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Spatial quality of cultural production districts

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Chapter 2

Spatial quality for cultural production districts: Defining research questions

Abstract

This chapter summarizes how a literature review has resulted in research questions for this thesis. Its starting point was the planning ambitions of many Dutch cities to develop mixed-use urban live-work districts, which are to an extent specifically targeted at creative firms and their workers. Such plans can be seen as a new type of arts-based economic development strategy. They could, however, be better informed by the growing academic literature on the topics of creative industries and the creative city.

The literature review therefore covers relevant academic and grey literature, and results in an overview of location factors of creative firms and workers. The literature review reveals two main gaps in

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the knowledge on the spatial qualities for mixed-use live-work milieus. First, studies on the desirable spatial qualities for firms and workers in creative industries mostly focus on cities, not districts. Thus, they offer little evidence that is usable for planning cultural production districts on the spatial scale of within-city districts. Second, the academic literature hardly informs planners about the desirable district spatial qualities for creative entrepreneurs and workers outside of work time. Planning of such milieus should, however, as suggested by a wider literature on the creative class, and particularly creative workers, be about more than just offices. They should be places where working, living and leisure can be mixed in both time and space. As a major output from the literature review, the conclusion section outlines the resulting research questions for interdisciplinary, empirical research aiming to fill these knowledge gaps. It is this recommended empirical research that is carried out and reported in the subsequent chapters.

2.1 Introduction

Many Dutch cities aim to attract creative industries. According to Dutch academic research, both the creative class and the creative industries are promising groups of inhabitants and firms to attract and retain. Creative industries in the Netherlands are concentrated in large cities, and they employ a growing number of people (Kloosterman, 2004). Creative industries provided 3% of all jobs in the Netherlands in 2003 (Blanken & Koops, 2005; Manshanden & Jonkhof, 2005). Moreover, creative industries and creative class professionals are suggested as providing support for urban meeting places such as cafes and restaurants, galleries and theatres. This increases the locational qualities of cities (Florida, 2002).

Although the academic debate on these findings is still open, already creative industries are major target groups in many plans for mixed-use live-work milieus. However, it is hard for urban planners to obtain suggestions for concrete planning measures, even though there is a large amount of academic research on creative industries available. Urban planners therefore rely on their intuition and experience in formulating planning ambitions. This practice need not be harmful. By contrast, many desirable inner cities, residential areas and leisure facilities have been planned without any scientific input.

Nevertheless, intuition and experience of individual planning professionals may not be able to keep up with expanding area development projects and budgets.

Using existing academic research results could help to produce planning ambitions and actions that are more realistic and more effective. Many large and middle-sized cities in the Netherlands today have the ambition to become a creative city; and some have dedicated specific districts within their cities as so-called “creative zones”. In many cases, such creative zones are envisaged as mixed-use live-work milieus (that often also aim at middle- and high-income residents in general) and as new “hotspots” for creative entrepreneurs to live and work. Such mixed-use live-work milieus with concentrations of small, creative firms and artists are referred to as “cultural production districts” within this dissertation (see also Ashworth, 2005; Scott, 2004).

Relevant planning knowledge for cultural production districts is, however, scattered among many academic fields. An overview would therefore be helpful for planning professionals in analyzing whether their ambitions in planning for cultural production districts are realistic: Which districts in their cities are suitable for attracting creative industries? How can planning enhance the desired functioning of such areas, in this case attracting creative industries and their workers? This chapter reviews the relevant literature on this topic and provides an overview of location factors of creative firms and workers. The conclusion section outlines the resulting research design, questions, methods and site selection criteria that were developed from the literature review.

2.2 Defining concepts

2.2.1 Creative entrepreneurs

Within this study, I define creative industries as both commercial and non-profit economic activities dedicated to producing goods and services with mainly aesthetic and symbolic value: creative producer services (including design and advertising agencies), media and entertainment, and arts and museums¹. As such,

¹ The studies reviewed in this chapter use the following definition of creative industries (with some minor differences) which was operationalized in the Dutch SBI 1993 codes by Kloosterman (2004) to include the following sectors: 22 (publishers), 36 (product designers), 742 (architectural services), 744 (advertising and graphic designers), 748 (photography), 922 (radio/television program production), 923 (other entertainment and arts), 924 (news agents and journalists), 925 (libraries, museums, and nature protection). In my selection of 63 interviewees, I used a more detailed list of subcategories within these subsectors, based on five-digit codes, in order to include particularly the type of firms most involved in producing semiotic and symbolic content: 74201 (architectural services), 74875 (interior architectural services),

this definition includes creative sectors included in seminal studies using an industry approach (e.g. Blanken & Koops, 2005; Kloosterman, 2004; Pratt, 1997; Scott, 2000, 2004) or an occupational approach (e.g. Markusen et al., 2008). I distinguish the creative sector from other sectors that make products with less symbolic and aesthetic content. Unlike Florida (2002), I do not include science, engineering, and other high-human capital sectors in my definition of the creative economy. Rather, I restrict my definition to sectors producing mainly aesthetic and symbolic value, such as designers, photographers, architects, filmmakers, visual and performing artists. Creative entrepreneurs are defined within this study as owners of firms in both the commercial and non-profit creative sectors, whereas creative workers are people being employed in these sectors.

2.2.2 Environmental perception

Environmental perception, as a general concept, means to the result of people's observations of physical, perceptible objects, including other people, and natural and built characteristics of the environment. In the field of urban planning, Kevin Lynch was one of the first to interview ordinary people about how they perceive the city. In his book "The image of the city," he took the physical environment as the independent variable: Physical, perceptible objects, visual form, in sum, the city as a thing in itself. His objective was to uncover how this physical environment was perceived, and he termed the result of this perception the "environmental image," that he defines as "the generalized mental picture of the exterior physical world that is held by an individual" (Lynch 1960, p. 4).

In the field of geography, perception is used to denote "how things are remembered or recalled by people - as with respect to resources or hazards" (Golledge & Stimson, 1997, p. 189). People also gather secondary information about their environment, for example from the media or from hearsay. Given that people's perceptions respond to their needs, and social and cultural values, Golledge and Stimson stress that constructed and selective images by people of their environment have stability, endurance and consistency (Golledge & Stimson, 1997, pp. 197-198).

Thus, the concept of environmental perception in both planning theory and geography assumes a difference between the factual people and objects that are observed, and the constructed image that a perceiver (a person) derives from

74401 (advertising and graphic designers), 74811 (photography), 92211 (radio/television program production), 92313 (artists, limited within my selection to visual artists).

this observation. This concept of environmental perception differentiates between what may be called *reality*, namely factual and observed people and objects, and *people's perceptions* of that factual, observable reality (Gregory et al., 2009, pp. 202-203).

In behavioral geography, perception has been a central concept used to explain why people do not have a perfect knowledge of the world, as well as a limited ability to use this knowledge. Yet, people do base their spatial behavior and decisions on this imperfect knowledge and imperfect ability. This viewpoint is based on Herbert Simon's criticism of the concept of economic man (Simon, 1957). Aoyama, Murphy and Hanson (2011, p. 158) depict this *homo economicus* as "that improbable figure who possesses complete information and always behaves in a rational, utility-maximizing manner," and who was the central actor of the quantitative models in economic geography during its quantitative revolution in the 1950s and 1960s. Authors such as Pred (1967) used Simon's rejection of the *homo economicus* in a new, behavioral approach to location theory. The behavioral approach to location theory in economic geography considers entrepreneurs to base their firm location decisions on their *perception* of what is real, rather than on reality itself. Therefore, it is this imperfect and subjective knowledge that is examined in such studies. The aim is then to explain how entrepreneurs base their firm location decisions on their perceptions and thoughts about places. Various methods have been used to explore these perceptions, including analyzing mental maps of entrepreneurs, surveys, and conducting interviews with entrepreneurs (see e.g. Brouwer, 2005; Meester & Pellenbarg, 2006; Pellenbarg, 1985).

2.2.3 Location factors

Location factors are generally defined as the common determinants of an industrial location that shape the location decisions of entrepreneurs, by influencing the profitability of a firm (for reviews, see e.g. Arauzo, Liviano & Manjon, 2010; Van Dijk & Pellenbarg, 2000; Brouwer, Mariotti & Van Ommeren, 2004). A non-exhaustive list of location factors includes:

- at the spatial scale of the business premises: price, size, and image;
- at the spatial scale of a district, accessibility and distance to the inner city and railway station;

- at the spatial scale of a city or region, local labor pools, educational institutions, and airport facilities.

As these examples illustrate, location factors are usually defined on a specific spatial scale: a firm's site, its situation, region, country, or part of the world. Furthermore, location factors are mostly objective, tangible features of a firm's site and situation. However, they may have differing importance and specific meanings for different economic sectors.

Next to classifications of location factors per spatial scale, location factors have also been distinguished in the literature either as push, pull and keep factors; or as hard and soft location factors.

Push, pull and keep factors are studied typically in studies on firm relocation (e.g. Van Dijk & Pellenbarg, 2000; Brouwer, Mariotti & Van Ommeren, 2004). Push factors are "reasons to leave the present location" driven by a need to "improve the current level of profits". For example, a firm's current offices can be too expensive in relation to its current profits. A lack of space and accessibility problems have been found to be the most important push factors in Dutch studies on firm relocation (Van Dijk & Pellenbarg, 2000, p. 195).

Pull factors are reasons for a firm's decision maker to be attracted to another location, because that location is expected to enable a firm to obtain a higher level of profits than it can achieve in its current location (Van Dijk & Pellenbarg, 2000, p. 195).

Keep factors are "reasons to stay at the present location". Keep factors are related to so-called sunk costs, previous investments in a firm's building and infrastructure at its present location. Such sunk costs can constrain locational changes, often because firms would have to invest similar large sums of money and effort in their building and infrastructure in a new location. Thus, such a firm must be able to make much larger profits at a new location to cover the costs of relocation (Van Dijk & Pellenbarg, 2000, pp. 195-196).

A second type of classification of location factors distinguishes hard from soft location factors. Just as push, pull and keep factors are all defined in relation to a firm's profits; hard and soft location factors are also seen as factors that influence profits and costs (see e.g. Dziembowska-Kowalska & Funk, 2000, pp. 2-4). The distinction here is between direct and indirect influences on a firm's profitability: Hard location factors have a direct influence and include the costs of material inputs, transport costs and wages. In other words: the classical cost elements that are quantifiable in terms of money. Soft location factors have an indirect influence on a firm's profitability. Soft location factors include the rep-

representativeness and image of a location and its region, the natural environment, the existing public infrastructure, and residential, cultural and leisure amenities. As such, soft location factors are more difficult to measure and integrate into a firm's profit calculation.

Over recent decades, research into the location behavior of knowledge-intensive firms in post-Fordist, knowledge-based urban economies has increasingly recognized soft location factors as influencing firm and worker location behaviors (see, amongst others, Florida, 2002; Musterd et al., 2007; Pellenbarg, 2012; Scott, 2007). For example, Pellenbarg found that having a representative building has become a more important push *and* pull factor in firm relocation decisions since 1977. Representative surroundings for a firm's premises entered the list of important pull factors at position 5 in 2008 (Pellenbarg, 2012, pp. 10-11).

Other recent research into manufacturing and business services found that the location behavior of firms is, alongside economic motivations, in part opportunity-driven. In particular entrepreneurs with young firms attach much value to being located close to their personal social networks, including their families (Stam, 2007). For Dutch professionals belonging to Florida's creative class (in a refined definition), Marlet (2009) found that those Dutch cities that offered residential amenities including a good quality of housing stock, heritage, proximity to nature, cultural venues, and restaurants were the most attractive. For the US, Carlino and Saiz found that urban amenities influence the economic growth of cities and city regions; and within these cities, particularly for districts adjacent to recreational amenities (Carlino & Saiz, 2008).

These studies are just a few of the academic studies that indicate that non-quantifiable, soft location factors are taken into account by entrepreneurs and workers in their location choices of places to live and work.

The definition of location factors used in this dissertation is based on the above definitions of location factors, and on the recent debate about the importance of soft location factors, while also taking into account some specific characteristics of the creative industries. I view the location factors of creative firms and workers as consisting of (1) their needs and preferences related to firm location at the time of settlement, and (2) their current implicit or explicit needs and preferences that play a role in decisions to remain in their district. This definition in part stems from the policy-oriented aim of this thesis with policymakers being interested in both attracting and retaining firms. To assess factors that concern needs and preferences and that play a role in decisions to remain in a district, I also included literature on the work practices and activity patterns of creative entrepreneurs

and workers in the literature review. This literature provides knowledge on the needs and preferences of such people in their daily work and life.

Furthermore, following the debate about soft location factors, I understand location factors as also including factors that may - at first sight - appear rather unrelated to improving the profits of a firm, such as professional and residential facilities and the visual quality of a firm's district. This is why I define the location factors of creative firms and workers as consisting of their *needs and preferences* related to firm location. Still, these location factors could respond to the needs and preferences of entrepreneurs from either a professional or a work-life balance perspective. There are several reasons to conjecture that such location factors may matter, and be related to my object of study.

First, creative firms are small in general: The owner-manager is the only worker in about two thirds of all creative firms, and 95% of all creative firms have fewer than 10 employees (Stam, De Jong, & Marlet, 2008). Fast growing creative firms, therefore, seem not to be in the majority. Thus, the above-mentioned push and pull factor of a lack of space for expansion may be less important for creative firms than their importance found in other economic sectors (Van Dijk & Pellenbarg, 2000, p. 216).

Second, my focus is on factors that are important in location choices *within* cities, thus, to locate in certain districts. Within cities, I hypothesize that many districts offer *more or less* equal benefits in terms of, for example, zoning conditions for creative firms. Thus, if quite a few districts within a city offer more or less the same conditions in terms of hard location factors that are directly influencing the costs of wages, premises or transport; then less quantifiable, soft location factors may become more important in choosing for a specific district.

In other words, the city may offer a "level playing field," in that it offers an environment in which all creative firms within this city must follow the same rules (for instance with respect to zoning and wages) and are given an equal ability to compete (for instance with respect to accessibility by car and supply of office space in office premises or dwellings). As such, districts within cities may offer other assets to a firm than those directly related to its profitability, as those are more or less equal in the urban level playing field. These district assets may thus also be steering location decisions, because many districts more or less equally meet other criteria. For example, a few studies suggested that a visually inspiring urban environment may be an explanation for the location decisions of creative entrepreneurs (Drake, 2003; Helbrecht, 2004; Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006). Such soft location factors may be responding to needs and preferences of creative

entrepreneurs that have as yet been unexplored, because they may be less important in location decisions *between* cities as compared to those *within* cities, which is the spatial scale of this study.

For a broader range of economic sectors, Van Dijk and Pellenbarg tentatively conclude that firm relocation decisions are less related to site-related location factors, than to a firm's internal factors such as its organizational goals and financial reserves (2000, p. 216). However, Pellenbarg (2012) argues that for a broader range of economic sectors, the Netherlands as a whole becomes more and more a "level playing field," as becomes clear from his stated preference research in the Netherlands from 1983-2012 (see also Meester & Pellenbarg, 2006). For creative entrepreneurs specifically, I would expect that soft location factors, such as professional and residential facilities and the visual quality of a firm's district, to matter to them both as workers and as residents of cultural production districts. Since the visual features of work milieus, or business districts, are not generally recognized as important in many or even most of the peer-reviewed articles in economic geography, I deliberately also included so-called "grey" sources in my literature review, i.e. studies about the needs and preferences of creative entrepreneurs and workers in terms of business milieus in reports by municipalities, urban consultants and planners².

2.2.4 Spatial quality

This chapter orders location factors into several types of spatial quality that are needed, or preferred, by creative entrepreneurs and workers. At the time of designing this PhD research, I have chosen to do so to provide a more useful overview for urban planners and designers, whose terminology usually concerns spatial quality of live-work milieus rather than location factors of their targeted users. Second, I aimed to schematize location factors within a broad definition of spatial quality, and to incorporate a few different streams of academic literature on location factors of creative firms and workers. For example, I premised that theories both in line with the literature of Scott (focusing on creative industries, firms and entrepreneurs) and of Florida (focusing on creative class professionals, a group that is more broadly defined) could provide location factors and spatial

² An example of the few peer-reviewed studies in economic geography that does include visual features of business premises and their environs, such as representativeness, is the PhD thesis by Pen (2002).

quality aspects that are important for creative entrepreneurs and workers. On this basis, I needed to study all the aspects of spatial quality that are used in these theories.

For this purpose, I used a broad definition and conceptualization of spatial quality as a starting point (Hooimeijer et al., 2001). Hooimeijer's definition includes spatial qualities with both use and symbolic value, the latter referring to the perceived attractiveness and image of a place in terms of its site, situation, composition, and layout in comparison to other places. Furthermore, Hooimeijer conceptualizes several types of spatial quality from economic, social, ecological and cultural perspectives. This leads to a rather complex operationalization of spatial quality. Since not all of these perspectives are useful in ordering the spatial quality of cultural production districts, I refined this operationalization into three types of spatial quality:

Physical spatial quality:

Physical objects in, and physical features of, a cultural production district that are of professional importance for creative firms and workers, such as a district's professional facilities, visual features, and public spaces. The term "physical" signifies here perceptible, tangible and material objects and features.

Socio-economic spatial quality:

People in a cultural production district that are of professional importance for creative firms and workers, for instance entrepreneurs, workers, or clusters of these people and firms.

Work-life spatial quality:

Objects or people in a cultural production district that are of importance in combining work, life, care and leisure. These include cafés and restaurants, take-aways, galleries, live-work studios and large dwellings, schools, childcare facilities, parks, and daily shops.

The following sections describe the main location factors found in the literature, and then schematizes them according to this definition in Table 2.1.

2.3 Criteria used in the literature review

I used several criteria in selecting studies to be included in the literature review. First of all, the research subjects of a study needed to be creative entrepreneurs or creative workers, as they are the primary target users of cultural production districts. This criterion severely restricted the potential literature for review, especially in terms of studies on creative workers. Most of these studies concentrated on creative *knowledge* workers, and also included professions that belong to Florida's - broadly defined - creative class, such as lawyers, managers and scientists. Since I used a narrower definition of creative workers, namely those working in creative industries and producing mainly aesthetic and symbolic value (e.g. designers, architects, and artists), I did not include studies on such creative knowledge workers in this review.

Second, because this literature review was part of a study that aimed at the application of its results in a Dutch context (Smit 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2007), I drew most results from Dutch research, since results on spatial qualities for creative industries are likely to vary in different countries. For example, some Dutch studies have found that a location factor for creative firms is cycling distance to their clients and collaborators. Such location factors are less imaginable in other countries where, to mention just one reason, cities offer far less safe bicycle routes than Dutch cities do. When the following review does include international studies, the reason is that their findings were relevant to the topic but not covered in equivalent Dutch academic studies.

Third, I reviewed both academic studies (peer-reviewed academic publications) and so-called "grey" literature (professional publications and municipal research reports that have not been subject to peer-review). I included grey literature, because this could provide sensitizing concepts, or point to spatial qualities not covered by academic literature, such as a district's visual features or reputation. Fourth, academic, peer-reviewed economic-geographic studies commonly concentrate on location factors directly related to a location decision. For the development of cultural production districts, it is also useful to cater to the needs and wishes of creative entrepreneurs and workers outside work hours. That is, it is useful to have knowledge about their daily schedules and radiuses of action for such activities as both formal working and informal networking in cafés and clubs, leisure and sports, household and caring tasks. In other words, creative entrepreneurs and workers have multiple roles in one day. They are not only creative individuals, who are anecdotically depicted as working late, having meetings

in cappuccino bars, and enjoying a rich cultural and social life (Florida, 2002); they also are members of households and may have to spend time on household chores, such as collecting groceries and taking care of children (Jarvis & Pratt, 2006).

Therefore, the literature review also includes some studies on gentrifiers, that is, city-dwellers who settle *by choice* in often dense, mixed-use live-work milieus. As cultural production districts are mostly envisioned as such dense amenity-rich urban areas, the gentrification literature is useful in learning about spatial quality for creative entrepreneurs and workers linked to their activity patterns in their private time.

For the policy-driven nature of this research, this body of knowledge is particularly useful in various geographic settings. It explains daily activity patterns by structural variables such as age, household composition, and workload per household per week. For example, the extensive use of cafes by young working singles is explained by their need to go out to meet people, as they live on their own (e.g., Vijgen & Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, 1992). The explanation of daily activity patterns based on these variables is therefore less likely to be dependent on taste or local culture than research results focused on lifestyle. As such, household constraints in terms of time and money that result from these structural variables are likely to be applicable to households in other cities than only where the research was carried out.

However, no integrated overview is available in the social and economic geography literature on the activity patterns of creative entrepreneurs and workers during and outside work time. Most research focuses on one or the other: Economic-geographic studies focus on creative industries and firms; while urban geographic studies concentrate on gentrifiers and on their life outside work. Nevertheless, some research results indicate that these two groups, creative entrepreneurs and gentrifiers, overlap. Gentrifiers often work in alpha and - less often - in gamma professions which overlap with the creative professions (Musterd, 2004; Arnoldus et al., 2002; Reijndorp, 2004; Karsten, 2003; De Wijs, 1999).

Below, Subsections 3.2.2 and 2.4.2 summarize research on location factors and activity patterns of creative industries and creative workers respectively. Based on the first selection criterion, for studies on gentrifiers to be included in the literature review their subjects (respondents or interviewees) must for the most part be creative professionals according to my narrow definition.

2.4 Literature review

2.4.1 Location decisions and activity patterns of creative entrepreneurs

Research on the location patterns of creative firms has shown that they are still mainly located in attractive residential environments in large cities, even in this age of increasing mobility and digital communication. Research has contended that urban locations are important for creative and innovative activities as this leads more often to face-to-face contacts (e.g., Manshanden & Jonkhof, 2005; Storper et al., 2004). Using cluster theory, concentrations of creative firms in certain, usually large, cities and regions have been explained by path-dependent urban production systems: networks of interrelated industries, local specialized labor pools, and other agglomeration advantages such as educational institutions (e.g. Kloosterman, 2008; Scott, 2000, 2007). Creative clusters have been explained by a need for frequent face-to-face contacts in flexible inter-firm networks (Bassett, Griffiths, & Smith, 2002; Brown, O'Connor, & Cohen, 2000; Pratt, 1997, Scott, 2007).

Research on creative industries covering all Dutch municipalities has shown that large cities contain most creative jobs (e.g. Kloosterman, 2004). Within those cities, most creative firms have located in and around the city centers both in the Netherlands (Manshanden & Jonkhof, 2005; Musterd & Deurloo, 2006) and in an international context (Evans, 2009; Ley, 2003; Lloyd, 2004; Markusen, 2006). Overrepresentation of these firms in certain urban areas is correlated with the presence of many jobs, high real estate prices, and a growth in the average disposable income and social status of those areas (Blanken & Koops, 2005).

International research has exemplified how daily work practices lead to location decisions in favor of certain districts. Proximity to the inner city with professional institutions and night life, and the provision of living and work spaces dedicated to cultural industries influenced American artists' decisions over where to work and live (Markusen, 2006). Drake (2003, see also Helbrecht, 2004) explained the value of a visually inspiring urban environment (for example, its architecture and urban quality) as a source of inspiration for entrepreneurs in creative industries in the United Kingdom.

Amsterdam-centered research on creative industries, based on concentration maps and planners' observations in city districts, proposed the following explanations for the location decisions of creative entrepreneurs (Municipality of Amsterdam,

2006). Creative firms have preferably located within cycling distance of essential business relations and institutions, including a large supply of amenities such as meeting places and specialized bookstores. Furthermore, the above study explained the over-representation of creative firms in and around the city center by the exceptional urban and architectural quality of the inner city. Firms' premises, it was contended, were best located on a waterfront or canal. A distinctive identity and image of the neighborhood and accommodation also mattered for these industries because creative entrepreneurs and workers use their district for working, living and leisure (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006).

Another Amsterdam study proposed that an important location factor for graphic designers is that the city and its cultural life (museums, events, posters) are a source of inspiration. Second, Amsterdam offers a large number of potential clients such as business headquarters, non-profit organizations and cultural institutes. Firm accommodation for graphic designers was argued to preferably be within cycling distance of clients and subcontractors, such as copywriters and photographers, to limit the costs of frequent meetings with them. Furthermore, an attractive building in a pleasurable neighborhood mattered in such location decisions (Röling, 2004).

2.4.2 Location decisions and activity patterns of creative workers

Research on gentrifiers is so far most useful in obtaining information on creative workers because, as noted above, some research results indicate that creative workers and gentrifiers are overlapping groups of people (Musterd, 2004; Arnoldus et al., 2002; Reijndorp, 2004; Karsten, 2003; De Wijs, 1999). Part of the research on gentrifiers is therefore suitable for obtaining information about housing preferences and daily private life practices of creative workers in creative industries.

Typical by-choice city-dwellers are identified as "gentrifiers" in the literature. Within the Dutch literature on gentrifiers and their residential location patterns (e.g. Droogleever Fortuijn, 1993; Karsten, 2003; Van Diepen, 2004; Vijgen & Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, 1992), several types of gentrifiers have been distinguished: young singles (mostly students); young working singles and couples; and family gentrifiers (specifically career-minded dual-earner families with cohabiting children).

Gentrifiers have been described as having only limited time for household chores

and leisure activities as they spend much of their time working or studying. As a result, proximity and quick accessibility to the urban labor market is important for them. Second, they appear to use time-saving amenities relatively frequently in the proximity of their homes: shops, take-aways and gourmet food stores, childcare and dry cleaners, etc. Young gentrifiers, including students, singles and couples, frequently visit urban meeting places, such as cafes, restaurants, theaters, and cinemas. Research shows that gentrifiers are indeed over represented in amenity-rich, compact urban areas in and around city centres in the Netherlands (Vijgen & Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, 1992; Droogleever Fortuijn, 1993; Van Diepen, 2004).

Reijndorp (2004) found that gentrifiers were often highly educated, but that they valued interesting work over a high income. According to Reijndorp, they did not always have a high income, another reason why they liked to live in older urban areas where relatively cheap housing was still available. Gentrifiers enjoyed the opportunities of cities: cinemas, theatres and concert halls. Reijndorp also suggested that gentrifiers were using many amenities where ideas and knowledge are exchanged: cafes, restaurants, clubs, galleries, etc.

Karsten (2003, 2007) studied the daily activity patterns of family gentrifiers, many of whom had creative occupations, in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The most important location factor for living in a city for the highly educated adults was the short commuting time to work (mostly in their own city). Still, many of them regularly worked at home. This was a strategy for easier integration of daily tasks. An important factor for choosing their particular residential district was the short cycling distance to cultural amenities in the inner city. This short distance was important for two reasons: On the one hand to keep up with cultural pursuits, on the other hand to be able to easily visit networking events, such as exhibition openings and lectures.

Many leisure activities, including shopping, visiting galleries, cafés and restaurants, strolling and looking at modern architecture, were undertaken together with their children, mostly in the district itself. As parents of children, they needed safe playgrounds and grass fields with benches for parents to sit and socialize. Second, they considered sports club activities for children in the 6 to 12 agegroup to be too far away, since this required them to chauffeur the children. Such time-consuming tasks were very hard to fit in the parents' busy days. Next to their orientation on the neighborhood for leisure, social contacts, and caring tasks, these family gentrifiers stated their appreciation of the modern architecture and urban design to be a location factor in their choice for the Eastern Docklands.

2.5 Spatial quality for cultural production districts

The literature review has been visualized in an overview of location factors of creative firms and workers (Table 2.1). First, Table 2.1 categorizes the location factors obtained from the literature review on two spatial scales: city region and district. Second, Table 2.1 categorizes the location factors obtained by the literature review by type of location factors: physical location factors of creative firms, socio-economic location factors of creative firms, and work-life balance location factors of creative workers. This important distinction follows from the literature review: Location factors of creative firms are obtained from economic geographic studies; location factors of creative workers are obtained from studies in the field of gentrification, since most research subjects of the reviewed studies had creative occupations.

Third, Table 2.1 distinguishes between those spatial qualities with use and those with symbolic value. This distinction is also used in the definition of spatial quality (Hooimeijer et al., 2001) mentioned above.

Fourth, this table classifies research results as from peer-reviewed, academic publications (white background to the text) or from the so-called “grey” literature, which is not peer-reviewed such as professional publications and municipal research reports (grey background to the text).

The reason for categorizing the results of the literature review by these four aspects, is to visualize the conclusions from this literature review that spans different fields in the literature, different spatial scales, different types of location factors, and different types of value (use or symbolic) for those location factors. By distinguishing between physical and socio-economic location factors of creative firms (that is, location factors that were obtained from economic geographic studies), Table 2.1 shows that the emphasis in economic geographic studies has been on socio-economic location factors with use value viewed on the spatial scale of the city region. Of the 12 reviewed studies that consider the spatial scale of the city region, 10 are academic sources, and 8 of them provide evidence for urban production systems being explanatory for the spatial patterns of creative industries: the large number of potential clients; the local labor pool, including other sectors of creative industries for project-based collaborations; professional and educational institutions; and place-based communities for local learning.

Of the 8 reviewed studies that refer to physical and/or socio-economic location factors on the spatial scale of the within-city district, only 4 are academic sources.

These studies demonstrate the importance of the spatial qualities of cultural production districts: the proximity to the inner city with professional institutions and nightlife, and the provision of living and work spaces dedicated to creative industries did matter in the location decisions of American artists (Markusen, 2006). Second, spatial qualities with symbolic value were demonstrated by Drake (2003), who explained the value of a visually inspiring urban environment as a source of inspiration for creative entrepreneurs (see also Helbrecht, 2004).

Table 2.1: An overview of location factors of creative firms and workers (table over 2 pages).

Spatial unit	Type of location factor	Type of value: use / symbolic	Location factor	Type of source: academic / grey
City region	Physical location factors for creative firms	Use value	Large cities	Kloosterman, 2004
		Symbolic value	Place-based reputations and traditions as a product brand and as a source of inspiration	Manshanden & Jonkhof, 2005 Drake, 2003
	Socio-economic location factors for creative firms	Use value	Urban cultural life (museums, events, posters) providing visual inspiration	Röling, 2004
			Large number of potential clients (business headquarters, non-profit organizations, philanthropic support)	Markusen, 2006;
		Symbolic value	Networks of related industries and activities as potential clients (cultural institutes, other sectors of creative industries)	Röling, 2004 Markusen, 2006; Kloosterman, 2008; Scott, 2000, 2007
			Local specialized creative labor pool	Markusen, 2006; Kloosterman, 2008; Scott, 2000, 2007
Work-life balance location factors for creative workers	Use value	Creative clusters with place-based professional networks for local learning processes and flexible inter-firm project-based networks	Bassett, Griffiths, & Smith, 2002; Brown Kloosterman, 2008; O'Connor, & Cohen, 2000; Pratt, 1997; Scott, 2000, 2007	
		Educational institutions for creative professions Urban cultural life (museums, events) providing meeting places	Kloosterman, 2008; Scott, 2000, 2007 Röling, 2004	
		Symbolic value	-	
		Use value	Cinema's, theatres, concert halls, cafés, clubs, galleries as places to exchange ideas	Reijndorp, 2004
		Symbolic value	-	

Note: Sources: see also in text. Sources that are academic, peer-reviewed publications demonstrating these spatial qualities are shown with white backgrounds. Sources that have not been subject to peer-review belong to so-called “grey” literature. These are shown with grey backgrounds.

Spatial unit	Type of location factor	Type of value: use / symbolic	Location factor	Type of source: academic / grey
District	Physical location factors for creative firms	Use value	Proximity to inner city with professional institutions, cultural events and nightlife Galleries, shows, clubs, events Dedicated creative work spaces: clubhouses, live/work and studio buildings, smaller performing art spaces	Drake, 2003; Markusen, 2006; Musterd & Deurloo, 2006 Manshanden & Jonkhof, 2005; Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006; Røling, 2004 Drake, 2003 Markusen, 2006
		Symbolic value	Identity and image of the neighborhood and accommodation Urban environment as a visual resource of inspiration, for example by its urban experience Urban and architectural quality of neighborhood (parks, lanes, waterfronts, canals) or seedy and transitional	Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006 Drake, 2003; Helbrecht, 2004 Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006; Røling, 2004
	Social-economic location factors for creative firms	Use value	Being part of place-based communities and local learning processes in district Accommodation is preferably within cycling distance of clients and collaborators Overrepresentation of creative firms correlates with the presence of many jobs in a district Overrepresentation of creative firms correlates with growing social status of a district	Drake, 2003 Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006; Røling, 2004 Blanken & Koops, 2005 Blanken & Koops, 2005
	Work-life balance location factors for creative workers	Use value	Proximity or short cycling / commuting time to work, and to cultural facilities in inner city Daily stores, dry cleaners, take-aways and gourmet food stores, cafés and restaurants, galleries, parks, sports fields, childcare, playgrounds Cheap housing, often in older urban areas Large dwellings for firm or work space at home Appealing environment for work, living and leisure	Dracogeever Fortuijn, 1993; Karsten, 2003; Van Diepen, 2004; Vijgen & Van Engelsdorp Gastelaars, 1992 Reijndorp, 2004 Karsten, 2003 Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006
		Symbolic value	Appealing environment for work, living and leisure Architectural style of district	Karsten, 2003

Thus, Table 2.1 shows that only a few academic studies (Drake, 2003; Markusen, 2006; Helbrecht, 2004) have carried out qualitative studies and interviewed creative entrepreneurs about district features that they perceived as important in their location decisions. The study by Musterd & Deurloo (2006) drew its conclusions based on concentration maps of creative firms within the city of Amsterdam. In addition, 4 grey sources have suggested that the spatial qualities of within-city districts, such as urban facilities and a distinctive identity of cultural production districts for working, living and leisure are important to creative entrepreneurs (Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006; Röling, 2004).

To summarize, although the scope of this literature review has been limited (as explained in Section 2.3), it shows that studies in economic geography have tended to overlook district features as a possible influence on location decisions by creative entrepreneurs, despite knowledge about such features being particularly relevant for the planning of cultural production districts.

2.6 Conclusions for the research design

I have drawn the following conclusions from the literature review as a basis for the further empirical research into location decisions by creative entrepreneurs that I report in this dissertation. These conclusions concern the topic for the new research, its specific research questions, method, and site selection criteria.

2.6.1 Topic: Spatial quality of cultural production districts

Based on the literature review, I conclude that a stronger evidence base on the spatial quality of cultural production districts is needed if local governments are to be provided with sufficient knowledge to develop meaningful planning policies. Second, the knowledge provided so far by research is scattered across various academic fields. New research that extends and integrates this evidence is necessary, particularly in view of recent attempts by cities to support and encourage creative firms by establishing attractive mixed-use live-work districts. I have identified three specific directions for further empirical research into location decisions of creative entrepreneurs.

First, as observed above, economic geographic studies on creative industries generally do not focus on the relationship between the spatial qualities of within-city districts and the locations of creative firms. Much economic-geographic research

explains the spatial distribution of creative clusters of firms in relation to elements of urban production systems as defined by Scott (2007) on the spatial scale of the agglomeration or city region; and address the specialized labour pool, the network of interrelated services and industries, and educational institutions and informal places for local learning. Thus, research is needed that focuses specifically on whether, and if so how and why, *district* spatial quality influences the location decisions of creative entrepreneurs.

2.6.2 Topic: Cultural production districts

If the emphasis of this study is on the spatial scale of the district, a necessary question is: What is a district? Districts have been defined in general terms as “city areas which the observer can go mentally inside of, and which have some common character” (Lynch, 1960, pp. 66-67). As for cultural districts, the literature distinguishes two main types: “planned” entertainment districts, and “natural” cultural districts or cultural clusters, the latter being defined as concentrations of cultural resources, including commercial creative firms, resident artists, nonprofit arts organizations, and cultural participants (Stern & Seifert, 2010). Scott (2004) makes the same kind of distinction between cultural consumption and cultural production districts based on the nature of the products sold (see also Ashworth, 2005; Evans, 2009). Arts and entertainment cultural districts mostly sell immobile products for instantaneous consumption; whereas creative firms in cultural production districts mostly produce mobile outputs, which can even have a global market reach, such as specialized design and media services.

In this study, I focus on districts that have a high concentration of creative firms compared to other districts within the same city, but that are not institutionally designated as cultural production districts. A second characteristic of the districts on which I focus is that the majority of the creative firms are involved in producing mobile cultural products, such as visual arts, architecture, design, and media.

2.6.3 Topic: Three types of spatial quality

The literature review indicated that research needed to offer more detailed evidence for the three main types of location factors outlined in Table 2.1: physical, socio-economic, and work-life balance. This requires interdisciplinary research

that bridges three distinct subfields: place-making, creative cluster theory, and gentrification theory. The findings presented in Table 2.1 were derived from these three different sub-literatures. Table 2.1 also shows that, in all of these fields, more research is needed with creative firms as the unit of analysis.

The physical location factors in Table 2.1 are mostly derived from economic-geographic studies that offer a link to place-making. Most place-making studies that have looked specifically at cultural production districts have focused on planning and promoting cultural quarters (e.g., Wansborough & Mageean, 2000). These and other studies from urban planners (such as on successful districts as best practices, thereby highlighting spatial features) tend to look at districts as the case subject, rather than using creative entrepreneurs as the central unit of analysis. Such studies, consequently, cannot reveal any causal relationship between district features and the location decisions of creative entrepreneurs.

To date, only a few academic studies have considered the spatial qualities of cultural production districts from a user perspective: the proximity to the inner city with its professional institutions and nightlife, the provision of living and work spaces dedicated to creative industries (Markusen, 2006), and visual quality (Drake, 2003; Helbrecht, 2004). However, given that Dutch grey sources also suggest that urban facilities and visual quality are important to creative entrepreneurs and workers (e.g., Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006), these physical location factors deserve further examination. Detailed empirical evidence on their salient characteristics will be particularly useful for planning practice.

To provide a rich understanding of district features that are perceived as attractive to creative entrepreneurs, such research should aim to inform economic developers and planning practitioners about operationalizing this knowledge in their own planning practice: How can they identify districts with features that creative entrepreneurs will find attractive? How do you know it when you see it? Which salient characteristics of a district's physical features are perceived by creative entrepreneurs as contributing to their location decisions?

The socio-economic location factors in Table 2.1 are mostly derived from economic-geographic studies on the location behavior of creative firms. As noted earlier, most of these studies do not scrutinize location factors at the spatial scale of the urban district although they do have the entrepreneur as the central unit of analysis, unlike most studies in place-making. Nevertheless, further research using qualitative methods, such as interviews, will be useful to investigate the spatial quality of cultural production districts. Furthermore, such new research should look at both physical and work-life balance location factors, since these

are mostly overlooked in most academic economic geographic studies on creative firms.

Moreover, it should address the question as to *why* a district's physical and socio-economic features are perceived as important by creative entrepreneurs in their location decisions, so as to provide substantive detail on how perceived district features catalyze creative production.

Next, district features that could be important for work-life balance reasons for creative entrepreneurs should be included as an independent variable. District facilities relevant for creative entrepreneurs in their roles as people with private lives and as members of households, such as supermarkets and stores, schools and daycare, may enhance the likelihood of creative firms locating in a district.

Finally, in interdisciplinary research that includes many different types of district features as potential location factors, it is interesting to examine the extent to which these features are perceived as important by creative entrepreneurs in their location decisions, vis-à-vis other location factors on other spatial scales. Information about the priorities of entrepreneurs in their wish list of location factors for their firm could inform developers as to whether they should prioritize enhancing district features in order to boost creative economies in districts, or instead offer, for example, cheap office space or start-up business loans to creative entrepreneurs who move to a district.

2.6.4 Research sites and selection criteria

From the literature review, it follows that my study on cultural production districts should be carried out in several locations using a comparative research design. The overview of location factors in Table 2.1 is mostly derived from research carried out in Amsterdam (Vijgen et al., 1992; Droogleever Fortuijn, 1993; Van Diepen, 2004, Reijndorp, 2004, Karsten, 2003; Municipality of Amsterdam, 2006; Musterd & Deurloo, 2006). Other cities in the Netherlands have different numbers of creative firms and workers, different housing markets and different severities of traffic jams, to name but a few possible influences on firm behavior and housing careers. Would, for example, creative entrepreneurs still choose to work and live in dense, amenity-rich central urban areas in close proximity to cultural institutions if attractive and affordable small-town environments were available within a short travel time of work and cultural opportunities in the central city? The extent to which the results from the Amsterdam studies are applicable to other cities requires further analysis. A set of comparable case stud-

ies would allow one to examine which location factors relevant by creative firms are place-specific and which are place-generic.

Therefore, the study should be carried out in multiple large cities in the Netherlands, which share some features in order to provide a comparable urban context for the specific research sites. These common features should include the cities having a relatively large share of creative industries in their urban economy compared to other cities in the Netherlands; and providing several cultural amenities and educational institutes for creative studies.

In selecting districts, the primary goal will be to find districts that fit what I define as a cultural production district: a relatively high concentration of creative firms in creative subsectors producing mainly mobile outputs, such as visual arts, architecture, design, and digital media. Such a concentration of related firms, since they all belong to the creative sector, can be termed a creative cluster on the district spatial scale. Interviewing creative entrepreneurs in creative clusters allows one to investigate whether these entrepreneurs take account of the presence of other similar firms in their location decisions, an aspect the literature review described as a socio-economic location factor. Second, such concentrations of creative firms may point toward physical and work-life balance spatial qualities of these districts having contributed to the decisions of creative entrepreneurs to locate there.

Second, to investigate the importance of physical and work-life balance location factors in an explorative study, it is important to select districts that present a broad range of the physical and work-life balance features that emerged from the literature review. For example, if one district has an urban park, and another district does not, this enables one to investigate whether proximity to a park is perceived as important if it is present, and whether it would be perceived as a hindrance if it were not. Selecting districts presenting a broad range of district features also helps to reduce the potential bias of research results stemming from the specific properties of a single case study area (Gerring, 2004, 2007).

Third, in case study research, it is useful to select the districts as case studies for their cross-case characteristics: here, how they fit into the wider population of what are commonly understood as cultural production districts. The literature mainly refers to inner-urban areas and redeveloped harbor districts or industrial sites. By studying such sites, a stronger claim can be made to represent a wider population of cultural production districts, and thus of offering general lessons to urban policymakers.

Fourth, it is necessary to delineate research districts that one can reasonably

assume will be perceived of as “city areas which the observer can go mentally inside of, and which have some common character” (Lynch, 1960, pp. 66-67). The reason for this is to be consistent with what respondents perceive as comprising their district, such that interviewees and interviewers will have the same area in mind when they talk about a district.

Based on these criteria, the three districts that were selected as research sites are the Eastern Docklands in Amsterdam, the Lloyd Quarter in Rotterdam, and the Hortus Quarter in Groningen. Section 3.4 further elaborates on how these districts meet the criterium of being a relative concentration of creative firms in creative subsectors. It also presents GIS maps, district maps and aerial photographs in Figures 3.2-3.7. Table 3.1, Table 4.1 and Table 5.1 present the broad range of district visual features, features pertaining to opportunities for knowledge exchange, and features pertaining to work-life balance of interest for this study as based on the literature reviews.

2.6.5 Criteria for the research method

The literature review has shown that a useful goal for further research would be to obtain insights into whether, how, and why physical and socio-economic features of districts influence the location decisions of creative entrepreneurs. If the purpose of this thesis is to respond to this call for specificity (whether, how, and why?), qualitative research is needed that explores the perceived influence of features of districts on the location decisions of creative entrepreneurs.

To measure perceptions of “what exactly is important, and why?” interviews are an appropriate method (Bryman, 2004). For this specific research question, semi-structured, in-depth interviews are most appropriate. Semi-structured interviews allow one to first ask open questions, to avoid steering the answers of interviewees about their location decisions directly towards features of the district, and to be able to relate the findings to other location factors highlighted in the literature (business space, regional labor market, etc.). Then, more focused questions can follow to investigate whether perceived district features are important in location decisions, if they have not yet been mentioned by the respondent. For one specific aim of this study, assessing the importance of physical features such as cafés and visual features, it is useful to also include questions accompanied by a district map and by pictures. Further, including a ranking question allows one to gauge how entrepreneurs perceive the relative importance of district qualities as against features of their office building and the proximity of clients and collabo-

rators within the city. This is important in assessing how creative entrepreneurs perceive the relative importance of district qualities vis-à-vis other location factors highlighted in the literature.

To measure perceptions of district features in a comparative research design, an appropriate research design will include several districts as case studies, and interviews with creative entrepreneurs as cases. In line with the focus of the main research question, creative entrepreneurs are logically the cases on which to focus with the question: What motivations do the entrepreneurs claim in explaining their decisions to locate in their district? As such, the aim is not to measure the influence of personal or firm characteristics on the location decisions of creative entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, it is useful to measure a few background variables including firm age and size, and the age and household composition of the entrepreneur. If a sufficiently large subselection of the total pool of interviewees share some characteristics (e.g., all young firms), one can also examine specific topics prevalent within this group.

2.6.6 Research questions

The main research question of this thesis is:

What is the influence of perceived physical and socio-economic features of districts on the location decisions of creative entrepreneurs?

Its key subquestions are:

1. *Are physical and socio-economic features of districts perceived as important by creative entrepreneurs in their location decisions?*
2. *Which salient characteristics of the physical and socio-economic features of districts are perceived by creative entrepreneurs as contributing to their location decisions?*
3. *Why are these perceived physical and socio-economic features of districts important in their location decisions?*
4. *To what extent are the physical and socio-economic features of districts perceived as important by creative entrepreneurs in their location decisions vis-à-vis other location factors?*

2.6.7 Reading guide for the remaining chapters

The following chapters respond to the research questions. Each chapter addresses these key questions from a different perspective and places them within different sub-literatures: place-making (Chapter 3); creative cluster theory (Chapter 4); and gentrification theory with a consumption-side perspective (Chapter 5). As such, these chapters also delve deeper into the specific sub-literatures than the brief literature review presented in this chapter. Further, these chapters offer lessons for urban policy in greater detail than is presented in Chapter 6, which offers general conclusions, reflections and implications based on the dissertation as a whole.

Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1 also provides a visual outline of the chapters in this dissertation. Each chapter can be read independently of other chapters if the reader has specific interests.

2.7 References

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