



A Culture-Based Approach to sustainability?: Global practices in the Cultural and Creative Industries

Cultural actions as urban sustainability drivers

Dr. Irene Bianchi

Department of Architecture and Urban Studies
Politecnico di Milano

 **Cities in Action
for Learning Lab**



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

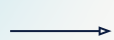
DIPARTIMENTO DI
ARCHITETTURA E STUDI URBANI

Cultural Action as Urban
Sustainability Drivers?

00

Welcome

00 - Welcome



Who am I?



Dr. Irene Bianchi

- Assistant Professor in Urban Planning, Politecnico di Milano
- Background in economics and social science
- Focus on sustainability transition, environmental governance, social innovation



CALL |

Cities in Action for Learning Lab

<https://www.call-researchlab.polimi.it/>

CALL is a reflexive and experimentation space in the Department of Architecture and Urban Studies of Politecnico di Milano since 2014-15 and has developed **research in and for the city**, with a focus on collaborative innovation dynamics and local resource mobilization towards knowledge and learning as drivers for sustainable futures.

00 - Welcome

→ Who are you?

Tell us something about you!

**INSTANT
POOL**

00 - Welcome

→ Why did you subscribe to this course?

**INSTANT
POOL**

00 - Welcome

→ What are the main 3 features of “sustainable cities”?

**INSTANT
POOL**

00 - Welcome

→ Which image represent better your idea of a sustainable city?

A



B



C



00 - Welcome

→ Which image better represent your idea of a “sustainable city”?

WHY?

A



DUBAI
SUSTAINABLE DISTRICT

B



AMSTERDAM
CITY CENTER

C



MILANO
BOSCO VERTICALE

00 - Welcome

→ Which image represent better your idea of a cultural city?

A



B



C



00 - Welcome

→ Which image represent better your idea of a cultural city?

WHY?

A



MILANO
FONDAZIONE PRADA

B



MATERA
ECOC 2019

C



VALENCIA
LAS FALLAS

These cities are all connected with a cultural dimension

Transformation trajectories in these cities are shaped (also) by cultural actions

00 - Welcome

→ What are our goals?

Theoretical Framework: Provide foundational theoretical insights into the relationship between cultural actions and urban sustainability.

Understanding Mechanisms: Foster comprehension of the mechanisms through which cultural actions can contribute to the transition to sustainability.

Illustrative Examples: Offer illustrative examples to support the understanding of how cultural actions influence urban sustainability transitions.

Encouraging Dialogue: Facilitate an open dialogue among students to explore diverse perspectives and insights on the topic.

00 - Welcome

→ What are we doing today?

- Introduction and warm-up activities

01. Cultural Actions and Urban Sustainability

- Sustainable Cities
- Culture for Sustainable cities

02. How do cities change?

- Urban transformations
- Urban sustainability transition

15 min break

- Cultural actions as drivers?

Questions?

03. Creative actions in context

- Who are the actors of change?
- What spheres of impact?
- Examples from Europe

10 min break

04. Group Exercise

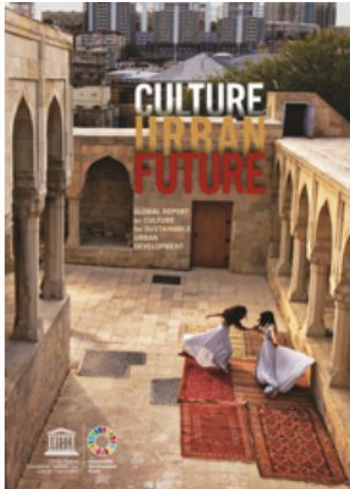
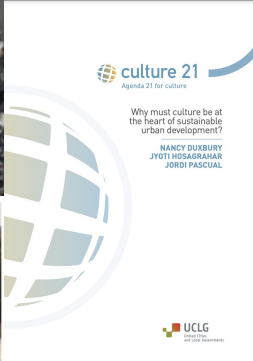
- Setting the rules and group division
- Group work
- Group restitution

Questions?

Cultural Action as Urban
Sustainability Drivers?

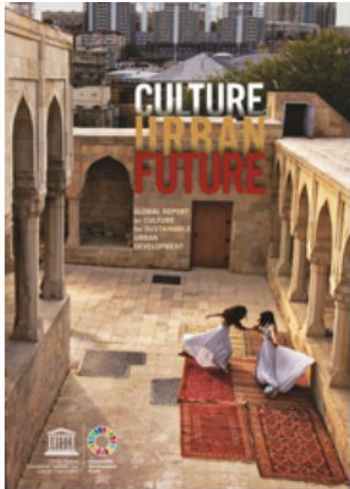
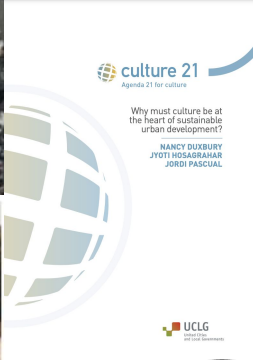
01

Cultural actions and urban sustainability



Cultural actions as urban sustainability drivers?

* guidelines and reports

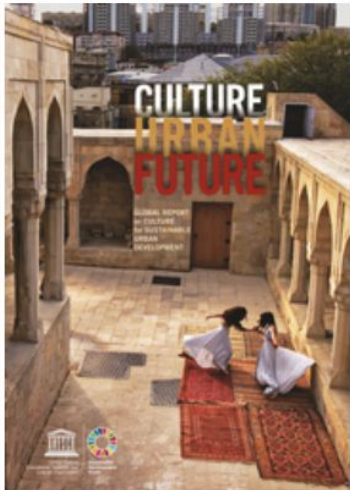
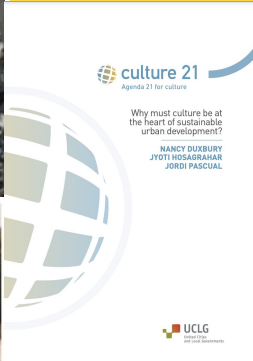


Cultural actions as urban sustainability drivers?

- * guidelines and reports
- * policy initiatives at multiple scales

Cultural actions as urban sustainability drivers?

- * guidelines and reports
- * policy initiatives at multiple scales
- * academic reflections



Cities in transition: Exploring the role of urban cultural policies

City, Territory and Architecture welcomes submissions to the thematic series - Cities in transition: exploring the role of urban cultural policies.

The Special Issue opens a debate on the role of cultural policies and initiatives in urban transformations and their potential contribution to urban transition processes. Activities developed in different cultural domains (e.g. including architecture, heritage, performative arts, visual arts) by different urban stakeholders have been broadly recognised as potential drivers of change at the city and neighbourhood levels. Nevertheless, their contribution to the long-term restructuring of spatial, social and organisational settings and their effects on citizens' routines and behaviours needs to be further explored. Also, it is crucial to critically reflect on the paths through which cultural policies trigger (purposive or unintended) effects at multiple levels, and on their social and political implications.

This thematic series hosts research reflecting on the role and meaning of culture-led transformative dynamics in cities and on the mechanisms through which they emerge. In addition, they will investigate how cultural activities contribute to (re-)shape cities in their socio-spatial and institutional configurations and affect citizens' quality of life. Multidisciplinary and cross-silos research investigating context-specific and exogenous factors intervening in different urban settings is particularly appreciated.

The Special Issue investigates research and case studies that tackle conceptual, analytical and empirical challenges related to the interaction among cultural policies and urban processes generating change in cities' material and intangible components. Submissions relate, but are not limited, to the following perspectives and questions:

- ≠ understanding of “urban sustainability”
- ≠ assumptions on the role of “culture” and “cultural actions” in urban transformation processes
- ≠ ways of framing culture-based transformative dynamics
- ≠ ways of embedding culture in policy and assessment frameworks

01.1

Sustainable cities

01 - Cultural actions and urban sustainability

→ Urban sustainability definition

Urban sustainability focuses on creating cities that can thrive economically, socially, and environmentally over the long term.

This concept has become increasingly critical in response to climate change and rapid urban development.

It can be defined as an **adaptive process** of addressing economic (e.g. economic equity), social (e.g. resilience to climate change impacts), environmental (e.g. reduced air pollution) and governance (e.g. ensuring citizens' active participation in carrying out urban functions) issues in an integrated way within and beyond urban areas. (Based on UN-Habitat and DFID, 2002; IBRD and World Bank, 2018.)

01 - Cultural actions and urban sustainability

→ Evolution of urban sustainability discourses

Initial Focus: Began with purely ecological aspects of sustainability.

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

01 - Cultural actions and urban sustainability

→ Evolution of urban sustainability discourses

Initial Focus: Began with purely ecological aspects of sustainability.

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

Social-Ecological Systems: Recognizing the interaction between social and ecological factors.

CITIES AS COMPLEX, ADAPTIVE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

- 1) Cities are ecosystems
- 2) Cities are spatially heterogeneous
- 3) Cities are dynamic
- 4) Human and natural processes interact in cities
- 5) Ecological processes are still at work and are important in cities

01 - Cultural actions and urban sustainability

→ Evolution of urban sustainability discourses

Initial Focus: Began with purely ecological aspects of sustainability.

ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

Social-Ecological Systems: Recognizing the interaction between social and ecological factors.

CITIES AS COMPLEX, ADAPTIVE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

SETS Approach: Integrating social, ecological, and technological systems.

CITIES AS SOCIO-TECHNICAL AND SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

Social: Promoting inclusive, healthy, and vibrant communities.

Ecological: Preserving and restoring natural environments.

Technological: Leveraging innovations for sustainable solutions.

Circular city: City in which all product and material streams can be brought back into the cycle after use and become resources for new products and services.(Based on Cramer, 2014.)

Green city: City model based on approaches to functional and ecological urban development design that provides healthy and sustainable environments for both natural systems and communities.(Based on McHarg, 1995.)

Healthy city: City with physical and social environments and community resources that enable people to perform all the functions of life and develop to their maximum potential.(Based on WHO,1998.)

Inclusive city: City in which the processes of development include a wide variety of citizens and activities and involve spatial, social and economic inclusion.(Based on World Bank, 2021.)

Low-carbon city: City that has achieved or is moving towards achieving low-carbon practices in all aspects, including its economy, daily life (e.g. travel), politics and culture.(Based on C40 Cities, 2015.)

Resilient city: City in which the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses and systems is enabled to survive, adapt and grow in response to chronic stresses and acute shocks.(Based on Resilient Cities Network, 2021.)



MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE,
SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

TARGETS

- 11.1 - Safe and affordable housing
- 11.2 - Affordable and sustainable transport systems
- 11.3 - Inclusive and sustainable urbanization
- 11.4 - Protect the world's cultural and natural heritage
- 11.5 - Reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters
- 11.6 - Reduce the environmental impact of cities
- 11.7 - Provide access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces
- 11.8 - Strong national and regional development planning
- 11.9 - Implement policies for inclusion, resource efficiency and disaster risk reduction

Urban sustainability
encompasses
multiple dimensions
(even beyond cities)



Urban sustainability encompasses multiple dimensions (even beyond cities)

- economic development
- physical organisation of space
- organization of social and economic space
- relation with environment/resources
- response/mitigation/adaptation to CC
- social inclusion
- health and wellbeing



01.2

Cultural action for urban sustainability

Urban sustainability encompasses multiple dimensions

- economic development
- physical organisation of space
- organization of social and economic space
- relation with environment/resources
- response/mitigation/adaptation to CC
- social inclusion
- health and wellbeing



Cultural action can contribute to the capacity of cities to move towards a sustainability horizon

Cultural actions can contribute to trigger change in multiple spheres of urban life

Fostering Awareness and Change in behaviours

- **Inspiration through Art:** Visual messages and storytelling can inspire sustainable behavior.
- **Creative Initiatives:** Public art installations, festivals, and events highlight environmental challenges and solutions.
- **Community Engagement:** Cultural events foster a sense of community and shared responsibility.

Cultural actions can contribute to trigger change in multiple spheres of urban life

Transforming Urban Spaces

- **City competitiveness:** Culture-led urban regeneration
- **Sustainable Design:** Incorporating green design principles to enhance energy efficiency.
- **Public Spaces:** Reimagining public areas to promote walking, cycling, and green oases.

Cultural actions can contribute to trigger change in multiple spheres of urban life

Shaping Collective Imagination and action

- **Shared Vision:** Cultural events and public art symbolize a city's commitment to a greener future.
- **Behavioural change / change in practices:** Support changes in action at the individual and community level

creative action as urban sustainability drivers

Creative action and thinking might

- ★ contribute to the **physical transformation** of space
- ★ provide **alternative ways of framing and understanding** (*Sacco, 2023*)
- ★ imagine **unexplored possibilities**
- ★ give voice to **multiple agencies** and create room for **new alliances** (*Metta, 2023*)
- ★ give space to the **intangible/invisible dimension** (*Jakob, 2023*)
- ★ **interact with practices and behaviours**

Cultural Action as Urban
Sustainability Drivers?

02

How do cities change?

02.1

Urban transformation

→ 02 - How do cities change

Urban transformation

Definition:

Urban transformation refers to **significant changes in cities' structure, function, and appearance**. In a sustainability perspective, it involves radical changes in cities to achieve sustainability and resilience and enhance quality of life (Davoudi et al., 2012)

Policy Integration:

Enshrined in the 2030 UN SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

Research Field:

Combines multiple scientific disciplines, ontologies, and methods.

02 - How do cities change

→ Urban transformation

Urban transformation is an interdisciplinary field with combines urban studies and complex system studies.

Three Perspectives:

1. **Descriptive:** Understanding urban change processes.
2. **Normative:** Guiding cities towards sustainable and resilient futures.
3. **Integrative:** Bridging diverse research approaches.

02 - How do cities change

Urban transformation

“**Transformation in cities** focuses on unravelling the diverse factors, processes and dynamics driving place-based transformations in cities. This perspective represents research that aims to examine and explain why transformations occur and are supported in some places and not others.

Transformation of cities examines the outcomes of transformative changes in urban (sub-)systems. It serves to understand and evaluate the emergence of new urban functions, new interactions and their implications for sustainability and resilience.

Transformation by cities looks at the changes taking place on global and regional levels as a result of urbanisation and urban development approaches. The perspective emphasises the agency of cities on a global scale and how transformation concepts travel between places.”

(Hölscher and Frantziskaki, 2021)

02 - How do cities change

→ Urban transformation

Urban transformation mechanism // DESCRIPTIVE

- **Drivers of change:** Endogenous/exogenous
- **Barriers/enablers factors:** Affecting urban transformation processes

Urban transformation mechanism // NORMATIVE

- **Aspirational horizon:** resilience, equity, sustainability, etc

02.2

Urban sustainability transition

02 - How do cities change

→ Urban transition perspective

Urban transition - The fundamental and structural changes in urban systems through which persistent environmental and societal challenges are addressed (Based on EEA and Eionet, 2016; Ehnert et al., 2018; EEA, 2019.)

They involve alterations in the overall configuration of transport, energy, and agri-food systems, which entail technology, policy, markets, consumer practices, infrastructure, cultural meaning and scientific knowledge (Elzen et al., 2004; Geels, 2004).

These elements are reproduced, maintained and transformed by actors such as firms and industries, policy makers and politicians, consumers, civil society, engineers and researchers.

Multi-level perspective ([Rip and Kemp, 1998](#), [Geels, 2002](#), [Geels, 2004](#), [Geels and Schot, 2007](#)) is a framework for understanding sustainability transitions that provides an overall view of the multi-dimensional complexity of changes in socio-technical systems.

LANDSCAPE includes the intangible aspects (social values, political beliefs and world views) and tangible aspects (climate, physical landscape...)

landscape

REGIME refers to form of government, set of rules, cultural or social norms, physical infrastructures, practices...

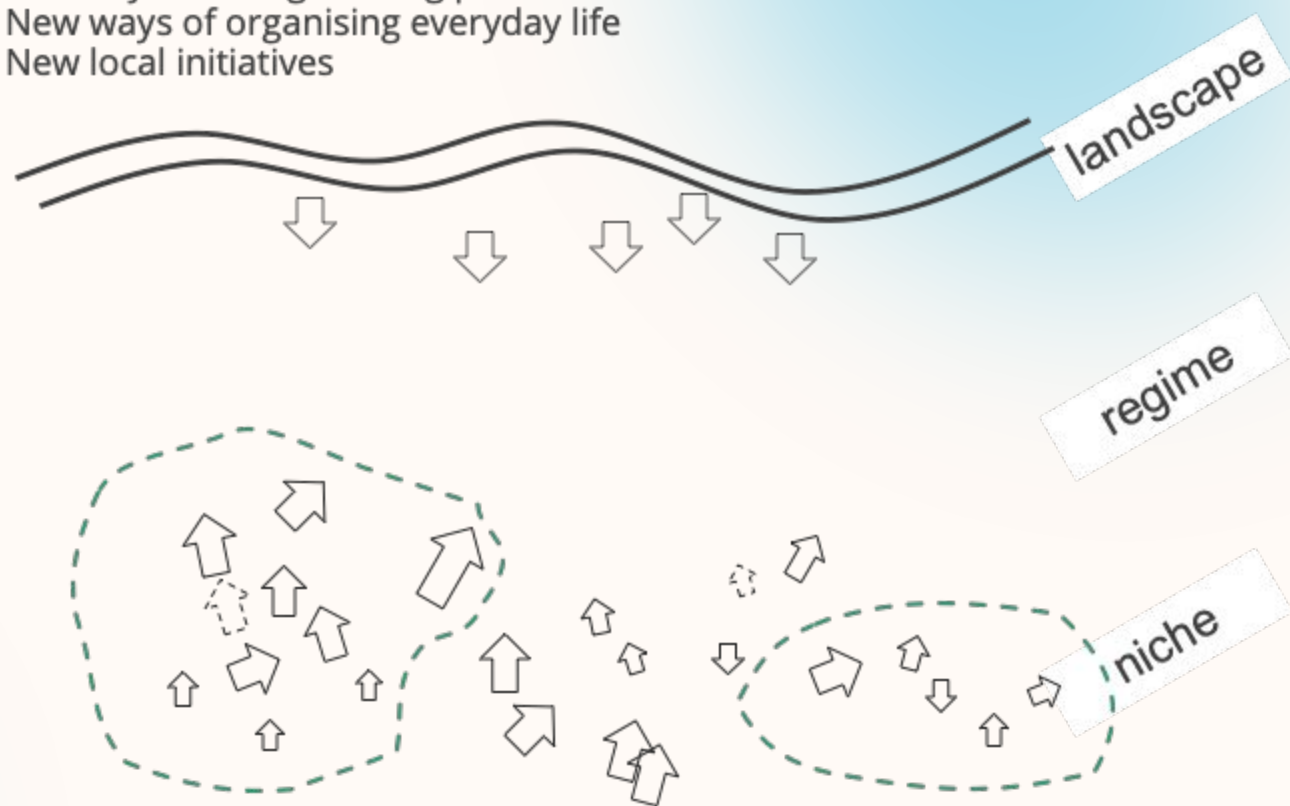
regime

NICHES are 'protected spaces/lab where new ideas are generated, prototyped, tested

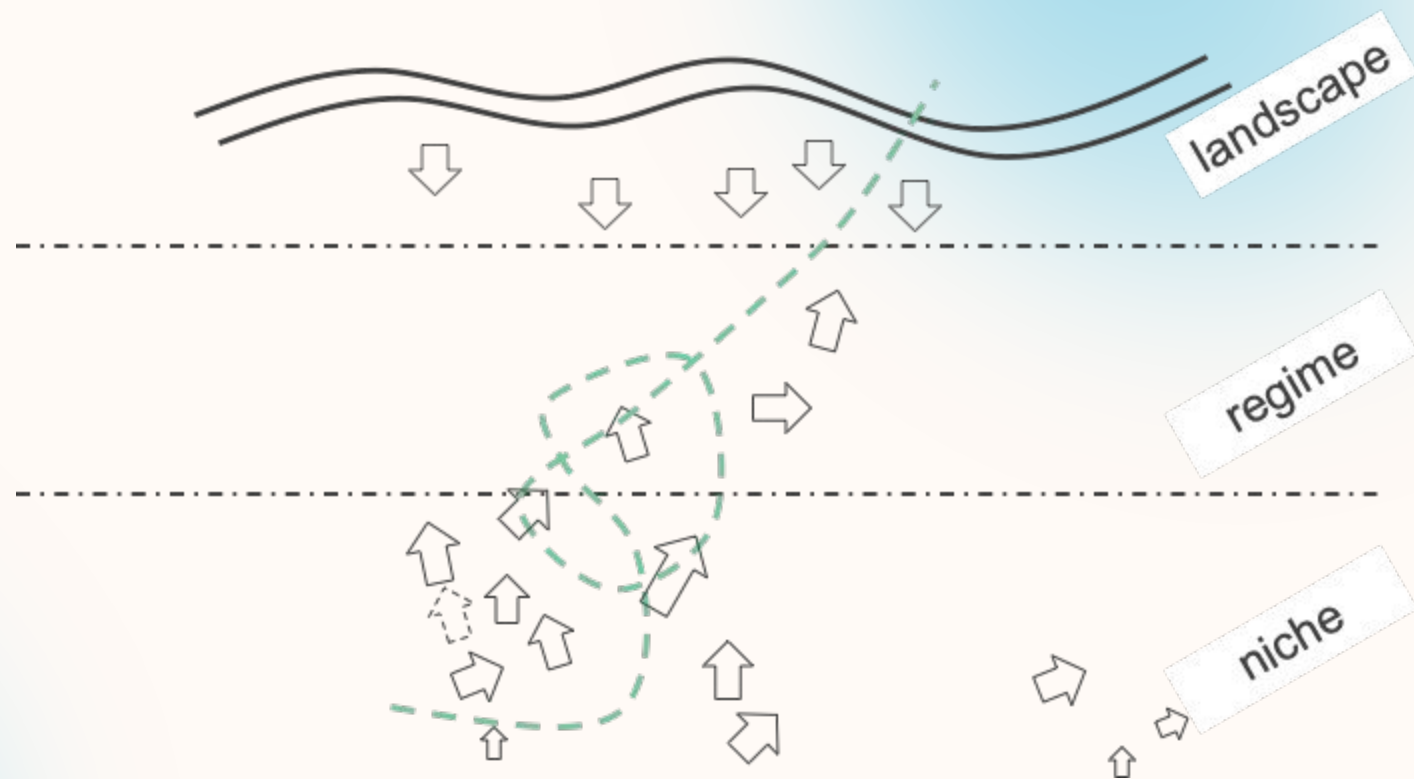
niche

In niches

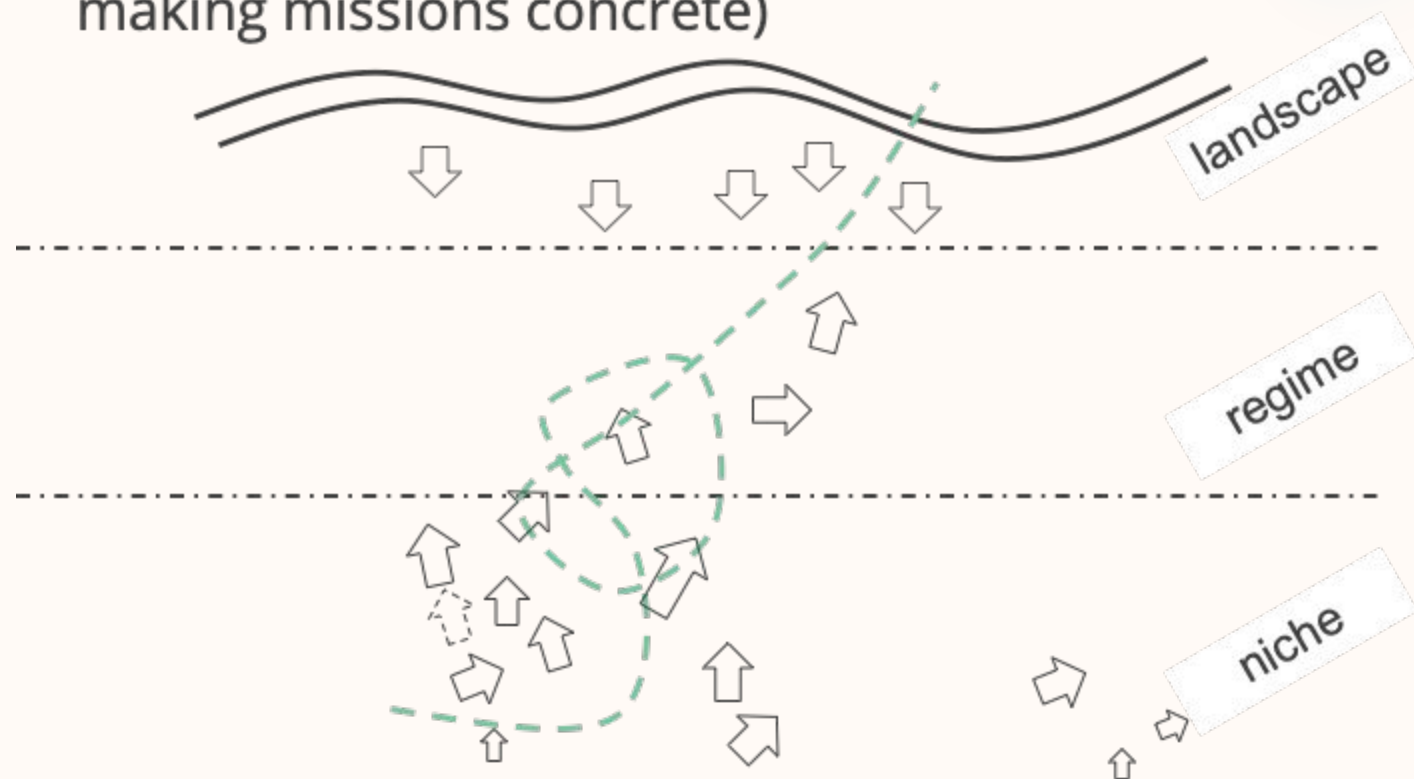
- New ways of using existing products/ infrastructures
- New ways of organising everyday life
- New local initiatives



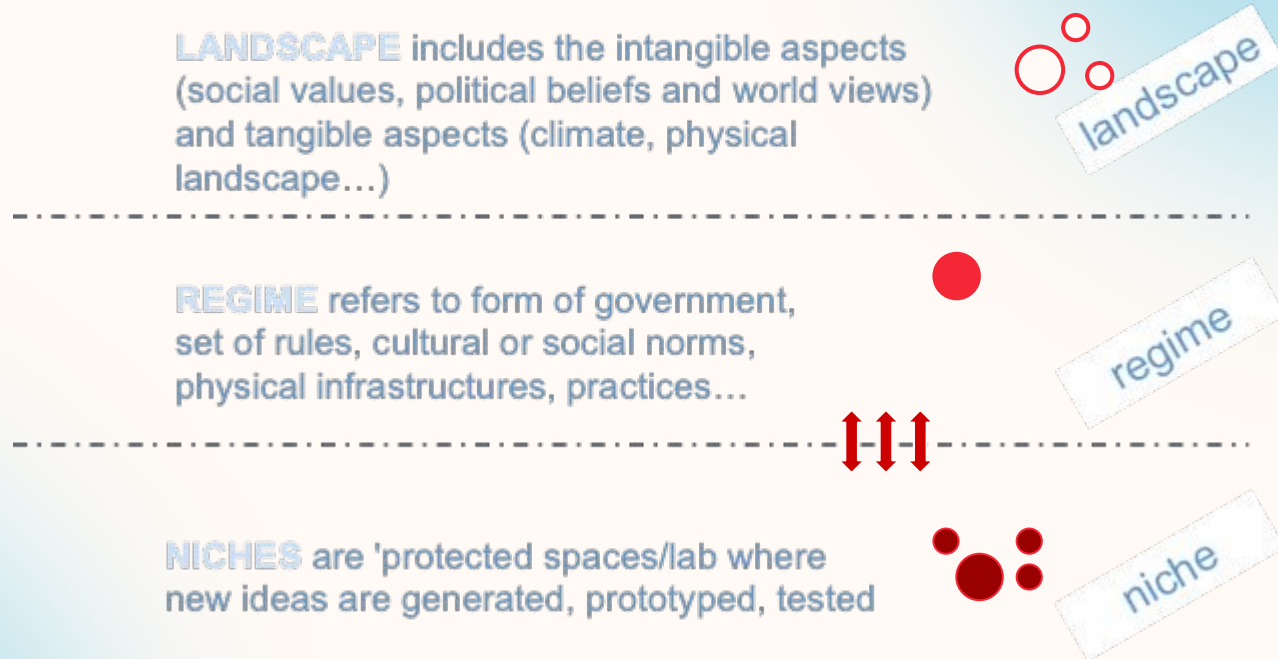
Regimes can support change in the landscapes (culture, values, etc.)



Regimes can work for **enabling** innovation with transitional power (i.e. being value generative and making missions concrete)

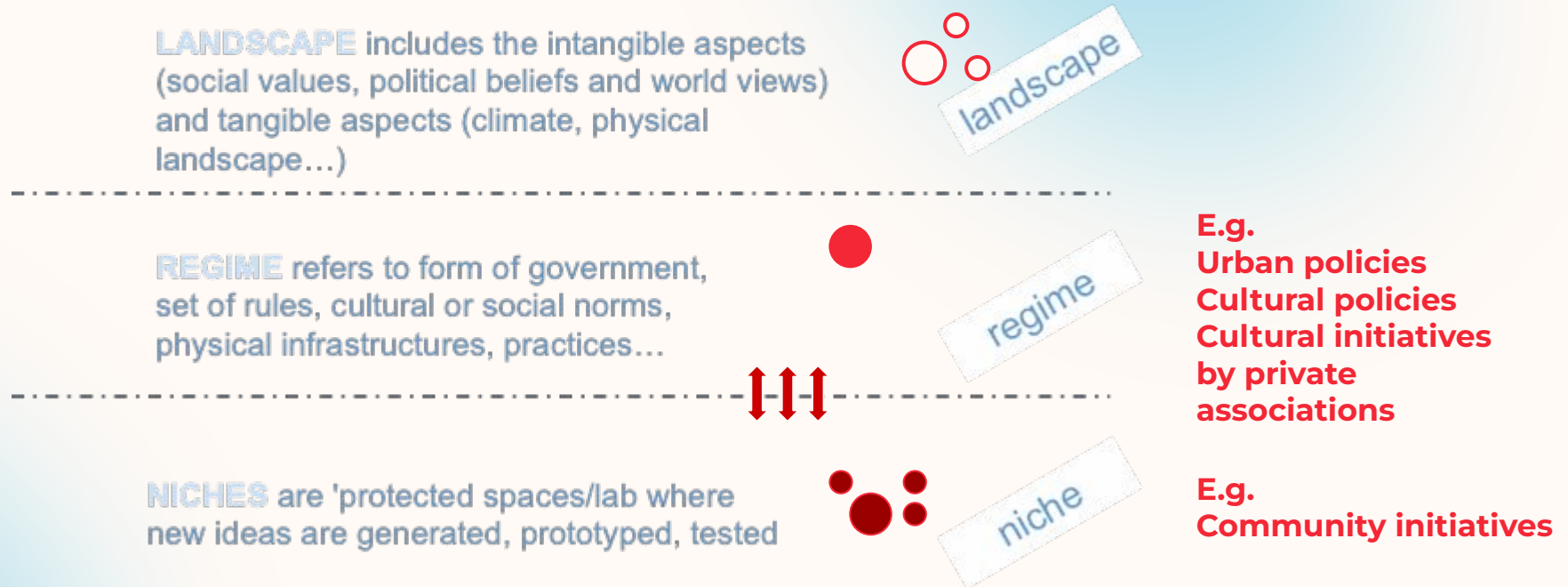


Multi-level perspective ([Rip and Kemp, 1998](#), [Geels, 2002](#), [Geels, 2004](#), [Geels and Schot, 2007](#)) is a framework for understanding sustainability transitions that provides an overall view of the multi-dimensional complexity of changes in socio-technical systems.



which role for cultural action?
what transformative potential?

Multi-level perspective (Rip and Kemp, 1998, Geels, 2002, Geels, 2004, Geels and Schot, 2007) is a framework for understanding sustainability transitions that provides an overall view of the multi-dimensional complexity of changes in socio-technical systems.



SUM UP

Systemic change takes place at multiple (interconnected) scales

Cultural actions

- Can affect urban transformation dynamics at different scales
- Can affect urban transformation dynamics intervening on different levels
- Can intersect and affect ongoing transformative dynamics or drive new transformation
- Can contribute to change cities in their material and immaterial dimensions
- Can contribute to change individual and collective attitude and behaviours
- Can play a role in urban sustainability...or not!

15 minutes break

02.3

Cultural actions as drivers of change in cities?

Culture & The City

- * Can creative and artistic practices act as transformative drivers?
- * w can creative practices hybridise with professional / expert action and dialogue with plac-specific needs in sustainability pathw

Large scale cultural
policies

Culture & The City

preferred locus of
cultural production
and artistic activation
(Parkinson &
Bianchini, [1993](#))

Local cultural actions

field of experimentation
where social innovation
processes can emerge
and consolidate
(Concilio & Tosoni, [2019](#))

* Can creative and artistic practices act as transformative

* w can creative practices hybridise with professional / expert action and
dialogue with plac-specific needs in sustainability pathw

Large scale cultural
policies

Culture & The City

preferred locus of
cultural production
and artistic activation
(Parkinson &
Bianchini, [1993](#))

Local cultural actions

Social Impacts

Local impacts

Local development / Urban
Regeneration / Community
Activation

field of
experimentation
where social
innovation processes
can emerge and
consolidate
(Concilio & Tosoni,
[2019](#))

Achievement of “Missions”

(Mazzuccato et al. 2018)

* Can creative and artistic practices act as transformative

* How can creative practices be integrated with professional / expert action and
dialogued with policy-making needs in order to build a coherently

Large scale cultural
policies

Culture & The City

preferred locus of
cultural production
and artistic activation
(Parkinson &
Bianchini, [1993](#))

Local cultural actions

?

Social Impacts

Local impacts

Local development / Urban
Regeneration / Community
Activation

field of
experimentation
where social
innovation processes
can emerge and
consolidate
(Concilio & Tosoni,
[2019](#))

Achievement of “Missions”

(Mazzuccato et al. 2018)

* Can creative and artistic practices act as transformative

* How can creative practices be integrated with professional / expert action and
dialogued with policy-making needs in order to build a coherently

Insights from
the MESOC PROJECT
Measuring the social Impacts of
Culture
www.mesoc-project.eu/



Funded by the
European Union

PARTNERS



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 870935

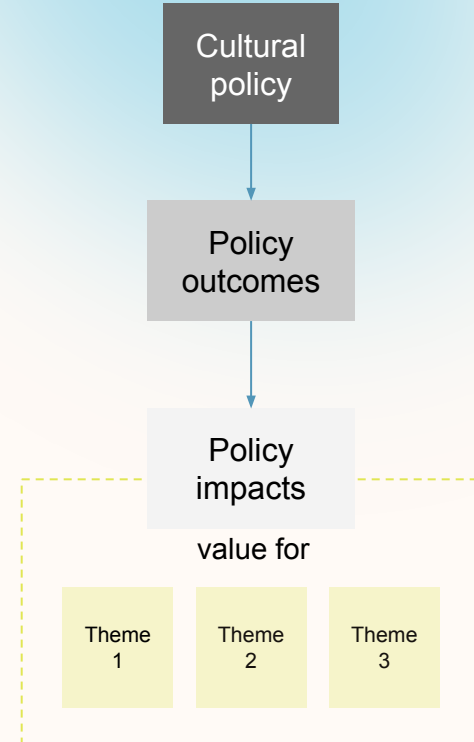
The Mesoc Approach

Focus on impacts as **policy outcomes**

Impacts related to 3 **crossover themes**

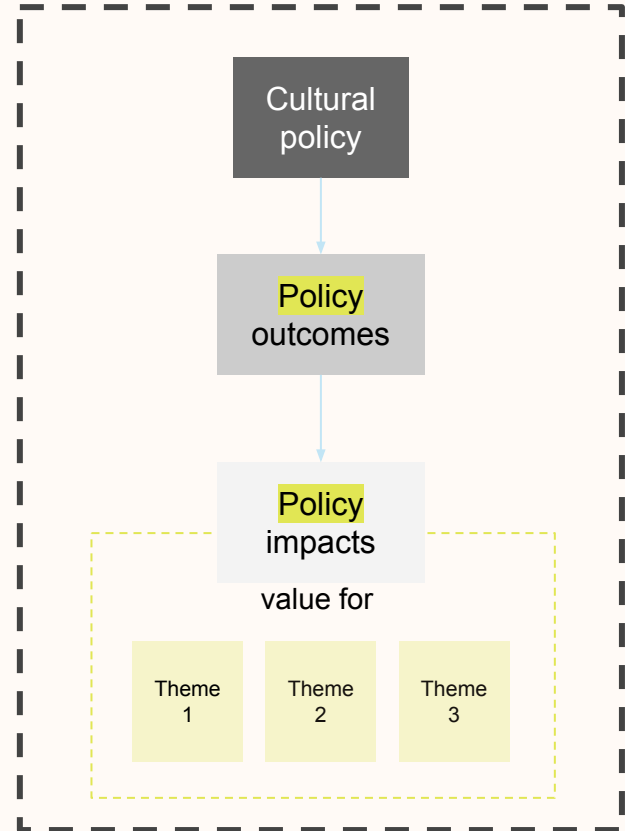
1. Health and Well-Being
2. Urban and Territorial Renovation
3. People's Engagement and Participation

Impacts in terms of capacity to generate **economic and societal value**



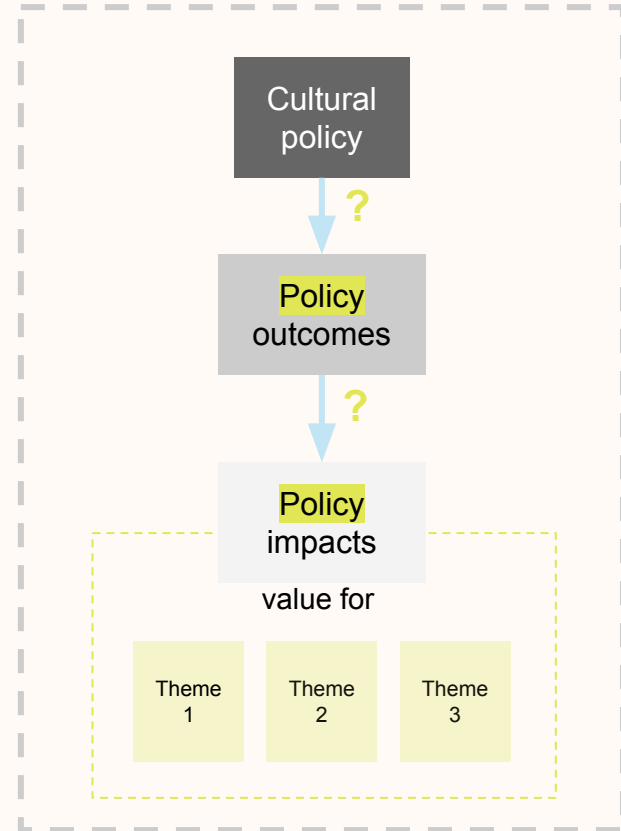
The Mesoc Approach **Reflecting on assumptions**

1. Focuses on policy processes, not so much on “transition” they possibly contribute to



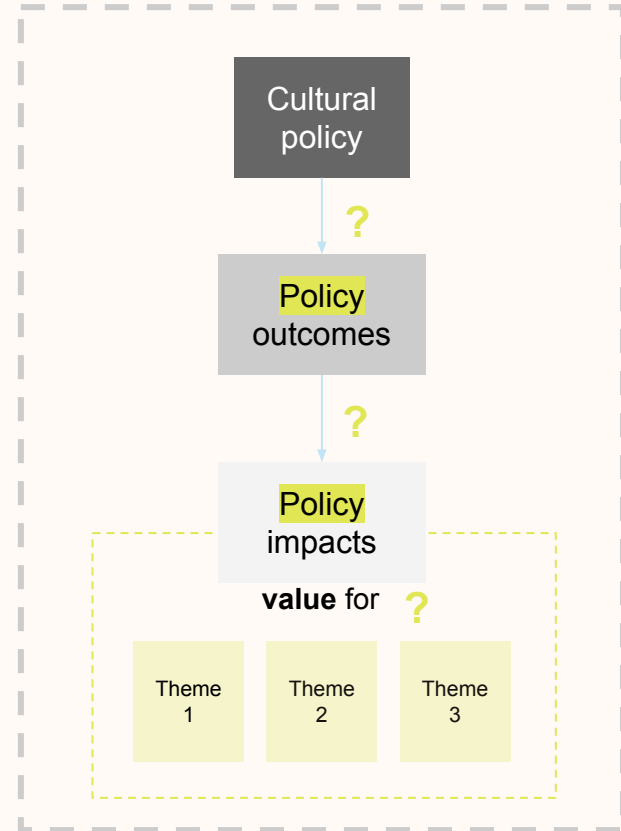
The Mesoc Approach **Reflecting on assumptions**

1. Focuses on policy processes, not so much on “transition” they possibly contribute to
2. Assumes linear causal pathways

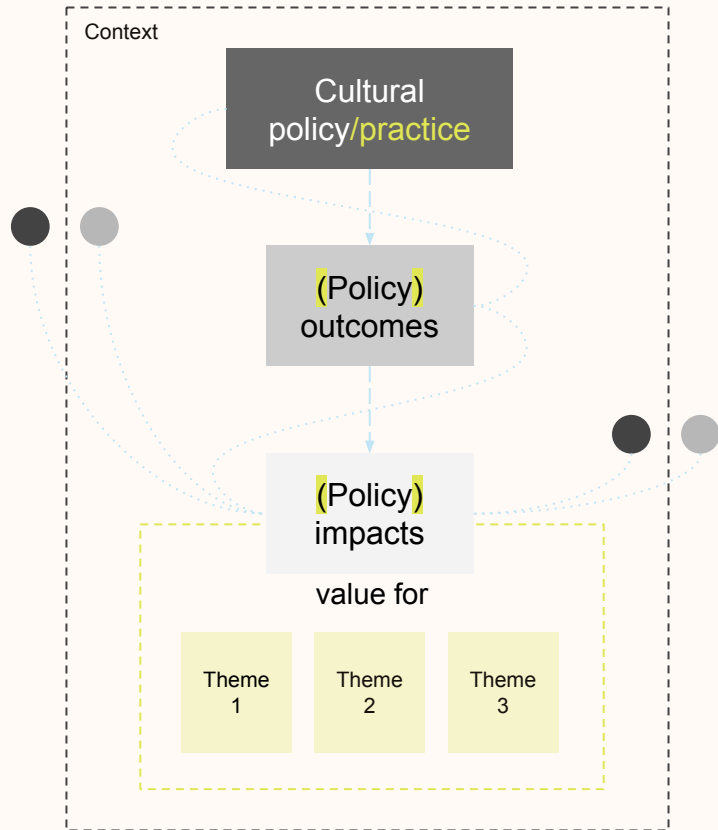


The Mesoc Approach **Reflecting on assumptions**

1. Focuses on policy processes, not so much on “transition” they possibly contribute to
2. Assumes linear causal pathways
3. Identifies impacts as ‘values’ → intrinsically positive connotation



The Mesoc Approach Reflecting on assumptions



Focus on formal policies and strategies, but also emergent cultural practices (*niche level*) having different degrees of relation with formal cultural policies

Focus on transition pathways

→ Observing transition mechanisms in-action
(*beyond declared policy intentions*)

Transition processes as complex and non-linear:

→ no direct causal link
→ multiplicity of factors contributing to an impact
(*triggered by the policy? By other events? Affected by context-specific and exogenous factors - e.g. privatisation, liberalisation, governance shifts, etc?*)

Impacts include:

→ Policy medium and long-term positive effects in the context analysed, for one or more cross-cutting themes
→ Unexpected policy results (*positive and negative*)
→ Spillover effects, trade-off (*positive and negative*)

What social value?

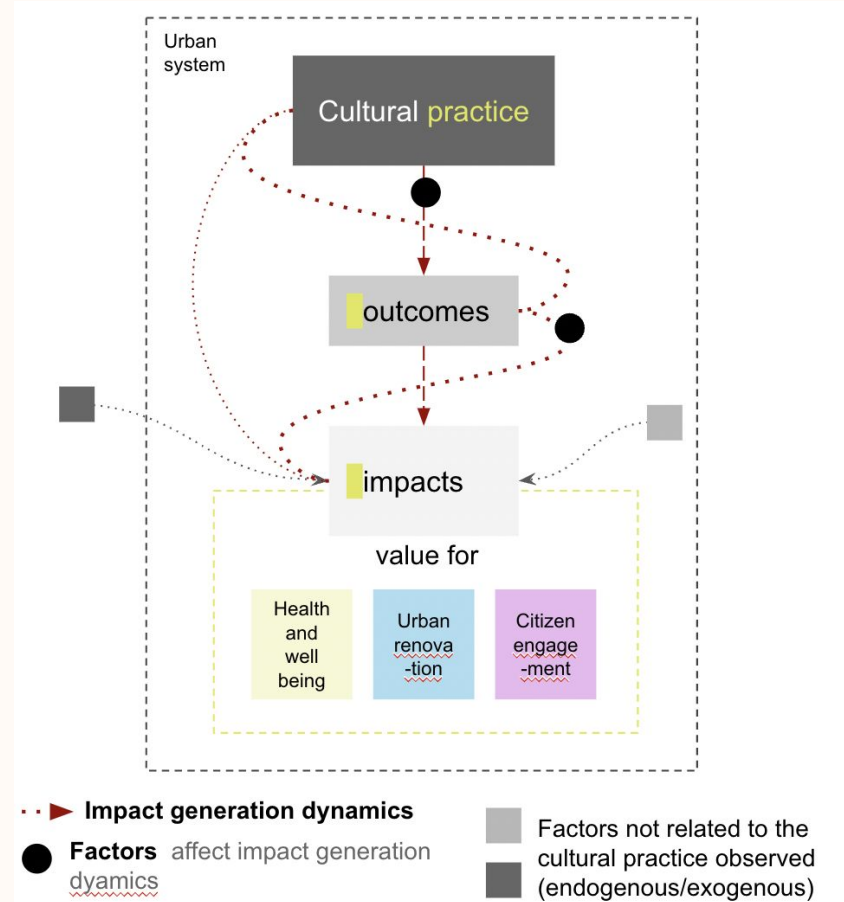
Beyond economic impacts // Capturing intangible / immaterial effects

Beyond policy outcomes // Trade-offs / Spillover effects / Unexpected results

What process of impact generation?

Recognise complexity, non-linearity, multiple determinants

Acknowledge place-specificity



1. Conceptual Framework for exploration of impact generation mechanisms and the identification of indicators (→ see Convergence Model)

2. Testing/contributing to the conceptual and evaluation models through research activities in 11 Pilot cities

- Collection of cultural initiatives
- Shared reflection on impact generation mechanisms
- Identification of key enabling factors and indicators

3. Development of an AI based online service (named the MESOC Toolkit) to be used by both researchers and practitioners (policy makers and cultural operators) to measure the societal value and impacts of cultural policies and practices.

CITY	Theme
1.Athens (EL)	People's engagement and participation
2.Cluj-Napoca (RO)	Health and well-being
3.Rijeka (HR)	Urban and territorial renovation
4.Barcelona (ES)	People's engagement and participation
5.Gent (BE)	People's engagement and participation
6.Milano (IT)	Urban and territorial renovation
7.Issy-Les-Moulineaux (FR)	Urban and territorial renovation
8.Turku (FI)	Health and well-being
9.Valencia (ES)	Health and well-being
10. Jerez de la Frontera	Urban regeneration
11. Lublin	Test of MESOC's toolkit

CASE STUDIES

Desk research

(i) changes recorded in the impact domains (beyond direct impacts)

(ii) causal relations between these changes and specific cultural actions

(iii) factors affecting the capacity of cultural actions to develop and generate impacts

Name of the Cultural Action (City)	social impact domain
Unspeakable: A music composition workshop for teenagers (Cluj-Napoca)	Health and well-being
Tablo: Training staff in the use of arts for the benefit of people with long-term conditions (Cluj-Napoca)	Health and well-being
Inner Space (Cluj-Napoca)	Health and well-being
Caixa dels Records: Memòria de una vida (Valencia)	Health and well-being
Museus per la Salut: Records de Festa al Museu Faller de València (Valencia)	Health and well-being
Ocio inclusivo (Valencia)	Health and well-being
Istituto Comprensivo Sandro Pertini (Milan)	Urban Regeneration
Cascina Martesana (Milan)	Urban Regeneration
Caravanseray Selinunte San Siro (Milan)	Urban Regeneration
Le Temps des Cerises (Issy-Les-Moulineaux)	Urban Regeneration
Le CLAVIM - L'Espace Andrée Chedid (Issy-Les-Moulineaux)	Urban Regeneration
Musée Français de la Carte à Jouer (Issy-Les-Moulineaux)	Urban Regeneration
Culture in the Neighbourhoods (Athens)	Social cohesion
Athens Garden Festival (Athens)	Social cohesion
Athens Escape Routes (Athens)	Social cohesion
Apropa Cultural Una porta a la inclusió (Barcelona)	Social cohesion
Xamfrà, Centre de Música i Escena del Raval (Barcelona)	Social cohesion
En Palabras [relatos migrantes] (Barcelona)	Social cohesion



Funded by the
European Union



DIALOGUES WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Dialogues

Semistructured interviews +
focus groups

- (i) factors affecting the capacity of cultural actions to develop and generate impacts
- (ii) local context dynamic

Semantic analysis of transcripts

- categories of enabling factors
- observation lenses



Funded by the
European Union



CULTURAL ACTIONS

18 cultural actions from 6 cities

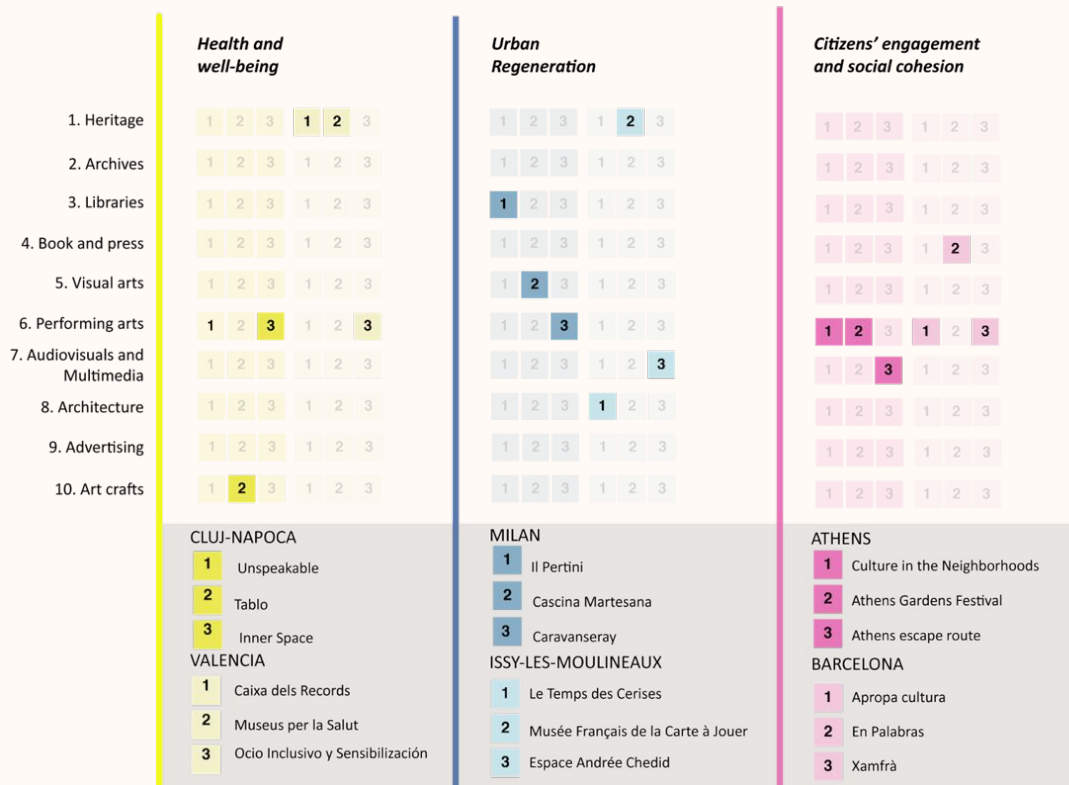
Prominent cultural sectors:
performative arts + visual arts

Start: 1997 - 2020

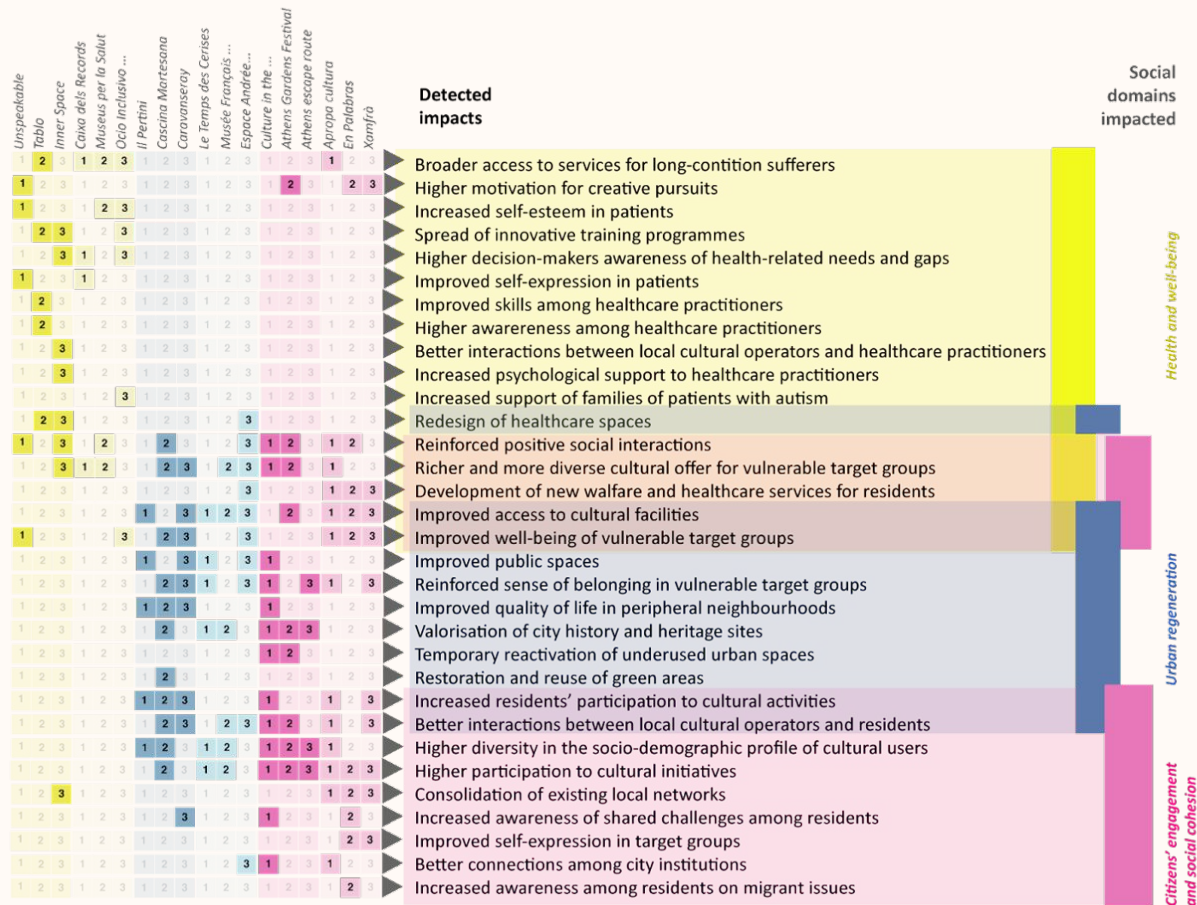
Permanent + recurring

Place-specific and general

Mostly public initiatives



CULTURAL ACTIONS AND THEIR IMPACTS



cultural actions
mostly capable to
generate impacts
across multiple social
domains
(direct/indirect
impacts, spillover
effects)

CULTURAL ACTIONS AND THEIR IMPACTS

Clusters of impacts

Enhancement
of cultural
abilities

Production of
knowledge
and
awareness
raising

Improvement of
individual or
group
physical or
psychological
conditions

Reframing of
governance
and
partnership
arrangements

Promotion of
new policies

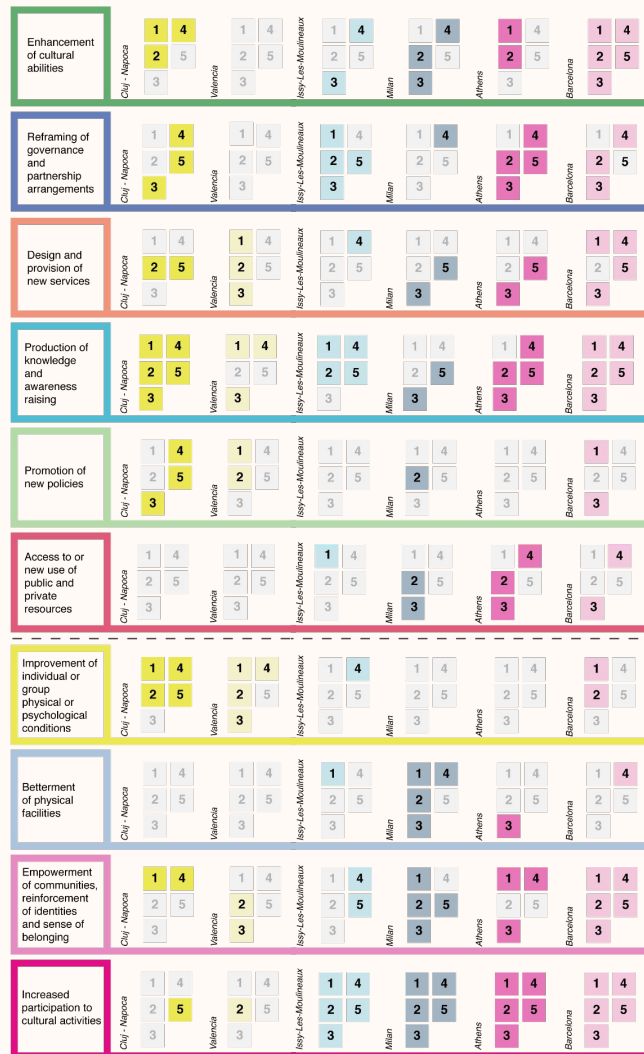
Betterment
of physical
facilities

Design and
provision of
new services

Access to or
new use of
public and
private
resources

Empowerment
of communities,
reinforcement
of identities
and sense of
belonging

Increased
participation to
cultural activities



FACTORS ENABLING SOCIAL IMPACT GENERATION

Enabling Factor	Descriptors (from the analysis of cases)
NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political recognition and support • Existence/Emergence of cross-sectoral collaborative schemes • Inclusion of consultants and professionals from different domains • Existence of well-established synergies with other cultural initiatives
RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of financial resources • Capacity to mobilise new financial resources • Availability and accessibility of spaces and infrastructures • Availability of human resources
NORMS & REGULATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of favourable normative frameworks in the cultural domain • Existence of favourable normative frameworks in the impact domain • Openness and flexibility of normative settings
NARRATIVES & DISCOURSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a strong identity • Alignment with discourses from the cultural sector • Alignment with discourses from the impact domain
KNOWLEDGE & ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of the skills and expertise of the actors involved • Capacity to build on the skills and expertise of the actors involved • Learning from other experiences



Funded by the
European Union



CONTEXT SENSITIVE OBSERVATION LENSES

**NETWORKS &
PARTNERSHIPS**

**RESOURCES &
INFRASTRUCTURES**

**NORMS &
REGULATIONS**

**NARRATIVES &
DISCOURSES**

**KNOWLEDGE &
ABILITIES**

**NETWORK
CHANGES**

*bonding -
bridging - linking
social capital*

- * context proactiveness
- * capacity to trigger / engage in transformative processes towards social value generation

**MARKET
REACTIVENESS**

*CCI + PA
alliances*

- * meet unsatisfied needs
- * propose new products and services
- * support scaling dynamics

**PUBLIC POLICY
SENSITIVITY**

*norms -
resources -
discourses*

- * readiness and maturity of local public actors
- * capacity to intercept broader transformative dynamics

**SYMBOLIC
REACTIVENESS**

*narratives -
symbolic values*

- * proneness to change and experiment
- * resonance of social impacts in context

**LEARNING
AWARENESS**

*recognition of the
culture-impact
link*

- * capacity to mobilise knowledge
- * capacity to embed it into action

**SPATIAL
INTELLIGENCE**

impact generation
process

Local Context



Funded by the
European Union



→ The transformative potential of cultural actions depends on multiple factors affecting

1. their emergence
2. their capacity to resonate in the local ecosystem
3. their capacity to mobilise other actors

→ Focus 1 - **Social Impact generation dynamics**

Social impact evaluation requires a process-focused approach, more attentive to local context dynamics and the cross-cutting social and cultural consequences of public or private actions

→ Focus 2 - **Proneness / maturity of local contexts**

maturity of the niche-regime interactions, the level and directionality of transformation pathways, degree of awareness and agency of the involved actors, degree of readiness of the context ... can work as “proxies” to flag ongoing transformative pathway

Do you have questions on the first part of the class?

Cultural Action as Urban
Sustainability Drivers?

03

Creative actions in context

03.1

The New European Bauhaus Initiative

LANDSCAPE includes the intangible aspects (social values, political beliefs and world views) and tangible aspects (climate, physical landscape...)

landscape

● **REGIME** refers to form of government, set of rules, cultural or social norms, physical infrastructures, practices...

regime

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION



NICHES are 'protected spaces/lab where new ideas are generated, prototyped, tested

niche

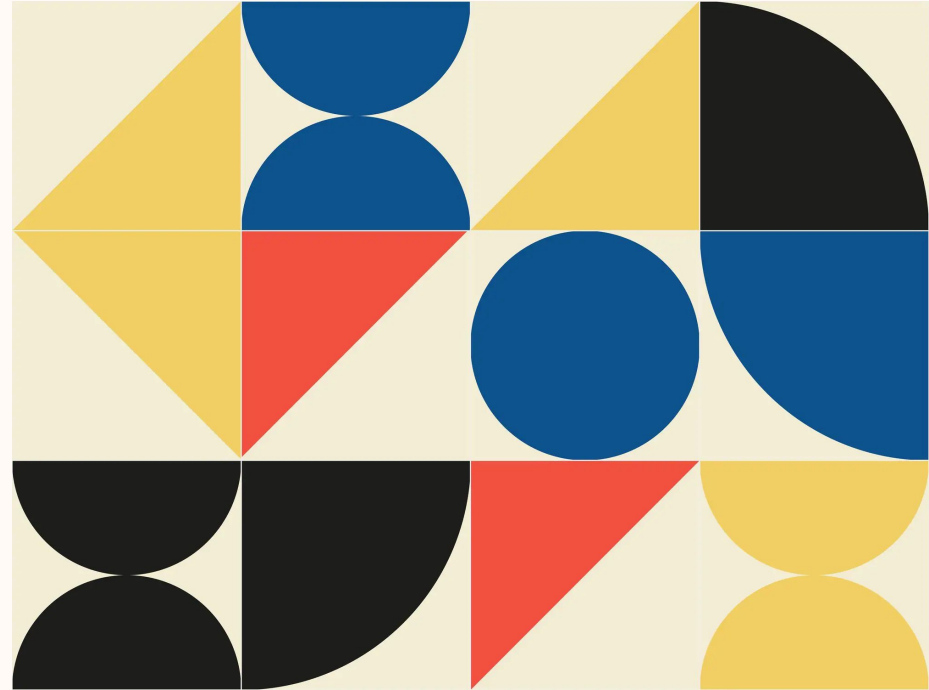
03 - Creative actions in context

The Historical Bauhaus

Origins: founded in 1919 by Walter Gropius in Weimar, Germany. It was a revolutionary school of art, architecture, and design that sought to unify art and craftsmanship.

Philosophy: functionality, simplicity, and the integration of technology and industrial techniques into art and design.

Legacy: Despite being closed by the Nazis in 1933, the Bauhaus movement greatly influenced modernist architecture and design worldwide, promoting a vision of socially responsible and accessible design.



03 - Creative actions in context

→ The New European Bauhaus Initiative



01 - Cultural actions and urban sustainability

→ The New European Bauhaus Initiative

Objective: The New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative links the European Green Deal to daily life and living spaces, aiming to create a sustainable, inclusive future that is aesthetically pleasing.

Values:

- **Sustainability:** Addressing climate goals, promoting circularity, reducing pollution, and enhancing biodiversity.
- **Aesthetics:** Ensuring quality of experience and style beyond mere functionality.
- **Inclusion:** Valuing diversity and ensuring accessibility and affordability.

Approach: A transdisciplinary movement bridging science, technology, art, and culture to co-create solutions for societal challenges.



01 - Cultural actions and urban sustainability

→ The New European Bauhaus Initiative

Transdisciplinary Collaboration: Involves citizens, experts, businesses, and institutions working together across disciplines.

Events and Festivals: The NEB Festival, held in Brussels and across Europe, features forums, fairs, and artistic performances to engage the public and showcase innovative projects.

Funding Opportunities: Provides EU funding for projects that embody NEB values, fostering experimentation and connection across Europe.

Educational Initiatives: Focus on education and learning to build skills aligned with sustainability and inclusiveness goals.



01 - Cultural actions and urban sustainability

→ The New European Bauhaus Initiative

Award-Winning Projects: NEB Prizes recognize exemplary initiatives that align with sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusion.

Community and Participation: Emphasizes co-creation and community engagement to address complex societal issues.

Global Recognition: Expands beyond the EU, including projects from the Western Balkans and recognition of efforts in Ukraine.

Future Goals: Aims to inspire and steer societal transformation towards a sustainable, inclusive, and beautiful future, enhancing the quality of life for all Europeans.



03.2

One Example from the PALIMPSEST Project

LANDSCAPE includes the intangible aspects (social values, political beliefs and world views) and tangible aspects (climate, physical landscape...)

landscape

- **REGIME** refers to form of government, set of rules, cultural or social norms, physical infrastructures, practices...

regime

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

NICHES are 'protected spaces/lab where new ideas are generated, prototyped, tested

niche

RESEARCH
CONSORTIUM

LOCAL COMMUNITIES



PALIMPSEST

Creative Drivers for Sustainable
Living Heritage Landscapes



New European Bauhaus
beautiful | sustainable | together



Funded by
the European Union

Consortium



POLITECNICO
MILANO 1863

DIPARTIMENTO DI ARCHITETTURA
E STUDI URBANI



COAL



AALBORG UNIVERSITET
KØBENHAVN

CULTURALINK

CONSULTORIA EN CULTURA Y COMUNICACION



NOMAD
GARDEN



novelcore

RESEARCH & INNOVATION



ŁÓDŹ DESIGN
FESTIVAL



fundarte

Fundación Universitaria
para los Artes Escénicas
y el Patrimonio del Jerez



ENTE REGIONALE PER I SERVIZI
ALL'AGRICOLTURA E ALLE FORESTE



Regione Lombardia



MAJOR CITIES OF EUROPE
IT USERS GROUP



etre



LADISLAV SUTNAR FACULTY
OF DESIGN AND ART
UNIVERSITY OF WEST BOHEMIA



SEMANTIKA



BASQUE CENTRE FOR
CLIMATE CHANGE
Klima Aldaketa Ikergai



ADR
Campiña
DE JEREZ + COSTA NOROESTE



IFLA EUROPE
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION
OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS



DESIS
NETWORK
Design for
Social Innovation
and Sustainability



Ayuntamiento
de Jerez



New European Bauhaus
beautiful | sustainable | together



Funded by
the European Union



PALIMPSEST

PALIMPSEST explores
creative action for landscape
sustainability transition
through co-creation
experiments

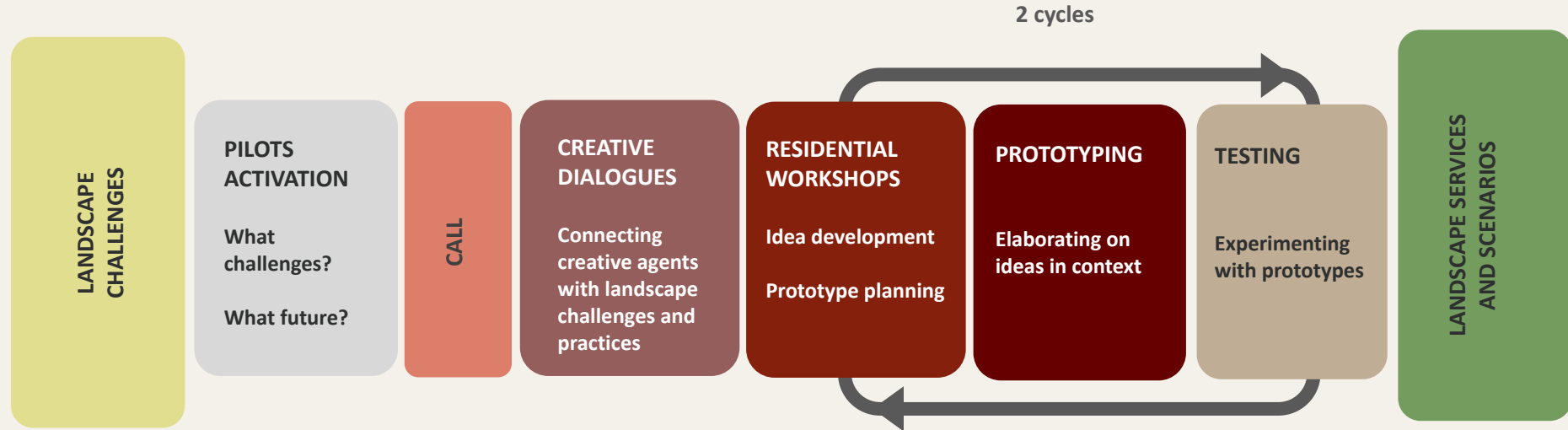
The starting point

Landscapes as

living and dynamic manifestations
of stratified nature-human interactions
(Corboz, 1983; Secchi 1998)

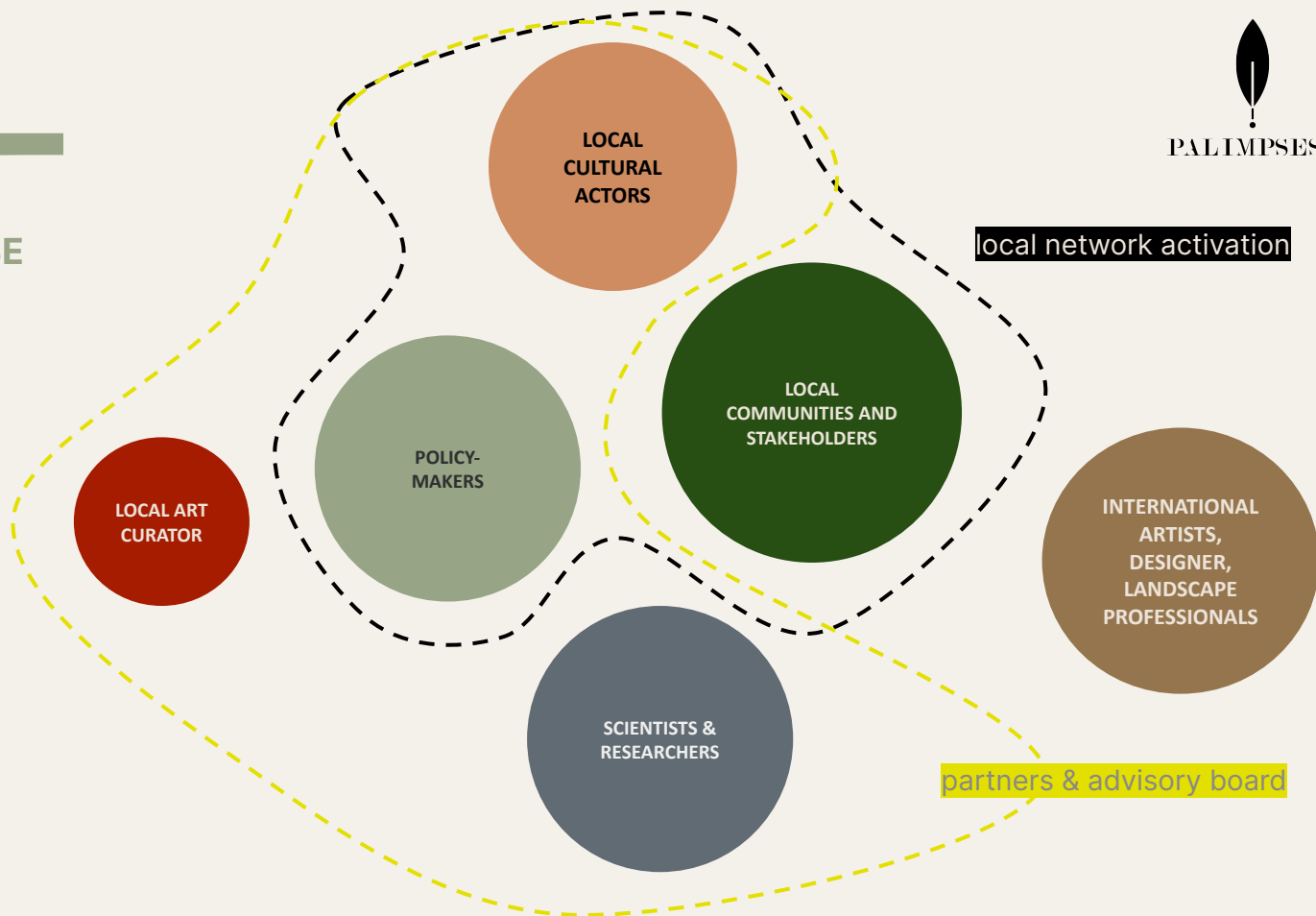
privileged foci for the observation of
misalignments, tensions and contradictions
as the one brought by CC, but also by CCA strategies and policies

The methodology | A co-creation approach

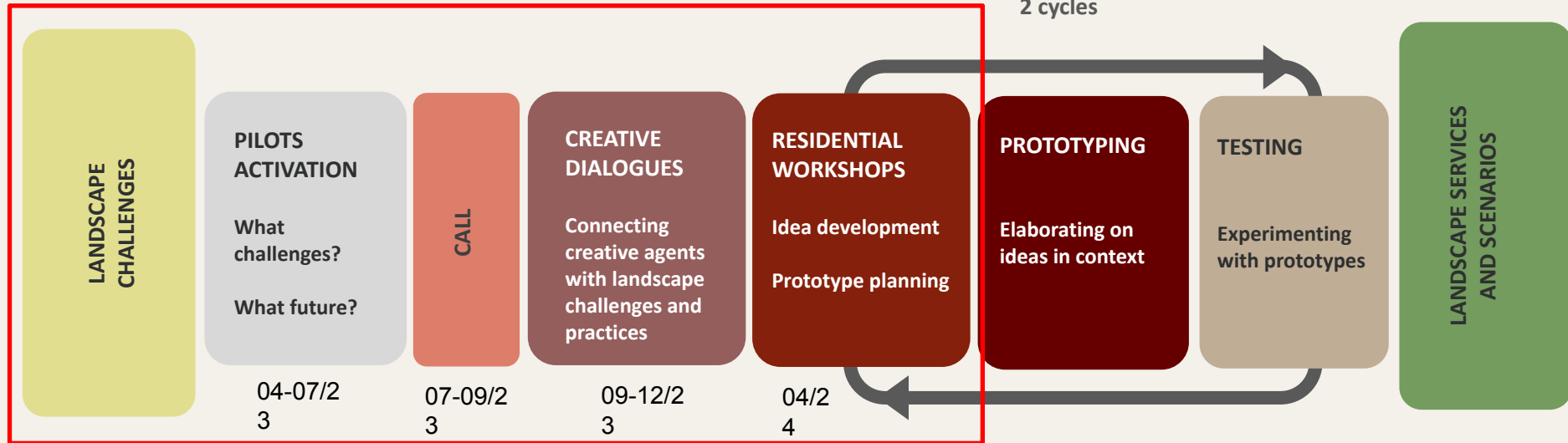


The actors

HOW CAN CREATIVE PRACTICES HYBRIDISE WITH PROFESSIONAL ACTIONS AND DIALOGUE WITH PLACE-SPECIFIC NEEDS?



The methodology | A co-creation approach





PALIMPSEST

Jerez de La Frontera

a wine landscape
challenged
by CC effects

Photo: I. Bianchi
April 2024



PALIMPEST

Jerez de La Frontera

a wine landscape
challenged
by CC effects

the birthplace of
Flamenco



Photo
J. C. Toro



PALIMPSEST

Jerez de La Frontera

a wine landscape
challenged
by CC effects

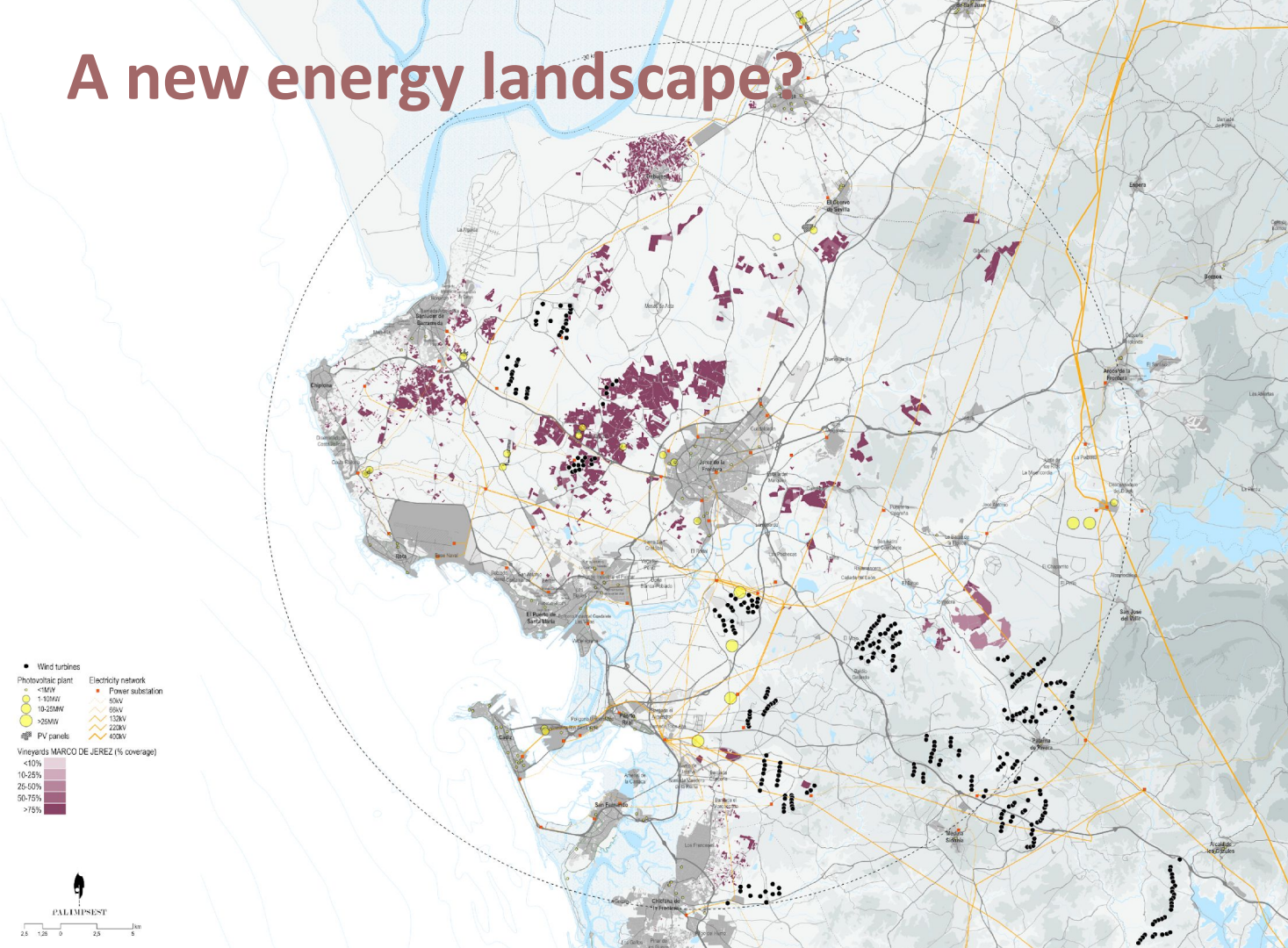
the birthplace of
Flamenco

a new energy
landscape?



Photo: I. Bianchi
February 2024

A new energy landscape?



Source: F. Pazons
Nomad Garden
2024

The experiment | Pilot activation

- Understanding practices shaping the landscape in change

- Connecting with local actors

- Identifying conflictual dimensions

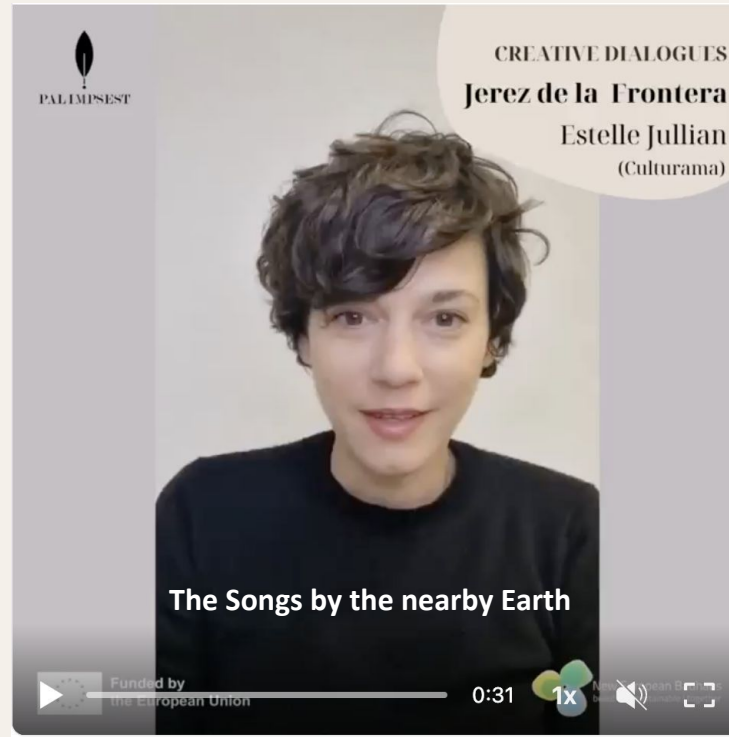
Typology	Practices	Relation with the landscape
Fruition	Tabancos, mostos, ferias, romerías, zambombas, tourism, flamenco	Cultural heritage & local identity
Production	Viticulture, agriculture, transhumance, energy	Cultural heritage, permanence/modification of landscape dynamics
Conservation	Biodiversity protection, protection of bird migration routes, local stewardship	Maintenance of environmental resources and ecological functions
Management & Planning	Funds allocation, compensation practices, land-use regulations, stakeholder engagement	Orientation of landscape transformation processes; Definition of modes of interaction

A new energy landscape?

Conflictual dimensions

- **Planning** | Land use and planning mechanisms
- **Governance** | Competences and interests across sectors and scales
- **Discourses** | Policy priorities and rationales
- **Imaginaries** | Visions of the future

The experiment | Creative dialogues





ZAMBOMBA as an OBJECT and a RITUAL

2. Imagineries



1. Materials



ZAMBOMBA

3. Adaptation practices



Do you have questions on the second part of the class?

10 minutes break

Cultural Action as Urban
Sustainability Drivers?

04

Group exercise

The rules of the game

Divide in groups (10?)

The prompt: You are in a city with a severe pollution problem affecting the main river. The river is inaccessible, the surrounding space is neglected, and the river is not considered a resource for the city. Those living nearby avoid it. A public call is launched to promote a cultural initiative to improve the river's situation, its relationship with the city, and to enhance the quality of life for residents. You decide to apply.

The questions

1. Can you imagine a specific city? If so, which one?
2. Which SDGs would you need to target? Why?
3. What kind of creative action comes to your mind?
4. What knowledge and expertise would you need?
5. Who would you involve in the definition of the proposal?
6. What kinds of impacts you would like to produce?

Discuss about the question, and then we will have a pool to see the results

You have **XX** minutes

3, 2, 1... go!

**Let's have a look to
the results!**

- 1. Can you imagine a specific city?
If so, which one?**

2. Which SDGs would you need to target?

3. What kind of creative action comes to your mind?

4. What knowledge and expertise would you need?

5. Who would you involve?

5. What kinds of impacts would you like to produce?

Thanks!

For information and questions

irene.bianchi@polimi.it

<https://www.call-researchlab.polimi.it/>