

**Abstract for *London Calling? Agglomeration Economies in Literature since 1700***

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The potential for gains from agglomeration of industry is evident for industries with traditional modes of production. However, less is known empirically about these dynamics for industries with few capital requirements and no apparent need to cluster geographically, such as literary production. Unlike a factory or science laboratory, writing does not require a centralised location of production. There are few capital requirements for the writing of literature, and the printing process does not require the author to be present. Authors are able to send drafts and conduct most business with a publisher or literary agent through the post. Authors are also highly mobile. Given these unique characteristics, do authors tend to cluster geographically at all? If so, are there gains in productivity associated with the agglomeration of literary activity? We argue that tacit knowledge exchange drives the geographic clustering of authors and that these flows cause a localised increase in author productivity. In order to answer these questions, we determine the cities in which literary activity clusters, and we empirically estimate these returns to literary agglomeration.

Specifically, we utilise a unique, purpose-built dataset with information on the birth location and lifetime migration, productivity (in terms of number of publications), and demographic characteristics of 370 authors in the UK and Ireland since 1700. We begin by discussing the data collection methodology. We then analyse the patterns of migration and clustering of authors, and we construct age-productivity profiles to determine the productivity gains (if any) associated with the geographic clustering of literary activity. Following [?], we acknowledge productivity gains from agglomeration effects (i.e. via tacit knowledge transfer) operate as both a by-product and driver of geographic clustering of literary production. We utilise individual fixed effects to control for spatial sorting by skill level, and the within estimator reveals the average author annual productivity is 10.68% per annum higher when the author resides in London, the only major literary cluster during the time period. While we do not find evidence of dynamic learning effects, we find no evidence that our results are driven by a dynamic self-selection process. We also find no evidence that authors strategically build

a portfolio of works before moving to London and publishing them in quick succession.