Partnerships in Heritage Governance and Management: Review Study of Public–Civil, Public–Private and Public–Private–Community Partnerships

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Abstract: Cultural heritage governance and management has been shifting from the sole authority of the state and public bodies towards approaches that list multi-actor partnerships in several combinations involving public actors, civil society, private actors and community. This paper examines the public–civil, public–private and public–private–community partnerships through expounding rationales, conceptual backgrounds and theoretical framings for each partnership, followed by a systemic review and analysis of the academic literature sourced through the PRISMA protocol. The analysis objective was to assess the main advantages and disadvantages of each of the partnerships in governing and managing cultural heritage, noting the levels of representation of each governance and management approach. The results have shown that the public–civil and public–private–community partnerships have similar advantages and disadvantages, with the public–civil partnership being the least represented approach in the literature, while the public–private partnership has the highest level of representation with advantages and disadvantages that are inclined towards more pragmatic aims than those of the other two examined approaches. The so-called ‘new governance models’ of heritage were also detected in the analysis; however, they represent only a variant of the already analysed models.

Keywords: cultural heritage; multi-actor governance; public–civil partnership; public–private partnership; public–private–community partnership

1. Introduction

The governance and management of cultural heritage have been gaining remarkable prominence and interest in academic and expert discussions as a complex and multifaceted subject. Aside from the heritage-focused work and studies that explore cultural heritage from the angle of conservation, preservation and safeguarding, the governance and management of cultural heritage have permeated multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary realms, covering issues and topics ranging from human and cultural rights and social and economic development to climate change mitigation and sustainability. This has been reflected and detected in a variety of approaches and models of cultural heritage governance and management that have been evolving in line with the increasing demands for the deregulation and democratisation of cultural heritage, articulated through governance and management schemes fostering the devolution of power and the sharing or transfer of authority between different actors [1–4]. There are several rationales why such approaches have been developing. First, in the scope of the European Union, cultural heritage is understood and defined as a shared resource of public value and the common good [5] which implies the active involvement of relevant actors in the multistakeholder and participatory frameworks of public action, i.e., public authorities and bodies, private actors, civil society organisations, NGOs, the volunteering sector and interested people, in the decision making and planning...
of cultural heritage governance and management. Second, cultural heritage holds a fundamental role in the protection and promotion of cultural rights and cultural citizenship, strengthening European identity and creating a sense of belonging [6,7]. The combination of the public nature and value of cultural heritage with its pivotal relevance to sensitive issues of identity, rights and belonging addresses the challenge of strengthening inclusive and equitable governance arrangements for effective management [8], encompassing legitimacy, accountability, transparency and public participation [2,9–14]. Third, during the past three decades, cultural heritage has been progressively utilised and valorised as a resource for promoting economic development [5,15–18]. The extent of economic instrumentalism and rationalism as the increasingly dominant criteria in planning and the valorisation of the use and purpose of cultural heritage have been contested for their negative effects, such as gentrification, Disneyfication and ‘the tourist gaze’ [19,20]. That leaves limited space for local (re)action and (re)direction toward more sustainable approaches in local development [21]. As stated in a document by United Cities and Local Governments, titled Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Cities, in analysing economic benefits from cultural heritage, what needs to be taken into consideration is who benefits, how and to what extent the cultural asset, identity and citizenship are endangered by intensified economic activity. This includes preventing the ‘freezing’ of cultural heritage in its past of exotic forms, and the decontextualization of cultural identities for the purpose of maximizing economic results” [22] (p. 12).

A possible approach towards addressing these issues is a shift in governance and management approaches or typologies that promote and enable participative mechanisms for governing and managing cultural resources [3,14,23]. Engaging communities in making relevant decisions fosters a “people-centred approach to cultural heritage that recognises its connections with broader sustainable development” [22] (p. 18). This requires “joined-up policies and an understanding of the importance of cultural heritage by decision-makers in many policy fields—including culture, education, environment, tourism, employment, social affairs, youth, gender, etc.” [22] (p. 18). Creating synergies and symbioses between different actors and sectors provides a way to form a structural mesh for local sustainability, distributing responsibilities and benefits reaped from commercial, heritage-based activity [21]. To this end, the recent trends in cultural heritage governance and management have been shifting from the ‘conventional’ approaches, that refer to conservation methodologies based on the preservation and conservation of the materials from the past identified as monuments and sites to be preserved for future generations, to more ‘values-led’ approaches that are more adaptable to the inherent and growing complexity of heritage [24]. These pertain to participation and access in delivering some of the more positive aspects of ‘integration’ and ‘diversity’, thus subduing social conditions that exclude people from social and cultural resources based on ‘differences’ of class, gender, ethnicity, political views, ideological sides, etc. [21].

In congruence with the proposed rationales, this review article examines three main types of approaches in governing and managing cultural heritage that all entail some form of partnership with the public bodies: public–civil partnership (PCP), public–private partnership (PPP) and public–private–community (PPCP) partnership. Accordingly, the principal aim of this paper is to analyse the representation of these types of governing and managing of cultural heritage in the existing literature and to provide a cursory review of the interpretations that suggest comparative insights into the research question of what the key characteristics of each partnership are alongside their distinctive advantages and challenges. The methodology used in the article is based on PRISMA guidelines, as a usual tool for review articles, to analyse the deficiencies and advantages of each of the partnerships in governing and managing cultural heritage. The main results indicate similarities between the public–civil and public–private–community partnership approaches, sharing similar advantages and challenges, while the public–private partnership has different connotations. The least represented approach in the literature is the public–civil partnership in the heritage sector, which calls for future research. The public–private partnership in the
heritage sector is rather well represented, being pragmatically directed towards ensuring the (mostly financial) sustainability of individual heritage assets. The ‘new governance models’ detected in the analysis did not reveal many novelties in relation to the existing approaches, but rather covered the same features under a different name.

After this Introduction, approaches to three types of partnerships are explained followed by the section explaining the methodology used in the analysis. Results are followed by the Discussion section providing conclusive thoughts on the advantages and challenges of each partnership alongside avenues for future research.

2. Public–Civil Partnership (PCP), Public–Private Partnership (PPP) and Public–Private–Community Partnership (PPCP) in Cultural Heritage Approaches

2.1. Public–Civil Partnership (PCP)

A public–civil partnership (PCP) is an alliance of public entities (public authority, public administration, public institutions, public agencies, public enterprises, etc.) and civil actors (associations, organisations, alliances, networks, etc.) sharing rights and responsibilities in governing and managing cultural heritage assets. As such, PCP builds on the principles of participatory governance [2,3,12,14,25,26], entailing the creation of new relations and networks based on open, inclusive and dynamic processes. Political theorist Frank Fischer situates participatory governance in an “institutional void” or institutional cracks of the traditional state where the practices of participatory governance are reflected in a “proliferation of new forms of social and political association” [25] (p. 20). Participatory governance, as a variant or subset of the governance theory, has contributed to the creation of new approaches in governance and management “constructed and shaped by a different brand of social actors” (Ibid.). This implies the rise of the political and social relevance of civil society and non-governmental actors that, by questioning the legitimacy and accountability of the state, open new organisational schemes, taking over public activities to “such a degree that some see them as reconfiguring public sector” [25] (p. 20) and affecting policies of the mainstream institutions. Civil society can thus be understood as a “counterbalance, a control mechanism and corrective of formal state government, a network of institutions and organizations that prevent state’s centralization, oligarchizing and arbitrary operation. It is a sphere of open play and articulation of interest that mediates between ‘individual citizens’ demands and decisions that are made and implemented by the state apparatus” [27] (p. 19). Involvement of civil society in governance schemes augments the power of social actors and allows them to participate in the processes beyond strictly formal channels of governing bodies and to use that participation for exerting influence in matters of public interest [28,29]. By using its influence, civil society creates and ensures better conditions for the structuring of good governance [30], which is characterised by participation, accountability, rule of law, transparency, equity, etc. As Kalanj suggests, if a different mode of political discourse and governing paradigm is possible, it is possible because of the rise of ideas and actions from civil society [27]. These claims made by Kalanj on the role of civil society in decision-making processes have a resonance with Fischer’s aforementioned elaborations on the role of non-governmental organisations in the practices of participatory governance, in particular, in the register of “people’s self-development” and empowerment as the primary goals, emphasising political rights, social recognition and economic redistribution in the development of participatory approaches [25] (p. 3).

The PCP approach opens a systemic perspective for the inclusion of non-governmental, non-institutional civil society actors in affirming the democratic claim of the accessible and participatory nature of cultural heritage. Drawing on the premises of participatory democracy [31,32], the PCP approach can contribute to a more inclusive society, stimulate active citizenship and ensure participation that goes beyond the ‘tyranny of participation’ [33–35] or passive modes of cultural participation [36] towards more empowered and meaningful participation in the decision-making processes [32]. Active participation [37] in the decision-making processes that involve all aspects of cultural heritage governance and management, encompassing planning, financing and programming, challenges the three
main definitional lines of democratic quality in policies on culture and cultural heritage according to: (a) the sources of authority or governing power (who or what governs); (b) the purpose of governing (why are we governing); and (c) the processes of constituting governing structures and bodies (how are we governing) [38]. In the scope of PCP as the participatory mode of governing and managing cultural heritage, the Brainstorming Report on Participatory Governance in cultural heritage [39] proposes that the source of authority (e.g., government, public authority, public agencies, public institutions, etc.) should share the power with the people to whom the heritage belongs, thus making non-institutional, non-governmental actors the equal source of authority. According to the Brainstorming Report, the purpose of the (shared) governing of three different types of cultural heritage (tangible, intangible and digital) is found in the increased need for civil participation in heritage safeguarding, protection, preservation, interpretation and promotion as it is “no longer valid or practical to rely on state institution to do everything” [39] (p. 3). Numerous purposes for participatory approaches in cultural heritage governance and management are listed in the European Agenda for the Culture Work Plan’s Report on Participatory Governance of Cultural Heritage (2015–2018), most notably the convergence of professional and local knowledge in providing care and planning use of cultural heritage, as well as a renewed recognition of the active engagement of the civil sector in defending and sustaining heritage assets as common goods, mitigating the risk of cultural heritage overuse and inaccessibility [40]. Finally, the processes of constituting governing structures and bodies involve the identification of innovative approaches to the multilevel governance of tangible, intangible and digital cultural heritage, which involves the public sector and civil society in promoting a new generation of long-term and forward-thinking society- and citizen-driven cultural heritage policies [40].

In its application, the PCP approach in cultural heritage is non-linear and highly dependent on the national, regional and local policy frameworks, on specific local contexts, i.e., the local situations and practices of cultural and urban planning, on relationships between local administrations and the civil society sector and on communities and institutions that co-govern and co-manage heritage assets. Still, the core concept of the PCP holds the same orientation, regardless of the location of its application, seeking to establish new organisational arrangements that can contribute to the common efforts in management and use of the shared heritage assets and that will commit to following the defined rules of collective action [41]. In practice, the PCP structure is designed according to the particular cultural heritage resource, its socio-political, economic and cultural setting and policy alternatives, hence it is implausible to provide an overview of a PCP formula that is characteristic and germane for this approach. However, several elements constitute the PCP approach and involve the following steps: (a) identification of the public heritage resource that will be a subject of the PCP; (b) detection of the key entities and actors on the public and civil side of the partnership; (c) negotiation and joint setting of the collective agenda and interests; (d) forming and developing modes and rules on communication, informing about mutual capacities, advantages and challenges; (e) establishing of the partnership rules; and (f) formalisation of the PCP (institutional, organisational, operational formats and rules of action) [42]. These elements are not mutually exclusive or rigidly set in a formal sequential order, but track the practice-proofed logic of instituting PCP. Insofar, Vidović [43] identifies several plausible models of PCP, such as a hybridisation model or partnership of public and civil sectors in the co-founding and shared governing of a new legal entity (public institution, agency, enterprise, etc.) that assumes the authority over governing and managing the resource, a joint governance model which implies the forming of the joint governing body (board or committee) that has the same quota of public and civil representatives, a collaborative governance model which is a partnership of a public institution with a number of civil society organisations for the joint governance of a cultural resource that is under the authority of the institutions, an extended cooperation model that defines cooperation in which the public body grants the use, governance and management of a public cultural resource to civil society organisation for a limited period and without
(commercial) fee and, finally, a new public culture model, which is a conceptual blueprint of the decentralised and horizontal structuring of governance in culture and cultural heritage through the systemic involvement of the civil society sector in the decision making.

The main defining distinctions of the PCP in governing and managing cultural heritage are the favourable effects and outcomes. The centrality of cultural heritage’s public value and interest makes the PCP’s orientation wide in the scope of a manifold of impacts that are not profit-driven, but are articulated in a myriad of interdependent links of active participation. Sacco, Ferilli and Blessi [37] define these links as innovation (constructing new meanings and practices, restructuring previous beliefs, prejudices and attitudes), welfare (effects on well-being and quality of life), sustainability (emphasis on the social dimensions of sustainability, reflection on the extent to which socially transmitted behaviours, habits and customs may influence the effectiveness of resource-saving programmes and strategies, fostering social mobilisation and awareness on the consequences of individual and collective behaviour on culturally critical resources), social cohesion (creating trust and conditions for dialogues through the appreciation of cultural diversity and the overcoming of negative stereotyping), lifelong learning (the development of capacities for adaptation to and shaping of the environmental context) and local identity (the role of cultural heritage in re-defining the social and symbolic foundation of a place and its development model, stimulating new, inclusive dynamics of cultural content and new modes of cultural access by the local community).

The challenges involved in PCP are evident and pertain to exogenous and endogenous factors. The former, to global trends in market-oriented cultural policy, cultural governance and the malfunctioning of democratic systems [44]. In such a reality, the governance and management of cultural resources are mandated to provide measurable evidence and justification in obtaining shrinking public support and funding and it is imperative that they show their “marketable” value to secure income and investments from the private sector [45]. This approach to understanding the role and values of cultural resources has led to rising trends in making cultural heritage marketable and more appealing and attractive to wider masses, thus subduing the crucial issues of democratic legitimacy, top-down centre-periphery relations and social, cultural and environmental sustainability. Endogenous factors point towards issues of trust, capacity, compromise and motivation [40], highlighting the crucial point of civil society’s future development in taking new steps and activities that will convince the city governments that it is an equal partner who can participate in long-term planning and contribute to more quality development of cultural heritage assets. At the same time, if they want to keep up and regulate contemporary changes, the local governments shall have to change current rigid cultural policy structures that are predominantly preoccupied with the institutionalised, hierarchical classifications of culture and start to strategically plan, allow institutional changes and thusly develop new institutional arrangements.

2.2. Public–Private Partnership (PPP)

While PCP entails an alliance of public entities and civil actors in cultural heritage assets’ governance and management, a public–private partnership (PPP) basically pertains to an alliance of public entities and private parties usually in the reconstruction and maintenance of a heritage asset. However, it is not a simple task to provide a comprehensive definition of PPP despite the extensive literature on the topic. Multiple definitions are in use, as are national regulations and international guidelines. Generally, it is agreed that it entails a form of cooperation between the public and private sector, but not any type of cooperation; rather, it pertains to a long-term contract for the provision of a public asset or service whereas the private partner uses capital to deliver the public services in question, in that, the private partner shares the associated risks but, at the same time, collects remuneration. PPP often represents an economically effective formula for infrastructure construction or renovation, which is why it may well be applied in the heritage sector. Two types of PPPs are usual: the provision of a public infrastructure or a public service (or both).
In the case of a public infrastructure asset, PPPs entail its financing, design, construction, renovation, management or maintenance, while the provision of public services may involve different services (e.g., education, transport, healthcare, etc.). Therefore, PPP is a scheme which executes tasks or services which are traditionally procured by the public sector and is usually described as a win–win model, offering benefits both for public and private parties. The ‘win’ for the public party is in the decrease of the financial pressure related to heritage assets and in the capitalisation of the private sector expertise [46]. The private party, in turn for the investment and maintenance, benefits from a steady cash flow paid off in regular instalments from the public budget, which is more feasible than from other sources (e.g., a bank). For illustration, assume that a certain heritage building, which is used as an educational institution, needs reconstruction. It is costly for the public party to invest in the reconstruction, which is why it seeks a private investor. A long-term PPP contract (e.g., 30 years) between the public and private parties is signed under which the private partner invests in the reconstruction and maintenance of the building. The public service of education continues to be provided under the specified terms. The private partner will run the building for the next 30 years, having to provide necessary conditions for the maintenance of the building and for the public service to run smoothly (electricity, water, lighting, etc.), receiving the agreed remuneration from the public budget for it. Additionally, private parties may rent the building for different lucrative activities (e.g., foreign language, dance or karate courses) in the remaining hours after a public service has been provided. In sum, it results as beneficial for the public party in that the heritage building is renovated, the public service has been delivered and it substantially decreases the financial pressures on the public budget. For the private party, analyses have shown that the overall costs of the project under the PPP model are significantly lower (app. 13.5%) than under the traditional public model for the capital investment and maintenance of the facilities (in which the public sector is responsible for the entire investment) [47]. Further on, on the financial side, the PPP model is often also combined with EU funds, which makes it even more feasible. Since both parties are involved in the PPP project, possible risks are shared. Risks relate to, e.g., revenue, (re)construction, regulatory challenges, politics, environment and archaeology on the site, sustainability and public acceptance, and all are negotiated for each PPP contract individually, as is also the private party’s remuneration.

Similarly, as with the PCP, elements constituting the PPP approach involve following preparatory steps: (a) the identification of needs related to the cultural heritage asset, (b) the calculation of the public sector’s ability to pay, (c) setting up a project implementation team, (d) comprehensive project design, (e) the implementation of the “open doors” (market testing) and (f) the procedure of selecting a private partner and contracting. It must be pointed out that, related to cultural heritage, different types of contracts are in use but not all of them are categorised as PPP. Thus, three types of contracts are usual: a service contract (a private party involved in services, e.g., conservation research, restoration or equipment maintenance, but in a short time frame), architectural works and construction contracts (a private party executes these works with the associated risks, while the public party is responsible for the funding and maintenance of the asset) and a lease agreement (the asset is temporarily transferred to a private party, while risks are solely borne by the public sector). Seemingly, we speak about PPP herewith, but this is not the case since PPP entails synergetic and complex long-term projects with shared risks related to both construction and maintenance, which require substantial funding, preparation and planning [47]. Although there are different forms of PPP contracts, for the understanding of this approach, it is needless to explain them in detail; rather, it is important to say that a PPP contract defines “the term, method of service delivery, equipment standards or infrastructure and service as well as the feepaying mechanism” (Ibid.: 11), whereas the private party assumes the reconstruction and accessibility risks and the public party acts as the regulatory or supervisory body in the provision of public services. The complexity of PPP projects consists of detailed financial calculations, technical requirements (e.g., room
In several cases, heritage is guarded by the public sector, which often fails to provide sufficient financial, but also management-related resources for heritage assets. Therefore, other options were sought and in the late 1960s, PPPs were introduced as a promising model for urban regeneration schemes [48], soon expanding to different heritage sites and areas. The model proved to be very successful in some countries (e.g., the UK, USA and the Netherlands) [49], providing alternative ways for cultural heritage funding while retaining the heritage assets’ intrinsic values due to the public party’s involvement [50]. PPPs are highly dependent on legal and regulatory frameworks which are usually treated by fiscal and rarely by cultural/heritage policies and the model is usually regarded as an efficient approach to secure funding for the reconstruction of heritage assets. Thus, the physical reconstruction and maintenance of the heritage asset is mostly focused on, while the (quality of the) content of the activities/services to be performed in the building/site is not zeroed in on in terms of shared responsibilities. Rather, it is the responsibility of the public party. Moreover, the activities/services provided are not necessarily related to the culture/heritage and heritage assets may have a purpose totally unrelated to culture. The public sector, however, has a responsibility to propose what type of service is appropriate.

The success of the model was especially effective and efficient in developed democracies. At the same time, the model has also shown some deficiencies: in some cases, a lack of transparency in the selection of the private partner occurred leading to corrupt activities, which resulted in the ‘privatisation’ or commercialisation of heritage values. Legally, the project should be protected from such violations since a mandatory Regulatory Authority is responsible for project planning, approval and monitoring, which should serve as a warranty for a project. Despite that, violations have been detected. Therefore, in some countries, the practice of the PPP model is avoided, as public parties are deterred from entering a PPP contract. Even if favouring a private partner is not the case, the publicly created image of contracting with a private party remains negative. It is especially common in transition countries, where democratic values are not sufficiently stable, having a substantial impact on the number of concluded PPP contracts. Thus, the study by Jelinčić, Tišma, Senkić and Dodig [50] reveals a very low or inexistent number of PPPs in the cultural heritage sector in Croatia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia due, among other, to the mentioned challenges. This is further enhanced by the image that PPP contracts are complicated and costly, thus resulting in the avoidance of such partnerships.

2.3. Public–Private–Community (PPCP) Partnership

A public–private–community partnership (PPCP) can be defined as an amalgamation of public–civil and public–private partnership approaches. The PPCP is a complex and demanding approach that juggles the diverse and somewhat conflicting interests of the involved actors. By adding the community to the equation, the PPCP extends the obvious relational traits of the PPP, overstepping the transactional ‘quid pro quo’ rationale into the fields of social inclusion, citizens’ participation and the economically and socially effective use of heritage assets. The PPCP can be diversely articulated and classified by different authors, hence Boniotti [51] writes about the public–private–people partnership (P4) for cultural heritage management purposes, while Iaione, De Nictolis and Sanagati [1] use the term public–private–community partnership (PPCP) to explain an innovative approach of a multi-actor, commons-based governance model. Based on the premise that governments lack the capacities and face significant challenges in preserving and managing public cultural heritage, which can lead to conditions of neglect, the multi-actor approach to planning, governing and managing is necessary to: (a) obtain the private funding and investment for the restoration and maintenance of the built heritage and (b) to secure the involvement of the community in line with the social inclusion and participative principles of a commons-based governance approach [1,52,53]. Much like in the case of the PCP, the PPCP is largely dependent on the specific case or heritage resource in question; it is
context driven and reliant on the possibilities to form a coherent organisational structure for a multi-actor governing and management scheme that involves: (1) public entities, i.e., governmental bodies, agencies, national, regional or local authorities, public institutions and public owners of the heritage assets; (2) private entities, i.e., developers, private owners and businesses; and (3) people, i.e., common citizens, the non-profit sector and end-users [51] (p. 4). Boniotti underlines that the P4 (public–private–people partnership) concept emerged from urban development, where that approach “created possibilities for engaging new pro-active and positive participation methods and solutions, not only for the early stages of urban development process (planning and design), but also for construction, operation and management of local economic and social infrastructure” [51] (p. 4).

In a similar fashion, Iaione, De Nictolis and Sanagati [1] (p. 7) argue that multi-actor participatory forms of cultural heritage governance “can be implemented as a form of local co-governance in which a diversity of actors share decision making and managing processes about a site or element of cultural heritage, for which they assume responsibilities in partnership. With the term commons, one refers not only to the resource but also to its community of belonging and the governance model adopted . . . polycentric governance of cultural heritage as commons is sustainable when social and economic sustainability is ensured, contributing to the creation of local forms of economic democracy with the affirmative goal of social and economic empowerment of vulnerable residents and local communities”. The claims by both authors indicate that the PPCP has wide-reaching potentials and implications surpassing the narrow remit of particular heritage resource governance. Accordingly, Iaione, De Nictolis and Sanagati [1] propose a multiple-helix model of governance that broadens the original circle of public–private–people actors to media and institutions (schools, universities, research institutes and centres), providing scientific knowledge and skills related to the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage.

One of the key differentiations of a PPCP in relation to the previously elaborated model of a PCP is that, in a PPCP, the focus on the civic side is not predominantly on the civil society organisations and is more inclusive of individual citizens and communities regardless of their legal status and articulation. Concerning a PPP, private entities join the PPCP with non-profit objectives, in which case, a return on the investment of private funds may be missing, hence the transaction at issue “relates to instances of philanthropy in the presence of community support and with common citizens acting as project developers” [51] (p. 3). Unlike the PPP, in which the private entities mostly pertain to the business sector and “may be either natural persons, legal persons with for-profit objectives (e.g., private universities), economic operators (e.g., construction companies) or financial institutions (e.g., investment banks, pension funds, insurance companies)”, the private entities involved in PPCP are most likely of “a civic-minded nature and may be either natural persons, legal persons with non-profit objectives (e.g., ecclesiastical entities), non-profit organizations, associations and various types of foundations (e.g., banking foundations)” (Ibid.). The civic-minded nature of the private actors in a PPCP sustains the participative and socially inclusive notion of the PPCP approach that promotes equitable and sustainable models of local development, fostering collective action in local development, the recognition of cultural rights and rights of use and the management and ownership of cultural heritage by local communities [1]. These aims of the PPCP rely on the pillars of the (EU) policy landscapes that recognise participation, sustainability and social inclusion as a groundwork of context-based multi-actor partnerships.

The discourse of social inclusion concerning multi-actor cooperation and partnership in governing cultural heritage has been developing since the early 2000s, with the Faro Convention or The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society from 2005 being one of the most significant documents from the period. Drawing on the right to freely participate in cultural life enshrined in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and guaranteed by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Faro convention underlines the access to cultural heritage and democratic participation through Section III on shared
responsibility for cultural heritage and public participation. Here, public participation is paralleled with shared responsibility and the emphasis is placed on the aspect of developing “the legal, financial and professional frameworks which make possible joint action by public authorities, experts, owners, investors, businesses, non-governmental organisations and civil society”, as well as developing “innovative ways for public authorities to co-operate with other actors” [54] (p. 5). Shared responsibility and public participation emphasise the need for the greater involvement of various actors and stakeholders in defining and managing cultural heritage and its use as a resource for the sustainable development and affirmation of cultural diversities. As such, cultural heritage becomes a significant point of democratic engagement and citizens’ or communities’ involvement, both on the level of individual and collective responsibility, as well as cooperation with private entities. Iaione, De Nictolis and Sanagati [1] provide a more comprehensive overview of the large body of policy and legal frameworks for the institution and development of the PPCP, as well as arguments in defence and against a commons framework for the governance of cultural heritage that incorporates private entities and communities, but that line of policy analysis is beyond the scope of this article. However, the provided overview suggests that the legal and policy stipulation for the instigation and application of the PPCP is in place, albeit in a modest form and with complex legal equations, which can provide a probable explanation for the scant presence of PPCP in both the literature and in practice. The scarcity and complexity of the legal and policy stipulations for PPCP are compensated with the use of tools of self-organisation, philanthropy, volunteering, novel technologies and social media that offer support and new opportunities for multi-actor cooperative endeavours [51].

The indicative aspect of the literature analysis of PPCP is that the available sources of PPCP theoretical and empirical work originate from the Italian context and show several culture-focused community welfare projects aimed at activating whole territorial areas or conserving and managing public heritage buildings, neglected and not previously open to visitors. That type of PPCP involves public authority granting a free concession to enterprises, cooperatives and community associations that turn the heritage buildings into multi-use spaces. Other notable examples involve the acquisition of the historical building through the joint fundraising of civil associations and business companies. As Boniotti [51] (p. 10) observes, the available illustrations of the PPCP in practice imply that the objective of the PPCP is not exclusively to plan a strategy of cultural heritage valorisation based on high-end interventions or innovative actions of long-term perspectives, but also to “mutually integrate the cultural supply chain and the local economy and implement an innovative approach to activity management and development” to be defined in cooperation with all local actors.

3. Materials and Methods

To further determine and empirically assess the key advantages and challenges of each of the three partnerships (PCP, PPP and PPCP), a systematic review of the academic literature was conducted throughout August 2023, using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) protocol. PRISMA protocol serves as a standardised guide for reporting the systematic review [55]. All records published until 31 August 2023 were included in the analysis. Boolean search for the terms ('public private' * OR 'public civil' * OR 'public-private people' * OR 'new governance model' *) AND ('heritage management' *) was carried out, using the Web of Science database, to discover research papers and book chapters written in English and originating from Europe. Web of Science database was chosen because of a reliable dataset and easy data extrapolation and analysis options. No other methods were used during the PRISMA protocol (e.g., search of websites) because we wanted to synthesise academic, peer-reviewed literature to provide an overview of what is known about partnerships and their challenges in academia (instead of practice) and to stimulate the discourse on heritage partnerships in the academic community. The categories of “new governance model” and “heritage management” were included in the search as generic lines of inquiry that can highlight additional approaches to those that
were at the core of the research interest of this paper. Accordingly, these generic categories were used to check for any existing or emerging forms of cultural heritage governance and management that are unbeknown yet indicative in the sense of new developments in the field of cultural heritage governance and management. Apart from the thematic selection criteria, the search was limited geographically to Europe and sectorally to culture. This implies that papers that involved ‘public-civil’ and/or ‘public-private’ and/or ‘public-civil-private’, etc., in diverse sectors (health, tourism, environmental protection, agriculture, etc.) were filtered and excluded from the analysis. The search for all categories resulted in 229 papers.

The collected papers were then assessed based on their abstracts and full texts when applicable. All 229 papers were screened against the following literature selection criteria. First, papers were screened based on their titles and abstracts to determine whether they report on the topic. Second, full texts for the remaining 59 papers were obtained and screened. At the current stage of screening, records that did not offer insights into the advantages or challenges of at least one of the partnerships were screened out. After the application of the final inclusion criterion and screening from the second and third reviewers, our final sample included 32 papers, out of which 3 papers were thematically linked to public–civil partnership, 13 papers to public–private partnership, 13 papers to public–private–community partnership and 3 papers to new governance models.

The PRISMA diagram below (Figure 1) illustrates the process of the paper selection.

Figure 1. The PRISMA diagram.

4. Results

The systematic PRISMA review was conducted to analyse the representation of the three partnership (PCP, PPP and PPCP) types of governing and managing cultural heritage and to determine their distinct advantages and challenges. As mentioned in the Methods section of the paper, the papers that were most represented in the review were on the topic of public–private partnership, followed by public–private–community partnership and, lastly, public–civil partnership. However, the majority of the papers did not clearly report on the advantages and/or challenges of each of the partnerships, so the findings from the
review of the literature were extrapolated by the careful reading of the eligible records. Hence, the advantages and challenges of the partnerships cover various aspects. In the following, we first present the advantages and challenges of the public–civil partnership, followed by the public–private, public–private–community partnerships and, lastly, the new governance models detected through the review of the literature.

4.1. Private–Civil Partnership

Public–civil partnerships offer multiple advantages and challenges in the realm of heritage management. One of the most prominent advantages lies in the engagement of citizens, who contribute significantly to the process of heritage value creation [56]. By fostering network community governance (NGC) through the involvement of citizens in decision making, these partnerships establish platforms that champion inclusivity, participation and diversity [57]. Moreover, they serve as a bulwark against market forces, ensuring that heritage remains shielded from commercial pressures. The community’s connection to the heritage and participation in decision-making processes further enhances the authenticity of these collaborations, facilitating the co-ownership of heritage among communities. This shared ownership underscores the valuation of heritage as a common good [57]. Synergistically, citizens’ financial contributions bolster the financial stability of heritage institutions, enabling a collective commitment to conservation and maintenance efforts [58].

However, amid these advantages, challenges emerge that underscore the complexity of such partnerships. A critical challenge revolves around the perception of authenticity in heritage involvement [57]. Individuals lacking a heritage background may encounter scepticism regarding their contributions, as authenticity is often tied to domain-specific knowledge. Strategic planning becomes a necessity to navigate these intricacies, but this is often easier said than done [57]. Societies of fragile democratic systems, in particular, grapple with the implementation of such partnerships due to ongoing political, economic or social unrest and crises. Hence this approach to governing and managing cultural heritage is difficult to implement in settings marked by segregation and instability [58]. In essence, the advantages of public–civil partnerships are accompanied by the nuanced challenges that arise when balancing inclusivity, authenticity and sustainable implementation, particularly in contexts with constrained resources and conflicting priorities.

4.2. Public–Private Partnership

Public–private partnerships also have their own set of advantages and challenges, shaping the dynamics of cultural heritage governance and management. Public partners, particularly in the context of foreign investors, can act as guardians of cultural integrity, safeguarding heritage against potentially negative foreign influences [59]. The partnership approach brings about efficiency gains, drastically reducing waiting times for actions (such as project implementation, conservation, etc.) to occur [60]. Notably, private involvement in the methodology development stages of conservation–restoration leads to effective risk management [61]. By leveraging the strengths of the private sector, public–private partnerships enhance procurement procedures, human resources management and overall service capacity, surmounting constraints inherent to the public sector [62]. Moreover, these collaborations elevate the visibility of partnering companies and infuse funding into heritage preservation, fostering economic growth and heritage tourism [63,64]. This approach effectively utilises state assets, leveraging private expertise to ensure efficient project delivery [65,66], while also offering avenues for donation-based or sponsorship-based partnerships [67]. Such partnerships can garner political support [68] and create authentic heritage experiences when a private partner originates from the heritage area [69]. Additionally, this approach may make use of public and private strengths (e.g., finances, public spaces and expertise) to educate the public, underscoring their educational value [69].

However, these partnerships are not without challenges. The intricate interplay between government intervention, political opposition and evolving legislation can disrupt
the harmony of such collaborations [59]. Transitioning from partnership to public governance can pose challenges in terms of hierarchy and seamless handover [62]. While private partners’ expertise is essential, cultural institutions must offer enticing cultural projects to attract investment, potentially sparking conflicts between preservation and profit motives [60,63]. The risk of criminal PPPs also looms, emphasising the need for careful vetting [70]. Within the public sector, challenges encompass a lack of understanding, potential unemployment, external influences, funding shortfalls and complex decision making [65], all of which influence governance sustainability. Balancing conflicting interests and identifying suitable partners remain critical hurdles [68], while the prospect of privatisation may raise concerns about the values and integrity of cultural assets [71]. Finally, to ensure smooth collaboration, it is necessary to create national-level legal, fiscal, institutional, policy and administrative enabling environments, which can be challenging [66]. In summary, public–private partnerships offer a wealth of advantages, but demand the astute navigation of multifaceted challenges to ensure a harmonious and beneficial collaboration for all stakeholders involved.

4.3. Public–Private–Community Partnership

The advantages of public–private–community partnerships span a wide spectrum. Such partnerships transcend traditional public–private models by facilitating social innovation and allowing local community involvement in decision-making [72], as well as increased awareness and social participation in heritage protection [51]. The benefits extend to opportunities for collaboration, heightened cultural awareness, co-ownership of heritage, increased accessibility, job creation [1] and knowledge exchange, especially when the local stakeholders have knowledge of the opportunities of the heritage area [73]. Moreover, these partnerships enable a shift beyond economic metrics, considering qualitative aspects like community wellbeing [51]. They facilitate social and environmental sustainability through the involvement of young communities and supporting the sustainable adaptive reuse of heritage sites [74]. Moreover, these partnerships ensure a delicate balance between safeguarding heritage and fostering economic development [75,76]. Additionally, a PPCP can foster sustainable tourism growth [77,78] and the improvement of tourism products [79]. When visitor numbers to heritage sites are not high enough to achieve economic advances for the private partner, a PPCP may serve as a buffer [80].

In the context of challenges, there is limited interest from local communities and private partners to engage in a PPCP [72,77]. There is a lack of institutional capacity to sustain the partnerships long-term due to public partners often lacking long-term vision [1]. Moreover, there is a risk of appropriation of ideas, values and labour, especially from the community actors [80]. On the other hand, the employment of the community actor by a public or private partner may also hinder the partnership [1]. Additionally, the challenge of reconciling divergent interests between preservation and tourism enhancement is evident [79,81]. The involvement of community actors further brings the risk of interpreting all community expressions positively, even though some of them could be driven by speculative, political or illicit motives which could be a threat to heritage preservation [81]. Ultimately, while these partnerships promise symbiotic benefits, navigating contrasting interests, legal complexities and the genuine engagement of all stakeholders remain critical for their success.

Table 1 summarises the findings of the literature review by offering a systematised overview of the advantages and challenges of each of the three partnerships.
Table 1. Advantages and challenges of the distinct partnerships in governance and management of cultural heritage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Public–Civil</th>
<th>Public–Private</th>
<th>Public–Private–Community</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Inclusive decision making [57]</td>
<td>2. Increased efficiency [60]</td>
<td>2. Inclusive decision making [72]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12. Possibility of forming PPP as donations or sponsorships [67]</td>
<td>12. Balance between safeguarding heritage and economic development [75,76]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges</strong></td>
<td>2. Challenging implementation in democratically fragile societies [58]</td>
<td>2. Endangered values of the heritage asset by privatisation [71]</td>
<td>14. Buffer for the private partner [80]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Conflicting interests [60,63,68,71]</td>
<td>5. Conflicting interests [60,63,68,71]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Risk of illicit operations and activities in PPP [70]</td>
<td>6. Risk of illicit operations and activities in PPP [70]</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. Risk to governance and management sustainability [65]</td>
<td>7. Risk to governance and management sustainability [65]</td>
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4.4. New Governance Models

In addition to the three partnerships which are the core of this paper, the literature review revealed several approaches to heritage governance and management that were categorised as ‘new governance models’. To clarify, the above-explained three approaches can be defined as ‘new models’ in juxtaposition to the ‘classical’ state-centred and institutionalised forms of decision making; however, the analysis yielded several sub-categories of multistakeholder partnership, institutionalised/hybrid cultural heritage, a lower/higher citizen participation model and decentralised governance. Different variants of governance and management approaches based on institutionalised/hybrid cultural heritage and lower/higher citizen participation (governmental, corporatist, service-led and co-creative) enable flexibility in tailoring approaches to specific heritage contexts, allowing the selection of models best suited for the unique needs and challenges of each heritage site [2]. Finally, participatory approaches point towards the decentralisation of heritage governance which can lead to an increased investment of resources, improved management capabilities and heightened local awareness about heritage preservation, thus empowering local communities and stakeholders to play a more active role in safeguarding their heritage [82].

For instance, multistakeholder partnerships which are based on participatory approaches and involve different governmental and nongovernmental actors can improve heritage conservation and enhancement [83]. The adoption of such models fosters collaboration and information exchange among various stakeholders, leading to better decision-making processes, as well as improved coordination among government bodies, organisations and communities involved in heritage management [83].

Regarding challenges of new governance models, determining the role of involved actors, such as local communities, can be challenging. Balancing their interests and integrating their perspectives into decision-making processes requires careful consideration and negotiation [83]. Implementing new governance models can introduce potential transactional costs, which may arise from coordinating multiple stakeholders [83]. Moreover, it can be challenging to find a balance between inclusivity and practical decision making when deciding how many actors to involve [2]. While decentralisation can bring benefits, it also presents challenges. There is a risk that government bodies might focus disproportionately on heritage sites with high tourism potential, neglecting less lucrative sites. Additionally, the absence of clear definitions of duties and rights can lead to confusion and conflicts, especially in cases where interests diverge [82]. Diverse interests pose a problem in finding a balance between economic development, cultural preservation and social considerations [82]. In summary, the new governance models in heritage governance and management offer the advantages of collaboration, flexibility and local empowerment. However, challenges related to the roles involving actors, costs, inclusion, decentralisation and differing interests must be carefully managed to ensure effective and sustainable heritage preservation and management.

5. Discussion

The presence of the ‘public’ sector in all presented cultural heritage governance and management partnerships affirms that the public value and understanding of cultural heritage as a common good is under the authority of public actors and policies. This implies the involvement of governmental bodies, administration processes and institutionalised protocols that seek higher levels of participation from non-governmental actors in order to affirm democratic accountability and the sharing of power. In the European context, this is an increasingly critical topic, sustained by a growing number of policy documents fostering participation and inclusion as fundamental principles of cultural heritage governance and management, enticing citizens’ empowerment, communities’ well-being, the sustainability of heritage and ‘fragile governance’ typologies focused on representing traditional hierarchies [2].

The analysis of the public–civil partnership shows that this approach in governing and managing cultural heritage fulfills the methods and principles of participatory governance.
This is its main advantage, especially in the line of galvanising a communal sense of ownership. Similar advantages are found in the public-private-community partnership in the form of perspectives for the structural inclusion of citizens and communities in decision making on the governance and management of the cultural heritage. However, the lines of the actors involved in a PCP and PPCP are blurred as both governance and management approaches typify multi-actor schemes that underline the significance of the civil and civic role; in a PCP, the role of civil society is accentuated, while in a PPCP, the role of citizens and communities is in focus. The categories of civil society and citizens and communities are not mutually exclusive but are overlapping (in PCP, the role of civil society can be read as intermediary). Consequently, the literature review and the theoretical considerations of both partnerships bear joint distinctions summarised in concepts of the inclusivity, shared ownership, sustainability and safeguarding of cultural heritage from detrimental market forces. As such, the PCP and PPCP are governance approaches that are attuned to links of active participation [37] and premises of good governance [30] constituting formational perspectives for the democratisation of cultural heritage planning, governance and management. The risks in the PCP are linked to the democratic maturity of the context and the disparate levels of knowledge of involved actors. The complexity of the PPCP is reflected in a range of communities’ and citizens’ engagement and commitment to the joint interest. The ensuing challenge to the PPCP is the interpretation and appropriation of the citizens’ and communities’ local knowledge and/or ideas while all three approaches have a challenge of unequal and insufficient representation.

The division of rights and responsibilities in cultural heritage governance and management decision making is at the core of the public-private partnership, yet with different motives and rationales. The main advantages of the PPP are more inclined towards pragmatic aims of increased efficiency, effectiveness and (financial) stability. Much like the PCP and PPCP, the arrangement of the PPP highlights the deficits of the state in providing sufficient resources for the preservation, presentation and commercial positioning of the cultural heritage assets. While the private actors in the PPCP join the partnership for non-profit purposes, the PPP is a profit-driven venture with potential disadvantages that can endanger the heritage value by overuse or through conflicting interests in joint governance and management, resulting in illicit operations and activities.

As the numbers of the sourced literature per partnership demonstrated, the available knowledge of PCP is exceedingly scarce, while the PPP and PPCP hold almost the same levels of representation. The added category of ‘new models of governance’ supports the claim of the under-representation of governance and management approaches that do not contain the basic customary scheme of public and private actors. Furthermore, ‘new governance models’ mainly resemble the PPCP approach bearing different titles (e.g., ‘multistakeholder partnerships’, ‘institutionalized/hybrid cultural heritage and lower/higher citizen participation model’ or ‘decentralized governance partnerships’). Fabbri and Dapit [84] further write about the ‘5P model’ (public–private–people–policy partnership) where the role of policymakers is additionally stressed. This further confirms the obscurity of the terminology used in the literature to describe various approaches in cultural heritage governance and management in which diverse terms and titles are used to explain matching meanings and practices. This is an issue that should be a subject of future research in the field of existing and emerging approaches in cultural heritage governance and management, pointing towards the need for a more consistent and systematic taxonomy.

6. Conclusions

New approaches to cultural heritage governance and management have been proven as a novel and pertinent research subject. The analysis presented in this paper investigated three approaches that have gained most prominence in the existing theoretical framework and literature: public-civil partnership, public-private partnership and public-private-community partnership. The results have shown that the role of the public actors is a decisive component of all examined approaches, yet the democratic claims and economic
expectations have exceeded the capacities of the public sector, seeking the active involvement of the non-state, non-public actors in cultural heritage governance and management approaches. Amongst the three main approaches that have been examined, private–public partnership and public–private–community partnership have been represented to a greater degree than public–civil partnership. The speculation on reasons and causes behind this differentiation is beyond the scope of this paper, but indicates towards new directions and problems that need to be further researched.

Limitations to the study are evident in the fact that the background theoretical analysis used in this article, particularly on the PCP, was grounded in the theory of participative governance in general, since there is not much literature specifically focused on PCP in the heritage sector, although it exists in practice. Future empirical research specifically focused on PCP is, therefore, suggested in confirming the results of this review research. Additionally, the analysed articles did not clearly report on the advantages and/or challenges, which is why the analysis used in this article addresses very specific and different topics, lacking a more structured approach. Moreover, future research could use other methods and databases, due to our search not being exhaustive. As it is the first article, to the best of our knowledge, to report on the advantages and challenges of these different governance and management approaches, its contribution is seen in their detection. This also points to a possible systematisation of these findings in future research.

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