

ic base, including social cohesion and intercultural integration (Bridge, 2006; Stern and Seifert, 2007).

Hall (1996, 1998) was the first author who argued that human interactions and synergy are essential foundations for the creativity of individual places and, around the same time, sociologists and geographers began to study the cultural economy of cities (Lash and Urry, 1994; Molotch, 1996; Pratt, 1997; Scott, 1996).

Another Urban Policies method based on art and culture is urban regeneration, concerned in particular with how to reuse the decaying areas of cities (see Judd and Parkinson, 1990) through the creation of public spaces dedicated to hosting cultural events, like concerts and exhibitions, or museums. Cultural industries are often considered key factors in the transformation of the physical spaces of cities and they involve local stakeholders and communities in the processes of the local economy and in cultural development. Yet, it is a mistake to consider urban regeneration only from a physical point of view, because the modernization of cities and of their local contexts also has intangible components: fostering a sense of belonging through icons (Sklair, 2006) and the evolution of the idea that creating urban space by means of practices is more important than creating new spaces (Crawford, 1999).

An increasing number of cities have already drafted plans based on development processes for the valorization of their cultural heritage, in the context of a post-industrial economy (Mommas, 2004). In this regard, it is true that the urban context is similar to a box of cultural initiatives (Gibson, Stevenson, 2004), but it is also true that art and culture can create new ideas. This literature sees culture as a tool, which can be used by individuals to evaluate possible choices (see Landry, 2000; Scott, 2000; Sen, 2000; Florida, 2002).

It is important to underline that for economists the role of art and culture is to promote urban and local economic development (Segre, 2013) but, in a broader sense, culture is a key point for territorial empowerment processes and for the strengthening of urban identity (Salone, Rota, 2013).

### 3 URBAN SOCIOLOGY IN THE ERA OF COGNITIVE-CULTURAL ECONOMY

According to the traditional theory of urban sociology (see Tonnies, 1957), in cities and in the cultural clusters of cities, there is a sort of “atmosphere” driving people to be more creative. Human creativity is neither exhaustible nor fully capitalized (Santagata, 2007).

In the era of cognitive-cultural economy, the knowledge of the economy and of the growing globalization represents a unique factor: every urban area, or learning-region, has its own traditions and skills, which produce a particular local product (Santagata, 2002). And it is for this reason that the economic value of a particular local product is the sum of a tangible and an intangible component. This intangible factor includes both the “price” of the local manufacture and its overall benefits.

Around the world there are many examples of these products, such as fashion from Paris, the London theatres, music in Nashville, or the pottery made in Caltagirone, Italy.

The ordinary life of each community is made of individuals with their own skills. This daily routine is part of the production system of a specific area and/or a specific urban context.

The main cause, which determines today's social and urban change, is the rise of *individual consumption*. In fact, the modern consumer society tends to diversify among various products, and choices are based on quality rather than on price. This is why one kind of computer, one kind of chair, or one kind of resort are rarely the perfect substitute for any other computer, chair, or resort, respectively (Scott, 2010).

From this point of view, the urban social environment provides a milieu, which facilitates coexistence and socialization among workers: this is essential in order to maintain the characteristic advantages offered by the local production system (Scott, 2010). Drawing inspiration from the ideas of Storper and Manville (2006), we can say that the urban environment offers a specific subset of profits and costs, but there is also a relationship between individual expressions of creativity and the social *milieu*. This concept is at the basis of the inductive reasoning according