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## Editorial: Creative industries at the intersection between local agglomeration, national regulation, and global networks

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# GUEST EDITORIAL: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AT THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN LOCAL AGGLOMERATION, NATIONAL REGULATION, AND GLOBAL NETWORKS

During the last decades, economic geographers have become increasingly interested in creative industries, creative economy, creative cities, as well as the creative class. In addition to this increasing academic interest, testified by several recent special issues in economic geography journals (see e.g., *Regional Studies* Vol. 49, Issue 3), policy makers at various spatial levels (urban, regional, national, cross-border, as well as supranational) try to find ways how to foster the development of creative industries. Many studies focus both on the economic functions of creative industries, mainly in terms of labor, value-added production, and exports, and on their current organizational and networking features. From a geographic perspective, so far, two strands of literature prevail (for overviews, see Drake 2003; Comunian *et al.* 2010; Berg & Hassink 2014; Gong & Hassink 2017; Lazzeretti *et al.* 2018; Lorenzen 2018).

First, by far most literature in economic geography explores the *agglomeration and clustering* of creative industries, and explains the evolution of these creative industry clusters. This strand of research also deals with labor market issues, project ecologies, temporary clusters, field-configuring events, co-working spaces and creative labs, creativity and knowledge production, and creative cities and creative regions. It has emphasized the concentration of creative industries in cities, by stressing the advantages of geographic proximity for informal information spillovers, local consumption, specialized labor markets, localized learning and networking, as well as the attractiveness of cities for talented and creative people (Lorenzen 2018).

Second, and much younger and less prominently available, recent work analyses creative industries from a *global networks and connectivity* perspective (Coe 2015; Lorenzen 2018). These papers deal with creative industries

and transnational corporations and foreign direct investment, the position of creative industry clusters in global networks, local buzz and global pipelines, offshoring, international co-productions, global niche markets, and international migration and creative industries (see e.g., Lorenzen & Mudambi 2013; Copercini 2015; Berg 2018). The increasing interest in this strand of research is a logical consequence of a shift from the traditionally dominating creative clusters in places such as Hollywood, New York and Paris "... towards higher complexity of globally competing and complementary creative industry clusters" (Lorenzen 2018, p. 307). This rapidly changing global map of creative industries is related to the lowering of entry barriers for creative industries in small countries and late-coming clusters, a less hierarchical international division of labor, as well as an increase in joint ventures and strategic alliances and in international personal or family (i.e., diasporas) and artist, professional or celebrity networks (Lorenzen 2018).

However, since a large part of the creative industries produces cultural goods or goods that affect society, most of these industries are also still subject to national regulations, laws, and policies. So far, there is little dialogue between these strands of research and connections among local agglomeration, national regulations, and global networks of creative industries.

This dossier, therefore, aims at exploring creative industries at the intersections between these three forces: local agglomeration, global networks, and national regulations. Intersections, which have so far, received little attention. Exploring the intersections between these forces with the complementarities but also tensions and changing linkages does not only fill a research gap concerning the economic geographies of

creative industries, it also helps us to get a more comprehensive understanding of the economic potential of creative industries. Moreover, it enriches the global production networks literature, a literature that has been so far dominated by the analysis of production networks in manufacturing industries, with empirical studies of creative industries both in industrialized and emerging economies. Furthermore, it contributes to a broader economic geography literature on the multi-scalarity of economic activities (see e.g., Gong & Hassink 2019). Finally, the dossier provides interesting comparisons, as it contains theory-led, empirical papers focusing on different industries (gaming industry, the film industry, and the product design industry) in and/or across different territories (China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Germany).

The dossier is based on papers presented at a special session on The Economic Geography of Creative Industries organized at the Global Conference on Economic Geography in Cologne (24–28 July 2018) and it contains four papers, including two studies in film industry, one in mobile gaming industry, and one in product design industry, covering Germany, mainland China, and Taiwan. First, Xin & Mossig's (2021) paper sheds light on the role of governments as active players, regulators, and promoters in the establishment of film co-production networks in China and Germany. While with the same research issue on co-production of films, Zhang & Wang's (2021) paper turns to examine the trans-local film production networks between China and Hong Kong. It does so under the salient institutional context, namely "Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement" (CEPA) initiated since 2014. They argue that CEPA is one of the regulations enabling marketization of film industry and generating a new identity of Chinese culture at the supranational scale. Both papers highlight the governments' role and impacts of regulations on the co-production networks of films, while in different research areas and contexts. Yang & Chan (2021) examine the globalization of China's domestic gaming companies, particularly Tencent, the world largest gaming firm in terms of revenue, which originates from Shenzhen, one of the promising gaming industrial clusters in China. Their study shows a pattern of regionalization with focus of the

gamers of Tencent's games on the markets in selected Southeast Asian countries, instead of the genuine globalization as expected. The global production networks of China's indigenous gaming firms have thus not yet been established in the distinctive global and local market contexts. Based on the case study of the product design industry in Taipei, Lin's paper (2021) scrutinizes the trans-local branding of Taiwanese product design firms through state participation in building trans-local networks.


The four papers in this dossier tackling several sectors of creative industries in different geographic contexts tend to be framed on the exploration of the interplay between the dynamics and process across different levels at global, supranational, national, regional, and local levels. The second related issue that the four papers deal with lies in the role of governments and regulatory policies involved in the development of creative industries at both local levels and internationalization attempts. With the findings and arguments focusing on three sectors, that is, filming, gaming, and product design, among the divergent creative industries, more research is needed to generalize the development and transformation of creative industries in the changing interplay between global and local dynamics. We highlight two specific challenges and areas for future research.

First, as the papers in this dossier show, existing literature has put emphasis on the production actors in the value chains/networks of creative industries while the concerned actors involving distribution and consumption of the creative industrial products are missing. In particular, the role and rising power of creative consumers at both home and overseas markets of creative industrial products, such as the co-produced films and games examined in this dossier, have undergone dramatic transformation. Recent research has tended to explore the participatory consumers as cultural intermediaries and translating and distributing cultural commodities (Lee 2012). Understanding the changing dynamics and ways in which creative consumers negotiate with the producers, distributors, and retailers, as well as bargain with policy makers and regulation practitioners, is a key research task warranting for systematic investigation as the creative industries evolve and proliferate among various creative industrial clusters.

A second related research theme concerns the digital transformation of creative industries in the era of the global digital economy. The worldwide spread of Covid-19 in 2020 has engendered the effects of digital technologies on the creative industries, particularly the gaming industry, characterized by the increasing number of gamers of mobile games during the lockdown of various countries in various cultural and market conditions. There has been little research on the digital dynamics and transformation of creative industries driven by the emergence of digital platforms and digital consumers (Li 2020). With the above-identified areas on the agenda for future research, the dossier provides a vivid platform for exploring the evolution of creative industries with efforts on generalizing conceptual frameworks involving established and emerging actors in the production, distribution, and consumption of creative industrial products, as well as mobilizing empirical research on variegated sectors and across territories.

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