

London's New Art Cluster at East End and its Implications

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Abstract Over the last two decades, there have been numerous studies of art clusters and their effects on urban regeneration. Most of those studies, however, rely upon an historical description of a cluster and fail to provide a general model for cluster development. To fill this gap in the literature, this paper argues that the Neo-Schumpeterian model of industrial location, which was developed to explain the location of high-tech clusters in the 1980s, is useful in explaining the formation of an art cluster. Since the 1980s, the East End has played a critical part in London's emergence as the global centre of contemporary art. Formerly an area of abandoned industrial properties and low-income residences, the East End attracted numerous artists, their workshops, and small businesses, and it became a major art cluster. The Young British Artists, a globally renowned British artist group, are known to be a product of this cluster. By applying the Neo-Schumpeterian model to this case, this paper finds several implications for urban regeneration policy: (1) a major art cluster can emerge only when there is a substantial change in cultural industry; (2) the small edge an art cluster has over others can make the cluster dominant, and government support might create that edge; (3) it is difficult to predict when and how the cultural market will change before it actually happens, so a major project based on the current market situation is extremely risky; (4) not all places have the conditions required to be the next big success; (5) the formation of an art cluster takes a long time; and (6) creating or attracting the cluster's leader is an essential task for policy makers and developers for the success of the cluster.

Keywords London's East End, Art cluster, Culture-led urban regeneration, Neo-Schumpeterian model of industrial location, Young British Artists

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1. Introduction

London's East End has been the UK's center for visual and performing art for decades. Recently London acquired another art cluster on the other side of the city: the West End. The most well-known group of artists whose roots are traced to the East End is commonly called the Young British Artists (YBA,). In fact, they are probably the most well-known British contemporary artist group outside the country. This paper uses the history of the East End and the YBA to reflect upon how public policy can contribute to the formation of an art cluster and urban regeneration. In so doing, the Neo-Schumpeterian model of industrial location, which was originally developed in the economic geography of the high-tech industry, is applied.

2. What has been discussed

Over the last few decades, the role of cultural industries in urban regeneration has been one of the most frequently discussed topics in urban planning and local economic development. With the flurry of the creative class, the creative city, and other similar concepts, it seemed natural for urban planners and local economic development specialists to ponder how they could use the art cluster to regenerate the urban economy. (이용숙·최정인, 2012; 최병두, 2013)

Some of those attempts had apparent success, but as Ann Markusen (2006; 2013) argues, infusing government money into high art only creates financial opportunities for transnational top artists and amusement for local elites. Job creation or other types of local benefits prove limited. Transnational super elites in the art world, who tend to travel via first-class flights and stay at five-star hotels, are willing to travel to a new venue provided it offers some prestige and an acceptable financial reward. Local elites who do not have access to the best the art world has to offer are willing to spend some money in those venues. In that sense,

with generous funding from the government, high-art development can flourish.

However, flourishing of the art venue does not guarantee a wider spread of the benefits. The jobs created by the high-art venues are not numerous and are mostly consumer services jobs that lack a good salary and stability. The local elites' consumption benefits the trans-regional and transnational art elites and their associates rather than the local workers. In that sense, high-art venues often take money away from the local economy rather than bringing it in.

For that reason, I would like to focus on the art cluster rather than the high-art venue as a tool for regenerating the urban economy. In an art cluster, there is usually a group of prestigious artists who eventually become transnational art elites. However, there are also numerous second-tier artists who serve the local art demand and who are surrounded by the art industry, which helps produce, replicate, publicize, and distribute art products. These two sectors (i.e. the second-tier artists and the art industry) are the real job creators. The prestigious artists are still important because they are the ones who maintain the stature of the cluster, bring attention to the cluster and its artists, inspire second-tier artists to work hard, etc. As such, the actors in an art cluster form a system in which none of the elements is dispensable.

I would like to approach this issue from a location theory point of view. Extensive research has been conducted on art clusters, but most of it has focused on the specific history and social context that enabled the cluster to form (Liu, Han, and O'Connor, 2013; Shin, 2010; Wang, 2009; Wang, 2012; Wen, 2012; Zheng, 2011; Li, Cheng, and Wang, 2014; to list just a few).

These studies are more interested in cluster specificities than generalisations for understanding other cases. In this paper, I will apply the Neo-Schumpeterian theory of industrial location to London's East End in an attempt to theorize the formation process of an art cluster.

3. Toward the Neo-Schumpeterian Model of Art Cluster Formation

The California School of Economic Geography, which was active in the 1980s and 1990s, proposed a four-step model to explain the formation of high-tech clusters. This model, already long forgotten in academic discussion and even by the authors themselves, remains one of the most powerful explanations of the formation of high-tech clusters.

I would like to apply this model to an art cluster case. This approach can work because the way the art industry functions is very similar to the way high-tech industries do. In both cases, innovations are the essence of industry. Here, innovation is defined widely: small improvement to and modification of existing ideas, as well as ground-breaking innovations are all innovations. If that is the case, every art product is an outcome of innovation, as are the products of high-tech industries. A new idea is usually the outcome of interactions rather than the work of a singular genius. In high-tech industries, an R&D lab facilitates an institutionalised interaction among scientists and engineers with related expertise. However, sometimes the interactions stretch across organisational boundaries and occur within the community of experts in an industrial cluster, which is noted by academics with the term 'localized knowledge spillovers' (Jaffe, 1989; Jaffe, Trajtenberg, and Henderson, 1993; Sonn and Storper, 2008; Sonn and Park, 2011). Artwork is regarded as individual work, but behind a work of art, there are accumulated inspirations, a learning of techniques, and an understanding of recent trends, all of which are facilitated by an artist's location within an art cluster. For that reason, a concentration of people is important for both the high-tech industry and the art industry.

According to Neo-Schumpeterian authors, a group of new pieces of knowledge (e.g. new ideas that were related to microelectronics in the 1970s) requires a certain economic/institutional system that facilitates the materialization of those pieces of knowledge. However, once established, an economic/institutional sys-

tem's rigidity against change hinders the introduction and use of radically different knowledge. Therefore, radically different knowledge might be adopted by less developed economies, thereby making those adopters new leaders in knowledge production (Freeman and Lucas, 2001; Perez, 1983).

In a pure economic formalisation, Brezis, Krugman, and Tsiddon (1993) argue that an advanced country is less likely to adopt new knowledge. That is because such knowledge would not be highly profitable, at least at the initial stage. On the other hand, a less developed country would be willing to adopt new knowledge, because such a country is not competitive in terms of old knowledge anyway. Brezis, Krugman, and Tsiddon (1993) mainly deal with a peripheral nation's advantage in new knowledge applications rather than production of knowledge. However, since knowledge is put into production not by a one-time introduction but rather by the subsequent development of further complementary and supplementary knowledge, as explained by Keirstead (1948), these leapfrogging theories indirectly suggest that a periphery of knowledge production can surpass the traditional core of knowledge production.

While the aforementioned theories mainly encompass national leapfrogging, the Californian School of Economic Geography (Scott and Storper, 1987; Storper and Walker, 1989) has developed a model that is more specifically geared toward explaining regional leapfrogging. According to these authors, when a new technological paradigm emerges, if it is not compatible with the old core's existing institutional arrangements—which is usually the case—then a 'locational window of opportunity' opens for other regions to become new cores. Any region with relatively advanced economic and social conditions can become one of these newly emerging cores. However, once one region gets ahead of the others—for any reason—the locational window of opportunity closes. The former then becomes dominant while the latter dies out. With the absence of competitors, the winner can enjoy higher demand from the global market, which reinforces economy of scale, which allows the cluster to improve its technology and reduce prices even further, which in turn squashes new potential competitors.

This monopolistic situation of a cluster continues until an external shock changes the standard of technology and the institutions of the cluster turn out to be too rigid to cope with the new technology. Then, a locational window of opportunity opens again.

It should be noted that the locational window of opportunity opens only when there is an abrupt branching of the technological trajectory. In a gradual evolution of existing technology, the existing centres are better. With the concentration of human capital and social institutions that fit the existing technology, existing clusters continue to lead the technological development. Saxenian's (1994) comparative research between Boston and the Silicon Valley in terms of their organisational cultures demonstrates this tendency well. In Boston, the original centre of the electronic industry with a long tradition stemming from the development of the transistor, established companies had a hierarchical culture, whereby the direction of R&D is decided at the top and engineers follow that direction to improve existing technology. This culture did not fit the semiconductor industry, where nobody could predict the direction of technological development. In Silicon Valley, companies were still young and small, so communication between executives and shop-floor engineers was still possible. Furthermore, communication among employees of different companies was not prohibited, because they are loyal to the community of engineers as well as to the company.

Consequently, new ideas were spread and picked up more quickly in Silicon Valley.

In a way, the formation of Hollywood as the film industry's world centre went through a similar process. In 1903, the first narrative film, *The Great Train Robbery*, was made. Before this movie's debut, films were all about showing spectacular scenes, with no or little storyline involved. However, after *The Great Train Robbery*, the audience realised that films were more fun when they had stories attached to them. Once that happened, there was no turning back. While this movie was produced in New York, the traditional centre of the film industry, studios in Los Angeles were quicker in recognizing narrative films as the future of

the industry. By occupying the emerging narrative film market faster, Hollywood became the centre of the U.S. movie industry.

Quantitative evidences of leapfrogging exist, too. Ceh (2001) analysed state-level patent counts and found that more patents come from California, Texas, and Florida than from the traditional core states in the Northeast and Midwest regions. Also based on analysis of patent data, Johnson and Brown (2004) found that almost 50 per cent of the Western states' leapfrogging over the Midwest and Northeast is attributed to the changes in industrial structure. Ó hUallacháin and Leslie (2005), in their analyses of each state's number of patents, find convergence up to 1993 and divergence thereafter.

4. London's East End and the Young British Artists

1) East End as the Seedbed for the Young British Artists

What we normally call the East End is an area that covers the Borough of Tower Hamlets, the Southern half of the Borough of Hackney, a small part of Stratford, and the dockland areas of Bermondsey and Greenwich. Until the mid-1970s, this area was industrial - cheap clothing, shoes and boots, tobacco, heavy engineering, biscuits, jams and pickles, brewing, furniture, printing and paper, and heavy chemicals (Green, 1999).

The emergence of this area as an art cluster is related to the Greater London Council's (GLC) housing policy. In 1972, the GLC was encouraging the formation of housing associations. This policy change was an important turning point for two artists, Harvey and Panton. They were planning to start a self-help organisation for artists, and they decided to take advantage of the GLC's new policy. They thought artists were in a better position than most other people were, because artists can accept any type of building and transform the building into a beautiful living space. The housing association was a quick success and housed

several hundred artists by 1979. Those artists used an abandoned warehouse called Butler's Wharf. The GLC, however, saw an opportunity for redevelopment in the midst of the property boom and evicted the artists in 1979. Many artists remained in the area by relocating to a nearby veneer factory that was owned by Tower Hamlets. So as not to repeat the eviction, artists set up a charity and signed a rental contract with the council (Green, 1999).

2) Emergence of the Young British Artists

The YBA, also called Brit artists and Britart, emerged in the late 1980s. Among its members, Damien Hirst was the artist/entrepreneurial leader of the group who started to organise shows for members, even before they had finished their undergraduate degrees. In the 1990s, he led the Freeze warehouse movement. The distinguishing characteristic of such works is that they are shocking. Unlike traditional fine artists, the YBA's members were active in promoting themselves in the mass media. As a result, they became media stars, not unlike rock or movie stars. Now, several leading members of the YBA are recognised by academia with honorary Ph.D. degrees and membership in the Royal Academy. The emergence of this group revitalised British artists within the global art market.

Aiden While argues, 'From its origins in the late 1980s, YBA subsequently had a more considerable impact than any of the predecessor British art movements, reflected in a rapid increase in the number of London galleries, the pop-star status for leading artists, the growing media interest, and the not insignificant regeneration/gentrification impacts as the locus of the contemporary art milieu shifted from West to East London and as the Hoxton/Shoreditch area was transformed into a major cultural quarter' (2003: 255). The peak of the YBA was probably the Sensation, which attracted over 280,000 paying visitors. Thanks to the YBA, London arguably became the dominant centre of contemporary art, surpassing New York (While, 2003).

One of the interesting features behind this group's emergence was the involvement of the controversial Charles Saatchi. Saatchi, who had assets worth USD \$200 million, spent more than USD \$2 million every year to purchase art in the mid-1980s (While, 2003: 258). The Royal Academy's Sensation exhibition of 1997 that was mentioned earlier used many of Saatchi's personal collections. Saatchi was different from traditional patrons of the arts, because his motivation was a combination of a love of art and profit. In the late 1980s, he found that the price of classical art masterpieces did not rise very quickly. In an effort to change this, he looked for unknown new talents and used his influence to promote them, thereby increasing the price of the works he had purchased from them earlier in their careers (Hatton and Walker, 2000).

He visited the Freeze that Damien Hirst organised as a student and became Damien Hirst's main collector. He also collected many YBA works and openly sponsored their creators. He even organised a series of shows for them, beginning in 1992. These shows proved very successful in terms of media attention and made Damien Hirst the most expensive artist in the world.

While the East End offers a spatial foundation for young artists who later become international stars and who benefit from that international status, a wider context of the art industry in London offers an industrial basis for the emergence of the YBA.

As While (2003) argues, some cities have better economic institutions for artists. This was the case in London. London has been one of the major centres of both the art trade and commercial art (e.g. advertising). What must be noted is that, while major art dealers operate across space, their main profit comes from the purchase of domestic art and the resale of such art on the overseas market for a higher price. This is because dealers need spatial proximity to artists. Close examination of emerging artists is extremely important. In so doing, they have to use multiple methods of evaluation, such as personal face-to-face meetings with artists, listening to local refutation among colleagues, and evaluation of the artwork itself. Without this multi-dimensional examination, it is difficult for an

investor to predict whether the artist fits the future trend and whether the artist would continue to produce high-quality work. This means, for an artist, without good international deals in the same city, it is difficult to be known outside his/her city.

At the same time, London has one of the biggest concentrations of disposable wealth. The international financial sector in London is second only to New York, having hundreds of financial executives and hundreds of highly paid lawyers and accountants. Combined with the wealth inherited through family lineage and foreign money (especially from Eastern Europe and the Middle East, where residents aspire to be part of the prestigious culture of London's wealthy class), London has an enormous amount of disposable wealth that could potentially be spent on art.

5. Theoretical reflections and policy implications

The application of Neo-Schumpeterian location theory to the case of London's East End and the YBA gives us several theoretical and policy implications.

A major cluster can emerge only when there is a substantial change in a market or an evolution of the industry. Because of increasing return to scale, a new cluster cannot compete against existing ones of a similar nature. When the YBA was emerging, the art world was stagnating. Whether artwork of that period generally lacked innovation is debatable and beyond the scope of this paper, but what is reasonably clear is that the art investors were having a hard time finding the next big thing. That was exactly why Saatchi was searching for new artists and found the YBA.

Only when there is a substantial change in the nature of demand can room for a new cluster be created. This is why many attempts to 'copy' successful clusters, such as London's West End, Hollywood, New York's fashion district, and Beijing's 798, fail. When demand for a new type of product is created, existing clus-

ters often miss the opportunity because firms and individuals within the cluster tend to resist change. This tendency creates an opportunity for a new cluster. If policy makers and property developers want to create new clusters for urban regeneration, they should first understand the long-term changes of the cultural industry they will use.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to predict when and how a radical change will happen before the radical change point is reached. It is even more difficult to predict the trajectory of the sector's evolution after the rupture. This hindrance makes use of a cultural industry for urban regeneration extremely risky. Urban regeneration projects require long-term planning and financial resources, which can be wasted if the wrong industry is chosen. Perhaps a better way to approach the matter is to reinforce an emerging art cluster rather than create an entirely new one. The market constantly creates and destroys numerous small clusters. In a cluster, individuals try different things, and successful attempts shape the future of the cluster. In that sense, a market-created cluster's survival is proven, at least for the time being. However, this does not mean that all market-created clusters are desirable from the perspective of the entire city or economy. Developers and policy makers should carefully study the nature of the industry and attempt to predict its future before they choose which cluster they will reinforce.

It should also be noted that not all places possess the necessary conditions to be the next big success. In the case of the East End, even though the area itself lacked a background in art, wider London has always been the national centre of art. One can find that pattern in other cases. Before Silicon Valley became the world centre for the semiconductor industry, it already had prestigious universities and a major city, San Francisco, nearby. This does not mean that a cluster's emergence is completely determined by the area's past. There are numerous places that meet the general conditions required to emerge as the next big thing, and any small advantage one of those places possesses could result in its ultimate success. On the other hand, those places lacking the general necessary conditions are most likely to fail.

Finally, it should be remembered that the formation of an art cluster takes a long time. The success of that cluster takes even longer. The difficulty lies in the short-term nature of policies and private investments. Periodic elections and criticism from civil society make politicians want short-term results. Similarly, a developer with long-term vision has a hard time in the face of the investors' desire for a quick return. Some other force is necessary that can counter balance the desire for immediate results. Enthusiasm from academia and the art community might help. Allowing citizens to be involved in the process may help them realise that building an art cluster is supposed to take long time.

An industry leader is the main locomotive of an art cluster. The industry leader can be an elite artist, a successful business, a prestigious venue, or a flagship event. The industry leader is where innovations are likely to originate. It is also likely to be known to people outside the cluster, thereby attracting talented workers, capital, and tourists. In the Silicon Valley case, Fairchild, the semiconductor company, was the leader, and in Hollywood, the five major studios were. In London's East End, the Young British Artists were. Creating or attracting the leader is an essential task for policy makers and developers for the success of the cluster.

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런던의 이스트엔드 예술클러스터가 문화중심도시재생 사업에 주는 함의

손정원*

요약 최근 20년간 예술클러스터나 문화산업클러스터가 도시재생에 미치는 영향에 관한 연구들이 많이 있었다. 그 연구들의 대부분은 성공적인 예술클러스터, 혹은 문화클러스터를 역사적으로 기술하는 데 치중하고 있어, 클러스터 발생을 이론화, 일반화하는 데는 한계가 있었다. 이런 맥락에서 본 연구에서는 1980년대에 첨단산업 클러스터 연구에 많이 적용되었던 신숨페터주의 산업입지론을 원용하여 문화산업클러스터의 성장을 이론화하려 한다. 1980년대부터 런던의 East End 지역은 런던이 현대미술분야에서 뉴욕과 맞먹는 중심지로 성장하는데 큰 기여를 해 왔다. 이 지역은 버려진 산업용지와, 저소득층 주거지역으로 이루어져 있었는데, 1980년대부터는 수많은 예술가들이 몰려들어 작업장을 차리고, 그들과 연계된 소기업들이 입지하기 시작하여, 이제는 상당한 규모의 예술클러스터가 되었다. Young British Artists라는 일단의 예술가들은 이 예술클러스터의 성장기에 함께 태어난 것으로 알려지고 있다. 신숨페터주의 모델을 적용하여 런던 이스트엔드 사례를 해석한 결과, 본 연구에서는 문화중심 도시재생 사업에 주는 몇 가지 함의를 찾을 수 있었다. 첫째, 예술 클러스터는 문화, 예술분야의 격변기에 태동한다. 둘째 다수의 소규모 클러스터들이 경쟁하고 있을 때, 작은 우위를 갖는 하나의 클러스터가 결국은 다른 클러스터들을 물리치고 독점적인 지위를 갖게 된다. 셋째 문화예술 시장의 격변이 언제 어떻게 일어날지 알 수 없으므로, 현재의 시장상황을 파악한 것에 기초하여 문화중심도시재생 전략을 세우는 것은 매우 위험한 일이다. 넷째, 예술클러스터 발생에는 기본적인 조건들이 필요하므로 모든 지역에서 예술클러스터를 육성하려 해서는 안된다. 다섯째, 클러스터 형성에는 긴 시간이 필요하다. 여섯째 클러스터를 견인할 수 있는 힘을 가진 개인 혹은 기업이 필요하다.

주요어 런던 이스트엔드, 예술클러스터, 문화중심 도시재생, 신숨페터주의 산업입지론, Young British Artists

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