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ABSTRACT

The global wave that elevates the creative economy and CI as instruments to gain urban competitiveness has been criticised in academia, for it presents extensive debates around definitions, methods and the overall impact of the CI. Scholars have been questioning the role of CI in economy and society: while some authors argue that CI are a generalised prescription that serve as vehicle to export neoliberal policy recommendations; others defend the ideal of a CI discourse with policy variance and attention to local contextual factors. However, those questioning or supporting the role of CI are mainly mapping examples from the Global North with only a few exceptions of study cases of from South-East Asia, Australia, Easter-Europe and Africa. As such, we introduce the case of Latin America, with the example of the city of Buenos Aires, as representative of a region that acquired similar strategies in their policies with respect to the CI. Accordingly, we remind how the *creative turn* adopted by cities is necessarily embedded in the territorialisation of global dynamics regarding creative theories and policies.

By providing a deep analysis of the adoption of the *creative turn* in Buenos Aires at the beginning of the XXI century, this paper suggests that global theories may have different socio-economic impacts in different local contexts. CI are neither critical, nor can be disregarded, for social and economic change; rather they call for a more nuanced perspective that is much needed both in policy and academia to understand the specific contexts of the creative sectors.

1. Introduction

The consequences of the globalisation process together with the new patterns in localization of the economic activity have become an emerging issue in academic debates for a while. Internationalization and economic, social, and cultural interdependence, together with the increase in flows of capital, people, and raw materials, shape a new environment to which cities had to adapt (Taylor et al., 2006). Cities of all dimension, of all cultural and economic traditions and attached to a diversity of social basis wish to belong, according to their possibilities, to this new international economic order. In parallel, the now globalised process of production highlights the growing role of knowledgeable human capital as a primary driver of growth, where knowledge and creativity are often considered avenues of development for this new economy (Trembley, 2008; UNCTAD, 2010). As promoters of urban regeneration, economic development and job creation, Creative Industries (CI) are claimed by policy and academia to be a source of economic growth as well as enhancers of social, cultural and sustainable development (Oakley, 2016; Pratt, 2014). While the knowledge and creative economy dominate the global productive scene, cities have been trying to adjust their local scenario to look for the necessary resources to adapt or relentlessly disappear of the global competition.

This paper explores the arrival of the *creative turn* in the intersection between global and local dynamics in the case study of Buenos Aires following the gap spotted in academia (Chapain, Clifton & Comunian, 2013). More specifically, we inquire into the ways Buenos Aires has adopted CI conceptions and the implications these have for the development assumptions of the creative industries in the city. This paper aims at presenting a critical view challenging the 'Western' hegemonic perspectives of the *glocalisation* or adoption of the *creative turn* discourse in Buenos Aires. The election of Buenos Aires responds to different reasons. First, the city has adopted and almost replicated the model of the CI developed in the UK and spread by UNESCO and UNCTAD at the verbatim. Thus, it represents a clear case of the *glocalisation* of the

creative rhetoric. Secondly, Buenos Aires is one of the most important cities in Latin America at an economic, cultural and political level. Finally, in Argentina the concentration of the economic activities and specially the CI is notoriously located in Buenos Aires. The city's cultural and creative concentration has made it gain the name of the cultural capital of Latin America.

Glocalisation is a conceptualisation among globalisation theories that refers to the 'reality of internal globalisation' (Roudometof, 2005). The concept is meant to transcend the binary opposition between the 'global' and the 'local' providing an interpretation of their blending. This is the approach considered in this article. Some interpretations (Ritzer, 2003) of the concept tend to emphasize the global heterogeneity that results from social and economic processes of territorialisation of global forces, rejecting that forces emanating from the West present a homogenising power. On the contrary, other approaches (Giddens, 2011) support the idea that, in fact, glocalisation facilitates governments and organisations ambitions whose desire is to be imposed in different parts of the planet in economic, political, institutional and cultural spheres.

In the race to remain economically attractive, the creative discourse appropriated by cities has developed at the intersection of both theory and policy discourse from the beginning. The global expansion of creative theories and practices has found different expressions in different parts of the world (Flew and Cunningham, 2010) while at the same time has showed the classic one-fits-all reproduction of policies coined in and for the Global North economies serving as vehicles for neoliberal policies (Hesmondhalgh, 2008; Miller, 2009; Schlesinger, 2007). On the one hand, the expansion brought the universalist policy prescriptions or what Schlesinger named as the '*creative turn*' as the political-economic project born in the UK that focused on the economic contribution of the CI associated with the development of official statistics (Schlesinger, 2017). On the other hand, academia has generated models to explain the strategic position of cultural goods and services as key for local development (Zarlenga, 2016).

Drawing on a mixed methodology that combines policy review and interviews, the paper is organised as follows: first, we situate the global economic scene and the role of cities in the race to become competitive and attractive. Secondly, we expand on the meaning and implication of the *creative turn* prescriptions as a tool for enhancing competitiveness, creation of growth and jobs and foster social and economic development. Next, we depict Buenos Aires for the period (2007–2015) considering both the importance of the economic momentum but also the policy narrative that has accompanied the city's development. Finally, we shed some light onto the *creative turn* scholarly discussion from a Global South perspective.

2. Setting the scene: theories on urban performance in a globalised world

Understanding the urban complexity is essential in order to situate the city (Marcuse & van Kempen, 2000). The 20th century witnessed major alterations in the international context: successive globalizing waves transformed the relations of production as well as patterns of consumption, distribution and supply. The proliferation and diffusion of economic, social and cultural globalization is accompanied by persistent and worrying global imbalances that are explicitly manifested in the city (Sassen, 2018; Fainstein, 2010). Cities have become the nerve centre for the development of real impact actions and programs that have moved from the international, national or regional level to the local urban environment. Cities have become the spaces where both the best-associated indicators in economic development and the negative effects that they produce have clustered. Therefore, cities, their areas of influence and their interrelationships, have become the main units of analysis for understanding and correcting as well as stimulating both the demands and consequences of a globalised world.

Despite the effects of globalisation, cities and regions around the world aim to foster economic activity to create employment and growth.

The decline in manufacturing and economic restructuring means that urban performance has progressively depended on certain sectors that include knowledge and CI as their main source of added value. Attracting these sectors has thus become a key element of urban competitiveness and hence in the local political agenda (Dubina, Carayannis, & Campbell, 2012).

Furthermore, it is generally accepted that the 'new economy' places emphasis on the need for advanced economies to concentrate on the production of high value, quality-based goods and services in order to distinguish them from developing economies. This emergent role of cities in the new economy depends on cross organisation interaction with contributions from other key players and through the positive and supportive externalities of being located within areas of agglomeration (Porter, 1996). Therefore, a progressive shift in the importance of the determinants for building up dynamic and attractive cities has occurred with creativity and knowledge becoming the basic pillars to enhance urban competitiveness and economic growth (UNCTAD, 2010).

The strategic resources of the new creative economy focus mainly on talent and human capital: the creative economy needs knowledge as an essential input, but it includes the genius of creativity, both individually and collectively, in the production of innovation in different fields. As Scott (2006) reflects, the creative economy is framed within a new cultural cognitive capitalist model in which technology, the scientific-technical intensity of labour, the symbolism of production, and the '*aesthetics of commodities*', among others, come to shape a new relational framework between agents. Cities thus emerge as innovation clusters, nodes of global networks providing knowledge while benefiting from talent and innovation flows created and developed around value generation processes in the territory (Castells, 2010). Combining the past with new drives for the future - with creativity and knowledge at its core - is one of the big challenges of future competitive cities.

In this context, institutions do matter, with each informational society, albeit capitalist, presenting different cultural and institutional arrangements as well as various levels of development. Indeed, institutions do affect markets, sometimes facilitating rent-seeking and exploitation but, more importantly, institutions and political decisions have the power to make structural changes happen (Stiglitz, 2015). Beyond thoughts around economic indicators and their magnitude, the scope of the social and organisational structure of the territory indicates a localised uniqueness: the diverse composition of its society, its political traditions and economic path dependency and the whole network of stakeholders and policies are key in the city's capacity to promoting and stimulating adaptation to the new global requirements (Pareja-Eastaway & Piquè, 2010).

The beginning of the XXI century saw the emergence of the *creative turn* discourse as a renewed perspective for improving urban competitiveness. Creating an innovative environment that allows talent exchange, transversal experiences in different value chains and the rise of new ideas were part of the political agenda and one of the strategic goals of most cities and regions across the world. As we shall see, the *creative turn* became a discursive narrative that spilled over many cities around the world as the clear mechanism to guarantee a place in the international landscape. Creative cities, the creative class, the creative economy and the creative industries were embraced as the formula to overcome a dusty, grey and undesirable industrial past.

3. The appealing 'creative turn': promoting creative industries as the panacea for urban competitiveness

The origin of the *creative turn* discourse is tied to the birth of the concept of CI, both on a political and theoretical level. Simultaneously, CI have been considered instruments not only of economic development but also that of social, cultural and environmental development. '*Creativity, a natural resource in abundance all over the world within reach of rich and poor*' (UNCTAD, 2010, p. 26) is a seductive statement hard to turn down on urban public agendas.

3.1. The origin and expansion of the creative industries: the policy prescription

The term Creative Industries (CI) attained its full expression when the Labour government under Tony Blair established the Creative Industries Task Force (CITF) as a central instrument of its new DCMS. This policy formulation defined the idea of culture as a market asset but, above all, it placed creativity in a privileged position within the chain of the production of culture (Rowan, 2010). In the DCMS⁰ mapping document of 2001 that first defined CI as we have seen, lies the basis upon which both CI's concepts and utilisation were to be built in the following years (DCMS, 2001; Pratt, 2005).

The initiative contained clear political intentions; the new Labour administration established CI as a central part of the UK post-industrial economy, highlighting the added value and employment generated by these kinds of activities. Endowed by statistical backing, the mapping document of the DCMS of 2001, that groups together arts and cultural activities with those of software, showed that the CI sector was growing at twice the rate of the general economy. Clearly, the term was not randomly constructed upon the awareness of heated global competition for human capital. CI were easy and intentionally linked with technological convergence, the information society and the 'new economy' (Pratt, 2005).

The UK model was quickly taken up in other regions, starting in Europe and then travelled via Commonwealth countries such as Australia, and parts of East Asia and New Zealand (Flew & Cunningham, 2010). Different countries defined different numbers and types of industries, at times distinguishing carefully the culture from the creative. But what remained a common strategy was to centre CI as the object of a policy to pursue economic and sometimes social outputs in a race to gain comparative advantage (Schlesinger, 2017).

The several international reports that followed signalled what Schlesinger (2017) coined as the *creative turn*. In 2006, The Economy of Culture in Europe report commissioned by the European Commission set the scene for the continent. The Creative Economy Reports of 2008, 2010 and 2013- commissioned by the UNCTAD are arguably the most influential policy-oriented reports with global scope and frame the global *creative turn* regarding policy (De Beukelaer, 2014). These sequence of reports, together with the "Orange Economy" from the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB), was received in Latin America as a pitch to governments to redirect their policy-making to the creative economy field. The idea of CI as an opportunity to motorize economic and social development was quickly picked up as between 2003 and 2006, in only 6 years, the notion of CI as development guarantors, had the support of the majority of the governments of the region (Quiña, 2016).¹

Despite their local particularities, all these accounts had something in common: understanding culture as an economic resource consistently represented in the creative weight on GDP and employment at city and/or national levels and with the understanding of development in its merely economic sense.

3.2. Creative industries and its contribution to growth and development

The relationship between CI and development is embedded in a bigger debate centred around culture and development (Pratt, 2014).

¹ "In 2003, in Colombia, the government together with the British Council carried out a Creative Industries Incubator project "Prana" to "promote and incentivize sustainable companies in the creative sector"; in 2005, in Salvador (Brazil), the Centro Internacional das Industrias Criativas was created; in 2007 in Uruguay the Department of Creative Industries (DICREA) was founded; in 2008, in Chile, the Production Promotion Corporation implemented the Integrated Territorial Program of Creative Industries in the city of Valparaíso." (Quiña, 2016, p. 92, p92).

Culture and development relate in a way that presents many approaches and the overlap of many fields of study (Economy, Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science among others). In the last half of the 20th century, when development started to be considered beyond purely economic implications, culture became a necessary element for development (Maraña, 2010).

However, and despite the symbolic implications imprinted in creative products and services, CI have most commonly played the role of making visible the economic part of culture; its evolution has reinforced its economic aspect in direct line with economic growth goals. Strategies for development posited cultural goods and services as key for growing the creative economy, reshaping what was known as cultural policy (Zarlenga, 2016).

After the DCMS identified the 'economic significance' of CI with their particularly pronounced GDP share of the UK's CI, as well as the share in employment and high volume of creative exports, CI were taken as signals of the fastest-growing segments of the economy and therefore the avenues of development that would lead to economic growth. Based on this auspicious forecast, theories started to centre the CI as a growing sector capable of providing employment and stimulating local demand. Thanks to a multiplier effect, cities with CI may be attractive locations to other firms and educated populations -the famous creative class-, raising wages and economic growth (Florida, 2002; Hall, 2000). Following this neoclassical perspective, CI became the chosen drivers to operationalise economic activity, as creators of new jobs, firms and markets; also generating economic added value thanks to the increased aggregation of capital and capabilities producing goods and services with increased demands. In a more evolutionary perspective, CI have been qualified as drivers of growth of knowledge in line with Schumpeter's understanding of economic growth through innovation. Here, CI play a significant role for innovation systems facilitating the flow of information and ideas and promoting economic systems that co-evolve with socio-cultural systems. (Potts, 2009).

The collection of data representing the international picture of CI became an essential addition to these theories. International organisations like UNCTAD, UNESCO and the IDB showed that CI growing rates were over the average of the economy, not only in the Global North but also in the South (IDB, 2016; Pratt, 2014; UNCTAD, 2010). These empirical results (of added value, employment and export metrics) have led to the centring of CI as drivers of development, seeing these industries as '*workable means to poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability*' (UNCTAD, 2010, p. 33). Considering CI not just as instruments for economic development but also that of social, cultural and environmental development, CI were presented as fundamental for the reorientation of economic models to foster structural changes. Interestingly, despite the emphasis in explaining the link of CI and development, there is still little empirical evidence on the subject with models often producing inconclusive results (Lee, 2014).

4. Creative industries in buenos aires: reaching the south from the north

The globalized promotional rhetoric finds a fertile terrain of localization in Buenos Aires, where the optimistic expectations about the capitalism of immaterial and the role of the creative economy are evident in the actions of the public policy.

The local absorption of the idea of CI was the exactly the one that was meant to be globalised, no more no less. The success of the dominant Western perspective clearly evidenced adequate rewards after the transition suggested by the *creative turn* (Pratt, 2009). Cities in the Global South like Buenos Aires promptly reacted to recognize the importance of the CI discourse without much debate about what should be conceptualized under the CI brand. Following the same concepts and strategies, and guided close by international institutions, Buenos Aires' strategy was a crude replication of the creative ideas coined in the UK: raising the economic benefit of the creative rather than the symbolic

importance of the cultural.

4.1. The appropriation of the 'creative turn' in Buenos Aires

In Argentina, the 1990's were marked by the implementation of neoliberal policies that followed the indications of the Washington Consensus, with an overappreciated exchange rate, state deregulation and privatizations. The capital concentration in every face of the productive process was not alien to the creative sectors, that saw, as many other sectors of the economy, the consolidation of economic conglomerates in detriment of the local SMEs which could not compete with the avalanche of imports (Díez, 2015).

In 2007 Buenos Aires was reached by the *creative turn* at the government level, the sub-Secretary of Cultural Industries -which was until then a part of the Ministry of Culture-became the Direction of Creative Industries in 2008; a division of the Economic Development Ministry. This brought a logic of enterprise to culture and signalled a change that endured from 2007 to 2015. Creative Industries, as first defined by the Economic Development Ministry of the PRO administration as '*content industries, which use creativity and intellectual capital as the main inputs*', were quite similar to, and even included the same, industries listed by the DCMS of the UK (OIC 2007). Similarly, the alignment with the creative economy ideas as well as creative districts or clusters policies in consonant practice with the Anglo-Saxon example, reinforced similar understandings (Bayardo, 2013).

Indeed, opposite to the populist non-market-friendly national policies of that time, in the PRO's neoliberal agenda, the *creative turn* from the Global North fitted quite well (Dinardi, 2016). The primacy of the market logic under the creative management can be spotted behind the many initiatives that saw in culture a strategy to attract tourism and investors. These included urban regeneration plans, whereby the Creative Districts were aimed at regenerating some former industrial urban areas in the south of the city by granting tax incentives to some creative industries (Zarlenga & Marcús, 2014). This district policy applied under the concept of '*it works in the most important cities of the world*', was believed to guarantee economic success and affluence of FDI (foreign direct investments), as well as being a prerequisite for the development of employment, exports and international recognition brought by CI (Bayardo, 2013, p. 119). Likewise, the guide *Invest in Buenos Aires*, elaborated in cooperation with the British Council, was the institutional pamphlet that promoted the cultural advantages of the city as a remedy to its convoluted politics and unstable economy.

In contrast, the elimination of many existing cultural programs, the closure of many non-profit self-managed cultural centres, and the wage cuts of employees of public cultural institutions signalled the position that city government took in the middle of the culture-creative battle (Dinardi, 2016). The little attention conceded to the cultural industries, especially to the non-commercial self-managed initiatives, was a clear replacement of cultural policies for economic ones (Bayardo, 2013). Nevertheless, the local government was not completely absent in the cultural sector. The city provided financial aid for the participation in international festivals to help some sectors of entrepreneurs or some independent initiatives with clear sustainable business plans, as they were considered tools with economic development potential (Observatorio Cultural, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2014). According to this administration, being part of CI meant being part of the international circuit of events.

4.2. The idea of 'creative' development

The adoption of CI as an avenue of economic development was rapidly adopted by the city government at the beginning of the 2000s. The economic and symbolic double aspect of CI was introduced by the academic and political tradition in dialogue with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) perspectives. The country and the city, in fact, formalised the recommendations

of UNESCO through international agreements and strategies of promotion and financing that condition the orientation of cultural policy (Raggio, 2013). More specifically, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) understanding of the role of the CI described in the Creative Economy Reports of 2008 and 2010, worked as the supra-national model for the local agents, as it was not only the government but also professionals, consultants, and academics, who subscribed to it. The rhetoric of the UNCTAD helped globalise the CI notions that surged in the UK and its locally unquestioned absorption by Buenos Aires' government. Moreover, the UNCTAD presented itself as the international spokesperson for the developing countries of the Global South (Bayardo, 2013).

Culture began to be presented by these institutions as a central input for economic development and poverty alleviation utilising variables such as creative added value and job growth as proof (Raggio, 2013); thus, following the same assumption that coined the CI term. In Buenos Aires, the Observatory of Creative Industries (OIC) was the organism in charge of obtaining such parameters of the CI's performance. Always following UNESCO's methodological recommendations, OIC's statistics present the added value of CI in the city as being stable through the period 2004–2014, reaching 9.5% of the gross geographic product of the city in 2014. Moreover, in 2014 CI were explained 10% of the jobs in the city (Lago Martinez, 2017).

Following the recovery of information from the databases of the OIC's last website, it is interesting to see not the static annual rates but the variable dynamic of added value and employment over time in comparison with the rest of the city's economic activities.

As Fig. 1 illustrates, the added value of the CI tends to accompany the general tendency of activities of the city. Except for 2008 and 2009, when the activity of the city contracted because of the global financial crisis, the CI presented a softened behaviour, signalling a positive reaction from CI in the face of the general crisis. However, the recession that started in 2012 decelerated the economy of the city and the CI contracted even more severely. This behaviour seems to explain how attached CI are to the local market and, more specifically, to the income elasticity of the domestic demand. By the end of the analysed period, the recovery of the overall economy after 2013 is magnified within the CI segment.

Likewise, registered employment variations in CI seem to portray quite a similar trend to the city's general dynamic (see Fig. 2) (OIC, 2013). However, the magnifying trend here is even more clear, as exemplified by the period 2006–2008, when the number of jobs in CI surpassed that of the city's total, after which in 2009 the general fall appears more substantial in the creative segments. According to the estimations based on the EPH (*Encuesta Permanente de Hogares- Permanent Household Survey*), we included the unregistered segments of the creative employment. This is different from the estimations of the OIC which are only based on official information of registered employment. As shown in Fig. 2, the un-registered segment of the creative labour explains with even more emphasis how the creative sectors'

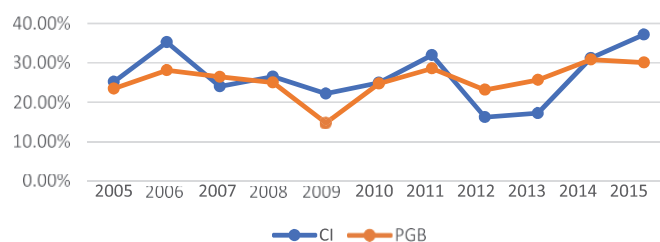


Fig. 1. Interannual variations of the GDP and the added value of Creative Industries. Buenos Aires. Years 2005–2015. At current prices (*), in percentages. Source: Authors' elaboration based on OIC, several years.

(*) Between 2008 and 2014 the accumulated inflation by the official indicator registered an increase of 106.7%.

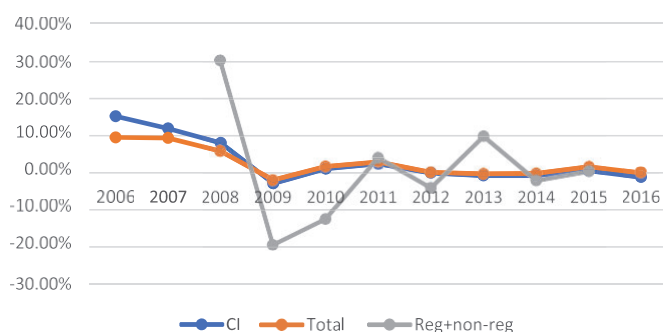


Fig. 2. Interannual variations in registered employment in the private sector for the Creative Industries and for the total of economic activities. Years 2006–2016 In percentagesSource

Authors' elaboration based on CABA, several years.

employment dynamic continues the general trend of the labour market of the city, amplifying the turbulent effects. Nevertheless, unregistered labour is a structural aspect of the economy and the labour market of the country: informal employment made up around 43 per cent of the nation's total number of employees in 2010 (Picozzi, 2014). Certainly, the 2001 crisis affected the creative sectors as much as the rest of the economy suffering a deep contraction of productive and commercial capacity.

In sum, in Buenos Aires the responsiveness of CI 'variables of development' seem quite aligned with the general economy, exemplifying the dynamism of a sector more subsumed with the variation of demand than enhancing growth. For understanding the quantitative impact of CI these variables are a rich source of information. However, as has been argued above, the dynamic of these rates is far from portraying a development strategy.

4.3. Looking at the 'creative turn' in Buenos Aires after a decade

This emphasis on international recognition together with the adaptation to the general mainstream politics deployed by the creative turn based on neoliberalism, emerged in the city as a situated practice. The rhetoric of *creativity* became dominant, yet simultaneously connected and fit to the local sphere highlighting the originality and exceptionalism of local talent. Nevertheless, the development ideas behind creativity seem to have left little room for the aims of social inclusion also stated as part of CI's goals. In the policy transfer mechanisms to become a creative city little attention was paid to the 'informal' cultural and creative practices concern with solidarity and social change beyond the goals of commercial entrepreneurialism (Mbaye & Dinardi, 2019). In Buenos Aires the cultural, the social, and the symbolic appeared at best as collateral effects in a policymaking guided by the neoliberal enterprise logic focused on competitiveness and commercial success in creative international markets.

In a recent interview Enrique Avogadro, the former Secretary of Creative Industries and current Minister of Culture offers a reflexive comment about the years of his involvement in the CI policymaking:

"CI are vanguard sectors of post-capitalism, which like globalisation are unstoppable phenomenon (...) [at the time] the creative game was given by the global markets, and we chose to be part of it (...) although many things that have been proclaimed about the CI did not matched the results, they are still a sector with huge potential to generate employment (...) and Buenos Aires is a city with enormous talent and potential that should understand how to be creative, while of course trying to include as many people as possible, and perhaps there lies the challenge." (Interview with Enrique Avogadro, April 2019)

Nowadays, the CI's department has been completely dismantled at

the city level while the province of Buenos Aires and the national state governments seem to be taking the lead. To this, Avogadro adds:

"I am critical in terms of the fact that we still do not deploy a coherent, aggressive, industry or economy strategy, say, and constant over time, neither as a country nor as a city. I am convinced of the importance of a coherent and sustained strategy over time with a level of governance, with commitment from all political parties to follow a plan in our country, saving the institutional problems that are in both the public sector and the private sector. It is very difficult to create medium-term plans that have a level of commitment throughout society." (Interview with Enrique Avogadro, April 2019).

This revision of how Buenos Aires experienced the creative turn reflects that despite aiming at following the global trend in trying to remain competitive, the local volatility of the institutions twisted the endeavour. The lack of long term commitment and the city swings caused by political variability left the creative turn agonizing without dedicating the necessary effort to enhance the IC for they can truly contribute to economic change.

5. Discussion and conclusions

Since the capacities, resources and actors differ, local environments adopt heterogeneous measures to accommodate the new economic order. Cities feature different appropriations of historical facts common to them all, by which they react to the ongoing challenges posed by the future in a way and with quite differentiated urban development processes.

Scholars as well as policy makers have both exalted the benefit of the CI for development in a merely economic sense. Development seen as an enhancement of living standards and of freedom of opportunities seems to escape from these models. Therefore, CI seem to stand in an intricate position as they have the capacity to be an instrument for economic, social and cultural development, but simultaneously to present inconsistencies in the impact in each of these three spheres.

This paper has established the link global-local in the adoption of the concept of CI and its implications, connecting the political origins with the application in Buenos Aires. In the adoption of the city's conceptions of CI, Buenos Aires provides a clear case of *glocalisation* in the form of a spread of universalistic claims. Specifically, marked by the 2007 political shift, the *creative turn* reached Buenos Aires and found fertile terrain. Culture and creativity were utilised as commercial strategies although, as this study shows, this was more in rhetoric than in practice. International institutions like UNESCO and UNCTAD, as well as countries like the UK and its British Council, were highly influential in the local adoption of the binomial CI-development as it is globally understood.

The ongoing debate about the capabilities of policy transferability in the global context of neoliberalism is also reflected here (Peck & Theodore, 2019). The variations in terms of socio-economic context or governance arrangements that are specific to every locality evolve and adapt to the requirements of a hegemonic discourse of global competition. It is this adaptation to general mainstream politics based on neoliberalism that emerges as a situated practice. Likewise, the rhetoric of creativity became dominant, yet simultaneously connected and fit to the local sphere. As we have seen, cities like Buenos Aires react to the imposition of global requirements guaranteeing the prevalence of the neoliberal discourse according to their own realities.

In the case of Buenos Aires, the nature of CI's had a lot in common with the long-term general shift from the manufacturing to the service economy, and the growing importance of knowledge capital as primary drivers of growth. However, despite being one of the sectors leading the shift in economic dynamics, it is still debatable to assume that CI are drivers of development, as the political origins suggested. The policies surrounding CI coined a relationship with development and reduced the latter to simple measures of economic growth. This paper questions the

understanding of development that places the focus exclusively on economic aspects, but even with such a view the results are far from clear. This research in Buenos Aires shows that the adoption of such economically centred development rhetoric, as most policy makers had, coupling CI with development offered inconclusive concrete results. The classic added value metrics, as well as job growths, showed how CI behaviour accompanies general tendencies of the city's activities, exemplifying the dynamic nature of a sector more subsumed with the variation of demand than becoming an enhancer of growth.

Despite the dynamics of CIs are different in different socio-economic contexts, Buenos Aires' case proves that the circumstances are, without a doubt, local but the model follows global conceptions, whereby international organisations and policy rhetoric has a lot of normative influence. However, CI are situated activities, not a set of universal applicable strategies.

Similarly, the creative sectors are not critical nor insignificant for achieving social and economic change. This article seeks to show the need for a more nuanced perspective of the relationship between CI and development, as well to demonstrate that contexts matters. With the aim of remaining competitive and attracting the right kind of activities, cities in the Global South should not take any *'if it works in the most important cities of the world'* generalist prescription as granted (Bayardo, 2013, p. 119). The institutional arrangements and the uniqueness of each territory matters. In the end, policymaking should respond to the local evidence, not to the global rhetoric or expectations.