



How to measure the social impact of museums?: learnings from the MESOC project

Lluís Bonet, University of Barcelona

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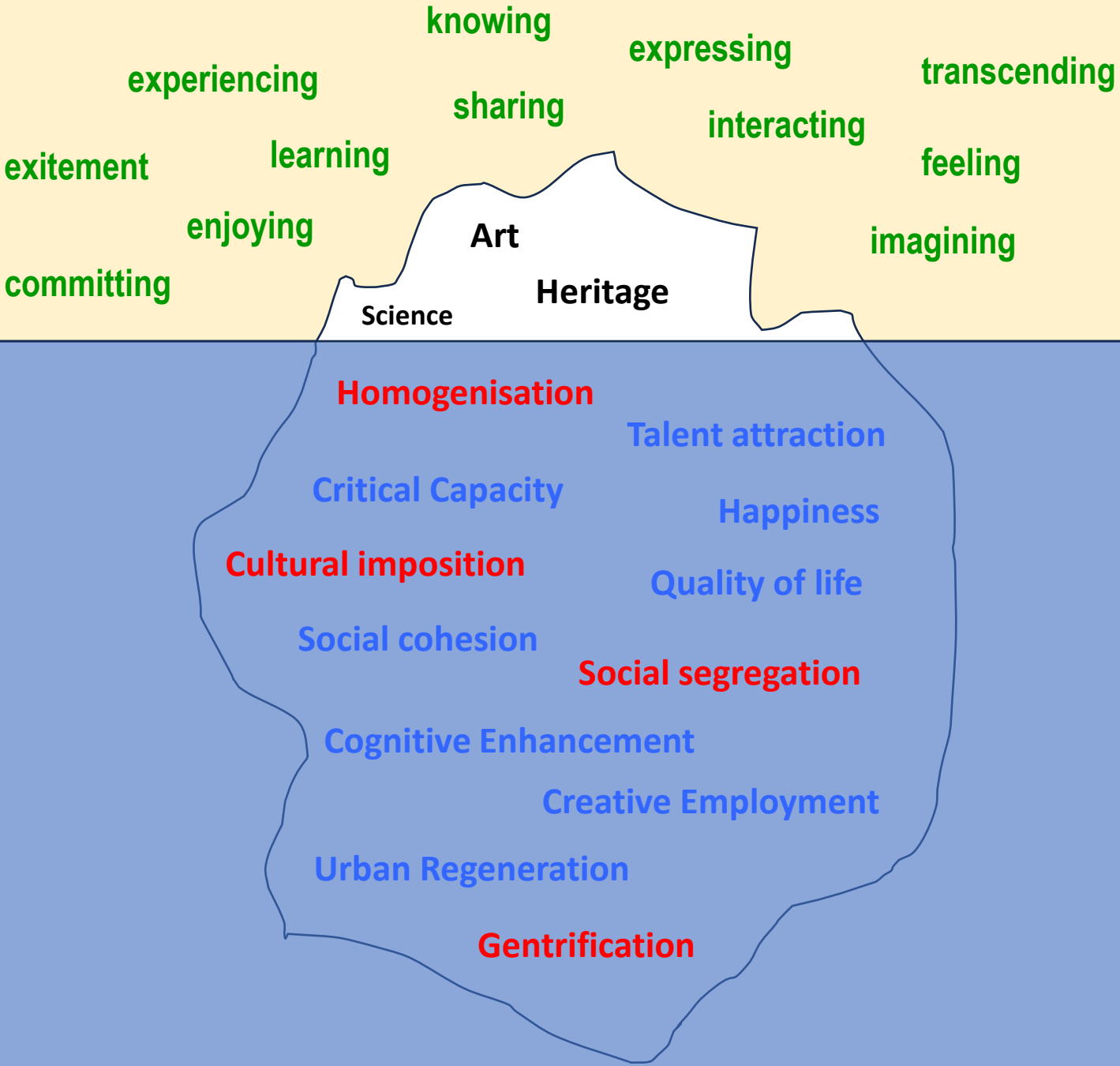
Fondazione 

OUTLINE OF THE SESSION



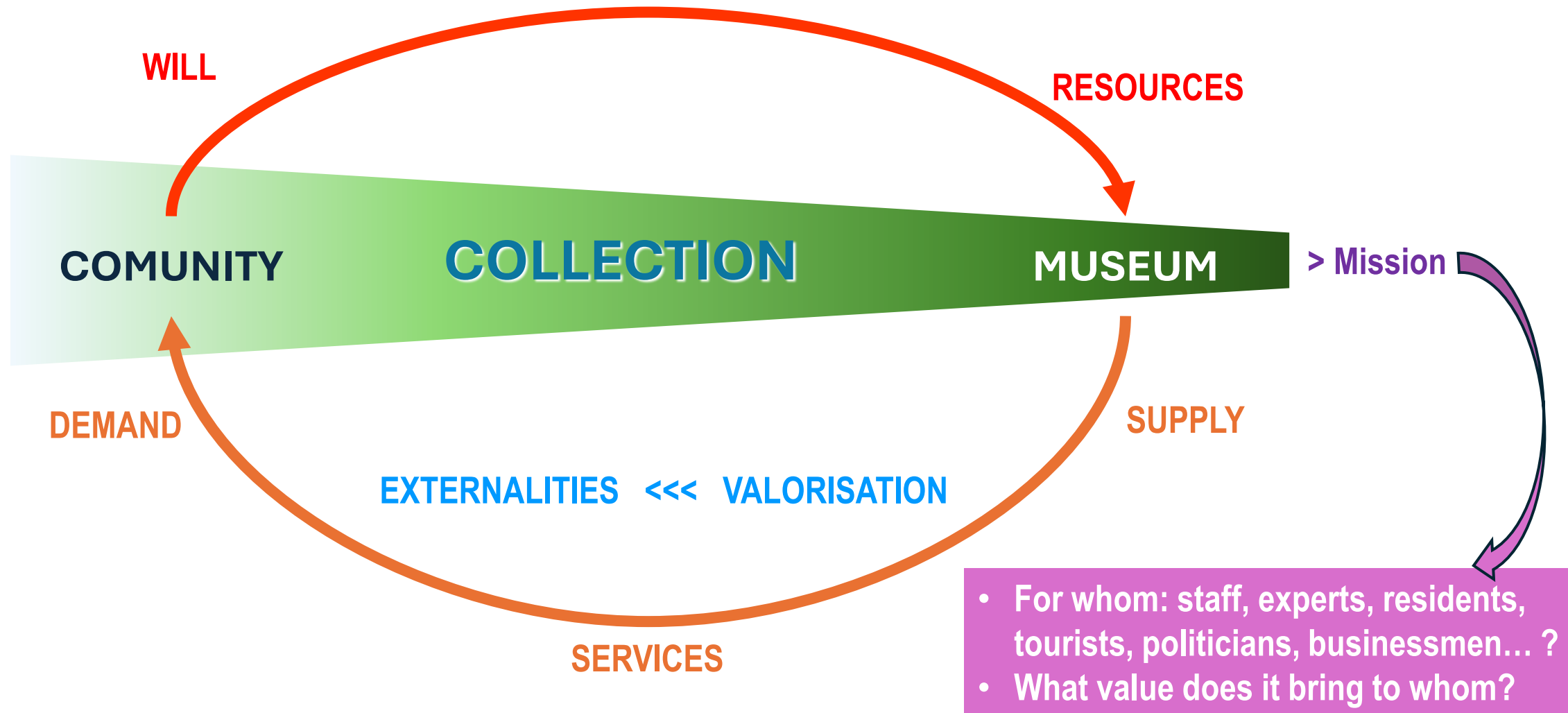
- **The Cultural Iceberg: the hidden social impact and externalities of culture**
- **The virtuous circle of value flow and services**
- **Learnings from the MESOC project**
- **An agenda for the social revaluation of culture**
- **Final reflections and debate**

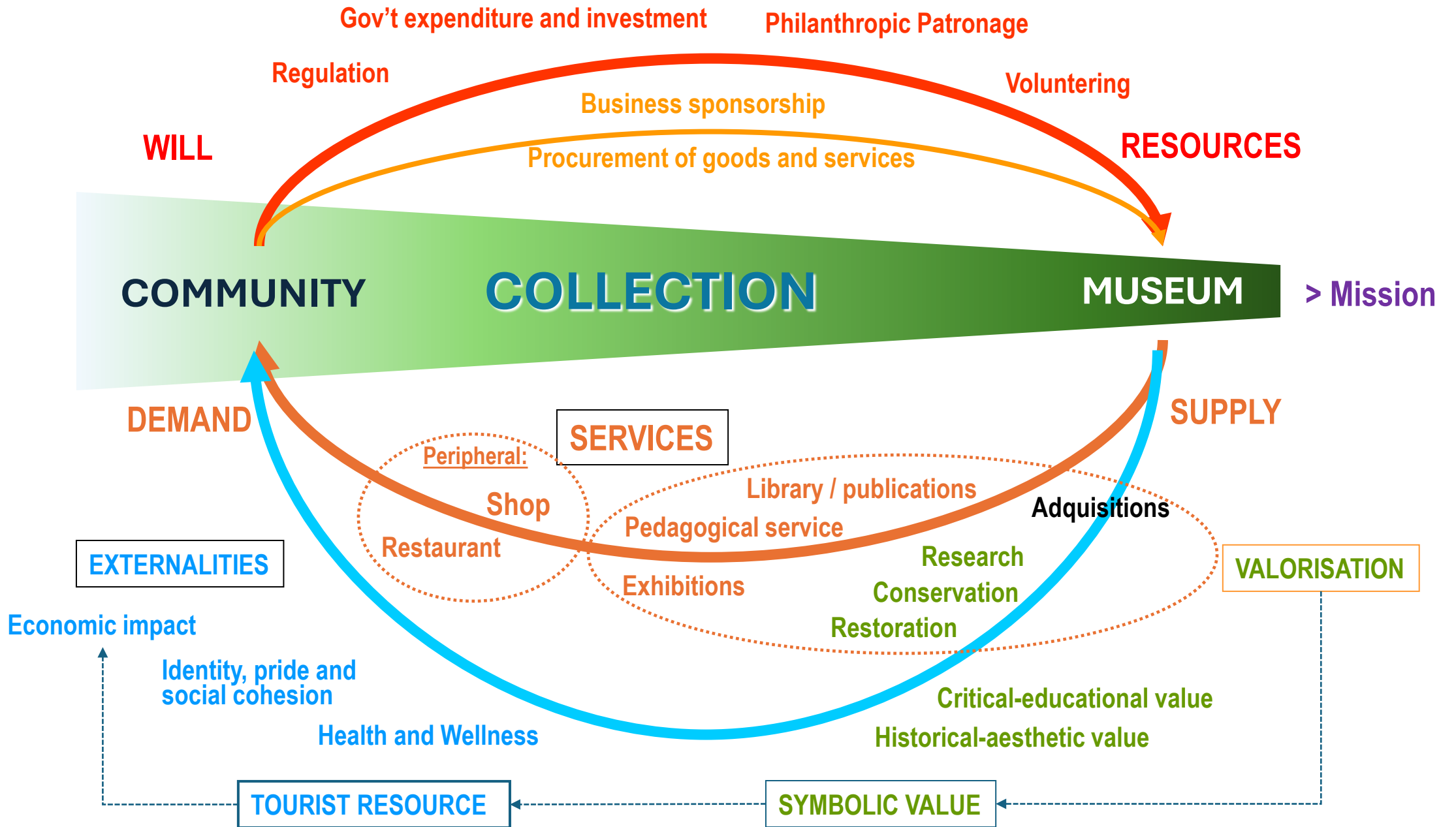
The Cultural Iceberg: the hidden social impact and externalities of culture



- The different ways of living culture shape the capacities and ways of valuing what each one is and desires
- Culture (in the anthropological sense and as an expression of the spirit) is the backbone on which human development is based

THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE OF VALUE FLOW AND SERVICES





HOW TO MEASURE THE VALUE OF CULTURE?

- **Cultural value:** multifaceted (diversity of units of account), **qualitative**, linked to the **experience, attitudes and transmission** (intimate or collective) of **emotion and symbolic, aesthetic, historical, spiritual or scientific meanings** of artistic creation and heritage legacy
 - **Economic value:** (can be measured monetarily)
 - **Direct use:** cultural consumption, generator of wages, rents, rents ...
 - **Externalities** (Contingent estimation, by experts, hedonics...):
 - **Asset value (Heritage, public good)**
 - **Legacy (Next Generations)**
 - **Option (sporadic, good of merit)**
 - **Social value and social externalities:** (multifaceted, sometimes instrumental) linked to the capacity of culture to generate:
 - identity and social cohesion/**exclusion** (socialization, image, self-esteem)
 - empowering/**alienating** citizenship (critical capacity, engaging, trivializing)
 - social, territorial, ethnic, generational, functional equity/**inequality**...
 - Environmental Awareness
- *The value and impact of culture is not by definition positive. There are direct and external costs and benefits that are asymmetrically distributed*



- **Emphasis on social value:**

- **Advantage:** it reinforces the social dimension of culture as a driver of development and counteracts its non-redistributive effects

- **Dangers:**

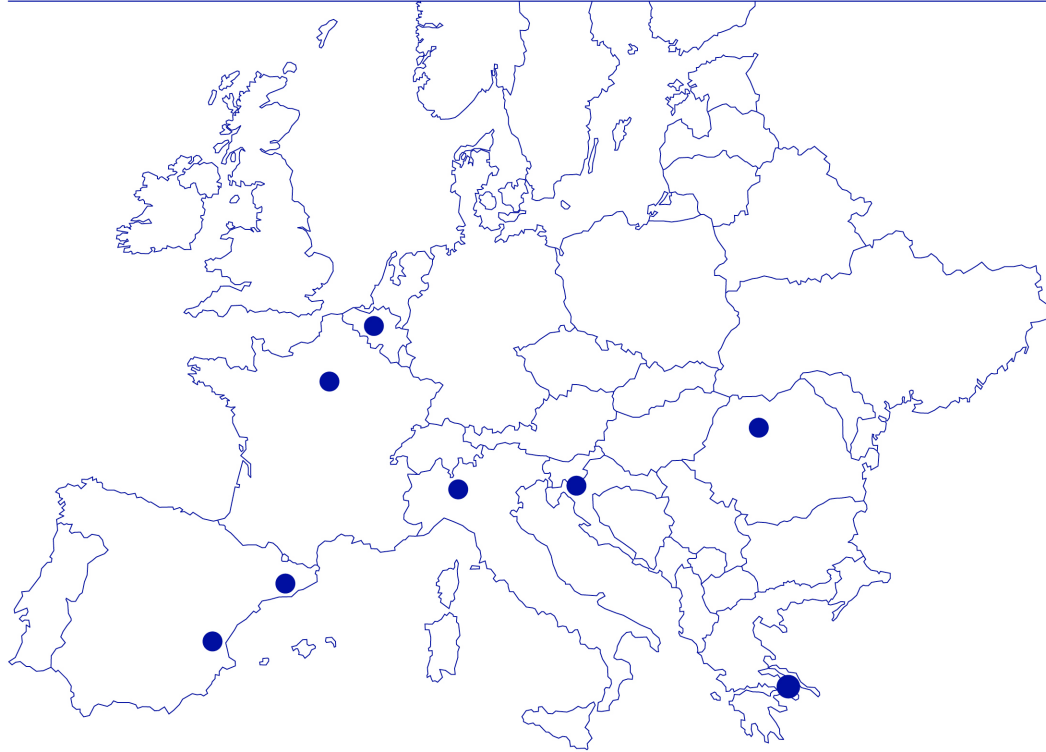
- Forgetting the intrinsic value of culture (the reason for being) and reducing it to its social or economic contribution (however valuable they are, they are still instrumental)
- Are we going to compete with the social value of sport or education?
- Difficulty in having objective indicators and measuring long-term effects.

- **Emphasis on intrinsic aesthetic-cultural value:**

- **Advantage:** Art and heritage have value for their uniqueness and the emotion, training and pleasure they generate in people

- **Dangers:**

- Reproducing the asymmetry of access to cultural capital: little redistributive effect compared to that of education or public health
- Self-referential gaze: "I am an artist, I deserve the support of others", "only experts can assess the excellence of the work of art"
 - *Growing importance of co-participatory proposals*



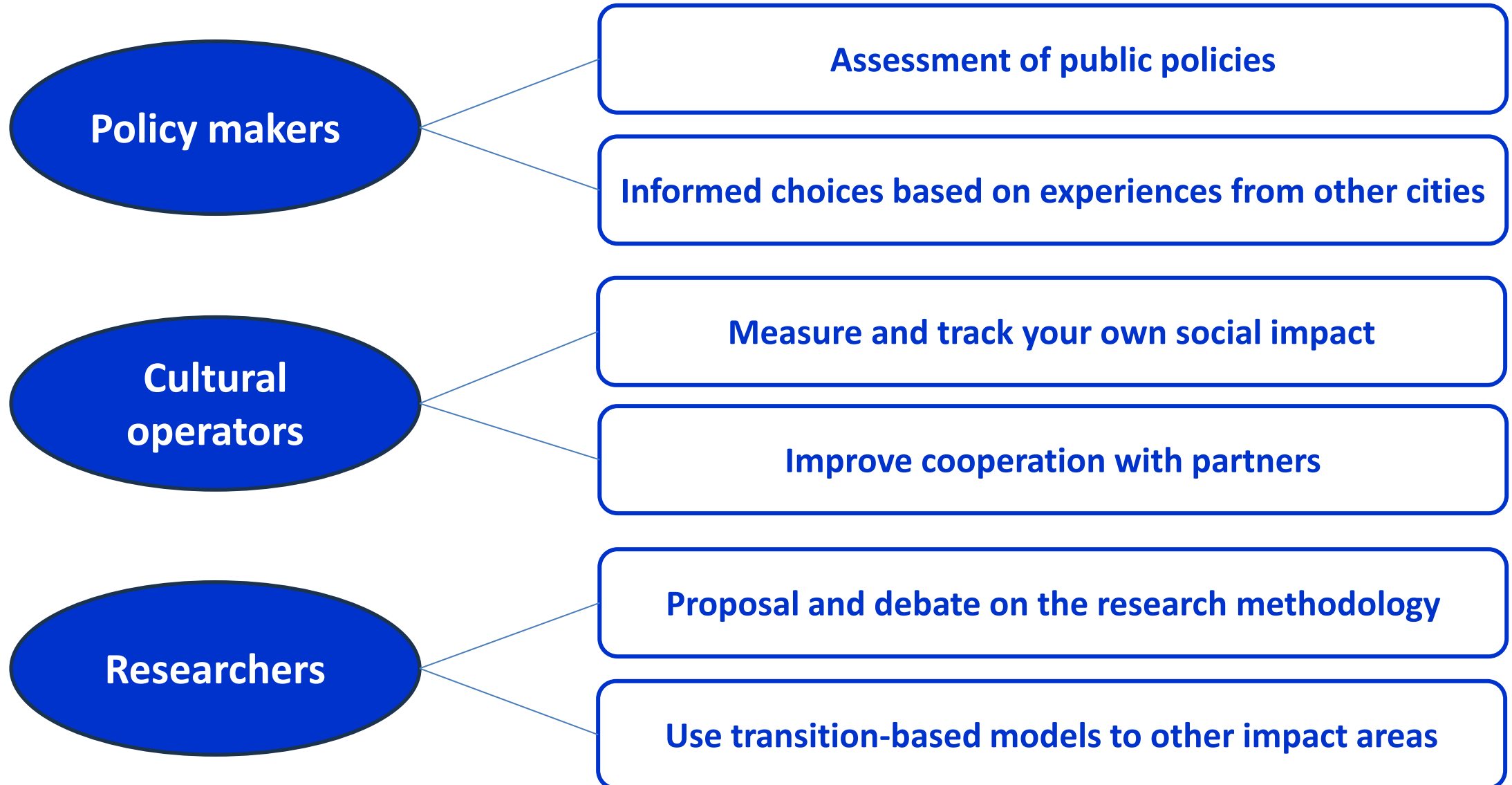
MESOC

measuring
the social dimension
of culture



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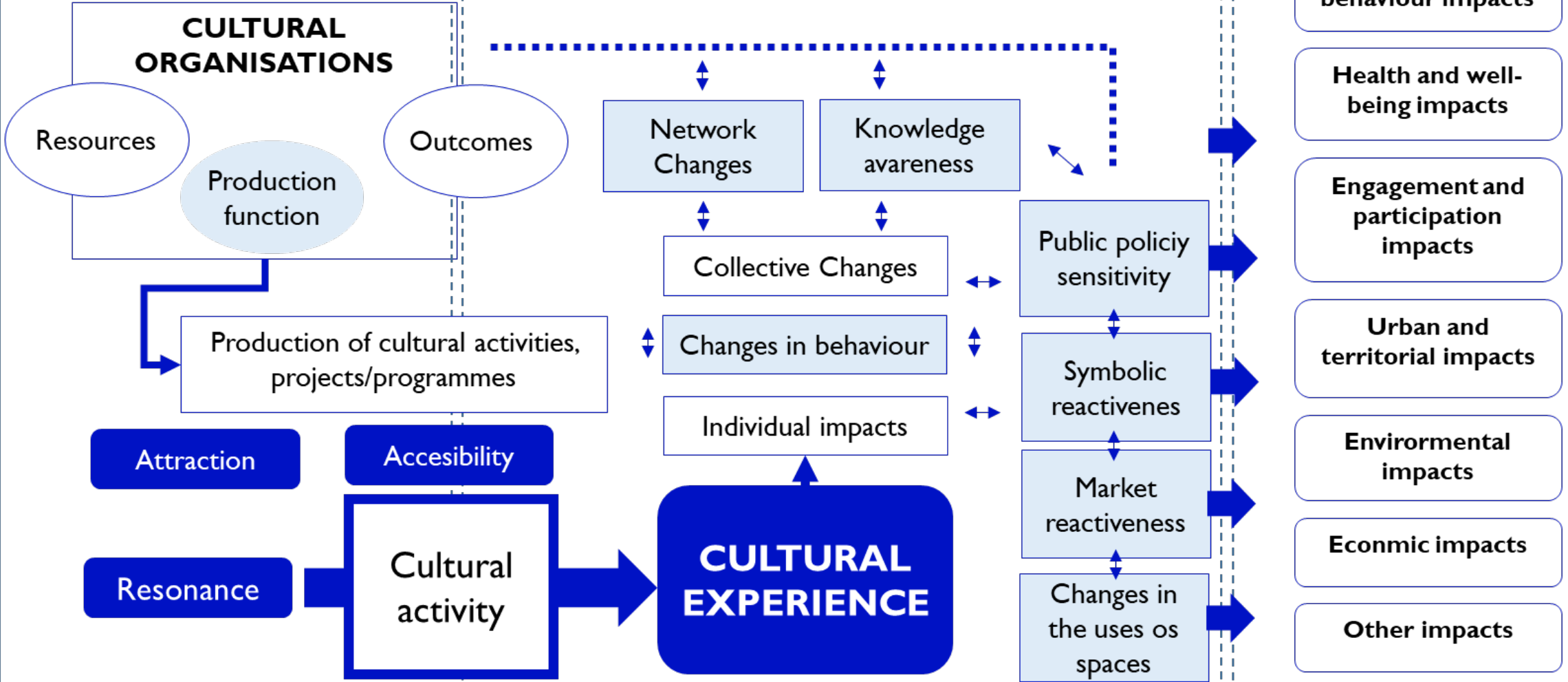
Potential use of the MESOC methodology

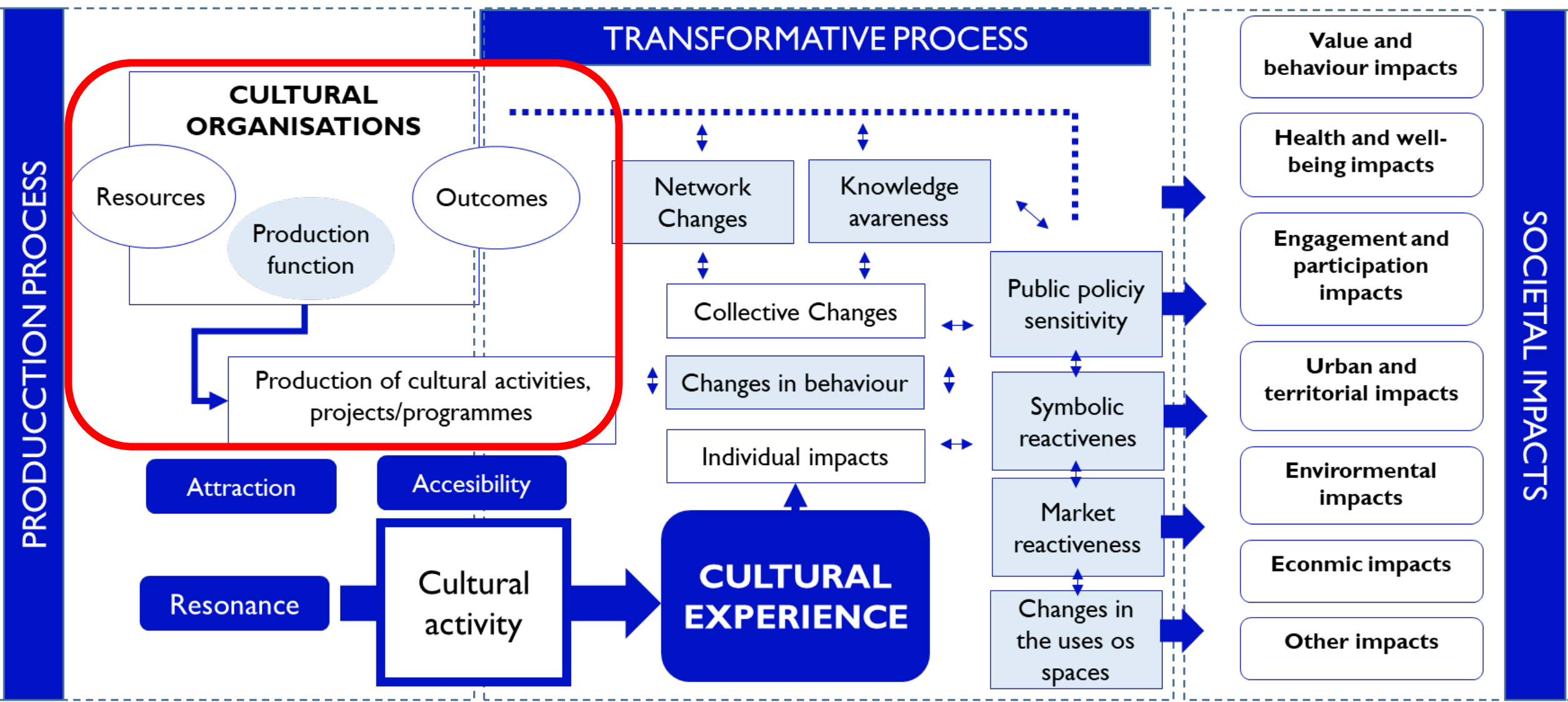


PRODUCTION PROCESS

TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS

SOCIETAL IMPACTS



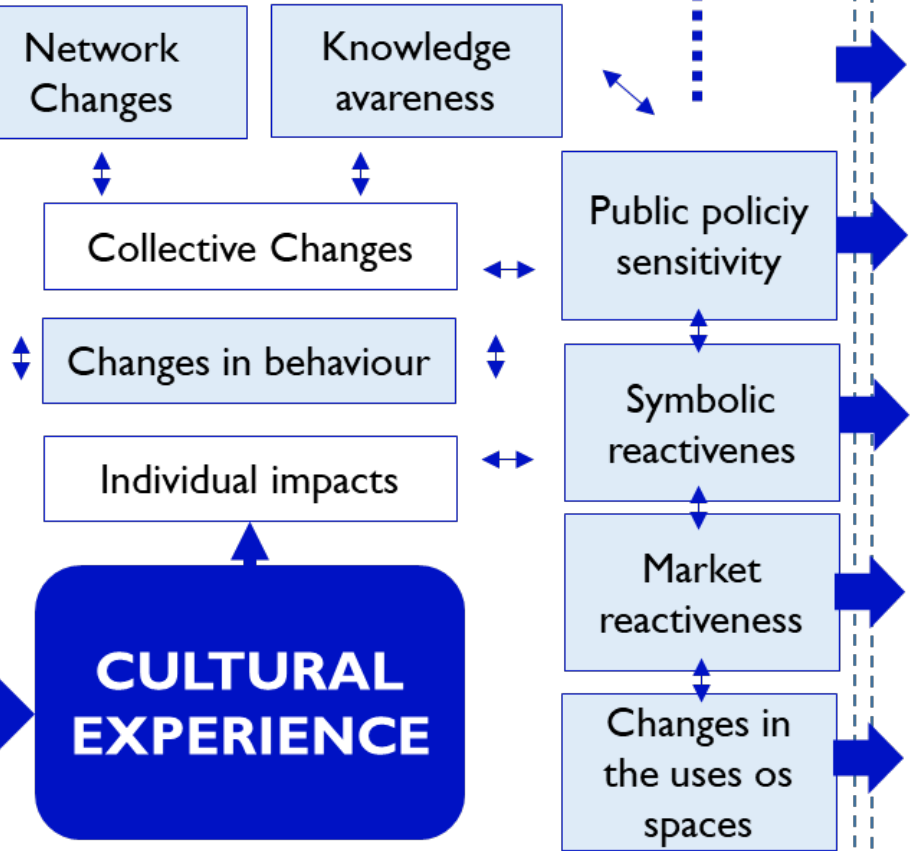
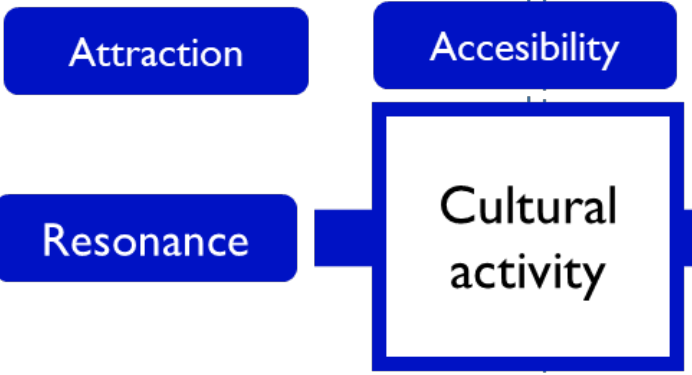
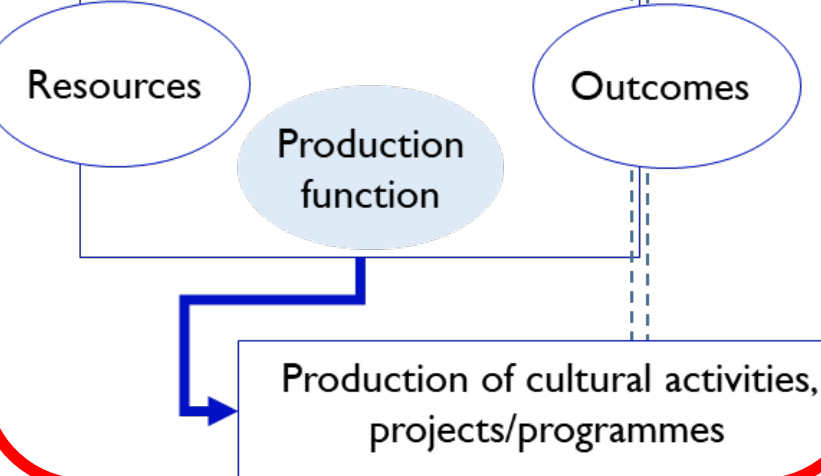


PRODUCTION PROCESS

SOCIETAL IMPACTS

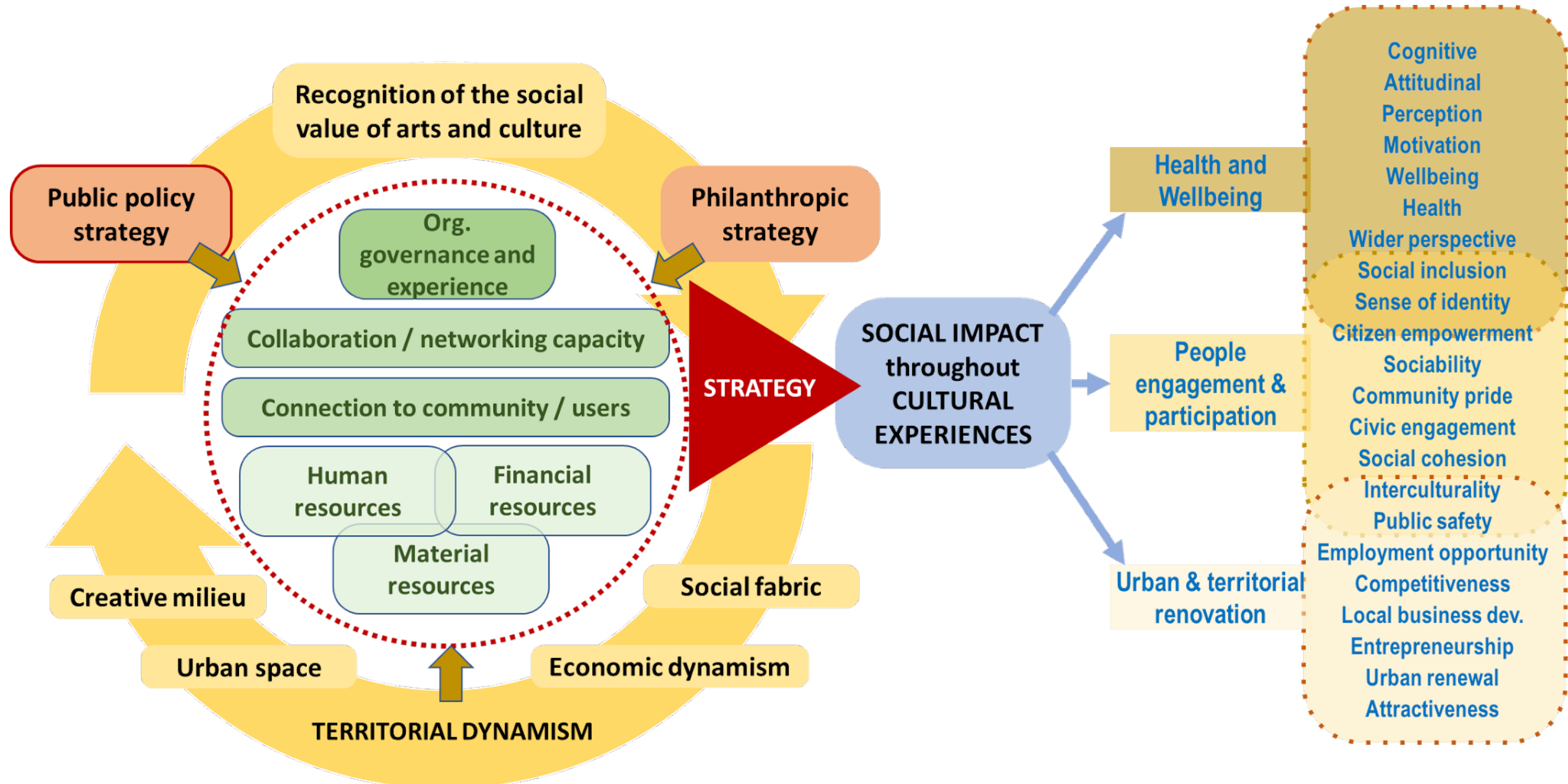
TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS

CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS



- Value and behaviour impacts
- Health and well-being impacts
- Engagement and participation impacts
- Urban and territorial impacts
- Enviornmental impacts
- Econmic impacts
- Other impacts

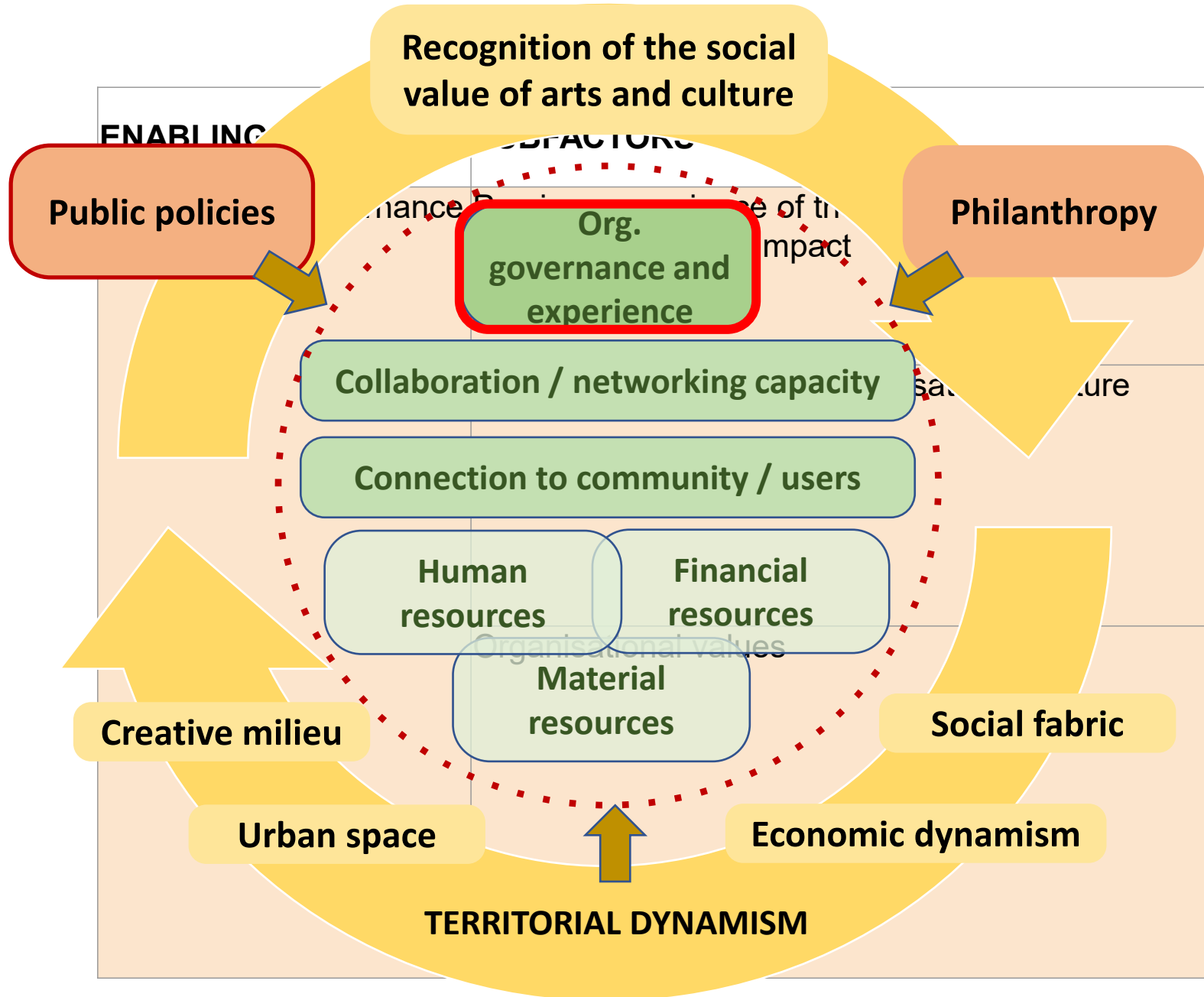
Enabling factors of the social impact of culture



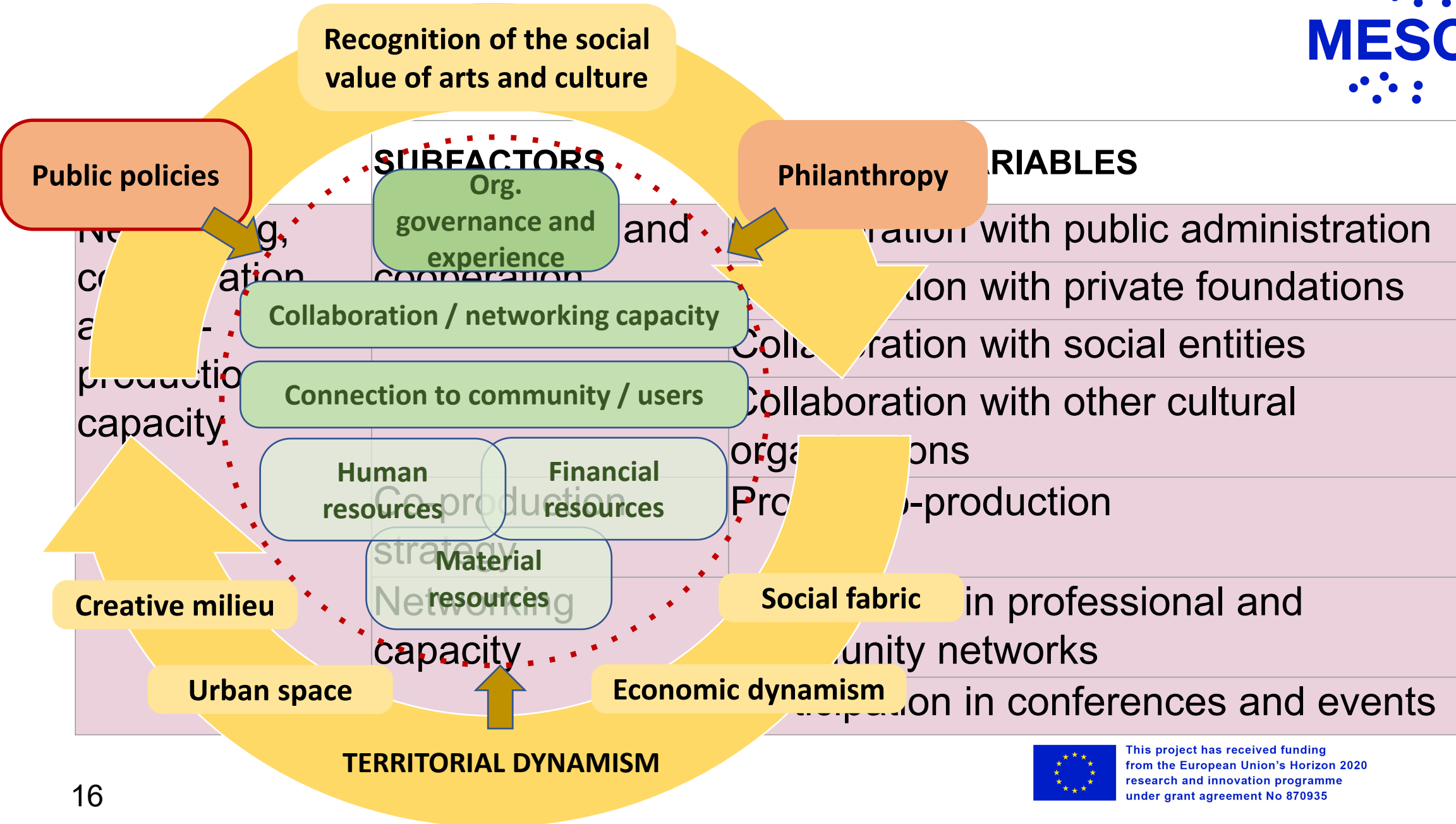
Delphi 1: The social impact of cultural programmes



	Cultural volunteering	Cultural entrepreneurship	Art therapy	Support to artistic creation	Community co-creation	Historical memory workshops / exhibitions	Artistic training and education	Community management of a festival	Co-designing / co-curating cultural activities	Collaborative funding (crowdfunding) / art commissioning	Cultural democratization strategies
Cognitive (better school results, new skills, reinforcing memory...)	27.1%	36.5%	32.9%	24.7%	42.4%	49.4%	77.6%	29.4%	50.6%	18.8%	25.9%
Attitudinal (better habits, autonomy, confidence...)	54.1%	29.4%	25.9%	25.9%	49.4%	20.0%	51.8%	47.1%	48.2%	28.2%	37.6%
Health (lower anxiety, reduced symptoms and medication...)	32.9%	5.9%	78.8%	21.2%	41.2%	12.9%	42.4%	9.4%	25.9%	8.2%	21.2%
Wellbeing (happiness, satisfaction, enjoyment...)	55.3%	15.3%	50.6%	36.5%	55.3%	17.6%	37.6%	31.8%	43.5%	18.8%	28.2%
Motivation (better mood, increased levels of energy...)	51.8%	35.3%	27.1%	28.2%	62.4%	11.8%	48.2%	45.9%	57.6%	30.6%	32.9%
Sociability	56.6%	16.9%	31.3%	21.7%	59.0%	18.1%	27.7%	39.8%	45.8%	16.9%	22.9%
Social cohesion	49.4%	9.6%	14.5%	19.3%	56.6%	38.6%	25.3%	47.0%	43.4%	22.9%	30.1%
Civic engagement	73.5%	15.7%	3.6%	19.3%	39.8%	24.1%	15.7%	38.6%	39.8%	22.9%	36.1%
Social inclusion	44.6%	10.8%	28.9%	12.0%	51.8%	30.1%	31.3%	38.6%	37.3%	16.9%	44.6%
Community self-management	24.1%	30.1%	3.6%	12.0%	59.0%	15.7%	16.9%	63.9%	55.4%	33.7%	39.8%
Cultural practice	47.0%	30.1%	16.9%	31.3%	59.0%	26.5%	47.0%	41.0%	57.8%	34.9%	39.8%
Social use of public space (safety, space renewal...)	37.5%	16.3%	16.3%	21.3%	61.3%	41.3%	22.5%	46.3%	41.3%	12.5%	48.8%
Better internal and external city perceptions	26.3%	22.5%	13.8%	30.0%	42.5%	56.3%	16.3%	32.5%	36.3%	12.5%	45.0%
Networking capacity	38.8%	36.3%	10.0%	23.8%	62.5%	15.0%	17.5%	41.3%	57.5%	42.5%	30.0%
Attractiveness as a living space	8.8%	28.8%	20.0%	40.0%	41.3%	36.3%	25.0%	41.3%	43.8%	18.8%	26.3%
Employability (better jobs and incomes, capacity building, skills...)	23.8%	61.3%	8.8%	38.8%	17.5%	12.5%	42.5%	36.3%	38.8%	32.5%	18.8%
Business environment (entrepreneurship, competitiveness...)	10.0%	75.0%	2.5%	23.8%	12.5%	7.5%	18.8%	30.0%	26.3%	48.8%	15.0%



TRANSITION VARIABLES	
Specific social expertise of the organisation	
Reputation and credibility	
Social accountability	
Financial accountability	
Participatory governance	
Empowerment and participation	
Inclusion and diversity	
Social sustainability	
Artistic quality	



Recognition of the social value of arts and culture

SUBFACTORS

Org. governance and experience

Collaboration / networking capacity

Connection to community / users

Human resources

Financial resources

Material resources

Philanthropy

CONDITION VARIABLES

Welcoming venue

Economic and social accessibility

Cognitive accessibility

Sensorial accessibility

Reputation

Community loyalty

Access to the community

User attendance

Participation processes

Public policies

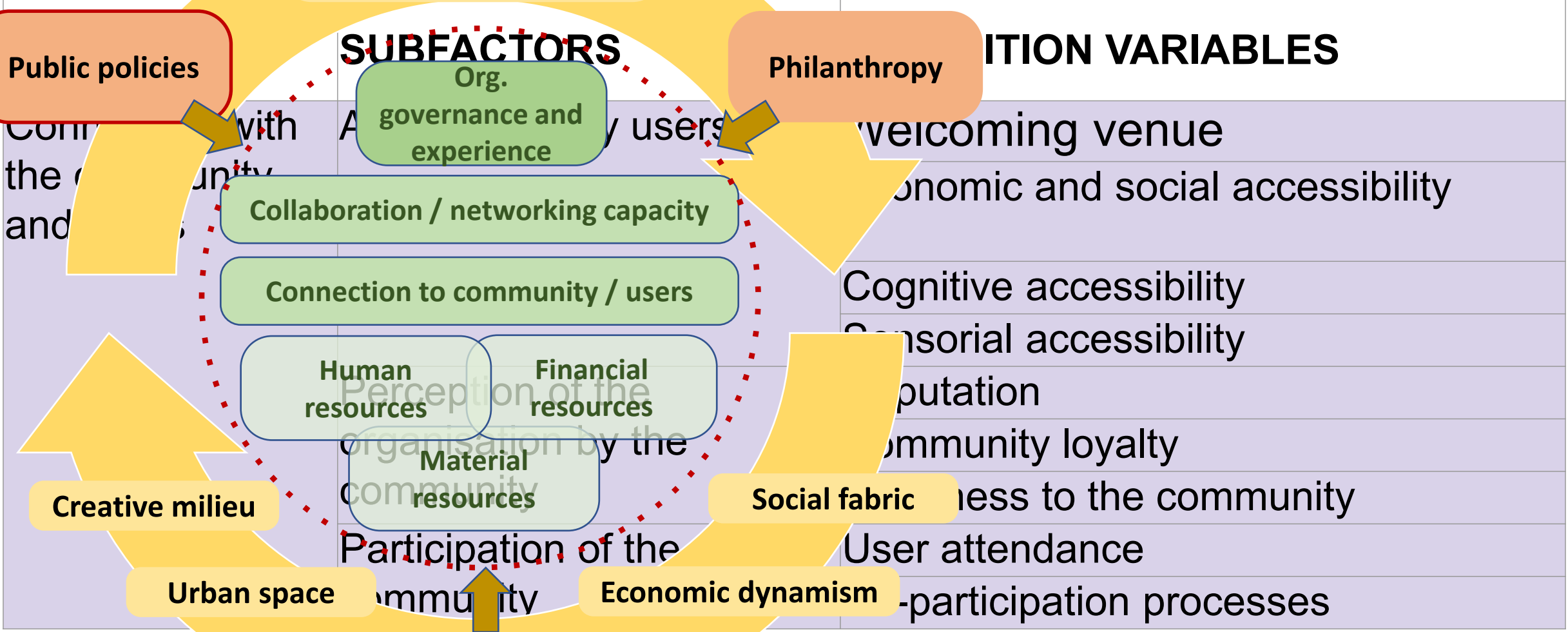
Creative milieu

Urban space

Economic dynamism

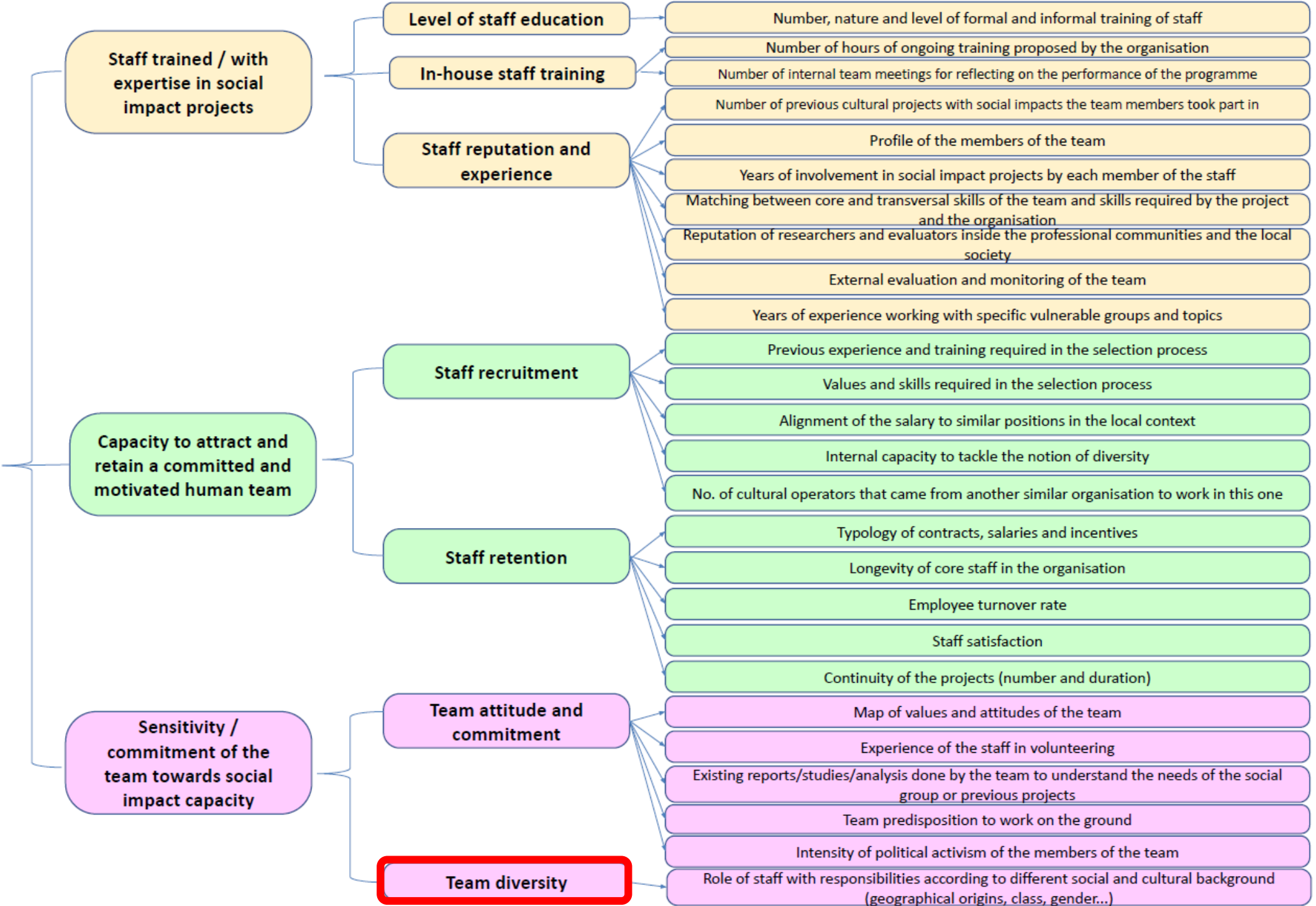
Social fabric

TERRITORIAL DYNAMISM



Building indicators: Proposed proxies of an endogenous factor

Human resources



Staff trained / with expertise in social impact projects

Level of staff education

In-house staff training

Staff reputation and experience

Number, nature and level of formal and informal training of staff

Number of hours of ongoing training proposed by the organisation

Number of internal team meetings for reflecting on the performance of the programme

Number of previous cultural projects with social impacts the team members took part in

Profile of the members of the team

Years of involvement in social impact projects by each member of the staff

Matching between core and transversal skills of the team and skills required by the project and the organisation

Reputation of researchers and evaluators inside the professional communities and the local society

External evaluation and monitoring of the team

Years of experience working with specific vulnerable groups and topics

Capacity to attract and retain a committed and motivated human team

Staff recruitment

Staff retention

Previous experience and training required in the selection process

Values and skills required in the selection process

Alignment of the salary to similar positions in the local context

Internal capacity to tackle the notion of diversity

No. of cultural operators that came from another similar organisation to work in this one

Typology of contracts, salaries and incentives

Longevity of core staff in the organisation

Employee turnover rate

Staff satisfaction

Continuity of the projects (number and duration)

Sensitivity / commitment of the team towards social impact capacity

Team attitude and commitment

Team diversity

Map of values and attitudes of the team

Experience of the staff in volunteering

Existing reports/studies/analysis done by the team to understand the needs of the social group or previous projects

Team predisposition to work on the ground

Intensity of political activism of the members of the team

Role of staff with responsibilities according to different social and cultural background (geographical origins, class, gender...)

Building indicators: example with endogenous factors

Human resources

Sensitivity / commitment of the team towards social impact capacity

Team diversity

Role of staff with responsibilities according to different social and cultural background (geographical origins, class, gender...)

Proposal for indicators:

- % geographical origins of total staff
- % women staff over total
- Δ diversity in staff composition (over the last 5 years)

Take into account:

- Data availability
- Relevance
- Territorial context

AN AGENDA FOR THE SOCIAL REVALUATION OF CULTURE



LEGITIMATION ACTION (in a context of budget cuts and loss of interest among some business and political leaders in critical and cognitively demanding cultural practices):

- More transparency and social responsibility
- More participatory strategies against the abuse of algorithms for commercial or ideological purposes
- Reinforce with facts (not only with quantitative data) the role of culture and education as a key tool for human development
- Greater self-demand and verification in decision-making processes

LIMITATIONS

- Providing outputs (exhibitions, publications, workshops ...) based on an efficient use of available resources **is a necessary but not sufficient condition** for achieving results and long-term impacts.
- The strategy and management of a museum, its outputs and outcomes, cannot be compared with others without considering the particular temporal, cultural, social, economic and political-institutional context.

>> This cannot be an excuse for doing things well and rigorously.

AN AGENDA FOR THE SOCIAL REVALUATION OF CULTURE



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Design dashboards with indicators which allows both on-the-fly corrections, improved results and rethink purposes and strategies.
- Design the evaluation process **together with the staff** who will use them: they know the available sources, the means of verification, how to adapt them to specific contexts or structural changes, and how to interpret the results.
- Avoid the complacency of staff who don't want to leave their comfort zones or those who consider that intangible products or processes cannot be evaluated. >> **incorporate demanding mechanisms** (simulating competitive markets, mystery shopper, participant observation, social cost-benefit analysis) **aimed at learning, correcting errors or rethinking objectives and strategies.**
- Promote cooperation with **research teams** to contrast the achievement of social impacts in the medium and long term.
- Incorporate managers with **diverse social background** and **holistic vision** to open perspectives and analyze the museum's strategy and its impact from different, complementary points of view.



Grazie mille !!

Lluís Bonet, Università di Barcelona

www.ub.edu/cultural lbonet@ub.edu

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