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Cyrillic Heritage in the Shadows: Exploring the Diminishing Use of Serbian Cyrillic Online in the Age of AI

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the decreasing use of the Serbian Cyrillic script online and in the media, with a focus on preserving this important part of Serbian national identity. The hypothesis suggests that the dominance of English-speaking regions in the genesis of the internet, which primarily uses Latin characters, has contributed to this trend. The main objective is to explore ways to maintain the Cyrillic script within the context of the internet and global popular culture. The study employs various methodologies, including empirical observation, ontological analysis, and comparative methods.

Throughout the 20th century, there has been a shift towards the Latin alphabet, especially during the 21st century with the globalisation of the internet. While the Serbian Constitution designates Cyrillic as the official script, its usage in daily life, particularly on the internet and smartphones, is significantly low. This presents a challenge as the Serbian language cannot be accurately written in any other alphabet due to the lack of certain unique graphemes represented in the Cyrillic script.

Preserving Cyrillic heritage faces specific challenges from AI systems, which struggle with limited training data and biases. Collaboration between AI researchers, language experts, and cultural scholars is necessary to address these challenges. Integrating AI tools into education can help emphasise the importance of preserving Cyrillic heritage.

The cultural sector has a responsibility to educate the public about the impact of technological advancements on cultural heritage and promote AI awareness. By fulfilling these responsibilities, the sector can overcome AI-related challenges and contribute to preserving and promoting Cyrillic heritage in the digital age.

The paper's theoretical framework encompasses studies on new media, Serbian Orthographic Dictionaries, research on bilingual alphabets, and cultural heritage, among other relevant sources. Several of these initial literature references are included in the provided list.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Introduction

Since its creation, the internet has evolved from its initial purpose and social function, spanning from military, economic and cultural, playing a significant role in the formation and dissemination of various phenomena of popular culture. These phenomena, viewed through the lens of Western culture, influence global culture and the assimilation of various cultural specificities of smaller nations, including Serbs. In this paper, the term Western culture, in a broader sense, will refer to the spatial determinant mentioned in the book *Introduction to Western Culture*, encompassing cultures rooted in the legacy of Ancient Greece and Rome, cultures familiar with Christianity and developed according to such teachings. In addition to countries in Western Europe, the term Western culture also includes America, Canada, Australia, i.e., all states with common Greco-Roman cultural heritage, Roman Catholicism (and religions separated from it later), predominant common languages (French, English, German and Spanish), shared economic trends, and the like (Xu et al, 2018: 7, 165). It also encompasses various folklore categories such as material folklore, ideological folklore, and social folklore (Zhang Shiman et al, 2002: 5, cited in Xu et al, 2018: 165). In a narrower sense, in this paper, Western culture will be referred to as the meaning proposed by Merriam-Webster, which is limited to "non-communist countries of Europe and America" (Meriam-Webster n.d, "west" - noun), thus primarily excluding countries that currently use the Cyrillic script, which are the focus of this paper's analysis. In this sense, the paper will bring the two cultural heritages into a contrasting relationship

through comparative analysis, with an emphasis on illustrating the consequences of Western culture's influence on the Cyrillic script.

The paper needs to discern the functional difference between the influence of Internet globalisation in the narrower sense and the influence of the genesis of programming languages and AI tools, which indirectly affects the Cyrillic script, both on the Internet and offline. When speaking of Internet globalisation, a parallel can be drawn with the influence that popular culture directly exerts on the Serbian language, making many terms altered or misinterpreted. This sometimes happens unintentionally due to insufficient knowledge of spelling but also intentionally to achieve wordplay, as noted by John Fiske, stating that "popular culture is often attacked for its (mis)use of language," giving the examples of why popular language use (or "misuse") is sometimes offensive and worries many educated individuals (Fisk, 2001: 123-124). According to him, "the pleasure of wordplay does not rest on linguistic demonstrations of small social relations, but in the inversion of the power that usually shapes them" [...] but also abuses language, thereby "refusing to submit to linguistic discipline" as a tactic of using the linguistic system "without respect," while "literacy prefers serious, disciplined language use" (Fiske, 2001: 124-126).

The contemporary endangered status of the Cyrillic script in popular culture and in the context of new technologies is also evident in the *Dictionary of Technology*, created during the New Wave period, written in "calligraphic, i.e., apocryphal Cyrillic script" in the form of a gospel. This was in a way a "revelation of the Orthodox Christian model of values against the new values of the techno-world," emphasising that technology is defined as a "false world" (Đurić, 2018: 13-16). Through the action of Internet globalisation in the sphere of influencing elements of national cultural heritage and the Serbian Cyrillic script, which is the focus of this paper, the previously mentioned contrast of value models is more visible today than in the period of writing the *Dictionary of Technology*. Between 1950 and 2010, 230 languages became extinct, according to the *UNESCO Atlas of the world's languages in danger*, and every other week, another language becomes extinct with the last speaker (National Geographic, 2018). With the disappearance of languages and scripts, the identity of nations also disappears. According to official European Union data, the Cyrillic script is "used by more than 250 million people across over 50 languages" (European Commission, 2021). In Serbia, although it is the official script, its use is visibly decreasing, even though it represents an important element of the national cultural heritage of Serbs and a part of their identity.

As Smith notes in the context of national identity, it is a common view that "advanced capitalism has rendered nationalism obsolete and that, by overlapping national boundaries, it is creating a single, interdependent world" (Smith, 1991: 165). However, globalisation and the gradual assimilation of different segments of various national identities lead to the loss of cultural variety and cultural richness. According to Schwab, "the spindle (the hallmark of the first industrial revolution) took almost 120 years to spread outside of Europe, and by contrast the internet permeated across the globe in

less than a decade" (Schwab, 2006: 13). For this reason, it is essential to preserve the Cyrillic script, which is part of national identity and a segment of the diversity of the world's cultural heritage, but which is becoming rapidly more endangered under the influence of Internet globalisation.

Technological Globalization as a Trigger for the Expansion of Cultural Globalization

As early as 1960, the theorist McLuhan observed that the information sphere was becoming a "global village" (Bolter et al. 2000: 76). The hypothesis of this work is that the Internet, as part of globalised culture, influences the assimilation of cultural heritage from different national specificities into a common Western cultural sphere. This influence is visible through the decreasing use of Cyrillic script on the Internet and in the media in general. This phenomenon is fundamentally determined by the genesis of the Internet, primarily developed in the English-speaking world, using programming languages marked by the Latin script. In the discussion of various theoretical aspects presented below, the goal is to compare the views of different theorists to demonstrate the impact of globalisation on the reduced use of less prevalent scripts.

Contrary to the initial hypothesis of this work, Lynch, paraphrasing Castells, defends the view that "it would be inaccurate to suggest that the emergence of the internet in the late twentieth century caused economic and cultural globalization. Rather the popularity of the internet can be seen in the context of a much wider social and cultural trends towards the formation of transnational networks of administration, trade, and communication that remains dominated by a relatively small cultural elite" (Castells, 1996: 13, cited in Lynch 2005: 53). This position could be partially, but not completely, supported through Andrejevic's "exploitation of user labour," which emphasises the distinction between content created by users and user data generated as a product of user-created content within the framework of the private Internet sphere, structured under conditions of access to production resources that necessitate consent for detailed monitoring and data collection, thus relations of power structure "free choice" of access through the exploitation of "free" consumer labour characteristic of the interactive economy (Andrejevic, 2009: 418). However, Lynch's and Castells' position cannot be fully supported by Andrejevic's thesis and is further questioned by Barker's definition of globalization, which "is not just an economic matter but is also concerned with issues of cultural meaning" (Barker, 2004: 76). In the context of remediating identity, Bolter and Grusin highlight the formation of collective identities within "virtual communities", which individuals create to achieve belonging to the same (Bolter et al, 2000: 232). Therefore, Lynch's and Castells' position can be just one of the possible aspects that need to be contextualized, as further insight can be gained through Barker's addition about the acceleration of electronic communication globalization, which has enabled

increased cultural resistance, meeting, and blending, making "all locales are now subject to the influences of distant places" (Barker, 2004: 76-77). In arguing from the perspective of Internet globalisation as a cause of cultural globalisation, Barker's, Bolter's, and Grusin's views can be joined by Tomlinson's aspect in which the effects of globalisation weaken the cultural coherence of all individual nations, including economically powerful ones, and that the "The idea of 'globalisation' suggests interconnection and interdependence of all global areas which happens in a far less purposeful way. It happens as the result of economic and cultural practices which do not, of themselves, aim at global integration, but which nonetheless produce it" (Tomlinson, 2001: 175).

Globalisation and Unromanized Scripts

Considering that the USA dominates within the framework of where the Internet globalisation has started, and that it is an ethnically heterogeneous country, Tomlinson's previously mentioned concept cannot be fully applied in terms of scripts. To be more precise, the influence of ethnically homogeneous countries scripts can exist on the population in Western culture countries, but it does not have the same consequences as the dominance of the Latin script, which can potentially affect smaller ethnic groups that do not have the Latin script as an original part of their cultural heritage, but they primarily or exclusively use notation in the specific script of their language (for example Serbian, Japanese, Arabic, Hebrew, Greek). Globalisation of brands present on the streets in all mentioned countries inevitably leads to the use of the Latin script in certain percentages in Internet communication in these territories. However, Serbia has a complete Latin script devised as a possible substitution for the original written cultural heritage. For example, Japanese could be written using different Latin letters, but it only would be transcribed into Japanese Katakana or Hiragana; Greek uses only its alphabet to write its language; Georgian, Bulgarian, Arabic and Hebrew also use only their script. In this way, the national cultural heritage of Cyrillic becomes only a collateral element of globalisation and cultural assimilation, which must be recognized primarily by individuals for any regulation to have an effect. This happens without the existence of a globalisation strategy to assimilate or eliminate minority cultural elements but as a byproduct of the lack of a clear cultural strategy to preserve the awareness of the importance of script for a nation's culture.

In the Japanese language, it is possible to transliterate the script using the *rōmaji system*, which is named as an abbreviation for *Romanized Japanese* and is marked with Latin letters (Verdonschot 2011: 106). The problem arises with various transliterations during which errors can occur due to the inability to adequately transcribe sounds (Marković, 2018: 193-194). Similar situations occur in other systems of transliteration of the Japanese language, such as the Hepburn or Kunrei system (Prošina,.

2007: 100–101, cited in Marković, 2018: 193). Such transliterations into a "Romanized Latin" form occur in examples of other languages and scripts: in Mongolian and Japanese, texts written using Chinese characters can be found (Maezono, 2018: 57, 62); in Cyrillic Mongolian script, among other things, the direction of writing is different during transliteration into Latin script, horizontal instead of the original vertical direction (Wu, 2018: 137); in Turkish, transliteration is applied based on the similarity of characters (Danka, 2018: 31). This practice of transliteration for deciphering languages that are no longer in use is common and justified, but it is unjustified and is damaging in the long run when used for transliteration from one language to another. Some of the most significant examples of deciphering are examples of Egyptian and Mayan hieroglyphs, inscriptions from the Minoan labyrinth, Etruscan script, and other ancient scripts from a similar period, which are no longer in use (Robinson, 2002).

Although transliteration into Latin script is most visible for scripts that do not use an alphabet, it is not exclusively applied to these scripts. The substitution of traditional graphemes also happens in developed Western cultures, under the influence of Internet globalisation, but to a lesser extent. As previously mentioned, according to Tomlinson, all cultures and nations, even developed ones, are subject to these influences (Tomlinson, 2001: 175). One such example is the German letter "ß" (*sharp s*), which is increasingly replaced in Internet communication by "ss" (*double s*). As a potential reason for this practice of gradual extinction of letters specific to individual cultures, it can be the influence of Internet globalisation, which strives for simpler writing using a basic universal alphabet, more readable for a wider target group, and adaptable to a larger number of algorithms for better optimization and ranking of content, as explained by Fiske in the context of the language of popular culture - oral language focuses on functions, not rules (Fisk 2001: 131). Although the spelling of the German language has not significantly changed in this segment during the 21st century (Deutsche Rechtschreibung 2006: 29; Deutsche Rechtschreibung 2018: 29), the expansion of the Internet and artificial intelligence tools in recent years, which have become inseparable elements of popular culture, clearly shows that even Western cultures are not spared the consequences of Internet globalisation and gradual assimilation of scripts or substitution of specific graphemes that represent one sound with digraphs.

The transliteration of Cyrillic script

The need to adapt various languages and scripts to the romanized form of Latin script has intensified in recent decades. Alongside many other scripts, the Serbian Cyrillic script is also placed in an unfavourable position in which it is not possible to adequately transliterate it into the Latin script and represent all words with corresponding letter symbols. Giving preference to the Cyrillic script, Šipka nonetheless points out that the Latin script is a shared script for Serbs and Croats because it was "ultimately shaped with the involvement of the Serb Đuro Daničić, and also because Serbs have been

using that script alongside Cyrillic since the early 20th century" (Šipka, 2010: 1328). He also highlights that at the beginning of the 20th century, Cyrillic was the only Serbian script, but Jovan Skerlić proposed its elimination from usage to achieve complete unity with Croats, who in turn, were supposed to compromise by fully accepting the *ekavian* pronunciation (Šipka, 2010: 1326).

Language represents a system of arbitrary symbol conventions, and writing rules are necessary for the functioning of a literary idiom to be comprehensible to those who know and adhere to the written convention, with the shared use of the script within that community (Subotić et al. 2012: 8, 116). As a standardised and normatively defined script and pronunciation convention, language and script are the subject of various strategies and regulations. Although two scripts, Cyrillic and Latin, are prevalent in unofficial use in Serbia, certain letters (and words) of the Serbian language still cannot be correctly written or pronounced in the Latin script. According to the described transliteration systems, for example, in other languages and scripts adapted to the romanized Latin form of writing, it is possible to create a parallel Latin script of the Serbian language that would be a transliteration of the Cyrillic script. However, this leads to various errors in writing.

According to the publication of *Matica srpska* on phonetics and phonology, "today's Serbian language orthography [...] relies on its previous version, the Serbo-Croatian Orthography of 1960, [...] not revoking it but updating the norm, refining it, and adjusting and correcting it as necessary" (Subotić et al, 2012: 123). This represents an important premise when familiarising oneself with the content of the aforementioned orthography from 1960. Jonke and Stevanović state that in the then Serbo-Croatian language, two scripts were in use - Cyrillic and Latin, with both scripts having 30 letters each. However, they add a significant fact that in Cyrillic, each sound is written with a single character, whereas in Latin, this is the case for 27 letters, while the remaining letters љ *(lj), њ (nj), џ (dž)* are written with two characters (Jonke et al, 1960: 7-8). Šipka refers to these letters as digraphs because they are marked simultaneously with two signs, although Đuro Daničić had previously proposed unique Latin characters for certain letters - the letter ђ *(Đ)* being the only one accepted. However, the previously mentioned letters љ *(Ļ), њ (Ń), џ (Ǵ)* still lack consistent usage, even though Jonke and Stevanović provide a clear explanation. These letters still do not have a single, unequivocal use, by which the Latin alphabet would have unique letters for each sound, so the use of 27 letters remains with the combination of signs in the remaining three. Vuk Stefanović Karadžić edited the Cyrillic alphabet according to the phonological composition of the Serbian language, "according to the principle: one voice (phoneme) - one unique sign (letter, grapheme)", which means that "the Serbian Cyrillic alphabet is a script without digraphs, and each letter can be read only one manner as one voice" (Šipka, 2010: 1325).

Respecting this rule, it is not possible to record the Serbian language in the Latin alphabet, which does not have the unity of all signs (letters, graphemes). From the above, the only conclusion is to

exclude the Latin script as a correct form of recording the Serbian language, with the possible acceptance of the Latin script of the Serbian language only as an adapted transliteration of the correct Serbian script, which is the Cyrillic script. This is also defined in official use in our country, by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, which states in Article 10 that "in official use are the Serbian language and Cyrillic script," mentioning other scripts in an undefined form whose use would be regulated by law, based on the Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of Serbia 2006/2021: Article 10).

In the preface to his "Dictionary of the Serbian language" ("Писменица сербскога језика"), Vuk Stefanović Karadžić points out the postulate for which he is known: "write as you speak; and read as it is written" (Stefanović Karadžić, 1814: X). This would not be possible in the following examples, which are in support of the previous conclusion, which shows the clear and noticeable impossibility of correct use of the Serbian language through the Latin alphabet, within the framework of different words in the Serbian language in which voices are heard in combination as neighbouring phonemes "дж" ("dž") and "нј" ("nj"). Several of these examples are cited by Jonke and Stevanović, emphasising that cases should be distinguished where in the Latin notation, the letters "љ" ("lj"), "њ" ("nj"), "џ" ("dž") denote sets of two voices each, giving examples in the multiple words - *nadživeo, podžeo, injekcija, konjugacija* (Људевит и сар. 1960: 7-8).

For example, the word *na**dž**iveo*[1], when it is written in Latin script could be pronounced in two different ways [nʌd͡ʒɪʋɛɔ / nʌdʒɪʋɛɔ], but in Cyrillic, this would lead to two separate ways of writing (*наджи*в*ео / нац́ивео*), of which the second way is wrong (doesn't mean anything). Giving the example, we can conclude that if we transliterate some Cyrillic word into Latin, it can produce double ways of pronunciations, creating some non-existing words in Serbian Orthography. The similar applies to the following examples. Although in Latin it is written the same, it could be pronounced differently, as it would be read from the Cyrillic examples or in the phonological pronunciation in the square bracket:

- *по**дж**ео* (*po**dž**eo*) [poɖ͡ʐɛɔ], not *поц́ео* [podʒɛɔ] (*po**dž**eo*)[2];
- *и**нј**екција* (*i**nj**ekcija*) [ɪnˈjɛktsɪjʌ], not *ињекција* (*i**nj**ekcija* [ɪɲɛktsɪjʌ])[3];
- *ко**нј**угација* (*ko**nj**ugacija*) [kɔnˈjʊgʌtsɪjʌ], not *коњугација* (*ko**nj**ugacija* [kɔɲʊgʌtsɪjʌ])[4].

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[1] Means to outlive.

[2] Means to harvest.

[3] Means injection.

[4] Means conjugation.

There are many additional examples that can be added to the list, which would not be clearly written according to the Latin system of writing digraphic characters "џ" ("dž") [d̥ʒ̊], and which recorded in the Latin script would be incorrectly read as a phoneme "ʮ" (in Latin it is written the same as the Cyrillic counterpart, "dž", but it is pronounced differently [dʒ]). Considering that although it is irregular, you can often see the letter "ђ" ("đ") [dʑ] recorded in Latin as a digraph "дj" (dj) [dj], to these examples, words can also be added which, in the combination of these two, would also be incorrectly produced as a voice if they were recorded in the Latin alphabet "ђ" ("đ") [dʑ], for example *одјек* (*odjek*, which is pronounced [ɔdjɛk], not [ɔdʑɛk])[5].

The dominance of Western cultural policy and the impact of artificial intelligence on the preservation of the Cyrillic script

According to Manovich, "information communications is contributing, perhaps more than any other technology, to the globalisation of economies and cultures" (Manovich 2001: X), and in the context of language and writing, it is noticeable that Internet globalisation has contributed to gradual cultural assimilation in the Internet space, i.e. in a broader sense, and on devices from which the Internet and artificial intelligence tools are accessed. In the initial hypothesis of the work, it was pointed out that the Cyrillic script is used less and less since the genesis of the Internet in the English-speaking area, programming language databases that are written in Latin, but also artificial intelligence tools in which the corpus of data in the Latin script is dominant. As stated in the introduction, the beginnings of the Internet are recorded in the English-speaking area, i.e. the area of the so-called Western culture, which in many ways led to the inevitability of its dominant cultural influence on cultures that are less widespread and less represented in terms of the number of users. The lack of a developed Serbian language in many computer softwares is not only a problem that existed during the first years of computer use in the region, but is still present today.

Castells states that the constitution of a new culture based on multimodal communication and digital information processing creates a generational divide between those born before the Internet age (1969) and those who grew up digital (Castells, 2010: XVIII). There is also a noticeable generational gap, within which the younger population who, according to the school program, studied English as their first foreign language, are better at using computers, thus accepting foreign terms (anglicisms) as part of the corpus of everyday language.

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[5] Means echo.

The influence of the genesis of programming languages in the Cyrillic script is reflected in the fact that programming languages were written and adapted primarily to Western culture or individuals from those nations who are educated to know the system of using these languages. By the fact that these languages are adapted to Western culture, it is understood that they are written in the Latin script, with commands and abbreviations in English, which determines the algorithms to more easily read the later user content that was created and placed in this way. "By reading a 'machine' PHP document, and replicating it in a visual CSS designed form, in a way, we can interpret the websites as duplicates of themselves, i.e., replicas of their machine language that is manifested through user interfaces, adapted to the interactive use of content by the end user" (Tvrdišić, 2022: 91). Most of the content that is created on the Internet is created with a commercial purpose, so their position represents a traded value, similar to the position of brands on the shelves in supermarkets. "Site architecture is a fable of programming languages (e.g., Php, MySQL, JavaScript...) that make up the structure of the site, while its summary is unique and inherent in the purpose for which the site was created" (Tvrdišić, 2022: 91-92). Various indexing and optimization of uploaded content on different sites, portals and also on the Internet in general, is only the first reason for the Internet globalisation of languages and scripts, because the system better (faster and easier) loads the original content written in the Latin script, which is more widespread on the global market. Artificial intelligence learns from users, and users, by insufficiently using the Cyrilic script, lead to insufficient education of artificial intelligence, which ultimately remains unable to properly load and index the Cyrillic script. In the following stages, an even more complete cultural assimilation of the script can be seen, so it is possible to expect that programming languages will be perceived as a new modernised form of Esperanto for programmers and more Computer literate users around the world. Another reason is the setting of the device itself, which users often do not know how to adjust using the Cyrillic keyboard, but also how to perform a general replacement of the system language within them, so a paradoxical situation occurs, that users adapt to technology, instead of technologies adapting to them, which in this way also leads to the dominance of the Latin script, with the gradual neglect, but also the forgetting of the Serbian Cyrillic script.

On the other hand, when analysing the impact of artificial intelligence in this sphere, a slightly different conclusion can be drawn, but the result is still insufficiently favourable for the preservation of cultural diversity. The above implies the fact that artificial intelligence "learns" from the user, but the quality of what is learned in this way can be questioned. due to the very environment in which such a tool collects data and linguistic diversity. This brings us back to the previously stated premise that users adapt to technology, due to greater availability of information when searching in the Latin script or languages of Western culture. This fact puts artificial intelligence in a disadvantageous position in terms of the amount of processed data and for subsequent users, so it enters a vicious circle, where cultural policy must be involved with adequate actions to promote the use of letters as objects of

cultural heritage, and with increased involvement in the issue of creating adequate software, tools and corpus of data available in the Serbian Cyrillic script.

The preservation of the Cyrillic cultural heritage faces specific challenges due to the emergence of various artificial intelligence systems, the disadvantage of which is the handling of limited data, which are stored only with the data on which they were previously trained, which results in various prejudices and biases in attitudes that such systems marketed to the user (which is directly dependent on the material used for the training of the particular software). Collaboration between artificial intelligence developers, linguists, and cultural scientists is necessary to address these challenges and allow preservation of vulnerable scripts, in accordance with greater data storage in software, so users can find the advantage of searching for answers precisely using those scripts. In the current hierarchy, in the deficit of an adequate quantity of literature in the Serbian Cyrillic script within various artificial intelligence tools, users will rather decide to search using the Serbian Latin script or even some other language, in which it is more likely that they will get a more complete answer. which ultimately contributes to the realisation of two scenarios. The first is that this representation of data encourages the user to reduce the use of an already endangered letter more and more often, which makes it even more endangered. The second is that due to the insufficient use of the Cyrillic script on the Internet, even artificial intelligence tools will not acquire new data, with the help of which they will be developed to the next version.

Conclusion

According to the initial hypothesis of this work, the Cyrillic script is increasingly threatened due to the genesis of the Internet and the base of programming languages written in Latin, which spontaneously popularises and extends the Latin alphabet, to the detriment of less widespread languages and scripts used to write them (Serbian Cyrillic script, Greek alphabet, Japanese hiragana and the like). The most noticeable impact is reflected in the accelerated transition to the Latin script, which leads to the gradual neglect and extinction of an important segment of the national cultural heritage of the Serbs - the Cyrillic script. In this paper, a multi-perspective analysis was used to show how the negative impact of Internet globalisation on the endangerment of the Cyrillic script occurs. Some of the main reasons are that the Latin text is easier to index on the Internet, it is easier to market certain commercial content, and consequently - the rest of the Latin notation of content is more prevalent, which leads to a decrease in the degree of representation of the Cyrillic script, as well as reduced use and less development of various software and artificial intelligence tools on the Cyrillic script, which causally reduces the possibility of development and further use of this script, making it increasingly endangered.

This paper presented various problems when transliterating specific language records into romanized (Latin form), with a special focus on the example of the Serbian language and the Cyrillic script, which cannot be properly transcribed in Latin, given the lack of the same number of graphemes, and thus no consistency in respecting the spelling rule in the Serbian language: one phoneme - one grapheme. This fact is proven through examples of different words from the Serbian language, which are impossible to write correctly and/or unambiguously in the Latin alphabet.

Given that the use of computers and smartphones is highly correlated with the conditionality for performing daily activities, it is necessary to develop a cultural strategy for the introduction of official departments for the translation of most popular software into the Serbian language, as well as many professional terms from the field of informatics, in order to enable the use the Serbian language, and thus the Cyrillic script in everyday private and business IT use.

In order to regulate the current problems due to the expansion in the sphere of integration of artificial intelligence and Internet/media communication, it is necessary to develop a cultural policy of training and retraining, which promotes interdisciplinary cooperation between artificial intelligence researchers, language experts, cultural scientists and educational workers. The culture sector has the responsibility to educate the public about the negative impact of technological acceleration on the preservation of cultural heritage and to promote awareness of the tools of artificial intelligence, and through the opportunities it provides to develop sectors that would deal with the additional enrichment of options and content on the Cyrillic script in various software, on the Internet and as part of artificial intelligence tools, with the active preservation and promotion of the Cyrillic heritage through digital archives, cultural projects and educational initiatives. In this sense, teachers of the mother tongue could deal with the protection of the cultural heritage of the language, emphasising the importance of preserving the linguistic heritage of the Cyrillic script in the context of Serbian language studies, and in keeping with modern technological trends, incorporate the tools of artificial intelligence and language processing technology into their teaching methods, gaining expertise in language technology and fields related to artificial intelligence and encouraging its students to contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage in the digital sphere through their actions and use of the Cyrillic script.

The Serbian language is only one example of the assimilation of cultural diversity into global cultural flows due to technological globalisation, and the policy of protecting the world's cultural heritage should, through various support programs, strengthen the activities of minority languages and cultures, in order to preserve cultural and linguistic diversity at the world level.

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The New Generation of Contemporary Digital Artists in China: AI and Digital Art *Work*

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the paradigm shift in work in the creative industries due to digital transition and the introduction of AI in artistic practices. This includes investigation into the often-overlooked aspects of artists' work, particularly their everyday artistic practices that increasingly include digital software and AI. This research conceptualizes this as 'digital art work', whereby new ways of working with machines and digital software are embedded and normalized in everyday artistic practices. This work includes new forms of creativity and work efficiency, yet, simultaneously includes new types of digital labour. This study includes 50 semi-structured interviews with contemporary visual artists and contemporary art gallery owners, museum project directors, curators, and culture policymakers in China during 2023. It investigates questions of: what is the role and position of the artist in an environment where AI is becoming more powerful and central in art creation, how do artists creatively (mis)use AI, and how do they see their relationship with AI? What does this change in work practices mean for the future of the artist's role? This can help with future policymaking and the management of AI globally and of ensuring sustainable and effective culture sector development by showing how these artists are harnessing AI for creativity – showing the opportunities and concerns of AI from artists' perspectives and showing the impacts of AI on the future of work in this sector.

Keywords:

Visual Artists, AI, Digital Work, Culture Sector Development, AI Policymaking, Creative Digital Labour, China

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now a common tool for the new generation of contemporary digital artists in China. AI for the creation of painting and text, including Stable Diffusion, DALL-E, MidJourney, and ChatGPT, has spread rapidly in the contemporary art sector in China during 2023 due to the mature, advanced digital environment and a general appetite amongst artists for convenience and accuracy in their work. Artists can provide new perspectives on understanding AI, by showing how AI can be a positive for artists' work, enhancing their productivity and ability to be innovative and creative. While there will not be discussion on ethics, IP and ownership with AI in the China context, the opportunities for creatives should be highlighted alongside the concerns.

This paper will shed light on how AI is empowering artists in their work and highlight artists' fears of loosing their jobs, feelings that these digital technologies are taking control, the decreasing physical creation in favour of digital convenience and efficiency, and considerations on morality, humanity, ownership, and ethics. This paper investigates questions of: what is the role and position of the artist in an environment where AI is becoming more powerful and central in art creation, how do artists creatively (mis)use AI, and how do they see their relationship with AI? What does this change in work practices mean for the future of the artist's role? What is needed in terms of cultural management and policymaking for sustainable and effective culture sector development through this historical period of digital transformation?

China is pushing ahead in this digital adoption of AI as part of a national directive for a "New Generation Artificial Intelligence", which has been aided by the recent generative AI regulation (effective from 15 August 2023) to promote the use of AI for national economic development, ease of use, and to promote business and individuals' innovation. China has recently published new rules for generative artificial intelligence (AI), becoming one of the first countries in the world to regulate the technology to *promote* its use. However, China's national strategy on AI development has been in place since 2017. These AI strategies are highly advanced while other parts of the world, such as the European Union and the USA, are discussing ethics and morals surrounding AI, copyright, ownership, and the artist's role. Subsequently, regulations in the EU are outlined to prevent the risks of using AI, while the regulations in the USA are for ensuring more accountability and responsible use of AI. As the World Economic Forum (2022) states, "the need to resolve issues around the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become increasingly important for countries, citizens, and businesses over the last eight years, with approximately 60 countries now having National AI Strategies and many have, or are creating, policies which allow for responsible use of this technology."

In a relatively short period of time, China has become one of the world's most technologically advanced nations. Due to a streamlined and mature digital infrastructure in China, AI has spread rapidly and is now being used in many sectors. This is funded through large-scale collaborations with big brands and tech companies, whereby AI art intersects with fashion, music, and cosmetics sectors. It has also developed rapidly due to government backing and the increasing value the government places in culture. China's investment in the creative industries and cultural economy is reflective of the government's long-term strategy for economic and national development (Keane, 2004). This is now evident in several official government Plans, including the 14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development, which states that "to implement the new development concept, build a new development pattern, and promote high-quality development, culture is an important fulcrum, and it is necessary to further develop and expand the cultural industry, and give full play to the role of culture in activating development momentum, and promoting the optimization and upgrading of economic structure" and "we must accelerate the deep integration of culture and science and technology" (The General Office of the CPC Central Committee, 14th Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development, 2022). In addition, the Chinese government is now developing digital creative industries for economic growth and national development goals (Zhang Jie, China Daily.com, 8th September 2022). This comes at a time of a national digitization strategy outlined in 2023 towards 2025, which is promoting the integration of new technologies into various industries, including the art industry with "the integration of art and technology" (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 14th five-year plan for Artistic Creation).

This paper explores the shift in work in the creative industries due to digital transition and the introduction of AI in artistic practices. This includes investigation into the visible and often overlooked parts of artists' work by focusing on their everyday artistic practices that increasingly include digital software and AI – i.e the work surrounding the final artworks. 'Digital art *work'* is conceptualized here in this paper as a way to understand artists' digital work. It is a play on words, meaning both artists' artworks as well as their artistic practices that belie a particular politics of everyday work and digital labour in the creative industries as an artist. This term allows for a broader discussion and definition of artists' work, beyond only seeing it as 'freelance', 'precarious', and 'passion but precarious' working conditions (Serafini & Banks, 2020; Sigler, 2017). Instead, this paper explores the nature of artists' work behind and before the final artworks. This paper uncovers how artists use AI, machine learning (ML), in combination with other digital software to create ideas, models, exhibition proposals, as part of their digital art work practices. This focus comes in response to the current literature on 'digital art' that discusses digital techniques or digital aesthetics (Astle & Muir, 2002; Yilmaz & Celic, 2011; Kucuk & Soydal, 2003) and digital techniques and digital aesthetics of AI art (Manovich, 2018; Liang, 2022; Contreras-Koterbay, 2019; Paul, 2023; Zeilinger, 2018). However, this paper argues that there is not enough discussion on the human, social issues of sustainability of artists' role or considerations of how artists creatively (mis)use and view AI, and new (creative) digital labour demands on artists.

This research provides a novel angle amidst existing discourse that takes a predominantly critical standpoint towards AI in terms of its impacts on the creative industries, concerning copyright, morality, and ethics (Tajalli, 2021; Appel, Neelbauer, & Schweidel, 2023) or AI jeopardizing creativity (Bisoyi, 2022; Nolan, 2022). Currently, AI is being spoken about a lot in isolation and about 'what it can(not) do' but it also needs to be seen in terms of how people are using it in creative combination with other digital software or used in the incorrect way for creativity and innovation. This allows a presentation of the human account in this very much technological determinist global discourse, in terms of how *we* can create creativity and innovation and growth in the sector through these kinds of uses of AI. In this respect, this paper considers how artists use AI, how they feel with using AI, and their thoughts about its use going forward for culture sector development, policymaking, and management. This new knowledge can help with future policymaking and the management of AI globally and of ensuring sustainable and effective culture sector development by showing how these artists are harnessing AI for creativity – showing opportunities and concerns of AI from artists' perspectives and showing the impacts of AI on the future of work in this sector. Hence, this research provides a neutral position – providing discussion on both the opportunities and concerns of AI. As a result, this research expands the small set of literature that sees the positives of AI for artists' work (Edmonds et al., 2005; Mitchell & Inouye, 2003) and fills a gap in the literature about this in relation to China.

The lack of attention on artists and the cultural sector through digital transition in this burgeoning literature is surprising given that artists have historically deployed new technologies in unexpected and often prescient ways (Shanken, 2002; Rieland, 2014) and have been interpreted as vanguards of new ideas, techniques, and cultural practices (Francastel, 2000). It is important to hear from artists working with AI and other digital software as they can share their opinions on the ethical importance, impact, and implications of (the current and future of) their digital work, without being beholden to particular companies or platforms, plus showing nascent bottom-up forms of creativity in using AI. This research makes artists a significant and valuable voice - able to speak directly to the changing and nuanced ethical questions and policy debates currently taking place globally – through candid discussions by those who use data, machine learning (ML), and AI everyday in their work. It is important to share the perspectives of contemporary visual artists - particularly in China – as they are working with these latest digital technologies first-hand; hence, their accounts can act as a blueprint for global cultural management and policymaking on AI and culture sector development and sharing the unique situation in China that shows both the opportunities and concerns of rapid technical transformation and rapid take-up of and now advanced use of AI in the contemporary art sector.

This study includes 50 interviews with contemporary visual artists and arts professionals from across China, including curators, museum professionals, gallery directors, art space project managers, and cultural policymakers from government, independent, and private organizations. The interviews were

carried out during 2023, either in person or online. They are of different ages ranging from 24 to 50 years old. This age range was chosen to gain a broader perspective on use of digital technologies, and use of AI in particular, and to allow a sense of how the contemporary art scene has changed due to digital transition over recent history, highlight what is distinct about today and this new generation of artists, and provide different perspectives on using digital technology in art. The participants are all trained arts professionals or artists, having graduated from art school, academy, or university. They include different types of artists like commercial and academic, some who create solely digital artworks, video art, mixed-media installations, and artists who create artworks using 'analogue' technologies like printmaking or painting. The sample includes a wide range of cultural professionals to understand the broader context of the current contemporary art scene, within which to situate the current trends in artistic practices.

Impacts of AI on Art, the Art Industry, and Work

This research connects literature on digital transformation in the art sector and trailing new technologies like AI in art. As Miller (2012) argues, "recent advancements in deep learning have reinvigorated interest at the intersection of art, creativity and machine learning" and, as Lopez (2023) argues, "AI has emerged as a desirable collaborator in artistic creation. Artists use AI as a creative tool and work with algorithms to set up specific rules through which machines analyze thousands of images to understand a particular creation process, a specific style, or aesthetic[…]It is the artist who will train the AI and determine its environment and learning rules, which makes the AI dependent on the artist" (Lopez, 2023).

Many claims have been made by scholars concerning the new way digital image-making technologies are fundamentally changing understandings of art (Lopez, 2023; Kittler, 1999; Kholief, 2018). These claims suggest that the "digital condition" induces a loss of trust in the image and a blurring of boundaries between artist and audience (Kittler, 1999). There is also a set of literature that discusses the changes in artworks (Handke & Towse, 2013; Goodman, 1976; Kittler, 1999; Douglas, 2015). This includes how art is changing due to digital technologies, the nature of post-internet art, and how the fundamental meaning of and way of seeing art is changing due to new digital technologies such as AI. For example, Kholief (2018) explores how the viewer now sees artworks differently through digital technologies, in what he calls "the post-digital condition", whereby a new cultural and artistic landscape has taken shape since 2000, since when there is a new language for seeing, feeling, and experiencing art. Also, Bridle (cited in Kholief, 2014) argues "the new aesthetic refers to the increasing appearance of the visual language of digital technology and the internet in the physical world, and the blending of the virtual and physical." However, while there is a lot of focus in the literature on

digital techniques and digital aesthetics (Astle & Muir, 2002; Yilmaz & Celic, 2011; Kucuk & Soydal, 2003), and on digital techniques and digital aesthetics of AI art (Manovich, 2018; Liang, 2022; Contreras-Koterbay, 2019), there is not enough discussion on work of artists. Yet, the focus on artists is important as it raises many new and novel questions about work in the creative industries to do with - moral and social issues of sustainability of the artist's role, considerations of how artists creatively (mis)use and view AI, and new creative digital labour demands on artists.

This relates to literature on digital creative industries and the nature of creative artistic labour that discusses how digital technologies have changed existing job skills, business models, the copyright system, and have made the audience more involved (Handke & Towse, 2013; Sigler, 2017; Douglas, 2015). This paper updates literature on the nature of work on creative industries, which focuses on flexible, freelance, and 'passion but precarious' working conditions (Serafini & Banks, 2020) and the totalizing nature of their work that leads to a blurring between work and life (Sigler, 2017), by exposing the current nature of their digital labour. This updates current discussion on artists' digital work that includes the changing relationship between artist and viewer, always being 'on', social media promotion, and managing online presence. For example, Douglas (2015) argues "technology and the internet inherently permeate the work of contemporary artists", McHugh (Cited in Kholief, 2014) argues "you're always on, always having to manage your online presence", and Troemel (cited in Kholief, 2014) argues "in the wake of social media, the majority of views an artist's work gets online is often not through their own website, but through the accumulated network of reblogs, links, and digital reproductions that follow it through social media." Kholief (2018) mentions how today "artists are working in diverse contexts, from eBay auctions to augmented reality". Troemel (cited in Kholief, 2014) also argues "the divide between artist and viewer becomes negligible when users of social media are able to more powerfully define the context (and thus the meaning) of an artwork" and, plus, "artists on the internet need an audience to create for".

Furthermore, there is only a small amount of discussion on the empowering aspects of new digital technologies for artists. For example, Edmonds et al. (2005) who argue "the arrival of digital media and computational tools has opened up new possibilities for creative practice" and Mitchell & Inouye (2003) who argue that "the connection between tech and creative practice has yielded many economic benefits and cultural value", arguing that tech can increase creatives' productivity levels. Additionally, while there is an emerging set of literature about artists' uses of AI (Miller, 2012; Lopez, 2023), there is a gap in this literature about how artists feel about working with AI, how they view their working relationship with AI, and how they mix AI with other digital software in creative collabs/combinations/mixtures/(mis)uses.

Results

Artists' Uses of AI

All 30 artists in the sample use AI, regardless of age or medium. The most popular AI software is MidJourney, DALL-E, Stable Diffusion, and ChatGPT. They use AI either for testing ideas, research, idea creation, image creation, a research tool, for text writing for the final piece, or for the final visual piece. There are a few older artists who are testing AI or testing it for the use of 'creative materials'. Some use DALL·E due to it being easy to use but they say it is not as powerful as MidJourney. Some use these AI generated images for inspiration while others use them for their art creation process and others use them for the final artwork. Some use ChatGPT to create poems or scripts for final artworks, either by inputting their own question or an existing text into ChatGPT and waiting for it to generate AI text.

However, most artists discuss AI in a positive light and talk about how they creatively (mis)use AI. These artists show how they now have mastered and control AI systems, and hence can be creative with it. These artists are not just testing AI. They are also using AI and other digital software in novel ways and not in the ways the technology was intended to be used.

A New Digital Work Process

AI has a clear purpose in their work process from idea creation the physical object in the exhibition. Hence, these artists' work increasingly revolves around using a combination of AI, machine learning, and other digital software. AI is used as part of the process and in combination with other software. AI has been seamlessly integrated into this process because there was already an established digital process.

These artists apply this digital work process, whereby they apply AI data into rendering and modelling software to create 3D models or game engines to create videos or immersive installations and send digital 3D to factories to be created physically, because they see it as efficient, cost-effective, and practical. They can finish tasks in a few seconds, but that used to take up to one week to complete. This makes them feel they can achieve more and move forward (quicker and more) with ideas, making them feel more productive, innovative, and creative. This means that their art is digital-born, as it starts with producing a digital image via AI and is meshed together, turned into video or a digital 3D model using digital software. This is perhaps more so the case in China due to such advanced, mature technology infrastructure, high internet speeds, full internet coverage, and efficient manufacturing.

Hence, this is increasing the digitization of their labour. Many tools have now been turned into digital ones. Everyone has had to transition to this new digital environment. This means the some people have no question about using an entirely digital method for art creation.

How Artists Feel using AI

Some artists express how they are empowered by using AI. Some feel AI gives them power, stimulation, creativity, innovative ideas, and ideas more quickly, enhancing their mental and imaginative abilities, and improving their accuracy and time. They feel they literally and physically have more power, speed, time. Things or ideas that used to be impossible in history are now possible with new technology. Hence, artists say that they can think of doing whole new things and it expands their imagination.

Creativity comes from the mixing of software, artistic mediums, and industries. This helps create entirely new types of artworks. With this, it is possible to create potential growth and innovation in the culture sector with new types of creativity, mixing of mediums and genres, and crossovers between industries. This is also bringing job satisfaction for some young generation digital artists. Some artists are mixing AI and digital software to produce something creative, while some are using the software in novel ways to get creative outcomes. Many are purposefully not using the software in the correct way. Instead, they want to 'mess' and 'play' around and do something new. With this, they feel more freedom and creativity because they can add more elements to the artwork and can change the artwork a lot, with the ability to be able to combine image, video, and music. Others say they really enjoy it because they are transported into a surreal world, which is good for out-of-this-world ideas and performances, and good for inspiring their imagination. Other artists also say they feel empowered when using AI because it is so conducive for crossing borders in terms of industries, being able to easily work with brands, cosmetics, and apparel sectors.

However, others feel concerned about being controlled by AI, fearful of the power of AI and how much it has changed their work and thinking, and are worried about how learning and mastering this technology can in fact take more time with the need for constant learning. They say how these technologies are difficult to learn and even more difficult to master. A few share about how this in fact takes more time and work. This is frustrating and tiring for some. Some question whether these new technologies are just tools or competitors. A few mention how they are worried about losing their jobs to AI. Some show their feelings of worry that AI is taking over control and, hence, taking over their role; they show this in confusion about not knowing who is in charge or who is the boss in their relationship.

Artificial Intelligence Embraced: the future of the cultural and creative sector.

Discussion

The increasingly close collaboration with AI is changing the artists' role in the creation process. There is less physical labour involved in terms of playing with and creating physical materials. Subsequently, these artists have become a director or manager, using a suite of digital software as their team. It is evident that there are both opportunities and drawbacks in this digital art practice. For instance, in addition to creating efficiency and convenience as the participants say, this research has highlighted how the increasing presence and reliance on new digital technologies places new labour demands on these artists.

New digital skills are needed today to be able to use AI and digital software, which means artists spend a lot of time behind their computer to learn and use AI and digital software. This is especially the case if the artist wants to master and 'influence' the software to produce novel and innovative outcomes. Some feel 'tired' and 'frustrated' with having to keep learning; however, some say they 'have the ability to constantly change'. They believe that they should have the ability to learn this new technology and feel that those who can do this will have an advantage today. This learning of new technologies and accruing new digital skills has been felt acutely in China due to recent rapid and radical adaptions to new technologies.

Only two artists were worried about losing their jobs to AI, while the majority see AI and digital software as 'tools', 'thinking systems', 'stimulants', 'another pair of hands' to enhance their performance. The young digital artists in the sample (24-28 years old) are comfortable using AI for creating their ideas, images, and producing their artwork and are not openly worried about copyright, losing creativity, or jeopardizing their position as an artist.

However, some older generation artists (45-50 years old) as well as young curators (25-30 years old) express their concerns. They mention that once artists can become trapped once they get locked into the technologies, aft which they must continuously learn to keep up, at which point they then realise it takes more time and then feel pressure. Some are worried that they can be controlled or trapped by these digital technologies. There are also some who are worried about the new generation of young artists who are focused too much on the techniques and aesthetics of AI and digital art and become a 'manufacturer rather than artist'.

Young digital artists are used to using AI and digital software, so much so that they have now begun to break, train, and influence the software. Furthermore, some are creating and coding their own AI so that they can create their own images and copyright. Some are creatively mixing different AI and software and other artists are breaking the new technologies to try to do something new with them.

They believe this mixing is creative and innovative. This is distinct to artists and art sector work in other countries that are still using AI as an extra, with questions, or as an experiment. In China, AI is now used beyond purely experiment. Creativity comes from their decisions on how to combine/mix/misuse the software. Artists can make it their own by creative mixing, overcoming issues/concerns of ownership and control of tech. This is perhaps the next stage in development of use of AI in art, whereby AI is no longer used in isolation and is harnessed by artists as a tool to be used for their creative purposes. Hence, they see a sustainable future of using technology and overcoming issues of ownership and keeping their job as through the creative mixture of the technologies – i.e their creativity can now be in the way they mix the technologies and misuse the technologies in original ways.

These findings provide new ways to illuminate and better understand the platform-mixing and creative (mis)uses of digital technologies, including AI, in artists' creative process. It has illuminated bottom-up initiatives and ways of using AI. This is a very different reality to the narrative in Europe and the USA about top-down big tech companies creating AI and about how AI gets things wrong. Hence, these findings provide an alternative perspective to concerns that tech companies are not just developing the tech but are moral arbiters of how you can use the digital technologies (Ganesh & Moss, 2022; Ross et al, 2022) and concerns around the underlying digital systems used by artists that dictate how they create, store, and present work, and how these digital systems operate on filters, algorithms, and biased databases (Bridle, cited in Kholeif, 2014) as, in fact, these Chinese artists are breaking the ways the software was designed.

Conclusion

Digital technologies, particularly AI, have transformed the way many creative artworks are generated, disseminated and used. The nature of creativity and authorship in their practice is now distributed among the platforms, technologies, and software. With AI, art becomes about using and sharing of common information or data. This is perhaps a paradigm shift in the art ecosystem and the nature of work for creatives like artists and curators. Moreover, artistic practices and ways of working have also changed in today's digital environment. This paper demonstrates how 'digital art *work'* is much broader than previously conceived in the literature (Manovich, 2018; Liang, 2022; Contreras-Koterbay, 2019; Astle & Muir, 2002; Yilmaz & Celic, 2011; Kucuk & Soydal, 2003) by showing digitality in artists' practices. This shift to more digital work practices, and especially with AI, has created new roles for artists – as artist-programmers, artist-director, or artist-manufacturer.

More broadly, this has shed light on the nature of digital transition in the creative industries in China. There has been rapid digital transition in China, resulting in a mature and integrated digital ecosystem today, bringing opportunities for cultural development and digital access to culture. However, artists have to keep up with this trend. Other countries can learn from the nature of what is happening in an environment of very mature digital platforms, advanced web 4.0, and new uses of AI.

This paper has helped update literature on the nature of work on the creative industries which has a lot to do with creative labour as 'freelance', 'precarious', or 'passion but precarious' working conditions (Serafini & Banks, 2020) and the totalizing nature of their work that leads to a blurring between work and life (Sigler, 2017) – and update by showing the nature of digital work and how they produce digital artworks as well as how they feel about this process as well as providing new perspective from China today rather than existing literature that is more commonly about the west and Global North. A different set of considerations have emerged through speaking with contemporary artists, (compared with that from the IT sector, academic sector, business sector) because artists are working from the bottom-up - at the intersection of their relationships with machines/software and the new politics in the everyday use of data tools in their work. We have heard the human side in this mainly technological global discussion. Hence, this paper has updated and expanded literature on digital techniques and aesthetics and possibilities by talking about what work is like for artists.

With this new knowledge, considerations can be made for the future of artists' jobs, roles, and skillsets amidst digital transition. This has shed light on contemporary art practices, successful ways of working in today's digital environment, and set standards for best practices in using AI that can be applied in the future to ensure sustainability of artists' practices, creativity, and jobs and to maintain value in the art sector going forward. development of the art sector overall. Digital technologies can be used for development; however, there is a need to know the reality of creatives' work and their first-hand, in the moment, perspectives on these digital technologies, to be able to understand how the art sector can sustainably go forward in the future. These findings can help to show how to develop sector by further connecting art and tech in sustain ways. It will show how Important for sustainable sector development will be further connection between Art sector and tech sector. As well as between artists and musicians singers graphic design and cosmetics sectors. These collabs can help promote creativity and innovation at the intersection of art and tech, particularly with the use of ai.

These discussions that are happening now will have an impact on how digital technologies are used in the future. It is also important to have discourse and thinking around times of societal change, rather than just to go full steam ahead with digital developments to find out the purpose and role of these new technologies in society. This is being done in Europe and USA through discussion - they are buying time for regulations to be put in place by discussing and questioning whether the technologies are thwarting artistic creation and discussing ethics and moral concerns. However, even though many artists and many people/companies are using AI in China, there is not a lot of

understanding about it or discussion around it in China. Technology has advanced so rapidly and dramatically but without question or philosophical discussion on morality, ethics, and humanity.

If we want to respect and value this new medium long-term and for sustainable longevity, then cultural managers need to ensure the value of this new medium and recognize this medium as a carrier of culture in itself. Therefore, we should see it as a standalone carrier of digital culture. It should be valued in its own right and not necessarily compared to painting or sculpture. It should be respected as the medium of this era. It may replace some aspects of the previous generation of paintings but will add to the cultural landscape, as this is the reality of what artists 'do' in their work today.

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The platformization of cultural industries

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to address a research gap about the role of crowdfunding campaigns in the cultural heritage sector. The interest of my research stems from Digital Transformation, Museum Institutions, and Galleries and what has changed their dominance and created a paradigm shift in research, in the crowdfunding area. It is interesting as digital platforms and museums are connected. The museum displacement is interesting as a digital platform, for cultural tourism (Zulkifli, et al. 2020). This is a framework through three aspects of the digital platform: museum institutions, sustainability, and crowdfunding area. A museum is a public entity of a permanent non-profit organization for long-term sustainability for a community and a country (Birtley, 2002). Museums can be a role model for the educational system. Digital transformation has introduced new practices, spaces, and types of heritage, as well as ways to conceive the museum itself. More than thirty years have passed since Eilean Hooper-Greenhill wrote in The Space of the Museum (1990) and the theory of internal and external museum spaces frames the way in which collections are exhibited, thereby defining how learning takes place. During the last two decades, the socio-economic scenario has questioned traditional public allocations (Bonet & Donato 2011; Kuhlke et al, 2015; Magliacani 2015).

Keywords:

digital transformation, digital platforms, museum.

Introduction

This work aims to analyze the numerous aspects and the economic and organizational implications of "product platform", one of the most used typologies of "multi-project strategy" in many artistic sectors. Digital platforms have the ability to connect people, organizations, and resources with the aim of facilitating the interactions between businesses and consumers for business management. New business concepts are created based on innovation and relationships and are to deeply understand the evolution of business models through online platforms.

The research project consists of three parts. The first is a deepening of the wide literature of international scope, above all "made in the USA" regarding the market orientation - Industry 4.0 - platform: the origin, the internal organization, the management, and the communication strategies.

The second part focuses instead on the network, to reconstruct the main social and economic projects while assessing the internal platform and external platform as coherence, and value, and deducing the most significant operational indications about connections.

On the other hand, it explores corporate social responsibility and sustainability as a lever in fundraising. Through small and medium-sized enterprises with market orientation, a socially responsible approach guided by management, strategic orientation of enterprises, and business management, resulting from different synergistic combinations.

Data collection is a process related to the design and compilation of data related to certain issues(Awang, 2001). This paper conducts a mixed analysis, to rely both on qualitative and quantitative data. The methodological structure is designed to collect and analyze data concerning the interviews and reviews of the literature.

In the current compress-references characterized by strong globalization, a growing diffusion of information technologies, and increasingly sophisticated needs of artistic experiences. In so doing, the paper traces a variety of perspectives beyond the mainstream political economy-oriented focus of platform studies, suggesting emerging paths for future research on these rapidly shifting and increasingly debated issues.

The museum has defined a new identity and has also experienced a change through The Fourth Industrial Revolution involving the Internet of Things (IoT). The growing role of the internet in our lives together with donation practices, creates through new technologies different forms of fundraising making it conventional (Hoefer, 2012). Crowdfunding (as a form of micro-financing) has emerged as an online philanthropy innovation. Online donation crowdfunding has gained noticeable popularity recently due to reaching a broader range of potential donors (Massolution, 2015). Increasingly,

projects based on donations can be found on crowdfunding websites, facilitating social development, especially in developed countries (Lee and Park, 2020).

Reviews of Literature and Conceptual Framework

The museum was also considered non-functional if not experienced by visitors (Yusof, 2013). The lack of interest in visiting the museum was also influenced by the lack of use of digital media in museum programs (Yatim, 2005). Klaus Schwab, the founder of the World Economic Forum, said: "The Fourthè Industrial Revolution is characterized by the entry of the supercomputers of intelligent robots, driverless vehicles, gene editing, and the development of neurotechnologies that allow humans to further improve brain functioning" (Universiti Malaysia Pahang, 2020). The scenario is slowly beginning to develop as a common norm through platform and digital transformation.

The Cleveland Museum of Art, USA, uses the ArtLens Studio Play, an Interactive Platform for the Community; while introduced in 2017 at the Detroit Institute of Art, Michigan, United States an example of Digital technology that has enabled the Development of a Virtual Tour example of using digital technologies for viewing materials known as the 'Lumin AR Tour' which was introduced in 2017.

The Museum moves on two levels:

- Real

- Digital.

The Museum can be experienced with an interactive approach without any kind of boundary of time and space (Hillier, 2018). A museum moves in the network in a more holistic way bringing an experience to its stakeholders (Kelly, 2007). To be relevant the museum needs a number of participants. Covid has helped us a lot in the use of technologies and digital platforms to be able to follow real-time events and exhibitions made on the other side of the world, 70% of museums depend on the number of participants to remain relevant in the future.

Currently, the emergence of new platform models and their implications on the evolution of the museum of the future analyzes the new theoretical concept of the Platform-Museum: a metaphor, an organization structure, and a business model as a platform for culture.

The prospects for this type of study are many. The paradigm shift in the cultural museum scenario exists and above all evident. In a platform world, the consequences of this revolution are in the description of the interaction with the culture and the ways to consume the culture: *post-museum*

(Hooper Greenhill, 2000), *participatory museum* (Simon, 2010), and *post-digital museum* (Parry, 2013: 24–39).

'Digital thinking' has become part of how the museum conceives its role, mission, and future development. The post-digital approach (Parry, 2013) was a time when digital technology entered all levels of organizational structure, strategies, and workflows. The post-digital approach, 'platform' emerges as the main model around which the Web is organized organizations are developed, and social functions.

The Platform is the center, and is recognized as a "transformative concept that is radically changing business, economy, and society at large" (Parker et al, 2016: 3).

Digital platforms (Asadullah, 2018) have become powerful tools for product innovation and development and technology services. Digital platforms can be classified according to different sizes. Some studies classify them according to the governance dimension (open vs. closed), while others according to the size of the proprietary structure (open source vs. proprietary). Boudreau and Hagiu have classified digital platforms into three types according to their business models: integrator platform, product platform, and multisided platform. Platforms have patronized new roles for the 'consumer' as a distributor, creator, co-developer, curator, and author of content. The democratization of practices has developed new approaches.

The works of Van Dijck, Poell, and de Waal (2018) have combined the perspectives of the political economy of communication with an approach based on Science and Technology (STS), outlining the mechanisms of an emerging platform society. This society, defined as "a context in which the increasingly intensified flow of social and economic activities, filtered through a predominantly corporate global ecosystem, is driven by algorithms and fed by data" stresses the combination of political and economic strategies of platforms and their technological components, including hardware and software infrastructures.

Cultural production has also led to the democratization of practices and the emergence of co-production and Collaborative approaches (Tamma and Arctico, 2015). The platform here is both the techno-cultural construct that mediates the relationship between the museum, users, and content, and the socioeconomic structure that conveys new business models.

A 'Platform Museum' is a way of being, creating value with people, producing new heritage with communities, and participating in the development of society. This is the main contribution the platform model can make to museums. Not simply in a technical sense, as a new set of tools that the museum can adopt, but as a metaphor, an organizational structure, and a business model. The platform model contains the ontological and methodological principles

THE MUSEUM PLATFORM MODEL

PLATFORM AS A METAPHOR: it is a metaphor for the museum conceptualization, the museum changed its shape. With the entrance into the Information Age and the dematerialization of many of our tangible possessions (Belk, 2013: 478–479),

PLATFORM AS A TOOL: the platform here is a tool used by museums for different purposes. The museums collaborate with other digital platforms, reconfiguring spaces, cultural practices, and products; assign new roles and actions to the public; and adopt new value-creation processes. (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Spotify)

MUSEUM AS PLATFOR: the platform here is both the techno-cultural construct that mediates the relationship between the museum, users, and content, and the socioeconomic structure that conveys new business models. It uses existing platforms and the creation of new 'museum platforms'.

FIGURE 1. THE MUSEUM PLATFORM MODEL (Source: ZARDINI LACERDELLI, 2018)

In the eighteenth century museum was a physical institution devoted to the collection and display of material objects, In the 21st century museum was a dynamic platform for the access, sharing, and co-production of heritage in a growing range of ways – often digital-based.
The platform is the latest stage of an evolution that transformed museums from physical institutions devoted to the acquisition, collection, and display of tangible objects, to intangible entities with multiple access points.

The platform metaphor influences the perception of the museum boundaries, i.e. the relationship between the interior and the exterior. The museum conceived itself as an isolated entity, a centralized institution that attracts visitors thanks to its top-down linear model of cultural production –from the 'head' of the organization to an indistinctive public. In the interconnected ecosystem of platforms, 'no

longer can museums operate as they exist in isolation', and they 'need to invest in relationships' (Falk and Sheppard, 2006: 14).

The museum can be conceived as a microsystem of relationships that interact with other microsystems at both the local – the territorial network of stakeholders – and global level – the online ecosystem.

The concept of sustainability is combined with the new vision of the museum.

It is no coincidence that the recent redefinition of the Museum, approved by the Extraordinary General Assembly of ICOM (International Council of Museums) in August 2022, is much broader than the previous one, recognizing the aforementioned changes and placing emphasis on inclusion, on openness to the community and on sustainability: "A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets, and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible, and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally, and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection, and knowledge sharing" (ICOM, 2022).

Before inserting the theme of sustainability as a lever introduce the theme of CSR.

In this view, combining the pillars of CSR Corporate Social Responsibility (Carrol, 1979, Schwartz, 2011) and the perspectives of creating shared value, a model of sustainable strategic innovation emerges, which is founded on a collaborative approach necessary to consolidate sustainable relationships (Freeman, Harrison & Wicks, 2007; Lippolis, Ruggieri, & Leopizzi, 2023). Making sustainable innovation through the creation of shared value in a multi-stakeholder perspective is, in fact, an openness-oriented strategic approach that aims to involve different actors in the creation and implementation of solutions that address social and environmental challenges (Kimpimäki, Malacina & Lähdeaho, 2022).

The creation of value (CSV), the opening towards the various stakeholders, according to the respective perspectives happens through the sharing of knowledge, competencies, and experiences that generate an approach to the topic of sustainability. Engaging stakeholders towards sustainability purposes also entails significant challenges, such as aligning different interests and expectations, managing conflicts and trade-offs, and ensuring mutual learning and trust (Nonet, Gössling, Van Tulder & Bryson, 2022).

Better working conditions for collaborators, a pillar of the concept of sustainability, ensure an organizational environment based on the protection and enhancement of people and their skills.

Adequate remuneration	Satisfying economic return for all stakeholders is associated with governance models able to combine efficiency with transparency, plurality, and inclusion
People development	Better working conditions for collaborators, which ensure an organizational environment based on the protection and enhancement of people and their skills and integrity
Innovativeness	Innovative products and services capable of fully satisfying the explicit or unexpressed needs of customers, conveying the message of sustainability
Openness	Knowledge sharing and long-term collaboration with stakeholders to ensure transparent relationships based not on a logic of competition, but on co-evolution.
Civic engagement	Responsible relationship and collaboration with government bodies about the governance dynamics of growth processes at the local and national levels.
Community Involvement	The proactive role of companies, inside and with local communities, as a real engine of development and place of innovation.
Sustainable practices	Care for the environment and for the rights of future generations, by preserving natural resources and minimizing all production and consumption cycle impacts.

TABLE 1. – CSV Factors Source: Perrini (2016) Management. Economia e Gestione delle imprese. Milano: Egea.

To this end, it is necessary to specify that CSV is not a one-size-fits-all approach, but rather a framework that can be adapted to different contexts and sectors (for example, Rialti, Marrucci, Zollo, & Ciappei, 2021; Bigliardi &Filippelli, 2022). It should be pointed out that creating shared value is a concept that goes into corporate social responsibility (CSR) and aims to generate both economic and social value for businesses and society (Ruggieri &Lippolis, 2023)

The research has aimed to explore the many facets of crowdfunding as a tool for advocacy in engaging users, non-users, and generic stakeholders, both for the legitimacy of the museum and for enabling a co-creation project.

By creating shared value, companies and organizations can promote a culture of innovation by addressing the environmental and social challenges of our time (Camilleri et al., 2023). In particular, museums, as no-profit and permanent institutions, are called to acquire, preserve, research, communicate, and exhibit the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment. Recent studies have explored whether and how crowdfunding could help museum managers face the discussed challenges (Mozzoni et al., 2018; Howe, 2006).

Museum managers are called to satisfy their visitors and to involve as many interested parties as possible (Kotler and Kotler, 2000), crowdfunding is a means of communication, it becomes a way to increase the number of people interacting with the museum. The use of the platform is fundamental for fostering public engagement and for facilitating the exchange and integration of resources (Colurcio et al., 2016).

The way crowdfunding platforms contribute to the co-creation of value is critical. Crowdfunding has become a popular channel for individuals and ventures to raise money from public online platforms via the Internet. Given the popularity of crowdfunding platforms among small entrepreneurs it is essential to comprehensively understand the determinants of crowdfunding success to promote capital resource allocation efficiency. Following the guidelines for literature search processes and review approaches proposed by Vom J.Brocke et al. (2009), Qazi et al. (2017), Leidner (2018), and Farias et al. (2019) conduct the web search for relevant papers on web search, such as Google Scholar, ScienceDirect, Web of Science (SCI and SSCI databases), EBSCOhost, for journals, conference proceedings, working papers, theses, reports, and books.

Crowdfunding is defined as acquiring financial support from the crowd for various special tasks through the Internet and providing a product, equity, reward, or interest for the funders after the project's success (Belleflamme et al. 2014).

Crowdfunding has become a method that helps companies in their svoid resorting to bank financing sources (Martinez–Climent et al., 2018; Madsen & McMullin, 2018; Yang et al., 2020), achieving great popularity among the business community. The adoption of new technology and the emergence of new businesses allow the way of financing new innovative projects to evolve the system (Jiang et al., 2020; Fu et al. 2021).

The term crowdfunding was coined in 2008, and it has expanded on a large scale, providing the infrastructure to attract investors and entrepreneurs (Moysidou & Hausberg, 2020). Crowdfunding is a term used to describe different types of fundraising where entrepreneurs campaign for individuals to support the idea of Web 2.0 (De Crescenzo et al., 2020). Crowdfunding platforms are intermediaries for innovation and sustainability methods to attract and grow new business (Chan et al., 2020).

Crowdfunding models

Despite the lack of a consistent taxonomy, from responses and sources compared crowdfunding models can be classified under crowdfunding models can be categorized under:

- *Donation-based*: donating small amounts to meet the larger funding aim of a specific project while receiving no financial or material return in exchange

- *Reward-based*: donating small amounts to meet the larger funding aim of a specific project with the expectation of receiving a tangible (but non-financial) reward or product in return

- *Peer-to-peer lending* (subdivided into consumer and business lending): borrowing from a number of lenders via an online platform, each lender lending a (small) amount in return for financial compensation

- *Equity-based*: Invest in a business via an online crowdfunding platform in return for a share in the business

Some platforms focus only on one model (e.g. donations), while others offer mixed options (e.g. rewards, equity).

DONATION	REWARD	EQUITY	PEER TO PEER LENDING
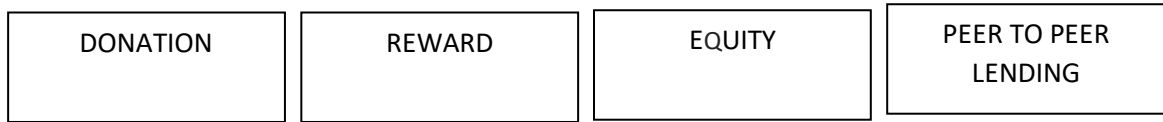
FIGURE 2. CROWDFOUNDING MODELS. Source: own elaboration.

The use of platforms reduces the costs of access to information (Meoli & Vismara, 2021).

Platform hosting fee: Some platforms, although not all, charge an initial cost just for hosting the crowdfunding campaign. This cost varies between €0-300 and will be charged to all projects, be they successfully fundraised or not.

Success fee: If a project is successfully funded, platforms will take a percentage of the total amount raised. The percentage varies from platform to platform and ranges between 3% and 12% of the total raised. The success fee will also vary depending on the fundraising model chosen. For instance, a higher fee is usually charged on the "Take it all" model. There are also platforms that charge no success fee, however, these are rarer;

Payment processing fees: Crowdfunding platforms work closely with payment providers in order to facilitate money transfer from the backers to the crowdfunding campaign. However, the payment providers apply their own service fee for every transaction made.

Delivering rewards: Once a campaign is successful in reaching its goal, it is time for the campaigner to produce and deliver the promised rewards to backers (at least in a reward-based campaign). Apart from time and resources, this requires specific costs, i.e. postal fees, production and packaging costs, etc.

The matched crowdfunding for the arts and heritage sector project provides grants to 'top up' finance generated by projects through crowdfunding.

The primary role of the aggregator platform could be to set up information on the platforms (models, costs, etc.), market developments, useful tools, etc. Other interviewees see the role of a possible European platform focused on information sharing, harmonizing data between platforms when possible, but also communicating on regulatory issues, practices, etc.

The importance of the platform is the construction:

- matchmaking of investors from all local platforms;

- Encouraging investment and activities

- broaden their reach and high level;

- to encourage cooperation between platforms and help them raise awareness and foster growth

of potential demand

This has allowed

- The creation of a crowdfunding platform at the European level that brings together all campaigns from all over Europe;

- a platform aggregating all equity and lending crowdfunding campaigns from all over Europe to become a single point of entry for investors;

- an information website where investors could identify more projects from crowdfunding platforms across Europe;

- a website where crowdfunding experts and investors can be matched with crowdfunding project holders.

NEMO is a network of European Museum Organizations. In October 2019, NEMO published an analysis of museum participation in several EU funding programs from 2014-2018. This document shows that only some of the museums in Europe make use of EU funding opportunities. Moreover, not many new organizations find their way to these funding opportunities because of the complexity of the application process. The heart of this initiative is the promotion and encouragement of museums.NEMO has developed a Toolkit to help museums and museum associations across Europe

improve access to EU funding and increase their international activities, as a support tool (NEMO,2023).

The research covers the following centralized funding programs:

Creative Europe: Culture

Creative Europe: Media

Erasmus Plus

Europe for Citizens

Horizon 2020 (strands social sciences and humanities)

It shows that only 6% of the Creative Europe budget is used by participating museums in projects, a percentage that falls to less than 1% if you consider the Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, and Europe for Citizens.

The same organizations that use for the benefit of EU funding confirm that for many museums, in particular small ones, being active in the European scene is too demanding in terms of the administrative and operational effort

NETWORK

Having a network of contacts is essential and often a prerequisite for working internationally. Cooperation projects work best when they build on pre-existing contacts and relationships, based on mutual knowledge and respect, shared values, and the commitment to common aims.

Being part of a museum association or a network specialized in a certain discipline (e.g. some International Council of Museums (ICOM) International Committees, or thematic networks like ECSITE for science centers, Hands On! International for Children museums, etc.) provides a range of like-minded institutions, with which it is usually easier to a cooperation project.

From June 1, 2023, onwards, IDEA Consult and 16 partners will start building a new "European Cultural and Creative Industries Innovation Policy Platform". Within the Horizon program, the European Commission has granted our partnership – led by Lund University - 6 million euros to develop an innovation policy for the cultural and creative industries. IDEA Consult is involved in all phases of the project and will play an active role in three cycles of Policy Formulation Labs.(IDEA;2023)

To this end, the partners in the consortium work intensively with a network of more than 40 European networks and organizations so that proposals are well aligned with the wishes of the sector. With the

policy recommendations the project will contribute to a greener, more inclusive, and digital Europe where innovation is driven by culture and creativity.

Among the projects financed through the European crowdfunding:

CTM - CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION MOVEMENT (ASSOCIAZIONE CULTURALE ZO ɪᴛ Italy - CARITAS DER ERZDIOZESE WIEN - HILFE IN NOT ᴀᴛ Austria - INTERNATIONAL CHARITABLE FOUNDATION IZOLYATSIA. PLATFORM FOR CULTURAL INITIATIVES ᴜᴀ Ukraine-KUNSTENCENTRUM VIERNULVIER ʙᴇ Belgium) is a four-year context-based-process to diversify artistic production and its destination– starting from within the organization itself– through generation and implementation of strategies and methodologies of cultural management and creation processes that are developed with the full engagement of under-represented communities (URCs) by an alliance of five partners who are four multidisciplinary art centers and production houses from Ukraine, Italy, Belgium and Austria, and One pan-European cultural network represents 40 European countries. (Creative Europe,2023). The final data have not yet been processed since the project is not finished.

KIDBEATS (MUSEO DEI BAMBINI - SOC COOP SOCIAL ITALY and HOGESCHOOL WEST VLAANDEREN HOWEST BE BELGIUM) The methodology of the KidBeats project targets musicians working with children's music and focuses on three pillars: research, testing, and production of a mobile tool that enables sound-based media play for children using environmentally conscious materials and 21st-century technology solutions. To reach the project objectives the KidBeats project convenes an international partnership from the following fields: music production, education, children-centered design, open design, and production with 21st-century digital solutions(Creative Europe Culture,2023). The final data have not yet been processed since the project is not finished.

MOI! MUSEUM OF IMPACT – (DEUTSCHER MUSEUMSBUND EV ᴅᴇ Germany - EESTI RAHVA MUUSEUM ᴇᴇ Estonia - HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS ɢʀ Greece - IDRYMA NIKOLAOU AND DOLLIS GOULANDRI - MOUSEIO KYKLADIKIS TECHNIS ɢʀ Greece - MENNTA-OG BARNAMALARADUNEYTID ɪs Iceland) was prepared for Creative Europe. The general project idea was already conceived a year before the real application phase started. The whole application preparatory phase lasted approximately eight months, from June to January, and included two physical meetings with prospective partners, coinciding with conferences or similar events where organizations from our networks regularly meet. (Creative Europe, 2023) The project will impact the increased capacities and skills of museums and museum professionals to focus on the various dimensions of museum's impact, the increased capacity of museum organizations to work in a strategic, efficient, scalable, and streamlined manner, and on a strengthened network of museum development professionals, institutions and networks in Europe. The final data have not yet been processed since the project is not finished.

METHODOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The interviews were carried out in two stages: at the launch of the crowdfunding campaign, to investigate the professional contribution of the project team to the project of co-creation of value, as well as at the end of this, to understand further stages of its development.

ATTRIBUTE	CATEGORY	NUMBER	%
Gender	Male	35	53.9%
	Female	42	46.1%
Education Level	Senior High School	7	10%
	Graduate	45	65%
	Post Graduate and above	25	25%
Donation Experience	No Exp.	2	2%
	1, 2 Y	45	45%
	3,5 Y	19	19%
	More than 5 Y	10	10%

TABLE 2. INTERVIEW SAMPLE. Source: own elaboration.

The selection of participants in the first place belonged to an age range from 30 to 60; some have considerable experience in crowdfunding. The participants' identifying information was removed before analyzing the experiment data to maintain participant anonymity. The experimental data were collected in the second and third week of March 2022. They were asked to complete an online questionnaire

The distribution of participants across scenarios was considered well-balanced (Seltman 2012).

A framework of shared meanings and principles inspires the trusting relationship between the donors and fundraisers of crowdfunding projects. Website features, systems, and the service design of crowdfunding sites play a critical role in establishing such frameworks (Zheng et al 2014).

The cluster of this project included specialists in museums and museum studies (which we call the 'museum study experts'). The museums found were present in the database created by the winning European projects and we identified URLs of websites and social media through a manual web search.

This initial sample was later used to (i) gain an understanding of the format of museum URLs of official sites to enable their automatic discovery and (ii) identify key language phrases used by museums to refer to the effects of digitalization.

We repeated this effort to identify museums on Facebook and Instagram accounts, using a combination of direct web page scraping and predictive modeling. After identifying target websites and museums' social media accounts, our next step was to periodically extract data from this corpus and to apply natural language processing and ML techniques to detect the presence of activity indicators within the data, for fundraising.

These posts are categorized by Facebook and Instagram as photographs (70%), links (14%), Facebook videos (8%), status updates (4%), and YouTube videos (1%).

The increase of word "crowdfunding" on the net has increased from 2020 to 2022 on the Facebook pages of museums (2023 - BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online Ballatore, Andrea and Katerinchuk, Val and Poulovassilis, Alex and Wood, Peter Tracking museums' online responses to the Covid-19 pandemic: a study in museum analytics. ACM Journal on Computing and Cultural Heritage, ISSN 1556-4673.).

 In detail, five open questions were asked. At the launch of the crowdfunding campaign, all respondents responded to:

RQ1) Was the digital platform for the fundraising campaign helpful?

RQ 2) What are the crowdfunding models used?

RQ 3) For what purpose were the crowdfunding campaigns used?

RQ 4) What are the expected results of the crowdfunding campaign?

RQ 5) What is the contribution to value creation in the theme of sustainability?

At the end of the crowdfunding campaign, the following questions were asked:

RQ 6) *What activities will be carried out for the development of the project?*

RQ 7) *Will it be necessary to involve other platforms in the development of such activities? What?*

RQ8) *What is the expected value in the sustainable theme for the development of this project in relation to the museum's mission?*

Questions from *RQ1 to RQ5* (before the campaign) and questions from *RQ6 to RQ8* (after the campaign) are similar, this is because the theme is sustainability which is the Pillar of the Platform Model in Digital Transformation.

The interviews lasted about 30 minutes each and were recorded and transcribed using the MAXQDA2020 program for social science-oriented data analysis. The *In vivo* coding was based on conceptual categories identified in accordance with the literature consulted. The interviews, together with the information collected by the crowdfunding platform, were used for the analysis of the case study and further discussion.

For the majority of the respondents of the survey, crowdfunding has been used to (co-)finance a specific creative work (a painting, a performance, a book, etc.).Respectively 15% of the respondents of the survey ran a crowdfunding campaign to (co-) finance recurring organizational costs.

Answers

I1 "The digital campaign was fundamental but not exclusive . There is always a need for support in parallel with the institutions".

I2"Not all campaigns are successful and the same success in relation to funds and the purpose is different"

I3 "The expected results are expected to be around 60% to be optimistic, but they reach 30%. " "Fundamental is the writing of the project and the pillars of the project"

I4"Value Contribution is better working conditions and sharing across platforms"

I5 At the end of the crowdfunding campaign, " The benefits of crowdfunding are in equilibrium with the costs" (45%)

I6" The costs outweigh the benefits" (55%)

I7 "Be sustainable, i.e. yield benefits for the target group/s after the completion of the project."

I8"Be in line with the priorities of the funding program and look for an international value"

I9 "Analyze the context in-depth "

The case study

There are hundreds of crowdfunding platforms in Europe, excited by creative professionals and cultural organizations for their projects.

FIGURE 3. SWOT.
Source: own elaboration.

The combination of answers with squares is as follows :

RQ1= 2,4 – RQ2=2,4 – RQ3 =1,2,3,4 – RQ4=1, 3 – RQ5 =1,3 – RQ6=1,3 – RQ7=1,3 RQ8 =1,3

The current words are platform, crowdfunding, sustainability, value, museum, funds, and sharing.

Recurring Themes in Projects are Digitalization, Sustainability, Creative Innovation, Integration, and Creative Innovation. The final values presented demonstrate the possibility of having greater growth in the crowdfunding sector. This study contributes to the literature by evidencing that in the crisis of funds. The paper presents the impact of different dimensions in the digital ecosystem.

The inequality of crowdfunding platforms develops in a decentralized nature and more democratic access. The network is an excellent solution to this difficulty and weakness of model development. The COVID period has identified groups for exploring the digital consumption of art. The lockdown imposed, in Italy, to the people to spend more time on the Internet, both for work and study and to create new purpose or alternative purposes on digital.

The study concludes that crowdfunding is innovative, too rooted in the vocabulary of cultural grants, and perhaps developing in the wrong political sector to thrive as a 'collaborative funding mechanism' (Senabre and Morell 2018). The Museum should focus on a communication strategy, also through the use of social networks (Ryder et al.,, 2021).

Conclusion and Limitations

Cultural crowdfunding identifies in practice significant opportunities for the economic and financial sustainability of the museum sector, as a response on the one hand to the awareness of the lack of external and internal public resources in support of museum institutions, and on the other hand the right of the private to participate in the care of cultural heritage.

The museum crowdfunding is not only configured as a funding channel or as a marketing and communication lever in support of brand awareness but becomes an accelerator of a network process, digital and physical, linking the museum institution to the plurality of public and private actors who inhabit the cultural ecosystem in a model of care and management of the heritage more sustainable, generating material and intangible impacts, from economic benefit, the capacity of resources, up to the creation of new values and prospects for valorization. In this sense, crowdfunding, aligning itself with the values and objectives of the museum's mission, contributes to the pursuit of its statutory purposes, located at the forefront of the democratization of finance (Röthler & Wenzlaff 2011¸Bonet & Négrier, 2018; Galuszka & Brzozowska, 2017; Gripsrud, 2000).

The areas for future research remain the questions of crowdfunding (is it because of public contributions that projects are supported and carried out), its democratization potential (If matched funding becomes more inclusive of politicians, creators, and supporters, will it lead to a more efficient and equitable distribution of resources to the arts and culture sectors)and how the regulatory

frameworks and specific public policies for crowdfunding and match-funding will develop and converge between the national systems (Lazzaro and Noonan, 2021).

To conclude, the research carried out in this thesis endorses the trend that has been identified in the literature about the ecosystem of platforms in crowdfunding. Moreover, the research highlighted the peculiar characteristics of crowdfunding the network system. Social identity in the museum is the development of the territory and intangibles (cultural values, cultural identity, social and relational capital).

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EU external cultural policy in the age of AI: challenges and opportunities for the cultural sector

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ABSTRACT

Although Artificial Intelligence is currently under the spotlight for both the benefits and threats it entails, culture is rarely mentioned in European policy and legal documents. Considering the strong cultural component of AI and the abundant geopolitical considerations surrounding it, the paper analyses the way this disruptive technology drives and impedes relations between the EU and other, culturally-diverse societies. It examines the impact of AI on the EU's external cultural action in terms of policy and practice by extrapolating opportunities and challenges for the cultural and creative sector to the international level of cross-border engagement. It demonstrates that the cultural and creative sector has the potential to apply AI as a tool or topic in order to boost the EU's international cultural relations, allowing cultures to make sense of the rapidly changing world, address the looming complexities and shape the common future.

Introduction

In the past year, Artificial Intelligence (hereafter AI), and in particular Generative AI, has come to the fore, capturing public's imagination, driving investment and regulatory action. The genesis of an AI age has been announced, comparable to the launch of the smartphones in 2007 but still long way from maturing (Savov, 2023). Yet, even before the hype around ChatGPT, Midjourney or Bard, the European Commission had foreseen the age of the "next big thing" -identifying already competition and ethical concerns- at the time of initiating the process for a "fully-fledged and ambitious AI strategy" (European Commission, 2018a).

More than five years later, the European Union's (EU) AI Act is still under negotiation by the co-legislators even though its ambition was to become a global norm setter, but there are prospects of introducing some provisions relevant to the cultural sector, which had so far been left out of the debate. It must be borne in mind that both the inputs and the outputs of AI models are mainly cultural manifestations (images, text, audio), and the underlying values and assumptions throughout the actors involved in the value chain permeate its design and use. In addition to being a tool, Artificial Intelligence is also acting as a topic of interest and as an environment in which culture, and in particular external cultural action, operates.

Therefore, this paper explores the intersection of three fields: international relations, culture and digital through an emerging tech like AI. While other contributions in this issue explore the influence of AI on culture, the present research focuses on the international dimension of that interaction with view of promoting the thriving of exchanges and trust-building between different cultures. It builds on the theoretical framework of international cultural relations, desk research and a series of podcast interviews with a diverse set of practitioners, including cultural professionals, researchers, diplomats, artists and companies' representatives.

Following a brief overview of policy developments, the paper delves into the opportunities and challenges for cooperation with non-European audiences and partners brought by AI from the perspective of the cultural and creative sector, drawing inspiration from a 2022 report published by the European Commission. Taking into account that the impact of Artificial Intelligence, as any other technology, depends on the use that people make of it, the paper concludes with a list of proposed courses of action for the cultural sector to minimise the threats and contribute to mutually beneficial relations between Europe and other societies, "to have a more structured, informed and balanced debate around it, not somewhere between either hype or fear" (culture Solutions, 2023c).

EU policy framework: from International Cultural Relations to Artificial Intelligence

The 2016 European Commission and HR/VP Joint Communication *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations* marked the culmination of a long policy-making process that involved all the main institutions, and remains the sole strategic EU document exclusively dedicated to culture in external relations. Recognising that "promoting diversity through international cultural relations is an important part of the EU's role as a global actor" (European Commission and HR/VP, 2016: 2), the Joint Communication introduces a set of five guiding principles (cultural diversity and human rights, mutual respect, complementarity and subsidiarity, cross-cutting approach, existing frameworks); establishes three work streams (sustainable social and economic development, cultural and creative industries, local authorities); and proposes a strategic approach based on enhanced EU cooperation and inter-cultural exchanges.

The 2016 Communication however only briefly mentions digital tools as a means of inter-cultural connection and technology in the sense of supporting creative industries and jobs. Such scarce attention misses the diverse ways in which digital change impacts EU international cultural relations, including digitisation of cultural contents and cultural management, new forms of digital cultural engagement, digital media and culture, as well as regulation of the digital cultural sector (culture Solutions, 2020). And while the 2018 *New Agenda for Culture* spells out digital as a transversal policy area (European Commission, 2018c: 8), the broader agenda of #Digital4culture -not laid out in one single document- is not translated into international digital cultural policy. The underexploitation of the digital dimension of EU external cultural relations in conjunction with the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for the digitalisation of the cultural sector contribute to the calls for updating the seven-year-old Joint Communication (for instance European Parliament, 2022: 8) and transforming it into a full-fledged strategy (Cuny et al, 2023: 2).

Nevertheless, the *New Agenda* is also symptomatic of the fact that the interrelation between technology and culture is addressed more prominently in EU texts on cultural topics than on documents pertaining to the digital policy realm. A case in question is the European Commission's 2021 *Proposal for Artificial Intelligence Act*, whose only allusion to culture can be found in the accompanying Staff Working Document under the section titled "Social impact" (European Commission, 2021: 75), and even there no example is given to illustrate the point, as opposed to those related to education and youth. In contrast, the earlier Staff Working Document of the *New Agenda for Culture* does enumerate AI among the "Technology take-up and acceleration" (European Commission, 2018b: 35), even though at the time the policy work in this field had barely started, as shown on the timeline below (Figure 1).

The crystallisation of the EU approach to Artificial Intelligence is proving at least as challenging as that of the strategy for international cultural relations. Two and a half years after the release of the Commission version of a regulation, the text of the *AI Act* is still at the stage of first reading by the Council and the Parliament, while other digital legislation launched around the same time have already been adopted (e.g., the *Digital Services Act* and the *Digital Markets Act*). Notwithstanding, the draft *AI Act*, still subject to internal negotiations, has served the first-mover objective that the European Union explicitly pursued when announcing the novel and most comprehensive proposal of the time: it has served as a blueprint for both national legal texts (testifying to its high potential to exercise Brussels effect – see Siegmann and Anderljung, 2022), and international frameworks such as those of the OECD, the Council of Europe and UNESCO (through proactive digital diplomacy efforts – Kokinova, 2023).

EXTERNAL CULTURAL ACTION	ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
2015 — **Resolution on the destruction of cultural sites perpetrated by ISIS/Daesh** – P8_TA(2015)0179; EP **Conclusions On culture in the EU's external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation** – 2015/C417/06; Council	
2016 — **Joint communication Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations** – JOIN(2016)29; Commission and HR/VP	
2017 —	**Resolution on Civil Law Rules on Robotics and AI** – P8_TA(2017)0051; EP
2018 — **Communication A New European Agenda for Culture** – COM(2018)267; COM	**Communication Artificial Intelligence for Europe** – COM(2018)237; COM **Coordinated Plan on AI** – COM(2018)795; COM and MS
2019 — **Conclusions On an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action** – 2019/C192/04; Council	**Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI** – AI HLEG **Communication Building Trust in Human Centric Artificial Intelligence** – COM(2019)168; COM
2020 —	**White Paper AI - European approach to excellence and trust** – COM(2020)65; COM
2021 — **Conclusions On EU Approach to Cultural Heritage in conflicts and crises** – 9837/21; Council	**Proposal for Artificial Intelligence Regulation (AI Act) and Fostering a European approach to AI** – COM(2021)206 and COM(2021)205; COM **Parliament resolution AI in education, culture and the audiovisual sector** – P9_TA(2021)0238; EP
2022 — **Resolution On the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations** – P9_TA(2022)0444; EP	**General approach on the Artificial Intelligence Act** – 14954/22; Council
2023 — **Open Method of Cooperation (OMC) on international cultural relations** – Council	**Amendments on Proposal for AI Act** – P9_TA(2023)0236; EP

FIGURE 1. TIMELINE OF SELECTED EU POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTSS RELATED TO EXTERNAL CULTURAL ACTION (LEFT) AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (RIGHT).

Source: Own elaboration.

This global intention is what elevates the significance of the EU's AI strategy for its international cultural relations. The *Proposal for AI Act* touches upon cultural content -image, audio or video- in the provisions relating to deep fakes, and the recent amendments by the European Parliament introduced additional obligations for Generative AI models. What is more, several studies[6] and Parliament resolutions have started focusing on the relation between the emerging technology and the cultural and creative industries. However, the underlying premise of the *AI Act* is markedly cultural – the human-centric and values-based vision of technology is product of European ethical conceptions. This is more readily appreciated when compared to the market orientation of the United States of America (USA) or the state-led development and security pursuit of China. Against the backdrop of outstanding cultural differences and colonial memories, the EU's emphasis on becoming the global norm-setter in AI risks alienating potential partners and endangering their digital sovereignty.

As a consequence, when engaging in regulatory and technical cooperation with other countries or implementing AI projects, including cultural ones, European actors -not only institutional but also from the private and non-governmental sectors- need to ensure partners are treated on the basis of reciprocity and equal footing, actively involved in co-designing those, and engaged on topics related values in an open manner. One example of such undertaking is *The Grid* – a European Space for Culture in the USA that explored the intersection between art, technology and policy and promoted conversation between artists, technologists and policy makers from Europe, Silicon Valley and beyond, through formats like encounters, policy days, report and award (EUNIC, 2020). In a similar vein, the *S+T+ARTS* initiative, supported by EU funding, covers AI in several of its artistic residencies, labs, challenges, etc., some of which are open to participants from outside the Union. Finally, the EU's *International Outreach for Human-centric Artificial Intelligence initiative* (InTouchAI.eu) deserves a mention, although not dedicated to culture, it aims to promote the EU's vision on sustainable and trustworthy AI through the mobilisation of strategic communication and technology diplomacy actions on regulatory and ethical matters (European Commission, n.d.).

The cultural and creative sector plays a crucial role in the implementation of the EU's external cultural policy, including in the realm of Artificial Intelligence, both when acting out of own initiative and within EU programmes, in accordance with international cultural relations' principle of arm's length (as

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[6] Recent studies contracted by the European institutions but not included in the timeline due to their non-policy nature include the 2020 briefing *The use of artificial intelligence in the cultural and creative sectors* by European Parliament's IPOL; the 2022 report for the European Commission *Opportunities and challenges of artificial intelligence technologies for the cultural and creative sectors*; the 2022 Commission *Study on Copyright data management and artificial intelligence*; and the 2023 briefing *Artificial intelligence in the context of cultural heritage and museums: Complex challenges and new opportunities* by the Parliament's EPRS.

opposed to the more top-down cultural diplomacy conception). This is why it is essential that cultural actors not only possess understanding of EU policies when collaborating with partners abroad, but also participate actively in their drafting and revision processes, bringing lessons learnt and good practice from the different local realities. While the sector may lack the lobbying capacity of big tech, it is characterised by a higher interest in the intersection between digitalisation and culture, intrinsic creativity and adaptability, and preoccupation with social issues. These enable the cultural and creative professionals to take advantage of the current increased public attention surrounding the launch of mass-use AI tools like ChatGPT, and lead the dialogue on the way Artificial Intelligence, in particular generative AI, could and should influence the interactions between cultures.

External cultural relations in action

In employing AI as a topic or tool of cross-border cultural cooperation, artists and cultural professionals need to seize the opportunities the technology brings while navigating the complex risks associated. It must be borne in mind that AI has both positive and negative implications for cultural relations, and the identification of challenges serves the purpose of continuous improvement -a defining feature of AI itself- rather than implying a deterministic view of human extinction and thus stifling creativity. This dual nature underlies both EU policy and legal texts, and the above-mentioned studies commissioned by the institutions in order to examine the different aspects of the interrelation between Artificial Intelligence and culture. The following analysis takes the report *Opportunities and Challenges of Artificial Intelligence Technologies for the Cultural and Creative Sectors* (hereafter "report") as its starting point, by highlighting the international aspects of each point. Following the reorganisation of the ethical, legal and social challenges from seven to four categories for greater consistency and focus on external cultural relations, the resulting list is presented in Figure 2.

Opportunities

Save costs and increase efficiency

Support decision-making

Discover and engage audience and creators

Inspire and complement human creation

Challenges

Produce harmful outputs

Reduce cultural diversity

Spur creative divide and competition

Pose existential questions

FIGURE 2. IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS.

Source: Own elaboration, adapted from the content of European Commission, 2022.

Opportunities brought by Artificial Intelligence

1. Save costs and increase efficiency

Efficiency gains are the main driving force behind the development and application of AI models, including in the creative industries. Automation of simple and repetitive tasks is practically possible in every step of the cultural value chain, from production to distribution of content, even when spanning different countries and continents. The report offers examples of cultural use cases in different sub-sectors such as customisation of items, film editing, cataloguing of artefacts, audio mastering, automated content curation and game testing. The importance of these applications revolves around the better, faster and more economical cultural creation, but also the freeing up of time which creative professionals can dedicate to other, more complex tasks or to expanding their scope of action (European Commission, 2022: 30-31).

One such activity could be the ideation and implementation of international artistic projects, which require a set of soft skills like cultural sensitivity that remain elusive for AI. Another case of a positive use of AI with international significance could be the cross-linking of metadata in audio-visual archives. Language is an area of particular interest, since natural language processing has been among the first areas to be developed, and at the same time it is essential for fruitful communication between people of different cultures. Automated translation and language learning apps can be useful both at the individual and institutional level for a wide array of actors: from artists and cultural professionals, through consumers and travellers, to policymakers and diplomats.

AI is more readily available for large institutions with considerable amounts of data, potentially coming from different countries, that can afford developing algorithms in-house to optimise their global operations. But although AI traditionally requires big datasets and processing power, even start-ups and independent artists can take advantage of open-source or freemium solutions which are now proliferating on the market, and there are also new methods that rely on small training sets. In this manner, Artificial Intelligence may lower the entry barrier for small cultural organisations or those based in developing countries.

Despite the current buzz around general-purpose chatbots like OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Bard or Baidu's Earnie, specialised AI has been around for quite some time (following several winters since its emergence in the mid-1950s), whether under the radar or attracting some attention, e.g. conversational AI like Alexa and Siri. As stated by one expert, "probably the best [AI] solutions are those that are invisible" – people simply see them as an efficient app that boosts their productivity and decision-making ability (culture Solutions, 2023a). Now that the technology is maturing, it is becoming a generalised, flexible "anything tool", like spreadsheets or semiconductors did in the past (Huang, 2023). Hence, cultural sector's efficiency through AI may take different shapes, ranging from small-scale automation of daily tasks to the core of an innovative business model.

2. Support decision-making

As AI continues evolving, the tasks entrusted to algorithms become more and more complex, reaching the decision-making level, which in turn further deepens the efficiency benefits. Data analytics, trend recognition, insights, etc. are particularly useful in the era of digital consumption, which has at least partially solved the long-standing issue with availability of cultural data. The Commission report presents a long list of possible AI-assisted decisions in the cultural sector (identification of publishing content or emerging authors, cloud-based AI software for building and materials sourcing, predictive fashion trend forecasting, approval of films, curation of exhibitions or

news content based on user interaction, listeners' analytics, performance programming, game player modelling, authentication and cataloguing of art works), but also points out to the disparities between sub-sectors and the concerns over the limited return on investment and value added of AI tools (European Commission, 2022: 32-33).

The world-wide nature of data collected over the internet enables the making of choices that impact international activities or are tailored to divergent local realities. On the other hand, it is possible to teach AI to take culturally-sensitive decisions through the coding of ethical behaviour and etiquette (Heaven, 2022), the correction of biases (Ganguli et al, 2023) or the Sustainable Development Goals (Chui et al, 2018). This kind of decisions not only contribute to social good, individual well-being and trust-building between cultures, but are also expected to increase the level of consumer satisfaction and enjoyment and consequently they are likely to stimulate further use.

Cultural safeguards can be added at the stage of quality control, execution or planning. In this regard, the application of AI tools holds great potential for business administration (e.g., marketing, communications, legal, human resources) and cultural project management, including cross-border one. Examples of project delivery improvements are: generation and revision of documents, presentations or visual materials, cost-benefit analysis and budget planning, scheduling, risk assessment, sentiment analysis and stakeholder engagement, development of training courses, addition of a virtual team member (Chinner, 2023).

A promising Artificial Intelligence application for international cultural relations lies in the area of Monitoring and Evaluation due to its ability to pool together and synthetise diverse data sources with view of both calculating impact and utilising storytelling to share success stories and lessons learnt. The relevance of quantitative and qualitative transcends the management of a specific cultural project or organisation as it is highly valuable for the EU's evidence-based policy-making process.

3. Discover and engage audience and creators

COVID-19 only accelerated the pre-existing trend of increasing digitalisation of cultural consumption. The report credits the digital natives of Generation Z for the shift towards immersiveness and content creation, away from passive reception. In this context, AI is seen as a way to empower users by facilitating the generation of own content or the collaboration with others' artistic processes, and by delivering hyper-personalised suggestions. Further benefits to audience engagement may be analysis of reactions through AI recognition technologies, or reaching new types of users with the help of recommendation systems. Some concrete use cases are: user-centred real-time design, immersive reading, shopping assistant, recommendation systems, audience engagement activities, personalisation of content, making live content available, adaptive games, AI-augmented art for people with disabilities (European Commission, 2022: 33-34).

The potential for internationalisation of cultural organisations is apparent from the above list – by expanding the reach in the borderless internet space, any European artist or cultural entity transforms into player of external cultural action. This may prove a lifeline to survive and grow for many small and medium enterprises -the vast majority of the cultural and creative industries- as well as cultural movements seeking societal change. Online interaction is a good first step towards building cultural awareness and understanding at the collective and individual level. Simultaneously, AI-powered recommendations bring the promise of discovering interesting content from less-prominent sources, such as produced by foreign artists. This is a fundamental prerequisite for identifying prospective partners for international collaborations. In this regard, scaling up of initiatives undertaken within Europe can be explored by opening up of the membership to entities outside the EU or by expanding the scope of action towards international projects and audiences. One such favourable setting is Europeana as a transnational network of cultural professionals which is already working on the topic of Artificial Intelligence for galleries, libraries, archives and museums.

Moreover, the above-mentioned active participation of users in co-creating cultural expressions with the help of AI tools is in line with bidirectional and bottom-up aspiration of international cultural relations. It is also likely to result in higher retention time (that may translate in monetary terms), in addition to gratification and recollection of the inter-cultural experience. This outcome can be strengthened by the introduction of elements with positive social purpose, such as developing accessible AI for often marginalised groups (e.g., women, people with disabilities or in rural areas, and those without access to internet) or nudging users towards a beneficial behaviour. On the other hand, an exciting future of AI that is driven by community needs and cooperatively-owned is being opened up by "Federated Learning, which is the ability for us all to have our data on our own devices and yet to build models collaboratively together" (culture Solutions, 2023d).

However, digital means still lack the effectiveness of face-to-face initiatives in providing space for exchange of views and building of long-term relations. Therefore, digital engagement should not be seen as a panacea to limited budgets and large audience targets, as it struggles to bring the "desired quality cultural relations outcomes and societal change" and must accompany in-person activities (culture Solutions, 2016: 49). Artificial Intelligence is currently being put into action to mitigate these shortcomings, for instance in combination with Virtual Reality or metaverse applications which promise more meaningful digital interaction. It is yet to be seen if for the new generation of AI natives digital cultural relations reach the impact or replace human-to-human exchanges.

4. Inspire and complement human creation

Artificial Intelligence is not limited to supporting the artistic process and is instead claiming its place as a creator, especially in the face of generative AI like Dall-E, Midjourney or Stable Diffusion, with artworks of human-machine collaboration proliferating. "Very often you hear the argument that

creativity or creative jobs are the ones that because of creativity cannot be reached by automation. But that's not necessarily true, because creativity (…) has so many elements that can be automated as well. It really challenges that last refuge of human superiority to machines" (culture Solutions, 2023a).

While reckoning "'AI as an artist' is not (yet) a realistic scenario", the Commission report (2022: 35-36) stipulates that AI is capable of both imitating or ensuring the consistency of the creator's style and surprising her with unexpected suggestions so as to improve outputs and attract audiences. Diverse applications are already put into practice and new ones keep appearing: AI-powered building design, AI-suggested new content, smart textiles, automatic story generation, painting restoration, AI-inspired music generation, open data mining for news media, AI-augmented choreography, software to improve game non-player characteristics, AI assisting post-production workflows.

The use of these disruptive technologies opens venues for cross-sectoral cooperation within the cultural and creative sectors and beyond with other industries, most notably big tech, but also education and engineering, inter alia. Naturally, it also provides a fertile ground for cross-border co-creation, bringing together diverse teams around a common idea. The eagerness to make available online that AI-generated content (as discussed in the previous section), oftentimes in dedicated communities (e.g., Midjourney's Discord server), further reinforces international cultural relations.

Even if one disregards the debate around AI replacing artists or ending human creativity and originality (noting that art in the 21st century seen as a mere patchwork of previous works), the fact that it saves people time and lets them engage in more challenging labour is sufficient to spur their creativity. As one artist passionately explains (culture Solutions, 2023d):

> I believe that ideally machine intelligence will free up mental space of mechanical work. In this way we can have a couple of hours a day that we could really allocate to our minds, exploring their full potential. This is healthy and conducive to progress for everyone. Time is a luxury, we know that. Giving time to this incredible human brain, where we only use a fraction…imagine what would happen if we trigger the rest of!

Challenges to building trust in the AI age

1. Produce harmful content

Keeping in mind that Artificial Intelligence, or any other type of technology, is not good or bad per se but instead depends on the use people make of it, the underlying algorithms and the training data are the two factors determining the quality of AI outputs. Low-quality AI content may include low-value journalism or functional music, as well as recommendation systems not satisfying users' tastes,

standardised (Hollywood-like) films, etc. The dangers of the consumption of such kind of cultural products go beyond the frustration of the user as they "can have a bad influence on our culture and quality of life" (European Commission, 2022: 41). While the EU draft provision on labelling content as produced by an AI is a step towards informed consumer decisions, more measures are necessary. Moreover, challenges related to availability of quality data from non-Western countries and to development of local AI solutions risk compromising the training of universal models.

A well-known negative trait of AI is the augmentation of human bias, present in historical data or the worldviews of the engineers. As a consequence, systemic inequality and discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, political views, sexual orientation, among other, are exacerbated, as demonstrated by the documentary "Coded bias". This is particularly true for AI in the cultural and creative sector, as it has the ability to communicate and shape perceptions on a larger social scale, which other applications lack even if they produce concrete results in a person's livelihood and rights (e.g., bank decision on loan). From the perspective of international cultural relations, AI bias can lead to strengthening of pre-existing stereotypes towards people from different cultural backgrounds and thus reducing the intercultural sensitivity and skills of citizens. It can also limit innovation and evolution of societal values by perpetuating old worldviews and practices, for instance failing to account for contemporary priorities like climate change.

Considering that bias and explainability were among the first aspects of AI to draw intense research and criticism (e.g., Goethe Institute's Image+Bias), numerous initiatives have started addressing the issue with the idea that AI bias can be detected and prevented (unlike human-generated one) and algorithms can even be used to nudge users towards high-quality or socially-beneficial content (such as promoting cultural diversity). In turn, AI may be used to uncover biases in European cultural collections -gathered over the centuries under different values systems- and these revelations may drive more representative, balanced and ethical exhibitions, productions, collaborations, etc. (culture Solutions, 2023a).

Other cases AI can generate harm are centred around misinformation and manipulation, which are among the few use cases proposed to be prohibited outright under the upcoming risk-based AI Act. "Algorithms focused on engagement may prioritise divisive content (…) [as] AI cannot distinguish whether the input it receives is accurate or inaccurate" (European Commission, 2022: 42), with virtually all social media networks being embroiled in controversy over spreading false information around elections or COVID-19. Such polarisation of societies is not only jeopardising healthy democracy but also detrimental to building trust between different cultures and countries. Verification of authenticity is also the hurdle in spotting and debunking deep fakes, such as those used in political messaging and fake news. While not the central issue, AI clones of actors have been a major concern in the protests that have paralysed Hollywood productions for months this year.

Closely related is also the ability of AI -mainly applied to social platforms or games- to manipulate user behaviour, with risks including addiction and mental health issues. Apart from bestowing substantial power on the owners of those algorithms over social behaviour and agenda setting, this function also opens the door to malevolent uses by external actors. Disinformation and propaganda rely on a mix of bots and AI amplification, and have occupied an important place during Russia's war on Ukraine, both in the West and in third countries with the aim of damaging the image of Ukraine's allies and winning sympathies for an alternative global order. While the EU has officially responded through successive rounds of sanctions on Russian media outlets and the increased efforts of the European External Actions Service's EUvsDisinfo and newly launched #ARTvsWAR, the cultural sector is a key player in what has been described as culture wars, where culture is both casualty and accomplice (Wilson Centre, 2023) but also a venue for showing solidarity (for illustration of the prolific cooperation see NEMO's list of museum support to Ukraine).

2. Reduce cultural diversity

Even when the content is of supreme quality, be it created by AI or artists, it may not reach a wide public. The downside of personalisation of user experience is the risk of what is known as echo chambers, filter bubbles, or monocultures. Essentially, recommender systems "feed users only material they prefer to see, leading to less understanding of other viewpoints and a lack of common ground with other members of the community" (European Commission, 2022: 41), both within and across national borders. Apart from homogenised view of the world and fragmentation of society, locking users in filter bubbles negative repercussions on respect and promotion of cultural diversity may include reinforcement of cultural preferences, standardisation of taste, and limited artistic expression.

Amidst the abundance of information and the scarcity of attention, the content that currently monopolises platforms is markedly WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic). As an illustration: "the classification systems of Apple or Google will not mark weddings as weddings when they happen in parts of the world that do not involve white dresses" (culture Solutions, 2023a). In that way, although AI and other digital tools have liberalised access to cultural creation, the concept of discoverability explains the gap between the available diverse cultural expressions -including those of marginalised groups or originating in third countries- and those that are actually enjoyed by users. Even if the EU sets quotas for European content, there is no similar measure promoting foreign or co-productions. This reduces not only the (digital) space for intercultural engagement, but also the interest and curiosity to pursue it (including in person). The root of the issue lies in the way AI technology functions: through oversimplification and stereotypes, and unlike humans it relies on keywords but not on cognitive concepts which are sensitive to and adapt dynamically in an ever-changing cultural context (culture Solutions, 2023b). At the same time,

If you don't have diverse folks in the room making decisions and thinking about the technology, then you're going to inherently affect communities that you're not aware of, despite even the best intentions. By making a decision from a limited privileged perspective, you're already hurting others. Essentially, you're already playing into systems of oppression that you may or may not understand.

For this reason, the cultural and creative sector can capitalise on its rich expertise for the design, testing or improvement of algorithms. With their deep understanding of different cultural realities, languages and values, cultural professionals can be key allies to technology companies (even though "they have to be together for at least six months until they actually understand each other's language, their codes" (culture Solutions, 2023d)). In this way they can serve as a bridge between cultures, giving the much-needed voice to citizens and cultural partners outside the EU and United States, and ultimately building better AI systems. A case in question is Africa: as late-comers, African leaders and innovators' participation in the global digital debate remains weak (DiploFoundation, 2022), but their worldviews can provide valuable input for AI development. For instance, the ancient wisdom of ubuntu in favour of harmonious relationships between individuals and communities (in contrast to AI Act's human centricity) can influence AI "epistemology (ways of knowing), ethics (distinguishing good from bad), and governance (making decisions and resolving conflicts)" (Kurbalija, 2023).

European cultural actors are uniquely positioned to take on the task of promoters of cultural diversity due to the high value the Union itself attaches to it, exemplified by its motto and plethora of official languages. Consideration of "these smaller languages and smaller numbers of speakers and generally more diversity in terms of the data and available resources" has the potential of becoming "one of the main benefits of a European strategy on AI compared to other nations" (culture Solutions, 2023b), as English dominates both the cultural content and technological applications and research. The topic of linguistic diversity in AI is of high importance both for the cultural sector in Europe and for its international cultural relations due to the fact that the main use cases of AI are language-based (e.g., natural language processing models) and communication is key to collaborating.

While the European Commission report (2022: 42) identifies a "need for language technologies 'made in Europe, for Europe'" and cautions against the fragmentation of languages in Europe (including of AI providers in the field), it is as imperative to invest and engage with non-European partners. "While artificial intelligence can help with automatic translation, the practice of multilingualism and translation itself is not a given and it will have to be explicitly promoted in the digital sphere" (Mc Neilly et al, 2020: 6). Ample AI applications in the area of language learning make it attractive to Member States' cultural institutes, potentially leading to higher number of foreigners getting in touch with European culture and worldviews through language, but they could also expose the European public to other languages. Yet, the intrinsic value of language learning may be eroded by automated translation, and we must ask ourselves as a global community whether a future where "everybody will be able to use

their own language, the language of their own identity, and to speak with everybody else" (culture Solutions, 2023a) is actually desirable.

3. Spur creative divide and competition

Although the report (European Commission, 2022: 44-46) addresses the risk of "Competing with the US and the rise of China", it barely touches upon China despite its burgeoning digital market. Through an analysis of AI research publications and patent applications in ten cultural sectors, the report concludes that Europe is stronger than the United States in science but weaker in technological development. It also talks of brain drain from the EU and its prestigious educational programmes towards the United States with its robust entrepreneurial and startup ecosystem. "AI can create a monopolised market for AI in the cultural and the creative sectors and exacerbate the 'winner-takes-all' phenomena" (European Commission, 2022: 38). Nevertheless, the adverse impact of power concentration in American big tech is far more pronounced for non-Western countries, as already explained in previous sections regarding bias, manipulation or lack of cultural diversity.

What is more, the comparatively disadvantageous position of third countries -in terms of technological development and the limited availability of funding opportunities, as well as their lagging behind in the adoption of national AI strategies, in particular targeted to the cultural sector- exposes them to the risk of turning the digital divide into a creative divide. The term refers to a "situation of increasing inequality between the North and the South in terms of the possibilities open to artists and creators", as their autonomy and capability become compromised (Kulesz, 2018: 10). A vicious cycle of lack of local African AI solutions and reliance on Western systems could irreversibly displace production of cultural products, services but also practices and beliefs from Niger or Cameroon to Silicon Valley or Tianjin. Inevitably, this will also hinder sustainable economic and social development, to which the cultural and creative sector contributes substantially.

The process is enabled by the digital extractivism of Western actors -reminiscent of the colonial past-and the cultural sector is not immune. AI colonialism "is enriching a powerful few by dispossessing communities that have been dispossessed before" (MIT Review, 2022) through the extraction of data (labelled by some as the new oil) and the exploitation of people. It is often forgotten that AI systems are "massively international, there's a lot of trade, (…) there's a lot of different workers involved" (culture Solutions, 2023a). Kate Crawford's *Atlas of AI* features an artist's breakdown of the anatomy of an AI, from the mining of precious minerals in Africa, through the people labelling photos, all the way to the high value-added software programming in the USA or Europe (culture Solutions, 2023a). It is thus important to first acknowledge the existence of that invisible labour force, and second to ensure equal treatment and better working conditions for all, as well as to provide educational opportunities to sensitise the workers to the different cultures impacted by their work (culture Solutions, 2023d).

Fair remuneration is a constant challenge in the cultural and creative sector, often characterised by its precariousness, both in Europe and beyond. The flipside of the automation opportunities brought by Artificial Intelligence are the labour displacement and the uncertainties around intellectual property rights, which endanger artists' livelihood and may shrink people-to-people exchanges and collaboration. The Commission report (European Commission, 2022) warns against the so-called technological alarmism and gives examples of tasks that are disappearing and others that are being created in the cultural sector, stating that entire creative jobs will not be replaced by machines. However, the report also concedes that structural changes in the labour market should be addressed through education and employment measures (European Commission, 2022: 45), and this is precisely the area which is the most likely to accentuate the inequalities between Western and countries, that lack the necessary support structures, but also the platform to make their innovations known to the rest of the world (culture Solutions, 2023d).

From the above it is apparent that the Artificial Intelligence age is intensifying the competition for user attention, giving rise to labour tensions between artists and AI, worsening division between North and South, driving further apart big tech and cultural organisations, etc. To this multi-layered competition in the cultural and creative sector can be added the broader context, in which AI applications are being put to work in virtually any sphere of society, from health, through transport and finance, to education. "Supremacy in technology means being superior in the future, and that goes hand in hand with every cultural manifestation, every aspect of our society" (culture Solutions, 2023c). In particular, military uses -including on the battleground, as cybersecurity threats or espionage- and arms race create a global environment of mistrust and rivalry and impose a zero-sum mindset, which are not conductive to successful international cultural relations, despite their contribution to building peace and mutually beneficial exchanges between communities. Therefore, the role of the cultural and creative sector as an active promoter of respectful and fair cross-border cooperation, in spite and with the help of AI, is of crucial importance.

4. Pose existential questions

However daunting AI (military) applications may be, alarmism about human extinction is thus far exaggerated, in part thanks to film productions in recent decades which have moved away from the previous techno optimism. Yet, art and culture provide a fertile ground for asking and debating this kind of concerns as a society, addressing fears but also imagining futures full of hope. ChatGPT has garnered so much attention precisely because it showed people the capabilities of AI -in a way 1000 research paper could not- and made them question not only the technology but also themselves. "AI is not just an exercise that threatens humanity, but it actually may be the opposite, bringing humanity back to what it is, back to its fullest potential by enabling us to free up the space to ask these basic human questions. Who are we? Where do we come from? What makes a human being a human

being?" (culture Solutions, 2023a). Closely related to this is the issue of creativity and whether it is limited to humans or can be exhibited by machines.

In a similar fashion, a topic that deserves contemplating is the prospect of excessive reliance on AI. According to the Commission report overreliance on AI suggestions and numbers can create inertia, narrow-mindedness, and disregard to local context (European Commission, 2022: 44). It is therefore highlighted that more intelligence (including cultural) is needed to interpret data, understand trends and make decisions. In the cultural sector per se, artists co-generating art with a specific AI tool may develop their skillset and practice in such a way as to become dependent on its functionalities and consequently on the company which controls it and has the power to introduce changes (European Commission, 2022: 41). These cases would have a clear negative impact on freedom of expression and human agency – when the user or artist allows AI to choose for herself, she relinquishes part of her autonomy. In order to "emancipate ourselves from technology [through] better understanding of how the system works, (…) we need a new age of enlightenment, to overcome our faith in technology and mythically over-exaggerated concepts, such as artificial intelligence" (culture Solutions, 2023d).

Data-hungry and hyper-personalised algorithms also jeopardise privacy and data protection. At the same time, they require vast data processing and storing which are extremely energy-intensive, hence running counter to the commitments towards climate neutrality and sustainability. The urgency of climate action could provide a boost to the high awareness about the pressing multi-faceted challenges posed by AI as well as the advantages for those who reap its benefits, so as to speed up and facilitate effective regulation in favour of planet and people, and not only profit. While AI providers have started recognising the need for regulation, industry and academia still have more questions than answers themselves. Artificial Intelligence has received unprecedented political, media and public attention at the national and international level, unseen by other technologies, and yet thorny issues abound due to the lack of consensus beyond the need for rules. Whereas cultural differences complicate and prolong multilateral negotiations, especially when the formats include non-Western countries as could be the case of UNESCO or G7, unlike the OECD or the Council of Europe, creative and culturally-sensitive approaches can ensure better regulatory and AI solutions.

Conclusions and recommendations

The age of Artificial Intelligence is bringing important improvements in everyday life, while also sparking wide-ranging concerns. Policy-makers around the globe, and especially in the European Union, have not shied away from thorny issues, but are still struggling to build consensus on the right balance between technological innovation and protection of the society. Against this backdrop, the

cultural and creative sector, which has been only marginally involved in the *AI Act*, is acquiring higher levels of awareness and actorness in view of the wide use and attention achieved by Generative AI.

As cross-border interactions become more and more mediatised by AI, all artists and cultural actors could either fortify their international credentials or embark for the first time on external cultural action. This paper has discussed four ways in which AI could enable the cultural sector's international endeavour: save costs and increase efficiency, support decision-making, discover and engage audience and creators, inspire and complement human creation. It has also drawn attention to four challenges that must be borne in mind and addressed: produce harmful content, reduce cultural diversity, spur creative divide and competition, pose existential questions.

Although that the current policy momentum pertains to AI, EU efforts in the area of international cultural relations culminated in the 2016 Joint Communication -and ever since 2019 have not been a political priority (Cuny et al, 2023)-, it is conceivable that the adoption of the AI legislation will be followed by and that the strategy on international relations be updated by the next European Commission 2024-2029. Hence, cultural professionals could seize the moment to leave their imprint on European external cultural policy by campaigning for and practicing strong and fair relations between the EU and other countries, promoting trust, cultural diversity and peace. In order to do so, the cultural sector is suggested to approach Artificial Intelligence for cultural relations in a three-pronged way:

1. AI as a topic:

   - Stay up to date with policy and technological developments on European, national and international level;
   - Participate in the policy-makers' written and oral consultations to make sure the general legislation on AI takes into account the particularities of the cultural sector, and advocate policy-makers for the adoption of sector-specific policies and regulations for the cultural and creative industries, channelling the ideas and concerns of non-European cultural actors;
   - Set up, in cooperation with local partners, projects exploring AI as a topic, for instance by focusing on one of the existential questions it poses;
   - Take active part in the international dialogue on the future of AI through the membership in networks, the attendance or organisation of events, and the publication of papers, blogs, social media posts, *inter alia*.

2. AI as a tool:

   - Make informed choices about the application of ready-to-use or the development of a new AI model so as to ensure it is fair, transparent and trustworthy, and consider opting for open

source or collaborative models provided by European entities or pooling resources to build such together with European partners;

- Take advantage of ethical AI solutions specifically tailored for internationalisation, for interaction with audiences outside Europe, as well as for continuous Monitoring and Evaluation and ;

- If AI systems are already implemented, perform audits to identify any potential bias or negative impact, and rethink their purpose and functioning to make them more diverse and inclusive;

- Clearly label and disclose the involvement of AI in content production, curation, etc.;

- Invite artists -from different cultural backgrounds- to work with datasets, exploring and visualising data in new ways and driving creative public reflection and debate;

- Draw and share lessons learnt from the experience with AI tools, and organise capacity building sessions to facilitate their positive use by like-minded organisations and independent artists.

3. AI as context:

- Ensure that the team working with AI applications or on AI issues is culturally diverse;

- Seek partnerships and coordinate with a diverse range of European and international actors, including tech companies, public sector, educational institutions and civil society, both within and outside Europe;

- Replicate success stories of intra-EU cooperation with AI on the international arena, or open up existing European initiatives to members from abroad;

- Raise awareness about the positive use cases of AI in the cultural and creative sector, as well as about the interrelation between culture and AI;

- Continue promoting a global culture of cooperation, mutual respect and learning.

With view of capitalising on Artificial Intelligence for international cultural relations, further research is necessary to account for the intersection of technology, culture and external action. In addition to identification of good practice and lessons learnt from international cultural cooperation on AI, possible angles could be thematic -on the influence of AI on specific issues like freedom of expression, creativity, copyright or climate change-, or sectoral -the Commission report focused on ten sub-sectors of the cultural and creative industries-. Lastly, more research is needed on the impact of AI-induced homogenisation of cultural tastes and traits, which endangers cultural diversity in such a way as to potentially render international cultural relations void in the absence of different cultures. If the international community is to capture the negative and positive sides of the relationship between AI and culture, then policy, research and artistic projects all need to adopt a multidisciplinary,

participatory and inclusive approach, involving diverse actors and perspectives and addressing values in an open way.

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Cultural Sensitivity practices and Intercultural Communication Competence on the protection of Indigenous Peoples' cultures

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ABSTRACT

One of the challenges faced by managers, practitioners and educators in designing and implementing cultural management policies is achieving Inclusive Sustainable Development. By working with Aboriginal Peoples in Australia, I learned that developing intercultural communication competence based on high level of cultural sensitivity is an essential pre-requisite to negotiating issues and reaching agreed solutions. Achieving a successful level of intercultural communication competence takes time and effort and requires training, mindset change, continuous learning, commitment to the people, and understanding of their living heritage. The objective of this paper is demonstrating how collaborative practices can help build social, cultural, and educational programs based on mutual understanding, trust, respect, and partnership. The paper explores key concepts related to cultural sensitivity and competence and demonstrates methods used in the field that have proven effective in building cultural competence, facilitating intercultural communication, and promoting meaningful engagement with indigenous peoples.

Keywords:

Cultural sensitivity, Intercultural communication competence, Indigenous People, Theory U

Introduction

Worldwide, there is increasing societal expectation that industry and government achieve the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Peoples impacted by industrial developments, as advocated by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP, 2007; International Council on Mining and Metals, ICMM, 2015; Department of Foreigner Affairs and Trade, DFAT, 2016; International Institute for Environment and Development, IIED, 2013). FPIC is a key aspect of inclusive sustainable development, that aims to more balanced and equitably distribute the benefits of economic growth and maintain or improve the well-being and quality of life of people affected by development projects (Lawson, 2010, in George, 2020; Kwan & Drolet, 2015; United Nations, 2015).

Collaborative community engagement with Indigenous Peoples facilitates their participation in decisions regarding project planning and management to achieve and maintain their FPIC. This type of engagement shows respect for the local people, their culture and values, helps to build trust, clarifies expectations, promotes mutual understanding, incorporates traditional knowledge on discussions and solutions, and keeps an open channel for ongoing communication (Artic Council, 2019). Collaborative community engagement requires an effective level of intercultural communication, that involves mutual construction of meanings, recognition and respect of cultural differences, and mutual adaptation leading to biculturalism rather than simple assimilation (Bennet, 2013).

Effectiveness in collaborative community engagement requires high level of Intercultural communication competence. This type of competence comprises three abilities (Yilmaz et al, 2020; Chen, 2010; Wiseman, 2003) as demonstrated in Diagram 01: Cognitive ability, related to cultural awareness; affective or emotional ability, associated with cultural sensitivity; and behavioral ability, associated with cultural adroitness or effectiveness. Cultural effectiveness refers to the "person's ability to interact and adjust adroitly with other human beings" in an intercultural setting (Chen, 2009). This level of effective performance in personal and professional intercultural settings is required for reaching cultural competence and cultural proficiency.
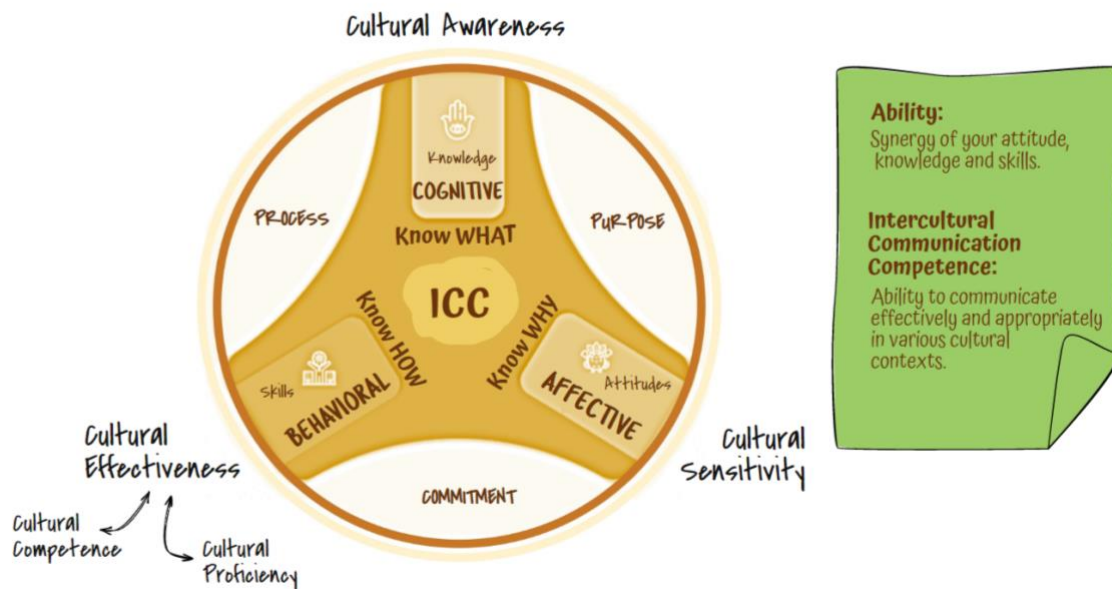
INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE (ICC)

FIGURE 1. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE.

Source: Drawing by Karla Penna, 2022, based on Yilmaz et al. (2020); Chen & Starosta (2000); Delors et al. (1996)

In this paper, I explore key concepts related to cultural sensitivity and methods I have adopted in the field that have been shown effective in building cultural competence, facilitating intercultural communication and promoting meaningful engagement with traditional communities worldwide and more recently, with Aboriginal People in Australia. Theory U and Transformative Educational theories are the theoretical base of this work. Autoethnography and associated research methods were used to conduct this study during the past two years on working with Aboriginal People in Western Australia.

Cultural Sensitivity Conceptual Overview

In this section, an overview of concepts associated with cultural sensitivity is presented, highlighting the importance of intercultural communication, and its established position by scholars in cultural competence development. The concepts presented and connected in this section will be discussed in more detail in subsequent sections of the paper.

Cultural sensitivity refers to the ability to identify relevant cultural differences and to accept and respect these differences when interacting with people from other cultures (Hammer et al, 2003; Chen & Starosta, 2000; Chen & Starosta, 1997).

Rice & Odohue (2002) argue that cultural sensitivity is the use of cultural awareness in effective communication with members of another cultural group. Cultural Awareness is the recognition that there are multiple different cultures worldwide, and for this reason, people have different ways of doing things according to their cultural backgrounds and worldviews (Dabbah, 2020).

Both cultural sensitivity and cultural awareness are part of Cultural Competence Development (See Figure 02). Cultural competence is the ability to detect, understand and exploit cross-cultural differences manifested in all processes of organising and in all managerial activities (Magala, 2005). The highest level of cultural competence is cultural proficiency. Cultural proficiency is the cultural competence practice, when culture is held in high esteem and one seeks to add to others' cultural knowledge through collaborative work, by reading, studying, conducting research, and developing new inclusive approaches (Victoria Aboriginal Child Care Agency, 2010)

In general, for cultural training in Australia, this conceptual framework is slightly different, with five predominant concepts/approaches that inform Indigenous cultural training: cultural awareness, cultural competence, cultural respect, cultural security and cultural safety (Downing & Kowal, 2011).

The concepts of cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency along with their intrinsic association to intercultural communication have been used interchangeably, despite each being uniquely different (Kerrigan et al, 2020). These concepts are associated with Intercultural Communication Competence but are different concepts. Intercultural Communication Competence refers to the abilities that enable individuals to conduct effective interactions in a multicultural environment and to narrate from different cultural perspectives (Bennett & Bennett, 2003).
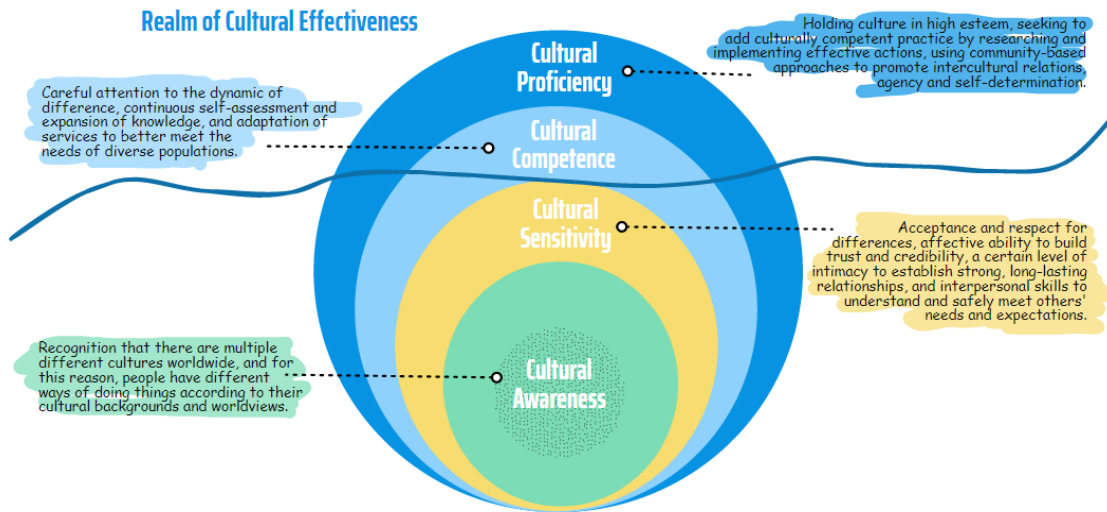
Realm of Cultural Effectiveness

Cultural Proficiency
Holding culture in high esteem, seeking to add culturally competent practice by researching and implementing effective actions, using community-based approaches to promote intercultural relations, agency and self-determination.

Cultural Competence
Careful attention to the dynamic of difference, continuous self-assessment and expansion of knowledge, and adaptation of services to better meet the needs of diverse populations.

Cultural Sensitivity
Acceptance and respect for differences, affective ability to build trust and credibility, a certain level of intimacy to establish strong, long-lasting relationships, and interpersonal skills to understand and safely meet others' needs and expectations.

Cultural Awareness
Recognition that there are multiple different cultures worldwide, and for this reason, people have different ways of doing things according to their cultural backgrounds and worldviews.

FIGURE 02: CULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT MODEL.

Source: DrawInG by Karla Penna, 2022, based on Victoria Aboriginal Child Care Agency (2010); Nuri et al (2005), Chen & Starosta (2000; 1997)

Consistent intercultural communication increases individuals' likelihood to challenge personal beliefs and embrace new perspectives. These intercultural interactions do not occur automatically, and when they do, there is always the potential for misunderstanding. The main causes identified by Chen (2010) for this misunderstanding are cultural barriers such as ethnocentrism and intercultural communication apprehension.

Ethnocentrism is described in social sciences as the tendency of judging another culture from a particular cultural lens (Mcauliffe et al, 2012). In intercultural communication, by default, individuals tend to be influenced by their own set of values and place their cultures at the centre, and all others as satellites. People who are ethnocentric or culture-centric tend to be embedded in a narrow perspective of what is good, right and true in terms of their culture.

A certain level of ethnocentricity is rational, to ensure or survival of one's culture, by promoting and defending cultural values. However, when ethnocentrism grows to racism and discrimination, it becomes a barrier to intercultural communication. Cultural sensitivity entails a balance between ethnocentricity and respect for other cultures. The individual's ability to develop emotion toward understanding and appreciating cultural differences promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication (Chen & Starosta, 2000).

Levels of ethnocentrism are closely connected to intercultural communication apprehension, another communication barrier. Intercultural communication apprehension is "the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with people from different groups, especially different cultural or ethnic groups" (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997:147). Intercultural communication apprehension influences individuals' behaviors' during intercultural interaction which can lead to a reduction in mutual understanding. The apprehension can affect the interpretation of messages, leading to decreased tolerance and increased disrespect toward individuals from different cultures (Trisasanti et al, 2021).

Storytelling 01: Experience of engagement with Aboriginal People, by Jeremy English

"From 2018 to 2021, I was study manager for a mining development proposed by a mining company ('the company'), in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. I participated in multiple engagements with the Aboriginal People whose traditional lands hosted the proposed development.

The destruction of the Juukan Gorge rock shelters in May 2020 catalysed impetus within Australian society for a significant change in engagement with Indigenous Peoples, and the approach to Indigenous cultural heritage, both within the Pilbara region and more broadly across Australia.   Following this incident, it was recognized by the company that reaching an agreement with the Aboriginal People for the development to proceed would require a deeper level of engagement, and increased protection of heritage values. During 2020 and 2021, intensive engagement was undertaken with the Aboriginal People, and significant changes were made to the development design and management, that enabled agreement in late 2021 for the development to proceed.

The engagements with the Aboriginal People involved multiple face-to-face interactions where information was presented, to build their understanding of the impacts, mitigations and management of the development. Materials provided included maps, handouts, PowerPoint presentations and 3D visualisations, as well as the comprehensive environmental impact assessment document required under Western Australian and Federal legislation. The importance of presenting material in a visual format and with non-technical language was recognized. The consultation was undertaken at indoor venues, and in the field at the location of the proposed development. Multiple technical specialists from the company were present at the engagements to facilitate understanding of technical

issues. The Aboriginal People were supported by specialist consultants in environment and heritage who participated in the engagements, asked questions to facilitate understanding, provided advice and prepared reports.

As the engagements progressed, it was agreed that discussions at the development locations were more engaging and better understood by the Aboriginal People, so more time was spent in the field, with less time spent at indoor venues. Progressive changes to the development design/management were made based on the ongoing comments and cultural information shared by the Aboriginal People. Despite their acknowledgment of the changes being made to improve the protection of cultural values, I felt there remained a sense of distance in the relationship between the Aboriginal People and the company representatives, including myself. With the benefit of hindsight, in my view, multiple factors were contributing to this; (i) an underlying long-term sense of dissatisfaction with the company - and the mining industry in general - in terms of existing operations on their traditional lands; (ii) concern over the impact of the proposed development on cultural and environmental values, perpetuating issues with existing operations; (iii) too many representatives from the company were present at engagements, reduced the potential for more personal interactions and relationships to be formed; (iv) a company representative with an established trusting relationship with the Aboriginal People, and experience in facilitating intercultural communications, was not always present at the engagements.

A step change in the success of engagements occurred in 2021 when a new heritage professional joined the company, who had extensive experience working with traditional communities globally through non-government humanitarian organisations. She quickly established a trusting relationship with the Aboriginal People, and in my view, this was due to her genuine care and commitment to an equitable outcome for the Aboriginal People. In my view, this relationship was instrumental in the timely progression to achieving agreement with the Aboriginal People for the development to proceed. I was fortunate to participate in several engagements facilitated by her, that were highly successful, and transformed my relationship with the Aboriginal People.

In terms of the change in my relationship with the Aboriginal People, this was due to: (i) preparatory coaching on respectful and meaningful engagement; and (ii) being vouched for as a trustworthy person, by a person the Aboriginal People trusted.

In terms of improvement in the engagement methods, the main changes were: (i) the presence of a person experienced in intercultural communications with an established trusting relationship with the Aboriginal People, to facilitate the engagements; (ii) the number of company representatives reduced, with increased reliance on the breadth of knowledge of representatives, that created a more informal and friendly environment; and (iii) the incorporation of different ways to visually present and explain information such as progressively drawing and explaining diagrams on large sheets of paper during meetings, rather than presenting on slides.

This experience demonstrated to me the importance of company representatives who are experienced in intercultural communication, and have developed trusting relationships with   Aboriginal People, to facilitate successful engagements with other company representatives, and the relationship with the broader organization."

Cultural Competence Development

I work with Aboriginal People in Western Australia, communities impacted by mining projects' activities. From my experience in the field, I have observed that intercultural communication between mining representatives and Indigenous communities can easily be affected by language, technical, or cultural misunderstandings. This led to disruptions in an ever-fragile relationship between industry and traditional communities. In my view, one of the causes of misunderstandings is the culturally different backgrounds of both parties. How companies' representatives express their worldviews and expectations needs to be managed carefully if positive long-term relationships are to develop.

A variety of cultural awareness training has been provided to mining workers and to Indigenous people. To date, evaluations of Indigenous cultural training programs have found them to have questionable efficacy, although most of these evaluations have been methodologically inadequate (Downing & Kowal, 2011). It seems that training for cultural competence requires more than cultural knowledge and awareness. It requires capacity building in intercultural communication competence (ICC) and abilities related to this concept.

The theory of cross-cultural competence - also recognised as intercultural competence or cultural competence - is still under construction, as is the entire academic field of cross-cultural studies (Magala, 2005). There exist countless cultural competence models and definitions published and discussed by different authors but, in general, cultural competence refers to an individual's set of

characteristics and ability to think, act and function effectively across cultures, in interculturally appropriate ways (Chen, 2010; Whaley & Davis 2007; Hammer et al., 2003; Rice & Odohue, 2002).

> "Taking off our cultural blinders allows us not only to understand different perspectives but to fine-tune our ability to listen and communicate effectively. For not only are we enculturated (both consciously and subconsciously) to become competent in our culture and in our roles within our culture, that is, we internalize the values and expectations of our society, but we are also enculturated to respond in appropriate but culturally limited ways. These "appropriate ways" are contextual and ever-changing. (...) cross-cultural competence involves developing not only understanding and curiosity, but also skills. Culturally appropriate communication is one such skill". (Thomas & Fujimura, 2022:2)

As an attempt to contribute to 'the big picture' of cultural competence development, the next subsections explore characteristics and individual abilities associated with each cultural stage.

Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is the cognitive aspect of intercultural communication competence; it is the recognition of cultural conventions that affect how we think and behave (Chen & Starosta, 2000). It is related to learning differences and similarities of others' cultures.

> "At the heart of each culture is a worldview, which is an integration of all of the tangible and intangible pieces of how that cultural group perceives the world. This includes interactions with the natural and social environment, history, politics, economics and belief systems." (DFAT, 2016)

Cultural awareness training typically aims to enhance participants' knowledge of 'cultural, social and historical factors applying to Indigenous peoples' (Thomson 2005, in Downing & Kowal, 2011). Cultural awareness is a precursor to cultural sensitivity, as awareness has been in general related to the provision of knowledge (cognitive), aiming at understanding and changing attitudes (behavioral), including acceptance and respect for others' cultures. This is an expected but not guaranteed outcome. Chen & Starosta (1997) explain that learning about other's cultures is different from achieving awareness of others' cultural differences.

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A culturally aware individual knows that there are different cultures in the world and in part understands that different cultural backgrounds are based on a set of social values, cultural practices and worldviews and that this 'cultural package' impacts how a person thinks and acts.

Cultural Sensitivity

> *"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."* Maya Angelou

Cultural Sensitivity is the affective aspect of intercultural communication competence, comprising the active desire to motivate oneself to understand, appreciate, and accept differences among cultures (Chen & Starosta, 2000). It is defined by Porta and Last (2018) as the ability to recognise, understand, and react appropriately to behaviors of persons who belong to a cultural or ethnic group that differs substantially from one's own. A high level of cultural sensitivity allows a person to monitor the intercultural communication environment and adjust their behaviors to the changes, showing themselves to be respectful, empathetic and interactive, facilitating a successful engagement (Shapiro, Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008).

Chen & Starosta (2000, in Chen, 2010) contended that intercultural sensitivity (ICS) is one of the essential factors for intercultural communication and consists of five abilities: (a) interaction engagement, (b) respect for cultural differences, (c) interaction confidence, (d) interaction enjoyment, and (e) interaction attentiveness. Bhatt (2020) described these abilities:

> "The feeling of participation in intercultural communication is "interaction engagement". The way to orient to or tolerate a counterpart's culture and opinion is the "respect for cultural differences" aspect of ICS. Interaction confidence is "concerned with how confident the parties interacting in the intercultural setting". The interaction enjoyment dimension deals with participants' positive or negative reactions to communicating with people from different cultures. The effort put in by a party in an intercultural interaction to understand what is going on in an intercultural interaction is the "interaction attentiveness" dimension. ICS deals with the ability to learn and understand people belonging to different cultural backgrounds and hence being able to think and behave appropriately." (Bhatt, 2020, pp. 22-23)

Cultural sensitivity involves an affective ability to build trust and credibility, a certain level of intimacy to establish strong, long-lasting relationships, and interpersonal skills to understand and safely meet

others' needs, expectations and inherent rights (Rice & Odohue 2002). Affective Abilities are defined by Baker & O'Brien (2019 in Baker, 2020) as the interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities required to influence the development of positive relationships (e.g., communicating effectively, role modeling, learning from experiences, or managing one's own emotions and values).

Cultural sensibility involves different components related to emotions. Chen and Starosta (2000, pp.5-6) identify six elements of cultural sensitivity: self-esteem, self-monitoring, open-mindedness, empathy, interaction involvement and non-judgment. According to those authors, empathy is the core component of cultural sensitivity. Empathic people have the ability to sense others' feelings, read their reactions, and adjust behaviour accordingly. They are more accurate in observing the internal states of others and able to show affection, active listening and understanding (Chen & Starosta, 2000). Being sensitive to cultural differences enables us to provide care specific to the culture effectively (Yilmaz et al, 2020).

Culturally sensitive people know how to project and receive positive emotional responses before, during, and after interactions with Aboriginal People, helping in building trustful relationships. In an interaction with Aboriginal communities, successful, meaningful engagement is the expected positive response. This leads to a higher degree of relationship satisfaction, enabling people to achieve an adequate social orientation that enables them to understand their own and their counterparts' feelings and behaviors (Gudykunst & Kim, 2002, in Chen, 2010).

Storytelling 02: Learning about Cultural Sensitivity, by Karla Penna

"After 26 years of experience working with cultural heritage and culturally diverse communities, I considered myself a culturally competent person. But an event I experienced in 2021 with an Aboriginal child in the Pilbara region showed me how much I still have left to learn about cultural sensitivity. I was in consultation with Traditional Owners in the field. There were some children there who were bored while waiting for their parents. I'm an architect and a scriber, and I had drawn diagrams to explain to the Traditional Owners how technical things work. The walls of the meeting room were full of drawings and maps. Nori (her original name was modified to protect her identity), a nine-year-old girl, saw me adding a few things in the drawings and, while pointing to the wall, asked me, 'Did you draw all of these?'

I answered, 'Yes, most of them.'

'Can you make a drawing for me?' she asked.

'Of course! What do you want me to draw for you?'

'A tree.'

So, I drew a beautiful, all-green tree full of branches and with a full crown.

'What are you doing? This is not a tree! Give me the pen.' Nori exclaimed.

And she drew a gum tree with a skinny trunk and scarce leaves. She said, 'This is a tree.'

I immediately understood that I was drawing my idea of a tree. I am from the Amazon Rainforest where trees are tall with big green crowns. She is from the Australian desert. Of course our trees would be different. I apologised for my mistake and we continued the drawing.

'Okay. draw me some small plants around the tree.' Nori said.

I drew then healthy green grass with colorful flowers all around it.

'What is this?' said Nori, a little upset.

'This is a beautiful surrounding for your tree.' I said.

She took a long breath, pulled the pen from my hand and, while drawing, said, 'These are the small plants I want.'

And then she drew spinifexes and some other plants that I didn't recognise, all of which were brown. She also drew some rocks and a little thing on the rock that she said was a lizard.

I felt horrible! This was a simple task: drawing for a little girl. What type of culturally sensitive person I am who does not understand others' contexts?

I asked Nori to give me one more chance to draw what she wanted. She was upset but said, 'Okay, draw an animal in the tree. Quickly!' She was a little impatient.

Immediately, I drew a monkey in the tree. When she saw the monkey, she looked at me with question marks in her eyes and said, 'You said you are from another country, right? There are monkeys in the trees in your country, yes?'

Then I realised that maybe there were no monkeys in trees in Australia... So, why I didn't ask her what type of animal she wanted in the tree instead of drawing "my type" of animal? I felt ethnocentric, insensitive, disrespectful to her culture.

My eyes were full of tears. I had a knot in my throat, and I had no words or apologies to give to her for being so insensitive to her culture. She noticed how disturbed I was.

And then she said, 'Look, don't be sad. We can redraw its ears and nose, add a belly and turn it into a koala! See?'

And in this way, being patient and understanding to me, she transformed a Brazilian monkey into an Australian koala - my culture into her culture.

Talking to me in a very gentle tone now, she said, 'Draw me a river, and then the drawing will be complete.'

Feeling very disappointed in myself, I drew a river.

'Let's paint it together,' she said, trying to cheer me up.

I got the blue pencil, and she got the brown pencil at the same time. We looked at each other and she felt my pain. I learned nothing! Did I choose the colour of my river, not hers?

I couldn't suffer for long because my manager called for me to come to a meeting, but my heart was broken by my insensitivity.

Fifteen minutes later, Nori came to the room where the meeting was happening, tapped my back and gave me the drawing. She said, 'I finished the drawing for us. I want you to keep it to remember me,' and she left.

When I saw the drawing, she painted half the river in blue and the other half in brown. I ran after her and asked, 'Why does the river have two colours?'

She said, 'I can see you miss your place. I mixed the colours because my place can be your place too - I like you and don't want to see you sad.'

What Nori showed me that day is that building cultural sensitivity is a life-learning journey. It is complex to figure out what to do to run our organisations and our professionals in a way that is fairer and culturally respectful for Indigenous people. Human rights discussions on the rights of Indigenous Peoples seem to be on the right path, working in accordance with the right set of values, but a new mindset is necessary to be consolidated all around the world for us to gain a deeper understanding of how our attitudes impact traditional peoples' lives."

Cultural Competence

Cultural Competence is the ability to participate and perform ethically and effectively in personal and professional intercultural settings (University of Sydney, 2022; University of Kansas, 2016; UNESCO, 2013; Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006; Deardorff, 2006; Martin, 2005). Magala (2005) says that this competence allows for the successful and creatively bridging of differences in perceiving, identifying, naming, prioritizing, and communicating values and beliefs. For Johnson et al. (2006:530), intercultural competence adds effectiveness to an individual's cultural sensitivity, who is expected to demonstrate a set of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes in order to work successfully with people from different national cultural backgrounds at home or abroad.

Chen & Starosta (2000) described cultural competence (adroitness) as the behavioral aspect of intercultural communication competence, the ability to get a job done and attain communication goals in intercultural interactions. Currie (2021) adds that cultural competence is the attitudes and behaviors, reinforced through policy and practice, that enable effective cross-cultural collegiality and collaboration at the individual and system level. For this reason, cultural competence requires mastery of the capacity for cultural self-assessment, values of diversity, management of cultural dynamics, the adaptation of actions through cultural understanding, and recognition of cultural differences and understanding of the impact difference makes. (Currie, 2021) These mastery skills lead to the ability to think and act in interculturally appropriate ways (Hammer et al., 2003, p. 422).

Cultural (or intercultural) competence aims at opening people's hearts and minds to understand others' logic and cultural beliefs engage and listen to others' ideas and worldviews, sharing awareness of selfhood and otherness with more and more people (UNESCO, 2013). They are closely integrated with what Delors et al, 1996) refer to as 'learning to know' (What), 'learning to do' (How), and 'learning how to be' (Why). According to these authors, learning 'to know' about cultures provides the first step in gaining intercultural competence and is a continuous process as there is always still more knowledge to be acquired. Learning 'to do' is related to interaction with cultural others, applying knowledge already gained and continuously acquiring more experience from the interactions. The interaction in the past helps in designing future interactions. Learning 'to be' relies upon the reflective step of thinking about one's social self as having a place in the global world. Intercultural competence frees people from their own voices of judgment, criticism and fear to communicate, interact and act in the cultural environment of the other.

Cultural Proficiency

The highest level of cultural competence development spectrum is cultural proficiency. Cultural proficiency is applying cultural competencies in practice. Cultural proficiency, at the organizational level, is the policies and practices that promote inclusiveness and bring capacity into the organisation

system to work effectively in cross-cultural settings to produce better outcomes (University of Kansas, 2016). At the individual level, it is the values and behaviors that enable people to interact and perform effectively in a culturally diverse environment. (Nuri et al, 2005)

Cultural proficiency, in my perspective, is directly related to a set of abilities associated by Portalla & Chen (2010:22-24) with cultural effectiveness:

- Message Skills: the ability to use the language of a cultural other using the other's verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Chen, 2007:102).
- Interaction Management: the ability to "taking turns in discussion, and initiating and terminating interaction based on an accurate assessment of the needs and desires of others" (Ruben & Kealey, 1979:18)
- Behavioral Flexibility: the ability to observe an interaction, distinguish and make use of the appropriate behaviors, and adapt to the specific situational context (Bochner & Kelly, 1974).
- Identity Management: the ability to maintain one's counterpart's personal and cultural identity (Yilmaz, 2020:2)
- Relationship Cultivation: the ability to establish a certain degree of relationship with one's partner in order to satisfy each other's needs and reach a positive outcome of interaction (Chen, 2007:106).

Beyond the capabilities of cultural competence, a cultural proficiency person recognises cultural differences and how issues can be addressed by considering others' perspectives. This individual is equipped to respond effectively and in a transformative way to present different, innovative, creative solutions for cultural and social good. They are visionary, change-makers, and ever-learners individuals, who understand that cultural proficiency is a journey, not an endpoint (Nuri et al, 2005). This transformative mindset is explained by Taylor (2013:180) as qualities of transformative learning:

- Cultural-Self Knowing: more fully understanding our worldviews (or ways of knowing, being and valuing), especially values, premises, frames of reference, emotions and ideals residing in our subconscious (and connected to the collective unconscious) which underlie our habits of mind, constitute our (cultural/individual) identities, and govern our social inter/actions.
- Critical Knowing: understanding and appreciating the value of reconnecting with the natural world and with culturally different others' ways of knowing, valuing and being in the world.
- Relational Knowing: understanding how economic and organisational power has historically structured our sociocultural reality (especially class, race, gender and the conventional scientific worldview) and thus governs (controls, restricts, limits, distorts) our identities and our relationships with the natural world and with the culturally different other.

- Visionary and Ethical Knowing: envisioning (through idealisation and imagination and dialogue with the culturally different other) what a better world could/should be.
- Agency: realising that it is desirable, feasible and necessary to contribute to making the world a better place and that we have the capacity and commitment to do so.

The following diagram is an attempt to illustrate the development of cultural competence, associating the main characteristics to each concept/stage.
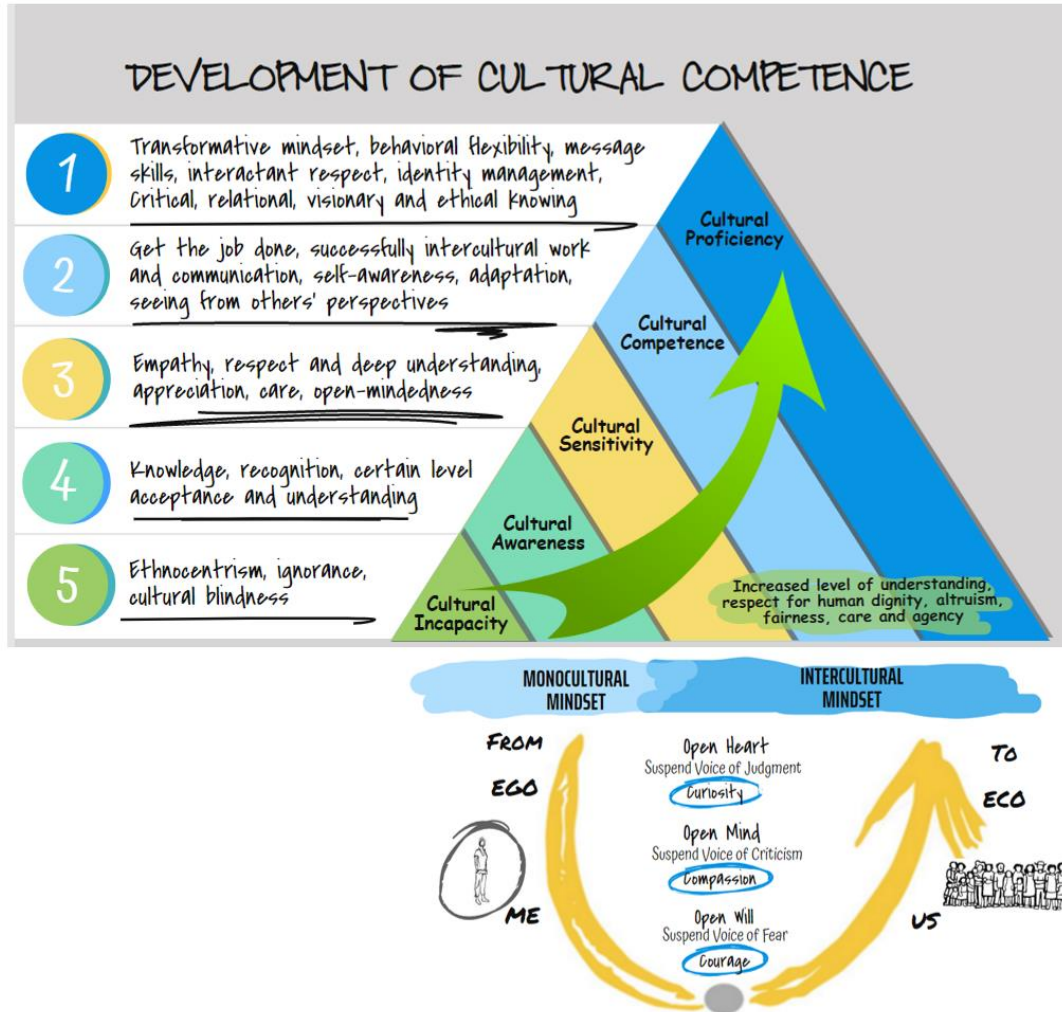

FIGURE 03: CULTURAL COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT.
Source: Drawing by Karla Penna, 2022, inspired by Scharmer (2018; 2016); Victoria Aboriginal Child Care Agency (2010).

Conclusion

Over the past four years, I have researched 15 cultural awareness trainings conducted in Western Australia and engaged in seven of them. These training workshops are part of numerous other cultural trainings I have engaged in and undertaken around the world, in countries I have worked with over 27 years professional life. It is my view that there is little opportunity in such a deterministic and objectivistic world for cultural awareness and cultural competence training directed to Indigenous Peoples (and to those who engage and work with them) adopting transformative models. The primary focus of these training programs has been to provide a cultural overview of history and traditions, followed by an overview of cultural behaviours and knowledge systems, then finally how to behave in an intercultural interaction.

As discussed in this paper, it is expected that with the provision of different levels of knowledge - or even short cultural immersion and other types of in-field experiences - that individuals change their attitudes toward cultural others. My experience in the field, supported by countless scholars, shows that this does not happen without a decision to change one's mindset from a state of cultural understanding and acceptance to one of continuous higher level cultural sensitivity.

My intention with this paper is not to criticise what has been done. Efforts in designing and implementing better training in cultural competence from governments, the third sector, companies and other institutions have been increased exponentially in the past decades. However, it is important to recognise that knowledge is an objective product, cognitive. Regardless of the amount of its acquisition, the subjective character of intercultural communication competence – the main factor that allows meaningful engagement and promotes mutual understanding and the joint construction of meanings - requires quality in the transmission of this knowledge to enable reaching the set of cognitive, affective and effective abilities. Art-based approaches can help in the quality of learning experience, offering exciting and novel methods for engaging Indigenous Peoples and industry workers in transformative processes focused on deconstructing discriminatory and racist mindsets and attitudes.

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Incorporating AI into Arts Management Undergraduate Education

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Greening our future: cultural policy and the ecological imperative

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How do we cope with emerging IA in managing the classical music field? A Romanian nationwide case study

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand musicians' capacity to embrace and incorporate Artificial Intelligence in their musical and management practices, both for personal and institutional gain.

The main objective of the research is to emphasize the opinions of Romanian professional musicians, regarding the benefits and risks of the development of AI in music creation, performance, and the entire organization of the classical music industry.

Keywords:

New era in music, artificial emotional intelligence, challenges, impact, perspectives.

At the end of June 2023, a questionnaire was launched in Romania to collect data from professional musicians (independent musicians, musicians in institutions, students and teachers in high schools and music universities), gathering both their experience with the use of AI and their opinions and perspectives on the benefits of its emergence in the classical music field. The results of this research will demonstrate that professional musicians are reluctant and tend to avoid the use of Artificial Intelligence due to a relative lack of expertise in the area of digitization vs. their main field of competence that has rooted in the traditional values.

However, existing literature suggests that Artificial Intelligence can be a useful and efficient tool in saving time and resources. Our purpose is also be highlight its potential to enrich the musical sector, without excluding the musician who makes the difference in ensuring the expressive, emotional, human content essential to music.

Introduction

There is scientific research in the fields of neurology and psychology which analyse the capacity of computers to recognize and respond to human emotions. The realm of "affective artificial intelligence", introduced by R. Picard (1997), approaches the interaction of technology with human emotions, the work with affective interfaces, measuring the impact that advanced affective technology can have. The up-to-date outcomes refer mainly to medical assistance (assistant robots for elderly or disabled people), education (assistance in teaching and learning), physical state or socialization (interactions with people, the physical optimization of the human body), and less to the artistic sector, which operates to a very large extent with specific affective states.

In connection to AI-associated discoveries, controversial topics are currently under debate, regarding the role that AI will have in people's lives. Researchers assert that automation does not mean the replacement of man by virtual machines (Moore, 2018), but rather, as can already be ascertained in life and education sciences, an assistance in adapting people to the age of speed, to an evolutionary stage that has become competitive, unpredictable, and many times hard to understand. These so-called robots wish to be "virtual agents which can advise, instruct and assist humans in decision" (Malik, 2020), offering people a clearer perspective on the trends in various fields, as well as the opportunity of a more complex instruction due to the richness of the informational resources they provide.

It is noticeable that most approaches highlight the caution we must have in this man-robot relationship, by pondering all actions, so that the system remains dependant on people's involvement and control. AI must be confined to supporting and not replacing human creativity and intelligence (Caramiaux et al, 2020), even if it reaches a level where it can perceive and operate with a huge cultural and informational diversity.

The topic is delicate also in aspects connected to human ethics, especially when decision-making comes into question, which can have significant implications in people's lives. There are concerns regarding the perspectives of this super-intelligent system, which at some point might exceed the social benefit and become "more correct" than man in making cognitive decisions, thus compromising affective involvement in achieving results.

Neuroscientific research proves that current AI variants can replicate emotions by means of "artificial empathy", but are and will be unable to generate their own affective responses. It is interesting to

follow this competitive man-robot dialogue, which in terms of affective existence is very easily and radically dominated by human beings. Whereas for humans the social instinct and the emotional intelligence emerge, most of the time, without difficulty, for AI this aspect represents a hard to solve problem. The advance that humanity has at this point in terms of "affective intelligence" is something to be secured, because it is considered as one of the few forms of connection in interhuman relationships in the foreseeable future. Otherwise, people's lives would become sterile and very questionable with regard to selections made according to ethical, emotional criteria characteristic of human beings, attacking and eliminating, in time, man's identity and essence.

Artificial intelligence in music – technical perspectives

Concerning its presence in the sector of classical music, this new „electronic brain" that AI tends toward is still in its incipient stage, as it encounters functional challenges and opposition from artists' communities. The majority of issues it raises are linked to the impossibility of algorithmizing creativity and emotions, essential aspects that define inspiration and authenticity in artistic creation.

Even though the opinion of software developers is that artistic inspiration, emotion, and creativity are unique phenomena that AI will not be able to generate, it is believed that AI will nevertheless be capable of assisting musicians in perfecting their artistic performances, regarding:

- Music composition and accompaniment;
- Production and recording – by sound processing and automatic audio-video editing;
- Assisted learning processes – building an interactive system containing creative exercises to aid in the understanding of theoretical concepts;
- Advertising and management – by automating the stages of music marketing and setting up the materials that artists can use to increase their visibility in the communities where they practice their profession, also by automatically carrying out consumption research.

AI may play an important role in getting to know the public, by analysing the data available to it, and recommending choices of repertoires that can be considered "of interest" for the potential audience. Thus,

- consumer's behaviour – by analysing the audience's musical preferences,
- personalization of musical contents supposed to be of interest, by means of consumption algorithms,

can increase the visibility of cultural institutions and can represent, per se, a form of assistance in attracting the public to performance venues.

It is not desirable that contemporary musicians should reject the phenomena that reality operates with, so that the online environment, the social networks, the databases and the streaming platforms – based on which AI builds algorithms and marketing solutions – can no longer be avoided in the analysis of an artist's visibility and popularity.

If we look towards specialized education, the possibility to access a personalized system, adapted to one's need, level, and speed of learning can support the process of theoretical learning in the field of music as well, offering more individual satisfaction.

However, irrespective of the point of view from which we regard the benefits brought by AI, we believe that human interaction cannot be eliminated, especially when it comes to the artistic act in its pure form, namely that sublime experience that we experience in the concert hall, in an agglomeration of emotions, feelings, spiritual interaction and intrinsically human dedication.

Directions and limitations in using AI in classical music

The field of classical music has been confined over the past decades to a quasi-closed space, reserved for the elites, without any endeavour to keep up with technological evolutions. The artists believe that the exceptional inner experience that music triggers is attained by sensing the abundance of sounds and the special energy in the concert hall. There are reserves regarding a virtual flexibilization of superior music, due to its very nature. Classical music has its home in the concert venue, where emotions are empathized directly with the audience, where the sublime goes beyond mathematics and a robot's processing capacity.

In the absence of this purely human ability, technology can, if it is not kept under control, be harmful and evolve in a wrong manner (Pichai, 2023), having a devastating impact on both society and the artistic fields that rely for their evolution on instinct and affective inspiration. We may soon witness an unprecedented stage in which we shall find it difficult to make the difference between a material recorded in a concert hall and an AI-generated one. But nevertheless, AI will never be able to replicate "the artistic sublime" without processing the profundity, the emotion, and the energies generated by the artists and the audience (Morrison, 2023). These elements are not to be found among the resources of a search engine, so they will not be part of the computational systems that AI works with.

Artistically speaking, the creative inspiration and the human mark are essential in accomplishing a musical act, as they are indispensable elements that define creative authenticity.

In a balanced manner, with significant limits regarding artistic inspiration, AI can aid in understanding, recreating, and finalizing unfinished works, employing sketches by grand musicians and bestowing value on fragments which, in the lack of another initiative of this kind, would remain unused and unperformed (Ihuoma, 2023).

Still, we find ourselves in a period of transition, in which we almost understand the technological potential, but are to an equal extent worried about the perspectives and the future of human art. In the past year, several articles presented in the online environment (Nair, 2023), bring to attention the danger of the disappearance of conventional artists. The discussed topic refers to pop music, a genre more visible and more widely consumed in the virtual environment. Due to the evolution of AI, a very subtle level of artistic re-creation has been reached in creation and performance. Thus, virtual singers have emerged that have a capacity to render human resonances so faithfully that one can almost no longer make the difference between the performance of the robot or the creative software and man. The manifesto highlights the necessity to establish new rules that will protect and encourage human creativity and remove these productions which begin to compete unfairly with conventional artists.

What still saves art music from this phenomenon is probably the lack of the massive amount of data with the help of which AI could learn and manifest itself. Because of this reason the current options are limited and oftentimes unsatisfactory for a professional musical level. The AI-generated music outcomes which have been tested since mid-20th century (Schumann, 2023) have evolved to what has nowadays become "machine learning", providing such software as PRiSM-SampleRNN, R.A.V.E, SingSong, MusicLM, WavTool, which are able to produce a good musical content with a medium creative value, however.

There is also fresh interest in including AI in public music performances, among which the events of the German composer and pianist Dirk Maassen for the project conducted at Sony Science Lab in Paris, the initiative of saxophone player Asya Fateyeva at Hochschule für Musik Nürnberg, Eduardo Miranda in Plymouth, BBC Orchestra for the Silicon project, K Allado-McDowell, Song of the Ambassadors, etc. We can therefore already speak about a certain degree of flexibilization and of acceptance of the phenomenon within the sector of international classical music. Even though we are in an incipient stage of surprise and resistance in our relationship with AI, there are endeavours that wish to make this (man – learning machine) relationship more functional in favour of the evolution of musical content and stylistics.

The outcomes of AI employment in the music field are also confirmed and visible in "music composition", where technology has acquired the capacity to generate and elaborate complex musical structures, be they completely new or obtained by synthesizing re-mixed old languages. The most noteworthy achievements in this regard are:

- Symphony no. 10 by Ludwig van Beethoven (2019), composed by AI based on sketches left by Beethoven, combining stylistic algorithms of automatic learning;
- Symphony no. 8 by Franz Schubert "Die Unvollendete" which had two complete parts and sketches for a third, for which AI completed the articulate form.
- Chorales by Bach which were lost in the past and have been reconditioned with the help of the "DeepBach" computer.

Also, in October 2022, the BBC Orchestra played for the first time together with AI a music piece composed especially for this combination by Robert Laidlow, within the "Silicon" project, which undertook to explore the way in which AI can be incorporated and used in a beneficial manner with a creative purpose.

Research description

In the time span June-August 2023 we conducted a study focussing on the AI impact in the classical music sector in Romania. The data and information were collected by means of an online survey (google forms) which was sent directly (via e-mail and text messaging) to 226 Romanian professional musicians, a mixed sample consisting of teachers, managers, students of music universities, freelance artists from the sector of classical music.

The aim of the research was to investigate to what extent professional musicians from Romania understand, accept, and use "artificial intelligence" in music practice, both for personal (in their own career) and institutional purposes (in management and organization of the activities of music institutions).

The hypotheses underlying the research were that:

H1 – the professionals in the art music sector are resistant to an interaction with AI due to the loss of human authenticity and the loss of sensibility in the artistic act;

H2 – due to a lack of appropriate knowledge regarding the benefits of technology in the creative process, musicians are reluctant to integrate AI in their own artistic activities.

The questionnaire we used focused on including matter-of-fact questions, relevant to the aim of our research, introducing types of closed-ended questions, Likert scales and open-ended questions, warranting confidentiality for respondents in order to encourage sincere answers. The questionnaire

was made up of 15 questions of which 3 for demographic classification, 2 closed-ended ones and the rest open-ended for bringing arguments on the discussed sub-subjects.

Until the date on which this article was completed, 53 responses were received and checked for errors and omissions, validating and interpreting 48 thereof.

Demographically speaking, the categories of respondents in the survey were:

Age	%
under 20 years	2.1 %
20-30 years	25 %
30-45 years	29.2%
45-55 years	27%
over 55 years	16.7%

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS
Source: own elaboration

Of which,

Categories	%
Manager of a music institution	2.1 %
Employee of a music institution	20.8%
Rector/Director of a music education institution	0 %
Specialized teaching staff (in a music university/high school)	43.8%
Freelancer (independent musician)	12.5%
Student, pupil (in a music school)	16.7%
Others (person in charge of communication and cultural management)	4.1 %

TABLE 2. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS
Source: own elaboration

with the last completed form of education

Age	%
High school	8.3%
Bachelor	22.9%
Master	22.9%
Doctorate	39.6 %
Post-doctoral education	6.3 %

TABLE 3. DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS
Source: own elaboration

The principle underlying the elaboration of the questionnaire was the question and the assertion, more precisely the offering of axioms that AI considers to be true (validated by the OpenAI platform), based on which we presented the contribution of learning machines to the evolution of the music sector in general, and the extent to which AI is already being used in classical music. The respondents were offered the option to accept them as false or true (Likert scale 1 - disagreement/ 5 - total agreement), with the possibility to motivate their answers in a dedicated supplementary space.

After the demographic classification of respondents, the questionnaire started by measuring the familiarity of the sample with the AI topic, first in a general manner, going towards a more particular one (music composition, music performance, consumption studies, musical management) in order to test the capacity to understand its functionality and acceptance into the art music sector and to encourage the formulation of perspectives beneficial for the field they represent.

The essential questions that configured the study are:

- Regarding exclusively the art music field, to what extent do you think that this "Artificial Intelligence" will be able to replace/simulate human behaviour in the next five years?
- "Artificial Intelligence" can process large amounts of data and make decisions based on the analysed information. Do you think that this capacity to detect the

models and tendencies "of consumption" can be favourable to the evolution of the musical sector in Romania? (bring arguments - optional)

- What do you think about the following statements: "artificial intelligence can be trained to compose original music in various musical styles and genres" (bring arguments - optional)

- "Artificial Intelligence can be used to create and adapt musical arrangements. For instance, it can generate music scores for various instruments (reductions), it can suggest harmonies or alternative rhythms or can create accompaniments for vocal pieces. This can be helpful for musicians and arrangers in the process of composing and performing music." (bring arguments - optional)

- "Artificial Intelligence can be used to improve the technique and expressiveness of musical performance. By analysing and interpreting audio data, AI can offer musicians feedback and advice, helping them to develop their abilities and to reach a superior level in their performance." (bring arguments - optional)

- "Artificial Intelligence can analyse the available data and information about the target audience of a musician/music institution, and can offer recommendations to set up repertoires. By analysing music preferences, online behaviour, and other relevant data, AI can help musicians and institutions understand their audience better, to identify market segments and to develop more efficient advertising strategies." (bring arguments - optional)

- "By processing and interpreting music data, AI can identify models, tendencies, and characteristics specific to certain musical compositions or styles. This can offer a more profound understanding of music and of creative processes, supporting researchers in the exploration and interpretation of the musical context." (bring arguments - optional)

- Which do you think are the benefits of "Artificial Intelligence" in music practice, management, and education?

- Which are the dangers of the emergence of "Artificial Intelligence" in music practice, management, and education?

- How do you see the perspectives of this new era of "Artificial Intelligence" in the cultural sector?

Analysis of survey responses and interpretation of results

Starting from the assumption that the AI topic is still insufficiently known by Romanian professional musicians, the first questions wished to measure the respondents' level of information regarding the profile and capacity of current technology to mimic human behaviour in art music practice. Most of the results (41.7%) are situated in the middle of the Likert scale, which proves that the subject is partially known. We notice that the superior percentage is represented mostly by young students, with ages ranging from 20 to 30 years, who are well familiarized with software of assisted music writing and training.

48 de răspunsuri
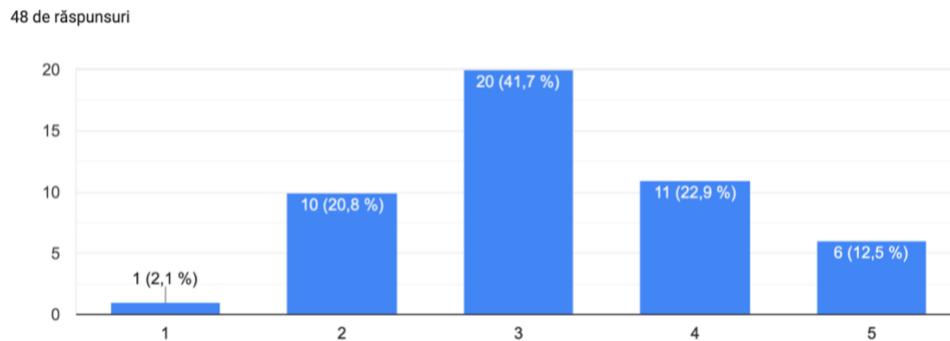
(1- Don't know AI at all, 5- very familiar with AI)

FIGURE 1. RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE PROFILE AND CAPACITY OF CURRENT TECHNOLOGY TO MIMIC HUMAN BEHAVIOUR IN ART MUSIC PRACTICE
Source: own elaboration

We can assess that the generation that has grown up in the age of technology (under 30 years), and had the curiosity to experiment AI capacities by means of an interaction with various platforms right after their appearance, is much better adapted, open, and eager to explore digital novelties. The young generation sees this evolution as natural and interesting due to the richness of online learning resources (courses, tutorials) which it offers. They believe that AI is meant to assist them in gaining deeper knowledge or offering them other perspectives in relation to the studied subjects.

The following question focused on the impact of AI in art music, as well as on the relationship between musicians and the potential, current results, and perspectives of AI. We analysed the perception of AI role in simulating and even replacing human behaviour.
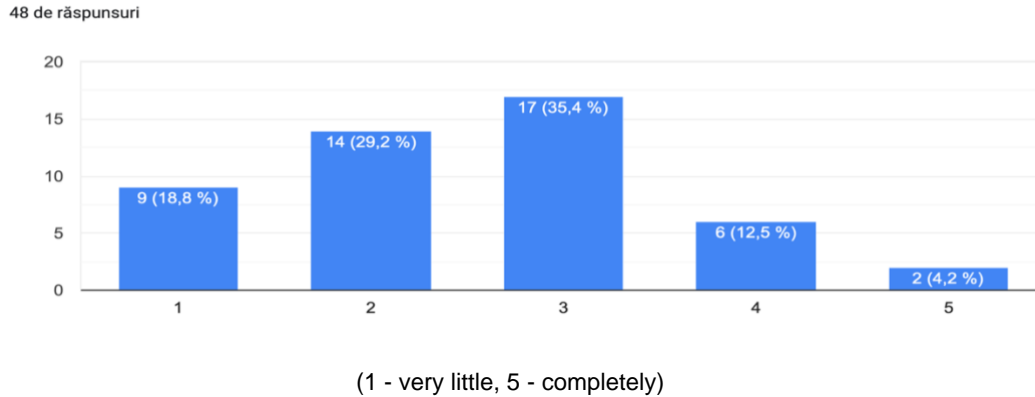

48 de răspunsuri

(1 - very little, 5 - completely)

FIGURE 2. PERCEPTION OF AI ROLE IN SIMULATING AND EVEN REPLACING HUMAN BEHAVIOUR
Source: own elaboration

The results show that most respondents believe the aspects connected to the complexity of musical inspiration, affect, and creativity to be inaccessible to AI and the complete replacement of the human factor is something nigh impossible to accomplish. This is due to the very nature of the human brain, which generates emotions and provides musical intuition, both of which are difficult to algorithmize. The artists' inner experiences, the dialogue mediated by the passion for singing, the energetic interaction with the peers on the stage and the audience cannot be imitated or replaced.

By staying within a general spectrum, the research went on to analyse the musicians' attitude to the results so far attained by AI, in the sector of art music, as well as the artistic perspectives that they see in relation to the learning machines and the algorithm-based music.

We asked the sample if processing large data quantities and certain decisions that AI can make based on the analysed information can be favourable in detecting the "consumption" models and tendencies, in order to support the evolution of the music sector in Romania.

After analysing, grouping and interpreting the responses, we extracted three attitude patterns and a category that evinced response errors:

a)   The radically positive group (20.83%) – made up of those who believe that AI can be a valuable tool in offering information on the musical preferences of communities, with proposals meant to develop interest areas depending on the audience's tendencies.

This category of respondents understands the help that AI can offer in their work of musicological research and marketing, consumer's behaviour, in organizing personalized music events – depending on the interest of the audience, being convinced that the algorithms with which AI operates can contribute to identifying concrete solutions to draw more people to concert venues.

b)   The group of neutral respondents (16.6%) who did not provide categorical opinions, expressing a moderate degree of agreement for the benefits that AI can bring to the evolution of the music sector in Romania.

They believe that an AI contribution to completing human abilities might have a beneficial evolution in the commercial and quantitative sense. They agree that AI can be an important statistical indicator for processing certain data, but have reserves regarding its quality in production. The respondents believe that the field of classical music is a niche sector, where AI does not yet have enough resources and access to valuable data in order to become a competent assistant.

Regarding the market studies and the marketing strategies that AI could generate, the respondents are worried that the highlighting of a small percentage of large-scale consumers (as appearing from statistics dedicated to art music events) might result in the appearance of unfortunate decisions, which would directly affect art lovers.

c)   The radically negative group (43.76%) – who vehemently oppose the capacity of AI to interact with the art music sector.

They feel that the consumption tendencies that AI can analyse do not support artistic value, and this "consumerism" can be dangerous for the future of music. The idea to promote "what the market demands" is considered by these respondents as having no qualitative relevance, on the contrary, it might impose an erroneous system of values. Also, there is a danger that reference pieces of art music literature, which do not satisfy the exigencies of the large public, may be left outside the concert repertoire.

d)   The response error group (18.75%), who did not manage to offer accurate arguments to the posed question, expressed, in general, a concern in relation to AI emergence.

In order to generally support the research theme, we selected the relevant information from these answers, from which we can show that some of the respondents have tested the potential of AI and the offered results have always been satisfactory. They also refer to the lack of originality, of authenticity and emotion which limits creative effectiveness.

The survey continued with the approach of specific sub-subjects relevant for the art music sector, starting from the most visible, already consecrated ones (AI-assisted composition) and ending with prospective ones. Regarding the potential of AI to compose original music in various music styles and genres, the responses are divided. In the negative zone, 25% of the respondents (with ages above

45) are convinced that this phenomenon is not feasible or that the reachable outcome is a definitely unsatisfactory one.

48 de răspunsuri
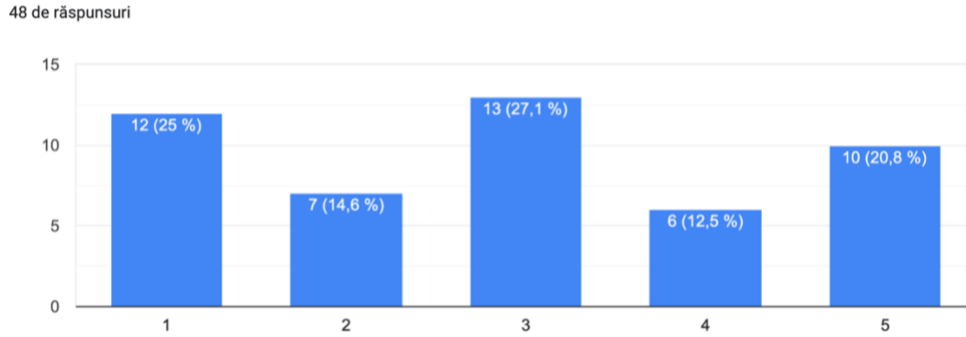
(1- categorically no, 5 – categorically yes)

FIGURE 3. POTENTIAL OF AI TO COMPOSE ORIGINAL MUSIC IN VARIOUS MUSIC STYLES AND GENRES
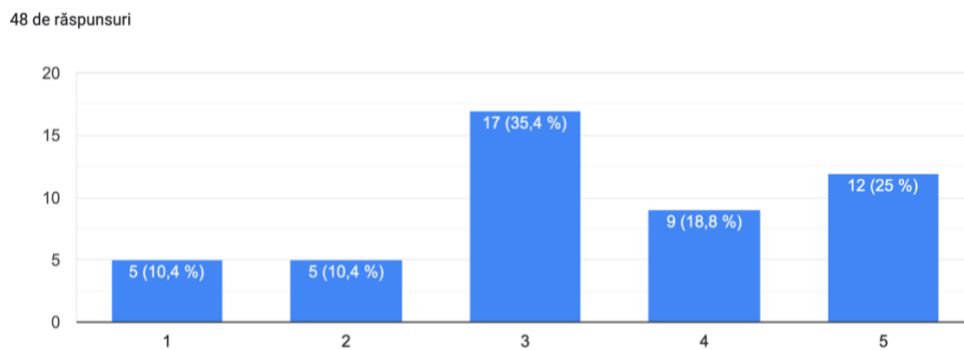**Source: own elaboration**

Referring to this topic, we wish to point out that the literature offers tested evidence that AI has reached the level where it can learn musical stylistic structures and is able to generate new music based on algorithms. The limitations that are still brought up, as mentioned above, have to do with the expression of human creativity, emotions and inspiration, aspects that are difficult for a robot to replicate.

We also mention that in many of the survey's answers, we find issues linked to the concept of "originality": Is an AI-generated production an original material? Or is it just a mixture of already existing materials/algorithms? The respondents believe that the term "original" is a very complex one in art music, as it unquestionably connects with affective, emotional components and the existence of the purely human inspiration. In their view, musical ideas involve, beside a combination of objective resources (of a stylistic, structural nature) also expressive ideas, which go beyond the algorithmic exercise. Even though AI-generated materials can imitate a stylistic musical exercise in a correct fashion, creativity itself remains, for now, something unknown to learning machines. Unlike everyday music, the classical sector resorts to a series of sound subtleties in order to obtain special effects which, for the time being, only people who possess a solid music education can produce. Elements are brought up related to unconscious contents which trigger the creative inspiration, to intuition in elaborating musical materials, to creative archetypes which go beyond the manipulation of mathematical algorithms. The issue of limiting the resources with which AI actually learns how to

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create is also discussed, an issue related to the information available in its training environment. In the absence of these resources, AI cannot display a qualitative, sufficiently relevant evolution that could convince the professionals of the art music field to accept it.

Further on, the next statement subjected to analysis within the survey was that AI can be used to create and adapt musical arrangements, can suggest harmonies or alternative rhythms or can generate accompaniments for vocal pieces, stressing that this can be helpful for musicians and arrangers in the process of composing and performing music.

In view of a good organization and, implicitly, of artistic progress and of particular contexts where music works are presented, it is often necessary for musicians to work with musical "adaptations", known under the name of orchestral reductions or even arrangements. The results for this question show that the great majority of respondents are placed in an intermediary area (35.4%), accepting the assistance of these virtual assistants who can make arrangements, nevertheless expressing doubts regarding the final outcomes.
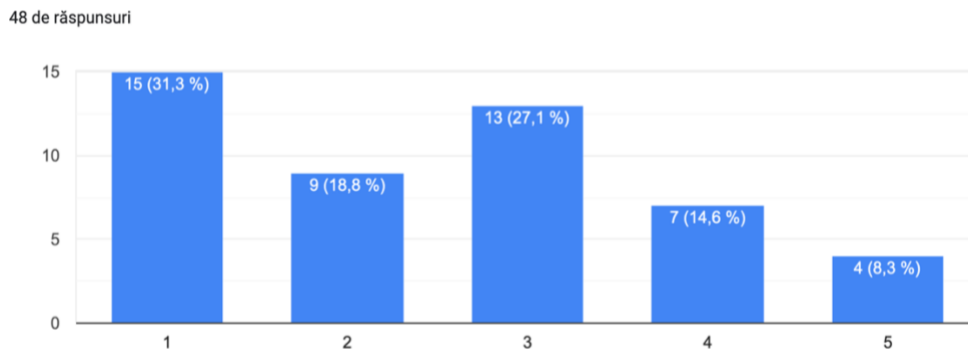

(1- Do not agree, 5 – Totally agree)

FIGURE 4. Source: own elaboration

In the space offered for free argumentation, the respondents show that they know about the existence of composition software which can make such arrangements, highlighting the fact that their use brings with it several risks we cannot ignore. On the one hand it can diminish the musicians' creative capacity, and on the other the quality of results remains questionable. In the case of music arrangements, the human decision that makes alterations to the original material involves the fragmentation, re-orchestration, and rearranging of musical details. This decision to eliminate certain melodic lines or to elaborate musical harmonies relies on one's own knowledge, being the result of judgments, one makes due to education and knowledge of an artistic essence. Respondents also stress that even though AI can be a useful tool in economizing time and resources and that it may be

used due to its rapidity, it also involves this decision factor in which the specialist (the educated musician) is seen as irreplaceable. Also, they believe that AI represents an additional risk in demotivating and engaging human creativity. If the help provided by technology is allowed to exceed the level of "suggestion" / "assistance" and left to create on its own, the conventional artist will become useless.

Another threshold in our research wished to investigate the extent to which AI can be accepted in order to improve the technique and the expressiveness of the musical performance. The data in the literature show that by analysing and interpreting audio input, AI can offer feedback and advice to musicians, helping them develop their abilities and reaching a higher level of performance. We mention here the Sibelius software (which can correct rhythm and melodic lines), SmartMusic (which offers feedback on intonation and rhythmic precision), EarMaster and Perfect PitchTrainer (designed for auditory developments, with note recognition exercises), Yousician (software for the learning of music instruments that evaluates performances and offers advice). Considering these learning resources, we invited the respondents to assess AI's educational capacity in terms of advice and performance evolution, referring exclusively to the sector of professional art music. Most of them (31.3%) feel that AI cannot replace the music "maestro", the human teacher, the one who is prepared to offer a pertinent and professional assessment based on their education and practical experience in music performance.

48 de răspunsuri

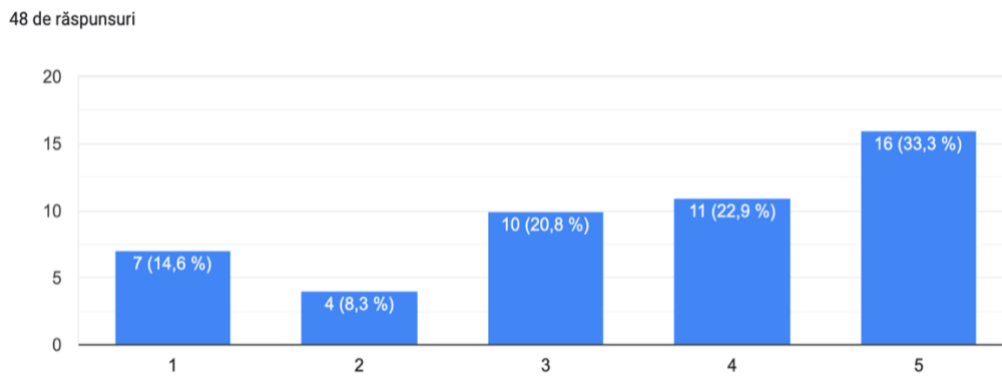(1- Do not agree, 5- Totally agree)

FIGURE 5. Source: own elaboration

The musicians who took part in the survey know about the existence of assessment and feedback software, but appreciate it as being very limited, sterile, incapable of algorithmizing artistic expressiveness, aspects which belong to the essence of the artistic act. Due to the complexity of art music, suggestions offered by AI are considered difficult to elaborate on a satisfactory level, because

the virtual learning basis still has no access to the valid landmarks of a superior comparative analysis. Considering the level of development that it has reached up to this point, AI can probably offer suggestions for beginners' level, beyond which the process should be individualized and formulated as an answer of the uniqueness of musical instinct and of the purely human vibrant nature.

Further on we approached the topic of music marketing mediated by AI, namely its capacity to analyse the data and information available in the virtual environment about the target audience, relying on which it could offer recommendations for setting up repertoires. By analysing music preferences, online behaviour and other relevant data, AI can help musicians and institutions understand their audience better, identify market segments and develop more efficient promotion strategies.

The largest percentage of respondents (33.3%) is situated within the agreement zone, while they understand that market research is necessary to develop a visibility of the music institution and represents an important source of information in attracting audience to concert venues.

48 de răspunsuri

(1- Do not agree, 5- Totally agree)
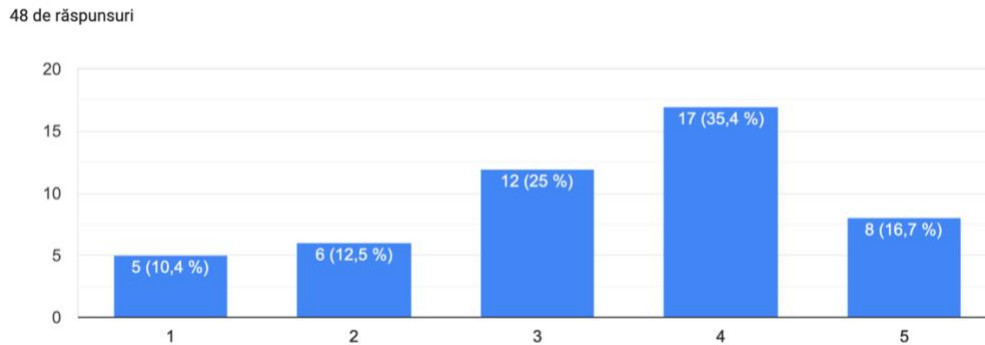
FIGURE 6. Source: own elaboration

The statistics completed for the preferred repertoires, by centralizing the number of views in a certain region and for a certain community, can prove useful in compiling a potentially attractive musical content. The respondents understand that AI might identify these market segments in order to analyse the behaviours of the target communities, thus helping institutions and artists aim attention at a certain public category, at a certain repertoire and personalize marketing strategies.

AI can formulate goals to optimize marketing actions and offer information for consumption. Also, it can perform what marketing calls public segmentation, namely setting up profiles of musical preferences, selecting efficient marketing channels as well as collecting post-event reports. The analysis of reviews offered by the public and even the anticipation of tendencies can, through an

inspired combination completed by the human artistic vision, provide real help in making music events more efficient.

In the field of education, AI can identify tendencies, models, and can even offer help in understanding music and, implicitly, artistic-creative processes, supporting researchers in the analytical application of musical contexts. Regarding this statement, respondents agree to a large extent (35.4% - 4; 16.7% - 5) that the statistical data can prove useful in the musical analysis, specifying that certain limits of utilization should be imposed, as well as an exigency in choosing truthful information.

The input that respondents' value in relationship to AI is the speed with which it can provide research resources. Even with this benefit, the specialist musicologist must verify and select the data that is truly relevant for their research.

(1- Do not agree, 5- Totally agree)

FIGURE 7. Source: own elaboration

Respondents state that the data based on which AI can formulate these models remains questionable when it comes to understanding music profoundly. The cognitive-morphological process underlying the creative instinct is a hard to decode variable. Even if AI can acquire analytical and statistical abilities, and thus gain a role as facilitator, the long-term impact on the alienation of human abilities is dangerous, creating premises of superficial, detached thinking patterns.

Conclusions and discussions regarding the implications of the results

What do these results mean for the field of research? Which are the benefits and the dangers of the "artificial intelligence" in music practice, management, and education? And how do respondents see the perspectives of this new era of "artificial intelligence" in the cultural sector?

AI could provide useful support in the music sector in the realm of music education for beginners or intermediate students, as it can provide means of diversifying learning processes, offering "engines" for work, learning, and evaluation for many of the theoretical disciplines necessary for the consolidation of musical knowledge. Also, when used responsibly, AI can be helpful to analyse, organize, access, assist, explore and stimulate creativity, while staying on a level of suggestion and assistance.

In music marketing it proves its efficiency in identifying musical tastes and the impact that certain projects, repertoires, and artistic actions could have on a target community.

Having the capacity to analyse large quantities of data in a fast and precise manner, AI can lead to better decision making based on such exploration, behaving like as assistant in musicological research, in music management, and in market studies interested in the analysis of virtual behaviours.

Regarding the dangers of the appearance and integration of AI in the music sector, one of the main aspects is related to a certain human regression, in which the artist, seconded by AI, could act only on the basis of patterns, without wanting to make the effort of employing specifically human functions (intellectual, emotional, psychological). These scenarios can lead in time to the deterioration of expressiveness and, implicitly, of the quality of the musical act, transforming musical experience into a sterile experiment. With this can also come a lack of interest in the deeper study of music, in finding the expressive subtleties in works of art and, implicitly, a distancing from the artistic affect of the human creators. Also, encouraging the diminution of the human creative and intellectual effort and concomitantly a dependence on the use of virtual assistance could lead to the disappearance of the engagement of artistic creativity.

And yet, the present world we live in imposes an obligation to adapt, respectively to accept AI and its use in a balanced manner, so that we can know and control the direction of development and employment of this technological support.

Another important element under discussion is the uncontrollable influence that the data in the online environment can have in relation to AI. At this moment, learning engines work with a variety of sources, many thereof not verified, which are mixed to formulate a so-called value scale which coordinates the artificial learning, respectively the formation of this artificial brain. The accessibility of operating with online data, as well as the ease with which users can upload unverified information into search engines can in themselves constitute a danger of distorting and losing the quality of results. 70.8% of the respondents are convinced that the abundance of fake data in the online

environment can pose a significant risk for the manner of action and the nature of the results offered by AI.

Regarding the perspectives of this new AI era in the cultural sector, the opinions diverge and, in general, the opposing poles are associated to age categories. The respondents with ages over 45 feel that the degree of risk posed by the appearance of AI is very high, due to the temptation to use it excessively and uncontrollably.

The concept of "musical art" appeared and evolved as a human product by excellence, created by people for people, with references to the condition of an individual or a group that are before all else human. It would be at least bizarre to imagine this context like a series of codes and algorithms which become mathematized to ensure evolution, even though through their structure they are human norms and characteristics with an affective nature. Even though they are aware of the imminence of AI in the future of the cultural sector, and that ignoring it cannot bring benefits, the musicians who participated in the survey expressed significant reserves in appreciating its effectiveness in current musical art. They believe that for the time being it cannot replace the complexity of creative, intellectual, and receptive processes from the artistic-musical sector, which are determined by the influence of subjective, authentic, original human factors.

The young respondents (20 to 30 years) see the perspective of AI as being favourable, even though they believe it is too early to draw peremptory conclusions on this topic. Young people see this phenomenon as a natural step in the evolution of humanity, a road that the future generations will certainly follow. Even though, as compared to the other arts, music still needs time to absorb this AI, we shall whether we like it or not witness a development leading to a fundamental reconsideration of artistic phenomena. And until then its presence will be felt most probably in teaching and education, training and management, trading, production, and research, where it already offers impressive opportunities for development.

Limitations of the research and future guidelines for analysis

Even though we made efforts to submit the survey to a considerable number of musicians, we feel that the size of the sample is not satisfactory enough to offer a significant outlook regarding the goals of the research. The weak representativeness of the sample of young students among the respondents, considering that they are the ones who have direct contact with the topic of this research, offers a limited conclusion of the real situation. Therefore, the results based on the analysis of this sample are considered fragile and require additional validation by means of future research.

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Unconference as a pedagogical tool for 'decolonising' teaching and curricula

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ABSTRACT

Challenges to traditional transmission models of knowledge are not new, but unconferences, resulting from an emphasis on informal connections, are a welcome addition to the toolkit for the education entrepreneur who thrives in the social learning paradigm and champions collaborative learning to (re)humanise higher education. In our paper we discuss the use of the unconference format as a pedagogical tool to 'decolonise' teaching and curricula.

Methodologically the paper utilizes a case study approach where data is collected through reflective journaling, participant observation, interviews and a survey. The case focuses on an event organised by the authors in July 2023 at the Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship (ICCE), Goldsmiths, University of London, United Kingdom. The unconference subverted the expert-centred structure of conferences, at the same time as it sought to de-centre and disrupt the traditional teacher-student power relation of the transmission of knowledge.

Keywords:

Unconference; social learning; decolonising; higher education; entrepreneurship

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Introduction

Challenges to traditional transmission models of knowledge are not new, but unconferences, resulting from an emphasis on informal connections, are a welcome addition to the toolkit for the education entrepreneur who thrives in the social learning paradigm and champions collaborative learning to (re)humanise higher education. This ties in with current scholarly interest in decolonising and activities of many organisations all over the world pursuing that aim.

British universities and cultural institutions are facing an array of reasons to engage with decolonising movements. Goldsmiths college, where we teach in the heart of London, has a proud history of radical and resistant research, curricula and pedagogy. The current institutional discourse sets the aim of "academic decolonisation, developing decolonized and pluriversal curricula, and anti-racist and inclusive pedagogies" (TaLIC 2023). We find it important to note the structural / institutional discourse in which our thinking and actions sit but exercise our academic independence and freedom (GOV UK 2023) in our interpretation of it taking into consideration those with whom we engage.

UK Higher Education (UKHE) has been shamed for a lack of commitment to decolonising the curriculum (Batty, 2020) in the wake of global social movements including Black Lives Matter and Rhodes Must Fall. We feel that a great wave of decolonising literature (e.g., Abu Moghli & Kadiwal, 2021; Behari-Leak & Chetty, 2021; Bhambra et al., 2018; Dennis, 2018; Ghemmour, 2020; Hayes et al, 2021; Liyanage, 2020; Walton, 2018) is promoted in UKHE uncritically, often without connecting student experiences of oppression to lecturers' own experience. As non-white[7] lecturers, we find ourselves othered in many ways. Further, we are expected to redesign institutional practices without affecting the structural roots, thereby perpetuating a colonising system. Our institution, like all others in UKHE, employs us to teach with criticality and social justice at the fore without using the instruments of activism, advocacy, dissent, disruption and protest. Instead, we are invited to decolonise our own bookshelves[8], consider allyship and 'white fragility' in an environment where students as 'racialised scholars' are transient members of the university.

Our joint response, however, is to create spaces which allow for students and lecturers together to build "the counter-university inside the university, seizing any opportunity to innovate on the margins" (Santos in Guilherme & Dietz 2017:23). In this paper, we discuss the use of the unconference format as a pedagogical tool to 'decolonise' teaching and curricula. Grounded on a social learning theoretical perspective, we analyse the why, what, and how of setting up and implementing an unconference in person and reflect on its value for faculty and students. Methodologically the paper utilizes a case study approach where data is collected through reflective journaling, participant observation, interviews and a survey. The case is an event organised by the authors in July 2023 at the Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship (ICCE), Goldsmiths, University of London, United Kingdom, which brought together (among other characteristics) a nationally and educationally diverse group of 30 students, alumni and staff from four different programmes

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[7] Here we are specifically referencing and problematising the context in which we live, the UK. Government refers to ethnicity, not race, and uses the expression 'ethnic minorities' to refer to all ethnic groups except the white British group. They "do not use 'non-white' because defining groups in relation to the white majority was not well received in user research." (https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/writing-about-ethnicity)

[8] https://www.gold.ac.uk/study/creating-change/visibility/deirdre-osborne/

(MA Social Entrepreneurship, MA Luxury Brand Management, MA Tourism and Cultural Policy and MA Cultural Policy, Relations and Diplomacy).

The ICCE fUNconference[9], as the title suggests, sought to provoke the expectations of the organisers and participants. The unconference sessions were designed with cross-cutting solution-seeking in mind and most were lightly facilitated (planned in terms of form rather than content e.g. fishbowl, fireside chat, pecha kucha, world cafe). The authors applied an entrepreneurial mind-set to the exploration of shared practices and resources across the programmes, foregrounding the students' perspective. By challenging the accepted formats of teaching and learning, using co-creation and sharing learnings as we went, the unconference subverted the experts centred structure of conferences. At the same time, it sought to challenge the traditional teacher-student power relation of the transmission of knowledge by instead levelling out engagement, through a dynamic organisational process and by prioritizing participants voices (regardless of their roles outside of the unconference). We wanted to offer the students a way to value their newly-developed knowledge as worthy of academic recognition. The unconference was a social learning space designed to develop agency, as the ability to act and give meaning to what the participants did from their own experience (Wenger-Trayner et al, 2020).

However, the focus of the paper is not on the students but on the teachers/organisers' perspectives – see Methodology – and we acknowledge that the event analysed is not a pure unconference, as there was some steering from the organisers in the shaping of the agenda. This may, for some, raise issues on the decolonising framework in which we broadly situate our paper. Therefore, it is important to outline here briefly, and then in more depth in the Theoretical Background section, our position on power. Our students and our own academic practices have taught us to value understanding of decolonising as beginning with the self and understanding institutional legitimacy and power as a function of proximity to whiteness. We use 'decolonising' invoking the current use of decolonisation as the process of changing something, such as a curriculum to be studied, in a way that considers the cultural beliefs behind it (such as the belief that European cultural production is better and/or more important than others), while understanding that 'decolonising' can be a restrictive (and loaded) label.

We believe that decolonising is a multi-level and layered process that is strongly anchored in self-awareness and critical consciousness (as *conscientização*, in the Freire (1970) tradition). Thus, the decision to focus the paper on us, as lecturers, those with the power in the (higher education) institution - well, at least in what concerns the immediate classroom environment. For us decolonising starts with the complex human individual self, as structures are built and destroyed by us, and it is a dynamic process in time and space that aims, in the higher education sector, fundamentally at (re)humanising it, collaboratively creating a "counter-university that actively pursues epistemic diversity as a pathway to alternative futures" (Dawson, 2020:71).

The paper is structured in five main sections. The Introduction presents broadly the focus of the paper and briefly communicates our standing to the reader. The Theoretical Background

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[9] The unconventional spelling 'fUNconference' is adopted in this paper. The capitalized 'UN' highlights the concept of unconference, while the letter 'f' in 'fUN' is in small caps to communicate the underlying playfulness to the reader. The visual identity developed for the fUNconference further played with the word, as you can see in Mosley (2023).

outlines the two main areas that underpin our later reflections: social learning (and unconferences) and decolonising education. This is followed by a Methodology section which details the research design and the event used as case study. The Implications section is divided in four main sub-sections: Time, Trust and Talent focusing on the forming of the idea and the preparation of the event; Process as Practice reflects on the event itself; Are You Still Buzzing? considers the post-event and what next; the final sub-section Liberating Entrepreneurship Education brings it all together in a reflection. The paper concludes with a summary of the main findings reflecting on the use of unconferences as a pedagogical tool for 'decolonising' teaching and curricula.

Theoretical background

Our study is theoretically grounded in critical pedagogy and entrepreneurship education literatures relating to our teaching focuses on social entrepreneurship, international cultural relations and cultural policy. We review the social learning and decolonising theories which informed our data generation and analysis.

Social learning and unconferences

We are educational intrapreneurs who thrive in the social learning paradigm and champion collaborative learning to (re)humanise higher education. Social learning theory is a different type of learning theory, in which all contribute to finding a solution, it is intentional learning as the mutual engagement of uncertainty (Wenger-Trayner et al, 2020). Groups who chose to learn together informally have been theorised broadly as forming 'communities of practice' and 'social learning spaces', depending on wanting to make or not the same difference, over several decades (Wenger, 2004; Wenger et al, 2002; Wenger-Trayner et al, 2020; Wenger-Trayner et al, 2023). The social learning theoretical paradigm fits well with our pedagogical approaches within the core curriculum and our own professional development ('professional learning' in the Freire-ian sense of *praxis*). It also supports the development of entrepreneurial communities of inquiry (Seyb et al, 2019) where uncertainty can be explored in an engaging, prosocial and – importantly - fun way. We respond to Shepherd's (2015) call to 'party on!' and explore the microfoundations of working within a creatively entrepreneurial academic teaching and research community.

The use of the unconference format was for us a social learning experiment with the learning communities we work with, i.e. present and former students from four different MA programmes and colleagues working across various MA programmes within ICCE. Some of the students attending the fUNconference had prior opportunities to learn and socialise together, but not all. We could say there are distinct characteristics to the teaching and learning in our department, ICCE, as well as, reportedly, to the broad approach to education at Goldsmiths. Students will experience ICCE as an extended network of practice; a 'looser' grouping of people who may never meet but may nonetheless share practices (Brown & Duguid, 2001). The idea of interconnected practices takes a view of practical understanding that transcends individual or organisational boundaries and involves learning. Wittel (2001:51) argues that 'network sociality' is more instrumental than notions of community, based not on enduring relationships but "fleeting and transient, yet iterative social relations; of ephemeral but intense encounters". Meaning-making is formed in shared moments within

a learning community. This contrasts with the conventional interactions of individual students moving towards accreditation as a formal cohort of 'classmates'.

Decolonising education

We have already noted that, in our understanding, decolonising can be a restrictive (and loaded) label, often associated with racial and ethnic interactions, be it across countries and regions of the world or within societies. In our own institution, published discourse also highlights race, colour and ethnicity: "decolonization as ongoing, collaborative and reparative work to advance social justice, academic rigour and fairness towards our Black, PoC [People of Colour] and ethnic minority students and staff" (TaLIC, 2023). The important task of dissecting and problematizing this set of labels is beyond the scope of this paper; nonetheless we embody them, we have our own issues with imposed categorisations, and have previously stated that we view decolonising as a multi-level and layered process anchored in critical consciousness. This ties in with our view of the individual as a complex agent, with identity being a multiple and further complexified by factors such as class, religion, race or gender (see for example Appiah, 2018). We do not see "being aware of these different factors as an invitation to essentialism – we do not believe that one single identity factor speaks for the whole person or for a whole social group; both dimensions encapsulate diversity" (as also noted in Figueira & Fullman 2019:6). In short, while students and colleagues illustrate and embody many 'protected characteristics' (EHRC, 2014), they cannot be expected to fully 'represent' any single attribute. Social categorisations are interconnected, creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage, as described by the concept of intersectionality.

Considering the above, we situate this paper as a personal exploration of a leverage point intervention (Meadows, 1999) in a system within which we work, UK Higher Education, specifically that of Goldsmiths, and of the Institute of Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship, our department in College. In this social/institutional landscape, we work towards a sustainable cosmopolitan and inclusive human society. We prefer to use these compassionate, appreciative terms instead of current popular expressions such as environmental and social justice because our own academic work requires a cultural/social understanding of entrepreneurship rather than legalistic and institutional defaults (see also Figueira & Fullman, 2021). We see this shift in language as a form of "letting something go, namely the flows of energy that keep you attached to the colonial matrix of power, whether you are in the camp of those who sanction or the camp of those sanctioned" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018:148). Inspired by this quote, we also align with the 'liberation' vocabularies used by Goldsmiths Student Union in their own decolonising work[10].

We see education as a fertile ground to inspire and affect change at individual and societal level. We "hold a view of higher education as both utilitarian (individuals study for a degree which develops knowledge and skills directly relevant for a job – i.e. a career individual focus) and a hub for the development of intellectual awareness of the individual and advancement of society (i.e. ultimately a broader societal focus), purposes which we see as being able to be conciliated" (Figueira & Fullman 2016:153). Thus, cultural management, policy and entrepreneurship education institutions and the sectors they serve are important actors in the systems we aim to be inclusive, diverse and representative of all voices. They

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[10] https://www.goldsmithssu.org/activism/liberation/

are important especially because many of the changes needed are cultural and it is through educational processes that we can reach the core of the individual. Decolonising work in education needs to increasingly incorporate social learning theory, thus moving beyond transmission models, so that we can make a difference that allows for all participating to voice, act and make meaning departing from their own experiences.

Grounded on the above theoretical perspectives, we analyse in section 4 the why, what, and how of setting up and implementing an unconference in person and reflect on its value for faculty and students. Before moving to that analysis, we briefly present in the next section some information on the design of the research and on the event itself.

Research design

The ICCE fUNconference, as the title suggests, sought to provoke the expectations of the organisers and participants regarding teaching and learning and co-creating and gathering lessons to be shared. The unconference framework intentionally subverts the often expert-centred structure of conferences, and replaces it with a social learning space, inspired by Open Space Technology[11]. We planned to use it in Goldsmiths to:

1. evaluate its effectiveness for disrupting traditional teacher-student power relations in the transmission of knowledge,

2. offer students a way to critically appreciate their own knowledge as worthy of academic recognition.

Our reflexive analysis responds to these two fUNconference aims in a fundamental way. We use polyvocal narrative to covey 'decolonization on the level of the text' (Abu-Lughod, 2008, p.26). We agreed these two research objectives from the outset and so were able to design and deliver the event with data generation in mind. We were guided by three (of eight) principles of Appreciative Inquiry (below) which underpin the generative potential of the whole project (Cockell & McArthur-Blair, 2012):

- Words create worlds: the constructionist principle

- We can choose what we study: the poetic principle

- Free choice liberates power: the free-choice principle

    (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010)

We write this paper in the collective first person, foregrounding the 'us' and 'we' in claiming authorial voice. This shared position was core to the whole fUNconference project, as an experiment in 'epistemic collaboration' (Palermis, 2022). We draw on our own experiences of subaltern contestation as workers in UKHE, and (re)interpret our personal histories in a way the serves to 'break the colonizing and encrypted code of what counts as knowledge, redefining silence as a form of agency and positioning local knowledge as the heart of epistemology and ontology" (Spry, 2012:.220).

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[11] https://openspaceworld.org/wp2/hho/

Methodology for this paper is qualitative, utilizes a case study approach where data was generated through reflective journaling, participant observation, interviews and surveys. The journaling was only deployed by Roxanne and Carla, to take advantage of our ongoing commitments to reflective practice.

Of 24 registered participants, 12 completed the pre-survey and 8 completed post-survey. These are the heart of our data, Other data was collected from video call transcripts, email exchanges and research journals of the organisers. We also use Emerald Mosley's blog post "Making time tangible at the Institute of Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship, Goldsmiths" (Mosley, 2023). As noted, Emerald was the creative director / artist in residence at our fUNconference. For this paper, only part of the data set collected was used due to time and resources constraints to prepare and analyse the data and limitations with word count.

Producing the fUNconference

This section outlines the resources Carla and Roxanne planned and used, reflecting the varied work we did to accommodate the emergent nature of unconference agendas. Data and analysis of the fUNconference proceedings, including 'look and feel', are discussed in section 4.

In late May, as in many universities, budgets are being scrutinised with the financial year end in mind. At this time of year, small research projects pop up as lecturers reflect on the waning year and consider improvements. We were alerted to departmental funds and resolved to take advantage of the opportunity. Roxanne proposed an expansion of her planned workshop for MA Social Entrepreneurship and Luxury Brand Management students, and Carla agreed to collaborate and bring the students she convenes. We secured a modest budget and started work in early June. Emerald Mosley and Nuria Cortes Romero joined the team via our weekly online planning meetings.

We wanted to create a playful working environment that brought our complementary approaches together in a productive way. Emerald accepted the title of Creative Director with responsibility for visual direction and championing alternative representations of working practices. She created a reusable set of artwork (Mosley 2023) for the ICCE fUNconference and delivered research-practice workshops on the day. Nuria took charge of the Padlet[12] and responsibility for helping participants browse and contribute to the digital resources collected during and after the main event. Carla and Roxanne adopted the role of impresarios with responsibility for recruiting participants and organising the event as a site of research.

The fUNconference took place on the 11th July 2023 in the 'home territory' of ICCE. As this is generally a quiet time on campus we had plenty of space. We booked two large (70 capacity) adjacent teaching rooms which connected to adjunct spaces. We used a nearby office to provide a private space for spiritual reflection. We planned catering and edible treats to be topped up at different points in the day. A kitchen, bathrooms, and a social area with comfortable seating were just a few steps away. We were all set for a good 'tea and toilets' experience. We wanted to be good hosts for the participants. The fUNconference would be the last time these people would all be in the room at the same time – we work with one-

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[12] You can find the fUNconference Padlet here: https://padlet.com/mzcpfnkq2p/funconference-m07tqwqiilbfv5g6

year masters and the summer term is mostly dedicated to dissertation work, which is a very individual learning process. We could mark the occasion by making the most of campus resources, including the wonderful views of London visible through every window.

We arranged for audiovisual equipment including room projection, video camera, portable sound system. We also provided a selection of stationery; the usual post-it notes and markers were topped up with craft materials such as wool, thread and needles. Carla and Roxanne also used the opportunity to promote the event informally around campus; we visited the career service and student union to collect promotional materials. We hoped to find excess or unwanted conference bags and materials which could be 'upcycled'. Emerald's design work would be used to accessorise and personalise them.

Within three weeks we were ready to go public. High quality graphic files were sent to print! Our ENCATC conference proposal had been submitted[13]! A tasty and healthy menu was ordered! We sent targeted emails to alumni and students on MA Social Entrepreneurship, MA Luxury Brand Management, MA Tourism and Cultural Policy, MA Cultural Policy, Relations and Diplomacy (referred to collectively henceforth as our MA programmes) asking for expressions of interest. Participants were a nationally and educationally diverse group of 30 students, alumni and staff from four distinctive postgraduate programmes in ICCE.

Even though we had well-established relationships with every participant, it took an enormous amount of energy to build confidence in the fUNconference. We built a sense of anticipation with a 'save the date' email teaser ten days before the event, and a registration questionnaire asking about their expectations. In the spirit of the constructionist and poetic principles, we used open questions intended to direct and enliven participants' pre-thinking.

Implications of the fUNconference

We analyse here the why, what, and how of setting up and implementing our unconference in person and reflect on its value for faculty and students. We remind the reader that the perspective we are foregrounding is that of the organisers and their reflections are used as the guide for the implications (a better word to describe our 'findings'), presented as vignettes. This section is divided in four main sub-sections: Time, Trust and Talent focusing on the forming of the idea and the preparation of the event; Process as Practice reflects on the event itself; Are You Still Buzzing? considers the post-event and what next; the ending sub-section Liberating Entrepreneurship Education brings it all together in a final reflection.

Time, trust and talent

Time, trust and talent defined the working practices for the team involved in the preparation and delivery of the fUNconference. In this sub-section, Carla reflects on the process from her perspective.

Roxanne and I had been colleagues at ICCE for quite a few years but only in the last four months we started working more together, or I should say 'working in parallel together': we participate in a small buddying group of three people supporting each other in securing time

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[13] Presenting this paper at the ENCATC Congress is part of that important task of sharing, as we see our practice and experience as being high applicability and transferable to other courses, contexts and educational levels, and also to other cultural organisations beyond academia. As such, we are keen to gather feedback from others with similar experiences oriented by inclusion and diversity to improve the practice.

for and developing writing for research publication. We have teaching and research interests in different (but sometimes overlapping) fields and we take great joy in working with our students. The decision to organise the unconference was taken in the setting of that buddying engagement: Roxanne suggested to organise the unconference and I said yes – then it was a matter of following the process (secure the funds, plan the event, organise the logistics, invite the participants). Trust the process, it will get you there!

When Roxanne first suggested the unconference, I was not sure what it was: a different way to do conferences?... I hastily googled the term to find out about the format, it seemed very loose, Wikipedia said "participant-driven meeting" (yes, academics do use – and also write - Wikipedia entries…). The truth was I did not have much time to learn about doing unconferences – we had roughly just over a month to prepare and I had a lot of work. I knew that pulling this off was going to challenge my favoured learning style, which involves quite a bit of reading before the doing, and also my working style – I do prefer to be in charge and working collaboratively and trusting others takes time (which I did not have). So, what better opportunity to dive deeply into personal 'decolonisation'?...

I was ready to trust Roxanne's knowledge and experience, and excited to work with a departmental colleague from a different field (social entrepreneurship) in developing an interesting activity for our students. Undertaking this common project was a way to get to know each other better in terms of our pedagogical approaches and work styles, a tester of the potential for the development of our working relationship. We were being academic (intra)entrepreneurs (Shepherd, 2016), finding opportunities and resources in our close vicinity. Afterall, we were buddying to support each other in parallel scholarly production, so finding a way to also produce something together was an added value enabled by the buddying.

We did the event for us and for our students – and Roxanne tried hard to also to make the event with the students (i.e. holding space for them to shape the agenda in the convening call), but making the pure unconference format work is challenging when you are not used to operating in the social learning paradigm. In the Summer term, both of us have less teaching but continue to support our students in their dissertation work, providing mostly one-to-one supervision, while we try to focus on our own writings. Thus, the students and us are experiencing similar processes, in terms of research writing and thinking, but there is no space to talk about those experiences in more equal terms, i.e. outside of the supervision meetings, where the expertise element of the lecturer is expected to guide the student. The unconference became the format of the social learning space where we all could on a (more) equal level engage in our (common) uncertainty. I hoped it would be a breath of fresh air for everyone while we tried to cope with the stresses of research/writing and that it would make a positive difference to our different experiences.

When Roxanne first mentioned the unconference format, it sounded interesting and different. I was excited that I could learn something new, to add to my pedagogical toolkit. Fear of failure (it could go wrong, students/alumni/colleagues might not show up, or not enjoy being there) were present and besides trusting the talents of others (Roxanne; Emerald, our Creative Director, whom I only met in the preparation of the conference; while I had a close and trusting working relation with Nuria, and I knew the wonderful students and colleagues we had invited), I further calmed myself by having confidence in my

knowledge and skills as an educator and having been an arts manager in my previous professional life, I knew I could deal with unforeseen circumstances and improvise.

Talent was in the room and I was going to trust the process of doing! On the day, I followed Roxanne's lead as 'chief unconferences impresario', Emerald's amazing creativity (do you know how much fun and what a great icebreaker activity is to decorate and customize your conference bag? And how this exercise can enable switching between conceptual and material / mind-work to hand-work and enable refreshing/new perspectives?), Nuria's encouragement to use Padlet to share our experiences and knowledge, the curiosity, generosity and warmth of our students, and also my instincts as an teacher/educator/facilitator (hooks 1994). For example, when I led some of the exercises, I did not stick to time (the unconference way), instead I ensured everyone spoke, when they were ready (even if I had to gently encourage). And if I was not doing that, I was focused on welcoming and connecting people.

In conclusion, and to be honest, I still don't know very well what an unconference is exactly, but I don't think it matters that much, what matters is to be in the room, in the moment, trusting those there with you, and if you have tea (plus some treats) and toilets nearby, you will be fine! In more formal terms, I hope to be able to incorporate my experience and reflections of it into the classic four basic stages of the cyclical action research process: reflect, plan, act, observe, and then reflect to continue through the cycle (Dickens & Watkins,1999). Further, the experience has confirmed my belief in the use of social learning, here using the unconference format as a social learning space, to hold space for the development of agency of the students, which then will contribute to the decolonising of teaching, curricula, and education in general.

Process as practice

Below we insert a braid of vignettes; excerpts from Emerald's blog, goldtop.org, where she documents "making, doing and finding things interesting...", and our reflexive commentaries.

Emerald's Vignette

> "It turns out one of the topics that came up for the agenda was wondering how to make academic and theoretical knowledge tangible in the real world, which tied in fortuitously with the POMpomPOM workshop I would be running with the students later on.
>
> We then divided into groups using the rule of two feet (ie, if you're not interested and aren't contributing, move to another group where you are, and can). Giving yourself, and owning permission was one of the themes that came up; along with:
>
> -   Informal doesn't mean unprofessional
>
> -   A useful way to frame 'disruptions' (in entrepreneur speak) can be working out just how a small a nudge can you do to move towards the direction you want to see improvement in

- Setting up a non-fiction book group as a way of continuing interesting discussions for professional development

- Although different people in the room may all be there to learn, they are not all learning the same thing (be aware of your different contexts / power)

- "If I've mentioned interest in doing something more than twice and have yet to take a concrete step to make it happen, call me out!"

The day was documented both in real time, and added to post-event, using Padlet. I'd never used this before and found it a great way for people to contribute in the round, ensuring insights across disciplines … and resources could be shared; break those professional silos! Will definitely use this again at collaborative workshops.

(Source: Mosley 2023)

It was important to bring informality into the whole process, to help participants feel comfortable and part of a learning event customised to them individually and collectively. Emerald's work on the 'look and feel' illustrated how the fUNconference was conceived and developed. A 'scratch logo' (Mosley 2023) was used to invite students into session planning. This was refined into a versatile set of graphics which visually summarised the conference themes.

As described in the previous section, time, trust and talent were the working practices for the team – while two (or three) other 't' are also important to note, tea (maybe with treats) and toilets, are minimum standards for the physical environment. I – Carla speaking - really appreciated Emerald's talent as creative director of the fUNconference – it elevated the event visually and experientially. As she notes, we worked collaboratively (in trust) in the preparation and delivery of the event. From her blog post, I would like to highlight the emphasis on doing (do give yourself permission to make a pompom and appreciate the tangibility of time) and notes about informality not meaning unprofessionalism which are something not that usual in the academic worlds I normally inhabit – although I am on a path that seeks to include it through my explorations of social learning and systems convening. Finally, I note her mention of different people in the room and how they are potentially learning different things depending on contexts/power. This is very important particular in higher education settings like ours where students (and staff) from all over the world come together. This also made me think, as noted by Dawson (2020:72), about "the potential of internationalisation to foster global solidarity through learning about and incorporating alternative epistemologies into the daily operation of universities". The more frequent adoption of the fUNconference format could be a useful tool to achieve this.

Hello! Roxanne here, with some observations from my journal. The first things I noticed in Emerald's reflective blog (Mosley, 2023) were tea and tangibility. For me, this is a perfect extension of the time, trust and talent theme. I trusted Emerald to take the role seriously, as befits an 'artist in residence' exploring commonalities of practice and process She would

probably not describe herself that way, though I know she is deeply experienced in making time and work tangible. Her talent with felt, wool and buckets[14] alongside her long-standing practice of 'documenting her making' contributed to the unique piquancy of the fUNconference as a social learning setting. I felt her participation would help to break down assumptions about the link between (un)professionalism and (in)formality which are, in my personal (English) experience are symptoms of institutional oppression. Imagine my delight reading Carla's analysis above! I realised how important embodiment can be as a route to epistemological aligned teaching and learning, i.e. using our bodies in different ways to support various modes of thinking. As you will soon read, we did indeed have tasty treats and bodily comfort in mind. Returning to Emerald's call for further iterations of the fUNconference approach, I have already started planning how to work with space and time, prompts and challenges in the MA Social Entrepreneurship programme. In particular, the 'law' of two feet (Owen, 2008) which derives from classic facilitation techniques, can be difficult to manage within a conventional classroom and curriculum.

Are you still buzzing?

In my experience – Roxanne speaking – and I think for most people, intentional disruption or breaking conventions is easier said than done, especially if you want the change to 'stick'. The key for me in the fUNconference was to provide regular moments of uncertainty and appreciation. The registration questionnaire was very short. We first inquired about participant expectations by asking 'what are you curious about'?'. Early responses were exploratory and optimistic, uncertain and open minded, practical and oriented to the working world. I was very excited to share these themes with fUNcolleagues (and wordplay is almost always fun!). I opened the first agenda-setting session of the day by displaying a summary of responses to the second question (figure 1).
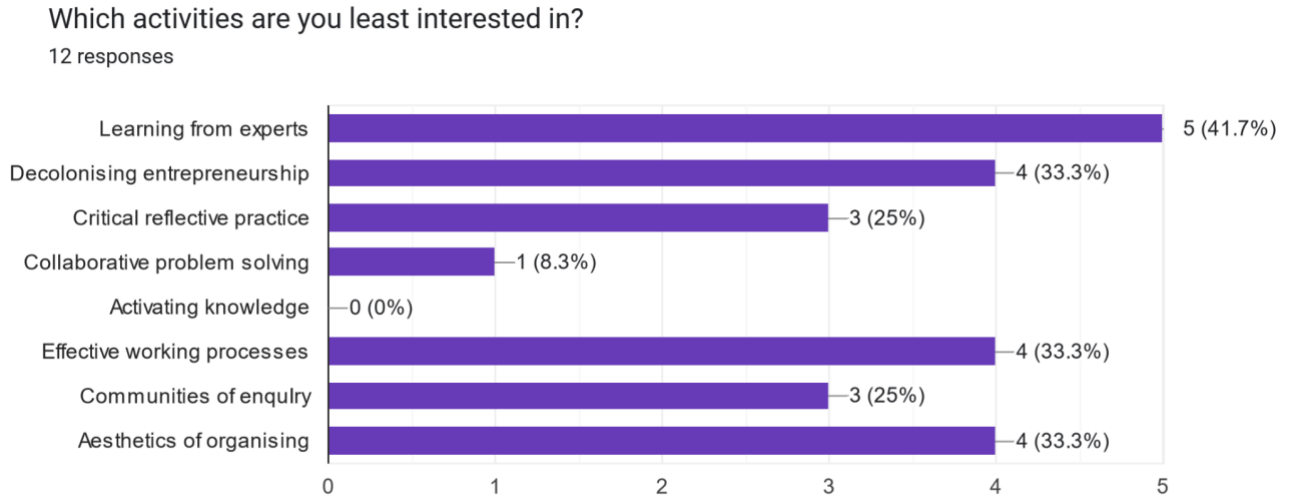
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[14] https://goldtop.org/making/back-forth/

Which activities are you least interested in?

12 responses

FIGURE 1: RESPONSES TO MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTION INDICATING (DIS)INTEREST IN POSSIBLE FUNCONFERENCE ACTIVITIES.

Source: own elaboration.

During the fUNconference design phase I hoped to create a space where participants felt safe to express doubts and uncertainty, by finding their own place in the collective creation of learning opportunities. As I displayed the graphic in the room, I imagined they might try to remember and re-evaluated their own responses. I expressed amazement at the zero interest in 'learning from experts' and received a wave of chuckles and murmuring. Perhaps, I wondered aloud, the question had been answered in haste? In any case, I mused, we could easily accommodate people who had not completed the questionnaire, and anyone who had changed their minds. Based on the fUNconference mind-set, I explained, 'everyone we need is in the room, so I'm not surprised that was the least interesting option, because we can take learning from experts for granted'. In this way, I assigned expert status to the assembled students and responsibility to 'be' an expert on their own practice throughout the day. After that, I tried to focus on time, tea and toilets, plus maintaining a festive vibe. I like to think of this style of facilitation as hosting a party… we made sure there was plenty of good quality cake. In the physical space, I was looking for butterflies and bees. Bumblebee behaviours are exhibited by participants who embrace the freedom and responsibility to move to wherever their participation is more meaningful (Owen, 2008). I did not see many bees buzzing in the room (maybe myself?) so was thrilled to see later that fUNcolleagues were pollinating in a virtual space, namely Nuria's Padlet board. Even better, I now get to share the product and process with other pedagogues. (Ooh, alliteration! Did I warn you about the wordplay?).

We were grateful to those who took time to complete the short follow-up survey, which we also designed as a pedagogical tool. We asked, 'what useful things did you discover that are helpful right now?'. Top marks to the person who told us about "way to frame tiny 'disruptions' to move towards the direction you want to see improvement in". Top marks also

to whomever wrote "engaging with ideas around useful constraints to help make effective process for creative work, strategies to engage authentically at work and apply our critical knowledge in different systems translating into action, reminder of the usefulness of collective practice and community sharing and learning". There is so much richness interwoven in all the data we generated. We asked participants to describe the fUNconference in five words and present the answers in wordcloud form (figure 2). Even this snapshot is energising – I could read it as the beginning of a manifesto of sorts. Certainly I view it as a fair summary of my approach to various kinds of academic work (research, teaching, professional development, service).

FIGURE 2: FUNCONFERENCE FEEDBACK IN FIVE WORDS.

Source: wordcloud with data feed by the authors.

This is feedback, not a formal evaluation – it's not that kind of research. Of course, there is bias. We cannot speak for those who stayed silent or felt unseen, we know this from our own experience. Carla and I know how much effort went into preparation, how much was left undone and unsaid, how much we rely on trust in each other's craft and vocation. What I really want to say on record, is thank you.

Liberating entrepreneurship education

Our concluding discussion weaves the themes of this paper together within the institutional context of our pedagogical work. It is clear to us that collaborative working cannot succeed without interpersonal trust. In this section we offer a critical reflexive analysis which

highlights key implications of our research. We resist the word 'findings' in favour of less constraining vocabularies; the word 'implications' opens the focus of inquiry to more diverse epistemological possibilities in knowledge generation.

Decolonising teaching and learning

We experimented with unconference approach according to a shared understanding of 'the Goldsmiths way' which attempts to resist rather than endorse students' unaware acceptance of an oppressive discourse (Shor & Freire, 1987). Following the Goldsmiths Student Union, we understand liberation as 'the act of working to challenge and reverse the effects of structural oppression in society'[15], and present the fUNconference approach as a route to both decolonising and liberating ourselves and holding space for our student-colleagues. We are in a department which celebrates scholarly creativity and innovation in the 'real world' and strives to discover entrepreneurial responses to academia. Decolonising our conventionally trained academic minds (which is an ongoing task) involved radical pedagogies as we invited current and former students and colleagues to 'question teachers and texts' (Johannisson & Achtenhagen, 2018: 76) and position students as reflexive practitioners.

Sharing challenges and difficulties related to dissertation work was seen as valuable and helpful. Hearing about others' experiences provided validation and relief from personal stressors. Responsibility to take the initiative and give oneself permission to follow up on opportunities was emphasized. Collective practice and community sharing were seen as beneficial for learning and growth.

Trusting 'others'

Students and alumni expressed an appetite for fUNconferences earlier in the academic year. We feel the need to familiarise each new cohort of students with the principles and practices of unconferencing through seminar activities integrated with the formal curriculum. Given our longer perspective on the annual cycle, we understand it is important to 'reset' our understanding of the student experience. We see how institutional processes shift and mutate over the years, in a complex socio-political environment. We can recognise how their learning conditions are intertwined with our working conditions. Most important, we believe the fUNconference is most effective towards the end of the year, once trust has germinated and the institutional power imbalance between students, alumni and staff is at its weakest.

We argue that a fruitful approach to decolonising is appreciative reflexive inquiry which constantly reinforces the idea that participants' situated knowledge is valuable. Individually, we were able to share our own experiences of being 'other' in order to demonstrate alternative ways to interpret and navigate feelings of isolation or confusion. Collectively, we were lucky that participants chose to make space in all fUNconference sessions to explore the potential of an 'outsider' way of thinking. Insiderness, especially if it feels 'wrong', could be the key to a strong authorial voice and coherent critical appraisal. Roxanne sums this up in a different way; declaring that the fUNconference work was 'a good way to counter imposter syndrome by putting yourself in a tight spot with trusted colleagues'. Self-efficacy and self-confidence are hard-won in UKHE, and wholehearted sharing of those precarious and uncertain moments created a learning community of fUNcolleagues. A simple insight

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[15] https://www.goldsmithssu.org/activism/liberation/

we can use in our future teaching is the key task for students is not to become a convincing insider within academic circles, as many strive to do. Instead, they should learn to be able to evaluate information, plans and ideas in a way that satisfies institutional expectations, and trust themselves to collectively explore creative, satisfying and enduring ways to extend their knowledge.

We find that other Appreciative Inquiry principles (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010) were manifest in the fUNconference. Powered by the free-choice principle and animated by the 'law of two feet', participants explored their creativity and collective capacity in ways that brought the best out of their efforts (the wholeness principle). It appears that commitment is enhanced when participants have more freedom to choose how and when they contribute - they (mostly) stayed for the full day![16] How this can be introduced into core curriculum teaching, which is already an intense and regulated activity, we are not yet sure. We will explore fresh critical pedagogies in entrepreneurship education (Verduijn & Berglund, 2020) extended to andragogy and heutagogy as befits our adult postgraduate learning community (Neck & Corbett, 2018).

(re)Humanising the institutional environment

Discussing the decolonising agenda with participants provided an opportunity to reflect on institutional expectations to consider ourselves in racial terms. One student remarked that the UK seems 'obsessed' with race and 'box-ticking' resonated strongly in our reflections. This prompted us, in our post-event discussions on decolonising, to share experiences of being racially othered by Goldsmiths and UK institutions in wider society and everyday life. We developed an intentional focus on our personal and emotional responses to being 'bent out of shape' or 'forced into boxes' according to UK population statistics. Again, this idea is nothing new, but certainly exploring with fUNcolleagues seemed to be a liberating experience. Routinely drawing attention to the emotional responses expressed by participants, when discussing the challenges of academic work, does not solve the problem: the lesson here is not 'a problem shared is a problem halved' but a more scary 'look at how all-pervasive this problem is'. We thus suggest that the participants, by sharing or listening and reflecting, can accelerate their learning about ways to deal with such feelings. We were able to share our own experiences of being 'other' in order to demonstrate alternative ways to interpret and navigate feelings of isolation or confusion.

The ambition we had for our students was to come to a realisation; perhaps the test of successful postgraduate education is not to become a convincing insider within academic circles, but to be able to evaluate information, plans and ideas in a way that academics will understand and respond to. What if their task in the coming months is to take the skills and knowledge that they have developed while studying and use it to make their working life more interesting, creative and entrepreneurial? What each student has taken from their experience of the fUNconference is unique, and collecting those value creation stories is outside the scope of this paper. Our own value creation stories will, perforce, focus on the environment in which those stories can germinate. In less flowery terms, we need not appropriate or even re-tell student stories in our pedagogical work because we need not de-centre ourselves. Indeed, our particular proximities to 'whiteness' in UK society and

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[16] We started at 14:00 and finished at 20:00, which is a long and unusual time period for academic engagement, bridging the normal work day with social/private time.

institutions give us more insight and power to generate lines of critical thinking in seriously playful and human ways.

Conclusions

Drawing on our teaching and learning experiences within Goldsmiths and wider UKHE we addressed two of the areas for which our own training and reading of literature left us ill-prepared. We focus first on the ethos and process, and second on the contributions critical reflective practice can make to our professional development.

We approached this paper in the spirit of collaborative reflexive inquiry, exploring ways to express our vision and action of a building a learning community that would interrupt and invigorate current thinking, and open a space in ICCE for ongoing critical dialogue amongst alumni.

We wanted, as 'enterprise educators', to apply a creative method and entrepreneurial mind-set to pedagogical development across the programmes, foregrounding the student perspective. We quickly realised the value of an appreciative evaluation of shared practices and resources.

We are delighted to offer a glimpse of our efforts to build a new community of fUNcolleagues within and outside ICCE. We encourage students and teachers of entrepreneurship to appreciate the value of social learning spaces and the generative richness and variety in compassionate and trusting interactions with colleagues, for it is these activities which shape our development as researchers, while enabling space and mechanisms for the decolonising of teaching, curricula and education in general.

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