

## CREATIVE CLASS: HOW AND WHY TO ATTRACT IT TO THE CITY?

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### Resumo

A principal força propulsora da economia do conhecimento é a criatividade humana, por isso ela tornou-se agente central também na vida em sociedade, promovendo constantemente o aprimoramento dos produtos, processos e atividades relacionadas à vida. Nesse sentido, a atração e retenção de profissionais altamente qualificados e criativos deve se tornar uma prioridade, não apenas porque estes estimulam a economia, inovação e empreendedorismo, mas também porque interagem para resolver problemas quotidianos em nível micro ou macro social, gerando impacto em toda a cidade. Nas últimas duas décadas, dentre os profissionais mais talentosos, começou a se destacar um grupo denominado classe criativa. A classe criativa é formada por pessoas que desenvolvem atividades criativas e partilham características relativas às suas preferências e estilo de vida. As cidades onde ela se concentra apresentam um melhor desempenho econômico, mas seu impacto se estende à todas as dimensões urbanas em função da sua participação na regeneração da infraestrutura, no estímulo e fortalecimento da cena cultural, no envolvimento em questões sociais e de governança, entre outros. A classe criativa possui alta mobilidade geográfica e alguns fatores são valorizados por ela na escolha do lugar para morar e trabalhar, os quais podem ser desenvolvidos e trabalhados pela cidade. Dessa forma, o objetivo dessa pesquisa é analisar a relação da classe criativa com as cidades e como atraí-la ou retê-la. Como resultado, o panorama atual indica que as cidades mais atrativas à classe criativa pelo mundo, desenvolvem aspectos como: diversidade, tolerância, cena cultural ampla, mercado de trabalho flexível, paisagens e proteção da natureza, boa infraestrutura de serviços urbanos, oportunidades de educação e cultura local cosmopolita ou com mente aberta.

### Abstract

The main driving force of the knowledge economy is human creativity, which is why it has become a central agent in life in society, constantly promoting the improvement of products, processes and activities related to human life. In this sense, the attraction and retention of highly skilled and creative professionals should become a priority, not only because they stimulate economics, innovation and entrepreneurship, but also because they interact to solve everyday problems at micro or macro social level, impacting in the city as a whole. In the last two decades, among the most talented professionals, a group called the creative class began to stand out. The creative class consists of people who develop creative activities and share characteristics related to their preferences and lifestyle. The cities where they concentrate show a better economic performance, but their impact extends to all urban dimensions due to participating in the regeneration of infrastructure, to stimulating and strengthening the cultural scene, to their involvement in social and governance issues, among others. The creative class has a high geographical mobility and some factors are highlighted in its choice for a place to live and work, factors which can be developed by the city. Thus, the purpose of this research is to analyze the relation of the creative class to cities and how to attract or retain it. As a result, the current panorama indicates that the most attractive cities to the creative class around the world are those which develop some aspects such as: diversity, tolerance, broad cultural scene, flexible labor market, landscapes and nature protection, good infrastructure of urban services, educational opportunities and cosmopolitan or open-minded local culture.

### PALAVRAS CHAVES

**Classe criativa, Cidades criativas, Desenvolvimento urbano.**

### KEY WORDS

**Creative class, Creative cities, Urban development.**

## Introduction

Traditional economic factors such as labor force, capital, and other resources have become easier to obtain or are no longer as essential today (Florida, 2011). In this sense, value creation in many areas of the economy has been increasingly based on intangible assets, shifting the focus to human capital, especially the highly qualified one (Clifton, 2008; Bontje, Musterd, 2009).

The emergence of the knowledge economy emphasized that innovation and business competitiveness increasingly depend on their ability to improve productivity, quality and value by creating new products and services (Hansen, Winther, 2010). Powell and Snellman (2004) define the knowledge economy as the era in which production and services are based on knowledge-intensive activities, which contribute to accelerating technical and scientific advancement. In this sense, technological innovation and knowledge development are fed by the work force in science and technology (Darchen, Tremblay, 2010).

Although we are in the so-called knowledge economy, it is more correct to say that - *from knowledge* - the main driving force of the economy is creativity, so what is observed is its rise as a central agent in the economy and society life, constantly promoting the improvement of products, processes and activities of human life (Florida, 2011).

In a knowledge-based economy, it is then crucial to attract and retain highly qualified professionals (Clifton, 2008), and thereby attracting talented people, the regions will be better prepared to meet social and economic demands and become more competitive (Hansen, Niedomysl, 2009).

Therefore, considering how current the theme is, the object of this research is the creative class, more specifically the approach and the motivation to attract it to the cities.

## Aim of the research

This research aims to investigate which aspects compose the theory of the creative class, including the characteristics, values and structure of the group that is part of it, besides its relation with the city and ways to attract it.

## Methodology

The work methodology consisted of a systematic review of the literature based on research in the international databases Scopus, Web of Science and Emerald. The exploratory searches were developed with the purpose of deepening the research theme and finding studies that evaluated or indicated the factors of attraction of the creative class to the cities.



The systematic review includes the steps: planning, execution, analysis and reporting (Clarke, Oxman, 2000), followed in this research. The result of the literature review directed the research design and presented the main sources on the subject.

In the search we used the following terms or descriptors: “creative class” AND cit\*, “creative class” AND attract\*, “creative class” AND cit\* AND attract\*, “creative class” AND evaluat\* OR assessment OR model OR framework, obtaining a return of 568 documents, of which 244 were available for access.

These 244 documents were analyzed by titles and abstracts, using as criterion the relevance to the theme or the presentation of a framework, survey or indicators related to the creative class in cities. After this analysis, we selected 78 papers that were completely evaluated by their content, results and applicability or use in the present research. Then there were 30 papers left, which were used in the theoretical reference. Books, theses, dissertations, reports and other documents were also consulted<sup>1</sup>.

## 1. What is the creative class

The class structure in capitalist society is undergoing a transformation and with it emerges the so-called creative class, whose economic function is the creation of new ideas, technologies or creative content (Boyle, 2006). Essentially, the theory of the creative class assumes that in the globalized economy innovation is the main competitive advantage and, in this sense, the most important component is the technical, social or artistically creative workforce (Lorenzen, Andersen, 2009). In this theory, economic growth depends directly on innovation and creativity (Hansen, Niedomysl, 2009).

The use of the word “class” is related to the sense of identity among its members and a consistent standards system that encompasses personal style, beliefs, values, and attitudes at work (Clifton, 2008). The members of this class have specific preferences for work and private life, such as high quality of housing, work empowerment and specialized consumption (Lorenzen, Andersen, 2009). The consumption habits of this class involve a greater preference for experiences than for the consumption of traditional products or services, therefore their status and identity are less related to the goods they possess and more to the experiences they live (Florida, 2011).

Martin-Brelot *et al* (2010) divided the thesis of the creative class into six basic statements:

1. There are a set of professions that solve creative tasks;
2. Members share characteristics relating to their activities and lifestyle and are therefore considered a class;
3. This class is the main driver of economic development today;

<sup>1</sup> This systematic review was developed as part of the research developed by Depiné (2016); its development, results and developments were published in her master's degree dissertation.



4. This class tends to concentrate on certain cities and, as a consequence, these cities present a better economic performance;
5. Members of this class are highly mobile, geographically speaking;
6. **Creative class members are attracted primarily by soft factors, and so cities should focus on these factors.**

The creative class consists of people who add *economic value* through their creativity, hence the bases that define it are economic in nature (Florida, 2011). The conventional measure of human capital is based on levels of education or training, but recent research suggests that it is more important to measure what people actually do than what they study or studied, and then develop measures based on occupations (Mellander, Florida, 2011). Human capital is usually measured by its degree of instruction, while the creative class is measured by what it performs (Qian, 2010). In this sense, perhaps the greatest contribution of creative class theory to the traditional theory of human capital is to investigate the real abilities of individuals and not just their education or training (Marlet, Van Woerkens, 2007).

## 1.1. The structure of the creative class

The creative class is made of two groups of workers: one that comprises the hypercreative nucleus, and the other formed by a larger circle of creative talents or professionals. The first group is represented by people who work in essentially creative activities, usually in the scientific field or in the area of computing, mathematics, architecture, engineering, education, arts, design, entertainment and media. These people are directly responsible for the generation of new content, forms, projects and products. The second group is represented by creative professionals who are dedicated to solving specific or complex problems that require high level training. They are professionals who work in industries that are knowledge intensive or in finance, health, management and law areas, for example. They can create and propose new products or methods, but this is not an activity inherent in their function (Florida, 2011; Bereitschaft, Cammack, 2015, Boyle, 2006).

Still within the two groups that comprise the creative class there are some individuals called 'bohemians'. Bohemians are a category of artistic and cultural workers such as authors, designers, painters and photographers, although they are involved with a more technological and digital base (Faggian, 2014). The artists, or bohemians, are treated differently within the concept of creative class, since they become a very important quality to the regions and cities, in order to be the most attractive for the creative class, broadly speaking (Clifton, 2008). In addition, bohemians are relatively few and represent only a small part of the contribution of the creative class to economic growth, but they are the most critical consumers of urban services and have the most specialized and pioneering preferences of the creative class in general (Lorenzen, Andersen, 2009).

## 1.2. Standards and lifestyle in the creative class

The main standards of this class are: creativity, individuality, diversity and merit. **Individuality** presents itself through the tendency to strive to create a unique identity and the need for self-assertion; **Meritocracy**, because its members are ambitious and value work and career, challenges and self-determination; **Diversity** is valued by individuals of the creative class in all its forms and therefore they seek an environment open to differences, whether at work or in the community in which they live (Florida, 2011).

Workplaces are attractive when they present horizontal management and encourage autonomy, creativity and flow of ideas (Houston et al, 2008). Creative people are motivated by passions, by intrinsic rewards, and by working on something related to creativity, not just by reward or status (Florida, 2011). In order to serve and attract the creative class, the structures need to go from conservative, bureaucratic and asphyxiating to liberal, bohemian, multicultural and cosmopolitan (Boyle, 2006). To privilege the creative process, even the schedules and rules of work environments are relaxed (Florida, 2011).

In the community, members of the creative class are interested in places with visible signs of diversity, such as the mixing of different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, income levels, lifestyles, besides continuity between past and present and social ties (Lawton et al. Al, 2013). This diversity is not only related to the history, trajectories and events of the city, but also to the more recent urban context such as the national political aspect and the urban and regional economic specialization profiles (Van Heerden, 2014).

The feature that most represents the lifestyle of the creative class is the search for experiences, especially those that reflect and reinforce their identity as creative individuals. An experience can stimulate more creative faculties than a product or service and this trend reflects the formation of a more dynamic and experiential lifestyle that is emerging in the new economy (Florida, 2014).

There are creative people of all sorts, but there is something in common among them: a strong desire to work and live in environments where they can exert creativity, their contributions are valued, there are resources, challenges and receptivity to change and ideas (Florida, 2011).

## 2. Creative class and cities

Highly talented people are an important factor for the economic development of cities, so exploring the issues that determine the distribution of such talent becomes essential (Buettner, Janeba, 2015, Chen, Chi, 2012). Attracting members of the creative class to regions is impacted by the generation of innovation and the development and attraction of high-tech industries (Clifton, 2008). Their mobility is linked to the search for new experiences, few affective ties and greater power in the choice of housing and work due to higher income and qualification (Chen, Chi, 2012).

A study developed by Kratke (2004) in Berlin showed that knowledge-intensive activities and the creative economy are the most important resources of the development of the urban economy and are based on the sociocultural aspects of the place combined with a dynamic of economic cluster formation. Therefore, creativity and talent depend on the interaction between economic, sociocultural and spatial factors.

In Ireland, research developed by Boyle (2006) shows, despite being a traditionally conservative country, its capital Dublin is an example of an attractive cosmopolitan city. Government projects stimulated cultural diversity, inclusion and migration in the city, and made renovations for urban regeneration that defined neighborhoods and areas of entertainment and cultural preservation. Tax incentives and resources policies were also created for artists, filmmakers, media professionals and writers to promote urban and regional growth through art (Boyle, 2006).

The research conducted by Grant and Kronstal (2010) in Halifax in Nova Scotia, a city with 373,000 inhabitants, has shown that although larger cities have a greater number of talents, the frequency and spontaneity of personal contact that smaller or medium-sized cities offer facilitate collaboration between talents. During the research, creative professionals highlighted that what attracted them and kept them in the city was the natural beauty of the region, the ease of access to parks or rural areas, the quality of life and the relaxed lifestyle.

Survey developed by Depiné (2016) in Florianópolis, Brazil, a city characterized by an economy focused increasingly on technology, aimed to understand its factors of attraction and retention of the creative class. As main results, it was verified that the main factors of choice of the creative class for the city were respectively the opportunities of education and learning, personal relationships, labor market and professional reasons, pleasant environment and natural amenities and landscapes.

Creativity together with innovation and the creation of knowledge easily translates into regional competitiveness (Faggian, 2014). Research developed by Gabe and Abel (2011) on the agglomeration of people working with similar knowledge has identified that high levels of collaboration are typically important in economic activities characterized by the use of tacit knowledge, so geographical proximity and regional specialization tend to increase productivity in face-to-face contact of individuals.

Empirical studies show that the geographical distribution of the creative class in Europe is positively related to the growth in the number of jobs and entrepreneurship at the regional level in several countries (Asheim, 2009). The distribution of high technology workplaces between European cities correlates well with the distribution of the creative class and the presence of cultural services (Lorenzen, Andersen, 2009). Results from a survey conducted in Dutch cities indicated that the presence of the creative class is a better predictor for local employment growth than the share of *alumnus* (Marlet, Van Woerkens, 2007).

Creative cities and regions are areas where the sharing of knowledge and experience is relatively free of constraints (Petrikova et al, 2015). Cities that concentrate companies and manpower involved in the creative industries are economically better off than others, which also implies that cities that do not follow this trend will suffer losses in the future economy (Martin-Brelot et al, 2010).

### 3. Factors of attraction to the creative class

The economic development model of creative cities, where the key ingredient for economic performance is innovation, focuses on attracting talent and uses policies to increase local quality and amenities such as arts and culture (Grodach, 2013).

Central to creative class theory is that highly skilled workers with creative or knowledge-intensive occupations are attracted by such facilities as: dense labor market, active society, warm and friendly environment, open-minded community, natural resources and green spaces, quality public services, cultural scenery and entertainment in a context of tolerance that enables diversity (Bereitschaft; Cammack, 2015; Darchen, Tremblay, 2010).

Florida (2011) concluded that creative people depart from traditional business communities and turn to places called creative centers. Creative centers are regions with high concentration of economic results in the form of innovations and growth of the high technology sector, in addition to the high concentration of members of the creative class. There are usually strong signs of widespread regional vitality, such as population growth and employment rates. It is an integrated ecosystem in which all forms of creativity can be developed (Florida, 2011). Table 1 summarizes the main factors valued by the creative class in choosing a place to live and work:

Table 1 - Factors of choice of the creative class by a city or region.

Broad labor market	Market consistent with the horizontal career plan, as professionals tend to spend little time in the same job.
Lifestyle	Due to flexible and unpredictable working hours, immediate access to leisure is important: musical, artistic, technological, sports and night life.
Social interaction	Space for interaction where they can fill the gap of contact with other people, considering their propensity to live alone, postponing the formation of a family and changing jobs frequently.
Diversity	A cosmopolitan feature, where any individual can find groups of like-minded people with whom they feel comfortable, as well as different groups that serve as a stimulus.

Authenticity	Providing unique and original experiences, presenting through its historic buildings, neighborhoods of renown, eccentric figures and cultural attributes.
Identity	The place conveys a status and so people want to get involved in the community in which they live and contribute so that it reflects and legitimizes their own identity.
Quality of place	Features that define a place and make it attractive to the creative class: - What is there: combination of built environment and natural environment; - Who is there: diversity of people and interaction; - What is happening: vitality of the streets, culture of cafes and arts, participation in outdoor activities and creative endeavors.

Source: developed by Depiné (2016) based on Florida (2011).

For the attraction of the creative class there are the soft factors and the hard factors. In the past, companies have invested heavily in the harder, more classic factors such as office space, workforce, salary level and accessibility, but when location became popular to justify the pattern of choice, soft factors such as environmental quality, lively cultural scene and market functioning emerged (Martin-Brelot et al, 2010).

Traditionally, economic factors are considered to be the most important for the attractiveness of a region in comparison to the others, such as wage differentials, variable cost of living and housing and the greater presence of jobs; however, for qualified, creative and high educated people non-pecuniary factors show greater importance, such as better weather conditions, lower levels of crime, more leisure options, less pollution and better traffic (Golgher, 2008), that is, the quality of the place.

The quality of the place should be understood in broad terms, relating not only to the conditions of the natural or built environment, but to the high concentration of people who work and constitute cultural occupations, the so-called Bohemians (Clifton, 2008). Places with a rich and diverse cultural scene, usually determined by the number of people in essentially cultural or bohemian occupations, attract other types of talented individuals (Faggian, 2014). There is a need to become a city that never sleeps, offering a vibrant lifestyle with bustling cultural scene and tolerance to the most varied styles, customs and beliefs (Van Heerden, 2014).

Urban economies grow because they are tolerant, diverse and open to creativity, which attracts talented people and makes this social environment also conducive to the opening of new enterprises (Hackler, Mayer, 2008). People of the creative class are attracted to places with openness to migrants and immigrants (Asheim, 2009). The more diversified the population of a region in relation to the origin of people, the broader the range

of available knowledge and the greater the possibility of combining existing knowledge to generate innovation (Qian, 2010). Immigrants have complementary skills to those who are native, not only because they perform different tasks but also because they bring different skills to the same task (Mellander, Florida, 2011).

Another important factor linked to the attraction and retention of the creative class is education. The presence of large universities is proven to be a key factor in the set of advantages. However, while some regions with universities have large concentrations of talent, others operate mainly in the development of talent, which are then “exported” to other regions (Mellander, Florida, 2011). These university-trained talents may be outspoken talents from the region itself or drawn from outside. That is, not only the formation of individuals with high human capital through the creation of structures and programs of educational formation is important, but also the attraction of highly qualified individuals from other regions (Faggian, 2014). In addition, universities have an impact not only on talent training and knowledge production but also on the creative engagement of the local community with the organization of cultural and artistic events and support innovation by connecting local groups with global knowledge (Grant, Kronstal, 2010).

In short, what attracts industries to locals is the talents available, and what attracts talented people to a place is their nature, culture, buildings and institutions, as well as the presence of other talented people (Florida, 2014). However, more empirical work is needed to understand the extent and reasons for creative class mobility, as well as the results of efforts to attract them and how they affect the creative economy in cities (Kong, 2014).

#### **4. Regional concentration of the creative class**

With the changes in the economy and in society the creative class naturally ascended to the role of protagonist of the transformations in several dimensions of urban life. The present and future prospects are directed towards innovation, be it technological, social or other innovation. The forms of work and lifestyle developed so far are inefficient for the complexity of the world today and in some cases even unsustainable, so that it is necessary to seek new and different alternatives. In this sense, the creative ones people the pioneers and protagonists.

Work and fun are melting together, just like bohemian and conventional culture. Individuals increasingly seek quality of life, a stimulating and creative lifestyle, not just work or guarantees. One seeks the development of their own identity, new and distinct experiences, learning and being cosmopolitan. The creative class is the expression of a new generation concerned with personal fulfillment based on internal factors, but which creatively creates and acts for the benefit of the whole society.

In all spaces individuals seek the possibility of developing their creativity and also find stimuli and opportunities. Members of the creative class act in several roles and even in more than one of them at the same

time, such as: professional person, entrepreneur, professional employee, investor, among others. However, the impact on the environment in which they are inserted goes beyond the economic one, as it is reflected in the development of the entire ecosystem.

In the cultural scene, its presence contributes to the support of the arts and to stimulating diversity in entertainment; in the urban infrastructure it contributes to the revitalization of spaces and to the return of the occupation of the streets with the cafes and small events of the community; to governance, with a commitment to social causes and in the creation of solutions to urban problems. In the economic dimension, this class is a magnet for companies, new businesses, investments, new solutions and even other creative people.

Cities are the habitat of the creative class and this contributes in various ways to urban development, including making them more competitive and more attractive. In this way, cities need to turn to the development of strategies that make them better cities to work, entertain and reside in, that is, to live.

Researches developed so far already present an interesting panorama for the development of better cities to live in and, consequently, cities more attractive to the creative class, with aspects such as: diversity, tolerance, wide cultural scene, flexible labor market, landscapes and protection of the nature, good infrastructure of urban services, education opportunities and a cosmopolitan or open-minded local culture.

In spite of the differences found in countries with different cultures, resources and opportunities, the factors of attraction and retention of the creative class are repeated and complementary overall, thus there is already a clear and defined starting point on how to attract them.

## **Conclusions**

The presence of talented people is essential for the development of cities and, at the present time, creativity is a central talent. Creativity is the main driver of sustainable economic and social development in the knowledge economy, constantly promoting the improvement of products, services and other activities related to human life and society.

Research has shown the strong economic impact of the creative class on urban development in several countries and continents, which in itself demonstrates the importance of attracting it, but they also highlight how the performance of this class has an impact on the most diverse spheres of life in society.

The creative class has high geographic mobility, and some factors are valued by it when choosing the place to live and work, factors which have already been highlighted by research presented and can be developed or improved by the cities.

When a city takes all the potential and human capital available to its favor and creates an innovation ecosystem with a healthy dynamic of job creation and new forms of participation or governance, it then becomes a creative city.

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