Innovation, territories and creativity: some reflections about usual and less usual innovation policy tools

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Key questions

- If the aim is to support the "creative economy" at local level (territories)…

  from the point of view of public authorities in charge of agglomerations, metropolitan areas, cities, regions, etc.

- … what can be said about possible (usual and less usual) policy instruments?

- ... and what are the ideas, principles and hopes (and even maybe wishful thinking) behind such policies?

- Can some patterns or explaining dimensions be identified? Can stylised facts allow some general observations?

- What can be learned by a German-French comparison?

Five conceptual objects

- We propose a grid devoted to the analysis of "shown and hidden dimensions" of different forms of policy instruments (5X5 matrix)

- Five conceptual objects
    - O1 - Cluster policies
    - O2 - Incubators initiatives
    - O3 - Ideas lab initiatives
    - O4 - Supporting knowledge angels
    - O5 - Attracting talented people

Five policy dimensions

- This grid (5X5 matrix) should allow us to characterize possible tools and initiatives in terms of policy implications

- Five dimensions for characterizing policy tools

  D1– Technical and financial resources characteristics: scale, size, number and types of elements involved; budget; timeline, time horizon…

  D2 – The nature of knowledge : symbolic, analytic, synthetic ; sustainable *vs.* volatile efforts; club *vs.* communities…

  D3 – Targeted actors: individuals *vs.* organizations; human *vs.* social capital; big firms *vs.* SMEs

  D4 – Academic weight: role of universities and research labs; S&T- *vs.* business-oriented; art *vs.* prototyping

  D5 – Complexity level of the mechanisms: classical *vs.* open model of innovation; multi-level/multi-actor governance; policy-mix; communication issues; spectacular aspects (for policy makers and politicians); social acceptance….

Typical issues

- For each policy instrument we attempt to give examples of general characteristics and important issues.
- This selection of five policy instruments is definitely not exhaustive but aims at displaying the diversity of possible (non-exclusive) options.
- As far as possible, we focus on items where German-French comparison cast light on the potential variety of policy design, policy constraints, policy efficiency.
- The ultimate aim is to help "thinking out of the box" for policy design in each specific national/regional context.
- We adopt an exploratory and (most probably) non-conclusive approach.

O1 : Cluster policies

- **D1 (resources)** : Very high level is required.

- **D2 (knowledge)** : Slightly volatile knowledge, communities, low speed of knowledge creation and circulation.

- **D3 (targets)** : Mixed targets (big and small firms, labs & higher education, etc.).

- **D4 (academia)** : Seems crucial as a success factor.

- **D5 (complexity)** : Very high (strategy based on a mix of actors).

O2 : Incubators initiatives

- D1 (resources) : Moderate level is required.

- D2 (knowledge) : Rather a club than a community, low speed of knowledge creation and circulation.

- D3 (targets) : Selective (individuals).

- D4 (academia) : Can be high, but not obligatory.

- D5 (complexity) : Moderate level of complexity.

O3 : Ideas labs initiatives

- **D1 (resources)** : Relatively high level required.

- **D2 (knowledge)** : High speed of knowledge creation and circulation.

- **D3 (targets)** : Mixed targets (public and private, research & arts, etc.).

- **D4 (academia)** : Most probably high level of involvement.

- **D5 (complexity)** : Very high (strategy based on a mix of actors).

O4 : Supporting knowledge angels

- **D1 (resources)** : Relatively low level required.

- **D2 (knowledge)** : High speed of knowledge creation and circulation.

- **D3 (targets)** : Individuals (selective process).

- **D4 (academia)** : Level of involvemnt,c an be high, but not necessary.

- **D5 (complexity)** : Not very complex (project approach).
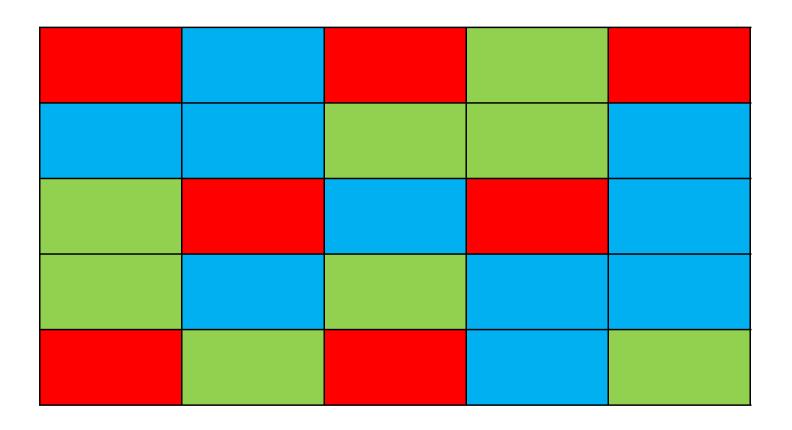
O5 : Attracting talented people

- D1 (resources) : High level required.

- D2 (knowledge) : "Importation" of volatile knowledge.

- D3 (targets) : Categories of individuals.

- D4 (academia) : Possible, but not obligatory.

- D5 (complexity) : Not very complex.

A 5x5 matrix

A 5x5 matrix

Objects / Dimensions	Cluster policies	Incubators	Ideas labs	Supporting knowledge angels	Attracting talented people
Resources	🟥	🟦	🟥	🟩	🟥
Knowledge	🟦	🟦	🟩	🟩	🟦
Targets	🟩	🟥	🟦	🟥	🟦
Academia	🟩	🟦	🟩	🟦	🟦
Complexity	🟥	🟩	🟥	🟦	🟩

Policy implications

- From industrial district to creative city (cf. Cohendet and Zapata, 2009) : evolution of policy instruments "follows" the evolution analytical observations (and vice-versa?).

- No "one fits to all" or "generic" policy tools can be put forward. The key issue is rather to identify context-specific "windows of opportunities" and/or "potential critical masses". The "detection work" must reflect national and regional innovation specificities.

- Attempt to introduce a sort of "reverse policy-engineering" i.e. "*Probieren geht über studieren*" + "No matters if it works in reality, does it work in theory ?" ☺

From industrial districts to creative city
(adapted from Cohendet and Zapata, 2009)

Industrial District	Knowledge flows and spill-over effects that flow more easily within spatially bounded areas thanks to face-to-face contacts
Innovation System	Emphasis on the systemic character of innovation Local institutional context and interrelations between businesses and public institutions
Industry Cluster	Business and non-business organisations for which their membership to the cluster is an advantage to their competitiveness
Cultural City	Relationships between economic development and the cultural sector, and of the cultural sector and its policy initiatives
Creative City	Matrices on which the diversity of creative forms (from scientific organisations to artistic underground) interfere and give birth to unexplored innovations

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A counter-manifesto for rethinking local innovation-supporting policy through more creativity?

Clear necessity to be clustered	Clear willingness to be (virtually) interconnected with islands of knowledge
Proximity with big science infrastructures as a key factor	Ability to access to (close or remote) knowledge as a priority
Tendency towards specialisation	Tendency towards eclectics
Bigger is better	Smaller is faster
R&D-driven is smarter	Creativity-led is funnier
Planning is everything	Expect the unexpected (or just nothing)
Solution-oriented tools	Problem-driven tools