



Routledge Research in the Creative and Cultural Industries

PLURAL VALUES OF CULTURE IN EUROPE

Edited by

Arturo Rodríguez Morató, Nancy Duxbury,
Antonella Fresa, and Gábor Sonkoly



Plural Values of Culture in Europe

In recent years, the plurality of values of culture has been increasingly recognized in practical, academic, and policymaking contexts. Beyond its traditional intrinsic values—linked to aesthetics, authenticity, and excellence—its capacity to contribute to well-being, to promote identity and belonging and tolerance and inclusiveness, to stimulate creativity, and to foster innovation are ever more acknowledged by a great variety of social actors. However, an economy- and market-oriented perspective has come to dominate the administrative and managerial discourse on cultural valuation for a few decades. This has resulted in a predominance of an approach to valuing culture that is expressed exclusively in terms of its economic impact, obscuring other values of culture. The European research project UNCHARTED has tried to counteract this predominance by providing a broader vision of the societal value of culture in the European context and by applying this alternative view to some of the most relevant areas in which cultural valuation impinges on cultural management and cultural policy today. This book presents its main results.

Based on a pragmatist perspective, we have carried out an extensive multiple case study (65 cases in seven countries) that considers the multiplicity of agents who participate in cultural valuation processes (citizens, professionals of creation and preservation, experts, and politicians) and the diversity of evaluative practices in which they engage within three main areas: the field of cultural participation, the field of cultural production and heritage, and the field of cultural administration. The book shows the irreducible plurality of the values of culture, the characteristic complexity of the dynamics of valuation and evaluation in the cultural sphere, and the current shortcomings and possible improvements in institutional processes of cultural evaluation. It is essential reading for cultural professionals, policymakers, and scholars of culture.

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3 Evaluative practices in action

Features, tensions, and resolutions

Paolo Ferri and Simone Napolitano

Introduction

How do actors in cultural fields construct, measure, compare, and rank the values they attribute to culture? This chapter provides an overview of how different types of actors (i.e., consumers, professionals, public officers, and analysts) assess the worth of a set of highly heterogeneous objects of evaluation (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006; Lamont, 2012; Stark, 2009), ranging from a music piece to the activities offered by a museum, from a project applying for funding to the level of cultural employment in a specific territory. Therefore, the focus is on the evaluative tools, the evaluative tensions, and the approaches to tension resolution characterizing four evaluation regimes: those predominant in the areas of cultural consumption, production and heritage management, public administration, and cultural information systems (Vatin, 2013). The analysis is based on a set of case studies developed by the UNCHARTED partners in phase 3 of the project.

This chapter begins with an outline of the methodological approach, followed by an in-depth analysis of each regime. It then discusses two important overarching logics leading to hybridization between evaluative regimes: participation and competition. In closing, broader implications are discussed.

Methodology

In phase 3 of the project, 18 cases were selected considering the criteria introduced in the earlier chapter “Mapping the plural values of culture.” Table 13 presents an overview of these case studies, organized by research area.

Data were collected through qualitative methodologies, including interviews, archival research, and non-participant observation. Although interviews were conducted in almost all case studies, they represent the primary empirical evidence for case studies belonging to the cultural consumption area, where evaluation happens in the form of a narrative rather than according to formalized criteria. On the other hand, in case studies relating to cultural production and heritage management, cultural administration, and cultural information, evidence from interviews is coupled with documentary sources. The presence of written evidence reflects the increasing formalization of evaluation practices, which become encoded in evaluation guidelines,

Table 13 Case studies examined in phase 3 of the UNCHARTED project

<i>Research area</i>	<i>Case name</i>	<i>Description of case*</i>
Cultural consumption	Loulé Criativo	Loulé Criativo is a project launched in 2015 by the Municipality of Loulé (Algarve, Portugal). The case investigates how actors involved in the activities (artisans, residents, and visitors) evaluate their participation in the project.
	Jazz ao Centro Clube	Jazz ao Centro Clube is a cultural association founded in 2003 in Coimbra (Portugal) that promotes musical culture through co-creation activities, with a particular emphasis on jazz. The case study looks at evaluation work in a context of cultural consumption where access is broadened to a wide range of participants (from amateur musicians and audiences less familiar with jazz to jazz lovers).
	Music valuations	The case investigates the evaluation of music listening through interviews with 12 French-based individuals diverse in terms of age, gender, and attachment to music.
	Dance valuations	The case study analyses the evaluation of dance through interviews with 12 French-based individuals characterized by different dancing practices (informal, contemporary dance groups, folk dancing, and nightclubs).
Cultural production and heritage management	Threatening Venice	The case study investigates the controversy between UNESCO and the City of Venice over the inscription of Venice and its lagoon into the UNESCO list of sites in danger.
	Delisting Liverpool	The case study investigates the formal delisting of the Liverpool Maritime Mercantile City (LMMC) from UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2021. LMMC was enlisted in 2004 and included 15 pre-1850 docks and 9 monumental dockside warehouses.
	MUDEC	The Museum of Cultures (MUDEC) in Milan is devoted to researching and displaying collections from world cultures. The case focuses on the inclusion of migrant communities in the museum's activities.
	Reimagine, Remake, Replay	RRR is a three-year project that enables young people to engage with heritage and museum collections through creative media and digital technologies across nine museums in Northern Ireland. The case investigates the evaluative practices of RRR and the values informing the guidelines produced at the programme's outset.

Table 13 (Continued)

<i>Research area</i>	<i>Case name</i>	<i>Description of case*</i>
	A Spanish architectural firm	The case analyses the evaluation dynamics in a Barcelona-based architectural firm, with reference to two projects: the New Sala Beckett theatre hall, part of the Fàbriques de Creació programme, and Building 111, a peripheral city block that is the result of a public competition.
	A Spanish design firm	The case studies the evaluation dynamics at a Barcelona-based design studio during two projects: a furniture and perfume packaging line project involving clients' approval and compliance to production conditions and the city luminaire project for 2021 Christmas, assigned after a public competition organized by the City Council.
Cultural administration	Urban regeneration in Spain	The case investigates the evaluation methodologies influencing public administration of heritage in Spain in two contexts: the programme Fàbriques de Creació started in 2007 and inspired by international initiatives and Matadoiro Compostela, launched in 2016 in Santiago de Compostela and hosted in a former slaughterhouse, to foster citizens' self-management of cultural activities.
	Monitoring Norwegian museums	The case investigates the development and influence of Arts Council Norway, a national system for evaluation, which is in charge of a yearly process whereby all museums in the national network are evaluated through quantitative and qualitative indicators.
	Local grantmaking in Spain	The case studies the evaluation methodology influencing grantmaking in Spain in two contexts: Grantmaking for culture, provided by the Barcelona administration, and Santiago culture grants, intended to contribute to fostering cultural projects in Santiago de Compostela.
	The Cultural Rucksack	The Cultural Rucksack provides a methodology for regional administrations in selecting performing arts and music productions for school performances in Norway. The case investigates how public administrators perform the evaluation of submitted proposals.
Cultural information	Cultural statistics in Norway	Statistics Norway is the national agency in charge of the collection and analysis of data describing the cultural sector in Norway since 1991. It is based on a combination of different kinds of data. The case investigates the values informing the collection and aims to capture various facets of cultural participation.

(Continued)

Table 13 (Continued)

<i>Research area</i>	<i>Case name</i>	<i>Description of case*</i>
	Regional cultural observatories in Italy	Since 1985, Italian regional cultural observatories have produced data on cultural activities at the local level through surveys. The case investigates the information produced in different periods to understand whether and how it captures the values reflecting the different roles of culture in society.
	Cultural Index Norway	Culture Index Norway is an annual benchmarking of cultural supply and participation in all municipalities of Norway. Established in 2011, CIN collects data from public and private sources. The case investigates what representations of cultural value are identified and which cultural values are typically not captured by this index.
	National museum levels of quality	The case investigates the evaluation dynamics affecting the accreditation process of Italian museums in the National Museum System, created by the Ministry of Culture in 2018 and enlisting museums by verifying the possession of a new set of parameters, the Uniform Levels of Quality.

* For more information on these cases, please refer to Appendix B at the end of the book.

Source: Own elaboration.

scorecards, or rankings. Documentary evidence collected in these areas may be quantitative, that is, the results of surveys or reports on cultural statistics. Yet, even quantitative evidence has been analysed qualitatively, looking primarily at the categories employed or the process required to transform qualities into quantities. Of note, one of the cultural information case studies (National museums' level of quality) employs non-participant observation to analyse the construction of a museum ranking.

Case studies were then compared at the area level to articulate the findings in each area within a comprehensive, plural, and integrated discourse on the societal values of culture.

Regimes of evaluation

In this section, we review the features of the four areas of cultural practice (i.e., cultural consumption, production and heritage management, cultural administration, and cultural information), considering the evaluative tools used by social actors in different fields, the emerging tensions, and their resolution forms, if present.

Grammars of evaluation in cultural consumption

The cultural consumers and practitioners analysed—music listeners, non-professional dancers, artisans, and jazz music amateurs—evaluate their

cultural experiences through four types of “qualifications”: emotional, functional, relational, and identity-based.

- Emotional qualifications can be positive, negative, or mixed. For instance, jazz *aficionados* qualify their cultural practices as pleasant (“goosebumps,” “well-being,” “momentary happiness,” “becoming weightless,” “feeling high”) or unpleasant (“aggression,” “creeps,” “oppression”) on an emotional base, while music listeners attach their vocabulary of valuation also to mixed feelings such as a “pleasant sadness” (“It moves me to tears . . . it’s not sadness, it’s that I’m affected . . . I find beautiful the things that move me . . . it has to touch me”).
- Functional qualifications refer to the function or role of the act of listening or practicing and include changes in mood, emotional state, or atmosphere. For instance, one of the music listeners interviewed related music-listening to a sleep aid (“when I can’t sleep, I listen to Indian music . . . it relaxes me, it calms me”). Also, dancing was reported as functional in its relationship with the body, including valuations involving not only a physical sensation but also a conscious awareness of the body (“a dialogue with my body”; “a sensation of being refocused in myself . . . I’m connecting with my body”).
- A third qualification refers to the relational aspects of cultural consumption. Participants highlighted that attending a jazz concert, for instance, can be an opportunity for social interactions with performing musicians (“It is very interesting to know their personalities, it is so funny. Whenever there is a chance, I talk to musicians”) and friends (“Music creates a pretext, an event. . . . You know that you’re going to spend a good evening together with your friends”; “I go in some festivals especially for the social side, to meet new people. . .”).
- Identity-based qualifications relate to the sense of belonging and empowerment informing actors’ valuation of their participation. In these situations, cultural practitioners do not validate their assessments beyond their peer group; instead, they use qualifications that are primarily implicit and manifested indirectly through behaviours or narratives. For instance, artisans of Loulé Criativo consider the activities to be an essential aspect of providing benefits to the local community, such as attracting visitors to the territory, smoothing tourism seasonality, renewing the city vitality, and creating employment and general development. Participants feel that each one represents the project (“We are Loulé Criativo”). At times, consumption and cultural participation are valued retrospectively through vocabularies linked to a sense of belonging, particularly in the act of listening (“I need to live with the atmosphere of my country of origin . . . this music is part of me”) often with a sense of “identity quest” (“I was in a quest for identity . . . the discovery of this music was a shock for me, as if I found a part of myself that I didn’t know”).

The cases investigating cultural consumption have highlighted that the articulation between different qualifications—that is, whether an experience is qualified according to one or a combination of the elements described above—is latent and varies according to habitus, context, and content (see Carvalho et al., 2022). The

habitus of the actors relates to the set of norms and expectations unconsciously acquired by individuals through experience and socialization as embodied dispositions. Through his/her habitus, an individual actualizes all the cultural values that are part of his socioeconomic and educational status of the individual, gender, place of residence, ethnic identity, etc. This combination of variables can be a source of internal tensions but also contributes to identifying an initial pole of values.

The context relates to the spatial, social, and temporal circumstances in which the valuation occurs. The value given to practice can vary depending on whether this practice is made alone, with family, or with friends. The valuation process may also differ depending on whether it is regular or exceptional or happens in an individual's household or in a public space.

Finally, the content relates to the inner elements constituting the social object or practice evaluated; depending on the type of practice, content fleshes out differently, enabling distinctions between highbrow and popular cultural practices and, within all cultural practices, different kinds of emotional and perceptual attachments. Practices can also be distinguished between those resulting from a creative commitment of individuals, such as playing music or crafting an artwork, from those that do not imply such commitment, such as listening, attending a show, an exhibition, etc.

The combination of habitus, context, and content explains variations in individual evaluations. For instance, interviews and observations of gestures, attitudes, and emotional manifestations of artisans experienced in the traditional crafts of Loulé Creativo revealed that the process of attributing value is influenced by family background and practices ("It's our essence, I don't know how to explain it. The first ones who did it, nobody taught them, it's something we already inherited"). In contrast, contemporary artists working at the Loulé Design Lab are influenced chiefly by their education and formal training. In terms of content, the valuation of music listeners is exemplary in showing the influence of content features such as lyrics, meaning, writing, and degrees of harmonic and structural complexity ("it's too simple, too repetitive"). At the same time, the aesthetic "intrinsic" values of each element vary according to virtuosity, complexity, and innovation.

Notably, habitus, context, and content underlie variations in evaluations in the same person too, as values can compete at the individual level. More generally, the case studied under this regime features individual or group-level actions with scant or very low organizational density that give rise to variations in valuations rather than value tensions. The way variations are harmonized is again contingent on individual habitus, context, and content. In the appreciation of a cultural product, for instance, such as when we listen to music or when this inspires dancing, the value given can be very high in terms of physical and emotional sensations and very low in terms of aesthetic value (and vice versa). Likewise, a context can contribute to valuing an experience because, for example, it is done with friends or devaluing it because of overcrowding. The habitus can also be "split," either because of the complex social trajectory of an individual or because of the legacies that have constituted it within their family.

Technologies of evaluation in cultural production and heritage management

The cases relating to cultural production and heritage management identify practices of evaluation in contemporary and historical cultural production, focusing on the tensions arising from different evaluation practices implied in the work of professionals and experts.

The cases are markedly different from those investigated in the area of cultural consumption, as they deal with activities carried out within organized contexts of production. Moving from consumption to production, evaluation becomes a collective matter and can be the result of a shared agreement or imposed through power. This typically involves increased coordination, separation of responsibilities, hierarchy, and accountability relationship. The two cases dealing with UNESCO sites (Delisting Liverpool and Threatening Venice) can be examples of the complexity characterizing organizational contexts. In addition to the well-known contrast between heritage preservation and economic development of a territory, the two cases are characterized by the co-presence of a multitude of institutional actors (UNESCO, the city government, the national government, and stakeholders of different kinds), which are at the same time internally articulated, where the actions of the subunits are not always consistent. UNESCO is, for instance, not a monolithic entity, as it comprises the World Heritage Committee, composed of representatives of the Member States, the Executive Board, and the World Heritage Centre, in addition to the Advisory Bodies such as International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and RAMSAR.

Given the convergence of numerous actors, it is not surprising that the most intriguing aspect lies in the realm of tensions. Frequently, these tensions revolve around different meanings ascribed to the same “value” or various ways of operationalizing it. For instance, as far as “economic value” is concerned, the two case studies relating to the preservation of UNESCO sites showed two radically different and opposing discourses involving the economic sphere, which are economic (vested) interest and economic development. The cases of Venice and Liverpool illustrate that individuals or groups often prioritize maximizing returns at the individual or group level, neglecting the potential negative externalities on society as a whole. Whether it is bed and breakfast owners and cruise companies in Venice or real estate developers in Liverpool, their valuation of the city is primarily economic and focused on short-term individual gains, often overlooking the impacts of over-tourism and heritage loss. In contrast, UNESCO-appointed experts approach the economic development of an area by considering factors such as employment and the economic well-being of its residents. Heritage, or culture more broadly, is viewed as a resource for societal-level economic development, with due consideration given to its interplay with other forms of development, including social, cultural, and environmental aspects.

Another source of heterogeneity relates to different ways of operationalizing an agreed upon value. The MUDEC case shows that the value of “inclusion” with reference to migrant communities has been continuously re-defined, moving from initiatives relating to the collection of programmes unrelated to it, from programmes developed bottom-up to more top-down arrangements.

In the case studies investigated in this area, we found different evaluation tools, from formalized advocacy-led measurement (RRR) to ex-post and informal assessments (MUDEC), worldwide-known but locally contested certification systems (UNESCO in Venice and Liverpool), and a variety of assessment devices associated with decision-making in production processes (architecture and design). These tools are characterized by adherence to professional criteria and lead to judgements, which are acts of value attribution of a subject to an object, often analysed through the speech acts in which they are manifested (Heinich, 2020a). Judgements can be encoded in a more or less formalized way through reports or informal meetings where different views may converge or diverge.

When tensions come to the forefront, actors employ two mechanisms to structure the relationship between evaluative criteria: polarization and integration. Polarization occurs when actors present the tension as a binary opposition between alternatives, as seen in Liverpool, where UNESCO framed the situation in terms of preservation versus development. Conversely, integration takes place when actors utilize conflictual situations to reframe the relationship between the evaluative logic involved. In the Venice case, an unexpected alliance emerged between municipal and international professionals (i.e., UNESCO), grounded in the concept of sustainable development, encompassing environmental, social, economic, and heritage preservation perspectives. At MUDEC, the decision to focus participatory activities on a subjective dimension channels diversity, making it manageable, thereby transforming initial polarization into integration.

The comparison of case studies revealed variations in the effectiveness of judgement devices in rendering tensions visible. A highly formalized and systematically developed system tends to neutralize tensions, as evidenced in the RRR case. Here, embedded within a neoliberal framework emphasizing fierce competition for funding, the evaluation tool is strategically employed to selectively emphasize positive outcomes, aiming to secure monetary resources in subsequent funding calls. In contrast, less formalized evaluation tools excel at highlighting tensions, prompting active responses from involved actors. Moreover, these tools are structured around the interaction between the evaluator and those accountable for the object being evaluated. In the MUDEC case, we observed a dynamic scenario where every participant has a voice, amplifying the perspectives involved and, consequently, the likelihood of tensions being articulated.

Methodologies of evaluation in cultural administration

Despite variations among European countries, cultural production and heritage management processes are generally closely interlinked with national, regional, or city public administrations. While public funding plays a role, the deeper connection stems from the fact that public administrations frequently own and manage cultural organizations. As a result, the procedures governing cultural institutions align with public sector practices, encompassing areas such as tendering and human resource management, thereby influencing hiring processes, incentives, and performance measurement.

Our case studies indicate that cultural administrators use evaluation tools that fall within a continuum, ranging from expert-driven assessments to indicator-driven approaches. The Cultural Rucksack (TCR) case thoroughly explores the elements characterizing an expert-based evaluation. TCR, a national programme in Norway, ensures that all pupils experience and understand artistic and cultural expressions. Within the programme, skilled public officers—the so-called TCR producers—play a pivotal role in evaluating and selecting artists for pupil performances. The evaluation criteria employed include aesthetic quality, artists' genre diversity, artists' origin, and institutional dramaturgy. The latter implies assessing how proposals align with institutional context regarding length, relevance to learning objectives, and production complexity. Although TCR producers employ assessment schemes or matrices in their selection work, the individual expertise and knowledge of TCR producers are critical resources in these selection processes.

Conversely, an indicator-driven evaluation is evident in how Arts Council Norway (ACN) assesses all state-subsidized museums in Norway annually. The assessments rely on a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators, covering aspects such as outreach/communication (including visitor figures, strategic documents, and audience development), collection management (encompassing documentation and conservation), and research (including publication figures and levels of competence). ACN characterizes this evaluation as a means of gauging the institutions' accomplishments based on "expectations towards a professionally run museum."

Hybrid evaluation approaches have also been identified, blending elements of expert and indicator-driven methods. For example, in Barcelona, a commission assesses cultural projects competing for municipal grants through a scoring system that considers project quality, social return, and alignment with the city's cultural policy goals. Despite a formal procedure that includes quantitative indicators, informal practices within this framework and during concrete evaluation phases have been discerned, significantly influencing grant evaluations and resolutions. This includes discussions among jury members during sessions where final scores are negotiated within Evaluation Commissions.

Every approach produces its tensions. In the case of expert-based evaluations, there may be a trade-off between evaluation criteria, that is, aesthetic and genre diversity. In the specific context of TCR, the tension is solved by achieving an equilibrium between criteria obtained over the years, ensuring that pupils are exposed to programming encompassing diverse genres, topics, and a mix of local and non-local performers. The difficulty in striking this balance may vary depending on budgetary constraints.

In the case of indicator-based evaluations, the tension is tied to the breadth or narrowness of the chosen indicators. Employing a limited number of indicators may focus the attention of the assessed entity but poses the risk of overlooking crucial dimensions of performance. Conversely, utilizing a more comprehensive set of broad indicators may lack clarity in communicating policy goals, resulting in varied and potentially incongruent prioritizations among targets. For instance, in Norwegian state-funded museums, tension exists due to diverse expectations such as technical conservation, audience development, diversity of dissemination forms,

and engagement in scientific projects and publications. This array of responsibilities creates an enduring challenge of prioritization, notably a value-based one, particularly intensified by a museum reform affecting all state-funded museums. These institutions are now expected to function as grassroots and identity-based entities and as university-level research institutions, posing challenges for several museums.

A second tension associated with indicator-based evaluation pertains to numbers' inherent limitations in capturing an organizational context complexity. Additionally, conducting evaluations using indicators raises the issue of determining what the performance of an individual, project, or institution should be compared against—whether it is the national average, an expected minimum, or their own goals and benchmarks.

Hybrid approaches come with inherent tensions. The primary tension revolves around reaching a consensus among diverse individuals evaluating a project based on standardized dimensions. Various problems may arise in these instances, such as discrepancies in the interpretation of criteria or differing views on what constitutes a high or low grade. For example, an internal report from the Municipality of Barcelona revealed that some experts consistently awarded high scores, averaging nine, while others took a more stringent approach. In the cases examined, conflicting interpretations of official indicators and their application within the evaluative framework are solved through open discussion, participation, and negotiation.

Cultural information systems

An information system is an infrastructure designed to collect and aggregate data over time, analyse it, and make it publicly available. Cultural information systems serve the crucial role of providing input to policymakers, who, on that basis, try to steer the actions of organizations in cultural production and heritage management.

In cultural information systems, the object of evaluation is measured through scores and indices. Quantification allows the collection and display of synthetic information obtained through aggregation. The approach enables a “bird’s-eye view,” providing snapshots of broad, wide, and complex realities. In addition, another advantage of using numbers to convey information is its potential for comparison. Thanks to commensuration, entities or practices belonging to distinct fields can be compared via ranking and classifications. Quantification is also an efficient way of producing information over time, as a measurement system implies a high level of replicability, which can lead to regular updates of the information produced.

Yet quantification also triggers tensions along with synthesis, efficiency, and portability. The case studies investigated, particularly the ones about cultural statistics in Norway and regional cultural observatories in Italy, have been informative in highlighting the tensions relating to developing “bird’s eye views” in the cultural field. More specifically, critical aspects relate to data availability and quality, categorization, and scope of coverage.

By comparing the systems collecting data on cultural activities in Norway and among Italian regions, the critical role of governance mechanisms, legislation, and organizational infrastructures in ensuring data quality and availability has emerged.

In Norway, Statistics Norway represents a reputable and long-lived institution that operates at the national level and has enough resources to collect and elaborate all the data internally. Data availability is, therefore, not an issue, and the institutional solid ethos revolving around autonomy and independence from political interests guarantee the quality of data. This autonomy is furthermore backed up by law. In contrast, the situation among the regional observatories in Italy is more complicated. They are all variously connected to regional political bodies, and, in some cases, they directly depend on these administrations. They are usually not endowed with enough resources to collect and elaborate all the data they need, and therefore they typically need to aggregate and harmonize data from different sources. This potentially raises concerns about the quality of the data reported.

Categorization efforts create tensions due to the fluid and changeable nature of the boundaries of cultural sectors/activities. For example, the Norwegian Culture and Media Barometer must consistently use the same categories over time to allow comparison and monitor historical trends. On the other hand, as time passes some categories lose meaning and should be substituted by others to capture emerging trends. For example, due to changes in consumption patterns, the boundaries between sectors or between “media” and “culture” are blurring, yet statistics fail to capture the phenomenon. We observed, therefore, a permanent tension between consistency and relevance in the production of information. Tensions relating to category-related boundaries have also been observed among Italian regional observatories. When these observatories try to measure actors involved in the cultural supply chain, from financing to production to consumption, the main difficulty regards the problematic definition of who should be included in the data as workers in the cultural sectors and what organizations can be defined as “cultural.”

Regarding the scope of coverage, the central tension concerns the relationship between what is measured and what is not. For example, in the case of Statistics Norway, the focus on participation signals an acknowledgement of the consumption of culture as intrinsically valuable. However, capturing values such as well-being, aesthetic experience, and entertainment is challenging. On the other hand, Italian regional observatories share the underlying conception that cultural activities are productive activities and may generate both *wealth*, that is, improvement in economic performances of the regions, and *welfare*, that is, the support of non-breaking even cultural activities by regional administrations. The two dimensions are not antithetic perspectives of how culture can be valuable in society but represent the poles of a range of possibilities: each observatory analysed falls somewhere between the two poles. Notably, both perspectives share the underlying assumption that culture is primarily a productive activity, which may contribute to the overall economic development of the regions.

Connections between regimes of evaluation

In the preceding section, we analysed evaluation regimes separately; however, the case studies revealed that the boundaries separating these regimes are fluid. This

section analyses how participation and competition are crucial for hybridizing qualifications, expert judgements, indicator-driven methodologies, and bird's-eye views.

Bottom-up hybridization: the logic of participation

Although cultural participation is often equated to passive cultural consumption, it can also be seen as an active effort by citizens to become involved in co-production, which can range from co-commissioning to co-design and from co-delivery to participatory assessment. Increasing co-production at various levels can be understood as a cultural democracy trend (Bennett, 2001; Evrard, 1997) since it involves citizenship as “active subjects and stakeholders in public policies by giving value to assembly decisions taken by active collectives and citizens” (Polityczna, 2015, cited in Négrier, 2020, p. 21).

In its various forms, active participation, or co-production, plays a crucial role in blurring the boundaries between evaluation regimes. Through participation, the tacit and contingent features of qualifications, primarily observed in cultural consumption, are blended with the expert judgement of cultural professionals or administrators, which characterizes heritage management and public administration.

Different forms of co-production illuminate the strategic impact that participants wield within institutions. Environments characterized by robust sociability and associative practices empower individuals to immerse themselves to a degree where they can actively shape and transform the values upheld by their institutions. This grassroots involvement can influence formal aspects of cultural organizations, including institutional vision, objectives, and partnership protocols. A tangible example lies in the network of partners associated with Jazza ao Centro Clube, where the active roles of participants have significantly moulded institutional protocols.

Infusing participatory logic into contexts traditionally driven by experts can yield positive dynamics and effects. However, the prevalence of institutional inertia and a tendency towards managing conflicts by suppressing them may undermine the outcomes of making visible participation-related tensions. These tensions, when acknowledged, can serve as catalysts for valuable processes such as self-awareness, debates, discussions, and proactive problem-solving instead of avoidance. Utilizing these outcomes as tools enables institutions to confront dissonances and conceive new agreements and arrangements, fostering a more flexible and open organizational strategy.

Informal evaluative approaches are crucial in exposing underlying value tensions associated with participation. This exposure raises citizens' awareness of conflicting aspects and encourages discussions about participatory processes. This becomes especially evident in scenarios involving the participation of under-represented groups in heritage institutions, exemplified by cases like MUDEC.

Participatory logic is evident in constructing indicators and rankings in cultural information systems. Creating a “bird's eye view” often involves discussions with end users of data or representatives of the measured entities. In these instances, those responsible for cultural information systems usually express a sense of inadequacy

when assessing the quality of information produced, the employed categories, and the scope of coverage. To address these tensions, information is often qualified and contextualized. Typically, this approach is developed through dialogical and verbal communication. While not conducive to quick copy and replication, these characteristics make it particularly insightful for obtaining in-depth, vertical views of contextual details.

The transformation of cultural information systems occurs through the encounter between developers and users or between those conducting measurements and those being measured. This interaction results in a combination of “bird’s-eye views” and “qualification” or “contextualization.” For example, in Italian regional cultural observatories, dissatisfaction with routine reports focusing on standardized information led to the development of ad hoc reports. These reports combine quantitative and qualitative evidence on specific and timely issues, such as multiculturalism, theatre, mental health, and the role of bank foundations in financing the performing arts. Similarly, the Norwegian Cultural Index made adjustments to enhance accuracy and capture the diversities of local cultural contexts after engaging with representatives from different municipalities.

Top-down hybridization: the role of competition

The logic of participation introduces elements that characterize cultural consumption into evaluation regimes that are more structured and formalized. In contrast, the logic of competition operates in the opposite direction, incorporating elements characterizing the evaluation of cultural information systems into public administration and heritage management. Research indicates that evaluation primarily operates through aggregation and quantification in cultural information systems. Aggregation involves assessing industries, fields, or geographical areas, often resulting in the loss of unique specifics associated with individual projects, initiatives, or experiences in the pursuit of a broader perspective.

Why does the logic of aggregation extend from information systems to heritage management and public administration? One possible explanation lies in the widespread adoption of competitive evaluative frameworks in the public sector, which are, to varying degrees, explicitly informed by a neoliberal approach to cultural policies. Neoliberalism can be defined as “a politico-cultural belief that advocates monetary exchange and free markets as the best method to organize human activity” (Alexander, 2018, p. 24). This ideology entails a strong faith in the market and competitive forces as mechanisms for the distribution of resources in societies. When markets do not naturally exist, public action seeks to replicate this logic by implementing administrative solutions geared towards constructing quasi-markets.

Case studies in the field of public administration and cultural production show many examples of quasi-market arrangements, where evaluative systems emerge as components of competitive schemes. These schemes can be explicit, as in the cases of Local grantmaking in Spain and the Cultural Rucksack in Norway, where cultural producers openly compete for public funding; or implicit, as it has

been observed when unique museums or municipalities are artificially set into competition through indexes and rankings (Monitoring Norwegian museums or National museum levels of quality in Italy).

In line with the findings presented in Chapter 1, country-level differences emerge when looking at how neoliberalism informs evaluation systems, methods, and technologies. In particular, differences arise in how neoliberal principles are formalized and explicitly integrated in cultural administration. The contrast between Italy and the United Kingdom is evident from this fact. While the neoliberal agenda constantly informs policies in the United Kingdom and Italy, in Venice, neoliberalism or rather old liberalism supports *laissez-faire* policies leading to economic exploitation (e.g., mass tourism and big ships).

As observed in the case studies, competition is often coupled with quantification, which may take place *ex-ante* and/or *ex-post*. Indeed, the efficiency of numbers is instrumental in monitoring agents' behaviours in competitive processes and providing evidence of value for money. Quantification has been observed in the form of advocacy-led measurement (RRR), ranking (Cultural Index Norway), performance indicators (Norwegian Museums and Urban cultural policies in Spain), and scoring systems (Local grantmaking in Spain and the Cultural Rucksack).

However, while at the outset, the systems of evaluation analysed are inspired by competition and quantification, indicators are rarely the only judgement device employed by decision-makers, as has been extensively discussed previously in this chapter. Evidence from the case studies shows not only situations in which professional judgement complements quantitative information (particularly in the Grantmaking in Spain and Urban regeneration cases) but also contexts where numbers play a marginal role in professional decision-making (TCR) or even situations where indicators are moulded to achieve an outcome reflecting the professional understanding of a field (National museum levels of quality in Italy). Moreover, the Venice and Liverpool cases highlight situations of “over-complexity” where calculative efforts are often contested.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have characterized four evaluation regimes focusing on evaluation tools, tensions, and tension resolution. Our analysis has allowed us to identify the contextual conditions that activate tensions in different domains and highlight the logic of hybridizing regimes, namely participation in co-production and competition (Donnat, 2011; Heinich, 2020a, 2020b).

Some broader implications emerge from the work carried out. First, the investigation has shown how different interpretations of the same value exist, as in the case of economic value or inclusion. Understanding variations is crucial to make sense of complexity, tensions, and related resolution strategies. The implication is to avoid looking at cultural diversity, equality, and inclusiveness as closed boxes and instead explore the variety of ways in which actors interpret and operationalize them (Bennett, 2001).

Second, the case studies examined have shown how tensions between values or different interpretations of the same value are contextually contingent. What leads to salient frictions in one situation can be worked out smoothly by actors in other contexts. Regarding policy implications, this observation suggests avoiding developing one-size-fits-all policy solutions and instead grounding policy guidelines on comprehending the local context.

These last insights relate to how to improve the assessment practices of cultural institutions. In this regard, our research findings can sound like a word of warning. Overall, what has emerged by looking at the practice of cultural administrators and even data producers is a limited “trust in numbers” in the cultural sphere (Porter, 1995). This suggests a careful consideration about whether further investments should be directed towards developing additional indicators or focusing on other strategies like training (and recruiting) more knowledgeable professionals or designing evaluation mechanisms involving qualitative information and deliberative processes.

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