Cultural participation: New challenges and opportunities

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From Culture 1.0 to Culture 3.0
Culture 1.0: classical patronage

- Technological conditions for cheap reproducibility and circulation not existing yet: no structured cultural markets
- Limited audience, coinciding with the patron’s acquaintances
- Patronage choices determined by the patron’s tastes and interests, mainly for spiritual cultivation and social promotion
- Culture does not generate value added, but only absorbs value produced elsewhere in the economy
Culture 1.1: strategic patronage

• The target expands strategically beyond the patron’s acquaintances to pursue more ambitious consensus policies (civil or religious audiences)
• Patronage choices determined by ideological objectives, in a potentially conflicting dialectics with artists
• Culture is economically non-productive, but can generate a huge political and social payoff, and even economic insofar as it increases the patron’s image and bargaining power in economic trade or banking relationships
Culture 1.2: public patronage

- Culture becomes a more and more universal human right as a basic component of human development.
- The State chooses what deserves to be patronized and what not, thereby fixing the dyadic categories of high-(brow) vs. low-(brow) culture.
- Audience significantly expands, with outside the market context.
- Culture absorbs relatively huge resources, and implies a redistribution from the citizens who don’t attend to those who attend.
- Access to high-brow culture becomes a sign of bourgeois distinction.
The 1.0-2.0 transition

- Modern cultural markets are created by the concurrent emergence of a wave of technological innovation at the edge between XIX and XX century: modern printing, radio, music recording, photography, cinema
- The fact that for more than one century through the industrial revolution culture is not industrialized, however, creates a permanent frame of mind in Europe according to which culture is un-economical and needs to be subsidized anyway
- The high-brow stigma of patronage makes commercialization of culture problematic to many cultural players and to part of the audiences
Culture 2.0: CCIs

• Builds and reaches very large audiences
• Is based on the virtually unlimited reproducibility of creative contents once the matrix has been produced
• Generates significant turnover and profits
• Is a distinct sector of the economy, and a part of the entertainment meta-sector
• Generates leisure experiences and occupies (part of) free time of people
• Needs intellectual protection (copyright)
• May also increasingly extend the creative element to functional domains (CIs)
The 2.0-3.0 transition

- We are now witnessing a new regime transition that is driven by two concurrent streams of innovation: digital content production + digital connectivity
- Standard digital suites provide people with semi-professional packages that are cheap and easy to learn; with a modest investment they can be upgraded at the professional level
- The same packages less than 2 decades ago would have been expensive, would have required bulky hardware and would have been difficult to use
- Contents can be distributed almost without mediators to highly segmented and profiled audiences by means of increasingly specialized social media
Culture 3.0: Communities of practice and open platforms

- Blurred distinction between producers and users of content: cultural access and production of new contents are two phases of the same process
- Culture can be massively produced and distributed also outside market channels
- Economic and social value is produced not only through priced content, but also through generic participation
- Culture becomes increasingly a precondition of all kinds of economic value generation processes (‘culturalization’ of the economy)
- Culture is no longer an aspect of free time use but is entrenched in the fabric of daily life
The evolution of participation

- Culture 1.0: participation as co-optation (limited, passive)
- Culture 2.0: participation as market access (generalized, passive)
- Culture 3.0: participation as community affiliation (generalized, active)
- We need a conceptual scheme that allows us to understand (and capitalize) the socio-economic effects of cultural participation
- The new paradigms of cultural production do not necessarily use the market as the value-generating platform (communities of practice)
An 8-tiers approach to the indirect effects of cultural participation

- Innovation
- Welfare
- Sustainability
- Social cohesion
- New entrepreneurship
- Soft power
- Local identity
- Knowledge economy
## Innovation

### Ranking Innovation Scoreboard 2008 (UE15)
1. Sweden
2. Finland
3. Denmark
4. Germany
5. Netherlands
6. France
7. Austria
8. UK
9. Belgium
10. Luxemburg (UE27 average)
11. Ireland
12. Spain
13. Italy
14. Portugal
15. Greece

### Ranking Active cultural participation Eurobarometer 2007 (UE15)
1. Sweden
2. Luxemburg
3. Finland
4. France
5. Denmark
6. Netherlands
7. Belgium
8. Germany
9. UK
10. Austria (UE27 average)
11. Ireland
12. Italy
13. Spain
14. Greece
15. Portugal
Culture as a pre-innovation platform?
Culture as a ‘pre-innovation’ platform

Active cultural participation stimulates the capability building of people in terms of **attitudes toward the un-experienced:**

- questioning one’s beliefs and world views,
- getting acquainted with, and assigning value to, cultural diversity,
- learning to appreciate the transformational impact of new ideas,
- building new expressive and conceptual skills...

→ Strong link with innovation systems
Welfare

- There is a strong statistical association between life expectancy and cultural participation (Konlaan et al, 2000)
- There is an equally strong association between cultural participation and psychological well-being (The Italian culture and well-being study, IULM/Bracco)
Hierarchy of factors affecting psychological well-being
Hierarchy of factors affecting psychological well-being

1 Diseases
2 Cultural participation
3 Income
4 Age
5 Education
6 Gender
7 Job
8 Geography
Classical music concerts
Theatre
Which single variables have the strongest impact on SWB?
Towards a cultural welfare perspective?
Towards a cultural welfare perspective?

- The well-being impact of cultural participation is especially strong among the severely ill and the elderly.
- Systematic cultural participation in these categories might bring about substantial improvement in their quality of life.
- At the same time, cultural participation might significantly reduce hospitalization frequency and duration for chronic pathologies.
- If this is true, the whole program could be financed through the consequential saving on general welfare costs.
In a nutshell...

• Culture is not simply a large and important sector of the economy, it is a ‘social software’ that is badly needed to manage the complexity of contemporary societies and economies in all of its manifold implications.

• The total indirect macroeconomic impact of cultural participation is likely to be much bigger than the (already remarkable) direct one.

• Once we become able to measure the indirect effects of culture on the various dimensions (to ‘capitalize’ culture), it will be possible to bring cultural policy at the top ranks of the policy agenda.

• These effects are further strengthened by the growth of the cultural and creative industries, but only insofar as such growth is as inclusive and participative as possible.
Thanks!

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