

The Relationship between the Creative Class and City Development in China

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Abstract: *This essay analyzed the relationship between the creative class and the city development, mainly based on the academic researches and findings from Dr. Richard Florida and other scholars. This essay will research the social problem from different aspects, the analysis of the creativity, the analysis of the creative class and the analysis of the city. Furthermore, there also is questionnaire research analysis in this essay, containing several figures and statistics. According to the research, we can realize that the relationship between the creative class and city development is similar with the research which Dr. Richard Florida did in the US. Although China and the US are two different countries with different social backgrounds, they have the similar social phenomenon.*

Keywords: *Creative class; Creativity; City Development; City Index; Preference*

1. Introduction

The 21st century is an era in which we are living, in which the world economy is developing and in which the power of science is being strengthened. Digital technology began to develop in the early 1980s and 1990s, gradually becoming the mainstream in the 21st century. Because of the development of human society and the continuous evolution of industry, it could be believable that the 21st century is the century of skills. Due to the ubiquity of skills and technology, our society is developing towards an information or knowledge society. According to Reich^[1], in 1992, he notes that many jobs of production workers (those who do repetitive work), such as those on the assembly line, may disappear as the technical potential to take on repetitive work grows. "Digitization, the transition to a green economy and demographic change have added to Europe's skill gap.

We cannot predict the opportunity and cannot control the trend of the times, but we can decide ourselves; the opportunity is impossible, but the creativity is possible. In this essay, I want to help the readers to realize the importance of the creativity and the relationship between the creative class and city development. The Chinese creative class prefer to move to big cities for high-quality platforms and infrastructures, which has injected new energy for the city, the creativity, creative class and city index are the major factors of this social phenomenon.

2. Creativity

With the rapid development of knowledge economy, globalization and information society, the traditional talent quality structure with knowledge as the core has been more and more difficult to meet the development needs of the future society. And what are the core skills of the 21st century? According to OECD, "Preparing teachers and developing school leaders for the 21st century: Lessons from around the world"^[2], here are skills of 4 aspects that 21st century students must master: thinking mode, working style, working tools and life skills. Among them, the learning and creativity is at the top of the learning skills pyramid in the 21st century, which includes creativity and innovation, critical-thinking and problem-solving, communication and collaboration. These capabilities, known as "4Cs". The key of creativity lies in the originality of ideas and the persistence to keep trying. Creativity and innovation is an important dimension of the 4Cs model, emphasizing on pushing boundaries and breaking the rules. Creativity is vital to the evolution and development of human individuals and the whole society, as well as to the competition and survival of nations. After entering the 21st century, knowledge economy occupies a dominant position gradually. New knowledge, new techniques, new processes, and new values will replace traditional resources, energy and capital and become the driving force. The size of a country's overall creativity depends on the innovative quality of talent.^[3]

Facing the 21st century, the creativity will be the core of the professional quality of engineers and managers. From the perspective of the development of science and technology, the following three development trends have been shown: The first one, many new disciplines and fields are emerging constantly, and they permeate and cross each other, forming a complex scientific knowledge system. Based on the rapid development of science and technology, the human beings has entered an era of knowledge explosion. According to statistics, in the past half century, there have been more new discoveries, inventions and creations in science and technology all over the world than over the past 2,000 years combined. People's knowledge growth rate is greatly accelerated, the world has entered the era of information revolution, "knowledge waste rate" is getting higher and higher. Second, the transformation of science and technology into productive forces has accelerated. For example, the utilization rate of scientific research achievements in the United States is 80% to 85%, and the original technology of its heavy industry will be eliminated and updated every 5 years on average. Germany, Britain and France use 50-60% of their scientific output. Thirdly, the trend of the development of science and technology not only becomes more and more detailed in classification and research, but also becomes more and more comprehensive. Highly integrated problems require creative people with highly integrated knowledge to solve them.^[4]

2.1. Creative Class

The opening of the creative era gave birth to a new class, "creative class". The concept was proposed by Richard Florida, an American scholar and professor at the university of Toronto, in his book "The rise of the creative class" formally. He defines it as a new class created by the economic demands of creativity.^[5] He in 2002 proposed the concept of the creative class, he thinks the class including scientists, engineers, architects, educators, writers, artists, and the entertainment industry workers, these people have unique personality and creativity, diversity and other characteristics, is the main power of the future economic growth, in the 21st century is the century of the creative class. Florida on the definition of the creative class away from the traditional understanding of ideas, he thinks the creative class are those who create new forms of profound significance and the work of people, it is made up of scientists, engineers, university professors, poets, and architects, including design, education, art, music and entertainment to create new ideas, new technologies and the work of the new content. When the city becomes the center of new industry and knowledge industry, all kinds of new social relationships are interwoven, forming a group different from the traditional social structure. The communication and collision between the young intellectual class has constructed a diverse, inclusive, independent and open system, which is also driven by the new economy. This is exactly the system on which the new creative class relies. In today's era, the creative economy has become the mainstream of economic development, and the cultural and creative industry has become a new engine to promote the sustainable development of the economy and society. As the core driving body of the economic development of the cultural and creative industry, the creative class plays an important role in promoting the economic development.

2.1.1. Creative Class in China

According to Fengli, the number of creative classes in China is very small, the density is very low, and the creative class is scarce.^[6] In 2007, the total number of creative classes in China was 66.06 million, accounting for 5.09% of the total population and 9.26% of the total employed population. According to the statistics of Florida, the creative class in America had reached 40 million as early as 2002, accounting for 30% of the labor force at that time. According to a survey of the advertising industry in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou, the demand for creative talents in the industry has reached 74 percent. Business planners, a part of the creative class, topped the list of 10 new occupations announced by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, with an annual shortfall of more than 100,000 in the job market. With the continuous development of new cultural industries, the demand gap for creative talents will further increase.

In today's China, creative space has become an indispensable name card for cities, such as Beijing's 798 Art District, Shanghai's M50 Creative Park, Chengdu's Eastern Memory Park, Shenzhen's OCT Creative and Cultural Park, Guangzhou's Xinyi International Guild, Taikoo Wharf, T.I.T Creative Park, Red House Art District and 1850 Creative Park^[7] Many high-tech zones and creative industrial parks across the country have begun to flourish. The most important part of industrial development is undoubtedly the competition for scientific research and creative talents. The creative class is a new group of people who born out of creativity. They have huge impacts on the development and economy of a city and even the society. As it is expressed in Florida's research, the creative class changes the structure of the city or the social economy, and a city's economic backbone industries are linked to the creative class data. It is obvious that the creative class is the economic answer of the creativity.

3. City Index

Florida announced the concept of “creativity index”, which combined Creativity Index, Creative Workers, Creative Rank, High-Tech Rank, Innovation Rank and Diversity Rank. Furthermore, he analyzed 49 American cities with over 1 million population, 32 American cities with 500,000 to 1 million population and 63 American cities with 250,000 to 500,000 population based on the creativity index.^[8] The result of the research shows Austin, Boston, Chapel Hill and Washington are the major creative centers in America, the percentage of the creative workers are over 35%. Although these big cities have obvious advantages compared with other smaller cities, big cities are not the only places where the creative class is the most concentrated. In fact, many small cities or regions still have very high proportions of creative workers. For example, Melbourne, FL, Boise City, ID and Huntsville, AL have 35.5%, 35.2% and 35.3% separately, which are very close to the number of Austin 36.4% and higher than San Francisco 34.8%. According to the research of Florida, those places where the creative class is concentrated also are the centers of creative and high-tech industries.^[9] The Washington D.C., Austin, Boston, Research Triangle Park and California are the top five cities and regions based on the creative talent index. These five cities and regions not only have the highest concentration of creative class, but also have the highest concentration of talents (the talent index, which shows the proportion of the people who have the bachelor’s or higher degree).

3.1. Location Preference

In addition to the attraction of material factors, the creative class pays more attention to certain characteristics of the city in their choice of occupation and living space, such as loose and diverse urban atmosphere and stable innovation foundation. In other words, the creative class is highly concentrated in some specific cities and regions. Thus, the creative class has obvious diverse city preference, most of creative class people tend to choose open, tolerant and diverse city to work and live. Moreover, the current tendency is more and more creative class people migrate to creative centers from working class centers. The concentration of creative class is positively correlated with local diversity, which will have important impact of city development. Based on the research consequences of Florida,^[10] “These shifts are giving rise to powerful migratory trends and an emerging new economic geography. In the leading creative centers, the creative class makes up more than 35 percent of the work-force, regions such as the greater Washington, DC, region, the Raleigh-Durham area, Boston, and Austin.”

3.2. 3Ts Theory

“The key to understand the new economic geography of creativity and its effects on economic outcomes lies in what I call the 3Ts of economic development: technology, talent and tolerance.”^[10] Florida believes that compared with traditional theory, creative capital theory can be better to explain the driving force of regional economic growth. Creative capital theory holds that the driving force of regional economic growth lies in creative talents, who are more likely to gather in regions with high tolerance and diversity. Different types of creative talents can form a new combination of manpower, which can increase the speed of information exchange and knowledge fusion. The integration of creative capital in a larger scope and deeper degree is conducive to the improvement of innovation and the birth of more high-tech enterprises, which will provide more and better jobs that are suitable for creative talents and improve the creative economy in the region. According to Florida, the creative capital theory says that regional growth comes from the 3Ts of economic development, and to spur innovation and economic growth a region must have all three of them. To attract the creative class, a city must have three basic conditions: technology, talent and tolerance. Technology refers to the application of science and technology in industry or business, including the high-tech content of industries in the urban economy and the proportion of scientific and technological achievements into productive forces. The essence of the city is the aggregation of people, and the city will eventually develop through highly educated and creative talents.^[11] Tolerance refers to the inclusiveness of a city. The inclusiveness of a city means that a city can not only provide local people and outsiders with material satisfaction, but also make them quickly integrate into the local culture and life environment and obtain a deep spiritual comfort and satisfaction. The tolerance in creative city refers to the ability to recognize and respect the beliefs or behaviors of others and the degree of a city to accommodate, accept and protect new ideas. Therefore, it is necessary that the creative industry provides suitable environment for creative talents, improves the city’s high-tech ability and creates a highly tolerant and diverse urban environment for the creative class, if a city wants to develop.

3.3. Diversity

“Overall diversity is a strong indicator of a metropolitan area’s high-technology success...San Francisco, Boston, Seattle and Washington D.C. are the top four high-tech regions on the composite diversity index. The composite diversity index also strongly predicts high-tech growth.”^[12] There are four indices have been constructed to level the diversity and the tolerance within the cities, which are Gay index, Bohemian index, Foreign-Born index and Composite Diversity index.

3.3.1. Gay Index

“The leading indicator of a metropolitan area’s high-technology success is a large gay population. Gays can be thought of as canaries of the knowledge economy because they signal a diverse and progressive environment that fosters the creativity and innovation necessary for success in high tech industry.”^[12] According to Florida’s research, the 5 cities with the highest gay index are also among the nation’s top 15 high-tech metropolises. Meanwhile, 11 of these 15 high-tech metropolises also are in the top 15 of Gay Index Ranking, such as San Francisco, Washington D.C., Austin, Atlanta and San Diego. As time goes by, the concentration of diversity may become more complex by increasing of a region’s high-tech prosperity. The proportion of gay residents in a metropolitan area is the only significant predictor of a region’s high-tech growth, the Gay Index’s impact on high-tech growth is slightly strong. High Gay Index as a predictor of high-tech growth, social and cultural diversity attracts talents and stimulates high-tech growth.

3.3.2. Bohemian Index

“High concentration of creative people or ‘bohemians’ are also an indicator of a metropolitan area’s high-technology success. It has long been thought that talented people are attracted to amenities or a better quality of life, that amenities are an increasingly important part of what cities have to offer, dubbing the new amenity-rich city ‘the Entertainment Machine’.”^[12] The Bohemian Index is based on the number of writers, designers, musicians, actors, directors, painters, sculptors, photographers and dancers, those are the people who work in or participate with the arts. The standard that offers considerable improvement over traditional amenities such as restaurants, museums, symphonies, etc. Because it provides a direct measure of the producers of these facilities. The urban areas with high Bohemian Index mean with appreciation of amenities that support and show creativity and artistic expression.

3.3.3. Foreign-Born Index

“Metropolitan areas with high concentrations of foreign-born residents rank high as technology centers. The growth and development of great cities comes from their ability to harness diversity, welcome newcomers, and turn their energy and ideas into innovations and wealth.”^[12] Anyone with any background can live in high-tech centers. For example, the Silicon Valley, one of the most famous high-tech centers in the world, nearly a quarter of the whole population in there are foreign born. However, as far as I’m concerned, the reason why such many foreign born in California is the education and the location. Why education and location? First of all, California is one of the most developed states in the US, with many excellent universities and colleges, such as UCLA, Stanford University, California Institute of Technology, University of California - Berkeley, etc. These universities enjoy a high academic reputation throughout the country and around the world. Thousands of people or students from everywhere of the world come to California to pursue the highest education in the world, some of them became the experts in their areas, it is possible that they stay in California after graduation. In other words, this region attracted many talents because of its education, social resources and development. It has appeared a very good cycle, California attracts the best people from all over the world through its excellent competitiveness, education, health care, technology, welfare and so on. At the same time, the best people from all over the world have been attracted by California’s excellent conditions and come here to live, work or study. And then, California got better and more competitive, attracting more and more talented people who were attracted to California. Furthermore, the US is bounded on the west by the Pacific Ocean and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, across the sea from Asia and Europe, the people from these continents can come to the United States directly. In addition, the US is an immigration country, it combines the nations from the whole world, any culture background, any country, any nation.

3.3.4. Composite Diversity Index

“Social, cultural, and ethnic diversity are strong indicators of a metropolitan area’s indicators of a metropolitan area’s high-technology success. Diversity of human capital is a key component of the ability to attract and retain high-technology industry.”^[12] This index is a sum of the ranking of the three individual diversity measures: the gay index, bohemian index, and foreign-born index. Florida’s

argument about diversity is straightforward. The diversity of human capital is a key factor in attracting and retaining high-tech industries. To prove the point, he constructed a composite diversity index, which for short CDI, that based on three diversity indicators, including the gay index, bohemian index, and foreign-born index. 50 metropolitan areas in the U.S were ranked by each indicator, and the three rankings were summarized. Surprisingly, CDI can predict the growth of high technology. According to Florida's estimation of the CDI on high-tech growth and factor in the percentage of college graduates in the region, population, and measures of culture, recreation, and climate, his diversity measure has a positive and significant effect on high-tech growth from 1990 to 1998. These results offer strong evidence of the importance of the combined effects of social, cultural, and ethnic diversity for both high-tech location and growth.

4. Research

According to the consequence of Florida, it is easy to see that there are some relationships between the creative class and the city development. But how? Furthermore, Florida's opinion was based on the social situation of the US. As it is known to all, the US is a western country with capitalism, it is possible to say this concept is suitable for almost countries in the world. However, is it really work on all the countries in the world? China as a big eastern country with socialism in the world, and it also has huge influence to the world nowadays. Does Florida's opinion is suitable in China? And what is the relationship between the creative class and the city development in China? This is the goal of this research.

4.1. Design of the Research

The questionnaire contains 17 questions, and all of them are choice questions, it is not too much for the target subjects. If there are too many questions for the subjects, they will be impatient. It is possible that they are not willing to do the questionnaire seriously, and it will affect the quality and the effectiveness of the questionnaire. Basically, the subjects can finish this questionnaire within 3 minutes. Because the target subjects are Chinese people, the questionnaire is English-Chinese bilingual. It can make sure that all the subjects can understand precisely and give valid answers.

The first three questions are normal questions about their basic information, like the gender, age and the educational background. The fourth and fifth question are asking about the creative industry, whether they are in the creative industry or not and if they think they are creative. After the fifth question, the topic move to the city preference. From the seventh to seventeenth question, they are asking about how much the degrees of the characters of a city attract them. For example, the economic development, recreational facilities, educational resources, humanistic environment and etc. There are five options for them to choose the degree from very unimportant to very important for each question.

4.2. Research Findings

A sum of 112 people participated this research, and the percentage of participants aged 0-18 years old is 3.57%. The majority age of the participants are 19-25 years old and 36-55 years old, reaching 35.71% and 32.14% separately. By contrast, the proportion of people in 26-35 years old is lower, but still occupied 28.57%. The major educational background of the subjects is the bachelor's degree, reaching 75%. And the rest of the subject are high school and lower for 17.86% and the master's degree and higher for 7.14%. The next question moves to the creative industry, "Are you in the creative industry? (mainly including education, arts, technology, design, media and etc.)". There are over a half people in the creative industry, 53.57%. The rest of 46.43% chose "No". 57.14% of the subjects think they are creative, and 42.86% chose "No".

Based on the results of the research, 82.14% of the subjects think the humanistic environment in a city is very important for them to live in. Furthermore, 71.43% of the subjects considered the atmosphere (e.g. the city is highly inclusive) is very important for them. At the same time, the recreational facilities and the transportation are very important for 67.86% of the target group. Additionally, the economic development and the cultural resources are very important for 60.71% and 53.57% of the participants.

According to the research, It is obvious that the relationship between the creative class and the city development in China is consistent with Florida's opinion. Meanwhile, the more developed cities have more creative classes, and the creative classes prefer to stay in developed cities. I would like to say the creative class and the city feed each other. The creative class can receive the things that they will never have in other small cities, like the cultural resources or the inclusiveness. The developed cities have huge

number of populations, there are plenty of different kind of people and different kind of thoughts. The developed cities have higher tolerance of the new things. There is a sentence from ancient China, "People should read ten thousand books and travel ten thousand miles.", this means that it is necessary for a person to go out to see a wider world and learn more knowledge. City just like a human, a developed city just like a wiseman, he has seen a lot of things, so he is open to all the things. Any special idea can be respected in here. Furthermore, developed cities have strong strength to provide any kind of resources to the citizens. As I mentioned, poor cities are struggling with the basic physiological need, there is no any spare ability to provide high level resources. Perhaps it is more necessary for poor cities to build a hospital than a library. A city's atmosphere also is very important for over 70% of participants, the inclusiveness is one of their consideration. Except environment and atmosphere, transportation, recreational facilities, educational resource and economic development of a city are considerable for creative class as well. The popularity and the degree of talent enrichment are little bit balanced. In general, the points mentioned in the questionnaire are important considerations for the creative class.

5. Conclusions

Creativity is a very important ability for human beings, and it influences people's daily life silently. There is no doubt, that education plays a vital role in the development of human being's culture. Creativity, on the other hand, is a sign of high intelligence and education. Thus, the increasing demand and requirement of creativity is the educational answer of the creativity. Furthermore, we know the creative class can promote and change the economic structure of a city. The more active the creative class is, the more developed the city's economy and more inclusive it will be. As the economic answer of the creativity, the formation of the creative class also is a symbol and embodiment of urban economic reformation. On the other hand, the city is the social answer of the creativity. Cities are the first to enjoy the creative dividend based on creative applications, excellent educational resources, advanced infrastructure, developed economic system and good cultural environment. Therefore, the developed city is the image of highly creative development. This is like a virtuous cycle. Excellent urban conditions attract more creative classes to develop, and the creative classes get the platform and environment they are satisfied with in the city. The creative class creates more value, and the city, as the embodiment of value, constantly improves its strengths. At the later stage of the cycle, the large cities gradually become developed cities in the world through the siphon effect.

According to the article, there is a positive relationship between the creative class and city development. The creative class and the city depend on each other for mutual achievement, the city provides the creative class with the platforms and infrastructures they need, and the creative class injects fresh vitality for the rapid development of the city. At the same time, the creative class is more willing to go to cities with good environment, high inclusiveness and developed economy and transportation. The creative class has obvious preference for city "diversity". Creative people tend to choose cities that are open, diverse and tolerant. A diverse city that tolerates different thinking, embraces new ideas, embraces different cultures, and embraces different lifestyles has a clear competitive advantage in attracting talent or human capital. The creative class is moving from traditional neighborhoods, working-class centers to "creative hub" cities. What the creative class seeks is the rich high-tech base of the place, the highly open urban environment and the many job opportunities that highlight their creative class identity. A city and a region for immigrants. The openness of artists, homosexuality, bohemianism, and socioeconomic and racial integration is closely related to the level of economic quality. Such a region can stimulate more people's creative abilities and access to more liquid capital. To promote change. Build new enterprises and attract foreign enterprises, and ultimately create new wealth. The emergence of the creative class in different cities is positively correlated with the local economic growth, and the creative class is the driving force of the new urban economy based on learning, innovation and fashionable lifestyle. There is a positive correlation between the creative class and innovation and high-tech growth. Cities with a strong creative class tend to be creative hubs for innovation and high-tech industries.

As the gathering place of creative classes and the carrier of human civilization development, cities play an important role in human civilization. The development of cities is closely related to the development of human beings. As the promoter of human civilization, the creative class contributes to human development continuously. As culture dishes for the creative class, the development of cities is also related to the creative classes of a nation.

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