

Perceptions mapping: a participatory tool for urban conservation planning

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ABSTRACT: This paper departs from questioning the relationship between the everyday maker and the built environment. It thus, positions the human reflections and daily interactions with the cultural heritage in terms of human sensory experiences at the center of its empirical research. The process of perceptions mapping is a sense-making process during which people map what they feel their cultural, natural and human assets are; express their opinions, ideas, needs and aspirations but also; raise concerns and highlight conflicts related to the management, conservation and preservation of the cultural heritage for future generations. Departing from the perceptions, the collective memory of what a place was to the community arises. Likewise, diverging and/or converging perspectives emerge in reference to what it is today and above all, how the community would like it to be tomorrow.

1 INTRODUCTION

“Moving elements in a city, and in particular the people and their activities, are as important as the stationary physical parts... Most often, our perception of the city is not sustained, but rather partial fragmentary, mixed with other concerns. Nearly every sense is in operation, and the image is the composite of them all” (Lynch Kevin, 1960):2).

This article wishes to posit perceptions mapping as a participatory tool for probing the relationship between the everyday maker and the built environment. A tool that positions human preferences, reflections and daily interactions with the cultural heritage in terms of sensorial experiences (hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling), at the center of its empirical research. We would like thus, to postulate perceptions mapping as a sensemaking process ((Weick Karl E., 1995)) during which people map their cultural, natural and human assets; express and exchange their opinions, ideas, needs and aspirations but also raise concerns and highlight conflicts related to the management, conservation and preservation of the cultural heritage for future generations.

This article will resume the results of a one-year empirical research during which perceptions mapping was exploited for analyzing and visualizing “attributed values” based on individual/collective memory in relation to the perceived cultural heritage. Likewise, we will discuss the potential of perceptions mapping in capturing the diverging and/or converging perspectives in reference to what the cultural heritage represents today and above all, how some members of the community would like it to be tomorrow. Proceeding from this premise, we would like to put forward perceptions mapping as a two-folded tool; an ex-post reflection tool and a co-design medium. As an ex-post reflection tool, perceptions mapping demonstrated to be very handy. First, it facilitated the evaluation of previous urban

development projects. Secondly, it resuscitated and reinstated on the map some forgotten/erased intangible heritage assets alongside with the cherished tangible assets. Indeed, as per Lynch's ((Lynch Kevin, 1960):1) statement: *Every citizen has had long associations with some part of his city, and his image is soaked in memories and meanings*. The ex-post evaluation of urban conservation planning is done through a storytelling process during which sensations, feelings, individual and collective memories are materialized on a physical map. While as a co-design tool, perceptions mapping visualized and expressed people's projections and proposals in a participatory, amusing and user-friendly manner thanks to the embracement of the mapping methodology and icons developed by Map-it toolkit ((Dreessen, K. Huybrechts, L. Laureyssens, T. Shepers, S. & Baci, 2012)). Although some participants were skeptical about the review and maybe, the potential adoption of the maps by the authorities, the co-created maps are perceived as a tool for exercising agency. Architecture and planning intervene in the definition of daily space. The contribution of both disciplines to the socio-spatial transformation is above all linked to the "*social construction of reality*" (B(Peter L. Berger Thomas Luckmann, 1966)). Very often, in fact, the conceived space is out of the question ((Lefebvre, 2008): 33), and this is precisely the key to the relationship between the built environment and power. «*The more that the structures and representations of power can be embedded in the framework of everyday life, the less questionable they become and the more effectively they can work. This is what lends built form a prime role as ideology*» ((Dovey K., 1999):2). At the end of the day "*power comes from maps and it traverses the way maps are made*" ((Harley, 1989):12). In this regard, this article aims at speculating on how perceptions mapping could become a new tool for assessing the state of the art; measuring people's attributed values; and avoiding "cosmetic" consulting activities. A tool for orienting future urban conservation planning vs co-design.

2 SETTING THE SCENE

2.1 *The empirical research under the framework of H2020 project CLIC*

The perceptions mapping process, was carried out in tandem with a mapping process of the state of the art of the urban development process. The two processes (perceived and *de facto*) are conceived as requirements of the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach which is embedded in this research. Our research was performed under the framework of the H2020 CLIC project¹ and it involved three partner cities/region of the CLIC Consortium, namely: Rijeka in Croatia, Salerno in Italy and Vstra Götaland Region in Sweden.

In order to identify the multilayers and interconnections between the human, natural and cultural (tangible and intangible), international and local values present in our CLIC cities/region, the HUL approach was adopted. The documentation phase of the state of the art was structured in three different moments. Firstly, we asked our CLIC cities/region to provide us with data related to the urban

¹ This research has been developed under the framework of Horizon 2020 research project CLIC: Circular models Leveraging Investments in Cultural heritage adaptive reuse. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 776758.

component at the macro level (geological and topographic mapping, environmental mapping, regulation mapping, historical and cartographic mapping, mobility mapping and current land use mapping). Secondly, we asked our CLIC cities/region to provide us with data related to the heritage component at the meso level. In this phase, we agreed together on the boundaries and identification of the cultural heritage. Finally, CLIC cities/region were asked to provide us with data related to the selected sites for adaptive reuse at the micro level (characteristics of the cultural heritage, economic and management aspects, conservation status, potentials and constraints for its reuse, accessibility/ proximity, and existing ideas of adaptive reuse). Thanks to the richness of the collected data by CLIC partners in addition to extra field and desk research conducted by ICHEC's interns, we were able to map not just tangible and intangible heritage but also other cultural and natural assets, and how these are connected and spatially integrated.

In the production of space (1974), Lefebvre underlines the dialectic between the social construction of space and the of the everyday practice. For the French scholar, the concept of space is reflected as a means of production, but also as a product. Lefebvre depicts space as a social product, a means of social reproduction and control. Indeed, he posits that the production of space takes place through three spatial dimensions: "conceived space", "perceived space" and "lived space". The "conceived space" represents the technical language of design and spatial agent. While the "perceived space" provides the materials for the reproduction of a society, based on the daily spatial routines. Finally, the "lived space" is where the imagination tries to change and appropriate itself. According to him, the production of the "lived space" is the result of a struggle between appropriation and dispossession. Our aim here is to negotiate between the conceived (technical blueprint) and the perceived spaces (actual use of space) in order to help people reconnect with their memories and fulfil their desired/imagined space (the lived space).

Since people are an integral part of the city's ecosystem, the mapping state of the art had to be confronted and complemented with people's perceptions. As stated above, the UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape pays meticulous attention to "*perceptions and visual relationships*" and to "*the intangible dimensions of heritage as related to diversity and identity*". Considering that human interactions and sensorial experiences are an integral part of the *genius loci* of the place, perceptions mapping was deemed as a symbiotic part of the research. It is however fascinating to see how Lynch has already anticipated and framed this in the image of the city: "*Moving elements in a city, and in particular the people and their activities, are as important as the stationary physical parts... Most often, our perception of the city is not sustained, but rather partial fragmentary, mixed with other concerns. Nearly every sense is in operation, and the image is the composite of them all*" (Lynch Kevin, 1960):2). Our mapping process was focused on people's perceptions, opinions and feelings with regards to their cultural heritage. In designing the participatory methodology, the Faro Convention was also embedded. This convention emphasizes on the value of cultural heritage as assets for sustainable development and a better quality of life. The peculiarity of our choice is because the convention also highlights the importance of the *heritage community* as an empowered community that aspires to conserve and

safeguard these common goods for future generations ((Europe, 2005)). Our scope of investigation was to valorize the interactions between the human, and cultural heritage, alias, the values that make our cities unique and characteristic. Whilst the main objective of this mapping process was not only to capture this intimate interrelationship but also to provide a methodology for citizen's participation in evaluating and co-designing urban conservation plans.

During the perceptions mapping workshops, we learned that people's mental maps are composed of what they see, touch, odor, taste or hear in relation to the cultural heritage. These mental maps represented participants' spatial knowledge and interest in peculiar tangible and intangible assets. Basar describes beautifully what we experienced during the workshops: "*...everyone, whether educated in architecture or not, is affected by and has an effect upon the spaces they occupy: you are born somewhere (a house, a hospital) you live somewhere (a flat, a farm) and you die somewhere (a house, a hospital). Everyone is secretly, profoundly cultured about their built world, they just don't know it, yet*" ((Miessen M. and Basar S., 2006):32). Indeed, people from all walks of life were proactively engaged in describing scrupulously the uniqueness of their lived environment. Participants recalled single and collective memories and evoked foregone and unpredictable elements. At the end of the day, every person was proud and satisfied of his/her contribution.

As this research departs from the theoretical setting of the Historic Urban Landscape approach (HUL), and eventually contributes to the economic politics of the place, it is deemed important to explain such theoretical framework.

2.2 *Historic Urban Landscape*

In 2011, UNESCO adopted a recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) as a new approach to urban conservation which takes into consideration the interconnections between the multilayered values of the historic city; the human, cultural and natural assets ((UNESCO, 2011); (Bandarin and van Oers, 2012); (Bandarin and Van Oers, 2014); (Pereira Roders, 2019)).

"The historic urban landscape is the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of 'historic centre' or 'ensemble' to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting. This wider context includes notably the site's topography, geomorphology, hydrology and natural features, its built environment, both historic and contemporary, its infrastructures above and below ground, its open spaces and gardens, its land use patterns and spatial organization, perceptions and visual relationships, as well as all other elements of the urban structure. It also includes social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions of heritage as related to diversity and identity" ((UNESCO, 2011)).

This policy and planning tool builds on values related to the human interactions with the built and natural environment as well as communities' perceptions. It thus represents a holistic and integrated vision of the historic city. HUL applies an interdisciplinary investigation of the dynamic and relentlessly changing historic cities. It aims at preserving the integrity of historic, social and artistic values within a sustainable

development perspective ((Sophia Labadi, 2016); (Peter Bille Larsen, 2018); (Throsby, 2017)). According to the HUL approach, the distinctive values, aka the DNA of a place, should be considered as a prelude in the overall management and development of the city. In this sense, the HUL represents a new perspective of understanding the uniqueness of our lived environment. Under this framework, the spatial investigation identifies multidimensional layers through the tailored tools to the local context. This peculiar investigation, constitutes a richness of a breadth and depth that needs to be acknowledged and enhanced in the urban conservation and development plans.

Among such many layers, we could identify individual perspectives that contribute to the final HUL (geomorphology, hydrology, demography, economics, social, environmental, etc). Each of such perspectives suggests a state-of-the-art of the complex and holistic vision of the city, to which the outcomes from the perception mapping are eventually confronted.

As an example, we may assume that the economic perspective of the HUL is not a common linear one (from inputs to outputs), but an implicit circular process within which we reuse past resources, we adapt the reuse of a building into new, sustainable, and inclusive needs and urban uses, and at the end of the day we integrate conservation of cultural heritage within the Sustainable Development Goals.

In an urban context, the cultural heritage is composed of different categories. In order to map it, we first of all defined the boundaries of the spatial analysis. In each of our case-studies we defined three levels of urban analysis: the micro level (the building level), the meso level (the historic center) and the macro level (the entire city/municipality). Practically speaking in our case studies, for meso area, we refer to urban ensembles that include altogether, streets, blocks of buildings and public spaces impregnated with tangible and intangible assets, urban cultural and urban green assets.

The micro level was set by the cities/region when each designated between 1-3 immovable heritage for adaptive reuse. The meso and the macro level were drawn in close cooperation with our partner cities/region.

The mapped perceptions in relation to the cultural heritage took place within the meso level boundaries. Practically speaking, the meso level was represented by the historic centers of Rijeka and Salerno; and of four rural municipalities in the Region of Västmanland in Sweden, namely: Fengersfors, Forsvik, Gustavsfors and Strömsfors.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Lynch ((Lynch Kevin, 1960):8), *“an environmental image maybe analyzed into three components: identity, structure and meaning”*. Our investigation was based mainly on these three criteria with specific connotations related to our purpose of research. More specifically, Lynch linked identity to distinctive objects while we investigated identity in terms of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. We believe that the intrinsic value of these assets is the main attribute that triggers its “imageability”. Lynch ((Lynch Kevin, 1960):9) defines imageability as: *“that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observe. It is that shape,*

color, or arrangement which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment”.

The second criterion, structure, was defined by Lynch as the “*spatial or pattern relation of the object to the observer and to other objects*” ((Lynch Kevin, 1960):8). We applied the same concept to the spatial relation between the observer, the identified heritage assets, and other objects. The first relationship was investigated through the five senses. In this regard, participants set forth which sense(s) was related to their daily interaction with the heritage asset(s). While the second correlation was investigated through an evaluation of whether the asset in question represented a weakness, a threat, or an opportunity in relation to the lived environment. Finally, Lynch supposed that the observer attaches a practical or emotional meaning to the object. In this regard, three different assessments took place, firstly; we asked people to identify heritage value. Thus, what the perceived cultural heritage within the meso area meant for them. Secondly, we asked people to assign a color to their city and; lastly, people were asked to identify the most visited and liked routes.

The question related to the color was meant to assess how people were affected by the surrounding environment. By analyzing the interviews and visualizing the data we noticed that people attributed a color to the city in relation to their immediate surrounding environment, more specifically, within the interview area. Many people associated the color of the city to the color of buildings paint and/or stone, or a unique heritage especially in the cities. In the rural areas, the association was made in reference to the natural elements (fauna and flora). In some cases, the color of the city was associated to a feeling, a collective memory or a personal/family history anecdote. Although perceptions varied from one person to another, some dominant colors were recurrent either because of the geographic location of the interviewee during the interview, i.e. overlooking the sea, closeness to the forest, the history of the area, etc...or because of the unique character of the assets in the meso area, i.e. unique color of the stones, richness of industrial heritage, landmarks, distinctive architectural elements, local building materials, etc...

In our three cities/Region, the dominant colors pervaded the space. Blue in the coastal cities of Rijeka and Salerno was all over the place whilst green was prevailing in the four rural municipalities of Vastra Götaland.

Nonetheless, it was interesting to notice that some expressed colors represented the city’s changing urban narrative in terms of: new urban developments (positive/negative), demolishing/substituting or a reminder of past collective memories. Color is a distinctive characteristic of a city’s identity and it answers Lynch’s question ((Lynch Kevin, 1972)): “what time is this place” by unpacking the historical layers and values.

4 METHODOLOGY

Perceptions mapping was carried out in tandem in four partner building/cities/region of the CLIC project consortium: Rijeka (Croatia), Salerno (Italy), Pakhuis de Zwijger (Amsterdam, the Netherlands), and Vastra Götaland Region (Sweden). In Amsterdam, perceptions were mapped in relation to an industrial

heritage building, thus at the micro level. Since Pakhuis de Zwijger is a cultural dialogue platform and not a local authority, as in the case of the other three CLIC partners, the perceptions mapping process revolved around the building and its relationship with the surrounding environment.

As anticipated, before launching the perceptions mapping process in Rijeka, Salerno and Vastra Götaland Region, we defined with our partner CLIC cities/region three levels of urban analysis: micro (building level), meso (historic center level), and macro (city level/region). The following paragraph aims at elucidating the two-phase methodology which was developed and put into practice in order to capture people's perceptions, personal interconnections and sentiments in relation to the cultural heritage.

Four master's students were engaged to undertake an internship in Amsterdam, Rijeka, Salerno and Gothenburg (covering five case-studies in Vastra Götaland Region). Thanks to the support of our partner cities/region and related academic partner, the four collected data related to:

1-people's perceptions about their cultural heritage in the meso area through both random and ad-hoc interviews; and

2- the livability of the four cities/region through personal observations.

In order to articulate the perception mapping process, this study performed a structured review of the literature on Historic Urban Landscape ((UNESCO, 2011); (Bandarin and van Oers, 2012); (Bandarin and Van Oers, 2014); (Bolici, Gambaro and Giordano, 2017); (Santander, Garai-Olaun and Arana, 2018); (Pereira Roders, 2019)); Cultural capital ((BENHAMOU Françoise, 2012); (Ost Christian, 2016); (Ost Christian, 2019); (Throsby David, 2001); (Throsby David, 2002); (Throsby, 2017)); Cultural mapping ((UNESCO, 2009); (Pillai Janet, 2014); (Freitas, 2016); (Jeannotte, 2016); (Murray, 2017); (Savić, 2017); (Hossain and Barata, 2019)); Sensorial mapping ((Dubey A., Naik N., Parikh D., Raskar R., 2016); (Graezer B. F., Pedrazzini Y., Bordone L., Herrera L., 2017); (Hoekstra, 2019)); Co-design and participatory mapping ((Miessen M. and Basar S., 2006); (Dreessen, K. Huybrechts, L. Laureyssens, T. Shepers, S. & Baciu, 2012); (Naik N., Philipoom J., Raskar R., 2013); (Saleses, Schechtner and Hidalgo, 2013); Blake *et al.* 2017; (He S., Yoshimurab Y., Helferc J., Hackd G., Rattib C., 2018); (Reilly, Adamowski and John, 2018); (Gutierrez, 2019); (Nyseth, Ringholm and Agger, 2019)).

4.1 *Perceptions mapping: phase one*

In the case of Pakhuis de Zwijger phase one was carried out in June 2018, during the festival WeMakeTheCity² at Pakhuis de Zwijger. This mapping focused on people's perception about the building. For this purpose, a citizen dialogue kit was used. This smart toolkit which is developed by Research[x]Design, Department of Architecture of KU Leuven university, was specially tailored by Research[x]Design for our case, and used for polling. This first phase helped understanding people's perceptions about the heritage building and its relationship with the surrounding area. The visitors had to answer a number of questions according to their use and knowledge of the building. Three different

² <https://wemakethe.city/en/>

categories of visitors were identified and three ad-hoc screens were designed for: frequent visitors, Amsterdam citizens, first-time visitors.

Random and selected interviews were conducted in Rijeka, Salerno and Vastra Götaland Region. The sample aimed at representing people from all walks of life. The choice of random and specialized interviewees was envisioned to capture the diversity of perceptions, feelings and opinions about the quality of the lived environment through the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell). Open-ended questions (i.e. When you think of your lived environment, what are the cultural heritage elements (tangible and intangible) that shape the identity of this place and makes it unique?) were embedded in semi-structured questionnaires. The interviews had a duration between 30 minutes to one hour and it was conducted in person. The duration of the interview depended on:

- 1- the availability of the interviewee;
- 2-linguistic barriers (interviews were conducted in English. Simultaneous translation was available only in Italy);
- 3-level of knowledge and willingness to share insights and thoughts.

Moreover, the level of detail depended significantly on the aptitude of the interviewers to trigger interest and enable the communication and dialogue with the interviewee. Although language was a barrier, especially in Salerno, thanks to the meticulous work of our interns a number of interviews were conducted as follows: 15 interviews in Rijeka; 22 interviews in Salerno and 12 interviews in four locations in Vastra Götaland Region. A diversity of insights was captured and the sampling criterion applied to the selection of the interviewees was whether people were residing in and/or working in the meso area ((Saleh, R. & Ost, 2019)).

In their survey about the familiarity of Harvard square (Cambridge, MA), He *et al.*, ((He S., Yoshimurab Y., Helferc J., Hackd G., Rattib C., 2018)), demonstrated that “*the relationship between the spatial structure of the built environment and inhabitant’s memory of the city derives from their perceptual knowledge*”. Following the analysis of 394 samples (out of 3617) the scholars concluded that “*human activity patterns are the drivers of spatial knowledge, which in turn largely depends on temporal parameters*”. According to the authors, people who live and work in a specific area tend to be more familiar with the places. It is the frequency of visits that enriches people’s familiarity of places and thus capacity to mentally map them. Indeed, this was the driver behind interviewing people who either lived and/or worked in the meso area. For the sake of this research, we were interested in interacting and establishing an enduring relationship with people knowledgeable about their cultural heritage and capable of describing it. This is also because perceptions mapping was part of a long series of participatory meetings/workshops envisaged by CLIC called Heritage Innovation Partnerships (HIPs) ((Garzillo Cristina Gravagnuolo Antonia Ragozino Stefania, 2018)).

4.2 Perceptions mapping: Phase two

In Rijeka, Salerno and Vastra Götaland Region, phase two was carried out as a group interaction through a participatory workshop based on active listening, feedback, and reflection. The workshops had the duration of three hours and were conducted in the local language.

Phase one had paved the way towards understanding the urban texture in reference to people's perceptions. More importantly, it facilitated the introducing of contextualized examples during the interactive workshop. While phase two helped identify the cultural assets; threats and weaknesses; and future opportunities in terms of potential adaptive reuse opportunities. Hence, the perceptions mapping process embraced the paradigm shift (demand driven instead of market driven) and it thus, departed from and investigated the urban sustainable needs identified by the everyday makers. As a final result, every group produced a map of how they perceived their cultural heritage.

In the case of Pakhuis de Zwijger, phase two consisted of mapping people's perceptions regarding the impact of Pakhuis de Zwijger as a cultural heritage organization on the community/ies. Especially, the perception of its role as catalyst for participative urban innovation development. For this reason, 25 interviews were carried out with emphasis on the years 1935, 1980 and 2006. Needless to say that people's perceptions changed in each of these turning points of the building's history. A number of interviewees from the local authorities, academics and professional experts, expressed their perceptions in relation to Pakhuis de Zwijger governance module; its impact on the local community; and its future vision. Moreover, the local community was interviewed as well to map perceptions in relation to the role of Pakhuis de Zwijger and its relationship with the surrounding area and the community/ies.

For each of the partner city/region, data were collected thanks to the case-studies provided by the CLIC partner cities/region. Additional data was collected through the qualitative interviews and empirical observations during the one-month internships. Finally, the interactive workshop provided an unexpected wealth of data and human exchanges. A diverse range of data was collected also through informal conversations with the stakeholders' and civil servants at the workshop, during missions and or CLIC meetings and conferences in the partner cities/region.

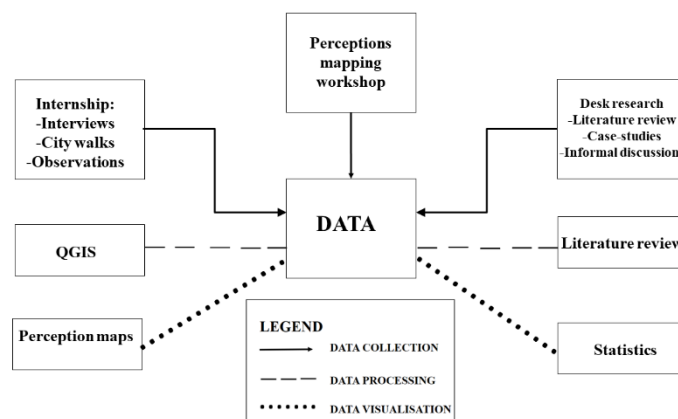


Figure 1. Perceptions mapping methodology. Source: (Saleh, R. & Ost, 2019)

The data analysis and elaboration was conducted in six steps and it took into consideration a number of variables:

- The first step was to quantify the perceived elements in every city at the meso level. In tandem, we quantified which sense (sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell) was used more for mapping the elements;
- The second step was to quantify the features that people attached to heritage;
- The third step was to geolocalise the attached color to the place and to draw the routes of the most liked itineraries and places;
- The fourth step was to quantify weaknesses and threats and delimit the bombed areas (conflictual buildings/ areas);
- The fifth step was to quantify the opportunities (how many elements were perceived as not in use or as underused with a potential for future reuse) and;
- The sixth step was to understand how to represent visually the data and how to develop a common but at the same time contextualized legends for Rijeka, Salerno, Fengersfors, Forsvik, Gustavsfors and Strömsfors.

The perceptions mapping workshop was inspired by the five senses methodology which was applied during the HUL workshops in Cuenca, Ecuador. After a thorough analysis of the process and results of this sensory methodology, we decided to adopt it and go beyond. Our added value consists of quantifying data and of visualizing perceptions in a representative and catchy way. We deem this sensory journey relevant because sometimes people feel at ease to express their personal experiences, opinions, thoughts and sentiments through sensations, gestures, observations, personal and collective memories and above all, through face to face interactions and eye contact. Indeed, in Cuenca, this sensory approach not only captured opinions, feelings and memories related to the lived environment but it has also induced to uttering hidden gems and beauty, potential, discomfort, fears and conflicts ((Pérez Rey Julia, Astudillo Sebastián, Siguencia Maria Eugenia, Forero Juliana, 2017)). This subjective feedback based on personal experiences and knowledge of the territory cannot be apprehended by an external expert or merely through desk research. Indeed, at the end of every perception mapping workshop, every group presented its final presentation. Although this took place at the end of the working day, participants were keen not only at presenting but also to listening to the other presentations and this was very enriching. Despite the fact that people took long time to present, almost every group brought up new issues and thus enhanced the discussion and research. The combination between the feedback from the interviews carried out by our interns and the interactive workshop helped us identify not only the perceived cultural heritage but also weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

In order to facilitate the mapping process. We used Map-it toolkit “*Map-it* is a hands-on tool used to plan, analyze and reconstruct past and future projects and spaces. It is a method to visualize a process in space and time, in a low-tech, open and flexible manner” ((Dreessen, K. Huybrechts, L. Laureyssens, T. Shepers, S. & Baciu, 2012)). This tool is designed by Luca School of Arts, Belgium, for participatory

cartography and conversation. Thanks to this playful tool, sensations were captured and face to face interactions were translated by virtue of the auxiliary icons. More importantly, some people who found it challenging to express articulated dissent in front of the public administration were intrigued by the idea of expressing oneself by colors and icons. Indeed, the bombs stickers were found playful but also powerful as a toll of negotiating power. Indeed, in Rijeka and Salerno some participants opted for the bigger sized bombs. The dissent and conflict utterance was faced differently in Gothenburg. Actually, two participants from Gustavsfors (Vastra Götaland Region) didn't feel at ease to bomb anything. According to them: "the place was too beautiful and no conflicts were to report". Lateral/bilateral discussions proved to be very useful and participants felt safe to express their opinions which resulted in a very collaborative co-creation process even between actors that they don't cooperate in everyday life. For example, in Salerno an impressive number of civil society organizations participated in the perceptions mapping workshop and although some had previous sensitivities they worked harmoniously together. Nonetheless, the unexpected result was that some organizations/associations started working and organizing events and projects together after this experience.

5 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

"In the development of the image, education in seeing will be quite as important as the reshaping of what is seen. Indeed, they together form a circular, or hopefully a spiral, process: visual education impelling the citizen to act upon his visual world, and this action causing him to see even more acutely. A highly developed art of urban design is linked to the creation of a critical and attentive audience. If art and audience grow together, then our cities will be a source of daily enjoyment to millions of their inhabitant" (Lynch Kevin, 1960):120).

Working in a historical building³ drenched with intangible memories provided the perfect crib for spurring imagination and stimulus. We also noticed that the use of a physical map contributed to enabling the participants to visualize their ideas, reflect on past and existing practices and design their desired space. Using a playful tool (Map-it) empowered the participants and made them feel at ease. It was interesting to notice how groups and individuals were attributing different values to icons such is like, dislike, danger, bombs, etc...Its worth noticing that after a while participants' felt confident to express oneself with an icon⁴.

The heritage elements which were visualized the most were of course the obvious ones and especially those related to the tangible heritage in people's surrounding environment. Nonetheless, Participants were invited to reflect on the intangible assets as well such as annual rituals or cultural events taking place in the streets of the city. For example: carnivals, processions, festivals, artistic manifestations,

³ The three perceptions mapping workshops took place in historical buildings

⁴ It was funny to remark that a participant from Rijeka managed to express her appreciation for receiving chocolate as a nice top up when her energy was starting to fall short with an icon.

storytelling and performing arts etc... These hints led people to identify places associated with the collective memory for example: the city beach which is not more accessible in Rijeka⁵ and Salerno⁶.

A significant added value came from the different age-ranges. As a matter of fact, older participants mapped intangible assets that the younger generation had never heard about. i.e. in Salerno forgotten intangible heritage was listed and verbally described by a couple of elder participants. The same happened in Rijeka for example when we were introduced to the craftsmanship of Kalafati⁷. The Kalafato, or master caulker, was a craftsman employed in shipbuilding and nautical maintenance. Several years of apprenticeship were needed to become a master caulker responsible for caulking ships and wooden boats. An interviewee spoke about the Rigo janći⁸, the cake that represents love and how Morčić, the black figure symbol of the city's carnival represents diversity⁹. Whereas the younger generation mapped current practices that are transforming the perceived space. For example, in Rijeka a participant spoke about an innovative high-tech umbrella designed by a local designer, the Kiša umbrella.

Moreover, in the cases of Rijeka and Salerno, having an external eye, a participant who lives in the city center but not originally from there, contributed to enriching the map with interesting insights and special elements that the locals took for granted. The outsider viewpoint gave a fresh and interesting input and triggered discussions around not previously valued elements.

The mapped intangible assets emphasized the uniqueness of every place. i.e. Rijeka was highlighted as the city of sounds: music, wind (different sounds according to topography), harbour, cranes, traffic, freight train.

The perceptions mapping helped emphasizing on the richness of the cities but also in pinpointing critical issues related to urban conservation and sustainability. In the sense, a lot of emphasis was put on traffic inside the historic centre and the incredible amount of moving/parked cars; architectural barriers; smog; the need of sustainable transport network and more green and open spaces; and the lack of maintenance of historic buildings. Weaknesses and threats were mapped not to denounce mismanagement but instead to use them as leverage to highlight strengths and opportunities. This is exactly where citizens' proposals came into play in order to provide space for pro-activeness and mobilize for collective benefit of the common good.

In Salerno, for a participant of the purple group¹⁰, the map represented a utopian space to be rediscovered. He took a picture of his group work and said: "Salerno che vorrei!" (Salerno which I

⁵ Currently it is an off-limit area and property of the Port authority.

⁶ Currently there is a commercial harbour there.

⁷ Calafati is a very old venetian craftsmanship. The Society for Mutual Assistance of Carpenters and Caulkers – *Società di Mutuo Soccorso fra Carpentieri e Calafati* – was founded in Venice in 1867. Source: <https://sanisepo.it/?lang=en> visited on 23/08/2019.

⁸ <https://www.total-croatia-news.com/lifestyle/27596-rigo-jancsi-a-cake-a-legend-a-forbidden-love>

⁹ http://www.visitrijeka.eu/All_about_Rijeka/Tales_from_Rijeka/Morcic

¹⁰ Participants were divided in groups of 5-7 participants. Each group was assigned a different color.

desire). The reason behind his exclamation is that he listed all the forgotten historical intangible memory and his group bombed the areas that, according to them, impacted negatively the quality of life in the historic centre. Interestingly enough, this sensation was anticipated by Lynch: *A good environmental image gives its possessor an important sense of emotional security. He can establish a harmonious relationship between himself and the outside world* ((Lynch Kevin, 1960):4).

Our main research gap is the lack of control over the representative sample. In our initial plan, a list of requirements related not only to spatial knowledge but also different backgrounds, age-ranges, equal gender representation, number of participants was developed. However, the final sample differed from one place to another. Moreover, due to language barrier, the number of interviewees was restricted. It would have been ideal to reach out to a larger sample in order to represent the pluralistic society in the decision-making process.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Perceptions mapping is a sense-making process during which people map what they feel their cultural, natural and human assets are; express their opinions, ideas, needs and aspirations but also; raise concerns and highlight conflicts related to the management, conservation and preservation of the cultural heritage for future generations.

When we initially asked the partner cities/region whether they had a list of intangible heritage the answer was negative. Nevertheless, despite the small sample size and meager resources, a large inventory of cultural heritage assets, especially intangibles were mapped. Perceptions mapping was applied as an ex-post reflection tool and a co-design medium. At the end of the process, the maps depicted a sensorial journey of people's sense of place. A collective storytelling of the myriad of spatial tangible and intangible identities. Weaknesses and threats were mapped not to denounce mismanagement but instead to use them as leverage to highlight strengths and opportunities. This is exactly where citizens' proposals came into play in order to provide space for pro-activeness and mobilize for collective benefit of the common good. Local citizens need to be engaged and their perceptions about their own heritage count. Indeed, the main idea behind perceptions mapping is to trigger critical reflection about cultural heritage. Different groups in society perceive cultural heritage weaknesses and threats differently and this participatory design process might lead people to start alternative conversations and practices and speculate on the way forward. Perceptions mapping aims at democratizing the design process and enabling participation and pitching of creative proposals. It encourages people to partake in the decision making, project planning and evaluation and thus to develop their own sense of community as heritage communities (Council of Europe, 2005). The ultimate objective is to design with the people, instead of for the people.

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