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Strategic Vision of a Euro-Mediterranean Port City: A Case Study of Palermo

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Received: 1 September 2013 / Accepted: 5 September 2013 / Published: 16 September 2013

Abstract: Italian harbours assume a decisive role in order to develop a Euro-Mediterranean web for maritime transportation. The geostrategic position of the Italian peninsula can be seen as a logistic platform at the centre of the maritime trades in the Mediterranean area, giving to its port cities the role of gateway of economic flows. The port poles, meant as hubs, are able to attract investments and create economic growth and territorial development through new operative models of urban usage and management. The management policies have to consider the environmental characteristics and distinctive features, respecting the identity of the places as concrete evidence of history, a source of intellectual development and therefore, cultural richness. In this sense, the current strategic plan “Palermo capital of the Euro-Mediterranean area” imagines the whole city, and not just its harbour, as a “gate city”, a sustainable and cosmopolitan city in the view of a recentralization of the Mediterranean area. The research tests an evaluation method in support of urban planning, which increases the active role of stakeholders in terms of participation and access to the decision-making process of urban renewal strategies for Palermo to the Euro-Mediterranean.

Keywords: gate city; bottom-up approach; creative city; urban renewal; CIE; NAIADÉ

1. Introduction

“...if you ask an inhabitant of Zenobia to describe his vision of a happy life, it is always a city like Zenobia that he imagines [...] a Zenobia perhaps quite different [...], but always derived

from elements of that first model. We could say, it is pointless whether Zenobia has to be classified among the happy cities or among the unhappy ones. It makes no sense to divide cities into these two categories, but rather into another two: those that through the years and the changes continue to give their form to desires, and those in which desires either erase the city or are erased by it..." [1].

Zenobia, stratified city, a place that can tell its history and renovate the creative dreams of those who live it, animate the feelings of the society transforming urban aspirations into "*participation*". The abstract idea of the "*happy city*" becomes concrete in the image of a reactive city which through creative processes answers to the common wellness and invests in human resources and culture. The creative approach to the environment reveals the cultural milieu typical of the territory as a source of multiple identities, offering an international platform upon which to screen the local experiences [2].

The vision of an international, attractive and multicultural city meets the updated strategies planned by Agenda Europe 2000, concerning the social economy of the market. The communitarian planning idealizes a system of smart development based on knowledge and innovation, sustainable in terms of efficiency under the aspect of renewable resources and competitiveness, which could benefit the social and territorial cohesion [3]. This context of global development is reflected in the planning of an intermodal transport, distributed on international networks, which for Europe involve the adjacent foreign areas, stimulating the economy of foreign markets and local entrepreneurship.

The geostrategic position of the Italian peninsula can be seen as a natural logistic platform at the centre of the maritime trades in the Mediterranean area, giving to its port cities the role of gateway of economic flows. The activity of study develops according to European policies of "Connecting Europe Facility" [4], advancing transport networks inside a unified market circuit, considering models of urban regeneration in the Palermo gateway—a city with deep-rooted historical and cultural profiles proposed to be a bridge between Europe and the Mediterranean countries.

The port area of Palermo has been, in fact, a dynamic centre of growth and metamorphosis of the urban historic fabric since World War II, and it has progressively been detached from the city, limiting it to a functional structure, hence the need to provide interventions that generate scenarios of continuous interchange with the city. This research focuses on the strategic vision of the redevelopment of the waterfront as the "face" of the port cities, as well as an expression of economic resource and of the social cohesion of the entire city.

The relationship between the city and the port binds to a process of efficient use of lands that is oriented in accordance with the international legal framework and establishes, at the same time, a proper dialogue between the idea of future and city identity. The analysis recognizes the identity as well as the intrinsic value of the history of the city, as key points in the process of urban transformation and a parameter for understanding the possible methods of recovery and of land management, developing a cross survey that observes the response of the expressive richness of the historical venues to the sameness of capitalism. The environment, in fact, is becoming more and more an expression of a modified nature, conditioned by human activity so that the existing historical and cultural heritage require more identification, especially through promotional activities such as an integrated conservation. The need to save on resources and also the identification of new targets of environmental compatibility, as a necessary condition for a process of sustainable development, have revealed a new

sensitivity for technologies and architectures, which are careful about the health of users and about the existing resources saving.

The start of public programmes for the conservation of urban areas, and in particular those of historical and architectural interest, relates to the need to assess *ex ante* operational models of land usage so that, on the basis of shared choices, they can attract new long-term investments. The question therefore arises of contributing, in a new way, in terms of method of evaluation, to processes of decision-making for the enhancement of local heritage. Finally, this research aims to identify the possible choices for the reuse of an abandoned industrial context of the port-city interface, working according to design criteria interwoven with a participatory decision-making process as an added value to the territorial identity affirmation.

The research tests an evaluation method in support of urban planning, which increases the active role of stakeholders in terms of access to the decision-making process within renewal strategies towards the communitarian vision of a Euro-Mediterranean. Starting from the study of the current strategic planning drawn up by the Palermo Municipality on the basis of the already approved Port Master Plan, we want to clarify the characteristics and needs of the renewal process that the administration wants to implement, analysing the role of the stakeholders.

Considering the area that is affected by this planning and which is restricted to the neighbourhood size, the research compares the transformation which the Strategic Plan has promoted with four other possibilities for urban renewal directly proposed by the citizens. This approach is developed through the combination of two already tested evaluation methods: the CIE and the NAIADE, which can be considered models of open-ended and multiple interviewing.

2. Community Planning: European Corridors

The community action in the field of infrastructure, TEN-T (Trans-European Network Transports), defined in the European Council in Essen in 1994, outlines an integrated and intermodal transport policy, promoting the interoperability of trans-European networks as a factor for the development of the internal market, economic and social cohesion and strengthening of maritime links between the EU member states [5]. In line with the European policies, the General Plan of Transportation and Logistics, developed by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport and Navigation, introduces a system of transport set on international cabotage and on “*short sea shipping*” [6], consistent with the objectives of environmental sustainability and safety requirements set by the EU.

This strategic vision idealizes the concept of the Trans-European network of “*Motorways of the Sea*” [7], according to which trade flows convey logistics of short-range routes or “*corridors*”, based on the maritime proximity, decongesting road traffic and enhancing the access to the island and its remote areas. The analysis of the trans-European corridors allowed some strategic transnational territorial platforms to be identified, giving to Italian harbours a decisive role in order to develop a Euro-Mediterranean web for maritime transportation.

The National Strategic Preliminary Document (2007–2013) focuses attention on the intermodality taking advantage of the benefits of the geostrategic position of the Italian peninsula meant as a natural logistic platform placed in the centre of the maritime trades in the Mediterranean area [8]. In reference to this community programme, the activation of a new “*meridian corridor*” [9] has been

promoted, in which the port cities are territorial poles of excellence and gateways able to intercept international economic flows in view of recentralization of the Mediterranean Sea. The port poles, meant as hubs, have the capacity to attract national and international investments, becoming an occasion for economic growth and territorial development through new operative models of urban usage and management [10]. The territorial policies must consider the environmental characteristics and their distinctive features, respecting the identity of the places, and first of all, the preservation of the waterfront as concrete evidence of the history of the civilization of the people, a source of intellectual development and therefore richness.

The strategic plan “Palermo capital of the Euro-Mediterranean area”, as well as the innovative “Ports & Stations” programme, identify Palermo as a natural interface of great historical value within the Mediterranean regions considering the city a strategic metropolitan node of the western Sicily platform and a receiving terminal of the continental production systems (Berlin-Palermo Corridors) which sorts them towards the Mediterranean markets along the east-west ridge (Cyprus-Seville) [11].

3. A Euro-Mediterranean Port City

3.1. Palermo's Strategic Planning

The strategic plan “Palermo capital of the Euro-Mediterranean area”, drawn up by Palermo's Municipality, imagines the whole city, and not just its harbour, as a “gate city”, a scene of culture exchanges, a sustainable and cosmopolitan city according to its deeply rooted values [12].

The project aims, through the involvement of the local authorities, the professional associations and the representatives of the civil society, to become a leading instrument in identifying and managing the projects considered overriding for the development of a future vision of the city.

The city of the future is expressed in the plan through nine major guidelines and then by indicating the sub-strategies that will be put in place during the operational phases of the planning. The nine guidelines are: the interconnected city, the metropolitan city, the international city, the productive city, the creative city, the city of tourism, the city of culture, the city of leisure and the city of integration.

From these points will come the hypothesis of intervention considering the relation between the metropolitan system and its local context [13]. The plan's action opens a strategy of inter-sectorial planning and enhances the local identity as an engine of economic development, articulating touristic routes which link various qualitative aspects of the city context to a larger metropolitan scale.

The vision of the metropolitan city idealizes Palermo as a polycentric city, based on two new urban centres, where the suburbs become satellite attraction poles able to involve in an active way the urban and social dynamics. The project “liquid waterfront” [14], part of the Strategic Plan, shares and integrates the port land plan which enhances the idea of the “city of water”, planning for the recovery of the port area as an opportunity for creative urban transformation and competitive development in response to the increasing and changeable requests of tourism and intermodal transportation. The redevelopment of the waterfront acts in synergy with the strategic planning of the city, complementing the port functions with the urban services at a metropolitan level: the creation of spaces of urban connection has been planned focusing on a better urban and port vocation and identifying an area of interface, some axes of access, and furthermore, conceiving more permeable and

relevant passages [15]. Planning the port and the urban waterfront means, in addition, improving the duty of the regional gate and optimizing the level of correlation in the exchange networks, trades, travels, flows and commodities. In order to fully understand the theme of the urban-port interface oriented to an integrated development of the city, a new analysis of the urban, economic and productive systems of that part of the city that gravitates around the sea front is necessary, with the identification of six filter areas, of varying dimensions and with different front borders.

The urban space projects in the port area make way for a reception, transit and rest centre for passengers, as well as the movement of commodities, *etc.* and, with regard to the interface port-city area, some port spaces should be created to carry out new functions addressed to possible urban users (archaeological park of “Castello a mare”, green area of the “Foro Italico”, “water district” in the “Molo Trapezoidale”...) [16].

We think that if the Strategic Plan is correlated to the abilities of the local governments to invigorate partnerships and webs of agreements, looking for common strategic goals, it will be possible to create conditions that attract investments for a sustainable territorial development. The Strategic Plan is limited to the territory of the city of Palermo as prepared and approved by the Town Council. Today, it is under review by the Sicilian Regional Government for its final examination and approval, but the Regional Government has not yet arranged strategic planning for its main maritime poles. This condition is a huge critical point for achieving results that significantly affect the sustainable development of the Sicilian sea cities in a regional network. Therefore, we hope that the transnational synergies and agreements that each strategic plan of these cities promotes could be included in a wider territorial plan, which should be able to advance the idea of national and European cooperation in the case of a recentralization of the Mediterranean area.

3.2. A Top-Down Approach to Planning

Analysing the public documents that attest the development phases of the Strategic Plan, it is possible to understand an evaluation method which the Municipality of Palermo wanted to conduct *ex ante* as a preparatory premise to the decision-making process. The instrument through which the administration has outlined initial tendencies, relevant themes and action lines is a strategic diary to organize a local representative witness listening phase, whereby representatives are classified by virtue of the social and economic role they fulfill. The listening phase starts with thematic workshops and aims to focus on the issues and the strategic priorities identifying the actions through which the imagined scenarios are realized. This inclusive decision-making process was conducted according to the techniques of *Metaplan* and *Open Space Technology* [17]. The technique of *Metaplan* provided for the billposting of cards on a board, which if coloured in green represents the strengths, in red the weaknesses and in blue the proposals. *Open Space Technology* is a method of meeting based on self-organization, which has allowed stakeholder groups to work together, on the same subject, in order to suggest topics and issues.

These meetings consider stakeholders as partners identified in relation to the strategic objectives of the plan, as connoisseurs of the territorial needs and potentiality. It is a survey extended to a small number of favoured witnesses, exponents of strategic areas such as the main authorities and local

institutions, the mayors of the surrounding municipalities, the regional district of Palermo and the Sicilian Regional Government, and trade and professional associations.

The planning activity of Palermo's Municipality is based on systems of monitoring and evaluation of the economic, social and urban impact in line with a global and critical vision of the current context and of the expected results. Starting from the European indicators, the municipality has created a specific in-depth analysis of urban sustainability indicators, useful for the evaluation of the present framework and necessary to make decisions about the work plan. These indicators refer to the new tasks of the Aalborg Charta for local sustainable development worldwide (*Aalborg + 10 Commitments*) [18], and they are efficient instruments to carry out the monitoring phase, prefiguring the goals of the urban planning for the social, sanitary, economic and cultural welfare. These indicators, in fact, have been created by the European Commission in order to help the local authorities who signed the commitments of the Aalborg document, and they are useful instruments for the requalification of the abandoned areas, to prevent urban sprawl, to grant an adequate conservation of the building heritage and to enforce the values of sustainable urban planning.

The integrated analysis of the territorial context which is the subject of this planning has been defined with the help of 65 context indicators divided into main themes—population, environment, mobility, culture and economy—which should be able to provide information regarding the current picture of all the urban components and to evaluate their development by calculating a time range between three and five years. Moreover, the comparison between obtained values and those recorded in 11 Italian provinces became a useful benchmark for framing the city in a national context [19]. The Table 1, shown below, lists some of the indicators used in this analysis.

Table 1. Context indicators, Town of Palermo.

Dimension	Definition		Value	Units of measurement	Year	Average Italy	Deviation to average
Population	P1	Resident population	656,081	Inhabitants	2009		
	P2	Annual rate of change population	−0.5%	%	2009	0.5%	100.0
	P6	Population density	4129.4	Inh.*km ²	2008	199.3	2071.9
	P10	% Foreign residents	3.5%	%	2008	6.5%	53.8
Environment	A1	% Urban green on municipal area	31.6%	%	2008	8.3%	380.7
	A2	Urban green areas for inhabitants	76.0	m ² * inh.	2008	93.6	81.2
	A3	Solid waste for inhabitants	595.1	Kg* inh.	2008	615.8	96.6
	A4	Selective waste collection	4.6%	%	2008	28.5%	16.1
Culture	C13	University students	57,565	Units	2007		
	C15	% Foreign university students	1.1%	%	2007		
	C16	Rate tourists (for 100,000 inh.)	176,408.9	Units	2008		
Economy	E2	Rate of change companies recorded	0.2%	%	2008	−0.3%	66.7
	E3	Registered companies for 1000 inh.	79.9	Comp.*1000*inh.	2008	101.7	78.6
	E4	Tourism – arrivals	594,372	Units	2008		
	E5	Arrivals of foreign tourists (%)	48.9%	%	2008	43.7%	111.9
	E6	Tourism – attendance	1,157,385	Units	2008		
	E7	Presence of foreign tourists (%)	50.4%	%	2008	43.3%	116.3

The analysis, conducted by Palermo's administration, has yielded a critical view of the reference framework as a useful basis of comparison regarding the significance of strategic planning in respect to the peculiarities of the area and the potential impacts. The evaluation scheme of the single cardinal executive projects of the Strategic Plan is made up of indicators of realization, result and impact, effective for estimating the "performance" of the planning in regards to social and territorial capitals, as well as environmental, economic and management sustainability.

The variables have given a quantitative estimate supporting the whole planning for the priority and the validity of the interventions; in particular, the indicators of realization measure the paid-out sources, the number of financed projects and their relative duration, the indicators of results express the immediate returns of the programme of spending, and the indicators of impact concern the effects on the community and on the environment in the middle to long term.

We think that this evaluation process allows the betterment and transparency of the decision-making process, through the analysis of specific characteristics and peculiarities of identity, such as primary factors for deciding on future changes. The enhancement of the exceptional local potential leads to the exaltation of endogenous heritage, which can be recognized as globally competitive if the design process proposes a landscape cohesion, redefining the space in its heterogeneous relations and dimensions. These territorial relationships require, in our opinion, policies that coordinate cultural concepts in a cooperative and united form, in a shared and non-hierarchical vision. However, we believe that the evaluation processes, carried out by the Municipal Administration, carefully assess the strategic importance of the individual implementation projects verifying potential capacity. Furthermore, the local communities not directly involved in decision-making appear, but only through a line of information and dissemination of results approved by the institutions. In this sense, the assumption that the entire planning process is based on self-recognition is partially or totally uncertain.

An exhaustive evaluation of urban renewal projects and sustainable development, which can interpret the dynamic values of the territory, must allow the evaluation of elements whose value is easily measured by the market prices and consider all the intangible elements, such as the improvement of human health or of environmental quality. These are, therefore, necessary market and non-market evaluation methodologies, and it is necessary to refine these methods and check their validity as useful tools in public decision-making.

4. Bottom-Up Approach to a Smart Urban Renewal

The contemporary urbanization of the port area of Palermo appears rooted in specific models, suffering from a levelling out of languages, due to the rapid change of the production system, with the consequent abandonment of local materials and techniques. The tangible and intangible relationships of the city are, in fact, gradually showing a fragmented picture where unbroken places do not exist but there is a structure of poles of singular value [20].

This contemporary city, developed on the basis of functional aspects, often appears rich with "Non-Lieux" [21], where local communities are without local roots; this loss creates, on the one hand, forms of social identity which are not influenced by constraint of contiguity or "urban spheres" [22]; on the other hand, it determines manifestations of isolation and insecurity. In such a system without synergistic relations, the landscape significance is not often shared by the community or it does not

represent features of identity, and so an evaluation based on the bottom-up information flow can be promoted, accorded to local “wishes” and the attitudes of human life, culminating in the realization of an integrated system catalyst for a cosmopolitan creativity.

This choice is based on the principle of interaction of the users in the process of valorization and protection of territorial identity, because the individual, after being part of the urban context, can promote models of economic and social welfare in a place where he feels an integral part. Therefore, the involvement of the local communities in the decision-making processes is supported by the European Union directive of 26 May 2003, n. 2003/35/Ce, and can represent an appropriate instrument in order to consider directly the presence of uncertain or irreversible factors of environmental and social-economic impact. The analysis that we want to carry out has the purpose of comparing the different options of planning and their impacts on different fields and of equating the cultural dimension of cities with fixed historical roots.

The case study of Palermo develops on the basis of a multidisciplinary and integrated approach, reflecting the principles of the Community Impact Evaluation (CIE) [23], a method conceived by the British expert Nathaniel Lichfield in the 1960s and revised in 1996. The Community Impact Evaluation (CIE) is a multi-criteria evaluation strategy on the possible effects of planning based on different social groups, estimating an economic reply and reinterpreting the cost-benefit analysis (CBA) where a hypothesis of intervention can have different economic and cultural advantages, depending on the social categories involved in an active or passive way in its implementation.

The innovation compared to the CBA consists of considering the point of view not of the decision-makers but of the community on which would fall the direct and indirect effects of the conservation. Additionally, it consists of distributing the benefits (or outputs/impacts) and the costs (inputs) in order to produce a set of “*social accounts*” [24]. In these accounts, the CIE considers not only the economic impacts as CBA does, but also the heterogeneity of the effects, like the social ones, on the natural environment, including eventual risks and the variation of welfare due to the transformation of a specific scenario. The immediate consequence is the traceability of the costs and the benefits for a precise aspect which on the other side could be distributed overall, creating an irreversible imbalance, as happens in the CBA [25]. Although it recalls the impact analysis (IA), the CIE method does not lead to comparison between the impact and standardized data used as a parameter of significance, but it considers both the tangible and intangible effects in a multidimensional space, in order to estimate a “*complex social value*” [26] from the perspective of a sectorial approach. According to the CIE evaluation, this value can be gained from an interpretation of the current scenario, pointing out the criteria and the indicator concerning each field; nevertheless, in these ones we cannot recognize a value that can define them in a ranking of advisability. If the CIE can give back a shared project, a multiple approach allows complex problems to be solved, such as the requalification of an urban area, considering the degree of desirability of the alternatives in relation to a parametric scale.

The NAIAD (Novel Approach to Imprecise Assessment and Decision Environments) software is a useful instrument for the management of the alternatives based on some set criteria, in relation to the evaluation method created by Professor Giuseppe Munda (1995), which uses conflict analysis procedures to be integrated with the multi-criteria results. Adopting a pairwise comparison technique, and in particular the equity analysis, NAIAD can give indications of the distance of the positions of

the various interest groups and can return a ranking of the alternatives according to actors' impacts or preferences [27]. The evaluation is based on the score values assigned to the criteria of each alternative and is performed using an impact matrix in the analysis of conflict among the different interest groups and the possible formation of coalitions according to the proposed alternatives.

Although this procedure expresses the desires of the stakeholders leading to the definition of alternatives compatible with the local context, it disregards the environmental researches for the realization of any process of planning. Consequently it places itself, in temporal terms, in front of the tests of feasibility. The programme of evaluation, which we want to test, is a new method created on the basis of the CIE and the NAIADE, which in particular integrates the two methods by linking them to obtain an *ex ante* evaluation which, in relation to the ongoing town strategic planning, can identify two macrophases: analysis of the context and definition of the future scenarios of transformation.

The process of analysis of the current situation is oriented to identify the existing or future problems and opportunities and it has been developed through a preliminary study of the ongoing strategic area planning and through a direct approach led in audience campaigns of the groups of current and potential stakeholders, in order to pattern matrices of analysis.

The framework of the first macrophase is carried out through the following steps:

- Analysis of the current context and identification of the evaluation area;
- Identification of the invariants and potentialities of transformation of the site;
- Identification of the problems, the opportunities and the restrictions that come from the choices of the local government and the in-force planning instruments;
- Identification of the project alternatives, meant as possible options of the intervention project, and description of their effects and impacts;
- Description of the quantitative and qualitative transformations induced by the different plan alternatives, according to an appropriate choice of parameters;
- Identification of the social groups which are affected by the impacts of the plan;
- Identification of the sector's objectives which involve each social group and the groups' feedback;
- Construction of the analysis matrix:
 - (1). matrix of intersection between the project alternatives and the variables that describe them;
 - (2). matrix between the social groups and the sectorial aims that interest each social group.

The framework of the second macrophase is carried out through the following steps:

- Choice of the parameters through which each identified evaluation criterion will be estimated;
- Comparison of project alternatives through the construction of the evaluation matrix:
 - (1). matrix of "users' choices" composed on the x-axis of the project alternatives and the main variables that describe them, on the y-axis of the sectorial aims, which interest the social group;
 - (2). matrix of the "equality" of the intersection between the social groups and the project alternatives;
- Comparison of pair of alternatives in relation to each criterion;
- Identification of the criteria number for the outranking and measurement of intensity;
- Analysis of equality on the level of conflict between the groups of interest (dendography);
- Organization of the alternatives.

In the creation of the effects matrix, the values related to the crossover of the aims expressed by the social groups have been judged through the fuzzy metric, of a stochastic nature, which considers the uncertainty of the decision-making processes according to a predefined set of nominal variables from “worst” to “excellent” in relation to a nine-point scale of numeric evaluation between zero and one [28]. The equity matrix in this research is related to the effects matrix pointing out the more advisable alternative as a solution to a “social compromise” [29] and conveying the level of agreement or conflict of the social groups through a marker of conflict. This marker is calculated as the semantic distance between the achievement of the objective levels, applying a comparison of couples of alternatives, which measures the differences in preference of each criterion or marker.

The conclusions obtained from the second macrophase of evaluation strengthen the direct analysis of problems and needs of the context found from a sample survey based on semi-structured interviews, which gather the desires of the community. This method aims to build a new communication relationship between the sensations of the social actors and the scientific competences of the governance since the beginning of the decision-making process until the aired agreement of the resulting alternative. In this sense, the stakeholders’ involvement supports their own hopes for a future city that denotes their interests, improving the trust in institutions and the efficiency of the planning process. With the aid of the first analysis matrix it is possible to evaluate the impact that any physical and social modification causes on the identity features of the analysed area: the variables that describe the planning alternatives correspond to the descriptive elements of the social and physical environmental transformations, which may result directly or indirectly from the intervention [30].

The qualitative aspects of the area can be evaluated through various indicators for the description of innovative features of the planning or can promote the valorization and the conservation of existing resources. Each project variable is checked on the basis of the above-described fuzzy scale, pointing out the transformation value of the natural environment and the consequent change of the historic-topological characters of the existing system. The evaluation at this stage, therefore, refers to the architectural planning choices and to the relationship between old and new, between tradition and innovation, and it is crucial to affirm the positivity of social and environmental implications. The second analysis matrix has been drawn up after a “choice experiment” survey based on questionnaires, in which the first part is useful for the classification of the interviewed subject according to a precise social profile and the second can reveal suitable and common sectorial aims.

5. The Case Study: Interface Area between the Port and the Ancient Centre

“...a proper planning should identify the real needs of the beneficiaries and this cannot be possible without an analysis of the local situation as it is perceived by different groups of stakeholders” [31]. On the basis of this idea, the research begins with a bottom-up analysis of the whole city, outlining a strategic map of the most active social groups in the area that classifies them in five sectors: university and research, users and residents of the district, institutions, and economic and cultural promoters. The evaluation is ongoing and this report describes the first results obtained on the basis of 50 interviews divided into four of the sectors described above. It is possible to consider the institutional promoters’ perceptions, which are easily deducible from the technical reports on the strategic plan “Palermo capital of the Euro-Mediterranean area”.

The answer detected is the composition of the responses of each social group, obtained by adding the values corresponding to the satisfaction degree of different indicators, which characterize the strategies of the intervention hypotheses. The evaluation process produces a social judgment in relation to the possible configuration effects of integrated conservation of an interface port-city area limited to the size of the district. In particular, we examine an area that in its current condition presents degraded and impacting conditions both on environmental matrices and on the surrounding tissue, but which has characteristics that can be enhanced, improving local economy and new development opportunities for the whole city.

This area is located in the south-west zone of the “Molo Trapezoidale” (76,130 m²) and represents the threshold that defines the cruise port area from the entrance to the old town, so it is a filter space between two outwardly distant realities but historically linked.

The selection criteria of the area are related to:

- the logistics location of the cruise landing service;
- the interface role between the ancient city centre and the waterfront;
- found visual characteristics of identity (urban morphology, waterfront);
- the conspicuous presence of historical sites partially disposed;
- transversal characteristics that influence a larger population than that of the district.

The identified area is not adjacent to the Port Authority and for this reason is only partly envisaged in the plan through the recovery hypothesis of the residential area as a result of the cargo storage area’s redevelopment in the close north sector.

The “Molo Trapezoidale”, as is visible in the Figure 1, is a place of merger between the port and the city and where the urban fabric, divided into two main areas, stretches up to the water. Throughout the entire eastern portion (31,590 square metres) the remains of Castello a Mare are distributed, where since its recovery in 2009, because of its natural cave configuration, cultural events have been held [32]. The western sector is urbanized to a greater extent in its southern part (59,300 square metres), where some tenements and warehouses built in 1922 stand out; among them can be seen a part of the social housing complex, which was built around 1925 by the Independent Social Housing Institute on the basis of the Ernesto Basile project and which was damaged by bombing during the Second World War. These buildings, observable in Figure 2a,b were meant for the workers of the nearby coal power station, which is an industrial architecture built in the late nineteenth century and also damaged in 1943 and of which remain visible, today, the old factory and the office building of ENEL [33]. The site is characterized, also, by the presence of two elegant residential buildings, with a classic front from the early nineteenth century and a court plan with garden.

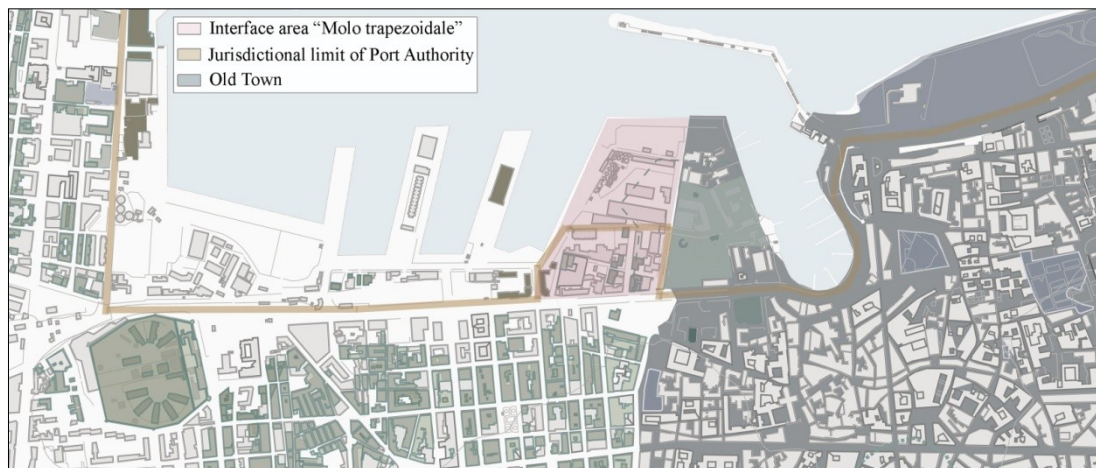
The entire pier overlooked a stretch of beach until the XIX century when the transformation works of the port facilities along with the progressive interment of the Cala waterfront deprived this part of the coast of a direct relationship with the sea.

Today, this site is the result of a historical and architectural evolution that has seen a succession of several construction phases, and much of the urban fabric is in a state of neglect and advanced material and structural decay, ascribable to the common phenomena of collapse as a result of bombardment.

The entire area reminds one of the alleged “brownfield” site defined by the European Commission in the CLARINET [34] project (2002) as “sites that have been affected by the former uses of the site

and the surrounding land; are derelict or underused; have real or perceived contamination problems; are mainly in developed urban areas; require intervention to bring them back to beneficial use” [35].

Figure 1. Old city and “Molo Trapezoidale” plan (Plan edited by Elvira Nicolini).



The industrial areas, in urban areas, are like polluted sites next to the transport infrastructures in which the processes of physical, environmental and social degradation, along with the restrictive regulations on production systems and on the impact of pollution, void the competitiveness of the maintenance of old systems. They then constitute an opportunity to imagine the potential alternatives to reuse through transformation projects of their functions and their services, identifying within the built-up tissue a communication code that can establish the morphological links that serve as a link between the original identity of the place and the new redevelopment. To this aim “...to evaluate means to interpret, predict and compare the impacts of different actions in relation to the specific objectives. The richness of the port area’s values allows multiple interpretations by different stakeholders and users. So prediction and comparison become very complex...The first step to improve the competitiveness requires a participatory process, iterative and interactive, to build a shared strategic vision and different intermediate paths” [36].

Figure 2. (a) The coal power station. (b) Residential buildings (Photo by Elvira Nicolini).



(a)



(b)

The alternative scenarios that we propose arise, therefore, from the interaction between the technical analysis and the listening process that led to the first “alignment of visions” to a true participatory planning of intervention strategies and they are configured in:

- “*Water district*”, as observed in the strategic plan (for a mostly residential use with commercial or leisure areas);
- “*Identity district*”, meant as an imagination of culture and an expression of the traditions of the city (cultural palimpsest, art studios and local products trade);
- “*Productive district*”, related to the port activity or to the original industrial use (laboratories and wholesalers, craft service, stocks of goods or heavy vehicles);
- “*Directional district*”, with public or private offices of business or service institutions and companies (professional offices, specialized facilities, schools and training centres);
- “*Welcoming district*”, meant as a tourist site with an entertainment use (cinemas, conference halls, shopping malls, spas, gyms, discos).

The survey has given an analytic environment picture, whose reliability concerns the amount of data collected until now, and evaluates the adequacy of the macro-actions concerning the user. The developed analysis shows the preferences of different social sectors and connects them to the changes necessary for their implementation identifying the resulting values as more shared goals. This databank provides a general vision for the territory, oriented to the complex needs of the community; this way, urban planning gains the role of a catalyst in the development of the cultural system, desired by all administration levels, the citizens and stakeholders, and delineated according to an integrated approach toward harmonization of the environmental, social and economic goals.

The first phase of analysis produces a cognitive framework of the transformations that occurred in the last decade in the institutional community field and explores the role and the method that the urban plan assumes, as an operative tool in the management of the entire process of the international city projection. The local economy, like many of the major urban settlements of the south, is based on a variety of cultural and institutional capacities, which, however, do not individually realize a criticality, such as qualifying a defined pattern of development. It is therefore believed that a better suited planned strategy, set on a polycentric and specialized pattern of growth unified by cultural networks, can recover a higher level of social cohesion. In reference to the town economic planning, the tourist flow plays an influential role, which grew exponentially from 2004 to 2010. In fact, the increase in the cruise industry is estimated at 400% and the passenger traffic doubled [37]. However, these flows are registered as transient, because the accommodation offer does not succeed in maximizing the territorial potentiality, devaluing the attractiveness of cultural values that the ancient city of Palermo preserves. This problem can also be seen through the development of the second matrix, in which the most required sectorial aims are profitability by improving the city image and the increase of local services. The collective desires, which emerged from the evaluation process, idealize an accessible city in all its parts and imagine the port area as a dynamic place through which passengers and goods transit, but also as an opportunity for the development of local economies; the common goal is therefore to create a magnet area for citizens and tourists. Table 2 shows the matrix built taking into account the relationships between the alternative projects and the aims of the social actors, both gained from the analysis phase. The same matrix was proposed to all the social groups composed of the same number

of members, who gave back, according to the fuzzy metric, a quality scale of judgments to which has been linked the corresponding numeric value. The consequent matrix has been obtained with the computation of the average of all the crossover values and detects the desirability of a certain future vision. Looking at the little difference between the identity images and the welcoming district in opposition to the wide difference with the left alternatives, the investigated vision is the one which creates never-ending chances of exchange and usability of the waterfront.

Table 2. Matrix of “users’ choices”.

Alternative projects	Water district		Identity district		Productive district		Directional district		Welcoming district	
	Residential areas	Leisure spaces	Cultural and art studios	Exhibition areas	Industrial areas	Stocks of goods or heavy vehicles	Professional office and specialized facilities	Research centres	Recreational and commercial areas	Touristic structure and services
Profitability	0	0.1	0.7	0.6	1	0.25	0.8	0.7	1	0.85
Green spaces quality	0.1	0.75	0.6	0.3	0	0	0	0	0.9	0.7
Emission management	0.8	1	0.9	0.9	0	0	0.55	0.5	0.75	0.6
Entrepreneurial creativity	0	0.8	1	1	0	0	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.45
Exchange or dynamic places	0	0.85	1	1	0.2	0	0.3	0.85	0.8	0.9
Perception of local identity	0.3	0.5	1	1	0	0	0	0.3	0.5	0.7
Waste management	0.75	0.8	0.7	0.7	0	0	0.65	0.5	0.6	0.4
Usability	0.15	0.9	1	1	0	0	0.2	0.1	1	0.75
Growth employment	0	0.3	0.85	0.4	1	0.3	1	1	0.85	1
Safeguard public safety	1	0.8	0.9	0.75	0.1	0	0.3	0.45	0.7	0.8
District image	0.4	0.65	0.8	0.95	0	0	0.45	0.5	1	0.85
Stakeholders’ participation	0	0.2	0.9	0.85	0.4	0.15	0.3	0.5	0.9	0.6
Growth service	0	0.7	1	0.9	0.75	0.4	0.8	0.65	0.8	1
Traffic management	0.7	0.5	0.65	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6
Growth of social cohesiveness	0.3	0.7	1	0.8	0	0	0.25	0.4	0.75	0.8
Historical heritage management	0.75	0.8	0.8	0.85	0	0	0.3	0.35	0.7	0.7
Redevelopment area	0.6	0.8	1	0.9	0.2	0.15	0.7	0.6	0.9	0.8
Newly built area	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.35	0.3
Cultural and welcoming offer	0	0.8	0.9	1	0.1	0	0.7	0.6	0.9	1
	18.4		30.6		6.7		17.8		28.5	

The reuse as a “welcoming district” can emphasize the multicultural facing between the city and those who come from the sea, as well as being linked to the proper cruise functions. Furthermore, the welcoming district becomes for the visitor a foretaste of the “identity district”, consequently the two visions turn out to be perfectly combined. The reuse as an “identity district” exalts the community participation, the sense of one’s own roots and the social cohesion, generating “places of expression” where the citizens are able to show their own creativity and the users are stimulated to discover the

ancient urban signs regenerating the forgotten places of the whole city. In the end it results that the cultural heritage, from which follows the visual perception of the district, is recognized among the main territorial resources, so its valorization can effectively contribute to the economic growth.

Table 3 contains the overall assessment of each social group in correspondence to the alternative projects, returning the degree of agreement on the basis of a numerical value, which is obtained as the sum of the judgment expressed in respect of the observable criteria in Table 2.

If in the analytical phase the opinions expressed by the community were purely qualitative, at the conceptual stage we preferred to think of a fuzzy metric by which becomes intuitive a preference ranking of alternatives and the gap of each value with the resulting average.

It is possible to outline a hypothesis of social groups' coalition in respect to the proposed interventions that can be evaluated according to the gap between the values obtained. The prospect to coalesce happens in relation to only one alternative that is recognized as the solution of social compromise which corresponds also to the choice with the highest value of liking.

Table 3. Matrix of “equality”.

Alternative projects	Water district	Identity district	Productive district	Directional district	Welcoming district
University and research	21.1	29.6	4.1	21.4	28.9
Users and residents	19.1	32.7	5.1	14	25.9
Institutions	23.2	30.3	8.2	17.2	27.4
Economic promoters	12.5	26.3	12.4	16.8	27.5
Cultural promoters	16.1	34.1	3.7	19.6	32.8
	18.4	30.6	6.7	17.8	28.5

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis expressed in this study positions urban planning as a cultural project, which though, forming the basis of the transformation process, refers to the examination of a selected area, can be extended to the entire decision-making process of any urban site with high historical and cultural connotations. The analysed area is restricted to a size of the neighbourhood, and its particular interface position between the port and the historic city is one of the areas affected by the “waterfront liquid” project of the Strategic Plan “Palermo capital of the Euro Mediterranean area”. This paper shows how two different evaluation methods for planning and integrated conservation in the same area led to different future visions of the land transformation. The first part of the research focuses on the first method, evaluating the social survey that the municipal administration of Palermo has carried out for the preparation of the Strategic Plan.

What emerges from the first method is its selective nature, being directed to the main bodies and institutions of the city. In relation to the object area of our analysis, the municipal administration of Palermo proposes the future vision of the “water district” meant as the redevelopment of the existing buildings with the recovery of the industrial fabric to dedicate the settlement of the “creative class” and then of artists, designers and musicians, who could use the space as a residence, workshops and exhibition spaces, while the part closest to the sea, in harmony with the creative character of the

neighbourhood, contains the “City of the contemporary arts and innovation” that will serve as an engine of artistic production, music and multimedia for the city.

The research on the same area tests another evaluation method in support of urban planning, which increases the active role of stakeholders in terms of participation and access to the decision-making process of urban renewal strategies for Palermo to the Euro-Mediterranean. The cross-reading of the matrices from surveys on different social groups shows that the desirable alternative of urban transformation concerns the promotion of local identity to promote a tourism and a business based on traditional activities. The recovery of buildings becomes then an occasion of cultural encounter between the city and those coming from the sea, as well as a connection between purely functional cruise activities or transit passengers and cultural and traditional identities of the city. The survey carried out reveals a subtle inequality in the principles of the project process, where the purpose is not so much to attract the so-called “*creative class*”, offering to it social and infrastructural conditions that meet its needs, but to actively involve local people in the new creative economy, to make them participate, stimulating the *genius loci* and the appreciation of the culture.

The basic idea is to start “from the bottom”, considering a social stratum that until now has been hidden and for the first time has been entrusted by the opportunity to consider its work as growth in creative economy. The cultural investment as a creative city is a current challenge that many cities face, but we need to determine how and for how long the attraction force of the creative class will increase the global economy in regions such as Sicily, which, like many others in the south, suffers from serious social problems. We want to imagine a local development strategy where policies can meet various categories of social groups in the cultural projects and lead them to a city that can disseminate their “desires” and attitudes as art forms rooted in an organic way in the territory, but are unique in the world. “The use of art and culture coincides with a change in emphasis of regeneration strategies about considering people as primary assets through which the renewal can be achieved” [38]. Preserving the memory of cultural identity is realizable through the valorization of the existing heritage, such as a local resource with new socially identifiable and logically compatible functions.

“The new functions must be able not only to protect the identity of the good, but also to ensure a significant growth in economic and social values...” [39].

Knowing the preferences of the population and group information on those of the various stakeholders involved in decision-making becomes useful in the management of the Structural Funds made available by the European Union but also to carry out projects in partnership such as “*Interreg programmes*” of cross-border cooperation. In particular, the INTERREG MED 2007–2013 programme finances projects of transnational cooperation within the Mediterranean area, considering the exceptional cultural heritage of this area and its connection role with non-European countries bordering the Mediterranean. Its overall objective is to make the Mediterranean space a territory able to compete with the other international areas in order to allow the dynamic growth of the economy, create jobs and make the area attractive. One of the main changes introduced by the EU programming period 2007–2013 is the JESSICA [40] initiative, through which European cities are empowered to find and manage the resources for ambitious initiatives of urban transformation. The admissible investment to the JESSICA instruments are activities “such as: the strengthening of economic growth, the rehabilitation of the physical environment, the conversion of industrial wasteland, the protection

and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage, the promotion of entrepreneurship, the employment and development of local communities” [41].

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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