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FROM CULTURAL PRESERVATION TO GREEN COMPETITIVENESS: A HISTORICAL LITERATURE REVIEW OF GREEK CULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Constantinos Challoumis¹, Nikolaos Eriotis² and Dimitrios Vasiliou³

¹Assistant Professor at Philips University, Nicosia, Cyprus and Visiting Professor at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, Email conchall@uoa.gr;

challoumis_constantinos@philipsuni.ac.cy

²Professor at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, Email: neriot@ba.uoa.gr

³Professor at National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, Email: dvasiliou@ba.uoa.gr

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ABSTRACT

This research offers a historical literature review of the evolution of Greek cultural enterprises from a preservation-centered paradigm to a model oriented toward green competitiveness. Drawing on academic studies, policy documents, and institutional reports published between 2010 and 2022, the analysis synthesizes evidence on the interaction between heritage, tourism, environmental policy, and cultural economy. The review traces the early foundations of Greek cultural enterprises in the mid-20th century, highlighting their embeddedness in nation-building processes and tourism-led growth. It then examines the gradual convergence of cultural and environmental policies, the emergence of sustainability criteria in museums and performing arts, and the role of creative industries in green innovation. Particular attention is given to governance structures, public-private partnerships, funding architectures, and measurement challenges related to green competitiveness. The findings indicate that while Greek cultural enterprises increasingly adopt sustainability-oriented practices, regulatory fragmentation, funding inequalities, and regional disparities constrain coherent transition. The research concludes that cultural preservation, environmental awareness, and competitiveness are no longer distinct trajectories but interdependent dimensions of a broader green development framework, requiring integrated governance and cross-sectoral alignment to support long-term resilience.

KEYWORDS: Greek Cultural Enterprises, Cultural Heritage Preservation, Green Competitiveness, Sustainable Tourism, Cultural Economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture is defined as embodied symbolic systems, including languages, rites, paintings, concepts, institutions, and attitudes. The specific focus of the current review is on Greek culture, within which the concepts of preservation and competitiveness are examined. The historical trajectories of these two concepts are analyzed, offering a synthesis of five papers along with supplementary information. Published between 2010 and 2022, the papers draw on a wide variety of primary and secondary data, including academic articles, popular texts, policy documents, and Greek statistical yearbooks. The argument is supported by the information contained in these documents and texts. A methodological critical approach is employed. The papers explore the emergence of Greek cultural enterprises as a response to the growing tourism sector and outline their recent transformation toward green competitiveness. In Greece, the existing green and environmental policies dealing with cultural institutions and cultural, natural, and artificial resources still lack the degree of coherence and depth required for the smooth transition of these enterprises toward sustainability. Such a transition – the creation of a joint administrative and regulatory framework developing and promoting the cultural and environmental functions of Greek territory – offers the potential for generating synergies and mitigating the occasional tensions between tourism, cultural, and environmental development policies (Hudec et al., 2019; Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2015; Marinela, 2018; Pilotti, 2018).

2. CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS: CULTURE, PRESERVATION, AND COMPETITIVENESS

Culture is defined as the collection of beliefs, ideas, values, and knowledge that shape social groups and that offer frameworks for interpreting reality. Heritage is understood as a multidimensional concept encompassing the according preservation (the action of safeguarding past resources for the future) and the cultural economy (the interaction of the cultural sector within the national economy), whose interaction enables a creative approach to innovation and modernization, directed towards social and sustainability aspects. Preserving culture therefore sustains its formative role in social and economic life (Challoumis, 2023a, 2024a). The social value of a country's culture gives tourism and international reputation an economically significant role, and the aim of optimizing culture creates green

competitiveness for countries, business enterprises, and entrepreneurship. At the global level, sustainable development incorporates protection against natural disasters, while studies on the financing and promotion of conservation and tourism development highlight policy convergence on green and cultural development. Policymakers also place increasing importance on brand differentiation through environmental protection. Other research notes that the protection of natural and cultural resources has never been closer, as leases associated with tourism and environmental protection converge towards one end: sustainability through the economy (Baloch et al., 2022; Challoumis et al., 2025; Deirmentzoglou et al., 2025; Koutsi et al., 2022; Terkenli & Georgoula, 2021; Theodora, 2020). Cultural policies, on environmental protection, and tourism marketing, tools with a focus on green growth, also seem to be adopting similar orientations: action reflects more harmonious and cooperative initiatives.

Although the Greek cultural landscape is shaped primarily by organizations operative in the domain of cultural heritage, the previous cultural economy framework also recognizes a second set of cultural enterprises: those responsible for the production and realization of contemporary artistic services and products. Academic discussions of cultural enterprises active in contemporary artistic domains are less pronounced. Nonetheless, the first conditions supporting such enterprises can be traced to the emergence of an economy based on the production of culture and identity, internationally promoted through tourism, where culture's role is solely that of a flow generator. It is during the mid-20th century that Greek cultural enterprises first come to fruition, and are recognized as such, albeit in a very embryonic manner. In this period there is no coherent formal cultural policy; it is a period, in fact, of policy neglect. In the 1930s and during the Second World War, the first attempts to form a cultural policy concern the country's rich cultural-historical heritage and the exploration of its potential for tourism. There are monographic studies and publications about several remarkable archaeological sites, such as the Acropolis of Athens, Knossos, Delphi, and Olympia. These developments continue in the post-war period, when, primarily through the efforts of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, infrastructure development contributes to a significant increase in visitor flows both to these major monuments and to other cultural sites throughout the country (Gourgiotis et al., 2021; Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2020; Koutsi & Stratigea,

2021; Lampropoulos *et al.*, 2025; Theodora, 2019; Tsartas, 2003; Vassi *et al.*, 2022). The demand for tourism also engages a large number of private investors and operators, and the economic, social, and cultural benefits of tourism become widely acknowledged. Despite the lack of coherent cultural policy, the historical heritage and antiquities are the first determinants of the country's identity and continuity, and several public and private actors begin to promote them as a source of revenue generation, identity, and, more recently, even national cohesion (Hudec *et al.*, 2019; Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2015; Marinela, 2018; Pilotti, 2018).

The emergence of heritage as culture shaped Greece's cultural, social, and economic fabric. Following independence, scholars articulated the need for heritage institutions, not necessarily museums, to stitch together the fractured parts into a coherent whole. The collection of objects started with the establishment of the Byzantine Museum and gained momentum with the opening of the National Museum in 1889, staunchly localizing the material expressions of the past within an increasingly dense configuration of powers at regional, national, and global scales. Their status as nation-builders brought legitimacy to their operation and funding but rendered them vulnerable to the expansion of cultural policy into the realm of tourism. While continuity with the past was central to cultural preservation, the economic relevance of the interwar and post-war periods prompted the development of supporting narratives and funding instruments. Heritage institutions were neither the only nor the first institutions to embody ideas about national identity and the connection of modern Greeks to their ancient ancestry. Under a different guise, the first records of travel were also sources of expression of a cultural identity (Li *et al.*, 2022; Nocca, 2017; Papazoglou, 2019). These institutions appeared at the level of economic policy much later, as actors in a tourism-powered cultural economy. Yet the historical and museological narratives expressed in their collections, the threshold for their operation stipulated in the Law for Antiquities, and the strict legitimacy of their activities were closely related to the emergence of the tourist as an operator investing for the first time in experiencing the country's culture. The risk for culture by associating the administration of major heritage sites with education and tourism was perhaps better captured in a report on the economic impact of tourism on the Greek economy rather than in the protests against the 2004 Olympic Games.

Mid-20th-century tourism development in Greece

marked a turning point for the cultural economy, as increasing international visitor flows drove physical infrastructure investments and new forms of creative expression in both the public and private sectors. The visitor experience for mass tourism was not only shaped by the provision of transportation, hospitality, and archaeological site facilities. Varied cultural offerings were also essential in courting tourists in search of authenticity, with the performance of different aspects of Greek culture – particularly those with roots in the ancient world – serving to enhance its appeal, branding, and identity. Yet the clearest and most direct contribution made by the culture sector to tourism growth arose from the economic benefits provided by major international events and exhibitions. These were accompanied by the creation of dedicated institutions & organizations (e.g. the National Tourist Organization of Greece) and the development of cultural policies and programs aimed at either attracting foreign tourists or enhancing aspects of the tourist experience. Both tourism and cultural policies were marked by the need for effective governance, yet each sector seemed to have developed its own means by which to pursue key aims (Gkoltsiou *et al.*, 2021; Gkoumas, 2019; Papadaki, 2024; Sarantakou, 2025; Štreimikienė *et al.*, 2020; Zafeiropoulos *et al.*, 2021). Tourism development through the second half of the 20th century had a profound and often controversial impact on Greek society and the Greek economy. It involved not only the establishment of the country as a major holiday destination that attracted some 15 million international tourists in 2019 but also an increasing focus on tourism as a major engine of growth for the overall economy. In the early 1960s, tourism directly contributed almost 7% of GDP, a share that, after fluctuating over the next two decades, surpassed the 10% margin during the 1980s and 1990s and peaked at over 23% in 2019. Beyond its economic weight, tourism was recognized as being of wider social, political, and cultural significance because of its potential for creating linkages within the economy (both vertically and horizontally) and between nations (Hudec *et al.*, 2019; Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2015; Marinela, 2018; Pilotti, 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a purely theoretical and literature-based methodology grounded in historical and conceptual analysis. No primary empirical data collection, econometric estimation, or statistical modeling is conducted. Instead, the research relies on a structured synthesis of existing academic publications, policy documents, institutional reports,

and historical sources published mainly between 2010 and 2022. The methodological orientation is interpretive and analytical rather than quantitative, aiming to reconstruct the intellectual and policy trajectory linking cultural preservation, tourism development, environmental policy, and green competitiveness in the Greek context. The research design follows a critical historical review approach. First, key concepts—culture, preservation, competitiveness, sustainability, and green growth—are conceptually clarified through comparative engagement with relevant theoretical traditions in cultural economics, public policy, and sustainability studies. Second, the literature is organized thematically into three analytical pillars: (a) the historical foundations of Greek cultural enterprises and their relationship with nation-building and tourism, (b) the convergence between cultural and environmental policy frameworks, and (c) the institutional, governance, and funding structures shaping contemporary cultural enterprises. The analytical procedure consists of qualitative synthesis and conceptual mapping. Sources are not treated as isolated contributions but as components of a broader narrative trajectory. Through cross-referencing arguments, policy shifts, and institutional developments, the research identifies patterns of convergence and transformation. Particular attention is given to the evolution from a preservation-dominant model toward a green-competitiveness orientation, emphasizing how sustainability criteria progressively enter cultural governance discourse. The methodology also incorporates a normative-analytical dimension. Rather than merely describing developments, the study evaluates the coherence of regulatory frameworks, the alignment between environmental and cultural policy instruments, and the conceptual consistency of green competitiveness indicators. This evaluative layer remains theoretical and argument-based, grounded in comparative literature and policy analysis rather than in original measurement or case-based empirical testing.

Limitations inherent in a purely theoretical methodology are acknowledged. The absence of original quantitative data restricts causal inference and prevents the measurement of economic magnitude. However, the conceptual depth achieved through integrative synthesis allows for a structured understanding of long-term institutional evolution and policy convergence. The contribution of the research therefore lies in clarifying conceptual transitions, identifying structural tensions, and proposing an integrated interpretive framework that

connects cultural preservation with green-oriented competitiveness within the Greek cultural economy.

4. THE SHIFT TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY AND GREEN COMPETITIVENESS

The literature documents the emergence of a sustainability discourse in the cultural sector and convergence of environmental and cultural policies, a trend echoed by supply-side responses, notably stakeholder engagement in green branding, eco-tourism, and eco-friendly cultural exports. Evidence of market adaptation reflects changing consumer behavior, as demonstrated by indicators of green competitiveness (Bekeeva, 2024; Fang et al., 2022; Gutkina & Martynenko, 2024; Kranioti et al., 2022; Maksimeniuk & Timakova, 2022; Mu & Aimar, 2022; Ocheredko & Tastemirova, 2024; Saakian, 2024; Tropina et al., 2024; Vassi et al., 2022). Convergence between environmental and cultural policy instruments is well established. While many environmental laws and regulations make explicit or implicit references to cultural values, integrated instruments (for example, the EU Regulation on the Establishment of the Creative Europe Programme) and cross-sectoral networks are also emerging. Yet integrating environmental considerations into the formulation and implementation of cultural policy remains a challenge. The cultural sector lacks a specific regulatory framework, and efforts towards a more comprehensive strategic environmental assessment of cultural policies are limited. Greater cross-sectoral governance quality and improved regulatory alignment could therefore support a more coherent and effective approach to cultural policies and their environmental dimension (Fafouti et al., 2023; Guizzardi et al., 2021; Imperiale et al., 2021; Koutsi & Stratigea, 2019; Kyvelou & Gourgiotis, 2019; Olivadese & Dindo, 2025; Pavlidis & Markantonatou, 2020).

4.1. Environmental Policy and Cultural Policy Convergence

The wide-ranging impact of the global climate crisis is also reflected in the convergence of environmental policy and cultural policy. For example, a meeting of the OECD Tourism Committee pointed out that while tourism can play an important role in achieving cultural preservation, it is equally important to integrate it with the promotion of environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Environmental challenges, such as the depletion of natural resources and environmental degradation, make it necessary to consider tourism from a sustainable development perspective. Moreover, the

relevant documents of the OECD Secretariat state that tourism too must become greener, taking into consideration the challenges posed by climate change and environmental degradation, and the need to conserve the natural and cultural heritage of tourism destinations for future generations. In the light of climate change and environmental degradation, the need for coherent cross-sectoral government action is emphasised, along with the alignment of policies regulating tourism and other economic sectors such as transport, waste management and land use. Such actions should aim at reducing the carbon footprint of tourism and be integrated into the management of natural and cultural resources (Harfst et al., 2021; Kontopyrakis et al., 2024; Kranioti et al., 2022; Linaroudis et al., 2025; Papakonstantinou & Papadopoulou, 2024; Pop et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2022). UNESCO has long been aware of the impact of climate change on the protection and management of natural and cultural heritage. In recent years, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre has been actively contributing to both climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts through a wide range of activities – research, capacity-building, policy development and partnership – and has initiated several projects entitled “Culture in a Changing Climate”. At the same time, decision-makers at different levels are increasingly aware of the potential of culture to serve as an important asset for facilitating adaptation to climate change at the community level through the preservation of identity.

4.2. Green Branding and Cultural Exports

The quest for green growth in the Greek economy has brought intensity to several segments of tourism, including the development of eco-tourism and the promotion of environmental protection in cultural policy. This development is not a matter only of tourism marketing but also one of internalization in the culture of the monuments and sites of attraction. The enlargement of the concept to Cultural Enterprises makes visible a wider sector on which convergence around green indicators operates. Regulatory instruments of environmental policy, mainly for Pollution Prevention and Control, with somewhat less emphasis on discrete Cultural Policy instruments for Cultural Enterprises – such as those for Culture, Travel and Tourism, and Culture and Sport – exhibit a comparable convergence toward a shared Green Brand. In addition, the creation of new relevant indicators of “Green Competitiveness” has highlighted parts of the Cultural Sector that incorporate and present the idea of sustainability for Greek products and cultural visitors. Green growing

represents a new trajectory on the map of growth and survival of these sectors, a trajectory that addresses in an integrated way today’s challenges and, especially, the concern about the environment which is, beyond marketing, a challenge of the current production model, of development patterns with ad hoc qualities for every region and area (Cerquetti et al., 2022; Di Turo & Medeghini, 2021; Malisiova & Kostopoulou, 2024; Perperidou et al., 2021; Skordoulis et al., 2020; Weng et al., 2019). In this context, the added historical perspective reinforces the usefulness of a part of the concept of Conservation-Creation, more specifically the dimension of Creation-Social Value, without discarding the others but contrasting case by case their role on the total evaluation. Such historical review confirms the progress of Cultural Enterprises toward sustaining-evolving practices and production models. By integrating parameters of ecological growth and mindfulness, the Contemporary Performing Arts turn to home-grown patterns without undermining their relationship with the global space. Digital Media and Creative Industries drive innovation toward “green districts” based on a common Cultural Ecosystem with participative links for the promotion and production of Digital Cultural Content.

5. INSTITUTIONS, POLICY INSTRUMENTS, AND GOVERNANCE

Greek cultural enterprises comprise a wide array of institutions and organizations involved in the creation, maintenance, and management of cultural products and services – from music festivals and archaeological sites to design studios and cultural foundations. All these publicly and privately owned institutions have established a diverse and highly variable ecology, raising a host of questions on governance, funding, and organizational contexts. The mapping of Greek cultural enterprises is complicated by the fact that the term enterprise is generally not used in the cultural sector; from a cultural economy perspective, moreover, most entities engaged in the production of culture do not operate for profit (Andreeva & Andreeva, 2024; Chen, 2024; Chernyakova, 2024; Druzhinina, 2024; Efimets, 2024; Kirillova & Kostrykina, 2024; Luan, 2024; Panchenko, 2024; Popova, 2024; Seidamat, 2024; Sledzevski, 2024b; Tarasova & Fayzova, 2024; Temerbekova et al., 2024; Tseva et al., 2024). The existing public-private partnerships in the cultural sectors of Greece remain limited, however, and are predominantly driven either by philanthropic motives or by the apparent need to attract private

funds for cultural activities that would otherwise remain unfunded. There are few emerging trends toward partnerships that aim to share the cultural risk while maintaining the public character of the activities. The first important step in the mapping of cultural enterprise is the identification of the main public policy instruments that constitute the funding architecture of cultural sectors in Greece (Gerlitz & Prause, 2021; Gómez et al., 2021; Leka et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2022; Stamatou, 2024). This exercise includes not only the major funding sources and grant schemes of the Ministry of Culture but also of other ministries and institutions, such as the European Union, regional authorities, and private foundations. A second line of investigation explores blended funding and finance in the contemporary culture sector; a further issue is the definition of suitable impact and value measures that can be used to monitor and evaluate the cultural enterprises in modern Greece.

5.1. Public-Private Partnerships in Cultural Sectors

Public-private partnerships have emerged as a major model for governance in the cultural sectors of Greece, contributing to the management and operation of such enterprises while also ensuring that large-scale investments are shared among different partners with varying levels of risk. The cultural services and activities offered by cultural enterprises are generally not regarded as profit-maximizing activities, at least not in ethical terms. The establishment of a viable governance model allows for risk-sharing between public and private institutions and businesses, therefore significantly enhancing the sustainability of landmark cultural enterprises. Greek cultural enterprises are among the oldest in the world: museums and archaeological sites have been operating for centuries, and theatre has a long tradition linked to ancient Greece. More recently, however, both the number and the diversity of cultural enterprises have increased manifold and, as a result, their cultural, economic, and social contribution has grown (Bakogiannis et al., 2019; Fragkou & Sinou, 2022; Olszewski-Strzyżowski, 2022; Seguí-Amortegui et al., 2019). Meanwhile, the erosion of public finances worldwide and the gradual withdrawal of the state from several functions has led to the search for alternative sources and forms of financing and operation for cultural services and activities. Hence, the last two decades have seen the gradual establishment of public-private partnerships in the governance of cultural enterprises.

5.2. Funding Models and Measurement of Impact

Public-private partnerships, risk-sharing arrangements, diverse funding architectures, blended finance approaches, and specific grant schemes crucially shape the impact of cultural enterprises in Greece. Dependencies on international philanthropy and EU support are evident in festivals and archaeological sites, while museums remain nearly wholly reliant on the state. Funding available for cultural purposes includes grants from the Greek Ministry of Culture and Sports, the European Regional Development Fund, the EU Culture Program (EAC), the EEA Grants, and the European Economic Area, among others. The Ministry of Culture and Sports supports temporary exhibitions, educational programs, digital exhibition design, specific projects of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports, the restoration of works of art in public ownership, and a wide range of archaeological site activities (Avlogiaris et al., 2023; Dionysopoulou, 2021; Font et al., 2021; Kişi, 2019; Maksimeniuk & Timakova, 2022; Martínez-Martínez et al., 2022). Cultural grants aim to facilitate innovative ideas, adapt culture to new technology, make culture accessible to all, pursue intercultural dialogue, strengthen cultural heritage, promote informal learning through culture, restore and upgrade monuments, support public and public-benefit institutions, and support festivals and production groups in the performing arts (Challoumis, 2024c; Challoumis & Eriotis, 2025). However, the Ministry of Culture and Sports offers fewer opportunities for major, high-visibility projects than larger European countries.

6. CASE STUDIES OF GREEK CULTURAL ENTERPRISES

Recent historical literature examining Greek cultural enterprises documents and illustrates transitions toward sustainability and a green orientation. The enterprises are treated as sets of distinct economic activities embedded within the broader cultural economy and focus in particular on the green competitiveness of cultural production and consumption (Challoumis, 2024b, 2025a). These case studies acknowledge the complexity of measuring, monitoring, and assessing sustainability and green quality at cultural enterprises and introduce some of the criteria used in recent evaluations of Greek museums, performing arts organizations, and creative industries. The analytical framework for evaluating museums and archaeological sites

applying sustainability criteria highlights management dimensions, quality of the visitor experience, visitor-centered conservation actions, and funding sources that are mindful of future generations (Moropoulou *et al.*, 2021; Mu & Aimar, 2022; Taliouris & Trihas, 2021; Tseva *et al.*, 2024). Attention to ecological mindfulness informs an assessment of contemporary performing arts organizations that consider ecological funding, environmental policies underpinning production, and strategies for creating a more sustainable relationship with audiences. Building on scholarship addressing green innovation and the role of culture in fostering new sustainable technologies and products, the analysis in this section emphasizes creative industries such as digital media, film, design and fashion in relation to eco-innovation and ecosystems of entrepreneurial support and investment.

6.1. Museums And Archaeological Sites in the Sustainable Era

Modern sustainability principles evaluate museum activity from a range of perspectives. Examining contributions to sustainable development priorities, the visitor experience, and disaster management reveals an emerging ecological-mindful character. The evaluation relies on the International Council of Museums (ICOM) definition of sustainability as the demonstration of a positive impact in Economic, Environmental, Social and Cultural, and Ethical spheres across all categories of museum operation. ICOM's definition implicitly suggests that museums are primarily resources for the local economy, society, culture, and environment, and only secondarily for international tourism. Such local precedence accords with the priority accorded by Akhmetshina and Chevalier. Indeed, whereas Akhmetshina and Chevalier's framework places "meet local and tourists' expectations" at its zenith, visitation at the apex of a sustainability triangle, and the museum's ecological footprint lower down, evaluation of Greek archaeological-societal and ecclesiastical museums suggests a less-wholehearted embrace of ICOM thinking (Hudec *et al.*, 2019; Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2015; Marinela, 2018; Naheed & Shooshtarian, 2022; Pilotti, 2018).

6.2. Contemporary Performing Arts and Ecological Mindfulness

Contemporary performing arts and ecological mindfulness (1) What role does ecological mindfulness play in the contemporary performing arts? (2) What distinguishes ecological awareness

and concerns in funding, audiences, and operational practices in the performing arts? Arts and culture continue to foster personal reflection, social dialogue, and cultural shifts. In the performing arts, consciousness-raising and dialogue on sustainability are often left implicit. Nevertheless, more explicit ecological mindfulness is shaping the character of funding decisions and audience engagement, and influencing the adoption of policies and practices that support environmental goals. The substantial funding allocated for rehearsal and performance facilities—an investment that creates jobs and acknowledges the vital role that collective rehearsal facilities such as these play in cultural life—echoes stories of experimented-with transformation that explore the ethos of economical and ethical motion in the age of environmental disintegration (Challoumis, 2023b, 2025b). Eco-performance is an expanding cultural expression conceived and staged not only to evoke awareness of ecological issues or inspire audiences to consider personal choices but also to engage audiences as participants and co-creators. Environmental consciousness is ushering audiences to alternative experiences or different opportunities for viewing, hearing, or thinking. In this context, preserving the art of performance depends on the birth of theatre-artists willing to consciously engage with tradition as soil and not simply to be in the theatre's time to perform it; willing to allow habitation in the shadows of the theatre to shape an art of subtler beauty; willing both to promote and limit the publicity of their message; and willing to risk an oblique acceptance of silence rather than mutation (Chatzinikolaou, 2025; Jackson *et al.*, 2025; Lampropoulos *et al.*, 2025; Leka *et al.*, 2025; Linaroudis *et al.*, 2025; Olivadese & Dindo, 2025; Pan, 2025; Petrakos, 2025; Rivero, 2025; Sarantakou, 2025; Slipetskyi, 2025; "Socio-Cultural Competence: Why Theatre(-in-) Education Is Important for Every Post-Colonial Nigerian Child," 2025; Vázquez, 2025). The current pressures of environmental disintegration and the slow awakening of a critical environmental consciousness are encouraging echoes or dark shadows of an art that, for a time, proclaimed the mundane and often sordid soul of being human while at the same time granting some strength and meaning simply to the fact of human performance (Duric & Topler, 2021; Ibnou-Laaroussi *et al.*, 2020; Jackson *et al.*, 2025; Kostetska, 2018; Trivellas *et al.*, 2020; Tzatzaki, 2020; Yang *et al.*, 2018).

6.3. Creative Industries and Green Innovation

As forces of social and economic transformation, tourism and creative industries have emerged as

collective means for a new sense of innovation and differentiation. Greece's creative industries assume a central role in implementing green-growth strategies, with digital media, design, publishing, gaming, advertising, entertainment, and the performing arts acting as stimulants for entrepreneurship and innovation. In this context, the roots of competitiveness and resilience lie particularly in creative fields that foster digital and technological alignment within innovative ecosystems. The perspective here tends toward a more comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurship, considering the complex interactions and mutual influences between cultural industries and tourism services. The digital revolution is radically changing the Greek media sector, yet it remains far behind global trends in demand and investment. Compared to the geographical size of the country, the market is small, and substantial dependence on foreign production houses limits critical mass. The need for a comprehensive view of the sector, including its smaller parts, is therefore pressing. Apart from the animation sector, evidence of digital games is also limited. Audio-visual production, in turn, is increasingly focused on television due to the lower risk and investment requirements relative to cinema. While the film industry sees a steady decrease in domestic film production, Greece's geographical and climatic diversity makes it an attractive destination for foreign production companies, with dedicated film commissions now facilitating incoming audiovisual services. The augmented reality and virtual reality sectors show interesting growth prospects. Concerning the life sciences, the cultural industry constitutes a promising entrepreneurship area, with strong scientific expertise and major activity of young biologists in the audiovisual field of health (Alam & Islam, 2021; Chernitskaya, 2024; Fatoki, 2021; Jia et al., 2022; Karagianni & Anastasios, 2024; Kyriakopoulos et al., 2023; Petrakos, 2025).

7. CHALLENGES AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

While the need for environmentally sustainable practices and economic development is recognized for cultural enterprises in the country, the previous overriding priority—preserving culture for future generations—is still equally important. The balancing act needs to accommodate contrasting pressing demands from many different stakeholders, each pursuing their own objective. Another facet with a different logic is embedded in the uncertainty in institutionalized funding. As public funding becomes tighter, all performing arts organizations

have been compelled to increasingly seek private support and sponsors. The growing reliance on private fund has three major consequences: the distribution of funding has become more uneven; part of the funding tends to concentrate on the more easily marketable productions or investments; and a form of cultural commodification is emerging, with the preferred patrons deciding both the types of production, experiences, or events and their content. The tensions between organizations' mandates to conserve and restore the past for the benefit of future generations and the growing demands for contemporary and experiential expressions reflecting current societal issues and environments, often with a transitory dimension, need to be addressed (Alam & Islam, 2021; Duric & Topler, 2021; Kostetska, 2018; Kyriakopoulos et al., 2023; Petrakos, 2025; Yang et al., 2018). The discussions on regional equity, financing availability and accessibility for all layers of the population reflect the different sides of the same coin. The external legitimacy of the performing arts mainly rests on achieving high quality, being a major tourist attraction for both foreign and local visitors and instilling a sense of belonging to the local community. Yet the pursuit of quality and claims of excellence can marginalize part of the local population, particularly the socially vulnerable, while the increasing richness and novelty of the experiences pursued in tourism can undermine the social relevance of many productions, thus also compromising their justified claim for public support through taxpayers funds (Islam, 2020; Kirmikiroglou et al., 2024; Pan, 2025; Rivero, 2025).

7.1. *Balancing Preservation with Modernization*

The preservation of ancient monuments, though a prerequisite for their resilience and the transmission of archaeological knowledge necessary for their appreciation, is rarely the end goal of cultural institutions. The unexpected emergence of these sites on the global tourism map inevitably rendered them objects of political and economic interest. The complex relationship between tourism development and contradictions among local, national, and private interests and exploitation patterns becomes evident as the flow of visitors increases, tourism acquisition becomes hyperconcentrated, and the boundaries of St. George beyond links to the local impact of natural disasters become apparent. Even in ordinary situations or at off-peak times, visitors rarely engage with the sites or their management in meaningful ways (Challoumis et al., 2025; Deirmentzoglou et al., 2025; Iakovleva, 2024; Papadaki, 2024; Sakhnovskaia,

2024; Sledzevski, 2024a; Stamatiou, 2024; Tkachenko, 2024; Yakovleva, 2024). The pressure from the tourism industry has sought to index the audience solely in quantitative, rather than quality-of-experience, terms. For a long period, the discussion revolved around the negative consequences of mass tourism. Ecotourism was viewed as a possible alternative, although its credibility has since come to be questioned. The impact of tourism extends to every aspect of Greek civilization, including performing arts, cultural industries, archiving, festivals, and every sector associated with culture. Cultural policies have often pointed to the need to bring tourism and culture together. No marketing, however, can be more persuasive than accessibility and quality. With both resources in common supply, the future of culture-policy is less green-oriented investments than an effort to improve management quality, cultivate new audiences, and enhance the experience of everyday actors (Alam & Islam, 2021; Chernitskaya, 2024; Fatoki, 2021; Islam, 2020; Jia et al., 2022; Karagianni & Anastasios, 2024; Kyriakopoulos et al., 2023; Rivero, 2025).

7.2. Equity, Accessibility, And Regional Disparities

The general message is that, although Greek culture is a public good that should be available to all, a considerable part of the funding dedicated to these ends operates through market principles, prioritizing valuable objects of the 'preservation' type. The main criticisms focus on the unequal distribution of resources between urban and remote areas, the overrepresentation of popular monuments or festivals in terms of participation and audiences and the traditional profiling of mainstream audiences (Hudec et al., 2019; Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2015; Marinela, 2018; Pilotti, 2018). The data from the Moore Foundation suggest that public preferences for cultural goods have been evolving; more experimentation is expected, but visits to less renowned monuments, sites and museums remain limited. Within these conditions, short-term solutions should be sought, at least until the establishment of a European bail-out policy focused on the topic of equality via culture. Concerns over the inequity of the current funding and production

models are widespread, and they even include the question of whether certain productions should be supported. For some commentators, these demands are excessive; public funding should at least ensure a level of experience beyond the commercial. The dilemma running through cultural production is whether it should primarily preserve, testify, authenticate and ensure quality, aesthetics, historical, cultural and contextual context—thereby requiring the best resources—or, on the contrary, ensure public access and cover wider social and cultural needs—allowing for compromises when necessary (Hudec et al., 2019; Karagiannis & Metaxas, 2015; Marinela, 2018; Pilotti, 2018).

8. RESULTS

A variety of text types have contributed to the literature. Private-sector historical accounts, fictional works, and academic analyses are supplemented by government policies, plans, assessments, and other reports from both national and international organizations. The themes, topics, and scope of government action have undergone radical change since the early post-war years, resulting in diverging and converging impulses in cultural, environmental, and tourism policies. The implications of this journey for sustainability conceptions and indicators of green competitiveness are not easy to determine. Evidence of direct convergence comes from an analysis of key instruments in cultural and environmental policymaking presented in the previous section. Cultural enterprises encompass a wide range of activities, and judgements about their sustainability and contribution to green growth depend on what is evaluated. More specifically, museums and archaeological sites have been investigated against sustainability criteria, the performing arts have been assessed in terms of ecological mindfulness and audience engagement, and the creative industries have been examined for their role in green innovation. The broader picture is one of contrasting perspectives from which the transition towards sustainability and green orientation is viewed (Chaloumis et al., 2025; Deirmentzoglou et al., 2025; Koutsi et al., 2022; Terkenli & Georgoula, 2021; Theodora, 2020).

Table 1: From Cultural Preservation to Green Competitiveness: Synthesis of Core Conclusions and Structural Implications (Authors' Table).

Theme	Conclusion	Structural Implication	Policy/Strategic Insight
Cultural Identity	Greek culture is historically inseparable from heritage and antiquity.	Preservation functions as a national and institutional obligation.	Cultural policy must remain rooted in heritage protection while adapting to contemporary demands.

Historical Trajectory	Cultural enterprises evolved from preservation-centered institutions to tourism-linked economic actors.	Tourism transformed culture into a productive economic resource.	Balanced governance is required to prevent over-commercialization.
Sustainability Transition	Environmental awareness progressively entered cultural governance frameworks.	Convergence between cultural and environmental policies is increasing but incomplete.	Integrated cross-sectoral frameworks are necessary for coherence.
Green Competitiveness	Green competitiveness emerges as a new paradigm linking preservation, sustainability, and economic performance.	Sustainability becomes both a value and a competitive strategy.	Development of standardized green indicators is required.
Governance & Institutions	Public-private partnerships and blended finance are expanding in the cultural sector.	Risk-sharing improves resilience but may increase inequality.	Governance mechanisms must protect public-good objectives.
Creative Industries	Digital media and creative industries act as innovation drivers within green transformation.	Digitalization enhances resilience and eco-efficiency.	Investment in eco-innovation and digital cultural ecosystems is strategic.
Measurement Challenges	Green competitiveness metrics remain conceptually fragmented.	Lack of harmonized indicators limits comparability and evaluation.	Creation of unified sustainability assessment frameworks is needed.
Equity & Regional Disparities	Funding distribution remains uneven across regions and institutions.	Market-driven models risk marginalizing peripheral actors.	Cultural equity policies and accessibility strategies are critical.
Climate Adaptation	Heritage assets face increasing climate-related risks.	Preservation now includes ecological resilience and disaster preparedness.	Climate adaptation must be embedded in heritage management planning.
Structural Transformation	The shift is moving from "green branding" to "green structural transformation."	Preservation, sustainability, and competitiveness are interdependent.	Long-term resilience depends on integrated governance and systemic alignment.

The table synthesizes the central conclusions of the research by structuring them along thematic axes that reflect the historical, institutional, and strategic evolution of Greek cultural enterprises. It demonstrates that cultural preservation, sustainability, and competitiveness are not isolated or sequential stages, but interdependent dimensions of a broader structural transformation. The historical foundation of Greek culture in heritage and antiquity established preservation as a national responsibility. Over time, however, tourism expansion and economic integration repositioned cultural institutions as active contributors to economic development, introducing new governance and market pressures. The transition toward sustainability represents a critical turning point. Environmental awareness progressively entered cultural governance frameworks, leading to policy convergence between cultural and environmental domains. Nevertheless, this convergence remains incomplete and fragmented, highlighting the need for regulatory coherence and cross-sectoral alignment. The concept of green competitiveness emerges in this context as both a strategic response to global sustainability demands and a mechanism for enhancing comparative advantage within the cultural economy. The table also underscores institutional and governance challenges. Public-private partnerships, blended finance, and

diversified funding models strengthen resilience but may also generate inequalities and commodification risks. At the same time, measurement limitations persist, as green competitiveness indicators lack standardization and comparability. Regional disparities and accessibility concerns further complicate equitable development within the cultural sector. The synthesis emphasizes that the shift underway is moving beyond green branding toward green structural transformation. Climate adaptation, digital innovation, and eco-efficiency are increasingly embedded within organizational practices and policy frameworks. Long-term resilience of Greek cultural enterprises therefore depends on integrated governance, harmonized sustainability metrics, and the balanced reconciliation of preservation, environmental stewardship, and economic performance.

9. DISCUSSION, FUTURE TRENDS AND LIMITATIONS

Culture is the set of characteristics, inclinations, experiences, understandings, and creative abilities of people or society. Preservation is the act of keeping something, such as a site, functioning, and alive. Cultural competitiveness means acquiring the capacity to create a comparative advantage in the sectors of the cultural economy. Using these definitions, the trajectories of Greek culture, cultural

preservation, and competitiveness were synthesized. Culture has always formed the bedrock of Greek identity, and Greek culture is synonymous with Greek heritage. In fact, the Greek terms for “heritage” and “cultural heritage” indicate antiquity, making heritage—representing the past and all its physical manifestations—an essential component for defining culture. The realization of this foundational role led to accepting preservation of Greek antiquities as a national responsibility. During the last decades of the 20th century, the services responsible for safeguarding Greek antiquities began taking their first steps toward adapting outside conditions, suggestions, and needs, albeit within the traditional framework of conservatism: to sustain the past with possible future benefits, even if the past was a burden and the future was uncertain. More recently, this effort grew to encompass environmental awareness and action, and to accord cultural preservation a green-metabolic orientation. These trajectories—from attention solely to cultural preservation, through the adoption of environmental-awareness elements, to green competitiveness—have also begun to underline the development of green-values-related indicators.

Despite offering a comprehensive theoretical synthesis, this research is subject to several limitations. First, the analysis is based exclusively on secondary sources and interpretive literature review. The absence of primary empirical data, longitudinal datasets, or econometric modeling restricts the ability to test causal relationships between cultural policy reforms, environmental integration, and measurable economic outcomes. Consequently, conclusions regarding green competitiveness remain conceptually grounded rather than statistically verified. Second, the heterogeneity of cultural enterprises complicates generalization. Museums, archaeological sites, performing arts organizations, festivals, and creative industries operate under different governance structures, funding mechanisms, and market conditions. A unified theoretical narrative may obscure sector-specific dynamics, particularly differences between metropolitan and peripheral regions. The literature itself often prioritizes high-visibility institutions, potentially underrepresenting small-scale or community-based cultural actors. Third, the measurement of “green competitiveness” remains conceptually evolving. Existing indicators tend to combine environmental performance, branding, visitor flows, and innovation capacity without a standardized methodological framework. This creates ambiguity regarding comparability across

institutions and regions. The absence of harmonized metrics limits the precision with which cultural enterprises’ environmental transitions can be evaluated. Fourth, institutional fragmentation and uneven policy implementation across ministries, regions, and funding bodies are acknowledged but not empirically quantified. While the research identifies regulatory incoherence as a structural challenge, it does not systematically assess administrative efficiency, fiscal multipliers, or policy impact evaluation mechanisms.

For future trends, several trends are likely to shape the evolution of Greek cultural enterprises within a green competitiveness framework. First, the integration of sustainability metrics into cultural governance is expected to deepen. Strategic environmental assessment tools, carbon-footprint measurement for cultural events, and lifecycle evaluation of heritage conservation projects may become standard components of cultural policy design. Second, digital transformation will increasingly interact with green orientation. Digital archiving, virtual exhibitions, augmented reality tourism experiences, and hybrid cultural events can reduce environmental pressure while expanding accessibility. The convergence of digitalization and sustainability may generate new forms of eco-innovation within creative industries, strengthening resilience and international positioning. Third, blended finance models and impact-investment instruments are likely to expand. As public funding remains constrained, innovative funding architectures—combining EU funds, private capital, philanthropic contributions, and performance-based grants—may provide more stable support for sustainability-oriented cultural enterprises. However, governance mechanisms will need to ensure that market-oriented financing does not undermine cultural equity or public-good objectives. Fourth, climate adaptation strategies will become central to heritage management. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation pose direct risks to archaeological sites and monuments. Preventive conservation, disaster-resilience planning, and environmentally adaptive infrastructure will be critical components of future cultural policy.

A broader conceptual shift may occur from “green branding” toward “green structural transformation.” Rather than treating sustainability as a marketing attribute, cultural enterprises may progressively embed ecological principles in organizational culture, operational models, supply chains, and audience engagement strategies. In this trajectory,

preservation, environmental stewardship, and competitiveness will not operate as sequential stages but as mutually reinforcing dimensions of long-term cultural resilience. Together, these future directions suggest that the transition from preservation to green competitiveness is not a completed process but an evolving structural transformation requiring integrated governance, methodological refinement, and continuous institutional adaptation.

10. CONCLUSION

Concerns over sustainability and green growth pressure nations, regions, and cities to articulate strategies towards adopting a green orientation in their development. Consequently, a multitude of public and private organizations, under the guidance of environmental policies, engage in the development and implementation of instruments and measures to create and enhance sustainability and green competitiveness. However, substantiating a green orientation is not confined solely to environmental policies. The criteria required for sustainability, which comprise economic growth and reproduction, social inclusion and equity, ecosystem protection and enhancement, and social and cultural identity, demand the co-evolution of all

establishments within these criteria. Culture, cultural identity, and cultural activities are thus equally instrumental for the alignment towards a green economy, leading to the adoption of the green orientation, branding, and the implementation of eco-efficiency and eco-innovation strategies.

At the same time, the existing and initiation of new enterprises within the cultural sector, including museums, archaeological sites, performing arts, and other sectors of creative approaches, respond to and evolve under the principles of green growth, eco-efficiency, eco-innovation, and sustainability. Moreover, the criteria required for sustainability and the green orientation are being embraced by organizations within the cultural and creative industry. These include tourism services of all kinds; hospitality infrastructure; mass media and media establishment; design and new-media activities; and digital content sectors, such as animation, computer games, electronic publishing, and visual effects. The discussion presented in the exploratory analysis of the available evidence highlights the early foundations of Greek cultural enterprises, emphasizing the weaving together of the notions of heritage, national identity, and cultural economy in a climate of growing economic dependence on tourism.

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