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## **The Geography and Typology of Creative Clusters and Firm Productivity in the United States**

### **ABSTRACT**

My research is at the intersection of urban planning, arts management, economic development, and sociology. I ask how we can leverage creative clusters to maximize their potential in the modern urban planning process while minimizing their negative outcomes for local communities. Given the challenges facing cities to balance the shift from a manufacturing to a service economy, my research focuses on how cities use arts and culture to enhance community liveability and economic growth. Based on a quantitative approach using a large national dataset, I determine the location of the different types of creative clusters within the United States and investigate their relationship with firm productivity. Creative clusters in my dissertation refer to the places where not only creative firms and artists are found more, but places where creative activities are incentivized and encouraged. My work suggests that creative clusters tend to co-locate and most likely contribute to economic growth through supportive hard (physical) and soft (policy) infrastructure. I also provide empirical evidence at the national level that creative firms tend to agglomerate in more compact neighborhoods with greater accessibility to transit and retail.

My research proposes a novel framework that identifies the different characteristics of a creative-friendly community and offers municipal governments a tool to evaluate their cultural policymaking strategies. In the dissertation, I investigate the social and economic implications of creative clusters for local communities, such as gentrification, displacement, and inequality, despite the potential that arts and culture have to boost economic development. While existing literature suggests higher productivity associated with firm clustering, my research demonstrates that the firm productivity in arts and cultural clusters is highly context-and type-specific. This contributes to the literature on firm clustering and offers new possibilities for interdisciplinary collaboration between arts administration, business, and planning.