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# From “serving” public arts institutions to creating intercultural contexts: cultural management in Germany and new challenges for training

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## ABSTRACT

This essay describes the development of cultural management as a profession and as an academic subject in Germany and discusses new challenges for cultural management according to changes in the cultural sector, enforced by migration, internationalization, and digitalisation. It identifies new working fields and discusses how this is going to change role models of cultural managers. The way academic programmes for arts and cultural management react to these developments, and adapt their curricula and training methods, is described, based on an analysis of university programs in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

## Keywords:

Cultural management

Professionalization

Role models

German cultural policy

Arts management

Universities

## Development of cultural management in Germany and Western Europe

Cultural Management as a profession and as an academic training subject only started to develop in the beginning of the 1990s in Germany and most other European countries, as a result of diminishing public funding for arts institutions and growing competition between private culture providers. One of the main reasons why cultural management attracted attention at that time were the financial difficulties many European countries were facing – in Germany especially as a consequence of German reunification, which required a lot of extra public funding. For the first time, after a long period of very high, and continuously increasing, public cultural funding, arts institutions in Germany suffered from resources shortage and were asked to manage their institutions more efficiently by means of professional arts management. For example, artistic directors in theatres or museums became supported by business managers, assuming that an efficient management could lower the costs for public arts institutions and thus make up for shortages in budget (Look, 1991; Bendixen, 2002; Mandel, 2009). A further reason for the need of cultural management in the public arts sector was the growing competition between public cultural institutions and an increasing number of private culture providers, such as musical companies, since the end of the 1980s. New professional posts, for example in PR and Marketing, began to emerge also in public institutions (Mandel, 2012)

Accordingly, in the beginning of the 1990s, many professional training courses in arts management were established and so were the very first programmes for cultural management, based at universities. A current expert report counts approximately 75 training institutions for cultural management in Germany altogether – about 45 of them are courses of study at universities. Most cultural management courses are CPD/Master programmes<sup>1</sup>. In 1996, the first handbook of cultural management was published in Germany (*Raabe Fachverlag*). And in 2000 the first comprehensive Internet network was founded<sup>2</sup>, which includes a monthly newsletter, also published in English, informing its readers about events, new books and current developments in cultural management in Germany and internationally. In the beginning, cul-

tural management was mainly defined as efficient and effective arts management of (mainly) public arts institutions, by adapting economic tools to the cultural sector. It was considered to be a set of tools, taken by the economic sector to "rationalise" the arts sector and opening up new financial resources. In the first books and articles on arts and cultural managers, those were defined as "specialist for economic questions", "fund-raiser", "mediator between arts and economy", or "impresario" (see Siebenhaar, 2003; Berg, 2007).

### The cultural manager as a "commercializer": reservations against cultural management as a consequence of traditional German cultural policy

Today the need for a professional, systematic approach to cultural management at a practical level, as well as in academic research, is taken for granted.

Nevertheless, there are still prejudices towards arts management in countries like Germany, Austria and Switzerland, especially in the older generation. A survey amongst graduates of cultural management programs in Switzerland showed that hardly any of them is using the title and self-definition of a "cultural manager" because the image of a cultural manager is still rather that of the "commercializer" (Keller, 2004 & 2008). It was argued that cultural management contributes to the commercialization of arts and culture by working with economic methods. Cultural management was therefore considered to reduce complexity and diversity in the art worlds. These prejudices also have to do with the traditional view on arts and culture in Germany, which has very much formed the cultural policy until now. More precisely, one of the biggest fears of German cultural policymakers and within the arts community is that the freedom of the arts could be limited by management. Safeguarding the freedom of the arts and the artists, as well as keeping them away from direct political influence, became most important for the new German Republic after World War II, as a consequence of the Nazi regime, and is thus also guaranteed in the basic law.

Preserving this independence of the arts, it was also interpreted that the state and the communities have to finance arts and their institutions to become

## "SAFEGUARDING THE FREEDOM OF THE ARTS AND THE ARTISTS, AS WELL AS KEEPING THEM AWAY FROM DIRECT POLITICAL INFLUENCE, BECAME MOST IMPORTANT FOR THE NEW GERMAN REPUBLIC AFTER WORLD WAR II"

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see [http://www.kulturmanagement.net/ausbildung/prm/57/v\\_list/edk\\_2/index.html](http://www.kulturmanagement.net/ausbildung/prm/57/v_list/edk_2/index.html)

<sup>2</sup> See [www.artsmanagement.net](http://www.artsmanagement.net)

## “THE TRADITIONAL *GERMAN* CONTRAST OF ‘HIGH’, ‘VALUABLE’ ARTS AND POPULAR ‘LOW’, COMMERCIAL ‘MASS’ CULTURE IS GRADUALLY DISAPPEARING IN FAVOUR OF DYNAMIC CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS”

independent from market and audiences interests. Germany’s cultural landscape, compared with that of other countries, comprises a very high number of publicly funded, and often publicly run, high culture institutions: more than 150 state and municipal theatres (nearly every bigger city in Germany has a theatre, fully staffed with ballet, drama and orchestra); over 200 private, often partly-subsidised theatres; 130 state-funded symphony and chamber orchestras; 6,000 museums (half of which are publicly funded); 40 festival halls and some 7,000 festivals per year; around 10,000 libraries (see Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, 2014). Furthermore, a total of 9.5 billion euros of public money is annually distributed to arts and culture institutions. Germany has a highly institutionalized, and thus very inflexible, publicly financed arts and cultural sector. Public arts institutions are supposed to present “high serious valuable arts”, whereas forms of entertaining arts and culture, preferred by the majority of the population, is left to the private sector. This has led to a strong distinction between publicly funded “serious” arts and low commercial, “entertaining” arts. Within this system and beliefs, the arts/cultural manager was seen as a threat, contradicting the paradigm that good art cannot survive in free markets and that all sources of funding, beyond public sources, could endanger the autonomy of arts and artists.

### Developments and challenges in the arts sector and in society

The traditional publicly financed arts sector and cultural policy in Germany is about to change, due to demographic changes and a growing international influence, which has also consequences for the functions and goals of cultural management.

#### ***Changing structures of arts suppliers and higher appreciation of creative industries***

If the amount of public money for the arts, also in a rather rich country like Germany, is going to be decreasing due to shrinking cities in some parts of the country and increasing social cost, there will be less money for traditional institutions and hardly any money for new institutions. Arts institutions need to find and develop

new financial resources. New forms of co-operation between public arts institutions and private sponsors and foundations need to be sought. More and more new cultural initiatives are privately run, many graduates of cultural management programmes establish their own private cultural enterprises as there is no public funding left for new initiatives in a highly institutionalized system.

Several reports and evaluations in Germany and Europe on the positive economic impact of the creative industries changed the view on privately run culture also in Germany (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, 2010). Cultural and creative industries have started to be recognized even by official cultural policy as a valuable “player” of cultural life (Mandel, 2007; Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft, 2008).

#### ***Blurring lines between “high” arts and popular “low, entertaining” mass culture, and a broader concept of culture***

The traditional *German* contrast of “high”, “valuable” arts, on one side, and popular “low”, commercial “mass” culture, on the other, is gradually disappearing in favour of dynamic cultural expressions. The different sectors are mixing. Small grass-root theatre companies have started to work together with big public theatres. Public classical orchestras invite pop groups to their concerts to become more popular. This is corresponding with a broader concept of culture: a national survey on cultural participation and interests comparing indigenous population to those with migration background showed that migrants have a much wider understanding of culture, comprising everyday life culture, culture of different countries, regional traditions, popular culture (Keuchel, 2012). For the majority of middle aged and older Germans, culture means mainly high art forms like books of Goethe, music by Bach, or paintings by Rembrandt. The study also shows that this narrow concept of culture is changing within the younger generations. Another result is that the vast majority of the population in general, and especially those with migration background, prefer entertaining culture and attend more frequently the events of private, commercial arts institutions than those offered by public arts institutions.

### ***The traditional “high” arts audience is getting smaller***

This is the result showed by several national surveys and requires from arts institutions to develop new audiences and new opportunities for access and participation. The small group of the highly educated population is the main audience of publicly funded arts offerings, as visitor studies show (Keuchel, 2009, 2011 & 2012; TNS Opinion & Social, 2013). In order to develop new audiences in a sustainable way, arts mediation and cultural education, as well as cooperation with schools, have become very important for arts institutions. Institutions have started to think about systematic audience development strategies in terms of communication and relationship-building, yet with limited success. As audience development research shows, to really gain new audience groups who are not yet interested and do not belong to the typical highly educated milieus, changes in communication and service are not enough: institutions also need to change their programming and their overall mission and need to become more diverse in their own staff too (Mandel, 2013).

### ***Intercultural changes in society as a whole lead to changes within the cultural sphere***

The change of society through migration is another important factor. In Germany already 25% of the population have a migrant background and, especially amongst the younger generation, this percentage is going to grow heavily in the next 20 years, also enforced by the high numbers of refugees in Germany. Arts and culture are considered to be an important field to bring people from different ethnic backgrounds and different milieus together and help “intercultural” understanding. But migration also leads to changes in everyday culture, as well as in the arts sector, and requires from traditional arts institutions in Germany to change their mission, their structures, their employment policy, their programs, and their staff if they want to be relevant for a changing population.

Also the influence of the digital world changes the way of communicating, criticizing and consuming arts by lowering hierarchic structures, providing new artistic initiatives with communication power and enlarging the influence of consumers and arts audiences on cultural productions. The Internet has enforced a culture of collaborative work, sharing, and participating that needs to be adopted by arts and cultural institutions.

The arts world is getting more and more international as people in general have become much more mobile: cultural workers study abroad, do internships in cultural institutions in other countries, take

part in international projects, travel easily. In addition, many cultural workers are forced to leave their home countries and live abroad.

### ***Concept-based cultural policy***

After more than 50 years of muddling through with an ever-growing amount of public money (public expenditure in the arts sector grew far more than in all other public fields (see Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder), a strategic approach to cultural policy in Germany is required in order to cope with demographic and cultural changes in society. Recently and for the first time in the federal state, in some federal countries and local authorities, administration boards have started to set up strategic goals based on cultural development planning (Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft, 2013). Yet it is still a long way to implement these goals into reality as this could also mean that some traditional public arts institutions might be closed down if they are not able to adapt to the needs and interests of the present society. Concept-based cultural policy needs to be connected to cultural development planning in cities, regions and rural areas. It turned out to be a big challenge to organize these processes in a participative way where all groups of the population have a say about what they find important as part of a publicly financed and developed cultural life (Föhl, Wolfram & Peper 2016).

### ***Growing demand for artistic and cultural services beyond the cultural sector***

The role of arts in society seems to change due to a high demand for creative and artistic potential in different fields of society. Artistic creativity is not limited to being presented in theatres, concert halls or exhibitions any more, but becomes very important for example in education, tourism, business management, city development. Beyond the arts world, the potential of the arts to transform society by stimulating innovation and stimulating the individual creativity and social changes becomes more important.

### ***New challenges, working fields and role models for cultural managers***

Obviously the working fields of cultural managers have become much wider and more complex in recent years. It is not only about finding new funding resources and new organizational structures for arts institution, but also about attracting and becoming interesting for new audience groups for the arts, and moreover identifying new fields of society where the

## “AS THE ARTS SECTOR IS CHANGING FROM A MAINLY PUBLICLY SUBSIDISED SECTOR TO A MUCH WIDER AND MORE DIVERSE FIELD WITH DIFFERENT SUPPLIES, CULTURAL MANAGERS ARE ASKED TO INTER-CONNECT THESE DIFFERENT SPHERES”

specific potential of the arts is needed. Cultural managers are key players in stimulating a diverse cultural life including change management processes of arts institutions and cultural governance processes. New challenges for a future generation of academically trained cultural managers are:

- Connecting the economic and the public arts sectors to create synergies
- Developing new, more flexible ways of arts production and distribution
- Fostering new audiences beyond the highly educated "white" elite
- Organizing cooperation between the arts sector and the educational, social, economic sectors
- Enlarging the relevance of the arts within society
- Connecting the real art world with virtual worlds
- Managing international exchanges
- Moderating intercultural change management processes
- Moderating processes of cultural governance, including participative ways of cultural development planning

This also changes role models of the cultural manager. In a simplified way, the following tendencies can be identified over time.

### ***From public institution management to entrepreneurial and leadership attitude***

Whereas cultural managers in the beginning worked mainly in public institutions or in public administrations, the amount of self-employed cultural managers increased. Many of them worked as freelancers or opened micro-businesses, often in collaboration with other freelancers and on the interstice between the economic and the non-profit sector (Mandel, 2007). But also within institutions an entrepreneurial approach of taking responsibility and risk became necessary, in order to change institutions. As the arts sector is changing in Germany and also in other European countries from a mainly publicly subsidised sector to a much wider and more diverse field with different supplies, also from the civil society and the private sector, cultural managers are asked to inter-connect these different spheres.

### ***From administrating the arts to co-creating programs***

Whereas in the beginning the focus was on administrating arts institutions in a more efficient way in order to help arts production to thrive, cultural management changed its focus to the side of the audiences. This also comprises that cultural management is not restricted to organize only the framework of arts production but takes a bigger influence on creating new formats and contexts in arts and cultural institutions to suit the needs of different user groups and thus enforce change management processes in traditional arts institutions.

### ***From arts management to cultural management***

Cultural management is more than arts management. The new challenge for cultural managers is not only to enable more artistic productions for arts institutions, but to enlarge the interest in arts and the social relevance of arts as an important part of cultural life and to convert artistic production into cultural values by bringing it to different publics. That includes empowering more and different groups of society, for them to be part of a rich and diverse cultural life.

### ***From cultural management to inter-cultural change management***

As the population in Germany is changing, mainly due to the big volume of migration, arts and cultural institutions also need to be changed to represent the population as a whole. To find new ways of communicating and programming, and to involve new players with different cultural backgrounds in the institutions, bringing together different cultural perspectives and interests is one of the new challenges. The role of cultural managers have become much more complex.

*A cultural manager needs to fulfil the task of bridging the gap between interspaces. As an external actor who only enters a new cultural field of intervention for a certain amount of time he can*

*be seen as having a very high degree of structural autonomy that makes him the ultimate broker (...) In this way, cultural managers, from a network theoretical point of view, act as 'broker' who bridge the gaps (so-called 'structural holes') between otherwise disconnected subnetworks in order to optimize the coordination between these fields and create synergies (Föhl, Wolfram & Peper, 2016: 21-22).*

## Teaching cultural management as an academic discipline

This wider understanding of the role and goals of cultural managers corresponds with latest descriptions of German cultural management programs where one finds instead definitions like "Co-producer, curator, transformer, change manager, cultural producer, interspace manager" (Mandel, 2015), showing a much wider understanding of the subject. If we define cultural management in a wider sense as managing, mediating and creating (inter-)cultural contexts – by connecting arts, politics and the social sphere as part of the process of collective creativity, and as an influential player of cultural policy and cultural governance processes –, what does this mean for curricular building and training cultural management at universities?

Cultural management has nowadays become a multiple discipline at universities, incorporating academic and technical input from many other disciplines. It is not reduced to an adaptation of business management anymore, but also integrates patterns of thinking from political science, cultural studies, social sciences and the arts. When analysing the curricula and the description of cultural management courses in Germany and comparing them to self-descriptions in the 1990s, there is an overall tendency to a more content-oriented, arts specific and more academic approach compared to a rather toolkit oriented training by methods taken from general economy in the beginning of the 1990s. Meanwhile most programmes ask not only about "How to do" to but also "why to do what" (Mandel, 2015).

The subjects Cultural Sciences and Cultural Policy became more important for cultural management compared to economic strategies. Programmes are less concentrated on administration of public arts institutions and place a bigger emphasis on creative industries and cultural entrepreneurship. All programmes offer seminars on international relations and international cultural policy, as well as international exchange programmes for their students. Most programmes do basic academic research and many include a Ph.D programme. During the last 10 years, academic research in cultural management has im-

mensely grown, also due to Master thesis and more and more Ph.D programs in cultural management. A systematic research approach in German-speaking countries has been mainly initiated by the Association of Cultural Management, founded in 2006, with the goal to improve quality in research and training and the reputation of cultural management as an academic discipline. The *Fachverband für Kulturmanagement* edits a scientific journal (also open to English articles) and organises a scientific conference once a year. Topics of the conference and the journal have been: Scientific research in cultural management (2009); theories for cultural management (2010); cultural policy and cultural management (2011); audience development and audience research (2012); cultural management and the arts (2013); cultural entrepreneurship (2014), and the internationalization of cultural management (2015)<sup>3</sup>.

### ***How to teach cultural managers in an academic setting?***

If cultural managers are important "agents of social and political change" and "interspace-managers" who connect different spheres of society, different social milieus and population groups with different cultural backgrounds, how can they be prepared for these complex tasks in an academic setting? If a standardized set of skills (like marketing, fundraising, budgeting) is not sufficient, but rather a mind-set of risk taking and taking over societal responsibility is needed including creative and social competences, how can this be trained in a university context? Methods that were identified in a workshop session of the *Fachverband Kulturmanagement* (Mandel, 2010) included:

- *Real work experiences:* Cultural projects, like producing festivals with students and cooperation with cultural institutions, offer the possibility to combine theoretical ideas and ideal strategic concepts with practical actions. Projects also allow to set students in charge of projects and make them become responsible and gain leadership experience.

- *Research-based learning:* As cultural management is still a young subject, basic research on cultural management processes is needed, as well as continuous research on developments in the vastly changing cultural worlds. Involving students in research processes makes them aware of relevant research questions and enables intensive analysis and discussion processes, as well as a more in depth look at structures, strategies, underlying assumptions.

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see [www.fachverband-kulturmanagement.com](http://www.fachverband-kulturmanagement.com)

- *International exchange*: Most programs offer international exchange programs which enable personal experiences in another country and reflections on diversity, and help identify and better understand different perspectives on arts and culture, different systems and goals of cultural policy, different professionalization modes in the cultural world. This is not only a crucial base for cooperation in the international art and cultural world, but also a way to gain intercultural competences, needed to work successful in increasingly international and diverse societies.

- *Artistic strategies, artistic thinking and research*: Involving artistic practise in cultural management programs is a way of stimulating a more innovative approach. As the arts are based on the principle of ambiguity, showing there is not one true answer and not only one way of doing things, a strong connection of cultural management and arts can stimulate a more utopic way of thinking and challenge to invent unusual, new ways of dealing with cultural co-creation.

- *Reflections on role models*: Critical reflections on role models in cultural management as an integrated part of a cultural management programme can help find out about individual goals and missions as a cultural manager, and show that there is not one standardized way of defining the work of a cultural manager, but many different role models.

Main challenges in cultural management training and research remain to find a balanced and fruitful combination of theory and practice. Theoretical reflections from different scientific fields are indispensable to widen the horizon and provide a base for systematic research. At the same time cultural management must remain a discipline that is closely connected to the empirical practise not to lose its relevance.

Encouraging students to think in a "utopic" way and not just to use proven standardized strategies is another challenge. Although professional cultural managers need to have a profound knowledge of strategies and instruments, it is necessary to keep openness for the unforeseen. This includes openness towards future developments in the cultural world and in society as a whole also in the curriculum, which needs to be continuously questioned and changed due to changing topics and needs.

## Conclusion

Cultural management is not restricted to strategic management and leadership but involves also creative work. Management tries to handle and also to reduce complexity in order to make things work. The arts are characterized by being over-complex, unpredictable, produce different meanings and not serve certain goals; the effects of the arts on an individual's life and on cultural life in general cannot be foresaid. Thus, management of arts is always confronted by dealing with uncertainty. This forces an approach to training on arts and cultural management that involves a complex set of subjects and methods and openness. Cultural management today is less about making arts institutions more efficient, but about having an active influence on cultural life, cultural policy and societal changes.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, cultural management has developed in Germany from a mainly economic discipline, trying to organize the public arts sector in a more efficient way, to a more political and at the same time more creative discipline. The general trends of globalisation, migration and digitalisation have been changing the context of cultural management: the international influence on the cultural system, both in cultural

and in economic terms, has been growing; migration has been changing the composition of the population; digitalisation has been influencing the way of producing, communicating and consuming cultural products. Especially the state-financed "high arts" sector in Germany has been challenged by the disappearance of the traditional arts audience and the competition between the growing private cultural industries.

Thus, cultural management has been confronted with the need to find new approaches to enlarge the relevance of arts and culture beyond the traditional institutional structures. These changes are reflected in new concepts of cultural management training at universities: from a toolkit approach to a more scientific and at the same time more interdisciplinary approach, with a wider understanding of cultural management as creating cultural contexts and moderating intercultural change management processes.

**"MANAGEMENT OF ARTS IS ALWAYS CONFRONTED BY DEALING WITH UNCERTAINTY. THIS FORCES AN APPROACH TO TRAINING ON ARTS AND CULTURAL MANAGEMENT THAT INVOLVES A COMPLEX SET OF SUBJECTS AND METHODS AND OPENNESS"**

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# Understanding the role of cultural networks within a creative ecosystem: a Canadian case-study

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## ABSTRACT

Despite prevailing theories which presume the importance of networks linking artists and others in their communities, we lack sufficient systematic, artist-centred, primary research for a good understanding of how cultural networks function. To address this lacuna, a project fostered by the three major arts organisations in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan has engaged artists and the public in quantitative and qualitative research to understand their involvement in local and more extended networks. With the first publicly funded agency for arts support in North America, a recently buoyant economy, and a diversifying and increasingly indigenous population, established formal and informal cross-disciplinary networks which created a vibrant cultural ecology in Saskatchewan are in transition. Emerging insights into the current dynamics of these cultural networks and the health of the province's creative ecosystem demonstrate the importance of such primary research as a foundation for cultural policy making in Canada and elsewhere.

## Keywords:

Cultural networks

Arts ecology

Cultural ecology

Artist networks

Creative ecology

## Introduction

The assumption that artists are interconnected within complex networks that also include other cultural workers and organizations as well as a broad range of individuals and organizations outside the arts sector is central to a host of current theories and studies related to the arts and culture. The extensive and wide-ranging citations concerned with networking in the recent Arts and Humanities Research Council Cultural Value Project<sup>1</sup> report demonstrate the embeddedness of this assumption to the point that the authors talk about “the networked nature of cultural value” (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016: 141). This goes beyond the importance of networking within the arts and culture to the capacity of the arts to foster networking and social cohesion within societies in general. This close interconnection between cultural and social capital, as suggested by theorists such as Bourdieu (2001 [1986]) and DiMaggio (1987: 442) explains in part the complex range of typologies that can be constructed by researchers examining such networks depending on their definition of culture and the perspective from which they examine the networks (e.g. Sieck, Rasmussen & Smart, 2010; Lizardo, 2006). This study examines cultural networks from an ecological perspective that closely parallels the work of John Holden, who theorizes that the complex web of networks which form within and around the arts should be approached as ecosystems worthy of more specific studies directed towards “understanding and analyzing local cultural ecologies” (Holden, 2015: 32). However, surprisingly few scholars have undertaken artist-centred, primary studies that contextualize and test these theories against the practical realities of how such networks are formed, how they actually function, who composes them – or even if artists have access to such networks within a cultural ecosystem in a specific place and time.

## Networks within culture and the creative economy

In a classic study of networks and relationships at work in Italy – a study that today might be easily framed and interpreted in ecological terms – Robert Putnam derives his influential theories from detailed, place-based, primary research concerning the role of choral societies in building social capital and connectivity through “dense networks of reciprocal social relations”, and he concludes that “social capital is often a valuable by-product of cultural activities whose main purpose is purely artistic” (2000: 19 & 412). Numerous studies on the social impact of the arts, though not always grounded in primary research and seldom with a focus on artists, have further demon-

strated the cohesive, connective capacity of the arts (e.g. Walker & Scott-Meinyk, 2001; Jeannotte, 2003) to the point that Doug Borwick (2012) positions the social cohesion derived from public engagement with professional arts organisations not as a by-product but as a central mandate essential for the survival of such organisations as well as healthy and sustainable communities and culture. Despite his primary emphasis on arts organisations, his argument presumes a set of interconnections linking arts organisation, artist and public in the construction of social capital, and he identifies artists as essential “for connecting with the community”, since: “Ultimately it is the artist that is central to community engagement. Performing arts organisations and museums establish and support frameworks through which any community arts project is based” but “artists (...) are often the face of community engagement” (Borwick, 2012: 350). He assumes that if artists engage in what matters most to their communities this will in turn position artists and arts organisations as indispensable components of those communities.

Despite Borwick’s allusion to the important role of artists and the networks they construct, he offers few specifics regarding actual networks and their capacity to encompass and engage the public in a particular place and time. In his initial work on the creative economy Richard Florida (2002) placed more focus on the artist as operating within a creative class of other individuals such as scientists, engineers, designers, architects and creative professionals in high tech, finance, law, health and business. In comparison with other creative economy theorists (e.g. Howkins, 2001), this effected an important shift in focus from creative industries as drivers of this new economy to the productive interaction of a creative class of individuals clustered in large urban centres as economic generators and catalysts of innovation and creativity. In response to vigorous critique, Florida (2012) modified his thinking to recognize the potential for smaller city centres – and virtually any community – to function similarly in providing a place for productive interaction across the creative class, but he further reiterated and extended his emphasis on the importance of networks by redefining the creative class more broadly to include even individuals from working and service classes if given the opportunity to develop their creative potential. Although subsequent researchers working within his theories have begun to fill the gap (see Spencer, 2009 & 2015), Florida failed to provide adequate primary evidence to support his assertions about the nature of creative networks, and the class-based, creative cities orientation drew considerable scholarly critique, but he did help to popularize the importance of creative networks, the centrality of artists within them and the blurring of lines between artists, other professionals, and amateurs.

David Throsby (2001) offers a more comprehensive valuing of culture beyond its impact on the

1 For more information, see <http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/culturalvalueproject/>

creative economy. He notes that for both economists and cultural theorists "a theory of value is the foundation stone" from which their work evolves and that the relationship between economic and cultural value should occupy economists' attention because "cultural 'ecosystems' underpin the operations of the real economy, much as natural ecosystems do; neglect of cultural capital can lead to the same sorts of problems as we now accept arise if natural capital and natural ecosystems are allowed to fall into disrepair" (2001: 158 & 161-162). His assertions regarding the connectedness of cultural ecosystems are grounded in detailed studies of cultural networks although primarily those formed by specific arts organizations (Bakhshi & Throsby, 2010) or within particular sectors or disciplines (Throsby, 2004) rather than those formed by individuals.

## Networks within cultural ecosystems

Throsby's reference to cultural ecosystems highlights the increasing attention paid to the arts and culture as ecosystems or parts of larger ecosystems dependent on interconnections and networks in the same manner as biological ecosystems. Mark Robinson (2010: 25-26) places the artist at the centre of the arts ecosystem, but notes that the connections between the various levels of the system work both ways, so that "what happens in a town or city (...) impacts on the arts sector. What happens in the arts or in an arts venue changes the city". In fact, he relates the relative health of the ecology, its capacity to maintain creativity in the face of change, directly to "connectivity" and "networks of relationships enabling adaptive behaviour and resilience".

Howkins promoted *Creative Ecologies* (2009) as showing "how our ability to develop ideas successfully depends on how we use networks; for example, knowing when to collaborate, when to compete, and when to go it alone". Bill Sharpe (2010: 17 & 39) in *Economies of Life: Patterns of Health and Wealth* also argues that "growth flows from relationships", but he focuses on the arts as an ecosystem in which money is just one currency of exchange and secondary to art itself, the currency of the economy of experience: "the value of art is precisely that it concerns itself with reflecting the experience of a particular life in its own terms and bringing that experience into the

infinite conversation of shared culture". In defining cultural ecology as concerned with "the complex interdependencies that shape the demand for and production of arts and cultural offerings", Ann Markusen centred its focus on interconnections and located its strength, like that of environmental ecology, in an integrated and convergent approach (Markusen et al, 2011: 8). From this perspective, John Holden, in *The Ecology of Culture*, calls for an ecological shift from what he sees as a dominant, single-minded model of the arts and culture as economically driven to that of an ecosystem with greater attention to how it functions more broadly – its "relationships and patterns (...) how careers develop, ideas transfer, money flows, and product and content move, to and from, around and between the funded, homemade and commercial subsectors" (2015: 2).

## Understanding how cultural networks actually work

Holden's work underscores the currency and influence of such theories with their emphasis on both formal and informal networks encompassing artists, cultural workers and their wider communities – and especially the trend towards situating artists within a broad ecosystem of symbiotic relationships. Increasingly practitioners in arts and culture cite and draw

**"THE OUTWARDLY FOCUSED PERSPECTIVE ON THE BENEFITS OF THE ARTS TO THE ECONOMY NEEDS TO GIVE WAY TO AN INWARDLY FOCUSED ATTENTION TO THE INTERDEPENDENCIES WITHIN THE ARTS ECOSYSTEM – WHICH INCLUDES NOT ONLY ARTISTS BUT ALSO OTHER INDIVIDUALS"**

from such theories in media releases, reports, programming and policies, and the concept of culture as an ecosystem has slipped into the day-to-day consciousness and discourse of artists, cultural administrators, government bureaucrats, agencies and organisations. However, a fundamental change of perspective needs to accompany the adoption of terminology. The outwardly focused perspective on the benefits of the arts to the economy needs to give way to an inwardly focused attention to the interdependencies within the arts ecosystem – which includes not only artists but also a wide range of other individuals, or-

ganizations, business, etc. from inside and outside the arts who together create a range of cultural meanings, economies of exchange and value. Effecting such a shift along with the application of ecological theories through programming and policy making, however, requires an understanding of how in practice formal networks and informal interconnections function in a given place and time. Artists and other creative in-

dividuals need to understand how such networking functions in order to maximize the benefits of networking to their own creative practice or innovative endeavours, and arts and cultural administrators and policy makers need to consider how policy and program changes will impact such networks and regularly ask how effectively and sustainably the arts and culture are functioning as an ecosystem – and interconnecting within broader ecosystems. Where are the disruptions and gaps? Who is included within existing networks and who is not?

Unfortunately, detailed studies and data relating to artists and their role within cultural networking at the grassroots level are limited – and for good reason. Simply identifying the number of artists in a given location is fraught with definitional complexities as well as the practical challenges of contacting and classifying them. If the ecosystem is broadened to include anyone who facilitates creative work from cultural professionals and technicians to participants – e.g. patrons, consumers, fans and avocational artists –, then the challenge of grassroots studies becomes even clearer. Much more work has been done at the level of arts and cultural organisations where identifying the organisations, contacting them and collecting consistently recorded quantitative data over time is much more manageable. Despite the importance of such research to understanding an arts ecosystem, appreciating the full significance of its organizational infrastructure depends on understanding the basic interactions between individuals, the facilitation of which forms the core of so many organizational mandates.

Scholars like Ann Markusen and Gregory Schrock (2008) through the Leveraging Investments in Creativity program in the US and even Statistics Canada (2014b) and the Department of Canadian Heritage in Canada have led large scale projects to mine existing census data and other sources such as labour statistics for information about artist demographics and work patterns. But in Canada, at least, these efforts have proven less than satisfactory or helpful partly because of a preoccupation with determining the arts' contribution to GDP and partly because criteria used in the original collection of the data excluded significant numbers of artists and failed to address key questions for the arts and culture (Hill, 2014a, 2014b & 2014c). Such studies do contribute to a useful constellation of secondary data sources, but other scholars such as Elizabeth Lingo and Steven Tepper have argued for the importance of primary research focused specifically on:

*artists as catalysts of change. We need to better understand how artists both create changes in the labour market itself and the way cultural work is done. What is their process of innovation and enterprise? What is the nature of their work and the resources they draw upon? How do differ-*

*ent network structures produce different opportunity spaces? How do artistic workers create and manage planned serendipity – the spaces and exchanges that produce unexpected collaborations and opportunities? And how do creative workers broker and synthesize across occupational, genre, geographic, and industry boundaries to create new possibilities? (2013: 348-349) .*

Evidence in their special 2013 issue of *Work and Occupations* addresses some of these questions and other scholars have undertaken "careful detailed empirical work, involving in-depth ethnographies" of clusters and networks which suggest that economic and ecological theories, as they relate to the arts, do not always square with the working realities of artists (e.g. Kong, 2009: 62-63; Di Maggio, 2011; Spencer, 2009; Porter, 2000; Gibson & Robinson, 2004; Markusen, 2006; Van Heur, 2009). While commonalities across such existing studies reveal the collective benefits of increasing this body of data, differences across them also point to the importance of studies which extend beyond economic factors to a broader ecological consideration situated in the specific place, time and disciplines for which programming and policymaking is taking place. While individual creative practice along with whole disciplines and an ever expanding constellation of consumers and audiences may be converging at a global level, for many artists and members of their communities the generative creative experience remains a local one. In a 2010 report produced for the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance in Canada, Canadian/Australian scholar Marnie Badham called for a specific cross-disciplinary, place-based study grounded in the broad and unique arts ecology of Saskatchewan which would yield "better data, both qualitative and quantitative, about the arts and their relationship to our lives and our environment. Over time, this would not only tell us more about the arts, but about how the public feels about the arts, and will help to inform better policy decisions" (Badham, 2010: 19).

## Understanding the arts ecosystem in Saskatchewan

In response to this call to action, the three major arts organisations and agencies in Saskatchewan came together in a research partnership to address this gap as it relates to Saskatchewan artists and their communities. The Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, and SaskCulture formed the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR) in 2012 with the objective of better understanding the role of artists in cultural networking and addressing the dearth of detailed data on how artists in the province work and develop networks in the process. Seeking out the perspective of both artists and mem-

bers of the public as components of an arts ecosystem who together construct cultural meaning, SPAR embraced both the limitations and the potential benefits of such research as articulated by Holden: "There are no parts, only ways of seeing things as parts. The connections, symbiosis, feedback loops, and flows of people, product, ideas and money are as dynamic and intense as to defy complete description. But a deeper understanding of culture can be achieved by applying the multiple perspectives that an ecological approach demands" (2015: 3). The partners had much information and data relating to arts organisations, their audiences and the spaces and programs they controlled, but the partners lacked understanding of the position of the artist in the system and how those artists connected with not only other components but also more complex cultural, social and economic dimensions of the broader ecosystem. Thanks to funding from its partners and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, SPAR launched its first research project, *Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan*, in 2013 by developing survey instruments targeted at artists and the public to address three basic questions: (1) What is the nature of professional connections and networks forged by artists among themselves and with their community (broadly defined)? (2) Are these connections contributing to a healthy and sustainable arts ecosystem? (3) How are they related to the cultural, social and economic dynamics of the broader provincial ecosystem?

The findings presented here derive primarily from analysis of these surveys as well as some qualitative follow-up consultations in the next stage of the research, but they need to be understood in the context of the broader provincial climate. As observed by Holden: "culture exists within a wider political, social and economic environment with both proximate and remote connections. No account of the ecology of culture can be complete without recognising the broader context in which culture sits" (2015: 22). Understanding something of the provincial context – both the arts and cultural sector and the extended geographical, social and economic environment – will also help people determine whether our data may be more widely applicable.

## The provincial context

Located in the heart of Canada's bread basket in the western prairie region, Saskatchewan has historically placed considerable importance on the arts. In 1948 it established the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the first

publicly funded, arms-length arts agency in North America, which later served as a model for the Canada Council. The Board served as a catalyst for training and funding amateur and professional artists as well as supporting arts organisations. The ongoing legacy of this organisation is an arts community which boasts a diverse range of artists, organisations and educational programs encompassing the full array of contemporary art forms, traditional indigenous arts and crafts as well as various electronic media. In SPAR's recent sample survey of the province's professional artists, they classified themselves as pursuing 967 different art forms or combinations of disciplines in all areas of the province.

In 1997 the Arts Board maintained a primary responsibility for professional artists and arts organizations when the Government created SaskCulture, a unique agency in Canada which derives funding through the lotteries to support a wider scope of cultural experience, including not only the arts (community-based, amateurs and students), but also heritage, multiculturalism and cultural industries. In 2013 as an attempt to alleviate the devastating effects on the local film and television industry of the elimination of the film employment tax credit and related film commission, the Government formed a third crown agency, Creative Saskatchewan, devoted exclusively to supporting the marketing of creative work with a particular emphasis on the creative industries of publishing, visual arts and crafts, screen-based and new media, music and sound recording<sup>2</sup>. As each new agency has emerged, programming and policy has shifted to the point where they serve all three spheres of culture outlined by Holden (2008) – publicly funded culture, homemade culture and commercial culture –, but not without challenges in facilitating the overlap and convergence of the three spheres – especially in the flows of creative ideas, cultural workers and audiences.

This backbone of funding agencies began evolving during difficult economic times, but in recent years Saskatchewan's abundance of oil, gas and potash along with its agricultural strength made it one of the few places in North America where the economy grew right through the 2008 crash up to the recent global collapse of oil prices. Although large sections of the province remain sparsely populated, the economic boom brought ongoing population increases in rural and urban centres and pushed the provincial population to 1,134,000. With metropolitan populations of just around 300,000, its two major cities, Regina and Saskatoon, have until very recently been among the fastest growing cities in Canada. This influx led to escalating rental and property prices as well as a shortage of housing in some locations – something that

2 Creative Saskatchewan works closely with the six creative industry associations: SaskGalleries, SaskMusic, Saskatchewan Crafts Council, Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association (SMPIA), Saskatchewan Interactive Media Association and SaskBooks.

has had a particular impact on people in low income brackets like students and emerging professional artists.

The province's economic boom also contributed to the diversification of the population. Despite an active immigration policy the province's share of immigrants to Canada remains comparatively low (3.5% in 2011), but 85% of the province's immigrants in this period came from Asia, Africa and the Middle East to a culture where established residents identify overwhelmingly with European ancestry (Government of Saskatchewan-Bureau of Statistics, 2013; Government of Saskatchewan-Ministry of the Economy 2011: 14). Further contributing to diversification, the rapidly increasing indigenous population comprised 16% of the provincial population in the 2011 census and will become the largest in Canada's provinces at 21-24% by 2031 (Government of Saskatchewan-Bureau of Statistics, 2014; Malenfant & Morency, 2011).

Not surprisingly, given this context, Florida singled out Saskatoon, one of the province's two major cities, as a smaller creative city (Florida, 2009: xvii, 95). Open responses to our artist survey corroborated this perception. As one respondent put it, "Specific to Saskatoon, the creative energy is high. Artists from other jurisdictions have moved (...) here. This is a mixture of opportunity, activity, and energy, and a good mix of artistic experience"<sup>3</sup>. Another respondent noted: "There is a growing younger artistic community in Saskatoon which is invigorating and essential to the breadth of a broader artistic community". The design of our surveys facilitated feedback like this on the health of the ecosystem as personally experienced by our respondents so that SPAR could determine the impact of the province's new wealth and diversity on the health and sustainability of the entire arts ecosystem — including the experience of professional artists and the public outside urban centres. Prior to this first comprehensive survey of local artists, no one really knew how many professional artists lived in the province. Through surveys which came just at the beginning of the recent downturn in the oil and gas industry, SPAR wanted to know how the shifting economic, social and cultural dynamics of the province had affected artist networks and relationships; how newcomer and emerging artists as well as those not of European ancestry were functioning within the arts ecosystem; how artists were connected with their broader communities; and how artists had benefitted from or been affected by fluctuations in the province's wealth.

## SPAR methodology and approach

Although conceived and launched well before Holden's 2015 report calling for such detailed studies, SPAR's research on Saskatchewan's arts ecosystem has involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches closely related to the research approach Holden advocates. This case study focuses primarily on results from the first stage of the research. Artist surveys were made possible by an artist registry set up by SPAR partner, the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, as well as names provided by other arts organizations, all of which contributed to a database of more than 3,200 artists from whom SPAR invited just over 1,300 to be surveyed in spring 2014. Nearly a quarter (348) of those artists responded and many completed the lengthy survey in detail, often providing extended answers to open questions. Simultaneously, SPAR also administered an open online survey of the Saskatchewan public in order to compare the perceptions of artists and others in their communities regarding the relative embeddedness and connectedness of artists in wider provincial ecosystems. Because of the openness of the public survey as well as uncertainty as to how well the database of artists captured the entire artist population, further qualitative research is being undertaken to confirm the extent to which the survey results reflect the perceptions of provincial artists and the public. Observations and analyses of the data are leading to hypotheses and questions as well as identification of gaps for follow up through qualitative consultations. Although aware of the challenges of identifying and accessing verifiable artist populations, the SPAR partners felt it important to push beyond those perceived obstacles to primary studies, and they felt that this two-part approach taken in conjunction with other pre-existing studies and data would provide stronger evidence for programming and policy making.

## Importance of informal and formal networking

### *Perceptions of importance*

For ecological thinking and research to inform such policymaking, however, the surveys had to first determine whether respondents saw themselves as part of such a system of interdependent relationships. When asked to rank the relative importance of informal or formal networking to both their evolutions as artists and their ability to create or interpret work, artists ranked

3 Apart from the theoretical studies already cited, SPAR's approach to our research and the analysis of our data have been informed by an amalgamation of theory and methodology drawn from sociology and ecology as well as the cross-disciplinary field of sustainability studies. Unless otherwise noted, the data described herein are from the SPAR Artist Survey Dataset. For more information regarding SPAR's process and methodology, see Blackstone, Hage and McWilliams (2015a: 3-5), its datasets and reports; visit [www2.uregina.ca/spar](http://www2.uregina.ca/spar), or send an e-mail to [spar@uregina.ca](mailto:spar@uregina.ca)

## “THE YOUNGER THE ARTIST THE MORE IMPORTANCE THEY PLACED ON NETWORKING, BUT THE RESPONDENT’S LOCATION WHETHER IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN OR IN ONE OF ITS TWO MAJOR CITIES SEEMED TO MAKE NO DIFFERENCE TO THE IMPORTANCE THEY PLACED ON NETWORKING”

it highly, although they tended to rank networking as more important to their evolution as an artist than their ability to create or interpret work. Not surprisingly, respondents found connections with other artists in their specific arts discipline most important, although connections with other artists still ranked as important. Despite indicating a substantial use of electronic communication, two-thirds of respondents placed the greatest importance on connections with artists, arts organisations and/or businesses in the arts or culture at the level of their local geographical neighbourhood or municipality with steeply declining importance assigned to regional, national and global connections in that order (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 23). An important exception to this ranking came from indigenous artists who also placed a high importance on networking at the national and international levels as well as within their extended cultural community (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 8-11). Only approximately 50% of respondents ranked connections outside the arts in their immediate locale or region as important although 71% placed a high degree of importance on their local context (e.g. their immediate natural environment, particular community or neighbourhood) as facilitating their creativity and art practice (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 20 & 23). Generally speaking, the younger the artist the more importance they placed on networking, but the respondent’s location whether in rural Saskatchewan or in one of its two major cities seemed to make no difference to the importance they placed on networking despite a slightly lower ranking of outright collaboration by rural artists.

### ***Importance as correlated with network density***

Although the survey asked artists to overtly rank the importance of networking to the evolution of their careers and realization of their creative work, it also asked them to provide specific information about the individuals, organisations, spaces, events, means of communication, etc. that helped to facilitate those connections. SPAR then analysed these responses to determine the respondent’s *network density* with respect to relationships within and beyond the arts. This variable was compared with other responses relating

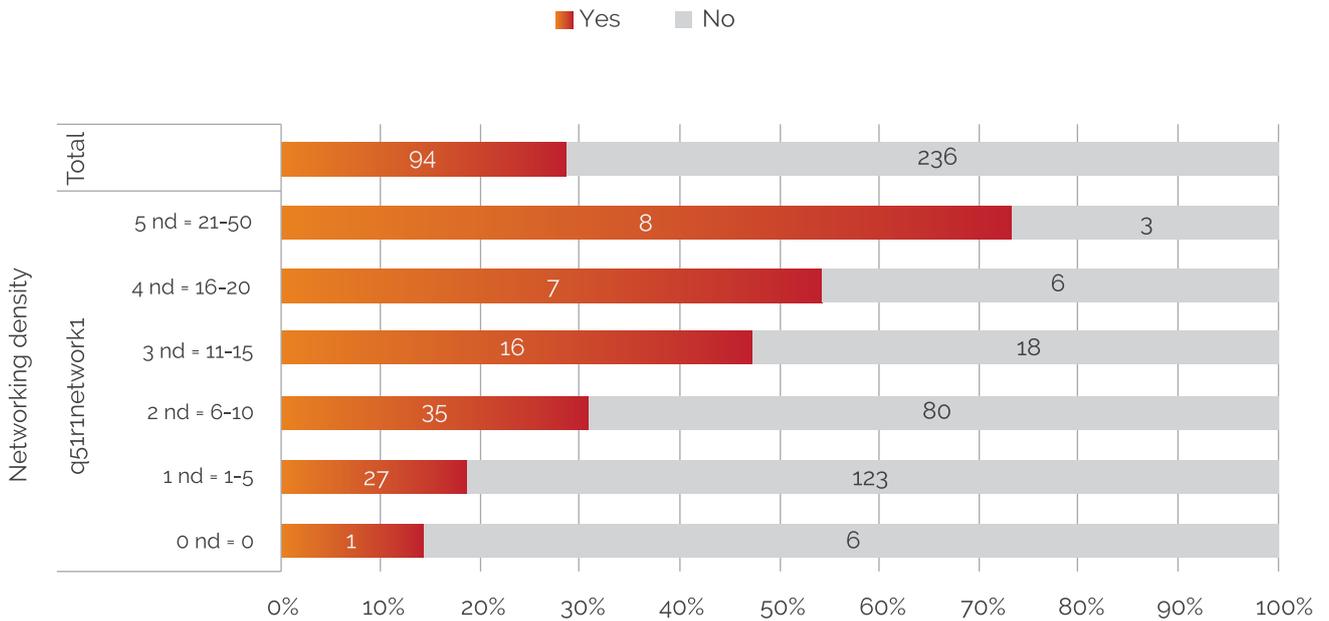
to income, grants, public and peer recognition, types of employment inside and outside the arts, etc. to facilitate a more complex analysis of the relative correlation between the degree of networking density and other factors addressed in their responses. For instance, there was a nearly perfect correlation between high networking density and the receipt of a publicly funded grant in the previous two years (figure 1). Similarly, both higher incomes and residence in one of the two urban centres were associated with stronger networking density (figure 2). While impossible to ascribe a cause and effect relationship between networking and grant success, income or an urban environment, there clearly is a correlation and a suggestion that the importance of networking overtly registered by survey respondents may be further supported by their responses to other questions

### **The nature and facilitation of artist networks**

#### ***Disciplinary and cross-disciplinary connections***

Apart from confirming that they saw themselves as interconnected within a complex web, artists provided considerable detail regarding the nature of the networks. One of the most striking discoveries with important programming implications was the overwhelmingly cross-disciplinary character of creative practice in the province. Nearly 75% of respondents indicated that they were engaged in two or more out of nine general areas of creative work (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 11). While the Canada Council has recently revised the disciplinary structure of its grant programs to better facilitate cross-disciplinary work, Saskatchewan’s Arts Board, the primary funding agency for professional artists, currently retains a structure which according to some artists presents numerous obstacles to emerging cross-disciplinary practices as well as traditional indigenous art making, but senior artists in more conventional fields which straddle more than one discipline (e.g. playwriting which straddles literary arts and theatre) also reported long standing challenges of this nature. Despite these hurdles with funding agencies, however, art-

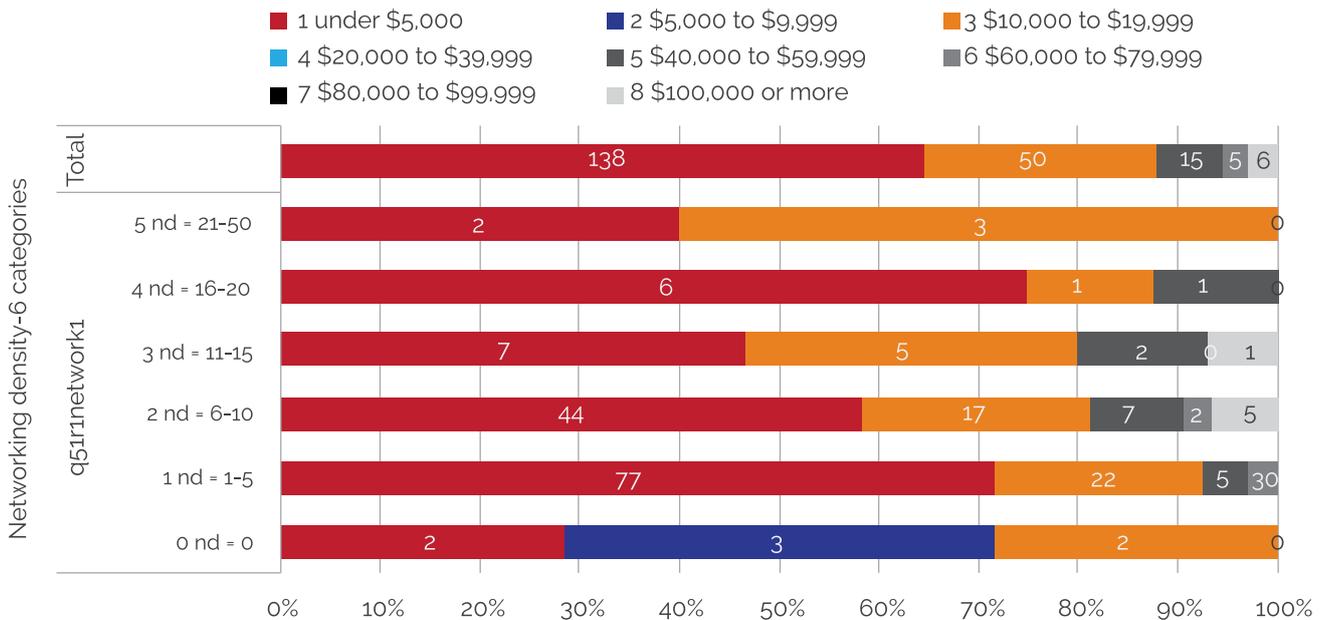
In the past 2 years, have you received a public grant for your creative work? (n=330)



**FIGURE 1. A PERFECT INVERSE RELATIONSHIP, THE LESS NETWORKING, THE MORE “NO” FOR RECEIVING A PUBLIC GRANT**

Source: Blackstone, Hage and McWilliams (2015a).

On average over the past 2 years, approximately what was your gross personal income from your art practice? (n = 325)



**FIGURE 2. HIGHER INCOMES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH MORE NETWORKING**

Source: Blackstone, Hage and McWilliams (2015a).

ists demonstrated their capacity to create and navigate networks whose disciplinary breadth was more than matched by the range of organisations, agencies, educational institutions and/or businesses (inside and outside the arts) that had contributed to their creative evolution. In three open questions, respondents could identify as many relationships as they wished ranging from formal, membership-based organisations in the arts; to other arts or cultural organisations and agencies engaged in programming, production, training or funding; to any kind of entity outside the arts. Not all artists responded to these open questions, but those that did gave more than 1,300 specific names which provided both a window into the networks formed by some individual artists as well as a small indication of the broader complexity of the networks which contribute to the ecosystem of the arts in the province (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 19).

### **Organisations and agencies**

While the artists were frequently fuzzy on the exact nature of the relationship (e.g. sometimes citing funding agencies as membership-based organisations) and the particular organisational connections varied according to the disciplinary orientation of the artist, some relationships figured consistently in the responses to these questions. Not surprisingly, the Saskatchewan Arts Board was a constant with over 140 references in this initial section (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 19). Later in the survey when specifically prompted to rank the role of the Arts Board as a direct source of income over their entire career as an artist, approximately 45% identified it as important despite the fact that less than 30% of respondents reported receiving a publicly funded grant in the past two years (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 16). Of course, with reference to the Arts Board respondents would also have recognized that its funding of arts organisations had constituted important if indirect support for their creative work. In another question, 57% of respondents identified arts organisations and festivals along with arts-related businesses as their most important direct source of creative income followed closely by 56% who saw sales to individuals, galleries and collections as important. In the public survey a large number of respondents credited arts organisations, arts-related businesses or related activities and events as the reason they came to know both professional

and emerging artists (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 16-17).

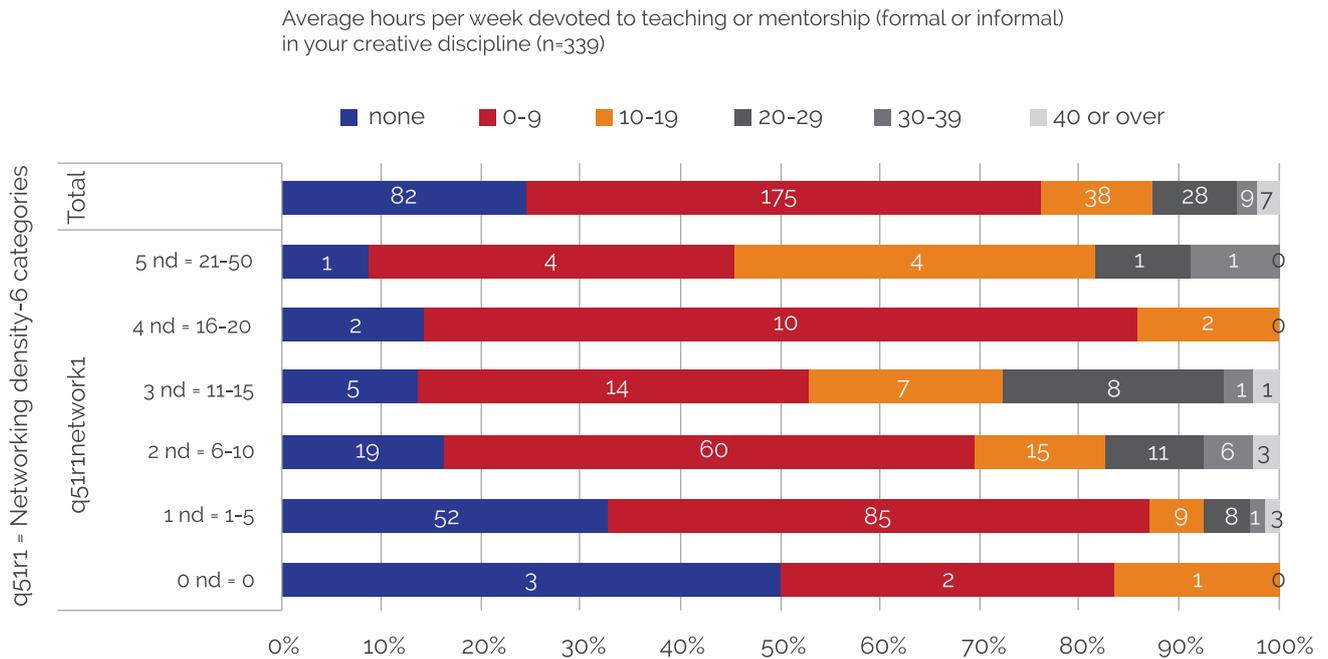
### **Educational institutions and facilities**

A more unexpected discovery with respect to artist networks was the prominence of educational institutions, particularly universities (either cited generally or with reference to a specific institution). In open responses they were by far the most frequently cited organisations with over 200 references (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 18-19), and it became clear that their policies regarding access to facilities as well as the events and programs they offered accounted for these references. The importance of universities should not be that surprising given that over 70% of the respondents reported having at least one university degree – a statistic that is consistent with the high level of education reported in a national survey of visual artists (Maranda, 2009). However, respondents with the highest levels of networking density placed considerable importance on arts facilities in educational institutions as helping to make connections necessary to their creative work. Although not necessarily related to a university or institutional context – or involving remuneration, over 50% of respondents

reported devoting up to nine hours per week to teaching or mentoring in their creative discipline(s) – something that underscores the importance of students whether avocational or emerging professionals in the creative networks constructed by a majority of our artist respondents (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015: 12). In fact, greater network density correlated with a higher number of hours devoted to teaching and mentoring (figure 3). The educational orientation of artist networks was also reflected in artist responses to another question

**“RESPONDENTS WITH THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF NETWORKING DENSITY PLACED CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE ON ARTS FACILITIES IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AS HELPING TO MAKE CONNECTIONS NECESSARY TO THEIR CREATIVE WORK”**

– the relative importance they ascribed to the contribution of artists to 10 areas of leadership in their communities. The three most highly ranked areas involved overt roles in levels of education – K-12 (primary and secondary education) through post-secondary, the professional development of other artists, and contributing to the understanding and appreciation of the arts among the general public. Over 85% of artists and 90% of public survey respondents ranked artist contributions in these areas as important, and just over 50% of artists reported actually contributing in all three areas themselves (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 25-26, & 2015b: 9). The SPAR survey data, therefore suggested that the arts and education are inextricably



**FIGURE 3. GREATER NETWORKING DENSITY CORRELATES WITH HIGHER NUMBER OF HOURS DEVOTED TO TEACHING AND MENTORING**

Source: Blackstone, Hage and McWilliams (2015a).

cably linked with educational policy and programming directly affecting the arts ecosystem and arts policy and programming directly affecting education.

**Work outside the arts and contributions to the creative economy**

A similar insight evolved out of both artist and public surveys regarding the networks artists form by working outside the arts. 38% of artist respondents worked 20 hours or more a week outside their creative practice, and 55% derived some kind of income from such employment (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 12 & 15). These facts do not come as a surprise to most people involved in the arts. However, because data derived from Statistics Canada's labour force surveys and national household survey have been the primary source for artist income and work-related data, the information provided by our artist-specific survey reveals important insights that Statistics Canada criteria and procedures obscure. Statistics Canada categorizes the occupations of its household survey respondents on the basis of the work they spent the most time doing during a specified one-week period. If they spent 15 hours working as an actor, another 15

hours working as a singer and 16 hours working as a computer programmer they are classified as a computer programmer. If they were employed full-time as an IT manager during that one-week but given flexible hours and working conditions so they could also be a member of one of the most prestigious string quartets in Canada, they would still be classified exclusively as an IT manager. If they were employed full-time as a professor of music but expected to be actively engage as a professional musician as part of their duties, even to the extent of being a principal musician in a symphony orchestra, they would be categorized as a teacher – not an artist.

Because our survey respondents could give details about their work outside the arts as well as the nature of their education and degrees both inside and outside the arts they revealed new insights into networking. Artists who work outside the arts may possibly be functioning as free radicals as they move back and forth between the broad range of businesses and occupations outside the arts associated with the creative economy. We should not assume that they are engaging in only blue collar or service class jobs such as plumbing, waiting tables, or driving taxis. For many artists their highest level of education was not in the Fine Arts but rather in fields such as agriculture, commerce, education, humanities, journalism, law, nurs-

ing, psychology, and various sciences. Respondents reported a variety of advanced/professional degrees and certifications, and the occupations they pursued outside the arts reflected this diversity in fields such as secondary and postsecondary education, research, agriculture, communications, business and consulting, administration and management. At least in some instances, they not only demonstrated a connection with other creative professionals such as scientists and information technology experts but also revealed that they themselves also worked as one of those creative professionals.

Over 70% of artists as well as public survey respondents thought that artists make important contributions to the economy and the development of the creative and innovative capacity of businesses or other professionals (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 25, & 2015b: 9). Yet just 39% of artists thought that they personally were making an important contribution to the provincial economy and just over 30% thought they were making an important contribution to creative or innovative capacity (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 26). These low percentages may have something to do with the low levels of income artists reported receiving from their creative work (figure 2). However, the fixation on the low levels of creative income for artists has possibly overshadowed attention to their gross person income. While a quarter of the respondents earned less than \$20,000 – Canadian dollars – and nearly 30% were in the \$20,000-\$39,999 range, 15% earned \$40,000-\$59,999 and 22% earned \$60,000 or more for an overall average gross income of \$44,335<sup>4</sup>.

This demonstrates that artists are engaged within the wider economy. However, important questions with critical policy implications arise as to whether this integration is by choice or necessity and whether artists as well as the public feel they are making the best use of their creativity under such circumstances or sacrificing creative or family time and energy in order to earn enough to support their creative practice. While many artists have so far situated themselves in the latter category, we cannot assume that the extension of an artist's network outside their immediate creative practice – as in the case of the professor or the IT manager already mentioned – does not provide a personal creative return in the form of social and cultural

as well as economic capital. In open questions and follow up consultations, some credited work outside their creative discipline as productively contributing to their creative work in the form of enhanced expertise and contacts. As well, when asked how they had come to know an artist or artists, a significant number of public survey respondents identified work-related contexts: as a work colleague, a client or customer, an employee or employer.

### ***Other community connections and broader contributions to social and cultural capital***

Artists' work-related connections outside the arts are just one component of artist networks that artist and public survey respondents depicted as extending broadly and deeply into communities. Two-thirds of public survey respondents reported knowing 10 or more professional artists as friends, neighbours, family members, fans, patrons, customers, community leaders or through involvement in an arts organisation, arts-related business or other volunteer activity. 85% also knew an emerging artist and over 90% knew an avocational artist (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015b: 19). In reporting their contribution of volunteer time and charitable donations to not only the arts but also a wide range of other non-profit sectors, artists displayed lower levels of donations than the public, but they closely paralleled their public counterparts in the areas and amount of volunteer time given thereby further reinforcing their community connectedness (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 24, & 2015b: 13-14).

While these figures may be influenced by our comparatively rural and small population even in our largest urban centres, it may also derive from the long established priority placed on the arts by provincial residents as well as an often celebrated, if contested, cooperative tradition stemming from pioneer era collective place-making. In small-town Saskatchewan, artists would find it difficult to hold themselves apart from the rest of the community, and artist and public respondents alike define creative networks broadly as intersecting and blurring with larger community agendas. Well over 75% of respondents to both surveys

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CIRCUMSTANCES”**

4 The remaining artists did not respond to this question. The average Canadian income in 2010 was \$40,650 – in Saskatchewan it was \$40,798 (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 15).

thought that artists and arts organisations in general make important contributions to the knowledge and understanding of human behaviour; the formation of personal identity, values and beliefs; the exploration of social, economic and/or political issues; social cohesiveness; and a community's shared sense of place, health, well-being and sustainability (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 25, & 2015b: 9). At this point, it should be acknowledged that many of the interests and demographics of our public survey respondents closely mirrored those of our artist respondents and were not representative of the demographics of the general public. Even in targeted telephone surveys of the public, willing respondents may often have more interest in or connection with the topic of study than the general public, so responses to our open online survey, which was promoted heavily by the arts sector as well as public media, may be most useful if interpreted as providing a profile of those members of the public who feel most closely associated with the arts ecosystem. Interestingly, however, our public survey respondents' perceptions about the importance of particular social, cultural and economic contributions by artists closely paralleled the results of two national surveys regarding similar contributions (Phoenix Strategic Perspectives, 2012: 17; Strategic Counsel, 2015: 23). Of course as recently argued by Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kaszynska, for claims regarding the benefits of the arts to society to contribute to effective cultural policymaking and advocacy, artist and public perceptions on the value of the arts need to be tested in the context of specific experience (2016). SPAR is proposing further research using these public perceptions as a point of departure for exploring ways the impacts of the arts ecology on society can be credibly measured through longitudinal studies.

## The health and sustainability of the arts ecosystem

Rather than defining the components of the arts ecosystem *a priori*, SPAR encouraged artists and the public to provide their own experience and vision. They provided a picture of an open and fluid system in which the collectively devised and shifting web of relationships regularly blurs the lines between arts disciplines and a host of contested dichotomies still embedded in current policy making; e.g. the artist and the public; professional and avocational; fine art and popular culture; innovative and conventional; creative practice and cultural entrepreneurship. Although some artists invoked one or more of these dichotomies and called for a return to greater clarity of distinction, many artists appeared to be navigating around and through them with more attention to developing the relationships and opportunities that will facilitate the realization of creative work than conforming to particular labels. Through both its surveys and follow-up consultations

SPAR's focus has been less on trying to devise fixed boundaries, models or helicopter perspectives out of this dynamic ecosystem and more on determining its health and sustainability as well as best practices for policymakers and artists to foster adaptive resilience.

Ultimately comprehensively assessing the vitality of the provincial arts ecosystem requires the contextualization of SPAR primary research findings within the substantial data and studies annually produced by its partners. Organizations regularly report to the Saskatchewan Arts Board and SaskCulture on the nature of arts and cultural offerings and enumerate the numbers of individuals involved – professional, emerging and/or avocation artists, other cultural workers, community participants, audience members, patrons and volunteers – as well as financial inputs and returns including funding sources and amounts, capital expenditures and liabilities relating to infrastructure and equipment. Recent reports independently commissioned by the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance also have a bearing on SPAR's findings, particularly two reports on arts and education in the province one of which details critical statistics regarding numbers of post-secondary students, programs and graduates along with resource allocation over the past 20 years (Gingrich, 2015). Review of this data is beyond the scope of this article. However, some potentially key indicators have already emerged out of SPAR's grassroots surveys and consultations.

The degree of connectedness within the system can be taken as a sign of systemic strength. The high level of importance placed on artists' cultural, economic and social contributions to society along with the level of public engagement in the arts revealed by public survey respondents are positive signs. 48% had made charitable donations to the arts and culture, and 79% had spent \$500 or more annually on the arts. Participation rates were generally high with 76% of respondents having accessed live performance often in the past five years. Over 70% accessed music or theatre during that period and this kind of participation also extended to children. The great majority of respondents who had children 25 or younger reported that those children had also participated in the arts (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015b: 6). Artists displayed a corresponding degree of connectedness within the provincial arts ecology and the wider provincial ecology, and the array of arts disciplines represented along with the surprisingly high degree of cross-disciplinary activity and the robustness of artist networks all suggest in their complexity and intensity that these may be important adaptive traits which artists have developed in a comparatively isolated and rural province, much like particular species within natural ecosystems. As one respondent observed, "Our relative isolation as compared to larger metropolitan centres has made the Saskatchewan arts community more innovative".

## “THE HIGH LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE PLACED ON ARTISTS’ CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY ALONG WITH THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE ARTS REVEALED BY PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONDENTS ARE POSITIVE SIGNS”

Although nearly all artists had access to the Internet, face to face contact slightly edged out electronic communication as their preferred mechanism for networking with 70% of artists in each of the top two levels of networking density identifying informal social gatherings as important in helping them to make connections necessary to their creative work” (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015c: 17). Despite strengths in connectedness, however, artists still expressed the need for improvement. Only 56% of artists reported adequate access to mechanisms or opportunities for collaboration or networking within the arts and only 40% reported adequate access to such mechanisms or opportunities outside the arts (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 20). These concerns appeared to apply to individuals regardless of their networking density or their urban or rural location. As well, 40% of artist respondents reported that neither they nor an agent, dealer, publisher, etc. actively promoted their creative work or skills (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 10), and otherwise limited evidence of networking, grant applications to federal agencies or foundations and other connections at the national level suggest that programs facilitating access to resources from outside the province could strengthen the ecosystem.

The high level of education reported by artists is another sign of systemic strength, and the related level of importance they placed on educational institutions, their facilities, programs and students within their creative networks would also appear to be strengths as well as another potential sign of adaptive strategies. In larger metropolitan areas educational facilities may not figure as prominently within artist networks, but in a province with a low population density and less concentrated access to both arts organisations and cultural infrastructure, it makes sense that artists have gravitated towards publicly funded and adaptable spaces like those professionally equipped spaces found in post-secondary institutions and K-12 facilities. However, if as some artist and public respondents as well as the recently commissioned Arts Alliance reports on K-12 and post-secondary arts education suggest, educational institutions are reconsidering their commitment to training and facilities associated with the arts, this strength could be transformed into a weakness without policy interventions (Gingrich, 2015).

The relative connectedness and adaptability of species within an ecosystem clearly contribute to

more fundamental criteria in determining the health of any ecosystem – its capacity to sustain the needs of those symbiotically linked within the system. When it comes to artists, this is one of the major questions regarding the vitality of the system. Much effort has gone towards demonstrating the economic impact of the arts on the provincial and national GDP, but given the public’s perceptions regarding the importance of the arts’ social and cultural as well as economic impact, what is the economic return to individual artists? Although nearly all artist respondents reported receiving income from their art practice, over the past two years 43% received less than \$5,000 from their art; 60% received less than \$10,000. During the same period, Saskatchewan wages rose nearly 5%, the highest increase in the country, but artists whose level of education far exceeds the provincial average appear not to have benefitted like other provincial workers as wages in art, culture, recreation and sport had just dropped by 2.6% when the artist survey was released in 2014 (Statistics Canada, 2014a & 2014c). It was the only wage sector to experience a decrease during that period. Additional concerns arise from artist work-weeks. Only 57% of artists devoted 20 hours or more to their creative practice and when all their working hours from both inside and outside the arts were combined they were working an average of 49 hours a week, nearly 8 more than the provincial average. Artists went into detail not only about the challenges of finding affordable housing and work space, but also about their inability to support or even contemplate a family, to purchase insurance or pay for dental care and/or to save money for retirement. Others reported a high level of stress and anxiety derived from working a full-time job outside the arts while trying to maintain a creative career and family commitments. Younger artists reported burnout when trying to support themselves exclusively through their creative practice and a more experienced artist noted that “I still earn less per engagement now, 30 years later, as a more senior artist than I did at age 20 in a different city”. Although little of this basic information is surprising to people in the arts, this new data focuses attention on a critical issue that is seldom discussed or specifically addressed through programming and policy. Is the ecosystem sustainable if it cannot sustain a healthy cohort of artists? What is the essential critical mass of artists generally and in the various disciplines and what needs to be done to sustain this critical mass?

## Beyond sustainability

These may be baseline questions relating to the arts ecology, but as Holden has observed, a healthy system needs to go beyond sustainability. It requires “increasing complexity; a healthy ecology should be generative (...) The ecology should be getting more complex not only in terms of the numbers of people involved but in the diversity of their involvement. Variety is [a] source of ecological strength” (2015: 33). Despite the signs of complex and evolving combinations of art forms and robust networks, the system’s relative capacity to sustain artists casts particular attention on the age dynamic of artist respondents, 47% of which were 55 and over while only 18% were in the 18-34 age range. This compares with 35%, 55 and older in the general provincial population, and 30%, in the 18-34 range (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 12-13). This may be indicative of a decline in younger artists choosing to pursue a career in the province. Alternatively, it may also be indicative of the lack of connection some younger artists have with others in the arts ecosystem as a whole and/or their lack of knowledge of existing agencies and organizations. One successful 35 year old artist told us that prior to the age of 30 he felt no connection to any arts ecosystem and had no knowledge at all of funding agencies, an experience further corroborated by other young artists not included in the original database created with input from the partner arts organizations. They suggest that a more concerted effort be made to reach, nurture and involve emerging artists.

With respect to diversity, the inclusion of youth is of particular importance for the indigenous community, which is substantially younger on average than the general population, but more generally for this community and others lack of inclusion and access are clearly limiting the strength and potential of the arts ecosystem. The 9% of artist respondents and 4% of public respondents reporting indigenous ancestry compares with 16% in the overall provincial population with indigenous background (Blackstone, Hage & McWilliams, 2015a: 28, & 2015b: 19). The very low response rate from indigenous people on reserves in both surveys raises questions about their level of engagement with others in the provincial ecosystem versus isolated cultural systems. Further to the point of diversity, respondents to both surveys were disproportionately female, and newcomers to the province

as well as individuals of non-European ancestry (apart from indigenous respondents) were virtually invisible in both surveys. One newcomer who did respond to the survey complained that “the arts community in Saskatchewan is very much a word-of-mouth, networking community. It is very hard for newcomers to Saskatchewan to break into the arts community successfully without a strong network in place. There is no cohesive place to find opportunities and access to auditions and artist related information. It is very hard to get ‘in’”. Although they acknowledged that newcomers may have similar experiences in other sectors, a newcomer focus group further confirmed this perception as well as the results of a 2014 SaskCulture report, “Engaging Saskatchewan’s Emerging Demographics”, noting the inability of the arts and cultural communities to adapt quickly enough to the changing cultural dynamics arising from recent population increases and shifts in cultural demographics.

Another factor which suggests that lack of diversity is sapping the potential of the arts ecosystem relates to a precipitating factor behind our study – the major disruption of the film industry due to the elimination of the film employment tax credit and the resulting exodus of film professionals since documented through declining local memberships in organisations like the Directors Guild and Equity. As a classic example of policymaking without sufficient evidence and consultation, the Government’s decision

generated copious responses to open survey questions which confirmed the findings of a film industry study following the decision. Respondents argued that irreparable damage had been done to the media sector because the province could no longer compete with other better funded provinces, that networks needed to be completely rebuilt and that the individuals who had not left the province needed to adapt what they do to the new limited opportunities available to them. As indicated in the earlier report, the departure of production companies and industry professionals (Lederman, 2012) led to “a lack of community” – a sense of “isolation (...) as industry activities and awareness decline and people leave”. Employers complained “that they no longer knew who was left and available to hire”. Workers in the industry complained about the collapse of personal and professional networks for “collaboration and friendship, and students specifically indicated that lack of this community would be a motivating factor to relocate” (Alberts, 2014: 27). From an ecological perspective, our

**“THE INCLUSION OF YOUTH IS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE FOR THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY, BUT MORE GENERALLY FOR THIS COMMUNITY AND OTHERS LACK OF INCLUSION AND ACCESS ARE CLEARLY LIMITING THE POTENTIAL OF THE ARTS ECOSYSTEM”**

survey respondents saw the effects radiating out beyond individuals directly associated with that industry:

*There is no film industry. This has hurt almost every sector of the arts community. Not many other art disciplines on the local level can provide a high wage like the film industry. (...) Many of these artists would take that money and invest it into other personal projects, which bring an additional unmeasured benefit to the economy and culture of Saskatchewan – sound department being musicians, art department being painters, camera operators being photographers, directors writing local stories, etc.*

The suggestion here is that the former film industry with its complex and broad scope occupied a position at the top of the supply chain and because of that contributed to networks and support systems as well as good paying jobs that could then feed other creative work outside of film. The conclusion of several respondents was that Saskatchewan had become “a less sustainable arts community” because of what happened to film and that until adequately corrective policies and programs reverse the situation the ecosystem will lack the connectedness, diversity and complexity as well as the innovative and generative capacity of which it was previously capable.

## Conclusion

Although research on the arts ecosystem of Saskatchewan so far completed has revealed some important areas that will need to be strengthened through cultural policy and programming, neat conclusions and specific policy recommendations would be premature at this point. We can say that the provincial arts ecosystem is composed of a highly cross-disciplinary and complex web of connections – but one to which emerging, newcomer, and indigenous artists on reserves appear less connected than others. As well, despite long workweeks and high levels of education among artists and the high level of importance placed on them by the public, the ecosystem is not sustaining its artists very well financially through their creative practice alone. More generally, however, beyond the immediate provincial context, this case study has demonstrated the benefits of ecologically informed research questions and approaches to not only the immediate arts ecosystem but also arts administrators, policy makers, theorists and scholars further afield. While its research questions and data may be particularly useful to individuals working in the under-researched field of cultural policy making for artists in comparatively rural settings like Saskatchewan, its approach offers more broadly applicable benefits. First, simply undertaking primary research that is informed by familiarity with the arts community and the

particular questions that most need to be addressed in that community has revealed the serious drawbacks of secondary research data often framed by unhelpful criteria. Second, consulting directly with artists and the public to get a substantial perspective on the arts community from two under-researched components of the creative process may be challenging and messy from a statistical standpoint, but artists and members of the public have critically important insights and are eager to share them. Third, the study has demonstrated the value of the emerging trend of examining the arts and culture as ecosystems in a given place and time and, in particular, the networking taken as a given by scholars who talk about the creative economy as well as the creative or cultural ecology. Trying to understand what and how players in an ecosystem are connected can further inform and interrogate such theories while also giving us new ways of seeing arts ecosystems, assessing their health and sustainability and developing an action plan to foster adaptive resilience that will ensure the ecosystem’s long term vitality. In a recent provincial Arts Congress convened to focus on SPAR’s findings, it became clear that engaging the entire arts community in such a process was feeding and energizing the arts ecosystem – in fact enhancing the very connectivity we were studying in a way that previous research solely for lobbying purposes had not done. SPAR is now moving forward to broaden this work into the entire Prairie region of Canada over the next 8 years. I invite colleagues interested in similar ecological studies to partner with us in comparing data and developing further methodology for what promises to be a productive field of research.

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# ***More is better!* Current issues and challenges for museum audience development: a literature review**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this conceptual paper is to investigate how research on museum management has been approaching audience development and community engagement in our society – especially in Europe, where the development of democratic participation is proclaimed as a shared commitment. This literature review endeavours to grasp both the state-of-the-art in museum audience research and audience development and the most relevant issues emerging in the scientific debate on this topic in the last 20 years (1995-2015). After analysing the main challenges concerning the innovation of the museum sector, the paper discusses the gaps in visitor studies and museum communication, making suggestions for future research and practice. In the field of museum marketing, this review tries to build a theoretical framework linking changes in audiences, museum role, visitor studies and strategies for visitor involvement, to support cultural institutions in achieving their mission and maximizing value creation.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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### **Keywords:**

Cultural heritage

Museum studies

Audience development

Audience research

Visitor involvement

*To find, though, that paintings could be decoded, that they were intellectual as well as aesthetic experiences, was something of a relief because it straight away put them in a familiar and much more English context if only because a lot of iconography, saying who's who and what's what in a painting, could be taken as a higher form of that very English preoccupation, gossip (...) The truth is people come in for all sorts of reasons, some of them just to take the weight off their feet or to get out of the rain, to look at the pictures perhaps, or to look at other people looking at the pictures. And the hope is, the faith is, that the paintings will somehow get to them and that they'll take away something they weren't expecting and couldn't predict (Bennett, 2005: 458 & 476).*

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The "Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society", signed in Faro more than 10 years ago (Council of Europe, 2005), definitively shared "the need to involve everyone in society in the ongoing process of defining and managing cultural heritage" (preamble). Even though the Faro Convention – as a "framework convention" – does not create specific obligations, allowing each State Party to "decide on the most convenient means to implement the convention according to its legal or institutional frameworks, practices and specific experience" (Council of Europe, 2014: 3), it invites the State Parties to develop cooperation networks to exchange experience and launch future initiatives. Among its priorities are not only the management of cultural diversity for cohesive societies and the improvement of living conditions and quality of life, but also the development of democratic participation, through the implementation of a "shared responsibility" (art. 8) involving citizens and civil society and the commitment from all social stakeholders. Finally, according to the Faro Convention, everyone "has the right to benefit from the cultural heritage and to contribute towards its enrichment" (art. 4).

Some recent European documents have confirmed and strengthened these objectives, including those in the EU agenda<sup>2</sup>. Sharing a dynamic and proactive notion of cultural heritage and with due regard for the principle of subsidiarity, the "Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe" called Member States to "continue to promote education on cultural heritage, raise public awareness on the potential of cultural heritage for sustainable development and to encourage public participation, especially of children and young people, in

cooperation with civil society" (Council of the EU, 2014: 3). Two months later, in order to enhance Europe's position in the field of cultural heritage valorisation, the Communication from the European Commission, "Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe", stated the need to "encourage the modernisation of the heritage sector, raising awareness and engaging new audiences" (European Commission, 2014b: 6). Moreover, in line with the objectives of the EU 2020 strategy, the Creative Europe and Horizon 2020 programmes put audience development and participation among their priorities in order to contribute to social innovation for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

As already stated by John Holden 10 years ago, cultural policy cannot remain a closed conversation among experts: the challenge is "to create a different alignment between culture, politics and the public" (2006: 11). If the best answer to the question "why fund culture?" is "because the public wants it", politicians should understand what the public values about culture, then cultural professionals should create and articulate that demand; in this way, the cultural system would succeed in working better to generate value for the public (Holden, 2006: 14). In order to face this challenge, more and better audience research is needed to help cultural organizations to reach new publics and satisfy their needs, attracting more funding from politicians and policymakers to improve the quality of cultural services and create public value (figure 1). According to accountability and evidence-based policy, information is required from strategic analysis on the actual and potential audiences, their characteristics, preferences and expectations (Reussner, 2003). These crucial issues will become more important in the near future, due to growing international migration and population change in Europe<sup>3</sup> (European Commission, 2014a). In this context, cultural heritage plays an im-

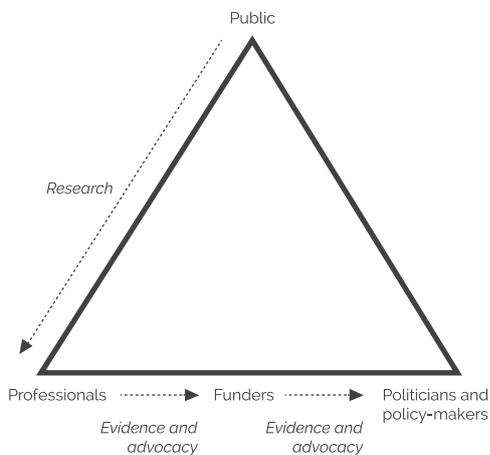
1 A first version of this paper was presented at the 6th ENCATC Annual Research Session "The Ecology of Culture: Community Engagement, Co-creation, Cross Fertilization" (Lecce, 21-23 October 2015) and published in the ENCATC e-book of proceedings.

2 See also the Treaty on the European Union stating that "the Union shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced" (art. 3).

3 According to Eurostat data for 2012, at the beginning of 2013, the EU population was 503 million, of which 20.4 million were third-country nationals, corresponding to 4% of the total population. In 2012, 2.1 million first residence permits were issued to third-country nationals. Of these, 32% were given for family reasons, 23% for remunerated activities, 22% for study and 23% for other reasons (including international protection). The countries whose nationals were given the highest number of first permits are: United States of America with 200,000 third-country nationals representing 9.5% from the EU immigration total, followed by Ukraine (163,000), China (161,000) and India (157,000) with around 7.5% each from EU total. Significant number of permits (between 5% and 2.5% from EU total) were issued to nationals from Morocco (102,000), Russia (66,000), Philippines (62,000), Turkey (59,000) and Brazil (51,000). The total number of asylum applications in 2013 amounted to 434,160, which represents a strong increase of around 100,000 applicants compared to the previous year. The largest group of applicants came from Syria (50,470, i.e. 12% of all applicants), with other significant countries being Russia, Afghanistan, Serbia, Pakistan and Kosovo (European Commission, 2014a).

## “IF MUSEUMS OPERATE IN THE SERVICE OF SOCIETY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT, THEY ACHIEVE THEIR MISSION CONTINUALLY AND HOLISTICALLY SERVING THEIR AUDIENCES AND COMMUNITIES, CREATING LONG-TERM VALUE BOTH FOR THEIR STAKEHOLDERS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS”

portant role in contributing to the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Even more important is the role of museums as institutions that provide a cultural service for public benefit.



**FIGURE 1. INFORMATION FLOW**

Source: Holden (2006: 48).

Sharing these assumptions, the following research investigates how museum studies have approached audience development and community engagement over the last 20 years, highlighting research achievements and advances both in visitor surveys and communication strategies. After showing the changing role of museums in our society, a literature review is conducted, to grasp both the state of the art and the emerging issues concerning the scientific debate on this topic. Finally, gaps in the literature and ideas for future research are discussed.

### The context: changing museums in a changing world?

Developing the ideas introduced in the 1980s by the “new museology”, particularly by Hughes De Varine and Georges-Henri Rivière, at the beginning of the 21st century, the International Council of Museums

(ICOM) has fully recognised the social role of museums in our society. As definitively stated in the 22nd General Assembly of the ICOM held in Vienna in 2007, a museum is an “institution in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment” (ICOM Statutes, Article 3, Section 1). If museums operate in the service of society and its development, they achieve their mission continually and holistically serving their audiences and communities, creating long-term value both for their stakeholders and future generations. According to a sustainable approach, equity in the treatment of different generations over time (inter-generational equity or inter-temporal distributive justice) is a key issue (Throsby, 2002: 107). In this framework, the challenge for museums is twofold: on the one hand, they must reach a wider and more diversified audience, reflecting the complex demographic composition of contemporary society; on the other hand, they must ensure that the value of cultural heritage is understood and cultural capital increases. Therefore, they are required to: (1) understand the context in which they operate, (2) engage with communities, and (3) create value for all potential stakeholders.

As far as the first point is concerned, if we consider challenges emerging in current society, more attention should be paid to social changes that are occurring in Europe and all over the world, which also have implications for cultural heritage management (Black, 2005; American Association of Museums, 2010; European Foresight Platform, 2012). In particular, international migration and an aging population play an important role in European population change. These changes set new goals for museums: international migration increases the cultural diversity of a population and, as a consequence, creates more diverse culture providers and consumers to satisfy, whereas an aging population implies more spare time for an increasing number of people, hence a wider potential audience for museums. Furthermore, the increasing familiarity of young generations with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) – see Prensky’s digital natives (2001) – has reshaped the way that museums provide services, improving user involvement and participation.

## “THE MUSEUM THAT SUCCEEDS IN CREATING CULTURAL VALUE FOR ITS USERS CREATES ECONOMIC VALUE FOR ITSELF, ATTRACTING MORE RESOURCES TO GUARANTEE THE LONG-TERM CONSERVATION OF ITS TANGIBLE AND INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE”

Secondly and more generally, as shown by case studies discussed in the volume *Looking Reality in the Eye* (Janes & Conaty, 2005), social responsibility and accountability towards communities become crucial issues for museums. For example, in their chapter of the book, Sutter and Worts (2005) consider museums as agents of social cohesion and active facilitators of social change because of how they contribute to history and cultural diversity being understood:

*Just as today's societies are incredibly diverse and complex, museums are no longer the monolithic institutions of the past. Instead, many are focusing their efforts more narrowly, telling particular stories with larger meanings. Often, these stories reflect issues and people that have been marginalized by mainstream society – First Nations, immigrants, and chronic illness. This approach can also lead to an activism that embraces community issues and inspirations, in an effort to provide value and meaning (Janes & Conaty, 2005: 3).*

Sharing this approach, the European Commission, too, recognizes that:

*Museums are increasingly community-oriented, led by people and stories, for instance proposing heritage-based narratives that weave the personal stories of community members into the interpretation of larger historical events. They place audiences on a par with collections, at the heart of their activities, do not shy away from exploring sensitive and difficult issues, and address contemporary topics that speak to more diverse audiences (European Commission, 2014b: 5-6).*

Finally, in order to satisfy this commitment, the results of museum activities and the value they create should be measured, communicated and evaluated (Koster, 2006; Weil, 2006; Koster & Falk, 2007; Scott, 2013).

Considering value creation in the museum sector as a democratic mandate, Scott (2008) identifies a *use value*, which is direct consumption; an *institutional value*, when well-managed institutions generate trust in the public realm and add value to government; and an *instrumental value*, describing governments' expected return on public investments related to evidence of the achievement of social and economic policy objectives: “the recipients are (a) the economy – through civic branding, tourism, employment and the multiplier effect on local economies; (b) communities – through increased social capital, social cohesion, tolerance for cultural diversity, urban regeneration and civic participation; and (c) individuals – through benefits such as learning, personal well-being and health” (Scott, 2008: 34-35).

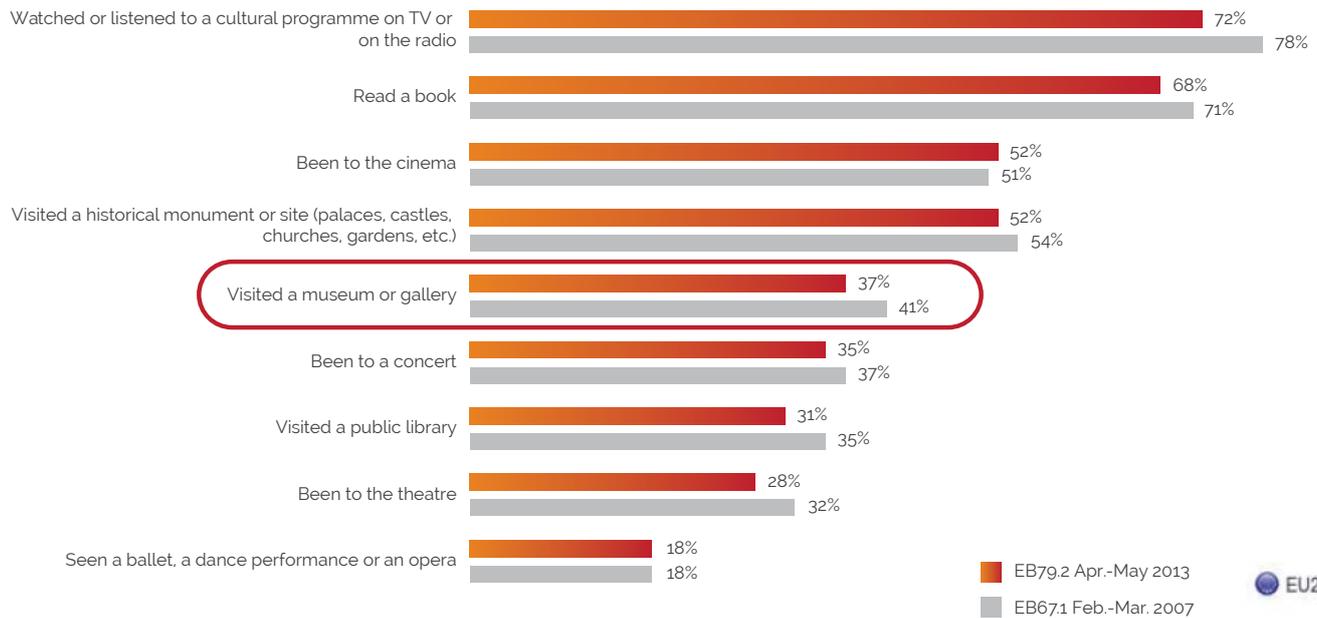
In a nutshell, activating a virtuous cycle, the museum that succeeds in creating cultural value for its users creates economic value for itself, attracting more resources to guarantee the long-term conservation of its tangible and intangible cultural heritage – directly, through revenue from tickets, and indirectly, through public and private funding. By continuously improving its performance, the museum could innovate its offer, satisfying new audiences that increase in number and creating benefits for the local context, e.g. development of economic and professional opportunities and higher quality of life (Montella, 2009; Cerquetti, 2014).

Shifting from theory to practice, despite a shared and increasing interest in value creation in museum studies, data on museum attendance reveal several gaps to fulfil. A survey on the participation of Europeans in cultural activities conducted by European Commission in 2013<sup>4</sup> showed that less than half of respondents had undertaken a range of cultural activities once or more in the last years. Only 37% had visited a museum or gallery (4% less than in 2007), while 62% had not visited a museum or gallery in the last 12 months (figure 2).

<sup>4</sup> The survey was carried out by TNS Opinion & Social network in the 27 Member States of the European Union (2013) and in Croatia between 26 April and 14 May 2013. Some 26,563 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed face-to-face at home in their mother tongue.

QB1. How many times in the last 12 months have you...?

Total 'At least once'



QB1.7 How many times in the last 12 months have you...?

Visited a museum or gallery

	Not in the last 12 months	1-2 times	3-5 times	More than 5 times	Don't know	Total 'At least once'
EU27	62%	23%	8%	6%	1%	37%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	61%	23%	8%	7%	1%	38%
Female	63%	24%	7%	6%	-	37%
<b>Education (end of)</b>						
15-	83%	12%	2%	2%	1%	16%
16-19	68%	22%	6%	4%	-	32%
20+	43%	31%	14%	12%	-	57%
Still studying	45%	35%	11%	9%	-	55%

FIGURE 2. MUSEUM ATTENDANCE IN THE EU (2012)

Source: European Commission (2013: 9 & 19).

Beside lack of time, lack of interest is the main barrier to visiting museums and galleries more often<sup>5</sup> (the first answer given in 21 Member States). An analysis of the results using socio-demographic categories

reveals other interesting patterns by education and occupation, which appear to be important factors. Among the most frequent reasons given for not visiting a museum or gallery in the last year, only 21%

<sup>5</sup> Respondents are least interested in visiting museums and galleries in Cyprus, where 61% said this was the main barrier; this is also the main obstacle for more than half of respondents in Malta (52%) and Portugal (51%). Lack of time is mentioned as the main barrier in the UK (41%), Latvia and Luxembourg (both 39%), Sweden (35%), Estonia (34%) and Romania (32%). The cost of museums or galleries is generally a secondary issue, but was mentioned by 18% of respondents in Hungary, 15% in Italy and 14% in Portugal. The quality and choice of museums and galleries was mentioned by 26% of respondents in Romania and by 17% in Greece, Estonia and Sweden (European Commission, 2013: 28).

of managers gave lack of interest as a reason, "compared to 42% of the unemployed or 39% of manual workers. Similarly, 48% of the respondents who left school before the age of 16 mention lack of interest as a reason, whereas this figure falls to 23% for those leaving education after the age of 19" (European Commission, 2013: 37). Despite changes having happened in society since the beginning of the 21st century, it seems that museum visitors are still upper education, upper occupation and upper income groups (Bourdieu & Darbel, 1966; Hood, 1993; Coffee, 2007). What about unemployed or manual workers, immigrants or less-educated audiences? The lack of visitors belonging to these categories confirms that there is a problem of social exclusion and a need for innovation that can no longer be ignored. This picture looks even more complex if we consider an interim finding from a study-in-progress aiming to examine long-term changes in cultural attendance in the UK (Voase, 2013). Richard Voase expected the growth of the knowledge economy and the expansion of the middle class in 2000<sup>6</sup> to generate an increased levels of cultural attendance:

*However, the picture is one of unchanging levels of attendance at cultural events and facilities. These two facts could be reconciled by theorising that an expanded middle class somehow loses its specificity: that its middle-class behaviours become diluted and as it expands. Thus, its propensity for cultural attendance lessens (Voase, 2013: 171).*

In summary, if museums and cultural organizations are supported by public expenditure, they should create value for a higher percentage of people, attracting and satisfying new audiences and measuring how valuable their visits are through a strategic marketing approach (Arts Council of England, 2011). Sharing this need, a meta-analysis has been conducted aiming to analyse the contribution that museum studies have provided on this topic over the last 20 years.

## Research methodology: the state-of-the-art in museum studies

In order to understand the state-of-the-art in museum studies, an exploratory literature review was conducted, searching two of the largest electronic databases of peer-reviewed literature (scientific journals, books and conference proceedings): Elsevier's Scopus and Thomson Reuters' Web of Science<sup>7</sup>. The two databases cover some of the most significant scientific journals within the museum and cultural heritage sector: *The International Journal of the Inclusive Museum*, *Museum Management and Curatorship*, *Visitor Studies and International Journal of Heritage Studies* (Scopus); *Curator – The Museum Journal* and *International Journal of Arts Management* (Web of Science); *Journal of Museum Education*, *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* and *Journal of Computing and Cultural Heritage* (both Scopus and Web of Science). The research used two keywords adopting inclusion criteria ("museum" AND "audience") and was limited to the period 1995-2015. The selected keywords drew focus to both audience research and strategies for audience development in the museum sector, while the selected period grabbed the main changes that have occurred in our society and in the museum sector between the 20th and the 21st centuries to this day. In Scopus, the basic search was made in the field "Article Title, Abstract, Keywords" – in WoS it was made in "Topic". In the selection of "Document type" and "Language" an exclusive criterion was adopted, restricting the search to articles – conference proceedings were excluded – in English. In total 662 records were found, 387 in Scopus and 275 in WoS (table 1).

The total amount of records included duplications in the two databases, different scientific fields (e.g. education, anthropology, marketing, etc.) and papers analysing policies and case studies from Europe, USA and Asia. The first qualitative analysis of these

Databases	Search fields	keywords	Period	Document type	Language	Results
Scopus and Web of Science	Topic (Scopus): Article Title, Abstract, Keywords (WoS)	museum AND audience	1995-2015	Article	English	682 records: 387 (Scopus) + 275 (WoS)

TABLE 1. THE SEARCH IN ELECTRONIC DATABASES

Source: Author's own elaboration.

<sup>6</sup> The middle class of the 2000s is much greater than that of the early 1990s: "the number of middle-class, ABC1 [upper middle, middle and lower middle class] households increased from some 19 million to 27 million. The number of C2DE [skilled working class, working class and those at lowest level of subsistence] households declined from 26 million to something over 21 million" (Voase, 2013: 172).

<sup>7</sup> The research was conducted in October 2015, with a second check in June 2016.

results led to the selection of papers that supported museums in achieving their mission and discussed strategies and tools to know, understand, reach and satisfy new audiences. As a consequence, the analysis excluded papers relevant for teaching (e.g. teachers' training, science education) or dealing with representation issues (e.g. national identity, prejudices, cultural differences, etc.) or institutions that are not museums (e.g. zoos). Even preferring a managerial perspective, the selection included papers having an interdisciplinary approach (besides marketing and management, education, digital technologies, museology and architecture), registering that management and marketing scholars have shown scant attention to these topics until today. Moreover, the research focuses on the European and Anglo-Saxon context – even though it included some Asian studies with international relevance. Therefore, a wide approach was adopted in order to understand not only trends emerging in a broad scientific debate, but also the complexity of some issues and the interdisciplinary connections they involve. Finally, 145 titles were selected and deeply analysed<sup>8</sup>.

## Research results: towards an audience-centred approach

In 1933, when studying the "museum fatigue" (Gilman, 1916) from a psychological point of view, Edward S. Robinson, the first scholar to carry out extensive and systematic museum audience research, wrote that if visitors could not discern the museum's philosophy, the philosophy must be changed and the outlook of the curators must change (cited in Hood, 1993: 18). At the end of the 1990s, this need for change in museum management definitively arrived at a turning point<sup>9</sup>, supported by the dissemination of a new notion of museums and their role in society (Adams, 1999; Briggs, 2000; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000): from places of exclusion to places of inclusion (Coffee, 2008); from places of education to places of learning, or rather "free-choice, or informal, learning environments" (Kelly, 2004: 47); mediators of "information and knowledge for a range of users to access on their own terms, through their own choice, and within their own place and time" (Kelly, 2004: 47). Moreover, in 1999 Weil argued that museums need to change their vision from being *about something* to being *for somebody*, strengthening the role of museum responsiveness (Lang, Reeve & Woollard, 2006; Ocello, 2011). Therefore, the challenges museums face (e.g. the increased competition and the proliferation of leisure choices) have resulted in a conceptual shift "from being primarily curator-driven to becoming market-

responsive, focusing on the needs of audiences and their learning" (Kelly, 2004: 48-49).

Today, an audience-centric approach is considered a vehicle to achieve museum sustainability (Villeneuve, 2013; Di Pietro et al, 2014) and audience development is a relevant democratic mandate for museums in contemporary society. For this reason, since the beginning of the 21st century, handbooks, toolkits and guidelines have been provided all over the world to support cultural institutions in this process and many museums have already adopted an audience development strategy or plan. Audience development is an interdisciplinary domain, including museology and education, sociology and psychology, leisure and information science, consumer behaviour and marketing. Indeed, all these disciplines are involved in "reaching and engaging people in local communities by increasing the number or types of people who participate in arts activities, or deepening an existing audience's level of participation. It includes serving both new audiences and the present audience more deeply" (Connolly & Hinand Cady, 2001: 7).

When analysing publications on museum audiences of the last 20 years, two different, but tightly linked, research paths emerge: on the one hand, audience research, including both visitors and non-visitors, theory and practice, methods and objectives; on the other hand, strategies for visitor involvement, which concern a majority of papers here selected and discussed.

As far as the audience research is concerned, even though visitor studies have been ongoing in the United States since the beginning of the 20th century, it was only during the 1990s that the proliferation of empirical studies was accompanied with a worldwide, new theoretical approach to audience research, shifting the focus from museum collections to museum services. At the beginning of the 1990s Marylin G. Hood pointed out that "most of the things people object to in museums are related to amenities and services, or lack of them, rather than to the collections, exhibits, or programmes" (Hood, 1993: 24). As institutions are supposed to function for the public benefit, museums have been required to ensure the critical understanding of the value of their collections, and audience research has become a means of measuring the quality of visitor services (Sanivar & Akmehmet, 2011). This kind of innovation has been developed above all in science museums, which are more aware than other institutions that "effective communication takes account of and involves museum audiences in shaping a museum's messages" (Fitzgerald & Webb, 1994: 278).

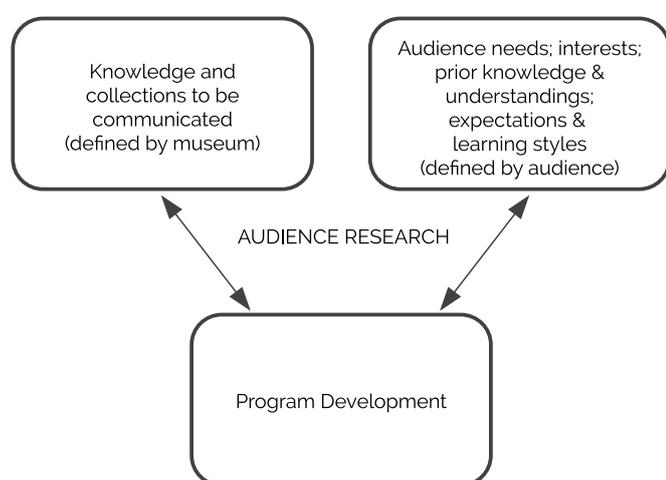
According to a visitor-oriented approach, the need to identify, understand and respond to different interests and perspectives has been highlighted, considering demographic data as useful tools for mu-

<sup>8</sup> The references list only articles that are mentioned in this paper.

<sup>9</sup> This has a precedent in the late 1970s with Robert Wolf's research about naturalistic evaluation, which considers the role of museums in society and also the interpretation of visitors – visitor experiences, rather than the knowledge obtained (see, for instance, Wolf & Tymitz, 1977).

## “OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS STUDIES HAVE PAID MORE ATTENTION TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH, ADOPTING UNOBTRUSIVE AUDIO OR VIDEO-RECORDING OF VISITORS’ BEHAVIOURS AND CONVERSATIONS AND NARRATIVE METHODOLOGIES TO INVESTIGATE MUSEUM EXPERIENCE”

seums to compare the profile of their audiences to that of their communities. They need to “identify fast-growing populations they might want to target, check assumptions, and re-examine standard operating procedures, as the world changes around them” (Mintz, 1998: 67). Since the 1990s at least, in order to explain cultural consumption, the analysis of social structure has been integrated with arguments relating to individual or culturalistic characteristics (i.e. lifestyle or milieu-based or dynamic-temporary states) (Kirchberg & Kuchar, 2014: 175). Above all, the concept of audience identity has progressively broken down in favour of audience diversity, shifting from audience to audiences (Werner, Hayward & Larouche, 2014). Finally, at the beginning of the 21st century, a research culture arose, moving from *practice* to *theory of practice*. This approach is supported by different methods and focuses on “visitor experiences and learning that, in turn, contributes to organisational learning and change” (Kelly, 2004: 62): “audience research in museums is uniquely placed to add value to organisations, not only through attending to the interests, learning needs and understandings of those who use their services, but to provide a meaningful and strategic role in the learning that takes place within the organisation” (Kelly, 2004: 67). Moving from these assumptions, a new paradigm has been adopted based on a transaction approach. In this model, audience research is the intermediary between mission and market approaches to museum programme development (figure 3).



**FIGURE 3. A TRANSACTION APPROACH TO MUSEUM PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

Source: Kelly (2004: 50).

When closely scrutinising research methods and objectives, over the last 15 years studies have paid more attention to qualitative research replacing traditional quantitative approaches, adopting not only interviews and focus groups (Avery & Prnjat, 2008), but also unobtrusive audio or video-recording of visitors’ behaviours and conversations and narrative methodologies to investigate museum experience (Everett & Barrett, 2009). In particular, ethnographic methods have been preferred (Jensen, 2013) as an effective tool to understand how people interact with computer-based exhibits (Meisner et al, 2007) and to evaluate the limits of museum interactive exhibits (Scott et al, 2013) and public engagement in science museums (Shea, 2014).

Considering the effects of demographic changes on cultural attendance, the impact of an ageing population has also been debated, analysing challenges and opportunities that museums will have to face in the near future (Benitez, 2013). Moreover, the importance of understanding the reasons of non-attendance has been discussed (Miller, 2011), focusing on young people and examining teen-centric programmes (Szekely, 2013). As argued by Mason and McCarthy, the younger age groups – teenagers and young adults – are the groups that “museums continually fail to cater to, despite their efforts to broaden and diversify their audiences” (2006: 22). In particular, so few young people go to art galleries because they are excluded by a kind of psychological barrier (“threshold fear”): they feel museums are not for them and do not feel as if they are part of museums. Immigrant populations, too, have been put on the agenda. As suggested by Kirchberg and Kuchar:

*The question then arises, for example, as to whether increased efforts to integrate immigrants into German society will decrease their exclusion from high culture events or whether continuing high culture exclusion will reveal that long-term cultural integration is unsuccessful. Non-attendance could, then, reflect either society’s lack of integration (obstacle) or the conscious and understandable refusal of these groups to assimilate to high culture (Kirchberg & Kuchar, 2014: 176).*

As some recent projects confirm (Jochems, 2008; Bodo, Gibbs & Sani, 2009; Filippoupoliti & Sylaiou, 2015):

*With their ability to provide possibilities for people to associate, interact and find common ground regardless of ethnic background, museums can play an integral part in helping immigrants to connect to their new home country and society. The full potential of this has not yet been harnessed. In order to make better use of their capacity, museums need to be more active and versatile in their outreach programmes, engage more deeply in work with multiple audiences, and encourage participation (Hautio, 2011: 61).*

Analysing strategies for visitor involvement, participation should not only be connected to the notion of museum as a social practice, involving social interaction with other visitors and dialogue with exhibitions (Coffee, 2007), but also be considered a dimension of accessibility, firmly linked to the use of the museum as a public space (Hautio, 2011). To become relevant organisations, it is essential that museums adopt new participatory practices (Nielsen, 2015)<sup>10</sup>: engagement means innovative presentation and interpretation techniques through interactive panels, guided tours, videos and audios, themed interactive exhibitions (Taheri, Jafari & O'Gorman, 2014).

As a consequence, the approach based on one-way mass communication is considered out-of-date and even the concept of different clusters of users based on socio-demographic categories is facing a crisis in favour of a new paradigm based on the concept of "identity formation in everyday life", where visitors are simultaneously "members of an audience (*cultural consumers*) and performers (*cultural producers*)" (Stylianou-Lambert, 2010: 135). Moving from this new approach, visitor studies have emphasized the need to encourage the participation of museum users in different forms (Simon, 2010), even through co-production (Davies, 2010). According to a constructivist approach, museum exhibitions have to be designed and set up as an open work, providing different perspectives and viewpoints, to facilitate open-ended learning outcomes (Sandell, 2007: 78).

In particular, the role of new technologies and the digital empowerment of museums have been considered crucial in attracting young generations and new audiences (Parry, 2007; Marty & Burton Jones, 2008; Tallon & Walker, 2008; Carrozzino & Bergamasco, 2010; Bakhshi & Throsby, 2012; Jarrier & Bourgeon-Renault, 2012; Howell & Chilcott, 2013; Alexandri & Tzanavara, 2014; Rubino et al, 2015; Enhuber, 2015). Both academics and practitioners highlight this idea: thanks to *edutainment*, interactivity and immersive experiences (Mencarelli, Marteaux & Puhl, 2010; Brady, 2011; Ntalla, 2013), ICTs could stimulate people's commitment, understanding, creative engagement (Dindler, 2014), also becoming an activating factor in lack of motivation and context

(Baradaran Rahimi, 2014). Even though there is a risk of dramatization, trivialization and *disneyfication* resulting from technologies (Balloffet, Courvoisier & Lagier, 2014), ICTs can create effective narrative environments (MacLeod, Hanks & Hale, 2012), facilitating the communication of the historical value of the exhibits through storytelling, thematization, spatialization and scenarization (Mencarelli & Pulh, 2012). Finally, in the era of the Internet, over the last five years more attention has been paid to the role of social media and their application in the museum sector from *one-way* to *multi-way* communication strategies (Srinivasan et al, 2009; Chae & Kim, 2010; López et al, 2010; Fletcher & Lee, 2012; Marakos, 2014; Gronemann, Kristiansen & Drotner, 2015; Pulh & Mencarelli, 2015).

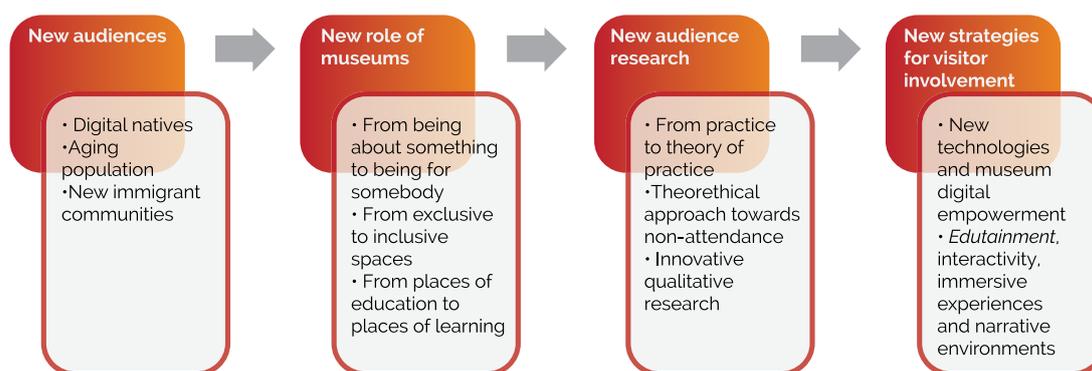
## Conclusion: research gaps and future challenges

Since the end of the 20th century important innovations have affected museums studies. In order to face social changes (ageing population, international migration, etc.) and attract and satisfy new audiences (e.g. digital natives and new immigrant communities), a new notion of a museum has been debated and finally shared, encouraging museums to become more relevant and responsive – to be places of learning rather than of education, for somebody rather than about something, inclusive rather than exclusive. Aiming to achieve a museum mission, audience research too has progressively developed its theoretical approach, addressing non-audiences and implementing innovative methods and techniques (i.e. qualitative research). As a consequence, visitor involvement has gained a central role: audience participation and engagement have been implemented through ICTs, promoting edutainment, interactivity, immersive experiences and narrative environments (figure 4).

Moving from these advances and achievements in museum studies, some possible further developments are listed here:

- Much more attention and consideration should be paid to the multicultural composition of our society. Studies confirm that many programmes have been developed in ethnological, anthropological or historical museums like immigrant museums (Horn, 2006; Hautio, 2011; Dixon, 2012; Johler, 2015; Schorch, 2015), rather than in art museums (Ang, 2005), that are also required to innovate their approach to new audiences;
- Museum audience research needs to become a shared resource for a museum learning "community of practice" (Kelly, 2004), sharing

<sup>10</sup> In the papers retrieved in this literature review, a lot of interactive and participatory museum projects, programs, and exhibitions are analysed that deserve further analysis and a deeper discussion.



**FIGURE 4. MUSEUMS AND AUDIENCE RESEARCH IN A CHANGING WORLD**

Source: Author's own elaboration.

expertise, methods and objectives and promoting interdisciplinary cultural networks across Europe (Innocenti, 2014 & 2015) and building evaluation capacity in museum professionals (Steele-Inama, 2015). This approach could allow the comparability of studies and their results in an international framework to identify best practice examples for high-quality analyses (Kirchberg & Kuchar, 2014) and promote the innovation of research – more theoretically based, collaborative, interdisciplinary and longitudinal (Patriarche et al, 2014);

- Audience research should develop the theoretical explanations for non-attendance, deepening the investigation of diverse audiences' needs (e.g. young people, immigrant communities, etc.) and levels of understanding also through qualitative studies (Kirchberg & Kuchar, 2014);

- New strategies to involve people should not neglect the innovation of communication contents. To become relevant organisations, it is essential that museums develop new content to match different levels of understanding (Montella, 2009; Cerquetti, 2014).

In addition, this literature review confirms that theoretical research can provide useful suggestions not only for further studies but also for museum management, particularly for a museum community that is required to promote audience development. A much stronger cooperation between academia and professionals could be a good starting point.

In conclusion, this study investigated the increasing attention paid to audience development in the museum sector through a literature review. In scrutinizing two international databases, it discussed the achievements and advances in museum studies, highlighting emerging issues and future challenges for museum management. The analysis of papers on

museum audience development confirms the central role of digital technologies for museum innovation, both for the improvement of service quality and the attraction of new audiences, especially in the last five years. As far as visitor studies are concerned, an increasing attention to evaluation methods and a deepened attention to different clusters of visitors are registered, beyond traditional socio-demographic categories. However, the focus on immigrants is still low in museum studies, except some projects in education. This conceptual paper tries to fulfil an identified need to promote the development of museum studies to support museums in achieving their

mission and maximizing value creation, with implications for the innovation of cultural policies. In particular, further research is needed from marketing scholars. To sum up, *more is better*: in order to increase the number of visitors (*more*), *better* audience research and *better* communication are required.

This descriptive overview shows some limitations, which will require further studies to suggest future research paths. First of all, even though it provides a review of the most diffused topics and issues in the scientific debate, it is not exhaustive. Therefore, it could be useful to refine the research, also analysing conference proceedings, non-English papers and

**"THE ANALYSIS OF PAPERS ON MUSEUM AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT CONFIRMS THE CENTRAL ROLE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR MUSEUM INNOVATION, BOTH FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICE QUALITY AND THE ATTRACTION OF NEW AUDIENCES, ESPECIALLY IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS"**

papers that are not included in the selected databases. A deeper research could systemically analyse the index of some specific journals, extending the research to papers not emerging in the search through the selected keywords, but relevant for the topic. Secondly, the limits of citation indexing databases should be considered, where some topics could be "overexposed" (e.g. the role of digital technologies) and others analysed just in one case (e.g. the role of written texts in museum exhibitions, discussed in Ravelli, 1996), because journals in information systems are much more indexed than journals in the humanities. Finally, each of the topics that emerged from this literature review deserves a deeper analysis. Despite these gaps, the conclusions provide useful suggestions for future case studies.

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# Festivalisation of cultural production: experimentation, spectacularisation and immersion

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## ABSTRACT

This paper reasons that the growth in arts festivals that has taken place since the 1990s has changed the nature of the cultural market and, consequently, is a major cause of the growth in the production of particular sorts of artworks that suit festival settings. Based on interviews and discussions with festival directors and arts producers, participant observation as a producer and audience member, primarily in the UK, together with examples from the literature, this paper explores the question of whether festival aesthetics and specific features of festival production and exhibition are changing the nature of the artwork produced in response to festivalisation. Three festival experience dimensions that are increasingly prevalent in the performing and visual arts are explored: experimentation, spectacularisation and immersion. It concludes that the festivalisation of cultural exhibition poses new management challenges and opportunities to produce innovative kinds of work that retain their aesthetic power.

### Keywords:

Festivalisation

Spectacular

Immersive

Cultural  
production

## Introduction

Festivals are an increasingly common feature of cultural life. Not just outdoor greenfield music festivals such as Sonar or Glastonbury, but also city arts festivals and large outdoor events and parades (Quinn, 2005 & 2006; Klaic, 2007). As such, festivals are a growing market for artists and this paper seeks to understand whether the nature of the work being produced is changing in response to festivalisation.

Négrier defines festivalisation as "the process by which cultural activity, previously presented in a regular, on-going pattern or season, is reconfigured to form a 'new' event, e.g. a regular series of jazz concerts is reconfigured as a jazz festival" (2015: 18). This reconfiguration can be seen to be a response to industrialisation processes across the arts, heritage and creative industries that have altered institutional and artistic forms, types of consumption and roles within the production process. The terms cultural producers and cultural managers are used interchangeably in this paper to refer to the people responsible for the management and financial aspects of realising an artistic work or programme and bringing it to an audience. In their examination of new business models in the cultural industries, Jones and Thornton consider the interplay between aesthetics, entrepreneurship, and production strategies, concluding that "[i]nstitutional entrepreneurs do not start from scratch but piece together and recombine cultural elements available in society in ways that often involve creative discovery as well as happenstance" (2005: xiii). Peterson and Berger (1975) stress the importance of industry dynamics in encouraging or suppressing innovation and diversity. Their research into the music industry identified the potential for innovative small labels and producers to puncture the homogeneity and dominance of global media companies. In an era of disruptive technologies and a tendency towards global monopoly amongst technology companies, there remains pressure to innovate, and festivals appear to be one of the answers that has emerged. Festivals differentiate the live experience in a market dominated by virtual entertainment opportunities and downloading (Connolly & Krueger, 2005; UNESCO, 2016); they offer economies of scale and specialisation in marketing, ticketing and site management; and in the case of outdoor events, festival capacities might be larger than most indoor venues, meaning festivals can book bigger headline acts (Nordgård, 2016).

In addition to these managerial considerations there remains the question of whether there is something inherently attractive about cultural festivals and festivity (Knudsen & Christensen, 2015; Morgan, 2007; Klaic, 2009). Bielby, Moloney and Ngo (2005) identified that there has been little consideration of aesthetics in the literature on popular culture in general, and there is a particular gap in the consideration of the relatively recent effects of festivalisation on the work that art-

ists produce. Based on interviews and discussions with festival directors and arts producers, participant observation as a producer and audience member, primarily in the UK, together with examples from the literature, a number of changes have been noted in the types of cultural works on display at many festivals. These changes appear to synthesise the aesthetics of festivals with the economics of experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). For the purpose of this paper, these are defined as spectacularisation, the increasing use of large scale, loud and impressive art works and events; immersive experiences, that appeal to all of the senses and engage participants in the production; and experimentation with new forms, technologies, business models or relationships with communities and places. Such works appear to draw on and add traditional expectations of festivals as sites for social disruption, experimentation and (dis)play.

## Festivity, sociability and professionalisation

Festivity can be thought of as a time and space for celebration and play that is distinct from everyday life (Jordan, 2016). Pieper (1999 [1963]) distinguishes festive periods from times of mundane labour. Falassi (1987) emphasises the spatial rituals associated with festivals, such as decorating the site, fencing it off or opening normally restricted spaces. Decorating the festival venue removes as many reminders of the humdrum world as possible, creating a message that this space will, for a limited time, obey different rules, welcome different people, symbolise something new or other; something festive.

During the last decades of the 20th century jazz, rock and pop music festivals were incorporated into the commercial music industries' touring schedules and festivity itself became a commodity to be promoted to niche markets seeking experiences and escape from the everyday world of work and commerce (Morey et al, 2014). Anderton's (2011 & 2015) analysis of the relationship between lifestyle segmentation, music festivals and commercial sponsorship describes the importance of festivity in helping brands to activate a sense of shared identity amongst festival-goers and a product. The music festival marketplace is, as a result, becoming deeply differentiated with festivals, too, creating brand identities such as Glastonbury, Sziget, and Festival International Benicàssim (FIB) that appeal to loyal audiences and become part of their personal identity (Bennett & Woodward, 2014). Festivals, including Rock in Rio (Brazil, Portugal, Spain and the US), WOMAD (UK, Australia, Chile, New Zealand and Spain), and the Flow Festival (Finland and Slovenia) have sought to monetise their brand names by running international editions (Martin, 2016). Economies of scale are a key factor in the growth of Festival Republic, which produces or partly produces more

## “ARTISTS AND CULTURAL PRODUCERS ARE CREATING MULTI-SENSORY, IMMERSIVE AND SPECTACULAR WORKS THAT CREATE FESTIVAL-LIKE EXPERIENCES, BOTH FOR THE GROWING FESTIVAL MARKET AND FOR CONVENTIONAL FORMS OF CULTURAL EXHIBITION”

than 10 large scale festivals each year in the UK alone, including Latitude, Download and T in the Park (Moirey et al, 2014). Other producers, such as Boomtown and the Secret Garden Party, are differentiating their festivals by developing unique aesthetic identities through commissioning new works or encouraging participation from festival-goers in designing and co-creating themed zones or making artworks for the site (Robinson, 2015; Bowditch, 2010).

Making work specifically for festivals requires an understanding of audience motivation, an area of interest in the events management and tourism literature (Getz, 2010; Glow & Caust, 2010; Robinson, Long & Picard, 2004), and indicate that festival-goers have different motivations to audiences for theatre, exhibitions or classical concerts (Fabiani, 2011). The social and experiential facets of festivals emerge as important attractions, indicating that, at festivals, audiences have an altered frame of mind and are looking for an affective and symbolic intensity in the event design and programme that differentiates the festive time and place from everyday life (Cummings & Herbert, 2015; Lash, 2010). This paper maintains that artists and cultural producers are responding to these expectations by creating multi-sensory, immersive and spectacular works that create festival-like experiences, both for the growing festival market and for conventional forms of cultural exhibition. Archer (2015) and Fabiani (2011) are amongst those who feel that artists and audiences mix more freely in a festive environment, creating a sense of community and involvement that is lacking in theatres, galleries and concert halls. This sense of sociability, of involvement, of the festival being co-created, is enhanced by the fact that many festivals encourage volunteering as a practical management solution to the need for large numbers of staff during the festival itself and because they perceive the festival as having a role in developing and encouraging community participation (Autissier, 2015). There is not the space to examine this social dimension in detail in this paper, which is focused on exploring the question of whether festival-specific aesthetics are changing the nature of artworks that are being produced and consequently, the nature of work available in the cultural market. Social and policy factors are, however, important in explaining the attraction of festival experiences to producers and participants and hence the growth in the festival market.

For Comunian (2015) festivals act as communities of practice, connecting artists and cultural managers in similar ways to conferences and trade fairs (Moeran & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2011). The Mladi levi Festival in Ljubljana, Slovenia, for example, seeks to maximise this social and artistic mingling through creating “opportunities where [they] could invite artists to stay with [them] for as long as possible” (Koprivšek, 2015: 119) in order to develop relationships with each other and the city. The festival holds an annual picnic for artists and its volunteers and encourages the use of a bar as an after show meeting place. “It was exactly at these places that a great many friendships and new co-operations came into being” (Koprivšek, 2015: 119). Festivals bring together significant numbers of cultural practitioners from all sections of the production cycle. They act as hubs in cultural economy networks providing practitioners with professional development prospects, cementing professional norms and expectations about how the sector should operate, and making and agreeing on judgements about aesthetic values that lead to some artists and artworks being promoted and others rejected (Moeran & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2011).

These studies, in their various ways, all point to the fact that there is something inherently different in the way that festivals produce and present work and in the way that audiences experience that work. This paper is an attempt to describe the aesthetic responses that artists are making to festivalisation and to understand the impacts these might have on the shape of the cultural marketplace, and the consequences for professionals working in festival production.

### Experimentation

The arts and creativity are inextricably linked in the popular imagination and are held up as exemplars for businesses seeking to increase their levels of innovation and creativity because of the iterative production techniques, openness to learning from experiences, an intensity amongst collaborators and avoidance of preconceived notions and rules (Austin & Devin, 2003). Artists play with conventions, invert expectations and push boundaries in an attempt to create something original that resonates with audiences. Festivals, too, mix the traditional with the experimental, the conven-

tional with the new. For O'Hagen festivals "may be particularly suitable 'testbeds' for innovation, due to the particular characteristics of festival production. By and large they contain a number of events and productions and under such circumstances it is likely that audiences will be more prepared to attend innovative events" (1992: 62). The festive rejection of everyday rules, sensual and temporal intensity and unmediated co-presence produces an atmosphere of openness to experience that which is qualitatively different, resulting in a willingness to take risks that is attractive to artists and firms developing or selling new products and services. Former chief design officer of Philips Lighting, a company at the forefront of LED research, Rogier van der Heide, a co-founder of the Amsterdam Light Festival, saw the opportunity to work with artists on pieces commissioned for the festival as a part of the firm's research and development activity, for example (James, 2015). Elsewhere, research institute i-DAT has developed a digital technology that measures the mood of audiences by capturing facial expressions and analysing mood and emotion in the users' social media posts by using an app that gamifies the evaluation process (i-DAT, 2015). The app has been tested at Cheltenham Festivals and Liverpool's Flux Festival, as the researchers found that festival audiences were particularly open to experimentation and risk.

Festivalisation, therefore, appears to offer cultural producers and artists more freedom to experiment, to try new ways of making work in new venues for new audiences. Commissioning new artistic works is an experimental feature that is common to many aesthetically-led festivals, whether they celebrate a historic tradition, or explore contemporary and commercial genres. John Cumming, director of the EFG London Jazz Festival; William Galinsky, artistic director of the Norfolk and Norwich Festival; and Ben Robinson, director of greenfield music festival Kendal Calling, discussed their distinctive reasons for commissioning new works during a conference on 22 May 2015 (Cumming, Galinsky & Robinson, 2015). There were four themes that emerged: art form and artist development, exploration of distinctive local identity, market competition for artists, and the creation of a unique product to attract audiences to the festival.

For Cumming, festivals have a responsibility to experiment by commissioning new works because "without it the art form doesn't move forward. It's the lifeblood". London Jazz Festival formalised its commitment to commissioning when it invited 21 artists to make new work for its 21st edition in 2013. Saxophonist Courtney Pine, one of those commissioned, explains the importance of being invited: "Musicians who are improvising and looking for inspiration need a springboard to help them – and commissions give them the opportunity to present new work" (London Jazz Festival/Serious, 2015). Evidence from the literature supports Cumming's observation that audiences are more likely to take artistic risks within festive environments than they are when seeing a concert means

buying a ticket for one event and making a specific trip (Morgan, 2007; Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Uysal & Li, 2008; Archer, 2015). For Cumming this means that festivals are ideally positioned to "celebrate an art form's existing repertoire, but also to celebrate the right to fail". Pianist and composer Alexander Hawkins explains the distinction between performing at a festival and at other concerts: "The chance to perform a commission comes along with a festival and the commission gives you an opportunity to do something new and something different from the day-by-day gig" (interviewed in EFG London Jazz Festival – 21 Commissions, 2013).

John Cumming suggests that festivals need stories, a narrative that runs across the festive period. Commissioning new works means he can bring together artists and shows he otherwise would not have thought of. In 2014 he invited jazz pianist Abdullah Ibrahim, a rare opportunity that stimulated him into developing a South African theme tied into the 20th anniversary of South African majority rule. The festival commissioned a new work from a South African big band to enhance the experience, and supplemented the programme with talks and panels discussing democracy and South African culture. The festival environment gives an artistic director more space to develop a programme than would be possible with a weekly jazz club, or traditional theatre programme. The intensity of festival programming places concerts, exhibitions, and plays in juxtaposition to each other, so one might still be resonating as the next event starts, producing unexpected insights, nuances and reflections. According to Cumming, festival audiences who have already committed to attend a performance by a known artist are more willing to try something new whilst they are there. Something new and something different echoes festivity's sense of being a time and space that is distinct from everyday life.

Something new and something different also enables festivals to compete for high-profile artists in the increasingly competitive field of live music. As it has become more difficult to make money from recorded music, the live music field has grown exponentially, a fact that was prophesied by David Bowie in 2002 when he said that recorded music would become as available as running water, leaving live performance as the main source of revenue for musicians (Krueger, 2005; Connolly & Krueger, 2005). And, although live event numbers have grown, the number of superstar headliners has not. Festivals are forced to either pay ever increasing fees for names who guarantee ticket sales, or to find inventive ways to build relationships with musicians. Commissioning them to make new work is one method discussed by Comunian (2015) and Glow and Caust (2010), who each highlight the role festivals play in helping artists to launch their careers and develop professional networks. Other festivals, such as Meltdown at London's Southbank Centre develop partnerships with artists who are then asked to curate the festival. Notable Meltdown curators have included David Bowie (2002),

Patti Smith (2005), Pulp's Jarvis Cocker (2007), Yoko Ono (2013) and Talking Heads frontman David Byrne (2015). Each curator provides access to their contact book and who would turn down an invitation to perform from singer Scott Walker (2000) or dance music producer James Lavelle (2014)?

Galinsky feels that commissions are important because they are made for a particular place, reflecting and adding nuance to local identity. In 2015 the Norwich and Norfolk Festival staged *Wolf's Child* by immersive theatre company WildWorks. The specially created, site-specific show took place in woods surrounding a 17th century manor house in Norfolk and was inspired by the true story of a man from the area who spent two years as a fully integrated member of a wolf pack in Idaho. In places such as Norwich, which is on the eastern edge of England and does not have its own producing theatre company, such commissions have social and public policy dimensions: they create a unique reason to visit or live in a place by filling that gap and telling the community's stories. Narrative layers are provided by the experience of attending the event itself, the rediscovered tales and insights provided by artists who are seeing the place from a new or different perspective.

Ben Robinson is also interested in the pulling power of commissions; in his case, to a music festival held in the remote and beautiful Eden Valley in the Lake District National Park in Northeast England. Kendal Calling has piloted an immersive art trail in the woods at the edge of the festival site. The woods became an additional – unique – attraction, adding a surprising feature to the visual and experiential design of the site. The trail, which saw Robinson and his team working with visual artists for the first time, was funded by Arts Council England in an attempt to access audiences who do not normally visit art galleries. The result, *Lost Eden*, is inspired by folklore from the Eden Valley. Audiences are encouraged to co-create new stories in the tale of a legendary lost people, the Carvatti, who inhabited the area. Wandering through the site, participants encounter themed costume parades, bespoke art works and giant installations and sumptuous creatures (Kendal Calling, 2015). The trail creates a link between the music festival, which could be sited in any green field with sufficient access and facilities, and this specific place.

The potential of festive-like events to influence place identity is a key element of many outdoor commissions being undertaken by cities seeking to rebrand or enhance communal identity. During a panel discussion at the Cultural Exchanges Festival in Leicester, February 2015, Shona McCarthy, the direc-

tor of the Derry/Londonderry UK City of Culture 2013, underscored the importance of culture in the city's peace process. New shared traditions and symbols of common identity are essential if divided communities are to find commonality. And large-scale spectacular outdoor experiences ensure that all communities feel that they can participate. The Amsterdam Light Festival, an annual display of commissioned works, sees the city's waterways as a stage. Works are developed for specific sites and suspended over the canals. Works such as Irma de Vries' 18-meter-high Canal House (2015-2016) reflect Amsterdam's unique architecture, while others make links to contemporary issues or Dutch research. Bianca Leusink's *Buckyball: Get Connected* (2015-2016) grew out of a partnership between the artist and the University of Twente and MESA+, a nanotechnology research institute. Shaped like a carbon atom, the hexagonal faces depict works by Leusink and information about Twente's innovations. Yet, despite the specificity of Amsterdam Light Festival's commissioning process, the works made for sites in the city can now also be seen in other cities on the developing light festival circuit, which is a good example of the spectacular aesthetic associated with festivals.

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### Spectacularisation

A spectacular is something highly visual and larger-than-life. Festivals have always sought to appeal and sometimes overwhelm the senses. Indeed, this is one of the reasons that the arts have traditionally been incorporated into religious festivals. Contemporary sites, whether urban or greenfield, are decorated with flags, banners and lights. And, as with carnival or South Asian *mela*, the audience adds to the spectacle by dressing in bright, colourful costumes, creating the atmosphere of a very special occasion that is different from the everyday (Robinson, 2015). Kaushal and Newbold use the word *tamasha* to describe the bawdy, striking and exuberant style of performance found at *mela*, arguing that it enhances "the spectacle to convey greater emotion and to establish a greater level of empathy with audiences" (2015: 220).

What is new is the tendency of art works themselves to be spectacular, at festivals and, as a result of the high costs of production, increasingly in other festivalised environments, too. Giant puppets by French company Royal de Luxe have been seen on the streets of China, South Korea, Chile, Portugal, Sweden, Iceland and Mexico as a key ingredient in city marketing and place-making strategies. In 2006 the company's show *The Sultan's Elephant*, toured the streets of London as part of the city's attempts to renew its sense of com-

munity in the wake of the previous year's tube and bus bombings. Chenine Bhathena, senior cultural strategy officer at the Greater London Authority, explained at a seminar at De Montfort University on 2 March 2016 that *The Sultan's Elephant* had awoken London to the possibility that the city's streets could be a playground for its citizens, paving the way for pedestrianisation and leading to retailers calling for festive spectacles to drive high street regeneration. The creation of a spectacular event brings together artists, businesses and civic authorities in a shared endeavour that challenges each group's attitudes and perceptions.

More recently, American artist David Best created a 22-metre-high wooden structure he called a temple in a park in Derry/Londonderry in Northern Ireland in the summer of 2015 as a symbol of peace from the sectarian Troubles. The structure references a Protestant tradition of lighting large bonfires to celebrate a victory of the Catholic King James in 1690. Members of both communities came together to build the temple, and to leave messages inside. After a week, the *Temple of Grace* was put to the torch and burnt to the ground in a symbolic act of healing<sup>1</sup>.

Perhaps the best example of this trend to spectacularisation is the proliferation of light art festivals across the globe – Sydney, Australia, Singapore, Kobe and Nabana no Sato in Japan, Amsterdam, Berlin, Ghent in Belgium and Durham in the North East of England to name a few of the better known examples. Whilst some of these festivals commission new and site-specific works, others rely on light artists adapting existing works. Janet Echelman's 1.26, a net of colourful LED lights was first seen in Denver in 2010 during the Biennial of the Americas. It has since toured to Sydney (2011), been suspended above the Amstel river during the Amsterdam Light Festival in 2012-2013, above Marina Bay in 2014 for Singapore biennial light festival and has appeared at the Lumiere festivals in Durham in 2015 and London in 2016 (Echelman, 2015b). In a statement on her website, Echelman describes her work as exploring

*the cutting edge of sculpture, public art, and urban transformation (...) By combining meaning with physical form, it strives to create a visceral experience in diverse city environments, accessible to all. These sculpture environments embody local identity and invite residents to form a personal and dynamic relationship with the art and place. Each project becomes intimately tied to its environment through the use of local materials and working*

*methods, thus strengthening neighborhood connections and promoting a distinctive civic character (Echelman, 2015a).*

The emergence of a light festival touring circuit is leading some to question how they maintain their unique sense of place, whilst developing competitive advantages. Amsterdam Light Festival's commissioning processes for the 2015-2016 edition included clauses giving the festival ownership of the works for the first time. The purpose of this was twofold: to allow the festival to develop an income stream from loaning works to other festivals and cities, and to ensure control of these loans so that the Amsterdam Light Festival retains its distinctive elements as a tourist attraction.

In all these examples, the sheer scale of the event has provided an artistic spark and acts as a metaphor for their desire to be inclusive, to involve the community, raising doubts about Debord's argument in *The Society of the Spectacle* (1983) that the highly visual had been co-opted by the market, with spectacular events being inauthentic and manipulative, made solely to sell products. There are, indeed, market pressures associated with festivals, and spectacular festival events and art works. Spectacle can be found in the use of festivals for city branding and tourism,

but it is clear from the cases above that place-making, community engagement and aesthetic judgements are just as influential, with market mechanisms being co-opted in order for artists and festival organisers to fund the artistic works rather than promote unrelated goods.

## Immersive experiences

David Bowie foretold the rise of the immersive experience in an interview with the BBC in 1999, where he described live events as places where "the audience is at least as important as whoever is playing (...). It's almost like the artist is there to accompany the audience and what the audience is doing" (1999: 8 mins 50 secs). Pine and Gilmore (1999) described this trend as the experience economy, a market where products and services are sold by associating them something affective or memorable, often an event that appeals to physical sensations and shared experiences. "The rise of the experience economy can be seen to as a result of contemporary life being lived in and through

<sup>1</sup> For more information, see <http://templederry-londonderry.com/>

a mediated and mass mediated world where people come to desire 'real' experiences, physical sensations, and contact with human beings" (Newbold & Jordan, 2016: xv).

Robinson (2015), O'Grady (2015) and Anderton (2015) each considers the participative, experiential and immersive nature of festivals to be something that distinguishes them from arts events held in theatres and concert halls. Fabiani (2011) contends that festivals create unique opportunities for encounters between artist and audiences unencumbered by the usual rules that separate performers from audiences in theatres and concert halls. For artists, particularly performing artists, festivals are rare opportunities to meet with and see their contemporaries' work, something that is difficult if they are on tour, or performing most evenings, meaning that audiences are more likely to include other performers. Combined with an increase in event numbers, the intensity created by the decoration of the site, and programming throughout the day and night, festivals can create a sense of what Turner called *communitas* – an "unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *communitas*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders" (Turner, 1969: 19).

Increasingly, those ritual elders, the festival's curators, directors and producers, are encouraging carnival-like participation in the production of work. In her work on the Burning Man festival in Nevada, Chen (2011) discusses the way in which spectatorship is replaced with concepts of prosumption and co-creation in which audiences are, explicitly, involved as producers of the festival's programme as well as the consumers. There is no main stage or concert programme. Participants are invited to make and stage the festival themselves. For Robinson, the no spectators principle that guides the festival's design and marketing messages means that there is a "fusion of practices based around this ideal [that] obligates festival-goers to contribute to such an extent that perceptible differences between the producers and consumers of the event are largely eliminated" (2015: 166). Symbolically, participants are called *Burners*, a practice also employed by the UK's Secret Garden Party (*Gardeners*), which mixes the traditional concert-style music festival programme with participative zones inspired by the Burning Man ethos. Shambala, which takes place in a secret site in England, resists publicising the acts booked for its stages. Its "Our Principles" (Shambala Festival, 2015) web page promotes the idea of the festival participant as the star rather than the acts on stage:

*Our passion is to encourage creative participation. Shambala is a canvas upon which diverse groups have autonomy to create and offer their ideas and create a rich tapestry of experiences in music, art and performance. The idea of the "Shambalan" being just as important as the entertainment we provide is an essential part of Shambala's nature.*

As in *mela* (Kaushal & Newbold, 2015) or traditional pre-Lenten celebrations such as Mardi Gras, striking and colourful costumes are increasingly visible at festivals. Indeed, festivals such as Bestival, Standon Calling and BoomTown Fair encourage participants to wear fancy dress associated with themes or festival zones. Costumes, generally considered to be children's wear in most of the Western world, are a form of performance and play that places the festival-goer on a par with professional actors as part of the entertainment for other participants.

Participation is increasingly found outside the festival environment, too, and takes a range of forms. Conceptual artist Marina Abramović, for example, routinely involves the public in her work, whether sorting pieces of rice into piles, or sitting opposite her for five minutes in silence. The context is controlled by the artist/producer and the public are, briefly, actors within it. Bishop coined the term "social turn" to describe what she saw as "the recent surge of artistic interest in collectivity, collaboration, and direct engagement" (2006: 179), much of which she felt was at least partially politically motivated, a factor that can also be found in festivals. Shambala's principles explicitly refer to a desire "to discover and share ways of moving to a sustainable future" and "to be a place free of corporate influence" (2015), the latter being considered to remove agency from festival-goers. The Woodstock Festival in Poland is run as a thank you to charity volunteers and offers co-creating opportunities, including a virtual game version of the event (Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity Foundation, 2015).

Immersion in the festive world is a significant part of festival's otherworldly attractiveness (O'Grady, 2015). Participants are distanced from everyday life through spectacular décor and sensual excess, allowing them to shed their cares and give themselves up to the experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Knudsen & Christensen, 2015; Falassi, 1987). As discussed above, festival-goers are actors whose costume is part of the event for others. Volunteers, too, become involved in festival production in larger numbers than elsewhere in the cultural sector, enjoying the opportunity to meet artists and see backstage (Puchkova & Elkanova, 2016).

As festivalisation has taken hold, the desire of audiences to be immersed in a production appears to be influencing artwork in other settings. Whilst immersive theatre is not entirely new, there has been a noticeable appetite for productions that involve audiences as characters or witnesses since Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* – a film noir style adaptation of *Macbeth*, where audiences explore a series of rooms in the McKittrick Hotel and happen upon scenes reminiscent of the Shakespeare play – opened in New York in 2011. Other examples include a musical adaptation of *War and Peace*, called *Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812* and *Leviathan*, a production of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* in which the audience play the ship's crew, or graffiti artist Banksy's anti-theme park, Dismaland (Banksyfilm, 2015). For prac-

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tioners such as Mark Storer, immersive theatre has a political agenda. His 2012 *A Tender Subject* was a promenade performance devised by gay prisoners that asks audience members questions about why they make the judgements they do. Placing audiences within the action changes their relationship from spectator to actor, with agency and responsibility for the subsequent events, just as Bowie predicted.

Large scale immersive installations have also become a feature in art galleries such as the Guggenheim in New York and Tate Modern, which has commissioned several for its sizeable Turbine Hall. Arguably some of these, such as Olafur Eliasson's *The Weather Project*, a gigantic indoor sun, are spectacular rather than immersive; exhibited primarily as a means of attracting visitors. Others, such as Rirkrit Tiravanija's 1997 *Untitled (tomorrow is another day)*, create an environment in which the audience become actors in the piece. The exhibition saw the Cologne Kunstverein opened 24 hours a day so that visitors could live in the artist's recreation of his New York home. Participants could cook, sleep and even have a shower. More recently Carsten Höller's *Decision* at the Hayward Gallery in London<sup>2</sup> uses mirrors, Upside Down Goggles, and twisting enclosed helter skelters that audiences can slide down' to disorientate, disrupt and undermine the logical, scientific paradigm that he believes dominates Western understanding (Adams, 2015). Immersion in these artistic worlds, like immersion in a festival world, invites participants to play in an environment that rejects the disenchanting rationalism of everyday life.

The creation and success of these works is dependent on the existence of audiences willing to take risks and wanting to experience altered states. As more and more people have immersive experience at festivals, the risk of programming this kind of work in other settings is reduced, making it possible for artists to tour works that might have been confined to one-off events. Architects of Air, a UK company, produces what it calls monumental multi-coloured inflatable sculptures out of plastic. These luminaria are immersive tent-like environments that, as the sun shines through the coloured panels, become infused with coloured light. Combining the visually spectacular with a calming soundtrack and a unique environment, the luminaria are explicitly marketed as immersive experiences for festivals and cultural venues, and have become a commercial success. There have been 22

designs that have toured in more than 40 countries, with nine currently available, providing permanent work for artist Alan Parkinson and a team of six in the workshop, plus temporary construction and event staff (Architects of Air, n.d.), a clear indication that immersive experiences are now part of mainstream culture.

### Conclusions

Festivals are unique environments in which to enjoy cultural events and experiences. Each is different from the next, yet there are features that distinguish the festive from the everyday and festivals from other forms of cultural production and exhibition. Traditional expectations of festivals have been immersive and spectacular environments, fewer distinctions in status between artists, audiences and participants, and place-specific events and themes. As the number of festivals has expanded, artists and producers are adjusting to this new market. It is becoming possible to identify shifts in cultural production, to see a festival aesthetic in types of work that are being produced and it is leading to new production methods. These raise a number of issues for cultural managers and for artists, just as digitisation has created the need for new business models within the music and movie industries. For some, there may be concerns that festivalisation is driven by market factors rather than aesthetics. The examples considered, however, offer examples of a mixed economy, a cultural ecosystem that combines private and public sector actors, market and public policy objectives. Artists are also responding to festivalisation by creating art works that are experimental, spectacular and immersive, sometimes seeking commercial success, sometimes to make a political statement, yet at the same time prioritising aesthetic criteria by being thoughtful, moving, or simply beautiful.

Festive environments are created as sites that are clearly distinct from everyday life, places where social norms can be turned on their heads and identities played with. In such spaces, audiences, participants and artists appear to feel freer to experiment than in other settings. At their most experimental, festivals can become cultural laboratories, giving practitioners room to try out new works and ideas and festival-goers a chance to sample art forms they

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see <http://carstenholler.southbankcentre.co.uk/>

would generally be wary of, or to see emerging artists. Whether or not acts or artworks that are successful in a festival setting also thrive in other environments when audiences might have more conservative tastes is open to question.

Artistically, the need to be eye-catching in increasingly busy and distracting environments poses problems for artists whose work is quiet, small in scale, or demanding of sustained commitment in order to understand it. For those who know Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, for example, Punchdrunk's *Sleep No More* provides an experience that is layered with meanings unavailable to those who don't. Négrier (2015) regards festivals as entertainment, experiences that anyone can enjoy regardless of their level of cultural capital, a view that is similar to Debord's (1983) arguments about spectacle. If festivals become the dominant mode of production, will the opportunity to learn about a genre or art form over a sustained period be limited? Yet the examples of spectacular and immersive artworks discussed in this paper indicate that artists are responding to festivalisation in ways that are thoughtful and thought-provoking, that ask questions about place and society that are just as interesting as more traditional works.

There are, however, practical considerations in regard to spectacular events. Large-scale performances are inevitably expensive to produce and, despite the intentions of the artists, may be distorted by funders and sponsors with city or brand marketing priorities. The need to make events eye-catching simply to be heard above the noise in the marketplace, whether that marketplace is a festival, or the increasing competition from the virtual world that is providing cheap access to the best (and worst) of global culture, is also a pressure facing cultural managers. Some are using the festival model as a solution to this problem. But if more and more venues and cities focus their resources on festivals or spectacular events, it will create a dilemma for smaller-scale producing companies: can they continue to commission new, quiet, unspectacular plays from unknown writers, or will they, too, have to bow to market pressure and choose projects primarily for their ability to attract attention?

As festivals have become more mainstream, so too have immersive and participatory arts. This is a phenomenon that is both rationally commercial – the immersive experience cannot (yet) be digitally replicated, you do have to be there – and a meaningful, af-

fective response to the demands of contemporary life. Artists and participants are seeking playful, sensory, surprising experiences that bear little relationship to their everyday lives. But marketisation is not the only reason for this phenomenon. Artists are also employing immersive techniques more often found in commercial leisure and marketing fields to reflect upon and critique society, to highlight individual social and political agency. Just as festivals can provide alternative visions of society (Bakhtin, 1994 [1965]) in which the personal is political, so too can immersive and participatory art experiences.

The practical production processes of festivals differ from those found in venues or touring companies. The particular relationship that festivals have with place is highlighted in their commissioning of site specific works. Norwich and Norfolk Festival and Kendal

Calling have commissioned work related to local myths, and added to the local myth making in doing so. Theatres and concert halls are constrained by maintaining a building and selling tickets for a regular season of events, but festivals have the flexibility to explore new sites and create links between venues, places and communities in new and playful ways. For those that produce one festival a year, or even biannually, there is also the time to build relationships and develop larger, more complex shows.

For artists and producers, festivals pose different challenges and offer different opportunities to those facing venue managers and touring companies. There is the need

for new production skills. One outdoor events producer admitted that she had recently fulfilled a professional ambition of hiring a crane when she co-ordinated an event at a ruined castle. On a practical note, crane hire is not a skill often taught on cultural management courses, but perhaps it should be. ISAN, the network for street arts organisations in the UK, publishes advice for its members; Guidance Document Two is entitled *Guidance on the Use of Cranes for Performance* (2014). Large scale performances are, effectively, building sites that are then opened to the public. Specialist festival businesses with relevant production know-how such as Festival Republic, or the Without Walls consortium in the UK that commissions outdoor arts for festivals, are growing and thriving, indicating strong demand. Cities are using festive techniques such as spectacularisation, experimentation and immersion, to create shared experiences and identities as part of high street regeneration, community

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development and place-making. When the practical demands of closing roads meets the symbolic power of an artistic experience, the results are not limited to the liminal festival space. Lucy Neal, one of the founders of the London International Festival of Theatre expressed it best: "we need celebratory social spaces to look backwards and forwards in time, where our collective knowledge, intuition and a sense of wonder at what is possible can come together" (2015: 6).

The economies of scale Nordgård (2016) identified in music festivals also apply to the growing street art and light festival circuits. But these raise questions about commodification and standardisation. Elsewhere, questions are being asked about the ownership of intellectual property. Some artists have withdrawn from Amsterdam Light Festival's commissioning process because they want to retain ownership of their works. The festival itself, whilst admitting that it wants to own the art works in order to maximise the return on its investment, is not entirely commercially orientated. It is also keen to maintain its uniqueness, its place identity by ensuring key works do not lose their connection to the city as they tour. The creation of a touring circuit for light art is a new phenomenon and, as yet, the rules of the game are still being negotiated.

Festivalisation is both a response to and a cause of changing audience expectations and production processes within the cultural marketplace. New experimental, spectacular and immersive art works are being created for festival settings, settings that respond to society's need for live social experiences and time away from the everyday as much as they do to commercial imperatives driven by new technology. These large, expensive works become catalysts around which new festivals and events with a festive aesthetic are conceived, reshaping the cultural ecosystem in their wake.

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# Changing Movie! Film Commissions as drivers for creative film industries: the Apulia Case

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## ABSTRACT

The organizational change of Film Commissions in Italy, from service agencies to drivers for the creative film industries, is the result of the ongoing evolution from a state-controlled industry to a new kind of industrial cooperation at territorial level. This research deepens the Apulia case and shows both the increasing leading role of Film Commissions in the Apulia region – in order to improve the competitiveness of the system – and the positive effects on the territory measured through the analysis of audiovisual firms. Finally, the research shows the strengthening of community engagement thanks to the promotion and support tools (festivals, networks, etc.) for the creation of value.

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### Keywords:

Creative industries

Film Commissions

Organization

Competitiveness

Community  
engagement

## Context

It has been demonstrated that culture and creative industries act as drivers in implementing change processes aimed at consolidation and structural growth (Gilbert, 2012). Policies aimed at increasing competitiveness across the cultural system are grounded on two pillars: accurate economic policies and the creation of new economies for cultural enterprises (Viesti, 2005). Some of these economies encompass national policies, as is the case with decisions related to public funds supporting culture. However, a number of external economies have been developed at a territorial level: from the competitive enhancement of cities to improved links between enterprises and research; adding value to cultural and touristic resources, as well as improved accessibility to them. More than ever, in order to re-launch culture, Italy needs the activation of good locally-targeted policies (Santagata, 2009), which at the same time foster its community's engagement (Bowen et al, 2010).

On the other hand, the territorial origins of a culture – of goods and services associated with culture – do not follow standard patterns but, after a random start, organize themselves around a system of agglomeration cultures (Scott, 1995). Following this track, historical cities, districts, creativity production chains, together with the movie industry and technological innovations, gained a longtime legacy of assembling knowledge and expertise (Santagata, 2009). The context conditions in which cultural enterprises operate constitute an essential factor of their competitiveness (Palmi, 2010). In the literature, there is wide documentation on how external economies, generated from different contexts in which enterprises operate, may significantly increase their competitiveness, while diseconomies may decrease it (Mollica, 2005). This happens because of multiple factors: the presence of other enterprises and infrastructures, the quality of related services, the production factors available through the surrounding territory, and the quality of public institutions (Viesti, 2005). This is the case of creativity districts and production chains supported by regional agencies. However, interactions between external economies-diseconomies and enterprise performances are spread across all territories. It is therefore assertable that local government institutions play a meta-organizational role in the strategic development of policies (Palmi, 2010), and it is appropriate to investigate the organizational tools that help territories increase their competitiveness and their community engagement (Bowen et al, 2010).

In the last years there has been a major change in the way Film Commissions (FCs) work in Italy: they are turning from service agencies into drivers for the cinema supply chain (Palmi & Salvemini, 2013). Such a change is the result of the ongoing evolution of a state-controlled industry to a new kind of industrial cooperation and solidarity. On the one hand, state in-

tervention policies to support cinema have been diminishing in the past few years with a significant decrease of government expenditure on culture. On the other hand, some people have been organizing new forms of horizontal subsidiarity to support cultural activities in general and the cinema industry in particular (Rushton, 2008; Salvemini & Delmestri, 2000). In the absence of any adequate policies of national intervention, Italy is witnessing the creation of new territorial developed economies which increase the competitiveness of the cultural system and attract investments to its territory (Cappetta, Carlone & Salvemini, 2005). We can also say that local authorities act as meta-organizers to promote development strategies and therefore, in practical terms, we can investigate the organizational tools which territories use in order to increase their competitiveness (Palmi, 2010).

Set up only within the last decade, Film Commissions are becoming more and more important for the multimedia sector in Italy and for the feature film industry. FCs are traditionally considered territorial attraction agencies that act by making the territorial potentialities operate systematically, bringing cinema and audiovisual productions – and through them, promoting the territory as well. Therefore, on the one hand they aim to benefit from the production economically; on the other hand, they try to capitalize on the territory image promotion, thanks to the ability of audiovisual products to function as tourist attraction factors. At present, however, these agencies are also becoming financial backers for cinema, in large part because there exist national and international funds designed for productions, with indirect and sometimes direct enterprise risk taking. In this paper we examine in depth the case of the Apulia Film Commission, because it is an illuminating case of Italian excellence at an international level (Palmi & Salvemini, 2013).

## Purpose and hypotheses

This research is focused on the Apulian cinema experience and aims at demonstrating how the creative film industry is increasingly playing a primary role thanks to the Apulia Film Commission, the regional agency established with the main purpose of drawing movie and audiovisual productions to the Apulian region. This work aims to show how essential the role of the Apulia Film Commission (AFC) is becoming in terms of increased competitiveness of the cultural system and how, thanks to its activities, the Apulian creative film industries chain is fostering its presence, as well as its economic outcomes on the territory. The research starts from a general overview of AFC from its creation to now. Later, the most innovative aspects will be introduced with regard to particular structures, coordination mechanisms, reputation and relationships, autonomous functioning and alliances that

strengthen community engagement. The research hypotheses can be summarized as follows:

- 1) FCs act as drivers for creative film industries in the Apulian territory, thanks to a good reputation for the creation of shared value.
- 2) Planning adequate organizational models is very important, as is having coordination mechanisms, with regard to context specificity.
- 3) Film funds and support tools (e.g. festivals, networks) create value, development and community engagement.

The aim is to prove the enunciated hypotheses.

## Research design, methodology and approach

The methodology is an in-depth analysis of the Apulian region case using empirical facts of the territorial contexts (Yin, 1994). A focus on the Apulia Film Commission (AFC), established in 2007, is of foremost importance because this institution has already been mentioned as a case of excellence and absolute novelty both nationally and internationally (Palmi & Salvemini, 2013). The employed methodology is the in-depth case analysis (Yin, 1994), which is consistent with the exploratory nature of this research. For the surveyed case, and through a semi-structured questionnaire, interviews were held to the top management (president and/or chief executive and/or management secretary) of the AFC. All the data were gathered in a summarizing chart (table 8 in the annex) showing their main coordination mechanisms, resources, structures and processes: legal status, membership to institutions, presence of networks, structured data (Board of directors, members, appointments, number of partners), financial resources (quotas, film fund, financing tranches), and every useful bit of information which represents the services' supply process.

In order to carry out this research, with regard to the survey on the establishment of the cinema production chain and the development of the creative film industries, the research team examined AFC's production guide. It is comprised of a database and, upon request through registration and a password, it is available online. Updated daily, it includes 161 operators: 144 companies/firms and 17 professionals. Companies and professionals can be searched by name and geographic position (according to Apulian provinces: Bari, Lecce, Brindisi, Taranto, BAT-Barletta, Andria, and Trani). The research team got its own account, registered as "Università del

Salento", and downloaded the list of existing companies, divided by sectors. Subsequently, the research team requested access to the local chambers of commerce in order to examine the balance sheets relevant to company analyses. These data, which will be presented shortly, show that over the last few years, despite adverse economic conditions, audiovisual Apulian companies kept their market positions, and sometimes their business grew because of the AFC, therefore pushing employment across its territory. This had significant outcomes, both direct and indirect, in the improvement of information and in creating relational capital, because of its good reputation at a national and international level. As regards the creation of the data set and the so-called "company dashboard", please see the paragraph on creative film industries below.

## Evolutionary tendencies of the Film Commissions

From what has been described so far, we can infer that FCs were created to fulfill the following goals: to support and improve the local economy, promote tourism, market the region and promote the culture. These goals are all referable to fields in which regions have been planning strategies, developing destinations for a long time, acting as meta-organizers in the territory through top-down actions that integrate with bottom-up boosts. Actually, these are subjects for which the Italian Constitution assigns regions a central role, on the basis of reference leading principles and a suitable national coordinating authority. The latest regional legislation shows there is an increasing awareness, and probably an actual will, to play a direct role in the creation or growth of FCs<sup>1</sup>. In addition to regional centrality, a second remarkable aspect concerning the need of a common destination is the centrality of cultural policies. In the United States, where cinema has been a strong industrial and economic reality for many decades, FCs are organized as superstructures with steady connections inside the departments for culture, tourism and economic promotion. Conversely, in Italy FCs usually depend only on departments for culture. As cultural policies do not often benefit from the same available funding and attention enjoyed by other sectors, this can be a major hindrance. It is certainly true that without strong coordination with the policies for economic and tourist development of territories, the FCs' activities would be marginal or paralyzed; what is therefore urgent and desirable is the convergence of regional policies for culture, tourism and economy towards actions aimed at supporting the audiovisual

<sup>1</sup> Among the most remarkable legislative measures, we find: Law of Regione Autonoma Friuli-Venezia Giulia, 6 November 2006, nr. 21; Law of Regione Liguria, 3 May 2006, nr. 10; Law of Regione Autonoma Sardegna 20 settembre 2006, n. 15; Law of Regione Lazio, 28 April 2006, nr. 4.

media supply chain. Moreover, the outlook, knowledge and tools through which FCs must refer to audiovisual productions are those concerning production and cultural promotion. As far as all that is concerned, it is better to discuss the efforts regions are making to seek and adjust efficacious criteria and tools for the selective financing of cultural productions, in order to increase also the spin-offs and positive effects for the overall territorial system, in addition to the intrinsic cultural value of the project. For the same reason, Italian regions and their coordinating authority took on precise commitments for the creation and consolidation of the *Osservatorio dello Spettacolo e della Cultura* ("Show Business and Culture Observatory"), which are and will become more and more the fundamental tools to monitor and understand the social and economic importance of cultural investments. They are useful for FCs as well.

Therefore, on the one hand the regional level is certainly the most suitable to regulate the activity and functions of FCs. On the other hand, it is important to underline the coordination exigencies on a national level. The confrontation between the State and regions that may happen in the near future about the new law system for cinema and audiovisual media will be an important occasion to define the role of FCs better, thus giving special emphasis and stimulus on their work to relaunch the government intervention in favour of cinema and audiovisual productions. Also, it would be important to define a minimum service package that FCs undertake to offer, identifying, at the same time, quality standards for promotional and informative tools in order to guarantee national and international productions competitive locations and qualified operators. Actually, the opportunity and need to promote excellent talents in their territories urged numerous FCs to differentiate and expand their mission.

Another important tool to qualify the work of regions and FCs is the study of a productions' direct and indirect economic impacts on a territory. According to research by the *Associazione Nazionale delle Industrie Cinematografiche* (ANICA, "National Association of Cinema Industries")<sup>2</sup>, from 2003 to 2010 regions allocated 116 million euros in favour of cinema and audiovisual activities. In four years' time (2006-2009) financial resources quintupled. In 2009 the budget almost reached 30 million euros (29.6), 40% of which was

estimated to be in support of cinema. Recently, there has been more and more intervention from regions to financially support this sector. They have also been playing an important substitute role for the progressive cutbacks in national public resources<sup>3</sup>. Actually, film funds are conceived of as spending accelerators in the territory and are set up for three main reasons: cultural, social and economic; the last of which is linked both with the direct employment aspect – through the recruitment of local workers – and with the indirect one – thanks to the subsequent spin-offs for supporting local activities and for the tourist sector (Di Cesare & Rech, 2007). So far, the only FC that has systematically measured its own performances as regards the direct economic impacts in the territory has been the AFC: the average index value for the years 2007-2011 has been 6.1, which means that each euro spent has returned 6.1 euros in direct spillovers (Fondazione Rosselli, 2011).

The ongoing trend shows more and more that FCs play the role of administrator of regional funds supporting local cinema and audiovisual productions. The funds are used to promote creativity and talents living in the region but also to generically attract "external" audiovisual production. Territorial marketing and support for creativity do not necessarily clash, however, they are two different themes which presuppose suitable strategies and specific criteria for the evaluation of projects and results. As regards the search for new talents and the enhancement of cultural heritage and identities – fields that cannot be measured, but indirectly show the competitive ability of territories – it is desirable that both the search and the sharing of the best practices should be set up in a short time. This promotion of the territory is realized also thanks to festivals, promotion and support tools for the creation of value, development and consent, all of which reflect positive effects in terms of direct spin-off of consumption in the territories. In every region where you can find Italian FCs there are film festivals, sometimes more than one, that are supported and sponsored by FCs. In some cases, as in the Apulian regions, their FCs are directly in charge of the festival organization and management. The case of the Bari International Film Festival (Bif&st), which is organized by the AFC, has remarkable performances. In seven years' time (2009-2015) it has reached an audience of 73,000 people and

## "FILM COMMISSIONS WERE CREATED TO SUPPORT AND IMPROVE THE LOCAL ECONOMY, PROMOTE TOURISM, MARKET THE REGION AND PROMOTE THE CULTURE"

2 ANICA research project "Mappatura degli strumenti di sostegno regionale al cinema". The first presentation entitled "Evoluzione dei fondi regionali per il cinema e l'audiovisivo: vincoli ed opportunità" took place on the occasion of the *Mostra del Cinema* in Venice on the 8 September 2010.

3 The allocation of the *Fondo Unico per lo Spettacolo* (FUS) ("Sole Fund for the Show Business") in 2011, on the same level of the previous year's one, is equal to 90 million euros per year, available as (internal and external) tax credit until 2013.

involves the whole city with remarkable direct and indirect expense spin-offs<sup>4</sup>. Finally, the film funds tool holds a prominent position. Between 2003 and 2013, 10 out of 16 FCs in Italy got one of these funds and, in some cases, in addition to the national one there is also a fund supporting international productions. It is the case with the AFC, which was created in May 2012.

## Apulia Film Commission: structures and processes

The FCs in Italy show a certain uniformity as far as structures are concerned. They have easy and functional hierarchic models, with few levels and few roles. The FCs that are internally larger are organized by projects. The organizational structure is composed of two parts: the current, continuous and permanent "production" part structured through functions, and another temporary part. The project-structure seems to suit the sector, as there are several types of projects: single non-repetitive activities aimed at achieving a goal in a certain period of time and carried out by using the combined effort of a resource pool (Tosi & Pilati, 2008). The projects are unique in nature; they can actually be similar but never the same because there is always something different: the goals, the realization times, the project team composition, the project leader, or the users. In an organization that works by using projects, individuals are assigned to one or more project teams, which are set up and stay until the end of the project. An interesting exception is the Apulia Film Commission (AFC) that has got a divisional structure and some organizational aspects which are best to highlight.

Born in 2004<sup>5</sup> but operative since 2007, the AFC is a foundation with five founder members: the Apulia Region, the cities of Bari, Brindisi and Lecce, and the Lecce Province, which became part of it after dissolving the *Salento Film Fund*. The governance is based on four structures: (1) a Board of Directors, composed of the five founder member representatives; (2) the Partners' Meeting that meet twice a year to make strategic decisions; (3) the Auditors' College, composed of three members; (4) the Director and his/her office staff. From the structural point of view, it has got an interesting divisional form with three "cineport" hubs, next to the supply chain's clusters of Bari, Lecce and Foggia. They gave up the function specialization criterion and adopted the geographical areas specialization criterion (Tosi & Pilati, 2008). The structural advantages of the divisional macrostructure are: the possibility to identify a single person in charge for each province (geographical area) and the ease with which you can

have different and suitable behaviours targeted at each productive or territorial reality. Limitations can be the increase of resources that carry out the same functions, thus increasing costs as well, and the possible communication difficulties between the different departments, which tend to behave like autonomous firms. As regards the AFC, the typical negative effects of the divisional structure do not occur because the headquarters in Bari (the regional capital where there are also the AFC's administrative headquarters) combine a series of centrally managed functions, such as administration, human resources management and the products and services departments.

At the present time, five people working at AFC have a permanent contract, and are helped by 35 collaborators<sup>6</sup>. The goals every FC shares are: (1) promoting the artistic, environmental and cultural heritage, together with the professional and technical talents present in the territory in order to attract national and international cinema and audiovisual productions; (2) providing assistance to get authorizations, permissions and contracts to shoot films in Apulia; and (3) promoting coordination activities with other Italian and foreign FCs to favour cooperation forms, like co-productions in the film and audiovisual industry. The AFC, for instance, lays emphasis on the collaboration between the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. Moreover, in the AFC's statute establishes the aim of (4) supporting the production and distribution of cinema and audiovisual works realized in the region, both through the creation of a film fund and through the promotion of the products made in Apulia during the most important national and international film festivals, but also to participate in the creation of resources and professionals in the sector. The statute provides also (5) the possibility to produce directly: the first positive experiment of this kind was the realization of the feature film *La nave dolce* directed by Daniele Vicari in 2012<sup>7</sup> (Palmi & Salvemini, 2013).

The activities from 2007 to 2015 aimed to promote and diffuse the brand and the information concerning what the AFC was doing. This was done by creating a web portal and opening communication channels with the towns in the territory and with the regional office for the European representation in Brussels. They did the following: created a database with the information about the best Apulian locations, specialized technicians and creative film industries available in the territory (and made production guide); created a cinema-tourist guide book about Apulia; participated in the main Italian and international film festivals (Venice, Berlin, Cannes) where the Apulian productions were promoted; and helped pass regulations to set up the Apulia Film Fund. The AFC activated easy and clear processes, usually standardized

4 For more information, see [www.apuliafilmcommission.it](http://www.apuliafilmcommission.it)

5 By the *Legge Regionale* ("Regional Law") nr. 6/2004.

6 They work mainly for the organization of Bari International Film Festival (Bif&st).

7 Coproduced with Indigo Film, Rai Cinema and Skandal Production.

## “APULIA FILM COMMISSION PROJECT CAPACITIES OVER ITS TERRITORY HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY INVOLVING ITS SURROUNDING COMMUNITY, ALLOWING AN INTENSE DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONAL CAPITAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT”

and based on precise criteria in order to measure the quality of the productions to finance. The allocation of grants – aimed at supporting the production and post-production costs in order to attract direct and indirect investments in the audiovisual sector – has actually been one of its most remarkable activities. In the first part of the AFC's life there was the definition of a series of specific requirements to get a grant: 30% of the hired staff had to be living in Apulia and the sum spent on the Apulian territory had to be at least the equivalent of 150% of the grant. The financial resources for that fund were more than a million euros for an overall financing of 22 film projects (five for the first session with a contribution of 230,000 euros and 17 for the second session). Among the other activities it is worth remembering the “Apulia Audiovisual Workshops” – seminar workshops with professors and students coming from all over Europe, and the *Progetto Memoria*, which supported short films and documentaries focused on places and characters of the regional history, the management of *Circuiti d'autore* (seasons of authorial films), among others.

In pursuing this aim, AFC has successfully connected with several national and international networks to strengthen its “social capital”. This expression has been sometimes used as a synonym of *civicness* (Helliwell & Putnam, 1995), of trust (Granovetter, 1985), and of “cultural rules not written in clear characters” (Fukuyama, 1995); however, overtime it has reached an ever widening meaning, thereby embracing diverse cultural, political, infrastructural and environmental dimensions. Social capital is identified as a set of values, regulations and social relations allowing each individual to pursue collective behaviours, thus representing a kind of facilitator in transmitting knowledge. Therefore, AFC project capacities over its territory have been increasingly involving its surrounding community, allowing an intense development of relational capital and community engagement (Bowen et al, 2010).

From the focus on the AFC and as regards processes, we can deduce that the difficulty in standardizing is typical of the service supply process, commonly regarded as non-static, which highly varies depending on the situation. Moreover, the process is contextual: the service is enjoyed by the customer only where and when it is produced (just in time production). There is no chance to “substitute” the faulty service, as it can be done with products, where it is possible withhold

goods for a while and to check their quality, possibly replacing them. This kind of process makes control activities barely useful, except in the final stage: quality must be produced by the operators directly and their chiefs cannot prevent a “faulty” product from arriving at the user; this remark stresses the importance of the human resources that have been used. Another characteristic of this kind of process is the customer's participation in the supply process, thus affecting the result considerably. The customer does not perceive only the quality of the final supplied service but also the quality of the whole supply process (quality of the process, not only of the product). Finally, the role played by human resources is vitally important because the quality of a service highly depends on the supplier's professionalism. From this point of view, the AFC enjoys a good reputation. A quality indicator can be the way employees and collaborators are hired: public notice with a selection based on professionalism and technical skills (see table 8 in the annex).

### **Creative film industries in Apulia: evolution tendencies**

It is now necessary to cover the Apulian audiovisual production chain. Apulian creative film industries are quite small, so much so that they could be defined as “pocket companies”. However, within the diverse and scattered creativity economy, recent studies have shown how the Apulian audiovisual sector is one of the most developed and robust (Palmi, 2013). It is particularly interesting within the Apulian creative district because of the balance between its *exploration* and *exploitation* activities, explained as respectively being the capacity of research and the exploration of new creative opportunities, transferring and incorporating them into new creativeness within products and processes (March, 1991).

### **Scope, methodological tools and results of the empirical enquiry**

Taking into consideration the purpose of measuring the creation and dissemination of the economic and social wealth of the Apulian film sector – largely

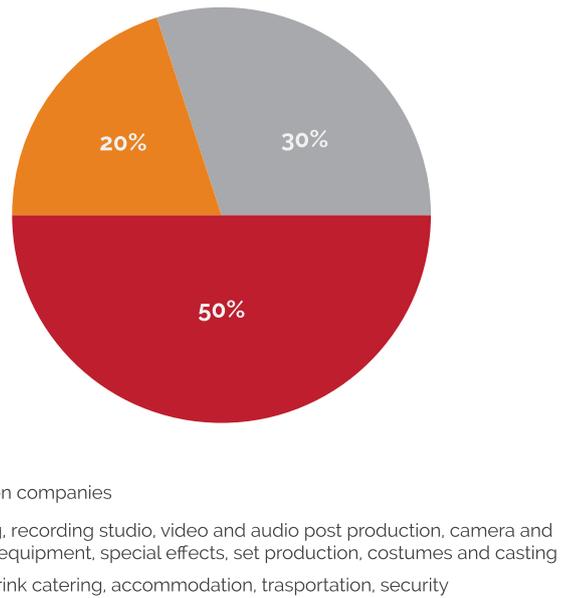
because of FCs' role as a development driver – the research team has conducted an empirical analysis on the economical/financial evaluations of resident companies operating in the relevant region. Research themes are based on a specific methodology of deduction analyses, established on sample definition techniques, and a methodology of data gathering and processing, pursuing knowledge information purposes, already set in advance (Horrigan, 1965; Brief & Lawson, 1992). The research period was focused between 2010 and 2013, while the survey technique used was the index balance analysis, which is considered an appropriate tool to monitor companies' capacity to create and distribute "economical-social value", suitable to ensure preservation of capital over time and an apt sharing of context (Foulke, 1961; Nissim & Penman, 2001; Caputo & Di Cagno, 2008; Venturelli, 2012; Dell'Atti & Turco, 2015).

In particular, such analysis is divided into the following phases:

- a) identification of the universe to be surveyed and its segmentation into activity classes;
- b) definition of company samples, whose balance sheets must undergo a balance analysis;
- c) processing of aggregated balance sheets and of average balance sheets broken down by company category;
- d) re-classification of average balance sheets according to financial criteria of assets and the added value of income statements;
- e) identification of "dashboard parameters" to be calculated;
- f) research results broken down by relevant company categories.

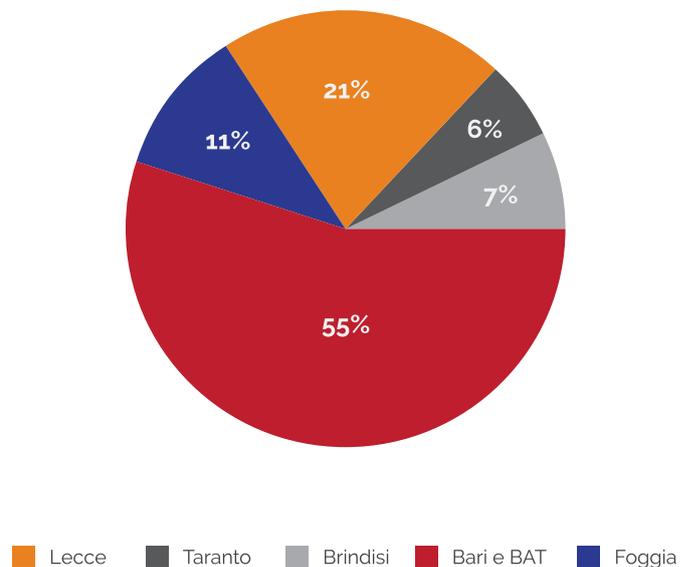
The total number of examined companies, as reported by the AFC production guide, comprises of 161 units, which have been divided into three macro-categories according to each specific activity: producing only movies; service and supporting operations (authoring, graphics, recording, video and audio post production, cameras and shooting equipment, special effects, set construction, costumes and casting, other services); collateral services (catering, accommodation, transportation, security, etc.). In more detail, gathered data show a strong presence of production support companies in Apulia, which account for 50% of the studied universe, while movie production companies account 30% of the entire production chain. The remaining 20% is referred to as collateral companies (figure 1).

A greater territorial concentration of movie companies emerges across the Bari and Barletta-Andria-Trani provinces, where 55% of observed companies reside. Taranto and Brindisi show a lesser number of companies, 6% and 7%, respectively (figure 2).



**FIGURE 1. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION OF COMPANIES, PER CATEGORY (% , 2013)**

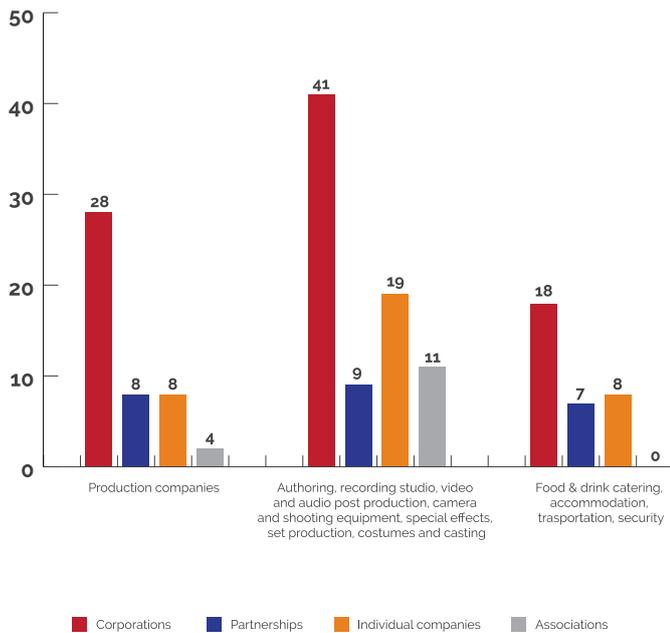
Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from AFC (n.d.).



**FIGURE 2. TOTAL OF COMPANIES' DISTRIBUTION, PER APULIAN PROVINCE (% , 2013)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from AFC (n.d.).

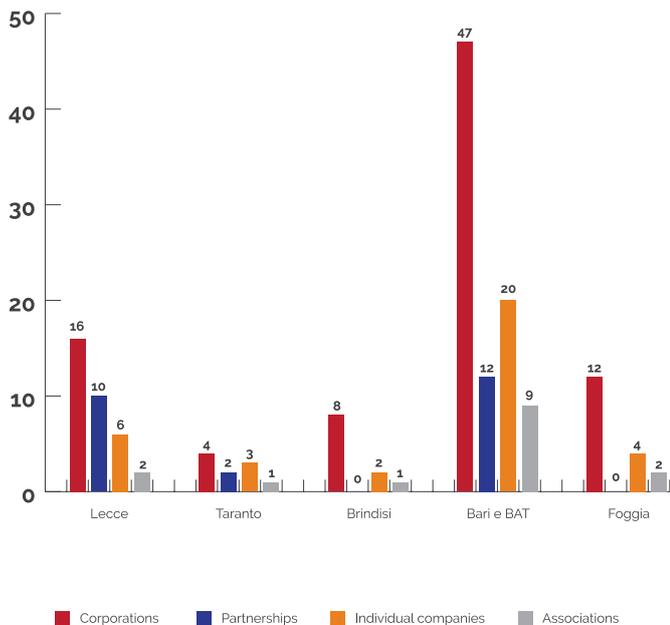
Regarding the legal structure of companies, the analysis has shown that most of the examined companies operate as partnerships, while there is a limited number of them operating as individual enterprises (figure 3).



**FIGURE 3. THE LEGAL STRUCTURE OF COMPANIES, PER CATEGORY (2013)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from AFC (n.d.).

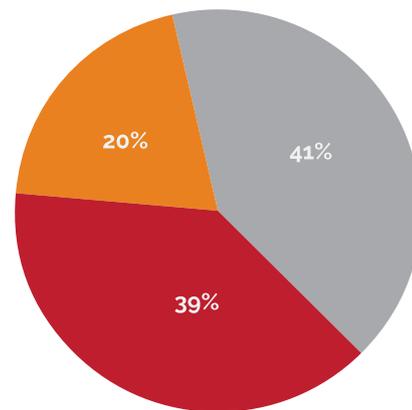
The preferred legal structure is the capital stock corporation, especially in the provinces of Bari-BAT, where there are 47 corporations over a total of 87. Associations are less common, as shown by the category analyses and by the province chart (figure 4).



**FIGURE 4. THE LEGAL STRUCTURE OF COMPANIES, PER APULIAN PROVINCE (2013)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from AFC (n.d.).

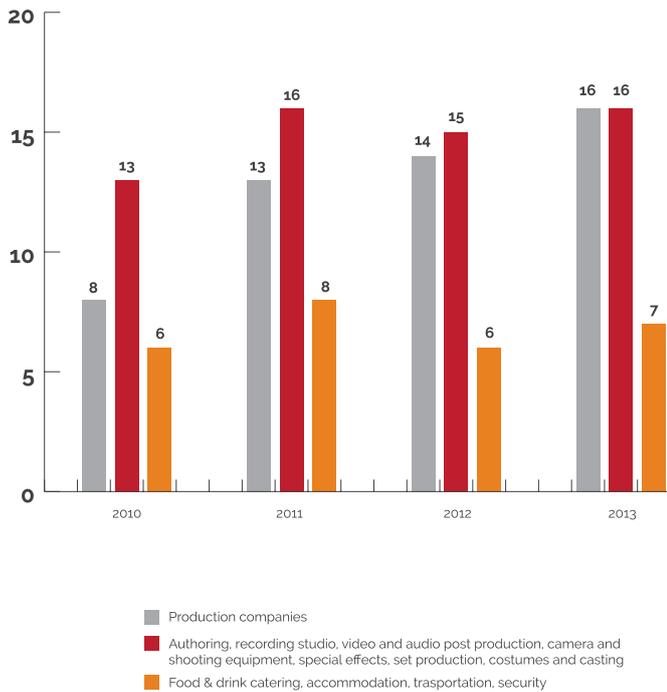
The observed sample has been defined only in relation to capital stock corporations providing balance sheets, which in Italy are available for the public at the Enterprise Registry. Taking this into consideration, the examined sample is comprised of 44 companies. Among these, 41% are movie production companies, 39% are companies operating service and support activities (authoring, graphics, recording, video and audio post production, cameras and shooting equipment, special effects, set construction, costumes and casting) and 20% by companies involved in collateral activities and indirect productions (catering, accommodation, transportation and security) (figure 5).



**FIGURE 5. SURVEY SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION, PER CATEGORY (% , 2013)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from AFC (n.d.).

The distribution of the sample by province shows and confirms the predominant presence of the Bari-BAT district, which encompasses around 68% of examined companies, while the province of Lecce accounts for 14%, followed by Foggia with 9%. Brindisi and Taranto, on the other hand, show 5% and 4%, respectively. Following an operational plan, an index analysis was conducted on a total of 138 balance sheets provided by the local Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Crafts and Agriculture (CCIAA). Their distribution, by year and category of operations, brings 27 balance sheets for the year 2010; 37 in 2011; 35 in 2012; 39 in 2013 (figure 6). In particular, across the examined years, most of the observed balances refer to companies supporting production activities, while there is a small number of companies operating collateral activities.



**FIGURE 6. DISTRIBUTION OF THE NUMBER OF BALANCE SHEETS, EXAMINED PER CATEGORY AND SURVEY YEAR**  
 Source: Authors' own elaboration based on official balance sheets<sup>8</sup>.

Liquidity values of examined balance sheets, aggregated by geographical areas and activity sector, have been gathered and processed in order to yield "average" liquidity balances, on which there has been

a re-classification using the "financial criteria" configuration regarding their assets and the "added value" for their income statements (Chen & Lin, 2003; Fridson & Alvarez, 2011). In particular, the re-classification of asset balance sheets according to financial criteria allows an analysis of the pace at which investments generate returns in cash, representing the companies' structural situation, as well as the composition of sources. This helps evaluate the exact correlation between financial sources and company investments. With regard to the re-classification of the income statements, the valued-added configuration has the advantage of showing the wealth created by companies, the way it is distributed throughout diverse actors who took part to its accomplishment, and the way those actors have been compensated. Subsequent economical-financial indexes, deemed suitable to respond to this survey request, are synthesized in table 1.

### Financial analysis results

The first considered index in the evaluation of the assets/financial structure of the observed companies is the "self-sourced fixed assets" index (net assets/fixed assets), signifying the capacity of their capital to cover fixed assets.

The result of this index, according to its value, takes a different meaning:

- > 1, the balance of assets is excellent, meaning the company invests with their own sources both fixed assets and partially net assets;

#### Balance sheet analysis indexes

Financial indexes									
Index of self-sourced fixed assets = net assets/ fixed assets									
Index of global coverage of fixed assets = net assets + consolidated liabilities/fixed assets									
Primary liquidity index = differed assets + immediate assets/current liabilities									
Economical-revenue indexes									
Evolution of turnover									
Evolution of cost of labour									
Impact index of labour factor on turnover = cost of labour/turnover*100									
Impact index of labour factor on added value=cost of labour/added value*100									
ROE= net income/net Assets*100									
ROI = operating profits (Earnings before interest and taxes [EBIT]/total of investments*100)									

**TABLE 1. BALANCE SHEET ANALYSIS INDEXES**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on official balance sheets.

8 In Italy the official balance sheets are those deposited at the Companies Register of the Local Chamber of Commerce..

- = 1, the balance of assets is good, meaning fixed assets are totally financed with their own sources;
- < 1, the balance of assets needs attention, as fixed assets are also financed with medium-long term debts, or short term debts which may generate further financial unbalances. If the index is < 1, further conditions may be classified:

- ◊ > 0.70, the situation is rather satisfactory;
- ◊ between 0.50 and 0.70, further analysis and monitoring is needed;
- ◊ between 0.33 and 0.50, a dangerous situation is ahead;
- ◊ < 0.33, a heavily unbalanced situation is in place.

With reference to the performed analyses, the results of such an index, determined for each activity category, are shown in table 2.

Analyzing the changes detailed above, there is an adequate level of fixed assets coverage, using self-sourced liquidities to support such investments. There were some critical situations in the last examined year, demanding a close monitoring of such fluctuating data to preserve a balanced and functional financial structure.

Another financial index is the "Index of global coverage of fixed assets" (net assets + consolidated liabilities/fixed assets), showing the capacity of a company's capital and of medium-long term debts to cover fixed assets. As regards the above index typology, there are some threshold values to be observed

in order to evaluate the company situation, which are:

- > 1.50, meaning the situation is balanced and motivated by a good company solidity;
- > 1, the situation is excellent, because there is a correct and timely use of medium-long term financial sources;
- = 1, all fixed assets are financed by fixed capital;
- < 1, there is a financial unbalance in place, the size of which depends on the shifting fluctuation from standard value (1), because a part of fixed assets are also financed by short term debts.

See the results for this index in table 3. In this case, it is possible to observe a positive index trend, confirming adequate financing policies of fixed capital. Critical figures are only relevant to the last year, where we can observe a reduction of the total financial coverage of fixed assets.

As regards asset analysis, the state of short term liquidity has been measured through the "primary liquidity index" (differed assets + immediate assets/current liabilities), meaning the ability of a company to face current liabilities with short term liquidity. In this type of index, the following threshold values are to be considered in order to evaluate the company situation:

- > 1, the situation is exceptional;
- = 1, the situation is excellent;
- Value between 0.50 and 1, the situation is acceptable, but some short term liquidity problems may arise;

Type of company	2010	2011	2012	2013
Production companies	0.97	1.24	1.30	0.40
Authoring, graphics, recording, video and audio post production, cameras and shooting equipment, special effects, set construction, costumes and casting	1.62	1.69	1.72	1.71
Catering, accommodation, transportation and security	1.21	0.55	0.67	0.47

**TABLE 2. INDEX OF FIXED ASSETS SELF-SOURCING, PER YEAR**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from AFC (n.d.).

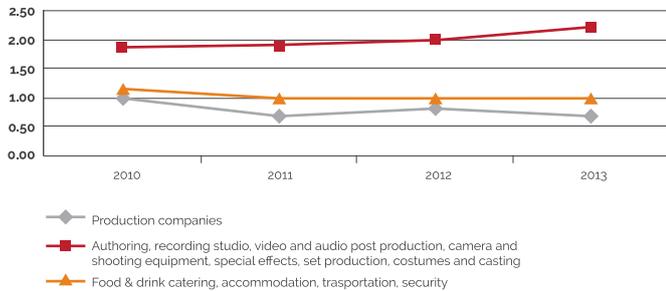
Type of company	2010	2011	2012	2013
Production companies	1.05	1.59	1.49	0.45
Authoring, graphics, recording, video and audio post production, cameras and shooting equipment, special effects, set construction, costumes and casting	1.81	1.87	1.92	1.85
Catering, accommodation, transportation and security	1.46	0.96	0.96	0.99

**TABLE 3. INDEX OF FIXED ASSETS GLOBAL ALLOCATION, PER YEAR**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from AFC (n.d.).

- Value between 0.33 and 0.50, the situation is slightly unbalanced, but not yet difficult;
- < 0.33, the company has a heavily unbalanced situation.

With reference to the above parameters, results show the following liquidity situation:



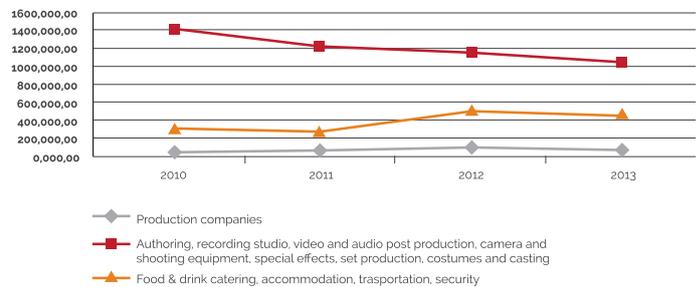
**FIGURE 7. PRIMARY LIQUIDITY INDEX, PER YEAR**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on official balance sheets.

The trend of the above index allows useful reflections on the examined companies' capacity to adequately face short term operations by accessing diverse types of credit with convenient, economical liquidity conditions. Some concern may arise with reference to production companies, where the average size, being smaller than 1, determines the need to follow and monitor implementation modalities of productive arrangements in relation to their financial profile, deriving from said arrangements.

**Economic analysis results**

Within such an analysis, there has been an initial evaluation of the absolute aggregated turnover trend and the relevant cost of labour, as well as the impact of this latter factor over revenues and added value. Said indexes show the impact that various entrepreneurial initiatives generate on value creation and on employment openings. The choice of taking into consideration the added value, obtained by deducting external purchasing costs of production factors from production value (without considering costs related to the latter – labour, capital and technical factors), allows an analysis of wealth distribution processes gained through the examined enterprise's economic conduct. The relevant results are highlighted in figures 8 and 9, and tables 4 and 5.



**FIGURE 8. TURNOVER EVOLUTION, PER YEAR (IN EUROS)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on official balance sheets.

Type of company	2010	2011	2012	2013
Production companies	12.19	12.61	20.33	19.49
Authoring, graphics, recording, video and audio post production, cameras and shooting equipment, special effects, set construction, costumes and casting	9.90	9.75	11.66	18.82
Catering, accommodation, transportation and security	28.44	21.24	24.19	18.51

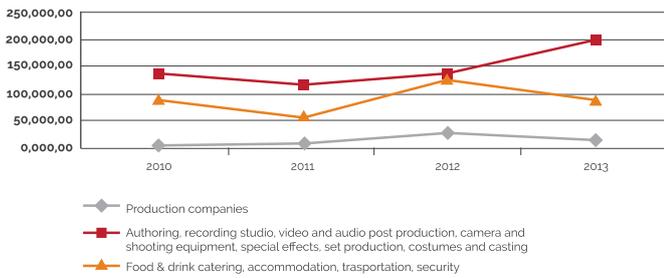
**TABLE 4. INDEX OF LABOUR IMPACT FACTOR, PER YEAR (%)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on official balance sheets.

Type of company	2010	2011	2012	2013
Production companies	55.43	89.78	78.17	52.72
Authoring, graphics, recording, video and audio post production, cameras and shooting equipment, special effects, set construction, costumes and casting	35.35	27.99	38.74	51.43
Catering, accommodation, transportation and security	53.49	49.82	56.91	52.77

**TABLE 5. IMPACT INDEX OF LABOUR FACTOR ON ADDED VALUE, PER YEAR (%)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on official balance sheets.

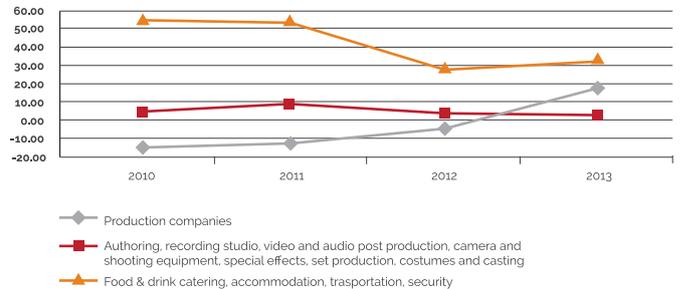


**FIGURE 9. LABOUR COST EVOLUTION, PER YEAR (IN EUROS)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on official balance sheets.

Based on the above charted aggregated data, the crucial importance of the labour factor within the process of creating and distributing generated value is clear. This circumstance reaches high peaks with reference to production companies' areas of interest. The observed quantitative dimension, and its evolution dynamics across the examined period of time, allow us to positively appreciate the outcomes generated by the creation of value seen from an employment standpoint. This is clearly confirmed by analyzing how the created wealth has been distributed, where the labour factor plays a fundamental role in this apportionment (table 5). The importance of these latter data are thus clear in order to steer regional economic policies; this is all the more significant across the current scenario, evidenced by a progressive decrease of public funds aimed at easing entrepreneurial initiatives. Upon conclusion of this economic survey, it is interesting to define revenue-generating indexes. We look in more detail at the "Return On Equity" (ROE, net income/net assets\*100), meaning the profitability capacity of invested capital, in terms of generated revenue, used in order to evaluate how convenient is to invest in a company. In order to evaluate such an index best, together with the convenience of investing in risk capital, it is appropriate to compare it with the profits generated by alternative, low risk investments, such as BOTs (Ordinary Treasury Bills), CCTs (the main Italian Treasury Bonds), bank deposits, etc. A favourable

dimension of the above mentioned index, besides the above quantification, is represented by risk profiles which distinguish the operations of any economic enterprise (the so-called "risk premium"). It is noteworthy that this latter element varies from sector to sector, based on relevant features. In the examined case, the following outcomes have arisen:



**FIGURE 10. RETURN ON EQUITY, PER YEAR (ROE, %)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on official balance sheets.

Production companies were characterized by a negative trend over the 2010-2012 period of time, while later on there was a recovery from the preceding year's economic activity. The collateral companies' sector shows a positive, albeit reduced, profitability (with the exception of 2011 fiscal year). The revenue situation of the examined sectors requires a close monitoring of internal trends to check the company's functionality. On the other hand, a decisively positive trend may be observed in the collateral sectors (catering, accommodation, transportation and security), where it is possible to observe highly competitive value dynamics, showing the implementation of the technical-productive combination performed by examined companies.

Finally, there has been an evaluation of profitability values of the entire invested capital through "Return On Investment" (ROI, operating profits (EBIT)/total of investments\*100). It shows the ROI of ordinary operations (not including interests and taxes, and independently from results of extra-ordinary operations)

Type of company	2010	2011	2012	2013
Production companies	-2.97	-4.98	1.83	3.61
Authoring, graphics, recording, video and audio post production, cameras and shooting equipment, special effects, set construction, costumes and casting	4.16	9.17	2.67	3.14
Catering, accommodation, transportation and security	18.74	13.54	14.69	11.17

**TABLE 6. RETURN ON INVESTMENT, PER YEAR (ROI, %)**

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on official balance sheets.

compared with the total of operated investments. In terms of company strategy, the ROI index is used by companies to compare their results with competitors, in order to better evaluate the performance of their ordinary operations, and thereby identify possible critical or favorable points. The study of such an index led to the results in table 6.

The above index confirms that production companies do not show adequate profits if compared with invested capital. This necessitates the implementation of management policies aimed at strengthening company process efficiency in order to create value. The same situation is to be seen across the supporting film companies, where it appears necessary to monitor operational profiles of each activity, in order to optimize their economic management. On the other hand, data relevant to collateral services companies (catering, accommodation, transportation and security) show a positive trend.

As a final point, the study conducted on small "pocket industries" in the Apulian audiovisual sectors how an essentially stable profile of the relevant production chain, with adequate employment rates, so as to confirm Apulia Film Commission's indirectly favourable impact on its territory. This has been achieved despite the unfavorable economic conditions, a national and international economic crisis, which characterized the analyzed years.

## Conclusions

Film Commissions traditionally play four main roles: promotion, assistance, training and enhancement of local professional figures (Salvemini, 2009). In Italy there has recently been an organizational change of FCs. Government support for the film industry has been reduced but new forms of horizontal subsidiarity are arising (Rushton, 2008). In the absence of adequate national policies, new economies are being created at the regional level which increase the competitiveness of the cultural system and attract new investments in the territory. In this process, the role of FCs is growing and, through regional financing and the establishment of special film funds, they are playing a leading role as drivers for the productions in a triad of actors composed of the *state*, *Film Commissions* and *(private) producers* (Palmi & Salvemini, 2013). All this is actually strengthening the role of FCs, supporting creative film industries and creating community engagement (Bowen et al, 2010).

Promotion is still the main activity involving territorial marketing (Salvemini, 2009). In the most structured FCs, promotion becomes a real territory sale, where the region is packaged as a product that productions can exploit, and its characteristics are like the ones a marketing mix requires (for example in Torino FC, BLS Südtirol, Friuli Venezia Giulia FC, AFC). It is carried out with tools that are now spread all over the world: participations in film festivals, direct marketing, and familiarization with trip organization for producers and managers. The assistance role is FCs' most specific activity realized when the territory use is optimized with all its components. As for training, FCs are increasingly working for it in different ways and they also deal with the retraining of audiovisual sector local professionals (with professional courses, seminars and workshops). Finally, one of FCs' usual activities is the enhancement of local professional figures. The enhancement of local professional figures is carried out through the production guide, and this research showed that every FC realized it. In addition to these traditional functions, there is also the "financial backer" which is carried out through the film funds managed by FCs, as it has been fully explained. This research showed both the increasing leading role of FCs in Italy in

## "FILM COMMISSIONS IN ITALY PLAY AN INCREASINGLY LEADING ROLE IN IMPROVING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM AND HELP STRENGTHEN THE FEATURE FILM SUPPLY CHAIN"

order to improve the competitiveness of the system and their active contribution as a driver to strengthen the feature film supply chain.

In particular, the following working hypotheses listed in the introduction were accurately verified:

*1) The role of Film Commissions as a driver for the cinema supply chain in a specific territory, thanks to a good reputation for the creation of shared value.*

It was possible to notice that a decade after the start of their first experiences in Italy, Apulia Film Commission have now taken a prominent role in the development of the film supply chain thanks to the reputation they have been able to earn (Ebbbers & Wijnberg, 2012). In the eight years since its creation, the AFC has been able to attract more than 227 productions: 90 theatrical, 20 Film TV, 45 short TV; 58 documentary, 14 others (see table 7). Pillars of Italian film history have worked with AFC, such as Ermanno Olmi and Gianni Amelio, and important directors like Sergio Rubini, Ferzan Ozpetek, Daniele Vicari, Daniele Cipri, Paul Haggis. They have supported emerging talent such as Pippo Mezzapesa and Davide Barletti, Federico Rizzo and Simone Salvemini. And international stars such as Sophie Marceau, Monica Bellucci, Valeria Golino, Toni

Servillo, Elio Germano, Rutger Hauer have been working on Apulian sets. It has also been shown that, despite the unfavorable economic conditions and thanks to the Apulia Film Commission, over the last years the creative film industries have grown, increasing business with new productions drawn over the territory by FCs. In this regard, a clear signal was the increase of employees in the examined companies, according to the data extracted from Apulia Film Commission database. Moreover, recent studies on the Puglia Creative district (Palmi, 2013) showed a positive balance between *exploration* and *exploitation* activities (March, 1991), and the presence of *knowledge gatekeepers* (Alaric, Longhop & Thomas, 2008), in particular across the audio-video industry.

*2) The importance of the ability to plan adequate organizational models and coordination mechanisms, with regard to context specificity.*

It was possible to show the effectiveness of easy functional structures and project-oriented structures. As regards the Apulia Film Commission, we verified the usefulness of a divisional structure oriented around two "cineport" hubs focused on the productive supply chains' clusters of the three most important cities of Apulia Region (Bari, its capital, Lecce, in the Salento area and Foggia in the Capitulate area).

*3) The use of film funds and support tools (e.g. festivals, networks) for the creation of value, development and community engagement.*

We analyzed the prevalence of film funds, above all in the regions that were not used to attracting productions. It is remarkable, for instance, that Roma and Lazio FCs do not have a film fund as they have well-known locations that are required at the international

level. Therefore, they do not need to attract productions through financial support. However, this situation often compels productions, even the Roman ones, to ask for support elsewhere: they address the FCs provided with financial support in addition to all the other kinds of support. We verified also the importance of film festivals in the territory aimed at creating value, development and approval. Moreover, it was briefly underlined the positive impact of the Bari film festival called Buffest, organized by the AFC. We explained (in the "Structures and processes" section) that the AFC has been successfully connecting with several national and international networks to strengthen its "social capital". Social capital is identified as a set of values, regulations and social relations allowing each individual to pursue collective behaviors, thus representing a kind of facilitator in transmitting knowledge. Therefore, AFC project capacities over its territory have increasingly involved its surrounding community, allowing an intense development of relational capital and community engagement (Bowen et al, 2010).

Years	Production	Theatrical	TV film	Short film	Documentary	Other
2007	10	4	1	2	3	-
2008	18	5	-	7	5	1
2009	36	13	2	5	15	1
2010	19	5	3	3	7	1
2011	22	8	2	2	9	1
2012	28	11	2	7	6	2
2013	47	23	3	8	8	5
2014	47	21	7	11	5	3

**TABLE 7. APULIA FILM COMMISSION PRODUCTIONS (2007- 2014)**

Source: Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from AFC (n.d.).

## ANNEX

Operative start		2007
Legal status		Foundation
Membership in institutions		Elfin, Cineraria
Company structure	Board of Directors	Yes
	Members	5
	Allowance	2
	Appointed assignments	Region President; Partners meeting; Board of Directors; Board of Directors: Director
Financial resources		1,400,000 euro
	Number of associates	26
	Quota	0.15/0.20 euro per inhabitant
	Balance sheet management	Online
Fund	Support fund	Yes
	Fund typology	Grant
	Fund amount	2,550,000 euro
	Tranche	2 funds per desk; 2 funds with 3 fixed terms
	Minimum % local workers	-
	Minimum number of shooting days	-
	% investment in the territory	-
Activities	% Film typologies	35% feature films; 34% documentary; 20% short films; 8% TV series; 4% other
	Foreign productions	Yes
	Film festival	Yes
	Collateral activities	Yes
	Cineport	Yes
	Tenders of competitions	Yes
Human resources	Permanent employees	5
	Collaborators	35
	Contracts	Temporary Italian Contract (so called Co.co.pro)
	Men	14
	Women	23
	Average age	35/45
	Kind of hiring	Public competition
Promotion and communication	Portal	Yes
	Newsletter	Yes
	Social network	Yes
	Press office	Yes
	Production guide	Yes

TABLE 8. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE APULIA FILM COMMISSION

Source: Authors' own elaboration based on data from AFC (n.d.).

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# Unresolved issues: students' perceptions of internships in arts and cultural management

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## ABSTRACT

Based on 76 open-ended survey comments from arts and cultural management students, this study used content analysis to identify and describe unresolved issues with internships. The data revealed issues of concern including financial challenges, cultural organizations' commitment, intern satisfaction, and distinguishing between graduate and undergraduate internship criteria and expectations. Identifying and describing students' perceptions of these issues alert the field that improvement in these areas could lead to enhanced internship satisfaction and professional development for arts and cultural management students.

## Keywords:

Arts management

Cultural management

Content analysis

Internships

## Introduction

To better understand students' perspectives of the internship experience in arts and cultural management, the authors developed a cross-sectional descriptive research survey and distributed it to currently enrolled graduate and undergraduate majors in academic programs from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, the UK, and the US. From April 10 to June 21, 2013, students from 131 arts management programs were invited to participate in the survey. Students from 35 programs responded. Not all programs require students to complete an internship to graduate, possibly affecting the overall program response rate, which was 27%. While this response rate was lower than anticipated, a total of 206 students participated in the survey, yielding 104 undergraduate and 102 graduate responses (Cuyler & Hodges, 2015). At the end of the survey, an open-ended comment section prompted students to "provide any additional comments you would like to share about your expectations of internships in arts and cultural management". Fifty-nine respondents provided a variety of comments. Because these comments revealed rich qualitative data, we believe it warranted further examination. Based on an analysis of this feedback, what points of concern can we identify for improving arts and cultural management internships in the future?

This study has practical significance because of its useful suggestions for arts and cultural management educators and cultural organizations. The unresolved issues revealed in this analysis provide opportunities for educators and cultural organizations to improve the internship experience in ways that may lead to increased student learning and satisfaction. In addition, this study has invited the perspectives of students, which previous scholarship on internships in arts and cultural management (Cuyler & Hodges, 2015; Cuyler, 2015; Cuyler, Hodges & Hauptman, 2013; Kuo, 2011; Brindle, 2011; Channell & Anderson, 2010; Stein & Bathurst, 2008; Holmes, 2006; Rolston & Herrera, 2000; Murphy, 1977) has not included in this way.

## Methodology

We used the methodological framework followed by Rothman (2007) which asked interns to provide specific suggestions on how employers could improve the experience for future interns enrolled in a for-credit business school internship. The frequency of specific comments made by students illuminated patterns and themes that Rothman found useful in deciphering areas of concern. These eight key areas of concern included: clarity of tasks, communication, completing challenging tasks in a reasonable time frame, ongoing feedback, mentoring, exposure to other parts

of the business, and respectful treatment. Employers' attention to these issues could improve the effectiveness of internships in business. Given that this framework yielded insightful findings for Rothman, along with content analysis, it has proved ideal for use in this study.

According to Frankel, Wallen & Hyun (2012), content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way by analyzing communications. Underlying meanings and ideas are revealed through analyzing patterns in elements of text, such as words or phrases (Yang & Miller, 2008). Researchers use content analysis to obtain descriptive information, to analyze interview and observational data, to test hypotheses, to check research findings, and/or to obtain information useful in dealing with problems. The latter supports our rationale for using content analysis as the methodology in this study. From the literature, as well as from previous phases of this project, students have often evaluated their internships as poor or even negative experiences. We invited open-ended comments from arts and cultural management students to potentially identify unresolved issues within the internship experience.

We received approximately 59 individual comments. Four students commented "None/nil", and one student commented on aspects of the survey itself, resulting in 54 analyzable comments. Approximately 68% of the original sample population studied in the US, and 85% identified as female. This explains the higher levels of commenters based on country of origin illustrated in table 1. Undergraduate students made up a little more than 50% of the sample population. However, there were 16 more comments from graduate students as shown in table 2.

Country	Nr. of comments
US	36
Singapore	6
Australia	5
UK	4
Canada	2
New Zealand	1

**TABLE 1. COMMENTS PER COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**

Source: Informed by data from the study.

Enrollment status	Nr. of comments
Graduate	35
Undergraduate	19

**TABLE 2. GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE COMMENTS**

Source: Informed by data from the study.

Several comments were complex enough to reveal multiple themes. We counted approximately 22 such comments. An example of a comment with multiple themes is this one:

*If a graduate student is completing an internship, I believe it would be respectful to the student that they are compensated. If they already have a degree and have obtained that internship, they are mostly likely qualified to work there and should be compensated since they are most likely spending time that they could be earning money, at a meaningful internship.*

This comment represents two of our themes: compensation and the need to distinguish between graduate and undergraduate internship criteria. These types of multi-layered comments brought the final total of analyzable comments up from 54 to 76. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, we conducted content analyses individually. We then conducted content analyses jointly to agree upon themes and the frequency of themes to reach a consensus.

As academic supervisors of graduate internships and the primary instruments of this qualitative study, we acknowledge the risk for bias. To control for bias, we adhered to two of Tracy’s (2010) criteria – rich rigor and credibility – for conducting excellent qualitative research. In terms of rich rigor, this study used appropriate and sufficient data, sample, and context. Regarding credibility, thick description with key illuminating data that shows rather than tells marks this study, which is replicable. Students’ expressions of concerns varied, but provided enough similar content to reveal several distinct, but related themes; one of which contains two separate elements. In the subsequent section, we present the five critical issues based on the frequency of themes with textual data as support.

## Findings

Table 3 summarizes the issues, thematic frequency, and percentage occurrence of the total responses.

### Financial challenges

Not surprisingly, the financial challenge associated with accepting an internship was mentioned most often, with the highest number of comments, 38%. Students indicated that they experience this financial issue in two separate categories: 29% of respondents commented specifically about the typical lack of compensation; and an additional 9% expressed (separately) considerable resentment at having to pay tuition for academic credit.

### Compensation

As expected, students have varied and passionate concerns about compensation. They seem to agree on an expectation of financial sustainability as a minimum level of compensation: they want and expect to receive enough financial resources to keep them afloat for the duration of their internship. They also want to know they can prevent incurring debt before accepting the internship. Students suggested that regular or hourly pay, scholarship stipend, travel, transportation, and/or parking reimbursement, housing, and food allowance are useful ways for organizations to consider compensation for interns. However, there are some distinctions between graduate and undergraduate student expectations of compensation. In the comments below, for example, one graduate student strongly desired compensation, while an undergraduate expressed a negative experience of going into debt:

Unresolved issues	Thematic frequency	Percentages
Financial challenges	29/76	38%
<i>Compensation</i>	22/76	29%
<i>Resentment of paying tuition for academic credit</i>	7/76	9%
Cultural organizations' commitment	23/76	30%
Satisfaction with the internship	18/76	24%
Distinguishing between graduate and undergraduate criteria	6/76	8%

**TABLE 3. FINDINGS**

Source: Informed by data from the study.

## “STUDENTS AGREE ON AN EXPECTATION OF FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AS A MINIMUM LEVEL OF COMPENSATION: THEY WANT AND EXPECT TO RECEIVE ENOUGH FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO KEEP THEM AFLOAT DURING THEIR INTERNSHIP”

*Really, arts organizations have devised a smart system where they can get skilled workers and pay them nothing. I feel disheartened.*

*I would not necessarily need a salary in order to complete an internship. However, I have done an unpaid internship in which I paid for my own travel and parking expenses. This resulted in me essentially losing money to do the internship.*

### **Resentment for having to pay for academic credit**

More than a few comments expressed resentment for academic institutions requiring students to pay tuition when there is little or nothing provided in compensation to offset this cost. Students often perceive little to no value provided by their college or university, such as expressed below:

*It is so NOT FAIR when I work for someone for free, AND pay 3 credits for my school who neither set up the internship program nor helped me find my internship. I'm willing to work for free for the experience, and I also value the real world experience very much. However, paying tuition when I'm a free laborer is RIDICULOUS!*

### **Cultural organizations' commitment**

While students see considerable academic investment from their university (course credit, syllabi, assignments, and faculty supervision), they do not believe there is equal commitment on the part of the cultural organizations where they intern. This is all the more important because they often view internships as potential professional opportunities for the future. Several points made by students in the comments below express this concern:

*An intern is someone who enters an organization with the explicit motivation to gain more practical real-world experience in the career field they wish to enter and grow in. This means opportunities to assist on multiple projects, and come into contact with multiple people. Having an intern means an organization should commit the time and energy to outline the intern's responsibilities and learning.*

*An internship should be about getting the experience we need for our future work. I think that there should be people monitoring what is happening in the company, because there are some companies that just make use of interns as coffee persons.*

*Companies seeking to hire interns from a college should have to speak with a representative (preferably a career counsellor) from the school prior to hiring a student for an internship to ensure that the student is right for the position and the employer is right for the student.*

*I think an intense full-time internship is more beneficial than a staggered part-time internship over an extended period. This is particularly the case with regard to working on a specific project.*

### **Satisfaction**

Some students commented that they were, indeed, satisfied with their internships. These comments focused on gaining valuable experience and making good professional connections. Typical among these types of comment are the two below:

*I recently completed a 10-week part-time internship with the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and had a meaningful experience because: it enhanced my networking opportunities, I got an insider's view of the Education and Marketing departments, I worked on two meaningful projects, my hours were flexible, and I had an opportunity to learn new skills.*

*Internships are obscenely helpful; they were one of the most useful pieces of my college education. I am all for a program adding more internship aspects to their programs.*

### **Distinguishing between graduate and undergraduate criteria**

Lastly, a few students commented about how little distinction exists between graduate-level and under-

graduate-level internship criteria. One graduate student commented:

*After four years of professional arts marketing experience, to complete my master's I am required to fulfil the same internship responsibilities as a student with no professional work experience. There is no flexibility within the program. That is an unfortunate waste of time and resources.*

## Discussion

As shown in table 3, a total of 38% of students related concerns about the financial challenge of accepting an internship; 30% commented on cultural organizations' commitment; 24% voiced concerns over satisfaction, and lastly, 8% conveyed a desire for distinguishing between graduate and undergraduate student internship criteria.

This study found that arts and cultural management students cite financial challenges most frequently as an unresolved issue for them relating to an internship. Too many cultural organizations do not compensate interns leaving them feeling undervalued by the field. How students view whether the cultural sector appreciates and values them is a key component of their socialization and pending entry into the field (Dailey, 2014). In addition, research has shown that unpaid internships in fields such as Accounting, Business Administration, Communications, Engineering, English, Political Science, and Psychology do not increase students' employability and salaries beyond graduation (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2013). Because of this, academic supervisors and practitioners should develop creative solutions to the issue of intern compensation, particularly because many cultural organizations cannot afford to compensate interns. Academic supervisors could consider, for instance, collaborating with their development officers to raise funds for internship scholarships. Internship scholarships would hold tremendous value for students of low socio-economic status who cannot afford to complete an unpaid internship. Similarly, cultural organizations could pursue funding through their fundraising and development strategies to regularly provide compensation for interns – see, for instance, the strategy followed with regard to this by the

DeVos Institute of Arts Management at the University of Maryland (John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, 2014).

Requiring students to pay tuition to their academic institutions in order to work for a cultural organization, mostly likely for little or no pay, has created considerable resentment among students. Lack of compensation for required internships seems to exacerbate resentment for having to pay tuition. This begs the question, should students receive academic credit only for paid internships in arts and cultural management. Academic institutions could consider an internship policy that encourages payment and explains why tuition is required. In addition, program directors and/or internship coordinators may need to improve communication with students about the college's or university's infrastructure and the advantages for enrolled students. Cultural organizations appreciate and often depend on competency from interns who have acquired academic knowledge about arts and cultural management. Engaging qualified interns is typically more efficient and effective than screening interns

from the general population. Academic supervisors can stress to students that cultural organizations are eager to engage interns with pertinent academic credentials. In addition, once academic advisors and cultural organizations develop relationships, the process of engaging interns and evaluating the experience becomes smoother for both parties. In our opinion, students need to also understand the benefits they receive from their academic institutions before, during, and after their internship. They should know that tuition ensures they will have an academic supervisor to provide feedback, guid-

ance, and support. Feedback from supervisors can become a part of their academic file, thus lending credibility to his/her resume; and the supervisor can allude to this experience in conversations with potential employers. Students' tuition also allows academic institutions to insure them in advance of problems that may arise, such as a sudden cancellation of the internship, or on-site injury.

This study reveals that cultural organizations' commitment to internships is of similar importance to students. Thirty percent of respondents perceive a lack of commitment from the organizations that host them. Evidence of such organizational commitment might include a publicly stated emphasis on nurturing the next generation of arts leaders; a published internship job description; periodic review of goals and objectives; a letter of agreement; time devoted to

## “ACADEMIC SUPERVISORS AND PRACTITIONERS SHOULD DEVELOP CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE ISSUE OF COMPENSATION, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE MANY CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS CANNOT AFFORD TO COMPENSATE INTERNS”

## “ORGANIZATIONS CAN SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE THEIR INTERNSHIPS SO THEY TRULY BECOME A MECHANISM OF ANTICIPATORY SOCIALIZATION THAT PREPARES ASPIRING MANAGERS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS”

assessment at midpoint and conclusion of the internship; and a designated, on-site staff mentor to nurture the intern toward understanding the organization's operations. By way of example, the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts – which supports an internship program that is regularly ranked favorably by the Princeton Review and Bloomberg Businessweek – makes clear a commitment to preparing the next generation of arts and cultural managers (Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, 2014). We believe evidence of organizational commitment would also go a long way toward improving intern satisfaction.

Students also voiced concerns about the apparent lack of distinguishing criteria between graduate and undergraduate internships. Their comments were pointed toward both academic institutions and cultural organizations needing to distinguish such criteria. Cultural organizations would do well to acknowledge the potential variance of skill level between graduate and undergraduate students. A graduate student may not require the same amount of supervision as an undergraduate student. Everyone might benefit from coming together to design individual internships to more effectively increase student skills, while benefiting the organization.

Finally, from general observation, negative experiences motivate comments at the end of a survey; therefore, we were surprised that commenters chose to share some of their positive internship experiences. The total rate of internship satisfaction may exceed expectations. Nevertheless, clearly the student who interned with the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston had a satisfactory experience because the internship enhanced networking opportunities, gave an insider's view of the education and marketing departments, provided two meaningful projects, permitted flexible work hours, and afforded opportunities to learn new skills.

### Conclusion

As part of a 2013 research study to better understand student perspectives of arts and cultural management internships, this qualitative analysis of their open ended survey comments sought to answer the following question: What issues can be identified

that might lead to improving their internship experiences? Using content analysis, we analyzed 76 survey comments from arts and cultural management students about their perceptions of internships. Several distinct unresolved issues emerged from the data: financial challenges (compensation and resentment of paying tuition), cultural organizations' commitment, interns' satisfaction, and the recommendation to distinguish between graduate and undergraduate internship criteria. Future studies on internships in arts and cultural management should investigate the correlation between paid or unpaid internships on future job placement and salary. We also encourage further investigation of contextual factors, and the attributes of assignments, projects, and work environments that lead to intern satisfaction (D'Abate, Youndt & Wenzel, 2009) in arts and cultural management.

As educators, we value internships as an important aspect of the curriculum in arts and cultural management. Internships can have tremendous effects on students' career goals, professional development, and their lives. We have witnessed the professional confidence and maturity students gain through their internships. With thoughtful attention to the unresolved issues revealed in this study, arts and cultural management organizations can significantly improve their internships so they truly become a mechanism of anticipatory socialization that prepares aspiring managers for full-time employment in cultural organizations (Dailey, 2014). In the same way that actors, dancers, and musicians rehearse in preparation for performances, internships in arts and cultural management will allow students to rehearse their future roles in the complex management settings of cultural organizations.

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# An integrated and networked approach for the cultural heritage lifecycle management

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## ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage is a complex and interconnected ecosystem requiring innovative methods and techniques to facilitate its management and valorization. From these assumptions, our research proposes a new, integrated and networked approach based on a three-level case study belonging to the archaeological context. In detail, the approach defines the lifecycle of an archaeological site, its processes and network analysis. It does this through the use of Business Process Management (BPM) and Social Network Analysis (SNA) techniques, taking the work of archaeologists at the Archeologia Ricerca e Valorizzazione s.r.l. (A.R.V.a) as a case study. The main objective of the approach is to provide valuable insights to optimize the flow of data, gather information and share knowledge created during the archaeological process, starting from lifecycle management and carrying on with the processes modelling and identification of roles and relationships among different stakeholders. The final aim is to improve the sustainable valorization of an archaeological site, facilitating value creation, strengthening the connections between culture and local development, and enabling a participatory governance of archeological heritage.

## Keywords:

Cultural heritage

Lifecycle management

Business Process Management

Social Network Analysis

Valorization

Participation

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## Introduction

"The community of heritage practitioners has long recognized the need for new approaches to conservation, which would reflect the increased complexity of their work and facilitate a positive interaction with the vast environment, with particular attention paid to local communities" (Romano, 2014: 3). Moreover, the need for new approaches can be extended to all of the lifecycle phases of cultural heritage (Bradshaw, Bryant & Cohen, 2011). In attempting to manage the complex ecology of a cultural system and cultural heritage (Holden, 2015), these approaches identify some important elements that should be taken into account, including the recognition of a distinct lifecycle, its phases and its stakeholders.

The concept of Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) (Willems, 2010; Mabulla, 2000) is not new anymore. It mainly concerns the legal and administrative requirements and a lot of bureaucracy. An integrated lifecycle management plan that involves all potential stakeholders can facilitate the conservation and valorization phases of the cultural heritage, increasing the positive impact on local communities. In literature, the discipline dealing with cultural sites management is also known as Cultural Resources Management (CRM). This includes cultural conservation practices, maintenance and preservation of significant cultural sites, restoration, museology, archaeology, history and architecture (Miller, Vandome & McBrewster, 2010; Latourelle, 2013). Due to the complexity of its management, the archaeological domain is the section that typically receives most attention (Talato & Cisco, 2014). Indeed, this domain is affected by the existence of a high number of threats (urban development, agriculture, absence of tutelage, etc.) and difficulties for the safeguard of the sites; furthermore, archaeology is a destructive process (Verhagen, Kamermans & Van Leusen, 2009). CHM was born with the rescue archaeology and urban archaeology undertaken in North

America and Europe in the period of the World War II and the succeeding years. In detail, Archaeological Heritage Management (AHM) was theorized for the supervision of the processes of the archaeological sites (Smith, 1993).

Nowadays, the intelligent and integrated management of the overall archaeological heritage lifecycle becomes strategic (Resca, 2011) for two main reasons:

- It facilitates the stages of conservation and enhancement with the several external stakeholders engaged in the process.
- It justifies a multidisciplinary approach, which involves management engineering, technology, urban planning, and archaeology applied to cultural heritage.

The complex operation subtended at cultural knowledge, of its lifecycle and players involved in the process through alternative technical approaches, could be a tool for the enhancement of players themselves, in correlation with the process of conservation of heritage. These actions, together with the protection of heritage, are fundamental concepts in specific legislation, which guarantees the right use of cultural heritage in respect of future generations. Along these lines, the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage (MiBAC, 2011), for instance, suggests to pursue an integrated approach where the stakeholders and the involved structures interact with the subjects of the territory. Cultural heritage represents a real inexhaustible resource for local development, a valuable cultural asset, to be transmitted from generation to generation. Moreover, cultural heritage safeguard, conservation and valorization require a great effort in terms of time, costs, skills and people involved. Indeed, the cultural environment should be studied, evaluated, and defined both in terms of historical and present-day relevance, from the point of view of a wide network including suppliers and users. In order to improve and

# “AN INTEGRATED LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT PLAN THAT INVOLVES ALL POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS CAN FACILITATE THE CONSERVATION AND VALORIZATION PHASES OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE, INCREASING THE POSITIVE IMPACT ON COMMUNITIES”

optimize the management of the whole cultural heritage lifecycle, professionals (architects, archaeologists, planners, etc.), public administrations, local authorities, public and private companies, associations, and citizens should work together on joint initiatives, in order to encourage the value creation and to reinforce the link between culture and economy.

This paper aims to systematize these concepts in order to optimize processes and to identify the best areas of improvement. The research question is: how can we standardize and simplify cultural heritage management lifecycle through the analysis of the relations existing in the ecological cultural network, in order to optimize the stakeholders' participation? To answer this question, we have employed a case study methodology, starting from the reconstruction of processes, information flows and players involved during an archaeological excavation. In detail, we intend to contribute to the improvement of cultural heritage management in two ways:

- providing an integrated methodology for managing the whole lifecycle, through standardization and digitization of procedures and documents;
- studying relations, information flows and outputs for identifying the role that each stakeholder can have along the whole archaeological lifecycle.

The study starts with general considerations on the Product Lifecycle Management (PLM) approach, usually used in manufacturing domains. Then, we applied the BPM approach for the reconstruction of processes and activities carried out, and the SNA technique for the identification of roles and relations among the people involved. Furthermore, we defined some strategic steps in order to encourage community engagement and participation. Finally, the main aim of this research is to provide both technicians and citizens with an integrated approach to increase sustainable valorization and fruition of the archaeological site as part of the global cultural domain. This work aims to facilitate the value creation and to strengthen the connections between culture and local development through the optimization of management and monitoring of new or existing cultural resources.

## Background

### *Cultural and archaeological heritage complexity*

Over the years, the cultural environment has been interested by a wave of change under the technological and methodological perspective. The tendency to merge different disciplines has opened new visions about the concept of culture and related domains. In this context, archaeological heritage is part of the most global cultural environment – including different disciplines (as anthropology, environment, technology, etc.) – whose attention is moving from structural features to external elements, such as knowledge, data, information and stakeholders, which are able to integrate the set of well-defined activities, processes and roles typically carried out during an archaeological investigation (Brogiolo, 2007; Manacorda, 2008; Volpe, 2008; Volpe & Goffredo, 2009). A global trend emphasizes the role of cultural landscape as an element that can integrate cultural lifecycle as a whole, as well as its typical phases of knowledge creation, protection, fruition and valorization. In this way, it is possible to enhance the link between landscape and people and to characterize the role of cultural resources in terms of key parts of the global territorial development, which also facilitates communication and access to outcomes and findings for different target audiences. This tendency highlights the need to work on the definition of a global approach able to manage the complexity inherent to cultural heritage. This will help face the administrative and bureaucratic criticalities and the lack of optimized methodology for knowledge sharing and management, inside and outside the complex network of players involved in the creation, protection, fruition and valorization of an archaeological site (Volpe, 2014).

The archaeological domain represents a complex field of research characterized by different phases including administrative procedures, practical activities, research, publication, communication and valorization both of theoretical outputs and archaeological evidences. The main criticalities of archaeological heritage focus on the conservation and integrated management of data, from rescue to interpretation. In this sense, the importance of digitizing the information is a well-known issue (De Felice &

Sibilano, 2010), even if there is a huge fragmentation of methodologies and tools aimed to solve different unconnected issues (Ryan, 2001). Based on these assumptions, it is essential to focus on the upstream and downstream activities of the archaeological heritage lifecycle, because the former are the starting point for the following elaboration and representation, and they are strictly linked to the latter, which in turn constitute the basis for implementing strategical fruition, communication and valorization actions. According to Manacorda (2008), detailed documentation can guarantee the conservation of the widest number of information. Nowadays it is fundamental to ensure real time access to data and information both for technicians – for them to gain access to analytical data and to verify the qualitative relevance allowing different interpretations on the basis of their own expertise) (Semeraro, 2009) – and for final users – to easily access data and information from multiple devices. In this sense the web provides the opportunity to share, spread and make use of culture, and it represents the point of contact between technicians (acquisition, storage, and data management) and final users (sharing, communication and valorization) coexisting with different roles within the same environment. The importance of the web has required revising the way in which archaeological data and information are collected, managed, manipulated, communicated and valorized; and it has highlighted the role of each player within the same network. The presence of all these elements led to consider this domain suitable to propose a flexible model for managing the methodological and procedural complexity endogenous to the microcosms within the global cultural environment.

Another important issue concerns the long tradition in terms of preservation in archaeological, cultural and creative domains, compared to the lack of economic and human resources committed to the safeguard and valorization of cultural heritage<sup>1</sup> at large. The intense legislation has often generated misunderstandings about roles and responsibilities, and the consequent need to define structured processes and to identify the stakeholders involved in order to optimize the whole lifecycle. The post-Malta archaeology is unanimously recognized as a phase of growth that led to several advances in terms of deep knowledge about the past, most efficient protection guidelines, increased and improved communication, and fruition and valorization of the archaeological sites. "In 'post-Malta' archaeology, the financial, human and technical resources allocated to archaeology have enormously increased but at the same time, these resources have had to be spent both effectively and efficiently. Therefore, why not create and use tools that will allow us to do so?" (Verhagen, Kamermans & Van Leusen, 2009: 19). This consideration points again to the need to op-

imize the management of archaeological heritage under a number of perspectives contributing to the evolution of this complex system.

### ***Product Lifecycle Management and Business Process Management***

A large number of studies has been carried out in order to define methods, tools and technologies to support the management of historical memory and cultural heritage, by adopting theories and practices from the manufacturing sector, which is characterized by interaction and management models that can be replicated in various entrepreneurial contexts. Cultural heritage management presents dynamics not so far from that of other industrial sectors. The main difference is to be found in the poor development of such dynamics, which in this sector remain prerogative of the academic knowledge of the involved actors (Hervy et al, 2013). In this context, questions related to knowledge management in archaeological processes become relevant, because the valorization process of cultural heritage is strictly related to the correct management of informative flows and knowledge. If we consider the significant information on cultural heritage, the adoption of a new managerial approach to its lifecycle, supported by technologies, could allow the identification of innovative methods of management and fruition.

A PLM system is a collaborative backbone allowing people throughout big enterprises to work together more efficiently (Saaksvuori & Immonen, 2008). An archaeological excavation is a system of complex and heterogeneous activities that involves a multidisciplinary team composed by actors with different responsibility levels and skills. Knowledge management in the archaeological process can be optimized through the digitalization of data, whose proper utilization strongly depends on their analysis and interpretation (Privitera, 2011). In the manufacturing sector, the adoption of the PLM logic is mainly focused on time-to-market, that is to say, on the capability to accelerate the fruition time, in order to increase the efficiency of the intervention, and to rise the control, security and safety of processes and activities carried out (Ameri & Dutta, 2005). In the cultural heritage sector, where many different actors communicate, this approach works properly for information management (Ding et al, 2007). The main issues concern the knowledge extraction methods, the data visualization and the flow of information. Hervy et al (2013) have recently proposed the application of PLM to the management of historical and artistic knowledge in museums. They argued that the increase of cultural knowledge is the main motivation that makes necessary the adoption of

1 For more information, see the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised), Valetta, 16.I.1992, and the Legislative Decree 22 January 2004, nr. 42 "Cultural Heritage and Landscape Code".

a PLM system inside museums. During the five-year research carried out inside the Nantes History Museum, in which various professionals were involved (historians, engineers and curators), all the available knowledge has been collected and the virtual links between the data have been created. The result is a system of virtual augmented reality based on real objects. The web-connected system allows both experts and common people to enrich the knowledge database with contents that include geographic information, semantics and historical links between the points of interest.

Starting from this considerations, it is possible to assert that the deep study of the processes along the cultural heritage lifecycle is particularly important because it fosters the standardization of procedures and activities that generate the data output. Furthermore, it allows identifying each actor involved in the process and the criticalities in the procedures that would be otherwise hard to identify. The digitization of the processes can be realized through the BPM approach (Van Der Aalst, Ter Hofstede & Weske, 2003), which sees processes as important assets of

an organization that must be understood, managed and developed. The approach closely resembles other total quality management or continual improvement process methodologies, and it can be supported or enabled through

technology (Thiault, 2012). The information technology research and advisory company Gartner defines BPM as "the discipline of managing processes (rather than tasks) as the means for improving business performance outcomes and operation agility. Process span organizational boundaries, linking together people, information flows, systems and other assets to create and deliver value" (Gartner, n.d.). In this sense, one of the first experiments was conducted by a team at the University of Salento (Corallo et al, 2015a). More

specifically, the collaboration between a team of archaeologists (A.R.Va – Archeologia Ricerca e Valorizzazione S.r.l., a University of Salento spin-off) and a group of researchers of the Engineering of Innovation Department generated one of the first examples of archaeological processes (figure 1). In this case, the mapping has been carried out on the basis of the manual

**“THE DEEP STUDY OF THE PROCESSES ALONG THE CULTURAL HERITAGE LIFECYCLE IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT FOSTERS THE STANDARDIZATION OF PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES THAT GENERATE THE DATA OUTPUT”**

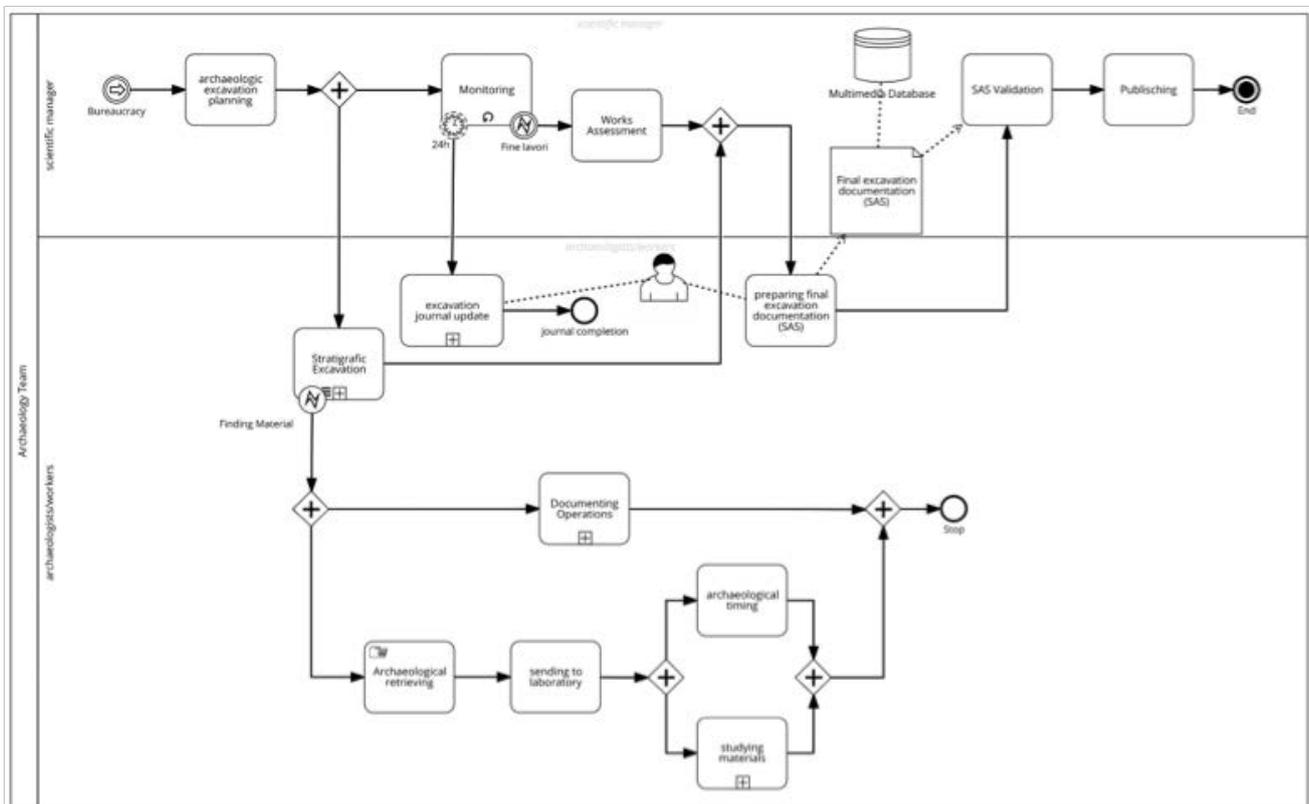


FIGURE 1. ARCHAEOLOGY EXCAVATION PROCESS (elaborated with Signavio BPM Academic tool)  
Source: Corallo et al (2015b).

*Process mining: discovery, conformance and enhancement of business processes* (Van Der Aalst, 2011). The result, even though still acerb and in need of optimization, has clearly evidenced the complexity of the information and communication flows among the actors involved, opening the way to future research and demonstrating the validity of the approach, described as an opportunity to increase the value of the information provided.

## **Social Network Analysis**

The main holders of the knowledge are the same main actors of the communication exchanges. "A significant component of a person's information environment consists of the relationships he or she can tap for various informational needs (...) who you know has a significant impact on what you come to know, as relationships are critical for obtaining information, solving problems and learning how to do your work" (Cross et al, 2001: 100). For this reason, most organizations recognize the importance of SNA as a powerful diagnostic method used to analyze the nature and pattern of relationships among members of a particular domain. One means of understanding knowledge flows or bottlenecks that slow down business processes is "mapping" the relationships between employees, with whom they communicate and how often (Busch, 2008). According to Burt (1992), a social network is a group of collaborating entities (actors) that are related to one another. Mathematically, the SNA result is a graph wherein each participant in the network is called an "actor" and depicted as a node in the network. Actors can be persons, organizations, groups, or any other set of related entities. Relations between actors are depicted as links between the corresponding nodes. Many social network relations are due to joint participation of actors in business or social activities, or membership in collectives. Their common activities create a network of ties among different participants. There has been an increased interest in this methodology to analyze the nature and role of informal relationships among individual members in formal business organizations (Cross & Prusak, 2002).

Software such as Ucinet, Jung, Pajek, Condor and Krackplot provide a graphic picture of the relations of people, teams and organizations. Moreover they allow the user to create visual maps, movies and adjacency matrices, and permit to calculate indicators of collaboration between actors or groups within a communication network (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005). With these techniques, SNA resolutely helps in identifying employees as well as work groups who play central roles in the organization; at the same time SNA is quite capable of discerning holes or bottlenecks in a communication network (Serrat, 2009). Through a better understanding of the formal and informal networks existing in an organization, it is possible to identify the tasks that employees effectively undertake and, consequently, to better map the business processes.

The application of network mapping and its characterization is recent but not completely new in the cultural field. Its recent use is mainly due to the actual availability of cheap and potent computing power especially suitable for large networks. Hewison, Holden and Jones (2010) described a level of connectivity of a cultural organization, the Royal Shakespeare Company (RCS). They analyzed informal and formal networks of the organization in two different periods and evaluated the variation of the network density in order to obtain information about the compactness of the working relations around the RSC. They also found the central node of the network in order to identify leadership and evaluate the consistency of the relation between leadership and organization. Moreover, they established how evident was the division between different organizational functions (artistic and administrative) in the networks. Jackson (2011) used the SNA to measure the extent to which connections in the sector had changed during and through the application of a visual arts strategy. The work showed clear growth in the connections between organizations and individual artists before and after the strategy, with a small number of individuals and teams that were the most connected, playing a pivotal role.

In the archaeological field, many analysts have been strongly influenced by SNA in our archaeological network (Brughmans, 2013). In the last 15 years, the SNA measures applied to archaeology concerned especially the construction of networks related to the ancient populations. Bernardini (2007) tracked the local movement of pottery among Hopi villages and mapped the interaction among them; Jenkins (2001) analyzed the network of 54 sites connected by Inka roads, like administrative centers, productive enclaves or storage sites; Graham (2006) analyzed a network of Roman towns connected by the routes. SNA centrality measures were used by Isaksen (2007) to explore aspects of the Roman transportation or communication systems in southern Spain, and by Mizoguchi (2009) to identify a centralized hierarchy between social groups in the initial Kofun period in Japan. Hart and Engelbrecht (2012) used SNA to determine whether pottery collar decoration data best fit the evolution of the Iroquoian ethnic landscape. Another study of ceramic networks in the Late Hispanic US Southwest (Mills et al, 2012) mapped the flows of information, the transfer of ceramics and distribution practices. Methods derived from SNA have been also used to examine temporal changes in the distribution and centralization of socio-political interactions of the Classic Maya (Munson & Macri, 2009).

Compared to these previous works, which used SNA to interpret networks related to archaeological findings, this work wants to focus on the extraction and analysis of the networks linking those who are responsible for such findings: the archaeologists. This paper aims to obtain a juncture between the management of the archaeological processes, the capture of knowledge flows and the analysis of human relation-

ships, in order to obtain a detailed comprehension of archaeological processes through the analysis of human processes.

## Research methodology and case study

Based on the general methodological approach and the continuous evolution of the different microcosms merging within the most general cultural heritage field, there are evident criticalities in managing in situ archaeological investigation. In a nutshell, the main problem lies in the gap existing between the technical archaeological investigation and the systematization of documents, data and information needed to make outcomes and findings available to other stakeholders and to the public at large. In this sense, the main solutions are aimed at providing technological tools for the data management, acquisition and elaboration, in order to support the data encoding in real time with the consequent distribution of information in a short time. With this aim, the upstream analysis of flows of information and players involved allowed to identify the main criticalities of the process of archaeological investigation and to provide ideas for improvements and optimization.

This research is part of the DiCeT-Inmoto project<sup>2</sup> and arises from previous assumptions in the field of the archaeological research, which consists of activities involving different methodological approaches. In addition, due to the complexity of the archaeological excavation dynamics, it is possible to integrate the analysis to better incorporate any other enhancement process and the digitization of the general cultural heritage. The tools and methods previously described are the basis of the research methodology and support the implementation of the case study. The innovation of the methodology consists in the application of methods widely known and applied in the literature within the manufacturing and business domains to the archaeological domain. The purpose is to optimize processes, activities and routines carried out, to identify strengths and weaknesses of existing networks, and to support the improvement of the flow of information through the creation of a virtuous cycle of knowledge co-creation and sharing.

The methodology is organized in different phases: archaeological site lifecycle; processes analysis, and network analysis. The outputs of each phase represent the inputs for the following one. In particular, we interviewed the group of archaeologists of A.R.Va s.r.l. in order to collect data and information both on the activities and on the types of relations developed among the different players involved on a specific ar-

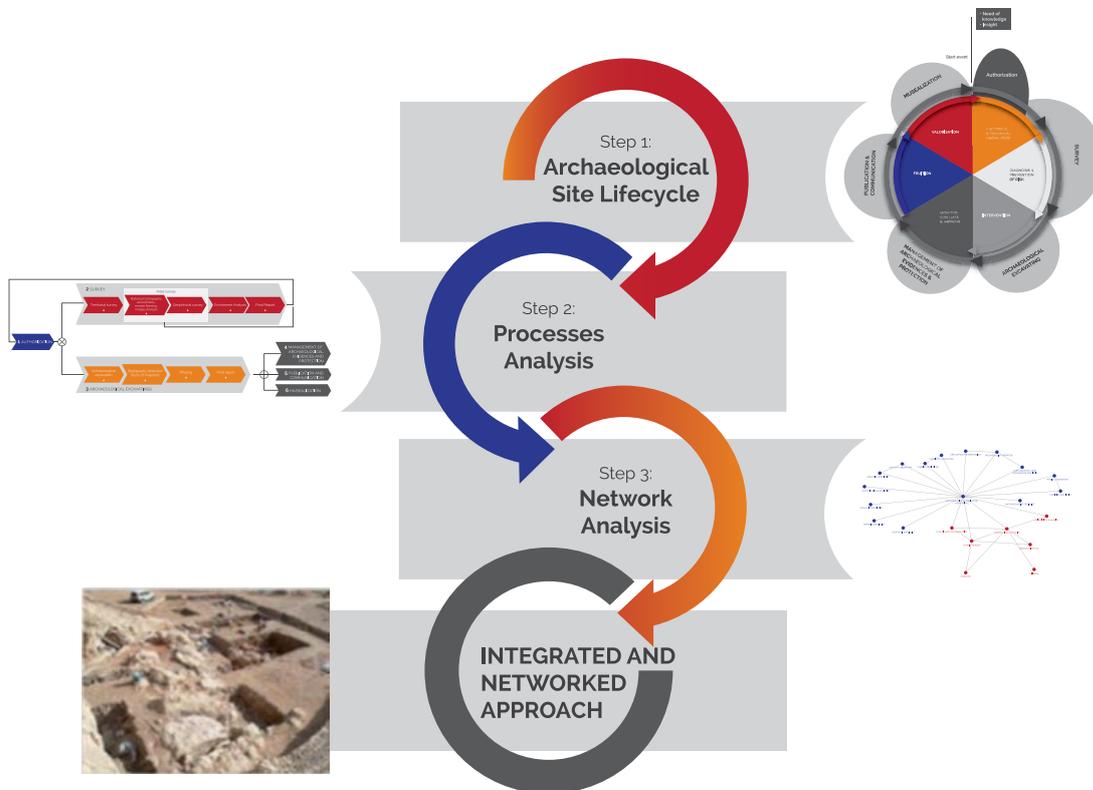


FIGURE 2. PHASES AND OUTPUTS OF THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see <http://imagelab.ing.unimore.it/imagelab/project.asp?idprogetto=44>

chaeological site. In this way, we were able to recreate the logical operation patterns of the archaeological site and to connect inputs and outputs to the different phases mentioned above. The main objective of the methodology is to provide an integrated and networked approach to overcome the limitations of fragmented views that tend to consider a single perspective and neglect other aspects which are crucial for reaching common goals within the cultural heritage ecosystem. Figure 2 summarizes the phases of the approach proposed. Each phase is described in detail in the next sections in order to facilitate the understanding and demonstrate the effectiveness of the approach.

### **Phase 1: archaeological site lifecycle**

The definition of the archaeological site lifecycle begun with a first round of interviews aimed to identify the *modus operandi* of the archaeologists on the field. During this stage, it emerged that, apart from the onsite work, there is a large amount of upstream activities linked to administrative procedures that can influence the following steps. This phase was a prerequisite for each following phase because it aimed to give an order to the *chaos* caused by the complexity of the work needed to be done and by the wide numbers of players with different backgrounds involved. The endeavor was undertaken to provide a model of archaeological site lifecycle starting from the existing literature (Bradshaw, Bryant & Cohen, 2011) on cultural heritage lifecycle models. That first bibliographic review provided many insights but required some customization due to the variety of cases embraced within the cultural heritage context. Based on these assumptions, we took as starting point the phases of the process of CHM elaborated in the IT@CHA project, from which we worked on the adjustment required to build the archaeological lifecycle, considering also the information collected during the interviews. In more detail, the phases of CHM can be summarized as follows:

- *Historical and technical knowledge*: cognitive analysis of technical data and information through literature review, desk and field analysis, etc.
- *Diagnosis and risk prevention*: in situ recognition aimed to identify the *living conditions* of cultural resources, and analysis of problems linked to structural and functional conditions.
- *Intervention*: activities needed to be carried out on the basis of the outputs of the previous two phases and the features of the resources (e.g. maintenance, restoration, excavation, etc.).
- *Monitoring, evaluation and improvements*: monitoring of direct and indirect impacts on cultural heritage, evaluation of cultural outcomes, improvement of systems, programs and opera-

tional plans, etc. This phase is continuously repeated along the whole lifecycle.

- *Fruition*: to make the cultural heritage available to public at large (e.g. through formal reporting processes) (Bradshaw, Bryant & Cohen, 2011).
- *Valorization*: open communication with external communities and stakeholders (e.g. museums, cultural associations, research centers, and citizens, etc.) (Bradshaw, Bryant & Cohen, 2011).

The following step was to recognize the phases of the archaeological research lifecycle based on the interviews with the A.R.Va. s.r.l. team. Drawing on that, we established the correspondence between each phase of the CHM lifecycle and the phases of the archaeological excavation. In detail, the data collected revealed the presence of a lifecycle starting with an event that corresponds to a need of knowledge or insights, derived from the interest to investigate of research centers, local authority, etc. Following the start event, we identified the phases below, which correspond to one or more phases of the general CHM lifecycle, even if there is not always a one-to-one correspondence (see figure 3):

- *Authorization*: corresponding in part to the start event and in part to the technical knowledge reconnaissance phases. It includes the process of obtaining permits for archaeological investigations and can differ on the basis of the purpose of the investigation, from authorizations or concessions for excavation/survey (by research centers), to opinions expressed in the case of the preventive archaeology.
- *Survey*: corresponding both to the historical and technical knowledge acquisition carried out through desk research, and the diagnosis and risk prevention phases implemented through non-invasive technical surveys, which allow guaranteeing the acquisition of a huge amount of data on the contingent existence of an archaeological site.
- *Archaeological excavation*: corresponding to the intervention phase. It is carried out to identify, analyze, provide documentary evidences and characterize all the elements of an archaeological site. In particular, this phase aims to go back in time to the age of the site, and to understand its function and relations in a wide historical and territorial context.
- *Management of archaeological evidences and protection*: this phase can be partially linked to the monitoring, evaluation and improvement phase, because, on one hand, it is aimed to plan and implement protection measures both in the field of the administrative procedures and as regard to technical activities (e.g. restoration work, conservation, etc.). On the other hand, this phase is also dedicated to the management of data (documents and knowledge base) coming from

the previous two phases and consequent phasing activity .

- *Publication and communication*: corresponding to the fruition phase. Its aim is to make the results of the different phases available through communication tools such as scientific or informative publications or materials (e.g. brochure, virtual reconstruction, web, etc.). This phase could not be linked to the material fruition of the site.

- *Musealization*: corresponds to the valorization of the archaeological site, findings, and other outputs through strategies addressed to the public enjoyment that are often able to network these cultural resources and foster community engagement in the context of territorial development.

This phase of the research was organized in two main sub-phases:

1. *Requirements analysis*: carried out through a second round of face-to-face interviews to A.R.V.a s.r.l. archaeologists in order to define the requirements of excavation activities and to investigate the criticalities to be revised.

2. *Process mapping*: which allows a detailed representation of processes, activities, time and people involved in each phase.

Figure 4 represents the logical flow of the processes carried out during each phase of the archaeological lifecycle. In particular, the diagram shows the activities launched from the start event. After the authorization, the process can follow the sequence enumerated from 1 to 6 or, under particular conditions, it can follow an alternative pattern, also from 1 to 6 but skipping phase 2. This can contribute to generate differences as regard to the legislative procedure, documentation, operations, and stakeholders needed to be involved.

### Phase 3: processes analysis

As reported in the background section, SNA is a methodology used for social relations analysis. The basic idea is that every individual or group of individuals (network actors) are interdependent rather than independent, they are a social interacting unit rather than an autonomous unit (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Therefore, it is reductive to base the analysis of an actor only on parameters that characterize him as autonomous unit. Relational ties (linkages) between actors are channels for transfer or flow of resources (either material or nonmaterial). For this, SNA theorists deem important to look at the interactions between the network members as variables responsible for a precise behavior and decision-making. Network models are focused on describing the structure of relationships between actors in order to see the impact that this structure has on the functioning of the network and its influence on individual actors, in terms of providing opportunities or constraints. Calculating the density of social networks, the number and relations between clusters, the relation type between actors and the centrality of key nodes allows network analysts to explore the structure of resources flow.

The *network density* is one of the main descriptive statistics, often used as the primary indicator of the degree of network cohesion. This index allows to detect the participation and the involvement in the social ties construction and to evaluate the compactness of the network. It is defined as the fraction of the maximum possible number of edges in the network that is actually present (Newman, 2010). Numerically, the density is a value between 0 and 1: "0" when edges

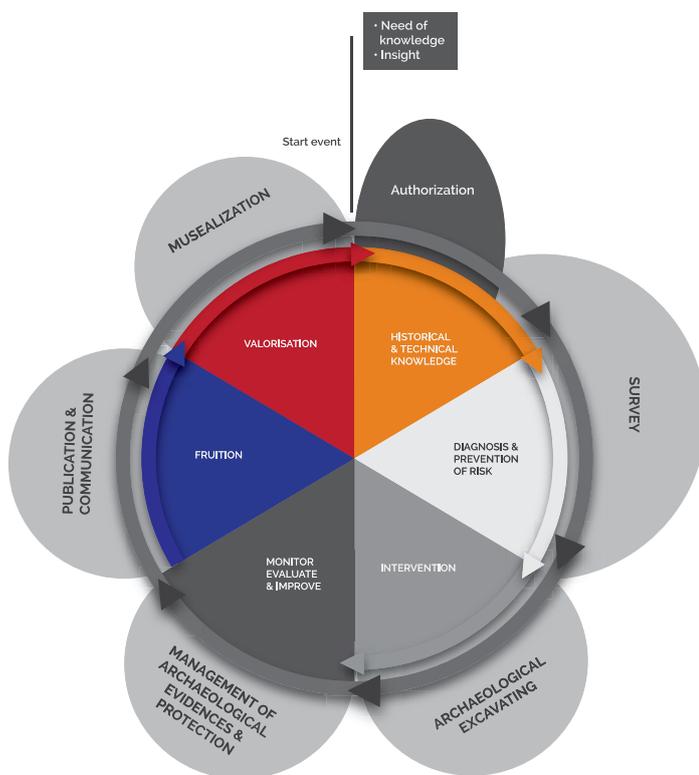
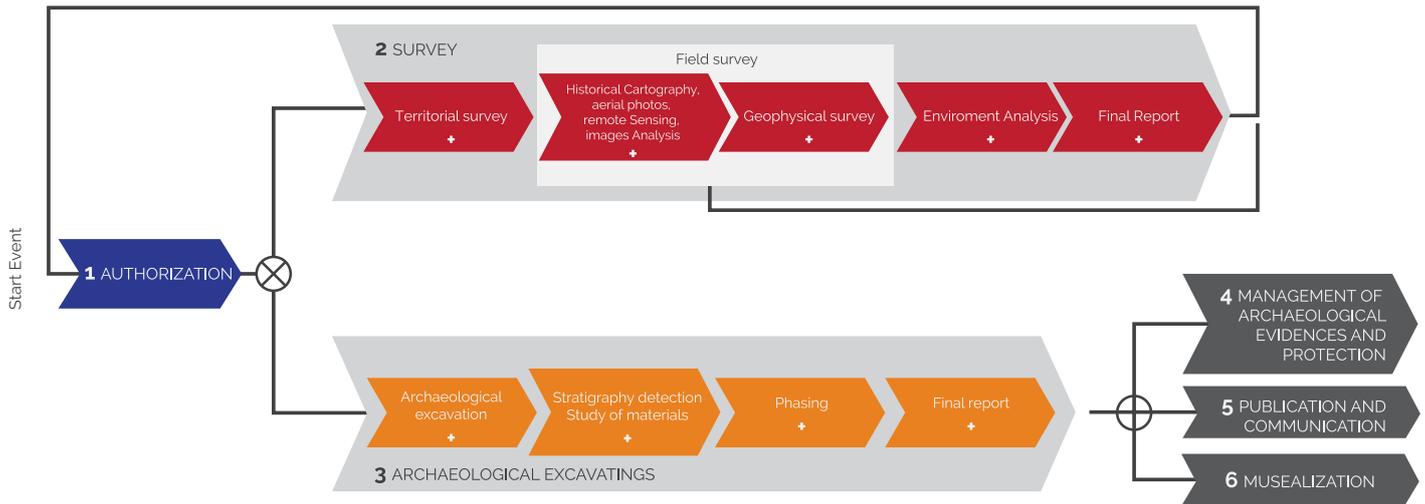


FIGURE 3. CHM LIFECYCLE AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE LIFECYCLE CORRESPONDENCE

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

### Phase 2: processes analysis

The second phase corresponds to the process modelling based on the archaeological site lifecycle. Through the application of the BPM approach we aimed to provide a snapshot of the current situation (*as-is*, as opposed to the *to-be* or desired condition) by identifying processes, activities, data and information exchanged, as well as players involved in each phase.



**FIGURE 4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION PROCESSES**

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

are not available – i.e. the network is empty, and “1” when there are all the edges possible – i.e. the network is complete. In a low-density network, actors have few contacts and sparse information/resources flow, while in a high-density network, actors maintain links with a high number of people.

In SNA, *centrality measures* – degree centrality, closeness centrality, betweenness centrality (Freeman, 1979) – make it possible to identify the nodes that have a central position and therefore a better access to information/resources. Their position enhances opportunities to spread information and resources. To understand network structures, the natural tendency of real-world networks to form *clusters* has been pointed out. Clusters are groups of nodes densely connected among them, with sparser links to the rest of the network (Gentile et al, 2014). The importance of these applications has recently led to the intense development of algorithms, aiming to automatically solve the detection of communities, or to check for the *clusterability* of the network (Fortunato, 2009). Specially for small networks, fine grain algorithms exist, in particular those involving metrics at the node/edge level that aim to a precise assignment of the single nodes to the various communities (Gentile et al, 2014). A perfect example of an algorithm feasible to be used straightforward for small networks is the Girvan-Newman (GN) method, based on the edge betweenness (Girvan & Newman, 2002).

In a social network, it is possible that the actors belonging to a particular group or cluster tend to focus only on their cluster activities and ignore what happens in the others. In terms of exchange of information between the different groups, this situation generates holes in the social structure, defined as structural holes (Burt, 1992). In SNA, the so-called *brokers* are key actors that build a bridge between these groups and they are in a *brokerage position*. The

broker is an actor that, holding a strategic position in the network structure, could provide access to diverse and heterogeneous knowledge and resources and enables or improves the resources flow between nodes otherwise unconnected (Burt, 1992). Its importance will be higher, the lower the number of players who can fill his position. The lack of a position of brokerage involves the dissemination of information and knowledge only within each group of the network, but the groups remain isolated from each other and does not exist the opportunity to knowledge recombination.

In SNA, a relation between two kinds of different entities is called a two-mode interaction, represented by a two-mode affiliation matrix ( $A$ ), whose elements ( $a_{ij}$ ) indicate if an entity  $i$  is in relation with the entity  $j$ . In particular, in this paper we have analyzed the relationship between information flow and archaeologists. A key hypothesis for network analysts is that, whenever two entities  $i$  and  $j$  participate in the same activity or share some information/resource  $x$ , this indicates the real or potential existence of a bond between them. Relations between actors are depicted as links between the corresponding nodes. Conversion into two one-mode data sets is the most direct approach to handle two-mode data (e.g. users-resource), and examine relations within each mode separately. This approach is appropriate in this study, because of the interest in focusing on just one of the modes: the  $N$  actors. We have created a data set of actor-actor ties, measuring the strength of the tie between each pair of users as proportional to the number of times they worked on the same activities (Corallo et al, 2015a). As starting point, a 1-mode matrix  $A$  is defined so that its elements  $a_{ij}=1$  if user  $i$  performs at least one activity (or share at least one information/resource) with person  $j$ . Using the sums of cross product, a method of the tool Ucinet (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005), we defined the weights of the 1-mode matrix. The use of these

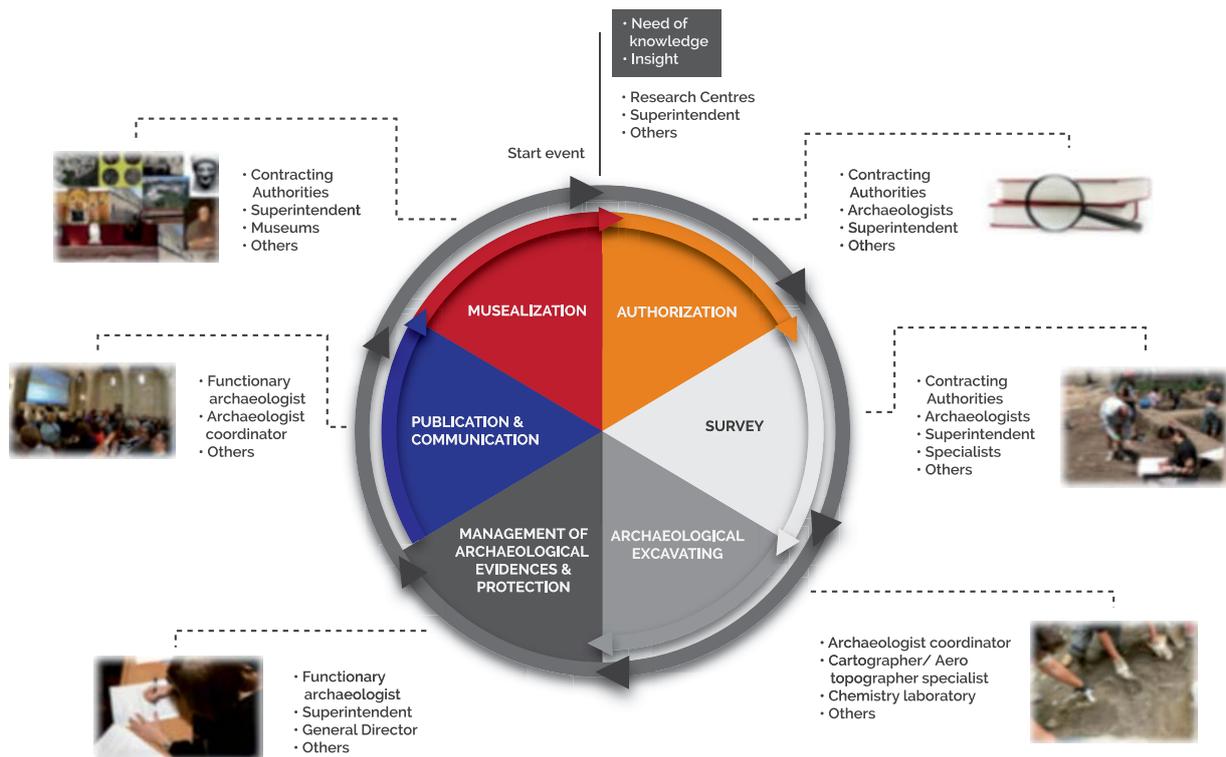
techniques of SNA allow analyzing and revisiting the information and communication flows between the actors involved in all lifecycle phases of an archaeological excavation, and its consequent improvement.

## Preliminary results

The first preliminary results show the graphic representation of the archaeological lifecycle with the integration of the different players involved in each phase (figure 5).

ing the third phase to the archaeologists involved in the excavation process and on the analysis of official documentation related to this process – the presence of some key figures (actors of the process) was extracted. Table 1 contains the list of these actors in order of appearance in the archaeological lifecycle and the description of their role.

According to the information received during the interviews, the archaeological excavation process described in the previous section consists of administrative and/or technical activities. Each activity produces some outputs that will be, consequently, administra-



**FIGURE 5. ARCHEOLOGICAL LIFECYCLE AND PLAYERS INVOLVED**

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The elaboration of the results of phases 1 and 2 of the research methodology revealed the existence of criticalities both in terms of scarce integration of standard procedures and in terms of innovative methods and tools for managing the archaeological lifecycle. In addition, substantial differences were underlined in the requirements expressed by different stakeholders involved in each phase, such as institutional operators, specialists, etc. That should be addressed to integrate their contributions to the whole process. In this sense, the analysis showed the patterns for digitalizing the processes of rescue and valorization, and the existence of a network of players that can actively participate and influence the outcomes. Following these phases – drawing on the interviews carried out dur-

ing the third phase to the archaeologists involved in the excavation process and on the analysis of official documentation related to this process – the presence of some key figures (actors of the process) was extracted. Table 1 contains the list of these actors in order of appearance in the archaeological lifecycle and the description of their role.

According to the information received during the interviews, the archaeological excavation process described in the previous section consists of administrative and/or technical activities. Each activity produces some outputs that will be, consequently, administra-

tive (e.g. administrative documentation) or technical (e.g. technical documentation, findings identified, test samples, etc.). Starting from the information about the sharing of official documentation among actors during their activities, the two-mode matrix was created. This matrix represents links between archaeologists and shared resources (e.g. activity output like documentation or findings) and, using the sums of cross product method of the tool Ucinet, the one-mode (archaeologists-archaeologist) matrix was obtained. Using NodeXL<sup>3</sup>, an add-in to the Microsoft Excel 2007 spreadsheet software, the archaeologists network based on the one-mode matrix was obtained (figure 6).

<sup>3</sup> For more information, see <http://nodexl.codeplex.com>

Actors	Description
Superintendent	Representative of the Superintendence that assesses the project and archaeological documentation
Contracting authority	Generally government departments, research institutions or large groups (in the case of works promoted by multinationals)
General director	Role ratifying the declaration of cultural interest
Functionary archaeologist	Officer of Superintendence with jurisdiction in the working/research area
Scientific community	Research institutions or researchers interested in the investigation
Archaeologist coordinator/responsible	An archaeologist or groups of archaeologists with specialization and/or PhD. They can also be research organizations
Cartographer/aero topographer specialist	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in cartography/topography/aero topography
Archaeologist operator	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in manual excavation or archaeologist scout
Study findings specialist	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in materials analysis, for each class of material
Geophysics specialist	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in geophysics
Botany specialist	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in botany
Chemistry specialized	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in chemistry
Geology specialist	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in geology
Zoology specialist	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in zoology
Anthropology specialist	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in anthropology
Physics specialist	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist specialized in physics
Area or sector responsible	Archaeologist coordinator/responsible or archaeologist responsible of the area/sector
Chemistry laboratory	Specialized laboratories for chemical analysis
Physics laboratory	Specialized laboratories for physical analysis
Geology laboratory	Specialized laboratories for geological analysis
Museums	Institution that conserves artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific artefacts and other objects and makes them available for public viewing
Citizens	Individuals or communities, end users of archaeological results

TABLE 1.. EXCAVATION PROCESS ACTORS

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

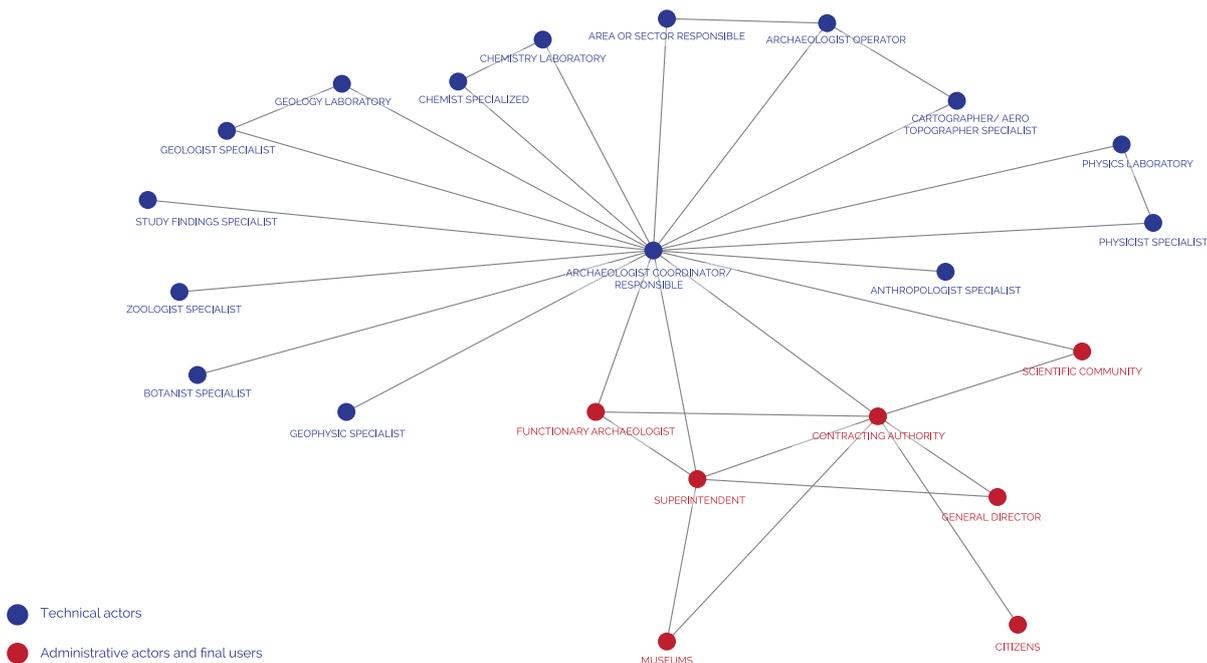


FIGURE 6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE NETWORK

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

The application of the Girvan-Newman (GN) method permits to identify clusters within the network structure. The algorithm identifies two clusters represented with two colors: blue and red. By analyzing actors belonging to clusters, it is easy to interpret the presence of these two groups. The blue spheres represent the technical actors involved in the excavation process, the archaeologists, while the red spheres represent the actors involved in the administrative activities of the process. More specifically, this last cluster also contains nodes (citizens, museums and scientific community) that are not properly administrative but identifiable as final users. It is proposed, nonetheless, to let them in the administrative network to distinguish them from the technical actors.

The low network density detected (0.13) demonstrates that the network contains a small number of highly connected nodes and a large number of nodes with few links. This sparse network does not permit rich information/resources flow.

The reason for this is explained by the betweenness centrality (BC) of the nodes. Actors with high BC are often found in the shortest paths that connect couples of other actors: they are gatekeepers. Identification of these people is very useful: these people should be contacted whenever it is required in order to facilitate internal communication, especially among people who have never done activities together. Notice that in this case the actor "archaeologist coordinator/responsible" is the one with the highest BC. All information, both technical and administrative, goes through him. The analysis of the *brokerage position* also shows that this actor is a *broker*. This strategic position of the actor archaeologist coordinator/responsible allows him to have an overview of the excavation process progress, both from the technical and the administrative point of view. In addition he is the one to which other archaeologists refer; there are few contacts among other technical nodes. His importance is remarkable, also he is the only one with a high value of brokerage. At the same time, his absence during the process may compromise the performance of the process as two clusters would be unconnected, interrupting the information flow. The final users of the archaeological results deserve a special mention – citizens, museums and scientific community. Beyond the only link between the scientific community and archaeologist coordinator/responsible, these final users are completely cut off from technical network. In our opinion, the presence of ties connecting end users with the technical cluster could give new life to the archaeological investigation, strengthening and im-

proving promotion activities. In this sense, this analysis identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the existing network in order to optimize processes and activities carried out in the archaeological domain, to support the improvement of the flow of information through the creation of a virtuous cycle of knowledge co-creation and sharing.

## Conclusions and future research

The main objective of the study was the identification of steps and methods to standardize and simplify the cultural heritage management lifecycle, optimizing the stakeholders' participation through the analysis of the relations existing in the ecological cultural network. With this aim, the analysis of flows of information, outputs, data, and relations among different

entities converging within the archaeological environment suggested that the single parts require significant improvements in order to optimize the global ecosystem. Indeed, the communication and the integrated valorization of the archaeological evidences have been underlined in order to create a virtuous circle of knowledge sharing and co-creation by involving not only technicians and experts in the field, but also citizens and general users as the main consumers of culture. Through the proposed integrated and networked approach, we are

able to analyze each single part and, at the same time, look at them jointly, with a more comprehensive view.

The attention to the methodological approach highlights the need to improve the upstream activities aimed to acquire and store data and information. This could help guarantee the correct archaeological heritage management, also supported by the information and communication technologies that can provide a number of advantages in terms of real time acquisition, storage, communication, publication and communication. In particular, the reconstruction of the archaeological heritage lifecycle allowed marking the standard logical pattern of operations (including methods, tools, and roles) to manage complexity during a multidisciplinary archaeological investigation. This standardization was reached thanks to the introduction of the process modelling approach through which we were able to define the current workflow and set the foundations for future improvements and processes reengineering. This leads to identify the set of methods and tools that can automatize a part

## "THE PRESENCE OF TIES CONNECTING END USERS WITH THE TECHNICAL CLUSTER COULD GIVE NEW LIFE TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION, STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING PROMOTION ACTIVITIES"

of the activities and digitize the documents generated on site. Having identified processes and people, we paid attention to the ways to increase and optimize the communication among the different actors. With this aim, the SNA made it possible to clearly identify different roles and the weight of each actor within the network. This provided insights and guidelines for creating the right correlation between roles and responsibilities and making suggestions on how the activities carried out during the process can benefit from the improvement of communication among the different actors. In detail, the analysis shows that the current role of citizens is one of a mere receiver of the whole process.

Future research will be dedicated to define the *to-be* (desired condition) of the whole process based on the archaeological lifecycle identified. The reengineered process will be based on the new methodological assets identified in the present work and will be characterized by the introduction of technological tools enabling the automation of some phases (e.g. data acquisition, data extraction, visualization, etc.). In addition, the network analysis carried out in this work will be used to complete the optimization showing the added value for all actors during the global lifecycle, underlying the importance of citizens' active participation and community engagement in each phase identified.

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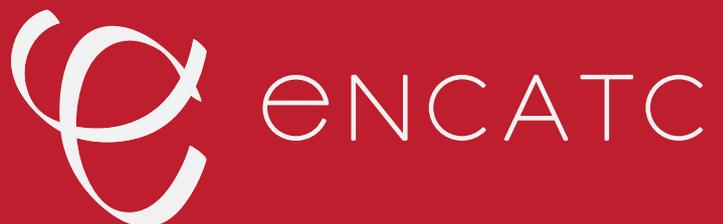
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