Preface

This volume takes part in the recent debate on modern economies and the relationship between culture, creativity and models of local development.

The issues of creativity and economic development are dealt with from many different viewpoints in economic analysis. Concurrently with the advance of research aimed at exploring specific segments of the cultural industry, either with an economic or a managerial outlook, the debate runs to the inference that culture is a possible flywheel of economic development for cities and places rich in cultural resources, as well as to the networks between cities of knowledge. The positive impact of cultural industries upon the 'regional creative climate' and the way in which culture tends to concentrate in places that have a high level of knowledge 'diversity' are also explored. On one side, the attempt is to focus on the organization of creative industries with the ambition of linking together with an ideal thread different industries whose common feature is that of conveying new knowledge (such as those founded on culture, design or science). On the other side, the attempt is to identify key elements in order to understand and manage creativity in cultural industries, also asserting that their distinctive elements must be basically found in their dependence on creativity itself.

The 2006 OECD report on *Competitive Cities in the Global Economy* underlines the strategic role of culture as a factor of sustainable economic development and emphasizes its ability to activate new *filières* of innovation and to contribute to the rejuvenation of traditional sectors. The report stresses the potential of culture for the revitalization of European urban historical centres and regions, in the context of the issues of urban regeneration and governance, and the significant implications of clustering in systems of firms or institutions, such as districts, clusters, cultural or creative neighbourhoods. Creative economy is tied in with culture as they both stress, on the one hand, human capital, the creativeness of specific professions and the impact of context-related variables, and on the other hand, belonging to social networks.

The first time the suggestion was made of collecting scientific contributions on the issue of culture, creativity and local development in their mutual relationships was in 2004, at the Florence conference, 'Industrial districts and clusters. Applications and contaminations in the study of art cities and cultural districts'. On that occasion, some reports focusing on art

cities and the economic enhancement of art and culture were presented (Cooke, Crevoisier, Kebir and Lazzeretti), which now constitute the early chapters of this volume. The meeting was also attended by PhD students in the research doctorate 'Economics and management of enterprises and local systems' (University of Florence), who illustrated the first results of their doctoral theses, the most relevant of which are also reproduced here (Capone, Cinti and Sedita).

Starting from that experience, the present volume has taken shape by successive enlargements in the issue of the culture–creativity relationship. Studies were included of industrial, urban and regional economists, scholars of local development (Belussi, Boix, Costa, De Propriis, Hypponen, Lorenzen, Frederiksen and Trullén), public and cultural economists (Cuccia, Marelli, Luís Palma Martos, Maria Luisa Palma Martos and Santagata); and while the latter are all European, a few media and communication sociologists and specialists from Canada and Asia (Smith, Warfield, Hing) were also invited to contribute.

Therefore, the triangle 'culture–creativity–local development' gathered together a collection of studies and researches which offers, because of its multidisciplinary approach, a variegated kaleidoscope of the paths of local development based on culture and creativity.

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