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Supporting Arts and Safeguarding Culture: Role of Cooperatives as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

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Abstract:

The paper aims to initiate a serious dialogue among stakeholders in the policy and research space concerning cooperatives for supporting arts and culture, premising this need on the 2016 inscription of *the idea and practice of organizing shared interests into cooperatives as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* in the Representative List of UNESCO. The paper establishes a theoretical framework elaborating on the value, opportunities, and challenges of cultural and creative sectors, and builds on the existing and potential connection between the creative sector and the cooperative movement. 7 examples of cooperatives plying in the creative sector are briefly introduced, and arguments for mainstreaming cooperatives, enhancing workers' position, and safeguarding genuine cooperatives in the cultural and creative sector are put forth, in line with the aim of the paper to help stakeholders in the cooperative movement to discuss leveraging the potential of creative sector for further development of cooperatives worldwide and vice-versa.

Keywords: cooperatives, safeguarding culture, heritage of humanity, culture of cooperation, culture and creative sectors

1. Introduction

A deeper analysis and collaboration between the cooperative movement and the arts and culture sector is required. Cooperatives are designed to build wealth in communities most directly targeted and affected by inequality, helping vulnerable workers build skills and earn income. The cultural sector is actively seeking alternatives to business-as-usual to create economic and racial justice in the sector and beyond. We know that racial justice cannot be achieved without economic justice, and that culture is key to imagining and enacting economies of solidarity. It is for this reason that the arts and culture sector needs the solidarity economy movement, and vice versa. Despite a strong presence of arts and culture workers in the cooperative sector of the economy—with an estimated 1 in 5 worker-owned businesses in the arts and culture sector in the United States alone—presently there is no comprehensive map of creative cooperatives internationally (Suryanarayanan and Woolard *et al.*, 2021).

Cultural and creative sectors are an important source of jobs and income with valuable spillovers to the broader economy. They are a driver of innovation, a source of creative and digital skills with strong cross-over into many sectors of the economy and help other sectors, such as tourism, to grow. In addition to their economic impact, they also have significant social impacts, from supporting health and well-being to promoting social inclusion and local social capital. However, these are often sectors that remain largely undervalued in the policy debate because of the difficulty in assessing their impact, the unique nature of the professions and the often financially precarious situations of persons associated with them (cultural and creative sectors) that characterize them.

The purpose of this research is to study at international level the economic and social benefits that the cooperative form of enterprise offers to the creative and cultural sector. We define a creative cooperative as an autonomous association of people united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise working in the cultural sector, including the performing and visual arts, literature, film, design, and crafts. The paper will present some case studies to support the role that cooperatives could play in the cultural and creative sectors, but the final goal of the research is to map the current state of play of cooperatives in safeguarding in/tangible cultural heritage, as well as the status and potential in the creative sectors. Further research is required to understand the cultural work and wisdom traditions that are often held within agricultural and other cooperatives that are not explicitly in the cultural sector.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Value and opportunities of the culture and creative sectors

Cultural and creative sectors are often referred to as cultural and creative industries too, a term that dates to 1947 when the philosophers Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer (2002) coined it. Today, it indicates those parts of the modern economy in which culture is produced and distributed through industrial means, applying the creativity of individuals and groups to the generation of original cultural products, which may have commercial value either through direct sale to consumers or as intellectual property (Flew, 2017). Cultural and creative industries typically bring together the arts, media and design sectors, with a focus on converging digital technologies and the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

As the OECD (2021) points out, measuring the value of the cultural and creative sectors internationally is not easy due to the absence of comparable statistics. This is also one reason

why this sector often remains largely undervalued in the policy debate. Despite this, there has been a proliferation of research in recent years demonstrating the potential of the cultural and creative sectors. A potential that relates to GDP growth, job opportunities, digital, social and environmental innovation.

A famous 2015 research study by Ernst & Young states that the cultural and creative sectors generate annual revenues of USD 2.25 trillion and account for 29.5 million jobs globally. In many economies, this has a bigger impact than in the telecoms or automotive sector. And in fact, if we consider for example the EU Member States, the CCS' impact in terms of value-added and employment, is comparable to other key economic sectors such as information and communication technology and accommodation and food services, which account for more than 4% of EU GDP (KEA, 2021).

Moreover, creative goods are a significant driver of trade, because, between 2002 and 2015, the size of the global market for creative goods more than doubled, reaching over USD 500 billion by 2015 (UNCTAD, 2018). Compared to these numbers, again the OECD (2021) points out that the economic impact of the cultural and creative sectors must be considered even broader, if only because the statistics consider only products and not the value produced by the production stage. Along with the fact in most countries before the pandemic, these sectors were growing a lot. For example, before the pandemic in the EU-27, cultural employment increased by over 11% between 2011 and 2019 compared to a 5.8% increase in total employment (Eurostat, 2021a; Eurostat, 2021b). Therefore, CCS have not only an impact on the economy but also on employment. In a world of work where the role of technology is becoming increasingly important (World Economic Forum, 2016), to the point that many professions are expected to be replaced by machines (Frey and Osborne, 2016), creative jobs tend to be more high-skilled than average, and many occupations are at lower risk of automation (De Masi, 2020; OECD, 2021)

CCS drive innovation in national and local economies in several ways. First, a more innovative workforce benefits from arts education and cultural participation, as evidenced by the fact that creative workers found in most industrial sectors, drive innovation across the economy (Propis, 2012; Avvisati, Jacotin and Vincent-Lancrin, 2013; Vincent-Lancrin *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, strong business-to-business linkages to the creative sectors are associated with high levels of innovative activity and performance (OECD, 2021). For example, while the pandemic has caused an unprecedented downturn in international tourism, it has also spawned innovations that are likely to endure over the long term. Cultural regeneration strategies, intelligently managed, can help revive cities, villages, and urban neighbourhoods. Additionally, CCS have long been at the vanguard of experimenting with innovative models of digital production and distribution. Among other things, COVID-19 has further accelerated digitization as workers, organizations and the public have had to adapt to new ways of interacting with culture and creativity due to closures and social distancing guidelines.

Finally, culture and heritage can help promote more responsible, pro-social, and pro-environmental behaviours and new approaches to social economy and the green transition (OECD, 2021). Concerning social impact, cultural participation can also be a tool for social inclusion and building local social capital. For example, by helping people to overcome social barriers also among people of different backgrounds. CCS can also play a role in increasing educational performance, including for disadvantaged groups, because cultural engagement improves people's sense of self-worth and motivation to invest in their intellectual curiosity and willingness to learn (Willekens and Lievens, 2014; Jaschke, Honing and Scherder, 2018).

Regarding the green transition, cultural and creative sectors also contribute to environmentally friendly planning, infrastructure, and mobility, and introduce creative reuse of objects and goods or support the expansion of the circular economy.

2.2. Challenges of the culture and creative sectors

There is a great opportunity for culture to play an even greater role in driving economic, social and indeed environmental outcomes, but to realize this potential, it is essential to also address the problems and difficulties in these sectors, from high rates of precarious employment to the structural fragility of many enterprises. With COVID-19 these problems came into the public eye, especially at the time when the creative and cultural sectors have been completely put on the back burner and considered “expendable” compared to other professions or sectors.

All the major institutions at the international and European level, estimated that the impact of the pandemic has been especially harsh for cultural and creative sectors, with a negative peak in entertainment and arts (OECD, 2020a; KEA European Affairs, 2020; ILO, 2021a; ETUI contributors, 2021; Ernst & Young, 2021; Eurofound, 2021). For example, in Europe, Ernst & Young (2021) estimated that CCSs lost €199 billion due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which corresponds to more than 30% of their business volume in 2020, and particularly affected were music and live entertainment, which were contracted by 75% and 90%.

This loss had of course a negative effect on creative and cultural workers too, with entertainment and arts workers who have been one of the most affected working groups by the effects of COVID-19 due to the shutdown of performing arts activities. We have also to underline that most CCS workers are non-standard workers that represent around 40% of total employment in sectors most affected by containment measures (OECD, 2020b). This means that the negative effects of the pandemic have hit a sector where workers are already fragile and vulnerable.

Even before the pandemic, workers in the culture and creativity sectors experience higher levels of precarity than workers in other sectors, due to their atypical work patterns, characterized by intermittency, heterogeneity, and instability (Howes, 2016; Culture Action Europe and Dâmaso, 2021) that often result in low incomes and limited, if any, access to social protection schemes, such as unemployment benefits, sick and maternity leave, and work injury coverage schemes. Creative and cultural workers usually work part-time, without a permanent contract, and combine employment and self-employment throughout their careers in other sectors (services, education, etc.). In addition, self-employment is higher in the cultural and creative sectors (33%) than employment in the total economy (14%) (Ernst & Young, 2021). Since most workers in the culture and creative sectors are usually isolated in the labour market, they also suffer from a lack of bargaining power. For this reason, they may be forced to work undeclared or under fraudulent contracts (Charhon and Murphy, 2016; Eurofound, 2021).

Prior to COVID-19, the cultural and creative sectors were already characterized not only by precarious labour practices but also by fragile organizational structures. For example, CCSs in Europe suffer from an endemic vulnerability due to their industrial structure and the inherent characteristics of many activities (e.g., project work, public good character, the unpredictability of success) (IDEA Consult *et al.*, 2021). This endemic vulnerability finds its origins in some peculiar characteristics of the industry. First, is the fact that most of the enterprises operating in the sector are very small, with mostly micro-sized enterprises, which

often rely on freelancers and temporary and intermittent workers. This implies that CCS in Europe is characterized by fragmented value chains, based on numerous workers and small organizations that must work closely together, and often also combine the high diversity of cultural and creative expressions, services, and goods, as well as linguistic diversity (IDEA Consult *et al.*, 2017). This fragmentation is also reflected in the sector's difficulty to speak with one united voice (KEA and PPMI, 2019). Secondly, companies operating in the CCS usually face greater barriers to accessing financing than companies in other sectors (IDEA Consult *et al.*, 2013). For this reason, enterprises resort to the abundant use of short-term finance and suffer from a lack of a healthy financing ecosystem, also because financiers are not familiar with businesses in the cultural and creative sectors, which are often characterized by highly varied business structures (from public and non-profit institutions to microenterprises and large for-profit operators) (IDEA Consult *et al.*, 2021).

2.3. The Cooperative Movement and Cultural and Creative Sectors

Around the world, culture and creative sectors appear rich in opportunity and potential. Nevertheless, as we have just underlined, there are many difficulties facing it, from the precariousness of the professions to the fragility of businesses. Situations where workers have little bargaining power, in conditions of isolation and exploitation, and where it is difficult to build structured enterprises due to fragmentation and limited access to financial instruments have always been fertile ground for the world of social and solidarity economy (ILO COOP, 2020), among which we find cooperatives. And indeed, all over the world, cooperatives are playing an increasingly important role in the CCS (ILO, 2021b).

Although most cooperatives operate in agriculture, finance, wholesale and retail, health care, housing, and insurance, and traditional worker cooperatives operate in industry and services, including social services, today the cooperative model is being applied to new fields of activity, such as information and communication technologies, tourism, and cultural and creative industries.

Bringing the two areas together can greatly enrich both. On one hand, the cooperative movement is seeking greater visibility in the dominant economy, and arts and culture have proven to support understanding, communications, and teamwork. On the other hand, the arts and culture sector is looking for culturally relevant materials and encouragement and mentorship from the cooperative movement. For example, a scan of the arts and culture landscape in the United States 2021 reveals a growing demand for education and training about cooperative forms of enterprise. (Suryanarayanan and Woolard, et al., 2021). As democratic enterprises, cooperatives are designed to meet people's economic and social needs, and in cooperatives, creatives learn technical artistic skills alongside racially-just, solidarity-informed business practices that follow internationally recognized principles.

This awareness also emerged during the 33rd World Congress of Cooperatives in Seoul, when Christine Merkel, International expert, Senior Adviser, UNESCO_EU Expert Facility Cultural Governance and Creative Economy (2011-2022) Co-Chair, EU OMC Group Cultural dimension of Sustainable Development (2020-2022) intervened during the session "Cooperative Culture and Safeguarding Cultural Heritage" aimed to raise awareness and stimulate conversation about the cooperatives' recognition as intangible cultural heritage having universal outstanding value, and the culture of cooperation defined by its values and

principles. She recognized that thanks to their-own culture¹, cooperatives show a natural propensity to grasp and enhance the innovative characteristics of the cultural and creative sectors through safeguarding cultural heritage (International Cooperatives Alliance, 2021).

Despite all this evidence, to date, the relationship between CCS and cooperatives has been little explored not only by scholars but by the cooperative movement itself. One of the few researchers who has devoted himself to the topic, Professor Thomas Knubben, as early 2018 emphasized the need to establish an empirical database with the purpose of cataloging the different types and tasks of cooperatives, and also assessing their economic and cultural importance in different countries.

Resuming the proposal of Knubben, who also attended the above-mentioned session in Seoul, the goal of this research is to lay the groundwork for mapping cooperatives working in the cultural and creative industries.

Considering that CCS is a relatively new academic field, which has not a lot of core texts, and that there is little literature connecting it to the cooperative at international level², the main research method used has been a qualitative approach based on a multiple case study approach. Statistical and general data come from international repositories, and institutions working in the entertainment field. Regarding the choice of cases, we opted to involve first the cooperatives that participated in the session in Seoul (Doc Servizi and Resonate) and then other cooperative entities that because of their type of activity and/or size seemed relevant to us to begin this mapping work about cooperatives in the CCS. The main research methods used are qualitative ones, specifically the text analysis of websites and semi-structured interviews, which were conducted via questionnaires sent via email.

3. Case studies

Cooperatives are founded by people who share specific needs, and members own and control the cooperative by making decisions democratically based on the principle of “one member, one vote”, regardless of the share of capital held. Members can be workers, producers, users, or customers, depending on the type of cooperative, and through their ownership structure, financial commitment, and democratic participation in the cooperative’s governance, they collectively become entrepreneurs of the cooperative. Cooperatives not only belong to larger, global cooperative networks but also care about the surrounding community. For this reason, they are used to establish alliances, networks, federations, groups, and consortia not only among cooperatives but also with formal and informal actors at the local, national, and international levels. The combination of these characteristics implies that cooperatives have a structure that is also capable of responding to the varied needs of those working in CCSs. To analyze the scope of this potential, in the next paragraphs we will analyze some case studies coming from all over the world and which range from entertainment and creative field to media and news.

¹ As recognized by the UNESCO in 2016, cooperative-culture is that which invigorates the cooperative-idea, and is at least, a combined practice of the values that cooperative-enterprises are based on self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity, and ethical-values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others, which cooperators have traditionally believed in.

² At global level this topic was recently studied in ILO (2021), *Cooperatives and the wider social and solidarity economy as vehicles to decent work in the culture and creative sector*, «Cooperative and the World of Work», n. 13.

3.1. Art.coop (USA, 2020)

Art.coop (www.art.coop) is a national network of grantmakers, grassroots organizers, and cultural workers in the United States who work together to grow the solidarity economy movement by centering systems-change work led by working class and queer, trans-, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (QTBIPOC) artists and culture-bearers. Art.coop began in the winter of 2020 of the COVID-19 pandemic to interview arts and culture grantmakers alongside cultural workers about the change they wish to see in the arts and culture sector.

In March 2021, Art.coop launched with a report commissioned by Grantmakers in the Arts and written by Nati Linares and Caroline Woolard. The report is about the ways that arts and culture grantmakers can engage in systems-change work that addresses root causes rather than symptoms of cultural inequity. The cultural sector is actively seeking alternatives to business-as-usual to create economic and racial justice in the sector and beyond. Grantmakers can play a role in the transformation of the sector by following the lead of BIPOC creatives who are innovating models for self-determination and community wealth. This work is part of an emergent movement in the United States that is known globally as the Solidarity Economy.

In September and October of 2021, Art.coop held a 7-week program called Study-into-Action with 105 cultural innovators and 7 facilitators who are leading transformative change in the arts and culture sector. The result of the convening was a series of listening sessions for feedback about the role that Art.coop can play in the solidarity economy movement in the United States. Art.coop's mandate is to (1) connect cultural innovators across silos in the solidarity economy movement, (2) amplify research, inspiration, resources, and events that lift up this work, (3) move money to multi-year, self-determined, systems-change efforts led by artists; and (4) study together to practice spreading power and wealth and rooting it in community.

The years of 2022-2024 are focused on the creation of a directory, a podcast, a toolkit, and online learning modules for the membership of Art.coop in addition to a monthly convening for artists in the solidarity economy, a monthly convening for arts and culture grantmakers to learn about funding opportunities in the solidarity economy. The membership of this emergent national network draws from three areas: (1) independent cultural workers who are self-employed, (2) Grantmakers in the Arts, a national association of public and private arts funders, and (3) the New Economy Coalition, a coalition of 200+ organizations building the solidarity economy in the United States. The members want to be connected to an international network of creative cooperatives but do not know where to go to find this information.

3.2. Associated Press (USA, 1846)

The Associated Press (apnews.com, AP), established in 1846, calls itself an independent global news organization dedicated to factual reporting. AP, as it is abbreviated, has an outreach to more than half of the world's population and operates from 250 locations worldwide. AP was founded as a cooperative whose members are US newspapers and broadcasters. It set up an Emergency Relief Fund to safeguard the health and interests of its member journalists and technicians when they are affected by conflict and disaster. The cooperative has won 56 Pulitzer Prizes for its unbiased and factual journalism. Most journalistic articles are written by members of the Newspaper Guild Union.

Today, AP's news is published by around 1,700 newspapers and used by over 5,000 television and radio broadcasters. AP also owns a library of 10 million photographs. As a cooperative,

member news agencies have provided automatic rights for the AP to distribute local news reports.

The origins of the cooperative are found in the need by US newspapers to pool resources to better coordinate journalistic work related to news coming from Europe. Before the AP, newspapers had to rely on manual transport and upon realizing that newspapers were duplicating efforts of collecting news, US newspapers floated the cooperative which in the beginning was called Harbour News Association.

Associated Press navigated through the fierce competition in the journalism business to report fast and accurately, and continues to do so today, by doing what it does best in its own words – boring, reliable and factual news.

3.3. Chitrlekha (India, 1965)

Chitrlekha, or writing with pictures, was a successful filmmakers' cooperative floated by some of the most revered Indian filmmakers such as Adoor Gopalakrishnan, Kulathoor Bhaskaran Nair and others, who did not subscribe to the mainstream film culture of India.

The cooperative was set up in 1965 with 25 members pitching in INR 100 each (around 1.5 US Dollars). The cooperative was instrumental in helping Malayalam cinema carve a niche for itself amid the otherwise noisy mainstream cinema and helped shape cinematic taste among film goers in the South Indian state of Kerala.

The idea behind the cooperative was to not just create good cinema but to also screen, produce and distribute such films. After a series of short films, the cooperative ventured into feature length film and produced a landmark film in its debut entitled *Swayamvaram* in 1972 which won 4 prestigious National Awards. The Film Financing Corporation of the Government of India supported the cooperative with a loan to produce its first films.

Rooted in the idealism of Gandhi, the pioneers were able to set up a cooperative film studio with pioneering sustainability architect Laurie Baker in charge of building it – an environmentally friendly choice the cooperative made in the early 1970s.

3.4. Doc Servizi (Italy, 1990)

Doc Servizi (www.docservizi.retedoc.net) was founded in 1990 in Verona, Italy, as a workers' cooperative. It was created by a group of musicians to obtain decent work, fight undeclared work, and collectively enhance their work as professionals in the performing arts (Martinelli, 2021). Today it is the largest Italian cooperative operating in the field of entertainment with more than 6,000 members working in all professions of the performing arts and 44 million euros of turnover foreseen for 2022.

In the cooperative, artists acquire the double status of worker-members (Martinelli, 2017): as workers, they become employees of the cooperative and have access to its social protection systems; as members, they become entrepreneurs of the cooperative and, through democratic management, can choose how to run the business to achieve the goals they would not achieve on their own. In addition, the cooperative's professionals organise themselves to be free to manage their specific activity and at the same time be able to collaborate with others.

Over the years, members have organised themselves to provide more and more services to carry out their work in the best possible way (job management, business promotion, professional communities, specific business units, training) and find new job opportunities within the cooperative. Since 2012, Doc Servizi members have introduced an internal digital

platform to manage all this activity and support their self-management (Martinelli *et al.*, 2019).

Regrouping workers usually fragmented in the market; Doc Servizi has begun to advocate for its members. Two examples where its expertise was involved are a decree dedicated to the safety of technicians delivered in 2014 and the first Italian collective bargaining agreement (CBA) for the professionals of the arts who work in a cooperative signed in 2014 (Chiappa, and Martinelli, 2019), and renewed in 2020 to protect all freelancers of the cultural and creative industry and regulate platform work.

Today Doc Servizi is part of a larger network, called “Rete Doc”, made up of eight companies that together have more than 8,400 members and cover all sectors of the cultural and creative industries, communication, education, and technological innovation.

3.5. Magnum Photos (USA, 1947)

Magnum Photos (www.magnumphotos.com), founded in 1947, is owned and run by its member photographers who are selected after a difficult process of “self-selection” to become full members. Members meet once a year, normally in the last week of June in New York or London for their general assembly. Magnum’s members are its shareholders and have voting rights on matters of governance. Some of its photographer members have the status of contributors or correspondents and this class of members do not have voting rights. This is similar to Stocksy United, a Canada based photography cooperative.

One of the key policies of Magnum is full members have to work for 23 years exclusively for the cooperative before becoming associate members and taking up work outside the cooperative. This transition removes voting rights of members.

Set up by renowned photographers Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson, among others, Magnum members at the time of the founding played an important role during the Second World War and were motivated to offer the world a newer perspective than what was available. Magnum put human-rights at the center and pioneered many a change, including photojournalism. It pioneered the blending recording events and artistic expression into a single composition (FujiFilm Square, 2017).

Today, the cooperative has offices in New York City, Paris, London and Tokyo.

3.6. Means TV (USA, 2019)

Means TV (means.tv) is a streaming service which is organized by the worker cooperative Means Cooperative, founded in 2019 in Detroit (USA), and fully launched in 2020. The service offers documentaries, live shows, fictional content etc. and operates with the goal to build a worker-owned and managed facility as an alternative to media platforms owned by venture capitalists.

The cooperative has different classes of membership (Employee, Contractor, and Royalty) which determine the type of returns members obtain. Most of the returns (70%) are used in remunerating the employees, a part of the profits is given back to Means TV contractors (20%) and to pay royalties (10%) to directors, distributors and creators who appear on Means TV.

3.6. Smart (Belgium, 1998)

Smart (www.smartbe.be) was created in 1998 as non non-profit organization in order to respond to the practical difficulties encountered on a daily basis, first by artists, and then, more widely, in the artistic and creative field in Belgium.

Smart's main objective is to enable anyone who needs it to act individually or collectively in the organization of their own work forces, while benefiting while benefiting from the best possible social protection. Today Smart is a cooperative, a shared enterprise, that provides freelancers and entrepreneurs with tools and services that support the development of their own activity through a model that provides solidarity.

Smart simplifies administrative, accountancy and legal aspects of running an economic activity through an online tool that allows mutualization of means and risks at a large scale. Since all benefits are reinjected in the development of services, along the years we were able to provide these workers with: information, training, insurances, debt collection, legal advice, a social professional network, co-working spaces, etc. Beyond these services that facilitate economic development, the freelancers and entrepreneurs of the cooperative also mutualise the role of employer which allows them to access the most protective working status, the one of salaried worker.

Smart is a cooperative that disseminated in 8 European countries and has brought solutions to over 30.000 workers, in 2019 alone members of the cooperative invoiced over 210 million (Smart, 2019).

By creating solutions to these needs, Smart answered needs of a variety of profiles. Today people who choose Smart work in very different sectors of activities (arts and culture, trainers/education, IT, well-being, consultants, tourism, catering, ...). Some members are entrepreneurs, some chose to freelance, some work in sectors in which freelancing is the only way to work, sometimes it is the only way for people to work and freelancing happened out of opportunity, occasional invoicing, and post-growth workers. Very different levels of income (within & following sectors of activities).

3.7. Resonate (Ireland, 2015)

Resonate (www.resonate.is) is a multi stakeholder cooperative, and is in a unique position to be able to reconfigure how we relate to the ancient cultural practice of sharing and listening to music, by being intentional about how we develop our cooperative community and platform. The composition of the cooperatives has three types of stakeholders: musicians who comprise 45% of the membership, and listeners and workers who comprise 35% and 20% respectively.

Resonate attempts to bring together, on an equitable basis, the core stakeholders of the new music economy based on fairness, transparency and cooperation. The stakeholders being listeners, for whom the cooperative offers “Pay for what you play” policy; for artists, by facilitating means of owning their creative works and the networks on which the creative works are published as well as set the terms on which their works are distributed; for industry, by according renewed terms of business based on equity, inclusivity, openness, transparency and collaboration; and for public at large, by creating a music platform which is based on the cooperative principle of Democratic Member Control - translated in this case as one-member, one-vote.

Resonate offers membership as well as “additional supporter shares” to anyone wishing to join the movement, against the following returns: (1) share in the profit; (2) rights to vote in

electing the leadership and management as well as major decisions on how the business is led; (3) access to members' forum; (4) special offers of accessing the business.

The cooperative shares its profits with consumers (users and listeners) as well as workers, and members are permitted to trade their profits for more streams and downloads and/or get remunerated in cash. As of now and until such time that membership reaches 30,000 persons, the founders of Resonate are empowered to nominate the board members. Nominations to the board will be open to all after the number of members crosses 30,000 persons.

4. Discussion

4.1. Cooperative models enhance workers in the cultural and creative sectors

Cooperative models offer economic, social, and cultural benefits to workers and consumers that are of great impact on the creative and cultural sectors.

The mutualistic structure of cooperatives supports the redistribution of generated wealth among creative and cultural workers. Worker cooperatives are often designed to build wealth in communities most directly targeted and affected by inequality, helping vulnerable workers build skills and earn income (US Federation of Worker Cooperatives, 2019). In the case of CCS' workers, the success of models such as Doc Servizi, Smart, and Resonate shows that they often turn to cooperative models because they both want to equitably capture and share the monetary value that they create and access more sustainable careers. These kinds of cooperatives safeguard autonomy, which is necessary in the artistic activity, but also provide access to mutualistic and solidarity structures.

In the case of Doc Servizi and Smart because workers, being hired as employees, access social protection schemes (e.g. maternity leave, sick leave, unemployment benefit, etc.). In these cooperatives, creative and cultural workers can develop in a single structure their economic activity (prospection, negotiation, dissemination, etc.), while accessing mutualization of means and resources (accounting, work management, debt collection, insurances, etc.).

Among the others, Resonate has also the goal to support artists in building and maintaining sustainable and non-exploitative careers on their terms. For this reason, Resonate explains the progress, protection and respect of artists as its central goal.

We find similar ways to support CCS's workers also in Art.coop and Associated Press. In the case of Art.coop, the networks also aim to raise money and find new solutions to guarantee economic sustainability to artists', while in AP journalists are also provided with extra services in case they face difficulties at work.

In general, we observed that the cases just mentioned offer through the cooperative model a solidarity and mutual way against the atomization of creative and cultural work. Workers that are usually isolated in the market entering the cooperative become part of a community and can also negotiate better working conditions. These cooperatives also offer new representation's opportunities, for example, when CCS' workers are hired by the cooperative, they can exercise their union rights and being protected by collective bargaining agreement, greatly improving their working

conditions. There are also cases in which the cooperative is used as spokesperson by its members.

In this context, the impact of COVID-19 has further shown the key role and resilience of cooperatives as a form of employment and support in economically challenging times. So, experts expect cooperatives to become more commonplace in the anticipated economic and labour market crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic (Eurofound, 2020). For example, the experience of the Italian Doc Servizi shows how artists and creative professionals have been cooperating to gain greater recognition and collective security both during and before the pandemic (Martinelli, 2021). While Art.coop's main goal is to empower creative and cultural workers through various actions.

4.2. Cooperatives provide alternatives to the mainstream CCS' systems and enterprises

Cooperative founders in the creative and cultural sectors have in most cases established cooperatives to counter the dominant mechanisms of cultural production and organization. Their goal is to create enterprises that are economically sustainable, without having a negative impact on workers or artists' exploitation (e.g. royalties), and that offer quality cultural and creative content. This is also why the use of technology in many cases is central, even if it does not follow the logic of technology corporations. Even in different ways, in each cooperative, cultural production is at the core, followed by profit, which became a functional element.

In the case of Doc Servizi and Smart, cultural production is supported by giving better working conditions to workers. Thanks to this, creative and cultural workers can develop their activities autonomously and in solidarity, enhancing the diversity of cultural expressions. Furthermore, these cooperatives connect workers from different fields, even beyond the artistic and cultural ones, and this leads creatives to disseminate their know-how within different fields (training, management, etc.). Finally, this model helps people to test, develop and make a living from their skills, cultivating jobs to which they aspire.

In the case of Chitraklekha, Associated Press, Magnum Photos, they support culture by offering high-quality products. The success of this choice is demonstrated by the long and prestigious history all three cooperatives have, marked by numerous international awards and recognition. The choice of the cooperative model in these cases is made to maintain high standards (Magnum Photos), enhance certain market niches (Chitraklekha) and better organize an industry (Associated Press).

In Chitraklekha, Means TV and Resonate, the founders' desire to produce culture rejecting the mainstream industry emerges most strongly. In fact, all three cooperatives were born in opposition to pre-existing organizational systems with the goal of rethinking them and making them more sustainable for both content producers and audiences. In particular, Means TV and Resonate in the cooperative model find a way to counteract the organization of dominant platforms by including not only

artists, registers, and content creators in the cooperatives, but also the public, who can buy shares, participate in the democratic governance and obtain profit. This new form of engagement of the public based on co-ownership is a way to both put art products at the core and fight passive consumption of products.

Another element to underline in the analysis of these cases is the key role that technology played in some of them. In the case of Doc Servizi and Smart, technology is used to manage discontinuous working activity and as a tool of self-management for workers. At the same time, their platforms help the cooperative in managing billings and payrolls and members in invoicing, managing and keeping under control their activity.

Means TV and Resonate experiment with platform technology in streaming services respectively video and audio. Considering the mainstream industry, in these two cases technology plays a central role.

In a cooperative technology is owned by members, who are creative and cultural workers and/or the public, therefore they choose to use it to avoid speculation and exploitation (Martinelli and Bozzoni *et al.*, 2019). Technology and platforms are tailored around members' needs and therefore, for example, against the maximization of profits based on data exploitation, cooperatives choose a transparent way to manage data, considering privacy, inclusivity, and ethics. The platform design is not based on the same principles of the venture-capital-driven platform economy, but on cooperation and community, and cooperative values and principles, such as solidarity and responsibility.

4.3. Safeguard the cooperative character of the business

What makes the case studies particularly significant even in light of the dominant cultural enterprises is that their strength lies in the fact that they embrace cooperative culture with determination; so much so that they refer to it constantly.

For these cooperatives, safeguarding the workers and products of the cultural and cooperative industry coincides with the choice to structure themselves as a cooperative. Indeed, the cooperative culture, with its values and principles, appears as an added value and a factor capable of attracting all those who are seeking alternative, more inclusive and ethical models. Consequently, among the values of the cooperatives studied also emerges the need to also safeguard the cooperative nature of their business, ensuring that it will not be changed.

The importance that cooperatives working in the cultural and creative sectors assign to cooperative culture is not a minor factor. Not only because the sensitivity of these cooperatives to cultural issues makes them more likely to grasp their own distinctive elements, but also because indeed cooperative culture is a recognized intangible cultural heritage.

Thanks to the work of the German cooperative movement, UNESCO recognized cooperatives as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2016. In 2014, German UNESCO recognized the “cooperative idea” as an intangible cultural heritage because

it is a very dynamic and influential form of social self-organization. Thus, cooperative culture is recognized because it contributes to overcoming social challenges and continuously adapts to changing circumstances. The choice coming from the Germany section of UNESCO was ratified in 2016 by UNESCO globally.

Today, the intangible heritage list includes the idea and practice of organizing shared interests into cooperatives. The list describes cooperatives as entities that «allow for community building through shared interests and values creating innovative solutions to societal problems, from generating employment and assisting seniors to urban revitalisation and renewable energy projects» (International Cooperatives Alliance, 2016). This UNESCO decision was an important recognition of the dedication shown by millions of people working in cooperatives around the world.

5. Conclusion

The cultural and creative sectors have enormous potential (e.g., employment, economies, skills, job opportunities, entrepreneurial organization, innovation) and cooperatives around the world are already promoting innovative and successful practices in these fields.

Although our research is very limited with respect to the potential pool of cooperatives, the case studies show that cooperatives already have many answers to the issues plaguing the creative and cultural sectors, such as the difficulties of workers in the sector, who are often precarious and exploited, and the lack of resilience of businesses, which are too small or have difficulty accessing finance. Although the cooperative movement is already rich in virtuous experiences in the field of cultural heritage and the creative sector, unfortunately, the international community is not familiar with most of them. Thus, although we have only scratched the surface of the relationship between the two worlds with our research, we have unearthed interactions that are little studied.

To better understand the relationship between cooperatives and the world of culture, our goal is to continue this work of mapping and analysis, as Professor Thomas Knubben has already suggested. Mapping the current state of cooperatives in the creative and cultural sectors, as well as in the preservation of in/tangible cultural heritage (excluded from this research but no less important), can offer new opportunities for all cooperatives in the movement. Indeed, a scan of the arts and cultural landscape in 2021 reveals a growing demand for education and training on cooperative forms of enterprise. In addition, the cultural and creative sectors offer a huge pool of economies and workers that should be enhanced by cooperatives in the interest of workers and artists, as well as in the interest of promoting a cultural atmosphere that reflects the 5th principle on education, training and information.

We conclude by mentioning that according to UNESCO and the cooperators who represent this sector and can be found all over the world, it is time for the cooperative movement to act for a greater appreciation of the cultural and creative sectors and their good practices, which are as unique as they are replicable elsewhere.

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