

# Innovation, creativity and space

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Communication to the workshop  
“Creative Cities, Creative Classes:  
Issues and practices”  
University Paris-South  
May 6th 2011

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# Introduction

- **Innovation:**  
a successful (market)  
**invention** (often  
transformed by means  
of **R&D** efforts)
- **Invention**  
money → ideas ?
- **Innovation**  
? ideas → money
- Invention is based on **creation** and **creativity**
- Creativity is the driver of invention and innovation  
= it is a good inducer of innovation
- **Creative classes** (Florida)
  - Creative core (Scientists, engineers...)
  - Creative professionals (people with routines and complex tasks)
  - Bohemians (artists...)

# Creativity and space

- It is commonly said that the concentration of creativity or creative classes (mainly in cities) gives birth to innovation, and then to development

**Creativity → Invention → Innovation → (local) Development** (the virtuous chain)

- **Questions**
  - what is the link between creativity and space?
  - is creativity stuck in urban areas?
  - is the creative class always playing a key role?
- **Plan of the presentation**
  - Innovation, creativity and space
  - Example: Short Supply Food Chains

Innovation, creativity and space

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# About Innovation an Space

# The spatial concentration of innovation activities

- **Technological innovation** is strongly spatially concentrated
  - in a **few countries** (US, Europe, a part of Asia)
  - in a **few regions** in these countries (France: Ile de France, Rhône-Alpes, Midi-Pyrénées, PACA; US: Technological Belt, California...)
  - in a **few places** in these regions (Technological clusters or technopoles. France: Sophia Antipolis, Toulouse Technopole. US: Silicon Valley, Route 128...)
  - most of these poles are located within or near **large urban areas**
- Strong link between **technological innovation and cities**

# Innovations linked with the process of production

- **Technological innovation** : measured by the level of RD activities or expenditures, or the number of patents and licenses
- The so-called spatial concentration of innovation refers to the **sole concentration of technological innovation**, mostly high tech
- Schumpeter's definition of an innovation:
  - A novelty in a given place, in a given sector
- Production and diffusion of innovation
- There exist **other types of innovations linked with production**
  - Innovation in Medium and even Low tech sectors
  - Incremental innovations
  - Commercial innovation
  - Innovations performed or induced by competent users

# What is innovation?

- But there exist **other definitions of innovation** and **other manners to measure it**
- A large part of innovations is not linked with the production process, but with social processes:
  - **organizational** innovation
  - **social** innovation
  - **territorial** innovation
- An **extended definition of innovation** opens the way to a more diffuse conception of innovation
  - the concentration of innovation is not so clear.  
**Innovation is diffused widespread** (ex: developing countries)
  - innovation is not only concentrated in the urban areas. It also exists in **remote or urban areas**



# About Creativity and Space

# Creativity and technological innovation

- If we consider the idea that **creativity** precedes or is an inducer of **(technical or technological) innovation**
- If it follows the same pace as innovation:
  - it must be **concentrated** in a few places as well
  - it might be concentrated in the cities or within **urban areas**
- Then
  - the idea of the **concentration of creativity in urban areas** is verified
  - **Florida's** argument in favor of the concentration of creative classes in the cities.
- Arguments in favor of the **Policies promoting (urban) concentration of creative classes**

# Creativity vs Creativiti(e)s

- If we come back to the previous distinction between **various types of innovation** (technological, technical, organizational, social, territorial...)
- This way of thinking supports the idea that there exist **various types of creativity as well**
- creativity can appear in **various places and various periods** (no tendency to intense spatial concentration)
- It gives birth to **two main hypotheses**:
  - there is **no tendency to a concentration of creativity in urban areas**
  - **creativity can emerge without the help of the sole creative class**

Let's test these hypotheses on one single case study: a great social and organizational innovation, induced by an intense creativity

## **Short Supply Food Chains**

# Short Supply Food Chains

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# Short supply food chains

- Short supply food chains rapidly developed in the next previous years
- There are **highly innovative forms of food production and distribution**
  - Considered as alternatives ways of production and selling
  - Induced by creativity of local actors
- A short supply food chain is shortened in the sense that :
  - it is **localized and uses less food miles** AND/OR
  - it implies **more direct producer/consumer exchange using fewer intermediaries** (Parker 2005)

# Examples of short supply food chains

- Farmers markets
- On farm selling
- Pick-your-own farms
- Box schemes
- CSA's
- Internet selling
- Local supermarkets selling
- Professionals supplying (school food, restaurants)

# Short supply food chains: the roots

- Find their justification in **food crisis, environmental issues** (food miles reduction) and the need for solutions in order to maintain rural or peri/urban agriculture
- Strong anchorage in **social (policy) demand**
- Mainly driven by **local actors (mostly urban ones)**
- Relates on observation of **various initiatives (Bottom-up)**, not very theorized
- Relatively recent literature essentially Anglo-Saxon scrutinizing **alternative food systems**



# Short supply food chains

## Two different issues

- restoration of the relation between **producer and consumer** and by this to the relation to food : **relocation issue** (*Anglophone approach stemming from food crisis and environmental issues*)
- **shortening of physical distance** between producers and consumers as a mean for the maintaining and development of proximity agriculture : **territorial development and agriculture safeguard issue** (*French and also Anglophone approach*)

# Creativity and Innovation and in alternative Food circuits

## Conventional vs alternative food systems

### Conventional

- Standardized
- Rationalized
- Mass production
- Manufactured/process
- Disembedded
- Externalized
- Fast food
- Long food supply chains
- agrochemicals

### Alternative

- Differentiated
- Traditional
- Craft/artisanal
- Natural/fresh
- Embedded
- Internalized
- Slow food
- Short food supply chains
- organic

(Ilbery, 2008)

# Creativity and Short supply food chains

- **SSFC are very innovative tools**, in various ways:
  - technological innovation
  - organizational innovation
  - relations with consumers
  - social innovation
  - ...
- These innovations are driven by the **creativity of local actors (mainly residents)**
- These **local actors are mainly urban ones**

# Conclusions

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# Conclusions

- Two main questions at the core of this presentation:
  - 1) is there a tendency to a **concentration** of creativity in **urban areas**?
  - 2) can **creativity** emerge **without** the help of the **sole creative class**?
- In the example of **Short Supply Food Chains**
  - these innovative and very creative processes of production and commercialization are **not driven by creative classes**
  - but they are **mostly pushed and driven by urban local actors**

# Back to the cities

- A part of innovation is not concentrated in the cities
- The whole creativity is not concentrated in urban areas
- But a large part of creativity has close relations with urban populations (SSFC are created by urban residents)

Thanks for attention!

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