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Creative Economy, Cultural Industries and Local Development

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to draw a clear picture of creative and cultural industries and of the creative economy, as driving factors of economic growth and local development. To this aim, the paper analyzes some recent data on the significance of the creative economies, reflecting on the concepts of creative and cultural industries. In the text, attention is paid to the links between creative economy and local development on one hand, and the concepts of territorial capital and social capital on the other side.

In the end, the work focuses on presenting the results of an in-progress study, about the recent literature on the mentioned issues, presenting a brief overview of some significant works.

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1. Creative economy, cultural and creative industries. Overview on concepts and data

Over the last years, the importance of the so-called cultural economy and of the cultural and creative industries has greatly increased. Today, cultural and creative industries are driving factors for economic growth and according to global demand, also stimulated by the new economy. As it is known, the concept refers not only to the domain of culture in the strict sense, but refers also to cultural goods and services as the core of a new, powerful and vast sector that can be broadly referred to cultural areas.

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The creative economy is closely related to the creative and cultural industries. The term cultural industries was diffused since the Eighties, and it was referred to those forms of cultural production and consumption, which have at their center a symbolic or expressive element. The concept was then spread around the world by UNESCO just since the Eighties and its definition has gradually incorporated a wide range of industries: music, the industries related to art, writing, fashion and design, media, as well as craft production.

Since the Nineties of the Nineteenth Century, however, it is in use also the name of the creative industries; the term refers to a very large production that includes goods and services produced by the cultural industries and those depending on innovation.

From the time in which the term “creative economy” was popularized, in 2001, the so-called cultural and creative industries started generating economic growth at a progressively increasing rate; at global level, as stated in the “Creative economy report” (2013), such economy generated “US\$2.2 trillion worldwide in 2000 and growing at an annual rate of 5 per cent”.

Concerning the European scenario, Europe has a strong interest in the cultural and creative industries, as they are a source of economic growth: as stressed in the report of the European Creative Industries Summit¹, “the cultural and creative sectors make up nearly 4.5% of the European economy, thanks to nearly 1.4 million small and medium-sized businesses generating and distributing creative content all over Europe. The cultural and creative sectors have shown great resilience during the crisis – they actually continued to grow – while stimulating creativity and innovation spillovers in other sectors. About 8.5 million people are employed in creative sectors across Europe – and many more if we take into account their impact on other sectors such as tourism and information technology”.

Focusing, more in detail, on the Italian situation, here in 2014² the enterprises of the cultural and creative sectors produce 78.6 billion of added value and stimulated other sectors of the economy so as to generate the 15.6 % of the whole national added value, equal to 227 billion euro including the incomes of that part of the national economy that is directly activated by culture (e.g. tourism).

According to recent data of the UnionCamere-Symbola Report (2015), between 2012 and 2014 despite the global crisis, companies that have invested in creativity have increased their turnover by 3.2%; companies that have invested in creativity were rewarded with a 4.3% increase in exports. Moreover, the 443,208 enterprises in the cultural production system, accounting for 7.3% of domestic enterprises, reaches 5.4% of the wealth produced in Italy, equal to 78.6 billion of euros. Arriving at about 84, equivalent to 5.8% of the national economy, if we include public institutions and organizations in the non-profit organization active in the field of culture.

Particular attention has to be paid to the multiplier effects generated by the economy of culture and the positive impact on the employment: in fact, the cultural and creative industries as well as the sectors of historical, artistic and architectural heritage, performing arts and visual arts, are actually employing 1.4 million people, that means the 5.9% of whole Italian employment – and over 1.5 million, equal to 6.3% of the whole employment rate if we include also the public and no-profit sector.

2. Cultural and creative industries as driver factors for local development. Relationships with territorial and social capital

The significance from an economic point of view, of the creative economies, mentioned in the previous chapter, imposes a reflection on the necessary national and international policies that will enhance the deep bonds between the various fields of culture, territories and the socio-institutional tissue, in order to give the cultural and creative sectors their role in the economy of the territories and make it the heart of the local economic development patterns, even in underprivileged territories.

As stressed in the European Creative Industries Summit (2015), “*The creative economy is also associated with large cities and/or dominant regions within countries, or even concentrated within cities where a prosperous creative*

¹ European Creative Industries Summit, Brussels 2015, <http://ecbnetwork.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/ECIS-2015-Brussels.pdf>.

² Unioncamere-Fondazione Symbola, 2015.

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