

Case Studies of Creative Cities in a Creative Economy: Nottingham, Bath, Hong Kong, Córdoba

Colin Mercer

Bristol, UK

The Creative Economy: characteristics

- Intellectual property and knowledge-based
- Symbolic goods and cultural capital
- Symbolic and cultural entrepreneurs and intermediaries
- The 'weightless economy' of 'bits' rather than atoms
- From market *place* to market *space*
- Based on outputs and flows of cities/city-regions and **clusters** rather than nations – 'clusters might be the idea of the moment but they are nothing new to artists'. (Charles Landry and Phil Wood, 2003)

Four themes:

- The significance of the creative industries at local and regional level (clustering effects and ‘critical mass’)
- The contribution of the creative industries to the national economy and international trade (growing faster than the rest of the economy in UK and many advanced economies)
- The context of *globalisation* and *convergence* and the importance of indigenous/endogenous creative industry growth – importance of cities, city regions, and local/regional government in this - ‘marking a place in the space of flows’ (Manuel Castells)
- Some conceptual issues and approaches enabling us to understand and engage these realities (the ‘*cultural ecology*’ and the ‘*value chain*’)

Nottingham: the Lace Market Area

- 419 registered businesses in Lace Market Area (LMA)
- 168 businesses (40%) in Creative Industries
- 67% of those surveyed rated as ‘important to crucial’ *for their business* their location in the LMA.
- 61% of those surveyed rated as ‘important to crucial’ *for their business* the capacity for meeting and networking with suppliers, collaborators, competitors in the LMA.
- 70% gave a ‘very good to excellent’ rating to the LMA as a location for combined business and social interaction.

The creative content makers...

- 74% rated as ‘important to crucial’ *for their business* the attractiveness of the built environment.
- 60% rated as ‘important to crucial’ *for their business* the range and quality of restaurants, pubs, clubs, cafes.
- 57% rated as ‘important to crucial’ *for their business* the heritage quality of the LMA
- 50% rated as ‘important to crucial’ *for their business* the proximity of arts and cultural institutions.
- 58% had plans for business expansion
- 77% had experienced growth in demand for their product or service in the past year

The creative content users...

- 91% of users agreed that the LMA ‘adds vitality to the city centre area’
- 68% rated the LMA as a ‘safe environment’
- 79% rated the LMA as ‘good for shopping’
- 90% rated the LMA as ‘good for socialising’
- 20% were there for work purposes
- 30% were there for shopping
- 49% were there for social reasons

What Nottingham people think...

- 68% of respondents in random street and telephone surveys, across demographics and areas, placed a 'fairly high' to 'high' value on culture with
- 55% agreeing that it 'encourages a sense of community'
- 71% agreeing that it 'helps me to understand the world and its people'
- 56% agreeing that it is 'important for my personal development'
- 47% agreeing that it encourages 'a sense of local identity'

- *Greater Nottingham Area Cultural Audit and Strategy, 2001*

From quantity to quality....

- The creative industries are a *special* sector because, while economically increasingly important, they are also about:
 - The resources of identity
 - The resources of affirmation
 - The resources of celebration
 - The resources of social inclusion and cohesion
 - The economy of symbols, values, and meanings
 - The quality, vitality and conviviality of lived human environments
 - The resources of a sustainable and creative new economy
 - The development of distinctive local, regional and national identities (and industries) in the context of globalisation and potential homogenisation of cultures
 - The basis for import substitution and innovation (Jane Jacobs, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations*)

Bath: The *Ecology* of Culture

- Dynamic and vital relationship between commercial, independent, community and subsidised sectors
- Flows of people, talent, skills back and forth between these sectors
- Importance of informal social networks and networking capacity (social capital)
- Importance of understanding the *processes* of this ecology and the 'critical mass' that sustains it.

Hong Kong: The *Creativity Index*

- Manifestations of creativity (patents, etc)
- Structural/Institutional Capital (legal system, IP, treaties, etc)
- Human Capital (qualifications, mobility, R&D spend)
- Social Capital (charitable donations, volunteer levels, civic engagement, contribution to trust, reciprocity, cohesion, networks, tolerance)
- Cultural Capital (cultural expenditure, participation rates, values placed on cultural activity)

The Value Production Chain

- **Pre/creation** (social conditions, training, funding inputs)
- **Production and reproduction** (physical and digital infrastructure and capacity)
- **Positioning, promotion and marketing** (dissemination of knowledge)
- **Dissemination and circulation** (distribution through people and places and the internet)
- **Consumption and usages** (how, why, what, people are doing with culture, and to what ends - audience and market development, co-creation, demand stimulation, 'prosumption')

The Córdoba Experience: using the value production chain

Creation

- Education and training for creative practitioners
- Funding and investment for creative practitioners, both public and private, including venture capital.
- Business planning support and advice for creative practitioners
- Encouraging participation in creation by traditionally excluded groups

The Córdoba Experience: using the value production chain

Production and Reproduction

- Infrastructure needs (physical and digital) for production and reproduction
- Education and training needs for production and reproduction
- Funding and investment needs in these areas
- Intellectual property issues

The Córdoba Experience: using the value production chain

Promotion, Communication and Marketing

- The 'branding' and place/destination-marketing of Córdoba
- Adequacy of marketing of existing and new cultural product
- Developing and consolidating networking and communication capacity
- Education and training needs in these areas

The Córdoba Experience: using the value production chain

Distribution and access

- Adequacy of existing distribution/exhibition venues and mechanisms
- Appeal to and potential for local, national, and overseas markets
- Providing access to traditionally excluded groups
- Education and training needs in these areas
- Funding and investment needs in these areas

The Córdoba Experience: using the value production chain

Consumption

- Adequacy of understanding of the cultural marketplace and various taste cultures locally, regionally, nationally and internationally
- Cultural tourism
- Efficacy of demand stimulation strategies
- Strategies for encouraging both local and wider audience development especially to excluded groups and 'non-users'
- Education and training needs in these areas

Coda on Participation

“It is crucial to participatory cultural policy-making and planning to get the community and citizenry actively involved as both subjects and objects of the planning process. In this context we are talking about cultural mapping which involves citizens in discovering, and, importantly, *rediscovering*, values and resources for cultural planning, policy and development. These are values and resources which can be crucial to, for example, an enhanced cultural tourism offer, cultural and creative industries development, urban design and regeneration, and infrastructure enhancement, as well as a more utilitarian inventory or ‘map’ of cultural places and spaces. This will be crucial to both 2016 and a longer term creative economy initiative for Córdoba which builds the local in order to go global.”

Córdoba Report, 2008.

Coda on creativity and diversity

“The creative industries depend on diversity for their success. There is a complex and critical relationship between creativity and diversity, whose centrality to the creative process cannot be underestimated...Diversity and competition are interdependent.”

- *Staying ahead: the economic performance of the UK's creative industries*, The Work Foundation, London, 2007.