

## IS CULTURE A SPECIAL 'HUB' POLICY AREA FOR CO-CREATION?

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*Co-creation is promoted as a solution to the 'wicked' problems of today. Despite its applicability across policy areas and its promising effects, culture is often referred to separately, as a special field of interest and favourable environment for co-creation. Although this tacitly implies that this policy area features rather different conditions for co-creation, there are no solid arguments to justify the fact that culture is treated differently than other policy areas. To address this dilemma, the paper aims to answer whether and to what extent co-creation drivers and barriers in the area of culture are 'policy specific'. This is achieved with the help of a systematic literature review and a case study of the 2020 Rijeka European Capital of Culture project. On this basis, the paper concludes that there are no 'culture specific' drivers and barriers to justify the 'special treatment' of culture as a substantially different co-creation arena.<sup>2</sup>*

**Key words:** culture; co-creation drivers and barriers; Fuzzy Cognitive Map; European Capital of Culture project.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Co-creation is advertised as a promising solution to the 'wicked' problems of today (e.g. Rittel and Webber 1973). It is recognised as a strategy capable to counteract and reshape the precarious political and economic conditions faced by the public sector since the 2008 economic crisis, which in the light of the

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present COVID-19 crisis bear a risk of being amplified. Thus, co-creation is seen as an answer to the politics of austerity and financial pressures on the public sector as it mobilises the resources, knowledge and skills of different actors with the aim to improve the effectiveness and quality of public services while lowering costs (Pestoff 2014). The main result of this process is (co-)creation of public value, which leads to higher satisfaction with a particular service, as well as to the general improvement of the wellbeing of citizens and fulfilment of their needs (Osborne, Radnor and Strokosch 2016). The attractiveness of this concept stems not only from economic grounds, but also from the 'promise' to address the main problem of modern democracies – the democratic deficit (Osborne, Radnor and Strokosch 2016). The active inclusion and contribution of citizens in policy making, presumed by this concept, is seen as a path towards stronger social cohesion and democratisation in general (Voorberg, Bekkers and Tummers 2015).

In such a context, culture has been given significant attention as a particularly favourable environment for co-creation (Barile and Saviano 2014; Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016; Concilio and Vitellio 2016; Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018; Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018; Alexiou 2019). This could imply that culture features different conditions for co-creation, which require special attention and consequently a different approach. However, there are no evidence-based arguments that could justify culture – as a separate co-creation arena – being treated substantially differently than other policy areas.

To solve the dilemma, the paper critically discusses the drivers and barriers of co-creation in the area of culture vis-à-vis 'general' co-creation drivers and barriers noted in other policy areas. On this basis, it attempts to answer the following research question: whether and to what extent co-creation drivers and barriers in the area of culture are 'policy specific'?

To achieve this, the paper is structured in six sections. In the next section two, we initially endeavour to identify the main changes/trends in the area of culture, as well as the general features of this policy area that make this context conducive to co-creation. In addition, in section three, we present the methodology of the research, which builds on two methods: content analysis of Web of Science (WoS) papers and a case study of the 2020 Rijeka European Capital of Culture project (ECoC). In section four, with the help of the first method (i.e. content analysis), we identify and discuss both 'general' and 'culture specific' co-creation drivers and barriers. These results are further, i.e. in section five, complemented with the findings of the Rijeka 2020 ECoC case study. Finally, in the conclusion, we answer the research question and draw conclusions as to whether the special treatment of culture as a 'hub' policy area for co-creation is justified or not.

## 2 CO-CREATION IN THE AREA OF CULTURE

There are three breaking points in the area of culture recognised as crucial for setting the stage for co-creation. The first is traced back to the 1960s, when a new 'consumerist' idea of culture emerged, placing the user at its centre (Barile and Saviano 2014). This is especially evident in the redefinition of the idea of cultural heritage featuring both tangible and intangible cultural goods – the former referring to material cultural sites, while the latter to symbols and values. Non-material aspects of cultural heritage have become subject to wider interpretations (and consequently value creation) by external actors as

recipients of culture. This new type of cultural value creation is seen to derive “from the interaction between an offering system, which has been organised to propose a value and a beneficiary/user who is capable of extracting that value through the interaction process” (Barile and Saviano 2014, 59).

The second breaking point is noted in the 1990s, with the technological progress and penetration of internet in every segment of life (Rutten 2018). This stirred the interest for greater participation and collaboration in culture and arts, while digital technologies also reshaped the management of culture as such – for instance, by making cultural heritage artefacts more visible and accessible to the public (Concilio and Vitellio 2016; Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018). Moreover, digitalisation contributed to the inclusion of different actors and their active contribution to the process of co-creation of cultural value (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018). Technology actually transformed citizens (or at least the perception of them) from passive recipients of culture to active co-creators of cultural content, who have the opportunity to critically deliberate and challenge deeply entrenched representations by the dominant (mainstream) culture (Rutten 2018). Hence, digitalisation could be interpreted as the main ‘ally’ of the processes of democratisation and de-elitisation of culture – firstly, in terms of boosting connections/interactions among users and providers of cultural services and secondly, by challenging traditional processes of cultural value creation (Lang, Shang and Vragov 2009; Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018).

Last but not least, the third event boosting the attractiveness of co-creation in the area of culture (but also in other policy areas) is the 2008 economic crisis. In the aftermath of the crisis, co-creation was recognised as an alternative to the downfall of the welfare state and the lack of public financing for non-profitable public services (Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018), with culture as their very epitome. Thus, faced with scarce resources on the one hand and increased competition coupled with cultural commodification and more demanding consumer base on the other, cultural organisations found themselves under strong pressure to redefine their role (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018). This was the trigger that made them pursue a more entrepreneurial approach, often embedding a co-creation orientation and more consumer centric culture (Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016). This also contributed to the redefinition of their attitude towards users, i.e. consumers of cultural services – accepting them as active partners in the process of creation of cultural experience and value (Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016).

Hence, aesthetic enjoyment of cultural products or services is no longer seen as the key aspect that shapes cultural value; instead, it is the multiple meanings that emerge among ‘users’ when enjoying, i.e. consuming culture (Barile and Saviano 2014). Such an understanding of cultural value implies strong dynamism and sensitivity to the context where interaction takes place and multiple meanings regarding the cultural product/service are exchanged (Barile and Saviano 2014). This is especially evident in the case of intangible cultural representations (e.g. intangible cultural heritage, festivals etc.), as they set the stage for people to meet and jointly co-create memorable experiences (Alexiou 2019).

On this basis, it can be concluded that cultural goods/services as such do not have an intrinsic value, as their value is constantly re(co-)created within the physical communities where interaction and sharing of experiences takes place (Concilio and Vitellio 2016; Alexiou 2019). Trying to acknowledge the importance of the social context, Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato (2018, 167) refer to this situation as

“value in use”. This means that both the context where interaction takes place and the actors’ disposition in sharing and integrating their resources shape cultural value (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018, 162). Other authors (e.g. Rutten 2018) even go a step further, claiming that the very events that provoke social interaction, participation and cultural encounters represent a form of art. This understanding of cultural value as a product of co-creation through “experience-for-experience exchanges” (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018, 167) departs from the traditional understanding of culture as hedonic, elitist and static phenomenon. Accordingly, cultural value is no longer fixed and predefined, but emerges in a dynamic process of co-creation with users (Ciasullo, Troisi and Cosimato 2018). As such, this new idea of culture comes close to the wider understanding of co-creation as collaborative innovation, which does not allow any reference to predetermined results (Sørensen and Torfing 2018, 391).

However, culture is not a ‘monolithic’ policy area (as it features substantially different cultural goods and services), which means that co-creation in this context could manifest itself in many different ways. For instance, in the area of cultural heritage, Concilio and Vitellio (2016) recognise two dimensions of co-creation – generative and preservative. The former implies co-creation of new forms of (intangible) cultural heritage, while the latter refers to reproduction (and thus generational transfer) of existent cultural value (Concilio and Vitellio 2016). Other authors (e.g. Hudson, Sandberg and Schmauch 2017) approach culture in a more general manner and discuss co-creation either as joint creation of culture *per se*, or as a specific act of collaboration/interaction between audience and artists at a concrete event.

Despite these differences regarding the manifestation of co-creation (stemming from the cultural context where it takes place), the arguments in favour of the introduction of this approach are more or less unified and to a great extent overlapping with the general debate about the benefits of co-creation. Thus, in the cultural sphere, as in other policy areas, co-creation is expected to contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of public services, improve democratic practice and deliver greater public value (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017); contribute to wiser policies and more democracy (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018); and empower citizens (Griffiths 2013). There are, however, benefits of co-creation that are context bound, such as greater creativity as a result of opening of cultural content and increased product selection (Lang, Shang and Vragov 2009), as well as co-creation of alternative (i.e. more inclusive) cultural narratives that break deeply entrenched stereotypes (Concilio and Vitellio 2016).

Yet, although culture is recognised as a fruitful soil for co-creation, there are certain issues that challenge this process. For instance, Lang, Shang and Vragov (2009) refer to copyrights and intellectual property as specific barriers to co-creation in culture. In addition, Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans (2016, 749) recognise as problematic the tension between “a curatorial orientation and one that focuses on the consumer experience”. The latter implies that cultural organisations are often torn between their goals of education, preservation and presentation of cultural value, on the one hand and customer satisfaction, consumer experience and coproduction within the organisation’s mission, on the other hand (Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016, 751). This could be interpreted by some as a trend of commercialisation and devaluation of culture leading to resistance and negative connotation ascribed to co-creation.

Nevertheless, apart from this, the issue of co-creation drivers and barriers in the cultural sphere has not gained appropriate research interest. Among the rare endeavours for a more systematic analysis of drivers and barriers in this area, we note the research by Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans (2016) arguing that many co-creation drivers and barriers are not culture specific but are relevant also in other policy areas. However, in the absence of a more systematic research effort for a comparative analysis of the drivers and barriers in culture vis-à-vis other sectors, this is only an assumption, which we will try to revisit in the conclusion of paper.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

To answer the research question, the paper relies on two methods: a content analysis of WoS papers and a case study of the 2020 Rijeka ECoC project. The content analysis is used with the purpose of identifying 'general' and 'culture specific' co-creation drivers and barriers. The findings of the content analysis are complemented with an in-depth analysis of the drivers and barriers identified in the case of the 2020 Rijeka ECoC project. For this purpose, the case study relies on a Fuzzy Cognitive Map (FCM) on co-creation barriers and drivers. Case study is used as the most appropriate method for investigation of a contemporary phenomenon (i.e. co-creation) within its real-life context, where the research goal is to answer 'how' and 'why' some events occur (Yin 2003). Thus, it is intended to help us better understand the process of co-creation in the field of culture: firstly, by identifying 'cultural' co-creation drivers and barriers and, secondly, by showing exactly 'how' and 'why' they enable, or prevent, co-creation.

#### 3.1 Content analysis of Web of Science papers

The papers analysed with this method were selected based on the following criteria:

- time-span of the papers: 10 years, between 2009 and 2018;
- key words: co-creation or co-production;
- WoS category: Public Administration; and
- written in English language.

On this basis, we initially identified one hundred fifty-five papers. However, after the cleaning process, sixteen papers were excluded as they did not refer to co-creation and/or co-production in the context of the public sector and public services. At the end, the total number of papers that were systematically analysed by means of the content analysis was one hundred thirty-nine.

The idea behind this approach was to provide a list of both 'general' co-creation drivers and barriers present across different policy sectors and 'specific' drivers and barriers in the area of culture. However, due to the small number of papers (only four) referring to culture as a policy area where co-creation had been applied, we decided to fill this gap with the analysis of drivers and barriers identified in a real case of successful co-creation – the 2020 Rijeka ECoC project.

#### 3.2 Case study of the 2020 Rijeka European Capital of Culture project

The case study of the 2020 ECoC project builds on the information obtained from 10 semi-structured interviews carried out in the context of the COGOV project between April and May 2019 (Cvelić et al. 2020). The interviews were conducted

with persons on key managerial positions within RIJEKA 2020 LLC (Limited Liability Company), the City of Rijeka and other related organisations responsible for the project implementation. Hence, the paper uses the data gathered in the interviews – precisely, by eliciting the information about co-creation drivers and barriers for the purpose of their further analysis by means of FCM methodology.

FCMs have become a suitable and proven knowledge-based methodology for systems modelling (Kosko 1986). This technique is especially attractive when modelling systems are characterised by ambiguity, uncertainty and/or non-trivial causalities among their variables (Nápoles et al. 2018). The vast literature related to FCMs reports very clearly about many successful studies that used FCMs.

A cognitive map, together with the related FCM, is the representation of thinking about a problem (e.g. Ozesmi and Maurer 2004). FCMs are intended to represent the subjective world of the interviewees (Eden 2004). They are considered a suitable method to categorise manageably complex knowledge forms (e.g. Eden 1988; Pluchinotta, Esposito and Camarda 2019).

The maps are directed graphs, a network of nodes and links where the direction of the arrow implies believed causality (Ackermann et al. 2014). FCMs represent the integration of the cognitive mapping approach with the fuzzy logic theory (Kosko 1986). For each variable a Centrality Index (CI) was computed leading to the identification of the most important nodes within a map, accounting for the complexity of its network of links (Ozesmi and Maurer 2004). The CI of a FCM is defined as the summation of its in-arrows and out-arrows (Eden 1992).

Within this paper, the case study represents a context-based ex-post analysis of the drivers/barriers of the ECoC project. The empirical data from the case study allowed to identify specific variables enabling or preventing co-creation, in order to answer the research question. Furthermore, the analysis of the CI determined which drivers and barriers were more relevant according to the interviewees.

## 4 CO-CREATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS IDENTIFIED IN THE LITERATURE

### 4.1 General drivers and barriers of co-creation

Based on the content analysis, we identified one hundred nine (78 %) papers that refer to co-creation drivers and/or barriers in different policy areas (e.g. health, environment, public safety, social policy, education and ‘others’). However, the majority of the papers discuss drivers and barriers indirectly – as issues relevant for the process of co-creation, without explicitly designating them as such. This is due to the fact that co-creation drivers and barriers are rarely in the prime research focus of the relevant literature. Moreover, the lack of a systematic approach to this problem manifested itself in our research as an enormously long list of substantially different drivers and barriers that lack clear categorisation. Hence, to present our results in a more comprehensive and clearer manner, we categorised the ‘general’ drivers and barriers according to the subject, i.e. aspect of the co-creation process they affect. On this basis, we recognised five categories of drivers and barriers: 1. structural/organisational drivers and barriers; 2. drivers and barriers related to the quality of the relationship between co-creators; 3. drivers and barriers related to internal (public organisation) co-

creators; 4. drivers and barriers related to external co-creators; and 5. contextual drivers and barriers.

#### *4.1.1 Structural/organisational drivers and barriers*

Structural/organisational drivers and barriers refer to the organisational properties and capacity of the public institutions to co-create. As the main driver of co-creation, here, we recognise less-centralised and highly connected structures with multiple stakeholders and decentralised and polycentric governance (e.g. networks) (Cepiku and Giordano 2014; Durose and Richardson 2016b). However, an appropriate (i.e. multi-actor and less centralised) organisational structure is not sufficient for successful co-creation, unless certain barriers are addressed, namely: unclear accountability, not clearly defined roles, lack of institutional instruments for motivation of co-creators and non-involvement of key (both internal and external) actors at the highest (management) level of organisation (Levasseur 2018; Nesti 2018; Touati and Maillet 2018). Moreover, an organisational structure favourable to co-creation presumes the existence of a continuous two-way channel of communication providing regular and direct interaction with external stakeholders (Barbera, Sicilia and Steccolini 2016; Tu 2016). Such communication should be complemented by institutional strategies securing the representation and engagement of different actors, *inter alia* 'hard-to-reach' and 'voiceless' groups (Pill and Bailey 2012; Bovaird et al. 2016). This means that an institutional setup that privileges certain (usually more resourceful) actors at the expense of more disadvantaged groups represents a barrier that undermines the impact of co-creation (Pestoff 2014; Burall and Hughes 2016; Farr 2016). In addition, public organisations which are more flexible in their approach – relying on incomplete, i.e. underspecified policy design (open to being directly affected by participation) – have a better chance to be successful in co-creation than organisations that apply a 'one-size-fits-all' approach insensitive to the context (Durose and Richardson 2016a and 2016c; Torvinen and Haukipuro 2018). To be able to co-create, public organisations not only need to have appropriate financial and human resources, but also need to be willing to invest in capacity building and training (Dunston et al. 2009; Pill and Bailey 2012; Sicilia et al. 2016; Surva, Tönurist and Lember 2016). Eventually, resources misalignment, lack of experience in managing co-creation and lack of evidence within the organisation about the positive effects of co-creation are also issues that hinder the process (Loeffler and Bovaird 2016; Vennik et al. 2016; Wiewiora, Keast and Brown 2016; Nesti 2018).

#### *4.1.2 Drivers and barriers related to the quality of the relationship between (internal and external) co-creators*

These drivers and barriers include the features and quality of the relationship between co-creators that affect the process of co-creation. For the establishment of this relationship, in the first place, there needs to be a sense of interdependency among participants (public institution and citizens) (Alford 2016). This means that the efforts and resources of all participants are recognised as necessary, complementary and interdependent for the achievement of the goal set (Chaebo and Medeiros 2017). Moreover, the relationship between co-creators should build on willingness, trust and equality among participants, clear commitment, shared responsibility and ownership (Pestoff 2014; Burall and Hughes 2016; Durose and Richardson 2016a; Loeffler and Bovaird 2016). It is also important that all parties share a common understanding of the basic principles of the process and are prepared for constructive interaction (Surva, Tönurist and Lember 2016). Precisely, this



means that they have a clear idea about the expected outcomes and each other's goals, respect each other and are open-minded to change their positions in the light of stronger arguments (Kemp and Rotmans 2009; Fledderus, Brandsen and Honingh 2014; Durose and Richardson 2016a and 2016c). In addition to the need for establishing this relationship from an early stage of the policy process (McCabe 2016), another relevant driver is the feeling among the participants that they have sufficient time for deliberation and performance of the tasks required (vs. limited time for debate and participants' inability to actively follow the process) (Isett and Miranda 2015; Burall and Hughes 2016). In contrast, 'relationship related' barriers that hinder co-creation comprise a prevailing feeling among co-creators that they are not understood and the asymmetry in knowledge, skills, power, expertise, information and power (Pestoff 2014; Hardyman, Daunt and Kitchener 2015; Burall and Hughes 2016; Wiewiora, Keast and Brown 2016; Williams et al. 2016; van Eijk, Steen and Verschuere 2017). Their relationship can also be strained by misuse of resources during the interaction and immense politicisation of the process (Bartenberger and Sześciło 2016; Williams, Kang and Johnson 2016).

#### *4.1.3 Drivers and barriers related to internal (public organisation) co-creators*

Drivers and barriers related to internal (public organisation) co-creators refer to the capacity and attitudes of the staff of the public organisation (public managers, middle-rank and frontline public servants) regarding co-creation. The key issue, here, is that internal co-creators understand co-creation (beyond mere consultation and formal participation), believe in its benefits and have the capacity/skills to participate in such process – e.g. 'soft skills', skills to experiment and to be open to surprises (Dunston et al. 2009; Duijn, Rijnveld and van Hulst 2010; Durose and Richardson 2016c; Strokosch and Osborne 2016). Consequently, a closed mind-set of the public servants to innovation, their inclination to a traditional 'way of doing things', the lack of appropriate skills (above mentioned) and the inability/reluctance to break away from a 'path dependent' logic are recognised as barriers to co-creation (Baker and Irving 2016; Nesti 2018). However, even in the absence of these barriers and in case of a genuine desire for co-creation, this process can be undermined by the staff's lack of time to co-create (e.g. due to market pressures for increased productivity) (Vennik et al. 2016) or fear that co-creation would increase their workload (Nesti 2018). Moreover, beside sufficient resources, public servants need to enjoy a certain level of flexibility and autonomy, i.e. leeway to take independent decisions during the 'unpredictable' process of co-creation (Lindsay et al. 2018). This implies that instead of selfishly protecting their 'privileged' position (in policy making), they are ready to give some discretion – in terms of responsibility and ownership – to external co-creators (Howlett, Kekez and Poocharoen 2017). This to be achieved often requires a 'role model' among high profile public servants, who not only practice collaborative leadership, but take the role of advocates of co-creation (Griffiths 2013; Strokosch and Osborne 2016). Finally, an important driver in this context is a strong sense and desire among internal co-creators to enhance the public image of the organisation (Vennik et al. 2016). This requires that public servants do not fear the innovation for revealing systemic and organisational flaws (Meričkova, Nemec and Svidronova 2015), nor see it as a 'Potemkin' strategy for justifying existing (flawed) goals and policies (Lövbrand 2011).

#### *4.1.4 Drivers and barriers related to external co-creators*

Drivers and barriers related to external co-creators refer to the traits (i.e. features, attitudes and capacity) of the citizens as co-creators. In order to be



willing to co-create, citizens first need to recognise the ‘salience of a problem’ (Chaebo and Medeiros 2017). This implies that voluntary – in contrast to pressured – participation positively affects the process of co-creation (Osborne, Radnor and Strokosch 2016; Surva, Tönurist and Lember 2016; Chaebo and Medeiros 2017; Torvinen and Haukipuro 2018). Another significant driver of citizen participation is ‘political efficacy’ – a prevailing perception that government authorities are responsive to their demands and value their contribution (Fledderus, Brandsen and Honingh 2014; Van Eijk and Steen 2016). In addition, citizens should feel confident (‘sense of self-efficacy’) that they are capable to contribute in the process (Fledderus, Brandsen and Honingh 2015; Bovaird et al. 2016; Van Eijk and Steen 2016; Chaebo and Medeiros 2017). This confidence builds on both, objective/material and intangible assets such as (leisure) time, money, social capital and civic skills (Thijssen and Van Dooren 2016). The absence of these conditions represents a barrier to co-creation, especially in terms of inclusion of marginalised and vulnerable groups. Additional barriers related to external co-creators include doubt that other participants will be actively co-creating; taking higher share of risk and responsibility within the process; too professionally oriented and abstract tasks; and costs outweighing the benefits of participation (Fledderus, Brandsen and Honingh 2015; Tuurnas 2016; Williams, Kang and Johnson 2016; Levasseur 2018).

#### *4.1.5 Context related drivers and barriers*

Context related drivers and barriers refer to conditions concerning the wider political and socio-economic context in which co-creation takes place. Thus, policy areas that are less defined and feature ‘loose’ normative and regulatory frameworks seem to be more open to the prospect of co-creation, a concept that does not follow strictly defined rules and requires significant leeway for creativity and experimentation (Burall and Hughes 2016; Voorberg et al. 2017). Also, strong political support for co-creation among elected politicians, beyond ideological and party lines (Griffiths 2013; Cepiku and Giordano 2014; McCabe 2016; Strokosch and Osborne 2016) and a prevailing discourse supportive of citizen collaboration – presuming collaboration as the standard ‘way of doing things’ (Doheny and Milbourne 2013; Bianchi, Bovaird and Loeffler 2017) – indicate a favourable context. On the other hand, contextual barriers seem to include state regulations and policies which, even though not directly related to co-creation, may have a significant impact on the process: e.g. fiscal climate, budgetary restrictions and austerity measures (Lum, Evans and Shields 2016; Martin 2018; Pearson, Watson and Manji 2018).

#### *4.2 Culture specific drivers and barriers of co-creation*

In the content analysis, we identified four papers that discuss co-creation in culture, precisely in the context of: conservation of historical buildings (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018); establishment of a digital cultural sphere (Griffiths 2013); role of museums (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017); and arts in general (Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018). We systematised the ‘cultural’ drivers and barriers identified in these papers following the categorisation from section 4.1.

The key structural/organisational barriers that hinder co-creation in culture are ‘inertia’ (resistance) to new ways of operating and lack of suitable institutional infrastructure supporting co-creation (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017). The latter refers to the lack of a clearly structured/institutionalised process of co-

creation, building on consultation with external stakeholders, consolidation of their ideas and development of solutions that reflect different contributions in the process (Griffiths 2013; Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018). A specific driver emerging in the first phase (i.e. consultation) is the application of familiar (to external co-creators) consultation techniques, such as the use of social media (Griffiths 2013; Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018). Another driver is the sensitivity of the (cultural) organisation in terms of understanding the psychosocial characteristics of external co-creators (Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018). Moreover, transparency, accuracy and accessibility of information should be included in the process to have the effects of drivers of co-creation. This often implies systematic endeavours by the organisation to clarify complex issues (with the help of diagrams, visualisation and links to external sites) and existence of a centralised information base providing the relevant materials to citizens (Griffiths 2013; Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017).

In addition, a high level of trust and open, honest and constructive communication between co-creators are recognised as crucial drivers related to the relationship among (internal and external) co-creators (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018; Wiid and Mora-Avila 2018). Also, consensus and common vision shared by co-creators are drivers that further enhance this process. However, for ensuring legitimacy of the co-creation process (and thus wider acceptance of its results), the relationship among internal and external co-creators needs to be representative (Griffiths 2013).

Moreover, among the key drivers related to internal co-creators we note the prevailing perception of citizens as active agents (rather than passive recipients) of change and positive attitudes towards citizen initiatives (Griffiths 2013; Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018). In contrast, the main barriers here are lack of skills for co-creation, reluctance to share control (i.e. responsibility) with external co-creators and fear that co-creation could undermine the reputation of the (cultural) institution (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017).

The key driver related to external co-creators that triggers their mobilisation is discontent with governmental planning and decision making (Edelenbos, van Meerkerk and Schenk 2018). Later in the process, digital skills and use of technology, informed participation and the perception that their contribution is valued emerge as important drivers (Griffiths 2013).

Eventually, general political support for experimentation and inclusion of citizens are considered context related drivers and barriers (ibid.). A favourable context is further created by the general regulative framework encouraging or mandating collaboration (Kershaw, Bridson and Parris 2017). Surprisingly, even the general lack of funding in the cultural sphere (ibid.) is recognised as a driver that forces cultural organisations to look for alternative ways to secure their sustainability, e.g. to turn to co-creation.

This discussion to a great extent matches the 'cultural' co-creation drivers and barriers identified by Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans (2016). However, their research complements our analysis with additional drivers, such as more demanding consumers and competitive pressures for change (as context related drivers) and upper management commitment to co-creation (as a driver related to internal co-creators). Moreover, tensions between curatorial and commercial imperatives within cultural organisations, hierarchical organisational structure featuring 'silo' mentality and lack of funding (ibid.) emerge as additional

structural/organisational barriers to those identified in the content analysis. Here, however, the lack of funding is reported as an impediment to the process – in contrast to the discussion above, where ‘lack of funding’ is seen as a ‘context related driver’. This could be explained by the fact that co-creation, although implying mobilisation and use of resources of different actors (leading to lower costs of services provision), is not a ‘cheap’ process *per se*. On the contrary, it requires cultural organisations to have sufficient funding to properly conduct co-creation activities.

## 5 CO-CREATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS IN THE CASE STUDY OF THE 2020 RIJEKA EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROJECT

The main idea of the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) project is to bring cities at the heart of cultural life across Europe, improving the quality of life in these cities and strengthening their sense of community. The candidature of Rijeka (Croatia) for the ECoC 2020 project was guided and financed by the City of Rijeka from 2014 till March 2016, when RIJEKA 2020 LLC (Limited Liability Company) was jointly founded by the City of Rijeka and the Primorje-Gorski Kotar (PGK) County for the implementation of the project. Through the ECoC project, the City of Rijeka and the PGK County aimed to improve the scope and variety of the city’s and region’s cultural offer, expand accessibility and participation in culture, build capacities in the cultural sector and its ties to other sectors and increase international visibility as well as the city’s and region’s profile.

Since the preparation phase, cultural organisations, NGOs, citizens and other stakeholders have been included in the ECoC project. Specifically, the Rijeka 2020 Participatory Programme is considered as one of the most innovative areas of co-creation thanks to the comprehensive citizen participation. The core idea is to actively involve citizens in creating cultural, social and environmental programmes and to improve the production and organisational capacities of informal civilian groups. The Participatory Programme intends to raise the degree of citizen participation in social and cultural activities and the awareness about the environment. The Programme consists of two micro-funding programmes (Civil Initiatives and Green Wave), a capacity building programme (Learning to Build Communities), a participatory decision-making body (Council of Citizens) and RiHub as a physical place for education, meetings, exchange and joint action.

Currently, the Rijeka 2020 ECoC project and its Participatory Programme are in the implementation phase ending in 2021. In the first call for project proposals of the Participatory Programme for 2019, 80 projects were submitted (59 under Civil Initiatives and 21 under the Green Wave programme) and 22 were selected (plus 8 backup projects). The call for members of the Council of Citizens received 94 applications and 30 Council members were randomly selected.

In this section, the results of the FCM analysis of the Rijeka 2020 ECoC project are presented and discussed. The FCM is built on the drivers and barriers identified during the stakeholders’ interviews in the context of the case study, conducted in the framework of the COGOV project (Cvelić et al. 2020). Below, drivers and barriers and the related CI are reported (Table 1) together with a graphical representation of their relationships (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: THE FCM OF THE DRIVERS AND BARRIERS OF THE 2020 RIJEKA ECOC PROJECT

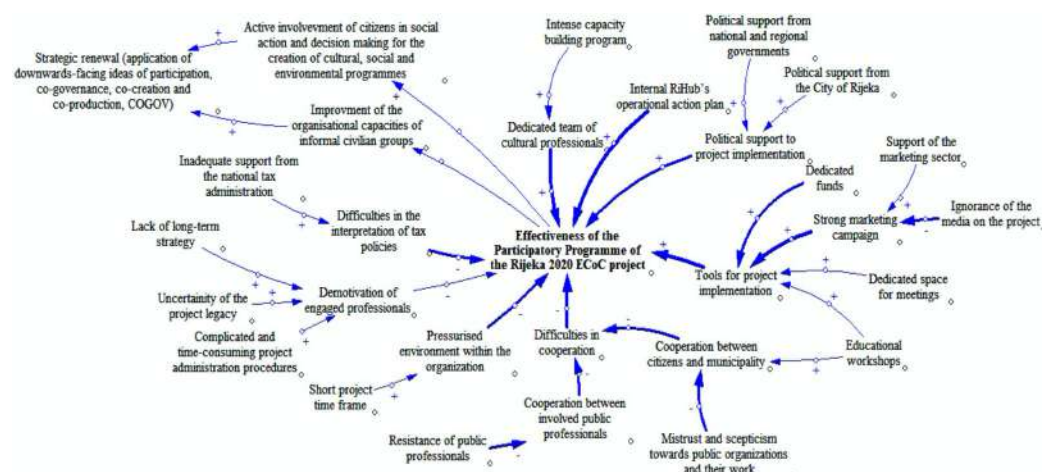


TABLE 1: LIST OF DRIVERS AND BARRIERS OF THE 2020 RIJEKA ECOC PROJECT ELICITED FROM THE INTERVIEWS AND THE RELATED CI

ID	VARIABLE	CLUSTER	CENTRALITY INDEX
A1	Effectiveness of the Participatory Programme of the Rijeka 2020 ECOC project	Main Objective	4.90
A16	Tools for project implementation	Driver	2.50
A10	Difficulties in cooperation	Barrier	1.70
A18	Strong marketing campaign	Driver	1.50
A13	Cooperation between citizens and municipality	Driver	1.30
A4	Demotivation of engaged professionals	Barrier	1.20
A22	Political support to project implementation	Driver	1.10
A11	Cooperation between involved public professionals	Driver	1.00
A26	Dedicated team of cultural professionals	Driver	1.00
A8	Pressurised environment within the organisation	Barrier	0.80
A25	Internal RiHub's operational action plan	Driver	0.70
A15	Educational workshops	Driver	0.60
A2	Difficulties in the interpretation of tax policies	Barrier	0.50
A12	Resistance of public professionals	Barrier	0.50
A14	Mistrust and scepticism towards public organisations and their work	Barrier	0.50
A19	Dedicated funds	Driver	0.50
A20	Ignorance of the media on the project	Barrier	0.50
A3	Inadequate support from the national tax administration	Barrier	0.30
A5	Lack of long-term strategy	Barrier	0.30
A6	Uncertainty of the project legacy	Barrier	0.30
A7	Complicated and time-consuming project administration procedures	Barrier	0.30
A9	Short project time frame	Barrier	0.30
A17	Dedicated space for meetings	Driver	0.30
A21	Support of the marketing sector	Driver	0.30
A23	Political support from the City of Rijeka	Driver	0.30
A24	Political support from national and regional governments	Driver	0.30
A27	Intense capacity building programme	Driver	0.30

The 'Tools for project implementation' (A16) was recognised as the key driver in the process of implementation of the Participatory Programme of the Rijeka

2020 ECoC project. Specifically, the Programme relies on a 'Strong marketing campaign' (A18, CI=1.5) which was considered essential together with 'Dedicated funds' (A19) and 'Dedicated space for meetings' (A17). Furthermore, a set of 'Educational workshops' (A15) was organised in RiHub with the purpose of breaking barriers in future communication and cooperation between citizens and public servants.

The presence of a 'Dedicated team of cultural professionals' (A26) was also recognised as an important driver (CI=1). Specifically, the team was trained and empowered through an intense 'Capacity building programme'.

The 'Political support to project implementation' (A22, CI=1.10) from the City of Rijeka as well as from national and regional governments and the presence of the 'Internal RiHub's operational action plan till 2021' (A25) were considered beneficial.

While 'Cooperation between citizens and municipality' (A13, CI=1.13) and 'Cooperation between involved public professionals' (A11) were mentioned as influential, the main barriers in the implementation of the Rijeka 2020 ECoC project were generally related to any kind of 'Difficulties in cooperation' (A10, CI=1.70), such as the one 'Between citizens and a municipality' (A13) caused by 'Mistrust and scepticism towards public organisations and their work' (A14) and the one 'Between involved public professionals' (A11) triggered by the 'Resistance of public professionals' (A12).

The barrier 'Demotivation of engaged professionals' (A4, CI=1.20) was also considered a key element influencing the effectiveness of the Programme, generated by 'Lack of long-term strategy', 'Uncertainty of the project legacy' and 'Complicated and time-consuming project administration procedures'. Lastly, one of the barriers mentioned due to the negative impact on the marketing campaign was the 'Ignorance of the media on the project' (A20).

## 6 CONCLUSION

The analysis of the 'general' and 'culture specific' drivers and barriers identified in the relevant literature does not indicate a substantial difference between culture and other policy areas. Actually, the analysis shows a significant overlap of the co-creation drivers and barriers irrespective of the policy area in which the process takes place. The only 'specific' difference ascribed to culture emerges as a rather epistemological challenge, deriving from the underlying antagonism of different understanding(s) of culture – often manifested in the tension between curatorial and commercial imperatives arising within cultural organisations (Minkiewicz, Bridson and Evans 2016). However, it is questionable to what extent this is a unique feature of culture, since under neoliberal pressure all policy areas face similar challenges in terms of the need for reinterpretation of their 'traditional' understanding and role towards greater commercialisation and commodification.

Moreover, also the findings of the Rijeka 2020 ECoC case study bring no surprise in this regard; they actually confirm the conclusion that there is no substantial difference between culture and other policy areas in terms of co-creation drivers and barriers. Seen through the prism of the categorisation presented in section 4, the drivers and barriers identified in the Croatian case study can be easily

grouped according to: structural/organisational features, features of internal co-creators, quality of the relationship between internal and external co-creators; and wider contextual features.

In line with the findings of the literature review, the case study emphasises the importance of structural/organisational features by pointing out the communication infrastructure and actions undertaken by the organisation towards securing better access of external stakeholders (covered by the drivers 'Tools for project implementation', 'Strong marketing campaign' and 'Dedicated space for meetings'). Furthermore, the case study stresses the importance of financial and human resources as the key organisational attributes enabling effective implementation of co-creation. The impact of the organisational setup is noted also in terms of organisational barriers to co-creation, such as 'Lack of long-term strategy', 'Uncertainty of the project legacy' and 'Complicated and time-consuming project administration procedures'. In particular, the barrier 'Short time-frame of the project' indicates the need for sustainable organisational structure and reveals a causal connection with the problem of 'Pressurised environment within the organisation' as an additional barrier.

As barriers related to internal co-creators, the Rijeka 2020 case study recognises 'Resistance of public professionals' and 'Demotivation of engaged professionals', in contrast to the drivers 'Dedicated team of cultural professionals' and 'Cooperation between involved public professionals'. Thus, similar to the findings of the literature review, the emphasis here is placed on the skills and capacity of internal co-creators enhanced by 'Capacity building programme'.

A similar driver – 'Educational workshops' – is identified in the context of the next category referring to the relationship between internal and external co-creators. This driver is seen crucial for improving the 'Communication and cooperation between citizens and public servants' and thus addressing barriers that undermine their relationship, such as 'Mistrust and scepticism towards public organisations and their work'.

Eventually, an overlap between the case study and the literature review is noted regarding context related drivers and barriers. Namely, the key contextual driver noted in the Rijeka 2020 case study – political support at different levels (local, regional and national) – corresponds to the findings of the literature review about the prominence of the general political support to co-creation. Moreover, the interconnected contextual factors from the case study – 'Inadequate support from the national tax administration' leading to 'Difficulties in the interpretation of tax policies' – can be interpreted as a concrete example of the 'general' barrier from the literature i.e. 'state regulations and policies, which even though not directly related to co-creation have significant impact on the process' (see sub-section 4.1.5). Although 'Ignorance of the media' emerges as a specific contextual barrier in the case study, it can be perceived as complementary to the general factor referring to a prevailing discourse favourable to citizen collaboration.

On this basis, we conclude that there are no 'culture specific' drivers and barriers of co-creation that make this policy area more (or less) conducive to co-creation in comparison to other policy areas. Thus, the special treatment of culture as a separate co-creation arena that differs substantially from other policy areas is not justified. This, however, does not mean that culture is not worthy of special research focus; on the contrary, it implies a need for better interaction of the research on co-creation across different policy areas. As the



analysis shows, there are many parallels that can be drawn from the research in other policy areas to inform and enrich the literature on co-creation in the field of culture.

At the same time, however, it should be born in mind that culture is not a 'monolithic' policy area, meaning that the drivers and barriers discussed here do not have universal and equal significance irrespective of the specific, i.e. individual cultural context in which co-creation takes place. Although the significance of a specific individual context was not the focus of this research, it can be assumed that it bears greater importance for the co-creation process than the policy area as such. Nevertheless, for drawing more solid conclusions about the significance of the individual context vis-à-vis type of policy area additional research efforts are required.

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## JE KULTURA KOT PODROČJE JAVNIH POLITIK VOZLIŠČE SOUSTVARJANJA?

*Soustvarjanje se promovira kot rešitev današnjih izzivov. Kljub uporabnosti na različnih področjih javne politike in obetavnih učinkih, se področje kulture pogosto izpostavlja kot posebej zanimivo in ugodno okolje za soustvarjanje. Tako se intuitivno uveljavlja kot področje, ki ponuja precej različne pogoje za soustvarjanje – kljub pomanjkanju trdnih argumentov, ki lahko upravičujejo drugačno obravnavo kulture od ostalih področij javnih politik. Da bi rešili to dilemo, je namen članka odgovoriti na vprašanje, ali in v kolikšni meri so spodbudni dejavniki in ovire soustvarjanja na področju kulture specifični. Odgovor iščemo s pomočjo sistematičnega pregleda literature in študije primera projekta »Evropska prestolnica kulture 2020 Reka«. Članek na podlagi tega ugotavlja, da ni specifičnih spodbudnih dejavnikov in ovir, ki bi opravičevali posebno obravnavo kulture kot bistveno drugačnega področja soustvarjanja.*

**Ključne besede:** kultura; spodbudni dejavniki in ovire soustvarjanja; mehki kognitivni zemljevid; projekt »Evropska prestolnica kulture«.