

Call for Papers



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Special Issue on: "Sustainable Entrepreneurship in the Cultural and Creative Sector: Contextualisation, Challenges and Prospects"

Guest Editors:

Prof. Christine Sinapi and Prof. Elena Borin, Burgundy School of Business, France

Arts, cultural, CCIs (cultural and creative industries), entrepreneurship, artist-entrepreneur, artpreneur... These terms have proved particularly prolific in recent years in academic and policy debates regarding the cultural and creative sector. Cultural entrepreneurship has become a rising topic within the cultural management literature. No less significantly, the topic is also emerging in traditional economic and management research, which had so far paid little interest in the sector of arts and culture: cultural entrepreneurship is emerging in generalist conference tracks, management journal special issues and research projects.

This suggests that cultural entrepreneurship may be a promising avenue for research, of interest both for the cultural sector and for the so-called "traditional" economy. In spite of having motivated a growing and significant number of academic contributions in the last decade (Bürger & Volkmann, 2016), cultural entrepreneurship remains an emerging, nascent research area. It fails, so far, to constitute a paradigmatic research field as more efforts are still to be made to structure it as a field of inquiry and practice (Beckman & Essig, 2012).

In academic literature, the topic is not new either. The term "cultural entrepreneurship" was first coined by DiMaggio (1982). Sociological, economical and managerial approaches of the topic have been developed.

Until recently, this research avenue mainly addressed the parallel between artists and entrepreneurs. On the one hand, research underlined that artists may be referred to as entrepreneurs since they present some inherent key entrepreneurial qualities (Blaug & Towse, 2011; Swedberg, 2006). On the other hand, academics suggest that artists are entrepreneurs with peculiar characteristics that have to do with the very peculiar sociologic, emotional and aesthetic dimensions of arts and culture (DiMaggio, 1982; Swedberg, 2006). The object of their innovation is sector-specific and value-driven: it is devoted to creating a "novel cultural activity" (Blaug & Towse, 2011); they pursue innovation to achieve cultural reputation ("something new and appreciated in the cultural sphere") (Swedberg, 2006). The economic profit is secondary and mainly interpreted as a means to achieve the artistic mission; they are "entrepreneurial in the realization of cultural values" (Klamer, 2011); they combine both the artistic freedom and the freedom of enterprise ("value oriented artistic freedom" and "material oriented entrepreneurial freedom", "supportive to the cultural value") (Hagoort, 2007). From this traditional "artist-entrepreneur"-focused trend of research, a series of managerial perspectives has emerged, which articulates artistic spheres and traditional management. Creativity-related research, entrepreneurial education and HR management are among the related areas.

More recently, the interest in cultural entrepreneurship has embraced a somewhat different perspective. In both academic and public policy debates, the renewed interest in the topic is primarily a reaction to a radically changing context. The economic crisis that hit Europe in the late 2000s was associated with budget cuts that were particularly severe for the cultural sector. Even if their amounts vary among countries, regions and sub-sectors, these budget cuts added to the inherent fragilities of cultural and creative organisations. Moreover, the crisis posed questions regarding the historical state-led cultural policy model, underlining not only how culture is struggling to keep its place in the welfare state (Bonet & Donato, 2011), but also that we need to identify new models of cooperation to ensure the sustainability of the cultural and creative sector (Bonet & Donato, 2011). The issue of sustainability, especially interpreted as economic sustainability, became progressively more relevant in cultural policies: policies have been increasingly interpreted as a means to promote sustainability through the connections between the public and private sectors and related fields, identifying in the implementation of ecosystem perspectives the key for more sustainable models for the cultural field (Holden, 2015). Cultural ecosystems, in which cultural institutions interact with cultural and creative industries, public authorities and local communities, have been indicated as a way to address challenges of sustainable local development (Borin & Donato, 2015; Mayangsari et al., 2015). Moreover, there has been a growing debate on how culture can interact with the other traditional dimensions of sustainability, thus contributing to more balanced models of development (Duxbury, Kangas & De Beukelaer, 2017). Although the discourse has sometimes been criticised (Isar, 2017), culture has been advocated as one of the four pillars of sustainable development (CHCfE, 2015), equal to social, economic and environmental priorities (Loach, Rowley and Griffiths, 2017). Cultural entrepreneurship and the promotion of entrepreneurial dynamics in cultural and creative organisations has been indicated as an important part of this shifting paradigm.

This changing scenario also implied the need to adjust the research approach to cultural entrepreneurship. Cultural entrepreneurship needs to be questioned as a process (i) through which organisational models can be forged, and (ii) which would enable the production and sustainability of artistic creation. What is required is to make cultural production possible and economically sustainable at the macro, societal and micro levels. This means that the leading research question should be restructured: rather than investigating (solely) the figure of the artist-entrepreneur, the research focus should address the entrepreneurial process, and notably the success factors and obstacles, the peculiarities of cultural business models and entrepreneurship education in culture and the arts (Beckman & Essig, 2012; Essig, 2014; Hearn & Saby, 2014; HKU, 2010; Scherdin & Zander, 2011; White, 2013). While cultural entrepreneurship research was dominantly questioning the cultural sector in search of possible lessons for the "traditional" economy, it is now questioning the topic per se: a better understanding of cultural entrepreneurship is crucial to the sector itself, its resilience and – hopefully – its sustainability. Moreover, though the crisis implied severe challenges for the cultural field, it also highlighted the potential of the cultural sector: actually, it gained recognition as an economic sector of primary importance. Indeed, in times of lasting "economic crisis" with low growth rates and high unemployment, not so many sectors offer non-tradable jobs, labour-intensive economic models and significant GDP and added value contributions (Itty et al., 2013, Ernst&Young, 2013, HKU, 2010).

This suggests that investigating cultural entrepreneurship in relation to the theme of sustainability is both of primary importance for the sector and promising in terms of theoretical contribution. This investigation should not only focus on economic and financial aspects, but should encompass other essential aspects of the question. Sustainability would gain from being understood as referring to economic, social, environmental and cultural sustainability aspects.

Bearing this in mind, we aim to stimulate a constructive reflection on the issue of sustainability in the cultural entrepreneurship field by inviting contributions that reflect on the different issues related to this topic.

Paper using qualitative as well as quantitative and mixed methodologies are welcome, as long as they are well grounded in the literature. Please refer to the articles by Dana and Dumez (2015) and Dana and Dana (2005).

Subject Coverage

Some examples of relevant themes and research questions that might be considered include, but are not limited to, the following:

- How is the topic of sustainability interpreted in the cultural entrepreneurship domain? What are the peculiarities of the cultural and creative enterprises in dealing with sustainability issues? How is the topic of sustainability analysed in the cultural entrepreneurship discourse?
- How does the development of cultural contents interact and influence the development of sustainability strategies? How does the cultural dimension of sustainability interact with the other dimensions of sustainability (environmental, economic and social sustainability)?
- How is sustainability in cultural and creative enterprises interpreted in an international perspective? What are the current and emerging models in the different countries around the world? What are the differences and similarities?
- Have the current demographic, in- and out- migration and more general international changes affected the implementation of sustainability perspectives in cultural and creative enterprises? How could we interpret these issues from a longitudinal perspective?
- How are cultural and creative entrepreneurs dealing with issues of financial sustainability? How are topics of resilience and financial sustainability addressed? Has the recent economic turmoil changed the attitude and discourse related to financial sustainability for the cultural and creative sector? What are the emerging models?
- Is there a link between cultural policies and sustainability issues? Are cultural policies both at the local and international levels including sustainability discourses? How do cultural policies intersect with sustainability policies?

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Notes for Prospective Authors

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. (N.B. Conference papers may only be submitted if the paper has been completely re-written and if appropriate written permissions have been obtained from any copyright holders of the original paper).

All papers are refereed through a peer review process.

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If you have any queries concerning this special issue, please email the Guest Editors at elena.borin@bsb-education.com and christine.sinapi@bsb-education.com.

Important Dates

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