

TOWARDS AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF CULTURE-DRIVEN INTERVENTIONS ON INTEGRATED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING: INSIGHTS FROM THE CASE STUDY OF PIRAEUS AVENUE IN ATHENS, GREECE

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Key-words: cultural assets, culture-driven interventions, impact assessment, local innovation, territorial capacity building, integrated local development planning, Piraeus Avenue.

Abstract. In recent years, culture has been addressed as a key component of integrated approaches to local development planning. In this context, it has been systematically combined with institutional and social aspects of local planning strategies and in support of local innovation/creativity systems. However, the articulation of these integrated approaches inhibits a wide typology of context-specific actions in European cities adopting different patterns of promoting culture as an innovative dimension of spatial planning. At the same time, recent discussion in the field suggests the adoption of more holistic frameworks that equally address the role of culture with differentiated aspects such as physical renewal, social relations and governance networks, hence recognising the integrated character of culture-driven interventions and explaining hindering development factors. The present paper aims to elaborate on the importance of such a holistic framework by testing its aspects in the context of the Piraeus Avenue area in Athens (Greece) and the (short-term and fragmented) emanating of developmental policies in support of the creativity and innovation that exist in this locality. The research focuses on the impact of cultural interventions in the Piraeus Avenue area in terms of the building of territorial efficiency, territorial quality, territorial identity and territorial capacity. In parallel, the research addresses the role of demographic and socio-economic parameters in this regard. To address these research aim issues, desktop research together with ten (10) semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders were conducted. Results indicate several positive impacts in the area mostly regarding spatial quality. However, in relation to territorial capacity building, a key finding is the need for activation towards building complementary uses and activities with other types of local stakeholders with accentuated decision-making powers. The research findings can serve to inform policy-making by identifying best practices and key challenges in the formulation of a holistic impact assessment framework towards culture-based spatial development planning in the European space.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the increasing discontinuity and fragmentation of urban development and related planning policies in Europe has triggered theoretical discussions and empirical research on the importance of both rediscovering alternative approaches and an emanating focus on integrated local development strategies (Delladetsima, 2003; Nussbaumer & Moulaert, 2004). All these entailed a shift from physical planning considerations and multi-sector urban revitalization practices towards a strategic rethinking of urban development processes involving the mobilization of local communities (Ferilli *et al.*, 2016). In this respect, several approaches (Crisp *et al.*, 2023; EC, 2022; Ferilli *et al.*, 2017; Hamdouch *et al.*, 2017) have identified the differentiated factors that should be taken into consideration in the making of an alternative developmental rationale; among these, culture was given top place as an expedient input in local development strategies.

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Culture-related local development and planning: a multidimensional imperative

Numerous social and spatial studies have revealed how a multiplicity of cultural formations proved to be impact-relevant in urban dynamics. More specifically, culture has been integrated into spatial planning and local development in differentiated ways and mainly as source of economic capital (see Evans, 2001 and Mommas, 2004 for an analytical review) closely related to the concepts of creativity, creative city and creative industries (Porter, 1998; Landry, 2000; Evans, 2001; Florida, 2002, 2008, 2012, 2017; Scott, 2006). This has highlighted specific characteristics of the cultural economy (Scott, 2000; Power & Scott, 2011) as a marketing strategy (see Bianchini, 1993; Bassett, 1993; Mootch, 1996); as a new consumption pattern in urban space (Montgomery, 2003; Pratt, 2005; Moore, 2014); as a social practice (Mommas, 2004; Santagata, 2010) indicating also the importance of social creativity and learning in everyday life practice (Roberts, 2006; André *et al.* 2013; Hillier, 2013; Moulaert, 2018; Haraldseid, 2019); and as a local and social innovation booster (Moulaert *et al.*, 2004, 2005, 2017, 2018, 2022; Maccallum *et al.*, 2009; André *et al.*, 2013; Moulaert & van Dyck, 2013) connecting the actual role of local skills, capabilities, and assets towards a culture-led development planning (Sacco *et al.*, 2013, 2014) through its emphasis on the development of socially creative milieus (André *et al.*, 2009).

The articulation of these dimensions denotes a distinct understanding of the term culture and its practical implications, with significant socio-historical contextual meanings. The recognition that culture should be understood as “a starting point for interpretation” (Shurmer-Smith, 2001:1) for the production, shaping, use and representation of spatial phenomena has marked the development of the so-called cultural-spatial turn (Baldwin *et al.*, 1999 in Hubbard & Kitchin, 2011). The shift represented an inherent quest for an alternative to the 1970s and 1980s economic and property-based strategies (Evans, 2001). Furthermore, the global challenges that emerged during the 1990s (Knieling & Othengrafen, 2009), fuelled respectively the valorisation of non-material aspects in spatial development such as: meaning, identity, and the politics of difference (Eade & Mele, 2002). At the same time, culture’s non-material aspects transcended the interpretive field to entail specific spatial manifestations (Kunzmann, 2004: 384). Within this approach, the term ‘culture’ was expanded to encompass additional aspects of social life beyond merely aesthetic considerations, for example employment, welfare provision, social organization and political participation. Based on this conceptualization, culture acquired a far more specific role in determining a shared analysis of social phenomena, but also in sharing a pragmatic urban development vision in urban space.

Creative strategies were implemented in many places, thereafter putting an emphasis on the interrelation of economy and space, further supported by the enactment of global classifications such as the UNCTAD stat². The attraction of ‘creative professionals’ and their contribution into the ‘creative city’, ‘creative clusters’, ‘creative hubs’, ‘creative industries’ and ‘creative capital’ formations, was argued to boost entrepreneurship and innovation, both largely important for local development (Delladetsima & Loukakis, 2017). Nevertheless, the implementation of a ‘creative city’ approach (see among others Porter, 1995; Landry, 2000; Scott, 2000; Florida, 2003; Mommaas, 2004; Evans, 2009; Markusen & Gadwa, 2010; Santagata, 2010) has led to a direct equation of identifying creativity indicators in cities to their economic competitiveness and development (Healy, 2004). Consequently, it has been argued that it became the source of “carbon-copy” policies and strategies (André *et al.*, 2013) largely promoting market objectives while sidelining the promotion of spatial, sustainable spillovers (Sacco *et al.*, 2014). As a response, literature emphasized the importance of stipulating new types of local capacity building (André & Abreu, 2009; Sacco *et al.*, 2013; Moulaert *et al.*, 2017, 2022). Still, there is a certain lack of empirically situated schemes that would explain the spatial and sectoral aspects nexus of culture’s integration (Tremblay & Battaglia, 2012; Sacco *et al.*, 2014; Ferilli *et al.*, 2016; Sogovia & Hervé, 2022).

² See UNCTAD, Retrieved August 30, 2023, from <https://hbs.unctad.org/classifications/>.

Culture as a key dimension of integrated spatial development

The idea of a more integrated development approach comprising culture as a key component at the European level has evolved to be a counter-dynamic to neoliberal doctrines and non-interventionist policies. In this context, relevant literature (Ferilli *et al.*, 2017) addresses points of criticism towards creative policies aiming at the attraction of foreign investments, the implementation of physical renewal strategies (large redevelopment projects and flagship cultural districts) and the promotion of institutional transformations (deregulation of markets and state practices, privatization of public domain and actions, public-private partnerships). Instead, the focus has been turned to the endogenous local development approach with cultural practices enhancing socially oriented, area-based collective action and programmes (promotion of local skills, capacities, and local assets) (Moulaert, 2010). An important point here is also the consideration of assessing development policies' impact relevance through these practices (Sacco *et al.*, 2013).

The aforementioned shift, as expressed also through the concept of social creativity (André *et al.*, 2013), was argued to be extremely relevant to counterbalancing the deep social legitimacy crisis in European cities during past decades (Hillier, 2013). In this view, the consideration of culture in local development strategies has been addressed as a key factor for enhancing capacities such as diversity, tolerance, collective learning and critical thinking between different stakeholders and local actors. Under these terms, the social creativity approach gives prominence to the networking role of culture by taking the form of socially innovative practices (Moulaert *et al.*, 2017, 2022), hence opening a new theoretical nexus of creativity's collective character potential, to building new relations, reconstructing identities and empowering vulnerable groups by challenging institutionalized practices (André & Abreu, 2009). The actual spatial manifestation of this potential not only exposes the 'creative city' limitations but also reveals future possibilities for planning systems (Knieling & Othengrafen, 2009) and development strategies (Sogovia & Hervé, 2022). In these terms, planning is argued to be rooted, understood and practiced in a particular cultural system which can also be seen as an asset for socio-spatial change. Subsequently, culture and creativity, in spatial planning, lead to the development of creative planning, thus, to a field of experimentation for planning cultures' possibilities, that embodies social innovation and collective learning strategies (Moulaert & MacCallum, 2019; Hamdouch, *et al.*, 2017).

Despite the dynamic potential of the social creativity approach for spatial planning, this has been inserted at the policy level rather in an abstract sense recognizing the *a priori* beneficial character of culture in citizens' everyday life (Hubert, 2010; Moulaert *et al.*, 2017; Pasikowska-Schnass, 2019; European Commission, 2020). While there is a certain degree of uncertainty regarding the European common identity (Alzons, 2019), and there is high vulnerability of global societies to repetitive economic and other crises, such as the COVID-19 crisis, the inadequacy of soft actions due to economic, legislative, and other parameters prevails over the possible positive spillovers of culture-related experimentation in local development planning. The realization of culture as a resource for local development and the analysis of hindering and enabling opportunities (Kazepov, 2005) as well as shaping, re-shaping and un-shaping processes in current sociopolitical systems with the active role of local societies (Moulaert, 2018) needs a more focused analysis on the culture-based initiatives impact assessment. Simultaneously, while recent contributions emphasize the significance of cultural assets for sustainable development across various local contexts (Gravagnuolo *et al.*, 2021; Olney & Kafiris, 2022; Stihl, 2023) and offer new insights into sustainable tourism (Duxbury, 2021; Rudan, 2023), they appear to overlook the aspect of impact assessment holistic understanding. An exception to this trend is the emphasis placed on heritage management (Arcos-Pumarola *et al.*, 2023; Ashrafi *et al.*, 2021; Gravagnuolo *et al.*, 2022) and the subsequent embeddedness of intangible cultural assets to tangible heritage (Capello *et al.*, 2019).

The importance of assessing the impact of cultural input through a holistic approach

Culture as an integrative component in local development planning is not a one-dimensional component. Rather than that, it entails three main elements: a) a given definition of culture; b) its

subsequent relevance to the development process; and c) a local policy and planning perspective (See Figure 1 for a schematic representation of culture's analytical role).

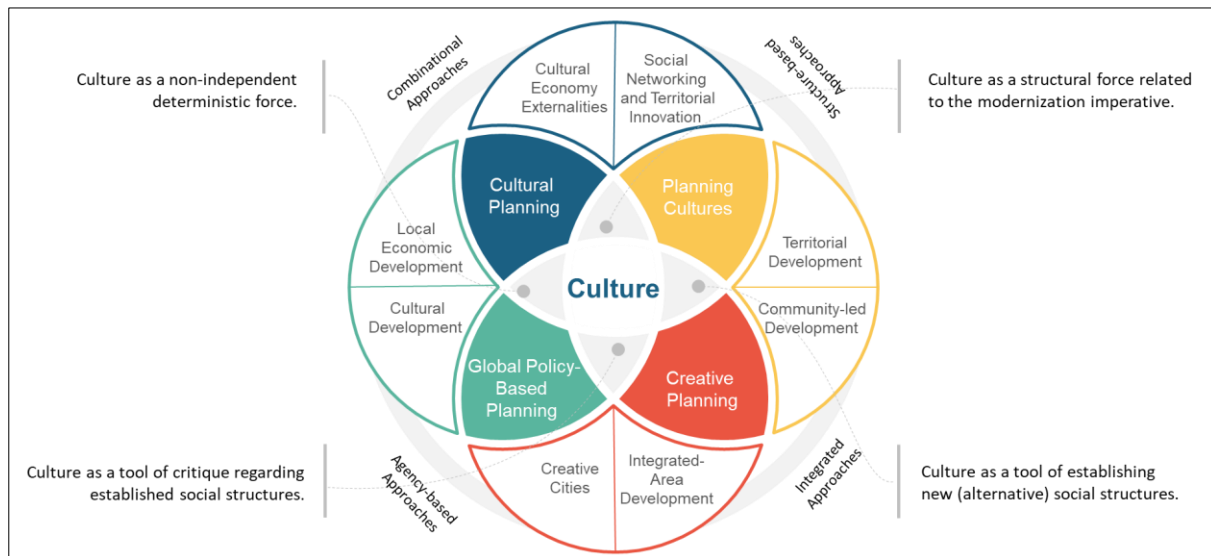


Fig. 1 – Portrayal of Culture's Multidimensional Approach in the Field of Spatial Development Planning based on the literature review presented in this article. This Visualization has been produced based on Venn Diagram³ to highlight that the Applications of Culture are distinct, but also highly interconnected.

Additionally, debates on culture's potentialities in spatial development and planning are based on the exploration of the multiple interrelations between urban development and planning challenges in relation to the typical/ non-typical culture-related responses introduced in support of an alternative development imperative. This implies the structuring of a context-specific alliance for the identification and analysis of a development problem in a cohesive and coherent way (Sum & Jessop, 2013). Such an approach can contribute to the impact assessment of cultural interventions focusing exactly on culture's ability to enhance soft strategies in spatial development planning considering that contemporary cities are often "places of vulnerability" (Eckardt & Sanchez, 2015: 127) where local responses to crises do not meet the wider priorities of development politics.

It also needs to be stressed that despite the wide interest derived from the relative literature and policy practices, the integration of culture in development practice has merely been based on "fuzzy theories" (Markusen & Gadwa, 2010: 379). As a result, there is an overall analytical void regarding the causal links between culture and the institutional spatial development environment (Nyseth *et al.*, 2017) still evident to this day. This also reflects the unfettered character of culture's integration into those fields. As a result, further research is needed based on theoretical and practical developments that analyse the strategic relevance of culture through more holistic impact assessment methodologies (Sacco *et al.*, 2014; Sacco *et al.*, 2013) in a way that context-specificness builds upon transdisciplinarity; this means that research processes should take into consideration the grasp of a problem's complexity, the links between abstract and case-specific knowledge, and the need for promoting the common good through knowledge production (Novy *et al.*, 2013).

In order to assess the potentialities of culture as a strategic component of an alternative local development initiative, focus should be shifted to the big spatial planning picture. In this respect, Moulaert & Mehmood (2013) have suggested that social reality, as a process of assessing elements, should be placed in the context of a whole development trajectory that is ontologically set. In an era

³ See <https://www.lucidchart.com/pages/tutorial/venn-diagram>, Retrieved February 23, 2022.

when the future of urban development and planning is still significantly dependent on struggles over resources (Delladetsima, 2003), coming both from the institutionalized and the non-institutionalized world, culture, as a strategic component, should tackle this exact discontinuity as evidenced both in the scale and purpose of planning investments and governance arrangements between different policy levels (ibid.). In this context, culture also incorporates a role of legitimizing the inadequacy of conventional land-use planning or later strategic interventions and the subsequent generation of creative planning (Hamdouch *et al.*, 2017).

Evidently, the nature of urban development and spatial planning fields is highly complex; hence, they constitute a mixture of elaborate policymaking and practice systems along with the interaction of multiple actors, flows, places, relations, values, collectivities, synergies etc. and often bring in unreliable responses to endogenous and exogenous forces (Healy, 2007). It is now well accepted that pressure for immediate action towards the implications of the economic crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic (Comfort *et al.*, 2020) put weighty barriers to the creation of strategic planning comprising long-term culture-based components. In this context, culture's importance for attracting large-scale economic interests incorporating renewed physical design strategies, cultural heritage, technology, and a touristic image of the cities, followed by numerous speculative practices, large-scale redevelopment remains quite popular in policy practice (Hamdouch *et al.*, 2017). At the same time, distinctively from the social creativity approach, the use of cultural and creative assets for social purposes takes the form of either individual or communitarian economic empowerment, or leasing out state welfare provisions (Moulaert *et al.*, 2017; Moulaert, 2022). In this respect, further research is needed in order to align theoretical models to value-creation practices (Segovia & Hervé, 2022).

Directions for culture's impact assessment strategies

The analysis of cultural impact assessment has been a less popular dimension of the impact assessment field. According to Partal & Dunphy (2016), the fewer references to the cultural dimension are related, first and foremost, to the contested definition of culture. In this view, the cultural impact assessment has been occupied mostly by the impact of tangible cultural resources, such as built heritage and other physical artefacts. In this context, the impact of intangible cultural resources has been considered a subtopic of social impact assessment or a form of cultural influence to societal and environmental issues (Boyle, 1998). As a result, there is quite a generic framework of how to address the impact of newly proposed cultural arrangements. Cultural impact assessment has been developed mostly in the context of local project evaluation frameworks leading to significant variations in the field (Sagnia, 2004) while there is limited relevant literature on the formulation of a comparative literature review up to date (see Partal & Dunphy, 2016).

Sagnia (2004: 6) has suggested that cultural impact assessment is "a process of identifying, predicting, evaluating and communicating the probable effects of a current or proposed development policy or action on the cultural life, institutions and resources of communities, then integrating the findings and conclusions into the planning and decision-making process, with a view to mitigating adverse impacts and enhancing positive outcomes". Cultural impact assessment is highly related to the ways that culture is integrated into wider development aspirations (Belfiore, 2020). In this direction, a more systematic effort to address a coherent model of cultural impact assessment has been developed in the context of the urban development field. Gibson (2011) has proposed methodological tools for assessing the multiplicity of the cultural content and its relation to local societies. In his view, the appropriation of culture, that is, cultural activities and interventions, should have a clear goal towards social sustainability. The value of culture is not a *per se* value but is integrated into systemic relations within a local community. As a result, the research on cultural impact should be based on a multidimensional research method that includes both quantitative and qualitative methods, techniques, and tools. Moreover, cultural impact assessment can be specified in terms of analysing

the potential impact of new cultural uses and organizations situating exactly the subject of interventions, policy goals, contextual characteristics and relevance to other local stakes.

Furthermore, literature related to the holistic local development approach (Moulaert *et al.*, 2005; Nussbaumer & Moulaert, 2004; Gonzales & Healy, 2005; Cassinary, 2011; Moulaert and Mehmood, 2013) and holistic sustainable development (Mrak *et al.*, 2022) has identified patterns for specifying the position of theory and practice into the analysis enhancing aspects such as coverage of peoples' needs, the improvements of relevant interventions in the area and the improvement of qualitative aspects such as accountability, liability, and responsibility. In this direction, cultural impact assessment is also close to the territorial impact assessment framework and methodologies. Territorial impact assessment in general aims to provide an integrated view of a project's impact in a particular area and therefore an integrated view of relevant policy arrangements (Medeiros, 2020; 2023). Although Territorial Impact Assessment is also highly relevant to local project-making processes (ESPON, 2019), its relevance lies in the valorisation of local characteristics based on statistical and geostatistical data in relation to the view and judgment of local, cultural and policy actors. In this context, territorial impact assessment indicates a process of constant counterchecks between a project's objectives, inputs, as well as outputs and wider socio-economic problems, and impacts explained as territorial capacity building.

In the following sections, we test a holistic scheme for assessing the differentiated impacts of cultural assets in the Piraeus Avenue area and the extent to which they can effectively contribute to local sustainable development planning strategies. The research focuses on the impact of cultural interventions in this area; hence addressing what the identified and potential outcomes of culture-related interventions in the area are in terms of territorial efficiency, territorial quality, territorial identity and territorial capacity building. Concurrently, the research addresses the role of demographic and socio-economic parameters in this regard.

2. CASE STUDY AREA

The paper addresses the outcomes and dynamics of cultural initiatives for spatial development planning based on a holistic cultural impact assessment and cultural impact relevance approach, attempting also a response to the aforementioned theoretical principles and challenges. It focuses on the case study of Piraeus Avenue in the Athens Metropolitan Area. Piraeus Avenue (Fig. 2) is a main artery that connects the centre of Athens to the port of Piraeus. It covers an area that belongs to four municipalities (Athens, Moschato-Tavros, Nikaia-Agios Ioannis Rentis and Piraeus Municipalities) and it is 10 kilometres long. Piraeus Avenue's historical importance and modern trajectory as a former industrial site has been thoroughly analysed in different studies (Kampouroglou, 1883; Tsokopoulos, 1984; Ntorizas, 1997; Kotea, 1997; Kardamitsi-Adami, 1999; Malikouti, 2004); architectural reports, research and policy papers (Ministry of Environment Spatial Planning and Public Works, 1995a; 1995b; Belavilas, 2002; Vatavali & Belavilas, 2007; Skayannis & Makri, 2012; Moschouti, 2012; Kotios *et al.*, 2018; Vincent & Bournova, 2023), press and online articles. It has also become the locus of ethnographic fiction (Ferousis, 2002; Psychopaidis, 2004), cultural production initiatives, educational activities and academic and historical studies (Argyrakaki & Lagopoulos, 2009; Oikonomopoulou, 2011; Tsagkarakis, 2010; Giannouloupoulou & Koutsanellou, 2013; Gkanouri & Skagianni, 2017; Chatzi, 2018; Kokkinis & Chamatzoglou, 2018) and has attracted several photographic and film interests. The avenue itself has also been, in part, the site of numerous architectural bids.

To gain a deeper understanding of the empirical study results, this section presents the key characteristics of the Piraeus Avenue area. These characteristics are derived from the findings of a desktop research study.

The historical development of the avenue as a brownfield site

The development of the avenue is tightly associated with Greece's industrialization trajectory. Since its development in the middle of the 19th century, the avenue – extending towards the South of the agglomeration from the Athens centre (Omonia Sq. to the port of Piraeus) – began to attract peri-urban uses/activities such as factories, crafts, warehouses, and wholesale depots. During the early stages of the Greek industrialization process between 1865–1875 (Agriantoni, 1991), tile factories were in the northern area of Piraeus Municipality, while tanneries also developed in adjacent areas (the Rentis area). Next, during the 1873–1883 period, the Piraeus Municipality area accumulated flour mills. Towards the end of the 19th century, intense development along Piraeus Avenue took place especially in proximity to the Athens and Piraeus built-up factory. Given these dynamics that lasted until World War I, a radical transformation of the spatial structure occurred with the installation of larger factories along the road, and the construction of the Athens-Piraeus railway. In the interwar period, Piraeus Avenue further extended its industrial role with the establishment of chemical and other large-scale plants. Up until 1939, the industrial landscape of Piraeus was determined mainly along the road segment from the north of Piraeus to Tavros. Within the interwar period, the areas of Rentis and Tavros included also 1922 refugee movement settlements that made up the only residential uses located on Piraeus Avenue (Makri & Skagiannis, 2012). The aforementioned processes began to change in the 1970s when Greece experienced a de-industrialization process (Agriantoni, 1991). After the 1970s, Piraeus Road lost its previous industrial importance and started degrading. Gradually, a land use differentiation trend took place with the attraction of new uses, while old factory facilities were largely abandoned, as they became obsolete.

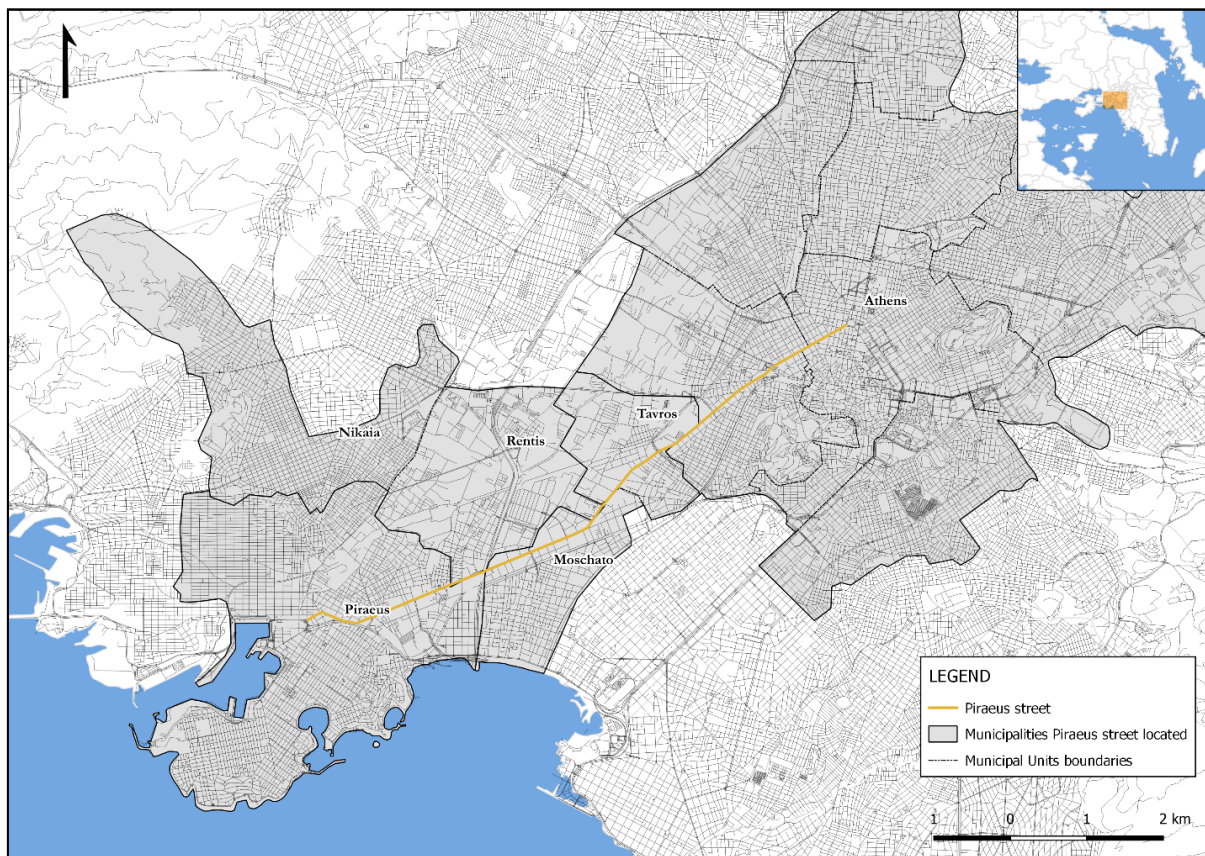


Fig. 2 – Piraeus Avenue and the Municipalities it crosses. Author's processing is based on open geospatial data.

Hence, starting the 1970s, Piraeus Avenue entered a long period of transformation, posing the need for a strategic renewal of the existing building stock. Nevertheless, an important tendency of the development of cultural uses was manifested after the 1990s, combined with several redevelopment proposals and plans, or even ideas for the land use structure of the axis. In this context, since the 1980s, a parallel legislative framework has been developed to enhance a new role of the axis.

The development of culture-related planning policies for the development of the road

The search for a new vision for Piraeus Avenue's redevelopment became a challenging priority for municipal and regional authorities. The Regulatory Plan of Athens of 1983 (Government Bulletin 18A /18.2.1985) was the first plan enforcing land use considerations, but its 1992 strategic plan amendment (Government Bulletin 94A /5.6.1992A) did not, in fact, foresee any regulations for the development potential of Piraeus Axis as a whole. However, it foresaw actions for redefining the Athens and Piraeus central areas, measures for the limitation of central functions and the elimination of wholesale and industrial uses. Moreover, it identified Athens and Piraeus' historical character and their role as metropolitan centres of international scope. In this context, emphasis was put also on the western side of the centre of Athens with the transfer of cultural and administrative uses to the areas of Gazi, Kerameikos and Iera Odos. The Athens City Local Plan (1988) (Government Bulletin 80Δ /4.1.1988) identified the need to determine incentives for new uses as well as the metropolitan role of the centre of Athens. The Moschato Municipality Local Plan (1988) (Government Bulletin 386Δ /2.6.1988) referred mainly to public road works with special reference to Kifisos and Piraeus roads intersection. The Tavros Local Plan (1987) (Government Bulletin 834Δ /31.08.1987) determined the need for incentives for the development of multi-centre and general housing uses on the street. The Aghios Ioannis Rentis City Local Plan (1987) (Government Bulletin 1038Δ /16.10.1987) referred to the upgrading of Piraeus Street with the gradual replacement of the industrial uses with less disturbing and aesthetically upgraded uses as well as the presence of wholesalers in the Central Market of Rentis. The Piraeus City Local Plan (1988) (Government Bulletin 79Δ / 4.2.1988) included Piraeus Road areas as in need of preservation and protection of historic buildings and of attracting new functions.

In 1996 a new legislation was reinforced in relation to the protection of the traditional character of specific parts of or buildings around the road (Government Bulletin 510Δ /1996; and its amendment (267 Δ /1997) and as part of an effort to upgrade the road. This legislation altered the aforementioned local plans in terms of designating as traditional the area of Piraeus Avenue outside the historical centres of Athens and Piraeus cities and within the municipal boundaries of Athens, Tavros, Moschato, Kallithea, Ag. Ioannis Rentis and Piraeus municipalities. In this context, eighty-eight (88) buildings and ten (10) facades located within the zoning plan of the Athens, Ag. Ioannis Rentis, Moschato, Tavros and Piraeus Municipalities were characterized as historically protected/preserved. As provided by law, it was forbidden to interfere in any way with the architectural character of these buildings, control was foreseen for repairs and additions to the buildings and public gatherings, leisure activities in general, cultural functions, while administration offices and social welfare uses were allowed.

In March 1995, the reconstruction program of Piraeus Avenue was announced, with the aim to reveal its history and its important buildings, enforce traffic regulations and nine (9) intervention points, as well as an integral plan for the avenue not compartmentalized in the distinct sections belonging to the related municipalities. Its relevant study issued by the Ministry for the Environment, focused on the following renewal initiatives: the recognition of Piraeus Road as a heritage site, the approval of a land-use regulation, the evaluation of building conditions, the designation of listed buildings, the enforcement of traffic regulations, and the development of multi-purpose targeted actions in specific areas.

Regional legislation [the Athens/Attica Master Plan (Government Bulletin 18A /1985; 156A /2014), legislation on the traditional character of particular parts or buildings of the road (Government Bulletin 510Δ /1996; and its amendment 267Δ /1997), and the legislation on Piraeus axis character (Government Bulletin 1063 Δ /2004, 103 ΑΑΠ /2007)] valorised the role of particular measures regarding land uses, regeneration interventions, building plot ratio etc., modifying the existing Urban Plans as based on relevant consultations and the subsequent policy studies/papers (Ministry of Environment Spatial Planning and Public Works, 1995b). However, in practice, these have mostly remained incomplete.

In 2004 (Government Bulletin 1063Δ/16.11.2004), Athens, Tavros, Moschato, Ag. Ioannis Rentis and Piraeus municipalities' local plans were modified in order to regulate new uses in the area while an amendment (103ΑΑΠ/22.2.2007) allowed the relocation of food hypermarkets and partly specified land use categories referred to the 2004 legislation. The 2004 legislation also defined distinct construction permits for the area.

In 2014, the new Athens-Attica Regulatory Plan was enforced (Government Bulletin 156A /1.8.2014). As stated in the new plan, it aimed at setting the goals, directions, policy, priorities, measures and programs necessary for spatial and urban planning, and housing organization of Attica, as well as the protection of the environment according to the principles of sustainable development. The plan was set to be developed also based on population and financial projections until 2021 while it was also stated that the Plan's strategic goals, the promotion of policies, as well as the pace and extent of implementation of the prescribed regulations would be consistently monitored through the defined criteria. The Plan's three strategic goals were: balanced economic development, sustainable spatial development, and the improvement of the inhabitants' quality of life. According to the plan, Piraeus Avenue should be developed with an emphasis on cultural and leisure uses. Overall, the Plan was sought to highlight the axis key elements of image and identity of the city as an international cultural and tourist destination metropolis.

In addition, in the context of securing the European Structural and Investment Funds implementation and the Enterprise Agreement for the Development Framework (NSRF) 2014–2020, the Municipalities drafted local operational programmes that included, to a certain extent, provisions for Piraeus Avenue. The Athens operational programmes 2012–2014 and 2015–2019 included a limited number of action areas in the Piraeus Avenue zone as indicative initiatives. The Moschato – Tavros municipal operational programme 2015–2019 made a thorough analysis of the history of Piraeus Road, of the symbolic character as well as the population dynamics at the south-east part of the axis. Nikaia – Aghios Ioannis Rentis municipal operational programme 2015–2019 referred to Piraeus Avenue as a main road with the development of large-scale activities of educational and cultural importance. Furthermore, Piraeus municipal operational programme 2015–2019 referred to spotted interventions in the area. At the same time, the Athens Sustainable Urban Development Plan funded by the Region of Attica and the Ministry of Employment Operational programmes (Ergo Athina 2012–2015; Ergo Athina 2020), as well as the Athens spatial and sectoral development strategy aimed at the recognition of cultural interventions' importance for the city (City of Athens, 2020).

Overall, policy interest in Piraeus Avenue was gradually expressed and a series of actions began, significantly affecting the current trajectories of the road. Policymakers responded to this situation with the formulation of a planning policy agenda and the enactment of subsequent legislation which aimed at the valorisation of the old industrial building stock and the attraction of cultural, entertainment, educational, recreational and targeted productive activities, while also aiming to transform the road into a supra-local development pole. Indeed, the relocation of cultural uses, such as theatrical spaces near Omonoia Square, the School of Fine Arts, the Ellinikos Kosmos Cultural Centre, the Technopolis in Gkazi area, the Benaki Museum, the M. Cacoyannis Foundation and the Greek Festival, during the

1990s and the 2000s constituted supra-local interventions that enriched the cultural capital of the area. These cultural assets have been combined with the development of supra-local commerce and mass entertainment activities on specific sites that in combination have altered the dynamics and image in different parts of the Piraeus Avenue area.

Despite the existence of a strategic interest in the road's redevelopment at a metropolitan level during the 1990s and 2000s, it can be argued that this has gradually decreased because interventions and the utilization of European financial instruments have been reoriented to areas with more intense poverty and social exclusion during the past decade. As regards the Piraeus Avenue case, concern at the local level planning remains more accentuated in the Moschato – Tavros Municipality. At the same time though, there is a lack of current operational support for new culture-based redevelopment actions in the area together with the proliferation of recent large-scale interventions through public-private partnership schemes that incorporate culture as a general supporting vision for other services and current recreational uses. The planning trajectory of Piraeus Avenue remains mostly related to the logic of not disturbing the status quo of land uses and interests as they stand (see Giannakourou, 2019), since it is the outcome of a combination between market forces dynamics and the limited local communities' engagement in the planning process (Belavilas, 2022). At the same time, the long-term inactivity of the political and legal imperative for the area has not been the object of a systematic exploration. As a result, there is a need for updated research and data before proposing an updated planning vision for the road. While Piraeus Avenue holds a significant industrial past, defining and evaluating redevelopment projects into former industrial areas is truly complicated and requires the investigation of complex conflicts and trade-offs that, if left unexplored, will add more to the vulnerability of the case area planning trajectory. In this context, it should be taken into consideration that the Piraeus Avenue planning paradigm is over thirty years old, and it has been further entangled after the emergence of the economic crisis.

Current Land Uses and Building Stock in the area

Despite the initiatives for the development of Piraeus Avenue, the road is facing a multitude of problems with the existence of road quality technical problems, traffic congestion issues and many vacant or abandoned industrial buildings. At the same time, the revival of the decaying industrial brown-field and the transformation of a large part of the road to now receive visitors – tourists, young people, schoolchildren, students – in museums, festivals, university halls, recreational areas, offices, industries, and commerce remains at stake for a large part of the road. The large acreage and poor quality of the unutilized land and building stock for a long time could not be reversed only through the relocation of public-driven cultural capital in the road.

Piraeus Avenue constitutes a terrain of highly differentiated and contrasted land uses⁴. The closure of the majority of industries in the area did not lead to the subsequent redevelopment of the industrial buildings. At the same time, appendant craft and warehouse uses remained or continued relocating in the area. Now, Piraeus Avenue has a certain degree of highly differentiated uses in terms of physical space quality, land-use and socio-economic activities that reveal a significant spatial fragmentation affected mainly by the distinct social, economic and spatial challenges faced by the individual areas connected to the road. Near the centre of Athens, Piraeus Avenue concentrates mostly commercial, administrative and cultural uses with the existence of several residential and common spaces. In the south area of Athens Municipality, Piraeus Road has residential uses mostly in the road's inner blocks combined with low-cost entertainment uses, cultural interventions, one industry and other services. On the contrary, the part that belongs to Tavros has mainly light industry, warehouses etc. together with cultural interventions and housing located mostly in the inner blocks. The part that belongs to Moschato,

⁴ This analysis is based on a site visit and on land use mapping conducted by the author during 2020–2021.

Rentis and Piraeus areas has mostly industries, light industries, warehouses, entrepreneurial activities, and services.

Retail uses have also emerged significantly in some parts of the road. At the same time, commercial enterprises show investment interest in the creation of department stores as they are offered for large areas with a direct connection to the centre. Due to the restrictions and the designation of many buildings as preserved, the buildings' alteration and demolition has been mostly avoided. Along with a few cases of department stores, retail trade exists but is fragmented and weakened, meeting local needs in specific areas. Uses related to driving throughout the length of the avenue, such as dealerships, warehouses, garages, and liquid fuel stations, are found mainly in the Moschato area, while office uses along with tourism and entertainment uses are present mainly in the south of Athens municipality (Kerameikos area). Residential concentrations exist significantly in the Athens area, with central Athens including buildings of historical importance. Actual land uses also show a large degree of diversification in terms of buildings' use related to non-built areas use and ground floor use (Figs. 3, 4).

The differentiation in activities is also related to differentiations in the quality and characteristics of the building stock. Moving away from the centre of Athens there is a prevalence of unstructured blocks, abandoned buildings and industrial shells, buildings of lower heights, a few cases of newer buildings and a lower quality of public space. A slight increase in the buildings' heights is observed closer to the city of Piraeus. The physical characteristics of the axis indicate also the severe lack of sidewalks or them being damaged or narrow, green spaces, and transitory areas for temporary parking or warehouses.

The sizes of the plots and the percentage of coverage in each one have affected the type of uses hosted today across the axis. In particular, the industrial zone located mainly in the middle of the road is characterized by large plots of land with low building heights and high floor space indices. Conversely, small and densely arranged blocks, close to the Athens and Piraeus areas, appear to be related to an urban character, where residential and commercial properties prevail. In its largest part, the building heights do not show large variations (from 2–4 floors) with the exception of the part of Athens (7–8 floors). A low-rise zone is generally maintained in the largest part of the road. In addition, in terms of traffic, a series of arrangements has altered the traffic capacity of the road over the years. However, the creation of uneven junctions (mainly in local administrative boundary areas) abruptly cuts off the continuity of the urban fabric.

Demographic and socioeconomic challenges in the area

In correspondence with the differentiation of land uses along the area due to the size of the axis, as well as its inclusion in different administrative boundaries and historical conditions, the socio-economic characteristics⁵ of the axis are also differentiated. Population concentration is larger at the two ends of the road. Regarding the demographic data, and specifically the age structure, we find that mainly middle-aged people live around the Piraeus Avenue residential area with the southeastern part of Tavros being an exception, since there is a stronger concentration of more dynamic age groups (15–34 y.o.). Regarding gender, a slightly higher concentration of men mainly in the central areas of the Municipalities is observed, except for the Municipality of Piraeus. As regards nationality, we note a larger concentration of migrants or third-country nationals especially in the north-west of the Athens centre and partly in the area of Aghios Ioannis Rentis. The concentration of residents coming from EU27 regions is also evident in central Athens; however, their presence in the Piraeus Avenue-connected neighbourhoods is lower.

⁵ The analysis in this section is based on available data derived from the Greek National Statistical Authority Censuses 2011/2021, Retrieved May 23, 2023 from <https://www.statistics.gr/>.

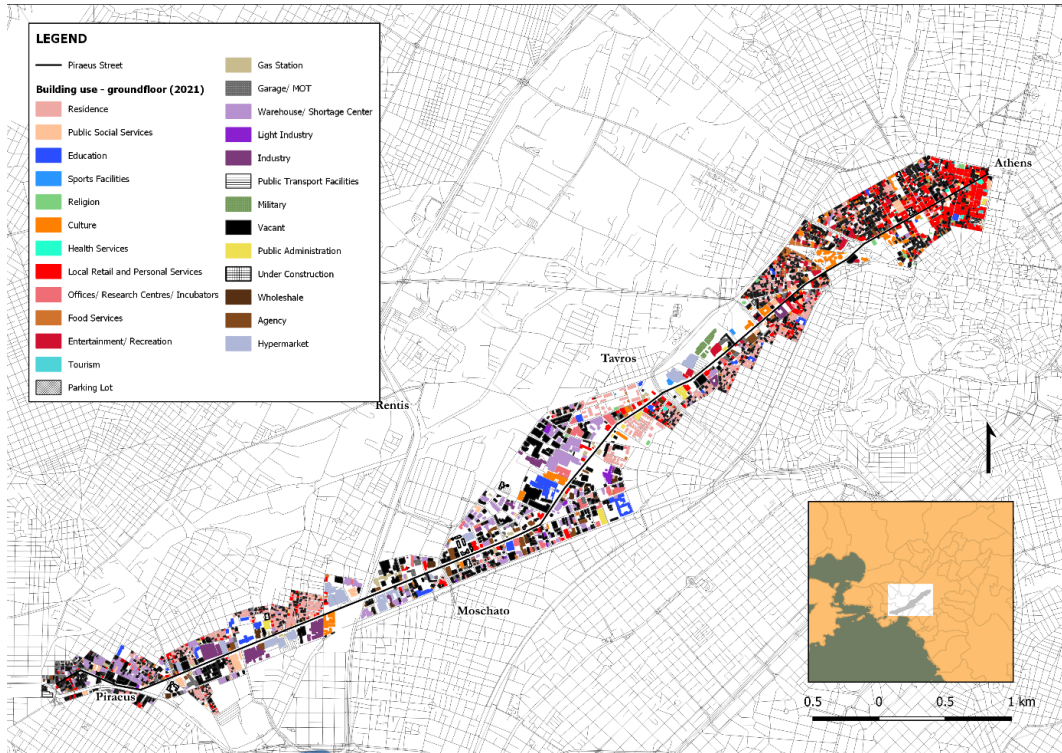


Fig. 3 – Building use in the area (ground floor), 2021.

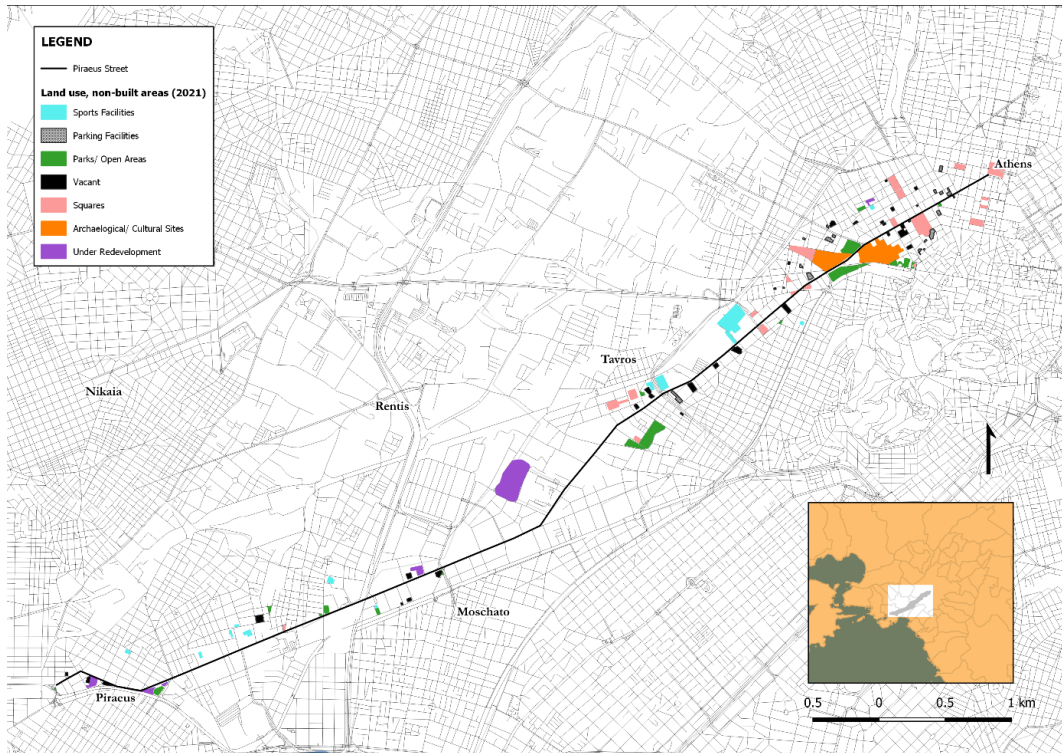


Fig. 4 – Use of non-built areas, 2021.

In terms of employment, there is an increased concentration of the population employed in the arts, entertainment, and recreation activities mainly in the Athens area, but also in Moschato – Tavros Municipality. On the other hand, we observe the presence of more technical professions at both ends of the road, as well as in the Moschato area. Indicative of this presence is also the provision of services and wage labour in these areas. Next, in the centre of Athens, we observe higher rates of self-employment and retail trade. In addition, we note a greater concentration of workers in the municipal units of Tavros and Rentis. In terms of the percentage of students and in relation to Piraeus Avenue, a greater concentration appears in the Tavros area. Correspondingly, in the Tavros and Rentis areas we also observe comparatively increased rates of unemployment. It is quite important also that areas connected to Piraeus Avenue that already had high deprivation levels, in particular the Centre of Athens and the entrance to Piraeus Municipality, have mostly held the same status throughout the years (Karadimitriou *et al.*, 2021).

3. METHODOLOGY

Towards a New Analytical Framework for Culture's Impact in Piraeus Avenue

In this section, we present the results of the empirical study conducted to test the prospects and dynamics of cultural initiatives for spatial development planning on Piraeus Avenue based on a holistic cultural impact assessment and cultural impact relevance approach.

As already mentioned, this exploration is based on the following elements: a. the ways that cultural interventions and assets are created, valorised, used, reproduced, and institutionalized in a particular area as part of a local development issue; b. the spatial manifestation of this development; and c. a wider recognition of culture's role in development. For this purpose, culture's impact in the area is approached under four (4) dimensions: a. territorial efficiency; b. territorial quality; c. territorial identity; and d. territorial capacity building. Territorial efficiency represents the physical aspects of local development and planning, hence the extent to which there has been a change either to the physical or built environment, or to the economic performance of local economic actors. Territorial quality integrates the social dimensions reflecting on culture's impact on living standards and access to services. Territorial identity elaborates on the presence of social capital in the area. Finally, territorial capacity building investigates the enhancement of governance relations and new institutionalized practices. It is noted that territorial development inadequacies lie in the lack of one or more types of impact. In this regard, while a project might not aim or be able to cover all impact dimensions whose relevance it should, in principle, clarify to other existing interventions in the area while it should also be aligned to a wider institutional strategy.

Analysis Methods and Techniques

The technique of semi-structured interviews was used to assess the territorial dynamics in the area of Piraeus Avenue and thereafter the interrelations between distinct cultural, public, and private actors. Interviews were conducted with key informants from the local, regional, and public administration and private actors integrated into development initiatives, as well as cultural institutions in the area. In particular, the aim of the interviews was to explore the key elements of spatial development stimulation in the area identified since the enforcement of land use regulations during the 2000s, as well as the impact of cultural assets activity. Additionally, the interviews sought to elucidate crucial topics raised in this regard. The empirical research design aimed for a qualitative assessment of culture's holistic impact approach, wishing to comprehend the underlying mechanisms, contextual factors, and lived experiences of individuals engaged in culture-related interventions in the area. The limited availability of up-to-date data regarding strategic aspirations for the area underscored the necessity of further analysing the validity of the existing secondary data, drawing on the specific knowledge and experience of key informants. This challenge was compounded by the volatile socio-economic environment amidst the economic crisis. In addition, the research's focus on

impact assessment oriented towards territorial capacity and governance processes underscored the importance of conducting an in-depth analysis of the existing social, economic, and spatial processes.

Ten (10) semi-structured qualitative interviews were eventually conducted, followed by a thematic analysis in order to come up with the identification of exact processes for enhancing relevant tangible and intangible assets and their characteristics following suggestions evident in literature (Ataman & Tuncer, 2022). The thematic analysis was conducted to uncover significant patterns in the interviewees' responses. Thematic analysis was selected as the most appropriate method to analyse the responses based on the interviewees' experiences, with the aim of paving the way for further research in the field. Thematic analysis identifies and organizes themes for describing the phenomenon under study (Daly *et al.*, 1997). Interviewees were selected using a snowball technique⁶, while criteria for selecting the informants were related to their institutional power regarding decision-making processes in the area, their integration into culture-related development programs, and their active interest in the development of Piraeus Avenue as a cultural axis.

The use of semi-structured interviews involves employing predetermined themes and/or questions while allowing relative freedom for both the interviewer and the interviewee during the interview process. In the context of the present research, semi-structured interviews were chosen to extract the participants' understanding of various issues such as development, impact, culture, creativity, and crisis, as well as to identify specific processes for enhancing relevant assets and their characteristics. Therefore, the selection of semi-structured interviews reflected the need for a pragmatic approach in socio-spatial research, recognizing the importance of an integrated analysis based on a multiplicity of data (Moulaert *et al.*, 2012). Semi-structured interviews enabled them to be conducted while covering specific themes, providing relevant freedom for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Overall, semi-structured interviews included predetermined themes and/or questions in combination with relative freedom both for the interviewer and the interviewee in the conduction of the interview. The interviews took place from May 2021 to June 2021. Due to COVID-19 restriction measures, participants were given the choice to participate either physically or virtually, respecting virtual communication principles in research (Sah *et al.*, 2020).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Assessing Culture's Territorial Impact in the Area

The present section showcases the findings of the thematic analysis, focusing on the meaning and significance of the identified themes in relation to the research design and the territorial impact dimension. Specifically, the analysis examines the themes of territorial efficiency, territorial quality, territorial identity, and territorial capacity building, supported by evidence from the collected data.

Table 1

Interviewees characteristics

Key Informant Code	Type of Institution	Position
I1	Local Administration	Administrative Officer
I2	Regional Administration	Administrative Officer
I3	Private Cultural Institution	External Associate in Cultural Programmes
I4	Public Cultural Institution	Managing Director
I5	Private Consulting Company	Chief Innovation Officer
I6	Private Consulting Company	Managing Director
I7	Local Administration	Mayor
I8	Private Cultural Institution	General Director / Vice-President of the General Assembly
I9	Local Administration	Head of Department
I10	Local Administration	Head of Department

⁶ Twelve (12) unofficial discussions initially took place in order to find key informants for the interviews' conduction. See also Figure 5.

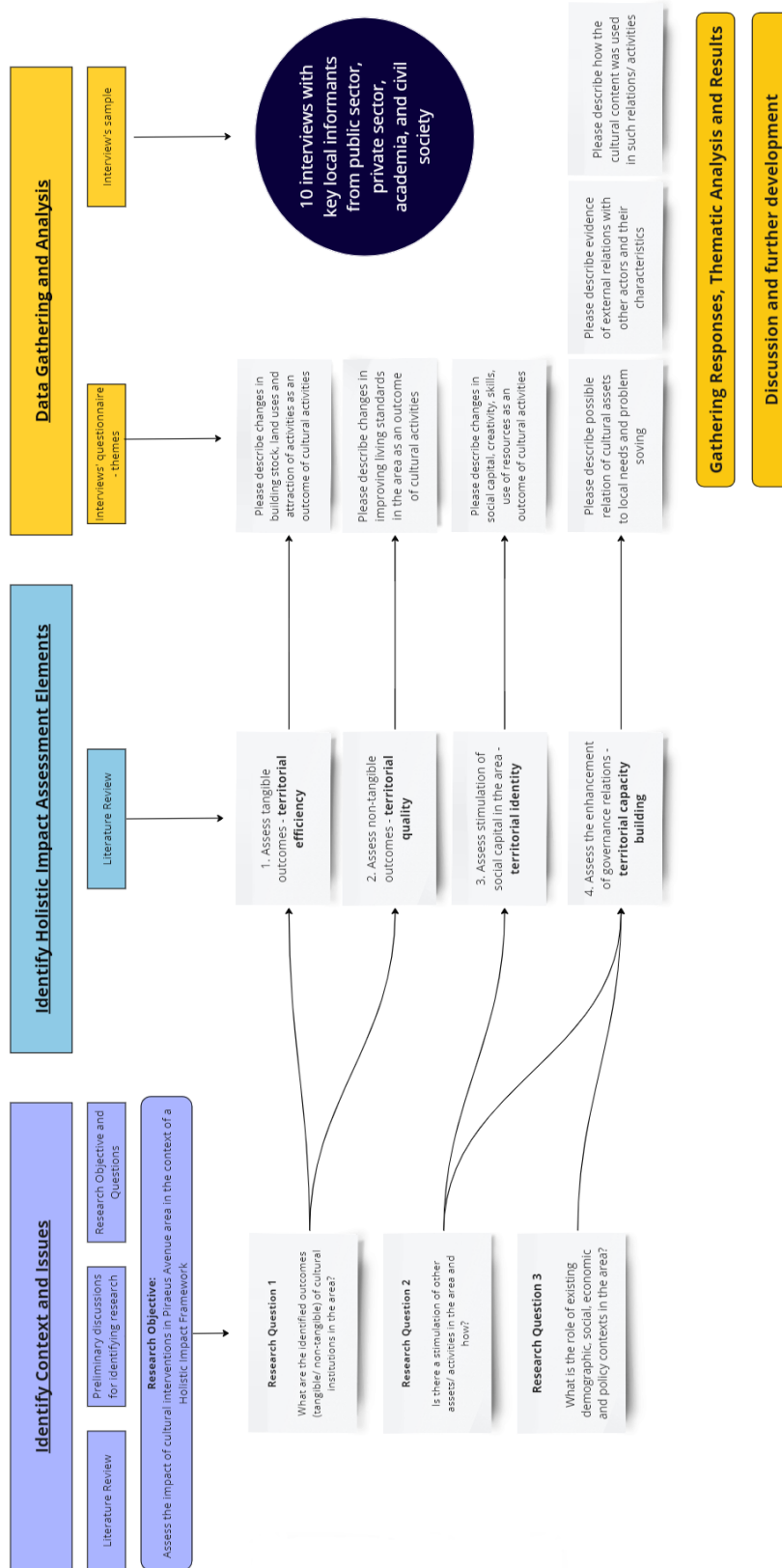


Fig. 5 – Research Methodological Steps.

a. Territorial Efficiency

Study results indicated that changes in terms of territorial efficiency are mainly localized and fragmented in the first zoning of major cultural spaces in the 2000s, while a number of cultural institutions located in Piraeus Avenue at that time managed to renovate both the buildings they were relocated to as well as public space outside their buildings in some cases. At the same time though, according to I9, these building upgrades coming from spot interventions in the area did not attract new renovation investments significant over time for the whole Piraeus Avenue. According to I4, an exception here is the case of Athens Technopolis, an industrial museum/major cultural venue of the City of Athens and former gasworks located in Gkazi/Kerameikos neighbourhood in the south part of Athens Municipality. This public-driven initiative managed to contribute to the former gasworks renovation as well as become a landmark for further public space investments in the area.

Regarding the issue of land uses, different development trajectories were indicated. According to I2 and I10, the existence of cultural institutions managed to create a new positioning of small-scale retail mainly spontaneously connected to food and personal care services. According to I1, I7, I9, the development of these services was also partly connected to the relocation of public sector education and consulting services (e.g., the School of the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Administration, and Technopolis' Innovation hub). On the other hand, according to I1, I8, I3 and I10, no relevant attraction of businesses was noted near the School of Fine Arts located in the Aghios Ioannis Rentis area despite the flow of students that emerged as a result of its relocation. Overall, regarding real land uses in the area, results indicated that the zoning of cultural institutions has not managed to systematically contribute to the large-scale reuse of buildings in this direction. For this reason, the area retains a high degree of diversification and environmental hazards.

As regards the issue of land values, and according to I2, the area followed a broader trend of value increase which, however, was not directly linked to the location of cultural institutions but to wider area redevelopment strategies (such as in the case of the Gkazi neighbourhood). On the other hand, I10 indicated how real estate values decreased significantly during the 2010's economic crisis. All in all, according to the same interviewer, there is no systematic connection between the level of land values and cultural institutions' relocation in the case of Piraeus Avenue; however, a case-by-case analysis is required regarding the impact of an institution on the increase in land values.

At the same time, inflows of income from the cultural institutions cannot be channelled towards other actions for the surrounding area. According to I3 and I7, the strengthening of jobs as well as the attraction of visitors based on cultural institutions' activities maintains a hyper-local character, and no situated link with strengthening the job market at the local level can be supported. At the same time, a significant number of services such as garages, warehouses, and craft activities have remained in the area without, however, creating conditions for the competitiveness of a local production system.

b. Territorial Quality

According to survey results, residents and stakeholders in the area have not built social ties under the adopted development rationale for Piraeus Avenue (based on culture or not). Even though the road and the wider areas it crosses have historically hosted refugee populations with a strong element of social solidarity, in the modern development course of the road no question of social integration was ever raised and therefore a strong desire does not exist from below to reorganize the uses of the road. Accordingly, as per I10, issues of reducing poverty, tackling inequalities and strengthening employability at the road level were never raised, according to I1, I2 and I10. This fact also highlights a set of other aspects of the area's development path. The physical dimensions of space quality highlighted by the interviewees, such as the quality of the sidewalks, the accessibility of the road and the different naming/numbering of the road highlight, in fact, a care for the interest and safety of both the residents and the visitors. However, according to I1 and I10, the absence of a coherent plan for

attracting cultural and other investments over time shows that the initial planning did not seem to take efficiency considerations into account.

The linear development of the road as it has been shaped over time has not succeeded in creating communication fields between the inhabitants of the various areas. I5, I6 and I7 referred to the absence of technological infrastructures as well as communication infrastructures which could attract a greater number of residents as users of the public space as a key point for the sustainable development of the road. Overall, according to all interviewees, the design of Piraeus Avenue as a cultural axis has significantly improved the access of residents and visitors to cultural and entertainment services. At the same time, this has not led to the determination of common strategies between culture-related organizations, public institutions and citizens for the spatial improvement of Piraeus Avenue. On the contrary, each cultural institution operates autonomously, targeting mainly hyperlocal visitors as I9 and I10 argued. The debate about the limits of the role of a cultural organisation was expressed as an important element for the respondents in the sense that cultural institutions cannot or should not play the role of an institutional body by organizing regulatory interventions or defining their cultural program based on the development priorities of the region as indicated by I3 and I4. According to I4, cultural organizations justifiably aim for their financial survival while undertaking additional networking initiatives eliminating the risk of its activities – a trend more intensively evident after the economic crisis. From there on, as I9 argued, it is important for public and funding institutions to take into consideration cultural institutions' advisory role in the field of expressing social needs, but also to support their cooperation with public bodies - those responsible for decision-making and policy formulation.

On the other hand, according to I10, cases of physical space renovations did not result from a participatory process with the contribution of residents and/or entrepreneurs in the area. In many cases according to the interviewees, the determination of land uses with the protection and attraction of cultural capital has not been accompanied by a targeted management plan for the protection and promotion of the cultural stock. In this view, individual interventions and action plans should communicate with each other to complement development goals in the region, a dimension that has not been achieved. At the same time, the considerable time that has passed since the initial determination of land uses makes the interconnection between different interventions even more difficult.

c. Territorial Identity

The existence of human networks contributes decisively to the achievement of goals in a society, including development goals. In this way, the existence of social capital concerns the existence of interpersonal relationships as well as social networks which are accompanied by value systems (Field, 2003:13). In this context, and as pointed out by I1, I3, I10, the various creative actions in the area, while they have strengthened the creativity and skills of many individuals (for example through student and artistic workshops) they have not somehow turned this creation of knowledge into capital for the region. At the same time, this new knowledge is fragmentary and there is no file recording which, even later, could contribute to the utilization of an idea or proposal to be implemented. For all interviewees the cultural issues have a great degree of subjectivity of the added value that they may provide at a practical level, or a different reading by different social groups. Such a repository with the use of modern technological tools could contribute to documenting the cultural importance of Piraeus Road.

In the case of Piraeus Avenue, the utilization of culture as a development tool did not contribute to the development of common values and resources to achieve development outcomes in the area. At the same time, according to I1, I7 and I10, a communication flow of information about the road and the various actions was not created in a systematic way and by many institutions. Although participants involved in local development initiatives for Piraeus Avenue specific areas have expressed that they would happily re-engage in consultation processes (I6, I7), they did not appear to have motives to take

any active initiative to revive the idea. An additional obstacle in this situation is the reduced operational capacity of municipalities and public services.

The fact that Piraeus Avenue is a mosaic of uses means, on the other hand, that the people who are active, living and working in such a large area will have different motivations and goals for the development of the area. The same seems to apply to the municipalities of the region and to the various cultural institutions. According to all interviewees, this condition did not allow for the creation of strong social trust between the various institutions, a necessary element, according to I10, for their cooperation. However, for I3 and I10, difficulty in strengthening social capital is just as important for the case of Piraeus as the non-existence of capital flow. The refuted development potential of the area seems to have been affected not only by internal factors but also by the lack of communication of the project in question and the lack of engaging people in it. Often, there have been cases where other areas have been development priorities due to past experiences, as well as municipalities' inability to manage the risks in the area related to local participation as I1, I2, I8, I9 and I10 stated. This is connected to Li *et al.*'s consideration (2022: 11) "when measuring formation factors such as trust, social norms, and social structure, their measurement factors should be considered before the old neighbourhood renewal project. In other words, the formation factor is the collective level of social capital in the historical context of the neighbourhood rather than social capital triggered by the renewal project". According to I8, I9 and I10, such a study is missing for the case of Piraeus Road while there have been many years since the initial plan enforcement. In the meantime, social capital dynamics in the area have changed.

d. Territorial Capacity Building

According to I1, I2, I7 and I10, the discussion around the development dynamics of Piraeus Street and its related discontinuities has been structured primarily not by the causes of these discontinuities but mainly by the visible results concerning the development of the natural space. A large discussion concerning the causes revolves around the weakness or often non-existence of networks of communication and cooperation between competent bodies. The objectives of the spatial strategy of each region include elements such as the improvement of the economic situation and employment, the improvement in social terms of the daily life of citizens and the preservation of the natural and built environment based on a sustainable development process. According to I7, municipalities often shoulder mainly the burden of the development process, as well as the communication with the citizens. At the same time however, they have significant shortcomings both in their operational capacity and in the support of specialized knowledge regarding the selection and/or claim of appropriate political and investment tools. These deficiencies are more evident in the section of Piraeus Avenue where former industrial uses are mostly concentrated, namely in the Moschato-Tavros Municipality. On the other hand, according to I2 and I4, the case of Athens is a more complex one as prioritization is often observed in neighbourhoods exposed to a larger percentage of criminal activities or in sectors with a greater inflow of capital, such as tourism.

According to I1, I2, I4 and I9, the development strategy for Piraeus Avenue has not been linked to a holistic street plan that would convince and concern a large number of citizens beyond the cultural sector. At the same time, according to I10, it has not been linked to individual local development plans of the Municipalities. According to I3, I5 and I6, the partnership efforts for Piraeus Avenue are more spontaneous initiatives that arise from the interest of executives of the various institutions. However, they have not succeeded in designing a sustainable proposal for the axis. The success of a new planning process should include elements such as the re-examination of the dynamics and socio-economic relationships in the region, the organized partnerships between stakeholders as well as the citizens, and a targeting of the local administration institutions' empowerment to support planning and implementing sustainable urban policies. These deficiencies are also indicative of the inability of the interviewees to propose more specific solutions. This has the aim of developing new capabilities based on the already

existing local potential. According to all interviewees, the passage of such a long period of time since the previous planning requires an initial formulation of analytical and strategic conditions for the road.

The characteristics of Piraeus Avenue require a revised metropolitan planning. Through the interviews, not only the weakness of the local bodies but also the frequent overlapping and ignorance in the public opinion regarding the responsibilities of each level of official bodies was highlighted again. According to I1, I2, I8, I9 and I10, apart from the financing issues, a clear organization of forces for the purpose of developing the road is missing. As developed by I10, a possible solution would be the establishment of a management body with authority at the government level or district level and under the logic of an emblematic project with, however, the participation of wider bodies and forces.

According to I2, I5, I6, I7 and I8, the various projects have not progressed as the central administration has neglected strategic planning based on which a local planning of resource mobilization might have been successfully implemented. However, I5, I6 and I7 declared to be optimistic that this is a matter of time for this strategic planning to mature. Interviewees also expressed the need for a new discussion regarding strategic planning – which, unfortunately, in the Greek context, is not often done effectively. The financing part is also important for most of the participants (I1, I2, I4, I5, I6, I9, I10); however, according to study results, the main discontinuities revolve around the lack of a strategic planning intervention for the road connected to operational priorities. As a result, the debate on the strategic planning of Piraeus should be reopened based on a targeted analysis of the current situation as a basis for planning its development dynamics.

Table 2

Main themes and subthemes in interviewees' responses

Dimension	Question	Themes	Subthemes	Interviewees
Territorial Efficiency	Please describe changes in building stock, land uses and the attraction of activities as an outcome of cultural activities	Land-uses	Localized change in land uses	All
		Attraction of activities	Spontaneous attraction of small-scale services	I2, I10
			Attraction of large-scale services	I1, I7, I9
			Attraction of mass entertainment	I4, I9, I10
		Buildings reuse	No large-scale reuse of buildings	I9
		Land values	Increased land values	I2
			Further research needed	I2, I10
		Income	Sub-local character of jobs creation	I3, I7
			Continuation of craft activities	All
		Territorial Quality	Please describe changes in improving living standards in the area as an outcome of cultural activities	Social Ties
Tackling Inequalities has never been raised	I1, I2, I10			
Strengthening employability at the local level has never been raised	I1, I2, I10			
Strategic relationships	Absence of a coherent plan			I7
	Pilot character of interventions			I1, I10
	The land plans are considerably outdated			All
Communication between citizens	Absence of technological and communication infrastructures			I5, I6, I7
	Attracting hyper local visitors			I9, I10
	Limited capacity of cultural institutions			I3, I4
	Financial sustainability of cultural institutions			I4

Table 2 (continued)

			Advisory role of cultural institutions	I9
		Citizens Participation	Lack of a participatory approach	I10
Territorial Identity	Please describe changes in social capital, creativity, skills, use of resources as an outcome of cultural activities	Value creation	Fragmented Skills creation	I1, I3, I10
			Value does not return to the area	I1, I3, I10
			Subjectivity of culture's added value	All
			No development of common values	All
		Knowledge creation	Fragmented knowledge creation	I1, I3, I10
			Lack of communication flow for the area's characteristics	I1, I7, I10
			Limited motives for cooperation efforts	I6, I7
		Social trust	Lack of social trust	I3, I10
			Lack of knowledge on social capital in the area before the situation of cultural institutions	I8, I9, I10
			Other development priorities	I1, I2, I8, I9 and I10
Territorial Capacity Building	Please describe possible relation of cultural assets to local needs and problem solving	Planning	Outdated land-use plan	All
			Please describe evidence of external relations with other actors and their characteristics	Operational Capacity
	Policy priorities	Tourism		I2, I4
		Criminality		I2, I4
	Planning	Lack of an updated holistic plan	I1, I2, I4, I9	
		Lack of integration among municipalities	I10	
		Spontaneous partnership efforts	I3, I5, I6	
		Need for a specific operational body	I10	
		Financing constraints	I1, I2, I8, I8, I10	
	Please describe how the cultural content was used in such relations/ activities	Value	Overall lack of updated strategic planning	I1, I2, I4, I5, I6, I7, I8
Value does not return to the area			I1, I3, I10	

5. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the present paper was to investigate aspects of cultural impact relevance in the case of the Piraeus Avenue Area in Athens, Greece, taking into consideration a holistic impact assessment approach. Therefore, it elaborated on the significance of cultural interventions of different character and scope and on the extent to which they have a potential to contribute to sustainable development planning strategies. The research analysed the impact of cultural interventions in the area in terms of territorial efficiency, territorial quality, territorial identity and territorial capacity building. To address the research aim, ten (10) semi-structured qualitative interviews with local stakeholders were conducted to assess the outcomes of the cultural and creativity assets-related action combined with insights for statistical, sociodemographic, economic and spatial data for the area. Given the diverse nature of the Piraeus Avenue area, notwithstanding the cohesive development framework, a qualitative thematic analysis was undertaken. This approach sought to comprehensively capture the existing and preliminary trends in

culture-related spatial development, while also investigating the potential for new governance arrangements.

Results indicated several positive impacts in the area and particularly concerning its spatial quality. However, as regards territorial capacity building, a key finding was the need for activation towards building complementary uses and activities with other types of local stakeholders that have more power in decision-making. More specifically, the deterministic incorporation of culture in its spatial development rationale in the case of Piraeus Avenue is related to structural deficiencies faced by organizations for sustaining and/or creating new developmental initiatives. These deficiencies include the social acceptance of initiatives, the creation and sustainability of networking links between actors, the difficulty to find funding opportunities, and the difficulty to adjust to changes coming from the socioeconomic environment. The study results can provide empirical data to contribute to ongoing discussions about the necessity to re-envision the creative city approach, particularly considering the context of transition at the empirical level (Segovia & Hervé, 2022).

The Piraeus Avenue redevelopment strategy has failed to address citizens' lives improvement in an everyday life realm. The planning strategy for the road failed to create productive links between the cultural content produced within the organisations and the intertemporal socioeconomic challenges for the area. Quite the contrary, qualitative research results suggested that the formulation of the planning rationale for the road has reflected, and continues to do so, a strategy for hyper-local development poles which will most likely attract visitors. This finding further stresses the need to situate analytically the practical links of a culture-related planning development strategy to combining activities and local communities' needs. Research results indicated the inability of culture-related strategies to support the development of soft skills for the local population or for the population that would develop long-term links with the area. Taking also into consideration the fact that the culture-related local development paradigm of Piraeus Avenue has started in the 1990s, the need for soft skills and cultural change needs to address the 'why' (Varnum & Grossmann, 2017) or the 'why not' of a shift in cultural practices for the area. These results can be valuable in the context of recent discussions on citizen participation aimed at supporting and sustaining cultural practices and institutions, as highlighted by Modzelewska (2021).

Moreover, the Piraeus Avenue culture-related redevelopment strategy has not been able to create sustainable links to regional and national policy imperatives. Research results indicated the absence of targeted strategies that would support the organizations in extending their activities, although this extension is not widely accepted. In addition, research results indicated the lack of political prioritization towards the further development of a culture-related spatial planning strategy for the road after the first relocation of cultural institutions in the area. It is quite reasonable that research results indicated a lack of interest in institutions or citizens' engagement in local activation initiatives based on culture-related activities. The identification of these factors is pertinent to understanding power relations that may impede urban equality, governance, and sustainability through culture-based initiatives. It also addresses the limitations of the cultural sector in this regard (Čamprag, 2023). Furthermore, they prompt further discussion on the broader issue of the lack of integration of culture into Greek strategic and operational planning policy tools (Tsilimigkas & Derdemezi, 2020).

As a counter point, research results indicated that there is a dynamic towards the connecting the Piraeus Avenue culture-related planning development paradigm with the utilization of new technological tools. The latter can assist in the context of both the recording of knowledge on cultural stock and for the communication of the cultural product in the area including emergency situations such as the restrictive measures against the COVID-19 pandemic. It is noted that the cultural sector was one of the sectors most affected during the pandemic in Greece and abroad, as it led to the interruption of all activities significantly reducing new productions in the field. It also strengthened the communication of the cultural institutions' actions abroad. Utilizing research results in the context of digital transition in Greece can be immensely valuable for informing and guiding further research efforts regarding the

relevance of culture-based actions and promoting the use of new technologies in the Greek creative sectors (Hellenic Republic, 2019).

Research results highlighted that the implementation of an institutional framework of incentives cannot be limited only to the registration of categories of permitted land uses, especially considering that a long period of time has passed since the enforcement of the last spatial plan for the region. In this direction, local institutions should work towards harmonizing their activity according to European Union (EU) policy opportunities in the cultural and creative sector for supporting context-relevant experimentation and expression of ideas. It is noted for example that EU policies support residency hosts under the Culture Moves Europe mobility scheme as a way for artists from other countries to visit third countries and implement local cultural activities.

These issues are further exaggerated as the road is a significantly differentiated spatial level both in terms of physical and socio-economic development. The multiplicity of existing land uses with different socioeconomic characteristics and opportunities for redevelopment makes the usage of an axis-based development paradigm useless. Opportunities for the Piraeus Road redevelopment require its connection to specific urban centre areas with updated data, participation of more institutions and support in financing mechanisms. As indicated through the empirical research, there is an existing will for public-private partnerships in the field, but not wider incentives. There is also a renewal of a strategic plan for the road based on wider consultation, which is highly important. The creation of a single supra-local management body might assist in the management support of this plan. Research results can provide valuable insights for assessing the socio-spatial sustainability of recent large-scale initiatives aimed at investing in expansive office and leisure spaces in the Piraeus Avenue area. These spaces are intended to host multidimensional economic activities and serve as landmarks for the area.

On the other hand, the mapping of issues related to the study of development perspectives for Piraeus Road, and especially the impact of culture, had not been the subject of a systematic study. Although the study of Piraeus Avenue has been the subject of several studies and articles, its connection to the theoretical framework with newer approaches to spatial development planning remains an open field of research. As a significant number of cultural and other assets have remained largely latent, it can be argued that research interest in the area also became latent after some time. The study can contribute to new directions for studies that have already tackled the development challenges of the area (see section 1) in light of the industrial heritage utilization incorporating the sustainable management of investments in the area. In addition, it can contribute to the formation of conditions for the strategic planning of Piraeus Avenue, especially since the investment activity and interest have been activated again. The development of theoretical approaches that support the culture-based interventions' impact on literature is not satisfactorily linked to the study of cases that highlight the perspectives and challenges of connecting with case studies. The implementation of a holistic impact assessment approach can contribute to the direction of indicating practical opportunities and limitations in this regard connecting theoretical contributions developed until 2017 in the field to more recent research priorities such as heritage management and sustainable tourism (Kim *et al.*, 2021).

Overall, the study provided a framework for the comparative analysis of the specific impact of culture-related institutions in the area and their comparative research through the analysis of a holistic methodology for impact assessment. Future research may involve conducting a more comprehensive analysis of each dimension within the framework for Piraeus Avenue and beyond, employing quantitative techniques to relate the road's characteristics to specific areas within the municipalities. Such an analysis is expected to significantly contribute to the creation of an updated development planning vision for Piraeus Avenue grounded in situated knowledge, as well as to enhance comparative research analysis in the field. This approach provides added value to the cultural impact assessment by considering the social aspect and the interrelation between different aspects, especially in cases of long-term inactive planning arrangements. It aligns with recent discussions concerning the need for a deep

understanding of geographical contexts when setting strategies for prioritizing impacts (Wang & Kao, 2023), and allows for extending discussions to other regions at the international level.

On the other hand, some limitations of the research exist that stem from its qualitative nature. The sample size of interviews was relatively small, and while it included key informants, there may have been others unavailable at the time of the research. Participation may also have been impacted by restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic ongoing at that time. Further research is necessary to derive quantifiable results. Regular updated research is also needed to obtain the most recent data on Piraeus Avenue, as there is no organized registry.

Despite these limitations, this study is the first to systematically approach this holistic framework in this case area and beyond. It can be further leveraged for research in the field, aiming to trigger a conversation on the development of situated knowledge.

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