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COLLABORATION AS AN ELEMENT OF BUILDING CREATIVE CAPITAL ACCORDING TO OPINIONS EXPRESSED BY EMPLOYEES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN PODKARPACIE

Abstract

Currently the concept of creative capital, just like knowledge, seems to be in focus of researchers of and those practically involved in economy. A look at creativity through the theory of creative class is linked with the conditions predetermining its development. The study describes collaboration as an element of building creative capital. Combining the concepts of cooperation and creativity in relation to local governments is a novel approach in literature. Therefore, the main purpose of the article is to present the conceptual approach to developing creative capital related to municipality as an administrative unit.

Key words: creative capital, collaboration, local government.

Introduction

The themes of entrepreneurship and innovativeness are particularly popular in literature focusing on economy. Various studies recognize creativity as one of the determinants of enterprising attitude. This is an essential feature in the process of innovativeness. Notably, the creativity related trend was inspired by Richard Florida's publication concerning the creative class.

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main purpose of the article is to present the conceptual approach to developing creative capital related to municipality as an administrative unit.

The study is based on a review of related literature and the author's own considerations. The basic methods applied here include: induction, reduction, deduction and analysis.

The article also discusses findings of a pilot study, based on an interview questionnaire, which was completed by 10 randomly selected employees holding executive functions in local governments operating within the Podkarpackie Province.

The current state of related research

Literature review should focus on the two areas of creative capital and cooperation.

Creative capital can be distinguished for the country, province, district, municipality or city. In the case of these units creative capital is perceived from the viewpoint of the creative class [Florida, 2010: 22, 35].

The creative class consists of individuals performing specific occupations, which are linked with the necessity to think, make associations and respond. This category includes such professions as, e.g. actor, director, researcher, IT specialist, business person. The author who proposed this distinction, Richard Florida, points to the relationship between the presence of the creative class and growth in economy. He specified a set of determinants for growth and development in economy, including factors of critical importance, such as talent, technology and tolerance.

The creative class carries economic value. The categorization and identification of groups recognized as the creative class, proposed by Florida, are not equivalent to social stratification. The wealth of people constituting the creative class is based on their inventiveness, ability to apply knowledge and on their sentiments [Florida, 2004: 69]. Groups rated as the creative class are guided by their own values, open-mindedness and diversity. More specifically, Florida breaks the creative class into the following sections: Super-Creative Core and Creative Professionals. According to Florida, these individuals combine their knowledge with the acquired information. The research carried out by Florida made it possible to rank countries, regions and cities which are leaders in terms of creativity [Florida, 2010: 367–390]. High creative class population contributes to economic growth. On the other hand Florida does not deny representatives of other occupations may also be endowed with the quality of “creativity”, therefore it seems a worthwhile idea to identify differences in the level of creative capital.

Correlation of three factors, which according to Florida impact the growth of creative class, i.e. talent, technology and tolerance, impacts the economic development and the choice of creative class location. Measurement of these factors is based on indices [cf.: Florida, 2010: 83, 343–344; Klinecicz, 2012: 86–87]. In international studies the indices describing these variables were subject to

modifications due to the availability of data, social context and research approach.¹ Factor related assumptions adopted by Florida with reference to the creative class can also be applied for other occupations. Hence, the creative class as one of the forms of creative capital may provide grounds for further analyses.

In literature it is possible to find the concept of creative organization. It is based on a model in which specific types of intelligence and creative consciousness are integrated by means of process. These elements were distinguished by Brzeziński [Brzeziński, 2009: 10, 32–33] for employee, team and entire company. Combination of all these variables, according to that Author, constitutes the capital of **creativity**.

This is how creative capital can be interpreted with reference to employees creativity.

Placement of creative capital in an appropriate space will act as a lever translating growth encouraging factors into the quality of that capital. The processes of establishing conditions for dialogue between individuals, uniting people and communities as well as enhancing diversity are particularly successful in cities which in literature are referred to as creative cities.

Creative cities are defined by determining the type of community established by them, notably by the existing relations between the different groups constituting the urban community and varying in terms of culture, religion, language and system of values. Hence, a creative city is a community of dialogue [Karwińska, 2009: 13]. Florida claims that competitiveness of contemporary cities indeed results from their creative capital which is a combination of their most talented professionals, atmosphere of tolerance and open-mindedness and the technological level, in accordance with the 3T approach. Creative capital is the total of conditions necessary for attracting and retaining high quality human resources [Matusiak, 2009: 50].

The concept of creative city, where conditions provide opportunities for growth, pays particular attention to the potential of the so-called creative industries. Enterprises and specific types of human activity constitute sectors of creative industries, also called creative economy. Creative industries have been distinguished from processing sector and services sector based on the factor of intellectual property. In a broader sense, these are industries and types of activity which generate any kind of intellectual property. These include industries of culture and industries of science. In the first place they stand for individual creativity combined with production and commercialization as well as distribution and

¹ See: analyses available via Richard Florida's website: www.creativeclass.com, or other studies carried out e.g. by R. Boschma, M. Fritsch (2007), *Creative Class and Regional Growth in Europe*, [in:] P.A.P., *The Future of European Regions*, Ministry of Regional Development, Warsaw, p. 243, J. Montgomery (2005), *Beware "the Creative Class". Creativity and Wealth Creation Revisited*, "Local Economy", vol. 20(4), p. 337–343, November; N. Clifton, P. Cooke (2007), *The Creative City in the UK: An Initial Analysis*, Cardiff Centre for Advanced Studies, Cardiff University; I. Tinagli (2009), *Norway in the Creative Age*, Preliminary Report, Citisense; J. Kloudova, O. Chwaszcz (2012), *Komparace kreativního potenciálu regionu v Česku a Slovenské republice ve vztahu k vybraným makroekonomickým indikátorům*, "Regional Studia", nr 2.

sales of cultural products. These are various forms of design and various forms of advertising, arts and crafts, as well as cultural tourism [Klasik, 2009: and next].²

The factor of collaboration should be examined from the point of view of creative city and creative industries.

Collaboration will be perceived as a pillar of “new economy”. Cooperation, or joint effort, will be linked with the ability for information acquisition and processing as well as the capacity for partnership in the framework of social and economic relations. Here it is possible to make reference to a publication by Castells [Castells, 2010: 95 and next] focusing on networks. The ability to find and select factors of production will be linked with accomplishment of specific advantages.

The basis for initiating collaboration is the existing bond between the specific entities. The bond may be defined as “that which unites, links and connects people with each other”. Quoting V. Liljander and T. Strandvik, Furtak defines a bond as an effect of a sequence of episodes. The same author, referring to E. Gummenson, emphasizes partners’ freedom and a lack of pressure as pre-conditions for long-term relationship [Furtak, 2003: 61].

Collaboration is a specific type of joint effort. It involves operation in partnership with and providing support to another entity, and it should lead to advantages, which are so important from the viewpoint of enterprises. When assessed by the public, advantages most frequently are of different nature than economic. Such endeavour is predominantly realized through work. The fact is highlighted by Zieleniewski in his discussion of group operations, such as team work, carried out in organizations [Zieleniewski, 1969: 173].

Collaboration (cooperation) in the area of economy is significant for economics in the changing conditions of the environment. Consolidation of goals, functions, tasks and operations assumed by entities or individuals working jointly is predominantly designed as a means to strengthen their position in the market. More and more frequently, in order to maintain their market position, specific enterprises have to initiate cooperation with other companies. On the one hand each entity aims at the accomplishment of its own goals, and on the other hand all entities working jointly enter a relationship between the achieved goals and partners’ operations [Pokorska, Maleszyk, 2006: 76]. This also applies to individuals. That which is attractive for them is an encouraging stimulus providing basis for collaboration. Public enterprises and organizations carry out obligatory cooperation aimed at achieving benefits.

It is possible to discuss collaboration between individuals, as well as enterprises and organizations [cf.: Bogacz-Wojtanowska, 2013: 36–39].³ The value

² See more analyses: (red.) (2008) *Kreatywna aglomeracja – potencjały, mechanizmy, aktywności*, Prace Naukowe AE w Katowicach, Katowice 2008; (red.) (2010) *Rola kultury i przemysłów kreatywnych w rozwoju miast i aglomeracji*, Wydawnictwo UE w Katowicach, Katowice; Gwóźdź (red.) (2010) *Od przemysłów kultury do kreatywnej gospodarki*, Narodowe Centrum Kultury, Warszawa.

³ See more: M. Górzyński, W. Pander, P. Koć (2006), *Tworzenie związków kooperacyjnych między MSP oraz MSP i instytucjami otoczenia biznesu*, Agencja Rozwoju Przedsiębiorczości, Warszawa; B. Kaczmarek (2000), *Współdziałanie przedsiębiorstw w gospodarce rynkowej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź; B. Kozuch, A. Kozuch (2008), *Współdziałanie jako instrument pod-*

gained as a result of cooperation, from the viewpoint of each party is a function of their benefits resulting from the partnership and expenditures incurred to maintain it [Pokorska, Maleszyk, 2006: 77]. It is also an emotional and social competence determining the quality of relations with people. It is linked with the need to establish bonds with the team and it impacts its performance. This leads to the perception of collaboration as a factor determining the development of creative capital.

Creative capital is produced by people. Representing various occupations, they are an asset using creativity to a greater or smaller extent. They live in a specific territory. Because of the variables adopted in measurements, the territory may be limited by the borders of the country, province or district. Some Polish publications contain analyses based on Florida's concept of the creative class [cf.: Klincewicz, 2012; Podogrodzka, 2013; Miedzianowska, 2013]. They suggest which regions of the country, in terms of talent, technology and tolerance, are marked for economic growth. Individuals recognized as part of the creative class most definitely contribute to regional development. Given this, it seems reasonable to ask whether this link could be confirmed at a local scale.

Transition from people with specific predispositions is linked with their professional roles. Creative capital of a municipality can be examined either by using modified indices proposed by Florida or via a qualitative research involving local residents. The latter approach was adopted for the study which made an attempt to diagnose determinants of creativity taking into account opinions of employees of administrative units. Employees of municipal offices know local residents, their problems, and the situation in a given area. They indeed have expert knowledge of and experience in relations with the local populations.

Creative capital, for the needs of this study, is understood as **a resource typical of people who cooperate and function in new conditions applying their creativity**. The concept of conditions necessary for attracting and retaining high quality human capital is understood as a combination of the most talented employees, atmosphere of tolerance and open-mindedness as well as technological advancements, in accordance with 3T approach. Development of creative ideas also requires cooperation. And 'new conditions' relate to the dynamics of changes in time and the need to adjust.

Creative capital is based on human open-mindedness, diversity, values, dreams, skill of reconfiguration, flexibility and courage. Analysis of conditions which provided the theoretical foundation can, by reference, be applied to human capital, whose descriptions can be encountered in various publications [e.g. Orlińska-Gondor, 2006: 169; Bogdanienko, Kuzel, Sobczak, 2007]. Conditions can also be

noszenia konkurencyjności przedsiębiorstw, "Roczniki Naukowe SERIA", Stowarzyszenie Ekonomistów Rolnictwa i Agrobiznesu, t. X(1); W. Popławski, A. Sudolska, M. Zastempowski (2008), *Współpraca przedsiębiorstw w Polsce w procesie budowania ich potencjału innowacyjnego*, Dom Organizatora, Toruń; J. (red.) (1992) *Współdziałanie gospodarcze przedsiębiorstw: praca zbiorowa*, PWE, Warszawa; H. Jagoda (2002), *Model funkcjonowania grupy kapitałowej. Między partnerstwem a podległością*, [w:] Z. Dworzecki (red.), *Przedsiębiorstwo kooperujące*, Euro Expert, Warszawa.

examined from the viewpoint of social capital, for which Florida in his considerations suggests an alternative concept of creative capital. Numerous publications discuss factors determining social capital [e.g. Gajownik, 2012 56–67; Fukujama, 1997]. These factors also include the ability to collaborate.

It is possible to formulate an assumption that determinants impacting human and social capital will also impact creative capital. Presented below are selected descriptive characteristics used during the interview with reference to the factors of talent, technology, tolerance and collaboration (figure 1).

Creative capital			
↓	↓	↓	↓
Talent individual pre-dispositions	Technology	Tolerance	Collaboration
Intellectual	Method of conducting a production process	Respect for opinions, beliefs, preferences	Ability to bond
Linguistic	Novel production method	Understanding, liberalism	Synonym of joint effort, support
Physical	Knowledge of resource applicability		Ability to work in a group
Artistic	Production process		Participation
Musical	*Capacity to utilize technological solutions		Assistance
Graphic			Partnership
Pedagogical			
Social			
Empathic			

* The use of this term is not linguistically correct, but this definition of technology is commonly accepted.

Figure 1. Characteristics of selected determinants of creative capital.

Source: elaborated by the author.

Results

Material capital became less important with the growth of economy based on industrial development. Yet, undoubtedly “the most valuable capital of each company consists of people related to it on a long-term basis, able to cooperate, having

creative attitudes and qualifications. They are the driving force for the company's development. Their inherent qualities include the capacity to be motivated by means of skillful management of the organization, focusing on the mission and strategic goals of the company" [Sajkiewicz, 2000: 17]. This is important from the viewpoint of an individual and the organization. Municipality in this study is understood as a self-governing community located at a defined area, consisting of the local population as well as a group of entities with legal personality.

Employees of a municipal office, in addition to administrative and managerial functions, also represent a self-governing community; hence in the first place creativity at the respondent's work place was examined.

Employees of municipalities perceive creativity on the one hand as the use of abilities and imagination to design and implement new solutions enabling improvement in the work process, and on the other hand as openness to changes, initiative and ability to solve problems. According to a particularly interesting definition "this is the ability of multi-dimensional thinking about development". The interview was carried out with 9 females and 1 male subject. One individual was a secondary school graduate and all the others held diplomas of higher education. In terms of age, majority of the subjects, i.e. 80% were in the range of 46–55. One person was in the age range of 26–35 and one subject was in the age range of 36–45. The mean length of employment for all respondents was 26 years. The subjects represented three urban municipalities, two mixed urban and rural municipalities, and five rural municipalities, located within the Podkarpackie Province.

Half of the respondents believe financial assets are the preferred capital in the municipal office. According to the employees money is the main attribute enabling implementation of goals and tasks both in the office and in the entire municipality. Lack of financial resources was indicated by the subjects as a problem. In comparison with the financial assets, intangible capital, according to the subjects, was of lesser importance, similarly to other types of capital.

The major barrier for creativity, identified by 70% of the subjects, is imposed by other people and unfavourable environment (figure 2). The respondents subsequently pointed to the national politics as a barrier for municipal growth, also limiting creativity. The third most important barrier listed by the subjects is the quantitatively poor development of enterprises. That factor was followed in the ratings by insufficient growth capital, both personal and owned by third parties. These choices may indicate the need to establish opportunities for inflow of foreign capital and development of entrepreneurship. Interestingly, the respondents always pointed to a number of barriers hindering the municipal growth.

The interview identified the following problem highlighted by the personnel of local governments, and related to creativity required at the professional position, particularly in the challenging and conflict-generating contacts with clients. According to them it is necessary to constantly change behaviours in order to adjust performance at work to the requirements of the environment and the global market. This is the area of continuous change to which they as employees must adjust. Hence, in their position they display innovativeness, creativity, and resourcefulness in handling various problems.

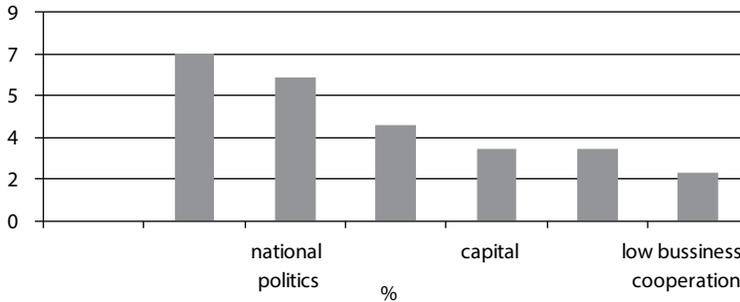


Figure 2. Barriers for creativity and municipal growth (respondents could choose more barriers)

Source: own construction.

Technology is of little importance to operations carried out in the municipal office and at a given position. The nature of technological solutions does not constitute a barrier due to the fact that this type of equipment can be encountered in nearly every household. Technology facilitates office workers' duties, yet learning new "methods" of logging to databases "is not always easy". Yet everyone is aware that it is necessary to "move with the times". The use of their expertise was assessed by most office workers as quite satisfactory.

On the other hand the subjects expressed negative assessment of the municipality, as a territorial unit, with regard to technology. Their responses show the proportion of enterprises employing high technologies is very low in those areas. On the other hand the proportion of small and medium enterprises was assessed as average. Similarly, openness of the local populations to new technologies was evaluated at an average level. The local populations ability to apply specialist knowledge was assessed at a high level.

The factor of talent was highly assessed in the employees' individual questions. Accordingly, the findings show that nearly everyone has some specific talents, most frequently for dancing and music. At the same time office workers expressed extremely favourable opinions about the local populations. Their artistic talents were assessed at a high level. Each interviewee was able to point to a local artist with excellent talents in music, or visual arts such as sculpting or painting. Despite this, local populations insufficiently invest in art or culture. Few people spend money for visits at the cinema, and the largest audiences are attracted by open events. The office workers assessed local populations' self-esteem at an average level, and the same opinion was expressed with regard to people's ability to take advantage of their skills.

The most negative assessment related to local populations was connected with their ability to accept opinions of other people. The degree of conformity is high, which resulted in poor rating of the level of acceptance.

The comparison of the analyzed qualities shows the factor of cooperativeness in particularly favourable light. This feature, characterized by the ability to

perform one's own work, was assessed at an average level in the study group. At the level of municipal office collaboration is most frequently carried out by co-workers. It is manifested as a bond existing between the specific individuals, and support at a given work place. Joint efforts are related to the statutory objectives of the municipal office. Therefore, all operations are subordinate to the targets of municipal development.

It is necessary to ensure place for collaboration within self-governing structures; this will be connected with the need to provide employees with conditions enabling response to ensuing situations, without stress. In cases of challenging situations they appreciate collaboration between co-workers. According to the respondents, support in a specific situation at work is a solution to the problem. Such behaviours frequently require courage and presentation of one's own opinions.

Municipal employees report that local populations are highly involved in the life of their communities. They take care of their common goals and needs, and that is also reflected by high rating. The need for collaboration is manifested by various endeavours undertaken jointly with populations of other municipalities. Such activities were rated at an average level.

The assessments show that residents of municipalities are talented and involved in joint efforts for the benefit of their communities. This is expressed by the high correlation coefficient, equal 1, for talent and collaboration. There is also high level correlation between tolerance and collaboration. In the case of other variables, this value is low. Correlation between the variables of talent and tolerance is high (amounting to 0.8), and between the remaining T variables, it is low. The poorest findings relate to the factor of technology.

Discussion

The essential element of comparison in the present study is creativity. Definitions proposed by the respondents do not differ significantly from those presented in text books. It relates to designing new solutions and the ability to solve problems.

Given the results of the analysis, creative capital can be encountered among office workers and residents of municipalities who cooperate and function in new conditions applying their creativity. These conditions were assessed taking into account the factors of talent, technology and tolerance.

The fact that citizens are involved in the life of the municipality should be recognized as a positive phenomenon. It is based on collaboration, just like in the case of a creative city. This is significant since creative capital will be generated by creative individuals. Quantitative assessment of those representing creative class in municipalities is the subsequent area for research.

This leads to a question concerning operations to be initiated at the municipal level to encourage location of companies at a given area. This may be a remedy for the barriers listed during the interview.

A reference to the approach proposed by the Dutch government will be justified here. In its document *Our Creative Potential* (2006), the government suggests no normative distinctions should be made between creative industry, culture industry, art and entertainment. This is because the term refers to all industries in which creativity is the key factor of production. Similar assumption can be made with regard to creative capital as a whole. A lack of distinctions can speed up the development of such capital, whereas formalization and bureaucracy may hinder its growth. This is a significant recommendation for municipal authorities to search for measures designed to shape creativity. One of the simple measures, known within the units and organizations, involves encouragement of collaboration. The confirmation are survey research studies of enterprises.⁴

The area of a municipality is also a good place to initiate entertainment programmes in order to awaken local talent. It often happens that greatly talented people with huge potential are invisible in the local reality. Without strong will power, individuals are unable to utilise the gift awarded to them for life. The awareness that creativity is a road towards the economic growth of the municipality should lead to developing those predispositions which set specific individuals apart.

Diversity of municipalities is not only a result of geographical conditions. Indeed, it is mainly built by people. Education associated with creating attitudes recognizing the right of other people to cherish beliefs, attitudes and behaviours which are different from or contradictory to ours, or which are not valued by us, is in fact a way to dialogue based on tolerance.

In the case of technology, its economic dimension is of particular importance. Unfortunately “moving with the times” and use of technological novelties require significant investments. Technological solutions are always cost intensive. Enhancement of technological solutions in households and enterprises will be enabled by conditions favourable for making such investments.

Conclusions

The study points to the fact that creative capital does not have to be restricted to the creative class. The analysis presented in the article enabled identification of the factors of talent, tolerance and technology as an aspect of building creative capital. As a function of human factor, it is associated with collaboration and adjustment to conditions encountered by people. In such conditions they take

⁴ See more: K. Szara (2014), *Kreatywność a innowacyjność w działalności przedsiębiorców*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Małopolskiej Wyższej Szkoły Ekonomicznej w Tarnowie. Prace z Zakresu Zarządzania. Innowacje w Nowoczesnych Organizacjach. Aspekty Ekonomiczne i Społeczne”, z. 1, t. 1, s. 201–210; K. Szara, (2013) *Kinds and Character of Joint – Action in an Organization within a Region*, [w:] R. Fedan, K. Szara (eds.), *Determinants and Sources of Development of Enterprises in the Region*, Wydawnictwo UR, Rzeszów, p. 247–259.

advantage of their creativity. It is possible to define attitudes adopted by employees of municipal offices in challenging situations as creative.

This is because research findings show that creativity is a method of coping with problems. It turns out that during their work representatives of self-governing units are required to respond to various situations resulting from the behaviours of clients or linked with performance of their own tasks. Support received from co-workers is frequently helpful, and that can be recognized as an element of collaboration.

On the other hand local populations' involvement in implementing the goals of the municipality is also a form of collaboration. Promoting joint efforts towards the strong determinant of talent may point towards new roads for municipal development.

It is clear that the identified determinants will not affect all organizations or individuals to the same extent.

The qualitative study provided mainly an opportunity to easily answer the question whether we can talk about creative capital existing in municipalities. A positive answer made it possible to perform qualitative assessment of the three determinants based on Florida's theory as well as the concept of collaboration proposed by this author's own definition. Legitimacy of these considerations should be supported with a quantitative study which, in accordance with this author's experience, is associated with a challenging task of identifying the primary occupations recognized as creative within the municipality. The findings show that the definition of creative capital should not be narrowed down to the creative class. Representatives of other professions also use the resources of creativity in their work.

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