

# Governing public heritage assets with civil society: Exploring the typologies of collaboration by the dominant actor

## Abstract

This paper addresses the societal challenge of sustainably managing cultural heritage, a topic of great relevance for the sustainability of societies and their historical institutions. Specifically, it focuses on long-lasting collaborative systems set up between a public actor and civil society in response to the need for heritage asset preservation, here exploring the roles of both actors in establishing and governing the collaboration over the heritage asset. Our research is exploratory, and our qualitative study is based on 10 case studies purposefully selected from eight different European countries. Three emerging typologies have been identified: in the first, the public sector fully retains the governing power; in the second, the public sector and civil society jointly create a new institutional order; and in the third, the public sector delegates and gives power to civil society actors. The findings point to the key role played by civil society actors in activating collaborative governance, both through practices of functional collaboration and counter-governance. Finally, the article concludes by discussing the main theoretical and practical implications for future research in the field.

**Keywords:** collaborative governance; heritage management; community engagement; collective action; public sector management; civil society

## 1. Introduction

Collaboration is a concept that regularly comes up—especially in periods of crisis and turbulence—to indicate a suitable strategy for dealing with complex and wicked societal problems and addressing grand challenges (Cepiku, 2018; George et al., 2016). In the words of Gray, ‘Collaboration is a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of “what is possible”’ (Gray, 1989, p. 5). The present paper focuses on a specific domain of collaboration: the collaboration between the public sector and civil society for cultural heritage management in Europe. This domain provides an interesting empirical context for analysis for at least four main reasons.

First, state intervention has been largely conceived of as the most common model of cultural heritage management (Klamer et al., 2013) based on the underlying economic concept that cultural heritage is a public good requiring public intervention (Benhamou, 2003). Among the typical public policy measures are the ownership and operation of heritage institutions (museums, archives, libraries, etc.), sites and buildings (Throsby, 2001). In some countries—such as Italy, France, Spain and Greece, just to mention some of the most known European countries with huge and rich amounts of these assets—the stewardship of cultural heritage for future generations is a challenging area of public policy and public services provision. Public actors at different levels often fail to ensure the conservation and management of these assets, mainly because of the limited availability of adequate financial and skills resources (Macdonald & Cheong, 2014).

Second, the value system of cultural heritage and process of heritage management leading to public value creation (Holden, 2004) offer fertile ground for collective action problems. Cultural heritage is a complex of tangible (historical buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, paintings, archives, museums, etc.) and intangible goods (rituals, dances, music, popular traditions, etc.) of cultural significance for human beings. They are the results of a process of ‘heritageization’, which are meant to be the social construction constituting something, such as a legacy, for those to come. In other words, the definition of an object as cultural heritage entails interpreting it as common property that no longer belongs exclusively to the property rights owner (Ariño Villarroya, 2010). Moreover, cultural heritage is diverse from other public goods because it embodies both economic values (use and nonuse benefits) and cultural values (identity, memories, feelings of regard, etc.) (Vecco & Imperiale, 2017). Accordingly, the goals and outcomes of public intervention may vary depending on the expectations of many stakeholders whose interests can be divergent. Bertacchini and Gould (2021) described the social dilemmas that may arise in this regard, where unresolved contention over the values created could indeed easily lead to governance failures (Gould, 2018), making it even more interesting to understand what collaborative strategies can be designed and implemented to avoid public value destruction (Dudau et al., 2019; Esposito et al., 2021; Ricci et al., 2023).

Third, in the past few decades, an emerging body of international compacts relating to cultural heritage management for public benefit has gradually challenged the state-based conception, instead favouring new interpretations that recognise the central role of people and human values (Vidović & Žuvela, 2018) in search of greater cultural democracy (Evrard,

1997) and further justifications for public intervention in this area (Gray, 2008). This trend has promoted a substantial transformation in conceiving cultural heritage as a ‘shared resource’ and ‘common good’ held in trust for future generations, whose care is a ‘common responsibility for all stakeholders’, thus requiring ‘innovative approaches to the multilevel governance which involve the public sector, private stakeholders and the civil society’ (OMC, 2018, p. 12). As a result of this participative turn in cultural policy, the public management of cultural heritage coexists today with various community engagement arrangements (Bonet & Négrier, 2018), and little is known about collaboration types that are successful in ensuring the sustainability and good governance of these public assets (e.g., Campanale et al., 2021; Cinquini et al., 2017).

Fourth, the literature concerned with public–civic collaboration has overlooked this empirical domain (Igalla et al., 2019), probably because of the *silos effect* that treats the study of cultural heritage as a prerogative of the humanities. Indeed, to the best of our knowledge, few studies have addressed this domain and topic from a managerial point of view. For example, Magliacani focused on an example of a cultural network, deepening aspects of governance accountability (Magliacani, 2012) and the topic of ecomuseums and community governance (Magliacani, 2014), and recently provided new insights regarding institutionalising sustainability practices (Magliacani, 2022). Imperiale and Terlizzi (2015) studied the types and related performance outcomes of community engagement strategies in Italian municipal museums. Ferri and Zan (2017) studied an example of a public–private partnership for the conservation of an archaeological site in Italy, and Bonini Baraldi and Ferri (2019) focused on the interplay between business models and governance in three Polish cultural heritage sites within privatisation and decentralisation processes. Moreover, other studies have referred to other geographical contexts, such as those of Cheng (2019) and Gazley et al. (2018) on state parks in the USA, focusing on coproduction activities involving charities. Furthermore, Sokka et al. (2021) offered a theoretical reflection on four types of governing with differing weights for public authorities, civil society, markets and citizens, here calling for empirical research to test them. However, none of these studies offers systematic knowledge about the characteristics of public–civic collaboration in this domain.

Given this backdrop, the present paper offers preliminary insights into three typologies of collaboration by dominant actors emerging from an exploratory study of some European practices, with a specific focus on the roles played by both the public actor and civil society in activating and leading collaborative governance for the management of public heritage assets.

The current paper proceeds as follows: the second section presents the theoretical framework; the third section highlights the research question and methodology; and the fourth section summarises the main results, which we then discuss in the fifth section. Finally, we also offer some concluding remarks on the implications, limits and future research perspectives.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

The present paper falls into the complex body of literature dealing with collaboration theory in public administration from an organisational perspective (e.g., Morris & Miller-Stevens, 2016).

In this context, collaborative governance can be defined as ‘a governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage nonstate stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programmes or assets’ (Ansell & Gash, 2008, p. 544). Emerson et al. provide another fundamental definition of collaborative governance, which is ‘the processes and structures of public policy decision-making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished’ (2012, p. 2). In the present paper, we have adopted this definition of collaborative governance. While acknowledging that the literature offers further frameworks to analyse collaborative governance and its species (e.g., Bianchi et al., 2021; Bryson et al., 2015), we consider that definition more suitable for our exploratory attempt because it ‘does not limit collaborative governance to only formal, state-initiated arrangements, and to engagement between government and nongovernmental stakeholders’ (Emerson et al. 2012, p. 3). In this respect, although collaborative governance initiatives are usually the result of a deliberate strategy of the public sector, this does not mean that this is always the case and that only the public sector can initiate collaborative governance.

Coming to a more analytical understanding of the concept of collaborative governance, drawing from Ostrom (1990), we can argue that the collaborative governance stream of studies is ultimately concerned with studying the actors, structures and collaborative processes that can overcome collective action dilemmas (Ostrom, 1990). Among the advantages of collaborative governance, Provan and Kenis listed ‘enhanced learning, more efficient use of resources, increased capacity to plan for and address complex problems, greater competitiveness, and better services for clients and customers’ (Provan

& Kenis, 2008, p. 229). In this respect, although collaborative governance is not a new phenomenon, this mainstream area in the research has turned up as particularly relevant in the wake of the emerging social awareness and policy attention given to collaboration for addressing complex and wicked issues and grand challenges (Cepiku, 2017). The theoretical premise is the recognition that a single actor does not possess the necessary resources for governing and/or creating sustainable public and social value alone in a complex, multiactor and fragmented society, like the one we are experiencing now (e.g., Bryson et al., 2017). This leads to inevitable resource dependency and using external sources to complement public sector capabilities (Bryson et al., 2007; Rivenbark et al., 2019; Sancino et al., 2018).

Moreover, we might understand collaborative governance both as bringing together actors in a novel way and as governing a collaborative entity. In this regard, Vangen et al. (2015) has provided an important distinction between the formation of interorganisational collaboration and the collaborative entity per se; this distinction is at the base of our work because we focus exactly on these two elements. In the formative process, collaborative governance is indeed about changing the status quo to determine a new arrangement characterised by a new position among the actors involved that become engaged in a collaborative venture. Previous research has discussed that, among the diverse antecedents or drivers of collaboration, the importance of understanding who propels the initiation of the collaborative arrangement, detecting the initiator, its motivation, and roles, can conceptually be defined as leadership or energy centre (Plummer & FitzGibbon, 2004) or initiating leadership (Emerson et al., 2012; Emerson & Natabatchi, 2015). However, once the collaboration is established, Vangen et al. remind us that ‘the governance of a collaborative entity entails the design and use of a structure and processes that enable actors to direct, coordinate and allocate resources for the collaboration as a whole and to account for its activities’ (2015, p. 1244). Accordingly, Vangen et al. have identified three key elements: ‘structure (that is, the different types of partners that are involved and the structural connections between them), processes (that is, ways of communicating, sharing responsibility and taking decisions) and the action of individual actors (that is, actions of individuals with enough power and know-how to influence and enact the collaboration’s agenda)’ (2015, pp. 1242–1244). The antecedents, characteristics (structure, processes and actions) and outcomes of the collaboration are interconnected through ‘an emergent interorganisational process’ that ‘represents the mechanism by which comanagement is realised, explains the dynamic nature of these agreements, accounts for the myriad forms within this type of institutional arrangement, and explicates the range of outcomes’ (Plummer & FitzGibbon, 2004, pp. 882–883). In these terms, the collaborative governance literature recognises the importance of some structural dimensions that provide a bridge between governance processes and structures (Stone et al., 2010), such as process protocols, ground rules and functional structures, to manage the interactions of multiple participants (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012; Emerson & Natabatchi, 2015).

In the present paper, we investigate collaborations between a public actor and civil society in governing cultural heritage that have proved to be successful from both perspectives, namely, the pathway to collaboration and governance, hence focusing attention on the initiating role, the formative procedure, and the rules and the structures that define the governance mode of the collaborative system. The first issue concerns establishing collaborative systems by actors who can be in a formal or informal position to establish and lead collaboration for public policy implementation and service delivery. In this regard, we have attempted to understand the approach used by the public actor, here in the role of the right owner, willing to share its authority over the cultural heritage asset(s), having as a main reference the van Meerkerk (2019) typology of pathways to collaboration between citizens and governments. The second issue deals with governing the collaboration system according to Kekez et al.’s (2019) modes of governance, that is, identifying the actor leading the policy implementation and service delivery based on the collaborative institutional design, which is seen as a complex of formal rules on how the collective action and the institutional linkages among the involved actors were organised.

### **3. Research question and methodology**

The present paper focuses on long-lasting collaborative systems set up between the public sector and civil society to manage cultural heritage assets, aiming to identify some typologies of collaboration for theory building and for guiding prospective empirical research.

The current paper tries to answer the following research question: What roles do the public sector and civil society play in the collaboration to govern public heritage assets? Specifically, this work explores how the collaboration between the public sector and civil society was established and governed for managing public heritage assets (e.g., museums, listed complexes, historical buildings, etc.), identifying the structures, processes and the roles of both actors intertwined in the following:

- The pathway to collaboration, focusing on the initiator, its motivation and main capabilities, along with the roles played in establishing the collaborative system.
- The governance of the collaborative system, identifying the managing authority and governance mechanisms, including rule-making powers over the public asset.

By investigating these dimensions, our paper can contribute to the literature on the types of collaboration between governments and civil society (e.g., Cheng, 2019; Kekez et al., 2019; Sokka et al., 2021) and can offer insights into public management practice, namely the collaborative governance of a public asset.

The present paper is the first output of an international research project and offers evidence based on a preliminary exploration by applying a multiple-case study methodology (Eisenhardt, 1989). Specifically, for within-case analysis, we used template analysis of archival documents (King et al., 2018; e.g., Bouncken et al., 2021) based on deductive–inductive coding aiming at identifying the cases’ characteristics in response to the research question; for cross-case examination, we conducted a K-modes clustering technique in unsupervised machine learning (Huang, 1997) to explore the emergence of any typologies of collaboration based on the observed roles played by both actors (Bailey, 1994). In particular, we conducted an extensive desk analysis using our case studies as a qualitative database consisting of documents retrieved from the case studies’ official websites, publicly available European project deliverables, and dedicated scholarly literature. To sample and analyse our case studies, we used a four-step protocol.

In the first step, we identified the case studies relevant to our analysis. To this end, we carried out a preliminary scrutiny of 137 case studies (diverse in scale, ownership, type of heritage asset, and business model), which were collected by five European research projects (see Appendix 1: [1]; [2]; [3]; [4]; [5]) as best practices of participatory governance for cultural heritage. We analysed those best practices, searching for cases to meet the following characteristics:

- To be located in Europe, where the public sector is traditionally the central actor in heritage management (Klamer et al., 2013).
- To refer to municipal-owned cultural heritage assets, which is the government level closer to citizens and characterised by participatory deliberative processes in several policy issues (OECD, 2020).
- To be examples of stable public–civic collaboration.
- To have freely available online information and secondary data on the history of the partnership, the role of partners, the governance mechanisms of the collaboration and any other useful information to study the governance structures and processes.

The scrutiny resulted in 10 case studies, as listed in Table 1, which also provides for each case summary information about the cultural value of the asset, the current use, the start date and the aim of the collaboration.

Table 1 – Case studies overview

Country / City	Case/Website/ID	Heritage values	Current use	Starting date	Collective action
Austria (AT) / Vienna	WUK Creative Centre / <a href="http://www.wuk.at/">http://www.wuk.at/</a> WUK	Former locomotive factory dating 1855.	Open cultural centre	1981	Promoting social and cultural development
Croatia (HR) / Dubrovnik	Lazareti socio-cultural centre / <a href="http://www.arl.hr/">http://www.arl.hr/</a> LAZ	Unesco quarantine station complex of the 17th century.	Socio-cultural centre	1990	Fostering cultural democracy and sustainable development
Germany (DE) / Berlin	ExRotaprint / <a href="https://www.exrotaprint.de/en/">https://www.exrotaprint.de/en/</a> ExR	Former industrial complex, a listed monument since 1991	Housing for artistic, social, and business organizations	2007	Fostering social, economic, and cultural regeneration
Ireland (IE) / Dublin	14 Henrietta Street / <a href="https://14henriettastreet.ie/">https://14henriettastreet.ie/</a> 14HS	One example of Georgian architecture Style of the mid-1720s.	Social history museum	2018	Preventing the loss of local memory

Italy (IT) / Naples	Asilo Filangieri / <a href="http://www.exasilofilangieri.it/">http://www.exasilofilangieri.it/</a> EAF	Historical building dating 1572 and listed as Unesco site.	Open cultural space	2012	Fostering urban and social regeneration
Italy (IT) / Turin	Cascina Roccafranca / <a href="https://www.cascinaroccafranca.it/">https://www.cascinaroccafranca.it/</a> CasR	Former medieval farmstead dating to the 7th century.	Multi-functional community centre	2007	Relaunching the local socio-economic development
Slovakia (SK) / Bratislava	Stará Tržnica / <a href="https://staratrznica.sk/">https://staratrznica.sk/</a> ST	Nationally protected cultural heritage building dating 1910.	Living urban center with food markets and cultural events	2013	Reviving the food market and increasing city attractiveness
Spain (ES) / Barcelona	L'Ateneu Popular 9 Barris / <a href="https://ateneu9b.net/">https://ateneu9b.net/</a> Ap9	Old asphalt plant, an industrial heritage site.	Public socio-cultural centre	1997	Reconversion towards culture and creative-led model
Spain (ES) / Los Santos de Maimona	LaFábrica detodalavida / <a href="https://lfdtv.org/">https://lfdtv.org/</a> LaFd	Former Asland Cement Factory, an industrial heritage site.	Community space	2009	Rewriting the history of industrial failure
United Kingdom / Manchester	Victoria Baths / <a href="http://www.victoriabaths.org.uk/">http://www.victoriabaths.org.uk/</a> VicB	Historical building dating 1906.	Art and cultural centre	2001	Providing spaces and facilities for swimming, bathing, and leisure

Source: own elaboration

All the case studies in Table 1 are long-lasting collaborative systems set up between the municipality and civil society for managing municipal-owned heritage assets. They share the same collective problem and action: the preservation of heritage buildings is the underlying collective problem, and collaborative governance of the asset is the collective action in response to the need for heritage asset preservation by use for public benefits (mainly city tourism development, social regeneration, public cultural services provision) ([1]; [2]; [3]; [4]; [6]).

The 10 case studies offer a good cross-section of some of the main dominant public administrative traditions in Europe (Peters, 2021). They also represent national variations in terms of cultural heritage policies (Klamer et al., 2013), active citizenship (Voicu, 2014), and civic space (Hummel et al., 2020). Thus, they provide a wide spectrum of situations to explore the relationship between public administration and civil society in collaborative settings.

In the second step, a further round of online desk research was performed for each case study to build a database of documentation from which to retrieve relevant information for our analysis. We collected 82 documents, totalling about 3,097 pages, which are listed in Appendix 1 and quoted in the text by ID.

In the third step, we applied template analysis by hand-coding the documents in the dataset. We did not use automatic coding because of the different formats (video, text, scanned text, image, etc.) and languages (English, Italian, Croatian, German, Slovak, Spanish) of the archival documents used. Specifically, we focused on two dimensions of the collaborative governance conceptual framework: the initiating leadership and the institutional design (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012; Emerson & Natabatchi, 2015; Plummer & FitzGibbon, 2004) like they have been operationalised in categories informing typologies by pathways to collaboration (van Meerkerk, 2019) and modes of governance by lead actor (Kekez et al., 2019). Moreover, acknowledging that, in each collaborative system, for governing heritage assets, different sets of actors can have different roles depending on cultural property rights, to identify the lead actor and the governing mechanisms, we used the generic action situations identified by Bertacchini and Gould (2021) for UNESCO heritage sites as an analytical tool, here applying McGinnis (2011) framework. Those generic action situations are the following: assignment/appropriation, that is, the consumption of the asset; provision/production, that is, the operations regarding conservation, curation and visitor experience; financing; rule-making (formal); monitoring/sanctioning; and dispute resolution/coordination. With this type of analytical tool, we aimed at identifying the asset-managing authority in charge of provision/production tasks while taking into account the actors with roles in rule-making, funding, monitoring and coordination tasks. Furthermore, considering the importance of rules about collective decision-making in providing a bridge between governance processes and structures (Stone et al., 2010), we

complemented the analysis of actors acting as rule makers with a polycentric approach to understand the collective choice aggregating mechanism, that is, to what extent the collaboration system is working collectively or is the result of a hierarchical approach. Here, based on the logical structure of the concept of polycentricity mapped out by Aligica and Tarko (2012), we further operationalised the rule-making task in terms of the participants' involvement in the rule design and existence of consensus rules. These dimensions and categories guided the development of the initial template with *a priori* themes, which were then iteratively modified to fit the data sources in response to the research question. Table 2 reports the final template we used to code cases, structure the examination and interpretation of data, and then write up the results.

Table 2 – Final Template of codes and categories

Code	Categories	Code	Categories
A	Pathway to collaboration	B	Mode of governance
A1	The initiating role	B1	The Managing Authority
A11	Who	B11	Actor entitled with full management power upon the asset
A111	Municipality-owner of the heritage building	B111	Public agency
A112	Citizens from the local community	B112	Citizens from the local community
A113	Civil Society Organization	B113	Civil Society Organization
A12	Why	B12	Users 'involvement in formal rule making
A121	Satisfying community needs	B121	Users are involved
A122	Preserving the memory of the place	B122	Users are not involved
A123	Protecting the property against market speculation	B13	Partner's involvement in formal rule making
A124	Identifying a renovate use for the building	B131	Partner is involved
A125	Compensating Municipality's failure	B132	Partner is not involved
A13	How	B14	Consensus rule
A131	Squatting	B141	Participants adopt consensus rule
A132	Professional Leadership & Service Provision Capacity	B142	Participants don't adopt consensus rule
A133	Public Authority & Convening Power	B2	Governing mechanisms
A2	The formative procedure	B21	Between the actor entitled with full management power upon the asset and the users
A21	Tool	B211	Decision-making
A211	Fee-lease contract	B212	Advisoring
A212	Long term free-loan for use	B213	Service concession
A213	Popular privatization	B214	Market transaction
A214	Invitation to collaborate	B22	Between the actor entitled with full management power upon the asset and the municipality owner of the asset
A215	Declaration of civic use	B221	Ownership
A216	Collaboration upon formal request	B222	Funding
A217	Rent-to investment-agreement	B223	Coordination
A218	Civic management agreement	B224	Policy regulation
A219	Urban masovería agreement	B225	Decision-making
A2110	Trust agreement		
A22	Partner's role		
A221	Provider		
A222	Co-opter		
A223	Enabler		
A224	Entrepreneur		

Source: own elaboration

To ensure the reliability and internal validity of our analysis, we performed two quality checks at the initial and final stage of the template development by using a comparison between two members of the research team who conducted an independent analysis of a sample of the full dataset. Only in two cases did the comparison give contrasting interpretations that the whole research group then discussed and resolved together. Appendix 2 includes the dataset, with cases coded according to the template in Table 2.

In the final step, to conduct a systematic cross-case examination, based on the coding, we first reduced the dataset to four categorical variables representing the roles played by both the public actor and civil society in establishing and governing the collaborative system upon the heritage asset. Table 3 reports the variables' descriptions and measurements.

Table 3 – Categorical variables for systematic cross-case examination

ID	Variable description	Measurement
PIN	Role played by the public actor in establishing the collaborative system	PIN = “Initiator” if A11= A111; otherwise PIN= categorical value under the subcode A22
CIN	Role played by the civil society in establishing the collaborative system	CIN= “Initiator” if A11<>A111; otherwise CIN= categorical value assigned under the subcode A22
PG	Role played by the public actor in governing the collaborative system	PG= “Managing Authority” if B11=B111; otherwise PG= categorical value assigned under the subcode B22
CG	Role played by the civil society in governing the collaborative system	CG= “Managing Authority” if (B11<>B111) and (B12=B121); otherwise CG= categorical value assigned under the subcode B21

Source: own elaboration

Then, using the reduced dataset, we executed a K-modes clustering technique using unsupervised machine learning (Huang, 1997), which was implemented in Python through the open access package K-modes included in the Pandas library (McKinney et al., 2010). K-modes clustering extends the K-means technique to cluster categorical data, thus removing the numeric-only limitation of the K-means algorithm. Specifically, the K-modes algorithm works as follows: 1) select k initial cluster centres, one for each cluster; 2) allocate data objects to the cluster whose cluster centre is the nearest to it according to the Hamming distance, update the k clusters based on allocation of data objects and compute k new modes of all clusters; 3) after all data objects have been allocated to a cluster, check the dissimilarity value of each object against the mode. If a data object turns out to be the closest mode to another cluster, move the object to the appropriate cluster and update the second cluster mode; and 4) repeat step 3 until none of the data objects change clusters (Huang, 1998).

The K-modes algorithm is widely used in different application domains and is one of the most computationally efficient clustering methods for categorical data (Andreopoulos et al., 2005). However, like the K-means algorithm, its performance depends on initial modes and the number of clusters given in advance because they have a direct impact on the formation of final clusters (Goyal & Aggarwal, 2017). We adopted both Huang's (1997, 1998) methods to select the first k distinct objects from the dataset as the initial k modes or to assign the most frequent categories equally to the initial k modes and then performed the algorithm with different devices and manually to verify the absence of fluctuations in the final clusters. Furthermore, we also executed the K-modes algorithm manually to verify the best cluster allocation in the presence of cases with the same matching dissimilarity measure, hence that were randomly allocable in different clusters. We found three cases of this type, and accordingly, we clustered the cases to the best fit with the collected detailed features that the software could not consider. Finally, to offer a graphical representation of the clustering results, we built the Heatmap from the dissimilarity matrix between every pair of observations based on the Huang distance. In particular, colour shades in the dissimilarity matrix represent the degree of similarity: red indicates high similarity, while blue indicates low similarity.

#### 4. Results

The analysis of the 10 collaborative systems showed different roles that both the public actor and civil society could play in governing public heritage buildings. Specifically, from the empirical cases, three main typologies of collaboration emerged that can explain how the collaboration between the two actors can be conceived and occur in practice by identifying the dominant actor, that is, the actor in the position to lead both the formative process and governance of the

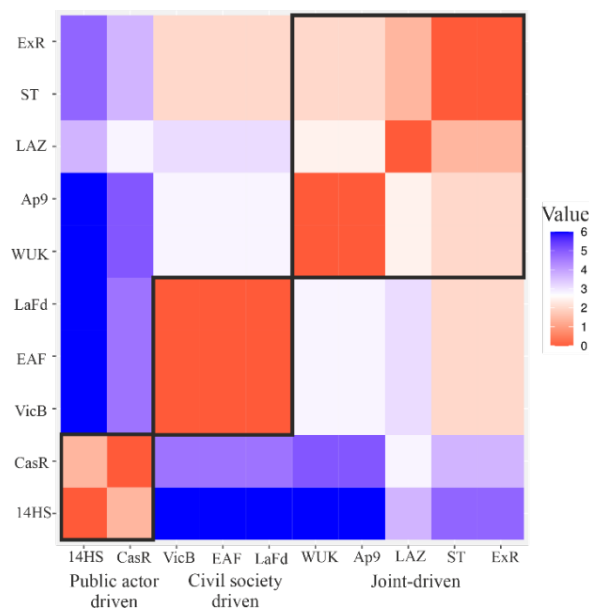
collaboration for the management of the heritage assets for public purposes. Table 4 offers an overview of the detected roles, while Figure 1 provides a graphical representation of the identified clusters.

Table 4 – Roles in establishing and governing public heritage assets

Case ID	Pathway to collaboration		Mode of governance	
	PIN	CIN	PG	CG
WUK	Co-opter	Initiator	Funding	Managing Authority
LAZ	Co-opter	Initiator	Managing Authority	Service concession
ExR	Entrepreneur	Initiator	Policy regulation	Managing Authority
14HS	Initiator	Provider	Managing Authority	Advisoring
EAF	Enabler	Initiator	Coordination	Managing Authority
CasR	Initiator	Provider	Managing Authority	Decision-making
ST	Entrepreneur	Initiator	Decision-making	Managing Authority
Ap9	Co-opter	Initiator	Funding	Managing Authority
LaFd	Enabler	Initiator	Coordination	Managing Authority
VicB	Enabler	Initiator	Coordination	Managing Authority

Source: own elaboration

Fig. 1 – Emerging typologies of collaboration by dominant actor

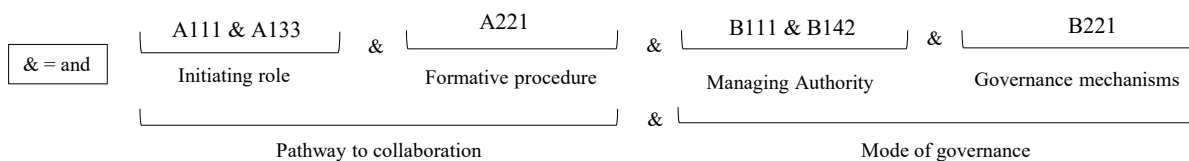


Source: own elaboration

#### 4.1 The public actor–driven typology

In this typology, the public actor leads the collaborative set up, retaining the authority in governing the cultural heritage asset and **institutionalising** the collaboration with civil society in terms of providing the skills and resources for service delivery. Figure 2 shows the most frequent categories that define the logical structure of this typology.

Fig. 2 – Public actor–driven typology logical structure



Source: own elaboration



The 14 Henrietta Street case in Dublin is an exemplary mode of how this type of collaboration could work in practice, while the Cascina Roccafranca in Turin can be interpreted as a variant of this model.

As for the formative process, the collaborative systems in this typology are the result of the deliberate strategy of the public actor. In 14 Henrietta Street in Dublin (IE) ([2], pp. 20–21; [7]) and Cascina Roccafranca in Turin (IT) ([4], pp. 6–30; [8]), the municipality used its public authority and convening power to set up a collaborative system for managing the heritage building. Collaboration with civil society has been regarded as a primary tool for preserving the memory of the place or for identifying a renovated use of the building, respectively. Moreover, in both cases, even if with different procedural tools ([52]; [53]; [54]), the municipalities invited citizens and their organisations to collaborate in service design and delivery under their control and leadership, recognising civil society with the role of providers of knowledge, activities and resources.

This pathway to collaboration led to governance structures where the municipality-owner instituted ad hoc not-for-profit entities (Dublin City Council Culture Company and Cascina Roccafranca Foundation, respectively), which are wholly owned by the municipality, formally granting them the management power over the entire heritage asset ([55]; [56]; [57]; [58]; [6]; [27], pp. 219–238). Nonetheless, on 14 Henrietta Street, people and organisations from the local community may express their opinion in the advisory group and panels ([60]), as well as being active coproducers in specific activities under the direction of the managing actor staff ([53]; [61]). In the Cascina Roccafranca, the local community (citizens, groups and associations, which are mostly on-site users of the building) can take part in the decision-making process by joining the College of Participants (Collegio dei Partecipanti), which is an advisory body in which they can elect (even if by simple majority) two their representatives in the Governing Council of the Foundation ([54]; [61]; [4], pp. 20–21; [30], pp. 38–42). However, looking at the composition of this latter body, which is made up of three representatives of the municipality and only two from the ‘participants’ and at its minutes of the past four years, it is clear that the government of the collaborative systems is mainly in the hands of the municipality ([62]).

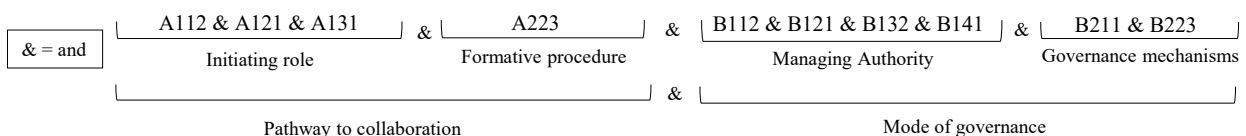
Thus, in this typology of collaboration, the institutional design of collaborative governance follows a hierarchical approach in favour of the public actor while **institutionalising** some forms of nonbinding participation of the local community in the decision-making process.

#### 4.2. The civil society–driven typology

**Opposite of the public actor–driven collaboration**, in this typology, the activation and governance of the collaboration are mostly in the hands of civil society, which **therefore** emerges as the dominant actor of the collaborative system of governing public heritage assets.

Figure 3 shows the most frequent categories that define the logical structure of this typology.

Fig. 3 – Civil society–driven typology logical structure



Source: own elaboration

The Asilo Filangieri in Naples represents the exemplary mode of this typology, while LaFábrika detodalavida in Los Santos de Maimona and Victoria Baths in Manchester are two variants of this type of collaboration.

**Although, in the public actor–driven typology, the public actor considers the collaboration as a deliberate strategy for heritage asset management, these** collaborative systems were **instead** initiated by civil society as the result of a lack of institutional commitment to respond to community needs or of the municipality’s incapacity to preserve the heritage asset for public purposes.

In the Asilo Filangieri and LaFábrika detolavida, the collaboration started with local citizens squatting the heritage buildings. They were local residents from the art and cultural sector ([22]; [23]; [24], pp. 248–253) and a small collective of four to five Bachelor of Fine Arts students from the University of Granada ([19]; [20]; [4], pp. 191–199; [17], p. 287; [21]), respectively, who were motivated by the need for the collective reappropriation of vacant heritage buildings to provide the local community with social and cultural infrastructures. In the Victoria Baths case, a heritage community,

the Friends of Victoria, promoted a massive campaign to convince the municipality to reopen the building after its closure ([28]; [29]; [3], p. 58, pp. 106–109).

In the pathway to collaboration, the municipality performed an enabler role (and no more that of a manager, as in the public actor–driven typology), legitimising and empowering the local community to create for themselves the conditions to manage the asset and ensure its sustainability.

Specifically, in these cases, the public actor recognised the strong sense of belonging to the heritage asset at risk that the civic initiators showed through their protests, as well as the importance that citizens assigned to the heritage assets as a common good. In this respect, for the Asilo Filangieri ([23]; [24], pp. 248–253) and LaFábrika detolavida ([19]; [20]; [4], pp. 191–199; [21], p.161), the municipalities favoured the activists, making the property available and offering basic support. Moreover, the Municipality of Naples legally recognised civic self-organisation and governance, innovating its regulations ([24], pp. 248–253; [41]; [42]; [43]). While in the Spanish case, the enabling role of the municipality was mostly in terms of leaving the activist collective to their own devices ([4], p. 198), only giving them authorisation on the basis of a joint agreement (later in 2013) in exchange for renovations, maintenance and operation ([4], pp. 191–199). A similar role, even more in terms of providing support, direction and specialist advice in finding a shared solution, has been performed by the city of Manchester in the Victoria Baths case ([3], p.109).

These three cases were formed almost from the beginning based on a similar legal tool: the declaration of civic use ([44]), the urban masovería agreement ([45]) and the trust agreement ([46]), respectively. The primary objective of the municipality was to recognise full free use and management power to a community of residents: the arts and cultural community in Naples, the students' collective in Los Santos de Maimona and the heritage community in Manchester.

Different from the public actor–driven typology, this type of formative pathway led to governance structures where civic society acts as the managing authority and the public actor does not take part in the decision-making process leading to the preservation and operation of the asset, hence remaining in the background as a coordinator and delegating its authority to self-governance models.

Indeed, the Asilo Filangieri in Naples, LaFábrika in Los Santos de Maimona and Victoria Baths in Manchester have in common a similar governance structure where the initiator civic actor has been granted full free use and management power over the asset by the municipality. Moreover, these cases share the openness of the civic managing authority, along with the voluntary character of the community members' participation in planning and implementing the operational programme, funding included, even if with different modalities.

In the Asilo and Victoria Baths initiatives, the ground rules governing the common use of the heritage assets have been set formally and are publicly available, with inclusion and exclusion criteria for membership. However, they have different governance structures: more horizontal in the Asilo Filangieri and more hierarchical in the Victoria Baths. The Asilo Filangieri bases all decision-making processes on the assembly open to all the on-site users and adopting consensus rules ([70]). An external body of guarantors (made up of seven people, among which one representative from the city) supervises the respect of democratic principles and collective use of the building ([65]; [66]). In the Victoria Baths case, the governing body is the General Meeting of members. Membership of the Trust is open to everyone, and the Council of Management considers applications received. Then, the Council of Management is the key decision-making body made of a minimum of four and maximum of 24 members elected by the General Meeting under a rotation rule ([46]).

However, the community managing the LaFábrika in Los Santos de Maimona does not have formalised ground rules of governance, defining itself as a 'disorganised society'; that is, they organise around goals, creating time after time different ways to relate to each other and working together, promoting the distribution of power and knowledge ([4], p. 202). They base the overall governance on micro-agreements between any individuals or organisations that want to use the building and manage the relevant issues through independent workgroups of members responsible for their action and direction while using periodical assemblies to take transparently and horizontally decisions affecting the entire community ([4], pp. 200–209; [30], pp. 62–65).

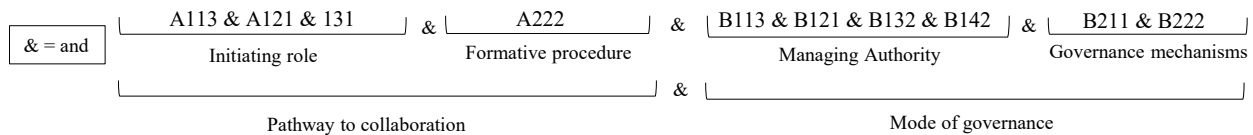
Finally, the three above cases set up arenas where the civic managing authority coordinates its work with the municipality, especially for building renovation and maintenance issues (Assemblea di Indirizzo and Osservatorio Beni Comuni in the Italian case; the biannual meetings of the Monitoring Committee in Los Santos; and the Steering Group in the English case).

### 4.3 Joint-driven typology

The collaborative systems in this typology are diverse from the previous ones because no dominant actor can be identified. Here, the collaboration between the public actor and civil society gives rise to a new institutional order where the two actors negotiate a pathway to collaboration and share in the authority in governing the heritage asset.

Figure 4 shows the most frequent categories that define the logical structure of this typology.

Fig. 4 – Joint-driven typology logical structure



Source: own elaboration

The L'Ateneu Popular 9 Barris in Barcelona and the WUK Creative Centre in Vienna are the closest cases to this type of collaboration. The other cases in this cluster represent some other alternatives of jointness that emphasise either some features of the public actor-driven model, such as the case of Lazareti Complex in Dubrovnik, or those of the civil society-driven typology, like the cases of Stará Tržnica (Old Market Hall) in Bratislava and ExRotaprint in Berlin.

As in the civil society-driven typology, the formative process of these collaborative systems was promoted by civil society. However, in a different way, these cases show a kind of conflictual beginning and response by the public actor. In three out of five cases in this cluster, the initiation of collective action originated through squatting the heritage buildings by activists (individuals or informal/formal collectives from the local community), mostly protesting against the lack of institutional commitment to respond to urgent collective needs. This happened in the WUK Creative Centre in Vienna, where citizens from the local community (social workers, artists, teachers, feminist groups, students and pensioners) took the initiative ([1], pp. 289–293; [9]; [10]; [11]; [12]; [13], p. 80); the L'Ateneu Popular 9 Barris in Barcelona, where 200 residents of the district of Nou Barris urged the city to provide spaces for socio-cultural activities ([14], [15]; [16]; [17], p. 286–287; [18]); and the Lazareti socio-cultural centre in Dubrovnik, where a civil society organisation from the art and cultural sector, namely the Art Workshop Lazereti NGO, squatted some buildings of the entire complex, contrasting the political idea to use the Lazareti for tourism purposes by urging spaces for independent art and cultural activities ([25]; [26]; [6]; [27], pp. 219–238). Meanwhile, the Stará Tržnica in Bratislava ([4], pp.237–258; [30], pp. 70–72; [31]; [32]; [33]) and the ExRotaroprint in Berlin ([34]; [4], pp. 283–303; [30], pp. 76–79; [35]; [36]; [37]) were both promoted by nonprofit organisations, namely the Alianca Stará Tržnica (Old Market Hall Alliance) NGO and the tenants' association ExRotaprint, both of which had strong professional leadership and service provision capacities that could offer compensative solutions to the municipality's failure to preserve and manage the historical complex for public purposes.

Interestingly, in this typology of collaboration, the public actor's response to the civil actor initiative was not to enable and coordinate the civil actor like in the civil society-driven collaboration; rather, the response was that to remedy its incapacity while negotiating some control over or the best economic exploitation of the owned heritage asset.

Specifically, in the WUK, Lazareti and L'Ateneu cases, the municipality reacted by coopting the squatters. In the WUK and L'Ateneu Popular 9 Barris cases, the city's reaction to squatting was to proceed, after long-lasting negotiations, with official recognition through contractual means (rental agreements or similar) and funding the activities. To this end, the squatters (individual citizens, artists, social workers and informal groups from the local community) were forced to organise themselves into a legal entity. In the L'Ateneu Popular 9 Barris case, activists created the Bidó de Nou Barris association ([15], p. 20; [16]; [18]; [40]), and in the WUK case, the activists formed the Association for the Creation of Open Culture and Workshop Houses ([1], pp. 289–292), even if, in this latter case, the basic idea to convene in an association already existed before ([12], p. 150). The city of Dubrovnik coopted the squatting CSO, recognising emerging needs for more cultural democracy against the local monolithic cultural policy and stipulating a long-term free-rental contract to use three buildings of the entire complex in exchange for the provision of art and cultural services of public interest ([38]; [6]; [27], pp. 219–238; [39]). In this case, the collaboration with the municipality began through a specific project ('Independent Cultural Centre Quarantine') proposed by the squatting NGO and approved by the municipality ([27], pp. 219–238; [39]; [24], pp. 148–151).

In the other two cases, the municipality performed like an entrepreneur, looking for the right compromise to keep the asset under the public domain while leveraging its economic exploitation. In the Stará Tržnica case, the collaboration between the municipality and civic organisation was based on a 15-year rent-to-investment contractual scheme that set the roles and responsibilities of each party ([4], p. 252). Here, the municipality took over a preservation and operation project proposed by a team of 11 experts grouped in a not-for-profit association, granting an exemption from the standard competition procedure ([4], pp. 237–258; [47]; [48]). The contract sets the common aim of exploiting the heritage asset as a city centre with an operational programme for the provision of cultural services, food markets and rental services to third parties. The civic association was granted the power to implement the project, with the obligation to invest 120,000 euros per year in renovation works ([48]). Conversely, ExRotaprint in Berlin emerged from a popular privatisation process, where the initial will of the municipality was to sell the heritage building to the highest bidder ([34]; [4], pp. 283–303; [30], pp. 76–79; [35]; [36]; [37]). Against this will, the former tenants of the building formed the not-for-profit ExRotaprint gGmbH ([49]) and, with the support of two local not-for-profit foundations—Stiftung Trias and Stiftung Edith Maryon—were able to negotiate with the city to purchase the building at a very low price, thus removing the asset from market speculation ([50], p. 56). The purchase contract instituted a rent control system based on the separation of land and building ownership, that is, a 99-year heritable building right bound to certain uses (small businesses, social services, artist studios) ([51]).

Thus, the formative process of these collaborative systems is guided by contractual tools aiming at redefining the bundle of property rights and governance tasks between the public actor (the legal owner) and beneficial actors from the local community (who uses the asset) to set the rights and responsibilities of different parties, hence keeping the property under the public domain. Moreover, **the contractualisation process** led to governance structures where the public actor and civil society somehow share the authority in governing the asset for public purposes, using different arrangements depending on the public actor task and the extent of civil society involvement to ensure high degrees of publicness.

Specifically, in the Ateneu in Barcelona and WUK in Vienna, the municipality mainly acts as the funder. In the Ateneu, the formal relationship started eight years after the squatting with a service contract stipulated between the municipality and newly formed association of the initial squatters (Bidó de Nou Barris). After 14 years, the municipality granted full management powers to this association, renewing it periodically up to 2010, when it recognised the initiative for funding within the Art Factories municipal programme ([15]; [1], pp. 83–87; [67], p. 168). As a result, the municipality provides up to 50% of the annual operational budget ([17], 287; [68], p. 3) but with the tacit adaptation of the civic association complying with the requirements to be accountable in the use of the public funds ([68]; Pera & Bianchi, 2022). As for the rules that the civic managing authority set up to govern the use of the space for collective purposes, the statute of the association defines the inclusion and exclusion criteria, as well as the governing bodies ([69]; [70]): the assembly, the management commission and the operational commissions. The consensus rule is the key principle for the functioning of these bodies, even if the statute considers a simple majority in case a voting system is necessary. The assemblies are the main decision-making space with deliberative and validation functions. They are open to everyone but require an actual commitment to actively and constantly participate. The management commission is the governing body able to work on two levels: in an executive composition (made up of the president, the secretary and the treasurer of the association, and two representatives of the operational staff) to deal with operational issues; and, in an extended composition (made up of people from the assembly and the staff without limits) to deal with political issues ([69]; [70]). The Austrian case operated in a similar way for almost 40 years, being legitimised through a special type of concession (*Prekariumsverträgen*) to use the space for free ([13]). Although, under this contract, eviction could be exercised within two weeks, the municipality never took action against the initiative, thus tacitly accepting the rule-in-use and recognising that the centre was able to achieve notoriety at the national and international level. Furthermore, the city government provided support through subsidising cultural activities and paying utility expenses and small-scale renovations ([13]). This situation culminated in the approval of a fee-rental contract in July 2020 to ensure the long-term protection of the *de facto* civic managing authority ahead of major building renovations in exchange for the payment of an annual rental fee ([71]; [72]). Compared with the Ateneu Popular case, the WUK adopts a more hierarchical governance structure, though one based on a broad membership base and coparticipated decision-making mechanisms. Here, the managing authority is the *Verein zur Schaffung offener Kultur- und Werkstättenhäuser*, the legal not-for-profit umbrella made up of about 650 members. The governing bodies are the annual general assembly, which is the highest decision-making body based on majority rules, and the six-member board of directors elected every two years, which heads the association and decides its strategic direction ([73]; [74]). Outside of this legal entity, 150 house groups and individuals self-manage the space and WUK activities in seven autonomous sectors, adopting monthly plenary meetings to make decisions on internal issues (e.g.,

admission or exclusion criteria, division of tasks and spaces, collective actions). The WUK association and seven autonomous sectors coordinate each other through the WUK forum, which acts as an advisory committee for the board of directors ([75]; [76]; [77]).

In the Croatian case, the governance of the entire Lazareti Complex (10 buildings in total) is structured on three levels: at the first level, the municipality, at the second level, the Dubrovnik Heritage Public Company (in charge of the overall management of the complex and of the use of five buildings out of 10) and, at the third level, two NGOs: the Art Workshop Lazareti (which grouped with another two NGOs) which is entitled to use three buildings, and the Folklore ensemble Lindo, which uses the remaining two buildings ([38]; [6], [27], pp. 219–238; [63]). At this level, the NGOs have full autonomy to operate the buildings for their own organisational purposes without any coordination or dependence on the managing actor in the decision-making process concerning the provision of the services they offer ([24], pp. 264–267). They act as in-kind service providers based on a service concession agreement ([38]; [6]; [27], pp. 219–238; [39]).

In the Bratislava case, the Stará Tržnica Alliance not-for-profit organisation was granted the power to implement the project and obligation to invest 120,000 euros per year in renovation works ([48]). The municipality retains the right to use the building according to a specific annual timetable and is obliged to cooperate in providing utilities, information and authorisations for the project implementation ([48]). There are two governing bodies of the partnership: the board of directors and the supervisory body. The former is made up of four representatives of the civic association and three representatives of the city. The latter is composed of representatives of the City Council of Bratislava and has controlling competencies and the task of supervising and reporting every six months ([48]). At the third level, on-site users are chosen via an open call on a competitive basis and stipulate sub-fee-rental contracts with the civic management actor ([4], p. 253).

Finally, in the German case, ExRotaprint gGmbH, the nonprofit organisation formed by the former tenants of the building, was granted responsibility for all aspects related to project development, the renting of spaces, financing and renovation but excluding the power of selling the heritage complex. Currently, about 100 local groups and organisations use the space, paying a very low base rent ([50]; [78]; [79]). The interplay between the managing authority (ExRotaprint gGmbH) and on-site users (the tenants) is well ruled through the statute of the ExRotaprint gGmbH, as well as the statute of the RotaClub e.V ([80]; [81]), the former association of tenants that initiated the process, which is now a member of ExRotaprint gGmbH. To participate in decision-making, tenants must join the RotaClub association and be able to elect three representatives who sit in the operational body together with the 10 shareholder tenants who founded the ExRotaprint NGO ([80]; [49]). However, in practice, ‘ExRotaprint has established a certain bureaucracy and a hierarchy of decision-making powers’, ([82], p.13), as well as that it resolves the need for collective spaces only for a few people, while ‘the problem of rising land and real estate values in the surrounding area’ remains unsolved, clearly still requiring the city intervention for this purpose ([82], p.13).

## 5. Discussion

Our findings have shown that governing public heritage assets with civil society may entail different roles that both a public actor and civil society can play, leading to the emergence of three main typologies of collaboration by the dominant actor.

Specifically, our research has identified collaborative systems with a role for the municipality spanning from the in-house provider and owner of the service model for managing public assets through other roles with more or less direct involvement, such as managing partner, funder, coordinator (e.g., Torfing, 2020; Tuurnas et al., 2022), or with indirect influence through its regulatory function.

Indeed, the three typologies become clear when compared from the point of view of the public actor, here in terms of the spectrum of collaborative solutions that it could use for ensuring the conservation and management of cultural heritage assets, in the presence of limited availability of adequate financial and skills resources (Macdonald & Cheong, 2014), to comply with international cultural policy demands for greater cultural democracy (OMC, 2018) or broadly respond to community needs. From the collected evidence, then, we can argue that one solution could be to invite civil society to contribute with skills and resources under its guide and control (public actor-driven typology). In this case, the public actor retains authority over the asset and public service design, mainly understanding civil society as a provider with whom the service delivery is shared. One other solution could be to retain some degree of authority and control by sharing with civil society both the asset and service design and delivery formula (joint-driven typology)—either directly (e.g., Stará Tržnica) or indirectly through funding (e.g., Ateneu Popular 9 Barris, WUK, Lazareti Complex)—or through policy regulation (Exrotaprint). The third solution could be to give up the authority over the asset and service design and delivery

to civil society (civil society–driven typology), limiting its intervention to ground coordination to ensure high degrees of publicness (e.g., Asilo Filangieri, LaFábrika, Victoria Baths).

Thus, depending on how the public actor would understand its role, drawing on Brando et al. (2019), one vision is to understand the collaboration with civil society as a *governing-over*, with top-down mechanisms and hierarchical structures (i.e., cases within the public actor–driven typology). The other vision conceives collaboration as *governing with*, favouring bottom-up mechanisms based on a more or less direct involvement and horizontal decision-making processes, with collaborative governance structures led by the civic actor, albeit under the political supervision of the public actor (i.e., cases within the joint–driven or civil society–driven typologies). In turn, this choice implies framing differently the cultural heritage to be managed, from a public good requiring public intervention to a ‘shared resource’ and ‘common good’, whose care is a common responsibility (Brando et al., 2019).

While confirming that collaboration can be ordered along a ‘continuum of community engagement’ (Austin, 2020), our findings also shed light on the fact that collaboration between the public actor and civil society is not necessarily the result of a deliberate strategy of the public actor to pursue specific outputs and outcomes (e.g., Emerson et al. 2012; Emerson & Natabatchi, 2015). Indeed, unexpected discoveries of our exploratory research, which is typical of the qualitative and inductive type of research (e.g., Pratt et al., 2020), deal with the emergence of a key role played by civil society for activating collaborative governance with the public sector both through practices of functional collaboration (e.g., Brandsen et al., 2018), where, as per our findings, the key professional capacities were residing in civil society actors rather than in the public sector, and through practices of countergovernance and agonism (e.g., Dean, 2018), such as squatting, where civil society actors received attention and convinced the public actor to collaborate after illegally occupying the abandoned public assets or after having shown the ability to deliver a public service and create public value in conditions of nonauthorised self-governance. Squatting in Europe has been described as a heterogeneous phenomenon (Squatting Europe Kollektive, 2014), and strategies adopted by authorities to repress or institutionalise squatting differ depending on the political circumstances at a particular time (Rossini et al., 2018; López, 2013); certainly, squatting and dissensus in collaborative governance are topics that deserve specific and contextual research that goes beyond the purposes of the present paper. However, it is interesting to note some common traits of typical entrepreneurial and conservational squatting that could explain the unusual willingness of the squatters to negotiate the survival of their project with the authorities, despite the countercultural ideological concerns behind their actions (Pruijt, 2013, p. 12). On the other hand, it is plausible to affirm that the level of public visibility and social legitimation of these centres were, together with the tolerance of the authorities, some important strengths. For example, the WUK has been described as the result of ‘a peaceful riot’ ([13], p. 80) thanks to the open nature of its initiators that determined the support of the culture councillor of the time ([13], p. 80), and to notoriety achieved by the centre ([13]; [71]; [72]); the neighbourhood associationism, the use of cultural events to gather public visibility and social legitimacy and the advent of social-democratic governments where many activists joined the new municipal administration were some forces behind the success of the collaboration in the Ateneu Popular 9 Barris ([15]; [16]); the institutionalisation of squatting in Naples was derived from a shared path that the mayor elected just a few months before the squatting led in contraposition to the power system of the previous centre-left administration ([41]; [42]; [43]). Conversely, the Croatian case saw a permanent dispute between the two actors because the civic actor declined the institutionalisation offered by the Croatian Peasants Party in exchange for a service concession ([6], p. 108) because the civic intention was mainly ‘to form a recognisable, visible and accepted point of contemporary arts that was subversively juxtaposed towards social and institutional frameworks’ ([6], p. 108).

These experiences point to the importance of considering the role of civil society as a social movement for countergovernance (e.g., Della Porta, 2020), offering a perspective on collaborative governance where conflict is more explicitly considered; as Dean puts it, ‘whereas collaborative governance has primarily focused on making decision processes more inclusive, the agonistic perspective points us to the need to also democratise avenues for challenging decisions’ (2018, p. 182).

## 6. Conclusion

The present paper has explored the roles played by the public sector and civil society in collaborating for governing public heritage assets in 10 European cases that the literature awarded as best practices of participatory governance of cultural heritage. The analysis of both the pathway to collaboration and the mode of governance shed light on the key role played by civil society in activating collaborative governance with the public sector both through practices of functional collaboration and countergovernance. Specifically, from the different configurations of roles played by both actors, three

emerging typologies of collaboration by dominant actors have been identified, which appear particularly promising for future research and practice. **In this regard, several contributions and implications can be highlighted.**

The paper offers systematic knowledge about some characteristics of public–civic collaboration in the cultural heritage domain, an empirical field that the literature on collaboration in public administration has overlooked (Igalla et al., 2019). In particular, considering the models of participatory governance proposed by Sokka et al. (2021), our findings, focusing on the effective role played in the collaboration by the civil society rather than on the participatory approach used by the public actor (governmental, corporatist, service-led or cocreative), provide a clearer theoretical window to operationalise collaborative governance models, where ‘much depends on how much power a political system is willing to grant the people’ and ‘citizen participation needs to be carefully thought out in advance’ (Sokka et al., 2021, p. 8). **Using a polycentric perspective (Aligica & Tarko, 2012), we have offered analytical tools that favour the integration of different perspectives (e.g., Bryson et al., 2015; Morris & Miller-Stevens, 2016:), which appear promising to overcome all the interpretative difficulties in detecting the differences in collaborations for public service delivery, especially when they could overlap in practice (i.e., consultative delivery, coproduction, ecomanagement, etc.; Kekez et al., 2019). For instance, the focus on the cultural heritage domain showed that collaboration initiated with coproduction (e.g., the civil society proposing a project like the Lazareti Complex) evolved in comanagement from a legal point of view.**

Moreover, our exploratory study has identified new linking governance mechanisms (Cheng, 2019). For example, where the involvement of the local community happens in terms of the creation of a joint entity, we found joint decision-making arenas with representatives from both parties, even if with different weights, and supervision activities performed by the public actor. In cases where the local community has the leadership, the public actor maintains control over the asset, indirectly through policy and funding regulations or directly through representatives in ad hoc joint coordination arenas. **A promising area for deriving some theoretical and managerial implications from our study is in promoting a better linkage between strategic management and collaborative governance because the practices of strategising might be very different depending on the organisational actor promoting them. Cases in the public-driven typology suggest embracing an advanced notion of strategic management that goes beyond the traditional environment of reference according to an ecosystem approach (e.g., Osborne, 2020). The experiences in the joint-driven typologies offer a perspective where power and conflict regulation are more explicitly considered (e.g., Della Porta, 2020), highlighting the opportunity to design formal or informal governance arrangements that are effective in addressing and managing stakeholder expectations (e.g., Cabral et al., 2019). The cases in the civil society–driven typology, here representing some concrete ways of institutionalising social innovation practices as a bottom-up strategic response (Sancino et al., 2023), clearly connect strategic management in collaborative settings to social movement theories, challenging the conception and formulation process of the strategic planning approach (e.g., Bryson et al., 2018).**

Although our research has some limitations in terms of the depth of the findings because of the archival data used and limited number of case studies, the emergence of three main typologies of collaboration by dominant actor appears particularly promising for future studies that could investigate what contextual factors shape the different models, through, for example, longitudinal ethnographies and how the different models may lead to different performance outcomes, for example, by using methodologies like the qualitative comparative analysis (e.g., Cepiku et al., 2019).

More broadly, these findings connect with the topic of how the state can reconstruct civil society (Brandson et al., 2017) or potentially can be reconstructed by civil society, as envisaged by Ostrom (1990). In this respect, as pointed out by Brandson et al., we believe that future research perspectives should try to better ‘understand how the complex relationship between governments and civil society organizations is currently unfolding’ (2017, p. 689), especially at a time when this relationship is increasingly being confronted with pressing societal challenges.

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