

THE CULTURAL DISTRICT BETWEEN PLANNING AND SPONTANEITY:

A study on the agglomeration dynamics in Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna



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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the benefits of agglomeration and clustering, policymakers have attempted to create cultural districts by employing top-down strategies. However, it has been observed that cultural clusters frequently arise naturally without direct intervention from local governments or policy incentives. In this thesis, the policy dilemma regarding the feasibility of recreating cultural districts has been addressed. Indeed, following the discussion on agglomeration and its benefits, the question of whether it is possible to plan something that by nature tends to arise spontaneously, and what this entails has been raised. Specifically, this thesis aims to answer the following research question:

Considering the benefits of clustering, how can policymakers replicate this phenomenon? How do the dynamics of agglomeration work in Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna?

In order to answer the research question, the analysis focuses on the case of Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna, aiming to understand the dynamics of agglomeration. The study reveals two main findings through 12 interviews with key actors in the district, including directors, cultural employees, and stakeholders. Firstly, there is a lack of identity and synergy within the planned district, attributed to factors such as physical and architectural barriers and a lack of governance. Secondly, a spontaneous cluster of cultural organisations has emerged, stimulated by the institutional planned district, leading to knowledge spillover and collaborations. However, the district's institutional and grassroots spheres highlight the need for better coordination and governance. On one side, the grassroots organisations feel instrumentalized by the municipality. This issue is closely tied to the relationship with the territory, where the bottom-up sphere demonstrates greater community involvement. On the other side, the planned district lacks a higher level of coordination to strengthen relations and foster synergy. The case of Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna offers valuable insights as it combines spontaneity and planning within an institutional district, resulting in both positive and negative effects. Finally, the findings have implications for policymakers and urban planners involved in cultural-led regeneration interventions.

Keywords: cultural district, agglomeration, cultural planning, urban regeneration, cultural policy

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1. Introduction

Throughout history, culture and creativity have always been substantial for the city. Cities have constantly required the creativity and inventiveness of a large concentration of entrepreneurs, artists, intellectuals, students, policymakers, and financiers to function as marketplaces, commercial, and productive centres (Bianchini & Landry, 1995). In his book “Cities in Civilization”, Peter Hall (1998) remarked that between 1980 and 1990 many European cities became aware that cultural industries could act as the foundation for economic growth. Indeed, the author foresaw that culture would have taken over the space left by abandoned industries and warehouses, creating a novel city model.

As a result of globalisation and digitization, a new age with the purposeful use of creativity for a city has gained popularity (Hospers, 2003). Indeed, today, many cities around the world are facing a period of change and transformation. Crime and security, handling globalisation and rapid information, and enhancing the standard of living in daily life are only a few of the new issues and challenges that have emerged (Hall, 1998).

Policymakers and urban planners must employ regional, creative, and innovative elements to foster a positive environment that benefits residents, enterprises, and tourists. The focus shifted from the physical and urban planning side of the city to implement the experience of an urban and cultural milieu. In particular, the concept of creative milieu coined by Tornqvist (2004) indicates that cultural and local ferment that gives rise to collective creativity and knowledge, showing that conditions of plurality, diversity, and open interchange of ideas are ideal for innovation (Tornqvist, 2004).

According to Throsby (2010), arts and culture contribute to urban life and economic growth in a variety of ways. For instance, a single cultural centre or institution can stimulate urban economic growth on its own. Consider the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, which is frequently cited as an example of a cultural investment that resulted in the revitalization of a poor metropolitan region (Throsby, 2010). The museum serves as an exemplary flagship cultural institution that since its inauguration in 1997, sparked a resurgence in the local economy, commonly known as the “Bilbao Effect” (Rybczynski, 2002). In this regard, many city branding and regeneration strategies are implemented, such as the designation of European Capitals of Culture or the listing in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

At the same time, the cultural sectors might profit from the network and agglomeration externalities present in urban environments (Throsby, 2010). The expansion of creative clusters in

many cultural industries, such as fashion in Milan, theatre in London, and film in Hollywood, demonstrates the financial advantages of agglomeration (Throsby, 2010).

Recognizing the benefits of agglomeration and clustering, policymakers have attempted to create cultural districts through top-down approaches by employing ‘copy-and-paste strategies’ (Lavanga, 2020, p. 180). However, over time, cultural clusters have emerged spontaneously, without a local government's intervention or a policy's incentive. According to Lavanga (2020): “most of the districts develop slowly. Cultural districts develop in an organic and spontaneous way” (p.180). Indeed, cultural organisations demonstrated a natural predisposition to localise together, particularly in cities in which they may engage with professionals from other fields and share expertise and knowledge, boosting creativity and increasing competition (Scott, 2001).

The nature of cultural clusters shows a dichotomy, with some involving little engagement from the public sector (bottom-up) and others established by policymakers with the intention of advancing economic and other policy goals (top-down) (Mommaas 2009; Evans, 2009).

This thesis seeks to contribute to the discourse on cultural districts. In particular, urban and cultural policy issues are addressed, with the intention of providing useful information for policymakers on how to intervene and be involved in cultural-led regeneration initiatives. Indeed, as already mentioned, cultural districts are often used as catalysts of urban regeneration and thus as a phenomenon of urban planning. However, policymakers and urban planners struggle to discover the proper formula for implementing cultural-led urban regeneration interventions, frequently focusing on desired results but seldom considering how the policy process may affect them (Lidegaard et al. 2017).

In this regard, within the framework of cultural planning, the following research also delves into the dilemma of top down vs bottom up strategies (Fromhold-Eisebith and Eisebith, 2005), wondering whether it is actually possible to plan something that by nature arises spontaneously and what this entails. Specifically, the following research will focus on the case of the planned district “Manifattura delle Arti” (Factory of the Arts) in Bologna to answer the following research question:

*Considering the benefits of clustering, how can policymakers replicate this phenomenon?
How do the dynamics of agglomeration work in Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna?*

To answer the research question, a qualitative approach has been adopted. In particular, 12 interviews have been conducted with key actors working in the cluster, such as directors and cultural employees of the organisations and institutions of the district and other stakeholders involved in the governance of the area and of the municipality.

The context of Bologna is suitable for investigating the top-down bottom-up dilemma, as the

city on the one hand has a high density of associations and bottom-up initiatives, indeed there are 1.06 non-profit organisations for every 10,000 people (Morea & Sabatini, 2023). On the other hand, the municipality shows great interest in cultural and urban regeneration policies, demonstrated by high spending on cultural initiatives and by the high position in the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor ranking, with a score of 29,7 (Montalto et. al, 2019). In general, in Bologna cultural activities are viewed as crucial in supporting socialisation and the development of human and urban skills (Morea & Sabatini, 2023). In addition, the case study is adequately developed to make an analysis, as the district was implemented in the early 2000s, contextually to the planning for Bologna 2000 - European Capital of Culture (Zan et. al, 2011). On the social level, the research aims to better grasp what are the most efficient practices and policies concerning cultural clusters and urban regeneration. This is considered to be socially relevant especially since there are plans to invest most of the funds from the National Recovery and Resilience Plan¹ in the creation of a larger district called 'The District of Creativity connecting the Manifattura delle Arti and the adjacent area 'Ex Scalo al Ravone'.

The following research is structured into six chapters. After the introduction, the second chapter delves into the theoretical framework which justifies the aim of the research. This section is developed through a review of the main literature and previous empirical research on agglomeration economies, cultural districts and urban planning. Afterwards, the methodology is presented in the third chapter, detailing the research's methodology, design, and data analysis. An overview of the case study Manifattura delle Arti and of the context of the city of Bologna, will be provided in chapter four. The fifth chapter concerns the main findings of the research in relation with the main literature, with the aim of answering the research question. The major implications and research limitations are then discussed in the last part when conclusions are formed.

¹ The PNRR, National Recovery and Resilience Plan, is a strategic document outlining Italy's plan to recover from the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and promote long-term resilience. The PNRR is part of the European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility, which provides financial support to member states for their recovery plans. <https://www.italiadomani.gov.it/content/sogei-ng/it/en/home.html>

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter delves into the dynamics and benefits of agglomeration, from the industrial context to the cultural and planned agglomeration. First, reference is made to Marshallian economies generated by proximity and co-location and the main cluster theories are explored. In the second section, there is a shift from the industrial to the cultural district, with particular attention to the planned cultural district, such as the Museum and Metropolitan Cultural District (Santagata, 2002). The third section will explore the role of the cultural district in promoting regional economic development and urban regeneration and thus as a phenomenon of cultural planning. Finally, the bottom-up vs top-down dilemma within the cultural district will be addressed, with a focus on the possible effects of regeneration interventions, such as gentrification.

2.1 Cluster theories and agglomeration economies

Marshall (1890) was the first to draw attention to localised industries. In his *Principle of Economics*, he defined the industrial district as an area where a strong concentration of firms developed. Marshall's analysis of industrial districts typically relies on external economies of agglomeration.

From a production point of view, agglomeration brings many benefits, which can be summarised in the three Marshallian micro-foundations of sharing, matching, and learning. As for the sharing of production factors, the high density of firms specialised in the same sector located in a specific area stimulates the emergence of firms specialising in the provision of intermediate goods and services. As regards the labour market, the concentration of similar companies attracts specialised labour, reducing search costs for both workers and companies and helping to improve the match between the specific managerial and technical skills required by companies and those offered by workers. Finally, the geographic proximity between similar enterprises facilitates the local dissemination of knowledge and production know-how, either through imitative processes or direct communication, thus promoting innovation and improvement of production processes (Marshall, 1890). Indeed, firms' restricted linkages and exchanges would lead to a division of work and expertise (Lavanga, 2020). When it comes to consumption, Marshall (1890) notes that people would go to distant places to get what they want if they can do so cheaply and quickly. Thanks to the importance of agglomeration economies, industrial districts are acknowledged as sites where average costs of production and commerce are falling. For example, Hollywood is a paradigmatic case of an industrial cluster, while Silicon Valley is widely acclaimed as a prime phenomenon of a business cluster in the knowledge economy (Towse, 2010). Potentially, as will be discussed later, there could be several reasons and advantages for the cultural industries to cluster since they often suffer from limited financial resources.

Belussi and Caldari (2008), defined Marshall's industrial clusters as distinguished by a unique blend of competition and collaboration. Competition and cooperation are at the core of the theory of Michael Porter (2000), whose contribution is fundamental in the agglomeration and cluster discourse. Indeed, based on the Marshallian definition, Porter (2000) has developed the idea of clusters as "geographic concentrations of interconnected companies, specialised suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries, and associated institutions (e.g., universities, standards agencies, trade associations) in a particular field that compete but also cooperate." (Porter, 2000, p.16). In particular, Porter identified three phases in the competitive development of clusters (Sacco & Pedrini, 2003). First, the development and productivity of existing enterprises and industries on the territory are boosted. Then, as the opportunity to develop this capacity is facilitated within the district's existence of local sources of competitive advantage (assets), localised knowledge (skills), and capital, the innovative capacity gains value, as do the productivity dynamics of the companies that are a part of it. Finally, the district encourages new enterprises and growth within the district and in favour of the district (Sacco & Pedrini, 2003). Building his research on the idea of localised competitive advantage, Porter concluded that the creation and development of clusters are essential to the growth of a country, supporting the idea that local rivalry is a powerful motivator for innovation potential.

When discussing agglomeration theories and clusters, it is essential to mention the significant work of Richard Florida, especially for its relevance to the cultural and creative sector. Florida (2002) added to the discourse that firms cluster to gain from concentrations of brilliant individuals who enable innovation and economic progress. These exceptional individuals are what he refers to as the 'Creative Class'. The uniqueness of this creative group of people is that its members draw in productions whose intention is to generate significant and original forms. Among these 'super-creative' personas he mentioned academic professors, scientists and engineers, writers and novelists, painters, performers, actors, design creators, and architects (Florida, 2002). According to Florida (2002), the creative class follows some trends, such as the tendency to cluster in specific places which the author calls 'creative centres'. These places are successful in economic terms; indeed, the high density of creative-class people corresponds to a high density of creative economic results, specifically innovation and advanced technology industry growth. In addition, they provide significant evidence of general regional vitality, such as growth in local employment and inhabitants. Florida (2002) underlined that these centres are contemporary 'economic winners' because creatives are willing to move and live in these places. Firms go after creative people, or in most cases are established by them. As a result, all types of creativity may develop and grow in an interconnected environment. According to Florida (2002), the main reasons why these people

decide to cluster in these places are manifested in a plethora of exceptional experiences, an openness to all types of diversity, and, most of all, the chance to confirm their identity as creative individuals (Florida,2002).

The theory of Florida has been perceived in different ways. On the one hand, it can be said to have positively impacted the decisions of policymakers, since it focused on creative people as a factor in the city's economic growth (Redaelli, 2019). On the other hand, it has generated much dissent in the academic world. Indeed, Florida's theory has been criticized for contributing to the gentrification and displacement of lower-income residents (Markusen, 2006). Critics argue that the 'Creative Class' can lead to rising housing costs and the displacement of existing communities, pushing out the very diversity that Florida champions. After several years of intense debate, Florida's most recent book, "The New Urban Crisis", explains that some of the most significant difficulties, such as gentrification and inequality are caused by the very dynamics that spark lively cities (Florida, 2017).

Lastly, in research and policy debates, Porter's theory got the most reception. However, the Marshallian idea of districts was revived in the 1960s and 1970s owing to the Italian economist Becatini (Lavanga, 2020). Becatini (1962), recognized the dynamics of agglomeration economies among the Italian manufacturing industries, in particular, located in the so-called "Third Italy" (central and Northeastern Italy). It is important to note that many of the craft-based enterprises that Third Italy grouped together found a use for Becatini's research, representing a very relevant element for our discussion on cultural districts, which we will elaborate on in the next section.

2.2 The cultural district

As we have discussed, there are several advantages to agglomeration, and this has also been acknowledged by creative people and cultural industries. Indeed, the roots of the cultural district can be found in the concepts of the industrial district and agglomeration economies. According to Santagata (2011, p. 147), a cultural district is "a social and economic experience at the confluence of two phenomena: that of localization, as first identified by Alfred Marshall (1890), and that of the idiosyncratic (unusual) nature of culture and cultural goods". Santagata's theorisation of cultural districts is based on the idea of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge refers to an information system that possesses characteristics similar to those of a local public good or commons. Within this framework, information and knowledge circulate unrestrictedly and are communicated through implicit channels (Santagata, 2011). Indeed, the author claimed that culture-based goods possess unique characteristics due to the requirement of tacit knowledge in their crafting, technical manufacturing, and dissemination. Additionally, individual knowledge draws upon previous distinctive personal encounters, further contributing to their idiosyncratic nature (Santagata, 2002).

Therefore, it could be said that cultural districts establish significant associations with the specific location of their production, encompassing their community and historical background (Rozental & Lavanga, 2014).

Moreover, clusters predominantly consist of small or medium-sized enterprises. In the creative industries, these smaller enterprises are considered the primary drivers of innovation (Towse, 2010) and the work is characterised by high labour requirements, mostly project-based and relies on a pool of specialised workers. Just like industrial districts, cultural districts can be described as a clustering of cultural businesses that benefit from favourable external effects due to their proximity within a particular location. The generation, dissemination, and exchange of knowledge are fundamental (Lavanga, 2020). Indeed, thanks to proximity and co-location, spontaneous encounters, the advancement of innovation, and the facilitation of knowledge creation and learning are increased.

Bathelt et al. (2004) define the dynamic information and communication environment as buzz. This buzz arises from face-to-face interactions, the physical coexistence of individuals and businesses in the same industry and location. In addition, specific information, continuous updates, and both intended and unexpected learning processes occur during organised and serendipitous meetings. Actors within the cluster actively contribute to and benefit from the dissemination of information, exchange of rumours, and sharing of news simply by being present in that environment (Bathelt et al., 2004, p. 38).

Moreover, associating cultural products and businesses with a particular place, area or building has demonstrated the ability to create a positive image and enhance the reputation of the involved actors over time. Cultural districts may have the power to develop or improve the reputation of a place (Molotch, 2002). Among the most famous cases is Hollywood, where the cinematographic cluster has played a significant role in elevating the United States' position as the foremost global producer of films (Scott, 2004). Another relevant example is the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, which serves as a model flagship cultural institution that has transformed the economic landscape of its host city. Since its inauguration in 1997, the museum has sparked a resurgence in the local economy, commonly known as the 'Bilbao Effect' (Rybczynski, 2002). This paradigm anticipates the other key theme of the following analysis, namely culture as a catalyst for urban regeneration.

Santagata (2002) theorises four possible models of cultural districts. First, there is the Industrial Cultural District, a cultural district that follows the same logic and dynamics as the 'traditional' district model. This type of district is entirely self-organised and does not rely on any governing institutions or organisations (Sacco & Pedrini, 2003). This is the case of textile or movie

industries, such as the already mentioned example of Hollywood. The second category of district entails the existence of established institutions that safeguard property and brand rights, the so-called Institutional Cultural District. In this regard, Santagata (2002) gives the example of the “denomination of origin” (DOC), which provides legal protection to a brand or a specific design, particularly for products of local culinary traditions. This has contributed to the economic growth of well-defined areas, such as the Italian regions of Piedmont-Langhe and Tuscany-Chianti. Santagata (2002) categorises the remaining types of districts as Quasi-Cultural Districts, specifically the Museum Cultural District and the Metropolitan Cultural District. These districts exhibit two main characteristics: the preservation of artistic heritage and the revitalization of urban areas (Sacco & Pedrini, 2003). The Museum Cultural District (for example the Museum Quarter in Vienna) is established around a museum network in important art towns that are rich in historical landmarks and art assets. In this case, the government's intervention and regulation are required to achieve the appropriate size of the district, which maintains productive efficiency and service quality while limiting touristic congestion at the site. Finally, the Metropolitan Cultural District was established to revitalise areas that were experiencing an economic and industrial decline. Cities in this category do not have an abundance of historic and cultural legacy, but they provide a fertile ground for artistic development as a result of the policies implemented. The metropolitan district offers urban areas the chance to foster development by engaging in cultural activities. It serves as a means to reduce the decline of established industrial sectors and shape a fresh identity for the entire city. This type of district can be recognized within an urban area featuring dedicated buildings for performing arts, museums, and various cultural organisations and services (Sacco & Pedrini, 2003).

In defining these two types of districts, Santagata (2002) distinguished between *City of Art* and *City of Culture*. A *City of Art* refers to a location abundant in historical landmarks, traditions, palaces, churches, and museums. For example, Venice or Florence, have a strong inclination towards museum districts and actively presents itself to both tourists and local residents. In contrast, a *City of Culture* may not have a wealth of historical and artistic resources, but it has the ability to generate and cultivate culture. Culture is created by artists, composers, and creative individuals, all of whom require a dedicated workspace, a platform to showcase their artwork, and assistance with marketing and communication. In this contest, the metropolitan cultural district operates as an ideal and effective method for generating culture (Santagata, 2002). Moreover, this district has the ability to satisfy two separate requirements: fulfilling the needs of tourists and fulfilling the desires of residents who seek an enhanced quality of life.

In particular, Santagata (2002) underlined two initial institutional prerequisites to the metropolitan cultural district:

- The presence of a concentrated area where property rights are not widely dispersed, such as an area devoid of industrial buildings or previously undeveloped land.
- The involvement of an organisation, trust, or business community responsible for spearheading the project by streamlining planning procedures and providing support for the management and marketing of cultural activities.

Moreover, concerning cultural city planning there are three factors that must be included (Santagata, 2002):

- A diverse selection of artistic and cultural experiences, including museums, libraries, theatres, art galleries, concert halls, studios, and art stores.
- Additionally, there are various activities centred around cultural production, such as art and crafts workshops, film studios, music recording studios, local TV stations, and commercial television stations.
- To further enhance the appeal for visitors and tourists, there is a range of supplementary offerings, including restaurants, cafeterias, gift shops, and similar establishments.

According to Santagata’s model (figure 1), both the museum cultural districts and metropolitan cultural districts fall under the purview of local public authorities and municipalities. Indeed, the origin of cultural districts can have different natures, they can emerge because of top-down planning or organic growth from the bottom up. This raises the question of whether successful cultural districts develop organically or if they necessitate intervention and support from public policies, both during their initial development phase and in the long term.

It is clear how crucial the discourse on cultural districts is to cultural planning, particularly as an urban regeneration phenomenon. Therefore, in the next section, we will delve into the policy dilemmas involved in the planning of districts and the following challenges for urban planners.

Figure 1: Cultural districts by class and economico-institutional characteristics

Table 4 *Cultural districts by class and economico-institutional characteristics*

Characteristics	Industrial cultural district	Institutional cultural district	Museum cultural district	Metropolitan cultural district
Goods and services supplied	Design-based goods, audiovisuals, movie pictures, apparel and fashion	Culture of the ‘savoir vivre’, wine and food shows and festivals	Networks of museums	Theaters, cinemas, art galleries, restaurants
The model	Institutions: Historic-evolutionist pattern	Institutions: Property rights assignment	Institutions: Public policy	Institutions: Urban policy

Source: Santagata, W. (2002). Cultural Districts, Property Rights and Sustainable Economic Growth. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 26.1.

2.3 Cultural Planning and urban regeneration

In the previous sections, cluster theories and agglomeration economies have been reviewed, as well as the main characteristics of the cultural district. Following the discussion on the benefits of agglomeration, leads to a policy dilemma regarding the feasibility of reestablishing cultural districts. This section will focus on the role of the cultural district in promoting regional economic development and urban regeneration and thus as a phenomenon of cultural planning.

In the main literature, there are several definitions and interpretations of cultural planning. Redaelli (2019), distinguished three different perspectives to understand cultural planning. First, cultural planning is often described as a comprehensive approach that integrates arts and culture into urban planning as a whole. Then, there are variations on how the cultural planning process specifically addresses the development of arts and culture. Lastly, there is an emphasis on the importance of community engagement and participation (Redaelli, 2019).

Ghilardi and Bianchini (2007), along with other scholars, support an urban planning approach that not only considers the physical aspects of a place but also takes into consideration its cultural milieu. However, according to Bianchini (1999) by the mid-1980s, the attention on cultural policy as a way to boost community development and foster social involvement had been gradually replaced by a focus on cultural policy's potential as a tool for urban economic and physical revitalization. For these reasons Bianchini (1999, p. 38) referred to this time as the 'age of city marketing'. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, neo-liberal policies encouraged a reduction in financial resources and government spending as well as a move toward deregulation, laissez-faire, and market-driven planning. Indeed, following the 20th century, the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial economy has caused a shift in the focus of urban planners and policymakers towards alternative factors driving urban growth. Creativity and culture have emerged as key catalysts for urban economies, leading to the creative economy becoming a central focus of urban policies. (Morea & Sabatini, 2023).

Furthermore, cultural planning is strictly connected to community engagement and participation. Indeed, cultural plans incorporate the perspectives of citizens and assist administrators in gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural sector within a city, as well as its various cultural assets (Redaelli, 2019). Cultural policies emphasised culture as a vehicle for community formation, and the city centre became the geographical epicentre of civic identity and public sociability. One main explanation for this is the development of governance models, with greater expectations for

participation from increasingly engaged individuals (Elkin & Soltan, 1999).

This tendency interacts with the emergence and development of later notions of cultural democracy, cultural development, and cultural diversity (Bonet & Négrier, 2011). Indeed, the notion behind cultural democracy is that allowing all social groups access to cultural life may raise people's awareness of injustice and inequality, prompting independent processes of social change (Bonet & Négrier, 2018).

For cultural planning to effectively achieve its goals at the local level, it is essential to consider and involve all sectors of the community, including large businesses, the elderly, and the unemployed (Redaelli, 2019). This inclusive approach ensures that the distinct character of the community is acknowledged and nurtured throughout the planning process.

Overall, cultural planning has been recognized both as a distinct approach to urban planning and as a valuable tool for fostering arts and cultural development while promoting community engagement (Redaelli, 2019).

In addition, according to Montgomery (1990), cultural planning refers to a comprehensive approach that encompasses three key areas: cultural economics and production, cultural policy and the arts, and urban design and revitalization. The latter is of particular interest for the following analysis. Specifically, we will explore the idea of a cultural district as a strategy for revitalising urban areas. Indeed, in recent times, several towns and cities have started combining cultural policy and urban planning in order to enhance the overall quality of life for both residents and visitors. One of the key strategies that many cities have adopted is the creation of cultural clusters (Cinti, 2008). Therefore, cluster theories have become increasingly important in both cultural and economic development policies as policymakers seek to encourage the growth of specific industries and promote regional economic development.

Cultural districts have evolved into a notion of urban development that may be seen in many city policies (Mommaas, 2004). According to Mommaas (2004), these projects are often initiated by urban planners who are seeking to regenerate urban neighbourhoods or boost the local creative economy. Among the most famous examples are the Museum Quarter in Vienna, the Temple Bar in Dublin, and the textile district of Ticinese in Milan.

Predicting the benefits of cluster formation and the factors that contribute to their success can help policymakers design effective strategies to support these important economic drivers. However, according to Lavanga (2020): “Policymakers around the world have tried copy-and-paste strategies to create cultural districts from the top down. In reality, most of the districts develop slowly. Cultural districts develop in an organic and spontaneous way” (p.180). Mommaas (2004) also highlights that many well-known creative districts have emerged entirely spontaneously, often

overlooked by both public authorities and private investors. Rather than being driven by clear correlations or established models, the emergence of cultural clusters is often a result of a combination of locally specific opportunities and a generalised understanding of the potential role of arts and culture in post-industrial cities (Mommaas, 2004). Recalling Santagata (2002), the establishment and implementation of planned cultural districts carry the risk of failure, but respecting the local cultural endowment may help mitigate this risk. Achieving a delicate balance between these factors is essential for designing successful public policy in this context.

A bottom-up approach is supported by Lazzaretti (Cinti, 2008) who suggests that the initial development of a cluster must occur organically, and while supportive conditions can be facilitated, they cannot be artificially created through top-down approaches of the potential role of arts and culture. Moreover, according to Stern and Seifert (2010) clusters are “cultivated not planned”, arguing that investment in the development of a planned cultural district is always subject to the possibility of failure. The authors differentiate between planned cultural districts and "cultural clusters" that emerge organically through grassroots initiatives. While planned districts focus on prominent cultural venues and large audiences, cultural clusters emphasise the dynamic interactions within the contemporary art scene. Cultural clusters have the potential to revitalise urban economies by actively engaging residents and revitalising neighbourhoods. They stimulate civic engagement and contribute to social cohesion. However, investment in planned districts carries the risk of failure, while planning interventions can support and enhance the success of cultural clusters by leveraging existing resources (Stern and Seifert, 2010).

The bottom-up vs top-down dilemma raises many challenges for urban planners. Indeed, policymakers struggle to discover the proper formula for implementing cultural-led urban regeneration interventions, frequently focusing on desired results but seldom considering how the policy process may affect them (Lidegaard et al. 2017). Although these policies have successfully generated positive outcomes in various aspects, they have often neglected to recognize the potential negative consequences inherent in their own designs (Morea & Sabatini, 2023).

When it comes to the level of intervention, the concept of planning creativity appears contradictory, as its value lies in its perceived novelty and potential for innovation (Lidegaard et al. 2017). Bianchini (1993) proposes a shift from top-down approaches to involving the community in decision-making processes, aiming to foster a sense of identity and belonging. Similarly, García (2004) argues that city regeneration initiatives often suffer from alienation, misrepresentation, and a lack of community ownership, ultimately leading to indistinctiveness and unsustainability in the long run.

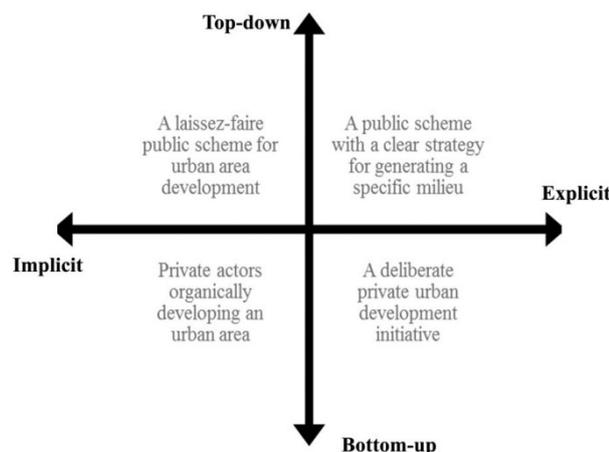
In the specific case of cultural districts, the question of whether they develop organically or

if they necessitate intervention and support from public policies, both during their initial development phase and in the long term, emerges. How can policymakers support and foster these clusters without stifling their unique characteristics and creativity?

Scott (2004) suggests the need for carefully tailored bottom-up measures, where public involvement should be focused on nurturing districts that would otherwise be neglected and supporting existing ones. Moreover, according to Mommaas (2004) the cultural district model itself should encourage horizontal interactions and dynamics among various stakeholders. However, the success of these models is strongly dependent on the formation of fragile personal connections among stakeholders who have personal interests at stake (Mommaas, 2004).

On the other hand, Fromhold-Eisebith and Eisebith (2005, p. 1265) propose that the trade-off between explicit top-down and implicit bottom-up policies in promoting innovative clusters should be assessed based on four dimensions: (i) geographical scale, (ii) regional structural preconditions, (iii) sector-specific focus, and (iv) life cycle stages of the cluster (p. 1265).

Figure 2: Governance dimensions in urban clusters.



Source: Lidegaard, C., Nuccio, M., & Bille, T. (2017). Fostering and planning urban regeneration: the governance of cultural districts in Copenhagen. *European Planning Studies*, 26(1), 1–19.

The governance matrix depicted in Figure 2 combines four polarities. Top-down approaches entail policy initiatives aimed at promoting the creative city, which is funded and directed by publicly dominated agencies. On the other hand, bottom-up approaches encompass initiatives led by profit-oriented and non-profit private actors who operate independently from the policy sphere, driven by their own willingness and capability. In terms of strategies, explicit approaches have well-defined objectives and generate specific expectations, whereas implicit strategies are characterised by a laissez-faire approach, often developing spontaneously, and allowing for self-growth and experimentation.

Based on

Montgomery (2003), Lidegaard et al. (2017) identified the key factors involved in planning sustainable urban districts and categorised them into three groups: form, activity and meaning (see Figure 3). Form pertains to the physical layout and spatial arrangement of urban functions, including their accessibility. In particular, according to Jacobs (1961), a creative environment necessitates infrastructure that provides for permeability and accessibility, whereas the former refers to good internal and exterior possibilities for personal transit and communication (Andersson, 1985). Activity encompasses the network of functional connections and social interactions that are fostered through gathering spaces, relational networks, and cultural activities. In order for cultural activities to be enjoyed, creative districts need to provide a variety of options for consumption, including shops, galleries, restaurants, theatres, and music venues (Montgomery, 2003).

These locations can also serve as ‘third places’ (Trip & Romein, 2014), referring to places that are neither work nor home, but rather social settings where people can gather and engage in various activities. Moreover, in order to ensure a continuous influx of emerging artists, entrepreneurs, and research and development initiatives for cultural activities, it is essential to have access to educational institutions and providers (Montgomery, 2003). Moreover, many scholars have emphasised the significance of tolerance (Bianchini, 1999; Florida, 2002) as a crucial element in creating an inclusive and diverse environment. Tolerance is seen as a catalyst that promotes openness and encourages the flourishing of artistic communities. Finally, meaning encompasses the subjective perception and identity of a place as experienced by its inhabitants, involving intangible aspects such as image and authenticity (Trip & Romein, 2014). These qualities are reflected in the sense of place, historical significance, and cultural context of the area (Lidegaard et al. 2017). According to Montgomery (2003) ‘knowledgeability’, such as “knowing what is going on” is essential to build the identity of the district. There are different ways to implement the ‘knowledgeability’ of a district, and therefore its identity, for example brochures, press releases, fliers which communicate the network of organisations and possible shared programming and events. In addition, Montgomery (2003), believes successful cultural districts display this ‘design ethos’ through architectural and design aspects as well.

Figure 3: Overview of qualities

- Form
 - Fine-grain urban morphology
 - Rent
 - Variety and density of building stock
 - Loft living
 - Open-minded spaces
 - Permeability and accessibility
- Activity
 - Relation networks
 - Consumption possibilities
 - Third places
 - Mixed primary uses
 - Diversity
- Meaning
 - A sense of history and progress
 - Identity and imagery

Source: Lidegaard, C., Nuccio, M., & Bille, T. (2017). Fostering and planning urban regeneration: the governance of cultural districts in Copenhagen. *European Planning Studies*, 26(1), 1–19.

In their analysis, Lidegaard et al. (2017), conclude that cultural planning should incorporate temporal experimentation and adopt a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches. This approach is considered more favourable than completely unregulated initiatives or real estate-driven developments. It ensures the financial sustainability of initiatives and allows creative workers and companies to maintain a certain level of control over area development. Additionally, this approach helps counteract gentrification, a process that can negatively impact communities.

Indeed, urban renewal and its implementation are intertwined in a complex debate that is closely related to the concept of gentrification. As stated by Klunzman: “Each story of regeneration begins with poetry and ends with real estate” (Evans, 2005). In particular, top-down policies frequently indicate a worsening of the current conditions of uneven growth. For example, various regeneration initiatives, particularly at the local level, have favoured urban growth at the expense of certain target populations, leading to gentrification.

At the same time, gentrification is related to the government's strong role in supporting a 'positive' kind of gentrification aimed at revitalising abandoned urban areas. The government has frequently interfered to encourage business redevelopment. As a result, because of its renewing effect, politicians and the media have embraced gentrification in many situations (Zukin et al., 2009).

Researchers and policymakers have mostly disagreed over whether gentrification has a beneficial or detrimental impact on the city. Arts-based economic development, in both scholarly literature and public debate, has been linked to displacement or gentrification (Zukin et al., 2009). It

is important that planners and policymakers include the costs of displacement in their calculation of the benefits of culture-based revitalization.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Strategy

In the previous chapter, the main theoretical underpinnings have been addressed, starting from the main theories on agglomeration economies and clusters. After delving into the benefits of agglomeration for the cultural sector, the planned cultural district was discussed as a catalyst of urban regeneration and as such, as a phenomenon of cultural planning. From the theoretical framework, a policy dilemma arose, which justifies the research question of the following research:

*Considering the benefits of clustering, how can policymakers replicate this phenomenon?
How do the dynamics of agglomeration work in Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna?*

The following research will focus on the case of the planned district Manifattura delle Arti (Factory of the Arts) in Bologna in order to answer the research question. A case study strategy was selected because it allows an in-depth analysis of a place such as a community or organisation (Brayman, 2012). Considering the intrinsic connection of clusters with the territory and the community, allows us to investigate the possible effects of clustering within the urban environment. The district of Manifattura delle Arti is a significant case of planned cluster and is adequately developed to make an analysis, as the district was implemented in the early 2000s. Moreover, the context of Bologna is suitable for investigating the top-down vs bottom-up dilemma, as the city shows a strong emphasis on culture both from the bottom and from the top. Indeed, on the one hand, the city shows a high density of associations and grassroots initiatives. On the other hand, the municipality shows great interest in cultural and urban regeneration policies, demonstrated by high spending on cultural initiatives. Overall, the city is connoted by high creativity, with a score of 29,7 according to the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor ranking (Montalto et. al, 2019). Moreover, Bologna cultural activities are viewed as crucial in supporting socialisation and the development of human and urban skills (Morea & Sabatini, 2023). More insights on the case study will be provided in the next chapter, dedicated to an overview and historical perspective on Manifattura delle Arti. However, within the case study framework, it may be challenging to establish cause-and-effect links between the data collected and findings are not always generalizable (Rutteford, 2012).

To understand how the dynamics of agglomeration act within Manifattura delle Arti, a qualitative approach has been adopted. Interviews have been conducted with key actors working in the cluster, such as directors and cultural employees in the main organisations and institutions of the district and other stakeholders involved in the governance of the area and of the municipality.

Indeed, through interviews, it is possible to capture the respondents' perspective on their lives, as perceived by them, thus enabling researchers to grasp their experiences, their feelings and their social sphere (Fossey et. al, 2002). In particular, I conducted semi-structured interviews, which employ an interview outline to allow for a more concentrated examination of a certain topic and guarantee the “sensitivity to participants’ language and privilege their knowledge” (Fossey et. al, 2002). Interviews are implemented with field observations, since I was able to conduct most of the interviews in the district and observe first-hand spatial and social dynamics.

3.2 Data Sample and data collection

Assessment of the population considered relevant for the study constitutes the initial stage of the sampling procedure. In particular, since a qualitative method has been adopted, a purposive sampling approach was employed. Purposive sampling is characterised by the deliberate selection of information sources based on their relevance for exploring specific meanings or concepts (Fossey et. al, 2002). Indeed, with direct relation to the research questions being answered, this sort of sampling essentially involves the selection of a unit (Brayman, 2012). To determine the population for this research, a comprehensive mapping of the district Manifattura delle Arti was conducted.

First, the institutional and founding organisations of the district were selected, these are MAMbo, Cineteca, Damslab and Cassero LGBTQI centre. Among the respondents of these organisations, 3 are the directors of the main institutions, one is a cinema planner and another is the director of the Educational Department of one of these organisations. A snowball sample approach was also employed. Indeed, some participants identified other people with direct knowledge relevant to the current investigation, allowing the researcher to familiarise with the district and gather a larger sample of organisations and perspectives. In particular, I first reached the representatives of Damslab and MAMbo who indicated to me the people to contact within Cassero and Cineteca. As well, I identified the cultural workers in the private and grassroots organisations thanks to the first interview with one of them. Indeed, the curator of LocaleDue facilitates the connection with the director of a gallery located in the district, with a representative of the association DRY ART and two curators of PARSEC collective.

Besides the cultural activities located within the district, other stakeholders involved in the governance of the cluster and of the municipality were identified as relevant respondents. Among these 2 are employees of FIU- Fondazione Innovazione Urbana, the foundation developed in collaboration between the Municipality and the University of Bologna with the aim of implementing many projects related to the care of territory and communities. Then, one of the co-founder of BAM- Strategie Culturali, a cultural consulting firm that is active in the area and has worked with several organisations in the district. Finally, a researcher that investigated the case of

the district through interviews at the time of its implementation, such as 20 years ago. Overall the sample consists of 14 individuals, as shown in table 1. The sample is predominantly composed of cultural workers, ranging in age from 30 to around 60, with a slight female majority. As reported in table 1, they are mostly people with several years of experience within the sector and in some cases within the district. This provided a historical perspective on the transformation of the district and the main milestones that led to the creation of the Manifattura delle Arti. Furthermore, belonging to very different organisations and having various experiences provides a variety of views on the topic.

Table 1: Sample’s overview

	ORGANISATION	POSITION	SINCE	AGE	GENDER	SETTING
R1	Fondazione Innovazione Urbana	Coordinator Area Cultural Innovation and Urban Economy	2017	40	F	Offline
R2	DAMSLAB	Director	2019	58	F	Offline
R3	LOCALEDUE	Curator and director	2014	36	M	Online
R4	MAMBO	Director of Educational Department	2018	48	F	Offline
R5	BAM - strategie culturali	Founder	2012	38	M	Online
R6	CINETECA	Cinema planner	1993	57	F	Offline
R7	Fondazione Innovazione Urbana	District neighbourhood agent	2019	31	F	Online
R8	MAMBO	Museum director	2017	40	M	Online
R9	CASSERO LGBT CENTRE	Director ‘GenderBender’ Festival	1995	56	M	Online
R10	GalleriaPiù	Director	2013	40	F	Online
R11	ANT- district researcher	Innovation and development manager	2005	44	F	Online
R12	DRY ART	Manager Made in Manifattura	2007	43	M	Online
R13	PARSEC	Curator and co-founder	2020	33	F	Online
R14	PARSEC	co-founder and planner	2020	28	F	Online

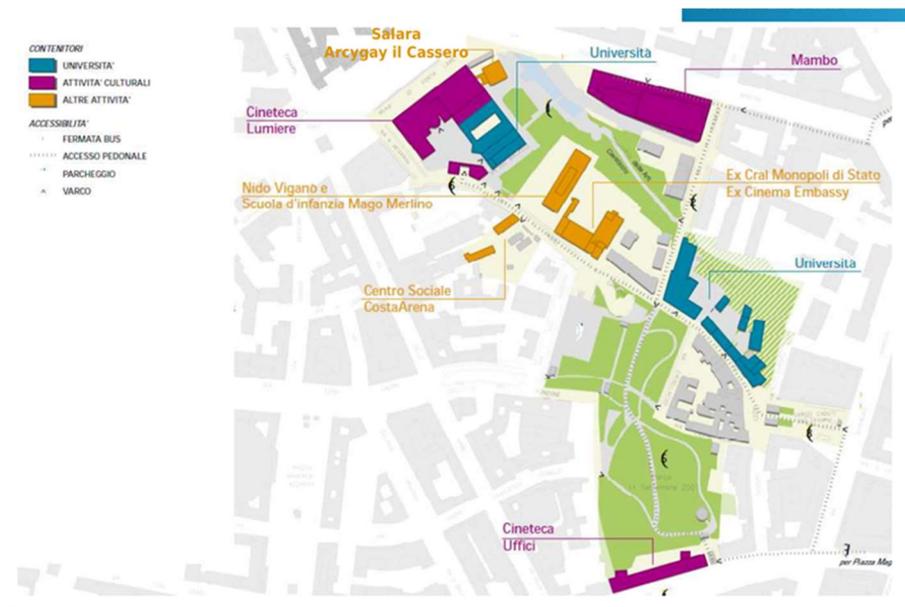
Finally, an interview guide was constructed based on the main topics explored in the theoretical framework (Appendix b). The first part of the interview includes an introduction about the research followed by a few personal questions to gain information about demographic aspects and about the respondent's roles within the organisations. Subsequently, the focus was on the perception of the district, questioning the interviewee about the function and the effects of the cluster on the territory. Next, I investigated the relationships between the main actors. Then, I asked questions concerning the cultural policies of the city of Bologna with a focus on the district and urban regeneration policies. Finally, the interviews concluded by asking what future developments and perspectives they expect from the Manifattura delle Arti. Semi-structured interview guides usually contain a list of questions and prompts designed to guide the interview in a focused, yet flexible and conversational, manner (Fossey et. al, 2002).

3.3 Data Analysis

After conducting the interviews, they were transcribed in the original language (italian) using the software Pinpoint. Then, the transcriptions were coded and analysed using the ATLAS.ti software. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse data acquired from semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis is defined as "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Moreover, thematic analysis provides flexibility in the interpretative process, allowing researchers to adapt to the unique characteristics of their study. It is widely used as an analytical method in qualitative research, as emphasised by Bowen (2009). Indeed, this method of analysis results suitable for the following research since allows to identify patterns across different interviews, providing a comprehensive understanding of similarities, conflicts, or areas where information may be lacking. It offers the ability to compare data horizontally, facilitating a thorough exploration of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of coding, organising and interpreting meanings follows the six stages outlined by Braun and Clark (2018): 1. Becoming familiar with the data; 2. Generating initial codes; 3. Identifying potential themes; 4. Reviewing and refining themes; 5. Defining and labelling themes; 6. Presenting the findings in a comprehensive report. The analysis of data involves both deductive and inductive approaches to connect data collection with the theoretical framework. Indeed, during the research process, certain predictions arose based on a thorough examination of the existing literature. These expectations were then compared to the actual findings derived from the interviews in a process of constant comparison and analysis. After familiarising with data, I generated 150 initial codes, among which 70 were chosen in order to abstract the main themes. *Appendix C* contains an overview of the codes resulting from the data analysis. Finally, the themes obtained throughout the analysis will be presented and discussed in chapter 5.

4. Case Study: Manifattura delle Arti (Factory of the Arts)

Figure 4: District conformation



Source: <https://www.comune.bologna.it/home>

“For centuries, the northwest corner of old Bologna was an industrial zone, home to slaughterhouses, salt works and tobacco factories. But now the once-neglected neighbourhood, a 15-minute walk from the city centre, is churning out a new commodity: art” (Ann Wilson Lloyd, 2008).

Manifattura delle Arti (Factory of the Arts), is a cultural district located in Bologna, in the centre-north of Italy. The district is one of the three main cultural districts of the city and home to organisations with very different natures, both in terms of artistic and cultural content and in terms of legal status. Manifattura delle Arti was implemented in the early 2000s, contextually to the planning for Bologna 2000 - European Capital of Culture (Zan et. al, 2011). The strategy entailed converting a former trade fair into a cultural district by bringing together various cultural institutions that were previously dispersed. As mentioned in the introduction, between 1980 and 1990 many European cities became aware that cultural industries could act as the foundation for economic growth, among these cities Peter Hall (1998) mentioned Bologna. The author foresaw that culture would have taken over the space left by abandoned industries and warehouses, creating a novel city model, as in the case of Manifattura delle Arti. Urban regeneration has become a global

and omnipresent genre of cultural creation, as seen by the transformation of numerous old industries into “creative” areas (Aiello, 2011). The transformation cost more than 500,000,000 euros and included funds from the municipality, the region, the university and the European Union (Aiello, 2011).

Manifattura delle Arti includes various facilities and institutions that have been established in repurposed industrial buildings. These include the Ex Manifattura Tabacchi park, which has been renamed Parco 11 Settembre, the renowned Cineteca (Bologna's Film Archive) situated in the former tobacco factory, along with its theatre, library, and archives. Additionally, the former slaughterhouse complex houses studio spaces for the University of Bologna's Department of Music and Performing Arts. Other components of the MdA include the University of Bologna's Department of Communication Studies, located in the former paper mill known as Ex Mulino Tamburi, the Museum of Modern Art (MAMbo) situated in the former municipal bakery, and the national headquarters of Arcigay, Italy's leading organisation for LGBT culture and rights, which is housed in the former salt storage building. Furthermore, the district incorporates amenities such as a 550-space underground parking facility, a nursery school, a community centre called “Casa di quartiere CostArena”, student housing, and municipal low-income housing (Porto15). It is worth noting that the MdA was intentionally designed to merge cultural institutions with social welfare establishments (Aiello, 2011).

The context of Bologna gained international recognition as a "laboratory of cultural enterprises" (Bloomfield, 1993). This designation originated in the early 1990s and was highlighted in a notable collection of studies on urban cultural policies in Europe by Bianchini and Parkinson (1993). Bologna's reputation as a hub for cultural initiatives and innovative projects underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics and outcomes of cultural policies in this city. Moreover, the city embraces the notion that the arts play a vital role in nurturing social connections and facilitating the development of both individuals and urban environments (Morea & Sabatini, 2023). In particular, the FIU - Fondazione Innovazione Urbana, the foundation developed in collaboration between the Municipality and the University of Bologna, is implementing many projects related to the care of territory and communities. Through the works and activities of the FIU, the municipality adopts a policy model focusing on participation and cultural democracy, such as the *Bilancio Partecipativo*, an instrument of direct democracy which empowers and engages residents to actively participate in identifying, designing, and ultimately voting on initiatives that directly impact their local communities. The proposals that receive the highest number of votes are subsequently financed and put into action (*Fondazione Innovazione Urbana*, n.d.).

This tool was used also to create projects within Manifattura delle Arti, for example contextually to the initiative 'Mercato Ritrovato', the sustainable market project raised as a requalification action for the square inside the Cineteca complex. Furthermore, another relevant urban policy framework is 'Bologna Attiva', a process of urban, social and human regeneration developed by FIU - Urban Innovation Foundation as part of DumBO, the 40.000 square metre area of the former Ravone Cargo terminal (Fondazione Innovazione Urbana, n.d.) Contextually to this project, there is the development of a new cultural district in the city, which is that of DumBO and the close geographical area. Encompassing the district of Manifattura delle Arti, is in the municipality agenda to create a new district called Distretto della Creativita. The vision is that these realities can contaminate each other, collaborate and give rise to a new dimension in the urban geography of Bologna.

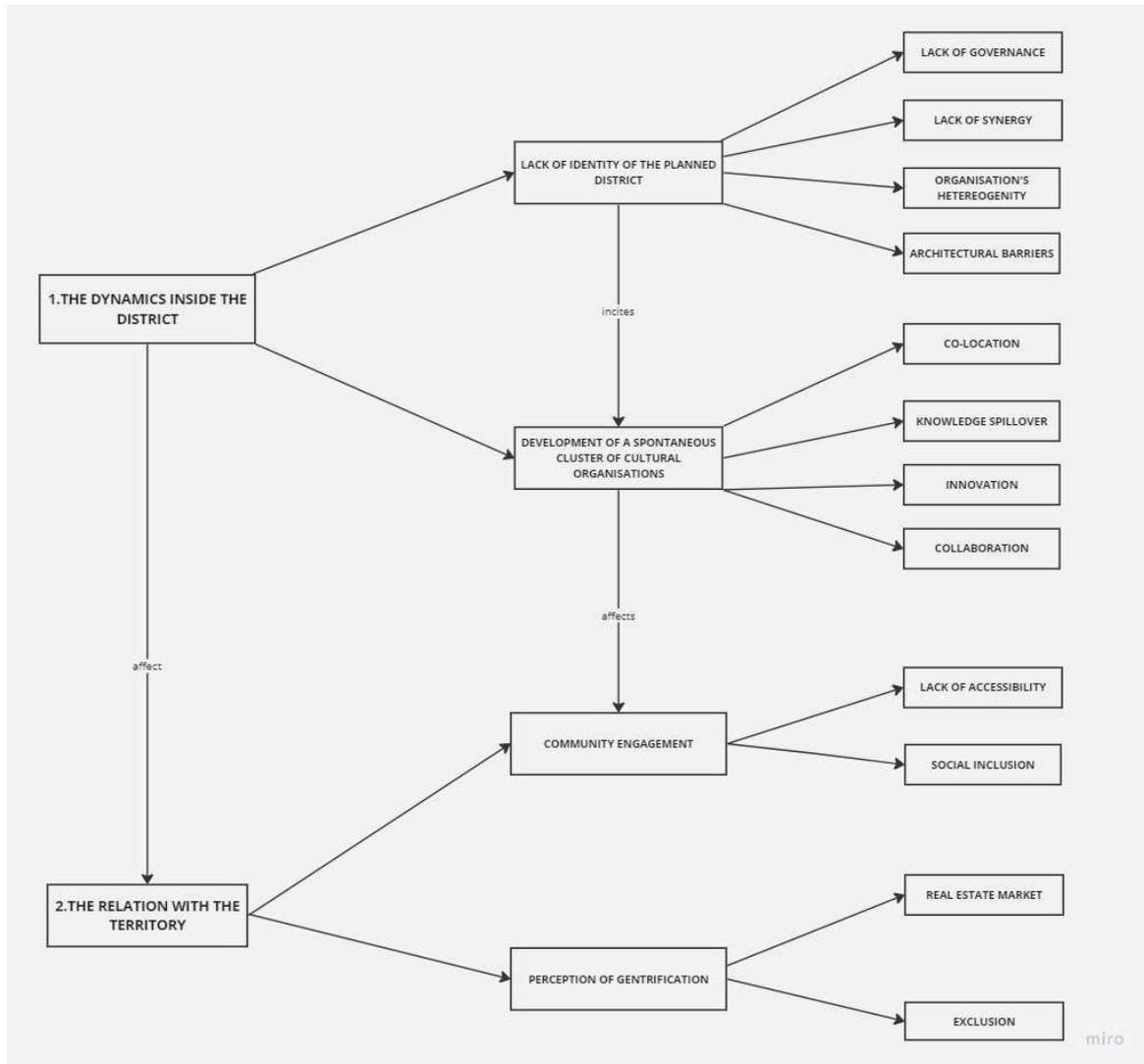
5. Results

In this chapter the data collected from 14 semi-structured interviews will be presented.

Additionally, the chapter delves into the discussion of the results in connection with the pertinent themes and theories explored in the theoretical framework. The analysis is structured around two main themes: 1) the dynamics inside the district and 2) the relation with the territory. Collectively, the findings related to these themes contribute to addressing the research question: *Considering the benefits of clustering, how can policymakers replicate this phenomenon? How do the dynamics of agglomeration work in Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna?*

First, I looked at the dynamics and relations between the organisations that operate in the district. Two main results developed from this perspective: on the one hand, the lack of the district's identity and lack of synergy among the planned district's organisations and on the other, the presence of a spontaneous cluster of galleries and grassroots cultural initiatives. Friction between the two souls of the district, such as the one composed of the founding institutions and the spontaneous cluster of galleries and private organisations, emerged. This dichotomy is reflected in a different degree of synergy between these two levels and it is also reflected on the community and neighbourhood in which the district is located. Indeed, the second stage focuses on the relation with the territory, with particular attention to the topics of gentrification and community engagement. The figure below (5) presents a summary of the secondary themes and the primary codes.

Figure 5: Data Structure



Source: Author's Interpretation

5.1 The dynamics inside the District

5.1.1 Lack of District's identity and lack of synergy among the institutional organisations

When asking respondents about their perceptions of the district, the main finding is the lack of identity, which is not perceived as such. Indeed, most respondents, especially among the founder and institutional organisations of the district, do not recognise the actual existence and functioning of the district. As stated by interviewee 12, “there is little awareness of belonging to such an important area”.

Knowing what's going on, referred to by Montgomery (2003) as ‘knowledgeability’, is essential to build the identity of the district. According to Montgomery, there are different ways to implement the ‘knowledgeability’ of a district, and therefore its identity, for example brochures, press releases, fliers which communicate the network of organisations and possible shared programming and events. The only attempt to state the identity of the district as a synergic network emerged from the director of one of the main cultural institutions within the district, as he mentioned in the interview: “I had a panel put up in the museum's anti-reception area with a map of the Manifattura delle Arti, showing all the public institutions, but also those independent or private initiatives”. However, referring to this attempt, the director of another institution in the district claimed that it was done eight years ago and that it created disappointment among other organisations in the city since they were not included in that itinerary (Interviewee 10).

In addition, Montgomery (2003), believes successful cultural districts display this ‘design ethos’ through architectural and design aspects as well. In this regard, from my field observations, the district shows a certain level of architectural homogenization, confirming the theory of Aiello (2011). However, it is relevant to comment on certain architectural elements that were pointed out by many interviewees. Indeed, few references were made to the totems placed as the entrance to the Manifattura delle Arti, as an example of failure in creating and communicating the identity of the district (Figure 6). As stated by respondent 5:

“Around the district there are ugly tall glass totems with the words Manifattura delle Arti written on them, which are 20 years old and falling apart, nobody is taking them down, restoring them, or doing anything with them, and they are testimony to the fact that right now nobody is interested in talking about this project”.

Figure 6: Glass totem in Manifattura delle Arti



Source: Author's photo

Moreover, among the reasons for the lack of interaction between the district's founding organisations emerged the issue of architectural barriers. Indeed, 5 respondents mentioned a disconnection among the organisations due to the physical disposition of spaces. Interviewee 8 argued: "The district itself on an architectural level was also designed and conceived as a bit of a barrier, it is a small ghetto". In particular, many interviewees complained about the situation of Cavaticcio Park. The park which all the institutions overlook and that should act as a link between them, but which in fact acts as a dividing element. The Cavaticcio is an historical canal that, as part of the physical regeneration intervention, was brought back to light after almost a century underground.

Figure 7: Cavaticcio Park



Source: Wikipedia

Figure 8: Map of Cavaticcio Park



Source: Google Maps

As claimed by the director of one of the main organisations in the district:

“From an architectural point of view, however, it can be said that the Manifattura delle Arti is a bit of an unfinished project because this bridge, which was supposed to connect the two banks of the Cavaticcio and thus directly link Mambo and the Cineteca to Damslab, was never built, and this certainly causes a bit of a disconnect because although there is this physical proximity of the institutions, they all look outside the Manifattura delle Arti, not so much inside”.

During the interview that took place in the Damslab, I was able to observe this situation firsthand.

Interviewee 2 showed me the Cavaticcio park from the glass of the Damslab saying:

“The Cavaticcio brings us all together, but until we don’t think about that as a common place and a common good of this reality and begin to see what is inside this place and begin to invest in this place as a space on which we can actually create synergies it will be difficult to overcome these difficulties”.

This perception is aligned with another consideration elaborated by interviewee 7:

“A first consideration that has to do with urban planning, when the restructuring was considered, the park was not considered as a connecting element of passage and exchange. So, this is an initial point that has to do with urban planning and how much urban planning also conditions the use of spaces”.

Indeed, this is an issue that pertains to the physical layout and spatial arrangement of urban functions which influence relationships and interactions in the district, as we explored in the theoretical framework (figure 3). According to Jacobs (1961), a creative environment necessitates infrastructure that provides for permeability and accessibility, whereas the former refers to good internal and exterior possibilities for personal transit and communication (Andersson, 1985).

On the other hand, a sense of history and belonging to a place that is socially and historically relevant for the city and the community was revealed from the research. Recalling the model of Lidegaard et al. (2017), presented as figure 3 in the theoretical framework, the 'sense of history' is highlighted as relevant for the meaning of a district. In line with this aspect, the actors operating in the district are very much aware of the history and past of this place which "is evidently an area that has its own *genius loci*" (Interviewee 2). In many interviews, the history of this district and the previous function of the buildings emerged as a deeply felt and recognised theme. As expressed by one of the employees of MAMbo, since the museum is located in the city's former bread oven which provided food for the population, "it is therefore both historically and socially a place full of meaning". Consequently, the main point of identity and sense of belonging to the district seems related to the historical relevance of the neighbourhood and to the architectural regeneration and homogenization implemented by the municipality when it created Manifattura delle Arti. This is related to the risk pointed out by Ghilardi and Bianchini (2007), of an urban planning approach that only considers the physical regeneration of a place with a 'city marketing' perspective, without taking into consideration other factors. Indeed, the only top-down intervention was ultimately the creation of the district, such as the physical requalification of the industrial area, contextually to the planning for Bologna 2000 - European Capital of Culture (Zan et. al, 2011).

In this regard, the lack of a governance model to coordinate the various organisations and strengthen synergy was complained of by many respondents. Indeed, as claimed by interviewee 3:

"It was never possible to create a real network between the spaces. Partly because the resources were not there, in the sense that there was perhaps a lack of a higher element that could coordinate it both conceptually and economically".

This aspect is reflected in the lack of relations and synergy among the institutions within the district: "they all look outside Manifattura delle Arti, not inside" (Interviewee 8). Furthermore, the director of one of the main organisations claimed:

"So, the various institutions are kind of always left to themselves, there is no specific project. So, if you leave it to these institutions to organise themselves, they won't do it on their own, they have no reason to set up a permanent round table, perhaps they don't see the point".

In addition, respondent 7 stated:

"There is a lack of governance tools for this network, i.e. a model of collaboration between the various actors that makes this system work, so I probably don't know whether it is necessary to have centralised coordination of Manifattura or whether it would be better to

try to find a governance model that also redistributes responsibilities between the various actors so they can actually work in synergy with each other".

Respondent 5 added, "we are talking territorially about something quite unique, but it is not interpreted as a district, it is not told as a district, and it does not work as a district, the individual organisations that are part of this territorial neighbourhood are left to their own initiative to build things".

The perception from many interviewees is that the district was planned from above, but dropped without detail and without successful interventions that would strengthen the identity of the district and foster synergy between the actors. As stated by interviewee 2: "It was conceived, it was created, it was much communicated, but it was never actually implemented". This perspective is in line with the perception of many other respondents. Indeed, according to the officer of the neighbourhood Porto-Saragozza: "the absence of a common network in Manifattura delle Arti means that the organisations are closed enclaves".

According to Santagata (2002), one of the main institutional prerequisites to the implementation of a metropolitan cultural district is indeed the involvement of an organisation responsible for guiding projects by facilitating planning procedures and providing support for the management and marketing of cultural activities. In the case of Manifattura delle Arti this aspect is not present.

On the other hand, recalling the governance matrix elaborated by Lidegaard et al. (2017) (Figure 2), it can be assumed that in the case of Manifattura delle Arti an implicit top-down approach was employed, meaning a laissez-faire public scheme. This approach is very much in line with the political model of the city of Bologna. As suggested by the District neighbourhood agent: "Considering the Bolognese context, a horizontal collaborative model between all actors rather than a vertical centralised coordination would be more efficient".

In fact, when asking about urban and cultural policies in the city of Bologna, models of participatory governance and various instruments of direct democracy emerged. In the interviews with two employees of the FIU - Fondazione Innovazione Urbana, i.e. the foundation promoted by the municipality and the University of Bologna focused on developing urban strategies, many of these tools were mentioned. For example, the 'Bilancio Partecipativo' (Participatory Budgeting):

"Bilancio Partecipativo is a tool of direct democracy that the Municipality of Bologna has adopted since 2017 and is a process precisely participatory and therefore involving and listening to citizenship aimed at the immersion of proposals for the city and particular neighbourhoods, the proposals that are submitted by the communities of the area are then evaluated. In short, they are subject to feasibility checks by the technical sectors of the

administration and then voted on by all citizens the proposal for each neighbourhood that receives the most votes is then implemented” (respondent 7).

As was explored in the theoretical framework, the notion of cultural democracy is indeed allowing social groups access to cultural life and prompting independent processes of social change (Bonet & Negrier, 2018). In this sense, according to respondent 7: “the municipality has developed several listening paths that have led to defining a minimum of light governance of spaces”. Moreover, according to Mommaas (2004) the cultural district model itself should encourage horizontal interactions and dynamics among various stakeholders. However, the success of these models is strongly dependent on the formation of fragile personal connections among stakeholders who have personal interests at stake (Mommaas, 2004).

These personal factors were addressed by many respondents. According to interviewee 5:

“Both the director of Damslab, the director of Mambo, and especially the director of Cineteca are people who have a certain kind of ego and are not willing to cede some of their influence to others and so forcing them to talk to each other is something that no one would want to do and so in my opinion at some point, the Municipality of Bologna simply took a step back and decided that they were no longer interested in putting these people to talk to each other at all costs”.

Moreover, one of the main reasons why the key actors “live in self-referential terms” (Interviewee 2), can be attributed to the different nature and vocation of the organisations. Indeed, respondent 12 stated: “we are talking about a very complex area with very different entities by statute.” This is also supported by interviewee 9:

“Very different subjects overlook that cultural district (Manifattura delle Arti): the Mambo is an institution of Bologna City Council, as is the Cineteca, which is a foundation owned by the municipality; then there is the University of Bologna with the Dasmlab; and then there is the Cassero LGBT Centre, which is essentially a private subject, a non-profit association”.

To sum up, when it comes to the level of intervention, the concept of planning creativity appears contradictory, as its value lies in its perceived novelty and potential for innovation (Lidegaard et al. 2017). In this perspective, the laissez-faire approach of the policymakers can be seen as beneficial in allowing space for innovation and not stifling diversity and creativity. In particular, this is reflected in the second theme of this section, such as the spontaneous cluster of galleries and independent organisations. Indeed, as it will be explained in the next paragraph, the presence of a spontaneous sub-cluster developed from the institutional one has been observed.

5.1.2 The planned district incites a spontaneous order and a subcluster

According to Lavanga (2020): “Cultural districts develop in an organic and spontaneous way” (p.180). Mommaas (2004) also highlights that many well-known creative districts have emerged entirely spontaneously. Aligned with this perspective, it has been observed the presence of a subcluster developed spontaneously, following the dynamics of agglomeration and cluster theories.

“The convergence of cultural institutions, especially interested in contemporary arts languages, has attracted other initiatives that are both private, commercial and cultural associations, as well as non-profit spaces run by artists or collectives that over time have populated neighbouring. There is a real district of private galleries and artistic organisations" (interviewee 8).

As explained by the director of one of the main contemporary art gallery in the cluster:

“The first was Davide Rosi who opened CARDRDE, then came the guys from P420, it was only a year later I was the third private commercial reality to open in the area and the intentions were to act as a corollary to the MAMbo, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Bologna, later there were two or three other non-profit spaces that opened in this area as well”.

What emerged from the answers of most of the interviewees, is the attraction factor due to the high cultural density present in the district. As stated by interviewee 6: “There is a resonance effect. I mean, if you carry out an initiative within that area, it's an area that has its own name and prestige”. Consequently, this led these bottom-up organisations to co-localising and create ‘a sort of corollary to the Museum of Contemporary Art (MAMbo). According to Molotch (2002), associating cultural products and businesses with a particular place, area or building has demonstrated the ability to create a positive image and enhance the reputation of the involved actors over time.

Moreover, in the disclosed cluster of contemporary galleries and independent spaces, it is possible to recognize the importance of proximity, strong collaboration, and knowledge spillover (Lavanga, 2020). As stated by respondent 8: “Working together with other organisations allows you to increase your audiences and also mix professional knowledge”. According to Marshall (1890), geographic proximity and co-location facilitate the local dissemination of knowledge and production know-how, both through imitative processes or direct communication, thus promoting innovation and improvement of production processes (Marshall, 1890). This finding shows that it is advantageous for art galleries to locate themselves in close proximity to other galleries and in general in a space with a high cultural density. Based on Porter’s theory (2000), the last stage of the competitive development of a cluster is the encouragement of new enterprises and growth within the district and in favour of the district (Sacco & Pedrini, 2003). In this sense, the development of

the subcluster is in line with the clustering process. As testified by the owner of one of the galleries located in the cluster:

“I wanted to open my gallery precisely to be close to the museum (MAMbo) and to be close to the realities with which I absolutely speak the same language. Of course, it was a choice that was strongly wanted and thought out”.

In line with Florida (2002), the creative class follows some trends, such as the tendency to cluster in specific places which the author calls ‘creative centres’. Florida (2002), pointed out many reasons why these exceptional individuals decide to locate themselves and their creative activities in these places, among which openness to all types of diversity. Moreover, as we discussed in the theoretical framework, tolerance is seen as a catalyst that promotes openness and encourages the flourishing of artistic communities (Bianchini 1999 ; Florida, 2002). Considering this, Bologna in general is renowned for being an inclusive and tolerant city (Morea & Sabatini, 2023), but specifically the context of the district is also such. For example, thanks to the Cassero LGBTQI Centre, many activities are carried out under the banner of inclusion. As confirmed by respondent 11: “In that area there is an absolutely strong theme of integration from the point of view of gender preferences, which are seen as bearers of value”.

For these reasons, it can be said that the subcluster of galleries was stimulated by the originally planned district, as a high-density cultural reality was created from above, attracting other cultural businesses to the area. This can be seen as a success of cultural planning, which provided an opportunity to foster spontaneity and innovation. Indeed, especially in the creative industries, smaller enterprises are considered the primary drivers of innovation (Towse, 2010). Furthermore, Porter’s idea of localised competitive advantage as a powerful motivator for innovation is also reflected in this environment, since the cluster of contemporary galleries has a strong predisposition for innovation and is home to some of the most experimental contemporary galleries in Italy, such as P420. As stated by respondent 3: “P420 gallery has always done incredibly niche work, but incredibly explosive in terms of both research and market”. And further, the director of one of the galleries stated: “We have really made a difference in terms of the very scene of contemporary research in the city over the last 10 years” (Interviewee 9). In line with Florida (2002), the high density of creative people results in a high density of innovation and provides significant evidence of regional vitality.

Moreover, according to Stern and Seifert (2010), spontaneous cultural clusters emphasise the dynamic interaction within the contemporary art scene, as confirmed by the case study. Indeed, as reported by the director of one of the main galleries located in the district:

“On many occasions we manage to open the galleries in a synergetic way. For example, last Saturday we organise a beautiful event in Manifattura delle Arti. We opened the three galleries that are really close to each other, more or less 150 metres away, and there was also a performance by a cultural association that is very active in the city, which decided to do a sort of public art operation”.

Again, proximity and co-location emerged as beneficial factors which favoured the generation, dissemination and exchange of knowledge and network creation (Lavanga, 2020). It can be said that through face-to-face interactions, the physical coexistence of individuals and companies in the same sector and place has created the 'buzz' referred to by Bathelt et al. (2004). In contrast to the previous section, where a lack of communication and knowing what's going on on the part of the institutions in the district emerged.

Another respondent, a curator of an independent exhibition space, added:

“When they (the other galleries) first moved to where they are today, they were clearly in dialogue with us, forming what was called the MAMbo zone. The average tour that a visitor to Bolognese art was doing was Galleriapiù, CARDRDE, locale due and then P420”.

The combination of these factors resulted in a ferment of artistic and cultural activities, not only the galleries mentioned above (Galleriapiu, P420, CARDRDE), but also many grassroots initiatives. Furthermore, during the interviews I was given several references to these bottom-up organisations, often referred to as the most active and interrelated in the district. Those that have been mapped are the association Dry Art, the art collective PARSEC, the independent space Locale due, and the centre for artistic experimentation and research DAS.

It was particularly significant for the research's objectives to discover that bottom-up organisations exhibit superior effectiveness in their relationships, in contrast to the lack of synergy observed among institutional organisations. Indeed, the main attempts at networking in the district and collaboration come from the bottom-up organisations, “between those who were talking to each other” (interviewee 3). The director of one of the main galleries in the district affirmed: “Certainly the relations between us private business people are very good, we have a continuous dialogue”. In addition to that, interviewee 2 claimed: "There is a bottom-up attempt to actually try to create a network within the Manifattura while not directly involving the main actors of Manifattura itself". It is precisely from the Dry Art association, for example, that the initiative called 'Made in Manifattura' was born, i.e. “this open day of all the realities that were present within the Manifattura area because there was this need to create a shared agenda” (interviewee 12). Or yet another example is the director of one of the galleries who created an association to bring together all the organisations in the district:

“Private realities, such as us, for example have created an organisation that encompasses all the cultural presences of the district, there is also a Facebook page and there is also an association that registered the brand which is called Manifattura delle Arti and it was Davide Rosi (the director of CARDRDE gallery) who first had the vision of the association.” (Interviewee 10).

A difference between the two souls of the district, such as the one composed of the founding institutions and the spontaneous cluster of galleries and private organisations, emerged. This dichotomy is reflected in a different degree of relationship and synergies between these two levels. Indeed, as we have already seen in the first theme, the identity of the planned district is not very perceived. Finally, as stressed by Lidegaard et al. (2017) bottom-up tactics are governed by a laissez-faire attitude and frequently evolve and raise fairly spontaneously, allowing for ‘self-grown’ and experimenting. Furthermore, according to Stern and Seifert (2010), spontaneous cultural clusters have the potential to revitalise urban economies by actively engaging residents and revitalising neighbourhoods. What emerged from the interviews is indeed that bottom-up initiatives, such as galleries, associations and nonprofit spaces, stimulate civic engagement and contribute to social cohesion with a greater degree of openness and permeability to the community compared to the institutional ones. This finding introduces the next theme, such as the relation of the district with the territory.

5.2 The relation with the territory

There is a strong connection among clusters and the territory in which they developed and operate. Indeed, cultural districts establish significant associations with the specific location, encompassing their community and historical background (Rozental & Lavanga, 2014). As mentioned in the previous section, a stronger community involvement has been observed by the bottom-up sphere of the district. Thanks to their nature of experimentation and openness, in fact, these bottom-up initiatives have succeeded in engaging the inhabitants and frequenters of the neighbourhood. For example, the curator of one of these independent spaces said that during some events they “even had people from the neighbourhood sleeping inside the space”. And furthermore, respondent 3 explained to me:

“When we did the strangest events, we involved the community. I mean, it's not that we were trying to involve the community and we had as a goal to involve them, simply certain things that we did naturally involve them”.

Thus, also the association Dry Art, promoted with the festival Made in Manifattura “Activities of various kinds dedicated mainly to the inhabitants of the area and therefore also very accessible in economic terms” (Interviewee 6). One of the organisers of this event described how the association focused specifically on revitalising the Fava Garden, in

particular emphasising the importance of sport. Indeed, they engaged a group of diverse young people who used the basketball playground there. We helped them organise and become an association, and together pushed for the park to be activated throughout the year” (Interviewee 12).

The issue of economic accessibility was underlined by respondent 6, referring to a lack of permeability between residents and the district:

“The residents perceive a sort of barrier a sort of limitation given precisely by the payment of a ticket, be it the ticket to the exhibition rather than the cinema rather than X thing, so this is an issue because indeed another perceptive element that I have seen over time lies precisely in the lack of permeability between the neighbourhood and thus the residents, between the cultural institutions and the community”.

This perspective was confirmed by one of the employees of the MAMbo - Museum of Modern Art of Bologna, claiming that: “I often wondered how much the museum was visited by the residents of this neighbourhood and in my opinion not so much, there are many people who have never been inside the museum. And in my opinion, it is an activity that should also be enhanced.”

Instead, many respondents pointed out the Mercato Ritrovato (a sustainable farmers' market initiative) as the main form of aggregation and of community inclusion in the neighbourhood. The initiative was raised as a requalification action: “precisely with a proposal for the redevelopment of the two main squares where the market takes place, which are Piazzetta Pasolini, and the one inside the former slaughterhouse complex” (Interviewee 6). In general, it has emerged from several testimonies that the main work on community and regeneration is done from the bottom-up. On the other hand, in line with Garcia (2004), city revitalization efforts frequently encounter issues such as disconnection, distortion and lack of community involvement, resulting in a lack of identity and long-term viability. This feeling of exclusion and disconnection was noticed by a few of the respondents, for example, interviewee 3 argued:

“We have gone from a peaceful disintegration, i.e. where different subjects cohabited the territory while not talking to each other, to a time when under the umbrella of dialogue there has been an exclusion of certain subjects.”

Moreover, despite the urban revitalization efforts undertaken during the establishment of the district, significant disturbances and deterioration persist within the vicinity. Indeed, many respondents referred to drug activity and danger, especially in green areas, such as Cavaticcio Park and 11 Settembre Park. This partially disproves the perspective of cultural policies as a vehicle for community building and requalification (Redaelli, 2019). On the contrary, it seems to be left to grassroots organisations and associations to revitalise the area. As stated by respondent 10:

“Bologna has no problems as far as the underground is concerned, it has problems as far as the institution is concerned”. Indeed, as we mentioned before, the city adopted a *laissez-faire* approach which encourages spontaneity such as grassroots initiatives and associations. These realities are seen by the municipality as pivotal in promoting social interaction and facilitating the development of human and urban potentialities (Morea & Sabatini, 2023). However, this aspect has been complained about by the associations active on the territory, which feel that the municipality is somehow using them to “do their job and solve social issues without adequately repaying them for this service” (respondent 14).

Conversely, during the interviews, the topic of the utilisation of culture as a justification for public expropriation of private properties emerged. Recalling Klunzman (2004), it could be said that every tale of revival commences with artistic expression and concludes with real estate. Indeed, 7 respondents out of 14, referred to an increment in the house pricing. As stated by interviewee 6: “this obviously also led to a major economic change because obviously the residential properties that exist in the surrounding area obviously had an increase in their value.” Thus, in line with Markusen (2006), the Creative Class can lead to the rising of housing costs. Indeed, according to respondent 12: “There has been a radical change in the perception of this neighbourhood, which has also changed the cost of flats nearby. It has gone up a lot”. This was confirmed also by interviewee 10:

“Before, this was actually a working-class neighbourhood, so in the early periods this redevelopment plan was not so well received because it basically raised drastically the rents and some people also had parts of their land expropriated because of the Cavaticcio redevelopment”.

However, it is difficult to assume the direct correlation between the implementation of the district and a rise in the real estate market. Indeed, respondent 3 claimed: “In Bologna, house prices are skyrocketing, and it is not that it is *Manifattura delle Arti* that has affected them so much in that area, it is others who are responsible”.

It is interesting that in response to the housing crisis, right in the *Manifattura* district, the first entirely public co-housing initiative in Italy, called *Porto15*, has sprung up. As explained by interviewee 12:

“The municipality's objective would be to extend this model throughout this district, which would have the perfect characteristics to be a pilot to test how this melting pot between different social situations can generate integration”.

However, this can be interpreted as an attempt to camouflage gentrification processes created by top-down policies. Indeed, in this regard, many respondents referred to the new project

District of Creativity that the municipality of Bologna is planning, as an excuse to gentrify all the area.

6. Conclusion

Considering the benefits of agglomeration and clustering, policymakers have attempted to create cultural districts through top-down approaches by employing ‘copy-and-paste strategies’ (Lavanga, 2020, p. 180). Nonetheless, it has been observed that cultural clusters frequently arise naturally without direct intervention from local governments or policy incentives.

In this thesis the policy dilemma regarding the feasibility of recreate cultural districts has been addressed. Indeed, following the discussion on agglomeration and its benefits, the question of whether it is possible to plan something that by nature tends to arise spontaneously, and what this entails has been raised. Specifically, this thesis aims to answer the following research question: *Considering the benefits of clustering, how can policymakers replicate this phenomenon? How do the dynamics of agglomeration work in Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna?*

By analysing the specific context of Manifattura delle Arti, this thesis addressed the research question in order to inform effective policy approaches. The study was conducted through 14 interviews with key actors working in the cluster, such as directors and cultural employees in the organisations and institutions of the district and other stakeholders involved in the governance of the area and of the municipality.

The research unveiled two first main results: 1) the lack of identity of the planned district and 2) the development of a spontaneous cluster of cultural organisations. The first finding is in line with the literature which sustains the risk of failure in planning districts (Santagata, 2002; Stern and Seifert, 2010). In particular, several reasons for the lack of identity and synergy have been identified. Among these, for example, is the lack of physical and architectural permeability between the district's main organisations, highlighting important hints for urban planners. Then, even more significantly, the lack of a higher element of governance. Therefore, in the case of Manifattura delle Arti an implicit top-down approach was employed, meaning a laissez-faire public scheme. This is in line with the policy of the city, based on a horizontal approach and participatory policies. From one hand, it could be seen as a cultural planning success, since it provided an opportunity to foster spontaneity and innovation, demonstrated by the ferment of artistic activities located in the area. Indeed, the research demonstrates that the subcluster of galleries was stimulated by the institutional planned district, as a high-density cultural reality was created from above, attracting other cultural businesses to the area. Moreover, the spontaneous order seems to follow the dynamics of agglomeration. Indeed, among these bottom-up activities there are evidence of knowledge spillover and strong collaborations.

However, the lack of a governance model to coordinate the various organisations and strengthen synergy was complained of from both the two souls of the district, the institutional and the spontaneous one. Indeed, the first would benefit from a higher element of coordination to strengthen their relations and create a synergistic environment. While the grassroots organisations complain that the municipality is somehow using them to do their job and solve social issues, instrumentalizing culture but without providing a sufficient welfare to the associations. This result is strictly connected to the third main theme identified, such as the relation with the territory. Indeed, the bottom-up sphere of the district has demonstrated a greater level of community involvement, engaging residents and frequenters of the neighbourhood through their experimental and open nature. On the other hand, the planned district and its organisations are perceived with a meaning of exclusion and inaccessibility by residents and some evidence of gentrification and rising house prices has been complained about.

Overall, the case of Manifattura delle Arti in Bologna results very interesting, because it's a particular case where spontaneity and planification converge in the framework of an institutional district, resulting in both negative and positive effects. The context of Bologna, with its vibrant association culture and its urban regeneration initiatives, has provided an ideal setting for investigating the relations among bottom-up and top-down initiatives. The findings of this research have implications for both policymakers and urban planners, as they navigate the complexities of cultural-led regeneration interventions. Understanding the efficient practices and policies that have emerged after 20 years of Manifattura delle Arti is crucial, especially in light of future projects such as The District of Creativity that the municipality of Bologna is planning.

Nevertheless, some limitations in the research can be pointed out. Concerning the sample, it was mainly composed of the institutional organisations that operate within the district and of employees of the municipality of Bologna. Indeed, for reasons of time and availability of possible further interviewees, many grassroots realities existing in the area were excluded from the research. This could have enriched the research with other perspectives from the bottom-up. However, I managed to listen to all the opinions of the founder and institutional organisation within the district, many of whom were able to see the development of the district over time. Therefore, a suggestion for further research would be to map more grassroots organisations and include more angles in the research. Finally, to better grasp the effects and the perception of the district on the community and on the territory, it would be useful to also include residents in the search.

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Appendix A - Sample's Overview

	ORGANISATION	POSITION	SINCE	AGE	GENDER	SETTING
R1	Fondazione Innovazione Urbana	Coordinator Area Cultural Innovation and Urban Economy	2017	40	F	Offline
R2	DAMSLAB	Director	2019	58	F	Offline
R3	LOCALEDUE	Curator and director	2014	36	M	Online
R4	MAMBO	Director of Educational Department	2018	48	F	Offline
R5	BAM - strategie culturali	Founder	2012	38	M	Online
R6	CINETECA	Cinema planner	1993	57	F	Offline
R7	Fondazione Innovazione Urbana	District neighbourho od agent	2019	31	F	Online
R8	MAMBO	Museum director	2017	40	M	Online
R9	CASSERO LGBT CENTRE	Director 'GenderBend er' Festival	1995	56	M	Online
R10	GalleriaPiù	Director	2013	40	F	Online
R11	ANT- district researcher	Innovation and development manager	2005	44	F	Online
R12	DRY ART	Manager Made in Manifattura	2007	43	M	Online
R13	PARSEC	Curator and co-founder	2020	33	F	Online
R14	PARSEC	co-founder and planner	2020	28	F	Online

Appendix B - Interview Guide

Personal Questions

- Demographic information (name, age, gender, etc.)
- Could you briefly summarise your function, activities and responsibilities?
- How long have you been working within the cultural organisation/foundation?
- As a cultural worker, was there a particular reason why you chose to work with/in the Manifattura District? If yes, what was it?

Perception of the District

- How would you describe the Manifattura District?
- Could you describe the main changes you have noticed in the Porto district since the Manifattura project was implemented?
- What are the main functions of this space in your opinion? And what are the main benefits for the organisations operating there?
- Do you perceive the District as a synergy, do you feel part of a cluster?
- Do you feel that the Cultural District has an influence on the surrounding area and community?
- What are the main problems you encounter in your organisation or in relation to others?
- Why do you think there are such difficulties?

Social Dimension

- Who are the main actors involved in the functioning of the District?

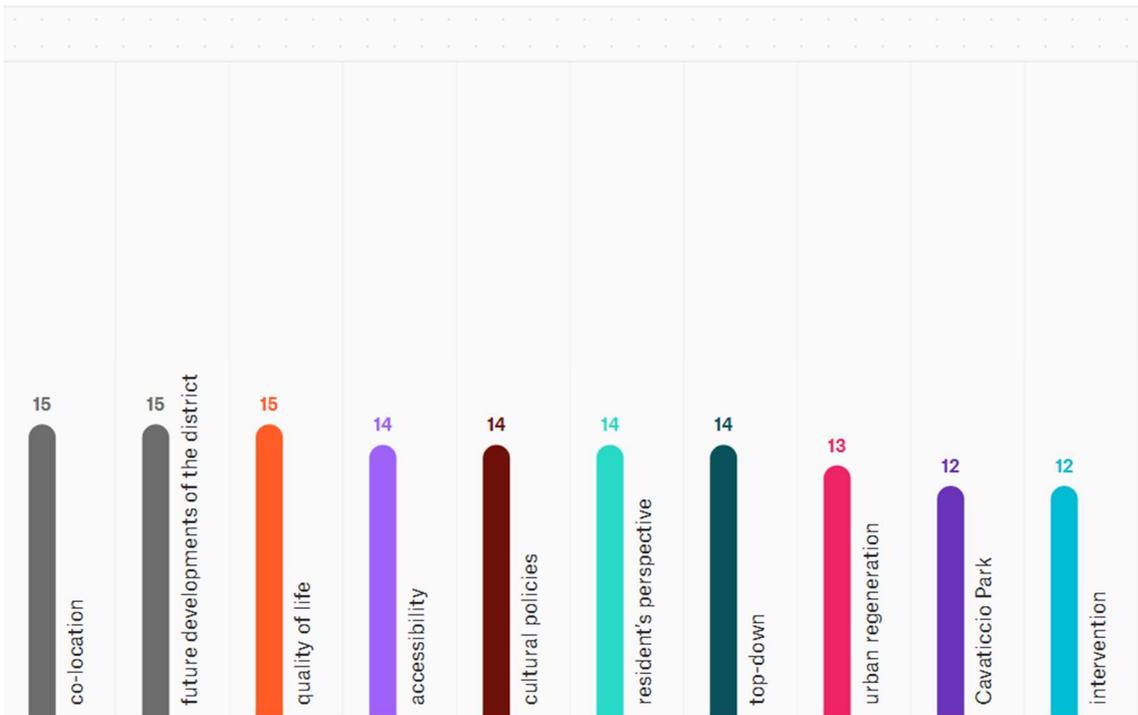
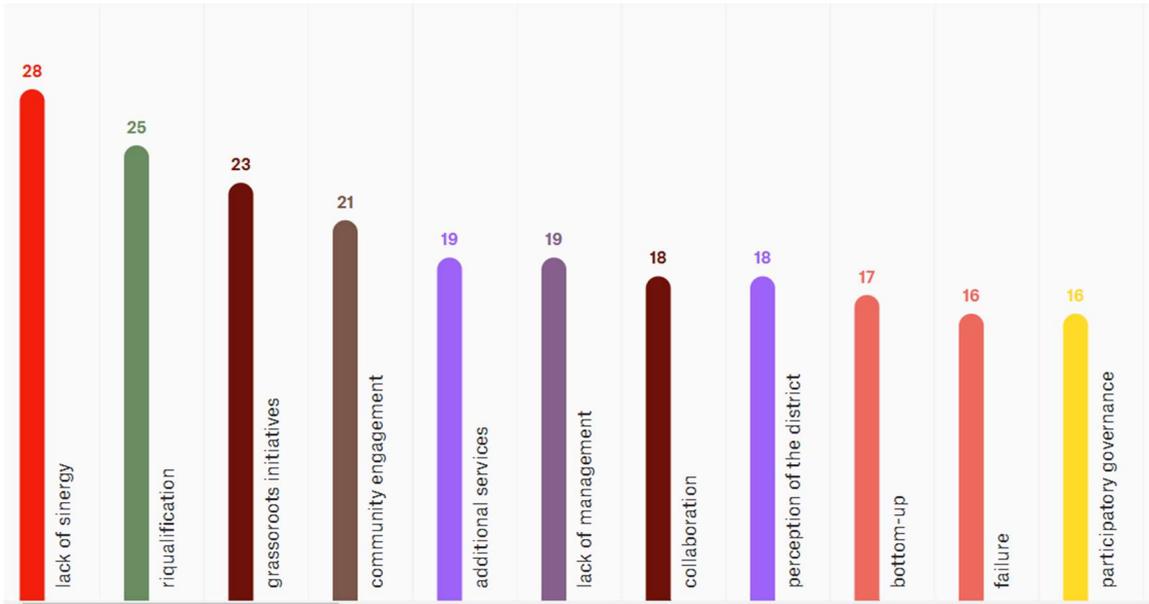
- Could you describe the type of relationships you have with other organisations in the District? Do you usually collaborate with other cultural organisations? If yes, could you tell me which ones and on what occasions?

Cultural Policy

- Do you think that the municipality supports the organisations within the Manifattura? If so, through which instruments? In your opinion, does the municipality cooperate with the organisations present in the District, including those of a non-institutional/private nature? If yes, in what way?
- Do you think that the community is actively involved in the cluster and its initiatives? If yes, in what way?

Appendix C - Coding Manual

Exemplary codes graphs:



Appendix D - Data Structure

