

Public-Private Dialogue In The Cultural Reuse Of Historical And Architectural Heritage: The Example Of The Carmine Monastery In Italy

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The paper wants to present and analyze an example of the application of the Special Public Private Partnership (SPPP) as a specific instrument introduced by the Italian legislation to favor the reuse of immovable cultural heritage for cultural purposes, thanks to the definition of “alliances” between public bodies and private subjects.

The case study analyzed concerns the process of reuse for cultural purposes of the former Monastero del Carmine, a complex structure of particular historical and architectural value located in the historical center of the city of Bergamo (Italy).

Built starting from the second half of the 14th century, the former Monastery experienced a long phase of decay and abandonment from the 18th century until the second half of the 20th century when, with the transfer of ownership to the municipal administration, some structural and functional recovery works were started. In the gradual reuse of this important place for the city, the theater company of the Teatro tascabile di Bergamo - Accademia delle Forme Sceniche (TTB) played a significant role.

To achieve the objective of this paper and to better investigate the case study, in addition to the analysis of the technical-administrative documentation concerning the complex process of reuse of the building (in particular since the arrival of TTB), it was decided to conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants. Specifically, various subjects were involved who, with different roles, interests and responsibilities, participated, directly or indirectly, in the reuse process of the Ex Monastery and, in particular, in the application of the Special Public Private Partnership. The interviewees were selected to ensure a certain diversity in their belonging to different professional categories (e.g. the promoters of the TTB process, the external collaborators who subsequently managed the development of the project and the redevelopment works of the building, the members of the association that provided consultancy for the application of the Special Public Private Partnership, the referents of the Municipality of Bergamo who were involved in the management of relations with the TTB and the private companies that financed, and continue to support, the project).

Each interview (lasting between 45 and 60 minutes), starting from a framework of questions previously sent to the subjects and grouped according to specific themes, was carefully transcribed and then analyzed. The analysis and interpretation, based on codes and categories derived from the adoption of an inductive approach, thus brought out themes of interest directly from the collected data.

The contribution intends to present and critically analyze the application of the SPPP in the reuse process of the former Monastero del Carmine, emphasizing:

The meanings given to the theme of culture in the context of the decisions taken and consequent of the interventions implemented;

The conditionings determined by the various actors directly or indirectly involved in the initiative (concerning role, purpose, professional background, etc.);

The importance, in this particular context, of phased planning and the activation of permanent and temporary projects;

How the SPPP can be adapted to the historical, architectural, and locational characteristics of the former Monastery;

The benefits and criticalities that emerged in all phases for applying an “conceptual” and general tool to a complex context.

In the analyses conducted, particular attention was paid to the complex’s historical importance and architectural complexity to understand what role these played in the building’s reuse for cultural purposes. The contribution therefore aims to provide an example of public-private collaboration, highlighting both the potential and the most critical aspects, to promote reflection on new models of governance of the disused cultural heritage, in Italy, but not only.

Keywords : Public-private Partnership, Abandoned place , Cultural Heritage, Restoration , Common good