

UNCHARTED

Understanding, Capturing and Fostering the Societal Value of Culture



UNCHARTED studies the emergence of values connected with culture, their configuration and the political impulse that these values could deliver to the society

The contribution that culture can offer in facing some of the crucial problems in Europe is evident:

- cultural participation increases well-being and stimulates learning
- at individual level, engaging with cultural values makes people more sociable and responsible, promotes tolerance and improves respect for the differences
- as a collective effect, culture generates identity and sense of belonging, supports inclusion and social cohesion, and fights the main threats that undermine the peaceful coexistence in Europe

Emergence and conformation of the values of culture are analysed, measured and contextualised from an interdisciplinary, collaborative and pluralistic perspective that integrates historical, economic, sociological and humanistic points of view.

The research elaborates a general and integrated vision of the societal values of culture, their evolutions and the tensions that can exist.

Through co-creation exercises, the consortium develops new tools and guidelines for understanding, calibrating and managing the plurality of values of culture.

In recent decades, with the growing emphasis on the creative economy, culture has tended to be increasingly seen in political circles under the lens of the economy and such economic perspective risks to obscure the non-economic dimensions of culture. The consequence is the difficulty for politics to take on the effective promotion of a wide and sometimes contradictory range of cultural values. This represents a fundamental challenge for Europe.

The demonstrations and fieldwork of the UNCHARTED project aim to contribute to re-orient cultural policy with the final outcome of a roadmap for cultural policy actions favourable to the acknowledgement of the plurality of cultural values in Europe.

Research plan

The scope of the UNCHARTED project is to identify, contextualize, understand, measure and analyse the emergence and conformation of the values of culture from an interdisciplinary, collaborative and pluralistic perspective.

For this purpose, the project is articulated around four areas of research (work packages 1 to 4). The results of the research are validated in a number of concrete experiments and demonstrations carried out by citizens, professionals, administrators and policy makers (work package 5).

UNCHARTED is a four-year project funded by the Horizon 2020 Programme of the European Union. It is designed to explore the multiplicity of the social values of culture and their impact on territories, cities, communities, business and employment, creativity and innovation.

The project's outcomes are tools and guidelines for the re-orientation of cultural policy in a pluralistic sense, focusing on the valuation practices of the actors involved in cultural life, within a cross-country and comparative approach between different areas of practice.

In the research, a very experienced and multidisciplinary consortium with proven competence is supported by an Advisory Board of exceptional category and adequacy.

Communication is a key factor both in terms of communication towards many different audiences, and in terms of interaction between audiences that belong to different networks, use different terminologies, and have different interests. In this light, UNCHARTED relies on a Stakeholder Group that brings together representatives of a wide range of communities, including scholars, researchers and curators, educators and students, creative enterprises and policy-makers. Through the dialogue with its stakeholders, the project aims to consider the complex relationship that exists between research, practice and governance, crossing social, economic, cultural, national and disciplinary boundaries.

Understanding the societal value of culture

Identifying the emergence of values of culture

Measuring and imagining the plurality of values of culture

Analysing political intervention and impact on the plural values of culture

Experimental demonstrations

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Partners:



Official Media partner



Experimental Demonstrations

The experimental and applied dimension of the UNCHARTED project is provided by the co-creative cases of *work package 5*. This work contributes to assess how the research outcomes from previous and parallel work packages (*work packages 1 to 4*) are reflected in real-life experiences and which is the actual impact that the theoretical investigation can deliver to policy makers, as the basis for the future exploitation of the project's results. Thus, the objective of *work package 5* is to validate the results of the UNCHARTED research in a number of concrete initiatives carried out together with citizens, professionals, administrators, experts and policy makers.

Experiments and demonstrations cover the **three axes** where the development of cultural values is studied, namely: **Cultural strategic planning, Culture-led urban regeneration and Cultural information systems**.

The three axes comprehend three main cases and two comparative cases for each main case, for a total of nine cases. The studies of the main cases mobilise a range of methodological approaches in order to develop model valuation processes in collaboration with stakeholders. This means that, although in different contexts and with different methods and toolkits, the main case leaders (Promoter S.r.l., Barcelona University and University of Porto) reach the practice-based objectives of *work package 5* through an experimental and demonstrative process of co-creation. The comparative cases - on a smaller scale and with less practical involvement with stakeholders - complement this by providing participatory observation-based analyses of cultural practices with thematically similar but different contexts and situations, and reflections on the methodology, which advance the work with respect to the main cases.

Work package 5 includes meetings with public administrators, experiments in museums, public assemblies with representatives of citizens' interest groups, and any other action that is suggested by the experts participating in the workshops and by the members of the UNCHARTED Advisory Board.

Work Package 5 Leader: **ELTE University, Hungary**

Cultural Strategic Planning - Axis 1

This Axis 1 of *work package 5* aims to reflect on, verify and demonstrate the way in which the values of culture, identified during the project, have an impact on the strategic planning of cities' cultural policies, at local, regional, national and European levels.

The experiments and demonstrations investigate various contexts – in Italy, Portugal and widely in the European Union – in which city administrations have planned strategies and policies in the cultural field, and how their respective territories are impacted by these policies.

Axis 1 is composed by one main case about the cultural strategic planning of Volterra (led by Promoter S.r.l.), a historical town located in the centre of Tuscany, and two comparative cases. In the former comparative case, the University of Porto analyses the experience of the European Capitals of Culture in Portugal. In the latter comparative case, the University of Coimbra looks at the evaluation of city and cultural policies carried out by the United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) group, the global network of cities and local, regional and metropolitan governments and their associations.

The main case aims to study and to demonstrate how the competition at the national level represents the occasion for the city of Volterra to reflect on the impact that culture values can generate at social and economic levels, expanding from the cultural dimension to several other areas of the civic life. The high level of the candidature of Volterra during the national competition for the Italian City of Culture in 2022, and the deep participatory approach implemented for the development of such candidature, brought the Tuscany Region to establish a new regional programme named “Regional Capital of Culture”. The nomination of Volterra as “First Tuscany City of Culture” is giving the opportunity to the city of Volterra to deploy a wonderful and very rich programme of initiatives that, starting from culture values, range to social and economic dimensions, and empower the value of the local and regional dimension of culture, as opposed to a strict national narration.

The comparative cases complement the main case, looking at the impact that the national competition for the Capital of Culture produced in Portugal and how strategic cultural planning of local administrations can benefit of the experience carried out by UCLG in the evaluation of city programmes in Europe.

Axis 1 Leader: **Promoter S.r.l., Italy**

Culture-led urban regeneration - Axis 2

In the frame of *work package 5*, Axis 2 deals with culture-led urban regeneration. Our work takes a comparative approach and starts by tracing the socio-historical parameters that shape the organizational dimension and approaches of cultural regeneration in a given urban context.

The assessment and experimentation tasks in this axis are related to the general value orientation of contemporary urban regeneration processes and policy change. The contexts of valuation practices and the dynamics of these processes are taken into account, together with the value recognition, promotion, and legitimization mechanisms operating in them.

The study plans to capture these parameters through a co-creative exercise of axiological cultural mapping. Our comparative strategy revolves around the city of Barcelona as a main case (led by University of Barcelona team), which we will contrast with two other cases, in Budapest and Porto. We focus on a currently underway process of culture-led urban regeneration, that of the Fàbriques de Creació (Creation Factories). This is a policy programme dedicated to rehabilitating old industrial and emblematic buildings and turning them into artistic and cultural facilities, which have been previously analysed from an investigation angle, in the course of the UNCHARTED research. The other two cases are in charge of Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem (ELTE University in Budapest) and University of Porto. The former comparative case is that of the 8th District of Budapest, a central district of the city that has experienced changing processes of culture-led regeneration in recent decades. The latter comparative case is that of the city of Porto, where processes of touristification and culture-led regeneration have crucially interacted lately.

Through comparing these cases, we will drive methodological approaches addressed to co-building valuation practices with relevant stakeholders. That entails, firstly, to assess the inclusiveness concerning the plurality of values in the definition of criteria of evaluation processes by public administrations in this area; secondly, to define validation tools (such as indicators); and finally, to elaborate a new strategic approach to evaluation methodology that overcomes detected limitations.

Axis 2 Leader: **University of Barcelona, Spain**

Cultural information systems - Axis 3

Axis 3 promotes an experimental data collection from cultural information institutions and alternative data providers (i.e. cultural and creative organisations, cultural sites, etc.). Cultural information systems are today one of the fundamental foundations of democratic cultural policies. The study analyses the complex construction of indicators that cross very diverse domains of activity, and are increasingly obtained by eclectic methods, of quantitative and qualitative nature, preferably with the participation of the civil society and the cultural field. In this way, we are able to make diagnoses, evaluate results and guide the decision-making process. A systematic approach in the construction and application of indicators, transparency in their use, comparability in the European context and adequacy to the singularity of cultural phenomena and values are basic requirements. The critical understanding of such indicators must be understood as an instrument of communication and involvement between all the actors involved, from technicians and specialists to producers and cultural receptors.

A co-creative study on the cultural practices of the Portuguese institutions (led by University of Porto) is complemented by two comparative cases, respectively in charge of the Centre d'Etudes Politiques et sociales in Montpellier and the University of Bologna. The scope of the study is to identify and map cultural audiences in different cases: throughout Portugal, in the information systems used by French national cultural administration, and within the process of accreditation of regional museums in the Emilia Romagna Region. These cases allow to establish a best practices' plan for the key indicators necessary to surveying and monitoring population participation in culture

The construction of the new tools is done within a collaborative methodology, gathering an assembly of professionals and experts of the cultural field and their organizations, policymakers, local and regional public administrations, involving a network of public and private institutions and triggering a confrontation between different perspectives and incorporating the logics of the actors involved in the various phases of policymaking and implementation.

Axis 3 Leader: **University of Porto, Portugal**

