UNCHARTED

Understanding, Capturing and
Fostering the Societal Value of Culture

Can Value Conflicts be Managed or Mitigated? Some research questions and evidences

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MAIN GOALS

- **Starting point: Understanding valuation practices from the point of view of actors and their contexts** (how actors "decide whether a valuation is acceptable or not" (Heinich, 2020: 79): repertoires of evaluation (Lamont & Thévenot, 2000: 6), avoiding *a priori* classifications but also de-contextualised interpretations (values do not emerge from a social vacuum)

- Our aim was to find inductively the plurality of criteria of evaluation

- Tensions and conflicts were identified concerning types of participation and social trajectories (the roles and positions of the participants and their social characteristics) – **power matters; we must pay attention to the distributions of social positions inside each case and each cultural activity**

- The analysis found several **"internal" tensions** between values within the same case study, and **"external" tensions** between values promoted in the case studies and values promoted by external fields of cultural activity and different degrees of institutionalization of cultural projects.

CAN VALUE CONFLICTS BE MANAGED OR MITIGATED?

1. Level conflicts are associated with power imbalances. While one party has social, symbolic, economic or political resources and can effectively put its values into action, other parties and other values are marginalized. **A preliminary step to reduce the marginalization of values would, in these cases, involve a reduction of the power imbalances –** *the "old" challenge of cultural democracy*► **redistribution of resources + plurality of sources of cultural legitimation**

2. Conflicts between level can be managed by **finding a balance or trading-off different values**.

Ex: the publishing company case highlights a portfolio approach to managing conflicts. When drafting an editorial plan, it is assumed that commercial books will subsidize quality and "cultural responsibility"-type of books, thus balancing the values involved. Interestingly, therefore, aiming at commercial success constrains and, at the same time, enables the publication of books that are relevant from a cultural or social point of view

3. Creating **cultural public spheres: to present, discuss and settle arguments in order to frame new relations and agendas**►**Public and political recognition - Mediating**