

# Creative Cities in the EU Outermost Regions: From Cultural Entrepreneurship to Cultural Policies

## *Cidades Criativas nas Regiões Periféricas da UE: Do Empreendedorismo Cultural às Políticas Culturais*

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### Abstract

This article seeks to explore two main conceptual dimensions — cultural policies and cultural entrepreneurship — as well as its impacts in the framework of creative cities in the European Union Outermost Regions (ORs). Through a comprehensive analysis, in this article are considered general trends and goals for the cultural world settled in different institutional levels of political discourse, such as the strategic partnership between UNESCO and the European Union. Tackling the post-pandemic political agenda facing global challenges, this article seeks to explore in what extend cultural entrepreneurship enhances governance systems for cultural and creative industries focused on resilience and sustainability.

**Keywords:** creative cities, EU outermost regions, cultural entrepreneurship, cultural policies, resilience.

## Resumo

Este artigo procura explorar duas dimensões conceptuais centrais — políticas culturais e empreendedorismo cultural — bem como os seus impactos no quadro das cidades criativas nas Regiões Ultraperiféricas da União Europeia (RUP). Através de uma análise compreensiva, neste artigo consideram-se as tendências e objectivos gerais para o mundo cultural estabelecidos em diferentes níveis institucionais do discurso político, tais como a parceria estratégica entre a UNESCO e a União Europeia. Abordando a agenda política pós-pandémica e os desafios globais, este artigo procura explorar em que medida o empreendedorismo cultural melhora os sistemas de governação das indústrias culturais e criativas centrados na resiliência e na sustentabilidade.

**Palavras-chave:** cidades criativas, regiões periféricas da UE, empreendedorismo cultural, políticas culturais, resiliência.

## Introduction

The emergence of a post-pandemic political agenda brought global challenges to the centre of the European cultural politics. Cultural policies are more than ever interconnected with cultural entrepreneurship, with the latter providing a supportive framework for the former's growth and impact in the EU Outermost Regions (ORs) of Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Réunion, Martinique, Mayotte and Saint-Martin (France), the Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain)<sup>[1]</sup>. Despite their common vulnerabilities to remoteness, climate change, and informal economic activity, the relying on the potential of creative cities based on cultural and creative sectors (CCS) means promoting local development and social cohesion in the ORs. But what exactly does this mean in terms of political mechanisms towards its expected outputs?

Firstly, this article seeks to provide a precise but sufficiently descriptive approach to the way in which cultural policies and cultural entrepreneurship are articulated in international politics towards resilience and sustainability. Secondly, using comparative and statistical data, this article provides an explanatory synthesis of the impact of cultural entrepreneurship on creative cities in the European ORs. Thirdly, the final part of the article aims to contribute to a strategic redesign of outlying centralities in the way the ORs are facing global challenges towards resilience and sustainability.

Last but not least, this article stands the research next step from a previous article published at the journal's 18 issue dedicated to the outermost region of Azores, Portugal (Oliveira, 2022, p. 155–168). That one was anchored in the triad

1. Thus, France, Portugal, and Spain have parts of their territory geographically located in areas of the globe distant from the European continent. These regions are known as outermost regions (ORs) located in the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, South America and the Indian Ocean. Besides their geographical distance and because of their unique and distinctive status they are integral part of the EU (*see* Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), with strategic policy-orientations ("putting people first") led by the European institutions (European Commission and European Parliament) and its foreign policy (European Council).

of politics, arts and territory and aimed to understand cultural democratisation in the outermost region of the Azores, analysing, in particular, the Walk&Talk | Fala&Anda Festival, held since 2011, in the city of Ponta Delgada, Azores, Portugal. In addition, on June 2024, the paper was presented as a draft at the *International Conference on Arts and Cultural Management* (AIMAC).

## 1. Cultural policies and cultural entrepreneurship

Cultural practices are an ambivalent domain. On the one hand, cultural practices contribute to the dissemination of political discourses with implications in the fields of policies of recognition and social and political identities. On the other hand, cultural policies converge into governmental public action, constituting the complex space of cultural governance (Vargas, 2022). Therefore, the impulse given by cultural policies to the various initiatives of cultural entrepreneurship together contribute to shape political strategies on territorial policies. Crafted by cultural practices, territorial policies are not only socially based upon civil society but also with the political community itself. These processes reinforce common values, commitments and identities driven by entrepreneurship.

Cultural practices have been embedded in the transformative initiatives and dynamics of cultural entrepreneurship, with implications for the political and economic dimension of cultural policies (Pratt, 2007). Cultural policies, crafted and managed by governments and public cultural institutions, shape the opportunity structure and the environment in which cultural entrepreneurs drive. Cultural public policies can incite funding mechanisms, support intellectual property regulations, and influence the overall ecosystem for creative enterprises (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2019), whilst cultural entrepreneurship, driven by the private sector (here including the individuals and the civil society), can boost cultural policy goals by fostering innovation, economic development, and the dissemination of diverse expressions (Naudin 2018).

Growing urban areas characterised by multicultural societies are facing a multidimensional crisis — climate change, terrorism, armed conflicts, pandemics, migrations, inequalities, and populism. The international community has been expressing its growing concern about contemporary global challenges, while at the same time is seeking to establish multilevel cooperation combined with a shared vision for conceiving the transformative impact of culture for sustainable development (UNESCO, 2022a). Meanwhile, under the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, UNESCO and the European Union have jointly coordinated efforts to strengthen creative economies and cultural industries in peripheral areas with a special focus on the ORs and SIDS (Council of the European Union, 2022; UNESCO, 2022b, 2023). These initiatives aim (i) to develop regulatory frameworks, (ii) to promote youth

and women's employment in the culture and creative industries, (iii) to address challenges related to industrial property rights and (iv) to promote international collaboration with the support of the EU and under the specialised guidance of UNESCO (UNESCO, 2023).

Although, cultural policies and cultural entrepreneurship have clear evidence impact on the cultural and political values orientations of international public policies, namely towards 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO, 2022a, 2022b; Council of the European Union, 2022; OECD, 2023), successful synergies involve aligning policy goals with the needs and interests of cultural entrepreneurs, promoting partnerships and creating opportunity structure for resilience and sustainable cultural endeavours. The dynamic interplay between cultural entrepreneurship and well-crafted cultural policies is essential for nurturing a vibrant and resilient cultural sector that enriches societies economically, socially, and artistically (Kolb, 2020).

## 2. Outermost regions and creative cities

Under the bent of creative cities, cultural practices are compromised with cultural regional/local groups and associations (non-profit associations also) in order to compete against territorial fragmentation and isolation. Promoting cultural entrepreneurship has frequently been proposed as a way to boost creativity and innovation, as well as cultural tourism, trade in creative goods and services, and cultural employment. Thus, creativity became an entrepreneurial approach to cultural policies that seeks to expand cultural and creative sectors and promote cultural and political shifts beyond institutional politics and its policies towards resilience and sustainability.

In 2021 the European Union positioned creativity and entrepreneurship as a forefront players in transforming global challenges in opportunities for achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs)<sup>[2]</sup>. Since then cultural entrepreneurship is giving framework to fulfil creative economy and competitiveness for the cultural and creativity sectors.

The working paper entitled *Leveraging cultural and creative sectors for development in the European Union outermost regions* (OECD, 2023) centred the analysis on the conceptual framework of cultural and creative sector (CCS) to refer to cultural entrepreneurship. The report assessed the potential of CCS in

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2. In the scope of the Regional and Urban Policy of the EU and the annual event European Week of Regions and Cities, anchored in the European Pillar of Social Rights, 2021 was the International Year of Creative Economy. In 2023 the discussion was set around what skills for entrepreneurship. More information available at: <https://regions-and-cities.europa.eu/>

the ORs and provides comparative data<sup>[3]</sup> and strategic guidance in what concerns the potential of becoming creative cities, where the linkages with tourism strategies<sup>[4]</sup> (French Guiana, Martinique, and Réunion) and the support of public policies (Azores, Madeira, and Canary Islands) are stressed as good examples of enduring the development of CSS with social and economic impacts by encouraging cultural participation and by promoting cultural entrepreneurship as part of cultural policies in the ORs.

Besides the recommendations to develop CCS in the European ORs in order to overcome disparities in cultural growth and to strengthen linkages between tourism, technologies, and sustainable development, the report also strives comparable data to understand CCS in European ORs (OECD, 2023, pp. 14–36), acknowledging the double role of culture: the first one as an integral part of SDGs and the second one as a key contributor for international policies and foreign policy.

### 3. Outlying centralities

The different organisational cultures in terms of public policies (from culture to tourism), the promotion of CSS and the commitment to cultural entrepreneurship all contribute to the perform of outlying centralities. On the one hand, ROs constitute a differentiated geopolitical framework in terms of power relations. On the other hand, the ROs have created new bilateral and multilateral platforms with other peripheral regions of the globe (Caribbean Community, Micronesian ORs, Cape Verde, and other SIDS), thus facing global challenges in a resilient and sustainable way. The recognition of belonging to the territory and the strengthening of identities therefore configure new outermost centralities. The relationship between outermost territories goes beyond the boundaries imposed by cartographic geography and offers new cultural, creative, identity and governance potential.

Therefore, creative cities in the ORs start the dialogue between cultural practices in urban settings, in particular with the territory. Outlying centralities mean that the advocacy of cultural entrepreneurship allows to raise and explore political

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3. However “Defining cultural and creative sectors (CCS) in statistical terms is not straightforward and many countries use slightly different definitions. Both UNESCO and Eurostat provide definitions of CCS to be used for statistical purposes. However, many national definitions of CCS include or exclude slightly different sectors meaning comparing between different national level definitions is problematic. Moreover, even when countries use a definition of CCS consistent with UNESCO or Eurostat, statistics are often not available at the subnational level.” (OECD, 2023, p. 24)

4. “Cultural and creative sectors are often deeply intertwined with the tourism sector, offering opportunities to develop cross-sector initiatives.” (OECD, 2023, p. 20)

discourses that seem to favour renewed integration policies, here taken in the perspective of CCS in ORs. Following this perspective, cultural entrepreneurship is encouraging political linkages in terms of the meanings of common identities (community). Multicultural societies are using cultural practices to explore mechanisms for social research and protest (Oliveira, Vargas and Sarmento, 2024). Additionally, the expansion of urban areas has made it possible to invest in the operationalization of cultural policies aimed at the cultural and creative sector.

However, the spread of cultural entrepreneurship does not necessarily translate into convergent cultural policies. Analysing the different initiatives promoted *by* and *for* the ORs reveals the challenges of scale and each specificities, not only deriving from territorial fragmentation, but also from local identities themselves. This doesn't necessarily mean convergence towards the political centre (Portugal, Spain and France), but the policy measures planned seem to be creating new outlying centralities — renewed interest in these spaces from both a cultural and creative sectors.

## Discussion

The comprehensive analysis presented above has brought two topics that deserve further research in the near future — cultural entrepreneurship and cultural policies. This article also brought the overall picture that is representative of cultural policies at the moment in which cultural entrepreneurship is currently being articulated across the European ORs, not necessarily as an innovative politics but more as a political strategy based on CSS towards resilience and sustainability.

Therefore, one of the firsts outputs of this article was to contribute to an entrepreneurial approach to cultural policies in international politics — mainly considering the big picture of UNESCO and EU policies as global actors.

However, further research may include a look inside ORs specific cultural policies and cultural entrepreneurship initiatives within a comparative analysis framework supported. This article, although based on secondary data, presents an important comprehensive analysis for European ORs.

Future lines of research may also include an analysis of bilateral and multilateral relations between European ORs and the SIDS and other outermost regions of the world, in order to gauge the dimensions of sub-national strategies and possibly global trends in cultural entrepreneurship applied to outermost regions in general. Nor the future research excludes the possibility of sectorial analyses within cultural policies, considering specific cultural practices or perspectives on the relationship between culture, creativity and female entrepreneurship or culture, creativity and innovation in ORs.

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