

Toward a better understanding of the cultural amenity concept

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Abstract This article deals with the definition of amenity and more specifically with cultural amenity issues. The very concept of amenity still remains unclear though it has been widely used both in the environmental field since the 70's, and in the cultural one since the beginning of the twentieth century. In the latter stream of literature, it is used to discuss urban development based on culture and creative class theory. However, the concept is often reduced to the amount of cultural equipment available in a city. We define an amenity as a non-market service provided by the specific features pertaining to an area. In addition, the amenity is a non-excludable and non-rivalrous service within this area. The originality of this paper lies in the analysis of the conditions under which cultural amenities can be generated and strengthened at a city scale. The process of cultural amenity generation depends on three main features concerning cultural assets: their density, their anchorage in the city and the implementation of flagship assets. Cultural activities can be instrumental in shaping charm, image and ambiance of cities. The last three items are examples of amenities. The randomness, the complexity and the bottom-up aspect of the amenity generation phenomenon is also discussed. Side issues that are at stake such as city gentrification, strategies of access to amenities are also part of our reflection.

Keywords Culture · Amenities · Non-market service · Public good · City attractiveness

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1 Introduction

There are two main approaches in cultural economics (Tubadji et al. 2014). In the first one, culture is considered as a study object and focuses on the market supply and demand conditions of cultural goods and services like the works of Baumol and Bowen (1965) or Throsby (2001). In the second one, culture is seen as a determinant factor of other economic phenomena like urban growth and location choices. In this second stream of literature, the notion of amenity is usually employed with the qualifiers cultural or urban but no clear definition of these concepts is hardly provided.

The very concept of amenity has been widely used both in the environmental field since the 70's, and in the cultural one since the beginning of the twentieth century as it is shown in figure 1.

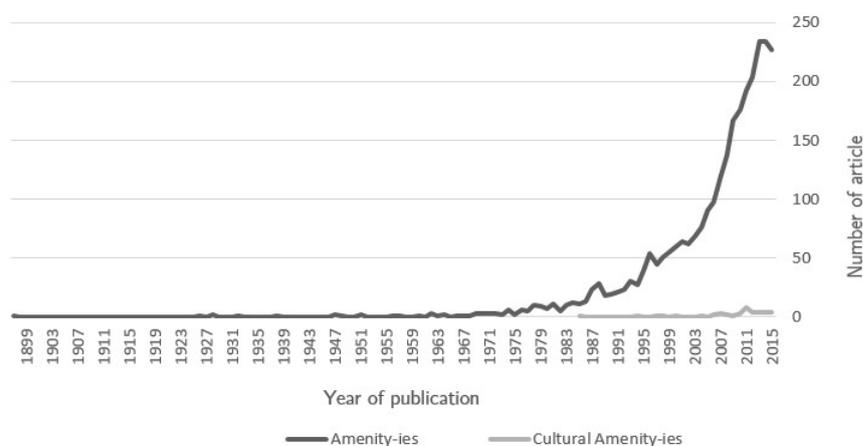


Fig. 1 Number of publication with the terms "amenities" or "cultural amenities" in title, abstract or keyword (source : Scopus, may2016)

Urban economics has an interest in quality of life, particularly through the impact of amenities on location choices (Blomquist 2006; Blomquist et al. 1988; Gabriel and Rosenthal 2004; Graves 1979; Knapp and Gravel 1989). In this stream of literature, amenities are considered as area quality of life components, which is supposed to enhance the attractiveness of geographic areas. Cultural amenities form a little part of the literature but have benefited from a growing attention since the beginning of twentieth century. They are supposed to be components of urban areas quality of places, and significant determinants of location choices (Clark et al. 2002; Florida 2002; Glaeser et al. 2001).

Through their increasing participation to the quality of places and quality of life, cultural amenities would be responsible for the arrival of creative people (Florida 2002) or highly qualified people (Glaeser et al. 2001) and consequently for urban growth. A side aspect of these theories is that the territory that has

the highest level of cultural amenities would benefit from a higher population growth (Sleutjes 2013). Studying culture as an attractiveness factor relies on the fact that cultural activities create symbolic value that shapes the place atmosphere (Trip 2007). This atmosphere can in turn be considered as a quality of place component. Further to the study of the amenities literature, three main statements can be made. First, there is a wide range of heterogeneous items that are called amenities. Namely weather (Graves 1979), forests (Terrasson 2002), bicycle paths (Florida 2005), bars, lakes and operas (T. N. Clark 2004), theatres (Clark and Kahn 1988) and live performances (Glaeser et al. 2001). Then, the question is to know why these elements are called of amenities? What kind of features allows scholars to consider weather in the same way as theatres, whereas one is a natural physical phenomenon, and the other is a built infrastructure?

Then, various categories of amenities can be found in the literature. Namely environmental amenities (Napoléone 2002), rural amenities (Beuret and Kovacshazy 2002), recreative amenities (Florida 2000) and finally, cultural and urban amenities (Clark and Kahn 1988). These categories clearly depend on the quality of life component that is analysed and on the analysis context. The question raised here is about the existence of a generic definition of amenity that can be applied to these different categories. Finally, the last statement concerns a certain lack in the economic definition of the amenity. More precisely, regarding the literature, one may wonder about the economic nature of an amenity, even before talking about the cultural or environmental one. Is the amenity a good, a service, an externality, or something else?

The Anglo-Saxon standard definitions of amenity stressed the origins and consequences of the amenities. The plural definition of amenities by the American Heritage Dictionary¹ stipulates that amenities are the quality of being pleasant or attractive, or something that contributes to physical of material comfort. There are two ideas here. The first one is that amenities can be a utility source. The second one is linked to the adjectives of physical and material which lets us think that amenity would be tangible goods but the real nature of an amenity still remains ambiguous. Then, an amenity is also defined in a third way as a feature that increase attractiveness or value, especially of a piece of real estate or a geographic location. This last definition stressed the effects of amenity on local markets such as housing and labour markets. The fact that an area is well endowed with amenities will increase its attractiveness. Then, the demand for housing will rise and the price of real estate would be higher. In the same time, the labour supply would rise too, applying downward pressure on wages (Clark and Kahn 1988; Roback 1982, 1988; Sheppard 2013). These consequences are developed in the third part of this article.

More broadly, the Anglo-Saxon approach suggests that amenities have a tangible dimension, but nothing yet proves clearly that amenities are goods. The idea of utility carried by the notion of amenity is also put forward in the Latin

¹ See www.ahdictionary.com

approach² where amenity is used as an adjective to qualify a charming place or individual, which means that amenity is a kind of free service provided by a place. The question of the economic nature still remains given these two standard approaches. We try to deal with in the section 2 of this article.

A focus on human science can help us to determine the nature of the amenity. This concept is useful to put forward a link between places and individuals. According to T. Paquot (quoted by Le Floch et al. 2002), amenity is synonymous to conviviality creating social cohesion in a place. It is something that is supra-economical(Le Floch et al. 2002), which strengthens the link between individuals and that is not subject to market forces. In other words, amenities increase the quality of social interactions. The social dimension of amenities would explain the reason why economists assimilate amenities to life quality. The term of amenity enables to connect spatial and human dimensions.

T. Barnerjee seems to bind in an inseparable way the physical features of the town planning to the aims which initiated this planning: amenities would be the quality of an equipment or a planning project implemented with the aim to contribute to conviviality making the cities liveable (amenities that contribute to the livability of cities) (Le Floch et al. 2002). A distinction between tangible features of the territory and amenities, which corresponds to a sort of service provided by place features, can be noted here.

The definition provided by Bartik and Smith (1987) and published in an urban economics handbook intends to serve as a reference in the domain. These authors conceive an amenity as a geographic feature that influences the well-being of individuals in a positive or a negative way. More, Amenities can be classified using many dimensions, such as geographic scale, degree of permanence and the extent to which they are physically tangible(Bartik and Smith 1987, p. 1207). Despite this definition, an ambiguity remains about the nature of amenities and the process creating amenities, which seems to be close to the concept of externality. Then, the question is to know why the term of amenity is preferred to the one of externality?

This article is structured as follows. First we try to put forward the economic features of an amenity and to understand the differences between externalities and amenities. In a second section, we discuss the elements that potentially could enhance the creation of cultural amenities on the territory. Then, in a third section, we discuss the implications and consequences of cultural amenities for a region or a territory.

2 The economic features of amenities

2.1 Effects of amenities are bounded to a geographic area

The fact that amenities are places specific features has reached a consensus in the literature. This implies that their effects on well-being are confined to an

² See Latin-French dictionary by F.Gaffiot (1937) available at the following url: www.lexilogos.com/latin/gaffiot.php

area. In the article of Bartik and Smith (1987), geographic features influence individual's utility explaining that people have to locate near amenities to benefit from it. Gottlieb confirms this idea saying that amenities will be defined as location specific, non-exportable goods or services that primarily benefits employees in their role of residents and commuters (Gottlieb 1994, p. 271). Some scholars may regard amenities like anything that shifts the household willingness to locate in a particular location. By definition, they are broadly defined and include weather, landscape, public services, public infrastructure, crime, ambience and so on (Partridge 2010).

The idea of location is strong when talking about amenities, first, they set up an incentive to locate in a particular area when they are positively valued by individuals. That is to say amenities are components of individual's utility functions. It is important to note that the term of amenity is often used without any value judgment. The same amenity can be valued positively, or be perceived negatively.

This idea of location can be also found in the OECD report about rural amenities where the latter are attributes that are natural or built by individuals, linked to an area or a territory and that contributes to differentiate it from another that doesn't have amenities³ (OCDE 1999). The idea of competition between territories is mentioned here and refers to the territories attractiveness and to the uptake of economic agents stock by cities through the supply of amenities.

Therefore, there are two main phenomena that are strongly referred to when talking about amenities. The first one is the location choices of individuals and the second one is the competitive tendering that emerges from amenities.

2.2 Amenities as a range of non-monetary location factors

According to Ullman (1954), pleasant living conditions amenities instead of more narrowly defined economic advantages are becoming the sparks that generate significant population increase. As a consequences, amenities are more and more mentioned as determinant location factors for migrants and consequently as city growth factor. Amenities correspond to agreeable living conditions that shape the quality of life in territories. Ullman opposes amenities to monetary advantages like housing prices or job opportunities. This idea can also be found in the work of Glaeser (2000) when he says that amenities are non-market transactions because they are not exchanged directly on a specific market.

Actually, amenities correspond to a range of non-monetary location factors and the only way to benefit from them for a household is to locate nearby. The consumption of amenities is not made through the payment of an explicit price but through a location choice.

³ "Attributs naturels ou façonnés par l'homme, liés à un espace ou à un territoire et qui le différencient d'autres territoires qui en sont dépourvus"

2.3 A service supplied by assets located on the territory

According to Glaeser (2000), amenities are not goods but flows, that is to say a kind of services that is provided by the territory without any direct monetary counterpart. A French report of the Rhône-Alpes region explains that the amenity is not a public good in itself but the agreement that can be generated by the attendance to this type de goods⁴. Amenities are services associated to a geographic feature. The latter would be the source of the amenity and the amenity would be a non-market service generated by the feature.

Mollard et al. (2014) also distinguish stock and flow regarding to amenities. They explain that amenities are linked to a public good stock like a forest and the amenity correspond to the utility flow that individuals can benefit from attending to the forest. The amenity and the amenity spring have to be differentiated. An amenity is a service provided by a stock which is a kind of amenities supply stock (Mollard et al. 2014). This formulation is consistent with the idea of an amenity non-produced (Gyourko and Tracy 1991) because the service in itself provided is not produced but generated by its source. The source can be produced, like cultural infrastructures, or existing naturally like weather.

Applying our reasoning to the cultural domain, culture corresponds to a produced stock on a territory because it is the result of human activity. Cultural events like festivals, cultural infrastructures like theatres or concert halls are cultural assets that constitute a stock that provide services. On the one hand there are market services like a live performance in a concert hall. On the other hand, there are non-market services which can be the vitality, the image, the atmosphere or the ambience that benefit the territory. This particular range of services corresponds to various amenities which may impact on individual's utility. As a preliminary conclusion, we can draw a definition of the amenity concept thanks to the three previous features. Thus, a cultural amenity is a non-market service such as ambience provided by assets geographically located. Figure 2 illustrates the phenomenon that has just been described.

Figure 2 describes a situation where a territory a region, a city or a district provides some kind of cultural assets, from one-time street performance to permanent cultural infrastructures. These assets can supply market-services like performances in a concert-hall (it is the market value of culture), but they also shape the identity and the ambience of the city. These last two phenomena are possible non-market services corresponding to amenities. They are only available on the territory and enhance attractiveness of the city when they are positively valued by foreign individuals.

The issue that arises viewing figure 2 is about the distinction between amenity and externality. Can we consider amenities as externalities that arise from cultural assets as Mollard et al. (2014) do ? This point of view can be understood

⁴ Report titled "Les aménités environnementales, facteurs de développement durable des territoires", Rhône-Alpes Tourisme, no date, http://aquitaine-mopa.fr/IMG/pdf/les_amenites_environnementales_facteurs_de_dd_des_territoires_-_2012.pdf

because there are no necessarily transactions between residents, tourists or commuters benefiting from amenities and holders of cultural assets.

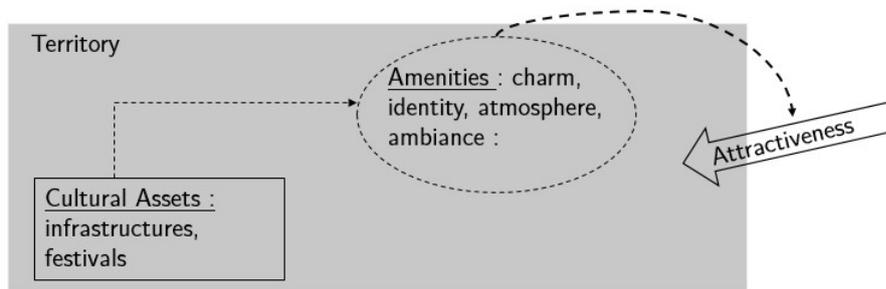


Fig. 2 Scheme of the cultural amenity concept

2.4 A distinction between amenities and externalities?

In the following paragraph, various points of comparison are analysed to understand why some scholars tend to use the term of amenity rather than the externality one in their work. The aim is not to rule a dichotomy between both concepts but to highlight some representations that are emphasised using one or another, putting forward a sort of continuum between the two concepts. Table 1 sums the various distinctive features of the two concepts that will be discussed below.

Table 1 Criteria of distinction between amenities and externalities

Criteria	Amenity	Externality
Spatialized	No	Not particularly
Money-based	No	Possibly
Origin	Assets (natural or built)	Human activities
Property right	Public good	Can be private

First, a geographic location issue is at stake using the amenity notion; it has already been proved in the first paragraph of this section. The use of the amenity concept refers to the geographic specificities of territories (Partridge 2010) and therefore, to a potential competitive advantage to attracting of new economic agents. This spatial dimension doesn't exist in the definition of the externality concept which describes a more general mechanism without any reference to a particular context.

Secondly, a distinction has to be made regarding the source of both phenomena. An externality is defined as a situation where activities of one (or several)

economic agent(s) have an impact on the well-being (at large) of other ones without any transactions between them (Guerrien 2003, p. 212). The interesting point in this definition is that an externality results exclusively from human action. Yet, for some scholars dealing with amenities, a human intervention is not always necessary in the amenity creation process (Bartik and Smith 1987). Some of them make a distinction between natural amenities and constructed amenities (Clark et al. 2002; Clark 2004) to indicate that weather, or natural landscapes do not arise from human production while it is the case for cultural or urban amenities. From this point of view and talking about culture, the distinction between amenity and externality is not really relevant. This second hallmark gives a justification of the use of the term asset in our amenity definition because the aim is to be general enough to gather a wide range of amenities, namely cultural, environmental, urban etc. Then, the source of the amenity should be called asset because it helps us to consider produced goods, services, or natural goods, which are not produced. The asset has to be understood in the accounting sense because individual can attribute economic value to them, even if they are not tangible like weather or culture. The notion of cultural asset is used by Greffe (2006) and allows scholars to talk about a more wide range of items than just tangible goods or services. Thirdly, an amenity is a non-monetary phenomenon while an externality can be pecuniary. For example, an economic outcome of a festival can usually be observed in surrounding hotels and restaurants turnover. This positive externality is monetary. The idea of geographic location exists but because of this pecuniary feature, scholars are more likely to talk about externality than amenity. In the case of the festival, the amenity for a city could be the cultural image enhanced or the atmosphere created. Finally, our last amenity hallmark is linked to the previous one and deals with the public goods features of amenities. It constitutes the last economic feature and it is discussed in the next paragraph.

2.5 Amenities satisfy public good features

The previous example of positive externality shows that an externality, especially when it is pecuniary, can be profitable only to private agents like hotels and restaurants. Considering amenities, we are much-more in a case of a public good as defined by Samuelson (1954), which requires two dimensions:

- Non-rivalry: it implies that somebody can benefit from the amenity even if somebody else benefits from it in the same time.
- Non-exclusion: it implies that it is not possible to set up a price to an amenity in order to prevent people from accessing it.

It is linked to the non-existence of an explicit market price for amenities. While some authors consider that the source of an amenity is a public good (Mollard et al. 2014), our view is to consider that, in the case of culture, in not so much the source of amenity but the amenity in itself that satisfies the public

Table 2 Sum up of the cultural amenity concept

Criteria	Defintion	Direct consequences
Nature	Non-market service - non-rival and non-exclusive	No price to pay to benefit from it
Origin	Spatially located asset	People have to locate where the amenities they want are provided
Spatial context	Effects of amenities are confined to a specific area	Competition between areas arises
Examples	identity, ambiance, charm, atmosphere	

good features. According to Gyourko and Tracy (1991), a pure amenity is a non-produced public good such as weather quality that had no explicit price. Talking about culture, an amenity could be the ambiance resulting from culture. If the scale on which the amenity acts is a city, an individual should locate in the city, or nearby the city to benefit from the amenity. The nearer an individual is to the source of amenity, the more he will increase his utility level. There is no price to pay to benefit from cultural amenities, only to be located nearby. Plus, if somebody comes to the city to enjoy amenities, it does not prevent anybody else from enjoying it at the same time.

Thus, from a static point of view, amenities can be conceived as public goods. The non-exclusive nature of amenities will be questioned and balanced in section 4 regarding the possible consequences of urban growth from a more dynamic point of view. Table 2 sums up our previous explanations about the definition of amenity according to three entries: the nature, the origin and the spatial context of the phenomenon. Direct consequences of these three items are also reminded in column 3.

Finally, amenities position themselves as city characteristics. The issue remaining in the literature concerning cultural amenities is about the link between cultural assets and cultural amenities. This is investigated in the following section through the Lancaster new consumer theory and Morin's complexity approach.

3 The relation between cultural assets and cultural amenities

The amenity concept as it just has been defined in 2 may be analysed through the Lancaster consumer theory (Lancaster 1966) where goods are defined by multiple characteristics and utility can be derived from each one. This is not the whole good itself which provides utility but its characteristics.

Considering city amenities, we can observe two levels at which this theory can be applied:

- The first one is at the assets level. Each cultural asset can be seen as a bundle of characteristics. For example, a festival can be defined by its artistic

programming, its location, its price, its period etc. Each of these characteristic is an objective one and may be positively or negatively perceived by individuals.

- The second level is the one of the city which can be considered as a consumption good. It may be defined by several attributes; some of them can be the labour market, the housing market, cultural assets, environmental assets, sport assets, weather, etc. Each one can be broken down into characteristics and some of these are amenities because they contribute to shaping non-market features of the city like its ambiance, its identity, its charm.

What is important to see here is that non-market characteristics like city ambiance or city identity are not only influenced by cultural assets but by a multiple range of assets. To fit the Lancaster's view, we can say that each city attribute can be a bundle of different characteristics and each characteristic can be found in several city-attributes. For example, the contribution to the city-charm can result from environmental assets like green spaces, from the intervention of designers in public spaces, from an old economic configuration of the city oriented toward industrial sector etc.

In other words, even attributes usually considered as strictly economic may be to some extent contribute to amenities because they contribute more or less to defined the ambiance or the image of the city and they can linger for decades. For example, cities like Glasgow, Manchester or Nantes in France are still imbued by a kind of industrial image which is combined with their more recent cultural image. Different combinations of city attributes and city characteristics can create various unique amenities which are in turn ranked and consumed by households. We can see here the possible existence of some kind of historical accidents according to Bartik and Smith (1987) which also refers to some extent to path dependencies (Nelson and Winter 1982) because the way the city is seen today can depend on what the city was in the past. History can contribute to shaping city amenities through heritage assets. Then, city ambiances or city identities are amenities would be objective features more or less culture oriented, more or less environment-oriented, which could be valued by individuals. The location choice would result from the comparison of city characteristics collections comprising amenities and more strictly economic features like wages or rents. Thus, location choices could be seen as an expression of preferences toward city characteristics.

A kind of complexity resulting from the randomness of the process occurring between multiple city-attributes and city characteristics can be noticed here. The complexity approach theorized by Morin (1988) lists several sources of complexity that arise analysing human phenomenon. One of them is linked to the organisation of elements where the whole organisation (a city for example) can be superior to the sum of its parts (its attributes). Amenities and particularly, amenities resulting from combinations of asset characteristics would be a kind of surplus created by the system the city and that would not have existed in the same way if one of the city attributes had changed or if assets

had not existed.

Figure 3 sums up our thinking from Lancaster's theoretical approach. From the city point of view we can list various attributes that are supplied by the city. From the residents or potential residents point of view, different characteristics of the city can be perceived, some of them correspond to pure private goods or services (housing for example), and some others like amenities correspond to public goods.

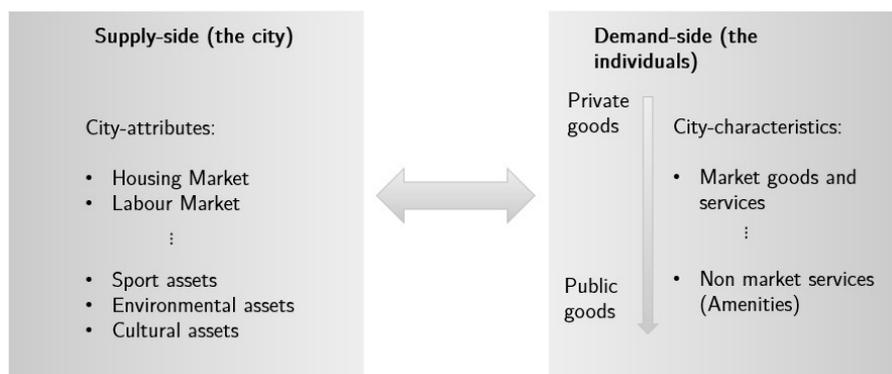


Fig. 3 Matching between city attributes and city characteristics

The difficulty that arises from this approach is the possibility to consider each source of amenities clearly separated one from another as economists usually do, trying to think everything else being equal. On the whole, each cultural asset contributes to increasing the intensity of cultural amenities in the city. In other words, the term of cultural amenity designate the contribution of culture to the general ambience of the city. Despite this apparent complexity, the key elements in the link between cultural assets and cultural amenities may be identified. Very little literature exists about this issue.

3.1 Developing cultural amenities by small-scale niche assets

A first way of analysis the link between cultural assets and cultural amenities is to consider the artistic contents of cultural assets which can guide the cultural image or the cultural ambience of the city by promoting different types of culture : cultural industries (music, cinema, book publishing), fine arts (painting, sculpture) or living arts (theatre, live music). The approach by the theory of scenes (Silver et al. 2007) is the closest to what has just been described. In their article, the scenes that are put forward in different cities can be of various kinds (punk or lyrical scenes to use two of their examples). These scenes result from the coexistence of different types of amenities. They do not distinguish cultural assets from cultural amenities and this kind of approach needs many data about cultural assets and the genre of culture they promote in order to

qualify their cultural genre. Plus, it may be a quite subjective approach which does not really deal with the intensity of cultural amenities in cities even if this aspect can be significant when individuals compare different cities in order to locate in one of them.

A more general work has been done by Kloosterman (2014) who created a typology of amenities according to two criteria and recommended public policies for each type. The author does not make any difference between cultural amenities and cultural assets. The first criterion he proposes deals with the scale of provision of the amenity which can be small or large. Large ones can profit from scale economies while small ones are more concerned by fixed cost issues, that's why they need low cost spaces to set up in cities. The second criterion is demand oriented and deals with the audience which is targeted. This audience can be more or less interested in specialized subjects, that is why the author makes a distinction between mainstream and niche audiences. It is important to notice that these two criteria are not dichotomous but much more a continuum. Table 3 is drawn from Kloosterman's article and sums up his approach.

Table 3 Typology of cultural amenities by Kloosterman (2014)

Scale of Provision		Small	Large
Type of Audience	Niche	Art Galleries Modern Dance Performance	EYE Film Instituut Van Gogh Museum
	Mainstream	Erotic Museum Popular Music Performance	Madame Tussauds Amsterdam Heineken Experience Zoo

According to the author, niche amenities (specialized culture) are crucial for the city attractiveness because high skilled workers (Scott 2008) and creative class workers (Florida 2002) are more likely to be attracted by diversity and by vibrant environment which is created by this kind of assets and specially by small-scale ones. Kloosterman (2014) considers these small scale niche assets as producers of bottom-up amenities because their co-localisation induce the creation of certain kind of ambiances in the city or at least in some city districts. This idea of bottom-up amenities also insists on the fact that the process of amenity creation is complex and not always deterministic. The issues related to these small scale niche assets are questions of zoning and rents according to Kloosterman because small scale cultural assets are more sensible to costs and intra-urban location.

This work provides some clues about what type of cultural asset can be more relevant for the creation of cultural amenities in the city, and overall, what kind of cultural asset can be interesting regarding attraction of knowledge workers. Mainstream amenities are also analysed but considered more particularly as cultural goods and services, not as producers of amenities without really saying why, except for the non-attraction of knowledge workers who are

supposed to contribute to life quality.

The following process can be considered: the more intense are the cultural amenities, the more the city image is culture-oriented and the more people who value cultural atmospheres are attracted to the city. The question that arises relates to the assets features that can be relevant regarding the intensity of cultural amenities at the city scale. Three main features are considered and discussed below.

3.2 The density of cultural assets in the city

Porter and Barber (2007) have tried to point out the effect of culture on the territory using the term symbolic capital. Each cultural activity would contribute to the symbolic capital by leaving a symbolic footprint on it (Meyronin et al. 2015, p. 31). Symbolic capital can be seen as something meaningful, which carries emotion or which refers to some ideals and values.

Comparing our definition of amenity and these urban planning and territorial marketing concepts which have just been outlined, we can conceive cultural amenities like identity, charm and ambience of cities as a kind of symbolic value. From this point of view, each cultural asset would leave a footprint on the city symbolic capital. People who find themselves in this symbolic capital identity or charm for example are more likely to value and to locate in the city or nearby to benefit from it.

The use of the term capital is interesting because it is frequently associated to the term accumulation in economics. Nevertheless, in this case it is not really easy to speak about accumulation because we do not face to a phenomenon which is countable when talking about cultural amenities. The term of intensity or strength of cultural amenities seems to be more relevant. Nevertheless, cultural amenities depend on the cultural assets which can be counted.

The argument of quantity is the most obvious because it is easy to understand that if one city has a lot of cultural assets – museums, cinemas, theatres and festivals – its cultural orientation is easier to identify, leaving out questions about the types of arts which may be promoted. In other words, its cultural identity or ambience will be identified more easily and maybe positively valued by residents and potential new residents. This can involve an increase in its attractiveness for people in general or just for some categories of people like the creative class or knowledge workers. Even without being direct users of these assets, individuals can benefit from city dynamics and city ambiances (Blaise et al. 2015, p. 32).

Los Angeles can be taken as an example because it concentrates a significant amount of assets in the film-sector in the Hollywood district (Scott 2005) creating a cinema-oriented image. People can be attracted because of job opportunities but maybe also by the ambience and the momentums of the city. The more there are cultural assets, the more the symbolic capital – cultural amenities – is likely to be created because culture will be a more significant feature of the city. It is important to notice that the quantity of cultural assets

is relative to the size of the city because we can notice a size effect when we study the quantity of cultural assets in each city. Thus, it is more realistic to speak about density of cultural assets in the city.

3.3 The territorial anchorage and the idea that history counts

The question of assets anchorage is also important dealing with the strength of cultural amenities because one of the most important features of an amenity is its geographical situation and it is non-exportable nature (Gottlieb 1994). Therefore, an asset which is not closely linked to the territory is less likely to create amenities because it is not something which remains on the territory. The more anchored is the asset, the more likely amenities might be fostered. The example of festivals are interesting because at a first glance, they are not remaining on the territory that's why it seems difficult to conceive they can contribute to the ambiance or to the identity of the city in an ongoing manner. However, we can find examples of cities which are identified by their festivals. It is the case of Avignon or Angoulême in France which respectively host festivals of theatre and comics. These are examples of events that have permanent footprint on cities. The case of Angoulême can be explained by the recurrence of the event and more generally by the anchorage of the event on the territory. The first event took place in 1974 and the other assets has developed afterward, keeping a thematic closeness to image, drawing, artwork and animation. The cité internationale de la bande dessinée et de l'image was created in 2008 and includes a museum, a library and offers trainings related to comics and artwork creating a kind of network around one common universe. To sum up, the anchorage of assets to the territory can be due to the recurrence and to the development of links between different assets around the same themes, as it is the case in Angoulême creating a kind of scene (Silver et al. 2007) in the city. The anchorage can be seen as a way to strengthen cultural amenities, either because that constitutes a particular feature that other territories do not provide in the same conditions, or because it is something that has an historical value, adding a more authentic image to the city, which can influence cultural amenities in the city.

This last idea can be linked to the one of path dependency (Nelson and Winter 1982) such as the city past can be determinant to explain its present features. Bartik and Smith (1987) speak about historical accident which can influence amenities. As an example, the city of Nantes in France has benefited from a dynamic cultural policy since the end of the 80's which contributes to shaping its image which is now culture oriented. While a certain diversity of cultural assets can be observed in the city, the past of the city still influences its image today. Its ancient shipyards and the historical figures who lived in Nantes have influenced the identity of the city and the assets that are present there today. For example, Les machines de l'île refer to the steampunk universe, which mixes first industrial revolution context to science fiction, and the festival named Utopiales promotes science fiction. These two examples are in a way

linked to the industrial past of the city and to Jules Verne's work. Comparing Nantes to other French cities like Paris, the path dependency is quite weak because Paris benefits from a historical image of cultural city while Nantes or even Glasgow has benefited from this kind of image only since the late of 80's. The path dependency of Paris is more strongly culture-oriented than the one of Nantes or Glasgow and this cultural path dependency may influence the strength of culture anchorage in the city.

Analysing cultural assets with panel data would be a good way to take into account the past of the city. Adding a network analysis of assets could also inform us about the strength of assets anchorage in the city but this kind of data, at least for the French case seems difficult to collect.

3.4 The flagship assets as a way to enhance cultural amenities

Another item which may influence the strength of cultural amenities is flagship assets (Porter and Barber 2007). These Flagship assets correspond to striking assets that would weight to the atmosphere of a city. This can be due to the size of the asset or to the architect's reputation who conceives the asset like the Guggenheim of Bilbao Guggenheim by F.Ghery. It can also result from a decentralization of cultural assets that are already notorious. It is the case of two Parisian museums in France which opened a sort of branch in two other cities that had not benefit from a particular cultural image before. These branches are Le Louvre-Lens opened in 2012 in Lens and Le Centre Pompidou-Metz opened in 2014 in Metz. The aims of this kind of project is to enhance attractiveness and economic development of cities improving the image of the city for residents and non-residents. It can be interpreted as a way to build a cultural image of the city and to encourage the location or the creation of other cultural assets in the city to foster or strengthen if cultural assets are already present cultural amenities and attractiveness.

However, the question of flagship projects needs more attention from scholars because the durability of their effects on territories has not been demonstrated yet. Plus, the definition of a flagship project needs more attention. However, the contexts in which this kind of assets are usually implemented are often regeneration projects demonstrating that the aim is to influence urban dynamics. In summary, several features stand out to being important about cultural assets in order to enhance cultural amenities at the city scale. Three main factors might influence the strength of cultural amenities in the city as it is shown in figure 4.

The link between cultural assets features and amenities is represented by a dotted line to symbolize the random character of the relation as it has been shown in section 2. Cultural amenities can be shaped first considering the genre of art they propose and the kind of public who is targeted. These two items do not appear in the figure because the genre of art promoted is usually plural and the public who is targeted is relevant only studying specific cases, while this figure fits into a general context. The policy makers or more gener-

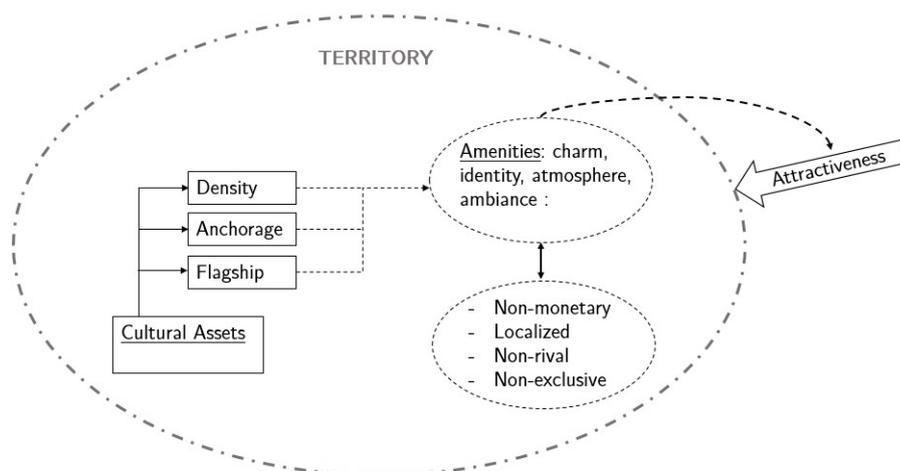


Fig. 4 Determinants of cultural amenities on the territory

ally speaking decision makers can have an influence on the density of cultural assets in the city by financing project developers or by the creation of economic incentives to the cultural assets establishment. The denser the cultural sector is, the more the city benefits from a culture-oriented ambiance and image. The question that is linked is the one of the definition of the cultural domain because even non-cultural assets can have an artistic value. For example the architecture of buildings can be considered as a cultural characteristic. The second factor deals with the assets anchorage to the territory. Then, decision makers can have a strong impact on the level of cultural amenities by implementing cultural flagship projects.

The formulation used by Mollard et al. (2014) to appoint the assets which provide amenities as a supply stock of amenities is interesting but not precise enough. Talking about potential supply stock of amenities seems to be a better way to show that the process of cultural amenities creation is not fully under the control of decision makers. Amenities result from public and private initiatives concerning cultural assets establishment the deterministic side of cultural amenities and also from hazard linked to the combinations of city characteristics and some kind of historic accidents the random component of cultural amenities.

4 The question of value privatization: the consequences of attractiveness

The aim of this section is to think about the potential side effects of high levels of cultural amenities in cities and also to the possible problems that can result from this phenomenon. Competition between cities encourages to foster cultural amenities by providing cultural assets in order to benefit from

a higher level of attractiveness and from economic development. From the resident point of view, the ownership of amenities values is at stake. More generally, we discuss gentrification phenomena at work in territories, cities and districts from an economic point of view.

Amenities might be a source of intrinsic attractiveness because they are suitable to a specific city. Other factors like housing prices or wages can be found in the same conditions in several different cities, then they are more likely considered as extrinsic factors of attractiveness. The literature shows theoretically and empirically that amenities might influence the equilibrium of local markets like housing market or labour market (Roback 1982, 1988) through attractiveness. These effects are analysed below.

4.1 The effects of intrinsic attractiveness on local markets

A higher attractiveness implies new households in the city and an increase in housing demand, which in turn raises the equilibrium price on the market (Sheppard 2013; Sheppard et al. 2006). As regards the labour market, arrival of new households increases the supply on the labour market which decreases the equilibrium wage (Clark and Kahn 1988) profitable for firms because their costs will decrease as they can benefit from an educated workforce to a lower price.

From a theoretical point of view and focusing on the homeowners, the increase of housing price is positive because it contributes to raising the value of their heritage, which might compensate for the decrease in wages if they live in a city with amenities. A situation where homeowners do not live in the city can be profitable in two respects. The homeowner can rent his house at a higher price and do not support any decrease of wage if he works in an area corresponding to another market labour where there is a lower level of amenities. These two categories of homeowners can profit from an increase in housing prices from a patrimonial point of view. In other words, the value of amenities can be privatized by homeowners which possess houses in cities where amenities are located.

Focusing on renter households, the attractiveness induced by cultural amenities increases the cost of living in cities because the rents increase and the wages decrease simultaneously. In other words, amenities are compensated by higher housing prices and by lower wages. Disamenities are compensated by lower housing prices and higher wages in a spatial equilibrium framework (Roback 1988; Rosen 1979). In the case of a city with amenities, renters can see an increase in their living cost which constitutes the implicit price to pay to benefit from cultural amenities.

The increase in the city attractiveness resulting from amenities reallocate wealth and value toward people who already possess real estate assets. This phenomenon can encourage homeowners to demand for the existence of cultural assets. If the funding of the cultural assets is public, there is a kind of free-riding issue because homeowners can profit from the capitalization of cul-

tural amenities on rents without assuming the entire cost of cultural assets in the case where cultural assets are financed by taxes on all the inhabitants of the city.

This phenomenon refers to questions about funding of public goods, which can be done by tax or by a voluntary contribution from the ones who demand cultural amenities.

4.2 The non-exclusion feature of amenities has to be put in perspective

According to various authors, amenities would be superior goods (Brueckner et al. 1999; Graves 1979; Partridge 2010) because their consumption increases with the income level. The existence of different city amenity endowments creates distinctive ways of localisation from an individual group to another depending on their income levels (Brueckner et al. 1999). The richest individuals can afford a higher cost of living resulting from a high level of amenities, while the poorest individuals have to locate where the housing cost is lower, that is to say where there are relatively fewer amenities. Generally speaking, this phenomenon takes place between city centre and its periphery as Brueckner et al. show in their work but it depends on the scale at which amenities operate. This phenomenon can be seen as an economic approach of the gentrification process which consists in the replacement of a population by another one with distinctive social and economic characteristics.

Focusing on economic consequences of gentrification, the housing price increase can be seen as a limitation of the non-exclusion feature of cultural amenities. The idea is that households that have not an income level high enough will not be able to afford an increase of the living cost level either to locate in any city with a high level of cultural amenities. Then, the non-exclusion feature of cultural amenities must be put into perspective because there is non-exclusion only for people where amenities operate. There is exclusion by indirect prices especially housing prices toward people who are not in the area and who want to be in. The area can be a district, a city or more generally a territory.

Finally, the gentrification phenomenon corresponds to a mechanism of value privatization by specific groups of population generally high income level groups who live in an area with cultural amenities. The non-rivalry feature of amenities still remains even after an increase in the attractiveness because the amenity is available only on a specific area and its action is less and less present as individuals go away from its source, regardless of the number of individuals on the territory.

Individuals who are excluded from the consumption of cultural amenities can still benefit from cultural amenities as a tourist locating temporary on the area. However, we can wonder whether cultural amenities of residents are the same as tourists ones. For example the pride to live in a cultural city will not be experienced in the same way by a permanent resident or by a tourist.

4.3 Cultural amenities as creators of urban desamenities

First of all, each cultural amenity can be valued positively or negatively by individuals. In the case of a negative valuation, the use of the term desamenity instead of amenity is more relevant.

An increase in prices can be one of the consequences of attractiveness. But when there is a growth in the population density of a city, noises, pollution, phenomena like congestion effects or a lack of social diversity due to gentrification can also be observed. These may be negatively valued by individuals acting like a repelling city attribute, in others words these effects can be considered like desamenities. The rise of housing prices could also play the role of stabilizer, preventing to some extent from these negative effects by a limitation of the city attractiveness.

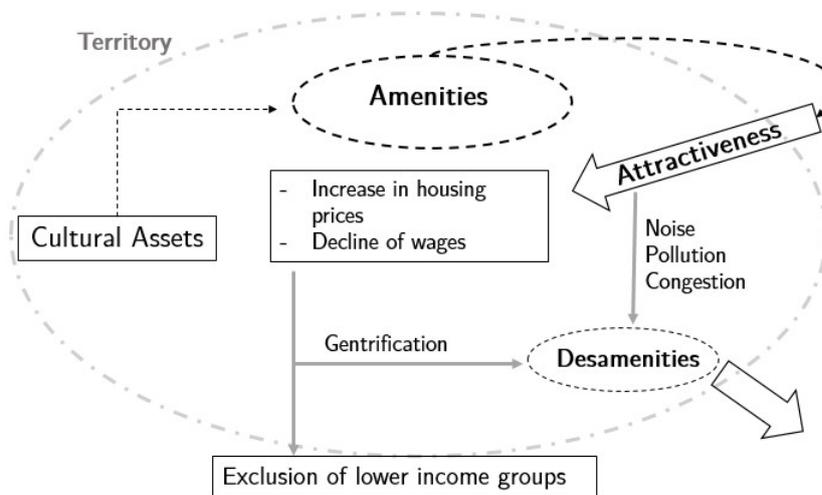


Fig. 5 Consequences of attractiveness at the city scale

As it is shown in figure 5, attractiveness resulting from cultural amenities can have two major theoretical impacts. An increase in the housing prices and a decrease in wages. These variations might exclude low income renters of the city or just prevent their access to the city as permanent residents if they are not yet. Another negative impact of amenities can be the creation of desamenities like congestion effects, noises or pollution because they are non-market local services, negatively valued by residents and they satisfy non-rivalry and non-exclusion features in the city area.

Finally, if these theoretical elements are correct, we might observe empirically an inverted U-shape relation between intensity of cultural amenities in an area and its level of attractiveness as it is shown in figure 6.

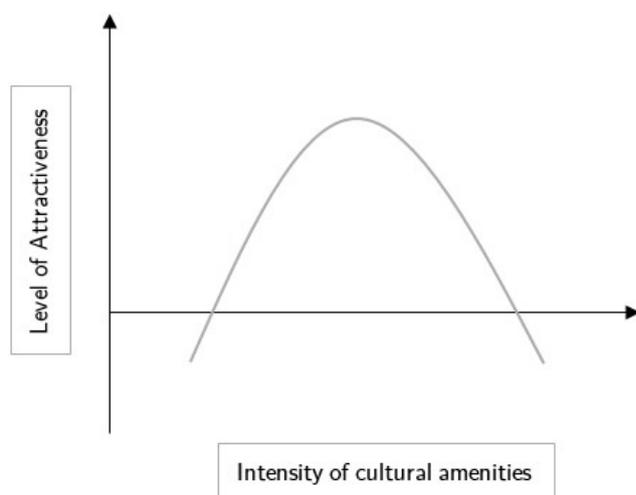


Fig. 6 Relation between intensity of cultural amenities and the attractiveness level of an area

5 Conclusion

This article provides a contribution to the literature on cultural amenities in two respects. A first contribution synthesises multiple definitions of the amenity concept to provide one which fits more particularly the cultural domain. The second contribution tries to put forward some features that can help to understand the relation between cultural assets and cultural amenities. Some clues are provided about the way cultural investment can create attractiveness.

Thus, cultural amenities are non-market services created by cultural assets located on a specific territory. The individuals who are located on this territory can benefit from amenities or desamenities without paying any explicit price, because amenities satisfy the features of public goods around their source. The non-exclusion feature have to be tempered by the consequences of the attractiveness. In other words, the exclusion does not result from an explicit price of the amenities but from its implicit price which can be calculated from the increase of housing prices on the territory that provides cultural amenities. Other phenomena like gentrification, noises, pollution can also be consequences of attractiveness and are generally negatively valued by residents. In other words, cultural amenities can be a source of desamenities, having a negative impact on the attractiveness of the city. Public policies like supervision of rents or quotas of social housing in France can be seen as means implemented to reduce the possible negative effects of attractiveness like housing price increase and exclusion of lower income groups from the city.

The second contribution is committed to understand the link between cultural assets and amenities. Using Lancaster's approach, amenities are considered as characteristics resulting from the existence of cultural assets in the city, but

also from the combinations that occur between different kinds of assets. As an example, the city charm can result from the architecture of numerous buildings, not only the ones dedicated to cultural activities. This approach induces a certain form of complexity of the process as defined by Morin (1988) with a lot of possible interactions between city characteristics that show a kind of randomness in the cultural amenities creation process. Despite this apparent complexity, three factors are highlighted where decision makers can play a role in increasing the strength of cultural amenities in the city, in order to encourage its attractiveness. The first factor is the density of cultural assets in the city that contribute to the identification of culture in the city. Another factor is the anchorage of cultural assets. The more permanent and interrelated cultural assets are, the more territories can distinguish one from each other, strengthening cultural amenities. Finally the last way discussed to enhance cultural amenities in the city is relative to flagship projects used to launch or strengthen cultural development in cities, building quickly and rapidly a cultural image to the city, on a national and sometimes on an international scale like with the Guggenheim in Bilbao.

This work about the definition of cultural amenity has to be continued dealing with some main issues. The first one at stake deals with amenity values, which are a non-market values requiring to be assessed using non market valuation methods (Ready and Navrud 2002; Throsby 2003). The calculation of these non-market values is useful to guide the decision markers regarding cultural development of cities.

The second issue at stake is the measure of amenities. Two ways of measuring can be identified in the literature. The first one counts the number of cultural assets in an area. It is an approach upstream to the process of cultural amenity creation that neglects the complexity inherent to this process. This way to measure amenities corresponds more to a measure of a potential amenity supply and is used by Glaeser et al. (2001) and Clark (2004). The advantage is to take into account the importance of the cultural sector in the city without any value judgment about amenities. This measure corresponds to a strict supply side approach of the phenomenon. The second way to measure cultural amenities requires an analysis of the life quality perception by residents that is to say of different kinds of amenities in cities by studying location choices of individuals. This spatial equilibrium approach studies the price differentials on the housing market and labour market where amenities are supposed to be capitalised. This is used in urban economics for valuing quality of life (Blomquist 2006; Blomquist et al. 1988; Chen and Rosenthal 2008; Gabriel and Rosenthal 2004) and also applied to study cultural amenities mostly cultural heritage by studying the wage differentials (Clark and Kahn 1988; Falck et al. 2011, 2015; Schmidt and Courant 2006) or the prices differentials on housing market (Koster and Rouwendal 2015; Sheppard 2013; Sheppard et al. 2006; Van Duijn and Rouwendal 2013). The disadvantage of this method is the need for several data. The consideration of value judgement from individuals that's why this way to measure cultural amenities is

more demand-oriented.

Cultural amenities is a central concept to understand the non-market values created by culture on a territory and not only the pecuniary externalities that are created which benefit some restaurants or hotels. An economic analysis of cultural amenities and of its total economic value would allow to study the whole impact of culture on the economy. This would not only take into account the impact through GDP but also indirect one studying the location patterns of certain individuals knowledge workers and creative workers that can be a strategic asset to the territory economy and for the post-industrial firms.

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