

Y.G.D. (Yosha) Wijngaarden MA MSc, PhD Candidate

Erasmus University Rotterdam

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Department of Media & Communication

Wijngaarden@eshcc.eur.nl

Locational narratives in creative clusters: consuming local buzz and producing local authenticity

Clustering literature has often focused on the attraction of new entrants (Baptista & Swann, 1999), buzz and knowledge spillovers (Bathelt, Malmberg, & Maskell, 2004; Storper & Venables, 2004), and supply side externalities (Baptista & Swann, 1998; Marshall, 1920). However, clusters are also approached in terms of production, where the locality functions as a ‘seal of quality’ (Porter, 1998), authentic neo-bohemia (Lloyd, 2002), or provides ‘artistic dividend’ (Markusen & Schrock, 2006).

We propose that the common denominator in these approaches is the cluster’s reputation. Focusing on ten small-scale creative clusters in The Netherlands, we seek to demonstrate that a cluster’s reputation is multifaceted. Reputation entails externalities that attract creative entrepreneurs (Asheim, Coenen, & Vang, 2007; Drake, 2003), and the creative or authentic reputation is also commodified as a marketing tool for locally produced products and services (e.g. Heebels & van Aalst, 2010; Scott, 2000; Molotch, 1996).

Our research is based on an iterative approach, including several rounds of interviews and fieldnotes. Eighty co-located entrepreneurs within these small-scale clusters were interviewed about the role of the cluster’s reputation in their locational decision making and how they tap into this reputation in order to promote and sell

their products. Each locational narrative was coded and analyzed in Atlas.ti, and compared to the interviewees' web based references to his/her locational identity.

In conclusion, this project, by closely examining locational narratives, develops a more fine-grained understanding of the meaning of reputation to creative entrepreneurs, and how this influences locational decision making and product marketing.

Word count: 249 including in text references

Key words: creative clusters; reputation; creative industries; locational decision-making; locational narratives; commodification; The Netherlands

References

- Asheim, B., Coenen, L., & Vang, J. (2007). Face-to-face, buzz, and knowledge bases: Sociospatial implications for learning, innovation, and innovation policy. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 25(5), 655-670.
- Baptista, R., & Swann, P. (1999). The dynamics of firm growth and entry in industrial clusters: A comparative study of the US and UK computer industries. *Journal of Evolutionary Economics*, 9(3), 373-399.
- Baptista, R., & Swann, P. (1998). Do firms in clusters innovate more? *Research Policy*, 27(5), 525-540.

- 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.
- Drake, G. (2003). 'This place gives me space': Place and creativity in the creative industries. *Geoforum*, 34(4), 511-524.
- Heebels, B., & van Aalst, I. (2010). Creative clusters in berlin: Entrepreneurship and the quality of place in Prenzlauer Berg and Kreuzberg. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 92(4), 347-363.
- Lloyd, R. (2002). Neo-Bohemia: Art and neighborhood redevelopment in Chicago. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 24(5), 517-532.
- Markusen, A., & Schrock, G. (2006). The artistic dividend: Urban artistic specialisation and economic development implications. *Urban Studies*, 43(10), 1661-1686.
- Marshall, A. (1920). *Industry and trade: A study of industrial technique and business organization, and of their influences on the conditions of various classes and nations*. London: MacMillan.
- Molotch, H. (1996). LA as design product: How art works in a regional economy. In A. J. Scott, & E. W. Soja (Eds.), *The city: Los Angeles and urban theory at the end of the twentieth century* (pp. 225-275). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Porter, M. E. (1998). Clusters and the new economics of competition. *Harvard Business Review*, 76(6), 77-77.

Scott, A. J. (2000). *The cultural economy of cities: Essays on the geography of image-producing industries*. London: Sage.

Storper, M., & Venables, A. (2004). Buzz: Face-to-face contact and the urban economy. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 4(4), 351-370.