



Centro Universitario Europeo
per i Beni Culturali
Ravello

Territori della Cultura

Rivista on line Numero 30 Anno 2017

Iscrizione al Tribunale della Stampa di Roma n. 344 del 05/08/2010

International Forum Colloqui Internazionali

RAVELLO 2017
LAB 12° Edition

NUMERO SPECIALE

Atti XII edizione Ravello Lab
*Sviluppo a base culturale.
Governance partecipata
per l'impresa culturale*

Ravello 19-21 ottobre 2017



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Comitato di Redazione



Centro Universitario Europeo
per i Beni Culturali
Ravello

Presidente: Alfonso Andria

comunicazione@alfonsoandria.org

Direttore responsabile: Pietro Graziani

pietro.graziani@hotmail.it

Direttore editoriale: Roberto Vicerè

rvicere@mpmirabilia.it

Responsabile delle relazioni esterne:

Salvatore Claudio La Rocca

sclarocca@alice.it

Comitato di redazione

Jean-Paul Morel Responsabile settore
"Conoscenza del patrimonio culturale"

jean-paul.morel3@libertysurf.fr;

Claude Albore Livadie Archeologia, storia, cultura

morel@msh.univ-aix.fr

Max Schvoerer Scienze e materiali del
patrimonio culturale

alborelivadie@libero.it

Beni librari,

documentali, audiovisivi

schvoerer@orange.fr

Francesco Caruso Responsabile settore

francescocaruso@hotmail.it

"Cultura come fattore di sviluppo"

Piero Pierotti Territorio storico,

pierotti@arte.unipi.it

ambiente, paesaggio

Ferruccio Ferrigni Rischi e patrimonio culturale

ferrigni@unina.it

Dieter Richter Responsabile settore

dieterrichter@uni-bremen.de

"Metodi e strumenti del patrimonio culturale"

Informatica e beni culturali

Matilde Romito Studio, tutela e fruizione
del patrimonio culturale

matilde.romito@gmail.com

Adalgiso Amendola Osservatorio europeo
sul turismo culturale

adamendola@unisa.it

Segreteria di redazione

Eugenia Apicella Segretario Generale

apicella@univeur.org

Monica Valiante

Velia Di Riso

Rosa Malangone

Info

Centro Universitario Europeo per i Beni Culturali

Villa Rufolo - 84010 Ravello (SA)

Tel. +39 089 857669 - 089 2148433 - Fax +39 089 857711

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ISSN 2280-9376

The Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor: a new tool to monitor and foster culture-led policies

Valentina Montalto,
Carlos Jorge Tacao Moura,
Sven Langedijk,
Michaela Saisana,
Francesco Panella

*European Commission, Joint
Research Centre - Directorate
for Competences, Modelling,
Indicators and Impact
Evaluation Unit*

Economic growth has improved the living standards of many people over the last half-century. Yet a model of development based solely on economic growth would clearly be inadequate. Prosperity and sustainability have also important environmental, social as well as cultural dimensions.

Culture is nowadays seen by policy makers as a major asset in achieving policy objectives beyond economic growth. Since the adoption of the first 'European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World' (2007) culture has been at the heart of European Union policymaking. Culture is understood to be a key driver of growth and job creation, enhancing creativity and innovation through processes of cross-fertilisation¹ as well as fostering social cohesion and wellbeing².

Governments at all levels (local, regional, national and European) are thus increasingly appreciating and investing in culture not only for its 'art for art's sake' or for its entertainment value. Rather, culture is now recognised as being a competitive and resilient economic sector in its own right as well as having broader impacts on the society as a whole. But it is at city level that the transformative power of the so called cultural and creative sectors (CCSs) is being best experienced. CCSs tend to concentrate around cities to benefit from mutual learning or availability of workers with relevant skills³. In turn, they generate positive effects in the areas where they are located, ranging from improved image and better attractiveness of skilled individuals, investors and tourists to revitalised local economies and greater social pride.

Data availability at city level thus becomes crucial to understand how culture and creativity are spread across Europe, assess their impact and ultimately support evidence-based policy making. The new Urban Agenda⁴ for the EU promotes the production of reliable data to enhance the knowledge base on urban issues and exchange of best practices and knowledge. However, mapping culture and creativity and measuring their value and impact in a systematic and comparable way across Europe remains a challenge, with no shared definitions or metrics, particularly at city level.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) – the in house research centre of the European Commission – has developed the '**Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor**' in order to start filling this information gap. Officially released in July 2017, the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor provides a reliable common evidence base⁵ designed to help national, regional and municipal policy

¹ See, amongst others, Bakhshi H., McVittie E. & Simmie J. (2008). *Creating innovation. Do the creative industries support innovation in the wider economy?* NESTA, London; Boschma, R.A. & Fritsch, M. (2009). Creative Class and Regional economic growth: empirical evidence from seven European countries. *Economic Geography*, 85(4), pp. 391-423; KEA. (2006). *The Economy of Culture in Europe*. European Commission; Sleuwaegen, L. & Boiardi, P. (2014). Creativity and regional innovation: Evidence from EU regions. *Research Policy*, 43, pp. 1508-1522; Throsby C.D. (2001). *Economics and culture*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.



Figure 1 – The Cultural and Creative Cities' Monitor conceptual framework

makers identify local strengths and opportunities, to promote mutual exchange and learning between cities and to inspire fit-for-purpose policies to boost economic development and strengthen resilience.

The first edition allows monitoring and benchmarking the performance of **168 'Cultural and Creative Cities'** in Europe vis-à-vis their peers⁶ based on a set of **29 carefully selected indicators** grouped along nine dimensions. These indicators measure the **'Cultural Vibrancy'** of a city in terms of cultural infrastructure and participation of the local population and visitors in cultural activities; its **'Creative Economy'**, as regards the extent to which the cultural and creative sectors contribute to job creation and innovation locally; and its **'Enabling Environment'** capturing a range of assets (such as human capital and transport connections) that help cities attract creative talent and stimulate cultural engagement. (Fig. 1)

Cities were selected on the basis of their demonstrable engagement in the promotion of culture and creativity, which was 'operationalised' using the three following criteria (Fig. 2):

- **93 cities** which have been or will be **European Capitals of Culture** up to 2019, or which have been shortlisted to become European Capitals of Culture up to 2021;
- **22 UNESCO Creative Cities** (including winners until 2015);
- **53 cities hosting** at least two regular **international cultural festivals**.

² See, for instance, Matarasso, F. (1997). *Use or ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts*. Blessi, G. T., Grossi, E., Sacco, P. L., Pieretti, G. & Ferilli, G. (2014). Cultural Participation, Relational Goods and Individual Subjective Well-Being: Some Empirical Evidence. *Review of Economics and Finance* (4), pp. 33-46.

³ 'There are several reasons why creative industries are concentrated in urban areas. The main factors are: (i) importance of specific local labour markets; (ii) spillovers from one specific creative industry to another; (iii) firms' access to dedicated infrastructure and collective resources; (iv) project-based work; (v) synergistic benefits of collective learning; and (vi) development of associated services, infrastructure and supportive government policies.' Source: European Commission (2010). *European Competitiveness Report*.

⁴ See more at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda/

⁵ Available at: <https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cultural-creative-cities-monitor/>

⁶ Peer groups are defined based on population size (from 50,000 to eight million inhabitants), employment rate (with employment rates ranging from 40% to more than 74%) and wealth levels (from €10,000 to more than €35,000 annual GDP per capita). Cities have thus been classified into five population, employment rate and income groups, making benchmarking between peer cities possible. For more information on the city groups, see Chapter 3 of the main report: <http://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC107331/kj0217787enn.pdf>

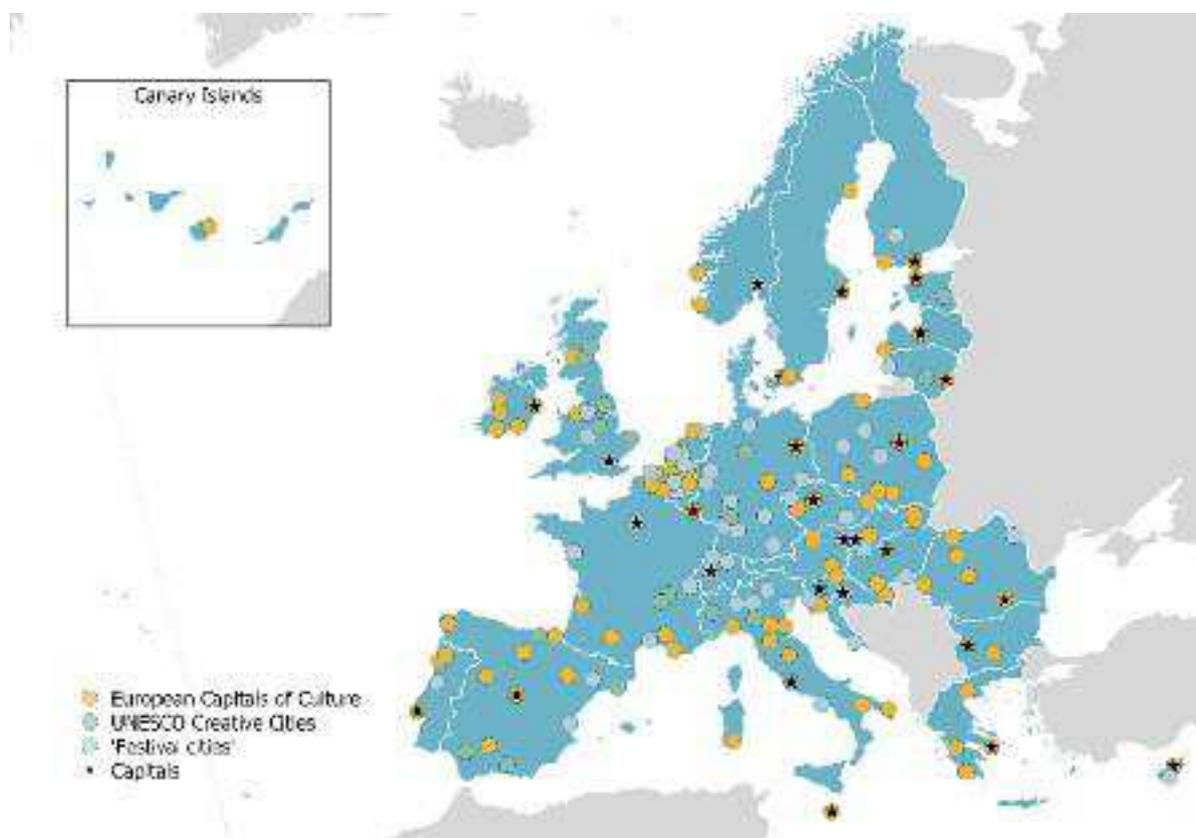


Figure 2 – The Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor's 168 selected cities – 2017 edition

Key findings

Capitals fly high but not the highest

The results of the analysis show a **'multi-centric'** map of Europe with **culture** and **creativity** to be found **across many and diverse cities**.

Overall, **capitals tend to be the best performing** cities on culture and creativity measured by the C3 Index⁷ in their respective countries. However, contrary to what one might expect, **eight** countries out of 24 are **exceptions**, with non-capital cities outperforming the capitals: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and the UK (Fig. 3). In most cases, the leading cities count fewer than 500,000 inhabitants (Linz, Leuven, Bologna, Florence, Eindhoven, Poznan and Edinburgh). One possible explanation for this result may be the expression of the indicators in per capita terms. This approach is primarily intended to enable cross-city comparability but also rewards more 'inclusive' cities which have more cultural and creative assets per inhabitant.

⁷The C3 Index score is the weighted average of the 'Cultural Vibrancy' (40%), 'Creative Economy' (40%) and 'Enabling Environment' (20%) sub-indices scores.



Figure 3 – C3 Index: ranked cities and related scores within EU countries

Note: Cities in Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta omitted due to poor data coverage.

If we look at the different ‘components’ of the C3 Index, it is clear that **non-capital cities are particularly well positioned on ‘Cultural Vibrancy’⁸**: in fifteen countries, non-capital cities mostly of medium-sized outperform capitals. The analysis of the indicators underlying ‘Cultural Vibrancy’ indeed shows that these outperforming cities are particularly rich in terms of cultural sites, events or visitors per inhabitant (Fig. 4). Cork (IE), for instance, obtains the maximum score (100) on both Concerts & Shows and Cinema attendance which correspond to around 12 concerts per 100,000 inhabitants and 10,700 cinema tickets sold every 1,000 inhabitants; Ghent (BE) comes first on Theatres (100) with 12 theatres every 100,000 inhabitants; whilst Florence (IT) comes close to the maximum score on Museums (91.9 over 100) meaning that it hosts 30 museums every 100,000 inhabitants.



Figure 4 – Cultural Vibrancy: ranked cities and related scores within EU countries

Note: Cities in Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta omitted due to poor data coverage.

The polycentric pattern of ‘Cultural Vibrancy’, with strong capitals and non-capital cities in many parts of Europe, is particularly encouraging in terms of the power of smaller or more peripheral areas of Europe to attract and retain educated and creative individuals to foster innovation and economic growth

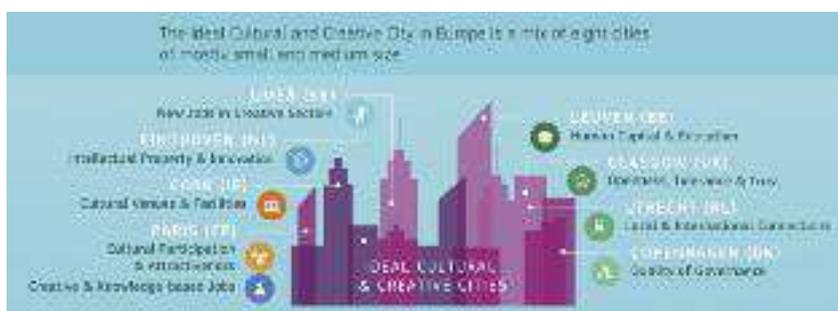
⁸ The ‘Cultural Vibrancy’ sub-index is the weighted average of two dimensions that capture elements of the ‘cultural pulse’ of cities: D1.1 Cultural Venues & Facilities (50%) and D1.2 Cultural Participation & Attractiveness (50%).

⁹ See, for instance, Backman, M. and Nilsson, P. (2016). The role of cultural heritage in attracting skilled individuals, *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 1-28; Nelson, A. C., Dawkins, C. J., Ganning, J. P., Kittrell, K. G., and Ewing, R. (2015). The Association Between Professional Performing Arts and Knowledge Class Growth: Implications for Metropolitan Economic Development, *Economic Development Quarterly*, 1-11; Clark, T. N., Lloyd, R., Wong, K. K. & Jain, P. (2002). Amenities drive urban growth. *Journal of Urban Affairs* (24), 493-515.

and strengthen resilience, intended as the city's capacity to face or recover from challenging circumstances. According to recent literature⁹, in a post-industrial economy, highly skilled individuals seem in fact to prefer locations with better education, heritage, arts, and natural amenities (e.g. green areas).

The ideal Cultural and Creative City in Europe is a mix of eight cities of mostly small and medium size

The 'ideal' Cultural and Creative City in Europe would be the amalgam of the best performing cities on each dimension. More specifically, it would have the Cultural Venues & Facilities of Cork (IE), the Cultural Participation & Attractiveness and the Creative & Knowledge-based Jobs of Paris (FR), the Intellectual Property & Innovation of Eindhoven (NL), the New Jobs in Creative Sectors of Umeå (SE), the Human Capital & Education of Leuven (BE), the Openness, Tolerance & Trust of Glasgow (UK), the Local & International Connections of Utrecht (NL) and the Quality of Governance of Copenhagen (DK). Of these eight cities, five have fewer than 500,000 inhabitants, namely Cork, Eindhoven, Umeå, Leuven and Utrecht.



Note: due to its size, London is not among the 'top' Cultural and Creative Cities because nearly all the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor indicators are expressed in per capita terms. This approach is primarily intended to enable cross-city comparability but also rewards more 'inclusive' cities which have more cultural and creative assets per inhabitant. As London eclipses other European cities with its population of eight million (almost three times as big as the second largest EU city, Berlin), it does not lead on any dimension in the overall ranking, but it does reach seventh place among the 21 cities in its population group. Also, London comes third in the ranking of capital cities, after Paris and Brussels.

Combined with a more in-depth analysis of the cities' performance on the nine dimensions and the 29 underlying indicators, this finding essentially shows that no city is best at everything. European cities rather rely on different strengths. Mutual learning and exchange with peer cities could help further straighten their areas of competitive advantage or improve their performance on weaker dimensions.

Leading Cultural and Creative Cities are more resilient

The Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor also shows that the European Cultural and Creative Cities scoring higher on the C3 Index kept growing faster despite the crisis. On average, in 2013, their annual GDP per capita was almost €750 higher for each additional point in the C3 Index, compared to 2009.



Note: An econometric model was used (i) to determine whether culture and creativity (approximated by the C3 Index) generate economic growth for European cities, and (ii) to quantify the impact of these effects. The proposed regression model also takes into consideration other potential explanatory variables, such as the size of the cities, previous levels of economic growth and wealth, population and geographical location, to refine the estimation process and, consequently, to obtain a more precise assessment of the impact of culture and creativity on economic growth.

For more information and full analytical report:

<https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cultural-creative-cities-monitor/>

Valentina Montalto

È una ricercatrice specializzata in economia della cultura, sviluppo locale e politiche europee per la cultura e la creatività.

Attualmente lavora allo sviluppo del "Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor" – uno strumento di valutazione che permette di monitorare e comparare la performance di 168 città culturali e creative in 30 paesi europei – presso il Joint Research Centre (JRC) della Commissione europea. In precedenza, ha lavorato come project manager con KEA, società di ricerca e consulenza nel settore della cultura e delle industrie creative con sede a Bruxelles.