ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Non-Technical Summary
A 1000 word (maximum) summary of the main research results, in non-technical language, should be provided below. The summary might be used by ESRC to publicise the research. It should cover the aims and objectives of the project, main research results and significant academic achievements, dissemination activities and potential or actual impacts on policy and practice.

Research Project Title: ‘Technology, Talent and Tolerance in European Cities: a comparative analysis’
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Introduction and Research Questions
Today, the relative demise of raw materials or other natural endowments and rise of human capital, innovation and creativity as the crucial wellsprings of economic growth means that to be successful in what many see as the globalising knowledge economy, regions must develop, attract and retain talented and creative people. Such people are not spread equally across countries and regions, but tend to concentrate within particular locations. In his US study of this, Richard Florida argues that regional economic outcomes are tied to the underlying conditions that facilitate creativity and diversity, what he calls the ‘Creative Class’. Accordingly, the ‘Creative Class’ thesis suggests that the ability to attract creative ‘talent’ and to be open to diverse people of different ethnic, racial and lifestyle groups provides distinct advantages to regions in generating innovations, growing and attracting high-technology industries, and spurring economic growth.

An important research task is therefore to explore the factors that are hypothesised to attract ‘talent’, and its effects on regional economic outcomes. In this report we provide a brief overview of our investigation into the extent to which similar processes drive the relationship between creativity, human capital, and prosperity in the UK (and other European countries) as reported for North America by Florida and colleagues.

The basic research questions are:

1. Where is the creative class located in the UK (and within the European Science
Methodology

The key variables for the quantitative analyses relating to quality of place are the Bohemian Index (employment in culture and media occupations), and the Diversity Index (overseas-born residents); these mirror directly variables employed in Florida’s (e.g. 2002) North American research. We also include a Cultural Opportunity Index (relative employment in restaurants, bars, museums and so on). In order to reflect the European context of our research, to these are added the Public Provision Index (healthcare and education) and Social Cohesion (unemployment). In turn, regional prosperity is gauged through examining population and employment change, concentration of high-tech industry, and entrepreneurial activity (new firm formation).

Finally, with respect to the ‘Creative Class’ themselves; these are essentially people who as a key constituent of their work are involved in the creation of new knowledge, or the use of existing knowledge in new ways. In the absence of a primary data set relating to the actual engagement in such activities, this is proxied by the use of Census Occupational categories. We subdivide the Creative Class into the Creative Core (scientists and engineers, architects and designers, academics and teaching professionals), and the Creative Professionals (associated professional and technical occupations of the Creative Core, managers, financial and legal professionals).

Results and Analysis

Mapping the Creative Class in the England and Wales

The Creative Class accounts for some 37.3% of the UK workforce; the total figure is split between the Creative Core (9.7% of the workforce), the Creative Professionals (25.5%) and the Bohemians (2.1%). There is significant variation in their geographical distribution. Localities in the inner M4 corridor area (Wokingham, Reading, Oxfordshire, Windsor and Maidenhead) feature heavily in the top ten Creative Core Location
Quotients (LQs). In addition to London, ranked at number seven Cambridgeshire completes the third facet of the UK’s ‘Golden Triangle.’ This gives confidence that the model variables are robust. Also interesting is that in addition to those areas which might be expected to feature, a number of less obvious regional centres of creativity emerge – particularly Cardiff, Manchester, and Newcastle each with a sub-national capital or primate city function. Finally, our rankings confirm the position of Brighton as a creative centre.

Turning attention to the low ranking areas, a number of these are places suffering the protracted after-effects of the loss of heavy industry, either as distinct localities (Blaenau Gwent, Stoke on Trent, Barnsley) or the de-industrialised areas of large cities e.g. Tameside (Manchester), Knowsley (Liverpool) and Sandwell (Birmingham). In addition, places associated with traditional seaside holiday resorts also make an appearance in this category (e.g. Blackpool).

The Creative Class and Quality of Place

The indicators for both diversity and presence of bohemians are positively correlated with the localisation of the Creative Class and both its sub-groups. This means that the Creative Class in the UK tends to live in places that also have high levels of bohemians and diversity. Both relationships are quite strong, particularly so for the bohemians. The diversity index is the measure of tolerance utilised, and from the above we may conclude that the Creative Class and tolerance (measured as diversity, and the presence of bohemians) correlate in the same way that Florida and his associates found in the North American analysis.

With regard to cultural opportunity, a positive and statistically significant relationship exists between the presence of the Creative Class in a UK location, and that location’s cultural and recreational offer. This finding is again compatible with those of the North American research. This relationship is quite strong for the Creative Class as whole and the Creative Professionals, but somewhat weaker for the Creative Core.

For public provision, a significant and positive (but weak) association is observed for the
Creative Core only. For unemployment, the relationship is consistently negative, although moderate and weak with respect to the Creative Core, meaning that municipalities with high levels of unemployment tend to have a low concentration of the creative class.

Comparing with the other European studies, it is common that a majority of the Creative Class is hosted by capital cities but the UK differs in having all elements in, for example, university cities to a greater extent. Contrariwise, Creative Class location is significantly correlated with intensity of welfare provision in the Nordic countries and Germany but not the UK and Netherlands.

Outcomes and Conclusions
The Creative Class in the UK appears to show a similar pattern of distribution with respect to quality of place as is observed in North American cities. Results from the other European partners are generally consistent with this, apart from the above-mentioned variations. High concentrations are found in places which are diverse, bohemian, socially cohesive and which offer higher levels of cultural opportunity. With regard to the outcome variables, for example population and employment growth, in general a positive association with Creative Class location was observed, in particular strong correlations with new firm formation and concentrations of technology-based employment, but interestingly no association with Hi-Tech employment growth. While these observations are largely consistent with Florida’s theories, they do not in themselves confirm causal relationships; the qualitative (case-study) phase of the research does suggest ‘steering’ rather than ‘triggering’ influences of Quality of Place on the locational choices for the Creative Class.