

POSITION PAPER

A model for cultural development and valorisation of European territories

Culture as an Inheritance

These past years have witnessed extensive and choral reflection on the theme of Culture and Heritage, aimed at modifying limits and approaches and moving towards much more extensive and transversal meanings, in line with the current historical moment.

As confirmation of this change in perspective on Culture in a broader sense, and also considering Culture as something that comes to us from the past – even the most recent past – we cannot but recall the words of Massimo Recalcati¹ on inheritance and on the act of inheriting, which he defines as an act of *recovery*, in which the inheritance is not received passively, ... *it is not something due, nor does it derive from nature, destiny, or historical necessity*. The concept of recovery therefore does not mean appropriating oneself of something simply because one is the descendant; it instead means attributing value to something, focusing on our origin and acknowledging its symbolic debt.

Culture and Heritage, which until only recently were practically the exclusive prerogative of the public system – intended as the totality of institutions and administrations belonging to the state apparatus – are today crossing these “institutional” boundaries and occupying a **much broader area**. This area can host the actions and coexistence of **all the subjects** that varyingly qualified and through various means implement the movement of *recovery* and acknowledgement of the debt, making Culture and the Heritage a factor of growth and social cohesion.

This **movement** opens up to, and in a certain sense legitimates through merit, all the actors capable of contributing to and positively influencing the common wellbeing by becoming bearers of a cultural heritage. This marks the decline of an interest aimed solely at economic and employment levels, and introduces a new attention for the community and, in particular, a socially and culturally sustainable development that also connotes and strengthens factors of identity.

In addition to the **time** and **space** of Culture and the Heritage, let us also bear in mind the concept of **duration**. The material heritage – tied to sites and monuments of the past – cannot be considered as **infinite**, as it is destined, in any event, to finish along with its use. The immaterial heritage, which includes the activities that support the creation of Culture and are associated with the valorisation of the Heritage, is conversely an **inexhaustible source of resources**, capable of

¹ Recalcati, M., *Il complesso di Telemaco*, pp. 122-124, Milano, 2003.

regenerating itself continuously and producing beneficial effects from both the economic and the social viewpoints.

The combination and interaction between cultural production and heritage confirms and increasingly more convinces us of the fundamental role Italy could play in this context, and for a specific reason: in Italy, the Heritage and the cultural industry **cannot do without one another**, and this **necessary** relationship – for too long considered a **limit** – can instead become a great **opportunity** for development. The enterprises under contract to provide additional services have played a very important role **in creating this essential relationship between material and immaterial heritage**, which is often experienced and considered only in relation to **profitability (is that bad?) for the private sector**, and not in relation to creating a broader and more shared value. In this sense, the perception and evaluation made on the additional services should be revised, if not totally overturned.

The Cooperative as an entrepreneurial model and the Network of cooperatives as a model development

In this new context, characterised by an extraordinarily variegated multitude of opportunities, capabilities, and potentials, two forms of activity possess the characteristics necessary to best respond to the process described above: the **cooperative**, intended as an association of people who voluntarily participate, and a **network**, intended as the interaction and integration among several subjects.

For its legal configuration and system of values, the cooperative is also capable of assuming the role of intermediary between public and private, between community and business.

How?

by combining development, efficiency, and the equitable sharing of the resources produced;

by bringing together social ranks and classes that would otherwise have been excluded from business and the possibility to produce income

by creating occupation and solidarity as inseparable aspects of a country's economic and social progress;

by enabling many young people to have the possibility to express their creativity and be protagonists of their work;

by investing in cultural development in order to help society emerge from a depression that afflicts Italy, as well as Europe;

by directly influencing territories by virtue of its capillary and diffused organisation.

The industrial policy of the sector has always been inadequate. The only existing interventions of support have wrongly targeted technology companies, which have almost always developed unusable prototypes, or start-ups that come into existence without having first created the conditions of a real market in which they can find a place.

Increasingly more often, however, **two orientations** prevail in the allocation of resources for Culture and the Heritage, financing companies with a strong technological connotation and start-ups. We feel that these decisions do not respond to a real necessity of companies, and even less to a precise strategic decision. While it is true that the rush towards digitalisation favours technological companies, it is also true that by so doing, the focus is never on the cultural concern but on technology in and of itself. At the same time, it is all too clear and confirmed that technology is a precious and valid tool of development, but it is not an end. For these reasons, we feel it is advisable to invest in systems that satisfy the needs of visitors and not those of information technology companies.

Another perplexity arises from the fact that if the new resources destined to the growth of cultural entrepreneurship are fragmented and scattered in many micro business initiatives, they will only generate ephemeral solutions, create false expectations, not resolve the employment problem, and not valorise the cultural heritage sufficiently.

Moreover, serious preoccupations arise around the measures and incentives aimed at promoting **non-profit organisations, associationism, and volunteerism** as forms of management of the diffused heritage. We feel that the true positive turning point, the implementation of a cultural policy with a strategy, is not that of **keeping all the sites open all the time**, but of valorising the territory optimally, rationally, and sustainably and – in the logic of a **cultural district** – connecting the various actors via a **policy of territorial management** and investments in order to provide the territories with infrastructures and promote the use of culture, developing the demand.

In summary, we feel that the important issues to solve, and urgently so, in view of an **industrial policy in this sector** are:

creation of a legal context in which profitability can develop legally;

creation of a system that motivates and rewards companies that transform profitability into benefits for the territory (creating qualified employment, guaranteeing revenue to the state, and making investments in innovation);

creation and support of networks and production chains focused on cultural enterprises in order to avoid fragmented actions whose benefits would be lost;

creation of new public/private forms of partnership;

The answer to these problems lies with the **Network of Cooperatives** and their possible inflections in the cultural ambit. The **cooperative**, which by virtue of its very name and structure knows the meaning of cooperation and joint action, is the best suited to **form a network**, because a network functions only when one is capable of cooperating, and only if the network functions is it possible to set up a **chain of values**.

The network expands **vertically**, in the sequence and subsidiarity of production chains, and **horizontally**, in its expansion on the territorial scale. Literature indeed acknowledges the potentials of networks to build scale economies by integrating services and functions in order to reduce costs, and expanding the supply towards new possibilities of:

accessibility that is

cognitive: simplify and systematise access to the supply, aggregating various operators; build a reliable relationship between the managers/producers/distributors of a service and the final user; offer an information content that is well-tailored to the actual demand;

physical: reduce the costs of access to the user; activate access – for both the members of the network and for the users – to shared contents and resources;

development that is

entrepreneurial: creation of a chain; inclusion of single companies within more or less complex and extensive aggregates specialised in the scale of markets; valorisation of the resources and competences of subjects, offering the possibility to implement and employ these capabilities on a broader

circuit, which multiplies value and rewards the investments made;

social: conjugate private benefits with the collective interest; plan the relationship between the social, cultural, and economic dimensions, thanks to a broader system;

impact

on the political decision-making process, to increase contractual power towards a new relational model between public and private;

on the way of doing business, identifying the economic actors, modifying the modalities of creating value, redefining a new coordinated set of activities to give life to a new kind of output;

on consumptions and the production process, influencing the behaviour of users and stimulating behaviours more conscious of the available instruments and the possibilities of choice.

The ReteCulture Project



CoopCulture, on the national territory, has already started using this new way of working, which unfolds and develops on a platform that affiliates small/medium cultural entrepreneurial concerns on the territory. In line with the modern logic of the sharing economy, CoopCulture brings to these concerns its know how and services, the result of a major daily commitment in the field. It thereby aims to render the work of all those involved fruitful and to valorise the territories where their work unfolds.

The cooperative has thus demonstrated its capability to fill a role that positions and connotes it as a subject capable of creating value in collaboration and occupying an intermediate space between culture on the institutional level and the civil society. A **network of cooperatives** could therefore become the **leader of this process as a new development and management model of the territory.**

This model, in turn, creates a **multiplier effect**, as it can count on a platform capable of guaranteeing its capillary action.

For these reasons, the cooperative network platform serves to:
valorise new technology, but adopting the ideas of all actors on the platform
allow supply and demand to meet significantly and innovatively

utilise culture as an aggregating and socialising element

<http://www.coopculture.it/reteculture.cfm>



Networks to share innovations, valorise cultural and territorial identities: from the Giotto Itineraries to the European Itineraries, a model to export

On behalf of the **DG-Belle arti e paesaggio** and the Mibact **DG-Musei**, CoopCulture has produced the *Giotto Itineraries*, starting with the monographic exhibition on Giotto entitled, *Giotto, Italy*, currently showing at the Palazzo Reale of Milan, and in collaboration with the State Museums of six regions (Lombardy, Veneto, Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Umbria, and Campania).

The itineraries are intended as a model to export in order to connect the Heritage and cultural production by making them become a source of wealth, as generators of a multiplier effect, because

- they complete cultural production, joining it to a complex chain
- they act on a territorial scale, creating diffused wealth

Our objective is to surpass national boundaries in order to export throughout Europe a working method we firmly believe in, so as to multiply the collective benefits indispensable for social and economic wellbeing, thus becoming a resource for all of Europe's cultural and creative enterprises (in the broadest sense of the term), in view of an exchange of best practices and to apply on the territory the methods, tools, and experiments born of local diversities.

<http://www.luoghigiottoitalia.it/>

Giovanna Barni
 President
 Società Cooperativa Culture