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ACTIVE CITIES FOR ACTIVATION POLICIES

Entrepreneurship support and experiences of young people in Milan and Barcelona

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To Emma,
my sunny grandmother

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ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

The thesis deals with municipal entrepreneurship support policies (MESPs) through a comparison between the actions undertaken in this field by the municipalities of Milan and Barcelona and the experiences of young people up to thirty-five years of age. The theoretical framework has brought together the neo-Marxian and neo-Weberian approaches to urban policies and governance, and the socio-economic literature and theoretically valuable institutional documentation on entrepreneurship, also in the framework of welfare changes. Two analytical macro approaches emerged from this literature. The first highlights the convergence towards neoliberal governance and welfare models, oriented towards market and competitiveness at the expense of social cohesion. A trend of which the policies for entrepreneurship seem to constitute a paradigmatic example. The second one focuses on the peculiarities of the European city and on the compromise between growth and social inclusion that would characterise it, supporting the opposite thesis of the persistent difference between cities and of the divergence from the neoliberal logic. Against this background, the research focused on local differences and the role of municipal governments and their capacity to govern socio-economic and political changes. Besides, attention has been paid to the experiences of young people and policy outcomes in terms of redistribution of risks and opportunities. The analysis avails itself of an interpretative approach, a methodology based on the case study and the technique of the interview, and a comparative logic, which puts the differences and the related factors of influence at the centre of the study. After having placed MESPs within the socio-economic and institutional conditions of the two contexts, and given research findings, the thesis focused on the heterogeneity characterising different dimensions of MESPs. These include ideas and values, problems, objectives, measures and tools and outcomes. It highlighted how politics, institutional legacies, localised policy paradigms and governance arrangements interplay to shape specific and diverse local approaches to MESPs, thus affecting the capacity of city governments to govern socio-economic changes and to alter the unequal distribution of risks and opportunities for participants.

ABSTRACT (ITALIAN)

La tesi ha come oggetto di studio le politiche comunali di supporto all'imprenditorialità. In particolare, mette a confronto le politiche promosse dalle città di Milano e Barcellona e le esperienze di giovani fino a trentacinque anni di età. Il quadro interpretativo attinge, da un lato, agli studi sulle politiche e la governance urbana di impronta neo-Marxiana e neo-Weberiana e, dall'altro, alla letteratura socioeconomica e alla documentazione istituzionale teoricamente rilevante sull'imprenditorialità anche nella cornice degli studi sulla riorganizzazione del welfare. Da questa letteratura sono emersi due macro-approcci analitici. Il primo mette in evidenza la convergenza verso modelli di governance e di welfare neoliberali improntati alle esigenze del mercato e della competitività a discapito della coesione sociale. Un trend di cui le politiche per l'imprenditorialità sembrano costituire un esempio paradigmatico. Il secondo, mette a fuoco le peculiarità della città Europea e la tenuta del compromesso tra crescita e inclusione sociale che la caratterizzerebbe, sostenendo la tesi opposta della differenza tra le città e della divergenza rispetto alle logiche neoliberali. In questo quadro, la ricerca ha messo al centro dell'analisi le differenze locali, il ruolo dei governi urbani e la loro capacità di governare le trasformazioni socioeconomiche e politiche in corso, e inoltre gli effetti in termini di redistribuzione di rischi e opportunità tra i destinatari delle azioni. Per farlo, si è avvalsa di un approccio interpretativo, una metodologia basata sullo studio di caso e sulla tecnica dell'intervista, e un'analisi comparativa, che mette al centro dello studio le differenze e i relativi fattori di influenza. Dopo aver situato l'oggetto di studio all'interno delle condizioni socioeconomiche e istituzionali che caratterizzano i due contesti, e sulla base dei risultati emersi, la tesi mette a fuoco, innanzitutto, l'eterogeneità che caratterizza le diverse dimensioni di policy. Queste includono idee e valori, problemi, obiettivi, misure e strumenti, nonché le esperienze dei giovani beneficiari intervistati. Infine, mette in evidenza il modo in cui orientamenti politici, paradigmi di policy locali, eredità istituzionali e sistemi di governance interagiscono per dare forma a specifici e differenti approcci alle politiche di supporto all'imprenditorialità nelle due città, e come queste influenzano la capacità di governare i cambiamenti e alternare la distribuzione dei rischi e delle opportunità tra i partecipanti.

ABSTRACT (SPANISH)

La tesis tiene por objeto las políticas municipales de apoyo al emprendimiento. En particular, compara las políticas promovidas por las ciudades de Milán y Barcelona y las experiencias de los jóvenes hasta los treinta y cinco años. El marco teórico de referencia puede atribuirse, por una parte, a los estudios sobre las políticas y la gobernanza urbana de inspiración neo-Marxista y neo-Weberiana y, por otra, a la literatura socioeconómica y a la documentación institucional teóricamente relevante sobre el emprendimiento, incluso en el marco de los estudios sobre la reorganización del estado del bienestar. De esta literatura han surgido dos macro enfoques analíticos. El primero pone de relieve la convergencia hacia la gobernanza neoliberal y los modelos de bienestar basados en las necesidades del mercado y la competitividad a expensas de la cohesión social. Una tendencia de la que las políticas de emprendimiento parecen constituir un ejemplo paradigmático. La segunda se centra en las peculiaridades de la ciudad europea y en el compromiso entre crecimiento e inclusión social que la caracterizaría, apoyando la tesis opuesta de la diferencia entre ciudades y de la divergencia con respecto a las lógicas neoliberales. En este contexto, la investigación se ha centrado en las diferencias locales, el papel de los gobiernos urbanos y su capacidad para gobernar los cambios socioeconómicos y políticos en curso, así como los efectos en términos de redistribución de riesgos y oportunidades entre los jóvenes entrevistados. Para ello, se ha utilizado un enfoque interpretativo, una metodología basada en la técnica del estudio de caso y la entrevista, y un análisis comparativo, que sitúa las diferencias y los factores de influencia correspondientes en el centro del estudio. Después de haber situado el objeto de estudio dentro de las condiciones socioeconómicas e institucionales que caracterizan a los dos contextos, y a partir de los resultados, la tesis se centra, en primer lugar, en la heterogeneidad que caracteriza a las diferentes dimensiones de las políticas. Estos incluyen ideas y valores, problemas, objetivos, medidas y herramientas, así como las experiencias de los jóvenes beneficiarios entrevistados. Por último, se destaca la forma en que las orientaciones políticas, los paradigmas políticos locales, las herencias institucionales y los sistemas de gobernanza interactúan para dar forma a enfoques específicos y diferentes de las políticas de apoyo al emprendimiento en las dos ciudades, y la forma en que estas influyen en la capacidad de gobernar los cambios y afectar a la distribución de los riesgos y de las oportunidades entre los participantes.

INTRODUCTION

UNDERSTANDING MUNICIPAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT POLICIES

The issue of entrepreneurship can be observed and analysed from very different points of view, but always with some difficulties primarily arising from the great scope and ambivalence characterising the concept of entrepreneurship itself (Reynolds and Curtin, 2007). The reasons for this ambiguity are various. They range from the lack of systematic theories and the marginality that the issue experienced for a long time even in the economic literature (Müller and Arum, 2004; Reynolds et al., 2005), through the pluralism of approaches and interpretations (Aldrich, 2005; Ahmad and Seymour, 2008), to the ideology underpinning its discourse (Dardot and Laval, 2013; Bröckling, 2016).

The study of entrepreneurship policies is no less problematic at whatever scale they are implemented, also due to the major influence of functionalist approaches. The strength of functionalism, as scholars from Critical Entrepreneurship Studies (CES) have stressed, has sustained the spread of an interpretation of entrepreneurship as an intrinsically positive phenomenon. As a result, it has led theoretical and applied research to focus on the description and predictions of conditions favouring the growth of entrepreneurship more than on the deeper comprehension of this social phenomenon in its complexity. Moreover, it has treated the heterogeneity of entrepreneurship as a matter of uncertainty concerning its definition, which can be easily addressed through greater accuracy and technical adjustments, rather than as a matter of ambivalence, which involves values and political issues. This has contributed to feed conditions for legitimacy of whatever public action oriented to its promotion as well as to limit the critical analysis of governments' discourses and actions, through a systematic depoliticization of the issue as well (Grant and Perren, 2002; Perren and Jennings, 2005; Essers et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the ambivalence of the concept of entrepreneurship, most of the time equated to the concepts of self-employment and business ownership, is reproduced by policy approaches that feed on heterogeneity. It is enough to consider that, in Europe, growing concerns about unemployment levels, combined with shifts in public policy approaches to

activation, have made entrepreneurship an instrument not only for promoting economic development but also for realizing active labour market policies. As regards activation policies in general (van Berkel and Møller, 2002b), *inclusive entrepreneurship policies* are therefore promoted having as target groups unemployed people or social groups with greater difficulties in entering the labour market, such as women and young people, whose self-employment rates are lower as well (OECD/European Union, 2017). This has not a few implications. On the one hand, as it will be discussed further in the thesis, it affects the very meaning of entrepreneurship as well as the outputs and outcomes of entrepreneurship support policies. On the other, it makes the issue at stake also an ideological question. This is especially due to the capacity of entrepreneurship support policies to embody the underlying philosophy of the activation paradigm, that can be summarised as the enhancement of individual responsibility for implementing strategies to find work thus realizing one's social inclusion through it (Crespo and Serrano, 2004; Lodigiani and Scippa, 2014). From this perspective, it provides a paradigmatic example of neoliberal policy, that is characterised by the emphasis on activation and 'responsibilisation of enterprising neoliberal subjects' (Fougère, Segercrantz and Seeck, 2017, p. 3). This is also affected by an always Schumpeterian vision of entrepreneurship, based on the heroic image of a (white-male) entrepreneur in his individuality characterised by an extraordinary capacity to innovate.

This important ideological dimension constitutes a challenge for sociological researches not to be underestimated. Indeed, it requires the researcher both the capacity to grasp the ideological aspects of entrepreneurship policies and, at the same time, the ability to not getting stuck in this terrain.

To this end, it is useful to contextualise this object of study within the processes of growing individualisation characterising the last decades. What seems certain, indeed, is that entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur fully reflects the model of socialisation demanded by these trends: highly dependent on individual skills and capacities to take the life on one's own hands, navigate the uncertainties of the market and catch emergent opportunities to earn one's own place in the society (Beck, 2000). The opportunities mainly refer to new spaces for self-expression and for adopting non-standard life models that have in fact arisen, thus enhancing autonomy, personal motivations and inclinations. Nonetheless, the way through which the capacities to compete and conquer these spaces (that can be enclosed in the 'entrepreneurial mindset') develop, how they interplay with old/structural inequalities and the role policies play in this respect represent relevant and interesting issues.

Against this background, young people represent a privileged group for observation, not only because they are particularly affected by the individualisation processes that are at the

basis of the construction 'of a new type of subject', to borrow the expression from Bröckling (2016). But also because young people have also been socially constructed as a target group of intervention and, with particular regard to entrepreneurship and self-employment, are considered as one of the 'groups with the greatest potential', together with unemployed persons with professional skills and women (European Commission, 2012, p. 4). This often ends up denying differences within them, thus making more difficult the recognition of social inequalities and their definition as a problem to address (Walther, 2005; Farrugia, 2013; Spanò, 2017). Moreover, young people are privileged targets of activating schemes in general, mostly due to the growing burden of youth labour market problems (Reyneri, 2011; Caliendo and Schmidl, 2016; Vesan, 2016) as well as to the fact that public interventions targeted to young people are generally more likely to work according to the logic of the *social investment* and, consequently, according to "active" and not "passive" principles (Crespo and Serradhno, 2004; Bifulco and Mozzana, 2016).

This is the general scenario in which MESPs moves and from which they are influenced. The European policy approach, in particular, has an important influence on city-level public actions – that are embedded in regional, national, European and global contexts – by contributing to legitimise and promote some approaches and instruments instead of others.

From the general scenario to the local scale: challenges and opportunities

The context just outlined implies that municipal entrepreneurship policies have to do with an issue that is imbued with ambivalence and a reflection of multifaceted socio-economic and policy trends. However, the adoption of a local perspective has a number of advantages in this respect. First, it provides a privileged point of observation as it allows for the appreciation of the complexity of entrepreneurship and its support policies thanks to the capacity of cities to compress and intensify social dynamics, as well as to facilitate the reflection on new inequalities in a context where growing opportunities coexist with new articulations of differences and risks. Moreover, many expectations have risen during the last decades about the local scale of public policies, also with respect to the implementation of new (integrated, active, collaborative, innovative) policy approaches. As a matter of fact, the local dimension acquired high relevance also in welfare policies. In this respect, even taking into account the limited room for manoeuvre of local governments, different welfare instruments have been mobilized in order to boost social cohesion. These include housing and employment policies, although most of the time these are not part of municipal competences (Gentile, 2011; Andreotti et al., 2012; Hendrickson and Sabatinelli, 2014; Bifulco, 2017; Cano et al., 2017).

As far as MESPs are concerned, it is worth highlighting that European cities are particularly active in supporting entrepreneurship, being also able to count on the fact that emerging opportunities for doing business have found fertile grounds in many European cities, driven especially by the growth of the service sector and their greater capacity of innovation (European Union, 2016; Houston and Reuschke, 2017). Consistently with the European normative framework, city networks like Eurocities encourage to develop the role of cities as facilitators/enablers of entrepreneurship in relation both to innovation processes and labour market inclusion (Eurocities, 2013, 2015b). They, therefore, tend to use entrepreneurship support as a tool to implement both active labour market policies[1] and economic development strategies at the local level.

Despite their relevance, MESPs are an under-researched area of study in urban sociology. However, it must be said that the interest in entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur as specific subjects of the analysis have been historically marginal in sociology in general (Ruef and Lounsbury, 2007). Moreover, scant attention has been also placed on the activism of cities in implementing their own activation policies, by concentrating, although not extensively, especially on their role as one of the levels in which national and/or regional activation policies are articulated (Karjalainen, 2010; Sabatinelli, 2010). On the other hand, an essential body of literature has focused on the broad category of 'urban entrepreneurialism' as a paradigm of the changes in urban policies and governance driven by neoliberalism (the 'neoliberal city' thesis) (Brenner et al., 2010; Hall and Hubbard, 1996; Harvey, 1989; Jessop, 1997). In this respect, Rossi (2017) highlighted in a recent contribution how the 'start-up city', that has become an important brand strategy for major cities that aim to support entrepreneurship and innovation, would further fuel the 'neoliberal city'. Following the more general Foucauldian interpretations of the role of entrepreneurship in the contemporary society, Rossi argued that the entrepreneurial governance, theorised by D. Harvey, has been even overcome since cities have become 'fertile grounds for the entrepreneurialization of society and the self' (p. 81). To support this argument, Rossi has made reference also to new opportunities for commodification and 'entrepreneurialization' that are offered by new digital technologies and are driven by the 'technology-led communities of entrepreneurs' and other "growth-oriented" actors, such as business organisations, chambers of commerce, bank foundations, universities, research centres and so on (p. 9). Overall, the debate around urban policies and governance approaches

[1] The website 'Cities at work' is good window into employment-related European cities' actions. [Available at: https://citiesatwork.eu/, latest access: May 2019)

undoubtedly provides a crucial interpretative framework for the understanding of MESPs and this is the reason why the thesis will take it as a starting point.

The aim and objectives of the research

In the light of the above, the study of entrepreneurship support policies is interesting since it allows for making considerations on urban policies and, at the same time, for contributing to entrepreneurship studies and their place in employment-related policies. Moreover, I consider that the frame just outlined lead to making the issue of entrepreneurship particularly relevant other than a stimulating area for research.

As far as this thesis is concerned, the study concentrates on municipal entrepreneurship support policies and the experiences of young beneficiaries by comparing the cases of Milan and Barcelona. More to the point, it explores the ways local policy actors interpret, invalidate or reproduce the mainstream approach to entrepreneurship support policies and the role local actors, institutional factors and politics play in this respect. This is tied to the objective to investigate the strength of both convergence and divergence trends in local public actions, which definitely means interrogating the *agency* of cities and their capacity to act as meaningful political actors by expressing their own strategies. To these ends, it develops an in-depth analysis of critical dimensions and values informing and shaping local policy choices, by paying attention to the tensions they embody as well, and of key actors involved and their perspectives. The originality of this study mainly relies on the attempt to keep together these dimensions and give prominence to the actors on the field, including "policy beneficiaries", who are here seen as key players that (indirectly) contribute to shaping local policies.

In particular, the analysis concentrates on the main features of MESPs, including values, the definition of problems and objectives, measures and instruments for the implementation, target groups and governance arrangements. Alongside these normative/cognitive dimensions and the main *outputs* of the concrete actions undertaken, the study deals with the *outcomes* of MESPs with respect to their implications in terms of (re)distribution of risks and opportunities among (young) participants. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions:

1) In what ways do local policy actors interpret, invalidate or reproduce the mainstream approach to entrepreneurship support policies and what local factors contribute to shaping locally specific approaches, if any?

2) Whether and in what ways MESPs affect the distribution of risks and opportunities among participants?

To the end to meet these knowledge objectives, the study relies on an interpretative analysis carried out through the lens of the urban sociology with contaminations from the sociology of public action and the economic sociology. Methodologically, it is based on a case-oriented comparative analysis involving MESPs designed and implemented by the cities of Milan and Barcelona. These two cases are relevant and stimulating for multiple reasons. First, Milan and Barcelona are two southern European cities and, as such, they face the particular constraints imposed by the continued impact of the economic crisis that especially affects the most vulnerable social groups, including young people, and in Southern Europe more than elsewhere. The way they are coping with the heavier effects that the crisis had in this context is particularly relevant. However, they are also among the most important cities in Europe and, like other European cities, they are particularly able to exploit peculiar economic advantages, such as those offered by innovation, specialisation and privileged access to local and international markets. As a result, they are increasingly recognized as a source of economic but also social potentialities, which make them a particular source of opportunities for working-age people and, in particular, for young people (European Union, 2016). Moreover, they represent two 'positive cases', namely two cases where the phenomenon that is the object of study is notably present (Della Porta, 2008, p. 212). Furthermore, they are suitable for a research strategy that – as will be highlighted in the methodological chapter – is based on the *most-similar system design* (Pickvance, 2001; Della Porta, 2008; Ragin, 2014[1987]).

Finally, the study is based on an interpretative approach that works inductively by using the categories of the sociology of public action and availing itself of qualitative methods and instruments. The investigation has been carried out through a software-assisted thematic analysis of sixty-five face-to-face semistructured interviews conducted with public and non-public policy actors and young people in Milan and Barcelona. The analysis has been realized through a circular process going from theory to fieldwork and from fieldwork to theory, not without some difficulties in dealing with the gap between the two.

Structure of the thesis

The first chapter, titled *Urban policies and modes of governance: convergence and divergence trends*, is based on the assumption that the interpretation of MESPs cannot prescind from the understanding of the broader framework of changes in urban policies and governance that have occurred over the last decades. To this end, I draw on those studies that have analysed these changes in relation to two main processes: the restructuring or territorial reorganisation of the nation-state and public policies. In particular, I refer to the approaches to the study of urban policies and governance that take shape mainly in the 'urban political economy tradition', notwithstanding their inherent interdisciplinarity: the Marxian and neo-Marxian 'critical political economy', by drawing on the analysis of scholars such as D. Harvey, N. Brenner and B. Jessop, and the 'neo-Weberian political economy of European cities' baptized by P. Le Galès and A. Bagnasco. The underlying attempt of the whole chapter is to analyse and keep together part of both the theses on convergence and divergence trends that emerged from the literature, under the assumption that neo-Marxist and neo-Weberian approaches can be considered complementary more than competing and that both are relevant for the understanding of municipal entrepreneurship policies.

The second chapter, titled *Entrepreneurship support in the context of changing economies and policy paradigms*, goes specifically into the issue of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship promotion. Before playing an important part in urban policies, indeed, entrepreneurship consolidated its relevance since the 1980s as a crucial component of the 'post-industrial' society (Audretsch et al., 2008; Fellini, 2010) as well as among policy agendas at different levels of government, from the EU to regions, while attracting more interest of academics of various disciplines too (Aldrich, 2005; Swedberg, 2000). Technological innovations have also contributed to giving relevance to this issue, sustained by the revival of Schumpeterian thesis. These have played a great part in making the belief of a causal relation between innovation and nascent entrepreneurs a robust *public sentiment*, thus supporting the legitimacy of entrepreneurship support actions. However, entrepreneurship is not reducible to innovation. The first part of this chapter deals precisely with the pluralism of definitions and interpretations of the concept of entrepreneurship, most of the time equated to the concepts of self-employment and business ownership, by returning a picture characterised by significant differences and heterogeneity. This chapter then addresses the way the ambiguity of entrepreneurship is reproduced in the policy field, where differences are taken for granted and fuelled on the basis of the principle of inclusiveness. I argue that the vast scope and ambiguity of the concept of entrepreneurship is not merely the result of technical/measurability dilemmas or theoretical approaches used to the set or not set the

boundaries of its meaning. I consider that the conceptual ambiguity lays the groundwork for highlighting the political component of the issue at stake. Finally, it dwells on the 'youth question', that constitutes part of the premise to inclusive entrepreneurship support policies.

The third chapter, titled *The research design*, deals with the methodological aspects of the study, by paying attention to positionality as well. Although in the different context of Southern Italy, I have indeed experienced the ambivalence of entrepreneurship first-hand when, at roughly the same time, a member of my family had access to a regional measure of microcredit targeted at unemployed to starting their business, while, together with others, I were trying to develop a social enterprise that, in 2012, won a grant from the Italian Ministry of Education and Research for social innovation enterprises undertaken by under-35 young people. This has certainly contributed to stimulate my interest in the issue at stake. Having said this, the chapter first addresses the purposes of the study and the research questions. Then, it dedicates ample space to the comparison and the selection of the cases. Finally, it focuses on data collection and data analysis.

The fourth chapter is titled *'Accompany' or 'Govern' socio-economic and policy changes? The role of politics and institutional legacies*. Here is addressed the first of the two main research questions. Thus, the chapter interrogates the fieldwork materials in order to contribute to explore the ways local policy actors interpret, invalidate or reproduce the mainstream approach to entrepreneurship support policies and the role local institutional factors and politics play in this respect. To this end, the chapter focuses on the analysis of the main features of municipal entrepreneurship support policies, including governance arrangements, values, problems, objectives, implementation and target groups, with attention to politics and institutional factors.

Finally, the last chapter is entitled *The opportunity to include and the risk of 'differentiated inclusion'*. In this chapter, I focus on the subjective experiences of young people up to 35 years of age who benefited from MESPs in Milan and Barcelona. The chapter interrogates the fieldwork material related to young people's experiences with two purposes. The first is to contribute to deepening the cognitive dimension of MESPs starting from the perspectives of the same recipients. Especially on the ground that municipal entrepreneurship supports are implemented as positive incentives, accessible on a voluntary basis, the access to the values, ideas and discourses underlying their experiences is crucial to contribute to grasping the values and ideas that inform this public policy and the kind of subjectivity it entails. The second aim is to investigate the implications MESPs may have in terms of the distribution of entrepreneurship-related risks and opportunities.

CHAPTER I

URBAN POLICIES AND MODES OF GOVERNANCE: CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE TRENDS

The activation of cities to support the birth and development of new businesses is not new and the understanding MESPs requires to pay attention to the broader framework of changes in urban policies and governance that may affect the way these are conceived. To start building the interpretative framework for this analysis, I will draw on the studies that analysed changes occurred in urban policy and governance as a result of two main processes: territorialisation and changing policy approaches. To this end, I refer mainly to the 'urban political economy tradition', and in particular: to the Marxian and neo-Marxian 'critical political economy', led by scholars such as D. Harvey, N. Brenner and B. Jessop, and the 'neo-Weberian political economy of European cities' baptized by P. Le Galès and A. Bagnasco.

I. The local between deterritorialization and reterritorialization

The territory in the globalisation

Since the 1980s, globalisation in its various dimensions has stimulated many scholarly reflections in several disciplines and it has become a critical social and political issue. At the core of the debates around globalisation are its complexity and its related challenges, since its consequences unfolded at different spatial scales and affected not only the economic life of single countries or firms but several aspects of the contemporary daily life of people across the world.

In particular, great attention has been paid to its economic dimension, namely on the globalisation of markets, the intensified international competitions, the delocalisation of economic productions and the new global division of labour. The huge scale of these processes, together with the succession of interpretations ranging from 'triumphalist' to 'catastrophist' tones (Cox, 2000, p. 3) in a blurred defining framework, has nevertheless

contributed to turning globalisation into a 'chaotic concept' (Jessop, 2000, p. 81), sometimes guilty of spreading 'fears and terror' (Beck, 2000, p. 125). In this vein, Peter Marcuse shared in a socialist magazine a brief but intense reflection on what he defined the 'Orwellian language of globalisation' (2000, p. 27). For Marcuse, views concerning for instance the myth of an immobilized nation-state, the idea of a conflict between states or cities conceived as homogeneous entities instead of bargaining places where different interests are at stake, the overlapping between advances in technology and the concentration of power and so forth, would have transformed globalisation into an useless concept: a simple list of macro phenomena in which causes and effects cannot be distinguished, the empirical evidence is often hardly detectable and the action of concrete actors left the door open for abstract forces. From the analytical point of view, Marcuse stressed that this considerably hampers the understanding of the 'really existing globalisation' (p. 24) whereas, politically, careless but popular reflections converted globalisation in a self-governed and out of control fetish.

As a matter of fact, the literature on the topic has been often marked by overgeneralization (Cox, 2000). Examples of this overgeneralization are briefly outlined hereafter with special reference to the interpretation of territorial consequences of globalisation, which are particularly relevant in this analysis. The unfolding of globalisation, indeed, led various scholars to support the thesis of a progressive disembeddedness of social relations from local territories, with the prevailing and increasing global circulation of flows (capital, people, commodities and images) over fixed territorial organisations (Brenner, 1999). We owe the notion of *disembedding* to Giddens who theorised this concept to refer to: 'the "lifting out" of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space' (1991, p. 21).

The success of this viewpoint has been reinforced by the financialization of the economy which, interpreted as independent from geographical locations, other than from material economic production, led even to declare 'the end of geography' (O'Brien, 1992; recently reviewed in O 'Brien and Keith, 2009). Another important contribution in this respect has been given by Manuel Castells who, in *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996), claimed the gradual shift, that also involves power organisations, from a 'space of places' to a 'space of flows':

> 'the dominant tendency is toward a horizon of networked, ahistorical space of flows, aiming at imposing its logic over scattered, segmented places, increasingly unrelated to each other, less and less able to share cultural codes.' (Castells, 2010 [1996], p. 459)

On the cultural side, in *Modernity at large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation*, the anthropologist Appadurai (1996) highlighted the way deterritorialization processes – 'one of

the central forces of the modern world' (p. 37) – would also affect identities of cultural and political groups who: 'increasingly operate in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities' (p. 49). Furthermore, in the political theory field, the concept of 'empire' – which has also had a powerful impact on large social movements, such as the 'no-global' one – has been introduced by Negri and Hardt in 2000 to conceptualise the new postmodern sovereignty. The latter, according to the two political philosophers, developed alongside globalisation by giving rise to a unique global order: it unfolded without any spatial and temporal limits and with the ability to disregard localities by virtue of its deterritorializing power. Finally, as Rossi (2017) recently pointed out, phenomena such as the 'McDonaldization' or the 'Disneyfication' have been strictly identified with globalisation, accused of fostering the progressive and relentless homogenization of cultures and ways of thinking, therefore levelling territorial differences.

These viewpoints, that intertwines with neoliberalisation theses discussed later, are of course symptomatic of the complexity of globalisation processes and the undoubted existing tension between global processes, flows, transnational forms of power organisation on the one hand, and local societies on the other. In this respect, Beck (2000) proposed to distinguish between the complexity of globalisation or globality and the simplification of the *globalism*. Beck used the concept of globalism to identify those approaches to globalisation which tend to subordinate the society as a whole to the rules of the market and to reduce the 'global society' to the 'global society of the market' (2000, p. 142). This adhesion to the market paradigm, not rare in social sciences[2], in times of 'time-space compression' – to use Harvey's definition of globalisation (Harvey, 1993) – together with the rise of neoliberal doctrines and policies, have contributed to spread an interpretation of the territory as a meaningless space in the face of the globalized world (Capel, 2016). As Keating (2017) noted, the statement of the 'end of territory' goes hand in hand with that one of 'the end of history' and together they end up demolishing two crucial dimensions and two key interpretative tools of the social world, i.e. space and time.

[2] The good fortune of the 'market paradigm' in the analysis of globalisation found a quite breeding ground in social sciences. At its basis there lies an approach that has long seen the separation between the economic action and the society as an intrinsic feature of modernity. In this respect, a critical and essential analysis was carried out by Mingione in *Fragmented Societies: A Sociology of Economic Life beyond the Market Paradigm* (1991). In this book, Mingione lays the foundation for a critical sociology of economic life, especially starting from its studies on the continuing relevance of informal economy, with a view to disprove the main assumptions of the market paradigm. In particular, Mingione highlights how major social scientists have usually regarded the market as independent from social conditionings as well as the dominant force in structuring social relationship and local contexts, which are basically interpreted as a sub-product of the market.

From deterritorialization to reterritorialization: the relevance of local economies

Deterritorialization processes are an essential dimension of contemporary society and, undoubtedly, the strengthening of globalisation put a lot of strain on territories. These are especially visible in the difficulties of governments to regulate the economy in a financialised global market as well as in the ceding of part of national sovereignty to supranational institutions, in Europe primarily through the European integration process for instance (Le Galès, 2002). Nonetheless, the literature provides a more complex interpretation of the issue at stake, by shedding light on the concurrent unfolding of both *deterritorialization* and *reterritorialization* dynamics. As we will see, this perspective moved the attention back to the territory, with its concrete resources, actors, economies, welfare arrangements, diverging mechanisms of governance and politics. In this sense, it reintroduces the 'territory' as an economic but also sociological subject.

More to the point, scholars highlighted that, very far from the idea of a homogenisation of territories driven by global and relentless forces, sub-global actors and territories have become increasingly relevant in the globalization and are a crucial dimension of an overall territorial reorganisation fostered first of all by nation-states (Keating, 1997, 2017). From this perspective, globalisation is not reducible neither to 'top-down' nor to 'bottom-up' processes (Jessop, 2000). Neil Brenner, whose analyses owe much to the works of David Harvey and Henry Lefebvre, observed how the local gains a central place within what he defines the 'highly conflictual dynamic of global spatial restructuring' (Brenner, 1999, p. 432). In his article 'Globalisation as Reterritorialization: The Re-scaling of Urban Governance in the European Union' (1991), Brenner has retraced the main steps of the geography of capitalism, with the leading role played, before, by the city-state and, later, by the nation-state. As Sassen has done in *Cities in a World Economy* (2000), he has shown as well the way contemporary changes in the geography of capitalism have eroded both the state-centred geography of capitalism and the relationship between cities and the States to which they belong to, thus leading to a reconceptualisation or 'rescaling' of the State space.

The concept of rescaling refers to the reorganisation of the State across different spatial scales through processes of both *upscaling* and *downscaling* that give more power both to the local (cities and regions) and the supranational levels. The concept of *glocalization* (also *glocalism*), which comes from the union between the terms *global* and *local*, describes this simultaneous and interrelated unfolding of deterritorialization and localisation processes. Brenner has interpreted glocalization as a strategy pursued by the same State to foster competition and growth, regardless of the unequal territorial implications of such a strategy

and in stark contrast to the territorial (as well as social) equalisation pursued by the Keynesian national state. More to the point, Brenner argued that the strategy of the State has been to:

> 'promote the formation of Glocalizing Competition State Regimes (GCSRs) in which (a) significant aspects of economic regulation are devolved to subnational institutional levels and (b) major socioeconomic assets are reconcentrated within the most globally competitive urban regions and industrial districts.' (Brenner 2004:450).

Jessop has referred to a 'postnational' regime which does not entail the end of the State but rather its 'relativization' as the privileged scale of power in favour of the increasing relevance of other spatial scales (2000, p. 95). From an analytical standpoint, Sassen develops the concept of 'global cities': agglomeration economies and global networks between them that reflect the need for localisation of global processes. Brenner (1991), instead, detected the development of 'super-regional blocks' (such as Europe and North America) and 'sub-national spatial scales' or 'global cities' competing to attract capital and state resources.

This mechanisms of restructuring have been analysed especially in relation to the changing geography of capitalism, also as a result of the transformations of productive systems. These latter are linked both to the increase in international competition and market volatility, together with the change in the principles of production (from supply to demand-based production) which, since the early 1970s, have forced to experiment with more flexible production modes (see Harvey, 1993). Flexibility would have resulted in 'recentering' phenomena of the socio-economic organisation that involved different scales: from industrial districts as 'recentering phenomena on old roots', to other kinds of 'local systems of production or of services, cities, metropolitan areas, regions' (Bagnasco, 2008, p. 20).

According to Sabel (1994), the renovated relevance of regional economies is the result of multiple and intertwined events, involving both economic and non-economic factors. Economic factors concern, for instance, the reorganisation of large firms via subcontracting and the development of strong collaborative relations among larger and smaller local firms which, thus, become directly linked to international markets (thus reinforcing local economies). In this context, a great influence has been also exercised by the emergence of successful industrial districts in several countries (such as Italy, West German, Denmark, Austria and France in Europe). On the other hand, Sabel also emphasises the value of territorial institutions and local interactions. For instance, its stresses the relevance of the cooperation of territorial organizations such as trade unions in industrial reorganisations, along with the consequent scant tension between labour and the local management that comes with it; as well as the role local governments play as job-creation agencies, partly in order to answer the needs of the networks of firms.

In this respect, it must be said that the literature on industrial districts has given a valuable contribution. I would further draw particular attention to three points it highlighted. First is to have grasped the persistent relevance "of the small" in capitalist systems. It is as early as the end of the 19th century that Marshall argued that the manufacturing system based on extensive and vertically integrated production units was not the only efficient model, but rather one of two types of system. The second one is based on small factories concentrated in specific localities, each of which is specialized in one of the different phases of the production process[3]. However, up to the 1970s, attention has been turned mainly to macro organisations, i.e. big corporations and the State, while it was assumed that small entrepreneurship would have disappeared under the burden of capitalist accumulation. A similar destiny was expected for local governments which, in the advent of national systems of social protections, would have become just 'subordinate agencies' (Sabel, 1994, p. 102). The concept of the industrial district was subsequently rediscovered in Italy, at the end of the 1970s, by a research group headed by Giacomo Becattini and undertaken to carry out a study on the economic development in Tuscany, a northern Italian region. In particular, the approach of industrial districts has been applied as a means to interpret 'the light industrialization of Italy' (Bianchi, 2009, p. 103) as well as the regional peculiarities and differences of the Italian economic development which led to the theorization of the *Tre Italie* (Bagnasco, 1977). Subsequently, Piore and Sabel, in their *The Industrial Divide* (1984), echoed the work of Becattini by generalizing the specific Italian model of production to other cases (Storper, 1995). It became clear, indeed, that this distinct model of development could be observed in various European regions, such as the Baden-Württemberg in Germany or the area of Barcelona (Andreotti, Benassi, 2014). The second point to be stressed is precisely this, i.e. to have highlighted the importance of local roots in European industrialization processes and especially the diversity guided by territorial differences. Finally, the third point concern the emphasis placed on institutional factors. Localities, indeed, were regarded not as 'locations of production' but as 'local production systems' (Crouch et al., 2004; Keating, 2017), that means:

> 'A local productive system has an economic and social identity shaped by an 'industrial atmosphere'; the latter coinciding with a set of shared cognitive, moral and behavioural attitudes drawing on locally-dense cultural interactions, and which orientate technical, human

[3] This argument that takes its roots in the debate about the mobility of labour and capital, claimed by classical economic theory but contradicted by the observation of a reality (namely the England at the time) that was 'fragmented into regional, sectorial and social compartments, which hindered the free circulation of capital and labour that was supposed to exist in theory' (Becattini, 2002, p. 85).

and relational investments towards forms consistent with local accumulation' (Becattini et al., 2009, p. XVIII).

The competitiveness as pervasive reference for local development policies

Against the background just outlined, the territory has become a privileged area for territorialized economic development policies (Capel, 2016). These would be faced with the need to preserve local economies in a context of growing competition and, therefore, in which the possibility to assemble global flux and/or valorise local assets, cannot be taken for granted (Camagni, 2002; Bagnasco, 2008). This possibility would depend, indeed, to the capacity of territories to compete with each other in order to attract resources (national and foreign investments but even people: entrepreneurs, creatives etc.) and to preserve and nurture their place in the global economy. Some problematic aspects have been raised with respect to this argument. By way of example, according to Keating cities and regions are 'discursively constructed as competitors' (2017, p. 123), whereas Le Galès (2002) argues that a tension between cooperation and competition better reflects the conditions in which contemporary cities lives (as witnessed by the emergence of international city networks, for instance). However, competitiveness has become a pervasive reference for local development policies by encouraging public actions oriented to endogenous growth, attractiveness and, in general, to develop a favourable environment for (especially small) businesses, also through the facilitation of 'local collective competition goods'[4]. This includes the development of the right "atmosphere" or "ecosystem" so as to support economic growth and facilitate the task of economic actors.

Camagni (2002) asserts that the territory can provide fundamental 'environmental tools' to firms, especially concerning 'the processes of knowledge accumulation' and 'collective learning'. The latter refers to the: 'socialised growth of knowledge, which is embedded not

[4] We draw on the comprehensive definition of 'local collective competition goods' provided by Crouch and his colleagues (2004): "In order to develop and prosper, firms need to use all sorts of goods and services that are provided in different ways, from knowledge about foreign markets to specialized skills. A central problem for small or even medium-sized firms in an advanced economy is that, whereas large corporations can provide many of these goods in-house for themselves, smaller firms must buy them on the market, where transaction costs are likely to make them more expensive than in the large-firm case. They often lack the specific resources that would enable them to cash in on their potential advantages within the competitive marketplace—flexibility, creativity, the high motivation of both management and workers, links with innovative firms and markets, etc.—and can be pushed out by large firms. They may lack, for example, specialized know-how regarding the introduction of new technologies; or they may need information regarding current developments on sales or procurement markets; or they may be too small to afford the costs of setting up a differentiated marketing system. Many SMEs solve these problems by clustering geographically, and finding means whereby these facilitative goods and services can be made available on a more or less non-market basis within the locality. We call these local collective competition goods".

only in the internal culture of individual companies but, particularly, in the local labour market (or, as used to said in the past, in the local industrial atmosphere)' (p. 2396). Economically, again according to Camagni (2002), the territory would result in: a system of material and immaterial resources, marked by *relational capital* and specific modes of *governance*, which are instrumental in enabling good economic performance. Therefore, territorial advantages are a matter of reliability, of the presence of crucial intermediate institutions such as universities, research centres, foundations, chambers of commerce and so on which contribute to develop and support local knowledge and know-how, consolidated but dynamic networks (Bagnasco, 2008). In other words:

> 'It is obvious that individual companies are the entities that compete and act in the international market and that their innovativeness can never be separated from the presence of a Schumpeterian entrepreneur; but these companies and these entrepreneurs are to a large extent generated by the local context and, in order for them to govern and live with uncertainty, their decision-making processes are firmly based on socialised processes and/or explicit collective action.' (Camagni, 2002, p. 2396)

In this context, great relevance has been attached to the capacity to enter the so-called 'new economy' founded on knowledge, culture, creativity and so on: all elements considered to be inherently local, 'as they are embedded in human capital, interpersonal networks, specialised and highly skilled local labour markets and local innovative *milieux*' (Camagni, 2002, p. 2397). The local and urban scale has, therefore, become strictly connected to innovation (Capello, 2001) while the 'innovative *milieux*' has offered, to borrow from Rossi (2017), a 'place-based reinterpretation of Schumpeter' (p. 44). Especially major cities have tried and continue to try to take advantage of this knowledge to strengthen the urban economy:

> 'most large cities are seeking to restructure in ways that broaden their bases of new-economy firms (..) where new-economy industries dominate, cities have achieved a competitive edge; cities with mixed economies are competitive but saddled with some persistent economic disadvantages; old-economy cities endure the most severe disadvantages in the competition for business investment.' (Di Gaetano and Strom, 2003, p. 368)

According to Sabel (1994), this has been the answer to the growing uncertainty brought about by the increasing competition, which makes regulatory powers weaker or more complex to exert, but also by the difficulties faced by the crisis of welfare systems. Local public actions would have been indeed oriented not only to promote endogenous growth, attractiveness, competitiveness, 'permanent innovation' (Jessop, 2000, p. 92) with high-technology to industrial parks and so on but also to experiment with forms of municipal Keynesianism. With the concept of Keynesian municipalism, Sabel (1994, p. 127) referred to a series of programmes implemented by cities such as London, Marseilles or Hamburg in

Europe, oriented to direct employment creation through public works or job-subsidies. The next subsection addresses how these processes intertwined with the restructuring of public policies more in general and the implications for local welfare.

II. Local public action, scale changes and new policy approaches

Decentralization processes and the development of local welfare

The previous section has addressed the way a progressive reorganisation of the economy on a territorial base has been witnessed within a double movement that is constituted by processes of deterritorialization and selective reterritorialization (Harvey, 1993 [1989]). Here I draw to the attention to the ways this 'also alters the places and the levels of political action' (Governa and Salone, 2004, p. 796). The economic changes and approaches just outlined, indeed, directly connect with the processes of rescaling of public policies. Therefore, here I focus on the second element at the basis of changes in the territorial organisation, that is the rescaling and changing approaches of public policies again on the double-track of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

The processes of territorialisation have not involved only local economies but the territory as a whole: all its dimensions, from the political to the economic, cultural and social ones, have undergone deep processes of change (Bifulco, 2017; Keating, 1997). The 'local production systems' that we have just seen can also be identified with a 'localised social structure', namely with 'a set of social relations at a particular spatial scale, within which concrete interests are defined' (Cox and Mair, 1991, p. 197). As a result, the very meaning of the territory has been deeply reinterpreted. Bifulco and De Leonardis (2006) pointed out that the territory is no longer reduced to an administrative unit nor simply associated with the space where policies take place, but it has also become a privileged field where specific problems arise as well as an important source of resources that can contribute to the solution of the same problems.

This has increased the relevance of both *territorialized policies*, which means that policies became more connected to the territory and local actors are more involved in their building processes, and *territorial policies*, which refer instead to policies that are the result of the very action of local actors (Chiasson, 2012). In the words of Keating (2017), regions and cities become 'sites *of* policy making' after having being 'spaces *for* public policies' since the post-war period (p. 131). Territorialisation of public policies have developed by following mainly

this double track: the rescaling of the State (that includes the *decentralization*) and, in this context, the development of new policy approaches and instruments (*localisation*) (Bifulco, 2017; Bifulco, Bricocoli and Monteleone, 2008; Keating, 1997).

As far as the rescaling of the State is concerned, it is worth adding to what has already said in the previous section that this entailed the transfer of part of state powers, transferred through mechanisms of upscaling and downscaling, to supranational and local government scales. In other words, the formation of supranational organisations, benefiting from the transfer of part of national powers, has gone along with dynamics of decentralization of regulatory capacities (Kazepov, 2005). This has undoubtedly led to a progressive weakening of the State[5]. Nonetheless, it must be said that the State keeps crucial functions while, on the other hand, it never had the monopoly of the political action nor of the social protection, which is a field particularly affected by decentralization. With respect to the latter point, by way of example, Ferrera (2005) pointed out how its embryonic form in Europe was already highly local in character since it was carried out mainly by municipalities, charitable institutions, parishes and mutual associations (p. 167).

Having said this, the phenomena of territorialisation and decentralisation of regulatory tasks to local levels (the *downscaling* just mentioned) occurred, albeit with differences in the degree, timing and modes[6], in the majority of European countries in the last 30 years (Bifulco, 2017; Kazepov, 2008). These transversely affected all policy areas (Governa and Salone, 2004) and entailed changes of both the levels of political action and of policy approaches, in the frame of the broader reorganisation of the very Keynesian welfare. The *regionalisation* is one of the primary forms assumed by the decentralization, although it is also characterized by the growing protagonism of cities as well (Le Galès, 2002). In this respect, according to Bagnasco and Le Galès (2000), the changes that involved institutions and contemporary capitalism – resulting in the weakening of nation-states and the construction of Europe – have represented a crucial 'historical interlude' in which cities have had more space to act as key economic and political actors, especially in the second phase of the process of decentralization.

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[5] Rhodes (2007) highlighted three processes that would have led to the 'hollowing out of the state'. These followed three main directions: 'from above', due to the growing interdependence characterizing different levels of government within an international system, 'from below', due to the marketization and the more important role of policy networks, and 'sideways', where they would be led by parastatal organisations (p. 1248).

[6] In centralist countries decentralization has been more moderate. This is true for France, for instance, where a timid process of decentralization started only in the 1980s; and in UK, where the local has been mainly emphasised with reference to the private and local communities and associations (Bifulco, 2015, p. 66). Countries with an already federalist structure (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) reformed their intergovernmental relationships by strengthening cooperation (Ferrera, 2005).

The first phase of decentralization is mainly endogenous, i.e. it took place prevalently as a "national phenomenon". First decentralizing reforms go back to the 1970s and the 1980s, when meso-governments (usually *regions*) emerged or were strengthened. For instance, institutional arrangements became regionally framed in countries such as Italy, Spain and Belgium, whereas more cooperative arrangements were boosted in federalist countries, such as Germany and Austria (Ferrera, 2005). This first phase of decentralization occurred for a variety of reasons. As Ferrera (2005) noted, it was partly a strategy to reduce the weight of national administrative functions and improve the management of public services, while in some countries the implementation of constitutional previsions played another important role (e.g. Italy, Spain and Belgium). To this, the rise of regionalist movements in some European countries must be added, together with a greater request for democratic participation.

The second phase of decentralization took place since the 1990s, encouraged by the Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992. It is in this phase that decentralization has particularly strengthened[7]. First, the process of European integration strongly enhanced the visibility of the regions, as well as of cities, and significantly contributed to their reshaping (Keating, 2017). This has been influenced by the development of a European regional and urban policy which gave an essential contribution 'to the repoliticization of territorial cleavages' as well (Ferrera, 2005, p. 178). In this respect, it is worth mentioning also the emergence of a specific "Directorate for Regional and Urban Policy", the establishment of the Committee of the Regions among the European institutions and the provision of additional, other than important, resources through the Structural and Investment Funds, from which both regions and cities have benefited. Secondly, the affirmation, in the Treaty of Maastricht, of the principle of *subsidiarity* contributed to *explicitly*[8] promote the redistribution of regulatory capacities (Kazepov, 2008). This principle, that goes with that one of *proportionality*, establishes that:

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[7] Ladner and his colleagues (2015, 2016) have analysed local autonomy, its changes over time and its variations across thirty-nine countries, despite the evident complexity of measuring and comparing such an index in so many different contexts. To this end, they developed a Local Autonomy Index (LAI), whose results confirm the increasing autonomy acquired by many local governments since the 1990s.

[8] According to Kazepov (2008) the subsidiarization of social policies took implicit and explicit forms. 'Implicit rescaling' occurred when a specific measure regulated at a particular level loses or acquires weight (e.g. the increase of the number of people in social assistance – often fall within local competences – determined by a decrease in the number of people benefiting of employment policies, usually regulated at the national level). This is the prevailing trend since the end of the 1970s up to the middle of the 1980s. The 'explicit rescaling', which became more relevant starting from the second half of the 1990s, occurred instead whit proper reforms of decentralization of regulatory powers (e.g. localisation of employment services) (see also Kazepov and Barberis, 2008).

> 'From the conception of policy to its implementation, the choice of the level at which action is taken (from EU to local) and the selection of the instruments used must be in proportion to the objectives pursued. This means that before launching an initiative, it is essential to check systematically (a) if public action is really necessary, (b) if the European level is the most appropriate one, and (c) if the measures chosen are proportionate to those objectives'. (European Commission, 2001, pp. 10–11)

Moreover, it encourages – combined with the principle of 'proximity'[9] – an exercise of power as close as possible to citizens. Although an optimal scale for the exercise of power does not exist in absolute terms, this principle recognises to local levels (from local communities and municipalities to regions and metropolitan areas) the capacity to develop in many cases effective and efficient responds to old, but above all new, social needs precisely in view of its proximity with inhabitants and flexibility to adapt to place-based configuration of social needs and risks.

Therefore, territorialisation/decentralization processes emphasised the role of 'the local' in the provision of welfare services as well, thus contributing to the development of regional and urban welfare arrangements (Ferrera, 2005). There are different reasons for this. On the one hand, Maastricht criteria and the 'Stability and Growth Pact', which have established the reduction of public debts and national deficits among their priority, have spurred towards the reconfiguration of financial relations between the State and subnational units, also with a view to facilitating compliance with budgetary constraints: as Ferrera (2005) stressed, in some cases this has even foreseen the stipulation of domestic stability pacts for local government bodies in order to comply with European budgetary rules[10]. However, there are also other changes and aspects that have led to increasing the relevance of the local scale, these are immediately addressed in the next subsection.

To conclude this part, I would highlight the three central dimensions characterising, against the background just outlined, the way decentralisation of welfare has been operated. First, as I said, through the relocation of financing and/or spending tasks at the local level. Secondly, through the mobilization of non-financial local resources for welfare by means of the multiplication of actors involved in local systems of welfare (issue takes up in the third and last section of this chapter). These, analytically and conceptually different from local welfare policies (Bifulco, 2015), are defined as follows:

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[9] The principle of proximity is set out in Article 10(3) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU, Lisbon Treaty) which states: "every citizen shall have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union. Decisions shall be taken as openly and as closely as possible to the citizen".

[10] Hulbert and Vammalle (2016) reported a list of most recent reforms concerning internal budget balance rules, requiring local governments to comply with the EMU's budgetary rules. Among the others, this includes: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Spain.

> "local welfare systems are not fixed and stable structures, but dynamic processes in which the specific local socio-economic and cultural conditions give rise to: different arrangements of formal and informal actors, public or not, involved in designing and implementing welfare policies; and different profiles of people in need" (Andreotti, Mingione and Polizzi, 2012, p. 1926).

Third, through the redefinition of welfare approaches, discussed in the next subsection, including the emergence of new forms of governance on new bases, discussed instead in the last section.

Social investment and activation: the emergence of new policy approaches

The relevance of local welfare is intertwined with the multidimensional aspects of the crisis of national welfare states. In particular, it is interpreted as a result of the interplay between a) the crisis of legitimacy of welfare states; b) the redefinition of the social risk map; and, as pointed out earlier c) the need of cost-containment of the public expenditure.

The crisis of legitimacy that invested State bureaucracies was triggered by diverse factors. These include the fact that public interventions have been increasingly regarded as too expensive, favourable to a few social groups and prone to corruption and frauds (Mingione, 2014). On the other hand, the emergence of new social risks (NSRs)[11] has been acknowledged as one of the most significant challenges – or *welfare traps,* as Ferrera (1998) has defined them – of European welfare states, together with cost-containment pressures and the related limits to the capacity of reconciling the 'rising demand' and 'restricted resources' (Taylor-Gooby, 2004, p. 6). This has, in turn, reinforced the criticisms to welfare systems which have been deemed to be unable or too "rigid" to dealing with the complex redefinition of the social risks map, by continuing to provide homogenous services in the face of ever more heterogeneous needs (Andreotti et al., 2012). I would further draw attention to some of the major transformations at the basis of the emergence of NSRs and affecting the three pillars of the Keynesian welfare state, i.e. the market, the family and the State (see Taylor-Gooby, 2004; Paci, 2005; Bonoli, 2007; Ranci, 2010).

Briefly, the first relates to changes in the economy and labour markets and the interruption of the 'virtuous circle of full employment and high-growth rates' (Kazepov, 2008, p. 249): processes of delocalization, tertiarization and industrial restructuring have been accompanied by higher levels of unemployment, increasing instability of careers and precariousness. To

[11] The new social risks are defined by Taylor-Gooby (2004) as: "the risks that people now face in the course of their lives as a result of economic and social changes associated with the transition to a post-industrial society" (pp. 2-3).

this, it must be added the growing wage and opportunity gap between skilled and low-skilled workers, as well as the spreading of the so-called *working poor*. The second relates to the growing vulnerability of the family which is linked with profound demographic and cultural changes that redefined the main features of households, particularly (but not only) problematic for those countries belonging to familistic welfare regimes, i.e. based on a strong role of the family in the provision of welfare services[12].

The new risks emerging in this context are 'transitory and particular' (Taylor-Gooby, 2004, p. 8) and they especially affect young people whose trajectories are increasingly de-standardised and individualised. As will be discussed more in depth in the next chapter, young people face increasing difficulties in entering the labour market and are among the most exposed to precariousness as well, especially in Southern Europe. To this, it must be added that social risks are unevenly distributed across Europe and specific configuration of social risks characterize each regional and urban context (Ranci, 2010; Ranci et al., 2014); while the 'social question' and the 'urban question' have become increasingly intertwined issues (Le Galès, 2005).

It is also from the problems associated with the advent of new needs that what has been regarded as a genuine *paradigm shift*[13] in welfare emerged. This is about a 'new risk welfare politics' that is 'concerned primarily with mobilising the population to enhance competitiveness and with expanding opportunities and changing behaviour and assumptions about responsibilities" (Taylor-Gooby, 2004, p. 11). A view that goes hand in hand with the 'centrality' assumed by local development in the processes of localisation and increasing the autonomy of cities and regions (Vicari Haddock, 2004, p. 109). Three are the main aspects that must be underlined in this respect. The first relates to the issue of the *integration* between welfare and economic policies, particularly emphasised within the *social investment perspective*; the second concerns the centrality acquired by the *activation paradigm* in modern welfare states (Kenworthy, 2010); while the third regards the growing relevance of the local as the privileged field of amalgamation of all these processes.

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[12] Among these, it is worth mentioning the increasing number of divorces and legal separations, single-parent families and single-person households; the ageing population which absorbs increasing percentages of the welfare expenditure; and, finally, the social and cultural changes – albeit partial – concerning gender roles.

[13] Following the reasoning of Hall (1993, p. 279), Taylor-Gooby (2004) argues that: "the notion of policy paradigm is used to sum up the shared core beliefs of a policy community. It includes ideas about the goals of policy; the identification of issues as problematic in relation to those goals; explanations of why problems arise; solutions to identified problems; explanations of why they will meet the problem; and definitions of the appropriate role for government and other actors" (p.11).

As far as the integration is concerned, as early as the 1990s Mayer (1994) highlighted that demand for policy integration at the local level resulted from the centrality of local growth strategies:

> 'These diverse efforts to mobilize and coordinate local potential for economic growth together have produced the effect of gradually undermining the traditional sharp distinctions between different policy areas. This is particularly true in the case of labour market and social policy domains, but equally, educational, environmental and cultural policies have become more integrated with, and are often part and parcel of, economic development measures' (p. 319)

Moreover, Mayer stresses how active labour market policies represent a telling example of the explicit link that has been made between local welfare, activation and economic development, as also pointed out by Andreotti and her colleagues more recently (2012). To put it in Mayer's terms:

> 'municipal employment and training programmes have served to mobilize and integrate the job-creating potentials from different policy areas. Active labour market policy measures of this kind therefore imply a blurring of the traditional distinction between economic and social policies, as they create a real link between the local economy and the local operation of the welfare state: welfare becomes increasingly redefined in the direction of the economic success of a local area.' (1994, p. 320-321)

As a result, the local level has become a privileged field from which to observe the interplay between economic development and welfare strategies. The integration between social and economic policies see again the key role of the EU, active promoter of actions based on the interdependence between 'social cohesion' and 'economic development' (Bifulco, De Leonardis, 2006). This combination is also at the basis of the *social investment perspective*, that has become crucial in the European debate since the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy in 2000. This perspective stresses 'the productive potential of social policy and thus provide a new economic rationale for social policy provision' (Palier, 2013, p. 41). More to the point, Hemerijck (2014) distinguished three components of social investment strategies, that he defines: 'flows', 'stocks' and 'buffers'. In a nutshell, the *flows* aim at easing labour market transitions (including activating policies), the *stocks* concern investments in order to raise the quality of human capital, whereas the *buffers* refer to safety nets. A number of criticisms have been raised by several scholars, who have drawn the attention in particular to two aspects. First, its long-term projections, which leaves the issues of the *hic et nunc* poverty and growing social vulnerability outstanding, by concentrating on *what works* (on the basis of evidence-based effectiveness) and selecting beneficiaries on the basis of their effective recovery chances, hence the particular attention placed on young people. This approach has been criticised also for reducing the number of available options for public policies and the complexity of problems that can be addressed, while encouraging post-ideological policy

approaches, i.e. based on pragmatism more than on values and 'ideas' (Busso, 2017; Davies, Nutley and Smith, 2017). Moreover, it seems to have contributed to led to pay excessive attention to activation policies, which is another of the main criticisms scholars raised (Busso, 2015; Cantillon, 2011; Morel et al., 2012).

Indeed, the concept of 'activation' has become a keyword in social and economic policies across Europe, especially encouraged by the EU through the European Employment Strategy (EES). Nevertheless, as often happens with policy notions, there are not univocal interpretations about what it means and how it works. Because of the variety of welfare states in Europe as well, indeed, activation 'means different things in different welfare states' (van Berkel, Møller, 2002b, p. 51). By way of example, the enduring weakness of southern European countries in delivering both passive and active policies have deeply affected the way of conceiving activation:

> 'In the Southern European countries, the issue about claimants who would have their cash benefits reduced or withdrawn for not participating in programmes does not exist or seems irrelevant. The theme here is rather the contrary: for those parts of the population which are not covered by social security arrangements, the only way to receive public financial support is via participation in activation programmes. Activation provides the only public means to be included, although often in a relatively weak position, into the system of income.' (van Berkel and Møller, 2002, p. 51)

However, despite the different nuances of activation in Europe, reference has been made to a common trajectory represented by a shift from one welfare paradigm to another, interpreted as a shift from 'passive' to 'active' approaches to welfare. Or, in other words, as a radical change in welfare objectives represented by the move from *decommodification* to *recommodification*, by encouraging the re-entry to (or the participation in) the labour market as the main way to deal with social needs and risks[14] (Palier, 2013; Taylor-Gooby, 2004; van Berkel, Møller, 2002). In this context, if in the narrowest sense activation means reducing welfare dependence by raising participation in work, overall, activation entails 'a new redefinition of the relationship between risks and responsibility' by levering on the self-responsibilisation in dealing with one's social inclusion (Crespo and Serrano, 2004, p. 13). Moreover, particular emphasis has been placed on young people who, as already said, represent the main target of actions guided by the social investment perspective (Bifulco and Mozzana, 2016; Bifulco, 2015; Crespo and Serrano, 2004). Although activation policies, in

[14] This logic revers the previous one, based on *decommodification*. The latter refers to the opportunity to satisfy basic social needs independently from the access and the position to the labour market. The aim of the Keynesian welfare state, whose main innovation can be summarised in the capacity to bring individual risk to a collective dimension, by *repairing* the social costs of the market economy through redistributive mechanisms and the recognition of social rights, was to make the satisfaction of basic needs not necessarily dependent from the market or, in other words, to strengthen citizens capacities beyond their position in the labour market.

their strict sense, should target unemployed people, they often enlarge their target to a series of target groups, generally chosen on the basis their lower levels of participation in the labour market, such as in the case of young people and women (Karjalainen, 2010; Heidenreich and Graziano, 2014). In turn, this 'social construction of target groups of social interventions' also means 'the definition of their problems and the nature of the social interventions directed at them' (van Berkel and Borghi, 2008, p. 332).

From an operational point of view, active policies result in a variety of instruments. In this respect, it is useful to look at the specific policies the OECD includes in the calculation of public expenditure for ALMPs. In the OECD analyses, activation translates in: public employment services and administration, employment subsidies, job rotation schemes, start-up incentives, training and direct job creation (Bonoli, 2012). These instruments mirror the variety of policy goals activation may pursue. Bonvin (2008) highlighted how these purposes range from forcing people back to work to enhancing their human capital to encourage employability, through encouraging companies to hire by providing recruitment incentives for employers, to encouraging alternatives to standard employment through self-employment.

As far as the implementation is concerned, activation has been pursued by fostering shared responsibility, horizontal cooperation and, overall, the promotion of a new mindset according to which 'everybody should be active, should activate or be activated' (Sabatinelli, 2010, p. 10). Activation, therefore, intertwines with rescaling processes; these two processes go hand in hand, encouraged by the EU. The European Employment Strategy (EES) provides, in this respect, a telling example. Since its origins, which date back to 1997, the EES foresaw the enhancement of local employment policies and, especially, the development of Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) at the local level, with particular emphasis on the principles of adaptability, entrepreneurship and employability (Taylor-Gooby, 2004). More to the point, it spurred the increasing involvement of local authorities in designing and implementing the National Action Plans for employment as well as it stimulated regions and municipalities to develop their own employment-related Local Action Plans (Ferrera, 2005, p. 190). It is against this context that employment-related policies (including ALMPs) are ever more developed by municipalities, by going even beyond formal municipal competences (Hendrickson, Sabatinelli, 2014). Nonetheless, the role of cities in designing and implementing their own activation strategies has received scant attention in European literature, mainly because these kinds of policies are traditionally designed at higher levels of government. However, cities are working to draw attention to them. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the activities of Eurocities, a European city networks, which launched in

2015 a call to strengthen employment-related policies at the city-level in Europe[15], by stating that: 'actions to create quality jobs, active labour markets and tackle unemployment must make sense in the local context, otherwise they will not be effective. We believe Europe's major cities and metropolitan areas provide critical mass and the right level for action' (Eurocities, 2015a, p. 3). The 'critical mass' also refer to local networks of actors, mobilised within local governance arrangements. These are based on the interdependence between institutions and civil society and constitutes another key dimension of rescaling processes; this issue is addressed in the next subchapter.

III. Urban governance between convergence and divergence trends

Governance: a conceptual premise

The processes of economic and institutional rescaling have placed at the centre the issue of governance. As Le Galès (2002) explains, the 'sociology of governance' is a discipline aiming to analyse the integration between social, economic and political transformations unfolding at different scales, by favouring a territorial approach[16]. To this end, it focuses on public actions which are put in place through the interactions, interdependences and mechanisms of cooperation between multiple actors along with different scales, and as a result of processual and multifactorial decision-making processes (see also Moini, 2013).

Several scholars claimed there has been an overall transition from *government* to *governance*, by placing emphasis on the *processes* of governing or, in other words, in the way outcomes are achieved (Kersbergen and Waarden, 2004; Klijn, 2008; Rhodes, 1996). For Giersig (2008), governance can be understood as an 'improvisational, dispersed, co-operative and temporary

[15] The website 'Cities at work' is good window into employment-related European cities' actions. [Available at: https://citiesatwork.eu/, latest access: May 2019). In the next chapter I will focus on the place entrepreneurship support policies occupy in this respect.

[16] In the field of social science, Le Galès (2002) has identified three main uses of the concept that relate to three different schools of thought. The first is the new institutionalism of American economists, in which the concept of governance is used to refer to coordination mechanisms within firms, designed to reduce transactional costs, and to the development of governance institutions such as market relations and so on. The second is the field of the economic sociology that, by drawing on Max Weber, Karl Polanyi and the organisational sociology, employs this concept to investigate the relations between the market and the social and political structures and, thus, the differences in modes of regulation (i.e. the State regulation, the regulation through the market and the regulation through cooperation/reciprocity). Finally, the political sociology which has emphasised the interactions, interdependences and mechanisms of cooperation between different political and social actors, and their degree of autonomy in relation to the State.

project-oriented style of political decision making' that is opposed to the 'highly institutionalized, centralized, hierarchical and comprehensive planning' characterising the government (p. 58). According to Rhodes (1996, 2007), the governance is a way of governing with and through 'self-organizing' networks, namely that have a 'significant degree of autonomy from the State' (2007, p. 1246). García (2006, p. 745) pointed out that governance can be interpreted as a 'new form of policy formulation' especially promoted by the European Union, a 'model of decision-making' and, finally, a 'negotiation mechanism'. More to the point, it is regarded as a 'new form of policy formulation' to the extent that it encourages greater participation in the whole policy chain, consistently with the principle of subsidiarity (European Commission, 2001). Then, it is also regarded as a model of 'decision-making' since it would imply a certain consensus through wider participation. As a 'negotiation mechanism', instead, it became a terrain in which different interests are at stake and a mechanism of negotiation between these interests.

Hence governance overall relates to a complex process reflecting the conflictual and the often-ambiguous reorganisation of public powers, with respect to which it must be underlined that: a) public powers do not disappear and governments retain an important role, since they keep different resources and can exercise different powers compared to other actors (Le Galès, 2002); b) the rigid definition of territory on the basis of administrative boundaries, characterising the government, gives way to a more fluid arrangements whose main features are multiscalarity and interdependence; and c) public powers increasingly tend to assume the role of 'enablers' of self-organizing forms of social regulation, more than directly 'doing' (see also Vicari Haddock, 2004; Bifulco, 2017).

With respect to multiscalarity and interdependence, it is worth stressing that governance entails interdependence between different institutional scales (*multilevel governance*) that goes along with the horizontal coordination of interests, actors and organisations (*territorial governance*). The conceptualization of the multilevel governance is central in urban sociology and it owes much, in particular, to the works of A. Bagnasco and P. Le Galès and their interpretation of cities as *incomplete local societies*: a further elaboration of Weber's concept of *localised society* to grasp the complex multi-layer governance in which cities are placed in. More to the point, cities are conceived as *local societies* to the extent that they are based on the interaction of groups and interests which 'come into conflict, coordinate, and produce representations in order to institutionalize collective forms of action, to implement policies, to structure inequalities, and to defend their interests' (Le Galès, 2002, p. 184; see also Bagnasco and Le Galès, 2000). They may be, in this sense, politically meaningful *collective actors*, namely an integrated system of interest groups whose processes of coordination are

defined within specific governance arrangements. However, these governance arrangements include multiscalar relations, as a result of the processes of re-territorialisation and deterritorialization already discussed.

Having said that, as several scholars stressed, there is no single kind of urban governance but multiple *modes of governance*. In the literature, some classifications can be found. Di Gaetano and Strom (2003), for instance, identified five ideal types: the *clientelistic*, *corporatist*, *managerial*, *pluralist* and *populist* modes of governance, distinguished according to the type of governing relations, the governing logic, the key decision makers and the political objectives. While Pierre (1999) recognised, on the basis of a series of criteria such as policy objectives, the local state-citizen relationship, the principal instruments and the key evaluating criterion among the others, the following modes of urban governance: *managerial, corporatist, progrowth and welfare*. These modes of governance are understood as 'ideal types', while hybrid forms may arise as well. As Pierre (1999) nicely put it:

> 'In the real world, one should not be surprised to find urban governance resembling more than one of the four models. To reiterate an earlier remark, cities frequently display conflicts between different models of governance supported by different segments of the city administration. Similarly, over time, cities could move from one model of urban governance to another along with changes in national and/or urban regimes.' (p. 377)

These classifications can be useful for comparisons but also risky for the rigidity they often conceal, the tendency to overestimate the power of actors and to present society as divided in clear and cohesive areas of interests and to undermine the role of other crucial factors, namely the 'different prevailing political systems, cultures and other path-shaping framework conditions' (Giersig, 2008, p. 70). In order to develop a more flexible interpretative framework of urban governance, based on *trends* more than on *models*, the next two subsections, also in the light of what has been addressed so far, discuss the neostructuralist approach to urban governance and the 'neoliberal city thesis', emphasising the strength of *convergence trends* in governance arrangements, and the neo-Weberian approach, which focuses instead on *divergence trends*. Convergence, as Savitch and Kantor (2002) stated, means: 'that urban policies, development strategies, and leadership behaviour become more uniform across time and space'. Moreover, they add: 'If cities are converging, variation among them should begin to disappear. Turning to the opposite side of the coin, divergence would mean that cities either remain differentiated or become more dissimilar' (p. 268).

The neostructuralist approach to urban governance and the 'urban neoliberalization'

As we have seen, the role of regional and urban actors become increasingly relevant since the 1970s and 1980s as a consequence of different and interrelated phenomena already analysed: the unfolding of globalisation, the rescaling processes of the economy and the State, the European integration, the crisis of the Welfare State and, in general, the changing socio-economic conditions that rocked the Fordism to its foundations, thus undermining the mode of regulation which has defined the post-war period until then.

Neostructuralist scholars developed a sophisticated analysis of these processes of change, by stressing the multilevel and multifaceted character of State rescaling and urban governance, the existence of complex interdependences between social, economic and political dynamics, and recognising the context-sensitive aspect of these changes as well (Brenner et al., 2010). They highlighted the strength of convergence trends towards pro-growth or market-led models of urban governance guided by the processes of change of the geography of capitalism that we have already discussed, other than by the spread of the 'new regionalist paradigm' of economic growth and competition, sustained by the European regional policy (Keating, 2017, p. 124) and reinforced by the emphasis on cities as crucial centres of economic growth and competitiveness in the EU (Atkinson, 2001). As Le Galès (2002) noted, convergence-based models of analysis are framed in the long tradition of urban sociology. From the urban ecology of the Chicago School to urban scholars adhering to the Marxist and neo-Marxist tradition, urban sociology has historically recognised to capital a predominant role in structuring the city and local modes of social regulation.

David Harvey's landmark work on the 'urban entrepreneurialism' is undoubtedly one of the most incisive contributions in this field and it has influenced a series of leading scholars, such as Neil Brenner, Jamie Peck, Nik Theodore and Erik Swyngedouw, who focused on 'urban neoliberalism' or 'urban neoliberalization'[17] from the perspective of the critical or radical geography and sociology, based on the French Regulation School as well (Pinson and Morel Journel, 2017, p. 9). These scholars interpret the growing relevance of cities and regions as part of a 'neoliberal strategy' based on mechanisms of both 'deregulation' and 'reregulation':

[17] As Pinson and Morel Journel (2017) pointed out, *neoliberalism* refers to 'the set of intellectual streams and policy orientations that strive to extend market mechanisms and relations, discipline and ethos to an ever-expanding spectrum of spheres of social activities and all this through relying on strong State intervention'. However, in front of a less coherent and steady reality, the notion of *neoliberalization* has been increasingly preferred 'to depict the inherently fuzzy, diverse, contingent, ever-mutating and path-dependent processes of regulatory change that have been inspired by neoliberal ideas' (p. 2).

> 'On the one hand, state re-scaling can be viewed as a neoliberal strategy of `deregulation' to dismantle the nationally configured redistributive operations of the Fordist-Keynesian order, frequently by undermining the social welfare functions of municipal institutions. On the other hand, just as crucially, state re-scaling has served as a strategy of `reregulation' to construct new institutional capacities for promoting capital investment within major urban growth poles, often through locally or regionally organised workfare policies, non-elected quangos and other entrepreneurial initiatives such as public-private partnerships.' (Brenner, 1999, p. 440)

This quotation resumes some of the main points of this critical standpoint. In the first place, the city has been conceptualized as a *growth machine* (Molotch, 1976) or, in other words, as a *dynamic growth engine* (Brenner, 2004b), where: the power of non-public actors grows, by favouring the emerging of *growth coalitions*[18] paralleling local institutions and influencing local government agendas, which has significant undemocratic implications and exclusionary effects (García, 2006); and the most meaningful resources and policies are functional to the creation of the conditions for growth and competition. As Mayer (1994) pointed out, the role of local governments in implementing 'proactive economic development strategies' became crucial to capital accumulation in the face of the partial 'hollowing out' of the State:

> 'The specific local conditions of production and reproduction required by globally mobile capital cannot be orchestrated by the central state. Hence local political organisations, their skills in negotiating with supra-regional and multinational capital, and the effectiveness with which they tailor the particular set of local conditions of production have become decisive factors in shaping a city's profile as well as its place in the international urban hierarchy.' (p. 317)

The 'new institutional capacities for promoting capital investment' mentioned by Brenner (quotation above) relate to what David Harvey (1989) referred to as 'urban entrepreneurialism', as opposed to the 'urban managerialism'. As Harvey explained, the managerial approach is typical of the post-war period when, in a context of economic expansion and development of the welfare state, the main purpose of local government was to regulate economic activities on their territory through planning and the provision of public services. The transition or greater emphasis to 'entrepreneurialism' in urban governance is instead marked by *boosterism*[19] and a 'new urban politics' centred on growth promotion to the detriment not only of the local welfare but also of the 'prosperity of the locality in general'

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[18] This term has been introduced by Molotch and Logan in their volume *Urban fortunes: the political economy of place,* published by University of California Press in 1987. It refers to: 'alliances of urban elites, with shared interests in local economic growth, partnered in pursuit of business-friendly and market-oriented forms of city governance and resource allocation'. Moreover, 'typically centring on the rentier class (including developers, financiers and realtors), the business interests of whom are 'place-based', growth coalitions also comprise a range of auxiliary players such as universities, media and utility owners, representatives of business and civic organisations, cultural leaders and labour unions'. (Gregory et al., 2009, p. 320)

[19] With the term 'boosterism' reference is made to image-building measures oriented to promote the city to attract investments (Jessop, 2000).

(Hall and Hubbard, 1996, p. 154), in line with a logic of weak competition. In this regard, Brenner (2004) agrees as well that the crisis of the Fordist-Keynesian system represented a crucial step towards entrepreneurial modes of governance, also due to the pressures of national fiscal constraints and the consequent necessity to quickly raise tax revenues from the private/business prosperity (see also Gottdiener and Hutchison, 2010).

More to the point, the 'urban entrepreneurialism' is based, in the analysis of Harvey, on four, not mutually exclusive, options. The first is the implementation of strategies aiming at boosting competitiveness by exploiting specific competitive advantages. The latter can derive from local natural resources, a strategic geographical position or, finally, they can be developed through public and private investments. These are oriented to develop a 'good local business climate' (Harvey, 1989, p. 11), to promote innovation and new technologies[20], to make available venture capital to new businesses or to provide subsidies (tax reductions and cheap credit, for instance). A second option is constituted by the alteration of the 'spatial division of consumption', which means attracting consumers by improving the quality of urban life. Tourism, gentrification, cultural innovation, physical upgrading of the urban environment, growing availability of attractions (like shopping centres, festivals and even 'exotic eating places') are all components of urban strategies having this purpose. The third choice concern the acquisition of new function in strategic sectors, i.e. finance, information gathering and processing and provision of specializing educational programmes in these sectors. Finally, the fourth option has to do with the exploitation of national redistributive mechanism 'as a means of urban survival'.

By turning now to the other main arguments supported by critical studies on urban governance and resumed in the thought of Brenner previously quoted, a second important thesis is that the pursuit of economic growth strategies has been made at the expenses of welfare provision and through the subordination of welfare objectives to economic purposes. In particular, it has been claimed that local public services have been reorganized in order to meet the new needs of labour markets and to foster competitiveness. This second trend is well summarised by Hall and Hubbard (1996) who explained:

> "It has been argued that there has been a reorientation of urban governance away from the local provision of welfare and services to a more outward-orientated stance designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development. These profound changes in the way that cities operate have seen the public sector taking over characteristics once distinctive to

[20] More recent examples that according to Ugo Rossi (2017) go in this direction are phenomena such as the high-tech entrepreneurial communities and even the sharing economy which is regarded as: a) an income supplement for the middle class; b) the continue enlargement of the circuits of valorisation of capital, namely the never-ending processes of commodification (e.g. private homes and cars); and c) a consensus-building strategy based on the positive values attached to sharing and collaborative practices.

the private sector – risk-taking, inventiveness, promotion and profit motivation – leading many commentators to term such modes of governance as entrepreneurial" (p.153)

This relates to what Jessop, from a regulation theory approach, has defined as the 'Schumpeterian Workfare Postnational Regime' (SWPR) (Jessop, 1994, 1997, 2000). For Jessop, the SWPR refers to a *regime shift*[21] entailing the establishment of a new *mode of regulation*[22] that emerged from the crisis of the mode of regulation characterising the 'Keynesian welfare national states'. This new regime can be distinguished, still following the analysis of Jessop, on the basis of four different elements. In no particular order of importance: one of them concerns the decreasing power of national states in favour of sub-national and supranational levels of policy-making and private actors and networks. Another one relates to a change in the economic paradigm of reference which is reflected by the passage from Keynes, and his well-known macroeconomic theories emphasising full employment, planning and the support to aggregate demand, to Schumpeter, the economist of the innovation theory. The innovation is interpreted by Schumpeter as a process of 'creative destruction', driven by the 'entrepreneur': the actor that he placed at the basis of the shift from one socio-economic phase to the other one. In a nutshell, this means the shift from the *demand-side economics* to the *supply-side economics*, based on incentives to work and to produce. The second (and interrelated) element detected concerns the changes related to social policy and, in particular, the emergence of *workfare* approaches. The term *workfare* is used by Jessop not in its strictest sense, as a coercive instrument to promote a rapid reintegration into the labour market of those receiving income supports ('an offer you can't refuse', to say it with the title of the work of Lødemel and Trickey, 2000), to refer, more in general, to the subordination of social to economic policies with a view to social investment, by developing also training and educational public services in order to meet the demand of flexibility of the labour market. More recently, Jessop (2018) suggested the emerged of a Ricardian Workfare Post-National Regime, particularly concerned about the reduction of labour costs and rights with a view to strengthen competitive advantages of territories, and

[21] The 'regime shift' is defined as a: 'paradigm shift in accumulation and regulation, introducing new economic and political principles' (Jessop, 2012).

[22] The notion of *mode of regulation* comes from the regulation school, of which Jessop is a member. The regulation theory is a political-economic theory aiming at overcoming the Marxism's economic reductionism by balancing the Marxian focus on structures with the analysis of the variability of capitalist economies as well as of their social and institutional embeddedness. Regulation, indeed, refers to the institutional and ideological framework that sustain each specific *regime of capital accumulation* (form of growth that is historically given and supported by a specific *mode of regulation*). Aglietta (2015) states that: 'a mode of regulation is a set of mediations which ensure that the distortions created by the accumulation of capital are kept within limits which are compatible with social cohesion within each nation' (p. 287) (see also Gregory et al., 2009, p. 641). The regulation theory gained particular prominence in the analysis of Fordism and post-Fordism.

characterised by the passage from *conjunctural austerity policies* to *enduring politics of austerity* (p. 355).

In the 1990s, it has been highlighted that priority to entrepreneurial and growth-oriented actions has been given by city governments regardless of their political affiliations: whether dominated by left-wing or right-wing parties, local governments would place economic development objectives above welfare purposes (Mayer, 1994, p. 330). In this respect, Harvey stresses the pervasiveness of 'competitiveness' as a key reference for urban policies in general, by regarding it in terms of 'coercive laws of competition' that force social actors to adapt to it, and that is inherent to capitalism: 'competition is inevitably the "bearer" of capitalist social relations in any society where the circulation of capital is a hegemonic force' (1989, p. 15). In this respect, Harvey (1989) wonders why to focus on the government when 'the real power to reorganise urban life so often lies elsewhere or at least within a broader coalition of forces within which urban government and administration have only a facilitative and coordinating role to play' (p. 5). A game in which, still according to Harvey, political parties and social movements 'can also play the game of local boosterism though often with quite different goals' (p. 7), by placing thus the attention on mechanisms of cooptation as well. In a similar vein, Brenner (2004a) traduced competitiveness in a 'politically constructed' neoliberal requirement for cities, summarised in the imperative 'compete or die' (pp. 212-213). Using a Foucauldian language, Keating has interpreted competitiveness (and in particular the competitive regionalism) 'as a way of disciplining governments to cut social overheads and taxes and to deregulate' (p. 123). At the same time, the mechanisms of legitimation and consensus would have been developed around competitiveness strategies. For instance, by using the case of image-building actions of city governments as a strategy of city marketing, Hall and Hubbard (1996) pointed out that:

> 'It is important to note that this manipulation of image is not only an attempt to make the city more attractive to external investors but also plays a role in a 'social control' logic, convincing local peoples as to the benevolence of entrepreneurial strategies. City images, cultures and experiences have become every bit as important to the accumulation of social and political power by hegemonic groups as more traditional material concerns'. (p. 162)

The relevance of critical neoliberalization studies has been widely acknowledged as a crucial contribution to the understanding of contemporary changes (and urban changes). However, criticisms have been raised to this vision of neoliberalisation in recent years (Leitner, Peck and Sheppard, 2007; Blanco, Griggs and Sullivan, 2014; Pinson and Morel Journel, 2017). For instance, Morel and Journel (2017) have undertaken a review of the main features of the 'neoliberal city thesis' by highlighting the key arguments supporting the thesis as well as its main merits and limitations. Firstly, it is important to say that criticisms stem

partly from definitional limitations and, therefore, to the conceptualization of neoliberalism and neoliberalization processes. This is considered a weak point, given the lack of clear definitions that make its use as *explanans* problematic, at best. Moreover, it has been stressed the tendency towards overgeneralisation starting from the experiences of the UK and the United States and, finally, the inclination to neglect the relevance of micro-levels actions and actors and to overestimate convergence and homologating trends.

These criticisms have led to a series of refinements. In particular, the emphasis on 'conflict, crisis, and contradictions' accompanied with 'incessant regulatory experimentation and dynamic institutional searching' (Brenner, 2004a, p. 304) has been followed by further reflexions and theoretical advancements. In particular, Brenner, Peck and Theodore (2010) called the attention to the variegated character of neoliberalisation and, more to the point, they have tried:

> 'to reconceptualize the process of neoliberalization outside the disabling binary frame of inexorable convergence versus unpatterned heterogeneity. Our proposed approach to investigating the geographies, modalities and pathways of neoliberalization thus seeks to hold together a concern with their patterned, patterning and tendential features; their dense entanglements, interdependencies and interconnections; and their constitutive family resemblances and systemic inter-referentiality; along with a nuanced understanding of their differentiated, differentiating, experimental, contested, contextually specific and ultimately polymorphic character.'

However, it has been argued that variegation and path-dependency would refer primarily to the timing and intensity of neoliberalism, that would remain a powerful force of convergence. Blanco and his colleagues (2014) argued that the emphasis on the 'coherence of neoliberal projects', furthermore, neglects not only existing alternative political projects or forms of the organisation but also the 'critical deficit in neoliberal accounts', especially emerged after the crisis in 2008 (p. 3130). More attention should be in addition paid, they argued, to the 'the logic of the local', entailing a certain extent of porosity of 'the local' to social demands, the embeddedness of local politics and the persistent relevance of local governments. That would require:

> 'to develop a comparative critical local governance that can engage with both 'global discourses' and contextually specific experiences, and which avoids either subsuming all regimes of local governance within an over-riding logic of neoliberalism or privileging the diversity of local regimes to the extent that we negate the hegemonic potential of discourses of neoliberalism' (ibidem, p. 3141)

To this end, Le Galès (2016, 2018) proposes a reflection oriented to identify the main traits of the concept of neoliberalism, while claiming at the same time its incapacity to provide an all-encompassing explanation of urban changes. There are two departure points in his analysis: the contrast between neoliberalism and liberalism and the adoption of a critical

perspective vis-à-vis constructivist approaches. These are regarded as 'too elastic' and, therefore, as a limit to the explanatory valence of neoliberal arguments. For instance, liberalism would differ from neoliberalism in relation to a series of aspects, we dwell on the two most relevant. Firstly, if liberalism is characterised by the acceptation of the market failures (corruption, concentration of power and wealth, monopolies and, to some extent, inequalities), thus admitting the necessity of a partial intervention of the State to deal with them, neoliberalism disregards this possibility of intervention as well as it does not care about inequalities. The second key point concerns instead the importance liberalism would attach to individual rights and autonomy that have not so much to do with the enforcement of the market logic pursued by neoliberalism by means of punishment and coercion, thus affecting the meaning of the fundamental liberal value of freedom[23]. Finally, neoliberalism is defined as the hegemony of the 'market society', understood as a society characterised by the alignment of individual and organisations behaviours to the rules of the market (self-interest and rational calculations); the destruction of any resistance; the hegemony of 'naturally self-regulated markets'; a punitive State through which suppress all problems coming from political instability and growing inequalities (Le Galès, 2018, p. 231). A reflection that takes him to conclude that European cities are more liberal than neoliberal.

In a similar vein, but in relation to the changes in welfare approaches and the shift towards activation, it has been argued that this is not the only path followed by urban social policies and that compromises have given rise, according to Ferrera (2013), to a 'liberal neo-welfarism' (LNW):

> 'LNW maintains not only the core of *liberalesimo* (i.e., the protection of negative freedom) but also key elements of various *liberalismi* (e.g. individuality, equal opportunity, non-discrimination, appreciation for functioning markets, and a competitive, open economy). At the same time, LNW is not only liberal because it also crucially includes various key elements of the social-democratic tradition (e.g., solidarity, redistribution, inclusion, and universalism)'. (p. 105)

To conclude, criticisms on urban neoliberalism and neoliberalization have especially highlighted, on the one hand, the need to conceptualize neoliberalism better and distinguish it from liberalism whereas, on the other, it has challenged the assumption that neoliberalism-driven forms of convergence are at work as *prevailing* dynamics of urban change.

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[23] As Le Galès put it: "the conception of freedom has moved from autonomy to the disciplined, self- governed, calculating, entrepreneurial *homo economicus* who may be incentivized by rules. (..) The individual is disconnected from the collective dimension. In order to be recognized, to gain value and to have worth, individuals have to transform themselves by performing entrepreneurs of their self. In other words, neoliberalism is also about the development of new metrics and measurements about what is a worthy person, the production of the self as an entrepreneur' (2016, p. 163)

The Neo-Weberian approach and the resilience of the 'European City'

The 'neo-Weberian political economy approach' was proposed by Arnaldo Bagnasco and Patrick Le Galès in their *Cities in Contemporary Europe* (2000) and, subsequently, by Le Galès in his *European cities: social conflicts and governance* (2002). As Giersig (2008) noted as well, this approach needs to be understood as a part the intellectual tradition coming from Max Weber who, in the early 20th century, suggested a comparative analysis of types of cities and, at the same time, theorised the European city (the *Western city* in his words) as an ideal type.

The hypothesis of a persistent and peculiar 'European vocation' and the focus on the European city, in opposition to the Anglo-American urban features, is the first element that marks the distinction of this thought from the neostructuralist school. This approach drew on the Italian political economy tradition and, in particular, to its attempt 'to articulate both urbanisation processes related to capitalism and the trajectories and transformation of cities and metropolis beyond simple ideas of convergence' (Le Galès, 2018, p. 218). Moreover, it questions one of the most important implications of the establishment of entrepreneurial modes of governance, urban neoliberalization and of the shift to the 'Schumpeterian Workfare Postnational Regime' theorized by Jessop, that is the *trade-off* between competitiveness and market-oriented actions with social and redistributive objective or, in a word, with welfare. As Giersig well summarised:

> 'Neostructuralists state that urban governance in Europe is currently trapped in a logic of international competitiveness, while neo-Weberians believe European cities capable of counter-balancing this logic of growth and competitiveness with principles such as cohesion, welfare and sustainability.' (2008, p. 100)

The issue is anything but banal since it relates to the long-standing problem of the *trade-off* between growth and equity in political economy. In this respect, it is worth premising that the existence of some levels of inequalities has always been taken for granted and regarded as an essential feature of the market economy. The economic theory, moreover, has *always* advocated the need for a certain level of unequal distribution of the income as essential to growth and this is one of the reasons why redistributive policies of the State have been, in some cases, regarded as inefficient or, in other words, an obstacle to economic growth and to the capacity of the market to allocate the resources (for instance by reducing savings) efficiently; although liberalism recognised that market can fail, as rightly as reminded Le Galès (2018). Mayer (1994) highlighted how pro-growth trends in urban policy are also supported by this underlying assumption that is framed in a more general liberal thought: that the stimulation of growth through dedicated strategy would allow, indirectly, to tackle socio-economic inequalities mainly through the creation of new employment opportunities.

In other words, social improvements would be an expected effect of strategies oriented to strengthen the invisible hand of the market, economic growth and local economic development.

Also Savitch and Kantor (2002) argued that cities were not converging and that 'divergence is very much alive', especially in Europe, by rejecting the dichotomy between growth and welfare:

> 'In Europe, the state has an enduring meaning and it continues to play a central role in establishing local policies. Cities have not traded social- for market- centered policies, and they view development strategies quite differently than their American counterparts. Governance has not become the handmaiden for business or growth machine.' (309).

Ranci (2011) reaches more or less the same conclusions, although by following a different path and agreeing with the thesis of a trade-off between competitiveness and social cohesion. Ranci stated, on the basis of the results of quantitative comparative research involving 50 western European cities belonging to the EU-15 member-states, that high levels of competitiveness are not statistically correlated with lower levels of inequality. Moreover, what he found is that levels of inequality depend on the regime of welfare to which cities belong to, thus concluding that: 'it is mainly the solid tradition of national welfare systems, together with the specificity of the social structure of European cities, which still today anchors the population to a basis of social rights able to mitigate inequalities' (p. 2801). An argument that recently has been partly updated by claiming the worsening of social inequalities in European cities as a consequence of an increased distance between competitiveness and social cohesion that would be both reinforced and mitigated by local governments actions (Cucca, Ranci, 2017).

Furthermore, both Savitch and Kantor (2002) and Le Galès (2002; 2018), take seriously into account the issue of conflict, resistances and conflict-solving capacities by arguing that political and social forces can be not so submissive as one would expect: 'economic change brings about corrective actions and encourages political countermovements. Societies make political choices about their economic welfare because most people refuse to be victimised by an unregulated market economy' is what Savitch and Kantor stated (2002, p. 270). This does not entail the negation of competitiveness as a strong element of pressure on cities. On the contrary, he agreed that the imperative of competitiveness and the development of entrepreneurial modes of governance, often to the detriment of welfare services and redistributive policies, have profoundly affected European urban policies. Nevertheless, Le Galès disagrees with the view declaring the 'end of the European city' and share, by contrast, the argument that some mechanisms of adaptation to the new scenario have been put in

place and that these mechanisms allowed to maintain the compromise between social integration and economic development characterising the European city.

Against this background, local welfare systems become particularly important in the comprehension of local variations. In the book *Social assistance dynamics in Europe. National and Local poverty regimes* edited by C. Saraceno, Garcia and Kazepov (2002) well documented, through an international comparative research involving numerous cities in different northern and southern European Countries, the way poverty in Europe is influenced and vary according to specific local conditions and, in particular, how it depends: 'on the local welfare culture, and also on the local economic, social and human capital resources. In other words, it depends on the specific demographic, economic, cultural and political features of the local society' (p. 6). Moreover, it must be taken into account that socio-economic and urban development dynamics in Europe are still shaped by an interventionist vocation and, thus, by welfare states, whose differences contribute, in turn, to influence local and cities' trajectories and make them less dependent on private resources (Lehto, 2000). In contrast to what happens in the USA where cities are more dependent on revenues from private companies, European cities can rely upon welfare systems, just think of the aid that stems from grants provided at the national and EU levels (Kazepov, 2005; Le Galès, 2002). Finally, in the light of the above, attention has been paid on urban policies, not as the passive reflection of processes occurring elsewhere but rather as active actors expressing a specific capacity to govern processes of change or, in other words, able to exert a sort of local *agency*:

> 'Urban policies are, in fact, becoming more fluid as a result of a complex process of structuration, during which a widening range of actors, from different sectors of society, with different interests and acting at different levels, interact and produce policies. This brings about "an immense field of experimentation undertaken by local actors," who are no longer merely implementing decisions taken at other levels of government, but are taking an active part in the redesign of public policies through conflicts and negotiations. In this framework, urban government has not disappeared; on the contrary, cities become a privileged site of aggregation and representation of interests'. (Kazepov, 2005, p. 27)

This includes the emergence of local welfare innovations and social innovations at the local level (Moulaert et al., 2013; Brandsen *et al.*, 2016) and the mobilisation of different welfare instruments with a view to promoting social cohesion. Especially with reference to housing and employment policies (García, 2006; Cano, Pradel and Garcia, 2017). Kazepov (2005) pointed out how this tendency is supported by the EU and European city networks that the EU itself contributes to promoting with the aim of encouraging new forms of governance based on the combination of competitiveness and cohesion objectives.

The economic and financial crisis of 2008 has undoubtedly contributed to spurring this activism to cope with the increasing social tensions that European cities are witnessing.

Hendrickson and Sabatinelli (2014) stated, for instance, that employment-related policies are ever more provided by municipalities, intending to contribute to reducing the rising unemployment in Europe, that especially affect the most vulnerable social groups, including young people. The economic crisis had severe effects in particular in Southern European countries and even in more among the weakest European regions and cities. In Europe, inequalities have increased since the 1970s, as well documented in the various publications of the OECD. This has been recently reaffirmed, since the recent and slight economic recovery does not seem to have reversed this growing trend in income inequalities and social vulnerability, especially in the most vulnerable countries (OECD, 2017).

Therefore, European cities struggle to preserve their specific urban regime based on the compromise between economic and social interests (see also Häussermann and Haila, 2005). However, Le Galès stressed (2018) that, 'despite increasing social tensions, social segregations, inequalities, even riots at times, European cities have resources, identities and political legitimacy, scores of new policies and public investment' (p. 220).

Nonetheless, the growing emphasis cities have been placing on entrepreneurship seem to have reinforced neostructuralist arguments, by even moving the urban entrepreneurialism forward through the strengthening of entrepreneurialism as a technique of government of individuals other than a way to develop the city as a favourable ecosystem for capital (as it will be discussed in the next chapter). In this respect, Rossi (2017) recently highlighted how the 'start-up city', that has become an important brand strategy for major cities that aim to support entrepreneurship and innovation, would further fuel the 'neoliberal city'. Following the more general Foucauldian interpretations of the role of entrepreneurship in the contemporary society, Rossi argued that the entrepreneurial governance, theorised by D. Harvey, has been even overcome since cities have become 'fertile grounds for the entrepreneurialization of society and the self' (p. 81). To support this argument, Rossi has referred also to new opportunities for commodification and 'entrepreneurialization' that are offered by new digital technologies and are driven by the 'technology-led communities of entrepreneurs' and other "growth-oriented" actors, such as representatives of business organizations, chambers of commerce, bank foundations, universities, research centres and so on (p. 9).

The impact of these new businesses on the urban economy and production processes in general is not clear. However, the start-up phenomenon seems to be bearer of a very influential ideology (in Gramsci's terms, i.e. as a conception of the world) and symbolic hegemony that, according to Ferrara (2017), relates to an ethic based on what follows: willingness of independence, risk-taking, active personal involvement and ambition (i.e.

making the history), speed and competition, financial capital as an opportunity to realize one's dreams.

In spite of all of this, municipal entrepreneurship policies represent an under-researched area of study, while more grounded approaches combining the analysis of cognitive and institutional dimensions, socio-economic contexts as well as the consequences on the life experiences of beneficiaries are needed to investigate the strengths and limits of this discourse that, therefore, puts the capacity of cities (or agency) to govern the 'common neoliberal trajectory' (Baccaro and Howell, 2011) at the centre of the analysis.

CHAPTER II

ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT POLICIES IN THE CONTEXT OF CHANGING ECONOMIES AND POLICY PARADIGMS

This chapter deals with the great scope and ambivalence characterising the concept of entrepreneurship, before dealing with core aspects of entrepreneurship support policies that are primarily drawn from the European policy approach. This conceptual ambiguity lays the groundwork for highlighting the political component of the issue at stake. Hence, the chapter shows how the ambivalence of the concept of entrepreneurship is reproduced by policy approaches that feed on heterogeneity, with not few ideological implications. In particular, I will focus on the principle of 'inclusiveness' and the activation paradigm informing EU recommendations and approaches to entrepreneurship support policies. This is then contextualised in the theoretical debate on individualisation processes, by discussing both the risks and the opportunities deriving from these trends.

I. Entrepreneurship: addressing an ambivalent phenomenon

Conceptual ambiguities: a critical reflection

Reynolds and Curtin (2007, p. 2) stated that 'few concepts reflect more scope and ambiguity than *entrepreneurship*'. This ambiguity, as we will see, has different causes and not a few ideological implications. What follows review the literature on the issue with the aim to critically reflect on this ambiguity, by highlighting the political and social implications that are most relevant for this analysis.

Although the origin of the term 'entrepreneur' dates back to the 1500s (Gallino, 1978; Swedberg, 2000), one owe its modern use mainly to J. Schumpeter, whose theorization on the 'creative destruction' as the engine of modernization and economic development revolves mainly around the notions of entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity. Three concepts that, as Hoppe (2016) highlighted, can be still observed in conjunction in the

guidelines of the European Union's action as well as, more in general, in the political and public sphere's discussions. Although the revival of Schumpeter's theories mainly dates to the 1980s, the enduring legacy of his thought is now more than ever visible also in the 'start-up phenomenon'. It is enough to consider how the very timely rhetoric about start-ups particularly mobilises a heroic vision of the entrepreneur until it becomes 'the hero' par excellence of contemporary society. To give some example, 'Global Heroes' was the headline of a special report about the entrepreneurs and the 'entrepreneurial society' published in 2009 by The Economist[24]. The University Paris-Saclay has instead launched a web series precisely called 'Start-up Heroes' to stimulate entrepreneurship among its students[25]. These are just a few examples but are able to highlight the revival of the Schumpeterian vision of the entrepreneur, centred on the individual and on an individual characterised by unique traits: a creative as well as a genuine entrepreneurial spirit which, most importantly, make him an innovator and because of this a crucial 'change agent' (Hoppe, 2016, p. 97).

The bond between entrepreneurship and economic change/innovation is still solid and reflects the ongoing influence exercised by this economist far beyond the business schools all over the world, where still constitutes the main theoretical reference for the study of entrepreneurship (e.g. Bagnasco, 2006; Swedberg, 2000). As a result, mainstream views on entrepreneurship rely mainly on this vision:

> 'The most prevalent and compelling views of entrepreneurship focus on the perception of new economic opportunities and the subsequent introduction of new ideas in the market. Entrepreneurship is about change, just as entrepreneurs are agents of change; entrepreneurship is thus about the process of change.' (Audretsch et al., 2008, p. 119)

Critical entrepreneurship studies (CES) questioned this mainstream view that makes entrepreneurship a decontextualised, social unrooted, always positive and purely market-based phenomenon, centred on the 'archetypal vision of the white, male entrepreneur' (Essers et al., 2017, p. III). This vision has however become conventional wisdom and has undoubtedly contributed to nurturing the spread of positive social recognition of entrepreneurship. The latter relates to the idea that entrepreneurship represents a crucial factor of social and economic progress through its capacity of introducing new goods or methods of production and, thus, by bringing innovation across different sectors (including in cultural and social areas), but also through the creation of employment opportunities and by triggering creativity and 'personal potential' (Cubico et al., 2010, p. 425). It is worth noting

[24] Available at: https://www.economist.com/special-report/2009/03/12/global-heroes (latest access: 03/09/2018).

[25] Available at: https://www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/en/news/startup-heroes (latest access: 03/09/2018).

CES have also shed light on the normative implications of this views, which would have led theories and applied researches to focus on the descriptions and predictions of conditions favouring the growth more than the understanding of entrepreneurship. An implication that contributes to feed conditions for legitimacy of whatever public action oriented to its promotion as well as to limit the critical analysis of governments' discourses and actions, through a systematic depoliticization of the issue as well (Grant and Perren, 2002; Perren and Jennings, 2005; Essers et al., 2017).

However, this does not mean that the definitional issue can be so easily dismissed. By contrast, the debate around the vocabulary/definitions takes place on a terrain of considerable ambiguity. The reasons for this are various.

The first is the lack of systematic theories and the marginality that the issue experienced for a long time in all academic fields, including economics. As a matter of fact, entrepreneurship has encountered a series of barriers or resistance to its acceptance and legitimacy as an academic field in general. Still except J. Schumpeter, entrepreneurship and 'the entrepreneur' are not so present even in the same classic economics literature. As Reynolds and his colleagues (2005) noted, the entrepreneur and the activity associated with its action of creating new ventures always struggles to form explicitly part of economic models of analysis. As far as sociology is concerned, it has overall shown a marginal interest for the issue and the study of the entrepreneurs as specific subjects of analysis (Ruef and Lounsbury, 2007, p. 3). Historically, indeed, there has been a common tendency to let coincide the entrepreneur with the capitalist[26] and to not distinguish small business owners or artisans from the other figures of the *petty bourgeoisie*, such as in the theorisations of Marx and Engels, for instance. Moreover, a sort of automatism in economic progress has been often taken for granted, also due to the influence of the market paradigm[27] (Ruef, Lounsbury, 2007; Swedberg, 2000). Finally, as already mentioned in the first chapter, entrepreneurship, small enterprises and self-employment, in general, have long been interpreted as a sort of endangered residue of the past (Arum, Müller, 2004). However, it is must also be said that, despite this, sociology has contributed to the understanding of this phenomenon from

[26] They do not always coincide. The owner – and provider – of the capital (the *capitalist*) is not always who directly organize and control the factors of production (the *entrepreneur*). These two figures are not distinguished, for instance, in Marx: both are 'capital personified', to put it in Marxian terms (see Gallino, 1978)

[27] In a nutshell, neoclassical economics attributes the birth of new enterprises to the rules of the market and perfect competition: a growing demand or the introduction of innovations alter the existent 'perfect balance' and generate new opportunities for profit and, as a result, the emergence of new economic actors, thus re-establishing the economic equilibrium.

Weber onwards[28] as well, by focusing on social, symbolic and cultural features of the entrepreneurs as well as on the institutional context in which entrepreneurship develops. A particular impulse has been provided by the *new economic sociology* in the 1980s when the academic attention paid to entrepreneurship increased overall[29].

To this, it must be added: the ideology underpinning its discourse and that will be deepened in the last part of the chapter, and the pluralism of existing approaches and interpretations that have wielded much influence over the meaning that, from time to time, has been attributed to it. Let's dwell on this by highlighting that, on the one hand, there has long been a tendency to employ theory-driven approaches privileging a philosophical or ideal conception of entrepreneurship that, although have shed light on several relevant aspects, they have nonetheless posed several analytical problems. While, on the other hand, the adoption of measurement-driven approaches has led to privilege precisely the measurability by confining the meaning of entrepreneurship to available statistics (Ahmad and Seymour, 2008).

As a result, different interpretations alternate in the academic field. This pluralism has been comprehensively reviewed by Aldrich (2005) who has identified four ways – and relative limits – of interpreting entrepreneurship and, therefore, of defining the entrepreneur. The first interpretation, that confines the phenomenon to high growth and high capitalisation companies, deals with significant problems of selection bias since the growth of firms cannot be predicted at first life stages of an enterprise and high capitalisation is not necessarily an index of growth or soundness (e.g. dot-com companies). The second adheres to Schumpeter's interpretation and associates entrepreneurship with innovation and, therefore, with the discovery of new markets and new products. This vision is especially privileged by economists that consider business innovators essential for economic growth and that, as a consequence, are interested in finding those conditions that allow the development of the 'entrepreneurial personality' (Bruce and Yearley, 2006, p. 87). This second interpretation, like the first one, is fairly problematic due to the difficulty to define innovation and to the consequent tendency to excessively extend definitional boundaries. By way of example, innovation can be the result of the work of brilliant managers or experts working on research and technological development activities (RTD) and, in this model, they are the ones that

[28] The contribution of Max Weber to this field comes from his analysis of ascetic Protestantism that shed light on the influence of religion and of the resulting cultural legitimation on economic behaviour (Aldrich, 2005; Thornton, 1999).

[29] Aldrich (2005), among others, analysed this growing interest by looking at the number of chairs in entrepreneurship, dedicated journals, annual review series and other dedicated series by commercial and academic publishers.

would be defined as the 'entrepreneurs'. Furthermore, it introduces a sort of time-variable, given that the Schumpeter's entrepreneur is not constantly an entrepreneur but only when he or she innovates (Swedberg, 2000). The third shares similar definitional and analytical problems to the innovation-linked interpretation, by identifying entrepreneurship with the 'opportunity recognition'. Reynolds and Curtin (2007, p. 2) stressed how this interpretation also incorporates *intrapreneurs* (managers) and even members of governments and various organisations (the so-called *social entrepreneurs*). Moreover, although the literature has emphasised the capacity of 'opportunity recognition' as crucial for entrepreneurship, much more than economic resources, Aldrich (2005) equally pointed out the 'irrational nature' of initial perceptions of some entrepreneurs and the general initial scant regard for cost-benefit calculations (p. 457). Nonetheless, the recognition of an opportunity is crucial in entrepreneurship studies that use this category to distinguish between opportunity and necessity-driven entrepreneurship, I will come back on this later. Finally, the fourth interpretation conceives entrepreneurship as a process of creation of new business organisations. Several scholars from different disciplines (e.g. Aldrich, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2005; Thornton, 1999) draw on this definition, that is actually able to reflect the processual character of the issue at stake, account for its complexity and to get out from both the economistic approach and the individual dimension in which the others are entangled.

This last perspective, by focusing on the creation of new business organisations, emphasises the 'process by which new organisations come into existence', that include social and environmental factors other than the individual entrepreneur, who represents one 'part of the complex process of new venture creation' (Gartner, 1989, p. 57). This definition is adopted in most cases. It is enough to consider that what generally distinguishes entrepreneurship from self-employment in Europe is precisely the presence or not of an organisation regardless of the presence of employees or the size and economic performance of that organization. (Lodigiani and Scippa, 2014). The Italian legislation, to provide an example, recognises as self-employed all those individuals who work at their own risk and are neither subordinate nor economically dependent to a single employer; examples are lawyers, accountants, architects and other professionals such as consultants, graphic designers, and the like. The term 'entrepreneur' refers, instead, to an individual who carries out an 'organized' economic activity to produce or exchange goods and services, including one-person enterprises (or *individual entrepreneurs*) such as craftsperson and persons engaged in commercial activities.

This criterion is also adopted by the international project Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) – the main research on new entrepreneurship carried out at a global level

every year since 1997 – that treats entrepreneurship precisely as a process of creation of new businesses, although the unit of analysis is not the enterprise but the individual, the entrepreneur, that is defined as 'every person engaged in any behaviour related to new business creation, no matter how modest', including businesses without employees or people who run a business as a secondary activity (OECD/European Union, 2015; Reynolds et al., 2005, p. 209).

The inclusiveness of this approach also concerns the specific stage in which the process of creation of a new business finds itself. In this respect, Aldrich (2005) pointed out that, from a sociological point of view, 'an "organisation" exists to the extent that a socially recognized bounded entity exists that is engaged in exchanges with its environment' (p. 458) and that researchers agree in tolerating certain levels of uncertainty about the time when an organisation exists for real. In this way, by surveying households in the different phases of business creations, the GEM can cover the moments preceding the actual start-up of the activity[30], thus allowing for collecting information about motivations and aspirations of *nascent entrepreneurs*.

The concept of 'nascent entrepreneur' has been introduced because deemed able to catch the intricacies 'of a chaotic and disorderly business-founding process' (Aldrich, 2005, p. 458). In a nutshell, it refers to who is undertaking activities to start a business. By taking as an example the definition and operationalisation that Reynolds and his colleagues (2005) offer, the nascent entrepreneur can answer in the affirmative to questions such as: 'over the past twelve months have you done anything to help start a new business, such as looking for equipment or a location, organizing a start-up team, working on a business plan, beginning to save money, or any other activity that would help launch a business?' (p. 214). Therefore, the existence of the organisation starts with the active and serious intentionality to make it exist.

The various steps of the process of business creation are summarised by these scholars in the figure above (Figure 1), which shows how the early-stage phase of the entrepreneurial activity starts with the 'nascent' activities and continues for the first forty-two months[31].

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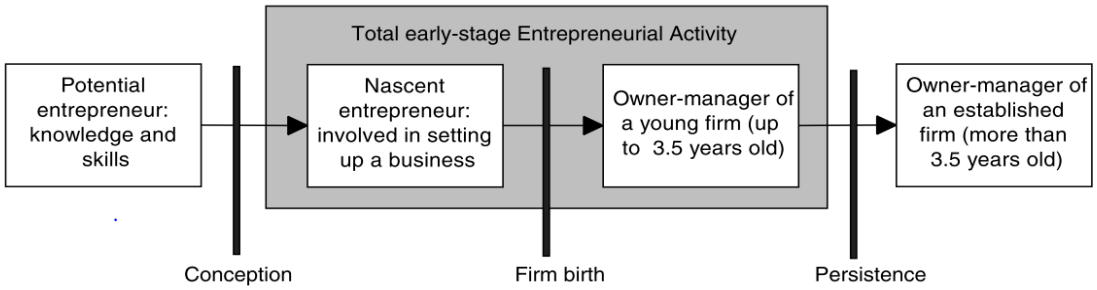
[30] As Aldrich (2005) stressed, researchers agree in tolerating certain levels of uncertainty about the time when an organisation arises for real, although, from a sociological point of view: 'an "organisation" exists to the extent that a socially recognized bounded entity exists that is engaged in exchanges with its environment" (p. 458).

[31] This time span is functional to the specific need of their research and the authors agree to consider satisfactory any period under five years. Moreover, for the GEM scholars, are 'new' (and not nascent) those firms that have paid salaries and wages for more than 3 months and until 42 months (those exceeding 3.5 years are considered 'established firms').

Figure 1. The entrepreneurial process



Source: Reynolds et al. (2005, p. 209)

This interpretation evidently entails a high level of inclusiveness and, consequently, a high social and economic heterogeneity. However, the literature has shown that entrepreneurship relates, most of the time, to small organisations: new-born businesses are generally small, often because available resources are limited, but also because initial steps often coincide with exploratory phases. Moreover, studies have shown that founder or founders usually are in their late 30s to early 40s when starting a business for the first time (this is also one of the reasons why under 35 or over 45 are often target groups of entrepreneurship support policies). Consistently with the evidence from sociological studies, indeed:

> 'By that point, they have accumulated enough work experience to believe that they can recognize potential business opportunities[32]. A few have also accumulated considerable financial resources, although lack of resources does not appear to deter people. Where they have worked, however, does make a difference. Nascent entrepreneurs often capitalize on knowledge gained and contacts made in their previous jobs.' (Aldrich, 2005, p. 459)

If this interpretation is already very inclusive, it must be said that the boundaries of the concept can be even more blurred. Further ambiguity, in fact, arises from both academic literature and public organisations, which tend to privilege even greater inclusive interpretations. As a result, the notions of entrepreneurship, business ownership and self-employment are often used as interchangeable concepts, held together by the notion of 'autonomy', deemed to be the main dividing point between independent and dependent employment (Amaral and Baptista, 2007; Audretsch, Grilo and Thurik, 2007; Reynolds and Curtin, 2007; Sheehan and Namara, 2015). Although there has been a more recent attempt to make some adjustments (e.g. OECD/European Union, 2015), Ahmad and Seymour (2008) stressed that also organisations such as the OECD contributed to confusing these notions. By way of example, these scholars noted how the OECD moved from the

[32] The job experience is deemed to be a significant source to draw from, although, still according to Aldrich, this can constitute a limit to the recognition of new opportunities and to innovation, since it would entail the birth of similar businesses.

identification of entrepreneurship with a process of 'opportunity recognition', to the definition of the entrepreneur as everyone who works on his/her own or, in other cases, as who is ready to take risks by promoting innovation. In general, entrepreneurship is often treated as a form of self-employment which is defined as:

> 'the employment of employers, workers who work for themselves, members of producers' co-operatives, and unpaid family workers. (..) Self-employment may be seen either as a survival strategy for those who cannot find any other means of earning an income or as evidence of entrepreneurial spirit and a desire to be one's own boss.'[33]

As a result, self-employment dataset tends to be inclusive as well. By way of example, Eurostat adopts the following definition of self-employment:

> "self-employed persons are the ones who work in their own business, farm or professional practice. A self-employed person is considered to be working if she/he meets one of the following criteria: works for the purpose of earning profit, spends time on the operation of a business or is in the process of setting up his/her business" (source: Eurostat metadata, latest view: 10/07/2018).

Most recently, the increased heterogeneity within the same category of self-employment – driven by the increasing casualisation and flexibilization of work[34] - has attracted the special attention of scholars that, however, started rise already from the 1980s. The next paragraph addresses the way the issues of self-employment and entrepreneurship have acquired greater relevance in the last decades and the way the issue empirically translates from a social and economic point of view.

The growing relevance and socio-economic complexity of entrepreneurship

The issue of entrepreneurship, that as we have seen is associated to the birth of new and small businesses up to self-employment in general, has long been interpreted as 'an archaic but persistent form of development that does not should have withstood the pressures of capitalist accumulation' (Fellini, 2010, p. 169). Only since the mid-1970s, the idea of an 'inevitable demise' of SMEs that characterised the post-war period started to be questioned. This occurred not only in the light of the recognition of their renovated relevance – discussed in the first chapter – in local economic development processes, but also because of their changing features and their recognition as an inherent and increasingly important component

[33] Definition used for calculating the "self-employment rate", taken from: https://data.oecd.org/emp/ self-employment-rate.htm (latest access: 9th July 2018).

[34] The latter have caused the rise of hybrid forms of self-employment and dependent employment and even the increase of the 'bogus self-employment', behind which there are, *de facto*, dependent employees (MacDonald and Coffield, 1991; OECD/European Union, 2015; Sheehan and Namara, 2015).

of the 'post-industrial' society in North America and Europe for economic, social and political reasons (Audretsch, Callejon and Aranguren, 2008; Fellini, 2010).

Swedberg (2000) claimed that factors that have brought these issues to the fore are various. One of these is related to the economic and social transformations of the Fordism entailing the re-emergence of small firms and industrial districts, but also the revival of self-employment and small entrepreneurship also as a result of the tertiarization of the economy. In this respect, Müller and Arum (2004) argued that:

> 'Significant changes in the technology of production and the economic opportunity structure have recently occurred in many countries, including a revolution in computing and new communication technologies; expansion of female employment; the growth and persistence of mass unemployment; the decline in goods-producing industries and concentration of the distribution of goods in larger units; the rise of the service sector and increased professionalization; the growth of flexible production; and the spread of non-traditional work arrangements. For all these developments, arguments have been advanced that have repercussions on self-employment.' (p. 2)

Therefore, the reasons for the revival of entrepreneurship are multiple. One of these is undoubtedly related to new technologies. As far as the new opportunities for innovation offered by technological advances are concerned, it is worth mentioning the interest that the (problematic) rise of the phenomenon of the so-called 'dot-com companies' attracted in the 1990s[35] and the attention, still highly topical, drawn more recently by digital or innovative 'start-ups'. Swedberg (2000) identified the relevance of these forms of business with the emergence of a new culture, based on the revival of Schumpeterian theses and the consequent spread of the idea that innovation and continuous adaptations and changes are essential to the survival and success of new enterprises as well as for economic and social progress.

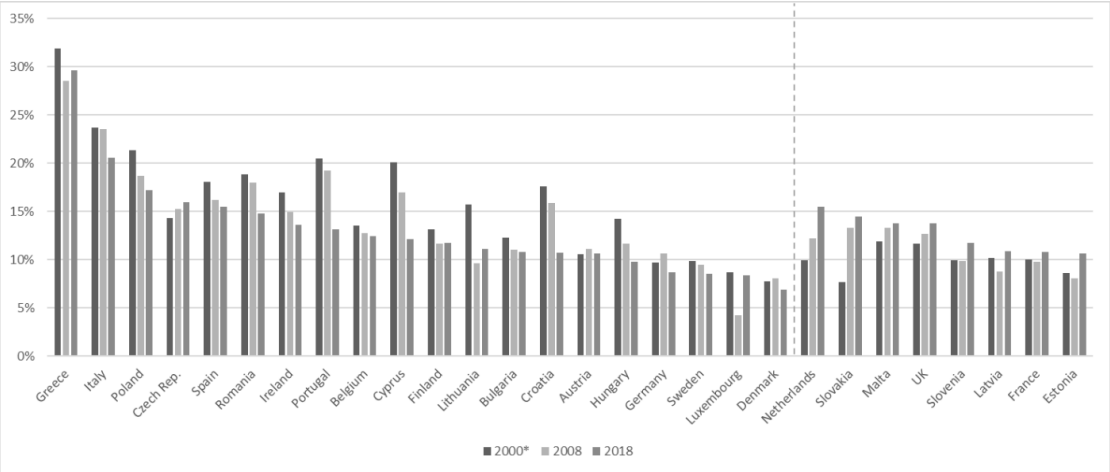
Moreover, a central place is occupied by the persistent concern with the rise in unemployment, combined with the consolidation of the following assumption: that the creation of new jobs is strictly related to the creation of new enterprises. To this, it must be added the spread of the 'enterprise culture' and other ideological aspects on which attention will be placed later. Finally, a comparison between the most recent data and those of 2000

[35] This exploded at the end of the 1990s in the well-known 'dot-com bubble'. An event cyclically evocated in the current public debate on innovative start-ups. Briefly, this is what happened: a large number of small and low-capitalised firms, then gone bankrupt, was created in the 'internet sector'. This creation was accompanied by growing expectations towards their profitability that led to a situation of euphoria in the stock market sustained by a blind trust in technological progresses, an increase in stock prices and a growing presence of venture capital. The logic at the basis of these enterprises is not so different from the one currently applied in the world of innovative start-ups and summarised in the slogans 'get big fast', which entails the need to huge investments in the initial phases, regardless of annual losses.

shows that just in some cases what has contributed to drawing the attention of scholars has been the overall quantitative rise of self-employment in the last two decades.

As Figure 2 shows, growing trends have been observed only in a small group of countries, including the UK and especially the Netherlands[36] (see countries on the right of the dashed line in Figure 2). For most of the cases, instead, self-employment rates have decreased since 2000. In this respect, particularly sharp is the decrease in Portugal, Croatia and Cyprus, mainly due to the decline of self-employment in the agricultural sector (Eurofond, 2017). On the other hand, a comparison with data from 2008, the year in which the economic crisis brock out, levels of self-employment appears quite stable when they have not decreased, apart from a few exceptions such as Greece, where it slightly increased. However, its weight on total employment remains significant, although very different across Europe (see again Figure 2, where both data of countries on the right and the left of the dashed line are ordered from the higher to the lowest value in 2018). Countries such as Greece, Italy, Poland and Spain, indeed, have long-lasting higher levels of self-employment with percentages that, such as in the case of Greece, even exceed the 30% of self-employed on the total number of the employed, thus doubling the EU average that lastly stands out about 14-15% (Eurofond, 2017).

Figure 2. Self-employment as a percentage of total employment in the EU, 2000-2008-2018



Source: Author's elaboration of data extracted from Eurostat Labour Market Database[37]. * Due to a lack of data, Croatia's first bar does not refer to 2000 but the year 2002[38].

[36] The Council of the European Union has even produced a country-specific recommendation for Netherlands to commend an intervention to deal with the increasing self-employment and, more to the point, the growing self-employment without employees (Eurofond, 2017, footnote at pag. 7).

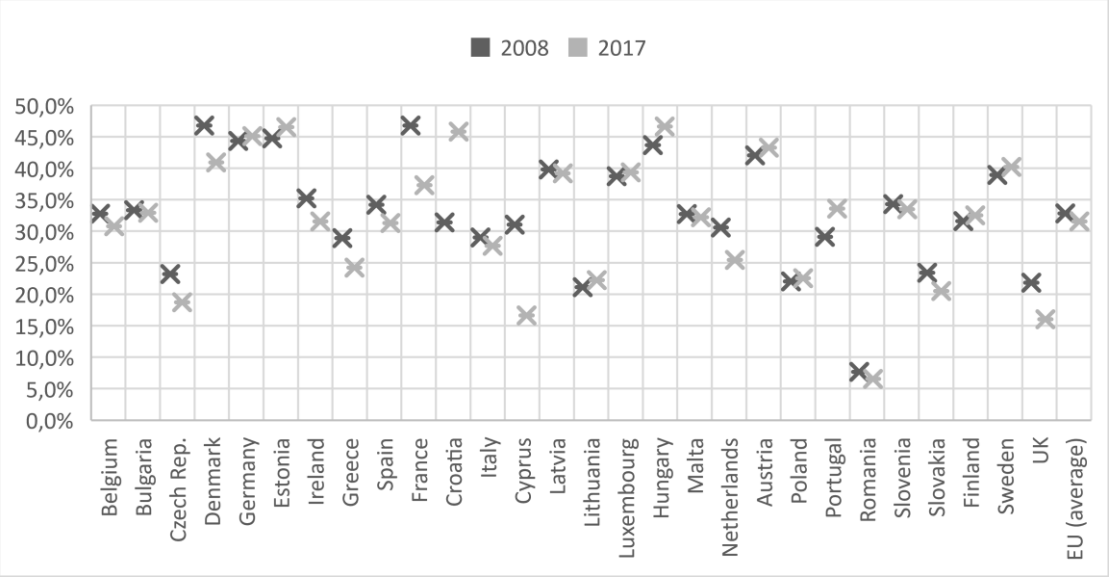
[37] Data are the result of the ration between the total number of self-employed and the total employment per year in the EU28. Time reference is precisely 2018Q1.

[38] All data are from the first quarter of each year, with some exceptions. Due to reasons related to data availability, data from the second quarter of the year 2000 have been taken for the following countries: Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Cyprus and Sweden.

Institutional factors play a crucial role in these variations: policy initiatives, including active labour market policies that encourage the attachment to the labour market as well as employment rates and trends, are particularly relevant (Hatfield, 2015). Others have stressed the role played by welfare state regimes and labour market regulations[39] (Müller, Arum, 2004).

These macro trends seem not to support the thesis of the 'entrepreneurial society' (Audretsch, 2007; Eurofond, 2017) or of the 'enterprise culture', reinforced by the current rhetoric on 'start-ups' and entrepreneurship. However, it is worth highlighting that, in the changing socio-economic context just briefly outlined, a look to this data from the inside shows that some variations occurred that have determined a different and more complex composition of self-employment.

Figure 3. Self-employment with employees (% on total self-employment) in EU, 2008-2017



Source: Author's elaboration of data extracted from Eurostat Labour Market Database. [Data are the result of the ration between the total number of self-employed with employees and the total number of self-employed per year in the EU28].

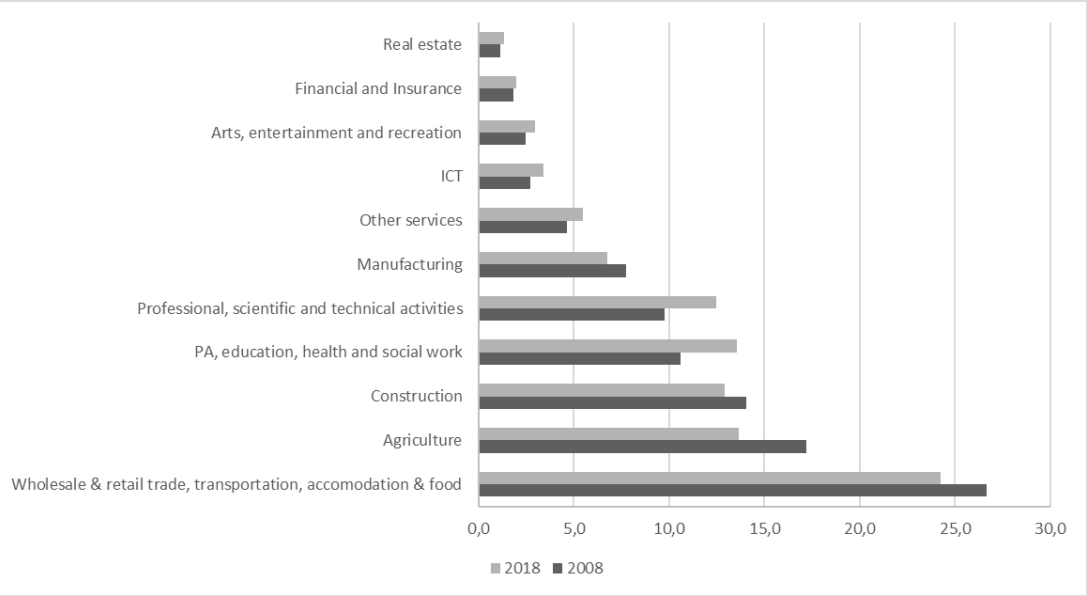
First of all, the percentage of self-employed with employees decreased in some countries. It is worth noting that this decrease is particularly significant in countries such as France,

[39] Müller and Arum (2004, p. 10) argued that governments used the instrument of entrepreneurship promotion with a view to allow to circumvent the limits posed by labour market regulations that would make dependent employment more attractive (and costly for the enteprises) than independent employment. As Barbieri and Bison (2004) stated, this thesis of the correlation between employment protection legislation and growth of self-employment is well-established among neoliberal economists. However, these scholars noted how this has been rejected by international empirical studies. In the case of Italy, for instance, they emphasised – among structural conditions for self-employment – the weight of other factors such as the *path-dependency*, characterised by the traditional existence of small enterprises, the relevance of the industrial implications of the crisis of the Fordism on the growth of small businesses (as already outlined in the first chapter of this thesis) and the consequent shortage of career chances for dependent employees in such a structure.

Netherlands, the UK and Greece, where from 2008 to 2018 there has been a general increase in the overall self-employment (Figure 3). A trend to which has corresponded the increase of self-employed without employees (see also Eurofond, 2017).

This aspect is particularly relevant given the different social implications this has, for instance in terms of social vulnerability. Studies, indeed, have highlighted the existence of a relation between the type of firm and, for instance, their life expectancy. By way of example, by analysing data from Spain, Audretsch, Callejón and Aranguren (2008) have found that the rate of surviving was much lower for enterprises with zero or few – one or two – employees than for the ones with at least three or more employees. Moreover, there were some significant developments regarding the economic sectors. Besides the already mentioned reduction of self-employment in the agricultural industry, there has been an increase in other economic activities in the EU28. For instance, there has been an increase in the service and the public sector (e.g. contractors for the public administration) as well as in the ICT field and among professional, scientific and technical activities (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Economic activities (% on total self-employment) in the EU, 2008-2018



Source: Author's elaboration of data extracted from Eurostat Labour Market Database (2008Q4 and 2018Q1).

As Arum and Müller (2004) argued, the growth of the service sector with its lower barriers to self-employment, compared to the capital-intensive industry, has been pivotal to increase opportunities for self-employment. Moreover, also knowledge-based and creative industries have made increasing use of self-employment without or with a few employees, thus contributing to making self-employment a crucial component of developed economies (Houston and Reuschke, 2017). Nonetheless, this growth of opportunities faces the 'fragile

horizons of the service economy' (Negri, 2006, p. 18) which, if one hand gives a fundamental contribution both to employment and self-employment, it often entails several adverse effects on inequalities and social vulnerability[40], as also Sassen (2000) stressed.

The growing opportunities for self-employment in all its varied forms found fertile grounds in the urban context, driven by the growth of the service sector – one of the major contributors of urban growth – and the demand for skilled positions as well. In this respect, it has been stressed that:

> 'While some of the rise in self-employment is likely to be driven by precariousness in, and exclusion from, the labour market for employees, increases in self-employment are greatest in skilled service industries – sectors that are associated with growth in city economies, including education, personal and business services and media.' (Houston and Reuschke, 2017, p. 3202, referring to D'Arcy and Gardiner, 2014)

The reduction of some traditional forms of self-employment, such as shopkeepers, craftspeople or, to give another example, owners of restaurants (Figure 4), has contributed to led to speculate about the progressive reduction of these 'traditional forms of petty bourgeois self-employment' in favour, precisely, of professionals and expanding post-modern forms of work based on freelancing, semi-autonomy and, sometimes, on a bogus autonomy (Müller, Arum, 2004, p. 11 and passim). However, although some rhetoric has contributed to the consolidation of the most popular portrait of the 'typical entrepreneur', that depict personalities such as Bill Gates, the principal founder of Microsoft, or Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, traditional and non-innovative organisational forms remain a substantial component of micro and medium businesses (Aldrich, 2005).

In conclusion, entrepreneurship is a multifaceted concept that incorporates very different social and economic realities that include new opportunities for doing business especially driven by the tertiarization of the economy and new technologies. However, the high heterogeneity behind entrepreneurship also entails that not all benefit from the same opportunities or, in other words, that people undertake different types of business organizations and hence they are faced with: different risks and constraints, different chances and economic returns, different social status, different starting circumstances or motivations. The analysis of the factors at the basis of one form of entrepreneurship instead of another

[40] The ever-growing demand for flexible work has sometimes pushed to privilege subcontracting self-employed. A process somewhat opaque, or to the margins of legality, resulting from the erosion of labour markets and increasing precariousness, that led to the 'economically dependent self-employment' (Negrelli, 2013, p. 104) or to the emergence of the 'bogus self-employment', more exposed to the risks of precariousness and vulnerability. These risks are even higher for the most vulnerable social groups, including women and young people under the age of thirty-five (Eurofond, 2017).

have been central in entrepreneurship studies. The next paragraph outlines the key points the literature stressed so far in this respect.

Contributions and limits of functionalist approaches

The identification of the factors at the basis of entrepreneurship, and especially *successful* entrepreneurship, is central in entrepreneurship studies, that are dominated, as already stressed, by a functionalist paradigm (Perren and Jennings, 2005; Essers et al., 2017). Therefore, the main question usually has been the following: what are the determinants of successful entrepreneurship so as to increase the chances of success of a new venture? Questions like this always entail substantial normative implications, providing suggestions and guidance for policy-making engaged in economic development and employment/labour market inclusion promotion. Scholars highlighted different determinants according to the different types of entrepreneurship, trying to conceptualise this distinction as well. Thornton (1999) identified two leading schools of thought in social sciences with respect to general determinants of entrepreneurship: the *supply-side* and the *demand-side* schools, a conceptual formulation that reveals the underlying economistic approach. I dwell on this because this produces significant knowledge for public actions.

The *supply-side* perspective privileges explanations mostly based on individual features, i.e. culture, human capital, social class belonging, ethnicity and to a lesser extent psychological characteristics. Psychological approaches have been indeed rapidly abandoned in social science researches, although they remain vivid in the public debate and primarily manifest in the discourses about the so-called 'entrepreneurial personality'. The idea that entrepreneurs "are born and not made" is so widespread to have policy implications as well, that is that 'to advance economically, societies need an adequate supply of these special individuals' (Thornton, 1999, p. 22). In this respect, it is enough to consider the promotion of attractiveness, especially central among urban actions, of these "special individuals", for example the creative class, the innovators, the high-tech entrepreneurs. Moreover, the supply-side school especially emphasises individual motivations of the choice of becoming entrepreneur/self-employed. It is interesting to note that, in the classic economic literature, Schumpeter already called the attention to the motivational aspects of becoming an entrepreneur, and in particular to dreams, willingness and pleasure of conquering and creating or, in the 'modern' language suggested by Swedberg, to the willingness of autonomy, power, success and of 'getting things done' (2000, p. 16). Currently, scholars tend to use the categories of *necessity* or *opportunity* entrepreneurship to distinguish between experiences

arising from necessity, generally related to lack of better alternatives in the labour market, and those emerging from the recognition of a business opportunity or promising idea. This distinction has been systematically introduced by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor that started collecting data about this in the early 2000s by asking respondents 'to indicate whether he was starting and growing his business to take advantage of a unique market opportunity (opportunity entrepreneurship) or because it was the best option available (necessity entrepreneurship)' (Reynolds et al., 2002, p. 4). Another way used, especially in economic studies, to distinguish between the two groups is based on previous circumstances: those who voluntarily leave their jobs are considered opportunity entrepreneurs, while those who experience an involuntary job loss are considered necessity entrepreneurs (Block and Wagner, 2010). This distinction has also been advocated because it is deemed useful to keep separated the *genuine* entrepreneurs from the 'distressed self-employed' (Sheehan and Namara, 2015, p. 13). However, it is worth highlighting that studies have shown that negative incentives to self-employment are not necessarily the symptom of negative entrepreneurial experiences. For instance, MacDonald and Coffield (1991), in their study on young entrepreneurs in a deprived context, highlighted that 'just because unemployment provided negative reasons for business start-up this does not mean that young entrepreneurs had a negative attitude to their businesses' and that 'whatever the reason for becoming self-employed, informants had an overwhelmingly diligent attitude to making a success of their venture' (p.97). However, a quantitative analysis of differences between necessity and opportunity entrepreneurship in Germany conducted by Block and Wagner (2010) concluded that the two groups mainly differ with respect to the quality of opportunities accessed (more profitable for opportunity entrepreneurs), human capital and the determinants of success, the latter are: 'general human capital' for opportunity entrepreneurs and specific professional knowledge for necessity entrepreneurship ('being educated in the professional area pursued as an entrepreneur', p. 167). These kinds of studies, therefore, generally do not account for contextual features, besides remaining, I insist, on the functionalist and economistic terrain.

By contrast, the demand-side school, developed within the new economic sociology, focused on the context-related push and pull factors. From this angle, the primary aim of the analysis is not to detect the albeit existing peculiar characteristics of the 'entrepreneurs' but, rather, to identify those social and spatial contextual conditions that can produce, or reproduce, a system of opportunities; and in which there are 'particular figures *that are selected*

from these conditions' (Bagnasco, 2006, p. 408, emphasis added)[41]. These include spatial aspects such as economic diversity, density and proximity characterising localities (*incubator regions*) together with some population's features that include career opportunities and personal fortunes (Thornton, 1999, p. 31). In this vein, MacDonald and Coffield (1991), in their study on the impact of UK entrepreneurship policies targeted at young people living in depressed areas during the 1980s[42], emphasised the relevance of localities and, more to the point, of local labour markets as *push* factors. These scholars underlined that 'the "choices" made and the "paths" weaved through the labour market are severely hemmed in by local social and economic conditions which structure and fence in the opportunities of people' (p. 94).

This perspective also contributed to interpreting economic processes and individual behaviours in the light of noneconomic and institutional factors: social relations and networks activated by trust, solidarity or, in general, not determined by the rational pursuit of the personal interest (the *embeddedness* perspective, see Granovetter, 1985). Moreover, the relevance of various kind of resources emerged from this standpoint. These resources range from education and work experiences (*human capital*) to family support, including spousal assistance, other than to the crucial opportunity of drawing on multiple contacts that can facilitate the access to information (Arum and Müller, 2004). These allow, for instance, to dispose of knowledge concerning new and existing markets, financing sources – in which private investors are increasingly important[43] – and so on.

It results from this that if *genuine* entrepreneurship is about the recognition of opportunities and if opportunities are strictly dependent on specific social and spatial locations, *genuine* entrepreneurship will be prevalent in those contexts that are best placed to promote it. Bosma and Sternberg (2014) argued that "opportunity entrepreneurship" is higher in cities and that this is positively related to levels of regional economic growth. By analysing data from GEM, these scholars found that higher is regional economic growth, higher will be the positive impact on entrepreneurship driven by the opportunity recognition

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[41] Some criticism has been made concerning the tendency of this approach to overlook *agency*. This is in fact a long-standing critical point of the institutionalism, only partly solved by claiming that social actors are those who have the ability to recognise, catch and combine the set of available opportunities, thus taking advantages of favourable conditions.

[42] The 1980s, known as the 'enterprise years', are the period when 'thousands of millions of pounds have been spent on an ideological project to transform the culture of education, training and employment within the United Kingdom and it has been one of the policies dearest to the heart of Mrs Thatcher's Government' (MacDonald and Coffield, 1991, p.1)

[43] As Aldrich (2005, p. 462) argued, 'business angels' are increasingly a crucial source of capital, much more than personal and family resources, that are employed in very few cases, and even more than banks and venture capitalists. Business angels are wealthy individuals investing their savings in new ventures and accompanying their development by providing assistance.

in the urban contexts. On the other hand, a harsh environment increases necessity-driven forms of entrepreneurship. In particular, again according to Bosma and Sternberg (2014), the decrease in employment (the job loss and the fear of losing the job) more than unemployment, tends to lead to higher levels of necessity-motivated entrepreneurship in cities. Higher levels of unemployment, as well as inadequate social protection, have deemed to be generally very influential factors that push into self-employment. For this reason, the analysis of career trajectories has been particularly useful to the understanding of the entrepreneurial experience itself (MacDonald and Coffield, 1991). The way in which the various forms of entrepreneurship also coexists in the most economically dynamic localities has received less attention. It is true, indeed, that opportunities have increased notably in these contexts, thus making available growing occasions for business creation which also means expanding chances of self-fulfilment, social mobility or status preservation for the middle class[44]. Nonetheless, it should not be forgotten that – as already discussed in the first chapter – these new opportunities have arisen in a context of growing uncertainty and change of social risks that affected also the most economically advanced locations.

These mainstream studies, although crucial for the description/explanation of the phenomenon (from a purely economistic and functionalist view) and, in particular, to the identification of part of the informational bases of public action in this field, fundamentally neglect the political and ideological dimension of the issue at stake and the way it interplays with the dynamics underlying not the economic success/failure but new and old inequalities unfolding in the context of increasing individualisation that characterise contemporary society. Before deepening these aspects, I focus on the way the ambiguity of the concept of entrepreneurship is reproduced in/by the policy field. I will come back to individualisation in the discussion of the 'youth issue', to which entrepreneurship policies often refer to, since young people, as we will see, represent a privileged group for observation in this respect.

[44] In this respect, indeed, sociologists have shed light on the use of self-employment as a strategy of upward social mobility, especially when a lack of opportunity career in wage employment is suffered (Arum and Müller, 2004; Barbieri and Bison, 2004). In general, it has been recognised the relevance of the contribution of entrepreneurship to stratification processes, also through the intergenerational transmission of entrepreneurial capacities (Granovetter, 1984; Ruef and Lounsbury, 2007), and to social cohesion, by working as a factor of social stability or safety valve and by producing an inter-classist space (Ranci, 2012).

V. From the European approach to entrepreneurship as an ideology

Economic development or activation policies? The circular production of ambivalence

Since the 1980s, when the awareness that entrepreneurship, small enterprises and self-employment were a crucial component of the 'post-industrial society' increased, entrepreneurship support has become an important priority of public policies at all levels, and it especially plays a crucial role in the European political agenda (Audretsch, Grilo and Thurik, 2007; Jakobsen and Ellegaard, 2012; European Commission, 2013; Lodigiani and Scippa, 2014). A primary goal of the public actor was and continue to be the promotion of economic growth and the consequent encouragement of employment creation by sustaining (new) entrepreneurship and the enterprises, also in the light of the production changes already discussed in the first chapter. At the basis, there is the assumption that entrepreneurship is 'a powerful driver of economic growth and job creation' (European Commission, 2013, p. 3), as declared in the *Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan* of the EU. Nonetheless, growing concerns about unemployment levels in Europe, combined with shifts in public policy approaches to activation, have made entrepreneurship - explicitly and sometimes implicitly accompanied by self-employment – significant instruments not only for economic development strategies but also for activation policies and, more in general, social investment strategies. An example is provided by the series of proposals launched by the European Commission in 2016 in the document 'New skills agenda for Europe'. In this document, the Commission places entrepreneurial skills among the key competences to 'cope with complexity and uncertainty':

> Formal education and training should equip everyone with a broad range of skills which opens doors to personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment. These include literacy, numeracy, science and foreign languages, as well as transversal skills and key competences such as digital competences, entrepreneurship, critical thinking, problem solving or learning to learn, and financial literacy. Early acquisition of these skills is the foundation for the development of higher, more complex skills which are needed to drive creativity and innovation. These skills need to be strengthened throughout life, and allow people to thrive in fast-evolving workplaces and society, and to cope with complexity and uncertainty. While some of these competences already have an established place in educational systems, this is not typically the case for key competences such as entrepreneurship and citizenship, or transversal skills. (European Commission, 2016, p. 5)

Regarding instead activation policies, first, it must be noted that the European Employment Strategy had strongly recommended the encouragement of entrepreneurship since its birth, in 1997, when it was promoted as one of its four pillars, that were: employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities. One purpose was of

'facilitating an easier transition to self-employment and the setting up of microenterprises'[45]. More recently, within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, all member states have been invited to 'launch active labour market programmes that provide financial support to all unemployed people for starting a business' (European Commission, 2013, p. 27). One of the purposes of the EES was and continues to be that of activating jobseekers also through alternatives to the paid job, whether through self-employment or starting up new businesses. In a recent publication of the European Employment Policy Observatory precisely titled *Activating jobseekers through entrepreneurship: Start-up incentives in Europe*, it has been claimed that: 'in some contexts, start-up incentives have been found to be more effective and efficient in reducing unemployment compared to other ALMP policies, particularly for the low-skilled' (European Commission, 2014, p. 5).

More to the point, entrepreneurship/self-employment support consists of a set of various instruments falling within *activation policies* and, more specifically, within both *employment* and *active labour market policies* (ALMPs). On the one hand, indeed, entrepreneurship support policies aim to support the birth of new enterprises that are then expected to hire employees. In this sense, they would indirectly support job creation and led to a general growth of employment levels (*employment policies*). On the other hand, entrepreneurship programmes are designed to directly stimulate labour market inclusion by encouraging independent employment as an alternative to the paid job (OECD and European Union, 2015). To this end, it avails itself of diverse instruments ranging from microcredit services to the capitalisation of unemployment benefits. In the light of what has been above discussed, this should lead to necessity entrepreneurship. This is why these instruments are most of the time accompanied by entrepreneurship training programmes, which are strongly encouraged to support the sustainability of new firms and not merely the birth of new enterprises as such (OECD/European Union, 2015).

The Entrepreneurship Action Plan adopted by the European Commission in 2013 summarises the various initiatives undertaken by the EU to support entrepreneurship and encourage member states to increase the number of entrepreneurs in Europe by 2020. This document highlights the need to reduce barriers to entrepreneurship, for instance facilitating access to finance and developing a favourable environment for businesses and 'would-be entrepreneurs', and the necessity to invest in education and promote an entrepreneurship culture:

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[45] From the summary titled 'The birth of the European Employment Strategy: the Luxembourg process (November 1997)'. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/SK/ALL/?uri=LEGISSUM:c 11318 (latest access: 03/09/2018).

> 'Not only is the environment challenging, but there is also a widespread culture that does not recognise or reward entrepreneurial endeavours enough and does not celebrate successful entrepreneurs, as role models who create jobs and income. To make entrepreneurship the growth engine of our economy Europe needs a thorough, far-reaching cultural change.' (European Commission, 2013, p. 4)

Against this background, differences are not only recognised but also placed at the core of the European approach, according to which 'the principle of "thing small first" must become the touchstone of European and national policies' (p. 5). This means including and accounting for the diversity of entrepreneurship: all economic organizations regardless of their size, business sector or legal form must be included, taken into account, supported. It is significant, in this respect, the reference also to the 'liberal profession entrepreneur' and the perfect overlap between self-employment and entrepreneurship.

What this highlight with respect to what we have already seen in the previous pages is the political dimension of the ambivalence of the concept of entrepreneurship. Hence the reasons for the polysemic character of the concept of entrepreneurship cannot be reduced to a merely theoretical or technical matter since policy approaches contribute to nurture the ambivalences and to further blur the meaning of entrepreneurship by widely extending its boundaries. This does not mean that there are a direct cause and effect relationship between policy approaches and entrepreneurship ambivalence. Instead, here the intent has been to shed light on the circular process through which this ambivalence is produced.

The next chapter examines more in-depth what this entails by focusing on the promotion of *inclusive entrepreneurship policies*.

Inclusive entrepreneurship policies, cities activation and the place for young people

The OECD and the DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission jointly support the promotion of inclusive entrepreneurship policies. Since 2013, they annually produced a report, titled 'Missing Entrepreneurs' to spread evidence-based knowledge on inclusive entrepreneurship and self-employment support actions undertaken in the EU. The latter are also encouraged to contribute to meet the broader policy purpose of promoting 'inclusive growth' to alter current upward trends in inequalities. More to the point, they are presented as follows:

> 'Inclusive entrepreneurship policies seek to ensure that all people have an opportunity to be successful as an entrepreneur. This includes policies and programmes that help people from groups that are under-represented and disadvantaged in the labour market (i.e. women, youth, seniors, the unemployed, immigrants and people with disabilities) in starting and growing businesses. The objective is to move more people into work via self-employment to allow people an opportunity to participate economically and socially, and to generate income for

themselves. Policymakers should seek to support those with innovative ideas to increase their chances of survival.' (OECD and European Union, 2017, p. 15)

As regards activation policies in general (van Berkel, R., Møller, 2002), they are therefore targeted on unemployed people or social groups with greater difficulties in entering the labour market, such as women and young people, whose self-employment rates are lower as well. As a result, inclusiveness entails both the inclusion of diverse social groups and of different (by size, sector, legal form) economic organizations:

'Inclusive entrepreneurship policies aim to ensure that all people, regardless of their personal characteristics and background, have an equal opportunity to start and run their own businesses. This includes all types of businesses: incorporated and unincorporated businesses, for-profit and not-for-profit businesses as well as social enterprises, full-time and part-time businesses, those in a dedicated premise and home-based businesses. These activities could be undertaken by an individual or a group.' (OECD/European Union, 2017, p. 24)

Therefore, the principle of inclusiveness does not deviate from the pattern previously discussed by advocating that everyone should have the opportunity to become an entrepreneur and that positive supports[46] should be provided to help to remove barriers to those individual coping strategies based on self-employment and entrepreneurship. In this respect, the local level is deemed to represent a crucial field where these objectives can be realized, and many local best practices have been in fact identified. These include some of the cases that, as we will see, this research analyses, i.e. the case of Barcelona Activa and of the social innovation incubator of the Municipality of Milan (OECD, 2009; OECD/European Union, 2015, 2017).

At the urban level, European cities and city networks such as Eurocities have particularly encouraged the development of local actions supporting entrepreneurship. Eurocities was founded in 1986 by Barcelona, Birmingham, Frankfurt, Lyon, Milan and Rotterdam, the aim was to contribute to shape EU policies and strengthen the capacity of cities to tackle contemporary challenges. Eurocities closely follows European initiatives fostering entrepreneurship as well, also providing feedback and suggestions. To do so, in 2012, EUROCITIES published 'Helping cities foster entrepreneurship', a response to the consultation on the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, to reaffirm the role of cities as crucial facilitators/enablers of entrepreneurship and innovation processes. In particular, they highlight the role of city governments in providing financial incentives, including to businesses located in deprived areas; sustaining and managing business incubators;

[46] Sheehan and Namara (2015) identified three types of support: 'hard', 'soft' and 'hybrid'. Hard assistance consists of financial aid. Soft assistance comprises the provision of coaching/mentoring services as well as all actions promoting an entrepreneurial culture or mindset.

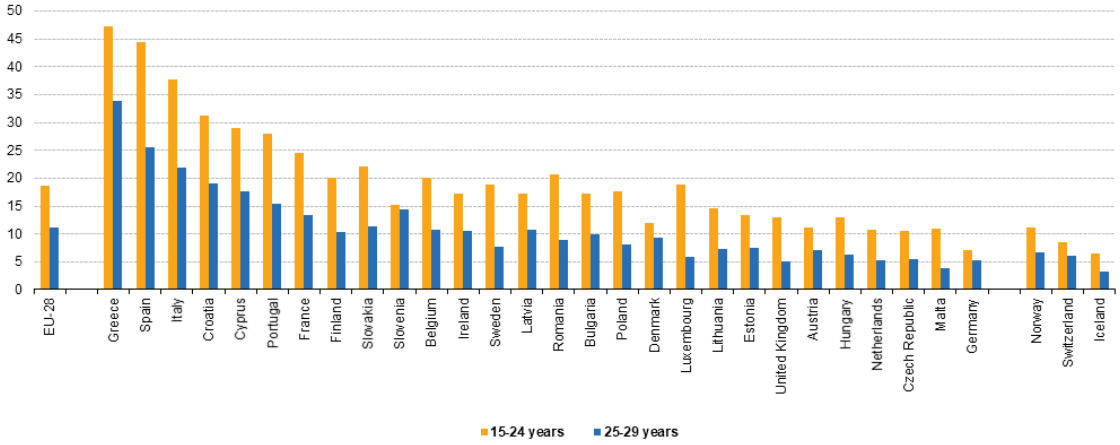
promoting networks of local actors; helping small businesses access both private and public procurement opportunities. In 2013, Eurocities published 'Cities supporting inclusive entrepreneurship', a report providing examples of actions undertaken by several European cities to provide entrepreneurship and self-employment support. This report also emphasised the relevance of the territorial dimension of inclusive entrepreneurship policies as well as the availability of crucial resources that can be mobilised at the city-level. In the introduction signed by the chair of the Eurocities Economic Development Forum, it is stated that:

> 'Cities can provide ideal start-up community environments where inclusive entrepreneurship thrives and where innovators want to live. Much research points to city-level interventions as the most significant element in building and fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems. City authorities across Europe are doing this. They support start-ups and early- growth businesses in the form of incubators and accelerators. They facilitate the formation of networks and access to these. They raise entrepreneurial awareness and promote links between the public, private and knowledge sectors. These open and inclusive approaches to entrepreneurship have already had encouraging results. Our city governments give priority to increasing entrepreneurial activity amongst under-represented groups or who face barriers to business success. These include young people, women, disabled people and migrants.' (Eurocities, 2013, pp. 4–5)

Despite their relevance and the privileged point of observation they provide, municipal entrepreneurship support policies (MESPs) represent an under-researched area of study even in urban sociology. However, I consider that, in particular high-income cities, they represent interesting cases also because of their capacity both to retain and attract 'young and entrepreneurial people', thus maintaining a younger population compared to the other scales (European Union, 2016, p. 100). It must be noted, in this respect, that young people represent a "special" group among the 'missing entrepreneurs' identified by international organizations. As a matter of fact, young people have been socially constructed as one of the 'groups with the greatest potential' related to entrepreneurship and self-employment, together with unemployed persons with professional skills and women (European Commission, 2013, p. 4).

There is a two-fold reason on the basis of this special attention towards young people. On the one hand, of course, there is a greater concern about the so-called 'youth issue' in Europe, and especially in southern countries. Data from EU-LFS shows that the situation is particularly severe in Greece, Spain and Italy, where unemployment levels overcome the EU average both among young people aged 15-24 and among those who are aged 25-29 (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Unemployment rate for young people, by age group, 2016 (% share of labour force among people aged 15-24 years/25-29 years)



Note: ranked on the average rate (for young people aged 15-29 years).
Source: Eurostat (online data code: yth_empl_100)

eurostat

These countries have also seen a significant increase of the number of NEETs since 2006 (more 12,3 points in Greece, 9,9 points in Spain and 9,4 in Italy) as well as significant shares of temporary contracts among young people (Eurostat, 2017). Unemployment and inactivity are in fact accompanied by the growing job insecurity resulting from processes of employment de-standardisation. Moreover, young people are especially hit by the overall growth of uncertainties related, to a different extent in different European areas, to the primary sources of social integration: systems of welfare, family and labour markets. In particular, young people from Southern Europe are at higher risk because of the interplay between increasingly precarious labour markets and the lack of adequate social supports that make families the main source of welfare (Antonucci et al., 2014; Koch and Fritz, 2013; Maestripieri and Sabatinelli, 2014; Taylor-Gooby, 2004; Walther, 2006). This seems to have altered even the social composition of the bottom of the social pyramid. As the OECD (2017) has recently stressed with regard to the socio-economic divide in Europe, indeed, young people are more vulnerable than in the past and they are even 'replacing the elderly as the group most at risk of poverty' (p. 8).

Despite the higher risk of social vulnerability[47] young people face, their lower entrepreneurship and self-employment rates have been nonetheless highlighted as an issue

[47] The concept of vulnerability is able to grasp the multidimensional and dynamic character of contemporary social problems resulting from the cronicisation of risks and uncertainties, also affecting middle classes, and take into account those "grey" sections of society, that do not fall under the concepts of poverty and social exclusion (Negri, 2006). Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli (2014a) defined social vulnerability as 'a condition that is characterized by instability in a context of harsh constrains' (p. 17).

to address by reducing barriers to entrepreneurship, which have been identified with the feeling of having a lack of knowledge and competencies as well as a fear of failure. However, because of their peculiarities, young people[48] are often reached by targeted interventions. As far as youth entrepreneurship support is concerned, the OECD provides a series of recommendations. I resume the salient point. Among the general principles, there is the selection of beneficiaries and the provision of tailor-made support. In particular, 'extensive support should be low cost and offered widely', while 'intensive support should be competitive or filtered to select recipients that are motivated and most likely to succeed'. Moreover, it is recommended to encourage the introduction of some innovation in project proposals, no matter how modest. Regarding instead entrepreneurship programmes, the OECD invites to 'consider adapting mainstream programmes as an alternative to youth-specific actions' and to integrate different policy instruments to be able to meet multiple objectives. Among these: strengthening sustainability through training/mentoring services and the development of networking opportunities; encouraging the combination between education, economic and labour policies, also within the broader aim of encouraging employability and "not simply" the creation of new enterprises; facilitating the access to finance through microcredits, guarantee funds, grants as well as alternative financial instruments (crowdfunding, peer to peer lending, business angel investments). Finally, it recommends 'building a supportive institutional environment'. This includes, on the one hand, the development of adequate and supportive regulatory frameworks (i.e. welfare and tax for youth entrepreneurship) and, on the other, the promotion of 'a culture of entrepreneurship'. The latter should be spread by increasing information about entrepreneurship support programmes and the procedures to establish a business, by increasing awareness of entrepreneurship as a possible alternative to the standard paid job as well as by 'celebrating young entrepreneurs as role models' (OECD 2016, p. 12-13).

These guidelines reflect the second aspect to underlined with respect to the reasons underlying the special attention paid to young people. This relates to the fact that they are privileged targets of public interventions that work according to a social investment logic and that make activation schemes as a sort of 'extension of the principle of institutionalised compulsory education' (Crespo and Serrano, 2004, p. 14, quoting the study of Lødemel and Trickey, 2000; see also Bifulco and Mozzana, 2016). In this sense, young people experience more directly changes in policy approaches but also those affecting, more in general,

[48] Reference is sometimes made to young people 15-24 years old and other times to youth aged 18-30 years old, depending on the statistics source on which they draw on. The first age group is indeed used by Eurostat, while the second one is the one chosen by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (OECD/European Union, 2015). Overall, the limits of age groups vary also according to national contexts of reference.

economy and society. Changes that entrepreneurship – especially in its broader meaning – often mirrors.

Activation and 'the entrepreneurial-self' in a context of growing individualisation

If the activation paradigm is the frame of entrepreneurship support policies, entrepreneurship policies fully embody its underlying philosophy, which can be summarised as the enhancement of self-commitment to one's social inclusion through work (Lodigiani and Scippa, 2014). From this perspective, as we have already seen in the previous chapter, self-responsibilisation is crucial in coping with old and new social risks. Moreover, it is considered not only a necessity but also an opportunity both for the economy as a whole and the same individual:

> 'in contrast to this principle of society being responsible for dealing with risk, what we are seeing today is that the individual is increasingly being expected to undertake risk management. Risk is no longer seen as something negative but as something which is inevitable or even positive and necessary for economic growth and individual well-being' (Crespo and Serrano, 2004, p. 14)

This change of perspective entails a profound change of paradigm, as already discussed in the first chapter. The point that I want to stress here concerns some specific assumptions relating to the role the public action has to play in the knowledge-based society, that this paradigm change somehow witness. First, the idea is that welfare policies far from being an unnecessary burden as they are conceived in the most radical neoliberal approach, can still have a crucial relevance for the economy in so far as they work as a *productive factor*, able to reconcile economic development and social protection (Hemerijck 2014; Morel et al. 2012). From this viewpoint, the public intervention must be rethought as an investment, not as a matter of cost or spending, and should be based on the logic of the *incentive* more than of the *compensation*. This investment should be able to positively affect economic growth and deal with new risks by activating resources, capacities and so on. In other words, public actions should help to address the new needs of the knowledge-based society, including by equipping people to individually navigate the uncertainty that characterizes the new economy and catch its opportunities (Crespo and Serrano, 2004). Therefore, if at the macro level the purpose of activation policies is to have more people at work, at the micro level:

> 'activation is meant to fight supposed passive attitudes, to increase independence and self-esteem and to enrich and update one's skills, and therefore one's chances to autonomously earn the resources for one's personal and family well-being through participation in the labour market' (Sabatinelli, 2010, p. 78).

Entrepreneurship constitutes an extreme example, but able to fully account for the ideology underpinning this paradigm change. In this respect, several scholars have stressed, from a Foucauldian perspective, the pervasiveness of the 'enterprise culture' in all aspects of social life, thus going far beyond the boundaries of the enterprise and the formally recognised entrepreneurs/self-employed people. Bröckling (2016) placed 'the construction of a new type of subject' and the rise of the 'entrepreneurial-self' at the centre of the restructuring processes of welfare states. According to Peters (2001), the entrepreneurial culture is an inherent component of the 'new neo-liberal metanarrative', based on 'free, autonomous, self-regulating individuals with an emphasis on the 'responsibilisation' of individuals as moral agents' (p. 68); other than promoting a 'vision of the future' based on 'excellence,' 'technological literacy,' 'skills training,' 'performance' and the 'enterprise' (Peters, 2001, p. 66). In the same vein, Dardot and Laval (2013) interpreted entrepreneurship as 'mode of self-government' and the 'mass entrepreneur' as the neoliberal subject par excellence.

These reflections also origin from the promotion of what has been known, especially in the UK, as the 'enterprise culture', that is deemed to have significantly contributed to making entrepreneurship a priority public issue from the 1980s (MacDonald, 1996; Swedberg, 2000; Peters, 2001). The 'enterprise culture' is considered the paramount of the economic-political ideology promoted by the governments of Thatcher in UK and Reagan in the USA, and that has strongly encouraged those values of independence and self-help that huge impact also had on social policy with the consolidation of peculiarly punitive activating approaches. This ideology is resumed by Bröckling (2016) who stressed:

> 'Entrepreneurial initiative has come to be regarded as a universal therapy for everyone and everything and deficiency in entrepreneurial spirit as the cause of all ills. The spirit of enterprise is supposed to overcome economic stagnation and promote general prosperity, shaving away the bureaucratic crust and bursting political narrow-mindedness, pacifying society through the spirit of market exchange and leading all to final success and happiness.' (p. 76)

Entrepreneurship is therefore interpreted as a rationale 'on which contemporary technologies of governing and self-governing converge' (2016, p. 21) and that goes beyond the formal creation of new companies to encompass, for instance, entrepreneurial ways of working for companies (i.e. 'intrapreneurship') and even the way life is managed (is what Bröckling refers to as the *entrepreneurial-self*).

Against this background, entrepreneurship – but also the 'entrepreneurial spirit' or the 'entrepreneurial mindset' (European Commission, 2013, p. 6) – has become a key 'competence' in the European framework and a vehicle not simply of business creation but also of employability, by improving 'creativity, initiative, tenacity, teamwork, understanding of risk and a sense of responsibility' (ivi; see also OECD/European Union, 2015). On this

point, the economists Audretsch and Thurik (2001) also maintained that the focus of the scientific debate should move away from the study of specific policy instruments that are concerned with entrepreneurship promotion as such (namely the birth of new business organisations), to the overall adaption and change of public policies to a new 'entrepreneurial economy'. These scholars claimed the latter is characterised by turbulence, diversity and heterogeneity: features that are diametrically opposed to those one attributed to what they called the 'managed economy', that are identified with the stability, continuity and homogeneity (p. 272). This new economy 'mandates a cohesive and pervasive policy approach that spans all facets of society, not just economic policy' (Audretsch et al., 2007, p. 2). Education is often the paramount field on which interventions are pleaded, but many other areas of policy, from retirement to health, from labour markets to social protection, are equally concerned. By referring to their empirical research conducted in the UK in the early 1990s, MacDonald and Coffield well highlighted this ideological substrate by claiming that:

> 'enterprise is not just the latest fashion or bandwagon in Conservative thinking; rather a brave new world of enterprise has been brought into being and its influence is spreading in so many directions simultaneously that few people are likely to escape whether they are children in primary school, students in university, unemployed miners or redundant executives. The intention is nothing less than to change the culture in education, training and employment from what is termed dependence to enterprise.' (1991, p. 26)

This ideological dimension can certainly not be neglected in entrepreneurship-related researches. Nonetheless, it constitutes a challenge for empirical sociological analyses. Indeed, it requires both the capacity to grasp the ideological aspects of what is the object of the study and, at the same time, the ability to not getting stuck in this terrain.

To this end, and with the purpose of better account for the complexity of the issue at stake, well aware that it is not possible to account for all aspects of this complexity, I consider useful to contextualise this object of study within the processes of growing individualisation characterising the last decades. Shift the focus on individualisation processes indeed allows to have more instruments to reflect upon the ways in which spaces for agency emerge as well. But what does individualisation mean? It is not my intention to account for the vast and interesting literature on individualisation, rather the aim is to clarify to what it refers and highlight most relevant issues for this study.

First, it is important to state that individualisation is an inherent part of the broader development of modernity and that it must be distinguished from the utilitarian individualism. It marks the transition from a society based on a few forms of belonging and social control and protection of individuals (a combination between the family and the

community) to a complex society characterized by the weakening of these traditional institutions, the emergence of new ones and the overall increasing number of these forms. This shift – although exposing people to new vulnerabilities and risks resulting from the loss or the lower covering power of the existing forms of social protection (constituted precisely by the family and the community) – has been deemed to be able to free individuals from traditional, and often oppressive, social ties and, simultaneously, to carry within it the conditions for the development of emancipation and democratization movements and to pave the way to more sophisticated and modern forms of social protection. Therefore, individualisation is conceived as a force that implies both an increase in the degrees of freedom of the people and higher exposure to social risks, which have become highly critical especially as a consequence of the crisis of welfare states in Europe (Castel, 2000; Paci, 2005; Fraser, 2013; Mingione, 2014). With the crisis of the Fordism and the restructuration/recalibration of economies and welfare states, including the further weakening of the family, the market and the State as sources of protection and the emergence of new risks, individualisation steers the attention towards the individual as the main responsible for one's well-being.

Leaving aside many other aspects and implications of this process, here I want to focus on what this entails for the individual, namely the growing need for acquiring high and diversified capacities. Ranci (2002) stated that these are about the 'ability to do' and the 'capacity to resist'. These are intertwined and boundaries between them are not always easily detectable. The 'ability to do' allows to recognise and catch opportunities, manage risks, develop strategies in a given context of opportunities and constraints. The 'ability to resist' instead refers more explicitly to the capacity to deal with adverse events and 'rapid as much as ephemeral successes' (p. 539). Therefore, entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur seem to fully reflect the behavioural and social models demanded by individualisation trends: highly dependent on individual skills and capacities to take the life on one's own hands, navigate the uncertainties of the market and catch emerging opportunities to earn one's own place in the society (Beck, 2000). These opportunities especially refer to new spaces for self-expression deriving from the de-standardisation of life models and enhancing autonomy, personal motivations and inclinations. Boltanski and Chiapello (2005) have noted how these issues have even intertwined with social claims, the 'artistic critique', that started to raise as early as the 1960s. The 'artistic critique' refers to that social request, especially vivid among the young, for 'liberation, freedom and authenticity' against 'all forms of disciplinary regulation' (p. 419). This obviously includes the disciplinary regulation of waged labour, whose critic re-emerged in the 1980s in the form of the desire to do a 'fulfilling work', of

'doing something interesting', 'expressing oneself', 'being oneself', 'breaking new ground' (or innovate, we would say today) and so forth (ibidem, p. 420). As far as entrepreneurship is concerned, reference is often made to the idea that ever more people look for more autonomy and opportunities of self-expression through self-employment, to which it should be added the observation that self-employed people would show higher levels of satisfaction in comparison with dependent employees (Hatfield, 2015; Eurofond, 2017).

The youth sociology has largely accounted for these processes since young people are those who should experience most in-depth individualisation processes (Walther, 2005, 2006). It has been highlighted the transversality of individualisation processes, that would somehow affect all young people but leading, at the same time, to the emergence of *individualised inequalities* along with traditional ones. As Walther (2005) nicely put it, in the context of individualisation: 'opportunities arise while social inequalities prevail' (p. 116). Indeed: 'young people's orientations and strategies reflect the resources and opportunities they can 'normally' expect and the 'legitimacy' of their aspirations' (Walther, 2006, p. 136). Several scholars highlighted how this is influenced by traditional inequality factors (class, gender, race, forms of capital) and institutional contexts that expose young people to different risks and constraints, while contributing to determine the *capacity to aspire*, to act, to strategize risks and opportunities (see also Farrugia, 2013; Spanò, 2017). Therefore, these studies invite to critically engage with the social construction of the homogeneity of the groups of intervention (i.e. young people) to take seriously into account differences within them.

Against this background, fundamentally imbued with ambivalence and thorny issues, the local perspective provides a privileged point of observation as it allows for the appreciation of the complexity of entrepreneurship and its support policies thanks to the capacity of cities to compress and intensify social dynamics, concentrate both growing opportunities and constraints young people face before them, as well as to pay attention to their capacity to redistribute resources and opportunities in the face of upward trends in (new and old) inequalities. In turn, we have seen how entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship policy approach seem to reinforce neostructuralist arguments. However, it also suggested the need to problematise its strong ideological component by paying attention to the tensions characterising individualisation processes.

CHAPTER III

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter deals with the methodological aspects of the study, by paying attention to positionality as well. It first addresses the purposes of the study and the research questions. Then, it dedicates ample space to the comparison and the selection of the cases. Finally, it focuses on data collection and data analysis. I will discuss how the study is based on an interpretative approach that works inductively by using the categories of the sociology of public action and availing itself of qualitative methods and instruments. More to the point, I will provide details about data collection and data analysis. The latter has been carried out through a software-assisted thematic analysis of sixty-five face-to-face semistructured interviews conducted with policy actors and young people in Milan and Barcelona.

I. The object, purposes and questions of the research

The relevance of studying municipal entrepreneurship support policies has been implicitly already discussed in the previous chapters: entrepreneurship constitutes a very present policy tool at all levels of government and occupies a prominent place in the European agenda; moreover, it exemplifies many aspects of individualisation processes affecting both policies and people's life courses; finally, entrepreneurship policies constitute a privileged field from which to observe the tensions between convergence and divergence trends in urban policies and, therefore, the capacity of cities to govern socio-economic restructuring and common neoliberal trends. All this contribute to making it a relevant other than a stimulating area for research.

However, MESPs represents an under-researched field of study. Hence, the literature does not offer solid interpretative frames but, as it has emerged from the previous two chapters, it allows to highlight some main features of what we can refer to as mainstream views of MESPs. From this perspective, MESPs seem to:

- serve growth-oriented strategy; in particular, they seem to be used as a crucial policy tool to develop a favourable environment for (especially small) businesses and, hence,

for sustaining local and urban economies as well as the transition to the knowledge-based economy;

- adhere to a Schumpeterian approach, centred on the strong link between entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity; and exalting extraordinary individual capacities and policy approaches that are based on innovation, flexibility, supply-side interventions and competitiveness (of the most dynamic economic spaces);
- mirror, so far as they are concerned, local welfare changes characterised by the subordination of welfare objectives to economic development purposes; through a strong integration between active labour market policies and economic development; the encouragement of self-responsibilisation and activation; the adoption of a social investment perspective, which rewards *what works* by leaving the problem of growing social vulnerability outstanding and reproducing or even worsening inequalities;
- be based on a *common* neoliberal mode of governance, entailing: the prominent role of growth-oriented policy objectives and actors (universities, research centres, chambers of commerce, financial institutions and so on); a strengthening of commodification processes and techniques of government centred on the entrepreneurialization of the society and the self.
- feed on ambivalence, which is reproduced by the view that entrepreneurship is a de-contextualised, social unrooted, always positive and purely market-based phenomenon, as well as a highly legitimised and de-politicised field of policy.

Against this background, this explorative research compares MESPs designed and implemented by the municipalities of Milan and Barcelona and the experiences of young adults up to 35 years of age who benefited from them. The study has two main objectives. The first is to contribute to the understanding of MESPs by focusing on diversities and similarities between cities and by investigating the strength of both convergence and divergence trends in local public actions. This means examining the role cities play in entrepreneurship promotion, interrogating the *agency* of cities, namely their capacity to act as meaningful political actors by expressing their own strategies. The second is to analyse the consequences of MESPs on participant's experiences in terms of the distribution of risks and opportunities by focusing, in particular, on young people.

Based on these purposes and of the theoretical framework outlined in the previous two chapters, the research aims to answer two main questions. Following the suggestion of Blaikie (2010), two categories of research questions, major and subsidiary questions, were used. As the same scholar argued, this distinction allows to isolate 'the core of the research

project' and, at the same time, to formulate more general questions. Major research questions are:

A. In what ways do local policy actors interpret, invalidate or reproduce the mainstream approach to entrepreneurship support policies and what local factors contribute to shaping locally specific approaches, if any?

B. Whether and in what ways MESPs affect the distribution of risks and opportunities among participants?

To answer the first question, the analysis concentrates on the normative and cognitive dimensions of MESPs, governance arrangements and the main *outputs*[49] of the concrete actions undertaken. In particular, the first primary question (A) incorporates the following subsidiary questions: what values inform and contribute to shaping Milan's and Barcelona entrepreneurship support policies? How problems and objectives are defined? What are the measures concretely implemented? What tools do MESPs use? What groups do they target? What kind of governance arrangements do they show? Do MESPs differ in Milan and Barcelona and why? What factors contribute to this differentiation, if any?

The second major question (B) deals with the *outcomes* of MESPs with respect to their implications in terms of (re)distribution of risks and opportunities among (young) participants. It is addressed by answering the following subsidiary questions: to what extent do entrepreneurship policies easily engage with under-35 young people? What features do young beneficiaries have? How do young people's experiences differ between the two cases and within them? What meaning/s do young recipients attach to entrepreneurship? Whether and to what extent do young participants (respondents) renegotiate their paths in the face of these policies? What are the representations of young people on the issues of entrepreneurship and its promotion? Whether and to what extent the distribution of risks and opportunities of young people involved differ and what role policies play in this respect?

As far as the hypothesis of the research is concerned, it must be said that although there is one single and theory-led hypothesis that will be empirically tested, this is intentionally broad and its role in the research design is quite limited. As Blaikie (2010) argued, hypotheses do not play the same role in all kinds of researches and, in some cases, 'the ritual of formulating and testing hypotheses can lead to unnecessary and unhelpful rigidities in the

[49] I draw some coordinates from the analysis from Moini (2013), according to whom the interpretative analysis of public actions is based on the 'public action pentagon'. This pentagon includes: actors (individual or collective; economic, political or social); representations made by normative (values) and cognitive (theories for knowledge and action) frameworks; institutions, made up of norms, rules, routines and procedures that guide the interactions between the different actors; the results translated in terms of outputs (concrete achievements of the actions) and outcomes (consequences for the target groups of the actions).

way in which research is conducted' (p. 58). This is especially valid in qualitative analyses such as this. This is the main reason why it has been privileged a more flexible and limited approach to the hypotheses of the research, which main originality, on the other hand, mainly relies on the attempt to keep together convergence and divergence dimensions by giving prominence to flesh-and-blood actors on the field, including policy beneficiaries.

The hypotheses is that the study of MESPs may support both the thesis of the convergence and of the divergence of urban policies. It is therefore expected to find not only homologation, with respect to uneven neoliberal and growth-led models of governance, but also variations, or better, distinctive local forms of *resistance* to the trends pushing for convergence. In particular, attention will be paid to the 'logic of the local' and its porosity especially in the face of local politics, social demands from the bottom and the misalignment of the same individual and organisations behaviours to, so to speak, the "neoliberal rules".

II. Research methods and tools

A qualitative and case-oriented comparative method

The research is overall based on a qualitative approach, and, as outlined later, it makes use of qualitative methods and instruments. Moreover, it adopts a case-oriented strategy of comparative analysis (2014 [1987]). Della Porta (2008) stressed that the purpose of a case-oriented comparative method is the 'rich description' and the *understanding* of a generally small number of 'complex units'[50] (p. 198). It differs from the variable-oriented and statistical method since it does not aim to identify correlations between variables nor to produce explanations and generalisations. By contrast, case-oriented comparisons work on the identification of similarities and differences between two or more cases as well as on the identification of 'the principles by which the parts [of a complex social configuration, *author's note*] consistently fit together' (Della Porta, 2008, p. 205). In other words, it manages to 'appreciating complexity', as Ragin (2014 [1987], p. 54) effectively put it. Moreover, the case study approach is especially suitable when the phenomenon object of study and the context have no clear-cut boundaries (Yin, 2003). Here, the cases are the municipal entrepreneurship policies, but their understanding cannot be separated from the respective cities in which they

[50] Comparative analysis can avail itself of case-oriented or variable-oriented methods. Della Porta (2008) argued that: 'variable-oriented studies mainly aim at establishing generalised relationships between variables, while case-oriented research seeks to understand complex units' (p. 198).

are thought and implemented and, therefore, from the understanding of their contexts. Overall, this method was found to be the most appropriate to meet the research's purposes and questions previously stated.

More precisely, the research is based on a specific case-study typology that is, following the classification proposed by Vennesson (2008), the interpretative case study[51]. The latter 'use theoretical frameworks to provide an explanation of particular cases, which can lead as well to evaluation and refinement of theories' (ibidem, p. 227). Amongst the issues that have been raised about case studies, one particularly relevant for this research concerns the autonomy of the cases being studied. As Vennesson (2008) stressed, this constitutes a limit since, although each case is treated as a unit of analysis that is separated from the other, macro-trends tends to reduce this separation and connect different cases which result embedded, for instance, in broader socio-political frameworks (such as the EU). This kind of limit, however, has been extensively taken into account in the theoretical framework and addressed throughout this research.

Especially on the basis of available time and resources, it has been chosen to ring-fence the analysis on two cases, Milan and Barcelona. Before addressing the reasons behind the selection of these two cities, a premise must be made about the number of cases that have been selected. Firstly, it was clear since the very beginning that the intention of going in-depth and look at the multiple dimensions of the phenomenon through qualitative analysis, without discard the point of view of beneficiaries, would have required time and resources. The literature has highlighted the appropriateness of limiting the research to a few numbers of cases to allow the researcher going in-depth, take into account and manage a large number of components of a complex social organization, as a case study it is, and study it by means of an holistic approach (Pickvance, 2001; Della Porta, 2008). A large number of cases with scant resources will inevitably lead to miss some observations and reduce the quantity and quality of data gathered (Schmitter, 2008). On the other hand, it must be noted that 'a case study is a research strategy based on the in-depth empirical investigation of one, or a small number, of phenomena in order to explore the configuration of each case'. Where a case is defined as 'a phenomenon, or an event, chosen, conceptualized and analyzed empirically as a manifestation of a broader class of phenomena or events' (Vennesson, 2008, p. 226). Therefore, the selection of a small number of cases is often a peculiarity of case-based research designs. In this vein, some other choices have also been made with the purpose of 'binding the case', a procedure that is often recommended to 'ensure that your study remains

[51] Vennesson (2008) has identified four types of case study: the descriptive case study, the interpretative case study, the hypothesis-generating case study and, finally, the theory-evaluating case-study (pp. 227-228).

reasonable in scope' (Baxter and Jack, 2008, pp. 546–547). This is mainly about having bound the case to a timeframe, as deepened in the part of this chapter dedicated to the sampling methods, and to a specific subgroup, namely young people up to 35 years of age.

The case selection in the most similar systems design

That brings as to the selection of cases: why have Milan and Barcelona been chosen and not others? Firstly, both contexts are characterized by growing opportunities, especially related to business creation. Indeed, as we have seen, emerging opportunities for doing business have found fertile ground in many European cities, driven mainly by the growth of the service sector and the higher capacity of innovation. Since one of the aims of the thesis is to investigate the consequences of MESPs in terms of the distribution of risks and opportunities, I've tried to focus on two contexts where constraints and opportunities were more or less balanced (a more in-depth analysis of the two contexts is at the beginning of the next chapter). Secondly, the analysis of entrepreneurship support policies here occurs at the municipal scale, this means that I deemed conventional or administrative boundaries of the city appropriate for this analysis and, therefore, they have been used to identify the specific level of government designing and implementing *urban* entrepreneurship policies.

The selection of cases started with the choice of studying entrepreneurship policies of the city of Milan. This choice has various origins. It must be said, for one thing, that the fact that Milan belongs to the country I come from – and it is the seat of the PhD programme I attended – has undoubtedly influenced this decision. In this respect, it is worth pointing out that many social scientists tend to privilege the home country or the country where they live and work for their researches, especially in the early stages of their career (Schmitter, 2008). On the other hand, in my view, the context in which a researcher live can have in turn an impact on the same research choices, starting from the topic of the research. It is true that the city provides a vast number, potentially endless, of stimuli for studies, and it is, therefore, a massive source of ideas. However, in this somehow chaotic set of stimuli, particularly present phenomena can more easily draw the attention of the researcher. Indeed, during my stay in Milan, I recognised an important engagement – then confirmed by the first collection of information – of the local government, but also by the city as a whole, in the promotion of entrepreneurship. This relates to a critical issue regarding case selection in case-oriented researches. In this respect, Della Porta (2008) highlighted how researchers engaged in this kind of research design typically devote special attention to 'positive cases', namely cases where a phenomenon is notably present (p. 212). This point will be taken up in the next

pages of this subchapter when discussing the dimensions underpinning the selection of the cases.

This has persuaded me of getting close to this topic, together with the growing relevance of the issue at stake and my curiosity towards it, which has also been stimulated by personal reasons. I have indeed experienced the ambivalence of entrepreneurship first-hand when, at roughly the same time, a member of my family had access to a regional measure of microcredit for unemployed entering self-entrepreneurship while, together with others, I were trying to grow a social enterprise that, in 2012, won a grant from the Italian Ministry of Education and Research for social innovation enterprises established by under-35 young people. In my case, the initial optimism has run aground a frustrating dead end in a scenario marked by a deep socio-economic depression, i.e. the South Italy, where, nonetheless, the debate about innovation and start-ups was starting to take root as well, also influenced by the enough numerous incentives (also economic) "to try". This has certainly contributed to stimulate my curiosity towards the experiences that other young people and young adults were living and the mechanisms underpinning entrepreneurship promotion, especially in high-opportunity contexts.

Then, this choice has been subject to a series of reflections and consistency checks concerning the purposes of the research and what emerged from the literature review. The theory and the research objectives have therefore guided the selection of case studies, especially with respect to the second case-study, Barcelona. In line with the research purposes previously highlighted, the selection of the cases has been based on the strategy of the *most similar systems design*, which is opposed to the *most different systems design* (Pickvance, 2001; Della Porta, 2008; Ragin, 2014 [1987]). To give an example, a study on unemployment benefits comparing countries that share a similar type of welfare is adopting a most-similar systems design. What the researcher wants, by selecting this strategy, is to reduce the number of uncontrolled variables that are related to the particular kind of welfare to which certain countries belong to. In this case, indeed, they would be irrelevant and an obstacle to the goal of grasping the variation according to the independent variables of interest:

> 'the idea is to choose societies which have most features in common but which show variation among them in the independent variables whose effects are of interest. The hope is that the effects that are observed are those of the independent variables of interest and not of the uncontrolled variables.' (Pickvance, 2001, p. 14)

As Della Porta (2008) pointed out, this methodological choice is quite common among sociologists and political scientists, who often decide to limit cross-national comparisons to, by way of example, northern or southern European countries, which share 'historical traditions, cultural traits and economic development' (Della Porta, 2008, p. 214). Therefore,

this strategy allowed to investigate varieties among the two cases on the basis of city-specific features. The cases of Milan and Barcelona well met this need, by keeping the most significant possible number of "disturbing variables" under control. What follows give an overview of the common features taken into account for the case selection and which, according to the study of the literature previously conducted, can represent "confounding" elements. However, it must be added, for clarification, that *most-similar* does not mean identical. In this respect, as Pickvance (2001) nicely put it: 'it should be noted that comparative analysis requires the things being compared to be commensurable but not necessarily identical. Commensurable means that they can be placed at the same or different points on a dimension of theoretical interest' (p. 17).

Before addressing the similarities of the two cases at the municipal level, it is worth dwelling on what the broader systems in which they are situated have in common. In this respect, the two cities share several commonalities concerning their respective countries and regions. Indeed, as stressed in the first chapter, the strength and features of localisation processes and urban actions vary according to the different institutional arrangements and, consequently, distinctive nation-states. In particular, it has been highlighted how institutional arrangements are regionally framed both in Italy and Spain and how the process of regionalisation has been followed by deeper localisation processes, which contributed to strengthening the role of cities in the European scenario.

At the country-level, another commonality relates to the *welfare regime* the two countries belong to. The concept of welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1999, 1990; Ferrera 1996), on the other hand, is at the basis not only of comparative welfare state studies, but also of the comparative local welfare literature (Saraceno, 2004; Kazepov, 2010; Ranci, Brandsen and Sabatinelli, 2014b; Brandsen *et al.*, 2016). Spain and Italy, indeed, share the features of the southern European social model which, besides the stronger role the family and relational ties play in the provision of some social guarantees, relies on a dual system of social protection. This duality is created according to the position the individual has in the labour market, and this means that, if this system can guarantee proper levels of protection to some social groups, it leaves many others without sufficient levels of social safeguards.

In this context, young people are one of the social groups more exposed to social risks, and this has increased their state of social vulnerability, especially during the crisis and, more in general, with the emergence of new social risks. The NSRs, as outlined in the first chapter, includes the growing instability determined by labour market deregulation and, therefore, by the rise of temporary employment, involuntary part-time work and low-paid job in the absence of compensation mechanisms: a condition to which young people are particularly

exposed, as already said. As Walther (2006) stressed, both Spain and Italy stands for the *sub-protective regime* of youth transition, characterised by very incomplete and weak welfare for young people. Finally, it must also be noted that the belonging to the same welfare regime also entails a similar way of translating activation policies which, other being regionally framed in both cases, they are diversified but, at the same time, weakly implemented. Indeed, it has been already highlighted the irreducibility of activation to unique approaches (such as *workfare*) and the need to take into account the differences that profoundly matter among European countries and localities.

Furthermore, the regional dimension (*Lombardia* in Italy and *Cataluña* in Spain) must be taken on board since it affects urban trajectories. The understanding of entrepreneurship policies and their implications, indeed, cannot ignore some regional aspects that are pertinent to the study of entrepreneurship policies. Firstly, the peculiar industrial path of the 'third Italy', discussed in the first chapter and affecting the entrepreneurial culture in this area of the country, was not an isolated case in Europe. Similar economic development models were indeed unfolding elsewhere. In particular, scholars have stressed the relevance of this model in the *Comunidades autonomas* of Valencia and Cataluña (Boix and Galletto, 2008) and, in particular, in the area of Barcelona (Trullén, 2002; see also Andreotti and Benassi, 2014). More in general, the two regional contexts are similar in socio-economic terms. Being in a prosperous region, indeed, would not be the same that being in a poor one, this could indeed profoundly affect the way entrepreneurship policies are designed and implemented, as well as their social implications. The same applies to the localities in general. By way of example, Saraceno (2002) has well documented, through comparative research involving numerous cities in different northern and southern European Countries, the way poverty in Europe is influenced and vary according to specific local conditions. Social risks, in other words, have found to be dependent on specific localities and, in particular, on 'the local welfare culture, and also on the local economic, social and human capital resources. In other words, it depends on the specific demographic, economic, cultural and political features of the local society' (ibidem, p. 6).

As far as city-level similarities are concerned, firstly, it must be said that Milan and Barcelona share the same formal status[52]. They are indeed two cities and regional capitals (Milan for *Lombardia* and Barcelona for *Cataluña*) and represent central economic hubs (also financial in the case of Milan) for their respective countries. They also have similar demographic size, being two mid-sized cities. Moreover, they occupy a similar as well as

[52] In this respect, Schmitter (2008) suggests to 'select only units that were at the same level of aggregation and enjoyed the same formal status within the world social and political system' (p. 275).

important position in the European urban hierarchy, which also contributes to their relevance as case studies. Both cities present a diversified economy and employment structure, also marked by the growing weight of the service sector. Moreover, the development and the ongoing promotion of an innovative and knowledge-based economy has been relevant for these urban economies as well. These aspects will be better outlined in the next chapter, together with the rise of the 'youth question' also in these economically advanced contexts.

The efforts of these two cities in the development of a knowledge-based economy and innovation partly connect to a fundamental element of the comparison, which is the presence of the object of study. Both cities design and implement their employment-related policies by adopting an active approach and reserving a significant space within them to different kinds of entrepreneurship support, including innovative start-ups.

Finally, among these commonalities, an element of variation that has emerged from the literature has been considered as well. This relates to their model of local governance. Within the European project *Wilco-Welfare innovations at the local level in favour of cohesion*, Cottacin and Zimmerman (2016) identified four kinds of regimes[53] according to different relations between social and economic policies. According to their classification, Barcelona is characterised by a model defined as *governance of cooperation*, namely based on the synergies between economic and social challenges. It is true that, in Barcelona, quite high levels of citizens and social movements participation, as well as the democratisation of local government, went steadily along with the process of decentralisation and development of welfare services (Blakeley, 2005). By contrast, Milan is identified with a different model, defined as the *governance of social and economic challenges*, which refers to a more dominant role of economic interest in the relation between social and economic purposes, driven by the durable power of economic actors although a change has been observed in recent times (Costa et al. 2016).

[53] They are: a) governance of co-operation (examples are Amsterdam, Bern, Münster, Barcelona and Varaždin); b) governance of growth (examples are Pamplona, Dover and Birmingham); c) governance of social challenges (examples are Malmö, Stockholm, Geneva, Lille, Nantes, Nijmegen, Brescia, Zagreb, Warsaw and Plock); d) governance of social and economic challenges (examples are Berlin and Milan). Cities taken into account are the group of cities (20) involved in the research project Wilco (http://www.wilcoproject.eu/).

Table 1. A synoptic view of the features underpinning the selection of the cases

Country-level	Southern European welfare regime
	The sub-protective regime of youth transition
	Regional framed institutional arrangements
	Decentralised employment policies and services (but started only in the mid-1990s)
	Deregulation of the labour market without compensation and the resulting growth of precariousness and uncertainty
	A similar approach to active policies in a context of weak implementation
Regional-level	Favourable position in the wealthiest regions of their respective countries (Lombardia in Italy and Cataluña in Spain)
	The similar economic development model
City-level	Same formal status
	Size of the city
	Economic capitals
	A diversified economy and employment structure
	Youth question
	Presence of the object of study
	Variation in local models of governance

Source: author's elaboration

Data collection through qualitative interviews

Data has been collected in the period between January 2017 and May 2018. The primary technique employed has been the qualitative interview. The qualitative interview was considered to be the most appropriate technique since it allows the researcher not only to gather information but also to access, in depth, the perspective of individuals. This enables the understanding of the way specific social situations are defined (in this case, for instance, the way problems, objectives, needs are defined) or to grasp the motivations behind actions, perceptions and feelings (King, and Horrocks, 2010; Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Wengraf, 2001). It has therefore been selected for the data collection, notwithstanding and with the awareness of the particular obstacles that this kind of technique entails. First of all, these obstacles concern the difficulty in accessing the fieldwork and obtaining the consent to interviews and the time-consuming preparation and implementation that it requires. In this respect, Rathbun (2008) also raised the challenges of international comparisons, such as travelling vast distances – to which the higher difficulty of accessing the field in a different country from that of origin must be added – and investing in language training. In this case, I spent the whole first period in Barcelona to reach a level of Spanish such as to conduct interviews and transcribe and analyse them easily.

Moreover, semi-structured interviews have been preferred to structured (or close-ended) and open-ended interviews[54]. This kind of interviews, although foreseeing the use of an *interview guide*, give participants the opportunity to express their thoughts and tell their stories more freely, and to the researcher the chance to be flexible and more natural and to ask for further clarifications and insights. Ultimately, it allows deepening unexpected but interesting emerging aspects, thus reaching *serendipitous* outcomes. The interview guide contains a series of questions or – when the question wording is made in the field – the themes that will be made or treated during the interview (see the interviews guidelines in Appendix 1). However, not all questions or issues are listed, and their order is, from time to time, changed and adapted to the specific need of the interview. This way of proceeding to collect qualitative data has been well suited for the purposes of this research. More precisely, in the case of policy actors and expert interviews, conversations have been less structured and, thus, more flexible. The interview has been more structured with young people. However, also in their case, the structuring level, the order of questions and the question-wording changed a lot according to the times and rhythms of each conversation. In both cases, the main questions have been accompanied by *follow-up* and *probing* questions[55].

In order to give some food for thought and facilitate the expression of the more general point of view of young participants about entrepreneurship, visual stimuli were used at the end of the interviews. Considering that interviews had an average duration of one hour, it must be noted that the use of visual stimuli has also proved to be often useful not to dissipate, and even recover, the attention. Furthermore, interviews have been individual and face-to-face, although with some exceptions. In a few cases, especially with young people, interviews have been conducted with two people and, only in one case involving policy actors, with three people (see Appendix 2). However, two-persons interviews with young people did not assume the form of the focus group, given that participants maintained a prevalently individual perspective, probably as a result of the approach of the interview, that remained based on the personal experience.

Moreover, some interviews with young people have been mediated, namely conducted via video call (using skype) on request of participants (Appendix 2). Every interview that I did via Skype has been preceded by some doubts related to how this would have affected the interaction. However, at the end of each interview, I had to acknowledge not only the

[54] For details about the different types of qualitative interviews, please refer to (Sala, 2010) and (Corbetta, 2014)

[55] Follow-up questions are raised to react to an answer of an interviewee to deepen some elements or concepts emerged during the conversation, for instance: "*you mentioned x, what did you mean?*". Probing questions, instead, are type of questions raised with the aim of encouraging the continuation of the talking, such as "*okey*", "*I get it*", "*go ahead…*" (Sala, 2010, p. 94).

absence of any particular problems but also the way in which the conversation has immediately taken a relaxed tone. This can be probably attributed to the great familiarity that the young people I interviewed have with Skype as well as by some peculiar advantages of Skype calls (such as being comfortable for being home during the interview). I have therefore realised that give the opportunity to choose between a standard face-to-face interview and a video call can help in obtaining the interview and providing the chance to who feels more comfortable using this instrument to opt for this. Furthermore, interviews have been recorded through a digital audio recorder – with the prior consent of interviewee – with a view to transcribing them and therefore permitting their analysis. However, in two cases, interviewees did not give their consent to record (Appendix 2). In these two cases, notes have been taken during the conversation. Another important aspect to be mentioned is that interviews in Milan have been conducted in Italian, while interviews in Barcelona have been conducted in Castilian, this has allowed participants to use their mother tongue or, in just one case, the language more fluently spoken.

Finally, official documents produced by the two municipalities or other stakeholders have been used too as a fundamental source of information, especially for the case of Barcelona where the number of available documents was higher than in Milan and reports of the activities systematically published (Appendix 3).

Sampling strategy

Overall, sixty-five people have taken part in the research between Barcelona and Milan. The quantity of participants has not been "equally distributed" between the two cases. Indeed, twenty-one people participated in Barcelona. Of these, ten conversations have been had with young people, eight with policy actors and three with experts. In Milan, instead, participants have been forty-four in all. These are made up of twenty-four young people, seventeen policy actors and three people that have been interviewed as experts. However, it is worth noting that the conduction of interviews has been accompanied by the study of several official documents that, as Appendix 3 shows, relate to a greater extent to the case in Barcelona.

The vast difference in the size of samples stems from various reasons. Firstly, consistently with the rest of the research design, also the sampling methodology has been guided by a qualitative approach. Therefore, more than wondering what number of interviews should have been reached, the question deemed more appropriate has been whether further interviews would have been useful, by adding someone else that could provide a new

perspective. At that stage of the fieldwork research, i.e. after some months of fieldwork in Barcelona, however, adding new interviews appeared more like a simple problem of form, and not one of substance. In other words, the choice of closing the fieldwork (it must also be said, in this respect, that fieldwork has been carried out first in Milan and later in Barcelona) depended, first and foremost, on the 'theoretical saturation' of data (Glaser and Strauss, 2006 [1967], p. 61). The theoretical saturation means that additional data does not provide or provide very little new evidence. To this, it must be added that the samples in Barcelona are small but not too much, given that they are nevertheless characterised by the internal differences that, as Glaser and Strauss (2006) stressed, give a fundamental contribution to achieve the saturation point. About young people, in particular, it has been met the requirement of 'symbolic representation' since young participants, albeit few, have been able to both 'represent' and 'symbolise' the differences of relevance to the research (Ritchie et al., 2003, p. 116).

Moreover, practical factors need to be taken into account as well. The access to the field in the two contexts has been very different, and this has been not only due to higher difficulties – that exist – in accessing the fieldwork in a different country from that of origin. Indeed, on the one hand, this has depended on the specificities, that will be discussed in the next chapter, in the organisational arrangements of entrepreneurship support in the two cities, centred in Barcelona and fragmented in Milan. The fragmentation of entrepreneurship policies in Milan results in the broader constellation of involved actors. In this respect, it is also worth highlighting that the promotion of entrepreneurship was a very salient issue in the city of Milan, as far as I could observe during the fieldwork. The easiness of the access to the field bears witness to that. At some point, the sampling became a sort of snowball sampling, since many people I met gave me other contacts or put me in contact with other people. Some interviews were not in the plan at all, and they were particularly useful also to realise how meaningful was the engagement of different parts of the city in promoting entrepreneurship. On the other hand, probably also due to the more centralised and formalised structure that is present in Barcelona, the availability of relevant and detailed documents has been higher in the Catalan capital. These represented an essential complement for interviews.

Another element to consider is the different type of support young people received in the two cities and the availability, in the case of Milan, of a list of beneficiaries of the municipal support (provided by the Municipality for this research). This point will be addressed in a moment together with the details about sampling methodologies that have been adopted. Before dealing with that, however, it should also be pointed out a final aspect, namely the

higher difficulties in analysing in depth too large samples. In this respect, Ritchie et al. (2003) stressed how qualitative samples are relatively small precisely to allow, as has been said for the case-study method, the in-depth investigation of a given social phenomenon (p. 112). Having said this, there remains to be highlighted the way and by what means participants have been chosen.

As usual in qualitative studies (Ritchie et al., 2003; Palys, 2008), this research adopts a *non-probability sample* strategy. The latter does not pretend to satisfy the criteria of statistical representativeness, and it implies that the characteristics of the individuals are not only known to the researcher but are even at the basis of their selection. The criteria at the basis of the sampling strategy can be, by way of example, certain socio-demographic features, the specific role covered, or some lived experiences. This is what mostly contribute to making this technique more suitable for qualitative studies: when characteristics have the priority, a probability sampling can constitute a significant limitation. More precisely, the *criteria-based* or, as is more commonly defined, *purposive sampling* strategy has been chosen among the various approaches composing the set of non-probability sampling techniques. As Ritchie et al. (2003) explain:

> 'Purposive sampling is precisely what the name suggests. Members of a sample are chosen with a 'purpose' – to represent a type in relation to key criterion. This has two principal aims. The first is to ensure that all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered. The second is to ensure that, within each of the key criteria, enough diversity is included so that the impact of the characteristic concerned can be explored' (p. 113)

The *purpose sampling* is, in turn, composed of several specific typologies (see Ritchie et al., 2003; Palys, 2008; Corbetta, 2014). For the purposes of this study, it has been employed a *stakeholder sampling*, although some interviews have also been conducted with experts as well (Appendix 2). The stakeholder sampling is particularly appropriate when policies constitute the object of study, since it 'involves identifying who the major stakeholders are who are involved in designing, giving, receiving, or administering the programme or service being evaluated, and who might otherwise be affected by it' (Palys, 2008, p. 697). Specifically, within the frame made by the stakeholder sampling, it has been applied a *stratified* logic. According to Ritchie and his colleagues (2003), the *stratified purposive sampling* constitutes 'a hybrid approach in which the aim is to select groups that display variation on a particular phenomenon but each of which is fairly homogenous, so that subgroups can be compared' (p. 114). Therefore, the sample displays a variation based on different programmes or projects activated by two municipalities. As far as the selection of young people is concerned, there are different subgroups on the basis of the different programmes or projects but within a larger group that is 'fairly homogeneous' (ivi) and made by young people up to thirty-five

years of age that received the municipal support for starting their business organizations. This age limit has been set taking into consideration the delayed transition to adulthood that especially characterizes young people in Southern contexts. In this respect, it must be said that an interview has been conducted with a man who was aged 38 years old at the moment of the interview, in Milan, who positively answered to my request for interview that I had sent via email to the list made available by the Municipality, although I had specified that study participants should be aged up to 35 since he considered himself 'still young'. I decided to be flexible and maintain this interview since, on the other hand, I found not many differences with other interviewees aged 33-35, given that most of them show a protracted transition to adulthood (by way of example, like the others, he is still building his vocational stability and identity). In this respect, it must also be noted that the decision to establish a business often can imply a further postponement of transition to adulthood. Roberto, 33-year-old-man (Milan), by way of example, decided postponing leaving the parental home to develop his entrepreneurial project.

Moreover, it must be pointed out that more recent experiences have been privileged for two main intertwined reasons. The first relates to the intent of including the *nascent entrepreneurs*, who do not need to remember the first phases of their experiences because they are living them at the moment. The second one concern the higher risks, by going back in time, to have impressions too much filtered by the way things ended ("success" or "failure"). On the other hand, here the aim is not to evaluate these policies nor to claim that a good policy of this kind necessarily ends with successful cases of business. Therefore, the reference period that has been taken into account has been from 2012 (maximum) to the most recent time (2017/2018), although I have adopted a flexible approach in this case as well. I, therefore, decided to maintain the interview with Raúl, interviewed in Barcelona, who started his project in 2008; his words explain why, he told me: "I still consider that I have a start-up, although I passed the start-up phase years ago. (...) The truth is that my company is still under construction'.

With respect to the way I get in contact with the interviewees, I have to say that the selection of young people presented more challenges in comparison to the identification of reference people for specific programmes or projects. For the latter, I employed a quite standard way of proceeding: after having identified the actions undertaken by the two municipalities, the department (Milan) or institution (Barcelona) or organizations of reference have been contacted via email. Experts have been reached by asking contacts to these participants or finding their email contacts online, when available. Moreover, it sometimes has happened that interviewees put me in contact with other people as well.

As far as young people are concerned, the concrete strategy that has been employed is the following. In Milan, it must be first said the Department for Urban Economy and Employment of the Municipality of Milan provided a list of all programmes and projects carried out since 2012 with the relative list of recipients and contacts. However, the list has been used to get in contact with beneficiaries, and try to include other participants, only in the second time of the fieldwork research and when almost all interviews had already been conducted. Due to time-constraints, indeed, I preferred to autonomously track down the young beneficiaries without waiting for this list that, nonetheless, when has been received, has been used to send a very brief questionnaire to both better understand the social composition of some programmes and try to get in contact with new potential young participants. The brief survey – elaborated and sent via Google Forms – asked for the following information: gender, age, nationality, educational level, occupational status before starting the entrepreneurial project, the juridical form of the enterprise, typology of enterprise and business sector, and finally the request to further contribute to the research through participation to an interview (by leaving an email or telephone contact in the space provided).

The access to the field in Milan has been relatively easy also without the lists that, it must be stressed, it has been used only at a second time. This has been due, on the one hand, to some transparency tools used by the Municipality, such as the publication of the list of beneficiaries or supported enterprise of the majority (not all) of the programmes, and the websites of incubators dedicating some spaces to the presentation of all accompanied start-ups. In this respect, it must be taken into account that, in contrast to what happens in Barcelona[56], the majority of actions of the Municipality of Milan foresee some economic incentives. This entails a greater necessity for transparency and the need to publicly announce who are the "winners" of these incentives. This has undoubtedly and enormously facilitated access to the field, thus contributing to explain the differences in samples size as well. However, no contacts were available in these lists. Therefore, when the name of the enterprise was available, I searched for the email contact on google and contacted them via email. In some cases, social networks (such as Facebook or LinkedIn) have also been used to get in touch with these people. In other cases, important contacts have been provided directly from some of the interviewee (e.g. Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano in Milan and a

[56] As will be highlighted in the next chapter, the Municipality of Barcelona provides support mainly through personal assistance, coaching services, information, in some case organizational support by providing access to coworking spaces and other facilities. These services reach a quite large audience and, if innovative start-ups are advertised and some space is dedicated to them in the official website, the same is not valid for all other beneficiaries of this kind of support which, it must be stressed again, reach a very wide audience (see Chapter IV).

person responsible for the programme *Idees Amb Futur* in Barcelona gave me some contacts of under 35 young people they supported). Participants in Barcelona as well have been contacted via email. In particular, besides the contacts provided by a person responsible for the programme *Idees Amb Futur*, eighty-two enterprises have been contacted at the email addresses (not all valid) available in the *Barcelona Start-up Map*[57] between November and December 2017.

Finally, it must also be taken into account that since it was not possible to trace back the age of participants from available lists, both in Milan and Barcelona have been sent emails to all available addresses. In these emails, it has been specified the object and general purposes of the research and interviews, and it has been asked for the participation of only under-35 founders of the enterprise or under 35 winners (at the time when the support was received) of the specific programme they attended.

III. The interpretational qualitative data analysis

The data analysis is a crucial step in qualitative researches, characterised by not a few difficulties. These problems relate to what Tesch (1990) referred to as the 'mechanics of qualitative analysis', to mean the combination of 'hand work' and intellectual effort that qualitative analysis requires (p. 113). The latter entails the organisation[58] and interpretation of a complex and dense set of collected data: two moments that some methodologists treat separately, but that in practice result more often done simultaneously and enclosed in the concept of 'analysis' (Tesch, 1990). Overall, no standard procedure can be applied to qualitative data analysis (from now on "QDA") which is, by definition, a non-standard methodology. However, although adopted in a flexible way, some technique of analysis has been of relevant help in managing the vast amount of texts that usually is produced when conducting qualitative studies.

Amongst the different types of qualitative analysis of data, the choice was made to employ the thematic analysis through the support of NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software that allows to organise, analyse and visualise qualitative data. The thematic analysis is a 'widely

[57] The *Barcelona Startup Map* is a map of start-ups, incubators, investors and other actors that for part of the 'entrepreneurial ecosystem of Barcelona'. It is the result of a public-private partnership led by Barcelona Activa and MarsBased and it has been supported by the *Generalitat de Catalunya* and by the European Regional Development Fund. It is available at: http://w153.bcn.cat/#/explore (latest access: September 2018).

[58] The organization includes the transcription of interviews. This activity has been done by me mainly due to limited available resources for this scope. Moreover, the transcription of interviews has been integral, to avoid selectivity-related risks. Although very time-consuming, this activity has been useful to start reflecting upon collected data and take notes of emerging themes.

used' approach and it 'involves discovering, interpreting and reporting patterns and clusters of meaning within the data' (Spencer *et al.*, 2014, p. 271). In more practical terms, it consists in the process of systematic segmentation of collected data in micro topics, also called meaning units, which are then unified in codes or 'higher-order key themes' (or *code*) (ivi). These two moments have been well defined by Tesch (1990) as 'de-contextualising' and 're-contextualising' processes. In a nutshell, what has been done for the data analysis of this research – and following this approach – has been to, firstly, segment into small parts of our data. This has been done by focusing on the substantive aspects of data (texts) and selecting *meaning units*. A meaning unit is a 'segment of text', no matter how long, 'that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode, or piece of information' (ibidem, p. 116). This segment is separated from the text or de-contextualised from its original context: in this case, the interview. Having done that, the segment is re-contextualised within a cluster of meanings (the code). This procedure of *meaning-making* can be carried out by using two types of approaches: the deductive approach, when theory-derived concepts or themes are searched in the text, and the inductive approach, when concepts or themes are derived from – or grounded in – the data. This means that themes already defined before accessing the field, thus using the theory to interrogate and problematize some aspects of data, are combined with those themes emerged from collected data. In this case, collected data have been examined through a mixed method approach, also used for *coding*. Indeed, each pool of meanings generates, in turn, one or more 'coding units' (here micro-themes) then connected, or re-contextualised in concepts or categories (here macro-themes) 'representing one pool of meanings' (Tesch, 1990, p. 122). Codes represent the labels attached to coding units, they are mutually exclusive and cover all data. Therefore, no data are left without a code. The pieces of interviews with no apparent significance for the study have been coded as 'uncoded data'. In this way, it is always possible to visualize all parts of interviews that have not been coded in another moment, to verify and be sure that no significant information has been lost. What follows are the theme-based coding schemes that resulted from the analysis. To read the following schemes, it is worth noting a few things. The first is that it has been maintained the terminology of the software Nvivo which name the 'codes' as 'nodes'. In the schemes below, macro-themes (theme *nodes*) are those in capital letters. These have been divided into subthemes. Sometimes there are articulated in more details and, thus, subdivided into micro-themes (*child nodes* in Nvivo). Moreover, the column 'files' refers to the number of interviews in which the specific node is present, the column 'references' instead refer to the number of single units that belongs to one or more interviews and that have been labelled within that specific node.

Table 2. Coding structure for stakeholders' interviews in Barcelona

Names of thematic *nodes* and *child nodes*	Files	References
A 'FAVOURABLE' CONTEXT	0	0
The inherent entrepreneurial culture	2	3
An active city	2	3
Business-friendly and attractive context	1	1
A plural economy	2	2
CITY RENAISSANCE: POLICY ORIGINS	0	0
Dealing with the socio-economic crisis	1	3
Urban entrepreneurialism	3	7
Strong political leadership	1	1
New vision based on economic-employment policy integration	2	2
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BARCELONA ACTIVA	0	0
A stable and innovative entity	3	4
A European best practice	3	3
PROBLEMS DEFINITION	0	0
Some groups have more difficulties in establishing a business	1	1
Lack of a specific education	2	4
Youth question	3	5
Low-quality jobs and unemployment	2	5
CONVINCTIONS AND VIEWS	0	0
Quantum leap in entrepreneurship	2	5
Young people are more interested in entrepreneurship	2	2
For self-fulfilment reasons	1	2
For the absence of better alternatives	1	1
Start a business is easier and cheaper	2	4
Willpower and right choices matter	2	3
But not costless	3	4
Decreasing job opportunities	1	1
Education for entrepreneurship ever more important	3	3
OBJECTIVES	0	0
Boost economic development	2	2
Attractiveness	2	4
Innovation	3	5
Competitiveness	1	1
Proximity economy and endogenous growth	1	2
Include	5	10

Increase awareness of self-employment as a possible alternative	1	1
Self-employment support	4	6
Educate and train	5	12
Entrepreneurial skills for employability	2	4
Abilities and competences	4	6
Manage responsibilities	1	3
Manage risks	2	4
Negotiate and network	2	2
Self-esteem and motivation	2	3
Technical knowledge	3	5
Promote direct and indirect job creation	2	2
Support not subsidise	2	3
Boost the social and solidarity economy	1	2
ROLE OF PUBLIC ACTION	0	0
Accompany entrepreneurs and their projects	7	15
Make a selection	2	9
Govern	0	0
Gradually shift the focus towards 'another economy'	5	23
Political and institutional legacies	2	7
Reduce individual risk-taking	5	16
SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF RECIPIENTS	0	0
Heterogeneity	3	6
Groups getting special attention	3	5
Vulnerable groups	3	5
Young People	5	5
Prevalence of young adults	2	2
Medium-high educational levels	2	2
Importance of family of origin	1	3
Resistances towards entrepreneurship	3	9
Higher innovation propensity	2	3
Higher risk propensity	1	1
Worried especially by taxation and financing issues	3	4
PUBLIC-CENTRED GOVERNANCE	1	3
Economic Resources	8	11
Generalitat (Region)	2	2
EU	5	6
National government (marginal role)	1	1
Municipality	7	8

Public-private partnership	3	4
EU influence and recognition	4	6
Tendency to centralize	1	3
UNCODED DATA	3	8

Table 3. Coding structure for stakeholders' interview in Milan

Names of *thematic nodes* and *child nodes*	Files	References
CONTEXT		
An active and future-oriented city	4	8
Vivid entrepreneurial and start-up culture	5	5
CONVICTIONS AND VIEWS		
Growing public attention	0	0
Policies	2	2
Increasing social acceptation	1	1
Educational system	1	2
Entrepreneurial skills for employability	1	1
Young people are increasingly attracted by entrepreneurship	6	9
For belonging-related reasons	4	4
To have more freedom and autonomy	2	2
For passion and opportunity reasons	3	4
Higher propensity to take risks	2	2
Due to the spread of a new mentality	2	3
Influence of the start-up discourse	1	1
Entrepreneurship is more accessible than in the past	0	0
Willpower and competences matters	2	2
Start a business is easier and cheaper	4	5
PROBLEMS		
Labour-related problems and changes	12	22
Lack of alternatives	4	5
Youth question	7	10
Lack of necessary skills	6	9
Risks of necessity entrepreneurship	3	4
Difficulties in starting a business	4	7
OBJECTIVES		
Combine activation with economic development policies	5	9

Revitalise peripheries	4	5
Support innovation	2	3
Support (self)activation to boost urban economy	5	8
Growth and attractiveness	2	3
Policy Innovation	4	7
'Innovate to include'	4	5
Self-entrepreneurship support	6	11
Promote active welfare (FWA)	2	3
Educate and train	5	11
Entrepreneurial skills for employability	2	2
Increase awareness of self-employment as a possible alternative	6	9
Promote entrepreneurial culture	1	1
Abilities and competences	3	3
Develop a supportive environment	4	10
Accompany	5	15
Incentivise	5	6
ROLE OF PUBLIC ACTION		
Unify differences	7	11
Transversality of entrepreneurship promotion	4	5
Accompany labour-economic changes	6	9
'Pander the spirit of the private'	3	4
Govern	0	0
Make a selection	6	10
Reduce individual risk-taking	1	1
SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF RECIPIENTS		
Heterogeneity	4	8
Groups getting special attention	2	2
Vulnerable groups	6	12
Young People	4	7
Prevalence of young adults	5	5
Medium-high educational levels	2	3
Low educational level (microcredit)	1	1
Resistances towards entrepreneurship	4	5
Importance of family support	2	2
FRAGMENTED BUT SOLID GOVERNANCE		
Engagement of a plurality of actors	9	18
Delegation to the private	3	6
Public-centred (FWA)	1	1

Economic Resources	0	0
National government	3	4
EU	4	6
Local resources	2	3
Municipality	1	3
UNCODED DATA	11	38

Table 4. Coding structure for young people in Milan and Barcelona

Names of ***thematic nodes*** and ***child nodes***	Files	References
ENTREPRENEURSHIP		
Meanings attached to START-UP	0	0
Separated from innovation	1	2
Source of innovation	2	6
A socio-economic bubble	15	37
Larger scale	1	1
A product itself and oriented to investors	11	19
Contemporary culture	14	23
Not a 'real' and serious thing	4	5
Something in constant change	2	3
Not an alternative to employment	1	1
Urban phenomena	1	1
Growing relevant and attractive	13	23
Scepticism about its growing attractiveness	7	7
'STOP AND THINK'_INFLUENCING CIRCUMSTANCES AND EXPECTATIONS		
Job loss	2	3
Precarity	7	12
Work-related malaise	9	19
Scant alternatives	8	31
Public support	5	6
Meetings	7	8
Education	2	4
Fruitful work experience	3	5
Ambition-Passion-Aspirations	16	31
Refusal of standard job	16	31
To build coherent and good trajectories	14	37
Political-Environmental consciousness	5	7

Reduction of opportunity-cost	15	28
PUBLIC SUPPORT		
Opportunity	7	26
Relevant-Trigger	11	35
Complement	7	21
Financial inclusion	8	14
Important	9	22
Marginal relevance	6	12
General. Rhetoric and political return	5	9
INDIVIDUALIZATION		
The utility of redistribution and welfare	1	1
The 'cumbersome' State	10	17
Enterprise as Social and Political Commitment	5	20
Varied daily work (no sameness)	10	13
Valorization and development of new skills	7	14
Personal achievement or growth	13	21
Satisfaction	9	13
Self-expression	13	20
Individual risk-taking	15	31
Entrepreneurial Mindset-Capacities	15	36
Voluntarism	17	28
Self-responsibilization	27	73
'STRUCTURAL' RESOURCES AND ALTERNATIVES		
Economic Capital	27	69
Human Capital	28	96
Social Capital	24	53
'Urban capital'	6	14
Family	0	0
Moral support	14	18
Presence of other entrepreneurs-self employed	17	31
No other entrepreneurs	10	11
Link with the family's enterprise	2	7
Spousal assistance	6	9
No support	3	9
Economic support	13	19
PERSONAL CAPACITIES AND RESOURCES		
Capacity to wait and persist	22	51
Capacity to take risks	11	14

Capacity to look for alternatives to standard paths	15	21
The 'entrepreneurial spirit'	4	11
Capacity to reflect upon personal abilities	13	22
Capacity to catch opportunities	19	38
Capacity to recognize business opportunities	9	12
Capacity to externalise and strategize risks	15	38
Coping capacity	15	44
PROBLEMS-BARRIERS		
Insecurity	5	7
Lack of public and private investments	5	11
Over-representation of digital businesses	4	5
UNCODED	24	62

CHAPTER IV

'ACCOMPANY' OR 'GOVERN' ONGOING TRENDS? THE ROLE OF POLITICS, GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL LEGACIES

In the light of the broader purpose to investigate the strength of both convergence and divergence trends in local public actions, this chapter aims to answer the first of the two main research questions. Hence, it interrogates the fieldwork materials in order to contribute to explore the ways local policy actors interpret, invalidate or reproduce the mainstream approach to entrepreneurship support policies and what local factors contribute to shaping locally specific approaches, if any. Once outlined the socio-economic and institutional structures of constraints and opportunities in which municipal entrepreneurship support policies are embedded, it develops an in-depth analysis of key dimensions and values informing and shaping local policy choices, by paying attention to the tensions they embody as well. In particular, the analysis concentrates on the following policy aspects: origins, the definition of problems, objectives, measures and instruments, target groups and governance arrangements.

I. Barcelona and Milan between constraints and opportunities

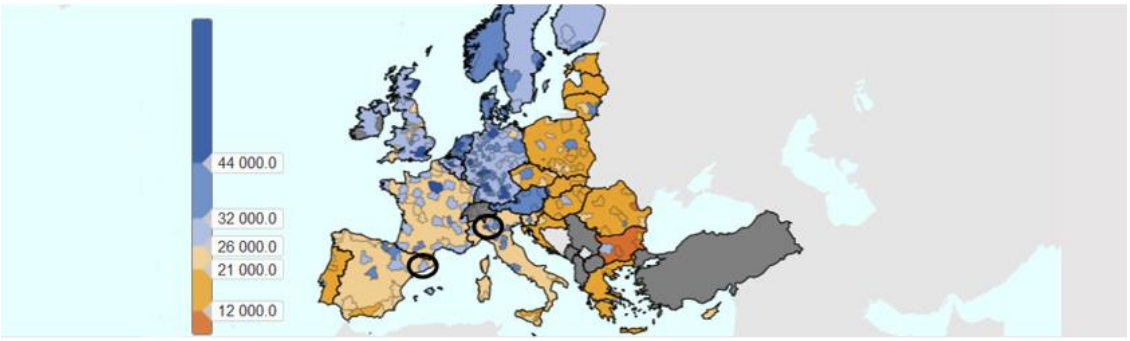
The socio-economic contexts of two European cities

Milan and Barcelona are mid-sized cities, with a population of around 1,300,000 and 1,600,000 people, and capitals, respectively, of the Lombardy region (*Lombardia*) and the autonomous community of Catalonia (*Catalunya*). Despite the crisis, both cities managed to maintain their role of economic centres for their respective countries and regions, and, as their position in the ranking produced by the Globalization and World Cities Research Network shows, their relevance as nodes of the international economy as well (GaWC, 2018). Like other European cities, they are able to exploit peculiar economic advantages, such as

those offered by innovation, specialisation and privileged access to local and international markets. Consequently, like other major cities in Europe, they outperform their countries with respect to several dimensions, such as economic growth, employment trends, educational attainments and innovation levels. It follows from this that they are increasingly recognized as a source of economic and social potentialities, which make them particularly attractive for working-age people and, in particular, for young people (Garcia and Degen, 2008; European Union, 2016).

Despite the negative impact the financial crisis had on the economic growth both in Milan and Barcelona, by inverting the positive trends experienced between 2000 and 2007, the growth has picked up since 2015 in both cities and, overall, their levels of GDP per inhabitants remains relatively high (Figure 6). In 2016, Barcelona's GDP was 43,5 million of euro per inhabitant, representing 31% of total Catalunya's GDP. The Barcelonès, the most important comarca (county) of Catalunya produced in the same year the 36% of total Catalunya's GDP (source: Idescat). The province of Milan has grown as well, and, in the same year, the GDP was 46,6 million of euro per inhabitant, the most important of the whole region (source: ASR Lombardia[59]).

Figure 6. GDP at current market prices by metropolitan regions in Europe (2015)



Source: Eurostat, Regions and Cities Illustrated (RCI) database

These performances rely on two important and diversified local production systems. The still ongoing restructuring processes of their past industrial development model, indeed, have led to the emergence of a diversified economy, accompanied by some specializations and the expansion of services. Milan, a historic industrial city, constitutes Italy's economic and financial centre. It hosts the Italian stock exchange, one the largest in Europe, and it is characterized by a diversified economy, with a solid specialization in the creative and cultural sectors (especially fashion, design, advertising, entertainment, publishing). The city is

[59] ASR Lombardia is a source of regional dataset resulting from the collaboration between the Lombardy Region (Regione Lombardia), *Union Camere*, an organization that brings together and represent all local chambers of commerce, and Istat, the talian National Institute of Statistics.

internationally recognised as a fashion and design capital and it hosts very important events and fairs related to these economies (i.e. Milan Fashion Week, Salone Internazionale del Mobile). The Chamber of Commerce of Milan had a crucial role in promoting these areas of specialization, while in particular the Lombardy Region and the metropolitan city (the former *provincia*) have engaged in the promotion of innovation and knowledge-based economy. A goal that, nonetheless, seems to have been undermined for a long time by the lack of a long-term plan and immature governance arrangements characterised by 'flagship projects' (Mugnano, Murphy and Martin-Brelot, 2010, p. 254). However, during the last year, sustained especially by the World's Fair *Expo* in 2015 and new public policies (discussed throughout this chapter), Milan consolidated as the largest of Italy's *start-up hubs*.

In Barcelona, urban renewal played a peculiar role in the local productive system. The Olympic game of 1992 gave rise to profound physical and socio-economic transformation, determining both the high relevance of the building sector and the expansion of the service economy, especially related to tourism, culture and knowledge-based services, which become the targets of city's economic specialisation (Crossa, Pareja-Eastaway and Barber, 2010; Pareja-Eastaway and Pradel, 2015). The 22@ project is a good illustration of the effort the city made to foster innovation and a knowledge-based economy. Also known as *Distrito 22@* and *22@Barcelona*, this is a project of urban, economic and social renovation of the old industrial and working-class neighbourhood of *Poblenou* (the 'Catalan Manchester'). This has been put forward as 'an important scientific, technologic and cultural platform transforming Barcelona into one of the most dynamic and innovative cities throughout the world'[60]. It, therefore, emphasised innovation and knowledge as core dimensions of a new model of competitiveness, around which a new (with respect to that of Olympic games) collective effort has been made. Indeed:

> '22@Barcelona district integrates the different agents constituting the system of innovation – cutting edge companies, universities and training centres, and centres of research and transfer of technology – with different agents of promotion that facilitate interaction and communication among them'.[61]

Barcelona has in this way developed a dynamic 'start-up ecosystem'[62] as well, namely a vivid and supporting environment for newly established enterprises that are active mainly in mobile, e-commerce, gaming and the like. Barcelona has also acquired the title of Mobile

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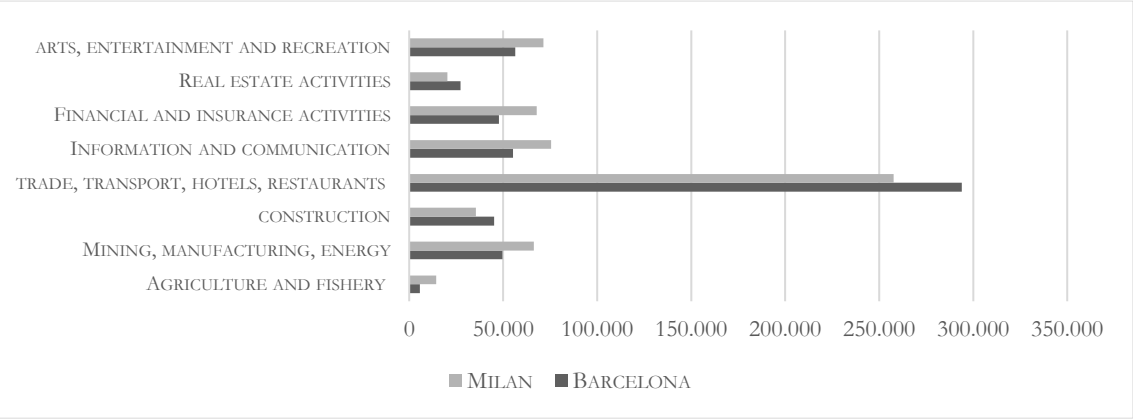
[60] Source: http://www.22barcelona.com/content/blogcategory/27/391/lang,en/ (latest access: October 2018).

[61] Source: http://www.22barcelona.com/content/blogcategory/51/421/lang,en/ (latest access: October 2018).

[62] See in this regard the Barcelona Start-up Map: http://w153.bcn.cat/#/.

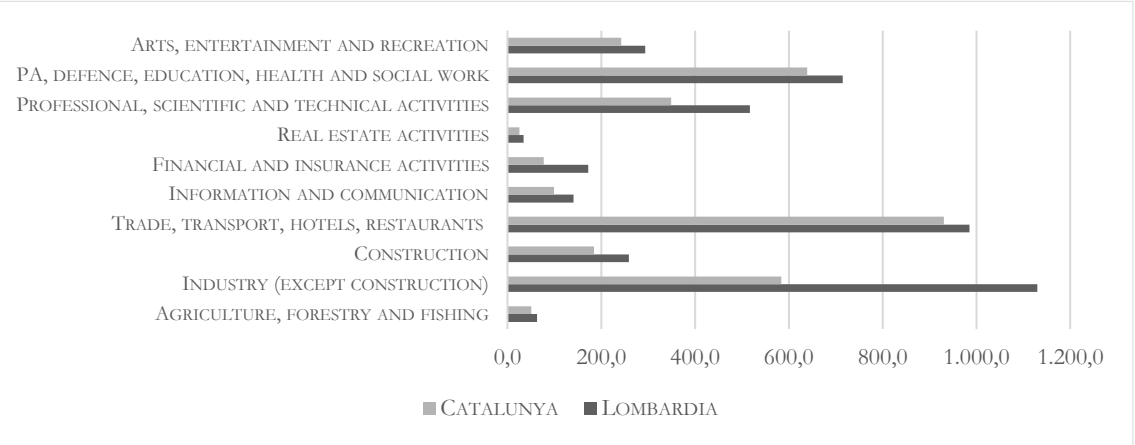
World Capital since it hosts the World Mobile Congress, an international meeting connecting entrepreneurs engaged with ICT-related activities. In this respect, both cities are very active, with numerous centres and 'incubators' – public and/or private – of innovation that also contributed to the physical regeneration of old industrial sites and neighbourhood, that is very powerful from a symbolic point of view as well. The features of contemporary urban economies, however, are not reducible to a few dimensions. Cucca and Maestripieri (2017) have recently analysed the main characteristics of post-Fordist trajectories of a number of European cities, including Barcelona and Milan. In their study, based on Eurostat data, they shed light on the diversity of these urban economies, by highlighting also the strong significance of traditional or non-advanced sectors in both local production systems, which are often accompanied by the problem of low-quality employment (see also Sassen, 2000). Urban economies are therefore complex and heterogeneous systems where different economic sectors and employment structures coexist. As Figure 7 and Figure 8 show, in fact, both at the city and regional levels, the larger number of jobs concentrates in trade, transport, hotel and restaurants, where the incidence of part-time jobs, low-wages, insecurity and, in general, less favourable working conditions are commonly higher compared to other service industries (especially finance, public administration and real estate, generally characterised by the most favourable working conditions) and the goods-producing sector (OECD, 2001).

Figure 7. Employment (jobs) by sector in the cities of Milan and Barcelona (2016)



Source: Urban Audit, Eurostat, Labour Market Database

Figure 8. Employment (jobs) by sector in Catalunya and Lombardia (age 15-74, 2016)



Source: Eurostat, Regional Labour Market Statistics

As discussed in the second chapter of the thesis, the expansion of the service sector had raised a number of issues. On the one hand, a problem relates to its consequences on social and economic inequalities. The growth of the socio-economic divide is a cause for significant concern across and within Europe (OECD, 2017). With regard to the territorial scopes of this research, a recent report by Éupolis Lombardia (2017, p. 209) has shown that the city of Milan has the highest levels of inequalities, based on the Palma ratio, compared with other Lombardy's cities. The latter is a measure of inequality that compares the total income of the wealthiest 10% of the population with that of the poorest 40%. In Milan, the income of wealthiest households is four times higher than that of the poorest families, whereas in other administrative subdivisions this proportion range from 1,53 to 1,90 times.

In Barcelona levels of inequalities are significant as well. The *Departament d'Estadística i Difusió de Dades* of the Barcelona City Council (based on data from *Institut d'Estadística de Catalunya. Enquesta de condicions de vida*) uses both the Gini index and the S80/S20 ratio to measure inequalities[63]. According to data they provide, in 2017, in Barcelona, the richest population had a total income that was 4,9 (without imputed rent) times higher than the poorest 20%, whereas the Gini index was 29,1. In Spain, in the same year, the Gini Index was 34,1 and the S80/S20 was 6,6 (source: Idescat). This seems to support the argument discussed in Chapter I, according to which cities face growing problem in assuring the fair distribution of the wealth produced by economic growth, which is what inform the various recommendations to support inclusive growth through inclusive policy strategies.

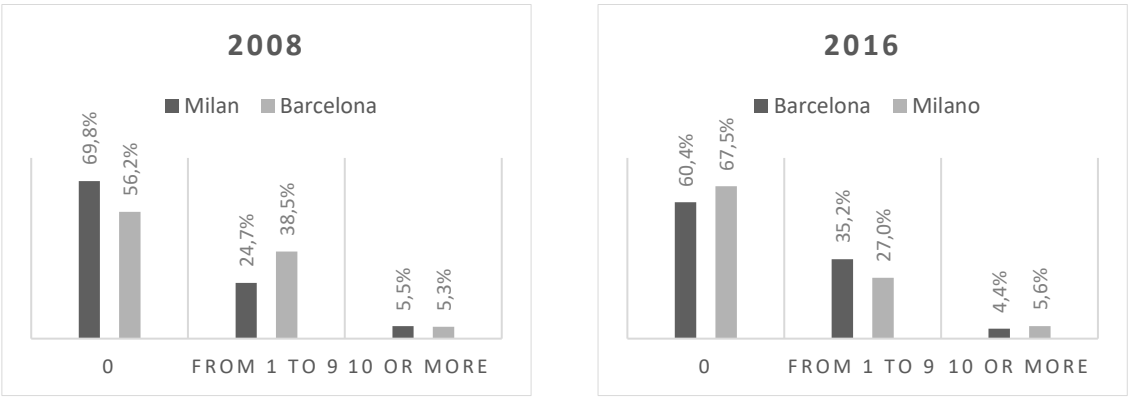
[63] The S80/S20 compares the total income held by 20 % of the richest persons to that held by 20% of the poorest persons.

On the other hand, tertiarization influenced the lowering of barriers to (self)entrepreneurship that has increased in both advanced and non-advanced services (Chapter II). This has impacts also on the size – measured in terms of the number of persons employed – of active and nascent enterprises, that is overall lower than in other sectors. As Figure 9 shows, both in Catalunya and Lombardia, the birth rates of enterprises with zero employees is the main component of the total birth rates and has even grown in recent years.

Figure 9. Business birth rate* by size class in Catalunya and Lombardia

Source: Eurostat, Regional Business Demography Statistics.
*Number of enterprise births in the reference period (t) divided by the number of enterprises active in t – percentage (related to industry, construction and services except for insurance activities of holding companies).

Figure 10. Active enterprises by size class in Barcelona and Milano (NUTS 3, % on total)



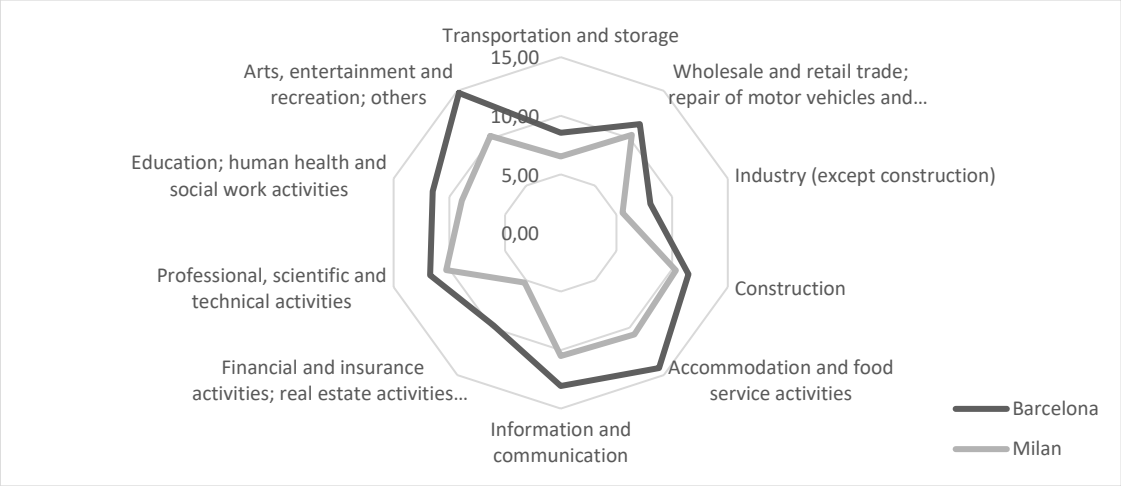
Source: Eurostat, Regional Business Demography Statistics.

The percentage of active enterprises with zero employees was also predominant in the business demography of Milan and Barcelona in 2008 as well as in 2016 (Figure 10). Moreover, these data show that this percentage is even increased in Milan. This tendency was highlighted by the Chamber of Commerce of Milan already in 2008, by stressing the relevance of the interplay between local peculiarities, i.e. the culture and social recognition of '*mettersi in proprio*' (Eng. starting one's own business), and processes of tertiarization,

including the emergence of new 'creative professionals' (Camera di Commercio di Milano, 2008).

Figure 11 provides a beneficial and quite complete picture of the composition of business birth rates in Milan and Barcelona. It shows that, in 2016, birth rates were especially high in sectors such as arts, entertainment and recreation, ICT, but also accommodation and food service activities.

Figure 11. The business birth rate in Milan and Barcelona (NUTS 3) by sectors in 2016



Source: Eurostat, Regional Business Demography Statistics.
*Number of enterprise births in the reference period (t) divided by the number of enterprises active in t – percentage

This picture is useful since from it, other than in the light of the above, can be drawn some contextual points that are extremely useful for this study: a) new businesses arise in very diverse economic fields and, in particular, in both advanced and not-advanced sectors; b) the expansion of services has increased economic opportunities and, perhaps, new opportunities for social promotion and/or of strengthening individual coping strategies based on (self)entrepreneurship (that however interact with the inequalities that services incorporate); c) there is not a specific front line sector, despite what some rhetoric seems to suggest, and research has to deal with the socio-economic complexity of urban economies and, therefore, of entrepreneurship features. With respect to this last point, moreover, it must also be highlighted that the diverse economic fields in which new businesses operate entail the existence of diverse people and experiences as well. This social heterogeneity is in front of both increasing opportunities – especially vivid, as we have already stressed – in urban contexts, but also with growing problems and risks. Reference has been already made to the increase in social inequalities. Another critical question concerns youth labour market problems, that currently represent one of the most critical problems throughout Europe and

one of the major premises of youth entrepreneurship incentive policies (European Commission, 2012; OECD/European Union, 2017).

In this respect, it should be highlighted that the crisis had severe effects on the most vulnerable European population and countries. Young people in southern Europe, in particular, have been among those who most suffered from the effects of the economic and financial crisis. Although to a lesser extent, also economically dynamic urban contexts such as those of Milan and Barcelona have seen unemployment and NEETs rates increase significantly since 2008, to reach the pick in 2014 (Table 7 and 8; Figure 12).

Table 5. Unemployment rates by age in 2008, 2014, 2017 (%)

	15-24			25-34			Total		
	2008	**2014**	**2017**	**2008**	**2014**	**2017**	**2008**	**2014**	**2017**
Milan*	14,0	34,1	26,6	4,4	11,1	9,1	3,8	8,4	6,5
Lombardy	12,3	31,2	22,9	4,1	10,0	8,0	3,7	8,2	6,4
Italy	21,2	42,7	34,7	8,9	18,6	17,0	6,7	12,7	11,2

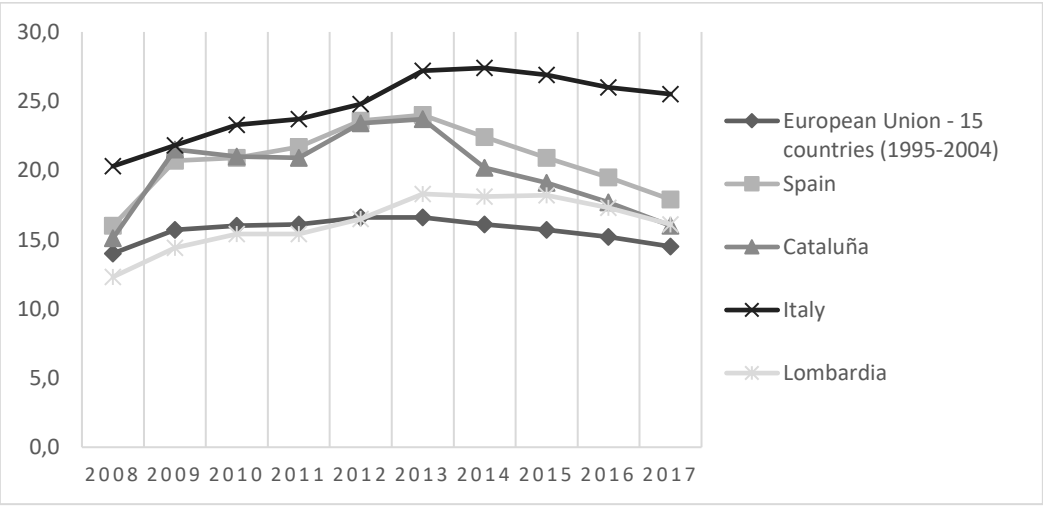
*Metropolitan area
Source: Istat

Table 6. Unemployment rates by age in 2008, 2014, 2017 (%)

	20-24			25-54			Total		
	2008	**2014**	**2017**	**2008**	**2014**	**2017**	**2008**	**2014**	**2017**
Barcelona*	22,0	39,9	27,4	6,6	15,9	9,9	8,6	20,0	13,1
Catalunya	15,9	44,0	26,9	8,1	18,3	11,8	8,9	20,3	13,4
Spain	20,2	50,3	35,2	10,1	22,8	15,9	11,3	24,4	17,2

*Province
Source: Encuesta de población activa, INE from Idescat for Catalunya and Spain; from Departament d'Estadística i Difusió de Dades, Barcelona City Council for Barcelona.

Figure 12. Young people neither in employment nor in education and training (aged 15-34)



Source: Eurostat

The continued impact of the crisis interplays with the structural problem of the participation of young people into the labour market and the institutional context, particularly unfavourable for young people, as outlined below. The assumptions, objectives and values underpinning MESPs must be framed in this context of both opportunities and constraints.

The institutional context of local entrepreneurship policies for young people

Young people have been the most affected not only by rising unemployment levels but also by the higher risks and insecurities resulting from increasingly precarious labour markets. This has especially concerned young people living in Southern Europe, where precariousness has grown in a context characterised by absent or family-based social supports for young people (Antonucci, Hamilton and Roberts, 2014; Taylor-Gooby, 2004; Walther, 2006). To be stressed is that Italy and Spain share the features of what Walther (2006) called a *sub-protective transition regime*, i.e. an institutional context in which the transition to adulthood is marked by the feeble levels of social protection that mainly depend on the family of origin, high precariousness or informal work, and the weakness in the vocational education and training system, within a welfare state overall characterised by weak (active and passive) welfare national policies.

In Italy, the weakness of active labour market policies has been accompanied by equally weak youth and youth-oriented labour market inclusion policies at the national levels. Although the picture should be complemented with the wide range of local initiatives that, as Ricucci *et al.* (2018) argued: 'need to be inserted within a framework of single initiatives rather than a coherent, inter-institutional policy' (p. 22). Furthermore, the extensive reliance on flexibilization as a privileged policy instrument to deal with young people labour market inclusion has made precariousness a problem especially concerning workers entering the labour markets, i.e. young people and women, and contributed – together with different regimes of social protections – to increase labour market segmentation[64] (De Luigi, Rizza, 2011; Ranci, Pavolini, 2015; Caliendo, Schmidl, 2016; Ricucci *et al.*, 2018). To be stressed with respect to youth active labour market actions is the intervention of the EU that, with dedicated policy actions such as the recent Youth Guarantee, has supported the implementation of youth policies among member states. As already discussed, the EU approach has given particular centrality to measures inspired by the activation paradigm and,

[64] The labour market segmentation causes the allocation of worst jobs to most vulnerable social groups, i.e. young people, women, migrants.

therefore, to supply-side interventions, including entrepreneurship and self-employment support (Crespo, Serrano, 2004; Bifulco, Mozzana, 2016; OECD, European Union, 2017). In the area of youth entrepreneurship policies, in contrast with what occurred for another kind of youth-oriented policies, some national strategies have been implemented. It is the case of *Invitalia,* a national agency supporting entrepreneurship for young people and unemployed persons (especially for people leaving in most deprived regions of southern Italy). Moreover, an important role is played at the national levels by the Chamber of Commerce, that developed a network across the whole country of *Sportelli per l'imprenditoria giovanile* (one-stop shops) for young people willing to become entrepreneurs/self-employed. To these numerous initiatives undertaken by various kind of actors (private, public, NGOs and the like) at the local level must be added (OECD, European Union, 2016). However, as mentioned before, these are too more often framed in a context of single initiatives rather than a comprehensive and multi-level policy.

Similarly, young people face serious and structural problems also in Spain. The segmentation of labour market and precariousness have particularly affected young people, in a context where they are cut off from main welfare schemes and youth-oriented active policies are very weak (Echaves, Echaves, 2017; Díaz, 2018). As in Italy, also Spain misses a comprehensive national strategy and main responsibilities are primarily transferred to the local scale. Moreover, also in this case, EU intervention has played an important and – at least from a national point of view – deputising role, by fostering the implementation of youth policies through the launch of the Youth Guarantee, that included self-employment and entrepreneurship support. However, relevant actions have been undertaken in this specific policy field both nationally and regionally. At the national level has been launched the Strategy of Entrepreneurship and Youth Employment 2013-2016. This foresaw a reduction of social security contributions and other incentives, having young people and women as priority targets. Moreover, the Public Employment Service (PES) provides soft supports (coaching and counselling) to entrepreneurship and self-employment; the same is done within specific programmes, i.e. *Ventanilla Única Empresarial* and *Centro de Información y Red de Creación de Empresas* (Menéndez and Cueto, 2015). Furthermore, at the regional levels, autonomous communities promote their own entrepreneurship and self-employment support policies, by establishing dedicated agencies as well. In Catalonia, the *Generalitat* has launched the programme 'Catalunya Emprèn', which offers hybrid supports to encourage self-employment and entrepreneurship (financial assistance and coaching/mentoring

services)[65]. Overall, Menéndez and Cueto (2015) found that self-employed can access a series of supports both nationally and regionally provided. These range from lump-sum payments, through the reduction of the interest rate or guarantee funds for microcredit loans, to connections with risk capital for high-growth companies.

At the urban level, as highlighted in the second chapter, European cities are particularly active in encouraging the development of local actions supporting entrepreneurship. In particular, the European city network *Eurocities* highlighted the role of city governments in providing financial incentives, including to businesses located in deprived areas; sustaining and managing business incubators; promoting networks of local actors; helping small businesses access both private and public procurement opportunities. As we will see throughout the chapter, the city actions in the field of entrepreneurship promotion are not only supposed to 'fulfil a gap' determined by the lack of intervention from other levels of government. By contrast, it is the sign of the 'activation' of cities to strengthening urban economies as well as social cohesion.

II. The heterogeneity of soft (Barcelona) and hybrid (Milan) entrepreneurship supports

There are different ways through which entrepreneurship can be sustained, whatever the meaning or specific features attached to it at a given moment and regardless of the private or public nature of who undertakes any action. In particular, Sheehan and Namara (2015) identified three types of support: 'hard', 'soft' and 'hybrid'. Hard assistance consists of financial aid. Soft assistance comprises the provision of coaching/mentoring services as well as all actions promoting an entrepreneurial culture or mindset. Finally, hybrid forms of support make use of both types of action. Reference is here made to this typology to classify the heterogeneous set of policy instruments mobilised by the local public actions. Moreover, two macro-categories for support have been identified, for analytical purposes, according to the target group: innovative or ordinary nascent entrepreneurs. This distinction will be especially useful for the analysis and discussion of young people's experiences in the fifth and last chapter of the thesis. Based on these categorizations too, hereafter will be highlighted the way in which entrepreneurship support policies are concretely implemented.

Starting with Barcelona, first, it is important to say that the city government employs *Barcelona Activa* (hereafter also BA), a local development agency born in 1986, as a tool to

[65] See http://canalempresa.gencat.cat/es/inici/ and http://xarxaempren.gencat.cat/es/inici/.

implement municipal activation policies for economic development and employment, which include public actions oriented to entrepreneurship promotion. Its governance and features will be further discussed later. So far, indeed, the focus remains on the way this entity concretely supports entrepreneurship. In this respect, Barcelona Activa provides systematic, flexible and easily-accessible soft supports. Every week a 'welcome session' is indeed held that can be attended via online reservation by anyone. *Welcome sessions* aim to present Barcelona Activa's entrepreneurship programmes and services and to introduce some preliminary information concerning the set-up of business in Barcelona (i.e. some legal information, funds). These are face-to-face, but digital welcome sessions are available as well, also with a view to attracting entrepreneurs from abroad, and are indeed provided also in English. After having attended a welcome session, appointments can be arranged, again by reserving them via the official website, with an 'entrepreneurship advisor'. The latter provides coaching services concerning the preparation of business or financial plans, access to funds and, more in general, any problems or doubts related to the entrepreneurial project. This kind of support, therefore, is weekly offered throughout the whole year, and related activities take place in the *Centro para la Iniciativa Emprendedora Glòries* (eng. Glòries Entrepreneurship Centre). The latter is located in the 22@ district and provides a *Centro de Recursos para Emprender* (eng. Resources centre to start a business) offering: training classes; interactive multimedia; expert consultation; seminars with various contents useful to start a business (e.g. how to develop a business plan or an entrepreneurial project, how to make marketing online, or also 'how to arrange sales meetings and seduce in the sales interviews'); and hosting *a Punto de Asesoramiento e Inicio de Tramitación* (PAIT). The PAITs have been established by the national law 30/2006 (29th, December) in order to offer two kinds of services: a) provide soft support to nascent entrepreneurs in the definition of their business initiatives; and b) provide administrative support for formal constitution procedures. Overall, this is what BA does:

> 'We have designed a map, which goes from the idea to the creation of the company and what we do, at each stage, is to provide resources. These resources are levelled: on the one hand, there is a lot of individualized advice with which I individually meet a technician, I expose my needs and the technician… after having defined the profile of this person and understood what resources might need to be trained. Or, perhaps, this person is a technology entrepreneur who directly wants to enter an incubator, so enter a model that is thought for those people who know the business model, their sector of activity… There are those that we call *capsulas formativas* (eng. educational meetings), every month we change the format, for example we offer *capsulas formativas*, or collective advising. The concept is the same: two hours in which we approach very basic issues. So, I am an entrepreneur who, for example, have no idea: I have capsules that tell me how to do a market study, how to set the price of my product, how to identify my legal form, how to find funding, how to relate to people. (Entrepreneurship Director at Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, October 2017)

Besides this kind of support, specific and tailor-made programmes or services are cyclically proposed. More to the point, tailor-made programmes are cyclically proposed for target groups, such as the programme Idees Amb Futur (eng. ideas with future) for young people between the age of 16 and 30 (mainly EU funded). Other target groups are women, while programmes like Ideas Maduras (eng. mature ideas) are targeted to people over 45 years old. Moreover, sector-based programmes have been developed as well, for instance in the fields of the social and solidarity economy (e.g. the recent La Comunificadora, eng. 'The Communifier', which derives from the term 'commons'), of social entrepreneurship, hand-made productions, creative industries and commerce. Therefore, these programmes are divided into two groups. The first comprises programmes for specific target groups, and the second includes the programmes for specific economic sectors that, although with some variations from year to year, are stably delivered. Indeed, the purpose of expanding the entrepreneurial initiative through programmes targeted to special groups emerged as early as the year 2000. This is the case of over-45 people and women, while the programme *Idees Amb Futur* for young people was launched in 2010. With the exception of *La Comunificadora* (that has its dedicated centre: 'InnoBA') and other sector-based programmes specifically oriented to social and solidarity economy, programmes are mainly based at the *Civic Centre 'Sant Agustí Convent'*. This carries out various activities 'oriented to inform, orientate, motivate, educate and promote employment and entrepreneurship in Barcelona', including programmes oriented to the labour inclusion of unemployed or specific social groups and tailor-made programmes to support entrepreneurship[66]. The Convent is spatially separated from the headquarters of Barcelona Activa and the 22@ district, being in the *Ciutat Vella*, the gorgeous historic centre of the city. Here too soft support is provided but adopting a different method. As an *Entrepreneurship Consultant* at Convent de Sant Agustí explained:

> 'here we work a little bit differently, methodologically speaking. There [in Glòries, *author's note*] people go, they can follow an itinerary with the training capsules, they sign up, they go, they sign up for another one... when they need consultations or have any doubts they ask for the advisory service of the Glòries technical team... here what we do is this: we have programs that are for 20 or 25 people who, throughout a program, are always the same, and then we pack, let's say so, the most basic training that is needed when setting up a business. Most of the hours of all programs are about the business plan, the development of the business plan, which is a basic tool.' (Barcelona, January 2018)

Although these programmes are not specifically oriented to innovation, it must be underlined that they do not include just 'ordinary' – or not innovative – businesses. Nonetheless, alongside these programmes, Barcelona Activa provides a series of facilities and support

[66] Source: https://www.barcelonactiva.cat/barcelonactiva/es/que-es-barcelona-activa/los-equipamientos/convento-de-sant-agusti/index.jsp [latest access on January 2019]

specifically oriented to innovative start-ups: the *Glòries Business Incubator*, an incubator for innovative start-ups that started operating in 1986; the *Almogàvers Business Factory* (ABF), run in cooperation with universities, research centres, professional associations and financial institutions providing sectorial knowledge; and the recent *MediaTIC incubator*, for high-impact technology start-ups. This is accompanied by the support to professional and medium-sized enterprises in general, provided by dedicated centres, such as the Business Support Office (*Oficina d'Atenció a les Empreses*, OAE). As opposed to the other supports, incubators deal with recently established, but already established, start-ups that are also located in the physical spaces of coworking that each incubator offers against payment of rent at a value below market price. Incubators can host start-ups for a maximum period of three years. As a Consultant for enterprises installed in Barcelona Activa's incubators resumed in an interview:

> 'we give them support and advice to develop their project, and we help them to enter the market ... we rent them a space that includes a series of added services concerning logistic and administrative issues, reception services, as well as a series of programs that companies can do to start up the entrepreneurial initiative and that help them consolidate and grow in the market.' (Barcelona, BA, December 2017)

Therefore, BA provides diversified or tailor-made soft supports according to the target group/sector. The choice to employ soft supports depends on the open and universal model adopted by BA, by operating as a connector with other (also public) entities that, as pointed out in the context analysis, provide some economic support. In this respect, the soft support is also meant as an instrument to facilitate the knowledge and the connection of/with other entities and resources. The soft support is universal but not standardised, as I have just mentioned. Indeed, it varies according to the economic sector of the project, the presence of innovation and/or the needs related to specific social groups. This diversification reflects not only the aim to take into account and support the pluralism that characterises urban economies but, as will be further discussed later, also the different policy objectives and different outcomes that they entail both in terms of typologies of the entrepreneurial projects supported and participants' experiences. The same can be said for the case of Milan, where, nonetheless, this diversification especially concerns hybrid forms of entrepreneurship support.

In the case of Milan, the distinction between the support to 'ordinary' and 'innovative' nascent entrepreneurs is particularly adequate and useful, from the analytical point of view, to classify the scattered and more project-oriented (aspects more deeply discussed later) initiatives of entrepreneurship support. In Milan, support for ordinary nascent entrepreneurs has been provided through three different actions over the period considered.

The first concerns municipal calls providing hybrid support for the creation of new businesses in peripheral urban areas. These calls are activated by the Municipality by drawing on national funds that have been allocated by the Italian Ministry for Economic Development through a law dating back to the 1997 (law 266/1997) that foresaw interventions for the entrepreneurial development in areas affected by urban decay. Since 2013, they have been slightly rethought by targeting especially young people up to 35 years of age and women; and by complementing them with accompanying services or pre-calls (such as Start Milano, launched in 2014). More to the point, these public calls are open to the general working-age population. Nonetheless, they give priority to young people up to thirty-five years of age, women, and they comprise, besides the accompanying services, significant financial aid. The latter foresees a benefit of 50% of the expenditure divided thus: a non-repayable grant of up to 25% of the total admitted and planned expenditure and a subsidised loan for the other 25%. Moreover, all those eligible can use a municipal guarantee fund activated with the aim of facilitating the access to further bank loans to fund the remaining 50% of expenses (total expenses set out in the 'business plan' must not exceed a hundred thousand euros).

The second is the microcredit, coupled with soft supports and targeting people who find themselves in the so-called 'grey area of welfare', thus those who are dealing with temporary difficulties and cannot access any assistance from welfare. This is managed by Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano (FWA), a private law organization under public control established in 2011 under the jurisdiction of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment of the Municipality of Milan, whose councillor took over the presidency. It consists of the Municipality, the Metropolitan City, the Chamber of Commerce and representatives of the leading Italian trade unions. In 2012 the local government concluded an agreement with FWA concerning the management of a Guarantee Fund and the activation of auxiliary services for microloans of up to EUR 25 000, also with the aim of launching a new microcredit circuit for young people. The guarantee fund was intended to cover up to 75% of the loans granted by banks, although, in response to the creation of a national guarantee fund for microcredit, this support has been then revised. Due to the creation, by the Italian Ministry for Economic Development, of the national guarantee fund for SMEs accessing to the microcredit, the local guarantee fund became unnecessary. Therefore, it has been developed a new programme called *Agevola Microcredito di Impresa* (eng. facilitating business microcredit). Through this programme, the foundation, together with the Municipality and the Chamber of Commerce of Milan, is supporting the access to microcredit through 'productive investment programmes' foreseeing the provision of non-repayable economic

contributions allocated to the reduction of the interest cost applied by banks to the microcredit guaranteed at the national level and, on the other hand, the provision of the accompanying services. Both microcredit and municipal calls mainly involved people running single-person or small enterprises concentrated in the services area, especially in commerce and craftwork (see Chapter V).

Finally, two soft services (called 'schools spin-offs') have been experimentally developed within two city-owned vocational schools, also on the initiative of the teaching staff and the principal of the schools. Basically, *spin-offs* work like incubators of the early entrepreneurial stages of the students who, at the end of the school, decide to follow this path (the alternative is the traineeship). Moreover, the initiative is also opened to former students that want to set up their own business. These are mainly young people involved in graphics and illustration as self-employed and, through the spin-off, they can access a series of facilities provided for the first three years (an office, a meeting room, a printer. and so on) other than having the opportunity to keep in contact with the teaching staff and to rely on a tutor.

On the other hand, the support for innovative nascent entrepreneurs, when it is not provided indirectly via support for the birth and consolidation of local private incubators, avails itself of hybrid support. The financial aid is provided through yearly municipal calls. The most significant of them are funded by the municipality and managed by FabriQ, the city-owned social innovation incubator, which was launched in 2014. The social innovation incubator of the Municipality, FabriQ, is indeed accessible in three ways: a) by paying for its services; b) by applying to special programmes (e.g. the *FabriQ Acceleration Programme*, co-financed by the European *EaSI* programme and launched in 2017); or c) by participating to the annual FabriQ calls, funded precisely by the Municipality. The municipality provides in this way incubation services and non-repayable grants as reimbursement of expenses. In particular, projects selected by FabriQ calls access an economic contribution that is up to fifteen or twenty thousand euros depending on the yearly call, through which 50% of capital expenses and activities management (e.g. the creation of a website, purchase of machinery, notarial deed charges and so on) can be covered. Thirty-two socially innovative start-ups have been supported in the first three years of activity. About two-thirds of them operate in the digital economy sectors, while others engage, for instance, in the production of innovative devices or in knowledge-intensive business services. In addition, FabriQ is involved in entrepreneurship education programmes for young people within local schools, with the aim of promoting an entrepreneurial culture. The municipality supports start-ups directly only with the annual FabriQ calls and, although with a lower financial commitment, with the 'Alimenta2Talent' calls. *Alimenta2Talent* is an acceleration programme oriented to

aspiring entrepreneurs in the agri-food and life science fields which is co-financed by the Municipality and developed by Fondazione Parco Tecnologico Padano. The latter manages *Alimenta*, that is the name of the incubator (established in 2006). This type of incentive targets the whole working-age population, although the support to start-ups strongly alludes to young people who are often associated with the capacity to grasp emergent (and innovative) business opportunities. In addition, Milan's municipality supports start-ups indirectly, by sustaining private businesses incubators (see Table 11, in the subchapter on governance models). The latter, in turn, provide soft support to innovative start-ups against payment of a fee.

Therefore, the types of supports in Milan and Barcelona are similar but also different. These are different since Barcelona Activa provides mainly soft support (including the search for funding), while in Milan hybrid support prevails. This is mainly due to the criteria on the basis of each public policy. In Barcelona, indeed, entrepreneurship policies take a "universal approach" with regard to activities of support carried out especially by the Glòries Entrepreneurship Centre. Suffice it is to say that, in 2017, 7.441 people attended information sessions and 5.090 participated in training activities on business creation, 2.126 entrepreneurial projects have been supported, and 14.395 people in total receive some kind of entrepreneurship support (Barcelona Activa, 2017). A selective approach is only adopted for tailor-made programmes on business creation that, nonetheless, have been attended by 642 people in 2017 and for innovative start-ups. With regard to the latter, it must be noted that, although selective: a) the support offered is constant, even if it is for a restricted period of three years; b) it partly involves an economic support, in the form of resources made available at a lower price or services included in the rent of the space; c) it too involves a considerable number of projects (also in 2017, for instance, 84 projects were located at the Glòries Incubator and 67 at the ABF). By contrast, a sort of "selective universalism" prevails in the case of Milan: although targeting the general working-age population, the access to benefits is subject to processes of evaluation and selection (point taken up later too). This is partly the result of the type of policy instruments employed (involving access to credit, grants etc.) that also entail a narrower spread of municipal supports, compared to Barcelona. Indeed, the municipality of Milan supported the creation of just under six hundred new businesses from 2012 to 2016 (Milan Municipality, 2016).

At the same time, however, entrepreneurship policies in Milan and Barcelona share their diversified character, entailing the designing and implementation of different programmes and/or projects. As already mentioned, it will be highlighted later how this diversification reflects different policy objectives, other than different outcomes and participants'

experiences. Before to address these differences, however, the next subchapter presents and discusses the perception and definition of problems emerged from the analysis of interviews. This will also allow understanding the multiple scopes of MESPs in Milan and Barcelona.

III. The multiple scopes of municipal entrepreneurship support policies

The perception and definition of problems within a resources-based logic

As shown before, Milan and Barcelona's entrepreneurship support policies group together a diversified set of supports. This is partly allowed by the already discussed multifaceted nature of the concept of entrepreneurship itself. Its great ambivalence, indeed, contributes to making the fields of application of MESPs not always clearly bounded. As already highlighted in the second chapter of this thesis, the concept of entrepreneurship – explicitly and sometimes implicitly accompanied by that of self-employment, is central in many policy agendas. In particular, it has been stressed that, in Europe, growing concerns about unemployment levels, combined with shifts in public policies approach to activation, have made entrepreneurship and self-employment significant instruments not only for economic development strategies but also for active labour market policies. As far as Milan and Barcelona are concerned, as we will see, city governments are trying to strengthen this integration, while combining economic development and labour market inclusion's purposes as well. This entails two main things: the first is that multiple scopes inform both Milan's and Barcelona's entrepreneurship policies; the second, is that entrepreneurship support strategies may assume peculiar features, also shaped by specific ways of interpreting active labour market policies and local welfare, as well as by the vision of urban development that characterises actors involved. In order to gain more insight into this respect, a critical element is represented by the way in which the problem or problems to address are perceived and defined. Table 9 reports the main themes emerged from the qualitative data analysis, in relation to problems. However, it must be stated that problems tend to be scantily thematised during the interviews in a clear way, especially in favour of policy purposes. As a member of the staff of the councillor of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment of Milan clearly stated, indeed: 'we try not to reason in terms of problems, or of holes that need to be plugged up, but we try to start from potentialities in order to develop them'. This premise is important since it starts shedding light on a 'resources-based' or 'social investment' logic, based on the principle of *what works* mentioned in Chapter II, that seems to characterise Milan's and, to a lesser extent, Barcelona's entrepreneurship support policies (which, as I

have already shown, provides more universal services). This has implications with respect to who is at the centre of the attention of this specific policy: all those people that are 'willing to do' and have enough resources that can allow them 'to do' and to succeed. This does not mean that they only include the most resourceful, but that, despite the alleged lack of specific resources or competencies, such as entrepreneurial skills (further discussed later), they have some resources, whether to grasp the opportunities offered by new technologies or enter the business spaces of the service economy or take advantage of the municipal support and, in general, to succeed in creating their job with their hands. In the words used in an informal conversation with a member of the Mayor's staff of the city of Milan, the basic purpose is indeed 'to support the will to put oneself to the test'. In this sense, the main 'underlying problem' seems to be mainly of finding ways to provide positive incentives that can *enable* people and provide them with adequate resources (*investing* on them) (this issue is further elaborated in the last subsection of this chapter). This applies especially in Milan where the municipality provides especially hybrid support. Several public presentations that the Municipality held focused on the effects in terms of investment, by emphasising (on the basis of the turnover of sustained undertakings) the economic return for each euro spent and, more in general, emphasising the success of *what works,* that is measured mainly through economic indicators[67]. More in general, As Karim, a 35-year-old man supported by the Municipality of Milan to set up his business in the foodservice sector, said during our interview:

> '…however, the State [*the municipality*] is not giving us anything without having its own return, not even a single euro, because if the project goes well, out of the 100 thousand they gave us, the non-refundable part is just 25 thousand euros. The VAT we pay is 20%, so they give us 5 thousand euro that they will recover in the first years with taxes ... I mean, they are not losing anything, they recover all this amount basically in a few years. It is not giving us anything. Then, if you close, you have to pay the debt'

The resources MESPs provide are intended important to help to remove barriers, not only to creativity and innovation capacities that can contribute to the innovative urban economy and to employment, but also to individual coping strategies that are based on self-entrepreneurship as an alternative to the paid job. Each form of entrepreneurship gives, on the other hand, its different contribution to the urban economy, which also includes small local shops and the economy of proximity that is deemed essential for the very urban quality of life, as we will see again in what follows. In this sense, it is a matter of how to avoid that local resources/potentialities of different nature can be lost and taken away from various

[67] It is also interesting to note, in this respect, that most accurate data the Municipality possesses about sustained enterprises is about their economic performances.

forms of 'capitalisation', i.e. political, economic or social. This is consistent with the theory discussed in the first chapter: within a growing uncertain economic scenario, public actions seek to mobilise the local potential, in terms of available resources and capacities, to boost endogenous growth and – in the face of the weakening of welfare systems – social inclusion through employment and self-employment. Against this premise, the in-depth and interpretative analysis of interviews has returned problems that are very interesting and slightly different between the two cases.

Table 7. Problem-related themes

MILAN	BARCELONA
Economy and labour-related paradigm changes	Low-quality jobs and unemployment
Youth unemployment and precarity	Youth unemployment and precarity
Skills shortages	Skills shortages
Entrepreneurship risks and social vulnerability	Entrepreneurship risks and social vulnerability
Barriers to entrepreneurship	Barriers to entrepreneurship

In both cases, one of the major problems or challenges thematised in the interviews as well as in official documents relates, as one might expect, to the economy and labour spheres. Others concerned the growing difficulties faced by young people and young adults and the lack of entrepreneurial skills that goes hand in hand with the barriers to entrepreneurship. The problem connected to entrepreneurship risks and consequent implications in terms of social vulnerability has also emerged as a problem to consider, both in terms of the problem to address and as a problem to avoid (thus concerning possible adverse policy outcomes).

Regarding problems or challenges affecting the economy and labour spheres, interviewees in Milan stresses the relevance of far-reaching economic and employment-related paradigm changes. In this respect, issues that emerged are: especially in the cultural sector, the retrenchment of welfare and the resulting lack of stable employment opportunities in the public cultural system; the growing flexibilization of work and the increasing relevance of self-employment; absence of good employment opportunities; new mentality and new attitude towards self-employment/entrepreneurship, especially emerging among young people. In this respect, the emphasis is placed, to a lesser extent, on the continued effects of the economic crisis and the consequent growth of unemployment; and, to a greater extent, on employment-related paradigm changes, i.e. long-term changes that would have enhanced the importance of entrepreneurship for public policy:

> 'If the municipality has a goal, in terms of employment policy, it stands at a crossroad: what do I do? Do I encourage traditional forms of job or do I decide to promote new

> entrepreneurship programmes? Our underlying assumption has always been: it is hard to believe that traditional forms of work, the steady job, the permanent employment, can be the answer to the huge gap of employment that we have at this moment. Thus, we decided, in front of this crossroad, to reward and support who, in a way, want to create this job on his own.' (Head of the economic planning unit of the municipality, Milan, April 2017)

In a similar vein, other interviewees stressed both the growing relevance of entrepreneurship and the value that entrepreneurship supports have in the light of this:

> 'Beyond the economic crisis of recent years, this is a sector [graphic design, *author's note*] where the number of freelancers is predominant. So, if these young people do not experience the opportunity of developing it… this would be, in my opinion, a limit for them'. (Spin-off responsible and teacher, Milan, April 2017)

> 'It's usual to say that "entrepreneurs are born not made". Actually, we have a bit subverted this way of thinking, in the sense that, by adopting as a philosophy that "entrepreneurs are born *and* made"… because it is true that there are peculiar characteristics, personal predispositions, but also families, because living in a family where your parents are entrepreneurs, of course, is of help. Of course, others have a vocation, in this case, it comes naturally. But, let's say that, with the evolution of the labour market, and therefore also with the transformation of employment contracts, the idea of starting own business and, therefore, of acting in the labour market as self-employed or as entrepreneurs has been a further way, easier, or… more than easier, let's say, recommended, to expand own opportunities for inclusion in the world of work. So, I know how to do this job, I see if I can do it as an independent, as autonomous, and from there choose what is the best option, the best juridical form, without excluding anything *a priori*.' (Responsible for Formaper, agency of the local Chamber of Commerce, Milan, April 2017)

According to the principal of the Municipal schools these changes would go along with young people's preferences, to which support must be given:

> 'Our students find, more and more, their place in the labour market no longer as employees but as self-employed. Thus, it is true that we still help many people to do traineeships and many people find a standard job, *what my grandfather did* [emphasis added]. But, increasingly, labour market embraces new forms of labour such as the liberal profession which, by the way, it is appreciated also by the same individual.' (Principal of a municipal vocational school, Milan, April 2017)

This represents a sort of starting assumption to MESPs in Milan. Basically, the idea that, despite or because of the crisis, young people are particularly and increasingly attracted by entrepreneurship. In this respect, the Councillor of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment during one of her public speaking in 2014 has stated that: 'the crisis has also shown us that there is a new propensity to do business of the younger generations, if this is a result of a constraint or a natural propensity, at this time, is of secondary importance'[68].

[68] The public speaking refers to a TEDx (brand of local and self-organised conferences) organised by the institute of design IED, held in Milan on 11th February 2014 and titled: Il lavoro, nonostante tutto (Labour, despite all). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RC1ZWJ1r8s (latest access: 25th February 2018)

As will be better shown in the paragraph dealing with governance in this chapter, this binds to the idea of a general particular propensity or vocation of the city to make business or, in other words, to a renovated 'self-made-man' rhetoric – that characterise Milan since the second half of the nineteenth century (Rosa, 2009) – that makes the 'entrepreneurial spirit' as an inherent feature of the whole city to preserve, nurture and consider in policy decisions. This has also to do with the 'identity' of the city, in which all citizens can recognize themselves, despite the great diversity MESPs entails:

> 'The municipality of Milan uses, also due to the culture of this city, the term *start-up* distinguishing it from that of *innovative start-ups,* to refer to all the new things that born. It has a series of instruments that you have probably already explored, and that encourage the birth of patisseries in the periphery that have nothing to do with innovative start-ups. They, of course, have a dimension of risk that can also entail a bad end, but this is in the game. However, there is the ecosystemic mix of the quality of the administration, along with a climate that is generically enabling, the city that works, the public transports, all things that make this venture much less arduous.' (Expert and policy advisor for the Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, March 2017)

In Barcelona, by contrast, there seems to emerge a different approach that emphasises more than a new role of entrepreneurship promoted by deep socio-economic changes, the problem of the continued effects of the economic crisis on labour markets, by especially underlying the significance of unemployment levels among specific social groups, i.e. young people and over-45, and precariousness. Related to precariousness, emerged the idea of a problem of search of opportunities of self-fulfilment and deployment of personal skills, especially in the case of high-skilled young people/young adults:

> 'In these years of crisis, there are generations like yours, made by very competent people, highly educated, who are excluded from the labour market, or, if they are in the labour market, they are engaged in precarious work. Therefore, these people decide to go to take their present and future in their hands and say: let's develop a project.' (Consultant for Social and Solidarity Economy Projects of Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, April 2018)

It is related to this also the perception of the reduction of the opportunity-cost to engage in self-employment or business activities, also for medium or high-skilled people. According to a trainer, other than responsible for the entrepreneurship area of the private foundation *Autoocupació*, subcontracted within specific entrepreneurship programmes (such as *Idees amb Futur* for under-30 young people) by Barcelona Activa:

> 'The traditional economy has suffered, yes, but were there people who have given up the traditional business to find a job? No, for a reason, because there were no work solutions either. Then, of course, when they will start having job alternatives, we'll really see if people ... if the business is more profitable than the work that will have offered them, and I'm telling you that is: no. Because in this country we have a general problem of salaries that are not competitive in general. I'm talking mainly about medium-high positions, and especially in first hires, not people who have been working for 20/25 years and who probably have good salaries

> because at other times they were well paid. I believe that the company gets by being, for those people who have talent, the best way to be able to dedicate themselves to the one they like, first, and to earn well, secondly.' (Responsible for Entrepreneurship activities of Autoocupació, Barcelona, October 2017)

To this, problems affecting labour market inclusion and precariousness of young people are emphasised as well, together with the problem of NEETs rates. Particularly related to specific social groups, such as young people and women, the lower entrepreneurship rates are also mentioned as a problem to address both in Milan and Barcelona. Moreover, barriers to entrepreneurship determined by the peculiarities of some sectors (such as the social and cultural sectors) or by personal features are thematised as problems to deal with. With respect to personal features, the most important element is constituted by the alleged lack of entrepreneurial skills:

> 'According to us, entrepreneurship is like expertise that you can learn. If you want to start a business, you will have to learn everything that has to do with that business, like a dentist who does the training to be a dentist. You must know your market, know who your competitors are, know why you fix a price and not another, where to buy my supplies, where to find the money. And if you've never set up a company you don't know that... and it's essential. Many times, they come to our advisory team with decisions already made, these are wrong and of course, we cannot be of help sometimes, because they have already rented a place in a place that is not right for what they want to do, for example. If I want to open a children's clothing store and I rent a place in a neighbourhood where only older people live ... sometimes they come up with these decisions ...' (Entrepreneurship Director at Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, October 2017)

Therefore, in Barcelona, the emphasis is placed on the difficulties that, in particular specific social groups, may encounter during the process of planning and creating a new business organization. Moreover, the problem of unemployment and precariousness, particularly affecting the same social groups, are taken into account since they may foster necessity-driven entrepreneurship (or, in general, more reckless or scantly planned entrepreneurship) and, at the same time, since they are problems that can also be addressed through self-employment and entrepreneurship both as an alternative to the standard paid job and as a potential driver of new employment. Nonetheless, the problem of deep changes giving centrality to entrepreneurship and self-employment has not emerged.

It is against this background that entrepreneurship support is mobilised as a policy instrument that can contribute to deal with the necessity to foster new urban economic development paths and the difficulties of labour inclusion of specific social groups, such as young people. At the same time, it could be said that entrepreneurship support is perceived as necessary or at least opportune in the face of those individualization processes that, regardless of what the public action does, would growingly spur people towards entrepreneurship.

The continued goal of developing the city as a 'business supportive environment'

As can be deduced from the analysis of problems, MESPs point to a mix of objectives. These range from the promotion of urban growth, including trough city branding and urban attractiveness purposes, to the enhancement of labour market inclusion by incentivising alternatives to the paid job. The first is often taken for granted, while a greater focus is on the second one, which also provides a greater source of legitimation in the face of the growing demand of inclusiveness that is asked even more so to leftist parties (as they were in Barcelona and Milan, *discussed later*). Therefore, the data analysis showed that the diversification of entrepreneurship support reflects its multiple scopes, within a more general strategy aiming at fostering and somehow combining economic growth and labour market inclusion in Barcelona; and, more explicitly, economic growth, labour market inclusion and local welfare in Milan. This difference will be more precise at the end of the next subsection titled '*Fostering inclusive entrepreneurship: the activating side of entrepreneurship support?*'.

To begin with the support to entrepreneurship as a tool to actively support urban economy and growth, first it is important to say that, in both cases, and in line with what urban studies have already highlighted, cities are committed to reinforcing their position in the European and global economy, including by boosting the strengthening of a *supportive environment* for businesses birth and growth or, more recently, the development of the city as a good *start-up ecosystem*. Terms like 'ecosystem' are buzzwords in the discourse about start-ups both in the private and public spheres. These refer to the development and strengthening of the "local community" of entrepreneurs, innovators, strategic public and private actors (i.e. city council, chamber of commerce, incubators, research centers, universities, start-ups, coworking spaces) in order to build innovative local systems (to misquote the *local productive system*, conceptualized as a community or collective entity as well, see Chapter 1 of this thesis). In this respect, it is worth pointing out also the explicit and recurring reference that has been made to the concept of 'district'. In Milan, it is the case of *PoliHub,* known as a *Start-Up District & Incubator* or, even better, the *Distrito 22@* in Barcelona, where the main facilities of Barcelona Activa are located. The idea is precisely to develop those "environmental tools" that can facilitate private initiatives. As highlighted in the first chapter, public action plays a central role as an enabler of processes and networks oriented to innovation and economic development. In this respect, Barcelona Activa constitutes a paradigmatic example.

This municipal entity, with its 400 people currently working within it (Barcelona Activa, 2017), has a crucial role in the socio-economic development of the city since it was created as an economic development agency in 1986, a period of great transformation of the city and the urban economy. The city answered to the intensive process of deindustrialization and the

period of social crisis that characterized the 1970s and 1980s with what will prove to be an effective and successful plan of urban regeneration based on the physical and infrastructural transformation of the city and the deep renovation of its economic structure. After the Olympics in 1992, the vision of the city was utterly transformed becoming 'world-class with a focus on attracting, growing and retaining talent and creative businesses in the services/knowledge-based sector'. The economic development model became based 'heavily on knowledge, entrepreneurship and value-added services' (OECD, 2009, p. 16). A change that has been intensively driven by the Municipality and the strong personality of the Mayor at the time, Pasqual Maragall, also fully included in the Catalan and Barcelonese business community. As an expert well summarised, it is mainly in this period that the Municipality started thinking that 'the main enterprise is the municipality itself' and that it could become a crucial 'revitalizing instrument' of economic promotion (Associate Director for the Strategic Plans of Barcelona from 1974 to 1992, 15/12/2017).

This 'entrepreneurialism' of the local government itself also entailed the capacity to innovating or keeping the same public action up to date. The emergence of the 'innovative start-up' in the business scenario has entailed, then, a renovated effort to attract resources (e.g. business investors, human capital) and provide adequate support. This has been mainly pursued by a two-fold policy approach. On the one hand, both Milan and Barcelona participate in constructing (also discursively) the city as an innovation hub or the 'best place to start up', to use a slogan of Speed MI Up, a Milanese incubator born in 2013 as part of the *Agreement for the support of Employment and Entrepreneurship* signed by the Chamber of Commerce of Milan and the Municipality of Milan, also used by Barcelona Activa which explains how 'Barcelona's entrepreneurial ecosystem is growing and the city is reinforcing itself as one of the best places to launch a start-up in Europe' (Barcelona Activa, 2017, p. 61). As a matter of fact, entrepreneurship policies give a contribution to city branding strategies as well, by putting the city on the various start-up maps, rankings and so forth. The project *Startup Heatmap Europe*, developed within the European Startup Initiative (ESI), is one example of start-up cities rankings in Europe[69]. This project reports on the attractiveness of start-up hubs – cities – and it is based on 'the perceived quality of startup cities, founder

[69] The European Startup Initiative (ESI) is a non-profit organization that has the purpose of 'facilitating interaction between startup founders, stakeholders and community builders interested in creating an attractive start-up environment in Europe' (source: https://www.startupheatmap.eu/, latest access October 2018).

mobility and the interconnectivity between European startup hotspots'[70]. Moreover, entrepreneurship and start-ups have a privileged link to innovation, that is deemed paramount to boost cities' socio-economic development. In this respect, it is worth noting that Barcelona was named the first European Capital of Innovation in 2014, also for having promoted strong alliances between research centres, universities, private and public partners. In 2016 Milan was short-listed as one of the nine finalists of the 2016 European Capital of Innovation Award 'for enhancing social inclusion and alternative models in the delivery of public services to create more opportunities for employment' (i.e. by supporting microcredit, coworking spaces, start-ups incubators[71]).

On the other hand, the two cities are committed to seek to guarantee active and direct support to nascent entrepreneurs as well as to sustaining and strengthening the network of actors surrounding and supporting them: incubators, accelerators, private foundations and so on. These represent, indeed, key players in the field of entrepreneurship policies. It will be discussed later the way the two models of governance also differentiate in this respect, by reflecting the function of 'coordination', especially in Barcelona, and 'valorization', especially in Milan, of networks of actors and/or structures that, ultimately, comprise the 'ecosystem' or 'supportive environment'. To give an example, with respect to Barcelona Activa, the entrepreneurship director explained that:

> 'We work on two levels: directly, providing service, or providing support to other local actors with the purpose, above all, to strengthen the ecosystem of the city and, therefore, make the city attractive, for instance for foreign investment and ... well, in the rankings of entrepreneurs we are, I think, in fifth place, that is, we are working very intensely on what allows us to position the city, to make it… let's say friendly or attractive to entrepreneurs who are or who want to come to Barcelona.' (Entrepreneurship director at Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, October 2017)

In Milan, a greater emphasis is placed on people's self-activation and entrepreneurialism and on the idea of 'accompany individuals' not only 'to employment and, in particular, innovative employment', but also, so as they can 'make their contribution to that economic development that allows the city as a whole to grow and act as an attractive and innovative hub' (Staff of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, February 2017).

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[70] The *Startup Heatmap Europe* is an interactive platform that 'shows which cities are the entrepreneurship hotbeds of Europe, how far their reputation travels and why founders would rather move there to startup. Complete with investment data, the Startup Heatmap seeks to provide orientation to startups, investors and researchers interested in discovering the realities of Startup Europe outside the political dressing' (source: https://www.startupheatmap.eu/, latest access October 2018).

[71] The video promoting the participation of the city of Milan to this competition is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k21yWFQ4nx0&list=PLvpwIjZTs-LgakOivJc_GQ07glOmGJQ6e&index=7&t=33s (latest access February 2019)

The underlying idea is that the creation of a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovation will strengthen urban development and, consequently, improve social inclusion through the creation of new employment:

> 'the phase of growth, of affirmation of the urban economy, will impact on employment in the most traditional sense. It is already happening. (..) the reports of our start-ups have already shown that new employment has been created. Therefore, the two things go hand in hand, because, from a certain point of view, the aim is to bring those who have ideas, those who have means, those who have possibilities, not economic means or training because we are the ones to bring training and economic support where there is a need, but really new energies. So, it is important to find them and bring them to contribute to development. After that, it is not all citizens who do this, it is those who have the potentiality and others will benefit from it.' (Staff of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, February 2017)

A similar expectation guided policies implemented by Barcelona Activa especially after 2011 when Barcelona experienced a reorientation of policies towards competitiveness and companies were placed at the core of a strategy supposed to create employment indirectly thanks to enterprises (Cano, Pradel, Garcia, 2017).

The effort of both cities in fostering innovative business and supporting growth-oriented networks with the objective to build the city (its image and its concrete infrastructures) as 'business-friendly' or favourable to start-ups seems to witness the strength of competitiveness as a reference principle for urban actions, also for those aiming at giving an answer to the problems previously discussed. Moreover, the city coincides with the 'start-up hub' par excellence and, therefore, a homogenised image of the city competing to foster innovation, attract talents and investors, develop high-tech business communities, often prevails over different scenarios. In the course of this chapter and of the following one, however, it will be argued that this constitutes only one aspect of entrepreneurship policies and, although important, this is paralleled by growing diversity and tensions in terms of objectives, values and governance arrangements both between the two cases and within them. Before addressing these issues, the next subchapter deal with the other field of the two-fold scope of entrepreneurship policies, and that concerns the integration with labour market and employment purposes.

Fostering 'inclusive entrepreneurship': the activating side of entrepreneurship support?

The purposes of entrepreneurship policies are influenced by the specific local economic development strategies – that depend, in turn, on the specific features of local economies outlined above – that, both in Milan and Barcelona, are comprehensive and include active employment and labour market policies, as well as urban development plans/projects. These

are not an object of the analysis. However, it is worth mentioning their relevance that emerged especially with reference to a) large-scale urban development projects, such as the *22@ district* in Barcelona; b) relatively smaller urban regeneration interventions, such as the municipal social innovation incubator and *PoliHub* (incubator) that are based in peripheral areas of Milan, or *Base* (Creative Enterprise Incubator), born in a former industrial building, and c) interventions aiming at revitalising cities' peripheries by supporting local shops or, more in general, the economy of peripheral or more critical neighbourhoods.

This 'territorial' inclusion goes hand in hand with another aim that is to encourage inclusive entrepreneurship policies as an instrument able to contribute to social inclusion from the labour market/employment point of view. The second chapter has already highlighted that the objective of promoting inclusive entrepreneurship supports is notably advocated by international institutions, i.e. the OECD and the European Union, especially in relation to specific social groups. It has been already stressed also the relationship between international institutions and urban agendas.

As far as it concerns the case of Barcelona, it must be said that Barcelona Activa adheres to the main principle of the European Employment Strategy since its beginning (Cano, Pradel, Garcia, 2017) and is the EES to play a major role in introducing activation as a reference concept in employment policies and in the enhancement of local employment policies with particular emphasis on the principles of adaptability, entrepreneurship and employability. The diversified forms of support previously presented have already shown the aim of reaching a large share of the population, not simply the 'innovators', starting from a perspective that sees the urban economy in its plurality and complexity, but also that takes into account the diversity of entrepreneurship motivations and people's needs:

> 'Still, there is a lot of self-employment, of people who, let's say, start one's own business out of necessity, who are creating their own job because they cannot get it from others. We then continue to have many traditional activities, much trade ... what we have done is create a model that can respond to this disparity… we define our model an inclusive model. This is important. That is to say, we have created an inclusive model, which wants to be universal and therefore what it wants is to respond to this different typology of entrepreneurial person that exists. It must not be an exclusive model, either from the bottom or from the top. I mean that it is not exclusive because it is too technological or too elitist ... and how do we guarantee that? with the offer we have.' (Entrepreneurship Director at Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, October 2017)

As a matter of fact, Barcelona Activa supported a large number of projects operating in very different economic sectors ranging from commerce to creative and cultural production (a point discussed more in-depth in the next chapter). Moreover, it supports technological teams, but also and especially individual entrepreneurs:

> 'They are often a single person... we have many projects that are unipersonal (...) Many times it is a pure self-employment: I am creating my own workplace, I do it for myself and I assume

> all the responsibility that the risk entails, I make the investment that is needed, I look for the financing that I have to find, I do everything that I have to do, but for myself.' (Entrepreneurship Consultant at Convent de Sant Augusti, Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, January 2018)

The model that Barcelona Activa is committed to implementing is deemed inclusive to the extent that it offers a variety of supports potentially able to catch the inherent heterogeneity of entrepreneurship and individual needs of diverse entrepreneur profiles. Moreover, through these differentiated supports, Barcelona Activa plays an important role in the provision of positive incentives – including through the support to the development of abilities and competencies, discussed later – that can help to remove barriers to individual coping strategies based on self-entrepreneurship. Furthermore, in line with the idea of inclusiveness promoted at the supranational levels, BA contributes to advocate the need of fair opportunities to become an entrepreneur, while contributing to promoting entrepreneurship as a possible alternative to the paid job:

> 'especially in the case of programmes for young people, for us, it is important that they know that this option exists, that it is self-employment and that, if it is not started now, is not a problem. It's the program where we are less concerned about the indicator of enterprises created, in the good sense.' (Entrepreneurship Consultant at Convent de Sant Augusti, Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, January 2018)

This caution about the effective creation of enterprises sheds light on the awareness of risks connected to inclusive entrepreneurship, an issue that will be addressed more in-depth later also with a view to understanding what role the public action plays in this respect, both in Barcelona and in Milan. However, it is also one signs of the important changes in discourses and in the attitude towards the relationship between entrepreneurship and (self)employment of the new (leftist) city government, that won the election in 2015. A comparison between the last local plans for employment show this change. The local pact for employment 'Pacto Local para el Empleo 2004-2007', signed by the municipality of Barcelona with main local trade unions and business organization, incorporated European employment directives and recommended, on the one hand, the creation of a supportive environment for innovation and business creation, and on the other hand, the improvement of the access to services and programmes to both the search of a job and the business creation. The 'Pacto para el empleo de calidad en Barcelona 2008-2011', this time also signed by the Generalitat of Catalunya, and still explicitly referring to the Lisbon agenda and the EES, gave particular centrality to entrepreneurship:

> 'Barcelona identifies entrepreneurship as a key factor of competitiveness, a tool for valuing work, an engine for employment, a catalyst for innovation, an axis for global positioning and an element of social and territorial cohesion. Consequently, the city must be a favourable environment for the creation of more and better companies and more and better jobs.

> Barcelona must have the instruments to expand the possibilities of business creation as a professional, viable and future alternative for everyone, while at the same time creating the mechanisms to facilitate the creation of global and highly competitive companies in strategic sectors.' (p. 36)

And again:

> 'The entrepreneurial, innovative and creative culture must permeate the city and it is necessary to promote the identification of entrepreneurial initiative and creativity as the axis for the formation of future human capital in Barcelona from the perspective of the entire educational system in its different formative stages.' (p. 37)

By contrast, in the employment strategy 'Estrategia para el Empleo de Barcelona 2016-2020' there is no mention of entrepreneurship, business creation or self-employment, while it declares that: 'one of the main priorities of the new municipal government is the fight against unemployment and precariousness. Thus, the promotion of quality employment for everyone will be one of the main lines of work in which the City Council will articulate its activity' (p.17). This reflects the changed political colours of city governments. While from 2015 the City Council was led by a left-wing political party (*Barcelona en Comù*), from 2011 to 2015 Barcelona has been governed by the Catalan conservative party *Convergencia I Union*, whose vision of economic development was centred on growth and competitiveness (see also Cano et al., 2017). This change in political orientation reflects the intention of the new government to distance itself from the conservative approach and its emphasis on entrepreneurship. However, a slight difference can be observed in local youth employment plans where, instead, entrepreneurship is a regularly present instrument of labour inclusion. Young people are more directly linked with labour and economic changes and relative "solutions". The youth employment plan of 2006-2010 is into 'el futuro de la ocupación' (the future of employment), depicted as the world of technological and organizational innovation, new professions, new employment fields, self-employment, information, mobility and with a renovated role of small businesses (p.22). Among its specific actions, it foresaw the promotion of youth self-employment through entrepreneurship support instruments and programmes. They are central also in the 'Pacto para el empleo de calidad en Barcelona 2008-2011', which encouraged the promotion of an 'entrepreneurial spirit' together with a new 'labour culture' among young people' (p. 35). Reference is made to entrepreneurship/self-employment also in the 'Pla per al Foment de l'Ocupació Juvenil de Qualitat 2016-2020', although especially in relation to social entrepreneurship. One of the objectives of the plan is indeed of 'promoting knowledge of other forms of economics, fostering an active attitude among the young population for the search for alternatives, giving support from the City Council to initiatives of entrepreneurship, especially those of a collective nature and with social value' (p.20). More to the point, are encouraged activities concerning: the

strengthening of young people's participation in entrepreneurship support actions of Barcelona Activa, the promotion of tailor-made programmes, and actions to raise awareness of entrepreneurship through the integration of entrepreneurship across all devices, programs and services.

The relationship between employment and entrepreneurship, being an ideological issue too, constitutes a field of tension. It is partly removed from the discourse of the city government, although it remains there, as we have seen, in the idea of inclusive entrepreneurship, but also in the cross-cutting approach at the basis of Barcelona Activa, from which economic development and labour market activation policies tend to be combined:

> 'active labour market policies incorporate self-employment and self-entrepreneurship, but then there is a division of labour here and this part, in Barcelona Activa, is managed by the Entrepreneurship Centre. The promotion of self-employment and entrepreneurship is negotiated. It is true that we could have incorporated an explicit reference to this. However, it is implicit when we talk about an integrated approach (original: *transversalización*) and the priority of employment in all municipal tasks. (..) In the case of the youth employment plan, well, here, there is a more explicit tendency, as we work with our colleagues of Joventut (the *Departament de Joventut*, youth department of the municipality, *author's note*) who have a more transversal vision… when they receive young people, they present them all the spectrum of activities. Anyway, to give you an idea, when young people are interested in doing self-employment projects, the youth information points direct them to the Entrepreneurship Centre of BA.' (Director at Employment Area of Barcelona Activa, BA, Barcelona, December 2017)

An approach that seems to characterise Barcelona Active since its origins:

> 'Barcelona Activa was born only supporting entrepreneurs, thirty years ago. When we were born, thirty years ago, BA was born as a business incubator and was born, I think it was in 1986 when there was a similar situation of unemployment, now we are timidly coming out of the economic recession, but five years ago and subsequently, we were in an economic situation very similar to the current one. So, at that time, I think there was a vision, which was not explicit yet eh, but there was already a vision of thinking that giving support to people who created jobs, who were self-employed, were also generating employment. I think at that time, 30 years ago, I was very visionary. (Entrepreneurship director at Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, October 2017)

As far as it concerns the case of Milan, entrepreneurship policies are part of a strategy aiming to integrate economic development, employment/labour market policies and, more explicitly if compared with Barcelona, local welfare. As an official of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment of the municipality of Milan explained: 'the idea of reconciling economic development and active labour market policies is recent, it was born in 2011 with the new city government and with the creation of this Department'. Against this background, entrepreneurship assumes a twofold meaning: 'entrepreneurship as self-employment, thus as self-promotion, and entrepreneurship as enterprises, start-ups, that, in

their development, in their growth, increase returns and create employment' (Official, Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, March 2017). As a matter of fact, the victory of a centre-left coalition in the 2011 municipal election fostered a series of innovation in this respect. One of them has been precisely the creation of a unique Department for Economic Development and Employment (then changed in *Department for Urban Economy and Employment*), to stress the need to combine economic development goals with active labour policies (see also Milan Municipality, 2016) and, thus, to try to innovate urban economic policies themselves, traditionally used to serve a strategy of pure competitiveness. As Torri (2017) recently pointed out, the action of the new city-government has totally reversed the prevalent logic that characterised the previous decades, governed by conservative political formations, and that was based on the full faith to the capacity of the market to generate job opportunities, to start supporting especially self-employment other than skills development, in particular among young people. However, as we have seen in the previous pages, the relevance of the idea that the city government needs to enable the development of a business-friendly environment persists, while the idea of supporting business creation to favour the creation of employment indirectly is still at the centre of this public policy, although flanked by social investment strategies or activation-oriented actions.

In this case too, the concept of inclusiveness has been incorporated in the urban policy agenda also with respect to entrepreneurship support and, more in general, to innovation. The slogan underpinning the whole municipal economic and employment strategy is 'innovare per includere' (innovate to include) that has then taken also the form of a sort of think tank or association involving civil society's members as well. Therefore:

> 'Alongside the concept of economic and entrepreneurial development, since 2012 the innovation component has always been associated, which does not mean supporting subjects such as innovative start-ups exclusively, but it means producing innovation not only in products but also in processes. For example, try to help more traditional companies or businesses with innovative financial tools, or less used or less common, as the micro-credit.' (Head of the economic planning unit of the municipality, Milan, April 2017)

In this respect, in fact, the accompanying and supportive services to microcredit represent an important example of self-entrepreneurship as a measure supporting labour market inclusion, including the inclusion of young people. The main difference of this action compared to other measures comprised in Milan's entrepreneurship support policies, but also to Barcelona's public action, is the incorporation of self-entrepreneurship within explicit welfare-oriented policies. It must be said, in this respect, that Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano represents an attempt of innovation of the same local welfare, through the strong capacity also of the local government to aggregate and mobilised plural local interests

and actors (subject of discussion in the next subchapter) (see also Polizzi and Tajani, 2015). The innovation brought to local welfare by this foundation relies both on the model of cooperation between different subjects that is at its basis and on the active approach to welfare that it sustains. Its main slogan is 'we help you to help yourself', that well summarises the purpose of 'working according to a principle of activation instead of assistance' (Microcredit manager and assistant to the general-director of FWA*,* Milan, February 2017). More to the point:

> 'We work on reactivable groups and our objective is to reactivate the person who has a need, helping and facilitating him/her in the resolution of the need and in re-entering into a virtuous mechanism of activation in the society in which he/she lives. So, yes, it is the very basis of our actions, it is always: we facilitate you, but you have got to commit. So, we make accessible to you a subsidised rate with our guarantee, the microcredit, and we accompany you ... but you are the entrepreneur, you became active, you sketch out the project, you do homework.' (Microcredit manager and assistant to the general-director of FWA*,* Milan, February 2017)

Later I will provide more details about how this works and especially about the mechanisms of selection. Now I would like to point out that, in this context, self-entrepreneurship is deemed as a survival tool or an instrument of social inclusion for adults, who use it forced by the absence of valid alternatives, while young people motivations are more associated with personal aspirations, appreciation of autonomy and willingness to become entrepreneurs (assumption critically discussed in the next chapter on the basis of results of interviews with young people):

> 'Above a certain age, it is somehow a way to regain a dignified working life and live. Then, to say that they get rich is another world! I mean, there are very few activities that are born with microcredit that exceed the threshold of ... "survive". They are activities that survive but do not get rich, we cannot say that they make such good money. Even after four or five years, they are well, earn money, have improved and stabilized their standard of living but they did not get rich. There are very few enterprises that have managed to make step change enough that they would be able to become entrepreneurs who can really do serious business.'
>
> '(..) Young people, by contrast, aren't even trying to enter the labour market. Almost always, they are young who don't want dependent employment, they want to start-up business since they want autonomy and they believe in their project, sometimes also recklessly but their recklessness is their strength. Thus, my experience tells me that young people want to be entrepreneurs and are born with this aspiration, in most cases.'
>
> (Microcredit manager and assistant to the general-director of FWA*,* Milan, February 2017)

In addition, the Municipality also encourages local partnerships and additional small projects with a view to foster inclusiveness. It is the case of the Project IN^3, which is the result of a partnership between Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano and FabriQ, together with other territorial associations, *ICEI* and *Comunità Nuova*, promoters of the project. This is an international project promoting a 'multi-sectoral partnership for capacity development to

enhance entrepreneurship opportunities for vulnerable youth in Milan, Lisbon and Madrid'[72]. It foresaw a free training course for 40 young aspiring entrepreneurs, promoted as part of the European Programme *YEP - Young Enterprise Program*. This partnership has also been encouraged by the same Municipality, that is a partner of the project, with the view of contributing to the inclusiveness of services provided the municipal incubator of social start-ups:

> 'the Municipality has asked us to cooperate with FabriQ so that we could have a partner specialized in youth entrepreneurship and not only, while they (FabriQ, *author's note*) could have had our support, that relates to our greater ability to relate with the most vulnerable social groups. That's why we have tried to build a partnership as varied as possible'. (Communication manager, ICEI, Milan, February 2018)

In this vein too, support is often provided also to the promotion of the entrepreneurial culture and adequate competences. In Milan, examples are projects such as MiGeneration Lab, promoted by the municipality with the Lombardy Region and 18 partners (including fablabs, universities and associations): it foresaw a series of training courses dedicated to NEETs up to 35 years of age aiming at the development of new skills and including the promotion of the entrepreneurial culture. But also, the educational projects carried out by the municipal social innovation incubators within local public schools:

> There is an alternative way, that is little introduced by schools, which is to train young people to develop different skills, design skill for instance, which can then lead to business ideas. So, the first reason is this, the second is that, in fact, we always tell each other that in Italy children and, in general, at school little is done, little with respect to practices, while there is a focus prevalently on the theory ... training in entrepreneurship is one of the most practical things that can exist. Because what we do, together with young people, is how to create a business, maybe we make them talk to companies as case studies and then, let's say, these are the main reasons. (Project Manager of FabriQ, Milan, January 1017)

These educational actions are also undertaken by Barcelona Activa that works for example with schools, although to a lesser extent 'since there are other entities that do it, such as foundations… and here we are not *pro-active*, but *re-active*. When a school ask it, we do it, but we don't have a structured programme because there are other people who do this job' (Entrepreneurship Director at Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, October 2017).

To conclude, we have seen the way Milan and Barcelona's entrepreneurship support policies, based on the principle of inclusiveness, have mobilised a varied set of policy instruments and/or measures that, however, reflect the multifaceted nature that the broad heading of 'entrepreneurship support' entails, other than their purpose of inclusiveness. This variety in terms of policy has been sustained by a two-fold objective: contribute to labour

[72] Source: http://www.icei.it/icei/project/yep-young-enterprise-program/ (latest access: September 2018).

market inclusion by encouraging the support to entrepreneurship as an alternative to the paid job and, at the same time, foster various facets of economic development. The next subchapter will critically engage with all these findings and others that will be progressively discussed. In doing so, the rest of the chapter will focus, more specifically, on the role the local authorities of Milan and Barcelona play in entrepreneurship promotion, going more in-depth in the analysis of values and narratives informing their policy choices as well as the tensions embodied therein, in the light of what emerged from the theories presented in the first two chapters of this thesis. Before discussing the different roles that they play, with the tension between 'accompanying' and 'governing' trends (emerged from the comparison) in relation to individualisation and, more in general, neoliberal processes, the next pages address the difference in policy governance, which are crucial in defining the same role public action plays in the two contexts.

IV. MESPs between governance arrangements, politics and institutional legacies

'Fragmented' vs 'centred' policy governance

The governance of entrepreneurship policies varies considerably between Milan and Barcelona. As will be shown in this subchapter, in the case of Barcelona, entrepreneurship policies present higher institutionalized, centralized and comprehensive governance founded on the public-private partnership, in which the municipality retains a strategic role. By contrast, the case of Milan is characterized by a greater fragmentation and dispersion with a stronger emphasis on the delegation to private entities, accompanied by a certain risk of discontinuity due to the higher tendency to adopt a sort of project-oriented style. The differences in the models of governances are crucial in defining the role the city-government can play in drawing up a comprehensive and coordinated strategy, setting priorities as well as vehiculating a discourse on entrepreneurship rather than another. However, in this context, both models of governance, albeit different, reflect the crucial role of the city government in the enhancement of local networks of actors and resources: in particular, it emerged a function of 'coordination' (especially in Barcelona) or 'valorization' (especially in Milan) of networks of actors and/or structures aiming at promoting and facilitating entrepreneurship. But let us take a closer look at the diversities and similarities of these two

forms of governance, starting from the case of Barcelona's entrepreneurship support policies.

As already shown, the city government uses *Barcelona Activa* as a tool to implement municipal activation policies for economic development and employment. The Barcelona City Council, indeed, is composed of two separate organizational levels: the political and the executive one. The political level is the level where decisions are taken – in this case, regarding employment and economic development policies, the competent department is that one of *Economy and Employment, Digital City and International Relations* – while the executive level covers their implementation. Barcelona Activa is a municipal capital corporation (*sociedad mercantil municipal*) operating in this last executive level and whose board of director is composed of representatives of all municipal groups. These types of society are wholly municipal owned companies, created with the aim to improve the efficiency and the efficacy of urban public services and in line with the principles of agile management and functional specialization[73]. Indeed, they can act as private actors in the market, but they are entirely public and highly dependent on the political vision of the city government and are responsible for the implementation of its decisions.

Among the strong points of Barcelona Activa, there is that of having consolidated its presence in the city during a period started in 1986, thus becoming a sort of 'well-known brand' with a high reputation, especially with regard to entrepreneurship support, both at the local level, as also some young participants told me during the interviews, and internationally (OECD, 2009). The main activities carried out by Barcelona Activa with reference to entrepreneurship support have been previously outlined. Just to complete the picture, it is worth providing an overview of its network of facilities. Indeed, besides its main offices (i.e. management offices, various support services), to Barcelona Activa belong to a series of specialized facilities. All these services and incubators (listed in Table 8) are directly managed by the municipality. Contrary to what happens in Milan, it is Barcelona Activa with its economic and human resources that deals directly with the entrepreneurs, who are 'accompanied' and supported, while availing itself of the support of private entities subcontracted for the provision of services within specific programmes[74].

[73] To deepen the political and executive structure of the Municipality of Barcelona, please refer to the official website of the Municipality (https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/es/organizacion-municipal/; latest access: July 2018)

[74] It is, for instance, the case of 'CP'AC - Fundación Privada para la Promoción del Autoempleo de Cataluña', now named 'Autooccupació' (the Catalan translation of 'self-employment). This entity is very important in the whole region, and it is specialised in the support to entrepreneurship for young people. It is involved, for instance, in the programme 'Ideas con Futuro'.

Moreover, the municipality is the principal investor, although it was not always so. In 2012, indeed, Barcelona Activa had profoundly changed its structure. Until that time, this municipal agency was relying mainly on projects, elaborated and then submitted for financing to higher levels of government: the Catalan government in particular, but also the national state, the European Union and others international organizations. As Figure 13 shows, the weight of funds allocated by the Catalan government on the total budget of Barcelona Activa has sharply and regularly decreased after 2011. Indeed, the Catalan government contributed more than 50% to the entire budget of Barcelona Activa in 2011, when the contribution of the Municipality was already relevant (43%) but lower of 32 percentage points compared to 2017.

Table 8. Barcelona Activa's network of facilities

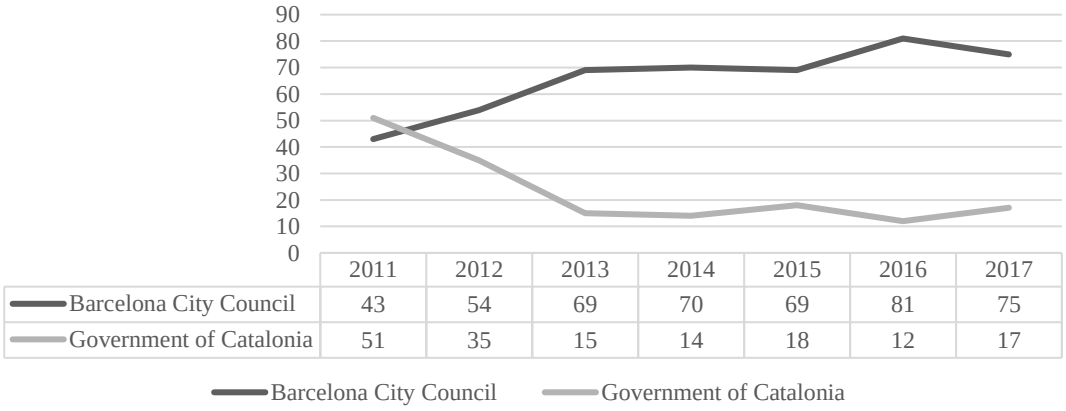
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	*Glòries Entrepreneurship Centre*	It provides general information, welcome sessions, expert advice and other contents to start a business.
	Glòries Business Incubator	Incubator for innovative start-ups. It started operating in 1986.
	Almogàvers Business Incubator	It is a sort of 'incubator of incubators' promoted in public and private cooperation with universities, research centres, professional associations and financial institutions providing sectorial knowledge (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Ecommerce Global Incubator, Nauta, AppStylus, McCann, Fundació INLEA, Fundació Banesto, Dinamon and Bihoop).
	MediaTIC incubator	For high-impact technology start-ups, it began operating in 2017.
	Civic Centre 'Sant Agustí Convent'	The city's space for entrepreneurial programmes aimed at specific collectives and traditional sectors.
	InnoBa – Centre per a la Innovació Socioeconòmica	It hosts activities, specialised services and incubation and experimentation spaces based around the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and Socio-Economic Innovation.
ENTERPRISE	*Cibernàrium*	Centre for technological training for professionals and small and medium-sized enterprises.
	Business Support Office (OAE)	Point of contact, information and advisory services for the development and competitiveness of organisations.
	Barcelona Nord Technology Park	For technology-based innovative companies in the expansion stage.
OTHER	*Centre for Professional Development (Porta22)*	Centre for professional guidance, training and employment programmes
	Ca n'Andalet	For training activities

Source: Author's synthesis based on BA's reports and observation

The more significant role of municipal funds has various reasons. First, this change resulted from the worsening socio-economic conditions related to the consequences of the 2007-2008 crisis, the forecasting of a progressive reduction of funds from national and regional institutions deriving from growing public budgetary constraints and, according to what has been mentioned during an expert interviews (Expert in economic development and entrepreneurship policies, member of the first plan for self-employment of the Municipality of Barcelona, Barcelona, October 2017), the pressures deriving from internal strikes (workers

of Barcelona Activa asking for their stabilisation in contractual terms). This has gone along with the intention of changing the overall strategy of Barcelona Activa. The new plan, developed by the conservative government previously mentioned, emphasised entrepreneurship support at the expense of employment services (i.e. skills support and "more standard" ALMPs); while planning the provision of permanent and universal services for people, nascent entrepreneurs and businesses. The objective was to make Barcelona Activa less dependent from outside resources, thus permitting to abandon a project-based structure that, by its very nature, would not be able to guarantee the continuity and stability of programmes, as well as to allow a comprehensive and long-term policy planning. As Figure 14 reports, this has not prevented, from 2012, the allocation of growing funds.

Figure 13. Barcelona Activa, trends in income distribution (% on a total budget)



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Barcelona City Council	43	54	69	70	69	81	75
Government of Catalonia	51	35	15	14	18	12	17

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Activity Reports of Barcelona Activa (2011-2017)

Figure 14. Barcelona Activa, total budget (2006-2017)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total Budget*	22,6	23,4	22	31	42,8	42	31	33,6	37	37,7	51,7	54,6

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Activity Reports of Barcelona Activa (2006-2017)

This stability has allowed, on the one hand, the consolidation of approach and practices, other than the strengthening of BA's position in the urban 'ecosystem' and its relationships with other actors, which has made Barcelona Activa a highly visible and key reference point

for the city as a whole. At the same time, this model of governance has not meant a weakening of the relevance of the public-private partnership that, as the case of the *Almogàvers* Business Incubator especially demonstrates (see the previous Table 4), constitutes a crucial dimension of governance. On the whole, indeed, Barcelona Activa works on 'two levels': the first one is the direct provision of services and the other one is 'the coordination of the [public-private, *author's note*] entrepreneurial ecosystem of the city' (Entrepreneurship Director of Barcelona Activa, October 2017).

The case of MESPs in Milan is very different. First, it must be said that these have been developed mainly since 2011/2012 by a new city government, with the only exceptions of the municipal calls encouraging the birth of new enterprises in peripheral urban areas which, nonetheless, and as already stressed, have been slightly revised after the election of 2011. The latter represented a significant turning point brought about by the victory of a centre-left coalition for the first time since 1993[75]. Le Galès and Andreotti (2019) recently argued that the new government made three main changes: the first is the involvement of actors that are new to the Milanese scenario in various fields of policy; the second relates to the strengthening of the participatory dimension of governance; and, third, the attempt to strengthen the control and direction capacity of the local government within this new governance arena.

As a matter of fact, the new government has given particular centrality to inclusive entrepreneurship support by developing a robust model of governance that is able to engage a plurality of actors. This capacity has been used to strengthen Milan as a business and self-employment supportive environment and overcome public budgetary limitations by channelling economic resources coming from other institutional levels (national and European funds), and from private actors involved in the management of the various initiatives, into the different programmes (see also Milan Municipality, 2016). Table 9 tries to resume the multitude of activities undertaken by the Municipality.

[75] In 1993, in Italy, was issued the law (Legge 25 Marzo 1993, n. 81) that introduced the direct election of mayors.

Table 9. Entrepreneurship Support System in Milan (2012-2016)

MUNICIPAL-GUIDED	**Municipal calls***
	▪ 'Welcome Business 2012', with Milan Chamber of Commerce: incentives to 'talents' abroad returning to Italy to set up their own business in Milan; ▪ 'Risorse in Periferia 2012', incentives and spaces to start a business in peripheral areas; ▪ 'Tira su la Cler 2013', incentives to start a business in peripheral areas, with higher scores for young people under the age of 35. ▪ 'Tra il Dire e il Fare 2014', incentives to start a business in peripheral areas; ▪ 'Startupper Imprese in Periferia 2016'. It foresaw a higher score for under-35 young people. *From 2012 and 2017, the Municipality has promoted 14 municipal calls to support "start-ups" (term 'start-up' refers to 'the enterprise born in the 5 years before the participation to the same call', internal document of Department for Urban Economy and Employment). Of these, only those calls oriented to the support to entrepreneurship more than to existing start-ups have been considered for this research. Moreover, during the last three years, municipal calls foresaw the support and accompanying services of Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano.
	Municipal Spin-offs
	A project connecting professional education and entrepreneurship support. It has foreseen the development of special and dedicated spin-offs within (and managed by) the municipal schools 'Arte&Messaggio' and 'Quarenghi'.
PRIVATE-CENTRED	**FabriQ – Municipal Social Innovation Incubator**
	Owned by the Municipality but operated by a temporary association of companies made by *Giacomo Brodolini Foundation*, a private non-profit foundation committed to the definition, application, evaluation and dissemination of policies at all levels of government, and *Impact Hub Milan*, a node of an international network of coworking and innovation labs.
	Other start-ups incubators
	▪ *Speed Mi Up*. Born in 2013 as part of the Agreement for the support of Employment and Entrepreneurship signed by the Chamber of Commerce of Milan and the Municipality of Milan. It is managed by a consortium made up of Milan Chamber of Commerce and the private Bocconi University; ▪ *PoliHub – Start-Up District&Incubator*, managed by the private Politecnico di Milano Foundation. ▪ *Base – Creative Enterprise Incubator*, supported by Cariplo Foundation and managed by the following companies or associations: Esterni, Arci, H+,Avanzi and Make a Cube; ▪ *Alimenta2Talent*, programme co-financed and managed by Parco Tecnologico Padano. It gives access to *Alimenta*, the incubator of Parco Tecnologico Padano; ▪ *Milano Luiss Lab*, an incubator for makers managed by the temporary association of companies composed by Giacomo Brodolini Foundation, ITALIACAMP S.r.l. andLUISS G. C. University.
	Other programmes
	▪ *Start Milano*, entrepreneurship supported services promoted by Milan Municipality, Milan Chamber of Commerce and Formaper and preparatory to municipal calls for entrepreneurship in peripheral areas; ▪ *MiGeneration Lab*, with the Lombardy Region and 18 partners (including fablabs, universities and associations): training courses dedicated to young people aged 18 to 35 years aiming at the development of new skills and including the promotion of the entrepreneurial culture. ▪ Self-entrepreneurship support (through Microcredit and Microcredit for under-35) managed by *Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano*, private law organization under public control made up by: Milan Municipality, Milan Metropolitan City, Milan Chamber of Commerce and main trade unions; ▪ *Civic crowdfunding*, an initiative to support self-entrepreneurship and social projects half financed by citizens' donation.

Source: author's elaboration

On the whole, many local associations and other realities have been engaged in other entrepreneurship-related activities, including youth educational projects also oriented (but not only) to promote an entrepreneurial culture among young people (such as

MiGenerationLab[76]). As stressed during the same above interview, a special effort has been spent on the cooperation between different actors, thereby stimulating 'the creation of a sort of model, in which dialogue and confrontation are the main assets' (Official, Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, March 2017). It is worth mentioning the capacity to make connections also between these realities, for instance through joint projects (e.g. IN^3, based on a partnership between Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano, FabriQ and third sector's associations).

Two things must be highlighted in this respect. The first is that this model of governance relies on a strong capacity of the city government to valorise and involve a plurality of actors, by taking a supporting and enabling role. As an official of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment stated:

> The whole work carried out has been to make visible another Milan, another city (..) the valorization of what exists, the promotion of networks of dialogue and roundtable discussions. But, in my view, it's the presence of a direction that matters beyond all single actions. (Int_9, Milan, March 2017)

However, delegation to private entities obstacles the capacity of effective direction and orientation, and this is the second point to stress. This model of governance, indeed, is marked by significant fragmentation, decentralization and by a strong emphasis on delegation and support to private entities. The latter has reached very high levels in the field of innovation but is also visible in other fields. To give some example, preparatory courses to municipal calls (Start Milano) have been delegated to the Chamber of Commerce of Milan; in municipal calls, the support and the accompaniment services are managed by Welfare Ambrosiano Foundation, that is in charge of evaluating the projects, the aspiring entrepreneurs, and accompanying them (points deepened later). The social innovation incubator, although owned by the municipality, is managed by private organizations (see Table 9). Incubators are all managed by actors that are external to the municipality. This can represent a weak point, witnessed, for instance, by some difficulty the Municipality had even to get the information they needed about supported enterprises from some of the entities involved. The third issue to be stressed is that this composite action, that goes in line with

[76] *MiGenerationLab* is a project co-financed by the Municipality of Milan, the Lombardy Region, the Department of Youth and National Civil Service of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and 18 partners: 3 between fablabs and makerspaces, 10 private social institutions, 2 youth associations and 3 universities. It offers 21 educational pathways, one of this is Tira fuori la tua idea di impresa (eng. break out your business idea!). The latter is described as "an introductory course to the creation of a self-enterprise (emphasis added), aimed at exploring and acquiring the necessary skills to transform a business idea in their own work' (http://www.migeneration.it/tira-fuori-tua-idea-impresa/; latest access October 2017)

the traditional inclination for political pragmatism, seems to lack of a comprehensive and long-term strategy also able to express a less timid political vision of that one that will be addressed in the following paragraph.

Milan. Accompany socio-economic changes and pander to the spirit of the private

The use of the term 'accompaniment' is recurring in the field of inclusive entrepreneurship support actions, but generally not with reference to the support to 'innovators' who are not accompanied but rather 'incubated', 'accelerated' or, more simply, 'supported'. The 'accompaniment' is based on the idea that there is the need of integrating, supporting and enhancing the abilities and knowledges of people, also in the face of risks entrepreneurship conceals, and in order to increase chances of success and reduce social vulnerability-related risks (a problem that, as it will be discussed in the last pages of this chapter, policies try to take into account and to reduce). In a nutshell, the 'accompaniment' consists – in Milan as in Barcelona – mainly of services that help participants to plan their business activity through, precisely, a 'business plan'. The latter is an instrument used to plan a business and facilitate its management, although it is deemed to be adequate especially for external communications (e.g. banks, investors). Moreover, accompaniment services are designed to train participants to deal with the problems and challenges of doing business (e.g. bureaucracy, organizational aspects, relationships with suppliers and clients etc.). According to interviewees, these difficulties are often underestimated by participants, and this is deemed the most critical factor that undermines the success of the entrepreneurial project. Hence the need for the accompaniment:

> 'if you accompany the entrepreneur in the first two years of life, he/she has many more possibilities to overcome ... the first two years are very difficult for a company, no matter how big or small. (...) an entrepreneur, in the first year of life of his activity, works 14 hours per day, does not sleep and has the anxiety. You understand that if you leave him alone, every problem… or he/she pretends not to see them, or he puts them aside hoping they will be solved, and then they come all at once and he/she closes ... or he/she solves two of them postponing the other three. If you have a structure that helps you to prioritize, manage priorities and imposes a minimum of control of how it is going ... and then requires you to open your eyes to what works and what does not work ... imposes and encourages you to hypothesize solutions and look for them, helps you to understand priorities or helps you understand what is needed and what is not needed. What is really important and what is not.' (Microcredit manager and assistant to the general-director of FWA, Milan, February 2017)

> 'start a business is not only what you put on paper but ... in everyday life, you find many problems or many doubts that you had not raised at the beginning and knowing that you can make these queries and you can solve ... logically it is important. Just think that most of them are one, two or three partners, we are not talking about teams that are multidisciplinary but sometimes they are all with the same careers, so sometimes they have problems ... basically the

> problems can be on the subject of marketing strategies or on the subject of accounting ... they have a very high profile of engineers and at the level of everything that would be the accounting part or the tax part that they do not know enough ... to know that they have the possibility of getting help in this is important to them.' (Consultant for enterprises installed in BA incubators, Barcelona, December 2017)

In Barcelona, this is the reason why programmes oriented to specific social groups consist mainly of education and training classes encapsulated in a planned package:

> 'the accompaniment is made by education and tutorship, they are the two legs with which BA works... and not only here, also in the areas of enterprises and employment. Here we embark much more training and pack it. Therefore, when the participants start, the training is already planned, its content, also the timing. The majority of the programs, and Ideas with Future is one of these, are intensive training. We make them come here four days a week if it is the afternoon, or 5 days if it is the morning schedule. This is during a month, more or less.' (Entrepreneurship Consultant at Convent de Sant Augusti, Barcelona Activa, January 2018)

Moreover, these structured educational programmes aim at strengthening participants' abilities and competencies, including: managing responsibilities, managing risks, develop the ability of negotiation and networking, improve technical knowledges (i.e. working on a business plan), while working on 'the issue of leadership, of self-esteem, because at the end I've to be convinced of myself and I have to communicate this self-confidence' (Entrepreneurship Consultant at Convent de Sant Augusti, Barcelona Activa, January 2018).

The instrument of the 'accompaniment' reflects some of the tendencies of change in policy approaches described in the theoretical chapters and that here we could summarise in a cartoon by Clay Bennet, American cartoonist, showing two images of a woman who is drowning in the sea: in the first, 'welfare' gives her a life vest, in the second a 'reformed welfare' gives her a book titled 'how to swim'. By using this metaphor, we can say that the entrepreneurial project is the small or medium boat that the accompaniment aims to help to build and to keep afloat.

In this sense, MESPs play a role in accompanying individualisation processes by providing resources and positive incentives to individual coping strategies, based in this case on entrepreneurship, other than, as we will see, to individual ambitions. In this respect, as the definition of problems has partly already shown, Milan more than Barcelona seems to retain this role of 'accompaniment' with respect to socio-economic changes and individualization trends. In Milan, labour and economic changes are indeed discussed as far-reaching facts, something that is already given and in the face of which what the public actor can do, in this respect, is to follow this change and try, let's say, to be prepared to exploit any resulting benefits: again, the emergence of the relevance of the specificity of the local policy paradigm, characterised by a resilient and robust pragmatism.

The new municipal government of Milan has made actions supporting entrepreneurship one of its distinctive traits, by emphasising the necessity to address 'the new' urban challenges: namely, those related to the enhancement of innovation, social inclusion, and the strengthening of 'emerging urban economies'. The latter refers to new and innovative business organizations, digital manufacturing, but also to that service sector that has contributed to strengthening self-employment and entrepreneurship. This focus has been accompanied by the ambition to present Milan as a field of experimentation of new ways to deal with significant changes and to catch the train of the 'future economy', other than as a model to emulate: 'Milan must be responsible for indicating a social and economic road. It's always been so, and, in this phase, there is no going back, the moment has come to say: 'let's change and let's try to innovate'. If Milan cannot do it, who can?' (Staff of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, February 2017). What is at stake seems to be not only the capacity to follow new economic trends but also the very identity of the city that is trying to recover its role of 'moral capital' of Italy after a period of twilight in this respect (Andreotti, Le Galès 2019).

The support to incubators, programmes and projects has developed against this background, together with the experimentations launched within more 'traditional' or historical services (i.e. spin-offs in municipal vocational schools): 'trying in some way to innovate it, or remodel it according to the needs of the market that is the big challenge of today' (Official, Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, March 2017). Other actions have not been taken into account so far but are worthy of being mentioned, such as the municipal support to private Milanese coworking spaces, which are very spread in the city. This action has not to do with entrepreneurship promotion, but coworking spaces – mostly populated by freelancers (Gandini, 2015) – have been supported since they are amongst the symbols of a new, smart, agile or entrepreneurial way of working. Therefore, it is an action that ties into the main policy objective of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment of the Municipality, and thus: 'to promote urban economic development in an inclusive way and *following* labour forms of change' (Staff of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, February 2017). The emphasis has been added on the use of the verb 'to follow' since it is able to highlight what is argued here, thus the tendency to accompany rather than govern socio-economic changes, sustained by a governance model that valorizes or 'panders to the spirit of the private':

> 'We do not want to privilege one of the vocations of Milan, but to select those that have the greatest potential, always *pandering to the spirit of the private*, which does not mean the spirit of the large private enterprise that has to invest, but an entrepreneurial spirit of the whole city, of the

smalls, of the individual workers and of the enterprises, large or small.' (Staff of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, February 2017)

Against this background, the 'vocations' or 'roots' of the city are mobilised as a source of legitimation of a strategy relying in no small extent on private actors and the entrepreneurial spirit of its citizens and civil society in general:

'a work that has, let's say, its roots in what is the fabric of Milan, what characterizes precisely the context in which we find ourselves. Obviously, Milan is, of course, the economic and financial centre of the country, one of the most significant territories from this point of view, hence the political mandate to try to use these assets given by the territory as a lever and with a trigger effect to produce multiplier effects. So, to use public policies in order to enhance excellence, a very fertile and vibrant fabric.' (Head of the economic planning unit of the municipality, Milan, April 2017)

'This department has taken in the hands, being able to read it, everything that the territory is able to express, and tried to bring it to a level, not only of visibility but also of further ... it gave a boost to what the city of Milan already expresses.' (Official, Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Milan, March 2017)

Connected with this, there is the assumption mentioned in the discussion about the definition of problems, that relates to the alleged sunset of the 'standard' or 'steady' job, in the face of which the decision has been 'to reward and support who, in a way, want to create this job on his own' that, again:

'It represents the underlying conceptual assumption to this line of intervention, together with the fact that being in a territory like Milan, probably this type of policies could take root better than in other Italian cities, due to endogenous factors.' (Head of the economic planning unit of the municipality, Milan, April 2017; fully quoted before).

However, it must be noted that the city government is trying to use entrepreneurship support policies towards specific priorities of its political agenda, and especially the urban regeneration of peripheral neighbourhoods. In this respect, an example is *PoliHub,* the *Start-Up District&Incubator* managed by the private Politecnico di Milano Foundation. The Municipality has supported the realization of a new space for this incubator, in the less deprived part of the neighbourhood *Bovisa*, with the aim of contributing to revitalising this peripheral area of the city:

'The City Council thought that a start-up incubator could help to give to this neighbourhood a new vitality, different from the simple one that the university can give. Simple in the sense that the university has a very limited vitality in terms of time: during the lessons, then students generally run away to other areas. The worker and especially the start-upper, who has totally random hours, can still make an area live even during non-university hours.' (Spaces Manager and Program Ambassador of PoliHub, Milan, April 2017)

The social innovation incubator of the municipality, FabriQ, is another example. This is located in the peripheral area of Quarto Oggiaro for the purpose of contributing to

revitalising this neighbourhood, regarded as one of the most marginalised urban areas. Moreover, this incubator has been launched with the aim of contributing to foster 'social innovation' within the city by supporting, more to the point, start-ups that have a social impact:

> There is the need to support socially innovative start-ups more than those ones operating in other fields, like in the purely technological one. On the one hand, due to the voluntary legacy characterizing the social which is, thus, less entrepreneurial: who has an idea related to the social does not think, immediately, to the possibility to create an enterprise, but he thinks, on the contrary, to create an association or something similar. The enterprise is not the first thing that he comes up with. Obviously, things are changing a little at a time. On the other hand, it is harder for them to intercept the classic funds for start-ups, because they see in social start-ups a lower return. (FabriQ Project Manager, Milan, January 2017)

Social start-ups supported via FabriQ calls are thirty-two up to 2016 and two-thirds of them operate in the digital economy, whose collaborative dimension is often considered intrinsic bringer of social value, while other concerns the production of goods, like a device for swimmers in training, or the provision of services, from platforms in the care sector to business services. As discussed elsewhere (Bifulco, Dodaro, 2018), a prevalent economistic approach and market orientation is adopted, while it seems to prevail a very timid interpretation of what is 'the social' in social innovation which, nonetheless, is also the fruit of the delegation of its management to private actors whose interpretation is influenced by the EU approach and of the business community to social innovation: *Giacomo Brodolini Foundation*, whose activities are carried out by a European team and it is part of several European networks, and *Impact Hub Milan*, a node of an international network of coworking and innovation labs.

Therefore, 'the political' and the role of the public action appear in the shadow in Milan, while pragmatic policy approaches seem to prevail. If the city government has been able to aggregate and valorise plural and contingent interests, the risk is to give excessive centrality to the private and, as a result, market-led models of government. This represents a limit to the capacity to govern contemporary socio-economic and political changes and tendency towards greater individualisation (*convergence trends*), which result, indeed, more 'accompanied' than governed in this case.

As far as Barcelona is concerned, it must be noted that this type of governance characterises entrepreneurship support policies of Barcelona Activa only partly. Indeed, they are based on stable and strong private-public partnerships and a mature capacity to go along socio-economic changes and adapt 'to the needs of the market' (Barcelona Activa, 2016, p. 42). In this respect, it must be noted that the Entrepreneurship area of Barcelona Activa, in its long-term trajectory, has progressively innovated, readapted and enriched its services

according to changing businesses needs and thanks to its flexible and agile form. As the Entrepreneurship Director of BA explained, indeed:

> 'The advantage of having this juridical form allowed us to adapt our services and programmes to changing circumstances… because the profile of entrepreneurs has changed. I mean, his necessities have changed. Nowadays they have a more technological profile, thus they do not have needs as they had 20 years ago ... for example, the incubator was more thought for… it was not industrial, but it was an office with many square meters, figuring that many people would come working ... now a company that begins, for example, e-commerce, needs 15/20 square meters ... then, we have been able to adapt the spaces, the training, to adapt also the profiles of the team'. (Entrepreneurship Director at Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, October 2017)

It has been previously highlighted also how the 'start-up phenomenon' has fuelled entrepreneurship policies and contribute to encourage both cities to become the 'best places to start-up', by trying to foster the attractiveness for investors as well as by retaining/supporting people (i.e. innovators, creatives) who want to develop innovation, but also new business organizations in general. However, in the next pages, it will be argued that the political turn in 2015, in Barcelona, had an impact on values underpinning entrepreneurship support policies and future directions, by showing the tension between politics and the pervasiveness of convergence trends towed by institutional legacies.

Barcelona. Govern: the relevance of the political dimension of governance

If the 'political' appears timidly and overshadowed in Milan by 'entrepreneurial spirit of the whole city'[77], in Barcelona emerged a stronger relevance of the political dimension of governance. In the Catalan capital, the political dimension is favoured, as we have seen, by a system of governance in which the city government has acquired an increasing room for manoeuvre and that, therefore, facilitate its capacity to impose political orientations and values:

> 'being a municipal company, every four years, when municipal elections are held, we are a little... we execute the municipal policy of the specific government and the economic policy has a lot to do with the economic and political program of the municipality.' (Entrepreneurship Director at Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, October 2017)

The municipal elections in 2015 were won by *Barcelona en Comù* (Eng. Barcelona in Common), a citizen and left-wing political platform inspired by ideals such as anti-capitalism, participatory democracy, social justice and the new municipalism. In this election, citizens

[77] Member of the staff of the Councillor at Department for Urban Economy and Employment, Municipality of Milan, February 2017. See interview extract at page 151.

elected Ada Colau, an activist of the *Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca* (PAH) (Platform for People Affected by Mortgages)[78], as the 'radical Mayor' of the city, thus promoting Barcelona as one of the 'rebel cities' of Europe[79].

As far as Barcelona Activa is concerned, this has entailed significant changes with respect to the former conservative government, as also the activity reports produced by BA witness. By way of example, if in 2014 the mission of Barcelona Activa was: 'to be a reference point for policies oriented to support business, create employment and engaged in the international projection of Barcelona as an excellent environment for the economic activity and the social progress' (Barcelona Activa, 2014, p. 9); in 2017 Barcelona Activa aimed at 'fomenting job opportunities, entrepreneurship and support for companies, as well as to respond to local people's needs from a plural, cooperative, social and solidarity economy perspective' (Barcelona Activa, 2017, p. 10). With respect to entrepreneurship promotion, indeed, the new government has tried to gradually shift the focus to the promotion of 'another economy' or 'social and solidarity-based' form of economies, which includes the support to an adequate (collective; i.e. cooperatives, collaborative civic platforms) form of enterprises. As an interviewee pointed out: 'the current government has introduced a crucial variable that it has been worked before as well, but it has never had the attention that it has now (..) it means, more specifically, that they give resources and political significance to the cooperative or associative types of entrepreneurship' (Expert, Barcelona, October 2017). This policy is 'totally new' also according to the Responsible for Social and Solidarity Cooperative Economy Services Directorate and the Consultant for Social and Solidarity Economy Projects. It is presented as 'new' also because of the intention to stand out from the promotion of 'social entrepreneurship', that Barcelona Activa supported to different extents since the 1990s:

> 'is an entirely new policy, started in 2015. And this is important. I mean, with the new government, then, it is decided to develop this new public policy. (...) Before there was something in Barcelona Activa… some activity that was timidly promoting cooperativism, you know, training courses or small training capsules, so that people who wanted to undertake a project of business could know that the legal formula of the cooperative exists, okay? But there was no a vision behind and at most there was more... a view of the social economy as more, as more complementary, as more... more from a charitable mentality... very moderate. With the new government, it was decided to open a services department dedicated to the

[78] Grassroots movement claiming for housing rights and fighting against evictions [Website: https://afectadosporlahipoteca.com; latest access April 2019]

[79] In this respect, see the articles by European Alternatives, 'a transnational civil society organisation and citizen movement promoting democracy, equality, and culture beyond the nation state' (i.e. https://euroalter.com/2016/rebel-cities-not-utopia; latest access: February 2019); but also the article of the Guardian titled 'Is this the world's most radical mayor?' and published on May 26, 2016 [Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/26/ada-colau-barcelona-most-radical-mayor-in-the-world; latest access April 2019].

> cooperative, social and solidarity economy.' (Responsible for Social and Solidarity Cooperative Economy Services Directorate, Barcelona, April 2018)

Actually, what is different is the emphasis the city government places on social and solidarity economy and the visibility it is trying to give it, in the attempt to counterbalance more conventional discourse about entrepreneurship. Of course, the extent to which the image of Barcelona as a 'start-up city' can convert into Barcelona as a 'social and solidarity-based economy city' remains unknown. What seems certain, however, is that this puts different values and political positions at the centre of the issue. In this respect, an interesting anecdote is about the news, circulating during the fieldwork in Barcelona in 2018, about a project that former delivery workers of a big companies like Deliveroo and Glovo were trying to launch, concerning the development of a cooperative of food delivery, to protest against working and contractual conditions of this giant of the so-called 'gig economy' and, at the same time, try to build an alternative model. They were supported by *Coòpolis*, a space for the promotion of the social and solidarity-based economy supported by the municipality of Barcelona, while Glovo is one of the most successful enterprises incubated by Barcelona Activa, when it was only a start-up. An event that may happen again, as we discussed during the previously quoted interview, since the new government strategy foresees the attempt to complement the consolidated activities of Barcelona Activa that are focused on the more conventional economy with new projects, whose reputation and legitimacy are going to be built as well:

> 'Does that mean that the rest of Barcelona Activa was working only with the conventional economy? Yes, we are stressing the fact that this didn't exist before and we are going to give it strength. This does not mean that it goes against the other. The other continues, more or less, possibly becoming influenced by it. This government has this more social outlook, which is the government's top priority. (...) the difficulties are often of mentality, and then you have to earn credibility and that's where the challenge is. It's a transition issue.' (Responsible for Social and Solidarity Cooperative Economy Services Directorate, Barcelona, April 2018)

This strategy entailed the implementation of projects, but also the opening of a specific facility of Barcelona Activa, called *InnoBA*, for the activities and services of support of the social and solidarity economy and socio-economic innovation. It is still hard to imagine assessing the effective capacities to pursue these objectives, given the recent implementation of this public policy. However, despite this recent implementation, occurred with additional resources and, therefore, without reducing the investments in the other facilities of BA and substitution effects, it constitutes a field of tension with other actors:

> I believe that what the Barcelona City Council did very well was to position Barcelona Activa as a very powerful economic promotion institute where factors such as technology and innovation are crucial. This, I would say that…it was the case a couple of years ago, and this is what allowed us to make a technological hub, make incubators, very powerful accelerators,

> generate spaces in Barcelona such as 22@ where there is also an urban plan behind which allows us to welcome many companies and generate this technological factor. And as a critique, it is true that since a couple of years, this has been, I believe due to political ideology, it's what I think, it has slowed down a bit. I think that the dragging factor that we have derives from the good work that has been done and that, in fact, has prevented the paralysis. Barcelona is still very attractive, there are many programs, but is trying to focus more on the social economy. And I say this as criticism, not because I do not believe in the social and collaborative economy, but because within the framework of being competitive, and not only with respect to one's own talent but looking for talents from outside that come here… perhaps in the social and collaborative economy, we are not so competitive, not because we do not want this, perhaps because of the geopolitical situation of other cities, traditions and countries with another type of industry, which allowed them to be more than us in this sector, and… we have positioned this as the main priority of the municipal policy of entrepreneurship of the Barcelona City Council when before there were others! (Training Manager and Responsible Area Entrepreneurship, Autoocupació, Barcelona, October 2017)

As I just stressed, the promotion of social and solidarity-based economy is introduced as a gradual and partly complementary asset of Barcelona Activa, although with a long-term and ideal vision that relates to the affirmation of social and solidarity-based values within economic activities and organizations. This seems to depend partly on political alliances, which are often necessary to govern but that bring together different political vision, it is the case of the alliance with the socialist party[80]: 'the socialist party has a more reformist discourse, more centred on the market economy and precisely it had… it participated in part of the economic policy plan. The issue of the Barcelona brand, tourism, trade, it is the socialist party has brought them and here some contradictions are visible' (Responsible for Social and Solidarity Cooperative Economy Services Directorate, Barcelona, April 2018). On the other hand, it takes its roots also in the specificities of the local economy, relying on an economic fabric that is mostly made by tiny, small and medium enterprises. These realities are centred on 'entrepreneurs' and forms of entrepreneurship that, as discussed in Chapter II, do not coincide with the 'capitalist' and that, according to the Responsible for Social and Solidarity Cooperative Economy Services Directorate, need to be supported and then oriented towards different economic models:

> 'The city council of Barcelona knows that the dominant part of the economy in the city has a mercantile mentality and a capitalist mentality. What it is trying to do is that this vision of the economy as more transformative can grow in this city. Therefore, to the extent that this type of doing economy grows, the rest will be placed in a different position. What does it mean? That most of the mercantile economy does not belong to multinationals, but to small and medium enterprises, then what would be the strategy is to try to contaminate with new values this conventional economy which is made by small and medium enterprises, which suffers from austerity, which suffers from budgetary constraints, which suffers for not having the infrastructures that would be necessary, which suffer from labour market legislation... that is where the meeting point and the interesting thing is. The big multinational is something else.

[80] The alliance will be broken only subsequently due to divisions on the independence question in Catalonia.

This is the medium and long-term strategy.' (Responsible for Social and Solidarity Cooperative Economy Services Directorate, Barcelona, April 2018)

Despite the huge transformations that crossed Barcelona since the Olympic games and that have made it a relevant node of the international economy and headquarter of big multinationals, the economic fabric sees different economies live together (the *fragmented society* of Mingione, 1991). As Garcia and Degen (2008) well pointed out: 'what is left of the past is the commercial character of Barcelona, with its innumerable small shops owned and managed by families with a strong local identity' (p.12). Consistently with this, attention has also been placed on the 'economy of proximity' and the strengthening of the commercial fabric, that is associated with the quality of life in the neighbourhoods and social cohesion.

By way of conclusion, it is worth highlighting the main point that here emerges, which is that, regardless of values and ideas, the political dimension occupies a crucial space in the governance of Barcelona's MESPs. Nonetheless, as also emerged from the last extracts, the political dimension of governance, no matter how hard, must deal with some limits. First, the scant legitimacy of 'alternative' discourses and practices. And second, the strength of institutional legacies that ensure the continuity of already established and internationally well recognised actions (therefore highly legitimised): 'it's like it is a great transatlantic, it has an inertia of many years that push to go in that line' (Responsible for Social and Solidarity Cooperative Economy Services Directorate, Barcelona, April 2018). A legacy that also relates to the consolidation of a model of governance that is based, first of all, on the 'capacity to integrate and shape private as well as public local interests' (Garcia and Degen, 2008, p. 10). The critique expressed to the city government to abandon a development model based on innovation, growth and highly competitive is the symptom of the different views of actors involved, and which of course matter.

To conclude, I want to add that, also in the light of what urban studies already outlined, the role played by supranational institutions cannot be neglected. The influence coming from other institutional scales, including from the EU and cities networks (that produce exchanges of methodologies and practices), indeed emerged, although only to a lesser extent. It must be stressed, in this respect, that European funds have a low incidence on Barcelona Activa's budget, but reference has been specially made to the capacity of influencing methodologies and practices regardless of the degree of dependence from European funds, that is indeed minor. With the exception of 2016, when the contribution of European funds has been undetectable due to the end of the 2007-2013 Feder programme, the average between 2010-2015 was around 4% of the total budget. Therefore, it constitutes a factor of influence, including with respect to methodologies, while the coincidence of themes and approaches

(e.g. the inclusiveness in entrepreneurship policies) indicates a powerful impact on urban agendas, sometimes regardless of the weight of funds allocated. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that, as we have seen, MESPs rely strongly on the active role of cities and their capacity to mobilise resources to sustain nascent entrepreneurs and, in the case of Barcelona, also to express new political contents.

The 'filtering', 'supporting' and 'orienting' functions of MESPs

There are other two functions public action seems to have when promoting entrepreneurship, namely what I refer to as their 'filtering', 'supporting' and 'orienting' functions.

The 'filtering function' refers to the role they play with respect to the 'selection' of participants. The latter especially concerns MESPs in Milan, mainly due to the type of support provided that is hybrid, and therefore entailing economic kind of benefits; and in Barcelona with respect to innovative start-ups accessing incubation services and intensive programmes that have a maximum number of participants. In line with OECD recommendations, indeed, 'intensive support should be competitive or filtered to select recipients that are motivated and most likely to succeed', while 'extensive support should be low cost and offered widely' (OECD, 2016, p. 12). The features of the Barcelona's model, as already stressed, allow the city to provide soft support to all those who request it; something that, on the other hand, allows BA to extend 'discouragement' actions and 'orienting' functions. Before addressing these two points, however, it must be said that the processes of selection – that as it has been just highlighted is especially active in Milan because it entails the provision of economic benefits (whose forms and features are discussed in the next chapter) – entails the inclusion of someone and the exclusion of someone else. We do not know anything about who is excluded and what he/she does after, if and what other strategies are undertaken to start the entrepreneurial project and to what extent and how this exclusion affect its eventual entrepreneurial experience and risks of social vulnerability. What is known is that there is a selection process.

The selection process is part of the strategy to deal with possible negative social outcomes of self-activation through entrepreneurship. Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano is involved in the selection processes preceding both microcredit and municipal calls. The selection follows the standard logic of social investment, i.e. *what works*. This leads to select beneficiaries on the basis of their chances of success:

'we assess the entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial project ... of the entrepreneur in terms of skills ... and of his entrepreneurial project to precisely decide whether they have the merit, in the entrepreneurial sense, to be able to receive this support, the economic guarantee, or not.' (Business Consultant, FWA, Milan, February 2017)

Therefore, the selection "discriminates" beneficiaries on the basis of the resources young people have at their disposal. From the point of view of policy actors and practitioners, these resources are not economic, because policy intervention is thought to intervene to compensate individual lack of economic resources[81]. Rather, they have to do with the individual capacities and determination to carry out an entrepreneurial project with higher chances of success. This merit is evaluated on the basis of individual capacities that can demonstrate the ability to do and to cope with adversities (i.e. expertise resulting from past work experiences, but also determination, willpower):

'If I want to open a bakery but I've never worked in a bakery and I have never attended even a bakery course, then my entrepreneurial project is a bit baseless. Or it's not completely baseless if maybe I have a partner who is or was a baker, so I can have the management and administrative skills and she can have those skills crafts and, therefore, together we're fine. But if I want to open it alone and I have no idea how to do it, the project loses value, so to speak.' (Business Consultant, FWA, Milan, February 2017)

The Welfare Ambrosiano Foundation manages accompanying services also for municipal calls oriented to support nascent entrepreneurship in urban peripheries, applying the same criteria of selection, which, nonetheless, must take into account the priority given to specific social groups (i.e. young people and women). This mechanism of selection has also been followed by the introduction of mandatory accompanying services as well as actions oriented to prepare people to the entrepreneurial path, also by making them more conscious of the risks and responsibilities that the entrepreneurial choice entails. It is the case of 'pre-calls' such as Start Milano, a preliminary preparation course to the calls for new business in peripheral areas. This is the result of the reflexion of the local government about the problem of how to manage the spread of self-entrepreneurship and the relative risks of increasing social vulnerability:

'Initially, the approach we always have had was: to create and support new companies or the existing company that hires new workers, because, clearly, if the company is solid and has new foundations, it then is able to grow and to create the employment that we all want. But that of making people all entrepreneurs is a problem that we have had to face because many people embark on this.'

'Lately, this idea to anticipate our calls with pre-calls, with Formaper, foreseeing insights or seminars, is because we need to make clear to the entrepreneur the process he/she is getting into. After this, many give up. We have planned a pre-call where we give all the information

[81] See also the extract from the interview conducted with a member of the staff of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment of the municipality of Milan and quoted at page 165 of this thesis.

> on what it means to do business. And this is a fundamental change if compared with the first calls where this step has not been made. Even so, however, we clearly have situations that are successful and others that fail. Anyway, this also depends on these particular years, where small business suffers a lot from the economic situation, the globalization, all that ... and therefore it is clear that the risk is still high, it remains in the hands of the entrepreneur and it can also manifest itself in a negative sense.'
>
> (Responsible for Self-entrepreneurship and Microfinance Service of the municipality, Milan, April 2017)

Mechanisms of selection or selective accompaniment of this kind may entail two risks: one relates to the risk of enhancing inequalities on new lines, based precisely on relational capacities, knowledge, ability to do and so on and so forth (as we shall see in the next chapter). The second is to provide help to whom less need it, by enhancing the accumulation of advantages. Given that no one knows what people will do after being excluded from public support (maybe try going on with their project alone?), this social risk of not supporting them is particularly significant. Because it is true that MESPs has a 'support function' through to the facility of resources that can effectively provide a support net in the first and critical years of activity, thus reducing the isolation of individual entrepreneurs and trying to reduce the risk of growing vulnerability that individualisation processes entail (that self-entrepreneurship often testifies). Nonetheless, it is also true that is provided only to the 'selected'. The extensive approach adopted by Barcelona Activa entails more room for manoeuvre in this respect.

First, the problem of social risks entrepreneurship entails, especially in the face of growing individualisation processes, that foster people to individually deal with their labour/social inclusion even creating their job with their hands, is a matter of concern also in Barcelona. However, as the Director at Employment Area of Barcelona Activa argued, one of the main tasks of a competent advisor is to orientate, shed light on the weak points of a project or, at the same time, of the profile of the 'aspiring entrepreneur', by also providing alternatives. This is what contributes to make Barcelona Activa an interesting case. Indeed, it concentrates support services for both economic development and employment that includes support to enterprises, nascent entrepreneur, but also to unemployed looking for a job that can access, besides the services for the active support to the search of a job, also education and training courses. When the Entrepreneurship Consultant at Convent de Sant Augusti facilitated me some contacts of young people, it was curious to know that one of them – that unfortunately was not disposed to participate in the research with an interview – that participated in the entrepreneurship programme for under-30 young people, at the end started working for Barcelona Activa. It is clearly just a unique case, but it shows the 'global approach' to people

asking for support that seems to characterise BA and that would deserve further attention. In this respect, an Entrepreneurship Consultant at Convent de Sant Augusti argued:

> 'the idea of the programs would be that programmes' participants, including those of 'Idees Amb Futur', at the end of the training period would start up their idea of business, their activity. This would be ideal. But it's not really just that. Entrepreneurship indicators often coincide with the number of created companies. This is the data that interests the most. For us, for our team at least, it is very clear that this is not the indicator that… this is obviously important ... but it is not just that. All the projects that have not been undertaken because participants have then realized that they were not enough prepared to move forward… for whatever reason, it doesn't matter, and they have not been activated, for us is also a good indicator because it means… this is the vision we give to this data, that there are people who have not risked what they would have risked with their project, for instance, to go against a wall.' (Barcelona, January 2018)

In a similar vein, the Entrepreneurship Director at Barcelona Activa stated that:

> 'It is also true that we do not want that people *emprendan por emprender* (start a business superficially, author's note). That is, our objective is not a quantitative objective. Our aim is that people who want to start a business can do so with the best guarantees of success. So, we want that he/she is trained, that he/she assesses, that he/she works on the business idea. Therefore, we do not seek ... if a young person is approaching Barcelona Activa, what we try to do is to enhance the analyses of the business idea, we want that she/he works with this ... In all cases, what we are looking for is that whoever approaches BA then can deploy all the necessary resources in the right way, also to avoid that they can risk too much the few resources they have, for instance, the unemployment benefit. Because in Spain there is an option that is to capitalize on the unemployment benefit, that is to say, a person that has the right to receive the unemployment benefit, can use it to start-up a business... obviously, what we want is that then... of course they are master of their decisions, but what we want is to direct all our resources so that people can do this analysis, the business plan, and see if, with all those elements on the table, the project is viable or is not economically sustainable. This is the focus of all our resources.' (Barcelona, October 2017)

To this must be added the more recent reflexion on the role the local government can play by providing a kind of support to self-employed people that can strengthen their position through the development of social cooperatives, thus avoiding risks and difficulties sometimes connected with self-employment. The *Pla d'Impuls de l'Economia Social i Solidària* (plan for the enhancement of social and solidarity-based economy), indeed, foresees the 'promotion of cooperatives of services made by freelancers' (p. 24).

> 'One thing that characterises the social and solidarity economy is the idea that collectively, it is always easier than individually. Therefore, self-employment depends on how you conceptualise it. That is to say, individual entrepreneurship can sometimes be justified, but it is more difficult to work alone, and the aim is to emphasise a collective view and to try to cooperate. (...) For example, in relation with what I told you before about the study that we have done with people who are working in the informal economy, there is a very interesting project called Mujeres Pa'lante that has been... most of them were Latin-American women who were working cleaning houses or in hotels, they have been establishing as an association and some are now going to establish a cooperative.... there are different strata and sectors in which this process of inter-cooperation. That there is a public policy that talks about these issues, that puts them on the agenda, that is developing mechanisms of funding, that is

developing processes of training, this is of help.' (Responsible for Social and Solidarity Cooperative Economy Services Directorate, Barcelona, April 2018)

Therefore, BA seems to play a more global role and, being its services almost entirely universal and able to count on composite services, seems to be capable of providing both support and orientation. However, to have the capacity to do something is not enough to make that happen. As we will see, indeed, a limit of Barcelona Activa is the difficulties it has to reach less educated people. This is something that Milan is more able to do, probably both because of the provision of economic resources and the presence on the territory of some services. Indeed, if Barcelona Activa's services are more spatially concentrated, in Milan the fragmentation and dispersion of initiatives allow to guarantee a more extensive presence in the urban space, including in deprived neighbourhood.

VI. Barcelona and Milan's MESPs in comparison: key points

By way of conclusion, it is useful to summarise the most significant elements that emerged from the comparison. The following table (Table 10) reports these key points (the final key-point concerns MESP's outcomes, discussed in the next and last chapter).

Table 10. Barcelona and Milan's MESPs in comparison

	Barcelona	**Milan**
Type of support	Soft; differentiated	Hybrid; differentiated
Approach	Extensive	Selective
Logic	Resource-based	Resource-based with greater emphasis on 'what works'
Problem definition	Greater emphasis on labour and economic paradigmatic changes	Crisis, precarity and consequences on self-employment
Scope	Integration between economic development and ALMPs (inclusive MESPs)	Integration between economic development, ALMPs and local welfare (inclusive MESPs)
Characteristics of governance	Institutionalised and centralized governance founded on the public-private partnership	Fragmentation and dispersion with a stronger emphasis on the delegation to private entities
City government's role	Public-private partnership; strategic role, coordination	Public-private partnership; valorisation of the private
Political dimension	Stronger; govern trends	In the shadow; accompany trends
Policy paradigm	'Ideas'	Pragmatism
Functions	Supporting and orienting functions	Filtering and supporting functions
Outcomes	Differentiated and differentiating	Differentiated and differentiating

Source: author's elaboration of key findings

Therefore, we have seen how Milan's and Barcelona's MESPs make use of a variety of measures and policy instruments to support nascent entrepreneurs. This diversification reflects two diversified urban economies and the aim to sustain the pluralism characterising local development patterns, but also the multiple scopes of MESPs. Despite some commonalities (e.g. differentiation of the interventions), significant differences also emerged about the other policy dimensions under study. As the table above shows, these include the type of support, approaches, main underlying logic, problem's definition, scope, governance arrangements, the role of city governments and political dimension of governance, policy paradigms and MESP's functions. Their analysis has allowed exploring the way local policy actors in Milan and Barcelona reproduce, interpret and partly invalidate the mainstream approaches to entrepreneurship support policies and the role cities play in this respect. Overall, the comparative analysis of Milan's and Barcelona's MESPs has highlighted that despite the relevance of convergence trends pushing towards entrepreneurship promotion as a crucial policy tool to contribute to developing the city as a 'business-friendly ecosystem', MESPs also incorporates other, more complex and differentiated functions and values.

CHAPTER V

THE OPPORTUNITY TO INCLUDE AND THE RISK OF 'DIFFERENTIATED INCLUSION'

In this chapter, I focus on the experiences of young people up to 35 years of age who benefited from MESPs. In the context of individualisation and de-standardisation already discussed, new opportunities seem to have emerged, while inequalities appear to unfold also along new lines, based on the capacities to catch these opportunities (i.e. determination, creativity, initiative, relational capacities, knowledge, ability to do). But what role entrepreneurship support policies play in this respect? The chapter analyses young people's experiences with the main purpose of investigating the implications MESPs may have in terms of the distribution of risks and opportunities. The question is: whether and how MESPs affect the distribution of risks and opportunities among participants? It is in the articulation of an answer to this question that the purpose of highlighting ideas and representations of the issue at stake by study participants is pursued as well.

I. 'You can be an entrepreneur in many ways': how boundaries fade

'I: *How do you like to define yourself? Entrepreneur, self-employed, startupper...?*' R: Entrepreneur. But the thing is that I think you can be an entrepreneur in many ways. It's not just setting up a business. For me, entrepreneur, it can also be learning new things, signing up for courses, it doesn't have to be necessarily starting a business... in other words... *emprender* [82] something means starting something. In the sense of starting something new. I think that "entrepreneur" is the right word.' (Letitia, 29-year old, production and selling of handicrafts, Barcelona)

In the previous chapter I have shown how the principle of 'inclusiveness' guiding MESPs translates into mixed policy instruments, which are designed to fit with the socio-economic heterogeneity that the concept of entrepreneurship as such entails and the different objectives these policies pursue: boosting innovation and economic development, but also

82 The entrepreneur is in spanish 'el emprendedor'. The term 'emprendedor' is derived from the word 'emprender', meaning to 'undertake', to 'launch', to 'initiate'. The verb 'emprender' can be assimilated to the English 'to start-up', meaning not only set up a business, but to start something in general as well.

promoting self-entrepreneurship as an alternative to the standard paid job. In this section, we will see how this is mirrored in heterogenous socio-economic realities, in which conceptual boundaries are increasingly fading. Before presenting first findings with respect to 'inclusiveness' and the main features of study participants, however, I want to dwell on the main underlying belief the sustains inclusiveness both as rhetoric and policy objective. This concerns the emphasis on young people whose mindset is deemed to be increasingly inclined towards entrepreneurship in its various facets and the belief of the consolidation of democratisation of entrepreneurship. The reasons for this belief have been only partly discussed so far and are further elaborated in the next subsection.

The democratization of entrepreneurship and the new mindset of young people

The idea that entrepreneurship is increasingly attractive for young people is often taken for granted. In the interviews, the reasons that are indicated for this alleged particular interest of young people to become entrepreneurs are mainly two. The first relates to the idea that young people expectations have changed. In particular, it is considered that young people take the end of the standard paid job for granted or, in other words, that they do not expect, at the end of their educational path, to find their full-time life-long job. This would lead them to develop a peculiar capacity to see and catch alternatives to standard employment careers. At the same time, reference is made to a profound mindset change attaching a growing value to a different life model. In other words, entrepreneurship would be not only the result of constraints young people face in the labour markets but also of changing personal needs. These relate to the needs of autonomy, authenticity, self-fulfilment and freedom of expressing themselves in what they do.

The second and interrelated belief is that young generations would be living in a world where barriers to entrepreneurship have crumbled, i.e. a world where establishing a business is easier and cheaper than in the past, especially with respect to service and new technology-based forms of enterprise. In particular, the underlying assumption is that the growth of the service sector and new technologies require less and less economic investments and, as a result, contribute to making the opportunities of doing business more accessible, or democratic. On the other hand, the presence of private investors would contribute to this 'democratization' through the provision of risk capital for those who have innovative (therefore riskier) entrepreneurial ideas but not the economic means. The public support would do the rest, by providing economic incentives and soft supports to all those who lack also the minimum resources and some entrepreneurial skills, and by adopting – as we have

seen and as we will see also later – an inclusive approach. What is depicted is a situation in which entrepreneurship is more and more affordable, while the availability of economic capital would become increasingly less crucial to develop one's entrepreneurial projects:

> 'Economic resources are some sort of legend. It is true that economic resources are important, but they are usually important when projects require larger investments. Moreover, the economic problem is when the company wants to grow more than when it wants to be born. It is a bit of a legend, normally the projects that young people want to undertake are not projects that require very large investments.' (Entrepreneurship Director at Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, October 2017)

This must not be confused with the idea that all people can or should become entrepreneurs. This seems rather to be based on the belief that structural inequality factors, including the availability of personal economic resources, would be increasingly less critical in establishing a business. This belief also relies on the increasing availability of financial instruments, as already mentioned, from the microcredit for ordinary businesses to venture capital for innovation, including public support in its different forms. As a member of the staff of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment of the municipality of Milan explained:

> 'We'd never think we'd have an entrepreneur per citizen. First of all, because not everyone has this vocation, and then because we are asking to the city, in the most inclusive way, by giving all the training tools to do so, to contribute to economic development. (...) from a certain point of view is to bring those who have ideas, those who have means, those who have possibilities, not economic means or training because we are the ones who bring training and economic support where there is a need, but just new energies. So, it is important to find them and bring them to contribute to development. After that, it is not all citizens who do this, they are those who have the potential and the others will benefit from this.' (February 2017)

The main consequence of this belief is the tendency to emphasise individual non-economic resources such as individual skills, willpower and determination and so on. Indeed, if economic capital is no longer a problem, what you need is to be able to have some good ideas and work on it with 'time, patience and perseverance':

> 'The issue of financing is a fairly widespread concern among all projects, but if the project has a face and eyes, that is to say that it is a good project, well developed, that it really has a potential, that it has a viability, that there is a promoter team, but if there is only a single person is the same... anyway, if the persons or people behind, if they are a good team… it's a matter of going to knock on different doors and the financing will come out. It is true that not all projects end to be financed, for one reason or another. But if it is a good project it is a question of time, patience and perseverance... this is valid for adults as well as young people, who have a lot of energy.' (Entrepreneurship Consultant at Convent de Sant Augusti, Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, January 2018)

Although no mention is generally made in the interviews that have been carried out to the weight of various forms of capital also with respect to the development of these abilities, the

point is that, also less resourceful young people can, perhaps with some more efforts, develop their projects by relying on their 'determination', 'skills' and willpower:

> 'So, few are graduated, but those who arrive here, and that we select, if they have a good family network move on very well. Those who are more fragile, more alone, I have to say that the majority of those who come here are of this second type ... well, among these there are those who can do it and those who cannot do it… and this is all a matter of determination, then of luck and a lot of skills and willingness to put oneself to the test.' (Microcredit manager and assistant to the general-director of FWA, Milan, February 2017)

This vision, as we will see, goes along with the narratives and ideas of young people interviewed, that are prevalently a-socialised and traced back to individual abilities and responsibilities. Ideas that are reinforced by the great scope of the concept of entrepreneurship that, as we have seen, serves a logic of inclusion more than exclusion.

The social and economic heterogeneity of inclusiveness

Against this background, the principle of inclusiveness translates in organizations that operate in very different economic fields as well as in different entrepreneur profiles supported by MESPs. Let's take the case of Barcelona Activa. The table below (Table 12) shows the heterogeneity of entrepreneurial projects supported in the last years. These range from commerce, through creative productions, to ICT. In particular, it is worth noting the weight of commerce activities among the other services, as well as its particular growth in 2014, a year in which the consequences of the crisis have been particularly felt both in Milan and in Barcelona.

Table 12. Entrepreneurial projects by sector accompanied by Barcelona Activa (2010, 2014, 2016)

	2010	2014	2016
Commerce	21,1%	24,4%	19,8%
Culture, tourism and leisure	16,5%	19,4%	19,1%
Personal services	12,3%	12,4%	14%
Creative production	14,3%	11,9%	13,1%
Businesses services	10,7%	9,7%	10%
ICT	6,9%	6,1%	6,7%
Industry/Manufactory	4,1%	5,4%	7,1%
Construction	4,8%	3,7%	3,4%
Health and social assistance	2,9%	3,1%	3,9%
Environment	2%	2,1%	1,2%
Life science	1,3%	1,1%	1%
Transports logistics	3,2%	0,6%	0,6%

Source: author's comparison from BA's annual reports (Barcelona Activa, 2010, 2014, 2016)

With respect to the profile of projects' proponents, distribution by gender is quite balanced, while the general slight overrepresentation of man has been inverted in the last years with women that have increased from 47,8% of 2010 to 54,2% of 2016. It must be noted the effort BA made in this respect, though the promotion of actions explicitly targeting women.

Regarding age, the percentage of young people up to 25 years of age is generally residual. The main group is indeed represented by people aged 25-40, although it is significant the increase of people aged over 40 in the last years (Table 13). Unfortunately, more detailed data are not made available by Barcelona Activa for the large group aged 25-40. However, findings from interviews with policy actors and young people suggests that proponents tend to be generally aged 30-33 and this seems to be influenced by the relevance of labour experience for entering self-employment or entrepreneurship, on which the delayed entry of young people into the labour market both in Italy and Spain has an impact as well.

Table 13. Profile of proponents accompanied by BA by age (%)

	2010	**2014**	**2016**
< 25	4,2	3,9	4,3
25-40	64,7	54,9	52,9
> 40	31,0	41,2	42,8

Source: author's comparison from BA's annual reports (Barcelona Activa, 2010, 2014, 2016)

Moreover, it is also interesting to note that proponents with a university background are the most represented with percentages nearly 70% (Table 14) and that supports are increasingly demanded by active, not unemployed, people. These two data make particular interesting the investigation of stories and narratives that stand behind that, but they also point out – as we will see later – the way circumstances surrounding the launch of the entrepreneurial project may increasingly be affected by labour market changes as well as employment conditions. Then, this highlights another aspect: although BA provides extensive soft support, with the potential to reach all people starting a business, that could benefit from significant support in establishing a business in whatever sector, the large part of people approaching BA entrepreneurship services has high resources in terms of human capital.

Table 14. Profile of proponents accompanied by BA by educational levels (%)

	2010	2014	2016
Primary school	8,2	2,9	2,5
Secondary school	32,4	28,6	28,9
University	59,2	68,5	68,6

Source: author's comparison from BA's annual reports (Barcelona Activa, 2010, 2014, 2016)

Table 15. Profile of proponents accompanied by BA by employment status (%)

	2010	2014	2016
Unemployed	52,1	50,0	35,9
Active	42,2	42,3	54,6
Other	5,6	7,7	9,6

Source: author's comparison from BA's annual reports (Barcelona Activa, 2010, 2014, 2016)

Another point that is worthy of being mentioned in this respect is the capacity to support foreigners' proponents, who represent about 20% of the total (Table 16).

Table 16. Percentage of EU and Extra-EU foreigners accompanied by BA on the total

	2010	2014	2016
EU	12,7	10,7	14,4
Extra EU	12,7	8,6	11,2

Source: author's comparison from BA's annual reports (Barcelona Activa, 2010, 2014, 2016)

The attractiveness of the city for entrepreneurs is a key BA's objectives and this represents a social component that would deserve further and specific attention. With regard to this research, I open a parenthesis to say that most of the young people interviewed in Barcelona are Spanish and comes from Barcelona or Catalunya (eight), "only" two came from other countries (EU and extra-EU). However, it is interesting to note that their mobility is strictly connected with the entrepreneurial project. As Linda, coming from Latin America tells during her interview:

> 'We looked at Barcelona because we thought it was a good place to open. (...) there is a young population, it's a cosmopolitan city, it's not very big, it's small, so... we saw that here there are many restaurants and creative establishments, different things from other countries. Then, we saw that we had space for our type of business. Here there are spaces for thematic things, gourmet... I could compare it with things in the United States in New York, for example. And then there are many foreigners who would look for our type of cuisine because they miss their country, and other types of people... curious, who would like to know our cuisine. When we came in June we did the training session in Barcelona Activa and we went walking around the neighbourhoods and perceiving that there are many different places, different from what you can see in other cities.' (Linda, 32-year-old woman, ordinary, Barcelona)

In Milan, the majority is Italian but with different regional origins with five participants coming from South Italy and three from other northern regions; one participant is a second

generation migrant and another comes from extra-EU country. In this case as well, the city is considered a perfect place where establish a business, also due to the features of its population (being also a university city) other than to the availability of many sources for support:

> 'In my view, if you want to establish a technological company in Italy, Milan is certainly the liveliest city from this point of view, both for the services you can get and to which you can access, and also for the base of users that you can have and that are perhaps more accustomed to using online services.' (Luigi, 29-year-old man, Milan, innovative)

This seems to reflect what I have already highlighted in the fourth chapter, namely the relevance of entrepreneurship policies for the development of a supportive/attractive environment for specific groups of people (innovators, creatives, but also working-age young with business ideas in general).

Returning to the composition of beneficiaries of MESPs in Barcelona, more quantitative exploration of under 30 young people supported by Barcelona Activa can be done thanks to data provided by the Convent de Sant Agustì and concerning the programme *Idees amb future*, a programme specifically targeted at young people up to 30 years of age. Participants to this programme from 2010 to 2016 have been 230 on the total, just twenty-five of these have not completed the period of training. The average age is 26,6 years old and the majority is represented by women also in this case, with an average percentage of 56%. The employment status is quite similar to the general picture presented before with respect to the percentage of unemployed and active people (40% and 38% respectively). However, the percentage of young people with other employment status is 22%, given the higher probability of being still students. The percentage of young people with university education is 61%, very high also in this case, while 36% has secondary education. The percentage of foreigners is lower but also in this case significant with 7% of young people coming from the EU and another 7% coming from non-EU countries.

Moreover, 38% of young people start the course with a business plan already drafted, thus with a more or less structured idea and with the serious intention to develop it further. Nonetheless, "only" 16% of all participants seem to have established an enterprise after the programme[83]. This is consistent with what stressed in the previous chapter, namely the fact that entrepreneurship programmes are also used as a way to test ideas, evaluate best options, reason about project-related risks and feasibility, sometimes discouraging entrepreneurship.

The sectors of the activity vary since young people seems to concentrate in activities related less to commerce (it nevertheless represents the 10%) and a little bit more to other

[83] This number must be read taking into account that monitoring activities are not systematic.

sectors such as tourism, leisure and culture, creative productions, TIC and industry/manufactory (Table 17).

Table 17. Sectors of activity (*Idees Amb Futur*, from 2010 to 2016)

Commerce	**10%**
Culture, tourism and leisure	19%
Personal services	11%
Creative production	16%
Businesses services	8%
TIC	8%
Industry/Manufactory	8%
Construction	1%
Health and social assistance	0%
Environment	0%
Life science	0%
Transports logistics	0%
Empty blank	11%

Source: data provided by Convent de Sant Agustì (Barcelona Activa).

With respect to the case of Milan, the lack of a systematic and detailed data collection at the municipal level prevents us from making accurate comparison with Barcelona. However, are here presented some data related to microcredit and provided by Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano, other than the result of the small survey conducted mainly with the aim of establishing contact, among winning projects of municipal calls, with young people and young adults for the interviews (see Chapter III).

Data related to microcredit have been collected in the period from 2011 to 2016 by the same Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano. According to these data, only the 23% of all applications are made by young people under 35 years of age, while men prevail both among under-35 and over-35 applicants (the percentage is around 70%). In this case as well, the percentage of unemployed, albeit important, does not prevail over the percentage of people working as employees or self-employed and it seems there are no particular differences between young people and adults (Table 18).

Table 18. Profile of applicants to microcredit by employment status (%)

	Under 35	**Over 35**	**Total**
Unemployed	38%	34%	35%
Employed	10%	9%	10%
Entrepreneur	39%	41%	41%
Professional	10%	15%	14%
Student	3%	0%	1%

Source: data provided by Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano (FWA)

What most distinguishes microcredit services from innovative entrepreneurs supported in Milan and from entrepreneurs supported by Barcelona Activa is the profile of applicants with respect to educational levels. As Table 19 shows, indeed, microcredit services provided by Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano and addressing the so-called 'grey area of welfare' are particularly able to intercept people with relatively low educational levels both among the adults and the young/young-adults population. In this regard, it must also be noted that the group of over 35 is not so different from the group of under-35 since they share nearly the same educational levels. Finally, the percentage of foreigner applicants is 27% but it raises significantly among under-35 young people, among which it reaches 42%.

Table 19. Profile of applicants to microcredit by educational levels (%)

	Under 35	Over 35	Total
Primary school	0%	1%	1%
Lower secondary education	29%	29%	29%
Upper secondary education	42%	43%	43%
Professional institutes	15%	10%	11%
University	12%	16%	15%

Source: data provided by Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano (FWA)

The small survey for winning projects of municipal calls has involved twenty-two respondents and reached a percentage coverage of 38% of the total number of enterprises established with the municipal supports (eighteen on forty-seven). The majority (seventeen; of which eleven was aged over 41) was aged over 35 and only three of them were unemployed on the date of participation to the municipal call. Moreover, the greater part was high-educated (seventeen obtained a university degree) while the rest had the upper secondary education. Just seven of them established a limited liability company, while all the rest established single-person or two-person enterprises. With respect to the sector, commerce (six) and craftwork (six) are the most represented sectors. No data are available for innovative start-ups that, however, as it will be better discussed later, are distinguished of course by innovation and generally attractive for people with high levels of human capital.

Data for the case of Milan, although partial and fragmented, as data from Barcelona Activa, that are instead collected regularly and systematically, offer a general picture that is useful to highlight both the social and the economic heterogeneity characterising beneficiaries of MESPs. This reflects the declared aim to include and supports entrepreneurship in its various forms. As we have seen, however, inclusion generally refers to the inclusion of specific but large target groups, such as young people and women, and to a lesser extent unemployed/inactive or low-educated people, whose inclusion is more implicit than explicit in the idea of supporting those who have less resources to establish a

business on their own and without any support. In what follows, I concentrate on young adults benefiting from the municipal support with the aim to investigates the differences within this group, discursively constructed as homogenous and homogeneously disadvantaged. In doing so, I argue that the principle of inclusion translates in different and unequal experiences and that this inequality risks to be reproduced by public actions that do not change the distribution of resources and opportunities among them significantly. This argument will be obviously unpacked and discussed analytically in the next pages of this chapter. Before doing this, however, are outlined the main features of young people who have taken part to the research, while the differences between the two cases (young people involved in MESPs in Milan and Barcelona) are highlighted when relevant.

II. Distinctive and shared dimensions of young participants' experiences

Study participants: main features

As already mentioned in the third chapter, thirty-four young people have been interviewed (24 in Milan and 10 in Barcelona). Overall, this group is not balanced from the gender point of view since, as Table 20 shows, men represent about 60% of the whole sample.

Table 20. Number of young people interviewed by gender and educational levels

Women				**Men**			**Total**
	UNIV	II Edu.	Total_W	UNIV	II Edu.	Total_M	
24-26	4		4	1	2	3	7
27-29	2	2	4	5	1	6	10
30-33	1	2	3	4		4	7
34-35	2		2	6	2	8	10
Total	9	4	13	16	5	21	34

Source: author's elaboration

This depends on the weight of young man interviewed in Milan more than in Barcelona, where, also due to the high general participation of women to BA's activities, five young women and five young men have taken part to the research. Women are more concentrated in ordinary businesses (eight/thirteen), therefore results of this research concerning the world of the innovative start-ups are dominated by men's perspectives.

The average age is 30,5 (29,5 in Milan and 33 in Barcelona). Therefore, interviewees are prevalently young-adults, this implies that all of them have completed their studies and that the majority had experiences in the labour market (the exceptions are: three of those aged

24-26 and one aged 27-29). With respect to educational levels, interviewees with a university degree represent the most significant part of the whole group of young people interviewed (about 70%) and, in percentage, they are equally represented both among women and men. In this respect, the group of young people interviewed in Barcelona has a considerable weight since all of them have a university background. This is consistent with general data from BA's reports, that show how people with a university degree represent the largest part of people Barcelona Activa attracts.

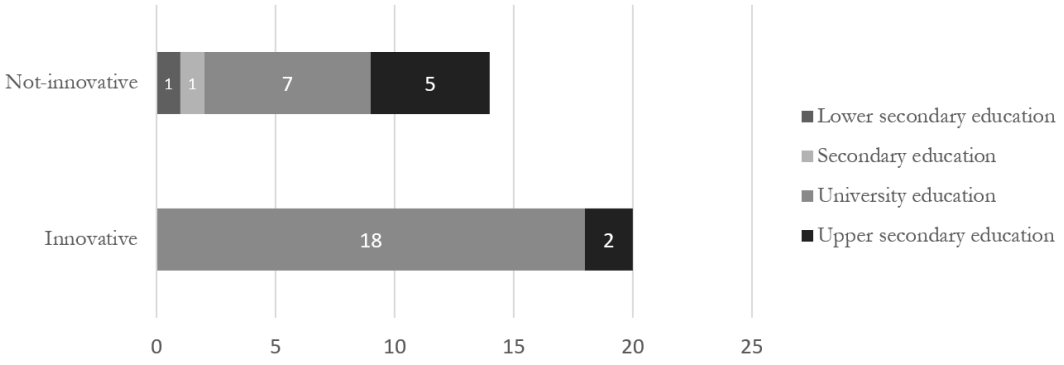
Table 21. Number of young people interviewed by educational levels in MLN and BCN

	Barcelona	**Milan**		
Age group	UNIV	UNIV	II Education	TOT.
24-26	1	4	2	7
27-29	1	6	3	10
30-33	1	4	2	7
34-35	7	1	2	10
Total	10	15	9	34

Source: author's elaboration

As Figure 16 shows, educational levels of nascent entrepreneurs in ordinary sectors are lower. Almost the totality of innovative young-adults had instead obtained a university degree. Moreover, the majority had degrees in STEM or economic/business administration fields, while only four out of eighteen were graduates in humanities and social sciences.

Figure 15. Study participants by educational levels



Source: author's elaboration

Furthermore, high-skilled working on innovative projects have done it never alone but always in a team, formalised – from the juridical point of view – through limited liability companies (Tables 22).

Table 22. Type of responsibility by type of project in MLN and BCN

	Limited Responsibility	Unlimited Responsibility
Innovative	16	
Non-innovative	4	10
Total	20	10

Source: author's elaboration

Projects relate mainly to the digital and platform economy (e.g. e-commerce, pool economy, sharing economy, digitalised services) that counts eighteen enterprises, and to the foodservice industry (six enterprises). Four interviewees are freelancers working mainly as graphics and illustrators, five are engaged with the launch of a new product, while the others are involved in businesses services and craftwork.

By way of conclusion, it is worth highlighting two main things with respect to the picture just outlined. The first is that despite what the rhetoric seems to suggest, are the young adults (and adults), not the youngest, to be more likely to start a project of entrepreneurship/self-employment, after having accumulated certain levels of human capital and labour experiences (consistently with other researches, see Chapter II). As we have already seen, human capital and labour experiences are also taken into account in the selective processes undertaken within MESPs that, working according to a logic of investment, tend to privilege those who are most likely to succeed. For instance, this is based on their educational levels or practical expertise that is generally accumulated *by doing*, i.e. on the job. This can potentially reduce the presence of the youngest people among beneficiaries. However, also when the support is extensively provided, such as in the case of Barcelona Activa, there is no massive participation of the youngest. An example is *Idees amb Futur*, the programme for under-30 young people, open to all kind of entrepreneurial ideas and without particular requirements:

> 'This is also one of the most difficult programs for us to find participants. But we think this is due to the age of the participants. They are ages, up to 30 only, because there are some programs that are up to 35 and, well, in these five years you can see the difference ... but up to 30 are very young. And they are people in the following life moments: they are studying, or they are beginning with their first labour experience. In other words, at this age, they don't think so much about setting up their own business. So, it is more difficult to find people who have an idea and want to develop it.' (Entrepreneurship Consultant at Convent de Sant Augusti, Barcelona Activa, Barcelona, January 2018)

The second point to be stressed concerns the variety of the sample as a point of strength of this study since it has allowed accessing different experiences that I distinguish by using the terms 'ordinary' and 'innovative'. This distinction is based, firstly, on the type of business that is carried out. However, ordinariness goes also beyond the typology of business to identify some young people: those, as Woodman (2013) stated, who are in the middle

between the most successful and the most excluded and that, as this research wants to contribute to suggest, allow to account also for the way new patterns of social inequalities - in which individual competences and abilities play an ever greater role – unfold.

'Stop and think': influencing factors of young-adults' entry into entrepreneurship

The study of motivations at the basis of the choice to establish a business has been at the core of entrepreneurship studies. The debate has developed especially around the opposition between necessity-driven and opportunity-driven entrepreneurship. The necessity-driven entrepreneurship refers to the experiences arising from a necessity, generally related to lack of alternatives in the labour market, and it has been associated with negative socioeconomic trends, social vulnerability – deriving from the absence of alternatives and the growth of individual risk-taking in dealing with one's social inclusion through self-entrepreneurship – and low-level impacts on economic development. On the other hand, opportunity-driven entrepreneurship is a category used to identify those experiences that arise from the recognition of business opportunities and that, for that reason, would have more chances to contribute to economic development significantly and guarantee good economic and social returns to the entrepreneur.

I see two main reasons that make this distinction limited and partly inadequate for the aims of this research. These reasons have been already introduced in the second chapter, but it is worthwhile to return to these two points quickly. The first concerns the value-judgement that this distinction incorporates as well as its fundamentally economistic interpretation. It leaves a positive mark on what is the fruit of the recognition of an opportunity and, by contrast, a negative mark on what arises from a condition of need (generally identified with unemployment). Moreover, it creates a very rigid opposition between the two. In this way, it neglects the variety of non-economic reasons that can stand behind the choice to set up a business or become an entrepreneur as well as the interplay between (higher diversified) constraints and opportunities. The second reason concerns the emphasis on individual capacities: the capacity to recognize and catch opportunities (connected to the entrepreneurial spirit, human capital and individual capacities and determination) and the failure to find alternatives to the labour market. As a result, it is to individual capacities that the responsibility for the success and failure is mainly attributed. This prevents a reflexion on inequalities that affect individual capacities, including even the capacities to imagine or *aspire* to catch high opportunities.

To adopt an in-depth and more sociological perspective, I propose to go beyond this distinction and to shift the gaze from individual motivations to the process of "becoming an entrepreneur" and the circumstances in which this process is rooted with a holistic method of observation. First, the perspective of "becoming an entrepreneur", observed with in-depth research instruments such as qualitative interviews, allows grasping the in-process character of young participants' experiences. The majority of study participants, in fact – with a few exceptions regarding young adults engaged in more mature and stable (at the moment of the interview) entrepreneurial project (e.g. as a result of valuable cash and confidence injections; discussed later) – feel the gap between a legal status that gives them the role of "entrepreneurs", having even past the start-up phase in some cases, and their expectations concerning what this actually should entail (a stable, profitable enterprise). Raúl is a typical case in this respect, having started the entrepreneurial process in 2008:

> 'I still consider that I have a start-up, although I passed the start-up phase years ago. (...) The truth is that my company is still under construction, there hasn't really been a single moment during these years where everything has flown without needs... then, that is to say… the stability has not existed, it has been like a time of constant change, of continuing reinventing... that's why I consider my company a company under construction and I don't know if one day it will cease to be one.' (Raúl, 34-year-old man, Barcelona, ordinary)

The starting point of this process of "becoming an entrepreneur" developed in moments 'of stop and think' (Marc, 35-year-old man, Barcelona, innovative) in which decision has been taken to embark on an entrepreneurial project. These moments are characterised by circumstances, events, conditions and expectations that differ in many aspects between 'ordinary' and 'innovative' young adults (summarised in Table 23).

Table 23. Influencing circumstances and expectations

ORDINARY YOUNG ADULTS	INNOVATIVE YOUNG-ADULTS
• Job loss • Precarity • Work Malaise • Public Support (Trigger) • Passion, Coherent trajectories	• Work Malaise • Refusal of standard paid job • Meetings (social capital) • University environment • Political-environment consciousness • Passion, ambition to succeed

Source: author's elaboration from the theme analysis

With respect to ordinary young-adults, the process of 'becoming an entrepreneur' is marked by circumstances that make the entrepreneurial choice an opportunity to turn an adverse event or circumstance (job loss, precarity, work-related malaise) in a positive turning point (entrepreneurial project). Raúl offers a good example also in this respect:

'I: when did you decide to start this project? R: It was in 2007 when I lost my job. It was a process of a year, more or less, until I formed, with my partner, in 2009…we created this company. It was partly because of the circumstances, as I told you, the very strong crisis in Spain, the company closed ... on the one hand and, on the other, was to... to have my own project, do things the way I wanted to do, make my own decisions ... I thought it was the most appropriate way. In addition, we were doing things together and… it was like everything was telling us that we had to try the jump.' (Raúl, 34-year-old man, Barcelona, ordinary)

Raúl's decision only partly arises out of necessity, since he did not even try looking for another job after the job loss. Rather, it seems to be the result of the interplay between opportunities and constraints. These include the crisis and job loss, but also the opportunity to realise his own project, gain more freedom and autonomy. Moreover, it must be added that when he states that 'it was like everything was telling us that we had to try the jump', 'everything' comprises the opportunity to access a series of public supports made available at the local level.

Contrary to what I have observed among innovative young-adult participants, the municipal support often constitutes an important triggering factor for the ordinary young entrepreneurs. This does not mean that for innovative entrepreneurs the municipal support is not relevant. On the contrary, it is deemed useful in many cases (although, as it will be discussed later, to a lesser extent and with differences between Milan and Barcelona). However, it does not intervene, directly, as a triggering event as often it is for ordinary young participants, for whom the municipal support play more or less this role in the various circumstances: I see there is a municipal support that seems made for me and I take this as an opportunity to cope with a negative event or circumstances that make me suffer. Just as Lorenzo and Letitia told:

'I lost my job, and I was going on with temp agency contracts, three months in a place and six months in the other one. We came up with this idea of participating in the municipal call and… we were already talking about it because I had this abandoned workshop that was my dad's, and I wanted to put it to good use... so laughing and joking, we looked into our eyes seriously and we said: let's participate to this call (..) We thought: it's perfect, everything was fine ... the street is ok, the idea can fit ... perfect! It seemed made specifically for us.' (Lorenzo, 35-year-old man, Milan, ordinary)

'I was like... not lost... but… a kind of… I didn't know what to do. Then I signed up for a program, through a friend who told me about it, I signed up for an entrepreneurship program of Barcelona Activa. Idees amb futur, for people under 30 and I started to give shape to all the ideas, thinking seriously about doing something. (...) On the one hand, I wanted to do this, but I was pushed by other things… It was like breaking a long love relationship with the "not finding work" ... this pushed me to do this, to start this, it's happened to me. If you don't find work, but you don't have the spirit that... because this is what I've always been passionate about, it doesn't make sense either. I mean, you have to be sure of what you want to do. Although I'm afraid sometimes, you have to be sure when you take the step.' (Letitia, 29-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

The job loss represents the moment of 'stop and think' for Raúl and Lorenzo. While in the case of Letitia, the moment of 'stop and think' arises during her attempts to cope with the difficulties to find a job, despite her high educational levels, especially deriving from the discrimination she was subjected to because of a physical disability. In the other cases, this moment occurs mainly as a result of precarious conditions or the emergence of a great deal of discomfort on the job that, in cases such as that of Aisha (31-year-old woman, Milan, ordinary), becomes clear with some organizational changes in the company where she was working ("when a company is acquired by a fund the things change a lot, if before the human aspect was important, then it still important because they are people, but what really matters at the end are the numbers") and is partly intensified by the underlying conflict between the perception of "being lucky" (having a stable and well-paid job) and the enormous daily effort this "luck" entailed:

> 'My dream, since when I was a child and then a teenager and my dad used to take me to the airports of Linate or Malpensa to see aeroplanes landing and taking off, was to travel for work, that was my dream. Then, when I achieved it, I realized it was a crappy dream. I mean, if you travel for work you're alone, without a chance to visit the city, you're always out on the road, it's heavy, you do it for another company, everything was weighing on me. I needed to live my house, to say: 'shit, I'm at home', to cook, to clean, I didn't do anything anymore, I was always travelling. I didn't like it anymore. (..) I set up this business because I had a personal need, really physical, psychophysical.' (Aisha, 31-year-old woman, Milan, ordinary)

In other cases, the difficulties of finding a stable job and/or precarious working conditions are the circumstances in which decisions to establish a business and ask for the local public support develop. This contributes to reducing the perception of how the gap is between opportunities and costs of the process of becoming an entrepreneur. This is mainly about the reduction, in terms of responsibilities, workloads and social rights, of the difference between wage labour and self-employment/entrepreneurship:

> 'The alternative was to work under the boss, underpaid, with the danger of working even 12 hours a day and without any result (..) It is like a rental property, when the rent is cheap you pay for it. When the rent starts to rise, you decide to buy a house, it is the same.' (Veronica, 29-year-old woman, Milan, ordinary)

> 'The jobs I've had didn't represent stability either. Probably I wouldn't have started this one if I'd had a stable job. The job in England was quite stable, but it was in England. I mean, if, on the one hand, it's okay... because here every day is a struggle to get a customer, to sell a thing, but in the long run I think this has more stability than the jobs you can find today. That is to say, the work in the shop for instance, where I was working… it was a contract of three months and I knew that they were just three months, without any opportunity to continue because they were going to close the shop. In the end, I worked for four months, but... the scholarship? I knew that they were six months of scholarship... that is to say, there is no stability either in the dependent employment. So, I think that, by doing what I've always wanted to do, I'll find stability when the business will work well. For me, this is more stable than going to work every

day knowing that the next month you won't have a job.' (Letitia, 29-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

A circumstance partly different is the one faced by ordinary young people working in specific service sectors, where enterprises increasingly rely on independent workers through commercial relationships/contracts to avoid standard labour bonds. In their cases, the reduction of the opportunity-cost assumes even more radical traits:

'It is if as wage-labour no longer existed in our field. I see many young people who work in agencies but as independent workers, this is what happens, and I think it is unacceptable, it happens that a traineeship is prolonged to an impossible extent… you work without a contract for some months, this is today's reality. If you are self-employed the only difference is that money will be directly deposited in your bank account, if you are an employee you will see the same money when the boss is in a good mood.' (Fabiola, 28-year-old woman, Milan, ordinary)

A critical experience is that one of Montserrat, who happened to refuse a job proposal because the company was not willing to pay her either as a freelance since it was even more convenient for them opting for a stage:

'I've been looking for a job in September, all offers were: you have to know about photography, post-production, programming, you have to be 20 years old, have 5 years of experience and the salary is at the minimum, and you think: mmm, no. I mean, I prefer to do my job than be there for a lot of hours earning nothing and having a degree and a postgraduate, you know. I: these companies were looking for self-employed or were looking for employees? R: It depends. I'll give you an example... there is a company that I have a problem with because before they had a trainee, she worked 5 hours per day, from Monday to Friday, and earned 400 euros per month, working on, I don't know, on final photos of 40 products. Well, in one day I went, I made them, in one day, twelve products, when she did about 40 in a month and I charged them, I do not know, like 20 euros per hour and I worked something like 7/8 hours. But they say that for this price they couldn't pay me. But I won't work for 400 euros either. With this company, we don't understand each other because I want to work with them and they want to work with me, but I don't plan to sell myself this cheap. This is what happens.' (Montserrat, 25-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

On the other hand, the process of "becoming an entrepreneur" occurs in different circumstances in the case of innovative young-adult participants. In some cases, meetings with friends (social capital) or particular educational paths (i.e. economics/business-related studies, specialising masters such as the MBA) are here significant triggers of the process, often combined with high-skilled professional experiences:

'I studied business administration here in Barcelona, I started working in the world of consumer marketing and multinational companies. Once I had 5/6 years of experience I did an MBA here in Barcelona and that's where... the MBA was like a "stop and think" because it was a full-time MBA, so I left the job with the very clear idea of training myself and starting my own company. (...) The company arose from a very interactive, very planned brainstorming process in which we analysed different ideas and business models that were working in other countries.' (Marc, 35-year-old man, innovative, Barcelona)

'I liked my job, but I always had the idea of doing something on my own, and when I heard a friend and two other guys who are all from city of origin, so we've all known each other for a long time... so I said: well, I know them, I know their skills... one was project manager and consultant, another guy who works in a communication agency and is a copywriter, I've my expertise in marketing, so we are quite complementary... the team seemed good to me, the idea good as well... and I said: in short, if I don't try now that I'm not yet 30 years old and I don't have great responsibilities, like a family to... I can still try.' (Luigi, 29-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

However, stressful working conditions have emerged in the stories of innovative young-adult participants as well. In these cases, entrepreneurship also represents a way to escape from a life fully centred on labour:

'There came the point when I realized that my life was... not a disaster, but, I worked very hard, and it was really a life plan that I didn't want. (...) I worked from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., every day, this was normal, and I was even lucky, there were projects in which people worked from 9 a.m. to 12 a.m. every day, without a weekend. So, I earned a lot of money, but my life was a disaster...' (Adelina, 34-year-old woman, innovative, Barcelona)

'I suffered a lot from what I call "corporate slavery", in the sense that especially with the arrival of the American multinational... you have to stay within certain tracks, within certain rules that become very oppressive. It was like being inside an army. (...) they also denied me overtime bonuses, even if there was a job to be done... so they asked me to work but without overtime, what does it mean? It means working at home. Or the fact of having to... there was a lot of hierarchy, even if there wasn't a well-planned work plan and often, as soon as the superior said something, even if it was senseless, you had to do it... you suffered a bit from the choices from above (...) probably I would have found these conditions also in a multinational company, in other realities I would have found instead those aspects too familiar like those of my father's company... that would have bothered me anyway. Perhaps the only aspect that could make me change my mind was a doubling of the salary... but it was utopian. Maybe in other countries you can do it, but in Italy, it's more difficult.' (Raffaele, 29-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

In other cases, especially those who have never had work experience, there is a kind of refusal of the standard paid job, in a few cases despised and downgraded to the activity of "clocking out" (it. *timbrare il cartellino*) (Francesco, 24-year-old, Milan, innovative). In Barcelona, two interviewees developed their projects for political and environmental reasons. These are about a 'life choice' realized through "entrepreneurship" (a word that is actually refused during the interview conducted with one of them, Jaume, who wanted to make it clear that it was about cooperativism):

'I realized that the kind of life I was living was not consistent with my way of understanding life. I was working in a purely capitalist company, looking for the benefit of investors... and after several years of reflection I decided that it was not the direction in which I wanted to focus my life and I did not want to devote so much of my life to ... to pursue objectives that are not in accordance with my way of understanding the world. Then, I returned to Barcelona in 2016 and started to travel and look for different forums, people or communities or organizations that understand the economy and life in a different way. (...) this project interested me because the project is a non-profit, social project, sustainability is one of its main values. (Jaume, 35-year-old man, innovative, Barcelona)

'The production of objects often has very negative impacts on the environment. For example, the mobile phone we all carry in our pockets has a lot of contaminated materials, which are extracted through salary exploitation... and what we are going to do is to design objects that have a responsibility towards the environment and the society.' (Raúl, 34-year-old man, ordinary, Barcelona)

This partly depends on the implementation of programmes, in Barcelona, particularly oriented to the promotion of socio-political innovation as well as social and solidarity economy. However, the presence of a particularly active civil society in Barcelona should not be neglected as well.

In addition, it is useful to highlight another aspect that partly relates to this issue but is of more general relevance. It concerns the attempt of young participants of both groups to use entrepreneurship also as a way to build more coherent trajectories. That is coherent with respect to their views of the world/life, with their desires (for instance continue living in their city), needs (e.g. autonomy, control over one's life), and even with the idea of building a stable path. In addition, this interplay with precarious labour conditions, but also poor rewards, including in terms of salaries, even for high-skilled young people. I have already reported the extract of the interview with Letitia, in which she claims that develop her entrepreneurial project 'is more stable than going to work every day knowing that next month you won't have a job'. Similarly, Luca decided to take the reins of the family enterprise – that was going through a period of crisis – by converting its main scope and relaunching it in another business sector. He undertook this complete business restructuration partly at odds with his father, who pushed him towards more secure and not risky employment positions and in particular towards a career as legal, that his son actually hated. What is interesting is that Luca considers the development of a stable career as a legal professional only comparable/replaceable with the development of an enterprise, given that alternatives were only 'odd jobs':

'I: *Don't you think there are stimulating job opportunities in the labour market?* R: No, because ... if you start looking for a path, not a job, then yes. Take a path and the evolution of that path ... I have never taken that road from that point of view. I knew that now my destiny was to continue this activity or take a path.' (Luca, 29-year-old man, ordinary, Milan)

To conclude, I want to stress two aspects related to the influencing factors of young adults' entry into entrepreneurship. First, it must be noted that, regardless of the different circumstances experienced by innovative and ordinary young entrepreneurs, they all share the passion for their business idea. The positive attitude, the desire to do and the passion in developing their projects is not a prerogative of the "innovators" and may coexist with the negative circumstances that ordinary young people may have experienced. The diverse expectations and the divergence about what is at stake, points addressed later, do not

undermine the fact they are developing something that is very important for them and for their future, and this is not just a matter of mere survival strategies.

The second has been just mentioned and will be further addressed later: namely the role the municipal support play as an important triggering factor. Indeed, for innovative entrepreneurs, the municipal support has more often a complement function, representing an opportunity to catch to strengthen or enrich one's project:

> 'Barcelona Activa was our incubator and the truth is that we use it quite a lot because it is a reference in the entrepreneurial world and the fact that you are accepted in Barcelona Activa ... this gives the message that the project makes some sense, if they give you a space is that because they believe that the company has a certain potential. Then, the environment of BA is very entrepreneurial, has many contacts, people who are in the same stage of development of the idea, and therefore this can support you because the structures of BA give you some support. It's true that in our case we already knew, through the MBA, we have a lot of contacts, also with investors directly ... but being in BA allowed us to have an office in a place where there was a very important breeding ground for innovation and start-ups.' Marc, 35-year-old man, innovative, Barcelona)

In all cases, public support does not work as a triggering factor: these projects would be launched in that circumstances in any case or, in other cases, they have been already launched and what the team is looking for is more support, more investments, more networks and so on. It is the case of Alessandra, for instance, who launched with her university's colleagues a start-up that received the municipal support only after a while and after having entered other networks and private support programmes.

As far as ordinary participants are concerned, I have already reported some examples from their experiences for which, instead, the municipal support had a trigger effect. I have reported the case of Letitia and Lorenzo, but this is valid for the majority of ordinary participants (eleven/fourteen). Just to provide some other examples through the words of the study participants, I report two extracts from the interview with Fabiola and, then, from the interview with Montserrat:

> 'I am 28 years old and more or less 3 years ago, I could choose whether to continue working in a studio in Milan, where I worked as a graphic designer, or to open a VAT number and try this new adventure with the creation of a business. Fortunately, more or less during the period in which I was supposed to make this decision, there was the opportunity to become part of this project, incubator, the school spin-off and I introduced myself, as soon as it was possible, to start this project and from there I had a huge support from both the structure and the tutor who then took care of managing our path especially in the first period. And so nothing ... all started from this opportunity' (Fabiola, 28-year-old women, ordinary, Milan)

> 'I knew I had this passion, but I didn't know how to think about it or anything... and I found the program of Barcelona Activa. And it was great because they helped me a lot with all the topics. (...) I: And how did you know about the program? How did you find it? R: With a friend of mine, we went to a fair called... Job Barcelona. We went with the idea of finding work because at that time we did not have a job... we were both very artists and we saw that in this

> fair all the stands were about engineering, technical stuff... the typical works that work. And we didn't see anything artistic or... and we were very disappointed. We were going to leave when we saw that there was a stand of Barcelona Activa, so I signed up and I said, look, I'm looking for a job, I'd like to do some training and so on. And one day they sent me an email about a conference on this programme...' (Montserrat, 25-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

However, if the municipal support may represent an important triggering factor within more general entrepreneurship-based coping strategies of ordinary young people – providing positive incentives to remove barriers that may hinder this strategies and support self-activation/self-responsibilisation – it is also true that the role policies play can be only read in their interplay with those circumstances that I have just outlined and, therefore, in the light of the broader social, cultural and labour-related changes that a) push for greater subjectivation, individualisation and self-responsibilisation; b) reduce the opportunity-cost, or the perception of it, of becoming self-employed or entrepreneur as alternatives to standard employment; c) make entrepreneurship ever more inclusive by extending its meanings and scope. I argue that is all this that, in a circular way, contributes to constructing entrepreneurship as an alternative "for all" to standard employment. From this perspective is again relevant the role MESPs play in this respect: one the one hand, they accompany all these social changes by contributing to remove barriers to entrepreneurship and supporting 'the will to put oneself to the test', to quote a member of the mayor's staff of the municipality of Milan again; on the other hand, this action itself can be interpreted as the result of individualisation processes and the consequent "social demand" for removing these barriers.

To start going more inside into these aspects, the next point I want to address in this chapter concerns the representations emerged from the interviews about participants' subjective experiences and representations, that emphasise the consequences of individualisation and subjectivation processes (in particular with respect to self-responsibilisation, autonomy, self-expression). To this end, I will pay attention to the slight differences between participants' subjective experiences and representations in Milan and Barcelona, after a brief discussion of representations about the issue at stake.

'We have merit and it's important that there are people who want to be entrepreneurs'

> 'I do this project and I see it as something normal, not normal because normal is known as what we were talking about, a job for life... but I do it a little bit automatically. But the interview with you and, for example… now I have been invited to go to a school to do a lecture, a few words to some high school kids who will carry out a project, a project to be taken seriously, for real, and that's because ... it's like if us, entrepreneurs, really had merit and it's important that there are people who want to be entrepreneurs…' (Montserrat, 25-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

The extract from the interview with Montserrat quoted above is the result of a reflexion of the participant during the interview, when, reflecting upon the attention she is receiving "just" because she works on her own (including my request for an interview), she concluded that this attention is somehow a signal that entrepreneurs 'have merit and it's important that there are people who want to be entrepreneurs'.

I want to focus here on the context in which study participants situate themselves or, in other words, on the representations about entrepreneurship. To this end, I invited study participants to reflect about the issue at stake by asking to comment and express an opinion about two newspapers articles that I used as visual stimuli during the interviews and that were, for Milan and Barcelona respectively: *Altro che bamboccioni, un giovane su tre si sente pronto a creare un'impresa da subito* [eng. They are not bamboccioni (a term used to refer to who refuse to assume adulthood responsibilities), a young in three feels prepared for immediately establishing an enterprise] and *Los jovenes prefieren montar un negocio propio a ser funcionario*s (eng. young people prefer to set up their own business rather than being officials)[84]. Attention has been therefore driven to the key point of these two articles, that is: young people increasingly want/prefer to become entrepreneurs. Their reactions and the discussions that followed have been interesting and highlighted the common tendency to consider entrepreneurship as an option ever more viable and relevant for people in the contemporary society, with some difference between ordinary and innovative participants that I'm going to discuss in a while. For instance, Angelo said:

> 'I see a society where the free profession, working as a freelancer, working on your own, having a small business is a strong trend and probably is the future of work. That is, we are actually going in this direction and all the various speeches from the time when the economic crisis began to today claiming that safe work no longer exists, the safe place no longer exists, be free and so on and so forth, it still begins to generate a change in the mindset of people, this thing is in place and there is.' (Angelo, 29-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

This is a particularly common thought among innovators, who also highlighted the growing relevance of entrepreneurship including for students with a background in economics, in opposition to what happened in the past. Adelina, for instance, commented on the first article saying:

> 'I totally agree. My brother is 24 years old and he is super committed to set up his business. I saw this also during the MBA, I graduated in 2012, and for many years, the typical outputs of

[84] The Italian article was published by Ansa on October 2012. It is available at the following link: http://www.ansa.it/ web/notizie/rubriche/economia/2012/10/06/Altroche-bamboccioni-giovani-attratti-impresa_7589470.html (latest access September 2018). In Barcelona the article that has been used has been published by Escuola de Periodismo UAM - El Pais on 2015. It is available at the following link: https://elpais.com/elpais/ 2015/06/25/masterdeperiodismo/1435222761_235721.html (latest access: September 2018).

> the MBA were to go to investment banking or consulting, and already my year people did not want to do that. In other words, it was a bit like, not for looser, but you weren't cool saying: I'm going to a bank, it's perceived as very boring and like "what a few ideas you have!". In other words, people wanted to go to Facebook, Zynga's or things like that ... but there were also many people who were already launching their business. Even in an MBA like Harvard, which had always been much more traditional and more and more people, even from the university, are setting up things ... I think the mentality has changed a lot. And it's no longer cool to work for a big company.' (Adelina, 34-year-old woman, innovative, Barcelona)

As far as ordinary participants are concerned, comparable arguments are supported primarily by freelancers, who emphasise the growing relevance of self-employment (in line with the previous discussion about the reduction of the opportunity cost of entering self-employment especially for specific professions). Montserrat is an example, who stated: 'I believe that in the end, we will all end up being autonomous, being freelance', and to my question 'why?' she answered: 'I think it would be the best idea, because now wherever you go you get some miserable contracts here in Spain, which are worth nothing'.

Other ordinary participants do not refer to epochal changes and generally do not find evidence of this growth in their experience. Nonetheless, they agree with the point highlighted in the article, although passively, and answered by focusing on the problems of growth in the number of young people establishing an enterprise or becoming self-employed. In particular, they highlighted the risks of doing business too lightly, without the right know-how: 'the problem, in my opinion, is that it is done with too much lightness, then they open and after three years must to close' (Lorenzo, 35-year-old man, ordinary, Milan). Moreover, they refer to the fact that entrepreneurship is increasing 'fashion': 'when I was a young girl there was Britney Spears and I wanted to become a singer, now there is Mark Zuckerberg, and all want to invent something…' (Aisha, 31-year-old woman, ordinary, Milan).

Overall, both innovative and ordinary entrepreneurs tend to recognise and denounce the lightness underpinning the discourse on entrepreneurship, to give space to their efforts, sacrifices, the uncertainties they face, the responsibilities, workload and seriousness of what they do:

> 'Start-upper is often a word used to feed one's ego: I'm a start-upper, that's cool. I don't like it (...) it's a term, let's say, cultural, a contemporary culture term, it likes, you're cool if you are a startupper, but I'm not interested in these things. I'm carrying out a project, even if it will be a start-up, maybe we will be startuppers, but I won't define myself in this way.' (Pasquale, 32-year-old man, ordinary, Milan)

If it is true that some participants reacted with scepticism to these newspaper articles that argued for the growing willingness of their peers to become entrepreneurs, but it must also be noted that all sceptics denounced the existence of a socio-economic bubble, as if to want

to distinguish between real and those false entrepreneurs that are often identified with the 'startupper':

> 'When we entered the labour market, there wasn't this craze for start-ups that everyone is earning millions with start-ups. All of us have started with normal jobs. But what I see now is that there are many more young people coming out of college who see that there are start-ups everywhere and that everyone is making a living with an application. But this is a bubble issue. It's a bubble. They have no fucking idea what it's like to start a business.' (Pau, 34-year-old man, ordinary, Barcelona)

> 'I always see opportunities for clever and prepared people or simply people who have the willingness to do and engage in something ... I do not see opportunities for others, and this is not related to the fact that there is no work. It is linked to the fact that there is no work for those who do not want or want to really engage in something. And unfortunately, those same people, sometimes, become these. I: *Do you mean they become startuppers?* R: Yes, that is, those people who do not want to commit themselves, to be prepared to enter a company, to do an interview etcetera, sometimes they become these because today it is very easy to have access to this stuff. Because the idea that is spreading is that: you just need to have an idea written on paper, have some friends a little more brilliant than you, the programmer, the cousin etcetera, involve him, so let's say to have skills ... not of leadership because it would be too much but a minimum capacity of aggregation ... and maybe you create your job for the next two years ...' (Angelo, 29-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

However, there is the other side of the coin of this discourse on the 'bubble', that is the idea of a growingly democratic access to entrepreneurship. This is a spread idea mainly among innovative participants, together with the belief that individual skills, not structural resources, are what matter in this democratic context and what make an idea survive in the chaotic bubble that this 'democracy' conceals:

> 'to democratize the access means that everyone can actually compete, anyone can enter. To maintain a competitive advantage I believe that, in the technological world, the key is the team, the people you have, which is what cannot be copied. It makes human capital more important than there has been in any other industry. This for me is something fundamentally different. And then the financing capacity. If you have a good team you raise more money, if you raise more money you will surely win.' (Marc, 35-year-old man, innovative, Barcelona)

The concept of inclusiveness discussed at length in the previous pages of this thesis is here set in terms of 'democratic access' to entrepreneurship, linked with the diminished need of personal availability of economic capital. As we will see, this is linked with the peculiar way through which innovators tend to finance their enterprises, while freelancer interviewed tend to adopt this vision also because of their reduced economic costs for entering self-employment. However, what I want to stress here is that the narratives about entrepreneurship tend to be more centred on the opportunities for all or at least for many to establish an enterprise. In this view of things emerged a crucial role of individual capacities, determination, willingness to do and predisposition to the sacrifice (i.e. renounce to the personal remuneration in first phases to invest all revenues in the enterprise). It is also in this

context that voluntarism and self-responsibilisation, that are discussed in the next paragraph but also emerged in the extracts of interviews already reported, become central in the narratives of both innovative and ordinary study participants, while structural resources and differences tend to be ignored or questioned by the prominence of individual capacities.

Self-responsibilisation and voluntarism: a common value frame

We will see now how young-adult participants act within a value frame that makes individual responsibility and voluntarism key references for their actions. Consistently with the individualisation frame outlined in the second chapter, young-adult emphasise the centrality of self-responsibilisation and voluntarism in the construction of one's career trajectories and as a prerequisite for grasping the opportunities of a supposed democratisation of the access to entrepreneurship/self-employment. This is complemented with the tendency to explain successes and failures with individual or team-related deficit of competences and entrepreneurial skills.

In particular, innovative nascent entrepreneurs, influenced by managerial approaches (deriving from their studies or from the knowledge imparted by incubators, or both), identify the *execution* as a dominant factor of success in their narratives. According to this perspective, have a good idea or good plan of the business activity is not enough, because what really matters is precisely the execution, i.e. one's capacity to develop a strategy, resolve problems, make decisions, attract funds, lead a work team and so forth. As Marc well summarised:

> 'The only key to success is the execution... the idea can be copied, in the end, there are many factors that your competitors can copy, the only thing they cannot do like you is the execution, the work, the hours that you dedicate to it, the effort that you put in. And how you get that a team will commit to the project in the same way.' (Marc, 35-year-old man, innovative, Barcelona)

As far as ordinary young people are concerned, their individual responsibility is not so much for the enterprise but especially towards themselves. As Veronica (29-year-old woman, ordinary, Milan) commenting on the first article stated: 'that's positive so at least we are a little bit more... protected? On the contrary, we protect ourselves on our own, because otherwise, we cannot go ahead'. Indeed, ordinary young people tend to assume the responsibility for creating their own job and the conditions for a more stable and coherent career trajectory:

> 'I saw my aunt, who is the only person in the family who is an entrepreneur, and she has always said that there are too many problems, too much concern, too much responsibility, now she has a bigger company, but I always said: no, I don't, I want to get paid each month. But the mentality now has changed. So, this is what has also led me to believe that nobody is going to

give you anything, you have to do everything, and you have to take advantage of it.' (Letitia, 29-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

High reliance is therefore done on one's capacities, including capacities to strategize risks, with poor attention paid on social security and stability, whose absence is an element taken for granted:

'I've never even felt the problem of paid leave, or to work until late, I've really never considered it. I don't know why to be honest, but... anyway I base all on my work, on what I can do, of course, if I don't do work I don't earn money.' (Carmelo, 26-year-old man, ordinary, Milan)

'the most basic problems are the quota you have to pay as self-employed and if anything happens to you and you cannot work…. these are complicated things. What I really see more strongly here in Spain is the issue of your expenses not being proportional to your income. That is to say, I am paying 50 euros, but there will come a time when I will pay 300 euros... I don't know what will happen that day... when they will ask me to pay three hundred euros and me still live with my parents and I don't know when I will leave their home, that's the truth. Because everything is like a wheel. Now I don't have the stability, last month I could earn x, but I don't know what will happen next month. The idea is to get to the point that I can go saving so that independently that one month I earn more or less, I can afford this.' (Montserrat, 25-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

In this context, two things must be underlined. The first concerns the legitimacy soft entrepreneurship supports (i.e. accompanying services, mentoring etc.) acquire when great responsibility for the success of the entrepreneurial project is assigned to individual capacities. This is at the basis of the legitimation of this kind of public and private interventions and it is in this context that, in some cases, develop a strong critique towards the traditional educational system. In particular, the school and the university are blamed for not having provided adequate support for the development of entrepreneurial skills:

'I would do it instead of doing university. For me, the university has been something quite useless, if not for the opportunity that gives you to go abroad and so on. But instead of studying on books you can do it, then you learn how to talk to investors, you learn a lot of things that will certainly be useful regardless of what you will want to do.' (Giulia, 26-year-old woman, innovative, Milan)

Although there is the perception that something is going to change:

'I have a cousin who is 15 years old, now, at school, he learns it, they have lessons about entrepreneurship... and they learn how to do entrepreneurial projects... and this is important because you have to be prepared both to do the civil servants and other things. I believe that in higher education there should be compulsory subjects of economics, management, about how to carry out an idea, a project. Well, now I suppose this is starting, but not in my time.' (Letitia, 29-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

The second aspect to underline in relation to this assumed cruciality of individual capacities is the need to put into practice continued self-activation and learning, understood as strategies to ensure themselves to be always competitive:

> We have to be creative, to be up to date, we have to continue to work on our own public relations, if not in a month I have no more work, cultivate old and new customers, be empathetic with those we have in front of us ... all aspects that must be cultivated and must be recognized. When you think that all the job is doing a product on the computer and being good at just doing this work, it can't work. (...) if we are called, small self-employed workers, within the multinationals, it is certainly because there is an acknowledgement of the fact of having arrived before ... compared to people who work in the staff of a company, the communication apparatus that, however, do not look out to the outside world for who knows how many years ... being autonomous allows you to be more actively inside, in today's landscape, not to be too stationary, as often happens within companies.' (Fabiola, 28-year-old woman, Milan, ordinary),

> 'Sometimes it happens to me to complain: nobody will follow me *o*n Instagram, neither *o*n Facebook, nobody will hire me a session... it could be like this all afternoon. But then I think: how can I have more followers? How can I make that... and get to work right away, because do it later if I can do it now, right? Then look for alternatives, think, think and think. That is to say, to make schemes for you, to write, I don't know... it's very good for me to write.' (Montserrat, 25-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

This translates in the high relevance of voluntarism in the narratives of both innovative and ordinary entrepreneurs. Voluntarism also results from the belief regarding the democratic access to entrepreneurship to which I referred to in the previous pages: if the access is easier compared to the past, diverse supports are provided by a wide range of public and not-public actors, and doors are opened to all, what matters at the end are the individual capacities (see Chapter II). Individual factors are therefore deemed to be the main explanatory factors of successes and failures as well:

> 'I associate everything with the fact that as a child I always played with Lego and therefore I developed this desire to build and create, which is the phase that interests me most, that is, the thing that most stimulates me is to create, from scratch, something and see it grow, see it develop and generate something, generate value.' (Angelo, 29-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

> 'I: Do you think this deficit concerns the idea? R: In my opinion, there is a deficit in our competences. I: Why do you think you have this deficit? What do you miss? R: Surely a bit of entrepreneurial initiative ... even just say: okay, let's make the product before starting the contract we are waiting for. Because we know how much it costs, but before investing the money we want to be sure there is this contract' (Domenico, 32-year-old man, innovative, Milan).

Therefore, MESPs interplay with strong trends based on self-activation and self-responsibilisation that represent a common denominator of young people experiences. In this context, the issue of inequalities is left behind. The view that the access to entrepreneurship and self-employment is increasingly democratic, also thanks to policy interventions that are meant for intervening to compensate individual lack of economic resources and training, combined with the more general idea of a democratisation of the 'youth question', deny the relevance of inequalities as well as of the differences entrepreneurship entails. The next two sections address this specific point, looking at the

differences (that have been partly explored also in relation to the influencing factors of young adults' entry into entrepreneurship) and inequalities that sustain inclusiveness and that, as we will see, are reproduced by *differentiated* and *differentiating* policy instruments.

Higher the business risk the lower the individual risk-taking?

The entrepreneurship process is evidently marked by great uncertainty and all study participants experienced or were experiencing periods of insecurity and difficulty, characterised by the feeling of 'working in vain, investing on the wrong thing, on something that would have come to nothing' (Angelo, 29-year-old man, innovative, Milan). It is evident that the risk of failure is inherent to any given entrepreneurial project. Nonetheless, and against the common value framework just highlighted, centred on individual capacities and self-responsibilisation, findings show that young people do not run the same individual risks nor share the same responsibilities. In particular, if we extend our view from business-related risks to individual risk and responsibility-taking, their weight not only appears to be different between innovative and ordinary young people, but unexpectedly greater on 'ordinary' ones.

First, it must be considered the differences concerning the legal form of their enterprise or, in the absence of an organization, their legal status. Indeed, a different legal status entails different risks and responsibilities. In particular, there are two forms of 'business liability': limited or unlimited. Put briefly, limited liability makes all members of the enterprise not legally responsible for any of the debts that the organization may assume, while in the cases of the more unbureaucratic sole proprietorship and partnership, owners are personally liable for settling their debts out of their own assets. Excluding one of them who had not yet established his enterprise nor thought about the legal form to adopt at the moment of the interview, study participants are divided as follows: all innovative young entrepreneurs constituted or were planning to constitute a limited liability company. By contrast, the majority of ordinary young people (ten out of fourteen) are, from the legal point of view, individual entrepreneurs or (in two cases) partnership, they have therefore an unlimited liability.

This difference in the legal form has an immediate consequence, that concerns the greater protection from business-related risks that a limited liability company assures. This is not of secondary importance, although it must be noted that this has not emerged as a problem or a concern in the interviews. Ordinary young people show a cautious stance toward financial risks. They pay attention to limit their economic exposure, they try to strategize risks and, above all, they prepare themselves to lose their savings/investments:

'I'm not worried about losing money. Because it's not... it's money invested, for me, it's not lost money. I mean, most of the things I have here are mine. Yes, the rent and everything... but if I were doing other things I would also be spending money on other things. No, my fear is of not being able to make a living from this. Of not being able to become independent and have my own money from this, of earning a living by this.' (Letitia, 29-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary)

Moreover, the issue of the legal forms is linked with the other two aspects to be considered. The first is that establishing a limited liability company is often necessary for innovators who want to access a series of financing opportunities that remain closed to ordinary entrepreneurs. As a matter of fact, findings show that ordinary and innovative young entrepreneurs could access or had access to very different financial instruments. These were diverse in relation to the opportunity both of reducing (or externalising) risks and of accessing important amounts of capital. In more detail: 'venture capital', 'angel investors' and 'equity crowdfunding' were the main funding sources that participants working on innovative projects wanted to obtain or had obtained, while one of the major tasks of any incubator is precisely to facilitate the contact between them and these forms of capital. Put simply, these are forms of financing that do not foresee any refund and through which the high risk characterising innovative start-ups is taken on by one or more investors in exchange for equity participation (venture capital has financed the projects of three interviewees in Barcelona and four in Milan, while one person in Barcelona and two in Milan used crowdfunding to contribute to financing their projects; others were looking for investors). This allowed study participants not to take the risk deriving from bank credit:

'I: Why did you not go to the bank and ask for credit? R: It's a matter of risk. Do you want, for a business idea, to take such a huge risk? No, to be honest. If there is a capital fund that gives you… firstly, these funds usually finance ten start-ups and, if they are lucky, two of them go well and give them the profit… so, we know that the mortality rate is extremely high, thus, to take such a risk… it's not our intention and it's not the intention of anyone here.' (Fabio, 28-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

The availability of private investors makes personal investments of economic capital less important and this is, probably, a powerful driver of the growth of innovative start-ups. I open here a parenthesis to say that the entry of this financial actors seems to have an impact not only on the opportunities to access important sources of capital but also on the concept of the enterprise itself, the motivations at the basis of the choice to become an entrepreneur and the expectations. In this respect, an interesting point of view is that of Angelo (29-year-old man, innovative, Milan). Angelo was running both a 'start-up' and an 'enterprise'. I use this distinction because, during the interviews, he wanted to make clear the difference between these two experiences and, therefore, between being an 'entrepreneur' and being a 'start-upper':

'I: Earlier you mentioned the difference between doing start-ups and doing business. What is the difference between an entrepreneur and a startupper in your view? R: I'll tell you right now. The entrepreneur starts his own business working on that thing and imagining it as the company of life, with an infinite time horizon. When you set up an s.l., in the statute there is also the duration of the company. This is something that you do not establish, let's say that it is by statute, it's more or less standard, it's something like 60 years ... the entrepreneur, when he starts to develop a company does not imagine selling it, what he imagines is: this is my son or my daughter and he works with a really long-term time horizon. The startupper creates the start-up with the idea of selling it within 5 years if that suits him. But he already creates it with the idea of selling it, and that's not doing business. (...) The goal is: I earn one of two million and I go on vacation. I obviously generalize, for obvious reasons, I'm not talking about 100% but 98%, compared to what is my experience in recent years and what I have seen. And I've come into contact with a lot of realities, both in the south, in Milan and in Rome. (Angelo, 29-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

From this perspective, the start-up seems to assume the features of a product itself more than of an enterprise, created since the beginning with the aim of being sold and, through this sale and with fewer risks as possible, with the purpose of becoming rich:

'Another important difference is that the entrepreneur believes in it and immediately he wants to invest with their capital, ie risking personally. The startupper actually has the presumption of starting without even wanting to risk a single euro out of his pocket but, right from the start, with his sheet of paper and his idea, he wants to go and look for money from others to start.' (Angelo, 29-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

'Everyone dreams of creating a product in a garage, of selling it within some years, of making six billion euros because ... let's say…the boys of our age, especially those who want to set up a business ... because those who work under the boss is something else. But those who work on their own, all have the dream of creating an activity, including us eh, make the boom, sell it and, then, the common thought ... create a very good activity and then became famous in the world.' (Carlo, 26-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

This also has some implications with respect to the relevance of public economic incentives (in Milan, where, as we have seen in the previous chapter, municipal support is hybrid). Contrary to what I have observed among ordinary young entrepreneur, for whom public support constitutes an important triggering factor (see previous pages), in this context, the economic incentives provided by the municipality are often considered as a negligible contribution ("nothing" according to Francesco, 24-year-old man, innovative, Milan). This seems not to apply to "more social" social start-ups, which encounter greater difficulties in attracting the interest of private investors due to the scant economic return that this kind of business can guarantee compared to the others. Nonetheless, two respondents operating in the field of cultural innovation in Milan had overcome this problem by managing to combine multiple non-repayable grants. In these cases, the reimbursement of expenses provided by the Municipality of Milan through the "FabriQ calls" was summed with other and quantitively more important funds that, in both cases, had been provided by Fondazione Cariplo, a philanthropic organization of banking origin that is very active locally and

prominent at the national level as well. From this point of view, therefore, innovative and ordinary young people seem to be separated by a great distance. As the microcredit manager of Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano told:

> 'My feeling, because I'm not an expert on this, is that there is easier access to funds in the field of innovation. It's my feeling. For example, yesterday I met a young woman that in just one year had managed to get 250 thousand euros for her digital platform that has not yet earned a single cent. I thought Wow! (..) The ease with which she obtained these funds surprised me, she was surprised as well because her boyfriend couldn't find 30 thousand euros for his café, she was surprised also about the need for some guarantees… I said to her: well, you are in the world of innovation, he is in the normal world of credit access!'. (Microcredit manager and assistant to the general director of FWA, Milan, February 2017)

The 'normal world of credit access' surrounded the young respondents who had set up their own businesses. In their case, subsidised loans (including microcredit) represented the main funding source, to which personal savings had to be added. An example is the case of Veronica, 29 years old and a mother of two children. Veronica had obtained a twenty thousand euros microloan that covered less than half of the investment needed for her business in the foodservice industry:

> 'The microcredit was twenty thousand euros, I had to find the remaining part… I can assure you that it's been hard. I: Did you invest a lot? R: The investment was much higher… where did this money come from? I can tell you that my pockets are now empty… it went badly also because my brother-in-law promised me some money but then gave me much less. So, I had to take those few savings... basically, I took them away from my children, because I had opened a bank account to save some money for them and I had to take those savings but with the hope of putting them back…' (Veronica, 29-year-old woman, ordinary, Milan)

Traditional forms of financing, i.e. bank loans, are the most common also among young people supported in the programme of Barcelona Activa Ideas con Futuro, addressing young people up to 30 years of age. By contrast, these are less suitable for innovators, who can count on diverse, no risky and richer sources of money. More to the point, financial instruments such as microcredit are the most adequate to address the needs of 'ordinary' young people, especially of those who need to develop their 'bankability' or, in other words, those who could not access any credits because lacking personal guarantees. They therefore attract specific target groups, specific types of projects, regardless of the intention to integrate different forms of financing that can be behind projects such as IN^3 in Milan, in which participate both Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano and the social innovation incubator of the municipality of Milan, FabriQ:

> 'This financial instrument forces us to work with specific sectors. Microcredit is a financial instrument with a just one-year grace period and that, usually, is requested by people with fragilities and lacking their own resources, thus people who need a quick return. I mean, we are talking about activities that, in six or eight months, have to be able to provide an income allowing coverage of at least living expenses. (..) Therefore, ninety-nine per cent of our

> activities concerns craftwork and services. (..) none of the guys I've met so far in FabriQ needs microcredit, because they get funding from the financial world that is throwing money at the world of innovation. Then, these tend to be activities that pay in... two? Three years? So I find it hard to make use *of* this tool to this world. They do not need it, they have other forms of financing. Microcredit is now a tool that is used by the artisan world, by traders, in the world of services.' (Microcredit manager and assistant to the general director of FWA, Milan, February 2017)

The implication of these different financial instruments for individual risk-taking is not negligible. Individual risks are in fact higher for ordinary entrepreneurs entering these circuits of debt, also considering the prevalence of sole proprietorships and partnerships previously mentioned. This is why auxiliary services are a sine qua non-condition, established not only to try to reduce the possible critical social consequences of growing risks, but also to safeguard creditors. Freelancers deserve a separate discussion since they faced lower costs for entering self-employment, often they did not need much more than a desk and a personal computer to do their job.

Another critical dimension emerged from the interviews and that contribute to increasing the weight of responsibilities on the shoulders of ordinary young people concerns the presence of an individual or a group-based type of organization. The latter is another dimension marking a clear division between the two groups. Indeed, all respondents in the group of innovative nascent entrepreneurs were part of teams, with at least two members. By contrast, most ordinary young entrepreneurs' respondents were individual entrepreneurs (ten), and two of them established a (two-person) partnership (it. *società di persone*). In the case of innovative entrepreneurs, the reasons for this include private investors' expectations, but also the need to decrease hazard and increase opportunities for success by sharing risks and responsibilities and combining different expertise. Findings suggest this imposes a more massive load of responsibilities. As Luca, a 29-year-old man, said: "the mess was having established a single-person enterprise. In the beginning, it was challenging… it was difficult to do it alone. It's different when there's two of you and you can exchange opinions with another person". According to Veronica (29-year-old woman, ordinary, Milan): "the most difficult thing is carrying all the weight on your shoulders". For Montserrat (25-year-old woman, Barcelona, ordinary): "the main problem would be this one, that sometimes you feel very lonely". On the other hand, Carlo (26-year-old man, innovative, Milan) stressed that: "many are afraid to start something that is bigger than them. Me, honestly, I couldn't do this on my own". Similarly, Lorenzo (35-year-old man, ordinary, Milan) stated: "the fact that there are two of us and I don't need to shoulder such a responsibility alone gives me confidence".

It is worth noting how, in the case of individual entrepreneurs, municipal support can limit feelings of isolation. By way of example, two young people supported by schools' spin-offs in Milan stressed the importance of knowing they have someone to rely on (i.e. a dedicated tutor and the teaching staff). Veronica found in the support by Fondazione Welfare Ambrosiano someone to share doubts and problems with, other than technical aid. In Barcelona Activa, soft support is much more comprehensive, including also courses to help manage emotions and cope with the difficulties of self-employment. As Montserrat told me:

> 'Barcelona Activa helped me a lot. There was also a coaching course and I really liked it because it motivated you a lot, because sometimes this thing of being self-employed... well, if you have doubts or problems... you have no one to say: look, can you help me for a moment? No, you are alone. (...) I was very impatient, if something didn't come out or I don't know what, I got tired and said: I'll leave it for tomorrow. Now I have a list and I say: this is what I least want to do, and I start with this. And Barcelona Activa helped me a lot, a lot. Three weeks ago I also took a course in Barcelona Activa on emotion management. I: Interesting! R: Very interesting. Because sometimes you are sad, but you have to work and… until you explode. So, then, learn to listen to you and to look at what happens to you, to know that if you are sad... it's nothing bad. In other words, well, all this... and there were also many girls, in the group we were 20 girls entrepreneurs! I thought this crisis only happened to me... and now I am sharing with the other entrepreneurs as well. We also have a WhatsApp group and we are helping each other.'

This is not mirrored in the group of innovators who can deal with the multifaced problems entrepreneurship entails by drawing on resources and capacities within the teams that are besides generally composed, as we have seen, by high-skilled persons with heterogeneous backgrounds. The next and last section provides further insight into the differences between the two groups and, in particular, the different constraints and capacities to strategizes entrepreneurship-related opportunities and risks.

Aspirations and capacities to strategize risks and opportunities

In the last part of the second chapter, it has been highlighted that when discussing young people's strategies and aspirations, it must be considered that these are influenced by their expectations about the right or 'normal' resources and opportunities they can access. This also affects their aspirations that tend to comply with the same resources and opportunities. In this framework, traditional inequality factors are certainly crucial: class, gender, race, forms of capital, but also institutional contexts. We have seen how both in Italy and Spain the institutional contexts expose young people to several constraints while contributing to make families the primary source of support. Scholars also highlighted the risk of the unfolding of inequalities also on new bases, i.e. capacities to catch opportunities, knowledge, ability to do and so on. However, the aim here is not to investigate traditional and emergent inequality

factors, although it would be interesting and worth of further analysis. Instead, here the purpose is to try to understand if and to what extent MESPs can affect the distribution of resources and opportunities by considering the complexity of social inequalities, that make economic resources just one of the multiple dimensions involved. To this end, it is useful to start precisely from young people's aspirations and expectations, that constitute another important distinctive dimension.

Innovative young people have high-ambition and high expectations with respect to the returns of what they are doing in economic terms, but also regarding personal success in general:

> 'If you get ten million euros and you can start over... you start at another level... I wouldn't set up a single company, but I would invest in several companies. I would have a portfolio of companies... more than just one. If instead of ten million, you come out with five hundred thousand euros ... well, probably what I would like to do is to start up another company to sell it for 50 million ... in the end, what I would like to do is to generate the maximum possible value, through something that motivates me, which is to create companies, innovate, generate jobs…' (Marc, 35-year-old man, innovative, Barcelona)

> 'The employee's ambition is to grow and perhaps achieve a better position and thus earn more money than before. Ours is not just one, let's say, it's our vision, let's call it a vision, it's not just about earning more but also about having some sort of success with your business. So, see your business grow, improve and ... have more and more success in today's world.' (Carlo, 26-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

The economic and personal success that is legitimately pursued by young adults who are working to create the next innovation significantly contrasts with the expectation of those who are setting up their own business to create their job and their salary with their own hands – as emerged also from interviews extracts previously quoted - but also their professional identity:

> 'It has been nice to be able to create my own workplace, it is nice when at 8:30 in the morning you already hear the phone ringing ... it is nice because it means that you managed to create something and to make yourself independent, to make yourself... necessary for someone because he esteems your work.' (Carmelo, 26-year-old man, ordinary, Milan)

> 'I have a lot of responsibility for getting my own life forward. Because you no longer depend on a boss who pay*s* you... I: Does this have more negative or more positive aspects? R: It has no more positive aspects than negative, you are your own boss, you control everything, then if you get it wrong, you get it wrong, but if you get it right, everything depends on you. I can do exactly what I want in my job. I mean, I imagine my ideal job and I do it. Nobody is going to offer me this because it's what I think and it's very difficult for a job to meet all your expectations.' (Letitia, 29-year old, ordinary, Barcelona)

As we have seen throughout the chapter, these different aspirations and expectations develop within a value frame centred on self-responsibilisation (also mirrored in the last quote), in very diverse circumstances that brought about the entry into entrepreneurship and

in a context in which risks, responsibilities and potential rewards are not the same for all. Study participants are not a homogenous group also with respect to human capital on which they can rely, as we have seen earlier in this chapter. In particular, innovative young people share the highest levels of human capital. This allows, together with quite successful past work experiences – and especially among those with an economic and technical educational background – not only contribute to develop innovative projects, but also to have a good perception of existing alternatives, create a certain trust in the capacity of the labour market to provide good safety nets in the case of failure, and reinforce a certain optimism about career chances:

> 'I: So, I understand that it was easy to find a job after university, right? R: Yes, it was. Things went well… actually, I've always had a job, even during secondary education when I did some unpaid internships. Then I gained some experience working in my father's business (..) but my degree has also been very useful. Engineering is a qualification that can be still easily sold on the labour market, but it is also one of the qualifications that do not pay so much in terms of salary, at least in Italy. (..) Thus, I know that I can handle it… you also need to have self-confidence. I know that if anything goes wrong, I can do some interviews for a job and, sooner or later, I think I'll manage to find a job'. (Raffaele, 29-year-old man, innovative, Milan)

> 'In my case, I worked a lot of time in consulting, my husband works in consulting, I have many friends in consulting, I could find a job ... unless suddenly there is an economic crisis and it would cost me ... but if the situation is like the current one, I could find work as a consultant in less than a month.' (Adelina, 34-year-old woman, innovative, Barcelona)

On the contrary, Montserrat's point of view about (good) labour market opportunities is very different. Exactly like Luca, she plans to move to another country in case of failure:

> 'Yes, there are opportunities in the labour market but good ones there are not many, the truth. Or at least not in Spain. If, for example, my project will fail, what I think I would do is to go abroad, to Canada or the United States. In fact, my partner is going to Canada this year and I had to go with him. But since in the end, they gave me the incentive to start-up, I'll stay. Because really, I'd rather be good with my project than not be with my partner, but be sad because I'm not motivated by what I'm doing. And for this subsidy and for this project I'll stay, but if I not, I'd leave.'

The entrepreneurial experience, therefore, seems to be for them something that gives sense to what they do and, probably, an opportunity to plan their future (also in the light of what already discussed earlier).

As far as the family support is concerned, no marked differences emerged among interviewees in relation to the support of the family of origin on which, although to different extents, most of them could rely, especially in terms of moral support and as sheet anchor in extreme cases. There are some exceptions. Veronica particularly suffers from the total abandonment and discouragement of her family of origin and her husband, which significantly contribute to increasing responsibilities and workloads. In this respect, it is

important to underline that, although many study participants come from families of entrepreneurs or self-employed (twenty), only two projects have some connection with the family enterprise and, in both cases, the project aims to reinvent the whole activity or to assist the existing activity with a new (digital) service that is formally and substantially separated from the family business. However, the presence of such a high number of interviewees coming from families of entrepreneurs or self-employed is significant and it may contribute to the development of the capacities young people interviewed use.

In this respect, we have already seen how all study participants can count on a certain set of capacities, that are available in different ways among the two groups. Among these, the most important is the capacity to wait and persist, that means time. We have seen how people who request microcredit needs quick returns, but that applies to all ordinary people that are exposed to banks: they cannot wait three or four years to have economic returns. The capacity to take risks and imagine alternatives to the standard paid job is also crucial and, as already shown, it is even more crucial in the case of ordinary young people who end up risking more than all the others, who are instead able to externalise entrepreneurial risks. In this respect, it is also worth mentioning the capacity they all have to reflect upon their abilities and exploit them. However, the alternatives that they can imagine and that they build with their hands mirror the different resources they have at their disposal.

With respect to resources, economic capital seems to remain crucial. On the one hand, also when economic incentives are provided by MESPs, initial resources are often necessary and made available through personal savings (some more, some less). It has been often questioned also the idea that it would be easy to attract venture capital. Many young innovators agree that if it is true that what you need is a proper *execution*, it is also true that this entails having excellent teams made by people with different backgrounds and high human capital, and the development of these teams in almost all cases depend on the social capital young people are able to mobilise. Moreover, as already stressed, being in a team or being alone is not the same thing in terms of the distribution of responsibilities and risks.

Therefore, MESPs pursuing inclusiveness provide effective help to young adults to realize and develop their entrepreneurial project and, therefore, their 'life project', by proving to be able to sustain not only the most resourceful young people but also those I referred to as 'ordinary' young people. Nonetheless, what emerged is that the experiences of study participants were very different between innovative and ordinary young people. These differences comprise unequal risks, responsibilities and potential rewards. Young adults are not a homogenous group and they can rely on diverse levels of human capital, capacities to grasp emergent opportunities, alternatives or labour market safety nets, and people (social

capital) with whom they can share risks and increase opportunities of success. This leads me to argue that MESPs, through their diversified equipment, are effectively able to reach inclusive outcomes by providing positive incentives and proper support to individual coping strategies based on self-entrepreneurship. However, this inclusion takes the form of a 'differentiated inclusion', as a result of both *differentiated* and *differentiating* policy instruments and programmes and, on the other hand, pre-existing socio-economic and cultural conditions. These push for greater subjectivation, individualisation and self-responsibilisation; nurture a 'social demand' for removing barriers to individual-based strategies of this kind; and construct self-employment and entrepreneurship as an alternative "for all" to standard employment. From this perspective, the risk appears to be that of contributing to reproduce, in a circular way, unequal distribution of risks and opportunities among young people, while fostering self-responsibilisation as a central value frame.

CONCLUSIONS

The thesis focused on municipal entrepreneurship support policies (MESPs). It compared actions undertaken by the municipalities of Milan and Barcelona and the experiences of young adults up to thirty-five years of age. This made it possible to empirically observe the shape, the contents and the implications for beneficiaries' experiences of these actions. The research availed itself of an interpretative approach, a methodology based on the case-study and the technique of the interview, and a comparative logic based on the study of differences and related influencing factors. Interviews allowed to access the assumptions, objectives, value paradigms and ways of operating of policy actors, and the experiences and points of view of beneficiaries. Moreover, the interpretative analysis enabled to critically interrogate the role city governments play in entrepreneurship promotion and their capacity to govern socio-economic and political changes.

To begin with, we have seen how the active role city governments play to support the birth and development of new businesses is not new and Barcelona Activa, with its thirty-year-old story, is a perfect example in this respect. Moreover, this study has shown that, despite the popularity that the 'start-up city' icon has recently gained, this is not more than a very fashionable city branding strategy, which hides a more complex and often 'ordinary' reality. Nonetheless, the 'start-up city' has appeared as a sort of symbol of the continuation with other means, or other discourses if you will, of the commitment to support competitiveness and local growth in the broader and lasting trends of 'urban neoliberalization'. In other words, MESPs and the emphasis on innovative start-ups, the attraction of venture capital as well as the aggregation of actors that are typical of growth-oriented alliances (e.g. universities, representatives of business organisations, chambers of commerce, private foundations) seem to have reinforced the 'neoliberal city thesis'. The investigation of the strengths and limits of mainstream views of entrepreneurship influenced by neoliberal and normative approaches has been a primary objective of this research that, therefore, has put the capacity of cities to govern socio-economic and political trends at the centre of the analysis. More to the point, the study has been guided by the purpose of answering the following two questions: in what ways do local policy actors interpret, invalidate or reproduce the mainstream approach to entrepreneurship support policies and

what local factors contribute to shaping locally specific approaches if any? And whether and in what ways MESPs affect the distribution of risks and opportunities among participants?

The answers to these questions developed starting with a proposal for interpretation that brings together the 'critical political economy' and the 'political economy of European cities'.

A proposal for interpretation: bringing together convergence and divergence trends

The study suggested an interpretative framework of MESPs that, on the one hand, brings together the literature on *convergence* and *divergence* trends in urban policy and governance, and that, on the other hand, included the socio-economic literature and theoretically valuable institutional documentation on entrepreneurship in the context of welfare changes and individualisation processes. Therefore, the first part of the theoretical framework developed by drawing on the 'political economy tradition', and in particular: the neo-Marxian 'critical political economy' and the neo-Weberian 'political economy of European cities'. The second part deals with the ambivalence – and the ideological component – of the concept of entrepreneurship and the way this ambivalence is reproduced by (inclusive) European policy approaches that feed on heterogeneity. The European approach places inclusive entrepreneurship policies within the social investment perspective and the activation paradigm. The review of this literature allowed to frame MESPs within the broader processes of growing individualisation and territorialisation/deterritorialization of economies and public policies. Indeed, it is as a result of the changing geography of capitalism and processes of recalibration or adjustment of welfare states that the local has become a crucial field of experimentation.

The neostructuralist approaches emphasised the strength of convergence trends in urban governance towards an ever greater neoliberalisation. From this perspective, the re-emergence of local economies in the globalised world and processes of welfare recalibration are prevalently the result of mechanisms of reengineering of State functions, oriented to the affirmation of pro-growth and Schumpeterian market-led modes of urban governance, and the spread of the morality and the discipline of the market paradigm. The growing emphasis cities have been placing on entrepreneurship has reinforced neostructuralist arguments even moving the 'urban entrepreneurialism' forward, by shedding light on entrepreneurialism as a technique of government of individuals, i.e. a way to encourage individualisation processes, self-responsibilisation and self-entrepreneurialism in the face of reduced social responsibility for individual risks. As we have seen in the second chapter, this thesis goes along with critical and Foucauldian analysis on entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurial-self in contemporary

society. Critical studies highlighted how neoliberal ideologies rooted in the 'enterprise culture' played a crucial role in this respect, by blurring the boundaries of entrepreneurship to make it a catch-all term and concealing underlying differences under the flag of innovation, creativity and the celebration of personal potential.

On the other hand, neo-Weberian approaches, stressing *divergence trends* in urban policy and governance, point out the resilience of the 'European city' as a specific urban regime based on the compromise between economic development and social cohesion precisely through different mechanisms of adaptations to contemporary changes. This resilience takes its roots both in national welfare states and in the local socio-economic, cultural and political resources. These resources, from this perspective, are mobilised by local actors who struggle to preserve the compromise between social and economic interests and renegotiate top-down approaches and decisions by actively contributing to shaping public policies and developing their own strategies as well.

The theoretical analysis has suggested to problematise the different approach to urban policy and governance, by shedding light on the tension and complementarity between convergence and divergence trends. Moreover, it has invited to keep on board both the weight of common trajectories that spur cities to follow the path already set by mainstream views, as well as the need for less abstract, more empirical and grounded analysis. These should be able to go in-depth and to critically face up to contextually specific experiences, by interrogating local actors in order to understand in what ways they reproduce, interpret or invalidate mainstream neoliberal approaches. It means looking at the specific ways through which cities try to govern socio-economic and political changes, the challenges they may face along the way, by paying attention to the distributive effects of their actions to realise a fuller social inclusion and a fairer distribution of opportunities as well.

MESPs between institutional legacies, governance and politics

The analysis has first put MESPs and individual experiences within the socio-economic and institutional conditions characterising the two contexts of Milan and Barcelona. It allowed shedding light on the main features of the structure of opportunities and constraints in which these are embedded. Milan and Barcelona are two southern European cities and, as such, they face the constraints imposed by the continued impact of the economic crisis and structural problems that, in Southern Europe more than elsewhere, especially affects young people and most vulnerable social groups. However, like many other European cities, they outperform their countries in several dimensions and are, therefore, increasingly regarded as

a source of potentialities, both from the socio-economic and policy point of view. As far as the institutional contexts are concerned, we have seen how young people – particularly affected by individualisation processes and central in social investment strategies – encounter particular disadvantages deriving from the scant levels of social protection and equally weak active labour market policies. A context in which local initiatives acquire high relevance. Concerning socio-economic conditions, the analysis pointed out that both urban economies constitute two complex and heterogeneous systems where different economic sectors and employment structures coexist. In particular, it has been stressed that: a) new businesses arise in very diverse economic fields and, in particular, in both advanced and not-advanced sectors; b) the expansion of services has increased economic opportunities and, perhaps, new opportunities for social promotion and/or of strengthening individual coping strategies based on (self)entrepreneurship (that however interact with the inequalities that services incorporate); c) there is not a specific front-line sector, despite what some rhetoric seems to suggest, and researches have to deal with the social heterogeneity and the economic complexity of urban economies and, therefore, of entrepreneurship features.

I. *The logic of the local and the strength of convergence trends*

Findings have shown how MESPs point to a mix of objectives. These range from the promotion of urban growth, including trough city branding and urban attractiveness purposes, to the enhancement of labour market inclusion by supporting alternatives to the paid job. A particular focus has been placed on the second one and on the principle of inclusiveness, which to some extent constitutes a source of legitimation. Nonetheless, it emerged the significance of the continued goal of developing the city as a 'business-friendly environment' and the differences between Barcelona and Milan in this respect. The strength of competitiveness, growth and innovation promotion as reference principles for local agendas occurred regardless of the political shift the two cities experienced with the victory of two leftist coalitions (in 2011 in Milan, in 2015 in Barcelona). Findings have shown how this is mainly influenced, in Milan, by a model of governance that is characterised by a relevant delegation to the private and pluralism, and by the pragmatism that continues marking the local policy paradigm. In Barcelona, instead, prevails the strength of institutional legacies, i.e. 'the transatlantic' made of rules, routines, procedures, also strengthened by international recognition, and consolidated and important partnership with private actors that, as we have seen, share different and more competitiveness-oriented views.

In Milan, these contextually specific factors seem to bring, more than in Barcelona, the local approach to MESPs closer to mainstream views. On the one hand, this is reflected in the weight of growth and innovation-oriented strategies, and the emphasis on *what works* measured mainly through economic indicators. This relies on the assumption that a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovation strengthens urban development and, consequently, improves social inclusion through the creation of new employment. Moreover, it is mirrored in the encouragement of self-responsibilisation and self-activation as a means of social inclusion and innovation of local welfare targeting 'the grey area'. Nonetheless, it emerged how this still represents an important discontinuity with past conservatives governments, by abandoning the full faith in the capacity of the market to generate jobs and social cohesion.

In Barcelona, institutional legacies seem to constitute a privileged vehicle through which mainstream approaches to MESPs reproduce. However, the local government can take advantage of the greater room for manoeuvre deriving from the specific governance arrangements of MESPs to set new directions, in net discontinuity with the past city government which, since 2011, reoriented local policies towards competitiveness and placed companies at the core of a strategy supposed to create employment indirectly thanks to enterprises. These new directions mobilise a vocabulary centred on 'the social' (e.g. social rights, social economy, solidarity, cooperativism) and the collective dimension against individualisation and commodification trends. This allows to problematise the issues at stake in new terms and to recognise they represent a terrain in which different political values are involved, by emphasizing alternatives discourses and practices. For instance, local policy actors tend to put in twilight entrepreneurship as such, by replacing it with the emphasis on cooperativism also as a possible way to empower 'individual entrepreneur' and, therefore, reduce risks of growing individualisation processes. By contrast, we have seen how the continued relevance of pragmatism in Milan led to 'accompany' more than 'govern' individualisation processes and socio-economic changes. Pragmatism emerged, for instance, by the way labour and economic changes are discussed as already given and de-politicised facts, by attributing to the city government the role to follow and get adapted to these changes.

In this respect, the last chapter has shown how the support to the individual coping strategies through inclusive entrepreneurship strategies – if not adequately addressed – may exacerbate trends towards self-activation and self-responsibilisation as the answer to social problems. Moreover, it may contribute to removing from the public and political debate the issue of (socio-economic) differences and the possible growth of social vulnerability deriving

from an *inclusiveness* that also occurs through financial mechanisms that expose 'ordinary' young people to higher risks. Also, it highlighted the relevance of precarious local labour markets and structural constraints young people face in the circumstances preceding their 'becoming an entrepreneur'. This demand more attention to the quality of job in urban contexts as well. In this respect, it seems that the call to innovation could not be sufficient since even high-skilled young people with stable jobs, related to their studies, expressed exasperation about working conditions and low rewards. In this context, entrepreneurship converts, in the best cases, in a sort of game of luck, in which if you are lucky, you manage to escape from those conditions. In all cases, it is your responsibility to set up a coherent and good future. Furthermore, the last chapter has shown how inclusive entrepreneurship tends to reproduce the unequal distribution of risks and opportunities. The heterogeneity of young people's experiences who took part in the study reflects unequal risks, responsibilities and potential rewards. Therefore, MESPs are inclusive, but this inclusiveness seem to occur by differenting. Indeed, I argued that these unequal outcomes are also the result of *differentiated* and *differentiating* policy instruments of which MESPs avail themselves, and their interplay with the diverse individual capacities to strategise entrepreneurial risks and the opportunities that the city offers both in terms of business opportunities and public support.

II. *The logic of the local and divergence trends*

The comparative analysis highlighted the attempt to steer MESPs towards social cohesion purposes, in different ways.

As far as economic development purposes are concerned, we have seen that the support for innovative start-ups also goes along with two other aims. First, the goal to support the economic fabric of deprived neighbourhoods (Milan) and the economy of proximity (Barcelona), both associated with the quality of life in the neighbourhoods and social cohesion. Second, the purpose of encouraging a more social-oriented economy. In Milan this translates into the support, delegated to private organizations, to social start-ups, while in Barcelona the tendency is to overshadow conventional entrepreneurship, start-ups and even social entrepreneurship, to subvert the *order of discourse* completely by emphasising the promotion of social and solidarity-based economy and cooperativism (of freelancer and other self-employed as well).

Moreover, divergencies emerge since inclusiveness in MESPs is not merely a policy objective but is the result of broader processes of changes which, in turn, make bottom-up demands of inclusiveness grow as well. If the municipal support may represent a triggering

factor within more general entrepreneurship-based coping strategies of ordinary young people, the role policies play can be only read in in the light of the broader social, economic and cultural changes addressed in the first two theoreticalchapters. These changes a) push for greater subjectivation, individualisation and self-responsibilisation; b) reduce labour-related rights and, thus, the opportunity-cost (or sometimes the perception of it) to become self-employed or entrepreneur as valid alternatives to regular employment; c) make entrepreneurship ever more inclusive by extending its meanings and scope. I argued that is all this that, circularly, contributes to constructing entrepreneurship as an alternative "for all" to standard employment.

Against this background, MESPs perform diverse functions. First, the development of inclusive 'supporting functions' seem to serve a strategy that aims to avoid 'adventurous', thus riskier, entrepreneurial projects in favour of more planned and consciousness entrepreneurial paths. Along with this, there are what I refer to as 'filtering' and 'orienting' functions. 'Filtering' functions, i.e. mechanisms of selection of participants based on the chances of success (tied to the provision of hybrid supports), prevail in Milan. This function may entail two critical aspects: one relates to enhancement of the accumulation of advantages, by providing support to whom less need it; the other and intertwined risk is to leave all the others without some supports or orientation. By contrast, the provision of soft supports with an extensive approach seems to allow Barcelona Activa to carry out both supporting and orienting functions – which means also try to provide some alternative to self-employment – widely.

Given these findings, it is possible to conclude that neoliberal approaches, that entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship promotion should fully embody, although pervasive, lose strength entering the field, coming down to the local level and accessing the points of view of flesh-and-blood actors. The study of MESPs has shown how much ordinariness (besides innovation and creativity) there is in the fashion label of 'start-up city' and how this 'ordinariness' is embedded in local socio-economic systems. Moreover, it underlined how entrepreneurship policies are certainly imbued with neoliberal assumptions to the extent that they fundamentally neglect inequalities, but also with liberal views or 'liberal neo-welfarism', by emphasising the relevance of autonomy and freedom within a logic that excludes coercion and affirm the importance of the public intervention. Finally, it highlighted how politics, institutional legacies, localised policy paradigms and governance arrangements interplay with the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the two contexts to shape specific and diverse local approaches to MESPs and the capacity of city governments to govern socio-economic and political changes.

III. *(De)limitations of the study*

Finally, I would like to spend a few words about the limits of this research and possible future researches. Leaving aside methodological limits, already emerged in the third chapter, I want here to focus on the limits deriving from the delimitations of this study. First, the research has been limited to the study of two cases, according to the most-similar system design, mainly because the interest was to find out the differences between the two cases deriving from city-specific factors. However, it would be interesting to enlarge this study to include different systems. Another necessary delimitation concerned the target groups. I have chosen to focus on young people, but it would be interesting to compare experiences and the role of policies by investigating them from the perspective of other groups (migrants, women, unemployed adults); probably this would show other aspects of MESPs not emerged here. Moreover, further attention could be placed on 'selecting' and 'orienting' functions through other and more in-depth studies in the case of Barcelona or by including the 'excluded' in Milan.

APPENDIX I

The interview guide for stakeholder interviews

Short introduction: presentation, purposes of the research and interviews, consent to record and use the transcription only for study purposes and confidentiality.

- Issue 1. Context and role-related information: icebreaker questions concerning the organisation/institution and role/work of the participant within the organisation of affiliation or a specific programme.
- Issue 2. Birth and development of the specific entrepreneurship promotion policy/programme/project.

  Example: when and how was this policy born?
- Issue 3. Impressions on the question of entrepreneurship and its evolution, in any, after the crisis (whether and what has changed during the recent years in comparison with the pre-crisis period

  Example: do you feel something is changed during this period of activity/compared with the pre-crisis period? If any, how?
- Issue 4. Definition of the problems that a policy/programme/project addresses

  Example: what objectives do this policy/programme/project pursue?
- Issue 5. Definition of goals pursued

  Example: what are the main objectives?
- Issue 6. Policy area and policies integration (economic development or active labour market policy?)

  Example: To what extent it can be defined as an active labour policy?
- Issue 6. Concrete actions, choice of instruments and motivations

  Example: what practical actions have you undertaken? Why?
- Issue 7. Choice of target groups and criteria for selection

  Example: are there specific target groups?; What criteria for selection?
- Issue 8. Specificities related to young people (i.e. specific programmes, special attention, particular participation)

  Example: Are foreseen different actions for young people? Do they present different levels or modes of participation?
- Issue 9. Governance arrangement (ie. actors involved; financial resources; the weight of the EU regarding funds provision, support of the approach and participation in programmes, networks or programmes promoted or supported by the EU in relation to the issue at stake)

Conclusions: gratitude for the cooperation and invitation to add other reflexions or points not emerged during the interviewed but deemed significant.

The interview guide for young people interviews

Interview Guide. Young people's interviews

Short introduction: presentation, purposes of the research and interviews, consent to record and use the transcription only for study purposes and confidentiality, some words to make the people feel comfortable (i.e. take your time, be free to establish links with other issues without worrying of going off-topic).

Section 1. Important personal and contextual information

Example of starting question: "Can you tell me a little about yourself?"

- Age
- Education levels and type
- City of origin and city where she/he currently lives
- Independent living
- Sources of income
- Presence of entrepreneurs in the family of origin
- Activities presently carried out
- The definition used or preferred to describe their position in the business activity (entrepreneur, self-employed, startupper)

Section 2. The period preceding the start-up of the business

- Activities and job performed
- The moment when the idea of starting up an enterprise come up
- Reasons for the choice of becoming self-employed (e.g. how did you come up with the plan to start this experience?)
- Search for a job (e.g. did you try to find dependent employment before?)
- If employed, the reasons behind the choice to quit the job (e.g. *why did you decide to leave your job?*)
- Reasons behind the choice of the business typology

Section 3. The experience with the public support

- Search for public aid (e.g. did you immediately look for some public support?)
- Experience with the municipal support (e.g. how did you find out about this support? How did the experience go? What kind of support did you receive? Has the support been important and because of what? Did you have an alternative plan in case of support rejection?)

Section 4. Risks and opportunities of the entrepreneurial experience

- Current challenges and gratifications
- Rights and stability (e.g. do you perceive as a problem the fact of having less stability and protection in case of need than a dependent employee? If any, how do you deal with this problem?)
- Positive and negative aspects of working in a team or alone
- Financial resources and personal exposure with credit institutions (e.g. can you tell me how did you fund this enterprise? Was the public support enough (if any economic help)? Did you ask for a credit to banks or other credit institutions?)

- Concerns about risks (e.g. are you worried about risks related to doing entrepreneurship?)
- Family support (e.g. did your family or relatives give you some help of whatever nature (economic and moral))?
- Support from social networks (e.g. did you find some help among friends or acquaintances or associations of which you are part (for consultancy, suggestions, clients etc.))?
- Location of the enterprise (e.g. where is the enterprise based? Why did you choose this location and/or this city?)

Section 5. Representations (through two visual stimuli)

- Thoughts on a short newspaper article about a supposed preference of young people for doing entrepreneurship. Two similar articles have been chosen, one for interviews in Milan and the other one for interviews in Barcelona[85]
- Thoughts on a newspaper article referring to the 'heroic' figure of the entrepreneur. Two articles with this reference have been chosen, one for interviews in Milan and the other one for interviews in Barcelona[86]

Conclusions: gratitude for the cooperation and invitation to add other reflexions or points not emerged during the interviewed but deemed significant.

[85] In Milan has been used an article published by *Ansa* on October 2012 and titled: *Altro che bamboccioni, un giovane su tre si sente pronto a creare un'impresa da subito* (eng. They are not *bamboccioni*, a young in three feels ready to create immediately an enterprise). The term *bamboccioni* refers to who is unable to deal with the responsibilities of the adulthood. It is available at the following link: http://www.ansa.it/web/notizie/rubriche/economia/2012/10/06/Altroche-bamboccioni-giovani-attratti-impresa_7589470.html (latest access September 2018). In Barcelona the article that has been used has been published by *Escuola de Periodismo UAM - El Pais* on 2015 and it was titled *Los jovenes prefieren montar un negocio propio a ser funcionarios* (eng. Young people prefer to set up their own business rather than be employees) available at the following link: https://elpais.com/elpais/ 2015/06/25/masterdeperiodismo/1435222761_235721.html (latest access: September 2018).

[86] In Milan has been selected an article published by *Corriere della Sera* on March 2012 and titled *Ventenni d'Italia. Gli «startupperoi»* (eng. Twenty-year-olds in Italy. The start-up heroes). It is available at the following link: https://www.corriere.it/economia/12_marzo_11/sideri-gli-startupperoi _b28d411a-6b4d-11e1-a02c-63a438fc3a4e.shtml (latest access: September 2018). In Barcelona, the article chosen appeared in *El Pais* on 2015 with the title *Los emprendedores serán los héroes de la próxima generación* (eng. The entrepreneurs will be the heroes of the next generation). Available at: https://elpais.com/economia/2014/12/30/actualidad/1419953210_882613.html (latest access: September 2018)

APPENDIX II

Interviews conducted with stakeholders

What follows is the list of interviews conducted with stakeholders. To facilitate its reading, it must be mentioned that a) when the same code is repeated (e.g. Int_8), this means that a single interview has been conducted but with more than one person; b) interviews are all anonymized; however, the role of stakeholders has been mentioned, while a pseudonym has been chosen for young people.

Milan		Stakeholders' role	Date	Place	Note
1	Int_1	Project Manager FabriQ	30/01/2017	FabriQ	
2	Int_2	Microcredit manager and assistant to the general-director of FWA	7/02/2017	FWA	
3	Int_3	Staff of the councillor of the Department for Urban Economy and Employment	8/02/2017	Municipality	
4	Int_4	Business Consultant, FWA	20/02/2017	FWA	
5	Int_5	Consultant at Culture Department, Milan Municipality	21/02/2017	Bar, Milan	
6	Int_6	Responsible, Cultural Innovation Area, Cariplo Foundation	23/02/2017	Cariplo F.	Expert interview
7	Int_7	Communication manager, ICEI	28/02/2017	ICEI	
8	Int_8	Head of Studies Centre and Stútegic Support of the Chamber of Commerce of Milan	10/03/2017	Chamber of Commerce	No consent to record
9	Int_8	Head of the International and Youth Projects Office of the Chamber of Commerce			
10	Int_9	Official, Department for Urban Economy and Employment	13/03/2017	Municipality	
11	Int_10	Expert and policy advisor for the Department for Urban Economy and Employment	20/03/2017	Municipality	Expert interview
12	Int_11	Senior Advisor, Make a Cube	21/03/2017	Make a Cube	Expert interview
13	Int_12	Policy Advisor, Mayor's Cabinet	14/03/2017	Bar, Milan	Informal conversation
14	Int_13	Spaces Manager and Progúm Ambassador of PoliHub	03/04/2017	PoliHub	
15	Int_14	Principal of the "Arte&Messaggio" municipal school	04/04/2017	Spin-off Arte&Messaggio	
16	Int_14	Spin-off responsible and teacher			
17	Int_14	Spin-off co-responsible and teacher			
18	Int_15	Head of the Self-entrepreneurship and Microfinance Service	07/04/2017	Municipality	

19	Int_16	Responsible for Formaper, special agency of the Chamber of Commerce of Milano Monza Brianza Lodi	07/04/2017	Municipality	
20	Int_17	Head of the economic planning unit	27/04/2017	Municipality	

Barcelona		**Stakeholders' role**	**Date**	**Place**	**Note**
1	Int_1	Training Manager and Responsible Area Entrepreneurship, Autoocupació	17/10/2017	Autoocupació	
2	Int_2	Entrepreneurship Director at Barcelona Activa	20/10/2017	Barcelona Activa	
3	Int_3	Director at Economic and Social Development Department, Metropolitan Area of Barcelona (AMB)	23/10/2017	AMB	Expert interviews
4	Int_3	Expert in economic development and entrepreneurship policies, member of the first plan for self-employment of the Municipality of Barcelona			
5	Int_4	Consultant for enterprises installed in BA incubators	04/12/2017	Barcelona Activa	
6	Int_4	Consultant (2) for enterprises installed in BA incubators			
7	Int_5	Economist and sociologist, Associate Director for the Strategic Plan of Barcelona from 1974 to 1992	15/12/2017	Office, Bcn	Expert interview
8	Int_6	Director at Employment Area of Barcelona Activa	15/12/2017	Barcelona Activa	
9	Int_7	Entrepreneurship Consultant at Convent de Sant Augusti, Barcelona Activa	15/01/2018	Convent de S. A. Barcelona Activa	
10	Int_8	Responsible for Social and Solidarity Cooperative Economy Services Directorate	09/04/2018	Barcelona Activa	
11	Int_8	Consultant for Social and Solidarity Economy Projects			

Interviews conducted with young people

Young people who participated in this research are listed below. The name reported is a pseudonym, chosen to avoid the depersonalization deriving from the use of codes and, at the same time, maintain the anonymity. The age reported refers to the age at the moment when the interview has been conducted.

Milan		**Young participants**	**Date**	**Programme**	**Note**
1	Yng_1	Carlo, 26 years old	12/01/2017	FabriQ	
2	Yng_2	Francesco, 24 years old	19/01/2017	Fabriq	
3	Yng_3	Fernando, 31 years old	31/01/2017	Fabriq	Skype
4	Yng_4	Angelo, 29 years old	02/02/2017	Fabriq	
5	Yng_5	Paolo, 38 years old	04/02/2017	FabriQ	
6	Yng_6	Giulia, 26 years old	09/02/2017	FabriQ	
7	Yng_7	Veronica, 29 years old	20/02/2017	Microcredit, FWA	
8	Yng_8	Pasquale, 32 years old	22/02/2017	MiGenerationLab	
9	Yng_9	Karim, 35 years old	24/02/2017	Municipal call	
9	Yng_10	Lorenzo, 35 years old			
10	Yng_11	Luca, 29 years old	27/02/2017	Municipal call	
11	Yng_12	Roberto, 33 years old	15/03/2017	Microcredit, FWA	
12	Yng_13	Adriana, 34 years old	17/03/2017	MiGenerationLab	
13	Yng_14	Aisha, 31 years old	23/03/2017	Municipal call	
14	Yng_15	Aza, 25 years old	24/03/2017	Municipal call	
15	Yng_16	Alessandra, 26 years old	27/03/2017	FabriQ	
16	Yng_17	Livia, 27 years old	29/03/2017	SpeedMiUp	
17	Yng_18	Raffaele, 29 years old	10/04/2017	SpeedMiUp	
17	Yng_19	Dario, 29 years old			
18	Yng_20	Domenico, 32 years old	11/04/2017	MiGenerationLab	
19	Yng_21	Fabio, 28 years old	12/04/2017	SpeedMiUp	
20	Yng_22	Luigi, 29 years old	13/04/2017	SpeedMiUp	
21	Yng_23	Carmelo, 26 years old	22/05/2017	Spin-off	Skype
22	Yng_24	Fabiola, 28 years old	23/05/2017	Spin-off	Skype

Barcelona		Young participants	Date	Programme	Note
1	Yng_1	Raúl, 34 years old	10/11/2017		
2	Yng_2	Marc, 35 years old	11/11/2017		Skype
3	Yng_3	Pau, 34 years old	14/11/2017		
3	Yng_4	Peter, 35 years old			
4	Yng_5	Jaume, 35 years old	11/12/2017	Comunificadora	Skype
5	Yng_6	Adelina, 34 years old	22/01/2018		
5	Yng_7	Camila, 34 years old			
6	Yng_8	Letitia, 29 years old	12/02/2018	Idees amb futur	
7	Yng_9	Montserrat, 25 years old	20/02/2018	Idees amb futur	Skype
8	Yng_10	Linda, 32 years old	04/06/2018	Idees amb futur	

APPENDIX III

Table of documents

Barcelona Activa
Barcelona Activa, Memoria de actividades 2017
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Barcelona Activa, Memoria de actividades 1999
Barcelona Activa Emprendimiento - Programa de formación y actividades 2017

Source of Barcelona Activa's memories: BCNROC. Repositori Obert de Coneixement de l'Ajuntament de Barcelona[87]

[87]https://bcnroc.ajuntament.barcelona.cat/jspui/handle/11703/83553/browse?type=author&sort_by=1&order=ASC&rpp=20&etal=-1&value=Barcelona+Activa%2C+S.A.&offset=0 (latest access: September 2018)

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