

THE EUROPEAN CREATIVE CITY.

Contextualising urban policies and strategies for creative industries

PRE-PRINT VERSION.

Please quote:

d'Ovidio, M. & Pradel, M. (2025). 10 The European Creative City: Contextualising Urban Policies and Strategies for Creative Industries. In L. Dubois, L. Simon & B. Szostak (Ed.), *De Gruyter Handbook of Creative Industries* (pp. 135-150). De Gruyter. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111351209-011>

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Keywords: creative city model, European city, globalisation, institutions.

Introduction

In the night between 11 and 12 March 2016, the renowned Italian street artist Blu erased his own murals in Bologna, Italy. This act of protest was in opposition to the commodification of his art in an exhibition titled "Street Art – Banksy and Co: L'arte allo stato urbano" (art in its urban state). Blu's protest was not an isolated incident; he had previously engaged in similar actions in Berlin, Germany. This act highlights a significant challenge in urban cultural politics: the commercialisation of alternative urban cultures by cultural industries and city branding initiatives. Originally subversive expressions, graffiti and street art are often commodified and repurposed for urban development and capitalist gains.

The case of Blu in Bologna provides a foundation for our examination of a development model that has been labelled 'creative' and of its critical implications, and for the formulation of a more contextualised and situated proposal for urban development (Landry 2000; Florida 2002; Peck 2005; Pratt 2010; d'Ovidio 2016). This model, frequently lauded as a forward-thinking urban development strategy, employs cultural elements to drive economic growth and enhance urban competitiveness. However, it also gives rise to considerable adverse externalities in urban spaces, cultural production and labour, particularly in the cultural sector.

This chapter will explore the dynamics between the creative city model and another theoretical city model that gained prominence at the turn of the century: the European city model (Le Galès, 2002; Colomb and Kazepov, 2023; Andreotti, Mingione, 2016). This chapter examines the intersections, overlaps, and divergences between these two models, offering a comprehensive critique of the latter from a European perspective.

The European city model, grounded in neo-Weberian critical urban studies, views cities as cultural and political laboratories for participation and governance. This perspective underscores the significance of contextual, institutional, and historical factors in influencing and mitigating global economic trends and their local impacts. This approach supports a situated conceptualisation of urban development that recognises the specific characteristics of each city. (Cucca, Ranci, 2017).

In contrast, the creative city model is frequently subject to criticism for its instrumental use of culture in urban development policies, fostering urban competitiveness and speculative strategies. This approach tends to prioritise convergent elements, frequently overlooking local specificities. This model has been instrumental in gentrification processes, whereby the cultural sector has inadvertently driven urban transformation and displacement (Zukin 1996; Pradel 2016).

The chapter aims to bridge these debates, assessing how the creative city model has been integrated into the European urban contexts or has disrupted it. The chapter puts forth a novel conceptual framework that is situated and respectful of local nuances and investigates whether a distinct European creative city model can emerge by examining both theoretical discussions and empirical case studies.

The first two sections of the chapter present an elaboration of the principles and critiques of the European city and creative city models. The third section presents a synthesis of the previous discussions and explores the possibility and opportunity of a coherent European Creative City model.

The chapter concludes by arguing that while the Creative City model offers valuable tools for urban development through the support and promotion of creative industries, it needs to be rigorously re-evaluated and adapted to local contexts. This is essential to prevent the perpetuation of negative externalities which are often denounced within the creative industry ecosystems and to genuinely foster inclusive and sustainable urban development able to accommodate diverse, inclusive and democratic cultural expression, a fair creative job market and open equal opportunities. The theoretical framework on the European city is useful because it allows for a focus on the combination of elements linked to the historical and cultural context, the local and multi-level institutional framework, and the constellation of public and private actors that make it up. The focus on the European city does not imply a Eurocentric point of view; rather, it highlights the need for a situated approach, capable of understanding the processes at work in the most diverse contexts.

1. The creative city debate

1.1 Development of the concept

The concept of the Creative City has been a prominent topic of discussion in urban studies since the 1990s. It has been employed to illustrate the shift in urban development from an industrial, Fordist era to one where production is increasingly focused on intangible, creative, cultural and cognitive components. The term subsequently gained significant recognition following the publication of Charles Landry's book "Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators" (2000), which urged urban planners, administrators and civil society to make wider use of creativity in addressing urban issues. At the outset, this concept was situated apart from the economic domain of the post-Fordist city. However, over time, the term 'creative city' has gradually lost its original meaning as a city that is engaged in a collective and creative process of renewal and transformation. It has become a highly attractive concept for both academics and policymakers seeking to understand and reimagine *the economy* of their cities, particularly in the context of profound economic and social transformations.

A review of the literature and debate suggests that the concept of the Creative City encompasses three semantic domains. It should be noted that these areas are not mutually exclusive, but rather overlapping and interrelated, and can be thought of as ideal types.

Firstly, the concept of the Creative City has assumed a theoretical meaning, functioning as a lens through which to observe the urban economy. This theoretical meaning emphasises the immaterial aspects, labour market transformations, and production organisation. The seminal work of Scott (2000; 2008), Storper (Storper and Scott 2008), Zukin (1996), in the US, and McRobbie (2016), Pratt (2010), Boltanski (2005), in Europe, represents a significant influence on a vast body of research exploring the role of creativity in the post-Fordist economy and its impact on urban societies. This line of research goes further in understanding how the creative industries can support local development in cities and regions, and what the consequences are for society. The most intriguing research delves into this subject from a robust critical

standpoint, as exemplified by the works of O'Connor (2024), McRobbie (2016), Mould (2018), Rantisi and Leslie (2006), De Bernard and Comunian (2022), and Pratt (2008). These scholars challenge the very notion of an inherent overlap between the concepts of creativity and economic growth or local development.

Secondly, the Creative City is conceived as a development model for post-Fordist cities that need to revitalise their economies and promoting growth and competitiveness. The focus is therefore shifting from a theoretical perspective (the first meaning) to a strategic, normative and development model. Indeed, during the 1980s and 1990s, in the wake of the decline of manufacturing industries as traditional drivers of urban socio-economic development, efforts to revitalise urban economies have centred on the promotion of the new cultural-creative economy, with the aspiration that it can propel renewed urban growth in a global capitalist system where creativity appears to have become a crucial resource for all cities. Over the past two decades, the term "culture" has become increasingly associated with ideals of creativity, innovation, and knowledge within urban policy discourse. In this context, culture and creativity have become a fundamental aspect of urban policy, giving rise to a proliferation of studies, theories, and strategies aimed at supporting culture and creativity for urban growth. The academic debate has concentrated on proposals, models and recommendations for the implementation of the concept of the Creative City with a view to the creation of employment opportunities, the attraction of investment and the rebuilding of the urban economy.

Among the numerous theories proposed, that put forth by Florida in 2002 has been particularly successful. It is noteworthy that Florida not only acknowledges the emergence of a new urban class, namely the creative class, but also proposes specific strategies for city governments to promote growth by attracting it. Following this view, cities should be able to offer a whole new set of infrastructures for the economy to rise, but especially a pleasant, enjoyable cultural atmosphere where creatives can feed their culture and enjoy. These elements are what Florida calls *soft* factors, to distinguish them from the *hard* ones which are the traditional, conventional and now obsolete attracting elements, such as welfare provision, tax regime, transport infrastructure, sectorial incentives, and so on. These recommendations frequently led to urban beautification and tourism marketing initiatives, which promoted cultural districts and spaces without adequately addressing the city's critical social issues. Despite their apparent superficiality, these policies were generally well received by the public, largely due to their simplicity of communication and comprehension, as well as their promise of more beautiful and competitive cities. However, the results of these strategies are highly controversial and strongly criticised by academics (Peck 2005, Markusen 2006, Markusen and Schrock 2006) and civil society, as documented by Novy and Colomb (2016), d'Ovidio and Cossu (2017), Pradel (2017), among others. To a somewhat lesser extent, and still of considerable significance in Europe, there has been an endeavour to foster the local creative industries and cultural economy by establishing an appropriate environment for creativity and culture to flourish. This development model deviates from the Floridian idea that companies should follow people. Instead, it aims to plan so-called creative neighbourhoods and to understand the local development of the cities as brought about by an ecosystem of activities that are very well connected both through strong social networks and local institutions (Banks et al. 2000, Cohendet et al. 2010, Santagata 2002, Krätke 2011). In this regard, the objective is to attract companies and economic activities, rather than individuals, 'talent' or 'the creative class'. In more recent times, the concept of creative hubs has been developed in the context of the UK in particular (Gill Pratt and Virani, 2019).

Thirdly, Creative City functions as a brand to market and promote cities on the international stage, and city governments, particularly in the 1990s and 2000s, have used it as a label to promote their image in the international marketplace (see, for a good example on Turin, Italy,

Vanolo 2008). Even today, cities all over the world practise an intense use of terms such as culture, creativity, vibrancy, authenticity and so on as key elements in a rhetoric able to (re)present the city as appealing and attractive. Paradoxically, cities tend to use the identical language and the same strategies in order to build an image intended to be unique, with the result of homogenising both cities and their branding: neighbourhoods have been renewed, with an artificial creative and artistic hint; *starchitects* have been called to design spectacular museums and downtowns, waterfronts and new neighbourhoods, and so on (Ponzini & Nastasi 2016). In a system in which all cities want to position themselves at the top of the world, each one tells a story through the characteristics most in demand on the global market, paradoxically becoming mirror of each other (Boy & Uitermark 2023).

Table 1 – Main conceptualisation of the “Creative City”

1.2 Creative city or creative cities?

From the concise historical overview of the concept presented above, it becomes evident that the Creative City model has been predominantly employed to accentuate the shared characteristics of urban environments across the globe, irrespective of their specific nuances and local contexts. Indeed, the Creative City has been developed as a model to address the challenges of globalisation and to compete in an international arena.

The global validity of the Creative City concept has been reinforced by the globalisation of cultural production on the one hand, and by processes of concentration and financialization of cultural actors and producers on the other. Cultural and creative products are highly globalised within a system that has been described as an *economy of signs and space* (Lash and Urry, 1994), in which goods that are increasingly imbued with intangible value, often derived from a few places in the world, are traded widely across the globe. This process has recently been reinforced by a notable concentration of companies also in the cultural and creative sectors, such as Disney in the audiovisual industry or LVMH in the luxury segment. The expansion of international architecture studios is another illustration of the growing number of global subjects engaged in the production of cultural and creative goods (Ponzini & Nastasi 2016). Similarly, regarding policies and political strategies, although the concept originated in the context of Anglo-Saxon academia and (neo-liberal) politics, it has been rapidly adopted in numerous countries worldwide, including the European Union.

Returning to the field of cultural policy, and cultural and creative industries policy, we can note that much of the recent concern of policy makers has been met by normative analyses of policy resulting in ‘Xerox’ policies: policies that are simply copied with little or no variation from one place to another with no acknowledgement of the different social and economic contexts, and little attention to the policy object. (Pratt 2009, 17)

In the academic context, European-funded research has only recently attempted to reframe the discourse, whereas in previous decades, efforts were made to contextualise global dynamics. An illustrative example is the research project "Accommodating Creative Knowledge: Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions within the Enlarged Union (ACRE)", funded by the European Framework Programme 6 from 2006 to 2010. The research evaluated Florida's theories on a number of major European cities to identify the factors that attract, retain and encourage the growth of knowledge and creative workers (the creative class). To address the criticisms levied against Florida's argument, the research placed significant emphasis on the local institutional context, path dependency, and the role of the welfare state, which is of particular importance in the European context. In light of the aforementioned theoretical

premises, the research did not challenge the fundamental validity of the creative city paradigm or model, however, it was able to integrate it within a framework that took the European context seriously (Murie and Musterd, 2010). The research assessed the importance of both 'soft' and 'hard' factors, taking into account not only the factors that attract people to cities, but also the retaining factors that keep them there. It was shown that workers in the creative industries are attracted primarily by work opportunities, with soft factors coming second; moreover, social networks and local welfare provision emerged as crucial elements in people's decisions about whether to leave a place and where to live. Finally, the research showed that people are less mobile than Florida suggested, and that historical local development plays a particularly key role in the development of the creative industries and the location choices of workers.

2. The European city debate

2.1 Analysing European cities

Analyses of cities within globalisation have tended to focus on the ongoing process of global urbanisation and the radical changes that this process has brought to cities. The pioneering work of Lefebvre, suggesting a process of 'complete urbanisation of society', has been followed by more recent work on planetary urbanisation and the decline of cities. Other work has emphasised the convergence of cities towards a globalised city, characterised by social polarisation and the concentration of the headquarters of value-added and non-value-added services (Sassen 1991). This approach has led to the application of similar paradigms for economic growth, such as the creative city, in the context of the competitiveness of cities to attract investments in the global scenario.

However, empirical research has shown that, despite global trends in the transformation of capitalism, processes of transformation and urbanisation are not homogeneous. While research has shown the diverse scenarios for non-Western capitalist cities and the importance of ordinary cities (Robinson 2006), a fruitful stream of research in Europe has focused on differences within the global North. This stream of research has focused on how, confronting globalisation, European cities use their local autonomy and collective identity to develop policy innovations, investments in urban infrastructures, amenities and local social policies to foster social inclusion (Le Galès, 2002, Andreotti and Mingione, 2016). Thus, being critical of North American analyses of the neoliberal approaches to cities, these perspectives look instead at the particular trajectories of European cities and how they adapt and transform, and sometimes resist, such trends (Colomb and Kazepov, 2023). Aiming at understanding differences in economic development paths and urbanisation processes, these analyses have focused on historical trajectories, the constellation of actors within cities and their conflicts, and the capacity of cities to become collective actors.

This approach departs from the Italian political economy tradition, which is interested in understanding the uneven development of Italian cities and focuses on the social dimension of the economy. Analysing late capitalism as a new wave of commodification of labour, land and money, this approach focuses on different trajectories and strategies shaped by a constellation of local actors, traditions, norms and values that explain how cities develop their own strategies to deal with structural pressures in different ways. This means recognising that the economic development of cities is embedded in a complex institutional framework that frames the actions of local actors. Cities are thus understood as regulatory spaces with political capacities and long trajectories that can be analysed as 'incomplete societies' (Le Galès, 2002). Cities develop local forms of regulation in the Polanyian sense, but these regulations are entangled with regulations at other scales, mainly the state.

Cities develop regulations that allow for certain forms of redistribution and the provision of services through market mechanisms. They also rely, formally or not, on the formal and informal role of reciprocity in the provision of welfare.

2.2 The European city model

Departing from this point of view, analyses on the European cities have underlined the existence of an 'European city model' characterised by a combination of public services and private companies, the existence of a robust middle class and lower middle-class formed by public sector workers and the continuity of good quality employments preventing social polarisation (Le Galès, 2018). This model also includes the provision of social policies at the local level through the collaboration between civil society actors (NGOs, charities, etc.) and the public administration. Another key feature of European cities is the strong role of public administration in leading strategies and plans for economic development, with the involvement of private actors.

This approach has been fruitful not only to analyse European cities in contrast to their Northern-American counterparts but also to analyse differences within European cities, focusing on differences between political capacity, the role of markets in the provision of services, or the strength of reciprocity mechanisms in the provision of welfare and the amelioration of life conditions. For instance, southern European researchers have underlined the role of reciprocity in the provision of social policies in southern European cities, for instance in covering needs such as housing or child and elder care. In this regard, we suggest that taking into consideration cities as spaces for regulation is an interesting point of departure to analyse other contexts beyond Europe.

Recent debates have focused on the structural elements weakening the European city model. These arguments underline the role of austerity policies and the transformation of productive models in the weakening of such models. On the one hand, the demise of public services weakens the relevance of public sector workers, whereas the transformation of cities main economic structures from industry to services brings less qualified jobs and a more polarised labour market (Cucca and Ranci, 2017). Although the empirical evidence of such demise is not clear (Le Galès, 2018), the transformation of the productive basis towards services, the increase of migration and the growing role of financial capital in cities is challenging the European city model in different ways, giving place to new policy initiatives, new actors and new conflicts.

Policy initiatives to transform local economies have been based to a great extent on the creation of the built environment and the conditions for new economic activities related to the symbolic production and the knowledge economy. In this regard, cities have promoted the transformation of their city centres into consumption spaces for visitors and inhabitants, and new forms of productive areas around different sectors, mainly knowledge-intensive and more recently creative sectors. Often these new productive spaces are based on face-to face interactions and the need to foster social relations to ensure innovation and creativity. Thus, interventions in the space have been based to a large extent on promoting mixed-use space (residential, economic, leisure and commercial), with open spaces facilitating the encounter and the exchange of ideas, and fostering new central spaces. These policy initiatives understand these interventions also as a tool to reinforce social cohesion, as they will provide new economic activities, good quality jobs and allow for better quality of life. These urban regeneration projects have relied often on the creative city paradigm, focusing on creative industries as strategic sectors for economic development and have used public and private cultural institutions as a tractor of inhabitants and investments to the refurbished areas.

Table 2 - The European vs the Global city model

3. The European creative city

3.1 Empirical research on creativity in the European cities

The necessity for a situated model of the creative city was made evident by decades of neoliberal policies that applied the model without sufficient consideration of the nuances and characteristics of the local context. A substantial body of research that considers the specific contexts of local areas has demonstrated the limitations and issues associated with the model.

Indeed, empirical research indicates that the creative city model frequently fails to consider the social consequences of policies designed to attract or retain the so-called creative class (Florida 2002), which is often equated with the urban middle-upper class. This approach reveals a paradox: policies designed to support the creative sector primarily promote consumption rather than fostering cultural production. The aforementioned critiques propose the implementation of context-focused approaches, which encompass a multitude of strategies, including direct support for the creative sector through the reinforcement of interconnections between the educational and productive systems, the facilitation of access to credit for nascent entrepreneurs, the provision of cost-effective workspaces for new businesses, and the establishment of constructive synergies between associated sectors.

Furthermore, this model fails to acknowledge the significance of historically established structural conditions and social relationships in the development of local production networks. To illustrate, in the region around Milan, Italy, a dense network of interactions between manufacturers and creative companies, is the backbone of the success of the creative economy, encompassing industrial design, furniture, and fashion. It is imperative that policies supporting creative individuals acknowledge these synergies and provide assistance to small-scale manufacturing in order to sustain the design industry (d'Ovidio and Pacetti, 2020).

Moreover, the creative city model posits that creative industries can flourish in any locale, irrespective of local historical contexts, path dependency, and resource endowments. In regions focused on heavy industry, policies to support the creative class are unlikely to be successful unless they are accompanied by targeted and tailored strategies. This is evidenced by the unique success of the Guggenheim in Bilbao, which has not been easily replicated elsewhere. This success is grounded in a wider strategy of economic development that is not based solely on creativity (Rodriguez and Martinez, 2003). This approach frequently advocates the implementation of policies that fail to acknowledge the distinctive histories and particularities of specific locations (d'Ovidio, 2021).

The literature frequently criticises the instrumental use of culture to promote new consumption models and urban space requalification, noting that this approach tends to favour higher social classes at the expense of marginalised communities and cultural producers. For example, Falanga and Nunes (2021) examined the case of Lisbon, noting that cultural heritage-led regeneration resulted in a significant residential segregation in the city. They observed a high concentration of undereducated and underemployed individuals in some areas, while other parts of the city were populated by upper-middle class (the creative class). Furthermore, they investigated the impact of community involvement and concluded that it can have both positive and negative consequences in such transformations, contingent on the particular contextual circumstances.

Furthermore, the recently EU-funded research on the cultural and creative sector aims to develop a new framework for facilitating situated, inclusive and sustainable growth through the cultural and creative industry within cities. For example, the DISCE project, funded from 2019 to 2022, aims to develop contextual EU indicators on the cultural and creative industries to contribute to the local economy and, in particular, to “re-shape understanding of what

‘inclusive and sustainable growth’ consists of in this context, shifting the CCIs [culture and creative industries] (and CCIs policy) towards strategic goals of ‘cultural development’ that encompass both GDP and human flourishing.” (<https://disce.eu/project/>).” From a distinct perspective, the CICERONE project (<https://cicerone-project.eu/>), funded under the same EU Framework Programme, aims to understand the role of the creative and cultural sector in local development. It does this by analysing the production chain involved in the production and creation of cultural projects, paying particular attention to the local embeddedness, contextual regulatory framework and multiscalar perspective.

3.2 Framing a European view of the creative city

Although this debate is not solely developed in Europe, empirical research in European cities places significant emphasis on testing and critiquing the application of the model, underscoring the pivotal role of context and providing a novel framework for examining the creative city.

By drawing on the ongoing debate on the European city and applying this concept to the creative city, particularly in light of the European debate on the (negative) impact of the creative city model on local society, we can develop a theoretical framework that contextualises the creative city model in Europe. We would like to draw attention to a number of dimensions that appear significant in both the debates: path dependency and institutional context, and the role of public administration and multi-level governance.

An understanding of local historical trajectories, situated within the broader regional and national contexts, is crucial for elucidating the specificities of local economic development and the materialisation of the creative city model. The industrialisation of cities also resulted in the ascendance of a more or less homogeneous bourgeoisie, which constituted the dominant social class, and its working-class counterpart. The economic activities that emerge and the concentration of property demonstrate a variety of organisational forms for social conflict and redistribution, as well as distinct roles for cultural production and consumption. Therefore, economic development trajectories give rise to actors, traditions and values that subsequently inform further economic development strategies. In this regard, the historical development paths that have been followed give way to complex institutional contexts that shape the implementation of the creative city models that are put in place. European cities are characterised by the presence of institutionalised actors, such as chambers of commerce and business associations, which claim a greater role in the economic development of the city. Additionally, they have citizens' groups and urban social movements that frame the possibilities for economic growth and advocate for redistribution. Furthermore, this process gives rise to a set of norms and values that shape the implementation of new economic development models and the emergence of new actors.

Furthermore, path dependency entails the inherited built environment, encompassing factories, architectural heritage, derelict space and urban fabric in general, which frames the opportunities and costs associated with the implementation of creative city models, as well as the perpetuation of urban segregation.

Finally, it can be observed that a multitude of historical stratifications and traditions pertaining to the consumption and production of culture exist in EU cities, which are a legacy of both the bourgeoisie and the working class. Theatres, galleries, art markets, cultural centres and so on can be considered material and symbolic assets and constraints for the implementation of the creative city model.

Consequently, historical trajectories exert a considerable influence on the implementation of the creative city model in a multitude of ways. These include the existence of powerful

economic actors who do not perceive the creative economy as a priority, as well as the symbolic recovery of spaces and practices with a view to fostering new activities.

In second place, the role of public administration and the multi-level governance structure is of paramount importance in the development of the European creative city. In European cities, public administrations continue to play a significant role in policymaking and the formulation of economic strategies for the city (Le Galès, 2002). Furthermore, they play a significant role in the promotion of cultural production and consumption, thereby contributing to the growth of creative industries. In this regard, and in relation to the above-mentioned dimensions, local governments adopt disparate approaches to the creative industries, placing greater emphasis on certain sectors. For instance, in certain contexts, heritage is regarded as a pivotal asset for stimulating economic growth through the tourism industry, with a greater emphasis placed on this sector than on others. In this regard, local strategies led by public actors do not always recognise the creative industries as a homogeneous group of activities, fostering some of the sectors, at the expenses of others. Moreover, in many cases promoting creative industries is not always perceived as an objective in itself, but rather as a means of fostering tourism or generating amenities with the aim of attracting financial investment to the city. This is also pertinent in terms of the collective organisation of creative industries. The multi-level governance framework and associated policies can either facilitate or impede the potential for the collective organisation of creative industries as a unified sector. The extent to which these industries can collectively represent their interests is a topic that requires further investigation. Moreover, in numerous instances, the organisational structure is based on a territorial foundation, with the formation of "creative hubs" or "creative districts."

Finally, the role of local administration is shaped by a complex interplay of supranational, national, and regional frameworks. In the European context, the EU framework plays a role in defining local strategies for economic development. This is achieved through the generation of common frameworks on the creative industries and the provision of funds and the implementation of best practices. A recent example is the approval of the Nextgeneration programme in 2020, providing funds at European level for the recovery of the economy after COVID-19. The programme establishes the conditions for the development of creative industries and the implementation of the creative city model, while simultaneously legitimising certain actors and interventions over others. It is widespread practice for urban renewal projects to include flagship initiatives based on the creative and knowledge sectors to legitimate interventions linking them to new economic activity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the term Creative City is employed to address an urban vision oriented towards the implementation of a series of policies and strategies for the purpose of fostering the growth of creative industries in urban areas. We observed that cities across the globe had adopted this model without sufficient consideration for the situated and contextual elements. On the contrary, we suggest that the analysis and the implementation of the Creative City through the lens of the European context allows us to develop more situated explorations and application of this model.

The examination of path-dependent trajectories, institutional contexts and the role of governments enables the comprehension of disparate framings of the Creative City and the uneven development of creative industries within urban contexts.

Besides, the model allows for better understanding the relation between political, social and cultural dynamics of a given institutional context and the emergence and consolidation of creative industries. This reframing of the Creative City provides insights for urban

policymakers on how to implement a new generation of local strategies for the support of the creative industries, ensuring that this growth does not compromise the integrity of local society and culture, nor result in the exclusion of urban communities. Indeed, the approach's strong situatedness allows for the consideration of a variety of specific elements and encourages engagement with local society.

In this regard, this kind of approach could prove valuable in a number of other contexts, extending well beyond the European cities. In focusing on the Global South, exploring the Creative City or implementing strategies that are labelled as such, it is of the utmost importance to consider the role of informal actors, the degree of autonomy or dependence of local governments on greater government levels, and the role of local hegemonic actors in the development of such strategies. It is crucial to consider how the built environment and public space are conceptualised as fostering the Creative City in different contexts, taking into account the cultural background and social life of each city.

Furthermore, this approach enables the comprehension of emerging conflicts within creative and cultural ecosystems, encompassing phenomena such as gentrification, disputes over space, and clashes between diverse economic actors. In this regard, an analysis of the context and the power relations between actors enables us to repoliticize the discourse and praxis of the Creative City.

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