Training for Beauty. Training as a Strategic Axis for Tourism Enhancement of Cultural Heritage

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ABSTRACT

This paper is intended to underline the importance of human capital and adequate professional advanced training in the field of cultural heritage as a core asset for local development. Through the example given by the Italian experience within the project MODI-FY, we argue that the development of integrated models of management of cultural assets requires specific professional skills which are not always provided by universities. An exploratory survey helps to describe the state of the art of the national educational framework and its main weaknesses and potentialities, in order to outline enhancement strategies able to implement virtuous behaviours in sectors such as tourism, which are crucial to local development.

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Keywords: Cultural Heritage; Local Development; University; Training; Enhancement of Cultural Heritage

Il contributo intende evidenziare il ruolo del capitale umano e di adeguati percorsi di formazione avanzata nel settore dei beni culturali quali elementi fondamentali per lo sviluppo locale. Attraverso l'esempio offerto dall'esperienza italiana nell'ambito del progetto MODI-FY, sosteniamo che lo sviluppo di modelli integrati di gestione del patrimonio culturale richieda specifiche competenze che non sempre sono erogate dalle università. Il caso studio presentato contribuisce a definire lo stato dell'arte del contesto formativo nazionale e le sue principali criticità e potenzialità, allo scopo di individuare spunti per l'implementazione di strategie di valorizzazione che abbiano

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ricadute virtuose in settori cruciali allo sviluppo del territorio, a partire da quello turistico.

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Introduction

Cultural heritage is an expression of identity, which pertains to "the social link able to increase the level of cohesion within the local community and the level of social capitalization, in order to foster networking processes and to give a structure to the territory" (Pollice, 2014). This intrinsic value, together with its potential, makes the cultural heritage a precious resource on which to base local development strategies, which are designed for environmental, economic and social sustainability, and that consider sense of place and cultural planning as sustainable competitive advantages (Albanese, 2015; Cabianca, 1999; Pollice, 2015).

This shift from conservation to enhancement of the cultural heritage is on the same track as evolutionary tendencies in tourism, as demonstrated both by juridical tools – e.g. the 1975 Amsterdam Declaration – and references in the literature focused on the need for a scientific, highly skilled approach to tourism, aiming at the construction of socioculturally informed and structurally integrated tourism models that considers the connections between the tourist's needs and expectations and the receiving system (Jafari, 1987). On the same wavelength, Cabasino (2005) observes that the shift toward an enhancement-oriented approach requires a convergent strategy based on both the re-thinking of professional profiles and the concurrent re-shaping of institutions according to the new educational tendencies in the field of cultural heritage.

In this sense, the design of sustainable tourism strategies offers a valid example through which it is possible to study the spreading of universities and higher education institutions' pivotal role as effective actors within planning processes, also by contributing to provide the territory with specific human and intellectual capital.

This paper is made up of two parts. The first section encompasses a theoretical review regarding the growing relevance of the university in promoting development strategies at the local scale by both training up a new generation of professionals and acting as a driver in the networking processes of local development strategies.

The second part focuses on our case study, consisting of an exploratory survey which describes the Italian educational framework in the field of cultural heritage by mapping universities and post-degree courses, analyzing the training provided and observing, also through qualitative interviews, whether they are able to match the needs of a renewed conception of cultural heritage management in terms of professional skills and promotion of a participative planning attitude.

1. Theoretical framework

The debate about the role of the university in triggering regional and local development processes is foundational for geography because it pertains to the relationship between the local dimension and university under the spotlight of a growing regionalist approach, according to which the regional scale, and the related interrelations among regional actors, represents the main scene of innovation

processes. This is to be considered the last step of a long, open-ended process in which higher education institutions witnessed a series of changes in their civic role and functions in order to adapt to the evolution of the social, economic, cultural and environmental fabric (Arbo & Benneworth, 2007) and through which universities integrated economic development into their mission. In so far as the regionalist approach represents the overcoming of "one-fits-all" tendencies based on the replication of good models and practices regardless of local peculiarities, it stresses the importance of the geographical dimension within innovation and knowledge transfer processes: these, indeed, are to be seen not just from an economic perspective aiming to increase regional competitiveness in the global era, but as a complex set of relations largely depending on spatial and geographical configuration (Keil et al., 2012). Moreover, such a geographical direction taken in studying development processes could be identified in the very concept of regional competitiveness, whose definition is based also on "non- economic factors (such as cognitive, social, cultural and institutional factors) [which] are crucial for knowledge creation, learning and economic development" (Boschma, 2004, p. 3). Therefore, what is functional to our thesis is the attempt to structure a clearer understanding of what Keil et al. (ibid., p. 5) define as "higher education institutions' 'footprint'", and its effects on local development: in this respect, we have found in the "Triple Helix model" and "Spillover Theory" two interesting theoretical tools which could be helpful in achieving this goal.

In the present era, universities are required to fulfill a triple function: to train highly-qualified workforce and professionals; to promote basic research, generate and transfer knowledge and technology; to help the spread of networking processes within the local context, among localities, and between local and global contexts. This triad recalls the foundational thesis of the Triple Helix of University – Industry – Government (Etzkowitz, 2002; 2003), according to which

the potential for innovation and economic development in a Knowledge Society lies in a more prominent role for the university and in the hybridisation of elements from university, industry and government to generate new institutional and social formats for the production, transfer and application of knowledge" (Ranga & Etzkowitz, 2013, p. 5).

The increasing role of universities is functional to the formation of an organizational regime in which the three spheres cooperate in a process of mutual shaping (Leydesdorff & Etzkowitz, 1996) which generates "new venues of interactions and new organizational formats" (Ranga & Etzkowitz, ibid. p. 7).

Because of the importance reserved to relational configurations, the Triple Helix Model could enable a better understanding of knowledge spillover processes, within which the role of universities as the main source of knowledge is to favor the creation of an organizational dimension able to trigger knowledge diffusion through the surrounding context and, therefore, stimulate the development of an entrepreneurial spirit across a loosely defined territory (Audretsch & Lehmann, 2005; Casper, 2013). One of the main mechanisms allowing knowledge spillovers is represented by the mobility of human capital trained by local universities. As Audretsch and Lehmann point out (ibid., p. 1194),

The business sector receives inputs from universities in the form of highly educated human capital. Although these individuals may require further training, university education provides the foundation for subsequent specialized training. Universities may also provide further training of employees. Thus, it seems that the most frequent types of interactions between firms and universities are the employment of university graduates (Schartinger et al. 2001, p. 259).

Thus, some elements emerge in characterizing university-driven spillover processes and contributing to explain why they seem to respond to the need for an autopoietic push for territorial development. According to Sánchez-Barrioluengo (2014), the more specific the context, the more active the role of the university. How can we interpret this claim? First of all, spatiality represents an ontological feature, as knowledge spillovers occur within geographically defined areas, and are largely identifiable in proximity to universities (Acosta et al., 2014). Indeed, proximity is another fundamental feature of knowledge spillover, not only in its spatial interpretation, but also with regard to the social fabric and attitudes (Boschma, 2005): spillover effectiveness depends indeed on local absorptive capacity, the pre-condition for organizing inbound open innovation activities (Spithoven et al., 2011), which is in turn determined by culture, bureaucracy, and organizational models. Finally, absorptive capacity recalls the importance of relations among all the local actors as illustrated by the Triple Helix Model in promoting strategic synergies converging toward a common vision, which connotes and differentiates the territory.

2. Case study

2.1. The MODI-FY project

Our research is part of the MODI-FY project. Funded by Erasmus+ Program, "MODI-FY – Maintaining Historic Buildings and Objects through Developing and Up-grading Individual Skills of Project Managers: Fostering European Heritage and Culture for Years to Come" is a three-year project (2014 – 2017) promoted by a consortium made up of nine organisations belonging to seven European countries, whose mission covers the main areas of interest related to enhancement of cultural heritage, with a strong focus on historic building. Management, planning, research, restoration, interpretation of the "spirit of the place", are just a few examples of the tasks these organisations carry out. The recognition of historic buildings and, consequently, historic building management, as MODI-FY's main target, has to be read according to its intrinsic value: because of their high usability potential – being part of the built cultural heritage and tangible expression of the so-called spirit of the place, but also containing cultural heritage – historic buildings can be considered a paradigmatic representation of the wide range of functions that can be played by the cultural heritage, if adequately and effectively exploited. This triggers the spread of what can be defined as an integrated approach in which the historic building is perceived by the local community as part of its own

cultural heritage and "espace vécu" as well as an economic resource for local development (Pollice, 2015).

Table 1 – The MODI-FY Consortium

COUNTRY	INSTITUTIONS TAKING PART TO THE PROJECT	
Austria	*Burghauptmannschaft Österreich*	*Unternehmensberatung Wagenhofer*
	European Certification and Qualification Association	
Belgium		*Landkommanderij Alden Biesen*
Hungary		*Magyar Reneszánsz Alapitvány*
Italy		*Centro Universitario Europeo per i Beni Culturali*
Portugal		*Secretaria General da Presidência da República*
Slovakia		*Národný Trust*
United Kingdom		*National Trust*

There are several factors defining the suitability of the historic building's intended use: apart from the availability of financial resources, some crucial elements could be identified in the nature of property rights – public or private – as well as in the nature of the activity, which may be profit or non-profit oriented. Moreover, given the huge variety of actual and possible functions related to an historic building, the question arises of the kind of skills and knowledge required to manage such a special asset, and if the professional profiles traditionally considered the most suitable for this task can actually master it adequately. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the historic building's hybrid character demands a kind of management which cannot only be based on historical, artistic or cultural skills, just as mere administrative or financial expertise are also insufficient. On the contrary, the greater the multitasking, the more effective the management of the historic building.

Figure 1: Historic building manager: an overview of professional skills
Source: the authors

The main aim of MODI-FY is to provide "a model of certified education for people working in management of historic buildings and sites" by setting up "a blended training approach [in which] old and new skills and competences will be merged into a standard requirement" (www.modify.eu). This goal is based on the statement, supported both by empirical observation and research (e.g. Cabasino, 2005), that the majority of professionals involved in the management of the cultural heritage are called on to deal with tasks and requirements without possessing the proper skills and knowledge. More specifically, a solution is needed to respond to the pre-existent educational background of professionals in cultural heritage management, who, despite their high level, have been increasingly considered lacking, and unable to deal with a sustainable and synergic conception of cultural heritage management.

2.2. Methodology

The research, conducted on behalf of CUEBC – Centro Universitario Europeo per i Beni Culturali (European University Centre for Cultural Heritage), lasted from December 2014 to March 2015 and was made up of two parts: first, we produced a mapping of the national education system in the field of cultural heritage, with reference to bachelor's and master's degree courses and post-graduate courses, in order to recognize the typical set of skills provided by each course; the second step consisted of an exploratory survey based on qualitative interviews with key informants among historic building managers operating all through Italy, in order to investigate their educational background, how it matches the needs of a more and more multifunctional management, which tasks he/she is supposed to deal with, and which are, according to him/her, the most important characteristics that an historic building manager should have.

3. Findings

3.1. National educational framework

With regard to "corsi di laurea triennale" (bachelor's degree) and "corsi di laurea magistrale" (master's degree) the geographic distribution appears quite homogeneus. A specific course designed to train a historic building manager still does not exist. According to MIUR data about expected learning outcomes (Appendix 1), the traditional source of human capital engaged in the field of cultural heritage is still represented by two main groups of disciplines. On one hand, courses like Arts and Humanities, Cultural heritage conservation and History of art produce a profile based on liberal arts; on the other hand, a more technical perspective is provided by faculties like Architecture, Restoration and, though to a lesser extent, Engineering. Therefore, the vision promoted is prevalently conservation-oriented, more than enhancement-oriented. Management skills and capabilities, necessary to trigger the spread of a shared vision among local actors gravitating around a cultural asset, still occupy marginal space (Epifani, 2015). In recent years, some faculties have recognized the need to provide hybrid courses, in order to combine artistic, historical and cultural skills, basic technical knowledge and managerial competences, and traditional courses, too, are trying to readapt their curricula, but it is still too early to evaluate the effects on the labor market.

On the other hand, the postgraduate scenario deserves particular attention. Traditionally, schools of specialization for artistic and historical heritage, especially for specific fields, like restoration and history of art, have provided a more specific, professionally oriented education. In addition to this option – which, however, only appeals to a restricted category of graduate students – the spread of first and second

level masters shows an increasing inclination toward management-oriented training. This could be interpreted as an effort to respond both to the need of new occupational perspectives and the recognition of a new real, albeit still undefined, labor demand, which is exemplified by a growing interest on the part of private actors in financing more and more specific kinds of training, as well as the fact that they are often designed for young professionals already involved in the field of cultural heritage and cultural heritage management in all its forms. The table in Appendix 2 shows a review of the professional profiles and learning outputs provided by the main I and II level masters offered during the academic year 2014-2015.

3.2 Exploratory survey

The exploratory survey involved ten professionals working in Italian historic buildings, who were asked to answer a short semi-structured questionnaire regarding their training profile, the tasks they are responsible for, the major criticalities encountered, in order to verify the suitability of standard formal education, investigate whether and why it appears lacking, and the kind of alternative paths followed.
The majority of the interviewees have a high level educational qualification (Figure 2a): six of them have a master's degree (or equivalent) and two attended post-graduate courses (in both cases, schools of specialization). Regarding the disciplinary sector (Figure 2b), the scenario is less homogeneous: four interviewees state they have a background mostly based on liberal arts, two are architects, while in the other cases educational background is completely divergent from their current role.
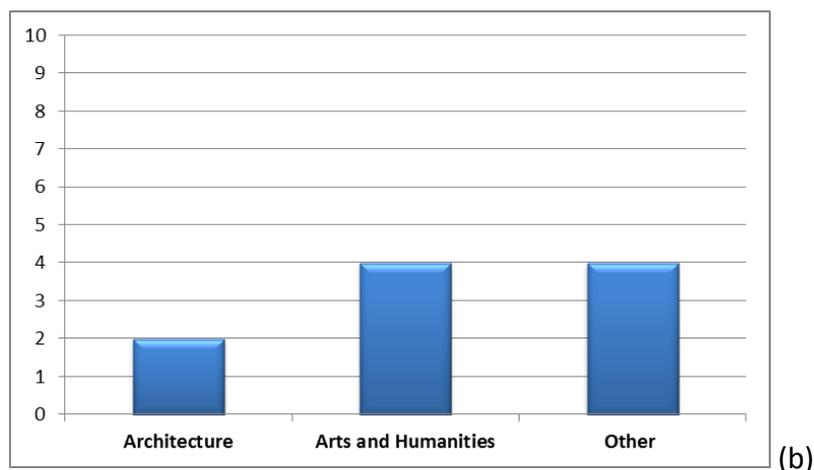

(a)

(b)
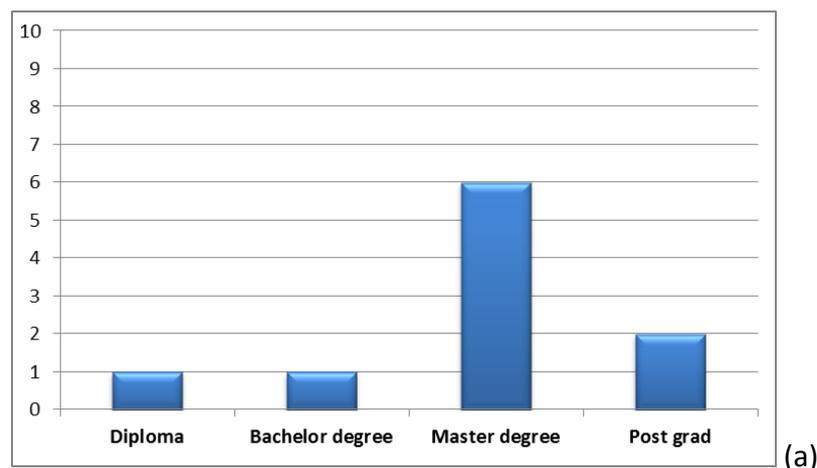
Figure 2: Interviewees' educational background with reference to qualification levels (a) and disciplinary sector (b)
Source: author's elaboration based on the interviews

The gap between educational qualification – also in terms of disciplinary sector – and job position is clearly shown in the table in Appendix 3.
This evidence represents an interesting element in our analysis for two reasons. On one hand, it suggests that university is not the only channel for professional recruitment: being part of local cultural associations, political activism in the field of culture, as well as personal initiative, are quite recurrent features among our interviewees which have influenced their employment. On the other hand, it explains why the interviewees often resort to non-formal and informal learning: learning by doing, learning from others who are more knowledgeable, and self-training, are considered valid alternatives to supplement knowledge and skills acquired through traditional formal education.
Thus, the situation described appears, and is said to be, problematic, and the criticalities reported by the interviewees involve different sectors. In the first instance, education is, unsurprisingly, a crucial issue: the interviewees report a general lack of further specific professional education as well as the lack of recognition of non-formal and informal skills; this seems to point to a certain level of incommunicability between universities and higher education institutions, on the one hand, and the major actors in the field of cultural heritage, on the other, both at the local, territorial, regional and national scale. Such incommunicability is indicative of the difficulties in creating institutional networks; where existent, they are often the result of unstructured and spontaneous initiatives. The absence of a stable institutional network represents, according to the interviewees, the impossibility of developing a long-term planned strategy based on effective context and needs analysis, and the opportunity to count on a wider source of skills, knowledge, and human resources. The resulting scenario is quite paradoxical: historic building managers feel abandoned to their own personal initiative: despite the efforts, without a systemic set of actors, policies and

interventions, the risk is that the historic buildings, and cultural heritage in general, could be stripped of all their intrinsic value and potentialities.

Conclusions

The reference to the Triple Helix Model and Spillover Theory may seem extreme, since it recalls the idea of cluster, where the importance of relationships between university and industry for the development of a "milieu innovateur" is quantifiable through the number of commercialized patents and papers. We are aware that, from this point of view, such a model might not be the most appropriate to describe this specific issue: dealing with cultural heritage enhancement, as our research demonstrates, requires new knowledge and skills, more than tangible tools; managerial attitude, in addition to technical and theoretical knowledge; processes, more than products. Nevertheless, within both the Triple Helix Model and Spillover Theory it is possible to find the theoretical principles behind our research which, in attempting to respond to a territorial need that still remains unexpressed (Pollice, 2015), suggests the implementation of cooperative mechanisms able to "mobilize local innovation agents, legitimize policy efforts and improve coherence between different policy strands that influence innovation" (Rodrigues & Melo, 2012, p. 1484). Such a configuration should involve stakeholders in the field of cultural heritage and cultural heritage management, the tourism industry and, to an equally important degree, universities, both as the main educational institutions for the training of highly qualified professionals and as the source of scientific tools and methodologies needed to interpret and implement new ways to consider and elaborate local planning policies in crucial sectors. What seems to emerge is that the goal of developing a highly innovative integrated system can be achieved by starting from the existing territorial resources. Indeed, they can be identified, as demonstrated by our case study, not only in the cultural heritage as such, but also in a wide set of related skills and know-how deriving from tacit knowledge, oral tradition, territorial culture and historical background through which traditional educational instruments and contents must be filtered, and which formal education should recognize not only as its subject of study but also as living features. A cooperative system would allow the university to recognize such a legacy in order to foster the design of courses to match local needs. On the other hand, despite the difficulties encountered, the interviewees are examples of successful experiences: this means that formal education is not to be denigrated; on the contrary, it still provides quality assurance, as the claim for formal recognition of the varied skills acquired through alternative channels (e.g. learning by doing) demonstrates.

Our research is far from being exhaustive: nevertheless, it shows that Italy can count on a plethora of resources, encompassing cultural heritage, enterprising professionals and prestigious universities. The creation of a definite organizational structure within which to find possible solutions to the manifest problems, also in the long term, represents an essential step toward a complete operative definition of the concept of enhancement, that involves not only the cultural heritage, but the whole territory.

Appendix

1. University courses and main skills/ knowledge provided (a.y. 2014-2015)
(Source: our elaboration based on MIUR)

a) Arts and humanities

ARTS AND HUMANITIES	**BACHELOR DEGREE**	Cultural Heritage	Adequate knowledge regarding all sectors of cultural heritage; knowledge of main juridical aspects, as well as management and enhancement, of cultural heritage
		Literature	Basic knowledge of literary, linguistic, geographic and artistic culture from the ancient to the modern age; direct knowledge of original texts and documents
		History	Basic skills for historical research and dissemination; fundamental knowledge of historical epistemology and methodology, as well as fundamental tools and techniques of other social sciences
	MASTER DEGREE	History of Art	Advanced methodological skills in history, aiming to research activities and critical interpretation variously related to arts develoment (architecture, painting, sculpture…) from the Middle ages to the present; theoretical and practical knowledge about conservation, management, promotion and enhancement.

b) Technical/ scientific field

TECHNICAL/ SCIENTIFIC FIELD	**BACHELOR DEGREE**	Architectural science	Adequate historical, methodological and operational skills related to architecture and construction; use of techniques and tools for architectural and construction design
		Technologies for cultural heritage's conservation and restoration	Intervene on the asset in order to maintain its preservation state; being able to define interventions aiming to prevent and hinder cultural heritage degradation and instability; basic juridical and economic knowledge in the field of cultural heritage; data management, information and communication management
	MASTER DEGREE	Archaeology	Advanced scientific, theoretical, methodological and operational skills related to prehistoric , ancient and medieval archaeology and history of art, supported by historical knowledge; management, conservation and restoration skills in the field of archaeological, artistic, built and documentary heritage
		Architecture	Advanced knowledge of history of architecture, urban planning, architectural restoration and other related activities; advanced theoretical, scientific, methodological and operational skills, functional to identify, elaborate and solve complex problems, also through an interdisciplinary approach
		Conservation of architectural and environmental heritage	Advanced knowledge of complex architectural historic structures, analyzed within their urban and territorial context; analyse structural features, recognize instability and degradation factors; intervention planning and design compatible with needs of stability, reuse, enhancement and management of historical, urban and territorial systems and artifacts
		Conservation and restoration of cultural heritage	Recovery, conservation and restoration of cultural heritage also in complex contexts; methodologies of restoration; advanced knowledge regarding: a) features, characteristics and degradation of asset materials; b) archaeometric applications; High skills in the field of museology and of conservation techniques; interdisciplinary approach in dealing with scientific issues regarding preservation of cultural heritage

c) Other

OTHERS	BACHELOR DEGREE	Sciences for tourism	Basic knowledge in the field of economics, anthropology, geography and sociology, regarding cultural and juridical issues linked to tourism; promotional techniques for fruition of the cultural heritage and activities; communication and information management
		Administration and management	Support to public institutions, private organisations and NGOs to pursue planning and implementation activities as well as initiatives aiming to promote economic, social and civic community development
		Economic and business administration	Methodologies of analysis and critical interpretation of business structures, through basic multidisciplinary (economic and juridical) skills; business disciplines
		Landscape, urban and environmental planning	Analysis of transformation processes; analytical forecasts of settlement from the economic, social and physical point of view; urban/territorial/landscape/environmental planning; analysis of territorial policy and assessment of its effects on settlements, environment, landscape, social and economic fabric
	MASTER DEGREE	Territorial, urban and environmental planning	Ability to interpret urban and territorial transformation trends and effects, also related to socio-economic dynamics; ability to interpret the historical evolution of urban and territorial stratification; ability to apply theories, methods and techniques to planning and design; specific knowledge of methods and techniques for urban/territorial/landscape/environmental planning; ability to define strategies for institutions and organisations with reference to recovery, enhancement and transformation within specific contexts
		Tourism systems design and management	Ability to work within tourism systems, in homogeneous or integrated contexts; skills in tourism business management, in order to match tourism accommodations and cultural and environmental services; promotion, trading and management of tourism commodities, also by using ICTs; professional language skills; planning and implementation of cross-sectorial and infrastructural interventions, necessary to improve tourism supply; supporting public administrations
		Economics for environment and culture	Economic, business and social skills integrated with technical background regarding environmental and cultural management; analytical skills to better manage and design decision-making processes within institutions and organisations involved in the field

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2. Postgraduate training (a.y. 2014-2015)

	SUSTAINING INSTITUTION	PROFESSIONAL PROFILES/ LEARNING OUTCOMES/ JOB OPPORTUNITIES
I LEVEL MASTER	Private university	Cultural operators; experts in management and promotion of cultural heritage; exhibition and cultural planners; experts in cultural communication; ecclesiastical heritage operators
	Private university	Specialized managerial background and an advanced enterpreneurial outlook to fullfill crucial positions in a wide range of organisations operating in the art sector
	Public university	Cultural operator within tourism organisations, museums, archaeological parks, protected areas
	Private university	Managers and qualified professionals from the area of artistic and cultural heritage management, providing a broad knowledge base including humanistic and social disciplines, and enabling the development of specific managerial skills
	Public university	Professional figures to involve within cultural institutions and companies
II LEVEL MASTER	Private university	Experts and professional within cultural heritage management
	Private university	Managers within private cultural organizations and foundations; consultants for public institutions; exhibition planners; experts in cultural communication
	Public university	Financial strategies aiming to the enhancement of the recovered objects
	Public university	National and cross-national for-profit and non-profit cultural institutions; large groups which, despite not beloging to the cultural and artistic field, plan to invest in transnational projects; banking and non-banking foundations which pursue cultural aims; international cooperation organisations

3. Interviewees' profiles: educational qualification and main tasks

(Source: authors' elaboration based on interviews)

Interviewee	Educational qualification	Job qualification	Tasks
1	Degree in Liberal Arts	Library managing director	Management of library activities
			Organisation of library activities
2	Degree in Cultural Heritage	Representative of Civic Museum	Contents organization
3	Postgraduate in History of Art	Head of the museum	Management
4	Institute for Commerce and Tourism Diploma	B&B worker	Reception
5	Degree in Architecture	Technical administrative officer (Cultural Heritage and Monuments)	Planning
			Responsible for a Public authority
			Network with stakeholders
			Human resource management
			Project management
			Technical Supervision
6	Degree in Architecture	Head Architect manager	Preservation of Cultural, Built and Artistic Heritage
			Responsible for a Public authority
			Network with stakeholders
			Project management
			Supervision
7	Degree in Physical Therapy	City councilor	contents organization
			cultural entertainment
8	Degree in Political Sciences	city councilor	promotion of cultural activities
9	Degree from School of Fine Arts	Head of the non- profit organisation which promotes the activities inside the building	Management
			communication
			Human resource management
			supervision
			maintenance
			Network with stakeholders
10	Ph.D. in Geography	Secretary of a cultural association	Management
			Communication
			Planning
			Supervision

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