

# HERIWELL

Cultural Heritage as a Source  
of Societal Well-being in European Regions



## ESPON HERIWELL: Project overview and main findings

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# 1. The HERIWELL Project

## HERIWELL research activities

- **Aims:** To develop a pan-European methodology and territorial analysis of the contribution of cultural heritage to different dimensions of societal well-being.
- **Launched** by the Espon EGTC.
- **Partnership:** IRS - Istituto per la Ricerca Sociale (lead partner), European Association of Cultural Researchers (ERICarts Network and Institute), Associazione per l'Economia della Cultura (AEC), ACUME (subcontractor), and a wide network of CH experts in European countries



# Two main challenges in assessing the contribution of cultural heritage to societal well-being

1. *How to **develop operational definitions of cultural heritage and societal well-being** that are measurable and comparable across countries and over time.*
2. *How to **define, analyse, and measure the relationship** between different forms of heritage and the heterogeneity and complexity of its impacts on the different dimensions of societal well-being, which cannot be analysed and measured by resorting to a single and undifferentiated method of analysis because:*
  - The relation between heritage and well-being is strongly influenced by many **intervening variables** and by the need to account for the **heterogeneity of impacts** on the different social groups composing a community in different socio-economic contexts
  - The **interconnected and bidirectional nature of the relation** between heritage and different societal well-being dimensions and the limited data on dimensions of well being other than the material conditions of individuals and communities

# Definitions: Cultural heritage

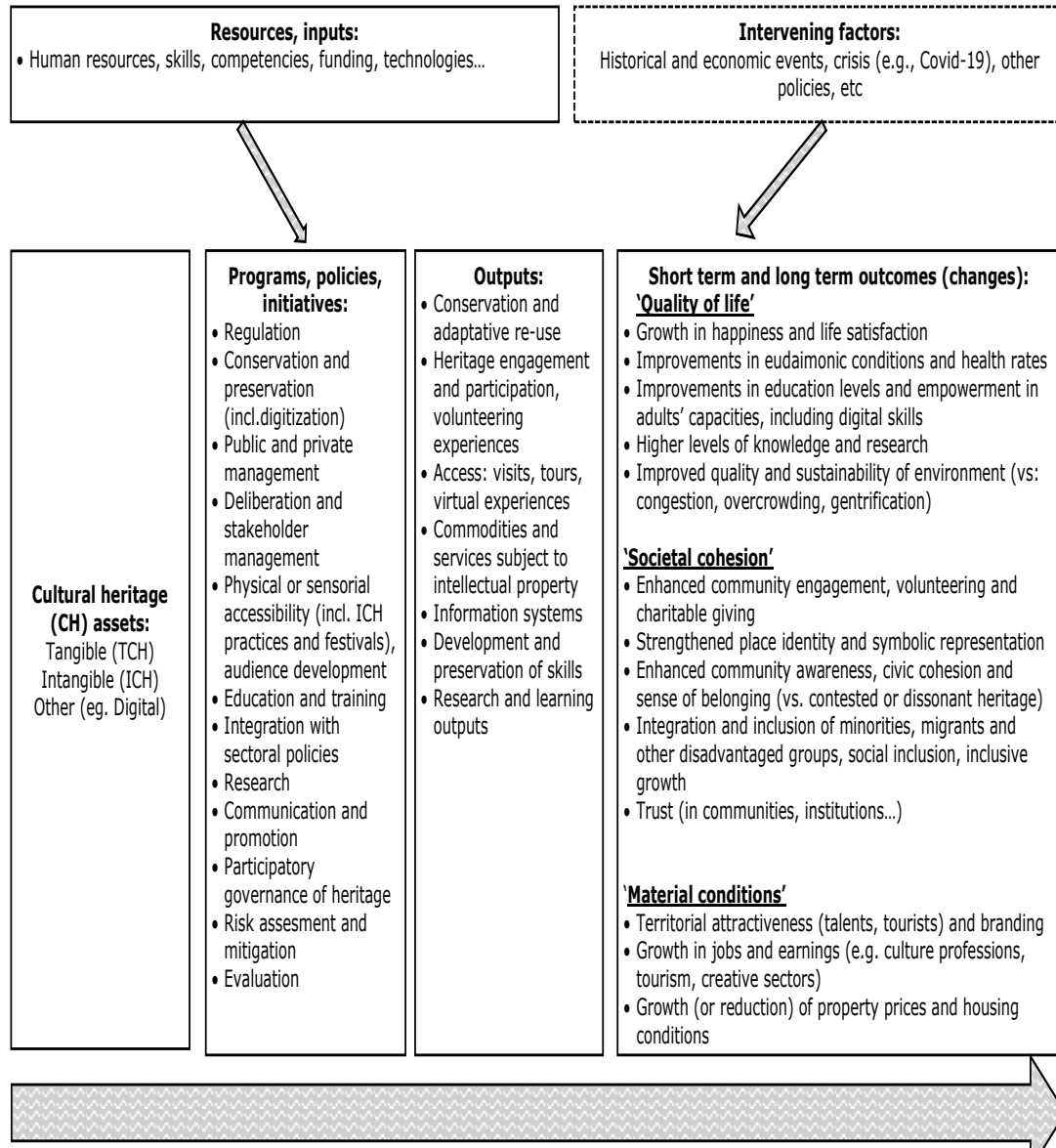
- Based on the definitions provided in the **FARO Convention, the EU JPI initiative, the UNESCO classification of cultural heritage, and consultation with CH stakeholders and experts**, in the HERIWELL project Cultural Heritage is defined as:
- **‘Cultural capital’ inherited from the past**, which people consider as an expression of their evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions and from which, through investment and effort, originates the rich and varied cultures of modern Europe.
- Therefore:
  - Cultural heritage results from the **interaction between people and places over time**, due to its strong interdependence with socio-cultural values and norms within and across communities: it is therefore **community based and changing over time**.
  - It has an **intrinsic value**, and it is an **investment** from which future development – cultural, social and economic – may be generated.
  - It comprises three interconnected forms of cultural heritage: **tangible, intangible and combined/mixed forms of cultural heritage**.
  - Specific attention to **controversial and neglected heritage**.

# Definitions: Social well-being

- Well-being encompasses both **individual and societal well-being**.
  - **Individual well-being:** shaped by societal perceptions and practices; connected to social norms and values.
  - **Societal well-being:** collective well-being of the community, including individual well-being.
- **Three forms of intertwined well-being dimensions** considered in the analysis:
  - **Quality of life**, focusing on a more individual perspective on well-being and encompassing: education and skills, including digital skills; health; contentment and eudaimonia; life satisfaction and happiness; quality and sustainability of the environment.
  - **Societal cohesion**, focusing on a more collective dimension, including : community engagement, volunteering and charitable giving; human rights and freedom of expression; equal opportunities and empowerment; place identity and sense of belonging; integration and inclusion of vulnerable groups (e.g. migrants, minorities, people with disabilities); trust; reconciliation of community relations.
  - **Material conditions**, focusing on the economic dimension, related to both the individuals and the community and including : growth, jobs and earnings; territorial attractiveness and branding, property prices and housing.



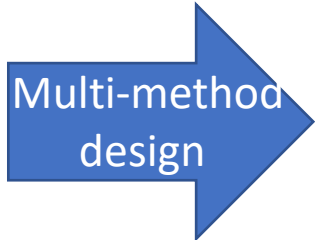
# How to deal with these challenges?/1



**Theory of change approach** to set into relation heritage and societal well-being:

- Clarifying the hypotheses that link the different variables pertaining to cultural heritage and societal well-being:
  - ✓ Cultural heritage can make a positive contribution to SWB on condition that it is valorised, accessible and that people engage actively with it;
  - ✓ Cultural heritage impacts transversally and on all dimensions of well-being and these impacts are intertwined;
  - ✓ Intervening factors can condition the impact of cultural heritage on well-being.
  - ✓ Both participation in heritage and well being are triggered by specific social mechanisms
- Providing evidence to verify these hypotheses.
- Providing explanations on why some relevant outcomes derive from specific policy configurations.

# How to deal with these challenges?/2



- **Pan-European (macro level) analysis** of the linkages between cultural heritage and societal well-being at national and regional level, through:
  - ✓ **Econometric multivariate analysis** of the relation between tangible cultural heritage and well-being at NUTS1 and NUTS2 level based on official comparative data sources and big data (Trip Advisor and Wikipedia);
  - ✓ **Qualitative analysis of administrative data** on: the 146 practices recognised in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage projects; the evolution of the gender balance in the direction of state funded museums based on information provided by the International Directory of Arts;
  - ✓ **Quali-quantitative analyses of primary data**: population survey in 8 ESPON countries (BE, CZ, DE, ES, IE, IT, NO, PL) with 8,818 respondents overall; stakeholders survey on contested/neglected heritage.
- **Local (micro level) analysis of 8 extrapolative case studies** in the survey countries to assess the mechanisms linking heritage and well-being at local level. Case studies carried out by country experts on the basis of desk and statistical analysis of available documentation/data and interviews/focus groups/workshops with relevant stakeholders.
- **Assessment of EU investments in cultural heritage in the programming period 2014-2020**, including:
  - ✓ quantitative mapping of cultural heritage related investments in **European Structural Funds and Creative Europe programmes** at NUTS1 and (where possible) NUTS2 levels, based on data and information sources available at EU level and national level;
  - ✓ qualitative meta-analysis of the ex-post evaluations of the **ECOC capitals** with heritage investments (desk analysis and stakeholders' interviews/focus groups).
- **Participatory approach**, integrating the knowledge and expertise of CH policymakers, stakeholders and experts involved in a deliberative event, workshops, interviews and focus groups.

# Main findings/1

- **Heritage contributes positively and transversally to all the considered dimensions of well-being.**
- **Heritage contributes particularly to improving:** education and skills; community building (place identity, civic cohesion and sense of belonging; reconciliation of community relationships); jobs, earnings and business development.
- Heritage has an **intrinsic value** for communities and individuals, however its **positive contribution** to societal well-being strongly depends on:
  - **Its preservation and valorisation;**
  - **Citizens' participation and engagement in CH** depending on: education levels; heritage accessibility and affordability; sense of ownership and identification; recognition of the value of heritage for well-being. Survey results show that **education** is the most important personal characteristic to explain differences in engagement, and in the intensity of engagement across all surveyed countries.
  - **Narratives of cultural heritage** shaping the **recognition and identification** with cultural heritage and the perceptions on the societal well-being value of cultural heritage.



# Main findings/2

- **Bi-directional relation** between participation in cultural heritage and well-being. Econometric analysis shows that tangible heritage has greater impact on well being in countries/regions with good socio-economic conditions and high participation and engagement in heritage. Population survey and the case studies show that high participation in heritage improves individuals/ communities well-being and triggers a higher care for CH preservation.
- **Different** types of **cultural heritage** contribute to well-being in a **strongly interconnected way** and **the effects** of heritage on well-being **are mutually-dependent**.
- **Effects of cultural heritage** are **context dependent**:
  - The societal recognition of cultural heritage changes over time and across societies.
  - Cultural heritage has a greater impact on well being in countries and regions with good economic and social conditions.
- Cultural heritage can also have **negative impacts** on well-being (e.g. negative effects of over-tourism on environmental and socio-economic conditions; gentrification; conflicts arising over contested or neglected heritage).
- **Effects of Covid**:
  - **Survey results** show an overall perception of Covid negative effects on heritage-related views or behaviors. However for about 20% of respondents it increased motivation to engage more in heritage-related activities. The use of internet and social media for heritage-related information did not change much for about one third of respondents.

# Main findings/3

## CH CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIETAL COHESION

**Evidence of positive contribution of cultural heritage** (and particularly Intangible Heritage) on:

- **Building communities:**
  - fostering engagement, volunteering and co-creation (e.g. ECoC Plovdiv, Mons, La Valletta cases)
  - fostering social relations among people with different backgrounds and generations (e.g. Spanish case and Matera ECoC; survey results)
  - raising awareness about hidden collective memory and related conflicts, helping to renegotiate traumatic histories, to heal past wrongs and reconcile migrants, ethnic minorities and communities (e.g. NO case)
- **Supporting the social inclusion of vulnerable groups when designed to promote inclusion on the ground.** Qualitative evidence from case studies (e.g. CZ and ES cases; ECoC Umeå). Quantitative evidence: positive correlation between ERDF CH investments and lower poverty risks, lower severe deprivation and lower inequality indicators.
- **Promoting gender equality** by improving women's representation in culture and in leading positions in CH management and policy making.

**Positive relation** generated mainly by: **sense of proudness, place identity and sense of belonging**, stronger among women and older people than among young people (survey results).

**Negative effects in contested heritage** cases: triggering contrasting memories (e.g. Weimar case); generating conflicts on unsettled disputes about heritage (ECoC Umeå). Need for attention in processes of restorative and transitional justice on whose heritage is narrated and how, building open and inclusive narratives by actively engaging the whole community.

# Main findings/4

## CH CONTRIBUTION TO QUALITY OF LIFE

- **Strong positive relation with subjective perception of well being:** life satisfaction (econometric analysis; Matera ECoC), personal development (in terms of education and professional and social skills), contentment, happiness (survey and case studies)
- **Less intense relation with knowledge and research,** as these dimensions tend to be less considered in valorization strategies
- **Negative effects** related to over-tourism (negative environmental effects; distortion of place identity to attract tourism), increasing housing prices and gentrification. Negative effects perceived more by people less engaged in heritage, young people

## CH CONTRIBUTION TO MATERIAL CONDITIONS

- Positive **contribution to the local economy** (jobs and earnings):
  - TripAdvisor analysis shows that **heritage is positively correlated with the share of employees in cultural and creative sectors on total employment**. Similar positive results in correlation analysis of between ERDF investments and local employment rates and in the HERIWELL and ECoC case studies.
  - HERIWELL survey and case studies show that heritage can contribute to economic development also through **contemporary creations relying on digitization**, supporting technological development in the heritage sector and new jobs and businesses (Spanish and Italian case studies).
- Possible **negative effects on material conditions**,
  - **congestion, gentrification and rising costs fueled by ‘over-tourism’;**
  - **tourism based narrative of cultural heritage**, might ignite social conflicts over heritage deeply rooted in the social structures of a specific place or community (ECoC Umeå case)

# Main policy implications

- Key factors supporting the positive contribution of CH to well being:
  - Preservation, conservation, valorisation of cultural heritage;
  - Accessibility of cultural heritage also for vulnerable groups and neglected/peripheral territorial areas;
  - Citizens' active engagement improving sense of ownership and identification with heritage and the recognition of its value for individuals and communities
  - Open and inclusive heritage narratives.
- Cultural Heritage **valorisation strategies** may take various forms to ensure:
  - **Accessibility and participation/engagement in CH:** making heritage opportunities/access/spaces alive and more inclusive also through digitisation and decentralisation; strengthening information on heritage and access opportunities; improving the quality of spaces where heritage is located, transport systems, adequacy of the digital infrastructure; adopting inclusive heritage narratives etc.
  - **Sustainability of heritage strategies/initiatives over time through effective multi-level and multi-actor governance** through: political support, institutionalisation of heritage initiatives and embedment in wider economic, social, territorial development strategies; adequate and continuous financial and human resources and capacity at all levels.
  - **Systemic data collection and monitoring & evaluation** of CH strategies and initiatives

# // Thank you for your attention

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