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# New challenges of cultural observatories

Cristina Ortega Nuere (ed.)

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de Estudios de Ocio  
No. 45



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New challenges  
of cultural observatories



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# New challenges of cultural observatories

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University of Deusto  
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The Institute of Leisure Studies intends that publication of its books helps to mitigate the shortage of publications in Spanish about leisure topics. Each book aims to answer some questions related to leisure practice, understood as culture, sport, learning, tourism, recreation and human development at individual and community level. The experts and professionals working on these areas will be able to get access to researchs, working tools and points of view from people who collaborate with this university institute. The content of each book is work and responsibility of their authors.

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# Introduction

by *Cristina Ortega Nuere*

## **The role of information and knowledge in the paradigm shift of today's society**

Contemporary societies are characterised, inter alia, by a complex overlapping of industrial era processes with other emerging processes characteristic of a society focused on information flows and information and communication technologies (ICTs), for the generation and dissemination of new knowledge.

While both information and knowledge have always been strategic pieces in decision-making, the big difference between today's society and previous ones lies in the dramatic transformations made possible by the third revolution, featuring the ICT. Never before have both information and knowledge been enshrined as the great motors of political, social, cultural and economic development. It should be noted, however, that there are grave doubts about the global response to whether or not the exponential leap forward has been made from the information society to the knowledge society. As indicated in the UNESCO World Report *Towards Knowledge Societies*, the information society revolves around constant technological advances, while the knowledge society is based on the effective management and use of that information to facilitate its corresponding conversion and transmission in the form of knowledge (UNESCO, 2005). Any society that intends to rise to the challenges that we are facing today and advance in political, economic and social development, can not remain apart from the qualitative distance which separates these two models of the emerging society.

Undoubtedly, the challenge is to invest in a knowledge society in the Information Age. The first decades of technological expansion in the mid-twentieth century generated high expectations in relation to the consideration of ICTs and their use as a panacea for global development, even in developing countries. However, the years have shown that a mere technological leap, *leapfrogging*, is not a sufficient condition for the advancement of society. The collection, processing and intelligent use of information, supported by the pillars of ICTs, is only the first step for the generation of knowledge.

Access, often excessive, to information, along with the dizzying speed of its transmission, shows the duality of this phenomenon. Firstly, it has become an opportunity, given the enormous potential that it offers, and also an obstacle, considering the risk of informational chaos that it can generate, as well as more globally, the digital and knowledge divides that have opened up with regard to information.

Information is indeed an instrument of knowledge, but not knowledge itself. Information and technology development go hand in hand in a process that is not an end in itself, but acquires meaning through a rational, strategic and innovative use which converges on knowledge generation. Knowledge that, in turn, can only be of value when it is applied, shared and evaluated to generate new knowledge.

A society that has knowledge as its motor of development enters into a virtuous circle, where advances in knowledge promote and accelerate the emergence of new knowledge. It is a cumulative logic to which scholars, including Castells, refer as «the application of that knowledge and information to apparatus of knowledge generation and information / communication processing, in a cumulative feedback loop between innovation and its uses» (1997, vol. 1: 58).

In the context of the information revolution new forms of organisation have been created that do not conform to the conventional centralization of spaces. Horizontal relations that often transcend geographical boundaries have increased. Knowledge societies are societies, which necessarily operate in networks, thus providing homogeneous accumulation, transfer and exchange of information and knowledge. Networks are based on the fundamental principle that information and contacts need to be shared (Staines, 1996).

## European context

In the European context, several initiatives have emerged which aim is to move forward the societies of knowledge. In the area of cultural

statistics, many activities have been developed such as the meeting organised by UNESCO in Helsinki in 1972, which addressed the nature of cultural statistics and indicators. At the end of the 1970s, Bohner spoke about the characteristics of indicators in his work on indicators of cultural development within the European context. In 1980, the *International Conference on Communication*, held in Acapulco, hosted the session called *Cultural Indicators and the Future of Developed Societies*. This was the first meeting in the field of cultural statistics, which brought together researchers from different lines of work. In 1982, the symposium *The Cultural Indicators for the Comparative Study of Culture* took place, organised by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. In 1986, as a result of these meetings, there came about the UNESCO-led project by the Framework for Cultural Statistics (FCS) (Carrasco, 1999).

In the nineties awareness increased about the lack of statistics in Europe. This fact promoted the creation of a targeting group (LEG) on Cultural Statistics in the European Union, which aims to develop a system of comparable information across countries. The next major effort was in the late 1990s, with the publication of the first *World Report on Culture* by UNESCO (Pfennig, 2004). During this period, on a European level, the Urban Audit programme took place in two phases, in order to facilitate the assessment of the individual cities of the European Union and access to comparative information for other cities in various aspects, among them culture and leisure. This project was carried out by the Directorate General for Regional Policy in collaboration with EUROSTAT. We should also mention other projects on the development of indicators in urban cultures that have taken place recently under the so-called thematic network Eurocult21 (Dähnke, 2006). Finally, to finish describing the European scene on cultural indicators, we should remark that Cultural Statistics is one of the priority areas within the Working Plan for Culture 2011-2014 of the European Union that will enhance the improvement of methodologies and information on culture and mobility statistics.

In a parallel way, the progressive incorporation of the Internet in the sphere of cultural action has brought about an acceleration in the development of the communication of cultural networks. Within the framework of information and knowledge societies, networks between observatories are created with the purpose of promoting connection, using the opportunities that the Internet presents us, among organs that focus their activity on the capture of information, and the management, generation and dissemination of knowledge (OEL, 2006).

International cooperation between observatories has begun to generate an interchange based on working networks of mutual enrichment, which has already taken shape in the International Network of Observatories

in Cultural Policies (INOCP). It was created by a UNESCO initiative with the aim of promoting bonds at global level between organisations that analyse, gather and disseminate knowledge on cultural policies. UNESCO's objective in relation to the observatories is to promote reflection on cultural policies with the aim of facilitating objective information on which to base decision-making in policy, management and educational matters. In addition, UNESCO itself acts as an observatory or centre of interchange of institutions, which study, document and promote cultural policies.

The objectives of the INOCP are to establish interactions systematically at international level for the interchange of information; to improve knowledge for the design and evaluation of cultural policies; and to promote the evaluative study with the aim of orienting cultural policies. Among the activities of this network are: to offer a platform via Internet; to facilitate a service-list for the exchange of information; and to offer sections for joint projects (UNESCO, 2001).

Among the initiatives of international collaboration we find the International Network of Cultural Policies (INCP), a space that promotes the joint analysis of Ministries of Culture on emergent subjects and questions of cultural policy and the promotion of cultural diversity in a context of globalisation. The INCP was born with the vocation of creating an informal point of contact, in which the Member States could interchange opinions. Among the present lines of work is cultural diversity and globalisation, broadcasting in the global context and cultural heritage. The members of the INCP have been considered of extreme importance in the creation of an observatory of observatories, considering that numerous state, regional and local governments are creating observatories of cultural policies. This observatory constitutes a bond between observatories and guarantees access to information for those responsible for policy decision-making, the scientific community and the public.

Other initiatives in this area are still in an incipient state, as is the case of the Network of Cultural Observatories of the Americas, which brings together part of the existing information systems of this continent, with the aim of interchanging information and knowledge around culture with their differences of context<sup>1</sup>. In the cultural field of the American continent, a tool is being created to fortify this sector and to realise its potential in regional development and integration: the Inter-American Observatory of Cultural Policies.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants at the 1st Meeting of the Network of Cultural Observatories of the Americas. Washington, DC, 24 August 2005.

## Contribution of ENCATC to the cultural observatories scenario

In the European context, in 2007 the Working Group on Cultural Observatories and Information and Knowledge was born within ENCATC, the European Network of Cultural Administration and Training Centres. ENCATC is a dynamic network encouraging the exchange of knowledge, methodologies, experiences, comparative research programmes and regular assessment of the sector's training needs in cultural management from a European perspective through a broad range of working groups, projects, activities and events. In 2007, ENCATC initiated an extensive consultation process to explore ways to provide its members with a sound structure for their exchanges. As a result, the ENCATC General Assembly, held May 2007 in Göteborg, Sweden, requested the Board of ENCATC to formalise the informal structure of the six working groups set up as a pilot in 2006. The ENCATC Working Groups are the following:

- Working Group 1: Creative Entrepreneurship & Education in Cultural Life.
- Working Group 2: Interpretation/Mediation applied to Heritage Sites.
- Working Group 3: Cultural Observatories and Cultural Information and Knowledge.
- Working Group 4: Audience Policies in Europe.
- Working Group 5: Europe International.
- Working group 6: Urban Management and cultural policy of city.

Three years later, a new working group on «Arts and Health» was created and added to the formal structure.

Each ENCATC working group addresses a specific issue, selected as a result of the membership consultation and thus representing their main areas of interest. Working group members are in the first place individuals representing the training institution member of ENCATC with relevant knowledge and expertise in the respective area. But members can also be representatives from external institutions and organisations with sound expertise or legitimacy in the specific field of the working group (e.g. UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Commission, EUROSTAT, Europea Nostra, Interarts, etc.). The ENCATC working groups reflect the policy priorities of the association for the period 2008-2010 as well as those set out in the European agenda for culture adopted by the European Council on 16 November 2007. After this period, these working groups changed into the following Thematic Areas and Policy Groups:

- Thematic Area: Creative Entrepreneurship & Education in Cultural Life.
- Thematic Area: Interpretation/Mediation applied to Heritage Sites.
- Policy Group: Monitors of Culture.
- Policy Group: Museums and Municipalities.
- Thematic Area: Europe International.
- Thematic Area: Urban Management and cultural policy of city.
- Thematic Area: Arts and Health.

The University of Deusto chairs the ENCATC Policy Group of Monitors of Culture, former Working Group on Cultural Observatories and Cultural Information and Knowledge that was formally set up in December 2007. It is intended to continue with the work carried out previously by ENCATC at the International event held in Bilbao and the Conference in Bologna in 2006, and by representatives from cultural observatories in Belfast and Budapest. This working group provides the opportunity to carry out research on the information systems used by cultural observatories and debate on the process of collecting, managing and disseminating information and knowledge. It also facilitates discussion about cultural data, statistics and indicators, common frameworks, cultural mapping, supply and demand study, methodologies, research, etc.

The needs and challenges of cultural observatories were defined when the first meeting was held in Split in March 2008. Reflections were based on the following definition: «*Cultural Observatories are organisms in charge of facilitating access to information and its transference to cultural knowledge in order to assist decision making by means of a systematic information processing*» (E.W.G., 2008). As a result, working group members agreed that their challenges should be to promote the role, essence and nature of cultural observatories; to assist in training and education to capitalise cultural observatories; and to support the system, that is cultural policies, in cultural development.

As regards membership, it is open to those cultural observatories which would like to achieve the aforementioned objectives and would like to join the group. So far, we are an alliance of over 40 European institutions and cultural observatories in 20 different countries and work in close synergy with major organisations at European level such as EUROSTAT, UNESCO, Council of Europe, IFACCA, as well as on other continents, such as OPCA —the Observatory of Cultural Policy in Africa— and OIPC —the Inter-American Cultural Policy Observatory in particular—. Membership of the working group represents a mix of old, recent and emerging observatories in Europe such as ATER Formazione, Culturlink, EUCLID, Interarts, The Budapest Observatory, LabforCulture,

Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles, Osservatorio Culturalle del Piemonte, Fundación Autor, the Croatian Cultural Observatory, and observatories from other continents such as the Canadian Cultural Observatory.

Regarding the activity of the working group, following the first meeting in Split, in March 2008, another encounter took place again in Lyon in October 2008 in the context of the ENCATC Annual Conference. We organised an additional expert meeting in Bilbao in December 2008, entitled *New Challenges of Cultural Observatories. State of art and new demand of cultural information and knowledge for decision taking* with representatives from Europe and Latin America. The idea was to engage professionals, researchers and politicians in a debate on challenges for cultural observatories; to promote the exchange of experience working on cultural information and knowledge; to stimulate new thinking on the phenomenon of cultural observatories; and to promote joint research, training and dissemination among those responsible for cultural observatories and cultural information. A major achievement of the Bilbao expert meeting was the Basic Repertory of Bibliography and a Map of Cultural Observatories in the world.

In early 2009, we organised a seminar on *European Statistics* as a follow-up to the International Scientific Conference run by the European Commission on the impact of new technologies on statistical collection, production and dissemination systems. The aim was to present recent findings in statistics and methods on cultural data at European level. Experts, including Anna Magraner and Cristina Marcone from the European Commission's DG EAC, looked at possibilities to measure creativity. Some experiences enriched the seminar such as the Italian project ORMA, considered as a reference for the coordination of cultural information between the regions of a country; or the experience of understanding multiple impacts of hosting a European Capital of Culture combining economic, cultural and social indicators and methodologies. The seminar concluded with the presentation of Marta Beck from EUROSTAT, presenting member states' working groups on statistics and the agenda for the two following years.

At the Annual ENCATC Conference in Barcelona, the results of another project were presented, the Global Map of Cultural Observatories MMOC. This project was run by the Chair of the Working group, Cristina Ortega; Melba G. Claudio-González, Researcher, Barcelona University and Coordinator of Ibero-American Portal of Cultural Management; and Rosa Luz Dávila, Researcher, Barcelona University. The objective of this instrument is to facilitate mutual understanding between organisations with common goals and actions and thereby promote the development of

joint projects. In this framework, we put forward another tool such as the blog and posed a debate on different hot topics: What is the contribution of cultural observatories to the European Agenda for Culture? How do cultural observatories conceive cultural diversity as well as ethical culture policies and what kind of indicators should be defined?

In 2010, the 19<sup>th</sup> issue of the Bulletin of Cultural Management was published by the Iberoamerican Cultural Management Web-Portal, where contributions (articles, interviews and case studies) of working group members and representatives from the most relevant cultural observatories were gathered<sup>2</sup>. At present, we are facing a new challenge thanks to the EU Culture Programme (Strand 2), which gave us the opportunity to move towards a Policy Group. Its aim is to promote the analysis, evaluation or impact assessment of cultural policies and give support to those groupings to exchange and compare data and evaluation methodologies at national/local levels. They aim to produce new methodologies and data on the considered topic as well as to maximise the impact and have EU wide reporting and dissemination of the results.

The ENCATC Policy Group Monitors of Culture took this opportunity to set up a framework for discussion (platform) and exchange of best practices to improve the design and evaluation of culture policies in Europe, mainly at regional level. This book is one of the outcomes of this initiative and it introduces the following issues: the results of a survey to know the State of Art of Cultural Observatories in Europe; some key articles written by experts in the field (guidelines for quality study, challenges of observing cultural industries, models of observation of cultural policies, critical evaluation of the cultural field, principles of cultural entrepreneurship); and some case studies that illustrates the situation in Spain, Italy, Hungary and Belgium. The annex includes the conclusions of our main meetings (Bologna Round Table and Bilbao Think Tank) and some policy documents produced.

We hope this book will be useful to those states and autonomous communities of Europe, which consider it a challenge to advance towards a society of knowledge. Developing new strategies, which facilitate the management and effective use of information, leading to the conversion and transmission of forms of knowledge, are key. This role is assumed by observatories, which has traditionally been linked to the study of natural phenomena, and which in the society of knowledge, goes on to become the heritage of other disciplines such as culture.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.gestioncultural.org](http://www.gestioncultural.org)

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## Chapter 1

# Considering Cultural Experiences from the Humanist Leisure Approach: Guidelines for Qualitative Further Study

*Manuel Cuenca Cabeza*

After the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the progressive formal recognition of the right to culture has been linked to the demand for the right to leisure<sup>1</sup>. During the 1970s, the idea spread that cultural development is directly related to social, personal and economic development<sup>2</sup>. Later on, with the *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*, culture moved to the centre of other contemporary debates and was opened up to topics such as identity and social cohesion. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the emphasis was on creative and participative culture related to the cultural diversity defended by the *Agenda 21 for Culture*<sup>3</sup> or the UNESCO *Convention on the Promotion and Promoting of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (2005). The proposals defended by the

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<sup>1</sup> See Articles 24 and 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

<sup>2</sup> The first debates took place in 1970 at the «Venice Conference on the Financial, Administrative and Institutional Aspects of the Cultural Policies». The official formulation of this cultural development idea combined with social and individual progress occurred at the 1972 Intergovernmental Conference of Helsinki and at subsequent international meetings. The Plan of Action approved by UNESCO in 1986 already contained these concepts.

<sup>3</sup> Agenda 21 for Culture was approved at the IV<sup>th</sup> Forum of Local-Authorities for Social Inclusion (Porto Alegre) during the Universal Forum of the Cultures, Barcelona 2004. The targets to be fostered were: diversity and intercultural dialogue; along with culture as the catalyst of creativity.

European Agenda for Culture<sup>4</sup> and promoted by the European Union, are also covered by the cultural observatories.

This article is written with these in mind and considers cultural observatories, with the aim of contributing to their function to give coherence and offer support to the new ways of understanding cultural enjoyment. We believe that it is difficult to think about enjoyment without relating it to leisure experiences. This will be our point of view. Our aim is to put forward new knowledge options regarding the cultural fact that go beyond data and statistics. However, it should be overlooked that what is important is democratic and generalised access to culture, its improvement and the development of guidelines that are applicable in different contexts and enable appropriate comparability.

## **Leisure and culture**

In more developed societies, culture is considered to contribute to the well-being and the quality of life of the citizens; yet that collective and subjective perception of an improved lifestyle places us in the framework of leisure. We thus refer to the cultural expressions that we enjoy, or we may enjoy, in our daily lives and, to a much greater extent, when on holiday and in our spare time. In other words, what refers to the enjoyment of cultural goods, arts, publications, audiovisual productions or shows.

For a long time, the university academic world has believed, and in many cases I suppose that it continues to think, that the terms Leisure and Culture are conflicting concepts. However, any observer of the current situation can see that the development of the so-called Cultural Industry is linked to the development of the Leisure Industry. Whether or not you accept it, the reality is that the cultural supply and activity today competes with other different leisure offers and of different sizes. As W. Rybczynski (1991) pointed out, the new citizen has to decide between what s/he does and what s/he stops doing. Many different factors are involved in that decision, including the economy, time, culture, motivation, tiredness, etc.

Culture, given the decision and personal enjoyment of the subject that experiences it, enables us to place it among leisure approaches; yet neither culture as a human fact is all leisure, nor is leisure all culture. As is the case with many other concepts and areas, the frontiers between culture and leisure have been blurred so that their relations have become complex and difficult to differentiate in an objective way. This is another important

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<sup>4</sup> On 16 November 2007, the European Council approved a European Agenda for Culture based on the proposals of the Commission submitted in May 2007.

reason to assess culture from subjectivity, that is, from lived experience. The new culture that surrounds us has to know how to integrate the secular values inherent to traditional culture with the new values, typical of an international culture turned into reality thanks to technology (Levy, 1995).

The transformation of the leisure concept has been parallel to the changes in mentality in other fields of modern life, which is not outside the very conception of culture. I am aware that, from a humanist point of view, the leisure concept that will be used as the benchmark in this article is far from the standardisation proposed by the consumer society. Yet I have wanted to highlight the humanist and positive vision, as this approach can orientate the action taken in other approaches and dimensions.

## **Humanist Leisure**

Over the last 20 years, I have written many times about what I understand leisure to be and now I must do it one more time, although in doing so, I refer to my own texts (Cuenca, 2000, 2004, 2006). Leisure is a concept with many meanings and can therefore be understood in different ways. We usually identify it with the actions differentiated from day-to-day work and, from that point of view, characterised by its not being compulsory, by enjoyment and entertainment. We do not usually think about what we understand by leisure, but we do question what we want to do and what we like.

At the University of Deusto's Leisure Studies Institute, the Humanist Leisure concept provides the context for our work. This is an approach based on knowledge of the scientific approaches that enable us to go further into the field of leisure in general and direct it towards the proposed plans of action that defend human values and the freedom of people. We believe that leisure is an intentional (personal and social) experience, based on autotelic or independent leisure, taken as the sphere of development and Human Law, which is accessed by means of training. Autotelic leisure compares with the leisure experiences that are carried out in a satisfactory way, freely and by themselves, with a utilitarian purpose.

This humanist leisure has its roots in the leisure concept of classical culture. The important conceptual preparation in Ancient Greek culture, present in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, had and continues to have transcendental importance. They considered leisure not to be a mere means of continued working but rather as an end in itself, the goal and the way to a happy life. In *Politics*, Aristotle argued that leisure is «the first principle of all action» (VIII, 1338: 30-35), in that it serves to achieve the supreme goal of man that is happiness. Classical leisure is linked to

endeavour and to the exercising of freedom. Endeavour and freedom are present in physical exercise and in intellectual activities, they are shared values that enable competitors to come together and the intellectual exchange between the lovers of knowledge and culture. If we remove these two aspects of Greek leisure, we are left without the essential.

It has already been stated that leisure is a personal, individual and also social experience, that is, it is characterised by a series of well determined characteristics: freedom, gratuity and satisfaction, which, in its classical sense, combined enjoyment and moral beauty. When we refer to humanist leisure, we still need to add other elements: overcoming, which implies endeavour and training; along with justice, in the sense of defending the right to leisure of all people.

In short, the essential convergence that can occur between culture and a leisure experience lies in both sharing the aforementioned features and opens up the way to communication processes between different people. That communication, which is not always convergent in time and space, makes reality satisfactory and provides what we so often want: the encounter with and understanding of something alien, separate from the ego.

## **Creative leisure and the ways of accessing it**

From a humanist approach, the enjoyment of culture is a type of leisure that we call creative leisure, given that it provides experiences linked to creativity. We take creative leisure to be a specific expression of leisure characterised by undergoing creative experiences in a more global sense, as creation and re-creation. It is related to different ways of experiencing culture and with differentiated leisure settings, environments, facilities and resources. It is, above all, cultural leisure, characterised by undergoing lived experiences separate from the instinctive and the easy, that introduce us to the view and enjoyment of a more complex world, but much more enriching, satisfactory and human in the long term.

According to Csikszentmihalyi (2001), the development of psychological complexity validates leisure and creativity. Creative leisure is related to experiences that enable us to access high levels of complexity. Each one of us has creative potential that we can develop and which enables us to enjoy satisfactory life experiences. The creative dimension of leisure becomes reality through two complementary aspects, creation and «re-creation». Creation brings us to the pleasure of inventing something or, simply, to the gratifying experience of creativity. In the case of culture, creative experience is the realm of authors, actors, directors and people responsible for the cultural fact. The other aspect of creative leisure is the

«re-creation» that, in this case, means giving life, re-creating something that is created. López Quintás (1977) points out that the enjoyment of «re-creation» comes from reviving the artistic creative process; but apart from the process, leisure as a lived experience takes us to the message of the work of art and to its personal and cultural meaning.

The creative and «re-creative» aspects are essential for understanding the interrelation between leisure and culture. Both make us approach cultural enjoyment from a different way; taken at a social level, they are complementary and interdependent. We cannot speak about the dramatic arts without enthusiasts, or of enthusiasts of any of the cultural expressions without creative benchmarks that act as models. The lack of enthusiasts leads to a lack of experts and without them there would be no audience. The creative and «re-creative» aspects of leisure are meaningless outside the intrinsic motivation of the stakeholders or of the receptors, and therefore training, taken in its widest possible sense (not necessarily academic) is an essential factor.

Leisure traditionally has been a differentiator element of cultures. This is expressed in lived experiences, in celebrations and festivities, in the way of understanding works and entertainment and, above all, in values. The development of an international culture fosters the appearance of leisure and cultural practices that are equally international, even though, at the same time, segmented. A large part of culture promoted from the areas of cultural development is experienced as leisure practice and experience. It is often elite leisure insofar as it has nothing to do with mass consumption and is characteristic of a social class with a specific cultural capital. The practice of this leisure fosters, according to P. Bourdieu (1988), class distinction, yet, at the same time, it stimulates social and personal development. The practice of culture as leisure goes beyond mere entertainment and becomes authentic leisure that is not accessible to anybody, but rather only to the person who is ready for its enjoyment. José Luis López Aranguren (1992: 55) was right when he said that, «everybody has the skills to be at leisure and enjoy themselves, yet not everybody is ready to choose leisure and pastimes». Culture experienced as leisure implies a «new humanism» to which Lopez Aranguren also referred on several occasions (various, 1957).

### **Culture from experiential leisure: Guidelines to delve further into experience**

At the start of the 21st century, leisure as a wide-spread concept is to be seen in developed countries, as leisure is to be one of the most

desired and representative experiences of our era. We dream of holidays, of travel, enjoying the great outdoors or culture, sports and recreation at a global level. Commercially speaking, we use the terms leisure or, increasingly so, leisure experiences to refer to these and many other offers that we can enjoy thanks to the development of technologies, the media and travel opportunities. Leisure experiences are related both to the very personal lived experience and to the social environment in which they are experienced.

In this experiential context, leisure economists have had to reformulate their previous objective, production or utility, as here «utility does not measure necessity, but rather the psychological desire that a consumer experiences in relation to a specific good» (Barret, 1974:79). The benchmark for this criterion is that everybody tries to optimise their decision, by opting for those that provide them with a greater degree of satisfaction. The validity of this everyday reality can help to explain why we are moving from a service economy to an experience economy.

Compared to the service economy, based on intangible activities, the experience economy understands that the key lies in the subjects that wish to enjoy memorable experiences, as the experiences are intrinsically personal (they are not external). In other words, they are related to the spiritual, intellectual or emotional physical state, and also to the values of the individuals and the communities. B.J. Pine II & J.H. Gilmore (2000), state that the experience economy is the start of a new economic era where each company is a scenario and provides memorable experiences, through «stagings» which people pay to attend.

When an individual buys an experience, he pays to enjoy a series of memorable events orchestrated by a company —in the same way as a play— in order for him to be personally involved. Experiences are always the core of the performances, from theatre plays and concerts to cinema films and television programmes. However, over recent decades, the number of performance options has increased greatly and tackled many, many new experiences. In our opinion, the source of this expansion of experiences can be traced back to one man and the company he founded: Walt Disney. (Pine & Gilmore, 2000:19)

In the short time since these ideas on experiential leisure were introduced, we have begun to differentiate between «first-generation experiences»; characterised as being «pre-fabricated» leisure supplies close to the aforementioned Pine & Gilmore proposals and the «second-generation experiences» where their first referent is the individual and his social and cultural individual values (Boswijk, 2005:43). The

proposal of the Leisure Studies Institute, set out herein, would come under this second approach.

## **Regarding the experience concept**

Before focusing on the leisure experience concept, I believe it is important to recall that leisure actions have been traditionally named as activities and that, in the following section, it is important to differentiate both concepts. Activity is related to the faculty of working and can be defined as an act, operation or task carried out by an individual or different individuals (it could also be an entity). Activity is momentary in nature; there is no activity that guarantees experience, but any of them enables the opportunity of a lived experience. Psychology (Vigotsky, 1982; Talizina, 1988) considers that human activity enables the relationship between the human being (subject) and reality, by allowing the latter to be the transformation object. In any human activity, the subject acts integrally. The psychic activity (internal) and practical (external) are complementary aspects of a single whole. The unity between both forms reveals the indivisibility of the human being. Our life is marked by experiences, but each experience is made up of multiple activities.

Along with leisure taken to be an activity, we are witnessing an abusive use of the word experience, which is nearly always used without conviction, without being aware of its meaning and its possibilities. The Spanish Royal Academy dictionary contains five different definitions of experience: 1. fact of having felt, known or witnessed something; 2. prolonged practice that provides knowledge or skills to do something; 3. knowledge of life acquired by circumstances or situations that have been experienced; 4. circumstance or event experienced by a person and; 5. experiment. Using these definitions as the starting point, we can understand that experience is an «event lived by a person» that provides him with personal knowledge or change, as the result of «having felt, known or witnessed something».

«Event» is used in the meaning of something that occurs outside the subject, which is exterior to him; yet, at the same time, closely affects him by transforming his knowledge and his way of understanding the world. That transformation is due to the direct and personal lived experience, which involves the senses, sensations, feelings, knowledge, concept and ideas. Experience is always the experience of someone, but that someone is permeable, open to change. This enables it to leave a mark on the subject that experiences it. Jorge Larrosa (2006) therefore stated that the subject of an experience is a passionate, patient subject.

## Experience is not the same as activity

John Dewey (1949) differentiated between daily activities and particularly intense experiences, unified around a situation, an event or an object. Experiences, from his point of view, follow a processual course, so that they offer fulfilment that enables them to be conserved as enduring memories. The examples of experience that the author uses belong, as it happens, to the sphere of leisure: writing a book, carrying out a satisfactory conversation or playing a game of chess. Yet perhaps the best of the examples available is executing a journey planned, carried out and recalled with fondness. All these lived experiences are experiences that are an independent whole, characterised by the consciousness of choice and their voluntary nature. This explains that individualising and self-sufficient quality.

A. Fierro (2000: 39) stated that «living is experimenting, and that means both having spontaneous lived experience that happens to an individual, and alternative lived experiences in the manner of an experimenter». Experience does not usually refer to a passive way of life, but rather to the contrary, to being awake and active that is related to very personal feelings, perceptions, thoughts or desires that are hard to objectify; yet experience is something quite different to an experiment.

Jorge Larrosa specifies that experience, unlike an activity or experiment, cannot be technically planned. Thus, the example can be given that

the activity of reading is sometimes an experience and sometimes not. As even though the activity of reading is something that we do regularly and routinely, the experience of reading is an event that takes place on rare occasions. And we know that the event escapes the order of cause and effects. The experience of reading, if it is an event, cannot be caused, cannot be anticipated as an effect based on its causes, the only thing that it can do is ensure that certain conditions of opportunity occur: only when the appropriate text comes together with the appropriate moment and the appropriate sensitivity, does reading become experience. Even though nothing guarantees that it is: the event occurs with certain conditions of opportunity, but it is not subordinate to the possible. On the other hand, a single reading activity can be experience for some readers and not for others. And, if it is experience, it will not be the same experience for all those that do so (Larrosa, 2006: 99).

Experience, as a subjective fact and transforming phenomenon of the person, is not an experiment in the way of the experimental sciences, each experience is singular as it corresponds to a specific subject. Even though

some people experience a single event, the perspective regarding how they experience it is always different, unrepeatable. On the other hand, an experiment must be repeatable and it must mean the same, irrespective of the subject that carries it out. Science works with the general, experience refers to something singular: «the affection for the singular is called precisely passion. Therefore, the singular can only have a passionate epistemology. Or passionate ethics. Or a national policy.» (Larrosa, 2006:103). The opportunity of the experience, seen from subjectivity, implies the suspension of the generic position, yet this does not mean, as we will see later, that the opportunity of living leisure experiences can be generalised. Science captures experience and constructs it, prepares it and exhibits it according to a point of view, from an objective point of view, with the hope of universality, therefore the language of science cannot be the language of experience.

## **Characteristics of the leisure experience**

In Leisure Studies, the first approaches towards experience were performed from psychological approaches. H.E.A. Tinsley and D.J. Tinsley (1986) linked leisure as an experience to well-being and satisfaction of psychological needs. However, years later, the vision was expanded and made more complex. In 1998, the *Journal of Leisure Research* dedicated a monographic number to leisure as a multi-phase experience.

Experience is independent from its objective attributes and it has something of first time and surprise, «it opens up to the real as singular, that is, as identifiable, as unrepeatable, as incomprehensible. And also as incomparable, as unrepeatable, as extraordinary, as unique, as unusual, as surprising» (Larrosa, 2006: 103). Without losing this uniqueness, experience also has a social aspect related to the previous experiences of the subject and with the social, cultural, economic and historic context in which it is inserted. This aspect, which is easier to generalise, is what allows us to refer to the common features of any leisure experience. Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, in «Leisure in the Sparetime Spectrum» (1992), consider that any leisure experience has different common features, something that, when you think about it, seems evident. Starting from the common approaches proposed by these authors and delving further, it can be confirmed that the following aspects should be considered in any leisure experience and, in our case in the cultural leisure experience:

## 1. *The benchmark framework is the actor or agent itself, i.e., the individual*

Experience is always embodied in someone, in a specific individual, and has to do with something that happens to a subject. This does not mean denying the social nature of leisure already implicit in the concept of individual, but rather that, even though the others are quite important in the decisions regarding recreational activities, the considerations towards the own ego is usually greater than what happened in work or other activities that are not leisure. N. Elias & E. Dunning point out that «in a work-focused society, leisure is the only public sphere where individuals can decide based mainly on their own satisfaction», which means that «leisure is a *last resort* for the socially allowed ego-centrism in a non-recreational world» (1992: 118, 134). «This enables us to affirm that, in order to understand the meaning of the leisure experience, it is essential to start from the subject that experiences it».

Without denying the unique and individual nature of the leisure experiences, we as people develop and share these experiences through a social structure that facilitates the social and personal identification. Creative leisure, which forms part of the culture sector, is not a separate world from the rest and coexists with a wide range of leisure offered to the citizens. Even within creative leisure, it competes with multiple cultural expressions with which it shares a similar context. It should be remembered that people characterised by an appropriate training are the potential targets of the cultural experiences.

From a sociological positioning, the core of cultural experiences is made up by the creator and audiences. For a leisure experience to be possible, an emotional communication between them must be established that enables them to be mutually acknowledged and find meaning in an encounter that goes beyond the mere economic transaction. The audiences recognise a work, or a cultural fact, it even moves them and it is difficult move someone that is not known, and it is therefore important to work further with the audiences, to go where the target is.

The demand for leisure experiences related to culture has increased over the last four decades, but this increase is related to the higher percentage of the population that has completed a university education. Education is the best audience predictor. In Spain, in the case of the theatre, a significant example for the topic in question, 15% of the population have completed university education and one out of every three people that go to the theatre comes from that section of the population. We could wonder if we are truly aware of the tastes and expectations of this audience or if the new university audiences are being educated with the humanist and cultural orientation of their predecessors.

The consumer society knows the difference between fans and enthusiasts. The satisfaction experienced in the world of the enthusiasts has a greater likelihood of sustainability, from the point of view of leisure, than in the case of fans. It may be economically more profitable for stars and celebrities to dominate the markets, but developing enthusiasts that result in sustainable leisure experiences is more important. The dilemma that arises between having to choose between fans and enthusiasts is similar to having to opt between quantity and quality. It seems that, at that time, we prefer to give priority to the second, without that meaning that the first is overlooked.

We know that the lifestyle of the «cultured» citizen (Ruiz Olabuenaga, 1992) is characterised by «being» introduced to the world of art and living in a «culture setting». Its percentage impact in the Spain of 1990 was small, between five and ten per cent; yet, in subsequent documents (Ministry of Culture of Spain, 1995, 2007 and 2008; Herrera Mora, 2004), it can be seen that the number of supporters increased, as was expected. They are active citizens that not only enjoy a certain cultural practice, but also are also interrelated to others. Many theatre goers also go to the ballet or the opera or to music concerts. And furthermore, a good number of citizens in this group buy books, videos and records, related to that lifestyle that they experience. The development of the supply in each of these areas does not hinder the development of the others.

Cultural leisure lifestyles are not determined by the economy, even though that can be an important point. In the case in question, the level of education plays a greater role. Each cultural expression has its audience and, even though they are no formulas or magical solutions, it is undeniable that it would be difficult for culture audiences to exist without training actions. The search for personal involvement in cultural experiences, in developed societies, requires the convergence of the interests of all the people involved in the cultural fact, each one from their specific characteristics and different levels of commitment. Technically, this involves developing multiple audiences, that are physically accessible, participative, economically viable and with a vocation that is enduring; yet, as will be seen below, we know that that is not possible without education.

K. McCarthy & K. Jinnett (2001: 24-25) defend that there are basically three ways to participate in cultural activities: a) Practical execution, such as being part of a group of enthusiasts; b) Attending shows or other cultural events; c) Through the media, for example, watching a concert on television. This and other studies (Kolb, 1998) stress that the greater the understanding of the artistic activity, the greater its enjoyment will be. This statement can be extended to other significant

leisure experiences related to personal development and creativity. It can therefore be seen that in each act where a person takes part, the reaction is related to established experiences and influences the subsequent decision when it comes to again participating, as the specific experiences change the expectations of the subjects.

## *2. It has an emotional predominance*

Leisure is a lived experience that is part of the world of emotion, where sensitivity, sensuality and affection predominate. The leisure experience is based on the enjoyable, not on the reasonable action. If the experience is something that happens to a person, it is not so much what is done, but rather what was undergone. It can be said that what is most important is not action, but rather passion. J. Larrosa (2006: 108) stated «experience cannot be captured from the logic of the action, but rather from a logic of passion, from a reflection of the subject on itself as the passionate subject. This explains why a person does not have the same tastes (an aspect that has a direct impact on the leisure decisions) or reactions to external stimuli with the same emotional load at a specific time of his life, in a determined context, as at another time and in another context. As Fericgla pointed out (2000: 13), emotion —and in particular feelings— emerge from the interpretation of the situations, not from the situations as such. This fact implies that there is a very close relationship between emotions, cognition (in particular the memory) and cultural entertainment.

Leisure experience provides the opportunity to feel a pleasant awakening of the emotions. The emotions are the base of the world in which each one is immersed, deeply influenced by our perceptions and cognitive processes. We know (Fericgla, 2000: 24-25) that emotions are mental and physical processes, complex and basic processes in our lives that have different dimensions: physiological, psychological, cultural, the result and cause of the enculturation process received and personality. The complex intermeshing of these dimensions means that emotions affect us completely, allowing culture and biology to interlink inseparably. We live in a factual world and a mental one that interact by mutually creating and modelling. The fact of living in a culture conditions us to live according to certain emotions, which in turn fosters specific leisure forms.

In leisure, greater importance is given to emotion and fantasy than in ordinary life. Emotions model the world of meanings and the setting of possible actions in human beings. Fericgla (2000: 12-13) claims, «we

must acknowledge that behind the practices and under the habits that define and shape each society, there is an emotional driver that carves out and fosters social life». We should differentiate between feelings, motivations and emotions in this emotional substratum. This trio is the core the systematically interlinks culture and human nature, which has a direct impact on leisure cultural experiences.

### *3. It is not justified by duty but rather by free satisfaction*

In an emotional world, desire and what is wanted is related with what is liked. Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) show that consumer conduct is motivated more by «pleasure» and satisfaction than the expected functionality (utility) of the products. Hedonist expectations (Arnold & Price, 1993) are very important in generating a satisfactory experience. The cultural experience, lived as leisure, has its primary reason in «what you like» and this gives it meaning. Unlike routine life and work, real leisure is an experience that is justified in the satisfaction that it provides, irrespective of the type of activity that is practiced. Leisure experience is a space of freedom, it assumes doing what «I like», «what satisfies me», not what «I should». Leisure actions do not require any mandatory undertaking, but this does not exclude perseverance or free commitment.

There is always a field of deep personal enjoyment in leisure activities that encourages the individual to relax and challenge the strict regulation of the routine way of life. It goes from outward-looking semantics to inward-looking semantics. Halfway through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Maslow defended the notion of development through pleasure, after noting that healthy individuals tend to elect what is better, insofar as their needs are accepted and fulfilled. Satisfaction of the basic needs are often identified with material needs (food, clothes, money, etc.) or bodily needs; yet Maslow defined that it is an error, as none of them meets in itself other basic needs such as protection, security, dependency, friendship, love, respect, appreciation, dignity... What is true is that, even though the lesser and more urgent needs are material, the same materialist approaches tends to be generalised in all others, by overlooking the intangible needs that are also basic.

Maslow (1993: 193) stated that shortcomings in meeting the basic needs make people ill; but when they are constantly satisfied, it makes us healthy and prevents the problems caused by their shortcomings. Based on these approaches, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi stressed the importance of satisfactory experiences as reaffirmers of the self, which is particularly

important nowadays. If, as he stressed in his research, «enjoyment is the cornerstone of evolution» (1998: 47), we can consider that leisure experiences, as generators of lived experiences, that tend to be repeated and improve the satisfaction that they give us, are sources of social and individual human development. In other words, leisure, as a satisfactory experience, has an impact beyond the personal and individual, as it also spreads to community and social levels.

#### 4. *It is also integrated in values and lifestyles*

Leisure has to be something *integrated* into the life of people, in their scale of values and their context. From another individual and subjective point of view, leisure is a sphere of fulfilment of valid actions, an ideal space for the development and the *lived experience* of values in their multiple fields. We cannot be «someone» on workdays and «other people» at weekends. Life is a continuous whole and dichotomies only lead to schizophrenia. Integrating leisure in our lives means putting it on «as serious» a footing as work, education or health.

Socially, leisure experiences are integrated in a context. The context is something that surrounds us from before we are born and, as has been indicated when speaking about emotions, conditions cultural experiences. People are, at the same time, passive objects and active subjects relating to the context, as, on the one hand, it conditions our acts and, on the other hand, we can act on it by modifying it. In any event, there is no doubt regarding the importance of the context when assessing the cultural fact.

The enjoyment of a creative leisure experiences requires time and its own vital space that has to be known and fostered. However, the changing situation in which we are living is a reality that we all share. In the case of cultural experiences, they affect both artists and audiences, and «antennas» therefore need to be installed, technological tools used that enables us to establish new social networks that provide us with new dialogue opportunities. The space of culture and the arts, fully integrated in the leisure habits of the citizens, has opened up and has evolved towards other social spaces.

Cultural experiences cannot ignore the opportunities that the mass media or digital technologies offer. Today's citizens are immersed in our media environment that has enabled the development of a convergent culture (Jenkins, 2008) that is to do with contents flows, mixture of cultures, convergence of spectators and use of the new media and resources. The convergence culture questions the traditional relationship between producers and distributors and blurs the frontiers between professionals

and enthusiasts. In that context, the role of the general public becomes more important, along with the characteristic values of the leisure lived experiences that are part of the knowledge culture defended by Lévy (1997), when he speaks about collective intelligence. Jenkins stresses «producers that do not manage to reconcile with that new participative culture will see their clientele decrease and their income reduce. The resulting struggles and agreements will define the public culture of the future» (2008: 34)

The current product of leisure experiences tends towards co-creation. That means that the citizens can and want to participate in their own cultural fact. The general public is intelligent and dialogue can be established with them, even though we are not so accustomed to it. Understanding, getting nearer to the artistic work, implies enjoying it, becoming an accomplice, creating a leisure community, which is the result we are working towards.

### 5. *Experiencing at different levels of intensity*

A leisure experience can range from the mere acceptance of the experience —doing something that I like, just that—, to the contemplative and receptive immersion, capable of providing us with an intense experience. Some time ago, the humanist psychology of Maslow and his followers highlighted the importance that these recent so-called summit experiences or optimum experiences have for people. From their position, leisure can be a sphere where the body and spirit are cultivated in order to achieve a better life and with better quality, both at a personal and community level.

The intensity with which an experience is lived is related to the novelty, the sociocultural context, the degree of knowledge and other subjective and objective aspects, including the very quality of the experience. The day-to-day experience is transformed into an event thanks to the novelty. Thomas Mann captured this aspect magnificently when, in *The Magic Mountain*, he describes the impact that a journey has on the life of a person.

Our first days in a new place, time has a youthful, that is to say a broad and sweeping flow, persisting for some six or eight days. Then, as one «gets used to the place», a gradual shrinkage makes itself felt; [...] the first days at home after the holiday will be lived with a broader flow, freshly and youthfully, but just some of them, for one adjusts more quickly to the rule than to the exception. (Mann, 1988: 118-119)

The example of the journey can be used to illustrate the impact of novelty on the intensity of the experiences. Novelty is a motivation factor that enables us to access unknown lived experiences as if they were extraordinary events. The first time that we went to school, that we caught a bus, that we saw a person we love, leaves a footprint that we cannot forget.

However, beyond the specific, subjective and specifically personal lived experience of the new, the vital experience is not explained by itself but rather to what extent it is inserted in its space-time coordinates. A person does not only live his life as an individual, but also, consciously or unconsciously, he takes part in his era and of his contemporaries. Vital experiences are perceived and are lived in a space-time horizon that affects both the person and the community in which he lives. This crossroad of social and personal structures, subjective and of the time, enable us to understand the complexity of the sphere in which we are in and in which we understand that the leisure experience must be located. Highly important socio-cultural factors intervene in the lived experience and in the expression of the emotions. Each culture rewards the expression of certain emotions and punishes others. Fericgla (2000:16-17) pointed out that some emotions are present from birth, or even from before, yet others appear later.

### *Knowledge*

Along with the novelty and the socio-cultural context, the intensity of the leisure experience is related to the degree of knowledge and skills acquired in the interest being practised. The research of R. Stebbins (1992) and Alan Tomlinson (1993) highlights the importance of differentiating serious (which is sometimes known as substantial leisure) from chance leisure. The former is identified with the systematic and voluntary practice of a specific amateur, voluntary activity or hobby. Stebbins (2001: 28), in his book *New Directions in the Theory and Research of Serious Leisure*, classifies cultural hobbies as a sub-type of serial leisure and defines them as «the search for fervent and system knowledge performed during spare time for the own enjoyment of each one».

Chance leisure, referring to a specific leisure practice, would be the opposite of serious leisure. We can situate the four levels of Bryan specialisation (1979) between one and another. It found that the participants in a leisure activity could be classified into:

1. Beginners (interested in achieving some results)
2. Those that begin to gain skills and set more difficult goals.

3. Specialists in something (with a specialist interest).
4. People that turn their leisure practices into an identification motif.

It is obvious that the degree of knowledge and satisfaction in each stage is not the same, and an appropriate leisure supply should therefore never overlook these approaches, that are directly linked to the quality demands.

Years later, R. Stebbins (2008: xii; 2006: 2) would qualify the opposition between chance and serious leisure by recognising leisure based on projects as a type of leisure «in the short term, that is reasonably complicated, performed one single time or occasionally, but that, despite its lack of frequency, carries out a creative project during free time or during the time free from unpleasant obligations». The most outstanding difference between the aforementioned types of leisure are surely based on the time spent on them, as while chance leisure can be associated to practising activities, substantial leisure, in which we could include both serious leisure and that based on projects, should be considered as experiences, given its processual character and its greater possibility of leaving an enduring mark.

Walter Benjamin (1973), in an article published in 1933, described the opposition between experience and lived experience that, in this case, can help us to qualify the difference between serious leisure and the one based on projects. Experience therefore has a long history and refers to the systematic and accumulative forced action, typical of classical leisure. Lived experience, which is newer and more recent, also refers to the free and enjoyable practice, yet it is characterised by discontinuity, spontaneity and the lack of systematisation. It seems clear that serious leisure is related to experience and the one based on projects is more in line with what Benjamín calls lived experience. If we translated it into current terms, we could speak about these lived experiences as consumer leisure experiences, contrasted to the substantial leisure experiences. Compared to the stability and systematic nature of the latter, the first are noted for being unstable, asystematic and by the predominance of hedonism, uniqueness, fleetingness and immediate satisfaction.

Consumer leisure, taken as experience, is an event that shocks, stimulates us, that is a pure sensation, in the form of the disconnected, one-off, instantaneous lived experience. Following in the steps of Bauman (1999), Larrosa (2006: 106) points out that «the speed at which the events occur and the obsession with novelties, the new, that characterises the modern world, prevents its significant condition. It also prevents memory, as each event is immediately replaced by another event that equally excites us for a moment, but without leaving any track. [...] The speed

and what it triggers, the lack of silence and memory, are also a mortal enemy of the experience»: The difference between leisure as a consumer experience, that can also be reiterative and, therefore, not just occasional, and substantial leisure, which is systematic, enduring and the reason for identification, is obvious.

Compared to the simplistic approaches to leisure, related exclusively to entertainment or laughter, people are looking for experiences which require complex approaches, involvement and interrelation. F. Colber (2003), considers that they are four factors that influence the enjoyment of complex cultural products: family values that foster or reject cultural practices; the useful educational context; the fact of having gone to the theatre and museums when a child; and the non-professional practice of cultural activities. The four are related to the leisure education of the individuals and are aimed at developing substantial leisure.

The intensity is related to the greater or lesser personal meaning given to an experience. This means, according to Csikszentmihalyi, that the person is, when all said and done, what determines if an experience is boring, gratifying or optimum. In general, it can be stated that the quality of the lived experiential consumption can only be determined by the consumer and does not depend on the objective quality of the product, which can be measured by an expert. The theories of Maslow or Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi show us that people need motivations that give meaning, at all social levels and at any time. One of the challenges of cultural experiences is to increase its meaning and a question of interest in this area would be: what are we doing for culture to be interesting for us?

### *Quality*

It should be stressed that quality currently is important among the many responses to that questions. The thoroughness with which things are carried out is important, and greatly so; thus, in the case of theatre, good scenery, good performances, good music, good acting, good directors are important. There is therefore a greater likelihood not to defraud, to create satisfaction and enthusiasts, which is a long-term promising result. The development of the audiences is to do more with quality than with quantity. Quality means that the intensity of an experience can be increased, even though the intensity of the experienced emotion cannot be measured by the intensity of its expression. An extroverted person communicates much more by his happiness or his anger than an introverted person, but can it be said that this emotion is more heightened in one subject than in another?

Any sustainable orientation of culture stresses the importance of opting for quality. From the point of view of supply, the objective is not to be better overall, which would be a little less than impossible, but rather to work cooperatively and be good in something different. From the point of view of leisure, it can be said that the good enthusiast demands better quality than the budding enthusiast. Substantial leisure has greater opportunities than the casual for providing optimum experiences to the subjects.

Optimum experiences are extraordinary experiences that enable us to access the greatest degree of experiential intensity. They are the summit experiences, which Maslow spoke about, or the optimum experiences, that Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi studied, that could be related, to a certain degree, with catharsis. From the anthropological perspective, Josep Ferriclla (1989) considers that it is very likely that those experiences will be the only unequivocally human emotional space, as there are first-rate emotional experiences in all culture, sought after by practically all religions and classic Shamanism.

Focusing on the sphere of leisure, the studies of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi should be recalled on optimum experiences or «flow» experiences, the term used by many of the people interviewed, when they describe what they feel. According to that author, optimum experiences are attained «when all the contents of the conscience are in harmony between themselves and with the goals that define the *self* of the person» (Csikszentmihalyi, 1998:38). They are the subjective conditions that enable us to access pleasure, happiness, satisfaction and enjoyment.

The conclusions reached by Csikszentmihalyi regarding optimum experience are directly applicable to cultural leisure experiences. For an experience to be optimum, a person must perceive what s/he wants and must do something (challenge perception) that s/he is capable of doing (that s/he has the skills to do so). The interest of the leisure experience is as much on the «challenges» that it sets the individual as on the enjoyment of its fulfilment. The Csikszentmihalyi studies (1998: 46) establish that the most common characteristics of those optimum experiences are the following:

- Balance between «challenges» and skills.
- Clear goals.
- Immediate feedback.
- Satisfaction for the people who experience them.
- High level of motivation.
- Overlooking or distorting time.

The consequences of living an optimum leisure experience are covered by a wide and rich bibliography known as *leisure benefits*, which

we will now consider. However, it is of interest to highlight that, even though the experiencing of a summit, optimum or ecstatic experience is a subjective, individualised and personal issue, Csikszentmihalyi's studies provide us with interesting guidelines on «opportune conditions» to carry out a leisure experience or, if one prefers, an experiential project.

We should therefore highlight the first five characteristics listed above. It should be noted that, in this case, we opt for a different scale and we do not consider «overlooking or distorting time» as we believe that it is a characteristic that occurs when an individual has truly experienced an optimum experience. The extraordinary cultural leisure experience also requires the successful construction of a narrative around related topic, a narrative marked by implicit semantic guidelines, appropriate for the recipients, which have to be culturally prepared.

## 6. *Processual character*

An essential feature in the significant experiences is their processual character, which means that they form part of our lives through a time dialogue between present, past and future, in any direction. This processual character is one of the fundamental aspects that differentiate the activities, or the lived experiences, from the experiences that leave their mark and the memorable experiences. As a metaphorical explanation of this footprint, Fierro describes the experience as

a fabric with figures, a tapestry where different threads are interlinked to draw profiles and colours. We could speak about an affective and also cognitive intrigue, ready on the loom of existence, and where the lived experiences and the biography of the individual are progressively woven. Yet it is not a finished tapestry and completed at any given time, but neither is it the fabric that Penelope was continuously weaving and unravelling. It is always incomplete, to be finished, without a definitive shape; it is a moving tapestry, in the future, developed in time (Fierro, 2000. 57-58).

The footprint of memorable experience appears in the time that follows the performance of the actions and will last, more or less longer, according to the intensity with which it has been lived. Tinsley & Tinsley (1986) distinguish between the backgrounds of the experience, the attributes and the consequences (that they identify with benefits). The experience cannot be anticipated, but it can be «facilitated» according to backgrounds and, as was indicated in the previous point, opportunity conditions. The leisure experience establishes its reality in the present, but

it is enriched insofar as it significantly incorporates the relevant past and future. In other words, the time that we are projecting or desiring and the past time where we enjoy recall or remembering. The full leisure lived experience occurs where it is carried out as a complete and meaningful experience, which requires a beginning, development and end.

If we focus on cultural leisure experiences, the proposal of K. McCarthy & K. Jinnett (2001 & Motos, 2009) is interesting due to its impact on the decision-making process. According to these authors, this process is made up of four stages: background, perceptual, practice and experiential. Each one of them is affected by different factors. The background phase covers the general attitudes of individuals towards the arts and their consideration as a potential leisure activity. Socio-demographic factors (education, income, job, gender, age, life cycles), personality and prior experience in that field come into play, along with other socio-cultural factors related to belonging to a group or identity.

The perceptual phase, related to the predisposition to take part, is based on assessing the benefits (personal and social) and on the costs incurred. This can range from a strong inclination to a strong rejection. It has to be considered here that the individual attitudes are made up by the very beliefs and by the attitudes of the social group with which each one identifies. In this perceptual phase, people who practice substantial leisure, who we usually call enthusiasts, are those who are more inclined to attend cultural events than the group of occasional attendees, even though it also influences the endeavour involved.

In the practical phase, the individual assesses the specific opportunities of participation and decides whether or not to assist. Obstacles such as lack of information about the programming, costs, lack of time, etc come into play here. Despite the obstacles, the decision will depend on the strength of the personal inclination to participate. People with a strong inclination (substantial leisure) are less likely to be dissuaded by the obstacles than those with a weaker inclination (occasional leisure).

Finally, the experimental phase is determined based on the previous decision that leads to the performance of the experience and the assessment that the individual carries out by him/herself. The options, obviously, will vary depending on a large number of factors: the knowledge held, the circumstances of the moment, the social value given to that experience, the degree of personal development achieved through the previous experiences, etc. The four phases, but, particularly the first three, would form part of what we have previously called backgrounds of the experience, but, in the case of cultural leisure experiences, contribute valuable reference points as conditions of opportunities for experiential projects aimed at success. The processual character enables

the leisure lived experience to transcend to a dynamic and, consequently, creative experience. The cultural leisure lived experience gains in meaning, importance and quality insofar as it separates from the mere «pastime» and is incardinated in our lives by breaking down the barriers of objective time.

## *7. Training requirement*

Even though leisure can be merely a spontaneous lived experience, the humanist leisure experience requires training. This training is more obvious in the case of cultural leisure experiences. Statistic yearbooks of cultural practices and habits remind us each year of the close relationship between personal training and cultural consumption. Sociologically, the audiences are made, they are not born. A study on the training actions being implemented in European operas (Eizaguirre-Cuenca, 2010), unveiled in the last OcioGune forum<sup>5</sup>, shows that all the organisations studied have educational programmes aimed at students from different degrees, along with strategies to develop interest in the opera among teachers, parents and young people. In addition to other important actions to reach out to new audiences, such as adapting the work to child audiences, developing programmes about thematic cores or special prices for young people and university students. It is obvious that the gradual increase of opera enthusiasts is the result of these actions.

Modern society provides greater opportunities for cultural leisure, yet each person can enjoy them in a different way. The attitude of the person, his/her interests and their capacity for enjoyment is more associated to their training than to what is objectively offered. The training enables the development of values, attitudes and skills that improve the capacity of enjoyment and the quality of life of the individuals. Therefore, leisure education does not only refer to childhood, but rather affects all ages. Conscious and mature leisure helps people to free themselves from their barriers, reward the shortcomings and heartaches and facilitates the escape from the closed sphere of the day-to-day grind.

Training is not only related to the opportunity to access a specific type of experience, but it also affects the intensity. When dealing with these aspects, reference is made to casual leisure (Stebbins, 2000:111) that is the result of an activity that offers an immediate reward and which does not require or requires very little specific training for their

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<sup>5</sup> The 2010 Ociogune Forum on «Leisure and Values» was held at Deusto University (Bilbao, Spain) from 9 to 11 June, 2010.

enjoyment, which contrasts with the serious, or substantial, leisure that is the result of prior training or preparation, where participants find it highly attractive to continue to acquire knowledge and skills. Cultural practices require committed audiences, which take up the offers from a deep-rooted liking.

In this context of training for cultural enjoyment, the ideas of François de Closets (1996) should be recalled. He stated that it did not matter what is taught, as long as it awakens curiosity and liking. This is the first essential requirement of leisure learning, the second is that one cannot go from nothing to the sublime without intermediary steps. Someone who has never been to the theatre cannot be expected to start with Shakespeare, in the same way as that someone who has never entered in a museum cannot be expected to be enthusiastic about Mondrain. Before learning to enjoy the best intellectual achievements, one has to learn to enjoy intellectually. This is the recipe that F. Savater knowingly proposed (1997: 126), based on the advice of George Steiner.

In short, cultural experiences, seen from leisure, are shown as spheres of enjoyment through knowledge, self-fulfilment and personal development. We could say that this can only be understood as a consequence of prior training that enables something to be created or re-created that is meaningful to one or other party. Cultural experience is also the moment of the essential encounter between enthusiasts (some professionals) that are created and enthusiasts that are re-created. The magic of the encounter and its *raison d'être* emerge from the possible convergence of both spheres.

I would like to end this section by recalling that it is impossible to understand the displays of experiential leisure within the framework of a specific human science, whether sociology, psychology, biology or any other. Elias & Dunning believe that the separation of the knowledge provided by the sciences «has led, inevitably, to the overlooking of many problem areas, one of which is the problem of leisure» (1998:138). Therefore, it is impossible to study leisure without the interconnection of knowledge. This interdisciplinary approach has been a basic principle of the Leisure Studies Institute at the University of Deusto.

## **Final considerations**

We have come to the end and we should now review the main ideas, set out throughout the text, in order to clarify some guidelines that will thus facilitate a deeper understanding the cultural experiences by the relevant cultural observatories.

The first reflection that should be recalled is to do with what an experience is and what it means. As we have seen, the experience is part of the personal and subjective world and therefore, from that point of view, its essential characteristic is uniqueness. Unlike the activities, each experience is unique and, in the case of similar facts, each person experiences them in a different way. This means that the institutions, or private initiative, cannot guarantee in any case that the experiential, in its deepest sense, becomes reality in anybody. What they can do is discover and foster the conditions of opportunity of the experiences.

From a social point of view, leisure experiences can be seen as leisure experiential projects. They act as models that foster the fulfilment of personal experiences, from a context and conditions of opportunity. This allows us to state that the characteristics of the leisure experience, described herein, collect references that help to go qualitatively further in the cultural experiences. Essentially, the cultural experience, analysed from humanist leisure, calls the attention to four aspects: subject, sensitivity, context and process.

**Subject.** The experiences are always embodied in someone and it is therefore essential to know, and the more the better, the characteristics of the subjects: What is the situation of a hypothetical subject with respect to a possible cultural experience? We have seen that, apart from the novelty, the degree of knowledge and skills acquired are important. It is not the same to think about beginners as to think about people with certain levels of skills, different to the specialist ones or to those that are interested by the theme with the typical enthusiasm of substantial leisure. Each degree of initiating has different expectations of satisfaction. As has been previously indicated, any cultural expression that is offered as leisure should identify the potential audience and the minimum skills required to be a reflective and active spectator. Cultural experiences require, at least ideally, committed audiences and deep-rooted liking.

**Sensitivity.** The experience is independent from its objective attributes and depends on the sensitivity of the subject. It is accessed through knowledge of emotions, feelings and motivations. It is known that the better the understanding of the cultural activity, the greater the enjoyment. The emotions and feelings awakened by a cultural experience come from the interpretation of the situation, not from the situation itself. Training is the best predictor of cultural audiences, but the interesting point is to differentiate between fans and enthusiasts. Cultivating a sensitivity that fosters cultural experiences is developed through the practical implementation (enthusiasts), attending or cultural events or through the communication media (particularly radio, television and Internet). This means it is important to consider the context and the family values, the

impact of the type of education received and the environment that is developed among the enthusiasts. Nowadays, nobody fails to understand the educational role of the media and the new technologies. Knowledge of the cultural habits of a country involves knowing the role of the media in cultural dissemination and training.

**Context.** Each experience has its right time and space, but the cultural experience is also related to the previous experiences and its cultural, social, economic and historical context. The cultural leisure experience is associated to values and way of life, which has previously made us differentiate between lived experiences, or consumer leisure experiences that contrast with substantial leisure experiences. We have indicated that given a context of stability and systematicity of the latter, the former are contextualised in change, discontinuity, the predominance of hedonism and immediate satisfaction. The way of expressing emotions depends on the culture and the socialisation process received.

**Process.** The cultural leisure experiences are differentiated from activities by their processual character. The background, the implementation of the experience and the consequences are important in the experiential process. The background explains the attitudes of the individuals towards the cultural offers and their consideration as the source of personal satisfaction. As has been previously indicated, education, social status, age, gender and other aspects related to the personality, the previous experience or belonging to a determined group has an impact. The realisation of an experience will be successful according to the motivation level of the subject, the clarity of the goals, the balance between «challenges» and skills, the feedback received and the satisfaction experienced. Quality has an impact on satisfaction. The consequences are associated with the benefits and intensity of the memory, what makes it more or less memorable or that the experience acquires a positive, and even optimum, degree. The optimum experiences are fundamentally among the initiated. From the point of view of leisure, we would say that it is more possible among those that practice substantial cultural leisure experiences.

Cultural observatories that are interested in greater knowledge about the experiential processes of cultural leisure offers should seek measurement indicators that enable them to come near to these four aspects that have just been highlighted (subject, sensitivity, context and process). It is obvious that much of the data required is already in official statistics and database, but others are not. And, above all, what I think is even more important is data correlation and integrated reading (often available) from new experiential parameters and from leisure approaches that are more in line with the values and functions of leisure in the current society. Essentially the cultural experience, analysed from humanist

leisure, highlights the key role of the subject of the experience and its purpose of social and personal development; this is the basis to defend the participation or the co-creation, and which does not confuse development with utilitarianism.

Creative leisure starts from what it means to each person, as creativity and «re-creation» are spheres of leisure dependent on an intrinsically curious, interested training. In the case of cultural actions, it may be hard to convert them into satisfactory without a strong experiential load. This requirement has to do with the capacity to understand a specific cultural expression. Any cultural supply that is offered as leisure should identify whether the target public has minimum skills to be a reflexive and active spectator, capable of assessing and enjoyment the cultural fact in its different dimensions. It should also be complemented with programmes to develop the skills characteristic of practice as an enthusiast. In our post-industrialised societies, this should also be a task of television and other audiovisual technological measures within the reach of everyone. They, together with the family, are the main vehicles transmitting values, symbols and emotional learning.

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## Chapter 2

# Trends and Challenges of Observing Cultural Industries

*Lluís Bonet*

### **Introduction**

Cultural industries are responsible for the majority of cultural goods and services consumed by the citizens, along with a significant portion of the proposals and services offered by public cultural institutions. Establishing the characteristics and dynamics of a sector that goes far beyond the serialised traditional production is vital for the good health of a culture. This is particularly true when the digitalisation of a good part of cultural production and its dissemination through the different types of networks transform the value chains and impose new business and access models on the cultural contents. Over the last fifteen years, creative and cultural industries have achieved unprecedented popularity, even though different problems exist regarding their definition, conceptualisation and statistical availability that hinder their observation (Hesmondhalgh & Pratt, 2005).

Monitoring its operating and evolutions, along with interaction with the strategies of government policies, should be one of the fundamental missions of cultural observation with public service vocation (Girard, 1979). Its impact on the job market, on the contents and recognition processes, or on the circulation, reception and appropriation by the citizens, affects the key objectives of a conscious cultural policy. In this context of constant change, discerning the key variables to be observed and to be interpreted is fundamental to ensure competitive indigenous

cultural production, where interaction with local and international audiences is increasingly more interrelated and specialised. Therefore, the observation work must not only direct governmental policies, but also help to define the strategies of the professionals and companies in the sector.

This paper seeks to set out the main challenges of the observation in that sphere and is structured in a format that highlights different key issues, which will enable us to consider the why, for whom and why it is performed. Some specific problems of the observation of cultural industries are also analysed. The document concludes with some recommendations for the people running the institutions that study and disseminate the reality and complexity of the sector.

### **What are we going to observe? The problem of the limits of the «cultural industry» field**

Both the concept of «cultural industry» and the term «culture» itself are characterised by their polysemy and by their, consequently, having multiple acceptations. Technological changes, with their impact on the business models, along with the fickle governmental interests when it comes to developing those industries, explain why it is so difficult to agree a standardised meaning for the term: a widely accepted canonical definition by the scientific community and the relevant governmental and professional entities. The concept likewise emerged with the stigma of the Frankfurt School, where a degradation of the value of the work of art is seen in the industrialisation and commercialisation process (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1979 [1947]). It would not be until the 1970s that the first systematic actions were implemented to diagnose and assess public cultural policies, in order to include the interest in the industrial activities of culture in that endeavour (Girard 1973, 1979). The objective was to observe and establish the situation and dynamics, from a prospective perspective, where the final purpose was to assess the effectiveness of the governmental intervention. However, this would not be a generalised process, as the full incorporation of cultural industries as an integral part of democratic cultural policies would not occur until half way through the 1980s.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> From a liberal democratic perspective, to the stigma of the Frankfurt School, the distrust generated by the totalitarian experience in Europe from the 1930s should be added. This explains that the support for the book industry, the press or the cinema in numerous countries would depend on the Ministries for Industry and the development of radio broadcasting for specific governmental monopolies.

The meaning of cultural industry used at that time (Girard, 1979; Anverre, *et al.*, 1982) was limited to those products capable of being reproduced in series by electronic and mechanical means; i.e., sectors such as the book, the press, the phonograph or the audiovisual. This definition uses the traditional classification that differentiates between manufacturing and service, even though in some aspects, it goes beyond producing goods in order to incorporate producing and disseminating services such as broadcasting. Thus, the convergence of interests between the analysis of the cultural sector and communication studies has enabled, over the last forty years, the development of mutually enriching, complementary approaches, of observing and analysing the policies, the contents and the social and economic structures of the media and cultural industries. In short, the term «cultural industry» challenges that of the traditional cultural sectors, artisan and non-serial production: the visual arts, live performances, heritage services and museums, libraries and archives, etc.

With the emergence of digital technologies in the sphere of information and communication, the capacity of serial reproduction that differentiated them from the craft cultural industries, began to disappear. At the same time, the traditional limits of cultural activities —those with an aesthetic or historical value or aura that generates copyright— tended to blur with the set of creative activities, those industries which have «their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property», according to the definition of creative industry by the UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2001: 4). It should be pointed out that fashion, gastronomy or computer software design are included in this definition, together with traditional cultural sectors such as audiovisual or music. It is not strange that the growing predominance of the term «creative industry» over «cultural industry», in particular in Anglo-Saxon countries, has triggered a critical debate on the uses of both terms (Galloway & Dunlop, 2006; Segers & Huijgh, 2007).

In any event, manufacturing production being replaced by a service economy in developed countries implies that the term «industry» has spread to the set of production branches or economic sectors. On the other hand, the production, distribution and consumption of cultural products with high symbolic contents are no longer an economic anomaly<sup>2</sup> and have become the core of the new economy. As Galbraith predicted in 1974, as cultural production becomes industrialised, its interaction with future and

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred Marshall's (1890). *Principios de Economía* uses appreciation towards music as an implicit exception of the Gossen Act on the decreasing marginal utility.

strategic sectors increases, including sector such as telecommunications, generating jobs and economic growth —and consequently— the interest expressed by economists and politicians.

The widely-accepted meaning of the term «cultural industry» includes the set of agents and commercial activities producing and distributing cultural goods and services for the market. The term includes both traditional artisan activity and serial production. In other words, it incorporates both the spheres of archaeology, museography, visual arts or live performances, and the world of publishing, phonography, tele-films or video games. The agents that provide these goods and services are self-employed professionals, companies, together with non-profit private institutions. However, the term «cultural industry» does not usually include those government-owned institutions that likewise produce and provide cultural goods and services (museums, public libraries or theatres, for example). In other words, the concept of industry is assimilated into the private sphere, while the term «cultural sector» includes both the private and public supply. As far as demand is concerned, the recipient or client of the cultural industries is both the end consumer and the public authorities, along with other non-profit companies or entities, whether or not they are cultural.

Therefore, only the public provision of cultural services and the non-commercial forms of social participation are left out of the reach of cultural industry observation. In any event, as has been already discussed, there is no consensus about the use of the term, and while the United Kingdom —and many other countries under its influence— have adopted the term «creative industries», others prefer to refer to copyright generating industries, or experience economic sectors, or others still continue to use the traditional meaning of cultural industry limited to serialised production (see Kea *et al.*, 2006: 48).

### **Why should resources be allocated to observing a reality that operates by itself?**

Those of us who work in the field of research believe that it is obvious and essential to have minimum resources to advance knowledge and contribute to better planning. Yet taxpayers may think it is wrong to spend extra public resources on the prospective and detailed analysis of an industry that they already subsidise; in particular, when the market itself indicates that it deserves the interest of the general public and what the competitive and viable business models are. The cultural industry is not, or even close to, the only one to benefit from governmental support, but it is always difficult to justify why a profitable private activity (and a

good part of its activity is) deserves this support. Therefore, how can the resources needed to monitor cultural industries be justified?

It is difficult to separate the why from the object to be observed or its recipients or beneficiaries. For example, in the majority of the studies to map the creative and cultural industries, in particular in the regional and local context, the endeavour is focused on measuring their capacity in terms of job creation, turnover, value added, or exporting capacity (Higgs & Cunningham, 2007). In those situations, economic development is the reason that explains the interest and legitimises government support for the sector. On other occasions, and currently less frequent ones, the issues that attract researchers are the aesthetical or technological aspects of the product, the contribution of local creativity, or the interaction between creators and users. In those cases, the analysed variables have a lower economic component as the research focuses on aspects such as the innovative capacity, the nationality or place of residence of the creators, or the degree of interaction between users.

The very name of the observatory often determines its approach or specialisation, along with the evolution of its own *raison d'être*. In the majority of cases, the analysis of cultural industries is merely one of the more widespread components of cultural observatory. In other cases, the name proclaims the specific purpose for which it was set up (book observatory, audio visual observatory...) and its evolution reflects its new interest. For example, the Buenos Aires *Cultural Industry Observatory* changed its name to *Creative Industry Observatory* when the political leanings of the capital's government changed in 2007.

The consolidation and vogue of the term «observatory» means that the name, thought up to describe a department or institution dedicated to permanent cultural gathering and analysis, is also used for certain studies. This is the case of the report entitled *Observatory of Piracy and Digital Contents Consumer Habits* (June 2010), published by a consultant commissioned by the Spanish Coalition of Contents Creators and Industries (which brings together the main copyright management entities, record companies and anti-piracy federation). It is a half-yearly report, for a very specific purpose, but it does not have a permanent analysis structure.

On the other hand, the majority of cultural statistics and study services comply with the premises of the observatories without using that term. Finally, the name and the characteristics of the observatories depend on the reasons for which they were set up. Thus, the large numbers of public-run (or where the majority funding is public) research departments or institutions are explained by the need to assess the correct use of governmental resources involved in developing cultural industries. The contemporary logics of good governance requires the use of those

resources to be audited, both for assessing the achievement of the set targets —assessment of the efficiency of the public action— and in terms of efficiency in relation to the processes used. Investing more or fewer additional resources to that task requires finding the right balance between the costs of the audit endeavour (from designing the indicators to gathering, systematizing and analysing the information) with respect to the volume of public resources made available. However, the ex-post assessment is not sufficient, as getting the design of a policy right requires extensive prior knowledge of the situation where they are going to operate and there is no room for improvisation.

### **For whom is the observation performed?**

As has already been pointed out, it is difficult to separate the «why» of observing from the «for whom» the observation is performed. Therefore, the public authorities are logically the first to be interested in assessing the suitability and efficiency of the tools implemented to support the sector.

In other words, insofar as there are governmental policies, proven information on the initial situation and its evolution that is as objective as possible, and indicators that enable it to be assessed are necessary.

Yet in a sphere such as cultural industries, under constant social, productive and technological transformation, the main beneficiaries of the observation process are the very professional and business agents involved. Having proven information and a good objective, neutral and systematic analysis of the reality of the very branch of activity, together with the adjoining ones, is hugely efficient in strategic and prospective terms. However, it is not always easy to ensure that the private agents are committed to the collection and diagnostics process. Many companies, in particular the larger ones, often do not cooperate in the essential data collection process for the sector analysis.<sup>3</sup> The reason is probably very simple: insofar as they already have confidential information in that area, they are not interested in sharing it with the competition or with the public authorities. An independent diagnosis could generate less beneficial forms of intervention for the specific respective interests. Insofar as they obtain information, and interpret it in a

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<sup>3</sup> The experience of the author is repeated in numerous research on different cultural sectors. The larger companies are accustomed to not facilitating the data required (in particular, economic ones), a fact that hinders having fully representative information on a sector. While replacing a small —or medium— sized company with another one of a similar size in a stratified sample is very simple, not having the data of the larger companies generates serious problems of representation for the analysed population set.

way that reflects their interests, from the authorities and other key agents (media, advertising industry, design associations or trade unions), the favourable status quo is maintained. Dependency relations —often based on patronage— between public authorities and companies (and in general, the set of cultural agents) are not used to facilitate a culture of transparent critical studies (Bonet & Négrier, 2003).

Therefore, it is preferable to generate processes of mutual trust and participative collaboration in the observation work. Creating spaces where the emphasis is on objectivity and transparency between the different agents involved, but with certain discretion in the availability of certain sensitive data, is possible. Periodically collecting and systematising the set of necessary information to analyse the sector and its stakeholders mean incurring significant costs, which should be shared between them. Therefore, having a specialised observatory or consortium observation structures, with the triple academic, professional-business and governmental participation is worthwhile. Its main mission would be to collect the most costly information, the subsequent statistical preparation, and the analysis and dissemination of the main results. Ministerial cabinets or business and professional associations, along with university researchers, can use that data to develop more specific reports or research. They not only therefore share the costs, knowledge and agree on the criteria for gathering the basic information, but also safeguard their respective interests. Observations in the hands of a single institution —whether corporate or governmental— can sometimes cause the consultants or academics involved to behave like an armed fraction to legitimise the (often partial) interests of the more powerful stakeholders.

Large cultural and communication incorporations are some of the potentially most dangerous stakeholders, although they are often necessary given their significant market share. Through their newspapers, radio stations and television companies, which usually attract large audiences, and their greater financial clout than their competitors, these groups can greatly influence public opinion and influence governments with information and editorials with a partial or interested focus on the topics that affect them (Croteau & Hoynes, 2006).

### **Which observation scale —local, regional, national, continental, global— is the most appropriate to decipher the behaviour and intervention strategies towards the cultural industries?**

One of the major challenges facing cultural observation is qualitative and quantitative time and spatial comparability. Each context explains

a good part of the dynamic needed to create, appropriate and consume what makes up cultural life. The importance of the territorial context in the implementation of the majority of cultural political strategies explains why one of the main focuses of the existing cultural observatories is the impact at local and regional level (Ortega, 2010). This focus is reinforced with the spread of urban or regional support strategies for local creative and cultural industries, following in the wake of fashionable thinkers, such as Porter (2000) and Florida (2002). The goal of the so-called creative entrepreneurial clusters is to try to specialise their respective cities or regions in creative activities, that highlight unique features and foster social and urban regeneration, and with a more competitive productive system and with greater capacity to create added value. In some cases, but not many, small observatories or measurement units of the achieved impact have been created. The experiences considered to be most successful usually occur in cities with a certain creative and entrepreneurial tradition (Sacco & Pedrini, 2003; Cooke & Lazeretti, 2007). However, the very concept of success, along with that of good practices, is not easy to measure. We live in an era where having a cultural district is fashionable and no governmental authority explicitly accepts the failure of their experiences in this field. On the other hand, the success rates of the new creative company incubators, even though they are higher than the initiatives set up outside that protective umbrella, are not spectacular.

However, the specific nature of the cultural industries may raise the need to have a wider range of data and analysis capacity, as is the case, for example, in the *European Observatory of the Audiovisual*. Indeed, cultural interests produce for, and are supplied by much wider markets, with dynamics that can be extended on an international scale. Likewise, their main benchmark legislative framework, along with a good part of the financial funding, is usually —in the majority of western countries— at a national level. One of the main arguments that justify the governmental strategies for cultural industries is the defence of their own national area of cultural consumption and expression when faced with the invasion of imported products that do not reflect the local traditions, values and contemporary creativity.

This has likewise been the historical reason for the lack of development of cultural policies on a European scale, with the exception of those sectors or processes —the audiovisual or international commercial negotiations— where only a community strategy is efficient or possible. The European Agenda for Culture in a Globalised World of November 2007 implies the overcoming of that situation. Four of its five priorities are to do with cultural industries and their observation: improving the

mobility conditions of the cultural professions; developing information, statistics and comparability of the sector; maximising the potential of culture and creative industries, in particular, the SMES; and promoting and implementing the UNESCO Convention regarding the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. This new benchmark framework, related to the challenges of the 2020 EU strategies, is beginning to have a significant impact on the strategic plans of the majority of the different levels of European government.

From any analytical perspective, it is clear that the indicators to be used —and their interpretation— depend on the targets set, the available resources, the initial social and economic context, and the economic context. Situating the focus at a more or less local, regional, national or international scale will depend, in the last instance, on the government level with the greatest competence or initiative capacity in this field. Its capacity to combine endeavours with other social institutions (business and/or professional associations, trade unions, universities, financial institutions, foundations, etc.) or with other levels of government will be the decisive factor.

### **What does observing involve?**

As Agustin Girard (1973) pointed out nearly forty years ago, «The need to prospect cultural development comes from the great uncertainty that weighs on the establishment of efficient cultural policies. [...] What we are driven to look for is the opening up of new hypothesis, enabling the total questioning and offsetting the overlooked». And at the same time, both now and then, «there is the need to claim the new place of the cultural budget in the national budget, or the new place of the Ministry of Culture regarding the other key cultural agents that are the media, the cultural industries and other authorities (education, territorial planning, infrastructures, etc.)».

Thirty years later, it is worthwhile considering how some cultural observation experiences self-define their functions. According to the *Yorkshire Cultural Observatory*, their function consists of being a *first stop shop*, supplying data and intelligence about the cultural sector, that enables access and actions with first-rate information that add value to the investment decisions performed by those parties with a strategic responsibility in the cultural sphere.<sup>4</sup> The *Creative Industries*

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<sup>4</sup> [www.yco.org.uk](http://www.yco.org.uk)

*Observatory* of the City of Buenos Aires lists among its functions: obtaining, preparing and disseminating qualitative and quantitative information on local creative industries; the publication of a Creative Industries Yearbook (with information about value added, employment, exports, production, consumption and contents by creative sub sectors) and a collection of sectorial studies (with diagnostics, development proposals and management tools); it also organises forums and seminars with the participation of stakeholders from the creative industries, public managers and academics.<sup>5</sup> This mission and listed functions are repeated in a more or less similar way in the different existing observatories.

What specifically characterises the tasks of observing, studying and disseminating cultural industries? A short glance at the framework document of the UNESCO cultural statistics (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009) seems to indicate that the fundamental statistics task consists of measuring the economic dimension of culture and, to a much lesser extent, its social dimension. In the case in question, the very concept of «industry» would seem to indicate that the economic dimension must be the dominant one, even though we firmly do not believe it to be the only one. The UIS framework document recommends focusing on the successive stages of the cultural appropriation-production cycle: creation, production, dissemination, exhibition/reception/transmission, and consumption/participation. In each of the stages of the cycle, both the characteristics and the distribution, interaction or marketing mechanisms can be observed, along with the skills and training level of the stakeholders that take part both in the production and in the appropriation or consumption process.

The key questions to be assessed are directly related with the observation targets. Studying the job market involves going deeper into variables such as employment, qualification and training level of the professionals involved, their remuneration, or the distribution by age and gender, among others. Yet the fundamental issue is understanding what is really of interest to know and why (better quality of life, equality of opportunities, competitiveness, generating economic value...). Thus, the information and studies on the training of the professionals in the different cultural industries or on the impact of artistic education on their consumption can take different directions. Another of the most studied issues is to do with territorial impact and commercial flows. Yet again, establishing the location factors or the impact of the commercial agreements on the national market share is related both to economic

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<sup>5</sup> <http://observatorioic.blogspot.com/p/nosotros.html>

issues and to the capacity of expression and reception of local contents. This situation occurs in other possible fields of analysis, from reflecting on creative dynamics and innovation, to studying the effect of the new social appropriation models regarding copyright or the evolution of cultural habits in terms of demand of the sector.

The contents and targets of the observation work depend, in the last instance, on the focus (sociological, economic or political, to name just a few) that is going to dominate the process, as the issues to be considered and the interpretative models to be used will be different (Bonet, 2004). It should likewise be taken into account that the level of interdependence, internationalisation and complexity of the cultural markets, together with the quantity of stakeholders and disperse interests involved, make it very difficult to establish the structure and dynamics of each of the sub-sectors of the cultural industry to be assessed.

### **Specific problems of observing cultural industries**

The first of the problems to be highlighted is statistical availability. Until relatively recently, not only were cultural statistics scarce and problematic for comparability between sub-sectors and at an international level, but they also lacked uniformity in their coverage and treatment (Shuster, 2003). We have an historical series that is more or less comparable regarding the facilities and activities under governmental ownership or management (museums, archives, libraries or publicly-owned theatres). They are also available for those subsidised private activities whose support mechanisms require reliable control data (cinema box office figure, or number of printed books and newspapers, among others). Otherwise, we have nearly no information on those more emerging activities or with barely any dependence on governmental support (the world of video-games, for example).

In order to have integral diagnostics, adding, without standardised criteria, data on industrial activities (in the traditional sense of the term) and on service activities continues to be necessary. At the same time, a distinction should be made between the organisation logics of the governmental provision —and the public accounting— and those regarding the private production of goods and services for the market, as can be seen when the contribution is measured in terms of the value added of the public production.

As far as demand is concerned, consumer habit surveys had barely begun to introduce the new behaviours emerging from the digital world until a few years ago (Donnat, 2009). The reasons behind this type of

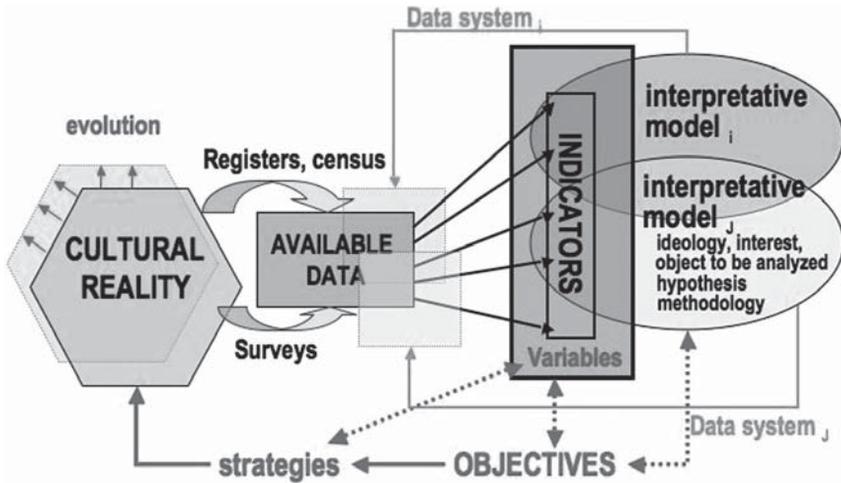
exercise —support for the traditional sector of culture— and the need to have a historical series explain why a good part of the issues included focus on the social practices related to the conventional cultural offer (reading, visits to museums and moments, attending concerts, films or drama, etc.). The high cost of fieldwork likewise hinders an ongoing or very detailed observation by types of citizens. Beyond the surveys funded by the public sector (institutional or by common agreement with certain sector groups), the private sector is only accustomed to funding those studies that measure targets for its market surveys or to justify the contributions of the advertising industry.

A second issue, not far from the aforementioned problem of the limits of the term cultural industry, consists in differentiating between the creative dimension of production or employment and that of the sectors affected. A significant number of artistic professionals do not work for the cultural sector, but rather contribute their creativity (design, music or expressive capacity) to other products or activities. Many professionals who have little to do with creativity work in the cultural industries, strictly speaking. Establishing and analysing the relations of mutual dependency between cultural activities, professions and environment is one of the most difficult issues given the many qualitative aspects that make them up.

A third important issue is related to selecting the indicators that enable the efficiency and effectiveness of the policies underpinning the cultural industries to be assessed, along with comparing in time and space the situation and evolution of those key dimensions or variables. In the first case, the indicators depend on or are directly related to the targets of the policies being pursued and, therefore, they have a certain (legitimate) ideological bias, or are tied to the dominant administrative culture. It should be taken into account that while the indicators are a management control tool for the public administrators, the political leaders use them to justify their actions or demolish those of their opponent.

In the second case, when the aim is the knowledge of a situation or dynamics —independent of the action— the variables assessed depend on the scientific or strategic interest of the observer. In the scientific spheres, the variables to be studied usually depend on the academic discipline or the school of thought that drives the research. In any event, the availability of specific secondary data —the result of censuses, registration or periodic institutional surveys— conditions the indicators that enable the time or space comparison. The specific nature of the issues or hypothesis that arise from specific field works, supplied by much more precise primary data, is difficult to incorporate in a permanent monitoring control structure of a cultural policy.

## Interpreting models and indicator selection



Bonet, 2004.

The fourth question to be taken into account is that of the interpretative studies. The statistics and the indicators by themselves do not enable the dynamics of a social, economic and cultural reality in intense transformation to be understood and further studied. The role of the scientific community is to try to decipher the complexities of the existing relations. However, there are very few specialist researchers, as can be seen by observing the limited number of researchers and papers submitted at the different international academic congresses on the topic.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, the majority of the resources available are invested in a la carte studies commissioned by governments, professional associations or companies to consultancy firms. Many of these studies, biased right from the start according to the objectives pursued (market studies, development plans, etc.), do not reach the other stakeholders or the scientific community. The high acquisition cost is occasionally outside the scope of a young university researcher.<sup>7</sup>

Finally and unlike the general cultural observation, the study of cultural industries requires an intensive endeavour or international compari-

<sup>6</sup> See the websites of the international conferences on the economy of the culture, ([www.acei.org](http://www.acei.org)), cultural policies ([www.iccpr.net](http://www.iccpr.net)) or cultural management ([www.aimac2011.org](http://www.aimac2011.org)).

<sup>7</sup> For example, the Yearbook of the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) or the reports of the European Observatory of the Audiovisual.

son. The local or regional approach is only understood if it is compared with those of other territories, as these are fully globalised industries. Yet it is not easy to compare different contexts (Schuster, 1987).

## **Six recommendations as a conclusion**

1. The cultural industries taken both in their facet as content suppliers and in their capacity to condition the consumption system and cultural practices shape an essential dimension of the cultural reality. Consequently, any endeavour to know and interpret the operating and dynamics of the cultural life —an essential task of any unit with observatory functions— should include its analysis.
2. The commercial dimension and the fundamentally recreational purpose of the companies involved, the main suppliers of the information for the observation, involve a significant task of dialogue and negotiating throughout the whole process to gather, prepare and disseminate the results. Having a fluid relationship with the different spokespersons of the cultural industry not only guarantees greater quality of the field work, but also a greater impact of the observation work on the business decisions and the global competitiveness of the sector.
3. A form of dealing with the conflict of interests between the critical academic analysis and partial agreements of governments and business groups consists of separating the basic observation and dissemination work (collecting information, preparing statistics and disseminating the general results) from fostering deeper scientific works, which are independent and critical by nature. Both are necessary and provide feedback, but they are not always possible within a single institution. In any event, it is important to guarantee the resources and disseminate the more critical research, together with the interaction between all the researchers and institutional managers involved.
4. When working in a network of institutions with shared objectives, on an international, regional and local scale, common projects should be designed, methodologies and hypothesis shared, along with research exchanges, as the problems faced by cultural industries are similar and the possibility of sharing costs and approaches is highly rewarding.
5. The specific characteristics of each sub-sector or cultural market, together with the standard low communication between the agents of the different branches of activity, mean that reports should be

- disseminated at sub-sector level, independently from or together with the (essential) diagnostics for the sector as a whole.
6. Parallel to the diagnostics by branches of activity and sector, it is fundamental to undertake transversal analysis focused on aspects such as:
    - The job market.
    - Training supply and demand: needs and format transformation.
    - The dynamics of localisation and international trade (creative districts, local competitiveness, exporter capacity, commercial flows...).
    - The innovation and creative dynamics.
    - The operating and impact of public policies (provision, contracting, incentives, regulation, imposition and inspection).
    - The intellectual property rights (regulation, implementation, business models).
    - Organisational change, competitive strategies and business models.
    - Demand and cultural consumption habits.

In short, the systematic collection of information on the different cultural industries of a territory, its study and dissemination, its proper contextualisation, along with its comparison with other realities must be one of the basic tasks of a contemporary cultural observatory. In recent years, different regional experiments — on a sub-sector or general scale — of great interest have been conducted. It would be necessary to systematise and generalise those experiences to other territories to better design the cultural policies and the business and professional strategies carried out.

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## Chapter 3

# Models of Observation and Cultural Policy in Europe

*Michele Trimarchi*

### General Profile

Numerous cultural observatories operate in the European context. The organisation models adopted are extremely varied and cover a wide range of options, from back offices and local government administrations to independent foundations. Some of them produce synthetic statistical reports without comment, as commissioned by their government of reference, and others make information and critical assessments of many cultural aspects available to the general public.

Thus, *variety* is the dominant figure and maybe *dispersion* too. However, this should not be considered negative. In fact, this variety must be considered a tool which shows the complexity of cultural problems, its economic trends and the dynamics that characterise support for public expenditure. It is understandable that different views and demands may coexist in a context as varied as Europe, where a common cultural strain has developed over many centuries adopting forms and methods related to the history and roots of each territory.

The issues presented in this paper regarding cultural observation models are thus varied, and they are all of considerable relevance. Firstly, the definition of culture must be stated. This definition has been rather consistent for decades but in recent years it has been studied in more depth and specificity due to the recent phenomenon of low-cost, high-quality cultural content production by the Internet and its tools.

Culture is inevitably linked to identity and roots, but in essence it reveals a growing process (perception, learning and multiplication of values). During the last two centuries culture has been a list of «high contents», conventionally defined by experts and technicians, and largely related to beauty, with aesthetic and sometimes ethical value, with the principles that govern society. It is no coincidence that this subject has opened quite a broad debate on the definition of Europe's cultural roots, as almost to oppose them rather than to integrate them with cultural roots elsewhere in the world. This protective view of culture has largely contradicted the very evolution of nature while jelling contents in «highbrow» cultural events (opera, classical music, prose, dance, museums and archaeological parks, etc.) in opposition to popular culture, a partly oxymoronic label in which the adjective tends to limit if not to deny the noun.

## **Definitions of culture**

The question of definitions goes beyond the limits of these pages. However, for it is a field framing issue that has implications relating to, for example, identifying the areas and limiting the public actions of heritage and cultural activities support, it seems appropriate to reflect briefly on the development of the concept and the subsequent exponential growth in the possible meanings attributed to it.

The reason why the definition of culture continues to be at the core of the debate of cultural observatories is related mainly to the radical change of the roles that the cultural sector as a whole is experiencing. Therefore, on one hand, the natural extension of the concept of culture thanks to the use of innovative and unusual means expands the spectrum, increasing the heterogeneity of organisation, production and distribution models. On the other hand, the fact that culture should abandon the contemplative and referential channels in which it has been confined for the last two centuries implies the recognition —and hence measurement and evaluation— of the functions and roles that culture covers in order to meet the needs and demands of a complex and philosophically troubled society: the pleasure of aesthetic contemplation and, if you like, the satisfaction of the hierarchy of values, give way gradually and decisively to social inclusion, multicultural dialogue, questioning of well-rooted paradigms and collective participation in the creative game.

The milestone here is the fairly obvious shift of the focal point of the definition of culture from its content to its function. It follows, among other important effects, a dilution of the role that is traditionally attributed to the convention and the assessment by experts and technicians, to move

towards a soft definition in which the value of subjective perceptions becomes very important. The phenomenon is due to two interrelated reasons.

First, we must consider the strong and irreversible change in the scale of values derived from the dominant economic paradigm, which has been anchored to the model of manufacturing capitalism and methodological individualism for two long centuries. What seemed to work perfectly in a world based upon the financial dimensions of activities becomes weak and loses justifications in a knowledge-driven and quality-oriented system. The functional value of goods has been replaced worldwide by the cognitive value of information, and this involves a repositioning of culture, from a valuable decoration to a cognitive and relational pivot.

This change is accompanied by other, more specific, changes that reconcile the philosophical assumption of the need for culture with the material and technological opportunities of the cultural phenomenon. In this regard, the cultural offer is characterised by a general movement of convergence between instrument and support, allowing each text to advance and regenerate from one form of expression to another: the creative and interpretative interaction of literature, cinema, television, discography and the Internet is only the simplest of all possible chains over which the cultural value of the text is defined and enriched. Ignoring this new and widespread phenomenon leads to a partial and insufficient view of the economic value of culture.

Similarly, on the demand side, we are witnessing migrations between forms and genres of once unthinkable scope. The cultural bible of the late nineteenth century has accustomed us to the more or less specialised model of culture consumer. This is obviously an entirely imperfect model even regarding the traditional consumption of culture, and it certainly no longer corresponds to the contemporary user, which is always less gripped to the specific nature of the support and increasingly able to integrate his/her cognitive experience with all means at hand.

For instance, the opera lover who in the nineteenth century came to the theatre and luckily listened to a de-contextualized opera, excerpted at the musical evenings of all European shows, today is able to integrate theatrical experience —enriched with subtitles, scripts, exhibitions and other simultaneous initiatives— with high definition vision of international premieres in technologically equipped movie theatres, with the comparison of performances available in thematic channels such as *YouTube.com* or in the many websites devoted to poetry, with home videos and, of course, with radio listening and records playing.

Along with this range of thematic options, it is very easy for the opera lover to be interested in other cultural forms at the same time, and

therefore to continuously change models, languages and content, thanks to the parallel evolution of technical opportunities, the low-cost access and the cognitive and hyper-textual expectations.

The result is a completely new model of culture, far away from the traditional concept. Both critical analysis and public action should gather its specific consequences.

## **Observing culture**

The establishment and development of cultural observatories in many countries and regions across Europe is due to a trend that emerged in the seventies and literally exploded in the eighties, to consider culture from an economic perspective. The demand to analyse and understand the economic mechanisms of cultural production and consumption has moved swiftly on the much less interesting and ultimately more mechanical field of cultural finances. The underlying question tackled the possibility that culture could be profitable. Hence the numerous impact studies in which some results, although ultimately expendable, were presented as if culture was always connected with international tourism and with the trade of a variety of objects and services.

The predominance of one dimensional and financial vision has placed the terms and conditions of audience budget and size at the centre of the debate, and thus at the centre of the first activities of many observatories. This has created a kind of muscular vision of culture, in which both the fixation on the balance of surveys (which disregards production and organisation details) and the small-town orientated initiatives (which could guarantee large audiences and compounds) occupy the analytical and interpretive scene.

Regarding the methodology, it is recognised that in any case, the financial variables cited above are more easily measured than profiles or sizes, very relevant in themselves, which characterise a culture's supply and demand (not to mention the great absence in the group of indicators, mentioned until now, the cultural, social and economic impact on public action). The selection of projects and productions, such as the selection of stage pieces or exhibitions, the interpretative value assigned immediately after such choices are made, with all their ambiguity but significant capacity to influence the quality of the final product, the cognitive reaction of the public and the choices made for conjoint consumption of other goods and services, are certainly visible in a direct way but not measurable in an objective and incontrovertible manner (what economists define as «untested experience»).

Therefore, considering together the financial situation and the different degree of measurability of the magnitudes involved, it can be clearly understood that the reasons for which the predominant activities of cultural observatories have been focused on the analysis of the balance sheets and the data related to production and consumption, such as expenditure and income, inevitably pay attention to the independent financial shares resulting from the comparison between the proportions of the balance sheets (which gather public subsidies) and market revenues.

At the synchronic level, it is important to stress that the simple record of income and expenses, whose analysis certainly allows many significant assessments (lets consider, for example, the relative weight of the various components in workforce, also in light of the relationship between the various in-house employees and the professionals hired ad hoc), is made of and enriched with indicators related to activities which still need shared development and experimental handling.

However, since cultural observatories provide meaningful and useful data and interpretations, a medium term perspective should be privileged. Measurements would be repeated and compared over a long period of time, to understand the dramatic need for a diachronic analysis that is capable of capturing, in a critical way, the dynamics and the relative trends. In order to capture with sufficient accuracy the causal links —not always clear and objective, and interlinked with various other magnitudes considered— we can turn to stock-market data, which is usually published daily in the media worldwide. The fact that certain stock markets increase or decrease their value by tenths of a percentage point in the course of two days is certainly meaningful, but does not say much about the trends in the economy. The published data may be important for those who speculate in the stock market or to detect its immediate symptoms and risk strategic interpretations, but if we want to understand the trend of the economy as a whole through an analysis of stock values, is undoubtedly necessary to refer to a long period of time which exceeds the contingencies arising from speculation based on financial values and which reflects, at least partially, the dynamics of the real value of economy.

Similarly, it is appropriate that cultural observatories explicitly declare that the periodically collected data only allows for a few reflections and leads to interpretations which are confirmed or articulated in the light of medium and long-term evidence. The occasional budget cuts and the increase or decrease of public attendance during a season, as well as the exceptional success of an exhibition, are not considered in this sense other than contingent symptoms, and they are deciphered and assessed in the light of longer development times.

## The role of cultural observatories

The main question lies in the background, and from its answer depend (or should depend) the choices related to the organisational structure and mode of operation of each observatory. The dispersion of models resulting from research on European observatories show a remarkable vitality and variability of their models and the activities but they are uncertain about the correlation between their strategic objectives and organisational arrangements: the path towards achieving an optimal design is still long.

Naturally, this discussion becomes very important, to the extent that the observatories are equipped with the appropriate technological resources. Any reasoning on cultural observatories must grant that the statistical data and the economic, social and cultural assessments (according to the level of detail chosen or required by the customer, or the public) are correct and relevant. An observatory that fails, either internally or through external institutional relationships, to provide reliable data, to compare the correct methodologies and finally to develop the necessary assessments, would be unable to fulfil its function.

Under this profile, it is also clear that the collection and systematization of data is considered a critically important activity, but that in itself is insufficient to generate the critical level of investigation required from an observatory. The danger is quite obvious from the moment that apparently aseptic and objective analysis eventually lead to any possible interpretation, even in light of the increasingly unhealthy interest for facts and figures, as if a complex reality like culture could be portrayed in a table. In this sense, the greatest risk is that cultural observatories would then be used as a sounding board for public action, as confirmed by, for example, the increasingly common impact studies which, despite their mechanical sensitivity and intrinsic heuristic weakness, are published on behalf of the government administrations who strive to demonstrate that spending on culture is not «useless.»

In short, it is clear that cultural observatories can perform their role in providing information and assessment, but also that other role —not least important— of developing guidelines for redesigning their own territory's political and cultural strategies. And they can do this in a more effective manner as long as they can count on legal, organisational and decision-making structures, which are independent from the public administration. It is not a matter of ensuring an alleged and improbable «objectivity», but an impartial attitude, which can be reflected in assessments and judgments explicitly expressed and naturally unchallengeable.

This judgmental attitude can thus be represented by a decisive feature, a pact by which the governmental administration assumes the

responsibility for posing the strategic questions and setting the ultimate goals of the action itself. Knowing the data as such, or even worse, referring to the technical assessments of an observatory, without having previously determined the ultimate motivations and possible guidelines that emerge from the surveys is of little value, and it can be considered a waste of public money. This does not mean, however, that the sole recipient of the Observatory's work should be the government.

In fact, with time, the information and assessment relationships between observatories and with the operators, managers, professionals and artists of the cultural sector has gained significant weight amongst the experiences of European observatories. The goal is, obviously, to increase the level of critical awareness in a sector which is usually indulgent, with its own difficulty to be described and assessed. In contrast, the territories where cultural observatories have been operating for years show an increase of technical and operational insight on those who perform the work, which is an advantage for relations between the public administration and the beneficiaries of the financial support and standard aid for culture.

It is clear that the optimal model of a cultural observatory must refer to the contingent conditions of the territory in which it operates. The variety and dispersion of the models adopted in Europe, which cover a wide range of options, can be considered a symptom of the immaturity of the local administrations, and if you will, of a certain reluctance to delegate sensitive tasks, especially considering the risk that critical assessments produced by the local observatory may not match the communication strategies of the administration. Moreover, it is said that the most vital observatories (those capable of detailed and therefore useful analysis) are those who are independent from the local authorities, which show an important progress towards effective cultural democracy.

## **Options and dilemmas**

The role of cultural observatories is crucial and delicate at the same time. A number of dilemmas that ultimately confront the observatories, as well as public administration and cultural operators, with a continuing series of alternatives, add to the need to structure an effective and scientific network of institutional and organisational relationships which would enable the maintenance and strengthening of the analytical functions of the observatories. Independence is indeed a valued target, and neutrality risks being an alibi for a cowardly and not very credible position of cultural observatories.

Naturally, it is clear that neutrality should never mean partiality. Cultural observatories will remain credible as long as they continue to represent a technical, scientifically sound and politically external point of view of the relationship between public support and cultural activities. On the other hand, it is difficult to envision a cultural observatory which limits its activity to the mere verification of data, presenting the results in a completely sterile way. In this case it would leave the burden and opportunity of interpreting the information to subjects largely less impartial: the press, which is constantly on the hunt for breaking news and shocking figures, and cultural operators who could use the data, even in good faith, according to their own approach and philosophy. As noted by Nobel laureate Ronald Coase: «by torturing the data, nature ends up confessing».

As for the dilemma between the assessments and the interpretation of data, we can cite examples of the analysis of balance sheets from cultural organisations. In recent years they have often been at the centre of arguments that highlight the degree of coherence of the balance sheets, basing their own conclusions on the evidence, considered the «objective», of the greatest distance from the equilibrium of balance itself. The argument reflects one of the most striking limitations of many economic approaches: a balanced budget, possibly lacking input from public sources, is the objective sign of virtue in management, while the presence and degree of the deficit shows an evident weakness in management and administration, if not a road to bankruptcy.

Considering that the data of the balance sheets are objective, it should be noted that their analysis cannot dispense a rather complex series of data and information, which establish an interpretive channel between the balance sheet as accounting documentation and the productive and financial situation as real facts. The balance itself, or the level of deficit, can refer to various situations, describing for example, an organisation burdened by fixed costs and unable to function properly, or a company that invests in technology, infrastructure and training but remains flexible and agile. The economic value of culture is perceived by analysing the reality and not by merely reading balance sheets.

An observatory with pretensions of neutrality could only synthesise and spread the data on the balance sheet, without any further consideration. But it would entail very little and it could even risk judging completely different and peerless situations as identical or similar (as it often happens with culture). Interpretation is therefore an inescapable stage of a cultural observatory's activity. The crucial point has to do, rather, with the interpretation itself. The alternative is clear: one possible solution is to make the public administration responsible for the activity

of the observatory, to let it be the one to «raise questions», namely, who explicitly defines the profiles and areas to be subjected to analysis and interpretation (the evolution of its own resources with respect to global balance, the dynamics of the audience or its composition, the degree of cooperation between cultural organisations and their business counterparts, etc.). On the opposite side, the cultural observatory may be the one to establish the analytical guidelines with which to develop that critical interpretation, identifying the ones which show productive, distributive, and financial priorities at a technical level.

We must bear in mind that if the relationship between the public administration and the cultural observatory is lopsided, such relationships will show more than one element of fragility. In fact, an observatory can be scientifically credible and strategically solid if it manages to integrate opposing demands. If the government dictates the agenda, there is the potential risk of applying censorship to the activity, or of collecting and compiling relevant information. If it is the observatory which is responsible for the interpretative guidelines, there is the risk of the public administration's indifference and the consequent use of the observatory's work only as a communication tool. The strategic vision of public administration should not be feared, nor the science-based subjectivity of cultural observatories.

## **The institutional and territorial context**

The heterogeneity of European observatories, as noted above and confirmed by the results of the SACO research,<sup>1</sup> not only affects the organisational models, institutional typologies and scientific content, but also the distribution within the territory and between the areas of competence. This implies a strong irregularity between observatories on the one hand, and between the activities of the cultural sector on the other, with striking gaps, overlaps and duplications, but also between areas and activities which remain largely ignored or even hidden. Naturally, this evidence can not be corrected by decree, but some indications may be useful to rationalise and optimise the financial efforts of government and the productive efforts of cultural observatories.

First, reflection is addressed —hopefully also at the institutional level— to the very name of the observatory. As it is known, there are organisations that act as a cultural observatory, without being formally

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter 6.

labelled as such and, on the contrary, there are organisations which act as observatories, developing various activities without integrating those that could be considered minimum requirements for a cultural observatory. Naturally, we can discuss at length the subject and expect to find positions which do not necessarily coincide. The problem still exists and to a certain extent it would be desirable that the European Union would outline an «identity card» for cultural observatories, if only in the form of guidelines and recommendations.

The image resulting from this situation consists of a multitude of organisations —public, private and non-profit— which are involved in the critical recognition of data on supply, demand, financing, infrastructure, relationships and programmes concerning the cultural sector. These data, which primarily respond to specific and contingent requirements, and often remains confined to a rather limited area of a country or part of Europe, could help generate a precise and effective overview, if a gradual but unequivocal process of cooperation and exchange was established between the organisations in question (not so much as to establish formal protocols of understanding but to agree on the methodological approach, techniques of data collection, evaluation criteria and management philosophies).

There are many cases where, for example, the same data is collected several times. In the Italian experience, the Istituto Nazionale di Statistica collected data on production and consumption of entertainment and cultural goods as well as data on domestic and international tourism. The Società degli Autoei ed Editori compiles similar records regarding live entertainment. The Entertainment Observatory under the *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali* reports annually to Parliament on the consistency of the supply and demand of live entertainment and cinema, as well as on the size and distribution of state funding. Regional Observatories record the same data in varying degrees of depth and extension, usually adding valuable and critical information. Needless to say that there is no institutional or structural connection among these organisations. Only for the last couple of years have some of these organisations established an internal dialogue that, if successful, in the coming years it will result in a optimisation and comparison operation, capable of generating much stronger results (because they will be crossed-checked and shared), greatly easing the effort.

Also in this case, the importance of preserving freedom of choice and action of cultural observatories regarding the interpretation and evaluation of the results should be highlighted, considering however that —paradoxically— such freedom can be fully exercised if these observatories are inclined to horizontal collaboration with other organisations in counterpart. Then it will be evident that the registration

and verification of data are somewhat sensitive but purely mechanical activities, and that the importance of the observatories lies in their scientifically based and strategically subjective ability to assess and develop an understanding of the dynamics of the cultural sector in the medium and long term.

Finally, it must be said that cultural observatories can offer the best of their complex work to public clients, cultural operators and society in general, if they decidedly accept the strategic guidelines to address culture. At a stage where the changes which affect the entire cultural sector are perceived with difficulty, and measured with caution and fear, it is compulsory that organisations that naturally combine independent judgment and scientific soundness design their proactive vision of the future. This is crucial when the apex of the public administration, whose time horizon is defined by the electoral deadlines, and the cultural sector, which is needed in order to manage balance sheets and less important programmes (due to their endemic financial constraints), make their own choices in a more tactical than strategic way, and no doubt referring them to a short time span.

In this sense, the ball is in the court of cultural observatories, the public bureaucracy court, the most advanced cultural operators, whose cosmopolitan orientation and technical work impose a longer and more stable horizon. From a strategic alliance between these entities might arise an effective agenda for cultural policies and actions, which will respect individual and reciprocal freedoms and will act dynamically in a society and in an economy which increasingly differentiates from the comfortable and static ecosystem of past centuries.



## Chapter 4

# For a Critical Observation and Evaluation of the Cultural Field

*Cécile Martin*

Why does cultural observation and evaluation arise, either by turns or simultaneously, with enthusiasm, reluctance or controversy today?

This article proposes a reflection based on the experience and the work carried out by the Observatory of Cultural Policies for over 20 years. The Observatory is a national organism located in Grenoble and whose mission is to accompany the discussion of art and culture professionals on the challenges and methods of design and implementation of cultural policies. For this purpose it relies primarily on a close partnership with French and European research.

This article is part of the ongoing discussions on these issues. The French case has both similarities and singular characteristics in relation to other countries. We will make no attempt in this article to establish generalities applicable to all, but rather to present, from a few examples, singularities that allow more general reflection.

### **What do we mean when we talk about cultural assessment or observation?**

The missions and structures of observation which emerged in France and Europe since the late 1980s are very diverse in nature: specific institutions, local departments, services related to universities. Likewise, their geographic territories, their parameters of intervention (often live

performances, but in other cases the cultural sector as a whole, heritage) and their missions are very heterogeneous. However, most of them share the fact that they are data-producing bodies (mainly quantitative) for a specific purpose, and they do so more or less regularly.

Cultural observation is in fact the action of producing and capitalising information and analysis on a scale of the territory under study, and making it available to the decision-makers and local stakeholders on the cultural offer. To do so, the observation must be scientifically reliable and complementary, it must provide regular data and, lastly, restate and spread this information.

Cultural observation is thus a collective approach (it involves numerous partnerships) which aims to encourage and capitalize information and analysis in the service of all those involved in cultural life and the general public. At present, the main topics discussed by the territorial observatories are the cultural offer, employment and training, or even public financing and culture economy<sup>1</sup>.

The creation observatories or the cultural establishment or cultural observatory mission over the last twenty years is explained by various contextual elements. Thus, the development of cultural policies at a territorial level and the growing implication at all levels of cultural groups have added great complexity to the partnerships resulting from the ministerial and inter-sectorial policies. This diversification and growth has also resulted in an increased public spending on the cultural sector. More recently, the cultural employment crisis in France (particularly in live performing arts) has further accelerated the need for culture observation, particularly at the territorial level.

All these elements are some of the factors which have made necessary a reflection on the meaning, coherence and complementarity of public action in the cultural field. The concept of observation was increasingly used in the 1980's and even more in the 1990's, parallel to the evaluation of cultural policies. The simultaneous mobilization of these two concepts guided the observatories to the production of data, mainly quantitative, in order to provide «raw material» for cultural policy evaluation.

Moreover, in recent years the cultural sector has been subjected to an increasingly strong pressure to produce figures and indicators as decision making and assessment support tools. This pressure comes at the same

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<sup>1</sup> DDAT-DEP Ministry of Culture and Education (2003), *Observer la culture en région*. Contribution du groupe de travail sur l'observation culturelle en région.

Jean-Pierre Saez, *L'Observatoire des politiques culturelles: un outil au service de l'évaluation et de l'observation culturelle territoriale*, communication by the Seminar of Montpellier, July 5-6, 2002, OPPES, «L'observation régionale des politiques culturelles».

time from the European Commission, the national governments<sup>2</sup> and the local authorities, which follow different guidelines or programmes (development of prospective and evaluation services), notwithstanding the lack of clarity of use or true purpose of the evaluation.

In this sense, we must insist on the multiple meanings of the term «evaluation», as it is frequently pointed out in the pieces of work related to this subject.<sup>3</sup> Evaluation means finding or trying to determine the value of an object, an action or policy, which leaves part of it to subjective assessment. But it is also often used for audit or control purposes, which is derived from the quantification and rationalisation perspective of Anglo-Saxon tradition.

Therefore, this polysemy corresponds to multiple approaches that sometimes have nothing in common but their terminology. Indeed, what do these have in common: the detailed study of a cultural mediator after conducting an awareness workshop with contemporary art for young audiences; the report of an investigator who decodes the effects of this action on the same audience; the mission of an inspector general of the Ministry of Culture in that same museum; the work of a consultant hired by the premises to verify the use of public money; a consultation process based on the personnel and shareholders; or even on the public in the museum, to improve performance, objectives, and uses?

Thus, ambiguity and blurred boundaries lay between the concepts of evaluation and observation, which do not correspond to well-established concepts, even if both of them are old and have been built more or less simultaneously. To simplify, we recall that evaluation consists of relating the goals, means and results of an action or policy. For its part, observation corresponds to a time-based programme established before the actual evaluation and which produces data for public debate and policy-making clarification.

It seems therefore that polysemy and the use of the same terminology for very heterogeneous social and professional practices in their reports is one of the first sources of confusion and misunderstanding between the cultural sector and evaluation. If we want progress on cultural policy assessment issues at European level and on the role that observatories can play in this dynamic, we should clarify certain terms (assessment,

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<sup>2</sup> In France, the reinforcement of this trend since the organic law concerning the August 2001 financial legislation following the 2007 public policy general revision programme should be noted.

<sup>3</sup> See Xavier Dupuis (2008), *Les enjeux de l'observation culturelle régionale. Observer et évaluer les politiques culturelles: pourquoi, comment?* In Jean-Pierre Saez (dir.), *Culture et Société*, tome 1, éditions de l'Attribut.

observation) although this practice has become even more complex due to translation problems and national differences in the definition of the artistic and cultural fields.

### **What system of common reference should be used for the evaluation of cultural policies?**

The development of the artistic and cultural offer and the increased public investment in this area have added great complexity to project financing and management. At the same time, recognising the role of cultural activities in the economy and the alleged role of culture in local development have resulted in attempts to quantify the impact of the cultural and artistic activities and their induced consequences.

As we have seen, this need has mainly orientated cultural observatories towards the production of quantitative data, thus further blurring the boundaries between observation, evaluation and control. Although it is very useful to demonstrate the economic interest of artistic and cultural activities, no one seems to be aware that this is not its only interest nor its only goal. So, how can we respond to this demand for global assessment of the cultural sector? How can we evaluate the social role of culture? How can we work on the effects of artistic and cultural activities?

These questions explore the meaning and value of cultural policies, which should be the core of our thinking when it comes to evaluation. But in practice, however, current references on evaluation carefully avoid this issue<sup>4</sup>. By considering artistic knowledge on one side and public policy assessment in terms of performance on the other, don't cultural policies risk losing their intrinsic essence?

In order to evaluate an action or a policy, some questions need to be answered: What is the precise purpose of evaluation? What are the objectives of this action or policy? What should the starting values be? These seem like simple questions, but they are usually very difficult to answer. We know of a paradoxical situation in which the feeling of reference and value loss is constantly increasing. Who has never heard the expression «God knows what that is!» when faced with a piece of contemporary art, about which there has been increasing pressure for evaluation?

Our value system is indeed more complex and even contradictory. Thus, recent French studies on cultural practices clearly demonstrate how

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<sup>4</sup> Here we corroborate the words of Jean-Michel Lucas, *Hétérogénéité, complexité et évaluation en politique artistique et culturelle*, Colloquium «Complexité, hétérogénéité, évaluation», Fondation des Treilles, Tourtour (Var-France), October 20-25, 2008.

the relationship of individuals with art, culture and legitimacy has evolved towards a greater individualization of the practices and the appropriation of all forms of culture (each individual decides his/her own practices and what art or culture «is», guided by a combination of personal influences)<sup>5</sup>. This sociological evolution corresponds to an ideological shift at the institutional level, particularly in France, with the transition from the «democratization of culture», symbolized by the creation of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in the late 1950s, towards a goal of «cultural democracy» in the 1980s, revealed today by the concept of «cultural diversity» or even «cultural rights»<sup>6</sup>.

We must also note that our society's progressive awareness of the cultural diversity<sup>7</sup> leads to a gradual appreciation of new artistic and cultural forms, and especially to the establishment of totally different relationships with art and culture. In our increasingly multicultural society, which common values would we use to assess socially and politically sensitive areas such as art and culture?

Finally, the cultural policy integration movement within broader policies (educational, social, urban, economic or tourism) leads us to the question «cultural» values within the evaluation systems of these policies. By this we don't mean to question the need for an open and cross-cultural conception of the cultural policies, nor do we intend to revive debates on the instrumentalisation of art by the economic or social arenas. It is rather a matter of trying to preserve the role of arts and culture in an increasingly demanding economic context.

To these structural difficulties of culture evaluation other elements must be added. We will only cite here the difficulty of comparison faced by observation and evaluation specialists. In fact, the data produced must be put into perspective and confronted with other works developed in more or less similar territories to be interpreted. This difficulty is further accentuated at the European level, as unfortunately often evidenced by the work of Eurostat, which is due to the large differences between the artistic and cultural perimeters of each country.

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<sup>5</sup> See Olivier Donnat (2009), *Les pratiques culturelles des Français à l'ère numérique: enquête 2008*, Paris: La documentation française.

Jean-Paul Bozonnet, et al. (2008), *Pratiques et représentations culturelles des Grenoblois*, Observatoire des politiques culturelles-éditions de l'Aube.

Bernard Lahire (2006), *La culture des individus: dissonances culturelles et distinction de soi*, éditions La Découverte.

<sup>6</sup> See the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) and the Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights (2007).

<sup>7</sup> Michel Wieviorka (1996) *Une société fragmentée? Le multiculturalisme en débat*, Paris: La Découverte.

All these questions refer directly to the meaning and purpose of cultural policies, but also to the artistic and political support in this field. Thus, we believe that the observatories working at European level should develop a framework (or common references as opposed to a single model) that integrates the specificities of each country.

### **Evaluation: a crucial challenge for the experts**

Despite these reservations and the difficulty of the exercise, it seems essential to improve cultural assessment practices. Indeed, today it is impossible to remain part of the institutions, as too often happens.

To give one example, although the cultural employment sector is at the core of public authorities' attention, it remains poorly understood, despite the national and regional surveys. This is mainly because they do not always take into account the same definitions. The National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies in France (INSEE) compiles information on very different professions, but does not count the people in charge of the cultural territorial administrations, which are far from negligible. In addition, and despite some studies (Eurostat), difficulties remain patent<sup>8</sup> at European level.

No doubt, culture professionals are still greatly reluctant to assess, particularly in France. However, with regards to this pressure (and of course, the legitimacy of the evaluation for the proper functioning of a democratic system) we believe that these professionals are very interested in not undergoing this process, not leaving assessment in the hands of cultural managers and administrators, but in organising themselves to participate in defining the principles and the assessment tools.

This is both a matter of recognition of their skills as evaluators, their expertise in their own fields and of knowledge production in order to defend stances or combat preconceived ideas. Some sub-sectors of culture (such as libraries) have been organised in this area for many years, but others, like live entertainment, are still far from these models.

Professionals are also concerned about the use of the results produced. For example, in order to foster the reflection on the challenges of their own field, help develop collective strategies and avoid being punished by an organisation or action.

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed analysis on this issue, see Jean-Pierre Saez (2010), *Emploi artistique et culturel et formations*. and Philippe Poirrier (2010), *Politiques et pratiques de la culture*, La Documentation française.

Regarding resource structure, professional associations and federations wishing to apply the conditions of their own assessment and the definition of the indicators are increasingly using the Observatory of Cultural Policies. This awareness seems particularly grounded, and it allows us to ask about the evaluation of a sector through these multiple issues (artistic, social, political, economic) and consider its use in advance. It also allows a more calm debate on the issue of assessment tools.

In terms of methodology, since its foundation, the Observatory of Cultural Policies advocates the integration of qualitative approaches together with more traditional quantitative ones. It seems vital to move beyond approaches that rely primarily on numerical indicators if they are not accompanied and interpreted by more detailed analysis.

To clarify these concepts, we will briefly present three examples of observation assessment/evaluation approach. Each is very different from the other and shows interesting perspectives for constructing tools.

*Participatory approach and structured approach: shared participative observation of contemporary or amplified music*

Firstly, let us mention the Fédurok, a federation that brings together more than 80 places of amplified or contemporary music in France. In 2000, it launched a shared participative observation device.<sup>9</sup> After noting the lack of available data on their activities and the lack of a private or public body capable of providing or producing these data, the federation began to develop a relatively complex device to overcome this situation, which allowed members access to a better understanding of their reality.

This ambitious project was developed over five years, in collaboration with members of the federation in each stage of the definition and validation of the device. It is characterised by the desire to create a system that allows each actor to dominate the information produced, getting fully involved in the development, implementation and use of the tool. Fédurok also wanted to streamline the observation-evaluation approach by sharing the necessary resources, and permanently ensuring the existence of a device that would transform into a long-term network structuring tool.

This tool is participative and shared observation is supported by several principles: collectively defined research areas, the use of quantitative and qualitative survey methodologies, shared information

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<sup>9</sup> Further details can be found at Fédurok's website: [www.la-fedurok.org](http://www.la-fedurok.org)

technology and human resources, and lastly, annual recovery times customised to the demands of the network members. The contribution of other regional and national networks involved in the cultural economy, whose main objective is to share experiences and standardize the recurring questions that appear on most media polls (to benefit both respondents and pollsters) must also be underlined.

Although this experience entails limits and does not correspond entirely with the original draft, the intelligence and relevance of the operation as well as the role of today's music industry regarding cultural policy innovation are worth praising.

*Combining statistical and ethnographic approaches in a thorough analysis of unfamiliar practices: the worlds of harmony in Alsace*

Within the music industry, we will examine another approach derived from similar questions. In 2002, the lack of knowledge about amateur musical practices added to the feeling that new arguments were needed to re-launch dialogue with partners. For this reason the Federation Societies of Amateur Music in Alsace (FSMA) applied to the Observatory of Cultural Policies for the launch a major socio-political development study among its members. The regional Federation of Harmony Orchestras gathers more than 300 partnerships, which provide the framework for the formation and activity of approximately 10,000 amateur musicians of all ages. Despite its vitality, the image of the world of harmony music is associated with the rural landscape. The observatory launched a major survey based on both statistical and ethnographic methods to measure the preconceptions and the reality of a practice, which is still very widespread in some European regions.

The four-year process enabled the identification of the representations that surround this type of practice, the sociology of the musicians and the heads of the *sociétés d'harmonie*, their careers and their motivations. The survey also analysed the functioning of the associations and their role in local cultural policies, the art projects they develop and their development prospects. Finally, this project's leaders strove to have a better understanding of the relationship between cultural hierarchies and social transformations.

As should happen with any observation work, this survey benefited from various restoration stages and debates, first locally (with the associations concerned) and then at the national and European level (thanks to a symposium which allowed a perspective of regional and national approaches, and a comparison of different fields of artistic practice).

These debates and publications resulting from the survey<sup>10</sup> also had a political and strategic use, both in regard to their protagonists and their numerous public partners. Through this unusual initiative, the FSMA also constructed a work tool that served as a strategic, pedagogical and political purposes and which no framework of indicators could equal.

*A mission of location for a conjoint reflection at a regional level*

The third and final example is a light location mission conducted by the Observatory of Cultural Policies in 2007 by the initiative of ARCADl, the organisation in charge of accompanying cultural actors from Île-de-France, in partnership with Culture Committee of the French Regions Association. This mission was based on intuition (the importance and diversity of regional interventions in the cultural field), and on finding (the lack of data on the modalities of intervention and the artistic life performance of these groups).

The goal of this survey was therefore to appraise the state of the policies carried out by regional councils on live entertainment, in order to establish a common working tool which would facilitate the flow of information between services and regional policy makers, and foster the reflection of its different actors and partners. This location was not designed to establish comparative data, but rather to identify trends, similarities and specific features in regional intervention modes. It was about gathering the information available in regional services on some priority issues, in short periods (six months) to establish a basic reference line for the eventual realisation of more detailed studies.

This study has shown the transversality and innovativeness of the regional policies in this area. It has restored the group in the form of a working day, a full report and a summary<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, it could prove greatly interesting for cultural professionals to pool financial and human resources to do the jobs that are missing and which are so necessary to enable reflection on the future of cultural policies. We should point out here that all the interest awoken at European level aimed at researching

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<sup>10</sup> The results of this study served as the grounds for the work of Vincent Dubois, Emmanuel Pierru, Jean-Mathieu Méon (2009), *Les mondes de l'harmonie*, éditions La Dispute. A summary of their work is available at: [www.observatoire-culture.net](http://www.observatoire-culture.net).

<sup>11</sup> Pascale Chaumet & Cécile Martin (2009), *Premiers repérages sur les politiques des conseils régionaux en faveur du spectacle vivant*, OPC. Available on the POC's website: [www.observatoire-culture.net](http://www.observatoire-culture.net).

fundamental issues of cultural policies are «interpreted» differently at a national level, such as studies on culture and art.

These three examples demonstrate the need for strong professional involvement in the observation and evaluation of cultural policies. They also comprehend a large number of surveys based on complementary methodologies which go far beyond what an exclusively administrative approach could offer.

In conclusion to this article, we wish to emphasize the role that cultural Observatories can play in setting assessment approaches on artistic and cultural policies that clarify public decision making and the choices of professionals. Established on the basis of respecting the intrinsic values of these fields of public action, these systemic and association approaches, which rely on scientific research and devote time to analysis and comparison, provide an overview which should allow us all to reflect on the future of this sector. At a European level, experimentation of conjoined work protocols on precise matters could also help Observatories to acquire knowledge tools with which transcend national boundaries.

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## Chapter 5

# On the Principles of Cultural Entrepreneurship: Balancing between Imagination and Financial Profit

*Giep Hagoort, Rene Kooyman*

### 1. Introduction: Cultural Entrepreneurship in context

#### 1.1. *A Theatre Company loses the governmental support and a sponsor*

The message was loud and clear and came at an unexpected moment: the Director of the local Theatre Company had just learned that the municipal government was planning to cut back on the subsidies by an unprecedented 20%. No, not because of the economical crisis —which had of course consequences for the upcoming annual budget— but more because of the new political momentum in the City Hall; subsidised institutions should become less dependent on subsidies and should generate more genuine income. What the City Hall did not know is that the Director previously had a serious conversation with the local Bank Manager, who has been the local sponsor for years. It was not that the Bank was not satisfied with the results of their sponsor activities, but rather at Headquarters they had decided that culture should no longer be the central topic on the priority list. The bank had to move to sports, sustainable entrepreneurship and social cohesion.

In total the sponsorship contract accounted for some 10% of the theatre company's annual budget. A fast calculation showed that the Director would have to face a deficit of 25% for the upcoming year. Cutting back here and there would no longer do the job. More severe

measurements would have to be taken. The director decides to confront his staff with the situation. He informs the Management Team ASAP, and the Governmental Bodies will have to be informed at short notice.

### 1.2. *A game-developer is facing investments*

Not far from the Theatre a different scene evolves. A Game Development company struggles with the question of whether they should accept the lending conditions offered by the local bank. Because of the growing international demand additional investments are dearly needed —at least EUR 50.000— in order to invest in equipment, to start marketing tours in order to sell their products and hire local specialist's advice. There are tremendous growth opportunities, yet the individual members of the Management Team will have to back up the bank loan with their personal guarantee. The financial support of family and friends worked well in the beginning, but a new phase will have to be initiated.

In addition to this financial debate there is the discussion about the artistic values; is growth indeed our main goal, and shouldn't we be satisfied with the way things are handled now? Indeed, people do not earn large salaries, but everybody is driven by the quality of the products made. And don't we lose our independence if we get involved in the money game? The team isn't capable of coming to a decision and will ask the advice of a well-known and much experienced colleague.

### 1.3. *Reorganising a Regional Museum*

By the time of appointment, the new Managing Director of the Regional Museum has been in the local press several times, resulting in a negative image and reputation. The local Gazette had even covered the events on its front page; the personnel of the museum resist the upcoming reorganisation and the appointment of the new director. For the new director the resistance came as a total surprise. The personnel and Board of Government were very positive, her personal profile fit the list of requirements perfectly; entrepreneurial type, attractive to new target groups, able to build a relationship with the commercial community, support enhanced cooperation with the other cultural institutions in the region (the archive, schools, the Museum, etc). It is clear that the Governmental Board supports the new Director, but also wants to avoid painful discussions with the personnel. In cooperation with the

Honourable Secretary, the Chairman has decided to put the issue on the agenda of the upcoming Board Meeting, in order to revisit the topic.

#### 1.4. *Shaping up Cultural Entrepreneurship*

In the cases sketched above we have given a glimpse of how Cultural Entrepreneurship takes shape. The examples show that it is about tapping into financial sources, creating an entrepreneurial climate in the organisation, reaching out to new potential target groups, and above all fostering a collective effort in order to realize an entrepreneurial culture within the organisation as such. In addition, governmental bodies and governmental boards have to become actively involved in the entrepreneurial policies and actions.

Within existing organisations it is not always easy to create and implement an entrepreneurial culture; often we are facing resistance and avoidance tactics. We are inclined to ask for an entrepreneurial attitude of the staff members; developing a good programme, keeping the premises clean and creating a sound financial accounting report will not be sufficient for a cultural entrepreneur.

#### 1.5. *The structure of this essay*

In this essay we will sketch the contours of cultural entrepreneurship. We will use a practical approach, but every now and then we will consult more theoretical input. These theoretical notions will supply us with insights needed when putting entrepreneurial behaviour at the centre stage.

The chapters are structured as follows: In chapter 2 we will explore the relationship between art, culture and entrepreneurship. We will explain from which perspectives we can look at cultural entrepreneurship. The creative economy will be discussed in chapter 3. This chapter will create a context in which cultural entrepreneurship can be discussed. We will give attention to the questions of what, why and how the creative industry can take shape. In chapter 4 a number of important developments will be discussed, relevant for scanning the trends to come. In the final epilogue we will reflect from a certain distance upon the topics treated and we will look for the flip-side of the creative entrepreneurship. This chapter will be based upon a multi-disciplinary approach. Strands derived from the theory of Business Administration, economical, cultural and culture-political roots will be mobilized to create a better understanding of the topic. This

understanding will help us improve the practical results of the cultural entrepreneur. Finally we will offer you an overview of literature used and we will point at additional sources of knowledge.

### **Box 1. Am I a cultural entrepreneur?**

In a Europe-wide survey regarding cultural entrepreneurship within the 27 EU Member States, five basic components of cultural entrepreneurship have been identified. These five central characteristics can be identified in the following questions:

1. Have I developed within my organisation or enterprise a long-term *cultural vision* (for the upcoming five years)?
2. Do I master the skills to scan the possibilities of *new product/markets/target groups*?
3. Am I capable of turning cultural and creative ideas into *financial results* (Return on Creativity)?
4. Do I hold the skills to *communicate effectively* with the different parties involved in our endeavours?
5. Do I hold the *managerial capacities* and am I capable of promoting the teamwork needed?

## 1.6. *A warning*

A warning is needed on the over-accentuation of knowledge regarding the cultural entrepreneurship. The theoretical body of knowledge is relatively young. We cannot apply international accepted concepts, codes, techniques and methodologies, and reliable large-scale data are lacking. Much information has been derived from individual researchers without the help of a programmatic approach.

Some topics are popular and have been debated in abundance: marketing, financing, cultural policies. Other topics have been less developed, i.e. the individual cultural entrepreneur. We will have to do with the notions derived from the general managerial theories on entrepreneurship. For this reason —and in order to create a realistic image of the sector— the collection of «grey-literature» is essential. Grey literature has been collected through dedicated internet-searches, recorded proceedings of conferences and presentations, personal blogs, interviews, non-published articles and essays, etc.

This article tries to offer support for the individual practitioner. The text will avoid —if possible— theoretical footnotes and hints. For those

who want to dig deeper into the theoretical catacombs we will offer a literature review at the end of this article.

Multi-layered concepts e.g. art, culture, creativity, industry, entrepreneurship will have to be analysed within the context used.

## **2. Art, culture and entrepreneurship**

### **2.1. *Specific human expressions***

Art and culture can be seen as a collection of specific human expressions that give meaning to the way groups live together and communicate with each other. In general these cultural expressions can be identified within the different forms of theatre, music, performing and visual arts, dance, architecture, design, fashion, etc. Driven by technological innovations the existing disciplines are enriched by new media, genres, and social organisations. All these expressions have in common that they are based upon individual imagination and skilled craftsmanship, even though they can be performed within collective organisations e.g. theatre companies, film studios, etc. Imagination is combined with artistic sensibility, the possession of talent and how external appraisal is organised around these different expressions.

The objects made by artists do not have to be «beautiful» per se. Nature, a machine, a social meeting can «beautiful» too. But we acknowledge —as mentioned by Umberto Eco— the special position of artists in order to explain beauty, because artists together with poets and authors have during the centuries explained to us how they appreciate «beauty», and have produced their examples of beautiful objects and experiences.

### **2.2. *Cultural entrepreneurship and cultural policy***

The concept of entrepreneurship has the idea of fulfilling a social need as a starting point. The recognition of these needs cannot be derived from static reports, analyses and policy documents, but have to be identified by entrepreneurial people and their organisations. Our society has developed a number of areas in which entrepreneurship can play a constructive role. Traditionally this is the case in the field of demand and supply, but in recent years these concepts have been applied in sectors such as energy, education, health care, etc. Art, culture and design are no exception in this matter, which does not mean that we can simply apply the principles of entrepreneurship derived from the industrial sectors in the sectors of art

and culture. The essence of art, culture and design is that products develop themselves in a spontaneous relationship between the individual artist or designer and his or her surroundings. *Cultural entrepreneurship means in this case that one starts off on a cultural vision and mission, balancing the artistic ambitions and economical opportunities, in which one takes over a responsibility of one's surrounding cultural infrastructure.*

This cultural entrepreneurship does not mean that the government can withdraw as financial supplier and regulator from the scene altogether. The non-material, symbolic contribution of art and culture, that enriches the local society in an independent way, creates —according to the European standards— an obligatory and lasting commitment local and national by governments. These governmental responsibilities are put into specific policies on cultural involvement, as part of the overall governmental involvement.

### 2.3. *An interdisciplinary approach*

The importance of cultural entrepreneurship can be approached from at least four perspectives. From the cultural-historical point of view one can analyse how earlier civilisations have given form to the entrepreneurial aspects of their cultural organisations. In addition, we will analyse the economical aspects of cultural entrepreneurship. These aspects can be derived from the macro-economical analyses (general characteristics of employment and financial growth) and from the micro-economical sphere (individual organisations). The third perspective is the managerial one: how can cultural organisations function under the managerial and administrative umbrella? The fourth and last perspective will be dedicated towards cultural policy —the governmental care for art and culture— in its relationship with the organisational approach of entrepreneurship.

#### 2.3.1. *A cultural-historical analysis*

Entrepreneurship is an essential quality of cultural life. From the first drawings on the rocks in prehistoric periods to the way artists, designers and art managers promote their products and services in the 21st society, the entrepreneur attitude on cultural organisation was and is an important driving force.

The prehistoric artist-hunter outlines his world full of animals on the rocks and he certainly could not have done this without a certain division of labour based on a difference in talents: the person that is making drawings was free from hunting.

This division of labour was more elaborated in the entrepreneurial approach of the Greek festivals circa 500 BC, with a more specific level of coordination. In evaluating these festivals it is important to consider the way these festivals were financed. Finance of these festivals was done by the appointment of the *choregus* as a core function to sponsor the festival (a), the independent jury to judge on the competition of performances (b) and the festival organisation to manage crowds of 10.000 visitors (c). The Greek director Thepsis innovated theatre at that time by introducing the individual actors and giving masks to create separate identities during the performance.

Also the Romans contributed to our understanding of the entrepreneurial spirit with their ways of organising public events and games during the beginning of our calendar.

In the Middle Ages one sees an impressive activity around construction sites from which cathedrals arise. The 12<sup>th</sup> century French Abbot, Suger of St Denis, near Paris, conducted a 13-year campaign to finance the restoration of their Roman church. Suger transformed the church into a gothic cathedral and founded innovative studios where craftsmen from all over Europe created glasswork, based on new methods of working.

The Renaissance artists from Italy, as defined by their own contemporary Vasari, showed how a multisided artistic practice has to be combined with networking and relationship with (clerical) commissioners and financiers. A great example was the painter El Greco, an inhabitant from Crete, who had some artistic practices in highly competitive Italy, but found a new and profitable market in Spain. By organising, marketing and branding his art, El Greco showed an entrepreneurial approach, combining artistic and economical values.

Playwright Shakespeare from England, and painters Rubens and Rembrandt from the Netherlands —living in the 17th century— developed their own creative businesses which were combinations of different disciplines: theatre in combination with real estate; visual arts with facilities for pupils, special tasks for assistants at the studio and other non-creative activities like diplomacy (Rubens) or accumulator and merchant in curiosities (Rembrandt).

During the 18th and 19th century the main western cities developed a new entrepreneurial humanitarianism: progressive and healthy, relatively well-to-do citizens founded new associations to create possibilities for new theatre performances and music concerts to enrich the cultural quality of life.

History shows us how cultural entrepreneurship, that is the division of labour, innovation, networking with commissioners and financiers, always has been present in cultural activities.

### 2.3.2. *The economic perspective*

The cultural-historical analyses proved to us that it is a misunderstanding to use the economical perspective as the leading principle of cultural entrepreneurship. Often we are involved in a culture-oriented organisational principle that serves the cycle of value-creation within art and culture: creation, production, distribution and experience. This misunderstanding comes from the error to approach entrepreneurship as a pure economical phenomenon. We will place the economic perspective parallel to other relevant perspectives, in order to create an adequate overall vision of cultural entrepreneurship.

From the economic point of view we specifically use two different objects of interest; the macro- and micro-economic approach. Seen from a macro-economic approach we concentrate on the importance of cultural entrepreneurship with regards to economic expenditure, employment figures and industrial growth. Within this macro-economic approach, the question is relevant —what is the economic impact of the cultural sector?— In general all impact-studies show the same general results: each investment in art and culture generates a subsequent range of expenditure in non-cultural sectors e.g. the leisure industries, bars and restaurants, tourism, etc.

A second contribution from the creative industries is derived from the effect on the annual GDP. Studies show that in the last two decades the contribution of the cultural sector has shown a steady growth, even in times where the other economical sectors have been forced to decline (steel industries, agriculture, financial services, etc). In chapter 3.2. we will expand upon this issue.

As a third argument, we can point to the contribution of the cultural sector in urban development and city-marketing. Cities profile themselves with their cultural identity in order to attract tourists and persuade companies to settle within their borders. These companies not only look for functional arguments to settle, but also weight the secondary aspects of a city; the presence of an active and creative cultural climate.

Recently there has been an urban alternative developed within the impact analyses regarding the creative class within an urban economy. The American author Richard Florida proved in his analyses that —under the influence of the creative economy, resulting in an atmosphere driven by tolerance, talent and technology (the three t's)— the local economy will thrive with a more than average growth.

At the micro-economic level we can point to the interest in the effects of cultural and creative initiatives; the development of a large number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The immense layer of cultural initia-

## **Box 2. Cultural Capitals of Europe**

Europe has initiated a system of Cultural Capital. These Capitals, appointed annually by the Council of Europe, create wider acknowledgement of European cultural heritage and support the better understanding of European citizens. In reality the choice of a cultural capital is the result of city marketeers, who —guided by their municipal governments— try to put their city on the international landscape. In the Netherlands Amsterdam (1987) and Rotterdam (2001), in Flanders Antwerp (1993) and Bruges (2002) have been Cultural Capital. Cultural capitals offer a fruitful grazing area for cultural entrepreneurs, while the Managing Directors of established cultural institutions are more reluctant to join the bandwagon, in fear of losing (part of) their funding when it is re-allocated towards the cultural capital initiative. There are, however, challenging opportunities to create strategic alliances with the local pubs and restaurants, tourist organisations, hotels, sponsors, etc. that want to align themselves with the European quest for diversity. There are also unique opportunities to attract a wide array of new target groups within the different events and educational programmes. Several millions of euros are available as a symbolic contribution from the European Commission for projects and assignments for each Capital. And indeed, evaluation research has proven that the city reputation is improved and a rising number of visitors will follow in the years after.

The municipal governmental board has to compete with other cities in order to be appointed. The most relevant argument used is that the cultural infrastructure will be enhanced and improved, internationalisation will be enhanced, and the cooperation between city and region is normally praised.

In this respect Europe cannot be seen as a limited collection of individual countries. In 2010 the Turkish capital Istanbul —together with amongst others Essen in Germany— was appointed as European Cultural Capital. In 2018 it will be the Netherlands' turn again. Almere, the Brabant Cities, The Hague, Maastricht and Utrecht have positioned themselves as potential candidates. It will be decided in 2014 which city will get the title —together with Malta—.

tives consists for some eighty percent of small-scale enterprises, both in the profit and non-profit sector, with an average size of four persons per enterprise. In some sectors free-lancers will cover sixty percent of these small entrepreneurs; the so-called single-person enterprises, enterprises without personnel.

In order to illustrate the very special sector within the economy we are discussing, a number of characteristics should be outlined:

- The creation and production of symbolic goods and services is tightly interwoven with the (individual) drive to create, and is often less based upon marketing research; the possibility to fail is an undeniable aspect of the creative and economical process.
- The artistic experience takes place —especially in the performing arts— within the direct interaction between the artistic product and its audience; it is impossible to keep the product stored in a warehouse.
- The fixture of prices is often not the result of economic price-calculations, but is primarily defined by the artist's reputation and the quality of former products.
- The artistic product is protected by copy-rights after the sale; it remains forever the intellectual property of the creator; destruction and/or alteration by third parties is illegal.

### 2.3.3. *The business perspective*

If we look at cultural entrepreneurship from the business perspective —how do organisations function?— we can identify four topics. First we will look at entrepreneurship as innovative activities, we will then discuss the entrepreneur as a person. The third discussion will be on entrepreneurial planning and the final topic will cover entrepreneurial survival.

#### *Innovation*

For the well-known economist Schumpeter entrepreneurship is identical with innovation. In his perspective innovation means, «creative destruction»; to put new products in place of the old ones in order to achieve economical gains. A more recent approach to innovation points at aspects of renewal and re-invention of products, services and working processes. Important in this matter is the reason for innovating. For a commercial entrepreneur it is in the first place the creation of a competitive advance. Innovations in the non-profit sector however, are geared towards the improvement of the quality and diversity of services and the realisation of cost-advantages.

The concept of «innovation» derived from the scholarly thinking within the sector of Business Administration is not without critique from the cultural field. Artists, designer and cultural institutions stress the fact that their activities are innovative in nature. They create original products that give proof to the fact that each specimen created is «new» in nature; it hasn't been created before.

For a better understanding of the concept of artistic innovation a more subtle distinction can be made. First of all, there is the subjective

innovation of the work of an artist, a designer or a cultural institution. As an example we can point at a painter that uses photographic means in order to improve his imaginary language. Second there is the innovation within a genre or an artistic discipline that involves a number of professionals within that sector. For instance, a film studio that creates innovative background-techniques for animation film. And finally we can identify the innovation that involves a totally new genre or creating a new artistic discipline. For instance, the performance art in the seventies and eighties of last century, in which the artist considered himself as a performing professional.

Within the Dutch cultural policy the government has created a special fund for structural subsidised organisation that implement a special innovation policy. The policy scheme is geared towards initiating new coalitions between cultural and non-cultural organisations, in order to reach out to new, until now hidden target groups. In chapter 3.3. we will expand on this topic.

### *The entrepreneur as an individual person*

Entrepreneurs have often been personified as people with strong personalities; the so-called «heroes of entrepreneurship». Especially in American literature, attention has been given to icons such as Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric, Bill Gates of Microsoft and Steve Jobs of Apple. Characteristic for these individuals is the individual drive to achieve and their powerful position within their company, of which —most often— they are the initial founder. In addition they seem to possess the qualities in order to motivate their personnel to strive for innovation and renewal, based upon clear visions about the future. And finally these heroes excel in vigorous perseverance and decisive powers with regards to innovations.

These types of entrepreneurs can also be identified within the cultural sector. In Flanders we can mention Gerard Mortier, director and intendant of several cultural institutions (e.g. the Salzburger Festspiele) and Jan Hoet, founder and curator at the S.M.A.K Museum in Gant and former artistic leader at the International Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany. In the Netherlands we can point at Joop van der Ende, who has innovated the Dutch musical culture and has set up his own distribution chain of cultural theatres all over Europe. From scholarly literature we can learn that there is a flip-side of this type of behaviour. Decisions are often made on the basis of individual emotional arguments, more than rational analyses; they implement an authoritarian style of leadership that cannot allow for other opinions and debate from their own surroundings.

In recent times we acknowledge the fact that leadership can be taught and trained, which goes for cultural entrepreneurs also. The basis is created by situational leadership patterns; what entrepreneurial style fits what situation, taking the professional support of the co-workers into account. Experienced, alert colleagues that can adjust to changing situations do not need unwanted interference, but need professional support given with a certain amount of distance and distinction. Inexperienced co-workers need supervision, with clear guidance and instructions. Creating leadership in such a complex, mixed situation demands the creation of (self-steering) teamwork, be it either as organisational principle within large organisations, or as guiding principle for small-scale creative entrepreneurs. Successful teamwork can be identified as a process (teambuilding) and as a collective combination of positions and roles that have to be filled within the team.

### *Entrepreneurial planning*

Entrepreneurship also holds more technical aspects that can be identified with the phrase «management»; the development of a business-like approach of the personal enterprise. At the centre of this approach we find the creation of a dedicated business plan, including the financial paragraphs and marketing analyses.

Synonyms for the term «business plan» are entrepreneurial planning, strategic plan, and for the not-for-profit sector policy planning. These plans hold a number of obligatory elements:

- Mission: explaining the reason for existence of the organisation, the fundamental values that are applicable and drive the initiatives.
- The positioning of the organisation within the surrounding cultural field.
- An overview of the products and services that are being created; the developments and trends within the different markets/social strata, and their contribution to success or failure.
- The position of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) within the organisation.
- The business model that is being used.
- The strategic implications of the physical location of the organisation.
- The developments foreseen for the near future.
- The partnerships —both cultural and non-cultural— needed and developed for the coming period.

In scanning the social and cultural environment one looks at cultural, social, economical, geographical, technological and international developments, that together form a fundament for potential opportunities and threats. The insight, created on the basis of this environmental scan, can be followed by an evaluation of strong and weak aspects of the organisation; for instance used in a SWOT analysis.

The concept of the SWOT analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) can be criticized because of the fact that it limits the analyses to the existing situation. The turbulent and vibrant nature of the cultural field requires perhaps a more dynamic method of analysis. Such an analysis has been developed by the Blue Ocean Strategy. This approach caters for a more strategic creative approach, that might lead to the creation of totally new sectors and applications, that might initiate a totally new market positioning of the organisation. Within the Creative sector for instance the example of Cirque de Soleil is mentioned as a unique result of such an approach, creating a totally new concept on the traditional circus. Cirque du Soleil is now one of the major export products of Canada, covering performances world-wide.

Taking the different stages of growth and development of a company into account, is part of the entrepreneurial planning. In the European Study on the Entrepreneurial Dimension within the Creative Industries a life-cycle model has been developed. Knowing the characteristics of cultural and creative entrepreneurship and the firm characteristics of cultural enterprises is not enough to understand the functioning and development of the Cultural and Creative industries. One needs a deeper understanding of the entrepreneurial lifecycle of the organisation in these types of industries.

One can identify five phases within the entrepreneurial lifecycle: preparing the enterprise before its launch; the start-up phase; the build-up phase towards a stable, recognised entrepreneurship; the build out phase; and the connecting phase, the full-grown cultural and creative enterprise with a sustainable existence.

- *Phase One: Preparing the ground.* In this phase, the initial understanding of learning and preparing for the entrepreneurial practice takes place. Often this is done during the professional training and education phase, when creative people prepare for a professional existence after graduation.
- *Phase Two: Start-Up.* At the start-up phase the first integration of practical experience and integration of learning and entrepreneurial practice takes place. There is a combination of novel experiences and adaptable behaviour needed in order to get the enterprise started.

- *Phase Three: Build-Up.* In the build-up period the initial enterprise moves to its first level of stable, sustainable existence. The novelty from the beginning is changed into adaptable behaviour, based on practical criteria and usability. Extra strengthening of competences to transform «discovery» into «exploitation» is crucial in this phase.
- *Phase Four: Build-Out.* In this phase the enterprise is maturing into a more stable, structural existence. It is deepening its structural sustainability and improving its market position.
- *Phase Five: Growth by creating lasting connecting networks.* The last phase identified is dealing with mature growth within a strong networked environment. Sustainable paths to a continuous enterprise growth have been identified and implemented.

It has to be stated that this model can be used for analysing the development of the different enterprises in different phases of their existence. This analysis creates the basis for developing a supportive system for the CCIs. However; the model should not be used as a blueprint or a plan that can be implemented from outside the creative firm. The small-scaled ecosystem of the CCIs makes it impossible to apply such a simplified approach.

The physical, geographical location of a cultural organisation is of strategic importance. When placed in the right environment, a positioning that offers continuity in the near future one can produce a contribution to the cultural value-chain. Hence the choice of location has to be part of the business plan. One can choose for a central position in town, or one can choose the opposite position at the outskirts at the fringe of the urban sphere (see also chapter 4.2). When one treasures the opportunity to create local networks with actors from the same sector or branch one might choose for an entrepreneurial clustering. Artistic breeding grounds (developed as a result of the free squatters movement) offer the opportunity to mingle with entrepreneurial initiatives from other cultural disciplines and sectors, and offer the opportunity of organising local collective projects catering for the surrounding neighbourhoods that surround the breeding place.

### *Survival*

Not often mentioned within the literature but very present in real-life is the necessity to survive as an entrepreneur. The lack of public funding, the disappearance of important markets, the appearance of competitors, the withdrawal of bank-guarantees and financial securities; all these

circumstances demand decisive entrepreneurial responses in order to avoid disastrous developments, and at the same time identifying and making use of new opportunities. The present economical crisis that became apparent first in the USA and later spread around the world, has shown numerous examples of entrepreneurial survival strategies, also in the cultural field. Architects have faced difficult times as a consequence of the dismissal of the housing market, festivals had to limit their programmes because of the withdrawal of sponsor funding. The private funds have had to diminish their involvement. Programmes supported by banks (VSB Bank), nature & environmental organisations, sports organisations had to also limit their involvement. The art & culture programmes had to step back in order to survive in a limited formation.

#### 2.3.4. *Cultural political perspectives*

The governmental care for the sector of arts and culture is often formalised by the development and implementation of cultural policies, sometimes covered under the term «art policy». In general we can identify three main goals within the cultural field:

1. *The protection and conservation of cultural values.* Cultural heritage, museums, archives and libraries.
2. *The development of cultural values.* Performing arts, visual arts, design, poetry, film and photography.
3. *The social art-participation.* Cultural education, cultural attendance and participation, amateur art.

Governmental bodies make use of several instruments in order to implement their cultural policies such as planning, regulation, and financial instrument geared towards local, regional and national target groups. When considering the financial instruments we immediately have to scan the multiplicity of different subsidies and grants, be it on an ad-hoc basis or structural. Each of these instruments are guided by their specific requirements. These specific requirements have been developed in order to guarantee effective and efficient application, in order to fulfil the governmental ambitions.

Can these requirements be modelled in favour of the creative entrepreneurship? Seen from the Dutch perspective there is no doubt that it can be applied to the creative entrepreneurship. Creative Entrepreneurship has been identified since the year 2000 as one of the cornerstones of the cultural policies. The Ministry of Culture and Media has strived for an improvement of the societal spin-off effects of the cultural policies. Cultural entrepreneurship has taken in aspects e.g. commercial marketing,

the search for alternative sources of revenue, the involvement of new target groups, a pro-active approach towards new developments, e.g. multi-cultural initiatives and digitisation. Recently the Dutch government has decided to add cultural entrepreneurship to the policy evaluation of all cultural organisations, including the operational results that are realized in that period.

Another government instrument developed is the Innovation Policy of Cultural Expressions in the Netherlands. This policy supports subsidised (national) organisations within their effort to attract new audiences and develop new cultural networks. When evaluating the potential innovation subsidy (which covers primarily costs of personnel and overheads) the government looks at the development of (local) networks, non-artistic innovations, sustainable perspectives, model-working and «cost effectiveness», which means that there has to be a positive relationship between investment and expected outcome. The first six projects that have received financial support have had a large amount of ICT involvement, and cover especially the media and design sector and museums.

In addition a parallel matching policy has been developed, geared towards the same target group. This policy strives for an increased amount of independent income for the subsidised organisations. Each organisa-

### **Box 3. Cultural Governance**

Not all regulation regarding subsidised cultural institutions have been initiated by the government. In the Netherlands the Code of Cultural Governance has been initiated and implemented on the basis of self-regulation; a regulatory system accepted by the sector itself and implemented by the government within their subsidy regulation. The code defines the principles of good governance within the sector; the selection of appointments in governmental bodies based upon open, public procedures. It offers support for the definition of the profiles of potential directors and decision-makers, structures periodical self-evaluations. In all annual reports of the cultural institutes a chapter has to be dedicated to the explanation of how they have handled the Code of Conduct.

The code has been initiated in order to break away from the appointment of close-circle in crowd candidates in official positions. The same argument has lead to the development of the ARANA-programme, stimulating governmental diversity. This programme caters for an additional training of (potential) members of the governmental bodies, that come from a different cultural background and carry a multi-cultural profile. It supports a positive intervention when selecting potential candidates.

tion will have to attract 17.5% of its income through market-initiatives. In addition to this self-generated income the government doubles the amount with a special fund. A budget of ten million euros has been reserved on an annual basis for these initiatives. The additional, independently generated turnover has to be generated by cultural entrepreneurial initiatives e.g. paid by participants of the events, partages, income from rent and catering, sponsoring, production contribution offered by the media, merchandising, contributions by friends and wealthy individuals.

Both policies have been supported by a special Advisory Committee Cultural Profit, lead by the former director of the Concertgebouw, Martijn Sanders. He has pushed the plea for improvement of the social functioning of cultural institutions by means of alternative financing and innovative methods of scouting new audiences.

### 3. Creative Economy

#### 3.1. *A creative transition is taking place*

As explained, cultural entrepreneurship is mostly driven by context-variables and strongly attached to practical experience. In this chapter we would like to rise above the day-to-day fine art of muddling-through, in order to place cultural entrepreneurship in a wider perspective.

From an economic perspective, international trade is a key component of the creative economy. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), world trade in creative-industry products increased sharply in recent years. Between 2000-2005, trade in goods and services from the creative industries grew on average by 8.7 per cent annually. For instance, world exports of visual arts more than doubled from \$10.3 billion in 1996 to \$22.1 billion in 2005. Exports of audiovisuals tripled over the same period (see chapter 5); much of the trade in audiovisual products occurs in the form of rights transactions as the means for buying and selling creative content. The functioning of intellectual property markets both nationally and internationally depends on the existence of effective copyright regimes in the countries involved, allowing efficient collection and equitable distribution of copyright payments.

#### Box 4. The Creative Economy in figures

— The five EU Countries with the greatest contribution of the Creative Industry to the GDP (in %):

- Germany 3.4
- Iceland 3.2
- Estonia 3.1
- France 3.1
- Bulgaria 3

— Top 10 exporting countries of creative goods (from the subgroup «developed countries» in billion \$ and market share in %)

- Italy 28 5.9
- US 26 7.6
- Germany 25 7.4
- UK 19 5.7
- France 18 5
- Canada 11 3.4
- Belgium 9 2.8
- Spain 9 2.7
- The Netherlands 7 2.2
- Switzerland 6 1.8
- (China , part of the group of developing countries: 61 b \$ 1 7.6%)

Source: UNCTAD 2008.

### 3.2. *The Creative Industry*

The Creative Industry —by the UN report presented as the heart of the creative economy— has been described in many different ways.

The EU too has taken on the discussions regarding the Creative Economy. Since the beginning of the millennium there has been a growing interest in this sector. Since then the culture and creative industries subsequently gained a new importance on the political agenda. Both in the Maastricht Treaty, the EU Lisbon process for the strengthening of economic growth in Europe as well as in the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity, the topic has gained central attention.

The study «*The Economy of Culture in Europe*» commissioned by the European Commission in 2006 has been the starting point of a vast political revaluation of the Creative Industries in Europe and its member

states. In its analyses the study makes a distinction between «*culture*» and «*economy*». It argues that the EU has been formed on the basis of economical and market forces. It creates a distinction between the *cultural sector*, subdivided in an industrial and non-industrial sector; and the *creative sector*.

1. The «cultural sector», that consists of
  - a. Non-industrial sectors producing non-reproducible goods and services aimed at being «consumed» on the spot (a concert, an art fair, an exhibition). These are the arts field (visual arts including paintings, sculpture, craft, photography; the arts and antique markets; performing arts including opera, orchestra, theatre, dance, circus; and heritage including museums, heritage sites, archaeological sites, libraries and archives).
  - b. Industrial sectors producing cultural products aimed at mass reproduction, mass-dissemination and exports (for example, a book, a film, a sound recording). These are «cultural industries» including film and video, video-games, broadcasting, music, book and press publishing.
2. In the «creative sector», culture becomes a «creative» input in the production of non-cultural goods. It includes activities e.g. design (fashion design, interior design, and product design), architecture, and advertising. Creativity is understood in the study as the use of cultural resources as an intermediate consumption in the production process of non-cultural sectors, and thereby as a source of innovation.

By analysing the government support given to the Creative Sector, four models can be identified:

1. *The welfare model*. From this perspective one finds the cultural and creative industries (CCI) to have a net negative impact on the economy, such that they consume more resources than they produce. They will have to be supported by governmental subsidies in order to survive within the harshness of modern, industrial, market oriented societies.
2. *The competition model*. The CCI is «just another industry». The cultural and creative industries, in this view, are just another member of the industrial community, and they should rightfully demand neither more nor less «assistance» than accorded to others.
3. *The economic growth model*. This model explicitly proposes a positive economic relation between growth in the cultural and creative industries and growth in the aggregate economy.

Policy should properly treat the cultural and creative industries as a «special sector», not because it is economically significant in itself, but because it powers the growth of other sectors.

4. *The innovation model.* The cultural and creative industries may not be well characterised as an industry *per se*, but rather as an element of the *innovation system* of the whole economy.

Recently in 2010, the EU Commission published a green paper for EU-wide consultation called *Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries*. In this document the Committee discusses the possibilities for government support regarding the Creative Economy, both at the regional, national and EU level. It questions the contribution of the Creative Industry towards the aspects of innovation.

The Committee states that if Europe wants to remain competitive in a more and more changing global environment, it needs to put in place the right conditions for creativity and innovation to flourish in a new entrepreneurial culture. Europe has a lot of untapped potential in the cultural and creative industries to create growth and jobs. To do so, Europe must identify and invest in new sources of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth drivers to take up the challenges. Much of our future prosperity will depend on how Europe uses its resources, knowledge and creative talent to spur innovation.

### 3.3. *Innovation policy*

It is clear that there are large differences between the 27 EU states. A transnational analysis of the environment that influences the cultural and creative industries has been performed in the Study on the Entrepreneurial Characteristics. The national characteristics and differences in terms of approaches to, and potential of the CCIs have been analysed. This analysis covered the 27 EU Member States and proposed a country clustering in respect to the identification of cross national common patterns of practice, and has looked into entrepreneurial activity and innovation performance with respect to the stated SMEs and cultural policies. The following main categories have been identified:

- *Knowledge economies* (UK, IE, NL, DK, SE, FI): Economies that can already be considered structurally reliant on knowledge based products and innovation services.
- *Traditional economies* - structurally strong (FR, DE, BE, AT, LU): These nations rely on solid structural foundations across all aspects of the system, but cannot be considered a knowledge economy as

the exploitation of knowledge fails to reward cultural and creative entrepreneurship and risk taking attitudes.

- *Traditional economies* - structurally weak (IT, ES, PT, GR): These countries present some strength in traditional sectors and SMEs clusters, but show average or below average performance in enforcing structural innovation measures and strategies.
- *Emerging economies* - virtuous (MT, CY, LT, LV, EE, PL, HU, CZ, SV): Some of these countries perform as well, if not better than, some of the traditional economies in terms of innovation performances and measures.
- *Emerging economies* - catching up (RO, BG, SK): These countries have just started the catching up process of generating the conditions whereby they can be competitive.

All countries, however, do recognise the importance of the Creative Industry. They all support the idea that the Creative Industry is a key-factor in driving the innovation-potential within their national context. Almost every national government is developing a national policy in order to integrate the creative and economical sectors.

From the study mentioned we can derive a number of examples.

- *Departure, Vienna, Austria.* Departure is a funding institution based in Vienna, Austria, which endorses creative professionals who consider themselves part of the economy and who strive to reveal their products or skills to the city of Vienna, thereby contributing to the prosperity of the metropolis. Many of those whom Departure supports are already entrepreneurs or company founders active in the creative industries, and thus aware of the international and cultural flair they can bring to Vienna. However, many are also individuals interested in turning a creative idea into a business opportunity. Departure strives to identify and financially support outstanding and visionary projects in the creative industries. (departure.at)
- *CREATE BERLIN, Germany.* CREATE BERLIN is an initiative by and for Berlin Designers. CREATE BERLIN was founded in 2006 by 15 established Berlin-based creative businesses. Now it is a network with over 60 members representing the creative diversity of the Berlin design scene. CREATE BERLIN also aims to connect and bring together Berlin's creative talents with political and economic decision makers. In terms of support for entrepreneurs in the Cultural and Creative Industries, CREATE BERLIN serves as a supporting hub for creative minds and ideas in and around Berlin. (create-berlin.de)
- *Tekes, Finland.* Tekes (national funding agency for technology and innovation) and the regional Employment and Economic

- Development Centres —for the use of companies in a new way—. The goal is to provide a «one-stop shop» for public services relevant to growth firms. The agency participates in high-risk projects, yet leaves the responsibility for the project with the creative entrepreneur. A problem for the Creative Industry is that Tekes demands a fifty percent participation from the creative entrepreneur. (tekes.fi)
- *Inserralves, Portugal*. A specialised incubator for stimulating and supporting entrepreneurial initiatives in the creative industries. This incubator was recently set up, bridging the gaps between creative people, artists and the business world, by providing an adequate environment and conditions. The innovative nature of this «incubator» arises from providing a special physical environment for an «open» development of the entrepreneurial projects, offering specially designed training and coaching programmes, creating new development and marketing opportunities by «breeding» the new companies, supporting contacts and networking (serralves.pt).
  - *b.TWEEN, UK, London*. In the UK, b.TWEEN has been acclaimed as the nation’s first and best sector media forum, designed to attract «the designers of the future of digital business». Among its activities, b.TWEEN organises festivals where creative people, influencers and visionaries with a commercial edge, are encouraged to attend and exchange ideas and information. The festivals provide an environment of varied interchange among a diverse crowd of students and professionals. (b.tween.co.uk)
  - *CultuurInvest, Belgium*. This programme aims at giving project financing (short term support), growth capital (capital participation for more mature companies), subordinated loans (quasi-long-term investment) and entrepreneurship training. In general, there is still a *lack of pre-seed* financing for creative start-ups and innovative projects as well as venture capital targeted especially for CCI SMEs since the measures are more directed at general start-ups and not CCI SMEs. The CultuurInvest programmes palliate some of those gaps through the collaboration with the Flemish Innovation Fund (investing in risk capital and start-up enterprises), with their renewed guarantee arrangement (allowing credit granters to cover the credits which they granted to companies with a government guarantee); and with other instruments, e.g. the co-financing of projects supported by the Federal Participation Fund. (cultuurinvest.be)
  - *Cultuur Ondernemen, the Netherlands*. Cultuur Ondernemen encourages and supports artists, creative professionals and cultural organisations in their professionalizing and their development

towards economic independence. In order to earn money and make a living, artists must have more to offer than just talent and craftsmanship alone. Perhaps just as important are the abilities to communicate professionally, to build and maintain a network, to develop plans, to make budgets and to negotiate effectively. Under the authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the organisation conducts investigations into the professionalism of artists who wish to make use of the benefits provided under the WWIK; Income Provisions for the Artists Act. Under the authority of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Cultuur Ondernemen is also responsible for the so-called flanking policy associated with the WWIK. (cultuurenondernemen.nl)

### 3.4. *Community Art*

The concept of Community Art is based upon the idea that art can play a central role in the social development of a local community. The artists and the local inhabitants operate together in order to organise local project and activities. In doing so the artistic and social cohesion is improved. Projects could be centred around either the process of social cooperation, or could be directed towards cultural products like a performance or an exhibition. In both cases, the identity and influence of the local community should be recognisable. In larger cities Community Art carries a multi-cultural dimension, in which social interaction and inclusion are an explicit goal of the projects.

For the cultural entrepreneur it is important to follow the developments that take place in this arena. First of all it is a sign of new markets; newly tapped target groups that express the local need for specific products and services. Often this involves target groups that normally cannot or have not been reached through the usual art structures. Secondly, often interdisciplinary activities are involved. Art is one of the disciplines used; often supplemented by social workers, community developers urban renewal, educational activities, social housing schemes. As a third argument one can look at community art as a means of Corporate (Social) Responsibility (CSR), or Sustainable entrepreneurship. CSR stresses the social responsibilities of the entrepreneur, with an inherited attention to sustainable methods of production. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development describes the general principles as follows: *«Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of*

*the local community and society at large*». Often the activities are evaluated on the basis of the three p's; Planet, People, Profit. We have to note that urban developers, social workers, educational institutions, etc, until now have overlooked the possibilities of the Creative Industry in this matter.

One of the fundamental debates around this question is whether—in this case— one has to talk about artistic production, or whether we should look at these initiatives from the social-work perspective. Often for the artists involved this is not a dilemma; they are involved in artistic processes and the results should be judged upon their artistic value, being new artistic expressions of the population involved.

A second debate is concentrated on the question of what products fall within the category of «community art». In what way should «the community» be involved in order to qualify for this category. In general one can identify two extreme positions; social activities with an artistic edge, or artistic initiatives with a social dimension. In short it is an indication of the wide area of activities that cultural entrepreneurs can initiate in order to create their artistic products in cooperation with the social community that surrounds them. It offers the opportunity to look at financial sources in a wider context. Funding can be sought in a wide area of potential strategic alliances; social housing corporation, healthcare institutions, educational organisations, social welfare initiatives, etc.

#### **Box 5. Case Community Art «De Nesten»**

In the multi-cultural neighbourhood Kiel in Antwerp, Belgium the concept of «nesten» (nesting) has been chosen as a start for the creation of an art-work. The inhabitants were invited to express their associations with the term «nesting». The project is aimed at bridging the gap between the inhabitants of the neighbourhood Kiel and the internationally renowned adjacent museum/statue park Middelheim. Inhabitants do not normally visit the museum. Under the banner of «social cohesion», a number of meetings between the artists and the inhabitants have been organised. Different forms of «nests» have been collected, re-shaped and exhibited in the neighbourhood, supplemented by a large number of additional activities, ranging from nature-walks to writing-classes. As a work of art they collectively designed a huge nest that has been exhibited in the centre of the neighbourhood. After a certain period of time the Museum offered to replace the nest with a new piece of art. The local inhabitants resisted any change; the piece of art had become their symbol of cohesion and connection between different cultures. It has created a piece of lasting value.

### 3.5. *Production, Project, Process in Programme management*

The appearance of the Creative Economy with its attention for entrepreneurship demands new forms of organisation. Besides the existing structures and networks of well-established art circles, structured around disciplines like theatre, music, visual arts, with their lasting organisational networks like theatres and museums, new cultural structures appear as a result of the internet and mobile communication devices. In the traditional value-chain of creation, production, distribution and experiencing, every organisation plays its specific role. Recently however the new media has created more hybrid forms of organisational structures and networks, catering for the new opportunities in the emerging sectors. Here we will discuss a number of management methods that can be used by the creative entrepreneur (product and project management) that are applicable within the creative industry (process and programme management). One must note that we will follow the theoretical principles, yet in reality often a combination of these principles can be found.

#### *Product management*

Product management is a traditional type of structuring, in which planning is the central focus of attention. Starting from initial ideas, until the final exhibition or performance, activities have to be ordered and placed in time to meet the final deadline. In order to streamline the production process the General Director, in his job as Producer, takes central stage. He is responsible for bringing the production process to a fruitful end. He might be assisted by an artistic and/or production leader, that in their turn might be assisted by the Head of Operations, Stage Manager, Head Internal Affairs, etc. The General Manager can at least lean on the support of the financial assistant and somebody responsible for the marketing, advertisement and public relations.

The success of this type of organisation is based upon the routine-like actions, with fixed and clearly defined responsibilities that stay the same over time.

#### **Box 6. Product management**

- From initial design, through explicit planning towards preparation and realisation.
- Routine-like rituals important.
- Task, responsibilities and positions are clearly expressed.

## *Project management*

The concept of Project management took central stage during the eighties of last century, when cultural management became more complex and increasingly was driven by strategy development, marketing, financial planning and personnel policies. In order to improve each other's involvement, the project approach was developed. Explicit targets had to be defined, and the execution of the activities was positioned in different phases of the total process (the idea phase, developmental phase, preparation, execution and evaluation phase). In addition the usual routine, members of the project team had to afford creative attention to management issues e.g. time schedules, organisation and teambuilding processes, quality control, information dissemination and money; the so-called TOQIM principles. With the development of the principles of project management, attention was given to the teambuilding principles; roles that one can play within the project group, leadership qualities and project coordination. Many project management training courses have been given to employees of cultural institution that had to face internal reorganisation schemes, for

### **Box 7. Project management**

- Applicable when organising an activity (presentation, exhibition, event, production).
- Capability of flexible responses within the formal structure of planning and control.
- Involvement and commitment of the project members important.
- Leadership qualities crucial.

#### *Phases:*

1. Idea development → 2. Design → 3. Preparation → 4. Execution → 5. Evaluation  
(what) (how) (planning) (realisation) (outcome)

#### *TOQIM:*

Time: developing, controlling a time schedule and planning

Organisation: who does what, task allocation and profile project leader

Quality control: criteria for the artistic content and operational aspects

Information & Communication: who has to know what and how are these issues communicated

Money: calculating the budget, generating income, keep track of income and expenditure

instance because of a lack of internal drive to modernise their traditional way of product management.

The great advantage of project management, with its attention to the different phases and «points of no return», is that it can be applied in both large and small scale organisations. This is of great value within the creative industry, with its dynamic and often changing ways of organisation. Large-scale festivals can be structured on the same principles as a small, intimate presentation of a book.

### *Process management*

When involved in a large-scale exercise, a continuous flow of decisions have to be dealt with. Decisions in which cultural expressions and projects are included that play their own part in the proceedings, and that include a manifold of stakeholders involved. In these situations we enter the sphere of process management. Within the principles of process management, the final end product and/or result is no longer the focus of attention. Instead we focus on the realisation of explicit targets and goals, placed within a longer-term policy planning, often initiated by the urge of reorganisations within the institutional structure. Often the different layers of management and control function as a network-organisation.

Given that the targets and goals are put at the centre of the managerial process, great attention is given to the development of the process architecture, the phases of decision-making, the different roles within the process, the rules that are applied, the interaction between the partners involved and the control of the progress made.

In designing a process, three elements demand our attention:

- Surveying the motivation for change of all stakeholders involved.
- The process development itself: a change-process, structured in time, with explicit moments of consultation and interaction, decision making, open meeting, the role and function of ICT.
- The realisation of the change-process: the «what» and «how», the personal mix in the new situation (who does what in the new structure).

Sometimes, when looking at different stages of the process with different outcomes, it can be practical to start the process with a phase of project-management. The process-management is in this case concerned with the effort to streamline the sub-project in such a way that they all contribute to the central targets set. In applying the principles of process management one often finds a structure of a Steering Committee and Working-Group, supported by different Project Groups. The steering

committee is the highest in control and has to confront the constituents, often a political organisation or the central executive officer within an enterprise.

Opposite to the principles of project management, where the final result is imperative, the surrounding organisational environment plays a crucial role within the implementation of process management. Within process management a continuous interaction with the social environment takes place, that sometimes even can lead to a change in goals and targets as defined in the initial phase. It requires an open communication structure in order to avoid counter-productive opposition. This also touches the governmental principles; only the constituents —sometimes in close cooperation with the Steering Committee— can decide to change the direction and targets of the process.

#### **Box 8. Process management**

- Used by complex and large-scale change-processes.
- Steering Committee, working groups, project groups.
- Main targets and goals set out in time; no concrete outcome defined.
- Continuous interaction between stakeholders and external environment.
- Governmental responsibilities placed at the top of the formal organisation.

#### *Programme management*

Finally the principles of programme management. Programme management is in such a way different from Process management that in principle the realisation of the activities are done by third parties. At the start of the programme there is a strategic agenda, accepted and formalized by the highest level of the organisation. Such an agenda explains the fact that an important and complex problem has to be dealt with in which social effects are involved, what global (interdisciplinary) targets can be set and what the planning involves, the cooperation of many stakeholders within the process.

A programme management structure covers several years, in which financial planning, project and process management are connected and streamlined with the main goals that the organisation wants to achieve. The programme management itself often consists of a programme manager or programme staff-team, that is responsible for the execution of the programme, yet has to get the formal agreement from the decision maker, often in the form of a Programme Council. This Programme

Council has to safeguard the developments and proceedings, and will guarantee that the central targets can be realised at an increasing pace within the agreed deadlines.

Programme management is an ideal organisational structure when a horizontal organisation is required; when different departments and policies have to be combined. Imperative for success is the clear distinction and coordination of the different organisational lines (hierarchical, functional). The Programme Council is responsible for the handling and avoidance of internal conflicts. The realisation of the programme can be combined with the request to define project proposals within the planned programme. One can also allocate different parts of the total programme budget at different centres of experts.

#### **Box 9. Programme management**

- Starts with a strategic agenda, responsibility is allocated at the highest organisational level.
- The underpinning social, organisational or managerial problem is complex.
- Programme management makes use of global targets and a final deadline; concrete steps are taken «along the line».
- The programme staff unit takes care of the operational management, the Programme Council safeguards the principle targets.
- Realisation of targets and goals by means of third-parties, based upon project proposals of assignments.

## **4. Scanning the future**

### **4.1. *Looking ahead***

What policy trends will steer the practice of cultural entrepreneurship? This question will be dealt with in our final chapter. We will discuss the influences and trends that are already visible in an embryonic stage at the moment. We expect these trends to gain strength in the years to come. In what way these developments will affect the individual entrepreneur is hard to predict, and will rely —amongst others— upon the discipline one is involved in. We feel, however, that in general both the policy-developer and entrepreneur can take advantage of perspectives that lay ahead. In order, we will discuss the main trends in regional development, digitisation and Central Business Marketing.

## 4.2. *Regional development*

In general, most attention regarding art and cultural policy has been directed towards the national and the municipal level. At the national level the main directions of the policy applied have been sketched. They form the structural context in which the lower governmental bodies can operate. These decentralized bodies do have the liberty to use their own governmental scope and political strategies. However often they are limited by the environmental factors defined by the national government bodies. In addition, municipal bodies used to compete with each other for a slice of the local market. In recent times each city has tried to develop its own version of «the creative city» and as a result they initiate each other's policies and end up with a sub-optimal result. As a consequence, a number of cities have decided to create a co-operational structure at the regional level to avoid an overload of empty, industrial breeding places.

The different regions have shown themselves to be willing and capable of organising their own cultural offerings outside the large urban centres. Growing regional consciousness regarding the cultural values of the specific region has led to regional theatre festivals, exhibitions, poetry and literature festival, local media, etc.

A third development is concerned with the urban-rural continuum. The countryside has been redefined as an inviting place for artists that use the available buildings to create their exhibition centres, art-farms and breeding grounds, leisure and educational centres (painting ateliers with an educational offering).

We can see a revival of the regional level as central stage for cultural initiatives. Artists offer their contribution to the regional identity, and the other way around.

## 4.3. *Digitisation*

The appearance of the computer in the last century has changed the cultural entrepreneurship fundamentally. The influences of digitisation can be felt all-over. To mention some:

### *Strategy development*

Trends and developments can be identified and analysed by means of online, real-time search engines. An abundant number of reports, transcripts of prognostic research and scenario-analyses can be found online and are available for free. Also the specific sector —including the

main competition— involved can be scanned and analysed on the basis of dedicated searches. In addition the digital interaction has changed the internal process of strategy development within the organisational context. Nowadays we have to face the challenge to involve active participation of our clients and target group when developing our future strategies. Modern ICT programmes offer the opportunity to get involved in the digital foray, whether organised by the organisation itself or by third parties. One cannot avoid the new social media in the present arena.

Additional involvement and commitment can be organised by permanent interaction and communication in the form of digital newsletters, email blasts, SMS and other social media initiatives (Facebook, LinkedIn, Skype, CallMeBack, Twitter, etc.).

### *Creation and production*

At this point we have to make a distinction between the computer used as a means of technical support (the creation of a light plan, the visualisation of a project, digitisation of a cultural activity or archive) and the use of the computer as an independent creative instrument within the creative process. The last aspect leads to completely new products and disciplines (new media, online gaming, digital productions and presentations). By using digital instruments the capability is created to involve the audience in an active sense, by the creation of the product itself (user-created content). The traditional series of creation, production, distribution and experiencing is turned around. The visitor becomes the co-creator of the digital product and can define the process of creation (User Centred Design, Public Oriented Art).

In addition, digital culture creates totally new public stages. Not only through the Internet, but also by means of mobile phones PDA's, web books, etc. YouTube has become the biggest film-distributor ever, populated by amateur-filmmakers, co-creators of client-driven cultural products. The fast growing sector of gaming can be seen as a new spectrum of visual arts, sometimes described as a new art-virus that will influence our perception of art products.

### *Marketing*

The most important changes triggered by the ICT developments have occurred in the marketing-field. We are capable of constructing and analysing vast databases of consumer behaviour. Also the art marketing itself has changed. The image of transforming the standard paper flyer into a website is totally obsolete. A cultural website nowadays is a platform for

interaction and dialogue with (potential) customers and clients, and has become a fellow-constituent of policy development. Cultural organisations will have to be aware of the fact that their customers are better informed and create their own communities when discussing cultural experiences and events. We can witness a new, high tech translation of the «word of mouth»; special, dedicated websites, created by customers in which they create a platform to discuss and share their opinions and experiences. *Cross media* (the possibility to use different media e.g. websites, SMS, internet, etc at the same time), *Augmented Reality* (integration of digital images in our physical reality on the basis of the information) and the entertainment needs of the customer will become the norm for the marketing of cultural products.

### *Personnel*

An important question is whether the existing personnel is *DigiMe-proof*? In other words, are they capable of combining our digital communication means with the physical reality in which they take place? The blurred distinction between the personal and public sphere comes to mind. It becomes important for a cultural organisation to include younger participants that are used to the digital developments within the organisational personnel. It is common practice to screen the digital presence of a potential candidate at the Internet, before organising an initial interview. By executing an online search sometimes a world of available information about a person can be discovered.

Also at the level of the individual entrepreneur the close interaction with the digital and virtual reality is evident. Mobile phones are being replaced by «mini-computers» that act as a personal digital assistant (PDA), offering capabilities of browsing, collecting and analysing data, creating interactive time-schedules, organising digital conferencing, etc. All these communication means tend to be more and more integrated, combining simultaneously very different streams of information and communication methods. Above all it is important that the cultural entrepreneur keeps up with the developing possibilities, and uses the opportunity to search for (international) opportunities to enrich the creative content provided by the digital era.

### *Intellectual property protection*

Special attention has to be given to the protection of intellectual property in this digital environment. Within the traditionally accepted norms the possession of the intellectual property right would create an

important stream of income. All results of art —be it visual arts, games or software— are on the basis of their product characteristics protected by individual financial safeguards. Copyrights do not have to be registered; they are immediately attached to the product at the moment of creation. The collection of financial profits is often done by collective organisation, mandated by the artist to execute this task. In addition we recognise the large-scale media and entertainment concerns that are both owner and holder of the copyrights on music, movies, video, media formats, theatre productions, etc.

Before the Internet one could identify a reasonably simple situation, in which adequate copyright protection was available and could be legally implemented. The existence of the Internet has drastically changed the scene; illegal copying of copyrighted intellectual property has grown at an exponential rate. We can identify a severe reaction from the existing industries in an effort to control and limit illegal use. Criminal prosecution and punishment is one of the final actions taken.

A more modern approach is striving for a system of open copyright regulation that on the one hand recognises the rights of financial profit for those that have created the original piece of art. Yet at the same time allows for the use of creative products for non-commercial purposes. Based on these last arguments the «Creative Commons» approach has been developed; an approach that offers the creator a choice in what kind of conditions and licences the creator wants to apply.

### **Box 10. Support centre for Desolated Robots**

In September 2008 the Arts and Economics lecturate of the Utrecht School of the Arts created a Support Centre for Desolated Robots. This centre, run by students of arts and economics, collects robots that resemble human-like creatures and have been left behind by their owners. They are offered for sale in an on-line market place. From the perspective of the lecturate we are on the verge of an era of robots, used in healthcare institutions, education, services and in the arts and entertainment sectors. The collected robots tell the story of their creation and use, and can provide a glimpse of the things to come within the near future. In addition, one pays attention to the topic of arts and robots, and external artists are invited to offer their comments, advice and performances. The centre wants to evolve into a centre of expertise for socio-creative robotics. Finally the centre wants to promote research into the entrepreneurial effects and contributions offered by robotics.

#### 4.4. *Cultural Business Modelling (CBM)*

Finding financial support for the cultural and creative entrepreneurs have come under pressure and confronts us with new challenges. In the subsidised sector governmental spending is diminished, while the continuing financial crisis lowers the possibilities to compensate lost funding by additional sponsoring. In the private market, creative industries private assignments become rare, especially in those sectors involved in the housing industries (architects, interior design, public art). In addition the financial institutions and banks have become very reluctant in providing financial support, especially in those cases where solid guarantees cannot be offered.

Already before the crisis of 2008 signs were apparent that the publicly subsidised sector had to account for a transition towards more individual financial responsibilities. The political strata predicted a situation where cultural organisation would have to carry their own responsibility, to guarantee a permanent continuity; art subsidies can no longer be guaranteed.

On the basis of these foundations a framework has been developed that is applicable for both the profit and not-for-profit sector. This Cultural Business Modelling has been tested in recent years and has been adopted by the Dutch Committee of Cultural Profit in their advice to the national government.

The framework is based upon ten different sources of income.

1. *Autonomous sources of income.* Autonomous sources of income cover those sources of income that can be realised without interference of other institutions or organisations. We will list three examples:
  - a. *PMCs.* Product Market Combinations identify what cultural and creative products services are targeted to what specific audiences. These combinations, an autonomous income for instance at the counter, at specific targeted assignments or by producing tailor-made products and services. In the subsidised sector these PMCs account for 10 to 40% of the annual income, depending on the specific discipline. Within the cultural profit sector these PMC's account for 70 to 100%. When developing these PMCs one must analyse whether there is enough space for the development of new activities (the «stars»), alongside the effective use of existing PMCs.
  - b. *Real estate facilities.* Organisations possess real estate either as their property, or as a rental construction. These buildings are seldom in permanent use. This offers opportunities that are

often overseen. The building can be utilised as an additional accommodation for conferences and fairs. One could utilise the building in order to generate additional income. A music school normally is in full swing in the afternoon. Yet in the morning it is often empty or even closed. One could create cooperative initiatives with educational or training-institutions, by which special arrangements can be offered for the rental of the class rooms until the lunch-breaks. If one makes use of specific historical premises, one can organise special catering activities, including a linkage with the original cultural activities. A festival accommodation can be used for additional services offered by independent entrepreneurs, who offer their specific services to the festivals audience.

- c. *Merchandising* consists of the sales of promotional materials. In normal circumstances the audience will receive flyers, CDs, brochures and posters for free. The costs are covered by the marketing budget. The fine art of merchandising strives for a situation in which the customer is paying for the promotional materials; t-shirts, booklets, bags, want-to-haves with the company logo, etc. Many examples can be found at museum stores and festivals where buying a t-shirt with well-known stars is a must; it creates a substantial source of additional income.
2. *External sources of income*. When discussing external sources of income we look at external partners in order to generate income. In total we can identify four possible sources:
  - d. *Sponsoring*. Sponsoring is defined as the construction of a business transaction with private enterprises of public organisations on the basis of mutual communicative and/or financial interests. This can cover either modes of sponsoring that involves financial arrangements, or it can be a non-financial cooperation with a mutual exchange. Long-term commitments can evolve into strategic sponsoring, in which long-term communicative targets of the organisations involved take centre stage.
  - e. *Matching*. Matching describes the efforts to combine contributions from different funds, in those circumstances where the individual funds would not be capable to support the initiative in question. Matching means that they can reach out to a wider audience which they would never reach individually. The initiating organisation will need the capacity to bring the different funds together.

- f. *Co-financing*. Co-financing occurs when a joined management structure is created and is used when the individual organisations each would not be capable to realise the project. It could involve combined programming, production, marketing, distribution, personnel and housing. Co-financing needs the mutual trust of the organisations involved to be successful.
  - g. *Individual funds*. A cultural organisation can create its own dedicated fund geared towards specific activities, for instance, in the area of education, innovation, real-estate programming. The expectation is that specific persons or organisations will support the dedicated purpose involved. Normally one would offer a (symbolic) gesture; a special welcome, priority status at the ticket sales, sending special brochures, etc. Sometimes these individual funds can take the form of a «Friends of ...» organisation.
3. *Sources of common interest*. Financial sources based upon common interest point at financial support on the basis of publicly shared cultural and art activities serving a social goal. This financial support is not bound to any service in-return, although specific requirements can be attached to the scheme in question. We can identify three alternative sources of income.
- h. *Maecenas*. The term indicates private financing by (wealthy) individuals, that offer their support on the basis of the common good and purpose involved. A basic requirement is that the cultural organisation needs a positive general image, so that the Maecenas can be sure that the money is well spent and will serve the proposed goals.
  - i. *Governmental facilities*. Several government organisations offer clearly defined facilities in order to promote specific goals. This can involve financial support for attracting well-educated personnel, creating possibilities for initial work-experiences for newcomers, internationalisation, promoting multicultural initiatives, etc. Sometimes financial support is paid directly, sometimes the government organisation takes care of the financial burden (for instance, subsidised labour). Also the creation of targeted tax-facilities can be counted under this heading.
  - j. *Subsidies*. Subsidising is a system of providing financial support by governmental institutions on the basis of (perceived) contributions towards the quality of the local society. Most governments use two different structures; a structural subsidy

and financial support in order to guarantee the continuation of basic cultural institutions (museums, theatres, concert halls and orchestras, etc). In addition one uses ad-hoc incremental subsidies in order to support the realisation of specific projects within a limited time-frame.

### **Box 11. The CBM Test**

In 2004, four cultural organisations —a theatre group, a festival, a music ensemble, and a museum— were tested on the basis of the CBM model. The three most important sources of income were: PMCs, Sponsoring and subsidies. The individual organisations sometimes score high at Matching, Co-financing and Governmental facilities. Almost none of them used Merchandising, Individual Funds or Maecenas.

It should be noted that within the CBM framework the mutual relationship between costs and profits have not been explored. More recent studies show that a mixture of different sources can be used and integrated. In the USA for instance, one uses cultural gala dinners that are tax-deductible (a combination of Individual funding and Maecenas).

Within the creative industry the application of business models is of growing interest. The central question is what way the cultural organisation wants to earn the needed income. Three aspects —three M's— are important:

— Meanings:

- What added value does the organisation create for society?
- With what target groups does the organisation want to communicate?
- What partners are used in order to realise the mission statement?

— Methods:

- In what way does the organisation plan to finance the enterprise (in the long run)?
- Which CBM sources of income are used?
- What kind of relationship does one develop with governmental and private funding?

— Money:

- What cost-calculations have been made?
- What perspectives can be predicted in the net-profit (turn-over minus costs)?
- What are the liquidity prognoses for the near future?

## Epilogue

In this essay different models have been sketched in order to support the personal situation as a creative entrepreneur. The Director of the Theatre Company that loses both the subsidy as part of the sponsor income (see the introduction of this chapter) can communicate with his staff in order to create a survival plan based upon the Cultural Business Model offered. The Governing Body will be wise to provide full support for this Director. In the mean time, a business advisor will be introduced to the Game Developer and will analyse his staff, the growth and entrepreneurial development of the firm. The organisation has landed in what phase, so is it good common practice to move into the Next Stage and borrow the necessary funds from the bank? The fear for loss of autonomy will not easily be put aside, though. However the advisor might be capable of analysing the hidden arguments behind the fear, if possible.

It is obvious that the Director of the regional Museum together with the Managerial Board will have to give attention to the principles of process management, in order to avoid a stalemate within the reorganisation process.

In order to develop a more sustainable understanding of the concept of cultural entrepreneurship, with its chances, challenges and tensions between the cultural imagination and financial results, we will have to dig deeper. It is the question whether we will have to analyse the position of the cultural entrepreneur in relation with the societal re-orientation since the financial crisis in the Western Societies. The disappearance of national borders is combined with a fundamental doubt regarding social dynamics of neo-liberal societies. It has to be seen that cultural entrepreneurs can balance the opportunities given by globalisation, and the need to contribute to the local cultural surroundings. Perhaps we will have to force ourselves to take on transitional tasks created by the growing importance of the creative economy, and combine a global existence with sustainable local involvement.

## Additional sources

### *Cultural entrepreneurship*

For a basic introduction on the entrepreneurial approach of art management one can use *Art Management Entrepreneurial Style* (2005). This publication offers an insight on the three main topics of art

management: strategy development, organisational design and leadership. An overview of themes regarding cultural and creative entrepreneurship can be found in *Growth and Development of Creative SMEs* (2008). This book offers an international selection of articles on the existence and functioning of small cultural and creative enterprises. Central topics are: networking, entrepreneurial planning, teamwork, financing, intercultural competencies, innovation, communication and Cultural Business Modelling. For a more scientific essay on cultural entrepreneurship one can turn to the Inaugural Lecture of Giep Hagoort: *Cultural Entrepreneurship*. June 6, Utrecht 2007. In this publication two fundamental freedoms are analysed; the freedom to create art and the freedom of entrepreneurial activities.

The European research on creative entrepreneurship has culminated in the EACEA publication on the *Entrepreneurial dimension of cultural and creative industries*. Utrecht 2010 ([www.hku.nl](http://www.hku.nl)).

### ***Creative Economy***

A wealth of concepts, theories and statistical data can be found within the UN/UNCTAD *Creative Economy Report 2008*. This is the first study into the importance of the Creative Industries on a global scale. In *Being Unnoticed*, Rene Kooyman (2009) develops a secondary analysis based upon this publication. At the same lecturate, the *Creative Industries Yearbook 2009* was published, covering nearly 25 articles on research, education, policy and practice in cultural entrepreneurship within the creative economy.

### ***Culture***

For the discussion on art and culture we can reference two grounding publications. The oldest is the *Social History of Art*, by Arnold Hauser (1951). The second and more recent publication is the publication by Daniel Boorstin, *The Creators. Histories of Heroes of the Imagination* (1993). Both publications offer a chance to discuss art, culture and creativity within their surrounding contexts. With regards to the topic of *creativity* one can point at the ground-breaking publication by Michaly Cskszentmihalyi. A more critical essay on culture and globalisation has been published under the title of *Art under Pressure. Promoting cultural diversity in the age of globalisation*, by Joost Smiers (2003).

## ***Management***

For a better understanding of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurship in general we have to point at *Mintzberg on Management* (1991). In *Blue Ocean Strategy*, W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne develop their alternative approach in times of financial crises and shrinking profit margins (2005).

## ***Acknowledgement***

In composing this essay we have made use of several publications and lectures published recently, e.g. the Flemish Compendium for the Creative Industries (to be published in Spring 2011), UNCTAD Creative Economy Programme, European ECCE project on creative enterprises, HKU research on the entrepreneurial dimension (Faculty Art Media & Technology) and the Amsterdam Declaration for strengthening Creative Industries in Europe.

The authors are planning to publish a more in-depth publication in the upcoming year, and would appreciate any remark and/or suggestion from the readers.

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## Chapter 6

# The State of Art of Cultural Observatories in Europe: SaCO Report

*Cristina Ortega, Melba Claudio, Alex Bunten*

### Introduction

In 2009 the Institute of Leisure Studies of the University of Deusto took the mandate to apply on behalf of the ENCATC<sup>1</sup> Thematic area/ Working group, to the Policy Grouping call under the European Union's Culture Programme (2007-2013). This platform of academics, researchers and cultural observatories provides the opportunity to carry out research on the information systems used by cultural observatories and debate the process of collecting, managing and disseminating information and knowledge.

The needs and challenges of cultural observatories were defined during the first meeting in Split in March 2008. The members of the working group agreed their role should be:

- To promote the role, essence and nature of cultural observatories.
- To assist in training and education to capitalise cultural observatories.
- To support the system, that is cultural policies, in cultural development.

The *State of the Art of Cultural Observation (SaCO) Report* is the first outcome of this collective project. It addresses the need to gather

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<sup>1</sup> European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres: <http://www.encatc.org/>

and analyse information regarding cultural observation and will be useful for the elaboration of a set of recommendations for the framework of CECOM — Common European Cultural Observation Methodology.

### ***Aims of the SaCO Report***

The *SaCO Report* and the Starting Point Document Toward Recommendations regarding the role of cultural observatories for the development of CECOM represent the natural evolution of a communal project of methodologies exchanges about cultural observatories, their informational role, and their influence on cultural policies. These issues were discussed and developed to their current state by partners at previous meetings in the framework of ENCATC. The general objective of the *SaCO Report* consisted of identifying a set of cultural observatories in Europe and comparing the main description data about those observatories (objectives, activities, thematic priorities, observation approaches, activities, etc). This aim provides the basis for CECOM, but also endeavours a better understanding of the overall picture of cultural observation in Europe.

As specific objectives, this study has undertaken the task of connecting all the European cultural observatories by providing a single platform wherein the essential information about each one can be presented in a common format. This, in turn facilitates mutual understanding between organisations with common goals and actions in order to promote the development of joint projects and create an encompassing network and a powerful synergy amongst those observatories.

### **Conceptual framework**

Cultural observatories are born in a society where information and knowledge stand as the main drivers of politics, culture and economy. Because of observatories' position amongst these three pillars, they take on an important role in the decision making process and in the design and evaluation of policies. States and autonomous regions that arise are challenged to move towards a knowledge society, develop new strategies to manage and make effective use of information, to facilitate their conversion and transmission in the form of knowledge.

The observatories that have traditionally been linked to the study of natural phenomena assume this role, but in the knowledge society, it becomes the heritage of other disciplines such as culture. It results that

at the end of the twentieth century, numerous cultural observatories in Europe and other continents are driven mainly by public institutions, universities and international agencies in order to obtain a broad view of the evolution of certain phenomena and cultural events.

There are many structures under the name of observatory which have emerged in order to obtain a broad view of the development of certain social phenomena and events. Observatories of culture respond to a greater need for creating sources of information that are comprehensive, integrated, reliable and accessible. This facilitates access to information and knowledge about the fields of culture, arts, heritage or cultural industries, to both public and private sectors, as well as the general public.

We have conducted this research with the definition of cultural observatories resulting from a consensus among experts and those responsible for cultural observatories participating in the Working Group of ENCATC. It is based on the definition taken from Cristina Ortega's PhD thesis on cultural observatories:

The observatories are agencies responsible for facilitating the transfer and access to information and knowledge in order to support the decision making process in the cultural field through information systems. There are some observatories which, in addition to that goal, are directly involved in the cultural process with actions ranging from making proposals or recommendations, or the development of consultancy studies, to develop strategies and intervention programmes<sup>2</sup> (Ortega, 2008).

## Methodology

This paper presents a proposal aiming to describe the main features and priority approaches of European cultural observatories. The *SaCO Report* was carried out in four stages:

- *Stage 1. Survey tool:* Based on the theoretical framework resulting from the review of literature and the outcomes of discussions held in the «Monitors of Culture<sup>3</sup>» meetings, a questionnaire was designed to compile the main characteristics of entities engaged in observation in the cultural field.

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<sup>2</sup> Definition taken from the PhD thesis on Cultural Observatories of Dr Cristina Ortega and consensus among experts and responsables of cultural observatories that participate in the Working Group of ENCATC. <http://www.encatc.org/pages/index.php?id=40>

<sup>3</sup> «Monitors of Culture» Policy grouping on Cultural Observatories and Cultural Information and Knowledge. [www.monitorsofculture.deusto.es](http://www.monitorsofculture.deusto.es)

- *Stage 2. Sample:* The list of observatories taken from the ENCATC Working Group<sup>4</sup> formed the principle source of information for the sample. We also reviewed the list of entities belonging to other international cultural networks who call themselves observatories. Finally, we examined the list of entities on the World Map of Cultural Observatories<sup>5</sup> (MMOC) and we searched by keywords on the Internet.
- *Stage 3. Definition of inclusion criteria:* At this stage we designed the evaluation flow that would be used in order to distinguish those observatories included in the study. We applied the inclusion criteria according to our definition of a cultural observatory.
- *Stage 4. Data collection:* To expedite the empirical part of the study, the basic information was obtained from the official website of the observatories. We then contacted a person responsible for the entity to have them validate the information gathered and to fill in the any missing data on the questionnaire by email or by telephone interviews.

### ***Inclusion criteria***

As we've discussed in the conceptual framework, the definition on which this study has been argued expresses that the main goal of an observatory is «*facilitating the transfer and access to information and knowledge in order to support the decision making process through information systems*» (Ortega, 2008). This characteristic was especially relevant in the process of defining the inclusion criteria. That's why in the selection of the cultural observatories, the most important factors considered were in three levels as shown in Table 1. Inclusion criteria.

The initial qualification level collected information on the basic inclusion criteria: location in the European territory, access to general information and contact details. At the second level of the qualification process, we confirmed whether the basis of research activity of each observatory corresponded with our target. Specifically, we verified that indeed, the entity is engaged in research activity on cultural issues.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.encatc.org/pages/index.php?id=132>

<sup>5</sup> Ortega, C.; Claudio, M.; Dávila, R.L. (2009), *Global Map of Cultural Observatories*. Barcelona University-ENCATC; 17th ENCATC Annual Conference, Barcelona, October 2009. See website <http://www.gestioncultural.org/gc/observatorios>

<sup>6</sup> We also considered the possibility that the link to research was indirect, but only in the case of entities providing grants for field research and then providing the platform and resources to disseminate the results through stable publications issued by the observatory.

**Table 1**  
Inclusion criteria

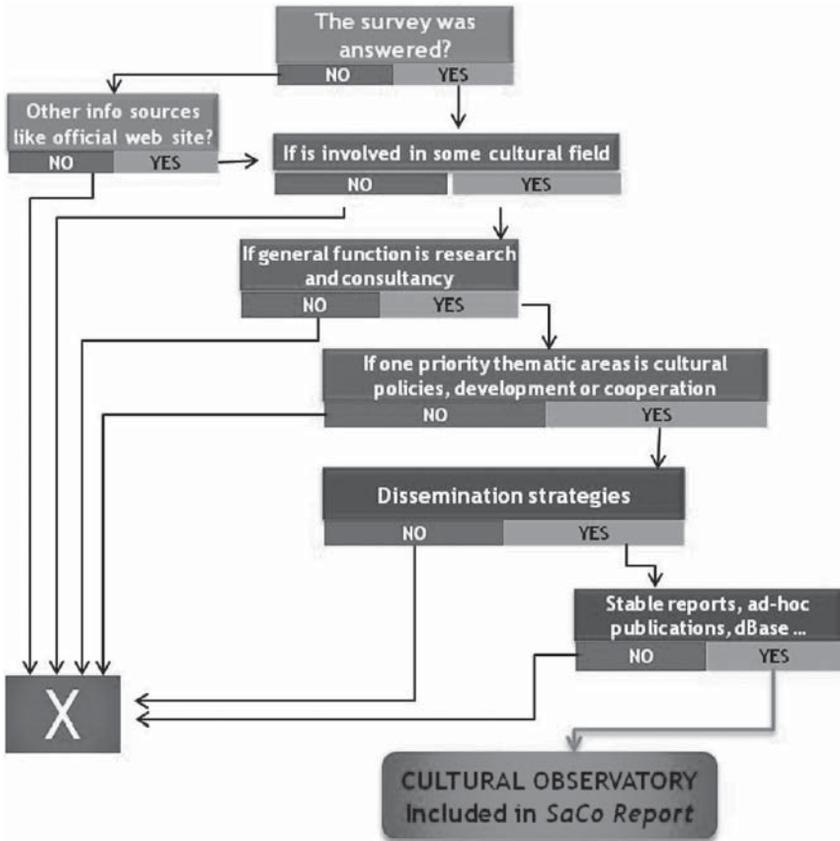
Level 1. Initial qualification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Location</li> <li>– Information accesibility</li> </ul>
Level 2. Basis of research activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Cultural sector</li> <li>– Research management</li> <li>– Thematic area</li> </ul>
Level 3. Dissemination strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Publications</li> <li>– Conferences, events</li> <li>– Information management and documentation services</li> <li>– Network affiliations</li> </ul>

In relation to the thematic areas, we confirmed if the institution has a clear association with one or more of the cultural fields: heritage, arts and cultural industries. The scope of their actions must be within European territory, regardless if it is at a local, regional, national or international level.

Finally, given the important role of the observatories as responsible for facilitating access to information and knowledge, we also reviewed their strategies for the dissemination of knowledge. Stable reports were the most obvious indicator, but ad hoc reports, fact sheets and/or newsletters were also considered as high significance dissemination practice. Also, complementary information and documentation services (such as live databases, updated directories, statistics, etc.) would provide the cornerstone to any comparative study, which is why we considered them as a good practice for the dissemination of knowledge. Finally, considering the importance of working in a community as one of the keys of the information and knowledge society, we also took into account if the observatory is affiliated with any formal cultural networks. Implying the sharing of information amongst its members, we considered that an active affiliation is a commitment to disseminating information and methodologies between the appropriate stakeholders in order to strengthen the field. The detail of this selection process is shown in Figure 1. *Inclusion criteria evaluation flowchart.*

**Figure 1**

Inclusion criteria evaluation flowchart



### Questionnaire

The *SaCO Report* sought to provide specific knowledge about the current activities of the observatories and for this reason, covered different subject areas. To achieve this goal, an electronic questionnaire (Appendix 1) was designed to gather data and to collect specific information about the observatories activities.

The first section of the questionnaire covered identification and general information about the observatory, including contact details, its legal constitution and the year of establishment.

Secondly, we included two tables wherein the observatories were asked about the priority cultural fields tackled and about general functions. In the first table, respondents could select from all cultural fields contained in three main groups: heritage, arts and cultural industries. In the general functions question, they responded by selecting from the following options: promoting debate, dialogue and contributing to reflection; facilitating research; improving the process of decision making; serving as support for cultural policies; and research and consultancy.

The third section included a summary description of the observatory, its objectives, scope, background, stakeholders, their priority thematic and research approach areas and their affiliations to cultural networks. Finally, the survey gathered information about strategies for dissemination of the information and knowledge, including description of main services, publications, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) tools.

## **Outcomes**

With the *SaCO Report* results as a backdrop, we will present the most relevant aspects of the profile of cultural observatories currently active in Europe. These data will help us to uphold our recommendations on the future role that the observatories should exert on the European cultural sphere.

### ***Territorial location***

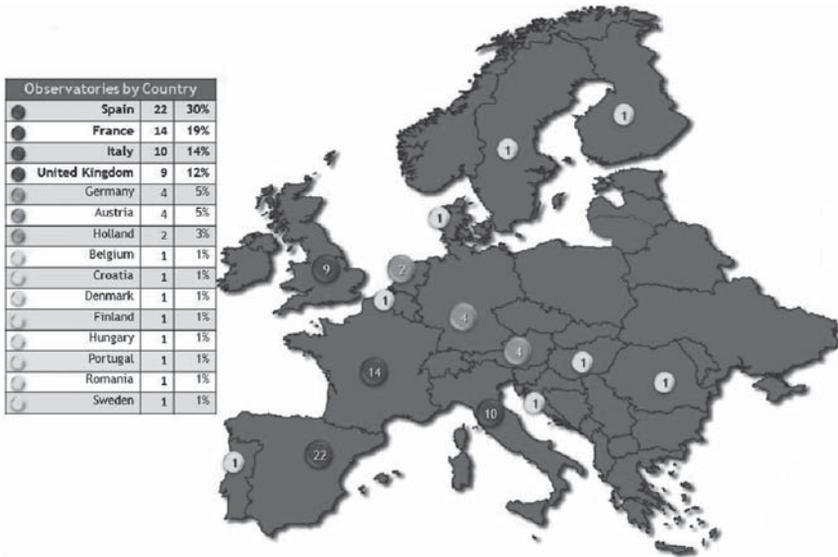
We identified a total of 103 European cultural observatories, of which 73 were included in the sample once we had passed the deadline to receive responses to the survey and applied the inclusion criteria.

We identified the most observatories in Spain, with a total of 22 (30%). Other countries with a higher instances of observatories were: France, 14 (19%), Italy 10 (14%) and United Kingdom with 9 (12%). See Figure 2. *Territorial location*.

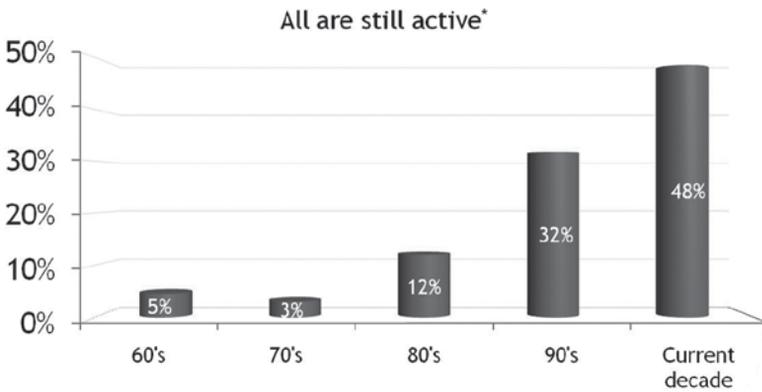
### ***Date of establishment***

This analysis is based on observatories which, on July 31, 2010, were still active from the date of their foundation. Figure 3. *Date of establishment by decade* shows the amount founded per decade. We can see that

**Figure 2**  
Territorial location



**Figure 3**  
Date of establishment by decade



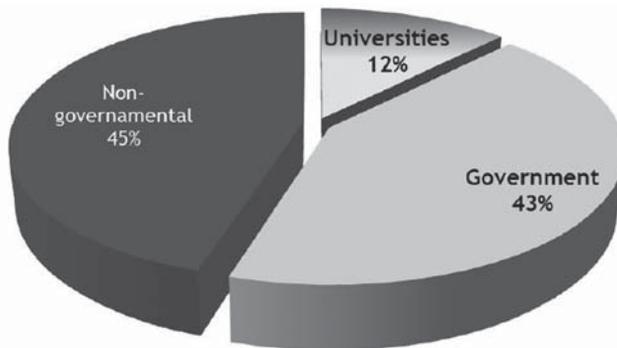
\* Date of establishment were not available for seven of the observatories.

the majority were established in this decade, 32 (48%), and in the 90s, 21 (32%). The previous 20 years represents a total of 80% of the growth in observatories across Europe.

### *Institution type, legal status and scope*

To understand a basic profile the types of entities that manage the observatories, we classified them into three groups: universities, government and nongovernmental entities. The result demonstrated that the observatories operated by universities represent 12% of the total, 43% are institutions of public administration and the remaining 45% corresponds to neither nongovernmental entities nor university. See Figure 4. *Institution type*.

**Figure 4**  
Institution type



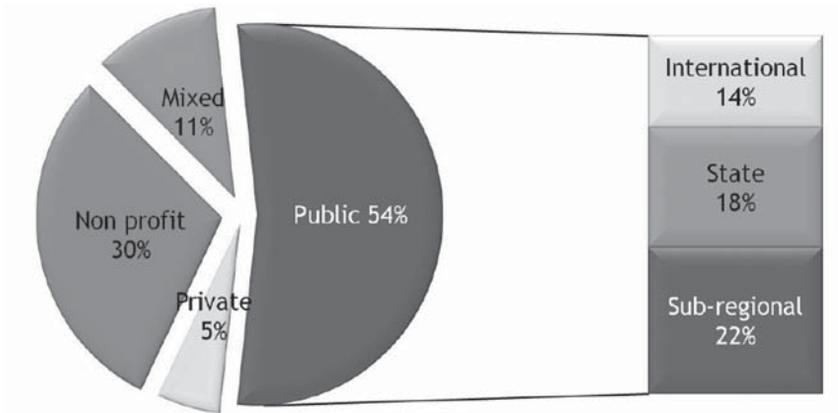
About their legal status we can note that 39 (54%) are governmental entities; 22 (30%) are non profit; 8 (11%) are entities created by alliances between private and public sector and 4 (5%) are private for profit.

In Figure 5. *Legal status*, we also observe the distribution of the 39 public entities, regarding their remit. 10 (14%) are international public bodies, 13 (18%) are national and 16 (22%) are sub-regional institutions. These percentages are in relation to all analysed entities.

Regarding the evolution of these initiatives over the past 20 years, we observed that the distribution between private and public observato-

**Figure 5**

Legal status

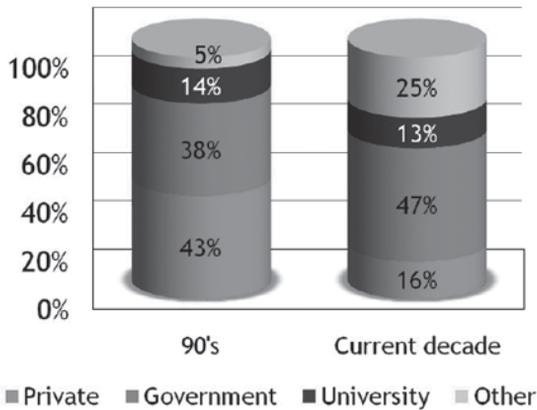


ries was almost the same in the 90s (9; 43% and 8; 38% respectively). But in the current decade, the difference is bigger: 15 (47%) are public and 5 (16%) are private. See Figure 6. *Type of organisation in the last 20 years.*

About the scope of action of the observatories, we found that 30 (34%) are focused on an international level, 25 (34%) operate at the na-

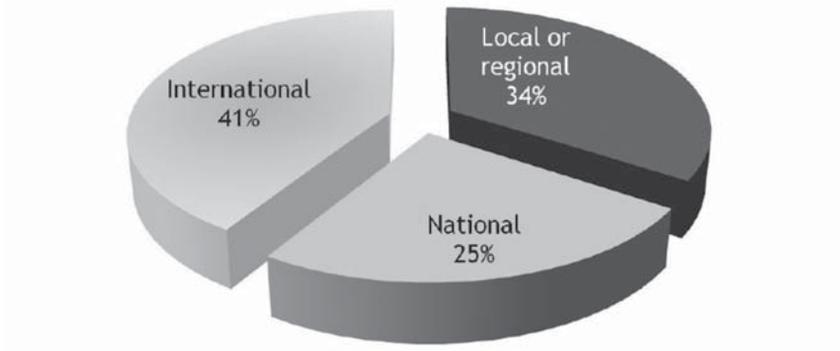
**Figure 6**

Type of organisation in the last 20 years



tional level and 18 (5%) are working at a sub-regional or local level. See Figure 7. *Scope of action*

**Figure 7**  
Scope of action



### *General functions*

From the literature review and the conclusions of the *Cultural Observatories and Cultural Information and Knowledge ENCATC Working Group* discussions, we built and included in the questionnaire a list of general functions related to the activities that the observatories perform:

- Promoting debate, dialogue and contributing to reflection
- Serving as support for cultural policies
- Facilitating research
- Research and consultancy
- Improving the process of decision making

We also included the possibility to add other options. The three functions with the greatest number of responses were: «Research and consultancy» 71 (97%); «Facilitating research» 59 (81%) and «Serving as support for cultural policies» 51(70%). See Figure 8. *General functions of the observatory.*

A total of 11 (15%) observatories marked the option «other» and specified their responses as follows:

- Education and training (2)

**Figure 8**

General functions of the observatory



\* Other functions: education, encourage cooperation projects, improving management, monitoring and evaluation programs, collecting data, implementation of policies.

- Promote knowledge and dissemination of initiatives for cultural heritage protection. (1)
- Encourage cooperation projects (2)
- Improving management, monitoring and evaluation programmes (2)
- Collecting data (2)
- Implementation of policies (1)
- Not specified (1)

### *Objectives*

In this section, we gathered information on the specific objectives of the observatories through an open question and then we created a list with their responses. Table 2. *Objectives summary* shows a list which summarises and collates the similar responses to observe trends in this matter. We found that the three objectives marked for more than 50% of the observatories are associated with their commitment:

**Table 2**  
Objectives summary

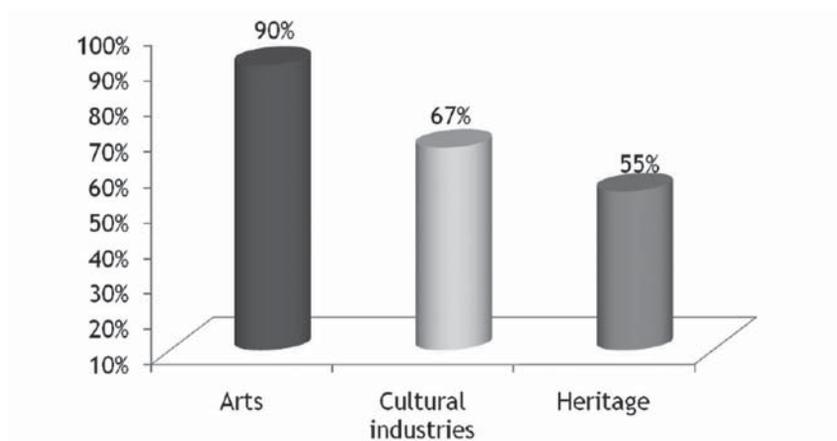
	Objectives	Count	%
1	Observe and monitor the dynamics and evolution of the sector. Assess, compare and disseminate public policies.	48	66%
2	Support the design of cultural policies providing observation, analysis and assessment instruments as public utility tools. Provide the cultural policy managers with tools that enable them to improve the perspective and prospective of their work. Visualise the impact of the cultural phenomena. Predict future scenarios.	41	56%
3	Provide the cultural sector with measurable and reliable statistical information that improves its day-to-day work.	38	52%
4	Foster a debate forum open to the expression of the ideas, participation and creativity, as an independent contribution to the progress of a region/town.	32	44%
5	Establish cooperation systems with organisations specialising in training, documentation and cultural research. Facilitate the transfer of cultural knowledge.	30	41%
6	Act as a meeting place for exchange and reflection on the different key initiative or policies implemented in a specific cultural sphere. Design common strategies for certain cultural sphere.	25	34%
7	Support for the private sector: Contribute to narrowing business and economic relations in the international setting. Contribute to set up a favourable framework for the development of the business cultural sector. Search for structural harmonic balances between the public activity and the market.	16	22%
8	Report to society on the situation of the cultural sector.	16	22%
9	Facilitate sustainable cooperation in the field of shared cultural research, by harmonising regional information systems through a single/comparable system.	14	19%
10	To train cultural stakeholders.	11	15%
11	Rigorously deal with all actions to do with territorial cultural planning.	9	12%
12	Lobbying: defend the interests of certain cultural spheres or sectors.	8	11%

- to monitor the dynamics and evolution of the cultural sector: 48 (66%);
- to support the design of cultural policies: 41 (56%); and
- to provide the cultural sector with measurable and reliable statistical information: 38 (52%).

### *Cultural fields*

Cultural fields listed under «Arts» were marked as priority by 66 (90%) of the observatories. In second place were the «Cultural industries» marked by 49 (67%), and finally, 40 (55%) indicated that they are involved in cultural «Heritage» issues. See Figure 9. *Cultural fields*.

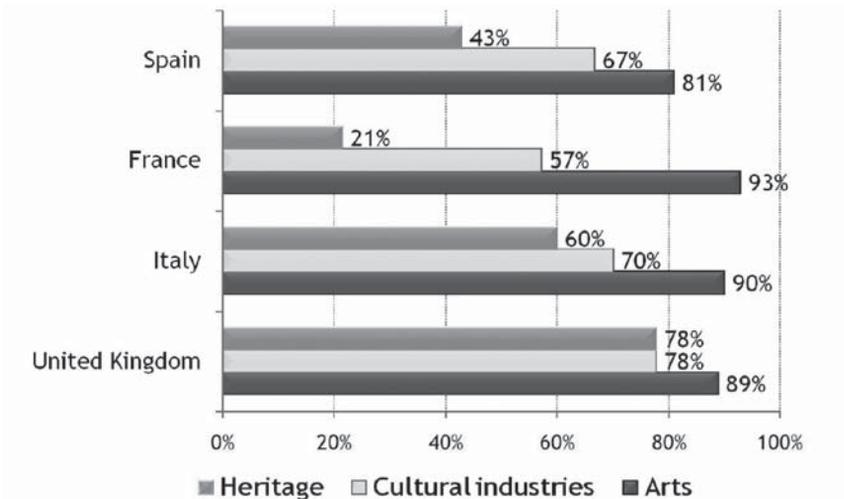
**Figure 9**  
Cultural fields



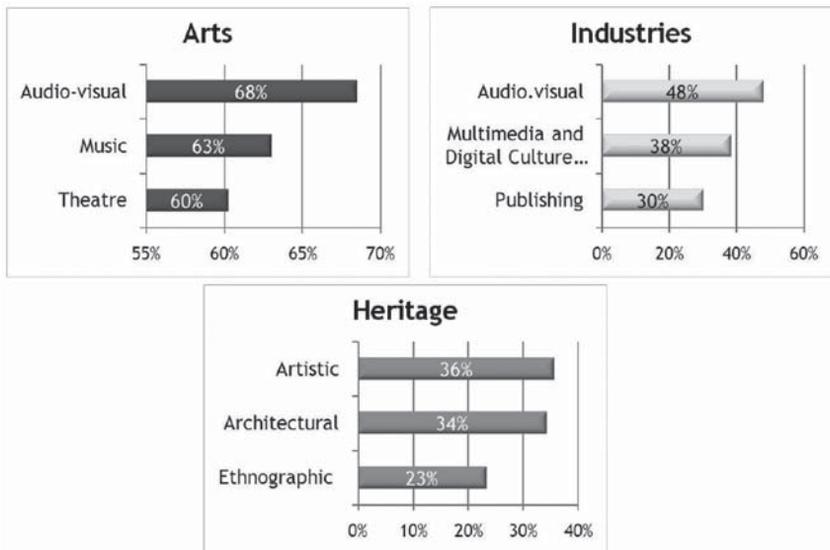
Considering the priority cultural fields for the four countries that bring together the largest number of observatories, we find that the general trend is repeated. That is, the «Arts» forms the cultural field most attended, followed by the cultural industries and heritage sector. See Figure 10. *Cultural fields by countries*.

Inside the Arts field, audio-visual (40; 68%), music (46; 63%) and theatre (44; 60%) are the ones that receive most attention. In the Cul-

**Figure 10**  
Cultural fields by countries



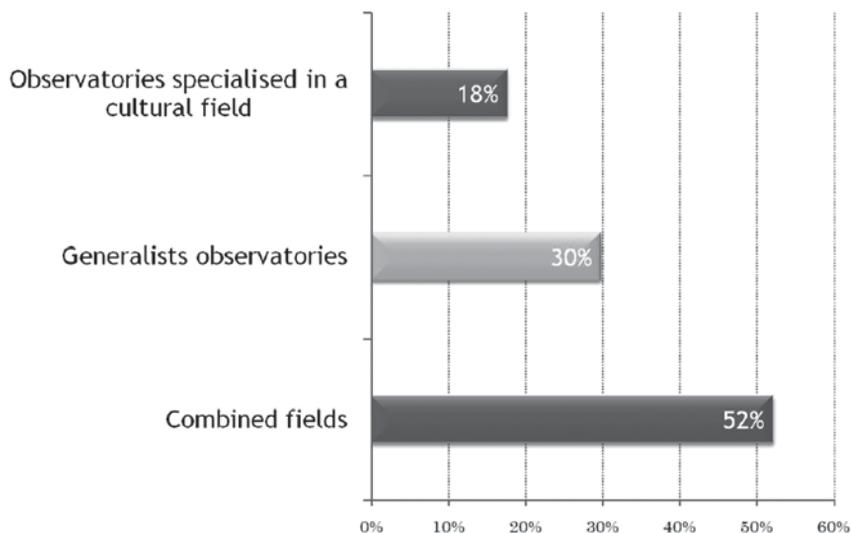
**Figure 11**  
Specific cultural fields



tural Industries field, the specific areas ticked as priority were the audio-visual industry (35; 48%), multimedia and digital culture industry (28; 38%), and publishing industry (22; 30%). See Figure 11. *Specific cultural fields*.

Another feature to note is in regard to whether the observatories are specialised in a specific cultural field or, conversely, they are generalists. That is, if they are open to the study of any cultural field, according to how the needs and opportunities arise (Figure 12. *Research approach*). The result shows that 38 (52%) of them attend a combination of some specific areas, 22 (30%) are generalist and 13 (18%) expressed that they are observatories specialised in a specific field.

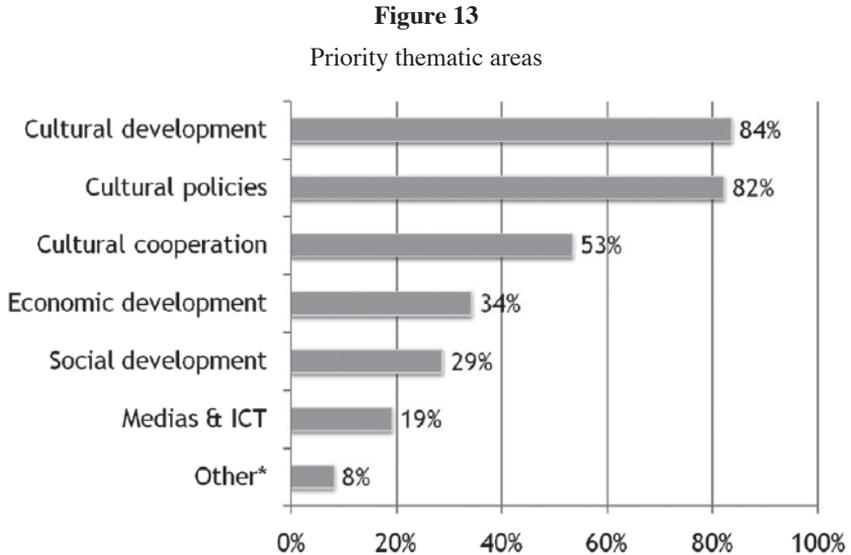
**Figure 12**  
Research approach



### *Priority thematic areas*

We also considered each observatories Priority Thematic areas. This question tried to specify the point of view of their studies about the cultural fields aforementioned. For example, if they put their focus on the study of cultural policy, economic development, social development or

others. The result shows that the three primary thematic areas are: cultural development 60 (82%); cultural policies issues 61 (84%); and cultural cooperation 39 (53%). See Figure 13. *Priority thematic areas*.



\* Other: education and culture; consumption statistics; cultural habits and practices; participation and social engagement; strategic planning; migration and cultural translation.

### *Main activities and services*

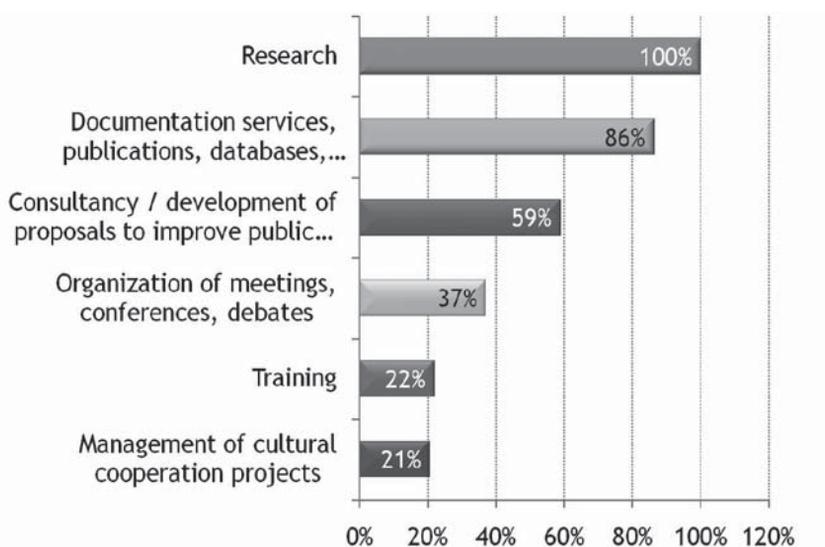
Documentation services and research are the activities carried out by the vast majority of observatories (86% and 100% respectively), but other complementary activities are also undertaken. For example, 43 (59%) reported that they are engaged in consulting activities and developing proposals to improve public policy. Another 27 (37%) reported that they also include organising meetings, conferences and debates related to their priority thematic areas. Training activities and management of cultural cooperation projects are carried out by 16 (22%) and 15 (21%) observatories, respectively.

We must also mention the other three activities that have also been explicitly mentioned as important by a smaller number of observatories:

- Active participation in forums, research groups, conferences, etc. (12; 16%)
- Consulting the private sector: design of business strategies, development of cultural industries, etc. (8; 11%)
- Organisation of Good Practices Award (2; 3%)

**Figure 14**

Activities



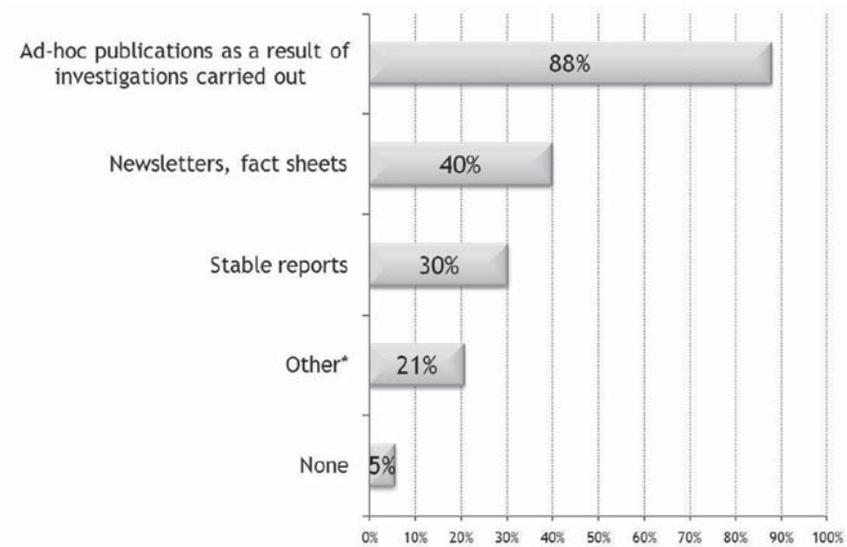
### *Dissemination of knowledge*

*Observation* does not necessarily imply the sharing of information. The aim of an observatory is become in a practical sense —in relation to its commitment to support the process of decision making in cultural policy— when their activity is complemented by strategies for dissemination and exchange of information and knowledge. The results of the *SaCO* report reflects a wide variety of tools and ways to manage information and promote its transformation into knowledge. That is, from traditional formats to cutting-edge tools.

A total of 64 (88%) observatories manage some kind of formal publication (books, journals or stable reports), 29 (40%) issue informal

publications (like newsletters) and 15 (21%) consider it important to share information and reflections through lighter and immediate formats like interviews, working papers, pools, or posts in blogs or websites.

**Figure 15**  
Dissemination of knowledge

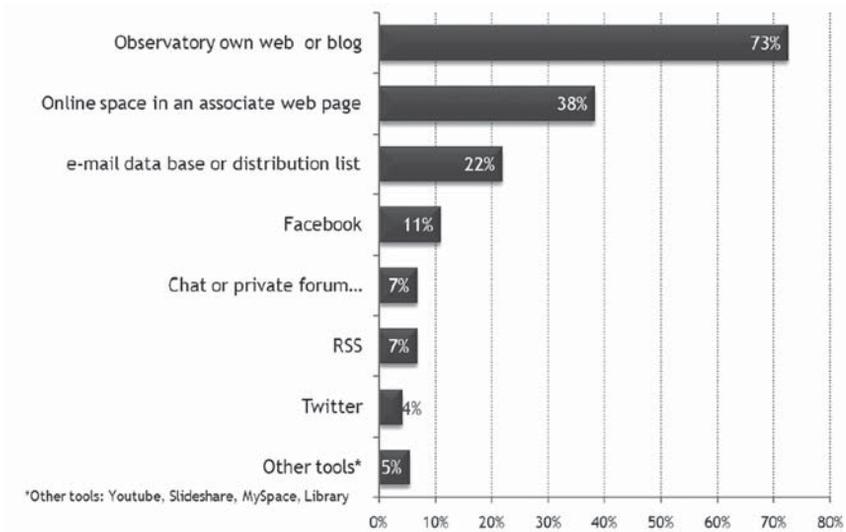


\* Other: working papers; posting in the website; maps; situation, evaluation or statistical reports; interviews and video-reports; books; CDs; surveys.

In relation to information and communication technology tools, we also confirm a trend to use first-generation tools. More than 70% have their own website, 28 (38%) publish their basic information in an associate web page and 16 (22%) use an email data base or distribution lists to disseminate their information or projects. Regarding the use of second generation participatory tools (web 2.0), Facebook and Twitter are the social networks used as complementary diffusion channels. Facebook is used by 8 (11%) and Twitter by 3 (4%). Four (5%) observatories marked the *Other* option to specify that they also use Youtube Channels, Slideshare, Myspace and on-line libraries to disseminate their publications. See Figure 16. *Use of Information and communication technologies.*

**Figure 16**

Use of Information and communication technologies



\* Other tools: Youtube, Slideshare, MySpace, Library.

### *Networking affiliations*

In the section about cultural affiliations to networks, we received information from only 25% of the observatories. The low response rate could be due to the fact that answering this question requires a certain period of time to verify the information. Moreover, some of the respondents, instead of writing the names of networks to which they are affiliated, they specified the names of other entities with which they have partnership agreements (like ministries, universities, consultants, etc.). Unfortunately, this result does not allow us to make specific comments on this topic. However, it seems useful here to list the networks that have been included in the responses received. (See Table 3. *Cultural networks mentioned in the survey*).

**Table 3**

## Cultural networks mentioned in the survey

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**Cultural Networks**

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*Banlieues d'Europe* brings together 300 international active partners and 5,000 contacts in Europe. The network is constituted of cultural actors, artists, militants, social workers, local councillors and researchers. Their joint objective is to exchange practices and information and to get away from isolation in order to valorise cultural action projects in deprived neighbourhoods with excluded communities. <http://www.banlieues-europe.com/>

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*BalkanKult Foundation* is the first regional cultural foundation in the Balkans. It was made out of a need expressed through the work of cultural practitioners and artists in order to create new cultural environments. It was founded on the experiences of the BalkanKult Association, established in 1999 in Sarajevo. <http://www.balkankult.org/bkl/>

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*CIRCLE* —Cultural Information and Research Centres Liaison in Europe— is an independent think-tank dedicated to developing cultural policy models for Europe. <http://www.circle-network.jaaz.pl>

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*Compendium: The Council of Europe/ERICarts «Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, 11th edition», 2010* is a web-based and permanently updated information and monitoring system of national cultural policies in Europe. It is a long term project which aims to include all 50 member states co-operating within the context of the European Cultural Convention. <http://www.culturalpolicies.net>

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*Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities (CAAC)* is a network of towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants bordering the Atlantic coast with whom the Observatory collaborates in the animation of cultural seminars. Created in 2000 on the initiative of Rennes, CAAC now federates more than 30 members —cities and urban networks— from the five States which structure the European Atlantic seafront (Ireland, the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Portugal). One of CAAC's main objectives is to encourage synergies and partnerships between member cities in order to contribute to the emergence of an area of solidarity and the development of cooperation projects. <http://www.arcacat.org>

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*Culturelink*, the Network of Networks for Research and Cooperation in Cultural Development, was established by UNESCO and the Council of Europe in 1989 in Paris at the UNESCO Consultation of Representatives of Regional and Sub-regional Networks for Cultural Development Research and Cooperation. The Institute for International Relations (IMO, formerly IRMO), Zagreb, Croatia has been the Network's focal point since its inception. Culturelink, as a world-wide network, encouraged the establishment of links between existing international networks on all continents and, above all, supported the development of new networks specialised in specific fields (such as cultural policies or cultural management), professions (music or applied arts, for example) or organisations (arts councils, among others). <http://www.culturelink.org>

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*Culture Action Europe* is an advocacy and lobby organisation promoting arts and culture as a building block of the European project. Their aim is to influence European policies for more and better access to culture across the continent and beyond. They provide customised information and analysis on the European Union, offer cultural actors a space to exchange and elaborate common positions and develop advocacy actions towards European policymakers. <http://www.cultureactioneurope.org>

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*Culture Platform: Access to Culture* was formed by 39 international organisations, whose main task is the exploration of new ways to access and wider participation in cultural activities. [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/glance/glance2375\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/glance/glance2375_en.htm)

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*ECURES* —European Association of Cultural Researchers— is an international association of scholars and experts specialising in cultural research. The members of the Association come from over 30 European countries and represent a broad range of academic disciplines. ECURES is committed to pioneering the development of theoretical and applied cultural research as a recognised professional field and to facilitating the free exchange of scientific ideas and resources. <http://www.culturalprofiles.net/scotland/Units/4295.html>

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*ENCATC* —European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres— is a network of higher education institutions and training organisations in the area of cultural management and cultural policy. Founded in Warsaw in 1992 in the context of the fall of the iron curtain, ENCATC today brings together 133 members in 37 countries across Europe and beyond. <http://www.encatc.org>

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*ERICarts* —European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research— is an independent organisation which carries out comparative cultural research and cultural policy monitoring in co-operation with experts from over 40 European countries. <http://www.ericarts.org>

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*EUROCITIES* is the network of major European cities which brings together the local governments of more than 140 large cities in over 30 European countries. They influence and work with the EU institutions to respond to common issues that impact the day-to-day lives of Europeans. Their aim is to shape the opinions of stakeholders in Brussels to ultimately shift legislation in a way that helps city governments address the EU's strategic challenges at the local level. A large part of their work is aimed at reinforcing the role and place that local government should have in a multi-level governance structure. <http://www.eurocities.eu>

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*Les Rencontres* is an open forum for debate and action, grouping together elected members from all levels of local government throughout Europe in order to actively take part in the setting up of European cultural policies. Since 1994 the network has facilitated exchange on cultural and educational policies at a local, national and European level. Elected representatives meet and analyse the political responsibilities at stake, examine the reality of cultural policy in Europe and contribute to its establishment. Collaboration is constantly sought with experts, advisors, cultural networks, associations of elected representatives and artists in order to reposition and develop proposals. <http://www.lesrencontres.eu>

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*MEDIACULT* carries out research in the areas of media and culture using top level theories and methodologies. <http://www.mediacult.at/>

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*TransEuropeHalles (TEH)* brings together about 50 multidisciplinary cultural centres in more than 20 countries. TEH runs and coordinates several bilateral and multi-lateral cultural projects. Examples include the setting up of an Artists-in-Residency Exchange Programme and the establishment of an international cultural incubator in Lund, Sweden, and CHANGING ROOM, a mobility project for cultural operators. <http://www.teh.net>

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*INPC* —The International Network on Cultural Policy— is an international forum where national ministers responsible for culture can explore and exchange views on new and emerging cultural policy issues and to develop strategies to promote cultural diversity in an informal venue. <http://www.incp-ripc.org>

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## **Final reflection**

After identifying the main cultural observatories and comparing their most relevant features, we can amass a broad picture of the state of art of cultural observation in Europe. The following section will conclude by remarking on some results of the analysis and reflections for discussion.

## ***Discussion and recommendations***

### *Development and proliferation of the observatories*

As we noted earlier, the decade that marked the cultural observatory boom was undoubtedly the nineties (Ortega, 2010). In fact, only 20% of the entities that we identified and included in this study were established before the nineties. However, we have to highlight that the survey confirmed an upward trend in the current decade. (See Figure 3. *Date of establishment by decade*).

A priori, the interest in the establishment of new observatories from the 90s to the present can be assessed as positive, but that is not enough. It is essential to take stock of the experience gained in the last 20 years keeping in mind the objective to make progressive development strategies which best serve the cultural policy challenges of the new century.

The question is: *Is this just a trend, or is there a real concern about whom, how and on which empirical basis the policy makers make decisions that affect European cultural policies?*

The evolution that we have observed may mean that the current decade is stabilizing and consolidating the creation of an institutional model whose main objective is the exercise of observation and the analysis of the dynamics and evolution of the cultural sector. Even though their specific objectives and the strategies used to achieve them are diverse, the survey highlights a common interest in research for supporting the design of cultural policies that address the contemporary challenges.

### *The challenge of observation: a global issue*

Observatories are a phenomenon that emerged in the late twentieth century. Although soon disseminated to other continents observatories, still remain most prevalent in Europe. According to the World Map of Cultural Observatories (MMOC: Ortega, Claudio & Davila, 2009), among all the observatories that were identified, about 60% are located in Europe, 30% in Latin America, 5% in the U.S. and Canada and another 5% in the rest of the world.

This geographical imbalance could be attributed to the lack of consensus with the concept itself, as well as a management model that responds to the role and powers competences that have so far been attributed to the exercise of observation.

The *SaCO Report* focused only on active cultural observatories located in European countries. We identified a proliferation of such initiatives especially in Spain, France, Italy and the UK, but we are sure that many other entities exist within the framework definition used in this report.

We encourage all professionals involved with European cultural observatories to contact ENCATC Working Group: *Cultural observatories and cultural information & knowledge*, to help us improve and update this analysis.

- A limitation of our study was the lack of information obtained about initiatives no longer active. We cannot ascertain when they were established, what their objectives and activities were, neither the reasons why they ceased operations.
- It should be noted that the survey was conducted in English and Spanish only. Although unconfirmed, this was probably a large reason for the weaker representation of European countries with other languages.

### *Local, global, partial, combined, specialised, transversal... many viewpoints as priorities*

Although the distribution of the observatories by their scope is fairly equal, we note that there is a clear interest in observing from an

international perspective. While 25 (35%) observatories focus on regional or local level, 30 (41%) reported that they focus their observations on the international scene. Although half of the observatories that inform their interest in analysing the international experience are international public bodies (30%), this highlights that 15 and the other 50% are private or mixed institutions. Contemporary debates —about the effects of globalisation on the cultural sector, the development of cultural industries, migration and intercultural dialogue and the impact of information technology and communication in the transformation of the sector, among others— have aroused great interest in being well informed about international experience and its impact at national and local levels.

### *The challenge of sharing: dissemination of knowledge tools and strategies*

The results obtained show that the use of participatory tools of second generation (web 2.0) is still incipient. This fact contrasts two recurring themes often discussed in relation to the future of the cultural observatories: the importance of networking and how to encourage participation in collaborative projects in order to develop common methodologies.

Networking is critical to facilitate the development of productive synergies and facilitates access to a greater diversity of information sources. While information technology and communication are not the panacea, they represent an undeniable opportunity to foster the exchange of experiences and knowledge.

While the survey reflects a wide variety of tools and ways to manage information and promote its transformation into knowledge, the results highlight the use of traditional formats.

### *Legal status*

Regarding the legal form of the observatories in the last 20 years, the results reflect a decrease in the establishment of new private initiatives during the current decade. Given the economic crisis in which we find ourselves, where the budget to support the cultural sector has suffered cuts, a further study on the financial models of the observatories could prove useful. This would allow us to explore whether funding is one of the reasons to which we could attribute this trend.

## *Final notes*

### *A heterogeneous profile*

The lack of consensus with the concept of an observatory itself —as well as a management model that responds to the role, scope and competence that so far has been attributed to the exercise of observation— results in a general profile of the European cultural observatories rather heterogeneous.

It should be noted that this diversity does not have to be considered a negative aspect. It is simply the result of realities that are also varied. However, the need to design an observatory that suits the priorities of its territory should not ignore the urge to share methodological experiences with other observatories. That is, with the aim of moving towards agreeing a common language (concepts, indicators and basic methods) that facilitates and promotes cooperation projects in the European context.

### *Still far from having a common approach*

Although there are several observatories that were born with similar needs and goals, their approaches, actions and territorial peculiarities are different. This unresolved matter complicates the common work between cultural observatories.

### *It is necessary to strengthen networking and encourage collaborative research projects*

The survey confirms the interest that previous studies have pointed to regarding the observatories willingness to work in a coordinated manner. In the description of aims and functions, many of them discussed the need to find a common framework and to create synergies that link existing sources of information. Given the common needs and that resources are limited, strengthening the networking is necessary. It would be advisable to develop initiatives which address European policy-making decisions on cultural matters.

### *Technological updating: an unresolved matter*

The development and use of tools that can help to achieve a higher level of efficiency in the exchange of experiences and knowledge creation is still an unresolved matter for the observatories. With few exceptions, they showed a very limited use of complementary services

to facilitate the dissemination and access to information. In short, a commitment to implementing a cross-section strategy of ICT in the observatories general actions could significantly improve and expand future proposals of collaborative work.

The aim of this report was not only to provide the cultural sector with a photograph of the present situation of cultural observatories in Europe, but to also help determine the role of cultural observatories in the future. These ideas and conclusions were gathered in a document discussed during the think tank in Bilbao, the 7th and 8th of September 2010.

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## Chapter 7

# Italian Regions and the Coordination of Cultural Observatories: ORMA Project

*Antonio Taormina*

### **Premises**

The current situation of the Italian cultural observatory is characterised by:

- the presence of already well-established observatories, one national and four regional (created between 1985 and 2005);
- seven new observatories established in recent times at the initiative of specific regions;
- the implementation of the inter-regional project. The implementation of Regional Observatories and the collaboration of the National Observatory on entertainment policies (known by the acronym ORMA Project), sponsored by the Cultural Heritage and Activities Committee of the Conference of the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces by initiative of the Emilia-Romagna and Piedmont Regions, scheduled for 2007-2010.

The project deals particularly with live entertainment (performing arts) and cinema. Given the experimental nature of the project, this choice is primarily due to the need for a well-defined area within culture which in the future, may also be extended to all cultural areas.

Nineteen Regions and Autonomous Provinces<sup>1</sup> have joined the ORMA Project: Basilicata, Emilia-Romagna, Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria, Autonomous Province of Trento, Autonomous Province of Bolzano, Friuli, Venice, Giulia, Veneto, Tuscany, Marche, Umbria, Lazio, Abruzzo, Molise, Campania, Puglia, Calabria and Sardinia<sup>2</sup>.

The project is financed in conjunction with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, mainly through funds provided for the covenant *Patto per le Attività Culturali di Spettacolo*<sup>3</sup> and through other financing channels.

Firstly, the description of this scenario requires a diachronic synthesis of the processes which identify it.

## **Events in the history of Italian cultural Observatories**

### *The 80's and the birth of the National Performing Arts Observatory*

The process linked to the birth of cultural observatories began in the 80s. It emerged first in public institutions and to some extent in academia, because of the need to address the cultural sector through new scientific and functional instruments at the operational level, which enabled a deeper understanding of the economic and structural relationships imbedded in social dynamics.

All this happened in an atmosphere of great activism, emerging mainly from the new tasks allocated to the regions, the increase of public investment in culture and the changes that promoted supply and consumption.

Following the establishment of the Regions in 1970, the first response to the need to decentralize state administration — as embodied by the transfer of some responsibilities which defined the new and effective powers of local authorities — was to consolidate the provision of some of them, governed mainly by the left wing, to invest in culture and entertainment.

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<sup>1</sup> The autonomous provinces are Bolzano and Trentino Alto Adige. As regards to this report, they can be considered regions.

<sup>2</sup> The Coordination of the Regions has entrusted the management of the project to three organisations with ample experience on building Cultural Observatories: Fondazione ATER Formazione, Fondazione Fitzcarraldo and ECCOM (European Centre for Culture Organisation and Management), which have established a Business Temporary Association.

<sup>3</sup> The Pact for cultural entertainment activities established between the Ministry of Cultural Goods and Activities, the Regions, the Autonomous Provinces and the Municipalities was signed on January 25, 2007.

The increased investments at various levels of government from the early 80s confirmed the change in the overall picture, as well as the trend towards decentralisation, the beginning of a process that would eventually redefine the balance between institutional levels. Therefore, the subjects which promote and finance cultural activities changed in parallel with the development of the entrepreneurial capacity of private agents operating in the sector and the evolution of the transformation processes that comprise the most strictly social aspects of cultural consumption. The local governments were the first to take them into account.

The local administrations assessed the implications of supply and the new grouping needs; they realised that «leisure time» was a driver of demand, and correlating administrative decentralisation and «emerging» new patterns and cultural needs. But at that stage problems related to the extreme disparities between different areas arose in the country (between capitals and peripheral areas): there was a widening imbalance between cultural supply and demand.

Currently there is a trend towards demand stagnation in live performances and cultural heritage opposed to the substantial growth in supply (related to increased investments). As a response to a steady increase in supply, other sectors such as the publishing industry show a limited and unsystematic growth. Due to the hard effects of the crisis on the whole sector, the film industry registers a decrease in both sides.

These, as well as other factors, forced the development of tools which would measure, analyse and interpret everything that happens in culture. This awareness gave birth to the first Italian projects of cultural observatories, which had a central reference point in whose article 5 of the constitutive law of the *Fondo Unico dello Spettacolo*<sup>4</sup>, entitled Performing Arts Observatory:

«It is established, in the field of research and programming of the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment<sup>5</sup>, the Performing Arts Observatory, whose mission is:

- a) to collect and update all data and information on the progress of the performances, in their various forms, in Italy and abroad;
- b) to get information on all annual costs in Italy, including those of the regions and local authorities, and abroad, for the support and encouragement of performances;

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<sup>4</sup> Law of April 30, 1985, n. 163 (en Gazz. Uff., May 4 n. 104), «Nuova disciplina degli interventi dello stato a favore dello Spettacolo». The Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, established in 1959, was withdrawn after the popular referendum of April 18, 1993. 1998 saw the establishment of the current Ministry of Cultural Goods and Activities.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

- c) to prepare a summary and analyse documents of such data and information to identify trend lines of the performances as a whole and of their individual sectors in the national and international markets.

The text unveils an important uncertainty regarding the role of the National Performing Arts Observatory. It determines its missions but not its goals, and in turn it shows an evident lack of a planning methodology.

### *First projects*

In 1987, the Autonomous Province of Trento set up, by its own initiative (the first measure in this area undertaken by a local authority, excluding the state), an Observatory of Cultural Activities, conceived as an «office»<sup>6</sup>.

From that year on, the global landscape of initiatives classified as institutions and cultural observatories able to conduct feasibility studies to establish new ones (a much larger category) were wide and varied. Some pilot projects were established: promoters desired to create (not without some approximation) the first databases and to build reality interpreting tools. The lack of role models made this process totally empirical. On one hand, the observatory projects reflected the complexities and socio-cultural contradictions of the territories they represented, and, on the other, they strived to acquire their own physiognomy.

The major institutions working in this area included the Region of Lombardy, the Region and the Province of Bologna, the city of Lecce, the Region of Tuscany, the National Association of Municipalities, the Union of Italian Provinces with the CISEM-Research Institute of the Province of Milan, some research institutes (such as Gemelli of Milan), University of Bologna, and the Region of Piedmont or the Censis (Centro Nazionale Studi Investimenti Sociali) among others.

The National Working Group on Cultural Observatories was created in 1988 at the initiative of public and private institutions (among which are *l'Assessorato alla Cultura e Informazione della Regione Lombardia*, *l'Assessorato alla Cultura della Provincia di Bologna* and the Department of Sociology at the University of Bologna).

Its main task was to promote the first national discussions in this area, launching the first exchanges with the emerging observatories in other European countries.

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<sup>6</sup> The experiment in Trento was unsuccessful and the observatory was closed. Only in 2007, by virtue of a new law, has Trento seen the construction of a new observatory.

It is difficult to classify the observatories of that time (or the feasibility projects aimed at building them). However, they raised general interest towards research and the ability to interact with the environment by adapting their own tools to the dynamics of the sector.

### *2000 and the Conference of the Regions*

The creative impulse, which at the end of the eighties led to the proposal of a fuzzy system of cultural observatories implemented with the support of public authorities, universities and private organisations, came to a halt, at least in part.

Many of those proposals saw financial and organisational problems, the lack of a legislation which would legitimize their support, and the misgivings of some sectors (if we think of performances). Observatories were seen as control tools manned by the authorities which financed the companies to limit their autonomy.

By the beginning of 2000, almost two decades after the creation of the National Performing Arts Observatory, three other regional observatories were born, besides those already mentioned:

- The Cultural Observatory of the Region of Lombardy, established in 1989 within the *Ufficio Studi e Rilevazione del Servizio Programmazione della Direzione Generale Cultura*, whose activities are held in conjunction with other regional structures, such as the *IRer-Istituto Regionale di Ricerca*, universities and research centres.
- *The Cultural Observatory of Piedmont (OCP)*, established in 1998 on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding which, besides the region, involves the *IRES-Istituto di Ricerche Economico-Sociali*, the Fitzcarraldo Foundation, the City of Turin, the Compagnia di San Paolo, the *Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio of Turin* and AGIS.
- The Regional Performing Arts Observatory of the Emilia-Romagna Region, managed by *Fundazione ATER Formazione*, established in 1996 as a «permanent observatory on culture and economics» and constituted at a legislative level in 1999 under Act 13 «Standards in Performing Arts».

The process which led to the creation of the observatories seemed to have finally settled, but since 2004 and mainly due to the intervention of the Conference of the Regions, the development process (and «proliferation») of culture observatories experienced a re-launch hitherto unforeseeable.

The reasons can be found in the expected transfer of a series of powers to the Regions and Local Authorities following the reform of Article V of the Constitution of 2001 and the allocation of the sector of Performing Arts to the legislative powers shared by the State and the Regions<sup>7</sup>.

The issue was the core of the national conference, *Le Regioni e lo spettacolo*<sup>8</sup>, during which the Bill on the fundamental principles for the performing arts in accordance with Article 117, paragraph 3 of the Constitution was presented, by initiative of the Regions themselves. The proposal, among other tasks entrusted to the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces, says: «developing and tracking observatory activities even through the creation of databases on performances promoted and developed in the regional territory». It also indicates that the task of «gathering local, statistical data and information»<sup>9</sup> is entrusted to the Municipalities, Provinces and Metropolitan cities.

A little later, the then called Regional Performing Arts Advisors Coordination Council approved a document that stressed the need to «deepen the knowledge of the existing regional observatories (performing arts or cultural with performing arts competence), through the creation of a working group composed of representatives of their own observatories and by the representatives of the regions concerned. Its mission was to highlight the roles and tasks assigned to their own observatories, management and operation modalities, the scientific and technical tools which they use, and the relations between them and the National Performing Arts Observatory.»

In 2005 the Regional Observatory for Culture of the Region of Marche<sup>10</sup> was established.

In September 2006 the Cultural Heritage and Activities Committee of the Conference of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces drew up a document proposing a system of regional observatories linked together and to the Performing Arts Observatory of the Ministry of Cultural

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<sup>7</sup> For more information, B. Caravita di Torotto «Legislazione dello spettacolo e riforma del Titolo V: aspetti giuridici» and M. Trimarchi «Chi ha paura delle Regioni?» monographic section «Fondo unico per lo spettacolo e regionalizzazione», by A. Taormina, in *Economia della Cultura n1/2006*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> The conference, «Le Regioni e lo spettacolo. Le proposte delle Regioni per una legge nazionale di principi nel quadro delle riforme costituzionali», was held on July 9, 2004 in Bologna.

<sup>9</sup> Article 6 (Duties of the Regions and Autonomous Provinces); Article 7 (Duties of the Municipalities, Provinces and Metropolitan cities) of the bill regarding Entertainment and promoted by the Inter-Regional Coordination, Rome, June 16, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> Regarding to the Legislation of the Region of Marche 75/1997 «Guideline on regional programme and financial interventions actions and procedures in the area of cultural goods and activities.»

Heritage and Activities. It advocated (also in regard to a combination of resources and intervention tools between the State, the Regions, the Provinces and the Municipalities) the establishment of common methodologies for data collection and analysis and the adoption of systems for the comparing of different realities beyond territorial specificities.

In October the same year, the Emilia-Romagna Region organised the conference, Cultural Observatories: institutional goals, organisational structure, and policy relevance<sup>11</sup>, in collaboration with the European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC) and Fondazione Ater Formazione (ATER), under the auspices of the University of Bologna.

The Bologna conference allowed the comparison of the Italian experience with some of the major foreign observatories, insisting on matters related to the areas of investigation and research methodologies adopted. It also allowed deep reflection on the degree of influence exerted on the definition of public cultural policies, organisation and relationship systems within the territory<sup>12</sup>. The main intention of the organisers was to «take stock of the situation» nearly twenty years after the emergence of the first Italian projects. Hence the re-thinking of the concepts related to cultural observatories. The Bologna Conference continued in two workshops very close in time that were very important in the European debate on cultural Observatories, held in collaboration with ENCATC. The first took place in Bilbao and it was organised by the University of Deusto, and the second was organised by the Observatory of Budapest and it was held in Budapest.

In May 2007, the Coordination of the Regions, in collaboration with the *Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani* (ANCI) and the *Unione Provincie Italiane* (UPI) presented and activated the interregional project, «Realisation of Regional Observatories and collaboration with the National Observatory in the field of Performing arts policies», later known by its acronym ORMA.

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<sup>11</sup> The conference, sponsored by the University of Bologna and the European Commission, was held in the *Sala Auditorium della Regione Emilia-Romagna*, in Bologna on October 18-19, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> In addition to the directors of Italian observatories, representatives of Observatorio Interarts of Barcelona, Arts Council of Finland of Helsinki, Observatory on Financing Culture in East-Central Europe of Budapest, LabforCulture.Org of Amsterdam, *Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles of Grenoble*, *Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles of Brussels*, *Observatoire de la Culture et des Communication* and *Institut de statistique of Quebec* also took part in the conference.

## Observatories within the laws of the Italian regions

The ORMA Project would not be understood if the Italian regions had not shown a real interest to support and develop it.

This interest was supported by numerous legislative initiatives enacted in various regions, starting in 1999 (Observatory of the Emilia-Romagna was established in this year) onto the most recent measures concerning Sicily, Umbria and Sardinia. We must not forget that the creation of the Osservatorio Nazionale dello Spettacolo derives from the law of 1985.

We will discuss in a more summarised manner the measures taken since 1999, and we will highlight some key aspects.

With regard to its institutional and organisational management, the cultural observatory can be designated as an independent body, or as an activity or function of the Region. We find several possibilities regarding its management: Emilia Romagna and the Autonomous Province of Trento, for example, study the possibility of using local external structures and bodies (although linked to the administration); Umbria considers its creation within a competent administrative structure; in Campania and Sicily the observatory is an agency within the regional government. The main activities of the observatory, which are made explicit by the implemented laws, are primarily informational: monitoring, documentation, data collection and information on the sector. At a second level we find purely scientific activities such as data processing, analysis, research, and impact assessments (also defined in specific ways) as for example the law of the Region of Marche, which pays more attention to the economic and occupational impact. At a third level we find more explicit references to the political purpose, which can be declined as a form of «transparency» regarding the proper use of the resources and achieving the programme objectives of the regional intervention (Marche, Emilia Romagna, Umbria, Sardinia) or as a regional programme organisational advisor (Puglia, Sardinia, Sicily). There is only one case where the purpose of the observatory (to «assess the degree of user satisfaction», considering the sector as an expression of service to the people and the community) is made explicit. Only some regional laws (Sicily and Campania) refer to the collaboration with the National Observatory.

Therefore, we can single out three types of regional laws regarding the observatories and, more generally, the activities which are usually carried out by them: the laws which do not explicitly consider the observatory as a structure but as a function (Liguria, Lombardy, Tuscany); the laws that frame it to the functions of the region but give it a purely administrative / technical / scientific connotation (Emilia

Romagna, Umbria, Marche, Province of Trento, Puglia, Friuli); and lastly, the laws which emphasize aspects related to governmental policies (Campania, Sicily).

## **The ORMA Project**

### *Options of the Regions*

The ORMA Project was borne from the desire of the Conference of the Regions to create a regional system of observatories (with networking features) whose work would support their government's actions and would allow a more effective measuring programme. Observatories are defined here as information and knowledge tools, as well as centres of production and analysis aimed at assessing the patterns, critical points and perspectives of the sector. The cultural observatory is also considered (despite its wide range of approaches) a place to delve into emerging themes and as a staff training support venue.

When the initiative was launched, it fully reflected the spirit and guidelines of the «Pact for Cultural Performing Arts Activities» signed in 2007 by the State and the Regions, which included among its goals, «the adoption of tools for the rationalisation of interventions [...] greater spending efficiency, by monitoring the cultural offer of the territory and the mutual exchange of knowledge and information on culture and the economic intervention tools adopted»<sup>13</sup>.

The ORMA Project was created as a response to the desire of the Coordination of Italian Regions to operate in two directions:

- to establish (if not already present) —and set up— regional culture and entertainment observatories grounded on the actual requirements of regional and sub-regional organisations, within the framework of a Unified and Coordinated Project;
- to enable discussions between the regional observatories and the National Observatory, setting up a common design of activities in a

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<sup>13</sup> According to the objectives of the Pact, Article 1, the signatories were obliged to collaborate in supporting the harmonisation process of the legal code with the Constitution's report regarding the assessment and support of the cultural and entertainment activities...» In order to support the measures within that agreement (which will finance several national activities) the Ministry established a 20 million Euro fund for each of the years comprised in the 2007-2009 period. In fairness, the financing plan would have suffered a significant shortage in the last year, according to the change in the government, from centre-left to centre-right.

logical categorisation of the initiatives, and mutual evaluation and benefit of all.

With regard to the objectives, the project reads:

The general objectives that the Regions, Autonomous Provinces, ANCI and UPI want to achieve with this project are:

- to provide constant and reliable information on the entertainment industry at a territorial level in order to implement more effective programme measures which apply to the definition of the objectives and priorities for action, the characterisation of the initiatives, the rules for the use of available financial resources, the adoption monitoring and evaluation tools with regard to interventions and the effectiveness and efficiency of spending;
- to provide a network of shared monitoring and research tools to enable the acquisition of systematic and comparable information on the evolution of the sector and on the policy initiatives undertaken at national and territorial level, enabling individuals to discuss and establish common operational strategies for culture, economy, finance and institutional relations;
- to carry out and develop a stable and coordinated system of regional observatories which would be then understood as a venue for methodological development, technical and scientific support, strategic impulse, support for policy implementation, and training of personnel, based on a common protocol and taking into account the autonomy of each Region and Autonomous Province regarding management, requirements, relationships and territorial characteristics;
- to implement economies of scale through the introduction of common methodologies and analytical tools, optimising cost in terms of design and management, and data collection and processing;
- to make more evident the institutional and financial commitment of the government institutions to the sector, at a national and especially at a regional and territorial level;
- to promote research and exchange culture, a *modus operandi* based on the availability and competence of individuals to acquire knowledge and information for a better administrative work fostering design and innovation.
- to establish and coordinate systematic relationships with other organisations, particularly with research, statistics, data collection and processing institutes operating in the sector<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> «Inter-Regional Project for the construction of Regional Observatories and the collaboration with the national observatory on entertainment policies», Rome, May 2007.

Framed within the wider objectives outlined above, two more specific objectives can be found:

- a) to develop an information tool based on a common methodological approach (beyond territorial specificities) which will enable the Regions to conduct annual monitoring and will offer the Local Authorities a common ground for action, while allowing the development of further study through more specific research activities;
- b) to identify modular applications applicable to diverse organisational, structural and dimensional situations through the application of easily adaptable, upgradeable and user-friendly tools which the administrative structures and operators will use on their procedures.

### *Lines of action and research areas*

Firstly, the choice of the Regions to share goals and methodologies led to the questioning of the approach of pre-existing Observatories, and secondly, to the attempt to achieve sustainable systematisation of the operation applicable to the various territorial realities. Hence the identification of a framework based on three lines of action:

- permanent monitoring of live entertainment and cinema;
- study and research activities;
- communication activities.

Circumscribing the area of intervention to performing arts alone (although entertainment and cinema belong to two «different cultural domains»), somehow simplified the implementation of the project and thus the determination of the main research areas, which are:

- the dynamics of public;
- spending on entertainment;
- the organisational and occupational dimension of industry.

It is worth indicating that the Italian model of coordination proposed here is indeed native. It has been designed by life experience and the opportunity to transfer skills and methodologies. However, it has also emerged from the urgent need for information on performing arts, which despite their great tradition and relevance to the socio-cultural role they play in a country, do not have, except in specific territories and specific areas of interest, reliable and coordinated information tools.

The ORMA Project provides the foreground of analysis in demand and supply in performing arts. Issues related to the enjoyment and access to culture —understood here as a meeting point for social and cultural policies— are assuming increasing importance, as evidenced by the attention paid in this regard by the Regions themselves. Knowledge of the characteristics, motivations and expectations of the spectators (considering that the obsolete image of a generic and indistinct public of the performing arts has definitely been replaced by the «publics») is now a priority derived from the requirement to invest in actions which bring the existing stalls to the current «no public» encompassing in that definition the unexpressed demand or the potential<sup>15</sup>.

It is widely believed that up to now investment in performing arts in Italy has been lopsided. Yet, very little time has been dedicated to assessing the impact of the product in the real market. In fact, in the past, studies on the public have often been confined to the grey literature of institutional diligences or functional marketing practices for exclusive business knowledge<sup>16</sup>.

However, public administrations need tools to assess the effectiveness of intervention policies and goals achievement. The observatories need information that helps innovate programming methodologies in order to expand the range of available services and improve the quality of the existing ones to address the communication levels.

To meet this requirement, the ORMA Project has established a registration system for the various levels: local, provincial and regional. It foresees the convergence of data in a single information system, whose implementation considers establishing agreements with each individual company and theatre in order to obtain a systematic collection of data on the public. These actions are accompanied by qualitative studies using several techniques.

The statistical and economic analysis of state, regional, local and private resources is also at the core of the overall project, which includes the identification of economic and financial strategies common to all government levels among its objectives. In this sense, the project also

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<sup>15</sup> As an example, the Emilia-Romagna Region indicates between its prime objectives for the period 2009-2011 of the Regional Programme on Entertainment (Ir 13/1999), «At a regional level, the initiatives of communication, information, public training and spreading, which foresee the (coordinated) implication of more organisations, people and targeted projects, including age groups». Regarding the allocation of financial resources to subjects who perform live entertainment activities, the programme contemplates using artistic data and public access fostering activity indicators, in addition to artistic data.

<sup>16</sup> For further information, see: Taormina A. (2006), «Il teatro e i suoi pubblici» in *Economia della Cultura*, n. 2/2006, Il Mulino, Bologna.

considers data collection and analysis. At a state and regional level, this will inevitably lead to the assessment of the legislative elements and production and distribution systems. Hence the emphasis on the analysis of organisational and management models and the working arrangements in public and private entertainment companies and institutions of each territory. Hence the need for a mapping of companies and locations, the evaluation of human resources in the different fields of entertainment, their strengths and weaknesses, in order to implement appropriate support and employment development policies.

The two basic research areas of the project necessarily involve both monitoring (which we can consider first-level), and «study and research» (which we will consider second-level).

The perspectives of the project include, among the information needs, the role and evolution of private financing, with special reference to the foundations associated to banks.

Another area for later study will be the international comparison of trends in other European regions, taking into account the increasing exchange capacity and the tendency to develop conjoint projects and initiatives.

In the short term, the ORMA Project also suggests investigating unrecognised issues (those not supported by public bodies or the Regions) whose structural features, economic dimensions and socio-cultural impacts are not being valued due to the lack of institutional linkage.

At this stage, however, it is crucial to define the activity evaluation indicators as tools necessary for the development of criteria for granting financial resources.

It should be noted that although at this stage the entertainment industry is a priority, the demands of comparison, development of knowledge and assessment tools concern all aspects of cultural production at a national level.

The third line of action concerns dissemination activities designed to communicate and spread the information, the interventions and their results. This is done using focused and differentiated tools. Thus, annual reports, publications, seminars and conferences addressed not only to administrators, operators, and scholars, but also to a wider audience have been predicted.

## *Methodology*

The implementation of the project included, as a prelude, a registration of the concerned regional administrations, whose aim was to deepen their

knowledge on industry standards, administrative procedures, the forms filled out, and then proceed to the analysis of the statistical instruments and information management systems existing in the administrations and the active observatories.

The next phase was the analysis of the information needed for the definition, the implementation and circulation of useful elements to describe the profile of the entertainment industry in each local context.

Thus, the construction of a model aimed at recording the acquisition of comparable data within the information systems to enable their communication began. It complied, with the specific goal of enabling all regions to develop annual follow-ups, offering them and the local authorities (municipalities and provinces), «a consistent basis for common actions while allowing further study to develop through focused research activities»<sup>17</sup>.

To that end, an executive working method was adopted. It was characterised by continuous feedback (necessary to ensure a coordinated construction of the instruments and to allow access of each region or autonomous province to the global system at its own pace). The resulting organisation of data-logging programmes, which considered the arrangements already made by each region, (involving the definition of general guidelines), has taken into account elements attributable to activity indicators such as personnel and days worked, the number of productions and performances, the number of users, as well as financial statements (reclassified succinctly), the descriptive elements of the company, financial data and information relating to activities for which the companies apply for funding to the regions.

In terms of methodology, the most innovative aspect of the ORMA Project was the proposal for the adoption, of standardised application forms for funding requests, firstly by all regions, and later by the provinces and municipalities, banking institutions, and other entities involved, which unified data and other relevant information to meet the objectives of the Regional Observatories. By doing so, the companies optimise the task of preparing the information requested and the general information on the public administrations themselves.

The global implementation of the ORMA Project therefore develops along two parallel paths. The first is closely related to the administrative activity of granting subsidies, while the second refers to rules adopted in socio-economic research in the cultural field.

Through the ORMA Project, the regions have responded to the need to establish partnerships with research bodies and institutions whose

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<sup>17</sup> Pact for Entertainment Cultural Activities, «Inter-Regional project for the construction of regional observatories and the collaboration with the national observatory on entertainment policies», *op. cit.*

activities are complementary to those of the regional observatories and the network as a whole, and also with agencies operating similarly in neighbouring fields. Collaboration with such subjects is important to avoid duplicating activities, to enhance skills and performance and to reduce costs.

Hence the comparisons and in some cases the establishment of agreements with Italian institutes dedicated to the production of statistics:

- *Istat-Istituto Italiano di Statistica*, Sistan, SIAE, CNEL and also CISIS<sup>18</sup>, as an instrument of the Conference of the Regions;
- ENPALS-*Ente Nazionale Previdenza e Assistenza Lavoratori Spettacolo* and AGIS-*Associazione Generale Italiana Spettacolo* produce, in parallel with agencies (but without being an institutional role), useful data (always within performing arts) for statistical purposes.

## Conclusions

In the last decade and at the initiative of the regions, Italy has witnessed the establishment of a large number of cultural observatories. Those regions have given life to a project which aims to develop through them an information and knowledge system that will support the political decision-makers and those involved in the cultural sector. The homogenisation of objectives and collaboration among the various levels of government, particularly between the State and the Regions, is among the main themes of the ORMA Project. The ORMA Project represents the first steps of a process whose completion will require a development timeline (which is not easily determined), although it also represents a major challenge at a particularly complex time for the country's cultural life.

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<sup>18</sup> *Società Italiana Autori ed Editori* (SIAE), was established in 1927; *Sistan Sistema statistico nazionale* is a network of Italian public and private subjects which provides official statistical information; *Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Lavoro* (CNEL) was established in 1957. It is named in the Constitution of the Italian Republic in Art. 99 as: «Provider of advice for the Chambers and the Government on the matters and functions legally entrusted to it; The CISIS is the technical body of the Conference of the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces regarding IT, geographical and statistical systems, for exclusive and conjoint matters.»



## Chapter 8

# Observing Culture in Belgium, particularly in the French-speaking Community Wallonia-Brussels

*Michel Guérin*

### **Introduction**

In Belgium, cultural matters have been entrusted to Communities since 1980. However, a number of competences and cultural institutions have been maintained at the federal level. To understand the observation systems this organisation entails, it is useful to recall briefly the organisational structure of the federal state. First of all, Belgium is divided into three Regions: the Flemish, Walloon and Brussels Regions, which have mainly self-governing economic competences and land management. Belgium is further divided into three Communities: the Flemish, French-speaking and German-speaking ones.

The communities can be distinguished by their language and their principle cultural and educational competences.

As for the Regions and the federal level, they are endowed with legislative powers, a Parliament and an executive body. As a consequence, at their level of government, Communities define the cultural policies they implement in a specific way using traditional instruments of public policy such as a legislative framework, an administrative office (that manages the implementation of regulations), implementing policies, acknowledgment, financing and control systems of public and private culture operators.

Public schemes for observing culture differ from one Community to another. In this article, we will sketch the competences and matters

managed at these levels of power by the Federal Government and the Flemish Community, as well as the existing observation and research instruments. Then, we will analyse more thoroughly the observation instruments for cultural policies in the French-speaking Community and conclude by shedding light on some specific challenges facing our observatory in an international context.

## The Federal level

Although most cultural issues are managed by the Communities, the Federal State intervenes in cultural policies of creation, dissemination and heritage through the so-called «bi-communal» institutions, i.e. a combination of the French-speaking and the Flemish Communities<sup>1</sup>.

Mainly established in the bilingual Brussels Region, these institutions are financed by the federal state. There are three such cultural institutions: the Palais des Beaux-Arts, the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie and the Orchestre National de Belgique<sup>2</sup>, and about fifteen federal scientific institutions.

Among these, we will focus essentially on museums and archives which have a cultural orientation<sup>3</sup> and on a number of organisations proposing musical, museum and exhibition activities<sup>4</sup>.

The federal government also plays an economic role in cultural policies. It is particularly involved in book pricing and in tax exemptions for liberalities or donations to cultural institutions. It is also a duty of the federal government to address issues relating to the Artist's status (social, fiscal and legal), as well as copyright and those relating to job opportunities in general, agreements between employers and workers, and specifically in cultural sectors.

Regarding these actions and policies, we will highlight, in addition to the specific actions these institutions, the job of the Observatory of the Federal Scientific Institutions (established in 2003) is to conduct user surveys and analysis. These surveys should allow institutions to set their objectives in relation to audiences, to measure results, to define strategies

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<sup>1</sup> These artistic and scientific institutions, primarily located in Brussels, are still competences of the federal state which funds them: <http://www.crisp.be/vocpol/vocpol.asp?terme=%C9tablissements%20scientifiques%20et%20culturels%20f%E9d%E9raux>

<sup>2</sup> [http://kanselarij.belgium.be/fr/institutions\\_culturelles\\_federales/](http://kanselarij.belgium.be/fr/institutions_culturelles_federales/)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.belspo.be/belspo/act/institut/index\\_fr.stm](http://www.belspo.be/belspo/act/institut/index_fr.stm)

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.belspo.be/belspo/res/coord/act\\_cult/patr/aacf\\_fr.stm](http://www.belspo.be/belspo/res/coord/act_cult/patr/aacf_fr.stm) and [http://www.belspo.be/belspo/res/institut/esf\\_fr.stm](http://www.belspo.be/belspo/res/institut/esf_fr.stm)

and to develop measures to improve the quality of services offered. Research programmes are established annually to meet the specific and timely needs of institutions in terms of knowledge of audiences. Moreover, the Public Observatory is conducting a quality survey in five federal museums (annual surveys for five years) to update the profile of the visitors and to measure their level of satisfaction. The objective is to retain and expand the number of visitors through an evaluation of the museum offer and adapting it to their expectations and knowledge.

## **The Flemish Community**

As concerns culture monitoring, the Flemish Community does not have a specific institution similar to the Observatory of Cultural Policies (OPC) as defined later in this study, which collects data, observations and analyses of the cultural area. There is, however, an important system of collecting and analysing data for the whole cultural field. On the one hand, the Ministry of Culture systematises a constant and accurate collection of data about the various sectors of culture<sup>5</sup> and, on the other hand, it organises a system of analysis and research in partnership with Flemish universities.

This system relies on «support centres for research» (Steunpunten beleidsrelevant onderzoek)<sup>6</sup>, to support political action through high-quality scientific research. These centres were established in 2001 and consist of one or more research teams from one or more academic institutions that provide support to the Flemish government for its decisions over a long period of time. The main task of these centres is to conduct scientific research (short-term and basic research) on topics identified as priorities by the Flemish government. These centres are involved in policy evaluation and they work in close interaction with government and ministerial offices. This mechanism allows the Flemish government to provide structural funding (contracts of five years) to university research teams. The research centres are selected on the basis of candidatures, and the Government appoints a research centre per theme. Fourteen research centres have been accepted for the period 2007-2011, working on the theme «Culture, Youth and Sports.» Moreover, the conjoined activities of these research centres are structurally coordinated in order to foster synergies, to identify cross-cutting issues (social issues, sustainable development, etc) and to

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www4.vlaanderen.be/dar/svr/Cijfers/Pages/Excel.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.belspo.be/belspo/home/publ/pub\\_ostc/BRISTI/Instell\\_fr.pdf](http://www.belspo.be/belspo/home/publ/pub_ostc/BRISTI/Instell_fr.pdf)

stimulate research. Working together in a «consortium»<sup>7</sup> allows research institutions to benefit from the accumulated knowledge and international networks kept by each of these universities. The developed expertise can then be exchanged and compared internationally.

The originality and interest of the processes chosen are based on the close coordination between researchers and the various research projects undertaken, which will consolidate their results in a common evaluation.

For culture, the research is supported, on the one hand, by a transverse dimension which includes the study of Flemish citizens' behaviour, participation and expectations. Every five years<sup>8</sup> a general survey is conducted to update information and data, and to evaluate the balance between supply and demand. This research is aimed at understanding the relationship between citizen and culture in its broadest sense, also at analysing the type of culture management, by verifying the effectiveness and efficiency of the resources allocated to implementing these policies. The Flemish Government has a policy which encourages active participation in cultural life from a global perspective of development. These evaluation procedures are therefore based on the analysis of scientifically defensible indicators underpinned by a multidisciplinary approach to culture.

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<sup>7</sup> The «consortium» is made up of the following institutions:

- Ghent University-Department of Sociology-GSRM, Department of Movement and Sports sciences, Department of Social Welfare Studies.
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel-Department of Sociology-TOR, SMIT, Movement and Sports Training, Sports Policy and Management, Human Physiology and Special Physiology of Physical Education, Biomechanics and Human Biometry.
- K.U.Leuven-Research Group into Youth Criminology, Department of Biomedical Kinesiology: Research Centre for Exercise and Health, Department of Human Kinesiology: Research Centre for Sociocultural Kinesiology and Sport Management, Department of Human Kinesiology: Research Centre for Exercise & Sport Psychology, and Coaching, Department of Human Kinesiology: Research Centre for Movement Education and Sport Pedagogy, Department of Geography and Geology: Social and Economic Geography Section.
- EHSAL-Centre for Modeling and Simulation.

<sup>8</sup> In 2008-2009, a large scale survey was organised using a representative sample of the Flemish population (3,000 Flemish people aged 14-85). This information on participation, behaviour and expectations provide useful data for basic research. The results of the surveys are interpreted according to the monitoring and compared evolution of previous surveys during these periods. People were questioned on subjects such as how many times they go to the cinema, their social life, music, sports, television, use of the Internet, among other things. The results provide a detailed image of Flemish people's leisure activities.

In direct connection with this transverse line of research (participation, practices and lifestyles), other investigations are conducted on four main themes<sup>9</sup>:

- Arts and Heritage: studies focusing on the analysis of participation, cultural competence, professionalism and the sense of responsibility.
- Socio-Culture: studies on the socio-cultural work of cultural operators (cultural centres, libraries, associations, volunteering, training institutions, continued education, amateur artistic practice, movements, etc). This sector of cultural policies plays an important role in meeting the challenges of social cohesion, democratisation of culture and participation. The research is based on qualitative and quantitative analyses of a representative sample of the population of users and non-users of cultural institutions.
- E-culture and Digitisation: studies exploring the effects of new technologies on cultural offer and participation, on the shift of traditional borders between real and virtual culture, between sectors of culture, between organisers and participants.
- The Economics of Culture: these investigations are directed in particular to measure the spending of the different sectors of culture, the impact of this spending on the economic and social development, particularly on job opportunities and the Horeca sector. They seek to measure the impact of government funding on the expenditures of cities and municipalities, to measure the multiplier effect and to evaluate the effectiveness of such funding in meeting the objectives.

Along with these research works, conducted by support centres, the sectorial<sup>10</sup> «steunpunten» (specific support points for the different sectors of culture) also produces quite a lot of data, analyses and research specific to their sectors.

## **Some remarks on the institutional division**

The fact that each community has the autonomy and control of cultural policies is interesting. Nevertheless, it raises some problems when it comes to obtaining statistical data from the federal level. Indeed, the method of data collection and processing only makes them available and usable

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.vub.ac.be/SOCI/cjs/cultuur.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cjism.vlaanderen.be/cultuurbeleid/actoren/index.html>

at a regional level. However, the territorial area covered by the French Community and the area of deployment of its cultural policies, does not correspond to regional divisions. The French-speaking Community<sup>11</sup> is indeed composed of French-speaking inhabitants living in Brussels (a bilingual region in its own right, comprising 80% of French-speaking inhabitants and 20% of Flemish ones<sup>12</sup>) and French-speaking inhabitants living in Wallonia (another region in its own right). The German-speaking population, although belonging to a different Community, but integrated in the Walloon Region for all policies with the exception of cultural and educational policies, should be subtracted. This complex institutional division (sometimes hard to understand even for Belgian citizens) makes it difficult (not to say impossible), at present, to obtain «simple» statistics that cover the reality of the French-speaking Community.

This difficulty is among other things encountered in obtaining accurate data on cultural employment insofar as the information collected does not make distinctions between the languages of employers and workers. And even if we could get them, they would still be too general and they would not provide information on the various cultural fields. Similarly and for the same reasons, it is not possible to accurately estimate the cultural spending in each Community in relation to its GDP.

## **Monitoring culture in the French-speaking Community**

Regarding the observation of cultural policies, the French-speaking Community established an Observatory of Cultural Policies in 2001. This initiative is part of a larger movement that in the same decade witnessed the emergence in Europe of similar institutions whose primary function is to integrate more reflexivity into public action: to obtain a better knowledge of reality, to intervene more pertinently, to evaluate results of the policies applied and to improve the use of public funds in times of financial restrictions.

The creation of the observatory is also part of a more general evolution of public policy management (cultural management in particular), which

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<sup>11</sup> For a definition of the Communities, see CRISP's political vocabulary: <http://www.crisp.be/VocPol/vocpol.asp?terme=communauté>

<sup>12</sup> This distribution key is «political» and it does not correspond to the linguistic reality of the Brussels Capital region: The Flemish representation is less relevant (just under 10%) and the other 90% it is not only French-speaking. In Brussels the use of other languages [due to the location of the European Institutions and the population of immigrant origin (28% approx)] must be considered.

in the same period saw the development and spreading of a «contractual» relationship between public authorities and cultural operators (public and private) which had received grants. The contracts will assign tasks and objectives to cultural operators, to be achieved within defined timeframes, and later assessed by the public authorities. The need for a quantitative and qualitative data processing tool, which would assess the implementation of policies, is specifically bound to this development.

The governmental order of the French-speaking Community (April 26, 2001) concerning the establishment of the Observatory of Cultural Policies identifies the following tasks<sup>13</sup>:

- Make a permanent inventory of:
  - cultural policies;
  - operators, associations, institutions, professions and employment on the cultural issues that affect us<sup>14</sup>;
  - the dissemination of cultural goods and services;
  - cultural practices, access modes and participation of French-speaking citizens in cultural life.
- Compile and coordinate the results of studies and research, take the initiative to conduct studies, allocate studies.
- Perform analysis on any matter relating to cultural policies at the request of the government of the French-speaking Community, the Secretary-General, or on its own initiative.
- Offer their knowledge of the cultural and political fields in Belgium and abroad to the consultative bodies and the competent authorities.
- Provide supervision of the cultural policies and decisions, support evaluating tools developed in the French-speaking Community in the rest of the country and abroad.
- Promote and disseminate the contents and history of cultural policies developed in the French-speaking Community and the

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<sup>13</sup> To learn more about the legal dispositions concerning the OPC, see: <http://www.opc.cfwb.be/index.php?id=3586>.

<sup>14</sup> Cultural matters are the following: language, books, human sciences and libraries, performing arts, permanent education and youth, plastic arts, museums and heritage, cultural animation (cultural centres), audiovisuals, multimedia, cultural industries, culture related training of staff members, press support, cultural infrastructures and equipment, training in culture related jobs, particularly on artistic teaching, international relations and the cultural aspects of tourism politics. Regarding youth, OPC has a privileged collaboration within the Observatory of the Childhood, Youth, and Youth Support (CFWB). <http://www.oejaj.cfwb.be/>

results of related studies and research among cultural operators and the general public.

- At the request of a cultural operator, public or private, and under the authority and control of the government, provide information on the socio-economic and cultural environment projects that the operator wishes to develop.
- Ensure the secretariat of the General Council of Cultural Policies.

The General Council of Cultural Policies (which is not operational today) is responsible for the following tasks:

- Performing analyses and making proposals and recommendations regarding:
  - Prospecting cultural policies and cultural dimensions of the public policies at all levels of government (federal, community, regional, provincial and municipal).
  - Consistency and relevance of the cultural policies within the overall policy of the French-speaking Community.
  - Consistency and relevance of the cultural dimensions of the public policies applied in the Walloon and Brussels-Capital Regions.
  - Cultural cooperation with other communities and with the federal authority.
- Providing analysis on the systems used by other levels of government and which have a direct or indirect impact on the cultural policy of the French-speaking Community.
- Performing analysis on any subject relating to cultural policies.

In other words, by undertaking these tasks, the OPC's mission is to prospect and evaluate, as well as to coordinate cultural policies between federal entities (for cultural matters relating to other levels of government as we have mentioned in point 1).

The OCP's work is guided by a steering committee composed of the secretary general of the French-speaking Community, representatives of the advisory council for sector cultural policies, senior civil servants dealing with cultural matters, representatives of political institutions (French-speaking Community and the Walloon and Brussels-Capital Regions) and academic experts. Every two years, the OPC files a report on its activities and research perspectives to the French-speaking Community Parliament. The order also stipulates that the Observatory develops and conducts its missions with total intellectual, methodological and scientific independence.

## *Availability of data, dissemination and research organisation*

OPC's early work focused on the analysis of the information systems existing in the Ministry of Culture. Following the recommendations of the LeG<sup>15</sup> which advocated the collection of data on financial flows (resources/jobs), on the supply of goods and services (activities), on attendance/participation and on employment and occupations, we found that a good amount of data already existed, but it was unusable. It was discordant, unprocessed, not aggregated and not comparable from one sector of culture to another. A substantial work on harmonisation of accounting and financial data was initiated and is expected to be finalised later in 2010.

Since 2001, a significant part of OPC's work has been devoted to the analysis of information systems that will eventually collect relevant data directly from the cultural operators in order to ultimately observe and analyse data. This work is carried out in collaboration with ETNIC (*Entreprise des Technologies Nouvelles publication de l'Information et de la Communication*), a public interest organisation whose mission is to develop databases, publish statistics and provide services to the French-speaking Community. Therefore, OPC's mission is not to build cultural statistics.

Moreover, each functional department of culture can also produce analysis and research on its own activities. For example, the service of public reading<sup>16</sup> regularly publishes its own studies or those carried out by other universities or research organisations on topics related to its specific challenges and issues. All of these publications and research are available on the Internet<sup>17</sup>.

Regarding the dissemination of information, in recent years a concern about transparency has emerged within the Ministry of the French-speaking Community. All budgets and expenditures of the Ministry as well as agreements, contracts and grant programmes between the Ministry and cultural operators<sup>18</sup> can now be consulted online.

Finally, the Ministry of the French-speaking Community has recently set up a research and studies coordination programme with the aim to provide the government with scientific information for the proper implementation of its policies. The main goal is therefore to share resources, to share research results thereby favouring transversality and to create

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<sup>15</sup> Cultural statistics in the EU-LeG final report, Luxembourg, 2000, European Commission.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.bibliotheques.be/fr/publications/publications/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www2.cfwb.be/cofraref/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www2.cfwb.be/cofraref/>

synergies which will be part of a common dynamic, both internal and external (with organisations outside the Ministry). This coordination is ensured by the «Research Service» whose mission is to take any initiative that will perform, assess, coordinate and promote sector and inter-sector studies and research within the competences of the French-speaking Community<sup>19</sup>.

### *Other data suppliers in the French-speaking Community*

In addition to the academic institutions of the French-speaking Community<sup>20</sup> which develop studies and research in specialised areas of culture depending on the subjects taught (theatre, books and literature, performing arts, music, etc.), regarding specific «cultural» information or more general information, there are obviously a large number of «professional» data producers that we regularly call upon. To mention only the most important, the *Institut National des Statistiques* (INS) which conducts surveys on the use of time and leisure (the survey on family budget and household spending) in collaboration with the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (TOR)<sup>21</sup>. In the audiovisual field, the *Service Général de l'Audiovisuel et des Multimédias*, which is part of the Ministry of the French-speaking Community, regularly compiles an audiovisual yearbook<sup>22</sup> which addresses a variety of topics ranging from private audiovisual consumption, television and radio supply and type of public, publishers of audiovisual media services in radio and television, distribution of audiovisual services via cable networks, telephone networks, mobile and satellite, film production activity, the video market, digital arts and multimedia, advertising, digital technologies and the Internet. Much of this data stems from the *Centre d'Information sur les Médias* (CIM)<sup>23</sup>, which continuously collects data on all media and conducts strategic multi-media studies. Surveys conducted by consumer associations on leisure activities and consumption practices<sup>24</sup> can be added to these data producers. Regarding tourism (and in particular museum activities), we will mention the Walloon and Brussels Tourism Observatories<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.servicerecherche.cfwb.be/>

<sup>20</sup> There are seven institutions. See: <http://www.ciuf.be/cms/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.vub.ac.be/TOR/intro/intro.phtml>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.audiovisuel.cfwb.be/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.cim.be/fr>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.crioc.be/> et <http://www.test-achats.be/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://observatoire.tourisme.wallonie.be/apps/spip/> et <http://www.obs.irisnet.be/default2.htm>

## *Main orientations in studies and research of the OPC*

The main mission of the OPC relates to tasks such as those described in section 4. To reorganise them in categories<sup>26</sup>, the OPC performs the following tasks:

- «Background» work by performing and coordinating a number of studies and projects aimed at building databases for all cultural sectors. These data relate to cultural activity, public attendance and participation, financial flows and cultural employment<sup>27</sup>.
- At the cultural economy level<sup>28</sup>, the OPC carries out tasks aimed at establishing «socioeconomic profiles» of the different cultural areas (museums, local television, French language book publishing in Belgium, theatre, dance, daily press, etc.). It also helps implementing the «Bilan Culture» by establishing a chronological series on the cultural expenditure of the French-speaking Community. In parallel, it geographically maps cultural operators in terms of socio-economic indicators (population, income, unemployment rate, etc.).
- In terms of cultural policy analysis, it conducts evaluations of programmes, cultural industries or cultural policy, either at the request of the Minister in charge of cultural affairs, or because the evaluation procedure is explicitly provided in the legislation.
- Quantitative and qualitative studies on the public of culture and on the consumption and cultural practices of the population within the French-speaking Community. These surveys go beyond the observation of the public visits to cultural institutions, and they encompass the overall «part time», activities which cover all practices and cultural consumption (leisure) outside working hours.
- Finally, as part of its mission to disseminate the history and content of cultural policy, the Observatory has undertaken the important task of gathering, collecting and producing relevant documentation on the historical understanding of cultural policies. In order to make this information available to the public, the OPC manages a documentation centre accessible to students and researchers. Much

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<sup>26</sup> For more information on the OPC's research and the ongoing studies, visit the «research and investigation» section of their website: <http://www.opc.cfwb.be/>.

<sup>27</sup> OPC's mission is not to produce cultural statistics but to contribute to a general reflection in order to build databases.

<sup>28</sup> The Community Policy Declaration (2009-2014) entrusts the OPC with the development of prospective studies aimed at analysing impact of financial support on cultural development. <http://www.cfwb.be/index.php?id=1774>

of this documentation is also available online on the website of the documentation centre.

### *Partnerships and European Projects*

To carry out this work, OPC establishes partnerships with private study and research bodies, with other Observatories and with universities in the French-speaking Community. A good part of the studies which need an important research system are conducted by tender (public procurement). Besides the fact that this practice allows studies to ensure a scientific level, it can progressively structure around OPC a network of resource persons and academic researchers to stimulate research on cultural policies.

In addition to these institutions, we can include (as a guideline) the gradual partnerships established between the OPC and other bodies. These include scientific institutions for Federal Science Policy<sup>29</sup> services, the *Institut Wallon de l'Evaluation, de la Prospective et de la Statistique*<sup>30</sup> and private and research study centres which work on objectives related to those of OPC such as the Socio-political Research and Information Centre<sup>31</sup>.

At a European and international level, OPC has relationships with a number of observatories (Quebec, Grenoble, Nancy, Budapest, Turin) and universities (Barcelona, Bilbao, Montpellier, Grenoble, Quebec). It is currently involved in two research projects (festivals in Europe and the observation of culture in Europe) which network it with different partners.

### **Some challenges and prospects for observing culture in the French-speaking Community Wallonia-Brussels<sup>32</sup>**

This succinct presentation shows the relative fragility of the systems for cultural observation in so far as they appear scattered and

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<sup>29</sup> [http://www.belspo.be/belspo/pubobs/index\\_fr.stm](http://www.belspo.be/belspo/pubobs/index_fr.stm)

<sup>30</sup> <http://statistiques.wallonie.be/default.shtml>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.crisp.be/>

<sup>32</sup> OPC and the General Directorate for Culture of the Ministry of the French-speaking Community have discussed the challenges presented in this conclusion. They have been summed up in an article presented by Jean-Louis Genard at a colloquium in Québec in 2008: «The Cultural Policies of the French-speaking Community of Belgium: grounds and challenges». September 2010 will see the publication of the article «Trends and Challenges of Cultural Policies: National cases in perspective» Saint-Pierre, Diane (dir.) and Claudine Audet (dir.) Presse de l'université Laval, Québec: <http://www.pulaval.com/aparaître.html>

uncoordinated with each other. To this is added the fact that in the French-speaking Community a genuine cultural research policy does not exist. It is not linked to a more comprehensive research as the one that would have been developed in other areas, like Flanders. Yet, the challenges facing the cultural sector are important. And they are not specific to the French-speaking Community: they are common to a large part of European societies, thereby inviting to increase analytical and prospective thinking of culture development in coordination with other policies.

In this sense, the relationship between culture and economy evolves from being a sector largely subsidised to become an industry associated with the economy and a producer of goods and services. There are now debates on cultural capitalism insofar as it focuses primarily on intangible goods and where the traditional industrial sector is gradually being supplanted by a post-industrial sector in which these properties become major sources of profit. The concepts of management, marketing, e-culture and «events» emerge in new private cultural venues. The issue of government intervention must evolve towards a regulatory function.

The relationship between culture and democracy must also be reconsidered. It is not enough to guarantee formal equality of access to goods necessary for human dignity, but we must also ensure that the actors have the capacities to enjoy those goods and access to real freedoms. The state has the responsibility of implementing policies of cultural democracy, which promote active citizen participation, enabling them to exercise their citizenship.

From this point of view, the relationship between culture and education is essential, on the one hand, because school is a major cultural operator in our societies and, on the other hand, because it has an important mission to fulfil in terms of social, cultural and artistic formation of youth. Because it particularly faces young people of immigrant origin, it has a fundamental role to play in multiculturalism. No doubt that culture and education have to develop and anchor common approaches to face the challenge of cultural diversity.

Faced with the challenges illustrated here —coordination to renew or to establish, the quantified observation of attendance to cultural institutions, establishment of socio-economic portraits or the weight of culture in the GDP— although useful to grasp the reality of the areas, it is not the essence of the observation work. In fact, in the future it will have to develop a conjoint reflection at the European level with methods and tools which will allow us to assess the relevance of cultural policies regarding more fundamental objectives, such as the contribution of culture to «improve living together», citizen participation and the happiness of individuals and groups, as well as its contribution to the democratic development of our societies.



## Chapter 9

# Cultural Observation in Hungary

*János Zoltán Szabó*

The purpose of this article is to give an overall picture of the state of art in the field of cultural observation in Hungary. It is not going to be just a descriptive list of data types, much rather a structured analysis of the focus of existing data collectors, research units including trends and types of approaches. Within this wide category, all kinds of analytical work based on data collecting are understood as being part of cultural observation.

Cultural data collecting has its own logic in every country of Europe. There is a market in this field with well defined structures and competitors as well. The different levels are identified as follows:

- On *state level* one may find organisations working within national dimensions —mostly statistical offices, ministries and background institutions are in this group.
- Organisations based on arm's length principle are usually operating on the level called *semi-state* infrastructure. Their position provides the opportunity to work in a national and international dimension, participating in specific projects.
- *Private* organisations may be divided into categories based on their relationship to financial benefits. In most countries it is possible to identify *for-profit* and *non-profit* organisations in the field of cultural observation. These bodies have the widest focus: a national and international scope with the possibility of international co-operation, comparing existing data between countries, regions, cities and organisations (e.g. festivals). Private organisations act as independent research, report and evaluation units of actions and

programmes in European, national, regional and increasingly at local level.

Following this structure (state/semi-state/private level) the detailed description, focus, interest and trends of cultural observation in Hungary will be outlined in the next pages.

## 1. Cultural Observation on State Level

On state level there are five national bodies actively working in the field of cultural observation:

- Hungarian Central Statistical Office<sup>1</sup> (*Központi Statisztikai Hivatal*, KSH) is in charge of official statistics in Hungary. This is an independent administrative authority operating in Budapest and in every region. Its database provides yearly general statistics on organisations, visitors and yearly budgets. The main tasks of KSH are: design and conduct surveys; record, process and store data; analyse, disseminate and protect individual data.
- The national government maintains a cultural administration that also has its statistical system called Cultural Statistics<sup>2</sup> (CS) maintained by the Ministry of National Resources<sup>3</sup> (*Nemzeti Erőforrás Minisztériuma*, NEFMI). This database contains yearly specific statistics by fields of culture (indicators of activities and capacities).
- As a background institution of NEFMI the Hungarian Institute for Culture<sup>4</sup> (*Magyar Művelődési Intézet és Képzőművészeti Lektorátus*, MMIKL) focuses on the analytical work based on KSH and CS data, sometimes individual research projects. Their primary focus is «köz művelődés» which covers cultural education, amateur art and community culture (cultural centres, houses of culture) as well.
- The Cultural Heritage Office (*Kulturális Örökségvédelmi Hivatal*, KÖH<sup>5</sup>) is primarily responsible for cultural heritage sites and their statistics, however, the National Film Office unit (*Nemzeti Filmiroda*) collects data on film producing in Hungary.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ksh.hu>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/kultura/infoteka/kulturalis-statisztika> (only in Hungarian)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nefmi.gov.hu/english>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mmikl.hu>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.koh.hu>

- The Theatre Institute and Museum (*Országos Színháztörténeti Múzeum és Intézet*, OSZMI<sup>6</sup>) is maintained by NEFMI and collects facts on professional theatrical activities in Hungary or in Hungarian, but outside the country.

After the short listing the main national cultural data collectors let us focus on the data structure regarding culture. Details are according to the listing order.

### 1.1. *Hungarian Central Statistical Office*

Hungarian Central Statistical Office provides data for the parliament and public administration, social organisations, local authorities, scientific bodies, economic organisations, the general public and the media as well as for international organisations and users abroad. Official data regarding the socio-economic situation as well as the changes in the population of the country are published yearly by the KSH. The publicity of the office is based on the principles of objectiveness, impartiality and competency, wide-ranging publicity and transparency of data (ensuring simultaneously the protection of individual data) and synchronous information dissemination. Data are collected in the following structure:

- Demography, vital statistics
- Society
  - Employment, labour, wages
  - Households (income, consumption)
  - Housing, public utilities
  - Social insurance, social welfare
  - Medical corps, accidents
  - Education
  - Culture
  - Justice
- General economic indicators
  - National accounts, GDP
  - Economic organisations
  - Investments
  - Research and development
  - Foreign trade

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.oszmi.hu>

- Prices
- Finances
- Energy management
- Economic sectors
  - Agriculture
  - Industry
  - Building industry
  - Retail trade
  - Tourism
  - Transport
  - Information statistics
- Environment
  - Air pollution
  - Environmental and protection expenditure
- Territorial statistics
  - Population, vital events
  - Society
  - General economic indicators
  - Economic sectors
  - Environment
- International statistics

(Source: [www.ksh.hu](http://www.ksh.hu))

Relevant cultural information might be identified by the society statistics on employment (cultural employment), households (cultural consumption) and culture (cultural activities). Within this last category, culture appears as theatre, museum, library, cinema and movie, general education (*köznevelődés*) and publishing. In general economic indicators, culture appears as economic organisations and prices. At international statistics, culture appears mainly as cultural employment, households' cultural consumption and cultural production. The theatre, museum, publishing sphere have their professional organisations that also collect statistics. They correlate to KSH data, however, in some cases they collect more detailed and complex data on market revenue, for example the Hungarian Publishers' Association. Translation statistics has a different approach at the National Library and KSH. KSH is responsible for informing international bodies about statistical data; however, as a specific case, the National Library sends statistical data to UNESCO Index Translationum on literary translations.

As one of their most exciting projects, KSH and Sándor Szalai started collecting statistics on free time utilisation and the reports are called «Időmérleg» (= time scale) surveys in 1963 (Szalai, 1963). The first time they surveyed the time scale of 12,600 people aged 18-60. This survey was repeated four times involving a similar size of people in 1976/77, 1986/87, 1993 and 1999/2000. The data received high public attention among researchers and still it is one of the best overall picture of social changes during the past 40-50 years. The relevant features changing within the social context for cultural consumption are the following:

- working hours decreased from 48 to 40;
- number of days off increased from 12 to 25;
- 6 weeks maternity leave was lengthened by up to 3 years (optional);
- full employment till 1989, followed by a peak of unemployment in 1996/97, which later decreased;
- share of agricultural employment decreased from 32% down to 5,6%;
- the level of GDP (1960=100) increased 331% until 2000, however, real value of wages (1960=100) was turbulent over the years: 1980:160%, 1989: 143%, 1996: 112%;
- appearance of «controlled private economy» (1978-1989), introduction of Personal Income Tax (1988), increase of black market after 1989.

(Source: <http://www.sulinet.hu/matek/adatok/idomerleg/2.htm>)

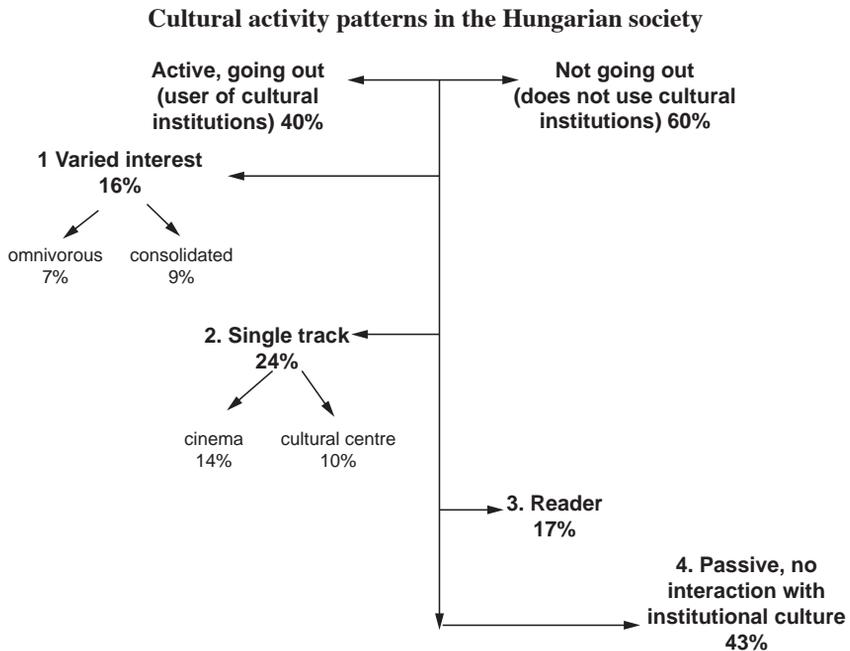
Culture benefited from this research through the picture that researchers gained about time spent on culture and the longitudinal trends of it. Béla Falussy (Falussy-Harcsa, 2000) and Iván Vitányi (2006) analysed these data and reported about their findings:

- From 1963 to 1987 free time decreased because people started their own entrepreneurship after official working hours in the «controlled private market». The use of leisure time had become more and more elaborate. TV watching time share (the relative champion) increased until 1993, which also supported passive usage of free time.
- After the change of political system (1989), the social context decreased time spent on working hours, which increased the possibility to pay more attention to leisure. From that time, researchers realised that highly educated people increased their leisure time while less educated people turned to passive free time investments.

Regarding the segmentation of society (class system) Vitányi (2006) analysed the correlation between free time and leisure time and found that Hungarian society can be segmented differently than the class system described by Paul Fussel (1983). Vitányi found that the leisure segments of Hungarian society fit into four different groups:

- passive or «low-brow»;
- recreation group —family or sport oriented people— or lower «middle-brow»;
- open, non selective consumption features people in the higher «middle-brow»;
- privileged people, culturally oriented are «high brow».

His conclusion is that only 15-18% of the people are members of the «high brow» in most of the countries, however, there is a potential chance for further 12-15% of people to join a this group. One of the main goals of cultural policy should be to enlarge the group of privileged people and mobilise the «low-brow» and «middle-brow» segments of the society. Hunyadi offers a classification as follows:



Source: Hunyadi 2005:11.

## 1.2. *Cultural Statistics*

Cultural Statistics (CS) of the Ministry of National Resources has collected statistics since 1993, when Law XLVI on Statistics was accepted by the Hungarian Parliament. The main fields covered are as follows:

- Open-air stages
- Museums
- Circuses
- Theatres and operas
- Libraries
- General education (*közművelődés*)
- Movie productions
- Classical music
- Dance companies
- Exhibitions
- Zoos

The Cultural Statistics database is the most detailed list of all the cultural organisations where searchable information can be found by name, location, address etc. Cultural Statistics publish non-regular reports on annually collected data, but it is free to analyse for a wide range of researchers.

## 1.3. *Hungarian Institute for Culture*

Hungarian Institute for Culture (MMIKL) reports about amateur arts, community culture and programmes organised by Multifunctional Institutes of Local Culture (MILC)<sup>7</sup>. Their work is based on the Cultural Statistics and they especially focus on activities at

- institutes called «house of culture» or «cultural centre»;
- non-profit organisations working for local culture;
- Society for Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge (*Tudományos Ismeretterjesztő Társulat*, TIT, established in 1844) and its 39 member associations in counties;
- zoos and arboretums.

In one of the latest reports Hunyadi underlined that «houses of culture» are the most frequently visited cultural institutions. Less educated

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<sup>7</sup> MILC as an abbreviation was introduced by the Budapest Observatory in a research on socio-cultural organisations: <http://www.budobs.org/socio-cultural-institutions/socio-cultural-institutions/socio-cultural-activities-and-their-institutions-in-europe.html>

people make up the highest proportion of visitors to these houses of culture compared to statistics of other cultural institutions' visitors (Hunyadi, 2004). Thus, «houses of culture» could play an important role in social integration of lower educated people; however, the report did not mention any policy related to this possible goal.

Although MMIKL is the descendant of Free Theatre Actors Association (*Szabadszínhátszók Országos Szövetségének*), established in 1946, its statistics have been restructured many times. Since 1996 one can search for detailed information on the yearly breakdown of different activities and organisational forms as well. Cultural consumption in «houses of cultures» seems to be rather stable in the last decade, only visitors aged between 30-60 are paying 2% more visits than before —other visitors' habits have not changed significantly.

#### 1.4. *Cultural Heritage Office*

Cultural Heritage Office (KÖH) is responsible for cultural heritage sites including protection of built heritage, archaeology, artworks and UNESCO World Heritage. One of their special statistics is to register heritage sites and moveable works. Furthermore, they control and license the transport of artworks. They have six regional offices which are responsible for the heritage protection and preservation of the region including authorising the (re)building or renovation of protected heritage buildings.

One of KÖH's central units in Budapest is called the National Film Office, which collects data on film producing in Hungary. This office works to:

- register the producers of Hungarian movie industry, its organisations and institutions;
- register produced films and their distribution by DVD or in cinemas;
- issue certificates about categories of films (for example, films for a 12/16 age group);
- promote Hungarian filmmakers through its performing arts office (*Előadó-művészeti Iroda*).

For scientific and statistical work there is a different department under the umbrella of KÖH called Heritage Research Institute and Documentation Centre (*Műemléki Kutató Intézet és Dokumentációs Központ*) which initiates and produces research, organises the scientific work of archaeology, gives advice and ensures the access to research results. Its database and archive are open to the wider public especially for scientific research.

## 1.5. *Theatre Institute and Museum*

The Theatre Institute and Museum (OSZMI) is the main organisation of theatre, dance and opera archives, statistics and library focusing on professional theatrical activities in Hungary and in Hungarian. Besides the library, it has a Theatrical Data Base (*Színházi Adattár*) on theatre actors, directors, other theatrical professionals and their works. It is available for digital access. They publish a yearbook which lists all the productions and the artists of the season. The archive also collects theatrical articles and research files on theatre. The institute initiates and produces research as well, for example reports on visitors' habits and structural changes (Szabó, 2007).

## 2. Cultural Observation on Semi-State Level

On semi-state level one might identify six different groups of bodies actively working in the field of cultural observation. These groupings are considered to be the main information sources of scientific and applied research.

### 2.1. *Universities*

Universities at Debrecen, Pécs, Szeged, Kaposvár and Budapest have units or departments focusing on culture. According to the Bologna process<sup>8</sup> of higher education, culture sciences as such are found at masters level as fields of study. The cultural mediator MA education (a descendant of cultural manager or cultural organiser education before the Bologna system) covers the field primarily, although adult education (andragogy) and human resource development studies are also considered to be interdisciplinary fields partly covering culture. Doctoral schools at Debrecen and Pécs are using the scientific approach to culture: they consider culture as being part of non-formal and informal education processes. PhD and MA students and their teachers at departments often manage scientific research projects on consumption and social effects of culture. The main funding body of scientific research of this kind is another semi-state body called Hungarian Scientific Research Programme (*Országos Tudományos Kutatási Alapprogram*, OTKA<sup>9</sup>). One of its

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<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc1290\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/higher-education/doc1290_en.htm)

<sup>9</sup> [www.otka.hu](http://www.otka.hu)

three sections called Social Sciences and Humanities is responsible for sociological research focusing on culture based on surveys. These surveys reflect on the situation, attendance and belief of Hungarian citizens.

Electronic archives of universities provide access to the bibliographies of all material published by lecturers and researchers of the university. For example, the Electronic Archives of Debrecen University<sup>10</sup> (*Debreceni Elektronikus Adatbázis*, DEA) provide access to the texts of published articles, books and defended PhD dissertations as well. These kind of archives are not usually free to the public, however, registered users and students have the opportunity to read documents electronically.

## 2.2. *Hungarian Academy of Science*

Hungarian Academy of Science (*Magyar Tudományos Akadémia*, MTA<sup>11</sup>) and especially its regional offices regularly initiate and manage scientific research projects on culture. The Regional Institute of Social Sciences (Central Region, Budapest) is one of the significant offices that researches culture. Its cultural research unit was the main source of evaluation and study of cultural consumption processes. Its primary focus is to study the cultural state of Hungarian society. This approach covers the main processes of cultural theory development in Hungary along with the evaluation of Hungarian cultural development based on time and cultural consumption processes.

## 2.3. *National Culture Fund*

The founding document of the National Culture Fund (*Nemzeti Kulturális Alap*, NKA<sup>12</sup>) supports the financing of research. The original idea was to run applied research on funded projects. In recent years they have published a series of books called NKA research (*NKA kutatások*) which includes applied research on funded projects and a wider approach to a specific field. Four books have been published by NKA:

- «*Színházi jelenlét-Színházi jövőkép*» (Theatre Presence-Theatre Future), analysed theatrical statistics and strategic approaches to theatre (Tomba, 2005).

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<sup>10</sup> [www.unideb.hu](http://www.unideb.hu),

<sup>11</sup> [www.mta.hu](http://www.mta.hu)

<sup>12</sup> [www.nka.hu](http://www.nka.hu)

- «*Az iparművészet változó szerepe az átalakuló vizuális kultúrában*» (Changing Role of Applied Arts in Visual Culture) focuses on the supported projects (2000-2004) and developments in the mechanisms of visual arts (Antalóczy-Kapitány, 2006).
- «*Fesztivál-világ*» (Festival World) is a comprehensive work about the role of festivals in the cultural scene. The authors surveyed all the available festivals in Hungary (Hunyadi-Inkei-Szabó, 2006).
- «*Műemlékek, múzeumok mindenkinek?*» (Heritage, Museums for Everyone?) was an attempt to detail the picture of Hungarian heritage and museums based on public opinion (Deme, 2007).

#### 2.4. *The Hungarian Tourism Office and Hungarian Tourism Ltd.*

The Hungarian Tourism Office and Hungarian Tourism Ltd. are responsible for international promotion of Hungarian Tourism<sup>13</sup>. They regularly survey and research visitors' habits, including purpose of visit and spending. In 2010 they proposed the Year of Festivals, which complements the other significant programme at Pécs: the European Capital of Culture<sup>14</sup>.

#### 2.5. *The Hungarian Patent Office*

The Hungarian Patent Office (*Magyar Szabadalmi Hivatal*)<sup>15</sup> has recently turned their interests to culture by focusing on copyright industries. The Hungarian Patent Office was established in 1896 by virtue of Article 23 of Act XXXVII of 1895 on Patents for Inventions. They are responsible for the protection of intellectual property and their functions and competence include:

- official examinations and procedures in the field of industrial property;
- performance of certain tasks in connection with copyright and rights related to copyright;
- central governmental information and documentation activities in the field of intellectual property;
- participation in the preparation of intellectual property legislation;

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<sup>13</sup> [www.gotohungary.co.uk](http://www.gotohungary.co.uk)

<sup>14</sup> [www.pecs2010.hu](http://www.pecs2010.hu)

<sup>15</sup> [www.mszh.hu](http://www.mszh.hu)

- preparation and implementation of the government’s strategy for the protection of intellectual property, initiation and execution of governmental measures required for this purpose;
- performance of professional tasks of international and European co-operation in the field of intellectual property protection.

In one of their latest reports (2008) they identified culture as a leading sector of the copyright industry, which especially contributes to creative industry. They examined the dynamics of the development and concluded that the process will probably stay vibrant until 2020.

## 2.6. *Studio Metropolitana Ltd.*

Studio Metropolitana Ltd.<sup>16</sup> (owned by city of Budapest) is key player in discussing urban development and city marketing, especially in Budapest. They participate in fairs, forums (MIPIM, Expo Real, Budapest Property Forum), organise «*Urbitalis NagyVárosFesztivál*» («Urbital Festival»-the Grand-City-Festival) and started DunaLog international cooperation on Danube (Danube Partnership Network). They play a key role in developing community and cultural space in Budapest and other partner cities.

Besides development projects they research the role cultural activities play in urban space, especially the role of open-air cultural festivals. In 2006 they surveyed public opinion at 14 open air festivals in Budapest. The result was not very surprising: the most well known festival was Sziget Festival<sup>17</sup>, but citizens support the idea of Night of Museums<sup>18</sup> and Festival of Crafts (*Mesterségek Ünnepe*)<sup>19</sup> the most.

## 3. Private organisations of Cultural Observation

Under private organisations, researchers usually understand for-profit and non-profit organisations as well. The research and players in the field of cultural observation are listed as follows:

- For-profit organisations:
  - Metropolitan Research Institute (MRI, Városkutatás Ltd.).
  - KPMG and others.

<sup>16</sup> [www.studiometropolitana.hu](http://www.studiometropolitana.hu)

<sup>17</sup> [www.sziget.hu](http://www.sziget.hu)

<sup>18</sup> [www.muzeumokejszakaja.hu](http://www.muzeumokejszakaja.hu)

<sup>19</sup> [www.mestersegekunnepe.hu](http://www.mestersegekunnepe.hu)

— Non-profit organisations:

- Non-profit research groups.
- Summa-Artium Ltd.
- Local and Regional Monitoring Institute (LRMI, *Helyi Obszervatórium*).
- Festival Associations.
- The Budapest Observatory and others.

### 3.1. *For-profit organisations*

Organisations making profit from cultural research might sound strange in Eastern Europe, notwithstanding two examples: a Hungarian company with their own staff and that of a company with an international background and larger capacity.

#### 3.1.1. *Metropolitan Research Institute*

The Metropolitan Research Institute<sup>20</sup> (MRI, *Városkutatás Ltd.*) works in the areas of housing policy and urban development as well as local government finance research in Hungary. The Institute undertakes research, consultancy assignments, organises conferences and designs and provides training in these areas. Its focus covers town planning, regeneration and the relationship of towns with its citizens, suburbs and neighbourhoods (Tosics, 2007). One of their greatest successes was the regeneration of the 13<sup>th</sup> district (the river bank of Duna) of Budapest.

#### 3.1.2. *KPMG*

KPMG<sup>21</sup> and its relevant units focus on Cultural Tourism and EU funds in Hungary with some comparisons of Eastern European countries. In its recent report on EU funds in Central Eastern Europe they measure the developments in using EU funds, including EU funds for culture (KPMG, 2009). It seems that countries in this region are using EU funds in a similar way, however, the place of culture is rather diverse. Development plans and the purpose of cultural funding from EU Structural Funds is being understood rather differently.

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<sup>20</sup> [www.mri.hu](http://www.mri.hu)

<sup>21</sup> [www.kpmg.hu](http://www.kpmg.hu)

### 3.1.3. *Other*

There are numerous for-profit organisations working in the field of consultancy and project management, but they are often invisible from the public attention —sometimes from professionals as well. Larger consultancy companies (Progress Consulting, Expanzió, Xellum, etc.) work in the field of public policy and occasionally cover the field of culture, however, their main focus is not culture therefore they are on the longer list of cultural observatories.

## 3.2. *Non-profit organisations*

Cultural research is a complex topic to choose when establishing a cultural organisation, foundation or association. Thousands of organisations can be found in the non-profit database of KSH based on this topic, however, there are only a few that actively take part in discussions and debates on culture with their own contribution.

### 3.2.1. *Non-profit Research Group*

The non-profit Research Group (*Nonprofit Kutatócsoport*)<sup>22</sup> is a group of researchers with the same or similar interests who started the scientific debate on non-profit, NGO and civil organisations in Hungary and are still active in the field of cultural research. One of its recent surveys focused on corporate social responsibility and especially donations by companies (Kuti, 2010). Culture is not among the first priorities (health, poor, sport), but still is in the top 10 of donation targets.

### 3.2.2. *Summa-Artium*

The Hungarian Arts and Business organisation Summa-Artium<sup>23</sup> focuses on donation habits and private money for culture. In their yearly reports they inform readers about surveys and estimations on the overall market value of donations for culture.

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<sup>22</sup> [www.nonprofitkutas.hu](http://www.nonprofitkutas.hu)

<sup>23</sup> [www.summa-artium.hu](http://www.summa-artium.hu)

### 3.2.3. *Local and Regional Monitoring Institute*

The Local and Regional Monitoring Institute (LRMI, *Helyi Observatórium*)<sup>24</sup> is independent of any political party's influence and delivers regular reports about local authorities. LRMI seeks to provide research in the following topics: local-government systems, local democracy and local services and the monitoring of autonomous governments. They focus on local and regional developments in order to foster indicators and indexes for the analysis of local and regional authorities. They also publish surveys and comparable data at national and international level.

Specific indicators and fields measured by the Local and Regional Monitoring Institute are the following:

— *Local governance / social inclusion-exclusion*

- Key figures (appearance) of local democracy
- Civic participation and the involvement of NGOs in the decision-making process
- The opportunities of ethnic minorities and migrants, the integrity of civic society

— *Local services-local authorities*

- The number of services
- The accessibility of services
- The quality of services

— *Local finance*

- Stability of finance
- Incomes
- Priorities of local governments

— *Degree of citizen-satisfaction*

- Demographic change
- Trust and satisfaction of citizens
- Public support for local policy-making

— *Condition of local economy, local resources*

- Change of citizen's income and employment
- Change of company's competitiveness
- Change of services of local-governments (accessibility, quality)

Source: [www.mri.hu](http://www.mri.hu)

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<sup>24</sup> [www.localmonitoring.eu](http://www.localmonitoring.eu)

Their recent report<sup>25</sup> focused on cultural activities supported by mid-sized towns (Debrecen, Pécs, Miskolc, Szeged, etc.) and compared the rate of cultural spending. It concluded that even similar size cities with 170-220,000 inhabitants use a completely different funding structure, shares and percentages by arts fields according to local circumstances.

#### 3.2.4. *Festival Rating System*

In 2007 five Festival Associations decided to establish a kind of Festival Rating System<sup>26</sup>. The main expectations of the founders were to provide clearer criteria for the decisions on the distribution of public funds why to support festivals. By giving answers a stronger legitimation, the justification of public support to festivals could be achieved, which also could improve guidance for private sponsors. The general and professional public might be better orientated about festivals and the quality of festivals should increase in the future. Today there are 212 registered festivals and they have a searchable database and statistics on the registered organisations. Statistics cover the following fields: number of visitors, budget, geographical position, age of festival, duration, and organiser's legal statue, membership in other organisations, venues and number of programmes.

#### 3.2.5. *The Budapest Observatory*

The Budapest Observatory<sup>27</sup> focuses on financing culture and cultural policy in East Central Europe. Practical research fields might be described as comparing cultural participation in Eastern European countries. Main reports focus on Eastern participation in the Culture 2000 programme, festivals, literature translation and culture in development programmes.

#### 3.2.6. *Other*

Non-profit organisations taking the role of researching culture are usually connected to universities (student associations, background foundations of university departments) therefore form a part of university education processes.

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.nonprofitkutatatas.hu/letoltendo/Kulturliis.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> [www.fesztivalregisztracio.hu](http://www.fesztivalregisztracio.hu)

<sup>27</sup> [www.budobs.org](http://www.budobs.org)

## 4. Summary

This short description endeavoured to show the cultural observation state of art in Hungary, but also would like to give reflection to the Italian case of cultural observation. It seems that Hungary might have several national/regional cultural observatories in the future since this need has been recognised by LRMI, even in a broader context (expertise for local authorities). The size and geography of the country does not allow the mushrooming of observatories, nevertheless certain local needs for getting feedback on cultural activities is still needed to realise new dialogues on culture with local leaders.

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## Chapter 10

# Cultural (transformation) Observatories in Spain

*Cristina Ortega, Roberto San Salvador del Valle, Rafael Peñafiel*

The doors of the cultural centre open every morning. The cinemas are ready and set up to offer a wide programme of dubbed films, in original version, or in 3D format. The bookshops have attractive window displays to draw in the passer-by. The museums are advertised in the press as offering a unique life experience. Radios broadcast non-stop music from here and there, from yesterday and today. Libraries, converted into media libraries, put creation within easy reach. The next theatre festival is advertised from lamp posts. Television multiplies the opportunities to enjoy films at home, live music, debates and talk shows, diverse range of documentaries. Jazz bands play in the underground to advertise the programmes to be put on over the coming days. Online, thousands of websites showcase music, works of art, bits of literature, audiovisual compositions...

After years of managing a wide number of facilities, services and programmes, we have accumulated sufficient experience to do things well. We have tried everything. We have exponentially improved the presentation of our cultural proposals. We have turned spaces inside out and made them welcoming. We have used all the tools within our reach (marketing, psychological, sociological, technological and social networking) to modernise our messages and staging.

Yet, all this does not prevent the number of questions raised and their degree of complexity from increasing exponentially. It does not prevent highly experienced and thoroughly prepared culture professionals to seek answers from those entrusted with observing the situation.

What do citizens do? What do they do and what do they not do? Do they do it alone, or with their partner, family, friends or in different types of groups? With whom do they enjoy culture? Do they wander along the streets, remain at home, go to school or university, go to work, enter into private and public facilities or visit the virtual space without moving from where they are? Where do they move? Do they go into cultural facilities or remain outside? How do they manage their free time? How long does it take them to do things? How frequently? At what time? At what point in the year, month or week? How do they distribute their limited resources between what is necessary, desired and superfluous? Why are some cultural centres bursting at the seams and others are empty? Why are some books, tickets or seats sold out in just a few hours and other end up being given away? Why do some people go to cultural centres? How can cultural supply be improved to meet demand? What can be done from now onwards?

They are questions that, raised by cultural stakeholders in this or other ways, turn to statistical data and the reports from cultural observatories for answers. Yet, are the observatories qualified to answer the questions raised by cultural professionals? How could they improve their response to the questions raised?

One of the main problems possibly lies in the different speed at which company and culture, on the one hand, and cultural observatories, on the other hand, progress. The acceleration of time and the globalisation of the space have changed and are changing society, in general, and culture, in particular. The observatories are thus working on making the relevant changes to unachievable funding and compulsory continuous training contents, methods and techniques.

What is the real situation of cultural observatories in Spain? What are their main features? What are their future challenges? These are some of the questions considered below.

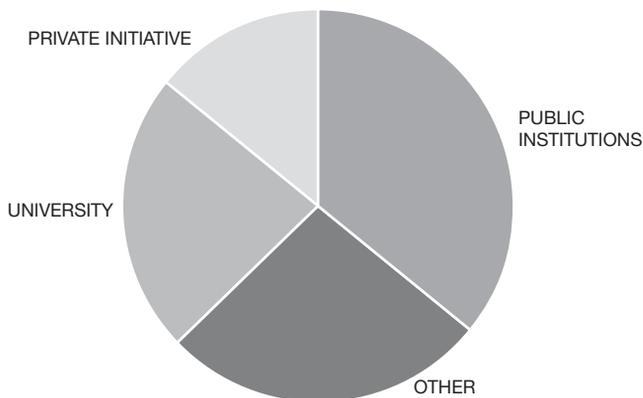
## **Cultural observatories in Spain**

We will now provide an overview of cultural observatories in Spain, before moving on to reflect on their degree of suitability to meet the aforementioned social demands.

## Ownership

**Graph 1**

Type of Institution



**Table 1**

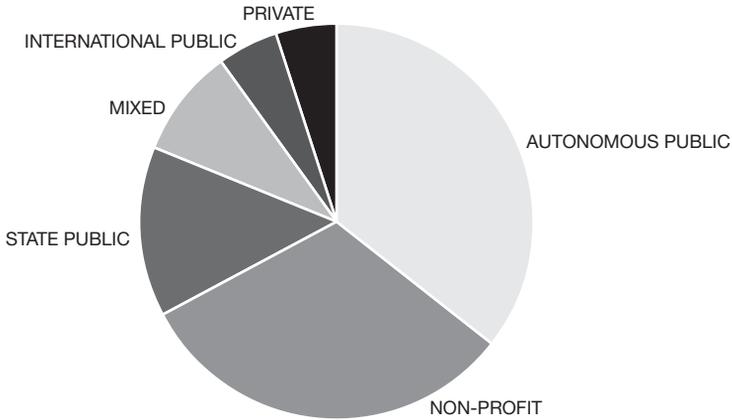
Type of Institution

Public Institutions	36%
Others	27%
University	23%
Private Initiative	14%

One third of Spanish cultural observatories are run by public institutions, a fourth by universities and the remaining by a range of different initiatives.

**Graph 2**

Type of organisation



**Table 2**

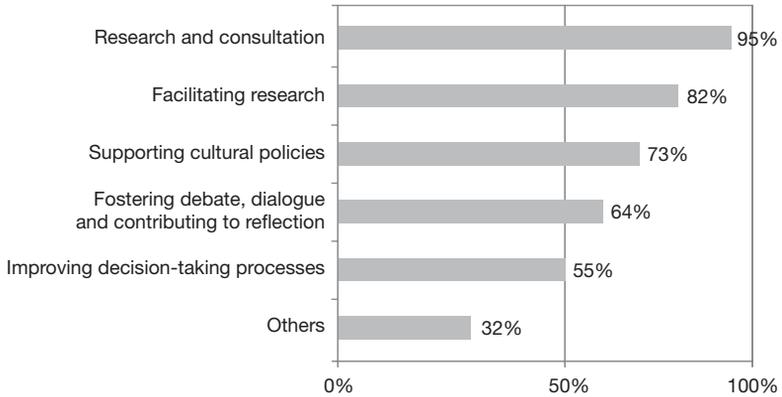
Type of organisation

Autonomous Public	36%
Non-Profit	32%
State Public	17%
Mixed	9%
International Public	5%
Private	5%

Certain uniformity can be seen when it comes to the legal status of the observatories. In the majority of cases (54%), Spanish cultural observatories depend on public institutions: autonomous (36%), state (14%) and international (5%). A significant percentage (32%) belongs to non-profit entities, mainly foundations. There are very few mixed models, which account for around 5%.

**Graph 3**

Functions



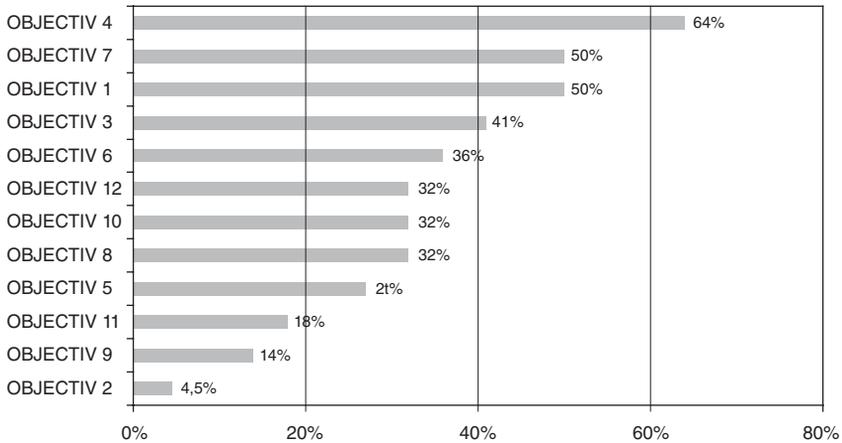
**Table 3**

Functions

Research and Consultation	95%
Facilitating Research	82%
Supporting Cultural Policies	73%
Fostering Debate and Dialogue, and Contributing to Reflection	64%
Improving Decision-Taking Processes	55%
Others	32%

As far as the functions performed, a clear focus on research can be seen whether in terms of facilitating or implementing it (82%). The function of supporting cultural policies (73%) and of fostering dialogue and contributing to reflection (64%) also had a significant presence. And, finally, the function of developing studies and tools to help improve decision-taking (55%) was also represented.

**Graph 4**  
Objectives



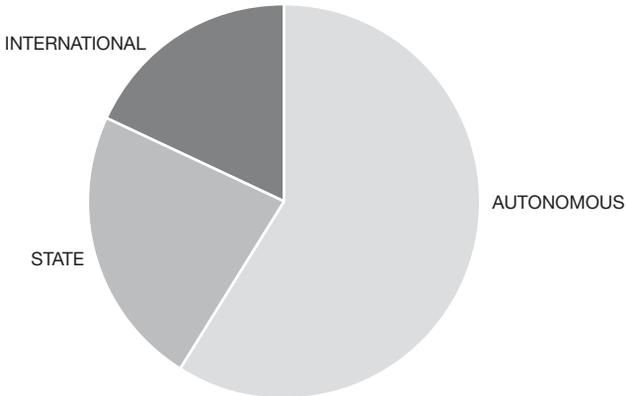
- OBJ 1: Foster a debate forum open to the expression of the ideas, participation and creativity, as an independent contribution to the progress of a region/town. (50%).
- OBJ 2: Facilitate sustainable cooperation in the field of shared cultural research, by harmonising regional information systems through a single/comparable system. (4,5%).
- OBJ 3: Act as a meeting place for exchange and reflection on the different key initiative or policies implemented in a specific cultural sphere. Design common strategies for certain cultural sphere. (41%).
- OBJ 4: Observe and monitor the dynamics and evolution of the sector. Assess, compare and disseminate public policies. (64%).
- OBJ 5: Rigorously deal with all actions to do with territorial cultural planning. (27%).
- OBJ 6: Support for the private sector: Contribute to narrowing business and economic relations in the international setting. Contribute to set up a favourable framework for the development of the business cultural sector. Search for structural harmonic balances between the public activity and the market. (36%).
- OBJ 7: Support the design of cultural policies providing observation, analysis and assessment instruments as public utility tools. Provide the cultural policy managers with tools that enable them to improve the perspective and prospective of their work. Visualise the impact of the cultural phenomena. Predict future scenarios. (50%).
- OBJ 8: Endow the cultural sector with measurable and reliable statistical information that improves its day-to-day work. (32%).
- OBJ 9: Train cultural stakeholders. (14%).
- OBJ 10: Report to society on the situation of the cultural sector. (32%).
- OBJ 11: Lobbying: defend the interests of certain cultural spheres or sectors. (18%).
- OBJ 12: Establish cooperation systems with organisations specialising in training, documentation and cultural research. Facilitate the transfer of cultural knowledge. (32%).

With respect to the objectives pursued by the majority of the existing cultural observatories, it can be seen that those that have a greater presence are those related to observation, analysis and assessment of the cultural sector and its policies, in addition to fostering participation and debate. This fact is not surprising and is in keeping with the aforementioned functions.

On the contrary, it is noteworthy that Objective 2: «facilitate sustainable cooperation in the field of shared cultural research, by harmonising regional information systems through a single/comparable system», has a limited 4.5% presence. Recently, particularly in the last decade, a large number of cultural observatories have emerged with major differences when it comes to carrying out their work. Therefore, harmonising the information systems by means of a single/comparable system should be a common priority to all those entities, in order to facilitate greater synergy and efficiency in their work.

**Graph 5**

Sphere of Action



**Table 4**

Sphere of Action

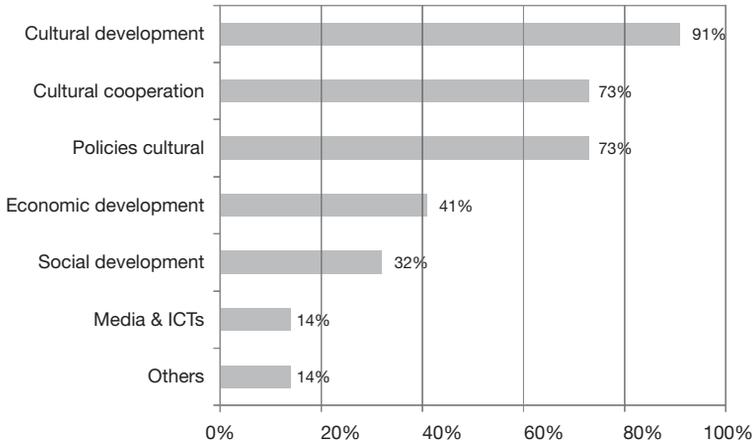
Autonomous	59%
State	23%
International	18%
Local	0%

The main sphere of action, in the case of Spanish cultural observatories, is at autonomous level (59%). This is possibly due to an increasing dependency on these entities of the Autonomous Communities. This fact can be considered as positive as it facilitates closer ties at local level and protects cultural diversity, by facilitating information to autonomous and local entities. Yet, it can hinder an overall view, due to the great fragmentation of contents, methodologies and techniques used.

*Priority thematic areas*

**Graph 6**

Priority thematic areas



**Table 5**

Priority thematic areas

Cultural Development	91%
Cultural Policies	73%
Cultural Cooperation	73%
Economic Development	41%
Social Development	32%
Media and ICTs	14%
Others	14%

The main thematic areas of Spanish cultural observatories are related to cultural policies, and cultural cooperation and development (between 73% and 91%). The more economic (41%) or social (32%) approach plays a smaller role. And the thematic area of the media and communication technologies is even significantly smaller.

**Graph 7**

Services and Activities



**Table 6**

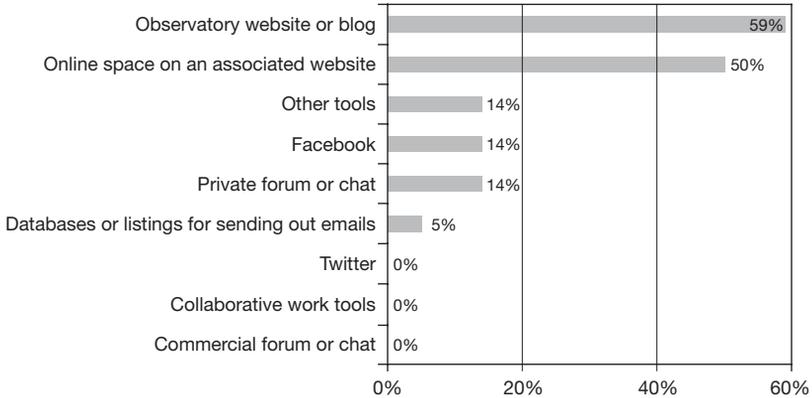
Services and Activities

Research	73%
Documentation Services, Publications, Database, Reports, Directories	55%
Consultancy/Preparing Proposals to Improve Public Policies	41%
Training	23%
Managing Cooperation Projects	23%
Organising Meetings, Conferences, Debates	23%
Private Sector Consultancy (Commercial Strategy Design, Developing Cultural Industries)	15%
Participating in Forums, Research Groups, Congresses, Seminars	14%
Organising Awards	5%

The main activities of the observatories studied are focused on research (73%) and the dissemination of knowledge and data obtained (55%). However, it can also be seen that those observatories offer activities focused on cooperation, participation and exchange of ideas by means of developing conferences, debates, etc. (32%). Finally, it is interesting to stress that some of the observatories offer services aimed at boosting the development of the culture sector, by means of proposing training for professionals from the world of culture (23%) and the organisation of competitions and awards (5%).

**Graph 8**

Dissemination and Communication



**Table 7**

Dissemination and Communication

Databases or Listings for Sending Out Emails	5%
Observatory Website or Blog	59%
Online Space on an Associated Website	50%
Commercial Forum or Chat	0%
Private Forum or Chat	14%
Collaborative Work Tools	0%
Facebook	14%
Twitter	0%
Other Tools	14%

Websites and blogs (59%), along with online spaces on associated websites (50%), are the main tools used by observatories to disseminate information online. Furthermore, in some cases, they also use private forums and chats (14%), such as the social network, Facebook, and Rich Site Summary (RSS), a tool to syndicate or share information. These types of tools are not only worthwhile as they are designed for users to look for and access information, but they also enable interaction. On the

other hand, other more passive systems, such as databases or listings for sending out emails, are barely used by the observatories studied.

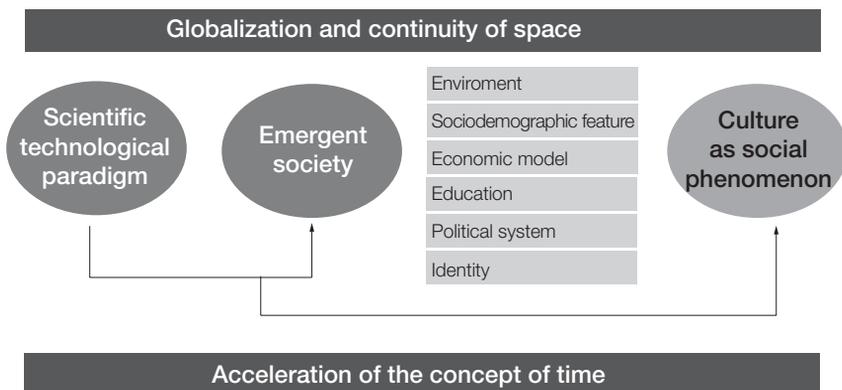
### The observatories and Cultural Transformation

Using the aforementioned overview, we plan to redefine the future of the contents and concerns of the observatories after reflecting on the transformation of society, leisure and culture, currently underway.

When talking about culture in a globalisation context, we should refer to at least seven fundamental questions that are of interest for political managers, designers or artists, producers or distributors, managers, educators or activities organisers, but, particularly, for observatory managers, the interpreters of future and present culture: the way in which time and space have changed and are going to change; how to achieve a sustainable environmental model; to what extent all the current socio-demographic changes influence and will influence us; what are the ways to harmonise learning and enjoyment; how we deal and will deal with the new economic model based on marketing not of *products* but of *experiences*; the changes to the political system that we are witnessing and will witness at all levels from the global to the local; and the way in which our cultural proposal is related to the concept of shared identities.

### Graph 9

Observing culture as a social phenomenon



With regard to time and space, we are witnessing a fundamental change to our social structure, as the current paradigm of science and technology has fundamentally changed the rules of the game. In the same way as the steam engine changed all aspects of everyday life, a small chip has gradually modified our way of seeing reality. It has caused time to pressurise, to speed up. We are experiencing a permanent feeling of vital stress (Durán, 2007). Time is out of our control. Nothing can be for tomorrow, or even half an hour later, even though it would be worth waiting, to think more about the idea or the project. Logically, this has led to something that we could call fast leisure (Honoré, 2004), using an analogy with fast food, in the world of leisure and culture. We are used to making products that are easy to digest. We have good examples on today's television, where contents are developed, sometimes, with lightweight and jocular messages, and on others, with deeper messages with more contents, but always administered in a user-friendly, concise way, while waiting for the series or programme that will follow. Therefore, culture is vying against other leisure proposals that have turned their dialogue with potential users, target public and audiences into an uninhabited, simple interaction.

This has also meant that space has become compressed. For the majority of citizens, except for collectives with disability or reduced mobility, it is easier to move around than a few decades ago. Even though the peripheries continue to be badly treated in terms of their inter-peripheral connectivity and movement, as they always have to go through centre, in that old-fashioned radial concept of transport and communication.

Our realities are likewise compressed. We watch the tsunamis, wars, famines, coups d'état, as if they were happening in our own living room. Any world event is there with the first or second course of lunch or dinner. This all means that we are living in constant tele-communication. Communication is a reality with which we live everyday and anything that is not known through the media does not exist. We are being permanently transported, in other words, taken to another place, living in different places to the one that physically surrounds us.

How are we going to digest so many pictures, so much information, catastrophes and human tragedy between lentil soup, steak and yoghurt? Only a numbing or emotional hyperbolisation process (Goleman, 1996) has been able to make us insensitive to so much disaster at lunch or dinnertime. Leisure and culture, made up by facts, on occasions, which are not newsworthy, and, at other times, loaded with a non-profitable

goodness, are seeking a niche between the spectacular, the immediate and the media friendly.

Accessibility, communicability and personal mobility are required and we co-exist with them every day in our cities. People live, study, work, buy or enjoy their leisure and culture in different spaces. Spaces that can be separated by a few or hundreds of kilometres, generating a pleiad of pendular movements that change over the week, weekends, long weekends and holidays. They describe customised and highly complex routes and itineraries, with moments of great satisfaction and saturation in the use of transport means and communication routes, along with others that are clearly underused. In that setting, it is reasonable that the cultural manager of a municipality, of a metropolitan area expects a citizen from another municipality to come to enjoy an organised activity; in the same way that it can be expected that the cultural centre programme reflects a percentage of citizens from other countries; that the programmers open up their offer to citizens from different origins; that the offer expects to have audiences from other parts of the continent or of the world. Any citizen becomes a potential user of cultural centres, based in municipalities and cities that are not his/her own.

Our space has been off-shored, a phenomenon not only of companies, but also of our policies. In this context, as an attempt to retain the population and citizens in our common places, in those that Manuel Castells called the *space of places* (1997), the institutions are tirelessly looking to generate star events and containers, through which the citizens are retained, as residents, or attracted, as visitors, by the cultural offer, by means of hubs, by means of switches and of fixed points where the off-shoring flows cross. The new cultural centres are in a desperate race to establish their own audiences and attract ones from outside that offset the loss of their own.

On the other hand, literacy takes on a new importance in this context. On the one hand, a new illiteracy has appeared and is linked to lack of knowledge about digital codes, which are impenetrable and incomprehensible for a significant percentage of citizens, which will remain outside the enjoyment of the potentials of the technological-scientific paradigm and, consequently, of the creation of leisure and culture developed on digital medium. On the other hand, another aspect can be seen in people who, even though they know how to use and handle a thousand and one cutting-edge devices, are not capable of turning them into a medium to serve their personal development. We can come up against digitally illiterate people for whom the doors of the greatest abstraction capacity are closed and digitally literate people where the manipulation of their consciousness is a fact (Aranguren, 1985). Leisure

and culture are up against a double entry e-illiteracy. The cultural centres are facing new difficulties. Along with the real or functional illiteracy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is also the digital illiteracy of those people who do not know their basic codes or when using them, they overlook the necessary critical capacity towards so much light and special effects.

### *Environmental and sustainability*

The society model generated by industrialisation and accelerated by post-war developmentalism has led us to a risky over-exploitation of spaces and resources. The soil, sub-soil, water, seas, rivers, air and the biosphere as a whole are subject to the pressure of an ecological footprint caused by the outrageous consumer standards of developed nations citizens. Overexploitation is the outrageous consumer model of resources, raw materials and energy, based on the unfolding of human activity in the biosphere: consumer and food habits, use of the land, construction materials, energy and water supply and domestic consumption, intensive practices, single crops, use of fertilizers, reservoirs, inefficient irrigation, abusive felling, exploitation of the subsoil, raw material used, manufacturing and production systems, transport organisation and means used, earth movements, saturation of space by maritime, river, air or earth transport, use of non-renewable energies (fossil fuels), exploitation of hydraulic resources (reservoirs, waves and tides), use of atomic energy, development of alternative energies, large shopping centres, use of the spaces and resources on sun and beach tourism, golf courses, artificial snow slopes, etc.

The consequence is double. On the one hand, there is a progressive reduction of available resources and, on the other hand, of the very biodiversity. Our outrageous consumption of air, earth and hydraulic resources leads to the progressive disappearance of elements that the human being has consumed excessively. And, at the same time, it has led to the extinction of living beings linked to ecosystems and habitats subject to that pressure.

Another outcome is environmental pollution, both of the air and noise, soil and waters. *Pollution* is the transfer system of materials and energy, supplied by the waste from human activities released into the biosphere: lack of balance in the natural production cycles, poisoning of the subsoil and surface, imbalances in the water cycle, poisoning underground and surface waters, eutrophication (increased algae), thermal changes to seawater, changes to the carbon and oxygen cycles, thermal inversion, greenhouse effect (global heating), acid rain, poisoning of the

air (smog), holes in the ozone layer, landfills and dumps, construction rubble, cooling and heating systems, residual water and sewage, sanitary waste, toxic deposit bags, waste, effluent and emissions, mining waste, radioactive waste and rubble, scrap metal, oils, oil spills, space waste, traffic emissions and noise pollution, fertilizers and phytosanitary waste, etc.

The outcome of this process is the climate change phenomenon, as the expression of the deep change to temperature conditions in time.

Leisure and culture, through the choice of formats and media, can endorse or help to reshape the model. The application of the sustainability criteria can lead to: the generation of facilities for the recovery of degraded spaces, with appropriate materials and structures; waste management with selective collection, treatment, recycling and reuse; rationalisation in the use of water, soil, air, energy and raw materials; the strict control of opening licences, activities and works; the application of eco-audits, environmental quality reports, environmental impact assessments and load capacity evaluations; and the design of cultural policies underpinned by the sustainable development philosophy.

### *Socio-demographic changes*

A deep socio-demographic change is occurring in the emerging society, in our cities and towns. The life cycle concept has changed: children stop being children too quickly; young people want to be become adults too quickly, while society keeps them, as Enrique Gil Calvo put it, as *adultescents* for a long period; adults become older earlier and the old are not elderly until they are nearly one hundred or until illness hits them hard.

These life styles are also fragmented where we can no longer talk about youth but rather of young people; there is no childhood, there are children; there is no third age, there are older people; there is no single way of being a woman, there are very different expressions as a woman. And we even have collectives, people who we declare to be *illegal*, that is, they were born, are here and, regardless, we say that they do not exist. *Youth* is over valued, we all want to be young, we all want to feel young until we are seventy years old and we want to innovate permanently. It is therefore strange that there are sports, cultural or leisure events, which are repeated, as they normally go out of fashion in two years. Yet, on the other hand, young people are greatly overlooked. Even though youth is a value on the rise, young people do not exist. They live thinking about solving the precariousness of their lives, by obtaining a decent job and

a home, which enables them to become independent and lead their own lives.

The progressive equality of women is also discussed. In the same way as when it comes to *youth*, women are socially allowed to be present, but there are many barriers and added difficulties. And in some cases, the change process has not occurred by conviction, but because they account for 51% of the potential target of the leisure supply. And when it comes to the sphere of culture, we know that they represent a highest percentage.

We refer to the family without being aware of the many different types of family environments in which we are currently brought up. From the traditional «Happy Families» unit that emphasised the diversity of the geographical origins (Bantus, Eskimos, Indians, Mexicans, etc.) and not the common structure that was taken for granted (grandfather-grandmother, father-mother and son-daughter), to a family unit consisting of one single member, single-parent, with natural and adopted children, with step-brothers and sisters from different relationships of one parent, etc.

Yet, where does this all take us? We are drawn into leisure and culture where youth is an absolute value, where innovation must be ongoing, in a meaningless crazy race, in no specific direction. It takes us to a cultural supply that opts for multiculturalism that is still undigested, which we discuss but without knowing exactly of what it consists or what it implies to each person. We are offered a culture where feminisation is not equalitarian, with many rights accorded to women, but with very little effective guarantee that they will be applied. There is a great fragmentation of tastes and practices that, deep down, does not tally with an identical will of respect, guarantee and effective protection of the diversity.

Cultural centres manage their projects within this controversial context: looking for children that are no longer so, young people who are very different from each other and who will be so due to an excessively long journey, timeless adults, the elderly who are no longer so elderly or who really begin to be so, women with a double burden, a greater diversification of origins and sources, families of different sizes and make-ups. Our target audience is so disparate that we are forced to programme in and from diversity.

### *Economic model*

We are witnessing the development of a new economic model in our society. Vicente Verdú, the journalist, calls it «fiction capitalism» (2003), referring to an economy of the fleeting, spectacular and virtual: is it the knowledge economy? Is it the economy of the creative industries? (Flo-

rida, 2005; Landry, 2000). Or, rather, of information accumulation, not necessarily of knowledge, where the multimedia absorbs the word until it is diluted among images and sounds, which sometimes render it meaningless.

We act in free competition, but we reserve protectionist measures for everything that really interests us. Production and consumption are off-shored. Companies are being merged until, in the end, a few express everything and many watch the person who expresses it. An economic model is developed that is generating an increasingly greater socio-space polarisation. Part of the planet enjoys the benefits of post-industrial society, while the majority of others struggle to survive. Part of the First World cities enjoy the emerging opportunities, while another part of those same cities are shipwrecked in a Fourth World, as has been made clear in the unrest in neighbourhoods of cities nearby and the silence in many others.

And what is happening with leisure and culture? They are progressively moving closer to «fiction capitalism», which enables essential values to be converted into merchandise. As Jeremy Rifkin stated (2000), they play a key role in the new economy, as they contribute first-rate raw material to the «commercialisation of experience». We protect cultural diversity, but the UNESCO Declaration or the WTO Ethics Code are based on weak columns, under attack from the robust global market, which is far ahead of the measures that try to safeguard that diversity. We think, by way of an example, in that wide apparent film offer shown in complexes with numerous cinemas, as when going through the list of the films shown in any of our cities it can be seen that the many different cinemas are not related to the small list of titles and sources.

The off-shoring of consumption follows that of production. A designer, a producer, a programmer from Buenos Aires has to compete against a supply from Los Angeles, Tokyo, Bilbao, London, Brussels, Strasbourg, Barcelona, or from anywhere else, where each leisure, culture and entertainment industry is generating a product that will be direct competition by raising the interest of its potential user. Physical consumption, exhibition and distribution media (museums, theatres, libraries, auditoriums, culture centres, etc.) compete with virtual scenarios (portals and websites, television, videogames, etc.) The commercialisation of the experience has found a field subscribed for its full development in the spheres of leisure and culture.

Cultural centres are also drawn into «fiction capitalism», the commercialisation of the leisure-culture experience, off-shoring of production and consumption, progressive concentration around large groups, brands and franchises, commercialisation of the experience through events and shows. The consolidated example of the Guggenheim is a good example of this far-reaching socio-economic change in the world of culture.

## *Lifelong Learning*

Education taken to be instruction has given way to a teaching-learning process where the student subject takes on a key role that was unknown in the past. Children are joining the education system at an earlier and earlier age, from when they are just toddlers. On the other hand, the educational process has extended throughout life (lifelong learning), without limits on age or life stages. There has also been a move from knowledge education to skill-based learning (skills for jobs). On the other hand, educating in values, constructing citizenship and achieving a world ethics code have become the epicentre of education reform around the world. Education has spread through informal spheres, with a growing influence of the mass media and social networks.

In this context, education of, for and in leisure and culture acquires a necessary and key role. We will thus be preparing citizens to learn by enjoying and to enjoy learning. The aim is to focus the access to culture, not as a boring and sad event, but rather as an enjoyable learning process and simultaneous enjoyment.

It seems that the education in citizen values, linked to protecting and defending human rights, is going to be a necessary aspect interwoven with leisure and culture.

Digital literacy is also considered as an aspect of the leisure and culture of the new century: a commitment to the literacy of those people who cannot enjoy the potential of the digital electronic world; and a significant teaching-learning task with those who use a very small percentage of the dignifying opportunities of the information and communication technologies.

## *Political changes*

In this context, we can see a far-reaching political change, an important transformation of the meaning of politics. The current benchmark ideologies emerged in the industrial society, in the 19th and 20th centuries. To a great extent, they are insufficient to answer the new problems and the new expressions of old problems (San Salvador del Valle, 2000). A certain crisis of the ideologies leads to an apparent relativism that everything is valid. All ideologies have turned ecology into environmental terms, even though they do not all go from the rhetoric of the preamble. All ideologies foster the introduction of the Internet, but they are not all clear about the reason why and its implications. We could continue with many references to all the open water channels in current ideological dis-

courses. To a certain extent, we are continuing with the risk of the sole thought, as our economic model leaves a very small fork so that the ideologies, the parties and social movements that develop them, have sufficient space to do something different.

We have an unresolved problem in relation to globalisation versus localisation (Borja, 1997). The technological scientific paradigm has enabled the connection of anywhere in the world immediately. The current economic model has developed a global market by skillfully using that paradigm. Yet, the spaces of the places, the local economies, the political communities, find a difficult and contradictory niche among such globalisation.

Parliamentary liberal democracy is going through a deep crisis. We have just come out of a sequence of European referendum and elections where the citizens, in some places, grudgingly approved its draft Constitution, and, in others, with a notable integrating tradition, turned their back on the proposed legislation. The very democracies of the nation state are facing difficulties to meet the new demands of the citizens, together with the increasingly influential cities, regions and nations to be found inside.

We are witnessing, *de facto*, an economic globalisation orientated by market forces, but without a world government, without, as Daniel Innerarity would put it, cooperative governance (2006) that moderates its likings and desires. There are anti-globalisation movements and movements that are searching for alter-globalisation. We are observing privatisation, not only of the management of public space, with regard to providing services, but also of the crisis of the public space itself, where the relationship of the citizen between the individuals and the State, generators of community and solidarity, are biased by the presence of the market and consumption, together with the appropriation practices by politicians and the mechanisms of the political parties. The power of the citizens has been replaced by the power of consumers, and even, by the power of the moneyed consumers.

And how do leisure and culture fit into this political scenario? Well, leisure and culture are excessively de-ideologised, excessively concerned about the audience and consumption. They are de-valourised, very concerned about aestheticism and the forms and barely committed to messages and contents. And we are witnessing the shrinking of the breakup of the public space in the different appropriation. Much of the public space that is designed in culture and leisure policies, that is managed, encouraged or energised, behaves in the same parameters as the private supply, in a total and absolute symbiosis. It has remained under the influence of what has been called the «New Public Management», based on the idea that the application of private business management formulas

to the institutional public sector would solve a large part of the defects of the welfare state in crisis.

The cultural centres enjoy the contradiction of this conception of politics and leisure: the ideological political de-valuation, along with their instrumental political valuation. Which politician, with his eye on the spotlight, prefers to take part in the opening of a cultural centre? What construction of a museum or library does not involve an international tendering process with the best and most attractive names of contemporary architecture? Globalisation barges into the cultural centres and call into question their localisation and inculturation. The management model of those centres, even in the case of the public ones, is privatised in terms of concepts, uses and practices. Democratic participation in those centres is reduced to the participation of the consumer and user more than the citizen themselves.

### *Identity Concept*

Another fundamental change in our emerging society is occurring around the concept of identity. The conflict, previously set out in political or economic terms, can also be seen with respect to identity, in an unresolved digestion of the global and local. There is a clear process of cultural standardisation where even the diversification process is reduced to a type of cultural new age. In other words, the cultural identities achieve recognition when, for example, local players are assimilated by music that purifies them until they are recognised as World Music around the world. Our identity features a shape that diversifies when it loses an important component of its own identity, sometimes in an enriching crossbreeding and others, on the other hand, in a sweetening process by a market that makes it graspable and interchangeable (García Canclini, 1999).

However, we increasingly coexist with more cultural mosaics, fringe and sub-cultures resistant to the standardisation process. We are also witnessing the risk of greater explicit or implicit violence in that anti-standardisation feeling, with which, far from being an active project, some become reactive projects that generate an unproductive resistance.

We are facing a wide disparity of values and life styles that, sometimes, instead of being a positive factor, biased by the market and consumption, fragment the supply and reach us though the immense minority. We are facing a multiplicity of identities and feelings of place that we are still not capable of transgressing, articulating and managing correctly.

Leisure and culture are a reflection of this convergent and divergent mixed mosaic, of multiple identities, standardisation and diversification coexist around leisure and culture activities.

The cultural centres, in the framework of this multiple-identity leisure, move between the western cultural long distance path, with universalised and recognisable values and symbols, and the divergent paths of the immense minorities.

## **Reflecting on the present**

After launching some ideas and provocative remarks about society, leisure and culture, in contrast to the reality of the cultural observatories in Spain, we will now consider: What do the trends highlighted in the first part mean for our professional activity in the sphere of cultural observatories? What does everything set out above imply for a cultural observatory project?

First of all, let us go back to the idea that leisure and culture are a social phenomenon, in other words, they are children of their time. In other words, they are always going to be subject to the influence of all the above. If we live in a demographic, social, political and economic context, etc., culture is going to reflect it and, therefore, nothing is beyond the reach of culture. It is a social product and it is a creation of society itself. And everything that changes in our city, in our metropolitan area, is logically going to modify our way of creating leisure and culture. In fact, it has already changed it and in what way has it done so?

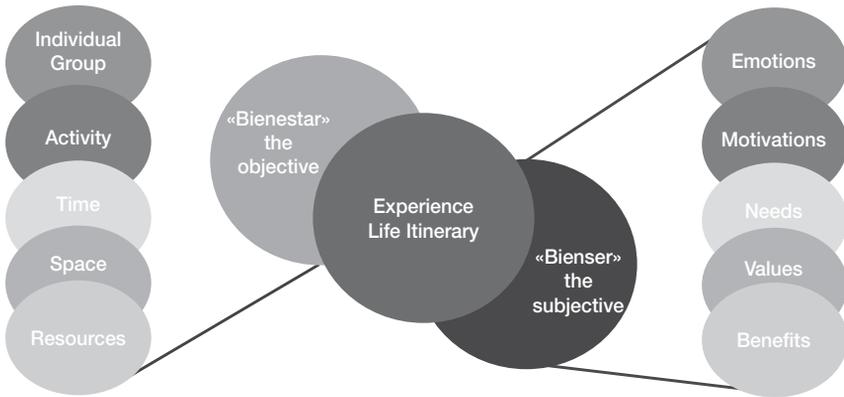
Pre-industrial leisure and culture, with a emphasis on craftsmanship, with minstrel characteristics, was a fact. Pre-industrial societies needed to celebrate, get together, mark natural events during the year (harvests, frosts, spring blossoms) and leisure and culture was there presented as a fact. Anyone in that pre-industrial city thought that, furthermore, s/he could generate certain goods around that human need, in such a way that small groups were set up, which we could call professionals from our perspective, that turned leisure and culture into an item.

Industrialisation introduced leisure and culture (Vogel, 2004) to its concept of production until a fundamental part was reduced to a mere product, which forced the remaining part to uneasily coexist with this new concept. In the evolution of industrial society, concepts such as total quality emphasized the service concept over the product idea. Said in a culture note, it was as important what was being watched on the stage as the quality of the seats, the temperature of the theatre, the price, times, etc.

Yet, we are living in a different time. We are in the sphere of the experience in the emerging society and city. We are in a setting where the citizen basically has been shaped to look for experiences in the existing culture and leisure supply.

## Graph 10

Culture is a phenomenon made up of personal experiences



The agreement between the citizen, as the demander, and the leisure and culture stakeholder, as supplier, will occur if the sum of the activity proposed, the time required, the resources implicitly requested, the spaces suggested as a meeting point, configure an interesting objective experience. And if the sum of the benefits that the citizen obtains from the proposed experience, the interests at stake and the opinions about what is offered, the emotions experienced, the motivations that drive the individual and the values taken from it make up a significant, gratifying and memorable subjective experience.

This is one of the key questions in the future of leisure and culture. The citizens, in order to achieve a satisfactory experience, by completing that time and available space, dedicating those resources allocated, through the suggested activity, want to live, want to experiment and want to feel.

And what is happening in our environment? There are leisure stakeholders, in the sphere of culture, that have understood it and have been capable of successfully providing a response. And let us move outside leisure in order to provide an example. We should recall the already classic slogan that you like to drive. We identify it with a brand of cars, even without having seen any of its cars in the adverts. The campaign is a success from the point of view of communication, but, above all, it is a good example of commercialisation of experience, which even replaced the presentation of the qualities of the product or the rendering of services by the experience caused by its ownership and use. It is not interesting to

discuss the characteristics of the product. When travelling from one point to another, we know that any car will take us there in a reasonable time, in acceptable mechanical, safety and comfort terms. We are looking for something else and those people that sell us cars know it.

Experience now plays a key role. Yet, it is strange that, in a society where the performance and the emotional aspects have triumphed, the world of leisure and culture is a latecomer to a significant extent. It is noteworthy that part of that world does not understand, as has been explained in other sections, that what the citizen is fundamentally looking for are experiences and that all our work has to focus on generating and managing those experiences, memorable experiences.

And what have we lost with this delay in the understanding of the emerging society? We have allowed a large part of the experiences that attract the citizen at this time to be commercialised and human feelings and emotions to be converted into goods. We can see with calculated distance thousands of people dying within buildings that fell down after being hit by several planes and continue to eat the first, main course and even the dessert, as if we were watching a disaster film. We watch a person trying to escape from a tsunami, an earthquake, and continue to watch through a membrane of relative insensitivity. And unless the explosion occurs in an adjoining space, the capacity that we have to truly feel becomes more restricted. Our time increasingly appears more like the classic Truman Show.

Logically, the world of leisure and culture finds it increasingly more difficult to capture the attention of those citizens. Furthermore, the media is among the sectors that have understood the far-reaching impact of the technological-scientific paradigm, of the derived economic globalisation and of the commercialisation of the experience underway. The media are part of those groups of leisure and culture industries that understand the industrialisation process well and have adapted well to the post-industrialisation process. It is no longer possible to find an interview of longer than five minutes on the radio, there is no debate programme at a reasonable time that leads into questions and answers without the microphone getting in the way<sup>1</sup> (except for a slot dedicated to the madman on a hill<sup>2</sup>, belonging

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<sup>1</sup> I am referring to a programme on Spanish television called *59 Segundos*, where the talk show guests only have this much time to set out their arguments, after which time the microphone is physically swallowed up by the table until it is the turn for the next speaker for an identical time limit.

<sup>2</sup> I am referring to another classic on Spanish television, presented by a journalist whose nickname is *El Loco de la Colina* (The Madman on the Hill), which consists of long interviews with figures from politics, culture or society, carried out at a rhythmical and unhurried rate.

to another era and which was the exception that confirmed the rule). A television channel spent a great deal of money to make a documentary on the Transition, Franco and the appointment of King Juan Carlos and then broadcast it at half past one in the early hours of the morning!<sup>3</sup>

We are at a difficult and complex time, because the motivation, perception, values and needs for satisfaction that make up the search for memorable, significant and gratifying experiences are being commercialised by stakeholders who are not among the professionals that run and manage leisure and culture. And what can we do from a cultural observatory when faced with this situation?

We would like to put forward six proposals for debate and reflection that, in theory, have clear practical implications.

In first of all, we would like to encourage the stakeholders of the cultural observatories to *become time management analysts*, so that the cultural stakeholder can find reasons in their detailed information sources to search for programmes that suggest moments for relaxation, to reduce their life style. Our points of reference are the proposals that in other spheres of leisure are being so widely accepted: the spa, hiking, thermal springs, routes and itineraries, rural tourism... The overpowering process of madness where, just at Christmas alone around one and a half million mobile telephones, all of which are under a year old<sup>4</sup>, are thrown into the dustbin, must find a turning point. In this totally runaway process of rash acceleration, the world of cultural observation may contribute data to be studied by cultural stakeholders in order to recover the dead times, the moments of introspection, the needed and yearned for serenity.

Second of all, given the far-reaching off-shoring process that affects production and consumption, the cultural observatory *should pursue in-depth knowledge of proximity as a value*. The proximity leisure facilities (San Salvador del Valle and Lazkano, 2003), such as cinemas, squares, theatres, cultural centre, sports centres, rehearsal rooms, children's play areas, outdoor sports areas, libraries or boulevards, are vitally important when time and space are reconsidered by individuals, in themselves and in coexistence with other citizens. Cultural observatories must develop efficient instruments to analyse and monitor proximity.

In third place, more than speaking about multiculturalism or interculturalism in the cultural observatory, we can analyse the degree of transculturalism of the cultural demand and supply being studied. The cultural observatories can provide information for the cultural stakeholders

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<sup>3</sup> It was the case of the Tele 5 Spanish television channel to mark the anniversary of the coronation of King Juan Carlos I of Spain.

<sup>4</sup> I am referring to Christmas December 2006 in Spain.

that are no longer dragged along by the cultures of the others, imbued by the identity of others, generating creation and production that not only co-exists with other identities, that not only cooperates with other cultures, but rather that is integrated and stops being integrated by other identities. Cultural observatories are their own spaces for the evolutionary study of transculturalism, of showcasing others and of their contributions to the well-being and general being-well.

In fourth place, the cultural observatory needs to *recover its commitment, not only in terms of social responsibility*, a concept that has come into vogue in recent years. Observatories will need to be committed in the endeavour to contribute information on the meaning and contents of the proposed cultural leisure product, service and experience to the cultural stakeholders in the evolution of their commitment towards and with the others. By evaluating, without ousting, the repeated, the known, the old always benefits from the new, the innovative, the latest.

In fifth place, the proposals of the cultural observatory can *work on the geo-localisation of identity*, in the search for solutions where the global coexists with the local. Therefore, the cultural observers shall measure the harmony, the dissolution of elements, hostility, the coiling of the minorities in a dying desire of survival. Yet, by also studying the potential false cultural diversity, the cultural stakeholders have to end up producing light products to feel part of the standardisation from their diversity.

In sixth place, the cultural observatory stakeholders should be concerned with *studying the authentic, memorable and significant nature of the experiences*. The commercialisation of the experience has meant that tears, smiles, happiness and strength have been packaged into luxury bottles of desire. We have examples of television shows that get over a million citizens to take part to show their support for a certain candidate to win a competition, by voting using their mobile telephone, something that not even the most media-friendly politicians have managed to achieved, which is worthy taking time to consider. The competence, ability and skills for managing feelings (frustration, happiness, courage, strength, anger, etc.) of the team running the aforementioned programmes is noteworthy<sup>5</sup>. Where is the motive for reflection? In that it is a good example of commercialising experience. Yet, far from disregarding or

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<sup>5</sup> A relevant example is the television programme of the Spanish Tele 5 channel «Operación Triunfo» (Spanish version of Pop Idol), which attracts audiences of millions of owners for each of its programmes. A group of young people take part in a competition that combines their training at a music academy with the participation in weekly eliminatory programmes, until the winner is chosen.

rejecting it, from a fundamentalism that says more about our incapacity to obtain similar achievements, we would have to analyse them carefully, break down the creation processes until we discover how they are able to connect with the citizens as experiences. This is the role to be played by the cultural observatories over the coming years.

There are many occasions where we have a really good product, but without a target behind, without users, without an audience, and that means we should question whether it is so good. If our target is to go beyond our heritage, creative work, production or dissemination, we have to *recover the citizens and think again from that perspective*: what they feel, what they think and, above all, why they trust or do not trust us. This is where the cultural observatory will find its meaning at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

We are trying to find the means and ways to recover the citizens, by understanding why some, by commercialising the experience, have managed to connect with these citizens and we did not. It is valid not to argue that the citizens are silly and can be managed, that the citizens are child-like, that there are few citizens ready to enjoy the non-commercialised leisure and culture experience. No, it is not sufficient. Research needs to be carried out into what codes, what media, what means, what messages and what ways we have to use to get the citizens to return to our spaces, to share our proposals.

It is nine o'clock at night and the majority of cultural centres are going to close. Those devoted teachers who keenly waited for their potential users were deeply moved to see how citizens looking for ways to relax or be motivated, from unexpected places, with many different socio-demographic profiles, came looking for authentic, transcultural experiences that were committed to the future of the individual and society. These citizens do not know how it happened, they only know that the cultural observatories began to set their sights on them, to think about them, to feel like them, and thus provided them with descriptive information on the cultural transformation underway. The best part is that the majority of the users left feeling as if they had something in common with the cultural centre that welcomed them just a few hours before. This complicity generates a lived, memorable and significant experience. The complicity that occurs when someone learns something and, also, recalls it with pleasure. Cultural observatories facilitate the data to describe the cultural reality in 3D, in all its rough edges, interwoven in the changes of space-time, environmental, socio-demographic, economic, educational, political and identity concepts.

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# Annexes

1. **Round Table of Bologna: Conclusions**
2. **Think Tank in Bilbao: Starting Point Document**
3. **Think Tank in Bilbao: Statement of Principles**
4. **Think Tank in Bilbao: Conclusions**
5. **Final Recommendations**



## Annex 1

# Conclusions of the Round Table

*Bologna, 9th July 2010*

### **The present situation of the European Cultural Observatories**

#### *Heterogeneity*

There is a great difference among the European cultural observatories. Many of them have a regional scope / mission, and their context is very different (budgets, laws, priority cultural fields, typologies, etc.). This fact complicates the common work among cultural observatories. This heterogeneity is also reflected on the objectives. There are many different goals between the analysed observatories. If it is taken into account the fact that the majority of the observatories are regional, the lack of agreement between the state and regional objectives become a bigger problem, and it makes more difficult the normal work of these organisations.

A large number of cultural observatories have been created in the last years, but if they cannot work together and share information, they will not be able to respond to the challenges of the current emerging society. Nowadays, we live in a contradictory society combining local goals and global views, where inter- and intra-jurisdictional co-operation becomes crucial for the improvement of our quality of life. A good example of common framework is the Italian ORMA project, whose main aim is to create a collective space to share information among the Italian regions and between them and the Italian Ministry of Culture.

## *Crisis*

The majority of the European cultural observatories are public, and those that are private receive important public financing (idea of «anomalies», private entities functioning with public money —Trimarchi—). The current economic crisis is a significant threat to cultural observatories due to politicians who do not see the intangible benefits of culture, and they tend to reduce the budget of this sector.

Politicians do not fully understand how culture can generate social cohesion and quality, proving consistent with their main goal: the attainment of stable consensus. But we must note that also cultural agents are quite reluctant to overcome the traditional, static and passive view of culture. Therefore, as the result of the lack of cultural inclinations of society, nowadays it is very difficult to obtain a sufficient degree of profitability from culture. If cultural observatories show the social benefits of culture to both politicians and cultural managers, it will be easier to achieve more consistent public financing.

## *Audiences*

There is a widespread perception of culture as something boring and tedious. Our society reads and writes more than any other in history, nevertheless society is often seen as becoming more and more trivial because it would tend to superficiality. People prefer to know sport results by heart, but they are not interested in literature, theatre or heritage.

The cultural observatories are mainly focused on quantitative data. This information is related to the people who enjoy the culture, but ignores those who are not interested and the reasons of their indifference.

## **Future role(s) and challenges of the European Cultural Observatories**

### *A common Framework*

It is necessary to develop more projects like ORMA, but at a European level. Although the observatories work at a regional level, it is interesting to do it with common methodology, indicators, means of diffusion, etc., in order to cooperate and to share their information and evaluations. Cultural observatories should try to find what is common among the different regions.

Another question is the function of the observatories. In Bologna it was questioned if the observatories have to focus their work only on collecting data, or they would have also to create knowledge and new ideas for supporting and improving cultural policies.

The main conclusion was that observatories have to widen their work and to create knowledge, not only to observe the cultural situation. In fact, there are public organisations that collect statistical data and it is not necessary to repeat the work. As an example, it is possible to mention the Basque case, where the cultural observatory does not collect the data, it just exploits the available information. And if the observatory needs any information that is not being taken into account by Eustat (Basque Statistics Institute), they provide Eustat with the specific indicators in which they are interested. So, it could be more interesting for the observatories to exploit the information and to develop knowledge, than to collect data.

### *Cultural experiences*

Nowadays everything changes very fast, so it is necessary to pay attention to these changes in order to face them properly. An important shift has occurred in how a cultural product is perceived; in the past, products were related to the supply of services and activities, although the current consumers tried to find experiences. This fact is of great importance in the field of culture where intangibles have considerable relevance. What turns an activity into an experience is the subjective part. Experience not only depends on the space, time, and resources, but also on the emotions, benefits, motivations, needs and values. Due to this, analysing the qualitative data of cultural experiences turns into an important opportunity for cultural observatories.

On one hand, qualitative information can help to convince politicians about the importance of financing cultural education and research. It is a strategic tool to emphasise the benefits of culture, because benefits are different from profitability and sometimes it is very difficult to see them. They are closely related to human development, so culture can be a great driving force to avoid the previously mentioned superficiality. If it is possible to show politicians the social gains that culture can bring to citizens, it will be easier to obtain financing from them. The justification of public culture is the existence of a culturally oriented society, not the satisfaction of the interests of cultural agents.

While on the other hand collecting qualitative data can help to know the motivations of current consumers and to know the reasons of the

missing audience. This information makes it easier to keep the current demand and to try to get new audiences. Qualitative data provides cultural managers with information about why people enjoy culture, but also why people do not. It is very important to know the negative perception of culture to change it. If it is possible to get the potential audience, profitability of culture will be larger and it will be easier to obtain financing.

Due to the importance of subjective data, European cultural observatories have to develop measuring tools for qualitative information.

## **Summarising**

The future role of cultural observatories is related to:

- Developing a common framework and methodology.
- Generating knowledge to improve cultural policies, rather than only collecting data.
- Creating tools and indicators to measure subjective features of the cultural experience.
- Trying to recover (or creating) the missing audiences.

## Annex 2

# Towards Recommendations for the Future Role of Cultural Observatories in Europe

By putting forward this document, the *Monitors of Culture* (MOC) Policy Grouping wishes to **highlight the future needs and challenges faced by cultural observatories throughout Europe**. The importance of these institutions, in all their various shapes and sizes, should not be underestimated in light of their increasingly important role in influencing policy making on the European stage, particularly on the regional level.

This paper provides the **framework for recommendations**, which will be scrutinised and discussed at length over the two-day Think Tank in Bilbao, September 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010. The prominent scholars and experts who attend the Think Tank will provide final input to this document before being published within a book and disseminated internationally among the most representative experts in the field in order to gather their contribution as well. In addition, it will be presented at many relevant cultural policy events in Europe.<sup>1</sup> However, it should be noted that this document is the product of a much longer process which included an extensive research survey conducted by MOC (SaCO), the collective contributions of experts in the field and several deliberative working meetings (Brussels, Bologna) with the partners of the project.<sup>2</sup> The final publication, endorsed by the Think Tank delegates, will stimulate and push forward the debate about how best to monitor and observe culture in order to foster a knowledge based society, built on cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue integral to human development in each region.

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<sup>1</sup> The planned publication date is October 2010

<sup>2</sup> Partner institutions include: Institute of Leisure Studies, University of Deusto, (ES); Budapest Observatory (HU), ATER Fondazione (IT), and the Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles (BE).

*"Tolerance, inter-dialogue and respect for diversity are more essential than ever in a world where peoples are becoming more and more closely interconnected."*

- Kofi Annan

## **BACKGROUND**

At the very beginning in Split, Croatia, in March 2008, the original members of the ENCATC working group agreed that their task lay in **promoting the role, essence and nature of cultural observatories**; to assist in training and education to capitalise cultural observatories; and to support the system of cultural policies in order to achieve the highest cultural development.

In 2009 the University of Deusto took the opportunity to enhance the ENCATC working group's remit by applying to the Policy Grouping call under the EU's Culture Programme (2007-2013). The fundamental nature of the ENCATC working group is continued under the MOC Policy Grouping, which consists of academics, researchers and cultural observatories with a vested interest in the future role of cultural observatories throughout Europe and beyond. They endeavour to offer a more precise framework for discussion and exchange of best practices in order to improve the design and the evaluation of culture policies in Europe, mainly at a regional level.

## **'CULTURE' AND 'OBSERVATION'**

Suffice to say that 'culture' as a concept is very good at eluding a narrow definition. "It can refer to the fine arts, including a variety of works of art, cultural goods and services. 'Culture' also has an anthropological meaning. It is the basis for a symbolic world of meanings, beliefs, values, traditions which are expressed in language, art, religion and myths. As such, it plays a fundamental role in human development and in the complex fabric of the identities and habits of individuals and communities."<sup>3</sup>

The complexity of 'observation' or 'observatory' is relatively simple by comparison, mainly involving the recognition and reflection of a given situation. However, combine the two into 'cultural observatory', and the meaning compounds itself to create an institution "responsible for facilitating the transfer and access to information and knowledge in order to support the decision making process in the cultural field through information systems."<sup>4</sup>

There are many institutions that offer a variation of this definition. The three main target groups of cultural observatories consist of public, private and non-profit sector. Although there are commonalities between these three sectors, each one implies different funding situations as well as accountability to the public. When assessing how observatories should be included in the survey, the main difficulty was in creating a border between those included and those excluded. In some cases, institutions and agencies such as universities or private consultancies could be said to 'observe' in terms of their support for the decision-making process and involvement in the cultural landscape. That said,

they may not have fulfilled the set criteria of an 'observatory' because of their mode of dissemination.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that many institutions responsible for observing as such, are not labelled 'observatories' and vice versa.

It is also important to note that this document by no means aims to provide the final word on how a cultural observatory should look or act, as this depends on the national context and many other factors. It endeavours to illuminate a model or ideal that can be aspired to and reflected upon. The MOC Policy Grouping is open to discussion about other rubrics, typologies, or models and looks forward to the ensuing debate.

## **CULTURAL OBSERVATORIES ACROSS EUROPE**

The recent survey conducted by MOC, *State of the Art of Cultural Observatories (SaCO)*, identified 103 cultural observatories, of which 73 were included as currently functional cultural observatories across Europe. The survey gathered specific information about each one regarding their legal status, services offered, dissemination practices, priority fields of work, amongst other variables that could lead to an improved framework for discussion and possibly the creation of a common approach methodology.<sup>6</sup>

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the SaCO results:

1. The capacity for cultural observatories to form strong networks and collaborative research projects should be enlarged. Many observatories cited this desire in the section detailing their aims and functions. With the limited resources available to many observatories, creating synergies to address common problems would significantly increase efficiency and communication.
2. Cultural observatories form a varied, but powerful resource of information and knowledge for society and human development. The SaCO survey shows that 88% of them disseminated their work in the form of books, journals or stable reports and 73% had their own website or blog. However, the use of tools like Facebook and Twitter isn't properly harnessed, with only 11% and 4% usage, respectively.
3. Although something to look forward to in the future, the survey reiterated the difficulty in creating a common approach for cultural observatories in Europe. Many observatories share similar objectives, but because of the local circumstances and peculiarities across Europe, parallel approaches are difficult to categorize.

The SaCO survey has provided a strong starting point from which more questions can be posed and future studies launched. The following frames of recommendations were

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<sup>3</sup> EU Commission Report "On a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world" 10 May 2007; <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0242:FIN:EN:HTML>

<sup>6</sup> For full details of the SaCO Report visit, [www.monitorsofculture.deusto.es/](http://www.monitorsofculture.deusto.es/)

inspired by the results of the survey combined with expert opinions gathered at the working meeting in Bologna.

## **AS REGARDS THE FUTURE ROLE OF CULTURAL OBSERVATORIES IN EUROPE, THE ISSUES AT THE HEART OF THE DISCUSSION ARE:**

### » ACCESS

Cultural is as much about creating as it is about distributing. Knowing how the public gain access to culture is parallel to understanding the making of the cultural landscape. How an event is marketed will decide whether a given public feels like they are accessing knowledge or are being inundated with information. Further studies into the 'missing audience' should be undertaken to understand public conceptions of culture.

### » SCOPE

The variance in scope amongst cultural observatories is vast. 42% of observatories surveyed in SaCO claimed an international scope, but how much does their final product reflect that statement? In many ways this issue is related to the funding bodies involved and what they ask for, regardless of where they are from. However, the 'range' in which they act as a cultural observatory should be related or contrasted to their final products and their own discourse of scope.

### » APPROACH

For the most part, cultural observatories can be said to embrace a quantitative approach in their research and reporting methods. Although undeniably valuable, quantitative data fails to address the subjective experience of culture. How can we assess the intangible feelings which make a person choose to go or not to a given cultural event? What happens at a three-day festival? Despite the difficulty in measuring such variables, the assessment of these could very much increase the ability of cultural institutions to gain audiences.

### » CONNECTION

The way in which a cultural observatory connects itself to the local or national landscape is of paramount importance. The SaCO showed that 54% of observatories are publicly funded which means they are linked to a government body in some way. In this situation, should they simply fulfil the task of a passive observer or should they inform and form opinion?

### » VISIBILITY

The recently undertaken SaCO has a mild bias towards the observatories located in Italy and Spain. Eastern European countries are highly unrepresented, which isn't to say they aren't in existence. The possibility that other organisms are in charge of cultural observation is likely. In light of this fact, the goal is to reach a more balanced view of all observatories. Knowledge of cultural observatories not listed would be welcomed.

## » INDICATORS

The so-called 'Holy Grail' of the cultural discipline is indicators.<sup>7</sup> There are a wide variety harnessed by observatories and they are used with varying weight according to the type of observatory in question. Better collection of statistical indicators will allow better comparative studies to be done - ideas and debate about what these should be are very much welcomed. We are keen to make distinction between result (can be observed immediately) and impact (can be observed many years after).

## » TYPOLOGIES

The cultural sector is primarily constituted of small institutions with project based or erratic funding. Many of them have interests, which reflect the funding bodies interest (regional or national) for that particular time. Therefore it is difficult to place observatories into typologies without conducting deeper research into the relations between their area, funding source, chosen field and disseminated products.

## » EVALUATION

There is a constant need in the cultural sector to have assessments done in order to evaluate the need for further funding or subsidies. It can sometimes seem a 'zero-sum game' because of how often one sector is funded at the loss of another. This also draws attention to how some sectors have more intangible value than others. The goal should not be to maximize subsidies, but to minimize the difference between previous year's subsidy and the following and to overcome the idea that the amount received symbolises the "approval from the Prince, or the King". This can lead to less innovation in certain sectors because of the perceived threat to foundational funding.

Moreover, it is difficult to talk about evaluation on a European level because national realities are so diverse and different stakeholders are doing the same work differently. That said, qualitative tools should be developed which can handle this diversity and the intangible nature of some experiences.

## » HARMONISATION

The ever-growing number of cultural networks circulating Europe is creating powerful transnational synergies. However, networks are only as strong as the information and knowledge that they share. While there will always be transnational difference in how cultural issues are approached, homogenous data collection would provide a better foundation from which information could be transferred into knowledge.

## » ANOMALIES

Certain anomalies were discussed in Bologna that deserve to be addressed; there is no criteria for heritage, and therefore no evaluation possible, why? Some observatories have too many goals, some of which conflict; nearly 100% of

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<sup>7</sup> As referred by Peter Inkei in his report from the Buda Castle Retreat.

subsidies are money – why not infrastructure such as pedestrian area? To address these issues would help alleviate some confusion surrounding cultural observatories' role in society.

» OBSTACLES

Obstacles to the access of culture can be material (parking places, kindergarten), economic (perceived value vs. actual cost) or cognitive (culture is heavy/boring). Both dimensions (objective, subjective) have to be analyzed at the same time in order to get an accurate picture.

» FRAMEWORK

Is it possible or desirable to analyse movies, opera and heritage with the same approach? There is currently no common methodology for many reasons. What should be endeavoured is an evaluation matrix, which would include different degrees of correlation between indicators.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Only by monitoring and comparing the variables at work and methods of implementation individual to each region (and those held in common across borders) is it possible to elaborate informed policy decisions. This is paramount to the public understanding of culture. TO BE CONTINUED...

## Annex 3

# Conclusions of the Think Tank

*Bilbao, 8-9 July 2010*

During 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2010 a group of European cultural experts met in Bilbao to discuss the future role of cultural observatories. Many interesting and innovative ideas appeared as a result of an important common project. Below, the main conclusions of the meeting are summarised.

### **Heterogeneity**

Among the European cultural observatories there is inherent heterogeneity; they observe different cultural fields (audiovisual, theatre, fine arts, heritage, etc.) at different levels (local, regional, national and international). The difference that cultural observatories present should not be considered a weakness, but an important strength due to two reasons. On one hand, culture is a wide field, which can be difficult to contemplate by only a few observatories. And on the other hand, the diversity of European cultures has to be taken into account, locally and generally, when observing culture. Instead of trying to develop a common methodology that would not be applicable to all the regions, it is more important to try to find a method of sharing the collected information and generated knowledge.

### **Sharing Information**

Nowadays, because of the existence of many cultural observatories, there is an enormous wealth of information about culture. However, in

many cases it is quite difficult to find or access this data. Taking into account that in Northern European cultural observation is carried out by institutions different from cultural observatories, the mentioned difficulty is increasing. Due to this, a useful first step could be to develop a map of cultural observation instead of a map of cultural observatories.

A way to take advantage of this heterogeneity is to develop an efficient and transparent method (indicators and benchmarks) to share information and knowledge between European observatories. In this way, it would be easier to cover the international scope taking advantage of regional or local observation.

## **Observing, Generating Knowledge And Communicating**

There are three main functions that a cultural observatory should carry out: to observe, to generate knowledge and to communicate efficiently and transparently.

Regarding observation, it is necessary to give more importance to qualitative data than to quantitative. Culture is an experience and the only way to understand and know the nature of the experiences is by measuring the subjective features (benefits, emotions, motivations, values and needs). Another interesting question about observation is what and where to observe. On one hand, the idea of culture has to include popular and alternative culture in order to involve all of the different expressions and to diminish the perception of culture as something boring. On the other hand, many cultural movements are closely related to other fields, science or new technologies among others. Because of this, it is important to focus on border areas of culture and not on central ones.

When observing it is interesting to know which information is already collected to not repeat the work. There are many different public and private institutions that collect data and it is not sensible to do it again.

If the cultural observatories aim to influence and improve cultural policies, they should to manage the information to generate new knowledge and efficient answers, as well as to communicate it to politicians and the rest of society (universities, cultural managers, cultural industries, citizens, etc.).

## **Other Actions**

At the think tank in Bilbao it was mentioned that there are other actions that cultural observatories should develop.

It would be quite interesting for cultural observatories to provide cultural technicians and educators with learning support. On one hand for helping professional retraining, and on the other hand to develop in the population (especially the younger) the interest in cultural observation and enjoyment.

Another important question is related to cultural industries. In the current economic crisis financing of culture is being reduced, while cultural industries are presented as the driving force of the new economic model. It is important to take into account their impacts to find new financing methods and rise above the threat of crisis.

And finally, politicians continuously are talking about the importance of culture, but they are reducing financing of culture. This is a great contradiction. Because of this, another action carried out by observatories could be related to detect the coherence of political actions.



## Annex 4

### Final Recommendations

- The European landscape of Cultural Observatories is rich and varied. Institutional formats, organisational structures, resources, goals and actions are quite heterogeneous. This must be considered an element of vitality and democracy, responding to the wide range of needs and expectations on the part of local communities, cultural actors and public administrations.
- The present transition requires deeper involvement of Cultural Observatories. It's features are evident: public budgets for culture are subject to cuts, but creative industries are viewed as a driver for economic growth; cultural markets are converging and incorporating technology; cultural consumers migrate through forms and styles, and often produce and share cultural contents.
- Cultural Observatories can effectively play their role of critical mediators between society and cultural community on one hand, and public decision-makers on the other. This requires independence from political power and from the market, arm's length from cultural actors, multi-disciplinary approach, stable financial resources from a variety of sources, and a strategic vision.
- Culture is quickly evolving, and its contents are prevailing upon its material substratum. It is a long and wide process, requiring a balanced combination of general analysis and specific focuses. Cultural Observatories should adopt a long-run perspective and track supply and demand in their complexity and multi-dimensionality. Economic and social benefits generated by culture must be also analysed.
- Action undertaken by Cultural Observatories should go beyond data collection, focus upon interpretation and elaborate guidelines. This

- requires co-operation with other organisations committed to data collection and evaluation, ability to consider stakeholders' views, to incorporate qualitative analysis and to elaborate appropriate indicators and benchmarks to measure performance and impact upon markets.
- Cultural Observatories can play a crucial role in this period of transition. This implies a common willingness to overcome the local dimension, activating a wider network able to share methodologies and to adopt a comparative approach. In such a way the complex evolution of culture can be properly interpreted, and its dynamics optimised within a wider territorial scope and a long-run view.

## Annex 5

# Statement of Principles

### **Our organisation will....**

- encompass a broad definition of culture, though individual institutions may seek to specialise in a particular area or areas;
- be open, transparent and independent (e.g. number and representativeness of board members, monitoring, self-evaluation);
- produce at least an annual report and summary info sheet (not necessarily in print);
- provide a website with at least key results translated into English;
- contribute information on the results of our work to key info sharing mechanisms (to be identified, ranging from EC to networks to newsletters);
- collect data in a minimum set of specific areas (e.g. visitors, employment, funding levels, etc.);
- consult on a regular basis (at least once every 2 years) with agreed set of stakeholders (politicians, practitioners, networks, citizens, researchers);
- submit responses to all consultation requests for feedback, responses or contributions from agencies such as EC, CoE, OECD;
- seek to include activities which encompass short, medium and long term observations, subject to resources;
- seek to undertake collaborative projects with other observatories to ensure cross-border comparative studies are undertaken;
- contribute to pan-national debates on the development of indicators, especially qualitative indicators;

- note social change at the local, regional, national and pan-national level, and ensure that our research reflects the changing nature of society;
- provide occasional opportunities for teaching, training and knowledge exchange, covering methodologies, mechanisms and results;
- participate in at least one pan-national or international conference or symposium each year, with the goal of presenting a paper should this be on offer;
- help change the world for the better...

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The growing importance of cultural observatories as main agents for knowledge of culture, its development and evolution is evident in a work that combines the insights of experts and professionals in charge of the different Cultural Observatories in the world, mainly in Europe. The analysis of the origins and transformations that the role played by the Observatory has undergone in recent decades provides the basis for a well-informed discussion about the future of them.



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