Places of Tourist Attraction: Planning Sustainable Fruition by Preserving Place Identity

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Abstract—Massive use of places with strong tourist attraction with the consequent possibility of losing place-identity produces harmful effects on cities and their users. In order to mitigate this risk, areas close to such places can be identified so as to widen the visitor’s range of action and offer alternative activities integrated with the main site. The cultural places and appropriate activities can be identified using a method of analysis and design able to trace the identity of the places, their characteristics and potential, and to provide a sustainable improvement. The aim of this work is to propose PlaceMaker as a method of urban analysis and design which both detects elements that do not feature in traditional mapping and which constitute the contemporary identity of the places, and identifies appropriate project interventions. Two final complex maps – the first of analysis and the second of design – respectively represent the identity of places and project interventions. In order to illustrate the method’s potential; the results of the experimentation carried out in the Trevi-Pantheon route in Rome and the appropriate interventions to decongest the area are illustrated.

Keywords—Place-identity, PlaceMaker method, sustainable fruition, tourist attractions.

I. INTRODUCTION

ANTHROPIC risk posed by places of strong tourist attraction represents a hazard for cultural heritage and the area in which it is located. Massive use of these sites with the potential loss of place identity produces harmful effect on cities and their users [1]. Several elements cause anthropic risk and are not easily identifiable due to the dynamic and often uncontrollable character of phenomena linked to the presence of humans [2]-[4]. The main factors which contribute to such risk are demographic dynamics, tourist pressure and susceptibility to theft; to these factors several activities are linked which also contribute to anthropic pressure and influence the environmental and cultural quality of places. This study mainly concerns the effects resulting from a huge human load caused by an increasing tourist flow concentrated in some focal points, namely heritage sites which due to their undoubted beauty and to intense area marketing operations, could become subject to the risk of gradual damage. In order to mitigate the risk, areas close to these sites can be identified so as to expand the visitor’s range of action and offer alternative activities integrated with the main site. The purpose is to distribute the main site over a wider area, with activities closely connected to the site so as to decongest it. The cultural places and appropriate activities can be identified using a method of analysis and design able to trace the identity of the places, their potential, problems and qualities, and to provide a sustainable and integrated use [5]-[9]. The identification of elements that constitute the identity of a site, understood as a fundamental element of cultural heritage, permits a complex reading of a place within a territory and, at the same time, allows an interpretation of its meaning and value not only for the purposes of its stewardship and enhancement, but also its design and reconstruction [10]-[13]. Present-day studies in the field of human risk have rarely focused on questions linked to place identity, probably due to the difficulties in obtaining objective results. Starting from this premise, this work aims to propose the PlaceMaker method of urban analysis and design, developed by the author in the context of a broader research under an agreement between the Italian National Research Council (CNR) and the Urban Design and Planning Department of the University of Naples Federico II and for a specific CNR project. PlaceMaker is a method to analysing and designing the urban landscape which both detects elements that do not feature in traditional mapping and which constitute the contemporary identity of places, and identifies appropriate project interventions [14]. The main products are two final complex maps, one first of analysis and one of design, which represent the place-identity and project interventions in order both to establish a dialogue with local people and support planners and administrators in the sustainable construction and transformation of the city. By way of example, we outline the results of the experiment carried out in the Trevi-Pantheon area in Rome. The information collected during the phases of analysis constitutes the basis for constructing orientations for sustainable planning of de-congestion measures. Place-identity will be considered the fundamental resource for sensitive stewardship and enhancement of the cultural heritage in the study-area.

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II. THE PLACE MAKER METHOD OF ANALYSIS AND DESIGN

PlaceMaker method comprises eight phases – five of analysis [15] and three of design – and a Phase 0 that consists in constructing the grid required for the operations which are to be implemented later. The different types of database have to be created to contain the different types of data collected: there are data from anticipatory analysis (sketches, poems, collages, etc...); the denominative and perceptive (through words), the graphical (signs and symbols), the photographic (fixed images), video (moving images) surveys; the elements deduced from the study of traditional planimetrics (graphic signs, symbols etc...); the questionnaire administered to visitors to the places in question (sketches, words, etc...). It is necessary to decide the categories of elements to analyze, which are particularly connected to the urban events identified above, and the corresponding measurement parameters. Moreover, it is necessary to establish which days are the most significant and the most appropriate time slices for surveys. The first phase of PlaceMaker is devoted to anticipatory analysis aimed at a primary investigation of places; after the preliminary choice of the city and of the part(s) to be analyzed, the ideas about that particular area can be described using any type of instrument or tool of expression, using the information known prior to the first inspection. These notes can be represented in different ways and the result of this phase will be a map of the emerging ideas. The second phase is that of the five surveys. The first, the denominative one, consists in collecting data regarding constructed elements (presence of monuments, buildings, etc.), natural elements (presence of urban green areas, trees, animals etc.), transportation mode (presence or transit of cars, buses etc.), people (presence of tourists, residents, etc.). The localization of all these elements and the kind and amount, expressed as a low, medium or high percentage, are indicated. As well as the denominative data base there is a cognitive one which constitutes a kind of flexible input, where it is possible to insert elements which are not decided previously, but deduced during inspection. The second relief is perceptive; a survey is carried out of the smell, sound, taste, touch and visual sensations, and of the global perception, focusing on the localization, type, amount (present in low, medium, high percentage) and quality (non-influential, pleasant, annoying). The survey of the amount and quality of the data, the three options regarding, respectively, the percentage of presence and the feelings induced, are intended to summarise the processing of data that can however be extended during collection. The next survey is graphical: it consists in sketching the places; the sketches will represent the area in question according to a visual-perceptive standpoint and will be supported by annotations where necessary. This operation constitutes a preliminary study for the construction of the graphical symbols for the complex map. Photographic and video surveys of the whole study area are carried out, taking care to record facts rather than an interpretation of the places. The product of the five reliefs is a map visualizing the results obtained from the different surveys. The third phase involves the analysis of traditional cartography of the selected sites in the city. The types of maps used in this phase derive from different disciplines and depend on the nature of the place; the study is carried out at the urban scale, in order to identify the characteristic elements and their relationships with that particular area, and at the areal scale, in order to identify the relationships between the site and the whole city. The result of this phase is a map identifying the components required for the site description that can be found only through a traditional planimetric reading. The fourth phase is that of the questionnaire administered to visitors to the area in order to gain an idea of the place as perceived by those who are not involved in the study and are not specialists in related fields, but only perceive the site as users, at various levels: the inhabitant, the passer-by, the tourist. The questionnaire consists of questions asked on the basis of images of the area or an inspection visit with the interviewee. The information deduced from the questionnaire is transferred onto a map that, like the previous ones, will constitute the basis for the construction of the complex map. The fifth phase is that of assembling the collected information. In this phase, we test the maps produced, the congruence of the various collected data, and choose the useful elements to construct the final map. The recorded data represent the basis for the construction of the graphical system of symbols to represent the elements of the urban landscape and the elaboration of the complex map of analysis. We then have three design phases. The sixth phase is devoted to surveying identity resources in the study area. During this phase, the complex map of analysis drawn up with the PlaceMaker method is used as a basis to detect the resources available for the project. The sixth phase is realized through three measures. The first is the identification of the identity potential, namely of the elements of the complex map which characterize the area in question in order to recognize those which may assume a focal role in the project. In this respect, both the comprehensive presence of a specific type of element (e.g. how many points of visual perceptions are present) and the quantity measured for each of them (e.g. such an element is assigned a certain size of symbol depending on its visual importance: namely medium size=presence of a given element in a medium percentage). Then there is the second action where the identity problems are highlighted. The activities are devoted to observing places in the complex map with the presence of unsustainable elements and annoying points of perception. With the aim of identifying these places the relationship among the different elements in the map need to be observed. An element may be sustainable in itself, for example a shop which sells typical products; but the presence of several of them may create a site with a concentration of businesses which is unsustainable with respect to place-identity. The goal is to understand the impact of people, things and activities and relative issues. The third action is the survey of identity quality. The actions to be performed here involve noting places within the complex map of analysis with the presence of sustainable elements and
III. EXPERIMENTATION

The PlaceMaker method was conceived in 2001 and has been regularly updated since its pilot case-studies started in 2002 in urban sites in Europe and elsewhere [16].

In order to study the urban identity of places, the areas selected are mostly of historical importance and at all events highly representative of the city and of its changes, alterations and redesign. The main users to whom the method and the complex maps are addressed are urban designers and planners, and administrators, while a simplified form of the complex map is addressed to local citizens, place users and visitors. The experiment below was carried out in the framework of the research project “Sustainable enhancement and fruition of Cultural Heritage: incidence and monitoring of anthropic factors” of the National Research Council Institute for the Conservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage in Rome. The Trevi-Pantheon route in Rome, which is affected by an intense flow of mass tourism, may risk to damage the identity of the place in question. In this case, the PlaceMaker method was used as a tool both for analysing tourist impact on identity of this site and for a sustainable redistribution of activities and tourist itineraries. In this regard, we outline below the main results of the method and the complex maps both of analysis and design.

A. The Complex Map of Analysis

The most striking overall finding in constructing the complex map (Fig. 1) of the Trevi-Pantheon route is that the identity of this area can be seen as porous. These places constitute a porous urban structure which is able to absorb elements of various kinds. As it is deduced from the denominative and perceptive relief (second phase) and the traditional analysis (third phase), this is probably why with the passage of time different strata of urban fabric, buildings, commercial outlets whether temporary or permanent, people of different cultures have become superimposed. It emerges as a non-rigid urban structure, spongy, ready to receive but without filtering. The route links two major monuments located in two piazzas, Piazza della Rotonda and Piazza Trevi, and we might characterise it as a (musical) piece of the city which leads from the sacred (point) to the profane (counterpoint). The most significant break along the route comes in Piazza di Pietra which in historical terms is no less important, but which has to some extent escaped the magnetism of a tourist, cultural and commercial attraction. In spite of its impressive appearance the Hadrianeum is less of a tourist pull, probably on account of its current function as Chamber of Commerce, so that passers-by may pause here briefly but then go on to visit other monuments. It is the only place among those analysed where the respondents referred to the beauty of the overall scenario, perhaps because it is the only place that is not crowded and where one can get an idea of the scene as a whole. By contrast, the break represented by Via del Corso is merely an interruption rather than a change in pace on the route. The streets linking the piazzas constitute a sort of recurrent motif with similar characteristics. Via di Pietra, Via dei Pastini, Via delle Muratte are primarily thoroughfares with several possibilities for eating and souvenir shopping. Along the sides the paving is in porphyry and down the centre special paving has been laid for the blind. There are also some modern steles made of burnished metal which recount the history of this route of Hadrian in Italian, English and Braille, with a plan of the itinerary (see the map symbols indicating the steles and special paving for the blind). In some points there are graffiti on the facades. The most striking perception of the whole area is the noise of the water cascading in the Trevi fountain (see the map symbols indicating sound perception). This inevitably elicits an emotional response in visitors, at the expense of other perceptions as observed by some respondents (fourth phase).
Fig. 1 The complex map of the analysis
Even before you reach Piazza di Trevi, you catch sight of the scenic Trevi fountain in white marble with ramps and the statue of “Ocean” as its centrepiece. The fountain is built against one side of a building. There are flights of ramps both inside and outside, giving different perspectives and encouraging people to linger.

Walking into the piazza you feel you are taking part in a scene or an event rather than merely arriving somewhere. The scene is made up of the spectacular fountain but also the enormous quantity of people (see the map symbols indicating transient sound perceptions). Not only characterises the piazza and adds to the overall scenario but becomes a place of socialization for many visitors and tourists. The steps around the fountain encourage many visitors to pause or stop for lunch, photographing the fountain and the Pantheon or reading a guidebook or feeding the pigeons. The ground floor of the buildings is occupied by bars and restaurants with outdoor tables that are always thronged with people. One of the restaurants emanates the unmistakable smell of fast food, while smells of food and coffee colour the atmosphere. A grocer’s selling local products on one side of the piazza attracts many tourists. In spite of the large throughput, the overall pace here is moderate and tranquil (see the map symbols indicating pace). The urban décor comprises old-style street lighting, litter bins and round metal bollards marking off the concourse; the paving, in small porphyry cubes, slopes at different angles and makes for a pleasant tactile perception.

These then are the main elements to have emerged from the PlaceMaker complex map of analysis to be borne in mind in attempting to reduce congestion in the area.

**B. The Complex Map of the Identity Project**

Analysis and the relative complex map with PlaceMaker indicated the basic elements and critical features in the area, and how to go about enhancing and using it in a sustainable fashion, creating a high quality public space.

Thanks to the survey of elements which are both objective and perceptive, permanent and transient, we can recognise a twofold anthropic load on this route, the physical and emotive one. The problem is not the mere concentration of mass tourism that affects many areas of cultural interest. Here visitors find themselves emotionally involved, and this must be a fundamental consideration in any operation promoting enhancement and sustainable use. Other two fundamental issues underlay the project phases and the entire experiments: the complexity of analysing sites with a deep-rooted historical identity, and the massive presence of tourism, currently on the increase in all heritage sites, creating overcrowding, chaos and gradual degradation not only for the works of art but also for the image of these sites. The PlaceMaker method enables us to identify their deep structure, and the elements, places and monuments of interest, adopting both traditional maps and on-site reconnaissance using various kinds of map surveys. Hence the complex map of identity project (Fig.2) was achieved by identifying elements which characterize place-identity as well as observing the number of them, both with respect to the percentages of each element and to the number of elements of each kind that are present. Identity resources were identified through observation of: potential; places with a presence of non-sustainable elements and annoying perceptions; places with a presence of sustainable elements and pleasing perceptions (sixth phase). Various interesting features of the whole route are not immediately apparent. The streets linking the three monuments are regarded merely as thoroughfares in spite of the presence of...
of places rather than the virtualizing are some of the interventions which, if duly explained below. And finally, we highlighted the project the responses provided supported the hypothesis of the project explained below. And finally, we highlighted the project interventions to be made to allow for sustainable enhancement and fruition and mitigate anthropic risk (eighth phase). Differentiating and restoring, slowing down, introducing vegetation, denoting and giving identity to what is transitory, virtualizing are some of the interventions which, if duly integrated, should prove beneficial. One might well start from the differentiation of routes and activities. This might involve: creating different linking routes between the monuments of the Pantheon and the Trevi fountain: a short route (Hadrianeum) and a longer one featuring the stratification of the urban fabric as well as the monuments; creating alternative routes focusing on the elements of perception. This solution may well prove both educational and sustainable: it would show visitors how pleasing perceptions can be easily blotted out by unpleasant ones. Thus one could introduce routes featuring the sound of water playing in the fountains, the ancient materials found along the route, admiring religious icons, buildings, churches, architectural features which pass unobserved in a hasty visit, sampling local produce, breathing in the scent of Rome; restoring the route for the blind, perhaps adding other perceptions; creating integrated historical-cultural-perception routes meeting specific requisites. The activities might include restoring handicrafts producing local products, including high-quality goods, so as to reduce the commercial confusion in these streets and rescue vanishing skills. Furthermore, we suggest the design of a coordinated project for shop signs and windows, above all as regards the streets which connect the squares. In this way, re-designing the critical points would ensure greater balance in the set-up of spaces and organisation of the various activities, it would act as a dissuader to additional fast food outlets and would pressurise those already in place to conform.

A second intervention designed to reduce the excessive physical and emotional load is the creation of breaks, to be introduced in: Piazza di Pietra, the only true moment of relaxation, where one might build – for example – a little conceptual garden, also serving an educational function, where people can pause and indulge their perceptions and then proceed, in the central space of the Hadrianeum; the Galleria in Santa Maria in Via, currently under-used, not strictly on the route but close by, could serve as a break with the inclusion of exhibitions, featuring the route of Hadrian for example, and other functions. A third intervention involves the introduction of vegetation, currently lacking in the area: in a small garden in Piazza di Pietra; in small well-defined spaces, for example at the start of Via delle Muratte, and also close by the study area such as at the end of Via del Seminario (parallel to Via di Pietra) in Piazza Sant’Ignazio. A fourth intervention consists in giving identity to what is transitory by: creating lightweight multifunctional structures to be introduced at the focal points of monuments and street commerce, variable in extension and dimension, opening and closing, where artists, hawkers, living statues and others can create their own fluid spaces within a dynamic, light grid which nonetheless constitutes a framework. This form of urban décor can be equipped for various functions including multimedia.
Fig. 2 The complex map of the identity project

**Legend**

- **Differentiating and Restoring Routes**
  1. Creating different linking routes between the monuments of the Pantheon and the Trevi fountain to learn about the stratification of the urban fabric as well as the monuments.
  2. Creating integrated historical, cultural, and perception routes meeting specific requisites, with information about the history and identity of the places.
  3. Restoring the route for the blind, also adding other perceptions.

- **Differentiating and Restoring Activities**
  1. Differentiating activities
  2. Restoring handcrafts producing local products, including high-quality goods.
  3. Coordinating shop signs and windows.

- **Making More Natural**
  Introduction of vegetation in a small garden in Piazza di Pietra; in small well-defined spaces, for example at the start of Via della Marmora, and also close by the study area such as at the end of Via del Seminario and in Piazza San'Urbano.

- **Virtualizing Graffiti**
  Developing an equipped pavement which allows the creation of virtual graphic signs which may visualize visitor footprints.

- **Virtualizing the Path**
  Creating multimedia guides with multimedia texts and maps to orient visitors towards alternative and personalized routes.

- **Giving Identity to What Is Transitory**
  Creating lightweight multifunctional structures to be introduced at the focal points of monuments and street commerce, where artists, hawkers, living statues, and others can create their own fluid and dynamic spaces.
A fifth intervention involves virtualizing the graffiti and the path. In the first case at some points, where there are more graffiti and the historical pavement has been replaced by a recent one, a special pavement could be inserted which allows the creation of virtual graphic signs which may visualize the footprints of visitors.

In the second case it involves going on line with the creation of multimedia guides. The various routes can be presented and made more user friendly by means of multimedia guides via satellites accessible for example from cell phones. In this way visitors can be oriented towards alternative personalised routes which they can follow with the help of multimedia texts and maps.

IV. OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This paper illustrated the method of urban analysis and design - elaborated by the author - called PlaceMaker and the case-study of the Trevi-Pantheon area in Rome in order to establish the current identity of such places and issues of anthropic risk. The complex maps with the PlaceMaker method indicated the basic elements and critical features in the area, and how to go about enhancing and using it in a sustainable fashion, creating a high-quality public space.

The proposed method allowed us to pinpoint some significant elements. The difficulties noted in the first phase were associated with the choice of the most suitable means of expression to represent expectations: in this phase, we are led to think that the type of observations made is vague and does not make much sense. It was interesting to note at the end of the analytical process just how these comments can come in useful for understanding the place. The imagery associated with the study area is very extensive, since the piazzas and monuments are very famous. In such cases it is important to view them from unconventional perspectives. The gathering of data for this phase of PlaceMaker can involve sketches, ideas jotted down, collages or any other means of expression considered opportune. In order to facilitate the transformation of the elements and places in the study area into symbols, it is better to choose a single means of expression for each analysis, which in this case was the written word.

In the second and fourth phases of analysis, attention must always focus on collecting data obtained from the specific tool used for each survey and not from logical deductions or previous knowledge of the place. We noted that different types of surveys and interviews of visitors should preferably be carried out in parallel in order to obtain results that can be compared and superimposed.

The most time-consuming parts of the surveys were those covering the senses of smell and touch. In these cases we worked on the basis of comparison and deduction, describing and measuring these elements of perception partly by approximation and partly in relation to other senses such as sight and hearing. The sense of taste offered no particular stimuli. We feel that the vagueness of results obtained for the above senses does not substantially impair analysis, because final perception of the place was provided by the sum of perceptions and not by any single one, unless one perception is so strong as to outweigh all the others: in such a case, in view of its exceptional nature, it is actually simpler to note and measure it.

The third phase involved some difficulties in terms of the choice of elements to be noted. We decided to implement it after the survey phase to avoid being influenced by knowledge of the ground plan; but this meant we had to take care to interpret traditional cartography objectively, without letting ourselves be influenced by the reading of the site obtained from field surveys. In a historical centre like Rome there are any number of monuments and places of interest and it is difficult to decide whether to take note of all of them or only those which seem to be more closely related to place-identity.

With regard to the interviews in the fourth phase, great care was taken to ensure that the questions were suited to the place in question, but at the same time comprehensible to all: they must not be too specific or specialised, but be suitable for passers-by, tourists and residents alike. As in other pilot projects, however much trouble is taken over the type of questionnaire, this aspect of PlaceMaker entailed various unknowns owing to the reactions of individuals. There are places where people are more willing to spend time answering a questionnaire, such as tourist attractions or other particularly agreeable sites, and others where people are primarily intent on getting to work and thus have little time or wish to respond. In this particular case everyone was quite willing to answer. It was interesting that the question “Can you compare this area to another area in Rome or in another city?” elicited answers including the Colosseum and all sorts of places throughout Europe and America, denoting a certain confusion among some tourists. However, although it did provide interesting data, the type and number of interviewees must be tested and classified more systematically and with greater accuracy in order to obtain more complete results.

As regards the complex map of analysis, the difficulty encountered in this part of the analysis concerns the synthetic, reasoned use of the several different types of data available and the maps, and their transformation into straightforward graphic symbols. To check the congruency of data collected there is need for constant comparison with data of the same type collected from the expectation analysis, from analysis of traditional cartographic material and from field surveys, and also from data collected by the various tools used. We noted that the areas where we found the greatest information inconsistencies were urban areas where new facts or critical situations had occurred: these are the areas of greatest interest for the purposes of analysis.

It is also important to build up a complex map which, while containing all the essential information, is not overcrowded with data and is clearly legible, and has a suitable legend showing how each symbol corresponds to the concrete contents. In the case of the symbols created for this place in particular, we sought to focus on just a few elements considered interesting for the proposed objects. For example...
the symbol relating to a marked concentration of people was
initially assimilated to the traditional symbol for a place of
socialization. But it was then realised that a sizeable
concentration of people does not necessarily imply such a
place. Subsequently, we decided to create a specific symbol
for a trade location selling souvenirs because this does indeed
characterise this route, in particular concerning souvenirs
which have nothing to do with Rome, representing a singular
anomaly. Finally the symbols created for paving and the steles
marking the route for the blind indicate a special route linking
the Trevi fountain and the Pantheon.

With respect to the sixth phase, the observation of identity
resources is an essential step because the results of this phase
allows us to set the second questionnaire for place users and
then draw up the complex map of design. It is important that
the three actions which characterize this phase are realized
separately. Indeed, while the identification of potential
resources leads to the knowledge of quality sites, whose use is
currently either sustainable or non sustainable, the
identification of problems shows only the places with issues
just as the identification of qualities resources shows only the
places of good quality. By overlaying the results of these three
actions we may truly understand the resources available for
the project.

With respect to the questionnaire of project (seventh
phase), it can be composed in different ways and depends, in
contrast to that of analysis, in particular on the results of the
sixth phase. The questionnaire, in this case was composed of a
greater number of questions (12) than that of the analysis (9),
requiring more time for answers, and was preceded by a brief
explanation of its purpose. As a positive point, some of the interviewees
not only gave a simple answer but also established a conversation on the subjects in question, often
comparing the place concerned to their place of origin. The
problems in this case line in the fact that it is difficult to ask
questions along the way, but one can only administer them in
the two main squares – Piazza della Rotonda and Piazza Trevi
–, namely where people stop. In contrast, in Piazza di Pietra,
where there is the Hadrianeum, few people stop and for little
time, making it difficult to find people to interview.

There was no need to explain the concept of identity of
places, clear to all respondents. One may notice a certain
difference between the answers given by respondents of
Italian nationality and those of other nationalities. While the
former have mostly observed the effects of mass tourism, the
latter only detected the presence of too many people. Hardly
no one noticed the presence of the modern stele which recount
the history of the route of Hadrian.

Finally, in the last phase devoted to the construction of the
complex map of design it is considered that the synthesis
carried out to represent the project interventions is quite
effective. A further consideration may be based on the degree
of detail of interventions to be proposed. In the case-study of
Rome for example, while some interventions are quite simply
imaginable, in the case of others, such as the creation of
structures for mobile urban furniture, more detail is required to
allow better comprehension.

REFERENCES


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