

CREATIVE ECONOMY IN THE URBAN AGGLOMERATION OF SEVILLE: STAKEHOLDERS, LOCAL COOPERATION NETWORKS AND MAIN ACTIONS

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INTRODUCTION

For over a decade a strategic value has been placed on the so-called *creative economy* by considering that it can contribute to driving both job creation and a new economic model, as well as the development of cities and territories (Bayliss, 2007; Cooke - Lazaretti, 2008; Pratt, 2008; Evans, 2009; Foord, 2009, etc). The creative economy is understood to include activities that are directly or indirectly linked to culture, such as theatre-, cinema- and television-related activities, book publishing, musical performances, design and photography.

Along with the foregoing, importance is also placed on valorising resources, not only with a view to fostering economic growth, but also the development of societies and territories, generalising the thesis that the imaginative, rational, balanced and dynamic use of all forms of heritage capital and assets, whether monetary, human, natural, cultural, social or territorial, is of fundamental importance (CEPAL, 1991 and 1992; Allende, 1995; Caravaca and González, 2009). This therefore entails the revalorisation of culture and the so-called *cultural capital* associated with it, which is considered to be a major resource, as well as a factor for social cohesion and collective learning given its ability to provide creative and imaginative answers with which to solve problems and malfunctions and advance integrated development processes (Rao, 1998; Ortega Valcárcel, 1998 and 2004).

Linking these theses helps us to understand the revalorisation experienced by the creative economy as the growth of the activities that comprise it is, to a large extent, supported by the existence of heritage resources. The existence of some specific resources can be highlighted, including knowledge and creativity, which are hard to relocate and therefore especially interesting for promoting territorial development processes (Rallet, 1995). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the importance of resources linked to cultural identity itself and creative ability has been underscored, considering them to be the possible basis for new economically-competitive, environmentally-sustainable and territorially-balanced development models (Mas Serra, 2009).

It was the institutional kick-start given to the development of creative activities in Great Britain (Department of Culture, Media and Sports, 1998) that first triggered this growth in their valorisation. This momentum was subsequently kept up by other international institutions (UNESCO, 2006 and 2008; UNCTAD, 2004 and 2008), most notably the European Union (2006), with their inclusion in the European Strategy that had come out of the 2000 Lisbon Summit and which was later revised to include proposals with a time horizon of 2020. Apart from designing a Green Paper aimed at giving free reign to the potential of these activities, one of the actions that the European Union took was to declare 2009 the *European Year of Creativity and Innovation* (EC, 2009 and 2010 a and 2010b). It should also be borne in mind that the emphasis that the European Union is placing on these types of activities also complies with the recognition that they might contribute to the structural economic change that would help the crisis to be overcome (EC, 2010c).

It should be of no surprise that a critical school of thought should arise as a counterpoint to this discourse and proposals, which it calls into question. On the one hand, a certain lack of accuracy with regard to the conceptual category of *creative economy* is underlined, while on the other, the excessive ability being attributed to it as a driver of economic development is being put into doubt. With respect to the conceptual ambiguity, certain authors seek to prove that differences exist between creative activities and creativity, understanding from the economic perspective that the latter is not only inherent in certain activities, but that it can affect the economy as a whole (Bouquillio, Miège and Moeglin, 2011). Meanwhile, the lack of a precise definition is a concern for some institutions, as a result of which they are directing their efforts at trying to identify the sectors that comprise the creative economy, as is demonstrated by the classifications used by UNESCO (2006: 3), UNCTAD, (2008: 14) and the European Union (2010a: 6). In other respects, there are a number of authors who question the undue emphasis that is being placed on the social and economic potential of these types of activities in the understanding that they serve to justify ideological, economic and power interests that are closely linked to market globalisation and neo-liberal economic conceptions (Bustamante, ed., 2011); an example in point is Temblay's discourse (2011) which highlighted that what is sought by advancing these activities is to reinforce the recognition of intellectual property and prioritise the payment of royalties.

Nonetheless, with all the nuances and caution demanded, from the territorial point-of-view creative activities seem to be demonstrating a certain ability for generating new opportunities for socio-economic development in some areas, and this ability should not be undervalued, *a priori*. The valorisation of the resource that is creativity, linked to culture in this case, can contribute not only to economic growth alone, but, especially, to territorial

development, which depends in the final instance on the capabilities of stakeholders to mobilise local society with the aim of generating and attracting activities that combine culture and market. It is therefore essential that the behaviour of stakeholders whose actions have a bearing on creative activities is analysed in order to delve deeper into knowledge of these activities in cities and territories; and it should not be forgotten that these actions are tightly connected with the ability to build socio-institutional cooperation networks that have close links with governance.

OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

In this general reference context, the objective of this article is to contribute to knowledge of the creative economy in the Seville metropolitan agglomeration, with special focus on the public and private agents operating there, on the local socio-institutional networks are created between them, and on their main actions.

The starting point for our attempt to achieve these objectives is the following research questions: What relative importance does the creative economy have in the Seville metropolitan agglomeration? How many public institutions have an influence on these activities and which institutions are they? Which other organisations and stakeholders with an active presence in the area are linked to them? Have socio-institutional cooperation networks been created by the public and private agents that have a bearing on creative activities? Who are involved in these networks? What types of actions and strategies are being implemented?

From a methodological point-of-view, the proposal made by the United Nations (UNCTAD, 2008) has been used as a reference for identifying creative activities. In this case it has been adapted to the information available in Spain, which is based on activity groupings found in the Spanish National Classification of Economic Activities (Clasificación Nacional de Actividades Económicas, CNAE, 2009) (Méndez, Michelini, Prada and Tébar, 2012).

Three types of sources have been used to undertake this research. Firstly, those of a quantitative nature focus on Social Security records to 31st December, 2009 (General Treasury for Social Security), with its available data on numbers of companies and employees. As already stated in earlier research, regrettably only information up to two digits is available from the National Classification of Economic Activities (CNAE) due to the confidentiality surrounding statistics, and this explains why some other activities which are not creative, such as engineering and marketing research activities, are included alongside the creative activities.

Bearing in mind that quantitative information alone is not sufficient for an in-depth analysis of these activities, complementary qualitative information has also been used that enables us to discern the way that the different actors involved behave. This has been of great use for understanding some of the underlying logic. This information has been generated from 37 approximately two hour-long semi-structured interviews which, although based on an initial script, allowed the interviewees to express themselves freely, especially with regard to any aspects that they considered to be of interest. The interviews were conducted with key informants representing a variety of institutions, organisations, foundations, associations and companies during 2010 and 2011. The interviewees were selected according to three criteria: the types of stakeholders involved, the fact that they belonged to municipalities with the greatest presence

of creative activities, and their links to the sectors that generate most employment in the sphere; moreover, stakeholders referenced by others in the interviews were prioritised. Thus it was once more accepted that for the proposed objectives to be achieved it is essential for qualitative methodologies to be used that enable knowledge of the territorial reality under study to be mined. Finally, documents prepared by the various institutions with a presence in the area were also consulted, as were public and private agents' websites.

The article is divided into six main sections. After the introduction, the second section analyses the presence of creative activities in the Seville metropolitan agglomeration, considering their importance in the region of Andalusia as a whole, and differentiating between the situation in the city of Seville itself and its surrounding metropolitan area. The third and fourth sections consider the strategies and actions taken by the main public and private agents, including administrations, organisations, associations and companies. The fifth section is devoted to analysing the socio-institutional cooperation networks that have been created. The article ends with the pertinent conclusions.

MAIN CONTENT AND CONCLUSIONS

The relative importance of creative activities bears no great significance for the economic structure of the Seville metropolitan agglomeration, as in 2009 it comprised 2,165 companies and provided employment for 28,657 workers, which represents only 4.81% and 5.17% of the area's economy, respectively. Nevertheless, the major regional concentration in the agglomeration cannot be overlooked, as these activities account for 25.99% of companies and 36.35% of jobs in all Andalusia; these figures easily exceed those for all economic activities as a whole (13.13% and 19.58%). This concentration can also be found in the agglomeration, where it is much more intense, as 67.25% of companies and 67.32% of workers are located in the core city.

With respect to the structure of the sectors involved in creative activities, *Architecture and Engineering, Advertising and Market Research, Cinema, Television and Music, and Radio and TV Programming and Broadcasting* all stand out regarding numbers of both companies and employees. As for territorial distribution, certain differences can be seen between the core city and its surrounding metropolitan area in the importance of the various branches.

The existence of positive externalities of a very different type help to understand the trend of these activities towards concentration, although it is obvious that historical and cultural tradition, the tangible and intangible heritage available, and also the policies put in place can all be determinants of the growth of these types of activities on the local scale.

The in-depth interviews conducted have turned out to be of the utmost importance with respect to the socio-institutional agents that fall within the scope of the study and the role that they play in promoting creative-cultural activities.

Although institutions on all administrative levels carry out some type of action linked to creative activities, it is the administrations on the regional level and the core city local council that can be seen to be the most active. It should be highlighted that the strategic role played by the regional administration not only in the promotion of, but also as a key customer of some activities (the performing arts, audiovisuals and publishing) has ended up causing disputes between some business associations.

It is also interesting to note how the administration departments that play a more dynamic role and are most involved in the undertaking of projects to dynamise or promote these kinds of activities do not come under the area of culture itself but have greater links with economic development.

What especially attracts attention is that some strategies and actions coincide and even overlap completely on occasion; this shows that there has been a certain lack of knowledge of these strategies and actions that could possibly be put down to their being given little publicity, or, perhaps, to a competitive zeal that is not only unnecessary, but also excessive. It therefore becomes apparent that the emphasis placed on governance in most institutional documents has not really been taken on board, which makes a coordinated inter- and intra-institutional effort absolutely essential if resources are to be best exploited and synergies produced.

As far as businesses are concerned, the growing concern for both training and for conciliating the cultural product with profitability is worth highlighting. Although company cooperation is very limited, some international and regional cooperation projects are being conducted, while there are fewer on the local level.

As far as socio-institutional cooperation networks are concerned, these can be seen to be not very extensive, as the number of actors involved in the networks is quite small, nor very dense, as there are few links between the actors, nor very complex, as the majority of the cooperation relationships that exist between the stakeholders are based around single projects.

In short, it can be concluded from the analysis that not only is the presence of creative activities in the area under study limited, but it also has very little economic importance. Along with this it should be taken into consideration that the little ability for cooperation shown by both public and private agents makes it difficult for the territory to be able to respond to the grave structural crisis that it is undergoing. It is therefore evident that it is still a huge challenge for this metropolitan agglomeration to give a major impulse to these types of activities –based on an intangible resource that is difficult to relocate as it is to a great extent associated with the cultural identity of the area– in order that they might contribute to the replacement of the current economic model with a new model which, apart from being economically-competitive is also, and above all, environmentally-sustainable, territorially-balanced and socially-cohesive.

