

Cultural and creative production and local specialization patterns.

The case of the Halland Region, Sweden

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In this paper, we map and analyze the spatial structure of the distribution of cultural activities and facilities in the Region of Halland, in their relationship to activities outside the cultural and creative sphere, to determine to what extent cultural and creative production plays a role in the local specialization pattern of the Region. To this purpose, we present a novel methodology based on the so-called Topological Weighted Centroid analysis and on the so-called Minimum Spanning Tree as computed by an AutoCM Artificial Neural Network on an extended database of geo-referenced data on the socio-economic structure of the Halland Region. This methodology has already been applied by our research team, with interesting results, in the analysis of the emergent cultural geography of the Veneto Region in Italy. The value added of this new paper is the development of new analytical tools that relate such geography to the organization of the entire local economy.

Our analysis shows, among other things, that cultural and creative production still plays a relatively marginal role in the economic specialization pattern of the Region, and that the critical variables in this respect have to do with relative lack of human and cultural capital.

Moreover, we show how the time dynamics of the distribution of cultural activity across the region is influenced by outside factors such as the construction of new transport infrastructure, but also how, in the absence of specific, targeted cultural policies that support a stronger specialization profile in the cultural sphere, the positive impact of an improved physical connectivity of the Region for its cultural vibrancy is going to be temporary.

The methodology developed in this paper can be applied to other regional and metropolitan contexts and is therefore useful for future analytical and comparative work in the regional economics and geography of cultural production.