolises of East-Central Europe.

Next, Dora Konsola and Nicolas Karachalis argue that, while the creative city discourse has become central in cultural policy debates with an emphasis on the cases of large cities that employ culture as a driver for economic growth, the cultural strategies of many medium-sized and small cities focus more on social objectives. This seems to be the case for Greek cities of medium and small size. In order to determine the contemporary cultural strategies employed by local authorities and the state, the authors present the results of a survey that was undertaken in 20 cities. Part of it focused on the examination of municipal and public cultural and educational infrastructure as a body of evidence for identifying these strategies. The findings of the survey indicate that cities share common strategies, which are mainly introverted, community-oriented and only slightly related to economic considerations. However, they do offer some opportunities for promoting a positive image and fostering creativity.

Then, Sophie Schramm and Susanne Bieker illustrate the case of the urban region of Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, where extensive urbanisation has contributed to a deficient provision of infrastructure causing environmental degradation and health problems for large parts of the population. The protection of the environment, as well as the preservation of the historic urban fabric, requires new approaches to infrastructure supply. The authors propose a semi-centralised approach, which focuses on supply and treatment structures on the neighbourhood level, and offers a solution to the challenges imposed by urbanisation. Comparing existing alternative plans for conventional centralised sewerage systems in Hanoi, it proposes the closing of certain treatment cycles on a local level. Within an integrated approach, tailor-made local technologies, such as septic tanks, can be used at a later stage in the treatment. As it is process-oriented, existing management structures of waste and wastewater treatment should be considered and incorporated.

In the following contribution, Li-Wei Liu and Pei-Yin Ko begin by pointing out that cultural industries now serve as the motor of urban creativity and regeneration. But, the construction of a creative city is not an easy task and requires a long period of policy

manipulation. Many cities thus manage to ‘become’ a creative city. The authors call these cities ‘creationalising cities’ which has a twofold meaning: one is to succeed in becoming a creative city; the other involves building a creative urban environment. They present the case of Taichung which, as the third largest city in Taiwan, is aiming to become a creative city, and make the transition from a local city to a creative city.

The next paper, by Candida Cuturi, focuses on brownfield redevelopment and waterfront revitalisation, which have recently been significantly pursued by British and Irish cities, by creatively rediscovering neglected areas along water courses, changing them into landmarks for urban life and tourism/business attraction, within an efficient network of transport infrastructures. The author describes many case studies of waterfront regeneration in Manchester, Belfast and Dublin, and evaluates their performance by adopting indicators related to different sustainability domains: procedural, economic, socio-cultural and environmental. This assessment involves the determination of important key aspects and common features of area-based regeneration experiences, and finer management and monitoring of processes and outcomes.

In the subsequent paper, Kevin Krizek advocates a new approach to understanding how people perceive and use the transportation system, and how transportation and land use interact to advance goals of sustainability. According to the author, at the heart of this approach is the concept of accessibility: the ability of people to reach the destinations that they need to visit in order to meet their needs. The article explores the issues related to the development of accessibility measures for non-motorised modes; namely, bicycling and walking. As a particular outcome of this paper, the author notes that difficulties in calculating accessibility measures arise primarily from problems with data quality, the zonal structure of transportation planning models, and the adequacy of models and travel networks for describing and predicting travel by non-motorised modes.

Next, Luigi Fusco Girard focuses on industrial-commercial and tourist port areas, as spaces of difference: rich in potential opportunities but also in contradictions and conflicts. The conservation of their particular landscape is very important for city/region development: port areas will become new spaces where creativity can have free rein. The author discusses how, and under which conditions, port areas can become an opportunity for the development of the whole city. Effective evaluation processes are suggested at the level of strategic, implementation and management planning in order to be able to combine tangible and intangible values.

In the penultimate paper, Andrea De Montis, Simone Caschili, Alessandro Chessa and Michele Campagna introduce complex network theory, a recently emerging corpus of methods, which allows researchers to deal with systems characterised by uncertainty and unpredictability. A typical system that can be conceived as a network is commuting between municipalities. In this paper, the authors aim at presenting and commenting on the results obtained by applying complex network theory techniques to the characterisation of topological, traffic and spatial properties of commuters’ systems in insular Italy. As a preliminary methodological result, the authors show how the adoption of synthetic descriptive variables is able to support the investigation of properties typical of systems whose nature is difficult to realise, as they comprehend many elements linked by a variety of connections.

In the final paper, Aliye Ahu Gülümser, Tüzin Baycan-Levent and Peter Nijkamp analyse the movement known as ‘counterurbanisation’, which nowadays characterises Turkey and represents a remarkable reversal in population flows between settlements. The authors investigate the new patterns of population flows linked to changes in

employment and focus on the causality linkages between urban-rural migration and rural employment, with special reference to entrepreneurship. This paper is the first attempt to explore the new trends in migration and employment in Turkey while offering a contemporary context for the different patterns of causal relations between counterurbanisation and new forms of entrepreneurship.

At the end of this editorial, it is worthwhile mentioning the issues that are common to the series of papers in this special issue.

Often, the creative city is discussed with respect to fields such as arts, technology and economy. In this special issue, a creative city is interpreted by many authors according to the integrated, multidimensional and multidisciplinary perspective proposed by Hall (1998) as the base to move toward a sustainable urbanisation, the reduction of ecological-social poverty, and the improvement of economic competitiveness. In many papers the fundamental role of culture, as a driver of sustainable urban development, is underlined with respect to its support for creativity; also, the role of evaluation processes is discussed in order to really identify innovative solutions in complex choices of governance and management.

On the side of the best practices presented in this special issue, it is clearly shown how investing in innovations increases city resilience and promotes urban sustainability. Therefore, mutual interdependences and relations among creativity, resilience, and sustainability should be highlighted in order to attain the highest possible benefits from the specific actions proposed. This knowledge allows really creative plans and projects to be proposed, which are able to integrate wealth production, ecological conservation and social promotion, in a win-win perspective.

References

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