

Cultural clusters in the Alps – The role of cooperation for positive cluster effects

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Abstract

The Alps are located in the heart of Europe, linking seven countries - France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Liechtenstein, Austria and Slovenia – and representing a dynamic cultural and economical environment. This geographical region gives hospitality to different ethno-linguistic groups overlapping their cultures and sharing one common natural element, the mountains. Culture, as a way to communicate and to convey the experience of a group of people, represents a relevant economic cross-sector field in the Alpine region that is a precondition to interconnect public and private cultural organizations with enterprises of the tourism and service sector operating within a concentrated geographic area.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the possibility to develop cultural clusters building on the cultural resources and the tourism infrastructures in the Alps and to highlight the implications and potentials of co-operation approaches (horizontal, vertical and diagonal) between the different actors. An empirical analysis by structured questionnaire was addressed to the cultural city councils of the Alpine cities in order to reveal the dynamic of the cultural sector both in the city and at a regional level. It also highlights the framework and strategic orientation of the modern cultural policy, as well as the co-operation and communication intensity and the perception of the strategic value of cultural tourism. In-depth semi-structured phone interviews were conducted in the most dynamic cities in order to reveal the present situation.

This study shows that the potential to develop cultural clusters in the Alps is higher at a regional level rather than in the city, highlighting a positive attitude to co-operation not only in the cultural sector but also within the other sectors, mainly in tourism.

Keywords: cultural cluster, cultural tourism, co-operation, horizontal co-operation, vertical co-operation, diagonal co-operation, Alpine region, Alpine culture

1 Introduction: Culture as a local resource

The Alpine region is located between the European cultural spheres - the Roman and the German – expressing an integrated development of culture and economy (Bätzing '97). Some Alpine cities were founded by the Romans along their commercial ways. In the Middle Ages, castles became the centre of trade and community. The mountain agriculture life style is strictly connected to the traditional events and gastronomy, to nature and to the romantic atmosphere of the “Bauernhof” and the “Alm”, typical Alpine farm buildings and settings. The industrial era saw the emergence of an urban society and of the expressions of high-culture and fine arts represented in theaters, concert halls, cultural associations, etc. Nowadays, the concept of culture in the Alps is evolving in a dynamic framework which linked

culture to life style and cultural identity, environmental awareness and open-air sport, a way to feel part of a society and to successfully create the first Alpine economic sector, tourism.

Culture in a particular context, means the shared way of life of a given people, comprising their modes of thinking, acting and feeling, which are expressed, for instance, in craft and food, religion and language, art and custom, as well as in the material products such as houses, clothes and tools (Kneller, 1965). It is a mix of **symbolic and spiritual values** strictly connected to the natural environment and to the inherited experiences of everyday-day life and activities, which characterize the identity and the sense of belonging to a culture. Those values are expressed through myths and fairy tales creating the traditional atmosphere, as well as through music and folklore enforcing the sense of community, and through handcrafts and special skills showing the capability to adapt to the local resources producing architectural and artistic goods which represent the **local cultural production**. Traditional values find expression in a dynamic culture and discover new ways to be performed and evolve through the contact and exchange with international artists and artistic expressions.

The Alpine culture is a popular culture implemented by the mountain inhabitants and centered on the **natural mountain environment**, creating a “romantic atmosphere” and representing an important economical resource (Pro Vita Alpina, Réseau Alpin des Espace Protégés 200 - EU-Program Culture). The Alpine inhabitants should become the “**preserves of an Alpine heritage**”, transmitted through the silence of this landscape, the difficulties and uncertainties of all-day life in the mountains, as well as the co-existing of the traditions of a multilingual group of people, both sharing a unique mountain identity and maintaining the uniqueness of each culture present in the single valleys (Zanzi, 2002). The concept of a popular culture is highlighted by the Alpine Convention in the work-in-progress protocol about “Population and culture” which floods the definition of culture in the Alps over the, so defined, “high-culture” represented through arts, music, dance, theater and literature, including traditional, economical and all-day life-style (Haid, 2000), as the expression of a dynamic society which recognizes the value of heritage both as cultural identity and tourist attraction element. The **cultural identity** of the Alpine population represents the key factor for a geographical concentrated economical development (Bätzing, 1997), which allows the optimization of resources use, the communication of specific know-how, the support of co-operation among local economical actors. Group values and ideas influence human activity. They symbolize both a reference system for human activities and a reference system for all objects used within this system (Bendixen, 1997). In the era of the globalized economy, the possibility to differentiate the local offer has an increasing importance; so, traditional culture becomes a relevant resource for the **Alpine tourism** (Haid and Haid, 1999).

Tourism includes everything that has to do with traveling and spending holidays in a world away from ones own culture. It can therefore be seen as a journey or stay in a “counter world” where travelers are on the quest for the originality and authenticity of other groups and cultures (Keller, 2000). It is tourism that makes culture accessible, if it is visible or physically present. Cultural tourism is more than just a visit of material and immaterial symbols and objects, on the contrary, it represents a cultural exchange provided by a mix of cultural and supporting services offered in a certain market (Pechlaner, 2002). The **cultural resources** in an Alpine city or within the region offered to tourism are based both on cultural sites such as castles and historic houses, traditional farm and modern architectural buildings, as well as cultural institutions like museums, theaters, operas or concert halls (Heinze, 1999) and on their relation with the support infrastructures like hotels, restaurants, transport and shopping facilities. Porter affirms that the “quality of a visitor’s experience depends not only on the appeal of the primary attraction, but also on the quality and efficiency of complementary business” (Porter, 1998). Thus, tangible resources can be considered as destination resources, even when not directly used for tourism (Abfalter and Pechlaner, 2002).

Furthermore, culture is more than a product of society and history, it is a **dynamic development process** of the social, cultural and economic surroundings, having an influence and being influenced by other and global cultures. In this sense traditional cultural products are reinvented or performed in a new way, maintaining their fundamental meaning and responding to the customer needs evolution.

2 Theoretical background of a cultural cluster

Clusters are geographical concentrations of interconnected companies, specialized suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions in a particular field that compete and cooperate (Porter, 2000). In this context, cultural clusters may be defined as concentrated sets of relationships between different cultural organizations and between cultural organizations and other sectors, tourism at first. The cultural cluster theory has been developed in the seventies as a strategy to revitalize industrial dismissed urban zones. Thus, the cultural sector was rediscovered as a synergetic development field implementing both quality of life standard and value of building (Valentino, 2002). The city of London was the first to apply this theory when renovating the image of the South Bank Centre and realizing the infrastructure of the Tate Gallery, supported by transport facilities and the organization of special events. Glasgow, Paris and Amsterdam followed this strategy in order to develop cultural tourism, creating new cultural and tourism centers able to attract artists, tourists and local people and supporting co-operation among these actors (Pearce, 1998, Batten, 1995).

Cultural clusters in the Alps have to be defined following local heritage and identity factors, as culture is an essential characteristic of Alpine tourism and among the most important attraction factors. Thus, the Alps benefit of an established identity and tourist image strictly connected to the local heritage and cultural atmosphere of traditional life style and festivals. Graz is the European Cultural City of the year and cultural tourism represents a relevant niche for the majority of the Alpine destinations, which develop the sector in order to improve the quality of the offer, to stimulate tourists to spend more days in the region and to attract visitors also during the off-season. Thus, the development of a cluster must be based on the local existing resources, aimed at the specification of the orientation of cultural strategies and focused on the integration of the local actors. Cultural clusters in the Alps could be defined at two levels: first at an urban level, because of the closeness of the local resources which facilitates the tourist visit and the investments efforts mostly represented with the “high culture” of international festivals and events. A second option regards, the development of co-operation at a regional level, which will allow the realization of cultural itineraries among the little towns and the country surrounding the city, an option more related to the traditional folklore and able to redistribute the tourist revenues.

A cluster is an alternative way of organizing the value chain and among the best options to support the growth of small and medium enterprises and their ability to compete effectively in the global economy/cluster of independent and informally linked companies and institutions. A cluster represents a robust organizational form that offers advantages in efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility (Porter, 1998). Destination management applies this concept to stimulate the use of co-operation as a strategy for the integration of services according to specific customer’s needs. None of the single cultural enterprises are able to provide a complete cultural package since tourism is a combination of services and activities intricately linked to one another and to the local environment (Osti, 2001).

Rats (2001) identifies five cluster dimensions: 1) a cluster consists of agents, 2) that are related through linkages, 3) who use resources, 4) to develop activities and 5) who are all located in the same region. Authors decided to focus on the second dimension related to the linkage developed between the local actors of the cluster, analyzing the compatibility, and the synergies grown up among the

participating businesses. Thus because, business activities clustered together generally have a greater drawing power than dispersed and isolated businesses engaged in the same activity (Russel and Pryor, 2000). Three forms of relationships are recurrent in clusters (Russo, 2001):

Strategic alliances

Strategic alliances set up horizontal coordination between units placed at the same stage of the production process. Cooperation and process coordination can be established between traditional cultural attractions (cultural heritage, country farms, museum and fine arts), new cultures (hi-tech and hi-touch, sub-culture) and the events industry, sports, performing arts, cinemas. The proximity of these activities is fundamental for the open circulation of the human skills and experiences from one field to the other. Horizontal co-operation is focused on sharing basic competencies in order to increase economies of scale, the sharing of know-how and the definition of common marketing strategies in order to reach a wider target.

Vertical linkages (supplier-producer-consumer-cooperation)

Vertical relationships can exist between the cultural industry and related sectors such as the public and non-profit sector, the tourism/travel industry or the business/congress sector. Development of cooperation initiatives at any level of the value chain of local cultural production as well as supplier-producer-consumer co-operation allow to develop different products and to reach demand-niches.

Diagonal partnerships

The formation of diagonal partnerships aims at realizing complex products and services between the cultural industry and other strategic sectors like banking, insurance, telecommunications, advertisement or press. Culture is an information-intensive service sector; a transversal co-operation allows for an enrichment of the offered service and an increase of communication channels.

The aim of this paper is to identify potential cultural clusters in the Alps, revealing the background elements for development and analyzing success factors. At first, the analysis of the background elements which guided the implementation of the questionnaire will be presented, followed by the highlight of the positive effect of clustering. The interrelated elements which influence the **growth of a cluster** are grouped in (A-B-C van den Berg, Braun, van Winden, 2001):

- Spatial-economical conditions (A)
- Organizing capacity regarding the cluster (B)
- Cluster-specific conditions (C)

The authors further define:

- Cultural-tourism conditions for cluster (D)

(A) The functioning, dynamics and opportunities of cluster development are largely dependent on the general economic and spatial conditions which relates to the presence of demand of cultural products both from residents and tourists, and to the cultural policy framework. Demand conditions are influenced by the quality of life and the experience component, thus income, level of education and attractiveness of a city create the market for cultural products. The cultural policy framework is communicated through the enforcement of public-private partnerships and further education, financial support and deregulation tendencies of the state stimulate local actors to invest in this sector.

(B) The organizing capacity regarding the cluster relates directly to the willingness and attitude of the actors to cooperate and transfer knowledge and information. As mentioned before, three typologies of co-operation and knowledge-transfer could emerge among the cluster agents: between cultural organizations (horizontal), between cultural organization and tourism (vertical) and between cultural suppliers and service sectors. Moreover, the satisfaction with the intensity of communication and the start-up of internet-based facilities should be analyzed.

(C) The cluster-specific conditions try to individualize a cluster orientation in the strategy of the cultural policy. The development of a cultural-city image and positioning, the priority attributed to the uniqueness and innovativeness of cultural projects which show the willingness to become a distinctive cultural venue. The support of co-operation between cultural institutions and the integration in the development of new cultural initiatives with the tourist board and service sector represent a high potential for the formation and development of clusters. Furthermore, the following factors have an influence: vision and strategy are an important starting point, but also political and societal support and leadership have to be taken into account (Van den Berg, Braun, van Winden, 2001). Leadership is based on people i.e. co-operation partners, government, society, stakeholders, employees and other persons or interest groups affected by the development of the cluster (Abfalter and Pechlaner, 2002).

(D) The cultural-tourism conditions for cluster development stressed the strategic value of cultural tourism both in policy and in marketing orientation. It reveals the drawing up of special offers and information campaigns, as well as the target orientation focused on day-guests or tourists, using culture to support the off- or peak season. The development of cultural tourism, as highlighted in the previous analysis, requires the support of the local authority because of its synergetic effect on the local economy. Policy is instrumental to the development of high added value sectors, aims at optimizing quality rather than maximizing quantities and has an integral and long-period approach (Russo, 2001).

The first successful factor, when creating a cluster, is linked to the geographical scope that Porter relates to the geographical distance in which informational, transactional, incentive and other efficiencies occur (Porter, 2000). The closeness of the actors allows both co-operation and competition, to provide a specialized market and infrastructure. Moreover in tourism, attractions are best carried out when physically grouped together (Gunn, 1994) in order to facilitate mobility of the tourist during the stay. Thus, the relationships and the collaboration between the different organizations and sectors may lead to the following **positive cluster effects** (Porter, 1998; 2000):

- Stronger competitive advantages
Clusters represent a combination of competition and co-operation, the first to win and retain customers and the second to survive in the global market. These two elements coexist because they are based on different dimensions. The combined strengths of the partners permit each partner to perform better. Furthermore, alliances make it possible to obtain resources and share experiences with partners without acquiring or being acquired by others (Mühlbacher, Dahringer, Leih, 1999).
- Innovation, flow of information and knowledge diffusion
Due to increased knowledge spillovers, clusters clearly recognize and rapidly react to new buyers needs as well as to new technological, operating or delivery possibilities in innovations and new products.
- Access to specialized input and employees
The awareness of the existence of a market for special needs pushes both producers and the government towards an increase of research and the production of new products. The growth of a cluster creates high specialized areas which require and attract professional employees.

- Economies of scale, increased profits
Since stronger competitive advantages and a higher number of innovations lead to increased profitability, clusters can enhance the profit rates of the participating firms (Hoen, 2001). Moreover, the proximity and increase of communication allow a decrease of transactional costs.
- Business start-up
The low entrance barriers, the high demand of specialized services and the high rate of spin-offs increase the number of business start-ups, mostly represented by small specialized industrial and service enterprises. The Business start-up is one of the most important indicators for the positive development of a cluster.

Furthermore, **cultural cluster effects** are the following (Santagata, 2002):

- Valorization of fairs and festivals linked to cultural local products and traditions;
- Attraction of international artists and festivals;
- Recovery of the historical patrimony of buildings;
- Use of the landscape as an economic resource;
- Cultural dissemination of eco-museums, cultural centers and wine cellars;
- Creation of cultural parks and tourist cultural itineraries.

Different clusters will have different determinants and effects, since the nature of cluster processes will diverge. The objective of this study is to explore the existence and the potential for a development of cultural clusters in the Alps, the accordant effects and the relations to the environment. Most of the cultural organizations in the Alpine area are small or middle-sized. Thus, clusters appear to be especially important for these structures; “Small and medium-sized establishments might not be at a disadvantage at all compared to large firms, as long as they are able to benefit from the advantage of clustering” (Humphrey, Schmitz, 1995). So the geographical proximity is important for small firms in order to benefit from the spread of tacit knowledge.

3 Empirical analysis

The Alpine region has around 13 million inhabitants, 60% of them living in cities where the greatest part of the cultural infrastructures and the major cultural associations are based. Therefore, the authors decided to carry out an empirical study on the potential of cultural clusters within Alpine cities. The European Academy of Bolzano together with the University of Innsbruck conducted:

1. a survey study in the cities of the seven Alpine countries
A self-administered questionnaire was sent via fax to reveal the dynamic of the cultural sector in the Alps and to identify the potential for the development of cultural clusters. Interviewers were the cultural city councils.
2. Case studies in Italy, Austria, Germany, Switzerland and France
The case studies, conducted through interviews, focus on the cultural offer, the identification of the actors operating in the sector, the existing relations within and outside the city and organizational factors such as leadership, vision or strategy.

This approach allows for an integration of qualitative and quantitative analysis and should generate a deep understanding of cultural clusters in the Alpine area.

3.1 Questionnaire

The cultural cities' survey is based on a standardized self-administered questionnaire sent to the 220 members of the "Alpine Cities Association", a satellite organization of the CIPRA – International Commission for the Protection of the Alps. The selection of this database derives from the difficulties met in the definition of an Alpine cultural city, since this study seems to be the first in this specific field. The evidence suggested addressing the questionnaire to the cultural city council of the Alpine cities in order to receive information only from the municipalities which had a similar council office. Altogether 62 valid questionnaires returned, 4 municipalities replied that they would not dispose of a relevant cultural offer. The evaluated questionnaire spread across France (8,1%), Italy (25,8%), Switzerland (19,4%), Germany (22,6%), Austria (17,7%) and Slovenia (6,5%) (The municipality of Liechtenstein answered that according to the city surface and cultural offer it would not be able to fill in the questionnaire). The questions were codified in 5-point Likert scales. Mean values refer to the (arithmetic) mean of the characteristics of a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very bad; 2 = bad, 3 = satisfactory; 4 = good, 5 = very good). A concluding series of four questions were codified in percentage scales in order to demonstrate the intensity of communication (0% = no communication; 100 = very intensive communication). The questions investigated whether the potential to develop a cluster exists in the city and within the region, common implications of the local cultural policy and the strategy to support the emergence of a latent existing cluster. Particular attention was attributed to the cultural tourism sector. According to the theoretical background presented in the previous paragraph, the questionnaire was full up, relating to the city and to the region, considering: spatial-economical conditions, organizing capacity regarding the cluster, cluster-specific conditions and cultural-tourism conditions for clusters.

The first table shows a series of means quite similar between the city and the region, showed by the overall rates related to the local cultural policy of 2.78 for the city and 2.74 for the region.

Tab. 1 – Means of spatial-economical conditions

A – Spatial-economical conditions	For the city					For the region/district				
	①	②	③	④	⑤	①	②	③	④	⑤
Enforcement of further education in the cultural management sector										
Interest of tourist target groups in culture										
Interest of the majority of the population in culture										
Increasing importance of the 'experience factor' in										
cultural policy?										

The cultural city councils of the Alpine region estimate low rates of the current spatial-economical conditions for the growth of a cluster, requiring a better support in further education of cultural managers (the actual situation shows a mean of 2.62 for the city and 2.73 for the region) and an enforcement of public-private partnership (the actual situation shows a mean of 2.55 for the city and 2.56 for the region). A particular attention is attributed to the deregulation tendencies of the state (the actual situation shows a mean of 2.44 for the city and 2.36 for the region) and to the cutback of financial supports for the cultural section, which highlights a particular negative situation at the regional level with a mean of 2.06, versus the situation for the city at 2.74. The public financial support of the cultural organization is a central problem for the city council who stressed the social implication of the cultural sector in the determination of the local quality of life. A satisfactory situation emerges according to the interest in culture, both of the tourists and of the local population. The highest mean values refer to the increasing importance of the “experience factor” related to the atmosphere of the cultural events and infrastructures in the city (mean of 3.47) and in the region (mean of 3.38). A positive innovation trend is achieved through the establishment of new distribution channels on the Internet (the actual situation shows a mean of 3.08 for the city and 3.06 for the region), as culture is an information intensive service sector.

Tab. 2 – Means of organizing capacity conditions

B – Organizing capacity regarding the cluster	<i>For the city</i>					<i>For the region/district</i>				
	①	②	③	④	⑤	①	②	③	④	⑤
Regular horizontal co-operation										
Regular vertical co-operation										
Regular diagonal co-operation										
Horizontal transfer of knowledge and information										
Overall co-operation and communication between the differing cultural organizations?										

The mean values of the organizing capacity conditions regarding the development of a cluster show different potentials between the city and the region, highlighting the importance of the proximity as a successful factor for the growth of a cluster. As shown in tab. 2, co-operation between organizations relating to culture is rated negatively, only the horizontal co-operation within the city presents a minimum satisfactory rate. Regarding the transfer of knowledge and information, the horizontal and vertical conditions relating to the city level show satisfactory means. When analyzing each form of relationship separately, the means of the horizontal co-operation and communication between cultural organizations is satisfactory at the city level (3.00 city co-operation mean and 3.20 city communication mean) and negative within the region (2.83 regional co-operation mean and 2.65 regional communication mean). The cultural organizations of a geographical context should cooperate in order to attract new customers instead of competing with the same target group. Regarding the vertical relationships developed between cultural suppliers and the tourist, transport and congress service sectors, the city councils highlighted a negative situation concerning co-operation, slightly better in the city (2.80 mean) than at the regional level (2.92). This may be due to the attraction that the city has on the regional population and to the distribution of the cultural resources within the surrounding district. Through the interviews, a deeper understanding of this situation was gained. Concerning to the sharing

of competences between the cultural and the tourist city office, both mostly pursue a common strategy but organize the events separately targeting different groups of people, the cultural office targeting internally and the tourist office targeting externally to the tourists. Thus, the vertical communication is considered positive by the city with a mean of 3.21 - because of the common strategy development - and negative for the region (2.69 mean). The diagonal relationships built between cultural suppliers and special service sectors such as banks, information technologies, advertise, press and insurance companies are not developed (mean 2.95). A strong incentive for the development of diagonal co-operation is represented by the destination-card which reinforces the linkage among the local actors.

Tab. 3 – Means of cluster-specific conditions

C – Cluster-specific conditions	For the city					For the region/district				
	①	②	③	④	⑤	①	②	③	④	⑤
Explicit orientation for achieving a certain image										
Explicit priorities for financing cultural projects										
Priority for the uniqueness of cultural projects										
Priority for the innovativeness of cultural projects										
Consideration of the needs of the population										
Consideration of the needs of tourism										
Support of cooperation between cultural institutions										
Explicit orientation of the entire cultural sector										
Integration of tourist organizations in the										

Tab. 3 tries to gain further insight into the strategic orientation of the cultural policy, showing an overall better situation at the city level with a satisfactory mean rate of 3.02 against a value of 2.92 at the regional level. An analysis of each single element of the cluster-specific conditions the cultural city councils of the Alps revealed a satisfactory situation in the explicit orientation of the city towards the development of a cultural image (mean 3.15), attributing priority to the uniqueness of the cultural projects (mean 3.10), to the support of co-operation between cultural institutions (mean 3.18) and to the consideration of the population’s needs (mean 3.30) and of the tourism (mean 2.98). These rates show a potential to build-up a common vision and a distinctive image of culture in the city, addressing both locals and tourists. A negative evaluation at the city level is expressed in relation to the integration of the tourist organization and the service sector into new cultural initiatives (the means are 2.68 and 2.61), as well to the innovativeness of cultural projects (mean 2.87) and to the explicit formation of priorities for financing (mean 2.79). This problematic view of the situation shows the need to develop a sound relationship between the actors in order to increase the economical and social importance of the cultural sector which will allow to increase funds and to attract new ideas. The potential for the development of a regional common strategy targeted at the formation of specific cluster conditions is even smaller. For the region’s cultural strategy only the consideration of the needs of tourist presents a satisfactory rate of 3.10, but more interesting is the relatively high mean rate of

2.92 in the integration of the tourist organization in cultural initiatives, which highlights the distribution capacity of tourism over the border of the city.

Tab. 4 – Means of cultural-tourism conditions for cluster development

D – Cultural-tourism conditions for cluster	For the city					For the region/district				
	①	②	③	④	⑤	①	②	③	④	⑤
Drawing up cultural-tourism marketing										
How do you rate overall the strategic value of cultural tourism?										

A specific block of questions regarding cultural-tourism conditions for the growth of clusters were included in the questionnaire in order to reveal the connections between culture and tourism. An overall positive situation is attributed to the strategic value of cultural tourism with a mean rate of 3.02 for the city and of 3.10 for the region. The strategic value attributed to cultural tourism has a mean of 3.09 both for the city and for the region. The offer of cultural tourism is positive in the city (mean 3.26) as well as in the region (mean 3.16), focusing on excursionists (day-guests), on tourists and on the support of the peak season offer. Thus, culture represents one of the most important tourist attracting factors of the Alpine cities. A lower focus is put on the support of tourism during off-season, while it could represent the way to attract new target groups and to decrease seasonality. The integration of business and cultural tourism could show a new opportunity to retain guests for the weekend. Another point discussed in the interviews is the low mean rate of the drawing up of cultural marketing-campaigns which is of 2.79 for the city and 2.88 for the region. During the interviews it became clear that the cultural-tourism marketing-campaigns are in the competence of the tourism board and not of the cultural council who only advertises the events within the city or the region.

3.2 Case studies – Bolzano, Graz, Kempten, Lucerne and Grenoble

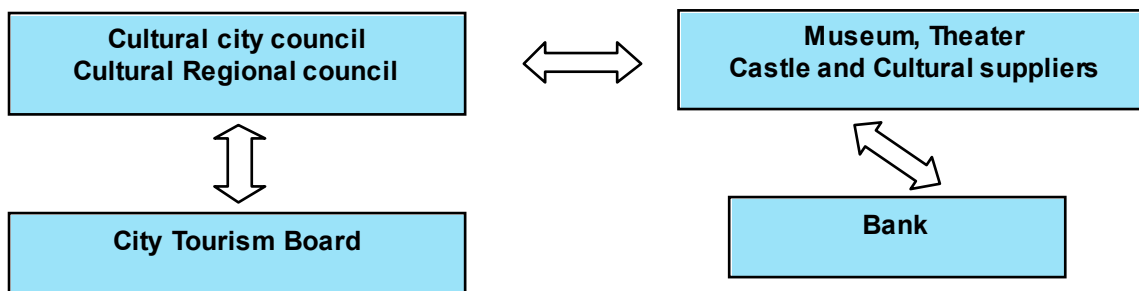
The semi-structured interviews prove to be an indispensable and very rich source of information for an in-depth analysis of the attitude to the recognition and development of cultural clusters in the Alpine region. Strategic and operative policy aspects highlighted in the questionnaire were discussed with the cultural city councils of the following cities: Bolzano (Italy), Graz (Austria), Kempten (Germany), Lucerne (Switzerland) and Grenoble (France). Further it was aimed to identify the key organizations and actors (firms, knowledge institutes, government) and to highlight how these organizations are strategically linked within and outside the city; Another issue was the presence of formal and informal co-operative structures, joint facilities and joint projects in the cultural field as well as within the

cultural and the tourist and service organizations. These cities were selected according to their specific attitude towards representing and communicating the Alpine culture.

3.2.1 Bolzano

Bolzano is a bi-cultural city located in Italy and influenced by the influence of an Austrian identity due to the historical belonging to the Austro-Hungarians Empire until the Second World War. The particular characteristic of the bi-cultural city of Bolzano is its language parity, 69% of the 94.000 inhabitants speaking Italian as their mother tongue, 30% speaking German and 1% Ladin, as well its wealth of gastronomical, architectural and artistic expressions. The heritage of Bolzano derives from its Roman foundation and is further characterized by Gothic, New-Gothic and fascism architecture. Bolzano is marked as a city with a “commercial spirit; mercantile and artistic riches”, the Italian Alpine capital. Regarding the city strategy, culture is actually an alternative way to market the city’s image which is composed of the attraction factors of the mountains, the sun and the quality of life, as well as being a shopping possibility and providing an alternative to rainy days. But the long-term cultural strategy has a vision and a goal; Bolzano aims at becoming the European Culture City of 2019. The most important cultural attractions are the New City Theater, the Grieser City Theater, the Theater Carambolage, the Cinema Library, the House of Culture “Walter von der Vogelweide”, the Regional Auditorium, the Auditorium Roen, South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology, the Municipal Museum, the Museum of Nature South Tyrol, the Mercantile Museum, the Museion - Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, the castles of Runkelstein, Maresch, Sigmundskron and Rafenstein, historical churches and the Fruits and Vegetables Day-Market in the city center. The most representative events are the International Piano Festival Ferruccio Busoni, the Gustav Mahler – Musik und Jugend, the International Dance Summer of Bolzano, the Film Festival and the Christmas Market. The cultural infrastructures and events are both privately and publicly run and managed.

Fig. 1 Co-operation Relationship in Bolzano (Italy)



The city’s cultural strategy is developed by the main political actors - the Cultural City Council and the Cultural Regional Council in collaboration with the City Tourist Board without a central meta-management structure. Periodical meetings among these actors take place in order to define the cultural policy and to organize the most important events. On the operative stage of the event organization, the horizontal co-operation with and among the main cultural suppliers is developed, as well as a vertical co-operation between the cultural and tourism organizations. Diagonal co-operation grows between cultural suppliers and as sponsors of special events - mostly banks, as well as between cultural and catering suppliers in order to complete the cultural offer. The willingness to cooperate is high, both in the city and within the region, but has to be supported by the development of a cultural cluster in order to grow up properly.

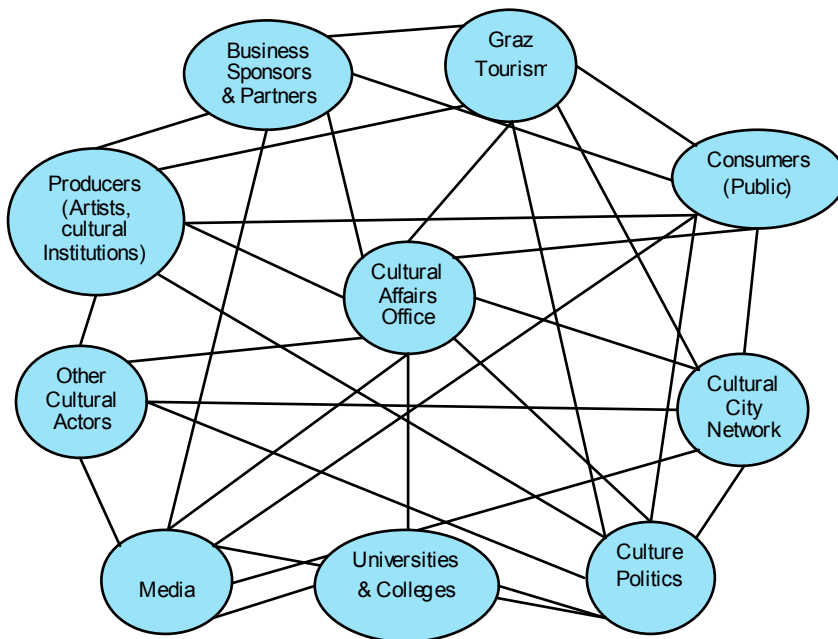
3.2.2 Graz

Having its roots in the 12th Century, the medieval city of Graz is the commercial and cultural capital of Styria, a province in the southeast of Austria. Graz is Austria's second largest city with approx. 250.000 inhabitants, disposing of a comprising educational and cultural infrastructure, that has been designated "Cultural Capital of Europe 2003" by the European Union.

Concerning the architectural heritage, the Stable Bastion on the Schlossberg (Castle Hill), the Bell Tower and the Clock Tower, the Hauptplatz Square, the Landeszeughaus (Armory) and the Landesmuseum Joanneum are the most popular sights. The Old Quarter of the city is part of the UNESCO world heritage, being "a particularly fine example of the living heritage of a central European urban complex" and "an exceptional example of a harmonious integration of architectural styles from successive periods" [<http://whc.unesco.org/sites/931.htm>, 09 May 2003]. More than 80.000 people came to see the spectacular opening events to the "Cultural Capital of Europe 2003" in the inner city of Graz, but also other renowned festivals like the Diagonale, the "Steirischer Herbst", the Kultursommer including the Jazz-Sommer, La Strada and Classics in the City and smaller events add to a highly professional and multifaceted "free scene".

The Cultural Affairs Office of the provincial capital Graz sees itself as part of a network between those creating art and the city's cultural initiatives, as well as the political decision-makers. It facilitates contacts and encounters, and offers support in coordination, although they do not believe that the cultural life in Graz due to its variety could be co-ordinated. Thus, the cultural scene has freely evolved over time. Nevertheless (or for this reason) there is an extensive co-operation within the numerous public and private cultural actors. The Tourism Board (Graz Tourismus) is a close partner, performing the tourism agendas and communication. Also, the Cultural City Network (CCN), an association fostering and financing cultural co-operation between Central-European cities, has evolved to an important partner. A variety of cultural actors, such as the 3 universities and the colleges, the Forum Stadtpark or the association "mur.at", festivals such as Styriarte, Steirischer Herbst or the Academy Graz etc. are strongly involved in the cultural life of Graz. Co-operation with private businesses, banks etc. usually takes place in form of sponsorship, but can also be encountered as more intense culture-partnerships.

Fig. 2 Co-operation Relationship in Graz (Austria)



The cultural strategy of Graz consists of both the long-term conservation of traditional cultural sites like the opera house or the theatre and at the same time a clear commitment to the promotion of the free scene and a variety of small cultural (niche) productions. A concept on the sustainable development of cultural sites is building on the international dimensions of the year of European Cultural Capital. The close co-operation for the implementation of cultural policies of the Cultural Affairs Office with the responsible City Councils seems highly supported by the cultural actors. Information on the cultural offer of Graz is provided through the established as well as new media. The KulturServerGraz (www.kulturserver-graz.at) provides information on current cultural events and information on the cultural life, venues and platforms in Graz, as well as the access of the Cultural Affairs Office's services. Also, Graz still disposes of a variety of local journals and of local public and private TV- and radio stations. Graz clearly shows signs or at least a strong potential for the development of a cultural cluster.

3.2.3 Kempten

Kempten is the main town of the *Land Allgäu*, a region of Southern Germany with 68.000 inhabitants. The cultural image of the city is related to its 2000 years history; from the Romans to the Baroque architecture. The strategic orientation of the city council is not specifically addressed to cultural tourism, although heritage is considered the most attractive factor of Kempten. The city is marketed as a "nice place to visit, to live, to work and specifically for tourism, a raining days alternative during the holidays in Allgaeu", according to the Cultural Council. It benefits of the tourism demand attracted of the surrounding region, the most southern holiday region of Germany located at the border of the Alps offering an Italian atmosphere.

The most important attractions are the Archeological Park of Cambodunum, attracting almost 25.000 visitors per year, the Freilichtbühne – an open-air theater, the City-theater, the City-library, the City-archive of Kempten and five museums; the Allgaeu, the Alpenländliche Galerie, the Alpinmuseum, the Natur Museum, the Roman Museum. These cultural attractions are run directly by the city council which is responsible for the organization of the city's cultural events. The most important events are: the APC Sommer – an intense calendar of appointment taking place in the Archeological Park of Cambodunum during the four summer months; the Jazz Festival in the month of April and the Allgäu

Week in August. Concerning the private cultural associations, the Klechs and the local theater were mentioned during the interviews.

The cultural city council manages the cultural offer targeting both local inhabitants and tourists. Regarding cooperation, it can be showed that there is no public-private partnership and each infrastructure is run independently targeting specific groups of interest. The private cultural associations are supported through the refund of the yearly debts. The communication of the events is done by an internet page (www.kempten.de) and an event calendar. The answers showed willingness to cooperate, but without seeing the need. Hence, the potential for the development of a cluster is not apparent at the moment.

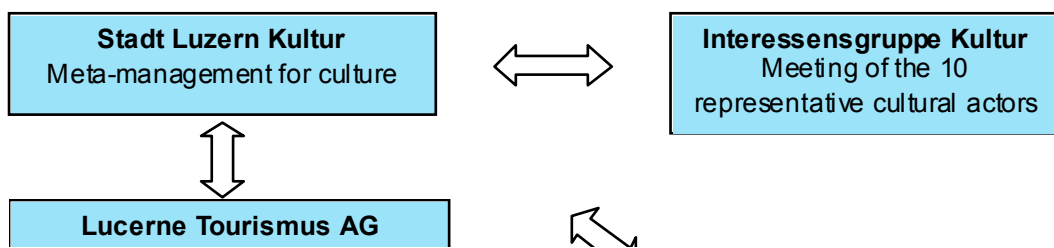
3.2.4 Lucerne

The city of Lucerne is located in the heart of Switzerland. Tourists associate the city image to the beautiful nature and landscape of the Alps, thus culture represents the added value of the local offer. The musical atmosphere of the festivals which take place in a city surrounded by the mountains and bordering a lake is creating a particular appeal benefiting of dynamic international expressions of culture in a traditional background. The *Stadt Luzern Kultur* develops the city image as a high-quality cultural provider, supporting the growth of alternative arts aimed at integrating and communicating the citizens' identity with the city.

The Culture and Congress Center KKL, the Cultural Center BOA, the Concert House Schüür, the Lucerneer City Theater, the Art Museum and the Alpineum Garten are the most important cultural infrastructures of the city, all run by private associations. The cultural event calendar is cramped, the Lucerne Festival takes place three times a year, the Blues festival, the Comics festival, the Gwand Fashion appointment and the World-Band festival are among the most attractive cultural initiatives. Strictly related to the Alpine Atmosphere, the city offers a night cruise including traditional music and dinner, typical restaurants and pubs, and in Altdorf, in the surroundings, an Alpentöne Festival of the Alpine music takes place.

The cultural vision is implemented by the Stadt Luzern Kultur, a public meta-management structure charged to coordinate and support the cooperation among the local cultural actors through the financing of the cultural projects. The cultural strategy is defined and discussed with a group of ten representative public and private cultural actors meeting quarterly as the *Interessengruppe Kultur*. Moreover, these periodical meetings allow the cultural actors to share their know-how and to develop common initiatives realizing horizontal co-operations. An intensive vertical co-operation is build-up with the *Lucerne Tourismus AG* and the local and regional means of transport. The co-operation between cultural and tourism actors concerns the cultural promotion, the event organization and the accommodation of guests; whereas the co-operation between cultural and transport actors concerns the connection facilities between the cultural infrastructures, free tickets to participate on cultural events and discounted tickets to reach the city from the towns of the surrounding region. Single co-operation initiatives are built-up directly among the private actors in order to achieve higher benefits of the development of a quality cultural offer. A diagonal co-operation between the cultural actors and the other services, i.e. banks, information technologies and advertising enterprises, is developed in order to offer e-ticketing services and Internet-advertise through the ticket-center of the Stadt Luzern Kultur and the Lucerne guest card. Moreover, the existence of the willingness to co-operate of the regional actors is shown through the implementation of cultural projects elaborated by the Regional-Cultural-Conference of which the Stadt Luzern Kultur is a member.

Fig. 3 Co-operation Relationship in Lucerne (Switzerland)



The cultural events are promoted within the city/region from the Stadt Luzern Kultur and to tourists from the Lucerne Tourismus AG. An internet platform (www.kulturnetz.ch) and a monthly issue of the culture magazine have been implemented in order to communicate the cultural offer; furthermore, the Stadt Luzern Kultur directly manages a ticket-office and the tourism organization offers a Lucerne guest-card. Lucerne endues all the fundamental criteria for the definition of a city cultural cluster within the Alps.

3.2.5 Grenoble

Grenoble is the capital of the Dauphiné or of the French department Isère with a population of 154 000 inhabitants and 415 000 people in the area. The reputation enjoyed by Grenoble-Isère for its quality of life is explained by the exceptional natural environment and the diversity of urban and cultural life in the region. Site of the 1968 Winter Olympics, Grenoble is a renowned skiing base with a spectacular location nestled amongst the mountains. Grenoble is also a scientific and industrial centre for France and has a large university population (about 10% of the population) which results in a cosmopolitan and lively city life. In addition to its own attraction, Grenoble is close to Lyon, Geneva, Italy and the French Riviera. High over the old city sits the Fort de la Bastille, built in the 16th and expanded in the 19th century; other important sights are the Palace of the Dauphins or the 19th century statue by Raggi, erected in homage to Bayard, the "fearless and blameless knight".

Artistic life in the area is promoted by the museums in Grenoble, such as, "Le magasin" - National Center of Contemporary Art, the Musée de Grenoble, the Musée Dauphinois or the Musée de la Résistance et de la Déportation de l'Isère, the Lyon Opera House or the Grenoble Theatre, as well as numerous smaller facilities. Grenoble disposes of a thriving artistic community, with jazz, rock and theatre festivals through the spring and summer months like "Jazz in Grenoble", "The Week of European Theatre", etc. The cultural policy of Grenoble is based on the "taste of exchange, diversity and innovation". With the artists' studios, a policy directed at the support of young creators, the establishment of a network for the cultural actors, the orientation on a pluralism of aesthetics and of contemporary expressions, Grenoble is clearly committed to - all artistic sectors concluded - creating conditions for a veritable cultural agitation, to arousing interest in culture in order to facilitate every person's possibilities for a real artistic or cultural choice and to open the own culture to other cultures. Information on cultural offers is communicated through various instruments used by each establishment such as brochures, newsletters etc. Furthermore, the Grenoble Tourism Office directs

specific actions at the information of tourists. Existing communication platforms include the City's Internet Page and the municipal journal "Les Nouvelles de Grenoble".

Coordination of cultural activities is provided through the team within the Direction des Affaires Culturelles, the city council's cultural office. The most important cultural actors within the city of Grenoble are the Maison de la Culture, the Musée de Grenoble, "Le magasin" - National Center of Contemporary Art, the network of 11 libraries in Grenoble, the Museum of Natural History, the national conservatory, the "Ecole supérieure de l'Art", the "Centre Dramatique National des Alpes" (directed by Laurent Pelly), the "Centre Choréographique National de Grenoble" (directed by Jean Claude Gallotta), the "Musiciens du Louvre Grenoble" (directed by Marc Minkowsky), the "Festival des 38ème Rugissants" (on modern music), The "Festival de jazz en Isère" and the "Cinémathèque". Grenoble shows very little activities of arts patronage and cooperation with business partners. Nevertheless, there is strong cooperation within the region, such as the creation of a "documentary passport" for all libraries in the 23 communes within the region. Grenoble also participates in a city network with Lyon, Chambéry, Annecy, St. Etienne, Bourg-en-Bresse, Valence et Roanne which is particularly active in the field of arts with a circulation of events, collaboration within the art schools and colleges and the conservatories and a partnership on scientific, technological and industrial culture. Thus, whereas the development of an internal cluster in the City of Grenoble is not advanced, the potential within the regional city network seems promising. A peculiarity in the institutional cultural environment in Grenoble is the Cultural Policies Observatory. Cultural observatories are institutions acting as mediators between various state bodies and other groups dealing with cultural planning and the general public. The Cultural Policies Observatory was created in 1989 in Grenoble with the support of French Ministry of Culture and the University of Social Sciences of Grenoble. It provides an interface between cultural central and local authorities and professionals and has a national competency in training, studies and researches, information and publications concerning cultural policies.

Cultural observatories have appeared with various objectives, but essentially, they exist to observe, monitor and disseminate information back to the cultural sector. The role of observatories on Cultural Policies can be defined differently depending on the level they focus on: At the multilateral level, the creation of observatories on cultural policies seems to be geared towards fulfilling a global clearing house responsibility in the cultural policy field, by making available comparative information on cultural policies and to share best practice and innovative thinking in cultural policy-making and implementation. At the regional level, the main preoccupation lies with the spread of cultural conflicts, which could be avoided by careful observation of cultural trends in a country and possibly prevent the spreading of conflicts. At the local level, the primary goal is to help the different communities to rebuild the educational gap between informational 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

4 The potential of the development of cultural clusters in the Alps

The Alpine culture focuses on heritage and its peculiar atmosphere which are expressed through traditional events and crafts, life style and identity, and have been integrated with the influences of the "international high culture" of theater, opera, concert and festival. The development of the cultural sector is relevant both to the improvement of the local quality of life and the attraction of tourists and business, thus culture is a very synergetic sector. In order to guarantee positive effects to local economy cultural organizations have to integrate their activities with the tourism and service organizations of the area (hotel, restaurant, transport and shopping facilities). The existence and the intensification of the relationships between the different local actors is an essential prerequisite for the identification and growth of a cluster. Following the example of the described cities, different forms of

relationships exist and could be developed: horizontal co-operation between cultural suppliers within the geographical area, vertical co-operation between cultural actors and other support services like tourism facilities, transport or congress organizers, and diagonal co-operation between cultural and other sectors. Culture represents one of the most important attraction factors of the Alpine region and cultural clusters are potentially present, both at an urban level and at a regional level. The closeness of the cultural resources in the city as well as in the region facilitates communication among the local actors, co-operation in the organization of cultural events and tourist visits of the attractions. Thus, vertical co-operations with the tourism and transport sectors at the regional level show the higher potential for the growth of cultural clusters in the Alps.

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Acknowledgements:

The information of Sandro Repetto (Cultural Council, Bolzano/Italy), Peter Grabensberger (Cultural Affairs Office, Graz/Austria), Ernst Reimann (Cultural Council, Kempten/Germany), Karin Auf der Maur (Cultural Project Collaborator, Lucerne/Switzerland) and Helga Sobota (Affaires Culturelles de la ville de Grenoble/France) for input on the case studies have been highly appreciated.

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