

Cultural management and policies in Europe

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CULTURAL REACTIVES, TESTING
TUBES AND THE MURCIA
CULTURAL MODEL WITHIN THE EU
URBAN AGENDA FOR CULTURE
AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Texts by

Amber Kay

Jesús de la Peña Sevilla

Mercedes Hernández Martínez

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FOREWORD

The COVID-19 pandemic produced, among its many collateral effects, an unusual discursive activation of a category that had until then remained largely latent in European cultural policy debates: that of culture as a basic necessity. This was not a new concept — as will be shown in the first chapter, its genealogy can be traced back to Spanish constitutionalism of 1931 and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 — but it was a category that, in the face of the near-total paralysis of in-person cultural activity in spring 2020, acquired an urgency and an institutional visibility it had not enjoyed for decades.

This book takes as its guiding thread a concrete and well-documented case: the set of programmes developed by the Municipality of Murcia from 2020 onwards

under the names of Cultural Reactives, Cultural Testing Tubes and Open Venues, which the institution itself has presented as an example of good practice recognised by the European Commission. The interest of this case lies not only in its local dimension — the injection of resources into a cultural sector in crisis — but also in its projection within a multi-level governance instrument of the European Union: the EU Urban Agenda and, specifically, the Thematic Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage, within which Murcia has formally led one of the eleven pilot actions of that Partnership's Final Action Plan.

However, a text aspiring to serve as a reference work in cultural management cannot confine itself to reproducing the institutional narrative of its protagonists.



This book therefore subjects the Murcia case to a triple contrast: with the international academic literature that has comparatively studied pandemic cultural policies in Europe; with the tradition of thought on cultural rights, the economics of culture and cultural management developed by scholars such as David Throsby, Lluís Bonet and Nicolás Barbieri; and with the experience of other European cities — notably Berlin and Florence — which participate in the same institutional

framework, but, as will be documented with precision, not as leaders of equivalent pilot actions, but as members of the broader Partnership.

The result is a text that combines the function of a case study with that of an introductory guide to some of the central debates in contemporary cultural management: the tension between cultural democratisation and cultural democracy, the role of culture as a common good

versus its treatment as a market good or an essential public service, and the question — never fully resolved — of whether the emergency cultural policies of the pandemic era represented a genuine paradigm shift or, as part of the specialist literature suggests, a rhetorical reformulation of pre-existing subsidy instruments.

The structure of the book reflects this dual vocation. The first two chapters build the conceptual framework: the first reconstructs the normative genealogy of the category of “essential good” as applied to culture, from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 to the international mobilisation of city networks during the pandemic; the second presents the four key references — Throsby, Bonet, Barbieri and Hylland et al. — whose analytical categories will be applied systematically in the analytical chapters. Chapters three and four reconstruct, with the greatest possible documentary rigour on the basis of publicly available sources, the institutional architecture of the case: first its local and municipal dimension, then its European dimension, with particular attention to the precise role of Berlin and Florence

within the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage. Chapter five subjects all this material to critical analysis organised around four tensions — innovation versus continuity, essential good versus common good, effectiveness versus equity, and technical knowledge transfer versus institutional positioning — and chapter six closes the book with a synthesis of findings, a set of practical recommendations for municipal cultural managers, and a research agenda for those wishing to go beyond what the documentary scope of this book has allowed.

Readers seeking an unconditional defence of the Murcia Cultural Model, or a destructive critique of it, will probably be disappointed on both counts. This book aspires, more modestly, to offer a careful reading of sources — municipal, European and academic — that enables readers to form their own informed judgement about a case that, beyond its particular merits or limitations, clearly illustrates the underlying tensions that any local cultural policy with European ambitions must necessarily confront in the post-pandemic Europe of the second half of the 2020s.

CHAPTER 1 | CULTURE AS A BASIC NECESSITY: GENEALOGY OF A CONCEPT

The purpose of this opening chapter is to dismantle an assumption implicit in much contemporary institutional discourse: that the category of “culture as an essential public good” was born as an improvised response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As will be shown, it is better understood as the reactivation of a long-standing normative tension between the formal recognition of culture as a right and its effective treatment as a policy priority.

To sustain this argument, the chapter proceeds in four movements. First, it reconstructs the international and comparative normative basis of the right to culture, showing that the association between culture and essentiality has a constitutional genealogy predating the pandemic by almost a century. Second, it examines the international institutional mobilisation of 2020, led by networks of lo-

cal governments rather than nation-states — a significant fact in itself about the scale of government at which the concept of cultural essentiality was most forcefully reactivated. Third, it introduces the critical counterpoint of comparative academic literature, which invites caution towards any narrative of rupture. Finally, it sets out why this tension between normative recognition and effective implementation is the central problem running through the rest of the book.

It should be noted from the outset that this chapter does not seek to resolve a fundamental legal or philosophical debate — whether culture is or is not, in strict terms, an “essential good” comparable to healthcare or food — but to reconstruct how and why that category was discursively activated at a specific historical moment, and what consequences that activation had for the

design of local cultural policies such as those analysed in chapters 3 and 4.

1.1. The right to culture in international and comparative law

The most widely cited normative starting point in the literature is Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations General Assembly, 1948), which recognises the right of everyone to participate freely in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. Seventy years after its proclamation, the specialist literature was still pointing to the distance between this formal recognition and its consolidation in practice as a policy priority (Pla Estratègic Metropolità de Barcelona [PEMB], 2021).

It is difficult to understand that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the right to culture, yet culture was not recognised as an essential good until a pandemic arrived. (PEMB, 2021)

This paradox — a right solemnly proclaimed in 1948 that took more than seventy years to be expressly declared

essential — is not unique to the cultural sphere. It is a structural tension inherent to many so-called second- and third-generation rights, whose effective enforceability depends largely on the political will of public authorities, unlike first-generation civil and political rights, which are generally equipped with more direct judicial protection mechanisms. Culture thus shares a relatively weak legal position with other social rights such as housing or, in some legal orders, healthcare itself, whose constitutional recognition is not always matched by proportionate budgetary commitment.

In the Spanish constitutional order, this right is set out in Article 44 of the 1978 Constitution, which states in its first paragraph that public authorities shall promote and protect access to culture, to which all have a right (Congreso de los Diputados, 1978). The systematic location of this article is not coincidental: it falls within Title I, Chapter III, devoted to the “guiding principles of social and economic policy”, a constitutional category which, unlike the fundamental rights properly so-called regulated in Chapter II, does not enjoy the same reinforced procedural protection (amparo appeal) before the

Constitutional Court. This difference in formal legal status helps to explain, in part, why the right to culture has historically received weaker budgetary translation than rights with more intensive protection.

The official commentary on that article, prepared by the legal services of the Spanish Congress of Deputies, offers a particularly useful analytical key for cultural management: it identifies in the constitutional text a threefold legal treatment of culture, articulated as freedom (of creation, of academic teaching, of the expression of cultural forms), as diversity (recognition of the coexistence of different cultures) and as a promotional activity aimed at facilitating access to and enjoyment of an already-recognised right (Congreso de los Diputados, s.f.). This tripartition is operationally useful for classifying any public cultural programme: one may ask, for any specific call for projects, whether it primarily acts as a guarantee of creative freedom, as recognition of cultural diversity, or as an instrument for promoting access, bearing in mind that in practice all three planes tend to overlap.

Especially relevant to the thesis of this book is a historical precedent noted in

that same official commentary: Article 48 of the Spanish Constitution of 1931 already declared that the service of culture was an “essential responsibility of the State” (Congreso de los Diputados, s.f.). This constitutional genealogy, predating the pandemic by almost a century, supports the argument that what the health crisis of 2020 activated was not an unprecedented legal category, but a latent constitutional category that had already been formulated in terms of essentiality almost one hundred years earlier. The contrast between the two Spanish constitutional texts — 1931 and 1978 — is also revealing of a shift in legal sensibility: while the Republican Constitution attributed culture as an “essential responsibility of the State”, in language suggesting direct state ownership and responsibility, the 1978 Constitution prefers the verbs “promote and protect”, language more characteristic of an enabling role than of direct provision, consistent with the social state model the Constitution articulates overall.

The official commentary also adds comparative constitutional law references that enrich this genealogical analysis: the Italian Constitution of 1947 establishes in

Article 9 that the Republic shall promote the development of culture and scientific and technical research, in a formula very close to the Spanish text of 1978; and the Portuguese Constitution, in Article 73.4 (as amended in 1989), provides that scientific research and innovation shall be encouraged and supported by the State (Congreso de los Diputados, s.f.). The commentary also refers to an older constitutional tradition, that of the Weimar Constitution of 1919, as the origin of the line linking science and culture constitutionally within continental European constitutionalism (Congreso de los Diputados, s.f.).

Implication for cultural management

The distinction between culture as a recognised right and culture as an effectively prioritised policy is one of the central analytical axes of contemporary cultural management. As will be developed in chapter 2, Nicolás Barbieri's work on cultural rights and inequality starts precisely from this gap between formal recognition and effective implementation, and as chapter 5 will show, this same gap enables the formulation of specific critical questions about the Murcia case.

1.2. The international mobilisation of 2020: city networks and cultural rights

Against the backdrop of perceived governmental inaction during the lockdowns of 2020, the most visible response came not from states but from international networks of local governments. This fact deserves reflection in its own right: had culture been treated predominantly as a national or supranational competence, the most visible institutional response would have been expected to come from national ministries of culture or from the European Union's own institutions. Instead, it was city networks — UCLG, Eurocities, the Agenda 21 for Culture — that articulated the fastest discursive response most explicitly oriented towards the concept of essentiality. This suggests that the category of “essential good” as applied to culture emerged, in its origins, as a local and municipal governance category before a state one, which is consistent with the fact that the central case of this book — Murcia — is itself a local government.

In April 2020, the partners of the #culture2030goal campaign — a coalition of civil society organisations linked to the 2030

Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals — published a declaration on culture and the pandemic calling governments to immediate action (PEMB, 2021). This declaration forms part of a broader advocacy process that had for years been calling for a sustainable development goal specifically dedicated to culture, absent from the seventeen SDGs adopted in 2015, in which culture appears in a cross-cutting manner but not as an autonomous target.

The document of greatest institutional significance from this period is the Rome Charter 2020, produced jointly by the Culture Committee of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the Municipality of Rome, under the title “The right to freely and fully participate in cultural life is vital for our cities and communities” (UCLG, 2020). The Charter was launched on 29 May 2020 at the UCLG Executive Bureau, and formally approved at the World Council of the organisation on 13 November of the same year, following a consultation process developed between April and October that culminated in a hybrid conference held in Rome from 1 to 3 October 2020 (Agenda21Culture, 2020).

More than forty cities from around

the world participated in its preparation — including Barcelona, Bilbao, Bogotá, Lisbon, Mexico City, Dublin, Montreal and Vancouver — alongside organisations such as Culture Action Europe, UNESCO, ASviS, and the UCLG network in its various regional sections (ESEIAP, 2020). The Charter does not constitute a legally binding instrument, but rather what its own promoters have defined as a practical, concise and useful guide for local governments to update the right to culture enshrined in 1948 to contemporary needs, starting from the conviction that commodification and the exclusive prioritisation of the economic were threatening equity, justice and human dignity (IberCultura Viva, s.f.).

It is worth pausing on the deliberate choice of the “charter” format, rather than more formal instruments such as a treaty, convention or binding resolution. This choice reveals an advocacy strategy based on persuasion and broad consensus rather than legal enforceability, which is consistent with the very nature of city networks as horizontal governance actors without their own legislative capacity. This characteristic — the primacy of persuasion over enforceability — is shared, as

chapter 4 will show, by the very mechanism of the Thematic Partnerships of the European Urban Agenda, which likewise generate no direct legal obligations for member states, but voluntary recommendations and action plans.

The Rome Charter has received explicit academic treatment, enabling it to be incorporated into the body of primary sources with full documentary value for cultural management research, and not merely as an institutional press release (Cruz Pérez, 2020). This academic treatment, published in a journal specialising in heritage and cultural economics, is itself a significant indicator that the academic cultural management community quickly recognised the historical importance of the document, incorporating it into its own reference corpus in the very year of its approval.

1.3. The critical question: paradigm shift or reinforced continuity?

Any institutional narrative of cultural “essentiality” activated by the pandemic must be confronted with the academic literature that has studied empirically and comparatively

the real effect of the health crisis on cultural policy instruments across Europe. The key reference in this area is Hylland et al. (2024), published in the International Journal of Cultural Policy, which compares the pandemic cultural policy measures adopted in seven European countries.

Their conclusions introduce a note of caution that is indispensable for any rigorous analysis of the Murcia case: cultural policies were not fundamentally challenged by the pandemic in their core instruments, institutional division of labour or central goals. The responses observed, far from representing a rupture, confirmed pre-existing policy structures or reinforced developments already under way, in particular a tendency for cultural policy to become economic, fiscal and labour market policy (Hylland et al., 2024).

Cultural policies have not been fundamentally challenged by the pandemic [...]. The responses have confirmed an existing policy structure or enhanced existing developments. (Hylland et al., 2024, p. 81) This finding deserves to be unpacked in its different components to understand fully its significance. First, the authors document a

plurality of mitigation measures combining direct subsidies and grants, lost income compensation, income support and fiscal flexibility, which they themselves describe as a tendency for cultural policy to become, de facto, economic, fiscal and labour market policy (Hylland et al., 2024). Second, they conclude that the relative importance of centralised versus federalist or decentralised cultural policy systems was not substantially challenged by the crisis, meaning that each country responded from its pre-existing institutional tradition, without the pandemic generating convergence towards a single European model. Third, and perhaps less expectedly, the authors find no evidence of a general acceleration of national digital cultural policies, which contrasts with the widespread intuition that the pandemic would have been a definitive catalyst for the digitalisation of the cultural sector (Hylland et al., 2024).

This last point is particularly relevant to the Murcia case, since one of the four axes of the Murcia Cultural Model is precisely the production of digital content, materialised in the OCULTO.TV platform (see chapter 3, section 3.5). The finding by Hylland et al. (2024) does not permit the conclusion that

Murcia's digital initiative was irrelevant, but it does oblige us to ask whether it represented a genuine structural acceleration of municipal digital cultural policy, or whether it was, as in the rest of Europe according to that study, a cyclical response that did not substantially alter digital cultural priorities over the medium term.

The central tension of this book

This finding constitutes the critical counterpoint running through the entire analysis of the Murcia case in chapters 3 and 5: do Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes constitute a genuine innovation in cultural policy, or are they — as the comparative literature suggests — an intensification of classic subsidy instruments dressed in a new rhetoric of emergency and essentiality? The reader will find elements supporting both readings throughout the book, and chapter 5 offers a nuanced response that distinguishes between the different components of the model.

1.4. A first synthesis: three levels of cultural essentiality

From the preceding sections it emerges that the category “culture as an essential public good” actually operates at at least three distinct levels that should not be conflated.

The first level is normative-constitutional: culture as a formally recognised right, with a legal basis that, as has been shown, long predates the pandemic. The second level is international political advocacy: culture as the object of discursive mobilisation by networks of local governments, whose paradigmatic example is the Rome Charter 2020. The third level is the effective implementation of concrete public policies: culture as the object of specific programmes, calls for proposals and budgetary allocations, which is the level at which the Murcia case analysed in chapters 3, 4 and 5 is situated.

The academic literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that the transition from the first to the third level — from normative proclamation to effective public policy — is neither automatic nor guaranteed, and that the pandemic, far from resolving this gap definitively, brought it to light with unusual intensity, generating an institutional response that combines elements of genuine innovation with elements of reinforced continuity. Distinguishing, in each concrete programme, which is which, is the task this book sets itself with respect to the Murcia Cultural Model.

1.5. The European framework for cultural rights: pre-pandemic antecedents

Before the irruption of the pandemic, the European Union already had a normative and institutional framework relating to culture that it is worth briefly reconstructing, since it constitutes the substrate upon which the EU Urban Agenda analysed in depth in chapter 4 was subsequently built. Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) provides that the Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the member states, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. This article, essentially programmatic in nature and supportive of member state action, reflects the so-called principle of cultural subsidiarity: culture is, in the EU's division of competences, an area of complementary and supporting action, not of direct legislative harmonisation, which explains why instruments such as the EU Urban Agenda — based on voluntary cooperation rather than binding legislation — have been the main avenue of EU action in this field. This architecture of shared competences,

in which the European Union supports but does not replace member states and their local and regional administrations in cultural matters, is consistent with the non-binding character of both the Rome Charter 2020 (an instrument of city networks, not of the European Union) and the Final Action Plan of the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage itself (an instrument of voluntary cooperation between administrations at different levels, not a European directive or regulation). In both cases, the normative force of the instrument derives from persuasion, the exemplary function of good practice and peer learning, not from direct legal enforceability, a characteristic that the reader should bear in mind when assessing the real scope of any “European recognition” attributed to a municipal cultural programme such as those analysed in this book.

At a more strictly cultural level, the Council of Europe — an international organisation distinct from the European Union, although frequently confused with it in public discourse — has developed since the 1970s a body of comparative reports on national cultural policies known as the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends,

mentioned already in chapter 2 in connection with Lluís Bonet’s career as a consultant to that institution. This body of reports constitutes, together with the European Commission’s Cultural Eurobarometers, one of the main sources of comparative data on cultural participation, public spending on culture and cultural employment at European level, and provides a useful reference framework for situating the budgetary magnitude of the Murcia case — the 700,000 euros and, subsequently, the one million euros of Cultural Reactives — in relation to per capita cultural expenditure figures for other municipalities and regions of comparable size in Europe, although that quantitative comparison exceeds the documentary scope of this book and is proposed as a future research direction in chapter 6.

1.6. A Critical View of the Concept of “Essentiality” as Applied to Culture

This chapter closes with a more conceptual reflection on the limits and risks of the very term “essential good” as applied to culture — a reflection that institutional literature rarely incorporates but that is indispensable

for a book aspiring to academic rigour. The category of essentiality, originally developed in administrative and labour law to distinguish, during the lockdowns of 2020, which economic activities could continue operating (healthcare, food supply, basic utilities) from those that had to be suspended, was not originally designed to apply to culture, and its extension to this sphere raises, on close examination, an unresolved conceptual tension.

On one hand, the declaration of culture as an essential activity clearly served a positive function in the context of 2020: it provided justification for the continuation of certain cultural activity (in adapted formats) during the most restrictive phases of the pandemic, and served as a symbolic foundation for the mobilisation of emergency public resources, such as those that gave rise to Cultural Reactives. On the other hand, the category of essentiality, in its strictest and most literal sense, is normally reserved for that whose absence would pose an immediate risk to people's lives or basic subsistence — a threshold that culture, however valuable, scarcely reaches in the same sense as healthcare or food. Applying the same category to domains of such different natures could paradoxically weaken

the rhetorical force of the term when applied to what it was originally designed for.

This conceptual tension does not invalidate the legitimacy of public support policies for culture during the pandemic, but does suggest that the expression “culture as an essential good” should be understood, more precisely, as a political metaphor of great communicative and mobilising efficacy — linking culture to a semantic field of urgent and priority protection — rather than as a strictly equivalent administrative-legal category to that of essential services in the technical sense. This terminological precision, which no institutional document consulted for this book formulates explicitly, is nonetheless consistent with the constitutional genealogy reconstructed in section 1.1: both Article 48 of the 1931 Constitution and Article 44 of the 1978 Constitution employ, in practice, a language of promotion and protection of the right to culture, not strictly a language of essential service indispensable for subsistence, suggesting that the Spanish constitutional tradition already distinguished implicitly between the fundamental importance of culture as a right and its technical classification as an essential service in the strict sense.

1.7. Pandemic cultural policy in comparative European perspective

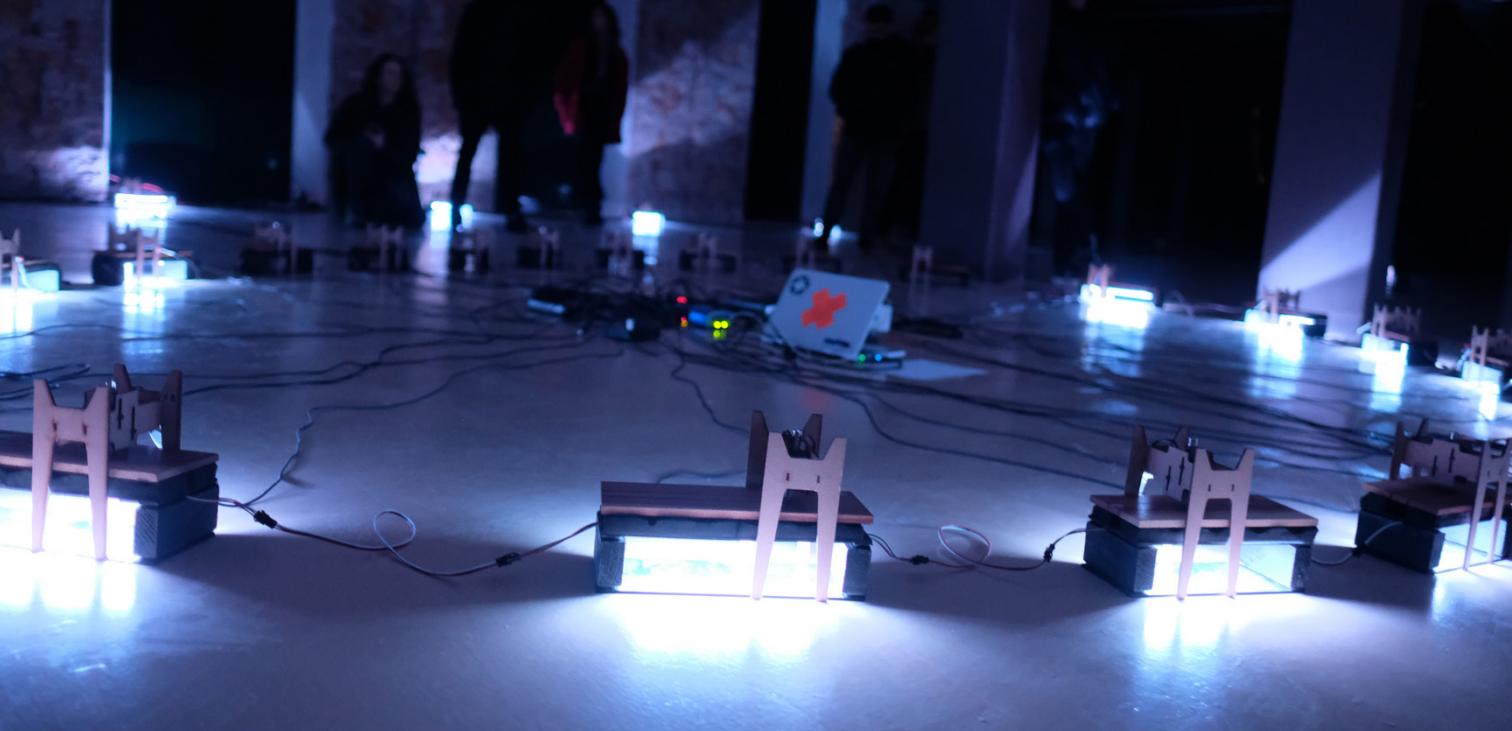
Before closing this introductory chapter, it is useful to offer a broader panorama of how different European countries responded, within their own normative and institutional frameworks, to the same fundamental question that animated the Murcia response: how to protect the cultural sector in the face of an unprecedented suspension of in-person activity. The study by Hylland et al. (2024), already introduced in section 1.3, provides the most rigorous comparative framework available, analysing jointly the responses of several European countries using a common methodology.

Without entering into country-by-country detail, which exceeds the purpose of this book centred on the Spanish and specifically Murcian case, it is worth retaining from that comparative study an analytically relevant distinction: the authors differentiate between countries with more centralised cultural policy systems, in which the pandemic response was articulated predominantly at national government level, and countries with more decentralised or federal systems, in which the

response was articulated in a more fragmented manner across different levels of regional and local government (Hylland et al., 2024). Spain, with its autonomous community structure and its broad tradition of municipal cultural competences, sits closer to the second model, which partly explains why the cultural response to the pandemic in Spain — and within it, the Murcia case analysed in this book — was so visibly articulated at municipal level, in contrast with more centralised countries where the main response might have come directly from the national ministry of culture.

This comparative observation reinforces one of the underlying theses of this book: the Murcia Cultural Model should not be read as an isolated or anomalous phenomenon, but as a local manifestation, within a broader response pattern observable in different European countries with decentralised governance structures, of the same tension between normative proclamation of cultural essentiality and its effective translation into concrete policy instruments, managed predominantly by the levels of government closest to the territory and to the cultural actors themselves.

Finally, it is worth noting that the



journal in which the Hylland et al. (2024) study is published, the International Journal of Cultural Policy, has in subsequent years devoted several thematic issues and additional articles to the analysis of pandemic and post-pandemic cultural policies in different national contexts, confirming that the subject matter of this book — the institutional cultural response to the health crisis of 2020 — constitutes, far from being a passing curiosity, a consolidated research strand within the academic discipline of cultural policies, to which this book aspires to make a specific contribution centred on the Spanish and, in particular, Murcian case.

1.8. Culture and public health: an instructive conceptual parallel

This chapter closes with a brief comparative exercise between the category of “essential good” as applied to culture and its application — far more consolidated and with a longer legal tradition — to the field of public health, which may be instructive for readers wishing to understand better the limits and possibilities of the conceptual analogy that frames the title of this book. Public healthcare enjoys, in the Spanish constitutional order, an express recognition as a right in Article 43 of the 1978 Constitution

along with a far denser and more consolidated legislative and administrative development over the decades: the General Health Law, the National Health System, catalogues of basic healthcare benefits. This dense normative development allows, in the case of healthcare, a much more precise and operational translation of the concept of essentiality: there are, for example, closed catalogues of health services considered basic and therefore of mandatory provision by the competent authorities. Culture, by contrast, does not have an equivalent legislative development translating the constitutional recognition of Article 44 into a closed catalogue of minimum cultural services or activities guaranteed to all citizens. This normative asymmetry between two formally comparable constitutional rights helps to explain, in part, why the declaration of culture as an “essential activity” during the pandemic of 2020, unlike the equivalent declaration for healthcare, had a far more symbolic and communicative than legally operative character: there was, neither in 2020 nor today, a normative framework equivalent to that of healthcare that would allow that declaration to be automatically translated into concrete and enforceable

legal obligations for public authorities.

This conceptual parallel between culture and healthcare, which no institutional document consulted for this book formulates explicitly, offers an additional interpretive key for understanding why the transition from the declaration of essentiality to effective public policy — analysed in general terms in section 1.4 and applied specifically to the Murcia case in subsequent chapters — required, in the cultural sphere, the ad hoc creation of new programmes and instruments such as Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes, while the healthcare institutional response could draw heavily on a normative and administrative infrastructure already consolidated over previous decades. Culture, in this sense, had to construct simultaneously, in the midst of a health emergency, both the symbolic recognition of its essentiality and the concrete administrative instruments to make it effective — a dual task that helps to explain the magnitude of the institutional effort that programmes such as those analysed in this book represented for a medium-sized municipal administration such as that of Murcia.

CHAPTER 2 | KEY REFERENCES IN CULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

Before turning to the case study, it is important to situate the debate within the intellectual tradition of cultural management and cultural policy as a relatively young academic discipline, which consolidated internationally from the 1970s and 1980s onwards, with the creation of specialist journals such as the *Journal of Cultural Economics* (1977) and, later, the *International Journal of Cultural Policy* (1994), in which the Hylland et al. (2024) study cited in the preceding chapter is published.

This chapter presents four complementary approaches—the economics of culture, applied cultural management, cultural rights, and comparative policy research—which will be taken up systematically in the analytical chapters on the Murcia case. The choice of these four

references is not arbitrary: Throsby represents the Anglo-American and economic tradition dominant in the international literature; Bonet represents the tradition of applied cultural management in the Spanish context, with strong European and Ibero-American institutional connections; Barbieri represents the critical current of cultural rights, which challenges both economism and a certain uncritical institutionalism; and Hylland et al. provide the comparative empirical counterpoint that allows the Murcia case to be calibrated against a broader European baseline. Together, they form a methodological framework that enables the Murcia case to be read from perspectives that would otherwise remain invisible if only one of them were employed.

2.1. David Throsby and the economics of culture

Australian economist David Throsby is probably the most internationally cited scholar in the field of the economics of culture. Distinguished Professor of Economics at Macquarie University in Sydney, his academic career has developed in parallel with his institutional engagement: he has served on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Cultural Economics* and the *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, and as a member of the governing bodies of cultural institutions such as the Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney or the Australian Museum (Wikipedia, s.f.-a).

His work *Economics and Culture* (Throsby, 2001) has become a canonical text in the discipline, addressing the economic role of artists, public intervention in art markets, cultural development, cultural policy, heritage and the sustainability of cultural processes (Wikipedia, s.f.-a). Throsby characterises cultural products as goods and services encompassing the performing arts, visual arts, architecture, heritage conservation (museums, galleries, libraries) and the cultural industries (print media, broadcasting, film, recording) (Throsby, 2010).

In later works, notably *The Economics of Cultural Policy* (Throsby, 2010), Throsby advocates the integration of economic reasoning — concepts such as market failure, public goods or externalities — into cultural policy analysis, without that implying a renunciation of recognition of the intrinsic cultural value of the arts. This intermediate position is important: Throsby does not reduce culture to its market value, but argues that the analytical tools of economics can enrich — not replace — the understanding of cultural value in the broad sense. This distinction between economic value and cultural value will be revisited in chapter 5 to analyse the double standard by which the success of programmes such as *Cultural Reactives* is typically evaluated.

One of his most influential conceptual contributions is the notion of cultural capital, which Throsby first develops in a 1999 article in the *Journal of Cultural Economics* and revisits in successive editions of the *Handbook of Cultural Economics* edited by Ruth Towse (Throsby, 1999, 2003, 2011). The concept enables cultural assets — both tangible and intangible — to be treated analogously to physical or human capital, as a stock that

generates flows of cultural and economic value over time. Throsby distinguishes, within this notion, between tangible cultural capital (historic buildings, works of art, heritage sites) and intangible cultural capital (traditions, shared values, socially transmitted cultural practices), a distinction directly applicable to the analysis of a programme such as Cultural Reactives, whose call categories cover simultaneously projects of tangible heritage (photography, architecture, design) and of intangible heritage (traditional culture and folklore, oral memory of traditional crafts).

The concept of cultural capital is also directly applicable to the analysis of programmes such as Cultural Testing Tubes, insofar as they aim to generate durable capacities and cultural assets in the local creative fabric, rather than simply funding one-off productions. From this perspective, the relevant question is not only how many cultural projects the programme produced in any given year, but what accumulated cultural capital — knowledge, professional networks, co-working infrastructure, collaborative working methodologies — was installed in the city once each call cycle had ended.

Application to the case study

Throsby's distinction between the economic value and the cultural value of a good or activity is especially pertinent when evaluating Cultural Reactives: should the programme be judged by its immediate economic impact (employment generated, expenditure injected, the 700,000 euros or the one million euros of funding) or by its contribution to the accumulated cultural capital of the city over the medium term? The municipal institutional literature tends to emphasise the first criterion — investment figures and numbers of selected projects; a rigorous cultural management analysis must also attend to the second, much harder to measure but, according to Throsby, equally decisive for evaluating the long-term sustainability of a cultural policy.

2.2. Lluís Bonet and the tradition of cultural management in Spanish

If Throsby represents the Anglo-American perspective of the economics of culture, Lluís Bonet Agustí, Full Professor at the Universitat de Barcelona, is the most influential equivalent reference in the field of cultural management in Spanish and Catalan. Bonet has coordinated for more than thirty years various postgraduate programmes in



cultural management at the Universitat de Barcelona, and has been a visiting researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a visiting professor at the Université de Montpellier (Bonet, personal blog, s.f.), evidencing a career combining management practice with a solid international academic profile.

Bonet has acted as consultant on policy, statistics and the economics of culture for the Council of Europe, the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank, UNESCO, the Andrés Bello Convention and the Organisation of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) (Universitat de Barcelona, s.f.). This direct connection with multilateral bodies of reference in cultural policy — including the Council of Europe, whose tradition of comparative national cultural policy reports (the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends) constitutes one of the most widely used data sources in the discipline — confers on his work an institutional authority uncommon among purely academic scholars. Among his work most directly applicable to the management of programmes such as those analysed in this book are *Gestión de*

proyectos culturales: análisis de casos (Alonso, Bonet, Garzón and Schargorodsky, 2010) and, more recently, *La innovación en la gestión de la cultura: reflexiones y experiencias* (Bonet and González-Piñero, 2021), a co-edited volume addressing specifically the genesis, politics and challenges of innovation in the cultural sector through the analysis of concrete projects in the fields of the book, theatre, music and video games (Universitat de Barcelona, 2021). This second volume is especially pertinent to the analysis of Cultural Testing Tubes, inasmuch as both texts share the same subject matter: innovation understood not as a statement of intent but as a concrete, situated and empirically analysable process through case studies.

Bonet has also worked extensively on the dimension of cultural diversity and intercultural policies in urban contexts (Bonet, 2006) and on public support policies for cultural industries at different levels of government, including the local level (Bonet, 2007), which provides a direct comparative framework for situating the Murcia model of cultural grants and residencies within a broader tradition of local cultural promotion policies in Spain. His analysis of “government

support for cultural industries”, focused on the current situation and future prospects of such instruments (Bonet, 2007), constitutes an obligatory reference framework for any evaluation of a municipal cultural grant programme such as Cultural Reactives, enabling us to ask whether the Murcia case confirms or nuances the general trends that Bonet identified more than fifteen years ago in the overall landscape of Spanish local cultural policies.

2.3. Nicolás Barbieri: cultural rights, cultural democracy and inequality

The third key reference for this book is Nicolás Barbieri, Doctor in Political Science from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (supervised by Joan Subirats, one of the most influential figures in public policy analysis in Spain) and researcher at the Institute of Government and Public Policies of that university, as well as a professor at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC, 2022). His research focuses on the analysis and evaluation of cultural and social policies, with particular attention to cultural rights and social inequalities (Barcelona Metròpolis, s.f.).

In an interview given to the blog of the Cultural Management Area at UOC, Barbieri explains that his interest in cultural policies arose from his personal experience in a neighbourhood of Buenos Aires, where an open-air auditorium near his home brought together diverse musical groups and the local community, and from his participation in a community radio project (FM La Tribu), where he not only accessed cultural activities but also organised them and debated the orientation of his city’s cultural policies (UOC, 2022). This intellectual biography is relevant because it situates the origin of his academic thinking in an experience of community-based cultural participation, rather than in purely theoretical training, which largely explains the centrality that citizen participation occupies in all his subsequent work.

In his article “Cultura, políticas públicas y bienes comunes: hacia unas políticas de lo cultural” (Barbieri, 2014), published in the journal Kult-ur, Barbieri proposes a conceptualisation of culture as a common good that constitutes an alternative — and at the same time a complement — to the notion of “essential good” that frames the first chapter of this book. While the category

of “essential good” emerges from a logic of state protection in contexts of emergency, that of “common good” emerges from a logic of collective management, citizen participation and critical cultural production oriented towards the construction of a fuller democracy (Barbieri, 2014).

This 2014 article is part of a broader debate in the discipline about models of cultural democratisation versus cultural democracy, a classical distinction in the European cultural policy literature since the 1970s. Cultural democratisation refers to the model in which the state facilitates access by citizens to a predefined cultural offering, generally of a high-culture or canonical nature (museums, opera, classical theatre); cultural democracy, by contrast, refers to a model in which citizens actively participate in defining what counts as legitimate culture and in managing cultural resources, without any prior hierarchy between high culture and popular culture. Barbieri positions himself explicitly in the second tradition, proposing the concept of common good as a way to overcome the limitations of both classic models.

In subsequent work, Barbieri has

advanced a thesis that is worth bearing in mind when evaluating any public cultural promotion programme: neither cultural rights play a significant role in strategies against growing urban inequality, nor does equity constitute a real priority on the contemporary cultural policy agenda, despite the limited research that exists on these issues (Barbieri, s.f.). Barbieri identifies three explanatory factors of inequalities in the exercise of cultural rights: difference, resources and connection, and argues that responses to such inequalities must be integral — public, but not only institutional — and developed from a recognition of diversity (Barbieri, s.f.). These three factors merit a brief gloss: difference refers to the different identities, trajectories and cultural capital of each person or collective; resources refers to the material conditions (time, money, education) necessary to effectively exercise the right to participate in cultural life; and connection refers to the social and professional networks that facilitate or hinder access to information about cultural opportunities — a factor especially relevant to evaluating effective access to public calls such as those analysed in this book, which depend substantially

on potential beneficiaries knowing of their existence and knowing how to apply.

Barbieri has also analysed the trajectory of cultural policies in the so-called “ayuntamientos del cambio” (change city councils) that emerged in Spain following the May 2015 electoral cycle, raising a question directly applicable to the Murcia case — though of different political orientation, given that the Municipality of Murcia during the period analysed in this book was governed by a centre-right coalition: should one speak of genuine change or rather of continuity in relation to the prior trajectories of municipal cultural policy? (Barbieri, 2018). This question, originally formulated for municipal governments of a particular political orientation, is methodologically transferable — precisely because of its analytical rather than partisan character — to the study of municipal governments of any political orientation, including the Murcia case.

Factors such as the neighbourhood we live in, our gender, origin or level of education condition the exercise of the right to participate in the cultural life of the city. (Barbieri, cited in UIC, 2022)

Derived research question

Barbieri’s contribution enables us to formulate a question that the institutional documentation from Murcia does not answer by itself: do the calls for Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes incorporate explicit equity criteria in access — by neighbourhood, gender, origin or level of education — or are they governed exclusively by criteria of quality and innovation of the project submitted? This question is revisited in greater depth in chapter 5, section 5.3.

2.4. Hylland et al. (2024): comparative contrast as a fourth methodological reference

Alongside Throsby, Bonet and Barbieri, this book draws systematically on a fourth reference that, unlike the three preceding ones, is not the work of an individual author but a collective comparative research study: the article by Ola K. Hylland, Mirta Burri, Katarina Lindblad Gidlund, Christian Handke, Arturo Rodríguez Morató, Kate Oakley, Jaka Primorac and Aleksandra Uzelac, published in 2024 in the International Journal of Cultural Policy, already presented in detail in section 1.3 of this book.

The reason for granting this study

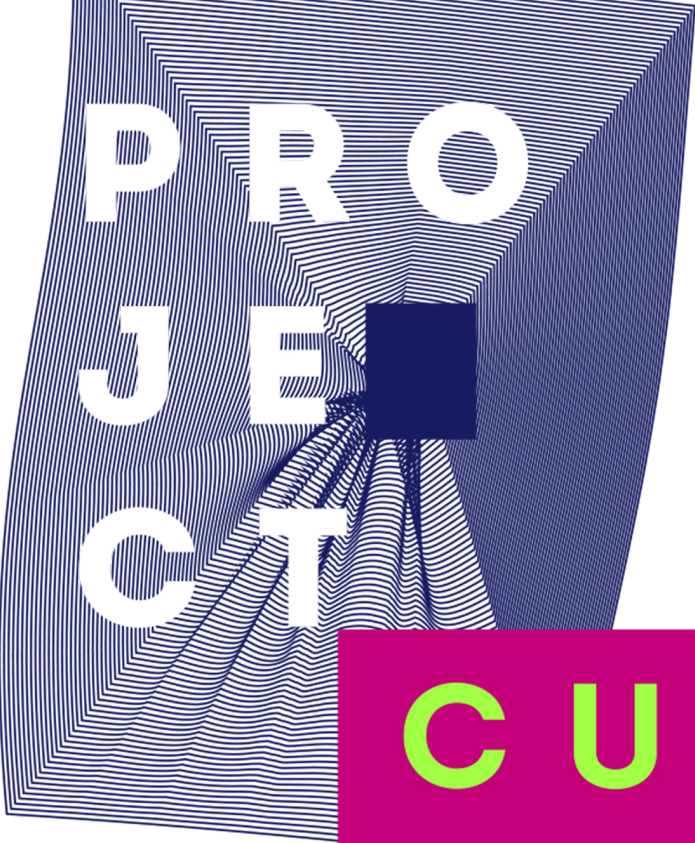
a methodological status equivalent to the three individual authors presented in the preceding sections is that it fulfils, within the analytical architecture of this book, a different but equally indispensable function: while Throsby, Bonet and Barbieri contribute conceptual categories for interpreting the Murcia case from the inside — what is cultural capital, how is a cultural project managed, what are cultural rights — Hylland et al. (2024) contribute the external empirical contrast that allows us to calibrate whether the Murcia case is an exception or one more manifestation of a general European pattern. Without this comparative contrast, any claim about the innovative or pioneering character of the Murcia Cultural Model would lack a reference point against which to be evaluated, and would risk simply accepting the narrative of exceptionality that the municipal institutional communication tends to project.

It is also worth noting that the collective and multinational character of the authorship of this study — eight researchers affiliated with institutions from different European countries — is not a minor detail: it reflects the very nature of the object of study, a comparison of the cultural policy

responses of several European countries to the pandemic, which would scarcely have been feasible from the perspective of a single national researcher without the risk of biasing the interpretation of the foreign cases. This methodological circumstance — the need for multinational research teams to address public policy comparisons at European level — is itself a practical illustration of one of the themes running through this book: the growing importance of transnational cooperation in the production of knowledge about cultural management and policy, in the same way that Pilot Action 3 of the European Partnership, analysed in chapter 4, required cooperation between technical staff from Murcia, the Canary Islands and Genoa for its implementation.

2.5. Synthesis: four complementary references for a single case

The four references presented in this chapter are not interchangeable but complementary, and each illuminates a different dimension of the case study developed in the following chapters. Throsby contributes the vocabulary and tools of the



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economics of culture, necessary for evaluating the efficiency and return on public investment in programmes such as Cultural Reactives, as well as the concept of cultural capital, which allows a distinction to be made between the immediate economic impact of a programme and its cumulative contribution to the cultural fabric of a city.

Bonet contributes the tradition of applied cultural management in the Spanish context and its links with international organisations such as the Council of Europe or UNESCO, which enables the Murcia case to be situated in relation to internationally recognised management standards, and also offers a direct comparison with the Spanish literature on local cultural industry support policies, a field in which Bonet has been a pioneer. Barbieri contributes the critical perspective of cultural rights and inequality, indispensable for not limiting the analysis to an evaluation of effectiveness or innovation, but extending it to an evaluation of distributive justice, and also introduces the classical distinction between cultural democratisation and cultural democracy, essential for locating the Murcia Cultural Model's actual position within this typology. Finally, Hylland et

al. contribute the European comparative contrast that allows us to calibrate whether the findings from the Murcia case are a local singularity or the expression of a broader continental pattern of institutional continuity under a renewed rhetoric of emergency.

The table below summarises the four contributions and their specific application.

Reference	Conceptual contribution	Application to the Murcia case
David Throsby	Economics of culture; concept of cultural capital (tangible and intangible)	Evaluate Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes beyond immediate expenditure, attending to accumulated cultural capital
Lluís Bonet	Applied cultural management; local cultural industry support policies; innovation in cultural management	Situate the Murcia case within the Spanish tradition of local cultural grants and European standards (Council of Europe, UNESCO)
Nicolás Barbieri	Cultural rights; culture as common good; cultural democratisation vs. cultural democracy; cultural inequality	Evaluate equity of access to calls and situate the model within the democratisation/cultural democracy typology
Hylland et al. (2024)	European comparative study; institutional continuity versus pandemic rupture in cultural policy	Assess whether Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes represent genuine innovation or rhetorical intensification of pre-existing instruments

2.6. A note on the methodological choice of these references

One might ask why this book has opted for these four particular references, and not for other equally relevant figures in the discipline, such as François Matarasso, Pier Luigi Sacco, George Yúdice or the contributions of UNESCO itself through its periodic reports on cultural diversity. The answer lies in a criterion of direct relevance to the object of study: Throsby, Bonet, Barbieri and Hylland et al. are not only authors of general prestige in the discipline, but references whose specific analytical categories — cultural capital, applied cultural management of European and Ibero-American inspiration, cultural rights with a perspective of inequality, and comparative pandemic policy research — are directly operational for analysing a case such as Murcia's, characterised simultaneously by a dimension of public investment economics, a dimension of technical management of calls and residencies, a normative dimension of rights and citizen access, and a dimension of European comparative benchmarking.

This choice does not, of course, exhaust all possible readings of the case. An

analysis centred on the urban regeneration dimension might have prioritised the literature on placemaking or creative economy from authors such as Richard Florida; an analysis centred on the digital dimension might have incorporated the literature on digital cultural industries and public streaming platforms. These alternative lines of analysis, which this book has not developed for reasons of length and consistency with its original scope, are incorporated as explicit suggestions in the future research agenda proposed in chapter 6.

2.7. Towards a methodology for evaluating local cultural policies

A final section of this conceptual chapter should be devoted to a question transversal to all four references presented: the methodology for evaluating cultural policies, a field of knowledge in its own right within the discipline of cultural management that connects directly with the questions that will be raised in chapter 5 when analysing the Murcia case. The specialist literature typically distinguishes between process evaluation (how a programme has

been implemented: timelines, procedures, participant satisfaction), output evaluation (what concrete products or activities the programme has generated: number of projects, residencies, budget executed) and impact evaluation (what structural or long-term changes the programme has produced in the cultural, economic or social fabric of its environment).

Applying this tripartition to the Murcia case to be developed in subsequent chapters, a first relevant methodological conclusion can already be anticipated: the public documentation available on Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes is relatively abundant in output indicators (number of projects submitted and selected, budget allocation, number of spaces enabled), but sparse in process indicators (there is no detailed public information on selection procedures, exact assessment criteria or the composition of evaluation committees) and practically non-existent in medium or long-term impact indicators (no follow-up study has been located on the subsequent trajectory of beneficiary projects or artists, nor on the cumulative effect of the programme on the city's cultural and creative

fabric beyond the period of each annual call).

This asymmetry is not exclusive to the Murcia case: the cultural policy evaluation literature has for decades noted a generalised tendency by public administrations to produce and publish output indicators — easy to calculate and politically communicable — at the expense of impact indicators, which are far more costly to obtain because they require longitudinal studies, surveys of beneficiaries years after their participation, or analyses with control groups that are rarely designed in the sphere of local cultural policy. The European evaluation document for Pilot Action 3 itself, despite being the most rigorous source consulted for this book, sits predominantly at the level of process and output evaluation — describing phases, milestones, products generated (manuals, good practice catalogues, audiovisual repositories) — without reaching a strict impact evaluation, confirming that this methodological limitation is not solely attributable to municipal institutional communication, but also affects the level of European technical evaluation.

This methodological reflection connects directly with one of the central findings of chapter 5: the impossibility, with



the sources currently available, of evaluating with precision the equity dimension and the medium-term impact of the Murcia Cultural Model — a limitation that should not be interpreted as a specific criticism of Murcia's municipal management, but as a reflection of a broader structural limitation shared by much of the evaluation of local cultural policies in the European context.

2.8. The translation of concepts: from academic English to Spanish management terminology

A final section of this chapter is worth devoting to an apparently minor but methodologically significant matter of growing relevance in contemporary cultural management: the translation of academic and management concepts from English —

the dominant language in the international literature of the discipline, as Throsby's own work demonstrates — into Spanish, the language in which both this book and most of the Murcia municipal documentation analysed in chapters 3 and 4 are written.

The most relevant instance of this translation dynamic, already anticipated in chapter 3 and developed in greater detail in chapter 4, is the relationship between the English concept "cultural testing tubes", used in the official European evaluation document of Pilot Action 3 (European Urban Initiative, 2021), and the Spanish concept "Tubos de Ensayo" (Cultural Testing Tubes) used in all Murcia municipal documentation. The correspondence between the two terms is not a casual coincidence, but confirms a direct translation relationship: the Murcia concept is not an autonomous local metaphor, but the Spanish version of a concept-action coined at the level of the European Partnership, possibly developed in collaboration between Murcia's technical staff and the general coordinators of the Partnership, since both participated, as recorded in the acknowledgements of the evaluation document itself (European Urban Initiative, 2021), in its final drafting.

This dynamic of translation and terminological adaptation between the English of European governance and the Spanish of Spanish municipal cultural management is not exclusive to the Murcia case: it is a widespread phenomenon throughout the cultural management literature in Spanish, which frequently resorts to calques from English (placemaking, living lab, crowdfunding, the term management itself as applied to cultural management) without there always being a stable terminological consensus in Spanish. For the analysis of the Murcia case developed in subsequent chapters, this terminological question has a direct methodological implication: any researcher wishing to independently verify the claims of this book must bear in mind that searching for primary sources in Spanish (municipal documentation, local press) and in English (European Union documentation, international academic literature) requires the use of different but equivalent search terms — "Tubos de Ensayo" in Spanish, "cultural testing tubes" or "CHIME" in English — a methodological precision that this book has applied systematically in its own documentary research.

CHAPTER 3 | THE MURCIA CULTURAL MODEL: DOCUMENTARY RECONSTRUCTION

This chapter reconstructs, with the greatest possible documentary detail, the institutional architecture of the case, distinguishing precisely between its different components, their chronology and the evolution of their budget allocations, before proceeding, in chapter 5, to their critical analysis in the light of the theoretical framework developed in chapters 1 and 2.

The presentation follows a combined chronological and thematic approach: first the context of origin of the model (2020), then each of its four main components separately — Cultural Reactives, Cultural Testing Tubes, Open Venues and the digital dimension — and finally a summary table providing an overview. This structure reflects a deliberate methodological decision: to treat each programme differently, avoiding

the temptation — present in much of the municipal institutional communication — to present the model as a homogeneous whole, when in reality each of its components responds to a different intervention logic, as will be argued in greater detail in chapter 5.

3.1. Origins: the declaration of culture as an essential activity (2020)

In 2020, faced with the near-total paralysis of the cultural sector brought about by the COVID-19 health crisis, the Municipality of Murcia — under Mayor José Ballesta and with Jesús Pacheco as Councillor for Culture — declared culture an “essential activity”, which was immediately reflected in the municipal measures adopted during the state of emergency, oriented towards

maintaining cultural provision and adapting it to a virtual format for the duration of mobility and capacity restrictions (Ayuntamiento de Murcia, 2021a).

This municipal declaration deserves to be contextualised in its precise temporal sequence. Spain's state of emergency was declared on 14 March 2020, and virtually all in-person cultural activity — theatres, cinemas, museums, festivals, concerts — was suspended from that moment. Murcia's municipal response, materialised in the launch of Cultural Reactives "during the state of emergency" (Servicio de Juventud, Ayuntamiento de Murcia, 2020), therefore falls within a window of immediate emergency response, with the sources consulted not permitting precise determination of how many weeks elapsed between the state of emergency declaration and the effective launch of the programme.

The municipal declaration is temporally framed within the same year in which, as documented in chapter 1, international city networks — notably UCLG — were developing the Rome Charter 2020 on very similar premises: the recognition that culture, despite its formal recognition as a

right since 1948, had not been treated as a first-order priority until its absence became more visible during the lockdowns. There is no documentary evidence of a direct causal relationship between the two processes — that is, there is no record that Murcia took the Rome Charter as an explicit reference for its own declaration, or vice versa — but the chronological and conceptual coincidence between the two phenomena is, in itself, a relevant datum about the intellectual climate in which the category of cultural essentiality was being forged simultaneously at both local and international level.

3.2. Cultural Reactives

Cultural Reactives is the strategic municipal programme for the promotion of artistic and creative production launched by the Municipality of Murcia during the state of emergency of 2020. In its first call, it had an allocation exceeding 700,000 euros and was structured around nine action lines or public calls that allowed the immediate commissioning of cultural projects, including the possibility of advance payments to facilitate creative activity from the outset

(Servicio de Juventud, Ayuntamiento de Murcia, 2020).

It is worth dwelling on this last element — advance payments — because it constitutes, from an administrative management perspective, a not insignificant procedural innovation within the Spanish tradition of public cultural grants, generally characterised by processing, justification and payment timelines that can extend for months or even years after the execution of the funded project. The introduction of advance payments responds directly to the urgent liquidity needs facing the cultural sector in 2020, and constitutes one of the programme elements that can best be described as a genuine adaptation — albeit modest in scope — to the exceptional circumstances of the moment, rather than a mere continuation of the classic grant instrument.

796 projects were submitted across those nine lines, of which 126 were selected, distributed across disciplines such as gastronomy, the performing arts, the visual arts, audiovisual and digital production, education and cultural mediation (murcia.com, 2020). The resulting selection rate — around 16% of submitted proposals — is a significant

datum for any analysis of competitiveness and access to the call: for every six projects submitted, only one was ultimately funded, suggesting a level of demand considerably higher than the available budget, and raising — though the sources consulted do not permit resolution of this — the question of how many of the 670 unselected projects corresponded to collectives or artists in more precarious situations, a matter directly connected to Barbieri's equity perspective developed in chapter 2.

Among the projects selected in this first call were initiatives for the recovery of local memory, such as a documentary about the Murcian vegetable garden (huerta) or an audiovisual compilation of the traditional milkman's craft, demonstrating that the programme was not limited to contemporary artistic production but also incorporated a dimension of intangible heritage and collective memory (murcia.com, 2020). This heritage dimension is significant because it connects directly with the notion of intangible cultural capital developed by Throsby (1999, 2003) and presented in chapter 2: these projects do not necessarily generate an immediate economic return, but contribute



to the accumulation of a documentary and testimonial heritage that, had it not been funded at that specific moment — with elderly protagonists whose oral testimony was at risk of being irrecoverably lost — could not subsequently have been recovered.

In its second annual call, developed in 2021 under the “Murcia Shouts Culture” communication campaign, the programme expanded its allocation to one million euros and restructured into eleven lines of work: Artillery Barracks Creativity, Artillery Barracks Gastronomy, Artillery Barracks Children’s Mediation, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Photography/Architecture/Design, Murcia in the Street Installations, Audiovisual and Digital Production, Traditional Culture and Folklore, Historical/Medieval/Three Cultures Murcia, and Landscape/City/Market Garden/Water (Murcia Plaza, 2021). The budgetary increase — from 700,000 euros to one million, a rise of more than 40% — and the expansion of the number of lines — from nine to eleven — suggest a consolidation of the programme beyond its initial emergency response function, constituting a first indicator, to be revisited in chapter 5, that Cultural Reactives transcended its character as a cyclical

measure to become a structural instrument of municipal cultural policy.

3.3. Cultural Testing Tubes

Cultural Testing Tubes is a cultural research and production residency programme that explicitly distinguishes itself from the traditional artistic residency format: it allows ideas and prototypes of innovative proposals in the field of culture to be tested, with particular attention to those that may be scalable, replicable or exportable to other urban contexts (murcia.com, 2021a). This conceptual distinction from the classical artistic residency — which is normally oriented towards the completion of a specific work within a set period — is one of the elements that, as will be argued in chapter 5, enables Cultural Testing Tubes to be considered the component of the Murcia model with the greatest potential for genuine innovation compared to traditional instruments of local cultural policy.

The 2021 call made available to creators more than one hundred residencies distributed across sixty-seven cultural spaces in the city — including the Artillery Barracks

(Cuartel de Artillería), the Teatro Romea, the Teatro Circo Murcia, the Palacio Almodí, the Museo Ramón Gaya, the Museo de la Ciudad and the Municipal Archive — offering participants access to co-working space equipped with wifi, furniture and lighting, financial support of up to 2,500 euros per project, technical assistance and audiovisual creation materials, in stays of up to six months' duration (Instituto de la Juventud [Injuve], 2021; murcia.com, 2021a).

The geographical dispersal of the offer — sixty-seven distinct spaces distributed across the entire urban and institutional fabric of the city, from historic museums to municipal archives — is a significant datum from the perspective of heritage management: the programme is not limited to enabling newly-built spaces for contemporary creation, but actively draws on the city's pre-existing built heritage, consistent with one of the thematic axes of the European Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage analysed in chapter 4: the transformation, adaptive reuse and urban reconversion of existing heritage.

The programme was open to any artistic or creative discipline: performing

arts, music, visual arts, audiovisual projects, photography, poetry or literature, gastronomy, urban innovation, education and mediation, tradition and folklore, neighbourhood projects, or technology and robotics, also admitting research, publication, cataloguing and compilation projects, provided their interest within the philosophy of the call was justified (murcia.com, 2021a). In the words of the Councillor for Culture himself, Jesús Pacheco, the objective was to “make the commitment that [...] the ideal conditions are created to promote both the production and the dissemination of contemporary creation and culture” (murcia.com, 2021a).

This disciplinary breadth — encompassing traditional performing arts through to technology and robotics — is consistent with the definition that the European evaluation document of Pilot Action 3 itself provides of “CHIME Hubs”, described as spaces open to any form of culture or to specific productions, so that a city or region can prepare and equip multiple hubs, each with its own thematic focus: visual arts, digital, audiovisual, painting, sculpture, music, dance, film, lighting, theatre, among

others (European Urban Initiative, 2021). This textual correspondence between the municipal and European documentation confirms that Cultural Testing Tubes is not an autonomous local label, but the Murcia implementation of the European concept-action CHIME, a matter developed in greater depth in chapter 4.

More than one hundred projects were submitted in the first call of the 2022 edition, which led the Department of Culture to work on a revision of the terms of both Cultural Testing Tubes and Cultural Reactives in response to demands raised by participating collectives and artists (murcia.com, 2022). The incoming Councillor for Culture, Tourism and Sport, Pedro García Rex, valued the resolution of this call as one that would “produce multiple benefits for the cultural landscape of the city, strengthening artistic production and culture in the municipality and increasing [...] the offer both for citizens and for tourists”, and added that it would allow “an immediate regeneration of the programming of the different centres” and would promote “greater citizen participation, encouraging intergenerational

and intercultural coexistence” (murcia.com, 2022).

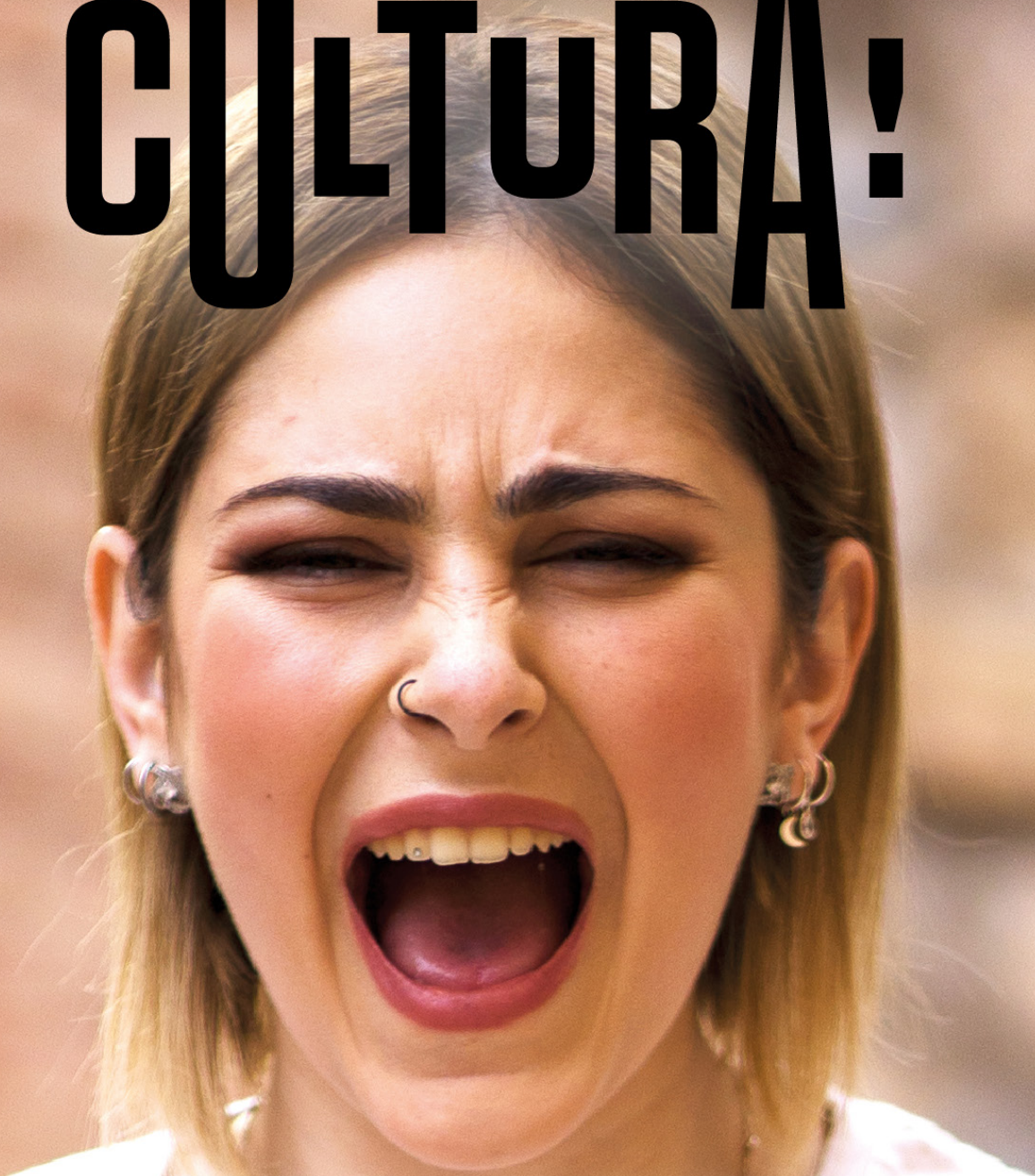
3.4. Open Venues and the fourth axis of the model

The “Murcia Shouts Culture” campaign, presented in 2021 by Mayor José Ballesta together with Councillor Jesús Pacheco at the Artillery Barracks, articulated the municipal cultural model around four major projects: Cultural Reactives, Cultural Testing Tubes, Open Venues — which aims to make culture more accessible by bringing it to the city’s streets and squares — and the production of digital content, directed at bringing culture into every household (Murcia Plaza, 2021).

Of the four axes of the model, Open Venues is paradoxically the one with the least documentary development in the sources consulted for this book, which is in itself a relevant finding: while Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes have generated specific detailed documentation — call terms, lists of selected projects and, in the case of Cultural Testing Tubes, an official European

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evaluation document — Open Venues appears systematically mentioned as part of the “Murcia Shouts Culture” campaign, but without equivalent documentary development in the publicly available sources. This documentary asymmetry suggests, without it being possible to state this with certainty, that Open Venues may have a more programmatic and communicative nature — the generic opening of spaces and the activation of public space — than the structured and evaluable public call nature that characterises the other two programmes.

Necessary terminological clarification

In none of the sources consulted for this book — institutional press, official pages of the Department of Culture, European Urban Agenda documentation — has any device or programme called “mirror rooms” been found. The fourth axis of the model, consistently present in all the reviewed documentation, is called “Open Venues” (Salas Abiertas). The phonetic similarity between the two expressions suggests a transcription error, and any reader who has come to this book seeking information about “mirror rooms” is recommended to verify the original source of that term before employing it in an academic work.

3.5. OCULTO.TV: the digital dimension of the model

The fourth axis of the model — digital content production — materialised in OCULTO.TV, an audiovisual streaming platform launched by the Municipality of Murcia that exhibits original productions online, organised in thematic channels such as “Murcia Medieval”, “Murcian Gastronomy”, the IBAFF film festival, and the “Cultural Reactives” channel itself, dedicated to promoting and disseminating the cultural projects awarded through public calls (UserCentriCities, s.f.).

According to the documentation of the European UserCentriCities network, with this platform Murcia became the first Spanish city to have a tool providing direct access to cultural content not available on other commercial platforms, with the declared objective of giving visibility to local artists and creators and simultaneously bringing culture into every household, especially in contexts of physical restriction such as those experienced during the pandemic (UserCentriCities, s.f.). The platform also features content available

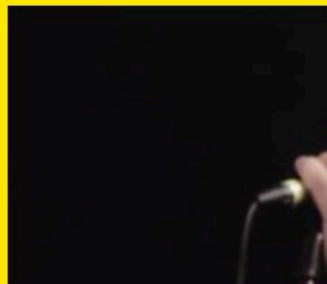
MÚSICA

MAESTRO ESPADA 'MURCIANA'

JAVIER LARA, 2022 - 2 MIN

Directo del single 'Murciana'. Una composición original inspirada por las lecturas del cancionero panocho....

VER AHORA ▶



NOVEDADES

OTROS

Todos los públicos

JURADO POPULAR IBAFF13

2023 - 2 min

CINE

Todos los públicos

INAUGURACIÓN IBAFF13

2023 - 1 min

OTROS

Todos los públicos

TALLER INFANTIL SONORIZACION

IBAFF, 2023 - 1 min

for a limited period of time — a year, a few days or even a few hours — as well as live broadcasts and streaming content, suggesting a management model inspired by commercial streaming platforms but applied to an exclusively locally-produced catalogue under public ownership or funding.

It is pertinent, in light of chapter 1, to recall here the finding by Hylland et al. (2024) on the absence of a general acceleration of national digital cultural policies across Europe during the pandemic. The existence of OCULTO.TV does not necessarily contradict that finding — which refers to a general tendency across seven European countries, not to the absence of any specific digital initiative — but it does invite the question, as posed in chapter 5, whether the platform represented a structural and sustained transformation of Murcia's digital cultural policy, or whether it was, as the general pattern detected by comparative literature suggests, a cyclical response whose intensity and relative priority within the overall municipal cultural model would need to be verified with post-2022 data that fall outside the documentary scope of this book.

3.6. Summary of the Murcia Cultural Model

Programme	Nature	Key data
Cultural Reactives	Cultural production grants	700,000 € (2020) → 1,000,000 € (2021); 796 projects submitted / 126 selected in the first call
Cultural Testing Tubes	Research/production residencies	100+ residencies across 67 spaces; up to €2,500 per project; stays of up to 6 months
Open Venues	Opening spaces to citizens	Bringing culture to the city's streets and squares
Digital content (OCULTO.TV)	Cultural streaming platform	First platform of its kind in a Spanish city; thematic channels by programme line

3.7. Institutional actors and administrative governance of the model

One further element of documentary reconstruction worth incorporating into this chapter is that of the specific institutional actors who piloted the Murcia Cultural Model during the period analysed, since the precise identification of political and technical officers is relevant to any subsequent research that might require contacting primary sources or requesting additional unpublished documentation.

During the launch of Cultural Reactives and the first phase of Cultural Testing Tubes (2020-2021), political responsibility for the Department of Culture rested with Councillor Jesús Pacheco, under Mayor José Ballesta (Murcia Plaza, 2021; murcia.com, 2021a). In the subsequent phase, corresponding to the 2022 call for Cultural Testing Tubes, responsibility had passed to Pedro García Rex, identified in the sources as Councillor for Culture, Tourism and Sport (murcia.com, 2022), indicating a reorganisation of municipal competences — the incorporation of tourism and sport into the same portfolio — between the launch phase and the consolidation phase

of the model.

The European evaluation document for Pilot Action 3 identifies, in its acknowledgements section, a broader group of people with direct technical responsibility for programme implementation: Kasper van Hout and Mercedes Hernández Martínez, both identified as Municipality of Murcia staff, together with Jesús de la Peña Sevilla, also from the Municipality of Murcia; Christian Jacques Perazzone, from the Regional Government of the Canary Islands; and Mónica Bocchiardo and Gianluca Saba, from the Municipality of Genoa (European Urban Initiative, 2021). This information, little visible in press documentation but present in the European technical document, enables partial reconstruction of the multi-level technical team — municipal, regional and transnational — that effectively sustained the implementation of Cultural Testing Tubes beyond the political responsibility of the councillorship.

The overall coordination of the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage, for its part, fell to Jan Schultheiß, Sandra Gizdulich and Giovanni Pineschi (European Urban Initiative, 2021), whose accounts of

the general functioning of the Partnership — including the already-mentioned anecdote about the unrealised project from Kazanlak — have been collected in an interview published by the European Urban Initiative itself (s.f.-b) and constitute, as noted, a valuable source of qualitative context about the real functioning, with its achievements and its limitations, of the entire Partnership beyond the specific Murcia case.

3.8. The Murcia Cultural Model in the context of Spanish municipal cultural policies

To avoid presenting the Murcia case in isolation, it is useful to situate it briefly within the broader context of Spanish municipal cultural policies during the period analysed. Spain has a long tradition of public cultural grants at municipal level, typically articulated through cultural departments with promotional competences, management of their own cultural facilities (libraries, cultural centres, municipal theatres) and organisation of direct cultural programming (festivals, concert series, exhibitions). The instrument of

public calls for cultural creation grants, such as those underpinning Cultural Reactives, is extremely common in this context, present in virtually all Spanish municipalities of medium and large size, albeit with very variable allocations, criteria and procedures depending on the political tradition and budgetary capacity of each municipality.

What distinguishes the Murcia case within this common landscape is therefore not the existence of a cultural grant call — a widely used instrument — but the combination of three elements that together are less common: first, the introduction of advance payments as an administrative streamlining mechanism in the specific context of the pandemic; second, the parallel development of a research residency programme with an explicit living lab vocation (Cultural Testing Tubes), distinct in its logic from the production grant programme (Cultural Reactives); and third, the achievement of a verified leadership role in a pilot action of a Thematic Partnership of the EU Urban Agenda, an institutional visibility achievement that the vast majority of Spanish municipalities of comparable size to Murcia have not attained during the same

period.

This combination of elements places the Murcia case in a relatively singular position within the Spanish landscape of pandemic and post-pandemic municipal cultural policies, which partly justifies the interest of devoting a monographic case study to it such as this book constitutes, without this necessarily implying that the Murcia model is superior, in absolute terms, to other Spanish municipal experiences from the same period that this book has not been able to review comparatively, as that would fall outside its documentary scope.

3.9. Acknowledged documentary limitations of this chapter

It is proper to academic rigour to acknowledge explicitly the limitations of one's own research, and this chapter is no exception. First, information about Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes comes predominantly from institutional press and municipal communication sources (murcia.com, Murcia Plaza, the official municipal website), without it having been possible to access the full legal text of the call terms,

the minutes of selection committees, or the detailed economic report of budget execution year by year. This limitation directly affects the possibility of independently verifying figures such as the 16% selection rate mentioned in section 3.2, which is based on data published by the institutional press source consulted and not on an official call resolution document.

Second, as already noted in section 3.4, the documentation available on Open Venues is appreciably sparser than that available on the other two programmes, making it impossible to provide the reader with the same level of chronological, budgetary and procedural detail for this component of the model. Third, information about the evolution of the model beyond 2022 — the most recent year of the sources consulted for this book — has not been able to be incorporated, which limits this chapter's capacity to offer an assessment of the trajectory of consolidation, stagnation or reformulation of the model in more recent years, including the period 2023-2026, immediately preceding the date of preparation of this book.

These limitations do not invalidate the value of the analysis developed in this

chapter, which has been built throughout on verifiable and precisely cited sources, but they should be borne in mind by the reader when extrapolating the conclusions of this book to the current situation of the Murcia Cultural Model, which has very likely continued to evolve since the date of the most recent sources consulted.

3.10. Murcia as a city: urban and cultural context of the model

To fully understand the scope of a programme such as Cultural Testing Tubes, with its sixty-seven spaces distributed across the city, it is useful to briefly recall some features of the urban and cultural context of Murcia in which the model is embedded. Murcia is the capital of the Region of Murcia, one of the seventeen autonomous communities of Spain, and constitutes, by population, one of the main municipalities of the south-eastern Spanish peninsula, with a historic centre of notable heritage richness that combines traces of the different phases of its urban history: Roman, Andalusian, medieval Christian and Baroque.

This historical stratification explains

the presence, among the spaces enabled for Cultural Testing Tubes mentioned in section 3.3, of facilities of such different natures as the Artillery Barracks (Cuartel de Artillería) — a former military installation converted into a cultural space, a paradigmatic example of the adaptive reuse of heritage that constitutes one of the thematic axes of the European Partnership analysed in chapter 4 — the Teatro Romea and the Teatro Circo Murcia — both nineteenth-century buildings with a bourgeois theatrical tradition — the Palacio Almodí — a former municipal granary building, today converted into a cultural centre — or the Museo Ramón Gaya — dedicated to the work of the Murcian painter of the same name, one of the most internationally recognised artistic figures of local origin.

The reference to the Murcian market garden (huerta), mentioned in section 3.2 in connection with one of the projects selected in the first Cultural Reactives call, points to another element of local cultural identity: the historic irrigation and agricultural cultivation system that has traditionally shaped the peri-urban landscape of Murcia, and constitutes a first-order element of intangible cultural and landscape heritage for local identity,



consistent with the inclusion of a specific line dedicated to “Landscape/City/Market Garden/Water” in the second 2021 Cultural Reactives call (Murcia Plaza, 2021), also mentioned in section 3.2.

This brief urban and cultural contextualisation note does not seek to substitute a proper urban planning or local history study, which clearly exceeds the purpose of this book, but enables readers not familiar with Murcia to better understand why the design of the municipal Cultural Model

has given such weight, in its various call lines, to the recovery of memory, tradition and local identity heritage, alongside the lines more oriented towards contemporary artistic creation in the strict sense.

3.11. Closing comparison: two intervention logics within a single model

Before turning to chapter 4, devoted to the European dimension of the case, it is useful to close this chapter with an explicit

comparative synthesis between the two best-documented components of the Murcia Cultural Model — Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes — which will serve as a direct basis for the critical analysis developed in chapter 5.

Cultural Reactives is, above all, an instrument for the direct funding of cultural production already planned by the applicant: the artist or collective submits a project with a result more or less defined in advance (a documentary, an exhibition, a stage piece), and the call selects, from among the submitted proposals, those that will receive funding for their execution. Its intervention logic is therefore fundamentally one of induced demand: the programme does not define in advance what is to be produced, but reacts to proposals that the cultural sector itself spontaneously submits to the call, within the established thematic lines.

Cultural Testing Tubes, by contrast, is an instrument for enabling conditions for experimentation, with a deliberately more open and uncertain outcome: the programme does not directly fund the production of a finished work, but provides space, time, technical assistance and a capped financial

grant for the creator to develop a research process whose final result — including failure, as documented in section 5.1 — is not predetermined at the time of selection. Its intervention logic is therefore one of process enablement rather than output funding.

This distinction, to be developed in greater analytical depth in chapter 5, allows us to anticipate at this point a first relevant conclusion: the Murcia Cultural Model is not, as its institutional presentation under joint campaign umbrellas such as “Murcia Shouts Culture” might suggest, a single programme with a homogeneous intervention logic, but the deliberate combination of (at least) two complementary but analytically distinct cultural intervention logics, whose combination — output funding plus process enablement — constitutes, in itself, one of the most interesting design characteristics of the model from the perspective of comparative cultural management, regardless of whatever final judgement is formed about its degree of innovation or continuity with pre-existing instruments, a question to be addressed in depth in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4 | THE EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK: THE EU URBAN AGENDA AND THE PARTNERSHIP ON CULTURE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

This chapter reconstructs, with the same level of documentary rigour as the preceding chapter, the European institutional framework within which the Murcia case is embedded, and examines with analytical honesty the real role of Berlin and Florence in that framework, distinguishing between the municipal divulgative narrative and what the official European primary sources permit to be verified.

This chapter is, together with the next, the one that provides the most distinctive value of this book relative to the institutional documentation publicly available about the Murcia case: while municipal and regional press tends to present the European

dimension of the model in an aggregate and laudatory manner, the systematic cross-referencing of official European sources — documents of the European Commission, of the European Urban Initiative and of urban governance platforms such as FUTURIUM — allows a much more nuanced reconstruction of the real position of Murcia, and of other cities such as Berlin and Florence, within the European institutional structure.

4.1. The EU Urban Agenda

The EU Urban Agenda (EUUA) was launched in May 2016 through the Pact of Amsterdam, ratified by the ministers

responsible for urban affairs of the member states, and confirmed as a permanent initiative in November 2021 with the Ljubljana Pact (European Commission, s.f.). It constitutes a new form of multi-level and multi-actor cooperation whose objective is to strengthen the urban dimension of Union policies, addressing the problems faced by cities through the creation of Thematic Partnerships between the Commission, national ministries, urban authorities and other stakeholders (European Commission, s.f.).

It is relevant to note that the EU Urban Agenda does not arise in a vacuum, but as a specific contribution by the European Union to a broader global urban governance process: the New Urban Agenda adopted by the United Nations at the Habitat III conference held in Quito in October 2016 (CIDOB, s.f.). The Pact of Amsterdam itself, approved months before the Quito conference, is understood in specialist literature as an anticipatory European contribution to that global framework, situating European urban cultural governance — and by extension the Murcia case — within a multi-level governance architecture that connects the local, the European and the UN global

level, in line with the process of localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals also mentioned in chapter 1 (CIDOB, s.f.).

The first four coalitions of the EU Urban Agenda were launched on a pilot basis in 2016, formed around the challenges of air quality, housing, urban poverty and inclusion of migrants and refugees (IDGL-UAM, 2019). Spain's participation in these pioneering partnerships was, according to the available academic documentation, through the state as a member in the Urban Poverty partnership, and through the Barcelona City Council in that on Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees (IDGL-UAM, 2019). In 2018 Spanish participation expanded to the partnerships on Energy Transition (through Nasuvinsa, a Navarrese Government body), Sustainable Use of Land (through the Institut Català del Sòl) and Climate Adaptation (through the Barcelona Provincial Council); and already in 2019, to those on Security in Public Spaces (coordinated by the Madrid City Council) and Culture/Cultural Heritage (IDGL-UAM, 2019).

This detailed chronology of Spanish participation in the EU Urban Agenda, prior and broader than the Murcia case, enables the Partnership on Culture and

Cultural Heritage to be contextualised within a broader Spanish strategy of urban governance internationalisation, in which different regional and local administrations — Catalonia, Madrid, the Canary Islands, Navarre and, later, Murcia — have progressively joined different thematic partnerships according to their public policy priorities. The academic literature consulted notes, in this regard, that Catalan actors have been earlier and more active at European level than other Spanish territories in the overall Urban Agenda (IDGL-UAM, 2019), situating Murcia's subsequent incorporation into the Culture Partnership in a position of relative novelty within the Spanish landscape of urban governance internationalisation.

In the 2021-2027 programming period, the operational development of the Urban Agenda is supported by the European Urban Initiative (EUI) (Ministerio de Vivienda y Agenda Urbana, s.f.). Its main implementation instrument is Thematic Partnerships, a mechanism defined by the EUI itself as the key piece within the Urban Agenda, formed by representatives of several member states and different levels of government and types of actor, with the function of identifying

problems and proposing action plans with solutions oriented towards better regulation, better funding and better knowledge sharing (European Urban Initiative, s.f.-a). A structural characteristic of these Partnerships highlighted by the EUI is that relationships between their members are horizontal: cities participate on an equal formal footing with the European Commission or national governments, a distinctive multi-level governance feature uncommon in other European institutional frameworks, which are generally more hierarchical (IDGL-UAM, 2019).

4.2. The Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage: composition and chronology

The Partnership on Culture/Cultural Heritage was formally created in November 2018 within the EU Urban Agenda, with the objective of identifying and promoting actions that improve legislation, financial capacity and knowledge transfer in the field of culture and cultural heritage at European level (European Commission/FUTURIUM, s.f.-a). The Partnership brings together more than twenty partners, including member states, regional

bodies, cities, the European Commission and European stakeholder organisations, and is co-coordinated by Germany — through the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community, with the support of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) — and Italy — through the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, together with the Italian Agency for Territorial Cohesion (European Commission/FUTURIUM, s.f.-a).

The kick-off meeting of the Partnership was held in Berlin in February 2019, followed by subsequent meetings in Brussels, Porto, Rome and the Canary Islands, among other venues (European Commission/FUTURIUM, s.f.-b). In autumn 2019 the Partnership completed its Orientation Paper, which established its main thematic lines: cultural tourism; creative and cultural industries; transformation, adaptive reuse and urban reconversion; financial sustainability and funding; resilience of cultural and natural heritage; integrated and interdisciplinary governance approaches; and cultural services and culture for inclusive cities (European Commission/FUTURIUM, s.f.-a). The Orientation Paper was presented to

the Directors General responsible for Urban Affairs (DGUM) in Helsinki in October 2019 for formal adoption (European Commission/FUTURIUM, s.f.-d).

A complementary source — the interview published by the European Urban Initiative itself with the Partnership coordinators, Jan Schultheiß and Sandra Gizdulich — offers a perspective of overall assessment of the results achieved at different levels, though without entering into the detail of each specific pilot action (European Urban Initiative, s.f.-b). This same interview includes a revealing anecdote about the real limitations of implementing the Action Plan: the Bulgarian municipality of Kazanlak, a Partnership member, had wished to design and promote an integrated and sustainable plan dedicated to roses — a cultural and economic symbol of the locality — but the coordinators explicitly acknowledge that it was not possible to develop a pilot project for that proposal (European Urban Initiative, s.f.-b). This testimony is valuable because it qualifies the image of generalised success often projected by the Partnership as a whole: not all cities or municipalities managed

to translate their cultural priorities into an effectively implemented pilot action, which makes it more significant, by contrast, that Murcia did succeed in leading at least one complete and documented pilot action.

In November 2020 the Partnership published its Final Action Plan, structured around eleven pilot actions oriented towards facilitating the implementation of existing European strategies in and for cities, as well as enabling them to express their needs at Union level (European Commission/FUTURIUM, s.f.-c). The German Federal Ministry of the Interior itself noted, in its official press release on the presentation of the Action Plan, that approximately 250 experts participated in the discussion of a more heritage-sensitive approach for European cities and towns (BMI, 2020), giving an idea of the scale of technical and institutional mobilisation involved in the preparation of this document. The eleven actions, in their official English denominations, are as follows (European Commission/FUTURIUM, s.f.-c):

- > **Action 1:** Cultural tourism and sharing economy
- > **Action 2:** Street Invasion, Atomisation

and Cultural Reactivation (Cultural Reactives)

> **Action 3:** Cultural Hubs for Innovation, Modernisation and Enhancement (CHIME) (Cultural Testing Tubes)

> **Action 4:** Collaborative management for the adaptation and reuse of spaces and buildings

> **Action 5:** Integrated local libraries as community anchors

> **Action 6:** Strategic urban cultural plan

> **Action 7:** Tourism data and heritage

> **Action 8:** Resilience principles for natural and cultural heritage risk management

> **Action 9:** Observation and monitoring of climate change impact on cultural heritage

> **Action 10:** Dissonant and difficult heritage

> **Action 11:** Cultural services for social inclusion

4.3. Murcia as action leader: documentary verification

Unlike much of the information available only through municipal press, in the case of Pilot Action 3 (CHIME) there exists

an official evaluation document — a booklet published by the European Urban Initiative in November 2021, covering the implementation period 2018-2021 — that permits precise verification of the leadership structure of the action (European Urban Initiative, 2021). This type of document, produced directly by the European institution responsible for monitoring the Partnership and not by the Municipality of Murcia itself, constitutes the most reliable source among those that could be located for this book, precisely because it represents an independent third-party evaluation.

According to that document, the leadership of Pilot Action 3 (CHIME) fell to the Municipality of Murcia (Spain), with the Government of the Canary Islands (through its Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport) and the Municipality of Genoa (Italy) as members of the action group, counting also on the University of Murcia as a collaborating body (European Urban Initiative, 2021). The document itself translates the local concept of “Tubos de Ensayo” into European institutional English as “cultural testing tubes”, confirming that the Murcia terminology is not an autonomous local metaphor but the Spanish

version of a concept-action coined at the level of the European Partnership (European Urban Initiative, 2021).

The cultural testing tubes enable the self-generation of employment by accepting projects to be ‘tested’ and providing tools, guidance and support. (European Urban Initiative, 2021, p. 6)

The evaluation document also details the starting problem that Pilot Action 3 sought to address at European level, in terms worth reproducing precisely because they conceptually frame the entire programme design: across Europe there is a lack of physical spaces to experiment with cultural creation and artistic expression, a problem concentrated predominantly in urban centres and gentrified neighbourhoods, which also constitutes an obstacle to job creation within and around the cultural and creative industries (European Urban Initiative, 2021). The document adds that the growing vulnerability of freelance artists, many of them in precarious working conditions, combines with the need for space to be creative, and the lack of institutional or regulatory

frameworks to support entrepreneurship, further impeding their cultural production — a situation which, according to the document itself, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated further (European Urban Initiative, 2021).

This description of the starting problem, formulated in general terms for the entirety of the European pilot action rather than specifically for Murcia, is methodologically valuable because it enables verification that the diagnosis underpinning Cultural Testing Tubes was not an exclusively municipal elaboration, but the result of a shared diagnosis at the level of the European Partnership about the structural precariousness of the cultural and creative sector in European cities, aggravated — but not originated — by the pandemic.

The same document certifies that the full list of official Partnership members — not of Pilot Action 3 specifically — includes, among others, Cyprus, France, Spain, Greece, the Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region, the Intermunicipal Community of the Coimbra Region, the municipality of Kazanlak, the Flemish Heritage of the Flanders Region, the Dutch Federation of Cultural Heritage Cities, the City of

Katowice, the municipality of Alba Iulia, the municipality of Nagykanizsa, the Office of the Marshal of the Silesian Voivodeship, the City of Berlin, the Government of the Canary Islands, the Bordeaux Metropolis, the City of Espoo, the City Council of Jurmala, the City Council of Úbeda, the City of Florence, the European Commission (through several directorates-general), the European Committee of the Regions, the European Investment Bank, ICLEI, the Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage, Eurocities and URBACT (European Urban Initiative, 2021). This exhaustive enumeration, taken from the final pages of the evaluation document, is of great value to this book precisely because it allows, for the first time in the available literature on the case, a precise distinction between the members of the general Partnership and the specific members of the group that led Pilot Action 3, a distinction developed in the following section.

4.4. Berlin and Florence: clarifying their actual role

It is at this point that a clarification is indispensable that the Murcia institutional



Murcia

**is awarded with the
URBACT Good Practice label
for Cultural Reactives**

press does not always formulate precisely. Municipal sources describe Murcia as a leading city “jalongside major European cities, such as Berlin and Florence” (cuarteldeartilleria.es, 2021), which may suggest to the non-specialist reader an equivalence of roles between the three cities. However, the official evaluation document of Pilot Action 3 places Berlin and Florence in the category of members of the general Partnership, while the formal and verified leadership of that pilot action belongs exclusively to the Municipality of Murcia (European Urban Initiative, 2021). It is worth reproducing exactly the original formulation of the municipal source so that the reader can appreciate for themselves the rhetorical nuance employed: the institutional news item states that “of the total of 11 pilot actions comprising the Final Action Plan, four pilot actions are led by cities: Murcia, Berlin, Florence”, adding that “five actions are led by the Ministry coordinators” (murcia.com, 2021b). This formulation is, in itself, more nuanced than the simplified version “alongside Berlin and Florence” that appears in other press headlines: it acknowledges that there are four actions led by cities as a whole, without expressly stating that the three cities

lead the same action or hold an identical status within the Partnership. However, neither this more nuanced formulation nor the more simplified versions circulating in other media identify precisely which of the eleven actions each of those three cities leads, leaving the reader without the information necessary to verify the claim independently — a limitation that only the official evaluation document for Pilot Action 3 allows to be partially addressed, and only for the Murcia case.

There is also an additional academic source — from a university analysis of European multi-level governance — that further nuances the original composition of the Partnership: Spanish participation in its constitutive phase (2018-2019) is described as having been through the Canary Islands Autonomous Community and the city of Úbeda, with no mention of Murcia at that founding moment (IDGL-UAM, 2019). This is consistent with the hypothesis that Murcia’s leading involvement came in a later phase, coinciding with the implementation of the pilot actions of the Final Action Plan approved in 2020-2021, rather than with the original constitution of the Partnership in 2018.

Methodological conclusion of this section

Berlin hosted the institutional kick-off meeting of the Partnership (a symbolic and historical venue) and appears, together with Florence, as a member of the general Partnership in the official evaluation document of Pilot Action 3. No source consulted documents that Berlin or Florence lead their own pilot action equivalent, in institutional status, to the one led by Murcia. It is therefore not methodologically sound to present the three cities as parallel cases of programme leadership: Murcia holds, according to the documentary evidence available, a verified leadership position in at least one pilot action (CHIME/Cultural Testing Tubes), while the role of Berlin and Florence, with the information currently accessible, should be described as that of relevant partners within the broader institutional framework. It cannot be ruled out that Berlin or Florence lead one of the other nine actions of the Final Action Plan, but none of the sources consulted for this book confirm this, so any such claim would need to be verified against the specific evaluation documents of each of those actions, equivalent to the one consulted for Pilot Action 3.

4.5. Berlin and Florence as cultural policy contexts: a qualitative approach

Although a comparison of equivalent programmes cannot be established, it is

legitimate and enriching for a book on cultural management to briefly situate the cultural policy tradition of both cities, insofar as it helps to understand what they bring to the Partnership beyond their formal membership, and why their participation, even if it does not equate to leadership of a pilot action, is not analytically irrelevant.

Berlin has one of the densest and most internationally recognised cultural scenes in Europe: it is home to Museum Island, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and to the Berlinale, considered the largest film festival by audience numbers in the world; it houses more than three hundred art galleries and has been designated a UNESCO City of Design, as well as being home to more than a thousand audiovisual and television production companies, with around three hundred national and international co-productions filmed annually in the region (Wikipedia, s.f.-b). This density of cultural infrastructure explains its symbolic suitability as the venue for the Partnership's launch meeting, though this should not be conflated with formal leadership of a pilot action.

The expansion of Berlin's cultural role has been further reinforced by the relocation

of numerous entertainment companies that, since 2000, decided to move their headquarters and main studios to the banks of the River Spree (Wikipedia, s.f.-b), a process of cultural urban regeneration that offers an interesting comparative counterpoint to the logic of built heritage reuse that characterises Cultural Testing Tubes in Murcia: while Berlin has gravitated towards attracting large-scale creative industries to former industrial areas along the river, Murcia has opted for a strategy of distributed activation of small pre-existing heritage spaces — museums, historic archives, historic theatres — spread across the city's historic centre.

Florence, for its part, brings to the Partnership a heritage management tradition centred on the historic-artistic heritage of the Renaissance, with a city model frequently described as an “open-air museum”, making it an obligatory reference for any European discussion on cultural tourism, heritage sustainability and management of tourist flows in saturated historic centres — precisely two of the seven original thematic axes of the Partnership (cultural tourism and resilience of cultural and natural heritage) — though neither in this case do the sources consulted

document a pilot action leadership equivalent to Murcia's.

The complementarity between the three urban profiles — Murcia as a medium-sized city with diverse historical-cultural heritage but without Berlin's museum density or Florence's tourist-heritage centrality; Berlin as a major metropolis of contemporary creative industries; and Florence as a European paradigm of management of historic heritage saturated by tourism — in fact illustrates the very operating logic of a Thematic Partnership of the EU Urban Agenda: it is not that all member cities share the same profile or the same type of intervention, but that they contribute, from their heterogeneous urban realities, complementary perspectives on the same set of challenges — in this case, the relationship between culture, heritage and sustainable urban development — which are then synthesised in the orientation documents and common action plans.

4.6. The other pilot actions of the Final Action Plan: a reference map

Although this book focuses on Pilot Action 3 (CHIME), as the only one for which

a detailed official evaluation document has been located, it is useful to offer the reader a brief contextualisation of the remaining actions of the Final Action Plan, both to properly situate Murcia's relative position within the Partnership as a whole and to guide future research directions, as will be proposed in chapter 6.

Pilot Action 1 (regulation of sharing economy phenomena in the cultural tourism sector) addresses a problem of great relevance for cities with strong tourist pressure on historic heritage, such as Florence, suggesting a possible — though not documentarily verified in the framework of this book — thematic connection between that city's heritage-tourism profile and this specific action of the Plan. Pilot Action 4 (collaborative management for the adaptation and reuse of spaces and buildings) has a direct thematic relationship with the very logic of Cultural Testing Tubes, centred on the reuse of existing heritage spaces, suggesting a methodological complementarity between the two actions that would merit in-depth exploration in future research.

Pilot Actions 8, 9 and 10 (principles of resilience against heritage risks,

observatory on climate change and heritage, and approaches to dissonant heritage, respectively) are situated on a different thematic terrain from that occupied by Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes, more centred on the physical conservation of heritage and its environmental and conflicting memory dimensions, than on the promotion of contemporary cultural production, confirming that the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage covers a considerably broader thematic spectrum than that represented by the two specific actions in which Murcia holds a verified leadership role.

Acknowledged documentary limitation

This book has not been able to locate and consult the evaluation documents equivalent to that of Pilot Action 3 for the remaining actions of the Plan, which makes it impossible to offer the reader the same factual certainty about the leadership of each of them as has been achieved for CHIME. The information in this section is therefore based on the official denomination of each action and its thematic coherence with the known institutional profiles of the member cities, not on an equivalent direct documentary verification to that carried out in sections 4.3 and 4.4.

4.7. The funding question: what does the European Union actually contribute?

A question that an attentive reader might raise at this point, and which the municipal institutional documentation tends to leave in a zone of deliberate or inadvertent ambiguity, is the following: did Murcia's leadership in Pilot Action 3 of the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage imply the receipt of direct European funding for Cultural Reactives or Cultural Testing Tubes? The answer, based on the sources consulted for this book, is nuanced and deserves to be explained precisely, as it constitutes one of the most common confusions in public discourse on the EU Urban Agenda.

The Thematic Partnerships of the EU Urban Agenda are not, in themselves, direct funding instruments for local projects: they are mechanisms of governance, knowledge exchange and elaboration of public policy recommendations, whose main function is to identify needs and propose regulatory and funding access improvements — in fact, one of the three cross-cutting priorities of any Partnership, according to the EU's own

documentation, is precisely that of “Better Funding”, understood as facilitating cities' access to already-existing European funds (ERDF, Creative Europe, Horizon Europe), not as the creation of a dedicated Partnership funding line (European Urban Initiative, s.f.-a). This means that the budgetary allocation for Cultural Reactives (700,000 euros in 2020, one million euros in 2021) and Cultural Testing Tubes (grants of up to 2,500 euros per project) comes, according to all documentation consulted, from the Municipality of Murcia's own municipal budget, and not from a direct transfer of European funds linked to the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage. The European added value of the programme, therefore, should not be sought in the plane of direct funding, but in two other planes: that of knowledge and methodology transfer (the very design of Cultural Testing Tubes as a living lab is explicitly framed in the conceptual logic of CHIME, as shown in section 3.3) and that of the city's institutional and reputational projection, analysed critically in section 5.4.

This clarification is methodologically important because it corrects a possible erroneous reading — fairly widespread in public discourse on European funds

generally — according to which any mention of “European recognition” or “European projects” necessarily implies the receipt of direct EU funding. In the case of the Murcia Cultural Model, according to the documentary evidence available, the economic component of the programme is of own municipal funding, while the European component is fundamentally qualitative in nature: shared governance, common methodology and institutional visibility, not direct budgetary transfer from EU institutions.

4.8. Complementary city networks: Eurocities, ICLEI and URBACT

The list of members of the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage reproduced in section 4.3 includes, alongside member states, regions and municipalities, three city networks of a nature different from properly territorial administrations: Eurocities, ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) and URBACT (European Urban Initiative, 2021). It is worth devoting a brief section to clarifying the nature of these three organisations, as their presence in the Partnership illustrates the institutional density of the European

urban governance ecosystem in which the Murcia case is embedded, beyond the EU Urban Agenda in the strict sense.

Eurocities is the most extensive European network of major cities, founded in 1986, bringing together more than two hundred local governments from across Europe with the aim of giving cities a voice in the European policy debate. ICLEI, founded in 1990, is a global network of local and regional governments originally focused on environmental sustainability, which has progressively expanded its scope to encompass integrated urban governance, including cultural and heritage dimensions when these connect with urban sustainability. URBACT, for its part, is a European territorial cooperation programme, co-financed by the ERDF, specifically dedicated to facilitating the exchange of experiences and peer learning between European cities in relation to sustainable urban development, and constitutes, alongside the EU Urban Agenda itself, one of the main European instruments for horizontal cooperation between cities.

The simultaneous presence of these three networks in the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage, with Eurocities and

URBACT explicitly mentioned as members in the evaluation document of Pilot Action 3 (European Urban Initiative, 2021), suggests that the institutional ecosystem in which Murcia's leadership is embedded is not limited to the bilateral relationship between the Murcia City Council and the European Commission, but extends across a much broader and denser network of urban cooperation organisations with which Murcia, in its capacity as leader of Pilot Action 3, maintains in principle a knowledge-sharing relationship — though the sources consulted for this book do not permit precise determination of the degree of effective interaction of Murcia with each of these three specific networks beyond their mention as general Partnership members.

4.9. The New Leipzig Charter: a complementary normative framework

To complete the reconstruction of the European framework developed in this chapter, it is worth mentioning an additional normative document that, while not forming part directly of the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage, shares with it the same temporal and institutional framework: the New

Leipzig Charter on the Transformative Power of Cities for the Common Good, adopted at the informal ministerial meeting organised on 30 November 2020 under the German Presidency of the European Union (European Commission, s.f.). This document, approved only days after the publication of the Final Action Plan of the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage — presented in November of that same year, as documented in section 4.2 — provides a common framework of principles for sustainable urban development in the European Union, complementary to the more specific work of the different Thematic Partnerships.

The temporal coincidence between the New Leipzig Charter and the Final Action Plan of the Culture Partnership is not accidental, but responds to the very institutional architecture of the EU Urban Agenda: both documents form part of the same cycle of review and consolidation of European urban governance that took place under the German Presidency of the second half of 2020, a datum that reinforces the institutional centrality of Germany — already noted in section 4.2 in connection with its role as coordinator of the Partnership on Culture and



Cultural Heritage — in the overall European normative process of urban governance of that period, and adds an additional, albeit indirect, nuance to the choice of Berlin as the venue for the Partnership’s kick-off meeting in February 2019.

This normative connection, though peripheral to the central object of this book, is relevant for any future research wishing to situate the Murcia case within the broader set of European urban governance normative instruments in force during the period analysed, and is included here as a complementary note that does not aim to exhaust, but merely to signal, the density of the European normative framework within which the Murcia Cultural Model is embedded.

4.11. The seven thematic axes of the Partnership: where Murcia is situated

It is useful, to close this chapter, to return in greater detail to the seven thematic axes of the 2019 Orientation Paper presented in summary form in section 4.2, and to specify in which of them Murcia’s contribution is most directly inscribed, which allows a more precise assessment of the real thematic scope of the city’s leadership within the Partnership as a whole.

The first axis, cultural tourism, connects indirectly with the Murcia case through the dimension of OCULTO.TV as a platform for the visibility of the city’s cultural offering, though the sources consulted do not document a specific cultural tourism strategy explicitly linked to Cultural Reactives

or Cultural Testing Tubes. The second axis, creative and cultural industries, connects directly with the declared objective of Cultural Testing Tubes to support freelance artists and creators in their professional consolidation, as extensively documented in section 4.3 from the evaluation document of Pilot Action 3.

The third axis, transformation, adaptive reuse and urban reconversion, is probably the one that connects most directly and intensely with the Murcia contribution, given that the very essence of Cultural Testing Tubes consists of the reuse of sixty-seven pre-existing heritage spaces — museums, historic theatres, former barracks — for contemporary cultural creation purposes, as detailed in section 3.3 and revisited in section 3.10 when describing the city's urban context. The fourth axis, financial sustainability and funding, connects with the advance payment dimension of Cultural Reactives analysed in sections 3.2 and 5.3, though more modestly than the third axis.

The fifth axis, resilience of cultural and natural heritage, and the sixth, integrated and interdisciplinary governance approaches, do not, in the sources consulted for this book, find as direct and documented a connection

with the Murcia case as the third and second axes, suggesting that Murcia's contribution to the Partnership is relatively specialised, centred around heritage reuse and support for creative industries, without extending as intensively to the dimensions of heritage resilience against risks or interdisciplinary governance in the strict sense. The seventh axis, cultural services and culture for inclusive cities, potentially connects with the Open Venues dimension — the least documented component of the Murcia model, as noted in section 3.4 — though the scarcity of specific sources on that programme makes it impossible to develop that connection with the same rigour achieved for the other axes. This thematic mapping, which no institutional document consulted for this book offers explicitly, allows the conclusion that Murcia's leadership within the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage, though real and verified, is concentrated in a relatively delineated portion of the broad thematic spectrum that the Partnership covers as a whole — a precision that nuances, without denying, the scope of the European prominence that the municipal institutional communication attributes to the city.

CHAPTER 5 | DISCUSSION: INNOVATION, RHETORIC & INEQUALITY IN THE MURCIA CULTURAL MODEL

Discussion: innovation, rhetoric and inequality in the Murcia Cultural Model. With the documentary evidence gathered in chapters 3 and 4, and the theoretical framework set out in chapters 1 and 2, this chapter subjects the Murcia case to critical analysis organised around four questions, deliberately avoiding limiting itself to a laudatory description of the programme — the most obvious risk when working predominantly with institutional and local press sources.

Each of the four sections of this chapter explicitly revisits one of the conceptual frameworks presented in chapter 2 — Throsby, Bonet, Barbieri and the comparative literature of Hylland et al. —

and applies it systematically to the empirical evidence reconstructed in chapters 3 and 4, rather than citing these authors in merely ornamental fashion, as frequently occurs in the applied cultural management literature that invokes theoretical frameworks without operationalising them on a concrete case.

5.1. Innovation of paradigm or intensification of classic instruments?

The institutional literature on Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes repeatedly employs a vocabulary of rupture and innovation: reference is made to “pioneering” programmes, a “new

cultural model”, European recognition as an “example of good practice” (Ayuntamiento de Murcia, 2021a; murcia.com, 2021b). Against this narrative, the central conclusion of the comparative study by Hylland et al. (2024) invites a more cautious reading: across the seven European countries analysed, pandemic cultural policies did not fundamentally challenge the core policy instruments, the institutional division of labour or the central pre-existing goals, but confirmed existing policy structures or reinforced developments already under way (Hylland et al., 2024).

Applied to the Murcia case, this perspective suggests a dual reading that is worth unpacking programme by programme, rather than treating the Murcia Cultural Model as a homogeneous whole. Cultural Reactives is, in its basic form, a public grant call for cultural production — a classic instrument of Spanish cultural policy for decades, perfectly described in Bonet’s (2007) literature on local cultural industry support policies — simply accelerated in its administrative processing (with advance payments, as detailed in chapter 3) and endowed with a pandemic emergency

narrative. The budgetary growth between the first call (700,000 euros) and the second (one million euros), documented in chapter 3, is consistent with a pattern of consolidation of an already-existing grant instrument, rather than the creation of a radically new one.

Cultural Testing Tubes, by contrast, introduces a less conventional element: the research residency open to experimentation and to failure as a legitimate outcome, in the living lab logic, which does represent a relative innovation compared to the traditional artistic residency model, normally oriented towards the production of a finished work (European Urban Initiative, 2021). The European evaluation document itself explicitly acknowledges this open-outcome experimentation logic, noting that some of the projects selected for a residency did not come to fruition, and that these failures are considered as valuable as successes because they equally generate knowledge and know-how (European Urban Initiative, 2021).

Some failures [...] are equally important as successes as they provide knowledge and know-how all the same.

(European Urban Initiative, 2021, p. 7)

This explicit institutional legitimisation of failure as a valid outcome is, in itself, a significant departure from the traditional administrative culture of public grants in Spain, generally oriented towards the strict documentary justification of tangible and measurable results. That a European evaluation document should recognise the failure of a funded project as a partially successful outcome, in terms of knowledge generation, is unusual in conventional administrative language, and constitutes one of the elements of Cultural Testing Tubes that best justifies its description as a process innovation, even if the underlying funding instrument (a financial grant of at most 2,500 euros per project) does not differ radically, in its legal nature, from a classic grant.

From David Throsby's conceptual perspective, this distinction can be formulated in terms of cultural capital: while Cultural Reactives primarily funds the production of one-off cultural goods and services — whose value is concentrated at the moment of their production and exhibition — Cultural

Testing Tubes is oriented, at least in its declared design, towards the generation of accumulable capacities and knowledge, in line with the notion of intangible cultural capital that Throsby develops in his work (Throsby, 1999, 2003, 2011). The evaluation document for Pilot Action 3 itself highlights the generation of “knowledge and know-how” as one of its principal results, even in projects that did not succeed (European Urban Initiative, 2021), which is consistent with the logic of cultural capital as an accumulable stock rather than a one-off production flow.

It is worth, however, not overvaluing this distinction: the evaluation document itself acknowledges relevant limitations in the actual implementation of Cultural Testing Tubes, among them the fact that in its first implementation the Murcia CHIME Hub had not yet hosted any international artist for one of its residencies, although visits and contacts had occurred that, according to the document, “bridged the way for future calls” (European Urban Initiative, 2021). This limitation qualifies the degree of effective internationalisation achieved by the programme up to the time of evaluation, and

suggests that the dimension of transnational cultural exchange — one of the programme's declared objectives according to its own official description (European Urban Initiative, 2021) — was, in 2021, at a still incipient stage.

5.2. Essential good or common good? Two distinct justificatory logics

The second analytical axis revisits the distinction introduced in chapter 2 between the category of “essential good” (of constitutional and emergency derivation) and that of “common good” (of participatory and collective management derivation), as formulated by Barbieri (2014). The documentary analysis of chapter 3 enables the finding that the Murcia Cultural Model combines, without explicitly resolving them, both logics — a combination that is not necessarily a design defect, but a characteristic shared by much of contemporary cultural policy, which rarely inscribes itself purely within a single theoretical paradigm.

The declaration of culture as an “essential activity” in 2020 clearly inscribes itself within the first logic: a justification of exceptionality and state protection against

an external threat (the pandemic), formulated in terms very close to those of Article 48 of the Constitution of 1931 analysed in chapter 1, which attributed to culture the status of “essential responsibility of the State”. This logic of state protection is, by definition, a vertical logic, in which the public administration identifies a social need (the sustaining of the cultural sector in crisis) and designs a response from above, without a co-design process with citizens or with the affected cultural sector necessarily being involved.

However, the design of Cultural Testing Tubes — with its emphasis on citizen experimentation, co-working and, according to its own evaluation document, its potential as a “tool for citizen participation and engagement to experiment with citizens' own initiatives” (European Urban Initiative, 2021) — approximates more to the second logic, that of culture as a common good managed collectively, in line with Barbieri's theoretical proposal (2014). This logic is, by contrast, a more horizontal logic, in which the role of public administration shifts from the direct provision of a service to the enabling of conditions (space, partial funding, technical

assistance) for third parties — artists, collectives and ideally non-professional citizens — to develop their own cultural initiatives.

It is significant, however, that the evaluation document for Pilot Action 3 itself acknowledges a relevant limitation: in its first implementation no specific call was launched for non-professional citizen initiatives, although citizens did participate in experimentation projects to develop creative skills (European Urban Initiative, 2021). This suggests that, in practice, the logic of the institutionally-protected “essential good” — centred on support for already-professionalised or semi-professionalised artists and collectives — has prevailed, up to the time of the European evaluation, over the full logic of the co-managed “common good” with non-professional citizens, which remains, according to the document itself, a declared possibility not yet materialised in a specific call.

This gap between Cultural Testing Tubes’ declared potential as a tool for citizen participation and its effective implementation focused, up to now, on professional artists and collectives, constitutes one of the most

relevant findings of this book, insofar as it substantially qualifies the narrative of full “cultural democracy” that might be attributed to the programme based solely on its official description. Applying the classical typology between cultural democratisation and cultural democracy introduced in chapter 2, the Murcia Cultural Model, in its documented implementation phase through 2021-2022, sits closer to a model of expanded cultural democratisation — facilitating access by a broader professional or semi-professional collective to public production resources — than to a full model of cultural democracy in the sense Barbieri advocates, in which non-professional citizens would actively participate in the definition and management of cultural projects.

5.3. The equity question: whom do the programmes actually reach?

The third analytical axis directly revisits Barbieri’s warning about inequality in the exercise of cultural rights, explained by factors of difference, resources and connection (Barbieri, s.f.). None of the documentary sources consulted for this book — neither



The URBACT Good Practice Label was collected in Wroclaw by Amber Kay, Jesús de la Peña and Mercedes Hernández.

institutional press nor European evaluation documents — provides disaggregated data on the sociodemographic profile of the beneficiaries of Cultural Reactives or Cultural Testing Tubes: no public information is available on the distribution by area of residence, gender, age, origin or level of education of the selected artists and collectives.

This absence of data does not permit the conclusion that the programmes are inequitable, but does allow the noting of a relevant methodological limitation: in the absence of impact evaluation reports with an equity perspective, any assessment of the inclusive or democratising character of the Murcia Cultural Model must be formulated with due caution. It is also worth recalling the quantitative datum presented in chapter 3: of the 796 projects submitted to the first Cultural Reactives call, only 126 were selected, a success rate of around 16% that, in the absence of information about the profile of unselected applicants, does not permit ruling out that there are systematic access biases related to any of the three cultural inequality factors identified by Barbieri (difference, resources and connection).

The European evaluation document for Pilot Action 3 explicitly recommends, as learning for national and European scale, deepening understanding of “the concrete causes of the precariousness of creators and artists” as a self-sustaining profession (European Urban Initiative, 2021), suggesting that not even the programme’s own managers, at the time of evaluation, had a complete structural diagnosis of who benefits and who is excluded. This same European recommendation can be read, from Barbieri’s perspective, as an indirect confirmation that the factor of “resources” — the availability of time, financial capital and training necessary to submit a culturally competitive project in a public call — remains as an unresolved variable not even explicitly recognised as a research priority by the European Partnership itself.

It is also worth noting, in the opposite direction, an element of the Cultural Reactives design that could be interpreted as a partial mitigation measure of the “resources” factor: the introduction of advance payments, documented in chapter 3, which reduces the need for applicants to have their own liquidity to finance project execution before

receiving the grant, a common access barrier in public cultural funding that tends to disproportionately disadvantage artists and collectives with fewer prior resources. This nuance cautions against formulating a one-sided diagnosis: the programme simultaneously contains design elements that could favour equity of access (advance payments) and relevant information gaps that prevent verification of whether such equity was actually achieved in practice (the absence of disaggregated beneficiary data).

A pending research agenda

The analysis in this section identifies an empirical research direction that exceeds the documentary scope of this book, but which any undergraduate dissertation, master's thesis or doctoral research that revisits this case should address: requesting from the Murcia Municipality's Department of Culture the disaggregated beneficiary data for the successive calls of Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes, and cross-referencing them with the cultural inequality indicators proposed by Barbieri (difference, resources, connection), ideally through a formal public information access request under Spanish transparency legislation.

5.4. European projection: replicable model or institutional positioning strategy?

Finally, it is worth critically examining the European projection dimension of the case, which constitutes one of its most distinctive features compared to other Spanish municipal cultural policies of the same era. The documentary evidence gathered in chapter 4 confirms that Murcia's leadership in Pilot Action 3 (CHIME) of the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage is real and verifiable, and is not a mere publicity claim by the Municipality itself.

However, this European projection fulfils, simultaneously, two functions that it is worth distinguishing analytically: a genuine knowledge transfer function — the evaluation document for Pilot Action 3 includes explicit recommendations at local, national and European level, designed to be replicated by other cities (European Urban Initiative, 2021) — and an institutional and reputational positioning function for the city of Murcia, visible in the repeated use by municipal sources of expressions such as “first Spanish city” or “alongside major European cities, such

as Berlin and Florence” (cuarteldeartilleria.es, 2021), a formulation that, as shown in chapter 4, exaggerates the actual equivalence of roles within the Partnership.

This dual function is not necessarily contradictory — it is common, and legitimate, for local governments to communicate the prestige of their participation in European networks — but a rigorous cultural management analysis must distinguish between the verifiable technical content of the knowledge transfer (which in this case is real and documented) and the divulgative narrative that the institution constructs about that content (which, in some of its more extreme formulations, does not withstand strict cross-referencing with the European primary sources).

It is illustrative, in this regard, to compare the recommendations that the evaluation document for Pilot Action 3 addresses at national and European level with the tone of the municipal institutional communication about the same programme. While the municipal press emphasises the recognition received and the pioneering nature of the initiative, the European

technical document formulates improvement recommendations still pending: the need to improve the accessibility of European cultural production at local and regional level, the need for specific funding to create a European community of cultural creation, and the need for a European-level debate on the concrete causes of the precariousness of creators and artists as a self-sustaining profession (European Urban Initiative, 2021). This difference in tone — between local institutional celebration and European technical identification of problems still unresolved — is consistent with the distinction, already noted, between the level of divulgative narrative and the level of independent technical evaluation, and constitutes in itself a methodological argument in favour of always prioritising, in any rigorous cultural management analysis, technical evaluation sources over purely communicative ones.

Finally, it is worth noting that the very existence of an official European evaluation document on Pilot Action 3 — something that, as noted in chapter 4, has not been located in equivalent form for Pilot Action 2, also led by Murcia — is in itself a relevant

indicator of the institutional solidity of the European knowledge transfer process around Cultural Testing Tubes, compared to Cultural Reactives / Street Invasion, whose formal European evaluation, if it exists, has not been verified in the framework of the research carried out for this book.

5.5. Chapter synthesis: a matrix of four tensions

The four preceding sections can be synthesised into a matrix of four tensions that run, to varying degrees, through each of the components of the Murcia Cultural Model, and which it is useful to present jointly before moving to the general conclusions of the book in chapter 6.

The first tension is that between innovation and continuity, developed in section 5.1: Cultural Reactives sits predominantly at the continuity pole with respect to the classic cultural grant instrument, while Cultural Testing Tubes introduces elements of relative innovation, principally in its treatment of failure as a legitimate outcome and in its living lab logic. The second tension is that between culture as an essential good and culture as

a common good, developed in section 5.2: the model as a whole tilts, in its documented implementation, towards the first logic, with non-professional citizen participation still incipient according to the evaluation document's own acknowledgement.

The third tension is that between declared effectiveness and verifiable equity, developed in section 5.3: the model has abundant and easily accessible quantitative effectiveness indicators (number of projects submitted, budget allocation, number of spaces enabled), but lacks equally accessible qualitative equity indicators, substantially limiting any definitive assessment of its inclusive character. The fourth tension, developed in section 5.4, is that between technical knowledge transfer and reputational positioning: both functions coexist in the European projection of the model, but not always in the same proportion suggested by the tone of the municipal institutional communication.

This matrix of four tensions does not seek to offer a final verdict of "success" or "failure" of the Murcia Cultural Model — a claim that, given the source limitations repeatedly signalled throughout this book, would be

methodologically imprudent—but to provide the reader with a map of open questions that any future, more comprehensive evaluation should address systematically.

5.6. Pedagogical application: how to use this matrix in one's own academic work

Since this book is also conceived as support material for cultural management students preparing their own academic work, it is useful to close this chapter with explicit guidance on how to apply the matrix of four tensions presented in the preceding section to the analysis of any other local cultural policy case, beyond that of Murcia.

The first step involves identifying, for the chosen case, what documentation corresponds to each of the three source levels proposed in this book: the institutional narrative of the actor being analysed (press releases, official websites, programme presentation speeches), independent third-party evaluation documents (reports from supra-municipal, regional, national or European bodies that have evaluated the programme), and comparative academic literature offering an external reference

framework (such as the Hylland et al. study used in this book). The absence of any of these three levels—for instance, if there is no independent third-party evaluation document, as is the case in this book regarding Pilot Action 2 compared to Pilot Action 3—must be explicitly declared as a methodological limitation, as has been done in sections 3.9 and 4.7, rather than filling the documentary gap with unverified inferences.

The second step involves disaggregating the object of study into its differentiated components, avoiding treating the programme as a homogeneous whole, as has been done in this book by systematically separating the analysis of Cultural Reactives, Cultural Testing Tubes, Open Venues and OCULTO.TV. The third step involves applying, to each component separately, the four questions of the matrix: does it constitute a genuine innovation or a continuation of pre-existing instruments? Does it respond to a logic of institutionally-protected essential good or of co-managed common good? Are there sufficient data to evaluate its equity of access? And is its external projection (media, institutional, European) proportionate to its verifiable technical content?



The fourth and final step, which this book has applied systematically throughout chapter 5, involves formulating conclusions in terms of nuances and unresolved tensions, avoiding both the uncritical laudatory assessment — typical of much institutional communication — and the equally uncritical dismissive critique — equally lacking in rigour when not grounded in sufficient empirical evidence. This balance between recognition of verifiable merits and honest acknowledgement of documentary limitations is, ultimately, the distinguishing characteristic that this book has attempted to maintain consistently from its first page, and which it is

hoped the reader will be able to replicate in their own research work on analogous cases of local cultural management.

5.7. Bonet's perspective applied to the administrative management of the model

A final section of this chapter is worth devoting to applying in greater detail the perspective of applied cultural management by Lluís Bonet, presented in chapter 2, to the specifically administrative and procedural dimension of the Murcia Cultural Model — a dimension that the preceding sections have addressed in a transversal manner but that

merits more systematic treatment.

Bonet, in his work on local cultural industry support policies (Bonet, 2007), identifies as one of the central challenges of local cultural management the tension between the need for rigorous administrative procedures — guaranteeing transparency and equal treatment among applicants for public funds — and the need for sufficient agility and flexibility not to discourage the participation of the cultural creators themselves, who are frequently distant from the administrative and bureaucratic culture of public calls. This tension, formulated by Bonet in general terms for the overall landscape of Spanish local cultural policy, finds in the Murcia case a particularly interesting concrete translation: the introduction of advance payments in Cultural Reactives, already analysed in sections 3.2 and 5.3, constitutes precisely an attempt to resolve this tension in favour of agility, without the sources consulted permitting verification of whether that streamlining resulted in any reduction of the transparency and accountability controls customary in Spanish public grants.

Likewise, the co-edited volume on innovation in cultural management (Bonet and González-Piñero, 2021) emphasises

that innovation in this field should not be understood solely as innovation in the artistic or creative content of funded projects, but also as innovation in the very processes of management, funding and evaluation of cultural policies. From this perspective, the introduction of advance payments and the design of Cultural Testing Tubes as a living lab with institutional legitimization of failure, analysed in section 5.1, can be read together as two manifestations of administrative process innovation, complementary to the content innovation that may occur in each individual artistic project funded by both programmes.

This joint reading should not, however, obscure an important limitation also noted in Bonet and González-Piñero's own work (2021): administrative process innovation, however meritorious, does not by itself guarantee content innovation or the artistic quality of the projects ultimately selected — matters that would depend, ultimately, on the assessment criteria applied by the selection committees of each call, about which — as already noted in section 3.9 — this book has not been able to access detailed documentation permitting a specific analysis.

CHAPTER 6 | CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This closing chapter fulfils a dual function. First, it synthesises the main findings of the book, organising them into a set of numbered conclusions that can be cited and discussed independently by any reader using this text as a reference for their own academic work. Second, it proposes a future research agenda that, far from presenting the Murcia case as a closed matter, frames it as an open object of study, susceptible to being expanded with data, interviews and documentary sources that exceed the scope and resources available for the preparation of this book.

6.1. Synthesis of findings

This book has reconstructed, with

the backing of verified primary sources, the architecture of the Murcia Cultural Model — Cultural Reactives, Cultural Testing Tubes, Open Venues and the OCULTO.TV platform — and its documented insertion in the Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage of the EU Urban Agenda. From this journey the following main conclusions derive, organised according to the chapters in which they are developed in greatest detail.

In relation to the general normative framework (chapter 1):

> **First:** the category of “culture as an essential public good” activated in 2020 is not a rhetorical invention of the pandemic conjuncture, but the reactivation of a

long-standing normative tension, already present in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and, in the Spanish case, in Article 48 of the 1931 Constitution and Article 44 of the 1978 Constitution, with parallels in other European constitutions such as the Italian of 1947 or the Portuguese.

> **Second:** the international institutional mobilisation around this category during 2020 — symbolised in UCLG's Rome Charter — and the local mobilisation of Murcia are parallel and temporally coincident phenomena, but the sources consulted contain no evidence of a direct causal relationship between the two; they are, rather, two manifestations of the same intellectual climate of the age, led significantly by local governments rather than state or supranational bodies.

In relation to the European dimension of the case (chapter 4):

> **Third:** Murcia's leadership in Pilot Action 3 (CHIME / Cultural Testing Tubes) of the European Partnership on Culture

and Cultural Heritage is documentarily verified through an official primary source (the European Urban Initiative evaluation booklet, 2021), which distinguishes this case from other Spanish municipal cultural promotion initiatives whose European projection is merely declaratory.

> **Fourth:** the presentation of Berlin and Florence as "leading" cities on an equal footing with Murcia does not withstand strict cross-referencing with the available primary source, which situates them as members of the general Partnership and not as leaders of an equivalent pilot action. This is one of the most important corrections that this book introduces with respect to the usual institutional narrative, and should be borne in mind in any future academic work that revisits this case.

In relation to the critical analysis of the model (chapter 5):

> **Fifth:** cross-referenced with the international academic literature (Hylland et al., 2024), the Murcia case sits at an intermediate point between innovation and

continuity: Cultural Reactives reproduces, in its essentials, the classic instrument of public grants for cultural production, while Cultural Testing Tubes introduces an element of relative innovation by incorporating the living lab logic and the institutional legitimization of failure as a source of knowledge.

> **Sixth:** applying the classical typology between cultural democratisation and cultural democracy, the Murcia Cultural Model sits, in its documented implementation phase, closer to an expanded cultural democratisation — facilitating access by a broader professional or semi-professional collective to public resources— than to a full cultural democracy in the sense advocated by Barbieri, given that the European evaluation document itself acknowledges that no specific call was launched for non-professional citizens.

> **Seventh:** there is, in the publicly available documentation, insufficient evidence to evaluate the degree of equity of access to these programmes from the perspective of cultural rights as formulated by Barbieri (difference, resources, connection), which

constitutes the main knowledge gap identified by this book, although design elements have been identified — such as advance payments in Cultural Reactives — that may partially favour access equity.

> **Eighth:** the European projection of the Murcia Cultural Model simultaneously fulfils a genuine technical knowledge transfer function, verifiable in the recommendations of the European evaluation document, and an institutional and reputational positioning function whose communicative tone is not always proportionate to the verifiable technical content, a pattern observable in the cultural management of many local governments with international projection, and not a singularity exclusive to the Murcia case.

6.2. Contribution of this book to cultural management

Beyond the specific case, this book aspires to illustrate a working method applicable to the evaluation of any local cultural policy programme with European projection: the need to distinguish systematically between

three levels of sources — the institutional narrative of the actor being analysed, official third-party evaluation documents (in this case, from the European Union itself) and peer-reviewed academic literature offering independent comparative frameworks. The combination of these three levels, rather than exclusive reliance on any one of them, is what enables cultural management to produce rigorous knowledge rather than reformulated institutional communication.

This tripartite method of source cross-referencing is not exclusive to the Murcia case, and can be applied, with the necessary adaptations, to the study of any other city member of any other Thematic Partnership of the EU Urban Agenda, or of any other international network of local governments with a technical independent evaluation component comparable to that provided by the European Urban Initiative for the case analysed in this book. In this sense, this book aspires to have, beyond its value as a specific case study, a transferable methodological value for students and cultural management professionals who in the future address analogous cases.

A second methodological contribution of this book is the insistence on treating the object of study — the Murcia Cultural Model — not as a monolithic block, but as a set of programmes with clearly differentiated logics, degrees of innovation and levels of documentation. This analytical disaggregation, applied systematically in chapter 5, makes it possible to avoid both the uncritical overvaluation of the model as a whole (attributing to Cultural Reactives a degree of innovation that only partially, and only to Cultural Testing Tubes) and the equally uncritical undervaluation (dismissing the value of the model as a whole on account of limitations identified in any one of its components).

6.3. Future research directions

From the preceding findings there derive at least the following research directions that would exceed the documentary scope of this book but constitute a reasonable agenda for future academic work on the case, whether in the form of an undergraduate dissertation, master's thesis, doctoral thesis or research

article:

1. An impact evaluation study with disaggregated beneficiary data from Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes, enabling empirical assessment of the equity dimension highlighted in chapter 5, ideally through a formal public information access request to the Municipality of Murcia's Department of Culture.
2. A systematic comparison, based on interviews or archive documentation not publicly available, between the design and actual implementation of Cultural Testing Tubes in Murcia and equivalent living lab cultural experiences in other European cities, beyond Berlin and Florence, that have led their own pilot actions within the same Partnership (for example, those corresponding to Actions 4, 8 or 10 listed in chapter 4, whose specific evaluation documents have not been located and consulted in the framework of this book).
3. An update of this analysis incorporating the Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes calls after 2022, as well as the complete final evaluation of Pilot Action

2 ("Street Invasion, Atomisation and Cultural Reactivation"), whose evaluation document equivalent to that of Pilot Action 3 has not been located during the preparation of this book, and which would be indispensable for completing the analysis of the European dimension of the model with the same documentary rigour achieved for Cultural Testing Tubes.

4. A specific investigation, through a public information access request or direct interview with the municipal officers responsible, into the origin and exact traceability of the term "mirror rooms", in case it exists in unpublished internal documentation, given that this book has not been able to confirm it in open sources, as well as a documentary characterisation of Open Venues in its own right, equivalent in level of detail to that achieved for Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes in chapter 3.

5. A longitudinal analysis of the budgetary evolution of Cultural Reactives and Cultural Testing Tubes beyond 2022, enabling verification of whether the consolidation trend observed between the first and



second calls (an increase of more than 40% in the case of Cultural Reactives) was maintained, stabilised or reversed in subsequent calls, which would provide additional evidence about the degree of definitive institutionalisation of the model within Murcia's municipal cultural policy.

6. A comparative study between the distributed heritage management model of Cultural Testing Tubes — sixty-seven historic cultural spaces reused — and equivalent experiences of adaptive heritage reuse in other Partnership cities, in direct connection with the third original thematic axis of the 2019 Orientation Paper (transformation, adaptive reuse and urban reconversion), which this book has not been able to develop in depth as it falls outside its documentary scope.

6.4. A final note on method

This book has been written with the conviction that cultural management, as an applied discipline, needs texts that combine the documentary rigour of academic research with the practical usefulness of a well-defined case study. The Murcia Cultural Model offers,

in this regard, a particularly fertile object of study: it has enough public documentation — municipal, regional and European — to sustain a rigorous analysis, but also enough documentary grey areas — the lack of equity data, the absence of an equivalent evaluation booklet for Pilot Action 2, the imprecision about the exact role of Berlin and Florence — for any student or researcher who revisits it in the future to find real scope for an original contribution.

6.5. Practical recommendations for municipal cultural managers

Beyond its academic value, this book may also be read as a set of practical recommendations directed at municipal cultural managers who are designing or reviewing cultural promotion programmes analogous to those analysed. From the findings developed in preceding chapters, the following practical guidelines derive, at minimum.

7. Systematically document the profile of call beneficiaries (neighbourhood, gender, age, origin, level of education), not only the number and discipline of selected projects, so as to be able in the future to

address the equity questions that this book has identified as the principal gap in the Murcia case.

8. Maintain and, if possible, expand administrative streamlining mechanisms such as the advance payments introduced in Cultural Reactives, which constitute one of the measures with the greatest potential for mitigating access inequalities related to applicants' prior lack of liquidity.

9. Design, alongside the calls directed at professional and semi-professional cultural workers, specific calls directed at non-professional citizens, as the European evaluation document for Pilot Action 3 itself suggests with respect to Cultural Testing Tubes, in order to transition from a model of expanded cultural democratisation towards a fuller model of cultural democracy in the sense proposed by Barbieri.

10. Commission or produce, on a periodic basis, medium-term impact evaluations — not only of immediate outputs — enabling assessment of these programmes' contribution to the city's accumulated cultural capital in the sense developed by Throsby, beyond the budget executed in

each annual call.

11. Distinguish clearly, in institutional communication, between the verifiable technical content of any European recognition or projection obtained and the divulgative narrative constructed about that content, avoiding formulations suggesting equivalences of institutional status — as occurs with the presentation of Berlin and Florence as “leading” cities alongside Murcia — that do not withstand strict cross-referencing with the available official documentation.

6.6. Closing reflection: culture between emergency and normality

This book began with a question about the genealogy of the concept of “culture as an essential public good”, and it is appropriate to close it by revisiting that same question from the perspective accumulated across its six chapters. The COVID-19 pandemic acted, in Murcia as in many other European cities, as a catalyst that accelerated the explicit formulation of an idea that, as shown in chapter 1, had already been latent in the Spanish constitutional order since 1931 and

in international law since 1948: that culture is not a dispensable luxury in times of crisis, but a constitutive dimension of shared life that deserves active institutional protection.

However, as the critical analysis of chapter 5 has shown, the translation of that general idea into specific programmes — Cultural Reactives, Cultural Testing Tubes — does not automatically resolve the underlying tensions that run through any cultural policy: the tension between rhetorical innovation and continuity of instruments, between institutional protection and genuine citizen participation, between declared effectiveness and verifiable equity, between technical knowledge transfer and reputational positioning. These tensions are not defects exclusive to the Murcia case, but structural characteristics of contemporary public cultural management as a whole, which any similar programme, in any European city, will necessarily have to confront.

The fundamental question that this book leaves open for the reader, and which probably only the passage of time and the availability of better data will be able to answer with greater certainty, is whether the activation of the category of cultural essentiality during the pandemic of 2020 ultimately represented an

opportunity seized to durably transform the relationship between public administrations, cultural creators and citizens, or whether, as the comparative literature of Hylland et al. (2024) suggests for Europe as a whole, it was above all a rhetorically renewed intensification of instruments and power relations that already existed before the pandemic, and that will continue to exist, with or without the label of “essential good”, once the memory of the health emergency has fully faded from institutional consciousness.

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Glossary of abbreviations

BBSR — Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung (German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development)

BMI — Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat (German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community)

CHIME — Cultural Hubs for Innovation, Modernisation and Enhancement (Pilot Action 3 of the Partnership)

ERDF — European Regional Development Fund

EUI — European Urban Initiative

FUTURIUM — European Commission collaborative platform for EU Urban Agenda

IBAFF — International Film Festival of Murcia

ICLEI — Local Governments for Sustainability (international network of local governments)

Injuve — Instituto de la Juventud (Spanish National Youth Institute)

OEI — Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura

SDGs — Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2030 Agenda)

TFEU — Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

UIC — Universitat Internacional de Catalunya

UCLG — United Cities and Local Governments (Cités et Gouvernements Locaux Unis / CGLU)

UNESCO — United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

URBACT — EU Territorial Cooperation Programme for sustainable urban development

