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Co-production practices between museums and *culture-based* companies

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Abstract. In the last decades museums have been pushed to adopt a range of strategies to cope with an increasingly challenging environment. In response to evolving cultural policies, lack of public funds available, the need to respond to social demands and better relate with territory and communities, museums are seeking other ways of working, including building relationships with stakeholders, and creating a mixed economy of public and private collaboration. The paper focuses on what are the development opportunities and organisational impacts that take shape when a museum adopts a particular type of strategy: the *co-production with culture-based companies*. The study relates to the ongoing discussions about "the new museology", the development of participatory practices, public and private partnerships, "culture and business". An exploratory research was conducted through three cases of co-production between heritage museums and firms especially sensitive to cultural strategies and cooperation with cultural organizations.

Keywords. Museum management, Cooperation and collaboration (strategies and practices); Culture-based companies, Culture and Creative Industries

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Introduction

In the last decades museums have been pushed to adopt a range of strategies to cope with an increasingly challenging environment. In response to evolving cultural policies, lack of public funds available, the need to respond to social demands and better relate with territory and communities, new thinking and management practices have been developed.

The paper focuses on what are the development opportunities and organisational impacts that take shape when a museum adopts a particular type of strategy: the *co-production with culture-based companies*.

The study relates to the ongoing discussions about "the new museology", the development of participatory practices, public and private partnerships, "culture and business". It is in fact increasingly claimed that culture is crucial for social and economic development and that economic benefits are broader than those relating merely to the production and consumption of cultural goods, since culture can support creativity and foster innovation in other sectors. However, on the one hand, there is a debate on the risk of the commodification, banalization, and poor protection of culture and cultural heritage, as well as on the sustainability of cultural policies in a time of public funding shortages; on the other hand, questions arise about the response of the private sector to this "call" for more engagement in art and culture (*if, to what extent and how*). In this context museums are seeking other ways of working, including building relationships with stakeholders, and creating a mixed economy of public and private collaboration.

Museums's partnership with private firms are far from new, nevertheless much attention has been devoted to the forms of funding and sponsorship. Our interest is to investigate forms of cooperation where museums and culture-based companies work together in order to strengthen specific resources and competences and develop joint projects. Through these partnership in fact, the single players are able to pool capabilities to cope with specific issues or projects that are beyond their individual capacities. These cooperative forms are also characterized by the "culture-based" nature of the private partners's business, where the symbolic, aesthetic, and emotional content of the product is the driver of their value creation and competitiveness in the markets. Mobilizing and regenerating, through innovation, the arts, traditions, cultural resources of a territory, these companies are able to offer products with a strong identity: cooperate with museums, and other cultural institutions, becomes an integral part of their strategies.

The current exploratory research has arisen from the study of a very inspiring case: the creation of a new museum gallery, born through the co-productive collaboration between the Civic Museums Foundation of Venice and Mavive Spa (famous and historical company of perfume production), which led to the creation of the *Perfume's Museum of Palazzo Mocenigo*. This co-production has led not only to the creation of a new museum gallery (characterized by a strong curatorial style and constantly animated by training and educational activities) but also to the development of a new line of products inspired by the history of perfume in Venice: The Merchant of Venice. As a result of the collaboration, the number of educational activities and events has increased, and the number of entrances to the museum has been almost tripled, as well as the new line has reached good outcomes for the firm.

Starting from here, we have deepened other two cases of co-production between heritage museums and firms especially sensitive to cultural strategies and cooperation with cultural organizations. The reflection focuses on the potential of development of this type of collaborative relationships - to what extent they can be considered successful - but also in

which manner, museums and companies, interact in developing joint cultural initiatives. The paper investigates: why they create the co-production and how they handle innovation and organizational processes; what is the contribution of the partners to decision-making and management functions; what is the degree to which the activity is shared between museum staff and external parties and what the interaction's intensity; what can be sources of coordination problems and conflict issues that may occur due to the fact that different languages and different styles of management have to be integrated.

Challenging environment and new museology

In the last decades museums have been faced with an increasingly challenging environment. The evolution of cultural policies, the need to respond to social demands and better relate with communities, the cuts of public funds available, have changed profoundly the context in which museums operate, charging them of new roles and expectations.

Heritage and culture are now incorporated into areas of policy that had previously not been seen as intrinsically related. It's widely claimed that they contribute to the social, political and economic development. As a consequence of this, museums, among the other institutions and organizations, are expected to develop policies and practices that meet multiple ends (McCall and Gray 2014, 22). The necessity to be more active and embedded in the social and economic life of the communities, has also led a redefinition of the role and practices of museums towards more openness and interaction with stakeholders and audiences that tend to become broader and more heterogeneous. Changes in policies have also affected the provision of public funds, requiring more efficiency and accountability. At the same time, the need to be more self-sustaining - less dependent by a decreasing state financial support - has prompted museums to diversify funding and revenue sources. «The impact of economic factors associated with changes in public and private sources of funding, and the opening up of [public] museums to the multiple pressures and effects of consumer markets, are clearly decisive in the formation of a new professional discourse with its visitor-centred, or consumer-oriented emphasis (Ross 2004, 86)». «In the logic of market-oriented strategies, it is essential for any given arts museum to reinforce its ability to intensively produce creative content (attractive collections, innovative exhibitions, etc.), while being able to secure private and public financial support with a long-term perspective (Coblence, Normandin and Poisson-de Haro, 2014)».

The effects of these trends have had a great influence on the development of museum theories and practices, towards a greater accessibility, a wider public participation, a deeper relationship with territories and local communities, the extension of museum activities "into and beyond the doors of the museum itself". What it is known as the 'new museology' «is a discourse around the social and political roles of museums, encouraging new communication and new styles of expression in contrast to classic, collections-centred museum models (Mairesse and Desvallées 2010)». The 'new museology' aimed at «introducing a new philosophy around how museums function and a changed relationship between museums and their societies and communities (McCall and Gray 2014, 19)». Its principles encompass a new focus on visitors and education, a new perception of the essence of collection for the tasks of the museum, and a challenge to the traditional position of authority of the curator that drive to a more active and participatory role for the public. «Community development and the principle of community participation [...] lie in the center of the concerns of the new museology (Lamas 2010, 48)». The "participative wave" emerges also with reference to a

more local level (as in the case of eco-museums and neighborhood museums): the objective is to contribute to the community identity and to its development. In these contexts, presentation and preservation of the heritage are seen as a social action of change. Cultural expressions of a specific, particular, community or group, are at the base of shared projects to preserve, interpret, manage heritage for sustainable development.

Participatory practices

Participatory practices, in general, can range between bland forms of collaboration and engagement and much deeper ones, as well as different kinds of participants and partners can be involved.

Van Dam (2014, 3) notes the lack of a unified theory and of an established terminology on the subject. Quoting two examples of description of participatory practices within museum (Davis 2010; Simon 2010), the Author points out that some are focused on production (curatorial) process, other emphasizes the visitor as a participant.

Simon (2010, chapter 5) identifies three different types of participatory projects: contribution, collaboration and co-creation. These types correspond roughly with the extent to which the visitors (but the concept can be extended to other external parties/contributors) are involved in the different stage of scientific research/participatory exhibition. In *contributory projects*, visitors are solicited to provide limited and specified objects, actions, or ideas to an institutionally controlled process. In *collaborative projects*, visitors are invited to serve as active partners in the creation of institutional projects that are originated and ultimately controlled by the institution. In *co-creative projects*, community members work together with institutional staff members from the beginning to define the project's goals and to generate the program or exhibit based on community interests. The staff partners with visitors to co-produce exhibits and programs. Following the same criterion of involvement, a fourth type is identified: *hosted projects*, that are ones in which the institution turns over a portion of its facilities and/or resources to present programs developed and implemented by public groups or casual visitors.

The subject of these practices – the participants – are also named in various ways in the literature on participative practices. They are referred as 'communities', 'representatives', 'participants', or just 'visitors'. In particular 'source community' is used to denote groups with a shared heritage who participate because they have a connection with the subject of the project: they can be the culture of origin of used objects or part of the culture the exhibition is about (van Dam 2014, 3). It has to be noted that even when the external parties are defined in a more general way, like in the definition of Davies (2010, 307) «co-production is broadly understood as a spectrum of activity across the production process, performed by a range of individuals and groups with a varying impact on the final exhibition», the literature on participatory practices rarely takes specifically into consideration firms and companies as participants.

Co-production with culture-based companies

Museums's partnership with private firms are far from new, nevertheless much attention has been devoted to the forms of funding and sponsorship. Forms of patronage and sponsorship have long supported arts and culture. By the side of the company, sponsorship has been considered mostly in terms of marketing objectives, as a means for brand promotion, and as

an opportunity to strengthen corporate image or change its public perception (Comunian 2009, 203).

But a company's engagement in arts and culture can also be wider and more far-reaching. Relationships with artists and cultural organizations (as interpreters of present and future trends, tastes, languages, lifestyles) can provide creative ideas. Also "cultural heritage", and notably partnership with museum institutions, can provide content, meanings, and know-how with which to confer identity and authenticity to product offerings. "The transformation of traditional knowledge into creative goods and services reflects something significant about the cultural values of the country and its people (UNCTAD 2008)" The commitment of companies to arts and culture can be considered not only as a way to develop and communicate innovative and distinctive offerings, but also as a strategy to maintain and cultivate a rich environment of unique and valuable resources.

With their contribution to conservation, regeneration and exploitation of culture and cultural heritage, companies can create both economic and social value. We refer to the concept of "shared value" as defined by Porter and Kramer (2011, 66): "The concept of shared value can be defined as policies and operating practices that enhance the competitiveness of a company while simultaneously advancing the economic and social conditions in the communities in which it operates". Cooperate with museums, and other cultural institutions, becomes an integral part of their strategies

Although some research have been done (a pioneristic work was proposed by Russell - 1950), the issue of collaboration between museums and other sectors is still under-researched (Tien 2006, 2). However, joint projects between museums and culture-based companies (those companies that put culture at the core of their offering and business model - Artico and Tamma 2015), can be interpreted as forms of co-production practices, i.e. participatory practices where participants are one or more firms part of a specific community. So, principles and frames used to investigate participatory practices can be adapted, to some extent, to these kind of cooperations. The level of involvement in the museum activities of the external parties, as well as their specific characteristics and objectives, clearly remain among the most significant dimensions. Austin (2000, 71), analysing cooperation between nonprofits and business, identifies a "collaboration continuum" where the different types show different levels of engagement, interaction, strategic value, scope of activities, managerial complexity.

Other elements very significant concern, on the one hand, the relationship between the innovation of content and processes and the resources and expertise that the two partners can confer; on the other hand, the leadership of the cultural and curatorial project, that can be more or less shared. The emergence of asymmetries among partners, as the collaboration evolves, can become a source of problems, and bring even to failure. Finally, it's of importance the ability to manage joint operational activities and handle organizational problems and conflicts taking into account that different languages and different styles of management have to be integrated.

An exploratory research

The field

The cases studied through the research, are co-production activities between museums and firms operating in the luxury perfumery industry. Regarding to the firms, their productions

are raw materials or finished products recognized as 'historic' (the firms have been chosen by virtue of their history and cultural meanings, belonging to the *culture-based* sector). The niche perfumery industry is now fastly growing, is highly international, and characterized by selective distribution channels. The sector is composed by firms which have a long tradition, and is now rich of integrated commercial and cultural strategies focused on the enlightenment of the area of origin and its identity: the *culture-based* firms which are present in the sector often are based on the idea of enlightenment of the identity productions of their territory. Regarding the museums, all the museums selected represent their territory through the enhancement of its intangible heritage (such as traditions and processes: the art of treating raw materials, the art of composition of fragrances and extraction of essences), being witnesses of how these practices have settled over time, creating and representing the culture of the territory.

Methods

Those will be discussed in the article are therefore the results of a qualitative research, whose data were collected in different ways: through a system of cross-dyads of interviews (for a total of 21,00 hours), and through a detailed study comprehensive of direct experience of exhibitions, museums galleries and joint cultural activities created by the co-producers.

The couples of interviews to the managers responsible for the cultural activities of the firms and to the museum managers have investigated on the same issues, problems and 'mishaps'.

The interviews were conducted, in a first phase, with an 'anecdotal' approach, supplemented by a second round of structured interviews. The anecdotal approach consists in a free talk, able to investigate how museums and firms, through telling anecdotes, problematize freely around the theme of cultural strategies (trying to build an interpretive and descriptive language directly since the stories and the most significant events identified by managers). Then, during the structured interviews, the managers of museums and firms were led to analyze in a detailed and technical way the co-production itself, reflecting about the impacts as concerns the goals related to the relationship with the territory, and to the improvement of innovation processes and image enhancement.

Interviews were completed by a detailed study and direct experience of exhibition, museum galleries, and cultural activities generated by the co-producers: the detailed study was composed by the observation on the cultural activities production processes; by the critical analysis on the organization of joint cultural activities and events. Besides, many indirect sources have been studied, relating in particular to advertising and image.

Cases

The cases of co-production taken for the study have been identified according, on the one hand, to the capability of the museum partner to be storyteller of the traditional heritages of his territory; on the other hand, to the high quality of the products of the manufacturers and producers of raw materials, perfumes and essences, to their orientation towards niche markets, and to the capacity of these producers to recognize the cultural activities as a strategic tool for their development.

In the group of cases treated, there are the co-production between *Palazzo Mocenigo* (Venice, Italy) and the company *Mavive* (Venice, Italy), the co-production between *MUSES-European Accademy of Essences* (Savigliano, Piedmont, Italy) and the *Bottega Reale* consortium (Racconigi, Piedmont, Italy), the co-production between the MIP, *Musée International de la Parfumerie* (Grasse, France) and several perfumery industries connected to the MIP, such as *Molinard* (Grasse, France), and several raw materials and essences producers.

Mavive S.p.A. and Palazzo Mocenigo

The one between *Mavive S.p.A.* and *Palazzo Mocenigo* can be considered a remarkable case of co-production. The agreement between the Civic Museums Foundation of Venice and the famous and historical company of perfume production, prepared thanks to several months of joint projecting and negotiations, led not only to the creation of a new museum gallery (the *Perfume Museum of Palazzo Mocenigo*, characterized by a strong curatorial style and constantly animated by training and educational activities) but also to the invention of a new line of products inspired by the history of perfume in Venice: *The Merchant of Venice*, a luxury line based on the history of the perfumery art in Venice, inspired by the museum's contents, that offers an assortment of exclusive Eau de Parfum and Eau de Toilette, along with body care and household products and accessories. The most important cultural feature of the line, is given by the fact that it draws attention to the everlasting role of the city as an essential force in the perfumery tradition throughout the world, and it is intended to highlight the tradition that made Italy, and particularly Venice, central to the history of perfumery. The line is inspired by the "mude": it is to say, the venetian maritime trade routes that covered a very large area from Asia to Africa, and on to Europe as far as the Northern Seas. This maritime trade started from Venice and reached many different harbours, which in turn were the destination of other commercial routes (these ports were the exchange centres for raw materials and finished products), as well as the museum exhibition teach to the visitor.

As further result of the collaboration, the number of educational activities and events in the museum has increased, and the number of entrances to the museum has almost doubled – the only beneficiary of the proceeds of ticketing is, however, the museum.

The collaboration is started, first of all, from the restoration of Mocenigo Palace (previously the palace was just inserted in the list of the 12 museum managed by the Civic Fundation of Venice, famous to be the ancient house of the historic Mocenigo family, home for the civic collection regarding textiles and costume). After the restoration of the whole noble floor of the Palace, financed by the firm, the collaboration has led to the creation of a new museum gallery dedicated to the Venetian perfumery art. In this way, Palazzo Mocenigo bacames also the official *Perfume Museum* of the city of Venice: the level of interaction between museum and firm in this first phase of content creation and curatorship has been very intense.

The objectives of the museum, were, on the one hand, the desire to be connected with the traditional business fabric of the city, recovering and giving visibility to the ancient techniques and knowledges that over the centuries have been developed on the soil of Venice. On the other hand, ideally, the costume and textile collection of the museum will be completed by the inclusion of the 'invisible accessory' (the perfume seemed, to the curators of the museum, a natural complement to the thematic offering of the Palace).

The outputs of the collaboration are, today, more complex than the creating a new museum gallery (which, just alone, provides a strong degree of complexity: the exhibition covers historical themes and more contemporary issues related to perfumery, and is divided between olfactory-sensory elements and preservation and exhibition of antiquities, like ancient herbal book and pomandier). The creation of the museum gallery emerges as fixed and structured asset, in which we can observe the growing up of many co-produced activities between the company and the museum: publications, conferences on the history of perfume, performing art activities, and the creation of an *Atelier* for the perfume creation, which provides training courses and a workshop for creating personalized scent.

In the dynamics of the collaborative process that led to the creation of shared activities, it is evident that the company has contributed above all in the proposition of cultural content, as well as giving propulsion to a new gallery thanks to the loan of managerial skills also, for example, connecting commercial activities to the cultural content of the new collections, by setting up a new area of the bookshop, in which perfumes can be sold). Reflecting on the sharing of the activities, we can say that in this collaboration, museum and firm have truly cooperate in identifying jointly the cultural proposal and the curatorship: the creation of the new perfumery gallery, driven by the museum, would not have been possible without the consisting participation of Mavive S.p.A., which has not only fully funded the restoration and new construction and allestiment, but contributed mainly in the structuring of the new path, giving ideas and techniques, identifying workers (such as designers), and raising awareness towards other companies in its sector, in order to make them participate in the activity enhancing it -for example, as in the case of the company *Drom*, providing free all necessary essences that must be disseminated and used in the olfactory pathway of the museum.

The interaction intensity has been very intense in the first two years of shared activity, testified by the quantity of events and shared activities organized by the partners. In terms of interaction between the two management heads, in those first two years, a very intense activity has been registered (a meeting between parts is organized more or less every ten days).

As a results of the cooperation, we have a renovate museum who presents the history of perfume in Venice in a interactive way, by creating numerous sensory stations, reconstrucing an historic perfume laboratory, and exhibiting valuable artefacts. The company is also strongly committed to enhancing the vitality of this museum by organizing workshops, family games, seminars and conferences that continuously attract new audiences. Yet, as much as mainly is the company to drive innovation and to deliver content in the co-production, it is the museum who leads the partnership.

Looking at the relationship, we can record that much of the problems and critical issues are emerging in the last period. In fact, the firm cares about to propose and implement new activities and content, the museum instead to manage the property and structure, but the two processes are not sufficiently balanced and coordinated. The museum have the sensation of leaving a lot of freedom to the company, in projecting, proposing and realizing activities, but seems to perceive a lack of sensitivity by the company toward the hierarchies, rules and the constraints that characterize museum management. On the other side, the company would like to find, on the side of the museum, greater availability and proactiveness regarding innovation and experimentation of new educational and exhibition practices. The discrepancies between the museum and company are appearing, rather than in the goals

(which seem, at least on paper, symmetrical between the two co-producers), in the management of cultural service delivery processes.

MUSES and Bottega Reale

Referring to the case of *MUSES* and *Bottega Reale*, central is the territory: the area of production of medicinal plants, which sees in the town of Savigliano its historic epicenter (as evidenced by the presence of a district of the University of Torino, home to the degree course in Herbal Science and Pharmacy). The area, which covers the provinces of Cuneo and Turin, is famous for the high quality of raw materials, both for food and cosmetic (such as lavender, peppermint, hazelnut, helichrysum, absinthe, genepi, juniper and small fruit) as well as for finished and semi-finished products (such as Vermouth and Castalmagno cheese). Composed of small towns, many land used for growing herbs and fruits, central in the area are also the numerous castles and Savoy residences, which give a potential further appeal for tourism. The location of projects and initiatives in the area starts off with the establishment in 2004 of the non profit Association recognized as *Le Terre dei Savoia*. The association brings together sixty municipalities of the provinces of Turin, Asti and Cuneo, and is focused on research of funds linked to projects, mostly in Europe, and particularly for those intended for innovation and productive activities. The reasons for this choice are substantiated, on the one hand, in recognition of an important historical cultural heritage, where a strong component is represented by knowledge, processes, by raw materials and local products, high potential products which are not sufficiently known and exploited; on the other hand, the increasingly difficulty to find funds in the traditional areas and channels of support for culture and cultural heritage. The Association over the years has developed and implemented a significant work that has allowed the animation of buildings and sites of historical value, promoting actions for the integration of cultural heritage and landscape, often cooperating with cultural partners such as museal pole, historic castles and residencies, universities and cinema academies. From this background, takes shape the case study *Bottega Reale*, an articulated and composite projects that have taken place and joined in time, creating a path that holds together "culture and business" and that it combines aspects of preservation and enhancement of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, tradition and innovation, the cultural and business world.

"*Bottega Reale*" (which settles the brand) was founded in 2010. The first activity has been the opening of the "Museum Supershop" at the Royal Castle of Racconigi, a kind of innovative bookshop containing food and perfumery products connected to the territory, instead of the usual books and gadgets. On display are the masterpieces of European masters artisans awarded in the last two centuries the title "Supplier of the Royal House" in major European courts. The intent, beyond the attractiveness for visitors, is starting to spread and affirm a "message" on the distinctive value of the productions of excellence, on the importance of their relationship of identity with the places of production, on the exchange of practices and techniques that have made at the time the network of knowledge. These principles have found, later, the development of the project "Officina Aromataria". The realization of this program is certainly a central passage in the process of knowledge, recovery, support and enhancement of the raw materials, knowledge and traditions of the production area of medicinal plants. The project responds primarily to a number of factors that threaten the heritage (tangible and intangible) of the area, which is strongly linked to the cultivation of herbs. There is the spread in the market of raw materials from tropical countries, North

African and South-East Asia, which have less aromatic spectrum and poorer olfactory component, but that since the late 80's are intensely imported and purchased wholesale from manufacturers from the cosmetic and food industries. An example is the Moroccan mint, which are increasingly replacing the Peppermint of Pancalieri (the best in the world for quality, smell and taste) in shampoos, toothpastes and candies, and that, despite having organoleptic qualities much lower, because less is bought expensive, or worse, because it sold as a mint of Pancalieri. Still, large multinationals (Ferrero and L'Oreal to name a few), buy large supplies in the district, at very low prices compared to the value of the products, by virtue of the exclusive economic agreements. Ultimately, the area is capable of the highest quality productions, but suffers from an impoverishment of its small traditional producers, with the risk of gradual disappearance of the raw materials that the excellent traditions. In 2014 was formed the company "Bottega Reale srl" and was created the brand "Bottega Reale - Knowledge of Piedmont", Today the products of Bottega Reale, distinguished between "flavors and aromas for the table" and "hints and knowledge for the well-being", are sold in the boutique of the same name, in the Castle of Racconigi, and other bookshops castles of Savoy, taking advantage of the flying tourist. They are also present in many hotels of the territory. The path of "Bottega Royal", today, is completed with a number of other initiatives designed to strengthen the link and integration of the cultural resources throughout the area, and between these and the production and business activities.

The most important activity, is the museal one: it concerns the creation of techno-sensorial museum. In the context of some of the historic building of the city (Palazzo Cravetta and Palazzo Taffini), a museum dedicated to aromas and herbs of the territory has been created: the museum (MUSES) holds installation inspired by the thematic of essences and perfumes, made by artists from all over the world. The museum is a kind of sensory path, that combine olfactory, visual and acoustic sensoriality, with workshops and educational activities for experimenting and creating fragrances in spaces equipped for teaching and training activities. The project responds to the will to develop the ability to communicate and represent the territory and its knowledge with a structure cultural structure. A great sensory design, drafted to combine technology and processes which characterize productive processing of medicinal herbs and fruit, representing the knowledge of the territory and giving visibility to the 32 companies that took part in the project *Officina Aromataria*. *Muses* want to create a strong sensory impact, by creating situations where the smell of the visitor is the protagonist, linked to the contemporary site-specific artworks done by contemporary artists to be locate in the museum.

Important, in the case of co-production between *Bottega Reale* and *Muses*, is the size of the network and the number of actors who took part in the museal project. In fact, the leader of the museal project, the association *Le Terre Dei Savoia*, coordinates sixty-two municipalities that joined conferring financial resources but also expertise and specific skills. If added to the thirty-two companies which are part of *Bottega Reale*, and joining the count also the cultural institutions and organizations which are *Muses'* partners (at least a dozen: there are two collaborating universities, many local tourism organizations and Savoy residences, the school of Cinema in Turin and the school of haute cuisine of Costigliole, and several local businesses which in turn give technical advice, funding, and expertise), we can easily appreciate how *Muses* actually represents an innovative experiment in the multi-stakeholder governance of a great and shared cultural activity, representing more than a hundred of territorial actors.

In conclusion, the experience of the co-production between *Bottega Reale* and *Muses*, can draw some observations: the enhancement through a paths of sustainability which involve enterprises, their know-how, processes and products, can lead to identify, describe and catalog cultural expressions and intangible assets that are otherwise not visible or even should be dissipated, leading to a virtuous museal practice. Through a virtuous combination between business and culture, through productions and museal activities, the territory has been able to generate resources for the maintenance of both sites and intangible cultural heritages. The intervention of different actors, public and private, to join their resources and capacity, make possible an innovative forms of preservation trying to get over the traditional approach of mere preservation.

In the case of the co-production between *Bottega Reale* and *Muses*, the territory has generated both the traditional industries than the museal structure that has to enhance and represent them, reducing the information asymmetry and the language difficulties between firms and museum, which are totally sharing practices related to cultural content generations and preservation, to communication, to organization of the activity inside the museum (both curatorial than educational or training activities), by allocating to each of the actors represented (all of them find a specific space in the museum) specific collaborative activities. But, this arrangement create a managerial complexity which affects both the side of the strategy than the side of the processes. In fact, *Muses* has some difficulty in emerging on the national scenario. *Muses* has all the ingredients to reach international audiences and national media: the museum projects affects and represent an entire community, both the co-producers (the business and the cultural ones) work a lot with the tourism and they known as well the mechanics of touristic routes; relationships with important institutions are not lacking, as well as those with local companies, who actively acts in the museum, and, last, but not least, the artworks created for the museum are truly innovative and done by famous and respected artist. However, the lack of a unitarian point of view, or perhaps the difficulty of the central management in balancing the internal relations of such a large and diverse range of actors, appears to inhibit a really coordinated growth for *Muses*.

MIP and perfumery companies

In the case of the co-production between the MIP, *Musée International de la Parfumerie* (Grasse, France), several perfumery companies connected to the MIP, such as *Molinard* and *Fragonard* (Grasse, France), and several french raw materials and essences producers (such as *IFF – International Fragrance and Flavor*, *Givaudan*, *Expressions Parfumées*, *Robertet*), and famous french brands such has *Hermès* and *Dior*, the dynamic with which the actors will exchange knowledges, skills and resources is very different.

The case has a special feature: it results as a perfect leadership of the museum on a group of a dozen specialized companies of the perfumery sector which participate the activities of the MIP, providing financial and in-kind resources (the range goes from the contributions in materials, contributions in objects and pieces for the museum's collection, to the exchange of technical expertise between companies and the museum with respect to the perfumery art's new technologies and discoveries, exchanges of educational skills, and joint proposition and management of educational activities).

In this case we also have a different time dimension: the situation has been stable for the past twenty years. Today the cooperation is fully structured, and it's based on solidified practices

and well-defined boundaries: one of the most important constraints is that companies are not allowed to participate in creating curatorial content, except through the donation/contribution of antique or valuable objects for the museum's collection or through the loan of objects for temporary exhibitions. The inclusion and the collocation of those objects in the permanent collections or in the temporary exhibitions, are decided, in any case, by the curators of the museum, thus keeping intact their power of discernment about what makes sense and what has not to be exposed.

On the other hand, the curators have developed over the years an orderly system to collect the proposals of the companies about possible cultural interests and activities they desire to do. This leads to learn about the interests of the industrial partners and also to collect innovative ideas that can come up from firms, especially about new practical and learning activities to be conducted in the museum. In addition, the museum tries to make its many industrial partners feel at home, by enabling them to organize private parties in the museum and dedicating to their celebration an annual gala event.

One of the planes on which the partnership between museum and companies is intensely developed, is the one regarding the collaboration in teaching activities delivered to kids and visitors (which sees an active presence, in the museum, of those firms producing raw materials, and a real and shared co-production of the educational contents), and the training activities, which can affect both the employees of the museum and those of the partners companies, taking place in the museum or directly in the firms headquarters. The level of interaction between partners is quite different from the one detected in the other cases: the long habits in being co-producers guarantees to the partners an adequate level of intensity in their relations.

About the critical issues in the management of this relation, such as noticed by the managers of the museum, there is the fact that inside the perimeter designed in this coral cooperation with the museum, companies demonstrate to be collaborative with each other, and able to put aside disagreements in virtue of the joint museal project (never complain, confirm the manager, for the fact that someone could have more space than someone else within a temporary exhibition, for example), but once they left the museum, the competition starts acting aggressively, and leads firms to the need of building by themselves private cultural activities without a coordination with the rest of the territorial actors, turning the city into a kind of uncoordinated "boutique à ciel ouvert", teeming with cultural and educational offers that steal space and attention each other (and maybe, steal attention also to those jointly proposed in the museum).

From the side of the industrial partners, a strong desire to see themselves represented in the museum and to be associated to its management and maintenance, appear clearly, also recognizing to the museum its coordinating function and its value as a tool of discernment and cultural transmission of knowledge of the territory. While accepting the leadership of the museum, some companies (three in fact, within the range of the partners), not being fully satisfied in the desire to participate in the curation and considering the revenues, prefer also deliver some fully self-contained educational and exhibition products.

Conclusions

This initial exploratory research leads us to conclude that the cooperation between museums and private *culture-based* firms of the perfumery field have a great influence on the development of museum practices and museum management processes.

The one offered by the co-production with companies is, for the museum, mostly a chance for renewal itself starting from the content, and has, instead, as an opportunity not yet grasped, that of improving processes through the contamination with a different management styles.

The co-production practices have an impact on several dimensions of the museums life, starting from the extension of the museum activities, up to a deeper relationship with territories and local communities, helping, on the other side, the firms.

The main problems occur in the relation start emerging in the moment in which, once passed the first initial investment due to the genesis of the project, the co-producers needs to solidify a long-term collaboration in a set of shared practices and rules.

All the companies producing *culture-based* perfume interviewed for this study declare tangible benefits from their cooperation with the museum, declaring also their desire to continue their investment in the museum activities (investment that leads not only to a better image, but also to creating products strongly characterized by a mix of intrinsic and extrinsic cultural features), although they suffer for the differences in language and management style which characterize these collaborations.

The following sections propose a comparison of the cases studied, giving an overview of the primary evidences that have emerged.

Motives, objectives and benefits which lead private companies to engage in co-production practices with museal activities.

About the role of the co-production between firms of the luxury perfumery field and museums, emerges from the interviews that companies undertake these strategies for various reasons.

Among the reasons identified, in the idea of all the actors respondents, there are the following related to image and reputation: the enrichment and strengthening of the brand image, achieving a public accreditation in scientific and artistic terms (like in the case of the several firms cooperating with the MIP), and the opportunity to enrich the perceptive bond between the company, its products, and the territory (we can also see this as an attempt of empowerment of the country of origin effect).

Have also been noted some important rewards related to the direct relationship with the customer, like for example the opportunity to create leverage processes based on turistic flows (like in the case of Bottega Reale and Muses) and to increase consumer loyalty (like in the case of Mavive and Palazzo Mocenigo). In the words of all the firms managers interviewd, the co-production with a museum is a way to ensure an immediate recognition by the customer of the niche market - these are high potential consumers, that need to stand out from the mass and choose products based on two main features: the quality of raw materials and olfactory concept, and, on the other hand, on the traditional, historical, cultural and artistic contents. Yet, if the consumers are not already part of the niche segments, these cultural activities done in collaboration with museums, represent an opportunity to attract

them towards the niche market, offering an educational proposal in order to removing them from the mass consumption.

Speaking instead of the economic benefits given by the co-production, it has been noted the possibility to create new products thanks to the cultural discoveries made by working with the museums (such as in the case of *The Merchant of Venice*, a line of product developed thanks to the relationship with Palazzo Mocenigo), an increase profit margins on singles products and lines, and the possibility for the product to have a longer life cycle (thus responding to the dynamics of continuous launches of the perfumery market). In all the cases collected, the adoption of a cooperation with a Museum brings the company to a direct (although not perfectly measurable) improvement in product sales and in the ability to marginalize. Still, companies recognized a substantial improvement in employee satisfaction: the staff felt more motivated and close to the company tanks to the cultural components adopted in the cooperation with a museum.

Motives, objectives and benefits which lead museums to engage in co-production practices with culture-based companies

Apart from financial contributions, museums often choose to co-produce and collaborate with *culture-based* companies for reasons mainly concerning the possibility of being better represented in the territory in which they are located; and to the possibility of developing projects that would otherwise not being possible, then, seeing the collaboration as a chance to realize and pursue projects that stand out against the background of normal operations (such as the normal management and conservation of the collection, and the regular management of the structure), bringing from outside to inside innovative content –such as new exhibitions, or sensorial components never tried before.

The objectives of the museums which are related to the desire to be connected with the traditional business fabric of the city, recovering and giving visibility to the ancient techniques and knowledges that over the centuries have been developed on the soil of their territories, are emerged like a very clear intent in the interviews with museum managers. Clear it is also, on the other hand, the idea to complete the offer through the inclusion of objects, reserches, tangible and intagible contents which have been developed inside the firms. Not clear (or, at least, not consciously clear) in interviews with the museum manager, is the recognition of the opportunity to learn and improve their management styles and skills through the contamination with the management styles of private industries.

For museum directors is explicitly interesting to acquire specific knowledges, skills and items from the specific business, but they does not recognize a value in the contamination that can be generated by the approach of two different management styles. The products and the cultural heritages of the companies are therefore attractive to museums partners, unless, the company's managerial skills are not perceived as interesting and often ignored.

To be more specific, by the side of the the museum partners, a great appreciation is expressed for material and non-material contributions to collections and exhibitions, given by the private partners. These contributon are considered to be able to enrich the museum, but, only in one of the cases treated, however, it was actually possible for the industrial partner to actively participate in the curating process.

Another of the areas of activity most important for co-productions, is the one related to entertainment and educational in the museum, in which the role of businesses is crucial, and much appreciated by museums. The objectives that guide the museum in this case, are the quickening of the museum and its vitalizing, and the improvement of educational and training supply of the museum, as well as the chance to see their museum professional operators better prepared on specific topics represented in the museum (almost always they go through the knowledge of the processes of transformation of raw materials for perfumery). Nevertheless, the companies often are not allowed to promote educational activities too different from those already proposed by the museum, the experimental value is, in this case, reduced.

How the decision making takes place, how co-producers manage the partnership

The empirical evidences gathered, leads to think that there are no rigid rules to manage the partnership. On the contrary, the management of the relationship appears like a liquid process, and, often it appears as a bit disorganized, and, in some case, even casual.

In every specific relation, the members of the partnership decide how to divide the tasks between the museum and the companies, with a general trend which sees the institution as the real leader of the partnership.

All the perfumery companies interviewed have found commercial benefits from the promotion of the cooperation with museums, being satisfied in the adoption of the partnership, but, sometimes, they are feeling disoriented in accepting a management structure characterized by a different style and rules.

The industrial partner carries out, in each case, very different tasks inside the co-production. Making a summary of what are the main tasks taken by the industrial partners, we can say that sometimes they act by conferring cultural and technical contents to the museum (like in the case of *Mavive*), other time they act by being exactly the content of the museum exhibition (In the case of *Bottega Reale*), or, in other cases, they participate by conferring historical objects and papers to implement the museum collection, becoming, at the same time, part of it (as we can see in the case of the industries cooperating with the *MIP* in Grasse).

Usually industrial partners act basing their behavior on the needs of the museum, trying to seize opportunities, but without any real long-term planning regarding mutual job description with the museum (the surveys conducted on the field lead to the emergence of a tactical behavior, rather than strategic, adopted by both the partners).

Rarely companies interact with the museal partner with the same intensity. The empirical evidences lead to see that companies which are the lonely industrial partners in the co-production could have a bigger space in promoting actively the museum contents and activities, also if the technical awareness (the curatorial attention and operation skills related to the cultural productions) is not as present in all companies, and this lack of awareness and capability penalizes especially those which are not the only industrial partners in the joint.

An interesting element that emerges from the interviews conducted with both business managers and museum managers, is the following: although both partners are guided, in choosing the collaboration, by dynamics and objectives affecting the image, and by the desire of reaching new audiences with new offers and new branding, regarding to the

communication management, has not been agreed a discipline between the two partners. Communication activities involve both corporate partners such as museums, but without any real planning and clear division of labor. These activities are numerous and diversified (from the management of the discipline related the use of logos and royalties, to the management of the processes of creating paper-based advertising media, of creating and spreading advertising on web media and social media, up to the management of journalists and press), representing a set of processes which are crucial for meeting the mutual objectives of the partners, and yet, they appears generally not been quite disciplined.

The limits of this research are in having treated a low number of cases: for future investigations, it will be important to increase both the size and the richness of the data.

Methodologically, it will be valuable to interview a larger number of managers and coordinators in various capacities within a given company in order to collect more nuanced interpretations of the same phenomena. Similarly, inside the museum, different skills related to making sense coexist: for the future, it might be worth considering to interview both the chief curator than the general manager of the museum.

The current research also focuses on a single sector (the perfume industry). Future research should expand the field to other areas and other culture-based products while, as noted, investigating consumer perceptions.

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