

Jonathan Borggren

'A place without living standards' - Defining creativity amongst 'talents' and 'creatives' in Gothenburg, Sweden

Abstract

Building on previous research concerning the location preferences of human capital (Niedomysl & Hansen, 2010; Borggren & Eriksson 2014) talents (Hansen & Winther, 2010), milieu (Buttimer, 1969; Drake, 2003) and the 'creative class' (Florida, 2002), this paper studies creative milieu from the perspective of individuals engaged in different creative occupations in Gothenburg, Sweden. Drawing on the background of structural economic change, the key competitive asset of attracting skilled workers and place-marketing to promote regional development, the aim of this study is to 'take a step back' and let representatives of these individuals first define a creative milieu, and second to investigate, in retrospect, whether this creative milieu has exercised any significant influence on residence and location choices by way of in-depth interviews. Results show that the creative milieu as described by the respondents constitutes a space containing human interaction, the possibility to think freely and having the option of choosing to participate in various activities. It is suggested that further understandings of creative milieu would be based on the social context, or more precisely the social space (Buttimer, 1969), of the observer and of how said person 'justifies' creative milieu from a professional standpoint, i.e. from the perspective of one's occupation.

Key words: Gothenburg; creative milieu; talents; interviews; Sweden

Introduction

Sites of creative production and inspiration remains, despite valiant efforts to conceptualize it, an enigma within contemporary economic geography, tourism and neighboring disciplines within the social sciences (Andersson, 1985; Amabile, 1996; Drake, 2003; Törnqvist, 2004; Sjöholm 2010; Duxbury & Murray, 2010). If we assume that the 'creative class' thesis put forth by Florida (2002) can shed light on this puzzle by acknowledging that the location of Florida's creative individuals forms the basis for a creative milieu, then it becomes crucial to approach the key participants by way of in-depth interviews and analysis and not only to make quantitative observations of human capital and skilled labor. Further, in order to conceptualize the creative milieu, this paper uses the concept of 'social space' put forth by Buttimer (1969), relating family, neighborhood, economy and the urban sphere to explanations of creativity.

As the industrialized countries gradually move away from being a labor-intense producer of physical goods while simultaneously increasing their share of human capital, issues are raised concerning what

Jonathan Borggren, PhD, Department of geography and economic history Umeå University, Umeå, Sweden;
E-mail: jonathan.borggren@geography.umu.s

the future of employment will be in a technologically advanced nation (Pinch & Henry, 1999; Rusten & Bryson, 2010). Florida (2002, 2003, 2004) is perhaps the most notable scholar on the importance of attracting a 'creative class' consisting of talented, often young and urban human capital in order for cities and regions to survive the transition from manufacturing to knowledge and services. This of course is not new, industry has been giving away to the service, information and knowledge based economy for years (cf Houston, Harrison & Mason, 2008; Pratt, 2009), however it can be argued that this process is slower in an industry town in transition, where manufacturing continues to have a significant impact on economic output and employment (Essletzbichler, 2004).

Taken together, there is, with some exceptions (Hansen & Niedmysl, 2009; Lawton, Murphy & Redmond, 2013) a lack in understanding the deeper causes behind change in residence made by the talents (Borggren 2011). This is surprising given the importance placed on finding and attracting for example the 'creative class' among policy makers and planners (Long, 2009; Ponzini & Rossi, 2010). Thus, a step back remains to be taken in order to address how a sought-after group of people in retrospect describe a creative milieu and its impact on residential and work-place preferences. Previous research (Boyle, 2006; Asheim, 2009) has shown that the thesis of jobs follow people and not the other way around (Florida, 2002) doesn't stand the test, indicating that further research is needed to better understand what matters regarding place of residence and also place of work. This paper contributes to "the filling of this gap of knowledge" (Hansen & Niedmysl, 2009, p. 193) with special attention paid to the creative milieu (Drake, 2003) and to some extent also to research on the importance of local buzz (Bathelt, Malmberg & Maskell, 2004) as the creative milieu can be argued a facilitator of knowledge transfer through interaction. As it has been shown earlier that applying broad brush strokes when answering the question of the location of 'talents' and the 'creative class' only serves to give a general understanding or "a conjecture at best" (Sjöberg, 2010, p. 112) of contemporary urban development, further qualitative inquiries are necessary in order to problematize the connection between residential and work-place location and creative milieu. Thus, drawing on the urban processes briefly depicted above, the aim of this paper is to let representatives of an arguably influential urban elite (Peck, 2005; Markusen, 2006; Hrac, 2009) first define a creative milieu, and second to investigate in retrospect whether this creative milieu has exercised any significant influence on residence and location choices by way of in-depth interviews. Using a retrospective approach to reach a more clear definition of a creative milieu will contribute to a deepened understanding of a highly contested and sought-after phenomena as this is a methodology that previously has not been frequented to any greater extent.

Creativity and milieu in a social context

As this paper concerns the perceptions of a creative milieu and whether it has exercised any influence on residential preferences, a theoretical breakdown of migration and milieu is essential in order to better understand what it is and why it may be important in the everyday lives of the respondents. The basic assumption behind the creative milieu often attests that it is a place where people come together, a meeting place or a destination, and can be linked to earlier work on cities as innovative hubs and centers of knowledge diffusion through the concentration of people with various backgrounds (Jacobs, 1969; Lucas, 1988; Törnqvist, 2009). As the creative milieu may be referred to as a meeting place it is also a milieu in a social context facilitating buzz (Storper & Venables, 2004; Currid & Williams,

2010). However, defining a creative milieu as a social milieu and hence putting it into the context of social relations has a wider meaning and impact outside the economy. Using the concept of social space (Buttimer, 1969) allows us to distinguish four spheres, placed in hierarchical order, of interest relating to social space. These are 'familial space', 'neighborhood space', 'economic space' and the 'urban sector', all of which are groups where people live, work, move and interact (Chombart de Lauwe, 1960). These spaces are also potential nurturers of creative milieus given that they exercise a positive influence on the individual, putting him or her in a creative mood. Consequently they may also be potential disturbers as for example economic, personal or social circumstances' relating to the spheres hinders creative activity. The target group of this paper, the representatives of the 'creative class', are no exception to the logic of the social space as they become subjects to the influence of the spheres depending on context. This needs to be considered when we later address descriptions and retrospective significance of specific milieus on for example creative work. Creative milieu becomes intertwined in a network of social relations, daily and weekly orbits and circumstances relating to housing, work, family etc. (Buttimer, 1969) and consequently needs to be understood as a contextual phenomenon.

There is a wide body of literature looking specifically at the spatial location of a creative milieu by describing certain physical surroundings and external circumstances that historically has been argued helpful in fostering creativity and simultaneously generating a desirable destination (e.g. Jacobs, 1961; Janik & Toulmin, 1973; Andersson & Strömquist, 1988; Landry, 2000, Törnqvist, 2004; Thufvesson, 2006; Wojan, Lambert & McGranahan, 2007). These factors initially include political instability, a variety of urban functions, housing situation, work environment, and architecture. Partially building on this, Andersson (1985) highlighted not only the above, but also the importance of size and of a multi-cultural composition when defining a city-region as being creative. Andersson continued by arguing that the creative process contains 3 basic concepts, competence, synergisms and structural instability (1985, p. 15). In conclusion, the creative region needs high levels of competence, many fields of academic and cultural activity, excellent possibilities for internal and external communications, widely shared perceptions of unsatisfied needs, and a general situation of structural instability facilitating a synergetic development (1985, p. 19). These concepts fit into the historical circumstances depicted and also help to illuminate the social context.

To most people the creative milieu is perhaps a place where individuals may feel inspired and connected to the task that they've set out to do (Wojan *et al.*, 2007), surrounded by a cluster of buildings and a critical mass of entrepreneurs, thinkers or intellectuals (Landry, 2000). Early contributions within geography treated the concept as an innovative milieu (Törnqvist in Buttimer, 1983, pp. 97-107) and as a milieu influenced by both discipline and playfulness (Hägerstrand, Sollbe Carlestam & Perlenhem, 1991, pp. 117-119). However doubts arise concerning the affordability of these milieus today as recent studies has shown that people engaged in creative production, e.g. musicians and artists, cannot afford the rising costs of living thus migrating away from the creative milieu to suburbs or neighboring cities (Hracs, 2009; Pratt, 2009). This is a causal effect of the growing attractiveness which in turn has rendered increased tourism and demand for property. The concept of a spatially displaced bohemia or a 'creative class', due to the contemporary financial situation challenges much of prior studies on localization economies and the connection between the city and creative professions. However, it is simultaneously in line with findings on the importance of structural instability and dire straits as key components of the creative milieu (Törnqvist, 2004; Thufvesson, 2006).

Florida (2004) summarizes some of the components needed to build place attractiveness and to nurture the 'creative class' within certain parts of the city. According to Florida, it is a milieu which becomes both working place, residential area and a neighborhood where one can play and recharge batteries. Hall (2000) concludes that the common denominator of past creative cities was primarily rapid economic and social transformation, for example Vienna in the early 20th century, intersecting events that for most parts were unprecedented anywhere else in the world. There is also an important measure of instability, building on the structural instability depicted above, in Halls version of a creative milieu: "So creative cities, creative urban milieu, are places of great social and intellectual turbulence, not comfortable places at all." (2000, p. 646). Before commencing on the research design and methodology of this paper we need to continue our theoretical breakdown and further discuss the concept of creativity as a social concept. This is important not least given the rapid growth of literature and policy recommendations relating to the creative and cultural industries (e.g. Hesmondhalgh, 2002; Power, 2002; Pratt, 2008) and the rise of creativity as a crucial economic factor in regional development (Florida, 2002).

Tying the concept of creativity to a specific theory or to a certain discipline is much difficult as there are a multitude of reference points in for example psychology, political science, tourism research, architecture and planning, economics, sociology and geography (e.g. Sahlin, 2001; Bjereld & Demker, 2003; Ougaard, 2008; Kahl, da Fonseca & Witte, 2008). These points of reference originate in observations and studies on different aspects and attributes of creativity. In psychology, for example, research on creativity in relation to the human mind and its various characteristics is common and there is a peer-reviewed scientific journal devoted to cross-disciplinary research on creativity, the *Creativity Research Journal* (cf Koestler, 1964; Runco, 1988; Boden, 1990; Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby & Herron, 1996). However, giving creativity increased attention is not without complications as the concept itself is problematic due to the positively charged connotation it carries, i.e. to be creative is desirable and vice versa (Pratt, 2008). Further, the typical case of creativity research is to enquire into the characteristics of a creative individual, comparing him or her with a comparison group and based on that observation list a number of traits (Amabile, 1996). We need to consider these exercises with caution as they may very well be socially excluding and contributing to the stigmatization of certain groups of individuals in society through the same careless categorization as observed and discussed in for example research on neighborhood effects (Permentier, Van Ham, & Bolt, 2008). For quite some time creativity, albeit highly contested as a concept, has been an important factor in for example many work-related situations and there is today a 'creative class' thesis stating that policy-makers and planners in large city-regions need to grasp the coming importance of this 'class' in order to maintain economic growth (Florida, 2002, 2003).

The rising thesis on the 'creative class' provides perhaps the ultimate contemporary example of how creativity has been conceptualized in accordance with the neoliberal economy. The much contested thesis states that firms (mostly high-tech) in pursuit of skilled labor will have to follow a current of 'creative class' in order to recruit successfully. This current of sought-after labor is destined for cities that correspond to the residential and life-style preferences of the 'creative class'. According to Wenz (2009), these areas can be interpreted as romanticized urban areas offering a multitude of amenities, a tolerant atmosphere and a degree of self-fulfillment occurring when a group of creative individuals come together. It is an urban milieu which is closely linked to the neighborhoods described by Törnqvist (2009) and Jacobs (1961). The location of the 'creative class' has been studied in most

western countries following the ideas put forth in the early 2000s. For example Denmark, Australia, the Netherlands, Canada, Sweden and the UK (Vaarst Andersen & Lorenzen, 2005; Tinagli, Florida, Ström & Wahlqvist, 2007; Hansen, 2008; Clifton, 2008; Hrac, 2009; Asheim, 2009; Verdich, 2010). Reactions and criticisms to Florida's thesis has been multitude, notably emphasizing the complexities involved in the forming of a cultural quarter based on the preferences of the 'creative class' (Pratt, 2009). This is especially relevant on the local level, where knowledge on residential preferences in relation to changing life-stages is lacking. A case study of Hoxton in London, UK (Pratt, 2009) shows that a place commonly thought of as creative and cool has a long history of unplanned and unwanted events such as the gradual displacements of individuals involved in creative production (for example artists). Cities such as Dublin (cf Boyle, 2006) with amenities, night life and a variety of cultural events to offer fit this image and constitute the type of milieu that would attract people in their twenties with arguably few strings attached (Åquist, 2007).

Research design, data and case

The primary data used in this paper is derived from 11 interviews documented through notes taken during the interview and transcribed and rewritten following the end of the interview (Table 1). The location of the interview where in 8 cases the respondents work-place and the remaining 3 interviews where done using phone due to travel and/or time limitations. The interview study consists of 4 men and 7 women born between 1953 and 1960 presently living in or within a short distance of Gothenburg. The relatively high age of the respondents may appear contradictory considering the primarily young people used in Florida's (2002) panels. However, as this paper attempts to not only let representatives of the 'creative class' describe a creative milieu, but also to address, in retrospect, the personal and professional importance of the specific milieu, selecting respondents from a middle-aged age cohort becomes necessary. Six of the respondents were also born in Gothenburg. All of them were born in Sweden, one had foreign-born parents and another one was raised by foreign-born foster parents. All of the respondents were living in Gothenburg in 1990 when their professional careers had begun to gain momentum.

As mentioned, previous studies on 'talents' and 'creative class' often is biased towards younger mobile individuals (Florida, 2002), the retrospective approach of this paper calls for the use of an older cohort. Hence this paper approaches the question of what happened based on the recollection of the respondents instead of speculating on what will happen in order to better understand, rather than explain, the phenomenon (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). The ambition with this approach isn't to draw a statistically representative sample (cf Gustavson, 2001; Hrac, 2009) but to provide a unique retrospective insight into the respondent's residential and professional career and to illuminate a creative milieu through personal descriptions. This paper approaches both residence and work-place as it is argued that the work space and residence of individuals involved in creative production often become blurred in the contemporary city (Gill, 2002, 2007).

Respondents agreed to participate under non-profitable terms and were informed that their identities would not be revealed. They are part of the study based on occupation, consequently the names and whereabouts of the respondents is irrelevant. Interviews lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and were

mostly held at the respondents working place after office hours (Table 1). The respondent's were unaware of the actual reason for being selected. Instead of being informed of the fact that they by definition belonged to the 'creative class', which may have affected the answers, they were told that they were selected solely based on age and place of living. Further, using retrospective analysis may affect the respondents' answers, leading them to favorably reproduce facts and milieus experienced earlier in life. However, as the respondents are unaware of their belonging to an influential group of people there is no incitement for them to try and deliver favorable answers aimed at justifying the selection.

Table 1.
Overview of respondents

Respondent	Gender	Born	Occupation at time of int.	Highest education	Date of int.	Length
1 (phone)	Male	1958	Translator/Author	Primary school	080814	70 min
2	Female	1956	Author	Journalism	080820	50 min
3	Female	1956	Painter/Teacher	Art school	080825	90 min
4	Female	1953	Choreographer/Artistic leader	Dance therapy	080901	70 min
5 (phone)	Female	1960	Communications-consultant	Communication	081006, 100125	45 min
6 (phone)	Female	1960	Sculptor/Cultural worker/Dancer	Junior college	081008, 100119	80 min
7	Female	1957	PR-consultant	Public relations (USA)	081014, 100119	80 min
8	Male	1959	Copywriter	Engineering	081017	45 min
9	Female	1958	TV-producer	Journalism	081120, 100119	60 min
10	Male	1957	Architect/Consultant	Architecture	090128	90 min
11	Male	1959	Researcher/Entrepreneur	Ph D	090211	60 min

The studied location is the city of Gothenburg, situated on the west coast of southern Sweden. It is the second largest city in Sweden with a population that recently surpassed 500 000 after consecutive positive net growth since 1982 and a popular tourism destination due to the event-based character of the post-industrial city (City of Gothenburg, 2009). The city was built by Dutch engineers who modeled it after Amsterdam and there were early on strong cultural and economic ties primarily with the UK. Dutch and British merchants and ship owners became influential through early investments in the booming local economy (Törnqvist, 1996). Gothenburg is a comparatively young city founded in the early 17th century as a military strongpoint to the west facing Denmark. Gothenburg today functions as a northern European shipping center boosting the biggest port of the five Nordic countries with approximately 900 000 containers (TEU) shipped in 2011 (Port of Gothenburg, 2012). The regional economy is dominated by automotive industry, namely Volvo trucks and Volvo cars located in the northern part of Gothenburg. As a small country of some 9,5 million inhabitants with a technologically advanced industry capable of producing far more than the national demand Sweden counts as one of the most export-dependending economies in the world. Being the nation's industrial engine, Gothenburg

sits perfectly within that context and shares many development patterns with other European cities in transition such as urban renewal, gentrification and place marketing (Borggren & Ström, 2014). Much like the case of Scotland (Houston *et al.*, 2008) Gothenburg also faces the "double challenge" of deindustrialization and periphery on the European continent. Attracting 'talents', 'creative class' and similar skilled labor will prove vital considering the continued down-sizing in most notably the automobile industry and its related spinoffs in the region if alternatives such as the creative industries (Power, 2002; Dahlström & Hermelin, 2007) are to be given serious consideration. To summarize, the environment in which the research is conducted, that is contemporary Gothenburg and neighboring residential areas, is that of comparatively high financial standards. However, if we consider the full longitudinal scope of this paper, going back to the birth and childhood of the respondents in the 1950s and 1960s, it is evident that extensive welfare and high standards of living has not always been the case. Gothenburg, as well as Sweden, has undergone a socioeconomic transformation (Furåker, 2010).

Defining a creative milieu and understanding retrospective importance

An account of the results will be given in this section following a selection of the questions asked during the interviews (Appendix).

To what extent does the following concepts apply to your perception of a creative milieu? Rank 1-5.

Having briefly touched on contextual issues in the previous section, we now turn to the empirical account of creative milieu following the answers given by the respondents. Initially, in order to relate the respondents perception of a creative milieu with theory follows an account of each participants rate, from a scale of 1 – 5, 5 being the highest, of how well the following statements was associated with the creative milieu the respondent had in mind.

Table 2.
From a scale of 1 – 5 how well does the following statements associated with your version of a creative milieu?

Statement	Respondents average
Meeting places	4.5
Well running infrastructure	4.5
Mixed tenure forms	4.5
Tolerance towards dev. behavior	4.3
Mixed primary functions	4.2
Travel	4.0
Nature	4.0
Large metropolitan area	3.8
Venture capital	3.7
Parks	3.7
Neighborhood fellowship	3.7

Table 2. Continued

Statement	Respondents average
Structural instability	3.6
Active leisure time	3.6
Bohemians	3.5
Ethnic diversity	3.3
University	3.1
Move	2.9
Downtown location	2.7
Opera house	2.7
Nobel Prize laureates	2.0

Table 1 show that most of the statements scored higher than 2.5, half of the highest value, indicating that the respondents thought that the statements were on the positive side. In fact, only one of the statements (Nobel Prize laureates) scored lower than half of the highest value. Opera house and downtown location were the two second lowest scorer. A well-running infrastructure, mixed residential types and meeting places scored highest on average for the respondents indicating that these statements corresponds strongly with the respondents creative milieu.

Respondent's attitude towards travelling where more benevolent compared to moving. The respondents have reached an age where several different factors such as work, school and established social network may work in sync to discourage migration. Hence they also rate travelling as more corresponding to creative milieu as compared to migration (move). As presented earlier in this section respondents were apt to associate a creative milieu with something positive which also became apparent when relating to the statements in Table 1. Consequently, a majority of the respondents not only considered whether for example the statement "large urban region" matched the creative milieu as described by him/her, but also whether the statement is in accordance with general understandings of a stimulating space.

The descriptions given by respondents during the interviews concerning what constitutes a creative milieu where two-folded, highlighting both physical locations and emotional and mental mindsets. These descriptions also tended to vary depending on whether the respondent was referring to a residence or a work-place. However, as we shall see below, there are several cases where the distinction between work-place and residence is blurred due to the free character, i.e. the where and when, of the respondents work. Respondent no 3 gives the following description of a creative milieu in retrospect over a period in life spent in a spacious 1970s flat in Gothenburg:

"A creative milieu happens when people grow their passions. There is activities in every room, people are absorbed, what they're doing isn't that important, just as long as they are absorbed." (Respondent no 3, Aug 25th 2008)

The respondent continues to describe living in the large apartment by giving accounts of sounds, smells and activities, as well as of talented and creative people working and living in the area. It is a close neighborhood space stimulating artistic expressions. Meeting places is frequently used when the respondent describe a creative milieu. To another respondent this meeting place is a location that need

not be blessed with material necessities and attributes, describing it as "a space without living standards" (Respondent 4, Sept 1st 2008). The same area as respondent 3 describes above has been frequented by respondent 1 during approximately the same time-period and he describes it as an area characterized by a mix of income groups due to the prevalence of both rental and owner-occupied apartments, thus facilitating meetings between people with different backgrounds. This was also during a time when casual employment on a day-to-day basis was easy to find in the harbor, which facilitated plenty of time for unpaid creative work. It was a time prior to the economic transition of the city sketched above, when: "Three days of labor in the harbor paid a month's rent" (Respondent 1, Aug 14th 2008).

Achieving creative milieu in the world of academia through multidisciplinary, i.e. mixing scholars with different backgrounds, has been a priority in the Swedish university sector since the 1980s. These successful physical locations were in several cases meeting places for people of various professional backgrounds, however:

"The creative milieus are all about finding the right people. Even if the universities have been doing multidisciplinary stuff for 30 years it all adds up to people running around the same track." (Respondent 11, Feb 11th, 2009)

Efforts from the universities to establish creative milieus within or outside the established academic sphere are inadequate according to respondent no 11. The explanation given by the respondent, who has substantial experience from the academic world, is the financial situation and the established sections within academia. Respondent 6 highlights the same bureaucratic obstacles and describes unclear direction as an "uncreative issue".

Respondents with work that have a propensity to be more solitary in character such as writing, rehearsing choreography and/or doing research described that they needed to emerge from the solitary nature of their work from time to time. Relating to this Törnqvist writes that: "We inherit a sort of artistic or scientific tool set, and we are bound into a network of cultural and social conditions. Even recluses and outsiders must have external connections to avoid withering away" (2004, p. 228). Several of the respondents noted the importance of peace and quiet in order to be creative. This relates closely to the type of work the respondent was involved with. Further, meetings with other people also meant different things depending on the type of work. Respondent 7 insisted that work-related conflicts often were very creative, building on what several of the other respondents had described, namely the openness of the milieu. An atmosphere of trust and respect between colleagues who dared speak their mind without the risk of being discredited was also mentioned. Non-creative milieus were characterized by mistrust, boredom and co-workers unsatisfied with their working conditions.

As depicted previously, the residential career of the respondents primarily occurred in or in close proximity of Gothenburg, thus it can be argued that the perception of a creative milieu is heavily influenced and perhaps to some extent biased towards a local 'Gothenburg context'. Therefore it is crucial to weigh these experiences against external residential careers and events, for example a temporary residence in another country, asking whether these experiences changed the perception of a creative and if so how:

"Yes they have partially – as part of why I like the suburb now is because of the multitude of different cultures, people from various countries, all the languages spoken, it reminds me of Amsterdam. Then I feel more like I'm living in the world than in Sweden... and that's a positive feeling as it is what I'm doing. It's not like that in downtown Gothenburg." (Respondent 6, Oct 10th 2008)

Respondent 6 highlights the spatial division of Gothenburg resulting in areas with a diverse array of different ethnicities and cultures. The growth of the city has resulted in increased internationalization. However, respondent 11 questions whether Gothenburg is big enough to generate creative milieus. Instead, respondent 11 argues that it is important to broaden one's horizons through travel and migration, to be open towards new influences and to break out of the prevailing structures in one's professional life. Respondent 11 argues further that a creative milieu doesn't include "walking to the nearest cafe and pretend to be gay" (Respondent 11, Feb 9th 2009). It simply isn't enough, instead it requires the creation of a new creative milieu outside the spatial frame of reference, it is not possible to "stand still". Partially in relation to the physical requirements of a creative milieu, respondent 10 describe certain markers or signals of creativity that are needed in order for the creative milieu materialize in the work-space. These signals include the way people dress and the aesthetical attributes of the environment. An example, according to respondent 10, is the work-space of banking and architecture, which looks alike for an outsider and is dominated by computer-based routines. However, the external and internal expectations of an architecture firm as a creative milieu is much higher compared to the banking office, hence signals and markers of creativity are important in the configuration of a creative milieu. Respondent 9 continues this line of thought, adding that a work-space as well as living-space also needs to be tolerant and "open to suggestions". Physical attributes are important but they should not shadow the most important prerequisite, openness to "creative conflicts".

Professional justification and importance of a creative milieu

In order to approach the importance of the creative milieu, the remaining part will describe the professional justification of a creative milieu within the economic space. It is argued here that evidence for the importance placed on the creative milieu can most easily be found in this validation. Hence the definitions of a creative milieu given by the respondents were primarily grounded in the professional role and 'justified' as they boosted creative production. A creative milieu in connection with for example place of residence or leisure time activities was secondary. An interesting observation given that the respondents often worked under flexible time-space conditions with plenty of personal responsibility and blurred borders between work-space and living-space. The creative and stimulating work performed by the respondents was the first matter that came to mind when defining a creative milieu and perhaps it indicates that respondents have a hard time separating a professional creative milieu and a non-professional creative milieu. This would hence indicate how flexible labor solutions associated with a growing service industry would generate more work and work-like situations in time and space. Thus it is essential to address the motive behind the importance of creative milieu as work- and duty-associated. If a respondent described a creative milieu in connection with leisure time at home or outside work-space it was commonly as a form of spatial and mental support to an ongoing work-related project. Respondent no 8 explains that a creative milieu at home can mean relaxing in the garden or going for a run on Friday after work with the intention to think of new ideas that will assist in the solving of a work-related problem. It can however be argued that the initial reason for exercising wasn't work-related but rather for personal benefits. Imbedded in the respondents associations and illustrations of a creative milieu lies a strong tie to work-related output. Respondents were to a great extent engaged with the professional utility of a creative milieu.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper is to 'take a step back' and voice representatives of a much discussed, influential and researched group of urban elite individuals known primarily as 'talents', 'creatives' or skilled by way of in-depth interviews targeted at further understanding the attributes and roots of creative milieu.

This paper shows that the definitions of a creative milieu is primarily based on the respondent's retrospective descriptions. Given this, these descriptions varies substantially but has social interaction as a common denominator. Thus, the creative milieu as described by the respondents constitutes a space containing human interaction, the possibility to think freely and having the option of choosing to participate in various activities. It was stressed several times that this milieu needn't be the latest in fashion and trend as long as it served its purpose as stage, studio, office or retreat. Stating that it is a 'space without living standards' as one of the respondents did may frame the case for all of the descriptions if a wider interpretation of the statement including both material and non-material aspects is allowed to be made. Building on this, the essence of the creative milieu found in this paper has little to do with aspects of wealth. For example, meeting the right people, finding shared passions or workplaces and living in other countries for shorter or longer periods of time isn't necessarily actions that are dependent on wealth. In fact they may very well be reactions to the absence of wealth. Implications include therefore that policy makers and planners need to be aware of the changing priorities of urban elites and not exclusively search for a group of people that will remain loyal over time to a downtown residential location. This is important if we consider that the empirical contribution of this paper is based on an unusual and sought-after approach to the 'creative class' debate, namely in-depth interviews with said group of people.

Social interaction and meeting places remains important as an attribute of a creative milieu when comparing different theoretical statements with the respondent's perception of a creative milieu. Meeting places, infrastructure and a mix of tenure forms were the three highest scoring statements in the test, which can be interpreted in the way that urban external factors have the greatest correspondence between observation and theory. Statements scoring the lowest, Opera house and Nobel prize laureates, are perceived as more distant and not part of the everyday lives of the respondents. It needs to be stressed that when respondents were asked to describe the constitution and importance of a creative milieu their answers were shaped by residential and work-place preferences, age and experiences made earlier in life. Perceptions of creativity and creative milieu remain primarily grounded in a social context and on life-course events.

This brings us to the first of two trajectories of thought, namely the social requirement of the creative milieu and the arguments put forth when motivating the importance of creative milieu. The implications of a creative milieu grounded in social space (Buttimer, 1969) include a redefinition of the phenomenon in accordance with its 'makers'. That is, creative milieu should be understood as subjective and tied to the social movements and positions of the individuals that define it. For example, the growth of the family together with its practicalities puts strains on everyday life within the familial space, giving respondents the option to reevaluate their perception of a creative milieu in accordance with the previous argument. It also implies that a creative milieu may occur in the borderlands of the familial space and the economic space as several respondents indicated that work-place and residence

was or still is blurred. Results have shown that especially women will reevaluate residential preferences after having children, making proximity to creative milieu, a less important factor.

The second trajectory of thought relates to the arguments put forth by the respondents when motivating its importance. Should future research attempt to probe deeper into the preferences and decision-making processes by 'talents' and 'creatives' regarding residence and work one needs to maintain an understanding of how profoundly important work is as a tool of identification. The implications of the findings presented here include that 'talents' and 'creatives' are work-driven and will ground their interpretations and perceptions of places and milieus from the perspective of a professional at all times. It is suggested here that future research on the perceptions of creative milieu and of creativity try to bridge this professional bias by trying to approach individuals outside their work-space and professional sphere. It needn't be assumed that creative milieu must be utilized in order to be an influential contemporary phenomenon.

Notes

¹ Henceforth 'creative class' refers to the influential works of Richard Florida first published in 2002, highlighting the importance of attracting an educated urban cadre of individuals

References

- Amabile, T. M. (1996). *Creativity in context: update to "the social psychology of creativity"*. Oxford: Westview.
- Amabile, T. M. Conti R., Coon, H., Lazenby, J. & Herron, M. (1996). Assessing the Work Environment for Creativity. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 39(5), 1154-1184.
- Andersson, Å. E. (1985). Creativity and Regional Development. *Papers in regional science*, 56(1), 5-20.
- Andersson, Å. E. & Strömquist, U. (1988). *K-samhällets framtid*. Stockholm: Bokförlaget Prisma.
- Asheim, B. (2009). Guest Editorial: Introduction to the Creative Class in European City Regions. *Economic Geography*, 85(4), 355-362.
- Bathelt, H., Malmberg, A. & Maskell, P. (2004). Clusters and knowledge: local buzz, global pipelines and the process of knowledge creation. *Progress in Human Geography*, 28(1), 31-56.
- Bjereld, U. & Demker, M. (2003). Självförverkligare och Världsförbättrare: En undersökning av de fria logotyperna. In H. Oscarsson (Ed.), *Demokratitrender*. Göteborg: SOM-institutet och Statsvetenskapliga institutionen Göteborgs universitet.
- Boden, M. (1990). *The Creative Mind: Myths and Mechanisms*. New York: Basic Books.
- Borggren, J. (2011). *Kreativa individers bostadsområden och arbetsställen. Belysta mot bakgrund av näringslivets omvandling och förändringar i bebyggelsestrukturen i Göteborg*. Department of Human and Economic Geography, University of Gothenburg.
- Borggren, J. & Eriksson, R. H. (2014). Human capital, Skills and Uneven Intra-urban Employment Growth: The case of Gothenburg, Sweden 1990-2008. *Urban Studies Research*, 2014(2014). Article ID 260813.
- Borggren, J. & Ström, P. (2014). On the waterfront: Creative individuals' work-places and residences at Norra Älvstranden, Gothenburg, Sweden. *Local Economy*. Forthcoming.
- Boyle, M. (2006). Culture in the Rise of Tiger Economies: Scottish Expatriates in Dublin and the 'Creative Class' Thesis. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 30(2), 403-426.
- Buttimer, A. (1969). Social Space in interdisciplinary perspective. *Geographical review*, 59(3).

- Buttimer, A. (1983). *Creativity and context: a seminar report*. Lund: Liber Läromedel/Gleerup.
- Chombart de Lauwe, P. H. (1960). L'évolution des besoins et la conception dynamique de la famille. *Rev. Francaise de sociologie*, 1, 403-425.
- City of Gothenburg. (2008). *Göteborgssamhällets utveckling*. Göteborg: GoTrends.
- City of Gothenburg. (2009). *Statistisk Årsbok 2009*. Örebro: Statistics Sweden.
- Clifton, N. (2008). The "creative class" in the UK: an initial analysis. *Geografiska Annaler Series B, Human Geography*, 90(1), 63-82.
- Currid, E. & Williams, S. (2010). The geography of buzz: art, culture and the social milieu in Los Angeles and New York. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 10(3), 423-451.
- Dahlström, M. & Hermelin, B. (2007). Creative Industries, spatiality and flexibility: The example of film production. *Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 61(3), 111-121.
- Drake, G. (2003). 'This place gives me space': place and creativity in the creative industries. *Geoforum*, 34, 511-524.
- Duxbury, N. & Murray, C. (2010). Creative spaces, In *Cultures and Globalization: Cultural Expression*. In H. K. Anheier & Y. Raj Isar (Eds.), *Creativity and Innovation*. London: SAGE.
- Essletzbichler, J. (2004). The Geography of Job Creation and Destruction in the US Manufacturing Sector, 1967-1997. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 94(3), 602-619.
- Florida, R. (2002). Bohemia and economic geography. *Journal of Economic Geography* 2(1), 55-71.
- Florida, R. (2003). Cities and the Creative Class. *City & Community*, 2(1), 3-19.
- Florida, R. (2004). *The rise of the creative class: and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life* (Paperback Edition). New York: Basic Books.
- Furåker, B. (2010). A post-industrial city? In H. Holgersson, C. Thörn, H. Thörn & M. Wahlström (Eds.), *(Re)Searching Gothenburg*. Göteborg: Glänta Produktion.
- GILDA. (2006). *Geografisk Individuell Longitudinell Databas för Analys baserad på uppgifter från SCB för åren 1990 – 2006*. Göteborg: CRA (Centrum för Regional Analys), Institutionen för kulturgeografi och ekonomisk geografi, Handelshögskolan vid Gothenburgs universitet.
- GILDA. (2008). *Geografisk Individuell Longitudinell Databas för Analys baserad på uppgifter från SCB för åren 1990 – 2008*. Göteborg: CRA (Centrum för Regional Analys), Institutionen för kulturgeografi och ekonomisk geografi, Handelshögskolan vid Gothenburgs universitet.
- Gill, R. (2002). Cool, Creative and Egalitarian? Exploring Gender in Project-Based New Media Work in Europe. *Information, Communication & Society*, 5(1), 70-89.
- Gill, R. (2007). *Technobohemians or the New Cybertariat? New media work in Amsterdam a decade after the Web*. Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures.
- Gustavson, P. (2001). Meanings of place: Everyday experience and theoretical conceptualizations. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21, 5-16.
- Hall, P. (2000). Creative Cities and Economic Development. *Urban Studies*, 37(4), 639-649.
- Hansen, H. K. (2008). *The Urban Turn – and the location of economic activities*. Lund: Lund University, Department of Social and Economic Geography.
- Hansen, H. K. & Niedomysl, T. (2009). Migration of the creative class: evidence from Sweden. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 9(2), 191-206.
- Hansen, H. K. & Winther, L. (2010). The spatial division of talent in city regions: Location dynamics of business services in Copenhagen. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 101(1), 55-72.
- Hesmondhalgh, D. (2002). *The Cultural Industries*. London: SAGE.

- Houston, D., Findlay, A., Harrison, R. & Mason, C. (2008). Will attracting the "Creative Class" boost economic growth in old industrial regions? A case study of Scotland. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 90(2), 133-149.
- Hracs, B. (2009). Beyond Bohemia: Geographies of everyday creativity for musicians in Toronto. In T. Edensor, D. Leslie, S. Millington & N. Rantisi (Eds.), *Spaces of Vernacular Creativity: rethinking the cultural economy*. London: Routledge.
- Hägerstrand, T., Sollbe, B., Carlestam, G. & Perlenhem, L. (1991). *Om tidens vidd och tingens ordning: texter*. Stockholm: Statens råd för byggnadsforskning.
- Jacobs, J. (1961). *The death and life of great American cities*. New York: Vintage.
- Jacobs, J. (1969). *The economy of cities*. New York: Vintage.
- Janik, A. & Toulmin, S. (1973). *Wittgenstein's Vienna*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Kahl, C. H., da Fonseca, L. H. & Witte, E. H. (2009). Revisiting Creativity Research: An Investigation of Contemporary Approaches. *Creativity Research Journal*, 21(1), 1-5.
- Kitchin, R. & Tate, N. J. (2000). *Conducting research in human geography: theory, methodology and practice*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Koestler, A. (1964). *The Act of Creation*. London: Hutchinsons & Co.
- Landry, C. (2000). *The creative city: a toolkit for urban innovators*. London: Earthscan.
- Lawton, P., Murphy, E. & Redmond, D. (2013). Residential preferences of the 'creative class'? *Cities*, 31, 47-56.
- Long, J. (2009). Sustaining creativity in the creative archetype: The case of Austin, Texas. *Cities*, 26, 210-219.
- Lucas, R. (1988). On the mechanics of economic development. *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 22, 3-42.
- Markusen, A. (2006). Urban development and the politics of a creative class: evidence from a study of artists. *Environment & Planning A*, 38(10), 1921-1940.
- Ougaard, M. (2008). The Political Economy of The "Creative Class": A Theoretical Comment. *Science & Society*, 72(3), 349-357.
- Peck, J. (2005). Struggling with the Creative Class. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 29(4), 740-770.
- Permentier, M., Van Ham, M. & Bolt, G. (2008). Same neighbourhood... Different Views? A Confrontation of Internal and External Neighbourhood Reputations. *Housing Studies*, 23(6), 833-855.
- Pinch, S. & Henry, N. (1999). Paul Krugman's Geographical Economics, Industrial Clustering and the British Motor Sport Industry. *Regional Studies*, 33, 815-827.
- Ponzini, D. & Rossi, U. (2010). Becoming a Creative City: The Entrepreneurial Mayor, Network Politics and the Promise of an Urban Renaissance. *Urban Studies*, 47(5), 1037-1057.
- Port of Gothenburg. (2012). *Kort om Göteborgs Hamn 2011-2012*. Retrieved from www.goteborgshamn.se.
- Power, D. (2002). "Cultural Industries" in Sweden: An Assessment of their Place in the Swedish Economy. *Economic Geography*, 78(2), 103-129.
- Pratt, A. C. (2008). Creative cities: the cultural industries and the creative class. *Geografiska Annaler, Series B, Human Geography*, 90(2), 107-119.
- Pratt, A. C. (2009). Urban Regeneration: From the Arts 'Feel Good' Factor to the Cultural Economy: A Case Study of Hoxton, London. *Urban Studies*, 46(5-6), 1041-1061.
- Runco, M. A. (1988). Creativity Research: Originality, utility, and integration. *Creativity Research Journal*, 1(1), 1-17.
- Rusten, G. & Bryson, J. R. (2010). Placing and spacing services: towards a balanced economic geography of firms, clusters, social networks, contracts and the geographies of enterprise. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 101(3), 248-261.
- Sahlin, N.-E. (2001). *Kreativitetens filosofi*. Nora: Nya Doxa.

- Sjöberg, Ö. (2010). Editorial. *Geografiska Annaler Series B Human Geography*, 92, 111-114.
- Sjöholm, J. (2010). *The geographies of knowledge in (making) artwork: The field, the art studio and the art scene*. Kultur-geografiska Institutionen, Uppsala Universitet.
- Storper, M. & Venables, J. (2004). Buzz: face-to-face contact and the urban economy. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 4(4), 351-370.
- Thufvesson, O. (2006). *Kreativitetens yttre villkor: miljöer, rörlighet och nobelpristagare*. Lund: Lunds Universitet, Institutionen för kulturgeografi och ekonomisk geografi.
- Tinagli, I., Florida, R., Ström, P. & Wahlqvist, E. (2007). *Sweden in the Creative Age*. Occasional Papers. Gothenburg: Kulturgeografiska Institutionen, School of Business, Economics and Law, Gothenburg University, Creativity-GroupEurope.
- Törnqvist, G. (1996). *Sverige i nätverkens Europa: gränsöverskridandets former och villkor*. Malmö: Liber-Hermod.
- Törnqvist, G. (2004). Creativity in Time and Space. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 86(4), 227-243.
- Törnqvist, G. (2009). *Kreativitet i tid och rum - processer, personer och platser*. Stockholm: SNS Förlag.
- Vaerst Andersen, K. & Lorenzen, M. (2005). *The Geography of the Danish Creative Class*. Copenhagen Business School.
- Verdich, M. (2010). Creative Migration? The Attraction and retention of the 'creative class' in Launceston, Tasmania. *Australian Geographer*, 41(1), 129-140.
- Wenz, L. (2009). The rise of the creative economy in Cape Town and its implications for urban planning. *3rd European Conference on African Studies*. Leipzig.
- Wojan, T. R., Lambert, D. M. & McGranahan, D. A. (2007). Emoting with their feet: Bohemian attraction to creative milieu. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 7(6), 711-736.
- Åquist, A. C. (2007). Den kreativa klassens ungarliv. *PLAN*, 61(5-6), 49-53.

Received: 01/10/2013

Accepted: 09/05/2014

Appendix

Questionnaire:

1. Start by telling where and how you've lived from birth up to 1990. If possible to recollect all of the locations. (Cities, countries, house, flat, semi-detached, rental, owner-occupied etc.). In the case of move, please state the reason why.
2. Where in Gothenburg and how did you live in 1990? (If possible, identify the primary urban area).
3. Have you moved after 1990?
4. If yes, where and why. If possible all of the locations.
5. If no, why not?
6. If no, do you find that the primary urban area in which you live has changed in any way? If yes, how?
7. Where do you live now? House, flat, rental etc.

8. If you were to move or if you have moved, what is important when choosing residence/residential area? Separate present from past, have your preferences changed? (Rank the most important factors, for example close to friends, kindergarten/schools, close to work, close to public transportation, outdoors, cultural scene, shops, downtown, services)
9. What's your present occupation? Why?
10. What was your occupation in 1990? Have you had other occupations between 1990 and present? If yes, which? Why? If you've changed occupation, why?
11. If the same occupation, has it changed in any fundamental way?
12. What's important when you chose occupation? (Rank: salary, benefits, colleagues, creative atmosphere, flexible working hours, career opportunities, meaningful assignments, personal development, the employers goals etc.)
13. Describe the surroundings in which you were raised before 1990. Urban/rural, city size.
14. (If not the same) Describe the surroundings in which you lived in 1990.
15. (If not the same) Describe the surroundings you lived in after 1990 upto present. (Neighborhood/primary urban area)
16. In your opinion, what is a creative milieu? – Describe.
17. Would you describe the surroundings you live in/lived in creative? – Motivate.
18. Is the creative milieu a place you deliberately want/wanted to live and work in? If yes, why? If no, why not? Is there a difference in opinion over time?
19. Is it important to be in a creative milieu when you are working?
20. Is it important to be in a creative milieu where you are living? Does one play out the other?
21. To what extent does the following concepts apply to your perception of a creative milieu? Rank 1-5.

Ethnic diversity, Metropolitan area, University, Mixed primary functions, Neighborhood fellowship, Bohemians, Downtown location, Nobel Prize laureates, Tolerance towards deviant behavior, Travel, Move, Active leisure, Meeting places, Opera houses, Structural instability (Chaos), Parks/Nature, Well-running infrastructure, Different tenure forms, Venture capital.