
FROM AN ART'S CLUSTER TO CREATIVE QUARTER:
GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES IN THE EVOLUTION OF
BOMBARDA FROM EMERGENCE TO MATURITY

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Abstract:

Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs) have become pivotal in urban development and economic regeneration, blending cultural vitality with economic potential. These districts are characterized by the spatial concentration of cultural and creative industries that drive innovation and contribute to the socio-economic revitalization of cities. This study explores the lifecycle of CCDs through the framework proposed by Lazzaro (2022), which includes the phases of emergence, growth, and maturity. Each phase is associated with specific governance models, performance indicators, and social capital dynamics.

The research highlights the importance of governance models in shaping the development and sustainability of CCDs. It categorizes governance into cultural versus economic orientations, planned versus unplanned structures, and centralized versus decentralized approaches. Performance indicators are linked to governance models, with cultural-centric governance emphasizing social and cultural vibrancy, while economic-centric models focus on job creation and innovation. Social capital, defined as networks, norms, and trust facilitating collective action, emerges as a critical performance indicator, with bonding and bridging social capital playing vital roles at different lifecycle stages.

The study addresses gaps in understanding how governance models evolve across lifecycle stages and their impact on CCD growth, resilience, and adaptability. By examining these dynamics, the research aims to inform policymakers and urban planners on designing interventions tailored to each lifecycle stage, enhancing the development and sustainability of CCDs. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, focusing on the Bombarda Creative District in Porto, Portugal, to explore its evolution and fit within Lazzaro's taxonomy. Through qualitative and quantitative analyses, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of Bombarda's lifecycle stages and the role of governance and social capital in its resilience and adaptability.

Keywords: Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs); Governance Models; Social Capital; Lifecycle Stages; Emergence, Growth, Maturity; Bonding and Bridging Social Capital; Public-Private Partnerships; Cultural Preservation; Economic Growth; Innovation; Urban Development; Community Engagement; Performance Indicators; Resilience and Adaptability; Gentrification; Cultural Identity; Creative Industries; Cultural Heritage; Economic Diversification.

Resumo

Os Distritos Culturais e Criativos (CCDs) tornaram-se fundamentais no desenvolvimento urbano e na regeneração econômica, combinando vitalidade cultural com potencial econômico. Esses distritos são caracterizados pela concentração espacial de indústrias culturais e criativas que impulsionam a inovação e contribuem para a revitalização socioeconômica das cidades. Este estudo explora o ciclo de vida dos CCDs através do framework proposto por Lazzaro (2022), que inclui as fases de emergência, crescimento e maturidade. Cada fase está associada a modelos de governança específicos, indicadores de desempenho e dinâmicas de capital social. A pesquisa destaca a importância dos modelos de governança na formação do desenvolvimento e sustentabilidade dos CCDs. A governança é categorizada em orientações culturais versus econômicas, estruturas planejadas versus não planejadas, e abordagens centralizadas versus descentralizadas.

Os indicadores de desempenho estão ligados aos modelos de governança, com a governança centrada na cultura enfatizando a vivacidade social e cultural, enquanto os modelos centrados na economia focam na criação de empregos e inovação. O capital social, definido como redes, normas e confiança que facilitam a ação coletiva, emerge como um indicador de desempenho crítico, com o capital social de ligação e de ponte desempenhando papéis vitais em diferentes estágios do ciclo de vida.

O estudo aborda lacunas na compreensão de como os modelos de governança evoluem ao longo das etapas do ciclo de vida e seu impacto no crescimento, resiliência e adaptabilidade dos CCDs. Ao examinar essas dinâmicas, a pesquisa visa informar formuladores de políticas e planejadores urbanos sobre o design de intervenções adaptadas a cada estágio do ciclo de vida, melhorando o desenvolvimento e a sustentabilidade dos CCDs. A pesquisa emprega uma abordagem de métodos mistos, focando no Distrito Criativo Bombarda em Porto, Portugal, para explorar sua evolução e adequação dentro da taxonomia de Lazzaro. Através de análises qualitativas e quantitativas, o estudo fornece uma compreensão abrangente dos estágios do ciclo de vida de Bombarda e do papel da governança e do capital social em sua resiliência e adaptabilidade.

Palavras-chave: Distritos Culturais e Criativos (CCDs); Modelos de Governança; Capital Social; Estágios do Ciclo de Vida; Emergência, Crescimento, Maturidade; Capital Social de Ligação e de Ponte; Parcerias Público-Privadas; Preservação Cultural; Crescimento Econômico; Inovação; Desenvolvimento Urbano; Engajamento Comunitário;

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1. Introduction

Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs) have emerged as significant components of urban development and economic regeneration, offering a unique blend of cultural vitality and economic potential. These districts are characterized by the spatial concentration of cultural and creative industries, which foster innovation and contribute to the socio-economic revitalization of cities. The literature presents various definitions and conceptualizations of CCDs, highlighting their role in enhancing the competitiveness and attractiveness of urban areas (Wu, 2005; Flew & Cunningham, 2010). The distinction between cultural and creative districts is often subtle, with cultural districts focusing on preserving cultural heritage and creative districts emphasizing innovation and economic growth (Florida, 2002; Scott, 1997).

The governance of CCDs plays a crucial role in shaping their development and sustainability. Governance models in these districts vary widely, reflecting different priorities and structures. Lazzaro (2022) categorizes these models into cultural versus economic orientations, planned versus unplanned structures, and centralized versus decentralized approaches. For example, the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter transitioned from an industrial district to a creative cluster, illustrating a shift from cultural-centric to economic-centric governance (De Propris & Lazzeretti, 2009). Similarly, cities like Lille and Genoa have adopted cultural strategies that prioritize cultural identity and community engagement (Sacco & Blessi, 2007; Lazzaro, 2022).

Performance indicators in CCDs are closely linked to their governance models, reflecting the unique priorities of each district. Cultural-centric governance often emphasizes social and cultural vibrancy, using indicators such as community engagement and cultural participation (Jackson et al., 2006; Sacco & Blessi, 2007). In contrast, economic-centric governance models focus on job creation, innovation, and market competitiveness (De Propris & Lazzeretti, 2009; Evans, 2005). Public-private partnerships in governance models combine both cultural and economic indicators, capturing the multidimensional impact of creative clusters (Andres & Chapain, 2013; Lazzaro, 2022).

Social capital emerges as a critical performance indicator in CCDs, providing a multidimensional lens through which the effectiveness of governance can be evaluated. Putnam (2000) defines social capital as the networks, norms, and trust that facilitate collective action. In the context of CCDs, social capital can be seen in two forms: bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital refers to the strong ties within homogenous groups, while bridging social capital connects diverse social groups, fostering inclusivity and understanding (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). The interplay between these forms of social capital is vital for a healthy CCD, supporting both cultural cohesion and economic innovation.

The lifecycle of CCDs can be understood through the framework proposed by Lazzaro (2022), which includes the phases of emergence, growth, and maturity. Each phase is associated with specific governance models, performance indicators, and social capital dynamics. In the emergence phase, bonding social capital is essential for cultural cohesion and identity formation, while in the growth phase, bridging social capital becomes critical for fostering economic partnerships and innovation. In the maturity phase, a balance of both forms of social capital ensures that districts maintain their cultural integrity while integrating into the broader economy (Lazzaro, 2022).

Yet, gaps remain in understanding the evolution of governance models across different lifecycle stages and their impact on CCD growth, resilience, and adaptability. While the existing body of work provides valuable insights into the spatial concentration and interconnection of cultural and creative activities (Wu, 2005; Flew & Cunningham, 2010), there is a noticeable lack of focus on how governance models evolve over time and their alignment with the developmental stages of CCDs. This oversight is critical, as governance plays a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of these districts, influencing their capacity to rejuvenate, adapt, or decline.

The relevance of this study lies in its potential to bridge these gaps by examining the evolution of governance models and the promotion of social capital within CCDs. Understanding the modes of governance and their evolution is vital for designing interventions that are tailored to each lifecycle stage, thereby enhancing the development, resilience, and adaptability of CCDs. Many districts face the risk of decline, while others successfully rejuvenate and adapt. However, the role of different governance modes in this

context remains underexplored. By addressing this gap, the research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of these dynamic cultural and creative phenomena.

The expected contribution of this research is multifaceted. Firstly, it seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of how governance models evolve and interact with social capital across different lifecycle stages of CCDs. By doing so, it will offer insights into the factors influencing the success of these districts and the dynamics that unfold over time. Secondly, the study aims to highlight that a better understanding of governance evolution can lead to more effective interventions that support CCDs' resilience and adaptability. Ultimately, this research aspires to inform policymakers, urban planners, and stakeholders involved in the development and management of CCDs, offering them a framework to foster sustainable and vibrant cultural and creative environments.

Thus, the focal point of this research is encapsulated in the central question: How governance models and social capital evolve throughout CCDs' lifecycle? To dive deeper into the details surrounding this overarching question, the study is guided by sub-questions that seek to provide a detailed exploration of this research:

- RQ1. What actors, types of economic activities, and governance models are present at each stage of the development of a Cultural and Creative District?
- RQ2. What types of social capital are observed in each stage?
- RQ3. In what ways do these factors influence the development, resilience, and adaptability of a CCD through different challenges at each stage?

To answer these research questions, this thesis employs a mixed-methods approach, centering on an in-depth case study of Bombarda's Creative District to explore its evolution and fit within Lazzaro's taxonomy of Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs). Through qualitative data collected via semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, complemented by narrative analysis and historical mapping, the study traces Bombarda's development from an emerging art cluster in the 1990s to a mature creative district in 2024, identifying key governance models, economic activities, and social dynamics (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Bell, 2010). Additionally, a quantitative descriptive analysis measures social capital

indicators like community engagement and networking, offering empirical validation of the qualitative findings (Taherdoost, 2022). This combined approach provides a holistic understanding of Bombarda's lifecycle stages and the role of governance and social capital in its resilience and adaptability.

This research also aims to serve as a practical resource for the *Quarteirão Criativo*, the new association governing Bombarda. In addition to offering an academic analysis, I have taken the opportunity to provide a detailed historical account of Bombarda's development and a solid literature review on governance models and social capital. These elements are not only useful to the academic understanding of Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs) but can also offer valuable insights that can support the association in navigating the complex challenges it faces. By exploring Bombarda's trajectory in light of established frameworks and drawing on relevant literature, this work aims to offer both a scholarly and practical guide for fostering sustainable development and resilience within the district. Given the breadth of this dual focus—combining a robust case study with a comprehensive theoretical foundation—the thesis may exceed the usual length. However, this is justified by the depth of analysis and the desire to offer *Quarteirão Criativo* a valuable and actionable resource. My hope is that this contribution will assist the association in managing the balance between cultural preservation and economic growth, while strengthening social cohesion within the community.

This thesis is organized in 6 major sections: a literature review, to provide a comprehensive understanding about Cultural and Creative Districts; the methodology, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches, utilizing a case study and narrative analysis to explore Bombarda's development, complemented by descriptive analysis to assess social capital; the case study analysis, describing the evolution of Bombarda from emergence to maturity; the describing analysis, providing a contrast to the qualitative approach on the evolution of social capital; and finally, the discussion of results and the conclusion, providing an answer to the research questions aforementioned and potential misalignments with the presented literature review.

2. Literature Review

The literature review is organized into sections that explore the dynamics of Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs). It begins with an examination of the terminologies and definitions related to CCDs, highlighting the lack of consensus among scholars and their various perspectives. The review then delves into governance models, categorizing them by ambivalent characteristics. Following this, the literature review addresses performance indicators, differentiating between those used in cultural-centric and economic-centric governance models, and introduces social capital as a potential performance indicator. The review also presents a taxonomy of CCDs, adapted from Lazzaro's framework, which outlines the lifecycle phases of emergence, growth, and maturity. The review concludes with a synthesis of these elements into a lifecycle matrix, offering a comprehensive perspective on the evolution of CCDs and setting the stage for further analysis in subsequent sections.

2.1. Concepts on Cultural and Creative Districts

2.1.1. Terminologies and definitions

The concept of cultural and/or creative clusters has been widely discussed and defined in the literature, but there is no consensus on a single definition. Different authors have adopted different approaches and perspectives to describe the phenomenon of spatial concentration and interconnection of cultural or creative activities.

Wu (2005) defines a cultural cluster as "a geographic concentration of interconnected businesses, suppliers, service providers, and associated institutions in a particular field that share a common cultural product or service" (p. 2). He argues that cultural clusters are dynamic and innovative, and that they can enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of cities. Flew and Cunningham (2010) propose the term creative cluster to refer to "a network of independent firms co-located in a specific geographical area that produce interactive experiences, goods, and services for the global market place" (p. 104). They suggest that creative clusters are characterized by the coexistence of different creative sectors, the presence of entrepreneurial and collaborative culture, and the role of public policy and institutions. De Propriis et al. (2019) use the concept of cultural/creative cluster to encompass both cultural and creative industries, organizations, and workers. They define it

as "a spatial agglomeration of cultural or creative industries, organizations, and workers that encompasses both vertical (i.e. value chain) and horizontal (i.e. cross-sectoral) linkages and that benefits from positive externalities derived from co-location and interaction" (p. 3). They emphasize the importance of the geography of creativity and the role of local and regional factors in shaping the development and performance of clusters. Lazzaro (2022), drawing on earlier work by Brooks and Kushner (2001), defines cultural and creative districts as geographically concentrated areas where cultural and creative industries cluster generate both economic and social benefits.

The distinction between "cultural" and "creative" in the context of these districts is subtle. Cultural districts primarily focus on the preservation, production, and dissemination of cultural goods, which may include tangible assets like historical sites, museums, and theaters, as well as intangible heritage such as traditional crafts and performances. These districts often aim to safeguard cultural identities and promote cultural diversity, often through government-led initiatives or public funding (Costa, 1991; Richards, 1999). In contrast, creative districts emphasize innovation and the generation of new ideas and products, often within sectors such as design, fashion, digital media, and the arts. Creative districts are more economically oriented, with a focus on fostering competition, entrepreneurship, and public-private partnerships that fuel local and regional development (Florida, 2002; Scott, 1997). While cultural districts seem to look to the past and emphasize cultural preservation, creative districts are likely future-oriented, prioritizing economic growth through creative industries.

The terms "district," "quarter," and "cluster" each reflect different organizational and spatial dimensions of these creative or cultural areas. A "district" refers to a formalized, often larger geographic area designated for cultural or creative purposes, typically involving both public and private investments and a variety of stakeholders, including governmental bodies and private enterprises (Brooks & Kushner, 2001). A "quarter," in contrast, tends to be smaller and more localized, often with a historical or cultural significance that predates its designation as a creative or cultural hub. For example, the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter is a historic area that has evolved into a creative district while maintaining its original artisanal identity (De Propriis & Lazzarotti, 2009). The term "cluster" refers to the economic framework developed by Porter (1990, 1998), in which businesses or industries within a

specific field, such as the creative industries, agglomerate to leverage local knowledge, resources, and networks. Clusters are often characterized by collaboration and competition among firms that drive productivity and innovation (Porter, 1990). While districts and quarters may have broader cultural or geographic meanings, clusters are primarily understood in terms of economic interdependencies and knowledge spillovers (Lazzaro, 2022).

Also, Cultural and Creative Districts involve a diverse array of actors and economic activities that evolve throughout their development, from individual artists and small-scale cultural producers to large institutions and businesses, each playing a crucial role in shaping the district's cultural and economic landscape. A common term used in this context is "Cultural vibrancy", which refers to the dynamic energy and activity within a cultural or creative district, often characterized by the presence of artistic expression, diverse cultural offerings, and strong community engagement. It is a key indicator of a district's ability to attract and sustain creative industries, visitors, and local participation, contributing to its economic and social vitality (Evans, 2009). Cultural vibrancy often arises from a combination of diverse cultural activities, public events, and the active participation of both local artists and the community, enhancing the district's identity and appeal. Brooks and Kushner (2001) highlight the role of institutions like museums, theaters, galleries, creative enterprises, real estate investors, and local entrepreneurs in this ecosystem, while Zukin and Braslow (2011) emphasize the centrality of individual artists and cultural workers in initiating small-scale ventures that shape the district's identity. Larger institutions, as noted by Richards (1999), drive cultural tourism and stimulate local economies, while Florida (2002) emphasizes the importance of public-private partnerships in providing infrastructure and investment. In districts like Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, artisanal industries form the foundation of early economic activity, which later diversifies into broader creative sectors (De Propriis & Lazzarotti, 2009). Together, these actors and activities create an ecosystem where cultural innovation and economic development are mutually reinforced. These districts are designed to harness local cultural and creative capital, which includes physical infrastructure, human skills, social networks, and cultural goods, to foster innovation, attract investment, and enhance community cohesion. In this context, the governance of these districts involves interventions in the creation, management, and reuse of existing resources, ensuring that both public and private stakeholders contribute to their sustainability and growth (Le Blanc, 2010; Markusen & Gadwa, 2010)

In sum, different authors provide key concepts for this agglomeration phenomenon present in urban development, involving the interaction between a diverse set of actors and economic activities, reflecting the growing recognition of culture and creativity as drivers of socio-economic revitalization. However, these differences among definitions and terminologies are not going to be the object of this thesis, and while there is some complexity and ambiguity surrounding the theme, this study will refer to the phenomenon as Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs) to ensure consistency whenever it's referenced in the next sections.

2.1.2. Governance Models

The interaction between cultural and economic actors is often mediated by different types of governance models. In the context of Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs), Lazzaro (2022) defines governance as the set of interventions and processes through which stakeholders manage and leverage urban and regional capital for socio-economic impact. Governance involves creating, managing, renovating, and reusing physical, cultural, human, and social resources to support the district's development. Stakeholders—including public entities (e.g., local governments) and private actors (e.g., real estate investors, citizens, associations)—engage in governance based on varying interests and goals, such as efficiency, accountability, sustainability, and quality of life. Governance thus operates at multiple levels, balancing these diverse interests to shape the district's long-term vitality and success (Lazzaro, 2022). Her work provides a framework for understanding these governance models by categorizing them into distinct types based on their core characteristics. The identified types are Cultural vs. Economic Orientation, Planned and Structured vs. Unplanned and Unstructured, Centralized vs. Decentralized, Formal vs. Informal, Bottom-up vs. Top-down (Leadership and Initiative), Private-led vs. Public-led (Sector Leadership).

Cultural vs. Economic Orientation: Culture-centric governance prioritizes cultural values, community engagement, and social cohesion, often focusing on preserving and promoting the cultural identity of the cluster. On the other hand, economic-centric governance emphasizes innovation, competition, and economic growth, often prioritizing public-private partnerships and business development. The distinction between cultural-centric and economic-centric governance is exemplified in the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter and Marseille case studies. De Propriis and Lazzarotti (2009) discuss the shift from

an industrial district with strong cultural underpinnings to an economically driven creative cluster. This transition highlights how economic imperatives like localised trade, raw material availability, and skilled labor shaped governance models focused on productivity and innovation, initially rooted in cultural identity (Lazzaro, 2022). On the cultural side, cities like Lille and Genoa serve as prime examples of districts where cultural strategies are at the forefront. Sacco and Blessi (2007) explain how these cities developed cultural policies that combined tangible and intangible assets with cultural innovation, reflecting a more culture-centric governance approach (Lazzaro, 2022).

Planned and Structured vs. Unplanned and Unstructured: planned governance involves deliberate strategies and formal structures to guide development. In contrast, natural governance emerges organically without predefined plans, relying on informal networks and grassroots initiatives. Zukin and Braslow (2011) provide an example of unplanned governance in New York's creative districts, where initial development occurred naturally, driven by artists' settlements in affordable neighborhoods. Over time, these areas underwent gentrification, but the early stages were marked by a lack of explicit public support or formal planning (Lazzaro, 2022). On the opposite side, the regeneration projects in Birmingham and Marseille as studied by Andres and Chapain (2013) represent planned governance. These districts were subject to structured interventions driven by public policy initiatives aimed at economic revitalization, showcasing a deliberate approach to governance (Lazzaro, 2022).

Centralized vs. Decentralized: centralization refers to the concentration of decision-making power within a single entity or a small group versus a decentralized approach involving multiple stakeholders. Centralized governance can streamline decision-making and provide clear direction, but it may also limit community participation and innovation. Decentralized governance allows for broader stakeholder involvement and flexibility, fostering a collaborative environment. The creative city framework discussed by Andres and Chapain (2013) in Birmingham and Marseille involves a centralized governance model where key decision-making powers were vested in national and EU-supported entities. This centralization allowed for coordinated efforts in economic regeneration and cultural planning. In contrast, the decentralized model seen in Liberty Village, Toronto, discussed by Catungal et al. (2009), relied heavily on grassroots involvement and non-profit development

agencies, empowering local stakeholders to influence the direction of the district's growth (Lazzaro, 2022).

Formal vs. Informal: formal governance includes official policies, regulations, and defined roles for stakeholders, often seen in structured partnerships and collaborations with governmental bodies. Informal governance relies on personal relationships and informal agreements, which can be more adaptable but may lack the stability and accountability of formal structures. Formal governance models are highlighted in Della Lucia and Trunfio's (2018) case studies of cultural regeneration in Naples, where private actors co-created formal governance structures around heritage preservation and creative tourism. This formal structure enabled community engagement through organized public-private partnerships (Lazzaro, 2022). Informal governance, in contrast, is evident in Zukin and Braslow's (2011) analysis of New York's creative districts, where informal networks and personal relationships initially guided development before formal structures emerged (Lazzaro, 2022).

Bottom-up vs. Top-down (Leadership and Initiative): Bottom-up governance is driven by grassroots initiatives and community involvement, empowering local stakeholders to shape the cluster's development. Top-down governance, guided by higher-level authorities or organizations, can provide resources and strategic direction but may risk overlooking local needs and perspectives. The top-down model is evident in Genoa and Lille, where cultural regeneration was driven by structured public policies and European Union funding, as Sacco and Blessi (2007) explain. These cities implemented top-down strategies involving large-scale, well-funded events, such as European Capitals of Culture initiatives, to rebrand and regenerate urban spaces (Lazzaro, 2022). On the other hand, bottom-up governance is reflected in Recife, Brazil, and Den Bosch, the Netherlands, where creative clusters developed through grassroots cultural initiatives that were initially informal, later evolving into more formalized structures (Lazzaro, 2022).

Private-led vs. Public-led (Sector Leadership): private-led models are dominated by private sector initiatives and investments, often focusing on commercial viability and market-driven strategies. Public-led governance is driven by public sector policies and funding, prioritizing public interest and community benefits. The role of private sector leadership is illustrated by the Liberty Village example in Toronto, where private actors,

particularly property management firms and real estate investors, played a central role in the district's transformation into a creative hub (Catungal et al., 2009)(Lazzaro, 2022). Conversely, public-led governance is evident in the South-East Cultural District in Sicily, studied by Le Blanc (2010), where public sector policies aimed at leveraging cultural heritage for regional development led the initiative (Lazzaro, 2022).

These diverse governance models demonstrate how the specific characteristics of each type—whether cultural or economic, formal or informal—are shaped by the unique needs and circumstances of the districts they serve and understanding them can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of cultural and creative districts. Each model offers unique advantages and challenges, and their effectiveness depends on the district's specific context. However, these different types of governance models were identified in Lazzaro's work, and future studies would be needed to better understand their underlying impacts through a comprehensive literature review on the topic, and how their application play out in the development of cultural and creative clusters, which will not be the objective of this thesis. In the present study, the interest will be only towards identifying the governance models present through each life-cycle phase of a specific case study and verify if the evolution in this specific case matches the taxonomy proposed by Lazzaro 2022, which is better explained in next sections.

2.1.3. Performance Indicators

Different types of governance models within Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs) are associated with varying types of performance indicators, reflecting the unique priorities and structures of each governance model. For cultural-centric governance, performance indicators often emphasize social and cultural vibrancy, including community engagement and cultural participation. For instance, Jackson et al. (2006) introduces the concept of "cultural vitality," which measures the presence of arts organizations, participation in cultural activities, and the strength of support systems for these activities. This indicator is particularly relevant in districts where preserving cultural identity and fostering community engagement are priorities. Sacco and Blessi (2007) apply similar measures in their analysis of European Capitals of Culture, focusing on how these initiatives foster local socio-cultural development through participation and cultural inclusion (Lazzaro, 2022)(Lazzaro, 2022).

In contrast, economic-centric governance models rely on economic performance indicators such as job creation, innovation, and market competitiveness. De Propris and Lazzarotti (2009) examine how the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter transitioned from an industrial district to a creative cluster, emphasizing metrics like the number of firms, employment levels, and value added to the local economy. These economic indicators reflect the district's ability to foster economic growth and innovation, particularly through clusters of small, specialized firms that enhance productivity through local cooperation and competition. The work of Evans (2005) further highlights how the economic performance of creative clusters can be assessed through their contribution to urban regeneration, where indicators such as increased investment, job creation, and tourism attraction are used to measure the district's broader impact on the local economy (Lazzaro, 2022).

For formal governance models, particularly those led by public sector interventions, performance indicators often focus on sustainability and accountability. The South-East Cultural District in Sicily, as studied by Le Blanc (2010), provides an example of how public-led governance evaluates the long-term impact of cultural investment through indicators like infrastructure development, heritage preservation, and the attraction of external funding. These metrics ensure that public policies are not only fostering short-term growth but are also laying the groundwork for sustainable development. In similar cases, like Genoa and Lille during their tenure as European Capitals of Culture, performance indicators were used to measure the effectiveness of public policies in increasing place attractiveness and competitiveness through cultural investments (Sacco & Blessi, 2007; Lazzaro, 2022).

In informal governance structures, where personal relationships and grassroots initiatives dominate, performance indicators are more challenging to formalize but often include qualitative assessments of community cohesion, creativity, and social inclusion. Zukin and Braslow (2011) describe how informal creative clusters in New York were initially evaluated based on their ability to foster creative expression and artistic innovation in underserved areas. However, as these districts matured and became gentrified, displacement and loss of community were critical indicators of declining social sustainability, reflecting the tension between creative vibrancy and economic pressures (Lazzaro, 2022).

Finally, public-private partnerships in governance models combine both cultural and economic indicators to capture the multidimensional impact of creative clusters. Andres and Chapain (2013) describe how Birmingham and Marseille evaluated their creative districts through a mix of cultural participation, job creation, and investment levels, providing a comprehensive view of performance that aligns with both economic and cultural objectives. This hybrid model of governance seeks to balance the need for economic growth with the preservation of local culture, ensuring that performance metrics reflect both market-driven outcomes and community well-being (Lazzaro, 2022).

However, this study will not focus on those indicators identified by Lazzaro, but rather propose social capital as an indicator and suggest how it could evolve through the CCD development while observing its dynamics with different actors, types of economic activities, and governance models. Social capital, as defined by Putnam (2000), which comprises networks, norms, and trust that facilitate collective action, can be an appropriate performance indicator in CCDs. When applied across different governance models and lifecycle phases, social capital provides a multidimensional lens through which the effectiveness of governance can be evaluated, particularly in fostering community cohesion, cultural vibrancy, and economic innovation. Its concepts and underlying meaning in the context of Cultural and Creative District is described in the next section.

2.1.4. Social Capital

In his seminal work “Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community”, Robert Putnam explores the concept of social capital, which he defines as the "features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). Putnam's analysis reveals a decline in social capital in the United States over the latter half of the 20th century, which he argues has significant implications for both individual and societal well-being (Putnam, 2000, p. 25).

Putnam identifies two main dimensions of social capital: bonding and bridging. Bonding social capital refers to the connections within a homogenous group. It is inward-looking and tends to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneous groups (Putnam, 2000,

p. 22). Bonding capital is often associated with strong ties, such as those found among family members or close friends, and it provides crucial emotional and substantive support. However, Putnam warns that an over-reliance on bonding capital can lead to the exclusion of outsiders and foster animosity towards those who are different (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). In contrast, bridging social capital is outward-looking and encompasses connections that link people across diverse social groups. Bridging capital is characterized by weaker, more inclusive ties that connect individuals from different backgrounds, thereby facilitating broader identities and reciprocity (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). This form of social capital is crucial for fostering inclusivity and understanding across different social, ethnic, or cultural groups. Putnam emphasizes that bridging social capital is essential in a heterogeneous society, as it helps to build networks that can span social divides and promote social cohesion (Putnam, 2000, p. 24).

The interplay between bonding and bridging social capital is vital for a healthy society. While bonding capital provides the necessary support and cohesion within groups, bridging capital enables cross-group interactions and collaborations that are essential for societal progress and innovation. For instance, a community with strong bonding capital but weak bridging capital may struggle with integration and innovation, whereas a community with strong bridging capital may excel in these areas but lack the internal support systems provided by bonding capital. In another example, a neighborhood association could strengthen bonding capital by organizing events that bring together residents with shared interests or backgrounds, thereby reinforcing trust and cooperation within the group. Simultaneously, the association could cultivate bridging capital by reaching out to diverse community groups, fostering partnerships, and creating platforms for dialogue and collaboration across different sectors of the community. This dual approach can help to create a more cohesive and resilient community that is better equipped to address common challenges (Putnam, 2000, p. 25).

Additionally, the concepts of social networks, trust and reciprocity, and belonging, are central to understanding how bonding and bridging social capital manifest in different community settings. Social networks serve as the foundation upon which both bonding and bridging social capital are built. According to Putnam (2000), bonding social capital thrives in tightly knit, homogenous networks, where members share a high degree of commonality,

such as familial ties or close friendships. These networks tend to reinforce exclusive identities and solidarity within the group. By contrast, bridging social capital emerges from more diverse and loosely connected networks, which link individuals across different social strata or community sectors. Trust and reciprocity are also closely tied to the formation of bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital typically entails higher levels of trust among group members due to shared backgrounds, values, or experiences (Putnam, 2000). This sense of trust is reinforced by reciprocity norms that are often more immediate and reciprocal within close-knit groups. In contrast, bridging social capital involves trust that is more generalized, as it must extend beyond the immediate in-group to include individuals or organizations from different sectors or communities. The concept of belonging is integral to both types of social capital but operates differently within the bonding and bridging frameworks. However, belonging can also relate to bridging social capital when individuals feel connected not only to their immediate circle but to the broader, more diverse community. In a highly integrated cultural district, where different types of businesses and cultural institutions feel a shared sense of belonging, bridging social capital is likely to flourish. This broader sense of belonging, as Putnam (2000) suggests, is crucial for building the kind of inclusive community networks that support democratic engagement and collective well-being.

In the context of a CCD, understanding these dimensions of social capital can help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the district's social fabric, or consider how a community organization could leverage bonding and bridging social capital to enhance community engagement and resilience. Bonding social capital within a creative district can be seen in the close-knit relationships among artists, cultural workers, and residents who share a common identity or cultural background. These strong ties are essential for fostering a supportive environment where individuals feel a sense of belonging and mutual support. For example, in naturally occurring arts districts, the interrelationship of artists and cultural workers often leads to mutual support and forms of self-governance, which are critical for sustaining the community's cultural vibrancy (Hidden Geographies, 2020; Social Capital of Traditional Market Traders, 2023). These bonding ties can help maintain the district's cultural identity and provide a foundation for collective action in addressing local challenges.

On the other hand, bridging social capital is critical for connecting the creative district to the wider city and beyond. Bridging ties facilitates interactions between diverse groups, such as artists and business leaders, local residents and tourists, or cultural institutions and policymakers. These connections can lead to new opportunities for collaboration, innovation, and economic development. For instance, creative placemaking initiatives often leverage bridging social capital to enhance community engagement and participation, drawing on local assets to create inclusive public spaces that attract a diverse audience (The Role of Creative Placemaking, 2022; Bridging and Bonding: Social Capital in the Music Festival Experience, 2023). By fostering these cross-group interactions, creative districts can become hubs of cultural exchange and innovation, contributing to the broader urban development goals.

The case study of the Fashion Triangle of Madrid offers a nuanced exploration of how social capital, particularly its bonding and bridging dimensions, plays a pivotal role in the area's adaptability to external shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. Within the Triangle, bonding social capital is evident in the strong internal ties among local businesses, which have historically relied on these connections for mutual support and identity reinforcement. This internal cohesion was crucial during the pandemic, as it facilitated information sharing and collective action among the businesses, allowing them to navigate the crisis more effectively. The association of businesses within the Triangle acted as a key agent in fostering this bonding capital, providing a platform for businesses to unite and present a collective front in negotiations with local authorities (Mecha-López & Vicente Salar, 2024).

On the other hand, bridging social capital is characterized by the Triangle's connections with external partners and institutions, which have been instrumental in enhancing its resilience and adaptability. The association's engagement with entities such as the Association of Fashion and Apparel Companies of the Community of Madrid (ASECOM) and the Directorate General of Commerce and Consumption in Madrid exemplifies the development of bridging capital. These external connections have allowed the Triangle to access new resources, knowledge, and markets, thereby facilitating broader interactions and collaborations beyond the immediate community. This dual approach of leveraging both bonding and bridging social capital has been crucial in maintaining the Triangle's economic vitality and cultural identity, even as it faces the challenges posed by a

rapidly changing economic landscape and external shocks (Mecha-López & Vicente Salar, 2024).

Overall, the application of bonding and bridging social capital in the context of cultural and creative districts highlights the importance of both internal cohesion and external connectivity in fostering vibrant and sustainable urban environments. To analyze these concepts in a case study about a specific creative district, it is important to examine the balance and interplay between bonding and bridging social capital. For example, a district with strong bonding capital but limited bridging capital may excel in preserving its cultural heritage but struggle to attract external investment or new audiences. Conversely, a district with strong bridging capital may successfully integrate into the global cultural economy but risk losing its unique local character (Social Capital in Knowledge Management Systems, 2023). In the next section, the dynamics of bonding and bridging social capital will be better understood in the context of various CCDs, showing how they play a role in a Cultural and Creative District from its emergence to maturity.

2.2. A taxonomy proposed for Cultural and Creative Districts

Lazzaro (2022) offers a taxonomy of Cultural and Creative Districts applied to a combination of examples of analysis of case studies taken from the literature in the last fifteen years. For each case study, Lazzaro provides the main perspective of the creative district, dismembering the analysis in three main axes: Life-cycle phases, Performance and Monitoring Indicators, and Governance and administration models. It is underlined that these three dimensions relate and influence one another, that is, a certain development stage presents several common features, as is associated with certain types of governance and actor coordination modes which are “typical”.

Regarding lifecycle phases, the author describes the historical evolution of a district from its start, going through growth up to its stage of maturity. In essence, the emergence stage of a creative district embodies a period of experimentation, risk, and passion of visionary individuals, laying the foundation for the rich cultural environment that will be developed in subsequent stages. The growth stage embodies a phase of dynamic expansion

and collaboration within a cultural/creative cluster. Finally, the maturity stage signifies a phase of cultural richness and stability within a cultural/creative cluster.

The phases of emergence, growth, and maturity each tend to align with specific governance types that enable districts to respond to changing needs and opportunities. It illustrates an evolution in governance, from unplanned and decentralized models in the emergence phase to more structured, hybrid forms in the growth phase, and finally to centralized and formal governance in the maturity phase. Each phase requires a different governance approach to balance creativity, economic development, and community needs, as seen in the cases of New York, Liberty Village, Birmingham, Marseille, Genoa, and Lille.

Performance indicators in CCDs vary according to the governance model in place, with cultural-centric governance prioritizing cultural vitality, economic-centric governance focusing on job creation and innovation, and public-private partnerships combining both economic and social measures. In the present study, we will look at social capital because it can serve as a powerful mechanism for evaluating community performance across different lifecycle phases and governance models. In the emergence phase, bonding capital is essential for cultural cohesion and identity formation. In the growth phase, bridging capital becomes critical for fostering economic partnerships and innovation. Finally, in the maturity phase, a balance of both forms of social capital ensures that districts can maintain their cultural integrity while continuing to integrate into the broader economy. These dynamics are evident in case studies from New York, Birmingham, Marseille, Genoa, and Lille, demonstrating that social capital can be a valuable performance indicator in CCDs. It is also worth noting that a misalignment between governance models and social capital approaches in the various stages of a Cultural and Creative District's (CCD) lifecycle can negatively impact its performance, affecting the district's capacity for growth, innovation, and long-term sustainability.

Details of how these dimensions play out in each phase are offered in the next sections. Following this framework, it can be applied for the sake of analysis of other creative clusters “as well as to support design and monitoring of creative clusters through their different life-cycle phases and more or less explicit, simple versus complex performance and monitoring indicators” (Lazzaro 2022).

2.2.1. Emergence

In the emergence stage of Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs), the actors and types of economic activities are typically characterized by pioneering entrepreneurs, artists, and small-scale creative initiatives. These early actors are visionary individuals who take significant risks to establish their presence in the district, driven by a shared commitment to cultural expression and experimentation. These actors tend to have a strong sense of community and often rely on informal networks and close-knit relationships, which are essential for fostering the bonding social capital that sustains their early efforts (Putnam, 2000). The economic activities in this stage are often experimental and unstructured, including independent art studios, galleries, and other ventures that prioritize creativity over commercial success (Lazzaro, 2022).

In naturally occurring creative districts, the focus of economic activity in the emergence phase is less on profitability and more on cultivating an environment where creative risks can be taken, and innovation can flourish. Zukin and Braslow (2011) describe how, in New York's early creative districts, artists and cultural workers initiated small-scale ventures that emphasized artistic freedom, often operating in repurposed industrial spaces. These activities, though not always economically viable in the traditional sense, were vital in shaping the cultural identity of the district and laying the groundwork for future development. The presence of such pioneering figures and their experimental activities is key to the organic growth of CCDs in this early stage (Lazzaro, 2022).

Another illustrative case is Liberty Village in Toronto, as discussed by Catungal et al. (2009). In the district's early emergence phase, the main actors were a small group of artists and creative professionals who repurposed underutilized industrial spaces to create studios, galleries, and informal cultural hubs. These economic activities were driven by the desire to create a collaborative and innovative environment, rather than by immediate financial returns. The close-knit relationships among these actors fostered a sense of community and mutual support, further reinforcing the district's cultural identity and creativity. However, as the district began to grow, external pressures such as gentrification challenged the sustainability of these early initiatives (Lazzaro, 2022).

The emergence stage of the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham also provides insight into how early economic activities and actors shape a district's initial development. De Propris and Lazzeretti (2009) explain that in its early stages, the district was primarily driven by small-scale manufacturers and craft-based artisans who specialized in jewelry production. These actors operated independently but were connected through a shared cultural and economic heritage, which fostered collaboration and mutual support. The economic activities at this stage were largely focused on craftsmanship and artisanal production, reflecting the district's cultural roots and emphasizing the creation of high-quality, locally made goods. This focus on craftsmanship and small-scale production would later serve as a foundation for the district's evolution into a broader creative cluster (Lazzaro, 2022).

In each of these cases, the actors and economic activities present in the emergence stage were likely essential in defining the cultural and creative identity of the districts. The early, experimental nature of these activities, coupled with the strong sense of community among pioneering actors, enabled these districts to establish themselves as cultural hubs, setting the stage for future growth and development.

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At this stage, governance is typically unplanned, informal, and decentralized. Districts often evolve organically, driven by grassroots initiatives and community-based efforts. Zukin and Braslow (2011) discuss how New York's creative districts initially emerged through the informal and unplanned activities of artists, who settled in affordable areas without the guidance of structured public policy. Similarly, Catungal et al. (2009) describe how Liberty Village in Toronto became a creative hub largely due to artists and creative professionals moving into underused spaces. This decentralized, bottom-up approach fosters local ownership and allows for creative experimentation, which is vital for the formation of a district's identity (Lazzaro, 2022).

Therefore, this suggests that social capital in the emergence stage leans heavily towards bonding. In the emergence phase of a CCD, bonding social capital tends to dominate, as districts are often formed around close-knit groups of artists, entrepreneurs and cultural workers who share common values and interests, forming strong interpersonal ties.

These strong ties provide emotional and social support, enabling the organic growth of the district (Putnam, 2000). Zukin and Braslow (2011) illustrate this in New York's creative districts, where the early stages of development were driven by the strong networks within the artistic community. In governance models that are informal or decentralized, bonding capital plays a role in facilitating collective action without the need for formal structures, enabling the district to establish its cultural identity and begin attracting broader attention (Lazzaro, 2022; Putnam, 2000).

On the other hand, a misalignment in the emergence phase can happen if a more centralized or formal governance structure is imposed prematurely, as it risks stifling grassroots initiatives, undermining the organic growth of the district and alienating key actors who thrive on informal networks and personal relationships (Zukin & Braslow, 2011). This can result in a lack of local engagement and creative expression, weakening the district's ability to establish a strong cultural identity (Lazzaro, 2022). Liberty Village in Toronto offers an example of misalignment, as described by Catungal et al. (2009). Initially, Liberty Village grew organically with a strong reliance on bonding social capital among artists and creative professionals. The district thrived on informal, decentralized governance and close-knit community ties, which fostered mutual support and cultural vibrancy. However, as the district started to gain external attention, real estate pressures led to rapid gentrification. This introduced a more formalized, economic-driven governance structure without fully considering the district's organic, grassroots development. The premature shift towards economic rationales alienated local artists, weakened the community's social fabric, and ultimately displaced many original residents. This misalignment of governance structures during the emergence phase hindered the district's ability to sustain its cultural identity and creative character (Lazzaro, 2022).

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Yet, developmental challenges typically revolve around financial constraints, securing infrastructure, gaining external recognition, and attracting wider audiences. These challenges stem from the informal and often under-resourced nature of early creative ventures, where actors rely on bonding social capital and grassroots support but lack the financial backing or formal structures needed for growth. The pioneering artists and entrepreneurs who drive

these early initiatives often face difficulty in sustaining their creative endeavors due to limited funding and access to infrastructure, such as affordable studio spaces or galleries (Zukin & Braslow, 2011).

Additionally, the absence of formalized governance structures can negatively impact the district's ability to attract external support or broader attention from investors, policymakers, or the general public (Lazzaro, 2022). A clear example of these challenges is evident in New York's early creative districts, where artists repurposed abandoned industrial spaces but struggled with financial instability and the threat of displacement due to rising property values (Zukin & Braslow, 2011). Similarly, in Liberty Village, Toronto, the lack of formal infrastructure and public support made it difficult for early creative professionals to sustain their projects. While the district was initially driven by a strong sense of community, the lack of external recognition and financial support meant that many early actors faced significant challenges in maintaining their cultural activities as the area began to gentrify (Catungal et al., 2009). In Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, the early artisanal manufacturers faced challenges in maintaining their small-scale production in a rapidly industrializing economy. The need for better infrastructure and formalized governance became apparent as the district grew, but the lack of external investment and support in the early stages made it difficult for local artisans to scale their operations or attract new talent and customers (De Propriis & Lazzarotti, 2009). In each case, the common challenges of limited financial resources, infrastructure, and external recognition presented significant obstacles to the early development of these districts (Lazzaro, 2022).

Finally, resilience and adaptability are needed for overcoming the challenges of financial constraints, infrastructure deficits, and limited external recognition. The presence of pioneering artists and entrepreneurs, often working within decentralized and informal governance structures, allows for flexibility and grassroots problem-solving. Bonding social capital, which is rooted in strong, supportive relationships within the community, helps sustain creative ventures and fosters a collective sense of purpose and mutual aid. This network of support often compensates for the lack of formal governance and resources, enabling the district to continue evolving in the face of adversity (Putnam, 2000).

In Liberty Village, Toronto, for instance, the district's early resilience was largely due to the strong bonds among local artists and creative professionals. Catungal et al. (2009) describe how the informal networks and collaborative spirit within the community helped sustain creative activities despite limited financial resources and external recognition. By pooling resources and relying on each other for support, the district's actors were able to adapt to changes in the local economy and the growing pressures of gentrification. This adaptive approach allowed the community to retain its cultural vibrancy for a time, despite the lack of formal infrastructure or public investment (Lazzaro, 2022).

Similarly, in New York's early creative districts, the resilience of the artistic community was fostered through flexible, decentralized governance structures and strong social ties. Zukin and Braslow (2011) highlight how artists repurposed abandoned industrial spaces and formed informal governance systems based on mutual trust and shared cultural values. These informal structures allowed for a high degree of adaptability, as artists could quickly respond to changing conditions, such as rising rents or evolving artistic trends, without the constraints of formalized systems. Social capital, in this context, provided the necessary cohesion for collective action, helping the district's actors withstand external pressures (Lazzaro, 2022).

In Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, the combination of artisanal actors, informal governance, and bonding social capital enabled the district to remain resilient during periods of economic transformation. De Propriis and Lazzarotti (2009) note that while the district faced challenges from industrialization and modernization, the strong sense of community among artisans and their willingness to collaborate and share resources helped them maintain their craft-based economy. The informal networks of support provided by the artisans allowed the district to adapt to external economic shifts while preserving its cultural identity (Lazzaro, 2022).

In all these cases, resilience and adaptability are not driven by formal governance or large-scale investment but by the flexibility and resourcefulness of the actors involved. Their reliance on bonding social capital and decentralized, informal governance structures enable them to address challenges creatively, ensuring the district's continued growth and evolution in its early stages.

2.2.2. Growth

The actors in the growth stage typically include both public and private stakeholders, such as local governments, private investors, real estate developers, cultural organizations, and community groups. These actors collaborate through public-private partnerships and other institutional collaborations to foster economic growth and cultural development (Andres & Chapain, 2013). Economic activities often revolve around the development and expansion of creative industries, which include sectors such as new media, advertising, film, television, and design. These industries attract creative professionals and investors, leading to site redevelopment and an influx of creative talent. The growth stage is also marked by the enhancement of lifestyle amenities and branding efforts, which further attract investment and creative professionals to the area (Catungal et al., 2009). For instance, Liberty Village in Toronto, Canada, experienced a rise in the dotcom industry and creative sectors such as media and design, which attracted investors and creative professionals. This led to the redevelopment of the area and improved access to lifestyle amenities, making it a vibrant hub for creative activities (Catungal et al., 2009). Similarly, the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham, UK, transitioned from an industrial district to an urban creative district, driven by factors such as technological change, skilled labor, and local trade (De Propriis & Lazzarotti, 2009).

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As the district enters the growth phase, the governance model typically shifts towards a more structured and formal approach, adapting to the heightened complexity of the district. This phase requires coordination among diverse stakeholders, including public and private actors, as the district expands its economic and social influence. Andres and Chapain (2013) illustrate this transition in Birmingham and Marseille, where the creative clusters evolved from grassroots initiatives into more formalized structures supported by public-private partnerships. These partnerships, driven by local governments and EU financial support, allowed for a mix of bottom-up creativity with top-down strategic planning, creating a hybrid governance model. As the district attracts investment and attention, formal governance structures ensure that growth is sustainable and aligned with broader regional development goals (Lazzaro, 2022). Collaborations with local authorities, cultural institutions, and public-

private partnerships have become more prevalent, providing a framework for sustainable growth (Lazzaro, 2022). The governance of the cluster evolves to strike a balance between maintaining its creative essence and navigating the intricacies of a more mature ecosystem.

Here, while bonding social capital remains important for internal cohesion, there is an increased emphasis on bridging social capital, which facilitates connections between diverse groups, such as artists, businesses, policymakers, and external investors, enabling the district to expand its influence and integrate into the broader economy (Putnam, 2000). For instance, Andres and Chapain's (2013) study of Birmingham and Marseille shows how public-private partnerships can leverage bridging social capital to connect local creative communities with economic opportunities, fostering both cultural vibrancy and economic growth. In this phase, governance models often become more structured, and formal performance indicators such as collaboration between local stakeholders and external investors can be assessed through the strength of bridging capital (Evans, 2005). The district has become a hub for cross-sectoral collaborations, knowledge exchange, and networking beyond its immediate boundaries (Spinuzzi, 2012). The social fabric of the cluster extends beyond close-knit relationships to include a broader network that fosters opportunities and external linkages.

A misalignment might happen in the growth phase if governance remains too informal or community-based at this stage, without transitioning to more formal structures and partnerships, the district may struggle to scale its activities, integrate into broader economic systems, or compete with other regions. As seen in the cases of Birmingham and Marseille, public-private partnerships and formal governance structures played a detrimental role in harnessing both local and external resources to support the district's expansion (Andres & Chapain, 2013). A failure to adapt the governance model and social capital approach to this phase can result in missed opportunities for economic diversification and sustainability (Lazzaro, 2022). The Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham offers an illustrative example of how governance misalignment can impact a district's expansion. According to De Propris and Lazeretti (2009), the district faced difficulties transitioning from a local, industrial cluster to a broader creative district. The governance model remained somewhat fragmented and overly reliant on the established industrial structures, which were more aligned with the earlier stages of development. This governance model failed to adequately integrate bridging

social capital—necessary for building external partnerships and fostering innovation—at a critical juncture. Consequently, the Jewellery Quarter struggled to attract new creative enterprises and external investment, limiting its ability to fully capitalize on the potential for economic diversification and growth (Lazzaro, 2022).

CHALLENGES, RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY

In the growth stage of CCDs, several common challenges arise as the district evolves from a grassroots initiative to a more formalized and economically diversified area. One of the key challenges during this phase is balancing the needs of established cultural and creative enterprises with the influx of new actors and ventures. As the district attracts more attention and investment, the growing number of stakeholders introduces complexities in governance and coordination. This requires the transition from informal, community-based governance models to more structured, formalized systems that can effectively manage the competing interests of residents, new businesses, and external investors (Andres & Chapain, 2013). The tension between maintaining the district's original cultural identity and embracing economic growth often leads to conflicts over the direction of the district's development, as seen in several case studies where the original community can feel sidelined or alienated during this phase (Lazzaro, 2022).

Infrastructure also becomes a critical challenge in the growth stage, as the district must now support an expanded range of economic activities. Initially, CCDs are often developed in underutilized or abandoned spaces, which offer low-cost opportunities for experimentation and artistic expression. However, as the district grows, the demand for more sophisticated infrastructure—such as upgraded buildings, transportation links, and cultural venues—increases. The need to develop infrastructure without displacing or gentrifying the original community is a recurring issue in many CCDs (Zukin & Braslow, 2011). For example, in the Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham, the district struggled to balance its heritage-based artisanal roots with the demands for modernization and new facilities as more creative industries moved into the area (De Propriis & Lazzarotti, 2009). The challenge lay in preserving the district's cultural and historical significance while simultaneously accommodating new businesses and visitors (Lazzaro, 2022).

Another significant challenge during the growth stage is the risk of over-commercialization, which can dilute the district's creative and cultural appeal. As noted by Sacco and Blessi (2007), in their analysis of European Capitals of Culture, districts that achieve significant external visibility often attract commercial interests that prioritize profit over cultural sustainability. This can lead to a shift in focus from creative experimentation to commercially viable activities, which can erode the district's cultural identity. In Lille, for instance, the influx of external investment and commercialization during its tenure as a European Capital of Culture posed the challenge of maintaining a balance between cultural heritage and economic growth. While commercialization brought financial benefits, it also introduced tensions between the local cultural community and external stakeholders, raising concerns about the long-term cultural sustainability of the district (Lazzaro, 2022).

Finally, maintaining social cohesion and community engagement in the growth stage is another challenge, as the district's expansion often leads to the inclusion of a broader range of actors, including businesses and policymakers with diverse agendas. The growth phase requires a shift from bonding social capital, which emphasizes close-knit community ties, to bridging social capital, which fosters connections between different groups and sectors (Putnam, 2000). However, this transition can be difficult to manage, especially if the original community feels that its interests are being overshadowed by new entrants. In Liberty Village, Toronto, for example, the district's rapid growth led to increased property values and gentrification, which in turn displaced many of the original creative professionals and residents. The district's growth challenged its ability to maintain the strong community bonds that had characterized its earlier stages (Catungal et al., 2009; Lazzaro, 2022).

Overall, the growth stage of CCDs presents numerous challenges, including balancing cultural identity with economic development, upgrading infrastructure without displacing original residents, managing commercialization pressures, and maintaining social cohesion. These challenges require careful governance and strategic planning to ensure that the district's cultural and creative vitality is sustained through its expansion.

RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY

In this stage, resilience and adaptability rely on the combination of formal governance structures, public-private partnerships, and the transition from bonding to bridging social capital. Governance shifts from decentralized, informal systems to more structured and collaborative frameworks that can effectively manage the growing complexity of the district. Public and private actors, including local authorities, creative professionals, and external investors, collaborate to balance the needs of cultural preservation with economic development. For example, in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, local artisans worked with public authorities to modernize infrastructure while preserving the district's cultural heritage, demonstrating how governance and social capital intersect to drive adaptability (De Propriis & Lazzarotti, 2009; Lazzaro, 2022). Bridging social capital fosters connections between local communities and external stakeholders, helping the district to expand without losing its cultural identity. In districts like Lille and Liberty Village, public-private partnerships and inclusive governance models ensured that local voices were integrated into decision-making processes, allowing the district to adapt to commercialization and gentrification pressures (Catungal et al., 2009; Lazzaro, 2022; Sacco & Blessi, 2007).

In sum, resilience and adaptability in the growth stage are shaped by a shift toward formalized governance structures and the strategic integration of bridging social capital. Unlike in the emergence stage, where informal networks and bonding social capital dominate, the growth stage requires a balance between maintaining the district's cultural identity and embracing new economic opportunities. This adaptability is driven by public-private partnerships, more structured governance models, and the district's ability to form connections with external stakeholders. By leveraging these formalized structures and expanding social networks beyond the local community, districts can address challenges such as commercialization pressures and infrastructure needs, ensuring continued growth while preserving their core cultural values.

2.2.3. Maturity

At this stage, legacy businesses, large cultural institutions, and established creative enterprises play a prominent role, while new entrants, such as emerging creative professionals, continue to infuse the district with fresh ideas and innovation. The actor landscape becomes more complex as these established entities coexist with newer ones, creating a balance between tradition and innovation (Lazzaro, 2022). Cultural institutions such as museums, galleries, and theaters often anchor in the district, serving as hubs for both local cultural production and international cultural exchange. This mixture of actors enables the district to leverage its cultural heritage while continuing to attract investment, tourism, and external partnerships (Richards, 1999).

The economic activities present in the maturity stage are diverse and span multiple sectors, often reflecting a balance between traditional cultural production and more commercially oriented creative industries. In districts such as Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, the presence of established artisanal businesses, which maintain the district's historical significance in jewelry production, coexist with more modern creative industries like design, media, and retail (De Propris & Lazzeretti, 2009). This diversification of economic activities allows the district to generate income from both local craftsmanship and global creative industries, ensuring economic resilience and sustainability. The coexistence of heritage-driven artisanal production and new creative enterprises demonstrates how mature districts can maintain their cultural identity while expanding their economic base through innovative industries.

In addition, public-private partnerships continue to play a crucial role in the maturity stage, helping to sustain economic activities and governance structures. Sacco and Blessi (2007) highlight the example of Genoa, which during its tenure as a European Capital of Culture, successfully integrated large-scale public events with private sector investments in tourism, hospitality, and cultural infrastructure. In mature districts, economic activities often extend beyond cultural production to include sectors such as hospitality, real estate, and retail, which benefit from the district's established reputation and cultural value. This diversification of activities allows the district to remain competitive in the global cultural

economy, attracting both tourists and investors while maintaining its role as a cultural and creative center.

In sum, the types of actors and economic activities tend to become more stable and diversified, reflecting the district's evolution into a well-established cultural and economic hub. It includes a mix of legacy businesses, large cultural institutions, and newer creative professionals, while economic activities range from traditional cultural production to more commercially driven creative industries.

GOVERNANCE MODELS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

To deal with this complexity, governance becomes predominantly centralized, formal, structured, and often public-led. Collaborations with external entities, local authorities, and public institutions become integral to managing the complexity of the cluster. As districts mature, they require structured management and the involvement of higher-level authorities to maintain momentum and address challenges such as gentrification and social inclusion. The European Capitals of Culture initiatives in cities like Genoa and Lille exemplify this model, where governance is highly centralized, led by public authorities with a focus on large-scale events and infrastructure projects to sustain the district's cultural and economic vibrancy (Sacco & Blessi, 2007). Cultural policies, strategic planning, and public-private partnerships play a pivotal role in sustaining the cultural/creative ecosystem (Lazzaro, 2022). In this phase, governance is often top-down, with decision-making concentrated in public bodies that ensure long-term sustainability, but there is a risk of diminishing local engagement if governance becomes too hierarchical and disconnected from the grassroots level (Lazzaro, 2022). The governance structures evolve to strike a balance between preserving the cluster's creative essence and addressing the challenges of maturity.

Here, social capital, both bonding and bridging, remains vital, but the balance between the two becomes crucial, especially when the district undergoes a transformative shift towards bridging social capital. This is when the district becomes a focal point for cross-sectoral collaborations, knowledge exchange, and networking beyond its immediate boundaries. The emphasis on external linkages and partnerships becomes crucial for the sustained growth and adaptability of the cluster (Spinuzzi, 2012), and while internal cohesion

remains important, the social fabric extends to include a broader network that enhances the cluster's influence and resilience – which can undermine social cohesion (bonding) if the right incentives are not properly placed. Sacco and Blessi (2007) explain how European Capitals of Culture such as Genoa and Lille have used large-scale public interventions to maintain both strong internal cohesion (bonding capital) and external connections (bridging capital). In more centralized governance models, where decision-making power is concentrated in public institutions, the ability to sustain community involvement and prevent the exclusion of local voices becomes a key indicator of performance. The erosion of social capital—either through the loss of internal cohesion or the weakening of external ties—can lead to challenges such as gentrification or the loss of cultural identity (Lazzaro, 2022; Putnam, 2000).

By the maturity phase, a misalignment can develop if the governance model remains too decentralized or reliant on bonding social capital, and the district risks becoming insular, focusing too narrowly on internal cohesion at the expense of external opportunities. This misalignment can lead to stagnation, as the district may fail to adapt to market changes or attract new talent and investment. The opposite can also happen, where if the governance model focuses too much on bridging social capital, the district risks losing its cultural essence. For example, in Genoa and Lille, the ability to manage tensions between cultural preservation and economic commercialization through formalized governance models was crucial to sustaining performance (Sacco & Blessi, 2007). Without such alignment, CCDs may experience decline as they lose relevance in the global creative economy (Lazzaro, 2022). The European Capital of Culture initiative in Lille demonstrates the risks of failing to balance governance and social capital appropriately. Sacco and Blessi (2007) note that while the formal governance model implemented during Lille's time as a European Capital of Culture was effective in attracting investment and international attention, it also created tensions between local cultural preservation efforts and the commercialization of the city's creative industries. The over-reliance on external partnerships and a strong emphasis on economic outcomes, without sufficient attention to bonding social capital and the needs of local communities, led to a sense of disconnection between residents and the city's cultural institutions. This misalignment threatened the long-term sustainability of the district, as it struggled to maintain its cultural integrity in the face of increasing commercialization (Lazzaro, 2022).

CHALLENGES, RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY

The common challenges at this stage often revolve around balancing cultural preservation with economic growth, ensuring inclusivity, and maintaining the district's long-term sustainability. As districts become more established, the tension between preserving their cultural heritage and capitalizing on economic opportunities becomes more pronounced. Large cultural institutions and legacy businesses play a central role in maintaining the district's cultural identity, but the pressure to commercialize and attract external investment can sometimes undermine the cultural foundations on which the district was built. Sacco and Blessi (2007), in their study of Genoa as a European Capital of Culture, noted that while economic development and tourism brought new opportunities, there was a risk of cultural homogenization and a loss of local distinctiveness as commercialization took hold. This reflects the broader challenge of ensuring that cultural and creative districts do not become commodified spaces that cater primarily to tourists and investors at the expense of local communities and cultural producers (Lazzaro, 2022).

Another major challenge in the maturity stage is managing inclusivity and avoiding the social and economic exclusion of certain groups. As districts mature and become more economically successful, property values often rise, leading to the displacement of lower-income residents and the original creative professionals who were instrumental in establishing the district's cultural identity (Zukin & Braslow, 2011). This process of gentrification can erode the social fabric of the district and result in a loss of diversity, which is crucial for fostering innovation and cultural vibrancy. For example, in New York's creative districts, the influx of capital and rising property values led to the displacement of many artists and cultural workers, which in turn weakened the district's creative ecosystem and social cohesion (Lazzaro, 2022). The challenge, then, is to manage the continued growth of the district in a way that retains its inclusivity and supports the long-term presence of diverse cultural actors.

Furthermore, maintaining sustainability in terms of both governance and economic activities is a significant challenge. In this stage, districts often rely on public-private partnerships and external investment to maintain their infrastructure and economic activities. However, over-reliance on external capital can make the district vulnerable to economic

fluctuations or shifts in cultural trends. In Lille, during its European Capital of Culture year, there was a concern that the district's dependence on large-scale events and external funding might not be sustainable in the long term (Sacco & Blessi, 2007). Governance structures must therefore adapt to ensure that the district's growth is sustainable and that it can withstand economic and cultural shifts without sacrificing its core values and long-term viability (Lazzaro, 2022).

Overall, resilience and adaptability in the maturity stage of CCDs are achieved through the integration of diverse actors, structured governance, and the strategic use of social capital. By maintaining strong local networks while fostering external partnerships, mature districts can address challenges such as gentrification, commercialization, and infrastructure demands, ensuring their continued relevance and cultural vibrancy.

2.3. Lifecycle Matrix of Cultural and Creative Districts

Finally, the conclusion of this literature review offers a new interpretation that adapts Lazzaro's (2022) theoretical framework on the lifecycle of Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs) by introducing additional dimensions in each phase, such as social capital – which can be interpreted as one of the many performance indicators chosen to monitor a district's development -, and “Resilience and Adaptability” – which can be interpreted as how the combination of actors, governance and social capital help to solve the challenges at that stage -, and summarizing the district's evolution in a 6x3 matrix that clearly lays out the defining characteristics of a Cultural and Creative District in its lifecycle phases. This adaptation provides a deeper understanding of how CCDs evolve and interact with these factors over time. While grounded in Lazzaro's taxonomy, the interpretation emphasizes the dynamic interplay between creative initiatives, governance structures, and social capital at each stage of development, offering a more comprehensive perspective on the district's transformation.

In the emergence phase, the economic activities are experimental and driven by risk-taking ventures such as art studios and independent galleries, which reflects Lazzaro's emphasis on the unplanned, grassroots nature of early CCD development. This stage is marked by decentralized governance models, where community-driven efforts and informal

networks are predominant. Social capital, particularly bonding social capital, is crucial at this stage, as it fosters a sense of belonging and mutual support within a close-knit community (Putnam, 2000). The challenges of this phase—such as financial constraints and the need to attract recognition—are echoed in case studies like New York’s creative districts, where artists initially formed strong internal networks to sustain the local culture and create a foundation for growth (Lazzaro, 2022; Zukin & Braslow, 2011). Resilience and adaptability are driven by the flexibility and resourcefulness of local actors, relying on informal governance and bonding social capital.

In the growth phase, economic activities diversify as the district becomes more established, with a mix of new entrants and established actors driving innovation and intensification. This phase sees a shift towards more formalized governance models, often involving collaborations with local authorities and public-private partnerships (Andres & Chapain, 2013). Bridging social capital becomes increasingly important, allowing the district to connect with external entities and foster cross-sectoral collaborations that support broader creative and economic endeavors (Putnam, 2000). In cities like Birmingham and Marseille, the growth phase was characterized by public-private partnerships that leveraged both bonding and bridging social capital to maintain local community cohesion while integrating external investment and expertise (Lazzaro, 2022). Resilience stems from formalized governance structures and public-private partnerships, alongside the shift from bonding to bridging social capital.

By the maturity phase, the district’s economic activities are diverse and stable, with a coexistence of legacy businesses and emerging projects. The governance model becomes fully formalized, involving structured collaborations with external entities, local authorities, and well-established institutions (De Propriis & Lazzarotti, 2009). Bridging social capital is paramount in this phase, as the district needs to maintain external linkages and partnerships while navigating the tension between cultural preservation and commercialization (Sacco & Blessi, 2007). Case studies like Genoa and Lille demonstrate how mature creative districts can strike a balance between maintaining their unique cultural heritage and integrating into the global economy through formalized governance and external partnerships (Lazzaro, 2022). Resilience and adaptability are ensured through structured governance, the integration

of legacy institutions with new actors, and the strategic use of both bonding and bridging social capital.

Two case studies that fit this interpretation well are Birmingham and Genoa. Birmingham's Jewelry Quarter exemplifies the transition from an emergent, grassroots-driven district to a mature cultural hub with a formalized governance structure that balances heritage preservation with economic growth (De Propriis & Lazzeretti, 2009). Similarly, Genoa's experience as a European Capital of Culture illustrates the shift from local community-driven initiatives to a fully formalized governance model that integrates external stakeholders and manages the tensions between tradition and modernization (Sacco & Blessi, 2007). Both cases demonstrate the importance of social capital in sustaining creative districts throughout their lifecycle.

This adapted framework aims to capture the evolution of social capital throughout the lifecycle of a CCD, transitioning from bonding capital in the emergence phase to a reliance on bridging capital in the growth and maturity phases. This evolution supports the district's capacity to address the developmental challenges at each stage—whether that means gaining recognition, balancing the needs of established and emerging actors, or sustaining cultural vibrancy in the face of commercialization. Table 1 synthesizes the adapted framework in a 6x3 matrix. Based on this interpretation, we will analyze the case study of Bombarda, a distinct creative district located in Porto, Portugal, and evaluate if its history matches the Lifecycle Matrix, which will be explored in the next sections.

Table 1: Lifecycle Matrix - adapted from Lazzaro (2022) framework

Characteristics	Stage 1: Emergence	Stage 2: Growth	Stage 3: Maturity
Types of Economic Activities	Experimental and risk-taking ventures, art studios, independent galleries, early creative initiatives.	Diversification and intensification, coexistence of established and emerging ventures, broader creative endeavors.	Diversity, stability, well-established institutions, coexistence of legacy businesses and emerging projects.
Actors	Pioneering entrepreneurs and artists, visionary individuals initiating creative projects.	Mix of pioneers from the emergence stage and new entrants drawn by the cluster's reputation.	Legacy businesses, established artists, continuous influx of emerging talents, complex actor landscape.
Governance Models	Decentralized and community-driven, grassroots initiatives, informal networks.	Adaptation to heightened complexity, more formal structures, collaborations with local authorities and institutions.	Formalized and structured, collaborations with external entities, local authorities, and public-private partnerships.
Social Capital	Bonding social capital, close-knit community support.	Shift towards bridging social capital, cross-sectoral collaborations, networking beyond immediate boundaries.	Transformative shift towards bridging social capital, emphasis on external linkages, and partnerships.
Developmental Challenges	Financial constraints, infrastructure support, gaining recognition, and attracting audiences.	Balancing needs of established and emerging entities, maintaining community, nuanced issues of infrastructure and funding.	Balancing cultural preservation with commercialization, sustainability, inclusivity, addressing tensions between traditional and contemporary forms.
Resilience and Adaptability	Creative problem-solving and collective support, enabling the district to navigate early challenges like financial constraints and lack of infrastructure.	Characterized by the balancing of cultural preservation with economic expansion, addressing challenges like commercialization and infrastructure development.	Directed towards managing commercialization pressures, gentrification, and sustainability, allowing to maintain cultural identity while embracing external opportunities.

3. Methodology

The methodological approach described in this section centers around an in-depth case study of Bombarda, which is going to be referenced in the next sections as Bombarda Creative Quarter (BCQ), or other variations such as Bombarda Creative District, Bombarda Creative Cluster, Bombarda Art's Cluster, or simply Bombarda. This is due to its changing definition over time, and because there is no reference in the literature about how Bombarda should be classified nowadays. In that sense, future studies are needed to address these ambiguities.

Nevertheless, this research integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods to examine its evolution and assess how it fits into Lazzaro's taxonomy of Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs). The case study methodology is particularly suitable for this research, as it allows for a comprehensive exploration of Bombarda's development over time, capturing the nuances of its governance models, economic activities, and social capital (Flyvbjerg, 2011). The analysis focuses on how Bombarda transitioned from an emerging art cluster in the 1990s to a mature creative district in 2024, identifying the key actors, governance strategies, and social dynamics that shaped this process (Lazzaro, 2022).

A significant part of the study relies on qualitative data, collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including gallery owners, entrepreneurs, and business operators within the quarter. These interviews provide firsthand accounts of the district's growth and the governance models that have been adopted over time. To complement the interview data, a narrative analysis was applied, enabling the identification of recurring themes and patterns that explain Bombarda's evolution from its early experimental stages to its status as a diverse and mature cultural quarter. Additionally, historical mapping was used to trace the key events that marked the district's transformation, offering a chronological framework for understanding its development (Bell, 2010).

On the quantitative side, the study incorporates a descriptive analysis aimed at measuring social capital within the district. By quantifying indicators of community engagement, trust, and networking among actors in Bombarda, the study provides empirical data to validate the trends observed in the qualitative research. This dual-method approach,

integrating qualitative insights with quantitative validation, offers a comprehensive view of Bombarda's lifecycle stages and the role social capital played in shaping the district's resilience and adaptability (Taherdoost, 2022). Together, these methods help situate Bombarda within Lazzaro's framework while uncovering how its unique characteristics and governance interventions influenced its trajectory over time.

To familiarize oneself with the research setting, the author of this thesis conducted several technical visits to Bombarda to different places such as galleries, cafes, coworking spaces, and other venues within the quarter. Figure 1 shows one of the in-person visits to the gallery Fernando Santos in the Simultaneous Inaugurations of July 2024. The visits contributed to this study in the collection of primary and secondary data, such as interviews, and talking to residents and business owners to better understand the history and the "cultural vibrancy" of the Quarter.



Figure 1 - Diego's visit to the gallery Fernando Santos in the context of a Simultaneous Inaugurations in July 2024.

3.1. Research setting: Bombarda Creative Quarter (BCQ)

Considered by many as one of the most prominent art's cluster in Porto, Portugal, Bombarda emerged in the 1990s, in the street Rua de Miguel Bombarda, primarily due to the efforts of pioneering art gallerists who saw potential in the area. The transformation began with the opening of the Fernando Santos Gallery in 1993, which was the first contemporary art space in the street. This gallery set the stage for Bombarda's evolution into an arts cluster, attracting other galleries and creative businesses (Bastos et al., 2009). The cluster's location, characterized by affordable rents and proximity to the city center, was a significant factor in its development (Bastos et al., 2009). As more galleries such as Galeria Quadrado Azul and Galeria Serpente opened by the late 1990s, Bombarda solidified its reputation as a center for contemporary art, drawing artists and visitors alike (Silva, 2020). The area also saw the introduction of innovative ventures like Artes em Partes, which combined elements of gallery space with creative retail, further diversifying the district's cultural offerings (Bastos et al., 2009).

From 2007, the growth stage of Bombarda was marked by dynamic expansion and diversification, transforming the district from a nascent arts cluster into a cultural destination. One of the pivotal developments was the founding of CC Bombarda in 2005, which brought a diverse set of businesses to the area, extending beyond traditional art galleries. Simultaneously, the Inaugurações Simultâneas (Simultaneous Inaugurations), a coordinated effort by galleries to hold simultaneous exhibition openings, became a regular event until present day. This initiative played a crucial role in attracting a diverse audience, including art appreciators, investors, and curious onlookers, thereby boosting the visibility of Bombarda as an arts cluster (Bastos et al., 2009). The success of these events highlighted the potential for collective artistic experiences to draw significant foot traffic and media attention, further establishing Bombarda as a cultural destination (Ladeira, 2012).

The period also witnessed the emergence of the Cultural Circuit, which expanded the concept of the arts cluster to include a broader range of creative businesses and events. This initiative fostered synergies among various cultural and creative enterprises, enhancing Bombarda's artistic identity and economic vitality (Dias, 2009). Partnerships with local authorities and cultural institutions, such as Porto Lazer, helped formalize and promote these

cultural activities, contributing to Bombarda's growing prominence within Porto's cultural landscape (Dias, 2009), which helped to characterize the location as an official permanent cluster with a temporal cluster – the simultaneous inaugurations (Ladeira, 2012). Despite these advancements, the associations initially formed to coordinate activities and enhance the street's cultural offerings faced challenges that hindered its effectiveness (Ladeira, 2012).

Nonetheless, the quarter continued to evolve, driven by a mix of established galleries and new creative ventures, setting the stage for Bombarda's continued development and resilience in the face of economic pressures and social tensions. In 2024, Bombarda gathers more than 200 businesses across 10 different streets in its quarter, including art galleries, studios, ateliers, coworking spaces, stores, professional services, and many other businesses catering to alternative niches with art-related products and services, summarized in Figure 3. It also counts with the support of an association formed by active members in the quarter – business owners from different backgrounds and other stakeholders –, to increase collaborations and synergies between businesses within the quarter, but also aiming to stretch their reach locally, regionally, and internationally. Figure 2 shows the evolution of Bombarda through 3 geographical snapshots in different periods.



Figure 2 - Bombarda's geographical snapshots in 3 periods: 1990s (left), 2008 (middle), and 2024 (right). Source: (Bastos et. al, 2009; Dias, 2009; Bombarda.pt, 2024). Image edited by the author.



Figure 3 - Bombarda's businesses in 2024 vs 2008. Source: (Dias, 2009) and (Bombarta.pt, 2024). Image edited by the author.

However, parts of the story about its evolution remained untold. Although there was some information in the literature about Bombarda from its inception until 2012, and now at Bombarda.pt about recent developments (from 2022 to present day), some gaps still exist. It is not clear how Bombarda navigated its lifecycle stages – or even in which stage it currently fits in – and how governance models played a role in this evolution. Hence, this study will aim to fill that historical gap by applying qualitative and quantitative approaches – which will be detailed in the next sections - and observe if Bombarda’s evolution fit the Lifecycle Matrix for Cultural and Creative Districts described in the literature review, while using social capital as an indicator to observe the district’s performance through each stage. Understanding these dynamics can inform strategies to enhance Bombarda’s social capital, such as developing programs that encourage collaboration between local artists and external partners or creating platforms for dialogue and exchange among diverse community members. By leveraging these concepts, policymakers and community leaders can design interventions that not only strengthen the social fabric of creative districts but also enhance their contribution to the city's cultural and economic landscape (Investing in Social Capital, 2023; Building Social Capital Through Creative Placemaking, 2016).

3.2. Approach - methods

In addressing the research question of how Bombarda, a creative district in Porto, Portugal, fits into the taxonomy of cultural and creative districts as proposed by Lazzaro (2022), a mixed-methods approach is employed, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The primary qualitative approach is a case study, which is complemented by

narrative analysis. This combination was chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of Bombarda's evolution, governance, and current status within the taxonomy framework. Also, the integration of a quantitative approach through descriptive analysis will be implemented with the focus on social capital, to confirm or deny the trends observed via qualitative approaches.

The case study approach is particularly suited for this research as it allows for an in-depth exploration of Bombarda as a unique entity. According to Flyvbjerg (2011), case studies provide a detailed examination of a single example, offering depth and context that are crucial for understanding complex phenomena. It facilitates a detailed examination of the district's historical, cultural, and socio-economic context, which is crucial for understanding its fit within Lazzaro's taxonomy. Lazzaro (2022) emphasizes the importance of considering cultural and creative districts within their specific geographical and historical contexts, as these factors significantly influence their development and governance models (Lazzaro, 2022). By focusing on Bombarda as a single case, the study can capture the complexities and nuances of its lifecycle stages and governance interventions, which are essential for accurately situating it within Lazzaro's framework.

In complementing the case study, the narrative approach is employed to provide deeper insights into the personal experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in Bombarda. Narratives are collected through interviews, allowing for the exploration of subjective meanings and interpretations that stakeholders attach to the quarter's development and governance. This approach is valuable for capturing the temporal dynamics of Bombarda's evolution, as it reveals how perceptions and roles have changed over time. The integration of narrative analysis enriches the qualitative data by highlighting themes and patterns that are relevant to the research question, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of Bombarda's position within the taxonomy. As Flyvbjerg (2011) notes, narratives allow researchers to capture the richness and complexity of human experiences, providing a nuanced understanding of the phenomena under study (Flyvbjerg, 2011)

To complement the qualitative approaches, the use of descriptive analysis will allow for the systematic quantification of social capital indicators, providing a structured means to assess the levels of community engagement, trust, and networking within Bombarda. This

method aims to offer empirical evidence that can confirm or challenge the insights gained from case study and narrative approaches. By quantifying these aspects, the research can identify prevailing trends and patterns that may not be immediately apparent through qualitative methods alone. As Taherdoost (2022) explains, quantitative research is designed to collect numerical data that can describe and explain phenomena, providing a structured means to assess specific variables. While narrative and case study methods provide a deep understanding of individual experiences and the historical evolution of Bombarda, descriptive analysis offers a broader perspective by capturing the collective characteristics of the district's social capital. For instance, if interviews suggest a high level of community cohesion, the descriptive analysis can substantiate this claim by revealing corresponding levels of trust and engagement across the surveyed population.

Moreover, the application of a quantitative approach allows for the identification of potential discrepancies or gaps in the qualitative data. By measuring social capital, the research can uncover variations in community dynamics that may have been overlooked in narrative accounts. This dual approach can enhance the reliability and validity of the research findings, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how Bombarda navigated its lifecycle stages and governance models. As Taherdoost (2022) notes, “Utilizing the integration of both methods can help researchers to address complex research circumstances”. And the interdisciplinary nature of cultural and creative districts necessitates a multifaceted methodological framework that can capture both qualitative and quantitative dimensions (Lazzaro, 2022). Together, these approaches facilitate a holistic understanding of Bombarda's fit within the Lifecycle Matrix, contributing to the broader discourse on cultural and creative districts and their socio-economic impacts.

3.3. Application – data collection and analysis

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The initial step involved collecting secondary information and previous reports related to Bombarda, which provided information from 1993 to around 2012, such as maps, stratification of local businesses, and detailed accounts of the main historical events and other key elements, such as governance models, on the evolution of Bombarda in this period. This

data was sourced mainly from the University of Porto's repository, where seven different works were available on different subjects about Bombarda. The official website of the association Creative Quarter (Bombarda.pt) provided detailed information about recent developments in the quarter since 2022, and a dynamic online map containing information about local businesses. Other local websites, including magazines, newspapers, blog posts, and social media accounts provided pictures, graphics, and confirmation of some historical events that were already accounted for in the other secondary sources.

Following the collection of secondary data, a questionnaire was developed in Portuguese language to gather primary information across several key areas, such as present and past accounts on modes of collective organization, key historical events, and challenges faced by local businesses. The goal was to observe trends in governance models, social capital, and complement the information collected in secondary sources, while filling the temporal gap between 2012 and 2022. The English-translated version of the questionnaire is attached, but it's important to note that it was not applied to the full extent of all questions. This is because when asking open-ended questions, the interviewee already ends up revealing some facts that would be connected to questions positioned later in the questionnaire. Thus, the questions served mostly as a guide to the interviewer so key information was not missed. In sum, the questionnaire was structured in two sections: the first section aimed to collect demographic information about the respondents, and the second section delved into the challenges and modes of collective organization, both past and present.

Interviews were conducted in Portuguese language with key stakeholders connected to Bombarda's history and governance models, in a semi-structured format. Seven stakeholders were selected from diverse areas within the district to ensure a broad range of perspectives and to minimize bias, including 3 gallery owners (coded as GAL), 2 entrepreneurs connected to commercial and coworking spaces (coded as ENT), and 2 store owners (coded as STO). To ensure accuracy and facilitate content analysis, the interviews were recorded using a smartphone and later transcribed using the paid version of the software service Turboscribe. Each interview was coded to maintain confidentiality while allowing for detailed narrative analysis. For that same reason, transcripts of the interviews will not be attached, but context details are presented in Figure 4.

No	Interviewee	Code	Date	Duration (minutes)
1	Entrepreneur connected to commercial and coworking spaces	ENT1	June 13, 2024	35
2	Gallery Owner	GAL1	July 11, 2024	22
3	Gallery Owner	GAL2	July 12, 2024	60
4	Entrepreneur connected to commercial and coworking spaces	ENT2	July 18, 2024	85
5	Gallery Owner	GAL3	July 18, 2024	16
6	Store Owner	STO1	July 20, 2024	29
7	Store Owner	STO2	July 20, 2024	19

Figure 4 - Interview details. All interviews were conducted in-person by the author, in different places within Bombarda Creative Quarter. The specific locations are not disclosed due to confidentiality reasons.

After the collection of the information, temporal and thematic content analysis was used to map key historical events in Bombarda in a process of 3 steps. Here, events are defined broadly as anything relevant to the evolution of the quarter, be it a promotional event like the Simultaneous Inaugurations, or other facts such as the foundation of galleries, businesses, stores, and associations, and even external events that impacted Bombarda directly or indirectly, such as economic crisis, or a global pandemic. In step 1, key historical events were listed for each source (Figure 5 and Figure 6). In step 2, similar events from different sources were coded into a uniform sentence and aggregated in a single row (Figure 7). This helped to decrease some ambiguity related to when some events happened and provided a clear timeline of key historical events about Bombarda. With the full timeline, from 1993 to 2024, it was possible to lay out the narrative about the quarter’s evolution from emergence to maturity in chronological order, a story that will be better described in the next section. This method was inspired by the work of Judith Bell “Doing your research project” (2010) in the section about the analysis of documentary evidence.

Key Event Short Description	Year	Reference	Source Type
Opening of Fernando Santos Gallery	1993	Bastos et al., 2009, p. 13	Paper
Establishment of Artes em Partes by Marina Costa	1998	Bastos et al., 2009, p. 39	Paper
Emergence of the Rua Miguel Bombarda Cluster	2000	Bastos et al., 2009, p. 13	Paper
Reopening of Centro Comercial Bombarda	2005	Bastos et al., 2009, p. 39	Paper
Signing of Protocol with Porto City Council	2009	Bastos et al., 2009, p. 40	Paper
Recognition as a Creative Cluster	2009	Bastos et al., 2009, p. 23	Paper

Figure 5 - Historical Mapping Step 1. Example of a secondary source.

Key Event Short Description	Year	Reference	Source Type
Foundation of Artes em Partes	1998	ENT1	Interview
Formation of First Association	1999	ENT1	Interview
Simultaneous Inaugurations and Events	2000	ENT1	Interview
Establishment of CC Bombarda	2005	ENT1	Interview
Economic Crisis Impact	2008	ENT1	Interview
Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic	2020	ENT1	Interview
Recent Successful Association Efforts	2023	ENT1	Interview
Ongoing Metro Construction Challenges	2023	ENT1	Interview
Collaboration with Suárez do Reis Museum	2024	ENT1	Interview
Advocacy for Recognition as a Creative Neighborhood	2024	ENT1	Interview

Figure 6 - Historical Mapping Step 1. Example of a primary source.

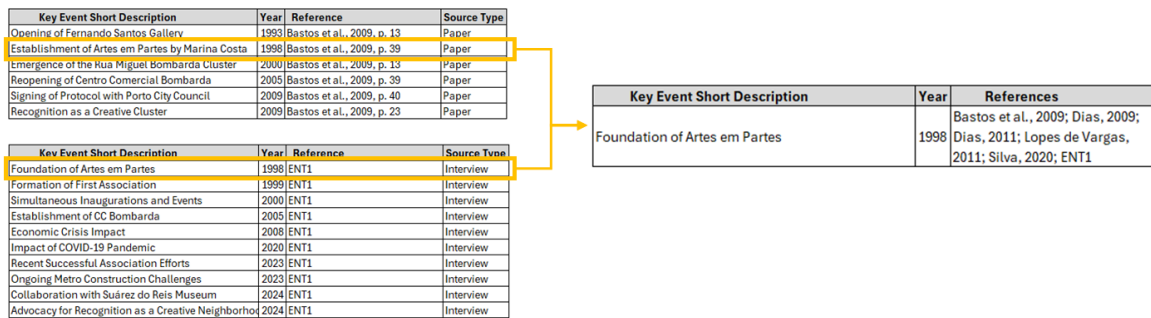


Figure 7 - Historical Mapping Step 2. Example of the uniformization of a key event.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The questionnaire was made based on the concepts of social networks, trust, reciprocity and belonging according to Putnam (2000), as described in the literature review. The questions are described in the annexes. A google forms was built in the Portuguese language and sent to more than 200 members of Bombarda Creative Quarter. In the end, 17 responses were collected, representing almost 10% of the audience.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to explore the dynamics of social capital within Cultural and Creative Districts (CCDs) and to understand how governance models and social interactions evolve across different lifecycle stages of these districts. The questionnaire aims to gather insights into the types of social networks, levels of trust, reciprocity, and the sense of belonging among stakeholders in CCDs.

The questionnaire was organized into several sections, each applying key concepts of social capital:

- a) Demographic Information: This section collects basic information about the respondents, such as their role and the organization they represent. This data helps contextualize the responses and understand the diversity of actors involved in the district.
- b) Social Networks: Questions in this section focus on the types of interactions respondents have had with other establishments over time. This explores the concept of social networks, a core component of social capital, by identifying how these networks have evolved and their current state.
- c) Trust and Reciprocity: Respondents are asked to rate their level of trust in other businesses and the frequency of exchanging favors or services. This section measures trust and reciprocity, which are crucial for facilitating cooperation and collective action within the district.
- d) Sense of Belonging: Questions here assess the respondents' feelings of belonging to the cultural community and how this sense has evolved. This relates to the bonding aspect of social capital, emphasizing the emotional and social ties that bind community members.

Overall, the questionnaire applied these concepts to evaluate how social capital influenced the development, resilience, and adaptability of Bombarda, to provide insights into the governance models that best support these dynamics. Results are better described in the section of discussion of results.

4. Case study: The Evolution of Bombarda Creative Quarter

Based on the qualitative methodological approach that resulted in a full timeline of key events about Bombarda in chronological order (see Figure 8), it was possible to interpret at what lifecycle stage each event belonged to by identifying the “historical snapshot” of the timeline that best matched with the description of the Lifecycle Matrix. This “historical snapshot” was made by identifying major themes that emerged across different periods - types of economic activities, actors, governance models, social capital, challenges, and resilience -, while looking for patterns or shifts, providing insights into the factors that have driven the change in these themes across time.

Key Event Short Description	Year	Lifecycle Stage
Opening of Fernando Santos Gallery	1993	Emergence
Opening of Galeria Quadrado Azul	1997	Emergence
Foundation of Artes em Partes	1998	Emergence
Opening of Galeria Serpente and Galeria Presença	1998	Emergence
Formation of First Association Círculo Cultural Miguel Bombarda	1999	Emergence
Launch of W.C. Container Project	1999	Emergence
Emergence of the Rua Miguel Bombarda as na Art's Cluster from 1995 to 2000	2000	Emergence
Creation of the Association of Galerias da Miguel Bombarda	2000	Emergence
Start of Simultaneous Inaugurations Event	2000	Emergence
Opening of CC Bombarda	2005	Emergence
Partnership with Porto City Council for Circuito Cultural Miguel Bombarda	2007	Growth
Partnership with Porto Lazer	2007	Growth
Global 2008 Financial Crisis Impact	2008	Growth
Partial Pedestrianization of the Street	2008	Growth
Peak of the Simultaneous Inaugurations Event	2008	Growth
Signing of Protocol with Porto City Council around 2009	2009	Growth
Recognition as a Creative Cluster	2009	Growth
Absolut Creative House Project	2010	Growth
Look Up! Natural Porto Art Show	2010	Growth
Opening of AP'ARTE Contemporary Art Gallery	2010	Growth
Economic Challenges and Gallery Closures from 2011 to 2015	2011	Growth
Introduction of Pre-Inaugurations by Some Galleries	2011	Growth
Decline in Association Activity	2011	Growth
Sponsorship mismatch for Inaugurações simultâneas from 2008 forward	2011	Growth
Founding of CRU Creative Hub	2012	Growth
Founding of Scar ID	2013	Growth
Cultural Initiatives by Paulo Cunha e Silva	2013	Growth
Increase in Tourism around 2013 onwards	2013	Growth
Shift from Artistic to Urban Culture District from 2013 onwards	2013	Growth
Formation of Bombarda Porto Art District Association	2014	Growth
Designation as Porto Art District	2014	Growth
Tânia Santos joins Bombarda Porto Art District Association	2015	Growth
Start of the boom in Co-working Spaces	2015	Growth
Bombarda Stop & Go Initiative	2017	Growth
Start of COVID-19 Pandemic, with prolonged economic impact until today	2020	Growth
Bombarda em Casa Event	2020	Growth
Ongoing Metro Construction Challenges from 2021 until 2024	2021	Growth
Gentrification and Rising Costs	2022	Early Maturity
Establishment of Quarteirão Criativo Association	2022	Early Maturity
Establishment of Bombarda Digital by the new Association Quarteirão Criativo	2022	Early Maturity
Increase in Foreign Residents	2022	Early Maturity
Recent Successful Association Efforts	2023	Early Maturity
Collaboration with Suárez do Reis Museum	2024	Early Maturity
Advocacy for Recognition as a Creative Neighborhood	2024	Early Maturity
Challenges of Economic Crises	2024	Early Maturity
Bombarda Digital Initiative	2024	Early Maturity
Challenges with Location and Foot Traffic	2024	Early Maturity
Community Engagement and Challenges	2024	Early Maturity
Collaboration with Local Artists	2024	Early Maturity

Figure 8 - Bombarda's key events timeline

Nevertheless, Santos pioneered the movement to concentrate more galleries in Bombarda and started to dynamize his network to build what would be Porto's infamous arts district. And from there, others started to follow. By 1997, the opening of Galeria Quadrado Azul, the second gallery to set foot in Bombarda, further contributed to the cultural and artistic development of the neighborhood, offering a space for contemporary art exhibitions and reinforcing the area's emerging identity as an arts hub (Silva, 2020; GAL1). Additionally, the opening of Galeria Serpente and Galeria Presença in 1998, and others that followed, helped solidify the area's status as a hub for contemporary art, attracting artists and visitors alike (Silva, 2020).

"The concentration of galleries in the MB 'happened because there were already other examples at the level of New York, London, Paris, there are nuclei of galleries concentrated in an artery of the city. And, therefore, this happened because there was really motivation, interest on the part of my colleagues in settling here, and today Rua Miguel Bombarda is a phenomenon in terms of the presence of galleries, and the concentration here gives much more importance to our activity'." (Fernando Santos, gallery owner, cited in Bastos et al., 2009)

The gallerist's efforts started to be noticed around the city, and other art enthusiasts began to approach the movement not only as potential clients or observers, but also to feel inspired and to collaborate. At that time, the young graphic designer Marina Santos found herself dissatisfied with her career path, which led her to explore entrepreneurial ventures, first opening an antique shop. However, when this venture failed to meet her expectations, she conceived the idea for Artes em Partes, which arose from Marina's desire to create a space that showcased highly differentiated and personalized products (Bastos et al., 2009; ENT1).

Marina and a partner were actively seeking old, traditional houses when they discovered the property in the street of Miguel Bombarda. Their choice of location was not coincidental; they were drawn to the area because of an emerging trend of art galleries establishing themselves there (ENT1). Marina recalls, "We fell in love with the house where

'Artes em Partes' is currently located" (Bastos et al., 2009), highlighting the emotional connection that underpinned the project's inception.

The establishment of Artes em Partes in 1998 coincided with the early stages of Miguel Bombarda's transformation into an arts cluster. Marina's project was unique in its approach, combining elements of a gallery space with a more diverse, creative retail concept. To make the project financially viable, Marina adopted an innovative strategy: dividing the building into rentable rooms, with exhibition projects receiving special consideration regarding condominium payments. This approach allowed Artes em Partes to function as an incubator for new ideas and talents, providing a platform for entrepreneurs to test concepts and products, build a reputation, and then expand beyond the confines of Artes em Partes (Bastos et al., 2009; ENT1).

The initial years of Artes em Partes were challenging, reflecting the pioneering nature of the project in the context of Bombarda's emerging arts scene. As mentioned by one of the interviewees, the first three years were "very complicated" (ENT1), indicating the difficulties in establishing such an unconventional business model. The project's uniqueness posed challenges in implementation and financial sustainability, together with initial hesitation of the public to engage with this new concept.

"At first it was a niche. Of people ... very connected to art and who found the concept very funny. And then it went from mouth to mouth ... And then we started to have, in fact, a lot of people ... I'm not very good at business. I like to do things, but then I'm bad at making money ... the project was very recognized, it was very talked about, but in fact it was not a project that gave money. That was the Arts in Parts." (ENT1)

Although not highly profitable, the project served as a catalyst for creative entrepreneurship in the area, "(...) an incubator for new ideas and talents" (ENT1, cited at Bastos et al., 2009), providing a low-risk environment for creative professionals to experiment and grow. A good example is the "W.C. Container Project", incubated in Artes em Partes from 1999 to 2001, conceived by artists from Coimbra and Lisbon.. The project transformed a common human space—the bathroom—into a venue for contemporary art

exhibitions. The goal was to bring together artists from various disciplines to create works that fit the unique environment of a bathroom, challenging traditional gallery formats and encouraging creative freedom. Projects like this provided a platform for artists to experiment with unconventional spaces and engage with audiences in a novel way (Lopes de Vargas, 2011).

These types of projects seemed to be particularly relevant for young and emerging artists, offering them a space to showcase their work in a non-traditional setting. The approach of inviting artist friends whose work fit both the project concept and Marina's personal taste helped to promote and energize the space (ENT1). This curation strategy not only seemed to attract a diverse range of creative talents but also likely contributed to the area's growing reputation as a hub for contemporary art and design.

As *Artes em Partes* evolved, it paralleled and complemented the establishment of more traditional art galleries in Bombarda. While galleries focused on showcasing and selling fine art, *Artes em Partes* offered a more eclectic mix of creative endeavors, including unconventional art galleries within its space (ENT1). This diversity likely contributed to the area's vibrant atmosphere and helped attract a broader audience to Bombarda.

THE FIRST COLLABORATION EFFORTS

At this point, most of the activities and collaborations in Rua de Miguel Bombarda seemed to be decentralized and community-driven with informal networks, and the street had emerged spontaneously as a cluster for arts, driven by key figures like Marina Costa and Fernando Santos. There is a consensus among interviews and other data sources confirming that this phenomenon was primarily driven by the concentration of art galleries in the area, which gradually transformed it into a cultural destination. Initially, the street was dominated by traditional art galleries, with few other businesses present, like *Artes em Partes*, small coffee shops, fruit stands, grocery stores, and private parking lots, but little else. Over time, other businesses began to establish themselves in the area (ENT1, p. 6).

Nevertheless, this initial mix prompted Fernando and Marina to think forward about Bombarda's organization, as the challenge to attract more people remained. In 1999, the

formation of the first association between gallerists and other businesses, *Círculo Cultural Miguel Bombarda*, aimed to foster collaboration among local businesses and galleries. Although this initiative was short-lived due to internal disagreements among gallerists, it represented an early attempt to create synergies and organize activities within the district (ENT1; GAL1; Dias, 2009).

Another attempt to build a formal structure was made in 2000, with the formation of the Association of *Galerias da Miguel Bombarda*, initially composed of five galleries present in the area at that time: Fernando Santos, Trindade, Presença, Quadrado Azul, and *Por Amor à Arte*, with the objective to coordinate activities and enhance the street's cultural offerings (Ladeira, 2012). One of its first collaboration projects was the creation of *The Inaugurações Simultâneas* (Simultaneous Inaugurations), conceived as a coordinated effort by these galleries to hold simultaneous exhibition openings, aiming to attract more visitors and create a collective artistic atmosphere in the quarter.

The intent behind establishing the *Inaugurações Simultâneas* was to boost the visibility and appeal of Bombarda as an arts cluster. As Fernando Santos explained: "A single gallery could function, but naturally 20 galleries function much better, because they attract more public and they benefit from each other (...) people can enjoy 20 or 25 exhibitions that happen here from month to month, and therefore people come much more easily than if the galleries were dispersed throughout the city" (Bastos et al., 2009). This initiative seemed to create a collective identity for the galleries, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose among the art spaces in the area, features that are strongly correlated with bonding social capital.

This collaborative approach aimed to leverage the concentration of galleries to create a more significant impact and draw attention to their collective artistic offerings. Initially, the event primarily attracted what Joana Gomes from Galeria Fernando Santos referred to as the "gallery public" - artists, art institutions, journalists, and other art world insiders (Ladeira, 2012). The *Inaugurações Simultâneas* were held monthly at first, reflecting the galleries' commitment to regular, coordinated programming. This frequency allowed for a consistent rhythm of new exhibitions and maintained a steady flow of visitors to the quarter, which likely played a crucial role in transforming the perception of Miguel Bombarda Street from a

relatively quiet area to a vibrant arts quarter. The regular influx of visitors during the Inaugurações Simultâneas breathed new life into the neighborhood, attracting attention from both local and national media, and turning it into an established feature of Porto's cultural calendar.

This increased visibility and network effect contributed to the area's growing reputation as an arts cluster within Porto and launched the cluster to embrace new opportunities. In 2005, Centro Comercial Bombarda (CC Bombarda) emerged as a commercial space on Rua Miguel Bombarda in Porto, Portugal. The space had been closed for 10 years before its reopening under new management, after a project proposal was developed and presented to the owners in Lisbon, and they accepted, leading to the launch of CC Bombarda (ENT1). The concept behind it was closely linked to Marina Costa's previous project, "Artes em Partes," which focused on highly differentiated and personalized products. However, CC Bombarda adopted a more commercial approach aimed at profitability, following a more traditional revenue model for this type of business, focusing mostly on rent, but differing in the types of stores it would host there (ENT1). CC Bombarda initially experienced significant success. ENT1 recalls, "When they opened this, it exploded. This here? It exploded, bringing a lot of people. It went very well in the first years". The selection of stores for CC Bombarda was not random, though there was more flexibility compared to Artes em Partes. Marina Costa curated the mix of businesses, inviting specific projects that aligned with her vision for the space (ENT1). This curation was aimed at maintaining the artistic character of the street while ensuring commercial viability.

The commercial center played a crucial role in the development of the Miguel Bombarda arts cluster, as it contributed to the concentration of arts-related businesses in the area, which was seen as a key factor in the emergence of the arts ecosystem. The space was perceived as one of the most advantageous locations within the Miguel Bombarda arts cluster. In surveys, businesses rated CC Bombarda as having more benefits than other locations on the street (Bastos et al., 2009).

4.2. Growth: development of the creative economy in Bombarda (2007-2021)



Figure 10 - Bombarda's geographical snapshot in 2008. Source: (Dias, 2009). Image edited by the author.

THE FIRST SIGNS OF GROWTH

According to Lazzaro's framework, the growth stage of a CCD is characterized by dynamic expansion and diversification of economic activities. This stage sees the coexistence of established enterprises and emerging ventures, and the actor landscape becomes more complex, with pioneers from the emergence stage collaborating with new entrants attracted by the cluster's growing reputation (Lazzaro, 2022). Although it's not clear from the author what exactly triggers the change from one stage to the other, it is possible to visualize key events that triggered the change in the landscape and, by observing the "historical snapshot" of the landscape in each analyzed period, it would be possible to characterize each stage according to the framework's description and conclude if they're matching with the theory.

In Bombarda, evidence suggests that the key events that triggered that change in landscape from emergence to growth were (1) the founding of CC Bombarda, that brought a diverse set of businesses to the street beyond the traditional art galleries, (2) the Inaugurações Simultâneas event, which reached its peak in this transition period and began to take shape as a regular event around 2007-2008, occurring on one Saturday each month, and (3) the Cultural Circuit, a new event that was born from the inaugurations, differing from the latter in scope, organization and evolution over time.

The Cultural Circuit of Miguel Bombarda refers to a broader concept encompassing the overall concentration and interconnection of cultural and creative businesses in the area. This includes not just the art galleries, but also the various creative shops, cafes, and other establishments that contribute to the neighborhood's artistic identity. As Marina Costa notes, "Initially, it was a spontaneous movement, but currently the synergies resulting from a concerted movement are felt" (Bastos et al., 2009). This suggests that the Cultural Circuit developed organically over time, gradually expanding from the initial concentration of galleries to include a wider range of creative businesses, as envisioned by figures like Marina Costa who saw the potential for the movement to "first expand to the 'quarteirão' (block/neighborhood) and later spread to the lower part of the city" (Marina Costa, cited at Bastos et al., 2009).

In contrast, the simultaneous inaugurations became a specific event within the broader Cultural Circuit by 2009. These coordinated gallery openings, occurring on one Saturday each month, represented a more structured and deliberate initiative. Fernando Santos explains that "Miguel Bombarda Street is a phenomenon in terms of the presence of galleries, and the concentration here gives much more importance to our activity" (Bastos et al., 2009). This regular event serves as a focal point for the area's cultural activities, attracting "crowds of art appreciators, investors, artists, followers of alternative lifestyles and many curious onlookers" (citation of Fernando Santos translated from Bastos et al., 2009). This diverse mix of attendees highlights the broad appeal the events had developed.

As the area gained popularity and more businesses were attracted to the neighborhood, the cluster began to spill over into adjacent streets. The perception of the arts

cluster in Miguel Bombarda expanding beyond a single street to encompass surrounding areas began to emerge around 2008-2009, which is evidenced by the study's examination of the Cultural Circuit of Miguel Bombarda, which includes not just the main street but the surrounding area, namely Rua do Breyner, Rua do Rosário, Rua de Adolfo Casais Monteiro, and Rua da Maternidade (Dias, 2009). And what started as a concentration of art galleries and a few other businesses in the street of Miguel Bombarda in the 90s (ENT1), turned out to evolve to a much more diverse landscape 15 years later. In 2008, the street aggregated businesses of different types, of which 21 were art galleries, 48 were stores and services (mostly art related), and 32 were restaurants or cafes (see Figure 11 and Figure 12). In that transition, it seems that the street known as an arts cluster was expanding geographically to more streets and turning itself into an arts quarter.



Figure 11 - Number businesses per category in 2008. Source: (Dias, 2009). Image edited by the author.

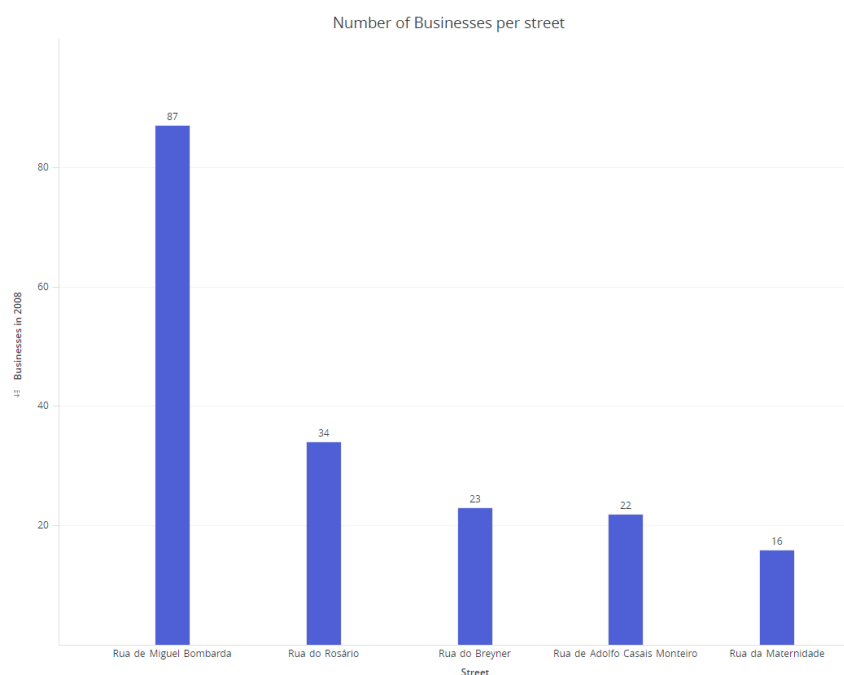


Figure 12 - Number of businesses per street in 2008. Source: (Dias, 2009). Image edited by the author.

Another key change that happens in the growth stage is that governance models tend to adapt to this increased complexity in the landscape, often transitioning from grassroots initiatives to more formal structures that involve collaborations with local authorities, cultural institutions, and public-private partnerships (Lazzaro, 2022). Although the attempt to create a formal structure through associative models were not successful so far in Bombarda, collaborations with local authorities, cultural institutions, and public-private partnerships started to take shape in this transition period.

One of the most notable collaborations was the partnership with the Porto City Council for the Circuito Cultural Miguel Bombarda (Miguel Bombarda Cultural Circuit), aimed to promote and coordinate cultural activities in the area, particularly the simultaneous gallery openings that had become a defining feature of the neighborhood. This partnership helped to formalize and expand the cultural activities that had been developing organically in the area. Furthermore, a partnership was also established with Porto Lazer, a municipal company responsible for organizing cultural and leisure activities in the city. This collaboration was particularly important in facilitating events and promoting the area as a cultural destination. Marina Costa, a key figure in developing the area's creative businesses, highlighted the importance of this partnership, stating that "Ricardo Figueiredo from Porto Lazer has been important for this synergy" (Dias, 2009).

Another significant development during this period was the partial pedestrianization of Miguel Bombarda Street. This initiative, supported by the City Council, aimed to make the area more attractive and accessible to visitors. Fernando Santos commented on this development, saying, "part of the street is already pedestrianized, which embellishes this artery" (Fernando Santos, cited in Dias, 2009). The growing recognition of Miguel Bombarda's importance led to the signing of a protocol between the galleries, shops, Famous Grouse (a sponsor), and the Porto City Council. Marina Costa described this as a positive development, stating, "a protocol was signed between the galleries, shops, Famous Grouse and the Porto City Council, which has been going well" (Marina Costa, cited in Dias, 2009). This formal agreement represented a key step in institutionalizing the area's cultural and commercial significance.

By 2009, these various initiatives and partnerships had contributed to Miguel Bombarda's formal and informal recognition, not just locally, but bringing attention on a broader scale, positioning Miguel Bombarda as an important element in Porto's cultural landscape and urban regeneration efforts. From 2010 onward, Bombarda continued to evolve in a decade that would be marked by (1) cultural initiatives that would reinforce the name of Bombarda as an arts cluster, (2) new entrants bringing a fresh perspective to the already recognized cluster, driven by a significant change in the global economic landscape (digital, creative economy, social media, knowledge workers, ecommerce, coworking spaces), and (3) various social and economic challenges that significantly impacted Bombarda's businesses and residents.

BOMBARDA'S RESILIENCE THROUGH SOCIAL TENSIONS AND ECONOMIC PRESSURES

In 2010, the Absolut Creative House Project was initiated by Marina Costa, leveraging the historical and aesthetic backdrop of the Palacete Pinto Leite. This project aimed to gather the best creators from Northern Portugal, encompassing a wide range of disciplines such as design, culinary arts, jewelry, visual arts, fashion, photography, architecture, and music. The objective was to transform Porto into a natural habitat for creators and to engage a broad audience by showcasing local culture and creativity. The project was not focused on selling products but rather on creating an immersive environment where the public could experience art and creativity firsthand, which seemed to have an impact on promoting local talent and fostering a sense of community among creators and the public (Lopes de Vargas, 2011).

In the same year, the *Look Up! Natural Porto Art Show* was a collaborative effort between the Fernando Santos Gallery and other partners, including the National Association for Young Entrepreneurs (ANJE) and the Porto Show Time program. This project was designed to bring art to unconventional spaces throughout Porto, thereby reaching audiences who might not typically engage with art in traditional settings. The project emphasized sustainability, both in its logistical execution and in the thematic content of the artworks displayed. By placing art in unexpected public spaces, the *Look Up!* project aimed to raise awareness about environmental preservation and to integrate art into the everyday lives of

the city's residents. This initiative was impactful in that it expanded the audience for contemporary art and reinforced the role of art in addressing contemporary societal issues (Lopes de Vargas, 2011). Additionally, the opening of galleries such as AP'ARTE Contemporary Art Gallery continued to contribute to the district's arts landscape by presenting renowned artists (ATOFLOW).

In hindsight, Bombarda was growing and seemed to be more active than ever, but navigating this dynamism was no easy task. The introduction of pre-inaugurations in 2011 by some galleries emerged as a strategic response to the evolving dynamics of the Simultaneous Inaugurations event. This initiative was primarily motivated by the need to cater to serious art buyers who were increasingly deterred by the large crowds and the festive atmosphere of the main event (Ladeira, 2012). The pre-inaugurations provided a more intimate setting where galleries could engage directly with potential buyers, offering them a personalized experience that was not possible during the hectic main event. This shift seemed to reflect broader tensions within the arts cluster. While the Simultaneous Inaugurations event succeeded in drawing significant foot traffic and raising the profile of the area, it also risked overshadowing the individual galleries' efforts to cultivate a dedicated customer base.

The galleries' navigation of these dynamics highlights the tension and duality between bonding and bridging social capital. While the main event served as a platform for bridging social capital by drawing diverse crowds and promoting cultural exchange, the pre-inaugurations catered to bonding social capital by focusing on the needs of a select group of serious buyers, although it may risk excluding outsiders (Putnam, 2000, p. 22-23). This dual approach underscores the necessity for galleries to balance internal cohesion with external connectivity to thrive in a competitive and dynamic cultural district (Putnam, 2000, p. 24).

In fact, the galleries that pioneered this approach, such as Galeria Fernando Santos and Galeria AP'Arte, recognized the importance of maintaining a balance between attracting a broad audience and meeting the needs of their core clientele. By organizing exclusive pre-inaugurations, these galleries could ensure that serious collectors and art enthusiasts received the attention they required, thereby fostering stronger relationships and encouraging sales (Ladeira, 2012). However, this not only diversified the types of interactions occurring within the quarter but also highlighted the varying needs and expectations of different stakeholders.

While some galleries embraced the change, others remained skeptical, viewing the pre-inaugurations as a necessary compromise rather than an ideal solution (Ladeira, 2012).

The pre-inaugurations thus served as a means to mitigate these tensions, allowing galleries to leverage the visibility provided by the main event while still prioritizing their business objectives (Ladeira, 2012). It reinforces Putnam's vision about how the interplay between bonding and bridging social capital is vital for a healthy society, as each form of capital serves different but complementary roles. While bonding capital provides the necessary support and cohesion within groups, bridging capital enables cross-group interactions and collaborations that are essential for societal progress and innovation (Putnam, 2000, p. 25). In this light, the response given by the galleries through the introduction of pre-inaugurations appears to have been an adequate strategy to address the dual demands of bonding and bridging social capital, ensuring both the maintenance of strong internal ties and the expansion of external networks. This balanced approach likely contributed positively to the social fabric of Bombarda, enhancing its cultural vibrancy and economic viability.

At this point, the Association of Galerias da Miguel Bombarda was still active but over time its influence began to wane, and balancing the interplay between bonding and bridging social capital became an ever-growing challenge. One of the primary reasons for this decline was the internal disagreements that arose when non-gallery businesses, such as shops and cafes, expressed interest in joining the association – the exact period is not made clear, but the author suggests it began between late 2011 and early 2012 after (or parallel to) the creation of pre-inaugurations. This expansion of membership was contentious because some gallery owners felt that the association should remain exclusive to galleries to maintain its original focus and purpose. The divergence in opinions led to a reduction in the association's cohesion and effectiveness, as it struggled to reconcile the differing interests of its members (Ladeira, 2012).

The decline seems to be related to the tensions that originated from the pre-inaugurations, which also came with a sponsorship misalignment for the Simultaneous Inaugurations. Initially, the event reached an "optimal" level of activity and visibility around 2008, largely due to the sponsorship by Famous Grouse, which provided significant street

animation and drew large crowds (Ladeira, 2012). However, the nature of the sponsorship began to diverge from the core objectives of the galleries. The misalignment in sponsorship goals and the galleries' objectives led to the retraction of sponsorship by Famous Grouse and a reevaluation of the event's structure and purpose. Despite these challenges, the event continued without sponsorship after 2008, as the galleries and the municipal organization Porto Lazer did not find a suitable replacement that aligned with the artistic goals of the event (Ladeira, 2012).

The absence of sponsorship necessitated a return to a more grassroots and diversified approach to organizing the event. As the association's activity decreased, individual galleries took on more responsibility for organizing the Simultaneous Inaugurations and other promotional activities. This shift likely marked a transition from a collective approach to a more fragmented one, where galleries operated independently rather than as a cohesive unit. The lack of regular meetings and coordinated efforts meant that the association no longer played a central role in the strategic planning and execution of events, which could have contributed to a less unified branding and marketing strategy for the arts district as a whole (Ladeira, 2012).

The only activity that remained with the Association Galerias de Miguel Bombarda was deciding the scheduling of simultaneous inaugurations in Bombarda. Although less democratic, ENT2 explains why it might be understandable for art galleries to centralize this decision, noting that galleries naturally took on this role because the scheduling had to align with their own calendars, which were influenced by international art fairs and exhibitions. These fairs have fixed dates, requiring galleries to coordinate their local events around them to avoid conflicts. This practical necessity led to galleries having significant input in setting the dates for inaugurations, ensuring they did not overlap with other commitments. While this approach might seem less democratic, it is practical given the galleries' need to manage their international and local commitments effectively. ENT2 acknowledged that this coordination initially involved much discussion and negotiation among gallery owners to agree on suitable dates.

These cultural initiatives and dynamism are a testament to Bombarda's resilience amidst social tensions and a series of economic challenges. At this time, businesses and

residents were still feeling the effects of the 2008 financial crisis while navigating the challenges imposed by the Troika.

Often referred to as the Global Financial Crisis, the 2008 financial crisis was a severe worldwide economic crisis considered by many economists as the most serious financial crisis since the Great Depression. It began with the collapse of large financial institutions in the United States, primarily due to the bursting of the housing bubble and the resulting subprime mortgage crisis, which led to a liquidity shortfall in the banking system. This crisis resulted in the bailout of banks by national governments and downturns in stock markets around the world. According to ENT1, the 2008 crisis coincided with the early years of the CC Bombarda, which initially saw success but was later hit hard by the economic downturn. The crisis led to financial difficulties, including the bankruptcy of Edifera, the owner of the space, and a subsequent change in ownership that required Marina Costa to continue managing the center under new conditions (ENT1).

Following this, the Eurozone faced its own crisis, particularly in 2011, when several European countries, including Portugal, Greece, and Ireland, faced sovereign debt crises. These countries were unable to repay or refinance their government debt or bail out over-indebted banks without the assistance of third parties like the European Central Bank, the European Commission, and the International Monetary Fund, collectively known as the Troika. The economic challenges imposed by the Troika in 2011 exacerbated the issues felt due to the '08 crisis, leading to a reduction in the number of galleries and a shift in the business dynamics of the area (GAL1). ENT1 suggested that this poly-crisis scenario made it difficult to stabilize and grow the business, as new challenges, such as increased taxes and social security payments, arose. These economic pressures forced businesses in Bombarda to adapt, often resulting in a focus on niche markets and local customers, as international tourism and investment were not reliable sources of income during this period (ENT2).

FRESH PERSPECTIVES: NEW ENTRANTS AND THE SURGE OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY IN BOMBARDA

In this context of constant volatility, uncertainty and change, a young entrepreneur arrived in Bombarda with a clear vision to dynamize the creative economy in the neighborhood, bringing a fresh perspective to Porto's artistic quarter.

“My purpose is to think and create better conditions for the practice of independent creative work and thereby contribute to increase the impact that the creative and collaborative ecosystem has on society and economy. It was with this drive that in 2012 I created CRU Creative Hub in the artistic quarter of Porto, where dozens of professionals from the creative industries meet daily to work, learn and socialize. It is also for this purpose that I advocate for the sustainability and proliferation of Creative Hubs in a European political context.” (Tania Santos, <https://taniaalmeidasantos.com/>)

The founding of CRU Creative Hub in 2012 marked a significant development in the Bombarda district of Porto, Portugal. Initially, CRU was envisioned as a creative hub that would serve as a space for collaboration and innovation among artists and entrepreneurs. The decision to establish CRU in Bombarda was strategic, as the area was already recognized for its artistic and creative businesses, making it an ideal location for a hub that aimed to foster creativity and community (ENT2). As noted by ENT2, one of CRU partners shared that "We thought that in Porto, in 2012, there was only one space where this could result, and that physical space, that territory, would be here, this block".

With that spirit, CRU was designed to be a multipurpose space that combined a co-working area, a design store, an art gallery, and studios for photography and audio production. This innovative model provided a platform for creatives from diverse backgrounds to work, exhibit, and sell their creations, thereby empowering a vibrant and dynamic community (ENT2). The establishment of CRU was not only about providing physical space but also about nurturing a community where synergies, partnerships, and friendships could flourish, contributing to the well-being and productivity of its members (CRUcreativehub.com, 2024).

However, innovative initiatives like this usually comes with a set of challenges such as communicating new products or ideas, finding the right public, and establishing economic viability – all of which came to face with the partners when founding CRU Creative Hub. One of the primary hurdles was introducing and establishing the concept of a creative hub that combined co-working spaces with a store for emerging artists in Porto. At the time, the idea of co-working was relatively new in the city, and there was a lack of public awareness about what such spaces entailed.

"When CRU got here, it was not evident that there was this opening for this kind of novelty, that we didn't have anywhere like CRU at the time, but it was still quite difficult because there was no tourism in Porto... The first two or three years were quite difficult to try to get these ideas heads out, on the one hand, the commercial part of the store, and on the other hand, to make more common the concept of co-working, which wasn't well known" (ENT2).

Another challenge was the economic context of Porto during CRU's inception. The city was emerging from the 2008-2010 economic crisis, and there was little tourism, which affected the purchasing power and consumer behavior of the local population. ENT2 observed that "people at the time were not used to the kind of products CRU was offering... they didn't understand the difference between a piece from a designer that costs 100 euros and a piece from Zara that costs 5 or 10 euros" (ENT2). Also, it was evident that older consumers with higher purchasing power often prefer well-known brands that validate their status, rather than taking risks on unfamiliar designer products, suggesting that this demographic is generally less interested in sustainability and the origin of products, making them harder to convince of the value of unique, sustainably made items (ENT2). This lack of understanding and appreciation by locals for designer and artisanal products made it difficult to attract Portuguese customers and sustain the business initially, which reinforced the potential of attracting tourists and international clients who appreciated design and artisanal products (ENT2)

Additionally, the partners faced the challenge of differentiating CRU from traditional galleries and retail spaces. They aimed to create a space that provided visibility and

opportunities for emerging artists, which required educating the public about the unique value proposition of CRU. This involved not only promoting the co-working aspect but also emphasizing the artistic, cultural and creative identity of the Bombarda district (ENT2).

"They were not an art gallery. They have an exhibition space. To be an art gallery, in the most traditional sense of the word, means that you represent agencies, artists, you have artists on your portfolio, which, deep down, you are almost an agent of these artists. You represent these artists in your space, in front of collectors, in front of international fairs" (ENT2).

But around 2015-2016, there was a noticeable increase in the number of co-working spaces in Porto, which ENT2 identifies as the first major boom of coworking spaces as a business model. This surge was beneficial for CRU, as it helped to popularize the concept of co-working, reducing the need for extensive explanation and outreach. The increased competition was seen as positive, as it brought more attention to the co-working lifestyle and attracted a broader audience interested in this flexible work style (ENT2). Later, following the COVID-19 pandemic, a second boom occurred, driven by the rise of remote work and the need for flexible workspaces. This period saw an even greater proliferation of co-working spaces, as companies became more open to allowing employees to work from various locations, including co-working environments. While this expansion was generally positive, it also presented challenges for CRU, as the market became more saturated, and the need to differentiate their offerings became more pressing (ENT2).

These events, highlighted by the experience of Tania with CRU, reflected a broader trend of creative hubs playing a crucial role in urban regeneration and community development, positioning Bombarda as a model for other districts aiming to harness the potential of the creative economy, while attracting a more diverse clientele and helping position Bombarda as a creative quarter in Porto.

Another evident example of this trend in Bombarda, and symbol of this transformation, was Scar ID, a jewelry store founded in 2013. The store was established in a former grocery store from the 1950s and, like CRU, Scar ID came to Bombarda to leverage the neighborhood's cultural dynamics while introducing a novel concept that blended retail

with gallery space, focusing on Portuguese contemporary design and art, and showcasing both emerging and established Portuguese designers. (STO1).

In its early years, Scar ID faced similar challenges to CRU, although being in different niches. The aftermath of the economic crisis of 2008-2013 meant that consumer spending was limited, and the market for niche products like Portuguese design was underdeveloped. The founders noted the difficulty in attracting local customers, who were not accustomed to purchasing high-end Portuguese products. This challenge was compounded by the limited reach of digital marketing platforms at the time, as social media was still in its infancy (STO1). The customer base of Scar ID was diverse, including both local and international clients. However, like CRU, the store has found greater success with international customers, who often have more purchasing power and are more willing to invest in unique, high-quality design pieces. This international interest has been bolstered by spontaneous media coverage, which, according to STO1, has proven more effective than traditional digital marketing strategies for the niche products offered by Scar ID. By integrating non-artistic businesses into the area, Scar ID contributed to the evolution of the neighborhood from a purely artistic district to one that embraced urban culture and lifestyle, while highlighting the potential for local design to gain international recognition.

This transformation can also be attributed to a steep increase in tourism in Porto from 2013 onwards. According to STO1, the cultural initiatives led by Paulo Cunha e Silva, the Culture Commissioner of Porto from 2013 to 2015, played a pivotal role in this transformation. His tenure was marked by a strategic focus on integrating art and culture into the city's broader social and economic framework. Cunha e Silva's vision for Porto as a "Liquid City," where cultural activities could permeate all aspects of urban life, was instrumental in revitalizing the city's cultural scene. This approach not only attracted international attention but also provided a fertile ground for creative businesses in Bombarda to thrive. By fostering a dynamic cultural environment, Cunha e Silva's initiatives indirectly supported the growth of Bombarda as a creative hub, encouraging the establishment of ventures like Scar ID and CRU Creative Hub (Porto.pt, 2019; STO1).

There is a consensus among the interviewees that the increase in tourism around 2013 further accelerated Bombarda's transformation. The introduction of low-cost flights

and the city's growing reputation as a cultural destination brought an influx of international visitors. This surge in tourism provided a new customer base for Bombarda's businesses, which had previously struggled to attract local clientele due to limited consumer spending power. The international tourists, with their appreciation for unique and high-quality design, became key patrons of Bombarda's creative offerings. This shift in consumer demographics not only boosted the local economy but also reinforced Bombarda's identity as a cosmopolitan and culturally rich district (STO1).

Simultaneously, the shift from an artistic to an urban culture district in Bombarda was marked by the diversification of its business landscape. Initially known for its art galleries, Bombarda began to attract a wider range of creative enterprises, including design boutiques, vintage shops, and innovative retail spaces. This evolution was driven by entrepreneurs like the partners from CRU and Scar ID, who recognized the potential of Bombarda to serve as a hub for urban culture and lifestyle. The presence of diverse businesses contributed to a vibrant and dynamic community, making Bombarda an attractive destination for both locals and tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences (ENT2; STO1).

BOMBARDA PORTO ART DISTRICT: THE THIRD ATTEMPT OF A FORMAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

While the influence of the association Galerias de Miguel Bombarda was declining, it was still recognized by many stakeholders that a formal collaboration structure would be positive for Bombarda and its businesses. With the collective ambition to enhance the cultural and creative identity of the artistic and creative quarter, came the formation of Bombarda Porto Art District in late 2014, now the third attempt at establishing an association that would cater to the quarter's diverse needs (ENT2).

ENT2 commented that the name "Porto Art District" was part of an effort to brand the area as a cultural and creative hub, leveraging its concentration of contemporary art galleries and alternative businesses. This branding was intended to attract both locals and tourists, enhancing the district's reputation as a center for contemporary art and culture. Initially, the association was composed of a diverse group of individuals, including gallery

owners, restaurateurs, and shopkeepers, who aimed to represent the district's varied interests. Some of the local business owners shortly became active members, taking on responsibilities such as drafting internal regulations and writing official communications. Their energy and dedication were evident as they worked to organize and formalize the association's operations. Despite its promising start, it was soon realized that the association's operations were not as inclusive as they had hoped. Although the initial intention was to represent a broad spectrum of businesses in Bombarda, the association's activities were largely driven by a small group of founders. This led to a lack of consultation with the wider community, making some members uncomfortable with the direction the association was taking, which seemed to inherit the focus from the previous association (Galerias de Miguel Bombarda) on scheduling and promoting simultaneous inaugurations. Over time, the management of these events became less democratic, with decisions being made by a few individuals rather than through community consensus. ENT2 noted that while this centralization made logistical sense, it also led to tensions within the group.

The involvement of the municipal entity *Ágora* was later introduced and it further complicated matters, as it introduced a more formalized approach to organizing these events, which sometimes conflicted with the galleries' needs (ENT2). They now were responsible for collecting information, coordinating with the galleries, and making decisions about the scheduling and the dissemination of promotional materials about the inaugurations. This strategy was intended to streamline the process and provide more structured support for the events, but this centralization led to dissatisfaction among some gallery owners who felt their input was being overlooked. This shift in control created a more municipal-focused agenda, which, while beneficial for broader promotion, sometimes clashed with the specific needs and desires of the local galleries (ENT2).

Despite these tensions, *Ágora*'s involvement seemed to bring benefits to Bombarda. The increased visibility and structured promotion helped to attract more visitors, thus enhancing the district's reputation as a cultural hub. The municipality's support also justified investments in programming and public engagement activities, such as workshops and street events, which aimed to make contemporary art more accessible to a broader audience (ENT2). One example is the Bombarda Stop & Go Initiative, led by Porto City Hall and organized by the municipal company Porto Lazer. The initiative offered guided tours of the

various galleries within Bombarda, designed to engage both the local community and visitors, providing an immersive experience in contemporary art, and specifically targeted students of Visual Arts and Artistic Technologies, offering them a unique opportunity to explore the diverse exhibitions in the district. The tours were free of charge and accommodated groups of up to 30 people, emphasizing accessibility and educational value (Porto.pt, 2017).

Nevertheless, the disillusionment among some members grew as they observed that the association's decision-making processes were not as democratic as they had envisioned, ultimately leading them to gradually disengage from its activities (ENT2). The association is technically and formally still in existence but is inactive and has no ongoing activities. Reflecting on the experience, ENT2 emphasized the importance of community involvement and representation in such initiatives. However it may have been, the journey of some members with the Bombarda Porto Art District association mirrored some of the frustrations felt by other participants in the quarter, not only with this association, but with all the other previous attempts.

Some participants offered a candid perspective on the associations and collaborative efforts made so far. Despite the potential for collaboration, it was observed a significant lack of genuine community spirit among the businesses in Bombarda. It was noted that while there was a frequent discourse about community, cooperation, and sharing, these ideals were not effectively realized in practice. The competitive nature of the businesses often led to a sense of isolation, where each entity focused on retaining its clientele rather than fostering a collaborative environment (STO1). Some described the interactions among businesses as superficial, with a tendency for owners to avoid entering each other's stores, which he interpreted as a form of competitive surveillance rather than genuine interest or support. This behavior highlighted a broader issue of distrust and competition that hindered the development of a cohesive community. Despite the presence of simultaneous inaugurations and other neighborhood events, these did not translate into meaningful collaboration or shared initiatives among the businesses (STO1). Also, although there were specific attempts to foster collaboration, such as street fairs organized by local figures, some business owners expressed skepticism about their effectiveness, citing a pervasive distrust and the complexity of achieving true collaboration. While these events provided opportunities for businesses to meet and share ideas, they did not result in substantial or lasting cooperative efforts (STO1).

GAL1 also reflects a pragmatic approach to collective organization. Initially, some gallerists participated in an association called *Círculo Cultural Miguel Bombarda*, which was composed of about ten to twelve gallery owners. However, GAL1 noted that this association "didn't continue" and was "not very important," indicating a lack of sustained impact or relevance. Ultimately, their focus remained on promoting artists and maintaining the gallery's artistic mission, rather than engaging in broader commercial collaborations with non-gallery businesses (GAL1). Accordingly, GAL2 pointed out the challenges that arose when individual ambitions and the desire for leadership sometimes disrupted collective efforts. He noted that while there were attempts to organize collaborative events beyond the simultaneous openings, these were often hindered by competing interests and the struggle for dominance among participants. Despite these challenges, GAL2 remained a strong advocate for collaboration, understanding its potential to increase visibility and success for all involved.

Finally, ENT1 noted that these early attempts were characterized by "meetings after meetings," but when it came time to implement plans, "no one did anything", suggesting that these associations struggled to maintain momentum and eventually dissolved as key members left and new ones joined, leading to a cycle of stagnation. These dynamics might reflect broader issues faced by the district, where the balance between individual ambitions and collective goals remained a delicate one. Despite these challenges, the association's efforts likely have contributed to Bombarda's cultural reputation, highlighting the importance of continued dialogue and adaptation in fostering a vibrant creative community.

ANOTHER CRISIS SCENARIO: THE COVID-19 GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Coming 2020, The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the Bombarda Creative Quarter, challenging businesses while also revealing their resilience, as the different experiences of each interviewee shows. ENT1 noted that despite the initial disruptions, the pandemic unexpectedly brought a good year of sales for some businesses. This was largely due to the spontaneous support from local Portuguese customers, who rallied to support small businesses during the crisis. ENT2 also highlighted the collective effort within the community to support each other during this period, observing a significant drop in morale

among business owners, which was countered by a strong sense of community support and collaboration. This collective resilience was key to overcoming both financial and emotional challenges (ENT2).

STO1 and STO2 observed the shift in consumer behavior towards online shopping during the pandemic, noting that many people preferred to browse and purchase products online rather than visiting physical stores. In response some stores sought to enhance their online presence and explore new digital marketing strategies to reach their customers. However, the niche nature of Bombarda's offerings made it difficult to find effective digital marketing solutions tailored to the specific needs of some businesses with alternative niches (STO1). The reliance on spontaneous international media coverage became a more effective means of attracting attention and driving sales than traditional digital marketing efforts with this kind of audience (STO1). STO2, noted that the initial impact was severe, with a marked decrease in the number of visitors and tourists. In response, some businesses diversified their offerings by increasing the number of workshops and other services, which provided an alternative source of income. STO2 commented that this strategic pivot was crucial for maintaining some store's viability during a time when traditional retail sales were suffering.

GAL1 also acknowledged the pandemic's impact, noting that it exacerbated existing economic challenges, leading to the closure or relocation of several. GAL2 mirrored the feeling and noted that the pandemic accelerated the shift towards digital platforms, as galleries had to adapt quickly to maintain engagement with their audiences. In response to these challenges, many galleries in Bombarda embraced digital solutions to showcase their art. This included virtual exhibitions and increased online presence, which became essential for survival during periods of lockdown and restricted movement. GAL2 highlighted that while these digital initiatives were crucial, they could not fully replicate the experience of physical exhibitions, which are central to the identity and appeal of Bombarda as a cultural hub. The transition to digital platforms also posed financial challenges, as not all galleries had the resources to invest in the necessary technology and expertise.

GAL3 noted that the pandemic exacerbated existing financial challenges, particularly concerning rent and operational expenses. Many businesses in Bombarda struggled to cover

these costs due to reduced income during the pandemic. This financial strain was a common theme across the creative industries, where income is often dependent on physical attendance and participation in cultural events. In response, newer galleries focused on strengthening their community ties and promoting local artists, which helped maintain a connection with their audience despite the physical constraints imposed by the pandemic. This shift towards community engagement and support for local artists was crucial in sustaining interest and involvement in the arts during a time when traditional exhibitions and events were not feasible (GAL3).

Overall, the pandemic tested the Bombarda community's resilience, but the strong local support and collaborative spirit seemed to have helped many businesses to survive during this unprecedented time. The ability to adapt and innovate was a common theme among businesses in the area, as many sought new ways to engage with their customers and sustain operations.

4.3. Maturity: art, creativity, digital, and urban lifestyle (2022 – Present)

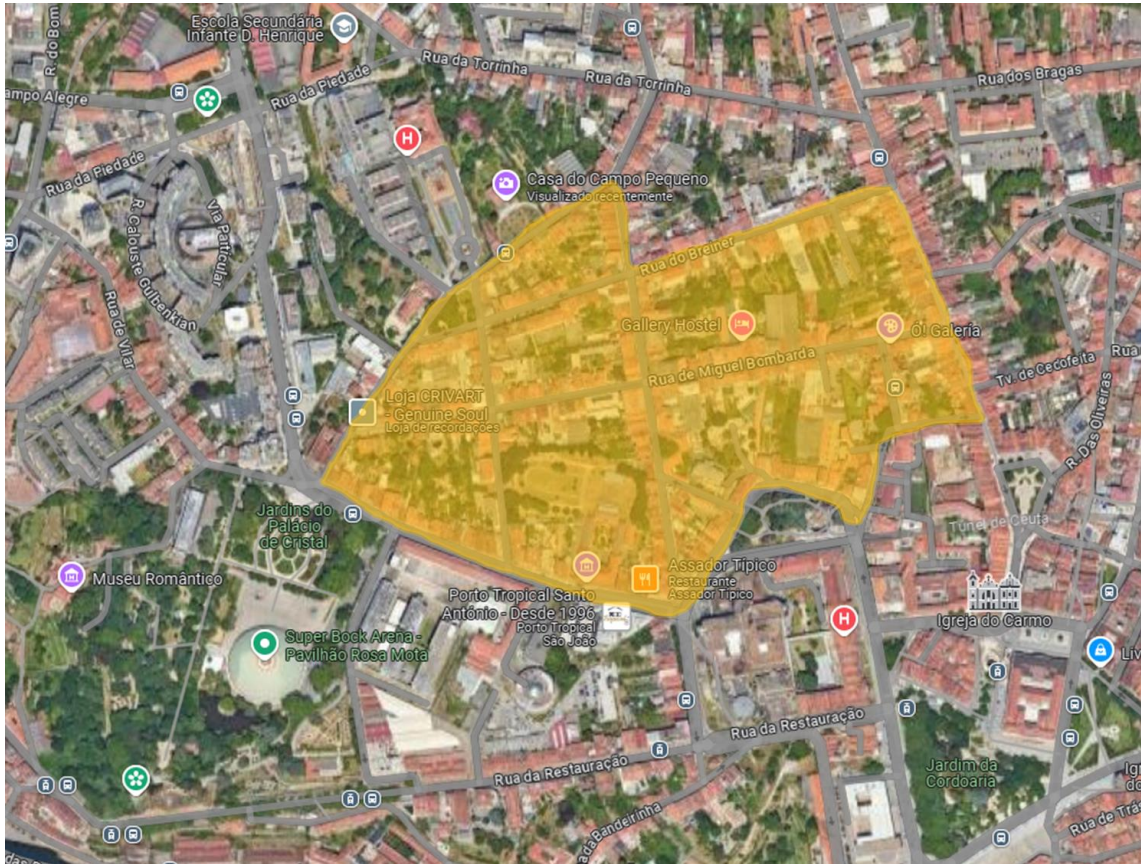


Figure 13 - Bombarda's geographical snapshot in 2024. Source: (Bombarda.pt, 2024). Image edited by the author.

MATURITY, BUT STILL IN ITS EARLY FORM

Lazzaro's framework suggests that the maturity stage of a CCD is characterized by a diverse and stable economic landscape where well-established institutions coexist with a variety of creative ventures, contributing to a robust and multifaceted cultural ecosystem (Lazzaro, 2022). At this stage, the cluster's identity is consolidated, encompassing a broad spectrum of economic activities including galleries, museums, performance venues, and collaborative projects that define its cultural footprint. The actor landscape becomes complex, reflecting a mix of legacy businesses and new entrants, with established artists and cultural institutions maintaining their presence while a continuous influx of emerging talents injects vitality and innovation. Governance models in the maturity stage tend to be more formalized and structured, with collaborations between external entities, local authorities,

and public institutions becoming integral to managing the cluster's complexity. Cultural policies, strategic planning, and public-private partnerships play a pivotal role in sustaining the cultural/creative ecosystem (Lazzaro, 2022).

Additionally, it can be argued that social capital dynamics undergo a transformative shift towards bridging social capital, with the cluster becoming a focal point for cross-sectoral collaborations and knowledge exchange beyond its immediate boundaries (Spinuzzi, 2012). Developmental challenges at this stage can include balancing the preservation of the cluster's cultural identity with commercialization pressures, addressing sustainability and inclusivity issues, and maintaining innovation amid established structures.

To mirror the exercise made in the beginning of growth stage and based on the analysis of previous session, it is possible to visualize the “historical snapshot” that better matches with Lazzaro’s description of the maturity stage. Here, evidence suggests that the key events that triggered the Quarter's development from growth to maturity were (1) a change in the actors’ landscape - starting around 2013, but consolidating at this point - , (2) a diversified mix of economic activities, and (3) the creation of a new association as a promising agent for a more formal and structured governance model, based on learnings from previous unsuccessful attempts.

What started as a cluster of art galleries in a single street in the first stage, progressing into a mix of galleries, and art-related stores and services within 5 streets in the growth stage, now shows a mix of 650 businesses across 10 streets. Figure 14 shows the number of businesses in 2024 versus 2008 and the distribution of those businesses in different categories, which shows the diversity of types of economic activities here in the maturity stage. Figure 15 also shows how many businesses exist between the 10 streets of Bombarda.



Figure 14 - (LEFT) number of businesses in 2024 vs 2008; (RIGHT) number of businesses in different categories, in 2024. Source: (Bomparda.pt, 2024; Google Maps, 2024). Image edited by the author.

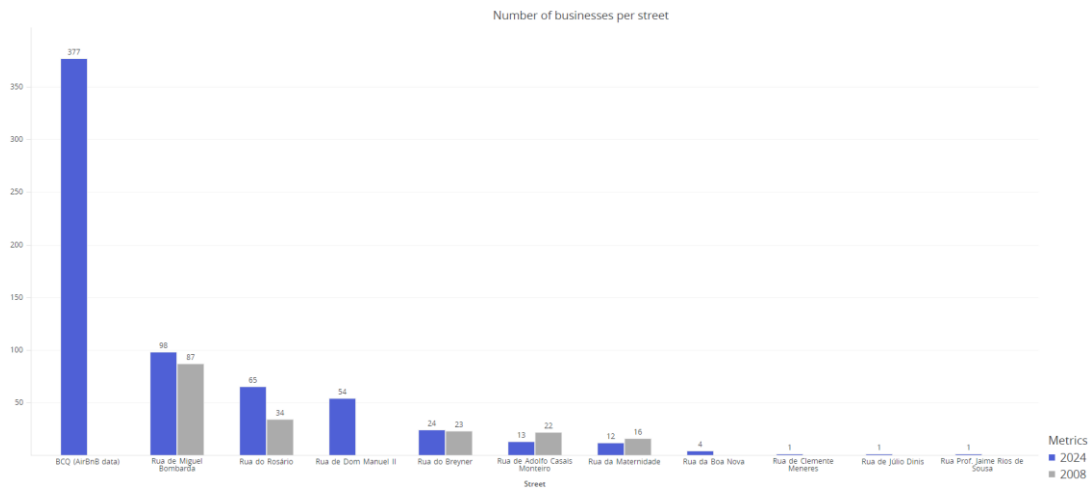


Figure 15 - number of businesses per street in Bombarda (2024 vs 2008). Source: (Bomparda.pt, 2024; Google Maps, 2024). Image edited by the author.

However, nearly 60% of those businesses are short-term rental properties (or rooms) displayed on the website AirBnB, indicated in Figure 15 by the street named “BCQ (AirBnB data)”. It is possible to get this data on the website by carefully placing the map where needed and selecting flexible dates to allow the platform to show more available rentals in that area. Figure 16 shows a print screen of the website at the moment that this search was made, which resulted in 376 available units to rent – but it is not clear how many businesses or people own these units. This metric only allows to see available units, and here, we are considering each available unit as a separate business. Because there are some uncertainties about this metric, AirBnB data will be ignored further on to make the analysis clearer regarding the evolution of Bombarda to the maturity stage. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight this phenomenon, which strongly affects Bombarda’s social and economic

dynamics, although its origin can be more related to the tourism growth on Porto rather than with any factors related specifically to Bombarda. Future studies about the impact of short-term rental properties in Bombarda – and how this type of business relates to other businesses in the area – could be insightful not only socially, but economically (i.e.: using a Customer Journey Map to understand the journey of tourists in Bombarda and suggest how businesses can improve their marketing strategies to drive growth).

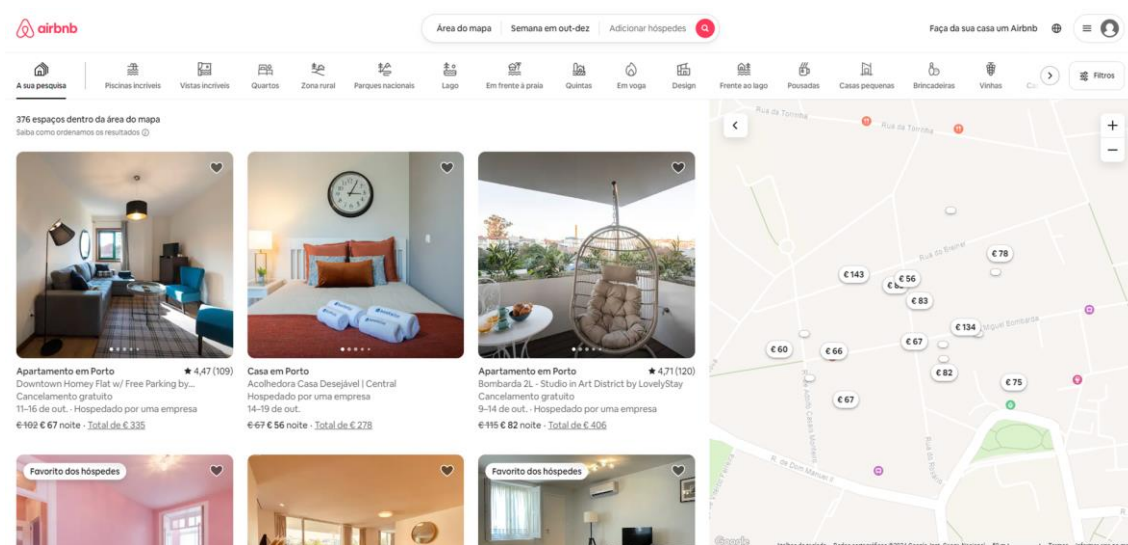


Figure 16 - printscreen showing the search results on AirBnB of available properties in Bombarda

Even disregarding the AirBnB data, Bombarda still shows an impressive growth from 182 businesses in 2008 to 273 businesses in 2024. Figure 17 and Figure 18 show the details of the number of businesses per category and the number of businesses per street, respectively. The category “Hotels and BnBs” is still present. But here, the short-term rental properties being considered are actual businesses (not units) that are associated with Bombarda. This data was collected mainly through two sources: a dynamic map on the website Bombarda.pt, which shows the number of businesses associated with Bombarda (although the author stated that it is not properly updated for more than 2 years), and google maps, which complements the information from the former source.



Figure 17 - Without AirBnB data: (LEFT) number of businesses in 2024 vs 2008; (RIGHT) number of businesses in different categories, in 2024. Source: (Bomparda.pt, 2024; Google Maps, 2024). Image edited by the author.

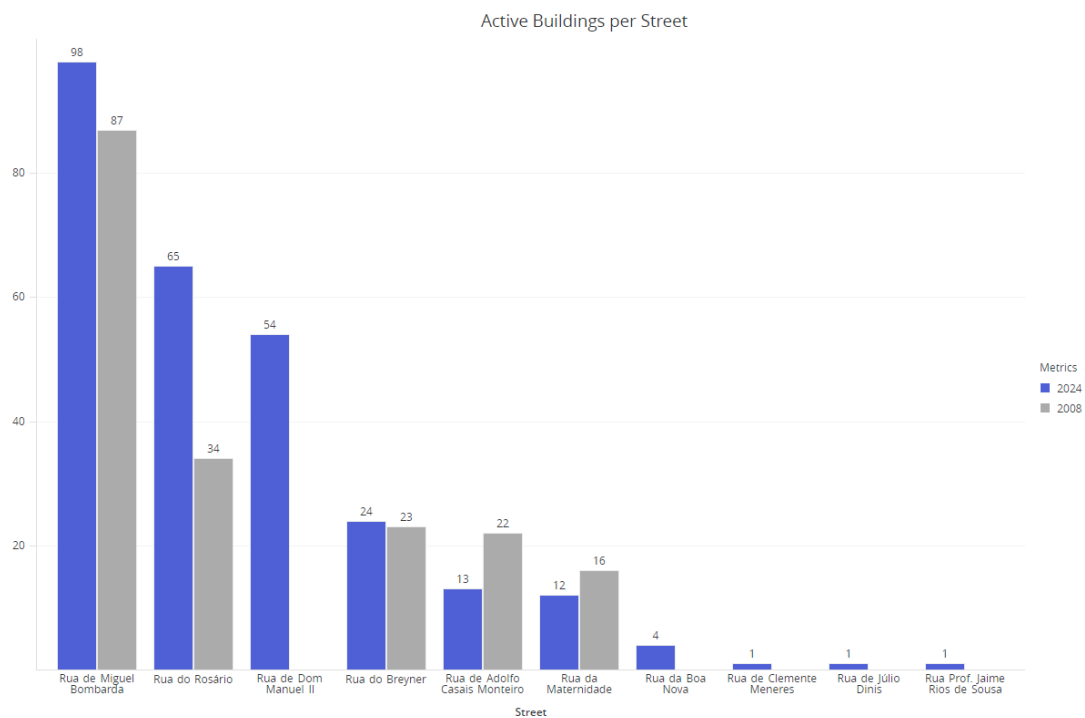


Figure 18 - Without AirBnB data: number of businesses per street in Bombarda (2024 vs 2008). Source: (Bomparda.pt, 2024; Google Maps, 2024). Image edited by the author.

In 2024 it is observed the consolidation of businesses in the category “Studios, Ateliers, and Coworking spaces” - which saw its beginning around 2013, as explained in the previous section and exemplified with the story of CRU -, the appearance of Museu Soares do Reis as a more frequent collaborator with Bombarda in the last 2 year or so - hence its presence in the figure -, and a growth in all categories since 2008, except for professional services. The diversity within each category is also significant, although most of them cater to very specific alternative niches somewhat connected to arts and urban culture.

Stores, for example, aggregate businesses specialized in a range of products, such as clothes, jewelry, wines, cosmetics, flowers, books and magazines, furniture, decoration, design, antiquities, food, foreign culture, and more. There is a range of options of Restaurants and Coffee Shops specialized in national and international gastronomy like Mexican, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Brazilian, and others. Professional services are a mix of art-related services such as design and hairstyle, and traditional services such as parking lots, schools, photocopies, laundries, and others, with more predominance on the former. Hotels and BnBs offers a variety of options from rooms to traditional and boutique units, with some of them even presenting an artistic touch aligned with Bombarda’s vibrancy.

Art Galleries are the traditional galleries still setting the cultural tone around fine arts and are now considered a legacy and established type-of-player in Bombarda. Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking spaces unite the players in the creative economy, leading themes such as ecommerce and digitalization, while providing access to specialized human capital (also known as knowledge workers), which are good ingredients to grow bridging social capital in the quarter.

It is also interesting to note the diversity of businesses present in each street in Figure 19, which shows that there is almost no predominance of a category concentrated in a single street, although 60% of Art Galleries still reside in Rua de Miguel Bombarda. All of this is aligned with Lazzaro’s (2022) claim that mature districts often display a broad spectrum of economic activities, and the actor landscape becomes more complex.

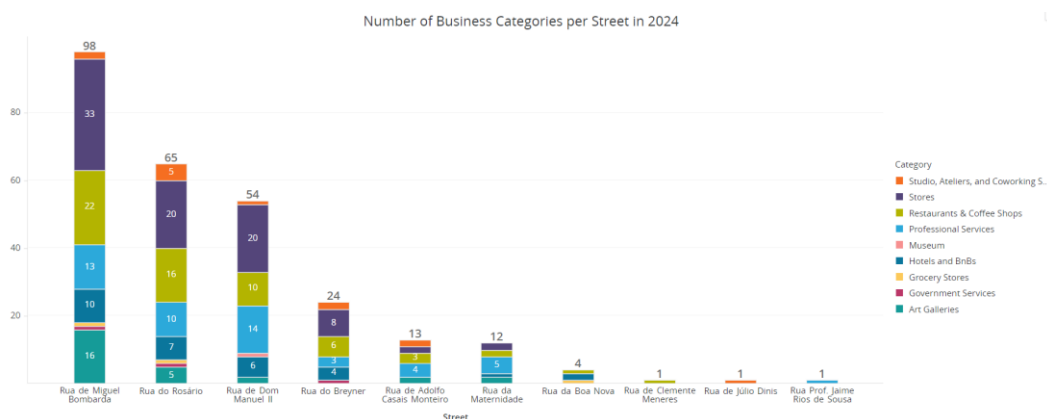


Figure 19 – Without AirBnB data: Number of business categories in each street. Source: (Bomparda.pt, 2024; Google Maps, 2024). Image edited by the author.

In this transition from growth to maturity, it seems Bombarda is now faced with a plethora of different businesses, from varying categories, with distinct business models – and thus, influenced and pressured by different social and economic incentives –, all of which contributes to an increased challenge in setting-up the right governance model and striving the right balance between bonding and bridging social capital in the quarter.

CREATIVE QUARTER – ASSOCIATION FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

To respond to this increased complexity, comes the creation of the association *Quarteirão Criativo – Associação para o Desenvolvimento Local*, which represents a significant shift in Bombarda towards a more innovative, collaborative and inclusive community. This initiative was co-founded by Tânia Santos in early 2022, alongside other stakeholders who shared a vision for fostering local development through creative and cultural engagement (ENT2). Tânia, who had previously been involved with the Bombarda Porto Art District association, felt a need for an organization that could more effectively represent and nurture the diverse interests of Bombarda (ENT2). The motivation behind establishing *Quarteirão Criativo* was rooted in the desire to address the challenges that Bombarda faced, such as collaboration tensions and economic sustainability, while promoting the district's cultural identity. ENT2 reinforced that previous efforts to organize the community had not fully embraced the inclusive and representative approach in the way some members envisioned. They believed that a new association could better serve the district by involving a broader spectrum of stakeholders, including artists, business owners, galleries, and residents in decision-making processes (ENT2).

This is evidenced by the organizational model adopted by the association, which was designed to be inclusive and representative of the diverse community it serves, and to foster a sense of ownership and collaboration between its members. Currently, the leadership structure of the association is composed of a Board of Directors, a General Assembly, a Fiscal Council, and a Consultative Council, each with distinct roles and responsibilities.

“Os Órgãos Sociais de uma associação, são, em princípio, um conjunto de pessoas com interesses comuns, que se voluntariam para dirigir, orientar e sistematizar esforços conjuntos, criando as condições organizacionais que

permitem que a missão da associação seja cumprida. Na génese desta organização, estabeleceu-se que este grupo de pessoas fosse, tanto quanto possível, heterogéneo e diversificado. Neste núcleo estão assim representados os diversos tipos de sectores e tipologias de negócios que podem ser encontrados em Bombarda, as diversas ruas que compõem a geografia do quarteirão e compreende diferentes perspectivas e vivências no território (lojistas, empreendedores, moradores). Acredita-se que, desta forma, estejamos mais perto de uma representatividade fidedigna e de uma compreensão holística dos interesses, necessidades e ambições de quem vive e trabalha em Bombarda.” (Bombarda.pt, 2024)

The Board of Directors is led by Tânia Santos, who serves as the President. Santos is a prominent figure in the creative sector, having founded the CRU Creative Hub in Porto. Her background in psychology and economics, coupled with her experience as vice-president of the European Creative Hubs Network, positions her as a leader focused on enhancing the creative ecosystem's impact on society and the economy. The board also includes Cátia Fernandes as the Secretary, whose career in communication and editorial projects, such as ROOF Magazine, underscores her expertise in managing creative and cultural communication. Marina Costa serves as the Treasurer, bringing her extensive experience in local business development and event organization to the role. Costa's long-standing involvement in the Bombarda area and her role in creating significant local events highlight her deep understanding of the community's social and economic dynamics (Bombarda.pt, 2024).

The General Assembly is presided over by Virgínia França, with Nuno Santos as the Secretary and Paula Sá as a member. Sá, an art gallery owner with a background in art history, contributes her expertise in cultural dynamics, which is crucial for the association's mission to preserve and promote the artistic character of the Quarter. The Fiscal Council is headed by Gonçalo Cruz, with Sérgio Barbosa as the Secretary and David Sampaio as a member. Barbosa's experience in the hospitality industry and Sampaio's expertise in urban mobility solutions provide valuable perspectives on the economic and infrastructural aspects of the district's development (Bombarda.pt, 2024).

Additionally, the association has established a Consultative Council to enhance its strategic capabilities. This council includes subject-matter experts like André Alvarim in innovation, António Ponte in museology, Cristina Farinha in creative industries, and Luís Carvalho in research & innovation, among others. These individuals bring a wealth of knowledge in various fields such as cultural policy, urban planning, and economic development, which supports the association's goals of fostering a dynamic and sustainable community (Bombarda.pt, 2024).

Like previous attempts to setup governance models in Bombarda, the newly founded association is now trying to build a more formal, planned and structured approach to foster collaboration, reinforce Bombarda's cultural identity and drive economic growth to local businesses. However, what represents a major shift here is the way in which Quarteirão Criativo is governed, and how that translates into action. The association seems to strive for a balance between cultural and economic values and assumes a decentralized structure with a bottom-up approach, emphasizing community involvement and participatory decision-making.

This is evident not only in the organizational structures mentioned above but also in several initiatives, all designed to empower local stakeholders and foster a sense of collective responsibility. Encouraging local stakeholders in decision-making processes is being facilitated through the establishment of working groups that focus on various aspects of community development, which are open to anyone interested, allowing for a diverse range of voices and perspectives to contribute to the planning and execution of projects. Other examples were the public gathering to present all the members of the Consultative Council in October of 2023, and the convocation to the General Assembly in April of 2024, with a public agenda published on the website – like accounting approvals, the activity plan for 2024, and other bureaucratic matters -, and a shared folder so members could access any important documents from the association (Bombarda.pt, 2024). This inclusivity ensures that the initiatives undertaken by the association reflect the needs and aspirations of the community it serves (ENT2).

Now, with more than 60 associated members in nearly two years of existence, the newly founded association aims to promote and support the development of the local area,

focusing on enhancing the quality of life for its residents, fostering economic growth, and serving as a catalyst for solidarity, cooperation, and networking among merchants, entrepreneurs, and residents within Bombarda (Bombarda.pt, 2024).

FROM STRATEGY TO ACTION

Another key differentiator of this association compared to the previous ones is its capacity to go beyond meetings and translate strategy into constant execution. Since its inception, Quarteirão Criativo has focused on several key initiatives to promote Bombarda's cultural, social, urban, environmental, and economic dimensions at local, regional, and international levels. In their website, they constantly update the public with invitations for meetups, conferences, expositions, and other events that are happening in Bombarda (or outside of it, if its related).

Since January of 2023, there have been 7 meetups open to the public to discuss ways to improve the neighborhood, each with a different theme such as innovation, creativity, digital and media arts, sustainability, and others (see Figure 20). One example was the meetup about creative districts that happened in July of 2023, which aimed to share with the public information on the key factors influencing the development of creative hubs such as Bombarda. Another key initiative is the frequent publication of contents on the social media platform Instagram, where the page of the association (@bombarda.pt) shares news, events, and actively promotes local businesses by sharing products, experiences, and stories related to businesses in Bombarda as seen in Figure 21 (Bombarda.pt, 2024).

Also, the members of the association have implemented a communication strategy that leverages digital platforms to facilitate real-time information sharing among community members. A WhatsApp group, originally created to address immediate concerns such as security issues, has evolved into a vital communication tool that supports the association's activities and fosters a sense of community. This platform allows members to stay informed about ongoing projects, share resources, and collaborate on initiatives, further reinforcing the bottom-up approach (ENT2). All these initiatives are more inward-looking and seem to be focusing on reinforcing social cohesion and inclusivity, catering primarily to bonding social capital.

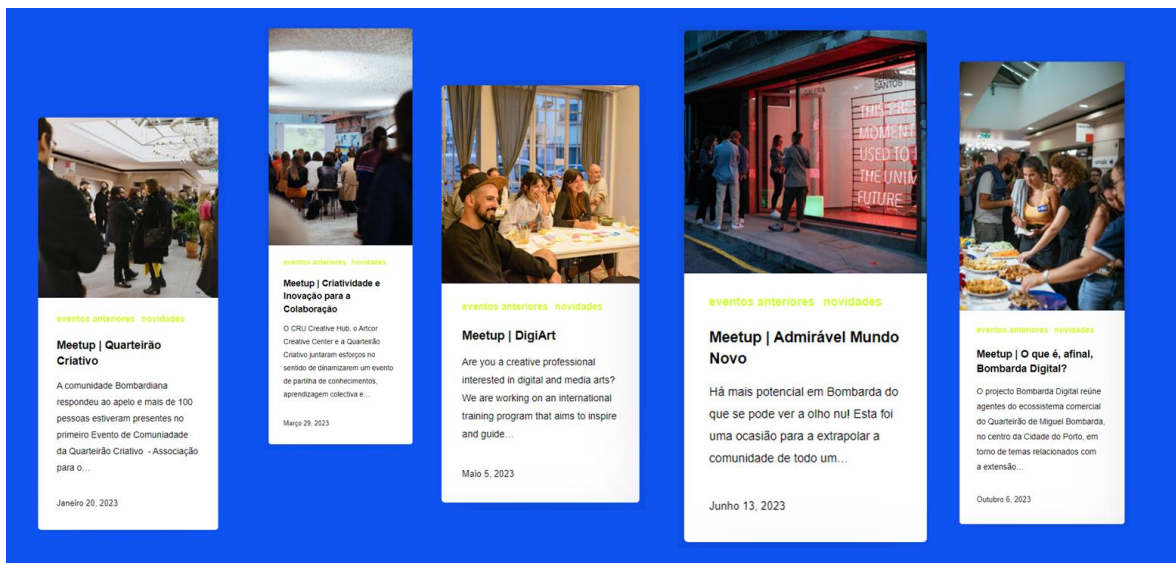


Figure 20 – Promotional content about meetups organized by the association Quarteirão Criativo. Sources: Bombarda.pt, 2024.

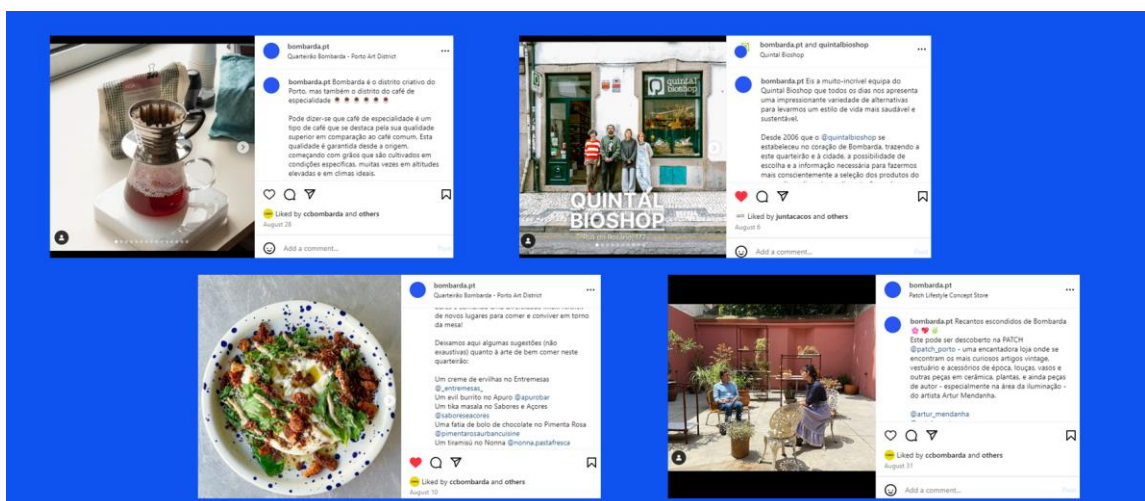


Figure 21 – Social media posts in the Instagram page @bombarda.pt, promoting local businesses from the quarter. Source: @bombarda.pt, 2024.

Furthermore, the participation of some board members in the conferences of Territórios Criativos and Creative Skills Week highlights their active engagement in fostering creative and cultural development. The Territórios Criativos online conference took place on August 24, 2023, and was an international event focused on creative territories. It provided a platform for discussing the role of creative districts in urban revitalization and economic development. The new association was invited to participate, showcasing their initiatives and contributions to the Bombarda Creative Quarter in Porto (Bombarda.pt,

2023). Creative Skills Week, held in Vienna from October 9 to October 13, 2023, was another significant event where members from the association were present. The conference, themed "Anticipating Creative Futures," focused on the intersection of creativity and future skills needed in the evolving cultural landscape. One of the objectives in this conference was to gain insights into emerging trends and technologies that could be applied to their local projects, furthering their mission to promote the district's cultural and artistic identity on an international scale (Bombarda.pt, 2023).

Following this internationalization strategy, the association aligned itself with a network of over 300 creative hubs across Europe by officially joining the European Creative Hubs Network (ECHN) on August 30, 2023. This membership represents a strategic move to foster collaboration, share best practices, and enhance the district's visibility on an international stage (Bombarda, 2023). The ECHN is a peer-led network that aims to amplify the creative, economic, and social impact of its member hubs. By joining this network, Quarteirão Criativo gains access to a wealth of resources and opportunities for collaboration. The network facilitates connections between creative professionals and organizations, enabling them to engage in joint projects and initiatives that can drive innovation and cultural development. Participation in the ECHN also provides Quarteirão Criativo with a platform to showcase its initiatives and achievements, thereby attracting new audiences and potential collaborators (Bombarda, 2023). The participation of the association in these conferences and international hubs serves as key examples of fostering bridging social capital, facilitating connections and collaborations across diverse networks.



Figure 22 – Members of the European Creative Hubs Network across Europe. Source: ECHN website, 2024.

Since 2023, the association also engaged in three bigger and more strategic projects with local, regional and international partners. The first one, The Twin Hubs project, was an exchange program under the Creative FLIP Peer2Peer initiative, designed to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange between creative hubs in different regions. This program connected the Bombarda Creative Quarter in Porto, Portugal, with the Garagen-Campus in Chemnitz, Germany. Launched in September 2022, the project aimed to enhance the creative and cultural capacities of both districts through mutual learning and collaborative projects. Key participants included creative professionals, local businesses, and cultural organizations from both regions, engaging in workshops, joint exhibitions, and events that showcase the unique cultural assets of each district (Bombarda.pt, 2022).

More recently, the "Afinidades" project is a collaborative initiative between the Museu Nacional Soares dos Reis and the Association, designed to explore and celebrate the intersections of contemporary jewelry and cultural heritage. Launched in 2024, the project aims to foster a dialogue between traditional and modern artistic expressions, using jewelry as a medium to connect past and present artistic practices. The project involves a series of exhibitions and workshops that bring together local artists, designers, and cultural institutions to create and showcase innovative jewelry pieces inspired by historical artifacts and themes from the museum's collection. The "Afinidades" project is hosted at the Museu

Nacional Soares dos Reis in Porto, providing a platform for both established and emerging artists to engage with the museum's rich cultural heritage (Bombarda.pt, 2024).

Finally, the third project with great tangible impact was Bombarda Digital, a transformative project, aimed at enhancing the digital capabilities of the Bombarda Quarter in Porto, Portugal. It is part of the broader "Bairros Comerciais Digitais" program under Portugal's Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR). The project is led by the Municipality of Porto, in collaboration with Associação Porto Digital and the association Quarteirão Criativo, focusing on the digital transition of local businesses and the community. Launched in 2023 and finishing in 2025, the project seeks to relaunch and revalue the commerce and services sectors in Bombarda, which were significantly affected by the pandemic. Key objectives include promoting digital commerce, enhancing urban accessibility and sustainability, and fostering social inclusion and intergenerational dialogue. The project has involved various stakeholders, including local businesses, residents, and cultural institutions, in workshops and collaborative sessions aimed at developing digital tools and solutions (Bombarda.pt, 2024).

Initiatives born from this project include the Bombarda Digital Lab, a bootcamp for innovation and prototyping digital tools; Bombarda Circular, a workshop focused on Design Thinking for the Circular Economy; Hearing sessions and work groups, with members from and outside the neighborhood to get feedback and build initiatives for initiatives within the project Bombarda Digital; and the creation of a Bombarda app to enhance local commerce and community engagement. The impact of Bombarda Digital and the other two projects has been substantial, and are good examples of balancing the interplay between bonding and bridging social capital with both inward- and outward-looking initiatives (Bombarda, 2024).

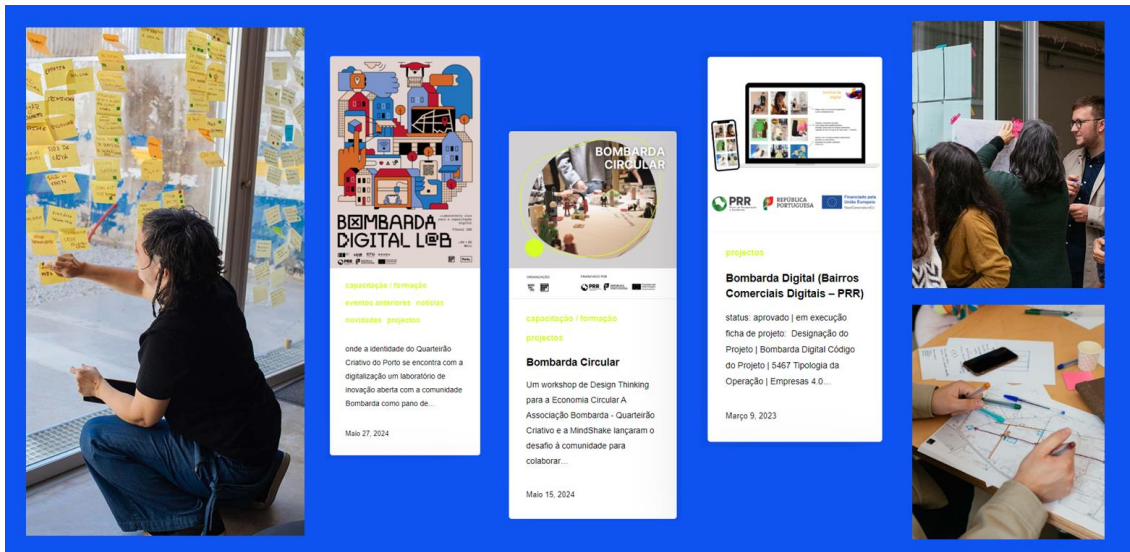


Figure 23 - Pictures and promotional content about initiatives in the project Bombarda Digital. Source: (Bombarda.pt, 2024)

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

All of this happened in parallel with the other already-established activities in Bombarda, such as the Simultaneous Inaugurations and the events and fairs organized by CC Bombarda and Artes em Partes. They continue to flourish, and art galleries continue to be key stakeholders in Bombarda when the subject is fine and contemporary arts.

Also, although the association is off to an impressive start with impactful initiatives in less than 2 years of existence, they still seem to be facing a lot of challenges ahead. Some traditional gallerists view on the phenomenon of the new entrants and the new association, for example, seem to translate a strong sentiment of indifference, which may indicate that the business model of art galleries is so specific that it becomes difficult to interact with other stakeholders in the quarter beyond the event of the Simultaneous Inaugurations (GAL1).

On the other side, in the view of non-traditional gallerists, GAL3 reflects on broader issues within the Bombarda Creative Quarter, critiquing the concentration of opportunities and recognition within a small group of established names, a phenomenon observed as pervasive across the arts in Portugal. This exclusivity restricts the visibility and opportunities for lesser-known artists, a dynamic that her gallery actively seeks to counteract by promoting

emerging artists without prior representation. GAL3 also addresses the difficulties in fostering collective organization within the quarter. Despite initial efforts to engage with the neighborhood and participate in events aimed at developing the space, logistical challenges such as conflicting schedules have hindered sustained collaboration. This has led to a sense of isolation, particularly considering spaces located at the less frequented ends of the quarter. However, GAL3 notes that interactions with individual artists remain robust, highlighting an upcoming event with a local artist as an example of their ongoing engagement with the creative community.

And from a store's owner perspective, when turning to the broader challenges of the Bombarda Creative Quarter, STO1 describes the area as historically centered around art galleries, although there was a clear potential for the district to evolve into a hub for urban culture and lifestyle. Despite this potential, STO1 still notes a lack of genuine community and cooperation among businesses, which is partially attributed to economic constraints and competition for the same clientele. This lack of collaboration has been a persistent issue, with businesses remaining largely isolated despite sharing a common space (STO1). Also, the threat of gentrification and the influx of mass tourism are current concerns for Bombarda. STO1 fears that rising rents and the potential for the area to become a tourist hotspot could displace the creative and niche businesses that define the quarter, noting a shift in the type of tourists visiting Porto, with a trend towards mass tourism that does not align with the target audience of many stores. Despite these challenges, STO1 sees an opportunity for the Bombarda community to strengthen its network and foster a more collaborative environment, hoping that the current mood among business owners is more conducive to cooperation, although remaining skeptical about the effectiveness of existing digital-focused initiatives. STO1 emphasizes the need for tangible, physical community-building efforts rather than relying solely on digital platforms.

Interestingly enough, all those challenges posed by the interviewees are related to failure in rightfully catering to bonding social capital strategies. In fact, these issues represent a common misalignment when a social group tends to focus too much on outward-looking initiatives (bridging), but do not care to invest in true social cohesion and inclusivity (Putnam, 2000). And now, balancing the interplay between bridging and bonding social capital, and

striving for economic growth while maintaining Bombarda’s cultural heritage is going to be a constant challenge to the new association Quarteirão Criativo.

5. Descriptive Analysis: Social Capital

The analysis below contains the descriptive results from an analysis of social capital in Bombarda’s Creative District, focusing on four main categories: social networks, trust, reciprocity, and belonging. Each category assesses different aspects of interactions and relationships among businesses, galleries, and institutions within the district, providing insights into the district's social dynamics and cohesion over time. Contrary to the qualitative approaches, this analysis is a broad description rather than a deep dive into the relationships between those dimensions. Future studies would be necessary to collect a larger number of samples that would allow to make correlations and longitudinal analysis.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The questionnaire applied to Bombarda retrieved 17 answers. The demographics show a representative set of profiles from various businesses and business owners, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: On the left: the years which different respondents arrived in Bombarda; On the right: number of respondents per category and per age range. The category was inferred based on the business description in the questionnaire.

Year the business arrived in Bombarda	No of Businesses
1999	1
2011	1
2013	1
2014	1
2015	3
2016	1
2017	1
2018	1
2020	2
2021	2
2023	2
2024	1
Grand Total	17

Categories	No of Businesses
Art Galleries	1
Professional Services	2
Restaurants & Coffee Shops	4
Stores	8
Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	2
Grand Total	17

Age Range	No of Businesses
30-40	3
41-50	4
51-60	8
Less than 30yo	2
Grand Total	17

SOCIAL NETWORKS

The tables below show varying levels of interaction between different types of businesses, including art galleries, studio ateliers, coworking spaces, hotels, BnBs, stores, professional services, restaurants, and coffee shops. For example, art galleries have frequent interactions with stores and restaurants, but less so with studio ateliers and coworking spaces. Overall, it suggests that social networks in Bombarda are moderately strong, with certain businesses showing more frequent collaboration. Additionally, there is a focus on the evolution of these interactions, showing whether social networks have increased, decreased, or remained stable over time.

Table 3 - number of types of collaborations the respondents said they had with other businesses (in general)

Types of collaborations	No of answers from businesses
Informal collaborations (conversations, exchanges of favors, networking, etc.)	10
Formal collaborations (purchasing, sales, contracts, business and event creation, etc.)	5
Simultaneous Openings	8
Other types of interaction	2
None	1

Table 4 - Codification of the answer provided in by the respondents in the questionnaire. In each table, on the left, is the actual option on the form. On the right, is the codification to make a descriptive interpretation.

Interaction	Numerical Coding
No interactions	1
Very frequent interactions	5

Evolution	Numerical Coding
Decreased	0
Remained the same	5
Increased	10

Table 5 - Above: shows in what frequency each business interact with other categories. Below: show the evolution over time.

Category	AVERAGE OF FREQUENCY OF INTERACTIONS BETWEEN BUSINESSES					
	with Galerias de Arte	with Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	with Hotels and BnBs	with Stores	with Professional Services	with Restaurants & Coffee
Art Galleries	5,0	1,0	3,0	3,0	1,0	3,0
Professional Services	2,0	2,0	3,0	2,5	2,5	2,5
Restaurants & Coffee Shops	2,8	2,8	3,0	2,8	2,5	3,8
Stores	2,1	1,5	1,8	3,3	2,8	3,1
Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	2,0	2,0	2,0	3,5	3,0	3,5
Grand Total	2,4	1,9	2,3	3,1	2,6	3,2

Category	EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL NETWORKS OVER TIME BETWEEN BUSINESSES					
	with Galerias de Arte	with Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	with Hotels and BnBs	with Stores	with Professional Services	with Restaurants & Coffee
Art Galleries	10	0	0	10	0	5
Professional Services	5	5	5	5	5	5
Restaurants & Coffee Shops	6,3	5,0	7,5	6,3	7,5	8,8
Stores	6,3	6,3	6,3	7,5	8,1	7,5
Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	5	5	7,5	7,5	7,5	7,5
Grand Total	6,2	5,3	6,2	7,1	7,1	7,4

TRUST

The data measures trust levels between different business types, with art galleries generally displaying high levels of trust in other businesses, such as restaurants and coffee shops. Professional services, restaurants, and coworking spaces also show relatively high levels of trust in each other. The evolution of trust between businesses is also highlighted, showing whether trust has increased or remained constant. This suggests that, overall, the district maintains a healthy level of trust among its businesses, though some variability exists depending on the sector (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6: Codification of the answer provided in by the respondents in the questionnaire. In each table, on the left, is the actual option on the form. On the right, is the codification to make a descriptive interpretation.

Trust	Numerical Coding	Evolution	Numerical Coding
No Trust	1	Decreased	0
Total Trust	5	Remained the same	5
		Increased	10

Table 7 - Above: shows the level of trust each business has with other categories. Below: show the evolution over time.

Category	AVERAGE OF LEVEL OF TRUST BETWEEN BUSINESSES					
	with Galerias de Arte	with Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	with Hotels and BnBs	with Stores	with Professional Services	with Restaurants & Coffee
Art Galleries	5,0	1,0	2,0	1,0	1,0	3,0
Professional Services	3,5	3,5	3,5	4,0	4,0	4,0
Restaurants & Coffee Shops	3,0	3,3	3,0	3,3	3,3	3,5
Stores	3,9	3,6	3,9	4,1	3,9	3,6
Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	3,0	2,5	2,5	3,0	3,5	2,5
Grand Total	3,6	3,2	3,4	3,6	3,5	3,5

Category	EVOLUTION OF TRUST OVER TIME BETWEEN BUSINESSES					
	with Galerias de Arte	with Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	with Hotels and BnBs	with Stores	with Professional Services	with Restaurants & Coffee
Art Galleries	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0
Professional Services	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0
Restaurants & Coffee Shops	5,0	6,3	6,3	5,0	6,3	8,8
Stores	5,0	6,3	6,3	6,3	6,9	5,6
Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	5,0	7,5	7,5	7,5	7,5	10,0
Grand Total	5,0	6,2	6,2	5,9	6,5	6,8

RECIPROCITY

Reciprocity is assessed by the frequency of favor exchanges between different business types. Art galleries, for instance, engage frequently in favor exchanges with other galleries, coworking spaces, and stores, though less so with professional services. The evolution of reciprocity over time shows that, in general, exchanges of favors have increased, particularly between restaurants, stores, and coworking spaces, indicating a growing sense of cooperation among businesses (Tables 8 and 9)

Table 8: Codification of the answer provided in by the respondents in the questionnaire. In each table, on the left, is the actual option on the form. On the right, is the codification to make a descriptive interpretation.

Frequency of Exchange of favors	Numerical Coding	Evolution	Numerical Coding
Never	1	Decreased	0
Always	5	Remained the same	5
		Increased	10

Table 9 - Above: shows in what frequency each business exchange favors with other categories. Below: show the evolution over time.

Category	FREQUENCY IN EXCHANGE OF FAVORS BETWEEN BUSINESSES					
	with Galerias de Arte	with Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	with Hotels and BnBs	with Stores	with Professional Services	with Restaurants & Coffee Shops
Art Galleries	5,0	3,0	3,0	3,0	3,0	4,0
Professional Services	1,5	1,5	1,5	2,5	2,5	2,5
Restaurants & Coffee Shops	1,3	1,8	1,5	2,3	2,3	3,0
Stores	1,8	2,0	2,4	3,1	2,9	2,5
Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	2,0	2,5	3,0	4,0	3,0	4,0
Grand Total	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,9	2,7	2,9

Category	EVOLUTION OF FREQUENCY OF EXCHANGE OF FAVORS BETWEEN BUSINESSES					
	with Galerias de Arte	with Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	with Hotels and BnBs	with Stores	with Professional Services	with Restaurants & Coffee Shops
Art Galleries	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0
Professional Services	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0	5,0
Restaurants & Coffee Shops	5,0	5,0	6,3	7,5	6,3	6,3
Stores	5,6	6,9	6,9	8,1	7,5	6,3
Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Spaces	7,5	5,0	10,0	7,5	7,5	10,0
Grand Total	5,6	5,9	6,8	7,4	6,8	6,5

BELONGING

The sense of belonging is analyzed through responses about whether businesses feel part of Bombarda’s cultural community. The results show that most businesses—particularly restaurants, stores, and coworking spaces—feel a strong sense of belonging, with the majority expressing positive sentiments towards being part of the district. However, a small proportion of businesses indicate that they could easily operate elsewhere, suggesting that not all feel fully integrated into the community (Tables 10 and 11)

Table 10 - Codification of the answer provided in by the respondents in the questionnaire. In each table, on the left, is the actual option on the form. On the right, is the codification to make a descriptive interpretation.

Sentiment	Numerical Coding	Evolution	Numerical Coding
Negative	0	Decreased	0
Positive	10	Remained the same	5
No answer	5	Increased	10
Neutral	5		

Table 11 - Above: shows how each category feels about belonging in the community. Below: show the evolution over time.

Category	Today, do you have a sense of belonging to the cultural community of Bombarda?		
	No. It could be anywhere else in Porto with good conditions.	Yes. I like being in Bombarda and I feel that I belong to the community of the	No of Businesses
Art Galleries		1	1
Professional Services		1	1
Restaurants & Coffee Shops		4	4
Stores		8	8
Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Space	1	1	2
Grand Total	1	15	16

Category	Average of Evolution of the sense of belonging to the
Art Galleries	10
Professional Services	5
Restaurants & Coffee Shops	8,75
Stores	8,75
Studio, Ateliers, and Coworking Space	10
Grand Total	8,5

6. Discussion of results

6.1. Qualitative approaches

Based on the analysis of the Bombarda Creative Quarter's evolution through the lens of Lazzaro's taxonomy, and the adaptation made in the Lifecycle Matrix, it appears that Bombarda largely fits the described lifecycle stages, with a few potential misalignments.

EMERGENCE

In summary, the emergence of Bombarda's art cluster aligns with the characteristics of the emergence stage described in the literature review. It exemplifies the period of experimentation, risk-taking, and passion typical of this stage, with governance being largely decentralized and community-driven (Lazzaro, 2022). The strong presence of bonding social capital and the challenges faced in gaining recognition and financial stability are also consistent with the theoretical framework presented in the literature review.

The economic activities during this period were primarily centered around contemporary art galleries, with the Fernando Santos Gallery opening as the pioneering establishment (Bastos et al., 2009), followed by the opening of other galleries. These early ventures were experimental in nature, taking advantage of the area's affordable rent prices and accessibility. The actors driving this emergence were visionary individuals and pioneering entrepreneurs who saw potential in the area. Fernando Santos played a crucial role in initiating the movement to concentrate galleries in Bombarda. Another key actor was Marina Santos, who established Artes em Partes and CC Bombarda, introducing a unique concept that combined elements of a gallery with a diverse retail approach (Bastos et al., 2009; ENT1).

The governance models during this emergence stage were largely decentralized and community-driven, reflecting the organic nature of the cluster's development. Initial collaborations were informal, with gallerists and businesses forming loose associations to foster cooperation. The first formal attempt at organization came in 1999 with the formation of the Círculo Cultural Miguel Bombarda, followed by the Association of Galerias da Miguel Bombarda in 2000 (Dias, 2009; ENT1; GAL1). These early organizational efforts, while

short-lived, represented attempts to create synergies and coordinate activities within the district.

Social capital during the emergence of Bombarda's art cluster leaned heavily towards bonding. The close-knit community of gallerists, artists, and cultural entrepreneurs formed strong interpersonal ties, providing mutual support and fostering a sense of shared purpose. This is evident in the collaborative initiatives such as the Inaugurações Simultâneas (Simultaneous Inaugurations), which aimed to boost visibility and create a collective artistic atmosphere in the quarter (Bastos et al., 2009).

The main challenges during this period included attracting visitors, establishing the area's identity as an arts district, and ensuring financial sustainability for the emerging ventures. The initial years of Artes em Partes was described as "very complicated," indicating the difficulties in implementing and sustaining such an unconventional business model (ENT1). The project, while highly recognized, struggled to generate significant profits, highlighting the financial challenges faced by pioneering ventures in the cluster.

The combination of visionary actors, decentralized governance models, and strong bonding social capital proved effective in addressing many of the challenges faced during the emergence stage. The collaborative spirit among gallerists and cultural entrepreneurs helped overcome initial hurdles and establish Bombarda as a recognized arts district. The success of initiatives like the Inaugurações Simultâneas demonstrated the power of collective action in attracting visitors and creating a vibrant atmosphere. However, financial sustainability remained a persistent challenge, as evidenced by the experiences of ventures like Artes em Partes.

GROWTH

The growth stage of Bombarda's art cluster also aligns well with the growth stage proposed by Lazzaro in her taxonomy. According to Lazzaro, the growth stage of a cultural or creative cluster is characterized by dynamic expansion and diversification of economic activities, a more complex actor landscape, and evolving governance models (Lazzaro, 2022). Bombarda's development from 2007 to 2021 exemplifies these characteristics.

During this growth stage, Bombarda saw a mix of experimental risk-taking ventures and established businesses. The founding of CC Bombarda and events like the Inaugurações Simultâneas and the Cultural Circuit expanded the district beyond traditional art galleries to include creative shops, cafes, and other establishments, contributing to a broader artistic identity, despite all the social tensions (Bastos et al., 2009). This diversification was crucial in attracting a wider range of visitors and investors, which, in turn, supported the district's economic viability. This expansion aligns with Lazzaro's description of a flourishing cluster witnessing the coexistence of established enterprises and emerging ventures, reflecting both stability and innovation.

The actor landscape in Bombarda became increasingly complex, involving pioneering entrepreneurs, visionary individuals, and new entrants. The establishment of CRU Creative Hub in 2012 exemplifies the influx of emerging talents and entrepreneurs who sought to leverage Bombarda's cultural dynamics to foster creativity and community (ENT2). This mirrors Lazzaro's observation that the growth stage involves a mix of pioneers from the emergence stage and new entrants drawn by the cluster's reputation.

Governance in Bombarda evolved from informal grassroots initiatives to more formalized structures involving collaborations with local authorities and cultural institutions. Partnerships with the Porto City Council and Porto Lazer helped formalize cultural activities, such as the Circuito Cultural Miguel Bombarda, which became a defining feature of the neighborhood (Dias, 2009). However, attempts to establish a formal governance structure through associations faced challenges, as internal disagreements and a lack of genuine community spirit often hindered their effectiveness (Ladeira, 2012). Nevertheless, it seems to be aligning with Lazzaro's note that governance models adapt to increased complexity in the landscape, often transitioning to include public-private partnerships

Social capital in Bombarda was characterized by a tension between bonding and bridging forms. While events like the Simultaneous Inaugurations fostered bridging social capital by attracting diverse crowds, initiatives like pre-inaugurations catered to bonding social capital by focusing on serious buyers (Putnam, 2000). This dual approach highlighted the necessity for galleries to balance internal cohesion with external connectivity to thrive in

a competitive cultural district (Ladeira, 2012). The social capital dynamics in Bombarda also reflect Lazzaro's framework. While bonding social capital remained important for internal cohesion, there was an increased emphasis and various attempts on bridging social capital. Events like the Simultaneous Inaugurations facilitated cross-sectoral collaborations and knowledge exchange, extending the cluster's network beyond close-knit relationships

Bombarda faced significant challenges, including the economic pressures of the 2008 financial crisis and the Eurozone crisis, which impacted business dynamics and necessitated a focus on niche markets (ENT1). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic tested the resilience of Bombarda's businesses, prompting a shift towards digital platforms and increased community collaboration (STO1).

The combination of diverse actors, evolving governance models, and social capital played a crucial role in addressing these challenges. While internal disagreements sometimes hindered collective efforts, the district's ability to adapt and innovate was evident in initiatives like the CRU Creative Hub and Scar ID, which contributed to Bombarda's cultural vibrancy and economic viability (ENT2; STO1). The collaborative spirit and local support during the pandemic further underscored the district's resilience and capacity for adaptation (Freitas, 2024).

MATURITY

The maturity of Bombarda's Creative District, beginning in 2022, reflects a complex evolution marked by a diverse range of economic activities, actors, and governance models, alongside significant challenges and opportunities. The economic landscape in Bombarda is characterized by the coexistence of legacy businesses, such as traditional art galleries, and newer creative ventures, including studios, ateliers, and coworking spaces. This broad spectrum of economic activities demonstrates the district's transition from experimental and risk-taking ventures to a more stable environment that embraces both established and emerging projects. The diversification of business types, ranging from fine arts to urban lifestyle services, indicates a mature stage where economic activities are no longer confined to specific creative niches but rather cater to broader cultural and economic endeavors, and it largely reflects Lazzaro's (2022) taxonomy of the maturity stage in CCDs.

The actors present in Bombarda during this maturity stage include a mix of pioneering entrepreneurs, such as long-established gallery owners, alongside new entrants and emerging talents who inject innovation and creativity into the district. The growth of actors like the CRU Creative Hub, which focuses on digitalization and ecommerce, exemplifies the influx of new creative professionals who contribute to the district's ongoing vitality. Additionally, established cultural institutions like the Museu Soares dos Reis have become more frequent collaborators, further diversifying the actor landscape and ensuring the district's continued relevance in both traditional and contemporary artistic fields (Lazzaro, 2022).

Governance models in this stage have shifted towards a more formal and structured approach. The creation of the Quarteirão Criativo association in 2022 marks a significant shift in governance, introducing a more collaborative and inclusive model to address the growing complexity of the district. This association brings together a diverse range of stakeholders, including artists, business owners, and residents, and seeks to balance community participation with strategic planning and public-private partnerships. By implementing a decentralized, bottom-up governance structure, the association aims to foster local engagement while ensuring the district's long-term sustainability (Lazzaro, 2022).

Social capital in Bombarda has also evolved during its maturity. While bonding social capital—strong ties within the local community—remains important, there has been a shift towards bridging social capital, which facilitates connections with external actors and cross-sector collaborations. This is evident in Bombarda's participation in international networks such as the European Creative Hubs Network (ECHN), which enhances the district's visibility and fosters knowledge exchange beyond its immediate boundaries. However, there are challenges in maintaining this balance. Some interviewees express concerns about a lack of cohesion among local actors, with competition and economic pressures hindering the development of a unified community (Lazzaro, 2022).

The main challenges in this maturity stage revolve around balancing economic growth with the preservation of Bombarda's cultural identity. Gentrification and the influx of mass tourism are significant concerns, as rising rents and commercialization pressures

threaten to displace the district's creative businesses. Additionally, there are internal tensions among actors, with some gallery owners and newer business entrants struggling to collaborate effectively. The difficulty in fostering true social cohesion while simultaneously engaging in outward-looking initiatives is a recurring issue, particularly in the context of balancing bonding and bridging social capital (STO1).

Despite these challenges, the combination of actors, governance models, and social capital in Bombarda has allowed the district to navigate many of these difficulties with resilience. The *Quarteirão Criativo* association's focus on community involvement, inclusivity, and international collaboration has provided a governance framework that addresses both local and external pressures. However, the district must continue to refine its approach to social capital, ensuring that bonding ties within the local community are not neglected in favor of broader, bridging connections. This balance is crucial for maintaining Bombarda's cultural vibrancy and ensuring its long-term adaptability in the face of ongoing economic and social changes (Lazzaro, 2022).

MISALIGNMENTS

While Bombarda largely reflects Lazzaro's taxonomy CCDs, there are notable misalignments between the case of Bombarda and the broader literature, particularly regarding the balance of social capital and the challenges of gentrification. Through the literature review, it is suggested that in the maturity stage, bridging social capital should facilitate cross-sector collaborations and external partnerships, while bonding social capital helps maintain community cohesion. In Bombarda, while bridging social capital is strengthened through initiatives like international partnerships and participation in networks such as the European Creative Hubs Network, bonding social capital appears less developed. Some local actors, particularly traditional gallery owners and some stores, express feelings of isolation and a lack of genuine community among businesses (STO1). This suggests a misalignment with the literature review's emphasis on maintaining strong local ties to foster social cohesion, which is crucial for addressing internal tensions and creating a resilient community.

Another potential misalignment is the challenge of commercialization and mass tourism, which Bombarda faces as it enters the maturity stage. Lazzaro's framework acknowledges the pressures of commercialization but emphasizes that well-governed districts can balance cultural preservation with economic growth. In Bombarda, however, the influx of short-term rental properties and the rise of mass tourism have introduced significant challenges. The economic pressures from tourism threaten to displace creative businesses and alter the district's cultural identity (Lazzaro, 2022). This dynamic suggests that Bombarda may struggle more with the commercialization pressures than Lazzaro's taxonomy anticipates, reflecting a more significant threat to the cultural fabric of the district than typically expected in mature CCDs.

Finally, a summary of the Lifecycle Matrix of Bombarda's case study is provided in Table 12.

Table 12 – Bombarda’s Lifecycle Matrix

Characteristics	Stage 1: Emergence (1993-2006)	Stage 2: Growth (2007-2021)	Stage 3: Maturity (2022-Today)
Types of Economic Activities	Pioneering art galleries like Galeria Fernando Santos and Quadrado Azul anchored the district, representing risk-taking ventures into a new creative niche for the area	Diversification beyond art galleries to include design shops, author jewelry stores, concept stores, studios and coworking spaces, representing a mix of established and emerging creative ventures.	Diverse ecosystem of established art galleries, design shops, and cultural businesses, alongside new entrants. However, some perceive an over-concentration of opportunities among a small group of legacy actors.
Actors	Visionary gallerists such as Fernando Santos and Marina Costa acted as the main drivers, establishing Bombarda's initial identity as an arts cluster.	The actor landscape evolved to include a blend of pioneering gallerists and a new generation of creative entrepreneurs like the partners of CRU, Scar ID and Kuri Kuri.	Legacy businesses and institutions now coexist with an ongoing influx of new creative ventures and talents. However, some express concerns about the true sense of community and collaboration among actors
Governance Models	Governance was decentralized and community-driven, with initiatives like the organic emergence of simultaneous gallery openings reflecting informal coordination among the core group of gallerists.	While still largely informal, governance adapted to the district's growing complexity, with the simultaneous gallery openings expanding to include shops and cafes. Structured approaches through associations were tried, but fruitless.	Structured governance approach with the association Quarteirão Criativo, striving for a balance between cultural and economic values and assuming a decentralized structure with a bottom-up approach, emphasizing community involvement and participatory decision-making.
Social Capital	Strong bonding social capital was present among the tight-knit group of pioneering gallerists, facilitating trust and collaboration in the early days.	The district began to exhibit a mix of bonding and bridging social capital, as its growing popularity forged connections to wider networks beyond the initial core of gallerists.	Challenges in balancing bonding and bridging. While the district's popularity continues to drive bridging connections to wider networks, a degree of distrust and rivalry seems to persist between some actors, potentially hindering the depth of community ties.
Developmental Challenges	Key issues included limited public awareness and recognition of the district, as well as infrastructure challenges like lack of parking.	Gentrification pressures began to emerge with rising rents, while the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted foot traffic and drove more consumers online.	Ongoing subway construction has disrupted foot traffic and accessibility, while accelerating gentrification remains a concern as better-capitalized outside investors enter the scene.
Resilience and Adaptability	Rooted in informal, decentralized governance and strong bonding social capital. Pioneering artists and gallerists relied on close-knit networks to establish the district's cultural identity, overcoming financial and infrastructural challenges through grassroots initiatives and community-driven efforts	Attempted a transition to a more structured governance models and integrating bridging social capital. PPPs and collaborations with local authorities facilitated sustainable growth, balancing cultural identity with economic development. Connection with external stakeholders and expansion of influence, addressing challenges such as commercialization pressures and infrastructure needs	Complex actor landscape and formalized governance. The district leverages both bonding and bridging social capital to maintain cultural integrity while integrating into the broader economy. Structured governance and strategic partnerships ensure continued growth and adaptability, addressing challenges like gentrification and cultural preservation

6.2. Quantitative approach

The quantitative analysis of social capital in Bombarda, based on a questionnaire administered to businesses in the district, offers significant insights into the evolution of bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital, which refers to the strong, close-knit ties within a community, appears to be moderately robust, particularly among certain business types like art galleries, stores, and restaurants. These businesses frequently engage in interactions and exchanges of favors, reflecting the high levels of trust and reciprocity that characterize bonding capital (Lazzaro, 2022). The fact that many businesses report a strong sense of belonging further reinforces the presence of bonding social capital, as it suggests a shared identity and commitment to the district. However, some businesses, particularly those in professional services and newer entrants like coworking spaces, exhibit less frequent interactions and lower engagement in favor exchanges, indicating that bonding capital may not be as uniformly strong across all sectors (STO1).

The data on trust and reciprocity points to the gradual development of bridging social capital, which facilitates connections between different sectors and external actors. Trust between different types of businesses, such as between art galleries and restaurants, as well as between coworking spaces and other sectors, reflects an increasing openness to cross-sector collaboration. This evolution of trust suggests that Bombarda is gradually building bridging social capital, enabling businesses to connect not only within their immediate networks but also across different types of creative and commercial enterprises. However, while bridging capital is growing, the data indicates that there are still gaps in connectivity, especially between established cultural institutions like galleries and newer entrants such as professional services and coworking spaces. This partial fragmentation highlights an area where Bombarda's social capital is still maturing and requires further development to foster deeper cross-sector relationships (GAL3).

Contrasting these findings with the conclusion previously mentioned, it becomes clear that while Bombarda is successfully navigating the challenges of commercialization and gentrification through formal governance structures, the development of social capital—particularly bridging capital—still poses a challenge. The earlier conclusion emphasized the need to strengthen internal cohesion and community engagement, which is supported by the questionnaire data. Businesses that report lower interaction and trust levels highlight the fact

that, despite a growing external network, the district has not yet fully bridged the gaps between its diverse actors. This suggests that while Bombarda's governance model has made strides in formalizing partnerships and securing external investments, it has not equally prioritized the strengthening of intra-district relationships, particularly among emerging businesses and legacy institutions (Lazzaro, 2022).

Therefore, the quantitative analysis provides a nuanced view of Bombarda's social capital. Bonding capital remains a significant force in maintaining community cohesion, especially among businesses with long-standing ties to the district. Yet, bridging capital, which is essential for Bombarda's long-term adaptability and resilience, is still unevenly distributed across sectors. Addressing these gaps will require a more deliberate effort from the district's governance structures, such as the *Quarteirão Criativo* association, to foster collaboration between newer and more established actors, thereby enhancing both internal cohesion and external linkages. This balance is crucial for ensuring Bombarda's sustainable development and cultural vibrancy in the years to come (STO1).

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has examined the case study of Bombarda Creative Quarter through the lens of Lazzaro's taxonomy. The analysis demonstrates that Bombarda largely aligns with Lazzaro's framework, particularly in its diversification of economic activities, complex actor landscape, and the establishment of more formalized governance structures. Bombarda has transitioned from a street of art galleries into a broader creative ecosystem, where legacy institutions coexist with emerging ventures, including studios, ateliers, coworking spaces, and digital creative services. This expansion into a quarter of diverse businesses reflects the evolution to the maturity stage's characteristic complexity and stability. Moreover, the creation of the *Quarteirão Criativo* association highlights a key element of governance evolution, providing a more structured and participatory governance model that seeks to balance local interests with external collaboration (Lazzaro, 2022).

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of Lazzaro's taxonomy by offering a real-world case that highlights both the strengths and limitations of the framework. While Bombarda fits well within the broader narrative of CCD development, particularly in

terms of its formalized governance and the diversity of its economic base, the district presents certain nuances that challenge Lazzaro's model. One such challenge is the issue of social capital, where the tension between bonding and bridging social capital becomes a critical factor. Although Lazzaro emphasizes the importance of bridging social capital in fostering external partnerships, Bombarda's case shows that an overemphasis on outward connections can lead to weaker community cohesion and collaboration within the district. This misalignment suggests that the model could benefit from a deeper exploration of how social capital dynamics influence the internal resilience of mature districts.

Practically, the findings of this study offer valuable insights for policymakers and cultural stakeholders involved in the governance of creative districts. The case of Bombarda demonstrates that governance models must carefully balance the need for external engagement with the preservation of local identity and community cohesion. The creation of the *Quarteirão Criativo* association is a positive step towards more inclusive governance, as it integrates diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes. However, Bombarda's experience also highlights the risks associated with commercialization, particularly as rising property values and mass tourism threaten to displace the creative businesses that define the district's cultural fabric. Policymakers should therefore prioritize mechanisms that protect local actors and maintain the district's cultural integrity while still fostering economic growth.

Nonetheless, this study is not without limitations. The analysis is primarily focused on the case of Bombarda, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other creative districts with different socio-economic and cultural contexts. Additionally, the study relies heavily on the available data from interviews and secondary sources, which may not capture the full range of dynamics within the district. Future research could expand upon this work by conducting comparative studies of other creative districts, exploring how different governance models and social capital strategies are deployed in varying cultural and economic environments. Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of the long-term impact of mass tourism and gentrification on creative districts like Bombarda would provide important insights into how districts can balance cultural preservation with economic viability.

Reflecting on the overall findings, Bombarda's evolution to the maturity stage underscores the complex interplay between economic growth, cultural preservation, and

community engagement. The district's evolution reflects the broader challenges faced by mature CCDs, particularly in managing the pressures of commercialization while sustaining local cultural values. However, the ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive and participatory governance model suggest that Bombarda is well-positioned to navigate these challenges. The Quarteirão Criativo association represents a crucial innovation in governance that seeks to balance local and external interests. However, its success will depend on its ability to foster stronger bonding social capital within the district, ensuring that the community remains cohesive and engaged despite the pressures of external growth. In this regard, a key recommendation for the Quarteirão Criativo association is to actively strengthen its focus on internal cohesion and community engagement. While external partnerships and bridging social capital are vital for growth, it is equally important to nurture the local relationships that define the district's identity. Organizing more community-focused events, fostering collaborations among local businesses, and creating platforms for dialogue among residents and stakeholders will help build a more resilient and inclusive district. This approach will not only preserve Bombarda's unique cultural heritage but also ensure that its growth is sustainable and equitable in the long term.

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Annexes

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEWS WITH KEY ACTORS

SESSION 1 – DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Characterization (I represent an Organization; I am a Freelancer)
2. Organization or personal brand name
3. Role in the organization
4. Year of foundation of the organization
5. Year of arrival of the organization in Bombarda
6. Your age (or age range)
7. Have you ever been or are you part of any group or association on the block (formal or informal)?

SESSION 2 - CHALLENGES AND MODES OF COLLECTIVE ORGANIZATION

PAST

1. What were the main challenges of your organization in your first years in Bombarda? (research between public interest in contemporary art and lifestyle – thesis: Portuguese people do not have purchasing power, so they don't buy so much art)
2. In your opinion, what were the main challenges of Bombarda as a Cultural and Creative District or Block?
3. Did you usually organize collectively? In what way(s)?
4. To what extent do you think this mode of collective organization has helped you to be able to solve your challenges?

PRESENT

1. And today, what are the main challenges of your organization in Bombarda?
2. In your opinion, what are the main challenges of Bombarda today as a Cultural and Creative District or Block?
3. What modes of collective organization currently exist in the neighborhood?
4. To what extent do you think this helped you to be able to solve your challenges?

TRANSITION

5. In what period (year) do you consider that there was this change in the challenges and modes of organization?
6. What do you believe were the main factors that drove the changes in the modes of collective organization in Bombarda?
7. How have these changes impacted your organization and other stakeholders at Bombarda?
8. Do you think these changes have facilitated collaboration, innovation or growth opportunities? Why?
9. Were there any challenges or conflicts resulting from changes in the mode of collective organization?

FOR PEOPLE CLOSE TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLOCK

1. What do you do in your daily life to collectively organize the different agents in the neighborhood?
2. To what extent have these activities evolved over time?
3. How do they contribute to solving the challenges of the neighborhood? Why?

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: QUESTIONNAIRE APPLIED ON GOOGLE FORMS TO BOMBARDA BUSINESSES

SESSÃO 1 – INFORMAÇÃO DEMOGRÁFICA

1. **Caracterização (Represento um(a)...):**
 - Organização/Empresa
 - Trabalhador Independente/Freelancer
 - NA
2. **Nome da organização ou da marca pessoal:**
3. **Função na organização:**
 - Representante (Fundador, presidente, diretor)
 - Funcionário
4. **Ano de fundação da organização:**
5. **Ano de chegada da organização em Bombarda:**
6. **A sua faixa etária:**
 - Menos de 30 anos
 - 30-40
 - 41-50
 - 51-60
 - mais de 60

SESSÃO 2 – REDES SOCIAIS

7. Que tipos de interações tinha com outros estabelecimentos nos seus primeiros anos em Bombarda? (Marque todas as opções aplicáveis)

Organizações	Tipos de interações				
	Eventos Sociais	Colaborações empresariais	Encontros informais	Projetos Comunitários	Outros (especificar)
Galerias de Arte					
Estúdios, Ateliers e Coworks					
Hotelarias					
Lojas					
Serviços					
Restauração					

- 8.

Organizações	Frequência de interações			
	Nenhuma	Ocasionais	Regulares	Frequentes
Galerias de Arte				

Estúdios, Ateliers e Coworks				
Hotelarias				
Lojas				
Serviços				
Restauração				

9. Essas interações aumentaram, diminuiram ou permaneceram as mesmas ao longo dos anos com estas organizações?

Organizações	Evolução das interações		
	Aumentou	Diminuiu	Permaneceu o mesmo
Galerias de Arte			
Estúdios, Ateliers e Coworks			
Hotelarias			
Lojas			
Serviços			
Restauração			

10. Que tipos de interações tem hoje com outros estabelecimentos em Bombarda?
(Marque todas as opções aplicáveis)

Organizações com as quais interage	Tipos de interações				
	Eventos Sociais	Colaborações empresariais	Encontros informais	Projetos Comunitários	Outros (especificar)
Galerias de Arte					
Estúdios, Ateliers e Coworks					
Hotelarias					
Lojas					
Serviços					
Restauração					

SESSÃO 3 - CONFIANÇA E RECIPROCIDADE

11. Numa escala de 1 a 5, quanta confiança tinha noutras empresas do distrito nos seus primeiros anos em Bombarda? (1 = Sem confiança, 5 = Confiança total)

Organizações	Nível de Confiança				
	1	2	3	4	5
Galerias de Arte					
Estúdios, Ateliers e Coworks					

Hotelarias					
Lojas					
Serviços					
Restauração					

12. O nível de confiança mudou nos últimos anos?

Organizações	Evolução do nível de confiança		
	Aumentou	Diminuiu	Permaneceu o mesmo
Galerias de Arte			
Estúdios, Ateliers e Coworks			
Hotelarias			
Lojas			
Serviços			
Restauração			

13. Com que frequência troca favores ou serviços com outras empresas do distrito?

Organizações	Frequência de Troca de Favores				
	Nunca	Raramente	Ocasionalmente	Frequentemente	Sempre
Galerias de Arte					
Estúdios, Ateliers e Coworks					
Hotelarias					
Lojas					
Serviços					
Restauração					

14. Esta frequência mudou nos últimos anos?

Organizações	Evolução da troca de favores ou serviços		
	Aumentou	Diminuiu	Permaneceu o mesmo
Galerias de Arte			
Estúdios, Ateliers e Coworks			
Hotelarias			

Lojas			
Serviços			
Restauração			

15. Sente um sentimento de pertença à comunidade cultural do distrito?
- Sim
 - Não
 - Não sei responder
16. Na sua opinião, como evoluiu o sentido de comunidade ou sentimento de pertença à comunidade nos últimos anos?
- Aumentou
 - Diminuiu
 - Permaneceu o mesmo
17. Como a presença de novos estabelecimentos impactou o a convivência no distrito?
- Positivamente
 - Negativamente
 - Neutro
 - Não sei responder