

## Recensioni – Book Review

edited by Giulio Cainelli

**Handbook of Creative Cities.** Andersson D., Andersson A., Mellander C. (2013). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. 576 pages. ISBN 978-0-85793-768-1.

The *Handbook of Creative Cities* brings together a number of the world's leading urban development and creative city experts. The editors, David Andersson, Åke Andersson, and Charlotta Mellander, have curated a diverse set of theoretical and empirical contributions, with insights extending to social psychology, economic geography, urban planning, regional development, institutional economics, and more. The handbook comprises twenty-six chapters, arranged into six parts: Foundations, People, Networks, Planning, Markets, and Visions.

Part I, 'Foundations', introduces three leading thinkers on creative cities and creative individuals: regional economist Åke Andersson, urban planner Richard Florida, and psychologist Dean Simonton. The opening chapter, by David Andersson and Charlotta Mellander, provides the background for the ideas and empirical analyses contributed throughout the volume in order to show how the work of the 'Big Three' creative city scholars neatly dovetails. Åke Andersson stresses the importance

of creativity and cities in the emerging post-industrial economy, with a focus on inter-regional network connectivity and infrastructure. Richard Florida, whose work *The Rise of the Creative-Class* stimulated the latest wave of interest in the 'creative class' and urban development, is also interested in infrastructural issues and the role of cities in a new knowledge economy, but more particularly he attends to the various attributes, such as diversity, tolerance, and human capital, of the creative people that would inhabit these cities. Dean Simonton, like Florida, has studied the personality traits of unusually creative individuals and the social settings that cultivate their creativity, predominantly at the micro-level but also at the level of institutions and creative milieus.

Following this are chapters by the 'Big Three' themselves, making this the first book to contain contributions from each of them in one place. In Chapter 2, Åke E. Andersson shows that while the influence of knowledge and creativity in society may be greater now than ever, certain institutional features such as those promoting the free exchange of people, trade and ideas have long been associated with prosperity. He cites Ancient Athens, Renaissance Florence, Enlightenment London and

*Fin de Siècle* Vienna as exemplary creative cities of the past. Chapter 3 is somewhat of a retrospective by Richard Florida (with Charlotta Mellander and Patrick Adler) on his creative class theory, its achievements, and criticisms; and it contends that his new social science paradigm better explains patterns of urban development than its rivals. In Chapter 4, Dean Simonton marries empirical psychological research on human creativity with a theory of how creative cities act as attractors of creative migrants and are stimulators of creativity in existing residents. Interestingly, he speculates that since a diverse population and openness to experience are stimulants for creativity, so too are political fragmentation and decentralisation; points taken up elsewhere in the volume by Åke Andersson and David Andersson. In Chapter 5, Charlie Karlsson completes the foundations by nesting the views of Andersson, Florida and Simonton within the wider literature on clusters, innovation and urban development.

Part II, 'People', explores Florida's notion of the creative class in five empirically-based chapters: Peter Jason Rentfrow analyses the spatial distribution and complementarity of psychological traits, economic specialisation and political values; Todd Gabe determines 'creative wage premiums' in excess of human capital accumulations, measuring increasing returns to economic diversity and diminishing returns to creativity within industries; Tara Vinodrai analyses employment clustering and growth in the Canadian design industry; Karen King finds that for Canada, contrary to Florida's hypothesis, there is no conclusive evidence for differential

patterns of inter-regional creative class migration; and Roberta Comunian and Alessandra Faggian test the relationship between arts-related education and bohemian clustering in the United Kingdom, finding positive correlations but also that some locations (e.g. London) dominate bohemian employment to an even greater extent than might be explained by education-led clustering.

Part III, 'Networks', follows from Andersson's focus on infrastructure, global connectivity, and the creative potential of networked individuals and institutions. The majority of these contributions are empirical: Christian Matthiessen, Annette Schwarz and Søren Find analyse the worldwide spatial structure of scientific research, finding that Asian and southern European cities are improving their connectivity and output and rapidly catching up with the leading research cities of northwestern Europe and North America; Dan Silver, Terry Clark and Christopher Graziul eschew the conventional analysis of creative industries and occupations to study instead how consumption clusters ('scenes') influence urban development; Elizabeth Currid-Halkett and Kevin Stolarick measure the generality of artistic specialisation in the United States, finding evidence that different cities do indeed specialise in specific arts, with only New York and Los Angeles specialising in multiple skills and industries; and Carol Kiriakos uses the experiences of Finnish residents of Silicon Valley to demonstrate how local face-to-face interaction can in certain circumstances surpass technologically assisted interaction. The only non-empirical contribution is the chapter by

David Batten arguing that networks of overlapping, complementary, and functionally-specialised cities (i.e., poly-centric regions) will become increasingly common and competitive in an Anderssonian post-industrial future.

Part IV, 'Planning', applies the Hayekian concepts of 'knowledge problems' and 'spontaneous order' to urban development and planning. In Chapter 16, David Emanuel Andersson argues that the increasing economic complexity symptomatic of an interconnected, diverse, post-industrial society heightens the knowledge problem and further exacerbates the task of city planners, who should instead focus on expanding the potential of creative market interactions and local experiments. Similarly, in Chapter 17, Stefano Moroni argues that land-use regulations should place minimal planning constraints on private property and allow for more active and locally differentiated use of public property. In Chapter 18, Gus di Zerega and David Hardwick make the case that Vancouver, one of North America's most successful creative cities, has balanced the conflicting spontaneous orders of markets, democratic decision-making, and non-governmental grassroots organisations.

Part V, 'Markets', construes Florida's creative class theory as an outcome of market processes: Randall G. Holcombe recasts Floridian creatives as Kirznerian entrepreneurs and therefore suggests that policies beneficial to entrepreneurship also spur creativity; Arielle John and Virgil Henry Storr show how markets, in particular the Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia, raise the cost of discrimination and thereby promote tolerance and socially ben-

eficial creativity; Pierre Desrochers and Samuli Leppälä examine how inventors benefit from the clash of ideas that is characteristic of diverse urban environments; Peter Gordon and Sanford Ikeda posit that whilst diversity stimulates creativity it is density that attracts creativity, but they also find that in-migrants to dense areas are not over-represented by the creative class; Börje Johansson and Johan Klaesson show that inflows of new ideas and products to the key Swedish import region of Stockholm led to economic diversity and creativity, and similar structural changes were replicated throughout the rest of Sweden; and Philip Morrison argues that creative class mobility and spatial restructuring are not univocally beneficial, as demonstrated by socio-economic residential segregation in Wellington, New Zealand.

Part VI of the handbook, 'Visions', concludes the volume with two contrasting perspectives on the future of urban development. Fred Foldvary follows on from the preceding 'Planning' and 'Markets' sections by presenting a decentralised, libertarian vision of the creative city, based on voluntary community associations and Georgist funding of infrastructural collective goods. In the closing chapter, Charles Landry acknowledges the imperative of markets and policy experimentation for urban development, but nonetheless proposes a vision of the creative city that is vitalised by interventions in education, housing policy, civic monuments, and more.

On the whole, the *Handbook of Creative Cities* provides rewarding insights for anyone interested in urban development and the ways that cities cultivate

creativity. The audience should not be limited to academics and students of urban economics, economic geography, and the like; but include policymakers involved in urban development, who might especially reflect on contributions in the 'Planning' and 'Markets' sections.

The theoretical contributions, particularly the 'Foundations', bring the reader abreast of the 'state-of-the-art' and provide a useful review on creative cities. Indeed, the handbook could have benefitted from a greater focus on review chapters like these. The empirical contributions offer a number of interesting and sometimes novel results, particularly with respect to the creative class thesis, but the balance between specific empirical content and general theoretical content seems slightly askew. What is more, the empirical studies are limited mostly to North America and Europe, yet many of today's most dynamic and rapidly growing cities are in the developing world, particularly Asia. These cities, too, are navigating the post-industrial transition, via creative cities, and in-

creasingly entering into direct competition with 'old' global cities. For this reason, the chapter by Matthiessen *et al.* on how this very dynamic is playing out for collaborative scientific research is all the more appealing.

The evolutionary and Austrian influence found in some later chapters (e.g. David Andersson, Stefano Moroni, and Randall Holcombe) is particularly stimulating, and it is a welcome, if provocative, inclusion to the wider urban development discussion. But policy implications from empirical studies and normative theorising are commendably balanced throughout. This is no more evident than in the closing two chapters, which advocate opposing interventionist and libertarian platforms. The decision to accommodate diverse methodological (and ideological) approaches reflects the multidisciplinary nature of urban economic theorising, and the *Handbook of Creative Cities* is all the better for it.

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