GaWC Project 59

ACRE: Accommodating Creative Knowledge – Competitiveness of European Metropolitan Regions within the Enlarged Union

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Grant holders: Sako Musterd, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Institute for Metropolitan and International Development Studies (AMIDSt) as the leading partner and project coordinator with 12 other partners from Western and Eastern Europe (Barcelona, Birmingham, Budapest, Dublin, Helsinki, Leipzig, Milan, Munich, Poznan, Riga, Sofia and Toulouse)

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[**Results**]

The study is carried out by an international consortium, which includes 13 research teams from different types of metropolitan regions within the enlarged Union (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Birmingham, Budapest, Dublin, Helsinki, Leipzig, Milan, Munich, Poznan, Riga, Sofia and Toulouse). The list of case studies does not include obvious success stories like London or Paris. The aim is to find out if and how *ordinary* European cities, in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South can be competitive in the field of creative industries and knowledge intensive industries and to discover the factors that promote and/or prevent success in this respect. In particular the focus is on the factors determining success, the difficulties that city regions experience in becoming successful as well as the ways to overcome these difficulties.

The project focuses on several issues that have been neglected or underestimated so far:

- The role of path dependency: do traditions in certain economic branches and spatial and institutional structures contribute to a more favourable point of departure when trying to develop a 'creative knowledge region'?

- The extent to which policies for competitive 'creative and knowledge-based regions' not only aim at attracting certain types of economic activities, but also at providing 'soft location factors' like a favourable residential environment, public space, and 'meeting places' for the 'talent pool' needed for these economic activities;

- Differences and similarities between metropolitan regions in West, Central and Eastern Europe in their potentials to become competitive centres of creativity, knowledge and innovation.

- The role of trans-national migration of a skilled labour force towards centres of creativity and knowledge, and the extent to which these trans-national migrants are attracted by 'soft' location factors like an attractive residential environment, a diverse population and a tolerant atmosphere in the metropolitan regions they migrate to? How important are such factors when weighted against job or career opportunities and costs of living? To what extent are migrants to 'creative and knowledge-based cities' different from migrants to 'global' or 'world cities' in their reasons to migrate?

One of the core objectives of ACRE is the close collaboration of all the local research teams with locally created Councils of Experts (briefly: Local Partnerships - LOPs) which include people from business or policy-makers, related to this topic. This makes the research practically important for local authorities and business communities.

Stages of work:

First stage (development paths):

- literature review;

- local reports about the current paths of creative knowledge regions for each case study;

- a comparative study, resulting in classification to reveal general types of paths and provide a basis for a differentiated approach to certain groups of city regions in the subsequent empirical research.

Second stage (empirical research):

- the analysis of target group importance for each city region;

- three separate studies on certain target groups, based on questionnaires, surveys and interviews (graduates and workers, managers, transnational migrants);

- discussion of results among the partners and between the partners and their local partnerships (LOP).

Third stage (synthesis):

- synthesis of results for each case-study;

- comparative study across cases;

Fourth stage:

- existing policies and strategies;

- policy recommendations, considering different paths and based on good practices;

- dissemination of results