

Creative spaces in the Netherlands

Dutch city regions and their creative industries, economic performance and spatial conditions

Introduction

Innovation lies at the heart of economic development and creativity lies at the heart of innovation. At present it is acknowledged that technological innovation through research and development is but one of the driving forces of the knowledge society. A neglected factor in attempts to strengthen the (inter)national economic and knowledge position of countries is creativity (Peter Hall, Richard Florida). In this article we demonstrate the enormous impact of the creative economy on the transformation of the Dutch economy and how this transformation affects the shape of cities and regions. Today 990.000 Dutch employees (13 % of total national employment) work in the creative economy. The aim of our research is to develop regional strategies for accommodating and facilitating this transformation.

1. The emergence of the creative economy

1.1 The promise of a creative city

What is a creative city? Can conditions for the success of the creative economy be defined, and in what way are they dependent on urban culture? Lately a rediscovery of the city has been taking place. Peter Hall in his magnum opus '*Cities in Civilizations*' promises a new golden age to those cities that innovate on three interdependent levels: culture, economy and urban organisation. There will be glory for cities that apply the combined lessons of Athens and London on culture, of Manchester, Berlin and Silicon valley on technology, and of Rome, New York and Paris on urban organisation. In the global competition between metropolitan areas the ones that are creative on all levels are the ones that will survive.

Landry and Demos (U.K. think tank for every day democracy) launched this promise as a concept: 'creative city'. To local authorities they handed a toolkit for shaping the future of the city. Their approach concentrates on creative strategies for solving problems of urban transformation. Several cities in the UK developed a cultural strategy to transform old industrial areas into fashionable parts of the city. The Bilbao Guggenheim Museum can be seen as an example of this cultural strategy, which changes the image of industrial cities by creating a post modern 'city brand'.

In the Netherlands the concept was introduced in 2002 by Zef Hemel, who for the Delta metropolis and the Dutch department for housing and spatial planning (VROM) wrote an essay under the same title. The debate on the contribution of creativity to economic development was speeded up by Richard Florida's attendance at the conference Creativity and the City, on the occasion of the opening of the Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam in September 2003. Since then his happy message about the significance of the creative class for the regional economy has been reverberating through governmental and administrative halls in the Netherlands. Every town wants to be a creative city, but is this possible, and if so, how then? Would not they all become clones?

1.2 Designing new urban strategies

In order to design new urban strategies we need to understand the way creativity as a production factor works in the regional economy. Firstly we evaluate the Dutch data in order to measure the contribution of the creative economy to growth. Secondly we map out the strong points and specific qualities of different regions by focusing on the distribution of different urban milieus and branches of the creative economy. Thirdly we present a model for analyzing the missing links in urban conditions in three different Dutch regions. Finally we show how the results are applied and translated into regional strategies for fostering creativity and meeting the challenges of the global shift towards a creative economy.

1.3 How the creative age reshapes the city

In the debate about the knowledge economy and the changing conditions of work the new word is creativity. Florida foresees a fundamental change of paradigm in the economy. In Florida's vision the transformation of the post industrial economy is not limited to turning the former into a knowledge economy. In our part of the world the true value is generated by those workers who invent and create new products, who apply knowledge for making commodities that are smart or 'cool', who invent brands and designs associated with new life styles. These creative workers are called 'the creative class'. Human creativity is no longer restricted to the area of culture and arts, or industrial design. The driving force behind the application of knowledge and the invention of new products, new designs and marketing strategies or improvements of production technologies is the human capacity to create new solutions and to imagine new possibilities. If this is true the economic paradigm shift will have a number of implications for urban life and the shape of cities. In the past industrial society reshaped the city in a fundamental way. The industrial city was about economy. Its ideal was a functional and efficient organization of the city. In the shape of industrial cities it was no longer obvious that creation of culture used to be an essential function of the city. In the post industrial economy in the Western cities production is shifting from the making of commodities towards application of knowledge and creation of new products, life styles and experiences. This shift again has a tremendous impact on the way of life, the use of land, on neighbourhoods and buildings in the city. Cultural and 'symbolic' production return to the heart of urban life though not necessarily to the centre of the city.

1.4 Unexpected renaissance of the inner city

Economic innovation is still associated with high tech, patent production and budgets spent on R&D. Technology is often seen as identical to innovation. Surely innovation can be technology-driven, but it can also spring from cross-overs between alpha or gamma knowledge and technicians, or between socio-cultural trends and economic development. A striking example is Amsterdam in the late nineteen nineties. No economist could have foreseen the economic 'boom' of its inner city. In the two previous decennia most industrial production had left the city and even the country. In the inner city many industrial sites were deserted, and often occupied by squatters. The official policy aimed at 're-industrialization' and services. Nobody expected the experimental way of life of the informal dwellers to turn the former factories into a breeding ground for creative industries. Now, twenty years later, the inner city of Amsterdam has a density of housing and working not seen since the nineteen fifties. The labour force in the inner city grew from 70.000 at the end of the eighties to 90.000 at the end of the nineties. Statistics on the expansion of creative industries in Amsterdam (TNO 2004) and the growth of the creative class offer a plausible explanation. Florida makes a point.

1.5 Creativity index

If creativity is the production factor in the regional economy, causing one region to be more competitive than another, we need to understand how this works. In order to design new urban strategies on a local or regional level in a global competition of regions we have to explore and reveal the conditions that make certain cities attractive to the creative class. We also need to understand the way creative industries interact with other economic branches, and why they prefer certain urban conditions. Finally we must try to understand the different chances of urban regions for making places fit for fostering the creative economy.

Florida's creativity index for the European countries has shown that the Netherlands are amongst the leaders in creativity in Europe, but to maintain that position it is necessary to develop spatial strategies in order to facilitate this economic sector more adequately. The results of our research confirm that it is possible and desirable to enhance a diversity of creative places to help creativity blossom. Promising places for the nourishment of creativity already exist but are usually invisible to those with the power to protect and develop them.

Since the European creativity index is on a scale too large to concern itself with specific Dutch localities, insight is needed in local situations in the Netherlands. We will concentrate on these regional aspects first.

1.6 Creativity as part of a production chain

It has been argued that creativity cannot be stimulated top down and certainly not on a large scale. Our research shows that local and regional efforts to create places for creative industries really make a difference. To analyse the regional conditions for creative industries we developed an instrument that differentiates various kinds of creative environments and relates them to the life cycle and production chain of creative industries. This analysis shows differences in the rate of concentration and economic diversity of the specific economic clusters in each region and in the Netherlands as a whole.

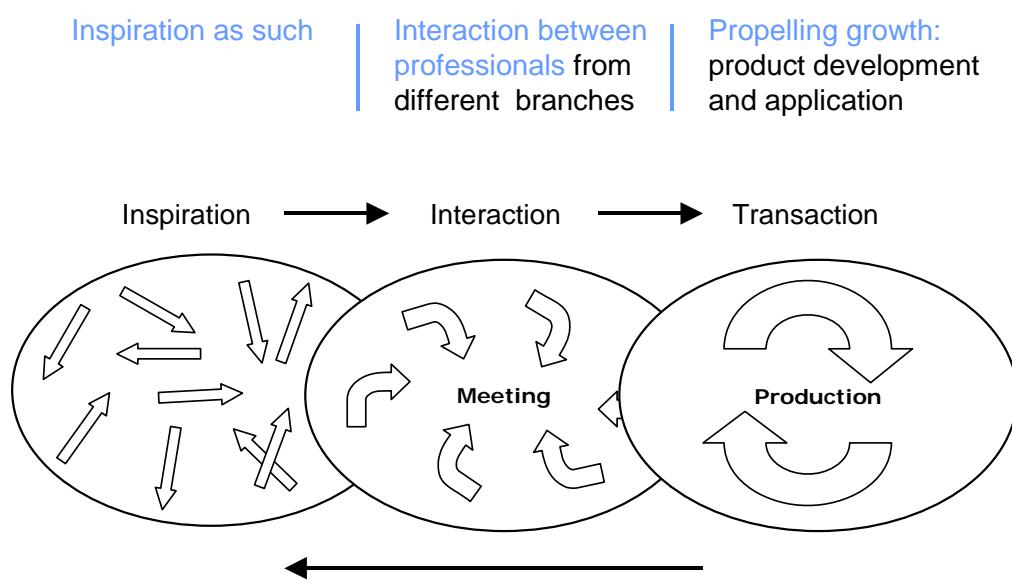


figure 1: Creativity Chain (de Stad bv)

Even in the Netherlands, mercantile country as it has been for centuries, it took quite some time to persuade the Dutch government to extend the efforts of the National Innovation Platform towards the creative economy. This change of attitude on the part of the decision makers is the combined result of research on creative industries in several Dutch cities and the lobby by the most innovative urban regions such as Amsterdam, Arnhem-Nijmegen and Eindhoven.

2. Research results in Dutch city regions

2.2 The results in short

Early in 2004 we mapped out the distribution of the creative class and the creative industries over cities in different regions in the Netherlands, and their influence on regional and national economic production.

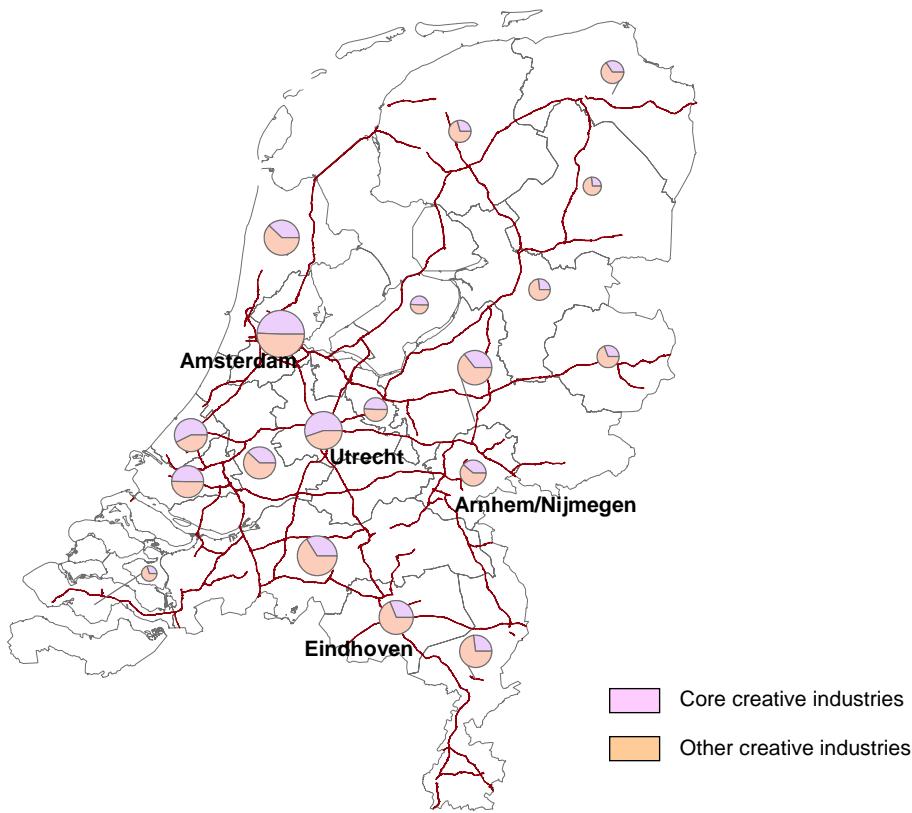


Figure 2: Size creative economy in the Netherlands 2002 (ABF Research / de Stad bv)

This figure shows three areas with a high concentration of creative industries: the Amsterdam Region as gravitational centre, the Utrecht Region in the middle of the country; the City Region Arnhem/Nijmegen is the eastern part, the Eindhoven Region is the southern part of the Netherlands. The creative core is concentrated in the region of the four largest cities Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht, while distribution, organization and high tech are stronger in the south and middle-east of the country. To illustrate the differences in distribution of the creative core and the rest of the creative industries we made a concentration index of both categories.

The figure below shows the relative change in the national creative employment of each region in the years 1996 to 2002.

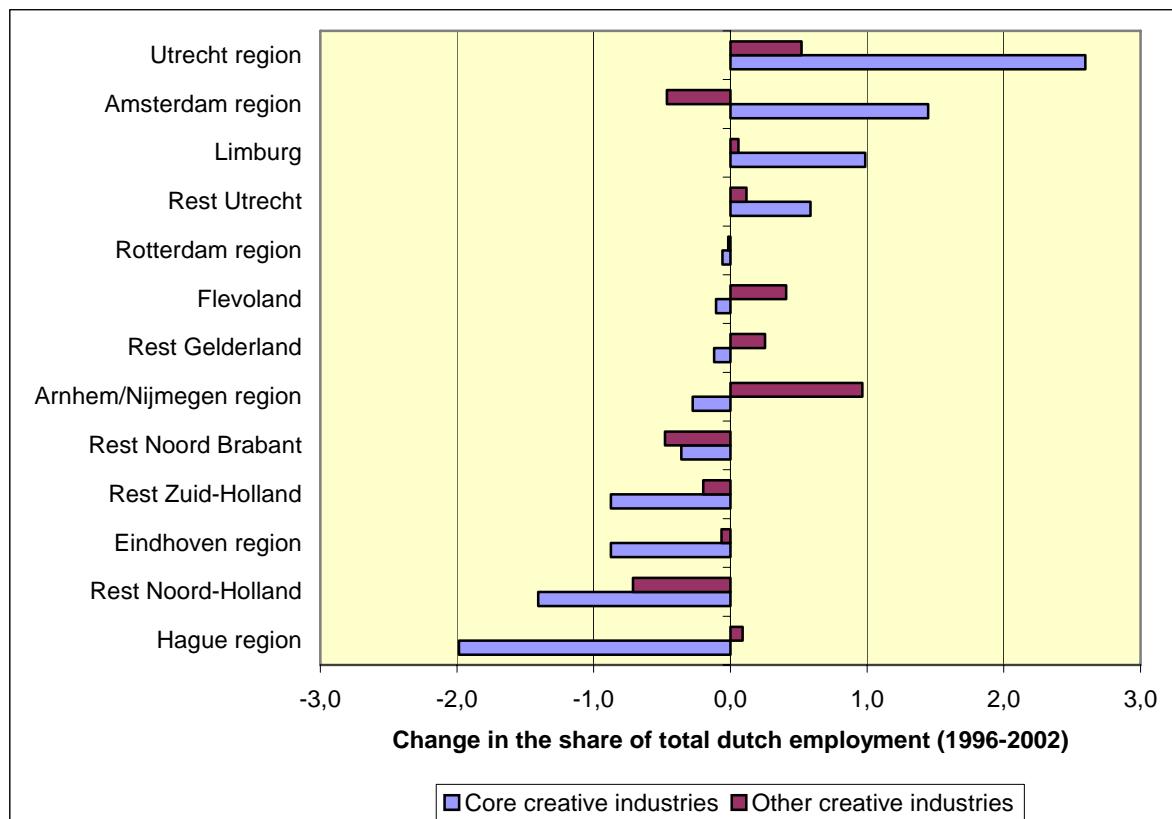


figure 3: Concentration-index employment in 2002 differentiated to core and other. (ABF Research / de Stad bv)

The Dutch creative city region is organized by two poles: the α -pole around the old mercantile centre Amsterdam and the β -pole around the high tech industry in the south. The best illustration of these two poles is the world of Philips. The Philips region stretches from Amsterdam to Aachen (Germany) and Leuven (Belgium, IMEC). In Amsterdam we find headquarters and marketeers, in Nijmegen the supply and development of semiconductors, Eindhoven is the techno pole with R&D, application, embedded systems and design. Crossing the borders we find the research centres of Philips in Leuven and Aachen. The Philips region is connected by three highways: the A2, A50 and the A12.

The metropolitan region of Amsterdam is the central marketplace of the Dutch creative industry. The region is specialized in business services (marketing, communication) design, entertainment (Endemol, theatre, musicals, broadcasting), software and media. The city is also the place to be for the creative class as life style group.

While Amsterdam is an important global and national marketplace the city is becoming too expensive for the production phase in the creative economy. Other regions are growing and specializing in production oriented branches of the creative economy. Furthermore, breeding places are pushed out of the inner city by the gentrification process started by themselves. This gentrification tends to 'dry out' the sources of creativity. That's why this region is on the look-out for a second generation of breeding places.

The region of Eindhoven, the so-called 'brain port' of the nation, has a reputation as technology and research centre (Philips). This area is becoming more and more specialized in the combination of design and technology. But the relative position of the Eindhoven Region has weakened in recent years.

In the network city Arnhem-Nijmegen, situated in between, the two poles meet. On one side Arnhem as a city of higher education, fashion and events, on the other Nijmegen with an ancient centre, a university with a reputation in biosciences and a Philips research centre. The region is well equipped to make the switch towards the knowledge economy and to

bridge the gaps between α and β , between culture, fashion, design, and life sciences and high tech.

Last but not least, Rotterdam, the world-famous harbour, is developing a new image as a centre of architecture, arts and design. On top of its modern architecture catching the eye in the city itself, the star status of Rem Koolhaas and OMA contribute greatly to the reputation of Rotterdam and its surrounding region in the world of architecture. Rotterdam is not characterized by one pole. The metropolitan atmosphere promises a development on both poles.

First we made a quantitative analysis of creativity as a production factor. We measured the contribution of the creative sector in relation to the more traditional economic sector in different regions.

The creative economy appears to be a strong catalyst of general employment growth. In the graph below we show the strong correlation between general employment growth in Dutch urban regions and the growth of creative employment. The regions with a fast growing creative industry like Utrecht, Arnhem/Nijmegen, Amsterdam also show a higher than average growth in general employment.

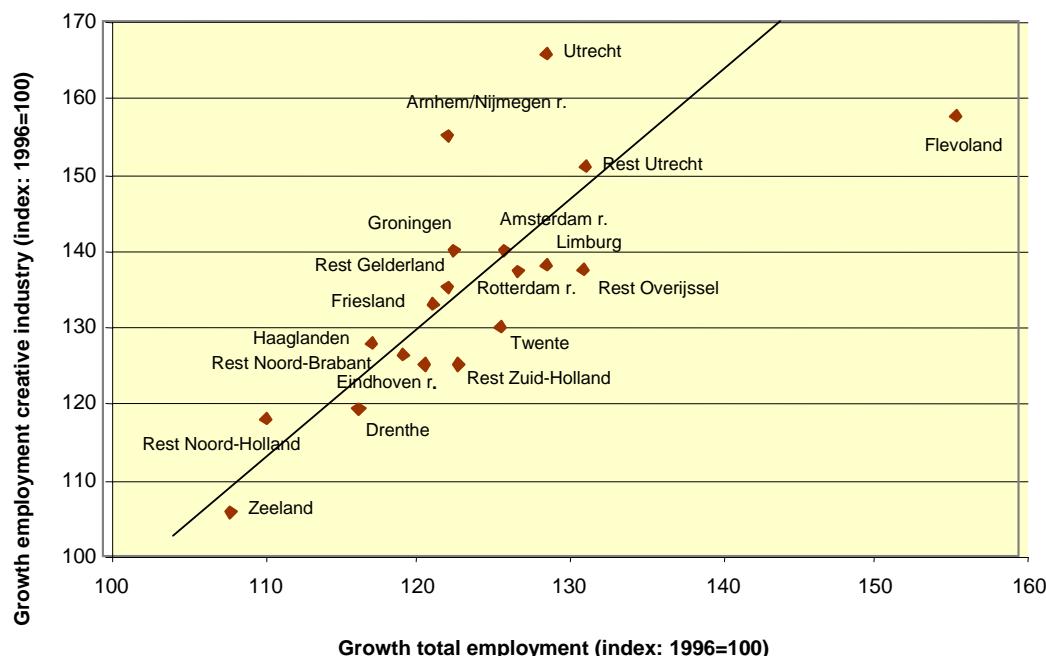


figure 4: relative employment growth 1996-2002 (ABF Research / de Stad bv)

To explain this remarkably strong correlation we have tried to understand the differences between the regions. By means of interaction with representatives of the creative sector we explored the conditions and potentials for the creative economy. In meetings and interviews with focus groups and individual entrepreneurs we learned to recognize the opportunities and conditions the creative entrepreneur requires. By telling us about their professional future, their expectations and the spatial conditions they need for working and living, the creative professionals gave us an insight in their vision on the future creative economy.

2.2 The spatial conditions

To analyse the spatial conditions we used the model below. It distinguishes between four types of 'business environments' for the creative industries. On the vertical axis we distinguish between open and close. This distinction relates to the degrees to which the sector needs a supportive urban environment. Extrovert environments are more dependent

on an interactive urban context. On the horizontal axis we distinguish experimental versus commercial. Thus four kinds of creative environments emerge. Each region can define its character and compare itself to other regions in the Netherlands, both to stimulate competition and to co-ordinate the different potentials of the regions. It is important that urban regions should have the right distribution of these different business environments of the creative economy.

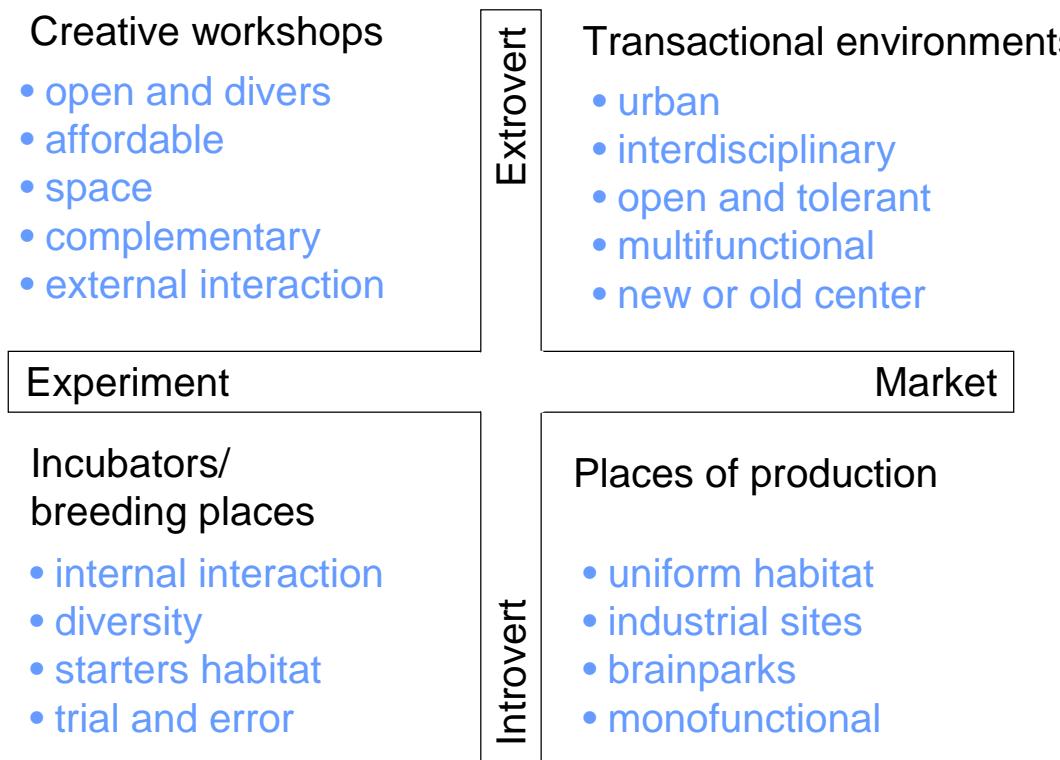


figure 5: Creative Environments (de Stad bv)

The experimental incubators are small core enterprises (1 to 3 persons) that need urban environments with a great deal of variety. Entrepreneurs in creative workshops need complementary companies and interaction and look for affordable urban spaces that offer diversity, space and openness.

In the transactional environment the core creative entrepreneurs and the distributional, organizationally oriented companies interact and meet their clients. The average size of the companies is a bit bigger. The market oriented production companies do have more employees and are strictly focused on production costs.

This typology of creative companies in the life cycle of their development makes it possible to distinguish different urban 'milieus' that are more or less equipped to offer the right conditions to the entrepreneurs. In the next figure we show you some examples of these four creative environments.

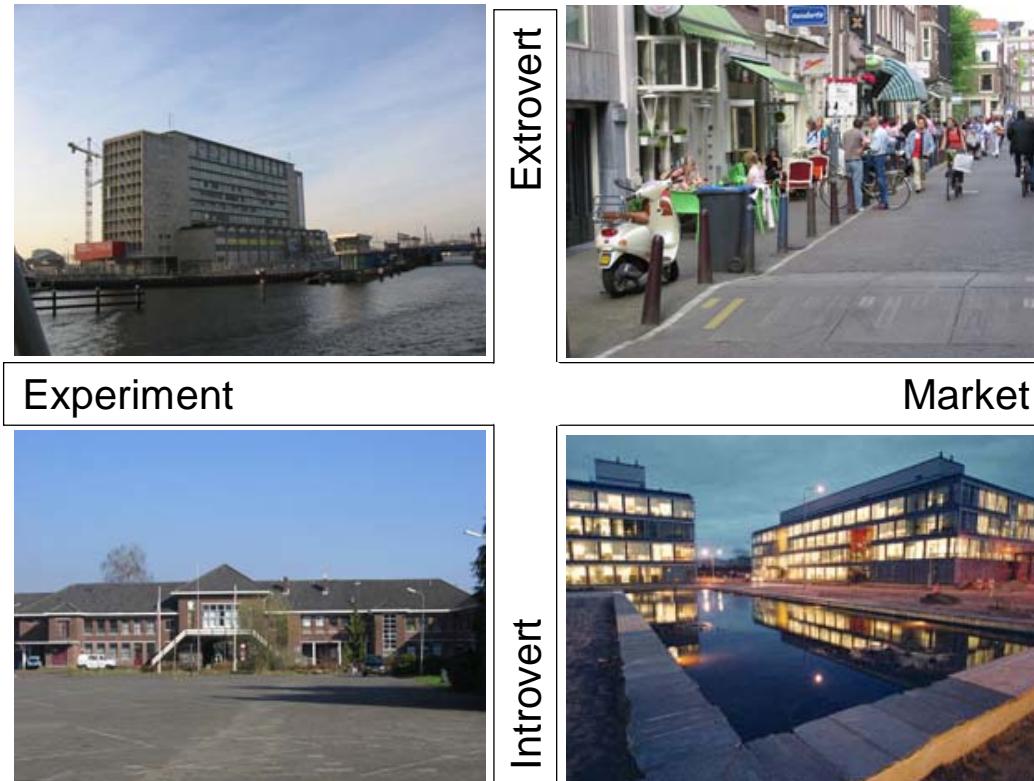


figure 6: Creative Environments (clockwise from left above: Post CS Amsterdam; 9 Straatjes Amsterdam, High Tech Campus Eindhoven, Saksen Weimar Kazerne Arnhem)

3. Three city regions exposed

To show the strategic impact of this analysis we focus on three regions: the Amsterdam Region, the Region Arnhem-Nijmegen and the Eindhoven Region.

3.1 *The α pole: the Amsterdam Region*

The Amsterdam Region has the highest concentration of all kinds of creative industries, but in the last few years growth became limited to the core creative industries. Visual and sculptural arts, media, design and creative services are well developed in this commercial and trade-oriented urban field. But we found a negative growth for the rest of the creative branches, distribution, craft and organization. When we look at the map of creative environments in the Amsterdam region this is no wonder: most of the inner city, the 19th century circle around the old city, and the southern part from the Rijksmuseum to Schiphol airport can be identified as transactional environments which are too expensive for productive and distributive companies, and thus unfit as breeding grounds. That's why incubators move more and more to the periphery of the region and even further. The distribution and production companies prefer locations with low transactional costs along the highways in the centre of the country.

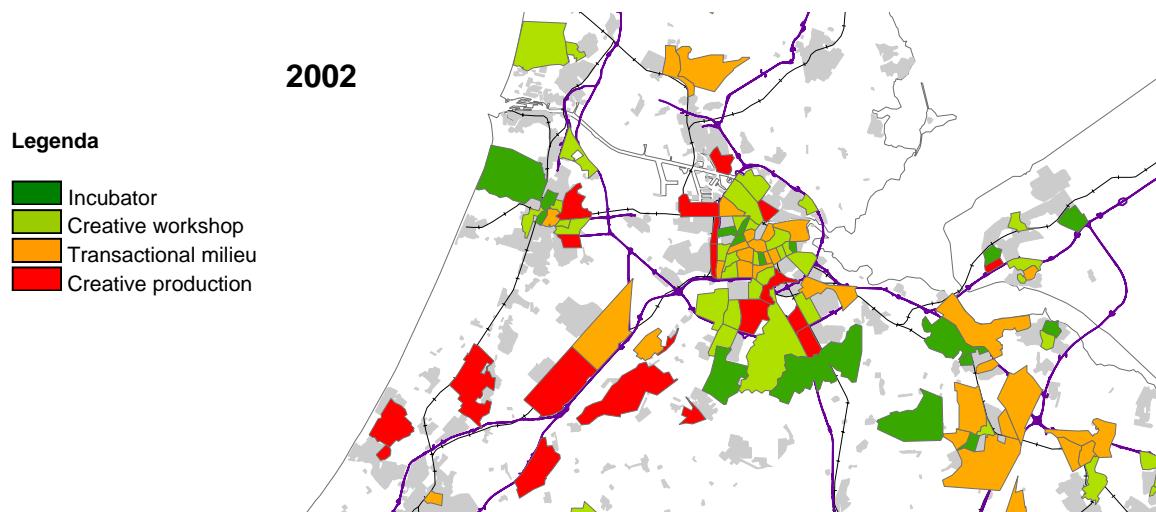


figure 7: creative environments in the Amsterdam region (ABF Research / de Stad bv)

Although Amsterdam is a highly favoured place to settle for the commercial services and the growing entertainment industry, there is a shortage of film industries, production sites for media and crafts to fabricate what designers invent.

Our diagnosis on the Amsterdam case is as simple as clear: to prevent stagnation in the growth of the creative economy the Amsterdam Region needs more breeding grounds and more production or supplier areas. These specific kinds of space are available in the former shipyards and industrial sites north of the North Sea Canal connecting Amsterdam Harbour to the North Sea. The demand for space can be solved when you take a larger region into consideration: in Zaanstad (north of Amsterdam) and Almere a lot of space is available. Two major projects resulting from this diagnosis are worth mentioning in this context.

For the first the advice was taken of Guy Hayward, CEO of 180 Communications, who, on a congress in November 2004, explained his preference for Amsterdam by comparing the city to other great European cities. He declared Amsterdam to be more cosmopolitan than Milano, Copenhagen or Barcelona, though lacking a film industry like London. In the last few months three media and film companies decided to move their production to the ship yards north of the city centre of Amsterdam, now turned into an incubator centre used by a hundred artists, containing a theatre and a skating hall.



Former ship yards north of Amsterdam centre

The second project is the follow-up of a workshop on creative economy in October 2004 at the Hembrug site, a former complex of ammunition and metal factories near Zaanstad, north of Amsterdam. Creative entrepreneurs initiated a foundation, the Artillery Club, for promoting the development of these 40 ha as a creative working place. They set up a strategy for temporary use of the area with the perspective of letting it grow out into a multifunctional supplier of the creative industries, and of becoming a festival/exhibition centre serving the needs of the Amsterdam Region. Soon a group was formed, calling themselves 'Friends of the Hembrugterrein', who joined the initiative.



industrial heritage on the Hembrug area

The Amsterdam Region has several locations fit for production, such as Aalsmeer, the production centre of Endemol, and Hilversum, centre of public broadcasting. Similarly the Haarlemmermeer can be developed as production and distribution centre of the creative economy.

3.2 The $\alpha\beta$ pole: Arnhem / Nijmegen

The area in the east of the Netherlands, Arnhem-Nijmegen Region, shows a fast growth of the creative industry. The creative core is growing less than average, which is remarkable since Arnhem has several famous schools for higher education in fashion, arts and design. Other creative branches grow fast, especially high tech. Nijmegen is a university city with a reputation in gamma and beta sciences.

The fact is that the creative environments are isolated and scattered about the area, there is no 'place to be'. Arnhem has some facilities in the experience and entertainment sector that could be interpreted as transactional areas, and surely there are some small incubator places and ateliers, but it lacks a creative environment of sufficient critical mass.

Nijmegen is a city of science and debate. The growth of the creative class was caused directly by university spin-off and the growing importance of R&D in the Philips semiconductor factory. It has more incubator environments, mainly for scientists in bioscience, though for the arts as well, but the creative class lacks a centre, a meetingplace. The cultural reputation of Nijmegen depends wholly on a single neighbourhood, Marienburg, particularly well-known for its movie house and debating centre: Lux. Some incubator sites are nearby.



Marienburg and cultural centre Lux

Analysis of the Arnhem-Nijmegen Region leads to the conclusion that this urban region needs meeting places for the cultural and creative networks of both cities. The creative industries don't have places for the exchange of knowledge and for mutual inspiration. The analysis leads to the following three recommendations:

In the first place Het Hoofdkwartier (Headquarters), an office building in Arnhem housing a number of creative enterprises, will have to grow out into a meeting place for innovative entrepreneurs, by organizing meetings of different kinds of disciplines and entrepreneurs. Secondly: because Arnhem has a world-famous fashion institute there is the opportunity to develop a fashion production chain. The circle around the inner city, with Klarendal and the former Coberco milkfactory just outside the inner city, has the space and the price level to start 'creative workshops' in fashion, with exhibitions, presentations by graduates, market performances and production.



Promotion for Klarendal

Thirdly: in the other part of this region, the historical city of Nijmegen, it is the Philips semiconductors factory which offers a unique opportunity for the creative economy. Philips decided to open up the industrial site of the factory to create a new knowledge centre for technology, business and lifestyle. This place, called 52 degrees, offers a fabulous opportunity for attracting world-wide talent to Nijmegen as a technological and cultural hotspot. But is Nijmegen ready for that opportunity? Up till now the university has not been involved in this project, nor has the cultural centre. The city council must learn to participate in these major events without delay, by taking on a mediator role between the creative class and the global capitalist Philips.

Finally, the region itself should develop an active strategy in order to attract more small enterprises. Therefore, branding the region as a creative economy is an absolute necessity. For Arnhem fashion and design are the obvious priorities, for Nijmegen the emphasis should be on the bio-science based creative industry. The combination of these focal points offers fine opportunities for the so-called "ambient intelligence" (Aarts a.o. 2003) on which the Philips corporation is focusing its research programs. Moreover, a successful combined strategy needs proper interactions between the scientific world, the applied sciences, the creative industry and the market. This asks for the interactive environments mentioned above.

3.3 β pole: Eindhoven high tech and design

In the Eindhoven area the growth of creative industries is not above the national average. The best developed cultural industry is in design. In spite of the Philips research centre in this city there is no spectacular growth of the creative economy, though in the inner city there are breeding places, market places, and the Eindhoven technology campus is a highly innovative initiative.

The opening up of the former Philips Nat Lab to all sorts of external companies may spell the beginning of a new era in multinational companies' manner of thinking.



High Tech Campus Eindhoven

A great challenge in Eindhoven will be the development of a relationship between design and high tech into a fruitful creative combination. A fine example of creative combinations is the White Lady, a former Philips headquarters accommodating the Design Academy, some smaller design companies and Philips Design. Along these lines of thinking the old Philips area in the inner city of Eindhoven, Strijp S, will be redeveloped as a creativity centre for the whole city.

Still Eindhoven lacks other appealing and informal creative workshops where creative individuals meet with high tech industry. Should it be true that customers do want well-designed and easy-to-use products and Philips is prepared to make them, this Strijp development and the technology centre could become epoch-making projects keeping the south of the Netherlands in touch with the most advanced regions in the world of knowledge and high tech.



Artist's impression of Strijp S



De Witte Dame ('The White Lady')

At the same time we can see in this figure that the creative economy in Brabant is spread over more cities. The city network, called BrabantStad, combines the arts, festivals, higher education, services and bohemians of 's-Hertogenbosch with the gamma university, music, musea and media of Tilburg, schools of economy and leisure, podium arts and festivals of Breda, and with the cultural renaissance of the former industrial city of Helmond, into a stronghold of growing importance to Eindhoven and the Netherlands.

4. Concluding remarks

4.1 Conditioning creativity

The final goal of the project is to spur the creative and other economic sectors into action. Since spring 2004 we have been organizing meetings between the creative and other economic sectors to stimulate creative collaboration. The tools we present, the creativity chain, the interactive approach and the model for environmental analysis, make sense in the analysis of regional conditions. Based on our analysis of each region and in interaction with the innovative and creative avant-garde of entrepreneurs in each region we are able to propose projects to innovators and politicians. In many Dutch cities this bottom-up way of strategy building has resulted in an interesting series of new initiatives for having the creative economy stimulated by action of the creative sector itself.

4.2 No "valleys" anymore!

These Dutch examples make perfectly clear that a regional strategy on creativity and innovation begins with an analysis of the specific quality of each urban region. There is no danger that cities and regions will become look-alikes in the creative age. Each city and each region has its own strengths and weaknesses. That's why the 'everywhere valley' will never be successful. Creative regions must be aware of their specific qualities and use them to become talent magnets that attract creative minds to that specific 'place to be'.

4.3 Basics on strategy on a regional level

The comparison of Dutch urban region teaches that in the post-industrial economy creativity is the prominent production factor and the catalyst of innovation.

Traditional settling conditions do no longer satisfy.

Regional educational level is no sufficient measure of aptitude for the creative economy. Creativity is also about a climate attractive to top-talented and top-creative people from all over the world.

The most important condition for success in the creative economy is an open and experimental environment in the academic climate, in the urban culture and in the shape and use of the city fabric.

Each node in the worldwide network has to be a centre of excellence in its own right. A centre of excellence needs a critical mass and a concentration of expertise.

The requirements of a region should be the guiding principle for public intervention. As each region is different, policy and strategy have to be specific too. Based on this precept the creative economy puts an end to a long Dutch tradition of cooperation and equivalence.

Cities in the creative age seem to re-invent the most basic functions of urbanity: cultural production, knowledge spill-over and speed of demand and supply.

Creative hotspots are not the result of top-down political intervention. They pop up on peripheral locations, as manifestations of the cultural production in creative workshops. Those peripheral locations, deserted industrial sites and older neighbourhoods, offer the best preconditions for breeding places and creative working places in an experimental phase.

Interaction between creative entrepreneurs and other production chains is the first and foremost need of the creative economy. In most cities outside the Amsterdam metropolitan area and other cosmopolitan centres there is a shortage of interactional and transactional environments. The regional authority has an important role to play as broker.

4.4 On strategy on a world-wide scale

There is not much empirical evidence on the interaction between city regions and its effects, but the assumption seems justified that the regional creative economies in the Netherlands, with very short distances between them, will have positive effects on each other. An other factor conducive to the success of the creative economies In the Netherlands is the context of North Western Europe: the Dutch urban regions together constitute a creative network city, which in its turn is part of a new configuration on the transnational level together with the Belgian city region of Brussels-Antwerp-Gent and the Rhein-Ruhr region, and urban regions between them. This North- Western European super region contains about 30 million people and is one of the 10 super-regions of the world. Its success in global competition depends on its ability to develop a pattern of complementary poles of competence.

Most interesting on a global scale is the question which megacity offers the best conditions to attract the largest number of the world's greatest creative talents.

In the creative economy world-wide communication of professionals is no more and no less important than intensive face-to-face encounters. Cosmopolitan urban environments are the play-ground preferred by creative professionals because of their concentration of a variety of specimens of the creative class in urban hotspots. Another reason why global cities do better in the creative economy is their nodal status in global networks, like internetworks, airports, and access to fast train networks. It could be said that urban mass and connectivity are necessary conditions for the creative economy to flourish, but not the only ones.

In accordance with the concept of creativity as booster of the economic performance of urban regions, the cultural factor will determine the outcome of the race between super regions and their components. Florida (*The Flight of the creative Class*) expects new American conservatism to restrain the US in their creative development. Political correctness and religious fundamentalism are threatening the academic climate and may kill intellectual curiosity. Rifkin (*The European Dream*) suggests that "the European emphasis on sustainable development, quality of life and nurturing of community will be better suited to meet the challenges of a globalizing world in the 21st century". Europeans, placing a premium on leisure, preserving a rich multicultural diversity and a reasonable social security may offer a way of life more attractive to the world of talent than "the work ethic and dictates of efficiency resulting from the focus on unrestrained economic growth and the pursuit of individual self-interest" in the United States.

The spectacular growth of the Chinese economy and the Asian cities is often seen as a threat to Europe. If this growth is the manifestation of a mass production and mass industrial society it is not at all certain these cities will be competitive to the European cities.

To develop strategies for European cities in the creative age we need to compare the deficits and advantages of the North-western European urban super region to the Asian urban networks and the American cities. An analysis restricted to 'hard economic indicators' like economic growth, growth in educational level, internal connectivity in the megapolis, expenses on R&D, will be necessary but not enough. In the end we will need a cultural approach to compare the specific features of European urban networks with American and Asian urban conditions. This cultural approach will be necessary to examine if the pillars of European urban culture, like the democratic civil culture, academic debate, cultural diversity and the historical urban fabric will be strong enough to carry the European megapolis into the challenging era of globalization and creative economy.

Paraphrasing the saying: "It's the economy, stupid!", we would say: "It's the urban culture, stupid!" .

With this contribution we would like to recommend application of our approach to other cases on the subject of the creative economy and the urban environment. We invite our colleagues in the field to try and translate our tools to their own practice. In our opinion it's of great relevance to investigate more thoroughly the spatial conditions for the creative economy and their interaction with other factors.

Bibliography

- Aarts, Emile & Marzano, Stefano (2003) *The new everyday. Views on ambient intelligence.* , Rotterdam: 010 Publishers
- Castells, Manuel (1989) *The Informational City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban-Regional Process*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Drucker, Peter (2003) *A Functioning Society*, New Brunswick/London, Transaction Publishers
- Florida, Richard (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class*, New York: Basic Books
- Florida, Richard (2005) *The Flight of the Creative Class: the new global competition for talent*, New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc.
- Hall, P (1998) *Cities in Civilisation*, New York: Pantheon Books
- Hemel, Zef (2002) *Creative Steden! Creative Cities!*, Den Haag: Ministerie van VROM, Delft: Vereniging Deltametropool
- Landry, Charles (2000) *The Creative city*, London Earthscan Publications LTD
- Rifkin, Jeremy (2004) *The European dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*, Tarcher/Putnam ISBN 1-58542-345-9

Note on the authors

Jaap J. Modder is Chairman of the Regional Board in the city region of Arnhem-Nijmegen. This urban area in the eastern part of the Netherlands is situated between the much larger city regions of Randstad and Ruhrgebiet (Germany). Population size of the Arnhem-Nijmegen region is 700.000.

The region is an association of 21 local authorities (1500 to 150.000 inhabitants) and has formal tasks and powers within the Dutch system of government. Statutory tasks are in the field of spatial and economic planning, and traffic and public transport.

Jeroen B. Saris is owner/director of 'de Stad bv', a private consultancy occupied with urban development in its widest sense. De Stad bv has created specific tools for organizing the interaction between stakeholders involved in processes of urban development, successfully applied in many projects, such as:

Creative competition in the planning phase in Amsterdam Southeast

Future Vision Amsterdam North

Urban development Haarlem

BrabantStad (future vision urban network in the Brabant region)

Vision, mission and strategy Province South-Holland

In the early nineteen nineties Jeroen Saris was alderman of spatial development of the city of Amsterdam.

At present Saris is working on a variety of projects about the creative economy. He has developed new strategic tools for analysis and stimulation of the creative economy. In 2004 de Stad bv organised an (inter)national congress on creative spaces in Amsterdam.