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# The Gadamerian hermeneutics for a mesoeconomic analysis of Cultural Heritage

Mesoeconomic  
analysis of  
Cultural  
Heritage

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to explore the application of a hermeneutic-based approach as innovative way to study the Cultural Heritage management in a mesoeconomic space.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The paper builds a theoretical framework based on the analysis of relevant literature in the field of cultural economics, heritage economics and conservation and restoration techniques. Then, after having defined the conceptual hypothesis, a hermeneutical interpretative model is designed for the analysis of the processes of Cultural Heritage management with particular regard to the strategies of stakeholder engagement.

**Findings** – The research shows how the mesoeconomic space is that border area where it is possible to solve more easily the conflicts that arise as a result of the different expectations of stakeholders. Hermeneutical analysis, applied in iterative form, allows us to find common connections, points of contact and convergences between the interpretative horizons of the various stakeholders.

**Practical implications** – The application of the interpretative model allows the identification of the expectations of stakeholders, improving the knowledge of the tangible and intangible attributes of works of art, in order to design appropriate interventions of restoration, conservation and valorization.

**Social implications** – The new model of analysis, based on hermeneutic methodology, is designed to understand and describe the social and economic relations between the different stakeholders involved in the management of Cultural Heritage.

**Originality/value** – This paper examines for the first time the Cultural Heritage sector within the mesoeconomic area between the micro and the macroeconomy. In addition to this mesoeconomic analysis and conceptual approach, the authors introduce as methodology the economic hermeneutics that represents an innovative tool in the field of economic and business disciplines.

**Keywords** Cultural Heritage, Stakeholders, Complex socioeconomic systems, Interpretive hermeneutics, Mesoeconomics

**Paper type** Conceptual paper

## 1. Introduction

The cultural sector is composite and distinct both from the perspective of resources and of protagonists. Consideration from an economic perspective addresses numerous problems in the delineation of the boundaries of culture as an economic activity. These problems have prevented the identification of the cultural sector in a universally accepted manner. In the economic field, the discipline whose objective is to study the production and consumption of culture is called the “economy of culture.”



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The expression “cultural economy” is composed of two terms, “culture” and “economy,” which are related by two very different means. The first is a means that considers culture and economy different areas of society. The second approach is the study of cultural production with the help of economic analysis (Frey, 2009). Most experts consider the economy of culture as a sub-discipline of economics and combine the two approaches noted above (Towse, 2014).

Therefore, the economy of culture appears as a new specific branch discipline, which is consolidating in a very fertile field for theoretical reasoning and empirical verification of the current behavior of men and institutions and the accumulated production of culture (Herrero Prieto, 2001). Within the scope of the economy of culture discipline, in general terms, we can distinguish three large objects of analysis: performing arts, cultural industries and heritage. All the components of these three groups have a common characteristic, which is their meaning as artistic creation, the essence of intelligence or the sign of identity of a community; these characteristics contribute to the cultural value of these elements (Predieri, 2014).

Heritage represents a cultural creation with a cumulative character, i.e., with a historical perspective or a sense of heritage, where there is no belief in reproduction, because they are unique items; most of the work is in the maintenance and conservation of these elements. From this perspective, the economy of the historical heritage constitutes a specific part within the general discipline of the economy of culture, which requires specific analysis.

To meet this need for a specific analysis, we have structured this paper in the following manner:

- At the beginning, we have developed a conceptual framework from the economy of culture, extending to the Cultural Heritage economy (Sections 2.1 and 2.2).
- Then, we have placed, as with the area of analysis, the sector of the Cultural Heritage in the mesoeconomic dimension, i.e., between the macroeconomic and the microeconomic dimensions (Section 2.3) and introducing managerial issues related to restoration processes (Section 2.4), then conceptualizing a new model of hermeneutical analysis (Sections 2.5 and 3.1).
- Finally, a new mesoanalysis model has been designed for Cultural Heritage and is methodologically based on economic hermeneutics (Sections 3.2 and 3.3).

## 2. Theoretical framework

### 2.1 *Cultural economy*

The approach of economic analysis to culture is relatively recent and has recently overcome the veto of those who suspected that economists, by addressing the issue, could claim to replace esthetic and cultural judgments (Sayer, 1999). Thus, culture is becoming one of the themes of greatest interest to economists, due to the growing awareness of the role assumed by the sector in development and the fact that, despite the efforts made in recent years, this field is still statistically little explored (Guiso *et al.*, 2006). It is, however, important to explore the evolutionary path that has led these two disciplines to agree on the concept of the Cultural Economy.

The concept of culture has crossed the whole history of human thought, even though it has evolved to the point of modifying its own meaning in a clear manner. In classical Greece, the concept closest to that of culture was that of Paideia (*παιδεία*), a term that made explicit reference to the learning of fine arts, such as poetry, philosophy, rhetoric (Jaeger, 1986). As its etymology testifies, the actual birth of the concept of culture, however, takes place in Roman times. The word “culture” comes from the Latin verb *colĕre*, which referred to the cultivation of the land.

The first anthropological definition of culture that moves away from both Enlightenment universalism and the ethnocentric vision of early anthropology and underlines the relative character of culture is that of Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), who in 1871 defined culture as the complex that includes the knowledge, beliefs, morals, habits and material objects of a community. This concept expresses substantial elements in the enhancement of culture, embracing several aspects of the cultural phenomenon (Tylor, 1871). Furthermore, the reference to the social community explicitly indicates the relationship that exists with man as a bearer of culture. From the end of the nineteenth century, awareness of the relationship between the culture that establishes itself in a society and the relations of power that govern it began to spread. With the spread of the French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), for example, the vision of culture as an element that helps the individual to move in society, to integrate positively in its models and its rules becomes clear. According to Durkheim, social phenomena necessarily have a cultural dimension expressed by a “collective consciousness” that is the set of mental representations shared by a social group (Swidler, 2000). Durkheim (1982) also argues that sociologists should study social facts as if they were things, as such social facts can be studied empirically, and this approach distinguishes sociologists from philosophers, who merely speculate on abstract themes without collecting data on concrete social phenomena. Durkheim also argues that social facts are external to individuals and exert coercive action on them. He distinguishes two types of social facts: material social facts (i.e. materialized in the social world such as the legal system, economy, religion, institutions) and non-material social facts (external and coercive to the individual such as norms and values).

While evolutionary anthropologists aimed to reconstruct the evolutionary stages of the culture of all humanity, in the twentieth century, anthropologists rejected the idea of a single common culture and focused on the individual cultures of the different peoples of the world. In the USA, Franz Boas (1858–1942) defines culture as a complex of intellectual attitudes and material ways of representing them, which one learns at a given time, in a particular society, at a certain historical moment (Boas, 1982). In England Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) defined culture as a functional system, in which every element is functional to the satisfaction of a basic human need. Malinowski’s (2014) central thesis is that culture exists to satisfy the biological, psychological and social needs of the individual. The normative character of culture in the social system is deepened by Talcott Parsons, who describes it as the main force that connects the various elements of the social world embodying rules and values. Culture becomes then the set of models of behavior that the community considers valid, on which therefore there is a social consensus and a sharing, and that members of that society are required to respect and pass on to the next generation (Hamilton, 1992). In more recent times, one of the most widespread definitions in the social sciences is that of the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926–2006), according to whom culture is a network of meanings that people in social groups create and continue to recreate completely covering any area of existence. It is therefore a structure of historically transmitted meanings, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms through which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge and attitudes toward life. From this point of view, culture is therefore not a stable system, but a set of changing, dynamic and unstable processes (Geertz, 1973). In the contemporary world in which cultural processes have a planetary dimension, a concept of culture that is localized, closed, delimited and linked to a specific social community is inadequate. Therefore, the idea of culture as a flow of meanings is becoming more and more widespread, without a close link with a place and a people. Studying culture today is substantially equivalent to studying processes of production, transmission and circulation of cultural meanings in the social space, which is an increasingly large, international and global space (Hannerz, 1992).

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In this sociological context, we are also able to reflect on the deep and complex relationships between culture and economics. We can see a relationship between culture and economics in Durkheim's thinking especially in relation to the body of social facts that he defines as collective representations, therefore, as the culture of a social group. According to Durkheim, economics falls within the framework of material social facts and in these terms, it can be seen as a cultural process which, like social facts, is an element external to individual consciousness that cannot be modified by the desire of the individual, but which is nevertheless able to exert an external constraint on the individual himself. Its coercive character lies precisely in its externality with respect to individual consciousness. Therefore, economic agents (individuals, families, companies, public institutions) live and make decisions in an environment where culture plays an important role during their economic life by placing a series of obligations and constraints on behavior (e.g. convenience in the use of scarce resources, programming logic of a budget, rigor of rules and procedures). But one can also think of the opposite relationship: cultural relations and processes exist within an economic environment and can be interpreted in terms of economic values. Moreover, the economic environment can act as a vehicle for cultural values and knowledge, as well as for lifestyles. A deep interaction between economy and culture is therefore confirmed, even on the parallel notions of economic value and cultural value.

In the past, economic theory did not include cultural activities. For Adam Smith or David Ricardo, spending on the arts did not contribute to the nation's wealth. Smith saw culture as the essential domain of non-productive work, although he did not fail to implicitly recognize the external effects of cultural spending (De Vecchi, 2008). However, at present, the economy of culture as a field of work within the economy is recording a progressive institutional and academic recognition. Within the various schools of economic thought, in the 1990s, attention must be drawn to the importance of culture as an influential element during economic history. In his book *Economics and Culture*, David Throsby (2001) states that Max Weber, at the end of the nineteenth century, was certainly the most famous contributor in this field, analyzing the influence of the ethics of Protestant work on the birth of capitalism. According to this analysis, there is a link between the cultural environment in which economic activities take place and economic effects. If the economy develops in certain cultural contexts, at the same time culture also lies within specific economic systems and economic instruments can be analyzed. The economy of culture is strongly anchored more in the economy than in culture.

Only toward the middle of the twentieth century did the term culture come close to that of economic processes. In 1944 two exponents of the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer and Adorno) coined for the first time the term "cultural industry," with the intention of highlighting the irruption into society of mass cultural productions (the so-called mass media), which replaced the traditional arts and culture, making society certainly flatter and transforming the consumer into nothing more than a number.

The birth of the Economics of Culture as a discipline can be dated back to the beginning of the 1970s, after 1966 when William J. Baumol and William G. Bowen, two American economists charged with studying the causes of the continuous increase in the financial needs of theaters, published the book *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma*, the text that conventionally dates the beginning of economic studies in the cultural field. Starting in the early 1970s, American sociologists (Hirsch, 1972; Peterson and Berger, 1975), followed by French sociologists (Miège and Garnham, 1979; Girard, 1983), launched the term "cultural industries," with the aim of underlining how cultural activities manifested themselves through an economic process strongly rooted in society, characterized by certain technological aspects, their own methods of work organization, etc., that in the social field it heavily influenced consumer behavior together with lifestyles, and in the economic field it showed a certain importance for productivity. But it is David Throsby (1994) who, with the

article "The production and consumption of the arts: a view of cultural economics" published in the *Journal of Economic Literature*, allows the subject to obtain from the international academy the institutional recognition of economic discipline.

Throsby argues that artists' work is studied as if it were in a traditional labor market using concepts familiar to economists such as labor supply equations and remuneration functions. This economic view of culture accepts that it is a fact that the production and consumption of cultural goods and services within an economic system involves economic transactions, that these activities can be grouped together in some way and that all this can be called industry and can be analyzed as such. On the contrary, Spranzi (2003) argues that the economist is not invited to invade fields alien to his profession, he just must know how to do his job. The author also stresses that dealing with the functioning of markets for cultural goods and services does not in any way mean dealing with culture, even indirectly, since the economist does not enter into the merits of these goods: the nature of the need they satisfy and the manner and effects (individual and social) of the act of consumption. Today this debate, both academic and political, is divided into three models that differ in the role that culture has in the economic system (Throsby, 2001):

- (1) Culture is an area of excellence for public intervention as part of local or regional economic development strategies. The first model, more traditional, considers culture worthy of public funding, regardless of whether or not there is an explicit demand for the consumption of cultural goods by individuals. This vision is based on the concept of culture as a public good, therefore, lacking rivalry and excludability in consumption and capable of generating positive externalities and, therefore, with the need for it to be subsidized through public funding.
- (2) Culture and related activities constitute an important source of economic flows, income and employment generation. The second model refers to industries that produce or distribute cultural goods according to market principles such as: film or record companies, publishers, the auction and antiques market, the cultural tourism industry. Unlike the first model, in this case they are private goods, with rivalry and excludability of consumption, to which the market assigns a value and an exchange price and, therefore, the intervention of the public subsidy is not possible.
- (3) Culture is an excellent field of application of the "new developments" of economic science. The complete maturation of traditional sectors, the advent of globalization and the irruption of emerging countries on the international scene have led policy makers to seek new frontiers of development. And one of these frontiers has been identified in culture, understood as the keystone for enabling the advanced countries to maintain their positions and to make the qualitative leap necessary to trigger a new phase of growth. This is the basis for the third model, which focuses on the role of culture in economic growth. In this new vision coexist both the public and private good dimensions. On the one hand, for example, the "public" value of Cultural Heritage and, on the other, the production of cultural goods and services that generate added value and wealth through their fruition.

The close link between culture and economy, in the perspective of the third model described above, is also made explicit by the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Carnaghan, 2006). In it, Article 2 states the principle of complementarity between the economic and cultural aspects of development, thus confirming that there can be no economic development without cultural development (and vice versa). This fact becomes even more important if we consider that the modern concept of sustainable development applied to society's policies was introduced precisely to include environmental and social problems (therefore also cultural,

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since culture is the reflection of being) alongside economic ones, with profound interactions and synergies (Brundtland Report, 1987). In evidence of this, Throsby (2012) underlines that the interpretation of Cultural Heritage as cultural capital raises the issue of sustainable development in management practices. Cultural capital (both tangible and intangible) represents the Cultural Heritage we have inherited from the past from our ancestors, and to pass it on to future generations it is necessary to implement long-term strategies for the conservation and restoration and use of the heritage itself. More recently Ost (2018) argues that the conservation of Cultural Heritage and the economy of Cultural Heritage are interrelated, and that economic inclusiveness should aim to make economic value compatible with cultural values, consistent with economic efficiency, social inclusiveness and protection of Cultural Heritage.

Therefore, we postulate the following:

- P1. Cultural goods have no market because (*sensu stricto*) there is no buying and selling process, but they are intermediate goods between the extreme cases of exclusively private or rival consumer goods and pure public goods whose consumption is of zero rivalry or exclusion.

The interaction between economy and culture takes place between microeconomic agents (individuals, families and businesses) and macroeconomic agents (local, national and international public authorities): they live and make decisions within an environment in which culture plays an important role during economic life, just as cultural relations and processes exist within an economic environment and can be interpreted in terms of economic values (Mazzanti, 2003). This complex system, where the interaction between economy and culture takes place, can be defined as a mesoeconomic space (Héraud, 2016). This space is linked to the concept of “trading zone” that originates in anthropology, to designate specific interdisciplinary collaborations: although different sectors have different objectives and points of view, they come to launch forms of exchange by building languages of intermediation, which allow communication and cooperation. Balducci (2013) used the concept of “trading zone” to solve the problems that arose with the adoption of the only participatory approach at the time of the implantation of the strategic plan for the province of Milan in Italy. The author demonstrated how the “trading zone” approach allows conflicts to be dealt with by developing an intermediate language that allows the production of partial agreements and the discovery of border strategies accepted by the various stakeholders. Gustafsson and Rosvall (2008) introduced the concept of “trading zones” in the field of Cultural Heritage based on the assumption that funding models applied to the conservation and valorization of Cultural Heritage should not be limited to those strictly aimed at restoration such as public funding. On this basis, the authors theorized a model (Halland Model) based on a Swedish experience in the social field: unemployed in the construction and industrial sectors, apprentices and immigrants were trained in traditional building techniques, working on dilapidated historical buildings under the supervision of restoration and conservation experts. The operation benefited the different sectors: high-risk buildings were saved from demolition, traditional knowledge was handed down to a new generation by building new skills, and finally new jobs were created (Gustafsson, 2009).

These ideas are summarized in the following propositions:

- P2. The interaction between economy and culture takes place in a “mesoeconomic” space forming a complex socio-economic system based on the interdependence of micro and macroeconomic agents.
- P3. Economy and culture are not independent elements but exist in a context in which a variety of stakeholders will operate and are influenced by different factors in their activities at the micro, meso and macroeconomic levels.

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P4. The mesoeconomic space is the “trading zone” where different and diverging stakeholder expectations can be resolved more effectively.

Therefore, from the conceptualization of literature, the theme of complexity as a characterizing element of cultural phenomena emerges. In fact, they have both a public and a private dimension, where a plurality of stakeholders expresses their requests in a mesoeconomic space intermediate between the micro and the macroeconomy. Complexity can therefore be seen as a new epistemological approach to dealing with problems, and questions regarding dynamic (complex) systems that traditional linear models cannot define, interpret and understand; an epistemology based on a systemic vision of the phenomena and dynamics of cultural processes, bringing together both the “natural sciences” (a set of disciplines dealing with the phenomena of the sensitive world) and the “human sciences” (a set of social disciplines in addition to philosophy, moral and spiritual disciplines). Thanks to this new epistemological paradigm, reality is no longer considered as known, stable and immutable, but as a product of the activity of interpretation, definition, explanation, in the processes of social interaction between economy and culture. In this perspective, complexity does not require a new scientific method, but rather the awareness of the need to adopt a new common interpretative framework for different scientific fields, which is able to analyze those issues that lie on the borderline between natural and human sciences and, therefore, considered by both irrelevant.

## 2.2 *Economy of Cultural Heritage*

The general theoretical discussion on the economy of culture also includes issues related to the management of Cultural Heritage. The definition and the concept of heritage have evolved over the years, depending on the national laws and interpretations that have governed it. In economic terms, Koboldt (1997, pp. 3-4) conducted an important delimitation defining it as “a collection of tangible objects and intangible elements related to the cultural development of a society, which comes from past generations and are esteemed by contemporary individuals, not only for their aesthetic values or its utility, but also as an expression of the culture of a society development.” With this conception, heritage simultaneously receives a cultural value and an economic value, which may be measurable in the form of prices and in the form of an estimation of the willingness to pay individuals when there are no relevant markets. Thus, the economic study of this important sector of the historical heritage therefore opens to the broader concept of Cultural Heritage.

To approach the study of culture and heritage from a traditional economic perspective through the analysis of demand and supply behavior, it is necessary to answer questions such as: What goods exist and are produced, how is demand expressed, with what intensity, what are the relative equilibrium prices and how can we influence the market? It is quite difficult to find a method of estimating demand, because it is often collective rather than individual, as is the case with most private property. On the other hand, the fact that these goods are priced in the form of tickets (e.g. entrance to a museum) does not reflect the real degree of desirability or scarcity of the goods, since most of them are subsidized prices and do not reflect the cost of production and maintenance (Riganti and Nijkamp, 2005). Moreover, Cultural Heritage goods are not just any product with use value, but may also have an option value, i.e. that which individuals would be willing to pay for, not so much to consume the good as to maintain the possibility of using it in the future. This is reflected in the concern for the conservation of Cultural Heritage. The most significant peculiarity of the demand for Cultural Heritage is that the individual does not require an object, but rather the value components it incorporates and, therefore, the services that can be derived (Greffé, 1990). Therefore, the most important feature of the culture and heritage market is that the behavior of the demand refers fundamentally to a diversified demand for services, while

the supply is a set of fixed resources that acquire a value to the extent that the services and the associated utilities are required.

The Cultural Heritage represents a unique and unrepeatable “human construct” with an eminently artistic content of public or private property, which can have both a material and immaterial character, a testimony to the past or present, the fruit of a single artist or a group of artists and obtained with artisanal techniques or with more complex processes of realization. In a managerial perspective, the work of art is an object that can be seen as a “cultural product,” obtained through a plurality of heterogeneous processes in which each case is different from the other and requires a specific analysis. The process of creating the value of the cultural product concerns all the stakeholders and the user of the work of art itself. In this process, the cultural product represents the “medium of relationship between the actors” (Rispoli and Tamma, 1992), which allows connecting their objectives, resources and activities. According to Tamma (2006), the constitutive element of the concept of cultural product is not therefore the “content,” but the “role” it plays.

Together, these arguments suggest the following:

- P5. The economic analysis of Cultural Heritage refers to that of an economy of income and not to an economy of prices, as would be the case with most market goods.
- P6. The economic value of Cultural Heritage does not depend on its sale but on the economic income it provides.
- P7. The creation of value of Cultural Heritage involves all the stakeholders related to its management, including the user of the work of art. This value is created through the interactions between the user, the work of art and other stakeholders.

It is therefore clear that Cultural Heritage, like other socio-economic systems, represents a complex system of economic agents among which non-linear cause-effect relations are established, but with mechanisms typical of feedback. In order to understand the dynamics of this complexity, the interpretative epistemological paradigm (attentive to subjectivity) can be more effective than the positivist paradigm (based on objectivity).

### 2.3 Cultural Heritage as a mesosystem

Traditionally, economic analysis has been subdivided into two levels: a “macro” level referring to the study of the sector or country as a whole and a “micro” level at the level of the production unit or enterprise (Giljum *et al.*, 2011); at an intermediate level between macroeconomics and microeconomics there is a “space” where people and institutions interact in order to promote development from a region or “territorial system” delimited within a country in order to make the “territorial system” of each country, region or city competitive. In the academic literature this space is called “mesoeconomics” (Dopfer, 2012). The meso level typically describes the structure and composition of the elements, interrelationships and environment that form a given industrial or sectoral conglomerate with deep territorial bases. The mesoanalysis approach has been put into practice through the development of models and methodologies that seek to describe sectoral or cluster behavior both quantitatively and qualitatively, involving sectoral, territorial, policy and behavioral variables, which contrasts with the individualistic approach of microeconomics or the high levels of aggregation characteristic of the macro. Consequently, we postulate the following:

- P8. The “meso” space focuses on the characteristics and dynamics of intermediate structures that lie between individual and/or enterprise (micro) and sovereign nation (macro) operations.

The mesoeconomics rely heavily on private actors and market forces for their operations, particularly in industrial sectors such as manufacturing and construction (Andersson, 2003)

and Cultural Heritage (Settembre Blundo *et al.*, 2014). Thus, in some of these industries there are services, which are not normally provided (or will be provided imperfectly) by market forces, due to some source of market failure (externalities, credit constraints, etc.). A significant segment of these market failures is addressed through the so-called social industries: health care, rehabilitation, family services, age care, public housing, disability services, welfare benefits, employment services, public education and more. The mesoeconomy of social industries, as a field of research, refers to the practical aspects of providing social services to its “public customers” (children, patients, students, clients, sponsors, etc.) in an efficient and cost-effective manner (Freyens, 2008). Within the framework of the construction sector, Tupenaite *et al.* (2010) propose an analysis model to improve the human environment in construction through effective decision making at the time of renovation, supported by multi-criteria assessment methods, which consider all economic levels (macro, meso and micro) of the context, as well as by identifying the needs of the stakeholders. This model was applied to the case study of five Cultural Heritage restoration projects. Cultural Heritage is a complex system of relationships that has particularly multidimensional qualities in terms of extent and scale although it is often isolated in individual elements. It can be individual and diffuse (i.e. a painting and a collection), and of different typologies: from the artistic object to the monument, the city and the territory. Taken together, we argue the following:

P9. In the “meso” space there are the “social” industries because of their interdependence between public and private action by the stakeholders.

P10. The Cultural Heritage sector can be seen as a paradigm of a complex socio-economic system located in a mesoeconomic space.

#### 2.4 Processes of restoration, conservation and valorization

The sector of Cultural Heritage is a system, which, by its intrinsic nature, needs focus when performing restoration and conservation works. The historic structures are not an independent element but exist in a context in which a variety of stakeholders operate; these are influenced by different factors in their activities. This sector therefore represents a great opportunity to reconcile environmental and social development with economic growth (Barthel-Bouchier, 2012).

The restoration and conservation processes are based on the knowledge and experience that have developed over the years and can now be used to preserve the integrity and authenticity of Cultural Heritage. The restoration and conservation culture are gradually imbued based on hypotheses and evidence, including a scientific method that led to an evolution of the “traditional” restoration to a more scientific and technological approach (Idelson, 2011).

Often the terms restoration, conservation and valorization of Cultural Heritage are used together, so it is appropriate to specify their meaning in accordance with what is stated at the 15th International Council of Museums (ICOM-CC, 2008) Triennial Conference held in New Delhi in September 2008. ICOM-CC adopted the term conservation to define all those measures and actions aimed at safeguarding tangible Cultural Heritage by ensuring its accessibility to present and future generations. Conservation includes preventive conservation, remedial conservation and restoration. All measures and actions must respect the meaning and physical properties of the Cultural Heritage element:

- Preventive conservation: all measures and actions aimed at avoiding and minimizing future deterioration or loss. They are carried out within the context or on the surroundings of an item, but more often a group of items, whatever their age and condition. These measures and actions are indirect – they do not interfere with the materials and structures of the items. They do not modify their appearance.

- Remedial conservation: all actions directly applied to an item or a group of items aimed at arresting current damaging processes or reinforcing their structure. These actions are only carried out when the items are in such a fragile condition or deteriorating at such a rate that they could be lost in a relatively short time. These actions sometimes modify the appearance of the items.
- Restoration: all actions directly applied to a single and stable item aimed at facilitating its appreciation, understanding and use. These actions are only carried out when the item has lost part of its significance or function through past alteration or deterioration. They are based on respect for the original material. Most often such actions modify the appearance of the item.  
We can instead identify a definition of the term valorization in the Code of Cultural Heritage and Landscape (2004).
- Valorization: any activity aimed at improving the conditions of knowledge and conservation of Cultural Heritage and increasing its public use, in such a way as to convey the values that it conveys.

Article 29 of the same Italian code states that the conservation of the Cultural Heritage is “ensured through a coherent, coordinated and planned activity of study, prevention, maintenance and restoration.” This definition given by the Italian legislator differs from the concept of preventive conservation provided by ICOM-CC, in which prevention is related to maintenance. According to this approach, prevention is implemented through regular monitoring and periodic preventive maintenance through minimal interventions aimed at preventing the occurrence of major damage. In the Italian code, prevention is distinct from maintenance practice and is based on risk management, understood as the reduction of the probability of a harmful event occurring, through the application of indirect actions. Maintenance, on the other hand, is seen as the moment of control and maintenance of the integrity that still exists, while restoration means the recovery of Cultural Heritage whose integrity has been compromised.

We believe that preventive conservation is the most appropriate solution for Cultural Heritage because it is based on a strategic approach, medium to long term, and necessarily involves humanistic, technological and managerial skills. All this ensures a better allocation of public and private resources for the maintenance of Cultural Heritage in line with the objective of transmitting to future generations the cultural identity of a territory. This objective also refers to the concept of sustainable development, which is expressed in the three pillars of sustainability: environment, economy and society, as recent research studies have shown (Settembre Blundo *et al.*, 2014; Khorassani *et al.*, 2018; Settembre Blundo *et al.*, 2018).

The modern concept of the approach or the “conservative” nature of monuments’ restoration dates to 1794, the year in which the French National Convention issued a decree for the conservation of monuments (Sette, 1996). From this moment, a series of initiatives were conducted that showed a change in attitude by the intellectual class and institutions toward restoration and conservation. In the mid-nineteenth century in France, an approach called “stylistic” restoration, defended by E. Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879), was proposed; this approach contrasts with the previous conservative approach that targeted the recovery of the value of the “was and are” origin of the monument (Hearn, 1990). Conversely, the “stylistic restoration” completely ignores the passage of time and, therefore, the various historical and artistic actions in favor of the pursuit of an ideal “stylistic unity” (Lamberini and Ferrari, 1986).

Modern architectural restoration dates to the approach known as “scientist” (the so-called third way, which extends beyond conservative and stylistic approaches). In this case, the restoration is based on the awareness that it is necessary to know what is being

restored before the conservation (Boito, 1883). The theoretical leader of the restoration in the twentieth century was Cesare Brandi (1906–1988), who postulated a new vision-based recognition and respect for Cultural Heritage in terms of historical and esthetic authenticity (Brandi, 1977).

At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, a new culture of conservation took hold in Italy, detaching itself from the traditional positions on restoration (Dezzi Bardeschi, 1991). This is how the concept of historical stratification was born and affirmed, that is to say that the Cultural Heritage must be understood in the widest and most extensive possible way, with the contributions of every epoch regardless of antiquity, because they are considered cultural documents in the same way as archival documents. This process overcomes the visibility that had marked the class theories of restoration, favoring the analysis of architectural styles, the identification of the figurative message and whatever else is allowed by the perception of the external image of the Cultural Heritage and its decorative apparatus. This current has matured the fact that, favoring the image, one no longer discerns the truth from the false and one of the fundamental concepts of restoration is misinterpreted: that of authenticity (Dezzi Bardeschi, 1993). In this cultural debate takes shape a new concept (especially referred to the architectural heritage), that of “restoration project,” in which the works of conservation and reuse are defined in graphic and descriptive form: knowledge and analytical interpretations of the Cultural Heritage, and procedures and techniques for the management of the restoration site. In these terms, conservation is aimed at the maintenance and consolidation of structures while reuse controls the addition of the new, that is, all the elements necessary for the compatible reuse of the Cultural Heritage (technological systems, services, etc.) which, however, must not be formally prevaricating and technically invasive, but preferably reversible (Torsello, 2005). However, today there is no prevailing line of thought, let alone institutional one, adopted by the public authorities that manage the Cultural Heritage, except for the “artistic restoration” that is substantially recognized by Brandi’s theories.

Conservation and restoration are goals that are usually recognized as the basis for the management of Cultural Heritage. These goals have traditionally been the objects of discord, revealing an implied dichotomous interpretative guidance, as if they were goals that somehow counteract each other (Quattrociocchi, 2011). Undoubtedly, protection is based on a logic of restriction, while enhancement follows the logic of chance.

In retrospect, the protection/valorization topic is only a false dilemma that has roots in a vision that incorporates a reductionist approach in the valorization of both protection activities. It is true that in the first case, intervention in heritage should be done to preserve, and in the second case, intervention should be done to monetize its value. Unbalanced conservation action that is separate from any recovery initiative leads to Cultural Heritage being denied the ability to generate value. Conversely, economic exploitation, irrespective of the Cultural Heritage, is treated as an object of “consumption,” ultimately undermining its survival, depleting its potential cultural value and subtracting it in time to its main function (Sciullo, 2010). Therefore, conservation and valorization must be harmoniously combined in a relationship of mutual need. Conservation refers to the preservation of “structural” Cultural Heritage, or better, of the expressive capacity of cultural value, and not the physical preservation but the structural and relational conditions for Cultural Heritage’s value. The valuation refers to the effective “systemic” functioning of the Cultural Heritage, namely, the ability to play a role of generator of socio-economic value because of their cultural potential (Della Torre, 2010).

The gradual change of perspective from the single conservation to the broader scope of conservation and more valorization of the Cultural Heritage involves areas of analysis that are properly called in question the economists. Therefore, first the question is technical and methodological. Thus, it should be the contribution of the economist, fully recognizing the

multidimensional and pluralistic nature of the carriers of interests involved in the management of the Cultural Heritage (Golinelli, 2012). Thus far, the contribution of economists appears to not have stimulated the adoption of new management of Cultural Heritage policies. However, experts are mainly limited to develop it, although valuable scientific contributions and specific prospects for research are expressed as well, and there are different perspectives to the “experts” (historians, architects, writers, sociologists, anthropologists and religious). However, these perspectives continue to suffer its partiality of vision, adding only points of view without capturing the essence of the problem: the need for a unified vision that includes different perspectives according to a logic that is not only multidisciplinary but also interdisciplinary (Barile and Saviano, 2012); deficiency that is yet to cover methodologically and which is seeking to contribute to the analysis of this paper.

Based on the arguments above, we propose the following:

- P11. The restoration process is the methodological moment of the recognition of Cultural Heritage in its physical form and in its twofold esthetic and historical instance, for the conservation, valorization and transmission to future generations.
- P12. The technical complexity and strong social impact of the restoration processes, as well as the number and heterogeneity of the stakeholders involved, have prevented the affirmation, in the last 20 years, of a theoretical and cultural position dominating the others.

The themes of conservation, protection and valorization of Cultural Heritage, from the question of scholars, specialists and technicians in the field, must also become a question of civil responsibility and active citizenship that concerns everyone, and everyone in the present and in the projection of the present into the future. All this is consequence of the “collective consciousness” described by Durkheim (Nemedi, 1995). Cultural Heritage are goods that fall into the category of “assets of public interest,” which belong to the social community, in which it identifies, disposes of and must defend and care for them as collective assets in an objective and subjective sense (Navrud and Ready, 2002). The process of valorization of the Cultural Heritage for public use is associated with the risk of “commodification” of the cultural good and in this context the debate is lively. On the one hand, commodification is seen as a mere resource to be exploited for commercial purposes, with the private interest prevailing over the public interest, ceasing to produce collective benefits (Ferreira, 2016). The contrary position argues that affirming that if a private individual takes possession of a good, this stops generating collective benefits, implies affirming that if a good becomes public then it begins to produce these effects (Settembre Blundo *et al.*, 2017). Practical experience has shown that public management is not always the best solution for the valorization of Cultural Heritage.

Therefore, we postulate the following:

- P13. Restoration and maintenance of the Cultural Heritage alone is not enough to produce a social benefit. For this to happen within a social community, it is necessary that it is also valorized through a process of creating a collective consciousness of its Cultural Heritage.

### *2.5 The economic hermeneutics for Cultural Heritage*

While it is currently widely accepted that the cultural sector contributes substantially to the economic performance of any country, it continues to have difficulties in the assessment of positive results on the economic system, arising from the activities of the companies that comprise the cultural chain, as well as the impact of the effects of the economic policies of public administrations. The lack of research methods capable of detecting certain dynamic

aspects of the cultural system has been noted; hence, opportunities are sought to remedy this deficiency. Because of this shortage or lack of data in the sector, the information is inadequate or is not presented systematically to private service operators of Cultural Heritage and cultural activities, notably, those companies that are part of the complex system of relationships that characterize the entire sector (McLoughlin *et al.*, 2006). The underlying reason for this deficiency is that economic research usually treats cultural identity and individual preferences as fixed exogenous factors on which to develop analysis and draw conclusions. On the contrary, other social sciences such as anthropology, sociology and psychology operate on the principle that culture and individual preferences can evolve and be influenced by their environment. Moreover, in the case of Cultural Heritage, there is a lack of definition and precise delimitation of the interest groups that constitute this sector, which makes it difficult to deal with any type of analysis: whether they are historical-artistic and technical (aimed at restoration) and/or managerial (aimed at valorization).

Such absence is attributed partially to the difficulty of reconciling his public character, which usually characterizes materials and cultural activities, with private aspects closely related to the market, or business activity. The identification of carriers of interests is important for the formulation of economic policies and business strategies. In addition, it is also essential to determine interdependencies among them because it is useful to differentiate them at different levels between macroeconomics and microeconomics (Arnaboldi and Spiller, 2011). There are various public and private institutions that have been examined to measure the progress of the economy of the Cultural Heritage in specific countries or regions, but most measure aspects without interrelating them correctly by difficulty (Cerquetti, 2010). In addition, many of the results are focused on mainly characterizing technology adoption (Rogerio-Candeleria *et al.*, 2013); in certain cases, the capabilities of innovation for the development of new products and treatments for the recovery and conservation of the works of art. However, these isolated models do not explain how the economy of the Cultural Heritage is inserted in a region or territory. These models also do not describe the sectoral or territorial structure that leads to forms of technological innovation and business.

Thus, the economics of Cultural Heritage alleviates this deficiency and can be observed between the complex socio-economic systems, understood as cultural capital, it is a phenomenon of value generation and intervenes in the production of an economy function, providing both complementarity utilities as a substitute to other sectors with other options or resources; therefore, it is subject to evaluation and collective management because of their significant contribution to the economic development of a society (Bowitz and Ibenholt, 2009). It is precisely this last objective, the contribution to economic development by which the principal to pursue, whose achievement will also allow the achievement of other great purposes for the “preservation” of heritage for generations to come. The field of economic development in the field of Cultural Heritage is a space in growth that seeks to review basic models, as well as build new ones that are more complex and that incorporate other disciplines, such as sociology, marketing, mathematics/statistics, to explain this economic phenomenon (Mazzanti, 2002), as well as a structuring at various levels (macro, micro and meso) for a better understanding of it (Settembre Blundo *et al.* 2018).

In the general field of complex socio-economic systems and, more specifically, in Cultural Heritage, technological, economic and social processes take place over a much longer period than in other cases. The complexity of socio-economic systems has increased by adding to *homo oeconomicus* a *homo socialis*, as Helbing (2013) points out. This author underlines that the difference between *homo oeconomicus* and *homo socialis* is that, when making decisions, the latter considers the interests of others, which implies interdependent decisions. In other words, the action of *homo socialis* is much more complex and is what gives rise to this systemic

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complexity in which we observe how different behaviors contribute to coordinating even incompatible interests, which leads to better individual results over a sufficiently long-time horizon (Nelson, 2001) Robert H. Nelson, 2001, *Economics as Religion*. From Samuelson to Chicago and Beyond, University Park (Pennsylvania), Pennsylvania State University Press, ISBN-978-0-271-06376-8. Therefore, from a scientific point of view, it is necessary to find the most appropriate method to take into account the time variable associated with complex socio-economic phenomena. Since social research is methodologically heterogeneous, there are three distinct traditions of analysis adopted by most social researchers (Mantere and Ketokivi, 2013). The literature on scientific methodology often lists certain types of reasoning for specific research designs. The analysis tested by the theory represents the “deductive” style of research (Rumelt *et al.*, 1991), whereas, the construction of theory based on qualitative data is “inductive” (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007), and interpretive erudition is “abductive” (Hatch and Yanow, 2003).

Inductive inference (Bruschi, 1999, p. 551) is a “bottom-up” logic in which one knows the premises and the conclusion and wants to reconstruct the rules (from particular to general). It starts from a specific case (antecedent), connects it to another fact (consequent) and derives from it an uncertain result that is a probable general rule (implication relation). Deductive inference (Bruschi, 1999, p. 517) is a “top-down” logic in which one knows the premises and the rules and wants to draw a conclusion (it goes from general to particular). It starts from a general rule (implication relation), applies it to a specific fact (antecedent) and derives a certain result (consequent). Abductive inference (Bruschi, 1999, p. 558) is a backwards process under a “bottom-up” logic that is used when rules and conclusions are known, and the premise is to be reconstructed. It considers a specific fact (consequent), connects it to a hypothetical rule (implication relation) and derives from it an uncertain result that is a hypothetical conclusion (antecedent).

Consequently, the researcher’s observation of the complex socio-economic phenomena in a mesoeconomic space requires a broader horizon capable of detecting all aspects of their evolution, overcoming the traditional opposition between economic activities and social issues, as well as between market organization (bottom-up) and socio-political regulation (top-down). From an epistemological point of view, it is necessary to highlight the interrelationships that exist between the observer and the observed object. On the basis of these interrelationships it is noted that not only do observations depend on the observer’s coordinate system, but the description of the observed object only makes sense if it is explicitly linked to a description of the observer. In the cultural and socio-economic systems, the problem is more complex because, in front of the sociocultural systems in which it is inserted, the subject acting poses himself as an observer, who should therefore be described with the sole purpose of being able to understand the systems he observes (Gallino, 2016).

This description could be concretized in the actor-network theory application elaborated by Latour (1996), who affirms that every scientific idea, technical artifact or every social fact, is the product of an intricate network of relationships in which human and non-human social actors interact. One of the pillars of this theory is the principle of general symmetry and according to this principle, a single vocabulary must be used to treat both human actors and material objects. Both, taking up semiotic terminology, are defined as “actants” (Greimas, 1973)[1]. Consequently, what distinguishes this method from other social investigations that deal differently with different topics is that it aims to study at the same time and in the same way all possible topics in both the social-humanistic and scientific-technological fields. Therefore, from this point of view, a methodological approach of this kind could be useful to solve the complexity of the management of Cultural Heritage. However, in this approach the human subject, who traditionally has always been seen as the fulcrum of action, is ontologically unrelated to the actor of the network. The result is that the human and non-human elements do not necessarily become the same thing, as Latour (1999)

himself pointed out in a critical re-reading of his theory. Therefore, in order to analyze the complexity of cultural phenomena, keeping the same constructivist perspective of Latour's actor-network theory, we believe that it is important to adopt a "socio-constructivist" approach that puts man back at the center of the analysis, considering him as an active builder of his own knowledge. Socio-constructivism combines two fundamental points of view: constructivism (Mir and Watson, 2000), for which the mind is capable not only of elaborating but of constructing the meanings of reality; and social interactionism (Blumer, 1986), for which this construction takes place through social relations. It follows that the world we know is that of the meaning attributed by individuals, a meaning that varies among individuals and in different cultures. Therefore, there is no universal social reality valid for all men, but there are many. Reality thus becomes an interpretation of the world made by the subject within the context in which he lives.

In this regard, Juarrero (2000) proposes an interpretative-narrative model of explanation for complex systems: hermeneutics. In the hermeneutic interpretation, the meaning of a complete text is deduced from the relationships between the individual passages. In turn, the meaning of individual passages in the story is derived from the meaning of the entire text in which the passages are immersed. This continuous interpretative movement, from the parts to the whole and vice versa, reproduces the way in which complex systems, self-organizing, show the interrelationships between the parts and how they reconnect them. Hermeneutics (from the Greek *hermeneutikos*, interpretation), in general terms, is the claim to explain the relationships between a fact and the context in which it occurs. The method was created as a means of analyzing the sacred texts of the *Bible*, understanding that the specific understanding of something depends on its context, and the context depends, in turn, on the meaning of the things that comprise it (Gadamer, 1975; Ricoeur, 2004). This relationship is called the hermeneutic circle (Peñalver Simó, 1998).

Gadamer and Fantel (1975) point out that the aim of hermeneutics is not to arrive at a grasp of the historical and psychological dimension of reality, but to arrive at the truth itself through the awareness that the research is placed in a circularity between two distant and distinct historical moments, that of the interpreter and that of the interpreted, with two different traditions behind. From a hermeneutic perspective, "truth" is the result of a "fusion of horizons" between interpreter and interpreted, and scientific truth itself can be considered the result of a dialogue with things (the actants of Latour). This search for truth is realized through the relationship between two subjects (interpreter and interpreted) and not between subject and object as happens in the natural sciences, and in the same metaphysical tradition. The diversity between the sciences of nature (*Naturwissenschaften*) and the sciences of the spirit (*Geisteswissenschaften*) had already been highlighted earlier by Dilthey (1883), who argues that while the object of study of the *Naturwissenschaften* is the set of phenomena external to the observer, the *Geisteswissenschaften* deal with the spiritual products of man who becomes here both the knowing subject, and the known object. This similarity of subject and object of study ends up having important consequences on the epistemological level: the encounter with the object allows the subject to recognize what is already known. It follows that the aim of the sciences of the spirit is not, as in the sciences of nature, to explain phenomena through causal and objective relationships, but to update the lived experience of which the object carries the traces. Mura (2003) concludes that Dilthey's distinction between the natural sciences and the spiritual sciences has given contemporary philosophy the principle that, with regard to the creative expressions of man (culture, art, philosophy, etc.), it is necessary to develop a methodology of "understanding" (*Verstehen*), and not only of "explanation" (*Erklären*), because they are all expressions of the spirit of man, which cannot be treated as an object of nature or as a pure ontological object. The question of truth is also addressed by Foucault (2011) by investigating the relationship between truth and subjectivity. He argues that we must also consider the way in which truth

is produced and manifested in the “form of subjectivity.” Foucault also elaborates the distinction between the analysis of epistemological structures and that of *alethurgic*[2] forms. The first poses the question of what makes true knowledge possible, the second investigates the act through which truth manifests itself. If for rationalism the world can be objectively known by reason without a necessary interpenetration between the observing subject and the observed object, Foucault (1981) has shown how the relationship between subject and truth has changed with time and described the phenomenon that leads philosophy to recognize the subject as the *a priori* bearer of truth. In this vision, what we call the philosophical subject cannot in fact be defined but is constituted by the social and power relations in force in a given historical context, coming to the conclusion that it is the relations that constitute the subject, and not vice versa.

In the perspective of a construction of subjective truth, hermeneutics evokes the horizon of history, in fact, the subject is always within a situation that he has not foreseen, organized or planned, but that still weighs on his own relationship with knowledge (Habermas, 1990). The assumption of a structurally historical truth must be understood in two senses: on the one hand, the truth happens in history and, on the other, it shows a historical physiognomy. In the first specification it emerges how a truth is always embodied within a concrete situation, while in the second one the emphasis is placed on the essentially temporal quality of every true experience or affirmation. This “historical” approach is particularly relevant to each path of analysis, study and management of Cultural Heritage aimed at the ethical commitment to preserve the memory of the past to be passed on to future generations (Harrison, 2013). However, the preservation of the past should not have the sole objective of conservation. Cultural Heritage finds its *raison d'être* thanks to the most innovative historical-artistic and technological research, and the method of hermeneutical analysis proposed in this paper can be placed in this perspective. Cultural production, which is measured by experimentation and contemporary reconnects memory and innovation, recovers tradition to give life to a representation of the present and an imaginary future, contributing decisively to the development of the community.

Disclosure of the hermeneutic that has occurred in recent decades has led to its incorporation in different research areas such as social sciences (Maier, 1994). Hermeneutics has been used by many disciplines and is regularly viewed in the literature as an accepted and effective means of data analysis (O’Gorman and Gillespie, 2010). The literature includes papers related to the economy (Söderbaum, 2000; Perrin, 2005; Hjorth and Johannisson, 2008), accounting (Chahine, 2006; Coad and Herbert, 2009), companies (Noorderhaven, 2004; Hancock, 2006; Hartelius and Browning, 2008; Van Marrewijk, 2009) and to marketing (Palmer and Ponsonby, 2002; Yannopoulou and Elliott, 2008). In all these cases, the social, economic and business events represent “texts” that the hermeneutist must interpret (Thompson, 1981).

In the literature, there are few research studies that apply the hermeneutic approach to the restoration to examine what relates to the management of the Cultural Heritage, particularly with respect to the restoration and recovery of historical surfaces. Among the works is a noteworthy article by Corrado (2005). Via the author, the Cultural Heritage becomes the sign of the artist, and their significance, formed in its horizon in a historic and cultural past, is dialectically related to the presence of the indispensable work of conservation and preservation. Therefore, we state the following:

- P14. For complex socio-economic systems, the classic top-down explanatory model is not enough because it requires a continuous change of interpretation (from the parts to the whole and vice versa), hence the need for a different logic under a new bottom-up interpretative model.
- P15. Abductive scientific reasoning is based on the process (cognitive, non-computational) of selecting the “best explanation” of a set of alternative statements.

P16. Interpretive research is an abductive process of dialogue between theory and empirical phenomenon, producing reflective narratives, not explanatory models.

P17. Hermeneutics understands that the specific understanding of something depends on its context and, in turn, the context depends on the meaning of the things that make it up (hermeneutic circle).

### 3. Building a conceptual model

#### 3.1 Design of the interpretive paradigm

In this paper, epistemological and methodological knowledge of hermeneutics is applied in designing a model of analysis suitable for describing and understanding the complexity of the current socio-economic systems which are particularly included in the Cultural Heritage sector. The motivation of this study is threefold:

- (1) first of all, to demonstrate how hermeneutics, little used in economic and business research (Prasad, 2002), could be successfully applied to the understanding of the complex interrelationships that exist in value chains with multiple stakeholders;
- (2) second, linking material and humanistic aspects in order to build a holistic vision of the interests of the stakeholders involved in the management of Cultural Heritage; and
- (3) finally, to introduce a systemic vision of the Cultural Heritage sector which, starting from the mesoeconomic space, can provide new opportunities for analysis compared to traditional methods.

Within social research, the abductive approach becomes central because it allows attention to be shifted from the result to the process, from pure theory to the formulation of innovative hypotheses. In particular, we can see abduction as a creative process in a context of discovery in which the technical skills of researchers add up to those unfathomable characteristics of cultural background, intuition and luck. In creative abduction, the case is defined on the basis of the explanatory hypothesis formulated *ex novo*. According to the new hypothesis, perceived reality is organized in a new way, and if our hypothesis works, this new organization allows us to understand what we are observing (Legrenzi, 2005).

In the specific case of this investigation a first abductive reasoning is as follows:

- Observation: complex socio-economic systems have a plurality of interdependent stakeholders.
- Rule: the classical rational deductive explanatory methodology is appropriate for the study of complex socio-economic systems.
- New explanatory hypothesis: hermeneutics is a more appropriate tool for modeling complex socio-economic systems.

Whose logical formalization is as follows:

$$\frac{[(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow q]'}{[(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow q]' \cap \{ \neg [(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow q]'' \}}$$

In the formulation,  $[(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow q]'$  is the explanatory hypothesis that will be denied ( $\neg$ ) and refuted by the observation ( $q$ ).

Instead  $[(p \rightarrow q) \rightarrow q]''$  is the hypothesis we created *ex novo*.

From this moment on, we will take the logical scheme presented above to formulate the new explanatory hypothesis. The structured set of abductive hypotheses or assumptions

based on the observations of the researcher constitute a theory that can make predictions in relation to the object of observation. In more detailed terms, a theory can be seen as a system of constructs and variables in which the former is related to each other by propositions and the latter are related to each other by hypotheses. In the specific case of this research, the universe of analysis is the “mesoeconomic” space and the components of theory, developed through the review of academic literature, are as follows:

- (1) Constructs
  - Cultural Heritage as complex socio-economic systems.
  - Research paradigm.
- (2) Proposition
  - For Cultural Heritage the classic deductive explanatory model is not adequate.
- (3) Conceptual variables
  - Plurality and interdependence of stakeholder.
  - Interpretive hermeneutic model.
- (4) Conceptual hypothesis
  - Hermeneutics is a useful tool for modeling complex socio-economic systems as Cultural Heritage.

Therefore, based on the conceptualization of literature data, the following theory can be stated exhaustively:

- For Cultural Heritage, as a complex socio-economic system in a mesoeconomic space, the classic model of explanatory deductive research is not adequate. Due to the plurality of stakeholders and their interdependences, interpretive hermeneutics is a useful theoretical and methodological tool for the conceptual modeling of these systems.

This logical approach is in some ways like classical ethnographic research, which is a method used to understand the reality starting from a particular phenomenon that affects a social system. The main feature of ethnographic research is that most of the information is collected directly in the real field, observing the object of the study. It is necessary for the researcher to immerse himself in the context of the analysis, to become familiar with it and become part of it, so that the information he will find will be obtained and processed in a more natural, spontaneous and therefore more faithful to reality. The new conceptual model of socio-economic analysis based on Gadamerian hermeneutics adopts the same dialectic between the object of analysis and the context but differs from ethnographic research in the type of relationship between the observer and the object of study. Although the anthropologist interacts with the object of analysis in his observation of reality, he limits this dialectical reciprocity to a given context, making it incapable of development, evolution and progress in communication. On the contrary, the hermeneut not only observes reality, but actively interacts with the object of the study, questioning it directly with the aim of gaining access to an understanding that goes beyond learning based on a mere acquisition of data and that constitutes the premise for a mutual justification and for a mutual change between hermeneut and observed phenomenon.

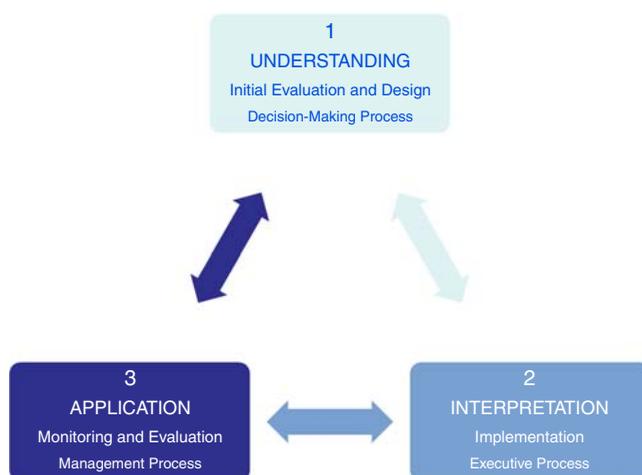
### *3.2 Design of the hermeneutical model for Cultural Heritage*

The “hermeneutic circle,” which is similar to the Gadamerian hermeneutics methodological centerpiece to explain communication, is a very general model of the development of knowledge which operates by means of a procedure of reconstruction and assembly that

extends to parties and vice versa (Gadamer *et al.*, 2004). Building a hermeneutic circle in mesoeconomic systems involves the provision of a subject interpreter to the communication initiative; this person is endowed with the theoretical support needed to decipher the meanings of the portrayed subject through their actions. Second, methodological rigor is required by the act of interpretation, adapting temporality and sociocultural context and respecting the physical and semantic format showcasing the social fact. Third, the ability to dyadically run the construction of discourses in and about the pragmatics of the horizon linking the hermeneutist, as agent to the work, requires an appropriate understanding of the social situation and the context.

The hermeneutic circle is composed of three phases (Higgins, 2001):

- (1) Understanding: it is the initial step of the hermeneutic circle (Figure 1) that relies on constructions from original sources that are anticipated by the hermeneutist. Thus, from the elaboration of these constructions, an initial construction of reality is being performed by the researcher. Therefore, there is no possible development of knowledge without prior knowledge, i.e., that all trials assume and take stand in trial in a pre-suit.
- (2) Interpretation: this phase allows the union of the expressed will of the interpreter and what was interpreted through a dialogical relationship reality. Thus, the researcher attempts to understand, approximate and engage the situation and the explicit reality. Thus, Gadamer placed in subjectivity reasonable critique of the interpreter, the responsibility of the interpretation, emphasizing that this work is not simply meant to reproduce the observation of reality, but it also must enforce his opinion of the means that appears necessary.
- (3) Application: this phase is the process where validity is provided to those enunciated hermeneutics defined in the two previous phases through the framework of practical knowledge, which reflects the validation of statements interpreted in a discursive relationship among the hermeneutist and the object of knowledge. Knowledge is not simply the assimilation of content. The interpreter must apply himself to hear, see or read; otherwise, the knowledge is not actually with him. The application involves updating the past on the present, creating an infinite cyclic process of interpretation.

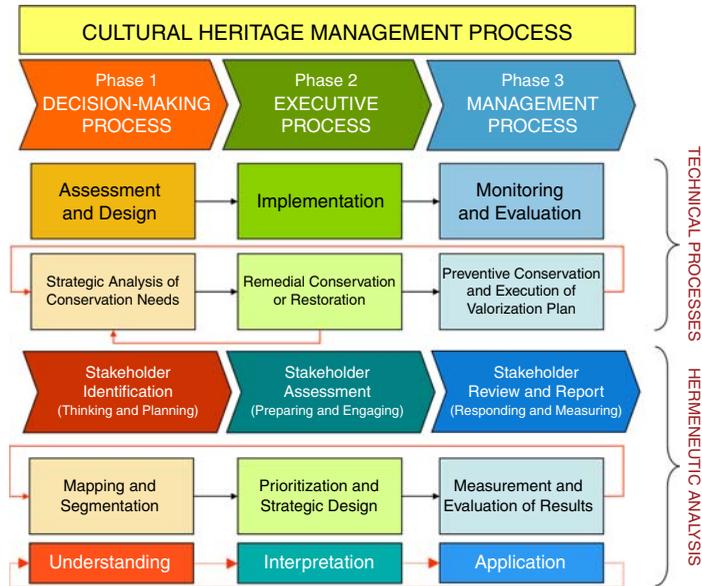


Source: Own elaboration

Figure 1.  
Scheme of the  
hermeneutic circle

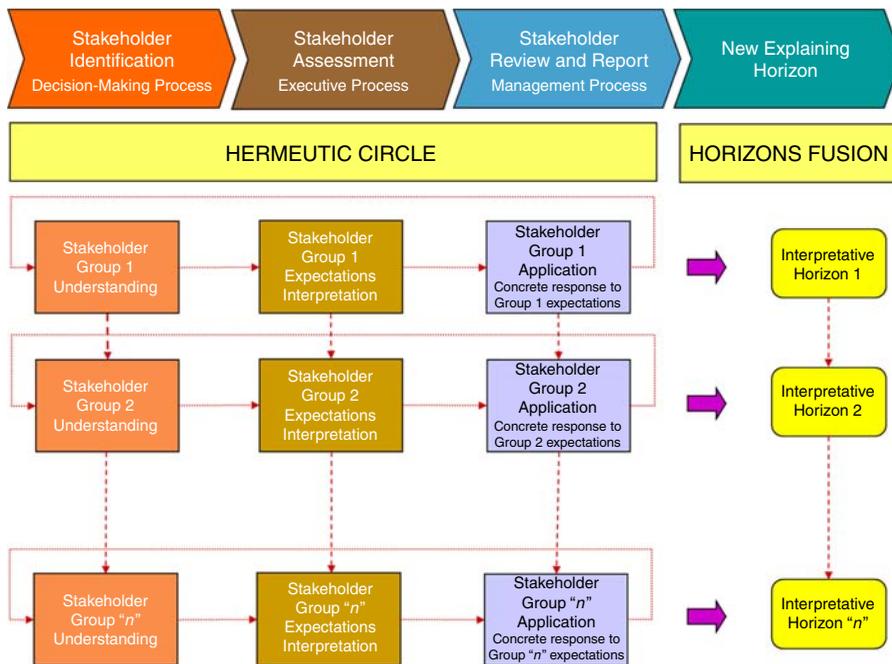
On the basis of the conceptualization of the literature data, we have outlined the process of Cultural Heritage conservation as a succession of three main phases (Figure 2, chart above): the decision-making process, which includes evaluation and design activities and ends with a strategic analysis of the conservation needs; the executive process, which includes the implementation of the remedial conservation or restoration works (depending on the conditions in which the Cultural Heritage finds itself); finally, the management process of evaluation and monitoring of the conditions of the Cultural Heritage in order to activate the operations of preventive conservation. In this phase, the valorization plan is also implemented. On this technical scheme, we have then implemented the hermeneutic analysis that is carried out in parallel with the phases of the conservation process (Figure 2, scheme below). The first stage corresponds to the phase of “understanding” of the hermeneutic circle and the decision-making process at the technical level. It foresees the identification of the main stakeholders related to the management of Cultural Heritage and their subsequent mapping and segmentation into homogeneous interest groups. The second stage corresponds to the phase of “interpretation” of the hermeneutic circle and to the executive process at a technical level. It foresees the evaluation and prioritization of the selected stakeholders in order to plan the appropriate strategies of engagement. The third stage corresponds to the phase of “application” of the hermeneutic circle and to the management process at a technical level. It provides for the verification of the effectiveness of the engagement strategies and the results obtained.

In this paper, we apply the interpretative conceptual model previously designed that is suitable to describe the interdependencies between the various stakeholders of mesoeconomic systems whose schema is shown in Figure 3. Initially, the model identifies the stakeholders; then, for each category, the model builds a hermeneutic circle of understanding, interpretation and application. The model then categorically organizes the application results, i.e., the specific products of the circle.



**Figure 2.** Hermeneutic conceptual model for Cultural Heritage

Source: Own elaboration



## Mesoeconomic analysis of Cultural Heritage

**Figure 3.** Application of the hermeneutic circle to the phases of the process of conservation of the Cultural Heritage

**Source:** Own elaboration

The methodology of the analysis can be simplified as follows:

- (1) delimit the universe of the study, i.e., “whole” or “context”: in this case the sector of the Cultural Heritage;
- (2) identify all stakeholders of the mesosystem, that is, the “parts”;
- (3) apply the hermeneutic circle to each stakeholder;
- (4) categorize the relationships found in the applied circle; and
- (5) build an interpretative matrix of the “inter-categories” through the fusion of horizons between stakeholders and researcher hermeneutists.

Initially, the model identifies the stakeholders. Then, for each category, the model builds a hermeneutic circle of understanding, interpretation and application and categorically organizes the application results, i.e., the specific products of the circle.

### 3.3 Application of the hermeneutic model to Cultural Heritage

Next, the interpretative conceptual model is applied to describe the interdependencies that exist between the different parties interested in the management of Cultural Heritage, who have been classified by Throsby (1997) into the following categories:

- (1) those who enjoy a proven direct benefit of the Cultural Heritage;
- (2) those who enjoy a positive externality or benefit of public good of the Cultural Heritage;
- (3) those who are responsible for direct costs related to the objects of the heritage because they contribute personally to conservation and restoration costs;

- (4) those who are responsible for maintenance and restoration costs, when those costs are borne by the community through taxes; and
- (5) those who have taken (or to whom it is attributed) the responsibility of making decisions about the management and maintenance of heritage or, more generally, about Cultural Heritage policy issues.

The first category includes all economic activities that benefit from Cultural Heritage management, such as restoration companies. The second category includes people who somehow enjoy the heritage goods for cultural or tourist reasons without receiving economic benefits. The third includes all those persons or organizations who contribute directly to the maintenance and restoration of works of art, such as those that make voluntary donations or simply pay the ticket to visit a monument. The fourth category refers to the citizens who use their taxes to indirectly take care of the preservation of Cultural Heritage. Finally, in the fifth category are “decision makers,” including all those who are called to administer Cultural Heritage directly or through appropriate public policies. Table I shows the relationships between the different perceptions of stakeholders,

Stakeholders	Decision-making process Understanding	Executive process Interpretation	Management process Application	Interpretative horizons
Operators related to conservation operations	Experience, technical evaluation, historical evaluation, diagnosis	Selection of the project and execution of the conservations operations	Control, monitoring of the state of conservation and maintenance of Cultural Heritage	Just recognition for the works performed if carried out with skill and professionalism
Citizens and organizations enjoying	Cultural, social or private incentives to enjoy the Cultural Heritage	Overview of citizens' expectations regarding the possible ways of enjoying Cultural Heritage	Implementation of communication strategies to inform people about Cultural Heritage conservation activities	Exploitation and new understanding of the work of art
Citizens and organizations donors	Private or institutional aspirations to contribute directly to the maintenance of Cultural Heritage	Evaluation of restoration projects and the most appropriate forms of financial contribution	Disbursement of the contribution and possible verification of the work executed	Just social recognition of the role of benefactors for the preservation of Cultural Heritage
Citizens and organizations taxpayers	Cultural Heritage seen as a reason for the imposition of a specific tax	Awareness of the importance of maintaining the Cultural Heritage over time	Implementation of communication strategies to inform citizens about Cultural Heritage conservation activities	Cultural Heritage recovered as a symbol for personal ethical and social gratification
Public institutions	Experience and prior knowledge in the management of Cultural Heritage, institutional obligations for its restoration and maintenance	Definition of intervention policies and evaluation of possible action strategies	Implementation of appropriate measures for recovery, monitoring and verification of activities and completed work	Fulfillment of the obligations provided for by the regulations in force for the protection and conservation of the Cultural Heritage

**Table I.** Interpretative matrix of relations between the phases of the hermeneutic circle and the stakeholders

**Source:** Own elaboration based on Throsby (1997)

the phases of the hermeneutic circle and the fusion of interpretative horizons for each stakeholder group according to the Gadamerian model. Stakeholder categories are the same as those previously discussed by Throsby (1997). For each stakeholder category, an interpretive hermeneutic circle has been constructed, which allows us to view Cultural Heritage from different perspectives.

For the operators related to conservation operations, the circle begins from their professional experience and moves to technical and historical evaluation through complex diagnostic mechanisms. Through this process, the restoration design can be selected from a range of alternatives.

For the citizens, this need to enjoy the heritage enters dialogue with the cultural offers, contributing to a new understanding of the works of art. Citizens and organizations can contribute or donate financially to the restoration and preservation of Cultural Heritage, both by institutional obligation (e.g. foundations and associations) and by philanthropy and patronage. In addition, citizens will focus on the choice of the recovery project and on the execution of the project via economic participation in the financing of the restoration works.

Citizens and organizations that contribute their taxes to the safeguarding of Cultural Heritage observe a tax burden in works of art. However, ethical awareness drives the duty to contribute to the conservation of works of art for future generations; the work recovered is the tangible reward for their sacrifice.

Finally, institutions and public administrations (national, local and regional governments) are bodies that have the institutional and management responsibility for Cultural Heritage. These entities' wide variety of knowledge together with their professionalism should enable them to define and adopt appropriate policies for the maintenance and conservation of works of art. All stakeholders involved in the management of Cultural Heritage (public administrations, institutions, companies, catering professionals and citizens) should be aware of these works' vulnerability and need for protection. Therefore, responsible organizations and those who hold heritage orientation and supervision positions have a primary responsibility to ensure these works' conservation and improvement, as well as to provide the human, physical and financial resources for this purpose. Restoration firms and all professionals in the sector should work together with institutions responsible for Cultural Heritage management in accordance with the general ethical orientation adopted by the responsible organizations.

All this cooperation can be observed clearly from the "fusion of horizons" between the stakeholders: companies, institutions, public administrations and citizens who "interpret" the Cultural Heritage differently, since each different category of stakeholders has a different purpose in the fulfillment of their activities. Indeed, the fusion of horizons and interpretation is initiated by the hermeneutic, which may also be one of the economic agents involved in the processes of Cultural Heritage management, and therefore one of the stakeholder's subject of the analysis itself. In this process the interpreter also changes his own horizon: on the one hand because he belongs to a contemporary cultural, technological and socio-economic category with respect to the "status" of the Cultural Heritage (placed before in time); and on the other because his horizon acquires new parts from the interaction between the historical and contemporary dimensions. In this way a movement is created in which both the subject interpreter and the historical tradition of the interpreted Cultural Heritage are mutually renewed. Furthermore, the hermeneutic who interprets the Cultural Heritage in the perspective of the planning of a management strategy develops a particular prejudice that includes a wealth of knowledge and experience unconsciously acquired and result of its cultural, technical and socio-economic tradition. Those who belong to the same tradition (e.g. the same category of stakeholders) have common prejudices as well as other prejudices that are strictly characteristic of their individuality. In this case a new fusion of horizons takes place: the individual one and the specific one of the groups to which we belong.

The hermeneutic circle thus becomes a spiral that allows the iteration of the process to refine more and more the level of analysis. In this way the interpreter can interpret reality both from a historical perspective with respect to the Cultural Heritage art and with respect to the contemporary expectations of himself and of other stakeholder groups. Therefore, in agreement with Gadamer, the fusion of horizons can make it possible to overcome the temporal, cultural, technological and socio-economic distance when designing a project for the conservation and restoration of Cultural Heritage.

It is necessary to underline that, in addition to prejudice, the stakeholders express another criticality: the lack of objectivity in that they all benefit from the same cultural good, even if in different ways. Each category is then regulated by its ethical codes that were adopted tacitly, deliberately or by legal obligation that occasionally contradict one another. Development in the meshes of this network can be very difficult, particularly if all interest bearers naively observe the “world” of Cultural Heritage considering only their personal interpretive horizon. It is only through the fusion of horizons, one’s own with those of the remaining interested parties (who cannot be ignored) that a person can approach the most complete understanding. It is precisely during this complex task when hermeneutics can greatly contribute through the development of a “polyhedral network.” This result is obtained by merging the horizons of the interested parties into the interpretive matrix and the system of relations and, in each of these, enables it to be extended and integrated with quantitative data. Similarly, other hermeneutic circles can be created to interpret social relations at sub-levels lower than the general level considered in that model’s approach.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

In this paper we wanted to provide an epistemological framework for the management of Cultural Heritage seen as a complex socio-economic system. The answer we wanted to offer to the complexity of the cultural system was the introduction of the subjective element of the researcher who analyzes the phenomenon. The reason for this choice is based on the fact that the analysis (and management) of Cultural Heritage necessarily implies the intervention of value judgments both by the observer (the researcher) and by all the stakeholders involved. The methodological question is therefore interpretative because the meaning and value attributed to a work of art is not unique but is always redefined. This does not depend on the identification of new elements, but rather on the fact that new and different points of view always emerge and, on the fact, that the past is always read in the light of the present. Not only that, the new points of view are also multiple and heterogeneous because they refer to both humanistic and scientific culture, which can adopt different epistemological paradigms and methods of investigation. Therefore, in order to “understand” reality, the researcher must be able to reach an aspect of truth by uniting the forces of reason and intuition, thus following an interpretative approach. However, understanding is related to the “explanation” and “description” that are typical of the positivist approach. In fact, the description is indicative of the type of understanding with which empirical data are organized and made usable. The nature of the concepts used in a description defines the perspective with which we wanted to structure a certain area of reality, since there are different ways of understanding reality by constituting alternative ways of seeing each other. Therefore, the researcher who wants to analyze the complexity of Cultural Heritage may have the same needs for rigor and objectivity as the chemist or engineer, as well as to use methods that offset the subjectivity of the operator to try to find the best possible way to understand and explain complex phenomena.

On these bases we have designed a new conceptual model of socio-economic analysis, based on the hermeneutical interpretative method, to study the sector of the Cultural Heritage under an economic and business perspective, with the aim of providing a tool to understand, interpret and apply best practices in the management and valorization of the

Cultural Heritage. This new approach allows one to see the Cultural Heritage as a result of its past (i.e. the history that has left its mark in appearance) and its future (i.e. all the interpretations that history has given it and left us). Through interpretative action, the researcher becomes part of the process itself: he finds himself immersed in a past that is not yet completely known, but that is already projected into the future.

This process of understanding, unlike the dialectic of ethnographic research, is not reduced to the attempt to identify the researcher with the work of art, but thanks to a continuous change in perspective of analysis between object and context. The researcher and the work of art are thus involved in a hermeneutic circularity that brings attention from the particular to the general (and vice versa) in a perspective of research that is no longer idiographic and that allows us to avoid subjectivism. The study of a work of art, therefore, is configured as an infinite analysis that requires to continuously testing the conclusions through the Gadamerian “fusion of horizons,” which forces the researcher to continuously change his attitude as an observer and interpreter. The Gadamerian interpretative approach obliges the researcher to open up to the dimension of otherness and to bridge the cognitive distance that separates him from the work of art, bringing out the possibilities, which are implicit in the work itself, to operate a continuous dialogue with other cultural dimensions involving also other researchers who will bring new knowledge elements. Therefore, compared to traditional ethnographic research, the proposed model of analysis based on Gadamerian hermeneutics goes beyond the biunivocal relationship between the researcher and the object of analysis and configures the possibility of involving other researchers, with different experiences and cultural backgrounds, in the process of analysis. They, together with the stakeholders involved in the management of Cultural Heritage, will bring new and relevant elements to improve knowledge.

Through the hermeneutic analysis, it has been clarified that the construction of the cultural value of a Cultural Heritage is a dynamic, eminently collective, process based on the fusion of the contemporary interpretative horizons of the stakeholders, which are always related to the horizon of the historical intentions of the artist. So, the cultural value is not only a tangible technical property integrated into the forms of the Cultural Heritage, but also the way in which the work is integrated into contemporary life style, that is something intangible and hardly measurable.

Awareness by stakeholders that the cultural value is built not only with the physical restoration of the Cultural Heritage, but also with their incorporation into other tangible elements of a community, is a relevant factor when implementing a management strategy for Cultural Heritage. In this connection, the hermeneutical model we propose can be helpful for considering, at one and the same time, most of the variables and expectations that can arise when it comes to preserving, maintaining and valorizing the Cultural Heritage as a symbol of social identity relative to the past, contemporary and future generations.

The implications of this research work are both academic and practical in nature. From a theoretical point of view, our study has integrated the economy of Cultural Heritage within a space of mesoanalysis and introduced economic hermeneutics as a new approach to the study of complex socio-economic systems, allowing us to arrive at some interesting conclusions that we report below:

- (1) The position of the hermeneutic observer cannot be neutral: as in the uncertainty principle (Heisenberg, 1927)[3], in which subject and object contribute to the construction of reality, the position of the hermeneutic observer cannot be neutral, but changes with his presence, the field of observation. Whoever observes and designs an interpretative model (the hermeneute) is a theoretician in a purely proactive position, while those who translate into practice the results of the model are the stakeholders. The *ermeneusi*[4] becomes a game of mirrors: how Josiah[5] rediscovers the tables of the law only after restoration, so the stakeholders discover

their “belonging to a context” because someone has revealed to them the network of relationships in which they find themselves.

- (2) The hermeneute as the designer of the model allows each stakeholder to identify where he or she stands in relation to the others: it is the hermeneute (theorist), the designer of the model, who allows each interest bearer to identify where he or she “is” in relation to the others. The ability to define through the *ermenusi* the coordinates of the system (I know where and with whom I am) promotes the awareness that the interest of each bearer of interests is also the same interest of the other, of all. Therefore, the “revelation” of the truth inherent in socio-economic events is not so much in the method as in the *episteme*[6] that defines it.
- (3) A new epistemic matrix: the hermeneutic approach on the way of knowing economic and social phenomena and their interconnections can allow us to postulate a new epistemic matrix, with a different system of assignment of meanings and operational processes. Therefore, it is a “holistic,” broader and more complete perspective, which cannot be offered by the reductionist conceptions of the world, or by the individual scientific disciplines applied separately. For example, in a restoration process where the social sciences must dialogue with the historical and artistic disciplines and the technological sciences. Therefore, a new vision of reality is necessary, capable of fundamentally transforming the way we think, perceive and value. The epistemic matrix can be the right way, thanks to its system of prelogical or preconceptual thinking conditions that give rise to a *Cosmvision*[7], the so-called *Weltanschauung* introduced by Dilthey (1991). This new scientific paradigm is based on the process of understanding, rather than explanation, as an indispensable element for the hermeneutic analyst’s knowledge of the historical object and for investigating the nature of a complex socio-economic reality such as Cultural Heritage. The category of explanation, in fact, is the cognitive mode typical of the natural sciences, which does not change the essence of the known object, and does not generate values or achieve purposes of any kind. On the contrary, understanding is the cognitive mode typical of the humanities and social sciences, in which the act of knowing is no different from what is known, and, moreover, the object is modified by understanding itself.
- (4) Conclusion of a double *ermenusi*: a double *ermenusi* is therefore necessary: that of the theoretician, the designer of the model of understanding and that of the operational hermeneutics of the bearers of interests who apply the model to reality. The initial model is broken down into a set of models, structurally dynamic, which allows for modification and adaptation to the context “in itinere.” This dialectical logic (understood as a process where the meaning of the parts or components is determined by prior knowledge of the whole, while our knowledge of the whole is continuously corrected and deepened by the growth of our knowledge of the components), can represent a new conceptual paradigm for responsible humanist-based economic policies and management strategies. The continuous adaptation “in itinere” to the context of the analysis model opens us to the need to consider the temporal variable: the “historical” time in which the socio-economic events occur and that we observe during our analysis. It is a cyclical, spiral time evolution, which includes all or part of the life of human people, as well as the evolution of their environment.

Again, from a theoretical point of view, the epistemological analysis carried out in this research has shown the potential of the Gadamerian interpretative model that we have proposed, to make disciplines that are only apparently distant from each other dialogue: the

human and technological sciences. In fact, at the base of Gadamerian hermeneutics there is the concept that at the moment of understanding (first phase of the hermeneutical circle) also the being of the researcher comes into play. In short, understanding applies to the one who understands, making it different each time precisely because he has understood the phenomenon. The fusion of horizons therefore becomes the applicative paradigm of this concept because it eliminates the problem of the separation of truth from the position of the one who understands (the researcher). Thus, in the complexity of the management of Cultural Heritage, there are different interpretative horizons: the historical and philological issues of the human sciences as well as those properly technological issues related to the problems of restoration. To these are added the interpretative horizons related to the different expectations of all stakeholders. The Gadamerian hermeneutic approach raises, once again, the question of the historical dichotomy between human sciences and technology and provides elements to solve the problem. In the field of restoration and conservation of the Cultural Heritage, scientists and professionals are always involved who work independently, although there is a close interdependence between them. It is therefore an organizational, and consequently management, issue. We believe that a managerial approach is a possible solution to the problem: the hermeneut could therefore have a socio-economic background capable of making the right synthesis between the interpretative horizons that refer to the historical and philological tradition and the more concrete ones of the exact sciences necessary to preserve and valorize the Cultural Heritage. This would fulfill the wish described by Neil Postman (1993) in his book *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* that technological tools are not integrated into culture but aim to become culture themselves; a way to avoid an ideological war between techno-science (a system in which science and technology are fused together) and humanism (a space in which the symbolic human expression has a central role).

From a practical point of view, socio-economic analysis developed in our research model can be an important operational tool for operators in the sector of Cultural Heritage in determining appropriate management strategies. From an operational perspective, both public and private operators within the Cultural Heritage sector can use the interpretative hermeneutic model to achieve the following goals:

- (1) Stakeholder engagement: promote initiatives to develop active relationships with stakeholders, in order to try to balance their legitimate interests. These are initiatives aimed at strengthening the social value of an organization that promotes a Cultural Heritage project, improving its reputation and trust, and at favoring the achievement of strategic objectives through the support of all the players in the system.
- (2) Multi-stakeholder collaborations: implementation of strategies to initiate a dialogue aimed at finding solutions for conservation, restoration and valorization (culturally and socio-economically concerted) through the active involvement of different categories of stakeholders.
- (3) Process monitoring: definition of the metrics (key performance indicators, KPIs) to arrive at a precise and precise measurement of the results of the stakeholder engagement and multi-stakeholder collaborations processes.
- (4) Heritage assessment: integration of the socio-economic dimension in the implementation of the framework proposed by ICOMOS (2011) with the Guidance for Heritage Impact Assessment, which is not provided for in the tool (Gravagnuolo and Girard, 2017).

Finally, we believe that adopting a mesoeconomic perspective is an innovative and comprehensive approach to identifying and describing the complexity of the Cultural

Heritage sector. Precisely because in this intermediate space culture and economy confront each other, just as the interaction between the multiple, and often divergent, expectations of the various stakeholders take place. This new approach identifies the mesoeconomic space as a “trading zone” where conflicts between the parties can best be solved in order to design more effective Cultural Heritage management strategies.

This exploratory and conceptual research presents a lack of empirical validation of the hermeneutical model. This activity will be the subject of further studies that the authors have already planned.

### Notes

1. The term actant in semiology is an element that performs or undergoes the act (subject/object, destination/receiver) independently of any other determination because they are not elements that can be directly identified from the text.
2. Alethurgy (from the Greek word *aletheia* which means truth) is set of procedures where truth is produced, where what stands as true is brought to light, in opposition to what is false, hidden, unspeakable, unpredictable, forgotten. What is important here is not what is true, but how what is true is produced, the relationship between the subject and the truth produced, and it is in the study of these relationships that Foucault encounters the practice of *parrhesia* understood as the practice of telling the truth, that is, the truth that the subject is able to tell about himself (Fabbrichesi, 2015).
3. In quantum mechanics Heisenberg’s principle of uncertainty states that certain pairs of physical variables, such as the position and amount of motion of a given object, cannot be determined simultaneously and with arbitrary precision. Many examples of the impact of the uncertainty principle can be found in economic events and the need to take into account the effects of this principle in order to obtain a more accurate view of economic and social reality can be deduced.
4. The *ermeneusi* is the practice of hermeneutics, i.e. the science and art of understanding, interpreting or translating.
5. Josiah was king of Judah between 639 and 608 BC and instituted important reforms. Among which he undertook the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem and in the course of these works found the book of the law which had been lost. After listening to the moving reading, he sent for God to be consulted through the prophetess Huldah and heard her answer. He summoned all the people, from the princes to the humblest, and he himself read them the book of the law, taking seriously his mission of making the word of God known to the people.
6. The word *episteme* in Greek means science, knowledge, cognition. In Greece, the type of knowledge called *episteme* was opposed to the knowledge called *doxa*. *Doxa* was the vulgar or ordinary knowledge of the human being, not subject to rigorous critical reflection. The *episteme* was rigorously elaborated reflective knowledge.
7. The term “Cosmovision” is an adaptation of the German *Weltanschauung* (*welt*, “world”, and *anschauen*, “observe”), an expression introduced by the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey with the intent of solving the enigma of life through a comprehensive or holistic view of its meaning and meaning.

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