Small Cities for a Small Country[1]: Sustaining the Cultural Renaissance ?

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Introduction

This chapter explores the implications for smaller cities of adopting culture-led regeneration strategies. It is suggested that there is a divergence between cultural planning for long term sustainable urban cultural renaissance and culture-led makeovers which rely on externally orientated projects devised to draw in new visitors, residents and enterprises. Drawing on evidence from Sheffield, an industrial city in South Yorkshire, northern England, it is suggested that small cities by thinking big, have been seduced into entering a culture-led city competition in which the stakes are high and the prospects of success limited.

Culture in the urban renaissance

Cities have been placed at the centre of government policy (if not the centre of power over resources[2]) in the UK with core objectives of promoting creative, competitive economies and enabling social inclusion and participation. For the first time in the history of urban policy the goal is to encourage people and businesses to return to, rather than leave, city centres. An 'urban renaissance' has been championed to counteract socio-economic deprivation and the sprawling car-dependent edge cities which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s (DTR, 2000). Increased residential densities, mixed-use development and the reuse of brownfield sites are now commonplace in spatial plans for central city areas and have been accompanied by calls for improved design standards, quality open space and enhanced public realm (CABE 2004). This physical renaissance, combined with re-population and new economic investment, was initially focused on the metropolitan and core cities of the UK (GLA 2004; Core Cities Working Group 2004) but is now driving planning policy and practice in market towns and smaller settlements, as well as major planned urban development areas and new town extensions, notably the Thames Gateway (South East) and the Northern Way.

Embedded within this strategy to re-centre cities and towns is a parallel concern with promoting an urban *cultural* renaissance. Here there is a general desire to capture and renew all that is best about cultural activity in cities - the ability to bring strangers (domestic and immigrant) together; to provide platforms for cultural engagement and creativity; and to foster social inclusion (DCMS 2000, 2004a). Within this there is recognition that it is within cities that cultural expression is forged, not just in the established cultural institutions but also in the informal spaces and events of everyday life. This attention to culture as an 'urban way of life' brings the identities of cities, places and communities and their quality of life to the forefront (Evans and Shaw 2004, Matarasso 1997). The development of Local Cultural Strategies by UK local authorities[3] linked to 'Best Value' performance indicators has encouraged the strategic use of cultural resources for the integrated development of neighbourhoods,

cities and regions (Gilmore 2004). Using a cultural planning approach (Evans 2001, Mercer 2002), the focus is not meant to be on cultural amenities per se nor the local cultural infrastructure, but rather on how strategic intervention into cultural activities can foster the development of a place, its communities and its economy. The aim is to encourage and support a cultural renaissance from within city communities.

However, other aspects of the cultural renaissance have had a higher profile, in particular culture-led physical revitalisation and creative industries-led economic revival. In Europe and North America these have become commonplace and they are increasingly included in the urban strategies of a wide range of developed and developing economies (Evans, Foord and Shaw 2005). Flagship cultural buildings, iconic cultural institutions, cultural and heritage quarters alongside cultural events, festivals and markets, have all been used to kick start both physical regeneration and visitor economies. Instead of cultural practice emerging from urban life, here it is being mobilised as the dominant driver of the post-industrial urban economy, pushing cultural activity and creative enterprises to the mainstream of the urban renaissance and inward investment (Evans 2001, Parkinson and Bianchini 1993). The cultural economy has thus begun to re-shape urban cultures as consumption cultures (Zukin and Smith Maguire 2004), even in former production districts which now serve as heritage locations combining residual design production with visitor activity, such as the Lace Market, Nottingham; Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham; and Clerkenwell, crafts quarter, London (Evans 2004). Placed at the leading edge of the post industrial economy, cultural assets have become a key resource in inter-city competition where specific cultural (including sporting) projects are used to deliver re-branding and economic development (Evans 2004, Garcia 2004a, Stevenson 2004). Strategies initially based on extracting the economic advantage of local arts and cultural activities have been replaced by initiatives encouraging the growth of cultural and creative clusters (Evans, Foord and Shaw 2005) mirroring current popular policy belief in the value added of economic clustering and related social networking (Porter 1990, 1993). The perceived goals are economic diversification and employment creation as well as image enhancement, with further external benefits arising from the compact city and mixed use development – namely crime reduction (natural surveillance, vitality), less car usage and therefore less pollution.

It has been argued that such economic and cultural transformations of cities are being led by three (overlapping) social groups. Indeed the competition between cities is increasingly played out through culture-led strategies aimed at attracting one or all of these groups. First there is a new group of urban citizens (young and single or older and child-free) who are discovering the advantages of city living and engaging in high consumption lifestyles (living near to work or live-work, networking and socialising in convivial settings, taking advantage of the city's entertainment and cultural activities, being part of a diverse community) (Zukin 1998). Second there are day visitors and tourists who are being drawn to city destinations such as specialised retail and entertainment areas, night-time zones of bars, clubs and restaurants as well as themed ethnic enclaves and heritage or market-based tourist attractions (Shaw, Bagwell and Karmowska 2004). Finally there are those with 'creative talent', identified and popularised by Richard Florida (2002). This 'new social class', he claims, is not only reshaping how work is being undertaken but through their flare for both bohemian ('boho') city living and entrepreneurialism, are also at the vanguard of transforming city spaces.

Much of the national and international research on documenting and evaluating the progress and impact of this urban cultural renaissance has focused on metropolitan and core cities (Evans, Foord and Shaw 2005). Strategic emphasis on gaining competitive advantage and attracting investment, new residents and visitors has

prioritised major investments in high profile infrastructure such as galleries, concert halls, sports and exhibition arenas, new public art and spaces (Garcia 2004b, Bailey et al 2004), in branding places (Evans 2004), and in developing and promoting cultural or creative economic clusters (Mommaas 2004).This culture-led city competition favours metropolitan and regional centres where past investment in cultural institutions and arts education has resulted in a comparative over-representation of established cultural activity. This uneven pattern of cultural investment has been strengthened by the current tendency for new creative enterprises (for example in advertising, design and new media) to locate in particular metropolitan and regional centres (Bryson et al 2004, Grabher 2001, Pratt 1999).

Nevertheless, there are examples of culture and creative-led change in smaller urban centres that suggest that the cultural approach to an urban renaissance may be appropriate for smaller cities. Christopherson (2004) notes that many small towns and cities have specific resources that can be drawn on to build a cultural and creative economy such as a local college or university, a health facility or other major public or private sector institution. Here the key is to draw on an existing pool of 'knowledge' workers as both audience and participants in new cultural activities and creative enterprises.

A small city, Sheffield, has also provided the first and one of the most influential examples of intervention aimed at changing place and economy through cultural production. Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) has been used as an exemplar in UK national policy and internationally. Based on providing local authority and European funded work units and production space in a ring fenced area of the city, the CIQ was aimed at retaining creative talent (especially in popular music, crafts and the visual arts) within the city's economy and so providing alternative forms of employment in a city that had had heavy losses from its steel industry in the 1970s and 1980s (URBED 1988). This also reflected a move to distance regional cities from the capital, London (Fisher and Owen 1991), using a combination of national and European regional structural funding. This was a strategy adopted by 'cities of culture' including Barcelona, Bilbao, Dublin and Glasgow. Resistance to the centre was a long standing sentiment, as was active opposition to the trap of becoming what Borsay coined as the "little Londons…importing their theatrical and musical performers from the metropolis..[and which] provided a blueprint for many other areas of provincial urban life" (Borsay 1989, pp.286-7). In Sheffield's case maintaining a local presence with national reach has required upgrading its theatre quarter and appealing to contemporary drama and popular events alike (such as the televised World Snooker Championship held at the Crucible Theatre since 1977). The initial driver for Sheffield was jobs and enterprise rather than a new cultural identity for the city - more new-industrial than a post-industrial cultural renaissance. Sheffield had been an exemplar innovative city in an earlier age, through its specialist skilled steel craft and manufacturing base. Alfred Marshall had identified the benefits of agglomeration here (as well as in Germany) as the foundation of his (creative) cluster and mileu theories which drive current creative class and local economic development initiatives today:

> "The leadership in a special industry, which a district derives from an industrial atmosphere, such as that of Sheffield or Solingen, has shown more vitality than might have seemed probable in view of the incessant changes of technique. Yet history shows that a strong centre of specialised industry often attracts much new shrewd energy to supplement that of native origin, and is thus able to expand and maintain its lead" (Marshall 1919, pp287)

Inspired by Sheffield's initial audacious intervention and influenced by aspirational toolkits (Landry 2000), or transfixed by blockbuster accounts of urban change (Florida 2002, 2005) other smaller urban centres throughout the UK have mobilised their local arts and creative/cultural sectors in their pursuit of regeneration and growth through cultural production and consumption. [4] Several have developed relatively successful niche interventions around one particular art form or a group of creative practices (Aitchinson and Evans 2003, Cooper 2004, Murray 2004, Wood and Taylor 2004).

However there are pitfalls. The intense concern with inter-city competition, place-making and leveraging in middle-class populations and inward investment has tended to sideline the wider goals of holistic and socially inclusive cultural planning (Chatterton and Unsworth 2004). In the UK a proposal to subsume Local Cultural Strategies with Community Plans has raised concerns among some policy analysts that despite central government endorsement for a wide understanding of culture (DCMS 2000a and b, 2004b), this process of withdrawing from community based cultural activity for its own sake will be accelerated (Gilmore 2004). Furthermore it may be that smaller cities and towns have been seduced into an unequal culture-led city competition in which they can never succeed. The competitive cultural advantage of metropolitan and regional cities leaves smaller cities at an irreconcilable disadvantage. If small cities focus their strategies and investment on the same types of externally orientated projects used by metropolitan and regional centres they can fall short on some of the key elements which enable metropolitan success. Small and geographically peripheral cities often lack a sustained year round critical mass of trade and cultural activity, generating the level of audiences, tourists and visitors that are required for regeneration to be viable (this is notwithstanding the short term benefits of some highly specialised festivals or arts events in smaller towns and cities). Small cities can also find that externally focused projects are easily detached from local cultural identity, leading to increased social division and therefore undermining the sustainability of any regenerative effects (McCarthy 2005).

Given such health warnings and accumulating evidence which suggests that few culture-led regeneration projects fully meet all the set social and economic objectives (Evans and Shaw 2004, Evans 2005) it is surprising that many small cities and towns cities continue to pursue conventional 'creative' strategies. This may, in part, be due to the persuasive nature of claims for the universality and growth prospects underlying the new creative economy.

Creative success for all ?

In his 2005 book *Cities and the Creative Class*, Richard Florida argues that his original thesis on the rise of the creative class has been misunderstood. He suggests that he did not mean to imply that the creative class were an elite vanguard of the new urban economy and society (2005 p3-4). He goes on to argue that he chose 'creativity' as his key concept because every human being has creative potential and the creative society (and by proxy economy) is open to all. This notion that creativity is a limitless resource is central to the power of the culture/creativity-led transformation notion and why small towns and cities become seduced into believing that they too can use the cultural renaissance to transform their communities.

The clusters associated with creative class enclaves are also predominantly a male, white, under-thirty year old group, whose shelf life is limited in terms of establishing a residential community (Nathan 2005). In the case of Sheffield for example:

> "when people buy an apartment to live in – they've been there a year or two and are now at a point in their life where they want children or they want a garden and they move to the suburbs…Having a school in the city centre is a waste of time – it's not going to be needed – there are so few kids that live in the city centre and there *are* going to be so few – I don't see a change in people's attitudes to having children in the city centre. On a Friday and Saturday night, it's full of drunk young people. Is that the kind of environment you want to bring kids up in?"
> (Interview - Local Estate Agent and Resident, Sheffield 2005[5])

This is fundamental challenge to the higher density, mixed-use model which is the basis of the government's Sustainable Communities vision (ODPM 2003). In mature inner urban areas which have pioneered residential development through industrial re-use and mixed-use design, local amenities and schools do not follow the commercial developments (Aiesha and Evans 2006) and even where more enlightened developers plan school provision as part of their master plans (as in New Islington Manchester, by Urban Splash), local education authorities will not back these plans if it means building a school only to have it lay empty while a new community settles and grows.

In a comparative study of creative industries interventions worldwide (Evans, Foord and Shaw 2005), several US mid-west cities rejected the notion of this kind of creative class and of the creative industries associated with them, preferring to stick to the <u>cultural</u> industries and their link to local heritage and identity. For these small cities, regeneration and quality of life was for 'local people', not for an imported group of creatives in downtown lofts. [6]

New Growth Theory

A principle tenet of the creative economy thesis is that creativity, the ability to use human imagination to develop new or original ideas or objects, has different properties from any other input into the economy. In a challenge to neo-classical models of exogenous economic growth where inputs are used up in the process of production, the concept of a creative economy draws on 'new growth theory' (Cortright 2001, Romer 1993) and its analysis of 'ideas' as endogenous drivers of the knowledge economy. Essentially it is argued that creativity produces a limitless supply of ideas and knowledge which can be shared, used and developed by more than one person, group, organisation or firm at a time. Creative knowledge, in theory, can be accumulated without limit. However, the intangibility of creative knowledge, its transfer through tacit and explicit exchange, makes the capture of potential economic value uncertain. Yet this uncertainty also means that any number of innovative events, products or services can occur and there is always the possibility of unforeseen innovations.[7] It is also argued that the benefits of new ideas in the knowledge/creative economy flow to individuals or economic actors other than those who created the new knowledge. This 'spillover' is central to new growth theory, suggesting a necessary openness and an ability to draw inputs from dispersed fields. Though attempts are increasingly applied to restrict this process through intellectual property rights (Santagata 2002), Colright argues that such mechanisms are likely to have negative effects by restricting the relatively free flow of ideas on which creative knowledge depends. This openness and uncertainty therefore means that creative knowledge remains undervalued until it becomes embedded in market tested innovations. In some respects the rankings or 'Creativity Indices' used by Richard Florida and others suggest a link between the presence of creative talent and the rate of innovations. The indices correlate selected location advantages with creative

milieus. They also highlight socio-cultural divisions, spatial inequalities and gentrification effects. Highest scoring places on Florida's composite creativity index also score high in terms of inequality between the highest and lowest earners (e.g. in San Francisco, Silicon Valley, New York, London). In the UK, the creativity index has been tested in an analysis of regional cluster economies and was found to show little or no significant link between higher productivity and creativity, as defined, and no demonstrable link at all with innovation, despite the knowledge-based creative industries the creative cluster supposedly represents (DTI 2004).

Nonetheless, 'new growth theory' proposes that there are limitless opportunities for the creative economy to produce an unpredictable number of new products, services and types of enterprise. Following this evolutionary approach, generating innovations from creative ideas is a process of trial and error. Furthermore it is suggested that small interventions (by an individual, private enterprise, government body or institution) can produce disproportionate and lasting returns. A particular role for public institutions in cities is identified:

> "As the world becomes more and more closely integrated, the feature that will increasingly differentiate one geographic are (city or country) from another will be the quality of public institutions. The most successful areas will be the ones with the most competent and effective mechanisms for supporting collective interests, especially in the production of new ideas" (Romer 1992 p89, cited in Cortright 2001)

In many senses new growth theory which implicitly underpins much of the current claims for the 'creative economy' suggests a win-win scenario for small cities: exploitation of ideas in the creative economy is not limited by finite resources and within an open and astute entrepreneurial/institutional/organisational context, successful intervention within the unpredictable business of capturing creative knowledge for innovative products and services can take place. Although large cities, especially metropolitan and regional cores, may have an historical advantage of cultural investment, a critical mass of knowledge and creative workers, and the exposure to diversity identified by Jane Jacobs as the key to the production of 'new work' (Jacobs 1969), new growth theory implies that although creative knowledge is neither evenly distributed across nor within nations nor equally accessible in every location, its unpredictability implies it can emerge anywhere where institutional openness coincides with the tacit exchange of creative knowledge. Big things can grow from small ideas in small cities.

As Scott suggests, "Provided that the right mix of entrepreneurial know-how creative energy, and public policy can be brought to bear on the relevant developmental issues, there is little reason why these cities cannot parlay their existing and latent cultural-products sectors into major global industries" (2000, p209). However Scott also sounds a note of warning: "As the experience of many actual local economic development efforts over the 1980s demonstrates, it is in general not advisable to attempt to become a Silicon Valley when Silicon Valley exists elsewhere" (Scott 2000 p27). This warning is even more pertinent in the early twenty-first century as metropolitan cities the world over develop in blind faith, major campus-based digital media cities and corridors – from Seoul to Singapore and from Barcelona to Berlin (Evans, Foord and Shaw 2005). Small cities have a tendency to try to follow in their footsteps, encouraged by their enterprise and regeneration agencies.

Cultural renaissance in small towns and cities

Wood and Taylor (2004) appear to provide positive reinforcement of the new growth thesis in their account of Huddersfield's mobilisation of culture for regeneration. A former woollen mill town, west of Sheffield, Yorkshire, set within a wider de-industrialised metropolitan area, they show how at a point of economic and political crisis a combination of new open leadership at the local authority. Combined with risk-taking public sector and not-for profit local arts workers with plenty of creative knowledge, an economic development partnership including the local 'new' University, and entrepreneurial bidding for European funding, has resulted in a 'creative milieu' which aims to: "initiate a wide range of diverse projects designed to find, stimulate, nurture, attract, harness, exploit, recycle, embed and keep creative and entrepreneurial talent, in order to rebuild the prosperity of the town.." (p382). The Huddersfield Creative Town Initiative has delivered site-specific physical regeneration with premises for creative enterprise and cultural activity, a festival based visitor economy, clustering of creative enterprises, new jobs and an image change for the town. Although the initiative has now ended evidence suggests that the number of creative jobs, albeit from a low base, continue to grow and although no one body assumes responsibility for the creative milieu, several new organisations have taken forward cultural and creative projects, alone and in partnership with both the University and private sector. General lessons were drawn from the Huddersfield experience and a generic model to 'create a form of renewable urban energy' has been proposed (*Cycle of Urban Creativity* [8]) which, it is suggested, can be used to inform strategy development for the cultural renaissance in other small towns and cities. This developmental approach is thought to be particularly beneficial in towns and cities where there is little obvious 'tradition of creativity', economic uncertainty or reluctant to participate. The authors do note however that the cultural renaissance is not overtly evident on the streets of Huddersfield. The socio-economic landscapes change slowly and this change has to be continually mapped and demonstrated. In line with evolutionary thinking serendipity could have played a part in Huddersfield's successful - "There is an argument to be made that Huddersfield was simply in the right place at the right time" (p393).

A different picture emerges from McCarthy's (2005) review of the cultural renaissance in Dundee, East Scotland, a small river port city that has experienced the annihilation of its staple industries ("jute, jam and journalism") and heavy losses of jobs in light manufacturing during the 1980s restructuring. Here the cultural renaissance was centred on the development of a 'cultural quarter' anchored by a new building, the Dundee Contemporary Arts Centre, complimenting the long established Dundee Repertory Theatre and bolstered by two successful computer games spin-off companies linked to the nearby Abertay University. An initial driver behind Dundee's cultural quarter strategy was a perceived need for the city to signal a presence within the national cultural sector: Dundee's cultural image within the Scottish (and UK's) cultural sector was poor despite a number of key local institutions (including 'the Rep' and Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art). The identification of Dundee as a key hub in a growing Scottish digital media cluster boosted the rationale for a cultural quarter (Scottish Executive 2000).

McCarthy suggests that it was a fervent desire for a TV and newspaper friendly image makeover that made the idea of a 'cultural quarter' attractive to the City Council. This rationale is ready made rather than bespoke. A number of critical points are raised in the evaluation of this small city's use of a cultural quarter-led approach to the cultural renaissance. The strategy was neither home grown nor locally embedded. It was the result of 'policy transfer' derived from experiences and

applications elsewhere (in particular from Sheffield) and delivered through external consultants' reports and feasibility study. Consequently it has been suggested that:

> "While there are accepted examples of 'good practice' in culture-led regeneration, acceptance and application of such good practice would seem to be frequently based not on formal evaluation or analysis but largely on anecdotal grounds. The process of policy transfer may therefore be one of 'serial replication' rather than sensitive adaptations to context that take into account the peculiarities and specificities of local aims and circumstances" (McCarthy 2005 p287).

Such copycat tactics undermines any potential uniqueness of Dundee's cultural renaissance and therefore jeopardises the desired aim to change the image of both the city and its culture. The link between local cultural abilities, assets and desires and the development of ubiquitous cultural facilities – workspaces, gallery, rehearsal rooms, cafes, bars, restaurants and new residential space - is questioned. Dundee's 'cultural quarter' is unhooked from the wider city, especially its large socially deprived population living in peripheral housing estates at some distance from the resources of the cultural quarter. McCarthy goes as far as to suggest that this strategy is likely to undermine inclusive indigenous cultural activity in its pursuit of external promotion, validation and audiences.

The argument has been made that 'hard branding' through cultural projects is becoming less sustainable as cities - metropolitan, regional and small cities alike - struggle to find and then maintain a 'cultural USP'[9]. Metropolitan and regional cities are becoming culturally homogenous and in danger of loosing tourists, day visitors and new investment (Evans 2003). For Garcia (2004a) too much imitation in culture-led regeneration is problematic. Driven by economic rather than cultural agendas, they failed second-tier cities in their competitive struggle to rise up the global hierarchy. Policy diffusion to smaller cities is in danger of replicating these inherent problems.

Nevertheless, new growth theory suggests that creativity is universal if unpredictable. One element of Dundee's story is more in line with this analysis: the two internationally successful digital media firms grew as an unpredictable consequence of developments in the research and teaching activities of Abertay University where computing and creative arts merge in the development of games software, virtual reality and 3D imaging. This creative success which is transforming the cultural identity of Dundee has had little to do with the designation of a cultural quarter and much to do with the tacit transfer of creative knowledge, its spillover and, once again, serendipitous timing. The small intervention that delivered significant results was first within the higher education institution, latterly it has been through financial support from Scottish Enterprise and in infrastructure development of both new and reclaimed premises. The triumvirate of university; boosterist city regime; and symbolic or residual industrial heritage, is now a formula for city growth and for achieving the hope value promised through a combination of the cultural renaissance and the knowledge economy. Regional cities such as Birmingham and small cities such as Sheffield have navigated local and national political regimes (and regime change) over the past 20 years to reach their current position and renewed focus on central city development.

Creative Sheffield: from productive culture to consumption culture

As already noted, the model from which many subsequent cultural quarter strategies drew inspiration originated in the small 'large' city of Sheffield. Sheffield is the smallest of the English Core Cities[10] outside of the metropolitan centre in the UK. It is not the regional (capital) centre, this is Leeds, a city which has also undergone an externally focused programme to deliver cultural renaissance and has been labelled ''boomtown' for its rapid growth (Chatterton and Unsworth 2004). It also competes with former industrial cities such as Bradford, Doncaster and Rotherham and lacks the natural and political advantages that cities such as Barcelona and Birmingham posses in their respective regions.

Benchmarking city performance has been one goal of the UK Government's Core Cities initiative, in a similar way that European cities are measured against a norm as the qualifier for regional assistance. In this case those city-regions below 75% of the European average GDP are eligible for support, as Sheffield and adjoining regions have been designated under Objective 1 of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Sheffield like other UK assisted cities is facing the move out of this ERDF zone as the benchmark is recalculated following the accession of poorer East European members and economic growth and returns from decades of public investment take effect. This means that the Euro gravy train will pull out of such city-regions and the dependency culture will be challenged. An acceleration of city redevelopment and private sector involvement encouraged by a boosterist council, is one response to this scenario. Politically this has required a conversion from urban new left to centre-right policies, which is also consonant with national politics. Comparisons with the English Core Cities therefore look to continental Europe as their reference points. This has seen Sheffield's economic performance compared with cities such as Stockholm and Helsinki (see for example the 2002 prospectus - *Creative Sheffield: Prospectus for a Distinctive European City in a Prosperous Region*). Since these are established national capitals and natural cultural capitals, such comparisons represent the 'small city thinking big', but also set up cities to fail. Competitive advantage cannot be manufactured (without continued public subsidy), whilst it is comparative advantage that small cities such as Sheffield might better build upon.

Sheffield has a population of 516,000 and some of the worst deprivation in the UK. The national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2004) shows that 10 of its 29 wards fall within the lowest 10%, that is 65,000 households of which 27 % are receiving Income Support. The city is sharply divided between two wards in the south west which are amongst the most affluent in the UK, the low scoring wards and a number of extremely deprived neighbourhoods within higher scoring wards. The proximity of wealth and poverty within the city boundaries is unusual (Sheffield City Council 2005). In recent years, in a bid to attract a new population, the expansion of higher education in the city has led to rapid increases in the number of students living in the city. In key city centre areas (such as the Devonshire Quarter), a third of the population is under aged between 16 and 24.

The high concentration of students (45,000 between the two universities) is matched by a similar clustering of white collar and professional workers in the city centre - two universities, the City Council, Department for Trade & Industry HQ, Regional Passenger Authority, two universities, teaching hospitals and law courts. This fuels the social divide between the city centre and the peripheral and rural hinterland and is reflected in house values and the demand for school places in a small area west of the city centre. 30% of employment in the city is in public service (versus 25% in the UK). The city's proximity to open space also defines its character, transport usage (a

high car commuter into and out of the city) and the limits to its urbanism: 'the Sheffield mentality – we are not London or Leeds – maybe Sheffield people like the character of the city – they don't want it to be a Leeds or a Manchester. We are like a big village' (Interview - Estate Agent and Local Resident, 2005, *Vivacity 2020* - see[5]).

Over 50% of the population live within 15 minutes of the open countryside, with a third of the metropolitan area lying within the Peak District National park itself. The city's topography – built on seven hills with five rivers – has defined both its industrial past and the contemporary urban renaissance. Quality of life is a key factor and selling point in attracting and retaining students, new residents and employers. Sheffield has the potential to trade on its locational advantages, despite its secondary position in the regional city hierarchy. Safety and crime are an important measure of 'liveability' and city image. Sheffield claims to be one the safest cities in the UK (www.sheffield.gov.uk/facts-figures). This is the case for violent crime, however burglary and theft from vehicles is 50% higher than the national average (Census 2001), an indicator perhaps of an economically divided community and problems of social cohesion.

View from Sheffield University Tower

Culture City and City of Sport

Though culture (including sport) was the means of Sheffield's early move into the urban renaissance, it was as a route to economic development rather than an end in itself. Moss (2002) notes that the motivations for intervention through culture were the sudden and heavy loss of employment in the city; the politics of localism including the fervent opposition to the Conservative central government; and the rising influence of claims for the economic contribution of the arts and creative enterprise. These came together at a time when there were significant amounts of national and European funding for regional economic development.

Like continental European cities, large scale public infrastructure projects were seen to lever private investment and engender public pride. This included public transport (South Yorks Supertram) and new sports facilities (Don Valley, Ponds Forge) in preparation for playing host to the World Student Games in 1991. Neither projects achieved their hoped for impact - passenger targets were not met (Lawless and Gore 1999) and the Student Games was a financial disaster for the city which carried the debt burden for several years. Local sports and community facilities, including four

older local swimming pools, closed, effectively reducing access for groups most in need of public leisure facilities. Swimming participation in the city had been in decline relative to the national trend, despite a fillip in 1991 which was short lived and continued to decline (Taylor 2001).

Positioning Sheffield as a Sport City continued in the 1990s. The city played host to some of the football matches for Euro96 (but with marginal economic benefits), with over 300 sporting competitions held since 1991 and a successful bid to locate a centre of the new UK Sports Institute in the city, exploiting its sports facilities and growing sports studies and science faculties in both of the city's universities (Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam). The national headquarters of the Institute was however located in Manchester.

An out of town shopping centre at Meadowhall also reinforced the city centre's decline, as experienced elsewhere in the UK, encouraged by land-use liberalisation and car-borne economic development exploiting motorway access and cheaper land opportunities. This opened the floodgate to an urban fringe landscape of sheds, mono-use multiplexes and shopping malls (Evans 1998). A decade of reversing this spatial and policy drift by the incoming New Labour government has only now started to see town centres revive. This is evident in Sheffield and other city centres such as Manchester, in increasing population numbers and residential density.

Local public sector expertise in leveraging regional development funding also grew rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s especially in the Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ), starting with a music venue (Leadmills) and the provision of work units in collaboration with the Yorkshire Artspace Society. This was followed by training and exhibition space all enabled by public sector funding. The CIQ, from its inception in the mid-1980s to date, was public sector led and dominated by not for profit activity. It became an extension of the service provision to the cultural sector. This has created a funding dependency which, Moss argues, has eroded the capacity for sustainable and creative development of both cultural production and cultural consumption in the city. "Through its strongly interventionist approach Sheffield locked itself into a particularly narrow interventionist model from which it is now difficult to expand because of geographic and competitive disadvantage" (Moss 2002 p212)

In 1999 Sheffield did attempt to extend its range of activities through the building of a National Centre for Popular Music, a museum and interactive visitor attraction in an iconic building designed by Nigel Coates and funded by £17 million of National Lottery and European (ERDF) grant aid. Other regional cities had exploited this opportunity where 'form followed funding', using extensions of national collections to create cultural tourist venues such the Imperial War Museum (Salford), Tate Gallery (Liverpool, St.Ives Cornwall) and the Tower of London (Royal Armoury, Leeds).

Lapdancing club/Music Training and former National Centre for Popular Music

However again it was a radical move for a small city to attempt this transition with no history of national museum based tourism. The National Centre closed within nine months due to poor attendance and loss of confidence in its limited content. This raises critical issues for small cities. A top down approach to developing a visitor attraction is risky and requires an exceptional collection, "experience" and investment. In the absence of other tourist attractions, an existing consumer culture, experience of curating national specialist collections and passing footfall it is not surprising the project failed. The long term consequences damaged Sheffield's image and capacity as a destination and raised the spectre of the 1991 Student Games. The building is now being used by the local Hallam University as its student union centre.

The CIQ, though beginning to attract a wider range of media and other employers is still dominated by small and micro enterprise with marginal profitability. Its history isolated it in an industrial landscape with little development of either the public realm or the mixture of uses and activities which have made other cultural quarters attractive to both new urban dwellers and visitors (Mommaas 2004). Organic development of related enterprises - cafes, independent bars, small retailers, service industries and professional activities related to the creative industries - are absent in the CIQ (this isolation is symbolised by the Workstation café and cinema which is only open part of the week).

Attempts by the newly established CIQ Development Agency to promote diversification through the public-private partnership in the development of heritage buildings, new residential building and dual (rather than mixed) use, are evidence of its exit strategy, albeit still dependant on city resources. Whereas this has brought a new residential population to the CIQ, this is largely made up of students who are housed in mono-use developments with limited aesthetic appeal and whose spending power is both limited and drawn to subsidised specialised venues within their higher education establishments. Adjoining retail property has lain empty for up to two years.

Student Halls CIQ

For Moss, the longstanding culture of a highly controlling local state, looking to the objectives of funders, actively prevents the kind of small incremental creative enterprise which allows a change to take place. Likewise Dabinett (2004) is also critical of this legacy and questions current master planning approaches to Sheffield city centre 'quarters', which are artificial rather than vernacular. Residential property development (if not occupation) is booming in Sheffield as land is released for private sector investment. However the residential and activity mix is not necessarily creating the Creative Sheffield identified in the Core City Prospectus (*Creative Sheffield*

2004). 'Studentification' (Smith 2004) produces a transient population and limited market demand for (creative) goods and services. Even in the Devonshire Quarter, a small central area north of the CIQ, identified as a vibrant 'mixed-use' area, in reality is dominated by new residential developments, which has seen new property bought by investors for lease to students, graduates and young tenants (see [5]). Non-residential amenities and ground floor commercial and leisure uses for these North American style apartment blocks have been vacant or under-used, leaving the area less than vibrant.

Devonshire Quarter – *West One Plaza*

New growth theory assumes that creativity can emerge in unexpected places as long as there is an openness to the institutional culture. However in Sheffield, the legacy of a centralised public funding dependent local state and its current overly enthusiastic boosterism and welcoming of residential property developers appears to be stifling the environments in which creativity can thrive. As Drake (2003) found in his interviews with creative producers, it is the old industrial spaces where manufacturing still hangs on that provides inspiration and connection to the creative process. Despite the *Creative Sheffield* strap-line and new projects for an E-Campus, Advance Manufacturing Park and the City Centre Masterplan, a familiar but flawed top down rather than bottom up approach is being replicated.

Conclusion

Although it was heralded as a model of culture-led urban renaissance, Sheffield, with its CIQ, sports and new Central City 'Quarters' Plan is struggling to deliver the changes perceived necessary to attract and retain the new urban populations and visitors who are seen to be central to the consumption dominated cultural renaissance of metropolitan and regional cities. Sheffield's experience, like that of Dundee, suggests that the promises of an externally driven 'new economy' and 'creativity' are not easily delivered. Strategies focused on largely on external audiences, markets and investors in a competition with cities higher up the urban hierarchy, make high profile initiatives for cultural change in small cities a precarious business. If successful then the dangers are of exacerbating existing social divisions within the small city community; and if they are not then the loss of local amenities can make the opportunities for cultural activity, with all its attendant benefits for social inclusion (skills, health and education), far more difficult for those communities most in need. The promise of this kind of new 'creative' economy may indeed be 'Emperors New Clothes' (Pratt 2005). For all cities, small and large, a sustainable cultural renaissance is more likely to emerge from within city communities where a

variety of cultural amenities, activities and providers respond to and challenge local contexts. This does not mean becoming isolated and inward looking. The cultural renaissance thrives on stimulation from beyond local borders. However linkages, networks and flows of ideas as in all vibrant cities need to be more than one way.   A cultural renaissance is not a quick fix. It does mean quality cultural opportunities for everyone - to be entertained as well as enlightened, to create for leisure and pleasure as well as enterprise, to consume culture and to participate in its everyday production.

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[1] After Richard Rogers (1997) *Cities for a Small Planet*, Faber and Faber and Richard Rogers and Anne Power (2000) *Cities for a Small Country*

[2] Between 80% and 90% of local government financial resources are controlled or distributed centrally, including business property taxes (UBR), regeneration programmes (including European) or ring-fenced according to central government formulae, e.g. education.

[3] Instigated by the Government Culture Ministry (DCMS 2000) *Creating Opportunities*, these are voluntary although most local authorities have completed or are preparing their own Local Cultural Strategies (LCS). In future these may well be merged with more wide reaching Community Plans where the significance of culture may be minimise.

[4] See the many creative and cultural strategies of numerous smaller centres for example *Creative Plymouth* www.plymouth.gov.uk

[5] This research is being undertaken by the Cities Institute in collaboration with University College London under the EPSRC *Vivacity 2020* programme (vivacity2020.org.uk). The project, 'Generation of Diversity' is investigating mixed-use development in central city neighbourhoods.

[6] In most cases this reflects a genuine desire to mobilise local assets for endogenous growth. However there is some anecdotal evidence that this rejection is driven by intolerance to the diversity and openness that Florida espouses, especially a tolerance to gay communities.

[7] Evolutionary economics is a growing area of debate . See Geoffrey Hodgson (2002) Darwinism in economics from analogy to ontology *Journal of Evolutionary Economics* 12, pp.259-281

[8] This proposed generic model has five key elements identifying points in the urban creativity cycle – ideas generating capacity; ideas into practice; networking and circulating; platforms for delivery; markets and audiences. Each element may require input and support. Some cities may be good at one element and not others and therefore unbalancing the cycle.

[9] Unique Selling Point.

[10] UK Government statistics rank 'large cities' as those with populations of over 250,000. The 14 largest used in the government's 'Urban Audit' averaged 444,000, placing Sheffield as the smaller of the large cities. In contrast,

Sheffield's population of 516,000 is equivalent to only two of London's 33 boroughs whilst London's regional population is set to grow by a greater number than Sheffield as a whole over the next 15 years.