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Culture-led regeneration in practice: an exploration of BASE Milano's business model

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the role of urban cultural policies and of cultural hubs as actors of culture-led regeneration processes, with a specific application of the concept to the practical experience of the day-to-day management of BASE Milano. This research was stimulated by the existence of a gap in the literature, symptomatic of a more theoretical and sociological approach to cultural policy. Indeed, the academic literature has attempted to measure the impact on cultural institutions and cultural hubs, but just a few have focused on the entrepreneurial dimension concerning how these institutions manage to be both economically viable and fulfil their mission. In particular I will provide an analysis and a review of the academic literature on the birth path and evolution of cultural policies, with a particular focus on the urban dimension of the matter. The concepts of the "creative city" and of the "creative class" will be explored through a critical literature review stimulated by the academic debate on the positive and negative effects of urban culture-led regeneration processes. As both a consequence and a cause of these processes, I will try to map the characteristics and the social and cultural impact of new rising collaborative and multifunctional spaces, with a focus on the creative and cultural hubs. After defining the theoretical background, the case study of BASE Milano, a cultural institution born out of an urban regeneration project funded by the Municipality of Milan and other sources, will show a concrete application of the matter presented. This will be followed by an analysis of its business model and an assessment of the role it plays for its reference community. The latter is a key element in this paper, as it aims to explore the role of urban cultural policies in fostering social transformation within society and the art world, drawing new trajectories for cultural actors in rethinking the approach to the city and to the communities. The relevance of this research lies in the need to highlight the relationships between policy, funding and the creation of new cultural opportunities that can lead to innovation.

Keywords: cultural policies, creative city, urban cultural policies, collaborative spaces, business model, local community.

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Introduction

Nowadays, academic studies and practical experiences show that urban cultural policies can play a key role in the interplay between cultural institutions, the urban environment and local communities.This research explores the framework of urban cultural policies with a particular focus on culture-led regeneration processes and their consequent tangible and intangible impacts. Central to this exploration is the practical examination based on the management of the multifunctional cultural hub BASE Milano, which serves as the primary case study.

This study arises from a gap in the existing literature, which reflects a predominant theoretical approach to cultural policies. The debate is either limited to policy directions or to attempts of measuring the impacts of these policies. Curiously, a managerial perspective, i.e. one focusing on the day-to-day practice of the initiatives enacted by policy directions is lacking.

With regard to the structure of the research, the first chapter will attempt to provide a comprehensive analysis and review of the academic literature on the genesis and evolution of cultural policies, the geographical variations and the objectives that have shaped these policies over time. In order to tackle this issue, it will be essential for this study to define a clear framework within which we will develop our analysis, focusing on the identification of the usual actors involved in policy-making processes from a national and international perspective.
We will deal with the main objects of investigation of cultural policy studies: the concept of culture and the still ongoing debate on cultural and creative industries; this will help to understand, from a sociological and "policy" point of view, the evolution of the kind of cultural practices that have been the object of cultural policies, from high culture to popular culture. A final section is dedicated to highlighting the lack of a managerial approach to cultural policy, which tends to focus on providing theoretical frameworks and general guidelines. We will see how a more holistic approach, involving expert advice, can be a key element in the success of policies.

The second chapter will narrow down the cultural policy discourse in relation to the entity of the city. I will analyse in depth the framework of urban cultural policies and the processes through which they are enacted within the city: culture-led regeneration processes will be the focus of the chapter's investigation, as they are closely related to the case study object of this research. The concepts of the creative city and the creative class are explored through a critical literature review, stimulated by the academic debate on the positive and negative effects of urban processes. Furthermore, in the last section, some strategic tools and best practices will be shared to highlight the need to adopt a strategic and inclusive community-driven approach within these processes.

The third chapter attempts to map the characteristics and social and cultural impact of the emerging collaborative and multifunctional spaces, with a focus on creative and cultural hubs. These multifunctional spaces are believed to be crucial in stimulating urban regeneration processes, as well as to be one of the resulting positive effects. We will explore how these hubs are centres of collectivity and knowledge sharing, open to contamination, as argued by Sgaragli and Teloni (2022).

Finally, the last chapter is focused on the specific case study of BASE Milano, a creative hub that was born from an urban regeneration project funded by Milano's municipality and many other sources of funding. Specific attention will be given to the analysis of its business model and its diverse source of funding that enables the daily enactment of its project. Not less important will be the examinations of the role towards the community of reference and the impact on the urban environment of Milan as a result of strategic funding allocation through the initiative.

In conclusion, this paper not only aims to unravel the managerial dimension of cultural policies on cultural institutions, but also wants to draw attention in fostering social transformation within society and the art world, drawing new trajectories for cultural institutions in rethinking the approach to the city and to the communities.

Chapter I

An introduction to cultural policies

This chapter will deal with the main features of cultural policies. From a more theoretical analysis we will explore the practical process of policy making and the main objects of policy studies.

1.1 Defining cultural policies

The first clarification that needs to be made when approaching the cultural policy discourse concerns the quiet novelty of the academic community's growing interest in the debate on the subject. However, in order to unfold the matter, it is first necessary to provide some definitions that will help to understand the theoretical framework in which this research takes place.

When addressing cultural policy it is crucial to keep in mind that we are dealing with one of the branches of public policy. In fact, Dye (2005, p.4) defines cultural policies as "what governments choose to do or not to do " in relation to the cultural sphere. More specifically, it encompasses all the actions taken by governments not just concerning the arts, but also the cultural and creative industries and cultural heritage (Schuster, 2002). Lewis and Miller (2008) also support the idea that cultural policy is a tool that shapes public knowledge and subjectivity following the scopes of preserving cultural heritage and promoting new ways of thinking.

However, Mulchay (2006) suggests that what is emphasised in the usual definitions of cultural policies is their political value, as they enact supportive or disincentivizing policies that result in different societal impacts. The author also points out how academics have always privileged anthropological and also sociological perspectives in defining cultural policies, rather than an economic approach. Another issue reported is that governments are unlikely to consider all types of artistic practices in the regulatory process, privileging some over others.

Of course, cultural policy as politics are not static. In this sense, academics have observed and systematised some of the main phases through which cultural policy has undergone, that can be summarised as follows (Menger, 2010; Markusen & Shrock, 2006).

1. Basing cultural policy on a limited dimension of culture, emphasising an elitist perspective.
2. Decentralisation of the public role in policy making.
3. Delegitimation of the usual hierarchies that would give support to high culture.
4. Legitimation of cultural policy through its contribution to economic growth.

In this evolutionary path, it is possible to note the growing openness of the remit of cultural policy: from an elitist and subsidy-based perspective to a democratisation of cultural policy that seeks to achieve an integrated regulatory framework between public authorities and the market (Menger, 2010). However, it is important to note that what has just been proposed refers mainly to European cultural policies, as this research operates within this framework.

It is crucial to understand that cultural policy and decision making is influenced and carried out through the contribution of many different actors' expertise at different geographical levels: from supranational bodies such as the European Union to national states (through the ministries of cultures) and local governments (from regions to cities). Among these diverse levels, Bell and Oakley (2015) enlist ministers, bureaucrats, consultants, academics and theorists, think tanks and the public community, which is usually addressed through political consultation.

Indeed, the decision making process is highly complex and articulated, but it is interesting for this study to attempt to give an overview of the practical experience that characterises the matter to try to understand the starting point that generates what we are able to see implemented within our cities, that are believed to be the concrete place of policy enactment (Bell & Oakley, 2015). All along every process, we must keep in mind that, as in a system, cultural policies are characterised by a reciprocal influence with public policies that span from education, transportation, welfare and social issues (Mulchay, 2006).

To help us navigate the discourse, Cairney (2012) outlines a “policy cycle” approach, which is composed of five stages in the life cycle of a public policy that he breaks it down in:

1. agenda setting;
2. policy formulation;
3. legitimation;
4. implementation;
5. evaluation;
6. policy maintenance;
7. succession or termination.

This scheme helps the reader to better grasp the roles of different policy makers throughout the life cycle, taking into account the different approaches to policy, which can range from top-down to bottom-up perspectives. In particular, Belfiore and Bennet (2010) highlight the importance of an evidence-based approach to demonstrate and evaluate the economic and social impact of new policies, especially when subsidies are at the centre of the debate. The authors argue for an integrated approach between humanistic visions and economic imperatives within evaluation processes, enabling them to demonstrate the transformative power of the arts in contemporary society. In order to have a successful evaluation process, the theoretical framework with which we approach cultural policy must be solid. Indeed, in the next section we will explore what have been some of the key objects of policy studies by identifying common key terms such as culture, creative and cultural industries. This is because, as Lewis and Miller (2008) suggest, the way in which we understand cultural policies is influenced by the way in which we identify culture. The shared knowledge context will then be translated, as Bell and Oakley (2015) suggest, into practical texts and guidelines that reflect the whole ongoing process.

In the study of the theoretical framework and in each step of the decision-making process, we must bear in mind that each policy is deeply linked to its reference context from a sociological, political and economic perspective (Mulchay, 2006). This is also crucial for understanding the role of the state and its scope for action in terms of a more

or less regulatory approach. As we know from historical references, culture has been used by governments as a tool to bind a nation together and form new identities (Bell & Oakley, 2015). Culture is thus transformed into a "soft power" tool that enables the vehiculation of ideas and values (Zhang, 2010). Although Nisbett (2012) argues that this enables an expansion of knowledge, Minnaert (2014) highlights the instrumental perspective of the matter. Instrumentalism is still a highly debated topic, as sometimes it can bring some benefits and open up new opportunities, but Nisbet (2012) also suggests that the cultural sector itself propagates the instrumentalism concept, especially because every policy is expected to achieve a certain object or it is related to something. Therefore, policies can be defined as instrumental by definition (Bell & Oackley, 2015).

To give a last glimpse of the intersection between culture and general public policy, it is interesting to report Ahearne's (p.144, 2009) distinction between "implicit" and "explicit" cultural policies. He identifies the first as "unintended cultural side effects of a policy" or as those kinds of actions that are intended to "shape cultures, but that are not expressly thematised as such". Many studies show that welfare, economic, social and foreign policies often include implicit cultural policies, as explained by Bell and Oackley (2015). In this sense, Gray (2004) developed the concept of "policy attachment" in order to explain how in this scenario, culture may "attach" itself to areas of public policy. In line with Ahearne's (2009) ideas, this indicates that cultural policy is not always the domain of individuals working within the cultural sector. In contrast, the second form explicitly addresses culture and intends to influence a community's cultural production and consumption. It is also crucial to note that all these processes are characterised by ecological complexity, which also involve external and structural forces such as globalisation, climate change and economic recession.

Having delineated the outline of cultural policies, in the next section we will deal with the specific objects of cultural policies studies to delve deeper in the discourse.

1.2 The object of cultural policy studies

In analysing cultural policy, it is crucial to understand what has been the subject of research and study behind the path that leads policy actors to actual policy making.

The main concern of many scholars has been to find common ground on specific issues such as culture, creative and cultural industries. This section presents an overview of what has been discussed in the available literature on these concepts.

1.2.1 Defining culture

The development of cultural policy's discourse is tightly bound to the conception of culture. Indeed, many scholars emphasise the importance of first delving into the definition of a common background in order to understand what the remit of policy is, since as we said previously, not all forms of artistic practices are usually included within these processes (Storey, 2006; Bell & Oakley, 2015; Mulcahy, 2006).

Mulcahy (2006, p.319) highlights how the concept of culture is semantically rooted in the Latin verb "colere", which translates as "to cultivate". In this sense, in addition to the rural cultivation of fields, we find a metaphorical view of translation as an intellectual cultivation of the mind towards the complexity of the world. This dimension became closely linked to the idea of education and refinement, and spread around the belief in the "civilising power" of the arts. Jahoda (p.289, 2012) reports an interesting definition by Tylor (1958 [1871]), an anthropologist, that perfectly frames these ideas:

> "Culture, or civilization ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, [...] and any other capacities acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, p. 1, 1958 [1871]).

Bell & Oakley (2015) also add a temporal dimension of the matter as they state that the birth of the definition of culture that we use today dates back to the nineteenth century, and was stimulated by a contrast. Culture was meant both as a set of artistic practices or products, and as a means of anthropological significance that separated human society from the natural world. In this sense, they stress the belief that spread through time of culture as an idealised practice to which humanity should aspire;

Having given a brief overview of the main definitions of culture, it is now interesting for our research to understand what kind of practices have been the subject of actual policy-making, highlighting the changes over time.

What is clear from a review of the available literature is that what used to be of more concern to cultural policy makers was what is usually referred to as “high culture”', reflecting an elitist perspective, since traditional or high culture is aimed at an audience with high cultural spending capacity. Opera, classical music and ballet have been - and still are - the main beneficiaries of public funding in most countries and, the subsidies allocated are usually stable and inversely proportional to the consumption of the public (Storey, 2006). Bell and Oakley (2015) provide an emblematic example regarding this topic: the Royal Opera House is the UK’s first opera company, which has received the largest institutional grants from the Arts Council every year since 1946. This is because, as history teaches us, it can enable a sort of glorification of the nation and contribute to identity building, by enhancing and protecting this kind of practice. As Storey (2006) highlights, cultural policy has always been strongly influenced by cultural patronage of the rich and of the state.

The twentieth century was characterised by a gradual change in perspective on the issue, particularly in the post-World War II period, which saw a sharp increase in the resources dedicated to supporting arts and culture through the use of tax revenues and a major effort to create a solid basis for policy instruments (Mulcahy, 2006). This stimulated greater debate about the comprehensiveness of the term culture and led to reflections on the inclusion of popular culture within the remit of cultural policy, as noted by Bell and Oakley (2015).

Indeed, there has been a move away from a focus on a limited definition of culture that just includes the high arts such as painting, music and drama, to a broader view of culture that seeks to encompass a wider range of cultural activities (Hesmondhalgh, 2005). This breadth is exemplified by UNESCO's (2003) use of the term “cultural heritage”, which includes not only tangible heritage but also intangible heritage such as oral traditions, rituals, ways of life and customs. This concept undoubtedly helps to safeguard cultural diversity, but on the other hand, as Hesmondhalgh (2005) argues, it suggests difficulties in defining boundaries.

It is interesting to add that within this broader view, policies are sometimes likely to take on an instrumental scope for other policies such as education, transport and welfare or social concerns, since as most policies are outcome-oriented, whether the outcome is social or economic, which goes beyond the purely cultural scope. In fact, as we will

analyse in more detail in the following sections, culture can be a catalyst for foreign economic investment, tourism and social inclusion, showing that instrumentalism can have a double dimension and also bring positive and sustainable benefits to all stakeholders involved. UNESCO's (p.5, 2003) definition of intangible heritage reported here, illustrates this double sided reality:

> "The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority groups and for mainstream social groups within a State, and is as important for developing States as for developed ones" (UNESCO, p.5, 2003).

It is evident from this statement that the focus of the 2003 Convention of the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is on preserving and enhancing the "wealth" of this heritage for its "social and economic value" (UNESCO, p.5, 2003). In this sense, debates can be opened, but with the conviction that in some ways these kinds of expression of identity and of culture survive and can thrive through time.

Returning to the theme of this section, whatever dimension of culture one prefers to take, the object of cultural policy is extremely variable, and cultural forms can be treated differently by the state through the instruments of economic support, repression and regulation. This is particularly the case for popular culture, which is usually addressed by policy makers when trying to solve social problems, especially when they relate to local communities (Browne, 2006).
Popular culture is a highly debated term, whose boundaries are perceived as blurry and its first aim doesn't coincide with an aesthetical accomplishment, as Browne (2006) states. In fact, Sontag (1966) sees a new function for culture: that of stimulating new consciousnesses and modalities of sensibility. From these debates, the contrast between *high vs low* culture took a stronger shape.

Hinds et al. (2006) continue adding a useful definition of the concept narrowing down everything that is entertaining, not perceived as elitist and that can be disseminated through mass media, embracing different aspects of life and every level of society. Indeed, the main characteristics of popular culture are the intrinsic popularity and the

large extent of distribution. Therefore, sophistication and elitism leaves space for a more pluralistic view and for larger participation.

It is crucial to point out that the perceptions of what is considered *low* and *high* culture can vary with time and change; this is exemplified by Shakespeare's works, which were first recognised as popular culture and then, by 1900, fit into the "high culture box" due to their capitalisation (Hinds et al., 2006). Regarding this topic, the authors argue how his plays are now attended by an educated audience, able to pay for a theatre ticket and who recognise the refinement of the theatrical representation.

In the last decades, there has been a growing debate on the policy implication on this matter and on the role of the policy makers in deciding whether or not to fund certain activities (Kong, 2010). This dilemma hasn't yet been resolved, mainly because it's not easy to define which practices are worthy of state support and which should be left to market forces, which can also be shaped by consumer preferences.
It is interesting to add to this section, in order to give a small overview of before developing further concepts, that public authorities can act through what we can call regulation and promotion of culture, at different geographical scales, ranging from the local to the global. The former involves censorship, protection from market forces and ownership. In the second, patronage and state funding of culture and much more is involved, as reported by Bell and Oakley (2015). Nevertheless, regulation and promotion are intertwined in certain types of policies, which need to create strategies that both regulate and promote local cultural assets.

Having laid the groundwork for tackling the issue of cultural policy, in the next subsection we will analyse two further concepts that are crucial to understanding the discursive framework of the policy-making dynamic.

1.2.2 Cultural industries vs Creative industries

Our analysis continues with another necessary clarification in order to avoid confusion of definitions and approaches and to provide an overview of the debate on the concepts of creative economy, cultural and creative industries. These latter terms have been introduced as a result of the growing importance and recognition by governments of the

role of culture as a key to economic development. As Throsby (2008) reports, the introduction of the term “creative economy” was specifically aimed at clustering the macro-sector that deals with the production of creative goods and services. In effect, it seeks to capture the impact on the wider economy beyond culture itself and in terms of consumer markets, and helps to shape or produce the technologies that drive economic growth. As the author (2008) continues, its core elements are the “cultural” or “creative” industries, which gives us the chance to highlight the still ongoing debate on what really distinguishes the two terms and which are the specific industries that fall under this umbrella-definition.

As many authors (Pratt, 2005; Hesmondhalgh 2008; Storey, 2006) argue, although “cultural industries” has been the preferred way of referring to the cultural sector, it has recently been joined by the term “creative industries”. Hesmondhalgh (2008) goes on to argue that there is a great deal of confusion between these two terms and their relationship, even though they have emerged from different policy and theoretical contexts. What is clear, however, is that both refer to how cultural goods are "produced and distributed in modern economies and societies" (Hesmondhalgh, p.552, 2008).

Usually, the concept of "cultural industries" is associated with the work of the philosophers Adorno and Horkheimer, "Dialectic of Enlightenment" (1947), in which they criticise the culture industry for having succumbed to the power of industrial capitalism. They were the first ones to use this term in order to address cultural production. In their discussion they supported the idea that art should have offered a critique of society, but with economic subjugation everything was turned into an industry, a "parcel of capitalism itself” (Adorno, 1991). Nevertheless, as Lawrence and Phillips (2002) argue, they did not specify the artistic practices that would be labelled as cultural industries. In fact, Hesmondhalgh (2008) suggests that the term can be seen more as an attempt to pluralise and sociologise the concept of cultural production in the authors' essay. What is clear is that these reflections on mass culture laid the basis for the work of policymakers and thinkers to assess the role of culture in our modern capitalist societies.

The sense of the term that we use today, involves the idea of value, since culture acquires the characteristics typical of an industrial production process, just as all other

economic goods, competing for the income and time of consumers. This shows how having a consistent idea of the dynamics of consumption is essential.

Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005) point out that from the 1980s onwards it became impossible to ignore the influence of the cultural industries, especially for policy makers. In this sense, one of the first steps to consider cultural industries within an international policy framework was proposed by UNESCO. Specifically, in 1982, it published a report on the subject, driven by a strong concern about the unequal distribution of cultural resources between the North and the South. The conference report Cultural Industries: a challenge for the future of culture (1982) provided the basis for definitions and policy frameworks, recognising the economic impact of cultural industries and applying an analysis typical of the industrial sector.

At the local level, the concept has taken longer to find its way into public policy, but the idea of the creative city and economic regeneration through culture has paved the way, boosting tourism and retail at the same time, as Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005) argue. This issue will be discussed further in the second chapter dedicated to urban cultural policy. However, it is important to note that in the 1980s the Greater London Council (GLC) in the UK adopted the term cultural industries for one main reason: they wanted to address all those cultural practices that were not covered by public subsidies and that were engines of economic growth and employment. These activities included cinema, books, television, radio and concerts, as reported by O'Connor (2000), highlighting in this way how most consumed cultural goods fell outside the public funding system and questioning the role of public policy.

On the other hand, the “creative industries” concept comes from a political background, since it is specifically linked to the foundation in 1997 of the Creative Industries Taskforce by hand of the British Labour government in the UK, as Thorsby (2008) reports. Its first objective was to quantify the growing economic impact of cultural industries, not only in the UK, but elsewhere. Practically, the creative industries were defined by thirteen different sectors, as shown in *Table 1*. As Nesta (2006) explains, statistics were not easy to draw since the biggest part of cultural production was done by small firms and freelancers. Nevertheless, this was crucial in demonstrating the economic significance of cultural production, extending the usual definition of the cultural sector beyond the visual arts to include architecture, fashion, advertising and cinema.

Table 1: Uk creative industries

Advertising	Music
Architecture	Performing arts
Arts and antiques	Publishing
Crafts	Software and computer services
Design	Television and radio
Designer fashion	Interactive leisure software
Film	

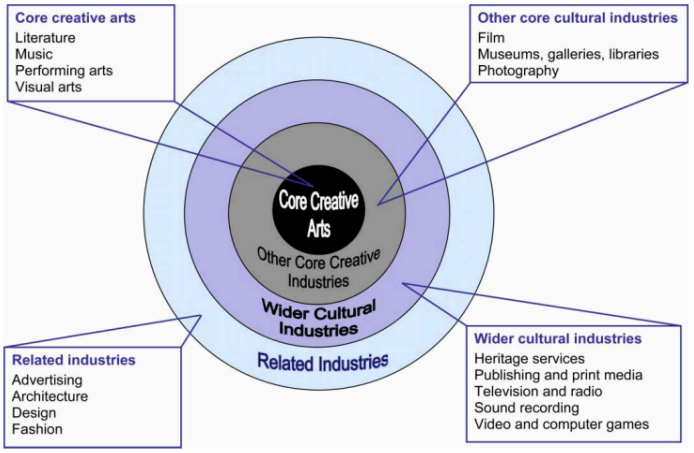
Source: Bell and Oakley (2015)

The changing shift from "cultural industries" to "creative industries" broadened the definition and enabled us to assess the link between cultural sectors and economic growth, a key element for cultural policies. Nevertheless, it is relevant to mention that there are some variations in the use of the term which reflect different approaches, as Newbigin (2010) states the UK takes into account fashion but not museums, while France considers museums but excludes fashion from the definition.

An attempt to visualise and schematise this duality is provided by the economist David Throsby (2010), who elaborated the "Concentric circle" model to explain the relationship between the creative and cultural sector. This model recognises the creative arts as a source of ideas that are then taken up by other cultural businesses, such as the media, and is useful for understanding the working dynamics between the wider economy and public subsidies.

The model is based on the recognition that goods and services produce two kinds of value, the cultural and the economic one (Throsby, 2008). This feature explicitly distinguishes cultural goods from any other kind of good.
The economist narrowed down three "layers" to classify the creative industries as reported in *Figure 1*.

Figure 1: The concentric circles model by Throsby



Source: Thorsby (2008)

He identifies literature, music, the visual arts and the performing arts as Core creative arts, through which ideas are produced in the forms of text, sound, images or performances. In the Other core cultural industries' layer he positions films, museums, galleries and libraries, together with photography. In the Wider cultural industries circle he includes heritage services, sound recording, tv and radio, computer games and publishing. And last but not least, as Related industries Throsby (2008) recognises the role of advertising, architecture, design and fashion.

This model, as Throsby (2010) argues, highlights how the core and pure ideas created by the artists influence and stimulate the offer of industries positioned in outer layers and how the artistic input diminishes in favour of others as we move outer from the core circle.

Following this analysis, it is necessary to point out that the terminology is far from settled and that such debates generally aim to shift the focus of "creative economy" policies away from concerns with cultural and artistic output and consumption towards more general innovation policies that affect consumer markets (Bell & Oakley, 2015). In addition, an increasing number of people work in creative occupations that are relevant to the wider economy, not just the cultural sector, demonstrating how all policies are interconnected and help shape each other.

1.3 A managerial perspective on cultural policies

The last section of the chapter on cultural policies aims to give an overview of the main trends of the policies enacted within culture, which are believed to lack a managerial perspective during their formulation and implementation. This kind of approach is necessarily intrinsic to the matter as it can help avoiding inefficiencies and losing opportunities.

As we will see in the next chapter, cultural policies influence the shape of the urban landscape and aim at fostering social development. Nonetheless, the stakeholders on which policies' effects are imprinted are also economic actors: from foundations, museums, creative hubs, non for profit organisations to the single individual. Therefore, cultural management theories and the involvement of the expertise of the right professionals are key factors that lead to a more comprehensive and sustainable implementation of policies able to carry out effective and appropriate performance measurements (DeVereaux, 2019). The author notes that among the many challenging areas that can be overlooked in policy making, the most critical are identified by leaks in stakeholder engagement, risk and project management.

In fact, Bullock et al. (2001), among the various characteristics listed for a modernisation of policy making, stress the importance of focusing attention on an evidence-based approach that involves constant consultation with experts in the field of management and not only.

Some of the actions that have been taken as guiding principles during the process of policy formulation in the survey carried out by Bullock et al. (2001) are identified in the use of pilot schemes able to stimulate innovation trials and the creation of solid evidence through the expertise of consultants, researchers and project managers.
This is certainly useful and vital for a successful result, nonetheless strategic planning and the allocation of resources are even more complex tasks that need to be carried out. This is why in the last chapter I will present an analysis of how BASE Milano has implemented the dedicated funds to regenerate the former industrial area where it is located, to actually see how the policy from the city municipality has been implemented from a managerial point of view and what are the related results.

From the literature review it is clear that policies are more likely to produce some frameworks and guidelines, through which states, cultural organisations and businesses navigate trying to achieve the best results economically and socially speaking. The policies enacted by the European agencies are the perfect examples as they usually produce general frameworks for all member states and try to provide some practical guidelines for them to follow in the use of the funds allocated for each project, such as the Creative Europe and the European Capital of Culture programmes. Nonetheless, even at a supranational level, the debate on cultural policies tends to focus on a theoretical perspective, lacking proper planning and a managerial view. Most of the studies have left out from the analysis the concrete episodes and their consequences on the territory and on the local community, especially from the perspective of individual organisations. This type of contribution would fill in the gaps that would only cover policy directions.

A great example of this is given by the European programme Culture 2000 (2000-2026), which was one of the most important flagship programmes of the European Union with a budget of 236.5 million euros (Culture 2000, n.d.). The main aim of this project was to promote a common European cultural framework while preserving cultural diversity (Culture 2000, n.d.). This programme aimed to fund a wide range of artistic practices, from literature to the visual and performing arts and cultural heritage in general. Despite this, some issues were identified as barriers to access funding and take advantage of the programme's opportunities. Chiti and Mendes (2021) highlight the complexity of the application process for the programme, which has had a negative impact on the participation of less structured cultural organisations, leaving many funds unused. In addition, Brunetti et al. (2020) note that many of the participating projects experienced long delays in the disbursement of funds, which resulted in a forced change of schedules and the unreliability of these funds. Finally, the distribution of the latter was perceived as unequal between member states and the evaluation phase was described as inefficient, resulting in a partial and incomplete accountability report (Lähdesmäki et al., 2021).

Some attempts have been made to move in a more practical direction through the creation and dissemination of toolkits. Some of these are identified as the Creative

Hubkit and the New Urban Agenda, which I will analyse in more detail in the next sections, as they are important for understanding the background to the issues that will be explored. In fact, these tools propose practical steps for the implementation of some actions or policies; in the first example, the aim is to support actors in the successful practices of establishing creative hubs, while in the second, the main concern is the implementation of sustainable and community-oriented regeneration processes (British Council, 2015; Urban Agenda Platform, n.d.). Indeed, these tools represent key elements that need to be integrated into the more general and theoretical policy frameworks in order to maximise the outcome and achieve a greater impact.

What can derive from this more holistic and integrated approach is an information driven decision making process and a facilitated knowledge exchange, which can lead to development within the cultural world and that of public policy.

In conclusion, this first chapter analysed the birth path of cultural policies and the main object of study of research on the topic. A clarification on the lack of managerial perspectives in cultural policy has been made with the aim of stimulating debate on the topic and to prepare the background for the last chapter on the case-study.

Chapter II

The conflictual role of the city and culture-led regeneration processes

After having analysed the birth path of cultural policies, it is now crucial for our research topic to bring even closer our magnifying glass and highlight the processes the city goes through, as the main place where decision making takes shape in practice. This chapter in particular will showcase the different roles that culture can acquire in the city and its related intended and unintended effects. We will dive into the phenomenon of the creative city and of its consequences, the process of territorial regeneration through the use of culture, exploring the role of communities in the matter. I will provide practical tools shared by the academic community that aims at tackling social polarisation and exclusion of communities from urban decision making processes.

2.1 The theoretical background of the urban scenery

Talking of geographical scales, it is crucial to understand that every level of government, from local to supranational organisations like the United Nations, shapes cultural policies. But throughout the past thirty years, the city has been the primary location for the creation of cultural policy, as Bell & Oakley state (2015). This takeover mirrors the significance of the city within the knowledge based economy discourse, known to have reorganised urban economies with a focus on consumer services and business. As Grodach and Silver (2013) argue, the rising global network of cities tried to frame the growing human capital sectors with policy programs, guided by neoliberalism and privatisation, embracing new goals such as sustainability, diversity and inclusion.

The “new” post-Fordist footprint, which has been characterising cities since the 1980s, suggests a definitive break from the past, leaving space for new production modalities and diverse urban landscapes (Evans, 2009). In this environment, culture acquired a pivotal role as it became associated with identity shaping strategies and converted into a tool to address urban decay, demographic changes and new social trends (Grodach & Silver, 2013). To tackle these issues, creating an attractive city-image and a captivating

urban design became a spread strategy to implement. Ashley (2014) suggests that culture became a ”new fuel for urban growth machines” when addressing place branding and city marketing. In this sense, some of the main practical trends spanned from the application of tax credits, the implementation of amenities and the erogation of incentives aimed at the construction of iconic flagship building that could characterise the new downtown, as well as the promotion of regeneration processes in former industrial areas (Grodach, 2017).

A disclaimer that must be made before continuing the analysis concerns the need to keep in mind the national footprint in which every urban cultural policy is embedded, as an expression of a shared and common national identity (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1993).

Transcending the economic reasons, culture and creativity revealed themselves to firstly represent, through the direct application to policy, a way to reach social cohesion, inclusion and innovation and to generate value. This kind of value does not depend just on physical urban assets, as Rausell-Köster et al. (2022) report, but lies in the attached meaning that derives from all these elements. The authors also remark the role of the city as an interface between the set of resources available in a geographical space and the possibility of interaction. This concentration is necessary to have a successful urban environment (Concilio et al., 2019) and create valuable cultural experiences that result from the encounter between the physical assets and the “symbolic heritage meanings” (Rausell-Köster et al., p. 4, 2022).
All this contributes to the creation of a sense of place which shapes the behaviours of individuals within the urban framework and their interactions (Grodach & Silver, 2013).

Florida et al. (2017) suggest that all the processes that arise from a concentration of people, assets and interactions which constitute a market, also propose some challenges that deal with economic, social and cultural issues; to tackle this, the city must find innovative and *smart* solutions. This last concept enables us to give some glimpses of the concept of the Smart City that has spread throughout academic debates.

Academics have come to agree on the definition of Smart City as a process and an approach towards the improvement of life within the urban context, concerning almost every aspect of the city from governance, to culture, health, sustainability and

transportation (Florida et al., 2017, Rausell-Köster et al., 2022). The concepts of efficiency and effectiveness lie at the basis of the matter, which are believed to be met through the use of technology and innovation, closely linked to the presence of human capital (Anthopoulos & Reddick, 2016).
This enables us to remark the cruciality for our analysis of the concentration of human capital within the border of the city, as Garcia (2004) suggests to be a key element for urban economic development. To give an explanation to this phenomenon, some useful theories help us to delineate the scenario.

Richard Florida (2002) is usually associated with the concept of "creative class" within the creative city discourse, as he bases his theory, concerning urban economic development, on the idea of "talent attraction". Firstly, the concept emerged outside the cultural policy framework, as the author referred mainly to high tech workers and industries deriving from the post-industrial economy of the 1970s. The concept was then expanded to the cultural dimension, evolving into an abused word in the cultural policy discourse. Florida (2002) stressed the cruciality of attracting skilled labour - named under the term "the creative class" - as the main asset to reach economic growth. Within this category he includes jobs characterised by intensive knowledge features that cover areas such as design, architecture, mathematics, education, performing arts, media and entertainment. What joins together all these categories is the production of new ideas and forms of knowledge. In fact, as Florida (2002) highlights, the creation of clusters of talent concerning these kinds of occupations is what really makes a city attractive for new residents. People would choose to move to a city mainly for its amenities, possibilities of entertainment, cultural facilities and for the narrated lifestyle that it could offer. The job offer itself and all the elements that related to it, are believed to move to the background (Florida, 2002).
In relation to these ideas, three main elements have been identified as crucial for economic development: talent, tolerance and technology have been labelled as the "3Ts of economic development" (Florida, 2014). Talent, as we saw before, is very fluid and can change its location very easily, for this reason cities must secure the greatest amount of talent within their communities. Technology, as we know, is believed to be the engine for innovation. To these three entities, he also adds a fourth one, the Territorial asset, that is linked to the concept of tolerance since the quality of a place depends on many

factors like the presence of amenities, of a vibrant and *diverse* community (Florida, 2014).

Other theoretical relevant contributions concerning the concept of the creative city highly devalue and criticise the use of the adjective "creative" as it seems to have converted into an overused rhetoric, just like those of sustainability and development (Niessen, 2006). Hwang (2014), for example, asks provocatively for real and practical solutions to tackle all the social issues that derive from this concept so acclaimed by academics. Clearly, this debate is still ongoing but inevitably Florida's theory represents a solid ground for urban cultural policies studies.

Having given a brief panoramic view on the well-known theories that function as a basis for the concept that we are illustrating in this chapter, it is possible to sum up the characterising trend from the 1970s that see culture converting itself into a tool to attract skilled labour, economic investments and cultural tourism; both as a consequence and as a cause, governments began to focus on the development of cultural districts, and on the livability of cities in order to win competition with other cities and to tackle the changing demographics and implicitly impose a new life style (Bell & Oakley, 2015).

Garcia (2004) comments that all this attention towards the creative sector stimulated the birth of a new approach that integrates the planning process and the cultural assets to tackle the urban crisis. In fact, he argues for a collaborative approach that places culture at the centre of the urban redevelopment discourse, which can be reached by a proper use and growth of cultural resources (Grodach, 2017).

This initiated a spreading approach to cultural branding and a race to be ranked as most creative within cities rankings and competitions. Indeed, at least at the beginning, it seemed that the attraction of cultural tourism and the presence of consolidated leisure facilities converted into a successful recipe for cultural development (Grodach and Silver, 2013).

Rausell-Köster et al. (2022) also highlights how the success of cities is usually determined by their ability to satisfy the symbolic needs of residents. Indeed, it is crucial to keep in mind that this symbolic capital can be very vulnerable and fragile as creativity can influence the market and social innovation.

The commodification of culture and the rising job opportunities in the creative sectors are some of the symptoms of what Scott (2014) calls cognitive-cultural capitalism.
Strong risks, here, are represented by the threat of falling into the dynamics of the "society of spectacle", as Rausell-Köster et al. (2022) explain, which leads to a total commodification of every form of culture leaving behind every social aim. Moreover, another critique that has been brought forward by some academics regards social polarisation stimulated by phenomena such as gentrification and social exclusion. We will deal with these issues in the further section , as it is useful, to be able to dive clearly into the matter, to associate these topics to more concrete examples.

2.2 Urban cultural policies in action

As Godrach (2017) argues, creative city policy is mainly a result of the "urbanisation" of cultural policy. In fact, the author positions cultural planning as one of the main and most virtuous modalities of explicitation of urban cultural policy, as it tries to merge the concept of culture as a way of life into the planning system (Grodach, 2017). This highlights how local cultural assets can work as a catalyst for economic development, engaging at the same time with the local community.
It seems also crucial to add that, at the very basis of urban cultural planning lies the need to include every aspect of policy such as education, public transport, communities and sustainability (Bell & Oakley, 2015) underlining the interconnection between all policy dimensions.

Policy makers can address culture through three main different narratives that can be summed up in the creation of cultural clusters within the city able to attract new talents, the hosting of mega-events and the promotion of culture-led regeneration projects which is usually linked to the establishment of flagship buildings.

For what concerns the first theme, Mommaas (2004) highlights the cruciality of the strategy used to reach cultural and economic development within cities through the establishment of creative clusters, also known as cultural districts.

One of the main authors from the academic literature regarding this topic is Micheal Porter, who in 1998 introduced the notion of cultural "cluster" within the framework of

the industrial district (Pratt, 2000). This concept is based on the localization of companies that share business scopes concerning the creative sector, from enterprises, to institutions and suppliers. What is called “co-location” is believed to facilitate the exchange of ideas and practices, as well as to implement the social networks, which lie at the base of the cultural world as symbolic capital (Pratt, 2000).

In many cases, this strategy gathers together exclusively cultural activities, such as galleries or museum institutions with the purpose of supporting artistic production and community engagement. Berlin's cultural district of Kreuzberg perfectly embodied these aims, especially during the first artistic wave after the fall of the wall, and continues to do so (Bell & Oakley, 2015). But new trends show how the concentration of not just this kind of activities, as also entertaining and leisure businesses such as cafes, restaurants and cool artsy retail places accompany the first ones (Mommaas, 2004). This opens occasions for the inhabiting of unused industrial places that are taken over by the artistic community and are given a new purpose. In this sense, the local urban policy makers should also be able to implement policies that can foster the creative economy. Some practical examples can be identified in the Museumsinsel (Berlin) and the MuseumsQuartier (Wien) and Tortona district (Milan), since they provide a lot of diverse services and activities.
The researchers Nuccio and Ponzini (2016) carried out an analysis of the cultural districts in Italy, and an interesting finding showed that the local communities are sometimes unaware of the potentialities of the areas in which they live and the interconnecting links are very weak. Also, they managed to carry out a typology framework of the matter, identifying that these realities mainly focus on cultural planning, network implementation and technological innovation (Nuccio & Ponzini, 2016). This contribution seemed also very relevant in order to subsequently unfold our case study in the last chapter.

To continue our analysis, nowadays a city's status is likely to be measured by the number of mega-events it hosts (such as the Olympics and international exhibitions), the coolness of its art week events, and its nomination as a “capital of culture” (Bell & Oakley, 2015). This race helped reorient cultural policy towards a toolkit approach and it also stimulated funding increase. Aside from all the coolness and attention the city

can receive, which are translated into economic revenues, Mills and Rosentraub (2013) argue that economic benefits are usually overestimated at the expense of local needs.
Therefore, multiple negative effects have been detected concerning social issues which lead to question the sustainability of these projects that are believed to play the role of international investments and tourists attractors.
García (2004), supports these ideas also adding an interesting comment. She argues that art and culture are initially the focus of the proposed project during the application process for the city participation. Once the city is chosen to be the place for these events, the cultural aims seem to be moved to the margins of the project. This is one of the greatest weaknesses of urban policy, which loses the ability to link economic investment with the local cultural dimension.

Other negative factors include the overcrowding of transport and accommodation facilities. It is also important to highlight that while aggregate spending data, which also refers to food and beverage consumption, may be considered an ideal indicator to measure impact, the true impact is only sorted out if all resources used are local (Mills & Rosentraub, 2013). They further comment that the possibility of external sourcing of these resources would only distort the aggregate spending data, which would simply not provide a true framework of the event's impact.

To conclude on this topic, it is a fact that mega-events contribute to the creation of new job opportunities. As an intrinsic characteristic of the events, these jobs are destined to be short-term and are also usually targeted also at people who commute from an adjacent area that needs to be well connected. This competition between locals and commuters could lead to lower wages, as García (2004) explains. In this sense, there are doubts about the real contribution to local wealth (Mills & Rosentraub, 2013).

The theme of culture-led regeneration is another very debated one, as criticism originated from the academic community arised from the very first projects enacted.
Usually, the project of reference that frames the lights and shadows on the topic is represented by the establishment of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, whose architecture brings the name of Frank Gehry. The establishment of this flagship building was part of a regeneration project that affected the entire former industrial city, which was in decline. From 1997 on (the date of the opening of the museum), a perfect recipe

to engage with culture-led regeneration processes was established, it included a declining industrial city, large public funding and the creative contribution to the project of an "archistar" (Bell & Oakley, 2015).

Therefore, the creation of landmarks or iconic buildings has been one of the most widespread trends that cities have implemented to stimulate their brand image and attract tourism and investments. As Gonzalez (2011) reports, this success, nicknamed the "Bilbao effect", determined the start of a race for cultural branding, which still risks nowadays a phenomenon of homogenisation and easy reproduction by the exportation of apparently winning urban models.

Of course, critiques from the academic world didn't lack, as most of the studies reported that there was no real evidence of broader advantages other than the economic benefits derived from an increase of tourists, marking also an evident line between the areas of focus and the surroundings, which were left behind (Bell & Oakley, 2015).

Yeoh (2005) reports that this kind of issues have not just been circumscribed to Europe, Southeast Asia has also been interested by the phenomenon, where the use of "cultural imagineering" through these mega-projects, usually concentrated in specific areas, have been worsening the gap between global cities and others that are perceived irrelevant structurally speaking. Moreover, along with what Evans (2004) argues, these projects usually lack a connection with local creative companies, and are carried out at the expense of the regional population. The lack of focus on local needs and artistic practices continuously results in disengagement and distrust, enhancing the homogenising and consumption effect. Running towards the will to be ranked among the most competitive and attractive cities, policy-makers and investors facilitated the expansion of winning models in terms of urbanisations and attraction assets. Many museums, such as the Louvre, the Guggenheim and the Centre Pompidou exported their brands in many other countries, creating some satellite museums with the aim of attracting tourists and international investments as Bell and Oakley report (2015). The real issue here reflects a fictitious aim of meeting the local culture and needs, resulting in what can be defined as cultural colonialism (Rausell-Köster et al., 2022). The so-called "Barcelona model" has become widely known as a successful example. The city has achieved in the last decades a participatory governance model that has enabled

a virtuous intersection between culture, economy and society as an active rebirth after decades of political dictatorship (Degen & Garcia, 2012). The city has been the protagonist of many cultural actions, from hosting the Olympic Games in 1992 to many culture-led regeneration projects that interested different neighbourhoods. What the authors highlight most is the ability to integrate culture into the political agenda with a holistic approach.

These examples show how culture can be a perfect vehicle for placemaking and capitalist consumption, but also as a way to give purpose to abandoned spaces and regenerate unused buildings in decline by hosting cultural events and creative hubs (Gainza, 2017). Among other cases, we find the establishment of the Kindl- Center for Contemporary Art in Berlin inside a former brewery in the Neukölln neighbourhood, which adapted the already existing spaces to a contemporary art museum dedicated to research. Following the same strategy we can also mention the Pirelli HangarBicocca Foundation in the Bicocca district of Milan, which has transformed the spaces of the Breda factory into a place for artistic creation and experimentation, guided by the mantra #ArtToThePeople.
A more socially oriented project, which is also interesting to report in relation to the case study that will unfold in the last chapter, is represented by Farm Cultural Park, which aims to revitalise the historic centre of Favara, Sicily. This hub is led by knowledge and cultural innovation and it is located in some unused houses within the Cortile Bentivegna, an 18th century courtyard (Farm Cultural Park, n.d.). This space has been transformed into a community meeting place and a space for knowledge sharing, education and artistic residencies (Farm Cultural Park, n.d.).

These transformative interventions are the key elements that enable successful city marketing and the start of new placemaking strategies. Nonetheless, the main risk in these cases concerns the resulting change in the social strata composition within what Gainza (2017) calls the “economic landscape”, as the projects involved usually attract investments, new consumers and residents. Inevitably, rents increase as a result of higher demand for the hype of the coolness of the regenerated area and many new businesses proliferate as the district is capable of providing economic success (Hwang, 2014). The local communities experience, therefore, new conditions that they may not be able to cope with: higher rent prices push old residents and shop owners to move

towards the suburbs. This phenomenon has been named as gentrification, and many academics even support the idea that Florida, through his theories, even legitimised this issue as part of the process towards the creative rise of the city (Grodach, 2017, Garcia, 2004, Evans, 2009). This displacement creates, as Gainza (2017) suggests, a loss of identity in the neighbourhood of reference, giving start to a process of global homogeneity within cultural and regenerated districts. As a reaction, occupy movements have risen, Bader and Bialluch (2009) report specifically the episodes in Berlin-Kreuzberg and in Hamburg where buildings were occupied by artists to obstruct property sale. Squatting highlighted, in this way, social concerns from housing to unemployment and education.

Hwang (2014) suggests that some of the key elements that need to be addressed in these processes relate to the revitalisation of communities and the stimulation of local economies. For this reason, the next section explores these issues with the aim of framing good practices that are recognised as bottom-up.

2.3 A community-driven approach: how?

Within the analysis of culture-led regeneration processes, the need for approaches that can be identified as "community-driven" emerged. This implies, as suggested by Della Spina (2019), the need to engage with the community of reference and carry out co-designing practices. The involvement of these stakeholders in decision-making processes has emerged as the solution to address the complexities we explored in the previous section.

Musco (2009) emphasises that culture can play a positive multiple role when decision-making creates favourable conditions for a sustainable process that takes into account (or at least tries to) all the variables of the process. Indeed, governance, culture, economics and environmental issues are all linked in a concave relationship.

It is crucial to understand that we are not only dealing with material resources. The identity of the territory, object of regeneration, and of the community are even more fragile than cultural assets, which nevertheless play a crucial role in the creation of local identities (Della Spina, 2019).

A concrete example of a supranational body attempting to provide guidance and a toolkit for sharing best practice and incorporating sustainable implementation of urban regeneration is the New Urban Agenda.
It is an “action oriented” tool proposed and adopted in 2016 during the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito (Urban Agenda Platform, n.d.). It is closely related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development as it aims at disseminating practices that could enhance social equality within the urban environment.
The Urban Agenda Platform provides the possibility to have access to the online platform that gathers and showcases some winning best practices. It also presents a report with the most virtuous implementations that have been selected on the basis of a high level of transformative change and commitment regarding the Agenda (Urban Agenda Platform, n.d.).

Some of the key features that can be drawn out as an ideal approach can be summarised as follows.

- The use of transparent evaluation methods that take into account the needs of multistakeholder.
- The use of multidimensional evaluation tools.
- The involvement of participatory processes.

A curiosity that emerged during my research on the platforms regards the position of Italy concerning the submission of city reports in the platform. Unfortunately, it seems that the country never presented the advancement towards the implementation of the Agenda (Urban Agenda Platform, n.d.), which is labelled as still pending. Nevertheless, a few 2022 Voluntary Local Review of the SDGs statements have been presented regarding Lombardy and Lazio regions, together with just a few specific cities such as Genova. This underlines as usual an inhomogeneity between large metropolitan areas and medium cities, and also between north and south.

To give some examples of participatory methodologies, decision making actors must first narrow down the stakeholders involved, and then apply what Cerreta and Panaro (2017) calls Multi-Stakeholder Decision Analysis (M-SDA), involving focus groups discussions all along the implementation of the projects.

It is important to point out that these stakeholders are not just circumscribed to residents, but usually practitioners, planners, investors are all addressed together during the processes.
Some of the issues that need to be investigated are the common urban needs and desires for change within the community (Smit, 2011).

M-SDA, as Della Spina (2019) highlights for the use of her case study on the city of Catanzaro, enables to create a shared vision bridging together not just the knowledge of experts, but also those of communities.

This kind of approach supports the concepts that I have introduced of collaborative approaches towards design and planning, which seems to be the only sustainable modality able to tackle complexities and to create valuable collective knowledge (Cerreta & Panaro, 2017).

Implicitly, this matter is bound to the breaking down of social hierarchies (Sharp et al., 2005). In the research of the authors, public art is addressed as a tool to foster a sense of belonging and social inclusion among the community. Sharp et al. (2005) suggest the inclusion of public art with urban regeneration processes as it can higher the degree of representation of local cultural beliefs. Indeed, the reader must be aware of the threats that can arise from a risk of commodification of culture and lack of funding issues.

Another interesting contribution is given by Smit (2011) who draws attention also on the well being of the community of reference, since the urban environment is believed to represent a key element for what concerns the quality of life. Inclusion and participation, indeed, contribute to guarantee a better quality of life, since as we saw they both generate a greater sense of belonging and a stronger shared identity.

In order to draw some conclusions, we analysed how culture has revealed itself as one of the most useful elements to foster economic and social development. Of course, social and urban challenges emerged as collateral effects of the processes enacted. Nonetheless, it has been shown how reactive and inclusive practices can be applied to tackle the exclusion of local communities.

Chapter III

Collaborative spaces: mapping the characteristics of new cultural spaces

This chapter will draw an analysis on the proliferation of new collaborative spaces, as they are usually the result of regeneration processes stimulated by urban policies, which function as innovative milieu within the city's ecosystems (Kalinauskaite et al., 2021). After presenting the theoretical and sociological framework that enabled the establishment of these spaces and their impact, a cultural declination of the matter will follow, trying to map the main features and trends within the art world. Some examples will be given in order to share best practices and successful business choices. Understanding these issues will be crucial in order to finally analyse the case study object of this research in Chapter 4.

3.1 Understanding the background

In recent years, collaborative spaces have proliferated, interesting areas of knowledge from science to sustainability and culture (Capdevila, 2013). Co-workings, hybrid spaces, cultural hubs and FabLabs are just some of the denominations that fall under the umbrella term of "collaborative spaces" that gathers a wide variety of approaches to work spaces (Montanari, 2022), all united by a common and shared feature that guides their life and business path: "collaborative innovation", as Capdevila (2013) explains.

In practice, these *hubs* are centres of collectivity and knowledge sharing, open to contamination, as Sgaragli and Teloni (2022) argue. Authors, such as Kalinauskaite et al. (p.614, 2021), clearly place these spaces among the main tools to address complex societal challenges, whether identified as a "milieu for innovation" or an "ecosystem", they have become very useful for change enactment.
Their essential aim is to create and enhance stimuli for the reference community, generating value and creativity. To do this, they usually provide a shared physical space and resources, and organise public programmes, aimed at different target groups, that

try to meet the demand for innovation (Sgaragli & Teloni, 2022), bearing in mind that innovation is a process.

Some of the key factors underlying innovation are identified in terms of skills and human capital: knowledge transfer is therefore translated into the need to train individuals in new ways of working. In this sense, technology facilitates these processes by making them more fluid and transparent (Sgaragli & Teloni, 2022).

The factors that have made this proliferation possible can be summed up in the change in the dynamics of work, as each sector demands flexibility and interdisciplinarity, the strong enactment of regeneration processes and the destination of unused buildings to cultural and non-cultural activities, and the establishment of collaborative approaches open to innovation (Montanari, 2022).

Before analysing deeply the intrinsic characteristics, it is useful to report the brief classification made available by Montanari (2022) that can help schematise the concept. *Table 2* provides a detailed description of the main characteristics and objectives of the following typologies: co-working spaces, Fablabs, incubators and accelerators, creative and cultural hubs, scientific parks and hybrid spaces.

Table 2: Typologies of collaborative spaces

Typology	**Definition**	**Main features**
Co-working spaces	Shared work environments for workers with diverse educational and professional backgrounds (entrepreneurs and freelancers).	Shared workstations, meeting rooms and common areas. They also offer training, consultancy and events. They mainly have two access criteria: horizontal (professionals from different sectors), vertical (professionals from the same sector or company).
Cultural and creative hubs	Spaces that offers atelier, exhibition spaces and areas for cultural events to artists, creatives and	They usually have former industrial buildings as setting, host collaborative workshops and shared areas. They organise cultural events and artistic programs for their local community.
FabLabs	Laboratories that aim at offering shared technological equipment to stimulate the realisation of digital creations (3D printers and CAD instruments).	They stimulate the production of creations with a high level of innovation due to the use of technology and collaboration.

		They constitute international networks with a high educational impact.
Incubators and accelerators	Spaces that offer entrepreneurial support for development (mentorship, education, funding strategies)	They guide professionals in developing new business strategies (incubators) or in accelerating (accelerators) already existing start ups. The approach can be both business and social oriented. They provide access to shared workspaces, fundings, administrative support and professional networks.
Scientific parks	Spaces dedicated to technological and scientific research, to knowledge transfer between enterprises and universities.	They play the role of bridging universities and enterprises of a specific territory, offering access to labs and funding for students to enhance research.
Hybrid spaces	Physical spaces that do not identify with just one category.	They conjugate the characteristics of different forms of collaborative spaces (one can provide workspaces and labs of Fablabs).

Source: Montanari (2022)

It is also useful to report here the main characteristics that these spaces have in common, which will be developed in more detail later, with the support of the literature review:

- public support;
- peer production, proximity advantages and cost sharing are the main reasons behind this phenomenon;
- multistakeholder approach;
- user involvement.

Having presented the previous classification and the main features of collaborative spaces, it is crucial to point out the relevancy of public funding support, since many of these spaces rely on this. Public bodies are likely to create, fund and manage these realities, converting them into policy tools that could pursue regeneration processes or social innovation projects (Montanari, 2022). Nevertheless, nowadays the governance model that has been spreading around, interests a mixing nature between the public and private, defining the business or social orientation. It's important to clarify that this is

only a tendency, examples of social spaces can also be present in a private management, and vice versa.

Capdevila (2013), who refers to these typologies as LSCI (Localised Spaces of Collaborative Innovation), suggests two main sociological reasons behind this phenomenon; firstly, he believes that it finds its roots in the ideas of peer-production and in the rise of the so-called "fabbing movement" (Capdevila, 2013; Troxler, 2010). Secondly, another key factor is identified in the geographical and cognitive proximity, as presented by Florida (1995) through the "learning regions" theory, which explains the term "localised". According to this theory, knowledge can be transferred easily between actors in "geographical proximity", even though as Capdevila (2013) reports, sometimes co-location is not enough to transfer both tacit (difficult to translate into shared codes and to transmit) and explicit (of an easier transmission) knowledge. As Nooteboom et al. (2007) point out, a successful transmission of the former involves a continuous and synergetic interaction among the actors that are required to share common communication codes. Therefore, we can say that the territory's capacity to innovate is mainly based on the ability to stimulate the flow of knowledge among diverse stakeholders, which enhances creativity and innovation outside the usual boundaries.

This last reflection enables us to deepen the discourse into the most important underlying concepts that characterise our matter: the multi-stakeholder approach and the user involvement (Kalinauskaitep, 2021). The former reflects the collaborative dimension that can stimulate innovation. In fact, as many authors have pointed out (Leydesdorff, 1995; Kalinauskaitep, 2021), collaboration prepares the ground for a knowledge-based economy capable of fostering not only economic but also social development. The importance of collaboration, as Pohl and Hadorn (2008) suggest, is due to the transdisciplinary and iterative character that it takes, which enables the collection of multiple viewpoints. As we are addressing different kinds of stakeholders with diverse interests and needs, this kind of approach becomes tricky as conflicts may arise. The same authors (2008) also propose that the real challenging factor is to find the right balance between their knowledge and expertise to facilitate the encounter, avoiding hierarchies-driven approaches.

This latter concept makes us introduce the co-creative dimension, as it indeed facilitates "inclusive, creative processes" (Kalinauskaite et al., p. 3, 2021): co-production and co-creation, as the first lay the basis for the second, which coincides with the practical implementation, are intrinsic phases of the matter.

It is believed by some of the researchers (Veeckman et al., 2013, Pohl & Hadorn, 2008) that the involvement of the individuals in this process results in a stronger sense of empowerment and belonging, even though part of the research academics of the topic report unclearness on how all this is implemented within organisations (Fuglsang and Hansen, 2018, Nesti, 2015). Kalinauskaite et al. (2021) remember the contribution of Schuurman and De Marez (2015), as they conceive co-creation to be at the micro-level of the organisation, as its main focus and objective; unlike other contributions, which place co-creation just as an operative task to bind the different stakeholders.

From this analysis it is therefore clear that the co-creative dimension is reflected in the internal and operational organisation of these spaces. It can be enacted through different modalities and its intrinsic nature leads to the determination of the form of these spaces As also suggested by Kalinauskaite et al. (2021), the success of the project may strongly depend on the degree of diversity represented by the stakeholders involved.

The first practical solution is detected in the creation of a shared strategy and in the value and vision alignment of every subject involved (Veeckman et al., 2013). Nevertheless, many authors such as Pohl and Hadorn (2008) and Brandt et al. (2013) agree again on a lack of modalities to measure the success of this alignment.

In conclusion to this paragraph, it seems relevant for our study to remark the importance of the impact of the LSC on public policy, highlighting in this way the necessity of developing a greater theoretical background on the topic for its societal importance and for the impact that collaborative innovation can have on decision making (Kalinauskaite et al., 2021). Specifically, from the literature available there seems to be a lack of operative indications and guidelines that could route collaborative strategies between stakeholders with diverse interests and characteristics. Tackling this hole in policy could help enhance the social and economic impact of these new organisations and promote a

new way to approach the working environment, bridging together communities and nurturing the ecosystem of the cities (Capdevila, 2013).

Given that creativity and innovation have been highlighted both for the economic and social value generated within the creative sector and for the spillover that it produces within the more traditional sector, it is essential to examine the approach that territorial public bodies take to the issue (Palmi, 2022). The literature on the topic (Brooks & Kushner, 2001; Montanari, 2022) delineate two main approaches, the top-down and bottom up. In the first case, strategies are planned from the top, and in the second approach the dynamics are stimulated from the bottom (the local community) (Mommaas, 2004).
The competitiveness of the "creative ecosystems" can be enhanced by focusing on consistent economic policy and on giving rise to new external economies for the creative sector. These last can interest the territorial dimension and therefore, depend on the local urban policy (Palmi, 2022).

In the 1990s, consistent changes have interested regional and local policy making, as the governmental funding has decreased. Among the modifications, there has been an attempt to involve the local communities in the consultancy and shaping process of integrated interventions (Palmi, 2022).
In fact, literature agrees on the fact that a top down planning would just result in a mismatch of objectives and in a non fulfilment of the local contingent needs (Mommaas, 2004). Specifically, Brown et al. (2000) highlight how this kind of approach could create resistances as many creative spaces are fuelled by anti-institutional moralities. On the contrary, the involvement of the local actors can create favourable conditions for effective public interventions and economic and social development (Palmi, 2022).

In the next paragraph the analysis of the subject will be declined in the cultural dimension, deepening the sociological reasons behind cultural and creative hubs and exploring their functioning.

3.2 Creative and cultural hubs: how do they function in practice?

Multifunctional spaces, embodying a new narrative of cultural conception, reflect the new evolving needs of society. Indeed, the changing perception of culture and cultural consumption, also influenced by the effects of the economic crisis, has made it impossible to dedicate spaces to only one function. As highlighted by Carlini et al. (2017), the economic crisis has also brought new consumption trends, dictated by a reduced and different spending capacity. As a result, consumer behaviour has changed, opening up new perspectives in terms of sociality, leisure and working time. New habits have tended towards new ideas of conviviality and sharing, reinforced by social networks.

As Pratt (2021) suggests, the first phase or wave of what he calls “art business incubators” began in the 1970s, when the cultural industry was undergoing many changes that led to the creation of new business modalities for producing culture, new visions, forms of participation and processes. This led to an increase in the diversity of actors in the network of reference that pursued innovation. In parallel, the new urban landscape characterised by the possibilities of transformation and reuse of dismissed places, opened the door to what we call knowledge based economy and to the will to regenerate urban areas for new “working communities”, as an alternative solution against the immobility that characterises politics (Pratt, p.5, 2021). In this way, “art factories", embodying a new narrative of the conception of cultural spaces, became catalysts for innovation within creative cities.

Among other factors that have contributed to the creation of the new environment, the convergence towards the digital and the constant need to be connected 24/7 have led to a blurring of the boundaries between public and private life, work and leisure, as well as culture and what is defined as entertainment, which is reflected in the new physical layouts of the spaces (Carlini et al., 2017).

Cultural hubs and all these new types of realities we have been discussing are specifically characterised by an intermixed nature, as their activities can range from bistròs to co-working, events, exhibitions, start-up accelerators, artistic residencies and

educational programmes that strike a balance between cultural offerings and entertainment.

The massive opening of multifunctional centres, as we have seen, reflects a strong shift towards a bottom-up approach, as public users begin to prefer diverse realities that can guarantee greater accessibility and proximity to everyday life. We can say that the explosion of these new creative models has followed closely behind the changing dynamics of the art world that concern the diversification of media and its multidisciplinarity, as from the 1950s and 1960s the new idea of performance and of the work of art have knocked down the walls of categories (Carlini et al., 2017). The performativity and the process became the focus of the projects which brought the consumer to be involved into the process of creation outside the usual and conventional spaces dedicated to the arts, permeating the urban environment. Consequently, the creative city becomes the perfect place to embrace this new hybridisation, which has a strong impact not only from an urbanistic point of view, but also from a sociological point of view and on the urban transport system, allowing new encounters between different artistic practices and professionals (Montanari, 2022).

As business realities, each of these spaces tries to address specific demands within one only hybrid "container", guided by diverse objectives that range from artistic and technological innovation, social learning, sustainability, rights claiming and so on. They can occupy theatres, unused buildings and squatted social centres to create what Carlini et al. (2017) define as utopias based on collective management. We, therefore, assist in the creation of the so-called horizontal publics, which flip the more traditional idea of user/consumers, pursuing the aim of cultural democratisation and stimulating the participation of non-consumers of cultural products and services (Palmi, 2022).

Even the office environment has started to appear as cramped compared to the enriching possibility of exchange and multidisciplinarity offered by co-working spreading in all the cities. In fact, we can say that these new spaces mirror the emerging generation of creative professionals, whose boundaries are blurry. Co-working spaces were first introduced in the USA, but now they have spread all over the world. The reason at the basis of this service is believed to create an environment that could help workers to be stimulated by others by working in the same friendly and innovative area (Leforestier, 2009). The opportunity of exchange, knowledge sharing and interaction represent the

main values of this new space typology. In fact, not surprisingly, they are enlisted within the new "business incubators" that we mentioned before and play a crucial role in fostering creativity and shared strategies among the creative community and not only.

In *paragraph 3.1* we discussed the importance of public bodies and public funding as one of the main channels for funding sourcing, but in this framework it seems relevant to report some divergent thoughts from the literature, as they can be useful to draw a critical understanding within the creative sector.

Indeed, within the cultural dimension, Boswinkel and van Meerkerk (2023) argue that the majority of the creative hubs are both physically and ideologically detached from the direct influence of local governments; for example, the communal initiatives are seen as a new possibility to rethink political organisations and actions (Cnossen, 2021). The authors Dovey and Pratt (2016) also remark the need to find forms of funding from direct business partners and sponsors, rather than using public funding sources. This is only to say that the fact of being associated with what can be defined as counterculture clearly explains the reasons behind the initial tendency to launch projects without the support of public funds (Boswinkel & van Meerkerk, 2023).

After reviewing the sociological and historical background that has contributed to the proliferation of these active and collaborative spaces, which have come to be considered as the most relevant outposts of smart cities, it is now interesting to analyse the governance models and the functioning of these spaces, trying to map out the most distinct trajectories that allow for viability in a long-term perspective.

Over the years there has been a growing awareness of the functional complexity of creative hubs as they became centres of aggregation and identity formation (Carlini et al., 2017). In this sense, a key issue to be raised, as we are dealing with social presidia, is the degree of influence imprinted on the identity of a territory by this phenomenon. The question of regeneration as a powerful driver of gentrification, as we discussed in Chapter 2, is highly criticised by the academics. Since identities have become fluid and not predetermined, it becomes crucial to ask what exactly are the values that these business realities want to pursue, finding a balance between the cultural and the entrepreneurial objectives, as Carlini et al. (2017) explains. This concept finds roots in

the necessity of an integrated dimension of sustainability between social, cultural and economic needs, which ensure long term viability.

One of the main and common features that characterise the creative hubs, as Pratt (2021) explains, is identified in the co-location of different activities, which is usually translated into practice into the destination of the spaces in different divisions for small enterprises or workshops. As we have explained earlier, they are believed to be a place dedicated to informal knowledge, exchange and shared support for innovation; but to really reach this objective these organisations need to match up with funders and attract the suitable residents with specific expertise (Pratt, 2021). Zemlyak et al. (2023) stress the importance of entrepreneurial innovation, as creativity lays at the basis for thinking, creating and distributing new products, services or ways of life. In fact, entrepreneurship covers many areas, such as culture, education and technology, which ensure the economic and societal development of the organisation of reference and of the surrounding working environment. This drive towards cultural innovation has led to the establishment of diverse legal forms of companies and new kinds of social enterprises that activate and foster new modalities of collaboration with the public administration and with the territory (Carlini et al, 2017).

From non for profit to business oriented hubs, the manager of each of these spaces functions as an intermediate between the residents of the area, the people working for and "within" the hub, ideally enabling a constant internal and external communication (Pratt, 2021). As the British Council (2015) reports, this exchange is biunivocal and mutually beneficial as it doesn't imply hierarchies.

To systemise information and provide practical guidelines, the British Council made available the Creative Hubkit with the aim of gathering successful examples within the UK and Europe and sharing best practices. This toolkit highlights once again the leading position that this country takes towards the creative industries and cultural policy in respect of other countries such as Italy and France (Pratt, 2021).

It mainly gathers the business realities into six models: studio, centre, network, online platforms and the alternative cultural hub (British Council, 2015).

The studio represents a small business usually settled in a co-working space, the centre embraces a wider reality in a building that hosts different activities, online platforms are

based on virtual communities and the alternative hub tries with new financial business models and aims at engaging with diverse communities (British Council, 2015). Indeed, all these forms can take either a for profit or non for profit footprint.

It is crucial to remember that even though they can mainly have a social function, they are business actors and need proper financial planning and vision-mission adherence in order to stay relevant for the community of reference. Most times, they direct their service to the local community with the objective to tackle issues such as social discrepancies and enhance diversity and inclusion. Others aim at capacity building as Johnstone et al. (2016) explain.

The Creative Hubkit suggests a checklist for entrepreneurs to follow when planning, as they need to focus on their vision, mission and values, their target audience and their community of engagement. Define the partnership that will support their programme and activities and create the network of stakeholders through which they want to stimulate change, taking a glocal approach (British Council, 2015). Throughout this process, the design of the core service or activity needs to be developed in collaboration with stakeholders, which requires a deep openness to listening.

Some of the most common activities that cultural centres organise are artistic residencies, exhibitions and cultural events, festivals, educational programmes and open calls. Their aims usually range from artistic experimentation to the promotion of cultural and social diversity, and cultural accessibility.
As some authors state (Carlini et al., 2017; Capdevila, 2013; Pohl & Hadorn, 2008), multidisciplinarity is a cultural approach adopted to try to grasp some glimpses of the complexity of our society. This explains why the analysis should not only consider the economic dimension, but also the sociological, environmental, architectural and urban dimensions.

For our study, which bases its case study on BASE Milano, located in the city of Milan, it is relevant to briefly mention the MilanoCORTEmporanea project (Carlini et al., 2017). This project tried to map and analyse the proliferation of these new space typologies in the city of Milan; Maria Cristina Carlini, Mimma Gallina and Olivero Ponte di Pino analysed sixty hubs in the city, from business cases such as Santeria Social Club, whose nature is a mixture between a learning space and a social club, to

Macao, a squatted social centre, to co-workings based on artistic residencies such as BASE Milano. The core reason for this attempt at mapping is reflected in the strong influence that these spaces have on our daily lives and on individual identity in the process of creating meaning through culture, especially in times of cultural and architectural turmoil such as the EXPO wave (Carlini et al., 2017).

Most of the business models of the mapped associations show a tendency towards large investments by the organisation, with secondary support from funders and partners. As explained by Carlini et al. (2017), the approach of these organisations is likely to be business-oriented, with consistent investments in marketing and communication, as public funding has decreased significantly in recent years.

A recurring issue they have identified is the loss of differentiation between these places in the Milan area, resulting in a loss of user loyalty (Carlini et al., 2017). The risk that can arise from this situation is the loss of enthusiasm and retention, and short-term viability.

Fondazione Prada and mare culturale urbano are taken as examples in this sense, as they embody a culture led regeneration process enacted specifically from an architectural point of view. What the authors criticise is the lack of adherence with the needs of the community of reference in their programs, that could drive them to transform just into cultural containers within a regenerated urban space. Once again, the issue of speculation and gentrification are raised.

In the next paragraph we will further discuss the areas of impact of collaborative spaces to complete the framework for our case study analysis.

3.3 A matter of impact measurement

Having analysed the main characteristics of the shapes and aims that new collaborative spaces can take, it is interesting to add to the Chapter an overview of the dynamics of impact measurement available from the literature. Especially because their concrete key role in the development of human capital (Montanari, 2023) and in the formal and informal knowledge exchange has led them to be identified as one of the main pillars for innovation within the local ecosystem (Montari & Mizzau, 2016).

Literature (Palmi, 2022; Montanari, 2023) seems to find an agreement on the general effects that they can produce, as they seem to contribute to the enrichment of the cultural offer of the related territory, forge a stronger social cohesion and regenerate urban spaces, as well as, foster the socio-economic development of the territory where the hub is located.

As we can notice from our previous analysis, the practices enacted are plenty and very diverse between each other, this consequently results in difficulties in the attempt to map recurrent models. Nevertheless, measuring the social impact becomes vital since this kind of data can stimulate new trajectories of policy-making and confirm the relevance of the matter. It's worth pointing out that the usefulness of measuring also interests the internal organisation of the hubs themselves, since as business players, accountability is one of the pillars to ensure viability and reputation (Montanari, 2023).

At the basis of measurements, of course, we find indicators and approaches that can range from qualitative to quantitative analysis methods. For the subject involved, as Montanari (2022) highlights, a relational approach seems to predominate, which privileges the social processes involved. Indeed, as we deal with individuals, the consultation of all the stakeholders involved becomes essential, from the local community, to the public bodies and partners (Montanari, 2023).
To give consistency to the topic, some of the potential areas where to measure change range from assessing a stronger social cohesion and civic participation to a better quality of life and economic and social conditions (Vanclay, 2003). The intrinsic characteristics of these areas of impact measurement suggest a monitoring that spans in time, as both the short term and long term effects can help to have a clearer picture of the processes enacted (Vanclay, 2003). Therefore, constant monitoring becomes essential.

Montanari et al. (2023) suggest to take into consideration that value generation can take various forms: from the social, to the cultural and economic one. Specifically, the first one can be declined in understanding the ability to grasp the social needs of a territory and to directly involve the stakeholders. In this sense, change may occur at an individual or community level. The adoption of an integrated approach enables to bring

to the surface every multidimensional connection and knot of the network and the respective connections (Monatanri et al, 2022).
In order to pursue the creation of cultural value, it seems important for the hub to define a precise identity that could be vehiculated to the stakeholders and be recognisable (Montanari et al, 2023). Many hubs seem to embrace the role of facilitator with the aim of fostering intercommunication within the territory. Therefore, the specific activities carried out become catalysts for these objectives. To this end, the impact can be identified through the characteristics of the artistic events they host: the analysis must take into account the degree of community involvement and of the social issues addressed in order to remain relevant in the contemporary world (Carlini et al., 2017). Other key elements are represented by the promotion of artistic innovation, cultural diversity and social inclusion.

As we address open innovation and a horizontal approach, the educational sphere takes even more importance within the collaborative context. Capdevila (2013) confirms how the collaborative and participative approach can enhance knowledge development. In fact, the intellectual capital (Montanari et al., 2023) is not just confined to the organisational borders of the centre, on the contrary it is believed to be expanded all over the territory.
Collaborative spaces can establish research and public programs, focus groups and informal educational formats that can match the lack of skills and competences of the territory of reference and address the target of reference with specific activities. In this sense, gathering data on the type and quantity of the activities delivered can help to build the framework for the impact assessment, together with surveying the satisfaction of the actors involved (Montanari et al., 2022).

Lastly, entrepreneurialism, as Montanari et al. (2023) explain in their model, strongly depends on the ability to innovate and to co-create. A key factor that nurtures the latter concepts is the collaboration with local and international start-ups, which permit a great availability of skills, knowledge and resources.

Indeed, all these elements, together with the economic development stimulated by the creation of new jobs and new economic activities, contribute to the long term viability

of the organisation and to the creation of a consistent reputation in the eyes of the community of reference.

To conclude this chapter, the analysis of the main typologies of cultural and non-cultural multifunctional spaces has helped to better understand the role that these spaces play within cities as engines of innovation and social inclusion. We have also shown how important it is to measure the social, economic and cultural impact of these hubs in order to use data to stimulate new directions in policy-making and to confirm the relevance of the issue.

Chapter IV

BASE Milano: a model for urban regeneration projects' trajectories

After having tried to lay the foundation of the major concepts that have interested this study, it is now possible to find a concrete application of the latter in the case study of BASE Milano, a creative hub located in the city of Milan and a great example of a culture-led regeneration process that resulted into a collaborative space. Here will follow a deep analysis of the historical and political background that led to the establishment of the organisation, and a specific focus on its business model and on the approach towards its community of reference. The institution's establishment is the result of a city public policy that made available some funds to restore and reuse the former Ansaldo factory in the Tortona District as a space for culture and creativity dedicated to the local community. After this paragraph, an extensive analysis of the business model of the institution will be carried out. We will lay the basic concepts to then propose its business model. In this phase of the study, a relevant quantity of data used in order to carry out this analysis will be based on the Social Balance Sheets that the institution publishes every year. In the document redaction BASE involves all the staff members, suppliers, partners and volunteers. They gathered both quantitative and qualitative data through different approaches that enabled them to map better the complex impact of this articulated project.

Among the instruments used (BASE, 2022) we find:

- the financial statement and various administrative documents;
- project management tools, monitoring reports and day-by-day evaluations of single projects (programs, technical sheets etc…);
- Board members and HR reports;
- evaluation questionnaire submitted to the main stakeholders (artists, designer, partner, residents, suppliers…);
- focus groups carried out with employees;
- interviews to artists and designers;
- social media insights;
- booking reviews of casaBASE.

4.1 The creative hub and its historical and political background

BASE Milano, as the organisation reports on its website (BASE, n.d), is a “hybrid cultural centre at the service of the city”. It doesn’t define itself as just a museum, a theatre, a space for aggregation or a traditional coworking space, rather it is all these things together.

“Base Milano is a hybrid cultural centre at the service of the city. Not a museum, not a theatre, not just a meeting space or a restaurant, not a traditional coworking space, not a dance club. We are all these things together and much more." (BASE, n.d.)

BASE configures itself as a "non-institutional" cultural organisation, that inhabits and curates a public space, fostering solid relationships with the city of Milan, the public administration, and working closely with policy makers and other national and international cultural institutions (BASE, 2022).
The space where BASE is located is part of the former Ansaldo factory, in the Tortona district, which was returned to the local community in 2016. Its location is very strategic, as the Tortona district has been subject to many regeneration projects over the years, leading it to identify itself as a cultural district.

The Tortona area was mainly dedicated to factories and to industrial production due to its strategic location near the Porta Genova railway station. Between the 1990s and 2000s its destination in use has changed from being a place of industrial production to an innovative centre for culture, music, design and fashion (MuMi, n.d.). The guiding key word for the changes that interested this district was “regeneration”. In fact, most of the archeological architecture of the dismissed factories were valued and converted with new functions.
Today, it is a hot spot for events and exhibitions especially during the internationally known Salone del Mobile, together with the Design Week and Fuorisalone events. BASE Milano, the MUDEC museum, the Armani Silos museum and Superstudio are just some of the cultural players to be found in the district. In fact, companies such as Deloitte or Nestlè have taken over the old building of Poste Italiane, the main Italian postal service company.

The building that houses BASE was established in 1904, right in the midst of the revolutionary period that turned the Lombardy metropolis into Italy's first modern city; almost 400,000 immigrants from all over northern Italy were attracted to the city's factories (MUMI, n.d.). In those years, the building served as the headquarters of some electromechanical workshops belonging to Roberto Zust's company, but after several changes of ownership, in 1966 the complex was acquired by Ansaldo, whose business focused on the production and construction of locomotives and railway carriages (MUMI, n.d.).

As was the case of many other neighbourhoods of Milan, the area was intensively exploited, with little regard for rational land-use planning. In addition to that, a major change in the production methods and a massive de-industrialisation project in the 1980s left the company's buildings unused and empty.
After the official closure in 1986, the City Council acquired the entire complex in 1990, thus initiating a process of regeneration that has affected the entire area, which was destined to comply with cultural scopes. In fact, since 1994 part of the building area has housed the laboratories-atelier of Teatro alla Scala, and in 2015 the MUDEC museum (Museo delle Culture) was established. Ths latter is the result of a project by David Chipperfield, who won a public call for proposals promoted by the municipality in 2000 to rethink some of the spaces and create a museum dedicated to non-European cultures (Artribune, 2016). Nevertheless, the destination of the area dedicated to BASE has been subject of many debates until 2014. In fact, the following year the municipality, through another public call, signed the concession for a period of 12 years (later increased to 18 years, due to the extension of the investment at a later stage) to OXA Srl, the founding organisation of BASE. Unfortunately, there is no document from the Municipality relating to the call for tenders, since the archival permanence of the executive decision is limited to a period of 5 years; however, the publication of the public call in the "Gazzetta Ufficiale" it's available, functioning as a trace.

The good thing about this approach towards the regeneration is that the Tortona district hasn't been subjected to disembowelment or to new intrusive constructions (Artema, n.d.). It's interesting to add that the attention given to this area has led the city to locate one of the future stops of the new M4 metro line, which is still under construction.

Indeed, all these actions have led to a change in the characteristics of the resident community. Therefore, it seems relevant to report the impact analysed in 2016 (the year in which BASE Milano opened) by the Eumetra Monterosa Institute, which carries out sample studies based on empirical research. The analysis was carried out on a sample of 400 people from the resident community of the neighbourhood.

The study “Gli abitanti della zona Tortona” (“The residents of Tortona neighbourhood”) shows that half of the sample has been living in the district for more than 10 years. Families seem to be the majority of residents, as they represent 86% of the population and almost 6 out of 10 people work in the district (Eumetra Monterosa Institute, 2021). The population interviewed also states that the cultural initiatives are almost sufficient in terms of the quantity proposed.

Regarding the appreciation of the MUDEC project, the 83% of the sample shows optimism and like it, within this cluster, people between 25 and 34 years seem to be completely satisfied with it (Eumetra Monterosa Institute, 2016). Furthermore, 62% knew BASE as a cultural space, those who did not were over 65 years old.

An interesting data for our analysis of the gentrification effect is the one that concerns the increase of rental costs, as the 51% confirms a significant rise. Therefore, it's clear that some of the negative effects we analysed in Chapter 2 have had an impact.
Nevertheless, 38% take part in the event proposed by Fuorisalone during Design Week, and of this percentage, 33% think that it brings benefits to the city and to the economic well-being of the neighbourhood, together with 26% who think that it brings vivacity to the district and 19% who think that it is an opportunity to visit areas not always open to the public. However, 13% are indifferent, 5% call for a greater involvement of the local community and 4% perceive the event as a source of discomfort (Eumetra Monterosa Institute, 2016).

This analysis helps us to understand the social and economic context in which BASE has established itself in this area of Milan, at a time of consistent turmoil for the city as it was preparing for EXPO 2015: a year of major investments in cultural and iconic architectural projects anticipating the mega event.

The mayor at the time was Giuliano Pisapia, a centre-left wing politician who opened a new chapter for the city in terms of urban projects and international repositioning through the hosting of events and trade fairs.
However, in addition to the praise of the city council, which planned considerable investments in these areas, there was also dissatisfaction and criticism because this type of action was aimed at entertaining high-income social classes, leaving other important issues unaddressed (Off Topic, 2021).
Nonetheless, it seems clear that the "Gentle Revolution" (Gabardi, 2012) enacted by Giuliano Pisapia and then perpetrated by Giuseppe Sala (the following major) laid the basis for the urban transformation that Milan has undergone in the last decade. It is also important to point out that what really distinguished Pisapia's approach to politics was the participatory involvement of the community, which led to a great appreciation of his figure by citizens (Gabardi, 2012). This political digression has been crucial in order to better understand the political framework and the administrative basis that stimulated the conversion of many industrial spaces into cultural hubs.

Going back to the restoration process of our case study, the project for the spaces inhabited by BASE was designed by Onsitestudio, which aimed at establishing an open cultural hub that could engage with the industrial identity of the location. The restoration involved a total area of 12.000 sqm distributed on two different floors, to which a third one was added at a later stage; the architectural guiding principle was to preserve the productive inclination of the building and try to act with minimum intervention (Onsitestudio, n.d). The idea was to create a modern "cultural production factory" and to enable a dialogue with the evocative industrial architecture of the former factory with a very innovative approach towards the process characterised by inclusivity, and open-mindedness (Artribune, 2017). On the occasion of the press conference for the opening of the space in March 2016, Giuliano Pisapia stated that BASE Milano was a place that could give a great contribution in making the city of Milan more attractive and international (Politini, 2016).

Figure 2: BASE Milano

Source: Onsitestudio (n.d.)

The words of Sonia Sorrentino (BASE, p.29, 2022), the Burò Manager, report clearly the process through which all the staff from BASE underwent, underlining the fact that the renovation works were running parallel to the strategy implementation and service creation of the hub.

> "Working in the middle of the construction site in the early days was no small challenge. Nothing worked and everything was chaotic. For months and months, we had the noise of the drills in our ears all day long, the perpetual dust on the stairs, on our shoes, in our hair and in our noses. It was not easy with the users, the public, the first residents of the workspaces, the guests of casaBASE, to put up with the bitter cold in winter, the sultry heat in summer and then the crowding of several functions in a few square metres because we had to start producing and invoicing to be able to pay for the work before it was finished." (BASE, p.29, 2022)

The peculiarity of this business case is that BASE was born from a private investment motivated by a strong cultural entrepreneurial idea to find new ways to experiment dialogue between creativity, social innovation, entrepreneurship and artistic research, as the organisation states (BASE, 2022). Since 2016, the institution has consolidated its vocation as a centre for cultural production and a place for artistic initiatives with a high social value, hosting temporary and permanent functions (BASE, 2022). Coworking spaces, artistic residence, spaces for the music industries, an auditorium, a large study-hall open to the public, a bistrò, spaces for performances, exhibitions, workshops and conferences.

This eclecticism reflects itself in the words of Linda Di Pietro (BASE, p.33, 2022), the artistic director of BASE:

"proposing a new concept of a cultural institution needs a reimagining of new ways of organising, producing and relating to others. The question we asked ourselves was not just about who was interested in our proposal, but who we wanted to contribute to the rethinking of the institution itself." (BASE, p.33, 2022)

In fact, looking at the programme it is evident that many of the activities are the result of collaborations with a large number of important cultural actors, who ensure a 365 programme, whose main objective is to experiment with new creative languages of contemporaneity, addressing different target audiences.
Some of the themes that emerged from the analysis of the activities seem to highlight new ways of living, urban transformations, new learning processes and the so-called human-machine relationship.

In practical terms, BASE attracts more than 400,000 visitors a year, gathers more than 200 creative companies that have chosen to set up in its spaces, hosts 2,200 people in the casaBASE hostel and 17 artists and designers in residence (BASE, 2022).
Especially during the first years, BASE converted itself into a sort of business prototype within other Italian cultural institutions, characterised by a unique business model and an extensive network of national and international creative partners. Its bottom-up approach and the involvement of the community tried to shape and clarify what should be the role of the institution "of the future" (BASE, 2022). The institution also managed to become one of the cultural "hot spots" in a continuous evolution within the city, which gave space to cultural intersection and new horizons for accessibility and inclusion: a place for debate.

4.2 BASE's Business model

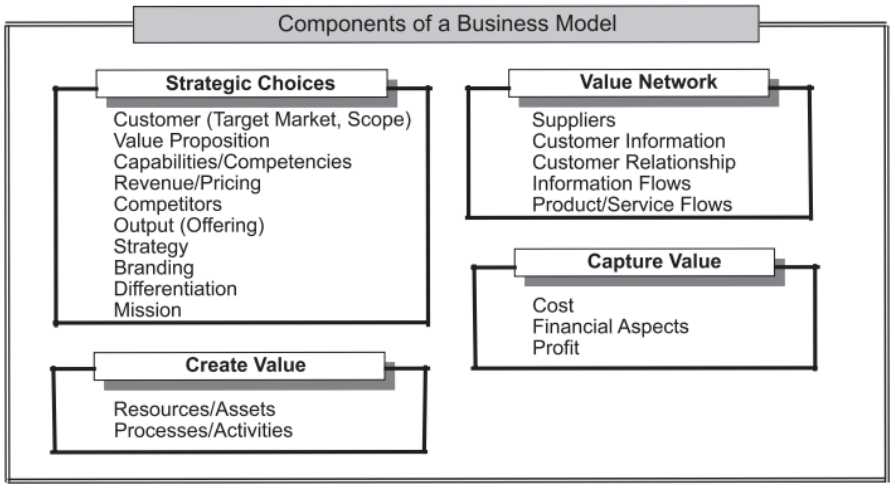
In the following sub-section I will analyse deeper our case study through the use of the business model in all its aspects, but first an overview of the theoretical framework of the business model concept is needed to align together on definitions.

Giving a certain definition of a business model, as Scott et al. (2005) argue, is no easy thing, since the academics have been focusing on different elements. Nonetheless, the authors (2005) suggest that a business model deals with the creation of value and with the positive (and negative) effects that result from the representation of a specific reality

(called model). It, therefore, represents the core business strategy which aims at creating value not just for the company involved, but for all the network of stakeholders. As Scott et al. (2005) continue, a business model must highlight all the strategic choices that have been made all along the company journey, pointing out all the underlying mechanisms of cause and effect between the different characterising elements. The concept of value creation brings another key aspect to the fore: viability over time. In this sense, value can be created through different strategies aimed at achieving competitive advantage: cost leadership, product or service differentiation, and targeting a specific market niche (focus strategy). What it seems interesting to add is that the process of value creation happens throughout the network that the firm builds for itself, this means that the implementation of all its resources and their optimisation depend also on the network of reference made of suppliers, partners and channels of distribution (Hamel, 2000). This enables us to state that the role that the company will take up towards all these stakeholders will define the strategy and, as a consequence, its business model (Scott et al., 2005).

The main components of a business model are identified in the firm proposition (strategic choices) and in the representation of the flow of value: value creation, value capture and the network of value (Nosratabadi et al., 2019). *Figure 3* shows a detailed declination of all these elements.

Figure 3: The four components of a Business Model



Source: Scott et al. (2005)

The main purpose of this abstract presentation is to simplify ideas and create a tool for analysing and communicating business decisions. In order to develop a successful strategy, the company must apply the principle of coherence by setting simple and coherent objectives and a long-term vision. As Byrnes (2014) argues, an objective analysis of the company's own resources and internal capabilities must go hand in hand with an in-depth knowledge of the competitive environment. The latter, in addition to direct competitors, as the author (2014) continues, is made up of suppliers and partners, substitutes, customers and new entrants. An external and internal analysis is therefore essential.

A business model can be implicit, meaning that it is just identified as the course of action taken by a company, and explicit as a schematic representation. This conceptualisation finds the practical translation into a specific tool called Business Model Canvas, which helps gather all the necessary information needed to communicate the strategy.

Byrnes (2014) suggests that the main reasons behind a business model are to be found in the need for internal and external communication, the first is aimed to create a shared language and vision inside the company, whether the second is to attract new clients and investors; also, it helps in launching a new idea or product and in visualising and understanding deeply the environment in which the company operates.

After having laid the basic concepts for the analysis of the elements of a business model, here will follow an analysis of the main feature of BASE's business model focusing on the four main dimensions: the strategic, the organisational and people aspects, the economic structure, and the accountability issues.

4.2.1 Strategic aspects

The strategic aspects within a business model representation are mainly identified within three areas: the value proposition, the key aspects that differentiate the organisation from the competitors and the core business activities.

The impact statement clearly defines the vision and mission of the cultural organisation, narrowing down its field of action and the difference that it makes for the community of reference.

BASE defines itself as a hub for contemporary cultural production, as an "hybrid relational ecosystem" which transforms and is transformed by all the creative communities that cross its spaces (BASE, p.10, 2022). As it reports in its vision, it intends to function as a platform for "collective imagination, a polyfunctional place, physical and conceptual at the same time" (BASE, p.10, 2022). BASE sees culture as one of the fundamentals for a sustainable social development of communities. In fact, as they report, the hub tries to be a physical and abstract place for the expression of every identity and as an engine of social cohesion. Moreover, it is committed above all as its mission to guarantee access and participation to everyone, since it recognises culture as a powerful tool in order to pursue social change. This aim with specific relation to cultural enhancement, research and to provide cultural and learning services reflects itself in the core values of the institution (BASE, 2022).

The cultural and artistic value wants to follow the path of innovation, quality and diversification with the first aim to increase community participation. The social value reflects the purpose of nurturing a stronger relation with the local and non-local community and pushing it to acquire an active role. The economic value aims at a sustainable viability in order to contribute significantly to the creation of new economies and better work. And, finally, the relational value reflects the will of taking care of an interdisciplinary and interactive community, strengthening national and international networks with the aim of enhancing and promoting good practices and innovation concerning the co-design processes (BASE, 2022).

For each of these values, the institution has set some specific objectives to pursue concrete changes in the medium and long term as reported in the Social Balance Sheet of 2022.

Through the cultural value it aims to achieve the promotion and support of culture by being an interdisciplinary space, hosting events, exhibitions to performances and cinema; guarantee innovation and artistic inclusivity and favour non-formal learning models (BASE, 2022). Socially, it aims at encouraging active participation of the public and creating a sense of belonging, promoting social cohesion. Accessibility, social inclusion and cultural diversity are the main drivers. The relational value is aimed at the

cross-pollination in the artistic field through the production of interdisciplinary projects and at the strengthening of partnership with local and international actors. Economically wise, the support of the local creative economy is one of the priorities achieved through the promotion and collaboration with local business (BASE, 2022). Moreover, it wants to contribute to the identity creation of the Tortona district, respecting local imaginaries. It guarantees the free fruition of most cultural activities and aims at offering new opportunities for artistic and professional development to artists through the provision of co-working spaces, artistic residencies, mentoring and networking.
All these objectives also reflect the will to serve as a winning model for national and international cultural centres, to share best practices and stimulate innovation.

Over the years, it has achieved the goal of creating a living, relational ecosystem of different creative communities and heterogeneous audiences with different knowledge and needs, all united by similar values.

The strategy implemented by the institution to obtain a competitive advantage towards its competitors can be identified as one of differentiation, but in this specific case it is crucial to understand that we are not in front of an economic competition, since BASE is socially committed. This differentiation is mainly based on bringing social and artistic innovation.

To give an overview of the local competitive environment, some of the local competitors are Triennale Milano as a cultural institution and Mare Cultural Urbano as a cultural living lab in the west area of Milan.

The range of activities that it offers secures a great diversification of services, also in terms of revenue channels which can provide a more sustainable viability in the long term. But above all, it is for its social commitment that it gains the real competitive advantage. Putting artistic innovation and the local community at the heart of its bottom-up development approach and its innovation is what really differentiates BASE from any other competitor (local or international). Its hybrid nature is reflected in its eclectic public programme, ranging from exhibitions, events and concerts to co-working spaces and hospitality activities that attract a wider audience.

It is interesting to add to our analysis that sometimes a great diversification of activities can lead to a low quality of the program and turn just into a way to increase revenues; in our case study, the institution fosters collaborations with many external and specialised stakeholders that guarantee the quality of the program and the expertise in every area. BASE also tries to offer many of its activities free of charge, which reflects one of the pillars of its mission. For this, it needs an even more solid financial plan to ensure the economic sustainability of the organisation, meaning that these funds come from other sources of revenues such as sponsorship, partnerships and income from other operational activities.

Its target is very wide; as a hub for cultural production and social innovation, it aims to address every kind of public from the local community to the international network, pursuing inclusion and diversity. BASE is a place not just for artists and art professionals, but also for members of the local community that are sensitive to social change and artistic innovation.
Nonetheless in order to be more specific, its most represented category within its target is 25-45 year-olds, young people and professionals in the Italian and international creative industry, residing in Milan.

What really characterises BASE business model is the double soul that the institution embodies: on one hand the cultural vocation and on the other hand the entrepreneurial side. This double-sided coexistence is evident in all the core business activities carried out, which highlight a collaboration and not an antagonistic relationship between commercial and cultural objectives. The outcome is reflected in the gratuitousness of almost all the activities of the public program (85%) and in the hybridization between diverse economic and operative models (BASE, 2022).

Coworking spaces

BASE provides two main coworking spaces, the burò and the musicROOMS, which are destined to companies or specific departments that work in the creative industries and in the social sphere that are not part of the organisation. It encloses specific contracts with a minimum duration of one year, in order to create a stable community able to collaborate and connect with the internal departments of BASE and with the residents.

More specifically, the burò is mostly for companies dealing with design, architecture, communication and the social sector. Whether the musicROOMS interests the event and music industry's organisations, as well as being the headquarters of Music Innovation Hub (BASE, 2022). The coworking service is open everyday, and it provides desks, meeting rooms and dining areas. During residencies and artistic projects these spaces open up to artists and creatives, providing offices, openspaces to foster creation, co-production and networking with these companies, remarking the cohesion between the commercial and cultural and social dimension.

casaBASE, the hostel

casaBASE is conceived as a polyfunctional place, it is a hostel for the public and a residency for the artistic and creative community. It serves as a space for research and exhibitions. In this sense, the common areas function as exhibiting spaces and film sets. casaBASE's project proposes itself to stimulate a new idea of hospitality that aims at integrating a more active attitude and a greater personal involvement from the guest side (BASE, 2022). Some of the main residencies that are hosted here regard We Will Design and the Milan Design Week. As they state in their Social Balance Sheet (BASE, 2022), the occupation rate concerning artists and creatives has reached 25%, both in 2021 and 2022.

Space rentals

The institution has shaped three possible ways of collaboration with companies within a social, cultural or commercial partnership. In regard to non for profit organisations, BASE chooses to apply social rates to them when their values are in line with those of the institution. Moreover, as a platform for learning, it supports these companies in project management and communication activities, and provides a discount that can range between 100% and 40% on the rental tariffs of spaces (BASE, 2022). Commercial partnerships are destined to corporates and events in order to foster strategic viability both for BASE's model and for these companies in a "circular support system" (BASE, p.39, 2022).

Bistrò - Un posto a BASE

Initially, the provision of a F&B service mentioned in the city concession was led in the hands of Posti Srl, an external company (BASE, 2022). This organisation, besides being for profit, shares BASE's values and approach toward its territory. In this sense, it is crucial to note that the collaboration between BASE and Posti srl enables to pursue social projects concerning the employment of people with fragile backgrounds; collaborations were carried out with prisons, people with disabilities and shelter centres for foreign citizens. Financially speaking, they worked out a contract that is based on a fixed quota and on a percentage one based on the turnover with the ultimate aim of sharing the outcome at the end of the year (BASE, 2022).

Cariplo Factory

Cariplo Factory can be defined as an innovation hub that has always been present within BASE's spaces from the beginning, on the third floor. The Carico Foundation has sustained financially the renovation works, defining contractually the destination of this space and anticipating financially some funds concerning the agreement. In this way, the institution could access the bank loan pledging the value of the 7-years-contract. The Factory was born with the aim of fostering "free circulation of ideas through the contamination between know-how and experiences within the digital innovation" (BASE, p.41, 2022). Moreover, it aims to contribute to the economic and social development of Italy, implementing job opportunities for young people. Finally, the Cariplo factory it's the starting engine of many projects in collaboration with Fondazione Cariplo, Novartis and Microsoft that aims at the growth of Italian young talents (Cariplo Factory, n.d).

Exhibitions and events

BASE organises within its public program many exhibitions, concerts, dj sets, workshops, talks and conferences within the spaces that we have just described. Each area can therefore be transformed into a platform for artistic and cultural exchange.
Just to give some examples among the main projects we have

- We Will Design;
- Farout Festival.

The We Will Design project has been proposed for many editions (the one held in 2023 was the 4th). It is a call for proposals directed to designers, students of universities and academies, that are involved in a residency and in learning processes to co-project the future of design, which culminates with the Milan Design Week (BASE, n.d.). This project involved a busy public program which brought together different experiences of designers, foundations and of international realities. The final exhibitions addressed the themes of accessibility and social design (BASE, n.d). On the other hand, the Farout Festival (Artribune, 2023) focuses on live performing arts and proposed for its 3rd edition in 2023 a program of nine days of events, talks, performances and artistic installations that stimulated a reflection on the concept of time (Artribune, 2023). It is interesting to add, since in line with the aims of my analysis that this festival is realised with the funding support of the Creative Europe Program, object of explanation in Chapter I.

4.2.2 Organisational and people aspects

As we mentioned earlier, OXA Srl Social Enterprise (founded in 2015) is the social organisation with limited liability that manages BASE Milano and that pursues non for profit scopes.
As stated in the constitutive act (Memorandum of Association, 2015), the regeneration project call promoted by the City Municipality was won by an ATI - (Associazione Temporanea di Imprese / Temporary Association of Companies), which deliberated the constitution of the social enterprise. This kind of business approach can limit the financial responsibility of the Srl, and as a non for profit organisation, it can access subsidies and contributions such as those provided by the Cariplo Foundation. This remains crucial in order to combine economic results with social and cultural ones (Memorandum of Association, 2015).
The funding organisations and associations that constitute OXA Srl are Arci Milano, Accapiu' Srl, Avanzi Srl, Make A Cube Srl and the Cultural Association Aprile.

In particular, OXA Srl's purpose is to carry out activities of social utility with particular reference to the areas of cultural heritage valorisation and promotion, the rehabilitation of unused public assets, research and the provision of cultural services and educational services. As stated in the Statute (2015), the company's main objective is to take care of

the regeneration and renovation project dedicated to the area of the former Ansaldo factory (granted by the Municipality with the concession procedure n.21 of 21 February 2014) and the management of the related artistic and public services.

The social capital as stated in the founding act (Memorandum of Association, 2015) was 20,000 euros deposited by the associate members. Each of the associate companies paid 25% of the sum (5,000 euros each), except for Make A Cube Srl and Avanzi Srl which signed up for the 12,5% (2,500 euros each).
The members of the Board of Directors were appointed by the Shareholders' Assembly and remain in office until revoked. The Board is made up of three representatives: the Chairman Matteo Bartolomeo, Nicolò Bini, CEO and Consultant and Daniela Cattaneo, Consultant and Vice President for Brand and Communication (Memorandum of Association, 2015). They were all appointed with the Act of 25/05/2015.
The main processes for which the Board is responsible are strategic and operational planning, economic and financial management, institutional relations, definition of guidelines for the programme of activities of a permanent and temporary nature, approval of the programme of activities for 3 years, 1 year and 6 months (BASE, 2022).

Until 2021, the company structure was composed by the Cultural Association Aprile (33,5%), H+ (33,5%), Avanzi Srl (16,5%), alcube SB Srl (16,5%) coinciding with the same share of Associazione Temporanea di Impresa (BASE, 2022). In 2022 some changes occurred, since Arci Milano and H+ have exited the corporate structure due to strategic choices. In this way, the relative percentages were redistributed giving to the Cultural Association Aprile the 50%, Avanzi Srl 25%, alcube SB Srl 25% (BASE, 2022).

To better understand the contribution of the funding organisations in terms of know-how and capabilities is crucial to give a more detailed overview of their field of action.

The Cultural Association Aprile, also known as esterni, contributes to the project with great experience in the management of events hosted in public spaces. This association also has a great deal of expertise in the audiovisual sector, one of the most important events it has managed is the Milan Film Festival (BASE, 2022).

Accapiù Srl (H+) is a communications agency specialised in brand strategies and strategic offline and online communications. Its contribution has been fundamental to BASE Milano especially in terms of cultural marketing and audience development (BASE, 2022).

Avanzi Srl has always been promoting sustainability through social innovation since. Its role within OXA Srl is to promote cohesion between the macro and micro, public and private dimensions. It contributes to the project with its experience in guiding social innovators, policy makers and large organisations (BASE, 2022).

alcube SB Srl is a company dedicated to the incubation and acceleration of companies with high social, cultural and environmental value. This participation is crucial, not only for BASE, but also for all the stakeholders involved in the production of cultural and social value (BASE, 2019).

Figure 4: BASE's founder companies

Source: BASE (2022)

Identifying the main characteristics of these organisations and associations was essential in order to introduce another key theme of this section, which concerns aspects related to the people involved in an organisation. These key players are likely to determine the success of an organisation's value creation process and the fulfilment of its mission, as Byrnes (2014) explains. Before analysing BASE's approach to human resource management, I must add that, as reported again by the author (2014), the working environment in the arts sector is characterised by high labour intensity and lower monetary rewards than in other industries, particularly at management level. This results

in a need for higher levels of staff motivation and a deep alignment of values than other labour markets.

Unpaid and voluntary work is a significant dimension that should not be taken for granted by the human resources department of any organisation. Moreover, when hierarchies are mostly flat and motivations are intrinsic rather than monetary, retention and support strategies must guarantee autonomy rewards and create a sense of purpose and satisfaction (Byrnes, 2014).

From the data available on the staff management of our case study, BASE values its employees as one of the main assets for the functioning and development of its activities, and this is also recognisable in the consistent economic investment made in this area: the investment went from 453,156 euros in 2017 to 678,983 euros in 2022 (BASE, 2022).
In terms of numbers, in 2022 it counted 18 permanent employees and 3 long-term collaborators, as it states in the 2022 Social Balance Sheet (BASE, 2022). The 39% of the 18 permanent employees (7) started their career at BASE with an internship, which could be interpreted as an interesting data highlighting that the institution tries to nurture careers that can be long term fuelling reciprocal benefits in terms retention possibility. The average age of the staff is 36 years, and according to the staff report, 48% of the staff is between 25 and 30 years old (BASE, 2022).

The internal departmental structure covers, of course, all the activities of the institution: from general management to those more functional to the business line.

The Project management and Production department deals with the organisation and development of all the activities in the program in collaboration with suppliers, clients and partners. Planning and Institutional Fundraising translates the strategic goals of the institutions into measurable objectives, and develops projects that enable them to achieve these objectives. It usually seeks out public competitions and grants. Marketing and Fundraising is a key department that builds bridges between BASE and the external stakeholders, and strengthens partnerships. The Communication department defines objectives and strategies for the positioning, setting the tone of voice, communication channels and communication actions. In collaboration with all the other departments, it defines the brand identity. The Administration and Human Resources is responsible for

financial management, budget definition and forecasting analysis. It also manages the human resources. The Burò and Coworking spaces department is in charge of managing the relations between BASE and all the creative industries that work within its spaces; it also manages the coworking space and the LearningROOMS. Hospitality and CasaBASE is responsible for welcoming the public and acting as an information point; it is also responsible for the operational strategy of the casaBASE hostel (BASE, 2019).

Moreover, BASE has institutionalised an executive body called Tavolo di sviluppo (Development Council), which carries out some more operational and coordinating tasks aimed at managing the various teams. It is composed by the Board of directors and other staff members involved in the development of the projects.

In 2020, the organisational structure was reviewed and a new internal structure, the C-Suite, was created to deal specifically with management tasks. It consists of the CEO in charge of the economic area, the COO (Chief Operative Officer) in charge of general coordination, and the CCO (Chief Cultural Officer) in charge of curating all projects (BASE, 2022). This is a great example of the application of the dual leadership concept, which, as Byrnes (2014) states, aims to combine the logic of business and art. Although many authors, such as Pancot and Lusiani (2021), allude to a more complex reality than dualism, referring to a need to address a more "polyphonic" dimension, this basic approach allows cultural organisations to pursue both drivers and be more financially viable in the long term. It involves the joint management of the institution by the artistic and administrative directors, who must share a common territory and complementary views in order to pursue the economic and artistic objectives, even if they have different approaches.

Since, generally, art organisations are not really considered great generators of employment, it is crucial to give some economic and contractual information regarding the employment conditions.
BASE's staff members receive a salary that is classified within the Italian framework of the Contratto Collettivo Nazionale del Commercio (National Collective Agreement), according to the levels and pay bands gross annual salary indicated in *Table 3*.

Table 3: Contractual levels and annual gross retribution of OXA Srl Staff members (as at 31/12/22)

Level	**Quantity**
1	1
2	1
3	6
4	3
Apprendistato[1] 5	1
Apprendistato 6	3
Apprendistato 7	6

Gross retribution/year	**Qty**
35.000-40.000	1
30.000-35.000	1
25.000-30.000	7
20.000-25.000	6
15.000-20.000	4
9.000 (part time 50%)	2

Source: Social Balance Sheet (BASE, 2022)

The presence of Apprendistato contracts highlights the will to invest in young people to professionally educate them and project their skills in the long term perspective within the institution. As we can observe from the Gross retribution per year, high levels of retribution are reduced in terms of quantity, but this is in line with the average of the art sector.

The institution also reports (BASE, 2022) that, in addition to its own staff, it has worked with external professionals and consultants for ongoing activities ranging from press to IT, audio services and security. In 2022, these collaborations resulted in the involvement of 474 suppliers, including 178 from local companies, reflecting and confirming its mission (BASE, 2022).

This last topic enables us to introduce another key aspect of the people dimension: the partnerships. Since one of the objectives of the institution is to be open to the community and involve external stakeholders in the creation of meaning, the

[1]Apprendistato is a professionalising contract for people between 18 and 29 years with the purpose of learning a specific job (Labour and Social Politics Ministry, n.d).

partnerships that it has created are many and very diverse between each other with the aim of reflecting its eclectic nature.

Here we can enlist some of the main ones to give an overview.

As institutional partners we find the The Italian Ministry of Culture, the City Municipality of Milan and the Cariplo Foundation, which is also one of the main funders of the project and responsible for the establishment of the Cariplo Factory within BASE's spaces.

Among the others, Select is a partner of BASE Milano since 2020. They started a shared project that involves the possibility to enjoy the very unique venetian aperitivo made with Select every Wednesday from April to October in the Bistrò (BASE, n.d). These two companies share the value of conviviality. In the BASEbistro's menù, they also chose to incorporate FINI's products. FINI is a company based in Modena which has become the symbol of fresh Italian pasta. This partnership was born from their alignment of the philosophy on the authenticity and quality of ingredients. Other companies involved in the F&B area are Tuborg and Caffè Diemme.

Furthermore we can find NETCO Srl, a company that deals with air purification whose service is used especially for the Burò, in order to offer clean and purified air in the coworking spaces. NEXI became a partner in 2020 with the aim of fostering a project that could make BASE a cashless hub (BASE, n.d).

Another interesting partnership is the one with Volvo Studio Milano, with which the institution carries out different projects. One of the most interesting has been Rumore in Studio: sperimentazioni elettroniche e nuovi riverberi dall'eco infinito (Noise in the Studio: electronic experiments and new reverbs with infinite echoes) that featured experimental sound compositions in collaboration with Le Cannibale (BASE, n.d.).

It is essential to highlight that every project can involve other partners, for example the British Council has been a partner for the We Will Design project, together with the Milan Design Week.

The kind of partnerships presented here reflects how the institution tries to cover all the different aspects of the concept of "being together", from food, to providing a good quality of the air and experimental events with the aim to bring cultural and social innovation to both parties involved and to the territory.

4.2.3 Economic aspects

This section of the business model analyses the financial viability of the organisation as it is crucial to give an idea of how the company sustains itself and to assess its solidity and distribution of resources (Byrnes, 2014); A detailed analyses of the core elements in object, the costs and revenues structures, can be very useful in order to support decision making and to plan internal financial projections.

In examining the financial approach, the public and non for profit vocation of this project becomes even more relevant, since it is rooted in the will to reclaim the former industrial space. As we said, the public call was taken up by OXA Srl with a very small share capital, which covered 70% of the cost of the renovation work (BASE, 2019).
As reported by the organisation (BASE, 2022), the cost of this first renovation phase amounted to 4.5 million euros. Furthermore, as stated in the call for tenders, with the temporal extension until 2033 and the possibility of restoring a further 6,000 sqm, the total cost increased to 11.5 million euros. The whole duration of the recoversion of the spaces of BASE lasted between 2014 and 2019 for a total amount of 16 million euros.

Table 4: Renovation costs

Renovation costs	
1st Phase	4,5 MLN
2nd Phase	1,5 MLN
Tot.	**16 MLN**

Source: BASE (2022)

OXA Srl invested 9,9 million euros for the regeneration process, of which 7,5 were part of the bank loan. The City Municipality contributed with a total of 5,3 million euros and Cariplo Foundation made available another 800,000 euros as a grant contribution to Oxa Srl. These funds derive from a call launched by the Foundation in 2015 for funding applications regarding the area of Art and Culture: Cultural Heritage for development (Fondazione Cariplo, 2015), which reflect the Foundation's mission of serving communities through the support of local organisations (Fondazione Cariplo, n.d.).

Table 5: Funds structure

Funds	
Oxa srl	**9,9 MLN**
City municipality	**5,3 MLN**
Cariplo Foundation	**800,000**
Total	**16 MLN**

Source: BASE (2022)

Furthermore, Oxa srl, through the Artbonus initiative, managed to collect 200.000 euros as liberal donation coming from the crowdfunding campaign for the restoration of the spaces. For the renovation works of the second and third floors, it raised 8.114.174, 25 euros from the second campaign (Artbonus, n.d.). A third crowdfunding campaign, aimed at the maintenance and implementation of the spaces, is still open. However, no donations have yet been received (Artbonus, n.d.).

Understanding the economic framework of the project can help the reader to grasp some of the strategic choices that the institution has made concerning the commercial and cultural activities and its internal structure. Therefore, here will follow a detailed analysis of the cost and revenue structure that characterises our case study.

Costs

This subsection deals with all the monetary resources employed to achieve a specific objective. Costs can be fixed, those that do not change with the variation of the volume of the activity realised, these can be identified generally in the rent and core personnel cost, equipment ecc; and variable, those that vary proportionally to the volume of the activity realised, these are particularly linked to the specific activity involved (Byrne, 2014).

The structural costs of BASE are composed by (BASE, 2022):

- rental of the spaces to city municipality;
- general maintenance;
- financial charges of the bank loan for the renovation project;
- personnel;

- communication;
- suppliers;
- external consultations;

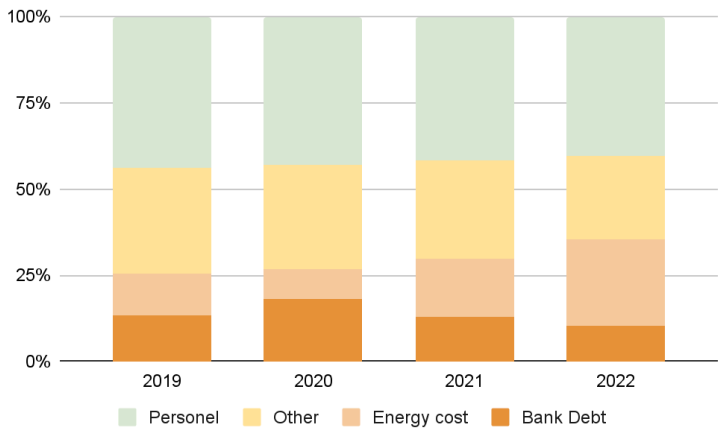
In addition to the structural costs, the fixed costs inherent to the projects are framed in this way by the institution (BASE, 2022):

- programming and events costs;
- running costs of the hostel and coordination costs for projects in which BASE gives its steady contribution, such as Music Innovation Hub and Rete NEMA;
- costs of the activities organised in the workspaces (community building and networking events).

When analysing the evolution of the cost structure between 2019 and 2022, it is interesting to note that the cost of the bank debt was always significant: in 2019 it amounted to 13% of all costs and in 2022 to around 10%.This shows how financially dependent this institution is on debt (specifically coming from the regeneration project) and highlights the problems particularly in times of rising interest rates (BASE, 2019, 2020).

The cost structure, as *Graph 1* shows, has been quite steady during the years. Base has tried to invest more in personnel. External variables such as the increase of the interest rate and of the energy costs have had a strong impact on the financial situation.

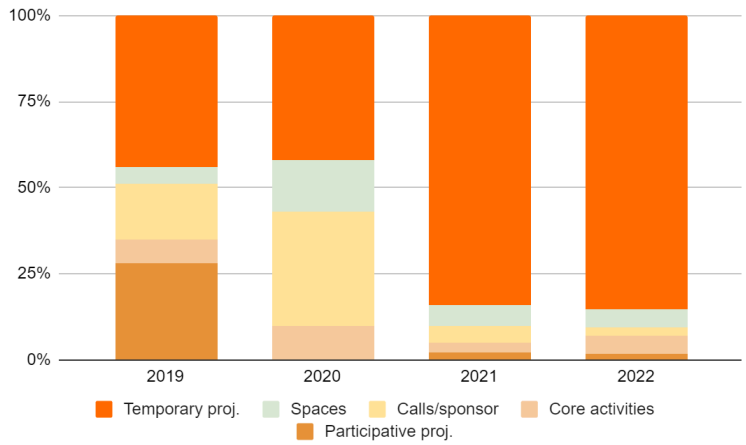
Graph 1: BASE's Fixed cost structure 2019-2022



Source: Elaborated by the author on the available data of BASE (2022)

Variable costs are generated by all the other sections of the projects and activities that BASE organises, from temporary projects to sponsorships and core activities. As *Graph 2.* shows, the temporary projects' costs have a greater impact on the overall structure of variable costs than the others. In 2019 and 2020, the cost of sponsorship was high due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, between 2019 and 2022, there is a decrease in the costs of the projects in which BASE participated.

Graph 2: BASE's Variable cost structure 2019-2022



Source: Elaborated by the author on the available data of BASE (2022)

Revenues

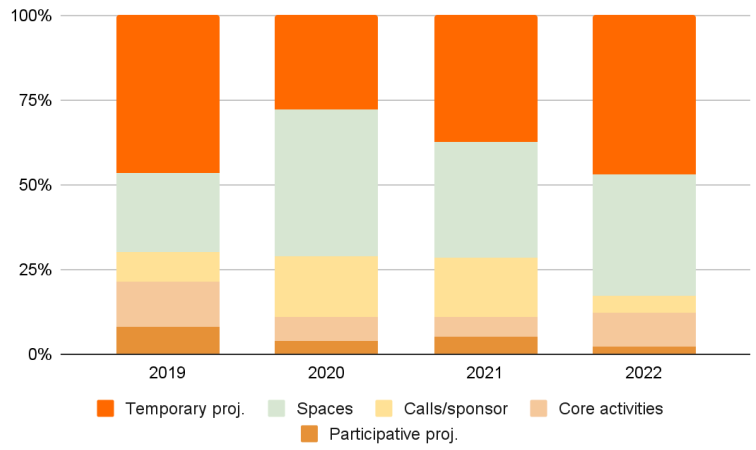
The revenues area analyses all the income generated by the normal operating activities of an organisation, such as the sale of the specific good or service, or coming from alternative activities (Levine & Kim, 2018). Looking at the cultural sector, Byrnes (2014) highlights that most organisations underprice their cultural good or service in order to pursue wider accessibility, following the principle of democratisation of arts and culture. This is because their cultural mission takes over the need to create profit.
In fact, many of these organisations rely on loans, partnerships and public or private funding.

BASE's project is very vulnerable to external variables due to the reduced amount of share capital available from the shareholders that forced a debt, OXA Srl as a non for profit organisation has tried to reach a sustainable funding mix that could enable it to be economically viable.

In 2022, the institution listed its main revenue streams as follows:

- coworking spaces such as burò, musicROOMS and Cariplo Factory;
- permanent activities such as casaBASE and Un posto a BASE;
- temporary activities (productions, co-productions and external events);
- grants and sponsorships;
- participated projects such as Music Innovation Hub and Rete NEMA;

Graph 3: BASE's Revenues structure 2019-2022



Source: Elaborated by the author on the available data of BASE (2022)

As we can see from *Graph 3,* a great decrease concerning the temporary projects' revenues due to the pandemic of Covid-19 is followed by a net steady recovery in 2022 on the general income. Moreover, it is also possible to note that co-working spaces have gained a greater percentage weight along the years starting from 2020, continuing to be around 36% in 2022.

Sponsorship and institutional fundraising are important sources of income for a cultural institution such as BASE Milano; in the first case we have already analysed the importance of the partnerships and sponsorship which the institution seeks to foster in order to sustain itself and share best practices. Equally important is the institutional fundraising that is developed by the specific department that tries to find new public and private funding. In particular, BASE applied for a majority of national, European and international calls for projects as well as calls for foundations belonging to the third sector.

In terms of public (City Municipality, Lombardy Region and Ministries) and private funding(foundations and corporates), BASE has registered some changes. In 2021, public funding was 141.000 euro, while in 2022 it increased to 163.446,31 euros; On the contrary, private funding decreased from 300.000 euros in 2021 to 118.200,01 euros in 2022 (BASE, 2022).

Giving an overview analysis of the data available from the annual financial statements, it's important to highlight that in 2021 and 2022 BASE shows a positive result regarding the operating profit (BASE, 2021, 2022). In the first year, the operating profit amounted to 68.282,00 euros, and in 2022 it decreased to 35.402,00 euros. We can say that the decrease is balanced by a minor due debt. As a result, the balance sheet remains stable and positive, despite the decrease in the operating profit in 2022.

Indeed, in both years, BASE has achieved a surplus. 2021 can be identified as a transitional year due to the Covid 19 pandemic. In fact, as we can see from the annual financial statements, after benefiting from the partial suspension of the mortgages in 2020 and 2021, in 2022 all the quotas were reintroduced with all the past ones of the previous years: this is shown by the total of 1.518.684 euros (BASE, 2022).

Analysing the difference between the value and the cost of production, the 2022 numbers result in line with the trend of 2021: in 2022 it registered 225.466 euros compared to 238.856 euros in 2021.

It's also important to highlight that the equity capital has increased, from 20.000 euros in 2021 to 26.000 in 2022. The accounts receivable have also increased in 2022, especially those relating to the following year, therefore the forecast for 2023 can be predicted as positive.

From my analysis I can state that the financial reporting of our case study is quite easily available, what could be enhanced more concerns the detailing of specific items such as partnerships, and temporary projects revenues. This data is probably included within other items that embrace larger information.

4.2.4 Accountability and performance measurement

In the art sector, and even more in the non for profit one, the use of financial and also non-financial resources can come from different stakeholders. In this sense, the dimensions of accountability and transparency become key elements in order to secure these resources and demonstrate reliability towards the funders.

Behn (2001) suggests four main areas in which accountability is demanded from these organisations: it relates to finance and economics, the mission, the social dimension and performance. As Labaronne (2017) reports, the need for transparency has been generated by a parallel request from donors, funders and public bodies, but also by the non-for-profit organisations themselves, as they strongly compete for resources and to preserve legitimacy.

This duty mainly covers the provision of information regarding the actions pursued and the report of the results achieved not only in terms of economic impact.

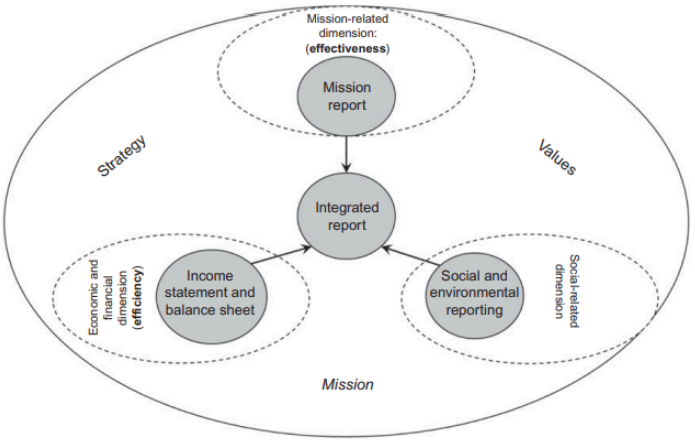
Andreaus and Costa (2014) provide an interesting contribution to the theoretical framework by suggesting an integrated model of accountability that takes inspiration from the areas proposed by Behn (2001) and that classifies some practical tools for reporting. The particularity of this model is that it recognises the three dimensions of the economic, mission and social accountability as interrelated since these organisations are mission-oriented and respond to demands of diverse stakeholders (Andreaus & Costa, 2014).

When addressing economic accountability, the organisations must present information concerning the resources received and the way in which those resources were used. It is crucial to show that a financial balance has been maintained, showing economic viability and assessing efficiency (Andreaus & Costa, 2014). In this case, some documents that ensure accountability are the income statement, which enlists the costs and revenues structure and the investment-liabilities-equity disclosure that shows the financial position and gives information concerning capital, investments and liabilities, these two together compose the financial statement (Andreaus & Costa, 2014). Also, it could be very useful to report how the remaining resources are distributed among the stakeholders or projects to fulfil the mission.

Non for profit lay on social and/or cultural values, therefore the fulfilment of the mission is essential. In fact, once the vision and the mission of an organisation is set, the members must assess the effectiveness of the actions taken in order to achieve the goal. Since the vision and mission are settled for a long term perspective (even though they need to be adaptable to change), more specific goals and objectives are needed to measure the impact. Some organisations may use mission reports as well to present key indicators that guide the action.

Linked to the economic and mission reports, the social dimension must be addressed in order not to lose legitimacy and pursue the goal of value creation. All the different stakeholders demand in this implicit contract that specific needs are met; funders may ask for efficiency in social impact, employees for a high quality of work benefits and guarantees, volunteers expect opportunities of growth (Andreaus & Costa, 2014). Therefore, as the authors (2014) argue, accountability becomes then a "necessary constraint" in order to have a stronger relationship with its stakeholders.
This information must then be provided in social and environmental reports.

Figure 5: The integrated Accountability Model



Source: Andreaus & Costa (2014)

BASE sees itself in the role of a hinge; on the one hand a physical one between the centre and the periphery, the Tortona-Solari neighbourhood being on the border of the outer circumference in the 6th district. On the other hand, a metaphorical one as it brings together different voices and transforms itself into a laboratory with a bottom-up approach. In the "Transparency" section of the institution's website, it is possible to find

available the Memorandum of Association, the annual economic Balance Sheet and the annual Social Balance Sheet. This documents' availability enabled the following analysis of the organisation's accountability.

Before going any further, it seems interesting to add that this data is only available in Italian and that it would be better, in order to address all stakeholders and audiences, to have a copy also in English. It might also be useful to have a kind of archive where all these annual documents could be collected and made available to the public, since one has access just to the most recent one.

For what concerns the financial reporting, BASE makes available annually its income statement, which respects the guidelines given by the Italian Ministry of Labour and of Political Sciences; what could be useful in order to increase transparency and allow a deeper understanding for professionals, would be a more detailed breakdown of the items relating to the cost and revenue structure within the document. This could provide a better overview of how funds are then re-used and useful for the planning of the public program. In addition to the income statement, financial information is also available in the annual Social Balance Sheet; the institution also reports some data collected from the previous year, which allows for comparisons. This document is a sort of commentary on the social and economic measures taken during the year and an explanation of the changes that may have occurred due to external and internal circumstances.

Mission and social reporting go hand in hand in our case study as BASE builds its values on diversity and inclusion. The vision and mission statements are included in the annual Social Balance Sheet, together with the values and objectives of the institution, as we reported in the *Strategic aspects* paragraph. Its statements are clear, realistic and feasible.

In the 2022 Social Balance Sheet, the institution stated that it felt the need to rethink and reimagine its physical and intellectual role in order to strengthen its social functions within the city and beyond, contributing even more to the redefinition of the social geography of the metropolis as part of its vision and mission (BASE, 2022). This urge was probably due to the constantly changing urban landscape, which is increasingly characterised by demographic, economic and social inhomogeneity. Indeed, as stated in the report, 2022 was a challenging year that questioned the institution's objectives in terms of impact. This has been stimulated internally, by the staff and by the

confrontation with its stakeholders, showing how accountability must be addressed both internally and externally.

Some of the questions (which are reported in *Table* 6) that BASE as an institution has had to face have revolved around its potential role in the rebuilding of a disjoint community, questioning what are the core elements that make a community and how a cultural hub can support and present artistic projects of the local territory.

Table 6: Questions to pursue social change in 2022

In the conflict between insiders and outsiders, who is entitled to produce culture? Who is entitled to enjoy it?
Which bodies are missing in our human ecosystem? Which ideas are we not listening to? Which ones do not even come into being for lack of space and time?
How do we change our perspective?
How do we become relevant outside our boundaries?
How do we activate an open and real dialogue with the communities that orbit around us?

Source: Social Balance Sheet (BASE, 2022)

An in-depth reflection on these concepts has led BASE to create its programming on two concepts which it defines as “cross-cutting and complimentary” (BASE, p.48, 2022), the co-design and the co-planning. These themes are concretized in the coexistence of different functions within its spaces and of different professionals and communities.

In 2022, BASE set some Objectives of Change that are deeply linked to the initial core values we spoke about (cultural, social, relational and economic dimensions). The aim was to launch a new triennial organisational project 2023-2025 guided by these new principles. The latter are developed on three interrelated dimensions; a political one stimulated by the need to take action and responsibility towards of its community; an introvert dimension, highlighting the pursuit of the well-being of the people of BASE and, consequently, of the institution itself; and finally, an extroverted dimension, referring to the "relational ecosystem" (BASE, p.52, 2022) that characterises BASE.

All these ideas were also reflected in the public program, where co-production was one of the keywords characterising the new approach, trying to share skills, ideas and projects. This made it possible to diversify the content of the projects, to include new artistic practices and to experiment new formats. It can also be said that there was a great interest in the participatory projects that involved the local community in the creative process. It should be kept in mind that when fruitors become active, they contribute with ideas and feedback to the reinvention of artistic creation.

If we have a look at the data for 2021, the change in evident: in 2021, BASE had 48% of productions, 30% of co-productions and 22% of hosted events; on the other hand 2022 shows a big increase in co-productions with 60%, 28% instead in produced events and just 12% in hosted events (BASE, 2022).

BASE recognises that its people are its most important foundation, as we have analysed in the previous sub-section dedicated to the people aspects. It's believed that there is a two-way relationship between the institution and its people, who constantly help to shape each other in terms of identity and purpose (BASE, 2022). One of the most important objectives of the institution is to bring its values closer to its staff, adopting some listening and engagement strategies, and confirming the will to be an open relational ecosystem that pursues diversity and co-planning.

In this way, BASE proposes its presence as a cultural factory and as a flywheel to bring forth contemporary issues and try to activate processes of reaction and of transformation. This process of identity formation is linked to the concept of cultural positioning and advocacy on issues of public debate in a world characterised by fragmentation and polarisation (BASE, 2022).

The institution proposes to convert itself into a platform to spread the plurality of voices from partners to the local community; Linda di Pietro (BASE, p.58, 2022), Artistic Director, stated that the impossibility to define BASE was the first reason why it was the perfect place where to start the re-thinking of the role of cultural institutions, giving spaces to invisible bodies and to unheard voices and trying to overcome any social obstacle.

Of course, when we talk about this kind of issue, especially the linguistic one, we are dealing with a context, a political and cultural dimension. Nevertheless, the action that the institution is pursuing in this sense is interested in the use of an inclusive language, through the adoption of circumlocutions such as "all people" instead of "all", which in

Italian ("tutti") is characterised by the generic masculine, and the use of words that don't exclude any gender identity and any body - young, old, able-bodied, disabled (BASE, 2022).

I.D.E.A. (inclusion, diversity, equity, access) is the acronym that guided the new planning strategies for 2022-2025, shaping a strong internal structure that is able to act from an internal perspective first enacting a radical transformation, avoiding “washing” mistakes.
In these terms, one of the outcomes was the winning of some calls such as the Spazi in trasformazione (Transforming Spaces) - CARIPLO, Creative Living Lab - MIC that made possible to carry out some specific projects in 2023: a capacity building and an advocacy pathway. The first aims at gaining new competencies to stimulate the creation of an environment open to change, whether the second had the scope to create a Protocollo Aperto per l’accessibilità Culturale (Open Protocol for Cultural Accessibility), a crucial tool and framework that gathers best practices and principles to enact a real transformation within the cultural environment (BASE, 2022).

As we stated before, cultural accessibility is one of the main objectives of BASE and this explains the choice of providing 85% of the initiatives free of charge, carrying out the public role it aims at, only the 15% of the events requires a payment with an average price of 9 euros.

Within the social dimension, the theoretical framework also includes environmental reporting. In the case of our institution there is no specific documentation.Nevertheless, the annual Social Balance Sheet takes into account sustainability in all its dimensions (social, economic and environmental). BASE pursues sustainability and attention to the environment also through the choice of its partners, funders and collaborators. Every project carried out in the space of the institution addresses the challenges posed by climate change, inclusion and diversity. In the We Will Design program, sustainability is addressed in all its features to rethink our approach toward our life in the city and our approach to the concept of “living together”.

To conclude on this topic, we could say that this artistic hub focuses its impact measurement strongly both on the economic and social dimension. Indeed as a non for profit organisation, it prioritises the cultural and social ones. Nevertheless, the

performance measurement of the economic dimension is really important to ensure its long term viability and to build new partnerships as a trustworthy organisation. In the 2022 Social Balance Sheet they provide really detailed data, especially compared to the 2019 one, whose structure is much simpler and economic based. The institution also makes available some graphs that analyse the evolving economic dynamics over the years.

It also reports on the results of specific core projects, such as We Will Design or the Farout Festival, in terms of participation, social impact and innovation.

As far as performance management is concerned, BASE uses both quantitative and qualitative indicators. From the number of participants to the number of events, the number of residencies organised, the occupancy rate of CASAbase and the number of projects produced or in which the organisation has participated.

The qualitative aspects are always more complex to analyse, and BASE indicates in the 2022 Social Balance Sheet the values achieved in each project. But the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) are not really clear in this case. In fact, among the objectives for the improvements of social reporting, it includes identifying more effective KPIs to map the intangible value generated, and to closely involve beneficiaries in evaluating the impact and value generated (BASE, 2022).

The in-depth analysis of the case study object of this research helped to show how urban cultural policies can have a positive influence, stimulate and sustain entrepreneurial ideas. The regeneration of the area where BASE Milano is located is a successful example of the enactment of a virtuous process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research provides valuable insights into the intersectional relationship between urban cultural policy, creative community spaces and opportunities for societal change. It has assessed how urban cultural policies have played a key role in stimulating new strategies to promote cultural development, from the construction of iconic buildings, the hosting of mega-events, the creation of cultural districts, to the promotion of urban regeneration processes. Indeed, each of these implicitly has some negative effects on the local territory and, in particular, on local communities. Some of the undesirable effects, as we have already explained, are the gentrification process and the polarisation of cities, which begin to overlook their original inhabitants in favour of economic investment.

Among the bad experiments, some projects stood out for their attention to the sustainability of their path, not only from an economic point of view, but above all by becoming a reference point for the social dimension. In this sense, we have seen that academics and international agencies are trying to share valuable tools to measure and evaluate the impact of each project.

BASE Milano, the case study object of this research, born from an urban policy, has been taken as a virtuous example. As we have seen, BASE is the result of the regeneration process of a former industrial building, based on a large amount of public funding. In this sense, our research has shown how cooperation between the private and public dimensions can be successful. However, the real purpose of our research was to study the day-to-day management of this creative centre, as there seemed to be a lack of managerial perspective in cultural policy studies. As we have seen, it is essential to take a holistic approach throughout the policy-making process in order not to miss opportunities and to plan properly. Indeed, BASE seemed to have adopted a successful model by involving different stakeholders from different backgrounds and prioritising project management practices in every area of action.

After analysing its business model, BASE has emerged as a pioneering reality that prioritises its community of reference and at the same time preserves and stimulates the

territory in which it is located (economically and socially). As a participatory space, it contributes to the innovation of the cultural sector by engaging with diverse audiences through all the different activities it carries out.

In addition to fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration, empowering the organisation's staff and contributing to capacity building, it has stimulated discussions on the incorporation of digital technologies to meet new market and societal needs. BASE stands out among other similar realities for its attention to diversity and accessibility. In fact, it is one of the few realities that has officially and formally adopted an inclusive way of addressing all people in written forms.

The creative hub has therefore established (at least nationally-wise) some best practices that it seeks to share with its national and international network, highlighting the importance of cooperation in the cultural sector, as one of its objectives is to increase knowledge. BASE has demonstrated to put all the dimensions of sustainability at the centre of its course of activity. In this regard a better reporting has been suggested for what concerns the environmental side, as a lack of reporting information has been detected.

Once again, art demonstrates its potential as a catalyst for change and social inclusion, contributing to social well-being through the enactment of participatory practices. The analysis of the daily management of a space that results from a cultural urban policy has been useful to bring even more light on the managerial side of the matter in order to give consistency to theoretical implementation of policies, reimagining the role of cultural factors beyond the walls of usual venues in contemporary society.

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