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Contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries to Regional Development and Revitalization: A European Perspective

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Abstract: Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) have emerged as powerful drivers of regional development and revitalization in Europe in recent years. This study explores the impact of CCIs on European regions, focusing on their economic, social, and cultural contributions. Drawing on extensive literature review and empirical research, this study examines the role of CCIs in job creation, GDP growth, innovation, social cohesion, cultural identity, urban regeneration, and the revitalization of declining areas. Data were collected using questionnaires distributed to 345 key players in the Cultural and Creative Industry of Greece. The findings reveal that CCIs significantly enhance job opportunities in European regions, with 74.4% of participants acknowledging their role in reducing unemployment and underemployment. Moreover, 71.4% recognized the substantial contribution of CCIs to regional GDP, highlighting that their economic importance is comparable to traditional industries. CCIs are seen as catalysts for social cohesion and cultural identity, as 75.6% of respondents attested to their role in uniting diverse communities. These results emphasize the sensitivity of CCIs to the existing cultural and historical context of these areas. Furthermore, this study identifies outcomes of regional development and revitalization, including improved education facilities (21.7%), preservation of regional cultural heritage (14.6%), and enhanced business relations (26.7%). Regression analysis demonstrated a strong association between CCIs and regional development and revitalization. This study provides comprehensive insights into the contributions of CCIs to regional development and revitalization in Europe. Policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders can use these findings to harness the full potential of CCIs for sustainable and inclusive regional development.

Keywords: cultural and creative industries (CCIs); social cohesion; cultural identity; urban regeneration; regional development and revitalization; urban development



Citation: Kalfas, D.; Kalogiannidis, S.; Ambas, V.; Chatzitheodoridis, F. Contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries to Regional Development and Revitalization: A European Perspective. *Urban Sci.* **2024**, *8*, 39. <https://doi.org/10.3390/urbansci8020039>

Academic Editors: Qiyang Liu, Zhengying Liu and Mengqiu Cao

Received: 29 March 2024

Revised: 17 April 2024

Accepted: 18 April 2024

Published: 22 April 2024



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1. Introduction

Researchers, decision-makers, and interested parties from all over the world have paid close attention to the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) throughout the last 20 years. They are now major actors in regional growth and rejuvenation, especially in the European setting, thanks to their diverse effects on the social, cultural, and economic landscape [1]. A fundamental characteristic of CCIs is their innate capacity to combine business, creativity, and culture. By creating jobs, fostering commerce, and revitalizing cities, they not only support cultural heritage preservation and promotion but also advance economic progress. Saucedo-Estrada (2022) [2] argues that CCIs play a crucial role in modern economies by serving as a crossroads between cultural ideals and financial gains; but there are a lot of moving parts in the CCI arena. One of the main problems is that there is no definition that is widely agreed upon, which causes confusion and inconsistent application of policies.

Notwithstanding the substantial amount of previous study, terminological clarity is still elusive, which makes it challenging to identify and fully use CCIs. A broad framework is provided by the UNESCO definition of CCIs, which is defined as “sectors of organized activity whose principal purpose is the production or reproduction, promotion, distribution and/or commercialization of goods, services and activities of a cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature” [3]. However, this reinforces the need for context-specific comprehension suited to unique local, regional, or national issues [4–7].

The phrase “cultural and creative sectors” (CCSs) is now used in the European Union to refer to the wider range of activities that fall under this umbrella [8]. These industries have become important engines of creativity, entrepreneurship, and competitiveness in the area. As an example, research published by the European Commission reveals that CCSs contribute between 5% and 10% of the EU GDP, which is a major boost to the economy [9]. The entire potential of CCIs is still mostly unrealized at the regional level, despite these remarkable numbers at the national level. There are many reasons for this underutilization. First of all, cross-national comparisons and benchmarking are made more difficult by the diverse nature of CCI definitions throughout nations [10]. Second, it might be difficult to determine the exact extent to which CCIs affect local economies due to differences in data-collection methods at the national and regional levels. Last but not least, a clear understanding of CCI contributions is further hampered by their incorporation into a variety of economic output measures within distinct regional economic paradigms [11].

Within academic and governmental circles, there is a growing recognition of the potential of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) to propel regional growth and rejuvenation. These sectors are seen as stimulants for social innovation and cultural vitality in addition to being economic engines [12,13]. CCIs have been shown to be essential for promoting resilience, competitiveness, and regional development in the European setting. But even while their significance is becoming more widely acknowledged, a number of obstacles stand in the way of their potential to be fully realized. The lack of clarity in the definition of CCIs is one of the main obstacles [14]. The creation of frameworks for the support and development of targeted policies as well as the design of policies themselves are hampered by the absence of a widely recognized definition. According to Černevičičtė (2019) [15] and Taylor (2009) [16], the European Commission acknowledges the diversity of CCIs, including a wide spectrum of industries from traditional arts and crafts to digital media and design. But this variety also makes evaluating and comparing their contributions to local economies more difficult; it is difficult to determine the actual effect of CCIs because of the uncertainty in their definition and classification, which results in variations in policy approaches and data-gathering techniques throughout various European areas. For CCIs, the quickly evolving global environment, characterized by changes in consumer behavior, technology breakthroughs, and heightened competition, presents both possibilities and difficulties [17]. CCIs must always develop and adapt if they want to be relevant and competitive. Nonetheless, CCIs may find it difficult to obtain the resources and assistance required for sustained growth due to the erratic and fluctuating character of the creative market [18]. Given these difficulties, the goal of this research is to establish a thorough understanding of the effects and issues that CCIs face while exploring the contributions of CCIs to regional development and regeneration in the European context. By addressing these issues, this study aims to offer insights and recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders to harness the full potential of CCIs for regional development and revitalization.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the contribution of CCIs to regional development and revitalization in Europe, understanding the breadth and depth of their impact. This means investigating CCI influences on economic development, social integration, cultural identity, and urban regeneration. The goal is to generate data that can be used to design policies and form strategies to utilize CCIs for sustainable regional development.

The purpose of this research is to fill the gaps in the existing studies by providing an all-around depiction of the influence of CCIs at the regional level in the context of Europe.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

- Examine the economic impact of CCIs on regional development in terms of job creation, GDP contribution, and innovation.
- Evaluate the role of CCIs in promoting social cohesion and cultural identity within European regions.
- Investigate the influence of CCIs on urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas.

1.3. Research Questions

1. How do CCIs contribute to economic growth and job creation in European regions?
2. In what ways do CCIs foster social cohesion and cultural identity within these regions?
3. What is the role of CCIs in urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas?

1.4. Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (H1). CCIs have a positive impact on the economic development of European regions, contributing significantly to job creation and GDP growth.

Hypothesis 2 (H2). CCIs play a crucial role in enhancing social cohesion and cultural identity within European regions.

Hypothesis 3 (H3). CCIs are instrumental in the urban regeneration and revitalization of declining areas in Europe.

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value for policymakers, regional planners, and stakeholders in the cultural sector. By elucidating the contribution of CCIs to regional development, it provides empirical evidence to guide strategic decision-making and policy formulation. The findings are intended to inform the allocation of resources, development of supportive infrastructure, and creation of conducive environments for the flourishing of CCIs and, by extension, regional development.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Economic Contribution of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs)

The Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) have long been recognized for their economic contributions to regional development. In the European context, where culture is diverse and deeply rooted, CCIs play a particularly crucial role in driving innovation, job creation, and economic growth [11]. This extensive examination of the economic impact of CCIs will delve into various facets including employment, GDP contribution, innovation, and foreign investment attraction. CCIs are significant employers within the European economy. According to a report by Eurostat (2022) [19], CCIs are responsible for 7.1 million jobs in the EU, which equates to 3.3% of all EU employees. This employment is not just confined to the stereotypical artistic professions but spans a wide range of job roles, including technical, administrative, and support positions. Additionally, CCIs tend to support a larger ecosystem of ancillary industries, thus indirectly creating more jobs [20]. Moreover, the nature of jobs within CCIs means they often require a high level of creativity and critical thinking. Such skills are increasingly in demand in a global economy that is rapidly transitioning from traditional manufacturing to knowledge-based industries. Training and education within the CCI sectors often emphasize creativity, problem-solving,

and flexibility, equipping the workforce with competencies that are transferable across sectors and highly valued in the contemporary market [21–23].

Cinar & Coenen (2022) [24] note that the economic weight of CCIs is further underscored by their contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A European Commission's report highlighted that CCIs accounted for 2.6% of the EU's GDP [25]. This is a significant figure, especially when compared to other industries like telecommunications and the automotive industry. It is important to note that these numbers often underestimate the total economic contribution of CCIs as their positive externalities extend beyond direct economic output [17]. CCIs are often at the forefront of technological and creative innovations. The video games industry is a prime example, often pushing the boundaries of what is possible in software development, graphics rendering, and user experience design. Such advancements often have ripple effects, influencing other sectors like education, healthcare, and even defense [26–28]. Furthermore, CCIs also play a pivotal role in shaping cross-sectoral synergies. Design, as an element of the creative industries, permeates sectors like manufacturing, retail, and technology. An innovative design not only enhances aesthetic appeal but also improves functionality and user experience, creating added value for products and services [15].

CCIs have also been instrumental in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) [8]. Vibrant cultural sectors make regions more attractive to investors. According to Horizon Europe [29], cities that have held the title of European Capital of Culture (ECoC) have seen a marked increase in tourism and investment, exemplifying the magnetic pull of a thriving cultural scene. This attraction is not just limited to cultural capitals; regions with strong CCIs often draw more investment across various sectors, benefiting the wider economy [2,30,31].

According to Lazaretou (2014) [32], CCIs have the potential to address regional disparities within Europe. Regions with strong CCIs tend to exhibit more robust economic growth [33]. For instance, cities like Berlin and Barcelona have leveraged their cultural sectors to transform their economies. However, this growth is not uniformly distributed, and some regions struggle to capitalize on their cultural assets. The European Commission has recognized this and has allocated structural funds to bolster CCIs in less developed regions, aiming to foster more balanced regional development [9]. Urban regeneration is another economic facet on which CCIs have had a noticeable impact. Deindustrialized cities have turned to CCIs as a means of revitalizing their economies [34]. The transformation of Bilbao with the Guggenheim Museum is a prime example of how CCIs can regenerate a city, boost tourism, and create jobs, generating what is often referred to as the "Bilbao Effect" [29].

Stephen Browning (2018) [35] notes that CCIs in Europe encompass a diverse array of sectors, from traditional arts and crafts, heritage sites, music, books, and performances, to contemporary sectors such as film, television, radio, video games, and software. According to the report by the ILO (2022) [36], CCIs represent an impressive 4.2% of the EU's total GDP. The sheer scale of this contribution underlines the central role that CCIs play in Europe's economic landscape. However, the economic impact of CCIs is not merely confined to direct contributions in the form of output or employment; these industries also have multiplier effects. The production of a movie, for example, not only generates revenue for filmmakers and actors but also benefits local businesses like restaurants, hotels, and transport services, often boosting tourism and local craft industries [37–40].

2.2. Social Cohesion and Cultural Identity

The cultural and creative industries (CCIs) have increasingly been recognized for their unique ability to foster social cohesion and cultural identity—two intangible yet crucial aspects of societal well-being and regional development [28,41,42]. In Europe, a continent characterized by its rich cultural diversity and history, CCIs serve not only as economic engines but also as vital instruments for social integration and the preservation and promotion of cultural identities [43,44]. The relationship between culture and social cohesion can be

theoretically traced back to the work of Primorac (2007) [45], who introduced the concept of “mechanical” and “organic” solidarity, highlighting the role of shared beliefs and values in maintaining social order [46]. Building on these foundations, contemporary scholars such as Pesenti (2020) [43] and Boccella & Salerno (2016) [10] have furthered our understanding of the intricate ways in which culture contributes to social capital and cohesion. Pesenti (2020) [43], in particular, emphasized “cultural capital” as a dimension that intersects both social and economic spheres, arguing that cultural practices and participation are critical to the fabric of society. Also, the relationship with the natural environment, both urban and peri-urban, should not be ignored [47].

In Europe, CCIs have been identified as vital contributors to social cohesion. This is particularly evident in the European Commission’s policies and frameworks, which have consistently highlighted the role of culture in fostering a sense of community and belonging [25,48]. A study by Comunian & Mould (2014) [49] supports the potential of cultural policies in addressing social exclusion and promoting integration in European cities [18]. Urban cultural events, festivals, and creative projects have been instrumental in bringing together diverse community groups, fostering intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. For instance, the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) program, one of the most high-profile cultural initiatives in the EU, has been successful in enhancing social cohesion through culture-led regeneration projects in cities such as Liverpool [50].

Usborne & Taylor (2010) [51] noted that the contribution of CCIs to cultural identity is equally significant. Cultural identity refers to the shared sense of belonging and collective self-understanding based on language, traditions, history, and cultural expressions. In Europe, where regional and national identities are complex and layered, CCIs play a pivotal role in both preserving and evolving these identities [52]. The cinema industry, for example, has been a potent vehicle for reflecting and shaping cultural identities. European cinema, often supported by initiatives such as the MEDIA Programme, has been instrumental in telling European stories, reflecting the continent’s diversity, and contributing to a sense of European identity [53]. Furthermore, the publishing sector, through literature and translation initiatives, has played a crucial role in cross-cultural exchange and the nurturing of a pan-European cultural space [54,55].

Numerous studies have examined the role of CCIs in promoting social cohesion and cultural identity [13,14,24,28]. For instance, in the European context, the “Creative Europe” program has recognized the potential of culture in bridging social divides and strengthening European identity [9]. The program INNOMED-UP (2022) [56] highlighted how cultural districts and creative clusters act as catalysts for social interaction and engagement in cities, facilitating a shared sense of community. Similarly, Dellisanti (2023) [57] supports the role of arts and culture in fostering community pride and a sense of belonging, particularly in multicultural societies.

The work of Jūratė Černevičiūtė & Strazdas (2023) [58] on urban cultural policies points out how the cultivation of local culture through CCIs contributes to the revitalization of neighborhoods and reinforces local identities. Moreover, Montalto (2020) [18] has documented the positive impact of flagship cultural events and institutions in enhancing the international visibility of cities and the pride of local citizens.

Several case studies across Europe illustrate the relationship between CCIs and social cohesion [14,59,60]. In the city of Barcelona, the regeneration of the Raval district, driven by the opening of the Contemporary Art Museum (MACBA), fostered a vibrant cultural scene that contributed to social integration and the reinforcement of a distinct cultural identity [57]. In Liverpool, the 2008 European Capital of Culture, a range of cultural programs and initiatives led to increased community engagement and a renewed sense of civic pride among the populace. The “Glasgow Effect,” referring to the city’s cultural renaissance in the 1990s, also exemplifies how investment in arts and culture can enhance social cohesion and reinvent a city’s image and identity [61].

The subject of CCIs would be incomplete without the discussion of the precarious nature of the work in the creative economy and the influence of the pandemic. The

pandemic brought out the vulnerability of the creative sector, and not unlike tourism, it has been shown that strong support structures should be put in place to ensure its recovery and sustained growth [62]. Dent, Tanghetti, and Comunian (2023) [63], noted that much like the tourism sector was affected, the CCIs have also been severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many cultural and creative activities are highly venue-specific and interactive physically, which makes them quite sensitive to lockdowns and social distancing regulations. The closure of cultural venues and the cancellation of live events not only reduced cash flows but also conflicted with the sector's operational model and raised the question of the sector's weakness. The recovery may necessitate the introduction of an innovative strategy, for example, the enhanced digital engagement and new business models that can successfully work under pandemic constraints [63].

2.3. Cultural Heritage in the European Perspective

According to Calligaro (2014) [64], cultural heritage holds a special place in Europe, where centuries of history, diverse cultures, and rich traditions have shaped a unique and invaluable legacy. Europe boasts an extraordinary cultural heritage that spans ancient civilizations, medieval history, the Renaissance, and modern times. This cultural wealth includes architectural marvels like the Colosseum in Rome, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, and historic cities like Prague and Vienna; it encompasses artistic treasures such as the paintings of Leonardo da Vinci, the music of Beethoven, and the literature of Shakespeare [15]. Europe's cultural heritage is not confined to tangible artifacts but also encompasses intangible cultural practices, folklore, languages, and culinary traditions. This rich tapestry of cultural heritage is not only a source of pride for Europeans but also a powerful tool for attracting tourists, talent, and investments. Europe is a global tourist destination, and its cultural heritage is a significant draw for visitors from around the world. Historic sites, museums, and cultural events contribute to the tourism industry's growth, generating revenue, creating jobs, and stimulating local economies [59,65,66].

Saucedo-Estrada (2022) [2] argues that cultural heritage is a substantial contributor to the European economy. Conservation, renovation, and maintenance activities related to cultural heritage represent a significant portion of the European construction industry's value. These activities involve the preservation and restoration of historic buildings, monuments, and archaeological sites [67]. The cultural heritage sector also includes craftspeople, artisans, and professionals specializing in restoration and conservation work. Moreover, cultural heritage generates substantial revenue and employment opportunities [16,68]. According to Prezioso et al. (2020) [8], the total turnover generated by cultural heritage represents approximately 3% of the European Union's GDP, and the number of jobs created by cultural heritage amounts to around 4% of the employed EU workforce. This demonstrates the sector's economic significance and its capacity to support livelihoods across Europe [11,41,69].

According to GIZ (2022) [21], historic areas, industrial sites, and rural regions with heritage value have been repurposed for innovation-driven activities, attracting investments and stimulating economic prosperity. The adaptive reuse of historic spaces as coworking hubs, incubators, and cultural clusters has become a trend, promoting collaboration and innovation at local, national, and international levels. Intangible cultural heritage, including artistic traditions and craftsmanship, contributes to the design and production of new goods and services [24]. The global economy provides markets for products rooted in cultural heritage, from artisanal crafts to traditional cuisines. This connection between heritage and innovation not only preserves cultural traditions but also facilitates economic sustainability and growth [70,71].

Europe's cultural heritage is a strategic asset in international relations and cooperation [72]. It serves as a tool for cultural diplomacy, fostering mutual understanding and collaboration with countries outside the EU. Recognizing and promoting Europe's linguistic and cultural diversity enhances its cultural diplomacy efforts, strengthening its soft power and global influence [52]. Furthermore, the European Union has recognized the

role of cultural heritage in external relations and cooperation. This recognition aligns with the EU's commitment to promoting culture as one of its key objectives. Cultural heritage, with its diverse expressions and historical significance, serves as a bridge for communication and engagement with other nations, contributing to global cultural exchange and collaboration [53,73–75].

2.4. Urban Regeneration

Urban regeneration, driven by CCIs, is grounded in several theoretical frameworks. S. Liang & Wang (2020) [1] noted that creativity is a crucial ingredient for urban regeneration, advocating the development of an environment that fosters creativity and innovation. Similarly, Černevičiūtė's et al. (2019) [15] pointed out that the "creative class" underscores the importance of attracting creative professionals, so that they act as a catalyst for urban revitalization. Another significant framework is the "Bilbao Effect," named after the city's transformation following the establishment of the Guggenheim Museum. This phenomenon illustrates how flagship cultural projects can act as beacons for urban regeneration, instigating socio-economic revitalization [13].

Weber & Duarte (2020) [17] examined European cities and revealed that cultural projects and events, such as the European Capital of Culture, have profound effects on urban regeneration, thereby enhancing a city's image and boosting tourism. Similarly, Cinar & Coenen (2022) [24] identified how cultural quarters and creative clusters have been instrumental in reviving urban areas, providing spaces for innovation and cultural exchange. Moreover, the European Commission's report on the economy of culture in Europe presented evidence of the significant contribution of CCIs to urban economies, with a particular focus on job creation and urban renewal [9,48]. This is supported by Lazaretou (2014) [32], who emphasized the role of arts and culture in transforming urban landscapes and fostering economic development. Kalfas et al. (2021) [76] argue that cultural heritage is a factor that could redefine the environmental conservation agenda and enhance the multifunctionality of the natural environment and the concepts of Landsenses ecology and Landsenseology.

The ways in which CCIs influence urban regeneration are multifaceted. CCIs act as attractors of human capital, fostering an environment that draws in entrepreneurs, artists, and skilled professionals [42,74,77]. They also catalyze the transformation of physical spaces, converting abandoned or underutilized areas into vibrant cultural hubs [18,60]. Furthermore, CCIs stimulate the local economy through the creation of jobs, the attraction of tourists, and the enhancement of the night-time economy [78,79]. Additionally, they contribute to the social fabric of urban areas, promoting social inclusion, community engagement, and cultural exchange [10].

2.5. Regional Development and Revitalization

Regional development and revitalization have been central to European policy agendas for decades, responding to economic disparities, deindustrialization, and urban decline [80]. The European Union (EU), with its cohesion policy, has been at the forefront of tackling these challenges, aiming to reduce disparities between regions and promote balanced development across the continent. This involves a multifaceted approach, incorporating economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions [15,74,81].

The economic restructuring of the late 20th century, particularly the decline of traditional industries, left many European regions facing unemployment, population loss, and a decline in local services. In response, the EU has sought to revitalize these regions through investment in infrastructure, innovation, and human capital [82]. The emphasis has shifted over time, from traditional infrastructure projects in the 1980s and 1990s to a stronger focus on knowledge-based development and innovation in the 21st century, encapsulated in the Lisbon and Europe 2020 strategies [83]. One of the critical areas of focus in regional development has been the recognition of the potential of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) as drivers of economic growth and social cohesion [58,84].

According to Y. Liang et al. (2023) [72], CCIs have played a crucial role in revitalizing post-industrial cities and regions across Europe. Cities like Glasgow and Bilbao have famously used culture-led regeneration to transform their images and economies. Glasgow's focus on cultural development, which culminated in its year as European Capital of Culture in 1990, is often cited as a turning point for the city, attracting investment and improving its global profile [18]. Similarly, Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum is frequently highlighted as an example of the 'Bilbao effect', where a flagship cultural institution helped to catalyze wider urban regeneration.

Beyond flagship projects, the integration of CCIs into local and regional development strategies has proven beneficial [49]. In regions such as Tuscany in Italy and Rhône-Alpes in France, CCIs have contributed to the creation of vibrant cultural ecosystems, supporting SMEs, fostering innovation, and enhancing the attractiveness of these regions. These industries often create 'creative clusters,' which act as hubs of innovation and entrepreneurship, leading to job creation and economic diversification [36]. Moreover, CCIs have been instrumental in enhancing social cohesion and cultural identity; they provide platforms for cultural expression and dialogue, helping to foster a sense of belonging and community. This is particularly significant in the diverse and multilingual context of Europe, where cultural identity plays a pivotal role in regional development. The Council of Europe's European Cultural Convention emphasizes the importance of culture in promoting mutual understanding and respect among Europe's diverse populations [8,32].

The social impact of CCIs extends to education and inclusivity. Initiatives like the European Union's Creative Europe program support cultural projects that aim to engage young people, minorities, and disadvantaged groups, contributing to social integration and intercultural dialogue [25]. However, the impact of CCIs is not uniformly positive, and there are challenges associated with culture-led development. Gentrification and the displacement of local communities are potential negative consequences of successful cultural regeneration projects [27,28,53,73]. Moreover, the reliance on flagship cultural institutions and events can sometimes overshadow the development of local cultural ecosystems and grassroots initiatives [35].

In addition to cultural factors, other strategies have been employed in regional development and revitalization in Europe. The EU's Smart Specialization Strategy, for instance, encourages regions to identify and develop their unique competitive advantages, often through the fostering of innovation and collaboration between public, private, and academic sectors [85]. Environmental sustainability has also become increasingly integrated into regional development, with the European Green Deal setting ambitious targets for the EU to become climate-neutral by 2050 [11]. This involves supporting regions in the transition to a green economy, with investments in renewable energy, circular economy initiatives, and sustainable urban planning [25,86]. Furthermore, digital transformation is recognized as a crucial factor in regional development. The Digital Agenda for Europe underlines the importance of digital literacy, infrastructure, and services as prerequisites for innovative and competitive regions [8].

Regional development and revitalization in Europe are multifaceted and complex processes. The role of the cultural and creative industries in these processes is significant, contributing to economic growth, social cohesion, and urban regeneration [3]. However, the challenges associated with culture-led development, such as gentrification and the sustainability of flagship projects, need to be carefully managed. Moreover, cultural strategies must be integrated with broader approaches, including innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation, to ensure balanced and inclusive regional development across Europe [20,25,87].

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research employed a quantitative methodology with a cross-sectional survey to investigate the contribution of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) to regional

development and revitalization in Europe. A cross-sectional survey, which are commonly used to gather data at a certain point in time, was used to understand present trends, patterns, and how they affect the economic performance of the region. It was through quantitative methods that the impact of CCIs on key development indicators, such as economic growth, employment creation, and social cohesion, was determined. By doing so, this research aimed to generate strong statistical evidence so as to prove or disprove the hypothesized influences of CCIs. The survey was built in such a way as to collect responses from a representative sample that is consequently statistically reliable and applicable to the whole group of CCI stakeholders in Europe. In this way, a comprehensive image of the current state of the cultural and creative industries and their role in regional dynamics was built thanks to the combination of empirical data and cultural economics and regional development theory. In addition, the cross-sectional nature of this study involved data collection from the participants at a single point in time rather than over a long period of time. This approach is well suited to identifying the current level of development and its immediate impacts, thus offering a snapshot of ongoing dynamics that can become a center of discussion on cultural and creative sectors policies.

3.2. Target Population

The study targeted important players in Greece's cultural and creative sector, comprising 144,700 people as the sample population. The aim was to collect a more representative sample of individuals who were knowledgeable about the role that these sectors play in regional growth and revitalization.

3.3. Sample Size Determination

The study utilized a sample size of 345 key stakeholders in the cultural and creative industry in Greece (Figure 1). The sample acted as a representative sample for the entire Europe.

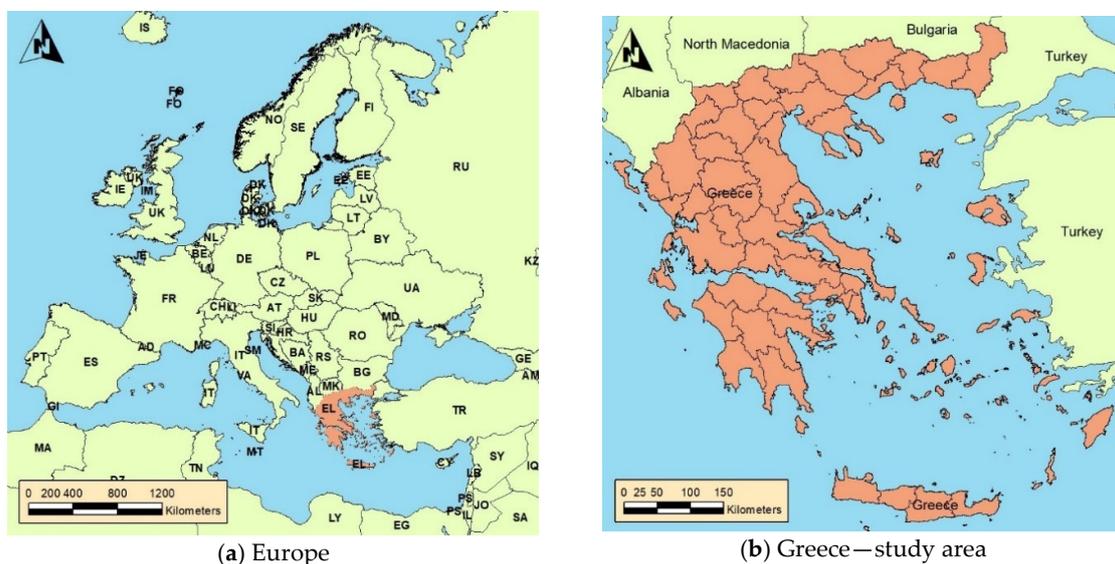


Figure 1. Maps of Europe and Greece as the study area.

The sample size was chosen after determining the survey's accuracy and reliability, which was determined to be $p = 99.7\%$. A pilot sample of fifty people was used to evaluate the variance between managers, directors, or employees who commute. The variance of the weekly payment for fuel (movements), only for work, was estimated using a preliminary sample (pilot sampling) of 50 persons, where $S^2 = 4961.61$ and $s = 70.44$. Sample size calculations often use a value of $z = 3$, which translates to a degree of dependability of $p = 99.7\%$. The value of z (P) depends on the necessary degree of dependability. The value

29.56€ was the confidence interval (or the margin of error) estimated from the pilot sample of fifty people, where the sample mean = 50.27€, standard deviation = 70.44€, sample size = 50 people, confidence level = 99.7, and z-score = 3. This, the sample's confidence interval was $50.27\text{€} \pm 29.56\text{€}$, or from 20.71€ to 79.83€.

Equation (1) uses $N = 144,700$ (the available target population), $s = 70.44$ (the sample standard deviation), $z = 3$, and $d = 11.37$ (half of the confidence interval plus 30% for contingency) to calculate the minimal sample size, which was determined to be 345 people [88–90]:

$$n = \frac{N(zs)^2}{Nd^2 + (zs)^2} \quad (1)$$

where n is the sample size the study, d is the level of precision, N is the target total population, s is the population proportion, and z is the critical value used to determine of the sample size. Thus,

$$n = \frac{144.700(3 \times 70.44)^2}{144.700 \times 11.37^2 + (3 \times 70.44)^2} \Leftrightarrow n = 344.57 \approx 345$$

where $n = 345$.

3.4. Sampling Technique

This study used both basic random sampling and stratified random sampling techniques, which are components of probability sampling procedures. In this case, the target sample was created using stratified sampling, and the final sample was extracted using a simple random sampling technique. Simple random selection yields very representative samples of the whole population but can be time-consuming, especially when dealing with large samples.

3.5. Data Collection

Data from the selected 345 respondents from Greece's cultural and creative sector were gathered through an online questionnaire. A survey questionnaire is one of the most straightforward and commonly used techniques for gathering data. This is because it is less costly as a large number of respondents can be surveyed quickly and it enables respondents to appropriately and freely reply to sensitive topics without fear of rejection or approval from the researcher. The online questionnaire was designed using Google Forms, a popular platform that is well established and secure. This tool was selected for its strong feature support that enables diversity in questions, data integrity, and ease of exporting data for analysis. The survey comprised multiple sections that were designed to correspond with the research objectives including economic impact, social cohesion, and urban regeneration attributed to creative and cultural industries. Participants were approached through a multichannel recruitment strategy to obtain a diverse and representative sample. The first contact was made via e-mail using the database of professionals listed under the Ministry of Culture and Sports in Greece. This was followed by a series of reminders sent over two weeks. Moreover, social media channels, such as LinkedIn groups focused on European cultural and creative industries, were utilized to increase participant interaction. When handling the data of the respondents, the highest standards of privacy and confidentiality were maintained. In addition, respondents were allowed to respond to questions according to how well they understood the various opinion questions. As a result, more responses to certain questions were received. Ethical considerations such as privacy and confidentiality of the data collected were well observed throughout the research process.

3.6. Data Analysis

The data were examined in line with the objectives of the research once the completed questionnaires were collected. All of the information collected from the respondents was then analyzed using the SPSS v.25.0. A frequency table was used to illustrate the

frequency distribution of the responses, which was derived from the first section of the user profile questionnaire. The mean and standard deviations of some of the values were also computed. The Pearson's rank correlation test was also used to determine the associations that existed between the study variables. Using regression analysis, it was also determined how much the creative and cultural sectors contribute to regional growth and revival. The coefficients of the various variables were obtained using a multiple regression model, shown in Equation (2) [91,92]:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

where Y is regional development and revitalization,

β_0 is a constant (coefficient of intercept), X_1 is the economic impact of CCIs, X_2 is the promoting social cohesion and cultural identity by CCIs, X_3 is CCIs impact on the urban regeneration and revitalization of declining areas, $\beta_1 \dots \beta_3 =$ represents the three independent variables' regression coefficients, which were used to calculate how much effect each independent variable had on the dependent variable. and ε is a representation of the error term that relates to the study's multiple regression model.

The three hypotheses of this study were tested based on the obtained regression results with 95% confidence interval or at a 0.05 significance level.

4. Results

This section presents the results obtained after analyzing the data collected from the selected respondents.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

Results for the characteristics of respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants' demographic characteristics.

	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	259	75.1
	Female	86	24.9
Age bracket	Below 30 years	27	7.8
	31–40 years	243	70.4
	Above 40 years	75	21.8
Designation in the creative industry	Employee	141	40.9
	Director	118	34.2
	Expert/Consultant	86	24.9
Experience in the creative industry	Below 5 years	14	4.1
	5–10 years	216	62.6
	Above 10 years	115	33.3
	Total	345	100

Source: Authors' own work (2023).

According to results in Table 1, the majority of respondents (75.1%) were male, while 24.9% were female. This gender imbalance may reflect the existing gender disparities in the cultural and creative industries, where males tend to be overrepresented. The age distribution of the participants indicates that the largest group falls within the age bracket of 30–40 years, making up 70.4% of the total respondents. This suggests that a significant portion of the respondents are in the early to mid-stages of their careers, which is relevant as they likely bring a mix of experience and fresh perspectives to the study. The designation in the creative industry reveals that the largest group of participants identified as employees (40.9%), followed by directors (34.2%) and experts/consultants (24.9%). This distribution suggests a diverse representation of roles within the industry, which can provide valuable insights from various perspectives. The experience level of the participants in the creative industry shows that the majority have between 5 and 10 years of

experience (62.6%), followed by those with over 10 years of experience (33.3%). A smaller percentage of the respondents (4.1%) have less than 5 years of experience. This distribution indicates that the study included a mix of relatively new entrants and more seasoned professionals, potentially providing a comprehensive perspective on the industry's impact on regional development.

4.2. Descriptive Results

This study examined the economic impact of the CCIs on regional development in terms of job creation, GDP contribution, and innovation.

According to the findings in Table 2, the majority of participants (74.4%) believe that the CCIs have significantly enhanced job opportunities in their region, compared to the 25.6% who disagree. This indicates a strong positive perception about CCIs as a job creator and their role in decreasing unemployment or underemployment in these regions. Another considerable portion (71.4%) of the participants feel that the CCIs contribute a substantial percentage to the regional GDP, comparable to traditional industries like manufacturing or services. This suggests that the economic value of the CCIs is being recognized as essential and on par with more conventional sectors. Over half of the participants (56.4%) concur that investing in the CCIs yields higher economic returns and rates of innovation than investments in other sectors. However, it is noteworthy that the agreement on this point is lower compared to the first two points, with a relatively high proportion (43.6%) of respondents disagreeing. This could hint at some skepticism or perhaps the need for more evidence about the innovative capabilities and economic returns from the CCIs. The majority of the respondents, 93.5%, believe that the growth of the CCIs has attracted new businesses and investments, leading to economic diversification in their region. This is the highest agreement rate among all the statements and underscores the importance of the CCIs in attracting external investments and bringing about diverse economic activities. Two-thirds of the respondents (66.2%) think that the development of the CCIs has played a pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurial skills and stimulating the birth of start-ups in their region. This highlights the potential of CCIs in building entrepreneurial ecosystems and encouraging business innovations.

Table 2. Opinions on economic impact of the CCIs on regional development in terms of job creation, GDP contribution, and innovation.

Statement	Agree	Disagree
The presence of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) has significantly increased job opportunities in my region.	74.4%	25.6%
CCIs contribute a substantial percentage to our regional GDP, comparable to traditional industries like manufacturing or services	71.4%	28.6%
Investment in CCIs results in higher economic returns and innovation rates compared to investments in other sectors	56.4%	43.6%
The growth of CCIs in our region has attracted new businesses and investments, leading to economic diversification	93.5%	6.5%
The development of CCIs has been crucial in fostering entrepreneurial skills and start-ups in my region	66.2%	33.8%

Source: Authors' own work (2023).

The results for the role of the CCIs in promoting social cohesion and cultural identity within European regions are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Opinions on the role of the CCIs in promoting social cohesion and cultural identity within European regions.

Statement	Agree	Disagree
CCIs have played a pivotal role in enhancing social cohesion and bringing diverse communities together in my region	75.6%	24.4%

Table 3. *Cont.*

Statement	Agree	Disagree
The activities of CCIs in my region significantly contribute to the preservation and promotion of our local cultural identity	51.2%	48.8%
CCIs have been effective in using cultural heritage as a means to foster a sense of belonging and pride among the residents	82.3%	17.7%
Public initiatives that support CCIs have resulted in increased community engagement and participation in cultural activities	63.5%	36.5%
The influence of CCIs has been crucial in promoting intercultural dialogue and reducing social tensions in my region	64.3%	35.7%

Source: Authors' own work (2023).

According to the results in Table 3, the majority of the respondents (75.6%) believe that the CCIs have play a crucial role in enhancing social cohesion and in uniting diverse communities in their regions. This highlights the perceived power of culture and creativity in bridging divides and creating shared experiences that strengthen social bonds. While 51.2% agree that the CCIs significantly contribute to the preservation and promotion of local cultural identities, a close 48.8% disagree. This suggests that while many see the positive role of the CCIs in preserving traditions and cultural values, a significant portion may feel that the CCIs could either be diluting local culture or not doing enough to protect it. Also, 82.3% of the participants felt that the CCIs have been effective in using cultural heritage to instill a sense of belonging and pride among residents. This underlines the perceived ability of the CCIs to root individuals in their history and shared traditions, cultivating a sense of collective identity. Furthermore, 63.5% of respondents believe that public initiatives supporting the CCIs have led to more community engagement and participation in cultural activities. This suggests that government or local authority interventions can amplify the positive effects of the CCIs, motivating more people to partake in and appreciate cultural events and programs. Finally, 64.3% of participants feel that the CCIs have been vital in encouraging intercultural dialogues and in mitigating social tensions. This shows the potential of culture and creativity as tools for conflict resolution and for fostering mutual understanding among diverse groups.

This study also investigated the influence of the CCIs on urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas, and the results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Opinions on the influence of the CCIs on urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas.

Statement	Agree	Disagree
CCIs have been a driving force in the urban regeneration of deteriorated or neglected areas in my region	95.7%	4.3%
The revitalization efforts spearheaded by CCIs have been sensitive to the existing cultural and historical context of the areas	73.5%	26.5%
The transformation led by CCIs has not only been physical (in terms of infrastructure) but also social, bringing new life to declining areas	51.7%	48.3%
CCIs have attracted tourism, making previously declining areas into cultural hotspots and positively impacting the local economy	65.6%	44.4%
CCIs have played a significant role in making declining areas more attractive for residents, businesses, and investors	92.3%	7.7%

Source: Authors' own work (2023).

The results in Table 4 show that the majority of the study participants (95.7%) agree that the CCIs have been a driving force in the urban regeneration of deteriorated or neglected areas in their region. This suggests that the CCIs are widely recognized for their ability to breathe new life into areas that have been in decline, potentially through initiatives such as art installations, creative hubs, cultural events, or the renovation of historic buildings for cultural purposes. Additionally, 73.5% of respondents feel that the revitalization efforts

led by the CCIs have been sensitive to the existing cultural and historical context of the areas. This indicates that, in the majority of cases, the CCIs are not just imposing new developments but are doing so in a way that respects and incorporates the existing cultural heritage, which is crucial for maintaining the identity of a place. Furthermore, 51.7% agreed that while there is recognition of the infrastructure improvements that the CCIs bring, their impact on social aspects such as community cohesion or local engagement might not be universally acknowledged or felt. Also, 65.6% of the respondents agree that the CCIs have attracted tourism, turning previously declining areas into cultural hotspots and positively impacting the local economy. This suggests that the CCIs have a significant role in rebranding areas and making them more appealing to visitors, which in turn can boost local businesses and services. Finally, a high percentage (92.3%) of the respondents agree that the CCIs have played a significant role in making declining areas more attractive for residents, businesses, and investors. This underscores the holistic impact of the CCIs, not just as cultural enhancers but also as catalysts for broader socioeconomic development.

This study examined the various aspects and outcomes of regional development and revitalization. According to the results presented in Figure 2, the majority of the study participants perceive the improvement in regional business relations as the most significant outcome of regional development and revitalization, accounting for 26.7% of the responses. This indicates that cultural and creative industries have a substantial impact on fostering business networks, entrepreneurship, and overall economic activity within regions. The enhancement of business relations can lead to an influx of investments, the creation of new enterprises, and the strengthening of existing ones, all of which are crucial for regional economic vitality. Following this, 21.7% of the participants noted an improvement in education facilities as a key outcome. This suggests that regional development initiatives, possibly fueled by cultural and creative industries, are successfully contributing to the educational landscape by improving the quality and accessibility of educational institutions and programs. This can have long-term benefits for the workforce and regional development. The improvement of regional cultural heritage was identified by 14.6% of respondents as a significant outcome. Cultural and creative industries play a pivotal role in preserving and promoting local culture and history, which can enhance community pride, cultural understanding, and can attract cultural tourism. Improved regional environmental conservation was noted by 13.4% of participants, indicating that regional development and revitalization efforts are also focusing on sustainable practices and the preservation of natural resources, which is critical for long-term regional sustainability. The revitalization of local languages was seen as an outcome by 10.3% of the participants. Cultural and creative industries often play a role in preserving and promoting local languages, which are an integral part of cultural identity and heritage. A smaller proportion of the participants (9.6%) saw an improved political climate as an outcome of regional development. This could reflect the potential of cultural and creative industries to foster community engagement, dialogue, and understanding, leading to a more collaborative and stable political environment. Finally, 3.7% of the respondents identified other outcomes such as an increase in cultural tourism, improvements in digital literacy, the formation of regional policies, and job creation. While these aspects received less emphasis, they are nonetheless important components of regional development and revitalization, contributing to economic diversification, policymaking, and employment opportunities.

4.3. Regression Analysis Results

Regression analysis was used to determine the extent to which regional development and revitalization is predicted by the economic impact of the CCIs, the CCIs role in promoting social cohesion and cultural identity, the CCIs impact on urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas, the results of which are presented in Table 5. Regression analysis was used to analyze the extent to which the independent variables (the CCIs impact on the economy, promoting social cohesion and cultural identity, and the urban regeneration and revitalization of declining areas) contribute to strengthening regional

development and revitalization in Europe based on different projected values. The findings of this research suggest a strong association between the three independent variables and regional development and revitalization, as shown by the positive multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.614. Moreover, the R-square value indicates that a 57.3% change in regional growth and revitalization is the outcome of the three independent variables.

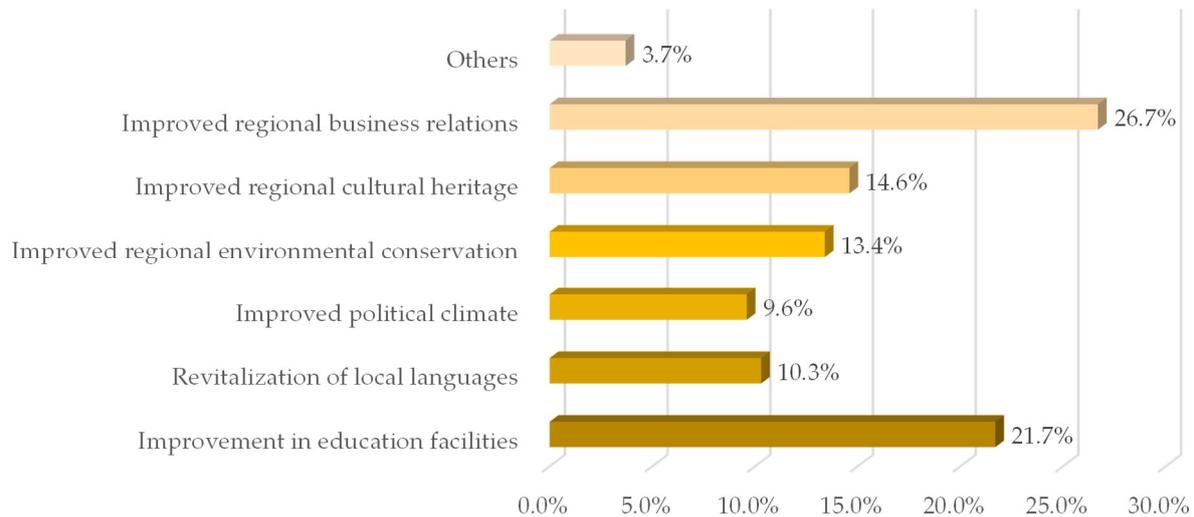


Figure 2. Outcomes of regional development and revitalization.

Table 5. Model Summary.

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	0.614 *	0.573	0.594	0.03142

* Predictors: Economic impact of the CCIs, the CCIs role in promoting social cohesion and cultural identity, and the CCIs impact on urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas.

Table 6 shows the results of a one-way ANOVA used to determine if the linear regression model adequately fitted the data or whether the three independent variables were better predictors of the dependent variable. The model and data are properly matched, as shown by a F (3, 342) value of 402.113, $p < 0.05$.

Table 6. ANOVA analysis.

Model	R	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	p
1	Regression	30.031	3	18.361	402.113	0.002
	Residual	41.105	342	0.027		
	Total	71.136	345			

Dependent variable: Regional development and revitalization; Predictors: Economic impact of the CCIs, the role of the CCIs in promoting social cohesion and cultural identity, and the impact of the CCIs on urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas.

The unstandardized coefficients of the model were examined (Table 7) in order to ascertain the part that the culture and creative industries (CCIs) plays in regional growth and revitalization. The beta coefficient for economic impact of the CCIs is 0.241, meaning that for every unit change in economic impact of the CCIs, regional development and revitalization rises by 28.1%. Likewise, the beta coefficient for the role of the CCIs in promoting social cohesion and cultural identity is 0.163, indicating that an increase in the CCIs promotion of social cohesion and cultural identity by one unit corresponds to an increase in regional development and revitalization of 18.6%. Lastly, a unit shift in the CCIs impact on urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas boosts regional development and revitalization by 18.2%.

Table 7. Regression coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	p
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.318	0.142		2.438	0.005
Economic impact of CCIs	0.241	0.057	0.315	3.736	0.002
CCIs in promoting social cohesion and cultural identity	0.163	0.067	0.117	3.195	0.003
CCIs on urban regeneration and revitalization of declining areas.	0.182	0.049	0.341	3.511	0.000

Dependent variable: Regional development and revitalization.

The beta coefficient β_1 was 0.315 and the p -value was 0.001; therefore, we accepted hypothesis 1 that the CCIs have a positive impact on the economic development of European regions, contributing significantly to job creation and GDP growth. The beta coefficient β_2 was 0.117 and p -value was 0.014; therefore, we accepted Hypothesis 2 that the CCIs play a crucial role in enhancing social cohesion and cultural identity within European regions. The beta coefficient β_3 was 0.341 and the p -value was 0.000, indicating a substantial relationship between the effect of the CCIs on urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas and regional development and revitalization; therefore, we accepted hypothesis 3 that the CCIs are instrumental in urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas in Europe.

5. Discussion

This study's findings regarding the economic impact of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) in European regions are particularly significant. The majority of survey participants believed that the CCIs have significantly increased job opportunities in their regions. This aligns with the fundamental role of the CCIs as engines of employment generation. The CCIs encompass a wide range of job roles, not limited to traditional artistic professions but also extending to technical, administrative, and support positions [41,72]. This diverse employment landscape makes the CCIs a valuable contributor to the labor market, especially considering the dynamic and evolving nature of creative work [87]. Furthermore, this study reveals that the CCIs contribute substantially to regional GDP, to a level that is comparable to more traditional industries like manufacturing or services. This highlights the economic value of the CCIs and their potential to rival more established sectors. It is important to note that the economic contribution of the CCIs often extends beyond direct output, encompassing positive externalities such as increased tourism and the attraction of foreign investments [17]. This broader impact underscores the significance of the CCIs in shaping regional economies. The finding that investing in the CCIs yields higher economic returns and innovation rates compared to other sectors is particularly noteworthy. While there was some skepticism, this result emphasizes the potential for the CCIs to drive innovation and foster economic growth. The CCIs often operate at the intersection of culture, creativity, and commerce, making them well-suited to sparking entrepreneurial discovery and regional competitiveness [11].

Social cohesion and cultural identity are vital components of societal well-being and regional development. This study's findings indicate that the CCIs play a pivotal role in enhancing social cohesion and bringing diverse communities together within European regions. This aligns with the broader concept that culture, creativity, and the arts can serve as powerful vehicles for building bridges among people from different backgrounds and fostering a sense of belonging [43]. Cultural and creative activities often provide a platform for shared experiences, where individuals from various cultural backgrounds can come together to appreciate and participate in artistic and cultural expressions. Whether through attending cultural festivals, art exhibitions, or music performances, the CCIs create spaces for people to connect, engage, and build relationships. This process of interaction can contribute to the development of social bonds, mutual understanding, and a sense of unity among diverse communities [25,42,49,93]. Furthermore, the CCIs are recognized for

their ability to celebrate and preserve cultural heritage, which is a cornerstone of cultural identity [7,52]. Many regions in Europe have rich and diverse cultural histories, including languages, traditions, and practices. The CCIs often serve as custodians of this cultural heritage, ensuring that it is passed down to future generations. By doing so, the CCIs help communities maintain a strong sense of cultural identity and pride. However, it is worth noting that this study also highlights some mixed perceptions regarding the role of the CCIs in preserving and promoting local cultural identity. This could be attributed to various factors, including concerns about the commercialization of culture or the potential homogenization of regional identities. These concerns underscore the importance of striking a balance between leveraging the CCIs for economic and cultural growth while safeguarding the authenticity and diversity of cultural expressions [11,58,68].

This study's findings strongly indicate that the CCIs have been a driving force in the urban regeneration of deteriorated or neglected areas in European regions. This aligns with previous research by Mavrin et al. (2014) [14] that showcases how the CCIs can breathe new life into once-declining urban neighborhoods. These initiatives can include the establishment of creative quarters, cultural hubs, and artistic spaces that not only rejuvenate the physical landscape but also foster a sense of vibrancy and energy within these areas [17,24]. The CCIs have a unique capacity to reimagine and repurpose underutilized or abandoned spaces, transforming them into cultural hotspots [85]. The adaptive reuse of historic buildings for creative purposes, the hosting of cultural events and festivals, and the development of public art installations are all strategies employed by the CCIs to reinvigorate urban areas. By doing so, the CCIs attract both residents and visitors, stimulating economic activity and driving foot traffic to local businesses. Importantly, this study reveals that the revitalization efforts led by the CCIs are sensitive to the existing cultural and historical context of an area. This is a crucial point because it reflects an approach that respects and preserves the identity and heritage of these regions [43,51,82]. Rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all model of urban development, the CCIs often work hand-in-hand with local communities to ensure that their initiatives align with the cultural fabric of the region. This sensitivity to context can be seen in the preservation of architectural heritage, the incorporation of local traditions into artistic expressions, and the celebration of indigenous cultures. Such efforts not only prevent the erasure of historical and cultural significance but also make the revitalized areas more attractive and authentic for both residents and visitors [10,57].

While this study acknowledges the recognition of the physical improvements brought about by the CCIs in urban regeneration, it also points out that their impact on social aspects, such as community cohesion or local engagement, might not be universally acknowledged or felt. This is in line with the study by Gerlitz & Prause (2021) [13], who support the need for a holistic approach to urban regeneration that goes beyond physical infrastructure. The CCIs often act as catalysts for community engagement, social inclusion, and cultural exchange; they create spaces for residents to come together, interact, and participate in cultural activities [49]. The sense of belonging and the shared experiences fostered by the CCIs contribute to stronger social bonds within these revitalized areas. Moreover, they promote creativity, education, and skills development, providing opportunities for personal and collective growth [16,59,94].

This study's findings also highlight that the CCIs attract tourism, turning previously declining areas into cultural hotspots and positively impacting the local economy. This outcome is particularly significant, as it demonstrates the ability of the CCIs to rebrand regions and make them more appealing to visitors [17,60]. Cultural tourism, in particular, can lead to increased tourism-related businesses, such as restaurants, hotels, and shops, providing economic opportunities for residents. Furthermore, the CCIs can contribute to the development of the night-time economy in these areas [42,77]. Cultural events, performances, and nightlife establishments often draw people in the evenings, extending the economic activity beyond daylight hours. This revitalization of the night-time economy can lead to increased revenue generation and job opportunities within a region [8,58,95].

This study reveals that the CCIs have played a significant role in making declining areas more attractive for residents, businesses, and investors. Beyond physical improvements and economic growth, the sense of vibrancy and cultural richness created by the CCIs can enhance the overall quality of life in these areas. This, in turn, can lead to an influx of new residents and businesses, further contributing to an area's revitalization [21,24,26,28].

This research demonstrates that the contribution of the CCIs to regional development, including job creation and economic contributions, is at least comparable to that of traditional industries [1,9]. Such employment conditions are either temporary or unstable, which will need further deliberation. Research shows that employment in the CCIs offers benefits such as creativity and innovation and, sometimes, contracts or project-based work; however, these roles do not provide the same level of security and benefits as traditional roles. Such a form of work can encourage economic instability for people depending only on the creative industries for their living. The lifestyle choice of creative activities can thus be viewed as a source of income, but it also highlights a bigger trend in people's involvement in the gig economy, which consists of both opportunities and challenges [22,36]. However, the importance of the CCIs as engines of economic growth and innovation need to be considered in the context of labor market opportunities and vulnerabilities as well. The advantages as shown in this study, e.g., substantial contributions to GDP and attracting investments [25], on the other hand, should be balanced with the possibility of economic instability that can affect cultural workers. This unstable position is further deepened by the fluctuating context of external funding as well as the markets requiring different art forms from region to region [40,68]. Furthermore, the role of the CCIs is not only limited to the rebirth of urban areas [71], social cohesion, and cultural identity [78], but is also significant for the continuity of these contributions through stable and supportive policy frameworks over time. Efforts to boost the resilience and sustainability of the CCIs should not only target the stimulation of economic growth and job creation but also stabilize the employment conditions of cultural workers. Such a strategy will reduce the precarity of creative professions and will also contribute to more equitable economic benefits arising from the development of these sectors [10,42].

6. Conclusions

This study has explored the different contributions of the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) to regional development and revitalization in Europe. The findings revealed that the CCIs have a significant and positive impact on various aspects of regional development, including economic growth, social cohesion, cultural identity, urban regeneration, and the revitalization of declining areas. This study shows that the CCIs are substantial job creators, contributing to reduced unemployment and underemployment in European regions. They also make a considerable contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), demonstrating their economic significance that is comparable to traditional industries like manufacturing and services.

Furthermore, investments in the CCIs are seen as yielding higher economic returns and innovation rates compared to investments in other sectors, underscoring their potential for fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. The results also showed that the CCIs have a powerful role in enhancing social cohesion by bringing diverse communities together, promoting intercultural dialogue, and reducing social tensions; they contribute to the preservation and promotion of local cultural identity, instilling a sense of belonging and pride among residents. Public initiatives supporting the CCIs have resulted in increased community engagement and participation in cultural activities. Moreover, the CCIs are recognized as a driving force behind urban regeneration and the revitalization of declining areas; they have not only transformed physical infrastructure but have also brought new life to declining areas, making them attractive for residents, businesses, and investors. The CCIs attract tourism, turning previously declining areas into cultural hotspots and positively impacting the local economy.

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the multifaceted contributions of the CCIs to regional development and revitalization in Europe. The CCIs are recognized for their economic significance, social-cohesion-building capacity, and transformative influence on urban areas; they have the potential to create jobs, boost GDP, enhance cultural identity, and revitalize declining regions. However, it is important to acknowledge that this study also reveals some areas of concern and skepticism, such as the potential dilution of local culture or the need for more evidence regarding the innovative capabilities of the CCIs. Policymakers and stakeholders should consider these perspectives and work towards addressing potential challenges while maximizing the benefits of the CCIs. Different stakeholders in the culture and creative industry should be mindful of the potential negative consequences of the CCIs, such as gentrification and the displacement of local communities, seeking to develop policies and strategies that aim to mitigate these effects and ensure that the benefits of the CCIs are inclusive.

The main limitation of this study is that it applied a cross-sectional survey design to capture the complicated picture of the CCIs and their long-term impacts on regional development. One challenge that needs to be addressed is the design of longitudinal studies to determine the sustainability and long-term efficacy of the CCIs during the course of local revitalization. Furthermore, scholars and researchers can also delve deeper into specific aspects of the CCIs, such as their impact on rural areas, the role of digital technologies in the creative industries, the effectiveness of different policy interventions, and the long-term sustainability of the CCIs in the face of evolving cultural and economic landscapes.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, S.K. and F.C.; methodology, S.K. and D.K.; software, D.K.; validation, F.C. and V.A.; formal analysis, S.K.; investigation, S.K. and D.K.; resources, S.K., V.A., and D.K.; data curation, F.C. and V.A.; writing—original draft preparation, S.K.; writing—review and editing, D.K.; visualization, V.A. and D.K.; supervision, F.C.; project administration, F.C. and V.A.; funding acquisition, F.C. and V.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: Data are available upon request.

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to thank the editor and the anonymous reviewers for their feedback and insightful comments on the original submission. All errors and omissions remain the responsibility of the authors.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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