

Professor Fabio Donato (1969–2023), contributions to the European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy

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It is with deep sadness that the European Network on Cultural Management and Policy ENCATC, mourns the loss of Professor Fabio Donato. The ENCATC community has lost a visionary researcher, a respected and loved colleague, a friend, a mentor.

Our community already misses Fabio's warm heart, vibrant personality, and extraordinary professionalism. His presence will remain forever in ENCATC. This e-book is intended to be a moment to remember his thoughts, thank him for his contribution, and emphasize how his legacy can stimulate the international scientific community to continue reflecting on the issues he held dear.

The diverse appearance of papers – in terms of formatting – in this compilation e-book is explained because of the different moments in the journal's history in which the papers were originally published. As such, readers navigating through the compilation encounter diverse formats, which imbues the compilation with a rich, historical texture, allowing readers to experience the passage of time through the evolving lens of document design.

**On behalf of the European Network on Cultural Management and Policy
ENCATC**

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In Memoriam: Professor Fabio Donato (1969–2023)

Gerald Lidstone¹, Gianna Lia Cogliandro Beyens² and
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KEYWORDS

Fabio Donato, cultural and creative ecosystems, models of governance and management in the cultural and creative sector, cultural heritage networks, cultural policy, cultural tourism, in memoriam

The communities of researchers and academics in cultural management and policy remain shocked and saddened by the recent passing of Professor Fabio Donato (26.07.1969–15.10.2023), a renowned academic and beloved colleague, friend, and father.

Professor Donato was an internationally recognized academic and researcher in arts and cultural management. Over the years, his commitment and dedication have significantly contributed to the theoretical and scientific discussion within the cultural and creative sector and to policy-making and decision-making on research and innovation at the European level.

Educated at the University of Pisa (Italy), Fabio Donato has worked since 2001 for the Department of Economics and Management of the University of Ferrara (Italy), where he became a full professor in 2007. Within the University of Ferrara, he held various roles, including Director of the Ferrara International School on Culture, Innovation, and Sustainable Development (2008–2011), Director of the Doctoral School in Humanities and Society at the University of Ferrara (2009–2013), Deputy-Director of the Department of Economics and Management and Director of the MuSeC—Master in Cultural Management together with Prof. Anna Maria Visser (2005–2017). During his career, he has authored around 100 scientific contributions. After an initial interest in the management of public services, Fabio focused mainly on studying the cultural and creative sectors. In Italy, he has been among the main advocates of the application of managerial approaches to cultural heritage, promoting and studying the introduction and evolution of performance measurement systems applied to cultural heritage organizations. His contribution to the theoretical and professional discussion in this field was instrumental in promoting the need for a collaborative, ecosystem, and holistic approach to the cultural and creative field, which could foster dialogue, civic participation, and collaboration between the various actors operating in the cultural and creative subsectors and beyond. These issues have become key themes in political and academic discussions in the following years and are still highly topical.

This e-book collects his contributions published in the EJCMP, which he co-founded in 2011, which represent the evolution of his thinking over the last decade. In his article “*The Financial Crisis and its Impact on the Current Models of Governance and Management of the Cultural Sector in Europe*” (published in 2011 in the first volume and issue of the journal and co-written with Prof. Lluís Bonet), he invites us to interpret

the 2008 financial and economic crisis as an opportunity to rethink the governance systems and management models of the cultural sector, in a “meso” (territorial) perspective, open to the various local stakeholders and based on the logic of collaboration and creation of territorial systems.

The “multiscale” approach, proposed in much of Fabio’s production, is visible in the concept of cultural ecosystem and his focus on cultural networks (as in the paper “*Developing local cultural networks: the case of Dante 2021 in Ravenna*,” co-written with Alessia Patuelli). His attention to the link between culture and territory is well represented in his studies on ecomuseums (“*Management perspectives for ecomuseums effectiveness: a holistic approach to sociocultural development of local areas*,” co-written with Francesco Badia). He studied participatory governance and was interested in an approach to heritage management also based on bottom-up stimuli from the communities and citizens, which could involve civil society in a transformative perspective (as visible in the paper “*Governance of cultural heritage: towards participatory approaches*,” co-authored with Sakarias Sokka, Francesco Badia, and Anita Kangas).

His interest in the evolution of European policies is well underlined in his scientific contributions published since 2018, including the reflection on the long-term impact of European initiatives such as the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (as in the paper “*What is the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage? A long way from cultural policies towards innovative cultural management models*,” co-authored with Elena Borin).

In deed, concurrently with his career in academia, Fabio had also played an active role in the development of the policy discussions concerning research and innovation at the European level, in line with his interest in the promotion of research and a strong belief in the key role of institutions. After having served as president of the technical-scientific committee “Museums and the Economy of Culture” of the Mibact (Italian

Ministry for Cultural Heritage, Environment and Tourism) and member of Italy’s Higher Council for Cultural and Landscape Heritage, since 2017 Fabio has taken up the position of Scientific Counsellor to the Permanent Representation of Italy to the EU. Fabio believed in the value of diplomacy and negotiation and in a vision of research and innovation that could benefit all European member states. Over the years, his commitment and dedication made a decisive contribution to policymaking and decision-making, enhancing innovation in research at the Italian and European levels.

We would also like to remember Fabio for his prominent role within ENCATC. Fabio has served in the ENCATC network with strong commitment and passion from 2005 till 2019. During that time, he made an invaluable contribution to the global academic and research community: as a Board Member from 2009 to 2015, he co-designed and launched the ENCATC European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy in 2011, and the Education and Research Sessions in 2013. In 2022, he was appointed by the ENCATC Board, Editor-in-Chief of the European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy after his proposal to have it published by top academic publisher Frontiers, showing visionary commitment to open science and taking the publication to an unprecedented international dimension.

This e-book is intended to be a moment to remember his thoughts, thank him for his contribution, and emphasize how his legacy can stimulate the international scientific community to continue reflecting on the issues he held dear.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.



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Management perspectives for ecomuseums effectiveness: a holistic approach to sociocultural development of local areas

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Considering their focus on participation and sustainable tourism promotion, ecomuseums can play a crucial role in the sociocultural development of local areas. Through three exploratory case studies of Italian ecomuseums located in the Emilia-Romagna region, this study shows the emergence of three different profiles of ecomuseum development strategies: they relate to the sustainable tourism, the cultural districts, and the holistic approach to sociocultural development. These kinds of strategic profiles not only emerge in opposition to each other but can also overlap and appear jointly within different situations of ecomuseums. The final aim of this work is to reflect on the applicability of management tools to support the implementation of these strategic aspects, especially in the current scenario, in which new perspectives are emerging about the role of communities in interpreting and enhancing their tangible and intangible cultural heritage in relation to sustainable tourism and local development linked to cultural and natural heritage preservation and promotion.

KEYWORDS

museum management, cultural heritage, sustainability, community involvement, COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

The ecomuseum is a concept that originated in the early 1970s as part of the process of innovation in traditional museology, which was called “new museology” (Ross, 2004). The conceptualization of ecomuseum is due to de Varine (1978), but later, it was developed and further analyzed by other important scholars, such as Riviere (1985), Corsane et al. (2007), and Davis (2011).

It is a well-established notion, and its usefulness appears to be valid, as the concept of ecomuseum is closely interrelated with those of community engagement (Choi, 2017) and sustainable tourism (Bowers, 2016). Another concept that can present important points of contact with ecomuseum is the cultural district, which Santagata (2002) defined as an industrial district where culture and cultural heritage are the dominant factors. All these

concepts appear to be very topical today; indeed, in recent years, their centrality, both in the academic debate and in real life, has grown significantly. Moreover, recent academic studies have reported a growing diffusion of ecomuseums in Spain (Corral, 2019), North America (Sutter et al., 2016), and generally worldwide, with a particular increase in developing countries (Wuisang et al., 2018). Ecomuseums also represent an important reality in Italy, especially in some regions where they have received legislative regulations (Santo et al., 2017) aimed at strengthening their role in the development of local communities.

In light of these considerations, the debate on the role of ecomuseums has also seen interesting recent developments. At the same time, from the point of view of the diffusion of concrete ecomuseum experiences, the last few years have shown an important recovery: numerous academic studies, in this regard, recall the recent growth of the phenomenon (Belliggiano et al., 2021; Tsipra and Drinia, 2022). This element is interesting since after an almost constant growth in the diffusion of ecomuseums in the last decades of the past century, a slowdown of this trend was subsequently recognized (Maggi, 2006).

Therefore, various scholars have analyzed the role of ecomuseums in museum studies (Davis, 2008), their importance for the development of communities (Doğan, 2019; Pappalardo, 2020), particularly in rural areas (Ducros, 2017), the relationship between the development of ecomuseums and sustainable tourism (Bowers, 2016; Belliggiano et al., 2021), as well as that between this form of museum and the promotion of community participation in cultural heritage management and policy (Sokka et al., 2021). Furthermore, ecomuseums fit very well in the European Union (EU) framework for action on cultural heritage (European Commission, 2019), as well as in the current European policies that place culture and cultural heritage in the context of the European Green Deal (European Commission, 2022).

Nonetheless, to the best of our knowledge, the subject of how the development of ecomuseum strategies can be made more effective by the application of managerial tools still appears to be underdeveloped. Therefore, the present study tries to fill this research gap through the analysis of managerial profiles that can make the development of strategic profiles for an ecomuseum more effective.

The achievement of this objective has declined through the proposal of distinct case studies, according to the qualitative research method of multiple case studies (Stake, 2006). Consistent with this, three cases of Italian ecomuseums from the Emilia-Romagna region were subjected to analysis. The approach that has been used is exploratory (Yin, 2018), which means that the basic idea is the definition of a framework of hypotheses on possible managerial tools. The analysis of the case studies, which considers the evolution of the three ecomuseums

in recent years, also includes the COVID-19 pandemic period, which tested the ability of each ecomuseum to keep its communities united at a historical moment in which the sense of loneliness and disorientation of many people was significant. According to these hypotheses, which will be subjected to further study in future research, managerial tools, if implemented, could favor the effectiveness of strategy implementation in ecomuseums.

Theoretical framework

The ecomuseum has been described by many authors and scholars in several circumstances, as already reported in Badia and Deodato (2015). One of the most famous definitions is that of Riviere (1985: p. 182):

An ecomuseum is an instrument conceived, fashioned and operated jointly by a public authority and a local population. The public authority's involvement is through the experts, facilities and resources it provides; the local population's involvement depends on its aspirations, knowledge and individual approach. It is a mirror in which the local population views itself to discover its own image, in which it seeks an explanation of the territory to which it is attached and of the populations that have preceded it, seen either as circumscribed in time or in terms of the continuity of generations.

De Varine, who is credited with the invention of the term, has stressed some important elements of the concept of ecomuseum on several occasions. First, “the ‘eco’ prefix to ecomuseums means neither economy, nor ecology in the common sense, but essentially human or social ecology: the community and society in general, even mankind, are at the core of its existence, of its activity, of its process. Or at least they should be. . . This was the intuition of the “inventors” of the ecomuseum concept in the early 70s. . .” (de Varine, 2006: p. 60).

Again, De Varine noted how, in the years following its first definition, the ecomuseum has assumed two different paths in practice, partly opposite each other (de Varine, 2002). The original definition aims to highlight the link between the museum and the natural environment toward a concept similar to a museum park. Simultaneously, around the early 1980s, a concept derived from ecomuseum has been developing, notably because of the experience of Le Creusot in France, as a museum becoming an instrument of community development.

This path of distinction between different forms of ecomuseums on a global scale has widened over the years. Currently, therefore, types of museums that are also very different from each other are called “ecomuseums” (Davis, 2011). In this diverse picture of concrete cases and practical

realities, some common elements seem to emerge and essentially refer to the mission of the ecomuseum.

Maggi (2006): p. 63 noted that “almost all ecomuseums, even when using different denominations, have a particular mission: they try to promote sustainable development and citizenship through local heritage and participation. The most relevant obstacles they face seem to be the same almost everywhere: people involvement, effective leadership and the continuity of the initiatives.”

Cogo (2006): pp. 97–98 developed this concept by explaining the most important points of the ecomuseum mission:

- the safeguarding and valuing of local socio-cultural traditions; - the safeguarding/rediscovery of collective memory in terms of the intangible heritage comprising the identity of a population, and its mediation with contemporary society; - the study, research and dissemination of local naturalistic, historical and social topics; - the promotion of sustainable economic and tourist development, by using natural and historic resources, the social heritage and other local resources, via a network able to attract tourists and the additional exploitation of cultural resources; - the promotion of socially responsible business enterprise and the active participation in processes of sustainable growth.

Two main features seem to characterize the mission of an ecomuseum: the support for the advancement of sustainable tourism and the active promotion of civic participation in cultural heritage management development. The ecomuseum can be part of an implementation strategy of sustainable tourism—not without difficulties (Howard, 2002)—when it is able to promote its activities toward visitors and tourists (Belligiano et al., 2021), enhancing its specific connection with the local area through the promotion of values that reflect its identity (Bowers, 2016; Simeoni and De Crescenzo, 2018).

Sustainable tourism combines the paradigm of sustainability with economic development based on tourism (Hunter, 1997). Sustainable tourism is not aimed at unlimited growth but is consistent with the enhancement of existing resources. In its various forms, an ecomuseum project explicitly aims to initiate socioeconomic activities compatible with the logic of sustainability. Specifically, tourism is sustainable if it is developed as environmentally friendly, economically viable, and socially equitable for local communities; in other words, it refers to a level of land use that can be maintained in the long term, as it produces economic, social, and environmental benefits for the area in which it is implemented.

For example, at the economic level, the positive impacts of sustainable tourism can be identified in job creation on the site, in the redistribution of income, and in restraining the depopulation of rural areas. In addition, sustainable tourism can reduce some negative social effects of “traditional” tourism, such as its

seasonal nature, the weight of external tourism companies that do not have a direct impact on the territory, the instability of local revenues, and transport and infrastructure development oriented only to tourists and not to local people. From an environmental point of view, sustainable tourism is concerned with reducing, if not breaking down, the negative impacts of traditional mass tourism (e.g., depletion of natural resources and pollution).

In summary, sustainable tourism satisfies both the needs of the local community in terms of quality of life and the demand of tourists, protecting cultural and environmental resources, maintaining a certain degree of competitiveness, and promoting the phenomenon of solidarity tourism through a relevant role of the ecomuseums (Doğan, 2019).

Another relevant key feature of the ecomuseum mission is favoring citizen participation in paths of local development through the enhancement of cultural heritage. Participatory approaches appear particularly appropriate for cultural heritage management. Relevant international institutions have already claimed the importance of community engagement in cultural heritage management and development since the beginning of this century (UNESCO, 2002; Council of Europe, 2005; European Commission, 2019). Academics and professionals in cultural management suggested multistakeholder governance models (Bonet and Donato, 2011), even considering the opportunities of a collaborative governance approach (Jeon and Kim, 2021).

Participation can be considered a challenging task when establishing an ecomuseum. In fact, an ecomuseum can promote a greater sense of collective ownership, more community-led initiatives, and a process of appreciating, supervising, and safeguarding the interactions between people and the environment (Choi, 2017). These processes can assume particular relevance in disadvantaged or depopulated territories, such as rural areas (Ducros, 2017; Bindi et al., 2022).

With reference to the development of specific participatory practices in the context of ecomuseums, community (or parish) maps (Clifford and King, 1996; Parker, 2006) emerged as one of the most widely used tools for ecomuseums. Community maps are instruments through which residents can expose their own representations of cultural heritage in its broadest sense, including the landscape, knowledge, and traditions of the place. These processes are fundamental for reinforcing the sense of awareness and identity of a community (Guran and Michelutti, 2021).

The map of the community is also a place of memory, as it sheds light on what people want to pass on to future generations. Specifically, it normally consists of a cartographic representation (or any other composition inspired by that logic of representation) in which the community can identify itself. The basis of the abovementioned knowledge and understanding can still lead, secondarily, to the development and eventual rediscovery of gastronomic production and

handicraft traditions, which could even allow the promotion of the territory and its products through the active involvement of the local community.

Although these two aspects (i.e., the development of sustainable tourism and the promotion of citizen participation) appear to be the most typical features linked to the development strategies of an ecomuseum, a third possible characteristic element can be identified: the promotion of a cultural district linked to the territory of which the ecomuseum wants to be an expression.

The cultural district stems from the concept of an industrial district (Becattini, 2004), which is defined as a local production system characterized by a high concentration of industrial companies specializing in that industry sector. Therefore, the cultural districts can be seen in an industrial district in which culture and cultural heritage are the dominant factors (Santagata, 2002: p. 15):

The content of the goods produced in these districts is strictly connected to the local civilization and savoir vivre. Furthermore, the economic advancement of these products is naturally correlated with the local culture: the more their image and symbolic icon is identified with local customs and cultural behaviors, the more they seduce consumers (cultural lock-in) and the more their production is fostered. In this case, the importance of culture is all-inclusive, mobilizing the aesthetic, technological, anthropological and historical content of the district.

The perspective of the cultural district takes on value for an ecomuseum because it enhances the need for collaboration between stakeholders as an essential element for its development (Arnaboldi and Spiller, 2011). This represents an approach to local development, where cultural production and participation play a central role in local development through integration with other economic sectors of the local area. In this context, culture can become a constitutive element of economic and social growth, based on social and environmental sustainability, in its ability to promote the elements of human, social, symbolic, and cultural capital linked to the founding values of the territory concerned (Sacco et al., 2013). With reference to cultural districts, the literature has shown the complex dynamics of management and governance that can favor their development (Schieb-Bienfait et al., 2018), also because the cultural district sees the involvement of a plurality of subjects, both in the public sector and in the private sector, whose government may require the development of collaborative governance paths (Gugu and Dal Molin, 2016).

Although the subjects related to the development of the ecomuseums seem to have assumed a good rate of advancement (Liu and Lee, 2015), the presence of research works that analyze the possible role of management tools to support these processes effectively appears rather limited.

Considering this framework and the emerging research gap, this paper aims to develop the following research questions:

- 1) Which concrete ecomuseum development strategies emerge in the current context?
- 2) Which management tools should be adopted to increase the effectiveness of these ecomuseum development strategies?

Methodology

The research method employed multiple case studies (Stake, 2006). The basic idea for using this method relates to the purpose to obtain, thanks to replication, the possibility of enriching the proposed considerations in compliance with the necessary methodological rigor (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007): replication indeed leads to comparison, which allows the initial theoretical concepts and the relationships established between them to be developed in more detail (Yin, 2018).

For this multiple-case study, three cases were selected. The choice fell on three ecomuseums belonging to the same territorial context (Emilia-Romagna, Italy) to favor a basic homogeneity of context, which is a necessary element for obtaining at least partial replicability of the research, which is an essential reference in multiple case study research. At the same time, these ecomuseums presented certain profiles of differentiation, which justify the multiple approaches that will be examined in the next section.

The three cases are the Ecomuseum of Argenta (province of Ferrara), the Ecomuseum of Bagnacavallo (province of Ravenna), alternatively named as “marsh herb ecomuseum,” and the Ecomuseum of hill and wine of Castello di Serravalle (province of Bologna). The research in these three realities was conducted using the following research tools:

- Semi-structured interviews (Qu and Dumay, 2011) with the directors and/or the administrative staff of the ecomuseums. At least two interviews were conducted for each ecomuseum. Overall, eight interviews were conducted, and six subjects were involved. Each interview was conducted using a homogeneous methodology based on a series of open-ended questions. Every interview lasted between 60 and 90 min.
- Material analysis of additional documents, provided by the ecomuseum staff or available on the web, regarding the activities of the ecomuseums.
- Participant observation through one experience of direct participation by the researchers in the ecomuseum proposal for visitors/tourists. These visits were realized without the involvement of the directors of the three museums to live a more genuine experience, not developed *ad hoc* by the museum staff for the research perspective.

In the next section of the article, every case study will be presented, highlighting the following points:

- Introduction and brief history of the ecomuseum
- Governance and the role of the managing entity
- Most relevant activities
- Involvement and participation of the community
- Impact of COVID-19 on the activities of the ecomuseum
- Analysis of the economic fundamentals
- Special projects and future strategies
- Role of management tools in supporting strategic development and operational activities

However, these points represent only a trace of the following exposure and will not be analyzed exactly in this order but depending on how the different points have emerged during the semi-structured interviews.

Case studies

Ecomuseum of Argenta

The Ecomuseum of Argenta was founded in 1991 with its first component, the Museum of the Valleys, following the will of certain groups of associations in Argenta to enable projects of restoring the environment and the river around the oasis of Campotto, territories belonging to Po Delta Park. Then, between 1994 and 2002, the ecomuseum was extended with a second component, the Museum of Land Drainage, at the water pump of Saarino, which is the heart of the hydraulic system of the government of the waters between the Apennines and the Adriatic Sea. Finally, in 1997, the ecomuseum was completed with the third component, the Civic Museum, conceived as a center for representing to visitors the history of the town of Argenta and its urban landscape. The Ecomuseum of Argenta is directly managed by the Municipality of Argenta, a city of 20,000 inhabitants, in the province of Ferrara. The director is an employee of the municipality. The ecomuseum has three other employees (one full-time and two part-time), as well as further cooperation with external professionals and a cooperative. The director has a good degree of autonomy in her management decisions.

The Ecomuseum of Argenta gained official recognition for its role by the Council of Europe and, on a regional scale, obtained the label “quality museum,” which means that it respects predetermined quality standards of museum management. This ecomuseum is based on integration throughout the territory between the local landscape and the three museum locations. The Ecomuseum of Argenta is hosted by a lagoon landscape inside the intensively cultivated Po valley close to the delta of this river. This landscape presents issues related to biodiversity, sustainable farming, and traditions of

manufacturing linked to the agrarian sector. In the specific case of Argenta, the ecomuseum assumes participatory functions for social and economic development by different actors in the local area. The Ecomuseum of Argenta can be defined as an internal agreement of the local community to take care of the territory. Therefore, the fundamental objectives that form the basis of the ecomuseum are mainly related to the sociocultural development of the territory and to increasing the level of awareness by the citizens of its values, history, and local traditions.

In this sense, participatory processes have been conducted by the instrument of the community maps in Campotto, Benvignante (hamlets of Argenta), and, in a more simplified way, other areas of the municipality of Argenta. Then, executive actions were implemented. For example, a space dedicated to the repopulation of native fish (such as pike, tench, and carp) was created, and new alliances were developed with companies, consortia, and associations of the agricultural and fishing industries.

Another interesting participatory project can be called “participatory archeology.” Following a recent discovery of an archaeological site of the Roman age in the area, the ecomuseum brought together associations and citizens with public initiatives, cycles of conferences, and courses with the high schools of Argenta, which continued despite the difficulties of the pandemic period. The result has been that the locals have begun to take an interest in the archaeological heritage of the area, to make reports, and to feel truly involved in these discoveries.

In parallel, the ecomuseum has enabled networking systems with restaurants for the revaluation of the gastronomy of the valley, with the reintroduction of the specialties of freshwater fish and the use of wild herbs in the kitchen. The economic boom of the 1960s and the extensive agrarian reform deleted these elements, favoring the consumption of sea fish and plant species that were alien to local traditions. Still, the ecomuseum is working for the rehabilitation of inland water navigation by electric boats with flat-bottom keel, which retools the historic “Batana” used both for monitoring fish and for natural excursions.

Among the initiatives and activities of the ecomuseum, an important role is played by the activities of restoration and enhancement of cultural and monumental heritage. In particular, Benvignante, a Renaissance village dominated by the residence of the Dukes of Este (this residence is part of the UNESCO recognition of the site of “Ferrara, City of the Renaissance and its Po Delta”), is at risk of dropping, along with the campaign and the rural village. After the earthquake of 2012 in this local area, which damaged Este’s residence, there was a first restructuring in 2011 and a second restructuring between 2014 and 2015. These actions were linked to the implementation of the community map. Another goal of Benvignante’s map is to build a basket of typical gastronomy

products, thus restoring knowledge, taste, and culinary innovation, with the identification of specific target markets. In the future, the residence will be equipped with kitchens and will be used for testing taste from gastronomic associations, agricultural and catering, and hospitality schools, with a link to the annual fair of the ecomuseums.

Other areas of the municipality of Argenta, which are located near the Valli di Comacchio and the Romagna, are characterized by biological fine dining with short production and distribution lines, such as the golden tomato; the cereal crops of wheat, barley, and spelt, derived organic flour and the incipient production of craft beer that emerged from Renaissance treatises of the Este period; and the typical “wines of the sands” and of the Bosco Eliceo. The artisan companies in the territory of the ecomuseum move in terms of knowledge and skills, specifically yarns, wool, and handcraft. This is the tradition of tailoring and knitwear factories, which were important in the years of the economic boom for women’s employment. These elements also emerge from the community map of Campotto, with the tradition of mulberry and silkworm breeding, silk yarn, and domestic wool, which engaged families and neighborhoods in partnership. Today, these skills have left silk but still emerge in other fields, such as diverse tailoring and wool.

A prominent role in the activities of the ecomuseum is occupied by networking activities with other institutions in neighboring territories. The most important initiative in this regard appears in the Constitution of the *Centro di Educazione Alla Sostenibilità* (Center of Education for Sustainability) (CEAS), which, in 2013, was set up as a network with other neighboring municipalities as part of a regional project for the promotion of institutional networks aimed at the development of sustainability in the territory. This center has assumed the name of CEAS “Valleys and Rivers” and is headquartered at the Ecomuseum of Argenta. The partners are identified, in addition to the Municipality of Argenta, in other neighboring municipalities (Mesola, Comacchio, Ostellato, and Portomaggiore). In addition to having importance from the point of view of establishing relations and exchanging experiences, the CEAS has also become a center of attraction for public funds, particularly from the Emilia-Romagna Region.

Finalizing the analysis of the main projects of the Ecomuseum, specific attention has also been given to educational projects, with constant attention to the relationship with the teachers and the schools in the area. In recent years, many initiatives have been developed aimed at creating itineraries for tourists and local inhabitants. The meaning of these itineraries is to make visitors discover the tangible and intangible heritage of the area. The main project concerns the Primaro route, from the name of a branch of the Po River—the longest river in Italy—which crosses the territory. The Primaro route traces a geographical route and connects it to all the naturalistic, historical, and economic emergencies along the route. Thus, while walking along the Primaro route, the story of Argenta is told from its origins to the present day.

The COVID-19 pandemic, although it has forced a slowdown in some cases, mainly due to the closures ordered for the museum venues, as established by national legislation in the most acute periods of the pandemic, has not had only negative impacts on this plenty of activities. The presence of outdoor nature trails has, in fact, been a reason for many people to rediscover itineraries when the rules on social distancing only allowed outdoor activities and prevented indoor activities. As for many other museums—somewhat around the world—the pandemic period was an important moment for ecomuseum managers to propose online activities and discover the opportunities provided by digital technologies. In this way, during the pandemic period, the Ecomuseum of Argenta played an important role in meeting the need for sociality in its community.

Moving on to a brief analysis of an economic nature, the Ecomuseum of Argenta has an annual budget of around €150,000. The largest part, for nearly €120,000 euros per year, is provided by contract between the ecomuseum and Municipality of Argenta, which is particularly directed to the payment of salaries to the employees of the structure. Even the rest of the funding is, for the most part, from public sources, but it is worth highlighting that the ecomuseum’s staff presents a particular to access to various funding lines on different public projects, partly regional, partly national, and partly from the EU.

With reference to management tools, there is a poor presence. This mainly depends on the circumstance that the ecomuseum is not autonomous from a management point of view but is comparable with an organizational unit of the Argenta municipality. However, the development of autonomous management tools compatible with this governance system, such as performance measurement systems or forms of non-financial reporting, has not been implemented due to the lack of specific economic–managerial skills and the scarcity of financial resources that can be specifically dedicated to these projects.

Ecomuseum of Bagnacavallo

The Ecomuseum of Bagnacavallo, also known as the Ecomuseum of Marsh Herbs, owes its foundation to the activity carried out by the Cultural Association “Civiltà Erbe Palustri” (Marsh Herbs Civilization). In June 1985, the founding nucleus of the future association began its activities. A young married couple, composed by Luigi Barangani and Maria Rosa Bagnari—who was the director of the ecomuseum for years—interested in recovering the artisan art that had once characterized the economy of their territory was the propulsive heart of this first nucleus. Thus began the first survey work within the country to recover original equipment, bundles of grass, artifacts, and leftovers to create a small exhibition. At the same time, the supporters of the initiative tried to identify people who still possessed the unaltered technical background of the manual arts in the use of marsh grasses and were available to collaborate on the first

informal idea of the reconstruction of classical production for the purpose of study and collection. As the first result of the research was carried out, the first edition of the Exhibition of the Marsh Herbs Civilization was held, with the first group of expert craftsmen at work, arousing great emotion throughout the community. With this initiative, the history of this ecomuseum began.

However, the history of the ecomuseum was born much earlier. In 1971, after Maria Rosa had married Luigi, when the young couple moved into their new home, Maria Rosa expressed the desire to beautify the small apartment with the window curtains that she had noticed in tatters in the bordering large house, previously Luigi's aunt's workshop. In this way, Maria Rosa, thanks to the teachings of her mother-in-law, learned to build curtains for windows using marsh grasses and rushes from the valley as per local tradition. The curtains displayed on the windows overlooking the main street began to attract attention for their beauty and originality to the point that several passers commissioned them.

Thanks to this origin, the Ecomuseum of Marsh Herbs has been characterized since its inception as a participatory project carried out by the people, by the population—first and foremost that of Villanova (a fraction of the Municipality of Bagnacavallo with 4,000 inhabitants). The sense of participation, which has always characterized the history of the ecomuseum, can be summarized in two phases.

The first phase can be considered the start of the ecomuseum story, which has not yet been defined in this way; it was aimed at making the community aware of itself and of its own history, culture, and tradition to avoid the loss of identity. The research and recovery of tradition was carried out among the people, with their help and active contribution to rediscovering and restoring a unique cultural heritage based on the values of aesthetics, a sustainable economy, and solidarity between generations. Reviving the processing of marsh grasses house by house, the grass once again invaded the country, causing amazement and emotion in the population and great interest in the institutions themselves. The completion of this first phase, therefore, led to the establishment of the ecomuseum in name and in fact.

The second participatory phase arose from the awareness that the importance of safeguarding the specificity and uniqueness of the recovered subject forced it to be disseminated and transmitted outside the limited boundaries of the municipality of Bagnacavallo, and even more than a fraction of it, such as Villanova. The logical thread that connected the history of the ecomuseum to the world of the valley and to the lands of the manual arts was the Lamone River, which has become a new horizon of interest. Thus, a new project was born: Lamone Bene Comune (LBC), literally “Lamone as a common good.” It was founded with the following objectives:

- To stimulate the participation of all the communities located along the Lamone River toward a single cultural horizon
- To raise awareness of territorial education for sustainability

- To enhance and promote the area around the river
- To safeguard the landscape and biodiversity of the lands and valleys of the Lamone

Currently, the collections acquired so far exceed 2,500 objects, which can be described as weaving products, textures, and artifacts made with wild herbs supplied by the nearby valley environment and by the various processing of soft woods.

The actions and products created by the ecomuseum are continuous negotiation tables, recovery of tradition (e.g., fires in March at the same time along the whole river, propitiatory crosses in the countryside, and potato crib with playing cards), creation of a vegetable garden of flowers, and forgotten smells.

The ecomuseum also promotes environmental protection issues, starting with the LBC project, which provides for the recovery and maintenance of the left embankment top of the Lamone River and its two continuations, one toward the sea and the other toward the hill, taking care of problems relating to the hydrogeological instability of Punta Alberete with the salinization processes that are advancing throughout the territory. The community development objectives are evident: the ecomuseum is aimed primarily at the local community, and it has the objective of stimulating community participation to promote the re-appropriation of the prior culture through projects of solidarity between generations. Finally, for both residents and tourists, there is a desire to raise awareness of territorial education in sustainability, safeguarding the landscape and biodiversity of the lands and valleys of the Lamone. In short, healthy use of the territory is promoted, even through responsible and sustainable tourism. In this, even the rediscovery of traditional cuisine linked to the territory, based on the conscious use of resources, is at the center of a rich activity of cooking workshops open to all.

From a tourist point of view, indeed, the promotion of responsible and sustainable tourism proposals involves tourists with alternative routes—compared to the traditional tourism of Romagna—based on the concept of slow tourism, exploiting already existing routes that connect the country's roads to embankment paths. In this context, the ecomuseum attracts interest above all of the cycle tourists, whose tourist activity particularly lends itself to lingering on the activities and itineraries proposed by the ecomuseum.

As in the previously analyzed case, the pandemic, which, in any case, implied the closure of the office in one of the most acute periods in 2021, has not blocked the activities. During the closing period, rich laboratory activity was carried out online. These projects were also brought back into attendance as soon as the rules allowed. In 2021, a summer school was also promoted entitled “Summer School of the Ancient Arts. Solidarity between generations so as not to lose wisdom and a sustainable economy.” This title is emblematic of the aim still pursued by the

ecomuseum, which makes use of a rich collaboration with the local associative fabric beyond the driving role of the association that manages it.

From a governance point of view, the ecomuseum is a cultural institute of the Municipality of Bagnacavallo, depending on the Direction of the Civic Museums of Bagnacavallo, and is managed by the founding body, the private association *Civiltà Erbe Palustri*. The municipality plays the role of orientation, direction, and control of the activities carried out by the ecomuseum in view of the tourist impact on the area. The association covers its managerial autonomy in organizing festivals, markets, environmental education projects, temporary installations, and the collection of evidence of the material culture of the local community.

Thanks to the attention of the public entity, there has always been collaboration with a public–private partnership for the use of public spaces. As already seen, the municipality has been interested in this activity since its beginning. The ecomuseum, between volunteers and collaborators, involves about 50 people, although these activities constitute their job only for the director and another collaborator.

The annual budget of the Cultural Association *Civiltà Erbe Palustri* is around 70,000–80,000 euros. This budget is sometimes supplemented by municipal public contributions, as well as by expenditure items of the municipality that affect interventions in the territory, even in the areas where the activity of the ecomuseum takes place. Often, public funds derived from competitive tenders, European and regional, have been intercepted for specific activities. Their own sources of revenue concern the museum store with ethnic artifacts from Romagna, a part coming from ticket office entrances and fees for the use of the convivial room for events and itinerant workshops linked to museum activity.

Despite the development of a set of activities fully consistent with the ecomuseum mission and its breadth, this second ecomuseum also does not have adequate development of management tools. This circumstance is also due to the lack of specific skills in the field of business administration within the association, even if the element that seems to emerge is also that their usefulness or necessity is not always perceived, with the potential detriment of even more incisive paths of growth and development of the ecomuseum.

Ecomuseum of hill and wine of Castello di Serravalle

The Ecomuseum of Hill and Wine has been running since May 2004. It was born with the aim of protecting and enhancing the cultural and natural heritage of Castello di Serravalle, a town belonging to the Municipality of Valsamoggia, inserted into the hilly landscape of the province of Bologna. The focus of this ecomuseum is on evidence of centuries-old human use of the land and the important buildings that express the relationship between landscape and man.

The owner of the venue and of the exhibitions is the Municipality of Valsamoggia, which comes from the merger of the municipalities of Castello di Serravalle (the owner entity of the Ecomuseum at its birth) with those of Bazzano, Crespellano, Monteveglio, and Savigno, which are all located in the territory of the province (here named the “metropolitan city”) of Bologna. The ecomuseum management has been entrusted to the public trust Foundation “Rocca dei Bentivoglio.” This foundation is under the direct control of the Municipality of Valsamoggia and manages the ecomuseum through a system of in-house provision. Some functional and operational tasks for the management of the ecomuseum are assigned to the non-profit cultural association “Terre di Jacopino,” whose associates participate in the management of the ecomuseum on a voluntary basis.

The ecomuseum has a main exhibition venue at a building called “Captain’s House,” which was built in 1,235 by Jacopino from San Lorenzo in Collina within the fortified village of Castello di Serravalle. The ecomuseum comprises nine systems of routes, which are the main themes of the relationship between man and land. Visitors can find educational panels for each system at the main exhibition venue with detailed text and images and symbolic objects with evocative aims: summary information and an essential exposure aim to bring the visitor outside in contact with the real aspects of the territory.

The ecomuseum proposes specific museum itineraries to its visitors focused on “nature and landscape: the gullies”; “architecture and land: the castle of Serravalle”; “man and landscape: work in the fields”; “humans and animals: zootechnics”; “the vine, the wine, and the landscape”; “the territory and its inhabitants: the first censuses”; “the post-war period and the reorganization of the territory”; “culture and folk tradition: folklore”; and “archeology and territory.”

In addition to the panels and objects for the nine itineraries, in the main exhibition venue of the ecomuseum, there is a room with archaeological findings of a Roman villa of the imperial age located just downstream of the fortified village. The most interesting artifact is a large terracotta that could hold more than 1,000 L of wine and inspire some local producers, such as the ancient Romans, to revive the wine in amphorae. In addition to educational programs for kindergartens and primary and secondary schools, the ecomuseum offers guided tours and tastings by appointment.

In recent years, the activity of the ecomuseum outside the main exhibition venue has been further developed, thanks to the support of the “Pro loco” (local tourism promotion association) of Castello di Serravalle. In fact, walks and excursions have been conceived to intertwine the places of the ecomuseum and the related themes. Paths regarding the German refugees in the area thus emerged, with walks in the various refuges, projects from which other enhancement projects were born, such as the walk on the occasion of the festival on the ancient vines or the walk to the ancient sources. This has helped bring these issues, even outside Castello di Serravalle, to nearby territories. In short, there has been work aimed primarily at establishing a dialogue between

the communities that form part of the rather extensive territory of the Municipality of Valsamoggia. This also appeared to be useful in overcoming the problems derived from the merger of the municipalities, which did not make everyone happy. Using the historical-cultural and landscape contents of continuity that exist between the territories has allowed for greater understanding and rapprochement.

The primary goal of the ecomuseum is to become a tool for the development of a form of culturally sustainable tourism in the territory. Some of the results have already been achieved, considering that after the birth of the ecomuseum, an economic appreciation of the buildings in the local area was observed in testimony to the revitalization of the area for tourism. Another important aim of the ecomuseum is the involvement of the population in creating a sense of awareness about the values of the territory. In particular, the engagement initiatives have been addressed to two specific targets: the segments of the older population and the younger population. For the elderly, initiatives were put in place with the aim of preserving the memory and the typical know-how of the rural world. To young people, instead, activities were promoted aimed at knowledge of their territory and the importance of taking care of it.

In agreement with these objectives, there have been meetings at the community center for the elderly and classes at the junior high school in the local area on the ancient crafts and the cycle of Parmesan cheese. There were three exhibitions to engage citizens with local origins, with the use of pictures taken from family albums and provided directly by the citizens themselves.

Other activities organized by the ecomuseum are addressed to the conservation of the peasant theatrical culture and to the use of dialect, supporting and disseminating performances of a recreational spontaneous group that animates the local carnivals and makes representations in dialect, especially staging “La Flepa,” a comic opera written by Giulio Cesare Croce, which has been orally transmitted for over three centuries and was reconstructed 20 years ago from the fragments that the elders of the valley recited by heart.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a crucial moment in this ecomuseum. In fact, before the pandemic, most of the operational activities were carried out by the historical staff of the “Terre di Jacopino” Association, whose average age was quite high. For this reason, since, as is known, the elderly people were those most at risk during the pandemic period, there was a need for the “Rocca dei Bentivoglio” Foundation to identify new initiatives and new activities that could be promoted in an alternative way by the ecomuseum compared to those traditionally promoted. This has led to the greater involvement of other local associations and the development of new online activities. Therefore, this represented, in a certain sense, a concrete way of implementing the aim that the ecomuseum itself had in its intentions: promoting intergenerational dialogue and favoring greater collaboration between the “historical” volunteers of the ecomuseum and the new resources activated by the foundation.

From the point of view of financial management, the annual budget available is approximately 10,000 euros. Although this budget is significantly lower than one of the above-presented cases, it appears interesting to note how, from the point of view of the percentage distribution of resources, this ecomuseum has a good degree of self-financing. In fact, the municipality contributes only about 30% of the budget, incurring the costs of managing the main exhibition venue and its offices. The remainder of the budget is covered by revenues raised by the association. They come for about another 30% from themed events in the village, 20% from the organization of tours, and 20% from sales of local products.

Similar to what was found in the other cases, this ecomuseum does not present the use of specific managerial tools. The small size of this reality leads to not detecting the usefulness or need for these tools, in addition to the fact that there is a lack of human and financial resources capable of implementing them.

Discussion

The aim of this section is to analyze what has emerged from the case studies, responding to the two research questions, which were about the kind of ecomuseum development strategies, and the management tools adopted to increase their effectiveness.

With reference to the first profile, the three cases were different, demonstrating variety and complexity that characterize the ecomuseums, even worldwide, but with relevant common features. The common elements mainly concern, on the one hand, the genesis, development, and participatory actions, which are implemented in all cases, and, on the other hand, the presence of a political will that is a decisive and stabilizing factor for the ecomuseum. Furthermore, it should be noted that the investigated development strategies properly mirror the main ongoing EU policies. On the one hand, cultural and natural heritage are envisaged as a shared resource, raising awareness of common history and values and reinforcing a sense of belonging to a common cultural and political space consistent with the 2019 European framework for action on cultural heritage based on the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (European Commission, 2019). On the other hand, the analyzed cases put cultural and natural heritage at the heart of broader public policies consistently with the vision of the role of culture and cultural heritage in the European green deal (European Commission, 2022).

The divergent aspects relate to different management structures, different purposes, and different operating ways of realizing the activities, mainly attributable to the specificities of the territories. The different expressions of the development strategies of these three ecomuseums are not seen as conflicting. In fact, all three cases demonstrate specific attention to sustainable tourism projects, which have an impact on the cultural side of belonging and knowledge of the

area and its heritage. Therefore, the perspectives of sustainable tourism promotion and community involvement are present in all cases analyzed.

In all the cases, the ecomuseum project seems, however, to overlap this perspective in order to embrace a wider perspective of the “cultural district.” In the examined cases, the territorial element is, first, the common ground between the industrial district and the cultural district. The goal of a cultural district is to be a product of a particular territory based on territorial integration of the cultural offer. Specifically, the cultural district, on the one hand, implements a process of enhancing cultural resources of different types and, on the other hand, connects this process with the system of professions, services, and infrastructure connected with the same enhancement activities. According to this perspective, the process of developing cultural resources in the form of a district can have positive consequences in terms of employment, entrepreneurship, and innovation in various sectors.

In this context, an ecomuseum is part of a cultural district that is able to integrate with this productive and industrial system in the territory. These aspects seem to be present, as previously said, even with different degrees of relevance in the three cases analyzed.

A further expansion of the ecomuseum mission development seems to be present. In this case, a holistic approach to the sociocultural development of the local area is emerging (Badia and Deodato, 2015): the promotion of tourism in itself is beyond the scope of the ecomuseum, and even the development of entrepreneurship does not appear as central or primary factors. The ecomuseum task is primarily to improve the perceived quality of the territory, first from its residents. This can help to promote social development, and possibly economic growth, as well as—but not only—through sustainable tourism initiatives. A thorough knowledge and understanding of the natural and man-made components of the territory are the first fundamental elements of this perspective. Such knowledge and understanding, however, are only possible with the real involvement of the community—to be achieved both by local knowledge development initiatives at the local population and through its involvement with participatory

tools. For these reasons, the cases of Argenta and Bagnacavallo seem to be further along this path, whereas Castello di Serravalle is trying to start it.

The holistic approach to the sociocultural development of the local area can strengthen the community feeling that is the basis of every ecomuseum project. With its different ingredients, this perspective attempts to root a sense of responsibility and awareness of an area that becomes a place of culture and potentially socioeconomic development. After all, the goal of the ecomuseum is to improve the quality of life of the local community; the first step in this process should consist precisely of an awareness of the quality aspects of the territory, with its strengths and its critical issues, through an integrated and holistic perspective.

The following Table 1 synthesized the most relevant aspects emerging from the previous analysis and allows for a possible comparison among the three ecomuseums. In particular, the last line—about possible future challenges—contains some possible issues of development for the three institutions, which are the results of the authors’ perceptions after the conclusion of the case studies.

Another point of interest emerges from the comparison of the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the three ecomuseums. For all the cases analyzed, although the pandemic remains an event that has had a tragic impact on communities, from the point of view of ecomuseum management, it has been able to activate proactive response paths that have allowed certain improvements in management, especially based on the use of new technologies, both in dialogue with the community and between internal stakeholders.

With reference to the second profile, the role of the management tools, the cases present similar results (i.e., this kind of instrument is very little used). Fundamentally, three orders of motivation are behind this circumstance:

- Lack of skills
- Insufficient resources (financial and human)

TABLE 1 A comparison among the three case studies.

	Argenta	Bagnacavallo	Castello di Serravalle
Managing body	Municipality of Argenta (direct management) through its offices	Orientation and control by the Municipality of Bagnacavallo and management by the Association “Civiltà Erbe Palustri”	Municipality of Valsamoggia through its Foundation “Rocca dei Bentivoglio” + operational role of the Association “Terre di Jacopino”
Main goals	Socioeconomic development of the territory, rediscovery of ancient places and traditions, and community involvement	Sustainable and slow tourism, rediscovery of ancient places and traditions, and community involvement	Sustainable and slow tourism, enhancement of local food and wine, and intergenerational dialogue
COVID-19 pandemic impact	The ecomuseum has fostered the population’s desire for encounter and dialogue	The ecomuseum has maintained a constant dialogue with its reference public and has proposed many initiatives	The dimension of intergenerational dialogue within the ecomuseum has grown and has led to the development of new initiatives
Future challenges	To improve the online dialogue channels and to develop a stronger management structure	To preserve the legacy of its intangible heritage and to strengthen the managerial dimension	To reinforce the dialogue with other stakeholder of the territory and to develop new routes and itineraries outside the exhibition venue

Source: Authors’ elaboration.

- Incomplete perception of the usefulness or need for such tools

The first motivation is actually a problem, which often emerges in the context of museum studies and is present mainly in the cases of Argenta and Bagnacavallo. The second motivation represents an evident problem in organizational structures of a few dimensions, and it has emerged from the cases of Argenta and Castello di Serravalle. Finally, the third order of motivation can lead to problems when management is unable to understand the importance of these tools for the stronger development of its structure. As proposed by some academic literature, a possible solution to these problems relates to overcoming the dimensional limits of the governance structures of these ecomuseum realities. The problem of the size of the ecomuseums and their funding systems requires further development. The problem with the size scale concerns cultural institutions in general (Donato, 2013). The ecomuseum, by its nature, cannot be separated from being rooted in small realities characterized by low population density and difficult access to financial resources. Overcoming the reduced scale of ecomuseums would mean, in some cases, overcoming the proper meaning of the ecomuseum; therefore, this is not the correct way to go through. A correct solution in this regard would appear instead to develop (and in the experience of the Ecomuseum of Argenta is interesting) a system of networking and institutional partnerships with other ecomuseums or similar situations that would allow the increase of the critical mass and the political weight of the ecomuseum without distorting its original meaning. This idea is fully consistent with the studies that proposed a multilevel governance perspective for the management of cultural heritage (Bonet and Donato, 2011). A possible further development of these ideas could consist of analyzing the opportunities for full adoption of a perspective of collaborative governance in the ecomuseum context (Jeon and Kim, 2021).

Conclusion

Starting from the considerations set out in the previous section, this concluding section intends to carry out an analysis of the possibilities for the future development of this research, starting from the key concept that the proposed study was exploratory (i.e., aimed at validating the possibility of expanding the hypotheses here formulated in different contexts). First, the research was able to highlight only that in the cases, there was a scarce presence, or even the absence, of appropriate managerial tools suitable for supporting the development of ecomuseum strategies. The development of this study in new contexts of analysis could start from the observation of ecomuseum realities, if existing, in which such tools, such as performance measurement systems or non-financial reporting systems, have been developed.

Regarding this last aspect, the role of non-financial reporting, it primarily represents an accountability tool that appears to be

particularly appropriated in an ecomuseum context, as suggested in previous works (Magliacani, 2015). A full involvement of the community is represented not only by citizen adhesion to the activities proposed by the ecomuseum, but it is also fully realized when some form of transparent communication to the community of the activities carried out—and related to the use of public financial resources—is provided.

A further point for future research can be represented by the role played by the COVID-19 pandemic with reference to the topics developed in this work. Some authors have already produced preliminary studies that have highlighted how ecomuseums played a key role in supporting local communities in certain contexts, precisely during the pandemic period (Santo et al., 2021). These considerations seem to deserve further study, not only with a perspective aimed at what happened in the past but also to understand what lessons the pandemic period has produced in the ecomuseum sector, with reference to the ability of ecomuseums to know how to interpret and deal with moments of unexpected crisis.

In conclusion, this work also has some limitations. First, it considered a single geographical context (Emilia Romagna Region, Italy), so the results could be influenced by the specificities of the identified territorial context. Second, the work has considered only the perspective of the ecomuseum managers, but a potential development of the research could consider the point of view of the people involved in the ecomuseum activities.

Author's note

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Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Author contributions

Conducted experiments: FB; participated in research conception and design: FB and FD; wrote and drafted the manuscript: FB; critical revision of the article: FB and FD;

performed data analysis: FB; contributed to writing the manuscript: FB and FD. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Governance of cultural heritage: towards participatory approaches

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes participatory governance in relation to heritage. Based on previous studies on the implementation of participation and theoretical discussions considering the participatory governance of cultural heritage, we found four types of cultural heritage governance, with differing weights with regard to public authorities, civil society, markets, and citizens. Governmental, corporatist, service-led, and co-creative cultural heritage governance types were identified, which reflect the shifts in participatory approaches to governance from state-centered activities to the proliferation of civil society, and from professionally dominated to more citizen-based activities. According to our analysis, culture and heritage can be conceptualized as instruments for the transformation of attributes and competencies, and they work as mediums to cultivate recognition between institutions and citizens. This includes not only seeking consensus in decision making but also respecting the nuances and values of different heritages.

Keywords:

governance

participation

cultural heritage

co-creation

public policy and management

Introduction

The subject of participatory governance has recently gained prominence in the fields of public policy and management. The basis of participatory governance is favoring and promoting the direct participation of citizens in the public decision-making processes. The growing relevance of participatory approaches is consistent with the evolution of the concept of governance in the current context of public administration, especially in Europe (Bouckaert, 2017). This implies the possibility of considering a new research agenda for public sector governance, where participation could play a crucial role. The opportunity to develop participatory methods in public administration is strictly connected with the possibility that these methods will emerge to solve problems between different, and sometimes conflicting, "public values" (Nabatchi, 2012).

Concerning the development and spread of participatory approaches to governance, Frank Fischer (2006) has construed two prominent shifts: a) from state-centered activities to a proliferation of civil society organizations that deliver services and offer various forms of support to economic and social development and b) from professionally dominated to more citizen- or client-based activities, often taking place within the new civil society organizations. Despite much of the rhetoric surrounding the discussion of participation, experiences with new forms of participatory governance show participation to be neither straightforward nor easy. A closer look shows that citizen participation is a complicated and uncertain business that needs to be contextualized, and carefully thought out in advance (Fischer, 2000). It must be carefully organized and facilitated and even cultivated and nurtured, yet without too rigorous a priori specifications (Johanson et al., 2014).

In this article, participatory approaches appear to be particularly appropriate for the application of cultural heritage policy and management. Relevant international institutions have claimed the importance of community engagement in cultural heritage management and development since the beginning of this century. The Budapest Declaration on World Heritage (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO, 2002), the Intangible Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 2003), the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005), and the Faro Convention of the Council of Europe (Council of Europe,

2005) represent some of the milestones observed along this path. An actual application of participatory methods for cultural heritage presents relevant difficulties, and there is a concrete risk of observing an expectation gap, similar to those highlighted in the literature concerning the effectiveness of democracy (Flinders, 2014). For these reasons, this paper aims to identify different conditions for the adoption of participatory approaches in the context of the governance of cultural heritage.

Different policy sectors' contexts produce distinct kinds of governing practices and procedures that have an impact on the level of citizen participation and affect the definitions of cultural heritage and the types of governance. For example, the international context of cultural policy shows a quite varied situation of national regimes, in terms of institutions, types of funding, and modes of organization (Dubois, 2015; Mulcahy, 2006).

The analysis draws on perspectives of participatory governance from earlier studies on the implementation of participation and will contribute to the theoretical discussions considering the participatory governance of cultural heritage. The paper is structured as follows. The next section will introduce the basic concepts used in this analysis. In the following section, four types of cultural heritage governance are identified in relation to the possible interrelation of the elements of the traditional/hybrid definitions of cultural heritage and the lower/higher levels of citizen participation. The paper will end with some concluding remarks, highlighting ideas for future research.

Basic Concepts

Governance for Citizens

Governance is a complex term with some ambiguity traits, and it is often linked to the promotion of democracy and the fight against corruption (Rose-Ackerman, 2017). The concept of governance is traditionally differentiated from that of government because the former relies on the system of relations between governmental entities and the societal system whereas the latter seems to convey a more coercive power exercised by the public authority (Kooiman, 2003; Peters, 1996; Rhodes, 1997). In this analysis, governance is considered "as governing with and through networks and their cooperative behaviour" (Rhodes, 2007, pp. 1245–1246).

Based on the findings of previous research, the extent to which citizens become involved in the

creation of heritage should have a strong impact on the success of governance processes. Also, academics and professionals in cultural management advocate multi-stakeholder governance models and the multi-level management of cultural resources (Bonet and Donato, 2011; Kickert, 1997; Li et al., 2020). In these governance systems, there is often a significant degree of autonomy of the actors involved, and the state can only steer the governance networks imperfectly (Stoker, 1998). The varieties of cultural heritage governance that this paper proposes reflect different types of governing with differing weights with regard to public authorities, civil society, markets, and citizens.

Previous empirical research reports and articles on governance have identified several important aspects of what it requires. These include constitutional legitimacy, administrative competence, accountability, transparency, and public participation (Ackerman, 2004; Blair, 2000; Cuthill and Fien, 2005; Fung and March, 2001; Kim et al., 2005), which imply attributions like capacity and autonomy but also performance and results (Fukuyama, 2013; Rotberg, 2014). A significant debate about governance regards the development of the conditions for "good" governance. Specifically, since 1989, the World Bank has established conceptual references for the key elements that constitute good governance (Woods, 2000). The concept of good governance is also explicitly noted, in these terms, by the International Monetary Fund, which defines good governance aspects as "the transparency of government accounts, the effectiveness of public resource management, and the stability and transparency of the economic and regulatory environment for private sector activity" (IMF, 1997, p. 3). Later, the OECD (2007, p. 336) defined good governance as follows: "Good governance is characterised by participation, transparency, accountability, rule of law, effectiveness, equity, etc." Good governance has thus become closely related with participation, which, in this context, has also become an instrument, for example, for the World Bank's "own agendas" (Fischer, 2006, p. 22).

The complexity of good governance can also be easily applied to the main contemporary, transformative challenges facing cultural policies: the call for redefinitions of culture, the desire for easier access to culture and art, and the widening of the borders of cultural fields (Bonet and Négrier, 2018; McGuigan, 2016; Stage, Eriksson, and Reestorff, 2020). The same ideas can be detected in the governance of cultural heritage (Poirrier, 2003; Shipley and Kovacs, 2008). This

relates to the struggle between the transformative and the functionalist roles that culture and heritage policy has in society, when heritage, tradition, art, philosophy, religion, education, and advertising can be used by dominant groups to make their dominance appear normal and natural to the heterogeneous groups that constitute the society (Williams, 1961, 1967, 1974).

Ultimately, good governance is rooted in trust as it rests upon interaction, negotiation, and resource exchange. This can involve different arenas: governmental arenas, where decisions carry the authority of the state; non-governmental arenas, in which self-organizing citizens make decisions; and new kinds of arenas, where governmental and non-governmental actors meet to debate and possibly act and decide together (Somerville and Haines, 2008). Good governance can be pursued through the enhancement of community-based decision making at a local level. It can contribute to improving resource allocation, increasing community commitment, reasserting community identities, and strengthening community groups and their voices, which all contribute to the development of new collaborative actions, which, in turn, can increase the success rate of governance (Cuthill and Fien, 2005).

Participatory Governance of Cultural Heritage

Heritage can be how "very selective material artefacts, mythologies, memories, and traditions become resources . . . [that] are selected according to the demands of the present" (Graham, 2002, p. 1004). A heritage regime is the result of socio-historical, political, and cultural processes of classification (definitions, hierarchies, inclusion, and exclusion), labelling, and support. The identification of heritage is based on an active choice about which elements of culture are deemed worthy of preservation as an "inheritance" for the future. These decisions are generally made by state authorities and international organizations (Blake, 2000; Salazar, 2010). According to Višna Kisić (2014), heritage as a process connects three interdependent categories: firstly, (re)production as a process of the creation or preservation of a desired image of the world; secondly, values as a process of the reflection, recognition, and formulation of desires and choices and as the intended result of creation; and thirdly, identities of new social structures as forms of shaping and representing values. To recognize such categories, institutions and official bodies need to encourage dialogue about values and allow social actors to take part in decisions about

heritage (Turnpenny, 2004).

A concrete attempt to delineate the concept of cultural heritage emerges from the Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, the result of the World Conference on Cultural Policies "Mondiacult" in 1982:

The cultural heritage of a people includes the works of its artists, architects, musicians, writers and scientists and also the work of anonymous artists, expressions of the people's spirituality, and the body of values which give meaning to life. It includes both tangible and intangible works: languages ..., rites, beliefs, historic places and monuments, literature, works of art, archives and libraries. Every people therefore has a right and a duty to defend and preserve its cultural heritage, since societies recognize themselves through the values in which they find a source of creative inspiration (UNESCO, 1982, secs. 23–24).

As an international organization, UNESCO has a very special kind of actorhood. Funded by its member states, it is a high-level forum for intellectual engage, that creates vocabulary to be disseminated on national level, and sets international normative standards (conventions, recommendations, and declarations), that policymakers can follow when (re)formulizing policy domains. (Alasuurari & Kangas 2020.) The definition of cultural heritage by "Mondiacult" has been further developed through the report *Our Creative Diversity* (World Commission of Culture and Development, 1996), the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* (UNESCO, 2001), and the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO, 2003). Therefore, the consideration of cultural heritage regards both its tangible and intangible dimensions (Vecco, 2010), also in its digital expressions. In the frame of the 2003 Convention, intangible heritage is defined (article 2) as "oral traditions and expressions, including language ..., performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, traditional craftsmanship." The newest theme for local stakeholders emphasizes many ways to get indigenous peoples better involved in the Convention (UNESCO, 2019).

There are systematic differences in how people do, make, and say things, and thus, different cultures exist (Cahoone, 2005). The richness of cultural phenomena and practices derives substantially from hybridity, which is a characteristic feature of cultural heritage: hybridity as such refers to variety, combinations, and mixtures, which also makes it impossible to define the moment when a "hybrid" begins (Kuutma, 2013). Consequently, cultural heritage is characterized by a multiplicity of

contexts and meanings, changing through time and across space, resulting in a processual production of heritage.

The link across time and space makes heritage a constructor of agreed-upon rules for a community, and the identification of cultural heritage can be regarded as a political act. Hence, cultural heritage is a value-laden concept, vulnerable to becoming co-opted by ideology. The phrase "participatory governance of cultural heritage" has gained popularity in recent years (EU, 2018; Voices of Culture, 2015). However, previous research also suggests that participatory governance has become a new orthodoxy in a sense that policy innovations, like participatory budgeting and citizen assemblies, are often celebrated without closer consideration of what kind of arrangements the realization of participatory governance requires (Richardson, Durose, and Perry, 2019).

As the UNESCO official documents (UNESCO, 1982, 2001, 2003) illustrate, the governance of cultural heritage requires the involvement of a range of local stakeholders, normally represented by associations that accompany an object or monument and provide the sense of being part of a group (Blake, 2000). In this view, the development of cultural heritage is based on the joint discovery of the community's own identity, and local actions, like associational memberships and cooperatives, are important for the development of the political capacities of citizens (Fischer, 2006; Holmes and Slater, 2012). Previous research suggests closely scrutinizing the processes that are concerned with the regulation, mediation, and negotiation of cultural and historical values and narratives (Waterton and Smith, 2009). It calls for dialogue where the inclusiveness of heritage definitions is discussed and diversities in communities are heard (Apaydin, 2018; Williams, 1961; Zamarbide Urbaniz, 2019).

It seems to be necessary to investigate both what (e.g., defining and adopting cultural heritage) is done and how (the processes and practices). This is particularly true in the context of the governance of cultural heritage so as to understand the varied contextual landscape that such governance is bound to. At the local level, the quality of governance rests both on rules of deliberation and the impact of new political space deliberation on decision-making processes (Farrington, 2011), which imply "using discursive techniques to identify appropriate policy choices for given circumstances," as Clive Gray (2012, p. 507) writes. The underlying idea of exposed concepts in the field of governance can be expressed in the search for a "new"

form of governance, based on tools and processes that enable participation (Bingham, Nabatchi, and O'Leary, 2005; Skelcher and Torfing, 2010).

Participatory Governance Logics, the Role of Citizens, and Functions of Institutions

As illustrated above, the participatory governance of cultural heritage refers to organizing and joining collaborative ventures aimed at intercepting, extracting, processing, and transforming knowledge to make it useable in decision-making processes. Recently, researchers have developed new categorizations to depict how such processes are intertwined with different governance logics and what it means for the nature and form of citizen participation in the processes. In a current analysis of different citizen roles, governance logics, and institutional functions of participatory governance, the researchers formed four distinctive logics for local participatory governance: instrumental, interest-based, deliberation-based, and functional (Danielsson et al., 2018). Instrumental logic is based on vertical relations and the top-down implementation of policy goals, where decision making relies on "the parliamentary chain." The other three logics are based on horizontal relations, where interests are mediated and articulated (interest-based), reflected via reasoning together (deliberative), or co-produced and coordinated (functional).

Citizens can lead their own lives with recognition and develop a sense of belonging to a community based on linguistic, religious, national, or ethnic identity, among other factors that appear to be connected with the definition of cultural heritage (Kangas, 2004). Each of the four logics above grants citizens different roles. According to the instrumental logic of participatory governance, citizens vote, take part in political party activities, and contribute to the top-down implementation of policies. Instrumental logic can be detected in the use of instruments like user surveys, which follow vertical implementation structures. In interest-based participatory governance, citizens participate actively in a role where they represent either their own or group (or both) interests. Interest-based logic leads to the use of instruments like participatory budgeting and the gathering of citizens' suggestions. In the deliberative model, citizens participate and provide learning in dialogues and public conversations. Deliberative logic is realized through citizen panels and dialogue councils. Finally, according to the functional logic of participatory governance, citizens contribute

knowledge and other resources to solve problems efficiently. Functional logic comes alive in governance networks (Danielsson et al., 2018).

Political participation also has diverse dimensions at the individual level. According to Ekman and Amnå (2012), manifest forms of political participation include both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary forms of political action, which happen via voting, political parties, partaking in demonstrations, etc. In addition, they refer to "latent forms", where engagement in activities within the sphere of civil society is important.

Since its beginnings, research on participation has stressed the importance of bottom-up perspectives and empowering protocols (Arnstein 1969). Rather than just being a process of creating shared knowledge, participation is a process where people give meaning to themselves and their relationships with others and can discuss differences, boundaries, and ways of belonging in everyday life; their formal and informal practices can meet and alter each other. Sherry Arnstein's definition of citizen participation delineates participation as a categorical term for citizen's power (1969). From a Freirean perspective, participation is a dynamic and transformative process of dialogue, which enables people to realize their potential and be engaged in their own welfare (Freire, 1972; see Fischer, 2006).

Per Gustafson and Nils Hertting (2017) found that people choose to participate for substantially different reasons. Based on empirical analysis, they produced three distinct types of motives for participation – common good, self-interest, and professional competence, and stated that "both common good and self-interest motives speak for the democratic potential of participation" and "democratic learning and networking ... [can] be an integral part of the meaning that certain groups of participants attribute to participatory governance" (2017, p. 546).

Participatory processes differ in terms of who is included (i.e., broad involvement versus small groups or interest groups) and who is encouraged to become actively involved (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Much depends on how much power a political system is willing to grant the people (Thomas, 1995). Participatory governance is a complicated effort, and citizen participation "needs to be carefully thought out in advance," as Fischer writes (2006, p. 22). Obvious questions regarding participatory governance are still whose voices and how many voices the governance system can recognize and on what terms. In the sense of participatory governance, the practices adopted by institutions are essential questions for a working

democracy. To what extent can people participate and influence politics that affect their own lives? New methods of citizen participation can also increase bureaucracy and lead to inefficiency (Farrington, 2011). Possible disadvantages in terms of participation include the heterogeneity of actors, their potentially differing ambitions, and the fact that the means they have at their disposal to take part in participation do not always lead to empowerment.

Examination of Participation in Cultural Heritage Governance

The aim for this article is to analyze participatory approaches in the governance of cultural heritage. This article also calls for further research in the field, especially to test these observations in different territorial areas and local context (Adell, Bendix, Bortolotto & Tauschek, 2015; Zamarbide Urbaniz, 2019). Next, based on the above-expressed theoretical framework and research dealing with participation and governance in cultural fields, the authors delineate four types of cultural heritage governance and discuss their readiness in terms of participatory governance approaches. The types are formed via the use of two axes, one expressing the heritage definition (a vertical line moving from the institutionalized definition of heritage to the hybrid one) and another expressing the level of citizen participation (a horizontal line covering low to high citizen participation). The four types reflect

different types of governance with differing weights regarding public authorities, civil society, markets, and citizens. By analyzing which understanding of heritage these different types adopt and how participatory the processes that produce the heritage definitions are, the aim is to deepen the understanding of participatory heritage governance. All this also relates to the role that heritage has in society: in its institutionalized form, heritage's meaning is cemented by established institutions and more or less taken as normal and natural, whereas hybridity may bring up disputes based on heterogeneity that challenge this institutionalized understanding (cf. Williams, 1961, 1967, 1974).

The two axes form quadrants that describe the types of cultural heritage governance:

- 1) governmental,
- 2) corporatist,
- 3) service-led, and
- 4) co-creative types of cultural heritage governance.

Governmental

Different governance systems vary in how they induce and respond to information from society ("feedback") and in their capacities to reply to this information ("adaptability") (Duit and Galaz, 2008). The governmental type of cultural heritage governance implies an institutionalized definition of cultural heritage and a lower rate of citizen participation. Incomplete transparencies in terms of the administration

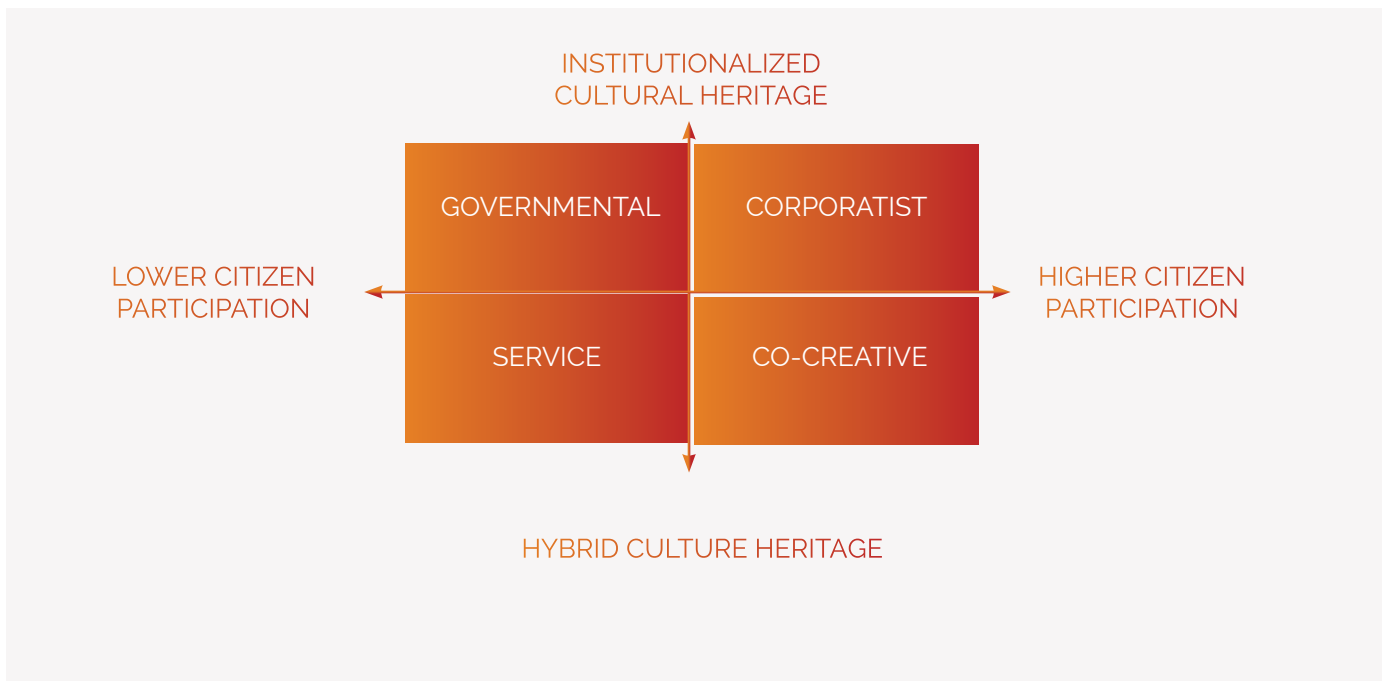


FIGURE 1. Types of cultural heritage governance

processes and limited citizen participation can both result from an exclusively defined notion of cultural heritage (Paquette, 2012; Waterton and Smith, 2009). Traditionally, cultural heritage policy and management have often been controlled by governmental bodies. This goes hand in hand with the legitimizing function of the power relations of cultural policy. Even in democratic societies, the culture of the elite becomes legitimized and hegemonic when administrators and experts make exclusive decisions about representations and reformations of culture, and when funding reflects power relations in society that may have consequences for the preservation of these relations (Sokka and Kangas, 2007; Feder & Katz-Gerro, 2012).

This type of governance can be compared to "fragile governance" (see Duit and Galaz, 2008): it can become focused on representing traditional hierarchies and face difficulties in accumulating new knowledge, adapting to new circumstances, and achieving collective actions, which makes it poorly equipped to handle change. As a result, citizen may find it difficult to join top-down generated processes and question the motivation and authenticity of public officers, who in turn can be afraid and insecure about what to expect after a potential change. Moreover, public officials often claim that there is no money for the necessary changes (Kangas and Sokka, 2015).

The lack of accountability is a common claim when attempts to develop participatory governance are criticized. Citizen participation and engagement require structural support for public action that backs grassroots community development and simultaneously reduces the tendency to create governmental hierarchies (Somerville and Haines, 2008). Public participation and good governance principles are important to create legitimacy, voice, and direction in heritage governance. People need to have opportunities and means to indicate their likes and dislikes to create accountability between them and the administration that governs: such instruments could include instituted public meetings, regular opinion surveys (including their collaborative evaluation), and formal grievance procedures (Blair, 2000).

At an organizational level, traditional top-to-bottom bureaucracy presents obstacles to empowerment-based participation. Due to the complex issues and rapidity of change in modern societies, politicians and public officials can face increasing difficulties in effectively managing the diversity of interests of local residents (Ackerman, 2004; Cuthill and Fien, 2005). In the context of social care (Braye and Preston-Shoot,

1995), some barriers to empowerment processes were listed. One of these relates to the organization of public services and the administration's relationship with residents. Public officers may fear the loss of their status and power, the insufficiency of their professional skills, and the eventual denial of their expertise. This makes them suspicious of their "clients'" emerging competences and emphasizes the mechanisms that reinforce (jurisdictional) power through legislation and administrative terminologies. These considerations seem to be expandable to cultural heritage.

The governmental type of heritage governance represents both low citizen participation and the hegemonic vision of heritage. As such, the competence and accountability of the administration can be questioned as it does not produce open, participatory, and democratic protocols and the free transfer of knowledge. To sum up, although this type of governance is still present in the context of cultural heritage management and policy, it does not appear to be suitable for responding positively to the current demands. It represents the instrumental logic of participatory governance, where citizens vote, take part in political party activities, and contribute to the top-down implementation of policies.

Corporatist

The corporatist type of cultural heritage governance implies an institutionalized definition of cultural heritage and a higher rate of citizen participation. Corporatist governance refers to controlled collaboration between the state and civil society, where established civil society organizations form intermediary structures between the state and the citizens. Corporatism can be identified in many policy areas (Öberg et al., 2011; Torpe, 2014). In corporatist settings, the structural preconditions that make voluntary organizations possible are important indicators of the overall "democratic infrastructure" of society (Torpe, 2014, p. 215). Despite this fact, corporatism is also a matter of benefits: it can be seen as a mutually beneficial exchange between interest groups and government, where "some actors control something that others desire" (Öberg et al., 2011, p. 365). Within its institutionalized arenas, the state can privilege some organizations over others and grant them the status of group representatives in the process of policymaking.

In many cases, interest groups and selected professionals have taken part in the formation of cultural

policy processes that create cultural heritage without the broader inclusion of local residents (e.g., Sokka and Kangas, 2007). The same problem is known to exist within other sectors. For example, in participatory environmental governance, public meeting attendees and committee members can be members of professional groups and strongly affiliated to interest groups, which leads to a lack of accountability in the eyes of citizen (Parkins and Sinclair, 2014).

Once again, the question of who has a voice is relevant because it reflects the inclusive and exclusive patterns embedded in the administrative structures. It is not guaranteed that attempts to develop governance through collaboration with civil society enhance participation. The selection of interest groups can be biased and exclusive, leading to a model of cultural heritage governance that, in principle, is a version of elitism. These problems are also emerging in some fields often related to cultural heritage management, like tourism, where the adoption of the correct empowerment of residents is crucial (Timothy, 2007). For cultural heritage, the level of the success of participatory practices can vary consistently in connection with the specific situation of the site or the local area and depending on the history and tradition of the representative groups (Chirikure, Manvanga, Ndoro, and Pwiti, 2010).

In this type of governance, the roles of citizens become defined by instrumental logic. Due to its controlled collaboration between the state and civil society, corporatist governance maximizes stability, but as an exclusive model, it is not flexible with regard to changing circumstances when collaboration with selected interest groups leads to the partial transfer of knowledge and poorly organized feedback (cf. Duit and Galaz, 2008). This can generate an assorted outlook in terms of cultural heritage, which engages the selected actors but does not fulfill the very ideas of changing boundaries, interactions, and negotiations within the networks that are identified to help in creating good governance (Rhodes, 2007). The success of governance seems to be dependent on opening up the process beyond the already established civil society organizations (Ackerman, 2004).

Service-led

The service orientation of cultural heritage governance implies a hybrid definition of cultural heritage and a lower rate of citizen participation. Governance has been piloted through the development

of service delivery models. For example, during the 1980s and 1990s, Australian governments attempted to develop an interface between the government and the community by following the private sector focus on improving customer services (Cutchill and Fien, 2005). This implies a need for balance between the requests of clients and beneficiaries of public services and the economic and efficient use of public resources.

Public managers are operating in a context where client (and citizen) needs are not made explicit as clearly as in a market system but where they must still be interpreted and possibly satisfied (Moore 1995). The service delivery perspective is targeted "for" the community, but it easily neglects community capacity building – the civic engagement – that can only be achieved by working with communities (Cutchill and Fien, 2005).

British experiences show how the use of markets has created tensions when the members of networks started to rival for contracts instead of aiming at cooperative behavior (Rhodes, 2007). In the end, the rivalry of participants can limit the diversity of cultural expressions when the actors try to maximize their individual utility through market-based selection processes, where only the fittest survive (Duit and Galaz, 2008). Annika Agger and Dorthe Lund (2017) noted how a service-oriented approach makes it hard to engage citizens in the production of public services as a group and limits citizen input regarding service improvement. Even if citizens participate and provide learning in dialogues and public conversations, the problem is that they are much more than customers: marketization allows a citizen to "exit" if they wish but does not provide active participation in decision-making and definition processes (Ackerman, 2004). Such governance can therefore be defined properly as service-led, echoing the shift from citizens to consumers (Clarke et al., 2007). The move towards a "contract culture" in service production has not increased civic participation as it posits the community organizations as parts of hierarchical governance rather than as cooperative partners (Somerville and Haines, 2008, p. 66).

Concerning cultural heritage governance, these topics typically emerge in the field of museum management and governance, where the public authority needs to balance the development of a correct managerial approach for the museum with the necessity of the integration of audiences within the museum (Croke, 2010). This necessity is related to the multiplicity of values associated with cultural heritage. At organizational level, the aim is to provide a service

to satisfy audiences' needs while at societal level participation can have public-good nature (Vecco et al. 2017). David Throsby (2010) identifies several cultural values to be added to heritage: aesthetic, spiritual, social, historical, symbolic, authenticity, and locational. That complexity alone is enough to indicate that any planning and policy instruments are not likely to be successful unless they engage the local population in the "ownership" of heritage. In principle, there is room for the diversity of heritage definitions in service-oriented governance, but this model does not actively support citizen participation. To accomplish this is not simply a matter of adapting predefined heritage and adjusting existing administrative patterns: it is also about fostering cultural understanding and taking part in decisions that (re)produce governing organizations and administrative formations (Kangas and Sokka, 2015).

Co-creative

There are also good experiences of co-management models that allow marginalized groups to take part in leading heritage administration (Paquette, 2008). The co-creative type of cultural heritage governance implies a hybrid definition of cultural heritage and a higher rate of citizen participation, where citizens contribute knowledge and other resources to solve problems efficiently.

In the functional logic of participatory governance, there are many alternative views to co-creation. It has been widely used to demonstrate a shift in thinking from organizations as definers of value to a more participatory process where people generate and develop meaning together with organizations. In the research literature, co-creation has mainly referred to innovation and value creation, which takes place as a collaborative process that involves different types of actors: a process where citizens are regarded as valuable contributors, but their precise role has remained rather unclear (Lund, 2018).

One of the many roots behind the idea of co-creation is participatory design, which was developed to involve workers in the development of systems in a workspace setting with designers in the 1970s (Holdgaard and Klaststrup, 2014). In the context of management studies, the concept of co-creation was introduced in the works that addressed the concept of co-production, investigated in both the private (Ramírez, 1999) and public sectors (Ostrom, 1996) through the development of flexible and cooperative

relations between organizations, which can be carried out through forms of so-called co-opetition (Li et al., 2020; Nalebuff and Brandenburger, 1997). The concept of co-creation is sometimes also used interchangeably with the concept of co-production, which, however, is here seen as more service- and product-oriented and often more concerned with cost reduction than value creation (Lund, 2018).

In the context of the public sector, co-creation has assumed a specific focus on the involvement of external stakeholders (Bovaird and Löffler, 2012). With regard to the provision of public services, this leads to rethinking the processes of the creation of public value (Moore, 1995). In this sense, co-creation, co-production, and co-governance are terms often used in contexts where the public sector and non-profit organizations cooperate, especially in the field of social services and welfare (Bode, 2006). In public settings where complex problems are addressed, co-creation can be subdivided into co-implementing, co-designing, and co-initiating – each of which distinguishes different approaches to citizen engagement (i.e., at which points of the processes citizen are active and how active they are). Of these sub-dimensions, the dimension of co-initiator refers to the most active yet also the most resource-demanding citizen role (Lund, 2018).

Co-creation is not just about the creation of things but also about interpretation and meaning-making, which is always co-created via social interaction (Ind and Coates, 2013). That is how the value-based definition of co-creation has developed to pay ever-stronger attention to the co-creation of experiences. The concepts of personalization, engagement, and co-production illustrate a broad view of co-creation, where personal experiences, the sense of connectivity and involvement, and taking part throughout the service experience are pivotal components. In marketing research, it is taken to refer to the self-directed path that consumers choose to take: it is about tailoring the experience to meet individual needs (Minkiewicz, Evans, and Bridson, 2014). In the context of the public sector, the experience-based knowledge of citizens has become valued in finding answers to "wicked" societal problems (Agger and Lund, 2017).

Frequently, even co-creative processes stem from institutional (organizational) needs. Experience, however, has not been the traditional focus of heritage organizations, and only little empirical research has been carried out regarding the drivers and inhibitors of co-creation (Minkiewicz et al., 2014). According to previous research, there, nevertheless, is a need

for tailor-made methods and facilitating processes in co-creation to minimize "the importance of power differences and support rational argumentation rather than interest-based advocacy" (Agger and Lund, 2017, p. 11). It is important not only to pay attention to output and effectiveness but also to include marginalized citizens to maintain the legitimacy of co-creative processes.

A Danish study illustrates how co-creativity has often been understood in a rather limited and unclear way. When the "outside partners" of art and heritage institutions (museums) remain "visitors" rather than actual partners who have a voice, their participation becomes stripped from its democracy origin – despite claims of enhancing participation (Holdgaard and Klastrop, 2014). One research study considering participation in cultural services in Finland found that people do not see themselves as having much power: residents feel unable to influence decision making concerning local cultural activities (Kangas and Sokka, 2015). In another Finnish project (Kangas, 2017), action research was conducted to strengthen the opportunities for existing, possibly even hidden, local cultures to engage in participative co-creation. The starting point was at the very grassroots level, trying to reach the people who had never taken part in cultural activities. It illustrated how artists and anthropologists can activate grassroots participation. Participation was also strengthened when the directors of different sectors facilitated change in their own domains, generated positive attitudes towards participation, and publicly expressed this (cf. Sani, 2015). Participation was enhanced by connecting the activation of people to the idea of finding universal points of identification and common denominators, with special features that may even be subject to debate among members of local communities. In contrast to knowledge determined by elites, participative processes can activate knowledge agreed upon by a community, and both innovators and adapters are needed in such processes (Ind and Coates, 2013). Another case study from Korea (Hong and Lee, 2015) demonstrates how shared goals and visions between all partners – local residents, public institutions, experts, and even tourists – are vital for the successful implementation of co-creation.

To avoid the most obvious governance failures, it is important to note that governance is date- and place-specific (cf. Paquette, 2012). Due to collaborative action, the co-creative mode is apt to detect changes early and create flexible decision-making procedures (Duit and Galaz, 2008). The co-creative governance of

heritage is, however, not likely to succeed without the acceptance and adoption of participatory structures. It requires support to back grassroots community development. Furthermore, attention should be paid to reducing the tendency to create extensive hierarchies – both within the political system that grants legitimacy to the actors and the civil society that creates and maintains the channels for expressions of individual and interest-group opinions (Somerville and Haines, 2008). In a public setting, processes of co-creation also require leadership that "can navigate in conditions of shared power and voluntary engagement, where participants cannot be ordered to collaborate but must be convinced of the merits of collaboration" (Agger and Lund, 2017, p. 10; see also Ansell and Gash, 2012).

Conclusions

This article aimed to identify different tools for participatory approaches in the context of the governance of cultural heritage. Following R.A.W. Rhodes (2007), governance was defined as governing through networks and the cooperative behavior of the same. Different models and their applications were recognized. The authors implement this approach to cultural heritage by asking how heritage becomes defined in different governance frames and which kinds of roles different modes of heritage governance allow citizens to play.

The analysis identified knowledge about contextual power structures and attentiveness to different voices in different phases of decision making and implementation as important prerequisites of citizen participation (including both more direct and latent forms of political participation). Based on this, obvious questions for participatory governance are regarding whose voices and how many voices the governance system can recognize and on what terms. Also, the practices adopted by institutions are essential questions for a working democracy in this perspective.

Against this backdrop, four types of cultural heritage governance were identified, that reflect different types of governing with differing weights with regard to public authorities, civil society, markets, and citizens: 1) *governmental*, 2) *corporatist*, 3) *service-led*, and 4) *co-creative*. As such, the four types indicate the shifts in participatory approaches to governance from state-centered activities to the proliferation of civil society and from professionally dominated to more citizen-based activities (see Fischer, 2006), which can also be detected in more official recommendations for

creating new participatory practices (cf. UNESCO).

Traditionally, the first and second, governmental and corporatist forms in relation to the governance of heritage have been the prevailing types in the cultural and heritage sectors. Of these, *the governmental type* implies the institutionalized definition of heritage and a low level of citizen participation and appears not to be suitable for responding positively to the demand for enhanced participation. It represents the instrumental logic of participatory governance, where a citizen may vote, take part in political party activities, and contribute to the top-down implementation of policies, but is excluded from other parts of the heritage process. *The corporatist type* of cultural heritage governance implies an institutionalized definition of cultural heritage and a higher rate of citizen participation. Corporatist governance refers to controlled collaboration between the state and civil society, where established civil society organizations form intermediary structures between the state and citizens. The structural preconditions that make voluntary organizations possible are important for democracy, but corporatism is also a matter of benefits. Within its institutionalized arenas, the state can privilege some organizations over others and grant them the status of group representatives in the processes of policymaking. Due to its controlled collaboration between the state and civil society, corporatist governance maximizes stability but is not flexible with regard to changing circumstances.

The third type, the *service orientation* of cultural heritage governance implies a hybrid definition of cultural heritage and a lower rate of citizen participation. In principle, there is room for diversity in heritage definitions in service-led governance, but this model does not actively support citizen participation. The service delivery perspective is targeted "for" the community, but it posits the community organizations as parts of hierarchical governance rather than as cooperative partners and easily neglects civic engagement, which limits citizen input to service improvement, echoing the shift from citizens to consumers.

Our fourth type, the *co-creative governance of cultural heritage*, implies a hybrid definition of cultural heritage and a higher rate of citizen participation, where citizens contribute knowledge and other resources to solve problems efficiently. Culture and heritage can be conceptualized as instruments for the transformation of attributes and competencies; at best, they can work as mediums through which it is possible to cultivate recognition between institutions and citizens and even

create a sense of identity among citizens and those who are excluded from formal citizenship. This includes not only seeking consensus in decision making but also respecting the nuances and values of different heritages.

The co-creative governance of heritage is not likely to succeed without the adoption of participatory structures in an administration that supports grassroots community development. In the co-creative type, citizens and other stakeholders take part in the formation of processes like goal setting and strategy definition, proceeding to a more active engagement of the users of public services. According to this type, it becomes important not only to pay attention to output and effectiveness but also to include marginalized citizens to maintain the legitimacy of co-creative processes.

The co-creative type aims to motivate community members to take part in heritage processes and requires interaction between professionals, managers, stakeholders, and members of the communities that the heritage definitions affect. Due to collaborative action, the co-creative mode is apt to detect changes early and create flexible decision-making procedures. In the public setting, processes of co-creation also require leadership. Participatory governance needs grassroots initiatives but can only work effectively if the local government is active in enabling partnership building and guaranteeing the rules of the game, which strengthens the legitimacy of actions.

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What is the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage? A long way from cultural policies towards innovative cultural management models

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ABSTRACT

The year 2018 has been declared the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH). This initiative aims at celebrating European cultural heritage through a series of actions and events across Europe to enable people to become closer to and to become more involved with their cultural heritage. This paper aims at investigating the legacy of the EYCH and its impact on the management models of cultural heritage. By means of a qualitative approach analyzing both secondary and primary data, the research contributes to the academic reflection on cultural management by highlighting the link between policy, governance and management. The EYCH initiative focused on promoting transversal and integrated policy actions by participatory governance approaches. However, it partially fails to design a proper management model for the cultural heritage that could enable policy and governance innovation to take place.

Keywords:

European Year of Cultural Heritage

Cultural management models

Cultural governance systems

Introduction

The year 2018 has been declared the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH), following the proposals presented in November 2014 by the Council of Ministers of the European Union ("Conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage", CEU, 2014) and in 2015 by the European Parliament (Resolution "Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe", EP, 2015). The EYCH consisted, first, in a broader set of events and initiatives: in total 23,000 events reaching 12.8 million people, alongside 14,000 labelled projects and over 900 EU-funded projects. It implied the collaboration of 37 countries and 38 stakeholders, and its implementation was carried out through the cooperation among 19 Directorate Generals of the European Commission.

However, the ambition of the EYCH was not only to create a year-long series of events to celebrate the richness and importance of cultural heritage, but also to leave a legacy that would prompt a rethink of the role and meaning of cultural heritage. Furthermore, the EYCH initiative could be interpreted as a potentially key moment for stimulating a broader discussion on cultural heritage management, pushing forward the link between policies, governance systems and management models.

Our research intends to investigate this topic, going beyond a mere analysis of policy documents: we aim to question the management dimensions emerging during the European Year of Cultural Heritage and its implication for future developments of the cultural sector. In particular, the research would like to answer the following research question: does the EYCH aim to create a new management approach to cultural heritage?

In order to investigate this question, inductive qualitative research has been carried out adopting a longitudinal as well as a transversal approach. The longitudinal analysis investigates the evolution of the policy documents related to the EYCH for a period of approximately four years; the transversal approach allowed the authors to link the impact of policy initiatives on governance and cultural management. The research was divided in two phases: a policy documents analysis and an empirical investigation focusing on identifying governance and management approaches emerging from the EYCH policy initiative. The latter investigation consists in a series of semi-structured research interviews with officers and those in managerial positions at European Union level who

were involved in different phases of the EYCH. The results of the two phases provided interesting insights and stimulated further reflections on the management approaches emerging from the EYCH, thus allowing the authors to answer the research question.

This paper is structured in five sections. Following the introduction, the first section presents a literature review on the developments of European cultural heritage policies as related to the academic research on cultural governance and cultural management in a longitudinal perspective. The second section explains the research design and methodology, while the third section provides an analysis and discussion of the secondary and primary data. Section four focuses on the managerial implications of the analyzed results in terms of cultural heritage management. In the last section, the authors draw some concluding remarks, also highlighting the limitations and potential further developments of the research.

The development of the approaches to cultural heritage: policies, governance and management

The objective of this research is to reflect on the link between policies, governance and management of cultural heritage with specific reference to the impact of the European Year of Cultural Heritage initiative.

In order to provide an appropriate theoretical framework to carry out this investigation, it seems relevant to analyze the development of the European policies on cultural heritage as well as the academic debate on cultural heritage management and governance.

With reference to policy, cultural heritage, defined as "our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations [...] irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration" (UNESCO, 2018), has been part of European policies from the beginning, starting specifically with the founding treaties of the European Union (Zagato, 2011; Sciacchitano, 2015).

In the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (1957, also referred to as Treaty of Rome) and more specifically in the Treaty on the European Union (1993), the European Union promotes a vision of culture based on the concept of preservation and on its potential role as a unifying element for the construction of a European identity. The common cultural identity is indeed underlined as one of the guiding principles,

“THE SHIFT OF EUROPEAN CULTURAL POLICIES FROM A FOCUS ON PRESERVATION AND IDENTITY TOWARDS AN INCREASING ATTENTION ON TOPICS OF PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE, CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACHES AND THE RELATION BETWEEN CULTURE AND SUSTAINABILITY, IS MIRRORED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH CULTURAL GOVERNANCE AND CULTURAL MANAGEMENT DEBATE”

and the role of promoting the preservation of European common cultural heritage is attributed to the European Union. These treaties promote, moreover, the principle of subsidiarity: the role of the European Union is to foster cooperation, implementing incentive measures but not excluding the laws and regulations of the member states that keep their autonomy in the development of their cultural policies (Mattocks, 2017; Staiger, 2013; Littoz-Monnet, 2007). In the consolidated version of these documents proposed in the Treaty of Lisbon (2007), art. 167 specifies that "the Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore". In this Treaty the key role of the member states and the subsidiarity principle is further underlined, reaffirming the European Union as the supporting entity in the development of common policies on cultural heritage; the cooperation for the development of cultural initiatives and exchanges among member states and with external partners (among which the Council of Europe) is again encouraged.

Though these founding documents addressed this topic, the first specific policy document on cultural heritage was issued in 1994 (Council Conclusion of 17 June 1994 on drawing up a Community Action Plan in the field of cultural heritage). This conclusion promotes an interpretation of cultural heritage still mainly based on preservation. However, for the first time it advocates for the need to connect cultural heritage with other fields such as tourism, territorial development, research, mass media and new technologies. As a matter of fact, over the following twenty years the approach to cultural heritage shifted from attention to conservation and links with the creation of common cultural identity to an interpretation of cultural heritage as leverage for socio-economic development, also addressing integrated approaches and the importance of enhancing cultural heritage as a strategic asset of the European Union (Barca, 2017).

An external organization, the Council of Europe, became in those years one of the most important discussion platforms on these topics. In 2005, an initiative of the Council of Europe led to the "Framework convention on the value of cultural heritage for society" (also known as the Faro Convention), considered as a milestone for the promotion of concepts that were to become central in the following years; first of all the idea of participation, but also the interpretation of cultural heritage protection as "a central factor in the mutually supporting objective of sustainable development, cultural diversity, contemporary creativity".

The Faro Convention, differently integrated in the national policies of EU member states, became an inspiring document for later policy actions by the European Union. Its influence is visible in the definition of the European Agenda for Culture (Resolution of the Council of the European Union, 2007), stating the need to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, culture as driver for creativity and strategic element for international relations. It is also evident in the creation of the Culture 2007-2013 program and in a series of initiatives such as the "Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage and Global Change" launched by the Council of the European Union in 2011 (Barca, 2017).

However, a real turning point in the European policies on cultural heritage can be seen in a series of documents issued in 2014. In this year the Creative Europe program was launched, unifying the previous Culture and Media programs and underlining the need for integrated projects and interpreting culture and creativity, and their subsectors, as an interacting ecosystem.

In 2014, the Council approved the "Council conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe", that substantially adopted the definition and role of cultural heritage given by the Faro Convention. In 2014 the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament "Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe" emphasized the need to promote more

integrated approaches to the governance of culture in the European context. Finally, in November 2014 the Council of Ministers of the European Union (during the Italian presidency) issued the "Conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage", where the member states were encouraged to adopt a multi-level, multi-stakeholder approach to cultural heritage. This document also promoted the importance of civic participation in governance systems that recognized the interconnections among tangible, intangible and digital cultural heritage and that could facilitate the role of culture in local regeneration (Barca, 2017; Sciacchitano, 2015). The launching of a European Year of Cultural Heritage was also proposed in the conclusions.

This latter idea of a European Year of Cultural Heritage is again proposed in 2015 by the European Parliament resolution "Towards an integrated approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe". The resolution moreover identifies cultural heritage as a strategic resource for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth in line with other reports appearing in the same year, such as the report of the Horizon 2020 Expert Group "Getting Cultural Heritage to Work for Europe" or the final report of the project "Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe" (CHCfE, 2015).

The shift of European cultural policies from a focus on preservation and identity towards an increasing attention on topics of participatory governance, cross-sectoral approaches and the relation between culture and sustainability, is mirrored in the development of both cultural governance and cultural management debate.

With reference to cultural governance, academic research on the topic initially consisted often in studies on cultural governance at the territorial level (Pratt, 2010, 2012 and 2015) and on the capacity of governance systems to unlock the potential of the cultural and creative sector (EC, 2010). Over the last two decades, issues of regional development, urban regeneration and planning (Borin & Juno Delgado, 2018; Cooke & Lazzeretti, 2008; Healey, 2004; Andres & Chapain, 2013) and of the specificities of cultural clusters and districts (Scott, 2000 and 2010; Tepper, 2002) have been particularly debated. This stream of studies evolved into the broader theme of the governance of creative cities (Florida, 2004; Pratt, 2010 and 2012; Grodach, 2013), that increasingly highlighted the link between the different dimensions of the cultural and creative sector – namely cultural heritage, local cultural assets and the development of cultural and creative industries

(Borin, Donato, Gilli, 2012; Florida, 2004). It was also deeply investigated as a result of the financial crisis and its impact on the cultural sector. Within this framework, academics highlighted the need to identify new models of cooperation, governance systems and management models to ensure the overall sustainability of the cultural and creative sector in times of crisis (Bonet and Donato, 2011; Patuelli & Donato, 2018). This finally paved the way for the concept of cultural ecosystems (Borin & Donato, 2015; Borin, 2015): culture is interpreted as an ecology (Holden, 2015), in which governance systems are a means of promoting sustainability through the connections between cultural heritage, public and private cultural institutions, citizens and communities. Also, on the basis of the links with related fields, identifying through implementation of ecosystem approaches, the key for more sustainable models of development (Holden, 2015; Throsby, 2016). It was ultimately connected with the growing debate on how culture can interact with other traditional dimensions of sustainability (Duxbury, Kangas & De Beukelaer, 2017). Although the discourse has been sometimes criticized (Isar, 2017), culture has been advocated as one of the four pillars of sustainable development equal to social, economic, and environmental priorities (Loach, Rowley & Griffiths, 2017) and the importance of cultural heritage for development has been considered crucial (CHCfE, 2015; Van der Auwera & Schramme, 2014) even promoting the concept of "culture as sustainable development" (Soini & Dessein, 2016). In this idea, culture and cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible) are embedded in the whole discourse on sustainable development and constitute the basis for successful reflections on sustainable societies (Soini & Dessein, 2016).

With reference to cultural management, the link with the development of cultural policies is even more evident. Over the past decades, studies on the management of cultural heritage have shifted from an initial more conservative focus on preservation and cultural identity towards broader areas, more related to traditional disciplines of management (e.g. arts marketing, funding, performance measurement, etc.), although adapted to the peculiarities of the cultural heritage sector (Colbert, 2003; Evrard & Colbert, 2000; Dewey, 2004; Donato & Visser, 2010; Badia & Donato, 2013). In general, this trend implied not only the development of particular approaches (specific to cultural heritage), but also exploring the capacity of cultural heritage management to draw from the experiences and contact with other related

disciplines, such as tourism management (Leslie & Sigala, 2005; Pechlaner & Abfalter, 2006; Silvestrelli, 2013), public management or urban planning and development (Deeben et al., 1997). As well as significant parallels with the development of cultural policies and governance, cultural heritage management has been increasingly associated with the broader debates concerning the need to implement integrated strategies, or to find alternative models for dealing with a more complex society and emerging socio-economic changes. Among these trends, issues such as models of financing (Borin, Donato & Sinapi, 2018) or participatory/co-financing, participatory management as well as management models adapted to public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships (Settembre Blundo et al., 2017; Borin, 2017; Jelinčić et al., 2017) have been addressed as new strategic management practices for the cultural heritage sector. This studies also promoted discussion on issues of sustainability in cultural heritage management and on the need to conceive cultural management as a tool for sustainable development (Barthel-Bouchier, 2016; Guzmán, Roders & Colenbrander, 2017).

In short, the analysis of the previous paragraphs has provided significant insights on how cultural policies resonate with and have an impact on cultural governance and management debates. However, so far, the European policy initiatives specifically linking policy and governance changes to new paradigms in cultural heritage management have been scarce. The EYCH could be therefore interpreted as a potentially key moment for stimulating a new, broader reflection on cultural heritage management, pushing forward the above-mentioned link policies – governance systems – and management models. The challenge of our research is therefore investigating policies to understand the management dimensions emerging in the policy documents, and initiatives issued and implemented during the European Year of Cultural Heritage. This inductive qualitative investigation will be presented and discussed in the following sections.

Research design and methodology

As specified in the previous sections, this paper aims at investigating the managerial approaches emerging from the European Year of Cultural Heritage. In order to explore this topic, the authors decided to adopt an inductive qualitative research approach involving three main phases: preparation, organization, and reporting results of the analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In the

preparation phase, the authors designed the research and collected suitable data originating from two main sources of information (primary and secondary). In the organization phase, the data were coded creating categories and abstraction using also the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2012). This methodology was considered essential in order to comply with the criteria of rigor and trustworthiness (Gioia et al., 2012). It consists in coding the data according to a 1st order (informant-centric) and 2nd order (theory-centric) procedure leading to the final aggregation of data into main themes. In the reporting phase, the data are presented through tables and figures and clarified through the interpretation and discussions of the authors.

The decision to use a qualitative methodology is based on the fact that it is generally considered particularly suitable to carry out in-depth contextual analyses (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2016). It was decided to collect research information through multiple sources, in compliance with the acknowledgement of the "potential relevance derived from multiple sources of evidence rather than relying on a single source alone" as identified by Yin (2016: 9). Therefore, the investigation focused on two main sources of data: document analysis and semi-structured interviews. These sources were classified according to the primary and secondary data classification (Schreier, 2018).

As far as secondary data are concerned, the analyzed sample included documents that were issued in the period November 2017 - December 2018 in relation to the European Year of Cultural Heritage and published in the official web sources of the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EC, EP, EU official websites). For reasons of thoroughness, a document published after the specified year, but strictly related to it (namely the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage – EC, 2018m), was also included, since it was considered to be the policy document more explicitly discussing a central topic of the research, i.e. the legacy of the EYCH.

As far as primary data were concerned, semi-structured interviews were carried out with a selected research sample of eight qualified experts and officers of different European Union bodies who were involved in the EYCH. During the primary data collection, the researchers minimized the risk of influencing the interviewees and collecting biased information (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) by ensuring the confidentiality of the identity of the interviewees and establishing, in many cases, previous personal contact with the interviewees and guaranteeing that

confidential information would be kept private. The semi-structured interviews were carried out following a flexible research protocol that was amended several times based on informants' responses.

The different research phases are presented in the third section of this paper.

Empirical Research and Discussion

An in-depth presentation of the results of the research will be provided in the following sub-sections, organizing the analysis into two main parts: the former discussing secondary data analysis, the latter focusing on primary data analysis. This will allow further comparison of the results and lead the authors to draw some reflections on their managerial implications in section four.

Secondary data analysis: emerging perspectives

The first level of analysis aimed at identifying the policy, governance and managerial perspectives emerging from the official documents issued by the European Union in relation to the European Year of Cultural Heritage. As preparatory action for the analysis of these documents, the authors collected data from the official website of the EYCH.

This phase gave more precise insights on the type of documents that could be included in the analysis and lead to the selection of three main organisms of the European Union as relevant in terms of document issuing: the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament. During the EYCH, relevant documents were also produced by 'arm's length' groups working in close connection with European Union institutions; although not directly issued by the above-mentioned organisms, these documents are considered crucial for a thorough investigation of the research questions and therefore included in the documents of the research sample. More specifically, we are referring to the reports published as result of the studies of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) working groups of Member States' experts, in particular of the OMC Participatory Governance, the OMC Heritage Professions and the OMC Sustainable Tourism (OMC Participatory Governance, 2018; OMC Heritage Professions, 2018; OMC Sustainable Tourism, 2018). These reports are the result of a collective effort by experts of 27 European Union countries, requested by the Council of the European Union to address specific challenges, such as "innovative approaches to

the multi-level governance of tangible, intangible and digital heritage which involve the public sector, private stakeholders and the civil society" (OMC Participatory Governance, 2018).

The resulting sample includes a total of 22 documents published in the period between May 2017 ("Decision (EU) 2017/864 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on a European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018") and December 2018 ("EC SWD(2018) 491 final, COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT, European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage", 5 December 2018), including the New European Agenda for Culture (22 May 2018). This analysis highlighted that the EYCH promoted more than ten thousand events and activities taking place across Europe, that were classified according to 10 long-term European initiatives around the theme of Engagement, Sustainability, Protection and Innovation (EC, 2018) that have been launched during the year but will also continue beyond this period (see Figure 1).

In the document analysis, a recurring idea emerged that the EYCH is not merely a celebration of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage but rather a moment of reflection regarding the development of innovative interpretations of and approaches to cultural heritage (European Parliament and Council of the EU, 2017; EC, 2018a, d, l, m) and aiming to leave a lasting legacy for future European policies and initiatives (EC, 2018c, g, h, o; European Council, 2019). In particular, the emerging themes were related to four main concepts (see Figure 2): 1) holistic approaches 2) mainstreaming and integrated approaches 3) evidence-based policy making, and 4) multi-stakeholder cooperation/participatory governance.

With reference to the first concept, "holistic" and "participatory" are frequent terms in all the documents that identify the EYCH as an opportunity to test new integrated, holistic and participatory approaches to safeguarding and management of cultural heritage, at national and EU level (EC, 2018m) and highlighting that the aim is to use the initiative to foster "a sense of belonging to a common European space" (EC, 2018d, i, l). The year is therefore an "opportunity to engage citizens in a deeper reflection on the wealth of memory, ideals, principles and values embedded in Europe's cultural heritage, aiming at re-discovering how cultural diversity has shaped our identity as Europeans, thus reinforcing a sense of belonging to a common European space" (EC, 2018c).

With reference to the second recurring theme, "mainstreaming and integrated approaches", the



FIGURE 1. EUROPEAN INITIATIVES IN THE EYCH 2018

Source: EC, 2018

EYCH is indicated as a stimulus for mainstreaming the cultural heritage importance as a transversal topic in other sectors (OMC Heritage Professions, 2018; OMC Sustainable Cultural Tourism, 2018); the EYCH is interpreted as a laboratory "for heritage-based innovation" (OMC Participatory Governance, 2018) in which heritage's impact on other domains is investigated and used as a rationale for rethinking innovation mechanisms.

Regarding the third recurring theme, "evidence-based policy making", new policy actions are called upon, but they need to be supported and implemented on the basis of more precise data: therefore, several documents call for gathering better comparative data from the existing statistical institutions such as Eurostat and UNESCO.

As for the fourth theme, "multi-stakeholder cooperation/participatory governance", the documents encourage dialogue and exchange among a wide range of actors when designing and implementing

cultural heritage policies and programs.

The idea of holistic approaches, multi-stakeholder cooperation and participatory mechanisms are also the basis of the implementation of specific actions inside the New European Agenda for Culture adopted in May 2018 (EC, 2018d and e), as well as the 2019-2022 Work Plan for Culture issued in November 2018, in which there are explicit references to sustainability in cultural heritage and to the concepts of cultural and creative ecosystems, participation and cooperation. Furthermore, these principles are the starting points for the actions encouraged in the European Framework for Action on Cultural heritage (EC, 2018m) which are explicitly indicated as the legacy guidelines of the EYCH. The document proposes around 60 actions to be implemented by the European Commission in 2019 and 2020, grouped around the four above-mentioned topics. Also, the creation of a Culture Heritage Forum, meeting at least once a year starting in 2019, indicates a clear intention to encourage participatory mechanisms

in a holistic perspective: its members are European organizations active in the field of culture and cultural heritage, individuals appointed in a personal capacity, Member States' authorities as well as international organizations.

These results were considered as particularly relevant for the following phase of the research and were used to develop the research interview protocol.

Primary data analysis: the EYCH purposes and objectives

In the second phase of the research, the authors interviewed key stakeholders in the implementation of the EYCH. The results were analyzed according to the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2012) and will be presented according to aggregated dimensions, then further detailed in the 1st order, 2nd order results. Overall, the coding of the interviews highlighted the presence of three main aggregated dimensions/themes:

1. changing European policy mindset;
2. facilitating integrated approaches and participatory governance in line with the Treaty;
3. developing long-term policies.

Theme 1: Changing European policy mindset

With reference to theme 1 (aggregated dimension "changing European mindset - see Figure 3), the

interviewees underlined that the EYCH per se is only partially important and that the real objective is not merely to celebrate European cultural heritage. The aim is rather to create a legacy and make 2018 "a turning point in policy-making in the future" and "having launched the EYCH means that the sector has finally reached a stage of high priorities in the EU". According to the 2nd order analysis, two main points emerged: the first concerning the introduction of a trans-sectoral approach to policies, implementing culture as transversal to other sectors; the second focusing on the promotion of shared perspectives that could change the mindset in creating European policies. With reference to the first point, an interviewee argued that "this year [EYCH] is the beginning of a change in European policy mindset: the starting moment for integrating cultural elements in all other domains: research and innovation, agriculture, social inclusion and environment for example". Cultural heritage policies are therefore no longer interpreted as isolated from the other socio-economic sectors, but rather as the leitmotif unifying, in a trans-sectoral way, other key policy fields for the European Union. Though cultural heritage has previously already been included in European initiatives and policy measures (Barca, 2017; Sciacchitano, 2015, 2018 and 2019), the EYCH aims to structure this approach and embed it in the mindset of policy makers. In summary, the ambition is "to make cultural policies as transversal policies to other sectors. For example, we cannot make transport policies without considering the cultural element,



FIGURE 2. TOPICS EMERGING IN PHASE 1 – SECONDARY DATA

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

1st Order Concepts	2nd Order Themes	Aggregate dimension
<p>To interpret culture and CH not in a sectoral way [...] not to close each sector in specific policies (policies for culture, for transports, wealth, energy, etc.) [...] policy topics touched by the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage and by the New European Agenda for Culture can make a difference also in domains that are not usually connected to heritage</p>	<p>Introducing a transversal approach to policies, implementing culture as transversal to other sectors</p> <p>Promoting sharing perspectives that could change the mindset in creating European policies</p>	<p>CHANGING EUROPEAN POLICY MINDSET</p>
<p>Bringing the cultural agenda outside the self-referential space of the cultural policy discourse [...] is to make cultural policies as transversal policy to other sectors. Provide a framework for a European, cross-sectoral and integrated approach to cultural heritage</p>		
<p>An important mindset change in the way people act within the Commission, being them normally used to work in a comfortable silos approach.</p> <p>as a result of the mainstreaming effort during the EYCH, 15 Commission Services (EAC, REGIO, RTD, GROW, CNECT, ENV, CLIMA, JRC, EMPL, HOME, TAXUD, DEVCO, NEAR, ECHO, MARE) as well as the EEAS are now involved in the implementation of the Framework of Action on Cultural Heritage. This is a very positive signal, especially as several of these DGs have no tradition in working on cultural heritage related issues</p>		
<p>Having launched the EYCH means that the sector has finally reached a stage of high priorities in the EU</p>		
<p>This year (EYCH) is the beginning of a change in European policy mindset: the starting moment for integrating cultural elements in all other domains [...] The aim is to implement shared perspectives between culture and other sectors</p>		
<p>Cultural heritage addressed through other EU policies such as education, agriculture and rural development, regional development, social cohesion, environment, tourism, research and innovation, among others</p>		
<p>I think indeed that the EYCH called for a change in mindset [...] it is also a key resource for our future</p>		

FIGURE 3. FIRST AGGREGATED DIMENSION: CHANGING EUROPEAN MINDSET

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

culture is related and at the basis of other different sectors". With reference to the second topic, the stated objective was also to implement shared perspectives: "we want to pass from a vertical logic in policy-making to a horizontal logic with shared perspective between culture and other sectors".

Theme 2: Facilitating integrated approaches and participatory governance in line with the Treaty

A second objective perceived by the interviewees in the EYCH is to facilitate integrated approaches and

participatory governance, respecting the principles of subsidiarity highlighted in the Treaty (TFEU, 1957) (see Figure 4). This is perceivable in the two themes highlighted in the 2nd order analysis: the first relating to the principle of stakeholders' engagement, integrated and participatory governance and the second emphasizing that the European Union could work only as a facilitator in the implementation of these approaches, since their actual implementation is the responsibility of member states. This is even more evident in the 1st order analysis, where verbatims reports reiterate that the European Union, through

the European Commission and its member states, is organizing the events and policy initiatives of the EYCH with the "aim to promote participatory governance initiatives in the different member states, since they are the ones in charge of the implementation of cultural policies". An interviewee argued that "participatory governance, integrated approaches and stakeholders' involvement are key concepts in this EYCH" and that we need to interpret the "EYCH as a moment for which

the European Union and the European Commission are facilitators", they "cannot compel the different countries to implement participatory approaches, but [they] can facilitate the dialogue". Several actions are aiming to enable this dialogue, organizing collective reflection around working groups such as the Culture OMC (Open Method of Coordination), whose reports issued in early 2018 promote again the principles of participatory governance and stakeholders' engagement.

1st Order Concepts	2nd Order Themes	Aggregate dimension
The key idea of the EYCH is to promote participatory governance and stakeholders' engagement, of course respecting the principle of subsidiarity		
EYCH generated a stronger appreciation for the potential of the Faro Convention in eliciting a stronger sensitivity and a greater need to experiment with participatory governance models. The notion of a heritage community is especially important in this regard		
More bottom-up examples: The Cultural gems app developed by the JRC is a collaborative platform for sharing information on cultural and creative places off the beaten tracks in European towns and cities. The information on the app is crowdsourced, and therefore citizens, local administrators and non-for-profit organization are key to uploading content about their cities	 Stakeholders' engagement and participatory governance	
Series of events that aim to promote participatory governance initiatives in the different member states, since they are the ones in charge of the implementation of cultural policies		
Participatory governance and stakeholders' involvement are key concepts in this EYCH. But of course, the European Union could only encourage the implementation of these principles		 FACILITATING STAKEHOLDERS' INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE IN LINE WITH THE TREATY
The EC and the EU are facilitators: we can facilitate the dialogue		
In line with the Treaty, the EYCH is giving guidelines that are focused mainly on the key principle of participatory governance		
Request to move participatory governance of cultural heritage from simply an abstract notion to concrete action, in other words how participation can be put to practical use in the ordinary and everyday governance of CH		
About the long-term impact of the EYCH on policies [...] and a lot will depend on the will of EU Member States, regions and cities to apply some of the key principles that emerged during the year and to fully use the potential of the new Framework for Action	 EYCH as moment in which the EU and EC are facilitators, to stimulate EU to implement participatory governance mechanism	

FIGURE 4. SECOND AGGREGATED DIMENSION: FACILITATING INTEGRATED APPROACHES AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE IN LINE WITH THE TREATY

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

Theme 3: Developing long-term policies

Finally, a third key theme refers to the temporal dimension of the EYCH. As emerged also in the previous analysis about the trans-sectoral, transversal policy mindset that the EYCH is trying to promote, this year aims at creating an approach to policies that will focus on the long term, extending and promoting the principles of engagement, sustainability protection and innovation at a broader European level (see Figure 5). According to the 2nd order classification, the perceived aim of the EYCH is to develop a common European cultural heritage policy and use the EYCH for establishing the basis for a long-term policy strategy. These ideas are even more evident in the transcripts of the 1st order analysis: the interviewees declared that "the EYCH is the year in which we create the basis for long-term policy development" and that "the EYCH wants to set the foundation of long-term policy reflections, to create a cultural heritage European policy based on the guiding principles of this year". "Concretely, the objective of EYCH is to have an impact in long-term policy development not just for this year", argued one of the interviewees.

Discussion: the impact of EYCH on the cultural management discourse

The results of both the primary and secondary data analysis highlighted that the focus of the EYCH was to stimulate a broader change in the approach to cultural heritage in Europe and beyond, based on key concepts such as participatory governance and stakeholders' involvement, holistic and integrated approaches and transversal European policies to be implemented in the long-term.

However, the documents as well as the interviewees overlooked the importance of implementing the necessary management models that could enhance these policy and mindset shifts, creating the basic conditions necessary to enable member states and stakeholders to actually implement the policy recommendations. A reflection on the managerial framework that could encourage an effective implementation of participatory mechanisms is partially missing. Similarly, indications on how to create or advance (for instance through education and training programs) managerial competencies and resources to enable these mechanisms are not sufficiently developed. It should also be further



1st Order Concepts	2nd Order Themes	Aggregate dimension
EYCH as the year in which we create the basis for log-term policy development	 To develop a common cultural heritage European policy	 LONG-TERM CULTURAL HERITAGE EUROPEAN POLICIES
Cultural heritage has a clear European dimension and therefore calls for joint action at European level		
The EYCH is based on the principles of engagement, sustainability and of course also preservation but developed in the long term and at a broader European level		
To set the foundation of long-term policy reflection, to create a cultural heritage Eurpean policy based on the guiding principles of this year [...] to have an impact in long-term policy development not just for this year [...] to ensure that the EYCH could foster a log-term dynamic		
That the EYCH created a good momentum and raised-awareness on the need to raise our ambitions and to be proactive. [...] At EU level, it is very interesting to note that both the New Strategic Agenda of the European Council for the years 2019-2024 and the Political Guidelines of the President-Elect for the next European Commission make a direct reference to cultural heritage		

FIGURE 5. THIRD AGGREGATED DIMENSION: LONG-TERM CULTURAL HERITAGE EUROPEAN POLICIES

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

expanded to include the analysis of managerial practices among the different member states that could enable the development of the common policies at the basis of the future reflections developed during the EYCH.

In a nutshell, the EYCH was effective in stimulating a broader discussion on the potential and impact that cultural heritage could have in a trans-sectoral and long-term perspective, but there is a need for further reflection that goes beyond mere policy and governance measures. The next phase in the process would be for the European Commission and the stakeholders to go further and identify how innovative management models for cultural heritage could boost the policy measures related to the EYCH, unlocking the potential of the suggested governance models.

This will suggest rethinking key aspects of the management of cultural heritage. First, reflection is needed on how to develop the necessary mindset of policy makers and cultural heritage managers, on how to develop the required competencies and skills in human resources. In particular, it will imply reconsidering education approaches and human resources training to provide the essential tools for the managers and staff who will work on developing and implementing participatory approaches. Second, it will require a change in leadership styles to encourage participation and cooperation development. Third, it will entail a change in communication, in order to encourage exchanges not just with audiences but also with citizens and communities and other sectors of society and the economy; this will need the implementation of effective communication tools that will enforce cooperation and transversal approaches. Finally, it will imply the need for a profound reorganization of the cooperation mechanisms among cultural heritage organizations and between cultural heritage and the stakeholders of other socio-economic sectors both public, private and civic; this will promote the cross-sectoral approaches

named in the policy documents, making cultural heritage a "unifying element" of the society and the economy.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to investigate the emerging managerial implications for the cultural sector, as a result of the policies related to the EYCH.

In the first section of the paper, the analysis of the literature on cultural heritage highlighted a holistic approach that connects policy, governance and management, indicating strong links between these domains. In particular, it emerged in the analysis that there was a shift from an initial approach based on preservation, to a more open approach based on the intersection between governance and policies, that lately focused on participatory approaches that could potentially engage the different actors of cultural ecosystems.

In the subsequent section of the paper, the focus was on the EYCH: secondary and primary data (documents and research interviews) were collected, analyzed and discussed. The analysis of these data highlighted that the EYCH was interpreted as an opportunity to change European policy mindsets as well as the perception and role of European cultural heritage in the long term. In particular, the EYCH promoted a different interpretation of cultural heritage as a cross-sectoral field and unifying element that could help to create shared perspectives with other key sectors for the European Union, such as research and innovation, agriculture or tourism. One of the key themes emerging in the investigation is that of participatory governance. Indeed, in line with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (1957) and respecting the fact that cultural policies are competence of member states, the European Union tried to promote its role as facilitator, providing guidelines for a common approach to cultural heritage policies. These common policy guidelines are

“THE RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS THAT THE EYCH DOES NOT PROPOSE A NEW MODEL OF MANAGEMENT FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE. THE INITIATIVE REMAINS MAINLY FOCUSED ON PROMOTING POLICY ACTIONS AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNANCE APPROACHES THAT ARE NONETHELESS DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT WITHOUT A PROPER MANAGERIAL MODEL”

based on engagement and stakeholders' involvement, sustainability alongside protection and preservation of cultural heritage.

However, the guiding principles for a new management model that could facilitate the participatory governance and the other ideas promoted by the EYCH policy initiatives are not sufficiently identifiable. As a result, the necessary future steps of the EYCH could stimulate a new approach to management of cultural heritage.

In conclusion, the research highlights that the EYCH does not propose a new model of management for cultural heritage. The initiative remains mainly focused on promoting policy actions and participatory governance approaches that are nonetheless difficult to implement without a proper managerial model. These results underline the need for the European Union to take a step forward and indicate a potential future development of this research: identifying a path that could create firmer links between policy, governance and management could be an interesting investigation, in addition basing the research on the analysis of case studies and best practices already implemented in European countries. This could indeed enable the cultural heritage sector to rethink how to fulfill its potential as cross-sectoral, transversal and unifying field.

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Developing local cultural networks: the case of Dante 2021 in Ravenna

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ABSTRACT

In the last decades and especially after the latest financial crisis, scholars are suggesting collaborative processes to address the reduction of public funds, as first discussed by New Public Management literature and later emphasised by Public Governance theories. As cultural activities belong to the wider set of public services, this paper enters the debate on delivering public services. It is aimed at analysing which factors contribute to an effective development of local cultural networks, also considering advantages, criticalities and potential for their future strengthening. Starting from a theoretical analysis, the paper carries out a case study of a local cultural network. The research focuses on the case of Ravenna, a town in northern Italy, and it is based on document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Results indicate that factors as geographic proximity, social relationships, a common cultural background and common values are crucial for the development of local cultural networks, consistently with isomorphism theory

Keywords:

Cultural networks
Public governance
Local networks
Public services

Introduction

Belonging to the wider set of public services, cultural activities have changed their governance and management models, as first anticipated with New Public Management (NPM) literature (Hood, 1991) and further developed with Public Governance (Osborne, 2010) theories, which highlighted the need for more collaboration between the public and private sectors. Collaborative processes which include citizens (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000) and other subjects (Provan & Kenis, 2008; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000) may also develop and create networks (Kooiman, 1993; Jones et al, 1997), which could contribute in delivering public services. After the international financial crisis, public funds for culture have diminished – yet, the crisis should also be considered as an opportunity for a structural change of the cultural sector, fostering the need to rethink how to deliver cultural services (Bonet & Donato, 2011). Specifically, more research is needed in how and why networks develop in national settings (Bagdadli, 2003), with a specific focus on local areas (Mydland & Grahn, 2012).

This paper is aimed at analysing which key factors contribute to the development of local cultural networks. It is also aimed at understanding how local cultural networks work and what the potentials for developing long term collaborations are (Vicente, Camarero & Garrido, 2012). To do so, the paper focuses on a local cultural network based in a town in northern Italy, Ravenna. The case of Ravenna is significant because the town's identity has been culturally shaped around an internationally known poet, Dante Alighieri, for centuries. In fact, Ravenna is the place where Dante lived and died after being exiled from Florence. Although this case is not aimed at generalising to the population (Johansson & Jyrämä, 2016), it is significant as it is based on a culturally rich territory and it represents a case (Yin, 2013) of different actors that spontaneously cooperate to deliver cultural services, innovating traditional models (Borin & Donato, 2015). Results might provide useful knowledge for policy makers and academics.

The paper develops as follows. The first section will discuss the theoretical framework on cultural networks as an alternative means to provide cultural services. The second section will outline the methodology of the research and its phases. The empirical part will follow, which will present an overview on the case of Dante 2021. Finally, concluding remarks and further perspectives will be drafted.

Theoretical framework

From the 1990s, most European countries have faced the need to reduce their public expenditures, also looking for new ways in delivering public services

(Héritier, 2002; Drechsler, 2005; Borgonovi et al, 2006; Levy, 2010; Anselmi, 2014). First, New Public Management theories (Hood, 1991) started to promote a shift towards collaboration between the public sector and private operators, introducing contracting out, privatization and competition. NPM processes contributed to the formation of hybrid organisations (Evers, 2005), thus changing the boundaries between the public, private and non-profit sectors (Brandsen & Pestoff, 2006). In some cases, hybridisation processes improved public sector management and efficacy, bringing in some positives of the private sector (Bianchi Martini, 2009).

After that, New Public Service (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000) proposed to put citizens at the centre of public services management, building collaborative processes which could foster engagement and responsibility, creating strong relationships between citizens.

In the Public Value perspective, managers should also respond to the collective preferences of citizens, trying to keep trust between them and institutions (O'Flynn, 2007), not just focusing on results and performances. While some emphasise the need for coordinating and integrating public policies (Christensen & Lægreid, 2011), others believe that each public service has its own needs (Osborne, 2010).

Public Governance (Kooiman, 1993) introduced the idea that public and private subjects, including citizens themselves, could collaborate for delivering public services (Rosenau, 1992; Ostrom, 1996). Public Governance theory was further developed and integrated by Network Governance and Co-production theories (Taylor, 2000; Osborne, 2017). While Network Governance scholars believe that different subjects should cooperate to deliver efficient public services (Newman, 2004; Provan & Kenis, 2008; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000), Co-production theory emphasises the need for different subjects to participate in producing public services (Bovaird, 2007).

Recently, the economic crisis contributed to emphasise the need to rethink how to deliver public services, specifically in the cultural sector, which has been marginalised in public policies (Jancovich & Bianchini, 2013). Italian cultural expenditure experienced substantial cuts between 2001 and 2014, around 11.5% (Council of Europe, 2016). Moreover, Italian public expenditure moved from the state to the local level, which means that in percentage the local government now provides more than half of public subsidies to the cultural services (Associazione per l'economia della cultura, 2005).

In recent years, cultural services delivery has been changing similarly with the state's governance model (Zan, 2007). Some scholars believe that the economic crisis should be interpreted as an opportunity for a structural change in the public sector and in the ways cultural organizations operate (Bonet & Donato, 2011). Such processes are bringing European countries and local institutions to rethink the ways to

deliver cultural policies (Vicente, Camarero & Garrido, 2012). Cross-sector and international collaborations between cultural and educational institutions could help developing and fostering the cultural sector's potential even more (Cogliandro Beyens & Ortega Nuere, 2014).

During the last two decades, researches on cultural networks increased, being studied from multiple perspectives (Milcu et al, 2013). In fact, as culture has no single meaning (Gray, 2009; Hawkes, 2001; Dallaire & Colbert, 2012), what constitutes the cultural sector varies. Overall, research concerning cultural networks between different actors maintains that public entities, companies, universities, cultural institutions and the community should cooperate, also increasing citizens' engagement (Simon, 2010). Part of cultural network literature also considers networks between volunteers (Jarman, 2018) and community members involved in the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage (Spiridon & Sandu, 2015).

Some explain the creation of networks as a result of both isomorphism and institutional theory (Bagdadli, 2003): cultural networks could be a result of similarities such as base values, geographic proximity, product or governance systems or reciprocity. They could also be based on pre-existing social relations, which might generate a common ground for cooperation: a solid base in common is considered a good starting point for building a joint organization from existing separate subjects (Jyrämä et al, 2015). On the other hand, according to institutional theory, having a specific purpose might be another incentive to collaborate. Indeed, it seems that a common value system supports collaborative behaviour (Camarinha-Matos & Macedo, 2010), otherwise communication between different cultures becomes a crucial factor for cooperation (Lidstone, 2008).

Events and local festivals themselves may have important network effects, as they contribute to bring together people, involving them from planning to executing the events (Richards, 2015). Recurrent events can also become a chance for artistic and professional development, creating an ecosystem and giving artists the possibility to return in the following years (Comunian, 2017).

Collaboration may involve subjects from different sectors (Schramme & King, 2016), and from the same sector (Blackstone et al, 2016). In the case of museums networks, they seem particularly suitable in Italy due to the small dimensions of museums and the way they are widespread in the territory (Montella, 2014).

Developing cultural networks could help not only fundraising capabilities, but it could also bring to knowledge exchanges and information sharing (Powell, 1990; Abfalter, Stadler & Müller, 2012), innovation, ideas interaction (Staber, 2008), and foster potentials of different cultural resources from which they are born (Pencarelli & Splendiani, 2011). Networks might provoke spillovers in many fields – from circulating the

knowledge created even after the event is concluded to promoting partnerships between different subjects in the local community (Podestà & Richards, 2018).

A cultural district could help increasing the touristic appeal of a territory (Arnaboldi & Spiller, 2011), also involving the community and residents (Taylor, 1995), even using only informal coordination practices (Imperiale & Cordella, 2016). Networks might contribute to the development of a region even after the events or festivals are concluded, as they help building connections and partnerships between different organisations (Moscardo, 2007). They might influence the performance of a region, as quality relationships between organisations may positively influence their performances. Moreover, events based on network may be drivers of the regional demand, starting from event-related expenditure and potential for increased tourism (Jones, 2005). The Network Governance approach is also considered to be valid in small, peripheral locations, and could help raise the cultural attractiveness of less known places (Golinelli, 2008).

Some part of the academia believes that research on the cultural sector should focus on specific local areas (Mydland & Grahn, 2012) rather than just taking national approaches. Small areas may also create the basis for culture and local traditions to build cultural districts or other forms of integration and networks (Turrini, 2015). This way, it is the territory itself, with its unique identity, which could become a "diffuse museum" (Cerquetti, 2007; Van Aalst & Boogaarts, 2002), where each museum is not isolated, but part of a bigger plan.

Research question and methodology

Past research highlighted the need for a better understanding of how to successfully manage and govern public networks (Cristofoli et al, 2017) and of how and why collaboration in different cultural contexts works (Bagdadli, 2003; Aas et al, 2005; Alberti & Giusti, 2012). It also seems that integrated cultural systems are the governance models where research is particularly promising (Donato, 2015) and where there is a need for primary data (Blackstone et al, 2016).

To address the need to research micro-levels and local areas (Luonila & Johansson, 2016; Mydland, & Grahn, 2012), this paper focuses on a specific art city (Lazzeretti, 1997) where peculiar cultural initiatives are held (Alberti & Giusti, 2012). It is aimed at analysing which factors contribute to an effective development of local cultural networks, including advantages, criticalities and potentials. Following a theoretical analysis, the research is based on a case study of a local cultural network set in Ravenna. The case study (Yin, 2013) seemed to be a suitable way to analyse a

case of cultural governance, which may be considered a "unique case study" (Aas, Ladkin & Fletcher, 2005). The choice of this method was a result of different insights: as the research was aimed at understanding complex social phenomena within their real-life context, focusing on a variety of sources could help tracing links and explaining connections over time, rather than considering only quantitative data. Thus, this paper adopts multiple qualitative methods, combining (Bowden & Ciesielska, 2016; Marzano & Castellini, 2016) document analysis (Scott, 2006) and semi-structured interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

All interviews were recorded, transcripts were made and analysed. Interviews followed a similar topic guide, which was adapted depending on the organisation the interviewee represented. The basic topic guide was as follows¹:

- 1) Could you please describe your role and the organization you belong to?
- 2) Which Dantesque initiatives do you organize on your own and which together with Dante 2021?
- 3) Why did you join Dante 2021?
- 4) How are the decision making and the coordination processes concerned?
- 5) What is Dante 2021's output, in terms of cultural initiatives?
- 6) What are the main advantages and criticalities of the network?

The case study is set in Ravenna, a town in northern Italy with a strong cultural background. In fact, the town hosts eight religious monuments belonging to the UNESCO World Heritage list² and some museum networks are already in place (Borin, 2015; Borin & Donato, 2015). Besides, Ravenna also has intangible cultural background, as it was the place where the poet Dante Alighieri lived and died after escaping from Florence. Thus, this paper concerns Dante-related cultural ecosystems in Ravenna, focusing on a peculiar one, Dante 2021.

The empirical research was carried out in two main steps. The first part was based on document analysis, starting from local newspapers, online and bibliographic researches, conference materials and documents. It showed that the territory is rich in cultural initiatives regarding Dante, but networks were not homogenous. The second part focused on the Dante 2021 case, using document and website

analysis together with semi-structured interviews. The ten key actors of the network were contacted and seven interviews were made. In two cases, the interviewee was supported by one or two colleagues, who helped adding more details during the interview. Interviewees included: Domenico De Martino (Dante 2021 Artistic Director), Giuseppe Alfieri (President of Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Ravenna), Paolo Bezzi (past "Primo Massaro" of Casa Matha), Francesca Masi (General Direction area of the municipality of Ravenna), Egidio Manzani (past Director of Centro Dantesco), Lanfranco Gualtieri (Past President of Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Ravenna) and Aureliano Benedetti (President of Accademia Amici dell'Accademia della Crusca).

Empirical research: results and discussion

Following Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher (2005) and Pencarelli and Splendiani (2011), the empirical part is structured as follows: first, the town and region will be briefly described, then the basic characteristics of the case will be outlined (including the level of formalization, the year the partnership was born, the kinds of subjects and the local government's approach), after that, the analysis will focus on the reasons for creating the network and understanding the dynamics of collaboration. Finally, potential for development will be discussed.

Dante 2021: an overview

The case is set in Ravenna, a town in northern Italy. It belongs to Emilia-Romagna region, whose economy is partially based on the touristic sector, mostly linked to its cultural, landscape and industrial heritage (Alberti & Giusti, 2012). Ravenna's municipality area is 652.22 square kilometre wide, with a resident population of 159,116 inhabitants³, which well responds to the need to investigate local territories (Mydland & Grahn, 2012). It has strong cultural and historical background, also included in the UNESCO World Heritage list and where some museum networks are already in place (Borin, 2015). Apart from monuments and museums, Ravenna was also the place where Dante Alighieri lived and died after being exiled from Florence in 1302.

¹ The Italian version of the questions is as follows:

- 1) Può descrivere il suo ruolo e l'organizzazione di cui fa parte?
- 2) Quali sono le iniziative culturali dantesche promosse dall'organizzazione in autonomia e all'interno di Dante 2021?
- 3) Quali sono state le motivazioni che hanno portato alla partecipazione in Dante 2021?
- 4) Come si svolge il processo decisionale e il coordinamento tra i vari attori di Dante 2021?
- 5) Qual è l'output di Dante 2021, in termini di iniziative culturali?
- 6) Quali sono i vantaggi e quali le criticità emerse?

² Please visit <http://whc.unesco.org/> for more details.

³ Please visit the official website of the municipality, Comune di Ravenna, for more details: <http://www.comune.ra.it/La-Citta/Informazioni-generalisulla-citta/Il-comune-in-pillole>

“RAVENNA’S CULTURAL IDENTITY HAS BEEN SHAPED FOR CENTURIES AROUND THE FIGURE OF DANTE. WHILE DANTE’S PRESENT TOMB WAS BUILT BETWEEN 1780 AND 1782, HIS BONES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN KEPT IN RAVENNA, AND THEY WERE LONG HIDDEN BY THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS”

Thus, Ravenna’s cultural identity has been shaped for centuries around the figure of Dante. While Dante’s present tomb was built between 1780 and 1782, his bones have always been kept in Ravenna, and they were long hidden by the Franciscan Friars.

As for now, Ravenna is one of the main places where cultural initiatives concerning Dante are held, also including international conferences⁴. Moreover, these years are particularly critical as a national law regarding celebrations of the centenaries of Leonardo da Vinci, Raffaello Sanzio and Dante Alighieri is being discussed in the Parliament⁵. Although Ravenna is rich in cultural initiatives regarding Dante, it is not homogenous in terms of existing and structured networks. Among the main networks, Dante 2021 involves both private, non-profit and public institutions. Dante 2021 appears to be quite recent, as it started in 2011, and with potential for further development, as it aimed to celebrate the seventh centenary of Dante’s death in 2021.

Dante 2021 is a 4-5 days festival held each year in September, based on events, meetings and shows. It focuses on themes around Dante Alighieri, not only on his works but also discussing and bringing their main themes to our days. It is promoted by one non-profit

subject, Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Ravenna, and it is developed in collaboration with many subjects, both private (non-profit) and public. As for now, the Dante 2021 network is formalised in the sense that the initiatives are included in one programme, which has its own brand, website, calendar and publications, thus favouring homogeneity between the different actors.

Collaborations have grown during the years, starting from the partnership with Accademia della Crusca (literally “the Bran Academy”), a public institution based in Florence (Tuscany, central Italy), and developing with other collaborations mainly based in Ravenna. It has the patronage of the local municipality and of the region. Currently, the network is composed of different subjects, both private (non-profit) and public. Following Borin and Donato (2015), we consider institution ownership in two categories: public and private. Private ownership also includes non-profit entities, Church authorities or single citizens. The main participants of the network are as follows:

Name	Role in the network	Public / Private	Details
Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Ravenna	Promoter	Private	Non-profit
Accademia della Crusca	Scientific committee	Public	Institution
Regione Emilia-Romagna	Patronage	Public	Local authority
Comune di Ravenna	Patronage	Public	Local authority
Amici dell’Accademia della Crusca	Partner	Private	Non-profit
Teatro nazionale della Toscana	Partner	Public	Non-profit
Istituzione Biblioteca Classense	Partner	Public	Institution
Casa Matha	Partner	Private	Non-profit
Centro dantesco dei Frati minori conventuali di Ravenna	Partner	Private	Non-profit / Church authority

TABLE 1. MAIN PARTICIPANTS OF DANTE 2021

Source: www.dante2021.it

⁴ It is the case of the International Dante Conference, which was held in May 2017 and was organised by the University of Bologna.

⁵ The Law Proposal, yet not definitive, may be consulted at: www.senato.it/leg/17/BGT/Schede/Ddliter/47987.htm

Ravenna also participates a wider national network of the *città dantesche* (Dantesque cities), also formed by Florence and Venice. These three cities are part of a national committee aimed at celebrating the centenary, which was formed between 2014 and 2015. While the national committee is institutionalised, the town network is mainly an operative one.



FIGURE 1. DANTE 2021 LOGO

Source: www.dante2021.it

Starting the journey: the long way to the network

The idea of Dante 2021 was born from Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Ravenna, a non-profit entity aimed at promoting and helping the development of the local territory⁶. The Fondazione continues the historical mission of Cassa di Risparmio di Ravenna, a bank based in Ravenna and founded in 1839, from which the Fondazione originated in the 1990s. Before the reforms of the 1990s, Italian *casse di risparmio* (saving banks) were originally aimed at developing the local territories both from a social and an economic perspective (Fasano, 1927). Now, one of the aims of the Fondazione is helping the town and territory grow from a cultural point of view, also supporting the town to be a key cultural place in Italy.

After a few years promoting a festival named "Dante 09" ("09" as it was held in September), the Fondazione decided to give a more specific connotation to the festival and to the events, thus shifting the focus to the Italian language and aiming at celebrating the 7th centenary of Dante's death, in 2021. With these goals in mind, the Fondazione contacted Accademia della Crusca, one of the leading institutions in research on the Italian language⁷, which agreed to collaborate as main partner.

Globally, Dante 2021 develops from one main

subject's will (the Fondazione), but also from the meeting of two aims and scopes: on the one hand, the Fondazione is interested in keeping some contact with the citizens and being a key actor in Dante's initiatives in Ravenna; on the other hand, Accademia della Crusca has a chance to develop and share its researches on languages, with a focus on Dante. Overall, Dante 2021 is now aimed at reaching 2021, the 7th centenary of Dante's death, bringing a variety of cultural insights, events and shows, also highlighting the reasons and the values of the Italian language, which contributed to build Italian national identity⁸.

Dante 2021 has grown its partnerships since the first edition. First, those subjects outside the local territories are based in Florence, the city where Dante was born in 1265. Collaboration between Ravenna and these subjects (Accademia della Crusca, Associazione Amici dell'Accademia della Crusca, Teatro Nazionale della Toscana) has deep meanings, as it ideally connects the places where Dante was born and died. Moreover, the local actors have many different links to Dante's figure, each of them from a different point of view. Collaborations with local and Florentine subjects have grown throughout the years of the festival, giving the events an increasing richness.

Another subject based in Florence which collaborates with the network is Associazione Amici dell'Accademia della Crusca (Friends of Accademia della Crusca), a cultural non-profit entity that financially supports Accademia della Crusca. Associazione Amici already had links to Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Ravenna, as the Fondazione is one of the associations's members. However, the relationship became even stronger as Associazione Amici participates in Dante 2021 initiatives, giving support, expanding the local network to Florence and helping the Fondazione reach a wider variety of speakers and collaborators.

The municipality of Ravenna also supports the network, both making public locations available for Dante 2021 events and including them in the wider programme of the town's events for Dante, which is published by the municipality every year. The calendar also contains all the main events concerning Dante organised by different subjects in the territory, putting together more than 60 events a year. In short, Dante 2021 also belongs to the bigger network put together by the municipality's calendar. Coordination is managed by the municipality, which also calls together the participants in a round table once or twice a year, to collect and organise all the events.

Among other collaborations, the ones with

6 For further details, please visit <http://www.fondazioneccassaravenna.it/>

7 Among the main aims of Accademia della Crusca, it supports scientific activities, helps spreading the historical knowledge and evolution of the Italian language, and collaborates with national and international institutions. More info can be found at: www.accademiadellacrusca.it

8 "Il nuovo Festival si propone ora, infatti, di traguardare il 2021, anno del VII centenario della morte del poeta, con una costellazione culturale di approfondimenti e riflessioni che abbiano particolare riferimento alle ragioni e ai valori della lingua italiana come fattore portante della nostra identità nazionale e dello stesso processo unitario. (...) E' anche un segnale che abbiamo voluto fornire alla Città, per contribuire, crediamo, a proiettare ancora di più la sua realtà e le sue connessioni storiche e culturali in una prospettiva nazionale e internazionale. (...) Lo festeggiamo con entusiasmo, nella speranza che, insieme ai volumi che seguiranno via via fino al 2021, possa offrire anche uno strumento di riflessione per la comune crescita culturale e sociale, nel riferimento alla lingua, ai valori letterari e civili di Dante" (Le conversazioni di Dante 2021, 2011).

Centro Dantesco dei Frati Minori Francescani (Dante's Studies Centre of Franciscan Friars) and Casa Matha have some peculiar aspects and strong links to Dante, both belonging to ancient history and current times. Centro Dantesco is a non-profit entity aimed at spreading the knowledge of Dante's works and managed by Franciscan Friars. Franciscan Friars have been long hiding Dante's bones from the Florentines, who wanted to bring them back to Florence. Franciscan Friars are then considered those who kept Dante's bones safe, till they were discovered, opened and brought to Dante's tomb in 1865.

Casa Matha⁹ is considered to be the world's oldest association of fishermen, as it was probably founded before 943, thus being more than a thousand years old. As for now, it is a private non-profit association that organises and hosts many different cultural initiatives, including some focused on Dante. It is one of the latest entities that joined the Dante 2021 network. In fact, it was contacted for the 2016 edition and they hosted a Dante 2021 event in the association's historic building. Collaborations further develop in 2017 and in following editions of Dante 2021, thus continuing to widen the network after almost ten years from the original idea. The first *cartolare* (the first statute) shows a person named Pier Giardini (or Pier Zardini) among the first Casa Matha's members. In the 19th century, scholars found out that Pier Giardini really existed and was one of Dante's best students – which meant that at least one of the members of Casa Matha actually knew and studied with Dante himself. More recently, at least ten Casa Matha's members attended the re-opening of Dante's bones in 1865.

As some interviewees mentioned, "everything here recalls Dante"¹⁰, and "it is not the same to do the same thing in Florence, in Ravenna or in Catania, it is different because there is some history, there is a texture that brings connections. (...) The centenary of Dante is the centenary from Alaska to Vietnam, but there are some places that have different reasons, emotions and vibrations"¹¹. To sum up, the common cultural background seems to help in many ways: first, as a variety of subjects start their own initiatives on Dante, second, connections seem to build easier as the promoting subjects already share a cultural interest. This way, each subject brings a different perspective and specific know-how, leading to increase the richness of the events jointly organised. Living in a rather small territory helps social and institutional connections too. In fact, an interviewee pointed out that living in the town helps to be involved in local initiatives: "living here you have the chance to meet [people], and being involved [in initiatives]"¹².

Empirical evidence

The empirical research highlights the following main results: 1) relationship features, including how small territories help the development of cultural networks; 2) cultural engagement attributes, as for citizens participation; 3) coordination issues, including the advantages and criticalities of collaborating; 4) outputs and innovation aspects; 5) the potential of local and wider cultural networks.

As for relationship features, the common cultural background seems to help in many ways: first, as a variety of subjects starts their own initiatives on Dante, second, connections seem to build easier as subjects already share a cultural interest. Overall, it seems that a common cultural background helps the formation and development of local cultural networks, creating a common value system (Camarinha-Matos & Macedo, 2010). Living in a rather small territory helps social and institutional connections, contributing to ease communication and building relationships (Foster & Jonker, 2005).

As for cultural engagement, Dante 2021 becomes a chance to offer citizens some understanding of current research concerning Dante, strengthening cultural and historic roots with their territory and reflecting on current themes and beliefs with a connection on Dante's life and works. Some interviewees believe that past initiatives helped to stimulate citizens to participate not only in Dante 2021 events, but also in other similar cultural ones. In this sense, the cultural network appears to help develop citizens' engagement to the cultural events of their territory (Simon, 2010).

The coordinating activities are managed by the Artistic Director appointed by the Fondazione, as it is the main promoter and financier, similarly to the core-periphery model (Jarman, 2018). The other network participants actively collaborate in different ways, depending on their role, know-how and where they are placed. They are involved in the decision making processes, even though the main decisions are made by the Fondazione. The local municipality is also involved with another type of collaboration, as it puts all Dantesque events together into a calendar, assuming a role of *ex-post* coordinator.

Managing cultural events and collaborating leads to advantages and criticalities. Most interviewees confirmed that funds for culture are diminishing, both from the public and private sectors (Bonet & Donato, 2011). However, limited availability of funds leads to higher sense of responsibility for those managing the economic resources. It also has some impact when looking for speakers, mainly attracting the most

9 Please find more info at www.casamatha.it

10 "Qui ricorda tutto un po' Dante" (Paolo Bezzi, Casa Matha).

11 "Cioè non è indifferente fare la stessa cosa a Firenze a Ravenna o a Catania, è diverso perché c'è una storia, un tessuto che lega (...). Il centenario di Dante è il centenario dall'Alaska al Vietnam, esistono però dei luoghi che hanno delle ragioni, delle emozioni, vibrazioni diverse" (Domenico De Martino, Dante 2021 Artistic Director).

12 "E stando qui hai la possibilità di conoscere, e quindi di essere coinvolto" (Father Egidio, Centro Dantesco).

motivated and passionate ones. Networking helps by means that participants may allow events to be held in their properties, thus lowering or eliminating costs of finding appropriate locations. Among criticalities, some interviewees raised the need for a stronger collaboration and shared planning activity. Networking seems to bring some advantages, first helping varying locations and lowering some costs. Collaborating with external institutions brought something new to the town and citizens, also contributing to strengthen collaborations between Ravenna and Florence. Collaborating and meeting different speakers becomes a chance for creating events that never existed before¹³, mixing ideas and perspectives (Staber, 2008), while setting the events all around the town makes citizens live their territory and develop stronger roots with their culture and history. Thus, the research confirms that cultural networks help innovation (Montella, 2014) and know-how exchanges (Powell, 1990; Abfalter, Stadler & Müller, 2012), fostering potentials of different actors (Pencarelli & Splendiani, 2011) and creating unique cultural events.

However, the main output are cultural events, which do not usually last after that fixed moment in time and space. To avoid this, the promoter decided to start a small publication, *Le conversazioni di Dante 2021* (Dante 2021's talks). The book is published every year and collects the main speeches and dialogues after each edition, in order to make the events last in time.

As for economic impacts, Dante 2021 is set in a town with a deep cultural and historical background (Borin, 2015) which belongs to a touristic region (Alberti & Giusti, 2012). Dante 2021's organisers are aware that the festival attracts external tourists and has an impact on various aspects of the local economy, including hotels, restaurants, transport systems, souvenir shops and local community firms. The festival also became a chance for artistic and professional development of the town's art students (Comunian, 2017). Although Dante 2021 was also aimed at promoting the territory,

a business plan for economic and occupational effects was not well defined. Thus, there seems to be room for further improvements in planning the local economic effects of the festival. In fact, academic literature offers methodologies to evaluate cultural events' economic (direct and indirect) effects, also considering touristic, social, occupational and environmental consequences (Candela & Figini, 2010).

Cultural impacts assessment practices are typically used in evaluating major events' spillovers, though such practices are less used in local territories (Partal & Dunphy, 2016). However, small-medium events can have some impacts on the local territory. They are usually characterized by soft investments focused on the event's areas, touristic spillovers and a high involvement of the local community, also including local typical firms. Cultural events can impact a town's long term image and reputation as a cultural destination, thus capitalizing the results of the cultural event while still keeping its key characteristics in the external perceptions (Richards & Wilson, 2004). Overall, economic effects can be synthesized calculating an index, the economic multiplier, which varies depending on the territory and the event's characteristics (Lundberg et al, 1995; Herrero et al, 2006).

Moreover, most interviewees hoped for more coordination and integration of cultural initiatives concerning Dante. More coordination should help improve the external image of Ravenna as a town culturally connected to Dante. One of the interviewees wished they had more sources of income to sustain their cultural initiatives, which would also support the public sector's cultural services.

Regarding the network's potential, the 2021 centenary is seen as a chance to do more together, strengthening collaborations with all the town entities connected to Dante, thus creating one bigger network with a better known external image¹⁴. Fostering collaborations between the public and private sector might help as well¹⁵. While most interviewees

“NETWORKING SEEMS TO BRING SOME ADVANTAGES, FIRST HELPING VARYING LOCATIONS AND LOWERING SOME COSTS. COLLABORATING WITH EXTERNAL INSTITUTIONS BROUGHT SOMETHING NEW TO THE TOWN AND CITIZENS, ALSO CONTRIBUTING TO STRENGTHEN COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN RAVENNA AND FLORENCE”

13 "Hanno creato una cosa che non esisteva, che è esistita in quel momento" (Domenico De Martino, Artistic Director).

14 "(...) coordinandoli insieme, creando una cosa che sia non voglio dire un organismo unico, ma una testuggine in cui tante persone poi costruiscono una grande immagine, forte e che può conquistare spazio" (Domenico De Martino, Dante 2021 Artistic Director).

15 "In questo senso è importante, ci può essere una cosa tra pubblico e privato, cioè trovare quel punto in cui il pubblico e il privato hanno interessi comuni, c'è un punto in cui si trovano" (Domenico De Martino, Dante 2021 Artistic Director).

“REGARDING THE NETWORK’S POTENTIAL, THE 2021 CENTENARY IS SEEN AS A CHANCE TO DO MORE TOGETHER, STRENGTHENING COLLABORATIONS WITH ALL THE TOWN ENTITIES CONNECTED TO DANTE, THUS CREATING ONE BIGGER NETWORK WITH A BETTER KNOWN EXTERNAL IMAGE”

believe that local entities and institutions should join their forces to work together with more synergy and collaboration¹⁶, some believed that they should start thinking and developing a common strategy. This would mean getting over the *ex-post* coordination and start building a strategy before the events are already planned¹⁷. The local municipality is also willing to promote an inter-regional committee, bringing together the two main regions of Dantesque cities: Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany. Two interviewees also highlighted the importance of creating an international network to celebrate the 2021 centenary. Overall, there is interest for more integration and collaboration at different levels: local, inter-regional, and international.

Final remarks

This research contributes to confirm isomorphism and institutional theories (Bagdadli, 2003). It confirms that collaborative processes and networks between public, private and non-profit actors, as first suggested by NPM (Hood, 1991) and then by Public Governance (Osborne, 2010) scholars, are an effective way to deliver cultural services. Doing so, it enters and deepens the debate on reconsidering public services delivery, including cultural ones, as a way to cope with the lowering of public expenditures (Héritier, 2002; Drechsler, 2005; Borgonovi et al, 2006; Levy, 2010; Anselmi, 2014), especially after the financial crisis (Bonet & Donato, 2011).

The research shows that a common cultural background and value system (Camarinha-Matos & Macedo, 2010), personal relationships between the actors and geographical proximity are the main factors for creating local cultural networks (Foster & Jonker, 2005). Local cultural networks help innovation (Montella, 2014), ideas and know-how exchanges (Powell, 1990; Staber, 2008; Abfalter, Stadler & Müller, 2012), fostering potentials of different actors (Pencarelli & Splendiani, 2011) and creating unique cultural events. Collaborating helps coping with low funds, which appears to be a major issue when considering single entities. However, this does not seem to be a reason for creating a local network.

This analysis raises some clear-cut reflections.

First, the paper confirms the critical role of citizens' awareness and external subjects' involvement in developing the network on a long term approach and shows that citizens' awareness and involvement cannot be limited to the short term. Results are fully emerging after an almost 10-year time. Hence, this case shows that cultural networks require long consolidation processes, as they need to gradually settle in time. A short term approach might have some transitory effects, yet not strengthening citizens' awareness, as well as local and external relationships. Second, this paper confirms the importance of building trust relationships between the network's subjects and it demonstrates that only when a network is homogenous and the actors share common rules and behaviors there is an impact in terms of tourist attraction and satisfaction. Third, the paper points out that without a multiannual plan of the impacts on the territory, results cannot be fully envisaged. A multidimensional approach is necessary for maintaining a long term sustainability and meeting economic, financial, reputational, and socio-educational targets. Finally, the limits and potentials of this paper are as follows. As for limits, being a case study, this research aims at generalising to theory, not to the population (Johansson & Jyrämä, 2016). However, research on local cultural networks proves to be a very promising area, still not fully explored, with a strong potential for innovating the cultural sector.

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16 "Si potrebbe fare molto di più, però in un altro spirito, ed è lo spirito della sinergia, della collaborazione, rinunciando un po' alle proprie autonomie" (Father Egidio, Centro Dantesco).

17 "Sarebbe bello che ci fosse la capacità di vedersi, prima cioè di pensare una strategia" (Domenico De Martino, Dante 2021 Artistic Director).

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The Financial Crisis and its Impact on the Current Models of Governance and Management of the Cultural Sector in Europe

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is to promote a critical debate among scholars and professionals on the impact of the crisis on the European cultural sector. The world is living a structural crisis, a crisis that is based on the lack of reliability of the current social, economic and political systems. The majority of the cultural actors, as well as the majority of the other social stakeholders, are not entirely aware of the changes that the crisis will provoke on the future. However, deep crises offer a great opportunity for improvement when people and institutions are fully conscious of their potential for a change. Hence, the crisis could be a great opportunity for a structural change of the cultural sector, both at the policy and at the organizational level. This paper aims at analysing some strategies for an improvement of the governance and management models in the cultural sector. Some relevant modifications of the governance and management approaches are suggested.

Keywords:

Management models

Governance systems

Financial crisis

Introduction

Nowadays, no one ignores the huge importance of the current economic crisis for the whole society, both in Europe and in most developed countries. It has had not only economic effects (on the financial, production, consumption and labour markets) but also political and social consequences. National governments are becoming unable to solve by themselves events beyond their possibilities of action. Also the European institutions are having difficulties reaching a consensus and efficiently working together. Most social groups are frustrated by the implications of the crisis in their everyday lives.

Some very specific economic characteristics of the cultural production sector and markets explain, to some extent, some of the opportunities, threats and difficulties they are facing in relation to the economic crisis. This is a risky sector of prototype products, most of them with a high but subjective symbolic value (Throsby, 1994). At the same time, the sector is living a huge transformation of its business models as a consequence of the impact of the digital communication technologies (Rifkin, 2000). A great part of the cultural initiatives and activities survive thanks to the generous support of public funding (and in some cases also of additional philanthropic contributions), as a result of a historical process of social valuation. The crucial importance of governmental policies might explain why the transformation of the welfare state and the new socio-economic trends have been affecting this sector in particular.

Our goals when writing this article are: a) to explain what kind of crisis we are facing and how it would have an impact on the cultural sector; b) to promote a collective reflection on the systemic framework and the priorities of the cultural sector; c) to strengthen the awareness of the future viability of the models of management and financing for culture and to raise the debate on these issues. Therefore, we will not talk about the effects of the economic crisis on the cultural values or on the contents of arts and heritage production. In this article, our aim is to stimulate the debate - among cultural professionals and cultural and economic academic communities - on the impact of the economic crisis on the current models of governance and management of the cultural sector in Europe.

This paper is permeated by our responsibilities as cultural management educators and academic economists. We believe in the importance of sharing visions, especially in a sector which is sometimes too self-referential.

The article begins by describing the milestones of the on-going process and giving an interpretation of the current economic crisis. We argue that we are facing a structural crisis that will radically transform the current economic, social and political context. However, beyond the obvious and implicit threats there is a huge opportunity to restructure the whole system. In the second part, we analyse the consequences of the economic crisis on the cultural

sector and its short-term reactions, focusing our reflections on the outcomes of the crisis for the weakest cultural actors. In the third section, we highlight the fact that cultural organizations must overcome some of their serious traditional weaknesses if they want to survive the crisis. Basically the Achilles' heels of cultural organizations are their close and self-referential vision, their incapacity to measure and communicate their performances and their social impact, and finally their inappropriate models of management and governance.

A structural crisis

From 2008 onwards, when the financial crisis began, we have been living a rapidly increasing process of bad news. Below, a synthetic description of the steps of the crisis is displayed:

- The Social Welfare Department, and within it, the Buenavista Social Centre, the Repélega Social Centre, the Villanueva Social Centre, the Gure Bakea Social Centre and the San Roque Social Centre.
- A wrong and aggressive mortgage strategy in the US generated toxic assets on the balance sheets of American banks. Since the whole financial system had an excess of self-confidence, the toxic assets spread worldwide through the mechanism of derivatives.
- In order to solve this financial situation, central banks and major countries' governments agreed on decreasing interest rates, giving liquidity to the system and creating warranty funds.
- Banks used the liquidity provided by central banks mainly to solve their own balance sheet problems. Companies' investments decreased as a result of the contraction of bank credits. As a consequence, the production levels declined and that was followed by the crunch of the labour and consumption markets, especially in the field of long terms goods and services. Hence, the difficulties shifted from the financial system to the real economy.
- In order to stimulate the economy, some governments decided to increase public expenditure (i.e. infrastructures, strategic sectors, new technologies). However, this action had a positive effect only in the very short term. Actually, it was performed in a situation of structural disequilibrium - the real estate bubble in some countries, a lack of productivity or a huge accumulated debt in others. As a result, the overall economic crisis has accentuated. Most European countries have registered a falling (decrease) of tax incomes and at the same time an increase of the costs of the welfare state. That provoked a relevant increase of the deficits of the governmental budgets.

“WE ARGUE THAT IT SHOULD BE INTERPRETED AS A RELEVANT OPPORTUNITY, SINCE ONLY IN PERIODS OF GENERAL CRISIS STRUCTURAL CHANGES ARE POSSIBLE.”

- In the weakest countries the level of the state debt became no longer sustainable under a financial perspective: the interest rate of state bonds has increased and the concern about the capacity of these states to reimburse them has grown (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and also bigger countries like Spain and Italy). The United States' difficulties in balancing their governmental deficit deepened and further spread the crisis all around the world.
- Thus, most countries have started a process of spending review aimed at rebalancing their deficits. This led to relevant cuts on governmental investments and on traditional welfare state policies, which include cultural contributions. Nowadays, this is producing growing social diseases and is de-stimulating the economy.

This is not a temporary but rather a structural economic crisis that would probably affect not only the current economic system, but also the political and social ones. The welfare state model built in Europe during the last fifty years is moving to a different form. It would be difficult to go back to the pre-crisis situation and to the same level of welfare state, even when a new equilibrium will be reached. This is a global crisis although it initially affected mainly the developed countries. The new-comers (for instance China, India, Brazil or Indonesia), the providers of primary goods and even the major investors will be affected, because they are the main suppliers of our markets.

Dealing with this crisis is difficult because it is a structural crisis and, in addition, it is embedded by a lack of reliability of the overall system. There is a lack of confidence in the economic and financial system, as well as in the model of governance and in the mechanisms of the current social system. This is the biggest crisis ever experienced by our generation and

most of the actors are not completely conscious of its implications. The different governance levels are trying to face the current challenges either alone or in cooperation but unsuccessfully. Thus, a systemic reaction at the European and world level is necessary in order to answer to the global financial forces and stakeholders.

In this context, the European Union represents a leading inter-governmental model, a quite effective system to share common challenges, strategies and values. However, its decision-making structures are too bureaucratic and too oriented towards national interests. Indeed, the members of the European Council and of the Council of the European Union feel they are primarily accountable to the constituencies of the individual countries. The European Commission and the Parliament, that should represent the European common interests, cannot counterbalance national pressures. The overall situation is further accentuated by the differences in the degree of economic development of the individual countries, that make it difficult to react using a single strategy. Moreover, in the European countries there are different traditional social values and a diverse perception of the severity of the crisis. Mostly in the case of the richest countries, where the percentage of elderly people is higher and where people are used to live with a good and stable quality of life, the fear of the future is increasing more and more. Nationalist forces dream on isolationist solutions although everybody knows (even them) that we live in an interdependent global society.

This situation is perceived as a threat for the development of Europe. On the contrary, we argue that it should be interpreted as a relevant opportunity, since only in periods of general crisis structural changes are possible¹. In times of crisis modifications of the institutional, financial and social structures are legitimated and citizens are more likely to accept

¹ Europe experienced a similar situation in war times.

socio-economic sacrifices and risks (Anselmi, 1995). Hence, the crisis should be considered as an opportunity both at a national and at a European level. At a national level it allows to develop large scale reforms (Guthrie et al, 2005). For instance, countries like Italy and Spain are changing some articles of their Constitution, thus making the balance of their state budget mandatory. This decision has been taken to counteract financial speculative forces. At a European level, the crisis gives the opportunity to renovate the Europe Union's institutional framework moving towards a more incisive and less bureaucratic system. Thus, nowadays the crisis should be interpreted with a different attitude. A systemic vision and a long term orientation are necessary for shaping a better Europe (Osborne, 2006).

The impact of the crisis on the cultural sector

During the last fifty years, Western European countries have developed relevant welfare policies. Cultural policies have played an important role in this process. The number of cultural activities and facilities (i.e. museums, libraries, theatres, festivals, films) has significantly increased together with the expansion of public expenditures. Thus, the cultural sector depends deeply on governmental policies. Directly, regarding public funding; indirectly, regarding the regulatory system and public policies. In Eastern and Central Europe, the situation has been more complex. During the communist regimes, culture (like sports) was supported as part of a "prestige policy". After the fall of the Berlin wall, they needed to entirely restructure their cultural system and policies. Nowadays, this is paradoxically an advantage for them, since they know how to face processes of radical change better than Western European countries. They are more aware of how to deal with instability and how to move to a very different political, social and economic system.

In the cultural sector, the majority of the European countries have reacted to the crisis with a process of gradual adjustment without structural changes of their cultural policies. From 2009 to 2011 some governments have reduced the level of public funding, while others have strived to maintain the previous amounts of contributions (Council of Europe, 2011). However, it is predictable that the degree of public contributions might significantly decrease in the next years, due to the deepening of the crisis and its impact on public budgets.

The cuts of public contributions have directly caused a reduction of cultural productions and activities, and indirectly a decrease of cultural consumptions (Eurostat, 2011). Cultural organizations have tried to replace these cuts through two main behaviours: 1) marketing strategies (Colbert, 2001)

and more popular artistic and cultural programming to increase the box office incomes; 2) partnership strategies for drawing private donations and sponsorships.

The first strategy has had a good impact, although the duration of the crisis is causing a fall down of private consumptions. The second strategy has not succeeded because the level of private donations and sponsorships usually collapses in times of crisis (Bertacchini et al, 2011).

The reduction of financial resources has generated a clearly negative effect on the weakest actors of the cultural sectors, such as the youngest generation of professionals, independent organizations and projects promoting experimental works and artists.

The situation of the labour market is increasingly difficult for young cultural professionals. So far, they have tried to find a job in established cultural organizations (i.e. museums, theatres, publishing houses, audiovisual companies), or to set up their own business after getting some work experience in this sector. As a result of the crisis, the possibilities to get a job have been dramatically reduced. New occupations are not created, young professionals are often employed only as freelancers, and even the current employees are in some cases dismissed (Lloyd, 2010).

The independent sector organizations are trying to survive the public funding cuts by mainly striving to reduce costs and increase productivity. In some cases they succeed using volunteers to replace full time employees; in other cases the organizations disappear after a few attempts to survive. This is more frequently the case of the youngest companies.

In order to avoid economic risks, many organizations are promoting well-known artists or popular and traditional cultural activities. Therefore, those projects that focus on avant-garde, innovative or experimental works have the greatest difficulties in surviving.

In addition, part of the public opinion is questioning the value of the public funds devoted to the cultural sector. The cultural community reacted with campaigns both at the national and the European level (e.g. the "we-are-more" campaign promoted by ACE and ECF²) to highlight the public value of culture. These campaigns and street demonstrations organized in a few big cities received only the support of the cultural community. Only few citizens have taken part in these initiatives, whereas there had been a greater participation in the campaigns and protests against cuts to other public services, such as health and education.

Concluding, in most European countries, culture is struggling to keep its position in the welfare state. However, only a minority of people do really believe in the strategic role of culture as a key factor of social development. In the last decades, a broad cultural system has been created, and nowadays its financial sustainability is questionable. In the same period of

² <http://www.wearemore.eu>

time, the ever largest and best trained generation of professionals is ready to apply its knowledge and competences. But the crisis makes it impossible to hire most of them in cultural organisations.

This has had highly negative economic, personal and social consequences. The economic consequences derive from the waste of the public money invested in their educative process (i.e. arts schools and universities, grants at the national and European level, and so on). Furthermore, these young people will pay a huge personal price if they will not find any possibility to develop in some way their vocation. So far, even if a young professional could not get the job of his dreams, he could nevertheless find a different occupation in the cultural sector. Nowadays, this is increasingly difficult. Thus, social problems like unemployment, identity misperception and lack of social cohesion have been constantly rising.

Perspectives and challenges

Our society is not yet fully aware of the implications of the current economic crisis on its future. This breaks its capacity for dealing with the global challenges through long term strategies. In this context, the cultural sector is a weak actor. Artists, curators and even cultural administrators frequently behave in a self-referential way, pursuing their mission with an autonomous approach. They justify any financial deficit on the basis of the importance of artistic quality, of creativity and of heritage conservation. Hence, the crisis is perceived as a temporary and external constraint. They are waiting for the end of the crisis and for the recovery of the previous levels of public funding. Instead, this is a structural crisis, and we should face it through a radical change of the strategies and management systems.

The history of cultural policies is deeply related to an elite of professionals and scholars who have saved our common heritage and created and promoted artistic projects and organizations. They lobbied for the development of cultural policies in their countries and, due to their vision and interests, focused basically on the advance of activities and initiatives in the field of arts and heritage. Nowadays, the main stakeholders of public cultural agencies are the representatives of the different sectors involved. Some artistic directors, curators and producers do not take into great consideration the needs and the requests of

the community when they decide their cultural programs. This clarifies the lack of citizens' involvement in defining the priorities of the potential cultural activities. Furthermore, this might explain the low perception of the public value of culture by large parts of the population, who declare only a rhetorical support to arts and heritage.

In general, cultural organizations have not developed advanced performance measurement systems that highlight both cultural/economic performances and the external impact on the territory (Turbide and Laurin, 2009). This is particularly evident in the case of not-for-profit and public cultural organizations. This attitude could be explained by different factors: a) the intrinsic difficulties in measuring a symbolic value (Donato, 2008); b) the frequent inability to define the mission and the strategic goals, and consequently the difficulties in setting up a consistent performance measurement system (Kaplan, 2001); c) the presence of governance systems that are little oriented to the stakeholders, resulting in less attention to the external communication of the performances (Freeman, 1984). Furthermore, some curators and artists believe that their cultural productions are so innovative or excellent that their value could

never be caught by any standard performance measurement system. In some cases, the situation is even worse. Sometimes the measurement is not carried out in order to avoid signalling a balance deficit. Indeed, in such cases the personal interests (prestige, career, salary and so on) are related to the magnificence of the projects, even though the available financial resources are not sufficient. However, we must admit that the conventional performance measurement systems have been designed bearing in mind for-profit industrial companies. Thus, there are difficulties in making them consistent with the characteristics and information needs of cultural organizations (Ames, 1991). Therefore, there are responsibilities, as well as big challenges, for cultural politicians and for cultural management researchers.

To summarize, the crisis could be overcome only through a radical change in the current governance and management models. As for the governance models, they vary in each country on the basis of the institutional and legislative frameworks, the social values and the organizational cultures. A leading role is played by the financial funding mechanisms that strongly influence the behaviour of the single actors. Nowadays, the decrease of the public contributions

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makes it necessary to restructure the size and the priorities of the cultural sector (Merlo, 2011). However, this collides with the current governance models and values. The different subjects (organizations and artists; not-for-profit institutions and for-profit companies) use their traditional strengths and connections only to defend their individual positions and interests.

Hence, a change is requested both at an institutional level (policy) and at an organizational level (management). As for the cultural policy level, some decisions have to be taken urgently. There is an on-going tension between contrasting forces: centralization versus decentralization; organizations' dependence versus autonomy; general objectives versus specific objectives; extrinsic goals versus intrinsic goals. In this context, the key factors to successfully overcoming the crisis are: a) building decision-making processes that should be fluent, non-bureaucratic and participatory, and at the same time able to combine responsibility with autonomy; b) moving towards a long term strategic approach defining policy and organizational priorities.

Traditionally, the total amount of the public resources invested in arts and heritage depends on the perceived value of the activities and projects proposed by the cultural sector. In times of general reduction of the welfare state, and consequently of the public funds to this sector, each community needs to (re-)evaluate the role of culture for its development (Sen, 2001). Before the crisis the cultural sector was in an overall financial sustainable condition since the public contributions (together with other revenues) were enough for the existing cultural activities and projects³. Nowadays, the cultural sector is no longer in a financial sustainable condition, and it is strongly unlikely that it will be in the future. However, even though the public contributions are deeply decreasing, the cultural sector is trying to maintain its dimension.

Adaptation to less financial resources could be reached in two opposite ways: competing or cooperating. In the first option, each actor fights to survive trying to keep its funds at the expense of the others (as a result, the weakest ones will disappear). In the second option, the aim is to establish priorities and to look for the best strategies to increase productivity and non-public revenues. In this case, a participatory approach should be sought to decide on the level of priorities. Furthermore, a change of the governance system would be requested in order to reduce the costs of each project and of each organization (and consequently the whole costs of the sector) and to enhance their revenues. We believe that this could be reached only moving from the current micro-perspective approach to a multi-scale approach capable of combining the "micro" and the "meso" level. That would mean that cooperative and network systems should be promoted both at a territorial and at a sectorial level in order to share the

structural and operational costs of single organizations. Moreover, the cooperative system would allow the cultural organisations to reach the critical mass necessary to increase the non-public revenues (commercial, fundraising, membership, box office, target related projects, etc...). We are fully aware of the difficulties implied by these institutional and managerial changes, but new structural frameworks can be accepted only in situations of severe difficulties, as this one is.

Hence, in a multi-scale approach the "meso" level allows reducing costs and increasing revenues. Nonetheless, the change should occur at the "micro" level too. The main challenge is to build the management system around knowledge and competences instead of around tools and techniques. In this perspective, some possible actions should be encouraged:

a) Improving the decision-making process. In this respect, the focus should be on designing adequate internal responsibility structures, developing performance measurement systems, promoting participatory approaches towards the local communities and the other involved stakeholders.

b) Stimulating organizations to cooperate with other subjects. Referring to this point, a networking culture should be promoted, public-private partnership should be increased and higher transparency should be pursued.

c) Addressing the on-going process of technological innovation using these innovations to develop new business models that could be shaped around market opportunities and challenges, as well as around people's expectations.

The improvement of the European cultural sector will derive from its ability to exploit its enormous potential. The creative industry is already generating the 2.6% of the European GDP (European Commission, 2010). The production and distribution of cultural contents through digital platforms could be a great opportunity to develop new markets and to improve the occupation levels (KEA, 2006). Moreover, culture plays a fundamental role for strengthening social cohesion and for developing local identities by means of participation processes. Thus, culture could acquire growing importance both at the economic and at the social extrinsic side. These sides are interconnected and could generate a multiplier effect.

Conclusions

We are living a structural crisis, a crisis that is based on the lack of reliability of the current social, economic and political systems. The majority of the cultural actors, as well as the majority of the other social stakeholders, are not entirely aware of the changes that the crisis will provoke on our future.

³ Even if it could be questionable whether all the cultural projects were worth public contributions or not.

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However, deep crises offer a great opportunity for improvement when people and institutions are fully conscious of their potential for change.

A pessimistic approach interprets the cultural sector as a weak and inefficient one, unable to create shared collective values. The downsizing of the welfare state will decrease cultural public funds and will probably not allow for the survival and development of many interesting arts and heritage initiatives. Many organizations are suffering from myopic vision and internal operational inefficiencies. This could lead to a smaller cultural sector, composed of a mix of commercial and elitist cultural organizations. Unless a multi-scale approach based on cooperation and joint strategies is established, only the biggest and most connected organizations will survive (i.e. already settled institutions, market-oriented projects, and experienced professionals). Besides, the youngest generation of professionals and the avant-garde organizations will disappear.

An optimistic approach interprets the crisis as a great opportunity for a structural change of the cultural sector, both at the policy and at the organizational level. A real improvement of the governance and management models is necessary to overcome traditional inefficiencies. Moreover, trans-sector and international cooperation could lead to a new development of the sector. However, some relevant modifications of the management approach are needed: to get over the traditional ego centrism, to implement non-bureaucratic and participatory decision making mechanisms, to build the management system around knowledge, transparency and competences, and to adopt long term strategic thinking.

Our goal is to promote a critical debate among professionals and scholars on the crisis’ impact on the European cultural sector. Nowadays the sector is facing a very relevant challenge. The main actors of the sector should interpret the crisis as an opportunity instead of a threat, in order to continue to be the forth pillar of development (Hawkes, 2001). More focused research on this sector and on the performances of

cultural organizations are requested. In times of crisis, understanding present conditions and the on-going trends are crucial points for positively facing the current and future challenges. As part of the research community, this is one of our main responsibilities towards the cultural sectors.

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