

Creative-based strategies in small cities: A case-study approach

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Abstract

The article intends to contribute to the literature on the relation between small cities and the creative economy in Europe. It aims to identify some dimensions and variables that need to be considered when approaching the capability of these small territories to attract creative people and businesses, surpassing the metropolitan-biased approaches oriented to the context of large cities. The research work is based on a case study methodology, centred on the comparative analysis of the small cities of Óbidos (Portugal), Barnsley UK) and Jyväskylä (Finland). The results of this investigation emphasise the context-specific nature of creative-based policies and stress the importance of some key success factors, such as governance and institutional arrangements, quality of life, entrepreneurship and networks.

Keywords: Small cities. Creative industries. Creative class. Creative economy. Local development.

1 Introduction

Creativity, knowledge and innovation have become the main driving forces of territorial economic, social and cultural development. In this context, several concepts have emerged, such as 'creative industries' (CAVES, 2000; HARTLEY, 2005), 'creative cities' (LANDRY, 2000), 'cultural quarters' (MOMMAAS, 2004; EVANS, 2009), 'creative clusters' (UNITED KINGDOM, 2001; PRATT, 2004; LAZZARETTI *et al.*, 2008, 2009), and 'creative class' (FLORIDA, 2002).

However, academic literature and public policy documents centred on the relation between creativity and territorial development have been essentially oriented to the reality of big cities and metropolis, marginalizing small territorial areas. The theoretical

models, the variables and indicators, and the measurement techniques used, are adapted to places with some level of critical mass, density, agglomeration economies and diversity which leads to an underestimation of the creative potential of small cities¹. Moreover, the cases analysed are mostly circumscribed to the universe of metropolitan areas, like New York, Paris, London or Sydney, which are described as 'creative cities'.

More recently, some authors have started to study the relationship between small territories and the creative economy, using quantitative and qualitative case study methodologies and underlining the rise of some successful creative small communities. The recognition of the potential role of small cities in the creativity movement is particularly relevant because these territories have a huge quantitative importance in terms of population and land area. For example, in the European Union (EU) approximately 40% of the population lives in small urban areas (from 10,000 to 50,000 inhabitants) and 20% in medium-sized cities (between 50,000 and 250,000 inhabitants) (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 1999).

Moreover, these small territorial areas are not necessarily devoted to failure and decline as they present several potentialities and face diverse opportunities. Their economic base is diversifying with a visible decline of the importance of agriculture and other traditional sectors, accompanied by the growth in other activities, such as services and recreation, as postulated by the 'new rural paradigm' (OECD, 2006). In simultaneous with the increasing urbanisation process, there is an on-going trend of counter-urbanisation in some parts of Europe, which is considered to be a reverse migration flow from big cities to small urban areas. This is mostly due to the uniqueness of their territorial capital in natural, cultural and symbolic terms and quality of life.

Nevertheless, these studies of small creative communities are mainly centred on the realities of the USA, Canada, Australia and the UK - "liberal market economies", requiring additional research and evidence on other European countries, namely "coordinated market economies" (HALL; SOSKICE, 2001). Moreover, some of their results are contradictory, and depend on the model, data and methods used, which reinforce the need for further investigation.

This article aims to contribute to this debate on the relation between the creative economy and small cities in Europe through a case-study research methodology, having as starting point the creative capital model of Richard Florida. The analysis is centred on three European cities which are defining and implementing creative-based strategies in their local economies: Óbidos (Portugal), Barnsley (UK), and Jyväskylä (Finland). This work contributes to enrich the knowledge base of cases of small creative communities, proposing some dimensions and variables that need to be considered when approaching these territories.

¹ For characterising small cities, size is not enough. Different countries use different measures to define them. Thus, it is essential to consider additional factors, such as the position in the spatial system and in the urban hierarchies, interdependences, influence, etc. (Bell and Jayne, 2009).

The document is structured into four main parts. After the introduction, the second part intends to make a review of the literature on creative-based territorial models, with a specific focus on small cities. Then, after presenting the methodology of analysis, three case studies of European cities that are designing and implementing creative strategies are described and compared. Finally, some conclusions are extracted, and lines for further investigation are proposed.

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2 Creative-based Development of Small Cities: A Literature Review

2.1 Beyond the Metropolitan-biased Approaches

In the literature, there are several models that explore the relation between creativity and territorial development, which can be systematised in two different approaches: the 'creative industries approach' and the 'creative class approach'.

Firstly, the 'creative industries approach' is based on the literature on clusters that can be dated back to the seminal work of Alfred Marshall (1919) on industrial districts in the late 19th century, which was followed by the research of several authors such as Bagnasco (1977), Becattini (1990) and Porter (1998). This model is centred on the creative industries as generators of innovation and territorial development, emphasising the role of firms and systems of firms, and was further developed in the context of the cultural economy of cities by Allen J. Scott (2001; 2007).

Localisation economies are considered to explain the clustering of businesses which benefit from being located in the same place due to dense input-output relations, a skilled labour pool and knowledge spillovers, being urban growth directly associated to the geography of production – "people follow jobs" (STORPER; SCOTT, 2009). In this context, there is evidence to advocate that creative industries cluster geographically (LAZZARETTI; BOIX; CAPONE, 2008; 2009; NESTA, 2009).

On the contrary, but for some authors complementary (TRIP; ROMEIN, 2010; CHAPAIN; DE PROPRIIS, 2009), the 'creative class approach' is focused on the concept of 'creative class' and highly skilled people, being based on the contributions of Florida (2002), Glaeser, Kolko and Saiz (2001) and Clark (2004). The location choices of individuals are made principally in response to features of the urban environment, shifting the focus from the creative industries to the human factor and its creative habitat – "jobs follow people".

Besides considering also the role of localisation economies in the clustering of creative people and businesses, this approach is more linked to the analytical framework of the urbanisation economies. This concept is related with the density and diversity of cities, based on a cross-pollination of ideas, technologies and knowledge, as postulated by

Jacobs (1969).

The literature on the 'creative industries approach', namely the writings of Scott refer mainly to large cities and metropolises, as they have bigger labour markets, strong agglomeration economies, and larger networks. Small cities can eventually have a role to play in the creative economy through a strategy of product differentiation and focus on niche markets (VAN HEUR, 2010b). The 'creative class approach' also concentrates in the largest metropolitan regions, since they are characterised by a vibrant cultural life, entertainment facilities, and other urban features that are magnets for the attraction of creative people and highly skilled human capital. For these reasons, Van Heur (2010a) refers to a geographical bias of creative economy research and policy.

Particular attention will be devoted to the metropolitan-bias of the creative capital model of Richard Florida, one of the most popular 'creative class approaches' (FLORIDA, 2002). This theory is based on three dimensions: Talent, Tolerance and Technology (3 T's) and is sometimes designated as a "people-based approach".

For the author, the driving force behind the development of a city is its ability to attract and retain creative people – the creative class. It includes creative knowledge workers "whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content" (FLORIDA, 2002, p. 8). Talent migrates to regions and cities with specific urban qualities and high degrees of openness, diversity and tolerance. Thus, what cities and regions should attract is not the creative or knowledge-intensive companies, but the people that work for these companies or those who might start such companies, themselves. The concentration of creative people in these places induces creativity and regional economic development in the forms of higher innovation and expansion of technology-based sectors. Summing up, "tolerance and low entry barriers to human capital help to attract talent, and that talent is in turn associated with the high-technology industry and regional growth" (FLORIDA, 2005, p. 139).

This theory was defined and tested in big cities mainly in the context of the USA, being questionable its applicability to small cities and to other territorial contexts such as the European spatial system. As an example, an analysis carried out in the Nordic regions, including Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland (ANDERSEN *et al.*, 2010) points to a positive correlation between amenities, creative occupations and high-tech jobs in larger city regions, and concludes that the Florida's approach is not a relevant framework for understanding the location of the creative class and regional growth in small city regions.

In fact, postulating that the creative class is attracted to places characterized by critical mass, density, diversity and tolerance, which are characteristics of large cities, the creative capital model reinforces the competitive disadvantages of small cities. As a result, the indicators and measurements used in its analysis, such as the "tech-pole index", "the gay index" or the "melting pot index", position small communities in the bottom of the rankings of creative cities. According to Lewis and Donald (2009), there is still a dichotomy between 'large and creative' versus 'small and disadvantaged' cities,

which tends to be perpetuated over time².

The application of creativity-based models focused on urban regions to small cities induces a misrepresentation of their creative potential. McGranahan and Wojan (2007a) proved that an urban-specific approach underestimates rural creative capacity, through the application of the Florida's approach and their own recast approach to rural areas in the USA. On a similar line, Gülümser *et al.* (2011, p. 12) advocate, "evaluating rural regions using the same approaches and measurement techniques applied to urban regions, seems to fail". These measures must consider the specific features of smaller places, such as territorial capital, natural and cultural amenities, rural lifestyles, and quality of life.

This geographical bias of creative economy research leads to a geographical bias of creative economy policy (VAN HEUR, 2010a): either small cities are considered irrelevant in the creative economy movement, or geography does not matter and they can extrapolate the concepts and models adopted by big cities and metropolises. In fact, the theories advocated by several academics and practitioners, with a special focus on the metropolitan-biased Florida's approach, tend to shape the strategies of policy-makers worldwide, including the local public policies of small cities.

Fast policy transfer is extremely dangerous because small cities all over the world tend to follow "metropolitan imaginaries" (VAN HEUR, 2010a), frequently with inappropriate results. In fact,

Authorities, generally under pressure of urban development and growth, and inspired by success stories, tend to minimize the importance of the basic nature of creativity and the cultural-historical assets of the cities, which tends to result in standard normative procedures and urban development frameworks addressed to transform cities into techno-creative capitals. (MUNOZ, 2010, p. 4)

Waitt and Gibson (2009) have presented a good example of this adoption of normative creative models based on experiences of metropolitan areas in small cities: Wollongong, in Australia. Wollongong is a city with 280,000 inhabitants located 80 km south of Sidney and with a well-known reputation for metal manufacturing, especially steel. In a process of de-industrialization and regeneration, it was one of the first Australian cities to embrace a creative city agenda and the ambition to become a 'city of the arts', a 'city of innovation' and a 'city of diversity'. However, the city has struggled to achieve sustained success with the adoption of a creative-based strategy centred on metropolitan ideas and unsuitable to its context and specificities. In fact, the authorities failed to attract creative people and businesses to the inner city because in the national imaginary, Wollongong remained associated to a steel city, with prevailing class legacies associated with working-class masculinity, with scepticism towards culture, arts and creativity. Moreover, its proximity to Sidney, that could be considered an opportunity, worked as a

² Besides this metropolitan-bias, several critiques have been made to Florida's creative capital model. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to analyse this subject in detail.

disadvantage.

Public policies are context-specific and have to be tailored to the realities of different territories, because the preconditions for creating job growth in small cities differ considerably from the preconditions of larger cities. According to Van Heur (2010b, p. 9),

A more progressive take on culture-led policies for small cities [...] should aim to question these dominant imaginaries by experimenting with new strategies of selection and retention; by developing new understandings of what constitutes culture in the first place; by including new types of actors; and by developing different indicators to measure the cultural economy or the creative class.

On the same line, "local authorities should think, plan and act, based on the city's specific features and assets, which have to be used as foundations in the search for their own urban creativity" (MUNOZ, 2010, p. 4).

2.2 Insights towards a Creative Small Cities Approach

Besides this metropolitan-bias of creative economy research and policy, some authors are dedicating their attention to the relationship between small cities and the creative economy, using quantitative and qualitative case study approaches and underlining the rise of some successful creative small communities (MARKUSSEN, 2006; PETROV, 2007; MCGRANAHAN; WOJAN, 2007a, 2007b; WOJAN; LAMBERT; MCGRANAHAN, 2007; WAITT; GIBSON, 2009; LEWIS; DONALD, 2009; NUUR; LAESTADIUS, 2009; DUXBURY; CAMPBELL, 2009; VAN HEUR, 2010a, 2010b; MUNOZ, 2010; MCGRANAHAN; WOJAN; LAMBERT, 2010; DENIS-JACOB, 2011). Moreover, the study of the importance of creativity for rural regions is also being considered with the introduction of concepts such as 'creative countryside' or 'creative rural economy' (BOP, 2008; BELL; JAYNE, 2010; LORENZINI, 2010).

Attraction of the Creative Class

According to this recent research work and some anecdotal evidence, small cities and towns have also a role to play in the creative economy and can benefit from participating in the competition for the creative class, although in different forms and to a different degree to that of metropolitan centres (PETROV, 2007).

The attraction and retention of the creative class in small communities depend largely on the quality of life and the quality of place, the so called 'amenities'. However, this represents a revision of the concept of 'amenities' proposed in the Florida's creative capital model: "smaller cities, while not necessarily offering the planned creative cityscapes of big cities, have their own set of advantages to attract new residents" (LEWIS; DONALD, 2009, p. 39).

In fact, we are witnessing a counter-urbanisation or urban exodus phenomenon that can be designated 'lifestyle migration' as "relocation decisions are presented as not being primarily economically motivated [...] but rather they are a result of a complex set of

considerations often bundled together in concepts like [...] 'liveability'" (BELL; JAYNE, 2010, p. 211). Creative people are looking for alternative lifestyles to those prevalent in big cities, giving priority to wellbeing associated with sports, healthy food, preservation of the environment and sustainable practices, and to the sense of community and local authenticity. This trend is clearly facilitated by the diffusion of information and communication technologies, especially in a highly mobile segment of the population: most creative people are freelancers, self-employed or owners of micro companies, and work in a project-by-project basis which induces a fading of the barriers between work, leisure and living.

The specific amenities of some of these small places function as magnets for the creative class, namely their 'territorial capital' that include factors such as "geographical location, size, factor of production endowment, climate, traditions, natural resources, quality of life, or the agglomeration economies provided by its cities" (OECD, 2001, p. 15). We can distinguish natural, cultural and symbolic assets which contribute to the strategic differentiation of a place because they are inimitable and hardly reproducible outside the territory, contributing to the affirmation of its uniqueness and distinctiveness.

McGranahan and Wojan (2007b, p. 17) corroborated this thesis statistically and empirically, advocating that "the creative class was present in rural areas, particularly in high-amenity areas" and "counties with high natural amenities are most likely to be creative class magnets". Their econometrical analysis showed that the creative class is growing most rapidly in areas that are mountainous, with a mix of forest and open area, and where winters are sunny. On a similar line, Lewis and Donald (2009, p. 39) state that smaller cities can offer "multiple land uses, amenities and pedestrian connectivity within a compact environment".

Besides this, sustainability in its ecological and social dimensions is attractive to potential new residents and highly valuable for current inhabitants. Thus, people seeking to have a low-carbon lifestyle are more likely to settle in a smaller city. Moreover, in small cities, non-economic dimensions of everyday life are privileged, such as community engagement, a culture of collaboration and participation, and social proximity. Sometimes it is outsiders who bring creative practices into these places (the agents of change), but they have to be appropriated by the local community, in order to avoid social gentrification and conflicts.

The conjunction of these ingredients is favourable to artistic creation and creative practices. As an example, according to a well-known Portuguese choreographer, Rui Horta who decided to move to a small town where he created a trans-disciplinary arts organisation - "O Espaço do Tempo",

By establishing a place that provides a structure for creativity, situated in the countryside, surrounded by a remarkable landscape and with an in-depth relationship with the small city of Montemor-o-Novo, our concept is to provide the artists with the necessary distancing and detachment to foster their creativity. (O ESPAÇO DO TEMPO)

In this context, some authors presented tentatively a new set of variables and indicators adapted to the context of smaller cities. For example, Lewis and Donald (2009) postulated that using liveability and sustainability, instead of talent, tolerance and technology as the starting points for economic health and growth, provides a useful alternative for smaller cities, proposing variables such as ecological footprint, commuting distance, public transit and other sustainable commuting modes, housing conditions and affordability, and education. On a similar line, Munoz (2010) identified five areas in which small cities should focus in order to achieve sustainable creative development, namely: education and sustainable talent development; network capacity, concentration of interactions, community engagement and co-development; quality of life; sustainability; and iconic and imaginative territories.

Besides these endogenous amenities and local characteristics, literature also stresses the importance of local public policies and a strong leadership, making favourable conditions available for local residents, new inhabitants and visitors. These built assets include not only the provision of basic services for the population and educational and leisure facilities, but also the offer of artistic and creative infrastructures and meeting places, as well as specific measures to support the emergence of creative businesses. Markussen (2006) advocates that the presence of artistic spaces, such as clubhouses, live-work houses and studios, and smaller performing arts spaces, contribute to the formation of networks and to the artistic pool by home-growing local artists, attracting and retaining them in these small territories. Community participation is another key success factor in the definition and implementation of creative-based strategies in small communities.

Preferences of the Creative Class

However, preferences for amenities-based places vary according to the different segments of the creative class and to other factors such as age, lifestyle, stage of life, and personal attitude and circumstances (TRIP; ROMEIN, 2010). According to Hansen and Winther (2010), "amenities have different meanings and different importance for different groups of people".

The 'creative class' concept defined by Richard Florida is a highly heterogeneous category, since it integrates scientists, engineers, artists, legal and financial workers, etc. Each of these groups can have different preferences in terms of deciding on their residential location. For example, Scott (2009) demonstrated that in the case of engineers, migrants of working ages are drawn primarily to places whose economic structure and job opportunities correspond to their particular professional expertise, and that amenities have virtually no impact in these relations. On the same track, Darchen and Tremblay (2011) showed that in Canada the quality of work is the most relevant criteria to understand the mobility of students in science and technology once they have graduated, being the quality of place less relevant.

On a similar line, Markussen (2006) advocated that the formation, location, urban impact and politics of artists are distinct from that of other members of the creative class, such

as scientists, engineers and managers. For example, artists' spatial distribution is in function of semi-autonomous personal migration decisions, local nurturing of artists in dedicated spaces and organisations, and the locus of artist-employing firms.

Other authors postulated that the factors of attraction of creative talent vary according to specific knowledge bases of the industries in which these people work: analytical, synthetic and symbolic (ASHEIM; HASEN, 2009). An analytical knowledge base corresponds to economic activities for which scientific knowledge and codification is very important (such as biotechnology). The synthetic knowledge base is related to economic activities in which innovation takes place through the application of novel combinations of existing knowledge, and originates mainly modifications in products and processes (for example, mechanical engineering). Finally, a symbolic knowledge base is linked with creating meaning, desire, aesthetic qualities, intangibles, symbols, and images (design, music, etc.).

In this sense, people with occupations within different knowledge bases may have different preferences in terms of residential location. People-climate factors, such as amenities, might be more important for symbolic knowledge-based occupations, while business-climate parameters are more expressive for synthetic knowledge-based job functions.

In terms of age, lifestyle and stage of life, McGranahan and Wojan (2007a) advocate that there are differences between the "urban creative class" and the "rural creative class", which is demonstrated by the fact that small communities attract mostly talented young families, midlife career changers and active retired people. Besides this, the talent that lives in rural areas tends to belong to a higher age-scale and be married with children, compared to urban talent.

The positive role of retirees and elderly people in the growth of small towns and rural areas is emphasised in several studies. Denis-Jacob (2011) suggests that this group of people can contribute to cultural consumption as well as to cultural production, having a central role in community life. On one hand, they have greater propensity to consume cultural activities due to abundant leisure time and financial resources; on the other hand, they are sometimes prone to the production of certain cultural products, even if on an amateur basis.

The presence of the creative class can, in itself, generate amenities:

A place that has attracted artists and designers may appeal to people who like artistic communities [...] people may be drawn to a community by the restaurants, stores, and other consumer services that develop in response to the consumption patterns of the creative class". (MCGRANAHAN; WOJAN, 2007b, p. 21)

Creative Class and Growth

The creative class is highly associated with jobs creation and growth in small communities. According to studies of the rural areas in the USA, small counties with a high proportion of creative class residents, generally had job growth rates that were twice as high as counties with less creative class presence (MCGRANAHAN; WOJAN, 2007b). Moreover, the results of the analysis of Wojan *et al.* (2007) centred on non-metropolitan counties, confirm a strong positive effect of a larger creative employment share on net-migration, employment growth and net increase in the number of establishments. A study developed in the UK corroborates these results, advocating that for each self-employed in-migrant to rural areas, an average of 2.4 full time jobs were created (COUNTRYSIDE AGENCY, 2003).

In fact, the entrepreneurial spirit of the creative class induces the development of creative businesses in areas such as arts, music, design, software, etc. Quoting NESTA (2007, p. 10), "many in-migrants tend to be entrepreneurial; they arrive with new ideas and seek to implement them". Entrepreneurship may be the mechanism through which knowledge and talent of the creative class is assimilated into the local economy (MCGRANAHAN *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, the presence of creative activities tends to attract more innovative companies and projects - "places with a higher concentration of creative occupations actually have more creative activities" (MCGRANAHAN; WOJAN, 2007b, p. 20).

According to a study of BOP (2008), in the UK creative industries still account for a smaller share of employment in rural areas than in urban areas. However, this trend seems to be changing in the fastest growing rural economies, where the relative size of creative industries is getting closer to the UK average. This work was developed in the context of the rural districts of the East Midlands. In this region, in 2005, 3% of all the employment concerns the creative industries, and creative industries employment grew by 20% between 2001 and 2005, compared to 8% employment growth in the whole economy. Additionally, creative businesses accounted for 7.5% of all businesses, with a growth rate of 23% between 2001 and 2005, more than twice the rate of growth in the total stock of companies in these districts.

Furthermore, creative industries provide innovative inputs for other areas of activity in local economies, such as agriculture, handicrafts, furniture, textiles, tourism and gastronomy, promoting their development and prosperity. The effects of knowledge spillovers derived from geographical proximity, induce the transfer of information, technologies, innovative business models and organization forms, to the overall economy. Findings also suggest that there is a strong tendency for individuals with artistic and creative skills, to work in other areas of activity (NESTA, 2008). In addition to this, several sub-sectors of the creative industries, such as architecture, design, advertising or software, sell the majority of their products and services to other businesses.

Without making a specific reference to small cities, the *Green Paper on Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries* (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2010) considers that the spillovers of the cultural and creative industries should be strengthened for the benefit of the economy as a whole. In this sense, it would be interesting “to better understand how to foster the use of creativity in other industries, the type of creativity that enterprises are looking for as well as the right mechanisms to facilitate such interactions” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2010, p. 19).

In conclusion, as Petrov (2007, p. 452) states, “there is some evidence that creativity can be even more critical for reviving economies in middle-sized and small towns (and perhaps rural areas) than it is in the metropolis”.

3 Creative-based Strategies in Small Cities: Case Studies

3.1 Research Methodology

The methodology used for this case study research analysis can be broken down into the following phases: definition of a conceptual model, establishment of a set of dimensions and sub-dimensions of analysis, and drawing of conclusions. The case study methodology is considered by Yin (2003) as a comprehensive research strategy, because it covers the logic of design, data collection techniques and specific approaches to data analysis, in an inclusive and pluralistic perspective. The empirical work was centred on three sources of evidence: direct observation, field interviews and collection of other relevant data, such as statistical information and policy documents.

Based on the theoretical insights and empirical studies on the emergence of small creative cities, five dimensions of analysis can be identified (Figure 1):

- *Governance* is a transversal dimension and central in the promotion of a creative economy in small urban communities. It is related with leadership and place management, but also with the coordination of actors, public participation, and territorial cooperation.
- The *Natural and built environment* dimension refers to the natural, architectonic and archaeological heritage, which are important components to attract creative people. This encompasses the architecture of the place, the urban landscape, the climate, public spaces, and other tangible and natural assets.
- The *Social and symbolic capital* dimension is strongly linked with the community and its social interactions. It is related to the immaterial component and social atmosphere of the place - the ‘*genius loci*’, as well as to the intangible heritage, such as memories and local identities and local image.
- The *Economic activities and cultural facilities* dimension is associated with the business climate, entrepreneurship level, local economic activities and knowledge, cultural and creative infrastructures (hotels, restaurants, bars, museums, art

galleries, events, etc.).

- The *Connectivity* dimension is a critical driver for the success of creative urban and rural contexts since it fosters cooperation between creative workers, activities, resources and territories. It encompasses both virtual (digital communications) and physical accessibilities.

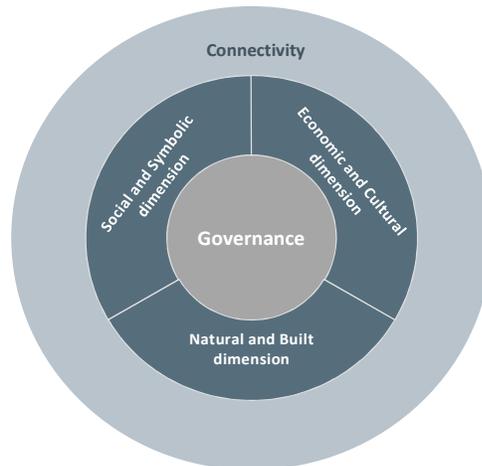


Figure 1 – Creative Small Cities - Conceptual Model
Source: Adapted from Selada and Vilhena da Cunha (2010)

This methodology supports the development of benchmarking exercises comparing the case studies and extracting its similarities and differences with the objective of validating, in a tentative basis, the possibility of developing creative small urban areas.

In this context, it is important to underline the limitations of the present methodology regarding the reduced number of case studies analysed, and the lack of collection and interpretation of quantitative data.

3.2 Introducing the Case Studies

3.2.1 Case Study 1: Óbidos (Portugal)

Context

The municipality of Óbidos is situated in the Central Region of Portugal, West Inter-Municipal Community, in the district of Leiria and it is divided into 9 civil parishes (*freguesias*). It covers an area of nearly 142 km² and has 10,875 inhabitants (3,100 in town).

Based on distinctive endogenous assets, a privileged geographical position and public policies concerned with culture, creativity and innovation, Óbidos aims to become a unique place to live, work, learn and interact. The local amenities make this town extremely appealing for tourism development; however, there is the intention to link

tourism and cultural consumption to an effort to attract cultural production through a strategy focused on creativity.

Governance

Centred on the mayor's strong leadership and a qualified local government, there is a formal strategy in Óbidos for it to become a creative, eco and healthy town.

Since 2002, the local authority has been seeking to implement a development strategy that combines culture, tourism and economy with the aim of improving the regeneration and diversification of the local economy, anchored in a powerful marketing strategy – the 'Creative Óbidos' brand.

The most visible part of this approach is the organization of public events that attract a significant number of visitors and tourists to the historical town (e.g. International Chocolate Festival, the Baroque May, the June Contemporary Art Month, the Opera Festival and the Óbidos Christmas Village). These events have drastically changed the perception of the 'museum town' and have reflected a strong organizational capacity along with the involvement of the local community and associations. Besides this, the impulse given by the support activities towards entertainment and cultural events have become an important lever for development, due to the creation of specific technical teams and the generation of activities in the areas of theatre, acting, sculpture and painting, among others.

Furthermore, the municipality has been promoting public policies and actions regarding the creation of favourable conditions for the emergence of a creative economy, namely in sectors such as the arts, architecture, design, digital technologies and gastronomy. In 2009, a 'Target Plan' was formally presented, which framed the programme 'Creative Óbidos' focused on the attraction and qualification of talents, job creation, wealth growth and improvement of quality of life. This strategic document established a set of anchor projects in some priority areas more oriented to creative production, besides the continued bet on a cultural environment of excellence and on high quality tourism.

One of the main strategic lines of the plan is centred on creative entrepreneurship. The local government launched a set of support infrastructures and financing schemes oriented to the attraction and retention of talents and companies. A technology park was specifically built to house businesses linked to the creative economy, offering material advantages (tax incentives, micro-credit), plus excellent working conditions and quality of life. An incubation space called ABC complements the offer of the technology park with the possibility of lodging creative businesses in a short period of time. The infrastructure is installed in an old convent and, at the moment, integrates 11 companies connected with design, editing and publishing, jewellery, geographical information systems and tourism.

Moreover, the intention is not only to attract companies, but also to provide favourable facilities to induce their workers to live in Óbidos. With that objective, local public policies in partnership with the private sector are launching an urban regeneration programme

comprising the refurbishment of old houses in order to create ateliers, studios, co-working spaces, and live-work houses for national and international artists, designers, researchers, etc.

This creative impetus also intends to keep traditions and the symbolic and immaterial capital of the town, linking heritage, knowledge and innovation. For example, a 'Network of Research, Innovation and Knowledge' was created, oriented to produce in-depth historical knowledge of Óbidos and to provide these contents to the public through interactive and user-friendly instruments. The concern with the preservation of cultural heritage is always present in the public development strategies, namely through the experimental use of new technologies.

For the management of relevant local initiatives an agency model was adopted through the creation of municipal companies: *Óbidos Requalifica* and *Óbidos Patrimonium*. Public and private partnerships were also promoted, such as OBITEC, the Óbidos Association for Science and Technology, which involves the town of Óbidos and the municipal company *Óbidos Requalifica*, as well as higher education institutions, training companies and business associations.

Inter-municipal cooperation is limited due to the lack of a common regional strategy and to the rivalry between municipalities. However, Óbidos has been participating in several networks with other towns and cities at national and European level, not only as a way of attaining critical size but also to enable international affirmation. We can highlight the national networks ECOS – "Energy and Sustainable Construction" and "Creative Economies", and also the European URBACT network "Creative Clusters in Low Density Urban Areas".

Natural and built environment

The municipality has a diversified geo-morphological context, which includes: a coastal strip with a number of beaches, the Óbidos Lagoon, a unique natural landscape with its paddy fields and rural settlements.

The town with medieval roots surrounded by castle walls has an exceptional set of historical monuments (e.g. the town gate, the judicial stone pillar) and religious too (e.g. the Misericórdia Church, the São Pedro Church and the São Martinho Chapel). Among these, there are traditional architecture houses in fascinating alleys that testify different periods and styles. Besides the walled town, the municipality includes small rural villages alongside contemporary architectural projects designed by renowned architects.

Social and symbolic capital

Óbidos has a strong iconic image that is recognised at both national and international levels: the medieval walled town. In fact, the local identity is rooted in its historical past and cultural heritage, but it is also defined by the natural landscape and the melting pot of secular traditions and rural lifestyles, which are still alive and are very important for the regional economy. Óbidos has an intangible and symbolic consecrated heritage

marked by memories and identities of different eras: from kings and queens to the elite who chose the village as a refuge.

A creativity-friendly climate is reinforced by the exploration of rural-urban relationships, the potential of a qualitative lifestyle, strong community sense of place that is an outcome of relevant social networks and projects, and an attractive environment. There is also an important associative spirit represented by several local communities, music bands and civic associations.

Economic activities and cultural facilities

Tourism has acquired an increasing importance and is currently one of the main activities of the municipality, being responsible for a large percentage of employment, as well as a wide range of services such as hotels, residential tourism, golf projects, restaurants and handicrafts. In addition to this, the agricultural activity is also very relevant, especially horticulture, fruit and wine. In terms of the industrial sector, food processing, construction and furniture should also be highlighted.

Due to the intention of developing a creative cluster in Óbidos, several infrastructures for entrepreneurship were built, as already referred, as well as a number of new cultural infrastructures, such as Casa das Rainhas (Óbidos Story Centre), São Tiago Bookshop, Casa do Arco, a network of museums and galleries (Municipal Museum, Parochial Museum, Abílio Mattos e Silva Museum with two contemporary art galleries: Nova Ogiva Gallery and Casa do Pelourinho Gallery) and a Centre of Interior Design (Maria José Salavisa Centre). Besides these built amenities, Óbidos has a strong cultural offer, in its various forms - music, dance, theatre, painting, sculpture and large entertainment, which attract a significant number of visitors and tourists to this historical town.

There was a large investment in the construction of new school complexes, based on new concepts linked with creative and open-minded education, besides the already existing specialized schools and training centres: Tourism and Hotel School of the West – Óbidos, Óbidos School of Advanced Studies of Tourism (ETUR), Pontinha Food Training Centre. About 20 minutes away from the town centre, we can also find the School of Arts and Design of Caldas da Rainha.

Connectivity

Óbidos is located near important urban centres such as Caldas da Rainha, Peniche and Alcobaça. Moreover, it is well connected with the metropolitan areas of Lisbon, the Portuguese capital (less than one hour away), Porto (about two hours away) and Coimbra (1 hour and 20 minutes away). Its centrality in a regional and national context allows it to benefit from a good physical connectivity, which is partly due to the major highways A8 and A15 and the IP6 road. The town lies also at a short distance from the Lisbon International Airport, about 45 minutes by car. To increase virtual connectivity, the municipality has provided hotspots and public spaces with free Internet access.

3.2.2 Case Study 2: Barnsley (UK)

Context

Barnsley is a metropolitan borough in South Yorkshire that was created in 1974 when 14 smaller urban and rural districts were amalgamated. Currently, it covers a diverse area of 320 Km² with a population of 218,000 people (82,000 in town) and it is characterised by an urban core and a rural hinterland divided by the north-south line of the M1 motorway.

The town developed a regional reputation as a historic marketplace that grew as a result of its significant industrial importance centred on coal mining and glass-making. When this industry closed effectively in the mid-90's, the local economy was severely damaged, which caused severe difficulties to the community. Since then, there was a strong effort and commitment to boost county economic and social renaissance, taking advantage from its location in the regional economy.

Governance

Strong political leadership in Barnsley is widely recognised. The council has engaged local people in the development of a clear strategic vision: to create a culturally inspiring, dynamic and thriving "21st Century Market Town & Borough" through sustainable growth. Thus, the local strategy is embedded on its endogenous assets, such as: the historic reputation as a market town; the local industrial tradition; its strategic location between the Sheffield and Leeds economies; the surrounding countryside; and the advanced technology companies already located in the borough.

In 2002, the Council launched a high-profile participatory campaign called 'Rethinking Barnsley' that led to a regeneration programme named 'Remaking Barnsley'. This programme has mobilized over £400 million of public and private investment and is committed to creating a thriving and enjoyable urban environment. Quality architecture set within an exciting and imaginative public realm, arts, culture and urban living are all part of this vision alongside trade and employment.

Barnsley's creative industries vision resulted in 'The Creativity Works/Creative Networks' programme designed for supporting the development of a creative and digital industries cluster in Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham – the South Yorkshire coalfield area. Launched in 2003, this programme was supported by ERDF resources and was managed by the Barnsley Development Agency on behalf of the programme partners: Barnsley MBC, Doncaster MBC, Rotherham MBC and the Arts Council England.

Built upon the success of the 'Creativity Works' project, the council reinforced the idea of putting culture and creativity at the forefront of its economic agenda, betting clearly in the creativity of their workforce that will underpin the growth of 21st century knowledge-based industries. Several support infrastructures and facilities were created, such as incubation workspaces, new and alternative gallery spaces, platforms for installation and public realm work.

The Digital Media Centre (DMC), near Barnsley College Centre, provides support for entrepreneurs and start-up businesses in the creative and digital media. The Business and Innovation Centre (BBIC) supports the development of innovative technology and knowledge-based businesses. Artist studios were also opened in the Elsecar Heritage Centre - CB HIVE STUDIOS, as well as a new contemporary gallery - HIVE GALLERY.

Following a programme developed by the Barnsley Development Agency aimed at researching the needs of the local creative community, in 2006 'Creative Barnsley' was formed, a social enterprise dedicated to networking and promoting local entrepreneurs and creative workers.

The Barnsley Council had adopted a comprehensive strategy for promoting effective citizen and community consultation and participation, principally via 'Local Strategic Partnerships' (LSPs). A LSP is a single non-statutory, multi-agency body that reflects a new mode of governance to deal with community key issues bringing together the Council as strategic leader and its partners from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. 'One Barnsley' is one of the twenty LSPs and is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Community Plan that sets out the strategic vision of the borough.

In terms of regional cooperation, there are some successful examples of partnerships among the four South Yorkshire authorities: Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, such as multi-area agreements, regeneration partnerships, formal company structures and cooperative working arrangements. Moreover, Barnsley has been participating in some European networks supported by EU Territorial Cooperation Programmes (namely URBACT), such as "Creative Clusters in Low Density Urban Areas" and "Building Healthy Communities".

Natural and built environment

Barnsley has a variety of landscapes ranging from high moor lands to urban areas and arable lowlands. The west part of the borough, predominately rural, is centred on the small market town of Penistone and includes parts of the Peak District National Park. The eastern part includes a number of smaller towns and villages of the former coalfield areas where 80% of the borough's population lives. The town of Barnsley itself lies roughly in the centre of the borough. Besides the natural heritage, there are idyllic villages and historic market towns with important monuments and buildings such as the pinnacle tower of St. Mary's Church, the Monk Bretton Priory, Cannon Hall, the Stainborough and the Wentworth Castle.

Social and symbolic capital

Barnsley's local distinctiveness stems from its past economy, settlement pattern, historical character and culture. The traditional market towns and the former mining settlements with their strong communities have shaped the identity of Barnsley. It has a strong sense of community constructed on a long history of informal and formal networks. This is reflected in the large number of community groups that are involved in

providing a wide range of activities such as environment, community, employment, safety and health projects. The Community Partnerships are recognised as a pioneering model to engage local residents in community projects and initiatives such as regeneration and the renewal of their neighbourhoods.

Economic activities and cultural facilities

Advanced manufacturing and materials is one of the region's key clusters. It employs over 40,000 people and brings together world-leading companies, support organisations and expertise from areas such as steel, metals and alloy processing, aiming the manufacturing of high-tech products at sectors including aerospace, automotive and household appliances. There is also a significant food and drink sector with a strong research base that employs a high number of people.

The town already provides access to leisure and cultural facilities, for instance: the Metrodome leisure complex, an increasing mix of pubs and restaurants or some fashion outlets. The Civic, one of the Barnsley Development Agency projects, offers access to a broad and diverse selection of arts events and activities and provides creative workspaces. Barnsley has a long tradition in brass bands, originally created as social clubs for its mining communities, and it is also home of a number of independent theatre companies, specialising in non-mainstream drama and performance, as well as over 300 local societies and clubs. Besides that, the borough's cultural infrastructure comprises museums, galleries, archives and libraries. There is a range of cultural events such as the All Barnsley Diversity Festival that contributes to the local vitality.

Barnsley's education system is changing. The 'Remaking Learning' programme aims to improve standards, and to increase employment skills, through a borough-wide infrastructure of Advanced Learning Centres and the continued development of Barnsley College that has a Business Solutions Centre, and the Barnsley Campus of the University of Huddersfield.

Connectivity

Barnsley has a central position in the Northern Growth Corridor at the heart of the UK. It is located close to three city-regions: about 30 minutes by car from Sheffield (19 km to the south) and Leeds (40 km to the north) and 1 hour from Manchester.

It enjoys fast access by road, air travel and rail. It is served by three major roads: the M1 motorway just one mile from the town centre, creating fast and efficient links to London, Leeds and other major UK cities. The M62 and M18 motorways are also only 20 miles away, providing links to Hull, Grimsby and Manchester. Within 60 minutes of Barnsley there are five international airports. Moreover, the new Barnsley's Transport Interchange provides national railway connections and bus links. Besides that, the city is developing walking and cycling infrastructures.

In terms of digital connectivity there is a regional project, 'The Digital Region', to provide an open broadband infrastructure that will cover the city, towns and villages of Barnsley,

Sheffield, Doncaster and Rotherham, and serve a population of over 1.3 million people, 546,000 homes and 40,000 businesses.

3.2.3 Case Study 3: Jyväskylä (Finland)

Context

The city of Jyväskylä is the capital of the Central Region of Finland, which has 270,000 inhabitants. The major part of the population of the region lives in the municipality that covers an area of 1,171 km² and has around 130,000 inhabitants. Only 24,635 people live in "Kantakaupunki", the city centre.

In the 1980's, Jyväskylä was one of the most prosperous regions of Finland, but the serious national economic recession, in the early 1990's, forced the region to rethink its future. A rapid structural change followed, based on the conversion of traditional industrial clusters and the adoption of a long-term strategy focused on knowledge, innovation, creativity and well-being.

Governance

Since 1995, the city administration has been adopting a strategic approach that recognises creativity and innovation as key factors for the region's competitiveness. This is translated not only in efforts for attracting companies, but also in the development of services, education and culture, with the aim of creating an environment with high quality of life. The central vision for the city is to build an innovative ecosystem, setting people at the core: that is the meaning of the place-brand "the human technology city".

The local development model is focused on establishing clusters of expertise, under the edge of the Finnish Centre of Expertise Programme, a specific government initiative oriented to exploit top-level knowledge and expertise as a resource for business development, job creation and competitiveness. Today, the city is renowned as a centre of knowledge in information and communication technologies, papermaking technology, new generation machines and equipment, nanotechnology and energy technology. Also, new productive areas are being developed in the region, such as tourism and experience management, and wellness technology.

In this context, the city has produced a local action plan with the aim of promoting the cooperation between the social and well-being sector, and the creative and cultural field. With that objective, a Creative Wellnet network was created. It aims to foster knowledge and improve cooperation between artists and entrepreneurs; and to create and develop new innovative services, based on the cooperation between the different areas of the culture, creative, social and health sectors.

Urban regeneration programmes are also taking place in order to improve local attractiveness and to build a creative environment, namely the regeneration processes around the Jyväsjärvi lake and in the Lutako Area, where a living lab project is being carried out. In addition, there are small creative and cultural spaces that support the

activity of artists and other creative people. One example is the Jyväskylä Centre for Printmaking, aiming to increase knowledge of and insight to the art of printmaking. Another example is the Lutakko Dancing Hall, which contains almost twenty rehearsal spaces for bands and workspaces for visual artists, in addition to hosting rock gigs throughout the year. Furthermore, putting together tradition and creativity, the Handicraft Centre, a local crafts association oriented to handicrafts as representative of culture, skill and business, provides the opportunity for one to make items, and learn through courses and crafts schools.

In Jyväskylä there is a strong policy emphasis in encouraging the formation of networks and cooperation between sectors, organisations, government levels and knowledge domains. For instance, in the rebuilt of the Kangas area, the city has been exploring a new governance model – the Quadruple Helix, based on a user-driven approach where knowledge institutions, enterprises, government and civil society, participate in the planning process.

Local economic development efforts are aligned with the national policies and involve the collaboration and negotiation between local government, regional state government, and central administration. In this context, the city is participating in several regional and European projects under the edge of the Regional Council of Central Finland, the joint municipal authority responsible for regional development, as well as the management of the EU Structural Funds programmes. Since 2005 the Regional Council has been developing a whole set of initiatives targeted to the cultural and creative industries such as: the *Luova Foorumi*, a creative forum; *Maali*, an initiative that combines creative industries and traditional industries; and CREA.RE – Creative Regions, an INTERREG IV C project that is developing a network of creative people.

The city has also participated in other European projects: the “Creative Clusters in Low Density Urban Areas” network, supported by the URBACT Programme of the EC.

Natural and built environment

The city is situated at the northern end of the second largest lake in Finland, surrounded by forests, hills and a coastline of 1,500 km. These natural assets are located within walking distance of the city centre, which makes it a great location to live and work. There are many pedestrian-friendly zones and cycle corridors, in addition to other sports facilities, that allow for the enjoyment of the beautiful natural environment, and encourage the adoption of an active lifestyle. In the lake’s area, there are several summer cottages in peaceful locations, available for those wishing to experience the traditional Finnish sauna.

Regarding the built environment, the city is well known throughout the world because of the famous architect Alvar Aalto who designed many buildings in the area, for instance, the Worker’s Club, and the Säynätsalo Town Hall. He also designed the Alvar Aalto Museum, which along with the Museum of Central Finland form a centre of culture in the immediate vicinity of the University of Jyväskylä.

The arts district centred on Kirkkokuisto (Church Park) combines two buildings belonging to Jyväskylä Art Museum, the City Theatre and the Craft Museum of Finland.

Social and symbolic capital

The subsequent crisis induced the development of a local capacity to adapt to change, called "creative tension", seen as crucial for the development process.

Moreover, the local versatility in establishing networks and cooperation processes between different sectors and organizations as well as between different levels of government is seen as an advantage in the creative economy.

The urban community is characterized by a strong civic participation, strengthened by policy measures that improve social capital. For example, the referred Lutakko Dance Hall, a rock concert venue, provides a large number of young people and voluntary workers with the opportunity to participate in their activities.

Economic activities and cultural facilities

The main economic activities of Jyväskylä are related to education, healthcare services, paper machinery production, information technology, nanotechnology and energy sector.

In cultural terms, a lively scenario is animated by theatre companies, orchestras and other performing groups in Jyväskylä: for example, the city has its own Symphony Orchestra and also a children's orchestra called Loiskis. Likewise, several popular events are organised periodically, like the LUMO - Contemporary Photography Triennial; Graphica Creativa Triennial - contemporary print; Jyväskylä Summer Jazz; Jyväskylä Arts Festival; and the international Neste Oil Rally. The city is also an important venue for international and national conferences and exhibitions, due to the existence of a wide offer of facilities in this area, such as the functional and versatile Jyväskylän Paviljonki - Congress and Trade Fair Centre.

Jyväskylä is known as the "Athens of Finland", due to its strong competencies in the area of education and research. The University of Jyväskylä and the Jyväskylä Polytechnic - JAMK University of Applied Sciences, are among Finland's leading research and educational institutions, with an increasing number of international students. Both are engaged in active collaboration with regional stakeholders, private firms, supporting services and intermediate organizations. A good example is the Agora Centre, a human-focused centre for information and communication technology, as well as the top-flight cross-disciplinary research into human development and learning. Another area of interdisciplinary work of university's research, results of the intersection of music-cognitive and socio-cultural disciplines, and includes projects in theoretical and clinical research on music therapy, or cross-cultural music cognition.

Complementary, the Jyväskylä Science Park is an incubator for new companies that combine research and development with the needs of business life. Moreover, the three business parks offer excellent office location and production facilities, bringing together national and international players.

Connectivity

Jyväskylä is a reference town in the Central Region of Finland, 147 km northeast of the city of Tampere and 270 km north of Helsinki, with fairly good transport connections. The city also benefits from an airport located at Tikkakoskia, about 20km north of Jyväskylä.

The region is also well served in terms of digital connectivity, partly due to the level of development of Finland, in the area of information and communication technologies.

3.3 Comparing the Case Studies

Based on the above in-depth analysis, we can conclude that there are different approaches to creative-based strategies in small cities based on their specific contexts.

The governance dimension is very important in the three cases analysed to carry out creative local development strategies. The creative strategies implemented in the different cities have a specific focus according to their local environment: Óbidos is based on a creative economy approach, Barnsley is anchored in an urban regeneration and economic revitalization process, and Jyväskylä is centred on a human approach, linking culture and well-being. These strategies have been implemented through different governance models: while Óbidos represents a top-down approach driven by the local authority, the other cases have been carried out with a strong commitment of local and regional authorities, in partnership with public and private local stakeholders, namely educational institutions, and the civil society. Furthermore, the Barnsley and Jyväskylä cases are embedded in an important territorial cooperation, in a strategic and integrated approach between local, regional and national units.

Regarding the path development of the case studies analysed, Óbidos changed from a traditional rural context to a new conception of rurality – ‘post-rural’ approach, introducing the new factors of competitiveness. Barnsley and Jyväskylä started from the necessity to reconvert their declined industrial framework towards a knowledge and creative economy – ‘post-industrial’ approach.

Endogenous amenities, related with the natural and built environment, are relevant for the definition of creative strategies. In the Óbidos’ case, its distinctiveness arises mainly from its historical heritage and natural landscape, while in Barnsley the protection of its industrial heritage and natural resources is considered as central in their local strategy. In turn, Jyväskylä has its distinctiveness linked with the re-conversion of the industrial legacy and the preservation of the natural environment, as well as the internationally renowned Alvar Aalto architecture.

Concerning the social and symbolic dimension, all the cases analysed are embedded in a strong sense of community that depends of their size and their community culture. One can highlight an active community involvement in the local initiatives in the cases of Barnsley and Jyväskylä, the latter through a large volunteer base.

Óbidos’s local image is rooted in its renowned historical heritage as well as in the case of

Barnsley. In a different way, the local image of Jyväskylä is based on a local capacity to adapt to change, called 'creative tension' linked with the ability to develop innovative processes.

About the economic and cultural dimension, the development and support of infrastructures for entrepreneurship and creative activities is a critical feature for the success of all the strategies analysed. These infrastructures, which have the ability to foster the attraction of creative workers and residents, are linked with a regeneration process of the under-utilised historical and industrial heritage.

The cases have different entrepreneurial focus: Óbidos is oriented towards cultural production and consumption, Barnsley towards the digital and media sector, and Jyväskylä towards research and development of new services and products in wellness.

Furthermore, the cultural vitality, as a result of an attractive offer in terms of cultural infrastructures and a dynamic cultural agenda, is a critical feature in each case, for the development of a creative atmosphere.

The connectivity dimension comprises two important aspects for the development of creative strategies in small cities, which are: digital connectivity, and physical accessibility. The digital infrastructure has been implemented transversely in all cases. Also the physical accessibility, the geographical location, improved by good physical connections, is crucial to facilitate the access to major markets.

Table 1: Comparison of the case studies

	Sub-dimensions	Óbidos	Barnsley	Jyväskylä
Governance dimension	Strategic focus	· Creative economy	· Urban regeneration	· Human approach
	Vision	· To become a creative, eco-friendly and healthy town	· To create a “21st Century Market Town & Borough”	· To develop an innovative ecosystem setting people at the core: “the human technology city”
	Governance model	· Top-down approach · Driven by the local authority and municipal companies · The Mayor as an agent of change	· Local Strategic Partnership · Cooperation between local and regional development agencies	· Driven by city council and regional authority · Cooperation between universities, government, enterprises, and civil society (quadruple helix)
	Public participation	· Weak community involvement	· Community consultation and participation	· Community involvement and public-private partnerships
	Territorial cooperation	· Weak territorial cooperation at regional scale	· Good territorial cooperation at regional scale	· Good territorial cooperation at regional scale
	Path development	· Post-rural	· Post-industrial	· Post-industrial
	Natural and built dimension	Geographic framework	· A small village in a predominantly rural region	· A urban centre in a rural region
Natural environment		· Unique and preserved natural landscape	· Protected natural landscape	· Diversified and preserved landscape
Built heritage		· Historic-cultural and religious heritage · Contemporary projects	· Historical and industrial heritage · Contemporary projects	· Industrial heritage · Iconic architecture by Alvar Aalto

	Sub-dimensions	Óbidos	Barnsley	Jyväskylä
Social and symbolic dimension	Local image	· Strong iconic and historic image	· Historic market town and centre of coal mining	· Clusters of expertise
	Intangible heritage	· Memories, legends and rural lifestyles	· Market legacy and former mining character	· “Creative tension” (capacity to adapt to changes)
	Community engagement	· Sense of community and associative spirit	· Sense of community and associative spirit	· Sense of community and strong civic and voluntary participation
Economic and cultural dimension	Creative infrastructures	· Support entrepreneurship and creative workspaces	· Support entrepreneurship and creative workspaces	· Support creative workspaces
	Entrepreneurship	· Cultural production and consumption	· New business in digital and creative sector	· R&D of new products and services in wellness
	Cultural facilities and events agenda	· Strong and diverse cultural offer · Network of museums and galleries and other cultural facilities	· Leisure and cultural facilities and a range of cultural events	· A lively cultural scene and several periodical events
	Education system	· New schools for creative and open-minded education, specialized schools and training centres	· Advanced Learning Centres and upper schools	· Research and higher educational institutions
Connectivity dimension	Digital connectivity	· Increase digital infrastructure with hotspots and public spaces offering free Internet access	· Implementation of an open broadband infrastructure	· Increase digital broadband infrastructure
	Physical accessibility	· Highway and air travel connections	· Fast access by road, air travel and railway	· Fairly good transport connections

Source: Author’s production

4 Conclusion

Most of the literature on the relation between the creative economy and territorial development is centred in big cities and metropolis. Small cities are usually ignored because “they are not expected to provide the necessary preconditions and environment that attract ‘creative people’” (JAYNE *et al.*, 2010, p. 1410).

In fact, the theoretical approaches, the variables and indicators, and the measurement techniques used in approaches like the Florida’s creative capital model, lead to an underestimation and misrepresentation of the creative potential of small cities. The privilege of dimensions such as density, diversity and tolerance reinforces the competitive disadvantages of smaller territorial areas and induces the perpetuation of the dichotomy ‘big and creative’ and ‘small and non-creative’.

However, creative-based strategies have been implemented with success in some small communities around the world, which are trying to reconvert and diversify their local economies in response to the de-industrialisation, globalisation and digital trends. In this trajectory towards the post-modern societies, some cities and towns are trying to overcome the injuries caused by the industrial decline of traditional manufacturing industries, privileging their re-conversion into high-tech and knowledge-based businesses – the ‘post-industrial’ cities. Others, with a strong agriculture profile, are developing efforts for changing their development pattern based on the valorisation of rurality as a component of local identity and an endogenous resource for community development, promoting sectors such as services or recreation – the ‘post-rurality’.

In this context, some authors have been advocating that small cities and towns also have an important role in the creative economy, although in different forms to that of metropolitan centres (PETROV, 2007). In fact, there is a need to avoid the adoption of development strategies by small territories based on “creative imaginaries” (VAN HEUR, 2010a) of large cities and metropolis, which may originate inappropriate results. Fast policy transfer tends to underestimate the distinctive features of small places, which claims for the definition of context-specific policies tailored to the different realities.

For that reason, additional variables and indicators for capturing the specific characteristics and creative potential of small cities must be considered. The literature review and the case studies analysed lead to the systematisation of the following critical factors in the definition, implementation, and evaluation of creative-based strategies in small cities: governance; quality of life (liveability); entrepreneurship; and networks.

Concerning governance, in the framework of a top-down or a bottom-up approach, a strong leadership is essential in the definition and implementation of creative-based strategies. Besides the role of a political authority, sometimes the process of creative transformation of the territories is promoted by a person, a group of people or a specific organisation – the agents of change. As postulated by Schienstock (2005, p. 5) “the transformation process, to a great extent, depends on the engagement of certain people being particularly good in imaginative exploration and creation”.

In small territories the non-economic aspects of life are more visible, in which a strong sense of identity and community spirit prevails. Face-to-face contacts, informal networks and sharing of tacit knowledge are characteristics of these places, being grassroots activities and civic engagement very important for the success of creative transformation processes.

Factors such as leadership, adequate institutional arrangements and collective action are also needed to coordinate the potential collisions between different interest groups and practices, namely the old residents and new inhabitants and to avoid social gentrification. Furthermore, it is necessary "to reconcile the sometimes competing demands of conservation of the landscape with democratisation of the tourist experience" (SCOTT, 2010, p. 1585).

The second factor is related to quality of life. Creative-based strategies in small cities, especially the ones located in large rural regions, are mostly based on their endogenous assets, such as natural landscapes, cultural heritage, symbolic amenities, and social capital, which are inimitable and hardly reproducible, conferring distinctiveness and authenticity to the places. A better work-life balance and an inspiring atmosphere for artistic and creative work, induce the attraction of footloose businesses and creative people to small towns, especially talented young families, midlife career changers and active retired people.

Competitive advantages based on liveability imply the consideration of issues such as well-being (sports, health, food, aesthetic, etc.), sustainability (quality environment, low carbon lifestyles, sustainable commuting modes, green spaces, energy efficiency, etc.) and social inclusion (community spirit, social proximity, meeting places, etc.). People are increasingly looking for satisfaction and happiness that is not only limited to the economic dimension, but increasingly to the social, cultural and environmental dimensions of life.

Besides these mostly intangible factors, liveability in small cities also implies a high-quality education system, which is a privileged factor in the location decisions of parents with young children. Several small communities are developing local creative education environments, providing school-age children with instruction in creative disciplines and exposure to cultural contents.

Entrepreneurship is the third factor to consider in the analysis of creative-based strategies in small cities. In fact, creative people attracted to small urban areas or rural contexts, tend to have a strong entrepreneurial spirit, which induces the emergence of new cultural and creative businesses, promoting job creation and economic growth. They choose to live and work in small environments, but most of them are connected to regional and global networks. In this context, these creative people can act as 'ambassadors' of the territories, motivating the attraction of more creative people, associations and businesses.

However, local public policies also have an important role, making favourable conditions available for the development of creative work, such as specific infrastructures and support schemes. Thus, the provision of vacant, flexible and low cost spaces for creative people must also be considered when approaching the attractiveness of small cities, such as incubators, studios, performance areas or live-work houses.

Finally, regarding networks, it is very important to explore the role of small cities in the territorial system and urban hierarchies and their participation in regional and global networks. In fact, small territories can play a decisive role as anchors for the development of surrounding regions, promoting connection between urban and rural areas and enhancing polycentrism. Moreover, they may benefit from establishing territorial partnerships with other towns or cities, based on their complementarities and functionalities.

Due to the apparent death of the nation state and the weakening of the regional arena, small cities can also function as bridges between the 'local' and the 'global' spheres, having an important role to play in international networks despite their size. Furthermore, with the development of the digital economy and the spread of information and communication technologies, it is possible for a person or a company to be located in a small town and be integrated in partnerships, working for the global market. This fact is also related to the increasing fading of barriers between work, leisure and living, especially in the case of mobile creative people who work on a project-by-project basis.

In this context, it is worth noticing that for capturing the creative potential of small communities based on these factors, most of them not present in official statistics - it is necessary to consider a specific set of indicators and also the collection of proper data, based on secondary sources. For example, in small cities, creative talents are often "invisible" in the official documents and statistical sources, due to the flexible and informal nature of their activities.

Further lines of investigation must continue to privilege case study approaches in order to enlarge the knowledge base on successful (or not) creative-based strategies in small communities, namely through the analysis of the development patterns in Europe, taking in account the varieties of capitalism. In fact, it is necessary to have a track record of implementation of these processes over time, in order to engage researchers in in-depth theorisation. Moreover, research work on specific indicators and their measurement for capturing the creative potential of small cities is also needed, due to the lack of suitable and comparable data.

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