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Beyond Dualism? Exploring the Polyphonic Dimension of Cultural Productions

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# **Beyond Dualism? Exploring the Polyphonic Dimension of Cultural Productions**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the nature and interplay of the logics that inform the day-to-day work of small cultural productions. Positioned in the literature on cultural and creative industries, it embraces a discourse perspective and in particular the concept of ‘polyphony’ as an analytical lens. Empirically, the paper draws on a case study of a music association, in which the authors especially followed the production of a music festival. What emerges is a situation of pluralism of discourses, a variety of relations among these discourses, and fluidity of discourses across actors and roles, which lead the authors to question, at least in part, the presupposed artistic *vs.* business dualism within which cultural productions and creative industries are instead typically framed.

Keywords: cultural industries, polyphony, discourse analysis, tensions, pluralism, festival

## **Introduction**

Most of the literature on cultural and creative industries acknowledges the dual and conflictual nature of the artistic and business logics that inform work in these settings (Lampel, Lant and Shamsie 2000; Townley, Beech, and McKinlay 2009), and it notably investigates the forms through which organizations balance and integrate these dual logics (De Fillippi, Grabher, and Jones 2007), with a great deal of attention dedicated to dual leadership (Cray et al 2007; Reid and Karambayya 2009).

We sense that such dualism reflects a limited view. Portraying cultural productions within the art/business logics frame falls short to acknowledge the many other sources of value and drives for action (Crossick and Kaszynska 2014), as well as to capture the complex elements of the cultural ecosystems in which cultural production is embedded (Holden 2015; Oakley et al 2017; Spence and De Beukelaer 2018). Moreover, most of this literature has been developed

from the analysis of large and structured organizations (e.g. Cohendet and Simon 2007; Reynolds et al 2017), in which dual leadership structures and a clear distinction between dual logics are sensible. Yet most of cultural production is composed of a plethora of small, independent, less structured initiatives in fluid interplay with the environment, which are simply not captured by a neat distinction of dual logics and dual leadership solutions.

Therefore, in this paper we wish to advance an empirical understanding of how small cultural productions are run in practice, by exploring the interplay of artistic and business logics in action in the day-to-day work and conversations of a cultural production. Specifically, we ask: *what are the logics that inform work in small cultural productions? And how?*

We embrace a discourse perspective as a theoretical lens (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000; Hardy 2001; Phillips, Lawrence, and Hardy 2004), borrowing, in particular, the concept of ‘polyphony’ as a metaphor of the plurality of discourses constituting an organizational reality (Czarniawska 1999, 2004; Rhodes 2000, 2001; Boje 2008).

We draw on a case study of an Italian music organization engaged in the production of a music festival. We collected observations, interviews, and informal conversations to reconstruct the discursive dimension of this cultural production and to trace therein the nature and dynamics of artistic and business logics.

What emerges is a picture of complexity. We cannot ascribe our findings to a neat artistic vs. business dualism – only a generic and blurred one. Rather, we find: *plurality* of discourses, rather than dualism; *variety of relations* between these discourses (at times conflicting but at other times complementary or entangled), rather than simplistic tensions; and *fluidity* of discourses across individuals and roles, rather than a crystallization of positions.

In sum, we propose to move beyond the artistic/business dualist assumption to gain a thorough understanding of how small cultural productions work. We believe that continuing to portray creative industries as a field of tension between dual logics is probably not erroneous,

but certainly simplistic and does not do justice to the more variegated nature of cultural production.

### **Background: dualism in cultural production**

Most definitions of creative industries (Hesmondalgh 2002; Jones et al. 2015; Roodhouse 2008; Flew and Cunningham 2010) or cultural economy (Du Gay and Pryke 2002; De Fillippi et al. 2007) bear an underlying assumption of dualism, in the form of existence of two different logics: one guided by artistic and aesthetic values and the other one based on business and managerial ones (Lampel, Lant and Shamsie 2000; Abdallah 2007; Daigle and Rouleau 2010; Townley et al. 2009). Art and business constitute not only distinct, but also potentially contradictory points of reference for those involved in cultural production (Eikhof and Haunschild 2007; De Fillippi, Grabher, and Jones 2007), and several studies have indeed unravelled the fascinating contrast between the identities, practices, and values linked to these two logics (i.e., Caves 2000; Townley 2002; Glynn 2000; Hirsch 2000). The literature on this topic, therefore, generally shares this assumption: organizations involved in cultural production are analysed and interpreted in the light of the conflictual dualism ‘art vs. business’.

How cultural organizations manage to balance or integrate these dual logics has attracted scholarly attention (De Fillippi et al., 2007; Cohendet and Simon 2007; Landry et al 2011;), and dual leadership has emerged as one way to manage the imperative of artistic quality and financial sustainability (Reynolds et al 2017), reconciling the related conflicting goals and orientations (Reid and Karambayya 2009; Bhasing et al 2012; Järvinen, Ansio, and Houni, 2015, Cray et al 2017). Dual leadership is a formal arrangement in which two people with different orientations have equal rank at the top of an organization (Denis et al 2012). This is a common structure in cultural organizations (De Voogt 2006; Cray et al 2007) displaying an artistic director and an administrative director, and an internal dual structure of the organization

that reflects the bifurcated view of the two leaders (Reynolds et al 2017). For it to work, dual leadership however requires leaders' commonality and complementarity of views (Alvarez and Svejnova 2005), communication and trust (Miles and Watkins 2007), so that the competing art/business logics can be managed by understanding alternative views and adopting different approaches (Järvinen et al 2015).

However, we note that the literature on dual logics in cultural production rests on evidence from large organizations, e.g. large established museums (De Voogt 2006), subsidised theatres and ballet companies mandated by a board (Bhansing 2012), the premier performing arts companies in Australia (Reynolds et al 2017), etc. And yet cultural production does not happen only within the borders of established institutions, but it takes a variety of forms, often through small realities (Borin et al 2018), largely unstructured, interdependent and embedded in a broader cultural ecosystem (Holden 2015; Oakley et al 2017; Spence and De Beukelaer 2018). All in all, then, the cultural economy seems to bequeath more than just the economic and aesthetic dualism (Crossick and Kaszynska 2014). In other words, while the literature has thus advanced our knowledge on how large and structured cultural organizations work through different logics, we still know little about how small and less structured cultural productions (e.g. a performing art company, an artists' collective, a band, a cultural association, etc.) operate, which logics inform their work and whether the dual logics of art and business, and the related dual organizational solutions, make sense at all.

### **Theoretical lens: polyphony**

To reconstruct the logics that inform the doing of a cultural production, we embrace a discourse perspective (Fairclough, 1992; Potter and Wetherell, 1987), assuming that organizational action, like any other action, is discursively constructed in interaction (Alvesson and Kärreman 2000b; Fairhurst and Putnam 2004; Fenton and Langley 2011).

In particular, we borrow the concept of ‘polyphony’ from the music field, which means “having two or more voices or parts, each with an independent melody, but all harmonizing”. The concept has, however, also been applied in linguistics (e.g. Bakhtin 1984) as a metaphor for a plurality of ideas, expressions, and languages, which are independent from one another but not isolated. In organization studies, some scholars conceived organizations as characterized by a plurality of voices, which produce discourses, and viewed polyphony as a feature of organizing (Boje 2002; Czarniawska 1999, 2004; Rhodes 2000, 2001) or a resource affording change (Sullivan and McCarthy 2008) and power and resistance dynamics (Carter et al. 2003; Kornberger et al. 2006).

Overall, scholars have generally portrayed polyphony either as the very natural condition of all complex organizations or rather as a useful device to enact change or subvert power relationships. However, the literature has only limitedly dealt with whether and how polyphony informs everyday work. We propose to employ it as a lens to explore the interplay of the two (or more) logics that drive behaviours in the context of cultural productions.

## **Methodology**

Consistently with the explorative nature of the research question, the study follows a qualitative inductive research design, i.e. the most useful to develop a rich understanding of specific phenomena (Langley 1999), based on a single case study (Yin 2003). No a priori theory therefore guided our analysis and context and social action became themselves object of analysis and potential explanatory factors of the phenomena under study (Charmaz, 2006).

We focus on a small Italian music association, Gclef (pseudonym), founded in 2008 by Giovanni<sup>1</sup>, a talented musician, and his friend Cesare, a businessman in the manufacturing field. Based in Northeast Italy, its activity covers teaching and performing contemporary and classical music as well as organising events. We selected this case because Gclef is a small independent

cultural organization led by an artistic and an administrative director: because of its size, it suits our purpose of exploring how small cultural productions are run in practice, and because of its dual leadership, it seemed an interesting setting in which we could track the artistic and business logics potentially informing its work.

### ***Case description***

Gclef most important event is the annual *Accordion Festival* launched in 2011 to promote the great expressive potential of the accordion. Gclef aimed to expand the festival internationally, inviting world-class accordionists and focusing on the contemporary music repertoire. The success of its first edition encouraged Gclef to bring the festival to a Southern Italy city, having four days of concerts, lectures, and masterclasses in the Northern city, followed by three days in the Southern city, making a total of one week arranged for October–November.

Gclef is composed of six main members and various collaborators with different tasks. Giovanni is the artistic director, musician, and founder. He has a long musical career as an accordionist and a great deal of experience in performing music all over the world. He is responsible for maintaining contact with artists and proposing the programme for the festival. Clara and Silvia (his wife and daughter, respectively) are musicians and music teachers of the school. They have administrative tasks, such as basic accounting, PR, and filing. Silvia also deals with social media promotion. Cesare is a businessman and co-founder of Gclef. Together with Clara and Silvia, he performs administrative functions; specifically, he is responsible for fundraising. Andrea is the project manager. He collaborates with an external communication agency, headed by Roberto, on the promotion of the association and the festival. Andrea and Roberto are also responsible for fund raising. Giuseppe is the co-producer of the festival. He is entrusted with the general coordination for [Southern city]. Finally, Valeria, Cesare's wife, variously supports him in his tasks; she has an important mediation role. There are also several musicians, who collaborate with the association in the production of events and make proposals

for the festival, such as Alessio, son of Cesare and Valeria and a young, talented accordionist pupil of Giovanni's.

### ***Data collection and analysis***

The first author spent five full months in the field (June-November 2015), connecting with the top management team of both musicians and managers. We collected observations of ordinary activities in the organization of the annual music festival, narrative interviews with all the members, and informal conversations. Fieldnotes and recordings were transcribed and collected in a textual database.

Following our initial goal of exploring how artistic and business logics inform decisions and actions in the organization of a cultural production, the analysis proceeded by inductively tracing discourses<sup>1</sup> and voices within the collected textual data. First, we coded and categorized discourses (moving from an open to an axial coding of textual data), with the aim of capturing the variety of discourses constituting the organizational action of this specific cultural production and of eventually identifying the main underlying driving logics (such as artistic and business logics). Second, for each specific discourse, we coded the 'voice' (the specific actor and role as well as the tone of voice that was expressing that discourse). Third, we looked for every co-occurrence of discourses (i.e. whenever a discourse was mobilized in relation to others, e.g. a discourse of accounting and financial resources and a discourse of artistic choices), and we qualified the co-occurrence by coding the relationship (e.g. 'conflicting' or 'reinforcing').

This analysis allowed us to obtain somewhat unexpected findings about the plurality of discourses, the variety of their relationships with one another, and their fluidity across actors

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the tradition of organizational discourse studies, for our analysis, we defined 'discourses' as any form of oral or written, formal or informal interaction based on language that relates to organizational actions (Oswick et al 2000, Hardy 2001).

and roles in the undertaking of the cultural production. We will present these findings accordingly in the following sections.

### **Plurality of discourses**

What do actors talk about when they discuss their festival and music association or as they act in them? Table 1 displays the plurality of micro-discourses that we inductively reconstructed from the field. The discourses are listed by their frequency, measured in terms of occurrences (number of times coded throughout all the textual data) and sources (number of interviews or observations in which the specific discourse featured).

[Table 1]

As we can see, the discursive landscape constituting the production of the Gclef accordion festival is mainly characterized by discourses of **artistic choices**, such as discussions about the artistic programme of the festival or about which musician to invite (e.g. artistic director: “I talked to Alessio just now. You know, we are still outlining this blessed programme, and I talked to him because we were considering inviting Galliano this year ...”), and discourses of **organizing** (e.g. “To do this, Giuseppe and I keep saying that we need an organizational structure, in which the artistic direction is just one element, not necessarily *the* element ...”, as expressed by Cesare, manager and co-founder of Gclef, in an interview). Indeed, concerns about coordination and the need to structure roles and responsibilities seem to be a shared preoccupation among most members of Gclef. In addition, as actors talk about the accordion festival, **strategizing** about the direction and the identity to give to the festival for the future is central to actors’ discourses, as in the following excerpt:

What is going on in [Southern city] is an improvement of activities. We could perhaps think of something different: Giuseppe organizes his events there, eventually detaching from the association, and we participate as Gclef, falling

within a wider and more diversified agenda. (Int. Cesare, manager and co-founder)

Moreover, discourses of **accounting** and financial resources constitute another large part of the actors' discursive landscape, for example:

**Cesare:** Our administration is really confusing now ... put simply, as for accounting, I told everyone that financial management is fundamental, and it must be done in a certain way, in terms of both transparency and coherence.

Partly related to this, discourses of funding the festival are also crucial, as well as discourses of the marketing and promotion of the festival activity.

Although to a lesser extent, recurring discourses also concern the political dimension of these types of activities (in terms of the importance of cultivating a positive relationship with the local institutions and public administrations when organizing cultural events in a territory), a central tenet in the view of the artistic director, for example. However, there are also discourses of passion, as the main driver of these activities, of artistic objectives, commercial objectives, and the like.

Can these emerging discourses be subsumed in the two main logics of art and business? Clearly, discourses of organizing, strategizing, accounting, funding, and marketing constitute the very pillars of managerial practice and reflect well the economic logic of practice described by Eikhof and Hauschild (2007) (explicit market orientation, measuring ethos, cost efficiency, or profitability concerns). On the other hand, discourses of artistic choices, artistic performance, artistic objectives, and so on reflect well the concurrent artistic logic of practice. Therefore, the dual nature of the driving logics of actors' behaviour and cognitions in cultural productions can be retrieved here.

Nevertheless, taking a closer look, this distinction appears to be blurred in many cases. For example, should a discourse of strategizing about the future shape of the festival be ascribed

to a business logic (reflecting the need to define, plan, and provide a strategic direction) or to an artistic one (concerning reflections about artistic choices and the artistic identity of the festival)? Should a discourse of societal impact performance pertain to a business logic due to its stress on measuring and accounting for the outcome of the festival or to an artistic logic due to the vocation to diffuse musical knowledge and culture among the masses?

Moreover, our findings reveal that the dualism of the main informing logics is not only blurred to some extent but also partial: if we superimposed the a priori dichotomization art vs. business, we would not be able to capture the plurality of other discourses that instead constitute the actors' talk. Note for example how the discourses of politics, friendship, family, and so on, which cannot be ascribed to either of the dual logics, emerged in the discursive horizon around the production of the festival.

Leaving aside for a moment the supposed art/business dichotomization and building inductively from the discourses, we clustered these micro-discourses into larger categories (Figure 1).

[Figure 1]

What emerges is a narrative about Gclef (the association), its growth, and its evolution until the establishment of the annual accordion festival. The narrative alternates different *foci* or levels of analysis (the festival itself or the whole association, sometimes in relation to the school activity or to the wider network of the Polinote cooperative). Clearly, what emerges is the coexistence of heterogeneous objectives: artistic, commercial, societal (e.g. Andrea, project manager: "If the artistic director aims at those specific objectives [...] well, you know, those objectives do not match the market ones"). Moreover, discourses about the festival's performance are quite relevant and in several dimensions: artistic and commercial performance

but also societal impact performance – often considered at the same time. For example, Giovanni, the artistic director and a co-founder, focuses on the importance of reconnecting with the territory: “Just in recent years, when my international concert activity has grown, I’ve been feeling the need to restore a balance with my land. A future commitment – as far as possible in terms of resources at our disposal – will increasingly connect the festival to the main places and the symbols of [Northern city] and its region, with a spirit that I would like to call ‘glocal’”.

One important dimension is the managerial performance of Gclef, in general and in relation to the production of the accordion festival. A hot topic of discussion is, for instance, the different approaches to organizing: the need for clearer roles and greater formalization and coordination of responsibilities and processes is a recurrent discourse in Cesare’s (manager and co-founder) and others’ talk, while Giovanni (artistic director and co-founder) would like to push further the informal and unstructured relationships that have characterized much of the organization of Gclef so far: “The matter of roles is a sensitive issue. It’s not a firm. It’s not like here my role ends and here yours starts. Sometimes, one has to perform the role of another one and vice versa, because it’s all interconnected”.

Furthermore, different approaches to fundraising issues emerge: from Giovanni, who stresses the political dimension of fundraising (“I keep insisting that we should address institutions: conservatory, municipality and region. This is really important, especially because politics can certainly favour us but also hinder our work»), to Cesare (manager and co-founder), who makes his point about the need to intercept new funding sources through a more professional approach: “We have to abandon this logic of ‘lending money to do a favour’ as it was so far, because of our business relationship – they know we do care about the festival and they support us, but they are not expecting to obtain anything from the event. We would like to move the discourse in terms of ‘our festival is well-structured, has great resonance, and your company could have reputational benefits’. I mean, moving from a personal level to a

professional one...”. What is more, different approaches to accounting and financial resource management emerge: from Silvia’s (music professional and in charge of administration) *adhocery* to Cesare’s calls for more careful planning and control, for instance: “We have to prepare forecasts and budgets. Okay, but who prepares these budgets? The budget is a document for which we need to prepare, to meet and discuss ... then we also approve the balance sheet. They are discussed, they are reviewed: in short, there are some steps you cannot skip”. Among the discourses about Gclef’ managerial performance, discussions concerning who leads the strategic choices about the future of the festival or the association at large also punctuate actors’ talk. For instance, Cesare (manager and co-founder) states that “[Southern city] has something more than [Northern city] ... there’s a chance to create a series of collateral events around the festival: in addition to concerts, Giuseppe would like to promote guided tours around the city and other things. An all-around event, I mean”. Andrea (project manager) asks for a wide scope of action: “From a strategic perspective, Giovanni should give us more space. As I told you, when alignment on goals is lacking, the machine cannot work efficiently”. On the other hand, Silvia (music professional) views the association in relation to the cooperative Gclef collaborates with: “Yes, let’s say that for now the organization of events is independent. But we’d like the cooperative to manage our events as well”.

Finally, another set of discourses that emerges from our data revolves around the importance of the strong bonding ties (the sense of friendship and family and the shared passion for the musical culture and the accordion tradition) as the real engine of it all (Valeria: “For me our strength lies in people, who have strong goals, who believe in what they do, either for a direct interest – because it’s their job – or for passion. They are all trustworthy people. Even in front of the question: ‘Should we keep doing it?’, in the end, everyone does a good job and we achieve our goals”). A residual but present set of discourses deals with the generation gap: the relationship between senior musicians (especially Giovanni, the founder) and younger

professionals, also connected to different artistic choices regarding the festival, for example between a rather classical and a contemporary orientation.

Overall, what is left is a composite picture of a plurality of discourses, that is, the existence of several souls animating the realization of this cultural production. The purported dualism of artistic and business logics in tension with one another would be a reductionist framing of the multifaceted nature of this small cultural production, one that would not fully capture its specificity and contextual complexity.

### **Variety of relationships between discourses**

We found not only that a plurality of micro-discourses exists but also that several of these discourses tend to co-occur. In other words, they are often closely linked with each other in a variety of relations that are at times conflicting and at other times complementary and synergetic. Again, this reveals a situation of complexity rather than simplistic tension between two conflicting logics. Specifically, we focused on the co-occurrences of different discourses (two or more) in each textual unit and qualified them to understand how they interrelated. Two main typical relations emerged: (a) *conflictual*, when discourses are mobilized together, with tension between them; (b) *reinforcing*, when discourses are in a complementary relationship and mutually supportive.

### ***Conflicting discourses***

The conflictual relation is the most frequent, but, contrary to what is usually thought about cultural organizations, tensions do not always occur between artistic and managerial interests. Rather, they emerge between different managerial approaches or even between divergent artistic choices, as will be shown. In vignette 1, an example of a conflicting relationship between artistic and managerial interests is provided.

### [Vignette 1]

This excerpt from a conversation between the two founding partners shows two different approaches to the organization of the festival and its musical offer. Cesare, a businessman, strongly recommends including the festival in long-term programming, thus structuring events and concerts under a coherent, prior established theme. Giovanni, with a clear marketing-driven approach, looks primarily at the prestige of musicians and secondly at their artistic proposals (specifically, whether they match the shared artistic goals of the festival). Therefore, the commercial goal of promoting events capable of attracting a wide audience – although disconnected from each other or even leaving the accordion in the background – risks to contrast the artistic objective of presenting a coherent programme of concerts linked by a common thread.

In vignette 2 we report another example of a conflicting relation, this time between different artistic approaches.

### [Vignette 2]

This excerpt is taken from an interview with Alessio. As a young career musician, he proposes to bring a more contemporary and experimental approach in the festival with a selection of high-level international accordionists. Giovanni has a different goal, that is to present a more accessible programme to a wider audience to raise awareness of the great potential of the accordion. The two divergent visions bring to inevitable contrast.

The third example of a conflicting relation (vignette 3) is between different managerial approaches, particularly in terms of fundraising.

[Vignette 3]

The question raised by Cesare shows subtle tension between different actors. Cesare and Giuseppe (co-producer of the festival) agree on a different approach to fundraising and ask for a more professional one. Conversely, Giovanni (artistic director and co-founder), on several occasions during meetings, asked for a greater effort to attract the interest of the political sphere to obtain more visibility and more chances to access public funds.

*Reinforcing discourses*

Moving on to the second type of relation identified, the *reinforcing* one, we provide three examples of discourses with complementary or entangled relationships. For instance, in the case reported in vignette 4, an artistic goal is totally in synergy with a commercial one.

[Vignette 4]

Other examples of reinforcing relationships between different discourses are reported in the quotes below (vignettes 5 and 6). On the one hand, Andrea, the project manager, is aware of the essential role of young musicians as a marketing tool in promoting the association and its events. On the other hand, Clara, a music professional, points out that excellent artistic performances are closely linked with the increase in marketing outcomes. In both cases, therefore, the discourses are mutually supportive.

[Vignette 5]

[Vignette 6]

### **Fluidity of discourses across actors and roles**

Finally, another aspect emerged. Specific discourses are not necessarily linked to specific actors or roles. Put bluntly, the artistic director does not speak only art and the administrative director does not speak only management. The same discourses *travel* across actors, and the same actors mobilize different discourses in different instances. In table 2 we report each discourse in relation to the actors involved, together with some significant quotes. The fluidity of discourses is immediately evident.

[Table 2]

As we can see, the same actors are associated with different areas of discourse, both managerial and artistic. For instance, Giovanni, the artistic director, responsible for the programme of the festival, also deals with fundraising, marketing, and commercial aspects. Similarly, Giuseppe and Cesare, who are usually more committed to organizing, strategizing, and accounting, on several occasions discuss artistic choices and potential artistic developments for the festival. We can also notice that the same actors mobilize different discourses simultaneously. Thus, Giovanni, speaking about artistic choices, refers to the importance of increasing the audience (a commercial objective), and Andrea, speaking about marketing strategies, suggests how to improve the artistic offering, for example designing the festival around a common thread.

### **An emerging finding: orchestrating behind the scenes**

In our exploration of discourses and of their dynamics, an element emerged: the role of Valeria (assistant to the management team), always oriented towards orchestrating conflictual ideas and approaches for both managerial and artistic logics. During an informal conversation, partially reported in vignette 7, she narrates a previous conversation with Alessio, a young talented

musician and a former student of Giovanni. She understands his desire to be proactive in regard to artistic choices, but she invites him to be understanding of and respectful towards his Maestro.

[Vignette 7]

In vignette 8 Valeria talks with Cesare about organizational questions concerning the association, after a meeting with all the members. We notice that Valeria tries to be more diplomatic and provides a different interpretation of the situation.

[Vignette 8]

### **Discussion and conclusion**

In order to explore how artistic and business logics constitute the day-to-day work of small cultural productions, we accessed a small music association, Gclef, and analysed its discursive landscape. Essentially, we find that the dual (art/business) logics framework (Lampel, Lant and Shamsie 2000; Abdallah 2007; Daigle and Rouleau 2010; Townley et al. 2009) does not fully explain the working out of a small cultural production. It is only a (quite limited and somewhat blurred) part of a more complex and dynamic picture. Our case revealed that there are many different sources of value and drives for action beyond just the aesthetic and economic ones, including internal elements such as the importance of trust and strong ties and passion, and contextual elements like politics and its contingencies that can work as both opportunities and constraints to action, interrelating with economic and aesthetic choices. As obvious as it may sound, these issues are rarely addressed by the mainstream dualist view of the cultural economy, and are rather in line with the emerging arguments that push for a more contextual understanding of the whole cultural ecosystem and variegated nature of cultural value (Holden 2015; Oakley et al 2017; Spence and De Beukelaer 2018).

The dual leadership framework (Reid and Karambayya 2009; Bhasing et al 2012; Järvinen et al 2015, Cray et al 2017) does not fit the context of a small cultural production either. Gclef was indeed founded by a duo of artistic and managerial directors, but this did not reflect any structured separation of functions, views and orientations that had to be balanced. On the contrary, our study reveals that in Gclef discourses are rather blended, and that the organization works more as a whole, not without conflicts, certainly in reason of its small size. Because cultural production happens through a plethora of small, independent, informal realities, we should be careful not to superimpose insights (like dual logics and dual leadership) derived from large and established cultural productions on which most of the literature has concentrated so far. A methodological implication is that more research is needed to explore the specificity of the variegated nature of small cultural productions in their multiple forms.

We wish to highlight our emerging finding about the importance of acts of orchestration behind the scenes. While this was only an incidental observation in our data collection, it hints at a potential crucial point: the invisible work of people behind the scenes of cultural production, with no particular axe in artistic or managerial roles, but with informal skills in listening, interpretation and mediation, who play a key role in making these complex organizations work. Because the literature is silent about that, an interesting avenue for future field research could be to directly collect observational and conversational data on the ‘orchestrating work’ behind the scenes of cultural productions.

In conclusion, the concept of polyphony (Kornberger et al. 2006; Belova et al. 2008; Shotter 2008; Sullivan and McCarthy 2008), rather than dualism, could be mobilized to better explain the complex interplay of how small cultural productions are run. Dualism may make more sense in large, structured organizations that have dual leadership and separate functions responding to different logics, but in smaller and more informal cultural productions this does not apply. However, the effectiveness of the polyphony of voices characterizing cultural

production requires some subtle and continuous work. Polyphony can be a valuable resource for organizations, but first and foremost all members need to recognize it: if awareness is lacking, there is no chance of developing a space for dialogue and cooperation. The first step in this sense would be to stop portraying cultural productions within the simplistic art/business divide.

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<sup>1</sup> All names are pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality.

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