Article

Urban alternative cultural production in Turin: An ecological community approach

Enrico Eraldo Bertacchini (iD)
University of Turin, Italy

Giangavino Pazzola
CAMERA—Centro Italiano per la Fotografia, Italy

Francesco Puletti
Politecnico di Torino, Italy

Abstract

From the ashes of the creative city paradigm, there is a growing awareness of the urban creative economy as an adaptive complex system of intertwined actors and institutions. Yet, especially in the European context, little attention has been given to understanding informal and alternative art spaces and venues that contribute to the vibrancy of the urban cultural scene. Drawing on the emerging creative and cultural ecology literature, the article proposes a conceptual and empirical framework to analyze alternative cultural production as an ecological community. After providing a conceptualization of distinct types of alternative cultural organizations, we investigate the economic, spatial, and relational structure of more than 50 art spaces in Turin, Italy, an industrial city that has experienced a radical urban transformation based on culture-led development strategies. Using both a quantitative and qualitative approach, our findings unveil a distinction between centers pursuing artistic specialization and those more oriented toward aggregating diversified cultural activities. The two types of organizations coexist within the community, but the difference in their mission and operation influences the organizational structure, the involvement in neighborhood revitalization, and features of the local network of collaborations. From a spatial perspective, while the centers tend to cluster in the main peripheral areas of social and urban transformation, the analysis points out possible different locational choices and spatial dynamics for the two types of organizations in distinct areas of commercial and real-estate-led transformation.

Introduction

From the ashes of the creative city paradigm (Comunian, 2011; Scott, 2014; Thiel, 2017), there is today a growing awareness of the urban creative economy as a complex system of actors, resources, and institutions. Yet, previous research has often focused on formalized and observable components of the cultural economy, such as planned cultural districts or the implications of the agglomeration of

Corresponding author:
Enrico Eraldo Bertacchini, Department of Economics and Statistics "Cognetti de Martiis," University of Turin, Lungodora Siena 100, 10153 Turin, Italy.
Email: enrico.bertacchini@unito.it

creative sectors (Chapain and Sagot-Duvauroux, 2020; Lazzeretti et al., 2018). Conversely, little attention has been given to informal and less institutionalized art and creative practices that contribute to the vibrancy of the urban cultural scene. At the same time, the existing theoretical approaches referring to or incorporating artists as the primary unit of observation (i.e. Florida, 2002; Lloyd, 2010; Markusen, 2006) have often proved insufficient as full explanations of the spatial, organizational, and entrepreneurial patterns of these artistic activities.

To partly fill this gap, there have been attempts to investigate art-related amenities, alternative spaces of creativity, or community-based art organizations as a conduit of neighborhood revitalization and artistic development (Edensor et al., 2009; Grodach, 2010; Silver and Miller, 2013). However, this scholarship has mainly focused on non-European Anglo-Saxon cases (the United States, Canada, Australia) and has partly neglected systemic perspectives of the interrelationships and interdependencies of these resources within the urban cultural economy.

Recent contributions (Dovey et al., 2016; Gross and Wilson, 2019; Holden, 2015) suggest that, rather than considering culture as an economy, ecological approaches might be better suited to analyze the complexity and the interrelations of creative and cultural activities in cities and regions. The article adds to this scholarship by proposing a conceptual and empirical framework to analyze urban alternative cultural production according to an ecological perspective. Instead of following an ecosystemic approach for addressing the relationships and the interaction with a cultural and creative subsystem with other urban resources and policy domains (see, for example, Loots et al., 2021), we propose to adopt an ecological community perspective to study the internal structure and dynamics of urban alternative cultural production. In ecology, a community is defined as a group of various organisms interacting in a common location (Morin, 2009; Whittaker, 1970). Looking at urban alternative cultural production as an ecological community could provide three main analytical insights. First, as community ecology primarily refers to the study of the number and identity of species found in a particular place and habitat, the ecological community analogy applied

to alternative cultural production calls for a categorization of the actors of this often-blurred field. Compared with the traditional sectoral boundaries characterizing publicly funded and commercial culture, alternative cultural production tends to be characterized by a higher degree of blending of artistic disciplines and practices, thus requiring novel classifications to study different types of organizations that coexist in the community. By critically reexamining the extant literature, we argue that organizations operating in the alternative cultural production space can be conceptualized according to two main strategies through which they seek to achieve an alternative status from mainstream arts and cultural institutions: either pursuing experimentation and specialization in innovative artistic niches or being oriented toward a diversified cultural offer for nonprofessional or community-based activities. Second, being informal cultural spaces often the result of inherently fragile or temporary ventures that germinate and decay in a relatively short period, an ecological community perspective is suited to investigate how the two different types of organization adapt to and coevolve with spatial and social urban changes. Finally, as community ecology focuses on species interactions, such an approach emphasizes studying the structure of the relations between different types of alternative cultural spaces and the internal functioning of the community.

From an empirical viewpoint, using both quantitative and qualitative information of more than 50 cultural and artistic centers, we investigate the organizational, spatial, and relational structure of the alternative cultural production system of Turin, Italy, an industrial city that has experienced in the past two decades a radical urban change based on culture-led development strategies. In this perspective, our work also relates to studies investigating similar phenomena in post-industrial contexts, such as cultural entrepreneurs' practices in Manchester (Banks et al., 2000), artists workshops in Barcelona industrial neighborhoods' transformation (Martí-Costa and Miquel, 2012), or grassroots industrial spaces in Bilbao (Gainza, 2018).

Our findings confirm that a distinction can be drawn between centers pursuing artistic specialization

and those more oriented toward the aggregation of diversified cultural activities. Centers in the former group tend to focus their activities in one or few fields of artistic expression, while spaces of the latter group are likely to provide a more diverse cultural offer. These two types of organizations coexist in the urban alternative production field, but differences in their mission and operation influence the organizational structure, the involvement in neighborhood revitalization, and features of the local network of collaborations. In particular, organizations with a more diversified cultural offer and community-based activities tend to act as recipients or brokers in the network of collaborations, but sharing similar artistic practices remains a relevant factor in shaping connections across the two types of organizations within the alternative cultural community. From a spatial perspective, centers tend to cluster in the peripheral areas, but the analysis also points out possible different locational choices and spatial dynamics for the two types of organizations in areas of urban transformation either led by a change in commercial activities or real-estate development of unused industrial sites.

The article is organized as follows. The second section conceptualizes alternative cultural production spaces, mainly drawing on the urban and regional scholarship debate emerging in the European context. The third section briefly introduces Turin and its post-industrial transformation. In the fourth section, we describe the methods and data used in our empirical analysis, while the fifth section presents the main findings providing evidence of the organizational, spatial, and relational structure of Turin's alternative cultural production system.

Conceptualizing urban alternative cultural production as an ecological community

The notion of "alternativeness" has often been connected to a search for innovative and subcultural modes of artistic expression with more or less explicit denial of mainstream standards (see Shildrick and MacDonald, 2006 for an extensive review).

With urban alternative culture, we refer to a set of informal and emergent artistic practices, mainly taking place in small- to medium-sized spaces that engage in cultural production through various activities and projects appealing to both professional and general audiences. These initiatives tend to be alternative to commercial and more institutionalized cultural circuits in the search for new artistic frontiers and new ways of using artistic practices in relation to the local context and the social and environmental fabric of the city. A limited but growing number of scholars has addressed alternative cultural production according to different analytical perspectives and labeled it in several ways, such as independent creative subcultures (Shaw, 2013), grassroots creative production (Gainza, 2018), spaces of vernacular creativity (Edensor et al., 2009), off-culture venues (Vivant, 2009), scene-based cultural production (Lange and Bürkner, 2013), alternative initiatives (Andres, 2011), and community-based arts institutions (Grodach, 2011).

As community ecology refers to the study of patterns and processes involving two or more species in a habitat (Morin, 2009), such an approach implies the need to identify distinctive characteristics of the actors that, like species, coexist and operate in this specific community of cultural production. In this perspective, Table 1 proposes a systematization of the cultural, economic, and spatial attributes of alternative art spaces identified by the previous literature. In particular, we contend that it is possible to differentiate alternative art spaces according to two main strategies through which they seek to achieve an alternative status from the mainstream arts and cultural institutions: (1) either focusing on experimentation and specialization in innovative artistic niches or (2) being oriented toward a more diversified cultural offer mainly for nonprofessional or community-based activities. Since alternative art spaces' hybrid and flexible character, we use this distinction to a purely illustrative and methodological extent. Therefore, rather than interpreting these two categories and the relative characteristics in a binary way, we consider them as the edges of a spectrum within which alternative cultural organizations position themselves according to their attributes.

Table 1. Attributes of alternative cultural production.

Attributes	Alternative cultural production strategies		Selected references
	Specialization	Diversification	
Cultural attributes			
Curatorial policy	Avant-gardist: focus on inherently innovative and experimental cultural offer	Audience-oriented: curatorial policy mainly devising involvement and interaction of diverse audiences	Shaw (2013), Grodach (2011)
Source of recognition	Art World: organized and planned relation with institutional culture to pursue the recognition of talents and ideas involved in cultural production	Community: achievement of community building goals, neighborhood residents involvement and appreciation	Vivant (2009), Shaw (2013), Grodach (2011)
Organizational attributes			
Economic sustainability of the cultural offer	Market orientation: commercial services to sustain art-related activities	Non-market orientation: self-funded, subsidized production, gift-economy	Shaw (2013)
Art-related professionalism	Professional: entrepreneurial approach to artistic research, experimentation, innovation	Amatorial: naive, grassroot and folk approach to art	Rota and Salone (2014)
Organization of cooperative processes of value creation	Scene-based: reputation, taste, and community building objectives	Alternative exchange network: entrepreneurial necessity or political contestation objectives	Lange and Bürkner (2013); Gritzas and Kavoulakos, (2016)
Spatial attributes			
Contribution to neighborhood transformation	Supply and demand side initiators or enablers of gentrification processes	Anchors of neighborhood revitalization	Carr and Servon (2008); Lees et al. (2013); Grodach (2011); Grams and Warr (2003); Zukin and Braslow (2011)
Culture-led place-making processes	Physical and symbolic reconstruction of urban environment through reuse of residual spaces	Performative spaces for creative practices and social relations based on the encounter, articulation and integration of "the other"	Andres (2011); Andres and Grésillon (2013); Salone et al. (2017)

From a cultural point of view, the first difference between the two ideal types of actors refers to how the autonomy of curatorial policy is articulated. The organizations focused on specialized and experimental production tie their alternativeness to the design of an inherently innovative and avant-gardist cultural offer that aims to be independent of institutionalized artistic canons (Shaw, 2013). Conversely, the curatorial policy of organizations pursuing the second strategy is more oriented toward using the cultural offer to create opportunities for the engagement and interaction of diverse audiences and groups (Grodach, 2011).

Organizations operating according to one of the two strategies also differ for the source of recognition of their artistic and cultural practices. Despite asserting an independent curatorial policy, the centers focused on innovation and experimentation seek legitimacy within the arts field by nurturing an organized and planned relation with more established and renowned cultural institutions as a strategy to pursue the recognition of talents and ideas involved in their production. In this view, Vivant (2009) proposes a distinction between in-culture and off-culture and suggests that a cyclical and systemic relationship between in-culture and off-culture venues allows for

different degrees of incorporation of institutional canons within alternative cultural practices without losing the status of alternativeness. Similarly, Shaw (2013) attributes this strategy to organizations that she labels as *indie spaces.* Instead, the second strategy is related to organizations whose primary source of recognition lies in developing a reputation to achieve community-building goals for specific constituencies, particularly at the neighborhood level (Grodach, 2011; Shaw, 2013). According to Grodach (2011), community art spaces create opportunities for the engagement of neighborhood residents or members of ethnic communities and often provide a venue for underrepresented groups to enhance their visibility.

In terms of economic and organizational attributes, alternative cultural production can vary according to several dimensions. While more specialized art spaces may provide goods and services on a commercial basis to sustain their art-related activities, diversified centers tend to rely more on a mixture of non-market mechanisms, such as public subsidies, self-financing, and gift-economy sources (Shaw, 2013). Moreover, this orientation toward alternative funding mechanisms also intersects with different degrees of entrepreneurialism and professionalism in the art field. Specialized organizations display a more professional approach focused on experimentation sustained by the work of mavericks and innovators while diversified ones carry out a more naïve, folk, and grassroots form of cultural production rooted in the contribution of community members (Rota and Salone, 2014).

Alternative cultural practices can also differ in the underlying organization of cooperative value creation processes, depending on different objectives pursued by the actors in these systems. The members of experimental and specialized art spaces usually have a scene-based mode of cultural production (Lange and Bürkner, 2013) that pursues reputational, taste, and community building objectives through cooperation and recognition by their peers. Opposingly, artistic practices focused on bringing a diversified offer to the local community resemble alternative exchange networks (Gritzas and Kavoulakos, 2016). The actors are consciously motivated to construct circuits of value that are

independent of mainstream institutions or processes, either as a form of entrepreneurial necessity or as political contestation to the market dynamics of the cultural economy.

Spatial attributes are another central aspect of the definition of alternative cultural production. Indeed, as Lange and Bürkner (2013) stressed, the organization of scene-based cultural production around concrete locations is essential to developing tight social and economic networks. The place of artists in both demand and supply-side explanations of gentrification, as well as their inclusion in urban regeneration processes have been extensively scrutinized (Lees et al., 2013). However, the role of alternative cultural spaces in neighborhood transformation is somewhat ambivalent. On one hand, they can be seen through neo-bohemian lenses (Lloyd, 2010), acting as initiators or enablers of gentrification processes (Murzyn-Kupisz and Działek, 2017). Arguably, this outcome is more likely in the case of organizations oriented to art specialization and experimentation, as the reasons for their localization choices can be closer to those documented for artists' live-work spaces based on rent affordability, the centrality of the location and clustering effects (Zukin and Braslow, 2011). On the other hand, several studies (Carr and Servon, 2008; Grams and Warr, 2003; Grodach, 2011) have highlighted conditions where locally rooted informal or vernacular art spaces with a diversified cultural offer nurture a neighborhood revitalization and community-oriented regenerating impact.

Other studies have focused on the place-making potential of alternative cultural spaces. Most of the research in this area has focused on the physical and symbolic reconstruction of the urban environment by reusing large industrial spaces into cultural brownfields by alternative and grassroots creative initiatives (Andres, 2011; Andres and Grésillon, 2013; Gainza, 2018). Similar transformational patterns occur looking at how socio-spatial relations of alternative cultural practices generate embeddedness at the neighborhood level fostering the sense of place and community belonging (Salone et al., 2017). This spatial attribute emphasizes the emergence of a non-planned, spontaneous "urbanity," based on the temporary reappropriation of residual spaces by civil or "informal" actors coming from outside the official,

institutionalized domain of urban planning and urban politics (Groth and Corijn, 2005). Coherently to our systematization, the enhancement of community belonging and sense of place can more explicitly be connected to the mandate of diversified centers. Conversely, the artistic experimentation approach of art-oriented centers has the physical renewal of dismissed urban premises as its primary place-making outcome.

Turin post-industrial transformation

Located in the northwest of Italy, Turin is the fourth most populated metropolitan area with about 1.5 million inhabitants. As an industrial one-company town for most of the 20th century, with the decline of the fordist era, the city of Turin has been already subject of several analyses as an example of urban agenda and development strategies that since the 1990s have been carried out to find new pathways for a post-industrial future (Dansero and Puttilli, 2010; Pinson, 2002; Ravazzi and Belligni, 2016; Vanolo, 2008).

Like other European experiences, Turin has taken a "creative city" turn in its urban development approach implemented along three main policy lines. First, renovation of the built environment in the city center and major planning and infrastructural projects in the peripheral areas where large spaces of industrial brownfields were present. Second, creation and support of an enabling environment for research, knowledge, and innovation centers. Finally, culture-led regeneration strategies to enhance the city's attractiveness in terms of leisure, entertainment, and tourist consumption. The three lines of the urban development agenda were equally pursued and implemented over the past 20 years following a strategic planning approach. In particular, the first line of intervention impacted distinct areas of the city, either favoring real-estate-led transformation, with investments in the infrastructural and built environment, or commercial transformation oriented toward the development of consumption amenities with changes in the type of shops and commercial activities. At the same time, culture-led regeneration strategies reflected in a significant increase in investments in the cultural economy.

Most of these investments have been either directed to formal sectors of the art and heritage system or involved mainly institutional actors. A strong expansion of the cultural offer through the renovation and reopening of museums in the city center, the establishment of new exhibition spaces by institutional actors of the art world, and the organization of large events and festivals (including the 2006 Winter Olympic Games) became the most visible component of the new urban policies of culture. Local private bank foundations have also played a pivotal role in supporting the new cultural projects by providing a stable flow of financial resources over the years. Moreover, the existing evidence of institutional support toward the development of cultural and entertainment scenes (Crivello, 2011; Mizzau and Montanari, 2008), can be mainly interpreted as an expression of ancillary branding strategies to enhance and promote the new image of the city (Vanolo, 2008).

Conversely, little attention has been paid in urban policies to the local emerging and alternative systems of cultural production, made up of a heterogeneous group of cultural organizations, art spaces, and artists' collectives. Such a changing urban cultural landscape has been partly the result of distinct but strictly intertwined tangible and intangible factors of urban change occurring in the past two decades, namely, the physical and social transformation of neighborhoods due to a high concentration of abandoned industrial spaces or multicultural residents (Marra et al., 2016), emerging socio-spatial styles of youth cultures (De Martini Ugolotti, 2015; Ferrero Camoletto and Genova, 2019), and increased demand for leisure consumption by university students (Zasina, 2020).

Data and methods

To empirically investigate the main patterns of urban alternative cultural production, one of the main challenges is to define the boundaries of this blurred area of the urban creative economy. Based on the previous discussion, we selected arts and cultural organizations to be included in the analysis according to the following criteria:

- Broad definition of artistic and creative fields in which the organizations operate, ranging from

traditional arts and cultural sectors such as visual arts or music, to those more creative oriented (i.e. fashion, design, and gastronomy);

- Organizations with public programming which have developed in-house some documented form of artistic production;
- Organizations must not be or have direct and stable connections in their ownership or organizational structure to a public authority, a foundation, or private institutional actor;
- Organizations established since year 2000 onward.

While the choice of the boundaries of the cultural production space serves to capture the increasingly multidisciplinary dimension of current art and creative practices, the last three criteria are used to operationally identify organizations belonging to the alternative cultural production community as discussed before. In particular, the last two represent proxies that seek to distinguish cultural and arts organizations with more institutional links relative to the more independent ones. In the first case, alternative cultural organizations might seek grants from public and private entities, but stable funding channels or institutional relationships are excluded. Moreover, ruling out foundations is useful to exclude those cultural institutions that are expressions of the legacy of art collectors or established intellectuals and artists of the past. In the second case, the establishment period serves to exclude those initiatives that could be initially an expression of alternative cultural production but over time became part of the more institutional circuits of the city's cultural scene due to their success.

Based on these criteria, we identified 60 organizations operating in the city of Turin in 2017–2018 and applied both a quantitative and qualitative approach for the analysis. A questionnaire was administered to all the organizations to obtain information regarding their activities, the organizational structure, and the relationship with the urban context and change. More precisely, the information collected are the following: (1) artistic and cultural practices (i.e. fields, activities); (2) organizational structure (i.e. legal form, type and ownership of the venue); (3) economic dimension (i.e. staff composition; funding sources; budget); and (4) geography and collaborations (i.e. localization by year of establishment, scale of operations, network of collaborations). A total of 53 valid questionnaires was returned. From this sample, we conducted semi-structured interviews to a subset of 21, to investigate more deeply the analytical dimensions of the questionnaire as well as the history, identity, and meaning given to alternative cultural practices.

Unlike other works which have studied with a longitudinal approach the evolution over time of artistic and subcultural scenes (Molotch and Treskon, 2009; Shaw, 2013), our analysis does not capture this dynamic aspect as it refers only to organizations established since 2000 but still active in the survey period. Moreover, the sample might not be fully representative of the entire city's alternative cultural production system. Yet, the initiatives we identified and analyzed are sufficiently diversified to provide an illustrative account of the complex patterns of the investigated phenomenon at the city level.

The alternative cultural production community of Turin

Organizational characteristics amid specialization and diversification of cultural production

To apply the conceptual framework and analyze the characteristics of alternative cultural spaces according to the two main strategies previously discussed, we asked each organization to report the artistic and cultural fields in which they operate. A common characteristic of the centers of alternative cultural production is their elusiveness in defining the artistic and cultural domains in which they operate. Although it is possible a priori to categorize these organizations according to the main area of specialization (e.g. visual art and performing arts), their activity and programming is often multidisciplinary. This is due to the growing cross-fertilization of practices and disciplines in artistic experimentation and the fact that these spaces often arise from the collaboration of artists and professionals with different specializations and interests. Figure 1 provides a map of
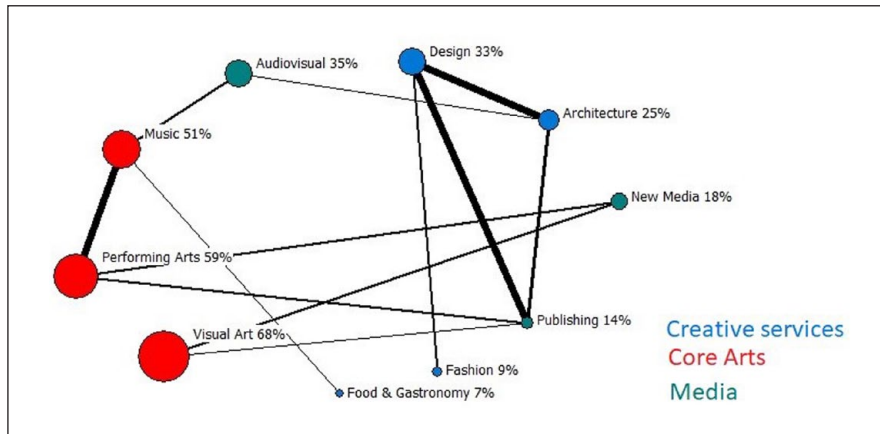
Figure 1. Size and linkages of cultural fields in Turin's alternative cultural production.

the relevance and interconnections between the cultural fields that can be found more frequently within alternative cultural production centers.[1]

While the centers report to be mainly active in core artistic activities (visual art, performing arts, and music), there is also significant activity in the media and creative services. One in three organizations report having projects in the media and design domain and one in four in the field of architecture (this field includes interventions in urban amenities). Turning to relationships, the map shows how in the centers some cultural fields are strongly connected (music with performing arts or design with architecture), while other minor domains (publishing and new media) represent fields of experimentation and interconnection between the most practiced disciplines.

More importantly, by looking at the distribution of the organizations according to the reported number of fields in which they operate, Figure 2 indicates that there is a marked heterogeneity in the specialization or diversification of cultural offerings, with centers that tend to specialize in one or few art domains and those more oriented toward the aggregation of diversified cultural activities. We use the median value to distinguish between the two categories previously identified in the conceptual framework, which we label as specialized art centers and cultural aggregators.

From an economic perspective, our findings point out that alternative cultural production organizations

generally operate as a nonprofit or low-profit-oriented and economically fragile system. Yet, as displayed in Table 2, the empirical analysis confirms economic and organizational differences between the two types of centers.

Cultural aggregators tend to perform more diversified activities relative to specialized art centers, with a greater engagement in audience-oriented activities such as exhibitions and live performances (88% and 80%, respectively). On the contrary, specialized art centers tend to focus primarily on exhibitions and the organization of labs, workshops, and courses. Specialized art centers' lower diversity of activities can signal their experimental attitude toward specific art forms. Indeed, the specialized art centers that indicated other activities than those listed (38%) mainly reported hosting conferences and presentations of artists testifying a research-oriented focus toward experimentation that likely restricts their target audience to experts and professionals in a specific field. Conversely, cultural aggregators tend to catalyze different initiatives in a complex artistic proposal spanning different fields, as documented by a larger share of centers promoting networking events and hosting artistic residences. These differences also emerge from interviews that highlighted the difference between cultural aggregators and specialized art centers, respectively, described in as *content specific* or *containers*:
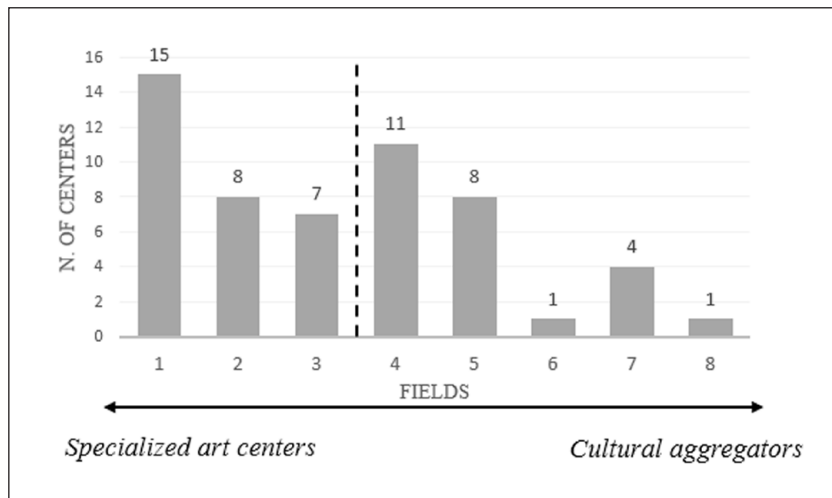
Figure 2. Distribution of organizations according to the number of cultural fields.

Table 2. Economic and organizational characteristics.

Number of fields of cultural production	Cultural aggregators	Specialized art centers	Whole sample
	More than three domains	3 or less domains	
Diversity of activities (mean)	3.52	2.31	2.87
% of centers engaged in[a]:			
Exhibitions	88%	66%	76%
Labs, workshop, courses	76%	66%	70%
Live performances	80%	34%	56%
Networking events	60%	17%	37%
Other	20%	38%	30%
Artistic residences	28%	14%	20%
Permanent staff (mean values)	6.88	6.03	6.43
Temporary staff (mean values)	19.68	10.34	14.67
% permanent staff	26%	38%	31%
% of centers by funding sources[a]:			
Self-financing	84%	66%	74%
Private contributions	56%	48%	52%
Public funds	44%	55%	50%
Services	40%	31%	35%
Other	44%	24%	33%
Tickets	16%	21%	19%

Percentage values therefore express the frequency of organizations reporting a positive response in each category.
[a]Organizations reported with a yes/no answer whether they undertook specific activities or relied on distinct funding sources.

In a way we liked to have a container where it was possible to do different activities as a cultural association. Events on cinema and exhibitions that could alternate with our parallel work of photography and video. A place where expressing a wide range of ideas and proposals. For example, for the first year we

focused on programming more than using this place as a studio, something we started to do after this intense year of cinema and projections. (Cultural aggregator)

We do something quite content-specific because it is photography and research, hence we do not attract a wider audience. Usually we are visited by people fairly interested and for the moment we do not have any project on the territory. (Specialized art center)

Another marked difference between the two types of centers may be found in the size and composition of the staff involved in the organizations. While the two categories of organizations show a similar number of permanent staff (about six on average), they differ in the share of non-permanent positions. Indeed, cultural aggregators employ more temporary staff than specialized centers. Despite these differences, both types of centers once asked which kind of contractual forms they preferred to regulate working arrangements, privileged voluntary and temporary forms of collaboration over stable ones (i.e. paid collaboration lasting more than 1 year). At a general level, the lower frequency of stable collaborations can be explained by the project-based character of the working relationships marking the cultural and creative industries (Caves, 2000). However, according to interviews, cultural aggregators more often opt for voluntary work, while specialized centers privilege temporary paid collaborations. A possible interpretation of this result is twofold. On one hand, it might be a symptom of different ways specialized art centers and cultural aggregators build social capital, either bonding artists' relationships within the cultural field or bridging it with the broader audience community. On the other hand, the lower number of voluntary collaborations of the specialized art centers might indicate the necessity to involve professional figures in temporary contractual arrangements for specific projects. Interviews confirmed the fundamental importance of voluntary work to sustain the activities of the centers economically:

Today, had it not been for the will of some guys that worked completely voluntarily, this place could have been completely ruined and maybe no one would have cared. (Cultural aggregator)

A look at the funding sources provides additional evidence on how the organizations cope with economic sustainability issues. As shown in Table 1, funding sources are highly diversified in both types of centers, with self-financing, public funds, and private contributions being the most important. Economic sustainability is mainly pursued through inclusion and active participation of the audiences via ticketing, provision of services, and self-financing. Indeed, most of the centers surveyed financed their activity through financial resources deriving from their staff's parallel work and collaborations in commercial and institutionalized cultural fields. Such practice is coherent with the increasing reconciliation of artists' "bohemian" and "professional" identities that previous studies have identified as a trending strategy to cope with the current expectations for the increased flexibility of cultural workers across sectors and occupations (Lingo and Tepper, 2013). Alternatively, some alternative cultural spaces offered services and carried out activities unrelated to their production (e.g. space rental, consultancy, cafeteria). As previous studies highlighted (Shaw, 2013), the alternative cultural production system is also characterized by "gift economy" practices, where different kinds of donations (e.g. work, time, expertise, technical equipment) emerged as a fundamental component for the sustainability of the activities carried out by alternative cultural production centers:

Here [in the gap between resources available and necessary] private collaborations come into play because all the contributions, services, raw materials that are given to us such as technical sponsorship comes from people with whom we entertain an ongoing relationship.

All these characteristics indicate a shift to an entrepreneurial approach to cultural production, mainly devised to cope with the insufficiency and ineffectiveness of public support to local cultural activism (Salone et al., 2017). Most of the interviewees' descriptions of their organizations underlined a more or less affirmed awareness of the entrepreneurialism of their practices:

It would be easier to be organized as an enterprise, but maintaining a [low] political price for cultural proposals
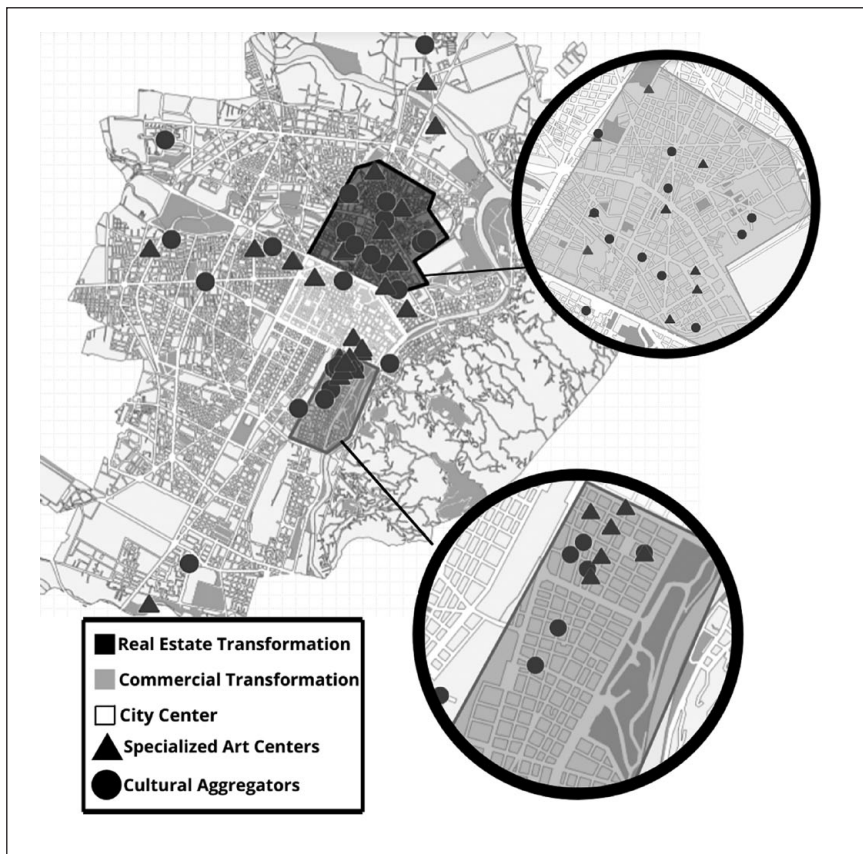
Figure 3. Location of alternative cultural production organizations in Turin.

is another characteristic of ours. The ideal would be to cut the umbilical cord from the funding of the institutions, but this would mean raising the price of tickets and making it difficult to enlarge the audience on our cultural proposal. We like to respect the rules, but we need to be able to do so.

Spatial distribution across areas of real-estate-led and commercial transformation

In community ecology, habitat selection functions as a filter between a developing community and the species pool of potential members by sorting among species that can actively avoid or choose to colonize a particular place (Morin, 2009). Similarly, understanding alternative cultural production's spatial patterns might help unveil how different organizations

in this community locate, adapt, and evolve in urban areas with different characteristics.

Figure 3 presents the geographical distribution of the organizations in Turin, differentiating by typology of centers and highlighting the main areas of urban transformation in the past decades.

The majority of the investigated art and cultural organizations (49 out of 54) are located in peripheral areas outside the city center of Turin. Like other European cities, most of these areas, deeply imbued by the physical and social fabric of industrial development, have been targeted by different interventions of requalification, spanning from traditional master planning to the recent project-making actions adhering to the area-based, integrated, and interdisciplinary approach of the European URBAN model (Ponzini and Santangelo, 2018).
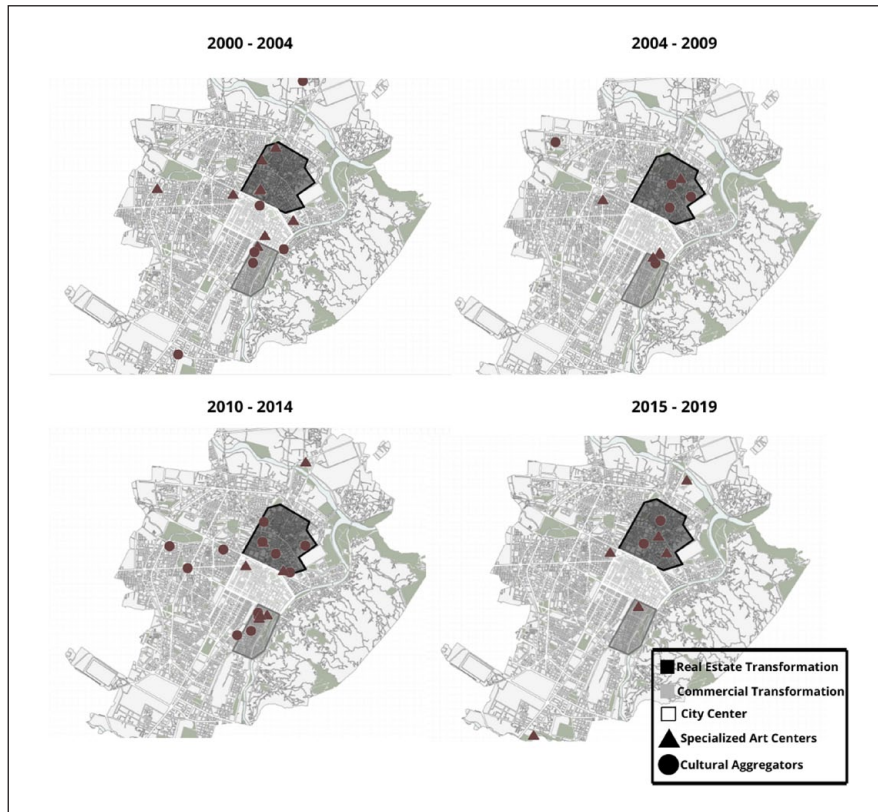
Figure 4. Spatial distribution of alternative cultural production organizations by period of establishment.

As underlined by previous research (Bolzoni, 2013, 2016; Marra et al., 2018) the north and southeast peripheral areas of the city have been characterized by different patterns of urban renewal both in terms of the stage and type of the neighborhood transformation process they experience. The neighborhoods of Barriera di Milano and Aurora, located in the northern part of the city (real-estate-led transformation, dark gray area with black outline) and characterized by a lower rate of homeownership and greater availability of vacant industrial spaces, are at an earlier stage of development that in the past few years has been driven by increasing investments in the real-estate sector. On the contrary, the southern zone, and in particular the San Salvario neighborhood (commercial transformation, light gray area), is a residential area whose renewal is at a more mature stage and is mainly attributable to the action of local development agencies and the blossoming of many commercial venues that since

2008 have marked its transformation "from a mixed class, gritty, multicultural neighborhood into a new place for leisure, night-time entertainment and tourist consumption" (Bolzoni, 2013).

Interestingly, as illustrated in Figure 3, both the areas of major urban transformation have the highest concentration of actors of the alternative cultural production system. In fact, out of 49 of the spaces located outside the city center 32 are in these areas, with a significant majority in the northern one characterized by real-estate-led transformation (21 out of 32). At the same time, a relatively balanced geographical distribution of cultural aggregators and specialized art centers in the two areas seems to suggest no specific location patterns connecting their different characteristics to a definite preference between the two neighborhoods. However, a deeper analysis of the spatial distribution of the organizations across subperiods (Figure 4) points out that

stratification of the locational choices over the past two decades might have occurred.

In the first period (2000–2004), characterized by the first strategic plan of the municipality, in connection with the preparation of 2006 Winter Olympics Games, no cultural aggregator settled in the northern area of real-estate-led transformation, while four specialized art centers were established in this part of the city. The prominence of artistic research and experimentation over purposes of audience engagement is arguably the most relevant feature of those actors that previous studies identified as pioneers of neighborhood transformation processes (Molotch and Treskon, 2009). Coherently with this aspect, the preference for this area might be connected to the wide availability of former industrial spaces and craft laboratories, as illustrated in an interview:

> The choice of this place has been a compromise between lower costs, the position and the squared meters. Having such an industrial space available, whether you like it or not, gives quite pleasurable emotions because you have a nice container where you can present in a good way all the things you want to do. (Specialized art center in real-estate-led transformation area)

The following three periods document the blossoming of new centers with varying intensity across the years. However, while specialized art centers tend to evenly distribute over the different city areas, a relatively higher number of cultural aggregators begins locating in the northern area. This might testify to an increasing preference for the new opportunities offered by this neighborhood compared with San Salvario, where the first signs of commercial transformation tended to homogenize space on consumerists and aesthetic grounds, transforming it into an increasingly expensive place for leisure, tourism, and nighttime entertainment (Bolzoni, 2013).

Collected interviews underline a high degree of awareness about these changes and a kind of strategic calculus to take advantage of them. As one member of a specialized art center reports:

> There is a common work of all those that are trying to offer things in this neighborhood [real estate-led transformation area] because little by little people get convinced to move. After years working and living here, you feel that from San Salvario [commercial transformation area] people and other organizations are moving here due to lower real estate prices. Then there is also the urban requalification that has been happening for a while now, so people are moving because you can invest on the neighborhood. (Specialized art center in real-estate-led transformation area)

Looking more in-depth at the locational choice, the proximity to the city center, the cost of rent, and the structure's physical characteristics have been generally recognized as driving factors. Yet, some differences emerge in the socio-spatial relations expressed by cultural aggregators and specialized art centers. While proximity to other artistic spaces, the cultural atmosphere, and the residential composition of the neighborhood have often been highlighted as equally important by cultural aggregators, they are considered by specialized art centers as secondary to the aspects of accessibility, functionality and affordability of the spaces:

> We are here because we feel good and pay little, a mixture of quality and price. Moreover, this was the place where the attraction for artists, musicians and creative people developed. Although I don't like the cannibalism of the leisure consumption that is emerging here, the area has structural values, and its multi-ethnic character is also a value. (Cultural aggregator, commercial transformation area)

> We have not chosen the location based on the neighborhood's characteristics. Rather, we sought a space to become our "permanent home," where we could develop and plan our activities on an ongoing basis. The choice was instrumental. We almost arrived there like a UFO, even though we were aware of the characteristics of the area, the difficulties of this place which is not the same as other parts of the city. (Specialized art center, real-estate-led transformation area)

From interviews, it also emerges how having a close bond with the neighborhood is regarded as a fundamental component of the identity of the cultural aggregators, which often asserted that the involvement of the neighborhood's inhabitants and the promotion of local artists are essential for their activities. Conversely, specialized art centers have often reported being more oriented to reach

collaboration and audiences outside the urban and regional dimension, aiming at extending their cultural offer beyond the local dimension.

The quantitative evidence confirms the stronger bond of cultural aggregators to the local territory, with the 72 percent (vs the 52% of specialized art centers) declaring that targeting the local audience is necessary or a priority.[2] However, very few organizations (8% of cultural aggregators) have developed projects specifically targeting or addressing the dynamics of the neighborhood in which they are located. This finding suggests that the logic of localization of the organizations is not driven by objective strategies of urban regeneration through processes of cultural production/consumption. Possibly, these aspects come into play only after the creation and set-up phase of the organization that, familiarizing with the neighborhood and community, is committed to imagining a new function for those places that are underused or often abandoned, linking them to contemporary art and cultural expressions. Moreover, while most of the interviewees recognized a specific potential to use artistic practices as a means of urban regeneration, they also demonstrated awareness of the possible contradictions inherent to culture-led regeneration policies. Such evidence is consistent with the link between urban movements and artistic practices already described by previous studies as one of the distinctive characteristics of the alternative cultural production system (Borén and Young, 2013; Krätke, 2010; Novy and Colomb, 2013; Valli, 2015):

> For us visual arts have a transformative role at the social level due to its capability to open a dimension that does not belong to the daily experience of people. Something that can be also useless and is just an exercise of production of future perspectives. Therefore, arts have an important meaning for us in certain contexts, but when the situation is really complex, we believe there are other means, we are very critical on the use of art as substitute to welfare. (Specialized art center)

Network of collaborations amid relational fluidity and cognitive proximity

As suggested by Holden (2015), network mapping is a promising tool in ecological approaches to the cultural sector to disentangle the interconnectivity of the cultural ecosystems and the linkages across actors. Social network analysis is increasingly used in innovation studies to map the structure of collaborations and communication across actors in clusters to better understand knowledge creation and learning patterns in the innovation process (Ter Wal and Boschma, 2009). Similarly, one relevant aspect to assess the creative atmosphere of urban alternative cultural production is the quantity and quality of the interactions across the actors within the community. The size and characteristics of the network not only is an indicator of the vitality of the community—through the degree of collaborations, the circulation of ideas, or the level of social and relational capital among its actors—but the study of the network structure helps unveil the role and the position of the different actors in the development of cultural production processes.

Information was collected on the subsample of 21 organizations subject to semi-structured interviews to explore the network of alternative cultural production in Turin. Through roster methodology (Ter Wal and Boschma, 2009), each of the respondents was presented the list of the other 20 organizations and was asked to indicate whether he or she has developed collaborations in the past 24 months relating to the development of artistic and cultural projects.

Figure 5 presents the map of such connections providing insights into the size and structure of the network.

Interestingly, a first finding that emerges looking at the figure is a significant fluidity of collaborative ties across organizations (depicted by gray and black ties), whereby not all reported collaborations seem to be reciprocated according to the information provided by the respondents. This finding can be partly explained by the fact that the alternative cultural production centers represent groups of artists and creatives who often belong to or are identifiable with different realities at the same time and, for this reason, having developed projects with certain subjects leads to indicate unconfirmed collaborative relationships by the interviewees in the other center. Alternatively, it is possible that the interviewees indicated only the most relevant collaborations for the cultural production of their space, which does not
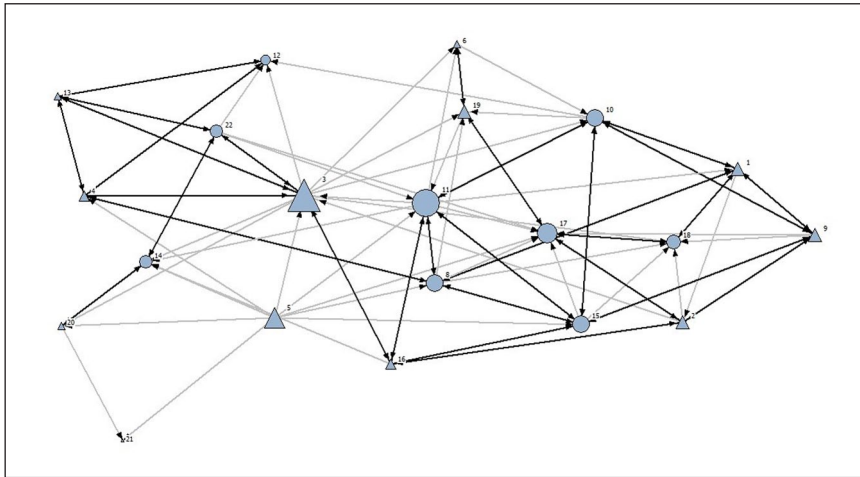
Figure 5. Network of collaborations, unidirectional and reciprocal ties.
The network map refers to the subsample of 21 organizations interviewed. The shape of the nodes refers to specialized art centers (Triangle) and cultural aggregators (Circle). Size of the node is proportional to its *degree* in the network. Black lines are reciprocal ties (collaborations recognized by both actors), while gray lines are unidirectional ties (collaboration reported only by one actor of the dyad).

necessarily find mutual recognition in the other interviewees.

Notwithstanding such fluidity in reported collaboration ties, significant differences emerge between cultural aggregators and specialized art centers in terms of connections. While both the types of organization report, on average, a similar number of outgoing connections (4.8 for cultural aggregators and 4.3 for specialized art centers), cultural aggregators tend to attract more incoming connections than specialized art centers (6 vs 3.5) and have a higher number of reciprocal ties (3.22 vs 2.3). In other words, cultural aggregators are more likely to act as recipients or brokers in the network of collaborations arising in the alternative cultural production system. However, a deeper look at the structure of collaborations suggests that such organizational characteristics do not influence the position in the network or are associated with preferential attachment between actors sharing similar characteristics.[3] This suggests that proximity based on the similarity in mission and organizational structure is not a conducive factor for collaborations, but cultural aggregators and specialized art centers tend to develop connections in a more symbiotic way. Conversely, looking at the artistic domains on which the centers operate,

proximity based on common artistic practices seems a more relevant factor in shaping connections across organizations operating within the alternative cultural production community. In fact, as depicted in Figure 6, focusing only on the strongest reciprocal links (cliques), two main clusters can be identified, with organizations sharing similar fields of cultural production: visual art (in blue) and music/performing arts (red).

Concluding remarks

Drawing on the emerging cultural and creative ecology literature, the article has attempted to provide a theoretical and empirical framework to analyze urban alternative cultural production as an ecological community. In this perspective, alternative cultural production can be seen as a community of actors that take different forms in urban contexts depending on the variability of distinct traits: (1) the type of positioning of the cultural offer relatively to local institutional circuits, (2) different organizational models for the provision of goods and services, and (3) spatial patterns and place-making implications. Emblematically, the differences in these attributes can be traced to two main types of
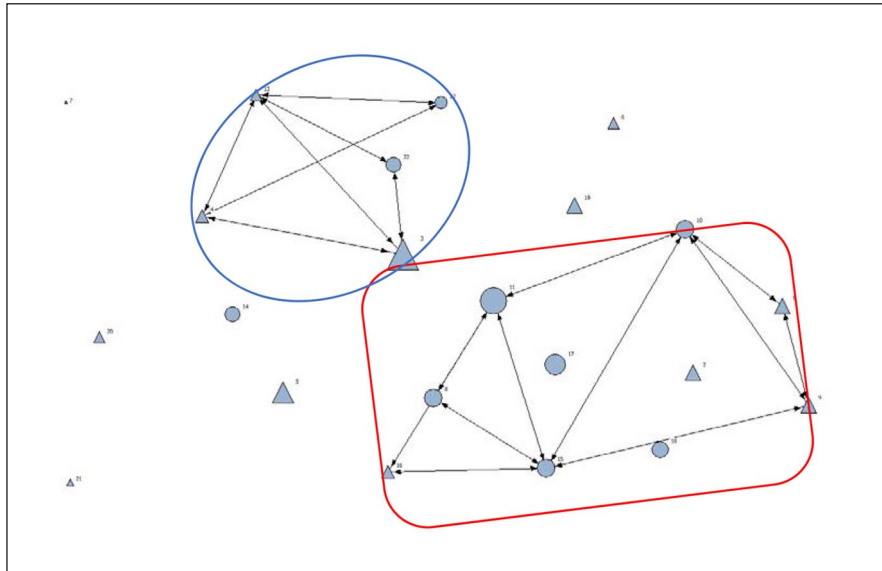
Figure 6. Network of collaborations, only cliques.

centers, which express different strategies through which these organizations pursue their alternative condition. On one hand, spaces focused on artistic experimentation specializing in one or few artistic fields or, on the other hand, centers oriented toward a diversification of their cultural offer to attract and represent diverse audiences mainly for community engagement.

Applying such a distinction in the analysis of the Turin urban context, our findings suggest that the two types of organizations coexist within the alternative cultural community. Moreover, differences in their mission and operation reflect in organizational structure, locational choices, and behavior in establishing collaborative ties within the network and the relationship with the neighborhood.

The article, having an exploratory purpose, presents limitations but at the same time highlights relevant aspects to develop new lines of research in the study of alternative urban cultural production according to ecological approaches. First of all, although it is difficult to generalize the results obtained for Turin to other Italian or European cities, the proposed conceptual and empirical framework can allow a more systematic comparative analysis of alternative cultural production, studying across

urban contexts the diversity in the structure of the community and of the behavior of different types of organizations. Second, the article does not develop a complete ecosystemic approach to study the relationships and interaction between alternative cultural production and other cultural resources and urban policy domains. However, the diversity of alternative cultural organizations conceived and analyzed through a community ecology approach can shed light on future research in understanding how the presence and behavior of each type of actors in the alternative cultural production community are interconnected to other urban cultural production systems and transformation processes. Third, by analyzing organizational, spatial, and relational patterns simultaneously, the analysis only superficially grasps possible distinctive traits of the different types of organizations. However, future research can investigate these distinct areas, in particular to what extent there are differences between cultural aggregators and specialized art centers in internal organizational hierarchies, in the type of resources mobilized and in the network of collaborations.

Finally, while it is beyond the scope of the article, the findings can provide some initial guidance for policy to address urban alternative cultural scenes

from an ecological perspective. Since alternative cultural production is a mix of initiatives blending artistic experimentation, cultural entrepreneurialism, and aspirations toward neighborhood revitalization, it might be a challenge to design a single policy approach and objective to address the cultural actors' diversified needs and development trajectories. As emerged in our analysis, cultural aggregators can better fit a policy approach oriented toward the social and community role of artistic practices, with interventions aimed at supporting their operations through social impact grants, concessions of public spaces, or programs apt at building managerial capacity. Conversely, specialized art centers are more oriented toward self-organization within the artistic field without necessarily aspiring to trigger social effects on the territory. As a result, the development trajectory of such actors can be better supported through proactive arts policy interventions that enhance entrepreneurial attitudes and conditions for a scene-based mode of art production and consumption.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Enrico Eraldo Bertacchini ![ORCID] https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4832-5798

Notes

1. Organizations' involvement in a given cultural domain is reported through a binary answer (yes/no). The size of the node is proportional to the relative frequency with which centers reported to operate in a specific cultural field. The existence and thickness of ties is measured through a positive correlation (at 5% of significance), indicating the likelihood to find the co-presence of diverse cultural fields in the same organization. No negative correlation is found at 5 percent of statistical significance.

2. Due to space limitations, this information is not presented in a table, but only reported in the text. Data of these variables are available from the authors upon request.

3. While the organizations included in the network mapping are not balanced across neighborhoods of the city, we also do not find any strong evidence of the effect of social and geographic proximity of the centers on the network of collaborations.

References

Andres L (2011) Alternative initiatives, cultural intermediaries and urban regeneration: the case of La Friche (Marseille). *European Planning Studies* 19(5): 795–811.

Andres L and Grésillon B (2013) Cultural brownfields in European cities: a new mainstream object for cultural and urban policies. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 19(1): 40–62.

Banks M, Lovatt A, O'connor J and Raffo C (2000) Risk and trust in the cultural industries. *Geoforum* 31(4): 453–464.

Bolzoni M (2013) What tourists ignore ambivalences, conflicts and compromises in a changing neighborhood. In: *RC21 conference*, Berlin, 29–31 August.

Bolzoni M (2016) Material appropriation and symbolic ownership: commercial gentrification, night-life and the legitimate uses of public spaces. In: *International conference: from contested cities to global urban justice*, Madrid, 4–7 July.

Borén T and Young C (2013) Getting creative with the 'creative city'? Towards new perspectives on creativity in urban policy. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37(5): 1799–1815.

Carr JH and Servon LJ (2008) Vernacular culture and urban economic development: thinking outside the (big) box. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 75(1): 28–40.

Caves RE and Plaine A (2000) *Creative industries: Contracts between art and commerce*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.

Chapain C and Sagot-Duvauroux D (2020) Cultural and creative clusters —a systematic literature review and a renewed research agenda. *Urban Research & Practice* 13(3): 300–329.

Comunian R (2011) Rethinking the creative city: the role of complexity, networks and interactions in the urban creative economy. *Urban Studies* 48(6): 1157–1179.

Crivello S (2011) Spatial dynamics in the urban playscape: Turin by night. *Town Planning Review* 82(6): 709–731.

Dansero E and Puttilli M (2010) Mega-events tourism legacies: the case of the Torino 2006 Winter Olympic games—a territorialisation approach. *Leisure Studies* 29(3): 321–341.

De Martini Ugolotti N (2015) Climbing walls, making bridges: children of immigrants' identity negotiations through capoeira and parkour in Turin. *Leisure Studies* 34(1): 19–33.

Dovey J, Moreton S, Sparke S and Sharpe B (2016) The practice of cultural ecology: network connectivity in the creative economy. *Cultural Trends* 25(2): 87–103.

Edensor T, Leslie D, Millington S and Rantisi N (eds) (2009) *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: Rethinking the Cultural Economy*. London: Routledge.

Ferrero Camoletto R and Genova C (2019) Alternative spatial styles: an exploration of socio-spatial youth cultures in Turin. In: Fisker JK, Chiappini L, Pugalis L and Bruzzese A (eds) *Enabling Urban Alternatives*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 179–199.

Florida R (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class*, vol. 9. New York: Basic books.

Gainza X (2018) Industrial spaces for grassroots creative production: spatial, social and planning facets. *European Planning Studies* 26(4): 792–811.

Grams D and Warr M (2003) *Leveraging Assets: How Small Budget Arts Activities Benefit Neighborhoods*. Chicago, IL: Richard H. Driehaus Foundation.

Gritzas G and Kavoulakos KI (2016) Diverse economies and alternative spaces: an overview of approaches and practices. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 23(4): 917–934.

Grodach C (2010) Art spaces, public space, and the link to community development. *Community Development Journal* 45(4): 474–493.

Grodach C (2011) Art spaces in community and economic development: connections to neighborhoods, artists, and the cultural economy. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 31(1): 74–85.

Gross J and Wilson N (2019) *Creating the Environment: The Cultural Eco-Systems of Creative People and Places*. Creative People and Places. Available at: https://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/sites/default/files/Creative%20People%20and%20Places%20Cultural%20Ecology%20Report_FINAL_WEB.pdf

Groth J and Corijn E (2005) Reclaiming urbanity: indeterminate spaces, informal actors and urban agenda setting. *Urban Studies* 42(3): 503–526.

Holden J (2015) *The Ecology of Culture: A Report Commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project*. Swindon: AHRC.

Krätke S (2010) "Creative Cities" and the rise of the dealer class: a critique of Richard Florida's approach to urban theory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34(4): 835–853.

Lange B and Bürkner HJ (2013) Value creation in scene-based music production: the case of electronic club music in Germany. *Economic Geography* 89(2): 149–169.

Lazzeretti L, Capone F and Innocenti N (2018) The rise of cultural and creative industries in creative economy research: a bibliometric analysis. In: Lazzeretti L and Vecco M (eds) *Creative Industries and Entrepreneurship*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 13–34.

Lees L, Slater T and Wyly E (2013) *Gentrification*. London: Routledge.

Lingo EL and Tepper SJ (2013) Looking back, looking forward: arts-based careers and creative work. *Work and Occupations* 40(4): 337–363.

Lloyd R (2010) *Neo-Bohemia: Art and Commerce in the Postindustrial City*. London: Routledge.

Loots E, Neiva M, Carvalho L and Lavanga M (2021) The entrepreneurial eco-system of cultural and creative industries in Porto: a sub-ecosystem approach. *Growth and Change* 52(2): 641–662.

Markusen A (2006) Urban development and the politics of a creative class: evidence from a study of artists. *Environment and Planning A* 38(10): 1921–1940.

Marra G, Barosio M, Eynard E, Marietta C, Tabasso M and Melis G (2016) From urban renewal to urban regeneration: classification criteria for urban interventions—Turin 1995–2015: evolution of planning tools and approaches. *Journal of Urban Regeneration & Renewal* 9(4): 367–380.

Martí-Costa M and Miquel MPI (2012) The knowledge city against urban creativity? Artists' workshops and urban regeneration in Barcelona. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 19(1): 92–108.

Mizzau L and Montanari F (2008) Cultural districts and the challenge of authenticity: the case of Piedmont, Italy. *Journal of Economic Geography* 8(5): 651–673.

Molotch H and Treskon M (2009) Changing art: SoHo, Chelsea and the dynamic geography of galleries in New York City. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33(2): 517–541.

Morin PJ (2009) *Community Ecology*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Murzyn-Kupisz M and Działek J (eds) (2017) *The Impact of Artists on Contemporary Urban Development in Europe*. Berlin: Springer.

Novy J and Colomb C (2013) Struggling for the right to the (creative) city in Berlin and Hamburg: new urban

social movements, new 'spaces of hope'? *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37(5): 1816–1838.

Pinson G (2002) Political government and governance: strategic planning and the reshaping of political capacity in Turin. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 26(3): 477–493.

Ponzini D and Santangelo M (2018) Spatial strategies through land-use plans, urban projects and metropolitan visions: twenty-five years of planning in Turin. *TPR: Town Planning Review* 89(3).

Ravazzi S and Belligni S (2016) Explaining "power to": incubation and agenda building in an urban regime. *Urban Affairs Review* 52(3): 323–347.

Rota FS and Salone C (2014) Place-making processes in unconventional cultural practices: the case of Turin's contemporary art festival Paratissima. *Cities* 40: 90–98.

Salone C, Bonini Baraldi S and Pazzola G (2017) Cultural production in peripheral urban spaces: lessons from Barriera, Turin (Italy). *European Planning Studies* 25(12): 2117–2137.

Scott AJ (2014) Beyond the creative city: cognitive–cultural capitalism and the new urbanism. *Regional Studies* 48(4): 565–578.

Shaw K (2013) Independent creative subcultures and why they matter. *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 19(3): 333–352.

Shildrick T and MacDonald R (2006) In defence of subculture: young people, leisure and social divisions. *Journal of Youth Studies* 9(2): 125–140.

Silver D and Miller D (2013) Contextualizing the artistic dividend. *Journal of Urban Affairs* 35(5): 591–606.

Ter Wal AL and Boschma RA (2009) Applying social network analysis in economic geography: framing some key analytic issues. *The Annals of Regional Science* 43(3): 739–756.

Thiel J (2017) Creative cities and the reflexivity of the urban creative economy. *European Urban and Regional Studies* 24(1): 21–34.

Valli C (2015) When cultural workers become an urban social movement: political subjectification and alternative cultural production in the Macao movement, Milan. *Environment and Planning A* 47(3): 643–659.

Vanolo A (2008) The image of the creative city: some reflections on urban branding in Turin. *Cities* 25(6): 370–382.

Vivant E (2009) How underground culture is changing Paris. *Urban Research & Practice* 2(1): 36–52.

Whittaker RH (1970) *Communities and Eco-systems*. New York: Macmillan.

Zasina J (2020) Students' leisure consumption patterns in cities: three-dimensional pictures from Lodz and Turin. *Miscellanea Geographica* 24(4): 253–262.

Zukin S and Braslow L (2011) The life cycle of New York's creative districts: reflections on the unanticipated consequences of unplanned cultural zones. *City, Culture and Society* 2(3): 131–140.