

Bridging understanding and practice of the culture sector and crowdfunding: towards a typology of cultural-creative crowdfunding platforms

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Abstract

Cultural-creative crowdfunding (CCCF) intersects the culture sector production chain and alternative finance technology as a global web-enabled phenomenon for funding cultural-creative activities. Yet, busking or aspects of patronage are not new to artists and cultural-creative agents; the novelty is doing so through a virtual intermediary space, a crowdfunding platform (CFP). CFPs have proliferated worldwide but the literature is embryonic and lacks further elaboration on how platform dynamics can impact the funding/financing patterns of specific sectors. In the case of the culture sector, given its unique attributes, specificities, and relational structuring, the impact of crowdfunding requires even more conceptual development, systematization, and potential policy instrumentalization. Hence, this study explores how CCCF has evolved and what different models (and channels) within multiple platforms were developed under the CCCF umbrella. Based on a combination of methods (tracking and trawling, Delphi, and categoric analysis), the current research maps the CFPs focusing on culture-creative projects throughout Europe and Latin America. The aim is to conceptualize a broader typology of CCCF practices that can better serve the cultural-creative circuit. This work is among the first to pursue such CCCF typology bridging cross-disciplinary understanding and real-world practices. This research, therefore, offers implications for interdisciplinary academics, practitioners, and policymakers by enabling the nuanced comprehension of the relational forms of CCCF as multiple-practices, expanding its boundaries amid a vaster umbrella of possible web-enabled genre (sub-)models to be adopted, legitimized, and systematized in (and by) the culture sector.

Key Words: cultural-creative crowdfunding (CCCF); culture sector; entrepreneurial/alternative finance; crowdfunding platforms (CFPs); communities of practices.

1. Introduction

Cultural-creative crowdfunding (CCCF) is a contemporary global digital phenomenon that intersects the culture sector production chain and alternative finance technology. Artists were pioneers of crowdfunding practice by launching one of the first crowdfunding platforms, ArtistShare, as early as 2003 (Rykkja et al., 2020). Yet, the notion of getting small amounts of money from the crowd – busking or “passing the hat” – or aspects of patronage is surely not new to artists and cultural-creative agents (Swords, 2017; Dalla Chiesa, 2021; Elkins & Fry, 2021). The novelty is in the intermediation of a crowdfunding platform (hereafter CFP), connecting

fundraisers/creators and backers (Ibid.). CFPs have proliferated all over the world, presenting distinct logic and diverse models (Dushnitsky et al., 2016; Ziegler et al., 2021). Although the literature on crowdfunding in general, and CFPs in particular is expanding (Belleflamme et al., 2015; Dushnitsky et al., 2016; Cicchiello et al. 2022), the sectorial perspective is still under-explored, especially when considering the lenses of the culture sector's relational structures. There is a literature gap in understanding and defining cultural-creative CFPs and relational forms that unfold on (cultural) policy-setting instrumentalization (Dalla Chiesa 2020a; Loots et al., 2023). Therefore, this paper aims to understand the relational forms of CCCF platforms and develop a (broader) typology of CCCF practices.

The term culture sector encompasses a wide variety of institutions, organizations, and private companies that perform an even more extensive list of activities, from core cultural-artistic expressions to broad creativity-use such as IT and software, constituting the cultural-creative industries (CCIs) and integrating the cultural/creative economy (Caves, 2000; Garnham, 2005; Throsby 2008). Often, CCCF is perceived as additional support for contingent projects (Lazzaro & Noonan, 2020), a contemporary crowd-patronage (Swords, 2017), and even a mechanism of co-creation (Rykkja & Hauge, 2021) as well as grassroots collective mobilization (Dalla Chiesa, 2020a). To our knowledge, it seems that there is still a void in recognizing CCCF institutional structures and how CCCF can integrate the culture sector's structural-relational dynamics. Institutional structure can be defined as the intricate networks of interrelated and interdependent components constituting a specific arrangement pattern, while structural-relational dynamics encompass the continuous interplay and mutual influence between institutional structure and relational/reciprocal interactions among structural framework and the dynamic relationships between diverse elements and stakeholders. In the context of this paper, CCCF platforms are characterized by distinct institutional structures and the structural-relational dynamics comprise the set of diverse platforms, their interaction with creators, backers, and policy settings, as well as multiple forms of business strategies and operationalization.

Accordingly, this paper investigates retrospectively how CCCF has evolved and what different models (and channels) within the various platforms were developed under the CCCF umbrella to conceptualize a typology of CCCF practices. This work is then among the first to pursue a CCCF typology clarifying the concept of CCCF, and thus creating a more solid background for future conceptual-stretch and real-world practices. Moreover, being inductive research, it used the digital method of tracking and trawling, in which CFPs, mainly focused on culture-creative projects, were mapped throughout Europe and Latin America, targeting what has been there and what is waiting to be retrieved. This resulted in a diagram mapping a typology for CCCF (practices) that expands the narrow (perhaps stigmatized) perspective on CCCF as a commercial-amateur-virtual tool to raise money. Noteworthy, investigating distinct realities, especially from the Global North versus Global South, offers the possibility to empirically contextualize diverse innovative CCCF practices vis-à-vis culture sector dynamics and cultural policy structures.

Ultimately, we pinpoint diverse forms of CCCF, speculating/elaborating on its potential as a socio-technical innovation that can support the various CCIs. Our work offers implications for practitioners and policymakers by enabling a nuanced understanding of CCCF to better serve the art-cultural community. The proposed typology of CCCF practices can help artists and creators choose the form of engagement that better suits their cultural-creative endeavor, instead of just choosing a platform for launching their projects,. Similarly, it represents a theoretical contribution to the fields of cultural economics, arts management, media and communication studies, as well as to cultural policy research. The findings indicate that there is room for the culture sector in general, and cultural policy in particular, to embrace multiple crowdfunding typologies and consider the possibility of a mindset shift while approaching *CCCF* precisely *as a practice*.

The remainder of this paper proceeds with a theoretical and contextual background, providing a literature review on CCCF, revisiting crowdfunding research with a focus on platform aspects, and the culture sector, including the policy landscape. The empirical context of the Global North versus Global South is presented in the subsequent methodology session in which the methods and database construction are also described. Next, we present our findings along with reflections, followed by final remarks with conclusions, discussion, and an agenda for future research.

2. Theoretical & contextual background: CCCF & cultural policy

CCCF, pioneered by artists and in the intersection of alternative finance and the culture sector, represents a promising channel of resources for realizing cultural-creative productions (Boeuf et al., 2014; Lazzaro & Noonan, 2020; Dalla Chiesa & Dekker, 2021). In short, CCCF is defined as a method of financing projects, initiatives, or ventures within the culture sectors and its CCIs through soliciting contributions/funds and support from the crowd/community of supporters via online platforms. Also perceived as entrepreneurial finance, crowdfunding, in general, has exhibited a fast-paced worldwide expansion in several industries and sectors of the global economy (Ziegler et al., 2021). It exists in two main logics; (1) investment with the models of equity and lending, and (2) non-investment, being reward- and donation-based (Ibid.). CCIs have been predominantly adopting the second logic (Mollick, 2014; Cicchiello et al., 2022) in which the backers either receive non-monetary benefits or act out of philanthropy/altruism (Bretschneider & Leimeister, 2017; Cicchiello et al., 2022). Noteworthy that in the investment models, there are monetary/profit gains as well as shared risk (Ziegler et al., 2021; Cicchiello et al., 2022). Yet, regardless of the format, crowdfunding brings the promise of democratizing access to funds and capital (including social and symbolic ones) (Rouzé, 2019; Shneor & Flåten, 2020).

As per broad definition, crowdfunding involves an open call for the provision of resources to back specific purposes that have no particular content and do not require previous investment/fundraising experience (Belleflamme et al., 2014; Shneor & Flåten, 2020; Dalla Chiesa, 2021). CCCF is, therefore, the application of such a practice in the context of the culture sector and its CCIs. Generally, a main feature of crowdfunding is the online platforms with two-sided market characteristics (Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2021). CFPs operate as the middle ground connecting promoters/creators and backers/consumers (see Rykkja & Dalla Chiesa, 2022). However, while

several studies have been conducted to understand these two sides (creators/supply – see Mollick & Nanda, 2015; and backers/demand – see Bretschneider & Leimeister, 2017; Chaney, 2019), the crowdfunding literature is in an early stage when it comes to the role of CFPs (Bennett et al., 2015; D’Amato & Cassella, 2020; Zvilichovsky et al., 2015; Cicchiello et al., 2022). Moreover, it has been pointed out that if one recognizes CFP’s number and diversity, even the question of what should be considered crowdfunding is back in the spotlight (Dushnitsky & Zunino, 2019).

The studies looking into platform perspective and their different types are related to reliability, quality of information (aligned with information asymmetry issues), business models, strategy design (aligned with competitiveness), risk management, regulatory and legal aspects, as well as entrepreneurs and investors’ choice (Belleflamme et al., 2015; Buana, 2018; Dushnitsky & Zunino, 2019 – to list a few). There is still a gap in how platform models and dynamics can impact funding and financing patterns as well as the structural-relational functioning of certain sectors (Dushnitsky & Zunino, 2019; D’Amato & Cassella, 2020). Hence, this section revisits the advances of CFPs literature, focusing on the specificities of the cultural-creative circuit, pursuing to discuss the main dilemmas of CCCF platforms and practices as an integrated part of the culture sector structural-relational ecosystem.

2.1.(Cultural-creative) Crowdfunding platforms

There are hundreds of active CFPs (Dushnitsky et al., 2016; Ziegler et al., 2020), divided into the aforementioned main models and attending a variety of ventures, being generalists - without a specific content-focus, or specialized - dedicated to specific sectors/industries (Dushnitsky et al., 2016; Shneor, 2020; Cicchiello et al., 2022; Rykkja, 2023). This web-enabled genre is not only an intermediary between creators/entrepreneurs and backers/crowdfunders; they are also a business (or organization) of its own (Rouzé, 2019; D’Amato & Cassella, 2020). Hence, platforms are embedded with particular tools, features, and frameworks that make them more or less suitable for different purposes by diverse agents (Best et al., 2013; Belleflamme et al., 2015; Shneor, 2020). Some studies, as Lacan & Desmet (2017), argue that platforms must act beyond a simple intermediary role, as a space of social network, for action and interaction, highlighting their usefulness among potential contributors (Ibid.; D’Amato & Cassella, 2020). This emphasizes the broader-than-finance benefits of crowdfunding, i.e., feelings of connectedness to a community with similar ideals and shared values (Josefy et al., 2017; Dalla Chiesa, 2021). Such intangible aspect is especially significant for the culture sector due to the unique/unconventional and collective nature of CCIs with social network market characteristics (Potts et al., 2008; Rykkja et al., 2020). Undoubtedly, CCCF is a growing subset of the online alternative finance market, with distinct dynamics according to the different CCIs (De Voldere & Zeqo, 2017; Rykkja, 2021; Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2021) and it has also been linked to reducing the funding gap for the culture sector (De Voldere & Zeqo, 2017; Bonet & Négrier, 2018). However, CCCF development and the boundaries of its market maturation have been quite slow and marginalized when compared to other industries/sectors, partly due to the tension between art and entrepreneurship (see Lewis,

2013; Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2022), and the literature on the specific topic of CCCF platforms remains in need of more studies (Cicchiello et al., 2022).

Still, numerous studies seek to make this picture clearer, representing global statistics (Ziegler et al., 2021) or venturing into a specific sector, as Cicchiello et al. (2022). In the latter, the authors look at the European universe of CFPs focused on cultural-creative projects, addressing how and where they emerge and what economic forces and platform designs influence the number of successfully funded cultural-creative campaigns (Ibid.).¹ The study shows that a minority of the platforms is specialized in the culture sector and the market is underdeveloped considering the different types of CCCF and variety of CCIs. Nevertheless, success is higher in generalist platforms where projects can reach a broader audience (Cicchiello et al., 2022). In generalist platforms, it is not uncommon to find socially engaged projects aligned with social enterprises which, therefore, creates an overlap with the concept of civic crowdfunding (De Voldere & Zeqo, 2017). Previous work has also shown that, although the political economy of civic crowdfunding is uncertain, governmental/public matching incentives can amplify communities' preferences given its feature of a nonmarket valuation tool, potentially being designed to promote equity (Brent & Lorah 2019). Furthermore, in both cases, CCCF and civic crowdfunding, the literature has pointed out that location (and distance) matters (Brent & Lorah, 2019; Rykkja et al., 2020; Cicchiello et al., 2022).

Other aspects of CFP dynamics are related to the signaling theory – a dominating theory in the crowdfunding literature – and indicate that the better the platform interaction/ties with other social media platforms, the higher the rate of successfully funded campaigns (Belleflamme et al., 2014; Mollick, 2014; Cicchiello et al., 2022). To a large extent, this is connected to a market peer-economy phenomenon also linked to the age of platform economy(ies) (Zvilichovsky et al., 2015; Siciliano, 2023). From this perspective, positive relational aspects of reciprocity, intrinsic motivation, and democratization are certainly present; but there is also the shadow side of digital dependency, free-riding, and shirking public responsibilities (Zvilichovsky et al., 2015; Brent & Lorah 2019; Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2021; Siciliano, 2023). As such, Siciliano (2023) pinpoints that under conditions of platformization, both intermediaries and producers appear subordinate to infrastructure. In this sense, digital infrastructure is changing the dynamics of the culture sector production chain, from its creative process to the final stage of distribution and consumption (D'Amato & Cassella, 2020; Siciliano, 2023). This challenges the traditional and conventional formats, in which funding mechanisms as well as gatekeeping are included (Lazzaro & Noonan, 2020; Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2021; Siciliano, 2023). CCCF practices can bloom on both fronts, as crowdfunding is a broader-than-finance channel; it is a chameleon tool (Dalla Chiesa, 2021).

Accordingly, our main assumption is that CCCF is a setting of diverse practices that fit under a large umbrella of the crowdfunding concept, and it manifests in various types of platforms as well

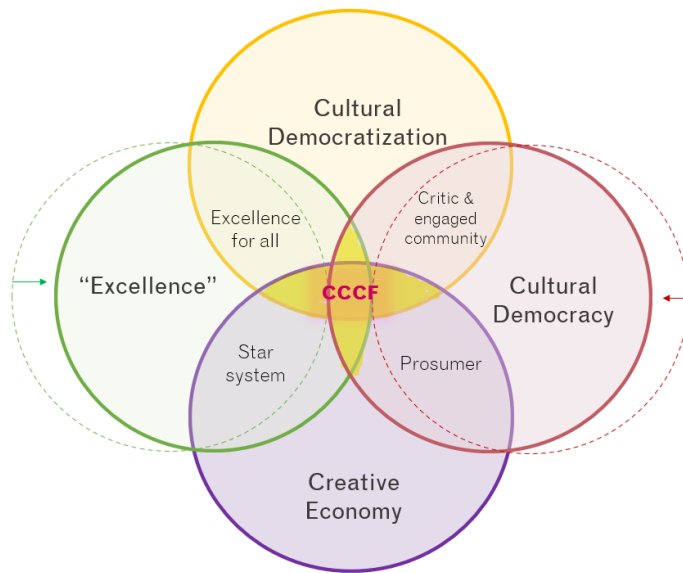
¹ Cicchiello et al. (2022) use the report “Crowdfunding - Reshaping the Crowd's Engagement in Culture” by De Voldere & Zeqo (2017) as a pivotal source for platform mapping.

as beyond. From this viewpoint, crowdfunding for arts-cultural-creative projects is pondered with other sources, such as governmental support (direct or indirect), private sponsorship, and forms of patronage. It serves as an extra provision for certain projects that are aligned with the often-precarious art market labor conditions (Rouzé, 2019; Ashton, 2021); as well as a continued form of income for content creators (Swords, 2017); and also potentially as a substitute rather than a complement to other alternative funding channels (Cicchello et al., 2022; Rykkja, 2023). Moreover, CCCF has the potential to somewhat disrupt the traditional art market, manifesting as a new gatekeeper (Lazzaro & Noonan, 2021; Dalla Chiesa & Dekker, 2021), an instrument for both cultural democracy and democratization of culture – pivotal paradigms of cultural policy, and even a new cultural agent (Thorley et al., 2018; D’Amato & Cassella, 2020). Hence, before continuing further elaborating on CCCF possibilities, opportunities, and challenges, we open a bracket to better delimit the functioning of the culture sector and its policy domains.

2.2. (Cultural) brackets: short notes on the culture sector structures and the place of CCCF

The culture sector, embracing the CCIs, integrates a wide variety of institutions, organizations, and private companies performing an extensive list of diverse activities, from core cultural-artistic expressions to broad creativity/talent-use as IT and software (Caves, 2000; Garnham, 2005; Throsby 2008). This work does not aim to define the cultural-creative economy and its multiple terms but rather considers it as characterized by a highly diverse, more horizontal, social network market with unique, unconventional, and intangible characteristics, and of a collective and collaborative nature (Emirbayer & Goodwin, 1994; Potts et al., 2008). The culture sector functions with relational structures made of connectedness and interplay (Mohr, 2000; Godart, 2018). This “bracket” portrays the object of study, CCCF, as a structure (of practices) itself, while briefly pinpointing the complexity of the culture sector dynamics in its diversity, policy paradigms, and life-long struggle for a sustainable budget. Following an adapted version of the model of cultural policy paradigms by Bonet & Négrier (2018), we reflect on expanding CCCF towards “excellence”, with various possibilities of interaction, cooperation, and engagement.

Figure 1. Cultural policy paradigms and the place of crowdfunding



Source: Bonet & Négrier (2018), adapted by the authors

According to Bonet & Négrier (2018), the cultural policy paradigm is defined by a historical evolution of four pillars that, although emerging at different points of time, coexist and interplay in contemporary reality throughout the globe. The notion of excellence arised in the post-war world and, even if subject to criticism over the last decades, still promotes criteria of autonomy, quality, and public support reasoning. Later, cultural democratization took place to bring the art-culture of “excellence” to everyone (Bonet & Négrier, 2018). Here the debate between high culture and popular culture goes side by side with the discussion of a passive versus active audience, influencing the sequential paradigm of cultural democratization.² During the seventies/eighties, ideals of cultural rights and diversity occupied the central rhetoric (Ibid.). The cultural economy emerged at the same timeframe, and, at the turn of the century, it was formulated as the creative economy expanding the culture sector’s activities beyond the previously considered legitimate objects of core arts and cultural expressions, toward outcomes involving human talent and potential property rights (Garnham, 2005; Bonet & Négrier, 2018).

Up to date, in each of those coexistent paradigms’ intersections, there is the logical unfold, i.e., excellence for all; or it lays some feature of the culture sector, such as the star system (Caves, 2000) and the prosumer in line with the participatory turn, with also the potentiality of social(-political) engagement (Bonet & Négrier, 2018). Yet, after reviewing the place of crowdfunding in the original model, we bring a provocative reflection about CCCF as a point at which all paradigms can meet. We place CCCF in the central intersection, as the main adaptation from Bonet & Négrier (2008)’s original model, to consider that CCCF can meet the paradigm of “excellence”. In pursuing this provocation, we are mapping the CCCF platforms in an exercise of thinking about typologies

² In such debate, the Bourdiesian perspective of distinction is embedded (Bourdieu, 1984; Anheier et al., 1995; Roose et al., 2019).

and streams – as detailed in the next section. The intention is not to defend that crowdfunding should be central to cultural policy; rather, the centrality is about the ongoing transformations of digitalization and platformization, as well as virtual collaborative practices (Schradié, 2011; Dalla Chiesa, 2021). CCCF arises as one of the multiple practices in this post-digital arrangement of interaction, production, and consumption.

In short, Figure 1 illustrates how CCCF is related to the structural-relational dynamics of the cultural sector, particularly, to cultural policy. In addition to the aforementioned provocative adaptation, CCCF has elements of both cultural democratization and cultural democracy, since it can foster cultural participation and, as a democratic finance, also enhance cultural diversity. CCCF platforms showcase a wide range of projects representing diverse cultural perspectives, aesthetics approaches, creative expressions, and backgrounds, and therefore, enable broader participation of various creative communities and movements. Moreover, by emerging in line with the creative economy, CCCF is at the forefront of digital culture realms and new forms of producing, consuming, distributing, and financing cultural-creative activities/products. Taking into account that cultural policy development amid its paradigms typically involves engaging various stakeholders, including artists, cultural institutions, policymakers, and the general public, CCCF might serve as a space for dialogue and collaboration among these stakeholders, facilitating communication between creators and supporters, as well as strengthening communities and network organizations. CCCF is complementary to cultural policy (paradigms), and a more holistic comprehension and consequent integration of CCCF might support policy expanding the promotion of cultural activities, creativity, and innovation, which is especially relevant in the digital age. To reinforce our assumption, approaching CCCF as a setting of diverse practices speaking to the cultural policy paradigms might be the way forward.

We sum up this theoretical-(reflexive-provocative) background session with what we believe to be the main challenges surrounding CCCF, and its underexplored possibilities/potentialities (as practices). This set of challenges and possibilities is addressed as the CCCF puzzle.

2.3. The CCCF puzzle: between platforms, business models, and practices

There is a conflictual point about artists and cultural-creative workers not necessarily self-identifying as entrepreneurs (Hoffmann et al., 2021; Ashton, 2021). When at the heart of CCCF lays a tension of commercial versus artistic values (Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2021), intertwined with identity matter, it is understandable why cultural-creative campaigns are mainly launched in reward- and donation-based models (non-investment logic) (Gleasure, 2015). Undoubtedly, artists and cultural-creative workers have a diverse range of identities and values; some simply wish to trade their production for its monetary worth, without being embedded in ethical considerations of aesthetics and social engagement narratives. Ergo, the relationship of the culture sector with CCCF embraces layers of “artpreneur(ship)” (Hoffmann et al., 2021), which ultimately recalls discussions surrounding arts-cultural-creative education and training but extrapolates the scope of this paper. The main point is that there are still a series of challenges, both conceptual as well as

practical, inhibiting the CCCF development across CCIs. As a two-sided market, there are great advances in the CCCF literature on creators and backers, as mentioned, but there is a gap in the role of platforms, as middle-ground, bridging these two actors (Rykkja & Dalla Chiesa, 2023).

Most of the earlier works consider a single platform as empirical context (i.e., Galuska & Brzozowska, 2016; Petitjean, 2018), and when looking into the platform dynamics, the focus is on success rates or business model strategies (Zvilizhovsky et al., 2015; Galuska & Brzozowska, 2016; Petitjean, 2018). We seek to address such gaps, pursuing to outline the agency and institutional structure of CFPs for the culture sector, as communities of practice and a socio-technical innovation, integrating cultural policy paradigms' ecosystem. From this viewpoint, the place of CCCF in cultural policy settings is still in its infancy, both as a practice and in terms of research (Dalla Chiesa, 2021; Loots et al., 2023; Rykkja, 2023). Therefore, given this literature review, the CCCF puzzle is summarized in three main points that guide our empirical efforts are as follows:

- [Point 1] Considering that CCCF is under the umbrella of crowdsourcing and crowd engagement, and the fact that the culture sector's history of financing/funding shares several similarities with the contemporary definitions of crowdfunding, we ask: is there a lack of an expanded comprehension together with a mindset shift? In other words, there is a diversity of works tackling co-creation, gatekeeping, and even alternative modes of production, but is the culture sector lacking an institutionalized orientation of CCCF practices, integrating its many layers while also considering the relational existent structures of the complex cultural-creative circuit?
- [Point 2] To what extent is this conceptual (and practice) expansion connected to the functioning and dynamics of the platforms and their respective business models strategies/mission orientations? Given the hundreds of active CFPs and many different models, is the culture sector exploring and conceptualizing them all? Or is there any oversight or underutilized channels, lacking classification?
- [Point 3] Due to the culture sector's unique and specific attributes and the platforms' intermediation role, is there a need for a clearer distinction between generalist versus specialized ones? If CCCF is to meet "excellence", is there a need for specialization together with a curation process paying respect to the culture sector's structural relationships?

Noteworthy, CCCF makes visible classical challenges of the culture sector from demand uncertainty to information asymmetry, and, on the supply side, the duality of excellence versus popular commercialization and amateurism, not to mention the limits of what activities are integrated into its realms (Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2021; Rykkja, 2023). Further, it is common for many cultural-creative campaigns to have most of the contributions coming from the project creators' network, as friends and family or the fan base (Mollick, 2016; Dalla Chiesa, 2021). This connects to the cultural consumers' profile from a Bourdieusian perspective of social distinction and habitus, which is somehow connected to public good and government support and how such

relational structures account for the positions of social agents vis-à-vis cultural elements (De Nooy, 2002; Roose et al., 2012; Alexandre & Bowler, 2014; Godart, 2018). Surely, the depth of this debate goes beyond the scope of this paper but offers a background to stretch the concept and formats of CCCF, in a holistic framework considering the different stakeholders' intake. Accordingly, based on the CCCF puzzle and seeking a categorization, the following section describes our empirical context and methodological choices.

3. Methodology

3.1. Methodological choices & empirical context(s)

An inductive study considers the socially constructed reality, focusing on meanings, ideas, and practices. CCCF is a digital phenomenon of contemporary society, and it is still a theory-less realm. To understand the meanings and practices of CCCF, especially in terms of platforms and respective institutional-relational structures, we therefore used the inductive digital method of tracking and trawling (Whiting & Prichard, 2020), alongside two expert panels with academics from both crowdfunding and cultural economics – see Figure 2 for the research design.

First, we employed the Delphi method with experts from the crowdfunding and cultural economics fields to legitimize and validate our hypothesis and conceptualization, i.e., the puzzle of CCCF. The Delphi method is a structured communication technique used to gather opinions from a panel of experts on a particular topic, in our case the adoption and comprehension of crowdfunding within the culture sector. It aims to identify areas of agreement and disagreement and explore the reasons behind different opinions (Linstone & Turoff, 1975). Accordingly, we proceeded with the two expert panels in major conferences of both aforementioned areas, within their respective pre-conference program. The choice of the fields of crowdfunding and cultural economics was based on the literature review where we identified that the key studies setting the theoretical background of the CCCF research came from these two fields (see the previous section). We acknowledge that this selection has some limitations, especially when considering the broader perspective of cultural studies. Nevertheless, we believe that the selected fields gave us the possibility of interacting with the community of academics interested in advancing the CCCF theory.

The first expert panel was held on the 31st of May 2023, in Gdansk, Poland, at the International Conference on Alternative Finance Research (ICAFR), with around 10 participants. The second was on the 27th of June 2023, in Bloomington Indiana, USA, at the Association of Cultural Economics International (ACEI), counting around 15 participants. Both sessions were around 2 hours long and all material was recorded and later transcribed. Previously to the panels, we sent a short online survey to conference participants, which served as common ground for the discussion. The survey as well as the way we guided the panels' conversation was based on the aforementioned threefold puzzle, i.e., a mindset shift, underutilization of models, and general versus specialized platforms. The survey had open-ended questions connected to the CCCF puzzle, such as naming CFPs relevant to the culture sector and its CCIs, evaluating the suitability and fit of various CFPs' characteristics (e.g. level of specialization, model type) in relation to the different culture sub-

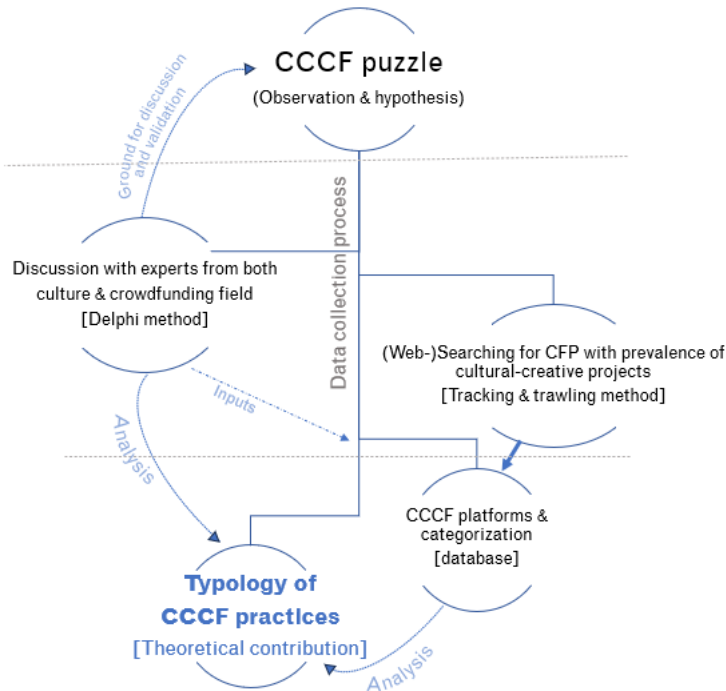
sectors, CCIs, and cultural-creative agents. Further, there were several statements for evaluating crowdfunding's characteristics and its value for the culture sector.

Then, we continued with the digital method of tracking and trawling, which follows a target (CCCF in our case) that has been moving forward and seeks what was already there and waiting to be retrieved, integrating a snowballing technique. Noteworthy, "online data" requires a systematic approach, and it involves careful research design since, although it might use mundane Internet tools, the research is more advanced than browsing the Web for information about a topic, thus the meta-perspective (Delphi method) was included. We pursued to virtually map the structures and relational forms of CCCF practices in an intellectual exercise of formalizing the field and its network possibilities, taking into account both spatialization and dimensionality.

Moreover, context matters (Kaartermo, 2017), and trying to bring efforts of spatialization and dimensionality to deeper understand CCCF structures, we focused on the European and Latin American realities. The relationship between Europe and Latin America has a long-intertwined history, marked by the colonial past and still ongoing flows of migration, an intense flow of symbolic and commercial exchanges in the vast diversity of various arts, cultures and heritage environments, and creativity more broadly (Rodríguez Morató & Zamorano, 2019; Bonet et al., 2019). Both territories maintain certain traditions of public financing of culture, following parallel cultural policy models as also engaging in cultural diplomacy and cooperation for development (Ibid.). Latin America constantly mirrors what is carried out in the North – not only Europe but also the US, lined by inconsistencies and instability (Miller & Yúdice, 2002; Rodríguez Morató & Zamorano, 2019). Yet, due to the historical relationship and the strengthening of cultural diplomacy, Europe has a (questionable) pivotal influence, setting the ground for the cultural policy paradigms and paths of institutionally oriented instruments intercalated with an intellectually oriented operation (Canclini, 2001; Bonet et al., 2019). Additionally, Latin American cultural policy mechanisms allow the private sector to participate in cultural financing, with resources from tax incentives to a larger extent than in the European context (Rubim, 2017; Rodríguez Morató & Zamorano, 2019).

Furthermore, there are many studies on crowdfunding in general and CCCF in particular exploring the European scene (i.e., Cicchiello et al., 2022; Rykkja, 2023), and considerably fewer taking the Latin American setting (Bénistant & Vachet, 2023), even if the size of the market is expressive enough to claim for more research (Best et al, 2013; Herrera, 2016). Crowdfunding has been considered "largely a developed-world phenomenon" (Best et al., 2013). Thus, the empirical investigation of CCCF in Europe and Latin America certainly offers a unique perspective of how CCCF practices have developed and what is there to explore. Noteworthy the expert panels used in the Delphi method included participants from outside Europe, which allowed us to have Latin American voice and perspective in both panels. The following part delves into the details of database construction and curation as well as the data analysis process. Before, Figure 2 summarizes the described research design.

Figure 2. Research Design



Source: by the authors

3.2. Database construction, curation, and data analysis process

To deliver an in-depth analysis of European and Latin American CCCF market (and structure), we carried out a mapping of CFPs that were somehow associated with CCIs. The list of European platforms was built by using the European information portal on crowdfunding in CCIs (De Voldere & Zeqo, 2017; Cicchiello et al., 2022), which included prior information about the platform’s general focus on the culture sector, business model - donation, reward, equity, lending, or mixed, with the respective possibility of all-or-nothing or take-it-all; and service costs. Not all details were properly completed, and in the elapsed time, some of the platforms have gone through transformations. We have complemented/compared the list using the CrowdSpace website, applying the filters of “art” as the industry, and also “social cause”. We also looked at the overview of reward- and donation-based platforms to see which were included in other reports/studies as CCIs-oriented. In addition, we included some platforms that came up during the expert panels (see Figure 2). In total, we visited over 160 platforms’ websites, exclusively located in and native to Europe, meaning that popular CFPs, as Kickstarter, were not included. For Latin America, the process was more complicated as, to our knowledge, there are no such CFPs aggregators or previous mapping projects; thus, we had to create from scratch the CCCF list by using an extensive/broad internet search within the snowballing sampling based on the expert panels and authors’ networks. In the end, we looked at dozens of platforms located in and native to Latin America; however, the vast majority were rather micro-finance or within the investment logic without a clear connection to the culture sector, as described below.

During August-November 2023, based on the tracked platforms, we delved into around 200 websites, exploring all the available information, i.e., activity, project categories, partners, and operation formats. From the initial total population, we excluded more than 50 platforms mainly with not correctly working websites. Some websites had some relation to CCCF, i.e., a blog discussing the theme, but did not enable any funding/investing mechanism. In few other cases, there was some sort of merging with another platform, and some domains were for sale or abandoned. We followed the criteria that to be considered a CCCF platform, some category choices connected to the diversity of the culture sector should be very clear.³ Further, we considered platforms with a prevalence of projects that have a broader cause than individual/personal-interest fundraising (e.g., for health issues), although we maintain some websites with those projects given their acceptance among creators, as Bidra in the Norwegian context. From this process and viewpoint, the final dataset consists of 79 European platforms and 10 Latin American ones, of which most are Brazilian, aligned with the literature on the crowdfunding market in Latin America pointing out that Brazil has been a leading actor in the region (Best et al., 2013; Herrera, 2016). See Supplementary material for the complete list of the 89 platforms. Notwithstanding, given the discrepancy of platform numbers, Latin America comes as a contrasting reality to our effort of mapping and systematizing CCCF. Further, we are aware of the limitation to mainly rely on the data displayed on platforms, since there is little consistency in the information disclosed on the websites. Yet, systematizing this information represented a means to the construction of a CCCF typology.

Accordingly, in the process of systematizing, we had the great challenge of categorizing the available information on the various platforms into a database, pondering the literature, our aims, and the insights from the Delphi method. Such an approach has the merit of identifying some of the multiple ways in which CCCF can be structured in the culture sector ecosystem as a relational network in digital realms. The main reason to do so was the search for patterns of CCCF practices and their relational structures. In the end, we considered using the following categoric dimensions: the native country, geographical scope (local, regional, national, or global); models (how many available, if subscription and/or match funding was one of them, or if there was something new/investment logic); focus (single-category-specialized, culture-specialized, CCI generalist, socio-generalist, generalist); institutional structure (non-profit structure, some sort of partnership, commercial business); and foundation year (pre-2009; 2010 to 2015; post-2015). Noteworthy, the way we classified the platforms' "institutional structures" (as defined in the Introduction) allows us to uncover many possibilities for institutionalizing/systematizing CCCF in different streams/channels, and as such it accounts for the position of crowdfunding practice(s) vis-à-vis culture sector dynamics and elements.

Ultimately, our analytical strategy offers a cross-disciplinary study with descriptive analysis, adding a diagram of CCCF practices and relational forms, which enhances CCCF theorization per

³ This includes audiovisual (film, television, videogames), performance, music, festivals, publishing (literature, radio), museums and libraries, cultural heritage, design, and architecture.

se. In other words, to develop the CCCF typology, the data analysis combined the findings from the Delphi expert panels with the interpretation of the distribution of categoric platform dimensions in the database. Accordingly, we design a diagram pursuing a visual mapping of the CCCF umbrella of practices, constructed also based on clustering efforts using the R-software, which seeks to group the different types of CCCF platforms following the categoric dimensions (see Supplementary material). Without further ado, Table 1 summarizes how we connected the CCCF puzzle and the literature with the categorization of platforms, also adding the number of CCCF platforms per category for information purposes. Thus, next is our analysis presenting the main results and reflection exercise, integrating both the Delphi method and the categorized database of platforms.

Table 1. A summary of the theoretical discussion (CCCF puzzle) & emerging categoric dimensions amid the data collection process (and some numbers)

Categoric Dimension	CCCF puzzle & literature	Overall numbers of platforms per categoric dimensions (see complete table in the supplementary material)					
		Temporality of CF phenomenon (e.g., Rykkja et al., 2020; Ziegler et al., 2020)	Period	Pre-2009		2009-2015	
			10		67		8
	The puzzle of CCCF - lack of comprehension of relational forms (Point 1)	CF Business Model	"Pure"	Total: 38	Hybrid	Total: 51	
			Donation	12	2 models	37	
	The puzzle of CCCF - functioning and dynamics of CFPs (Point 2)	Institutional structure	Reward (+Pre-order)	12	> 3 models	14	
			Subscription	6	Subscription option	5	
			Other	8	Match-funding	12	
					Investment logic	10	
			Non-Profit		Some sort of partnership		For-profit
			20		29		35
	The puzzle of CCCF (Point 3)	Sectorial focus	Specialized	Culture-Specialized	CCI generalist	Socio-generalist	Generalist
				27	4	18	15
	Spatiality of CF phenomenon (e.g., Kaartemo, 2017; Cicchiello et al., 2022)	Geographical scope	Local	Regional	National		Global
				5	34	24	

Source: by the authors (noteworthy that there are some not disclosed information in some platforms – see supplementary material). *Please see section 2.3 for details about points 1, 2, and 3.

4. Findings: CCCF mapping & reflection

4.1. A cross-disciplinary aspect: the academic perception of CCCF among crowdfunding experts and cultural economists

Engaging in an exercise of defining and understanding CCCF from an academic point of view, especially when bringing in two different areas of knowledge – the alternative finance experts (ICAFR) and the cultural economists (ACEI) – opened up more questions than answers if being honest. The fundamental comprehension and standpoints were indeed distinct. The Delphi method aims to gain consensus on a specific topic, and we observed the consensus within the two hosted panels. However, the outcomes of the two panels’ discussions are significantly different. Still, overall, multiple aspects of CCCF were addressed in an endeavor to establish it as an innovative sustainable tool for the culture sector. As pointed out in the literature, when recognizing the number and diversity of CFPs, as well as different interpretations and conceptual understanding, the question of what should be considered crowdfunding is truly back in the spotlight (Dushnitsky &

Zunino, 2019), and “we are back to the ancient debate of discussing the sex of angels” (ACEI panel, 2023).

The central issue at stage differed for the two panels: for the alternative finance experts, the debate was centered around the mechanism of crowdfunding per se and the different models and possible channels; for the cultural economists, the culture sector was the main focus, as crowdfunding adoption depends on the culture sector’s functioning, and CCCF is “just” an external tool/funding possibility. The comprehension of crowdfunding as a concept was much narrower among the cultural economists, mainly in line of what the crowdfunding experts would define as reward- or donation-based models. It is also fair to say that, perhaps, their understanding is closer to the common perception which also raises questions about what should be and what should not be considered as crowdfunding (ACEI panel, 2023, aligned Dushnitsky & Zunino, 2019). For the cultural economists, the main debate was how we could involve people in funding cultural projects, which is tidily linked to the long-term theme of cultural budget/justifying public expenses on culture as well as the Bourdieusian perspective of habitus (De Nooy, 2002; Alexander & Bowler, 2014; Roose et al., 2019). They discussed the decision to use CCCF as a utility function in which crowdfunding adoption happens not only to cover market failure (i.e., inefficient distribution of resources) but also has the potential to achieve a considered social optimal, by maximizing the artists’ funding choice both in terms of future income and the values going beyond the monetary/economic one, i.e. symbolic, cultural, and social values (ACEI panel, 2023). Such rationale is a typical economic formalization of decision-making, and yet to some extent, it validates the CCCF puzzle by addressing the fact that artists/creators, and more broadly cultural agents and structures, lack a nuanced comprehension of CCCF relational forms and possibilities when integrating the use of crowdfunding into their “utility function”. Although utility function is subjective to individual preferences, the overall utility maximization in regard to the decision to adopt CCCF is not being fully pursued due to limited information, i.e., a narrow understanding of CCCF's multiple forms.

The alternative finance experts debated extensively on whether specialized platforms are better than generalists and vice-versa, and audience/backers were the core issue behind both arguments. On specialized platforms, backers could be more purpose-driven, with the exchange of ideas from a specified target and matching preferences (ICAFR panel, 2023). On the other hand, generalist platforms offered a wider and more diverse audience, and larger network, and “force artists out of their bubble”/niche (ICAFR panel, 2023), which is easily connected to the aforementioned “artrepreneurial” literature (Hoffmann et al., 2021). Both points validate the CCCF puzzle related to the functioning, dynamics, and strategies of CFPs together with the mindset shift. Even without a consensus on which business model is the best for CCIs, the ICAFR experts truly believe that crowdfunding has great potential which has not been fully explored (and comprehended) by the culture sector, and academic discussion and practical training surrounding “artrepreneurial” efforts could stimulate an uptake by the diverse industries.

In sum, even if not reaching a full consensus, both panels discussed if there are certain CCIs for which crowdfunding use is more suitable in coherence with the literature (Shneor, 2020; Cicchiello et al., 2022; Rykkja, 2023), and exciting discussion points emerged concerning the change of technology and impact of digitalization on cultural production in general (resembling Alexander & Bowler, 2014; Swords, 2017; Rennie et al., 2022; Siciliano, 2023). In this, the distinction between production of content and goods was pinpointed as crucial to CCCF and, of course, the philosophical question “what is art and culture after all?” could not be missed. Still, what is the most important is that within such a multi-layered perspective on CCCF with several challenges, dilemmas, stigmas, benefits, and future possibilities being addressed, there was an underlined cross-disciplinary agreement that there is a puzzle in relation to crowdfunding within the culture sector, or CCCF. Hence, next, we present the data analysis mapping potential typologies of CCCF, referring to the experts’ opinions and literature, as a way to get closer to the solution of the puzzle.

4.2. Data analysis: understanding CCCF evolution and the emerging multiple-practices

The mapping results demonstrate that CCCF has evolved in several directions. It all started with ArtistShare, still active,⁴ and serving as a blueprint for many other platforms that appeared in consecutive years. In our database, with a total of 89 CFPs, eight were launched pre-2009, and the vast majority between 2010-2015 (according to the literature, see Cicchiello et al., 2022; Rykkja, 2023; and Table 1). While ten new platforms emerged after 2015, a larger number of platforms disappeared. Accordingly, in the last two decades, the crowdfunding market has shown itself extremely volatile, with remarkable “unicorns” but even more remarkable very-short-life cycles for many companies. In the over 200 visited websites, we encountered abandoned domains, privacy issues, and sort of blogs that used to be specialized platforms and still kept the activity related to the specific industry, i.e., music, but without funding option. Moreover, some websites were crowdfunding (consultancy/marketing) service companies, e.g., the Spanish Backercamp, which indicates that there is already a spillover of correlated markets entering the scene.

Platforms’ information is highly dispersed and often not straightforward, even regarding the models, displaying different terms and novel concepts, connected to the first two points of the puzzle. Nevertheless, more than 57% of the platforms offer a hybrid model with the majority combining reward and donation (22 platforms), but also with other possibilities, such as subscription and match-funding - increasingly common. Only 38 platforms indicate a single model, with a prevalence of reward-based/pre-order and donation, usually associated with a generalist focus as also indicated in the previous literature (Rykkja, 2023). There are six exclusively subscription platforms, all specialized within the content creation range, and five others offer subscription channels (see Table 1 & Supplementary material).

Notwithstanding, previous crowdfunding studies consider subscription platforms to be donation-based (Ziegler et al., 2020); however, reflecting on our findings and looking for the puzzle solution,

⁴ As US-based platforms, not only ArtistShare was excluded from our mapping, but several main others, i.e., Kickstarter, Indiegogo, and Patreon. We encourage researchers to pursue similar approach to understand and map the booming North-American market.

we suggest that it can represent investment logic in the culture sector, being a source of income, corroborating the literature of “culture sector’s lenses” (i.e., Swords, 2017), and consequently, linked to the ACEI panel’s discussion, which questioned if subscriptions should be considered as crowdfunding. Perhaps, there is a need for a distinction: when accounting for the volume of crowdfunding transactions worldwide, subscription and donation can be merged; but when referring to CCCF specifically, subscription is one of the practices that allow alternative income to the creators – rather complementary or as substitute (Rykkja, 2023). On this note, the investment logic is appearing, with 10 platforms offering this possibility, e.g., the Estonian Kanvas.ai brings an innovative Art Gallery function to the virtual space, as augmented reality, pinpointing blockchain system (see Rennie et al. 2022).

When contrasting the European platforms with the Latin American ones (mainly Brazilian), all the platforms that focus exclusively on CCIs offer the subscription option, combined with reward and donation. There are some cases in Europe too, e.g., the French Tipeee. Yet this indicates that the Latin American formats stretch more to embrace the diverse needs of the CCI regional market, which arguably has fewer resources with remarkable cultural policy backlashes, more informality, and quick-fix, but also with more collectivist/collaborative endeavor (Rouzé, 2019; Bénistant & Vachet, 2023). Furthermore, different funding options are emerging elsewhere, especially in the range of match-funding (crowdfunding + public/private funding). Twelve platforms in our database allow this option, of which three are Latin American and proportionally show a push in this direction. The Brazilian Benfeitoria and the Dutch Voordekunt are great examples of such practices in which community-enabled finance is boosted by public/institutional money multiplying the amount raised (Loots et al., 2023). Regardless of the context both move towards expanding the portfolio of the ecosystem of funding in the culture sector. Additionally, seven platforms explicitly bring tax benefit possibilities, e.g., the Brazilian Évoe innovates on this front by offering such possibility within the mechanism of one of the Brazilian cultural policy incentive laws (see Rubim, 2017).

In sum, pivotal to the second point of the puzzle, we observe three trends in what we classify as the “institutional structures”, although acknowledging that there exists an infinity of configurations that can emerge in between, with overlaps and intersections. First, the partnership formats mixing public-private structures, also combining a network of partners and sponsors, are gaining importance, with 29 platforms classified in such type. Second, the majority (35) are still oriented to a commercial/profit-based business approach, having as main revenue the fees, or percentage over sales. In the latter, we highlight the stream of Crowd Publisher, mainly used by the platforms focused on the publishing industry but expanding to music (record labels) and games, with the channel of Crowd Store – this trend is connected to the view of crowdfunding as marketing-testing and pre-sale mechanism (Lazzaro & Noonan, 2020; Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2021). As such, if the aforementioned CCCF subscription practice comes as an alternative source of income covering the process from creation to distribution, there is also this CCCF practice of producer agent (Thorley, 2018; D’Amatto & Cassella, 2021), enhancing the project development from its production to its distribution interplayed with consumption, especially in case of co-creation with backers (see, for

instance, Rykkja & Hauge, 2021). Third, the type of nonprofit approach (association/organization or linked to a governmental institution) even though smaller in numbers (20) presents unique cases with distinct characteristics given the different CCIs. The case of the Dutch Tilburgvoorcultuur as a municipal platform deserves special attention, as it offers both rewards and subscriptions to the local inhabitants in the interplay of the cultural policy/incentives decisions. The Spanish Axeta in similar manner, supported by the Catalan Generalitat, offers a subscription model to promote local artists/creators.

On the other main axis, the focus dimension and point 3 of the puzzle, the majority (27) platforms are specialized in one sector, with the prevalence of music and literature/publishing (including journalism) – both somehow in line with the alternative producer agent – and cultural heritage, which also deserves further research attention. As a counterpoint, the second largest group (21) is the generalist-focus, which has a range of projects/causes, including health issues and some individual interest campaigns. Intriguing enough there is no strong association between this focus dimension vis-à-vis the “institutional structure” (see Figures 3 & Appendix⁵) and the puzzle seems to persist.

In Latin America, there is no single-specialized platform, and the countries where platforms were mapped are aligned with the most prominent crowdfunding market in terms of transaction volumes (see Herrera, 2016). Still, the number of Latin American platforms is remarkably lower compared to Europe. This could indicate that in the Latin American context platforms are viewed as an ecosystem that articulates with each other and develops through collaboration due to its collectivist characteristics (Bénistant & Vachet, 2023). Accordingly, most of the Latin American platforms have channel features with the creation of a community of shared values standing for a certain socio-cultural cause (or upheavals, e.g., Covid-19). Only a few European platforms present this feature, such as the Spanish Goteo, and the French ProArti, which is related to their “institutional structure” in a more mission-oriented approach, as well as a more restricted cultural budgets resembling Latin American countries, keeping the proportional ratios (Bonet et al., 2019; Rodríguez Morató & Zamorano, 2019). From this viewpoint and looking for the puzzle solution, CCCF can be also a multiple-practice for and by the platform, meaning that such channel creation can be configured as boosting CCCF practice for collective mobilization (Dalla Chiesa, 2020).

Contrasting both realities, all Latin American platforms have a national geographical scope, with campaigns mainly from the country where they are based, except from the Argentinian Idea.me which has a regional scope, i.e., any Latin American countries. In Europe, platforms have a more frequent regional scope, reaching all areas of influence (linguistic and cultural), i.e., the Swiss Wemakeit serves all German-speaking regions. In this linguistic aspect, it is noteworthy that UK has more platforms with global reach, e.g., the CrowdPublisher Ubund. This is aligned with the

⁵ The Appendix displays a table detailing the other classification-focus (CCI-specialized, CCI-generalist, socio-generalist), and a Figure that illustrates the clustering efforts.

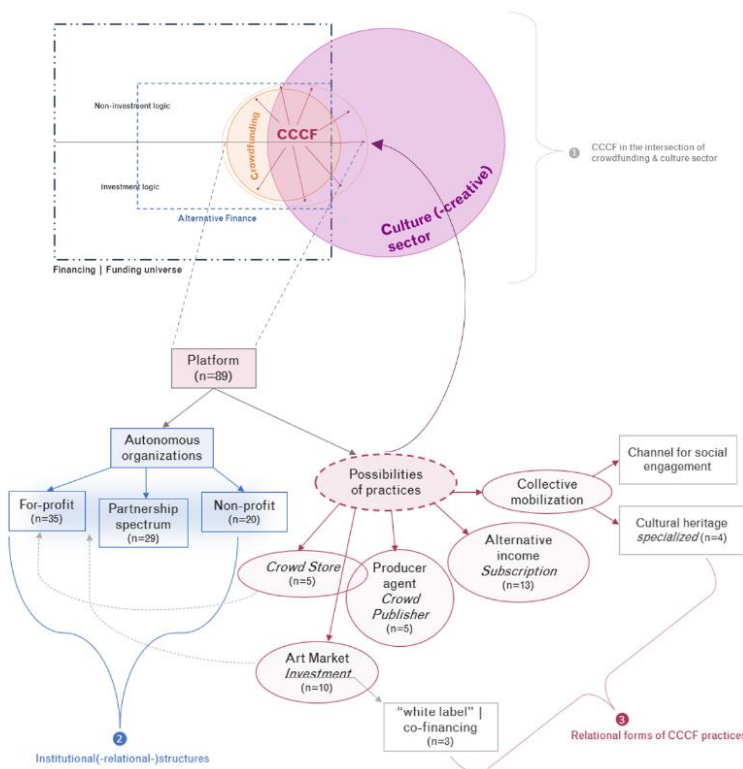
literature (see Rykkja et al., 2020), but there is no clear association between spatiality and dimensionality (see Supplementary material).

Thus far, Section Four has presented a fairly descriptive analysis of the database, yet it uncovers some pivotal points of the CCCF puzzle and confirms our main assumption that CCCF is a setting of diverse practices manifested in various types of platforms and beyond. Ergo, next, we attempt to orchestrate our analytical strategies in a visual categoric-systematized structure of all the possibilities within the relational forms of CCCF and its multiple practices.

4.3. Systematizing (visually) the data analysis: CCCF relational forms as a chameleon practice

We argue that CCCF is a setting of diverse practices fitting under a larger umbrella of the crowdfunding concept, and it manifests in various platform types and beyond, as a community of practices with room for development. When framing CCCF as a chameleon practice (Dalla Chiesa, 2021), we consider the portfolio for supporting the sustainability of various CCIs' future development, conceptually and empirically, offering more experiences, alternatives, and know-hows to artists/project creators and platforms themselves. As the main output of this research, Figure 3 is designed to represent the typologies of CCCF relational practices. In the Figure, point 1 illustrates CCCF in the intersection of alternative finance, precisely crowdfunding, and the culture sector, where there is a negotiation that can expand CCCF reach – and perhaps help to find the missing pieces for the puzzle.

Figure 3. Expanding the CCCF concept – mapping the possibilities of practices



Source: by the authors (see Supplementary material for more details & clustering efforts)

As pieces of a puzzle, CCCF platforms exist as autonomous organizations, as businesses (Figure 3, Point 2), and beyond, configuring possibilities of practices (Figure 3, Point 3). In such a manner, all the earlier presented categoric dimensions are subject to overlaps and intersections, including a combination of aesthetic values with commercial orientation, and with philanthropic forms. Accordingly, in the face of the multiple overlaps and intersections, a rigorous clusterization of the platforms is rather ineffective - see Supplementary material. Consequently, the CCCF typology is presented as a relational form of autonomous organization distributed in the “institutional structures” (Figure 3, Point 2) and expanding to the possibility of practices (Figure 3, Point 3). Ergo, considering the mapping efforts (see Supplementary material), we suggest some outstanding practices that might be a way to solve the puzzle.

There is a practice of producer agents, i.e., CrowdPublisher (e.g., Polish Gamefound), in which platforms are exclusively specialized in certain projects (e.g., game industry). Those platforms usually offer a channel or “store” to buy the games/books/records that have been successfully pledged. Similarly, we suggest that there is a stream of Crowd Store in which creators deliberately choose to sell their cultural-creative product using a CFP. Surely, at this point, there are issues of scalability and reproducibility, as well as cultural-creative production, more or less immersed in technology transformations (Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2021; Siciliano, 2023). Still, the notion of a producer or a “showroom” brings elements of non-market evaluation dealing with commercial vs. aesthetical considerations, and it is up to how the institutional structure is framed to engage the practice as a cultural-creative venture. Subscription platforms/channels – or a practice of alternative income (expanding the CCCF notion) – are advancing on this front, as well as the Crowd Producers, which seems to indicate an association with specialized focus (see Supplementary material [cluster 5]). The Crowd Store practice, especially when intersecting with Crowd Producer, undoubtedly raises questions regarding aspects of intellectual property rights/royalties also linked to the investment logic within business models. Those issues are associated with the practice/stream of Art Market in which platforms reproduce art market logic within its virtual space pushing the boundaries of digitalization (Rennie et al, 2022), e.g., the Estonian Kanva.ai.

Within such possibilities of practices, the CCCF use can integrate the different phases of the cultural-creative production process, from its creation (which is very clear in the case of subscription models) to distribution and consumption. Additionally, when systematizing the different channels, and mission orientations, both institutional structure and focus allow various types of community projects of collective nature, and socio-cultural engagement initiatives (Practice of collective mobilization, Figure 3). Notwithstanding, even without a clear clustering of CCCF, our suggested typology opens up the debate on what has been there and what is waiting to be retrieved, and prospectively systematized. On this note, in line with the signaling and social network theories (Cicchiello et al., 2022), we reinforce that information transparency alongside the creation of a community on social networks might foster the performance of CCCF in its multiple-relational practices. We argue, conclusively, that a clear systematization of the structures of CCCF relational forms (within diverse practices) can foster its integration in the culture sector ecosystem

of funding, financing, and functioning. This work hopes to be a “kick starter” to this broader research agenda and a helpful roadmap for practitioners considering the use of CCCF.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This research explores how the culture sector can embrace CCCF practices based on its own relational structure, perspectives, and prospects. By investigating how CCCF has evolved, and the different models developed within a CCCF umbrella, the paper offers conceptual-empirical-based typologies of CCCF practices to better serve the cultural-creative circuit. We pursue ways in which the culture sector can integrate this alternative-entrepreneurial(-community-based) finance tool into a broader sustainable ecosystem of arts and culture, going beyond the notion of crowdfunding with a single function of raising money. CCCF shares similarities with CCIs in terms of functioning as a non-vertical platform of collaborative nature amid communities of practices.

By considering the intermediary agent, CFPs, this work elaborates on the puzzle of CCCF dynamics, i.e., commercial considerations vs. aesthetics/moral values, donation vs. investment/income, and broad audience vs. niche preferences. Following an inductive approach, it employs a combination of various methods such as tracking and trawling, Delphi, and clustering efforts. CCCF platforms were mapped across Europe and Latin America, searching for how the crowdfunding concept has been applied in and understood by the culture sector. As a result, our database allowed the creation of a diagram with a typology for CCCF (Figure 3), in a multi-context way, and within a Global North versus Global South realities. We argue that CCCF is a setting of diverse relational practices that fit under a larger umbrella manifesting in various types of platforms and beyond.

The unique meta-cross-disciplinary perspective aims to bridge the scholarly understanding and real-world of CCCF practices, advancing in a novel conceptual framework. In other words, the proposed typology of CCCF practices can help artists and creators to comprehend CCCF diversity and various approaches to crowdfunding adoption. For instance, rather than just choosing a platform for launching projects, practitioners can look for the form of engagement that better suits their cultural-creative endeavor. Moreover, by elaborating on CCCF’s potential as a socio-technical innovation that can support the sustainability of CCIs, in a broader notion of communities of practices, our work shows that CCCF principles are aligned with the culture sector’s functioning, and cultural policy can benefit from taking agency on how to shape its development. Hence, this research offers implications for practitioners and policymakers by enabling this nuanced understanding of CCCF, expanding the boundaries of CCCF, amid a broader umbrella of possible web-enabled genre (sub-)models to be adopted, legitimized, and systematized in (and by) the culture sector.

Further, this study makes a theoretical contribution by developing the typology of CCCF practices that communicates directly with interdisciplinary academic audiences. For instance, it advances the incipient literature on crowdfunding in the context of the culture sector, especially from the lens of cultural economics (Handke & Dalla Chiesa, 2021; Cicchiello et al., 2023), and by adding the

Global South perspective. In addition, based on the previous media studies on platform mediation (Swords, 2014; D'Amato & Cassella, 2020; Siciliano, 2023), it expands the gatekeeping roles of CCCF and tackles aspects of cultural production, platform/media use, and digital culture. Lastly, this research advances the cultural policy paradigms (Bonet & Négrier, 2016) by presenting a new standpoint of CCCF and discussing the possibilities for its integration into the culture sector and CCIs ecosystem, which complements works on funding, policy, and technology (Loots et al., 2023). Accordingly, we recommend taking a closer look at match-funding opportunities and how public funding can be combined with community-based initiatives.

In sum, by addressing the CCCF puzzle and pursuing a mindset/discursive shift, this research sheds light on how to promote crowdfunding for the artistic-cultural community, soothing the tension between art, entrepreneurship, and digital transformations. However, to extend CCCF understanding and keep advancing the studies of media use and conditions of cultural production (and financing) in times of digitalization and platformization, we invite future research to delve deeper into each of the practices in the proposed CCCF typology. Furthermore, based on the comprehension of CCCF as a chameleon practice, novel studies in the field of cultural economics can further address CCIs' institutional functioning, production as well as consumption, and CCCF intersection with policy settings. In line, cultural policy research can greatly benefit from this emerging stretching of CCCF concept, and contribute to boosting a sustainable structural-relational culture sector ecosystem.

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