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THE ISSUES OF DEFINING AND CLASSIFYING CULTURAL CENTRES

Dita Pfeifere

The Latvian Academy of Culture, Riga, Latvia, E-mail address: Dita.Pfeifere@lka.edu.lv

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Abstract

Research purpose. Cultural centres are multifunctional interdisciplinary cultural institutions that provide access to culture and a wide variety of cultural services, promote citizen participation in culture, offer lifelong learning opportunities and perform various other functions. Cultural centres are a phenomenon shared with many other countries, especially former Soviet republics; however, although historically different models of cultural centres have also been developed in Western countries, the field has been relatively little studied in an academic setting. The aim of this research is to study the problems of defining and classifying cultural centres, to identify the most characteristic functions of cultural centres in Europe and suggest a classification model based on the functions of cultural centres.

Design / Methodology / Approach. Research design is qualitative research. The research strategy uses qualitative research methods - the data extraction and analysis methods that are characteristic of qualitative research. The following methods were used: a comparative analysis of scientific literature, document analysis as well as secondary data analysis. Qualitative content analysis was used as the method of data analysis.

Findings. Although the literature review shows that there is no single definition and characterization of cultural centres in Europe, researchers generally identify three parameters that characterize most cultural centres (regardless of their legal form): multifunctionality (offer and functions); socio-cultural aspect and orientation towards the local community; having a building/technical equipment. The author has identified and proposed a chart with four main dimensions characteristic of cultural centres: art/culture; education; leisure/recreation; social.

Originality / Value / Practical implications. As a result of the study, the author has developed a model for classifying the functions of cultural centres, laying the ground for further academic research of cultural centres and their roles in society. The four main dimensions characteristic of cultural centres open new directions for research on the impact areas of cultural centres for a society: education, wellbeing, integration, community development, participation in culture etc. The results of the research will be used by the Association of Latvian Culture Centres for the development of cultural centres in Latvia. The research results will be partly used for further research within the framework of Dita Pfeifere's doctoral thesis. They will be useful for researchers in other countries who conduct research in the field of cultural centres. The practical implication of the research is related to the development of the Law on Cultural Centres in Latvia, clarifying terminology used in the law and the segmentation of cultural centres.

Keywords: cultural centres; cultural institutions; cultural policy.

JEL codes: Z1; M3.

Introduction

Although cultural centres as a phenomenon can be found in many countries around the world today, this study will examine the problem of defining and classifying cultural centres in the European context - on the basis that the genesis of cultural centres in Europe has been influenced by interrelated historical events that have taken place in a given geographical area, which have resulted in a public demand and corresponding national cultural policies to support the activities of this type of cultural institution. Cultural centres in Europe operate in a similar format of state/municipal intervention support, which is specific to the European cultural policy tradition, so their definitions, typology and operational functions at the European level are comparable.

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Defining and classifying cultural centres as multifunctional interdisciplinary cultural organizations involves several important challenges that will be analysed in this article. According to researchers who have focused on the study of cultural centres in Europe, both nationally and internationally, one of the main challenges in coming up with a comprehensive definition and classification of cultural centres is their great diversity and differences both in terms of their functions, activities, missions, and objectives as well as in the context of governance models and resource availability (Järvinen, 2021, Bogen, 2018). Unlike cultural organizations such as museums, libraries, theatres, concert halls, exhibition galleries etc., where the activities and basic functions of these cultural organizations can be clearly identified, the range of activities covered by cultural centres is so broad and varied that their classification and typology is a considerable challenge. It should also be borne in mind that the historical origins of cultural centres and their multiple patterns that have been developed over time, influenced by historical, political, cultural, and socio-economic processes, can vary widely across Europe, making the studying and conceptualization of these institutions even more difficult (Bogen, 2018; Järvinen, 2021; Eriksson et al., 2018).

There is also a lack of accurate data on the number and types of cultural centres in Europe, as the data are not collected and compiled in all European countries. The analysis of data available in the European online database of the *Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends cultural* network shows a very different national approach to compiling statistical data on cultural centres, resulting in no systematic, comparable data on cultural centres in the European context (The Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, 2021). The researchers point out that the number of cultural centres in Europe today is hard to estimate as there is no reliable or comprehensive information available on this (Bogen, 2018; Järvinen, 2021). The information available on the website of the European Network of Cultural Centres provides a clearer picture of the types and number of cultural centres. The European Network of Cultural Centres was founded in 1994 to promote dialogue and cooperation between social-oriented cultural centres in Europe. The European Network of Cultural Centres (ENCC) represents more than 5,000 centres through 14 national networks, one regional network, five urban and rural/local networks, and 34 individual cultural centres from 27 European countries (ENCC, 2022). However, many European countries either do not have national networks and/or are not members of ENCC; consequently, there is no possibility of drawing objective conclusions based on ENCC. In order to obtain an objective picture of the number of cultural centres in Europe, a separate study would be needed within each country where the results obtained would be very useful in further research into the problem of cultural centres.

Although interest in research into cultural centres in the academic environment has increased in recent decades, there is still a lack of research at both the national and international levels on the functioning of cultural centres (Eriksson et al., 2018; Järvinen, 2021). The researchers from the University of Aarhus (Denmark) in the article "Forms and potential effects of citizen participation in European cultural centres", state that "there are thousands of cultural centres in Europe alone with millions of annual visitors and actively involved citizens, however, the knowledge of the ways in which they engage citizens, and the social impact of their activities is limited. The lack of research on the social impact of European cultural centres can partly be explained by their diversity and variations. As institutions, they exist in multiple forms and even without an agreed name. The forms vary from the neighbourhood centre with a focus on community activities and local cultural forms; centres created and run by (groups of) artists; and the new creative hub that uses art and culture to boost entrepreneurship, innovation capacity and attractiveness of a city or region. The names, in various countries and languages, include such denominations as a 'houses of culture, 'centres for socio-culture, 'citizens' houses' and 'activity centres'" (Eriksson et al., 2018, page 207). Based on the, for the purposes of this article, the term cultural centre is used as a unifying term for all cultural institutions performing functions specific to cultural centres, regardless of the organization's name, founder, and legal status.

The research goal is to study the problems of defining and classifying cultural centres, to identify the most characteristic functions of cultural centres in Europe and suggest a classification model based on the functions of cultural centres. Research questions: 1) what common aspects can be identified in the researcher's definitions of cultural centres; 2) whether it is possible to identify the most characteristic functions of cultural centres and to propose a classification of cultural centres based on these.

This study will analyse the definitions of cultural centres offered to date in the academic environment to describe the types of cultural centres and their common and differing characteristics in the international context (mainly European countries). Although the literature review shows that there is no single definition and characterization of cultural centres in Europe, researchers generally identify three parameters that characterize most cultural centres (regardless of their legal form): multifunctionality (offer and functions); socio-cultural aspect and orientation towards the local community; having a building/technical equipment. Based on a comparative analysis of the scientific literature, document analysis and secondary data analysis author has identified and proposed a chart with four main dimensions characteristic of cultural centres: art/culture; education; leisure/recreation; social.

Literature review

Although researchers point to limitations in defining cultural centres (which was described in the introduction of the article), scientific literature and research identify efforts to provide a definition of the cultural centre. According to Kristina Laurell Stenlund, the term 'cultural centre' (*Kulturhus* - in Swedish) can be used in a number of understandings, one of which refers to the cultural centre as a house/building where different cultural events take place. According to Stenlund, a cultural centre is a public building that hosts a variety of cultural activities or includes several cultural facilities: a concert hall, a library, a theatre, an art gallery, as well as restaurants and cafés that provide a meeting place for people. The cultural centre is a public platform for people to engage in cultural activities and to provide them with a cultural experience (Stenlund, 2010). The Finnish researcher Tomas Järvinen sees cultural centres as houses of versatile use for cultural activities: a versatile application is what distinguishes them from cultural venues used for a single purpose (Järvinen, 2021). Danish researchers offer the following definition of a cultural centre: "A cultural centre, in general, is a particular cultural institution that often combines art and creative activities (with spaces and technical facilities for exhibitions, rehearsal, performances, workshops) with a focus on diversity (a variety of activities, users and user groups), civic engagement, involvement of volunteers and openness to bottom-up initiatives. The centres are normally closely tied to the local neighbourhood and often run on a rather low budget (with a mix of public and sometimes private funding and tickets/fees) while at the same time offering open and flexible spaces and combining professional and amateur as well as cultural and social activities" (Eriksson et al., 2017, page 3). Paul Bogen defines cultural centres (according to Bogen- arts/cultural centres) as functioning, multi-disciplinary centres with some form of physical space and location (Bogen, 2018). According to Bogen, multi-disciplinary in this definition means more than one art form/discipline being part of an organization's activities (production and/or presentation) and relates more to arts/cultural centres than to performing arts organizations, that are most often devoted to a single discipline (Bogen, 2018).

According to Järvinen, there are many aspects that need to be considered when topologizing cultural centres and one of these aspects is their classification by organizational types. Järvinen points out that according to the organizational typology set out by management researchers Barry Bozeman and Hal G. Rainey, organizations can be divided into two main groups: private and public. Regarding cultural centres, he observes that "some are, for instance, joint-stock companies, some NGO's, others are maintained by municipalities or by the state. Some may even be joint ventures between private and public owners. The two fundamental categories seem nevertheless to be private and public, with some alternative combinations" (Järvinen, 2021, page 4). Paul Bogen also points out that specific performance differences exist between the state and municipality cultural centres financed by public funding (which in turn entails a degree of political and artistic oversight over these institutions) and the so-called 'independent' cultural centres (private legal structure such as an association, limited company, foundation, co-operative, NGO, etc.). Independent Arts/Cultural Centres refer to centres that are not state, regional or city-owned and managed institutions and, therefore, outside of and independent from political/artistic control (Bogen, 2018). However, as previously mentioned, the lack of data on European cultural centres complicates the accurate analysis of the proportion of public versus private sector cultural centres. Researchers also suggest that the organizational type of the cultural centre influences its mission, aims, and functions because public cultural centres are primarily related to the realization of national, regional, or municipal cultural policy goals. In contrast, private centres themselves decide which type of cultural services to provide (Bogen, 2018, Järvinen, 2021, Jurėnienė & Skaistė, 2018).

According to Bogen, when defining and classifying cultural centres, it is important to take into account the different use of the terms in different countries. He draws attention to the fact that the 'arts' and 'culture' have different definitions in English and non-English-speaking countries. "Arts as a term is primarily used in English-speaking countries to mean the Performance, Media and Visual Arts together with Literature. In most non-English speaking countries, the equivalent term used is either 'cultural' or 'culture'. Therefore, the term Arts/Cultural Centres can be used to encompass both the English and non-English speaking most common descriptions of the culture centres [..]" (Bogen, 2018, page 7).

Hungarian researcher Péter Inkei in his research about socio-culture, concludes that there is no single/conventional name for cultural centres in the international cultural policy arena which could be applied to these cultural institutions and the content they produce (Inkei, 2016). The problems of the development of cultural centres and their roles in culture policy have been analysed in the following contexts: in the context of cultural democratization and cultural democracy (Mulcahy, 2006; Dragićević Šešić & Dragojević, 2005), cultural decentralization (Kawashima, 2004), quality of life (Seed & Lloyd, 1997), access to culture, cultural rights and social participation (Laaksonen, 2010) and others. However, at the level of international cultural policymakers and researchers, a common definition of cultural centres has not been put forward, hence the use of terms such as "cultural centre", "socio-cultural centre", "cultural house", "community house", etc. Péter Inkei raises the issue of defining cultural centres as a separate cultural domain in the cultural policy agenda. He proposes to treat it as a socio-cultural domain and to use the term "socio-cultural centre", which has been used in Germany since the 1970s, as a unifying term for the various modifications of cultural centres. The German term 'Soziokultur' suggests two essential features of the concept: it is a sector at the crossroads of the cultural and social spheres, a hybrid. This approach highlights the fact that although cultural centres are primarily cultural institutions, their activities are very much related to society. Cultural centres often not only perform cultural functions but also cover areas that do not fall under the classical cultural sector, such as child and youth care, education, social services, urban development, and the environment. Socio-cultural centres serve the neighbourhood, the city, and the region. They are culturally, socially, or politically active associations, initiatives, and groups; their premises and technical facilities provide rehearsing and production opportunities for music and theatre groups, as well as studios for artists and others. They offer open space for debate and socializing (Inkei, 2016). However, as Inkei points out, there is no consensus among cultural policymakers and cultural centres themselves on this approach of bringing all cultural centres under the umbrella term 'socio-culture', as many cultural centres do not associate themselves with this term for various reasons (Inkei, 2016).

To summarise, there is a broad consensus among researchers on three aspects of the definition of cultural centres:

1) A cultural centre is a cultural institution that has a venue and appropriate technical equipment for cultural activities.
2) Multidisciplinarity of a cultural centre (regarding its functions, activities, and events).
3) Socio-cultural dimension of a cultural centre with a strong focus on local communities as its primary target audience.

The author has identified the following problems regarding defining and classifying cultural centres:

1) there is a lack of aggregated and comparable statistics on cultural centres in Europe;
2) no comparable statistics are available on the breakdown of cultural centres by organizational type;
3) there is no common cultural policy understanding of the field of cultural centres and the role of these cultural institutions in the implementation of national cultural policies;
4) different names are used for cultural centres in different European countries;
5) there is a lack of studies systematically collecting information on the diversity of functions and activities within cultural centres.

The further research aims to identify the most characteristic functions of cultural centres in Europe and suggest a classification model based on the functions of cultural centres.

Methodology

This article is a systematic, analytical review identifying challenges in defining and classifying cultural centres and proposing a classification model as a result of the study. The research strategy uses qualitative research methods - the data extraction and analysis methods that are characteristic of qualitative research. The following methods were used: a comparative analysis of scientific literature, document analysis as well as secondary data analysis.

Qualitative content analysis was used as the method of data analysis. In the context of the study, qualitative content analysis was used to identify the most frequently used definitions of cultural centres and the list of functions of cultural centres in academic literature, previous studies, cultural policy documents and normative acts. The statistical data on the number of cultural centres in European countries compiled by Compendium was also analysed to identify in which countries and by which dimension they are collected and compiled.

The issues of definition and classification of cultural centres were studied in two stages. In the first stage, a review of the existing theoretical approaches in the scientific literature and previous research on the topic was carried out. The main problems regarding the definition and classification of cultural centres set out by researchers were identified, and further research question was thereupon based on the identified problems. In the second stage, an analysis of scientific literature, documents and secondary data was carried out to provide an answer to the research question posed by the author.

Results

In order to find out what approach is used to classify cultural centres in the cultural policy discourse of European countries, an analysis of the available data provided by 43 European states in their culture policy online database, *The Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends,* was carried out. *The Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends* is the only database that, to the best knowledge of the author, provides in-depth information about European cultural policies and cultural institutions, including data about cultural centres. Analysis of the data revealed that the database's information on cultural centres is incomplete and does not provide a thorough overview of the field (the data is shown in Table 1). Data analysis leads to the conclusion that *The Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends* tries to gather data about the number of cultural centres in Europe, as well as determine their belonging to the public or private sector. This approach is partly in line with the classification of cultural centres by organizational types analysed in the literature review. Data about mixed public and private model centres are not available. Despite creating a structure responsible for gathering data on the proportional investment of both public and private sector cultural institutions of the participant states into different aspects of culture, most of the 43 states have no data at all or only partial data available on cultural centres. Even then, it is mainly contained to public sector cultural centres. At the same time, it is essential to note that the database categorizes cultural centres under the domain of 'interdisciplinary', and the unified descriptor for cultural centres is socio-cultural centres/ cultural houses (The Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, 2022).

Table 1. Socio-cultural centres/cultural houses in Europe (Source: author's compilation)

Country	**Total number of cultural centres**	**Public sector (Number of cultural centres)**	**Private sector (Number of cultural centres)**
Czech Republic, Poland, Romania*	Data available	Data available	Data available
Germany	Data available		No data
Austria	No data	No data	Data available

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, The Netherlands, Russia, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Ukraine	No data	Data available	No data
Albania, Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Holy See, Italy, Lichtenstein, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland	No data	No data	No data

In order to identify the functions of cultural centres that are highlighted in the cultural policy reports of European countries, an analysis of the national cultural policy profiles available in the Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends database was carried out. It was found that the activities and functions of cultural centres are addressed in the different national reports in the following aspects: participation in cultural life (various forms of participation in cultural life, including traditional and amateur art activities); access to arts and cultural services (with a focus on local communities as its main target audience), the right to equal access to cultural activities (with a particular focus put on those parts of the population which are "socially excluded); arts/cultural education and life-long learning; children and youth artistic education; intercultural dialogue and social integration; cultural heritage preservation; leisure and recreation - including sports activities and activities for different interest groups; political work and district/community work (The Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, 2022). Regarding the data summarised in Table 1, it can be assumed that the information in the cultural policy overviews is mainly relevant to public sector cultural centres and their activities.

As has already been pointed out, the multiple operating models of cultural centres that have developed over time vary widely across European countries. They have been shaped by historical, political, and socio-economic processes, as well as by the national, regional, and local specificities of each country. According to Bogen, "early examples of Arts/Cultural Centres' in the biggest part of Europe can be traced back to initiatives established by labour movements in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries (up to the Second World War), which were extensive in Europe. For example, in England, they were part of Union facilities and civic buildings called People's Palaces; in Scandinavia, Folkets Hus (People's Houses) and in Spain, Ateneos or Casa del Pueblo's" (Bogen, 2018, page 18). Bogen points out that these centres were not established as arts/cultural centres, per se, but encompassed a wide range of facilities not available to the broader community at that time, such as education, health care and social services. However, they often included spaces for arts and crafts and venues for theatre and music (Bogen, 2018). As an example of early cultural centres can serve the community centres built in Latvia and Estonia in the second half of the 19th century to provide space for various social, educational, cultural and leisure activities (Kulbok-Lattik, 2013; Cabinet of Ministers, 2009). In Bulgaria, cultural community centres were also established in the mid-19th century, the national name of which is *chitalishta*. As stated in the report of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the first *chitalishta* were set up in 1856, and they have been a fundamental organizational unit of Bulgarian society ever since. *Chitalishta* performs cultural and educational activities aimed at safeguarding the customs and traditions of the Bulgarian people, ensuring access to information, and distributing knowledge. Nowadays, in accordance with the *Chitalishta Act* of 1996, *chitalishta* are non-governmental self-regulatory organizations. *Chitalishta* is central to the process of transmitting intangible cultural heritage in the country (UNESCO, 2017, Santova & Nenova, 2010).

According to Bogen, "after the Second World War, the rise of the welfare state across much of western, northern, and southern Europe and public funding for arts/culture allowed for Arts/Cultural Centres' to both be established and supported by the state [..]. Furthermore, in the Soviet-controlled Eastern block of European countries, every city, town and often village had a state-run and managed 'Culture House', many of which still exist today" (Bogen, 2018, page 18). In the second half of the 20th century, alongside state and municipally subsidized cultural centres, various types of non-governmental and private sector cultural centres began to emerge in Western Europe. As researchers at Aarhus University point out,

cultural centres have historically combined different objectives in their activities, which means that their functions can vary widely. “These include promoting active citizenship through cultural and artistic activities, revitalizing abandoned industrial buildings and developing neglected urban areas, enhancing creativity, community, networks, entrepreneurship and innovation” (Eriksson et al., 2017, page 3). In Thomas Järvinen's study on private cultural centres in Denmark, the majority of cultural centre operators interviewed said that producing versatile cultural and arts offerings to residents was their core function. Several respondents emphasized that public sector cultural centres subsidized by the state/municipality perform broadly similar functions as private cultural centres and are a strong competitor to private cultural centres. However, the positive aspect of this competition is that private cultural centres are therefore looking for different innovative, non-traditional, contemporary forms of cultural activities and offer cultural services that are lacking in the municipality's cultural offer. At the same time, it is pointed out that cultural centres operating as businesses, in order to survive financially, need to be able to balance the performance of functions important for the development of society and culture with the provision of commercially viable services, which include the rental of premises, catering services, the organization of corporate business-to-business events, etc. (Järvinen, 2021). Paul Bogen's study on European private and non-governmental cultural centres indicates that 83% of the fifty arts/cultural centres surveyed rent out space in their buildings for a range of different purposes and activities, which plays an essential financial role in their business models. 84% of the centres either have a bar, cafe, restaurant, shop, or commercial art gallery in their buildings. As regards the functions performed by these centres in the field of arts and culture, the Bogens study shows the following results: "the centres produce or present 13 different art form types, and on average, each centre presents or produces eight different art form types: 93% present or produce visual arts, 84% present or produce music, 82% present or produce theatre, 78% present or produce film/video, 60% present or produce dance, 53% present or produce club nights/party's, 49% present or produce new media, 47% present or produce outdoor festivals, 40% present or produce storytelling, 29% present or produce crafts, 29% present or produce comedy/cabaret, 24% present or produce circus/carnival, 22% present or produce literature, 24% of the centres present or produce ten or more different art form types. All centres' programmes include some form of education or participatory activities such as workshops, classes, debates, and lectures (Bogen, 2018, page 27). It can thus be concluded that private cultural centres perform artistic and cultural functions, educational and community engagement functions, as well as provide commercially viable services.

An important function of cultural centres, both private and public, is the provision of leisure and recreational activities for community residents. According to Lithuanian researchers, cultural centres are treated as one of the most important cultural institutions in Lithuania that organize recreational activities in local communities. This is explained by the fact that the network of cultural centres is vast, they are established in small towns and villages, and the activities organized by them are accessible to a large number of people (Jureniene & Stonyte, 2016).

Researchers also emphasize that cultural centres play an important role in the provision of cultural-educational, informal educational and educational activities in the local communities (Jurėnienė & Urbonienė, 2014; Urbonienė & Jurėnienė, 2015) and in the field of children and youth artistic education (Jurėnienė, 2012). Many cultural centres have a cultural heritage preservation function, especially in the field of intangible cultural heritage (Jurėnienė & Urbonienė, 2012). Lithuania is one of the few European countries with a law on cultural centres. The law defines the following functions of culture centres: “Centre for culture [..] fosters ethnic culture, amateur art through its activities, creates artistic programmes, develops educational, recreational activities, satisfies community cultural needs, and organizes dissemination of professional art” (Seimas, 2004). The Bulgarian Cultural Centres Act, on the other hand, defines the following functions: development and enrichment of cultural life, social and educational activities in the localities where they operate; preservation of Bulgarian folk customs and traditions; involvement of the population and expansion of knowledge about scientific, artistic and cultural values and achievements; strengthening of national identity; provision of access to information (National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2020). The law on cultural centres has recently been adopted in Latvia too. It defines the following functions of municipal cultural centres: 1) organization of cultural, lifelong learning and continuing education activities; 2) ensuring the continuity of the Song and Dance Festival tradition, ensuring the activities of amateur and folk art groups; 3) ensuring access

to professional arts and culture, supporting creativity and the development of local creative industries; 4) preserving and developing the local cultural environment, identity and intangible cultural heritage; 5) promoting historical research and local studies, participating in the development of cultural tourism services; 6) identifying and gathering the cultural needs of the population living in the municipality (Saeima LR, 2022).

Nowadays, the role of cultural centres in building civil society is particularly emphasized, and the different forms of public participation implemented in cultural centres are brought to the fore. "In cultural centres "citizen participation" is frequently stressed as a key goal. Despite variations in organization, size, economy, and facilities, they all share the aim of involving citizens as participants in (voluntary) socio-cultural activities" (Eriksson et al., 2017, page 4). Also, the European network of Cultural centres highlights the importance of the activities of cultural centres for cultural equality, intercultural communication, democratization, and active civic participation (ENCC, 2021).

To sum up, cultural centres have historically developed as gathering places for the public and, at different stages of their development, have performed **not only cultural functions but also educational, leisure/recreation and various social functions**. In line with public demand and the needs of cultural policymakers, cultural centres continue to perform these functions today. When classifying the functions of cultural centres, it should be taken into account that private cultural centres also perform commercial/business activities.

Based on the analysis of the above information, the author proposes the following model for classifying the functions of cultural centres (see Table 2).

Table 2. A model for classifying the functions of cultural centres (Source: author's compilation)

Dimension	Functions
Art/Culture	Providing access to arts and cultural services; Producing/disseminating versatile cultural and art products (exhibitions, performances, concerts etc.); Providing communities with diverse cultural participation opportunities, including amateur art activities; Safeguarding cultural heritage, local traditions and ethnic culture; Collecting and distributing information on culture.
Education	Providing cultural education and informal education; Offering children and youth artistic education; Offering life-long learning opportunities; Offering education or participatory activities such as workshops, classes, debates and lectures.
Leisure/Recreation	Providing access/venue to leisure time activities; Organizing entertainment events; Organizing recreational events and activities.
Social	Providing integration activities; Advancing intercultural dialogue; Enhancing community participation, community work and volunteering; Promoting active citizenship through cultural and artistic activities.

Conclusions

According to researchers who have focused on the study of cultural centres in Europe, one of the main challenges in coming up with a comprehensive definition and classification of cultural centres is their great diversity and differences both in terms of their functions, activities, missions, and objectives as well as in the context of governance models and resource availability.

Although the literature review shows that there is no single definition and characterization of cultural centres in Europe, researchers generally identify three parameters that characterize most cultural centres (regardless of their legal form): 1) multifunctionality (offer and functions), 2) socio-cultural aspect and orientation towards the local community and 3) having a building/technical equipment.

The author has identified and proposed a chart with four main dimensions characteristic of cultural centres: 1) art/culture; 2) education; 3) leisure/recreation; 4) social.

The author identifies other problems related to the definition and classification of cultural centres as areas for further research: the lack of comparable statistics/reports that would allow to compare the activities of cultural centres in several countries, as well as to assess the proportional importance of each identified dimension in the activities of cultural centres; to compare and assess the differences and advantages of different organizational and legal forms; to assess the instruments of cultural policy support in European countries to ensure the activities of cultural centres.

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