



Creative class agglomeration across time and space in knowledge city: Determinants and their relative importance



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ABSTRACT

The Creative Class Theory proposed by Richard Florida has captured widespread attention from international scholars and political community. From a geographical perspective, this paper employs spatial regression and variances partitioning to examine the determinants of creative class agglomeration (CCG) and its spatiotemporal dynamics, using a typical knowledge city (Shenzhen) in China. Aggregated data are collected at district level in 2000 and 2010. In particular, creative class is categorized into two sub-groups: creative professionals (CP) and super creative core (SCC). In particular, CCG is measured by the total share of creative class within one district. Potential determinants are described from three aspects: amenities, social tolerance and openness, and economic incentives. Results show that the three categories of determinants all have significant influences on CP and SCC agglomeration. However, the relative importance of determinants differs with the creative class sub-groups and differs with time. The 'social tolerance and openness' determinants have the strongest influence on SCC agglomeration in 2000, while the 'economic incentives' determinants have the greatest influence in 2010. For CP agglomeration, the relative importance of 'amenities' determinants is highest in 2000, but 'economic incentives' determinants have the strongest influence in 2010. 'Economic incentives' determinants also have the biggest influence on both CP changes and SCC changes during the study period. It is suggested that urban policies should not particularly emphasize the attraction power of amenities in fostering creative capital. In addition, the urban policy makers should place continuous investment and long-term focus on a diversity of relevant location factors, such as amenities, housing, education, social atmosphere.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Richard Florida argues, in his publication 'The Rise of the Creative Class', that creative class acts as the cream proportion of the labor force for urban and regional economic growth (Florida, 2002). The creative class is defined as people who are employed or engaged principally to develop new technologies, propose new solutions, design new products, and do any other forms of innovation work (Florida, 2002). The creative class typically includes scientists, engineers, artists, social scientists, health professionals, and intensive knowledge-based professionals (Boschma & Fritsch, 2009; Florida, 2002). The basic assumption of Florida's theory is

that a region with higher share of creative people should have better economic performances, since these people have higher level of entrepreneurship, produce more novelties, and attract and generate innovative businesses (Alfken, Broekel, & Sternberg, 2015; Batabyal & Nijkamp, 2010; Boschma & Fritsch, 2009; Florida, 2002; L'Heureux, 2015). The Creative Class Theory is appreciated by international scholars and political community because it applies an occupational approach, which has various advantages over the conventional human capital driven approach or agglomeration externalities to urban and regional economic growth (Tiruneh, 2014). Many empirical studies have supported the Creative Class Theory in a number of regions in Europe and US (Amitrajeet & Nijkamp, 2013; Báez, Bergua, & Pac, 2014; McGranahan & Wojan, 2007; Slee, Hopkins, & Vellinga, 2015; Wedemeier, 2015). As a consequence, it is a conspicuous ingredient to enhance the capacity of absorbing creative class and creative industries in urban policies in many places around the world (Coles, 2016; Markusen, Wassall, DeNatale, & Cohen, 2008; Spencer, 2015).

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From a geographical perspective, it makes the Creative Class Theory particularly interesting that creative people are not distributed across regions and cities in an even manner (Boschma & Fritsch, 2009). Researchers in this field highlight that geographical concentrations and mobility of creative people are primarily determined by natural amenities, social tolerance and openness (Florida & Mellander, 2010; Florida, 2002). Most existing literature employs static approach as Florida's in empirical assessment, emphasizing the inter-urban comparisons but ignoring the inherently spatiotemporal dynamics (Marrocu & Paci, 2012; Tiruneh, 2014). Also, other scholars argue that the economic driving forces should be taken into consideration (Asheim & Hansen, 2009; Perry, 2011; Storper & Manville, 2006). The essential influential factors of creative class agglomeration (CCG) as well as its spatiotemporal changes have not been frequently tested for intra-urban areas. In addition, prior cases were overwhelmingly conducted in developed nations (e.g., Europe, US, Scotland, New Zealand), and knowledge of CCG in developing countries is rather limited. Developing countries and developed nations vary with social, economic, cultural, and political conditions, and the CCG may present discrepancies. The present study attempts to address some of these limitations. For one thing, in contrast to most existing studies, we examine the intra-urban dynamic CCG across time and space in developing countries (China in particular). For another, we focus on a broad array of influential factors that are known to influence the agglomeration and mobility of human capital, and further and compare their relative importance. It allows for more sophisticated empirical investigations and theoretical discussions of the spatial agglomeration and spatiotemporal dynamics of creative class.

1.2. Literature review

Following Florida's ideas, earlier studies claim that local amenities are significant determinants of CCG, since creative people greatly value local amenities (Bille, 2010; Florida, 2002; McGranahan, Wojan, & Lambert, 2011; Moretti, 2004; Shapiro, 2006; Suedekum, 2008). "Amenities" in prior literature is an ambiguous notion, and can represent cultural, natural, aesthetic, and recreational aspects of an urban environment (Storper & Manville, 2006). Bader and Scharenberg (2010) highlighted that artists were attracted by cities with more young population proportion. Ling and Dale (2011) explored the potential link between human creativity and landscape using a Canadian case. Wedemeier (2015) reported that local cultural amenities acted as the driving force behind the CCG in Western Germany's regions. Rao and Dai (2016) found that artists preferred to live in districts with more natural amenities in Shanghai, China. Several studies have also examined the CCG in linkage to "quality of place" (Brown & Meczynski, 2009; Clifton & Cooke, 2009; Fritsch & Stützer, 2008; Hansen, 2007; Kloosterman, 2013; Mansury, Tontisirin, & Anantsuksomsri, 2012). The general discovery is that the creative people are more likely to locate where the quality of place is high. However, some cases are inconsistent with these findings. For example, Alfken et al. (2015) discovered that amenity related factors failed to explain the spatial agglomeration of artists in 412 German districts. Outdoor natural amenities and proximity to the natural environment are attractive factors of creative class in rural Launceston, but are not significant determinants of creative people migration in urban central Launceston (Verdich, 2016). Van Holm (2014) compared the leisure preferences between creative class and service and working class, and found limited support for the role of amenities.

In addition to the amenities, Florida and the followers stress the influence of openness and social tolerance. It is argued that open and tolerant environment are beneficial for developing

unconventional and new ideas and attracting human capital (Florida, 2002). Also, tolerant communities and discrimination are expected to open-minded enough to share and accept the discrimination facing creative class. Several empirical studies have evidenced that social tolerance and openness had strong and positive effects on regional CCG (Alfken et al., 2015; Bereitschaft & Cammack, 2015; Boschma & Fritsch, 2009; Borén & Young, 2013; Haisch & Klopper, 2014; Rao & Dai, 2016; Sharp & Joslyn, 2008). Spencer (2015) reported that creative industries were more likely to locate in neighborhoods with great diversity near the urban core. Scholars have developed various indicators to measure openness and social tolerance (e.g., share of foreigners, gay household percentage, bohemia, and social diversity), and the social diversity is the principle approximation (Bereitschaft & Cammack, 2015; Clark, Lloyd, Wong, & Pushpam, 2002; Florida, 2002; Florida, Mellander, & Stolarik, 2008; Li, Liu, & Zhang, 2016; Rao & Dai, 2016). Social diversity refers to the heterogeneity in terms of lifestyle, ethnicity, and sexuality. Social diversity is proven to be a critical reflection on the ideology of tolerance (Lozano & Escrich, 2016), and its indicative significance in theory can be summarized as: (1) diversity can lower social barriers and increase responsibility (Harjoto, Laksmiana, & Lee, 2015; Li et al., 2016; Thomas & Darnton, 2006); (2) diversity can increase social vibrancy and establish authenticity for the sense of place (Zukin, 2011). Gauthier (2016) pointed that diversity management could foster social inclusion for immigrant creative class.

Some scholars do not quite agree with Florida's ideas and in contrast they emphasize the traditional economic factors as drivers of CCG (Asheim & Hansen, 2009; Hauge & Hraacs, 2010; Storper & Manville, 2006). Such studies comprise another main stream of literature on the influencing factors of CCG. Perry (2011) argued that it was impossible for high income people to shift location without consideration of employment prospects. Möller and Tubadji (2009) found that creative people presented residential preferences towards promising economic regions. Martin-Brelot, Grossetti, Eckert, Gritsai, and Kovács (2010) reported that spatial mobility of creative class was often as a consequence of employment opportunities and better salary. Housing affordability was discovered to be important consideration for residential decisions of creative workers (Frenkel, Bendit, & Kaplan, 2013; Lawton, Murphy, & Redmond, 2013). Dai, Zhou, Keane, and Huang (2012) demonstrated that occupational locations of creative class were largely determined by "personal trajectory" of human capital. Several studies also highlighted that diversity of economic agents was a significant determinant of CCG (Boschma & Fritsch, 2009; Wojan, Lambert, & McGranahan, 2007).

It is clear from former empirics that CCG depends on a broad array of factors other than simply amenities, social tolerance, or economic opportunities. These studies have different motivations towards the concept of creative class (economic-oriented and geographic-oriented) at two levels (worker-centric and firm-centric). For the economic-oriented research, scholars emphasize the functional role of creative class in promoting economic growth, and therefore analyze the agglomeration of creative economy using the proxy of knowledge firms. For the geographic-oriented research, scholars consider the creative class as a segment of population, and thus examine the spatial concentration of creative workers at different scales. Though the geographic-oriented research does not particularly emphasize the economically functional role of creative worker, it does can extend the understanding of creative capital agglomeration. Recent geographical studies call for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the determinants for CCG and its spatiotemporal dynamics (Brown, 2015; Li et al., 2016; Rao & Dai, 2016). Moreover, intra-urban CCG should be understood since policies for individual cities are unlikely to be

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