

The value of participation. Or, in other words: I like participatory museums but, how much?

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THE VALUE OF PARTICIPATION

I LIKE PARTICIPATORY MUSEUMS; BUT HOW MUCH?

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Work derived from Internal Reports – WP1 & WP3 – Tasks T1.3 & T3.1 and Deliverable D3.2

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Setting out the matter

Aims and structure

Setting the research:

- **Governance based on participatory models:** growing interest for cultural institutions / museums
 - Grounded on the active involvement of multiple actors (curators, community, and stakeholders) in the processes of management, programming, production, and innovation
 - **Assessment:** few experiences, at most ex-post (results and efficiency) but not ex-ante (embedding the value).
- **Study purpose:** evaluation of a participatory strategy for RECHARGE museums, embedding the value allocated from the demand- and supply-side (community and stakeholders), and comparing with the current efforts made by the museums
- **Designing an *ad hoc* methodological approach:**
 - Defining a participatory strategy: dimensions and options
 - Evaluation from the demand (community) and supply side (managers and stakeholders)
 - Setting out the approach and techniques to be applied: non-market evaluation and benchmarking decisions
 - Carrying out the empirical work: surveys in cities (demand) and in museums (supply)

Setting the matter

Aims and structure

Structure:

1. **Methodological approach:** defining a participatory management model for a group of museums / setting the evaluation strategy
2. **Case study and application:** living-lab museums and implementing the complex assessment approach
3. **Results:** back-to-back display of results by subject, museums and stakeholders
4. **Discussion:** main conclusions and policy implications

Documents:

- **RECHARGE Research report:** The value of participation. April 2024
- **RECHARGE Research report:** Benchmarking participatory strategies (September 2024)
- **RECHARGE Deliverable:** Report on Effectiveness of Cultural Business Models (March 2025)

Methodological approach

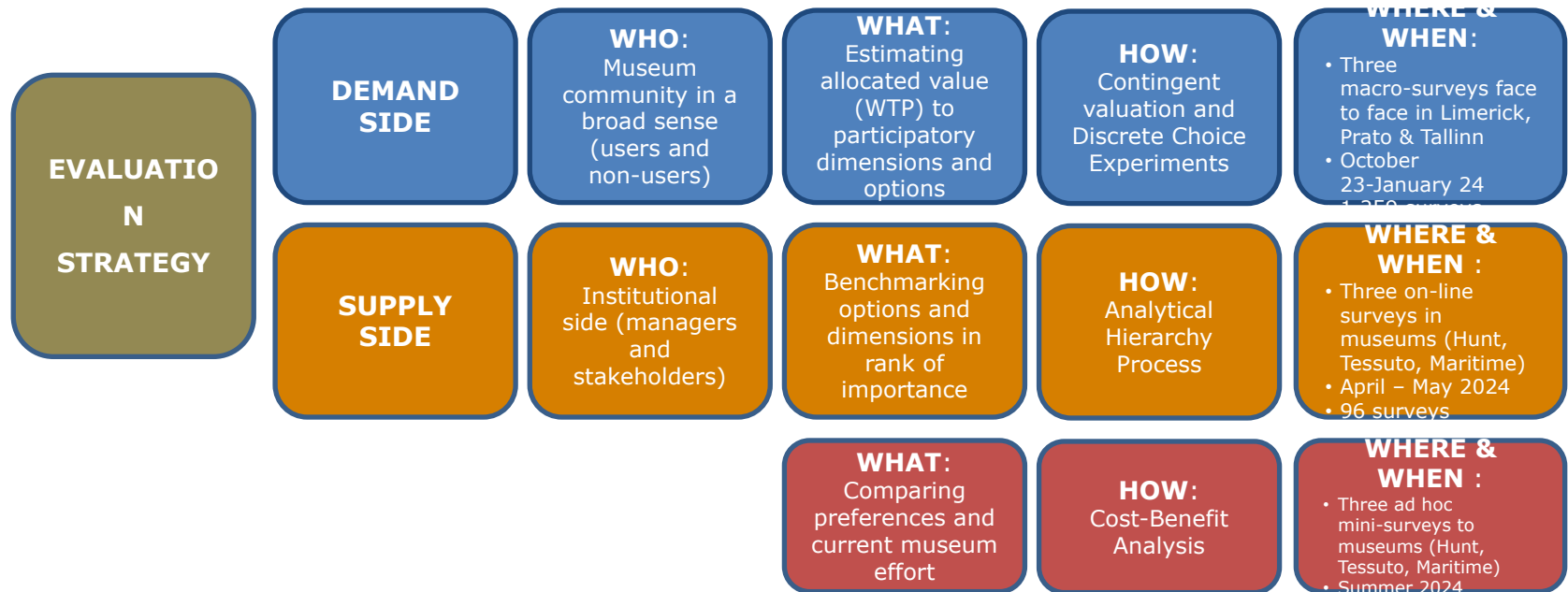
Definition of a participatory strategy for museums

<i>Defining participatory dimensions</i>	<i>Specifying participatory options on a scale of growing involvement (contribution / co-decision / empowerment)</i>			
Dimension 1: Involving collaborative co-governance	Option 1: Consulting people on activities of their interest	Option 2: Advisory board with relevant groups (artists, curators, citizens, etc.).	Option 3: Multi-stakeholder engagement with decision-making power on policies & accountability	Status quo
Dimension 2: Involving creative co-production	Option 1: Creative experiences for local community	Option 2: Facilities for emerging artists and guest curators	Option 3: Permanent advisory board with creative sector agents and institutions.	Status quo
Dimension 3: Involving social co-innovation	Option 1: Voluntary programme of social and community actions	Option 2: Collective co-creation on promoting diversity, inclusion and civil engagement	Option 3: Long-term social action programme addressing social challenges and wellbeing impact	Status quo
Dimension 4: Involving technological co-innovation	Option 1: Crowdsourcing initiatives to make the museum's digital material available	Option 2: New digital cultural supply based on sensory experimentation and AI services	Option 3: Permanent participatory committee on technology and innovation engagement	Status quo
Value vehicle: Annual monetary contribution	25 €	50 €	100 €	0 €

Methodological approach

Evaluation strategy: embedding the value allocated

Methodology: a complex approach focusing on both sides of the market, demand (community) and supply (institutional)



Methodological approach

Case study: the RECHARGE museums

RECHARGE

Resilient European Cultural Heritage
As Resource for Growth & Engagement



<https://recharge-culture.eu/>



Limerick, Ireland

Living lab focused towards CSR and engagement of participatory communities



Prato, Italy

Living lab focused towards engaging the creative sector and artists in an online shop for products and services



Tallinn, Estonia

Living lab focused towards harnessing technological innovation for the creation of educational resources



Application: evaluation on the **demand side**

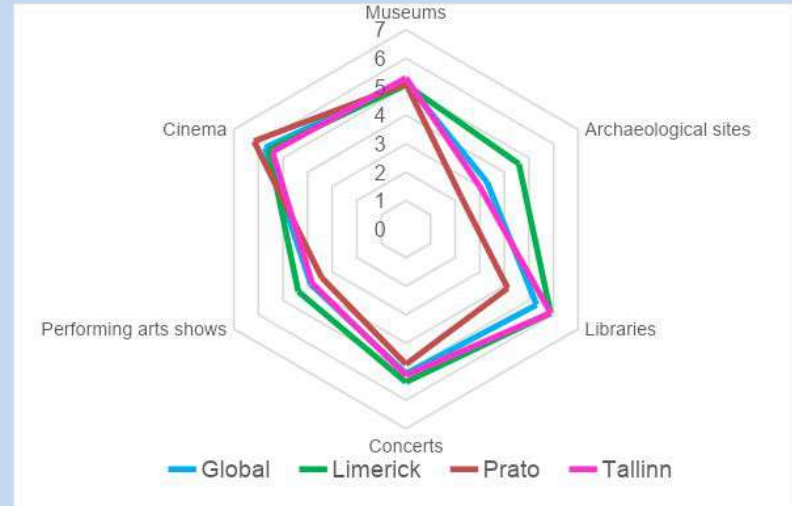
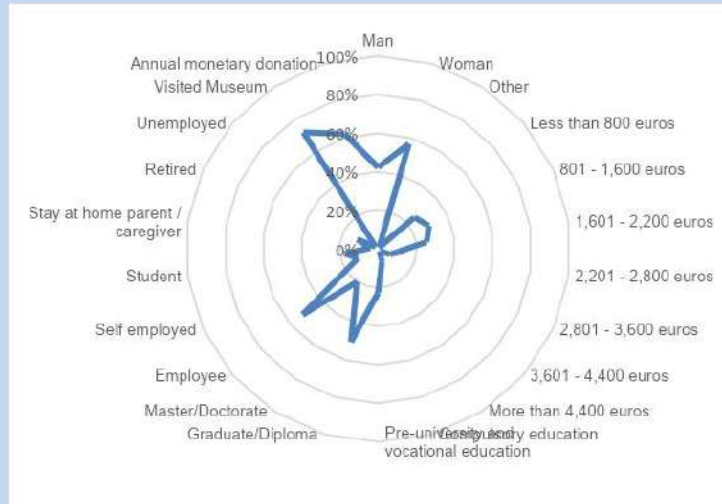
Experimental design and socio-economic characteristics of samples

Contingent Valuation Method

- Contingent market (whole strategy)
- V
- S



Demand side: museum community



Communities: mainly women, of adult age, 42 years old on average, intermediate income, intermediate-high education, mostly employees, have visited the museum, significant WTP, standardised cultural consumption (+ museums and libraries)

Tallinn
 .60%
 .40%
 .00%
 .91%
 .03%
 .82%
 .14%
 .62%
 .59%
 .88%
 .76%
 .71%
 .53%
 .00%
 .64%
 .42%
 .48%
 .58%
 .64%
 .52%
 .81%
 .02%
 .203
 .23
 .34%

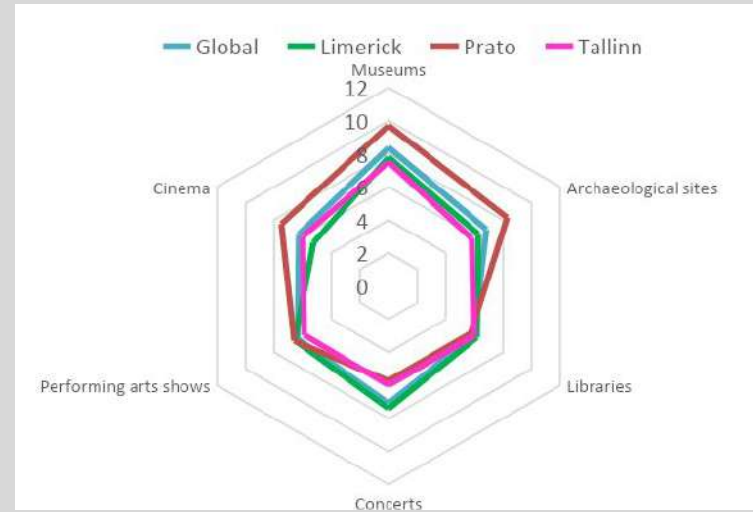
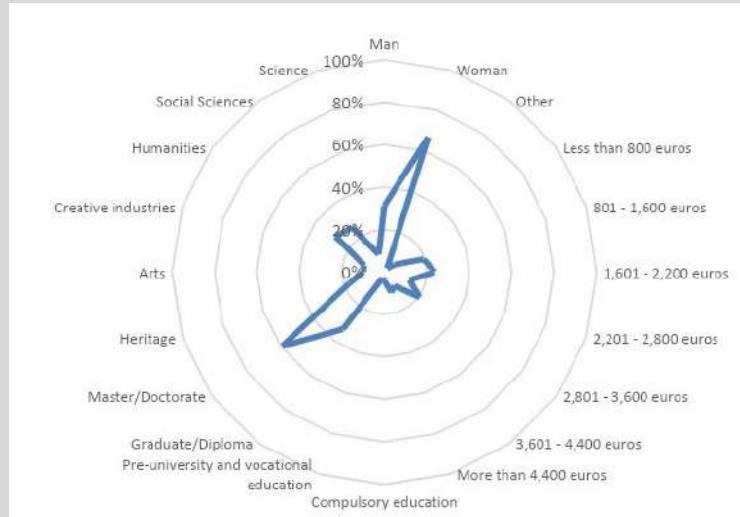
Application: evaluation on the **supply side**

Experimental design and socio-economic characteristics of samples

Analytical Hierarchy Process

- A decision-making method to rank alternatives

Supply side: Museums' stakeholders



Stakeholders: mostly women, 46 years old, intermediate income, high level of education, studies in humanities and social sciences, quite long-standing relationship with the museum (10 years), highbrow cultural consumption

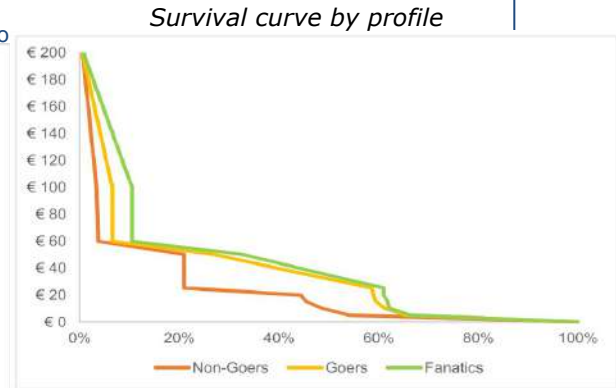
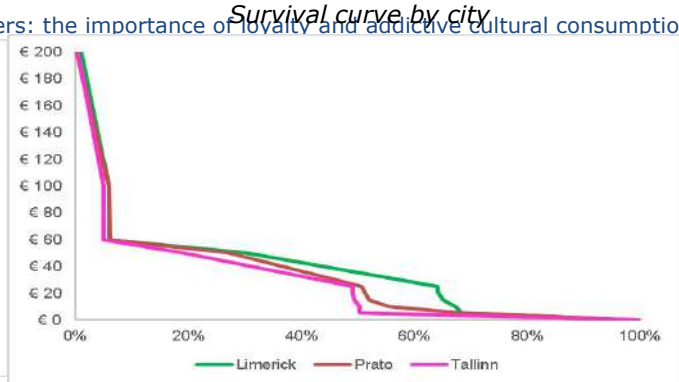
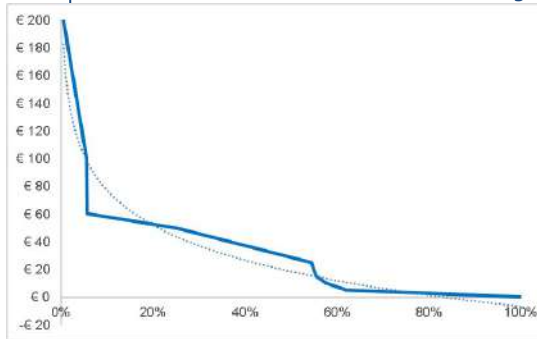
Tallinn
33.33%
66.67%
0.00%
4.17%
8.33%
25.00%
12.50%
29.17%
12.50%
8.33%
13.33%
26.67%
16.67%
16.67%
26.67%
3.33%
0.00%
33.33%
63.33%
43.03
14.65

Results (I): embedding the value from the **demand side**

Valuing the whole participatory strategy

Willingness to donate a voluntary annual quota so that museums can implement a full participatory strategy.

- Approximately 68% of respondents in Limerick and Prato willing to donate. Only 50% in Tallinn gave an affirmative answer
- Significant WTP: higher in Limerick than in Prato and Tallinn
- **Global survival curve**



Value	Global	Limerick	Prato	Tallinn
Average WTP	€ 64.59	€ 71.70	€ 63.29	€ 40.15

Value	Non-Goers	Goers	Fanatics
Average WTP	€ 45.65	€ 69.71	€ 80.84

Results: embedding the value from the demand side

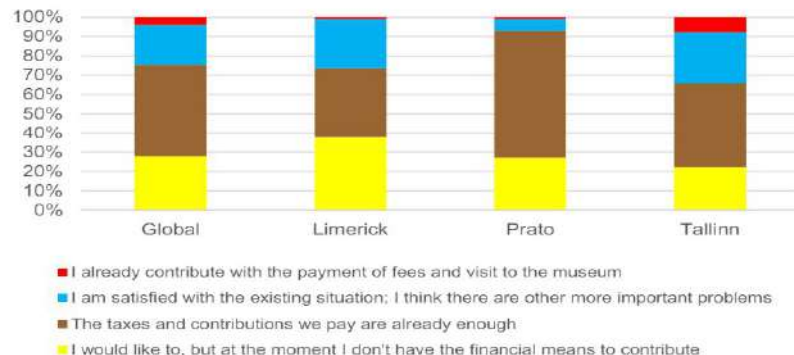
Factors determining WTP and reasons for not contributing

WTP	Global
Sex	0.0107 (0.1429)
Age	-0.0118 (0.0064)*
Level of education	0.0036 (0.0959)
Income level	0.2263 (0.0725)***
Employee	0.3047 (0.6547)
Self employed	0.1117 (0.6829)
Student	-0.1871 (0.6774)
Stay at home parent / caregiver	2.0023 (0.7942)**
Retired	0.1636 (0.6960)
Unemployed	-0.2573 (0.8403)
Goers	0.3931 (0.1577)**
Acceptance level of participatory models	0.4699 (0.0755)***
Visits to museums or exhibitions	0.1679 (0.0944)*
Visits to monuments or archaeological sites	0.0851 (0.0825)
Attendance at libraries	0.0416 (0.0549)
Attendance at musical performances (concerts)	0.1644 (0.0890)*
Attendance at performing arts shows (theatre, opera, dance, circus)	0.0232 (0.0921)
Attendance at cinema	-0.0252 (0.0726)
Museums are central to the progress of communities	-0.1436 (0.1128)
The value and importance of a museum is expressed in the effect it has on communities	0.2789 (0.1034)***
Populations with museums tend to have a high standard of living	-0.0234 (0.0773)
Museums provide public spaces for social interaction and participation	0.2795 (0.1025)***
Museums have the ability to transform societies	-0.0017 (0.0928)
The services offered by museums help people to learn	0.2636 (0.1488)*
Museums help to preserve history and strengthen community identity	-0.1250 (0.1296)
Investment in museums is as important as investment in other social services	0.1007 (0.0594)*
Constant	-4.6311 (1.0274)***

Note: Standard error in parentheses, which indicate the dispersion of the data (standard deviation) for each indicator. *p value<0.1; **p value<0.05; ***p value<0.01

Remarks:

- Drivers of WTP: income, cultural consumption, museum goers, trust in museums as levers of social change, age (-)
- Reasons for not contributing
 - Main reason: taxes payment (notion of museums as public goods) (Prato and Tallinn)
 - Limerick differs: arguing contingent financial reasons (notion of cultural common)



Results: embedding the value from the demand side

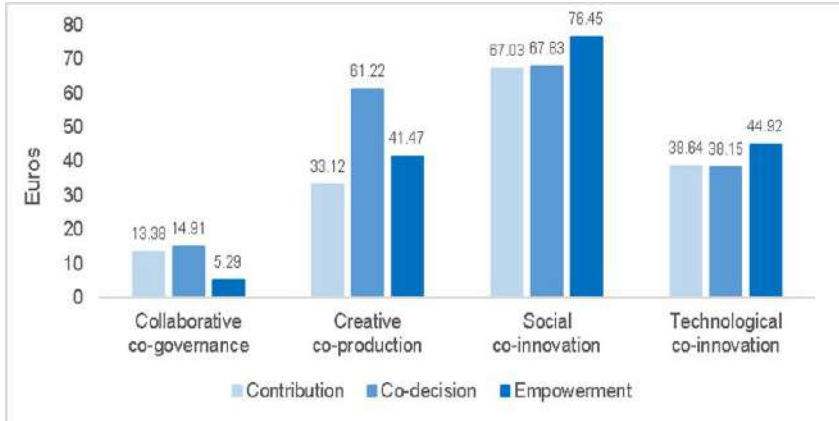
Marginal values of dimensions and options: econometric models

Econometric models for estimating WTP by participatory levels for Global, Limerick, Prato, and Tallinn

	Global		Limerick		Prato		Tallinn	
Variable	MNL	MCL	MNL	MCL	MNL	MCL	MNL	MCL
Annual monetary contribution	-0.0152*** (0.0010)	-0.0164*** (0.0011)	-0.0097*** (0.0019)	-0.0087*** (0.0018)	-0.0174*** (0.0019)	-0.0183*** (0.0022)	-0.0190*** (0.0018)	-0.0179*** (0.0019)
Collaborative co-governance (Ref.: current situation -without changes)								
Contribution	0.2149** (0.0956)	0.2194** (0.0936)	-0.0745 (0.1654)	-0.0490 (0.1504)	0.4210** (0.1712)	0.3826** (0.1591)	0.3325** (0.1648)	0.2640* (0.1526)
Co-decision	0.1926** (0.0835)	0.2445** (0.0890)	0.3581** (0.1456)	0.3904** (0.1423)	-0.0089 (0.1513)	0.0143 (0.1533)	0.2430* (0.1421)	0.2935** (0.1388)
Empowerment	-0.0119 (0.0888)	0.0859 (0.0976)	-0.0573 (0.1568)	0.0151 (0.1586)	-0.1063 (0.1611)	-0.0151 (0.1515)	0.0967 (0.1492)	0.1893 (0.1570)
Creative co-production (Ref.: current situation -without changes)								
Contribution	0.6359*** (0.1013)	0.5431*** (0.1044)	0.7156*** (0.1760)	0.5929*** (0.1699)	0.7131*** (0.1853)	0.4777*** (0.1794)	0.4805*** (0.1708)	0.2776 (0.1687)
Co-decision	0.9395*** (0.0926)	1.0040*** (0.0957)	1.0232*** (0.1585)	0.9011*** (0.1495)	0.8706*** (0.1720)	0.9078*** (0.1657)	0.9094*** (0.1565)	0.8737*** (0.1555)
Empowerment	0.6590** (0.0844)	0.6801** (0.0840)	0.5892*** (0.1482)	0.5018*** (0.1349)	0.6728*** (0.1485)	0.6982*** (0.1371)	0.7027*** (0.1464)	0.6334*** (0.1324)
Social co-innovation (Ref.: current situation -without changes)								
Contribution	1.1228*** (0.0829)	1.0993*** (0.0864)	1.0528*** (0.1455)	0.8401*** (0.1370)	1.5522*** (0.1483)	1.4722*** (0.1537)	0.8221*** (0.1417)	0.7130*** (0.1381)
Co-decision	1.1223*** (0.1005)	1.1125*** (0.1034)	1.0278*** (0.1752)	0.8332*** (0.1629)	1.7795*** (0.1831)	1.688*** (0.1849)	0.6358*** (0.1731)	0.5575*** (0.1706)
Empowerment	1.2634*** (0.0880)	1.2538*** (0.0962)	1.0046*** (0.1518)	0.8306*** (0.1522)	1.7123*** (0.1590)	1.5541*** (0.1730)	1.1288*** (0.1520)	1.0269*** (0.1566)
Technological co-innovation (Ref.: current situation -without changes)								
Contribution	0.7187*** (0.0831)	0.6337*** (0.0853)	0.7522*** (0.1464)	0.6152*** (0.1387)	0.624*** (0.1505)	0.3654** (0.1474)	0.7597** (0.1409)	0.6072*** (0.1351)
Co-decision	0.6714*** (0.0885)	0.6257*** (0.0950)	0.7022*** (0.157)	0.6025*** (0.1531)	0.7791*** (0.1565)	0.4993*** (0.1669)	0.5774*** (0.1540)	0.5499*** (0.1572)
Empowerment	0.8264*** (0.0846)	0.7368*** (0.0877)	0.8450*** (0.1472)	0.6758*** (0.1382)	0.9022*** (0.1474)	0.7102*** (0.1486)	0.7667*** (0.1494)	0.5738*** (0.1419)
Constant	-1.5565*** (0.0458)		-1.6525*** (0.0789)		-1.7769*** (0.0875)		-1.2999*** (0.0740)	
Number of observations	7,554	7,554	2,502	2,502	2,442	2,442	2,610	2,610
Wald chi2 or LR chi2	985.58	1,091.18	316.97	305.49	441.95	448.78	291.58	283.20
Prob > chi2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Pseudo R2	0.1176	0.1327	0.1144	0.1353	0.1691	0.2036	0.0975	0.1202
Log pseudolikelihood or Log likelihood	-4,242.8607	-3,565.5934	-1,410.3942	-976.5137	-1,291.5598	-877.7844	-1,499.2607	-1,036.4017

Results: embedding the value from the **demand side**

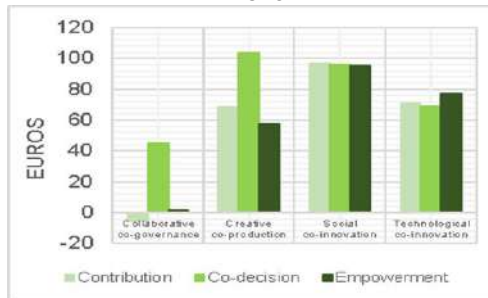
Marginal values of dimensions and options: main results



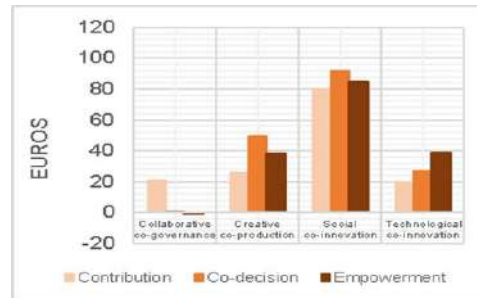
Remarks:

- ✓ Social co-innovation: most highly valued
- ✓ Also technological dimensions and specifically facilities for emerging artists (production)
- ✓ Collaborative co-governance dimension is highly undervalued.
- ✓ Limerick: highest ratings. Tallinn: fairly balanced valuation structure. Prato: social options stand out

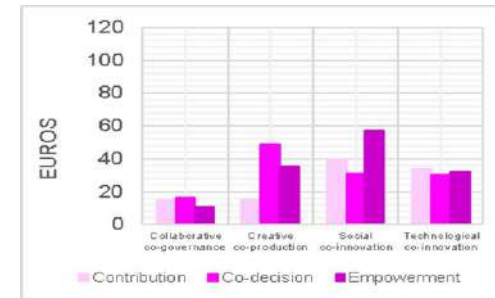
Limerick



Prato



Tallinn



Results (II): benchmarking options from the **supply side**

Benchmarking participatory options by managers and stakeholders

Defining stakeholders

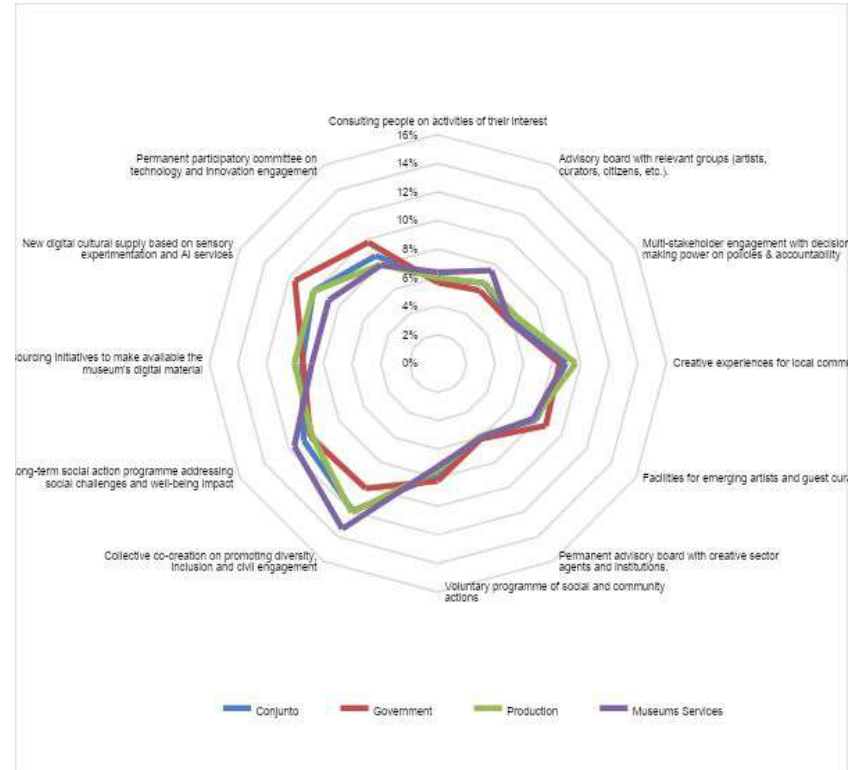
- Government (managers and policy-makers)
- Creatives (artists, technologists, and museum operators)
- Services allies (providers, artisans, publishers, education and outreach)

Purpose

- Benchmarking participatory options in pairs
- Robust results on the value allocated (no-monetary, just ranked) for the whole sample, by museum, by type of stakeholders

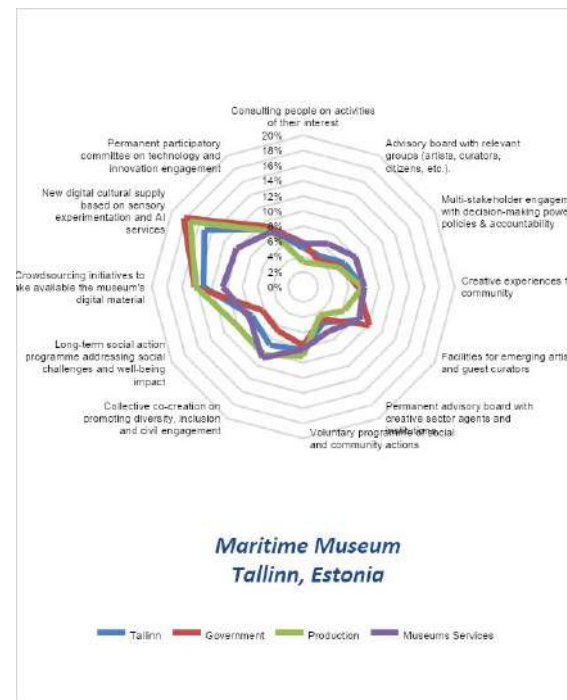
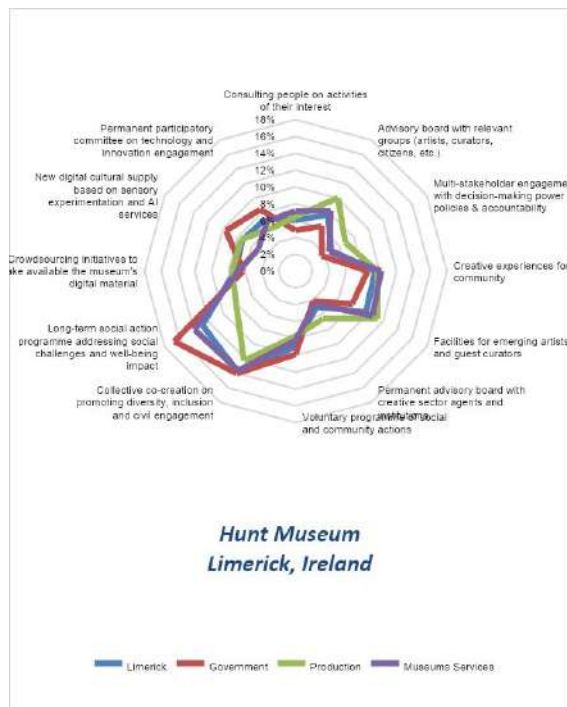
Remarks

- Stakeholders value social actions the most (specially DEI matter), then technology options. Also specifically supporting creative experiences for the local community
- The lowest values go to participatory governance options
- Preference structure similar to that emanating from the community (demand side)
- Government goes for Technology, Creators have quite balance set, Services allies go for social dimensions and production.
- Museum preferences according to their specialisation (Hunt-Social, Tessuto-Creative, Maritime-Technological)



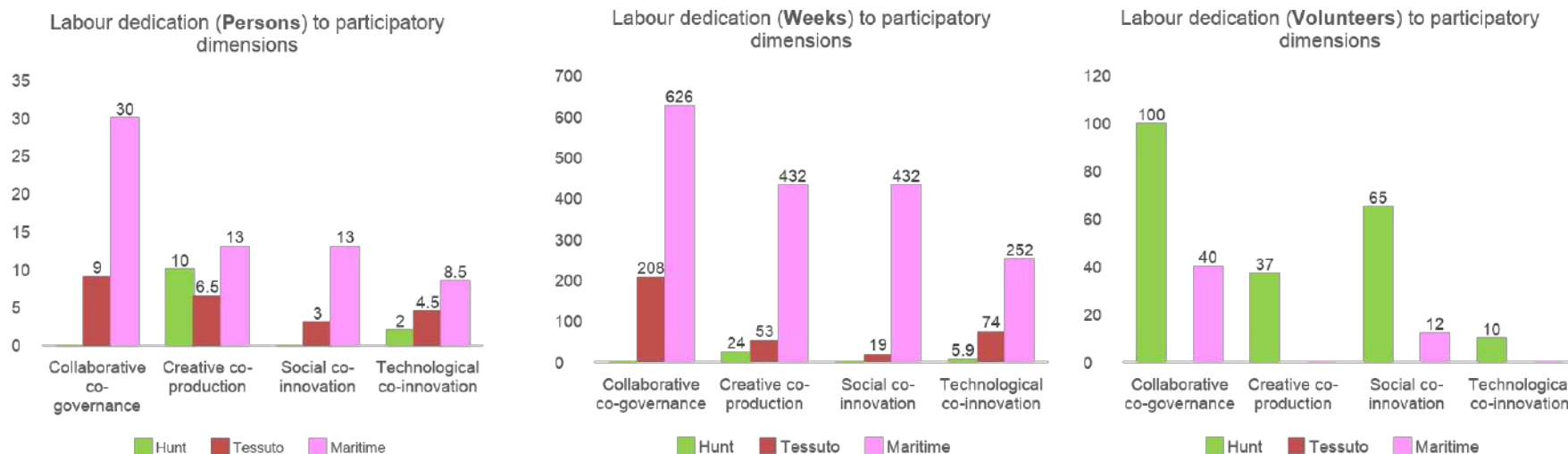
Results: benchmarking options from the **supply side**

Benchmarking participatory options by managers and stakeholders



Results (III): comparing preferences structure and **museum real effort**

Labour dedication in participatory strategies by museums

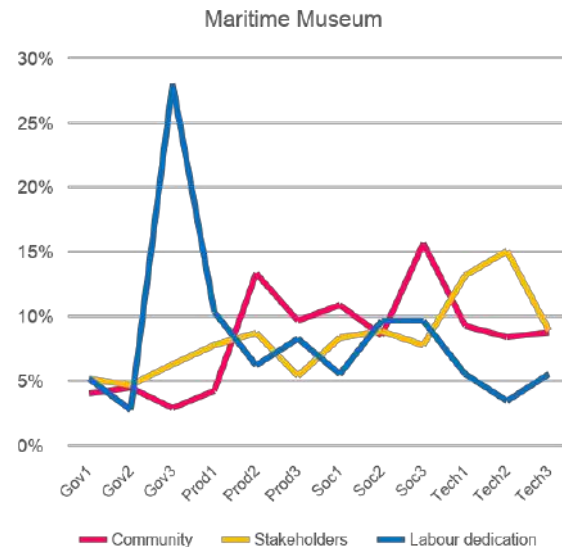
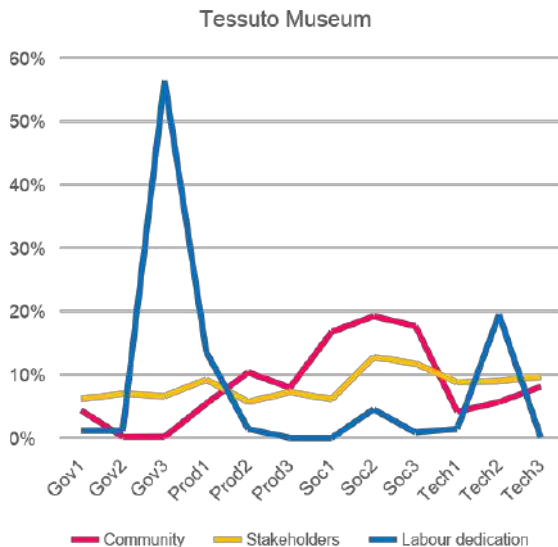
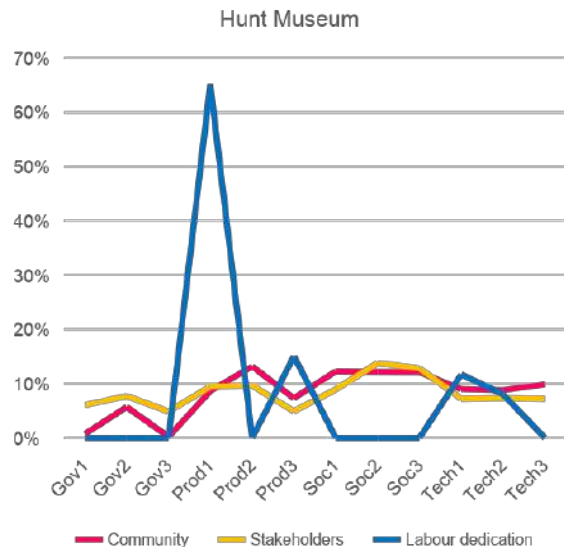


Remarks:

- ✓ Caveat:
- ✓ Self-completed mini-survey on the investment and work effort made by museums in the participatory strategy (dimensions and options)
- ✓ Cumulative data for **18 months** (2023 and half of 2024)
- ✓ Labour dedication: No. of **persons** and no. of **weeks** in weighted units (1 full + 1/2 part time)
- ✓ **Tessuto** only external contribution is counted for implementing the participatory strategy

Results: comparing preferences structure and **museum current effort**

Comparative structures: preferences vs real effort (weeks)



[All metrics of comparative museum effort and community & stakeholder preference structure are standardised on a scale of 1 to 100]

Hunt museum

- Perfect match between preference structure of community and stakeholders
- Museum efforts focus on **production** and technology

Tessuto museum

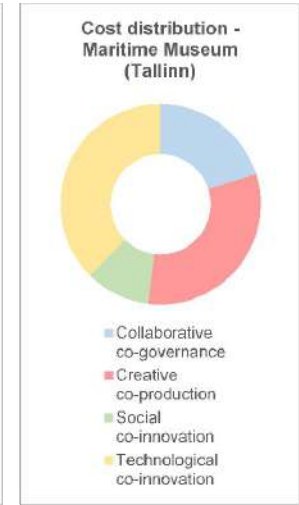
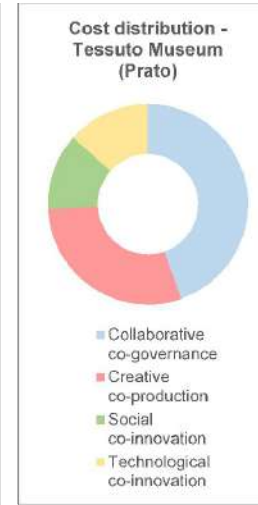
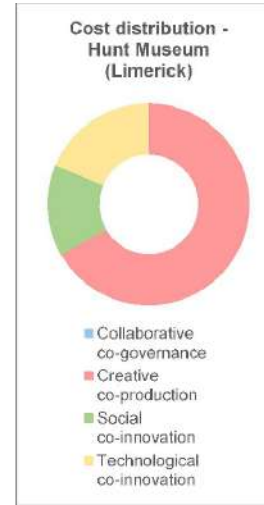
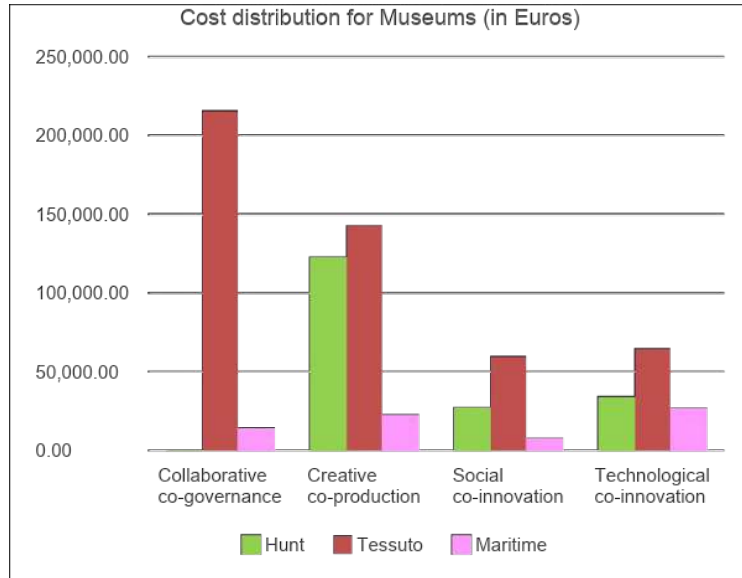
- Quite similar demand and supply preference structure (community counts more on social)
- Museum efforts focus on **governance** and technology

Maritime museum

- Slight alignment in preference structure (community more on production and social, stakeholders on technology)
- Museum efforts focus on **governance** and social

Results: comparing preferences structure and **museum current effort**

Expenditure (€) in participatory strategies by museums



Remarks:

- Caveat: Monetary units in euros not harmonised by purchasing power parity
- Tessuto records the highest expenditure, followed by Hunt, then Maritime
- Tessuto polarized towards governance and production. Hunt invests in creative co-production, and then social and technological dimensions. Maritime has a quite balanced expenditure structure

Conclusions

Policy implications

Approach

- Participatory management models for cultural institutions are gaining growing interest, but are so far little evaluated
- This research:
 - A methodological proposal for the evaluation of a participatory strategy for museums
 - This is an ex-ante evaluation, embedding the value allocated to participatory dimensions and options
 - It is an evaluation focused on both sides of the market: demand (community) and supply (institutional side)

Results (I)

- **Value allocated by the museum community**
 - Significant WTP for the whole strategy, especially from fanatics and museum goers (*importance of loyalty*)
 - This makes it feasible and viable to provide complementary *funding mechanisms* for museums: donation quota instead of prices or taxes
 - Respondents prefer concrete and *targeted options* instead of general empowerment
 - Challenging formula: participatory services becoming *club goods* (enjoying through a contribution)
 - The highest values are for *social and technological innovation options*, and the lowest for governance engagement
 - Museums as *drivers* of social change and innovation but still with sound *leadership*

Conclusions

Policy implications

Results (II)

- **Value allocated by museum stakeholders (draft)**

- Similar preference structure to that of the community (social and technology options > governance involvement)
- Therefore, there are **no major discrepancies** between the value assigned by **communities** (demand) and **stakeholders** (institutional supply) to participatory options.
- DEI actions, creative experiences, digitalisation and sensorial offerings stand out among the strategies.
- Museums are displaying a **preference structure** mainly according to their **specialization**: Hunt-Social, Tessuto-Creative, Maritime-Technological

Results (III)

- **Comparative analysis of preferences structure and current museum efforts (draft)**

- Intense museum **work effort** to implement participatory strategies, especially Maritime and then Tessuto. Extensive policy of **volunteer involvement** in Hunt
- Greater dedication (workforce and expenditure) to the **governance dimension** in Tessuto and Maritime (**opposite to preference structures**), while Hunt focuses on social and technological dimensions
- The preference structure of museum communities and stakeholders is more or less aligned, but the effective dedication of museums (work and expenditure) is **polarised**

Research in progress

- Building a synthetic indicator of effectiveness of the participatory living labs in the context of the museum ecosystem
- Counterfactual analysis: who is making more progress? participatory or non-participatory museums?

FINAL QUESTIONS TO THE FLOOR

1. *Preferences in participatory actions from the museum's community and stakeholders seem to be quite aligned (social & technological options > governance involvement),*
 - **Are museums focusing their efforts in the opposite direction to public preferences on participatory strategies (investment and labour dedication polarized towards governance)?**
2. *Communities and stakeholders seem to prefer targeted options rather than general empowerment as regards participatory strategies,*
 - **Is there still room for strong museum leadership? Should we limit participatory policies towards just concrete and well-bounded outlets in social and technological dimensions?**
3. *Drivers of participation seem to be (as usual) connected to income, level of education, highbrow cultural consumption, loyalty to museums, trusting in participatory paradigm,*
 - **Could we turn the outcomes and outputs of participatory plans into club goods? Could interesting funding mechanisms emerge for museums through the participatory plans (enjoying in exchange for contributing)?**
 - **How can we attract people from outside the typical profile of cultural consumption towards participatory engagement?**



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