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# CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AS CATALYSTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** *The potential of cultural and creative industries is increasingly recognised as catalyst for sustainable development from environmental, economic and societal perspectives. Cultural and creative industries have been identified as prominent to drive change and bring a positive role in the desideratum of a sustainable and inclusive future for all. This paper aims to highlight the benefits of cultural and creative industries over the main dimensions of the sustainable development, environmental, social and economic by addressing the sector beneficial contribution to factors such as social cohesion, economic growth, and environmental protection awareness. To become a society in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, a holistic approach is required in which the economic, environmental and social dimensions are addressed interrelated. Cultural and creative industries refer to more than a cultural good, product or service, but an integrated process with multiple implications and effects over the three dimensions and this interlinked approach emphasizes the role of culture and creativity transformational capacity in connecting the three pillars of sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** cultural and creative industries; sustainable development

**JEL classification:** A12; O20; Q01

## **1. Introduction**

Cultural and creative industries use creative capacity in the development process and refer to what is produced through creativity and has potential in the economic circuit, benefiting by a growing recognition internationally both at policy level and among researchers and practitioners. The contribution of cultural and creative industries (CCI) to the development process is based on the involvement of economic, environmental and socio-cultural components. Development through cultural and creative industries aims at economic prosperity and social well-being by emphasizing the benefits of culture, art and creativity, leading to a re-evaluation of the boundaries between culture and economy, between creativity and development.

## **2. The intersection between cultural and creative industries and sustainable development**

The intersection between cultural and creative industries and sustainable development has gained increased attention in both scientific literature and at the level of international policies that harness the potential of cultural and creative sectors as a means of facilitating economic, social and environmental sustainability.

The interconnection between cultural and creative industries and sustainable development is often perceived from both local and global perspectives. International

policies emphasize the importance of global engagement, while local policies focus on regional development and local economic growth. International organizations such as UNESCO and the United Nations have recognized the importance of cultural and creative industries in sustainable development. For example, support for the cultural dimension of sustainable development and the recognition of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development can be found in international bodies such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG, 2010). The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) touch upon the role of cultural and creative industries.

At EU level, policy documents in different fields (from cultural to regional and industrial policies) recognize the wide impact of culture and the potential of cultural and creative industries for economic growth (European Commission et al., 2017). Given the economic and social importance of the cultural and creative industries, the European Parliament is interested in promoting a coherent EU policy, as seen in the Parliament's Resolution, "A coherent policy for the Cultural and Creative Industries" (European Parliament, 2016) on the role of industries in local and regional development and increasing the attractiveness of regions, inclusion and socio-economic development of rural areas and sustainable urban regeneration.

Moreover, a growing number of researchers around the world have incorporated the notion of culture into this sustainable development paradigm. Among them I mention Hawkes (2001), Hesmondhalgh and Pratt (2005), Duxbury and Jeanotte (2011).

This intersection of concepts continues to evolve as researchers and policymakers explore new ways to leverage creativity and culture for a more sustainable future.

## **2.1. Social dimension**

A more widespread role of cultural and creative industries is based on their ability to support social cohesion and cultural identity, norms and values inspired by culture and tradition. Culture-based creativity contributes to enhancing social cohesion by facilitating shared beliefs and ethics for society. Innovative and experimental actions encourage the emergence and development of new forms of expression of cultural and creative industries, improving access to the different sectors of culture (traditional or modern forms of expression) and promoting the transmission of cultural values. Cultural and creative industries are identified with a creative ecosystem and influence the quality of life and well-being.

Culture contributes to inclusive and quality education and fosters lifelong learning opportunities (Clicu and Gariboldi, 2021). Moreover, culture and creative industries have the potential to contribute to increased awareness on sustainable lifestyle by generating environmental friendly products and services as well as encouraging more sustainable consumption patterns.

## **2.2. Economic dimension**

The contribution of cultural and creative industries to economic development is considered relevant to be contributory to indicators such as revenue generated, gross value added, employment, number of enterprises and jobs created, bringing dynamics in production, distribution, cultural consumption and trade relations. In the pursuit of development, high creativity and broad application of knowledge are the main characteristics of modern economies, and at the same time, the developed economy becomes more creative (Zhang, 2011).

In terms of economic factors, in 2020, in EU there were 1.2 million cultural enterprises, representing 5.2 % of all businesses within the non-financial business economy. The

value added at factor cost of cultural enterprises was around €147 billion, meaning 2.3 % of the non-financial business economy (Eurostat, 2023). Considering the employment level, the cultural and creative sectors employ 8.02 million people and represents 3.05% of the EU value added (EUR 477 billion) and includes 1.2 million companies, out of which 99.9% are SMEs (European Commission, 2021).

### 2.3. Environmental dimension

In the process of sustainable development, the principle of resources circularity is a valuable one. When the exploitation of an environmental resource exceeds its regenerative capacity, the resource stock is diminished, generating a loss and reduced possibilities for use of the resource stock by both present and future generations, affecting quality of life (Pjerco et al., 2011). As a result of the effects of excessive industrialization and other activities that are based on exploiting resources, culture and creativity stand out as a valuable resource. The ability to initiate and develop activities in which man becomes the main driver of results, offers countries and regions the premises to launch innovative products and services on a global market, the creative products that complement the potential of the economic system (Costică et al., 2016). Moreover, cultural and creative industries have innovative potential, predilection to technology usage and adoption of sustainable practices such as usage of environmentally friendly materials, recycling or producing and promoting eco-friendly products and services contributing to increased environmental protection awareness.

### 3. Conclusion

The paper approaches the potential of the cultural and creative industries to be considered as catalysts of sustainable development, generating economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental protection awareness. The convergence of the analysed concepts within the paper addresses the cultural and creative industries capacity to contribute to sustainable development, involving simultaneously the economic, social, and environmental dimensions.

While the analysed concepts cultural and creative industries and sustainable development are endorsed as distinct concepts, they can be interconnected, and their mutual intersection have become subject of increased level of research, policy development, and trans-sectorial interventions in areas such as cultural policy or economic development. The paper presents the premises of a basis for a future research direction on the impact of cultural and creative industries towards sustainable development, bringing perspectives of study of scientific literature as well as policy references, and arguments for incorporating cultural and creative industries in sustainable development initiatives.

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