



Creative Regions and Sustainable Tourism

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Abstract

Theories of regional inequalities often attribute poor economic performance to lack of natural, physical or human resources. The theory of creative economy elaborated by Richard Florida described the role of creative industries and creative people in the development of regions. Creative regions possess large proportions of educated people, of businesses in high-tech industries, a lively cultural life, rich historical legacy, and a pleasant environment. Many of these are true for attractive tourist destinations, where cultural richness and environmental appeals are abundant. This raises the question whether an outstanding tourism destination can possess the traits of a creative economy. The paper surveys the methodology designed to measure the level of creativity for any geographical unit, either a country, or a region, or a city. The quantification of creativity is based on indicators of talent, technology and tolerance, following Florida's ideas. However, later studies offered different measures and included different components of creativity, covering culture and tourism-related indicators, too. Culture, technology, diversity, and quality of the natural environment with its ecosystem services are all taken into account when the success of creative economies is analysed. Common aspects of creative economies and tourism destinations are reviewed and compared, with special regard to issues of sustainability. Finally, future research directions are outlined.

Keywords: Creative economy; Talent; Technology; Tolerance; Culture; Sustainability; Tourism

Introduction

Inequalities between regions in their level of development have long been known and researched. Theories about discrepancies often explain poverty and poor economic performance by the lack of natural resources, physical or human capital. Other explanations point to the historical circumstances, disadvantaged geopolitical location, and to many other factors. Currently we see many success stories of countries or regions emerging from an underdeveloped status to join the leading economies of their neighbourhood, while others – even formerly successful ones – fall behind. Endowments once the core factors of economic success seem to lose their importance, and factors formerly irrelevant become key driving forces. One such new developmental factor is the creativity of the labour force, i.e. its ability to find out new things, invent products or services formerly not thought of, and

respond to the newly emerging needs and wants of modern or postmodern society.

The theory of creative economy by Richard Florida [1,2] has focused on the role of the so-called creative industries and creative people in the rise of regions. This theory tries to explain what attracts creative people and businesses to certain areas, what makes a particular place good for the growth of the creative sector, and offers a way to measure the „creative capacity” of regions – countries, provinces, cities. Although Florida's theory has received much criticism, it deals with an interesting aspect of the relationship between human resources and development. While the creative economy cannot be the universal solution for all regions, it may still be the best road to high quality of life for some.

The typical features of such creative regions include the high proportion of talented and well educated people, the high share of businesses working in high-tech industries, a lively cultural life, rich cultural and historical legacy, and a pleasant, often uniquely beautiful environment [1,3].

Most of these features are true for many tourist destinations and resort areas. Such destinations are often considered pleasant places where it is good to live, and many people choose them not only for a few weeks of a summer vacation, but for a longer off-season stay. Many of the features of popular tourist destinations – the fine climate and environment, the rich historical and cultural traditions, the vivid cultural scenery – are also major attractions to people of flexible work schedules and mobile lifestyles, which are typical features of workers of the creative industries [4].

This raises the question whether an outstanding tourism destination can possess the features of a creative economy. Following the various methodologies available to compare creative economies or regions, tourist destinations can be evaluated by the level of their creative capacity.

The Concept of Creative Economy and its Relation to Development

The economic performance of countries and regions widely differ, therefore the reasons of discrepancies and driving forces of development are key topics in development economics and regional science. The 2009 World Development Report [5] identified three dimensions of regional inequalities: density (the economic size of an area), distance (from regional centres and large markets) and division (physical, political or cultural fragmentation). „Division” may be viewed as a barrier against movement of goods, people and ideas, being a factor for underdevelopment. This can include cultural diversity, which, however, if well-managed, can also become an asset. Cultural diversity may represent a wide range of knowledge, experience, new approaches and creative ideas, which can speed up development, if the population receives it with a positive, inclusive attitude.

The main developmental assets of regions are considered to be the natural endowments, the physical capital (machinery, tools, money), infrastructure, trained labour force and, increasingly important, the human capital, as a key factor towards a knowledge-intensive development path. Info communications technology may be a major opportunity for becoming innovative, competitive and successful, as is seen in the „smart city” idea, an ICT-based concept of city

development [6]. However, innovative, knowledge-intensive activities are much more than ICT-based technology solutions. The human factor, the utilisation of human creativity and talent is absolutely crucial. Traditional location theory underlines the importance of „hard” factors, i.e. availability of raw material, suitable labour force, transport facilities, and production infrastructure, physical and financial capital, institutional structure, and government regulations [7,8]. The creative capital theory [1,2], on the other hand, places the emphasis on creative people and 'soft factors', such as the cultural milieu, natural and cultural heritage, varied, inspiring and colourful environment, beautiful landscape, entertainments, and generally, a pleasant way of living.

The term “creative city” was first mentioned by David Yencken [9], and was introduced into the regional science literature by Landry [10] establishing the concept of the creative capacity of a city or region, and the need for attracting and keeping creative, talented people in the area. The idea of a creative milieu in a city or a region has become well-established, as creative people are usually attracted to areas of rich cultural and natural heritage that provide unique, authentic experiences, entertainments and stimulation, and are open to new ideas and different, often “strange” approaches and people. The capacity to attract creative, talented people had been found to be important by Jane Jacobs [11], Lucas [12], Glaeser [7], among others. A breakthrough in the creative capital theory was the research by Richard Florida [1,2] and his team [13,14], who introduced a measure of creative capacity, the creativity index. Their results demonstrated the positive relationship between economic development and the share of creative industries and creative class in the economy and labour force of a city or a region. The creative class was defined by Florida as people involved in creative activities, regardless of their education attainments: scientists, artists, designers, engineers, entertainers, media workers, and top and middle managers whose work requires individual, non-routine problem-solving.

Since then the theory has gained popularity, and several empirical studies have been published about the creativity index [13-19]. These studies generally follow the original methodology developed by Richard Florida, with some adaptations, allowing for the differences in data availability, and specific traits of nations and societies.

To some critics, the relationship between the presence of the creative class and economic development is more ambiguous. Wealthy places are probably more likely to have the cultural facilities that might attract the creative class, so economic development may come first, followed by an inflow of creative people - i.e. the causality may be the opposite to what Florida envisioned [20,21]. Later, Florida himself admitted that his excessive optimism about the economic importance of the creative class was somewhat exaggerated [22], but he still believes in the value of the creative class as an engine for economic prosperity, though other components of development may be equally important.

Many studies, accepting the idea of the creative economy, argued about the actual measurement of creativity [23,41]. The criticism about the 3T-index developed by Florida, argued that it does not grasp the full meaning of a creative economy, or may be biased in some directions. Thus, modified creativity indicators emerged, which, though partly based on Florida's approach, introduced new components.

How to measure the creative economy

The idea of creative cities and sustainable regions focuses on the 'soft' components and resources that make an area appealing. The endowments that make an area 'a place, where it is good to live', increasingly include factors that are related to cultural values. As technology and infrastructure - including telecommunications and transport facilities - are generally widely available today, the special appeal comes from a lively and colourful cultural scenery, entertainments, varied and novel experiences for individuals. The inclusive social environment enhances the possibility of such experiences, that besides cherishing the natural and cultural heritage of an area, offers wide scope for introducing new approaches, creative ideas and varied, multicultural values and experience.

Creative people are not necessarily the same as highly qualified people, though their education attainments are often higher than average. The key feature of creative activities is to create or invent new things, develop new forms that may be applied under various circumstances. There are many approaches in the literature to identify these creative activities, with many similarities and some differences. Florida [1] defines creative jobs as activities done by their own rhythm, involve continuous learning and development. The worker is independent in determining the work process, there is a definite possibility to express the individual personality. Florida uses the term 'creative class' for such people, including the following jobs: researchers, engineers, architects, designers, people working in education, art, and entertainments. Highly qualified professionals in business, finance, law, and healthcare also belong to the creative class. Similar lists are mentioned by Ságvári and Dessewffy [19], Ságvári and Lengyel [18], Kovács et al. [24] and Keresnyei [17], distinguishing creative industries, knowledge-intensive industries and cultural industries. Landry [27] divided creative industries into three groups: industries creating copyright material, industries creating patents, and industries creating designs.

Therefore based on Florida [1] creative occupations include the engineering, scientific and biological (medical) professions, lecturers at different levels of the educational system, representatives of the social sciences, writers, artists and representatives of spiritual life and the churches. The creative group also includes people in leading positions, e.g. senior leaders of the state and communities, of legislative and administrative areas as well as of the business sector - whose work can generally also be regarded as creative. Therefore creative people include two groups: creative occupations and creative leaders.

The creative economy does not require large quantities of raw material or labour, and is not particularly sensitive to travel and transportation facilities. However, it definitely looks for certain 'soft' factors: communication facilities, a good quality urban environment, the cultural milieu, the attractiveness of the place, the rich historical heritage, the colourful, diverse surroundings for living and work, the mentally inspiring cultural environment, the high level of available services, and the open and inclusive local society. The importance of creativity in urban development has been underlined by many research findings of the 20th century [7,11,12,15].

The development and prosperity of a creative economy requires three core features, the so-called 3 T-s: talent, technology, and tolerance [1]. Creativity, and innovative activities cannot prosper without access to high quality technology, and primarily the most up-to-date infocommunications technology (e.g. broadband internet and wifi), as fast and efficient communication is crucial for exchange of

ideas. Communication technology can often substitute for the weaknesses of transportation infrastructure, too. Talented people make up the creative class, they are the ones who can invent and create the new objects required and consumed by postmodern society. However, the new ideas and unusual approaches shown by creative, talented people must be accepted by the society, therefore tolerance, the ability of the local community to show openness to seemingly strange ideas, and often strange creators of these new ideas, is also a necessary feature. Creative people are usually highly independent, preferring weak bonds to close networks, the possibility to follow their own ways is absolutely necessary for them [1,2].

Quantitative indicators for creative economies

The 3T Approach

Richard Florida et al. [13] applied multivariate statistical analysis to assess the size and importance of creative industries and creative employment in the USA and in the EU at the beginning of the 21st century. They estimated the levels of talent, technology and tolerance (3T) in the following way:

Talent was measured by the average educational attainment of the population, and the proportion of the creative jobs in employment. Similarly, Ságvári and Dessewffy [19] used the proportion of the 25+ population having higher education degrees, the proportion of the creative jobs in employment, and the number of researchers working in the public and the private sector.

Technology was measured by the proportion of businesses working in high-tech industries, and the number of innovations and patents [13]. Ságvári and Dessewffy [19] also used the proportion of businesses in creative industries, the number of innovations, and the R&D spending by the government and the private sector. In addition, the number of internet subscriptions can also be included, as high quality info communications technology is a key factor for the creative industries.

Tolerance is the most difficult to estimate. Florida et al. [13] used the results of a Gallup-survey, that measured the respondents' openness towards ethnic minorities, and inclusiveness towards the gay and lesbian people. As a modification of this approach Ságvári and Dessewffy [19] applied the results of an international attitude survey, in which respondents were asked about their attachment to traditional or modern values, and about the importance of self-expression or survival values. Another possibility is to use the ethnic and religious diversity of the population, as an expression of tolerance. Cultural diversity may be an important generator of creativity and innovative ideas. Assuming, that people more readily acknowledge their ethnic and religious affiliation in tolerant societies, and that intolerant societies tend to become more homogeneous, the degree of inhomogeneity is a possibility for a tolerance indicator. Following Greenberg's methodology [25] in computing a Linguistic Diversity Index [26] a cultural diversity index can be computed using linguistic, ethnic, and religious composition of the population [27,28,29]. Although greater cultural heterogeneity goes together with greater level of innovation and creativity, it can also make communication and cooperation more difficult. Various ethnic and language fragmentation indices were found to be slightly negatively related to GDP per capita growth, but studies point out, that the most affluent countries possess a medium level linguistic, ethnic, or cultural diversity, i.e. a certain level of diversity is necessary to economic progress [30].

Applying the 3T context Florida et al. [13,15] established a Global Creativity Index (GCI) and used it for measuring the performance of creative economies in America and Europe.

The C3 Approach

The Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor establishes a Cultural and Creative Cities index (C3-index), describing the achievements of a place in terms of cultural vibrancy, creative economy and the enabling environment [31,32].

CULTURAL VIBRANCY	CREATIVE ECONOMY	ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
1.1 Cultural Venues and Facilities Sights and landmarks Museums and art galleries Concert and music halls Theatres	2.1 Creative and Knowledge-based Jobs Jobs in arts, culture and entertainment Jobs in media and communication Jobs in other creative sectors	3.1 Human Capital and Education Graduates in arts and humanities Graduates in ITC Average appearances in university rankings
1.2 Cultural Participation and Attractiveness Tourist overnight stays Museum visitors Cinema attendance Satisfaction with cultural facilities	2.2 Intellectual Property and Innovation ICT patent applications Community design applications	3.2 Openness, Tolerance and Trust Foreign graduates Foreign-born population Tolerance of foreigners Integration of foreigners People trust
	2.3 New Jobs in Creative Sectors Jobs in new arts, culture and entertainment enterprises Jobs in new media and communication enterprises Jobs in new enterprises in other creative sectors	3.3 Local and International Connections Accessibility to passenger flights Accessibility by road Accessibility by rail
		3.4 Quality of Governance

		Quality of the local governance
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Table 1: Structure of the Cultural and Creative Cities index (Source: [30]:22).

This index, though it is similar to Florida’s 3T-s in many of its components, also puts a strong emphasis on cultural aspects, and grasps new factors of creativity, particularly in its Cultural Vibrancy concept. In this component tourist nights and main tourist attractions are directly included. Another interesting feature is the issue of tolerance. Both Florida’s index and the C3-index covers tolerance, but while Florida measures it by openness towards ethnic minorities, and inclusiveness towards the gay and lesbian people, the C3-index measures it by the inclusion and integration of foreigners (Table 1).

Other creativity indicators

Correia and Costa [33] designed a Creative Space Index (CSI) as a cross-section index for 26 European countries using data from the period 2005–2012, and made a comparison with Florida’s GCI. They included 9 groups of indicators: talent, openness, cultural environment & tourism, technology & innovation, industry, regulation & incentives, entrepreneurship, accessibility, liveability. Thus CSI is partly similar to the previously described 3T-s, or the C3 indicators, but there are significant differences. As the authors point it out, the values and country rankings are rather different from Florida’s GCI.

Alexy et al. [34] also constructed a creativity index, based on the 3T approach, but adding a few new features. They measured the creative capacity of 28 European countries in the period 2005–2014. In their study they underlined the importance of the cultural context, i.e. the supportive cultural background. They used an extended version of the 3T-s described in [16], Talent was measured by creative class, human capital, and scientific talent, adding two new aspects: public spending on education and the number of published scientific journal papers. The other substantially modified index is tolerance, incorporating an attitudes-index, a value- index and a self-expression-index based on the Worldwide Governance Indicators and the European Values Study. They compared their computed index values to 3T-index values computed by Florida’s method, and found that the picture presented by the two different methods is different within individual countries. They also demonstrated lack of correlation between their creativity index and GDP per capita.

Culture, Creativity and Sustainable Tourism

The relationship between tourism and culture is twofold. First, cultural tourism, a major motivation for tourism, is attracted by the cultural heritage of a place, including built heritage and intangible heritage (gastronomy, local food and drinks, folk dance and music, costumes, handicrafts, etc.). Tourists consume cultural assets and by paying, they contribute to the maintenance and development of them. On the other hand, as the current trends show, tourists increasingly look for authentic experiences, and culture may contribute to the supply of this authenticity. The significance of a tolerant, lively urbanity, which attracts, and is often generated by a highly qualified creative population makes it possible for tourists to become part of the local atmosphere. Thus tourists searching for authentic experiences will find such places particularly appealing [35].

A rich cultural life is an important asset for a region or a city to attract people from the higher end of the social ladder (e.g. corporate

executives, highly qualified employees, or self-employed creative people). These people are similar to cultural tourists in the sense that they consume culture and entertainment, and appreciate good cultural infrastructure. Areas possessing a rich cultural and natural heritage, including World Cultural and Natural Heritage sites, attract tourists and also attract immigration from the nearby developed regions as the example of countries in Latin-America or the Caribbean region show [36]. As the example of Sweden demonstrates, the natural and cultural qualities of regions influence the regional distribution of human capital. The local supply of built heritages, cultural environments have a positive impact on the inflow of highly qualified individuals. This underlines the fact, that cultural heritages are important place-based resources contributing to regional attractiveness. Besides, natural qualities, like the pleasant climate and local supply of recreational areas (preserved natural areas) are also appealing to qualified people [3].

Up to the early 21st century the tourism industry had made relatively little use of creative approaches to development. However, recently more attention has been paid to experience production, and this gave space to creativity in both tourism consumption and production. This creative turn is explained by the fact that the loss of traditional jobs in manufacturing or in agriculture and primary industry led to a search for alternatives. Tourism has been such an alternative in many places, and tourism development followed very similar patterns in many regions. Cultural tourism became a ‘good’ form of tourism, as it is generally considered a sustainable form of tourism that supports local culture. It is often seen as ‘quality tourism’ in contrast to the traditional forms of mass tourism which have become less profitable recently. Due to the strong competition among tourist destinations, creativity in the production of tourism services can create a competitive edge. The ‘creative class’ are not just important for the production of creativity, but are also its biggest consumers. Those employed in the cultural and creative sectors are important consumers of cultural tourism, too. For the creative class the ‘quality of place’ is an important part in their location choices, and this combines openness, diversity, atmosphere, street culture and the quality of the natural environment. These relatively intangible factors may be more important than traditional cultural institutions such as opera houses or ballet companies in the locational decisions of creative people. It is reasonable to assume, that tourists would also be attracted to such places, since many tourists are in search of ‘atmosphere’ and difference [21].

Creativity is also an aspect of rural environments, and even of nature itself. Rural areas have become creative spaces rivaling urban regions in this sense. They have become creative havens for those retreating from the city, and are often homes to rural artists’ colonies and rural museums and crafts centers. Rural areas which attract tourists can also be attractive places for lifestyle entrepreneurs to relocate. Most of the existing examples of ‘creative tourism’ are to be found in rural areas, One of the solutions to the growing problems of rural tourism has been the development of creative tourism products, like the creation of crafts tourism, arts festivals, workshops and master classes, and learning to appreciate local produce. Alternatively, creativity in rural tourism may suggest new ways of understanding

creativity, for example in activities related to eco-experience or adventure [37].

Creative strategies in tourism will only be successful if they become sustainable. The fact that creative tourism development utilizes creative assets rather than created ones implies that it should also be more sustainable in environmental terms than traditional forms of tourism. Similarly, it is assumed that the creative city is more sustainable and self-renewing than more traditional cultural capitals. However, sustainability does not only affect the built or natural environment. Social sustainability depends on the ability of the host society to benefit from creative development. It can possibly be detected in the increased creativity and creative activities in the local population, growth in tolerance and greater social cohesion or social capital [38].

Future directions of research

The relationship between tourism and creativity points at the deficiencies of creativity measures. The indices are typically biased towards some aspects of creativity while neglecting other important aspects.

For example, in the study about the creativity in European countries [16], Italy rated very low, and yet the country is famed for its design and fashion industries. Regarding tourist destinations, one would expect that cities with high creativity scores would also attract more visitors. However, the creativity rankings produced for a study of UK cities [39] showed, that Manchester ranked higher than such cultural tourism icons as London and Edinburgh, and cities which ranked higher in terms of creativity actually had less overseas tourism growth between 2000 and 2003. This means, that the 3T-based creativity indicator is unable to grasp the attractiveness of a region for tourism. The other important aspect of creativity was tolerance or openness, which is associated with multiculturalism or diversity, being strong tourism appeals, as the example of Barcelona, as a creative city shows. Ethnic or cultural diversity is also a potential stimulus for creativity [6, 40]. In line with these ideas the newer measures of creative economies, like the C3 approach [31, 32], or the Creative Space Index [33] were designed to directly include tourism data, and a wider approach towards openness and tolerance, which may give a more subtle understanding of cultural diversity.

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