

Chapter 7

Local Creative Ecosystems as a Strategy for the Development of Low-Density Urban Spaces

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ABSTRACT

Development strategy based on cultural, innovative and creative activities but worried about the possibilities of being foreign bodies to the community and the city. Hence the associated goal of establishing a creative ecosystem that seeks to create strong and direct links of local stakeholders with this strategic investment. The other challenge was to demonstrate that, in spite of all known experiences have taken place in major cities, this strategy could be implemented in low density urban spaces. This is the story of the overcoming these two challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Cyclically, paradigms emerge for local development whose results have not prevented, in many different cases, that the asymmetries between regions or cities continue to increase, even with advantageous financial support provided by the European Union.

It is in this context that one can explain the incessant search, taking advantage of globalization, for development models adapted to each specific territorial reality, even if sometimes, imported from other contexts, as happened with the creative strategies.

This is why according to UNCTAD (2008), “In the contemporary world, a new development paradigm is emerging that links the economy and culture, embracing economic, cultural, technological and social

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aspects of development at both the macro and micro levels. Central to the new paradigm is the fact that creativity, knowledge and access to information are increasingly recognized as powerful engines driving economic growth and promoting development in a globalizing world” (p.3).

Thus, we strongly follow the idea that EC (2010) has highlighted:

Academic research suggests that large scale industrialization of creativity and cultural innovation (CCI) occurs in large urban areas. Nonetheless, there is no straightforward connection between CCIs and labour market size or population. Regional distribution of industrial and innovation systems, including CCIs, is much more diverse. In rural areas, new business models can help bring innovation and sustainability to traditional forms (i.e. local crafts) and lead to economic viability. (pp.13-14)

The world we live in has undergone numerous changes over the years, which arise in various ways and eventually affect several areas related to our day to day life, including the economic and social areas.

Largely, those changes are the result of dynamics and processes with economic, social and political causes, derived from globalization. This phenomenon has caused changes of a global nature, inasmuch as it increases the interdependence and unification of national markets, mobility of capital, as well as faster propagation of technological innovations and information, partly where the importance of Information and Communications Technology is noted. This process has consequences for the economy and society, causing both to pass through several stages, leading to a creative economy. This concept, introduced by Howkins (2001), is based on aspects associated to creativity, with the potential to generate economic growth and development.

Even though creativity is the prominent factor associated with this economy, it is also relevant to consider the importance of other intangible factors such as:

- Innovation, which according to Frankelius (2009), can be seen as the creation of a method, idea or particular object by means of a shape that differs from background patterns; and
- Knowledge, which refers to the set of information and skills that a person acquires through the understanding that he or she makes of a certain matter by means of experiments and theoretical and practical knowledge, gained educationally throughout life.

Thus, Landry (2000) introduces the term creative city where creative industries generate new investment opportunities and jobs. As UNCTAD (2008) underlines “Creative industries can be defined as the cycles of creation, production and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs (...) with creative content, economic value and market objectives” (p.4).

Medium cities have “great quantitative importance in terms of population and land area” and have their own distinct characteristics, that can help assign value to these spaces, so that they become relevant for the economy and local development (Selada et al., 2011, p. 80).

The creative ecosystem corresponds to a level of greater complexity where activities and creative and innovative events begin to give way to the installation of a community of people, increasingly integrated and interdependent activities and policies.

The advantage of the establishment of this ecosystem is that it can allow its autonomy from the stimulus policies - European, national or local - where the synergies within them will lead to more differentiated value chains, greater visibility and greater multiplier effect.

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