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DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

This book examines how international organisations (IOs) have struggled to adapt to the digital age, and with social media in particular.

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This book will be of much interest to students of diplomacy, media, and communication studies, and international organisations.

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DIGITAL DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Autonomy, Legitimacy and Contestation

Edited by Corneliu Bjola and Ruben Zaiotti

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IS THERE A PLACE FOR A CROWDSOURCING IN MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY? SEARCHING FOR A NEW MUSEUM DEFINITION

ICOM vs the world of museum professionals

Natalia Grincheva

Introduction

The discourse on the public and cultural diplomacy 2.0 is not new. For at least a decade, many diplomacy scholars have discussed, debated, and explored through empirical evidence interesting cases of public involvement in shaping informational flows in the global media environment (Seib 2012; Bjola and Holmes 2015; Manor 2019). In the age of digital interactivity, the old principles of diplomacy based on a "top-down branding approach, which treats people as targets rather than participants in an exchange of views" have become irrelevant (Leadbeater 2010). More than a decade ago, American public diplomacy expert Nancy Snow (2008) asserted "global publics will not allow themselves just to be talked to but are demanding fuller participation in dialogue and feedback through the help of Web 2.0 communication technologies and new media" (8).

These global public expectations and demands transformed government-led broadcasting and promotional campaigns into more complex and sophisticated exercises in public engagement. On the state level, many governments around the world now actively utilise digital tools and social networks to engage audiences across borders in global conversations and negotiations (Fletcher 2016; Manor 2019). However, it remains questionable whether the global public has been really admitted to take part in international conversations to constitute global democratic governance. This democracy in global governance is understood as an "inclusion of manifold voices through participation of civil society that represent different and previously excluded groups" (Kalm et al. 2019, 500).

Van Langenhove (2010) argued that in the 21st century we might witness the emergence of Multilateralism 2.0, which promises to provide an "increased room for nongovernmental actors at all levels" and might even offer an "ad hoc order in which no single institution or organisation is the centre" anymore (267).

For example, some scholars explored such innovative practices as crowdsourcing as new tools to "address governance issues, strengthen communities, empower marginalized groups, and foster civic participation" (Bott et al. 2011, 1). Coined by American politician Jeff Howe (2006), crowdsourcing refers to the outsourcing of tasks to a network of people. While it is not new for governments to invite citizens for assistance in the delivery of their services (Dutil 2015), the advances in information technology have significantly increased the capacity of broader publics to share their knowledge and expertise in ways that can advance global democracy (Spiliotopoulou et al. 2014, 547).

The use of crowdsourcing is argued by some to enhance the inclusiveness of decision-making efforts and even increase their transparency (Lehdonvirta and Bright 2015). "Greater inclusiveness may yield more input, better ideas, and a greater sense of ownership over the outcomes resulting from participation" (Gellers 2016, 419). However, while theoretically Multilateralism 2.0 has been reckoned by some as "the most revolutionary aspect" of contemporary global diplomacy, it still remains "the most difficult one to organize" (Van Langenhove 2010, 267). Furthermore, as some scholars stress, while democratic global governance is in principle possible, its democratic potential is usually "hampered by current practices" (Kalm et al. 2019, 500). Specifically, shortcomings inherent to the processes of global democratic governance, that are more desirable rather than realistic, continue to inspire debate (Gellers 2016, 417).

For example, even though crowdsourcing is believed to enhance inclusiveness (Spiliotopoulou et al. 2014), this inclusiveness comes with "more noise in the system without the guarantee that marginalized voices will emerge from the shadows" (Gellers 2016, 420). More importantly, it remains unclear if crowdsourcing as a platform for participation can provide a robust avenue for making quality decisions that can result in efficient global policies (Radu et al. 2015, 364). Such practices, for instance, as "aggregation and filtering" of public input can significantly skew final outcomes in decision-making processes (Prpie et al. 2015, 79).

This chapter specifically explores the practice of crowdsourcing in global governance as a tool of multilateral diplomacy to interrogate its exact role and place in decision-making processes. Though crowdsourcing provides a platform for a global public engagement that helps IOs demonstrate their democratic aspirations, it remains questionable if the democratic input, produced through crowdsourcing, can be effectively integrated in global policy making. The chapter examines how and why inefficient strategies to properly manage crowdsourcing input can compromise IOs' accountability, foster global contestation of their decisions, and lead to loss of public trust.

Specifically, the chapter investigates the case of the multilateral cultural diplomacy of the International Commission of Museums (ICOM). This is a non-governmental international organisation under formal relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and holding its consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social

Council. First established in 1946, ICOM has built its global reputation as a leader in the world's museum sector. It strives to harness the collective knowledge of its thirty thematic International Committees, over a hundred of National Committees and six Regional Alliances. Attempting to provide the forum for debate about global museum issues, ICOM takes a strong diplomatic role in advocating on behalf of museums on the global stage.

ICOM works to provide museums with guidelines, policies, tools, and best practices to support and enable them to better serve the societies they exist in. In this sense, ICOM actively exercises multilateral diplomacy and aims for global cultural engagement for "the enlightenment of many policymakers, and the development of many professional networks working on culture and international development issues" (Memis 2009, 298). Conducive to cultural diplomacy stewardship and the cooperative engagement of the professional museum community, ICOM strives to tackle cultural engagement challenges and promotes "creativity, innovation, and systematization in this field of inquiry and practice" (Memis 2009, 298). As former ICOM Vice President, Bernice L. Murphy (2004), stressed, while serving the professional international museum world, "ICOM has a much greater potential to realise" (3). The global diplomatic ambition of ICOM is to address and serve international society "as a cultural leader" or "as an effective public advocate" for achieving democratic sustainable development of cultural communities across borders.

Since its inception, ICOM has passed through several stages of democratisation by making its global governance structure more transparent and inclusive for international engagement. While in 1946 ICOM National Committees were mostly represented by the largest museums in Europe, by 1974 the organisation became a global membership organisation with its members' electoral influence in its governance and activities (Murphy 2004). From only 700 members in the 1970s, ICOM has grown into a 35,000 members' community, representing more than 20,000 museums from 136 countries, with the list of engaged territories continuing to expand. Following global trends in contemporary diplomacy to "advocate for group actions" by multiple stakeholders "to reflect on cross-cutting issues," ICOM implemented an unprecedented campaign in 2019 demonstrating "synergetic approaches to cultural engagement interventions" (Memis 2009, 298).

The case in point is the online global crowdsourcing campaign delivered by ICOM's Standing Committee for Museum Definition, Prospects, and Potentials (MDPP) in 2019. It aimed to collect public contributions to re-define the museum agency in the 21st century so that it can better reflect the rapid and dynamic changes in contemporary museology. As ICOM's President Suay Aksoy explained, this campaign became "one of the most democratic processes in the history of ICOM" (Gould 2019). Despite its inclusiveness, openness, and democratic aspirations, the campaign resulted in a failure to adopt a new proposed definition of the museum during the ICOM Extraordinary General Conference in Kyoto in 2019, "the biggest and most important conference of museums in the

world" (ICOM 2019a). The decision to postpone the vote, taken on September 7, 2019 in Kyoto by more than 70% of the participants, served "a severe blow to the NGO's leadership" (Noce 2019). What had gone wrong? This chapter aims to address this question by exploring if and how exactly the crowdsourcing input informed and shaped the MDPP Committee's decisions in proposing the new definition for the global museum community.

Before the chapter unfolds the analysis, it is worthwhile, though, to step back to explain the background story of the historical development of the museum definition, which is heavily charged with colonial European legacies. Going back to the times of the Renaissance, one can trace the development of the first European museums that emerged from collections of strange objects arriving from the New World. Most of the collections in the 16th century were housed in the "cabinets of curiosity," called "studiolo" in Italian; "cabinet de curiosites" in French; and "Wunderkammer," or chamber of wonders, in German (Olmi 1985, 7). "Everyone thinks they know what a 'museum' is, but the boundaries of that definition are constantly evolving. The last century has seen the purpose and values of the museum largely transformed to the point where, it could be argued, collections – once so central to museums – are considered of secondary importance today" (Brown and Mairesse 2018, 525).

In 1946, ICOM defined the museum as a *collection*; in 1951, the museum agency turned into an *establishment*, finally becoming a *permanent institution* only in 1961. The latest version was adopted in Vienna in 2007 and defined the museum as the "a *non-profit*, *permanent institution* in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study, and enjoyment" (ICOM 2007, emphasis added). In July 2019, upon completion of its global crowdsourcing exercise and "following the processes of active listening, collecting and collating alternative definitions through its standing committee on Museum Definition," ICOM proposed a new definition:

> Museums are democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic *spaces for critical dialogue* about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artifacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.
>
> *(ICOM 2019b, emphasis added).*

The new definition was met with significant opposition in the world of museum professionals. In August 2019, 24 national ICOM branches, including French,

Italian, Spanish, German, Canadian, and Russian, submitted a petition, requesting ICOM to postpone the vote on the proposed definition (Gould 2019). Despite the crowdsourcing exercise, it was debated in the media that "ICOM has sparked controversy over its decision to select a definition, which was not submitted as part of the public campaign" (Hatfield 2019). In the international media, the MDPP Standing Committee was widely accused of ignoring public voices and delivering an "ideological text," "that would have little legal value" and that was launched without required consultations with key constituents (Noce 2019). This chapter will explore whether that was indeed the case, given ICOM's two-year, multi-layered processes of creating a new definition that culminated with the Kyoto 25th Extraordinary General Assembly.

To address this question the study employs a mixed methodology that includes multiple qualitative approaches. First, the chapter draws on media discourse analysis of the public debates concerning the new definition, focusing mostly on the international Anglophone media and on the blog posts written by museum professionals. Second, it applies content analysis to the 268 definitions submitted by the public to the ICOM official online platform (ICOM 2019d). It is important to note that this meticulous content analysis resulted in rich and illuminating insights on contemporary museology, which, for space reasons, aren't fully given here and would be valuable to publish in a separate piece. This chapter, therefore, focuses on the most relevant part of this analysis that is mainly used to explore the role of crowdsourcing and its direct inputs in the processes of global policy making.

Finally, the chapter takes readers behind the scenes of the work of the ICOM MDPP Standing Committee by integrating two sources of institutional analysis. On the one hand, it draws on the desk research of numerous open access reports and statements (ICOM 2018a–b; 2019a–d; 2020), published by ICOM to document its work on the museum definition. On the other hand, this chapter features insights from the MDPP Committee Chair, Jette Sandahl, interviewed specifically for this research in February 2020. Sandahl is a Danish Museum curator, with an impressive museum career earned through her dedicated service to the Museum of World Cultures in Gothenburg, Te Papa Museum in New Zealand, and the Copenhagen City Museum. To understand better the failures of global digital diplomacy, the chapter draws on a focused semi-structured interview with Sandahl to gain insight from her experience in leading the ICOM campaign of public engagement.

This analysis unfolds in two parts. The first section, "Radically democratic," positions the case study within the current debates on the role and place of public engagement in global multilateral governance by specifically looking at issues of public trust and institutional accountability. It reviews current scholarship on international organisations and their practices in adopting more democratic approaches in international policy making, identifying key challenges and obstacles they bring to IOs' decision-making processes. This literature helps develop a framework that can explain the role of the ICOM crowdsourcing campaign

in the system of global governance. Building on this framework, the following section titled "Pursuing a 'common good'" seeks to explain the negative outcome of the first ICOM's attempt to exercise "transnational democracy." On the one hand, it investigates competing policies and agendas that surrounded the ICOM decision-making processes in revising the old definition. On the other hand, it reveals how the failure to listen and understand global voices can lead to detrimental results compromising institutional accountability. The chapter interrogates the role and place of digital technologies of public engagement in facilitating democratic systems of global governance and argues that Multilateralism 2.0 still remains a desirable vision rather than reality.

"Radically democratic": Transparency at the cost of accountability

As Sandahl pointed out in one of her media interviews, since the appointment of the MDPP Committee in 2017, the whole process of developing the new definition has become "radically democratic" (de Wildt 2019). It consisted of several stages of membership and public engagement and was guided by open and transparent communication efforts that included publications of several foundational documents on the ICOM website (ICOM 2018b), a Special Issue in the *Museum International Journal* featuring articles written by several committee members (Sandahl 2019), international round tables organised through National ICOM committees across countries in 2018, and even a crowdsourcing campaign (ICOM 2019c).

According to Sandahl (2020), even the appointment of the MDPP Standing Committee, which consisted of a diverse and international team of museum experts, was a step forward in democratising the process of making revisions to the museum definition. The museum definition has traditionally been a part of the ICOM statutes and its revision "is a formally regulated process. It is something that takes a lot of focus and there is a formal process around this procedure" (Sandahl 2020). However, in 2017 the ICOM Executive decided to open the procedures and embrace new democratising opportunities. While "we were quite formally appointed as a committee" the Chair explained, "we are civil servants, our main role is to analyze, review, prepare documentation for discussion sessions, but we are not the part of the decision making process" (Sandahl 2020).

The creation of such expert groups or international committees to investigate a specific global issue and provide recommendations is a growing practice among international organisations (Pouliot and Therien 2018). As explained by Lapeyre (2004), these groups usually serve as a "transmission belt" for the introduction of new ideas and fresh perspectives in the process of global governance (1). They aim to provide an important stimulus to global policy making by facilitating "the political debate beyond the bureaucratic or intergovernmental spheres to include individuals whose expertise renders them seemingly impartial" (Pouliot

and Therien 2018, 168). Furthermore, as Lapeyre (2004) stressed, these committees are expected to deliver a work process that is "open, visible and participatory," receiving "the broadest range of views on the key issues it was addressing" (60). Indeed, the work of the MDPP Committee included two important phases, both new, and both designed to involve the broader international community of museum professionals in the process of redefining the museum in the new century to reflect on social, cultural, and political changes.

Firstly, MDPP invited National ICOM Committees across countries and continents to take part in Roundtable sessions. They aimed to determine whether a change of the existing museum definition was necessary through focused discussions with participants on current museum issues, challenges, and opportunities (ICOM 2018a). In 2018, the Roundtables working groups received responses from 37 sessions from different countries, including Costa Rica, Kenya, New Zeeland, the USA, Singapore, and Austria, with a total of just under 900 participants. Transcribed and translated into English, they resulted in 320 closely analysed responses that revealed "strong trends and concerns" in the international professional sector of museums and pushed the process of redefining the museum further to next stages (Bonilla-Merchav 2019, 164).

A member of the MDPP Standing Committee, Bonilla-Merchav (2019), suggested that Roundtables offered "a democratic platform where voices from around the world could express themselves" (162). This format was "new and very experimental, not anything that is common in big international organizations, like ICOM," and Sandahl (2020) confirmed. "They were open for everyone … they provided much more flat, non-hegemonic working methods" (Sandahl 2020). Most importantly, they revealed a greater need not only to continue the search for a new museum definition, but also to employ new digital tools that would allow ICOM to make the process more automated, and even more transparent and open. As a result, in January 2019 ICOM opened an online platform on its official website to collect museum definitions from the public (ICOM 2019c). It was open to everyone without restrictions, even to non-ICOM members, who were asked to submit text contributions in the language of their choice.

By April 2019, the MDPP Standing Committee collected 268 definitions from 73 countries across continents written in 23 languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Hungarian, Ukrainian, and Hebrew. As Sandahl (2020) assessed, such a result indicated a high level of public participation "that is unlike anything that ICOM has had before. We have got contributions from places where there is barely an ICOM National Committee …, places where the ICOM does not necessarily usually hear voices from." Notably, while there was a close monitoring of the crowdsourcing process, none of the definitions submitted online was censored away. "I think that we greatly exaggerate the fear of receiving inappropriate feedback," Sandahl (2020) shared. The crowdsourcing exercise proved that online participants were highly motivated, interested, and engaged museum professionals who took the challenge with great enthusiasm and commitment.

"Definitely the process was different," the Chair stressed, pointing out at the new media possibilities that offered ICOM "tools that have not been available for previous discussions":

> What we had on the ICOM platform for collecting museum definitions from the public is new. And it is also new for big international organizations to have that kind of public hearing process with members …. There are huge democratizing potentials in the open public platforms for discourse and conversations, like we had for collecting museum definitions.
> *(Sandahl 2020)*

As the quote illustrates, the new digital technologies allowed ICOM to open up the discussion on a global scale. Most importantly, they allowed the organisation to enhance the democratic dimension of its public engagement approach and to place it at the core of its campaign. In this regard, the disappointing result of not being able to develop a global consensus on the new proposed definition constitutes a critical puzzle that requires explanation. Current scholarship on global governance, international organisations, and transnational democracy provides important insights and analytical approaches to explain this situation.

While the trend toward stronger public engagement has the potential to "increase the level of participation of civil society in global governance" (Van Langenhove 2010, 267), global governance is believed to be a real challenge for democracy (Lamy 2010). In order for the multilateral governance to improve its practices to establish truly democratic processes in global decision making, IOs have to incorporate principles of "horizonal accountability" (Hoffmann-Lange 2012). Accountability is defined as the establishment of a process through which an actor can exercise punishments or grant rewards to another actor (the accountable party) in response to its actions or mis-actions (Gent et al. 2015). Accountability requires a strong level of transparency in the decision-making processes as well as the power to exercise rewards or punishments (Grant and Keohane 2005). Consequently, horizonal accountability entails an increased IO transparency towards the public and greater participation of civil society in the adoption and implementation of IO policies (Grigorescu 2008). A failure to neglect or poorly handle at least one of these important components can compromise institutional accountability and lead to public distrust. It seems that the MDPP Committee faced significant challenges in addressing both these critical issues.

First, as Bauhr and Nasiritori (2012) pointed out, "if IO decision-making processes are perceived as unfair, unpredictable and ineffective, *transparent* IO decision-making processes may be ineffective at best and counterproductive at worst" (10). Indeed, MDPP's two-years-long process of creating a new museum definition radically restructured the traditional decision-making procedures without necessarily making them more efficient. In fact, it diminished the role of internal stakeholders, such as ICOM National Committees, in the

decision-making process. It is important to acknowledge that the basic rules and structures that shape key IOs operations are primarily based on productive interactions and efficient cooperation between major players or representatives of member states (Yi-Chong and Weller 2015). Their input in the decision-making process is important as they are entitled to "legitimize the actions and operation of the international organization" to "pursue collective interests" by representing their national communities in international arenas and mobilising support from their states and civil societies (Yi-Chong and Weller 2015, 11).

Decision-making processes that neglect these traditional players may significantly compromise institutional accountability. They usually result in a loss of trust in IOs from its member states while growing criticism of their decisions. In this case, the National Committees' global mobilisation through direct petitions to ICOM and the unfolding public debates contesting the proposed definition actually manifested "institutional social counter-powers." It "has evolved in order to compensate for the erosion of confidence," expressing "distrust against power-holders, pressuring them to stay committed to the common good" (Kalm et al. 2019, 504). These activities are known in the scholarship on democratic governance as "denunciation," they aim at exposure, centre on the norms of transparency, and often involve the act of "naming and blaming" (Rosanvallon 2008).

Furthermore, as Ecker-Ehrhardt (2018) observed, a centralised public communication usually results in a significant loss of control for members "over how internal negotiations are communicated back home to national constituencies" that limits the extent to which they are able to effectively shape domestic perceptions (520). Indeed, after losing their powers over the final decision making via the process of public engagement, ICOM National Committees contested the new museum definition proposed by ICOM. They accused the organisation in launching the definition "without consultation of the national committees" and even argued that the definition poorly articulated global views of a larger museum community (Noce 2019). Addressing this criticism, Sandahl (2020) concurred with the idea that the Kyoto heated debate and the decision to postpone the vote was the result of the lack of time given to the National Committees to think through and discuss the new definition:

> I think it would have been good if we had quite a bit longer time between the proposal and the Kyoto debate, so people have had more time to meet with their National Committees to discuss new changes. Only a few committees managed to do that and, in most cases, only Executive Boards had the time to discuss it.
>
> *(Sandahl 2020)*

By moving to take a decision on the new definition too soon, ICOM not only undermined the decision-making powers of the National Committees, but also minimised their important roles in communicating with their direct

constituencies and communities. However, the lack of time, as Sandahl suggested, was not the key reason of such a negative outcome leading to compromising institutional accountability.

The second component of horizontal accountability, such as the direct involvement of the public in the decision-making processes, in fact, was also missing in the MDPP campaign, despite the promising potentials of crowdsourcing to make the process more open and inclusive. As Bauhr and Nasiritori (2012) stressed, even decision-making processes that are designed for enhancing "transparency" in the global governance are usually blamed "for lack of impartiality, fairness and effectiveness in IO decision-making." "IO disclosure policies coupled with inadequate support for a well-governed internal system can result in greater misuse and corruption within the system," reducing public accountability (10). A stronger level of public participation, enabled by crowdsourcing, does not automatically lead to more productive deliberations (Aitamurto 2012), nor can it necessarily produce "reasonable, well-informed opinions" to fairly represent the diversity or the majority of viewpoints across participants (Chambers 2003, 309). In fact, methods employed by IOs to manage, analyse, and integrate the public input in the decision-making processes are important tools that can either help organisations to achieve desirable results in global democratic governance or compromise their accountability.

In the case of ICOM, the disappointing outcomes of the museum definition campaign points to a lack of "a well-governed internal system" that could have helped the organisation better handle "transnational democracy" and manage public input more efficiently, without compromising its institutional accountability. This efficiency is understood as an organisational ability "to solve collective problems and to meet the expectations of the governed citizens" (Mayntz 2010, 10). ICOM's first exercise in democratic crowdsourcing governance revealed the lack of efficient institutional strategies and policies to gauge global public response in a way that could have delivered meaningful problem solving.

According to the global survey conducted by Macnamara and Zerfass in 2012, 80% of international organisations do not have well-developed institutional policies for the strategic use of social media and digital means of global communications. Furthermore, in most cases the majority of organisations have not developed Key Performance Indicators along with measurement methods and procedures to understand the online public and strategically integrate its input into their organisational communication and decision-making process. Finally, Macnamara and Zerfass (2012) revealed that the majority of international organisations do not properly conduct content analysis of online public contributions shared through social media to "identify the issues and topics being discussed" and assess the sentiment towards these issues (12).

As disappointing as it could be, this situation seems to be still relevant, evidenced in the 2019 ICOM crowdsourcing campaign that was the first and maybe the last of its kind in the work of the Standing Committee on the ICOM statutes. In fact, the Committee's approach towards the analysis of

the museum definitions submitted through its official portal reveals a complex nexus between the democratic input and authoritative institutional output in global governance. Specifically, Sandahl (2020) shared that the analysis of public contributions of museum definitions was strictly guided by eight predefined parameters, explicitly outlined in the 2018 Report of the MDPP Standing Committee, submitted to the Executive Board after finishing the Roundtable phase of the process.

"We had 8 parameters in place that were the guidelines for how we sorted through the whole body of definitions that we got," Sandahl (2020) shared, "they were the sieve through which we sifted through all public contributions."

> Some definitions were really good, let's say on four of them [parameters], then we tried to add from one or two others which were really strong in other criteria. In the end, we created hybrids, where we brought together different definitions, because there was not any … (or there have might been a couple) that pretty much expressed all of it, or met all eight parameters …

The process had at least three or four layers of "sifting public contributions," on each stage reducing them to smaller groups and creating new hybrids. Finally, the Committee chose five definitions to present to the ICOM Executive Board, who then selected one for discussion in Kyoto at the Extraordinary General Assembly (Sandahl 2020). Not surprisingly, such a strong authoritative curatorial approach to explore global public voices, as in many similar cases, significantly undermined the integrity of the Committee's work on creating the museum definition based on horizontal democratic principles.

In fact, while online global contributions greatly inform IOs' international panels' thinking, their participants usually admit that it is "impossible to do them all justice, and to address all the issues they raise" (Ramos-Horta 2015, 4). Strong selective approaches applied to the analysis of public contributions do "impose certain political priorities and opinions over others," skewing final results in favour of institutional agenda (Pouliot and Therien 2018, 169). Pouliot and Therien (2018) indicate that while global political deliberations exercised by IOs can enlarge the voice of non-state actors, these "practices also encourage cooptation, non-transparency, and normative homogeneity" (171). Specifically, the scholars argue that a common dialectic of inclusion and exclusion in these practices marginalise important viewpoints and tend to stress existing inequalities between the Global North and South (Pouliot and Therien 2018, 171). This inevitably leads to the contestation of the results of such "transnational democracy" campaigns challenging the organisational accountability. The following section provides a convincing illustration of these observations to further explore the role and place of crowdsourcing in the digital infrastructure of global governance.

Pursuing "common good": balancing between the Global North and Global South

In many cases, IOs' legitimacy and accountability rest on their "autonomy" or "neutrality" (Barnett and Finnemore 2004). "As a general principle, then, an independent actor has interests that are neutral or impartial with respect to other political actors," especially to specific state actors or regional alliances (Haftel and Thompson 2006, 256). IOs that are driven by universalist values and concerned about "the common good" represent democratic ideals of global governance. This "common good" is usually linked to "universalist principles of equal rights and obligations no matter for example race, class or gender" (Kalm et al. 2019, 510).

A pursuit of the "common good," though, is a direct and logical response of IOs to address a challenge of diversity of interests or, in other words, local, regional, and global clashes of interests in search for effective solutions. As a result, IOs tend to articulate their vision that can

> transcend all such difference, that predicts positive outcomes for all competitors, that formulates its mantra in terms that none can readily falsify, and that enables all parties to global governance to justify their universal prescriptions in seemingly clear and compelling language(s).
>
> *(Halliday 2018, 951)*

For example, the ICOM's greatest commitment and organisational value is "recognizing and promoting cultural diversity," that was explicitly articulated as the main vision of the MDPP work on revising the museum definition (ICOM 2018b). While being quite utopian, the "common good" vision is argued to appeal to and attract global publics (Mallard and Lakoff 2011). The question is, though, how to sustain, express, and even represent this commitment for a "common good" to "act as guardians of a transnational public interest" (Steffek 2015, 278). In recent decades, a rapid raise of digital media established the presence and increased the visibility of previously marginalised actors, like economically disadvantaged communities, women, people of colour, or transgender groups.

In this regard, the trend in international organisations has been one emphasising the "promotion as reinforcing Othering" (Kunz and Maisenbacher 2015). The current IR scholarship argues that digital technologies not only expose this marginalisation, but more importantly, enable the growing emancipation and consequently visibility of "those on the margins" (Jackson 2019, 526; Lindsay 2013). In the struggle for de-colonisation, it has become a common place among IOs, such as UNESCO, to acknowledge and promote ideas and viewpoints coming from the Global South, exactly with the aim to reach institutional "neutrality" in establishing transnational democracy (Singh 2018). This seemed to be the case in the work of the MDPP Committee as well, which drew on public

discourse originally stemming from the Global South to push forward new "decolonisation" agenda for museums, a move that was highly contested from the very beginning.

Specifically, the 2018 MDPP Report pointed out that creating a new definition was needed for "historicizing and contextualizing it [the museum], on de-naturalizing and de-colonizing it, and on anchoring the discussion of museums and the futures of museums in a larger framework of general societal trends and issues of the 21st century" (ICOM 2018b, 5). In particular, the challenge for the Committee was to "to counter the systemic European and Western dominance in the development of its strategies and policies" and to ensure "a real global representation" (ICOM 2018b, 4). Jette Sandahl (2020) emphasised: "I don't think that there is anything at the moment where the Global North–Global South divide is not present. I think it's a subtext to pretty much everything we do and say." In the processes of revising the old definition, the MDPP Committee aimed "to provide … guidance in the conflicts between what is currently often called the Global South and Global North and make 'de-colonisation' … a mutual and shared need and commitment" (ICOM 2018b).

It seems, that this strong vision really affected the work of the Committee. It led to a quite biased reading of the global public contributions, which, in fact, conveyed much less concern about the inequalities between the Global South and North. Particularly, this "divide" set the context for re-defining the museum from "a permanent non-for-profit *institution*" (ICOM 2007) to a "democratizing, inclusive and polyphonic *space*" (ICOM 2019b). This radical imbalance between the traditional conservation purpose of museums and their social functions can, in fact, be conceptualised through a tense historical relationship between the Global South and Global North, specifically through their differences in understanding the museum's role and place in society.

Brown and Mairesse (2018) stressed that the 2007 ICOM Definition "was still largely European in origin and from a time of colonial expansion" (526). However, in the recent decades, multiple entities across regions no longer fulfil all of the requirements in the definition, but, in fact, claim their museum status. Especially in Latin America, the development of new experimental museums significantly challenged the canon of contemporary museology, by interrogating whether a museum was still a permanent institution or a more inclusive organisation, or even a form of a political resistance and social activism (Brown and Mairesse 2018). In Santiago de Chile in 1972, the "Round Table on the role of museums in relation to the social and economic needs of modern day Latin America" brought together museologists from Central and South America, rural development specialists, and representatives from UNESCO and ICOM. As a result, the "Declaration of Santiago de Chile" (1972), published by UNESCO, asserted the idea that a museum should be "at the service of society and its development," a phrase found in the UNESCO Declaration of 1972, that remains in the ICOM museum definition until now (Brown and Mairesse 2018).

Since the 1970s, Latin New Museology inspired "decolonisation" working practices of museums in many countries, including Brazil, Mexico, Canada, China, and Japan. In many cases, museums in these countries had already functioned in contexts outside the confines of the ICOM museum definition (Brown and Mairesse 2018). However, the idea of the "ecomuseum," that emerged in the second part of the 20th century, a "fluid and open concept" of new museology, has mainly remained excluded "from the ICOM definition, and even from the Oxford English Dictionary" (Brown and Mairesse 2018, 529). Despite a high level of activism in Latin America to reinforce the value of a museum as predominantly a social actor to address the problem of "colonialism, imperialism, nationalism and elitism" (Brown and Mairesse 2018), the concept has been contested for its utopian outlook (Hudson 1975). For example, in 1970s, Jean Chatelain, Director of the Musees de France severely criticised the idea of ecomuseums. He stressed that "a museum without collections is not a museum" (Debary 2002, 40). By contrast, an ecomuseum is not a collection or even an institution, rather it "is an invention. It is something that is invented by people … to answer local questions" (Brown and Mairesse 2018, 530).

Sandahl (2020) revealed that this debate on the key museum roles and functions was, indeed, quite old, and various unsuccessful attempts to change the museum definition in favour of its social democratising agenda go back at least five decades:

> In fact, I worked with somebody back in the 1970s on changing the museum definition who also tried to propose these changes and it was very contentious then. There were museum people and directors who thought that it was a really inappropriate politicization of the sector and it had nothing to do with museums. This was just politics. So, that resistance was there already in the 1970s, and I feel that now we have the same voices.

Sandahl was quite accurate when she referred to the "same voices." The proposed definition sparked global protests and led to heated debates contesting the radical changes suggested by the MDPP Committee. Many ICOM members, including National Committees from European countries, opposed the new definition, expressing a great concern about how their governments and legislation systems, in which an old museum definition has been embedded, would deal with such significant changes (Nelson 2019).

For example, Museology Professor François Mairesse stressed that, "It would be hard for most French museums – starting with the Louvre – to correspond to this definition" (Gould 2019). CEO of ICOM Germany, Klaus Staubermann, also challenged the implications of the absence in the proposed definition of such keywords as "institution" and "education": "Both these words are very important, because their presence has a crucial effect on legislation in the German states" (Solly 2019). Juliette Raoul-Duval, who chairs ICOM France, denounced the new definition as an "ideological" manifesto, and even Hugues de Varine,

a former director of ICOM and an early proponent of the "new museology" movement in the 1970s, found the definition to be too vague (Small 2019). Such proposed characteristics of museums as "democratising" and "polyphonic," some professionals argued, "would sit rather uneasily next to jurisdiction systems in many countries" (Gould 2019). Others also indicated that the proposed definition undermined the institutional status of museums that could negatively "influence government funding and public support for exhibits" (Johnston 2019).

By contrast, though, it was pointed out in the media that museum professionals in emerging economies contested the previous museum definition as it was "too narrow to encompass the work they are doing to grow their sectors – they may not have 'permanent institutions' but they are adapting 'spaces.'" In this sense, the new proposed definition offered "crucial validation for their efforts and gave extra weight to their advocacy" (Nelson 2019). Executive Director of Portughese Organisation Acesso Cultura, Maria Vlachou, accused the previous definition of its poor ability to serve the museum field, because the museum core functions "to acquire, conserve and research" is "not an aim, a purpose in itself, but rather a tool, in order to fulfil the purposes mentioned by the new definition" (Debono 2019). The report produced by MINOM, the ICOM-affiliated international organisation Museum Movement of New Museology, though, rightfully pointed at the "complex reality of contemporary museology." On the one hand, there are "museums that continue to reproduce and value colonial processes" and, on the other hand, there are those "that affirm themselves as decolonial experiences" (MINOM 2019).

Before the 2019 Kyoto Assembly, MINOM called ICOM to postpone the voting in order to enhance the current proposal, stressing that even though the new definition was "well-intentioned, [it] does not help the universe of normative museology and much less the museal processes and the museums" (MINOM 2019). In fact, this middle-ground reasoning can excellently illustrate a wide range of opinions that were not only well expressed in the press of the day but were also conveyed in public contributions through the ICOM crowdsourcing platform. Notably, this much-expected polarisation of opinions between museum professionals from the Global North and Global South was not present in definitions submitted by online participants.

First, it is important to note that there was a quite fair distribution of voices representing countries from both regions, 149 definitions from the Global North (with the majority from Spain, United States, and Germany) and 119 from the Global South (with the majority from Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia) (see Figure 4.1). In this sense, the crowdsourcing, indeed, allowed for a more inclusive global public engagement. The key question, though, is whether the voices of the international contributors have been really heard and acknowledged.

Second, the keywords' density (frequency) analysis specifically indicated that key terms used in the old and new definitions amounted equally in public contributions from both regions with slight differences that are discussed below. Table 4.1 shows the keyword frequency across the Global North and South, thus

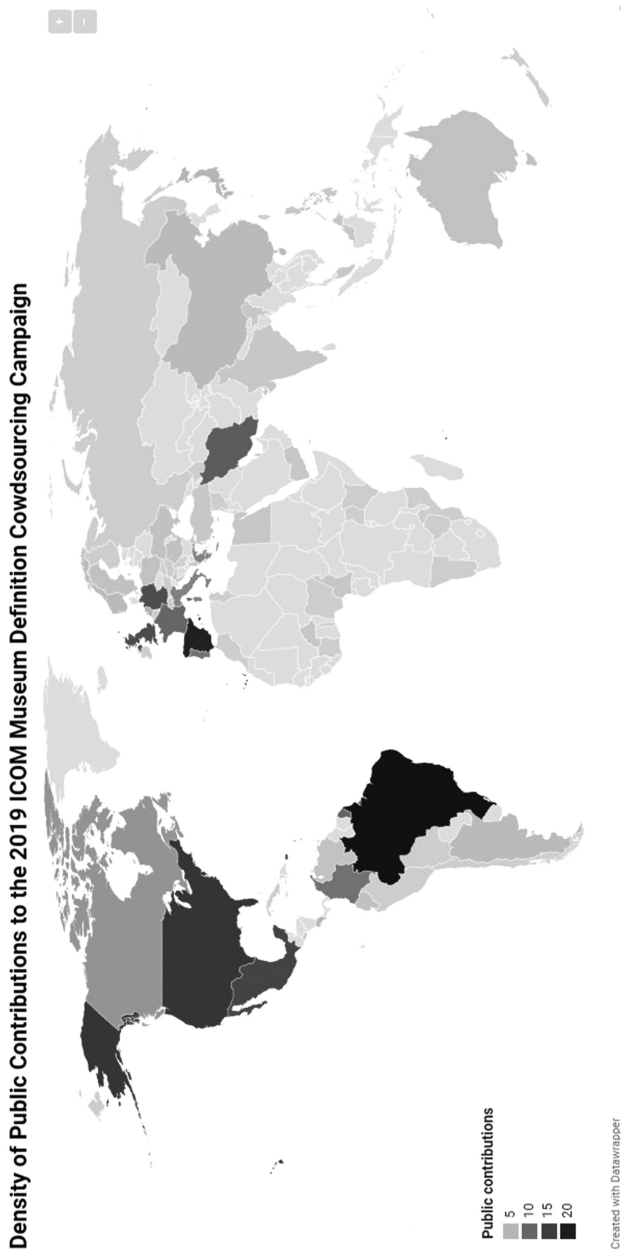

FIGURE 4.1 Density of public contributions submitted to the ICOM platform (created by the author)

TABLE 4.1 Keyword frequency in texts of museum definitions submitted to the ICOM platform

Type	*Keyword*	*Global South*	*Global North*
Current definition	Institution/Institute *(used without "not")*	70	73
	Permanent	18	29
	Place	23	44
	Education	32	38
New definition	Space	43	32
	Democracy/atising/atic	10	4
	Inclusive	12	13
	Polyphonic	0	1

demonstrating that the terminology of the current ICOM museum definition still prevails in the global public understanding of the museum, while new key terms with a strong "decolonising" agenda remain in the minority. For instance, the term "institution" appeared (in the positive sense) almost an equal amount of times in publicly proposed definitions submitted from the Global North and South. Moreover, this number is almost twice as large as the frequency of the word "space" (see Table 4.1) in definitions from both North and South "hemispheres." Notably, "democratising," "inclusive," and "polyphonic" keywords did not appear very frequently in the online definitions submitted by the global public, specifically in comparison with the word "education" that had a strong density in public contributions across regions.

Interestingly, though, contributions defining the museum as a "space," rather than a physical "place" or an "permanent institution," were more representative of voices coming from the Global South. Specifically, a focused content analysis revealed that contributors from the Global South most frequently avoided the traditional terminology of museum definition and, in some cases, even stressed, that a museum is not necessarily a permanent institution. Table 4.2 lists some quotes from definitions that came from the Global South. On the one hand, these quotes highlight the diversity of countries represented in the crowdsourcing campaign, while on the other hand, they offer interesting examples of how a museum is understood in these countries.

Reflecting on the analysis of public contributions, Sandahl (2020) noted that, "there were really beautiful definitions from Latin America. The Latin languages can capture processes, their nouns contain the process." She further revealed that, "the definition that was chosen by the Executive Board [among five versions proposed by the MDPP] has very strong Latin derivatives, that came very much from Spanish, Portuguese, Latin American contributions. In comparison, other four definitions, were rather Anglophones." This quote rather explicitly

TABLE 4.2 Quotes from museum definitions contributed by participants from the Global South

Country	*Quote*
Cuba	"an iterative *creation* between reality and the subject"
Ecuador	"a timeless *portal*"
Egypt	"the *process* of fusion the gaps between civilisations"
El Salvador	"living *culture*, visibilised heritage and the identity"
Iran	"inclusive cultural *houses*"
Kuwait	"an integrated *system* that works as a house of history and culture"
Mauritius	"is *not necessary an institution* but a place where knowledge and history are disseminated"
Mozambique	"*a non-institution of permanent character*, with or without juridical personality"
Nigeria	"a *network* of places where the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of communities has been deposited and preserved"
Yemen	"*no longer an institution* to preserve and display monuments"
Brazil	"are *processes* and must be at the service of society and its development"
China	"a social *phenomenon*"
Colombia	"is a *Cultural Horizon* where human life forms converge with nature and the universe"

indicates that the definition selected by ICOM favoured contributions from the Global South, in line with its "decolonisation" agenda, a result of "a couple of years of intensive analysis of the histories and paradigms, which have shaped museums" (ICOM 2019d).

In many cases, IOs are criticised for their lack of accountability exactly because they cannot realistically meet their democratic aspirations "to speak on behalf of a given population" and "articulate the needs and desires of that population accurately" (Pallas 2013). One of the main reasons of this is a "(mis) use of their power and agency … to set development and advocacy agendas" (Pallas and Guidero 2016, 618). As Pallas and Guidero (2016) explain, some IOs "have significant agency, but use that agency to satisfy organizational interests" (618). Moreover, their mission and vision in specific activities or programs "may be chosen with little regard for external input" with no direct "responsiveness to affected populations" (ibid.). Specifically, IOs' executive boards with their "invisible hand" very often tend to promote their "own agenda and interests, and shaping the decision making of IOs with [their] expertise, executive mandates, entrepreneurship, and discourse" (Yi-Chong and Weller 2015, 4).

The formal ties between ICOM and UNESCO have always strongly shaped museum definition in direct link with the evolution of international law after the Second World War. For example, in 2007, in reaction to the UNESCO "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003," the ICOM museum definition added the concept of intangible cultural heritage,

"significantly expanding the sphere of operation of the museum as an institution traditionally associated with material culture" (Simansons 2020). As Simansons (2020) observes, quite logically the 2019 museum definition was shaped by ICOM commitments to address issues of sustainable global development, explicitly stated in the 2015 UN General Assembly Resolution, "The 2030 Agenda" (UN 2015).

Furthermore, in the past several years, ICOM invested significant efforts to "strengthen its partnerships with high-level intergovernmental organisations to promote the value of museums in contemporary society" (ICOM 2018a). For example, in 2018 it joined forces with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to promote and reinforce the role of museums in local development. In 2019 in collaboration with the OECD, the ICOM Secretariat developed a Guide for Local Governments, Communities and Museums, that offered a road map for state and non-state actors to pursue an economic and social development agenda of museums to achieve a more sustainable future of local communities, especially in emerging economies (ICOM 2019e). This agenda significantly shaped the work of the MDPP Committee who applied strong selective approaches in the analysis of global online submissions. For example, key parameters used for creating a new museum definition, outlined in the 2018 MDPP Report, included acknowledging and addressing global, social, and environmental problems and expressing commitment and responsibility towards sustainable development of museum communities (ICOM 2018b). As a result, the definition specifically articulated the ambition of ICOM to define museums as "democratising spaces" that "contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing (ICOM 2019b).

The clash of preferences between the larger institutional global agenda and the majority of opinions expressed through public crowdsourcing input produced a disappointing outcome and instigated heated debates at the General Assembly. Sandahl (2020) admitted: "But then, the interesting thing was that in Kyoto, this alternative new definition was not backed up by Latin American countries. And that was for me a surprise!" While, according to the MDPP Committee Chair, Latin America "was so dominant, so eloquent" in the "raw material" of submitted definitions, in fact, Brazil along with other Latin American countries expressed a sharp opposition to the proposed definition, evidenced in both online debates and at the Kyoto Conference.

Sandahl (2020) concluded that "there was no clear relationship between where these definitions came from and which countries would support the new proposed definition." She added, "For example, they [representatives from Latin America] were upset that the word 'education' is not in there [in the new definition]. A very strong critique on this issue was from Brazil. There was a strong resistance on that" (Sandahl 2020). It thus appears that the MDPP Committee created the proposed definition by drawing on ICOM's predefined priorities and vision rather than by actively "listening" to the online voices. Otherwise, it is

difficult to explain why the word "education," one of the most frequently used in public contributions, would not be included in the definition.

Indeed, the proposed definition instigated a polarisation of opinions between those who strongly opposed it and those who saw its values to the sector and to larger communities. However, the polarisation line did not go along the perceived divide between the Global South and North. Instead, as Sandahl (2020) herself pointed out, the proposed definition strongly resonated with those countries, where what it "has expressed, is already an established practice," and "a way to catch up with existing practices." "Of course, you would see the Global South, but also you would see countries like the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand who were very supportive." Furthermore, there is "a solid community of Northern Europe in support of the new definition: Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark." She further clarified that these "are the regions where the indigenous populations have changed the concept of museum or museology very strongly" (Sandahl 2020). The final decision in Kyoto to postpone the vote clearly indicated that these voices were still in the minority and the new proposed definition in fact did not reflect the vision and voices of the global public.

Unbiased reading of the online public contributions, collected by ICOM from 73 countries, without such a strong commitment to the institutional agenda, could have helped the MDPP Committee acknowledge the majority preference and avoid such a detrimental effect on organisational accountability. The final section reflects further on this example of unsuccessful decision-making processes delivered around the crowdsourcing campaign, while outlining the key learning points from this case.

Conclusion

At the 2019 Extraordinary General Assembly, the ICOM Director General, Peter Keller, addressed the global museum community, admitting that "the Secretariat have been deeply affected by the emotional reaction this proposal has provoked." In his speech he emphasised:

> The strength of our network lies in its diversity, and its ability to overcome any linguistic, cultural and ideological barriers to ensure that the values of our museums are upheld and evolve to remain relevant in the world we live in today. The diversity of reflections on the new proposal to define our museums illustrates the need for ongoing cross-cultural debate and exchange on the future of our sector, independently of the decision that you, as our committees, will be taking. We therefore call on all ICOM committees to express their opinion on the new museum definition proposal, to respect the democratic process according to ICOM's statutes, and to respect the opinion of others.
>
> *(Keller 2019)*

While in his address the ICOM Director stressed the organisational values of diversity and democracy, the next stages in the process of revising the museum definition seem to be a return to more traditional, more closed, approaches of working through the National Committees. Sandahl (2020) confirmed that "the next stage will be more structured through the Committees rather than in a very direct relationship between ICOM and individuals, and some individuals who might not be even ICOM members, as we had in the first process." The Executive Board has appointed a new Standing Committee MDPP2 with assigned responsibilities to collect results of discussions, surveys, and workshops conducted by the National Committees as a preliminary input for the ICOM June 2020 Meeting, where a new process and methods for the definition's revisions will be adopted (ICOM 2020). This meeting will mainly provide a platform for a more extensive discussion to negotiate a new definition through a "convergence of different viewpoints." A new vote for a revised museum definition is expected then to take place in the next year of ICOM's 75th anniversary, in June 2021 (ICOM 2020).

Challenged by a direct question as to whether ICOM will organise a new crowdsourcing campaign in the second round of the museum definition process, Sandahl (2020) stated that, while she personally believed that public contributions were "really meaningful, useful and needed," "we don't know yet how to go about this." She further explained that the main challenge for ICOM now is "to shift from a critical mode to a creative mode … and it is difficult to make this transition" (Sandahl 2020). It seems that the institutional approach to address this challenge is mostly based on restructuring the work of the MDPP2 Committee to regain the institutional control over the whole process and to rebuild its accountability.

Macnamara and Zerfass (2012) indicated that a perceived "loss of control" over organisational image building and policy-making processes is understood by the majority of international organisations as the main obstacle and risk in delivering input-oriented, online, public engagement campaigns (13). Furthermore, "the need for self-legitimation is assumed to increase with greater public contestation in the form of contentious activism addressing international organizations" (Ecker-Ehrhardt 2018, 521). These observations explain the outcome from the first round of the MDPP committee's work on the museum definition, which was highly contested in the global public space. However, as this chapter illustrates, the public input-oriented approaches and the crowdsourcing exercise itself were not the main reasons for global contestations and protests against the new proposed definition, challenging ICOM's accountability. As Bauhr and Nasiritori (2012) point out, the adversarial relationship between IOs, the media, and key stakeholders could be a direct result from a "poor quality decision-making combined with transparency" (13).

In fact, online public contributions supplied the MDPP Standing Committee with rich material. If properly analysed and understood, it could have signalled to the Standing Committee that the global museum community was not ready

for radical "decolonising" changes which assigned museums new responsibilities to "contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing" (ICOM 2019b). It is important to acknowledge, though, that this attempt to do so was a timely and important milestone in the evolution of the museum agency from a private collection of material artefacts into an active social and cultural agent with global visions and commitments. It instigated public debates across continents and brought important issues to the surface to question the status quo of contemporary museums. In fact, it was a bold move for the MDPP Committee to assert a new vision of the museum's role in the society in the current context, where the majority of stakeholders still believe that museums "are not spaces with the mission of favouring democracy and cultural citizenship, nor are they inclusive, nor polyphonic, and much less do they favour a critical dialogue about the past and the future" (MINOM 2019).

This case provides evidence in support of the argument that Multilateralism 2.0 is still an aim and a desirable model of global governance rather than an established practice, especially in such international organisations as ICOM. The attempt to enhance the democratic profile of ICOM governance through public participation proved this time unsuccessful. It revealed a lack of strategic institutional policies and procedures to properly incorporate the public input into the decision-making process. The failure to understand and acknowledge the diversity of views of its main constituencies resulted in public contestations of ICOM's accountability, pushing the organisation back to traditional working methods. It would be interesting to explore at later stages if ICOM will accept the challenge to repeat its attempts in building platforms for digital transnational democracy. It would be even more fascinating to further investigate whether ICOM will seek not only to facilitate global public deliberations but, more importantly, to make them a meaningful part of its global diplomatic outreach.

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