



WG2 Research Workshop

Unlocking the transformative potential of culture and the arts

Innovative practices and policies from social enterprises and third sector organizations active in the cultural sector

4-5 November 2019

Valletta campus, University of Malta

Organizers:

EMPOWER-SE COST Action, EMES International Research Network, University of Coimbra, University of Malta

I. SCOPE OF THE WORKSHOP

Drawing from the critical and transformative potential of culture and the arts this workshop focuses on the role of social enterprises and the social and solidarity economy (SE) and third sector organizations (TSOs) in the sustainability of local communities and society at large: “art cannot change the world, but it can contribute to change consciousness and impulses of man and woman who can change the world” (Marcuse).

On the one hand, there has been a revival and strengthening of linkages between artistic expressions and social and local socioeconomic grassroots initiatives and global issues of environmental sustainability, human rights and participatory democracy, with strong expression in the context of the recent crisis and the solidarity economy. On the other hand, culture and the cultural and creative industries become described and promoted as a tool for global competitiveness of places and cities and economic regeneration and growth. While much attention has been paid to the latter, there is a gap of knowledge and understanding of the dynamics and reach of what is taking place in the field of solidarity and civic socio-economic collaborations in culture and the arts. At the same time, precariousness and fragmentation persists in the field. As research shows: “TSOs in the field of “arts and culture” have to survive in a climate of permanent austerity as particularly in this area public funding is being scaled back. Working in the area of arts and culture can be very precarious and field often lacks an encompassing umbrella organization and a sub-sectoral infrastructure” (Zimmer, 2016).

SE initiatives in culture and the arts are diverse and include an economic dimension related to sustaining artistic and cultural expressions through market and non-market relations, on one hand, and embedding cultural and artistic

dimensions in socio-economic relations, on the other. Social dimensions emphasise aesthetic, cultural, civic values circulating and giving consistency to the linkages between people and people and the planet, helping to create community(es) from the construction of utopias and narratives in spaces of diversity, citizenship and trust (Sassen). It involves artists and culture workers, and often collaborations; across sectors (public, conventional enterprises, cooperatives, associations), resources (market, public grants and philanthropy) and activity fields.

This workshop is specifically addressed to scholars that have been exploring the diverse relations and synergies between socio-economic and political movements and culture and the arts. Many of these initiatives are being promoted by individuals, arts and culture movements and organizations, social enterprises, social and solidarity economy organisations, projects and movements. Papers may address one of the following five thematic lines:

1. Transformative social innovation through culture and the arts.
2. Social and economic inclusion to and through culture and the arts
3. Survival strategies from artists and creators face to labour market changes.
4. Cultural policy in a period of transformation for culture and the arts.
5. Culture as a transition field.

Thematic line 1. Transformative social innovation through culture and the arts

Implications of the recent evolution from the "democratization of culture" to "cultural democracy", making visible the critical nature of many of the emerging artistic and cultural practices and the challenges that they generate to the mainstream. Artistic and cultural expressions (e.g. activism) unlocking the imaginations and practices for other worlds and ways of living by communicating utopian and dystopian alternatives and criticisms. Culture and arts are seen here as a repository of civic values essential for the constitution of the public spheres where cultural practices and groups are active in creating and occupying democratized public spaces, enacting the right to the city.

This thematic line includes analysis of the meanings and practices described inside the creative industries frameworks, including the role of the market as mechanism to organize the exchange of cultural and artistic creations and experiences and the position of SSE-based initiatives in relation to these meanings and practices.

In light of these premises, this thematic line aims to gather contributions that address the role of cultural and artistic SE in promoting the regeneration of the public sphere, through interventions of public art (as opposed to private arts

closed in artists workshops and museums and art fairs) and the role of SE for supporting local arts collectives

Relevant case examples: [Observatório de Favelas](#) (Rio de Janeiro, popular culture as focus of rebuilding identity of the periphery), School for Creative Activism (USA).

Thematic line 2. Social and economic inclusion to and through culture and the arts

Artistic practices for social inclusion of disadvantaged people addressing cultural exclusion or/and the multidimensional character of social exclusion. Cross-boundary observations and multidisciplinary interventions including artists, social workers, educators, etc. disclose and target the systemic nature of social exclusion from the individual to the institutional and societal levels.

What is the role of arts and culture in social and solidarity economy initiatives of disadvantaged territories and people promoting economic inclusion? Arts, crafts and culture play a central role in providing symbolic meaning and value to the work and products of local communities as, for instance, in fair trade and community tourism, often a way to preserve local culture, memory and identity. In other instances, SE work collaborative with the “creative classes” (e.g. graphic designers) in re-signifying local cultures and artefacts.

This thematic line aims to gather contributions that analyse the use of artistic practices by SE that enable awareness and the outreach of disadvantaged groups (elderly, disabled people, roma, migrants, prisoners, mental health issues) and promote local cultures and identities.

Relevant case examples: Educab; partis Projects by Gulbenkian; Humusa komanda (Latvia, food producer employing refugees), [Blindart](#) (Latvia); [Sabura](#), Cova da Moura (Lisbon, ethnic tourism to overcome the image of the neighbourhood); [VOARTE](#) (theater of people with disability); Chapitô (Lisbon, circus school for young people inclusion); [Art therapy](#) (MBAM), [Group Paradoxe](#) (work integration through working experiences in the creative industry), [Laboratoire Culture Inclusive](#).

Thematic line 3. Survival strategies from artists and creators face to labour market changes

Precariousness and intermittency are defining traits of work in the cultural and artistic sector with consequences in terms of access to citizenship rights and

social protection by artists. These are becoming the norm of the larger labour market. Artists particularly are usually amongst those with the highest precarity, combining their work in arts with other jobs in order to be able to carry on artistic work. They also experience high levels of spatial mobility related to their arts careers. These work patterns are particularly challenging for women due to the prevalence of the sexual division of social reproduction labour. In this usually individualistic and isolated careers, forms of collective organization help to deal with the work and life circumstances of artists. Therefore, what are the lessons to be learned from these collective forms of organization?

We invite presentations investigating survival and social security strategies of artists while active or inactive (for reasons of unemployment, disease, disability, retirement) and the role of social enterprises in facilitating the socio-economic stability of creators. This may include artists' cooperatives, mutuals, residencies and other collectives as well as movements and infrastructure bodies addressing public policy, web-based platforms enabling artists direct contact with their publics. Particularly welcome are presentations on innovative collective strategies and initiatives that have proved effective in supporting the lives of artists and creators.

Relevant case examples: SMartbe (Belgium) and SMarteu; Studio Solipsis (Malta); Comptoir des Ressources Creatives (Belgium).

Thematic line 4. Cultural policy in a period of transformation for culture and the arts

Cultural policy-making has evolved from generous subsidies to drastic cuts in the last decades with strategies that range from instrumentalization to co-construction. Culture, arts and creativity became a core asset in policy strategies for the global competitiveness of regions and cities and an element in processes of gentrification and turistification while most arts and culture organisations suffer the effects of permanent austerity. Moreover, new actors have emerged as interlocutors with policy-makers representing culture and the arts while citizen-based initiatives are booming. Based on this recent past: what are the possible scenarios for policy-making in the field of culture and the arts?

This thematic line aims at discussing both case studies of cultural policies and good practices of TS/SE-led or government/SE or businesses/SE initiatives in promoting public policy goals such as citizens access to fruition and production of culture. It also addresses the impact of large-scale cultural events in promoting local cultural sustainability.

We are especially interested in contributions which explore the role of social enterprises and third sector organizations in facilitating the participation of local populations in culture and the arts. This includes arts organisations address to public policy, access to finance by both public, private (e.g. patronage) and social sources (e.g. crowdfunding), and the role of public policy in promoting directly and indirectly the sustainability of the arts which enable contributing to the public policy goals.

Relevant case examples: [The Liminals](#) (Greece, everyone to engage in performing arts); InArt – Community Arts Festival (Lisbon)

Thematic line 5. Culture as a field of transition.

Culture seen as a core element in transitioning to sustainable societies, including the promotion and preservation of cultural diversity and the role of local knowledges and cultures in biodiversity preservation. It includes strategies for considering culture and, connected to it, knowledge as a new common where cultural and artistic collaborative practices open the diversity of ways of knowing and speaking and question current power relations and dynamics by allowing for an engagement of citizens and communities. It addresses issues related to intellectual property rights ownership, promotion/preservation of local knowledges and cultures, co-production of knowledge and mutual learning, trans and intercultural dialogues

Cultural and artistic social enterprises put forward alternatives with other transitions under way. An emerging shared vocabulary is under construction and, very often, these different transition areas interconnect and combine strategies, languages and actions.)

Researchers are invited to presenting contributions focusing on awareness raising, education and alternative narratives to the mainstream economy with a view to sustainability, articulating interdependencies, substantive notions of the economy connecting human beings and nature, excess economies as alternative to economies of scarcity and artistic communities in urban commons. Questions to be raised are, for instance, how these initiatives are sustained and scaled.

Relevant case examples: [Inland-Campo Adentro](#) (Madrid and EU, art, agriculture and territory); [Cape Fairwell](#) (culture and climate change)

II. WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

This workshop is conceived as a high-profile academic event aimed at exchanging initial thoughts in an incipient field of research covered by the EMPOWER-SE COST Action thematic line: social enterprise and culture. Enough time will be devoted to present and comment on the contributions and case studies presented.

One of the goals of the workshop is to contribute to EMPOWER-SE Working Group 2 with regards to arts, culture and SE but also to create connections that can lead to future joint research proposals. To this end leading investigators will be invited to present the research findings of research projects they are coordinating. Among others, we will discuss the following projects' outcomes: Third Sector Impact, ARTERIA (theatre and citizenship in Portuguese cities), Popular University of Social movements, the Cultural Base platform, the CulturePolis project.¹

Moreover, key stakeholders will be invited to present their views and contribute to the discussion. The main umbrella organization Culture Action Europe will be invited as well, together with Interarts.

An academic publication with selected papers of this EMPOWER-SE COST Action Research Workshop will be published after the event. In addition, the proceedings of the seminar as well as a Stakeholder Brief summarizing the discussion with stakeholders will be published.

Call for case studies

A collection of case studies will be published in the website as a tool for dissemination and teaching on the wealth of initiatives connecting culture and the arts and social enterprises.

Cases to be submitted should address at least one of the five thematic lines as described above and have **a maximum length of 2000 words**.

They should be written in English and include the following sections:

1. Name, contact information, website and social media channels
2. Historical background (including organizational form and why it was selected)
3. Mission and objectives
4. Main current activities
5. Legal form and legal status (if any)
6. Mode of governance and stakeholders participation
7. Main resources available and challenges of sustainability

¹ Third Sector Impact (<https://thirdsectorimpact.eu/>), ARTERIA (<https://www.ces.uc.pt/en/investigacao/projetos-de-investigacao/projetos-financiados/arteria-o-centro-em-movimento>); UPMS (<http://alice.ces.uc.pt/en/index.php/upms/?lang=en>); The Cultural Base platform (<http://culturalbase.eu/>); The Culture Polis project (<https://culturepolis.org/en/>)

8. Main connections with the social and solidarity economy and/or the cultural sector
9. Transformative potential statement (one sentence summarizing the innovative character of the initiative)

III. WORKSHOP COMMITTEES

Scientific committee:

- **Vincent Caruana**, University of Malta (Malta)
- **Adalbert Evers**, Heidelberg University (Germany)
- **Sílvia Ferreira**, University of Coimbra (Portugal)
- **Malin Gawell**, Södertörn University (Sweden)
- **Paula Guerra**, University of Porto (Portugal)
- **Maité Juan**, Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme (France)
- **Jean-Louis Laville**, CNAM/LISE (France)
- **Rocío Nogales**, EMES Network (EU)
- **Julie Rijpens**, University of Liege (Belgium)
- **Philip Schlesinger**, University of Glasgow (UK)

Organizing committee:

- **Vincent Caruana**, University of Malta (Malta)
- **Silvia Ferreira**, University of Coimbra (Portugal)
- **Rocío Nogales** and **Thomas Pongo**, EMES Network (EU)

IV. DISCIPLINARY APPROACH AND ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS

We invite proposals for paper presentations focusing on findings of theoretical analyses, empirical quantitative and qualitative field research, and comparative analyses covering various EU countries. We welcome the submission of papers drawing on all fields of social science (sociology, economics, political science, law, geography, social anthropology, social work, pedagogy, etc.). Interdisciplinary perspectives are particularly welcome.

Interested authors should submit a 250-300 word long abstract of their contribution that includes: author(s)' full information (including country, gender and state whether they are early career investigators); contribution title; main research objective/question; methodological approach; (expected) results and



contribution. All submissions will be made via email to the address empowerse-culture@emes.net by 1st July 2019. A full paper template will be shared with selected authors when they are notified so they can submit their contribution by 1st October 2019.

Targeted participants

Researchers and practitioners currently involved in the topics described above are welcome to apply. Around 25-30 papers will be selected for a maximum of 6-8 per thematic line.

Financial support

Mobility (travel and accommodation) for selected presenting authors will be covered fully by the EMPOWER-SE COST Action. No other financial support will be available from the organizers.

Key dates

- 9 April 2019:** Call published
- 1 July 2019:** Deadline for the submission of abstracts
- 3 August 2019:** Notification of acceptance to authors
- 1 October 2019:** Full paper submission deadline
- 16 October 2019:** Programme published
- 4 November 2019:** Workshop begins

For any questions about this workshop, please write to empowerse-culture@emes.net