

## Social-Heritage Innovation Ecosystems. Definition and Case Studies\*

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### ABSTRACT

In recent decades there has been a lot of talk about social innovation, an emerging concept that in a short time has made its way onto the agendas of public administrations and different social agents, although in the field of cultural heritage it has not been sufficiently discussed and analyzed. This article presents a proposal to contextualize, problematize and think about how social innovation and cultural heritage are linked through the analysis of three case studies. Using quantitative-qualitative methods of observation, we analyze the strategies and actions that different collectives and communities have implemented around certain heritage elements or vectors and which have served to meet their social needs. The implications of these processes at the political and academic sphere are also discussed. These self-organized communities have been able to create various devices or interfaces that we call “ecosystems”, in which citizens play a central role alongside other social and institutional actors in the activation, custody, defense or management of some kind of cultural asset. From this perspective, we re-situate these types of actions, which we could call “alterheritage,” bringing them to the center of academic discussion from the outskirts of the usual framework of reflection Authorized Heritage Discourse. It shows their full potential as processes with an important accumulated know-how of great scientific, social and political interest, capable of connecting some collective cultural goods with the great challenges of our present and contributing to the construction of more democratic, plural, fair and sustainable communities. These are open and transferable social innovations, from which other organizations, communities (both public and universities), can learn and reflect on cultural and heritage practices.

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### Keywords

Activism | Self-management | Bertsozale Elkartea | Centro Social Rey Heredia | Communities | Ecosystems | Governance | Social Innovation | Citizen participation | Patrimoni PEU-UJI | Heritagization | Cultural Heritage |



"A sobre de les pedres". Heritage education activity of the Heritage Studies Group from Costur at the CEIP (Childhood and Primary Education School ) of Costur | photo PEU-Jaume I University

## Ecosistemas de innovación social-patrimonial. Definición y estudio de casos

### RESUMEN

En las últimas décadas se ha empezado a hablar mucho de innovación social, se trata sin duda de un concepto emergente que en poco tiempo se ha hecho hueco en las agendas de las administraciones públicas y diferentes agentes sociales, aunque en el campo del patrimonio cultural no ha sido suficientemente discutido y analizado. En este artículo se presenta una propuesta para contextualizar, problematizar y pensar cómo se vinculan innovación social y patrimonio cultural a través del análisis de tres casos de estudio. Utilizando métodos cuantitativos-cualitativos de observación, se analizan las estrategias y actuaciones que diferentes colectivos y comunidades han puesto en marcha en torno a ciertos elementos o vectores patrimoniales y que les han servido para cubrir sus necesidades sociales. También se discuten algunas de sus repercusiones en el ámbito político y académico. Estas comunidades autoorganizadas han sido capaces de crear diversos dispositivos o interfaces que denominamos "ecosistemas", en los que la ciudadanía ocupa un rol central junto a otros actores sociales e institucionales en la activación, custodia, defensa o gestión de algún tipo de bien cultural. Desde esta perspectiva se re-sitúa este tipo de actuaciones, que podríamos denominar alterpatrimoniales, trayéndolas al centro de la discusión académica desde las afueras del habitual marco de reflexión de los discursos autorizados.

### Palabras clave

Activismo | Autogestión | Bertsozale Elkartea | Centro Social Rey Heredia | Comunidades | Ecosistemas | Gobernanza | Innovación social | Participación ciudadana | Patrimoni PEU-UJI | Patrimonialización | Patrimonio cultural |

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## INTRODUCTION

1

This project was recently (2019) awarded one of the Hispania Nostra awards for good practice in the conservation of cultural heritage in the category "Intervention in the Territory or Landscape".

2

For example, there is the work of the association Sendas de Asturias, in particular their "waste map" (examples of buildings constructed with ill-used public funds).

The article presented here arose originally from a non-academic need, born out of our role as social activists at the head of a cultural and self-managed project called La Ponte-Ecomuséu. We have already published an abundant bibliography on this initiative and some of its main characteristics (Alonso González and Fernández Fernández 2013; Fernández Fernández 2013; Fernández Fernández, Alonso González and Navajas Corral 2015; Alonso González, Macías Vázquez and Fernández Fernández 2016; Navajas Corral and Fernández Fernández 2017). This is a community and rural heritage organization located in a small municipality (Santu Adrianu), with less than 260 inhabitants, in the central area of Asturias (Spain)<sup>1</sup>.

The need was to learn about experiences that dealt with similar ways of doing and thinking to what we were doing at the La Ponte-Ecomuséu at the time. In our local context, we felt quite alone in the face of what Laurajane Smith has called the Authorized Heritage Discourse, referred to as AHD here after (Smith 2006).

We perceived, on the one hand, a strong criticism of the recent public interventions developed in the years of housing bubble<sup>2</sup>. Yet beyond this, we did not see alternatives materialize that were well articulated nor expanded upon taking shape to generate a critical discourse in the face of what was and is being done. This solitude in the Asturian context seemed deceptive to us, because after all the movement produced by 15-M Movement (Spanish: Movimiento 15-M) and its echoes, something must have been happening, the problem is that we probably weren't seeing it. We needed a device, an antenna, which would allow us to capture that wavelength on which the things we were interested in were happening. Where, how to look? This is where the need to find concepts and indicators that would allow us to start locating experiences and narratives that we could call "alter-heritage" began to emerge.

It was in this way that we came across the term social innovation, which we can define as the set of new solutions that the affected communities themselves promote to meet their needs. They are therefore social in both their means and their ends. By involving and mobilizing the beneficiaries, they contribute to transforming social relations and improve the beneficiaries' access to power and resources. As there are different meanings of social innovation (Social 2012; Social 2013; Moulaert, Maccallum and Hillier 2013), we refer to our definition published in journal PH and free ourselves from a denser introduction (Fernández Fernández 2016). Here we prefer to focus on how we arrived at the concept of social innovation and for what reasons we found it useful.

Finally, we include a series of cases that illustrate and lead to the elaboration of more precise indicators that help us to identify and delimit social innovation

in the field of heritage, while allowing us to broaden and diversify this field of study and to raise a series of discussions.

### **SOCIAL INNOVATION IN CULTURAL HERITAGE: A CONCEPT NOT SOUGHT, BUT FOUND**

Social innovation was completely unknown to us as a concept only a few years ago. When we started the La Ponte-Ecomuseum project, a few of us neighbors were looking to create self-employment by making the most of a series of endogenous cultural resources that were completely underused. All of this takes place in a rural area with serious structural problems of development and demography (Fernández Fernández 2013). This approach connected two important aspects: cultural heritage and rural development. If we add to this that the aim was to create a meeting place for the community, to promote popular education and training, to collaborate with other organizations, to contribute to sustainable development, etc., we are fully in the social field. Moreover, as it was a project set up by a civil and independent organization, self-managed and implemented in an area where there were no previous similar initiatives, we were also innovating. Finally, we, as part of the local community in and for which we intended to work, were both drivers and beneficiaries of these innovations. In short, we were creating social innovation, even if we were not aware of it.

The lack, or ignorance, of critical-referential frameworks often led us to ask ourselves what we were: an ecomuseum, a simple association, a cultural centre, a social enterprise, a self-employment workshop?

All of these yet none of them in particular? In working with cultural heritage, we turned to the “new” museology in search of answers to these dilemmas, and the most coherent term we found to fit in was the term ecomuseum, even though we are aware that today it is difficult to differentiate most ecomuseums from any conventional ethnographic museum. We put “new” in quotation marks because its origin is in the 1960s, and it is a bit strange that we have not come across anything more current in the intervening fifty years, the main characteristic of which is undoubtedly its accelerated and rapid changes. We thought the term ecomuseum to be rather obsolete yet could not find anything better.

At this point we already perceived a lack, something we could not put a name to. We began to find it by looking outside the heritage sciences, in terms, expressions and ideas in which our actions were more appropriate, such as citizen laboratory, expanded research and education, commons, new knowledge economy, exo-innovation, etc. (Lafuente 2019; Lafuente and Alonso 2011). Concepts and definitions that helped us to understand and

describe ourselves better; a whole emerging field of a new social economy that is being forged outside the conceptual repertoire of heritage sciences (Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan 2010).

This is why we found more similarities with the organization Cambalache in Asturias or Medialab Prado in Madrid than with l'Écomusée du Creusot-Montceau, despite calling ourselves an ecomuséu (ecomuseum in Asturian). When looking for an even more general and binding idea, under which all these innovative projects could be captured, we stumbled upon these two words that summed up better than any other everything that was being done in this new field (and were trying to do): social innovation.

Therefore, we did not start from an academic discussion, or from a scientific conference, or from a round table with experts (even if some of us were). It was simply our needs that led us to the concept, and this alone indicates why we find it useful. If what we are looking for is to share experiences and knowledge, to find spaces that allow us to be self-reflective, to create synergies and to move towards the construction of a collective intelligence, we need binding concepts. This helps us to know where to look, to understand with whom we have real similarities beyond nominal mirages or restricted fields of knowledge.

This is not a minor issue. The use of certain concepts can lead to the emergence of others, condition practices or prevent reflection on certain issues. We must also innovate in terminology, in how we call things. And, of course, we must reclaim the use of certain words such as innovation, transfer or technology, which have been completely monopolized by certain institutions, areas of knowledge and economic agents. The humanities and some related social sciences must reclaim their right to use them and thereby challenge the mistaken idea that these disciplines are not applicable and therefore not useful to society. We will expand on this discussion later.

It was now clear to us what we had to look for, namely, where social innovation around cultural heritage was taking place. We just needed to design the device that would allow us to locate it.

## **THE HESIOD PROJECT**

In 2014, by implementing some of these ideas, we obtained a post-doctoral research project that allowed us to have the time, contacts and resources to make them more concrete. From there we were able to design the antenna, which we called HESIOD (Heritage and Social Innovation Observatory), based on a double work of quantitative and qualitative analysis of cases (Fernández Fernández 2016).

The work with HESIOD was initially based on designing a rapid dissemination protocol that would operate as a “spider web”, gradually registering the projects we were looking for. To this end, we developed a 26-question questionnaire<sup>3</sup> designed to identify the main elements that characterize social innovations (social impact, sustainability, type of innovation, networks, scalability and replicability), as well as other variables and factors: economic sector, size, types of activity carried out (cataloguing, conservation, dissemination, research, etc.), cultural heritage base of the innovation (collections, historic buildings, archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, vernacular and intangible heritage, etc.), social orientation, impacts and governance models.

We will not go into the quantitative results here, which would force us to adopt a dry, statistical and depoliticized message which is not the intention. Its role within the project was not the definitive or in absolutely the most relevant, but we cannot underestimate it, because thanks to this mapping we preliminarily identified a whole series of heritage processes that presented characteristics and indicators suitable for the analysis of social innovation. The questionnaire contained a series of key questions that helped us to make this identification in a precise manner. For example, question no.19 directly asked about the participation in the governance of the projects of the communities affected by or benefiting from the social innovations<sup>4</sup>. This is a key question, as one of the conditions that we consider essential for true social innovation to take place is the involvement of the beneficiaries in the process itself. We understand that this can be a controversial point: there are those who will argue that social innovation is produced in institutions through highly controlled and equal participation processes, such as consultations, referendums, suggestion boxes, etc. What we argue is that in these cases we should rather speak of institutional innovations for social purposes or public innovation. We insist on remembering that social innovation is so both in its means and its ends (Social 2012). If the beneficiaries are not an active and relevant part of the process, making decisions and guiding it, it is difficult to speak of social innovation. In this sense, it is question no.19 that helped us the most to identify those projects that were in line with what we were looking for: a real involvement of local communities. Of the 26 cases initially surveyed, only 38% (10 cases) indicated the existence of direct democracy in the organization, which led us to the conclusion that one thing is the perception of what is done (social innovation) and another is what actually happens (other types of innovations that follow a social purpose and, as we have already seen, are socially innovative in the ends but not in the means).

This first quantitative approach allowed us to make a brief analysis of what is happening in this field, especially in Spain, and to create a network of contacts that has facilitated a direct and coordinated relationship with those projects.

3

Accessible through the portal [www.hesiod.eu/questionnaire](http://www.hesiod.eu/questionnaire) [Accessed: 09/10/ 2019].

4

Question No. 19: What channels for citizen participation exist within your project-organization? a) none b) informative participation through standardized procedures (e.g. complaints, claims, or suggestion boxes) c) participation through user/beneficiary consultations d) permanent and institutionalized participation through forums, assemblies, etc., which lack decision-making power e) direct participation in decision-making through bodies where there is a clear distribution of power and democracy is open.

From this network we selected several that, through interviews or direct and participant observation, we used as case studies and identified as true social-heritage innovation ecosystems..

## CASE STUDIES

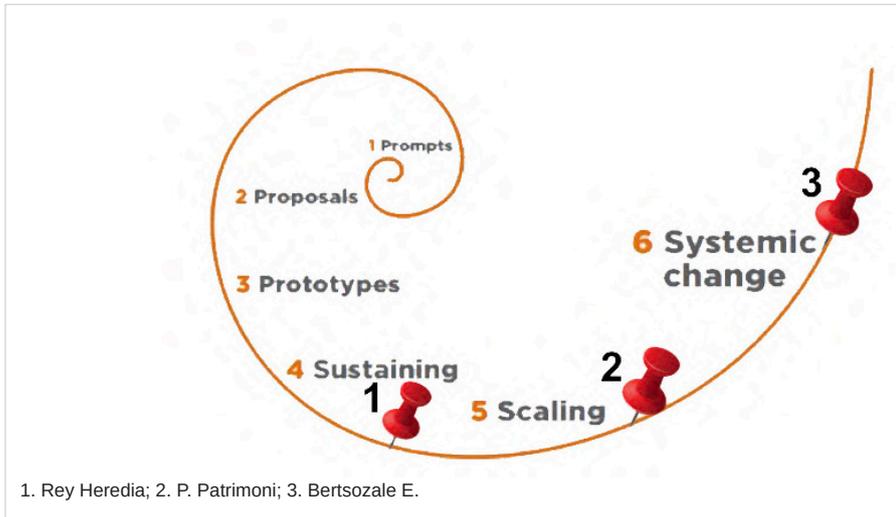
Here we adopted an ethnographic and qualitative methodological approach, which we had previously used to work with local communities on different topics: toponymy collection, traditional uses of space, historical memory, etc. (Fernández Fernández 2011, 2014; Fernández Fernández and Moshenska 2016). In this case, we started from what the organizations had already told us about themselves through the questionnaire. The aim now was to identify roles, acts, processes, etc.; to contrast the vision of the organizations themselves with our own, taking a critical approach to them.

In addition, we include here a series of preliminary considerations that have served as guidelines and indicators when analyzing the case studies. First, we consider that in order to speak of social innovations, these three situations should occur jointly (Fernández Fernández 2016):

1. Creation of new solutions (products, services, models, processes, etc.) that comply in a more sustainable, fairer and improved way with the objectives of conservation, management, dissemination, defense or enhancement of some type of cultural heritage.

Table 1

INDICATORS	
Variables	Examples of indicators
Sustainability	Type of organization; Funding; Volunteering; Activism; Strategy, vision; Effectiveness
Social innovation	Creation of new products and services, new practices, forms of organization, governance, rules, rights, networks, cooperation, etc.; Novelty, creativity; Production of new collective cultural goods; Production of new knowledge; Production of social capital
Impact and social orientation	Number of beneficiaries; Social needs; Impacted areas (education, research, knowledge, democracy, transparency, ecology, employment, inclusion, etc.); Contribution to social transformation; New processes of transformative heritagization
Networks, scale, replicability	Size of the organizations; Organizations with which collaboration takes place; Connection with other experiences at different scales (local, regional, supra-regional); Transfer of ideas; Social technologies accessible to the public
Governance and participation	Pathways for participation; User participation; Forms of empowerment and social leadership; Bottom-up practices; Heritage governance systems; Conflicts and their resolution
Heritage vectors	Collections, funds, buildings, archaeological sites, vernacular heritage, intangible heritage, etc.; Old and new types of heritage. Common cultural property



Phases of social innovation. This image shows the stage in which we consider each of the three case studies presented here to be | fuente Murray, Caulier-Grice and Mulgan 2010

2. Coverage of social needs such as access to education, science and knowledge, culture, quality and non-relocatable employment, new technologies; participation and democracy, environmental conservation, sustainable development, social inclusion, integration, gender equality, etc.

3. Creation of new types of relationships that improve society's capacity to act by incorporating citizens as active agents in innovation processes, or by facilitating the means for these processes to be directly driven by them. Favoring multi-sectoral, multi-directional and balanced collaboration between society, the state and the market.

Second, we have described a series of variables that can allow us to take a quantitative and qualitative approach to social innovation, such as those proposed by Buckland and Murillo (2013): social impact, economic sustainability, type of innovation, cross-sectoral collaboration, and the scarcity and replicability of the innovation. We associate these variables with a series of indicators that are useful for us to identify them through participant observation and/or interview (table 1).

On the other hand, social innovation is a process to be described and analyzed within a chain of events that goes from the simple idea or proposal to the contribution to social change. In this case, we use the proposal of Murray, Caulier and Mulgan (2010), divided into six stages from ideas to impact and systemic change, which are summarized on figure above.

Finally, it is important to clarify what we are referring to regarding the process of heritage production or heritagization. Although there is an abundance of literature on the subject in recent decades (Kirshenbaltt-Gimblett 1995;

Prats Canals 1997; Smith 2006), it remains a problematic, controversial and conflictive concept (Sánchez-Carretero 2012). Cultural heritage is a cultural and social construction, a dynamic process through which meanings are elaborated for certain relevant cultural assets (Prats Canals 1997, 2000), given the desire to conserve something that a human collective considers important (Criado-Boado and Barreiro 2013). It is therefore always a process of immaterial valorization (Smith 2006). In our case, we will use the term “heritagization process” to refer to these dynamics –symbolic, political, conflictive, etc.– by means of which an institution or collective selects and transforms some type of asset, tangible or intangible, into an element of social and/or community interest.

On the basis of these premises and orientations, several projects were selected that met at least the following characteristics:

1. They self-identified as socially innovative and showed traits indicative of social innovation.
2. They claimed to be organized through some kind of internal and open or direct democracy.

As mentioned above, only 10 cases of the respondents fulfilled these requirements. Among them, some were chosen for more scrupulous observation (8 in total). These observations consisted of interviews with different social actors, direct participation activities and the collection of written and/or audiovisual information. Of all the cases studied, a selection of three have subsequently been made to illustrate this publication, trying to combine both institutional and non-institutional or informal initiatives, in order to show the variety of forms of social innovation that occur in cultural heritage.

These three cases are the Rey Heredia Social Centre in Cordoba (Andalucía, Spain), the Peu-Patrimoni Project of the Jaume I University in Castellón (Valencia, Spain) and the association Bertsozale Elkarte de Esukal Herria (Basque Country and Navarre in Spain and Iparralde in France).

We provide below some quantitative information extracted from the preliminary closed survey, summarized in table 2, which allows us to have a first comparative perspective between the cases studied. The aim of these fields is to provide data to contribute to a proper assessment of the social impact (based on the number of users), the economic sustainability and cross-sector collaboration (based on the analysis of the funding channel, its nature and the number of stakeholders), the scale and replicability of the process, and finally the degree of diversity of the innovation (based on the types analyzed).

Case study	Sector	Size (staff plus volunteers)	Sustainability	No. types of social innovations*	No. of users impacted	Scale of impact	Stakeholders	Replicas	Innovation phase
King Heredia	Third sector	40 approx.	100 % own resources	4	Several decisions. Local users	Local	3	1	4
Peu Patrimoni	Public	100 approx.	+ 75 % public	6	Several hundred. Users from various localities and regions	Supra-local	6	5	5
Bertsozale Elkartea	Third sector	200 approx.	50-75 % own resources, 25-50 % public, < 25 % private	6	Several thousand. Very diverse and from different regions and states	Supra-regional	19	9	6

Table 2. Some fields analyzed in the different case studies. \*Types of social innovations: 1. Creation of new products and services, 2. Creation of new practices, 3. Creation of new forms of organization, 4. Creation of new forms of financing and co-production, 5. Creation or promotion of new rules, 6. Cultural heritage rights and laws, 7. Creation of new collaborative networks

### Rey Heredia Social Center (Cordoba, Andalusia). Seeds of citizen innovation

The first case that we developed is that of the Rey Heredia Social Center, a former school that was occupied by a series of collectives grouped under the name of Acampada Dignidad de Córdoba and transformed into a social centre in October 2013.

The heritage vector of this process is the building itself, built in 1918 as a co-educational school, the work of the architect Francisco Azorín Izquierdo, a prominent socialist politician of the time. It is therefore the first school built for this purpose in the city, following a rational approach that sought to create a secular, quality education for the most popular classes. It continued its activity during the Second Republic and was the only building in Cordoba that kept the Republican coat of arms intact during Franco's dictatorship. In short, it is a symbol for the city and a repository of the memory of several generations who strove to build a truly public education, the historical value of which is beyond doubt.

Although the centre is owned by the municipality, it was ceded to the Consejería de Educación de la Junta de Andalucía, which in December 2011 abandoned the activity there and the building itself. Following this series of events, and despite its historical value and the fact that its abandonment was denounced by various neighborhood groups and the South District Council, a municipal project foresaw its demolition as part of the Cordoba City Council's General Plan to convert the area into a large square that would enhance the surroundings of the Calahorra Tower and the Roman bridge<sup>5</sup>.

5

<http://cordopolis.es/2013/10/06/rey-heredia-de-colegio-abandonado-a-centro-social-en-menos-de-24-horas/> [Accessed: 25/10/2019].

6

[http://www.diariocordoba.com/noticias/cordobalocal/ayuntamiento-vecinos-llegan-acuerdo-cesion-rey-heredia\\_933860.html](http://www.diariocordoba.com/noticias/cordobalocal/ayuntamiento-vecinos-llegan-acuerdo-cesion-rey-heredia_933860.html)  
[Accessed: 25/10/2019].

This decision clashed with the will of different citizens' organizations that had been calling for a social use of the space for some time without receiving a response. It should be taken into account that this is one of the poorest areas of the city, where the economic crisis has had a very strong social impact and where its effects, such as unemployment and cuts in public services, have been felt most acutely. Finally, after a demonstration in protest against pension cuts, the building was occupied by various groups under the name of Acampada Dignidad de Córdoba on October 5th, 2013. The occupation thus avoided the demolition of the historic building at the same time. One of the arguments put forward for the occupation was that of providing the neighborhood with services that public institutions were not providing for those most in need as a result of the crisis and cutbacks.

After several years of struggle between the neighborhood organizations and the City Council, which tried to evict the building by different means, an agreement was reached in January 2015 whereby the Córdoba City Council undertook to cede the building to the different groups represented by the association Casa de la Ciudadanía Sur and the Acampada Dignidad<sup>6</sup>.

Today the centre continues to operate, providing important services to the neighborhood, such as a social dining room, library, computer room, assembly hall, tutoring classes, urban vegetable garden, employment and social counseling, etc. Governance is the responsibility of a general assembly that meets monthly and coordinates the different work groups, which in turn coordinate the day-to-day running of the centre and are in charge of keeping the building well cared for.

### Indicators

1. Sustainability. The quantitative data on table 2 give us a first clue about the type of ecosystem that Rey Heredia is. The social impact is reduced to the local user community, with an important diversity of social innovations. The source of funding is unique (self-managed) which isolates the process from other sectors (public and private). This imposes many constraints on the process to scale and replicate, but at the same time guarantees its sustainability due to its informal, collaborative and community-based nature.

There is no doubt about its effectiveness. It has ensured the preservation of a building of great interest and has kept it well cared for and, above all, in use, which is, after all, the main guarantee of conservation for any building.

2. Social innovation. Innovation in this process takes place in several aspects, although we will highlight two in particular. First, the creation of a collective asset through community re-appropriation. The Rey Heredia school lacked protection as a historical asset; it is the very community that occupies it that values it and claims its right to exist, not to be destroyed. This aspect places



us in an interesting scenario from the perspective of heritage theory, since rather than speaking of a process of heritagization, understanding this type of procedure as practices of creating difference and domination (Alonso González 2017), we should speak of pro-communication practices through which a social group activates an imminent process of creating value around a collective asset. We will discuss this issue further below. The second novelty lies in the fact that, as a common good, the management and governance are the responsibility of the self-organized community itself, which designs an assembly-based system of property management adapted to the very nature and socio-economic reality of the context. There are also other types of innovations to which this process has contributed, such as legal innovations, which, although they have not implied a transformation of the regulatory frameworks, have set precedents by forcing a novel interpretation of the rules by the administrations. An occupation considered illegal in principle, following a restrictive interpretation, is later legitimized by the administrations themselves through a transfer of use agreement and a possible reformulation of the city's land-use planning, and in this way the social innovations are assimilated by the administrations themselves.

3. Impact and social orientation. Services are provided to the neighborhood, such as a soup kitchen, library, computer room, assembly hall, remedial classes, urban vegetable garden, employment and social counseling, etc.

This use is also social, creating a series of community services where there were none, outside the paradigm of welfare, in which the affected community itself is the owner and sovereign of its decisions and actions.

For example, the building's caretaker, who is in charge of opening, closing, surveillance, user information, etc., was a socially excluded person, a homeless person, before carrying out his activity here. Rey Heredia offered



The site of the school, next to the Calahorra Tower and the Roman bridge | photo Javi

Rey Heredia Social Centre in Cordoba | photo Jesús Fernández Fernández

him the possibility of taking on these functions in exchange for board and lodging. He lives in an adapted space in the same center and uses the center cafeteria for his basic food. Thanks to his new role, his social role has changed radically, as he has moved out of the previous context of exclusion and is now doing important social work and helping other people. We can imagine the effect this can have on a human being's self-esteem.

In short, the Rey Heredia Social Centre can be described as an innovative social technology that generates social and community services. Its impacts also reach academic reflection (Velasco 2014).

4. Networks, scale, replicability. Rey Heredia was born out of an informal process of collaboration between different platforms and collectives. It has therefore already emerged from a network. The process has not been designed to scale or replicate, but this type of precedent can always be used by "contagion" in spaces where similar circumstances exist. It is not difficult to imagine the number of situations in which the same gentrification and speculative pattern is repeated in many urban centers of historic cities, with communities displaced by these processes; the replication or imitation of these practices is not only possible, but could be considered desirable if we truly want to build more democratic, inclusive and socially sustainable cities and societies. It should also be noted that there is a precedent of similar characteristics in the city of Seville, the Casa de Pumarejo, to which we will refer below. The Rey Heredia movement was later in time and in some aspects found inspiration in El Pumarejo, which had already begun its activity in the year 2000. It can be said that there are certain signs of replication among this heterogeneous set of practices.

Posters next to the cafeteria of the Rey Heredia Social Centre; on the right, Neighborhood atmosphere in the courtyard of the old school | photos Javi

Therefore, based on the stages of social innovation proposed by Murray, Caulier and Mulgan (2010), summarized in the figure of the page 89, the





On the left, Occupation of the Rey Heredia school  
| photo Javi

On the right, Pumarejo Neighbourhood Centre  
(Seville) | photo Smart Citizens

Rey Heredia project would be in the stage between 4 and 5. It has proved to be sustainable thanks to community involvement and has therefore passed stage 4. It would therefore be in a stage prior to 5, scalability and replication, pending future collaboration or integration in platforms or networks on a municipal or regional scale.

As we have already indicated, the nature of this type of process is that it is restricted to a very local level, leaving the only alternative to expansion by “contagion”, placing us back in the context of local or citizen-based social innovations.

What is most evident is that Rey Heredia has created a genuine eco-system of citizen innovation with great potential, which after a first experimental phase faces the challenge of opening up, or not, the process to more actors: how can an administration participate without institutionalizing and politically co-opting these movements? How can the private sector intervene without turisticizing or converting initiatives of this type into cultural industries? How can the idea be extended and replicated? These are some of the questions that can be asked, and whatever the answer, the underlying political tension cannot be avoided. Social innovations also have this advantage of making visible conflicts and/or issues that might otherwise remain hidden or unexplained.

5. Governance and participation. As noted in the introduction, governance is the responsibility of a general assembly that coordinates all the actions and working groups. There is no doubt that the protagonism of the process belongs to the affected communities themselves, who lead and self-manage it, and from the heritage point of view, this process has been very effective, as it has avoided the gratuitous and speculative destruction of a historic asset, has restored it and has also given it a new use, which guarantees its preservation.

6. Conflicts and their resolution. Rey Heredia was born out of a tension that we have already described. It has had to face threats of eviction and sanctions on numerous occasions. Part of the key to its success has been precisely its ability to reach consensus, through assemblies, on fairly firm collective actions that have given the process coherence and social legitimacy. After its tortuous beginnings, this form of assembly has been maintained and it is through it that the conflicts that may arise and their solutions are worked out. The advantage of this type of open and horizontal practice is that it avoids the appearance of minorities (logically never one hundred percent), who may feel discriminated against or displaced, unlike what happens in non-consensual or simple majority systems.

7. Heritage vectors and relationship with the AHD. As we have already seen in the case study, the heritage vector is a historic building that is used as a self-managed social-community centre to provide services to the neighborhood.

The tension with the DAP has been evident in this case, between what we might call public and community heritage. On the one hand, the experts, the technicians and the administrations who, through a speculative project, were prepared to destroy a historic building in order to enhance the value of another heritage site (Roman bridge and Calahorra tower). On the other hand, the common heritage of the amateurs, the communities and the people administered. To enhance the value of the heritage of the former, it was necessary to destroy that of the latter. And it was necessary to do so in order to provide services to the urban wealthy, the main consumers of tourist products, taking public space away from less privileged groups. Kevin Walsh was one of the first authors to describe this type of practice as a process of “heritagization”: the destruction of public space to be converted into tourist space (Walsh 1992, 4), or, to use Marc Augé’s terminology (1993), the conversion of “places” into “non-places”. We can find no better academic definition of what was planned for this part of the southern district of Córdoba.

But in this process other unexpected voices have emerged, those of other, less well-off urban classes who, by self-organizing, have set in motion their own processes of heritage subjectivation. They have identified with this non-heritage, reappropriated it, revalued it as a historical object and a space of collective memory, saved and restored it. And above all, they have endowed it with a real social function, beyond the paradigm of the conversion of heritage into a mere product for mass consumption. We are therefore faced with a process of community-based heritagization –which we could also call “pro-communalization”<sup>7</sup> which, on the basis of these radical and necessary approaches, proposes a fairer, more representative and inclusive alternative for the social enhancement of certain historical assets. Initiatives of this kind go beyond the simple public-private debate and point to other paths possible to build more inclusive, horizontal and necessary models of governance

7

We speak of this type of action when a community self-organizes and creates its social fabric around a process of collective appropriation of an asset, which is horizontally governed, used and maintained as a guarantee of the social reproduction of the collective itself. As opposed to institutional or top-down processes of heritagization, which would be those in which a group of experts delimit the nature of a good based on their knowledge, turning it into a legal-epistemic object that is differentiated and separated from the social whole by means of a hierarchical-expertise governance system (for example, a museum). Although a dichotomous vision is proposed here in order to delimit concepts and to set out the discussion, it goes without saying that the possible hybridizations between the different spheres of heritage and forms of heritagization are infinite.

in the current socio-political context of the crisis of legitimacy of Western representative democracies.

As we have already indicated, there are important similarities with the process of the Casa del Pumarejo in Seville, where a series of self-organized collectives reclaimed the social use of an 18th century building in the historic center of the city, which was the object of urban speculation by a large hotel company<sup>8</sup>. As in the case of King Heredia, these processes make visible the enormous tensions that currently exist in the historic centers of large European cities and different forms of resistance to these processes of rampant gentrification (Harvey 2012). On the other hand, it shows alternative mechanisms of relating to assets of historical and cultural interest.

From the point of view of the AHD, the Casa Pumarejo has been declared a BIC, Bien de Interés Cultural (Cultural-elements declared of Cultural Interest)<sup>9</sup> and in the case of Rey Heredia, the urban development plan that foresaw its demolition is being reconsidered. All these changes and recognitions were subsequent to the start of the community actions described above, and are therefore, at least in part, a consequence of them.

### Case conclusions

Heritage is not a created or given thing, with value in itself, but depends on the communities claiming it, using it and integrating it as part of their identity as a group (Prats Canals 1997). This case study shows how this process of citizen innovation takes place around an asset that is collectivized and self-managed by these communities for social purposes. In this case, the role of this type of non-disciplinary practices –platforms, associations, social and neighborhood movements, squatters, support communities, etc.– as

8

Personal communication from David Gómez.

9

<https://www.iaph.es/patrimonio-inmueble-andalucia/resumen.do?id=i19439> [Accessed: 25/10/2019].



No to the eviction of the Rey Heredia Social Centre  
| photo Javi

laboratories of social innovation, generators of new ways of doing, practicing, governing and knowing, seedbeds of new imaginaries and social technologies from which many other organizations can take ideas and/or replicate them. For example, institutions can learn a great deal from this type of action to improve their ways of relating to citizens. In short, this is what we could call innovation from “outside”, transferable to formal and institutional contexts of heritage management or the implementation of public cultural policies.

### **Patrimoni PEU-UJI. The role of institutions in the creation of social-heritage innovation ecosystems**

Patrimoni is a project within the University Extension Program, from here on referred to as PEU due to its acronym in Spanish (Programa de Extensión Universitaria), of the Vice-Rectorate for Culture, University Extension and Institutional Relations of the Jaume I University (UJI) of Castellón. It was launched in 2002 following a request from local cultural associations for the university to provide them with advice on how to catalogue their cultural heritage. This experience was repeated in more territories in which the university has been offering resources and technical support so that the different local groups could develop their projects and in this way the Patrimoni project was formalized, which currently includes 15 local groups from all over the province of Castellón (table 3).

The project contributes to “making cultural heritage visible, and the value and possibilities it has as a resource for society in order to form a critical and responsible citizenship with its heritage” (Portolés Górriz 2015). It is therefore described as a project laboratory which, through participatory methodologies, mediates between the groups of volunteers and the technicians who advise them to guarantee the horizontality of the projects, respect for the diversity of each action and constant adaptation and updating to each specific circumstance and its rhythms. In this way, interventions are carried out in a consensual manner and are planned by involving the different actors who participate in the local groups. By creating this “ecosystem” of collaborative projects, a dynamic inter-group logic and networking is achieved, which allows a more general level of reflection and perspective to be created where, through assemblies of all the working groups, common frameworks for action are established, with the aim of self-evaluating, learning and improving the procedures already in place.

Here the university becomes a listening device. Its main function will no longer be to say what needs to be done and how, but to accompany, to act as a mediator between the expert and amateur worlds. Understood in this way, Patrimoni is not a finalist or solutionist project, it is simply a resource that the university makes available to different communities and forms part of a process (Portolés Górriz 2015), which is not intended to be standardized,

fixed, fenced off or patented. This open, horizontal, collaborative nature and, above all, the role of the university as a facilitating agent, creates conditions that can be considered as an ecosystem of heritage and social innovation, and for this reason its inclusion as a case study seemed pertinent to us.

## Indicadores

1. Sustainability. Patrimoni is a public program, financed by the university and the Castellón Provincial Council (which, although it contributes part of the program's funds, does not interfere in its coordination or development). During this time, it has managed to become a sustainable project through the replication of the process thanks to the creation of autonomous groups or heritage communities, 15 so far<sup>10</sup>, which do a great job of heritage custody. The community organizations function autonomously and in each case materialize in a different way, seeking their own sustainability. The process

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This number varies over time, as some groups leave the network, disappear or disassociate themselves from it. It is a dynamic structure with an organic development.

Table 3. Name of the village, the local organisation(s) involved and the key words of each project (list updated in September 2019)

Población	Organizaciones locales implicadas	Palabras clave de cada proyecto
Almedíjar	"Almedíjar Vive"	Depopulation, community, rural school
Altura	A. C. El Cantal	Cultural heritage, dry stone, heritage education
Altura	A. C. Cartuja de Valdecríst	Cultural heritage, socialization, interpretation, heritage education
Cirat	A. C. Las Salinas	Cultural heritage, art, museum, socialization, heritage education
Costur	A. C. La Fontanella	Cultural and natural heritage, dry-stone, socialization, heritage education
Territori Espadà	The 19 municipalities of the Natural Park of Sierra de Espadán (Aín, Alcudia de Veo, Alfondegulla, Artana, Agimia de Almonacid, Almedíjar, Ayódar, Azuébar, Chóvar, Eslida, Fuentes de Ayódar, Higueras, Matet, Pavías, Suera, Tales, Torralba del Pinar, Vall de Almonacid, Villamalur)	Cultural and natural heritage, interpretation, depopulation, community, socialization
Els sentits dels Ports	9 municipalities (Forcall, Todelella, Vilafranca, Ares, Cincorres, Villores, La Mata, Zorita, Morella)	Cultural and natural heritage, interpretation, community
Montán	A. C. Conde de Vallterra	Cultural heritage
Los Taulons	Sant Rafel del Riu-Barri Castell (Ulldecona)	Cultural and natural heritage, cataloguing, heritage education, research, community
Sot de Ferrer	Grup de Voluntariat de Sot de Ferrer. Cultural heritage education. SOM (Suera Museu Obert)	Cultural heritage, socialization, museum, heritage education
Terres de Cruïlla	Populations in the north of the province of Castellón and in the south of Tarragona	Cultural and natural heritage, heritage education, interpretation
Vilanova d'Alcolea	Vilanova d'Alcolea Heritage Committee	Cultural heritage, cataloguing, research, socialization
Vilanova d'Alcolea	Vilanova d'Alcolea Arts Festival	Art, contemporary creation, community, participation, network, local development
Viver	Wine culture recovery group	Cultural heritage, cataloguing, heritage education

is effective, as it makes visible an important set of forgotten or marginalized assets and activates local communities that investigate them by setting up mechanisms for their recognition, cataloguing, protection, socialization, etc.

2. Social innovation. The novelty of Patrimoni lies mainly in its methodology, which creates conditions in which the university acts as a facilitating agent, favoring the creation of ecosystems of local heritage action and spaces for meeting, reflection, analysis and permanent dialogue between the communities born of the process. This network functions in a disaggregated and horizontal way, very different from the hierarchical and concentrated ways of disseminating academic knowledge, producers of unidirectional models and discourses.

So we come to another important novelty of this methodology, which is that the processes are not standardized or normalized; differences are respected, and this aspect is fundamental so that innovations are not limited.

3. Social impact and orientation. The social impact reaches a not very large community of users, but on a supralocal scale. It should be borne in mind that these actions lead to heritage socialization practices that extend the network over a larger population group, which is difficult to quantify. Let us take for example the dissemination programs of some groups that have been set up, such as in Viver, where guided tours of its wine heritage are organized (Grupo de recuperación de la cultura del vino de Viver and Portolés Górriz 2016).

The social orientation is evident, as it is fundamentally a heritage education project. Around the socialization of knowledge and heritage, local action groups are created, which promote horizontal and participative practices of management, dissemination and conservation of different types of assets. There is a triple process of knowledge transfer, from the university to the groups (experiential knowledge), from the groups to the university (experiential knowledge) and horizontally, between the groups.

4. Networks, scale, replicability. In fact, Patrimoni is based on the creation of different types of networks, at different scales, at least two, local and supra-local. As we have already indicated, there are 15 groups constituted within Patrimoni that are distributed throughout the province of Castellón, and some even work in other provinces, acting both individually and jointly, adopting a territorial network structure.

With regard to the dissemination or replicability of the process, as already indicated, Patrimoni is structured in an open and accessible way for any new group that wishes to join. Therefore, the resources and know-how accumulated are shared collaboratively, so that they can be used by any



Wine festival. Viver. October 2015. Heritage Education Project. Group for the recovery of the culture of Viver and CEIP Historian Diago | photo Programa Patrimoni (PEU) of the Jaume I University

other local group, inside or outside the project, so that any innovation can be easily replicated or imitated. Patrimoni is undoubtedly a good example of the new attitude that academia must assume when addressing the problems of society and territories if it wishes to be a true agent that fosters innovation in general, and social innovation in particular, beyond the ivory tower paradigm.

Within the stages of innovation, Patrimoni would be in stage 5, making an important effort to disseminate and replicate the idea, seeking the greatest possible repercussion and benefiting the greatest number of users.

5. Governance and participation. Undoubtedly, the leading role in the process belongs to the local communities themselves, who demand this mediation from the academy, which is capable of co-creating a space for the exchange of ideas and procedures without the existence of a prominent actor. By implementing participatory and open methodologies, a deliberative and democratic culture is fostered, which is also scarce in spatial planning and particularly in the field of heritage, where technicians and administrations are not known for asking too many questions. In this way, new local assembly bodies and actions in which the citizenry is the protagonist agent are favored.



"Textures del meu poble". Costur (October 2016).  
Heritage Education Day of the Heritage Group of  
Costur with the school | photo Programa Patrimoni  
(PEU) of the Jaume I University

6. Conflicts and their resolution. Patrimoni is a project with a large number of actors, both institutional and community, and therefore with an important complexity. It is normal for tensions to arise in its different areas, as diverse as the structure of the project itself, although the area in which they occur most frequently is the local one. For example, one of the most common clashes is between administrations (city councils) and local groups (usually associations). This tension is usually caused by the lack of recognition of these groups by the corporations, which usually translates into little support, lack of involvement, counter-programming, excessive bureaucratic obstacles or sometimes direct opposition. Thus, the groups understandably feel mistreated. These tensions are dealt with in two ways. First, by means of continuous technical support from university staff, who act as mediators here, that try to commit the parties through the negotiation of agreements or formulas that allow establishing stable agreements between them. Second, the university, as a public institution, assumes this task of recognition by supporting the proposals and actions of the collectives as a countermeasure, thus providing them with greater legitimacy and a new public role in their more local context. It is essential to keep channels open to analyze difficulties as soon as possible through express visits, crisis meetings and the adaptation of projects based on their circumstances, as is done by Patrimoni's technical staff, who are always part of the design and planning process of the collectives, trying to build horizontal and participative spaces for the collegiate resolution of conflicts. The project's scheduled meetings (conferences, preparation of publications, technical visits, an annual meeting of the network of local groups, etc.) are also used to define, deal with and



Technical visit with the communities in Altura (Castellón, Valencian Community) as part of the Heritage project | photo Programa Patrimoni (PEU) of Jaume I University

work on these problems and their resolution through the design of specific tools, very often in an experimental and tentative way, which is what makes the project innovative.

7. Heritage vectors and relationship with the AHD. Diverse, as each group acts on tangible or intangible assets of a very different nature. As we have already indicated, in the town of Viver, this vector has been the culture of wine (Grupo de recuperación de la cultura del vino de Viver and Portolés Górriz 2016), thus recovering a completely forgotten collective asset and giving it new meaning through community action itself, avoiding, in short, its definitive destruction and oblivion.

From the point of view of the AHD, these groups are forcing local and regional administrations to extend the list of inventoried assets, heritage sites of interest and resources activated for different uses..

### **Case conclusions**

This example perfectly illustrates how social innovation can be fostered from public institutions and also takes the process to a supra-local scale through replication and horizontal transfer. Starting from locally implemented initiatives, an ecosystem has been created that has made it possible to reach a larger number of users, replicate, scale up and disseminate these ideas and methodologies (phase 5), thanks to the involvement of the public sector, which in this case facilitates and does not strangle the processes, assumes local diversity without imposing solutionist agendas that aim to solve complex



Party "La-Re-Mi de la roba bruta". Synchronized activity. Artistic intervention projects | photo Patrimoni Program (PEU) of the Jaume I University

problems in a few years and usually end in failure. Patrimoni offers an open methodology that could be replicated in any territory to implement new social and territorial technologies for the governance of heritage considered "minor" or local.

### **Bertsozale Elkartea (Association of Friends of Bertsolaritza). Intangible heritage, social innovation and international impact**

Bertsozale Elkartea (Association of Friends of Bertsolaritza) was founded as a non-profit cultural association in 1987 with the aim of transmitting bertsolaritza in a broad sense to new generations through its transmission, research and conservation in the Basque-speaking territories: Araba, Bizkaia, Gipuzkoa, Nafarroa Garaia, Lapurdi, Nafarroa Beherea and Zuberoa, which are currently divided between the Spanish and French states.

The heritage vector in this case is bertsolaritza or bertsolarismo, a traditional art of improvised singing in Basque based on various melodies and rhyming patterns, which are performed on stage by one or several bertsolaris (performers) in different types of public events. The sung composition is called "bertso" in Basque (Garzia, Egaña and Sarasua 2001).

Bertsozale Elkartea currently has more than 2,400 members, including bertsolaris and bertsolaritza enthusiasts. Each of the 7 Basque-speaking territories has its own territorial section with representation on the board of directors of Bertsozale Elkartea Euskal Herria (the Basque name for all the

Basque-speaking territories). The association works and develops different aspects and fields of bertsolaritza in which professional and voluntary work come together in an unmistakable way. This is its philosophy and is reflected in its projects and annual objectives.

Bertsozale Elkartea divides its activity into different, highly diversified fields or areas of work. More than 80 professionals work in them, in addition to a significant number of volunteers<sup>11</sup>.

The Transmission area promotes the bertsolaritza ecosystem through the organisation of teachings, courses, classes, schools and different types of events, such as bertso schools (there are around 100 throughout the Basque Country)<sup>12</sup>. The Development-Promotion area organizes the Bertsolaris championships, the national championship every four years<sup>13</sup> and, more frequently, different territorial championships. It also promotes the dissemination of bertsolaritza through television and radio stations and the portal<sup>14</sup>. The development-promotion area administers the bertsolaris' copyrights, manages professional contracts and organizes events. For logistical execution, a service spin-off has been created (Lanku) which carries out the technical tasks (sound, stage assembly, management of bertsolaris' contracts, designing artistic projects, etc.). It works with the objectives of a company, although with the general philosophy of the association. The Research area tries to promote studies and research into bertsolaritza, also incorporating other types of orality in Basque. A foundation called Mintzola Ahozko Lantegia has been created to organize this function. This foundation, in collaboration with various institutions, gives the process an international dimension by organizing a congress on improvised singing in the world (Kulturartea). It has a centre for oral activity: Elkargunea, and an archive (Xenpelar Dokumentazio Zentroa) where everything related to the past and present history of bertsolaritza is kept, documented, classified and made available to the public and researchers. All this work has led to a significant increase in the number of works dedicated to bertsolaritza in recent years and several doctoral theses have been written on this subject (Larrañaga 2013)<sup>15</sup>. The communication department is responsible for the external communication of the Bertsozale Elkartea (Internet, press, social networks), also taking care of and promoting communication with members through meetings, annual and extraordinary meetings, newsletters, etc. Finally, the Gender area, created in 2008, works on the gender perspective in the association and in bertsolaritza in general.

The socio-cultural relevance achieved by the movement is evidenced by the high level of participation; for example, in the national bertsolaris championship (Bertsolari Txapelketa Nagusia in Basque), held in 2017, some 14,500 bertso fans gathered together<sup>16</sup>. It should also be noted that the bertsolaris offer more than a thousand performances throughout the year.

11

<http://www.bertsozale.eus/eu/proiektuak> [Accessed: 30/10/ 2018].

12

<http://www.bertso-eskolak.eus/es/> [Accessed: 30/10/2018]. In addition, there are more than 26,000 pupils in formal education who receive one hour of bertsolaritza per week. To this end, the association employs around 40 people, whose contracts are financed in equal parts by the regional and local administrations.

13

Bertsolari Txapelketa Nagusia 2017: <https://www.bertsozale.eus/eu/bertsolari-txapelketa-nagusia> [Accessed: 30/10/ 2018].

14

<https://bertsoa.eus/> [Accessed: 30/10/ 2018].

15

At least 8 theses have been completed so far, and several are in progress. The Mintzola foundation was recently suppressed by its board of trustees in 2021, passing its functions to another Basque organization: Euskaltzaindia (Royal Academy of the Basque Language): <https://www.eitb.eus/es/cultura/detalle/8216369/deciden-dar-por-terminado-tour-of-mintzola-ahozko-lantegia/> [Accessed: 05/06/2022].

16

Up to 400,000 people followed the final on Basque public television. Data provided by Bertsozale Elkartea.

The number of final beneficiaries of Bertsozale Elkartea and its antennae is finally very broad and diverse. For example, the audience of Hitzetik Hartzera, a weekly television program dedicated to bertsolaritza, was 14,000 people per week each episode, with a total of 26 broadcasts in 2014. Meanwhile, Bertsoa.eus, a website where videos of performances, interviews, etc. are shown, reaches some 210,000 users a year. Overall, the figures for direct participation in courses, classes, bertso schools, championships, etc., would have been around 45,000 people<sup>17</sup>.

The achievements of this association are evident, not only because of the creation of a social fabric that involves thousands of people, but also because it has rescued an ancestral tradition that in the 1960s was marginalized to a rural environment and was practically unknown to most of the inhabitants of the Basque Country (Garzia 2007). To turn it into a mass cultural phenomenon that has applied to become an integral part of the UNESCO Intangible Heritage of Humanity List (Hernández García and Arrieta Urtizberea 2014), a process that Bertsozale Elkartea began in 2007.

### Indicadores

1. Sustainability. The source of funding is diverse (mixed), although mainly its own, which makes the process more sustainable and financially independent (table 2). Its collaborative nature is manifested through the high number of stakeholders. The process has undoubtedly been effective due to the high number of users impacted and the change that the whole process has meant for the tradition of bertsolaritza.

2. Social innovation. The process shows a high diversity of social innovations and a high capacity for replication and scaling up, all without losing its civic-community roots. The creation of new processes, services, collective cultural goods, knowledge production and social capital are very evident in the case analyzed. For example, social innovations are important in intergenerational work (bertso schools, championships) and gender, because although traditionally bertsos were sung by men, there is a growing number of young women bertsolaris today thanks to the work of Bertsozale Elkartea (Hernández García and Arrieta Urtizberea 2014). New services, private and social enterprises have been created.

From the point of view of governance, we are once again faced with organizations that amplify the dimension of a common good, the bertso, which they manage collectively, facilitating the integration of different actors and social agents, adding them to the process. They facilitate access to knowledge by organizing an archive that is used for research work and doctoral theses, thereby directly contributing to the production of knowledge, as well as to its dissemination through the organization of an international congress.



Mattin (Mattin Treku Inhargue, 1916-1981) improvising his verses in Sare in 1960 | photo Juan San Martín



On the left, 2013ko Bertsolari Txapelketa  
| photo UKBERRI.NET Uribe Kosta eta Erandioko  
agerkari digitala

On the right, 2017ko Bertsolari Txapelketa  
| photo Dani Blanco

3. Impact and social orientation. The social impact reaches a very wide and varied community of users and also on a supra-regional scale (all the territories of the Basque Country). It has had a notable influence on the mentality of the people who live in these territories in their perception of bertso, traditionally understood as a practice exclusive to rural men, which has been very effectively incorporated by women (several recent editions of the national championship have had a female winner), with Bertsozale having a very direct influence on the implementation of collective changes in mentality, such as the social perception of women in a society that has traditionally been very patriarchal.

4. Networks, scale, replicability. Within the stages of innovation, Bertsozale Elkarte has achieved a high degree of dissemination or replicability of the process, having a notable repercussion and reaching a very significant number of users. Bertsozale Elkarte is a well-known, respected and valued organization in the Basque Country and all the Basque-speaking territories of Spain and France. For all of these reasons, due to its community involvement and its social purpose, it is in a position to influence systemic change (for example with regard to gender roles) and is located in stage 6 of the stages of social innovation.

5. Governance and participation. From the beginning, the protagonist role has been played by the community of those affected, the amateur and professional improvisers, who have led it, and although a professionalization of the process and a heritagization branch can be seen, this has not meant abandoning the creation of community, which firmly anchors the process

to its socio-community origins and guarantees its sustainability over time. Bertsozale is from its origin an association where direct democracy is practiced. At a territorial level, it functions as a federation by encompassing the different organizations in each province.

6. Conflicts and their resolution. In the first place, a very evident tension has arisen related to gender and the role of women bertsozalaris in the process, within a mainly male tradition which they do not manage to join at the same pace and with the same success as men. This problem has been channeled through assemblies and meetings where it has been raised collectively, which has led to work on drawing up an equality plan in the association. Another sensitive issue has been politics, in a context as unique as the Basque Country has been in recent decades. Some sectors within the association have demanded more explicit backing for certain causes on which Bertsozale Elkarteak decided not to show a consensual opinion. Working groups and assemblies have also endorsed the criterion always followed: to guarantee freedom of expression but without distilling a specific ideological line and to focus on cultural activism (which is still a form of political activism).

Beyond these issues are the organizational ones. Due to the complexity and scale that Bertsozale Elkarteak has acquired, problems of coordination, competencies, definition of functions, etc., which are common in any large organization, have arisen. These problems have been solved by dealing with them in the organization's bodies or through the figure of the coordinator. Every 12 years Bertsozale initiates a process to specify its vision for the next cycle: mission, strategy, etc. in each of the association's areas. It involves some 150 members and is where many of these problems, tensions and conflicts and their possible solutions are dealt with. The process also makes



2010eko Bizkaiko Bertsozale Txapelketa  
| photo UKBERRI.NET Uribe Kosta

it possible to channel another of the recurrent conflicts in long-standing processes, such as generational change and the space demanded by the new bertsolaris, who do not always feel sufficiently valued or recognized.

7. Heritage vectors and relationship with HHD. The heritage vector is immaterial, a type of improvised singing based on certain rhythmic-melodic patterns and schemes. In no other region of the world is a similar process of social innovation related to an oral musical tradition based on improvised singing observed. Even in regions with an important local musical tradition, organizations with this level of structure and network are not found. In that sense, this is a very innovative process.

Once again, community involvement is one of the keys to the success of this process, which was not aimed at rescuing an asset in order to turn it into a resource (a transcendent practice), but rather the action and creation of the social fabric is what allows the asset to be maintained and expanded. Without the community of bertsolaris and bertsozales, bertso could not exist, and without this expanded community, it could not have become a collective cultural asset appreciated throughout the Basque Country.

From the point of view of the AHD, as we have already mentioned, they have been submitting a proposal to UNESCO for the recognition of bertso as intangible heritage of humanity since 2007. However, this process had to be halted for some time due to the lack of an appropriate legal framework in the Basque Country. This situation has changed with the approval of a new law in 2019, which has made it possible to relaunch the initiative<sup>18</sup>. Article 11 (protection of intangible cultural heritage) lists bertsolaritza among the 11 categories that make up the intangible cultural heritage of the Basque Country. There is no doubt that the work of Bertsozale Elkarte has been key to this official recognition.

18

Law 6/2019, of 9 May, on Basque Cultural Heritage (Official Gazette of the Basque Country of 20/05/2019).

### Case conclusions

The case study is a good example of a social innovation ecosystem that has involved a very large number of users through replication and scaling up, has made it possible to disseminate ideas and methodologies (phases 5 to 6) with the creation of its own dissemination tools (bertso schools, workshops, events), and has involved different public-private sectors. Non-relocatable jobs have been created, as well as several spin-offs, both private and non-profit. Local involvement is nourished by bertso schools, educational programs and associations, while working with structures on a regional and international scale, involving organizations from other countries. The bertsolaritza movement is an example of good heritage practice, its methodology is open, as is the heritage accumulated and documented over the years, which allows bottom-up transfer mechanisms from communities to companies, universities and public institutions.

## DISCUSSION AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As we indicated at the beginning, this research arose from the need to find concepts and indicators that would make it possible to map, describe and analyze innovative experiences set in motion by civil society or in which civil society has played an essential role. Processes in which people affected by different problems have been protagonists in the search for possible solutions through actions based on different types of heritage. The concept of social innovation has been very useful for us in achieving these objectives, and has also shown us a field of research with great potential that we believe has been little explored by the heritage sciences. It has also served as a conceptual anchor around which to characterize a series of identifiers common to different, highly heterogeneous heritage processes that would otherwise be difficult to fit into the same comparative framework. All this has allowed us to enrich and widen our field of vision of heritage and to go beyond the formal limits in which we usually think of it, with a problematizing and critical approach, closer to local communities, social movements and non-disciplinary practices.

We raise an initial discussion by calling for the use of a concept, innovation –in this case social innovation– which, like others such as technology or transfer, are practically eradicated outside scientific-technical and business circles. They are hardly used in the humanities, and even less so in informal contexts, the third sector of the economy, activist and community spaces. It is also in these contexts that social technologies are created, knowledge can be transferred and social innovation can take place, as this work has shown. Let us reclaim to call things by their name and incorporate these nouns in a habitual way when describing and documenting these actions, with their successes and failures. In doing so, let us demonstrate something that is insufficiently repeated: the applicability and practical function of this plural and diverse set of experiences and the need to re-politicize and provide a humanistic perspective to a conceptual repertoire that is currently monopolized by this kind of instrumental reasoning.

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During the course of this work we were invited to participate on 7 and 8 May 2018 in an event organised by the Andalusian Institute of Historical Heritage called “Red Activate. I Encuentro Patrimonio y Proximidad” in which one session specifically addressed the issue of social innovation and favored the approximation and confluence of public, private and community initiatives. We applaud this initiative and this much-needed “listening” movement from the public administrations.

The socially innovative heritage processes described here are sometimes located at the limits of what is formally understood as heritage. This leads directly to another discussion: it is not possible to assess social innovation in this field without permeating the idea and concept of heritage itself, making room for other meanings and practices of intangible valorization that are not normally considered as heritage by the AHD<sup>19</sup>. As we have seen, the benefits of looking beyond these limits are evident, as they allow us to investigate socially innovative ways of acting on various types of heritage (hidden, problematic, hidden, intangible, etc.) reflect on its implications, learn from them, (re)discover them in the academic light, and disseminate them. Discovery means not only making something visible, but also replicable and

transferable. As we have already mentioned, the open and binding nature of social innovation reveals a scenario with great potential for connecting different spheres of knowledge, ways of thinking, governance and action: science, art, activism, experimental and experiential contexts, institutional and community contexts, which can mutually benefit.

All these ideas break with the installed prejudice that the transmission of knowledge can only circulate in a single direction, generally university-business-society, as if there were no other spheres of applicability of innovations than the commercial ones and as if society itself were not capable of generating its own innovations. Universities, large museums and institutions can learn a lot from Bertsozale Elkartea or Rey Heredia: forms of mediation, governance through direct democracies, procedures and strategies for creating communities and resolving conflicts, new types of heritage, etc. Innovations made from the “outside”, are perfectly transferable, as long as all parties are willing to do so and have the necessary practical and conceptual tools to do so. Let us not forget that we provide a case in which the process is driven by a university, Peu-Patrimoni, from which other large institutions are also enriched, as well as local corporations, areas of activism and social organizations.

But for this to happen, for peer-to-peer transfer processes to take place, a stable system of horizontal relations and permanent collaboration between the different sectors –public, private and community– is needed. These spaces do not have to be built; one of our objectives is to demonstrate that they already exist, characterizing them, researching them and making them visible. What we need to do is to facilitate their development and avoid their downfall. It is where social innovation takes place that there is real citizen involvement and where citizens are respected and allowed to work. Facing the great challenges of the future, which are fundamentally social, is not possible without the protagonism of the communities and their organizations, which until now have been little involved in decision-making and in the management of collective resources such as cultural heritage. Only on the basis of this horizontal and shared experience can problems be tackled in an open, collaborative, less vertical and conducting, more complex, conflict-aware, in short, less naive and solutionist way. This is only possible with public institutions that recognize the importance of these delicate ecosystems that we have described, that know how to listen to them, understand them and contribute to their sustainability, without subordinating them, as collaboration can often consist of simply facilitating, letting things be.

Despite the diversity in terms of origin, process, scale, etc., of these interfaces of multi-sector interaction that we call ecosystems of social-heritage innovation, we have been able to identify a series of common denominators that allow us to point to factors that favor these types of ecosystems:

1. These are open, participatory and horizontal processes.
2. They are self-organized and self-managed communities; in any case not subordinated.
3. They have a processual and non-solutionist nature: they are proposals that do not set out to find simplistic solutions to their problems, but have assumed the complexity, contradictions and diversity of reality in order to construct provisional and tentative solutions while the process itself develops.
4. They produce collective goods: they are pro-community processes, community building is the fundamental factor and during this process new collective cultural goods are created, re-signified or amplified.

Finally, the interconnection between heritage sciences, social movements and the great challenges of our present can be facilitated by the use of certain concepts, such as social innovation, which allow us to create research devices such as the one proposed here and extend our gaze to observe processes of great scientific, social and political interest, sometimes little known in more academic and formal contexts. Open and transferable social innovations, from which other organizations, both community and public, can learn very useful lessons about governance models and good practices.

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