

The Indices of Creative Cities: the Global and Local Aspects

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Abstract

The paper deals with the indices of creative cities. Author analyses the different creativity indices suggested by both the followers and the critics of R. Florida. The author criticizes the Florida's indices such as Bohemian, Melting pot, Gay, High tech, Innovation, Talent indices, as well as Minor integrative (diversity) and Major integrative indices. The indices of other authors presuppose the questions about the role of the region in defining certain creativity indices. The author makes conclusion that the uniform formula of creativity indices is impossible for two reasons. First, the creativity indices depend on the region of a city. Second, the very strategy to have the uniform creativity indices makes the cities similar to each other and no more unique, consequently, no more creative; as result, this strategy is anti-creative.

Keywords: creative city, creativity indices, global city, local region.

Introduction

"Creativity" is one of the most vague concepts (Barevičiūtė 2014; Černevičiūtė, Strazdas 2014). Despite this, the scholars try to define and explain this concept using different creativity indices. The different sciences use different approaches towards creativity. As result, we face very different research indicators of creativity. For example, psychology appeals to the psychological indices (Cherry, Latulipe 2014; Furst et al. 2012; Runco 2004; Runco et al. 2005) including index of imagination (Liang et al. 2013); sociology pays attention to the creative environment and its indicators (Hunter et al. 2007; Baltrėnas et al. 2015; Kačerauskas, Kaklauskas 2014; Pruskus 2015) including mathematical models (Soler 2007; Carroll 2009; Cherry, Latulipe 2014; Weinstein 2014); pedagogy uses the predictors of creativity (Batey 2010; Juzefovič 2015); economics appeals to the relationship between socialization, externalization, combination and internalization (Chang et al. 2014), as well as to the cultural production (Power, Scott 2004; Scott 2000). The urban studies integrate all these approaches by using Tolerance Index (Florida, Tinagli 2004) and the regional city creativity indices (Gong 2013; Hong Kong 2004; Shanghai 2006). The researchers speak also about the factor data of creative city (Florida 2002; Florida 2012; Çetindamar, Günsel 2012) that is inseparable from the concept of global city (Çetindamar, Günsel 2012). The concept of creative city is inseparable also from the discussions about the cultural clusters and creative production in the cities (Scott 2000; Krätke 2003; Cooke, Lazzarotti 2008), as well as from the artistic activities in a city (Lavrinc 2014).

The concept of creative city has been based on the idea that a city with the creative activities is more attractive to the investors. As result, it has priority in the global competition of the regions. The scholars speak about the concentration of scientifically and technologically creative occupational groups (Krätke 2010), as well as about the role of creative industries in the development of regional economy (Weinstein 2000).

The concept of creative city presupposes the idea that creativity of a region (a city) plays an important role in developing of both national economy and welfare state. On the one hand, creativity is an aspect of culture. On the other hand, cultural environment is the base of the creative impulses. Additionally, one of creativity indices could be cultural environment. The paper deals with the possible indices of creativity, as well with relationship between cultural environment and creativity.

The indices of the creative city

Table 1 shows R. Florida’s (2002, 2012) creativity indices including two integrative. Bohemian Index refers to number or percent of the artists (writers, painters, sculptors, composers, actors and so on) in a region. Melting Pot Index shows the number or percent of people born in other region. Gay Index refers to the number or percent of mail couples in a region. High Tech Index shows the part of high technologies in regional economy. Innovation Index shows the number of the patents comparing with number of population. Talent Index refers to the number or percent of the graduates from universities and colleges in a region. All these indices have influenced both the very concept of creative city and the indices of creative city.

However, the mentioned indices should be evaluated in a critical way. Although Bohemian Index appeals to importance of the artists in social development, it is not clear what kind of the artists should be accounted – all of them or the most prominent, formal or informal (for example, the graffiti artists), the graduates of art schools or the members of creative unions. Although Melting Pot Index presupposes the idea that the emigrants enrich the regional economy with the new ideas, this index appeals to the creative capital that should be stimulated instead of the social capital. Although Gay Index shows the level of tolerance in a region, the gay-ness is first of all a cultural category; additionally, the limits of gay-ness in the case of bisexuality are also unclear. Although High Tech Index shows the openness of a society for the novelties, it is impossible to separate the “high” technologies from the “low” ones. Although the Innovation Index shows the level of technical thought, it ignores the fact that the patent industry is profit-making. Although Talent Index shows a weight of educated society, it expresses also the devaluation of the university studies. The Integrative Indices have not less problems: after summing the unreliable indices they become even more unreliable. Additionally, we can analyse other indices ignored by R. Florida although they are important for the idea of creative city, such as the number of the green parks, the speed of the internet, the level of computer literacy, the low level of suicides, the level of urbanisation, the economic growth, the socialization etc.

Table 1. R. Florida’s (2002, 2012) indices of creativity

No.	Index	Integrative Indices	
1.	Bohemian	Minor Integrative Index (Diversity)	Major Integrative Index
2.	Melting Pot		
3.	Gay		
4.	High Tech	–	
5.	Innovation	–	
6.	Talent	–	

Figure 1 shows the content of Euro Creativity Index developed by R. Florida and I. Tinagli (2004). Figure 1 covers three first-level indices in European region including Talent, Tolerance and Technology Indices. Euro Tolerance Index has been divided into two second-level indices. This schema has influenced the creativity indices of certain European cities including Berlin, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. We face here the similar questions: why namely these indices have been taken into account; what particularity of the creative indices do we have concerning certain European regions (Western, Central, and Eastern)?

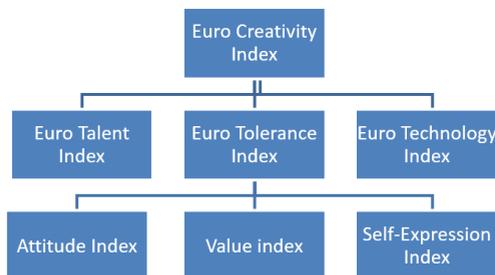


Figure 1. Euro Creativity Index according to R. Florida and I. Tinagli (2004)

Figure 2, Figure 3 and Table 3 show the different indices of China creative city including Hong Kong (Figure 2), Shanghai (Figure 3), as well as the integrative index of Chinese cities (Table 2).

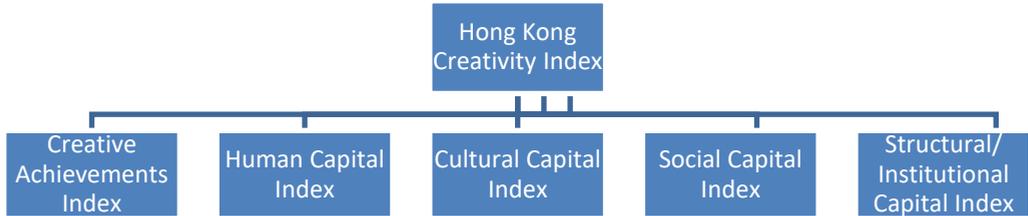


Figure 2. Hong Kong Creativity Index (2005)



Figure 3. Shanghai Creativity Index

Although Table 2 shows only the first-level and the second-level indices, X. Gong (2013) develops also the third-level indices. By developing the indices of creative city, all Chinese scholars stress the particularity of Chinese cities and appeal to the necessity to research the local creative indices although based on the ideas of R. Florida and his followers.

Table 2. China city creativity indices (Gong 2013)

First-level Indices	Second-level Indices
Industrial Scale (A)	Creative Industries Scale (A1)
	Creative Industries Accounted for GDP (A2)
Creative Ability (B)	Talented Person (B1)
	R&D Ability (B2)
Creative Environment (C)	Cultural Environment (C1)
	Social Environment (C2)
Potential Development Ability (D)	Development Trend (D1)
	Potential Development Ability of Talented Person (D2)
	Openness and Tolerance (D3)

By analysing the indices of creative city, we face the problems as follows: 1) What indices are important in a region? 2) What weight has every index in the integrative index? 3) How to account the integrative index? 4) What could be creativity integrative index in certain regions including Central Europe? 5) Whether and how the indices of creative city are the factors of urban (regional) sustainable development? 6) Whether and how the indices of creative city are the factors of economic development?

The global and local aspects of creative city

R. Florida and his followers appeal to the global creative city. According to him, the mentioned indices have universal significance despite the region or continent. The paradox is as follows: while developing the social areas indicated by mentioned indices we uniform the cities and lose their creativity. The phenomenon of creativity deals with uniqueness. If a city tries to repeat the success of the certain creative cities instead of searching for its unique way it loses its creativity, too. As result, such city has been doomed to failure. Similarly, we face dialectics of global and local aspects in every city. If a city is global enough, it is like other cities around the world. As result, such city is no more attractive both for the tourists, for the investors¹ and finally for the inhabitants. Not by accident, the scholars (Currid 2006; Çetindamar, Günsel 2012) speak about global city and creative city together, i. e. about global creative city and its indices.

Çetindamar and Günsel 2012 pay attention to certain limitations of Florida's indices: 1) creativity has been treated as an occupation, as result, it is a static view; 2) the Florida's creative indices "overemphasizes the role of technology"; 3) the creative indices are "intended to measure diversity of cities in one country, the USA." (Çetindamar, Günsel 2012: 1304) According to the authors, many of the indicators of innovativeness (R&D investments, patent data) do not exist at the city level in Turkey. Referring to consultancy company PricewaterhouseCoopers, Çetindamar and Günsel (2012) speak about the indices of creative city as follows: 1) top 500 universities, 2) public expenditures for higher education per city and 3) Nobel Prize winners. The authors appeal to the factors of different origins, namely to the "hard" (R&D manpower, R&D investment) and "soft" factors (management practices, governance structures). Finally, they suggest the additional two "soft" indices (human development, knowledge flow through networking) beside three Florida's indices (see Table 3).

Table 3. The indices of global creative city (Çetindamar, Günsel 2012)

No.	Index	Origin
1.	Creative occupation	Florida 2002
2.	Innovativeness	
3.	Diversity	
4.	Human development	Çetindamar and Günsel 2012
5.	Knowledge flow through networking	

However, the problems arise as follows: 1) Why only three Florida's indices have been chosen? 2) What about the mentioned paradox of global creative city? 3) What about the vague content of certain concepts (innovativeness, diversity), as mentioned above? 4) Does the choice of the indices depend on the region of a city?

All these and mentioned above problems have not been solved neither by Çetindamar and Günsel nor by other scholars until now. It seems that Çetindamar and Günsel try to correct the list of the creative indices in order to improve the results of Turkish cities, first of all of İstanbul. However, the questions are more basic: 5) Is it possible to have a uniform set of creativity indices for all cities around the world? 6) Is the strategy to have the creativity indices not anti-creative?

Conclusions

Sociology presupposes the empirical methods including the indices to be measured. Discourse of creative city requires a uniform set of creativity indices that could be used by comparing the cities and by developing certain urban policy. However, the uniform formula is impossible for two reasons. First, the creativity indices depend on the region of a city. Second, the very strategy to have the uniform creativity indices makes the cities similar to each other and no more unique, as well as creative; as result, this strategy is anti-creative.

¹ The investment is also a kind of tourism.

[1] References

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