

## Chapter 2

# Cultural Product Management from Environment to Territorial Context: Configuration of the Main Relationships<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter aims to represent the evolution of the cultural vocation of the territory with relation to the cultural product. The authors achieve this by adopting a holistic, viable-systemic approach. This approach proves useful to draw a better representation of the relationships existing among members of the territory - which is a prerequisite for the creation of any cultural product - and among them and the stakeholders to whom the cultural product itself is targeted. The authors consider the notion of relationship as a form of interactive connection determining - in causal fashion - a series of input-output effects among system members.*

### INTRODUCTION

The viable-systems approach provides a very different view compared to the structuralist and reductionist ones, which have been so far predominant in most studies regarding territorial governance.

The common definition of territory, in fact, used to focus on the notions of area, space or region and on their morphology, thus implying a structural and reductionist approach towards the

issue in question. Such a view tends to bring out objective representations of the phenomenon, based on a strict definition of territory as a mere sum of the resources given, this way inevitably overlooking any perspective diversity and all the opportunities emerging from relational dynamic.

The systemic approach - on the other hand - takes into account the great number and variety of the stakeholders that are in constant relation with the territory, trying to lay out an interpreta-

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tive methodology of relational dynamic in order to support - both at decisional and at operational level - the establishment of long-lasting relationships (Gummeson, 2008) among the players involved (Barile, 2011).

In the present work we shall therefore adopt the systemic approach, as we feel it is the best way to render the complexity of the scenario we want to study.

Given a certain sets of resources, the growing trend in territorial management studies is the creation and/or maintenance of partnerships/relationships between public and private stakeholders on the one hand, and interlocutors/recipients on the other, all of whom are becoming increasingly active in their mutual interactions (Maturana, 1975).

Management targets, aimed at achieving common goals, do not represent homogeneous and static forms of governance (Vernon et al., 2005; Edwards et al., 2000).

That is mainly due to political dynamic, either national or international, and to collaborative relationships established with the reference supra-systems - dealing with finance, consumption and others - which require constant readjustments by the parties involved (Bailey & Koney, 2000).

Such relationships also appear to be retroactive, as described by cybernetic models according to which the large number of correspondence phenomena occurring between the states/conditions of the system - in our case a territorial one - and the configuration of relationships existing among the different parts of the system, is called variety (Ashby, 1956; Bocchi & Ceruti, 1985, p. 62).

The countless combinations of possible system responses and relationships occurring among their parts/members produce complexity, in turn affected by the variety of inputs and outputs constituting the retroactive loop. Control - and governance - of dynamic, are therefore only possible if the 'variety' of the controller is at least on a par with that of the dynamic to be controlled (Beer, 1972, p. 41; Wiener, 1948).

Countless definitions of complexity can be found by scholars from many different and unrelated disciplines. The previously mentioned cybernetic scientist Ashby (1956) claimed for example that the different types of behavior a certain system can evoke express complexity; the mathematicians Shannon and Weaver (1949) argued that the amount of information and the number of 'feedback loops' (Newell & Simon, 1972) occurring in a system are a measure of complexity; finally, the sociologist Morin (1987) argued that complexity depicts interconnected phenomena that - in order to be properly synthesized - should then be described through a suitable model and not simply decomposed by the observer, whether a scholar or a governing body. Morin (2007; 1986) argues that the neuro-cerebral system first perceives the world analytically (through its sensory detectors) then, through the application of coding patterns and organizing rules, it builds that fantastic synthetic picture - the representation - whose details are in turn constantly analyzed. The representation, which is at the same time the emergence, the global outcome and the material of cerebral mega-computation, can be regarded as a 'simulating' construction that 'presents' and 'makes present' that part of the outside world which is picked up by the senses. The goal of this work is therefore to provide an actual view of the territory with relation to the dynamic of relationships, taking into account the subjectivity of governance within a cultural product-based perspective.

## **1. BACKGROUND: ENVIRONMENT AND CONTEXT**

As soon as we start discussing the notion of cultural product, we are faced with the dilemma of providing a clear definition of culture, with relation to an equally elusive target.

One feels therefore the need to sort the context - given by the perspective cultural vocation of a territory - from the environment, that is the

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