

# Residential Preferences of the ‘Creative Class’?

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**Abstract.** The desire for ‘vibrant’, ‘bohemian’ neighbourhoods forms a focal point of the amenity preferences of Richard Florida’s ‘creative class’ thesis. Here, a vibrant street culture, which includes cafes and restaurants spilling on to the pavement, is implied as being of key importance in the selection of a residential area for creative and knowledge workers. Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data, this paper examines the residential preferences of the ‘creative class’ in Dublin, Ireland. The results illustrate the continued importance of classic factors in residential decision-making, including housing cost, accessibility and travel-time to place of employment. Moreover, the results also illustrate how changes in the life-cycle, including the decision to have a family, have a direct influence on their residential location choice. While there is a tendency for younger workers to select the city centre, older workers predominantly opt to live in suburban areas with good transport connections to the city centre or their place of employment.

**Key Words:** ‘Creative Class’, Residential Preferences, life-cycle, classic location factors

## Introduction

Over the past decade, Richard Florida’s ‘creative class’ thesis (2002; 2005) has become a focal point of academic debate and urban policy formation (Scott, 2006; Evans, 2009). Florida (2002, 2005) sees the economic success of cities as being directly connected to their ability to attract and retain ‘creative people’. Urban economic growth is therefore perceived as something relatively unrelated to ‘classic’ (or ‘hard’) conditions, such as the availability of job opportunities for employees. Rather, the ‘soft’ factors, including openness, tolerance and amenity preferences, are thought to drive the location choices of potential employees (Florida, 2002, 2005), and this in its turn attracts companies. The dominance of the amenity preferences of workers within Florida’s ‘creative class’ thesis is illustrated by the emphasis placed on an urban image of an active street scene of coffee shops and bars in a historic or ‘bohemian’ urban area (Florida, 2002; Clark et al., 2002; McCann, 2007, 2008). According to Lloyd (2006, p.68), Florida’s, “...bohemia has morphed into something else, a new mainstream in which creativity, nonconformity, and lust for visceral experience can coexist comfortably with gruelling work schedules and the pursuit of massive profits.” For a number of authors, this focus on rejuvenated inner-city areas and consumption-orientated lifestyle choices further enhances the predominance of entrepreneurial forms of urban planning and development within advanced capitalist economies (Peck, 2005; Zimmerman, 2008). Thus, Florida’s bohemian image has become intertwined with the wide-ranging transformation of city centre areas associated with neo-liberal capitalism throughout the last number of decades (Peck, 2005; O’Callaghan, 2010).

Florida’s (2002, 2005) focus on established ‘urban villages’ lacks any significant examination of classic location factors such as the cost of living, an individuals’ position in the life-cycle (Rossi, 1955; Bell, 1968; Clark et al., 1984), or accessibility to the workplace (Kim et al., 2005; Prashker, et al. 2008). The ‘creative class’ thesis implies a distinction between the residential preferences of creative knowledge workers and other workers, with the former assumed to be wedded to ‘authentic’ established urban areas with an ‘active street-scene’ while the latter have different location preferences according to their age, life-cycle and income level. While Florida (2002, 2005, 2008) does not outright reject the possibility of a movement to suburban areas, his focus is predominantly on an urban image of historic urban neighbourhoods with which he associates diversity and spontaneity, and thus lacks any in-depth analysis of the key issues involved in residential choice.

A number of studies have questioned Florida’s assumptions regarding the locational preferences of the ‘creative class’ (Wojan et al., 2007; Asheim and Hansen, 2009; Andersen et al.,

2010). Most of these have been predominantly focused upon the factors attracting workers at the scale of the region, city region (Niedomyl and Hansen, 2010; Andersen et al., 2010), or nation (Houston et al., 2008). There has, however, been little examination of the preferences for particular parts of a city-region amongst the 'creative class', whether that be the city centre, the city outskirts or the periphery. Within this context, the current paper examines the residential preferences of 'creative class' workers in Dublin. Indeed, we argue that the residential choices of workers in the creative and knowledge industries are over-simplified in the existing 'creative class' literature; in effect, they are more complex than a simplistic desire to live in vibrant or 'neo-bohemian' neighbourhoods (Florida, 2002; Clark, et al, 2002; Lloyd, 2006). Nevertheless, the paper highlights the importance of the role of classic or 'hard' factors for the residential preferences of 'creative class' workers. This is evidenced by the predominance of factors such as proximity to place of work, cost of dwelling and individual's position in the life-cycle in selecting an area in which to live (Bell, 1968; Rossi, 1955; Clark et al, 1984, Karsten, 2003).

The next section gives an overview of literature examining the 'classic' factors associated with residential preferences. This is followed by an overview of Florida's 'creative class' thesis, and its association with entrepreneurial urban planning. Then the methods and the results of the paper are presented. Finally, conclusions are drawn linking the current paper to previous literature on the 'creative class' and residential preferences.

### **Residential Choice: The role of 'classic' factors**

Literature examining classic factors influencing residential preferences has predominantly focused on economic and demographic determinants of location choice (Rossi, 1955; Bourne, 1981; Alonso, 1964). The main argument is that residential preferences and decision making vary through the course of the life-cycle (Clark and Huang, 2003; Clark et al., 1984). As households move through the life-cycle, their need for physical space changes and their residential preferences adjust to these changes. This may result in the search for more compact and centrally located space at an early stage in adulthood, followed by a desire for more space linked with the decision to have a family. Households whose children have grown up and left, for example, may desire to downsize (Bourne, 1981, p.137):

“This hypothetical life cycle progression through the housing stock also has a spatial imprint. Typically the new household would seek rental accommodation in the inner city or suburbs, then move into the newer suburbs when children arrive, and subsequently into more mature suburbs or exurbs as the family matures.”

In the literature, much of the research focus centres on family households: the essential argument is that family households desire more dwelling space in order to bring up their children and that the costs of such space is cheaper in the suburbs; such families in effect engage in a trade-off of more and cheaper space in the suburbs for longer and more costly travel to work. This is, of course, only a starting point and over the years researchers have explored the complexity of this trade off. Families not only desire more dwelling space, but also have a preference for high quality and accessible schools, good local amenities, accessible leisure and recreation spaces and neighbourhoods that are seen as safe and socially homogenous (Karsten, 2007; Hur and Morrow Jones, 2008). Kim et al. (2005a) point to the importance of open space by demonstrating that those who decide to raise a family are more likely to trade accessibility to place of work for accessibility to more open space or a better quality of 'natural' environment. The location and ease of transport accessibility to the workplace has also been highlighted as an important element in the selection of a residence. This is also related to a person's position in the life-cycle (Kim et al., 2005a; Prahsker, et al., 2008). For example, Prahsker et al. (2008) have highlighted how those who are single and without children are more likely to select accommodation that is closer to their place of work. Thus, these individuals have shorter commutes. On the other hand, those who are looking to raise a family make their residential selection based on a compromise between accessibility to work and size of residence and thus tend to live further from their place of work.

While most research on residential preference generally confirms the life-cycle hypothesis, the recent work of Karsten (2007) and Boterman et al (2010) alters it somewhat. Their work examines the location decisions of family households who decide not to move to the

suburbs and remain in the city. Karsten's (2007) analysis of middle class families in Rotterdam shows that they have a commitment to city living, are embedded in middle class social networks and make a strategic choice to remain in the city as in many cases both partners work in the city. However, they remain critical of the city as a place to bring up children, arguing that the city centre is not as child friendly as the suburbs, thus confirming one of the reasons most families seek the suburbs. Karsten makes clear that families seeking the city centre are atypical and remain a minority. Research by Boterman et al. (2010) examining processes of gentrification in Amsterdam concluded that many middle class gentrifiers who would normally migrate to the suburbs when they have children, are now staying in the city centre.

Much of the research on residential preferences is concerned with what are termed 'revealed preferences'. In other words it focuses on the actual decisions made by households. Increasingly, however, there are more stated preference studies which give households a series of complex, though hypothetical, choices about future residential choice (Pagliara et al, 2010; Hunt, 2010). Offering households complex hypothetical alternatives has the advantage of seeking to emulate real world conditions but have the disadvantage of what is termed commitment bias; in other words, respondents are not committed to behave in the way they say they will (Kim et al, 2005b). The results of the research show that individuals prefer residential locations with a combination of shorter commuting time, lower transport costs, lower density and higher quality schools (Kim et al, 2005b, 1633). These results are not dramatically different to many revealed preference studies.

### **The Role of Amenity Preferences in Florida's 'Creative Class' Thesis**

Florida's 'creative class' is comprised of two specific groups. The first of these is the 'super-creative core', which consists of those working in computing and mathematics, architecture and engineering, science and social science occupations, education (including training and library occupations) as well as occupations in the areas of arts, design, entertainment, sports and media (Florida, 2002 p.328). The second group are 'creative professionals', comprising of those working in management, business and finance, the legal profession, healthcare workers and high-end sales and sales management (*Ibid*).

The thesis revolves around the 3T's of technology, talent and tolerance. In essence, tolerant areas are perceived to be attractive to talent, which in turn attracts high-tech companies and stimulates regional economic growth. Florida's ideas have been widely adopted within policy-making circles (McCann and Ward, 2010; Peck and Theodore, 2010). In particular, 'place-making' ideas contained within the 'creative class' thesis have become prominent whereby cities are reworked according to the perceived desires of 'creative people'. This includes the transformation of public space in a fashion that is attractive to middle class consumption patterns and the tourist industry. Indeed, to a certain extent Florida's ideals have merged with already-existing strategies, such as city re-branding exercises and the development of high-profile architectural landmarks (see Vicari Haddock, 2010; Vanolo, 2008). Thus, the reworking of urban space according to the assumed needs and wants of the 'creative class' extends the use of entrepreneurial forms of urban planning and its association with 'culture' and consumption (Peck, 2005).

### **Location for Table 1: The role of Residential Preferences within Florida's 'Creative Class' Thesis (After Florida, 2002)**

Florida's (2002, 2005) perspective on the relationship between residential choice and the 'creative class' is somewhat ambivalent. On one level, throughout much of his writings on the 'creative class', Florida focuses upon the importance of the broader region in promoting urban economies. Moreover, with direct reference to residential choice, Florida (2002, p.233) notes the degree to which members of the 'creative class' will move according to their position in the life-cycle: "Young people, when they first move to New York, live in places like the East Village, Park Slope, Williamsburg or Hoboken, where rents are more affordable and there are lots of other

young people”. He continues: “Once marriage and children come along, some stay in the city while others relocate to bedroom communities...” Thus, to a certain extent Florida fits his ‘creative class’ thesis within broader theories of residential choice. However, such sentiments stand in relative isolation within Florida’s work, with residential choice being implicit within his broader arguments, and the focus being placed largely upon factors such as openness, diversity and amenities.

While the desire to be in close proximity to nature, or places in which to take part in ‘participatory’ activities (such as mountain biking) are mentioned, the focus is predominantly upon established urban neighbourhoods in centrally located areas that are set in opposition to ‘generic’ suburbia. Here, Florida is at pains to connect the ‘creative class’ to notions of bohemia, the ‘back to the city movement’, and down town or city centre areas:

“...creative workers strongly prefer the mixed-use type of urban setting, both for living and working. They are drawn to stimulating and experiential creative environments. They gravitate to the indigenous street-level culture found in Soho, Greenwich Village, and parts of Brooklyn and [New] Jersey. They look for places with visible signs of diversity – different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, income levels, or lifestyles” (Florida, 2005, p.164).

In espousing the importance of diversity and tolerance and its connection to established urban neighbourhoods, Florida’s ideal urban image relies heavily upon the work of Jane Jacobs (1961) and her rejection of modernist urban planning in favour of tightly-knit, high-density neighbourhoods (*Ibid*) such as the afore-mentioned Greenwich Village. For Florida (2002, p.41-42), Jacobs’ perspective was that “the street where many different people came together, was both a source of civility and a font for creativity.” Indeed, in developing his argument, Florida evokes Jacobs’ (1961) fabled Hudson Street in New York with its mixed use, wide pavements, ethnic diversity and “...lots of old, underutilized buildings, ideal for individual and creative enterprises ranging from artists’ studios to entrepreneurial shops” (*Ibid*, p.42). Elaborating on this urban image, Florida (*Ibid*) perceives the choices of the ‘creative class’ to be based primarily on a neighbourhood ideal of spontaneous interaction in culturally diverse settings, primarily in established parts of cities. As later elaborated upon (*Ibid*, p183), this “...“scene of scenes” provides another set of visual and aural cues they [the ‘creative class’] look for in a place to live and work.”

As summarised in Table 1, the neighbourhoods associated with tolerance and diversity, which the ‘creative class’ are thought to be attracted to as areas in which to reside, are also orientated towards cosmopolitan forms of entertainment such as restaurants and bars and other consumption-based amenities (Clark and Lloyd, 2002). When taken together, the desire for this mixture of factors is referred to by what Florida (2002, p.228) perceives as a search for ‘authenticity’:

“Authenticity comes from several aspects of a community – historic buildings, established neighbourhoods, a unique music scene or specific cultural attributes. It comes from the mix – from urban grit alongside renovated buildings, from the commingling of young and old, long-time neighbourhood characters and yuppies, fashion models and “bag ladies.””

Here, authenticity is perceived as a search for an urban idyll where there is continuity between the past and the present through social ties and the physical structure of a city area (Zukin, 2009, 2010). This urban image, once primarily associated with artists, has therefore been re-appropriated by Florida (2002, 2005) into what Ley (2003, p.2528) refers to as the “residential landscapes of the creative city”.

While never rejecting suburbia outright, there is an implicit bias within Florida’s (2002) ‘creative class’ towards the social forms which the likes of authors such as Jacobs (1961) and Clark and Lloyd (2002) have seen as being related to established central areas of cities. Indeed, where Florida does acknowledge the role of suburbs as places of attraction for the ‘creative class’, it is based less on ‘hard’ factors, such as the desire for greater amounts of space and more on the shift towards ‘authentic’ “... pedestrian-friendly town centers filled with coffee-shops, sidewalk cafes, designer merchants and renovated office lofts” (Florida, 2002, p.291). This, he contends, is

based on the desire to “...attract the talented people and thus the companies that power growth in today’s economy (*Ibid*).”

A key criticism of Florida’s thesis has been on its causal nature. For Peck (2005), the development of ‘hip’ and trendy neighbourhoods is not so much a cause of prosperity, but a symbol of up-market consumption patterns associated with wider urban change. Therefore, while those workers employed in creative or knowledge occupations may well be attracted to the amenities described by Florida, their development and survival is dependent on a much wider set of processes. This includes the promotion and support of industry and employment at the regional level, rather than policy orientated narrowly at ‘place-making’ and ‘creative class’ rhetoric (Lawton et al., 2010). This perspective is summarised succinctly by Scott (2006, p.11):

“The key to this conundrum lies in the production system. Any city that lacks a system of employment able to provide these individuals with appropriate and durable means of earning a living is scarcely in a position to induce significant numbers of them to take up permanent residence there, no matter what other encouragements policy makers may offer.”

A similar perspective is put forward by Glaeser (2005 p.596), who questions the link between ‘bohemianism’ and urban economic growth, stressing how it is more important for city authorities to focus on “basic commodities desired by those with skills, than by thinking that there is a quick fix involved in creating a funky, hip, Bohemian downtown.”

In recent years, a number of authors have examined the attraction of particular countries, regions and city-regions for the ‘creative class’ (Houston et al., 2008; Niedomysl and Hansen, 2010; Hansen and Niedomysl, 2009; Andersen et al., 2010). Such an analysis is based on the assumption within Florida’s thesis that the ‘creative class’ are highly mobile and attracted to specific regions based predominantly upon the soft amenity-based preferences outlined in the foregoing analysis. Drawing on a wide-range of examples, this literature has expressed severe difficulties with Florida’s assumptions that those working within various occupations will display similar tendencies in terms of locational preferences (Markusen, 2006; Storper and Scott, 2009). One aspect of this research has questioned the assumptions that the ‘creative class’ have a common set of amenity preferences. For example, as commented by Niedomysl and Hansen (2010, p.1639), “preferences are heterogeneous across the life course, and the factors that attract one group may repel another.” Thus, while younger age groups may well be attracted to regions that offer the forms of amenities outlined by Florida’s ‘creative class’ thesis, Niedomysl and Hansen’s research illustrate the continued importance of the life course in selecting a region or city region (*Ibid*).

Wojan et al., (2007) and Asheim and Hansen (2009), have taken the analysis further and examined the differences based on a division of the ‘creative class’ into analytic, synthetic and symbolic activities. Here, analytic knowledge refers to those activities predominantly focused on scientific knowledge, such as nanotechnology and biotechnology, and thus often refers to university and industry links and spin-off companies. Synthetic knowledge is used in reference to those industries predominantly focused on the application of existing forms of knowledge to new uses, such as in the field of engineering. Finally, symbolic knowledge refers to the production of ‘meaning and desire’ (*Ibid*, p. 430), and includes industries such as design, branding and media. In summary, it is posited that those working in ‘symbolic’ and ‘analytic’ industries are more inclined to be attracted to regions based on what is referred to as a ‘people climate’ than those working in ‘synthetic’ industries, where the ‘business climate’ is perceived as being of greater importance.

This line of research has also stressed the continued importance of classic factors in the selection of a region or city-region. For example, drawing on the example of Sweden, Niedomysl and Hansen (2010) highlight the continued importance of the availability of employment and affordable housing in selecting a region amongst migrants. Furthermore, drawing upon data from capital city regions, regional centres and semi-peripheral cities in the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, Andersen et al (2010) analysed both push and pull factors in terms of attracting the ‘creative class’. Pointedly, in analysing the factors that detract from capital city regions, the authors found that “a common problem is that adequate housing at reasonable prices and in reasonable distance from the work place is not available” (Andersen,

2010, p.1600).

Within the context of the foregoing discussion on residential choice and the role of amenity preferences or 'soft' factors in locations decision-making, the current paper focuses on testing two hypotheses: The first is that residential location choices of the 'creative class' are dominated by 'soft' location factors over and above 'classic' location factors. The second is that the 'creative class', and particularly its younger age cohorts, favour the central city for residential location choice and that this favouritism is synonymous with a greater quality of life satisfaction in central city neighbourhoods. The following section will detail the study methodology including defining terms such as 'soft' and 'classic' ('hard') factors. Thereafter, the results are presented before some concluding comments are offered.

## **Study area and methods**

### *Dublin*

In order to set the research in context it is important to delineate some of the key population and economic trends in the Dublin Region over the past decade or so. One of the most salient and obvious points to make is that Dublin has been and remains the dominant population and economic centre in the State. Indeed, over the course of the past twenty years that dominance has been reinforced. The most recent Census of 2011 shows that the Dublin Region (the core urban area) had a population of 1.27m which accounted for 28% of the national population. If we examine what is termed the Greater Dublin Area, in effect the wider functional urban region, the area accounts for 39% of the state's population (Redmond et al, 2012). However, this snapshot of population share does not reveal the dynamic nature of population change. Over the past twenty years the population of the state increased by 30% in the period 1991 to 2011, rising from 3.53m to 4.58m. This rapid increase was driven by a high rate of natural increase and significant levels of immigration. One of the consequences of such rapid population growth is that, in European terms, the state has a relatively young population, although the economic recession from 2007 has led to increased emigration of younger age groups.

While nationally there was population growth of 30% between 1991 and 2011, there were quite distinct trends in Dublin (Redmond et al, 2012)<sup>1</sup>. One of the most dramatic trends was the extent of population dispersal, with some of the counties (e.g Kildare and Meath counties) furthest from the urban core having population growth of 70% over the same period. In effect the region has seen extensive and un-coordinated suburban sprawl. The inner city of Dublin, representing the commercial core, also saw a high growth in population of 60% over the same period, in large measure driven by residential tax incentives aimed at attracting people and investment back to the inner city (Redmond et al, 2012). By contrast, the mature suburbs of the city either declined or remained static. In the context of debates about the 'creative class' (Florida, 2002), it is also worth noting that immigration trends since the mid-1990s have led to a more diverse population. In 2002, 7% of the state's population were non-Irish nationals, whereas by 2006 this had increased to 11%. In the Dublin Region non-Irish nationals accounted for 9% of the population in 2002 and this increased to 15% by 2006. In the Dublin City Council administrative area, which is the old urban core, the figures went from 11% to 17%. The combination of a buoyant economy in the decade to 2007, alongside a facilitative approach to EU enlargement in 2004, led to increased immigration.

Given the importance of the region in population terms it is no surprise that it is also economically predominant. The most recent economic data show that in 2009 the Dublin Region and the Greater Dublin Area accounted, respectively, for 40% and 48% of Gross Value Added in the state (Central Statistics Office, 2012). With regard to jobs, at the start of the economic boom in 1998 there were 498,000 people in work in the Dublin Region and at the peak of the boom in 2007 this had risen to 636,900 (Central Statistics Office, 2011). However, with the advent of the recession in mid to late 2007, there has been a severe contraction in employment with the loss of

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<sup>1</sup> The population data described here is taken from Redmond et al (2012).

<sup>2</sup> Under Florida's (2002) definition, the creative class comprises workers in the creative and knowledge

119,300 jobs in the Dublin Region between late 2007 and late 2011, with the unemployment rate rising from 4.4% to 13.1% for the region. Reflecting the economic boom, disposable income per person in the state increased from €13,722 in 2000 to a peak of €23,239 in 2008. In the Dublin Region the respective figures were €16,045 in 2000 and €24,005 in 2008. Since then, as the economy has fallen into a steep recession, incomes have declined (Central Statistics Office, 2012)

### *Methodology*

The research utilised a dual methodology of quantitative and qualitative approaches when gathering data from ‘creative class’ workers.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the quantitative approaches, a questionnaire survey was carried out between July and November 2007. The survey inquired into topics ranging from the importance of ‘classic’ (‘hard’) factors and also ‘soft’ factors for location decision-making.<sup>3</sup> A stratified random sampling framework was employed to select workers from the creative and knowledge industries. Employees were contacted through their employers, which were sought through the Kompass and Fame company databases.<sup>4</sup> Employees from 47 companies took part in the survey. This was broken down into 22 creative companies and 25 knowledge companies. The total number of usable responses was 180; 95 in the creative sector and 85 in the knowledge sector.

There were three criteria imposed on respondents being used for the final sample. First, they had to work in a creative or knowledge industry as defined by NACE codes (Table 2)<sup>5</sup>. Second, respondents had to live within the Greater Dublin Area (GDA). Finally, respondents could not be employed within an administrative position within their company. This is justified on the basis of the commonality of administrative functions across all industries.

Responses were sought in a way that proportionally represented each of the different industries. For example, the games, software and electronic publishing sub-sector accounted for 36.2% of those employed within the four selected creative industries (Table 2). The achieved response of 31% in this sector is more or less representative of its relative importance. In so far as was possible, a geographical break-down was sought between inner and outer areas of the city. The total number of responses in inner areas was 86 while the total number of responses in outer areas was 96. In the creative sector the total number was 41 inner city responses and 54 outer city responses. The number for inner and outer responses within the knowledge sector was 45 and 40 respectively. Therefore, there is a relatively even distribution of responses between each sector.

### **Location for Table 2: Breakdown of responses by sector, size of company and location**

For the qualitative approach, interviews were undertaken with transnational migrant workers<sup>6</sup> in the creative and knowledge sectors in Dublin. The selection of transnational migrant workers was based on the assumption within the ‘creative class’ thesis of high levels of worker mobility. A total of 24 respondents were interviewed from three sub-sectors within creative and knowledge sectors: 8 respondents in each of the following sectors: (1) the television and film sector; (2) the computer games and electronic publishing sector; (3) business and management consultancy sector. As with the questionnaire survey, efforts were made to select respondents working in city centre and suburban areas in the Dublin region (Table 3). Again, this was

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<sup>2</sup> Under Florida’s (2002) definition, the creative class comprises workers in the creative and knowledge sectors of the economy. Thus, we have adhered to this definition of the creative class in our selection of respondents.

<sup>3</sup> Classic ‘hard’ factors included proximity to public and private transport infrastructure, commuting distance and time, housing cost and size, proximity to family/friends, proximity to schools, proximity to services/facilities, and proximity to the city centre. ‘Soft’ factors included the availability of leisure facilities, neighbourhood atmosphere, proximity of pubs/nightclubs, availability of public and private open space.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://ie.kompass.com/> and <http://eps.bvdep.com/en/FAME.html>

<sup>5</sup> NACE codes are the European Community’s standardised classification of economic activities. See <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

<sup>6</sup> We define transnational workers as highly-skilled migrant workers from outside of Ireland working within either creative or knowledge industries in Dublin.

achieved through the selection of employees through their respective companies. The data collected was used to examine the degree of importance attached to both 'hard' and 'soft' factors when moving to and experiencing particular localities in Dublin as well as the geography of residential location choice within the city.

### **Location for Table 3: Breakdown of transnational migrant workers by location and company size**

#### **Findings: Residential Preferences of the 'Creative Class'**

*Hypothesis 1: Residential location choice of the 'creative class' is dominated by 'soft' location factors over and above 'classic' locations factors*

The questionnaire survey asked respondents to assign importance to a number of factors in selecting a residential location. These included 'classic' factors for residential location choice and emerging 'soft' factors as purported under the rubric of the 'creative class' hypothesis.<sup>7</sup> The level of importance ranged from 'not important' to 'very important'. Table 4 presents the three most and least important factors emerging from the results. They demonstrate that the most important factors cited by respondents for residential location choice were classic location conditions or 'hard' factors. These included the cost and size of residential dwellings as well as the distance between home and work. The results correspond with the literature cited earlier and indicate that the residential location preferences of the 'creative class' conform more or less to those of the general population.

It is notable also that the least important factor for residential location choice was proximity to pubs/nightclubs, precisely the type of 'soft' factor that the 'creative class' hypothesis espouses as being important for creative individuals. In fact, 'soft' factors were rarely cited among the main concerns for location decision-making. Contrary to the 'creative class' hypothesis, this implies that only marginal consideration was given to these factors in the core residential location decision-making process.

### **Location for Table 4: Important and Unimportant Factors for Residential Location**

The foregoing trend also emerged from the semi-structured interviews: respondents frequently cited the importance of 'hard' factors in choosing where to locate including the cost and size of housing and proximity to work or proximity to public transportation. Moreover, there was no significant difference in the location decision-making trends of city centre residents or those residing beyond the central core. The majority of respondents, regardless of geographic location in the city, emphasised the importance of 'classic' location factors in residential location decision making. In a typical response, one central city resident highlighted the importance of accommodation cost and proximity to the work in decision-making:

*'I like the fact that...I am able to walk into the city in any direction and be there in about fifteen or twenty minutes walking. ... And then just the rent; ...Houses I was looking at on the south side were €600 to €800 for the same room, [and they] were even smaller and I am paying about €400 for where I am now...'* (Interview 21, Central City Resident, American Female, 25-34, Computer Games and Electronic Publishing)

Similar sentiments were expressed by respondents living in outer locations:

*'I think [we went] on [the property rental website] Daft.ie or whatever it is and just looked around for apartments when we were here... we ended up in Dundrum*

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<sup>7</sup> Classic 'hard' factors included proximity to public and private transport infrastructure, commuting distance and time, housing cost and size, proximity to family/friends, proximity to schools, proximity to services/facilities, and proximity to the city centre. 'Soft' factors included the availability of leisure facilities, neighbourhood atmosphere, proximity of pubs/nightclubs and availability of public and private open space (see Murphy and Redmond, 2010; Bontje, 2011)..



*which is [an outer area] on the South Side... We've been so happy with it. I mean the Luas line takes us right in, I'm at work in twenty five - thirty minutes max...'*  
(Interview 11, City Outskirts Resident, American Male, 25-34, Business and Management Consultancy)

*I'd say part of that is again just kinda getting older, getting a bit more I dunno, needing a bit more, feeling the need for a bit more space I suppose. I've always grown up by the water as well so South Dublin you know has... It's obviously on/by the sea and all the rest so I like that and also and I suppose just you know trying to get more space for your money...'*  
(Interview 14, American Female, 25-34, City Outskirts Resident, Business and Management Consultancy).

It is important to highlight again that these trends correspond closely with those in the existing literature on residential location patterns of the general population (Prashker, et al, 2008; Kim et al, 2005). Thus, despite Florida's (2002; 2005) focus on the importance of leisure and cultural facilities and 'hip' neighbourhoods ('soft' factors), residential location decision-making of 'creative class' workers is dominated by traditional factors, with the 'soft' amenity preferences seen as secondary – at least in the case of Dublin.

#### **Location for Table 5: Residential location and the importance of availability of leisure facilities**

Our results also show that the level of importance attached to the availability of leisure facilities (a 'soft' factor) is generally low for respondents and does not vary significantly for individuals residing in different parts of the city (Table 5). In fact, for central city (25.0%) and city outskirts (20.9%) residents, the proportion of respondent citing the availability of leisure facilities as not important for residential location is much higher than for those who consider their availability important (9.2% and 2.3% for central city and city outskirts residents respectively).

For Florida (2002), creative workers are attracted to the forms of leisure and cultural amenities that can only be offered in established city locations. It might be expected then that a greater level of satisfaction with these amenities could be observed in the city centre. The findings (Table 5) indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship ( $p=0.66^8$ ) between residential location and levels of satisfaction with the availability of leisure facilities indicating that similar (low) levels of importance are attached to these facilities for city centre and peripheral residents.

#### **Location for Table 6: Residential Location and Satisfaction with Cultural Activities**

A similar trend emerges when another of Florida's 'soft' factors are considered. Table 6 displays the relationship between residential location and levels of satisfaction with cultural facilities and shows that no significant relationship exists between residential location and levels of satisfaction with cultural facilities ( $p=0.79$ ). More specifically, the data shows little difference in the proportion of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with cultural facilities and their residential location. Once again, one might have expected the levels of satisfaction with these facilities be to be greater for residents of the central area given the assumption of the 'creative class' thesis for those individuals to predominantly locate there because these 'soft' factors are more abundant and readily located in the more established central parts of cities; yet, this is not the case. This implies that, at least in the case of Dublin's 'creative class' workers, Florida's suggestion is incorrect. In Dublin, their behaviour is heavily influenced by the classic location conditions espoused in the existing academic literature (Clark and Huang, 2003; Clark et al., 1984).

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<sup>8</sup> In all cases where p-values are quoted, a Pearson chi-square test was used to examine the association between variables.

## Location of Table 7: Residential Location of Respondents by Age Group

*Hypothesis 2: The 'creative class', and particularly its younger age cohorts, favour the central city for residential location choice and that this favouritism is synonymous with the greater quality of life satisfaction in central city neighbourhoods.*

The 'creative class' hypothesis suggests that individuals from the younger population demographic tend to favour central locations where they can benefit from the social and cultural amenities, and particularly that of an 'active street scene'. In Florida's (2002, p.232) words: "The street buzz is right nearby if you want it, but you can also retreat to your home or other quiet place, or into an urban park, or even set out to the country". In essence, he suggests that the 'creative class' want all the advantages of living in the city centre, but can also remove themselves to the country-side for other activities, such as mountain-biking. Our results show that just over half the respondents (50.6%) live in the central area with 28.5% and 20.9% living in the city outskirts and periphery respectively highlighting a fairly even geographical distribution of respondents across the study area. This information is broken down by age cohort in Table 7. The results from that Table show that a high proportion of respondents in the younger age cohorts – 53.8% and 60.0% in the 15-24 and 25-34 cohorts respectively – reside in the central area; the corresponding figures for the older age cohorts is considerably lower. This suggests that the younger age cohort of Dublin's 'creative class' do in fact have a tendency to congregate to a greater extent in the central area and, in this respect, appear to conform to the 'creative class' hypothesis. It is also notable from the results that the proportion of individuals residing in the periphery is more or less consistent across age cohorts indicating that the locational preferences of the 'creative class' for the periphery is similar across age demographics. However, a chi-square test revealed that no statistically significant relationship exists ( $p=0.14$ ) between age cohort and residential location indicating that the tendency for younger cohorts to locate closer to the central area cannot be inferred for creative workers more generally.

It is important to note also that although the results do suggest a tendency for the younger age-cohorts of these workers to favour the central area (even though it is not statistically significant), they are also in line with classic location preferences from studies in the literature (Rossi, 1955; Kim et al., 2005; Prahsker, et al., 2008). These studies highlight the tendency for older age cohorts to locate beyond the central area irrespective of occupational characteristics (i.e. irrespective of 'creative class' membership). This work also corresponds with previous research conducted in Dublin which highlighted the limitations of city centre living for older demographics that tended to favour suburban and peripheral areas irrespective of their association with the 'creative class' (Howley, 2010; Howley, et al, 2009). In our interviews with transnational migrant workers, respondents frequently cited the impact of life-cycle and personal trajectory issues in determining whether they located in the central or suburban areas. For example, one respondent described the impact of the change in his life-cycle as follows:

*'My life's changed in the last two to three years and if you become a parent you suddenly look at a city differently. So the first six months or the first year, being slap bang in the middle of the city I didn't particularly enjoy it... [In] that sense we did sort of flee to the suburbs and then flee again even further out. But then you've got children so you don't want really to be city centre so I don't really go out in Dublin that often.'* (Interview 23, Scottish Male, 35-44, Business and Management Consultancy)

This demonstrates that these issues play a much more important role in the location-decision making of individuals than their employment in 'creative class' occupations. Thus, while our results do indeed show a tendency for older age cohorts to locate in suburban areas and vice versa for younger age cohorts, this is entirely in line with broader trends in the wider residential location literature (Rossi, 1955; Bourne, 1981; Kim et al., 2005; Prahsker, et al., 2008).

Florida has also suggested that individuals reside in more established urban locations, due to their association with lively and active streets, and availability of amenities such as bars and restaurants, and as a result enjoy a more satisfying urban experience presumably when compared

to individuals who live beyond the centre (Florida, 2002, 2005). Thus, one might expect that given Florida's assumption for the 'creative class' to congregate in the central area, neighbourhood quality of life satisfaction would be greater for individuals residing there. Yet, our results demonstrate this not to be the case. Table 8 shows that there is no significant disparity between residential location and neighbourhood quality of life satisfaction in the study area ( $p=0.20$ ): levels of satisfaction with neighbourhood quality of life are similar in the centre and periphery. This suggests that in the case of Dublin, a residential location in the central city is not synonymous with a higher neighbourhood quality of life.

### **Location for Table 8: Residential location and neighbourhood quality of life satisfaction**

To summarise, the results demonstrate two key findings. First, the 'creative class' hypothesis which suggests that the residential location choices of 'creative class' workers are dominated by 'soft' factors does not conform to the results emerging for Dublin. Our results reject that hypothesis and highlight the continued importance of classic ('hard') factors for the location decisions made by these workers. In this respect their residential location decision-making would seem analogous to that of the general population already established in the relevant academic literature (Bourne, 1981). Second, the hypothesis that the 'creative class', and particularly the younger demographic, favour central city locations over others does not receive support from our results even though there does appear to be a tendency in the data for younger age cohorts to favour the central area (see Martin-Brelot et al, 2010). Moreover, the notion that neighbourhood quality of life satisfaction is greater in central locations is also rejected from our results which show no considerable difference in neighbourhood quality of life satisfaction and residential location.

### **Conclusion:**

Much has been written about the role of consumption patterns amongst those in creative and knowledge orientated occupations (Florida, 2002, 2005; Long, 2009). The findings presented in this paper point to the limitations of Florida's focus on the 'soft' amenity-oriented factors in the residential preferences of the 'creative class'. The results show also that the focus upon older more established urban neighbourhoods, or the 'urban village', as the location focal point of 'creative class' workers is over-simplified within Florida's thesis (Pratt, 2008; Catungal and Leslie, 2009). Instead, the results highlight the diversity of residential preferences amongst those working in 'creative class' occupations, but points specifically to the continued importance of 'classic' location factors. These include the role of dwelling costs, distance and journey time to work, and the quality of transport infrastructure as important conditions for selecting a residential location (Kim et al., 2005; Prashker, et al. 2008). Moreover, the importance of these factors is evident for all age cohorts regardless of whether they live in the central area or the periphery. To a significant extent these results reflect the evidence already available in much of the established literature on residential preferences (see Rossi, 1955; Bell, 1968). The paper has also pointed to the role of the life-cycle in influencing the residential choices of 'creative class' workers (Clark et al, 1984). These factors were evident throughout the questionnaire survey and interview data.

Pointedly, the results of the qualitative interviews with transnational migrant workers indicate similar results to the survey findings. While for Florida, members of the 'creative class' are highly mobile, the results point to two significant factors. First, and in line with previous research on expatriate workers moving to Dublin (Boyle, 2006), our results emphasise the continued importance of classic, or 'hard', factors, such as the availability of employment, in the selection of Dublin by migrants working within creative and knowledge industries. Moreover, these 'hard' factors also continued to be of primary importance in selecting a residential location. Second, a somewhat unexpected finding was the continued importance of personal trajectories amongst transnational migrant workers. While it might be assumed that transnational migrant workers are freer to select an area outside the constraints of family-ties, our findings indicate the continued significance of these ties in selecting an area of the city in which to live. Predominantly, this was connected to the initial reasons for moving to Dublin in the first place, with the wider family unit of a spouse or partner of the respondent often playing a significant

role. Personal trajectories therefore have a significant impact on the degree of mobility amongst those working within 'creative class' occupations, with residential choice within a city based primarily on factors related to a combination of classic location factors and shifting preferences throughout the course of the life-cycle.

Previous research on locational preferences has questioned Florida's assumptions in comparing the attraction of the 'creative class' to specific regions or city-regions (Houston et al., 2008; Niedomysl and Hansen, 2010; Hansen and Niedomysl, 2009; Andersen et al., 2010). In focusing on the residential preferences of the 'creative class', our results highlight the residential preferences of that group are similar to the choice characteristics of the general population. It is posited that the promotion of the 'urban village' as the ideal urban environment of the 'creative class' draws too heavily upon the association between certain creative industries and the renewal or gentrification of city centre areas. Here, particular 'creative' groups, such as artists, who move into run-down or decaying urban areas, are often credited as 'pioneers', paving the way for further gentrification and renewal (Ley, 2003; Markusen, 2006). In recent years these associations have been given further support with explicit connections often made between Florida's 'creative class' and their desire for 'bohemian' city districts and the gentrification of city-centre areas (Lees, et al, 2008; Long, 2009; Wyly & Hammell, 2005). Yet, no discernible pattern could be found in our results that might differentiate the residential preferences of the 'creative class' from those outlined in the existing body of literature (Rossi, 1955; Bell, 1968; Kim et al., 2005; Prashker, et al., 2008). This should provide a useful context for a more in-depth analysis of the relationship between residential preferences and different occupational groups. More particularly, following from previous research focused upon location preferences at the regional level (Asheim and Hansen, 2009; Andersen et al., 2010), this would require a more nuanced enquiry into the residential preferences of different sub-groups of the 'creative class' within specific regions and city-regions, such as, for example, artists and knowledge workers, while also seeking to expand the enquiry so as to examine a much broader set of occupations and socio-economic groups. Our results point to the importance of broadening the scope of enquiry and examining the role of a wide-range of factors in influencing residential choices. This would include looking at the role of global economic forces in shaping housing markets, while also looking at those factors that are specific to different cities.

The foregoing analysis has significant implications for future policy formation in Dublin. To a large extent, the promotion of Florida's ideal urban image has dovetailed with the ongoing transformation of Dublin along entrepreneurial lines (see Lawton et al., 2010; Fox-Rogers et al, 2011). Policy formation has also been in keeping with the desire to promote what are considered more sustainable urban models in the wake of the suburban sprawl of Dublin over the last three decades; yet, the focus has been predominantly upon the 'soft' amenity factors (DRA, 2009). Thus, creative workers are so actively catered for in current policy formation because it is assumed that they are attracted by 'soft' conditions despite the fact it is the 'classic' conditions that are more influential in their decision-making process (see Murphy and Redmond, 2009). This suggests that existing policy is out of kilter with the available evidence on the preferences of the 'creative class'. In Dublin, the ability of policy to direct change is also significantly curtailed by the ongoing economic crisis. As an example, in as much as the recent economic collapse has highlighted the unsustainable nature of Dublin's continued suburban sprawl, it is likely that 'classic' location factors will play an even more significant role in residential choice in the coming years. It should, however, also be noted that given the constraints on personal finances, the current crisis places very real constraints upon household mobility and the ability of households to change residential location due to prevailing negative equity issues. Bearing this in mind, the results of this paper indicate the importance of policy in Dublin to enhance connectivity between peoples' place of residence and employment and to ensure the promotion of a high quality and affordable housing stock. This is not only of significance for attracting and retaining the 'creative class', but also for promoting a more sustainable and liveable urban region for the general population.

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**Table 1: The role of Residential Preferences within Florida's 'Creative Class' Thesis (After Florida, 2002)**

<b>Dimensions of Place:</b>	<b>Key Factors</b>
<i><b>Broader Factors in Residential Location Decisions</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locational choice implicit within lifestyle choices of 'creative class'.</li> <li>• Little attention to factors associated with needs for more or less physical space</li> <li>• Little attention to proximity to either private (car-based) or public transport infrastructures</li> <li>• Impact of cost of housing upon residential choice given little attention</li> </ul>
<i><b>Physical Dimensions of Neighbourhood</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suburbs mentioned, but not focused upon as desired place for 'creative class' to live</li> <li>• Rejection of 'monotonous' appearance of suburban neighbourhoods in favour of 'authentic' old renovated buildings in established urban areas</li> <li>• Mix of functions within small blocks (see Jacobs, 1961)</li> <li>• Emphasis on physical quality of public realm to cater for needs of 'creative class': High-quality paving for outdoor seating for restaurants etc.</li> </ul>
<i><b>Social Dimensions of Neighbourhood</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place as central feature of personal identity</li> <li>• Desire for tolerant and diverse ('authentic') neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Focus on individuality, yet ability to interact with others on a sporadic basis</li> <li>• Focus on consumption orientated spaces, such as coffee shops, bars, restaurants</li> <li>• The street as extension of spaces of consumption</li> <li>• Bike and pedestrian friendly (bike paths etc)</li> </ul>
<i><b>Physical Dimensions of Housing</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little specifics of physical dimensions of housing; however, preference is for rejuvenated older houses; converted lofts; live-work units</li> <li>• Little attention given to shifting needs for space throughout the life-cycle</li> <li>• Increased likelihood of living alone; less focus on family life</li> </ul>
<i><b>Social Dimensions of Housing</b></i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mention of children, but not a focus</li> <li>• Little mention of movement throughout the life-cycle and its impact upon housing choice</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Breakdown of responses by sector, size of company and location**

Creative Industry					
NACE	Sector Name	Size	Inner city	Outer/Suburban	Responses
722	Computer games, software, electronic publishing, software consultancy	Small	6	8	29
		Large	13	2	
921	Motion picture and video	Small		5	8
		Large	3		
922	Radio & TV	Small	1	1	8
		Large	1	5	
742	Architecture	Small	3	18	43
		Large	9	13	
	Other	Small	3	1	7
		Large	2	1	
Total					95
Knowledge Industry					
741	Law	Small			1
		Large	1		
741	Accounting, Book-keeping, Auditing, Tax	Small		1	22
		Large	21		
741	Market Research, Public Opinion Polling	Small	9	8	24
		Large		7	
741	Business & Management Consultancy, Holdings	Small	2		4
		Large	1	1	
65	Financial Intermediation	Small	2	6	13
		Large	5		
73	R&D	Small			1
		Large		1	
803	Education	Small			20
		Large	4	16	
Total					85

**Table 3: Breakdown of transnational migrant workers by location and company size**

<b>Nace 74.14: Business and Management Consultancy Activities</b>					
<b>Business Location</b>	<b>Inner City</b>		<b>Outer City</b>		
Size	Small	Large	Small	Large	Totals
Employees	3	3	1	1	8
<b>Nace 921 and 922: Motion Picture and Video: Radio and Television Activities</b>					
Size	Small	Large	Small	Large	Totals
Employees	2	1	3	2	8
<b>Nace 722: Computer Games and Electronic Publishing</b>					
Size	Small	Large	Small	Large	Totals
Employees	2	4	2	0	8
Total Respondents					24

**Table 4: Important and Unimportant Factors for Residential Location**

<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
1: Cost of dwelling (55.4%)	1: Nearness to Pubs/Nightclubs (42.3%)
2: Distance to work (45.7%)	2: Proximity to Major Roads/Highways (28.0%)
3: Size of dwelling (39.4%)	3: Availability of Crèches (24.0%)

**Table 5 Residential location and the importance of availability of leisure facilities**

		Very Important	Quite Important	Somewhat important	Not Important	Pearson Chi-Square
	Central City	7 (9.2%)	24 (31.6%)	26 (34.2%)	19 (25.0%)	X <sup>2</sup> =4.116 df=6 p=0.66
	City outskirts	1 (2.3%)	12 (27.9%)	21 (48.9%)	9 (20.9%)	
	Periphery	3 (8.8%)	9 (26.5%)	15 (44.1%)	7 (20.6%)	

N=150

**Table 6: Residential location and satisfaction with cultural activities**

		Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
	Central City	9 (10.6%)	49 (57.6%)	16 (18.8%)	11 (12.9%)	0
	City Outskirts	8 (17.0%)	26 (55.3%)	8 (17.0%)	3 (8.8%)	0
	Periphery	2 (5.9%)	22 (64.7%)	7 (20.6%)	3 (8.8%)	0

N=166

**Table 7: Residential Location of Respondents by Age Group**

Age Cohort	Central City	City Outskirts	Periphery	Pearson Chi-Square
<b>15-24</b>	14 (53.8%)	7 (26.9%)	5 (19.2%)	X <sup>2</sup> =9.607 df=6 p=0.14
<b>25-34</b>	48 (60.0%)	16 (20.0%)	16 (20.0%)	
<b>35-44</b>	15 (40.5%)	14 (37.8%)	8 (21.6%)	
<b>45+</b>	6 (28.5%)	9 (43.0%)	6 (28.5%)	

N=164

**Table 8: Residential location and neighbourhood quality of life satisfaction**

						Pearson Chi-Square
		Very Satisfied	Quite Satisfied	Somewhat unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	
	Central Area	20 (23.2%)	54 (62.8%)	20 (23.2%)	0	X <sup>2</sup> =5.997 df=4 p=0.20
	City outskirts	8 (16.3%)	37 (75.5%)	4 (8.2%)	0	
	Periphery	11 (30.6%)	18 (50.0%)	7 (19.4%)	0	

N=166