

# The value of cultural and regional identity: an exploratory study of the viewpoints of funders and cultural and creative entrepreneurs

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## ABSTRACT

In recent years, local cultural ecosystems have emerged as a new way to conceive the cultural and creative sector in relation to its territory (Holden, 2015; Bonet & Donato, 2011). The criteria that could lead to establish successful cultural ecosystems have been identified in different tangible and intangible assets among which are the cultural identity and values of the territory (Borin & Donato, 2015). The creation and enhancement of local cultural values and identity could lead the members of the ecosystem to establish successful collaborations and to support the development of specific categories of participants (Borin, 2017). This paper aims to explore the potential of the creation of value and enhancement of local identity in ensuring a special type of support, financial resource allocation, to a particular type of ecosystem members, cultural and creative enterprises. The research is carried out through a preliminary empirical investigation in a French region, using mixed research methods.

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## Keywords:

Cultural ecosystems

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Resource allocation

## Introduction

In recent years, culture, creativity and innovation have been identified as potential drivers of the world economy (UNESCO/PNUD, 2013; Cooke & De Propriis, 2011) and increasing focus has been placed on the socio-economic, political, cultural and geographical conditions that could favor the development of culture and creativity and the potential interactions among the stakeholders and subjects operating in this environment (Sam, Florida & Acs, 2004; Andres & Chapain, 2013; Chapain, Clifton & Comunian, 2013). The cultural and creative sector has indeed been considered as comprising specific subjects, including a relevant percentage of public entities or associations, not-for-profit organizations, those active in the social economy and social entrepreneurship world. Also, enterprises in the cultural and creative field have been considered as distinctive, since they are mainly driven by strong cultural-related objectives (CNCRES, 2014) and they attempt to create not only economic but also cultural and social value for citizens and local communities. The cultural and creative sector has increasingly been interpreted on the basis of this "local vocation" and linked to local ecosystem perspectives. Cultural and creative enterprises, associations, cultural public institutions and authorities are considered as part of a cultural environment, a cultural ecosystem where commercial culture interacts with homemade cultural production and public cultural organizations (Holden, 2015). One of the driving forces uniting these cultural ecosystems has been identified in the common cultural identity and common cultural values among the different stakeholders active in the ecosystem (Bonet & Donato, 2011; Donato, 2013). Local cultural identity and values are indeed considered not only as the basis to guarantee the necessary "collaborative attitude" leading to effective governance systems for local cultural ecosystems, but also as the driving force that could lead the different parts to support each other in different dimensions, including financially (Borin, 2017). This aspect seems particularly relevant in recent years in which the economic and financial crisis has reshaped the attitude towards cultural and creative organizations that have in general experienced restrictions in both state financial support and private sponsorship (Bertacchini et al, 2011).

The idea that the creation of value at the territorial level and the shared local cultural identity could lead the ecosystem to financially support its enterprises needs to be further investigated. As part of this potential investigation, we decided to focus first on exploring this topic in relation to a specific category of ecosystem members, cultural and creative enterprises. As a result, the research investigates whether the creation of cultural values for the territory and the enhancement of its local cultural identity could really be critical in augmenting financial support for cultural and creative enterprises in specific territories. In order

to address this main research question, the paper will investigate the following sub-questions:

- Do the financial resource providers of a local territorial ecosystem allocate funding according to the expected cultural value created for the territory and the enhancement of its local cultural identity?
- Are the entrepreneurs giving importance to and trying to promote the enhancement of local cultural identity and the creation of cultural value for the territory?
- What are the similarities and differences between these two perspectives? Is there an alignment or a misalignment?

Since there are variable definitions of creative and cultural entrepreneurs, and we can encompass different subjects in the category of financial resource provider, we decided to include in the first category the enterprises working in the cultural and creative industries according to KEA (2006) classification, and in the second the most important public and private entities that are potentially financially supporting the development of entrepreneurial and start-up activities according to the definition of Isenberg (2011).

In order to answer these research questions, we first analyzed the relevant literature related to ecosystems with a special focus on ecosystems in the cultural and creative sector and issues of identity and value creation, then addressed also the theme of resource allocation in ecosystems. In the second phase, a preliminary empirical research in the region of Burgundy-Franche-Comté (a region located in the North-Eastern part of France) was carried out through mixed research methods (quantitative and qualitative).

The paper is divided into five sections. After a brief introduction, the first section presents an analysis of the literature related to the research topics. The second section explains the research design and the rationale for employing mixed research methods, clarifying also the criteria related to the selection of the area of research and research sample. The third section presents the results of the empirical analysis and is divided into two sub-sections: one focusing on the perspective of the main stakeholders of the territory, and another one on the perspective of the entrepreneurs. The fourth section briefly discusses the research findings, and the last section draws some concluding remarks related to the research questions and the potential implications of the findings not only for academic debate but also at the policy and practitioners' level.

## Theoretical perspective: cultural and creative enterprises and territorial cultural ecosystems

The main aim of this paper is to investigate if the creation of local cultural value and enhancement of the local identity of the territory are factors which could influence the members of the local territorial ecosystem in their allocation of funding to cultural enterprises and if they are attaching importance to these aspects and are striving to meet these aims.

In order to properly explain these research topics, it seems essential to analyze the theoretical debate concerning the link between cultural and creative enterprises and their territorial ecosystem, focusing in particular on the influence of local and territorial value creation and local cultural identity, and then linking them with the debate on financial resources potentially allocated by the ecosystem to cultural and creative entrepreneurs.

Over recent decades, academic research on the cultural and creative sector has indeed increasingly focused on the relationship between its activities and the territory, not only measuring economic impact (Nicolas, 2010), but also social relevance (Chapain & Hargreaves, 2016) or cultural impacts. The link between the development of cultural and creative enterprises and a given territory has been addressed from different perspectives and approaches, only quite recently leading to the concept of ecosystem. Two main streams of research have emerged over the last decades and will be addressed in the following paragraphs, the first focusing on the contribution of cultural and creative entrepreneurship to territorial development; the second on the contribution of local ecosystems to the development of cultural and creative enterprises, including the studies on entrepreneurial ecosystems with additional reference to culture. This second stream of research is particularly relevant as theoretical basis for this research and will be explained in more detail.

With reference to the first point, the potential of cultural and creative activities for value creation not only in terms of employment activities and urban regeneration (EP, 1999), but also in terms of attractiveness for different stakeholders (Florida, 2002), is one of the main arguments in the design of urban development policies in many cities in Europe (Li & Li, 2011). Culture could be considered a key asset of cities (Detter & Fölster, 2017) and a significant element in addressing social and political changes such as the rise of populism (Katz & Nowak, 2018). Furthermore, culture and creativity could play a central role in urban renewal and planning practices (Andres, 2011; Bianchini, 1993). Academics have highlighted the importance of culture and creative industries as a strategic element in regenerating territories, or rebranding a region or city (Aitchison & Evans 2003; Chapain & Comunian,

2010; Chapain, Clifton & Comunian, 2013; Chapain & Stryjakiewicz, 2017; EP, 2013; Evans, 2001 & 2009; Garcia, 2004; Montgomery, 2013; Roodhouse, 2010; TERA, 2013). Other perspectives approach the cultural and creative industries according to models, such as that proposed by Emin and Schieb-Bienfait (2007) on the creation of value in the field of social and solidarity economy.

The second research stream investigates the contribution of local ecosystems to the development of cultural and creative enterprises, progressively leading to the emergence of the concept of entrepreneurial ecosystems also for the cultural and creative sector. There is a rich literature investigating the link between entrepreneurs, value creation and the territory focusing mainly on the forces and mechanisms of the territory that can support the creation and development of entrepreneurial activities. It includes studies on entrepreneurship as related to clusters (Marshall, 1920; Porter, 1998; Mommaas, 2004), innovation systems (Cooke, Gomez Uranga & Etxebarria, 1997; Fritsch, 2001) and networks (Sorenson & Stuart, 2001) that paved the way to the studies on entrepreneurial ecosystems. Though these researches present substantial differences, not only in methodology but also in their conceptual outlooks, they put forward the common idea that there are attributes of the region and territory that might contribute to the development and competitiveness of entrepreneurial activities. These attributes vary from the importance of shared cultural understanding to the influence of the institutional environment (Henry & De Bruyn, 2011), from the significance of social networks to the relevance of access to financing and availability of investment capital (Powell et al, 2002), and from the impact of government policies to the links with universities and research institutes (Feldman & Francis, 2004). The concept of entrepreneurial ecosystems has emerged quite recently. Entrepreneurial ecosystems are defined as a combination of different factors (mainly social, political, economic and cultural) that are favoring the development of entrepreneurial activities, in particular start-ups and nascent enterprises (Nicotra et al, 2017). Researchers have proposed different analyses of the components of entrepreneurial ecosystems. Early research has focused mainly on the presence of skilled human resources and large local companies and universities attracting talents and stimulating spin-off generation (Kenney & Patton, 2005). The World Economic Forum (2013) and the recent work by Isenberg (2010 & 2011) have identified the most important pillars of the ecosystem in the local and international markets, in the human capital, financing mentorship and support system, regulatory policy framework and the culture, interpreted as a combination of success stories and societal norms promoting a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship.

The literature on entrepreneurial ecosystems for the cultural and creative sector has developed quite

parallel to the studies on entrepreneurial ecosystems in general but addressing the peculiarities of the field. Cultural and creative entrepreneurship indeed calls to specific approaches in their link with the territory (Markusen, 2013; Mateos-Garcia & Bakhshi, 2016) that are related to the focus on issues of cultural identity and cultural values. Among the first to endorse the need to rethink the way we interpret culture in favor of an "ecology of culture" approach, Holden (2004 & 2015) argued that culture should be analyzed as an ecology rather than an economy. Indeed, in cultural ecosystems, commercial cultural and creative enterprises interact with homemade cultural production and with public cultural organizations in a way that resembles more an ecology than an economy (Holden, 2015). For homemade culture he intended the amateur cultural production of citizens, community, schools and volunteers that "speaks to the heart of individual and communal identity" (Holden, 2015: 15) and has more a social and cultural function than a high artistic value. The publicly funded culture is instead considered the artistic production funded by the state as well as the milieu of museums, theatres, dance companies, etc. that are financed by means of public funds. The commercial culture is the for-profit culture composed of different subjects, additionally including the cultural and creative enterprises. These three spheres interact and converge through ecosystem interrelations.

One of the potential criticisms of Holden's approach is that the cultural and creative ecosystem is interpreted in a rather isolated way from its broader territorial and local context (Borin, 2017). Other approaches to cultural ecosystems promote an idea of cultural and creative enterprises as something strictly related to the territory, on the basis of the shared cultural identity. Cultural ecosystems therefore have a strong local component and are created on a "meso" level: they are designed not on the bases of administrative criteria but on the basis of the values and identity the different members are sharing (Bonet & Donato, 2011). Cultural and creative enterprises are part of local ecosystems based on multi-stakeholder collaborations among the different public, private and civic stakeholders of the territory (Borin & Donato, 2015). From this point of view, cultural and creative enterprises contribute together

with other local stakeholders to the enhancement of the values of the territory while in the meantime benefiting from the cooperative network on the basis of their shared identity of the territory. According to this stream of research the local identity is strictly linked to the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the territory that are indeed identified as peculiarity of entrepreneurial ecosystems in the cultural and creative sector (Borin, 2017). The "culture" component in cultural entrepreneurial ecosystems is indeed interpreted not as a favorable attitude towards the development of entrepreneurial activities as in the traditional entrepreneurial ecosystems debate. It is instead considered as the appreciation and

identification with a common cultural identity linked to the cultural traditions and cultural heritage typical of the territory; this cultural heritage creates a shared sense of belonging among the different members of the cultural ecosystem and consequently a positive attitude towards different types of activities (including entrepreneurial ones) that enhance or are related to it.

The support that the local cultural ecosystem could grant to cultural and creative enterprises could be manifold. It comes not only in terms of "approval" of or participation in cultural and creative activities, often encouraged by form of governance and cultural policies that attempt to address the sometimes conflicting interests of the different stakeholder groups (O'Brien, 2014), but also

comes in terms of provision of financial resources, in-kind donations or volunteering, as advocated both at a European and worldwide level in significant policy documents (EC, 2010; UNESCO-PNUD, 2013). This is most relevant since many firms in the cultural and creative sector base their business model upon the financial support provided at the local level. Moreover, it is argued that this support is particularly needed after the economic and financial crisis further downsized the cultural and creative sector, decreasing both financial support for cultural and creative organizations (both public and private) (Bonet & Donato, 2011) as well as donations and sponsorships (Bertacchini et al, 2011). The ability to correctly interact with the other members of the cultural ecosystem in order to overcome this lack of funding possibilities

**"ACCORDING TO THE DIFFERENT STREAMS OF RESEARCH, THE VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS OF LOCAL CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM ARE UNITED BY THEIR SHARED COMMON CULTURAL IDENTITY AND VALUES; THEREFORE, CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ENTERPRISES COULD BE CONNECTED TO THEIR LOCAL CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM BY A SHARING OF THOSE VALUES IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE SUPPORT TO THESE ECOSYSTEMS"**

becomes therefore crucial (De Propriis, 2013) since it allows development of funding models based on matching diverse sources of financing (Baeck et al, 2017) or the innovation of traditional financial structures (Bakhshi, 2014). Interpreting the values and expectations of the resource providers is also key to granting the necessary financial allocations. Research into funding of cultural organizations highlighted the existence of different categories of criteria leading to financial support for culture and creative industries (Konrad, 2018). Once again, the creation of cultural and identity value for the territory emerged as one of the criteria differentiating donations to cultural and creative organizations from donations to other sectors (such as sports or humanitarian causes) (Barometer Admical/CSA "Corporate patronage in France", 2016; KEA, 2006).

In a nutshell, according to these different streams of research, the various stakeholders of local cultural ecosystem are united by their shared common cultural identity and values; therefore, cultural and creative enterprises could be connected to their local cultural ecosystem by a sharing of those values in order to enhance the support to these ecosystems. Indeed, the support – also financial – granted by the ecosystem to cultural and creative entrepreneurship is often related to expectations of cultural value creation. Value creation seems to be the key consideration for granting the necessary resource allocation. The meaning attributed to this "cultural and identity value" potentially created for the territory by cultural and creative industries is a complex one that could be associated with different approaches, frequently taken from sociological and anthropological sciences (Bochner, 1973; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Bordieu, 1968; Jenkins, 2004). However, in the ecosystem framework, cultural identity is interpreted as the culture of a territory, and in particular its tangible and intangible cultural heritage (Borin & Donato, 2015).

The theme of resource allocations in cultural ecosystems and its link with cultural value creation and local identity enhancement is however not often investigated. Therefore, it seems interesting to address it in the present research focusing on the two points of view, that of the resource providers in the ecosystem and that of the cultural and creative enterprises. The design and methodology of this research is explained in the following section.

## Research design and methodology

In order to investigate the research questions, we implemented an empirical investigation in the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region from June 2016 until March 2017.

The region has been selected for its strong cultural identity that is linked both to its cultural traditions and to its tangible and intangible heritage. Burgundy-Franche-Comté is indeed a region where

issues of identity and cohesion of the different stakeholders are of particular importance. This region has a long tradition of wine-making that impacted on built cultural heritage, territorial development, and intangible cultural heritage, thus creating a strong sense of belonging in the citizens and communities. In 2015 the area was inscribed in UNESCO World Heritage Sites List for its "Climats de Vignoble de Bourgogne", with an inscription proposal submitted by an association comprising local authorities, wine-makers, cultural heritage institutions and associations of citizens and communities. Moreover, the area has a variety of current cultural initiatives that are promoted by different types of cultural and creative entrepreneurs, mainly small and medium-size enterprises. These features made Burgundy an interesting first case to investigate within the framework of a broader research project. The research presented in this paper was conceived as a first step of an investigation in different European countries that is currently being undertaken.

A mixed-method approach, involving the sequential collection and analysis of both preliminary quantitative and qualitative data in a single study was considered the most appropriate research method since it allowed integration of the data (Creswell & Clark., 2007), which was considered crucial to better answer the research questions. After a first phase of literature analysis that aimed at an in-depth understanding of the theoretical debate surrounding the research question, the empirical phase consisted of a quantitative investigation followed by a qualitative phase. The quantitative data-collection phase was considered essential in gathering information to more effectively qualify and understand the local ecosystem in which the cultural and creative entrepreneurs were operating. It was considered as a preliminary phase that enabled more precise data collection in the qualitative phase. The decision to carry out a qualitative investigation in the following part of the research was taken on the basis that qualitative research is more appropriate for understanding at a deeper level a general phenomenon and its dynamics (Yin, 2014). During the qualitative research we collected and analyzed data according to the approach conceptualized by Gioia et al (2012). The data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews based on a flexible research protocol that was amended several times based on informants' responses. The collected data were later coded according to a 1st order (informant-centric) - 2nd order (theory-centric) procedure that lead to the final reorganization of data into main themes. In order to ensure rigor and accuracy, we also analyzed the data through software for content analysis (Nvivo) that helped us to visualize words frequency and distribution and gave further insight into the most relevant concepts that emerged during the interviews.

Each sub-phase was related to a specific research sample as explained in table 1.

Phase of the research	Research methods and sub-phases	Percentages
1	Literature review	
2	Empirical investigation in two sub-phases: 2.1 Quantitative (questionnaire) focusing on the perspective of the operating environment 2.2 Qualitative (semi-structured interviews) focusing on the perspective of the cultural and creative entrepreneurs	<i>Sub-phase 2.1: 28</i> respondents (main stakeholders of the territory) <i>Sub-phase 2.2: 8</i> interviewees (cultural and creative enterprises of the territory)
3	Data analysis (according to Gioia methodology) and conclusions	

**TABLE 1. RESEARCH DESIGN: PHASES OF THE RESEARCH, RESEARCH METHODS AND SUB-PHASES, AND RESEARCH SAMPLE**

Source: Authors's own elaboration.

In the first sub-phase, the research aimed at carrying out a preliminary study of the ecosystem in which the cultural and creative enterprises were operating. This sub-phase intended to gather data on the propensity of the different subjects operating in the area to support the cultural and creative sector (through funding, financial donations and other forms of financial and in-kind support) on the basis of cultural values and local cultural identity. It was conceived as a preliminary study and was performed through a questionnaire which, after a testing phase with some potential respondents, was sent via email to approximately 50 organizations among which there were banks, foundations, local authorities and small, medium and large enterprises (not operating in the cultural or creative sector) located in the Burgundy Franche-Comté area. These entities were selected because of their representativeness of the main stakeholders of the local ecosystem of the region and on the basis of their geographical distribution, thus complying with the criteria of variety and representativeness (Patton, 2003). The answers allowed the researchers to have a first overview of the current and potential scenario of the support provided by the local enterprises, public authorities and other stakeholders to the local cultural and creative enterprises. The final sample included 28 respondents. Though restricted, this sample presented significant coverage of the main categories of stakeholders: among the responding organizations, 51% were private enterprises, while the rest belonged to the bank sector, foundations, local authorities and chambers of commerce. Among the enterprise category, 50% were large enterprises, 18.8% small and medium size enterprises and 13.3% were very small companies (with less than 10 employees). The size of the sample was too small to carry out a parametrical analysis, therefore the data were processed and discussed through descriptive statistics.

The second sub-phase instead aimed at understanding the perspective of the cultural entrepreneurs and was carried out according to a qualitative approach. In this sub-phase the sample was more restricted (10 enterprises operating either in the cultural or creative field, in different parts of the region) due to the choice of using qualitative methods as well as due to time and resource limitations. Nonetheless they meet the criteria of diversity and representativeness (Patton, 2003) not only in terms of geographical distribution but also representing a variety of enterprises in both cultural and creative industries (KEA, 2006) operating in the area. The sample included music and video companies, entrepreneurs in theatre and performing arts, circus companies, as well as advertising/cultural-event-organizing companies. Out of 10 institutions, eight agreed to take part in the research, though asking to keep their identity confidential. This part of the research was implemented through semi-structured research interviews based on two main discussion topics. The interviews were carried out mainly face-to-face, lasting from 40 minutes to two hours, and recorded (though ensuring that the identity of the interviewees was kept confidential).

In the third phase, the interviews were transcribed, translated into English and analyzed according to the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al, 2012). These preliminary results were significant in providing potential answers to the main research questions.

## Empirical analysis

### *Territorial ecosystem's perspectives*

As mentioned above, the first preliminary quantitative analysis provided the researchers with useful information about the territorial ecosystem of the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region and the criteria and motivations that could lead its main stakeholders to support the development of local cultural and creative entrepreneurship. More specifically, the results of this part gave first insights into the propensity of the ecosystem to financially sustain the cultural and creative enterprises on the basis of the expected values created for the territory and enhancement of its shared local cultural identity.

This quantitative investigation should be conceived as a first overview about the local ecosystem of the region, to pave the way for the qualitative investigation. The research was carried out through a questionnaire, whose questions could be grouped into two main sections. The first section gathered general data on the survey respondents and their current financial support and donations to cultural and creative enterprises. The second section addressed more specifically the motivations leading to the donations/support and their link with the value and identity of the territory. As clarified in the following paragraphs, in this section respondents were asked to evaluate the motivations on the basis of a Likert scale.

The first section of the questionnaire gave a picture of the current support (financial or through other types of donations) provided by the ecosystem to the cultural and creative sector. As emerged in this part, 57.1% of the survey respondents declared providing grant support to the cultural and creative sector (either to non-profit associations in the cultural and creative sector or to cultural and creative entrepreneurial projects, e.g. through crowdfunding platforms). The most frequent support was financial (81.3%), sometimes matched with time/skill or in-kind donations (37.5%). Respondents showed a significant tendency to favor performing arts (50%) and cultural events and festivals (56.3%). Relevant support was also granted to visual arts (37.5%) and cultural heritage (31.3%), whereas education (12.5%), audio-visual and the press sectors (12.5 and 6.3% respectively) were less frequently chosen. In terms of the category and type of supported organizations, a great majority of the participants sustains associations or public cultural institutions. With reference to entrepreneurship, the sample revealed a preference for providing financial support for cooperatives and social enterprises. The location of the cultural and creative enterprises, associations and organizations to which financial support was granted was mainly local (87.5% to organizations in the local territory), whereas donations to organizations operating at the national level are less significant (31.3%). No donations were given to international associations.

As explained in the introduction to this section of the paper, the last section of the questionnaire focused on the motivations to grant financial support and on their link with the concepts of value and identity of the territory. In fact, this section consisted of a list of 10 main motivations (plus a general category "other motivation"): the survey respondents who had declared providing financial support to cultural and creative entities were asked to answer this section and rate each of these motivations on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. These 10 main criteria/motivations were identified on the basis of preparatory talks carried out with representatives of the main stakeholders of the territory and tested with some of them before starting the distribution of the questionnaire. These criteria included: 1) interest for the cultural and creative organization, for its sector of activity; 2) coherence with the program and activities of the donating entity; 3) trust in the people or managers of the organization; 4) fiscal incentives; 5) external communication, branding and image motivations; 6) improvement of the internal communication with and motivation and sense of belonging of the employees; 7) promotion of an initiative of general interest; 8) alignment with the CSR strategy; 9) creation of value for the territory; 10) other motivations (please specify and rate according to a scale 1-5).

The answers regarding the motivations could be categorized into 3 main groups. The first group includes the higher rated motivations. The highest scores in the scale were given to two criteria related to the interest in the specific activities of the supported entity (average rate: 4.2), and to the trust in the people working in the cultural and creative organization or project (average rate: 4.5), thus confirming the preference towards a "personalized" approach to donation and the importance of the relational and social capital. A second group of criteria scored lower but significant rates, such as the criteria related to the need by the supporting organization to sustain entities that were operating for a general interest purpose and the creation of value for the territory (average rate: 4). A third group of criteria includes those with the lowest rates, namely the criteria related to fiscal advantages, communication – either internal (related to objectives of motivation of the employees) or external (promoting the image of the donor, marketing and branding purposes) – or related to specific CSR strategies.

Since understanding the role of the creation of value for the territory in the donation process was a key purpose of this research, further information was requested in relation to the criterion related to the creation of value for the territory. More specifically, the questionnaire respondents were asked to specify what type of value they mean as "value for the territory" (providing three options: social value, economic value and cultural and identity value). Synthetic descriptions were provided on the meaning of the three values in the questionnaire, plus the respondents were asked to further specify what they meant in each criterion.

## **“CULTURAL VALUES HAD HIGHER AVERAGE SCORES (3.7), SOCIAL VALUE WAS CONSIDERED SLIGHTLY LESS RELEVANT (3.4), WHILE THE ECONOMIC VALUE WAS CONSIDERED THE LEAST IMPORTANT FOR THE TERRITORY (2.28)”**

Cultural values had higher average scores (3.7), social value was considered slightly less relevant (3.4), while the economic value was considered the least important for the territory (2.28). The respondents identified as social values mainly the potential of cultural and creative enterprises to create the life quality of the citizens and communities, to contribute to the improvement of the networking and social relations among the population of the territory based on culture and creativity, as well as the creation of public value for its inhabitants through cultural and creative initiatives. Economic value was conceived as the capacity of cultural and creative enterprises to create job opportunities and spill over into the territory. As for cultural value, the respondents wrote that cultural values and cultural identity of the territory need to be protected and preserved. Cultural value was mainly related to the promotion of culture and creativity in the region as linked to the enhancement of its rich cultural heritage as well as the traditions and historical identity of the region. A respondent argued that cultural and creative enterprises and their initiatives could be related to the cultural heritage and characteristics of the territory: they should valorize its history and cultural assets, increasing the sense of belonging to their shared cultural background.

In a nutshell, these results confirm that the creation of cultural value of the territory and enhancement of cultural identity, both referring to the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, are significant criteria for the ecosystem to grant financial support to cultural and creative entrepreneurs. Therefore, the capacity of the cultural and creative entrepreneurs to be aware of and meet these expectations seems essential in granting them the necessary financial support from the stakeholders of their territory.

### ***Cultural and creative entrepreneurs and values and cultural identity of the territory***

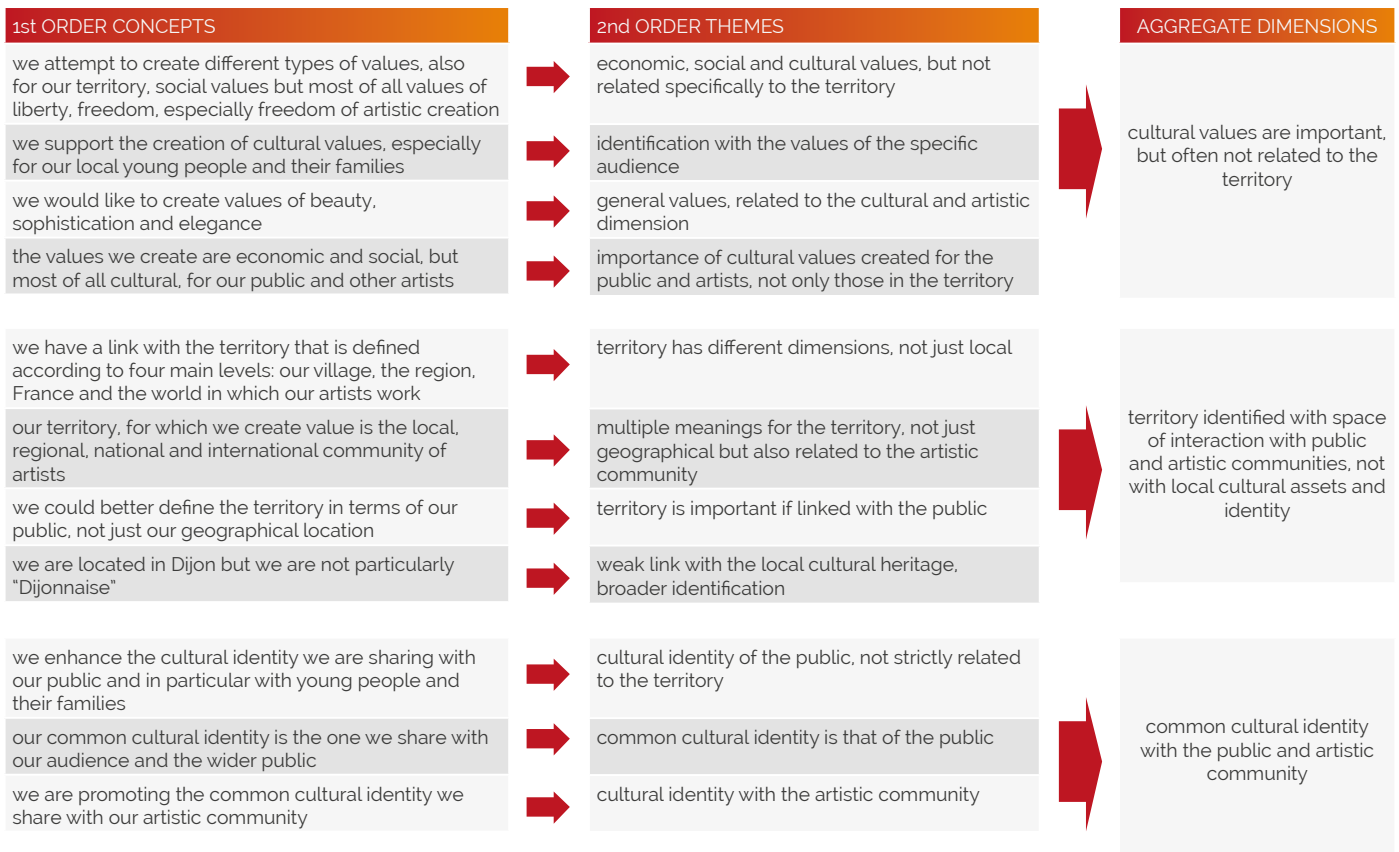
After analyzing the role that cultural values and local cultural identity play in leading the members of the ecosystem to allocate funding to the cultural and creative entrepreneurs, the second part of the research focused on the point of view of the entrepreneurs. This part was implemented through a qualitative analysis that, as specified above, aimed at understanding the role of cultural values and local cultural identities for the entrepreneurs operating in the cultural and creative sector.

Eight semi-structured interviews were carried out with representatives of cultural and creative enterprises of the territory. An interview protocol was implemented based on two main topics: 1) value creation for the territory; 2) enhancement of local cultural identity. During the interviews, corollary topics were addressed, for example collaborations and partnerships the entrepreneurs have implemented with other stakeholders of the cultural ecosystem.

The interviews were carried out face-to-face in French, then transcribed, translated and analyzed according to the Gioia methodology for inductive qualitative analysis (Gioia et al, 2012), classifying the responses according to 1st order concepts (that include many verbatim and represent the informant perspective), then in 2nd order themes (researcher-centric) and subsequently presenting aggregate dimensions.

With reference to the first topic (creation of value for the territory), the interviewees showed substantial agreement on the fact that they are attempting to create values, that are social and economic but mainly cultural values. However, they seem to describe values that are rather general artistic or cultural values linking them frequently with their public rather than their territory. As emerging in the 1st order analysis, the recurrent concepts were artistic values. For instance, an interviewee argued they promote multiple types of values, more specifically social values (related to living together and sharing experiences), but also values such as liberty and freedom of artistic creation. Others underlined the importance of creating emotions through the various art forms for their public. An entrepreneur in the domain of visual arts, said that his focus was on creating "beauty", sophistication and elegance, while other interviewees operating in the cultural education domain focus on values related to the involvement of families and young members of the public in performing arts productions. For others, the idea of creation of value is related to the possibility of supporting the development of artists or to use performing arts to address social problems. From a 2nd order perspective, these responses indicate that the cultural value is important and frequently mentioned, along with social and economic value, but that it is identified with more general values related to the public or artistic community. From an aggregated dimension, considered very important, the cultural value is not strictly cultural value for the territory, but rather cultural value for the public and the artistic community.





**FIGURE 1. DATA STRUCTURE: ENTREPRENEURS' PERSPECTIVES ON VALUE CREATION FOR THE TERRITORY AND LOCAL CULTURAL IDENTITY**

Source: Authors's own elaboration.

When addressing this first theme, the interviewees had also the opportunity to better understand what the entrepreneurs intended when talking about the territory. An additional dimension highlighted in the 1st level analysis indeed underlined that they considered this aspect as having multiple dimensions. As argued by one of the interviewees, "the territory could be defined according to four main levels: our village and the surrounding communities, the region in which we are located, and the third one is France, our nation. There is a fourth level that is the world, in which our artists work". Another interviewee said that he was talking about "the territory with which we interact [which] is the local, regional, national community of artists". Another argued that he could better define their territory in terms of their public, not merely in terms of geographical location. As a geographical space, the territory can provide opportunities for interaction with the public on the basis of artistic interest. The majority of interviewees declared that they often cooperate with different local authorities within the territory. In many cases these collaborations are established mainly with instrumental aims, as a way to secure public funding, to access public grants and other types of contributions or for logistic reasons. However, the link with the geographical identity of the territory is weak: as argued by one interviewee, though his institution was

located in Dijon, they were not considered particularly "Dijonnaise" and they aimed at creating performances and events involving a larger public, with whom they shared a connection on an artistic level. From a 2nd order perspective, these results could be interpreted as proof that the local territory was often interpreted as a space of interaction with the public rather than as a space to express identity. The entrepreneurs seem to conceive the territory not just as their local geographical space but as a broader space not strictly linked with the cultural assets and identity of the territory.

This perspective was further reinforced by the analysis of the responses to the second discussion topic, related to enhancement of local cultural identity. The interviewees declared that they are enhancing the cultural identity they share with their public and artistic community rather than the identity linked to their territory and its particular tangible and intangible cultural heritage. If we consider this from a 2nd order perspective, the enhancement of local cultural identity seems weak, and is opposed to the enhancement of a broader identity dimension, those of the public and the scientific community, that emerged also during the previous discussion. The shared identity is not with the other members of the local ecosystems but the one shared with the public and other artists.

# “THERE IS A MISALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE RESOURCE ALLOCATORS OF THE LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS AND THAT OF THE LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS IN THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR IN THE IMPORTANCE ATTRIBUTED TO THE CREATION OF VALUE FOR THE TERRITORY AND THE ENHANCEMENT OF LOCAL CULTURAL IDENTITY”

## Discussion

The results of the empirical analysis could be interpreted as first indications towards understanding whether the creation of value for the territory and enhancement of local cultural identity could really be at the cornerstone of the allocation of financial resources to cultural and creative entrepreneurs.

The preliminary quantitative analysis seems to confirm this idea in the ecosystem of the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region. First of all, the members of the local ecosystem declared that they donate to the cultural and creative sector, preferring mainly organizations located in the local territory (87.5% of the sample) and basically giving very limited support to national or international organizations, thus confirming the propensity to act as a member of the local cultural ecosystems. This confirms an interest in financially supporting the local cultural and creative sector, therefore the “local vocation” in allocating financial resources. The data collected in the following part of the questionnaire indicate that the creation of value for the territory are among the most important criteria leading to financial resource allocation, although less important than personal connections and trust in the specific organizations. The creation of value is interpreted mainly as cultural value, more specifically the enhancement of the cultural identity and tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the territory.

In short, these results indicate that the creation of cultural value for the territory and the enhancement of its local cultural identity are significant in resource allocation by the members of the local ecosystems. However, the qualitative analysis focusing on the point of view of the entrepreneurs underlined a different importance attributed to these two concepts. As highlighted during the interviews, the main goal of cultural and creative entrepreneurs is to gain excellence and innovation in their domains and with reference to their audiences: the creation of value is important but it is not strictly related to the territory. Cultural and creative entrepreneurs focus on artistic creation, and their sense of belonging is related to the location of their public and artistic community, with whom they share a common cultural identity that does not necessarily coincide with that at regional or local level. When they talked about identity and territory they often refer to an ideological proximity

based on artistic and cultural aspects that could or could not match the geographical location and that just by chance coincide with the traditions, cultural heritage and the cultural identity as defined by the other members of the ecosystem. Thus the creation and enhancement of local cultural identities and values could just partially be a driver to unite with the other members of a territorial ecosystem, and appears to be less strong than project-based cooperation, or used instrumentally to secure funding.

In conclusion, there is a misalignment between the perspective of the resource allocators of the local ecosystems and that of the local entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sector in the importance attributed to the creation of value for the territory and the enhancement of local cultural identity.

## Conclusions

This paper aimed at investigating if the creation of cultural value for the territory and the enhancement of its local cultural identity could be core consideration in the allocation of financial support to local cultural and creative enterprises. In order to address this main research question, research was implemented, including both a theoretical and an empirical component.

The theoretical analysis explored the various scientific contributions on the relation between cultural and creative enterprises and their territory, focusing in particular on the emergence of the concept of entrepreneurial ecosystems and the peculiarities of cultural entrepreneurial ecosystems. The sharing of strong common cultural identity and values, mainly related to the tangible and intangible cultural identity of the territory, was considered a unifying force for the members of the cultural ecosystems as well as one of the main criteria in its design and implementation. It has also been considered as one of the expectations of the resource providers when allocating financial support to specific members of the ecosystems.

The empirical research combined quantitative analysis with qualitative analysis, and could be considered as a preliminary investigation of the topic. The research was carried out in the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region, and focused on the point of

view of the resource providers in the local ecosystem (using a quantitative research method) and on that of the cultural and creative enterprises of the area (qualitative research method).

The first analysis confirmed that the creation of cultural values for the territory and the enhancement of local cultural identity could indeed be crucial for financial resource allocation to cultural and creative enterprises by the main stakeholders of the local cultural ecosystem. However, the qualitative analysis highlighted that the local entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sector attach significant importance to the creation of value and enhancement of common cultural identity, but they do not link them with the local territory and its intangible and tangible cultural heritage. They instead tend to pursue value creation for their public and artistic communities that are not automatically identified with those in the territory or linked to its cultural assets.

Hence, there is a misalignment between the expectations of the resource providers and the objectives of the cultural and creative entrepreneurs in the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region. This misalignment could potentially lead to issues in the allocation of resources in the local ecosystems. In summary, these preliminary results indicate that creation of value for the territory and the enhancement of its local cultural identity could not be key considerations in resource allocation for cultural ecosystems to cultural and creative entrepreneurs, because they are not specifically pursued by the entrepreneurs themselves who do not perceive such a strong identity link with their region.

Though related to a restricted research sample (both in terms of geographical distribution and in terms of number of participants), the research could be considered interesting as a preliminary reflection that can contribute to academic debate and bring thought-provoking insights for professionals and policymakers.

In terms of contribution to the academic literature, these results could not only encourage reflection on the criteria for resource allocation to cultural and creative enterprises in cultural ecosystems but also stimulate investigations on other research topics. In particular, the results could lead to further reflections related to the unifying components for the design and implementation of local cultural ecosystems, since they underline that one of the most important elements identified so far (local cultural identity, in particular related to the local cultural heritage) is not a focal priority for some members of these ecosystems (i.e. the local entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sector). This aspect could also stimulate reflection by professionals in the cultural and creative sector, leading them to consider the criteria that link them with the territory and their local cultural ecosystem and prompt them to establish partnerships and seek financial support for other members. In terms of policy development, the research could encourage further exploration of the significance of the different criteria

for local cultural ecosystem implementation and their relation to the promotion of entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sector.

These results should however be considered as preliminary insights that need to be verified in further research projects, due to the limitations both in the specific geographical dimension of the investigation (the Burgundy-Franche-Comté area), in the restricted research sample and in the specific characteristics of the selected area. Future developments of this research could include exploring these topics in other geographical areas, possibly in different countries in order to be able to develop international comparative perspectives and better address and understand these issues at a broader level.

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