

CULTURAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AMONG THE PROJECT OF CONSERVATION, ENHANCEMENT AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES' IDENTITY

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Abstract. The safeguarding of cultural heritage and, specifically, architectural heritage, as an expression of cultural identity, means the defense, as the Faro Convention argues, of human rights and is part of the concept of democracy. Therefore, there is a need for a collective participation in its protection and enhancement which concerns not only the governing bodies but also the communities that identify themselves in cultural heritage (Faro Convention, 2005). Governments have, in fact, the duty to interface with communities guaranteeing them the care of everything that can help to create "understanding, identity, cohesion and creativity". It is evident that the extreme difficulty of implementing this process is answered by adopting all the most suitable tools for safeguarding the cultural good itself (Treccani, Item: Identità). The idea of protection is linked to the awareness that cultural heritage, and the architectural one, belongs to every people and this assertion assumes that it is not really the people, but the government is the guarantor of the people who take in care the protection of the goods which is awarded with universal value.

Keywords: Cultural heritage, Conservation, Identity, Stakeholders

Introduction. Government and the local community must create, working together, new opportunities for heritage conservation. These opportunities are expressed through the understanding of the identity of communities, and in the building of opportunities for knowledge, training and jobs.

In fact, the conservation and transmission to the future of architectural heritage is grafted onto a production process that provides for the formation and creation of a specific labour market with technologies and specializations that, on the one hand, open up new opportunities of work, on the other hand it accentuates the responsibility of the communities as a whole and in the singularity of its components.

Safeguarding architectural heritage, therefore, cannot be left to the conscience and initiative of the local community alone. The synergy of the government and the community itself must create the opportunity for a creative approach that overcomes the passivity of safeguarding, protecting and enhancing what it is recognized as heritage. Architectural heritage needs conservation in order to transfer it to the future generations.

This means that it is necessary to apply all the knowledge, the technologies and the methodologies useful to conserve it, in its physical consistency because the objects themselves, the goods have the value of document expression of culture and with symbolic value. Nowadays more than in the past, cultural heritage, and specifically, architectural heritage, seems to represent and make tangible the concept of identity.

The architecture can be the image of identity, defining identity as the consciousness of ourselves: from the philosophical point of view the term is generally indicating the equality of an object with respect to itself. Any expression of architecture can become heritage as part of cultural when the society recognizes its value important for its (of the society) identity.

From the anthropological point of view, as Fabietti argues (in the development of this paper, all the English translations of the Italian quotations are under the responsibility of the author): "*the idea of belonging to a collective self and the idea of being who we are as individuals both refer back to what is usually called identity*" (Fabietti, 2010). Architecture, in any time and any geographical region, can bring the idea of identity throughout its historical value as well as recognized by the community.

The social denotation of the community can be defined as a: "*collectivity within which members share most or all of their activities, developing intense interpersonal relationships, or collectivity that shares a portion of territory for its daily activities. The dichotomy between community and society was introduced by F. Tönnies: community would represent a form of coexistence based on a feeling of belonging and a fusion of individual wills resulting from the perceived similarity of each individual with respect to others; society, on the other hand, would be characterized by a greater division of roles and thus a greater perception of*

individual differences, and within it, it would be contract and exchange that would provide social cohesion” (Treccani, Item: Comunità).

As the government and the individuals, the community is called to pay attention to the architecture and architectural heritage.

These three dimensions as levels of stakeholders cannot be distinct: the focus on their intersection is one of the aims of the research in restoration and conservation considering not only the technical issue but also the need to recognize the conservation/restoration of cultural heritage as flywheel for the society and the economy.

Heritage, and the architectural one, is part of common goods set. In this paper the central question is not to speak about the role of the economics on the quest of the common goods but in which way the different levels of the three stakeholders can enter inside the management, that is also restoration, and conservation, of architectural heritage: *“The quest for the common good takes as its starting point our well-being behind the veil of ignorance. It does not prejudge solutions and has no criteria other than the collective interest. It allows the private use of goods for the well-being of individuals, but not their abuse at the expense of others.³ Take for the example the idea of the commons, the goods that, behind the veil of ignorance, must for reasons of equity belong to everyone: water, air, biodiversity, cultural heritage, the planet, or the beauty of a landscape. These goods belong to everyone, but are ultimately consumed by individuals. They can be enjoyed by all of us to the extent that my consumption does not infringe on yours (this is also true of knowledge, public street lighting, or national defense)”* (Tirole, 2017).

The role of the stakeholders in the new conservation perspective. In order to introduce the topics, could be interesting to offer a short excursus and schematic exposition about the restoration and conservation from the XIX up to XXI centuries. The schemes are referring to the Italian approach to restoration versus conservation: this approach could be adopted as representative of a more general question connected with the management of memories (starting from its national definition, up to the individual one), monuments and architectural heritage along the time. The generalization is due by the fact that in the Italian restoration approach it is possible to have a very wide view on cultural heritage safeguarding for the variety of the typologies of goods and for the management policies opportunities.

If we consider the number of stakeholders in the safeguarding and restoration/conservation process, it is possible to see their incrementation along the time due by two main and general factors: the increasing (and changing) of the typologies of the goods and the enhancement of the actors involved in the processes.

The increasing of heritage goods number depends on different factors, also considering the opening of the view, from the only one monument to the historic centers.

In Europe and, after in Italy, the interest to the question of the conservation of the monuments in the historic centers and of the historic centers themselves, started by the raising of the attention in the urban management, in order to ensure the health to the population. The question arose meanwhile Europe was managing its re-construction connected with the re-building of their geo-political design and the improvement of the city life of the population in the moment of transition from an agricultural economy to the industrial one, at the end of the XIX century. After, the Second World War and the re-construction introduced a new attention to the urban planning, the architectural design and the architectural heritage conception.

The demolitions of parts of the cities, to improve the health of the population conceiving new urban plans, provided an opportunity to rethink the architectural heritage made up not only of isolated buildings (monuments) but sets of building with great historical significance.

Thus, the horizon formed by the cultural heritage, composed of a building bearing the memory of a society, came to be broadened (Carbonara, 1997; Guerra, monumenti, ricostruzione, 2011; Offese di guerra, 2011; Monumenti alla guerra, 2008; Italia moderna, 1983).

The changes inside economies and the social asset started from the Sixties of the Twentieth century and are at the base of a different idea of heritage.

In particular, the encounter of new cultures, brought to different places by the needs of the movements of peoples and societies in search of new jobs and new ways of living, in a movement that Bauman (Bauman, 2000) might call *liquid* and that goes far beyond the concept of colonialism, has involved the need to confront other social systems and other cultures, cultures that have determined their cultural heritage.

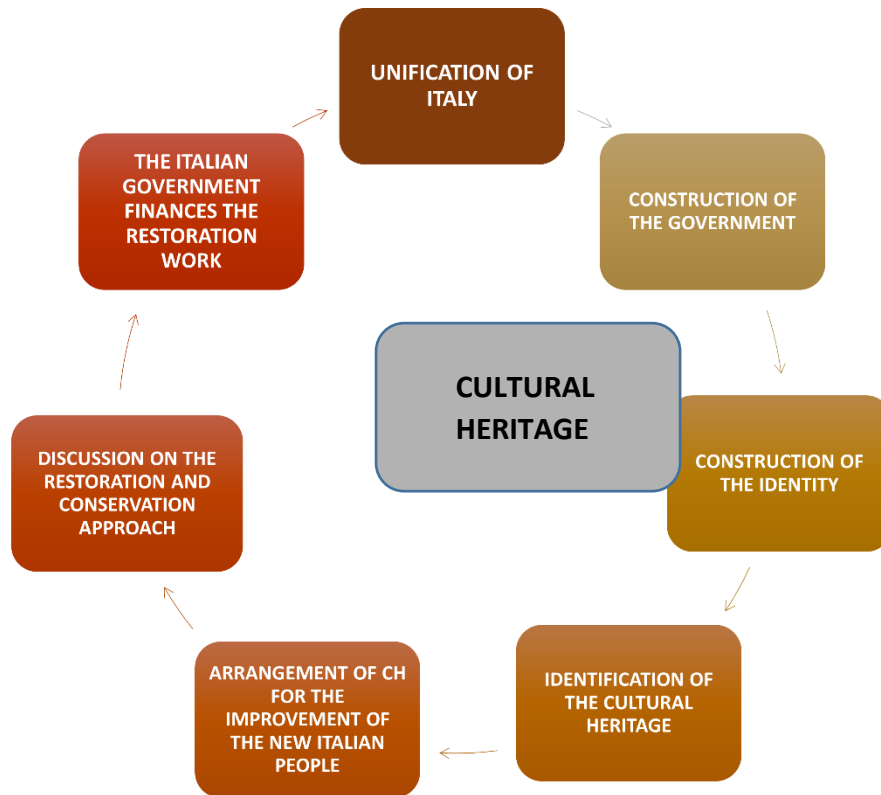


Figure 1. Restoration in Italy- 1861-1930 about

Communities, therefore, and not just governments, have become active players in recognizing and safeguarding cultural heritage. The trend today is for them to work together, not only on a cultural level but also on the level of management and distribution of responsibilities, both from the point of view of their preservation and maintenance and from the point of view of economic financing. This new perception of cultural heritage has led to the need to consider it not just as an imposed expression, even if for educational (when not ideological) purposes, but as a shared choice of heritage (just think of the places of memory described by Pierre Nora (Nora, 1984-1992) or the places of the heart promoted by the FAI - Fondo Ambiente Italia - 1975) in which the historicity of the element cannot lose its significance.

The heritage, therefore, becomes a common good and document of whose historicity traces remain in the material.

Conservation of material, therefore, means handing down all the historical traces that identify a specific cultural context. As a document, material must be preserved (with the technologies possible) and not changed. Architecture, if in the state of ruins, should not be reconstructed, in order to avoid a counterfeit but, in order to reuse it, it should be completed leaving the additions evident.

The action of handing down history to the future should not involve the re-construction of the property, which is made very difficult by the fact that we almost never have certain and useful information for reconstruction and that in any case we cannot revive the now-lost building material.

In fact, the history of restoration is full of episodes of "as it was, where it was" reconstruction.

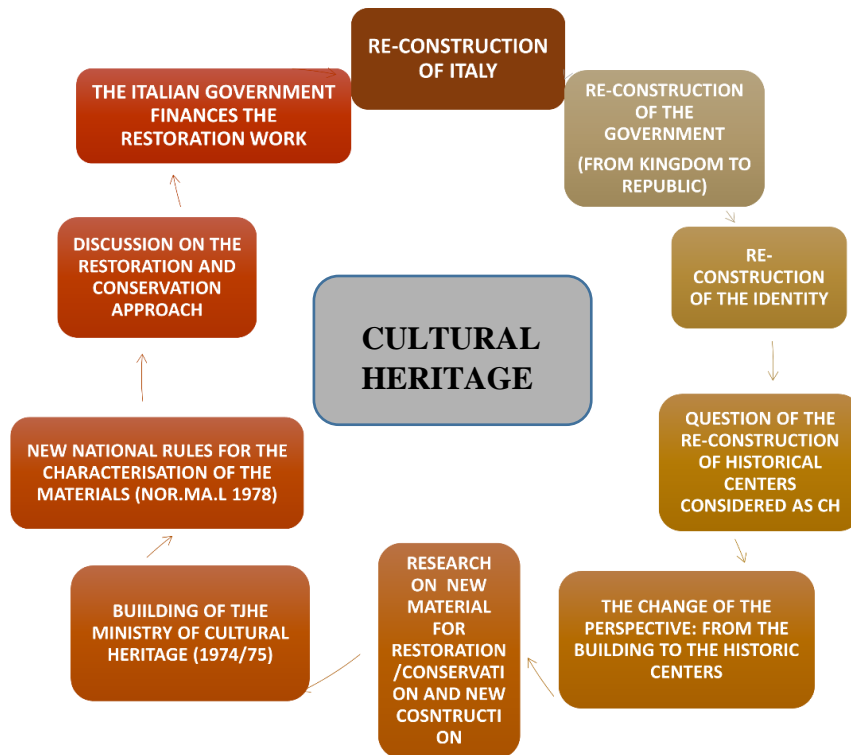


Figure 2.

After the second world war up to 2000 according to the Italian law on the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage – code for cultural heritage and landscape 2004

And Italy itself presents many important examples of these kinds of re-construction, improved in order to build and re-build the national identity with an educational meaning. In Italy, the selection of monuments chosen by the scientific community on behalf of the government immediately after the Unification, particularly with educational functions had, as a consequence, the tendency of their mimetic reconstruction in the face of their loss, particularly if partial (sometimes even total).

Different fates, however, have been suffered by the reconstruction of historic centers where, after the destruction due to the war, it was necessary to defend against building speculation.

At that moment it was necessary to have a new approach in re-building historic centers, balancing the intervention between the re-construction and new buildings out of scale and totally against the historical and aesthetic values of the centers itself.

Speaking in general terms, it is possible to think of places of war as different from one another if one changes the perspective from which one looks at the place. And the perspectives can be multiple.

A superficial glance makes us perceive all places, after their destruction, to be more or less the same, but if we change our perspective, all these places are not the same at all.

The perception of those who see their lost 'things' is certainly different from that of those who have offended and from that of those who watch the event from very far away, as from another country in a different social and economic situation. The perception becomes more complicated if the contenders have different ideological interests.

We have to start with the meaning of cultural heritage and why it is necessary to talk about its preservation and the need to transmit it. The preservation of memory is a necessity that everyone tries to respect. But how can architecture contribute to the recovery of memory?

Obviously, one must define to whom one wants to refer memory, that is, for whom one wants to preserve and pass on the objects that generate memory as remembrance.

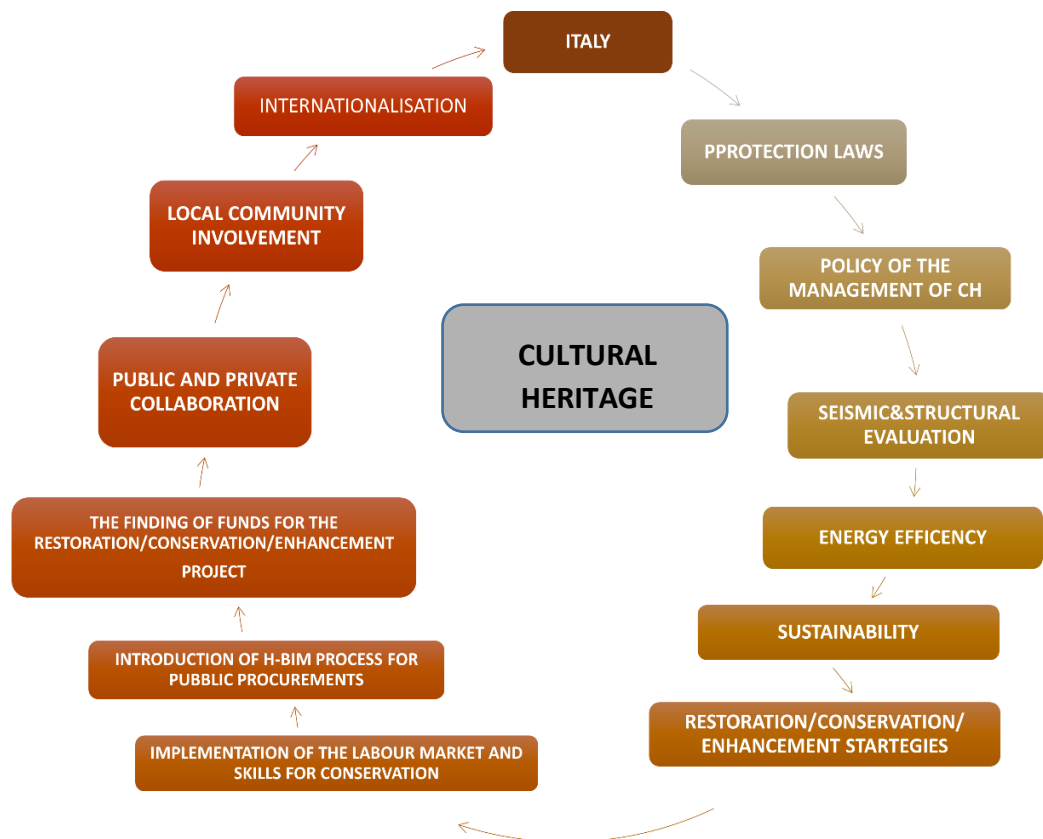


Figure 3.

Italian conservation management nowadays

Memory, says Barbara Spinelli, must be 'alive'. with the capacity to function for the community, having a trigger capacity from below rather than from above (Spinelli, 2001). That is, memory must be for the community and generated by the community with the complicity of the governing bodies, and not for the community but generated by the governing bodies, often for demagogic purposes. Memory, particularly collective memory, is the result of a construction, often carried out at table, that intends to channel memory in a certain direction. Induced and non-accidental destruction also moves in this direction. In the past and through the preservation of the past, the identity of a country is built. The activity of architectural restoration (the so-called restoration of monuments) conducted on Italian territory from the time of its Unification and, it can be said, up to the reconstruction after the Second World War, served precisely the purpose of fixing, in educational terms, the national identity.

For different reasons, the community, during that time span of almost one hundred years, has been passively involved in the protection and restoration of historic buildings. A different awareness induces a different participation of communities, understood as active stakeholders, who should be able not only to recognise the value but to become involved in their protection. Actions such as “I luoghi del cuore” (“The places of heart”), as it was already said, since 1975, have the aim of raising awareness of citizens and institutions on the issue of landscape protection and artistic and environmental heritage bear witness to this.

As Pierre Nora states: “*Our interest in lieux de memoire where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn-but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists. There are lieux de memoire, sites of memory, because there are no longer milieux de memoire, real environments of memory*” (Nora, 1989).

Memory and historical reconstruction end up being contradictory. Always according to Pierre Nora: “*Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and*

appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past” (Nora, 1989).

The moment something falls into ruin, one must speak of a loss of memory or a loss of history. More specifically: the destruction of an existing object, perhaps with symbolic value, is meant to destroy a piece of history or a piece of memory. The complex relationship between memory and history can also flow into the concept of historical memory, understood as a “*process, ..., sometimes personal sometimes collective, which builds, fundamentally through remembrance, community and individual paths in giving recognition to one's perceptions and experience” (Treccani, Item: Memoria storica).*

The idea of common good connected with the conservation project. As Tirole states: “*The quest for the common good therefore involves constructing institutions to reconcile, as far as possible, the interests of the individual with the general interest. From this perspective, the market economy is not an end in itself. At most, it is an instrument –and an imperfect one at that –when we consider how to align the common interest and the private interests of individuals, social groups, and nations” (Tirole, 2017).*

Cultural heritage is a common good able to bring wellbeing because can lead benefit and profit to the society. From this point of view, which is the role of a private body in the conservation of cultural heritage as a common good?

It is possible to distinguish two roles:

- 1) as backer or sponsor
- 2a) as local community as manager of goods and
- 2b) as consumer and beneficiary of goods.

The community, as expression of a specific social and economic local and regional context, must be the manager of goods if it wants to play a role of a good beneficiary of goods.

In this last case, it is necessary to refer to the Faro Convention: “*a heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.” (art. 2-b)*

The involvement of people in the choice of their places of memory, recognized as cultural heritage, is one of the practices implemented for a sustainable development, in compliance with the 2030 Agenda which reaffirms the need to obtain guaranteed assistance for all (Transforming our world, resolution, 2015).

The way of combining conservation design, understood as respect for existing material and the addition of ever recognisable and removable additions, with issues related to the common good emerges from the fact that “*cultural heritage also plays a role with respect to many other public policies beyond culture, potentially contributing to policy objectives for regional development, social cohesion, agriculture, maritime affairs, environment, tourism, education, the digital agenda and research and innovation. On the other hand, each of these policy areas can in turn have an impact on cultural heritage. The Conclusions call on both the Member States and the European Commission to recognise and fully develop the potential of cultural heritage” (Patrimonio culturale come bene comune, 2014).*

Trying to transfer conservation of the architectural heritage, even if it is in ruins, into practice, starting from the idea of common goods, and adopting the assertion suggested in the above sentence by the International Conference “*Patrimonio culturale come bene comune. Verso una governance partecipativa del patrimonio culturale nel terzo millennio (Cultural heritage as a common good. Towards a participatory governance of cultural heritage in the third millennium)” held in Turin in 2014, it is necessary to consider the act of heritage conservation not only as a cultural fact *stricto sensu*, but also as a factor that can have an important impact on the social and economic structure of a given context.*

In the case, for example, of the completion of ruins for reuse, we move towards the use of new forms and materials.

This presupposes that, alongside the ability to know and conserve the existing material of the object, it is also necessary to know new technologies and new materials that are compatible with the existing (which may be more or less ancient but is always historicised).

This offers the possibility of expanding the labour market, offering new opportunities beyond the *traditional* use of *traditional* building materials.

All these questions in the light of a careful reflection on the reuse of the architectural good.

The use of an architectural good is a crucial and can happen very often that it is necessary to change it for different reasons, due to cultural, social, economic changes, or even structural and safety problems.

This change of use must not modify the understanding of the original asset, nor the sense of its history, which can be read on the signs that time leaves on it as it passes (to quote Ruskin).

In order to better understand the motivations that lead to the use of a good in one way rather than another (provided that this use is not constrained), an attempt has been made to link the teaching of architectural heritage conservation to that of applied economics in the training of architects at the Politecnico di Milano. The contribution of economic science is important in order to assess what the impact, on a social and economic level precisely, of a choice of use can be.

This assessment must be conducted because the restoration, conservation and reuse interventions have a cost that is, in any case, passed on to society.

Restoration, both rebuilding and conservation, has a cost of implementation and a cost of maintenance. The adaptation of a building to new uses requires a very thorough analysis of the architectural heritage, and its reuse project must not fail.

The analysis of social and economic conditions must offer the tools to guide this intervention and reuse project.

One of the cases investigated at Politecnico di Milano with students, at the kind suggestion by Professor Sabina Hajiyeva and by Professor Gulchora Mammadova, Rector of the AZUAc University (hosting the conference to which this article refers) are the ruins of the Seven Churches, a very important cultural place in Azerbaijan.

Reference is made to the complex of the Seven churches in the Lelit-Kötüklü a municipality in the Qakh Rayon, region in the northern part of Azerbaijan. The period of construction of the complex is from V-VI centuries up to XI-XII centuries (Mammadova and Hajiyeva, 2013). This is a system of a ruined religious site of which the monastery part is not visible.

The challenge was not to rebuilt but to preserve it, in line with the Italian school of conservation, and to define an alternative function to that of orthodox churches, also considering that the ruins are located in a predominantly Muslim country.

Once it had been established, through social and economic analyses, that the museum and recreational use might seem most congenial, the project sought to propose solutions that would not encroach on the existing structures and would make them readable at all times, both for what remains above ground and for what is not yet visible because it is underground.

Conclusion. Through the very important example of the Monastery of the Seven Churches, an attempt was made to test a design approach that, based on empirical data, could offer useful parameters to guide the choice of reuse project, conceiving the restoration project as aimed at the conservation of the existing and absolutely distinguishable additions.

The focus on the economy and society on a regional scale helps to understand the needs of the local community and thus offers the possibility of activating their effective involvement in the asset recovery phase.

Cultural and architectural heritage has and maintains a strong identity value. Local communities can become important actors in the process of recognising this value. Working alongside the government as stakeholders in the asset, they can guarantee not only the architectural heritage survival, but also its maintenance and preservation in the future.

Seven Churches Monastery Complex, Azerbaijan

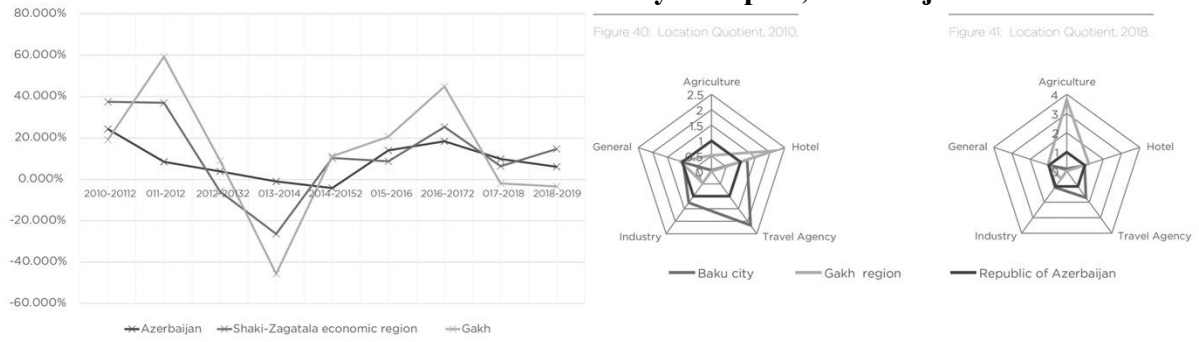


Figure 42: LQ of the Hotel Sector.

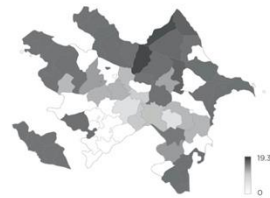


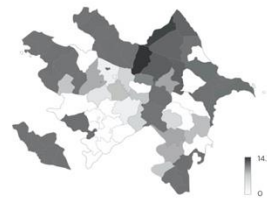
Figure 43: LQ of the Agriculture Sector.



Figure 44: LQ of the Industry Sector.



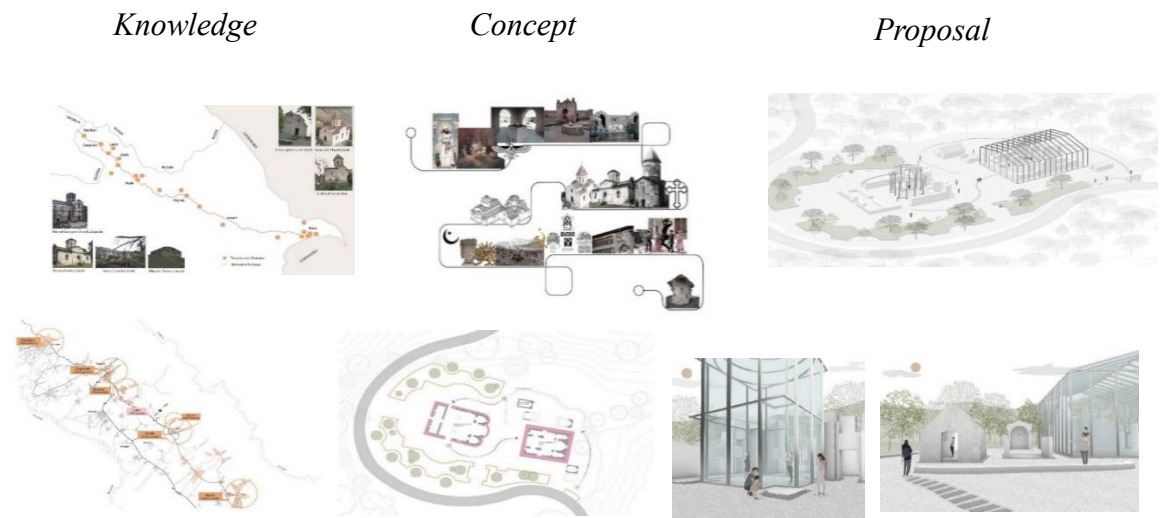
Figure 45: LQ of the General Sector.



Students: Daria Sachek, Burakcan Gökhan, Yiğit Boğaçhan Perk under the supervision of prof. C. Lenzi (applied economy) and prof. N. Lombardini (restoration)

Figure 4. Graphics related to the social-economic analyses of the region of the Seven Churches (students: Daria Sachek, Burakcan Gökhan, Yiğit Boğaçhan Perk with prof. C. Lenzi)

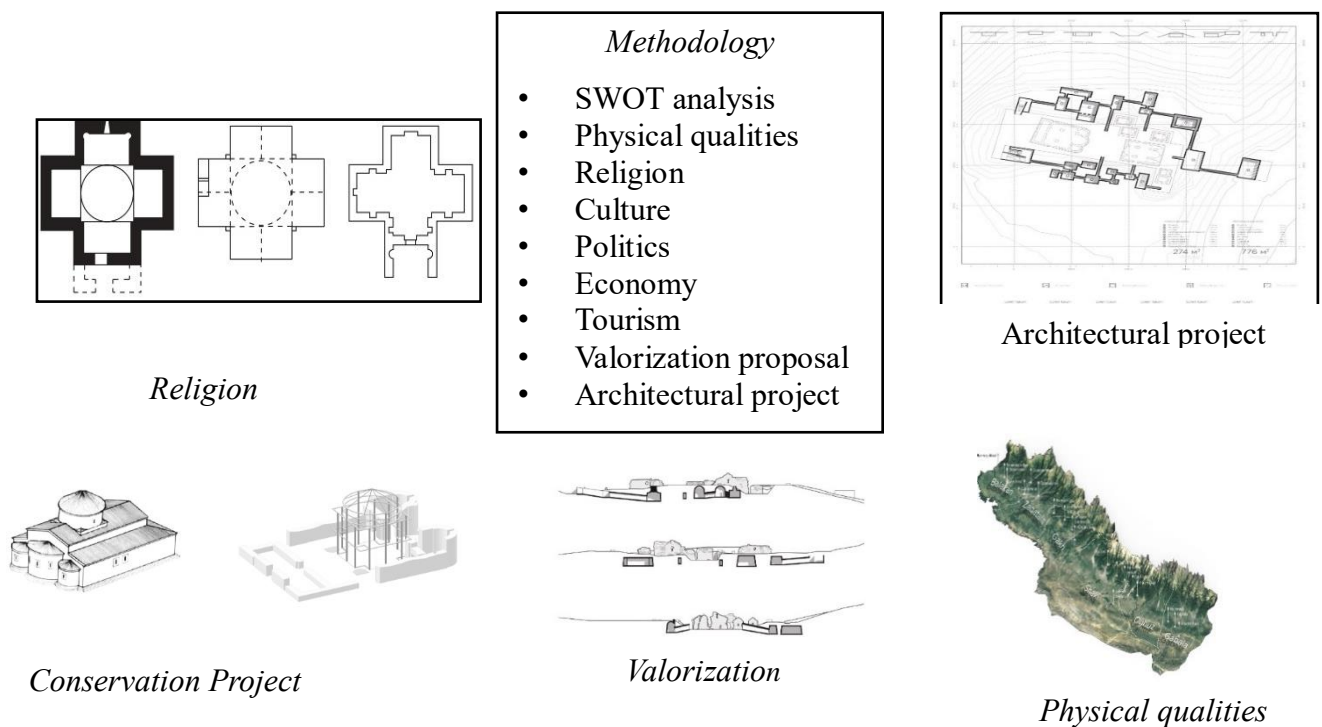
Seven Churches Monastery Complex, Azerbaijan



Students: Anita Damanshoko, Sina Kazemirashid, Shivi Jindal, Ranjana Siva

Figure 5. Enhancement project, connected with the social and economic analyses (students: Anita Damanshoko, Sina Kazemirashid, Shivi Jindal, Ranjana Siva with Prof. N. Lombardini)

Seven Churches Monastery Complex, Azerbaijan



Students: Daria Sachek, Burakcan Gökhan, Yiğit Boğaçhan Perk

Figure 6. Enhancement project, connected with the social and economic analyses (students: Daria Sachek, Burakcan Gökhan, Yiğit Boğaçhan Perk with prof. N. Lombardini)

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