

Cultural strategies and public value creation: empirical evidence

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Abstract

In recent years there is a growing conviction that cultural policies – focused on the enhancement and the promotion of artistic, musical and historical heritage of countries – are very important drivers of public value creation process (Murphy, 2001).

Many scholars show that cultural policies can generate social, economic and political advantages. However, it should be noticed that until now the importance of cultural policies in the social and economic growth of a country has been justified mainly by means of theoretical analysis or case studies. The researches on this subject supported by empirical evidence are few (Dalle Nogare, Galizzi, 2011).

Moreover, the analysis related to international contexts are very rare. The contributions referred to specific areas (cities, regions, countries, etc.) are more frequent. However, it is known that surveys referred to different contexts can help to determine the factors that can contribute better to the creation of public value.

This paper aims to: 1) determine these factors with reference to an European context; and 2) investigate the relationship between the main elements of cultural policies and a set of social, economic and political variables, without disregarding the context of each country analyzed.

The research was carried out with reference to 39 European countries by means of statistical methods (e.g. regression analysis) and it yielded the following main results:

- the government spending in the cultural field (promotion and improvement of artistic and historical heritage) seemed to be a very important factor in the public value creation process. In fact, the highest levels of public spending in the cultural field were found in countries with the highest social well-being indicators. Moreover, it is interesting to underline that the countries with the highest levels of cultural public spending had economic advantages, as well, because they gained appeal from the tourists point of view. Finally, the promotion and improvement of artistic and historical heritage could contribute – among other things – to enhance the country image;
- the pricing policies seemed not to produce adverse repercussions on the social, economic and political variables analyzed. In fact, the demand of cultural services and goods was not flexible to price differences in the 39 countries examined;
- finally, the distribution of political responsibilities between central and local government in the cultural policy field seemed not to be relevant in the public value creation process with reference to the countries analyzed.

Rèsumè

Ces dernières années ont apporté la conviction que la mise en œuvre de politiques convenables “culturelles” – qui se proposent de valoriser le patrimoine artistique et historique d’un territoire déterminé – constitue un élément assez important dans la perspective de la création de “valeur publique” (Murphy, 2001).

De nombreux auteurs soulignent comment les politiques culturelles peuvent produire d’importants bénéfices sociaux, économiques et politiques. Il faut préciser, toutefois, que, dans la littérature existante, mais en de rares occasions, l’analyse des bénéfices en objet apparaît fortifiée par des évidences empiriques (Dalle Nogare, Galizzi, 2011).

En outre, les analyses au niveau international se révèlent être assez réduites; plus fréquentes semblent être les enquêtes menées sur des espaces territoriaux particuliers (centres urbains, régions, Pays spécifiques, etc.). De notre côté, nous estimons que la réalisation d’enquêtes adaptées à plusieurs contextes territoriaux peut contribuer à identifier les facteurs qui favorisent la création de valeur publique.

A la lumière des considérations traitées, le présent travail se propose de: 1) discerner ces facteurs par référence à un contexte européen; 2) examiner la relation qu’il y a entre les principaux “ingrédients” des politiques culturelles et un *set* de variables sociales,

économiques et politiques, en surveillant l'effet de quelques conditions particulières de “contexte” recueillies dans les Pays- objets d'enquête.

L'analyse – menée sur un échantillon de 39 Pays européens – a été réalisée à l'aide de techniques statistiques (analyse de corrélation et analyse de régression) et a permis de mettre en évidence tout ce qui suit:

- le niveau de dépense publique destinée à la promotion des activités culturelles et à la valorisation du patrimoine artistique et historique d'un territoire déterminé apparaît un élément capable d'aider d'une manière significative à la création de valeur publique. Il faut remarquer, en effet, que des niveaux plus élevés de dépense publique “culturelle” se trouvent dans des contextes où il y a un plus grand degré de bien-être social. Il faut observer, en outre, que les Pays qui dédient plus d'attention aux activités culturelles – du point de vue des ressources publiques qui leur sont destinées– reçoivent aussi des avantages de nature économique parce qu'ils apparaissent plus “attrayants” aux yeux des touristes. On ne doit pas passer sous silence, enfin, que la valorisation et la promotion des activités culturelles peuvent aider, entre autres choses, à améliorer l'“image” du système-Pays;
- les politiques de tarifs pratiquées pour l'accès et le déroulement des activités culturelles ne constituent pas un facteur à même de provoquer des effets négatifs aux plans social, économique et politique. La demande de biens et de services culturels apparaît, en effet, peu “élastique” par rapport aux différences de prix enregistrées dans les Pays examinés;
- les choix effectués par les Pays faisant l'objet d'enquête en matière d'attribution de responsabilités politiques à plusieurs niveaux du gouvernement dans la gestion des fonctions et des services culturels, ainsi que dans ceux du financement des organisations culturelles, ne sont pas des facteurs en mesure de contribuer directement à la création de valeur publique.

Keywords: cultural policies – public value – public management – European countries – empirical evidence.

Mots-clés: politiques culturelles – valeur publique – management publique – Pays européens – évidences empiriques.

Cultural strategies and public value creation: empirical evidence

1. Introduction

In recent years there is a growing conviction that cultural policies – focused on the enhancement and the promotion of artistic, musical and historical heritage of countries – are very important drivers of public value creation process (Murphy, 2001).

Many scholars show that cultural policies can generate social, economic and political advantages. However, it should be noticed that until now the importance of cultural policies in the social and economic growth of a country has been justified mainly by means of theoretical analysis or case studies. The researches on this subject supported by empirical evidence are few (Dalle Nogare, Galizzi, 2011).

Moreover, the analysis related to international contexts are very rare. The contributions referred to specific areas (cities, regions, countries, etc.) are more frequent. However, it is known that surveys referred to different contexts can help to determine the factors that can contribute better to the creation of public value.

This paper aims to: 1) determine these factors with reference to an European context; and 2) investigate the relationship between the main elements of cultural policies and a set of social, economic and political variables, without disregarding the context of each country analyzed. To achieve the aims of the research, we use statistical methods (bivariate correlation and regression analysis), with reference to a sample of 39 countries. The analysis is cross-sectional.

The implications of the research are various. In particular, the research, firstly, can help to fill the gaps in existing literature and, secondly, can offer useful information to define cultural policies that create public value.

2. Literature review

Cultural sector¹ is very important in the European economy. The analysis of some data can confirm this assertion. It has to be noticed that²:

¹ According to NACE classification, economic activities covered in the cultural sector are the following: “publishing activities”; “motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities”; “programming and broadcasting activities”; “creative arts and entertainment activities”; “libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities”.

- in 2009, over 3,6 million people (representing about 1,7% out of the total people in employment) worked in the cultural sector³;
- in 2009, the European countries exported more cultural goods to the rest of the world. The trade balance recorded a surplus of about 1,9 billion euros;
- the “cultural attractiveness” is the second motivation, in order of importance, for the European tourists in the choice of holiday destination or accommodation.

Recently, the importance of the cultural sector has also been highlighted by the European Commission in a Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. In this communication – focused on the definition of some objectives for a new European agenda for culture⁴ – it has been noticed, at page 3, that «... culture is an indispensable feature to achieve the EU’s strategic objectives of prosperity, solidarity and security, while ensuring a stronger presence on the international scene»⁵.

In the light of these considerations, it is believed that the definition of appropriate cultural policies by the Member States may be an important driver of economic and social growth of the European Union. According to a managerial point of view, it is possible to say that cultural policies are closely linked to the public value creation process.

Many scholars showed that cultural policies could generate social, economic and political advantages. In particular, with reference to the “social” ones the implementation of cultural policies could contribute to the “regeneration” of the depressed regions (Bassett, 1993; Bianchini, 1989, 1990; Bianchini, Parkinson, 1993; Griffiths, 1993, 1995; Herbert, 1995; Lim, 1993; Lister, 1991; Rogers, Fisher, 1992; Whitt, 1987; Wu, 2004; Zukin, 1982)⁶.

In particular, some of them, believed that the implementation of cultural strategies could help to rebuilding the citizens “sense of belonging” to their community (Benhamou, 2001;

² Data on cultural workers, referred to the EU-27 countries, are available from the recent Eurostat report “*Cultural statistics*” (2011).

³ The highest shares were found in Iceland, Norway and Sweden; the lowest in Portugal, Romania and Turkey.

⁴ We refer to the Communication COM(2007)242.

⁵ The European Commission recognised that defining cultural sector was complex. However, the Commission noted that the term “culture” «... 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». Communication COM(2007)242, p. 3.

⁶ With reference to the urban areas, Griffiths (1995: 253) noted that «... “*cultural realm*” is destined to play an increasingly important part in the future evolution of cities».

Bianchini, 1989; Del Vecchio, Heller, 2003; Fisher, Worpole, 1991, Montgomery, 1990). This is, among other things, «... because the consumption diffusion of cultural assets allows to share the same values and the same lifestyles» (Del Vecchio, Heller, 2003: 211). Otherwise, other authors focused their attention on the importance of cultural policies in promoting the “renovation” of the entrepreneurial system of a given area, through the creation of enterprises aimed at the production and the promotion of the “cultural products” (Kim, 2001; Myerscough, 1988).

It is easy to notice that the creation of the “cultural” enterprises can increase the level of social welfare, because it allows to increase the employment rate of a specific area.

Moreover, there are some observers that focused their attention on the role of cultural policies in the diffusion of the knowledge. At this regard, Del Vecchio and Heller (2003: 210) noticed that the increase of citizens cultural background seemed to be highly desirable because it could generate significant additional advantages. In particular, they believed that «The aim of spreading the knowledge can also represent a move towards more outcomes, i.e. to other purposes; the fact that citizens have a great cultural background may be an aim in itself or a prerequisite for the development of human capital ... and for the convergence of values and lifestyles in a perspective of social integration ...».

As regards to the “economic” advantages, cultural policies can help to attract tourists through an improvement of the “attractiveness” of a country (Bramwell, Rawling, 1996; Del Vecchio, Heller, 2003; Huges, 2000; Nicolau, 2010; Sofield, Li, 1998; Watkins, Herbert, 2003; Zukin, 1995). Generally, the improvement of the intensity of the touristic activities has a significant impacts on the economic system of a specific area. According to this point of view, Nicolau (2010: 182) said that «... cultural tourism should consistently contribute to local welfare as an inclusive, spatially balanced and self-supported industry ... with lots of synergies with other strategic sectors of the urban economy ...»⁷. However, it seems to be essential that policy makers are able to identify (and satisfy) stakeholders claims so that cultural policies could generate economic advantages (Pulido-Fernandez, Sanchez-Rivero, 2010)⁸. In this perspective, the definition, among other things, of pricing policies that could be adequate to the set of cultural goods and services seems to be very important.

⁷ Similar considerations can be found in: Del Vecchio, Heller (2003); Russo, Van der Borg (2002).

⁸ Since the last decades, cultural tourism is in great expansion. For this, many authors focused their attention on the study of the “behavior” of the cultural tourists trying to provide useful information to policy makers to define their “cultural supplies”. Further considerations at this regard are available, among others, in: Pearce (1982); Poria *et al.* (2001, 2006); Richards (2002, 2007); Silverberg *et al.* (1996).

Finally, with reference to the “political” advantages, it was observed that cultural policies could generate a significant improvement of politicians reputation (Frey, 2000). In other words, the activation of cultural strategies could enhance the “image” of a country (Del Vecchio, Heller, 2003, Heilbrun, Grey, 2001).

After having briefly analyzed the existing literature on the effect of cultural policies, it is necessary to identify, on the one hand, the variables that represent the social, economic and political elements above mentioned, and on the other hand, some cultural factors that can contribute better than others to the creation of public value.

As stated above, it is useful to control the effect of some specific context conditions, as well. In fact, this is important to “neutralize” the differences between countries.

All these variables will be described in the next paragraph.

3. Description of the variables

We identified a set of social, economic and political variables referred to the investigated countries in order to pursue the aims of the research. The variables are the following:

- social welfare degree (*Soc_Welfare*);
- educational degree (*Educ_Degree*);
- tourism competitiveness (*Tour_Comp*);
- tourism intensity (*Number_Tour*);
- tourism expenditure (*Tour_Exp*);
- perceived government effectiveness (*Public_Image*).

The variables labelled *Soc_Welfare* and *Educ_Degree* were useful to represent the potential social advantages that were related to the implementation of cultural policies. As stated above, many observers believed that cultural policies could contribute to the social development of a specific area because this policies aided the “regeneration” of depressed regions, the improvement of employment rate, etc. These elements could improve the level of social welfare. According to the cited authors (Del Vecchio, Heller, 2003), we also considered the contribute that the implementation of cultural policies could give to enhance the level of cultural background of citizens.

The variables named *Tour_Comp*, *Number_Tour* and *Tour_Exp* estimated the economic advantages – with reference to the tourism – that might come from cultural policies. Using these indicators, we aimed at evaluating whether and to what extent the design of cultural

policies to promote and enhance the cultural heritage of a territory was able to enhance its touristic attractiveness.

Finally, the variable labelled *Public_Image* helped us to identify the political advantages that might come from cultural policies. More precisely, we observed the effects that the decisions taken in the cultural field might generate on the image and on the effectiveness of public institutions. We focused, in particular, on the relationship between cultural policies and the perceptions of key stakeholders on the effectiveness of public institutions⁹.

The variables that represent the cultural factors may be various. In this paper, we focused our attention on the following:

- annual per capita government spending on culture (*Cult_Gov_Exp*);
- price levels of cultural goods and services (*Price_Level*);
- cultural institutions financed by public authorities (*Public_Instit*);
- political responsibilities broken down by level of government (*Pol_Gov_Resp*).

There are many reasons to justify the choice of these variables. In particular, with reference to the variable labelled *Cult_Gov_Exp*, the public spending on culture reflected the interest of governments in cultural activities. Moreover, we observed that this variable was used, frequently, by existing literature (Dalle Nogare, Galizzi, 2011), to explain the economic policy adopted by a government in the cultural sector.

With reference to the variable named *Price_Level*, pricing policies for cultural activities could have a relevant effect on the “attractiveness” of cultural goods and services for citizens. This is a very interesting matter if we consider that, over the years, many authors analyzed the “sensitivity to price” of the cultural tourists. The analysis of the most relevant literature revealed two distinct perspectives: some observers demonstrated the presence of a strong relationship between prices and intensity of cultural tourism (Bille-Hansen, 1997); other scholar revealed that the demand for cultural goods and services was “insensitive” to the price

⁹ According to the business administration and management literature (Borgonovi, 2004; Bouckaert, Halligan, 2008; Fouchet, Guenoun, 2007; Hatry, 2006; Hinna, 2006; Mohr, 1999; Mussari, 1999; Onesti, Angiola, 2009; Poister, 2003; Pollit, Bouckaert, 2004; Valotti, 2005; Van Dooren, Bouckaert, Halligan, 2010) the effectiveness of public administrations refers to the attitude of public administrations to fulfil the needs of citizens. Its judgment must rely on the evaluation of the effects (outcomes) that public policies generate on social and economic conditions. In this perspective, the perceptions of citizens and of other relevant stakeholders could be useful indicators of citizens satisfaction with reference to public action. In the Italian context, the recent “Brunetta Reform” (Law No. 15/09 and Decree No. 150/09) introduced the concept of “organizational performance” into the national law order. This concept takes into consideration, among other elements, «... the implementation of policies on the final satisfaction of the needs of the society» (article 8, paragraph 1, letter a), Decree No. 150/09).

policies adopted (Choi, 2009; Nicolau 2010; Prieto-Rodriguez, Fernandez-Blanco, 2006; Zieba, 2009). At the same time, there were not studies that analyzed the social and political effects that price levels of cultural goods might generate.

With reference to the variable labelled *Public_Instit*, we believed that the number of organizations (museums, theatres, art galleries, etc.) financed – wholly or partially – with public funds could be another useful element in order to judge the level of attention of politicians for cultural activities. However, no studies analyzed the social, economic and political impacts generated by transferring public funds to cultural organizations.

Finally, as regards to the variable named *Pol_Gov_Resp*, we observed that the distribution of political responsibilities between central and local government in the cultural policy field was a determinant factor in the management of cultural public functions and services. Even in this case, there were not contributions that analyzed the social, economic and political effects related to cultural policies.

As stated in the previous pages, the evolution of the social, economic and political variables could be influenced not only by the cultural policies (as described above), but also by specific “context conditions” (i.e. “initial differences”) that characterized the countries analyzed. For this reason, we identified some “control variables” in order to “neutralize”, to some extent, the differences between the country contexts.

Specifically, the control variables are the following:

- cultural heritage of the country (*Cult_Herit*);
- cultural workers as percentage of total employments (*%Cult_Workers*);
- annual spending on education as percentage of public spending (*Ed_%Gov_Exp*);
- internet users as percentage of total population (*%Int_Users*);
- urban population as percentage of total population (*Urban_Pop*);
- unemployment rate (*%Unempl*).

We expected that the presence in a country of a great cultural heritage and of a large number of cultural workers could have a positive impact on the social, economic and political variables identified in this paper (e.g. the tourism competitiveness).

Similar considerations could be formulated for the variables labelled *%Ed_Gov_Exp*, *%Int_Users* and *Urban_Pop*. We believed that these ones were positively related to the social, economic and political variables, because they reflected a population more educated and a socio-economic context more developed.

Finally, we believed that high unemployment rates were strongly related to low levels of social, economic and political indicators.

The next section describes the data sample and provides useful information with regard to the statistical techniques adopted.

4. Methodology

Data sample

We analyzed a sample of 39 European countries. We gathered data for every variable used in this paper with reference to these countries. The Table 1 shows the list of investigated countries¹⁰.

Table 1 – The investigated countries

Albania	Finland	Lithuania	Serbia
Armenia	France	FYR Macedonia	Slovakia
Austria	Georgia	Malta	Slovenia
Azerbaijan	Germany	Moldova	Spain
Belgium	Greece	Netherlands	Sweden
Bulgaria	Hungary	Norway	Switzerland
Croatia	Iceland	Poland	Turkey
Czech Republic	Ireland	Portugal	Ukraine
Denmark	Italy	Romania	United Kingdom
Estonia	Latvia	Russia	

Data on social variables (*Soc_Welfare* and *Educ_Degree*) and on some economic variables (in particular, *Number_Tour* and *Tour_Exp*) were available from Eurostat database.

The level of social welfare was estimated using the percentage of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion.

The proxy for the educational degree was represented by the percentage of people (out of the total population) with tertiary education attainment.

The tourism intensity was estimated using the number of tourists as officially reported for each investigated countries.

Finally, the tourism expenditure was estimated using data on consumption of the tourist when they visited one (or more) of the investigated countries¹¹.

¹⁰ We included also Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. As it is known, they are Caucasian countries. However, they are generally considered as European countries. At this regard, it should be noticed that these countries are described as “Other European countries” by the official European Union website (<http://europa.eu>).

¹¹ It has been considered only the consumption related to visits of at least a night.

The economic variable that was used to estimate the level of tourism competitiveness (*Comp_Tour*) was the “Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index”. This index was available from “*The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2011*” prepared by Blanke and Chiesa (2011) for the World Economic Forum 2011¹².

The political variable that reflected the judgment of public opinion on government (*Public_Image*) was measured using the “Government Effectiveness” index, developed by Kaufman et al. (2009) as part of the “Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project” of the World Bank. This index was founded on the perceptions of many actors (outside observers, citizens, etc.) with reference to «... the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government’s commitment to such policies» (Kaufman *et al.*, 2009: 6)¹³.

All the data referred to 2009.

With reference to the variables regarding the cultural policies factors (“cultural” variables) and to the context conditions factors (“control” variables), various data sources were available. See Table 2.

Table 2 – Cultural and context variables

	Variable	Year	Data source
Cultural variables	<i>Cult_Gov_Exp</i>	Media 1999-2008	<i>Council of Europe, Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe (2009)</i>
	<i>Price_Level</i>	2008	<i>Council of Europe, Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe (2009)</i>
	<i>Public_Instit</i>	Ultima rilevazione disponibile (tra 2000 e 2009)	<i>Council of Europe, Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe (2009)</i>
	<i>Pol_Gov_Resp</i>	Ultima rilevazione disponibile (tra 2005 e 2009)	<i>Council of Europe, Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe (2009)</i>
Control variables	<i>Cult_Herit</i>	2009	Unesco
	<i>%Cult_Workers</i>	2009	<i>Council of Europe, Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe (2009)</i>
	<i>Ed_%Gov_Exp</i>	2008	Eurostat
	<i>%Int_Users</i>	2008	<i>International Telecommunication Union, World Telecommunication/ICT Development Report and Database (Internet Users)</i> ; Eurostat (Population)
	<i>Urban_Pop</i>	2009	<i>United Nations, World Urbanization Prospects</i>
	<i>%Unempl</i>	2009	Eurostat

¹² In the report, the level of tourism competitiveness of the investigated countries lay between 1 and 7.

¹³ The “Government Effectiveness” assigns to each of the countries and territories surveyed a value that lay between -2,5 and +2,5. For additional information as regards to the index construction, see Kaufman et al. (2009).

Cult_Gov_Exp measured annual per capita public spending – on average – with reference to the decade 1999-2008¹⁴.

Price_Level was expressed through the so-called “Cultural Price Index on Goods and Services – Public Arts Service Price” (CUPIX PASP). This index, developed as part of the activities of the Council of Europe, measured the average prices associated to many (public) cultural services (in particular, art museum tickets, music lessons and opera tickets) in the European Union countries. The variable was expressed in terms of euro at constant 2008 prices.

The variable labelled *Public_Instit* was estimated using data on the number of (public or private) cultural organizations¹⁵ which received public funding.

The variable named *Pol_Gov_Resp* allowed to identify the level of government (state, regions/districts/provincial administrations, municipalities) which had the greatest responsibilities – in financial terms – in cultural fields. More exactly, we defined a discrete variable that could take three distinct values: “1”=“State”, “2” = “regions/districts/provincial administrations”; “3” = “municipalities”.

The artistic and cultural heritage (*Cult_Herit*) was measured by the number of sites and monuments existing in the countries under investigation which the Unesco considered as “world heritage”.

The variable called *%Cult_Workers* provided a measure of the number of workers (as a percentage of total people in employment) that worked in the cultural sector (we didn’t consider the distinction between public and private sector).

The variable labelled *%Ed_Gov_Exp* measured the annual public spending for education as a percentage of total public spending referred to the same year.

The variable named *%Int_Users* was calculated by the ratio of the total number of internet users to the total population.

Finally, the variables labelled *%Urban_Pop* and *%Unempl* referred, respectively, to the number of people living in urban areas (as defined by national statistical offices) and to the percentage of people unemployed.

Statistical methodology

We used some statistical techniques to achieve the purposes of the research.

¹⁴ Data on annual per capita public spending on culture are expressed at actual values.

¹⁵ The cultural organizations considered for the definition of the variable are numerous. We referred, among others, to museums, archaeological sites, archives, art galleries, theatres, academies (art, music and theatre), libraries, etc.

At first, we conducted a bivariate correlation analysis. This analysis allowed, on one hand, to select the “cultural variables” that seemed to be able to better explain the evolution of the social, economic and political variables (in other words, we tried to find a set of variables significantly related to the indicators labelled *Soc_Welfare*, *Educ_Degree*, *Tour_Comp*, *Number_Tour*, *Tour_Exp* and *Public_Image*) and, on the other hand, to highlight possible “multicollinearity” problems in our models”¹⁶.

Secondly, we realized a regression analysis to obtain useful information on the intensity and on the “sign” of the relationship between the social, economic and political variables (“dependent” variables) and the “cultural” and the “context” ones (“independent” variables). In the definition of the regression models, we based on the results of bivariate correlation analysis, considering only the independent variables that seemed to be significantly related to the social, economic and political ones.

The results of statistical analysis are discussed in the next section.

5. Results

Bivariate correlation analysis

The Table 3 shows the results of correlation bivariate analysis¹⁷.

¹⁶ The bivariate correlation analysis was realized using “nonparametric” techniques (we used the “Spearman's Rho” index). This choice seems to be preferable when data samples are not so great.

¹⁷ For simplicity, the Table 2 shows only the correlation indices between dependent and independent variables. As regards to the correlations between the independent variables (useful for evaluating the “multicollinearity” problems), please refer to the Appendix A. It is also to be noticed that we expressed the variables *Number_Tour*, *Tour_Exp* and *Cult_Gov_Exp* in logarithmic terms.

Table 3 – Bivariate correlation analysis. The relationships between the “dependent” and the “independent” variables

		<i>Soc_Welfare</i>	<i>Educ_Degree</i>	<i>Tour_Comp</i>	<i>Number_Tour</i>	<i>Tour_Exp</i>	<i>Public_Image</i>
<i>Cultural variables</i>	<i>Cult_Gov_Exp</i>	-0,744*** (n=26)	0,555** (n=29)	0,862*** (n=37)	0,200 (n=27)	0,522** (n=26)	0,892*** (n=37)
	<i>Price_Level</i>	-0,485* (n=24)	0,528** (n=27)	0,887*** (n=35)	0,530** (n=25)	0,754*** (n=25)	0,803*** (n=35)
	<i>Public_Instit</i>	0,221 (n=16)	-0,180 (n=18)	0,035 (n=26)	0,365 (n=17)	0,279 (n=17)	-0,149 (n=26)
	<i>Pol_Gov_Resp</i>	0,030 (n=24)	-0,289 (n=27)	0,185 (n=35)	0,245 (n=25)	0,223 (n=24)	0,009 (n=35)
<i>Control variables</i>	<i>Cult_Herit</i>	0,005 (n=27)	-0,050 (n=31)	0,508** (n=39)	0,804*** (n=27)	0,697*** (n=26)	0,267 (n=39)
	<i>%Cult_Workers</i>	-0,456* (n=27)	0,531** (n=30)	0,311^ (n=30)	-0,165 (n=27)	0,104 (n=26)	0,571** (n=30)
	<i>Ed_%Gov_Exp</i>	-0,336 (n=25)	0,584** (n=27)	0,340^ (n=27)	-0,101 (n=25)	0,083 (n=24)	0,638*** (n=27)
	<i>%Int_Users</i>	-0,741*** (n=27)	0,745*** (n=31)	0,825*** (n=39)	0,197 (n=27)	0,494* (n=26)	0,925*** (n=39)
	<i>Urban_Pop</i>	-0,429* (n=27)	0,394* (n=31)	0,643*** (n=39)	0,408* (n=27)	0,569** (n=26)	0,590*** (n=39)
	<i>%Unempl</i>	0,512** (n=26)	-0,135 (n=30)	-0,386* (n=38)	-0,266 (n=27)	-0,369^ (n=26)	-0,387** (n=38)

^ $p < 0,10$; * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

It should be noticed that only some of the independent variables (“cultural” and “control”) were significantly related to the dependent ones. More exactly, for the cultural variables, the annual per capita public spending (*Cult_Gov_Exp*) was highly correlated with five dependent variables (significant correlations were not found only with the variable *Number_Tour*). Similar considerations could be made as regards to the variable *Price_Level*. It appeared to be statistically correlated with all the dependent variables. For this, the variables *Cult_Gov_Exp* and *Price_Level* seemed to be the main “factors” of cultural policies in the countries under investigation.

This conviction was corroborated, however, by the fact that there were no significant correlations between dependent variables and the “other” cultural dimensions (we referred to *Public_Instit* and to *Pol_Gov_Resp*). In this perspective, we could say that the choices made in the field of public funding of cultural organizations as well as in the field of the distribution of “cultural” responsibility among the various levels of government did not seem elements closely linked to the public value creation process.

With reference to the “control” variables, it is possible to observe that the cultural heritage was positively related to all the economic indexes used. Therefore, this variable had a very important role in determining the degree of “attractiveness” of the country for the tourists. We noticed also that the development of the cultural sector (measured by the variable named *Cult_Workers*) appeared to be related to some social, economic and political variables in the sense that higher percentages of cultural workers were related to lower percentages of population at risk of poverty or social exclusion, to higher levels of education and tourism competitiveness, as well as to a better image of the country.

Before moving to the definition of regression models, it should be noticed that some of the independent variables that appeared significantly related to the dependent ones were also closely interlinked. This circumstance, as it is known, might generate “multicollinearity” problems and, for this, might alter the results of the regressions. We observed the main criticisms¹⁸ with reference to three variables. In particular, we referred to the annual public spending on education (*%Ed_Gov_Exp*), to the percentage of internet users (*%Int_Users*) and, finally, to the percentage of urban population (*Urban_Pop*)¹⁹. In this perspective, we excluded these indicators from the regression models.

Regression analysis

It is possible to estimate, at this point of the discussion, the regression models. In particular, we specified six linear regression equations. The values of the dependent variables were based on the values assumed by the independent variables that appeared to be significantly related to the first ones.

The models are presented in the Table 4.

¹⁸ In this paper, we considered “critical” the relationships between independent variables that had Spearman’s $Rho > |0,45|$.

¹⁹ With reference to the study of the relationships between independent variables, the bivariate correlation analysis is described in the Appendix A.

Table 4 – The regression models

<i>Models</i>	<i>Equations</i>
Model 1	$Soc_Welfare = \alpha + \beta_1 * Cult_Gov_Exp + \beta_2 * Price_Level + \beta_3 * \%Cult_Workers + \beta_4 * \%Unempl + \varepsilon$
Model 2	$Educ_Degree = \alpha + \beta_1 * Cult_Gov_Exp + \beta_2 * Price_Level + \beta_3 * \%Cult_Workers + \varepsilon$
Model 3	$Tour_Comp = \alpha + \beta_1 * Cult_Gov_Exp + \beta_2 * Price_Level + \beta_3 * Cult_Herit + \beta_4 * \%Cult_Workers + \beta_5 * \%Unempl + \varepsilon$
Model 4	$Number_Tour = \alpha + \beta_1 * Price_Level + \beta_2 * Cult_Herit + \varepsilon$
Model 5	$Tour_Exp = \alpha + \beta_1 * Cult_Gov_Exp + \beta_2 * Price_Level + \beta_3 * Cult_Herit + \beta_4 * \%Unempl + \varepsilon$
Model 6	$Public_Image = \alpha + \beta_1 * Cult_Gov_Exp + \beta_2 * Price_Level + \beta_3 * \%Cult_Workers + \beta_4 * \%Unempl + \varepsilon$

Note:

 α = Constant; $\beta_{1, \dots, n}$ = Regressor parameter; ε = Error

The Table 5 presents the results²⁰ of the regression analysis²¹.

Table 5 – Regression analysis

	<i>Soc_Welfare</i> (Model 1)	<i>Educ_Degree</i> (Model 2)	<i>Tour_Comp</i> (Model 3)	<i>Number_Tour</i> (Model 4)	<i>Tour_Exp</i> (Model 5)	<i>Public_Image</i> (Model 6)	
<i>Cultural variables</i>	<i>Cult_Gov_Exp</i>	-0,686**	0,119	0,390*	-	0,059	0,554**
	<i>Price_Level</i>	-0,073	0,409*	0,408*	0,140	0,367**	0,236^
<i>Control variables</i>	<i>Cult_Herit</i>	-	-	0,213	0,756***	0,621***	-
	<i>%Cult_Workers</i>	-0,029	0,436*	0,039	-	-	0,249*
	<i>%Unempl</i>	0,118	-	-0,108	-	-0,315**	-0,105
No. of obs.	24	26	26	25	25	26	
F	7,597**	7,763**	9,249***	21,927***	26,339***	18,727***	
<i>Rsquare</i>	0,615	0,514	0,698	0,666	0,840	0,781	

^ p<0,10; * p<0,05; ** p<0,01; *** p<0,001.

The models were all statistically significant (Model 3, Model 4, Model 5 and Model 6 for p<0,001; Model 1 and Model 2 for p<0,01). The *Rsquare* indices were all rather high (they

²⁰ Table 5 shows the values of the standardized parameters (*Beta*) of the regression.

²¹ For a descriptive analysis of the variables used in the regression models, see Appendix B.

lay between 0,840 of Model 5 and 0,514 of Model 2). All the main tests of “robustness” of the models seemed to be satisfactory²².

In all models there were significant variables. For cultural variables, we noticed that *Cult_Gov_Exp* was statistically significant in three out of five models. More exactly, this variable appeared to be positively correlated with the degree of tourism competitiveness (Beta=0,390, $p<0,05$) and, more intensely, with the “image” and the reputation of the government (Beta=0,554, $p<0,01$). In contrast, *Cult_Gov_Exp* seemed to be negatively related (Beta=-0,686, $p<0,01$) to the level of social welfare (*Soc_Welfare*). In other words, higher levels of poverty and social exclusion were registered, more frequently, in the countries that spent least on cultural activities.

Particular interesting are, moreover, the results obtained in correspondence of the pricing policies variable (*Price_Level*). In fact, this variable appeared to be positively correlated, among other things, with the level of tourism competitiveness (Beta=0,408, $p<0,05$) and tourism expenditure (Beta=0,367, $p<0,01$). In this perspective, it is possible to notice that price levels did not generate negative effects on the dependent variables investigated. These results were consistent with the orientations of a part of the existing literature (Choi, 2009; Nicolau 2010; Prieto-Rodriguez, Fernandez-Blanco, 2006; Zieba, 2009) that believed cultural tourism not to be negatively affected by the pricing policies. In other words, an increase in the prices of cultural goods and services did not usually generate a reduction in the level of tourism competitiveness and/or in the level of tourists expenditure.

As regards to the control variables, it is noticed that countries with larger cultural heritages had the most intense tourism. It is necessary to observe that in the Model 4 the variable *Cult_Herit* is the only one that generated a positive effect (Beta=0,756, $p<0,001$) on the trend of tourist flows (variable *Number_Tour*). This variable also generates a positive effect on tourism expenditure (Beta=0,621; $p<0,001$). At the same time, the number of cultural workers – representative, as stated before, of the development of the cultural sector – seemed to have a

²² More exactly:

- there were no particular problems of multicollinearity (the Variance Inflation Factors – VIF – never exceed the value of 2,5);
- there is no autocorrelation among the errors of the standard models. The Durbin-Watson index (DW) assumes, in all cases, values close to 2;
- the scatter plot of standardized residuals respect to the dependent variables of each model does not show the presence of groups of observations with different variances. Therefore, it is possible to accept the assumption of “homoschedasticity” of the regression models.

positive effect both on the level of education (Beta=0,436, $p<0,05$) and on the government image (Beta=0,249; $p<0,05$). These results were consistent with the existing literature.

6. Closing remarks

The paper had two main objectives: firstly, it determined the factors which contribute – by means of cultural policies – to the public value process in the European area; lastly, it analyzed if there were connections between these factors and some particular social, economical and political variables, without disregarding each country context.

The research was carried out with reference to 39 European countries by means of statistical methods (e.g. regression analysis) and it yielded the following main results:

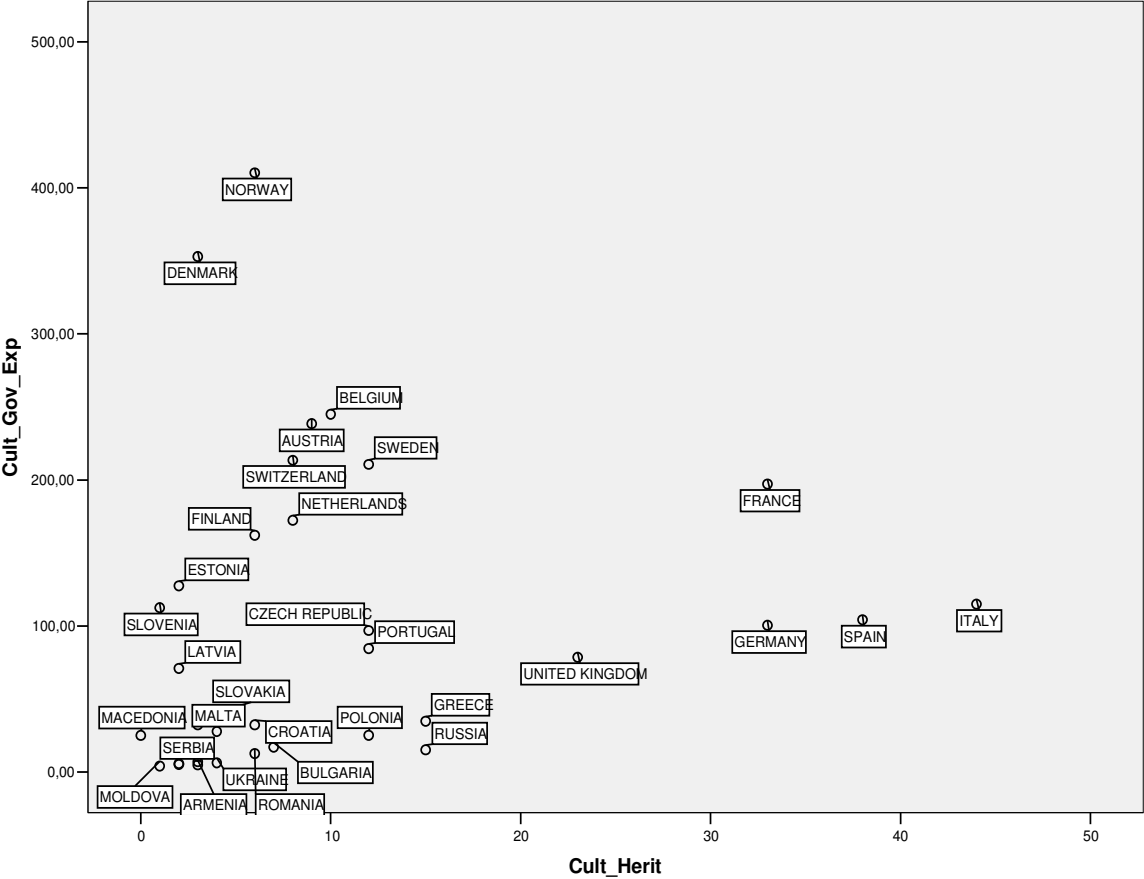
- the government spending in the cultural field (promotion and improvement of artistic and historical heritage) seemed to be a very important factor in the public value creation process. In fact, the highest levels of public spending in the cultural field were found in countries with the highest social well-being indicators. Moreover, it is interesting to underline that the countries with the highest levels of cultural public spending had economic advantages, as well, because they gained appeal from the tourists point of view. Finally, the promotion and improvement of artistic and historical heritage could contribute – among other things – to enhance the country image;
- the pricing policies seemed not to produce adverse repercussions on the social, economic and political variables analyzed. In fact, the demand of cultural services and goods was not flexible to price differences in the 39 countries examined;
- finally, the distribution of political responsibilities between central and local government in the cultural policy field seemed not to be relevant in the public value creation process with reference to the countries analyzed.

The managerial implications of those results are the follow: the destination of public funds to cultural activities seems to be a “good investment” considering the social, economic and political advantages connected with public spending. Moreover it is interesting to note that the decisions regarding pricing policies, the numerousness of public/private organizations to fund and the distribution of political responsibilities between central and local government seems not to have produced significant benefits from the social, economic and political point of views, in the countries analyzed.

As things stand now, not all the countries examined seemed to have caught the possible advantages coming from the “cultural investment”. Norway and Denmark were among the most sensitive countries with reference to the promotion and improvement of artistic and historical heritage. The two countries invested on average about 410 and 352 euro per habitant, respectively. On the contrary, Armenia and Albania were among the least favorably disposed countries to invest in the cultural field (on average, just 5 euro per habitant).

The analysis of public spending data was even more meaningful if those data was associated with the data of artistic and historical heritage of each country. In fact, the countries with a broad cultural heritage²³ (“rich” countries) should invest much more than “poor” countries. Actually, as it can be easily seen from Graph 1, rich countries (*in primis* Italy and Spain) did not invest the most per habitant.

Graph 1 – Cultural public spending and cultural heritage



The results seem not to be conclusive; in fact, the analysis refers to a restrained number of countries (n. 39) that refer to a specific geographical area (Europe).

²³ We refers to the number of sites and monuments existing in the countries under investigation which Unesco considers as “world heritage”.

However, the research represents the real attempt to give a true and fair view of the possible advantages coming from the activation of cultural policies in an international (European) context. Moreover, it is interesting to underline that the literature on the matter refers mainly to theoretical considerations. But this research provide some empirical evidence.

On the other hand, the lack of data that refer to an international context had led many researchers to relate their analysis to limited geographical areas (cities, regions, specific countries, etc.).

In the future, the results of this research could be extended to a larger number of countries of different geographical areas. But this aim could be kept only if there were an intensification of the recording activities with reference to an international context.

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Appendix A – Bivariate correlation analysis. The relationships between the “independent” variables

	<i>Cult_Gov_Exp</i>	<i>Price_Level</i>	<i>Public_Instit</i>	<i>Pol_Gov_Resp</i>	<i>Cult_Herit</i>	<i>%Cult_Workers</i>	<i>Ed_%Gov_Exp</i>	<i>%Int_Users</i>	<i>Urban_Pop</i>	<i>%Unempl</i>
<i>Cult_Gov_Exp</i>	1,000 (n=38)	0,324* (n=35)	0,035 (n=26)	0,152 (n=36)	0,414* (n=37)	0,353^ (n=28)	0,559** (n=26)	0,878*** (n=37)	0,628*** (n=37)	-0,391* (n=37)
<i>Price_Level</i>	-	1,000 (n=35)	0,093 (n=25)	0,174 (n=33)	0,392* (n=35)	0,110 (n=26)	0,325 (n=24)	0,775*** (n=35)	0,610*** (n=35)	-0,310^ (n=35)
<i>Public_Instit</i>	-	-	1,000 (n=26)	0,390* (n=26)	0,512** (n=26)	-0,277 (n=17)	-0,350 (n=16)	-0,129 (n=26)	0,341^ (n=26)	-0,115 (n=26)
<i>Pol_Gov_Resp</i>	-	-	-	1,000 (n=36)	0,442** (n=35)	-0,225 (n=26)	-0,484* (n=24)	-0,045 (n=35)	0,307^ (n=35)	-0,425* (n=35)
<i>Cult_Herit</i>	-	-	-	-	1,000 (n=39)	-0,363* (n=30)	-0,403* (n=27)	0,205 (n=39)	0,396* (n=39)	-0,169 (n=38)
<i>%Cult_Workers</i>	-	-	-	-	-	1,000 (n=30)	0,543** (n=27)	0,715*** (n=30)	0,393* (n=30)	-0,243 (n=29)
<i>Ed_%Gov_Exp</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000 (n=27)	0,632*** (n=27)	0,539** (n=27)	-0,170 (n=26)
<i>%Int_Users</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000 (n=39)	0,609*** (n=39)	-0,351* (n=38)
<i>Urban_Pop</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000 (n=39)	-0,259 (n=38)
<i>%Unempl</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,000 (n=38)

^ $p < 0,10$; * $p < 0,05$; ** $p < 0,01$; *** $p < 0,001$.

Appendix B – Summary statistics. The variables used in regression analysis

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
<i>Soc_Welfare</i>	27	11,60	46,20	23,10	8,50
<i>Educ_Degree</i>	31	10,00	31,60	21,64	7,33
<i>Comp_Tour</i>	39	3,60	5,68	4,66	0,56
<i>Tour_Exp</i>	26	5,43	7,92	6,64	0,61
<i>Number_Tour</i>	27	2,54	4,67	3,6	0,56
<i>Public_Image</i>	39	-0,77	2,19	0,82	0,81
<i>Cult_Gov_Exp</i>	38	0,62	2,61	1,67	0,58
<i>Price_Level</i>	35	1,38	61,08	16,49	14,10
<i>Cult_Herit</i>	39	0	44	9,51	10,67
<i>%Cult_Workers</i>	30	0,004	0,032	0,017	0,006
<i>%Unempl</i>	38	3,2	32,2	10,37	6,11