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Creativity as a Form of Potential Economic Value

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ABSTRACT

The study explores creativity as a potential source of economic value, focusing on its role as a strategic resource in contemporary economic systems. The topic centers on the multidimensional nature of creativity, which extends beyond artistic expression to influence innovation, production processes, and competitiveness across firms, institutions, and territories. The main aim of the study is to analyze how creativity can be understood as a generator of economic value and to identify the mechanisms through which it is transformed into concrete outcomes. In particular, the object of the research is the interaction between cognitive, economic, and territorial dimensions, with the goal of developing an integrated interpretative framework capable of explaining how creative processes contribute to value creation in modern economies. From a methodological perspective, the study adopts a mixed-methods approach. It combines a qualitative analysis based on a review of the relevant scientific literature on creativity, innovation, and value, with an empirical analysis using secondary data from Eurostat on employment in the cultural sector in the European Union over the period 2015–2024. This integrated approach allows for a comprehensive and systemic understanding of the phenomenon by linking theoretical insights with measurable economic indicators. The results show that creativity represents a concrete driver of economic value and innovation. Empirical evidence highlights a general growth in cultural employment in the EU, alongside a strong resilience of the sector after the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the findings underline that the effective transformation of creativity into economic value depends on enabling conditions such as infrastructure, collaborative networks, and supportive public policies. Overall, creativity emerges not only as an economic asset but also as a key factor for social and territorial development, contributing to competitiveness, sustainability, and long-term growth.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, creativity has emerged as a central resource in economic development and innovation processes, assuming an increasingly significant role in the competitive dynamics of contemporary economies.

Far from being limited to the artistic sphere, it is now recognized as a transversal capability, capable of influencing knowledge production, the organization of production processes, and the generation of economic value (Eco, 2004; Salvemini, 2007).

In general terms, creativity can be defined as the ability to produce ideas that are both original and appropriate to the relevant context.

This perspective, widely shared in the scientific literature, identifies novelty and usefulness as the distinguishing criteria of the creative phenomenon (Perkins, 1988; Sternberg, 1996, cited in Cavallin, 2015).

However, although this definition allows for a conceptual delimitation of the phenomenon, it does not fully capture the complexity of creative processes, which involve cognitive, social, and contextual dimensions that are difficult to reduce to a single model (Cavallin, 2015).

The link between creativity and innovation represents one of the most significant areas of interest in contemporary

economic analysis.

In particular, creativity translates into innovation when generated ideas materialize into products, services, or organizational models capable of producing tangible effects on economic and social systems (De Giorgi, 2016). From this perspective, creativity assumes a functional role in value creation, contributing not only to the introduction of new solutions but also to improving the efficiency and competitiveness of organizations.

However, the transition from creativity to economic value creation is not automatic. Not all creative ideas result in economically significant innovations, and their effectiveness depends on a multitude of factors, including available resources, organizational capabilities, and, above all, the conditions of the territorial context.

As highlighted by Salvemini (2007), environments characterized by high cultural density, adequate infrastructure, and developed collaborative networks tend to foster the emergence and dissemination of creative processes, amplifying their economic impact.

Despite the widespread use of the concept of creativity, the literature still presents some notable challenges.

First, there is difficulty in providing a univocal definition of the phenomenon due to its multidimensional nature

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and highly contextual character.

Second, understanding of the mechanisms through which creativity is effectively transformed into economic value remains limited, particularly regarding the interaction between individual capabilities and the territorial context (Parisi, 2003).

In light of these considerations, the present study aims to analyze creativity as a form of potential economic value, with particular attention to the processes that enable its translation into concrete outcomes.

The objective is to develop an interpretative framework that integrates the main dimensions of the phenomenon, cognitive, economic, and territorial, to understand how creativity can contribute to the development of contemporary production systems.

The article is structured as follows: the next section presents a review of the reference literature, analyzing the main definitions and approaches to creativity; this is followed by a discussion of the relationship between creativity, innovation, and the territorial context; finally, the economic implications of the phenomenon and possible modes of valorization in contemporary systems are examined.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Creativity

Creativity can be understood both as the ability to produce innovative ideas and solutions in practical contexts, and as an internal cognitive process that relies on intuition and the reorganization of information to generate new connections.

According to Baccarani (2011), the term creativity derives from the verb “to create,” meaning “to give origin, to bring forth, to generate.”

This definition already implies a generative dimension that goes beyond mere recombination, emphasizing the transformative capacity of individuals when dealing with disordered or fragmented elements.

In this sense, creativity consists of producing something new from disorganized elements, among which some individuals are able to identify potential links.

However, this perspective implicitly raises a critical issue: if creativity depends on the ability to detect latent connections, then differences in creative performance may not lie solely in the availability of information, but in the cognitive structures through which such information is processed.

Creativity can manifest in any human activity, including business processes, where innovation represents a constant necessity for firms operating in competitive environments.

A parallel can therefore be drawn between the creativity of artists and that of entrepreneurs or employees, while recognizing significant differences between the two contexts.

An artist applies creativity primarily for self-fulfillment and only secondarily for an audience, whereas an entrepreneur uses it instrumentally, aiming to respond

more effectively to customer needs than competitors.

This distinction highlights a fundamental tension between expressive creativity and functional creativity, suggesting that the latter is constrained by external validation mechanisms such as market acceptance and economic sustainability.

From this perspective, business creativity can be defined as the ability to find new solutions to old or new problems within the market domain.

This approach highlights two fundamental aspects: the centrality of problem-solving and the presence of market constraints, which require solutions to be not only novel but also superior to existing alternatives.

Consequently, creativity in firms cannot be evaluated independently of its outcomes, as its relevance is inherently tied to effectiveness and competitive advantage. The creative process in firms generally follows classical stages: identifying the problem, reflecting on possible solutions (incubation), reaching the idea (illumination), and verifying its feasibility. Nevertheless, unlike purely theoretical models of creativity, this process is significantly influenced by external constraints such as response times, cost sustainability, and alignment with market demand.

This suggests that organizational creativity is not a purely cognitive phenomenon, but a situated process, embedded in economic and competitive dynamics.

De Bono (2015) emphasizes that effective idea generation cannot be achieved solely through external conflict or simple comparison between old and new information.

When new information is evaluated only in light of preexisting ideas, these tend to solidify, preventing truly innovative solutions from emerging.

This observation introduces a critical limitation of path-dependent thinking, which may lead organizations to incremental rather than radical innovation.

According to this view, the most effective way to produce new ideas operates from within, through the intuitive reorganization of available information.

However, this emphasis on intuition raises an important theoretical question: to what extent can intuition be managed or structured within organizational contexts that typically rely on formal procedures and analytical tools?

This tension between intuition and formalization represents a key challenge in the management of creativity. Intuition is therefore a key element of creativity, particularly in contexts where information cannot be evaluated objectively, such as hypothetical or imaginative situations.

Even in domains characterized by high levels of objectivity, such as scientific research, intuitive reprocessing of data can lead to significant advances, enabling what may be defined as creative “leaps.”

This suggests that intuition does not oppose rationality, but rather complements it, expanding the range of possible interpretations.

Creativity does not consist merely in accumulating information but in knowing how to use it in an original

and functional way.

When ideas actively guide the interpretation of data, rather than passively receiving it, the creative process becomes faster and more effective.

This reverses the traditional assumption that information precedes interpretation, highlighting instead the role of cognitive frameworks in shaping meaning.

A central element in managing information productively is the use of codified models, which allow attention to focus only on relevant elements to identify meaningful patterns, analogous to how books in a library are cataloged according to an identification number.

However, while codification enhances efficiency, it may also introduce rigidity, potentially limiting the emergence of unconventional associations.

This dual role of models, as both enablers and constraints, further reinforces the complexity of managing creativity.

In this sense, the mind should not be considered a mere data-processing machine, but as a dynamic environment in which information can be organized into models and new connections, generating original ideas.

Ultimately, creativity can be considered the capacity to transform information into new ideas through intuition, internal reorganization, and model construction.

At the same time, its effectiveness depends on the ability to balance structure and flexibility, as well as exploration and constraint, particularly in organizational settings.

Concept of Value

The concept of value represents a central element both in business management and in the activities of public institutions, as it reflects the ability to generate lasting benefits for stakeholders and the community, integrating economic, social, and relational outcomes.

However, the multidimensional nature of value makes its definition inherently complex and subject to different interpretative frameworks.

According to Marchi (2019), value in the economic-business context should not be understood merely as a measure of achieved results, but rather as an indicator of a firm's capacity to generate wealth over time, combining reliability, continuity, and economic relevance.

This perspective challenges both the traditional view based on historical cost and the fair value approach.

While the former focuses on realized outcomes, potentially neglecting future prospects, the latter incorporates expectations that may introduce volatility and uncertainty. The coexistence of these approaches reveals a fundamental tension between stability and forward-looking evaluation.

Historical cost provides reliability but may underestimate future potential, whereas fair value enhances relevance but may reduce comparability and increase exposure to market fluctuations. Therefore, neither approach alone appears sufficient to capture the full complexity of corporate value.

In recent decades, North American management theories have influenced business practices by introducing

an empirical and scientific approach to performance measurement, highlighting the contrast between civil law regulations and accounting practices.

Companies have adopted ERP systems based on an asset-oriented logic, while Italian regulation, with Legislative Decree No. 58/1998 (the "Draghi Law"), has introduced corporate governance criteria and fair value-based evaluations.

This evolution reflects a broader shift toward market-based measurement systems, but also raises concerns regarding the increasing dependence of accounting values on external financial dynamics.

However, fair value also presents limitations, as it incorporates both realized results and estimates, generating short-term volatility.

For this reason, corporate value cannot be reduced to individual accounting criteria but must be interpreted through an integrated perspective that combines historical, prospective, and contextual information.

This suggests that value is not an objective datum, but a constructed representation, influenced by methodological choices and institutional frameworks.

In the public sector, according to Deidda Gagliardo (2002), local authorities act as generators of value for the territory.

By modifying management approaches, public administrations can unlock resources and latent potential and direct them toward an expanded institutional mission, namely the satisfaction of the needs of the entire community.

This shifts the focus from efficiency alone to broader outcomes related to collective well-being.

The "local system" includes the authority itself and all the actors with whom it interacts, including citizens, businesses, and social stakeholders.

The role of municipalities or provinces is to create both economic and social value by involving stakeholders in a co-creation process based on a balance between contributions and rewards.

This perspective introduces a relational dimension of value, in which outcomes depend on interactions rather than isolated actions.

These actors form a "value constellation," in which the public entity coordinates contributions and ensures an equitable distribution of benefits.

However, this coordination role is not neutral, as it involves choices regarding resource allocation and prioritization, which may generate trade-offs between different stakeholder groups.

This highlights the inherently political dimension of public value creation.

In practice, the authority compensates the economic resources employed (economic value), acknowledges stakeholders' contributions and supports those unable to participate (social value), while promoting the future development of the territory (socio-economic value).

The coexistence of these dimensions implies that value cannot be maximized along a single axis, but requires

balancing potentially conflicting objectives. To measure and manage this value, the “value pyramid” model is used, structured across four levels: socio-economic, social, economic, and intangible. While this model provides a comprehensive framework, it also raises methodological challenges, particularly in the measurement of intangible components such as human capital, relationships, and organizational development. These elements, although critical for long-term value creation, are difficult to quantify and compare. The value creation process follows several stages: ideation, analysis, negotiation, design, accumulation, distribution, control, and feedback. The public entity must extend the value chain to the entire territory, involving external stakeholders as well. This extended perspective reinforces the idea that value creation is a systemic process rather than a linear one. Key tools include the synthetic equation and the value report, used to compare benefits and sacrifices, as well as value drivers, which act as strategic levers. However, the effectiveness of these tools depends on the assumptions underlying their construction, particularly regarding what is considered a “benefit” or a “sacrifice.” This again points to the interpretative nature of value. By systematically coordinating contributions and managing the flows of socio-economic benefits and sacrifices, local authorities can aim to ensure that the former exceed the latter. Nevertheless, this condition is not merely technical but normative, as it reflects choices about collective priorities and acceptable trade-offs, reinforcing the complexity of value as both an analytical and a governance concept.

Conception of Economic Processes

According to Montesano (1972), the definition of dynamic economics should not be regarded as a mere terminological convention. On the contrary, definitions are deeply connected to the theoretical frameworks adopted by economists, and differences among them reflect substantive divergences in how economic phenomena are interpreted. This implies that scientific debate is not purely semantic, but conceptual. The evolution of knowledge often requires abandoning previous definitions and introducing new ones, as illustrated by the transition from Newtonian physics to Einstein’s theory of relativity. Similarly, the definition of dynamic economics proposed by Ragnar Frisch has shaped the development of dynamic models, embedding specific assumptions about time and change within the analytical structure. However, the lack of a universally accepted definition generates ambiguity, particularly in relation to concepts such as static economics, stationary economics, and equilibrium. This conceptual overlap may limit analytical clarity, suggesting the need for more precise distinctions. Polanyi (2010) distinguishes between two meanings of

the term “economic”: the substantive and the formal. The substantive meaning refers to human dependence on nature and social relations for subsistence, focusing on the material conditions necessary for survival. Importantly, this perspective does not necessarily imply scarcity or choice, as some essential resources may be abundant or socially provided. By contrast, the formal meaning is based on the logic of means and ends, emphasizing rational choice under conditions of scarcity. This interpretation underlies much of modern economic theory and frames economic behavior as a problem of optimization. Historically, these two meanings have converged in market economies, where scarcity necessitates choice. However, this convergence may obscure important distinctions. By conflating subsistence with scarcity, the conventional notion of the “economic” risks reducing complex social processes to purely allocative mechanisms. This critique suggests that the formal approach, while analytically powerful, may be insufficient to capture the broader social and institutional dimensions of economic life. In this sense, the substantive perspective provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding economic systems in different historical and cultural contexts. Sen (1999) further expands this perspective by highlighting inequality as a central challenge of contemporary economic systems. Inequality is not limited to income disparities but includes differences in access to political power, social opportunities, and basic capabilities. This broader view challenges the adequacy of purely growth-oriented models. Ensuring an equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization requires not only market mechanisms but also institutional interventions. Political, social, and legal institutions play a crucial role in shaping outcomes, influencing both the extent and the nature of inequalities. Moreover, economic growth does not automatically translate into poverty reduction. While it can provide resources for public services such as education and healthcare, its benefits may be unevenly distributed. This highlights a critical limitation of approaches that equate development with growth. Poverty, in this framework, is understood as a condition of “unfreedom,” encompassing deprivation in multiple dimensions, including health, education, and social participation. Consequently, addressing poverty requires more than income redistribution; it involves expanding individuals’ capabilities and opportunities. An additional issue concerns the ability of individuals to access market benefits. Participation depends on various factors, including education, health, and the absence of discrimination. Barriers such as illiteracy, malnutrition, or social exclusion

can prevent individuals from benefiting from economic opportunities, even in contexts of overall growth.

This perspective reinforces the idea that economic processes cannot be fully understood without considering the institutional and social conditions that enable or constrain participation.

Therefore, the analysis of economic systems must integrate both formal mechanisms and substantive realities, avoiding reductive interpretations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The adopted methodology is based on a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and empirical analyses in order to explore the role of creativity as a generator of economic value.

The qualitative component relies on a review of the scientific literature, conducted through the analysis of relevant academic contributions on creativity and economic value creation.

The selection of studies was based on criteria of thematic relevance, scientific impact, and consistency with the research objectives.

This phase is complemented by a theoretical-conceptual analysis of the main contributions regarding the definition of creativity, its areas of economic application, and value creation processes.

This allows for the construction of an interpretive framework aimed at identifying the principal dimensions through which creativity translates into economic value.

In parallel, the empirical analysis is based on the use of secondary data from institutional sources and official databases, including Eurostat.

The data, covering a defined time period, include economic indicators and sectoral statistics related to the creative industries.

Through descriptive and comparative analytical techniques, the study examines the relationships between indicators of creative activity and economic performance. This methodological approach is particularly suitable for capturing the multidisciplinary nature of the phenomenon, allowing the integration of economic, managerial, and cultural perspectives. Moreover, it enables the study of the complexity of multi-sectoral variables that characterize creative contexts, providing a systemic understanding of the relationship between creativity and value generation.

Qualitative Analysis

Florida (2005) defines creativity as an innate characteristic in all human beings, constituting the main source of economic value creation. In recent decades, creativity has become the engine of the modern economy, concentrating in a creative sector that includes science, technology, arts, design, and knowledge-based professions.

The “Creative Class” represents approximately one-third of the workforce, whose members are remunerated for creative production.

Stimulating and enhancing the creative potential of all

individuals is fundamental for increasing productivity, improving working conditions, promoting sustainable development, and reducing social inequalities.

While creativity is inseparable from knowledge, it does not merely promote it: it implies specific social connections and can drive economic, cultural, and political change.

Culture plays a central role in this process, as it must foster open and inclusive environments capable of unleashing creative potential rather than limiting or classifying it.

Furthermore, the creative society manifests both through exceptional individuals, whose talent may be underappreciated in mass-media-oriented contexts, and through creative communities or classes that, while not numerically dominant, exert significant influence on society.

However, in a majority-based democracy, the political impact of a limited creative class may be constrained, generating tensions between creativity and political participation.

Some studies have attempted to address this issue by expanding the concept of the creative class, although this complicates its identification (Florida, 2002; Florida, 2012; cited in Karacerauskas, 2020).

Howkins (2005) emphasizes that young people in contemporary cities claim the right to be different, freely expressing their ideas and engaging in continuous learning.

According to the author, creativity is closely linked to learning: to stop learning is to stop being creative.

Creatives want their ideas to be heard and tested, not because they are superior to existing ideas, but because they represent personal and innovative experiences.

These individuals value the subjectivity and ambiguity of creativity, naturally embrace ignorance, and find stimulation in personal conflict and passion.

Ideas become a source of style, status, power, and personal identity.

It is also essential to distinguish between creativity and innovation: the former is subjective and personal, while the latter is collective and objective; creativity can generate innovation, but rarely the other way around.

Government policies often misunderstand this difference, treating creativity as synonymous with innovation or the knowledge society.

However, disciplines such as music, theater, and entertainment constitute experiences rather than mere information, and therefore require specific approaches.

The global creative economy is highly competitive and rapidly evolving: cities, companies, and creative individuals move and adopt new strategies at high speed.

The mobility of creatives makes them “nomads,” able to operate anywhere in the world, from Mumbai to Shanghai or Sydney.

Over the past decade, it has been possible to identify numerous key factors for the success of creative enterprises and to understand the role of governments in fostering or hindering the creative economy.

In this regard, Howkins (2005) cites the Creativity Audit,

a tool based on twelve factors that allows organizations to develop strategies for creative success, manage and leverage their intellectual resources, and enables governments to ensure that policies support sustainable creative development.

Among these factors, intellectual property plays a critical role: in India, patent regulations and obligations arising from WTO/TRIPS agreements profoundly affect access to knowledge and the development of the creative economy, going beyond mere legislative compliance.

Building on the evidence from the qualitative analysis, the following section focuses on the empirical approach, using quantitative data from official sources to explore the relationships between creative activities and economic performance, thereby integrating theory and practical findings.

Empirical Analysis

To analyze trends in cultural employment within the European Union, quantitative data were extracted from the Eurostat database, covering the period 2015–2024.

The data refer to the number of people employed in the cultural sector, classified according to the NACE Rev. 2 nomenclature, expressed in thousands of units.

The analysis focused on the temporal evolution of cultural employment both at the aggregate level (EU-27) and for individual countries, aiming to identify trends, variations, and potential effects of extraordinary events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Differences between countries with more developed economies and those where the cultural sector appears less dynamic were also considered.

Data processing allowed the observation of overall growth in the EU cultural sector, with a decline in 2020 followed by a subsequent recovery up to 2024.

These results provide the empirical basis for further insights and reflections on employment dynamics and policies supporting the European cultural sector.

Eurostat data analysis on cultural employment in the European Union reveals a generally positive trend over the period 2015–2024, with some fluctuations linked to significant economic and social events.

Overall, the number of people employed in the cultural sector across the 27 EU countries increased from approximately 6.8 million in 2015 to nearly 7.9 million in 2024, indicating sustained sectoral growth.

However, in 2020, a decline to around 7.1 million was observed, likely related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely affected the cultural and creative sector.

After 2020, a rapid recovery occurred, with a steady increase up to 2024, surpassing pre-pandemic levels.

This trend indicates strong resilience in the European cultural sector, supported by recovery policies implemented at both EU and national levels.

At the national level, significant differences emerge.

Countries such as France, Germany, Italy, and Spain show high absolute numbers of cultural employment, reflecting

their economic size and the historical importance of the sector. France exhibits continuous and consistent growth, rising from approximately 850,000 employed in 2015 to over 1.2 million in 2024, indicating significant expansion. Smaller countries or those with less developed economies, such as Croatia, Lithuania, or Malta, display lower absolute numbers but generally growing trends, indicating expansion even in emerging cultural markets.

Some fluctuations are visible in specific countries, for example Spain and Greece, which experienced a decline in 2020 followed by an irregular recovery, highlighting potential fragilities or longer recovery periods.

In summary, the data show a growing cultural sector in the EU, with a temporary setback due to external factors, but with clear signs of recovery and strengthening.

These results underline the importance of continued monitoring and support for the cultural sector, both for its economic value and for its social and identity role within the Union.

Integration of Qualitative and Empirical Analysis

The qualitative analysis highlighted that creativity represents a fundamental resource for economic and social development, embodied by the so-called “Creative Class” (Florida, 2005) and supported by the dynamics of the global creative society (Howkins, 2005).

The theoretical evidence shows that stimulating and enhancing individuals’ creative potential not only fosters knowledge production and innovation but also contributes to economic growth, sustainability, and the reduction of inequalities.

Culture plays a central role in this context, as it creates open and inclusive environments that unleash creative potential and generate economic, social, and political change.

The integration of empirical data from Eurostat confirms and quantifies these dynamics.

Analysis of cultural employment in the EU between 2015 and 2024 shows a generally positive trend, with the number of people employed in the cultural sector increasing from approximately 6.8 million to nearly 7.9 million.

The decline observed in 2020, linked to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights how external events can temporarily reduce sector activity, while the rapid recovery up to 2024 demonstrates the resilience of European cultural economies.

At the national level, empirical data corroborate the findings from the literature: countries with developed economies and a strong cultural tradition, such as France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, exhibit high absolute numbers and sustained growth in cultural employment.

At the same time, smaller or emerging countries also show positive trends, indicating that creative potential can translate into economic growth even in less developed markets.

However, fluctuations observed in specific contexts, such as Greece or Spain, suggest that the capacity to leverage

creativity may also depend on public policies, cultural infrastructure, and institutional support.

In summary, the integration of qualitative and quantitative data shows that creativity is not merely a theoretical concept but a measurable economic driver.

The qualitative analysis suggests that nurturing the creative class generates social, cultural, and political impacts, while empirical data confirm that these effects are concretely reflected in employment and the development of the European cultural sector.

This integrated approach allows for an understanding of both the conceptual logic of creativity and its practical manifestations in the labor market, reinforcing the importance of targeted policies to support a dynamic and inclusive cultural economy.

Methodology Conclusion

In summary, the adopted methodology combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of creativity as a driver of economic value. The qualitative analysis provided a solid theoretical foundation, identifying the main dimensions of creativity and the role of the “Creative Class” in socio-economic dynamics.

At the same time, the empirical analysis quantified the impact of cultural activities on the European labor market, confirming growth trends and the resilience of the sector.

The integration of these two levels of analysis enables an understanding not only of theoretical concepts but also of the concrete manifestations of creativity in real economies.

This mixed-method approach strengthens the validity of the study, highlighting the relationship between the enhancement of creative capital, employment, and the development of the cultural sector.

In this way, the adopted methodology offers a systemic and multidisciplinary perspective, useful for guiding further research and policies aimed at supporting creativity as a driver of innovation and economic development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research highlight the fundamental importance of considering creativity as an essential element for value creation within economic systems.

This perspective is supported not only by the Eurostat data previously cited but also by the recognition that innovation itself generates ideas, thereby fully integrating into the relevant economic system.

It is therefore crucial to provide an overview to understand how the entirety of affiliations defines market processes, forming the basis of economic-systemic combinations that are essential for interconnection in a globalized context.

International relations, in fact, can be seen as the primary link that connects, defines, and influences every foundational aspect of our society (Strappati, 2024).

The relativity of creativity exists within the absoluteness proposed by contemporary market economies,

positioning itself as a distinctive element of development and interest within a targeted audience, enhancing its positioning in correspondence with the proposed specialized functionalities. This inclusive dichotomy is thus adaptable to the multivariable perspectives proposed by modernity, in its conceptions of cultural homogenization, internationalization, and economic value creation, based on a strategic conception of primary relevance within the reference context.

Contemporary Economic Systems

According to Luigino Bruni (2015), addressing the challenges of contemporary economic systems requires not only changing practices but also renewing the language and symbols through which the economy is communicated.

In this process, creativity becomes central: the civil economy must go beyond the traditional appeal to ethics, altruism, and solidarity, adopting a language capable of valuing creativity and sharing, directing them toward goals that go beyond mere profit.

It is also emphasized that it is precisely difficult and ambitious challenges that stimulate creativity and attract the most talented young people.

However, the civil economy has not yet been able to fully engage them because it has failed to renew its symbolic code: values such as generosity, fraternity, and the common good have not been expressed in new forms capable of activating creativity during the most dynamic phases of life. Therefore, it is necessary to translate these ideals into messages and practices that can ignite creativity, transforming the enthusiasm of young people into concrete projects for work and life.

According to Marino Regini (2015), economic institutions tend to develop and consolidate over time following a logic of continuity.

Even if they are often created with the goal of ensuring efficiency, once established, they rarely change form unless strong external shocks occur.

A central concept is that of path dependence, which describes the tendency of institutions to maintain their characteristics over time, even when the original conditions that justified their effectiveness have changed. Sociological research, however, questions the idea that these institutions emerge solely for reasons of efficiency. Their origin is also influenced by historical and social factors, such as the interests of the actors involved and the structure of the context in which they operate.

Consequently, both the emergence and persistence of economic institutions depend not only on rational criteria but also on historical and social dynamics that determine their form and evolution over time.

The characteristics and structure of economic institutions thus directly influence market functioning, determining how supply and demand meet and how resources are allocated over time.

Market Perspectives

According to Alessandro Roncaglia (2019), in the classical

view, the market is not seen as a specific place where supply and demand meet, but as a dynamic system of exchanges repeated over time across different sectors of the economy.

In this perspective, each sector supplies its products to others and, in return, receives the resources necessary, such as means of production and subsistence goods, to continue the production process.

Unlike the marginalist conception, which interprets the market as a meeting point in a defined space and time (such as a fair or a stock exchange), the classical approach considers it as a continuous set of economic relationships. Within this framework, the so-called natural prices assume importance, i.e., theoretical prices that ensure two fundamental conditions: on one hand, sufficient revenues to sustain production and wage payments over time; on the other, a level of profit that is generally uniform across sectors, at least under conditions of free competition, while entry barriers may generate higher profits in certain areas.

Domegan (2008) emphasizes that in social marketing, a key characteristic widely recognized in the literature is that voluntary behavioral change occurs at both the individual and collective levels. Various scholars highlight that social marketing campaigns produce effects on three societal levels: the micro-level (the individual), the group level, and the macro-level (society as a whole).

As in traditional marketing, social marketing begins with the consumer (micro-level), but it also extends to relationships among organizations, which must be managed alongside individual needs. Added to this is a third level, the entire social system, which includes actors influencing the context, such as institutions and public decision-makers.

This three-level structure makes social marketing more complex than commercial marketing, as individuals both influence and are influenced by the social context in which they live.

According to Hastings and Saren (2003), this approach represents the main contribution of social marketing because it connects the business world with public welfare.

Consequently, social marketing involves many actors and relationships: not only consumers, but also suppliers, distributors, support organizations, local communities, regional authorities, and governments.

All these actors interact simultaneously to promote the desired change.

Finally, this process can be seen as a complex exchange, in which multiple parties collaborate to create value within a network of relationships, going beyond the simple logic of direct economic exchange.

The art market, as highlighted by Genco and Zorloni (2017), is configured as a complex and articulated system, particularly when considering factors such as turnover and global positioning. In this context, a limited number of operators emerges, organized as true multinationals with offices in different cities worldwide and very high

business volumes.

This structure leads to defining the market as oligopolistic, as it is controlled by a few large players capable of influencing trends and exerting strong control over prices, which may be high even in the early stages of an artist's career.

At the same time, the art market appears divided into multiple levels, international, national, and local, and into segments often very distant from each other, with limited interactions, to the point that they can be considered almost as distinct systems.

From a broader perspective, it also includes all supporting activities for the artistic supply chain, such as promotion, consultancy, financial and legal services, as well as insurance and transportation of artworks, which contribute to the overall functioning of the sector.

Access to international markets and global competitive dynamics amplify the impact of local economic interactions, modifying the structure and strategies of markets, including cultural and artistic ones.

Globalization of the Art Market

Fignini (2015) describes globalization as a phenomenon structured on four main and interconnected levels.

On the cultural level, it causes linguistic, material, and lifestyle homogenization, imposing standardized products on the international market and reducing the valorization of local cultures, often perceived as obstacles to development and efficiency.

At the political level, the traditional balance among nation-states transforms into increasing institutional and ideological uniformity, with the spread of similar democratic models and the progressive transfer of governance to supranational bodies.

On the social level, globalization generates both wealth and poverty, accentuating inequalities internationally and within individual countries.

Finally, on the economic level, the restructuring of relationships between politics and production favors free markets and economic individualism, while companies exploit vertical integration, through the growth of multinationals and transnationals, and horizontal integration, through increased foreign trade.

At the same time, outsourcing and investment mobility allow companies to relocate to more favorable contexts, with significant social and economic consequences in their countries of origin.

Perrulli and Marrella (2009) highlight, in the first principle of the Venice Manifesto for the Regulation of Economic Globalization, that the expansion of globalization and the progressive elimination of traditional barriers, such as tariffs and quotas, have made interactions among trade, environmental protection, investment, monetary policies, and respect for human rights and core labor standards increasingly relevant.

However, in the current transitional phase between struggling national systems and emerging supranational institutions, economic and social regulation still relies on

bilateral and sectoral negotiations, awaiting a multilateral political solution capable of stabilizing a global framework for international trade governance.

Rodrik (2015), through Cameron's study of eighteen advanced nations, emphasizes that openness to international trade has been the factor contributing most significantly to economic growth. Economies more exposed to global markets have developed larger governments, while some nations remain relatively protected from international competitive pressures due to geographic or territorial size, as in the case of the United States, Japan, and Australia, which feature smaller public sectors.

Conversely, smaller economies close to their trading partners, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, engage in more intensive trade and maintain larger public sectors.

This outcome is counterintuitive to the idea that markets thrive only with limited state intervention. Indeed, among economies with similar levels of wealth, differences in the size of the public sector can be explained precisely by the intensity of international trade relations.

Globalization has profoundly transformed the art market, resulting in significant growth in revenue, employment, and socio-economic importance: in 2016, sales reached \$56.6 billion, with approximately 3 million employees and an additional 334,000 jobs generated by supporting services.

Postwar and contemporary art has become the leading sector, tripling its market share from 17% to 52% in less than twenty years.

This growth has been driven by the entry of emerging countries with high disposable income, particularly China, which has tripled the value of transactions and captured 20% of the global share, ranking third worldwide. Strategies for internationalization adopted by companies in the supply chain have also contributed to this expansion, giving the art market characteristics typical of global sectors (Genco & Zorloni, 2017).

From the perspective of cultural internationalization, it is essential to consider institutions that provide support and guidance in project implementation, in addition to offering direct logistical assistance.

A concrete example is the European Union, with its arts funding programs such as Creative Europe, as well as embassies, ministries of foreign affairs, and economic entities from the country of origin present in the project's host territory.

The most widespread strategy for internationalization in the cultural sector is collaboration, which allows agreements between institutions and artists and simplifies export processes.

Streaming platforms and social networks are the main channels for immediate internationalization, considering the visibility that services such as Spotify and YouTube can provide simply by uploading content.

Finally, knowledge of the target market and the specific characteristics of the artistic creation is fundamental: combining the features of the offer with the needs of

demand constitutes an effective strategic alignment from a marketing perspective (Strappati, 2025). In this global context, creativity is no longer just an artistic expression but becomes a strategic resource capable of generating innovation and economic value.

Creativity as a Driver of Economic Value

Santagata (2004) highlights how creativity is closely linked to economic and social value through the ability to solve problems in original and engaging ways, following Herbert Simon's definition, cited in Santagata (2004).

An action is creative when it produces something original with social relevance, which constitutes the foundation of creativity.

Three fundamental conditions for the creative process are identified: first, preparation, since knowledge and expectations precede and enable any serendipitous discovery; second, experience and expertise in one's field, necessary to reach levels of excellence; and third, risk, understood as the willingness to explore underutilized information or ideas contrary to established wisdom, an essential element for generating differential advantages and innovation.

It is also emphasized that, while these models describe the creative process, they do not explain the biological and neurological origins of creativity.

Full understanding will require analyzing how the brain, emotions, and mind interact to produce new ideas, as illustrated by Damasio's studies, cited in Santagata (2004), on the relationship between emotions, behavior, and cognition.

Strappati (2026) explains how the economic system applies directly to the circulation of artworks, placing them within a context defined by international relations and hyper-globalized modernity, in which a unified network consolidates within contemporary society.

This scenario highlights the interconnections between sectors, whose relevance becomes the key variable for the efficiency of the systemic network.

The role of the artistic product within the community is relative and depends on the audience, target, and positioning.

The entire system relies on a balance between supply and demand, which, thanks to internationalization processes and new technologies, involves people from all over the world in the name of globalization.

Gasca (2011) emphasizes that the Confindustria Research Center underlines the importance of recognizing that cultural policies today have far broader tools than in the past, when actions were limited to protecting historical heritage and promoting creative arts.

The objectives and actors involved have expanded: in addition to national and local public bodies, today commercial enterprises, creative industries, public cultural institutions, and non-profit organizations, such as arts foundations and heritage-related service organizations, must also be considered.

In this context, it is essential to enhance both traditional

and new tools.

Among the former are: opening cultural institutions to private participation through transparent models like the French *délégation de service public*; optimizing museum storage; strengthening art history education in schools; and involving private actors directly in cultural management, capable of generating significant positive externalities.

Among the new tools are those that align cultural policies with industrial policies, aiming to improve the competitiveness of cultural and creative industries.

These include: intellectual property protection, essential for valuing cultural products; international promotion of Italian historical-artistic heritage and Made in Italy; development of the Italian Digital Agenda, which still requires greater attention to the cultural and creative industry; and revitalization of the manufacturing industry, where Italian industrial craftsmanship integrates traditional skills, artistic heritage, and creative talent.

Amin and Roberts (2008) highlight that studying Communities of Practice (CoPs) helps understand how these communities contribute to economic creativity, organizational innovation, and local regeneration.

Three main aspects are emphasized: the nature of knowledge generated by CoPs, the placement of this phenomenon within the broader economic debate, and the spatial dynamics linked to situated practice.

The final result of this analysis is the understanding that CoPs are not just environments for incremental learning, but strategic tools to manage creativity, leverage tacit knowledge, and improve organizational and territorial performance.

The authors also highlight a paradox: despite growing interest in communities, their original character, made up of daily interactions, ambiguity, conflict, and differences, is often overlooked. These elements constitute their true strength in generating innovation and applicable knowledge.

The “creative economy” is an economic policy concept based on systems similar to tradition, placing theoretical knowledge and innovation at its center.

Definitions agree on the increasing importance of knowledge over traditional factors of production, natural resources, physical capital, and skilled labor, in generating wealth, emphasizing the role of knowledge creation as a source of competitive advantage for all economic sectors, with particular focus on research and development, higher education, and knowledge-intensive industries such as media and entertainment (Peters, Margison, Murphy, 2009).

In conclusion, creativity is confirmed not only as a cultural expression but as a true engine of economic development.

Its capacity to generate value depends on the interaction between skills, innovation, and market networks, both local and global.

In contemporary economic systems, where international relations, digital technologies, and cultural policies

are intertwined, creativity becomes a strategic tool to stimulate growth, competitiveness, and sustainable development, confirming its central role in building an increasingly dynamic and interconnected economy.

CONCLUSION

Creativity emerges as a fundamental core of human nature, whose expression extends beyond artistic or cultural manifestations to assume a strategic role in generating economic value.

As highlighted by this research, creativity directly influences market dynamics, affecting supply and demand, stimulating innovation, and enhancing competitiveness at both national and international levels.

In particular, creativity functions as a key variable in contemporary economic systems, characterized by complex interconnections among institutions, firms, digital platforms, and cultural networks.

The art market, and more broadly the cultural and creative industries, exemplify the economic value of creativity.

In these contexts, the ability to produce original works, leverage cultural heritage, and integrate traditional and innovative tools translates into tangible benefits in terms of employment, revenue, and overall development.

At the same time, professional communities and collaborative networks enable the transformation of tacit knowledge and individual skills into organizational innovation and territorial regeneration, highlighting creativity’s strategic role in building human and social capital.

Globalization and digitalization amplify the impact of creativity, extending the reach of markets and economic relationships, while requiring careful management of value flows and cultural networks. Creativity, therefore, is no longer merely a personal trait but becomes a strategic asset for economic growth, competitiveness, and sustainable development.

Its enhancement requires an integrated approach that considers the interplay between technological innovation, cultural policies, market internationalization, and collaborative networks.

Ultimately, creativity confirms itself as an indispensable element for modern economies: it constitutes a strategic investment capable of combining economic development, social innovation, and cultural valorization, strengthening the resilience of economic systems and serving as a central driver for constructing a sustainable, dynamic, and interconnected future.

Recognizing creativity as a systemic and strategic lever is, therefore, not only a desirable perspective but an imperative for global competitiveness and growth.

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