

SECOND SEMINAR: CARDIFF, APRIL 2009

The second seminar of the Regional Studies Association Research Network on Creative Industries, and the Regions: Relationship between places, local and regional policies and creative production was held on the **22nd and 23rd of April 2009** at **Cardiff University**, in association with **Cardiff School of Management, UWIC**.

Seminar title: **Creative industries, scenes, cities, places: idiosyncratic dimensions of the cultural economy.**

The second seminar focused on the relationship between places (cities, neighbourhoods, and quarters) and the development of creative industries. The aim was to question what makes a place a 'creative place' and in particular to look at the 'idiosyncratic' dimensions which link creative practitioners to the places where they operate. The seminar also sought to address the fate of "non-creative" workers and places, to understand how such places might become more creative, and who could be responsible for making this happen. The range of papers covered both theoretical perspectives and practical examples of the challenges faced by researchers in trying to capture the economic, social and cultural dimensions of the creative economy.

ABOUT THE SECOND SEMINAR: A SHORT REPORT

The second seminar welcomed over 20 speakers from around Europe, and in the region of 40 delegates, who we would like to thank for their lively contribution from the floor. The first afternoon of the event was reserved for PhD students and younger researchers, presenting their first major pieces of research work.

During the first session, **Lech Suwala** from Germany explored conceptual issues around the spatial forces of creativity with regard to 'creative fields', **Carmel Conefrey** then presented findings from her PhD on rural creativity, with specific reference to Stroud in Gloucestershire. It was then the turn of **Bruno Lusso** to talk about Lille as example of the use of creative and cultural industries to regenerate former industrial areas. To conclude a very busy session, **Simon Moreton** discussed the role of affordable studio provision in London over the last 4 decades.

After the coffee break, on a related theme **Katherine Champion** opened the second session reporting her doctoral research on the contribution of 'cheap space' in creative milieu, within the context of the Greater Manchester area. In the next paper **Evelina Wahlqvist** presented longitudinal data from Sweden tracking the labour market position of arts graduates. The final contribution of the first day was from **Amanda Brandellero** of the Netherlands, focusing on the trajectory of migrant workers in the cultural industries. Attendees from day 1 then retired to a nearby Restaurant to carry on informal discussions of the issues raised earlier, joined by a number of speakers from the second day.

The 'main event' kicked off in the grand surroundings of the Council Chamber of the Glamorgan Building with an informal welcome to Cardiff from **Nick Clifton** and **Brian Morgan**, the latter setting the scene with an overview of 'cultural capital'. The first presentation of the day was given by **Olwen Mosely**, who continued the Cardiff theme with an insightful account of the role of design festivals in fostering a sense of creative community. **Rachel Granger** then took the 'scene-making' topic into a consideration of the influence of the 'underground' within performing and digital arts. Following a brief break, the second session of the day centred around creative clusters; **Lisa De Propriis** set the scene with a review of early findings from NESTA funded research mapping creative activity in the UK. **Nick Clifton** and **Robert Huggins** followed, presenting their quantitative research exploring links between creativity and competitiveness and the local and regional level. The morning's proceedings were concluded by **Roberta Comunian**, focusing on the inhibitors and enablers of the regional creative economy in the UK.

Following a well-earned lunch, **Bastian Lange** reviewed contrasting aspects of scene formation in the design industries of Berlin and Leipzig; continuing the city-level focus, **Carla Sediti** followed with gender perspective case study material relating to quality of life factors for creative professionals in Milan, research arising from the EU-funded ACRE project.

The final session of the day opened with a lively contribution from **Patrick Collins** on the role of creative sector policy in achieving balanced development, the case in point being that of the West of Ireland. The session's theme of reporting research into national and regional geographies of creativity was continued by **Balázs Lengyel** and **Bence Ságvári's** quantitative modelling of the location dynamics of the creative workforce in the Hungarian regional innovation system. The last academic presentation of the programme was given by **Enrico Bertacchini**, who described the geography of creativity and cultural production in Italy with specific reference to the urban-rural divide.

Finally, **Nick Clifton** made some brief concluding remarks, and thanked all the presenters- and contributors from the floor- for all their efforts in making the two days such a stimulating and enjoyable experience. On a personal note, I would just like to restate these sentiments; being the local organiser of the event was a hectic but ultimately extremely rewarding experience, and it was a pleasure to welcome speakers and delegates from a dozen or so European countries, from Ireland in the west over to Hungary and the Baltic states in the east. A number of areas for spin-out activity and future collaborations arising from the session have already been discussed, most immediate being a special issue the RSA's *Regions* magazine for Spring 2010, along with an organised session at RSA's International Conference to be held in Pecs in May 2010.

The third and final seminar of the series will be held at the **University of Birmingham** in September 2009, where **Caroline Chapain** (as host), **Roberta Comunian** and I look forward to seeing previous contributors to the programme again, and of course to meeting new ones. Please see <http://www.creative-regions.org.uk/> for updates, reports of activity and calls for papers.

Nick Clifton, Cardiff, June 2009.